

‘A’ LEVEL

**European
History
Study Pack**

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SYLLABUS INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

According to Cambridge International Examinations, the advanced level history syllabuses give students not only the opportunity of studying aspects of the past, but also of developing an understanding of the complexity of human societies. The study also helps students to acquire a range of thinking skills which are helpful in daily life. It is therefore essential to study Advanced Level History if one needs to have a thorough understanding of matters of a political, cultural, social and economic nature, because they have their roots in the past, and cannot be explained without reference to these roots.

PAPER COMBINATIONS FOR ‘A’ LEVEL HISTORY (9155)-ZIMSEC)

This European History syllabus is studied in conjunction with another different area to constitute a complete subject at Advanced Level. For instance, European History can be studied together with another separate Advanced Level History component such as Tropical African History (9155/2) or Zimbabwean History (9155/3).

However, the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) allows paper combinations to follow any pattern i.e. Tropical African History can be studied in conjunction with

Zimbabwean History and or Zimbabwean History can be studied in conjunction with European History. No single component is therefore complete in itself.

The European History Paper is code-numbered 9155/01 in the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) examination. Technically speaking, it is not a compulsory paper although the majority of candidates register for it. The other papers on offer are 9155/02 (World Affairs since 1960), 9155/03 (History of southern Africa 1854-1914), 9155/04 (Tropical Africa-1855-1914) and 9155/05 (History of Zimbabwe). The European History Paper (9155/01) can be combined with any of the papers stated above. Below are the Advanced level History paper combinations offered by ZIMSEC.

OPTION	PAPER COMBINATIONS
A	1 and 2
B	1 and 3
C	1 and 4
D	1 and 5
E	2 and 3
F	2 and 4
G	2 and 5

Option D has clearly become the most popular in schools as evidenced by the increased candidature. Option C is now trailing in second position. The other options have registered a very low candidature to date.

Cambridge International Examinations syllabi for European History and Tropical African History and ZIMSEC are clearly the same and therefore the study packs formulated by Turn-up College are highly relevant for both ZIMSEC and Cambridge International Examinations.

In fact, the Tropical African History syllabus offered by ZIMSEC and the History of Tropical Africa offered by Cambridge are identical in content and objectives. The Turn-up study pack, for such a paper (Tropical Africa) is therefore perfectly tailor-made to address the material needs at Advanced Level for both ZIMSEC and Cambridge International Examinations.

The European History study pack is equally relevant for both ZIMSEC and Cambridge. The difference comes in the styles of examinations employed by ZIMSEC and Cambridge. ZIMSEC Advanced Level History requires them to choose four essays from at least two sections of the syllabus materials prepared by candidate. Happily, all the sections are covered by this study pack.

The topics covered by the Cambridge International Examinations include the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte's Domestic policies, the Industrial Revolution in Britain, France and Germany; the 1848 Revolutions; the Italian and Germany unifications up to 1870 and 1871 respectively, German Foreign Policy after 1871; New Imperialism (1870-1900), the Russian Revolutions; 1905 and 1917 right through to the death of V.I. Lenin in 1924. Just like ZIMSEC, Cambridge also studies totalitarianism between the wars in Germany, Italy and Russia. In all the

cases, the rise of the dictators together with their ideologies is covered. All this material is covered adequately by the study pack for European History.

Cambridge Examinations in European History are similar to ZIMSEC in that the candidates are required to answer any three essay questions from the above outline syllabus content. In addition to the three essays, Cambridge offers a compulsory source-based question on the causes of the First World War (1870-1914). The four questions make up a complete 3-hour paper.

In preparation for the compulsory source-based question for Cambridge, candidates will have to familiarize themselves with and examine the historical controversies on the origins of the First World War. They will also need to develop skills of interpreting and evaluating source-based materials.

Assessing scripts at Advanced Level.

Assessment Aims:

The aims of the syllabus are the same for all Advanced Level History syllabuses and they describe the educational purposes of a course in Advanced Level History.

The aims are to:

1. Develop an interest in the past and an appreciation of human endeavour.
2. To acquire an understanding and a sound knowledge of selected periods or themes
3. To gain an awareness of historical concepts such as change and continuity, cause and effect.
4. To appreciate the nature and diversity of historical sources and methods used by historians.
5. To group a variety of approaches to aspects and periods of History and differing interpretations of particular historical issues.
6. To think independently and make informed judgements on given issues and situations.
7. To cultivate empathy with people living in diverse places and at different historical time frames.

Assessment objectives

1. To demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of issues and themes within a historical period.
2. To distinguish and assess different approaches to interpretations of and opinions about the past;
3. To express awareness of historical concepts such as change and continuity, cause and effect in the past;
4. To present a clear, concise, logical and relevant argument.

These objectives are tested in essay questions. However, it needs to be noted that at Advanced Level, historiography is not necessarily an assessment objective. As in objective number 2, students may have a thorough knowledge of the different schools of thought pertaining to a topic such as the origins of the Cold War, where we have traditional, revisionist, post-revisionist schools and thought. It is however not necessary to summarize the arguments raised by different authors on a particular argument. Whilst that may earn credit for those who do it accurately and relevantly, it does not in any way disadvantage the other candidate who simply raises pertinent facts, analyses them and relates them to the question.

Generic mark bands for essay questions.

A generic mark band is a standard and agreed mark allocation procedure. These usually range from mark band 21-25 marks where the strongest answers are placed, right down to band 7 where the weakest answers are also placed.

ZIMSEC adopted both the Cambridge International Examining standard and their generic mark band in the marking and assessment of scripts for candidates at 'A' level. It is extremely vital to highlight and explain in this chapter how marks are allocated to scripts, and what each respective mark band stands for, so that candidates and teachers alike may know what to aim for, how thoroughly they should prepare for the exams, and the possible outputs they should forecast.

Band I: 21-25 mark. The approach of the answer is consistently analytical and explanatory. (The terms analysis and explanation' will equally not be taken for granted. They are fully explained elsewhere in this chapter.) The quality of the answer indicates that the student has addressed all parts of the question. For example, How far...? The answer should discuss both the extent of agreement and disagreement with the assertion. Relevant factual information is adequately given and linked to the question. The quality of English expression also applies at this top band because the argument must be structured coherently and accurately. Essays will be clearly question-focused as opposed to topic focused. Hence students should be able to select what material is relevant to the specific question set and leave out what might just apply to a broader topic in general. A perfect answer is impossible to get but the best answers will achieve 25 marks.

Band 2: The requirements for this band are similar to the above band. However the marks are a little lower (18-20) because whilst answers are analytical or explanatory in style, they tend to be one sided. For example: How oppressive was the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte in France (1800-1815). In being one sided, an answer would clearly explain the oppressive policies and legislation passed by Napoleon at the expense of his liberal and progressive policies. Alternatively the answers may fail to appreciate that the same measures were populist and yet serving oppressive tendencies. For example the well-known concordat and the organs article, passed one year after the other, guaranteed freedom of worship in France as well as heal the bad relations which existed between the church and the state. The hidden motive which the 21-25 answer will further discern is that these instruments were Napoleon's long arm of gaining total control of the activities of the church.

Band 3:16-17marks Answers in this band will reflect a clear understanding of the question. The approach will be in many ways heavily narrative and descriptive though fully relevant. Analysis and explanation may be at the very end of the essays. Usually such answers manage to make or pass a few analytical comments within the body of the essay but on the overall the style of writing may be descriptive.

Most candidates do not realize that analysis and explanation with links to the question must be consistently done in every paragraph for their answers to be placed in the top two bands. The 16-17 band, may also have some parts of the answers which lack coherence.

Band 4:14-15 marks

These are usually heavily descriptive and narrative answers which make very little or no attempt to analyse the arguments in the topic. Such marks are given because the descriptive material is very full and relevant although it is not effectively explained and lined to the topic. There may be some limited areas of irrelevance or vagueness but overall, the answer builds enough credit to deserve 14-15 marks.

Band 5: 11-13. These are thin descriptions of the topic, if not question. They constitute a basic pass (48-52%). There is no analysis and explanation and factual knowledge is not as full as the above band. Frequent errors usually occur to answers in this band. These are borderline cases usually determined by the amount of relevant description that they offer

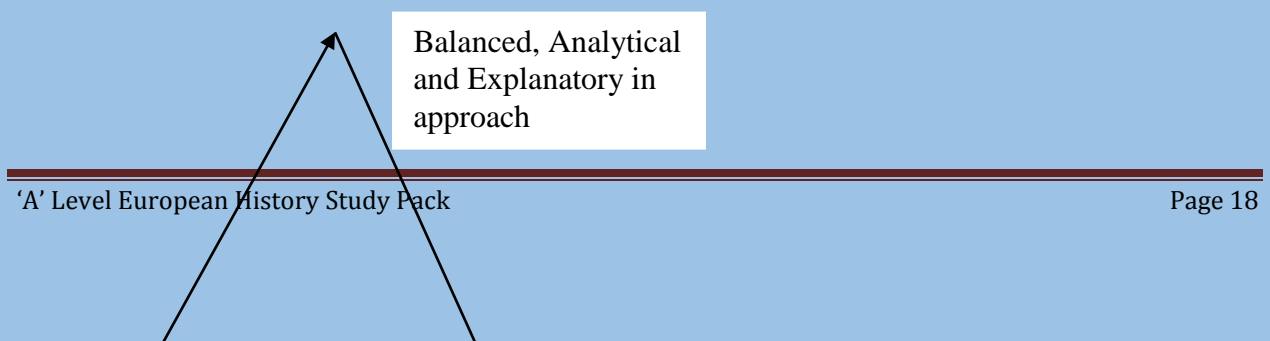
Band 6:8-10 marks; Essays will lack focus on the demands of the question. There may be relevant but inadequate descriptive material to merit any higher marks. The writing will show vagueness and confusion about the implications of the question.

Band 7: 0-7 marks: Essays in this band will be irrelevant and shoddy description. Incomplete answers are also places in this band, if they reveal gross weaknesses in their approach. Marks at the bottom of this band (zero) are rarely given since even the weakest answers manage to raise one or two relevant points.

Examiners will assess which marking band reflects the quality of the answer given by the candidate.

The choice of mark within the band will depend on the quality of the analysis and the amount of relevant supporting information given by the candidate. For example the essays in Bands 1-3 will be clearly question- focused whereas answers in the lower bands will show a primary concern with the general topic rather than the specific question set in the exam. It is important to note that while question focused answers are likely to fetch the most marks, they still have to be analytical, explanatory as well as accompanied by sufficient relevant, accurate factual material.

In summarizing generic mark bands we can use the following diagram to illustrate all the points that have been mentioned above.



Question-
Focused
Answer

Relevant and
adequate factual
material is given



If the three pillars are all well represented in an essay, then it should be awarded marks in the two top bands. But if the answer goes on to be balanced in its focus, then marks in the top band, 22-25 must be given.

Guide lines on Essay writing at ‘A’ Level

a) **Introduction**

The introduction should be short and to the point. Aim for a maximum length of about ten sentences. Anything longer than this could possibly have taken too much of your time. You want to cover the following three areas

- i) Explain the question- this involves defining the key terms in the question and explaining what you see the question as being about.
- ii) State your argument: state your stand-point- whether you agree with the assertion and to what extent. Do not say “I agree to a certain extent” This sounds vague and adds nothing to your answer.
- iii) Outline the themes you wish to consider and link them to the main argument.
An introduction is certainly vital because it shows the reader your line of argument.

AEB History Examiners Report A’ Level (1995), stated the following,” “The most effective introductions outlined the historical content briefly and identified a line of argument.”

The above quote perfectly summarizes the essence of an introduction at A- Level. A good introduction should whet the examiner’s appetite to learn more from your answer.

The Main body of the essay

Each paragraph should tackle a key point related to your core point. Rank your points in order of worth, starting with the strongest point and ending with the less important. The first sentence should clearly outline what point you are making in the paragraph. In the middle and at the end of the paragraph link the point to the mainstream of the argument, assessing its relative importance in the process.

- Do not be tempted to go into lengthy factual descriptions of the topic. This, as we have seen, will be deemed descriptive in style, resulting in you only achieving a ceiling of 15 marks.
- Avoid repetition, it is a sign of desperation, not emphasis.
- Be sure you stick to analytical writing. Analytical writing makes judgements but uses the facts in a supportive role.

Narrative writing on the other hand, relates the facts as a story and leaves the story hanging requiring the reader to come to their own analytical conclusions about why and how events came to happen. You want to aim for analytical rather than narrative writing. This will ensure that you explicitly tackle the question at hand and, do not waste time reeling out paragraphs of accurate, fascinating, but in reality worth very little. (14-15 mark band).

- Still in the body of your answer. You may insert quotations to give weight to your arguments and to show evidence of your deeper appreciation for the topic. Quotations can come from primary sources or from more modern historians. However do not quote just for the sake of it. Many successful essays which earn marks in Band 1 (22-25) have no quote at all. A poor quote is worse than no quote.
- Choose a quote from a historian because it says something that you can then go on to discuss. Quotations should not be left on their own. Instead, explain the importance of the content and how it links to the argument
- Quotations need not be long. Short phrases that express an idea or clever metaphors are ideal for quoting.
- You can paraphrase a historian's argument if you cannot remember it word for word.
- Never try to invent quotations.

The Conclusion

The conclusion rounds the essay off. Your core argument should be obvious by now, but use the conclusion to state it very firmly and to relate it back to the essay title. Please note that:

- The conclusion should not introduce new concepts or arguments
- Avoid phrases such as "in summary." Or "thus it can be seen," they may sound vague
- Keep your conclusion short and to the point. Throughout the essay, examiners expect you to be able to write grammatically correct English and the spelling to be accurate. Avoid the following:
- Slang- this reveals carelessness and lack of respect for the examiner.
- Avoid misspelt proper names- particularly of key historical figures e.g Bismarck instead of Bismarck
- Avoid the use of long sentences that ramble on and on without a break. These create gloom and boredom in your answer.
- Always write in the third person, not in the first person.

Interpretation of key words frequently used by examiners

1. Why... } Such questions require
Explain... } the candidate to give reasons. The best answers for such questions often
rank the reasons in order of their importance.
The most important reasons are given down in the order.
2. Account for }
Discuss the role of }
Examine the role of }

They are somewhat related in the sense that you will need to offer the most valid explanation, and go further to show why other reasons are less preferred. This latter part is often ignored by even the strong Candidates. Focus on explaining why the factors chosen are important candidates often get tempted just to write out a detailed factual account, but description no matter how accurate and relevant, will not be enough to score the higher marks.

3. How far... and why...

There are three parts to this type of question: the extent for and against as well as the reasons why... this is a very common 'A' level History question and as such must be fully and thoroughly known.

4. Compare and contrast. This can be rephrased to- similarities and differences. Compare- is a broader term than what meets the eye. This is because we never have identical situations or personalities in history, we only have similar situations and events. Hence compare... on its own means that a Candidate has to explain the differences even where they do not seem to exist. Contrast on the other hand shows direct opposites in the given situations.

5. Analysing: This implies that we give strength and weaknesses, positives and negatives. As a rule, there is no part essay question which requires Candidates to offer only one side of the answer.

Developing your argument

At A- Level, you are expected to create an argument to answer the given question directly. Start by imagining that you have to answer it in one basic sentence.

- Next, consider the key points you need to make to support your argument.
- The other side of the debate- must never be left out of the arguments you could have made. You need to look at the alternative responses, and proceed to show why you consider them less important.
- Always remember the key words, e.g- "Most successful." What criteria would you use to judge the importance or degree of success?

CHAPTER 1

THE CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (1789 – 1799)

Chapter objectives

By the end of the chapter the student should be able to:

1. Show that the king's incompetence in particular contributed to the worsening crisis of 1789.
2. Show how the extravagant life of the king and the queen at the palace worsened the financial crisis.
3. Explain how the privileged status of the nobility contributed to the financial crisis in 1789.
4. Explain and link the harvest failures of 1788 to 1789 to the growing financial bankruptcy and social disharmony in the country.
5. Explain how philosophers and intellectuals influenced the revolutionary situation in France.
6. Assess the relative importance of the various causes of the French revolution.
7. Examine how the ambitions of the Third Estate and the Nobility linked to the king's growing failure to implement moderate reforms in France.
8. Explain and assess the impact of the American War of Independence.
9. Explain how the glorious Revolution in Britain contributed to the coming of the revolution in France in 1789.

Introduction

This is an important topic in both ZIMSEC and Cambridge syllabi. It is also a very popular topic among both students and teachers. The French Revolution has wider consequences for both

France and Europe, and indeed, the world at large. Therefore there is need for thorough coverage of the major issues in this topic. In this chapter, a focused discussion of the causes of the revolution will be undertaken, while in the next chapter, the main focus will be the course of the revolution. On the causes, students are expected not only to identify the causes, but to analyze them by showing how each cause led to the French Revolution. A mere description of events should be avoided. In this chapter, therefore, the causes will be identified, and then each will be discussed in turn.

The following are the causes of the French Revolution:

- a)The system of the Ancient Regime.
- b)The influence of the Philosophers.
- c)The influence of the American Revolution.
- d)The Financial crisis.
- e)The Character of Louis XVI.
- f)Poor harvests of 1787 - 1789.

Study Guides

- i) What were the long term causes of the French Revolution?
- ii) Why did the French revolution occur?

(a)The system of the Ancient Regime:

The regime itself was one of the major causes of the French Revolution. It was characterized by the absolutism of the monarchy, the confused nature of the Judiciary system, and the unfair system of privileges.

(i) Absolutism of the monarchy

With the exception of England and the Netherlands, the rise of national state in most of the European countries in the early modern Age went hand in hand with the consolidation of royal absolutism. It was generally accepted that the king ruled not by permission of the people, but by divine right, and all the power of government rested in the king himself. This development of royal absolutism reached its zenith in the last half of the seventeenth century under Louis XIV. Under Louis XIV's successors, absolutism, however, degenerated internally into a form of tyranny, and externally into weakness and loss of prestige. No effective leadership could be exercised. The state machinery they had inherited called for competent monarchs, but the successors were incompetent and failed to use the power enshrined in their office.

Although the king theoretically exercised absolute authority, in practice, he had to rely on officials acting in his name. Even Louis XIV, the best example of an absolute king, could therefore not supervise the whole of his state administration on his own. Under his slack successor, Louis XV (1715-1774), the government of France was, in fact, in the hands of a royal council, known as the conseil du roi. The central government had thirty intendants as provincial agents. As local representatives of the king, their authority was practically absolute, particularly

in the provinces closest to Paris, which had no local representative assemblies. In the remote provinces, local representative assemblies controlled by the nobility had a measure of authority.

The administration of government already displays the seeds of revolution, namely arbitrariness and confusion. In arrogant fashion, the pleasure of the King or his privileged officials was the decisive factor, rather than the spirit, or even the letter of the law. Government machinery was so unwieldy and complicated that the confusion and delays were the order of the day.

(ii) Confused Administration of Justice

Administrative confusion in the Ancient regime was perhaps most noticeable in the administration of justice. Royal, feudal, municipal and ecclesiastical courts dispensed justice alongside each other. This confusion was exacerbated by the absence of a uniform code of law. There were, in fact, on the eve of the revolution, more than 300 codes in force. Many justice officials were extremely inept and corrupt. It is therefore, not surprising that administration of justice was a confusing, expensive and time-consuming process. Moreover, it paralysed control of the country's administration and caused general embitterment amongst those who were wronged.

The king had the right to withdraw any case from the customary courts and to have it heard by the royal council. Louis XVI (1774 – 1793) had in fact, become law himself as evidenced by his statement that “the thing is legal because I wish it to be so”. In other words, the king had become the standard or yardstick for any legal issue in France. In addition he could, in terms of a *lettre de cachet* (a warrant under the royal seal) have anyone locked up without giving reasons and without a hearing or an opportunity for defence. The administration of justice, therefore, showed a striking element of arbitrariness. This confusion later led to a revolution by those adversely affected by it.

iii) The privilege system

The privilege system is best seen in the division of France into three estates, the first, second and third estates. The third estate was the most exploited, whilst the first and second estates were the most privileged. The three estates will be discussed below.

The first estate (the clergy)

Out of a total population of 23 000 000, there were probably no more than 130 000 priests, monks and nuns. The clergy enjoyed tremendous privileges and their influence extended far beyond what their small numbers would seem to indicate. The Roman Catholic Church, which was the dominant religion in France, was responsible for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages. It also controlled poverty relief and education. It was, in fact, a self government institution, almost a state within a state, with its own representative officials, own courts of law and an own representative assembly, which amongst other matters, determined the attitude of the Church towards the Monarchy.

The king had the right to appoint bishops and archbishops. These high offices in the church were consequently filled exclusively by the nobility, and ability or religious devotion hardly played a

part. In reality members of the church were not a class, but could be distinguished as the higher clergy – such as the bishops and abbots, and the lower clergy such as the priest and parish priests. Those lower clergy were from the common people, amongst whom they worked. In general their exemplary life contrasted sharply with that of their superiors. They were poorly paid, and during the Revolution they were to make common cause with the third estate. In other words, the first estate was divided between the higher and lower clergy.

The church was extremely wealthy. Its income was derived from its properties, numerous donations and levies and the tithes which was levied on all harvest yields. The first estate was exempted from paying taxes.

The second estate (the nobility)

The Nobility can be divided into two groups: the medieval nobility of the sword, and the new nobility of the robe, which had obtained its titles by marriage or the purchase of administration or judicial posts. As far as their financial status was concerned, the nobility ranged from the greatest wealth at the royal court at Versailles – at most 4 000 in number, to the lowest poverty on rural estates. Their rights and privileges included amongst other things, exemption from the most burden-some direct taxation, the *taille*, preferential tariffs for other taxes, the right to be tried by their own special courts, a monopoly of the highest offices in the administration of the state, and offices in the church, military and diplomatic services, and the exclusive right to the traditional sports of hunting and fishing.

The nobility was very ambitious. They were not satisfied with their privileged social and financial position, and strove for further privileges for themselves. Politically, they wanted to take over local government as well as participate in central government. Furthermore they wanted to extend certain of their manorial rights and privileges, increase the non-taxability of their properties and revive earlier privileges. The ambitions and position of the nobility and clergy must be viewed against the background of a centuries – old power struggle between the aristocracy that is clergy and the nobility, and the French monarchy. Since the Middle Ages, the aristocracy had been a stumbling block in the extension of the monarchy's powers. It was only during the reign of Louis XVI that the aristocracy was subject to direct taxation. During Louis XVI, the aristocracy had won back most of their earlier social privileges. During Louis XVI's reign, they prevented reform, and eventually led to revolution in 1789.

The third estate

This estate constituted the largest part of the population, about 97%.The third Estate can basically be divided into three groups: The bourgeoisie or middle classes, the urban craftsman and labourers, and the peasants. The bourgeoisie represented about 10% of the total population of France or about half of the population in cities and towns. They owned about one – fifth of the land in the country. The rise of the bourgeoisie must be ascribed to the rise and progress of capitalism, trade and industry in Europe since the 14th century. By the 18th century, trade and industry were playing an important part in the national economy, and it was the bourgeoisie which kept the treasury going in times of crisis. This class included the wealthy new business elite, and government officials, independent craftsmen, wealthy merchants, book sellers and printers, and professionals such as scholars and lawyers.

The bourgeoisie strove for upward social nobility, and wanted the same privileges as the first two estates. Even more, they wanted political power. The wealthy and educated bourgeoisie, which was exempted from some of the heaviest taxes, was strongly opposed to the endeavors of the monarchy and the nobility to thwart its opportunities for social development advancement. They demanded that the social, legal and political privileges of the aristocracy be abolished. They read the works of the philosophers and the economists, and prepared themselves for an onslaught on a system of government which discriminated against them unfairly and which, in addition, was wasteful and inefficient.

The craftsmen, retailers and urban labourers did not share in the wealth of the higher bourgeoisie. Their existence in general was poverty – stricken. The urban labourer worked long hours for low wages. When a crisis occurred, thousands were impoverished. Their daily struggle consisted of warding off unemployment and hunger, and during the Revolution, they were to play an active role in the popular insurrections. The peasants in France constituted the majority. Possibly about 25 percent of them were tenant farmers, 50% were share – croppers, 20% were landless agricultural labourers and only 5% were land owners.

The conditions under which France's peasants lived were highly disadvantageous, but there is little doubt that they were better off than similar classes in certain parts of Germany, Italy, Spain Ireland and England. Yet dissatisfaction amongst them was growing, and would become an important factor in the Revolution. Primitive agricultural methods, famines and epidemics were partially responsible. However, there were two reasons in particular for their dissatisfaction. There was heavy taxation, which was levied so unfairly and took most of their income, and secondly, the oppressive and irritating obligations they had towards the landowners. This entailed obligations such as unpaid labour (corvee), tolls, and the exclusive hunting and fishing rights of the nobility. Finally, there were the banalities, that is, all grain had to be ground in the manorial mill, all wine pressed in the manorial winepress, and all bread baked in the manorial bakery at prices fixed by the Lord. The peasants paid a number of taxes both direct and indirect taille. The peasants had a dual obligation i.e to the feudal lords and to the state.

The taille was the basic direct tax, and was the most oppressive. The capitation was a poll tax imposed according to income. The vingtieme or "twentieth" was originally 5 per cent of income. The corvee was a direct road tax in terms of which only the peasants had to provide labour and transport. Indirect, taxes included import tax and the gabelle or salt tax. The collection of these taxes was farmed out, that is to say, they gave the right of tax collection to the highest bidder. The resultant collection therefore brought about anomalies and an arbitrary distribution of tax. All this imposed an unbearable burden on the peasants, leading to their willing participation in the Revolution.

Study Guides

- i) What was the nature of royal power in France?
- ii) Why was the unfairness of the system of taxation an issue in France?
- iii) Why was the First Estate unpopular?
- iv) What were the benefits of belonging to the second estate?
- v) Why did the Third Estate consider itself to be disadvantaged in France?

- vi) How could an individual enter the nobility?
- vii) Explain, as fully as you can, why the Third Estate were unhappy with the following people:
 - a) King Louis XVI
 - b) Queen Marie Antoinette
 - c) The Nobility
 - d) The clergy
- viii) Assess the role played by Louis XVI in bringing about the collapse of absolute monarchy in France in the period up to 1789.
- ix) Account for the increasing resentment of the power and privileges held by the First and Second Estates in 1789.

(b)The influence of the Philosophers

One can hardly explain the origin and course of the French Revolution without tracing the part played by the Enlightenment and the writings of the philosophers in it. These must be seen as long term causes of the revolution. One of the most noticeable features of the Enlightenment was its harsh criticism of all existing institutions and its subjection to “reason” a new kind of intellectual, the philosophers. In many persuasive works, with heart-felt eloquence, the philosophers condemned the abuses of the ancien regime. The social structure, the church and the government in France, was exposed to continued and harsh criticism.

As the largest part of the French population was illiterate, the philosophers directed their propagandistic writings at the developed bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was receptive to the political and fiscal reforms which the philosophers championed, and to their defence of free enterprise. The philosophers desired a society where undeserved privilege would be abolished. As the revolutionary leaders were from the bourgeoisie, the influence of the philosophers cannot be underestimated. It was these bourgeoisie leaders, who in turn, relayed the contents of the philosophers’ writings to their illiterate counterparts through rallies.

The most famous of these philosophers were Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu. The Encyclopedists also deserve mention. Obviously the philosophers did not share the same opinions. The greatest exception was perhaps Jean Jacques Rousseau who exchanged rational thinking for human emotions or intuition as a guide towards exploring the truth. Voltaire on the one hand, was devoted to the concept of the sovereignty of the people, and on the other, a champion of enlightened despotism through reason. However, the philosophers had one thing in common, their criticism of the abuses of the ancien regime. The ideas spread by the philosophers undoubtedly gave direction to the Revolution and exercised an important influence on it. When their contemporary writings are analyzed, it is clear that a number of theses and principles were accepted as frequently repeated in the speeches of the revolutionary leaders and in the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

It is not true that, as is often believed, the philosophers in general strove for a political revolution. Most of them, either pleaded for enlightened despotism, in which a strong central ruler governed the people to their greatest benefit, or a constitutional monarchy in which the king

governed according to a constitution drawn up by representatives of the people. They did demand that the monarchy should be “enlightened” and institute extensive reforms. These included civic freedom, equality or the abolition of aristocratic privileges, equal taxation, religious tolerance, a uniform and fair judicial system, and the abolition of state monopolies.

Most of the philosophers, with Voltaire in the background, sharply attacked Christianity, and in particular, Roman Catholicism. In this manner, the philosophers succeeded in undermining and destroying the bases of faith, religion and Christian morality. The result was frequently quite different from what the philosophers had in mind, because through their attacks on authority and tradition, the respect for absolute monarchy and the aristocracy was similarly undermined. Thus, the way was prepared for the destruction of all traditional institutions in the course of the Revolution. To what extent the philosophers were responsible for the Revolution remains an open question. One can state with certainty, however that the defects and abuses of the ancient regime, and not the philosophers were the chief cause of the radical change. As Ergang rightly puts it, these defects and abuses were so clear that no philosopher was required to point them out.

(c)The influence of the American Revolution

The struggle for independence of the British colonies in America from their motherland, gripped the imagination of the French public from the outset. The philosophers and their followers were enthusiastic about the American Declaration of Independence, and in particular about its claim to the “natural rights of man”. This mentality was not confined to the bourgeoisie. Members of the French aristocracy, who were to become the leaders of the liberal elements during the first phase of the French Revolution, served as officers in the American army. Possibly more important than the relatively small officers’ corps, was the rest of the 1800 French veterans who assisted the colonists. They returned to their fatherland as followers of liberty and avowed critics of the existing government of France after they had seen how the common man in America was a free tenant on his land and enjoyed his prosperity and freedom. Various historians contend, in fact, that in those areas in France where there was a geographical concentration of those French veterans from the American Revolution, the beginning of the French Revolution was more radical than elsewhere. Whatever influence the American Revolution may have had on the mentality of its French participants, the most important point is surely the fact that France’s participation dramatically doubled the French Royal debt, which also contributed to the crisis of 1789.

(d)The character of Louis XVI

If France had ever had need of a great king, it was in 1774, on the death of Louis XV, who wore the crown for sixty years in a profligate, irresponsible and extravagant manner. His successor, Louis XVI was a man of moral behaviour (unlike his queen, Marie Antoinette), a man who took his duties seriously and who was honest, benevolent and religious without being intolerant. He really wanted to improve the lot of his subjects, and tempered the expenses of his court. But these virtues were quite overshadowed by the inability of the king, as absolute monarch, to govern a country as large as France, with its enormous social, economic and political problems, problems which, moreover, threatened to come to a head simultaneously. His serious character defects included, amongst others, a slowness of grasp, indecision and a lack of self confidence,

and consequently an inability to pursue a determined course. He is described by some historians as being weak-willed.

In his fervor to institute reforms, Louis appointed able ministers, such as Turgot, Necker and Calonne. He had the ability to identify the right people for the right jobs. However, he failed to support these men when pressure was brought to bear on him by his wife, Marie Antoinette and the nobility. He was easily influenced by his wife, his family and the court circle which saw its privileges threatened. He withdrew his support from his ministers at critical moments. Thus, he only impressed the people more dearly with the need for reform and his inability to bring it about. His queen, Marie Antoinette of Austria, was highly unpopular. She was the symbol of the hated Austrian alliance which had, with the seven years war, cost France its colonial empire in India and America.

Marie Antoinette did not understand the French and, possibly more important, she did not understand the needs of the time, and therefore frequently exercised a wrong influence on her husband. Louis's closest kinsmen, his two brothers, the count of Provence and the count of Artois, and his nephew Philip, the later duke of Orleans who was also known as Philip Egalite, were frivolous and irresponsible. Together with the queen, they frequently had a detrimental effect on Louis's decisions. The Revolution cannot simply be ascribed to the king and his court. Yet the personalities of the royal pair can be discerned as one of the immediate causes of the Revolution. A strong and able ruler, like Louis XIV could possibly have controlled the course of events and channeled the forces of reforms correctly and safely.

Study Guide

i) What role did the enlightenment play in bringing about the Revolution?

(e)The financial crisis

The most important of the short-term causes of the French Revolution was the financial crisis. By far the most important aspect of this was the huge deficit that the government was building up.

On 20 August 1786 Colonne, the controller-General (the equivalent of finance Minister) told Louis XVI that the government was on the verge of bankruptcy. Revenue for 1786 would be 475 million Livres, while expenditure would be 587 million livres, making a deficit of 12 million - almost a quarter of the total income.

A much more detailed and alarming picture of the situation is provided in the Treasury account of 1788, which has been called the first and last budget of the monarchy. Total income for 1788 was 503 million livres whereas expenditure stood at 629 million livres. This produced a deficit of 126 million livres, 20 percent of the total expenditure. There are two reasons why the expenditure continued to rise above income.

1. **War:** Between 1740 and 1783, France was at war over Austrian succession (1740-1748); then the seven years war (1756-63) and finally, the American War of independence, (1778- 1783). The cost of helping the American colonists to defeat the British government was approximately 1066 million livres. This was mainly achieved through, Necker's efforts in raising loans, rather than imposing any new taxes, while this did not

directly lead to revolution. The lack of an elected parliament to guarantee loans, as in Britain, did not give leaders confidence.

2. **Tax:** the crown was not receiving much of the money collected in taxes and until it recovered control of its finances, no basic reforms could be carried out. This is because taxes were collected by a chaotic and inefficient system known as tax farming. The Farmers- General was a company that collected the indirect tax for the government. They paid the state an agreed sum and kept for themselves anything collected above this figure. The French government consequently never received enough money from taxes to cover its expenditure, and so frequently had to borrow. Interest rate payments on the debt became too large because of an increasingly large part of government expenditure in the eighteenth century. Added to this, was the fact that corruption and wastage were vast ways of draining away revenue.

The privileged classes, whose income from property had increased, were an untapped source of revenue that the Crown urgently needed to access. There would, however, be powerful resistance to any change in the taxation structure from those with vested interests in retaining the status quo.

The failure of the attempted reform policies.

Why did the reform process fail and with what consequences?

Following Necker's dismissal in 1781, his successor Joly de Fleury discovered the true nature of France's finances. The treasury was 160 million livres short for 1781 and 295 million livres short for 1782. To make good the shortfall, Fleury and his successor Colonne, undid much of Necker's work by resuming the practice of selling offices (many of which Necker had abolished). They both also borrowed much more heavily than Necker.

In 1786, with loans drying up, Colonne was forced to attempt to reform the tax system altogether. His plan consisted of an ambitious three part programme:

- i) The introduction of a land tax, on all owned land. This would affect all landed proprietors the church, noble and common alike. This was regardless of whether the lands were used for luxury purposes or for crops. There were to be no exemptions. This was in light of the fact that the current system of taxation which primarily targeted the Third Estate, could not be increased any further. New sources of revenue had to be found in order to alleviate the burden on the Third Estate as well as increase the amount of the revenue which was collected. Such a reform was directly affecting the privileged position of the clergy and the nobility and was therefore likely to hit a brick wall.
- ii) The second part of the programme was aimed at stimulating the economy to ensure that future tax revenues would increase. Colonne proposed abandoning controls on the grain trade and abolishing internal customs barriers, which prevented the free movement of grain from one part of France to another.
- iii) The final part of the programme was to try to restore national confidence so that new loans for the short term period could be raised. By doing this, Colonne hoped that the parliaments would be less likely to oppose the registration of his measures.

The failure of the reform process.

The obvious body that was supposed to oppose the reforms, that was representative of the nation, was the Estate- General. But this was rejected as being too unpredictable. Colonne and Lous

XVI, opted instead, for a handpicked Assembly of notables. It was anticipated that this would be a pliant or soft body which would willingly agree to rubber stamp the reform package.

The 144 members of the Assembly of notables met in February 1787 at a time when the financial woes of the nation were increasingly becoming apparent. It included leading members of the parliament, princes, leading nobles and important bishops. On examining the proposals, it became clear that they would not support Colonne and Louis XVI's reform package. As representatives of the privileged orders, they had the most to lose from them.

The notables were, however, not opposed to all the changes and they agreed that taxation should be extended to all the classes. They claimed that the approval from the nation was needed for Colonne's reforms had urged the summoning of the Estates – General, which had last met in 1614. Realizing the strength of opposition to Colonne, Louis XVI dismissed him in April 1787. This action directly worsened the economic and political situation in the country because the avenue to raise the much needed revenue was now blocked. This was one clear example where the King's weakness worsened the crisis in France and helped crystallize the revolutionary situation.

The Political Crisis, 1787-1788

Colonne was replaced by one of the Notables, Lomenie de Brienne. The Assembly of Notables proved to be no more co-operative with Brienne than it had been with Colonne.

Brienne retained Colonne's land tax and introduced a number of new reforms following on from Necker's earlier plans. There was to be an end to corrupt financial officials; a new central treasury established and laws codified in a printed form accessible to those who needed to consult them. The education system was also reformed and religious toleration was introduced. The army was made more efficient and less expensive to maintain.

When Brienne presented his reforms first to the parliament of Paris, they refused, arguing that the Estates – General was the only one which represented the whole nation, and needed to be consulted about the new taxes. Louis' reaction was to exile parliament to Troyes on 15 August 1788.

Louis' action was considered to be high handed and the result was an aristocratic revolt, usually called the revolt of the nobility. It proved to be the most violent opposition the government had yet faced. There were riots in some of the provincial capitals where the parliaments met, such as in Rennes in Brittany and Grenoble. In all parts of the country, nobles in unauthorized assemblies met to discuss action in support of parliament.

An assembly of the clergy also joined in on the side of the parliaments, breaking its long tradition of loyalty to the crown. It condemned the reforms and approved the payment of an amount which was less than a quarter of the size requested by the crown.

What was the significance of the revolt of the nobility?

Firstly it showed clearly that Louis XVI was a weak character who failed to exercise the absolute power which had been bestowed upon him by divine right. He was therefore incapable of implementing tough decisions which would both, address the financial and political crisis in the country as well as save his own position.

It also shows quite clearly that, by their negative attitude towards reform, the nobility were equally responsible for the political crisis which gripped France in 1789. The crisis in France had reached staggering proportions where the nobility were supposed to exercise magnanimity for their own survival. This did not happen, and the nobility as a class headed towards political and social extinction in the face of the French Revolution.

Due to the revolt of the nobility and the failure by the crown to secure more revenue which was desperately needed, the French government went completely bankrupt at the beginning of August 1788. On 16 August 1788, Brienne suspended all payments from the royal treasury, which in effect confirmed that the Crown was broke.

In September 1788, Louis was forced to back down and allow the Paris parliament to return. Following the resignation of Brienne, the king recalled Necker in the belief that he was the only one who could restore the government's credit and raise new loans. Necker abandoned his predecessor's reform plans and while indicating that he would try to raise new loans, he stated that he would do nothing until the Estates-General had met. The crisis revealed the limitations of royal power. Although Louis was in effect an absolute ruler, in reality he was unable to impose his government's reforms on the state. The forces of opposition detected clear signs of weakness in the Crown. The failure to secure reform contributed to a paralysis of the government.

When viewed broadly, the economic crisis directly led to the outbreak of the revolution in France. Bankruptcy compelled the king to agree to call for the Estate-General meetings, whose outcome directly led to the collapse of the Crown. Bankruptcy worsened the harvest failures and the food shortage, because the Crown could not raise money to feed its people. Hence the polarization and land politicization (a process when people who were previously unconnected with politics take, an active interest in political issues which affect the daily lives of the majority of the third (Estate) began as a result of the economic crisis.

The above analysis is backed by J.H. Shennan whose research argues that the long term problems and resentments were brought to a head by events immediately preceding 1789. According to Shannon, the two most important areas in which deep-seated problems reached a critical point in the 1770s and 1780s, were finance and government. Financial problems brought about by the involvement in the American War of Independence were compounded by a series of bad harvests which resulted in steep increases in the price of bread. Behind both of those factors, lay the permanent problem posed by the conservative social and political order which prevented the rich land of France developing as it should and the government constantly starved of income. Hence both long-term and short-term causes contributed significantly to the outbreak of the French Revolution. The revolution itself was a culminating point of a long period of social, political and economic grievances in France. Whilst factors which became more clearly visible in 1789, such as financial problems and the king's weaknesses, are often cited as more important, the root causes of the Revolution should never be underestimated.

Study Guides

- i) How significant was the financial crisis in bringing about the collapse of the monarchy?
- ii) Why did the reform process instituted by the King and financial advisors fail and with what consequences?

iii) How did the economic crisis contribute to the outbreak the Revolution?

(f)The poor harvests (1787 – 1789)

The general expansion of the French economy since the 1730s was interrupted by periodic economic crisis which hit the unprivileged the hardest. In particular, it was the crop failures and consequent crises of the years 1787 to 1789 which led to food shortages, corresponding sharp rises in prices, a decrease in textile production, and widespread unemployment in cities. The misery which resulted in the cities as well as in rural areas from these short-term economic crises and crop failures created an explosive situation, which could be ignited by unpopular political decisions. The rural-urban drift as a result of the crop failures created the so called Paris mob, which was restless and ready to explode into action. The poor crops of 1788 not only caused incessant rises in prices between 1788 and 1789, but also drastically reduced the purchasing power of the people and hampered international trade. Unemployment was therefore rife at the precise moment when the cost of living was rocketing. Lefebvre quite justifiably asks: “How can anyone fail to suspect a connection between this ordeal and the furore of insurrection that gripped the population at the time?”.

Study Guide

i) How did the harvest failures from 1787-1789, a natural occurrence, end up having political and economic consequences?

Examination type questions

- 1) How valid is the view that the privileged position of the nobility was the central cause of the French Revolution?
- 2) The claim that Louis XVI was the most responsible figure behind the outbreak of the French Revolution is incorrect; it was instead his wife Marrie Antoinette.” How far do you agree with this verdict?
- 3) How significant was the financial crisis in bringing about the collapse of the monarchy in France?
- 4) “The peasantry contributed very little, if any, to the outbreak of the French revolution.” How valid is this assertion?

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CHAPTER 2

THE COURSE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (1789 – 1799)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Explain the transformation of the Estates-General into the National Assembly of the radical phase of the French Revolution.
2. Explain the differences in the significance of voting by head count and voting by class.
3. Evaluate the August Decrees and the subsequent Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen.
4. Evaluate the significance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.
5. Explain the origins of the civil constitution of the Clergy (1790).
6. Explain the collapse of the monarchy in France.
7. Relate the political reforms in Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen as well as the religious reforms in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy to the following episodes in France:
 - i) The emergence of “émigrés” in France
 - ii) The development of counter-revolutionary activity outside France. The eventual outbreak of counter-revolutionary war against the Monarchs of Europe.

The best way to study the course of the French Revolution is to consider each revolutionary government as an entity. A wholesale coverage of the ten-year period, apart from confusing,

might leave out some very important aspects of the period. Candidates are expected to undertake an in-depth study of each revolutionary government, analyzing the achievements and indeed the failures of each revolutionary government. The four revolutionary governments include the National Assembly (1789 – 1791), the Legislative Assembly (1791 – 1792), the National Convention (1792 – 1794) and finally the Directory (1795 – 1799).

a) The National Assembly (1789 – 1791)

Events leading to the formation of the National Assembly.

i) The May riots

The economic crisis caused by the poor harvests of 1788 – 1789 led to the May riots in the provinces. Although there had been little bloodshed in the May riots of 1788, the situation in the provinces had clearly got out of hand. The king sent troops under General De Vaux to bring order to the provinces. General De Vaux found that public opinion was unanimous on two demands:- the abolition of the Letres de cachet, and the calling of the Estate General to solve the financial problems and other issues. Louis XVI gave way to pressure. He recalled the popular Necker as controller – general of finance, and ruled that the Estates – General should meet at Versailles in May 1789.

ii) The meeting of the Estates – General (Parliament) 5 May 1789

Two issues became central in this meeting of the Estates General, which had last met in 1614. These were:- the preparation of the lists of grievances (cahiers) by the three estates for discussion when the Estate General met, and the issue of voting procedure.

a) The Cahiers (List of grievances)

The cahiers were a good indication of the grievances and proposals of the various estates in 1789. On the one hand there was a surprising amount of unanimity between the three estates. All were in favour of retaining a hereditary monarchy, disapproved of royal and ministerial despotism, and desired a constitution which would guarantee the rights of the individual. This would mean a constitutional monarchy, in which the king would act as an executive officer. The cahiers requested that the constitution and new legislation be in the hands of the Estate – General, which should meet periodically. On the other hand, the cahiers of the clergy and the nobility showed that the privileged classes were only prepared to relinquish their tax privileges under certain conditions, and that they had not yet agreed to accept social and political equality with the third estate. The third estate, however insisted on equality. Although they all demanded legal reform, it was the third estate which went the furthest: they wanted ready access to the courts for everyone, simplification of court procedure, abolition of the sale of judicial posts, appointment of judges for life, the replacement of fees by salaries and the abolition of manorial courts. The third estate also demanded religious freedom, a decrease in the tithes, and even the state control of the church. There were also large differences in approach to the agrarian system. Where the nobility and church wanted to see all feudal privileges retained, the third estate demanded the abolition of all these irritating measures. In summary, it can be said that the Revolution was, above all, a struggle for equal rights.

b)The issue of voting procedure

The parliament of Paris, at the registration of the edict summoning the Estates – General, had set the condition that the assembly was to take place like the previous one in 1614, namely that the estates were to deliberate separately and vote according to estate. This would ensure the continued majority of the two privileged estates, rendering any drastic reforms impossible. In this, the parliament failed to appreciate the social and economic development which the bourgeoisie and even the masses had undergone in the previous 150 years. Thus the decision to summon the Estates General precipitated heated discussion about the manner in which the three estates should be represented. The higher clergy, and the majority of the nobility, maintaining the social privileges of the ancien regime, welcomed the proposal that the representatives of the different estates should meet and vote separately as in 1614. The bourgeoisie, also called the “patriots” or “nationals” and led by people like Lafayette, Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Condorcet, and Abbe Sieyes, demanded double representation for the third estate. In other words, as many representatives as the other two estates put together, joint sessions and voting by head instead of by estate.

Altogether, 1201 members were elected to the Estates – General: 308 Clergy, 285 members of the nobility and 621 of the third estate. These were the circumstances under which the final opening of the Estates – General took place on 5 May 1789. Without any firm guidance from the government, the assembly was immediately embroiled in the issue of procedure. Necker – after a long speech, proposed that voting according to estate should provisionally be retained. The third estate insisted on voting by head, jointly. This would be advantageous to them because their members were more numerous than the other two estates put together. Voting by estate, separately would advantage the first and second estates, who would always win by 2 votes to 1, given the fact that the two estates always voted for the same thing against the third estate. The nobility and the clergy, however, went away to meet on their own, and therefore enacted a policy of no compromise.

When all efforts to persuade the privileged estates to accept their point of view had failed, the representatives of the third estate (i.e the bourgeoisie) decided to assume full powers. After some parish priests had joined them, they decided on the 12th June, 1789, by 489 votes against 89 to call themselves the National Assembly. This was the first time that the monarchy’s order had been defied so directly. This event effectively signaled the beginning of the revolution in France.

Study Guides

- i)What concerns were reflected in the ‘cahiers’?
- ii)How did Louis XVI react to the actions of the Estates- General?
- iii)How did the demands of the Third Estate lead to the creation of a National Assembly?
- iv)What impact did the economic crisis have on the population of Paris?
- v) How important was the popular movement in the outbreak of the Revolution?

The Royal session and Tennis Court Oath

Disconcerted by the events, Louis XVI approved Necker's proposal that a royal session be held on the 23rd of June to reach a compromise. The assembly hall of the National Assembly had to be spruced up for the occasion. With the characteristic lack of consideration shown on numerous occasions to the third estate, no formal notice was given of the closing of the hall. When the members of the National Assembly arrived on the 20th of June, they found the hall locked. Their immediate fear was that Louis was planning to dissolve the National Assembly. Acting on the proposal of Dr Guillotin, they adjourned to a nearby building which was used as a tennis court, and there took a solemn oath never to dissolve until they had provided France with a constitution. This was a show of solidarity on the part of the National Assembly.

Louis XVI – failed to appreciate that the situation in France was irreversible. His insistence on voting separately, as estates is clear evidence of a man who did not want to part with tradition. His failure to read the situation correctly was likely to prove fatal in the future. Events in France were intensifying by the day and the situation had become uncontrollable.

The storming of the Bastille

The king's dismissal of the popular Necker on the 11th of July 1789 was a grave mistake. The news of his dismissal sparked riots in Paris. The police force was not equal to the task, and the French National Guard fraternized with the people. The mob plundered shops, broke open jails, and finally stormed the Bastille, a notorious prison, and a symbol of tyranny, on the 14th of July and obtained arms. So far the Revolution had not been characterized by any bloodshed. It was during the storming of the Bastille that the first blood flowed. News of the fall of the Bastille intensified rioting in the rural areas.

The significance of the Storming of the Bastille

The news of the fall of the Bastille spread through France and intensified activity among the peasantry. The event itself took place on 14 July 1789 and had far-reaching results and marked a turning point in the course of the Revolution in France. It meant that real power had passed from the king to the elected representatives of the people. Louis had to share his power with the new National Assembly. He was no longer in a position to dictate to the assembly, because he could not rely upon the army. As a matter of fact, Lafayette became the commander of the predominantly bourgeois National Guard. Moreover, the Assembly, which had on 09 July 1789, taken the name of the constituent assembly was prepared to draw up a constitution for France and they felt, no longer, the threat of being dissolved by the king.

Important to note too was the fact that the storming of the Bastille led to the emigration of some of the Nobles who were led by the King's brother Comte d Artois. These numbered around 20 000 émigrés who fled abroad in two months. Their flight abroad was directly linked with counter revolutionary activities which unfolded after 1790. It could thus be argued that the storming of the Bastille marked the violent phase of the French Revolution and the economic, social and political dispossession of the king and the nobility in France.

Study Guides

- i) Why was the storming of the Bastille important?
- ii) What was the significance of setting up of the Paris Commune?
- iii) Why did events in Paris contribute to revolt in the countryside?

iv) How far did the actions of the peasantry contribute to the collapse of the ‘ancient regime’?

The achievements of the National Assembly (1789 – 91)

Candidates are expected to identify and explain the achievements/successes and failures of each revolutionary government in France. The various political forces at work during each revolutionary government also need to be discussed. Some of the achievements included the abolition of feudalism, the civil constitution of the Clergy, the constitution of 1791, the declaration of the Rights of Man, just to mention a few.

i) The August 4 Session of 1789

In the dramatic session of the 4th of August, one member after another of the nobility and of the higher clergy rose to voluntarily renounce his feudal rights. It was, quite obvious, a decisive moment in the Revolution. Serfdom, tithes, the corvée, the exclusive hunting and fishing rights were all abolished, with or without compensation.

-The principle of equal taxation was announced, the sale of judicial and municipal offices prohibited and all citizens without discrimination had access to all offices.

-A number of members of the nobility and the court circle, who feared for their lives, went into exile. They were the first of the émigrés, to be followed later by many more in the course of the Revolution. They were to form an émigré army of 20 000 men across the Rhine with the aim of restoring the king to his former powers.

i) The Declaration of the Rights of Man

On the 26th of August 1789, the foundation for a new government was laid by the approval of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The first clause begins with the words: “Men one born free and remain free and equal in their rights.” In essence this summarized the achievements of the revolution to date. The rest of the declaration is merely an extension of this statement. It laid down fundamental principles such as social equality, sovereignty of the people, civic freedom, sovereignty, freedom of the press, equality of taxation and the division of powers.

ii) Legal and administrative reforms

The royal courts, including the parliament were abolished. A new system of regional authority began to take shape in an attempt to break down deep provincialism and to obtain uniformity; the Assembly did away with the old provinces and divided the whole country into eighty – three “departments” of more or less equal size. Each department was subdivided into districts and cantons, which in turn included communes or municipalities. A new system of local government was also introduced. Elected councils in the communes, districts and departments replaced the intendants and provincial assemblies of the estates.

i) The civil constitution of the Clergy (24th August 1790)

The ecclesiastical measures of the National Assembly were indicative of the dismantling of traditional authority which characterized the revolutionary period. The August decrees abolished tithes payable to the church without compensation. To ward off bankruptcy, the Assembly shortly afterwards seized church property and issued paper money (assignats) to serve as security. The following measures were passed by the Civil Constitution: First the old number of 135 bishops was decreased to 83 corresponding to the new departments. Second,

priests and bishops would henceforth be elected, which meant that the non-Roman Catholics and apostates would be able to vote. Third, the clergy became paid state officials; fourth: the ties between the French bishops and the pope of before 1789 were broken by forbidding the clergy (and the rest of the French people) to recognize the authority of the pope. Fifth, all clergy had to take an oath of loyalty to the new constitution.

The new measures had far-reaching consequences. Not only was it rejected by the Pope Pius VI, but more than half the clergy (most of the bishops and the majority of parish priests) refused to take the oath. These were called the non-juring priests or refractory clergy. Those who took the oath were known as the juring priests. No other measure did the cause of the revolution as much harm as this. France was torn apart, and the counter-revolution gained popular support. Gershey quite rightly says “The fires of religious fanaticism were lighted, as from each side came increasing violence and persecution”.

The king’s reaction to revolutionary changes

The measures against the church roused the king to action. He had signed the Civic Constitution of the Clergy with a heavy heart. The break with Rome was highly inconsistent with his religious convictions. He began to think of placing the fate of the French monarchy in the balance by leaving Paris, where he had been brought from Versailles, through the famous March of the Women of 5 October 1789. From some city on the border, he would be able to appeal for help from foreign rulers (absolute monarchs) to stem the revolutionary tide in France. Ignoring the advice of Mirabeau, (who died in 1791) and once again listening to his wife, in June a dramatic escape attempt to reach Metz near the eastern borders failed when the royal family was recognized and arrested at Varennes.

Effects of the attempted escape

The flight of the royal family can be seen as a turning point in the revolution for the following reasons:-

1. Firstly, it revealed Louis’s attitude towards the revolution. It was clear that he was an unwilling collaborator in the matter of reforms.
2. It brought republicanism into full force:- in the National Assembly a number of republicans demanded that the king be dethroned, but the majority was still in favour of monarchical government.
3. European monarchies – Austria and Prussia in particular realized afresh that they would have to show solidarity in opposing the new revolutionary order.

Study Guides

- i) How important were the August decrees?
- ii) What was the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the citizen and why was it important?
- iii) Why did the state take over the property of the church?
- iv) What effect did the August Decrees and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen have on the power of the Monarchy?

The constitution of 1791-The Constitutional Monarchy

The constitution of 1791 was approved by the assembly on 3 September 1791 and by Louis XVI, eleven days later. In its terms, France became a constitutional monarchy. In other words, the king was bound by a constitution which had been compiled by representatives of the people.

The terms of the constitution

An important principle was the separation of the Legislative, executive and judicial powers, as advocated by Montesquieu. This differed totally from the position in the ancient regime, which had united all three powers in the absolute monarchy.

Legislative power

Legislative power was in the hands of the legislative Assembly, which was to consist of 745 members. Only “active citizens” had the vote, that is to say, male landowners of 25 years and older, whose annual taxes were equal to three days wages. More than 4 000 000 people qualified for enfranchisement, and about 3 000 000 were excluded because they did not qualify since they were “passive citizens”. The legislative Assembly would be elected for two years, and the king could also not nominate a deputy as minister. The king’s participation in Legislation was limited to the “suspensive veto”, in other words, he could only delay legislation but not prevent it. This veto was not in force for fiscal and constitutional measures.

Executive powers

The king was the head of the executive authority, but his powers were strictly limited. The reason was the fear that he might reinstate the ancient regime should he have sufficient powers. Now he was unable to introduce legislation and could not conclude treaties or declare war without the consent of the legislative Assembly. He had no judicial powers, and could not appoint judges. He had no control over local authorities, and there were no longer agents in the provinces like the intendants who represented the monarch’s authority.

Administration of justice (judicial Power)

Administration of justice was to be independent of both the executive and the legislative authorities. The hodge – podge of royal, administrative, ecclesiastic, feudal and manorial courts which bedeviled justice to such an extent, was abolished. Procedure was simplified and made uniform for the whole country. Judicial officers who had previously bought their offices were replaced by elected ones. Judges were elected for only six years and received relatively low salaries, which made it difficult for them to ignore the pressures of public opinion. Administration of justice would be free, and all citizens, irrespective of their religious or social status would be equal before the law.

Weaknesses/flaws of the constitution of 1791

- i) The lack of a strong executive authority was a grave defect. It was to become the most important factor in the success of the Paris commune and the Jacobins in their abolition of the monarchy and the institution of a Republic. In its fear of the king’s reaction from the right, the National Assembly constitution ensured a new revolution of the Jacobins from the left.
- ii) Local assemblies were given extensive powers, and central government exercised little control over them. In other words, the decentralization of authority was overdone. This was one of

the most serious flaws in the constitution since it made it difficult to make peace and implement authority.

iii) Lack of administrative experience: In a spirit of self-denial, the National Assembly determined that not one of its members would be eligible for the legislative Assembly. The new legislative assembly therefore displayed a lamentable lack of experience. It had no broad base of political authority which the National Assembly had leaned on, since its members were elected on a limited basis.

iv) The continued exclusion of members of the legislative authority from any ministerial office meant that there was no minister of quality. The ministers were puppets.

v) The bourgeoisie character of the constitution: Seen as a whole, the chief defect of the constitution was its bourgeoisie character. The property qualification left the wealthier classes as the biggest beneficiaries at the expense of the masses who had fought so hard to end the ancient regime.

Thus the National Assembly concluded its activities in September 1791 in great disfavour. The people as a whole were not satisfied. The lowest classes were becoming mistrustful of the attitude and policies of the bourgeoisie, and the radical Jacobins were determined to take the revolution further. At the other side of the spectrum, the counterrevolutionaries, the clergy, the nobility and the émigrés abroad, were waiting for their opportunity to restore the ancient regime with the help of foreign rulers.

Political representation in the National Assembly

Political Parties in the modern sense were non-existent in the National Assembly, but the deputies soon showed a tendency towards separating into groups. They sat in a semi-circle around the chairman, and so the concept of “left”, “centre” and “right”, originated to indicate political groupings. The advocates of the ancient regime took their places at the extreme right. These were the court nobility, the nobility of the robe and the higher clergy. They had extensive contacts with the counter-revolutionaries inside and outside France. In the centre to the right sat those members of the nobility who sympathized with the reform movement, but who thought that the Revolution had gone too far. They wanted a constitution modelled on that of England.

At the left centre, were such outspoken reformers such as Mirabeau, who desired reforms of the absolute social order, but simultaneously wanted to retain strong royal authority. They called themselves the ‘patriots’, and formed the majority in the National Assembly. Directly to their left the outspoken revolutionaries took their places, those who wanted to construct a constitution on democratic principles. At the far left wing there was a group of radicals, people such as Robespierre, who strove for a total social and political revolution on the principles of Rousseau’s theories.

Study Guides

- i) Describe the stages by which the challenge to the power of the Monarchy increased in 1789.
- ii) To what extent was the role of Louis XVI the main factor shaping the course of events between 1789 and 1792?

b) The Legislative Assembly (1791 -1792)

This was the second revolutionary government. It was the first government elected under the new constitution; its deputies were mainly men of little political or administrative experience.

The major focus on this government was on the various groups which influenced the course of events, the 1792 war, the abolition of the monarchy and the formation of the First French Republic.

The composition of the Legislative Assembly

Of the 745 members of the new legislative assembly 264 were Feuillants, or rightists who were in favour of a constitutional monarchy, although not necessarily of the existing constitution. They had no strong leaders. The left wing in the Assembly consisted of only 136 members, the Jacobins and the Girondins. The Girondins were from the department of Gironde. They were also known as Brissotins, after their leader, Brissot. They wanted the constitution of the Revolution and the deposition of the king. The large majority of members 345 sat in the centre, and had no definite political convictions. Outside the Assembly were the radical Jacobins led by Robespierre

The threat of a counter-revolution

.Within a few weeks of the first session, the Assembly paid attention to the elements posturing a counter-revolution. These were the non-juring priests in La Vandee and the Bastille émigrés in the Netherlands and the Rhine territories. As the legislative Assembly regarded them as the most dangerous enemies of the constitution, two decrees were proclaimed in 1791, one ordering the émigrés back to France by the 1st January 1792 or face the pain of death. The other was depriving all priests who refused to take the oath of allegiance of their office and emoluments. When the king vetoed both decrees, tension between the legislative and the executive almost reached breaking point. Louis's veto, in fact benefited the radicals, as the supporters of the constitution suspected him of collusion with the enemies of the Revolution.

The 1792 war

This was the war between France and the Allied powers of Austria and Prussia. This war was to rage on for the next twenty years. Candidates are expected to determine why France went to war with the Allied powers, and the effects of that war on France.

The causes of the 1792 war

1) The untenable position of the monarchy in France:

While the revolutionary changes in France rumbled on, international politics also took its course by 1791, some European countries had become anxious about the events in France. France was subtly threatening the monarchs of other powers by its abolition of feudalism and the institution of a constitutional monarchy. The king, Louis XVI's flight to the eastern border of France, his suspension and subsequent imprisonment, gave rise to thoughts of information among the threatened monarchs. This led to rapprochement between the absolute monarchs of Prussia and Austria, who eventually fought France.

2) **The role of Marie Antoinette:**

Marie Antoinette was a sister to Leopold II of Austria. Antoinette appealed to her brother, Leopold II to intervene in France and reinstate her husband. Therefore, Leopold II was under pressure because of the safety of his sister, to intervene in France.

3) The Declaration of Pillnitz on 27 August 1791

According to this declaration, done jointly by Austria and Prussia, the restoration of the monarchy in France was a matter of common interest to all the monarchs of Europe. The declaration of Pillnitz was a gesture rather than a serious threat, and the restoration of Louis XVI to his throne, once he had approved the constitution in September 1791, provisionally ruled out any reason for intervention. The language of Pillnitz was, however, provocative, and the émigrés continued to foment war.

4) The warlike mood in France

In France, too, a strong mood of war was fast developing. As a result of the deteriorating economic conditions, there was a spirit of restlessness in the country which could easily be turned into a desire for war. The feuillants led by Lafayette were in favour of war because they hoped that a short and glorious campaign would restore the prestige of the king in the eyes of the people. The leftists were divided. The Girondins were in favour of war, not only because it would win all classes for the revolution and bring their true attitude to light, but because their large shipping and trade interest would benefit. The Jacobins were opposed to war because they feared that a long exhaustive war would in case of defeat, destroy the fruits of the revolution. Louis XVI himself was in favour of war as he expected France to be defeated and hence – the restoration of the monarchy.

5) The accession of Francis I to the throne of Austria

In March 1792, Leopold II died. His successor, the youthful Francis I was rather inclined towards a military adventure. In this policy, he was supported by the veteran imperial chancellor, Von Kannitz. Francis rejected the demand of the French government that he revoke his alliance with Prussia. This resulted in war.

Results/effects of the war

1) Heavy losses on the French side

The French army of only 130 000 men entered the war totally unprepared, and as a result suffered heavy casualties. Discipline was extremely slack, military equipment was poor and the economy was not prepared for war conditions. Many volunteers joined the French army for patriotic reasons and without adequate military training.

2) Increasing insecurity of the royal family

Early military reverses immediately exerted an influence on the political state of France. Suspicion of the Royal family and Marie Antoinette, in particular, rose to new heights. In Paris, it was rumoured that an Austrian committee was working from the Tuileries. This endangered the Royal family.

3) Increased Patriotism of the French people

Instead of discouraging the French, this actually did the opposite. The war led to more unity of the French people in defence of the gains of the Revolution. It is important to note that the

legislative Assembly was able, at a heavy cost in human lives, to defend the gains of the revolution.

4) The Brunswick manifesto – 28 July 1792

The last event preceding the fall of the monarchy was the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, commander in chief of the Austro-Prussian forces. The manifesto declared that the allies were calling on France to suppress anarchy and restore the king – Louis XVI to his rightful position of authority, and that any members of the National Guard who resisted would be shot and their homes demolished. The Manifesto also stated that if the Tuileries were to be stormed again or the slightest harm befalls the royal family, revenge would be taken on Paris. It seemed to confirm the suspicion that the émigrés and foreign rulers were secretly working hand in glove with counter-revolutionary groups within France.

Effects of the manifesto

1) Increased violence, especially in the capital Paris –

This threatened the security of the Royal family who sought shelter in the legislative Assembly.

2) The rise of the Revolutionary Commune in Paris –

The municipal administration of the city of Paris was taken over by the representatives of the 48 sections into which Paris had been divided in the middle of 1790. They called themselves the Revolutionary Commune. The Sansculottes, that is action groups from the lowest classes of the petit bourgeoisie such as craftsmen, shopkeepers and industrial workers, joined the Revolutionary commune. Although a republic had not yet been officially proclaimed, (but defacto), it already existed.

3) Loss of control by the legislative Assembly -

The legislative Assembly had lost control of the situation. Leadership now rested in the hands of the Paris Revolutionary city council or Commune. It now controlled the police and the National Guard. A provincial government was chosen in which Danton played the leading role. The Council provisionally maintained the Legislative Assembly, but forced it to keep the king suspended and confined until such time that the National Convention, elected on the basis of universal suffrage, could draw up a new constitution.

The September massacres

These were caused by the rumours that Verdun was surrounded and that the enemy cavalry was on its way to the capital. Panic seized the city, and new volunteers were hurriedly recruited. Jails were stormed and the suspects were indiscriminately murdered on 2 September 1792. Various provincial cities followed the example of Paris. In the course of four days some 1200 victims died. The September massacres had far-reaching results. The events strongly influenced the election of delegates to the National Convention. Thus atmosphere of violence caused the Monarchists and moderates to stay away from voting. In fact only 10% of the qualified voters registered their votes. This ensured a thoroughly republican convention and the election of extreme revolutionaries such as Marat, Danton and Robespierre. With one exception, all 24 members for Paris were Jacobins, while the Girondins found most of their support in the rural areas.

Study Guides

- i) To what extent was the Civil Constitution of the Clergy the defining moment of the Revolution before 1793?
- ii) Was the new system of taxation better than the old one?
- iii) How did the Constitution of 1791 propose to limit the powers of the Crown?
- iv) Why did the French Revolution become more radical up to 1792?
- v) Explain why the King attempted to flee France on 21 June 1791.
- vi) Was the flight to Varennes a turning point in the Revolution?
- vii) Why were the events of the champs de Mars massacre important?
- viii) What effect did the lack of trust between politicians and the King have on the legislative Assembly?
- xi) What impact did the Flight to Varennes have on the émigrés?

Examination type questions

1. Which event was more significant to the course of the French Revolution: the Declaration of the Rights of Man or the civil constitution of the clergy?
2. How valid is the view that Louis XVI's downfall was precipitated more by those who ought to overthrow him than by his own mistakes?
3. Why was Louis XVI executed in January 1793?
4. Why did the radicals gradually gain more for their aims than the moderates by 1793?
5. Why did France go to war with other European states in 1792?
6. How valid is the claim that the Directory added nothing to the achievements of the French Revolution?

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CHAPTER 3

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION (1792 – 1795)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- i) Explain the origins of the counter- revolutionary war against France
- ii) Explain the origins and assess the impact of terror in revolutionary France
- iii) Explain the impact of the Declaration of Pillnitz and the Brunswick Manifesto
- iv) Analyse the role played by the:
 - a) Revolutionary Tribunal
 - b) The committee of Public Safety
 - c) The Guillotine
 - d) The Law of suspects
 - e) Edict of Fraternity
- v) Evaluate the role played by Maximilian Robespierre, Danton, Guissot, Marat and other extreme republicans.
- vi) Explain the reasons which led to Louis XVI-s execution
- vii) Analyse the impact of counter -revolutionary war on France

viii) Explain the impact of de-Christianization in France (Role played by Herbertists and the supreme goddess of reason; the republic of virtue etc.)

The highlights of this period are the abolition of the monarchy, the execution of Louis XVI, the intensification of the war with the formation of the First Coalition and the 1793 constitution. Most of the period, however, is dominated by the Reign of Terror. This is an important part of the syllabus and candidates are expected to undertake an in depth study of it.

The abolition of the monarchy and the execution of the king (Louis XVI)

The first action of the Convention was to abolish the monarchy on the 21st September 1792, and to declare that the first year of the French Republic began on the 22nd September 1792. The question was what to do with the king. The Girondins wanted to spare his life, but the Jacobins demanded his death as a matter of political necessity and not so much as of justice. After a trial of more than six weeks, Louis XVI was found guilty of high treason. With a majority of 70 votes, he was sent to the guillotine, where he died on the 21st January 1793. This was the first victory for Jacobins, for the idea began to take root that the Girondins were no longer faithful to the revolution since they had tried to protect the king.

The formation of the first coalition

Causes of its formation

i) The Edict of Fraternity – November – 1792:

After their success at Valmy on 20 September 1792, the French took the offensive along the entire border from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. Nice and Savoy were occupied as well as Speyer, Worms, Mainz and Frankfurt. The Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) were invaded and the Austrian troops driven out. The French armies were welcomed everywhere as liberators by a large part of the inhabitants. In the first flush of victory, the Convention decreed the Edict of Fraternity in November 1792. By this Edict, the Convention declared that all nations who wished to rebel against their rulers would be offered assistance. This was a challenge, indeed to all the monarchs of Europe

ii) **Declaration on the river Scheldt:**

Shortly before the Edict of Fraternity, the Convention had declared that the river Scheldt was open to the ships of all nations. This was a challenge and a severe blow to the Dutch, who since the peace of Westphalia in 1648, had held the sole navigation rights over the river as well as to their British protectors. Savoy, Nice, Belgium and the Rhineland were incorporated into France. France was really exporting the revolution to other nations.

iii) **The execution of Louis XVI:**

The execution of Louis XVI further brought matters to a head. This sent shock waves across Europe, especially among the monarchs. They felt threatened by the events in France. They felt the Revolutionary ideas had to be stopped before they affected their own people. In response to the declaration of war on Britain and the Netherlands by France, the First Coalition was formed on the 1st February 1793. It consisted of Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Naples, Britain and the Netherlands.

The supremacy of the Jacobins

The struggle between the Girondins and the Jacobins intensified daily. The resistance to attempt to peg food prices further antagonized the starving mob of Paris. On the 2nd of June 1793 the National Guard, and the order of a new so-called Insurrectionary Commune, which had taken over the authority in the meantime, forced the Convention to have a score of Girondin leaders arrested. Some escaped, and the rest were put under guard in Paris. The Jacobins were now in power.

The constitution of 1793

The first action of the Jacobins was an attempt to reconcile public opinion in the provinces by drawing up a new constitution. A draft was ready within a few weeks, and on the 24th of June, the Convention approved the constitution of 1793. More than the constitutions of 1791 and 1795, it embodied the idea of direct representation by the people.

Study Guides

- i) Why did France go to war in April 1792?
- ii) Why did King Louis XVI become increasingly isolated during 1792?
- iii) How well prepared was France for the war in 1792?
- iv) How did the feeders (militant revolutionaries and republicans) and the Brunswick manifesto lead to removal of the King?

Terms of the constitution

- i) There would be no property qualification for voters or candidates
- ii) Every male citizen of twenty-one years and older would have the vote to elect deputies to the legislative Assembly.
- iii) Executive Authority would be in the hands of a committee of 25 members chosen by the legislative Assembly.
- iv) A declaration of rights promised freedom of worship and of labour employment.

The constitution, however, was never implemented because of the situation within and outside France. The security situation had deteriorated so much that normal government was suspended, leading to the so-called Reign of Terror.

Study Guides

- i) Describe the causes and results of the Vandeé rebellion in 1793.
- ii) Why did Louis XVI's actions lead to demands for greater democracy in France?
- iii) What did the trial and execution of Louis XVI reveal about divisions in the Convention?
- iv) How serious was the military crisis in August- September 1792?

The Reign of Terror (1793 – 1794)

Candidates are expected to be able to define the Terror as well as explain its causes and results. They are also expected to discuss how the Terror achieved its objectives, that is, the machinery of the Terror.

What was the terror?

This was the period in the Revolution when the government of France as embodied in the Convention, deliberately adopted a policy of terror in order to instill fear in the Republic in the

hearts of the royalists, traitors, counter – revolutionaries and war profiteers. The Terror was an emergency and temporary measure meant to run for one-year 1793 – 1794. Normal government was suspended during the reign of Terror.

Causes of the terror

The Terror was caused by the deteriorating situation both internally and outside France.

a)The internal revolts

Revolts broke out in about sixty departments south and west of Paris, where royalists, non-juring priests and Girondins made common cause to overthrow the Jacobins reign. Some of the departments which were in revolt included La-Vendee, Lyons and Marseilles. The peasants, especially in La Vendee had rebelled against the recruitment of troops.

In Paris and elsewhere, the price of bread, which had been stabilized the previous year, rose sharply. Necessities such as soap, sugar, and coffee were unobtainable. There was an unparalleled shortage of food and the assignats dropped only to about 30 percent of their normal value.

The external threat – The first coalition

With the formation of the First Coalition, matters took a serious turn almost immediately. The defeat and treason of Dumouriez were followed by the loss of the Netherlands. Spanish troops crossed the Pyrenees. The crisis was aggravated by the simultaneous invasion by Prussian and Jordanian forces, while the British fleet began a blockade of French harbours.

Therefore, with these clear and dangerous threats to the Revolution, it was clear that drastic measures only would save the Republic, hence the Reign of Terror.

The machinery of the terror

The Committee of Public safety

The threat to the Republic posed by foreign armies and internal revolts had an immediate effect on internal politics. The Convention entrusted all executive authority to a secret committee of nine members, known as the Committee of Public Safety. The most important member was Danton. The Committee controlled the ministers as well as the various committees of the Convention. By means of political commissioners, it kept a close watch on local governments in the provinces and incited them to action. On the 10th of July 1793, the Committee of Public safety- which was in charge of external security, assumed dictatorial powers.

The committee of General Security

This committee controlled the police, investigated the reports of secret informants and arrested conspirators and suspect persons. In other words, it was in charge of the internal security during the Reign of Terror. The Reign of Terror can be divided into the economic, religious and political/military Terror. This is because the terror was to make itself felt in the economic, religious and political spheres.

i)The economic terror

The purpose of the economic terror was really to organize the people with a view to suppress the state of war. In this manner, military supplies could be obtained at reasonable cost. The clashing

interests of the consumer and the producer could be coordinated. A central Food committee contributed to the success of the policy. Bread was rationed, food and war supplies were earmarked for the war effort at fixed prices. According to the law of the Maximum, the Convention only could set the maximum prices of all basic commodities. Because some of the farmers were no longer selling their grain to government because of low prices offered by the latter, two drastic measures were introduced. These were food requisitioning – whereby the government used force to get the grain from the farmers and making hoarding punishable by death. Stringent financial measures were taken to ward off the financial crisis, e.g. a compulsory levy of 1 000 000 Francs on the rich.

ii) The religious terror

In religious matters, the payment of salaries to priests was left in abeyance and the Christian religion was viewed with suspicion and scorn. The Herbertists, a small group of fanatics under Herbert and Fouche, who controlled the Paris Commune, wanted to take matters even further. All churches in Paris were closed, and steps were taken to institute atheism, as the official religion. Luther Cathedral or Notre Dame, an actress was crowned as the Goddess of Reason. The provinces followed the example of Paris, and thousands of churches were closed, or converted into “temples of reason”

The republican Calendar replaced the Christian – Gregorian one. The twelve months of the year were re-named after seasons, and the names of saints in the calendar were replaced by names of plants, trees and fruits. Every month was divided into three periods of ten days, so that the Christian Sunday fell away. These measures, were, however, not as popular as anti-clericalists had hoped. Robespierre, who personally held deistic convictions regarded the excesses of the Herbertists as a blot on the name of the Republic, and feared that there would be serious repercussions abroad. The Committee of Public safety also realized that the majority of the French were still loyal to the Roman Catholic Church. In addition, there was the possibility that the religious terror could become a source of social confusion and political disunity. With the support of Danton, the Hebertists were consequently accused condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal, and sent to the guillotine.

The political terror

The political terrorism of the Reign of Terror was extensive. The “law of suspects” determined that all suspects should be charged immediately. Suspects were described as all persons who showed that they sympathized with “tyranny”. As a result, few royalists, Girondins or people who were in the slightest, dissatisfied with the Revolution, escaped. In Paris, the Committee of General Security had the task of arresting suspects, while in the provinces, vigilance committees were responsible. It has been calculated that about 500 000 people were arrested. Between January 1793 and June 1795, the Revolutionary Tribunal, a special court not bound by the ordinary rules of court and legal procedures, sent about 2800 people among them Marie Antoinette and the duke of Orleans, to the guillotine. Many others were the victims of a senseless butchery, while their property was confiscated. The worst atrocities occurred in the provinces.

The military terror

On the recommendations of the Committee of Public Safety, the Convention proclaimed a general mobilization for military service and labour. It was an important step in the direction of

full-scale war. An army of 750 000 men was soon raised through conscription or levee en masse. All men between the ages of 25 and 40 were drafted into the army. Tribute must go to the efforts of the energetic Carnot. He transformed an ill-disciplined and ill-equipped French army into an efficient army.

The results of the terror – positive results

While the above measures were frequently senseless and cruel, they had an important effect. The Reign of Terror was viewed by normal and civilized citizens as an imperative in order to overcome a national state of emergency. Not only treason, but even indifference or laxness towards the Republic became dangerous. In addition, the greatest dangers, as well as the threats from abroad, could be countered during October 1793 with a good measure of success. France ended the year 1793 with excellent victories.

- i) Firstly, the external enemy, which is the first coalition was repulsed across every border, and the counter-revolutionary spirit was contained.
- ii) The internal revolts in the departments like La Vendee were suppressed.
- iii) Due to the economic terror, the value of the assignats remained fairly firm. In other words, the economic scene improved drastically.

Negative results

- i) The terror had resulted in the deaths of many innocent people through the Law of Suspects.
- ii) The dechristianizing activities of the Hebertists had compromised the unity of the nation as the Roman Catholic Church was the majority religion in France. Later Robespierre, who believed in the binding force of religion, did not want to reintroduce Roman Catholicism. He introduced a new deistic religion characterized by two things – the cult of the Supreme Being and the immorality of the soul.
- iii) Robespierre's dictatorship:- Instead of ending the Terror after it had accomplished its purpose, Robespierre intensified it. This intensification was totally unjustified as it was prompted by personal selfish ambition. It resulted in the execution of Danton and fifteen of his followers.
- iv) The Thermidorian Convention (July 1794 – October 1795). In the month of Thermidor (July), the Reign of Terror reached a turning point. The fear that Robespierre was heading for total dictatorship had rapidly been growing. Robespierre became so obsessed with power that he wanted through the law of Prairial (June) 1794, to silence all criticism. This alienated him from most members of the Committee of Public safety. Consequently on the 27th of July (9 thermidor), he was arrested. The following day, the 28th July 1794, he was guillotined with 21 of his followers.

Consequences of the fall of Robespierre

- i) The committees of Public Safety and that of Generals security lost their despotic powers
- ii) The Revolutionary Tribunal was abolished.
- iii) The Jacobins club was closed.
- iv) The Convention retained its grip on the Revolution, and the remaining Girondins regained access to the Convention.
- v) The economic tyranny was relaxed and forced loans were abolished.
- vi) A list of the laws against the non-juring priests and against the émigrés were revoked.

vii) Religious freedom was reinstated.

viii) The bourgeoisie regained the political control which it had temporarily lost to the rash efforts to establish a republican democracy. To forestall any further attempt to restore the monarchy, the bourgeoisie in the Convention drew up the constitution of year III (1795).

Study Guides

- i) What was the significance of the overthrow of the Girondins?
- ii) How did Robespierre justify the terror?
- iii) What was the impact of the Maximum Laws?
- iv) How important a figure is Robespierre in the history of the French Revolution?
- v) How successful was terror?
- vi) Why was Robespierre overthrown and executed during the coup d'état of Thermidor?
- vii) To what extent did the executions -aulottes shape the course of the French Revolution?
- viii) Assess why the government followed such extreme policies during the Terror?
- ix) What measures were taken to end Terror?

Examination type questions

1. "Considering its results upon French society between 1793 and 1794, terror was an unnecessary evil." How far do you agree?
2. Analyse the causes and results of counter-revolutionary wars in France between 1792 and 1794.
3. To what extent did the Jacobins change the course of the French Revolution?
4. Why was the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte so 'successful' in France?

CHAPTER 4

THE DIRECTORY: 1795 - 1799

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Explain the circumstances which led to creation of the Directory.
2. Describe and explain the strengths and weaknesses of the Constitution of Year 111 of 1795 which gave rise to the Directory.
3. Explain why the popular risings of Germinal and Prairial failed in 1795 in France.
4. Explain the reasons why the Directory was able to survive the many onslaughts it faced between 1795 and 1799.
5. Explain why the Directory was eventually in the Coup de tat of Brumaire (Summer 1799).
6. Evaluate the achievements of the Directory.
7. Explain the Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power in France.

BACKGROUND

The immediate aftermaths of the fall of the Jacobins was that, the National Convention moved in to restore order. The Jacobins themselves had arisen out of the National Convection as members

of the Montagnards. But they had extreme views and violent tactics to save the revolution. These tactics included terror, dictatorship and the use of the law of the maximum. Although Robespierre claimed to be working towards saving the revolution from internal and external threats, it must be remembered that he had more important sinister motives such as setting up an unparalleled dictatorship in France.

It was therefore common understanding and expectation that the first task the National Convention would do to ensure a lasting guarantee of the liberties of the 1789 revolution would be to remove all the institutions and mechanisms of terror, and in their place, setting up a democratic constitution. The constitution would ensure that no one individual is made too powerful in France. Hence, the Directory were appointed as a guarantor against a possible return of the Jacobian dictatorship in France.

ENDING THE TERROR

Between July 1794 and 31 May 1795 the convention set about dismantling the machinery of the Terror in a number of ways.

- The Revolutionary Tribunal was abolished, and France resorted to the civil judicial system.
- All political suspects who had been detained under the law of suspects were released without charge.
- The law of Prairial, which authorised the Jacobins to carry out more wholesale convictions and brought in the Great Terror, was repealed. The Jacobin club was also closed down.
- Religious reforms were also carried out to end the de-Christianisation which had been started by the Herbetists. In September 1794, the convention decided that it would no longer pay clerical salaries. This, for the first time, brought about the separation of the church and state. Moreover, on 21 February 1795 the government restored freedom of worship for all religions, and thereby formally ending the persecution of religion waged during the Terror by the de-Christianisation campaign. For the first time in a major European country, the state was declaring itself to be entirely neutral in all matters of religious faith.

The above changes meant that the political centralization which had been established by the Committee of Public Safety was abandoned. Committees of the National Convention were set up to take over most of the work of the Committee of General Security (CGS) and the Committee of Public Safety (CPS). The latter was now confined to running the war and diplomacy. In Paris, the commune was abolished. In local government, power passed again to the moderates and property owners who had been in control before June 1793.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR III, 1795

The Thermidorians (those individuals and groups who had helped to overthrow Robespierre) wanted a new constitution which would guarantee the main features of the Revolution of 1789. This had ushered in the abolition of privileges, and freedom of the individual and the control of local and national affairs by an elected assembly and elected officials. They also wanted to ensure that a dictatorship, like that of the Committee of Public Safety⁷ (CPS) would be

impossible in the future and that there would be no return to monarchy or the popular sovereignty on the sans-culotte model (a violent and anarchic manner).

The main features of the new constitution which brought in the Directory were therefore as follows:

- All males over 21 years old who paid direct taxation were allowed to vote in the primary assemblies to choose electors.
- Real power, however, was exercised by the electors who actually chose the deputies. Electors themselves had to be people who paid taxes equivalent to 150 – 200 days labour. This was such a high requirement that the number of electors had fallen from 50 000 in 1790 – 2 to 30 000 in 1795. Electors were, therefore, the very rich who had suffered from the Revolution in 1793.
- In order to prevent a dictatorship arising, the Midorians rigidly separated the legislature from the Executive.

THE LEGISLATURE

The legislature was divided into two chambers as follows:

1. The council of Five Hundred, all of whom had to be over the age of 30. This council would initiate legislation and then would pass it on to a council of Ancients.
2. The Council of Ancients were (250 men of over 40), who would approve or object to bills, but could not introduce or change them. There was no property qualification for the constitution of other chambers. Elections were to be held every year, when a third of the members retired.

THE EXECUTIVE

The executive was to be a Directory of five members, chosen by the Ancients from the list drawn up by the five hundred. The five Directors would hold office for five years, though one, chosen lot had to retire each year. Directors were not allowed to be members of either council, and their powers were limited. They would not initiate or veto laws or declare war, and they had no control over the treasury, yet they had considerable authority as they were in charge of diplomacy, military affairs and law enforcement. Ministers who also could not sit in the councils were appointed by, and were responsible to the directors. This was the same case with government commissioners, as well as representatives on mission, and national agents who saw to it that government policy was implemented in the provinces.

WEAKENESSES OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION

In spite of the checks and balances, a complex system which ensured that the power given to the executive was balanced by the power granted to the legislature, the new constitution had many weaknesses.

- The yearly elections promoted instability, as majorities in the councils could be quickly overturned.
- There was no means of resolving conflicts between the Legislature and the Executive.

- The councils could easily paralyse the Directory by refusing to pass laws that the government required.
- The Directors could neither dissolve the councils nor veto laws passed by them.
- The legislature was not in a strong position either, if it clashed with the executive. It would alter the composition of the Directory only by replacing the one director who retired each year with its own candidate
- The new constitution enforced, quite rigidly, the separation of powers (the division of Executive and Legislative powers in order that the government could not make laws without the support of the legislature). Yet if a hostile majority dominated the Legislature, then the constitution allowed it to paralyse the Directory. As the Directory was unable to dissolve the legislature or even veto their laws, it came to rely on unconstitutional methods such as cancelling election returns and calling in the army to resolve any disputes. As will be noted, the army had their own vested interests and they envied political power. This led to the overthrow of the Directory in 1799.

It is important to note that the convention, having drawn up the new constitution devised means to cling on to power, a little longer, since they knew that they were unpopular as an elected assembly/chamber. They also feared that an open election might produce a royalist majority. Hence, in order to avoid this, it decreed that two thirds of the deputies to the new councils must be chosen from among the existing deputies of the Convention. The new constitution of Year III was agreed on, 22 August 1795. This was submitted to a plebiscite for approval. 1 057 390 were in favour of the constitution, against 49 978 who opposed it. Four million voters did not vote mainly because of apathy towards the whole system of elections in France. The Two – Thirds Decree was accepted by only 205 000 to 108 000. As will be seen there was growing anxiety and fission in many sections of French political life.

THE VERONA DECLARATION – Why did it fail to appeal to the French people?

As the discussions about the proposed constitution were nearing a close, the Royalists sought to promote their cause. Constitution monarchists, wanting a return to a limited monarchy similar to that in the 1791 Constitution, felt they were gaining public support as they appeared to offer a prospect of stability. They had hoped to put Louis XVI'S son, - a prisoner in the Temple. (one of the prisons in Paris), on the throne as LOUIS XVII', but he died in June 1795.

From northern Italy, therefore, came the Conte De Provence, Louis XVI's brother who immediately proclaimed himself as Louis XVIII, and on 24 June, issued the Verona Declaration. The Declaration promised to reverse many of the liberal gains made during the French Revolution. Louis promised to restore the ancient constitution of France completely, which meant restoring the three orders and the parlements (3 classes, – first, second and third). He also promised to restore 'stolen properties' such as the lands taken from the nobility, émigrés and clergy. This antagonised all those who had bought lands and all who had benefited from the abolition of the tithe and seigneurial dues. Although not intended, the Verona Declaration turned out to be a great boost to those who loved a republic. This is because the declaration turned out to be a reactionary document which made even the task of restoring the monarchy very difficult if not impossible.

THE VENDEMAIRE UPRISING

The Verona Declaration failed to attract mass support for the royalist cause. Although work on the new constitution was proceeding well, of the new two-thirds law came as a shock to many Parisians who had hoped that the convention would soon be replaced. It was the inability to deal with food shortages and inflation that turned many ordinary people against the Convention, yet it now appeared that many of its deputies would be returned to the new assembly. Hence, the attack on the convention became synonymous with the attack on the new Directory.

The royalists, in particular, felt that the prospect of any restoration of the monarchy was unlikely, given the known hostility of the Convention. Frustration and anger, therefore, spilled into rebellion.

On 5 October 1795 (13 Vendemiaire) a large royalist crowd of 25 000 gathered to march on the Convention and seize power. They greatly outnumbered the 7 500 government troops, but the latter had cannons, under the command of General Banaparte, whereas the rebels did not. The devastating artillery fire – Bonaparte’s famous “Whiff of grapeshot”, crushed the rebellion. As over 300 were killed or wounded in the fighting, this was one of the bloodiest of the revolutionary episodes. It also marked another war, the people of Paris would not again attempt, to intimidate an elected assembly until 1830.

The divisions among the royalists and the unpopularity of the Verona Declaration, all made the rising of Vendemiaire appear rather mysterious. It is usually presented as a royalist rising brought about by the two-thirds Decree, which, it is said, prevented the royalists from obtaining a majority in the elections to the Councils. Yet, the largest groups of the rebels were artisans and apprentices: a third of those arrested were manual workers. The rising was not simply against the two-thirds Decree, but had economic origins too. Many people, including rentiers - small property owners, and government employed, had been badly hit by inflation. These people, who were among the rebels, had supported the Thermidorians and defended the Convention in the rising of Germinal and Prairial.

The repression that followed was light. Only two people were executed although steps were taken to prevent further risings. The sectional assemblies were abolished and the National Guard was put under the control of Napoleon Banaparte, the new Army General. For the second time in six months, the army had saved the Directory, which was still in its infancy and still dominated by the unpopular former members of the Convention.

THE DIRECTORY

The new third of the members elected to the council for five hundred after Vendemiaire, and the dissolution of the Convention, was mainly a royalist, but they were, at least, unable to influence the choice of directors. As the Verona Declaration had threatened to punish all the regicides (those who killed the King), the Conventionnels (members of the convention between 1792 and 1795) were elected as Directors, (Carnot was the best known), all of whom were regicides, as this would be a guarantee against a royalist restoration.

The directors wanted to provide a stable and liberal government which would maintain the gains of the revolution. Yet the problems they faced were daunting. The war appeared to be endless, and it had to be paid for. The treasury was empty, taxes were unpaid and the assignat had dropped in value. Many Frenchman did not expect the Directory to last more than a few months. The Directory did, however, survive and for longer than any of the other revolutionary regimes. There were a number of factors that contributed to this:

- The Directory was committed to restoring the rule of law.

- Many of their key opponents were discredited. Few wanted a return either to the Jacobin Terror of Year II or to the absolute monarchy of the ancient regime.
- While many ordinary people were prepared to accept a constitutional monarchy with limited powers, the royalists themselves were deeply divided between extremists who supported the Verona Declaration and constitutional monarchists.
- Public apathy also helped the Directory to survive – after six years of revolution and three years of war revolutionary enthusiasm had all, but disappeared.
- Significantly, the army supported the Directory as a royalist restoration would mean an end to the war. Army officers did not wish to be deprived of any opportunity provided by war, for promotion or plunder. It was the army above all, that enabled the Directory to overcome all challenges to its authority, but this was a double-edged weapon. The army which kept the Directory in power would be the most serious threat to its survival, if it became dissatisfied.

THE BABEUF PLOT, 1797

The first real challenge to the Directory came from Gracchus Babeuf, a radical pamphleteer and editor of *Tribun Du Peuple*. Babeuf disliked the constitution of the Year III because it gave power to the wealthy. He believed that the aim of society should be “the common happiness”, and that the revolution should secure the equal enjoyment of life’s blessings for all. He thought that as ownership of private property produced inequalities the only way to establish real equality was to establish the communal management of property and abolish private possession. These ideas were a lot more radical than those put forward in the Year II and had led many historians to regard Babeuf as the first communist, a forerunner of Karl Marx (1818 – 83).

From March 1796, Babeuf organised a plan to overthrow the Directory by means of a coup. He saw what he called his “conspiracy of Equals” as a popular rising. Babeuf realised, however, that this would not come about spontaneously, but must be prepared by a small group of dedicated revolutionaries. Through propaganda and agitation they would persuade key institutions like the army and police, who would provide the force to seize power. After seizing power the revolutionary leaders would not hand it over to an elected assembly, but would establish a dictatorship in order to make fundamental changes in the organisation of society.

Babeuf received no support from the sans-culottes and little from former Jacobins. He was arrested in May 1796, after being betrayed to the authorities by a fellow conspirator, and was executed the following year. Marxist historians such as Albert Soboul consider Babeuf’s theories to be extremely influential. They argue that his ideas inspired not only nineteenth century French revolutionaries, like Blanqui, but ultimately, Lenin and his followers who set up the first communist state in the Soviet Union in 1917. Babeuf’s importance to the French Revolution itself, however, was slight.

THE COUP D’ETAT OF FRUCTIDOR 1797 (3- 4 September 1797)

The elections of 1797 revealed a growing popular shift towards the monarchists. People were tired of war abroad and religious conflicts at home, and found the idea of a constitutional monarchy attractive, believing that it would offer peace and stability. Of the 216 ex-members of the convention who sought re-election, only eleven were returned. Monarchists won 180 of the 260 seats being contested, bringing their numbers in the councils to 330. The wealthy, populous

northern departments returned the largest proportion of monarchists, which suggests that the Directory had lost the support of the richer bourgeoisie.

The elections, in which, in some departments, were fewer than 10% of the electors who voted, did not give the monarchists a majority in the Councils. However, they did mean that the Directory no longer had majority support and could rely on only about a third of the deputies. All the monarchists needed to do, it appeared, was to wait for the next elections, when more Conventionnels would have to give up their seats and, if voting followed a similar pattern to the elections of 1797, they would obtain a majority. Monarchists would then be in a position to restore the monarchy legally. The opponents of the Directory were also successful in elections to the provincial administrations.

THE COUP D'ETAT. WHAT WAS ITS IMPORTANCE

The royalists showed their strength when the councils appointed three of their supporters to important positions. One was elected President of the Five Hundred and another President of the Ancients. Barthelemy, the new director was regarded as sympathetic to the monarchists, as was Carnot, who was becoming steadily more conservative. Carnot was prepared to give up conquered territory to make a lasting peace and so was disliked by the generals.

Of the remaining Directors, two were committed Republicans. They were determined to prevent a restoration of the monarchy and sought help from the army. Bonaparte had already sent General Augereau to Paris with some troops to support the republican Directors. On the nights of 3 – 4 September 1797 (17 – 18 Fructidor) troops were ordered to seize all the strong points in Paris and surround the Council chambers. They then arrested two Directors, Carnot and Barthelemy, and 53 deputies.

Some of the remaining deputies who attended the councils clearly felt intimidated, and they approved two decrees demanded by the remaining Directors. One decree cancelled the elections in 49 Departments removing 177 deputies without providing for their replacement. Normandy, Brittany, the Paris area and the north now had no parliamentary representation at all. A second decree provided for the deportation to the penal settlements in Guiana of Carnot (who had escaped and fled abroad and was sentenced in absentia), Barthelemy, the 53 deputies arrested and some leading royalists. The Directors also cancelled the local government elections and made appointments themselves.

It was clear to all that the coup was the end of parliamentary government and of the constitution of Year III. It was also clear that the executive had won an important victory over the legislature. The revival of monarchism had thus been dealt a significant blow. It also meant that the Directory could now govern without facing hostile councils.

TERROR

After Fructidor, the new Directory took action against émigrés and refractory priests. Émigrés who had returned to France were given two weeks to leave, (otherwise they would be executed). During the next few weeks many were hunted down and were sentenced to death. The Clergy were now required to take an oath rejecting any support for the royalty. Those who refused would be deported to Guiana. The 1400 non-juring priests were sentenced to deportation.

The terror that followed Fructidor was limited. It was carried out solely by the government and the army in an attempt to destroy the royalist movement. In the short-term, it succeeded. But by alienating Catholic opinion, it provided more opponents for the Directory

FINANCIAL REFORM UNDER THE DIRECTORY

Many of the financial problems of the Directory were the legacy of previous regimes, which had printed more and more assignats in order to pay for the war. As by February 1796, these were almost worthless, and the Directory issued a new paper currency known as mandats territoriaux. They also soon lost value and by July were worth less than five percent of their nominal value. In February 1797 they ceased to be legal tender.

The monetary crisis had been catastrophic for government officials, rentiers and workers, as they saw rapid decline in their purchasing power. Metal coins now became the only legal currency and these were in short supply. There were only one billion livres in circulation in 1797 compared with two and a half billion in 1789. Thus, resulted in deflation (a fall in prices as demand for goods and services falls), as producers and retailers lowered prices to try to stimulate demand among consumers who were reluctant to buy goods. The inflation of 1795 to 1797 had made the Directory unpopular with the workers. Now it became unpopular with businessmen, since lower prices meant lower profits.

REDUCING THE NATIONAL DEBT

From the coup of Fructidor to the spring of 1799 the Directory had little trouble with the purged councils, and Dominique – Vincent Ramel, the Minister of Finance had an opportunity to introduce some far-reaching reforms. This debt increased during the revolution and the war was renounced by a one-off payment to debt holders. Their loans to the government were converted into non-interest bearing bonds which could be used to buy national property.

This move was of immediate benefit to the government as it reduced the annual interest as it reduced the annual interest on the national debt from 240 million francs (a quarter of government expenditure) to 80 million. It was not of much use to the bondholders who were denied income. Within a year the value of the bonds had fallen by 60 percent. Soon after that they became worthless when the government refused to accept them for the purchase of biens (nationalised property of the church as ordered by the decree of 2 November 1789). This was in effect a practical declaration of state bankruptcy as two thirds of the national debt was liquidated in this way. Although debt holders were unhappy with the measure, the bankruptcy of the two – thirds (the government wrote off two – thirds of the debt it owed its creditors), as it was known, helped to stabilize French finances for a time.

INCREASING REVENUE

In addition to cutting expenditure, Ramel wanted to increase revenue. He put in place a number of policies to achieve this:

In 1798 four basic forms of direct taxation were established

- A tax on trading licences
- A land tax
- A tax on movable property
- A tax on doors and windows.

These measures were among the most lasting achievements of the Directory and survived until 1914.

Ramel changed the method of collecting direct taxes. Whereas previously locally elected authorities had been responsible for collection, central control was now introduced. Commissioners appointed by the Directors were to assess and levy taxes.

As there was continued deficit during wartime, the government revived an unpopular practice of the ancient regime, – indirect taxes. This proved to be very unpopular as it was raising the prices of goods in the towns.

An increasingly lucrative source of income was plundered from those foreign states, especially Italy and Germany, which had been occupied by French armies.

The impact of these policies was positive. Although very unpopular, the bankruptcy of the two-thirds helped to stabilise French finances for a time, aided by the reduced military expenditure when peace with Austria was made in October 1797. Hence, Ramel was able to balance the budget. The government's expenditure was equal to its income for the first time since the Revolution began.

THE DIRECTORY AND THE WAR

1794 – 1799

The battle of Fleurus (in Belgium) in June 1794 was the first in a series of successes which continued until all the members of the first coalition, except Britain, had been knocked out of the war. In the summer of 1794, Belgium was occupied and in the following winter, the United Provinces were invaded. The French conquered the Rhineland, and crossed into Spain. Russia had intervened in Poland, which it was clear, would be partitioned again. Russia, therefore, made peace with France so that she would be free to claim Polish territory for herself. This, in reality, made very little difference, as Russia had played only a minimal part in the war against France, since 1793.

At the treaty of Basle, on 6 April 1795, Russia promised to hand over its territory on the left bank of the Rhine to France. In return, she would receive land on the right bank. This treaty freed French troops to attack other enemies.

Meanwhile, the united provinces had become the Batavian Republic in January 1795. This was after a revolt against William V who fled to England. Having lost Russian support the Dutch made peace with France to whom they became allies. The French hoped that the powerful Dutch navy would help to tip the naval balance against Great Britain, but this did not happen. Spain too made peace in July 1795, giving up to France her part of the island of San Domingo. Of the great powers, only Great Britain and Austria remained in the fight against France.

DEFEAT OF AUSTRIA

In 1796 the main French objective was to defeat Austria. Carnot, therefore, drew up the plan of the campaign. Armies under Jourdan and Moreau would march across Bavaria to Vienna, whilst the armies of the Alps and Italy would conquer Piedmont and Lombardy and then move across to the Alps, to Vienna. The main attack was to come from Jourdan and Moreau, who were given charge of 140 000 troops.

The main Italian campaign was spear-headed by Napoleon Bonaparte, who was given a small force of 30 000 ill-disciplined troops. Napoleon, however, soon won the loyalty of his men by promising them vast wealth after defeating Austria. Within a month of taking charge, Napoleon had defeated the North Italian state of Piedmont and forced her to make peace. In the same month of May, he defeated the Austrians at Lodi and entered Milan. Mantua was the key to the passing over the Alps to Vienna, and Napoleon finally captured it in February 1797.

WHAT IMPACT DID NAPOLEON MAKE ON THE WAR IN ITALY?

First, it is important to note that through the conquest of Mantua, the road to the eventual conquest of Vienna itself was opened. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the Austrian Arch Duke Charles, had driven Moreau back to the Rhine. Napoleon had to sign an armistice with Austria at Leoben in April 1796.

Secondly, Napoleon actually decided the terms at Leoben without consulting the Directory. He was already confident enough to be making his own foreign policy. In so doing, he was ignoring the specific instructions from the Directors. They had wanted to use Lombardy as a bargaining counter when negotiating with Austria, to exchange for recognition of French control of the left bank of the Rhine. Instead, Napoleon joined Lombardy to Modena and the Papal states to form the Cisalpine Republic. Austria recognised Belgium, which the French had annexed in October 1795, as French territory.

As compensation for giving up Lombardy and Belgium, Napoleon gave Austria Venice and part of the Venetian Republic, which provided access to the Adriatic Sea. The fate of the left bank of the Rhine was unclear; it was to be decided by a congress of the Holy Roman Empire. The Directory and the generals on the Rhine were furious, that they had no choice, but to accept what Napoleon had done. As the royalists had won the elections in France, the Directory knew it might need him. The peace of Campo Formio, on 18 October 1797, confirmed what had been agreed at Leoben.

CREATING STATES. HOW WAS THE CREATION OF NEW STATES BENEFICIAL TO THE DIRECTORY?

On the continent the prospects for a permanent peace receded. French foreign policy became increasingly aggressive as the Directors sought to keep French conquests and even to extend them. France re-organised a number of foreign territories, effectively re-drawing the map of Europe in some areas. These new territories were, in effect, satellite republics under French influence or control.

- (a) The Helvetic Republic was set up in Switzerland in January 1798 with the help of Swiss Patriots sympathetic to French ideals. This was important to France as it controlled the main Alpine passing to Italy. Geneva was annexed to France.
- (b) In Italy, three small republics were created, viz
 - (i) The Roman Republic, after the French invasion, and the flight of the Pope to Tuscany (1798)
 - (ii) The Cisalpine Republic, based in Milan
 - (iii) The Ligurian Republic which replaces the Genoese (Genoa) Republic in June 1797.
- (c) The Batavian Republic was established in the United Provinces in January 1795 after a revolt supported by the French against William V, who fled to England.
- (d) The French were busy re-drawing the map of Germany in negotiations with the Congress of the Holy Roman Empire at Rastatt. In March 1798 the congress handed over the left bank of the Rhine to France, and agreed that princes who had lost land there, should be compensated by receiving church land elsewhere in Germany.

The spring of 1798 marked the high point of the Republic's power. In western, central and southern Europe, France had attained a degree of hegemony (domination) unparalleled in modern European history. Yet from this position of great external strength, the decline in the Directory's fortunes was equally dramatic. Within 18 months it would be overthrown.

THE SECOND COALITION

Following his success in Italy, Napoleon departed for Egypt in May 1798 with the aim of attacking British interests. His fleet, however, was destroyed by Nelson at the Battle of Aboukir Bay in August 1798.

The defeat was crucial. It encouraged other countries to once again take up arms against the French. A second coalition was formed, and Russia which had not taken part in previous fighting against France, declared war in December 1798. Tsar Paul was incensed at the French seizure of Malta which he had declared himself protector in 1797. France declared war on Austria in March 1799 on the grounds that Austria had allowed Russian troops to move through her territory. Immediately war resumed. France occupied the rest of Italy. Piedmont was annexed to France.

These early victories, though, were followed by a series of defeats. The French were pushed back to the Rhine by the Austrians and the Russians advanced through northern Italy. French forces withdrew from the rest of Italy, except Genoa, as the Russians moved into Switzerland. It appeared that France would be invaded for the first time in six years, but, as had happened before, France was saved by quarrels among the allies. Austria, instead of supporting Russia in Switzerland, sent her best troops north to the Rhine. This allowed the French to get on the offensive in Switzerland where the Russians withdrew in the Autumn of 1799. The immediate danger to France was over.

HOW EFFECTIVE WERE THE MEASURES INTRODUCED IN 1799 TO DEAL WITH THE WORSENING ECONOMIC AND MILITARY CRISIS?

By 1798 there were concerns about the size of the French army which was only 270 000 strong men. Desertion, low morale and a reluctance to join the military, were all taking their toll. Jourdan's law proposed that conscription be re-introduced for the first time since 1793. The councils approved this in September 1798.

However, the law provoked widespread resistance. Much of Belgium, where conscription was also introduced, revolted in November and it took two months to put down the rising. The prospect of conscription was viewed with great reluctance among large numbers of young men who went to great lengths to avoid military service. Of the first draft of 230 000, only 74 000 men reached the armies.

The 1799 elections once again showed the unpopularity of the Directory. Only 66 out of 187 government candidates were elected. Among the rest there were about 50 Jacobins, including some who had been purged during Floreal. They were still a minority, but many moderate deputies were now prepared to follow their lead. The moderates had become disillusioned with the government as news of military defeats reached Paris. The military situation was regarded as so desperate that the councils were persuaded to pass emergency laws that were proposed by Jacobins. Hence, in June 1799 Jourdan called for a new levee en masse – all men between 20 and 25 were to be called up immediately.

THE CRISIS

With her armies being driven back into France, the Republic could no longer pay for the war by seizing foreign assets. A forced loan measure compelling the wealthy to loan money to the government was decreed. This was intended to raise 100 million francs, a sum that meant that the wealthy might have to give up as much as three quarters of their income.

The law of hostages (decreed that the relatives of any French citizens challenging the authority of the Republic would be imprisoned at their own expense, and their property seized to pay for any damages caused by anti government rebels) of July 12, was even worse for the notables. Any areas resisting the new measures would be declared “disturbed”. Local authorities would then arrest relatives of émigrés, nobles or rebels. They would be imprisoned, fined, and their property confiscated to pay for the damage caused by disturbances.

These measures appeared to be a return to the arbitrary arrests and harassment of the Terror of the Year II. Yet by November, only 10 million livres of the 100 million livres had been collected. Conscription was planned to raise 402 000 troops, but as in 1798, there was widespread resistance and only 248 000 actually joined the army. Many became brigands or royalist rebels to avoid being called up. In fact, the law of hostages was hardly ever applied because of opposition from local officials.

In 1799 there was a virtual collapse of government administration in the provinces. There were many reasons for this:

1. The Directory could not persuade local notables to accept office and had few troops to enforce its decrees.
2. Local authorities were often taken over by royalists who refused to levy forced loans, persecute non-juring priests or catch deserters.
3. The National Guard was not large enough to keep order in the absence of regular troops and hence substantial areas of the countryside were not policed at all.
4. Government commissioners were killed as quickly as they were replaced.

The result of this administrative collapse was brigandage (outbreak of lawlessness and violence by groups of bandits). By November 1799 there was civil war in Ardeche region in Southern France.

THE COUP D’ETAT OF BRUMAIRE. WHAT WAS SIEYES HOPING TO ACHIEVE BY A COUP?

It was in the wake of a worsening political and economic crisis that Abbe Sieyes who had become a Director thought of a coup in order to strengthen the executive. But he knew that the Five Hundred would not agree to this and that it could not be done constitutionally. Therefore he saw the opportunity of a coup in which the support of the army would be really necessary.

Sieyes approached Bonaparte, the most successful of the republican generals to back him in the coup. On his way to Paris from Egypt on 10 October, Napoleon was greeted enthusiastically by the population as one who had brought peace in 1797. He had equally made up his mind to play a leading role in French politics. He, therefore, agreed to join Sieyes’ coup only on condition that a provisional government of three consuls, who would draft a new constitution, would be set up.

The decree to abolish the Directory was in fact approved by a small group of Councillors who were sympathetic to the coup plotters. The directory was replaced with a provisional executive committee of three members, Sieyes, Roger Ducos and Napoleon. The great beneficiary of Brumaire was Napoleon, and his brother Lucien Bonaparte, President of the Council of Five Hundred who had moved in to justify Napoleon's role.

CONSTITUTION OF YEAR VIII

Napoleon issued a proclamation to the French Nation on 10 November 1799 to explain why he had taken part in the coup. "On my return to Paris I found all authority in chaos and an agreement only on the truth that the constitution was half destroyed and incapable of preserving liberty. Men of every party came to see me, confided their plans, disclosed their secrets and asked for my support. I refused to be a man of party (aligned to any party)"

Paris remained calm but this was a sign of apathy and reluctance to become involved in any more protests, rather than of approval. When news of the coup spread to the provinces, there was little rejoicing at the events. Such reaction was varied between surprise and mild opposition. A poster that appeared in Paris expressed the disillusionment many felt towards the Directory: "France wants something great and long – lasting. Instability has been her downfall. She has no desire for a monarchy, wants a free and independent legislature and to enjoy the benefits from ten years of sacrifices"

When Napoleon presented the new constitution of Year VIII to the French people on 15 December 1799, he said that it was "founded on the true principles of representative government, on the sacred rights of property, equality and liberty. The citizens the revolution is established on the principles which began it. It is finished".

Many did not realise the significance of the coup d'état of Brumaire. The republican phase of the Revolution was drawing to a close, while another destined to culminate in the Napoleonic Empire was beginning.

WHY DID THE DIRECTORY FAIL?

The Directors had wanted to produce a stable government which maintained the gains of the Revolution of 1789 whilst at the same time avoiding the extremes of Jacobin dictatorship or royalism. In the final analysis they were unsuccessful, and this was due to a combination of factors.

1. The Directory failed to create a stable government partly because of the weaknesses of the constitution of Year III. Its system of annual elections had no provision for settling disputes between the Legislature and the Executive, or change the constitution in a reasonable way.
2. In order to try and maintain a non-Jacobin/Royalist majority in the Councils, the Directors interfered with election results. During the coups of Fructidor (1797) and Floreal (1798) they purged the Councils. The effect of such action on the Constitution was that the Directory together with the constitution, lost respect.
3. Increasing reliance on the army to settle political disputes terribly weakened and eventually destroyed the Directory. This started with the Thermidorians during the risings of Prairial and Vendemiaire and continued to the coup of Fructidor. This heavy reliance on the army made military take-over a distinct possibility. Although a politician planned the coup if Brumaire, and assumed that the army would merely occupy a

supportive role, its most important figure was General Napoleon Bonaparte who had no intention of leaving the political stage.

4. Most of the people who would normally have supported the Directory – owners of biens, the wealthy notables – were alienated by its policies, especially its forced loans. They showed this by refusing to vote in the annual elections or take up posts in local government. When the challenge to the Directory came, few were prepared to defend it.
5. Any enthusiasm for the war had long since gone and most people wanted peace. Yet war had become a necessity for the Directory. They needed to secure money for the French treasury, to produce the victories and the prestige that would enable the regime to survive and to provide an opportunity to keep ambitious generals and unruly soldiers out of France. As Napoleon observed: “to exist it (the Directory) needed a state of war as other governments need a state of peace”. One of the reasons for Napoleon’s popularity was that he had bought peace at Campo Formio in 1797.
6. The renewal of the war after 1797 also produced a flurry of Jacobin activity. The Jacobins pressed for and secured a forced loan and the law of hostages. Whilst Jacobins by the late 1790s were never more than an urban minority, the policies which they advocated revived fears of a Terror like that of Year II. This helped to convince many that the Directory could not and should not survive.

The above mentioned events discredited the Directory and produced politicians who were not as attached to the Republic as the conventional had been. Only 12 percent of those elected to the councils in 1799 had been members of the Convention and only 5 percent were regicides (those who had executed for the first time that year. These deputies were prepared to accept the view of Sieyès that the constitution should be changed and this, of course, meant getting rid of the Directory, they were not only prepared to welcome the new regime, but took part in running it. Of 498 important officials of the consulate, 77 percent had been deputies under the Directory. These conservatives and moderates wanted stability and were prepared to accept an authoritarian regime to get it. To some extent the regime collapsed because of the contradictions within it. It claimed to favour democracy, yet used the military to suppress opposition. It needed war for economic purposes and yet, the war made the Directory lose considerable domestic support.

DID THE DIRECTORY HAVE ANY ACHIEVEMENTS AT ALL?

Despite the fact that the Directory was the longest lasting of the revolutionary regimes there has been a tendency to discuss it as a period of little achievement. The trend in recent years has been to consider the period in a more balanced and objective way.

Many of the achievements of the consulate in fact began under the Directory. The financial reforms and reorganisation of the tax system started during the Directory immensely contributed to economic recovery. These helped stimulate industrial and agricultural expansion that would develop much more fully in the Napoleon era.

Moreover, changes in administration within the departments preceded the roles later taken by prefects. Although its collapse was sudden, the Directory’s achievements should not be

dismissed an insignificant. Reforms under the Directory were a significant basis upon which future reforms were refined and perfected.

Study Guides

- i) How far was France's military success during the Directory the result of divisions amongst its enemies?
- ii) How did the Revolution affect the French nobility?
- iii) How did the Revolutionary War change the map of Europe?
- iv) What was the impact of War, economic crisis and religious division on the course of Revolution?
- v) What did the French Revolution achieve?

Examination type questions

1. How effective were the measures introduced by the Directory in 1799 to deal with the worsening economic and military crisis?
2. Explain why Napoleon emerged as a major political and military figure during the period 1792- 1799.
3. How valid is the claim that the Directory was the most successful regime in France in the period 1789 – 1799?
4. What can be learned from the Directory (1795 – 1799) about the achievements and problems of the revolution in France?
5. Why was the Directory so easily overthrown by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799?
- 6 Which posed more dangerous threats to the survival of the Directory: the internal or external enemies?
- 7 What did the Directory achieve in revolutionary France?
- 8 How valid is the view that without the support of the army the Directory would never have survived the way it did in France?
- 9 How important was role of Napoleon in bringing about the overthrow of the Directory?
- 10 What significant differences were noticed between the France of 1793 and that of 1795?

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CHAPTER 5

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN EUROPE:

Britain, France and Germany

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter students, should be able to do the following:

1. Define the term “Industrial Revolution”
2. Trace the origins of the industrial revolution, with particular focus on the three syllabus case studies-Britain, France and Germany.
3. Illustrate the nature of changes which took place in Europe. What areas were covered by the industrial revolution?
4. Explain the results of the Industrial Revolution- economic, political and social.
5. Give reasons why Britain had an earlier industrial take-off than France and Germany.
6. Account for and illustrate the technological discoveries and improvements which took place during the Industrial revolution.

Definition and General Introduction

According to The Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, the industrial Revolution was the process of change from an agrarian, handicraft economy to one dominated by industry and machine manufacture. A different historian viewed it as the period where major transformation of European agricultural, technological and manufacturing and production capabilities had a significant impact of the social, economic and political landscape of Europe. Both these definitions highlight the fact that the industrial revolution was not an event, but a process which occurred over a period of 100 years or more. It tended to be faster in Britain where, as we shall see, conditions were more favourable, than in France. Germany was a later comer but she quickly excelled past Britain.

More importantly, other historians tended to emphasize the onset of mass production which characterised the industrial revolution. Such is the case with the Barron's Banking Dictionary which states that; the industrial revolution was a period marking the introduction of mass production, improved transportation, technological progress and the industrial factory system. Also similar to the above definition is the one from The Gale Encyclopedia of US History which asserted that the industrial revolution was a drastic transformation both of the processes by which American and European society produced goods for human consumption and the social attitudes surrounding these processes.

The expression "industrial revolution" underlines the depth and speed of the changes observed, and the fact that they seemed to derive from the introduction of machine based factory. Yes, in Great Britain and France, the process was slower than in Germany and the United States, but there is no doubt that there was a leap in the quantities produced and that the process had profound effects in the economic, political and social spheres. In all cases, population boomed and demographics shifted. Because industrial resources like coal and iron were found in central and Northern England, a shift in population from Southern England northward took place. Northern cities like Manchester, grew tremendously. These changes in social and demographic realities created vast pressure for political as well as social change in labour relations.

The division of labour, the rise of the working class movements and wider distribution of wealth as well as increased international trade, all resulted from the industrial revolution.

What common factors accounted for the emergence of the Industrial Revolution in Britain France and Germany? Some common results.

1. The first major factor in this period of change was a remarkable growth in population in 1800 the population of Europe as a whole stood approximately at 188 million. By 1850 it had reached 267 million. This sharp increase was reflected variously in different countries, mostly marked in the British Isles and in Germany, more gradual in France, which by 1850, had already been surpassed by Germany.

The immediate significance of this population growth was quite obvious. In Great Britain and France, industrialization caused towns to grow out of small villages. During the first half of the century (1800-1850) the populations of Paris and Lyons were doubled. Toulouse and Marseilles's population rose by 75%; and in the industrial regions of the north-east a small town such as St. Etienne expanded from 16000 to 56 000 people. The population of Berlin had doubled by 1850.

With the growth of populations, came the emergence of an urban proletariat class. Hence population growth was essential in creating a pool of labourers who could be absorbed by the rising factories.

2. The development of new relevant technology equally lay at the centre of a successful industrial revolution in all Europe. It is important to note, however, that such research and expertise was first nurtured in Great Britain and then it spread to other European countries. For instance, by 1815 the new industrial processes affecting the production of iron and textiles, the manufacturing of machinery and the application of steam power, had given Great Britain an enormous lead over all other European countries. She remained the workshop of the world. British engineers and workers played a considerable part in this phase of the Industrial Revolution on the continent. Actually, British technology was exported to France, Belgium and Germany.

Initially, the major economic difficulty for French industrial take off in 1815 was the loss of the Belgian coalfields which, until she began to tap the fields of northern France after 1850, left her with only those of the upper Loire and the Valenciennes. This meant that French coal output in 1815 was a little more than that of 1789 although by 1847 it had been raised from 914, 400 to 5 235 448 tonnes.

English exports and capital provided the French with the technology to use coke in the smelting of pig-iron especially after 1815. Moreover, the technology of cotton-spinning mills, which had begun to appear during the Napoleonic period, grew throughout the first part of the century until 1847 there were in Mulhouse in 1 150 000 spindles and another 550 000 in the cotton areas of Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing and Armentieres. The power looms developed much more quickly and by 1846 there were 10 000 in operation in France. Other industries made less use of steam power but machinery was gradually affecting many trades such as riveting, leather- cutting and nail making. Since chemical science was advanced in France, Paris could boast of its gas burners for street illumination by 1844. Of course it is important to note here that technological advancement was much less in France than in Britain. Nonetheless, it was pivotal to industrial development in France.

Technology was equally vital in Germany's industrialization. The Prussian government set up an institute of trades in 1821 to encourage industrial enterprise. This, together with the services of the British technicians helped to foster the development of machines in factories. But in Berlin itself the lack of any coal nearby made progress slow, and in the rest of the confederation insufficiency of capital and the confusion of frontiers (borders) and local laws and customs duties hampered any speedy development. There was, however not much attempt made to exploit the coalfields in the Ruhr and the Saar until after 1815, partly due to lack of appropriate technology. Only after 1846 did coal output reach 3251200 tonnes in Silesia and Prussia combined although large firms sprang up on the Rhine, such as the Krupp at Essen, and Haniel Huysen and Jacobi at Ruhrort. German industrialization really took meaningful shape well after the 1850s.

3. A sound network of communications and transport was a third characteristic of this period of economic transformation in Europe. Even before the railway age, striking improvements had been made in the use of roads, canals and rivers. In France the restored Bourbons and Louis Philippe continued to develop an invaluable heritage of good highways, as well as undertaking great programmes of canal building.

Similarly, the Prussian government benefited greatly from its acquisition of the Rhineland roads although communications in the eastern provinces of Prussia remained poor. River transport in Europe had always been problematic since waters were often shallow or rocky or dangerously swift. In Germany, the local river tolls continued to be a hindrance to trade until 1834. The invention of the steam-boat however, overcame some of the physical difficulties, making it possible as early as the 1820s to run services on the Rhine, the Weser and the Elbe.

It was of course, the railways that were to bring about real revolution in European communications. Much of the initial impetus and knowledge came from Great Britain where independent companies had been experimenting with various forms of steam locomotion in the 1820s. The British government authorized individual companies by Act of Parliament. As a result, in thirteen years, from about 1820, Lebeau and Charles Rogier Company laid out a network of railways which connected Belgium with Holland, Germany and France. Although they proved expensive- (an average of £16500) a mile- but the indirect gain in terms of increased export of coal and pig iron made it an investment of incalculable national profit.

In France, the approach to the whole question was far more cautious. Torn between systems of state control and private enterprise the French Chamber spent most of the 1830s in discussions with private companies. In fact a few concessions to private companies did result in the laying of 564 kilometres of track in this decade (1830s) but it was not until 1842 that a compromise solution was reached whereby private companies could build the railways according to a national pattern, on the understanding that they would eventually become state property and that in the meantime the state would supervise rates and safety precautions. Afterwards there followed a great boom in railway building, attracting British capital through the banker Edward Blount. This brought to France a whole army of British engineers and railway workers, and by 1848 over 1932 kilometres of track had been laid in France. The impact was to stimulate a lot of industrial growth through increased market links.

The enthusiasm for railway building was spreading fast in the 1840s. In Germany, the southern and western states tended to rely upon governmental direction, while Prussia, after at first hanging back, began to work in cooperation with private companies, and by 1848 the completion of 4 830 kilometres of track had brought Germany within reach of a national network.

Economically, the railways allowed the easier movement of both raw materials and finished goods. Branded goods could be sold anywhere in Europe giving rise to and stimulating greater industrialization during the course of the nineteenth century.

Many new jobs were created by the railways directly- engine drivers: porters etc, and indirectly- the building of the railways stimulated other industries such as iron processing and engineering. This added to the wealth of the countries concerned.

Socially, the effects were just as great. Railways brought the “penny post” and helped the spread of daily newspapers as opinion makers. Workers could now visit the seaside and resort centres developed. They could also live in suburbs outside the cities. Revolutionary ideas spread faster and made uprisings, such as those of 1848 more coordinated and often spontaneous.

Police forces and soldiers could be moved quickly around the country to put down disturbances such as the Chartist demonstrations in Britain.

4. The enormous demands made on capital to finance these developments in industrialization helped to create a fourth characteristic of the economic revolution- the enhanced position of banking on an international scale. The tendency in each country was for the government to rely upon one bank as an agent for its won financial transactions and as a means of controlling the fiscal economy of the country. This was the origin of central banks in all the countries to regulate and standardize the currencies in Britain, France and German. For instance, the uniform French franc system was introduced in Belgium in 1832, and later in Switzerland. However, in Germany, a variety of local currencies was still in circulation at the end of the 1830s.

The most striking feature of all was the growth of international financial operations. The notes of the Bank of England enjoyed an unrivalled position in Europe after the Napoleonic war and the immense amount of capital available in England. It is important to note that due to her earlier industrialization, combined with a long experience in the handling of credit, the development of cheques and the clearing-house system made London the financial centre of the world.

Significantly, merchant bankers in the city, the great houses of Rothschild and Baring Brothers, were the services to which governments and businessmen all over the continent, as well as in North and South America increasingly turned for the floating of loans to finance new industrial developments and the building of railways. The activities of these London bankers spilled across the different countries in a delicate web of international credit eventually making the economy of one country become largely involved in the economies of other states. If there was a slump in one country, it needed to spread and affect the economies of others. Such was the situation in 1833, late 1870s and even in the 1930s with the Great Depression.

It is interesting to note that international finance and increased financial dependence on Britain consequently raised questions on new policies such as free trade or protective customs duties. National commercial policies were directly influenced by the strengthened position of the commercial and industrial classes after the revolutions of 1830 in France and Belgium, and the Reform Act of 1832 in Great Britain. National policies came to be based on the assumption that in open competition, the British industrialists had an overriding advantage over their counterparts on the continent. Free Trade, as Bismarck once said, was the weapon of the strongest nation. Thus, whereas in Great Britain the tendency was to continue to lower or to remove import duties, a policy of protection for the new industries prevailed on the continent.

In this respect there was little difference between the policy of the Bourbons and that of Louis Philippe’s government. In the years following the restoration, duty on imported cotton and iron as well as on corn had constantly mounted. Louis Philippe, who would

have liked to lower them succeeded to some extent at the beginning of his reign, but in 1841 he had to play to the interests in the Bourgeois chamber with an increased tariff. It was in fact the resistance of French manufacturers, coupled with strong British objectives that forced him to abandon the scheme for a customs union with Belgium.

In Germany the most significant change was the merging of the Prussian Zollverein with the Unions of the centre and the south which took effect on 1 January 1834. This is despite the fact that Oldenburg, Brunswick, Hanover and Hanse still remained out of it. Nevertheless, the establishment of a general protective tariff for Germany industry, the abolition of internal customs, greatly facilitating local trade. The beginnings of a uniform currency and the rapid growth of a network of railways all marked Germany's move towards greater industrial expansion. Once the domestic market, which was the largest on the continent, was fully exploited, Germany was assured of a rapid industrial revolution.

In terms of social impact, Britain and France were worse than Germany. The new working class was left unprotected by any governmental action. In the industrial towns France was beset with the same ills as in England-child labour, long hours, starvation, wages and appalling living conditions in slums lacking all means of sanitation, where the great cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1848 spread like a wildfire.

In England, the efforts of Lord Ashley and other humanitarian urgencies had succeeded in restricting child labour in the mines and factories and in establishing a ten- and -a half working day in certain forms of industry by 1850. Be that as it may, real conditions on the ground were quite the opposite of what legislation provided. Many children were forced to work in relatively bad conditions for much lower pay than the elders 10-20% of an adult wage. Children as young as four, were employed. Beatings and long hours were common with some child coal miners working from 4am until 5pm. Conditions were dangerous, with some children killed when they dozed off and fell into the carts, while others died from gas explosions. Many children developed lung cancer and died before the age of 25. Workhouses would sell orphans and abandoned children as "pamper apprentices," working without wages for board and lodging. Those who ran away would be whipped and returned to their masters.

Some children were employed as "Scavengers by cotton mills and would climb under machinery to pick up cotton, working 14 hours a day, six days a week. Some lost their hands or limbs, others were crushed under the machines and some were decapitated. Young girls worked at match factories where phosphorous fumes would cause many to develop phossy jaw. Children employed at glassworks were regularly burned and blinded and those working at potteries were vulnerable to poisonous clay dust.

Reports were written detailing some of the abuses, particularly in the coal mines and textile factories and these helped to popularize the children's plight. The public outcry, especially among the upper and middle classes helped stir change in the young workers' welfare.

Politicians and the government tried to limit child labour by law, but factory owners resisted; some felt that they were aiding the poor, giving their children money to buy food to avoid starvation. Others simply welcomed the cheap labour. In 1833 and 1844, the first general laws against child labour, the Factory Acts were passed in England. Children,

younger than nine, were not allowed to work. Children were not permitted to work at night and the work day of the youth under the age of 19 years was limited to 12 hours. Factory inspectors supervised the execution of the law, however, their scarcity made enforcement difficult. About ten years' later, the employment of children and women in mining was forbidden. The positive thing is that these laws decreased the number of child labourers.

It must be highlighted that the Factory Acts were not universal but rather, simply worked in to Great Britain alone. This meant that child labour still continued elsewhere in Europe even up to the 20th century.

Interestingly, however, in France a Factory Act of 1841 also restricted the use of child labour in concerns employing more than twenty persons and in Prussia, after complaints from the army that physical defects were having a serious effect on the intake of recruits. Frederick William III, in 1839 forbade the employment of children under nine years of age and decreed a ten-hour day for those under sixteen. These French and Prussian measures, however, were largely undermined by the absence of an adequate system of inspection. A decree or a law passed forbidding a practice, did not always signify compliance by the industrialists.

Among the workers themselves there was little success in organisation. In France the penal code forbade any association larger than twenty; striking and picketing were criminal offences. Moreover, the workmen's code instituted by Napoleon Bonaparte gave the employer a controlling influence over his labour force. The harshness with which this control was exercised varied, but an average of two hundred workmen a year were sentenced to imprisonment between 1825 and 1847. In fact, two attempts to establish the right of association- (in 1831 and in 1834) among the silk workers at Lyons frightened the government of Louis Philippe into treating them as armed rebellions which was put down by military force after bitter fighting.

Two fundamental weaknesses hampered the French proletariat in these years. First- there were still too few of them. Workers numbered only one million by 1846 throughout France.

Second, large forms of industrial enterprise had not yet developed on the continent. The scene was one of tiny workshops. In 1848, for example, there were 64 000 private factories in Paris- 50 per cent of them consisting of no more than the proprietor either on his own or aided by line work man. In such circumstances, the organizations of workers was difficult to achieve.

Luddites in Britain

The rapid industrialization of their English economy cost many craft workers their jobs. The movement started firstly with Lace and hosiery workers near Nottingham and spread to other areas of the textile industry owing to early industrialization. Many weavers also found themselves suddenly unemployed since they could no longer compete with machines which only required relatively limited and unskilled labour to produce more cloth than a single weaver. Many such unemployed workers, weavers and others therefore turned their animosity towards machine that had taken their jobs and began destroying factories and machinery. These attackers became known as Luddites,

supposedly followers of Ned Ludd, a folklore figure. The first attacks of the Luddite movement took place in 1811. Luddites rapidly gained popularity and the British government took drastic measures by using the army to protect industry. Those rioters who were caught were tried and hanged or exiled or life imprisonment.

Unrest continued in other sectors as they industrialized. The agricultural labourers in the 1830s, for example, were equally affected. Threshing machines were a particular target, and brick burning was a popular activity. However the riots led to the formation of trade unions, and to greater pressure for reform.

Housing during the Industrial revolution

Living conditions during the Industrial revolution varied from the splendour of the homes of the owners to the squalor of the lives of the workers. Poor people lived in very small houses in cramped streets. These homes would share toilet facilities, have open sewers and would be at risky damp conditions. Disease was spread through a contaminated water supply.

Conditions did improve during the nineteenth century as public health acts were introduced covering sewage, hygiene and making some boundaries upon the construction of homes. However not everybody lived in homes like these. The Industrial Revolution created a larger middle class of professionals such as lawyers and doctors. The conditions for the poor improved over the course of the 19th century because of government and local plans which led to cities becoming cleaner places. But life had not been easy for the poor before industrialization. However as a result of the Industrial Revolution, huge numbers of the working class died due to diseases spreading through the squalid living conditions. Chest diseases from the mines, cholera from polluted water, and typhoid were also extremely common, as was smallpox. Accidents in factories with child and female workers were regular. Strikes and riots by workers were also relatively common. These conditions were common in Britain, France, and Germany and wherever the industrial revolution made its mark.

Organisation of Labour

The industrial revolution concentrated labour into mills, factories and mines. This directly facilitated the organisation of combinations or trade unions to help advance the interests of working people. The power of a union could demand better terms by withdrawing all labour and causing a consequent cessation of production. Employers had to decide between giving in to the union demands at a cost to themselves or suffering the cost of the lost production. Skilled workers were hard to replace, and these were the first groups to successfully advance their conditions through this kind of bargaining.

The main method the unions used to effect change, was strike action. Many strikes were painful events for both sides the unions and management. In England, The Combination Act forbade workers to form any kind of trade union from 1799 until its repeal in 1824. Even after this, unions were still severely restricted.

In 1832 the year the Reform Act, which extended the vote in England but did not grant universal suffrage, six men from Tolpuddle in Dorset founded the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers to protest against the gradual lowering of wages in the 1830s. They refused to work

for less than 10 shillings a week, although by this time wages had been reduced to seven shillings a week and were further to be reduced to six shillings.

Working people also formed friendly societies and co-operative unions as mutual support groups against times of economic hardship. Enlightened industrialists such as Robert Owen also supported these organizations to improve the conditions of the working class.

Unions slowly overcame the legal restrictions on the right to strike. In 1842, a general strike involving cotton workers and colliers was organised through the Chartist movement and it stopped production across Britain.

Eventually, more effective political organisation for working people was achieved through the trade unions who, after the extensions of the franchise in 1867 and 1885, began to support socialist political parties that later merged to become the British Labour Party. Due to the fact that more meaningful industrialization in Germany only occurred after 1850, changes to the rules which governed the work place came way into the 19th century, mostly after 1871.

The emergence of Socialism

Socialism emerged as a critique of capitalism. Marxism began essentially as a reaction to the industrial Revolution. According to Karl Marx, industrialization polarized society into bourgeoisie (those who own the means of production; the factories and the land) and the proletariat (the working class who actually performed the labour necessary to extract something valuable from the means of production). He saw the process of industrialization as the logical dialectical progression of feudal economic modes, necessary for the full development of capitalism, which he saw as in itself a necessary step to the development of socialism and eventually, communism.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels put together the Communist Manifesto which first appeared in London in February 1848, the month of revolution in France. It had no immediate effect and was little known about. However, two decades later, it had already had more than ten editions printed.

Marx's ideas were revolutionary in nature because they called for more than just a change in the working conditions at the factories and mines, but for a total proletariat take-over. For instance, they wrote, "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains: they have a world to win. Workers of all countries, unite." He argued that the destined proletariat revolution will be a world revolution, inevitably triumphant, inaugurating first a proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) and eventually a truly classless society. Such a supra-national appeal was relevant to any worker, whether in the USA, Britain, France or Germany. Marx and Engels argued that the "Age of Revolutions" had reached its climax and that the proletariats needed to rise and take over the means of production. They also wrote that; "what the bourgeoisie produces are its on gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." They also argued that democracy was a sham, for parliamentary government was only a mask for the class-rule of the capitalists, and that the workers should have no national loyalties and none at all, with the employers.

Such ideas certainly inspired revolutionary dissent during the last quarter of the 19th century and 20th century. It is important to note that such important modern thinking which came to reshape the world, for better or for worse, had its fundamental roots in the industrial revolution. Socialism certainly lay behind the uprisings of the 19th century: formed the Soviet Union, led to the division of the world along east-west lines during the Cold War.

Impact on Socio- political status of Europe

The industrial revolution represented a shift in influence away from the traditional power holders in England and conferring the new wealth and power upon the growing middle class of enterprising traders, manufacturers and financiers. Just as the landowners were in general a bulwark of conservatism, so the middle classes were one of the prime movers of change. The “captains of industry,” the self- made mill owner of Lancashire, the energetic, thrifty and hardworking manufacturers of northern England and France were, however still a minority in 1815. They were the new men, the first generation of a new class which would inevitably resent the old aristocratic idleness and contempt for earned incomes. They were increasingly taking their place alongside the older families of business and industry. The established financial groups such as the Rothschild Baring’s Laffittes and Hope- assumed a new pre-eminence in a world where capital and credit were in immense and profitable demand.

The new wealth demanded greater political representation and lower; the removal of petty restrictions and out-of-date laws, social recognition for the men whose energies and enterprise brought employment to millions. The result was a growing tide of liberal opinion hostile to the existing order. It was the most potent force of change in mid- 19th century Europe. However, the aristocratic landholders did not entirely lose out: they maintained some power and only grudgingly gave it up.

The industrial revolution, as noted earlier on, also brought into existence a proletariat class which ultimately attained sufficient strength to challenge the supremacy of the bourgeoisie. By concentrating large numbers in the cities and by subjecting them to common abuses, the industrial revolution infused wage earners with a degree of solidarity and imbued them with common aspirations.

What technical innovations were brought by the industrial Revolution in Europe?

The commencement of the Industrial Revolution is closely linked to a small number of innovations and inventions made during the second half of the 18th century.

1. **Textiles**-Cotton Spinning using Richard Arkwright’s water frame, James Hargreaves’s Spinning Jenny and Samuel Compton’s Spinning Mule. This worked as a combination of the Spinning Jenny and the Water Frame. This was officially launched in 1769. After 1783 there were many cotton mills which were launched, thus making cotton spinning a lot faster. Similar technology was subsequently applied to spinning worsted yarn for various textiles and flax for linen.
2. **Steam Power**
The improved steam engine invented by James Watt and patented in 1775, was initially mainly used for pumping out water from mines, but from the 1780s was applied to power

machines. This enabled rapid development of efficient semi-automated factories on a previously unimaginable scale in places where waterpower was not available.

3. **Iron Making**

In the iron industry, coke was finally applied to all stages of iron smelting, replacing charcoal. This had been achieved much earlier for lead and copper as well as for producing pig iron in a blast furnace, but the second stage in the production of bar iron depended on the use of potting and stamping (for which a patent expired in 1786) or puddling- patented by Henry Cort in 1783 and 1784.

These represent three leading sectors in which there were key renovations, which allowed the economic take-off by which the Industrial Revolution is usually defined. This of course is not to belittle many other inventions, particularly in the textile industry. Without some earlier ones, such as the Spinning jenny and flying shuttle in the textile industry and the smelting of pig iron with coke. These achievements might have been impossible.

Later inventions such as the power loom and Richard Trevithick's high pressure steam engine were also important in the growing industrialization of Britain. The application of steam engines was also important in the growing industrialization of Britain. The application of steam engines to cotton mills and iron works enabled steam engines to be built in places that were most convenient because other resources were available, rather than where there was water to power a watermill.

In the textile sector, such mills became the model for the organisation of human labour in factories, epitomized by Cottonopolis, the name given to the vast collection of cotton mills, factories and administration offices based in Manchester. The assembly line system greatly improved efficiency, both in this and other industries. With a series of men trained to a single task on a product then having it moved along to the next worker, the number of finished goods also rose significantly. A fundamental change in the working principles was brought about by James Watt. In close collaboration with Matthew Boulton, he had succeeded by 1778 in perfecting his steam engine, which incorporated a series of radical improvements, notably the closing off of the upper part of the cylinder thereby making the low pressure steam drive the top of the piston instead of the atmospheric use of a steam jacket and the celebrated separate steam condenser chamber. All this meant that a more constant temperature could be maintained in the cylinder and that engine efficiency no longer varied according to atmospheric conditions. These improvements increased engine efficiency by a factor of about five, saving 75% on coal costs.

But the atmospheric engine could not be easily adapted to drive a rotating wheel. Hence Wasborough and Pickard did succeed in doing so towards 1780. However by 1783 the more economical Watt steam engine had been fully developed into a double- acting rotative type. This meant that it could be used to directly drive the rotary machinery of a factory or mill. Both of Watts basic engine types were commercially very successful and by 1800, the firm Boulton and Watt had constructed 496 engines, with 164 driving reciprocating pumps, 24 serving blast furnaces and 308 powering mill machinery. Most of the engines generated from 5 to 10 horse power (7,5kw).

The development of machine tools such as the lathe, planing and shaping machines powered by these engines, enabled all the metal parts of the engines to be easily and accurately cut, in turn made it possible to build larger and more powerful engines.

Until about 1800, the most common pattern of steam engine was the beam engine, built as an integral part of a stone or brick engine house, but soon various patterns of self-contained portable engines, readily movable, but not on wheels, were developed, such as the table engine.

Towards the turn of the 19th century, the Cornish engineer, Richard Trevithick and the American, Oliver Evans began to construct higher pressure non-condensing steam engines, exhausting against the atmosphere. This allowed an engine and boiler to be combined into a single unit compact enough to be used on mobile road and rail locomotives and steam boats.

The above improvements to the core of the driving force in industry, (the engine), were very vital to the pace at which industrialization would grow and spread. Technological inventions continued right into the 21st century and they covered diverse fields such as chemicals, metallurgy, water engineering and of course engines.

Revision Questions

1. Why did the Industrial Revolution first start in England during the last quarter of the 18th century.
2. Describe the major changes made possible by the industrial revolution.
3. Discuss the social impact of the Industrial Revolution.
4. Account for the rise of protectionist policies in Europe by the late 19th century. Give examples where appropriate.
5. What were the driving forces behind the Industrial Revolution?
6. What were the social and economic results of the expansion of railways?
7. Was socialism such an important force before 1850?
8. Why did Germany's industrialization eventually overtake that of Britain and France?
9. In what ways did a growing population in Britain, France and Germany the main ingredient for the success of the industrial revolution?
10. Why were the bourgeoisie such an important class during the industrial revolution?

Examination type questions

1. What was the nature and scope of the changes in industrialization? [25]
2. Why did Britain undergo an Industrial Revolution earlier than France and Germany? [25]
3. Why were improvements in communications, important to industrialization? You should refer to the developments in at least two of Britain, France and Germany in your answer. [25]
4. Explain the conditions that were necessary in the nineteenth century for the development of an industrial economy. You should refer to developments in at least two of the following countries, Britain, France and Germany. [25]

5. Discuss the claim that the middle classes gained most from the Industrial Revolution in Europe. [25]
6. How true is the claim that the most important political effect of industrialization in the 19th century was to encourage the demand for democracy? Refer to developments in at least two of Britain, France and Germany. [25]
7. Did the Industrial Revolution result in advantages or disadvantages for the working classes in Europe? Refer to developments in at least two countries namely Britain, France and Germany. [25]
8. What sort of differences would you identify between pre-industrial and industrial society in the 19th century Europe. Refer to at least two of Britain, France and Germany. [25]
9. Why did Europe industrialize during the 19th century? Refer to developments in at least two countries in your answer. [25]
10. Assess the social and political effects of industrialization in the 19th century. Refer to at least two of Britain, France and Germany. [25]

CHAPTER 6

NAPOLEONIC FRANCE: 1799 – 1815

Chapter Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) Explain the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte
 - a) His Italian campaign
 - b) His Egyptian campaign
 - c) His restoration of order in France through crushing the Vendémiaire Revolt.
 - d) His defence of the Revolution through defeating the invading Austrian forces.
 - e) Importantly of course, the coup d'état that of Brumaire.
- ii) Explain Napoleon's rise to power as First Consul, Consul for life and eventually as Emperor.
- iii) Explain the aims of and illustrate the structure of Local Government reforms
- iv) Evaluate how far Napoleon Bonaparte was a dictator right from the start of his rule?

- v) Explain the features of a police state under Josef Fouche before 1810 and Savoy after 1810.
- vi) Analyse the nature of Napoleonic reforms in specific detail
- viii) Evaluate Napoleon's reforms in light of the foregone Revolution.

This is one of the popular topics among many students, and one which is very straightforward. The main focus here will be on Napoleon's domestic and foreign policies. His rise to power was discussed in the previous chapter under the Directory. In his domestic policies, candidates are expected to analyze the various reforms which were introduced. In analyzing the reforms, students need to determine Napoleon's objectives in passing particular reforms. There is need to also check whether the various reforms were influenced by ideas from previous governments or they were totally a product of his own innovation or creativity. The relevance and usefulness of the reforms on French society need to be ascertained by the student.

Napoleon's domestic policy (1789 – 1815)

Apart from the constitution of year VIII (1799), Napoleon introduced a number of reforms. These included economic reforms, the concordat, local government reforms, the code Napoleon, education, legion of honour/career open to talent and public works. However, after 1807, some repressive measures were introduced such as censorship of press and the employment of the "letters de cachet".

The constitution of year VIII (1799)

Napoleon was aware that the French, after 10 years of revolution and war, were more interested in stability and security than in equality or even liberty. In his whole approach, he took account of this, but he also identified himself with the will of the people as reflected in the cahiers of 1789. In those terms, they did not demand the abolition of the monarchy, but a more efficient government, equal taxation, justice and the elimination of privilege. He was to curtail liberty in France, but exert himself for greater equality before the law and for equal opportunities.

In February 1800, the people were asked, after a propaganda campaign of two months, to vote for the constitution in a plebiscite, two months after it had been put in operation, and the legislative bodies had already been appointed. Although 3 000 000 votes were for the constitution, and only 1 500 against, 4 000 000 Frenchman did not vote at all. Nevertheless, Napoleon took the result as a vote of confidence in himself.

Terms of the constitution

a) Executive power

Although it was republican in form, the constitution did not guarantee the sovereignty of the people, but gave the executive authority and more powers. Normally, executive authority was vested in the Consulate – the committee of three consuls, but the actual authority rested with the first consul, Napoleon himself. Although he could consult the second and third consuls if he pleased, his decision was final. With the exception of judges, who would be elected, the first consul personally appointed and dismissed ministers and all other high government ministers or officials, including military personnel. He also gained the right to conclude peace and declare war, subject to ratification by legislative authority. The consuls were assisted by a council of state and a senate.

Council of State:-

It drafted and introduced laws and ordinances. The members were nominated by Napoleon, as the first consul.

Senate

It consisted of 60 members (later 80). There were life members. These were nominated by the first consul, but had no legislative powers. The senate's task was to nominate the members of the legislative authority, namely the Tribunal of 100 members, and the legislative body of 300 members, from a list of "notables". These Notables were indeed elected by universal male suffrage, and not only by "active citizens", but the franchise was now actually more limited than in the constitutions of 1791, 1793 and 1795. All the voters in a commune could elect one-tenth of their number into a communal list. These elect could then again vote one-tenth of themselves onto a departmental list, which in turn elected a tenth of their number to a national list. These were the so-called notables of France from which the senate nominated members of the Tribunal and legislative body. Out of something more than 6 000 000 enfranchised voters, there were therefore only 6 000 on the national list.

Study Guides

- i) Why was Napoleon Bonaparte able to emerge victorious in the Italian and Egyptian Campaigns?
- ii) Why was Napoleon's coup d'état a success?
- iii) What was the nature of Napoleon's reforms in France under the Consulate?
- iv) How did Napoleon make his position secure between 1799 and 1804?
- v) To what extent was Napoleon a dictator?
- vi) What were the similarities and differences between the Napoleonic rule under the Consulate and his rule under the Empire?
- vii) Why did Napoleon introduce a police state? What were its characteristics?

Legislative Authority

a) The Tribunal

Had the authority to discuss legislation which had been introduced by the first consul or council of state. However, it had no vote in the matter, and could not initiate legislation.

b) The legislative body

This body could vote on proposed legislation during its four-month sessions, but no debate was allowed.

Therefore, the whole arrangement was a denial of popular government, although this was not generally perceived at once. It was calculated to place the supreme authority in the hands of the first consul; Napoleon who controlled all legislative authority since he nominated members of council of state, which carried out all urgent legislation, and the Senate – which nominated members of the Tribunal and legislative body. The separation of powers as embodied in the constitution of 1791 therefore continued only in theory. Although universal male suffrage had been introduced, it was virtually meaningless as the members of the assemblies were nominated and not elected. Subsequently, these legislative bodies were stripped of their already limited power. The powers which had been exercised by the Committee of Public Safety during the

Reign of Terror, were now concentrated in the hands of one man. This was more than Louis XVI ever had in the ancient regime. According to Brewing, “Napoleon’s parliamentary institutions were, from the beginning, little more than window dressing for what was-essentially a dictatorship”. The Council of state was nothing other than a revival of the conseil du roix royal council of the ancient regime.

His choice of subordinate consuls, Cambaceres and Lebrun, reveals Napoleon’s true attitude. Lebrun was a royalist who had kept himself aloof during the Revolution, while Cambaceres had been a member of the Convention, and now proved to be loyal to Napoleon. Napoleon subsequently increased the number of ex-royalists in the government, thereby moving step by step in the direction of a monarchy.

One should, however, guard against judging Napoleon according to modern views of democracy. Justifiably, Thompson puts the cast that the French would not necessarily have condemned the franchise issue the way a modern voting public would do. If the French nation had sacrificed its political liberty with the constitution of 1799, at least it had gained an energetic and efficient government in exchange. After 10 years of political unrest, France enjoyed a competent, honest and energetic government. The financial, judicial, administrative and religious innovations which would form the basis of France in the 19th century fell into the Napoleonic era.

a)Financial reform

Just like the Directory, the Consulate set out with an almost bare treasury. With his first law of 3 Brumaire (the 24th November 1799), Napoleon encountered the financial problems, which the Directory had been unable to solve, or which it had created by means of centralization.

- i) A Director of taxation was put in control in Paris to whom deputies in each department and agents in each Arrondissement and Commune were answerable. In this manner the whole tax machinery was put on a firm footing. This enabled the government to make a better estimate of its revenue.
- ii) Direct taxation was kept at a steady level, while indirect taxation was increased as the need arose. As his power increased, Napoleon instituted more and more indirect taxes such as the tax on alcohol in 1804, and on salt, two years later.
- iii) Inflation was contained. The franc was the most stable currency in Europe, and this included Britain in this period.
- iv) In order to relieve the high interest rates on government loans and stabilize the currency, Napoleon established the Bank of France in February 1800, in 1893, it gained the exclusive right to issue bank notes in Paris. The Bank of France is still today the country’s central financial institution, although it was nationalized in 1945.

Results of financial reform

- i) The results of this reform were favourable. There was a noticeable improvement in public finances. Regular tax collection and economizing on government expeditions even balanced the budget for year X (1801 – 1802).
- ii) French industries grew by 25 percent and various new industries – in metals, wheel, sugar-refining, tobacco processing and cotton were established.

iii) Unemployment was low or unheard-of, thanks to the industrial growth, larger European markets, protective tariffs and military service.

iv) Trade was promoted by improving roads, canals, and harbours. The purchasing power of the bourgeoisie, in particular, benefited from these measures.

b) Agricultural reform

Agriculture expanded. The growing population, a series of crop failures and military requirements forced price increases, thereby increasing the purchasing power of the landowning peasants. The general public was impressed with the payment of debts, which was, to them the most important. Thus Napoleon bound all classes closer to him. He had become, indeed, the “Bulwark of society”.

The financial reforms of the Consulate did not, however, bring about a large measure of financial stability. Napoleon was unable to create full confidence in government policy as his measures were arbitrarily taken, but not openly.

c) Administration

i) Central Administration

As far as central administration was concerned, Napoleon demanded regular ministerial reports from his ten ministers. A department of internal affairs served as a central bureau to the various ministries, and also transmitted Napoleon’s instructions to them, thus relegating ministers to the status of ordinary clerks:- The overall effect of this was to decrease the authority of ministers.

ii) Local Government/Administration

Although the Revolution’s geographic division into departments was retained (there were now 98, later increased to 102), Napoleon reversed a characteristic principle of the Revolution by returning to the centralization of the Bourbon monarchy. A law of the 17th of February 1800 replaced the local-self-government and elected officials of the years when they were also responsible:- Prefects were in charge of departments, sub-prefects for the 400 arrondissements (previously called districts) and mayors for the 40000 communes. The prefects were nothing other than a revival of the intendants of the ancient regime. In central government, the chief aim was to eliminate election by people. Thus Napoleon paved the way for his centralized despotism. Centralization and the creation of the Bourbon monarchy, had been partially destroyed by the Revolution but was being restored in 1800.

d) Judicial reform

Reforms of the judicial authority began in March 1800 when the election of judges was ended. Napoleon now appointed them for life. A Chancellor and Council of state supervised judicial authority.

e) The Civil Code (Code Napoleon)

This was undoubtedly Napoleon’s most important and lasting achievement. When Napoleon came to power, there were 366 local codes in force, throughout the country containing Frakish, Roman, Royal, provincial and feudal elements. In addition, the Revolution had radically changed the system of ownership by the abolition of feudal privilege and sale of church properties. The idea of creating order in the chaotic administration of justice did not originate with the first

consul. At the start of the Revolution, the National Assembly had passed a resolution to codify the legal system, but nothing had come of it. Napoleon, with characteristic drive and single-mindedness, completed the task.

The final draft, consisting of 2281 articles, was a compromise between the most important ideals of the Revolution and the authoritarian views of Napoleon himself.

Terms of the civil code

- a) It made provision for a uniform legal system for the whole country.
- b) Freedom of the individual was guaranteed.
- c) Equality before the law.
- d) The right to private property was guaranteed.
- e) Secularization of state.
- f) Liberty of conscience was confirmed.
- g) The abolition of all aspects of feudalism was confirmed.
- h) Ratified the land settlement of the Revolution.

On the other hand, the code incorporated Napoleon's authoritarian views by promoting the interests of the state or a figure of authority at the cost of the individual.

The code and the family

The family was of great value to the state, as it was one of these units which disciplined the behaviour of the individual. The following points should be noted about the family:-

- a) In this spirit, the patriarchal authority of Roman law, which had been weakened by the Revolution, was re-established. In other words, the father became dictatorial.
- b) According to the Civil Code, a father could make his children serve up to six months in jail purely on his own evidence.
- c) The father also had total control of their property.
 - i) The father could administer his wife's property, and as common ownership was law, he could do with it as he pleased.
 - ii) To prevent families from becoming too powerful, the family was put under the guardianship of the state.
 - iii) The code determined how property inheritances were to be arranged.
- iv) Civil marriages, which meant that marriages would be registered by the state, were made compulsory, even if the couple had been married in church.
- v) Divorce by natural consent, for reasons of adultery, after a criminal offence or by reason of insanity was allowed.
- vi) Women were regarded as "less equal" than men and were discriminated against. For example, should a woman detect her husband in adultery and kill him or his partner, she was guilty of murder, but in a reverse situation, the man could not be charged.

Like all other legislation, this should be viewed in the spirit of the time. Although it was a return to the social discipline of pre-revolutionary France, the French laws were only adopted in the 1960s to provide a reasonable measure of equality for women. The divorce law was only changed in 1965.

Employer and employee in the Code Napoleon

Freedom of work and equality before the law in fact exposed the wage earner to the risks of completions. The code in reality rejected the Jacobin element of the individual's right to existence. As only the employer's word was taken in wage disputes, the code even departed from the principle of equality by discrimination against the wage – earner. In addition, the state employed its police powers to enforce labour discipline. The Law of 22 Germinal of the Year XI (12 April 1803), removed the ban on trade unions. On the 1st of December 1803, a decree obliged workers to carry a labour pass issued by a local authority, without which they could not be employed. The interests of the employer were carefully guarded, as even the organization of strikes was forbidden. From the foregoing, it is clear that the code was bourgeoisie – oriented, as it favoured the employer at the expense of the employee.

The civil code was followed by the code of Civil Procedure (1806), the Commercial Code (1807), the Criminal Code (1808) and the Penal Code (1810). These codes were increasingly reactionary and illustrated a growing extension of Napoleon's powers. There was a return to the laws of the ancient regime. Heavy penalties were imposed for political offences against persons and property.

(f)Education reform

The principle of free elementary education for all children had already been embroiled in the constitution of 1791 and had been established by the convention, but little progress in its establishment was made in the course of the Revolution. The Napoleonic government was not much more successful in extending the principle. Elementary education was left to the municipalities, as in the days of the ancient regime. In more than one department, half of the communes had no teachers, and there were no funds for teacher-training. In rural areas, illiteracy persisted. It has been calculated that only one out of every eight children of school-going age was accommodated in the existing primary schools in 1813. Like Voltaire before him, Napoleon took the view that education for the poor was politically and socially “inconvenient”

(g)Secondary education

As far as secondary education was concerned, the state – supported central schools of the Convention which were initially allowed to coexist with the prytanees, which were also controlled by the central government. Secondary education flourished in the early years of the consulate. The syllabuses included Classical grammar, Mathematics and French literature. History and Philosophy were prohibited because they encouraged independent thinking and a critical, questioning mind.

Fourcroy's education ordinance of May 1802

According to this ordinance, the central schools and the prytanees, which promoted independent thinking, were replaced by 45 lycees and 700 secondary schools; which were privately administered, but government controlled. The lycees were nothing other than colleges of patriotism for the training of future leaders.

The government prescribed the syllabuses, appointed teachers and enforced regulations by means of inspectors. The schools were controlled by military discipline, and retired officers even lectured on military matters. Of the 6400 bursaries available, 2400 were reserved for the sons of officers and government officials, and the rest for the ablest scholars. Most of the poor were

therefore, excluded. Church schools were also permitted, but when they subsequently began to compete with the lycees, Napoleon returned to total government control of education.

University education

In order to ensure control of education, Napoleon centralized control by establishing the Imperial University in 1808. It was not a university in the usual sense of the word, but a kind of government department, a corporation of all the education personnel in France, aimed at promoting loyalty to the government. It drew up syllabi, determined the nature of examinations, and controlled grading.

Education for girls

Napoleon paid little attention to education for girls. According to him, their mothers were their best educators. Their role was at home, not in public life. He did, however, approve a finishing school for girls, where they were given some education. Most of their time was to be devoted to religious instruction, good manners, and practical subjects such as needlework.

(h)The Concordat (1801)

An early achievement was Napoleon's religious settlement. Religious issues had seriously divided France since the Civic Constitution of the Clergy had been promulgated in 1790. The important causes of friction were:- the breach with Rome and the Pope, and tension between the government and non-juring priests who had refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Revolutionary government. Napoleon had no strong religious convictions, but appreciated the value of religion for the people. He was aware of the religious revival amongst the bourgeoisie, and realized that the masses were basically still Roman Catholic. He calculated that support for Roman Catholicism would therefore be useful in gaining the people's obedience to law and order. Following lengthy negotiations with the Pope Pius VII, the Concordat was signed in 1801. Although it was a compromise, the French government benefited most.

Terms of the agreement:-

- 1) All French Roman Catholics were granted religious freedom on condition that they obeyed police regulations.
- 2) Roman Catholicism was recognized as the religion of the three consuls, of the Republic and of the "large majority of the French citizens". It was not recognized as the state religion as such a measure would be a denial of a principle of the Revolution, namely liberty of conscience.
- 3) In return the Pope relinquished all claims to church property which had been declared forfeit. All bishops had to resign, and new ones would henceforth be nominated by the first consul and canonically installed by the Pope.
- 4) The state agreed, as with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, to pay the salaries of bishops, and priests who, in turn had to take an oath of allegiance to the government.

The authority of the state over the church was thus unequivocally confirmed, and the connection between the pope and the French bishops further weakened. It was a return to the Gallicanism of the 17th century. Although ardent republicans were opposed to the compromise represented by the concordat, and saw it as a retrogressive step, the largest part of the population welcomed reunion with the Roman Catholic Church.

(i) Public works

Napoleon employed architects, painters and sculptors to contribute to the illustriousness of his regime and to depict him as a hero. Particularly in Paris, numerous striking and geometric constructions were erected within a short time, amongst them, the Arc de Triomphe. New bridges spanned the Seine, a number of streets were widened, and Paris sewerage and fresh-water provisions were improved. Museums such as the Louvre were built and furnished. Numerous art treasures from the conquered territories were bought to France. Artists such as David and Goya enjoyed Napoleon's patronage. A number of scientists came to the fore such as Gaspard Monge, the father of descriptive geometry.

(ii) Career open to talent

As was the case with other measures, Napoleon's social policy was thrust in two directions: On one hand, he continued a principle of the Revolution by opening careers to talent, but on the other hand, this led to the creation of a new social class, the "aristocracy of merit". The idea of a "career open to talent" was not at odds with revolutionary principles. The first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man stated that all people were from birth free citizens with equal rights. Social distinction arose purely on the grounds of usefulness, meaning talent.

However, Napoleon's group of notables selected in 1799, were considered "more equal" than the rest of the population. It was from this group that Napoleon built his aristocracy of merit. He held that the whole social hierarchy should be created with wealth and talent. Careers were opened to talent, but such people should preferably be wealthy, Napoleon shared the suspicion of the rich about the needy people with talent.

(k) The Legion of Honour (1802)

On the 19th May 1802, Napoleon founded the legion of honour. He had come to the conclusion that mankind desired recognition, and consequently, he had already awarded swords of honour for meritorious service during the Directory. When he became first consul, he began to plan an organization which would reward merit in the civil and military spheres. The members of the Legion of Honour, were to be chosen by a so-called Great Council. The fact that Napoleon was its chairman agrees with his train of thought that the award of any honour or privilege should be under his control. The Legion of honour, indeed consisted of a host of meritorious citizens who made up part of Napoleon's new aristocracy of merit. On the other hand, the principle of equality was maintained, as anyone who had given exceptional service to the state or society could be rewarded with membership. In defence of his scheme, he declared to the council of state, "I do not believe that the French love liberty and equality. They have not been changed by the years of revolution. They have only one feeling, and that is honour. We must nourish that feeling".

Study Guides

- i) How far was Napoleon Bonaparte an enlightened despot.?"?
- ii) Describe the reforms introduced after 1810.
- iii) Did Napoleon seek to create his own dynasty?
- iv) How far were Napoleon's reforms motivated by (a) a personal greed for power/
b) The need to protect and develop France?
- vi) Did Napoleon's reforms fulfill the revolutionary aims of liberty, fraternity and equality or he

undermined them?

Moves towards dictatorship

Censorship

Napoleon's rule was also marked by drastic limitations on the freedom of expression and speech. This was clearly a violation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Napoleon accused "irresponsible intellectuals" of confusing the people. "Troublemakers", such as Madame de Stael, were banned from France. Napoleon advocated public harmony in political matters, but achieved it at the cost of freedom of expression. In January 1800, Napoleon closed down sixty of the seventy – three newspapers in Paris. By the end of the year only nine remained, and ultimately, only four were permitted. Newspapers became little more than mouth pieces for the government, carrying official news. It is customary to condemn the system of censorship under Napoleon, but in reality censorship was nothing new and not stricter than elsewhere in Europe.

Enforcement of Censorship: The police force in order to enforce all the censorship regulations, a large and efficient police force was required. The notorious Fouche who, during the Reign of Terror had been relieved of his post because of excessive cruelty was appointed as its chief. In 1810 he was succeeded by the less subtle-savary. Fouche established an effective espionage system to watch over the personal lives of thousands of individuals in all walks of society. Denying the principles of the Revolution, the system of letter de cachet of the ancient regime was once again openly employed; following the decree of 1810.

It is clear that Napoleon's reign became increasingly despotic. Yet there were reasons why the French did not oppose its laws. The National Assembly's policy of decentralization during the Revolution had exposed France to grave dangers in times of war. That he was able to satisfy his personal desire for domination in this manner was only possible because he had won the French to his cause by his victories on the battle front, because they enjoyed prosperity at home and because he respected the social arrangements of the Revolution. The people were satisfied with and proud of their leader, but they had not yet realized that he was abusing his power.

The Ministry of Police first under Joseph Fouche and after 1810, under Savary was most important. 'Police' in this context refers to the idea of national security which numbered around 20000 men. The ministry's main purpose was to keep a close watch on all forms of subversion. It did this through the use of spies and informers. Fouche reported daily to Napoleon who also had his own personal spies who acted as a check on Fouche's reports. Department prefects also had a responsibility to keep a watch on public opinion and similarly send the reports to Napoleon. Those suspected of subversion could be tried before special courts, imprisoned or sent to penal colonies or kept under house arrest. The Ministry of Police also had the responsibility for censorship, prison surveillance and monitoring of food prices.

The effective police operation prevented opposition from becoming open and strict censorship denied any critics and opponents any room for publicity. However, committed he was to revolution principles like equality before the law and careers open to talents. Napoleon certainly did not believe in a free press. From the start, he wished to control the flow and nature of information reaching the public. In January 1800 the number of newspapers in Paris was reduced from 73 to 13, and in 1810 reduced further to 4. The press bureau of the Ministry of Police kept

a close watch on all publications, and editors were forbidden from printing anything defamatory about the regime. Increasingly they relied on official bulletins or articles written in the government newspaper Le Moniteur. Not only were newspapers censored, but plays, books and art as well.

The other side of censorship was propaganda. A deliberate attempt was made to ensure that the right messages got full publicity in all the media. A kind of cult of the emperor was developed and reinforced by the work of artists like David and Ingres. By making himself emperor, with the endorsement of the Senate and Legislature and of the people in the plebiscite, Napoleon was attempting to join the club of kings to find a dynasty bearing his name. The Napoleon court began to resemble more and more that of an 'ancien regime' monarch. His brothers and sisters were made princess of empire in 1804, a new title of grand dignitary was introduced and in 1808 an Imperial Nobility was instituted, with titles ranging from court to duke. As final confirmation of this change from republican consulate to imperial dynasty, in 1810 Napoleon married Marie-Louise, the daughter of the Austrian emperor. However, this was not quite a return to 'ancien regime' forum. Title depended on wealth rather than on birth and could be given as a reward for service. Napoleon created 3263 Nobles between 1808 and 1814; 60% of them were military men, the rest were prefects, bishops, senators, and mayors and so on. A duke had to command an income of at least 200 000 francs, a baron only 15000. According to historians like Jean Tulaid, the increasing resemblance of the Napoleonic regime to an absolute monarchy aroused fears of a return to feudalism and offended a deep attachment to revolutionary principles of equality, even among the notables.

From Consulate to Empire

Between April and August 1802 a series of laws openly turned the consulate into a dictatorship. The opportunity to do this was offered to Napoleon by the enthusiasm engendered by the Concordat and the Peace of Amiens. He requested the senate to elevate him to consul for life. When the senate, in a rare display of courage refused, the council of state proclaimed a plebiscite. On the 2nd August 1802, the voters with a poll of 3 500 000 in favour and less than 9000 votes against, approved Napoleon's consulship for life.

Napoleon's consulship for life practically gave Napoleon the powers of an absolute monarchy. All that remained was to formally institute an imperial crown. In 1804 Napoleon's prestige stood high as a result of his domestic and foreign successes. When a conspiracy to assassinate Napoleon, hatched by a group of émigrés in London under the duke of Artois, with the Breton leader, Cadoudal, and the royalist general, Pichegru, came to light, there was a strong reaction in France. The different sections of French society who were benefiting from the consulate were prepared to give Napoleon further powers. They were prepared to accept the declaration on the 18th May 1804, that Napoleon should become the "Emperor of the French" and that his office should become hereditary. Only the heredity was tested in a plebiscite, of which the result, 3 500 000 for, and 2500 against, was once again an overwhelming confirmation of what was already a fact.

Study Guides

i) Why were so many people exiled from France during the period 1804-1815?

- ii) What opposition did Napoleon face in France?
- iii) Did Napoleon's religious reforms make him more popular or autocratic?
- iv) How far were "careers open to talent."?
- v) In what ways and for what reasons did Napoleon seek to look after the interests of the middle classes in France?
- vi) Explain the two ways by which Napoleon dealt with opposition.
- vii) How far did Napoleon's rule of France change after he became emperor in 1804?

Examination type questions

1. Why was Napoleon Bonaparte able to support the Directory and establish himself as First Consul in France?
2. Why did Napoleon introduce popular reforms before 1804 and oppressive reforms thereafter?
3. Did Napoleon's foreign adventures have any more aim than to increase his grip on France?
4. "In his domestic policies, Napoleon was cruel in order to be kind." How far do you agree?

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CHAPTER 7

NAPOLEON'S FOREIGN POLICY (1800 – 1815)

Chapter objectives

By the end of the chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) Explain the aims of Napoleon's foreign policy
- (ii) Describe the Continental system
- (iii) Describe the Third Coalition against France (Britain, Austria and Russia) as well as the Treaty of Pressburg with Austria.
- (iv) Examine the Confederation of the Rhine, and explain its wider significance to the Napoleonic Empire.
- (v) Explain why and with what results Napoleon lost in a war against Spain at Baylen, 1808.
- (vi) Explain why Napoleon was successful in Europe up to 1807.
- (vii) Analyse the reasons for Napoleon's decline and defeat
- (viii) Assess Napoleon's achievements in foreign policy
- (ix) Estimate whether or not Napoleon's downfall was inevitable.

Napoleon's foreign policy can be divided into two segments. The period between 1800 and 1807, his campaigns were successful, and the period 1807 marked his downfall in 1813. Candidates are expected to examine the reasons why he was successful in the first seven or so

years at his empire building and why he was ultimately a failure. Napoleon's control methods in foreign policy also needed to be explained and assessed. Some of the methods he used in foreign policy included military conquests, military alliances, marriage alliances, the continental system and the installation of members of the family on thrones.

The defeat of the second coalition

The major method Napoleon used was military conquest. With characteristic speed and self-confidence, Napoleon crossed the Great St Bernard Pass in the Alps in May 1800, and invaded Italy. On the 14th of June, he scattered the Austrians at Marengo. Five days later, a French force under Field Marshal Moreau defeated the Austrians at Ulm. This was followed by another victory at Hohenlinden on 2nd December 1800. To save Vienna, the Emperor Francis II was forced to sign the peace of Luneville in February 1801 on Napoleon's conditions. Basically, it was a confirmation of the Treaty of Campo Formio (October 1797). The contents of the treaty were : (1) The independence of the Batavian, Helvetian, Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics was guaranteed.(2) Austria was compelled to recognize French annexation of the left bank of the Rhine, but retained Venice. France had restored her lost prestige. In January 1802, the Cisalpine Republic became the Italian Republic with Napoleon as president. It was clear that Napoleon was no longer confining himself to the natural frontiers of France.

With the elimination of Austria, the Second Coalition collapsed. Napoleon's conciliatory policy towards Russia and the accession of a new Tsar, Alexander I offered Russia the opportunity of withdrawing from the struggle. Once again, Britain was the only remaining member of the coalition. Despite British successes at sea, such as the reconquest of Malta 1800, the driving of the French army out of Egypt, and the occupation of the Dutch and Spanish colonies, the British government desired peace. British merchants wanted to gain access to continental markets. Napoleon himself wanted an honourable peace which would enable him to consolidate his position in France and Europe.

The Peace of Amiens (March 1802)

The terms of the treaty

- (1) Britain gave France or its allies (Spain and the Batavian Republic) back all territories which it had conquered since the beginning of the war with the exception of Trinidad and Ceylon.
- 2) France agreed to vacate the kingdom of Naples and the Papal States and return Egypt to Turkey.
- 3) France was left in charge of the Batavian republic, Belgium, the left bank of the Rhine, Switzerland, and the largest part of the Italian non-republics which had been established under French authority was not recognized.

British merchants who had been looking forward to the restoration of trade with continental parts were the greatest opponents of the treaty as it made no provision for this. Although the treaty with the British lasted only just over a year, France enjoyed a breather from war on the continent for almost five years (1800 – 1804).

Study Guides

- i) Why did Napoleon engage Europe in various wars?

- ii) Why was Napoleon so successful in Europe up to 1807?
- iii) What factors help explain Napoleon's downfall?
- iv) What can be said in favour of regarding 1810 as the high point of Napoleon's power in Europe
- v) What can be said against it?
- vi) Assess the effectiveness of the Milan and Berlin Decrees as strategies of winning the war against Britain.
- vii) How did Napoleon combine diplomacy and warfare to win "peace with holier" against the Second coalition?

Resumption of war with Britain (May 1803)

The peace of Amiens (March 1802) could be little more than a truce, for its terms failed to recognize the most important point. This was that British and French imperialism could not coexist.

The resumption of the struggle between Britain and France in May 1803 must almost exclusively be blamed on Napoleon. This is because of his violation of the terms of Luneville, e.g. by absorbing Redmond into France. A second reason must be sought in Napoleon's refusal to accept Britain's commercial and colonial dominance. As long as Britain dominated in these areas, Napoleon could not exercise economic control of the continent. For the rest of his regime, Napoleon aimed at the destruction of this mastery of the British. It can be seen as an important reason for his fall.

Thirdly, the British were justly disconcerted at Napoleon's renewed interest in the eastern end of the Mediterranean. It seemed Egypt could easily be recognized by France because of its weakened military position.

War began officially in May 1803 when a French army tried to invade Britain, which had as its ruler, George III of Britain. However, by 1805, at the battle of Trafalgar, Britain reaffirmed her dominance at sea by defeating the combined French and Spanish fleets off Cape Trafalgar.

The formation of the Third Coalition (1805)

This coalition consisted of Russia, Britain and Austria. The idealistic but vacillating Tsar, Alexander I of Russia took the lead in the creation of the Third Coalition against France. Napoleon's reorganization disconcerted not only Russia because of its trade with and influence in the Balkans, but also the Austria Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Francis II. In Britain, the beginning of William Pitt's term of office in 1804 was decisive in the formation of the coalition. In April 1805, the Anglo-Russian convention was signed in St Petersburg, and Austria joined the coalition in August 1805. The weak link in the entire political and military framework of the Third Coalition was the stubborn refusal of Frederick William III of Prussia to relinquish his neutrality. He took this attitude because he hoped that Napoleon would give him Poland. However, he was suspicious of Russia's aims in Poland and also that Prussia was dissatisfied with Britain's treatment of neutral shipping.

The collapse of the Third Coalition

Napoleon did little to prevent the formation of the Third Coalition. Undoubtedly he regarded himself as strong enough to act against the old governments of Europe and to finalize his organizational plans for the territory. After he had failed to defeat the British at sea, resulting in

his own defeat by Nelson at Trafalgar on the 21st of October 1805, he inflicted a heavy defeat on a combined Austria-Russian army at Austerlitz. At the end of the battle, the French had lost 9000 men out of an army of 73000 against 27000 Russians and Austrians in an army of 87000. It was probably Napoleon's most famous victory. The rest of the Russian and Austrian forces were totally demoralized and the Third Coalition collapsed. Emperor Napoleon I had no choice but to sue for peace.

The Peace of Pressburg:-

The peace was signed in December 1805. It was agreed that:-

- i) Austria would leave Venetia, Istria and Dalmatia to the kingdom of Italy.
- ii) Her Tyrolean and Silesian possessions to the Duke of Bavaria and Württemberg in exchange for Salzburg. By her recognition of Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden as independent kingdoms, Austria lost her last foothold in Germany.

Enthronement of Napoleon's brothers

In January 1806, soon after Pressburg, Napoleon declared Ferdinand of Naples deposed and installed his own brother, Joseph as king of Naples. The occupation of the Papal States by French troops brought the whole of Italy under the authority of Napoleon. In June 1806 he turned the Batavian republic into the kingdom of Holland with his brother Louis as king in July 1806. The Confederation of the Rhine was established under the protection of Napoleon. Sixteen West German and South German Sovereigns somewhat reluctantly renounced the Holy Roman Empire and entered the Confederation. They would leave foreign policy to Napoleon and support him with troops.

The defeat of Prussia -October- 1806

Prussia was beginning to realize that her neutrality had allowed Napoleon a free hand in Germany. Consequently, Frederick William III began to take a more provocative stance. His suspicions were fed by Napoleon's refusal to sanction a North German Confederation under Prussian leadership. Furthermore, Frederick William learned that Napoleon had secretly offered honor to the British in exchange for peace after Prussia had received honour in 1805. Napoleon forced Prussia to suspend her trade with Britain. Totally overestimating his power, Frederick William concluded an alliance with Russia in July 1806, mobilized in August, and without waiting for his ally, marched on the Confederation of the Rhine. The aged duke of Brunswick and Prince Hohenlohe, however, did not cooperate. Consequently on the 14th of October 1806, the Prussians were crushed at Austerlitz. Two weeks later, Napoleon was in Berlin.

The Treaty of Tilsit (7 July 1807)

Without consulting his own ally, Tsar Alexander opened peace negotiations with Napoleon, and Frederick William had to submit. Two treaties known as the Treaty of Tilsit were signed on 7 July 1807 – one between France and Prussia and another between France and Russia.

France and Russia

Terms with Prussia

- (i) Prussia was forced to pay a large indemnity and to maintain a French army of occupation until the indemnity had been paid.

- (ii) Prussia also lost all the territories she had gained in the three partitions of Poland in the previous century. These territories were transformed into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and placed under the rule of the king of Saxony.
- (iii) Prussia territories west of the river Elbe were united to form the kingdom of West -Phalia, with the youngest of Napoleon's brother, Jerome, as king.
- (iv) Danzig became a so-called free-city under the command of a French general.

Terms with Russia

Russia was much more leniently treated – because of the plans Napoleon had with Alexander. Napoleon claimed virtually only the Ionian islands, and relinquished part of Prussian Poland to Russia.

Secret agreement between Russia and France

After signing the Treaty of Tilsit, Alexander also concluded a secret agreement for future action. The open Treaty of Tilsit made provision for Napoleon to act as mediator between Russia and Turkey in the war which had broken out in 1806. Secretly it was now agreed, that should mediation fail, Napoleon would assist the Tsar in a war, and that the Turkish European provinces, Moldavia and Wallachia would be given to Russia. The secret agreement also made provision that the Tsar would act as mediator between Britain and France. However, this newly found friendship evaporated within a few years.

The Third Coalition had collapsed, and Prussia had also been defeated. Only Britain remained. Britain had been a problem to many French rulers for centuries, and had foiled their plans to dominate Europe. Britain's dominance of the seas and her entrenchment behind the English Channel and the North Sea exacerbated the problem. The French defeat at Trafalgar in 1805 had shortened the last hopes of a direct invasion. Some other means had therefore to be found for bringing Britain to her knees.

Study Guides

- i) How did the reforms of Gribeauval and Griberth change the French army?
- ii) Was Napoleon a great General?
- iii) Why was the ability to motivate men so important in generalship?
- iv) How did the French Revolution change the nature of warfare in Europe?
- v) In what ways did the relative weaknesses of Napoleon's enemies a key factor in his military victories?

WHY NAPOLEON WAS SUCCESSFUL IN EUROPE UP TO 1807

Napoleon's phenomenal and rapid success has three broad elements:

- The nature of the French army
- Napoleon's generalship
- The relative weakness of Napoleon's enemies

The three factors are not mutually exclusive. The relative strength that France, and Napoleon enjoyed is mirrored by the relative failings of their enemies. Napoleon's generalship would not have been so successful if the quality of his force had not been relatively high; and he would not

have had the freedom to act as he did if France had been unable to provide the resources necessary or if he had not also been ruler of France.

I) The Nature of the French army

David Chandler, a prominent military historian and adviser of Napoleon, argues convincingly that Napoleon inherited an armed force that was already superior to that of his enemies. The French army had undergone fundamental reform for two reasons. The humiliating defeats for France in the War of Austrian Succession (1740- 48) and the seven years war (1756-63) had led to technological, organisational and tactical developments that would improve its fighting capacities. Then the French Revolution totally overturned the nature of the army and its officer corps.

The key technological developments under the guiding hand of Gribeauval was the manufacture of lighter, more maneuverable and standardized cannons. This facilitated the supply of ammunitions and allowed the development of new artillery tactics under DuTeil. Indeed the use of concentrated artillery firepower was to become a notable feature of Napoleonic Warfare which made him more easily victorious over his enemies.

Perhaps even more important was the military potential the revolution released. As a result of the pressures of foreign invasion and civil war in 1793, the revolutionary government in Paris introduced the levee en masse. Effectively this organisation of the concept of universal conscription was the earlier form of “total war.” From 1793 France was a nation in arms. It was the duty of every citizen to contribute to the war effort. For young men, this meant service in the armed forces. They served as citizen soldiers in defence of France and the revolutionary ideas of liberty and equality. Universal conscription meant that France by the mid-1790s was approaching a million men under arms. Losses could be replaced by further conscription. Napoleon was to boast that he could afford to lose 30 000 men a month. Hence the abundance of forces highly increased Napoleon’s chances of victory against his enemies.

Along with the increased size and motivation of French revolutionary armies came the fact that the French were fighting for the survival of the Revolution. The French were also fighting to overturn the European states system by wars of conquest and liberation. In the wake of victories, states’s annexed frontiers were redrawn, new political and social systems imposed. This made French armies to actively seek battle and were willing to bear heavy losses for the sake of what victory would bring. French forces were therefore more motivated than any other forces in Europe.

ii) Napoleon’s great generalship.

Napoleon was a man of many talents as a general and he also had immense personal magnetism. He had a quality of natural authority and could charm almost anyone he met. He also had a keen sense of what motivated the soldier. For instance, when taking command in Italy of a semi-mutinous army in 1796, he promised to pay them in silver rather than the worthless paper currency. The award of the Legion of Honour, other decorations and titles or swords for bravery or outstanding service all helped. Overall, he created a sense of deep personal loyalty amongst his men and helped replace the motivation provided by defence of the revolution with a

motivation directed towards military glory impact on army morale that made the duke of Wellington remark that Napoleon's presence on the battlefield was worth 40 000 men.

Napoleon was also a great military strategist. His most popular strategy was the "bataillon carre" a diamond formation of four divisions of the army, with each division numbering at least 15 000 men. The flexibility and speed of the system was brilliantly displayed in the rapid march from the channel coast into Germany and down to the Danube in October 1805 Napoleon got news of the Austrian concentrating at Ulm on 20 September. His advance was so rapid and the surprise so complete that General Mack and the Austrians were surrounded and forced to surrender on 20 October. Part of the reason for the success of the "bataillon carre" or corps system was the entailed planning and command exercised by Napoleon.

The Peninsular War 1809-14

The French failed in Spain for several reasons. These include:

1. Napoleon's initial underestimation of the scale of resources needed to conquer Portugal and Spain, coupled with his over estimation of the degree of French support in Spain.
2. The revival of Austrian opposition to France caused Napoleon to leave Spain before Spanish resistance and Sir John Moore's army had been decisively defeated.
3. The decision by Britain to maintain a small army in the peninsula under the able command of Wellington, stiffened Spanish and Portuguese resistance and enabled battle victories over the French.
4. Spanish control of the countryside required French troops to be diverted into maintenance of strong garrisons and escort duties for ensuring supplies and communications. Whilst French field armies could secure victories they failed to crush resistance.
5. Napoleon divided command of French forces in the peninsula. This meant that French efforts were left in the hands of different commanders (Junot Soult, Massena, Marnot, Joseph and others) whose mutual rivalries and jealousies diluted French efforts.
6. Napoleon had to divert veteran troops away from Spain at vital times to fight in central Europe and Russia. Such actions no doubt weakened his armies in Spain and Russia, especially after 1812.

The Peninsular war is important in explaining Napoleon's eventual defeat for several reasons. First the defeat of a small French army at Baylen was significant because it punctuated the image of French invincibility. Secondly, Spanish resistance encouraged the Austrians to take up arms in 1809, causing Napoleon to leave Spain at a crucial moment. Thirdly, the Spanish and Portuguese resistances provided the British with a continental theatre of operations against France. The constant guerrilla attacks and lack of a decisive victory sapped French morale, required the maintenance of a force of over 200 000 men in the peninsula which strained French resources and increased the levels of conscription and taxation at home. This served to undermine French support for Napoleon. The war cost France over 300 000 casualties and 3 billion francs. The need to maintain forces in Spain meant that there were fewer for operations elsewhere and that in 1809 and 1812 Napoleon was fighting on two fronts. Taken together, these reasons help explain Napoleon's downfall. If the consequences of the Peninsular War were to be slow death, then the Russian campaign hastened the final crisis.

The inevitability of Napoleon's downfall

Some have argued that Napoleon's eventual downfall was inevitable from the start. The qualities that brought him success were those that guaranteed his eventual failure. His ambition, egoism, sense of destiny and single-minded determination helped him to achieve remarkable feats both in politics and on the field of battle. The flow was that he did not know when to stop. Securing frontiers developed into conquering an empire which further developed into action to establish some kind of universal monarchy in Europe, like his role models, Charlemagne and Alexander the Great. His military success bred in him self-belief that led him to ignore advice or not to seek it. The concentration of command in his hands left him with subordinates incapable of or unused to successful independent command, as the Peninsular War demonstrated.

He lacked the quality of statesmanship that could have enabled him to make lasting peace treaties. Having defeated his enemies in the field, he sought to defeat them again at the peace table. His peace treaties were usually one-sided. The experience of Austria in this respect is quite striking. Austria took up arms in 1798 after the humiliation of Campo Formio in 1797, only to be humiliated once again at Luneville in 1801. It did the same in 1804, only to be crushed by the terms of Presburg in 1805 and then again in 1809 at Schonbrunn. A final attempt in 1813 was to give Austria its reward at Vienna in 1815. In this sense, it can be seen that there was no real chance of lasting peace in Europe while Napoleon was on the throne. He had the opportunity to make peace in 1798 on terms that would have left France substantially more powerful than it had been in 1789, but was blind to such offer, partly because Napoleon believed that he could still win, and partly also because he was only interested in the fate of France in so far as it served his own end- of remaining in power.

Another sense in which the seeds of his downfall were there from the start, could be said to be the constant opposition of Britain whose material resources enabled it to fight on and subsidize allies until Napoleon was finally defeated.

The Continental System

This was Napoleon's strategy to isolate Britain economically. In other words, this was economic warfare. The Berlin Decrees of November 1806 formally launched the continental system. Britain was declared to be in a state of blockade and all states were forbidden to trade with the country. British subjects on the continent were henceforth liable to arrest, and their property to confiscation, as well as all goods belonging to Britain or which originated from her factories or colonies. Likewise, any ship of whatever nationality which arrived directly from British ports or colonies would be refused entry to continental ports.

British response to the Continental System

In January 1807, Britain reacted with an Order-In-Council. She forbade all neutral ships, on pain of confiscation, to call at ports which were closed to British vessels. A further order-in-council of November of 1807 determined that neutral ships should be permitted to call at continental ports provided they had previously been to a British port to pay a tax on their cargo and obtain a licence from the British government.

The Milan Decree: December 1807

Napoleon reacted with his Milan Decree of December 1807 in which he threatened to confiscate all neutral ships which complied with British instruments. The struggle between Britain and France now developed into a commercial war between a sea power and a land power. Between

April 1810 and November 1812, Britain suffered heavily under the restriction of her continental trade. Nevertheless Napoleon never achieved his main objective, which was to destroy British trade. Had he succeeded in excluding British trade from the continent, British credit would have collapsed. However there were a number of factors which doomed Napoleon's efforts to failure and contributed substantially to his fall.

Reasons for the failure of the Continental System

i) Firstly, British goods were never totally excluded from the continent. They managed to enter Europe in various ways. The problem was that the European coastline from the eastern Mediterranean to the furthest reaches of the north was too long. Honest and competent customs officials and military officers were not always available to apply the system affectively. As a result, there was constant smuggling of British goods. Contraband came to mean big business in Europe.

ii) The continental system developed the French economy at least as much as it did the British. Although undertakings such as agriculture flourished, others experienced a serious recession. Enterprises which depended on foreign trade collapsed completely. Instead of French trade increasing at the expense of British goods, it declined sharply. The problem was that the British blockade was succeeding. It led to the financial ruin for numerous French ship-owners and merchants. In 1807, for example, Marseilles had 330 sea-going vessels, but four years later, there were only nine.

iii) Thirdly, Napoleon himself undermined the continental system. By 1809, the system was working so badly that Napoleon decided to issue licences for trading with the enemy. That French businessmen were permitted to trade within a system which was directed against such trade, was telling proof of the failure of the continental system. By 1813, it had been abandoned, as Napoleon urgently needed the licence revenue for his war efforts.

iv) Napoleon lost the support of the bourgeoisie. This was the social group which had brought him to power, and derived the greatest benefits from his government. They blamed the continental system for the economic depression of 1810 – 1811. This class became indifferent to the Napoleonic dynasty.

i) The other reason for the failure must be sought in the fact that neutral shipping suffered greatly. If ships failed to obey British regulations, they were liable to seizure on the high seas by British warships. If they complied, they were liable to seizure on arrival in European ports. This led to much dissatisfaction and to various retaliatory measures by neutral countries. The USA, in particular, was alienated from Napoleon for this reason.

ii) Because of her sea power, Britain found it easier to implement the Orders-In-Council than Napoleon's imperial decrees. Britain possessed more ship owners, sailors and merchants than any other country. In addition, Britain became the undisputed leader in the industrial revolution of the 18th century. Against the cheaper British goods and products of her quality and in larger quantities, the decrees of the continental system were of no effect.

iii) Equally serious was the dissatisfaction amongst the nations controlled by France in regard to her allies. This was particularly the case in the countries where there was less industrialization – but a surplus of agricultural products, which had to be exposed such as those in eastern and south-eastern Europe. No imperial decree could suppress the demand for familiar and inexpensive British or colonial goods, and there was increasing opposition to Napoleon's economic tyranny in Europe. On the 31st of December 1810, Tsar Alexander opened Russian ports to neutral shipping, and by so doing sealed the fate of the continental system.

The causes of the downfall of Napoleon I

There were both long term and short term causes of the downfall of Napoleon. The long-term causes included the effects of the continental system, and British naval and financial power, the size of the empire, which had become too large to be intact, the rise of nationalism, especially in the Peninsular involving Spain and Portugal. The military reforms in Prussia also helped in the defeat of Napoleon. The short term causes included the disastrous Moscow campaign and the formation of the stronger Fourth coalition in 1813 comprising Russia, Austria, Prussia and Britain.

The long term causes

i) The rise of Nationalism in the Iberian Peninsular – particularly in Spain:

In 1808, Napoleon installed his brother, Joseph as king of Spain, while Murat took the place of Joseph in Naples. In the long run this step proved to be a fatal blunder. The proud Spanish nation found it an intolerable insult to its honour. For the first time Europe experienced that a nation could rise against a conqueror. A medieval but powerful kind of nationalism which combined the crown and the church, developed in Spain. Juntas (people's committees) were formed everywhere, with a central Junta in Madrid to lead the rebellion against French occupation. The aid of Britain was sought. Thus, a British force under Sir Arthur Wellesley (known after 1809 as the duke of Wellington) was sent to help the rebels liberate the Peninsula.

The guerilla warfare and the mountainous nature of Spain and Portugal proved very difficult for Napoleon to control rebellion against his system in Spain. The Spanish rebellion drained his troops and resources. He later remarked that "the Spanish ulcer destroyed me". Besides draining him of troops and resources, the Spanish nationalism had an inspiring influence on other European nations, particularly the Germans.

ii) The Empire had become too large to keep together. By 1809, Napoleon's empire had reached its zenith. Virtually the whole of the European continent lay at his feet. He was not only ruler of France, but of an Empire which stretched from the North Sea (Holland) to the river Ebro in northern Spain, and from the English Channel to the Bay of Naples. In Italy, he was also king of Italy and patron of the Confederation of the Rhine which, by 1810, included all German states except Prussia and Austria. His brothers, Joseph and Jerome were kings of Spain and Westphalia respectively and his brother – in – law, Murat, king of Naples.

After divorcing Josephine, as she was unable to provide him with an heir, Napoleon married, Marie Louise, the daughter of Francis I of Austria, in March 1810. By so doing Napoleon entered one of the oldest dynasties in Europe. However, in spite of its outward appearance of strength, the Napoleonic Empire had inherent flaws which appeared one after another. The empire lacked firm national support and was kept together by military force. Continuous war substantially thinned the ranks of the veterans of war. Napoleon was increasingly obliged to make use of foreign troops and young inexperienced French conscripts. Thus with this vast empire, and war-weary troops empire was bound to start crumbling.

The Continental System

The failure of the continental system had confirmed the naval and commercial supremacy of

Britain. That Napoleon possessed remarkable qualities which set him far above many excellent leaders down the centuries cannot be doubted. There was his magical charm, which could win opponents within moments. Then he had the ability to understand the psychology of his soldiers and to win their confidence. The duke of Wellington himself said that the moral effect of Napoleon's presence on his army was worth as much as 40 000 men. But then, it is true that while certain personal qualities helped him achieve great heights, they were equally responsible not only for the failure of the continental system but for his fall.

Prussia's military reforms

The reforms of social and political life in Prussia went hand in hand with improvements in the military system. The army was to be a national institution. All citizens had to undergo military training and thereafter be enrolled in the national reserves and the Land Storm. To keep abreast of times, improvements were also made to military training, uniforms and weapons. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, and the well-known military strategist Clausewitz, undertook the military reforms which were complete by 1813, in time for the final onslaught against Napoleon in the Battle of the Nations.

Study Guides

- i) What factors limited the effectiveness of the Continental System?
- ii) What were the causes and results of the Peninsular War?
- iii) In what ways does the history of the Peninsular War support Napoleon's view of it as the "Spanish ulcer."?

Short-term causes

The Moscow Campaign of 1812

Alexander I's violation of the continental system was a challenge which could not be ignored. The Tsar had to be humiliated. Napoleon, therefore resolved to reduce Russia to a state of complete submission. Napoleon fully equipped his army well, and had made extensive logistical preparations. It would be a brief campaign in June 1812. The Grand Army with a troop strength of 611 000 men started the invasion of Russia. Russia employed the scorched earth policy, where they destroyed all food supplies. Thousands of soldiers fell by the way-side due to heat exhaustion and hunger. After the bloody battle of Borodino the road to Moscow lay open for the Grand Army. However the shortage of food plus the winter led to a drop in morale among the soldiers. Alexander rejected the offer of a truce. By mid-October 1812 Napoleon had no choice but to begin the retreat with only 100 000 men left. Probably not more than 20 000 or 30 000 men out of an army of over 600 000 finally crossed the Niemen into France. The Moscow campaign had been very costly to Napoleon's plans and ambitions and hastened his downfall.

The formation of the fourth Coalition

This coalition was formed in February 1813, by Russia, Prussia, Austria and Britain. For the first time in his career, Napoleon was confronted with the joint forces of four large powers. Three large armies under Moreau and Bernadotte (previously Napoleon's Marshal), Blucher and Schwarzerberg, descended on Napoleon. Bernadotte and Moreau persuaded the allies to utilize Napoleon's proven tactics of dividing the enemy, and to fight the separate commanders, and not Napoleon himself. In this they were successful. Ultimately the Allies cornered Napoleon at Leipzig. They had 320 000 men, and Napoleon, half that number. In what the Germans later

called the “Battle of the Nations”. (16 - 19 October 1813), Napoleon suffered a crushing defeat. Early in 1814, the allies with a force of 200 000 men, invaded France across the Rhine. Napoleon was finally overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the allied troops. He could not prevent Alexander I and Frederick William from entering Paris on 31 March 1814. It was not until April 1814 - that Napoleon finally abdicated and was settled at the island of Elba.

Study Guides

- i) Why did Napoleon invade Russia in 1812?
- ii) In what ways did Napoleon’s defeat in Russia contribute to his eventual downfall?
- iii) What factors contributed to the more effective allied military performance in 1813- 1814?
- iv) What mistakes did Napoleon make which his enemies were able to capitalize on?
- v) Why was Napoleon finally defeated at Waterloo?
- vi) What impact did the French Revolution have on Europe to 1815 and even beyond?

Examination type questions

1. Why was Napoleon Bonaparte able to support the Directory and establish himself as First Consul in France?
2. “The Continental System was the key reason behind the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire.” How valid is this view?
- 3 By what means and with what success did Napoleon Bonaparte administer the conquered territories?
- 4 Why was Napoleon Bonaparte able to wage such a lengthy war against the European governments?

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CHAPTER 8

THE PEACE SETTLEMENT (1814 – 1815)

Chapter objectives

By the end of the topic, students should be able to:

- (i) Describe the aims of the major Powers at the Congress of Vienna.
- (ii) Locate the conflicting aims of the major powers.
- (iii) Explain the terms of the Congress of Vienna.
- (iv) Assess the impact of the Congress of Vienna on
 - a) the victorious powers
 - (b) The defeated powers.
- (v) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Treaty of Vienna
- (vi) Assess how far the balance of power was achieved
- (vii) Describe how effectively the threat of French resurgence was dealt with
- (viii) Link the heavy-handed nature of the Treaty of Vienna to the eruption of revolts during the 1820s.
- (ix) Pass a judgement on whether the Treaty was the best package possible in the circumstances of the time.

This is a very important topic in the syllabus. It is also a very popular one among both students and teachers. In fact there are syllabi which begin in 1815, with the peace – settlement. The

Peace Settlement consisted of a number of agreements signed after the defeat and abdication of Napoleon I. These included the Treaty of Chamount (March 1814), Treaty of Fontainebleau (April 1814), First Treaty of Paris (May 1814), Congress of Vienna (November, 1814-June 1815), and the 2nd Treaty of Paris (November 1815).

The Treaty of Chamount (March 1814)

According to this treaty, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia undertook to unite in a quadruple alliance for twenty years. They also agreed to overthrow the Napoleonic dynasty. The underlying objective was to create a balance of power in Europe, which was to prevent any single state from ever again reaching such a dominant position as France had, under Napoleon. The treaty of Chamount also paved the way for the later system of Congresses.

The Treaty of Fontainebleau (April 1814)

Paris was already in the hands of the allies when Napoleon formally abdicated in April 1814. According to this treaty, Napoleon was obliged to relinquish all claims he and his family had to the French throne. Napoleon, furthermore, undertook to settle on the island of Elba, where he would enjoy full sovereignty. He and his family members would also receive pensions.

The first Treaty of Paris (May 1815)

This was a very lenient Treaty which did not aim at imposing revenge on France.

- i) The treaty determined that the country's borders were to revert to those of 1792.
- ii) France was further exempted from the payment of war damages
- iii) She was allowed to keep certain territorial gains along the Rhine
- iv) France was permitted to keep her colonies and trading posts in India
- v) She regained Guade-loupe and her fishing rights in Newfoundland waters.
- vi) France undertook to vacate her military-bases in the East Indian territories. France was therefore militarily weak in her colonies, although her trading wealth remained largely untouched.
- vii) Britain was allowed to keep Mauritius, Tobago and St Lucia.
- viii) Article XXXII (32) stipulated that a Congress would be held in Vienna in September 1814 to order matters in Europe as a whole.

The Congress of Vienna (November 1814 – June 1815) The Vienna Settlement

Of all the treaties of the Peace Settlement, this was the most important. Most examination questions have been set on the Congress of Vienna. Candidates are expected to study the aims of the Congress and analyze its terms. Students are also supposed to familiarize themselves with the terminology of the Vienna Settlement.

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA 1814-1815

The Vienna settlement of 1815 was an attempt to redraw the map of Europe after years of French control. The statesmen were aiming to prevent anyone dominating the continent in the way that Napoleon had done. The aim was to create a treaty that would be satisfactory to the majority of Europe and so secure a lasting peace. The settlement was also an attempt to control the twin evils' of nationalism and liberalism which were held to be responsible for the upheavals for the previous two decades.

The aims of the Peacemakers

1. Castlereagh of Britain, was devoted to the principles of the balance of power, which in particular would mean resisting the territorial ambitions of Russia. France was the other main threat to future peace, so containment of the France was also necessary. Peace would benefit Britain commercially.
2. Metternich of Austria, wanted a balance of power as well as a strong central Europe (under Austrian control) as a barrier to Russia.
3. Tsar Alexander 1, emperor of Russia, wanted to use the congress to pursue Russian expansion into Poland. He was totally opposed to any measure that could be seen to be promoting nationalism or liberalism.
4. Hardenberg of Prussia was weak after the Napoleonic war and was indebted to Russia for liberating most of the Kingdom from the French. Accordingly, Hardenberg had to follow the Russian line. Nevertheless, she remained cautious over Russian expansionist motives in east and central Europe, mainly Poland and Saxony.
5. Talleyrand of France, aimed to convince the allies that France was no longer a threat to European peace. He was also the chief exponent of the principle of legitimacy. His main aim was to take advantage of the leniency exercised by the major powers to press for the restoration and recognition of France as a major power.

Problems facing the Peacemakers

A major problem facing the peacemakers in 1814-15 was the chaos caused by 22 years of war and the overthrow of regimes and frontiers. Europe was in a real sense, like “a world turned upside down.” Since 1792 and, more specifically, since 1805, enormous changes had been made to the map of Europe. In central Europe the frontiers of Austria Prussia and the smaller German states had been drastically reshaped. Italy had also undergone numerous alterations. Some states had been annexed to France, while others had been grouped and later regrouped into republics, then kingdoms. This was the case of Italy. In Eastern Europe, Poland which had ceased to exist in 1795 after its final partition between Russia, Austria and Prussia, had been partially resurrected as the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Rulers as well as peoples had been subjected to the whims of Napoleon the conqueror. The Bourbons were deposed from Napoleon’s generals, Marat and Bernadotte, became rulers respectively of Naples and Sweden. Consequently the peacemakers were confronted with a lot of questions to be decided regarding state boundary and rulers.

Probably the most important problem facing the peace makers was how to prevent France from overrunning neighbouring states and disturbing the peace of Europe in future. Most of the states bordering France in the 1790s had been too small and too weak to offer effective resistance to French armies. However a solution to the problem was reached fairly easily, since the victorious Great Powers were in complete agreement on the need to contain France, in contrast to the strong disagreements that arose on other issues.

One such issue was the fate of German states, a contentious issue between Austria and Prussia since 1813. It remained to be decided what sort of federal structure should replace Napoleonic Confederation of the Rhine, which had itself taken the place of the Habsburg-dominated Holy Roman Empire. However the most serious disagreement that arose at Vienna was over the future of Poland. The Tsar proposed to create a large independent Poland, with himself as King, to replace Napoleon’s Grand Duchy of Warsaw. This had been created out of territory acquired by

Prussians and Austrians in the 1790s. The plan was rejected by the other Great Powers on the basis of the fact that there would be nothing like an independent Poland but simply a Russian satellite. The Polish question therefore had serious implications for the European balance of power. It also affected the balance of power in Germany, because Prussia was keen to acquire Saxony (a German state) as compensation for the Polish territory she would forfeit.

The treatment of France became a problem only after the “hundred Days of Napoleon’s attempted come back. In 1814, after Napoleon’s abdication, Castlereagh had persuaded the other victors, without much difficulty, to accept his case that leniency towards France was the best guarantee for the survival of the Bourbon regime and by extension for stability in Europe. But after Napoleon’s triumphant return to France in 1815 and the flight of Louis XVIII to Brussels, Castlereagh’s assurances seemed somewhat hollow. Russia, and to a lesser extent Austria, demanded a punitive peace while the Prussians and some of the German states clamoured for the dismemberment of France.

Finally the pressure of public opinion might be deemed to have been a problem for the statesmen at Vienna. Since 1795 French armies had spread an awareness of the ideas of liberty and equality and after 1805, the concepts of the Napoleonic civil code. In addition the French occupation of Europe, increasingly severe in its demand on the civilian population, had provoked some stirrings of patriotic and nationalistic feeling. Such ideologies could not easily be accommodated to the great power’s conception of the need for peace and order in Europe.

It must be noted that the peacemakers were not supermen but human beings living within the same geo-political context. As such, historians and students alike should take cognizance of the difficulties and problems under which they operated. The best they could achieve was perhaps, a political compromise. Of course they should still be blameworthy where they exercised self-interest and ignored obvious realities.

Aims and Principles

In recent years some historians have become dissatisfied with the traditional way of presenting the aims and principles of the Vienna settlement. For example, it is commonly stated that the Vienna settlement was based in the twin principles of “legitimacy” and the balance of power.” A variant interpretation would be that the congress of Vienna intended to achieve “Restoration founded on Legitimacy”

To this could be added the third principle “rewards for the victors’ with the “containment of France.” Such assertions are not so much incorrect as misleading because they oversimplify a complex situation. In the first place, it seems that the peacemakers only recognized the claims of former rulers when it suited them, secondly, although all the great powers did attach importance to the concept of the balance of power, they tended to interpret it to suit their own national interests it therefore lacked a precise meaning.

A more valid point of view is that the congress of Vienna represented a series of compromises by the Great Powers, whose views were vastly different. Important differences of opinion had characterised most of the negotiations among the allies since 1813. Metternich for example, was far from being convinced before 1814 that it made sense to destroy Napoleon’s power in Western Europe if the result was to leave Russia dominating the continent. This explains why Castlereagh had insisted on the need for a united front in both diplomacy and war in dealing with Napoleon, which was eventually agreed on at the Treaty of Chaumont. (March 1814) what the

Great Powers had in common was the desire for peace, security, and stability but they did not necessarily agree on how to achieve such ends.

The Territorial settlement

In Western Europe, the key factor in territorial settlement was the “containment” of France which necessitated the re-drawing of state boundaries. The solution adopted to deal with the weakness of France’s immediate neighbours was to create more powerful “buffer states” on her borders. The areas most easily overrun by French armies since the 1790s had been the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), the Rhineland, and the coastal strip of north Italy. It was decided therefore to join Belgium and Holland together under the Dutch king as the United Netherlands, whose frontiers were to be reinforced by restoring the old “barrier fortresses.” In the Rhineland Prussian territory was greatly extended and Bavaria and Baden were also strengthened. The independence and neutrality of Switzerland, a route into central Europe for French armies, were recognized by all the Great Powers, including France. To close the gap into north Italy, the formerly independent republic of Genoa was incorporated into Piedmont, which was further enlarged by the restoration of Nice and most of Savoy. With Prussian forces ready to be deployed along the Rhine or to assist the King of Holland and Austrian armies in Lombardy, to the east of Piedmont, France was surrounded by a defensive arrangement or “cordon sanitaire” which would severely restrict her opportunities to expand in future.

It is important to note that the territorial settlement in Italy illustrates the limited vision of the statesmen at Vienna in that, for the most part, they revive the pre-war system of separate sovereign states and restored the old dynasties. A federal union taking account of regional loyalties would have been an appropriate political structure for Italy, whose people hoped for something better than the arbitrary, despotic regimes thrust on them in 1815. However, it has to be recognized that the frequent boundary changes made by France between 1797 and 1811 were really not meant to promote a measure of Italian unification, but French administrative convenience. Accordingly, by 1811, some Italian states had been annexed outright to the French Empire, while others had been formed into the Kingdom of Italy.

At first sight, the reconstitution of the Italian states gives the appearance of being based on four “principles,” the containment of France, territorial compensation, the balance of power and legitimacy. In fact, the Italian settlement was designed to serve Austrian interests. She secured Lombardy and Venetia as compensation for the loss of the Austrian Netherlands. She also acquired the Adriatic territories of the Venetian Republic including Dalmatia.

Austrian influence was further increased by the restoration of Habsburg rulers to the central duchies of Parma, Modena and Tuscany. The restoration of the old regime in Italy was symbolized by the return to the Pope of the Papal States, guarded by Austrian troops. Ferdinand I took over as the ruler of Naples and promised Austria not to grant his subjects a constitution.

The Vienna settlement created an Austrian paramouncy in Italy to the exclusion of French influence. This was blatant Great Power politics which recognized Austria’s entitlement to compensation and her supporting role to the “buffer” state of Piedmont on the French frontier. Her Italian gains were supposed to strengthen her as a Great Power, vital to European stability, and to act as a counterweight to the aggrandizement of Prussia in Germany. But it could be argued that Austria was able to gain additional territorial influence because of her central role among the Great Powers at the Vienna conference. Hence self-interest was hidden behind the need to achieve a balance of power in the case of Italy.

The reshaping of Germany in 1814-15 provides another example of the limited vision and practical realism of the peacemakers. On the one hand they accepted the logic of Napoleon's reduction in the number of states of the old Roman Empire from over 300 to only 39, but they then could not see the need to allow the new German states a viable constitution.

The basic decision to set up a new German Confederation of 39 states made sense, but it perpetuated the existence of too many weak, small states. At one extreme the Confederation included the two German Great Powers, Austria and Prussia, while at the other extreme, were the four free cities: Hamburg, Lubeck, Bremen and Frankfurt. In the north, Hanover was elevated to the status of a kingdom. In the south Bavaria gained valuable additions of territory, strengthening the Rhine border in exchange for territory restored to Austria. The German Confederation also included within its boundaries, two duchies of Holstein and Luxemburg, ruled by the king of Denmark and Holland respectively. These were too weak to stand alone and they became a cause for contention in the 1860s.

Having said this, it is clear to note that the opportunity to make Germany a more powerful force in European affairs was not taken in 1815. German was as much a geographical expression as Italy for the purpose of enabling Austrian domination. Any greater integration which would have encouraged nationalism and even liberalism was strictly forbidden. Instead the Kingdom, dukedoms and free cities enjoyed equal rights as independent sovereign states, sending non-elected representatives to a Diet at Frankfurt under an Austrian president. The new Germany largely reflected Metternich's desire for a weak federation, dominated by Austria. Proposals made by Stein and Hardenberg in 1813 for a single sovereign Germany state or for a north/south division of influence between Prussia and Austria were strongly opposed by Metternich.

Although the restoration of Austria to her 1805 strength had been agreed without difficulty, the reconstruction of Prussia was a lot more contentious. This was because Prussian claims were linked to a much larger issue in Europe which brought the allies to the brink of war against each other. The root of the problem was Tsar Alexander's determination of a larger Polish state as a Russian satellite and to compensate Prussia for the loss of her former Polish territory with the whole of Saxony. This had been the essence of the Treaty of Kalisch (February 1813) by which Prussia agreed to abandon its alliance with France and to side with Russia against Napoleon. It was feared that if Prussia gained the whole of Saxony, she would become too strong in Western Europe, thereby upsetting the balance of power. Austria and Britain, together with France, bitterly opposed the idea. In the end, Prussia had contentment with receiving only two fifths of Saxony (40% of its population and 60% of its land) and a larger area of Polish territory, including Posen and Thorn. Hence the Tsar's ambitions of taking over the whole of Poland were also thwarted

British gains were made overseas. She retained Tobago, St Lucia and Mauritius taken from France as well as Ceylon and Cape Colony taken from Holland. She paid Holland financial compensation. She also gained protection of the Ivorian Islands in the Adriatic Sea, formerly belonging to the Venetian Republic. British territorial gains reflected her vast trading interests as the mistress of the seas.

France got off lightly. The victorious allies were remarkably lenient towards the state that had created such upheavals in Europe since 1792. This peace of reconciliation was another aspect of containing France by re-integrating her into the European states system. In the First Treaty of Paris (May 1814) she kept her 1792 frontiers, as well as the art treasury looted from all over Europe by Napoleon. No indemnity or army of occupation was imposed. However, France was

required to give her assent to a series of changes which the allies envisaged making in Europe. These related to Holland, Germany, Switzerland and Italy in particular, as well as Britain's acquisition of various islands. But Britain actually returned far more overseas territories than she kept.

Even after Napoleon's ill-fated return from Elba, France was saved from the punitive peace terms which Holland and some of the German states, especially Prussia, wished to impose on her. By the second Treaty of Paris, November 1815, her frontiers were slightly reduced by fixing them at their 1790 limits. She had also to pay an indemnity of 700 million francs, a substantial amount, and return all stolen art treasures, as well as suffer an army of occupation for three to five years. Napoleon himself was exiled to St Helena, a distant island in the south Atlantic. Even so, these were not harsh terms for a nation which has seemingly welcomed Napoleon's return and had therefore to accept some measure of responsibility for disturbing the peace of Europe yet again, before the peace settlement commenced in May 1814 was even completed.

Castlereagh, with some support from Metternich, demonstrated his statesmanship by his insistence that European peace and stability would not be secure if France was resentful. Instead of weakening France, the allies sought to strengthen the bonds uniting them against a repetition of French aggression. This was one of the greatest achievements in 19th century diplomacy. This actually ensured that no major wars broke out for a period of 40 years. As a safeguard the statesmen added Article VI to the Quadruple Alliance which provided for periodic meetings of the allies to consider measures to maintain the peace of Europe. It was this article which provided and formed the basis for the Congress System.

How successful was the Congress of Vienna?

The Vienna Settlement attracted more criticisms than praises for much of the nineteenth century. The fact that the period from 1815 to 1848 is often referred to as "The Age of Revolutions" strongly suggests that the Vienna Settlement failed to achieve the aim of re-establishing order within states. In the late 19th century it was commonly asserted that the "reactionaries" of 1815 had willfully ignored the twin forces of Liberalism and Nationalism. Furthermore it was asserted that the principle of legitimacy was invoked to justify the return of discredited dynasties" in Spain, Italy, and Germany, whose despotic, rule provoked revolutions in the following decades. Hence 19th Century historians dismissed the Vienna settlement just as a triumph of reaction."

The peace settlement has also been attacked for the exclusion of the smaller powers from decision-making. By delegating themselves the right to decide the fate of smaller states, the Vienna statesmen, it is said, put too high a premium on international stability at the expense of the wishes and aspirations of peoples. Cavour, the Prime Minister of Piedmont in 1852 commented in 1846 that;

"Resting on no principle, neither that of legitimacy, nor of national interests, nor of popular will, taking account neither of geographical conditions, nor of general interests, this august assembly, acting only by right of the strongest, erected a political edifice (house) without any moral foundation."

Another area of criticism was the reluctance of the Vienna statesmen to allow constitutional governments in smaller states. However, France enjoyed the benefits of the charter of 1814 which was "the most liberal form of government to be found in Europe at that time." Constitutions were also granted in some German states in accordance with the terms under which

the Confederation was established in 1815. Overallly though, it has to be admitted that the opportunity to make better governments in smaller states was missed.

On the other hand, it maybe argued that the peacemakers cannot be fairly criticised for their neglect of liberalism in 1815. Certainly, some historians have argued that if nationalist feelings had been allowed fuller expression after 1815, Europe could have been spared many of the wars and upheavals which resulted from nationalist pressures later in the century. However, others have suggested that the emergence of an aggressive, expansionist nationalist feeling later in the 19th century demonstrated the potentially disruptive force within nationalism which, if given free reign after 1815 would have destroyed the peace settlement.

Another approach by modern historians has been to question the assumption of earlier generations that support for liberalism and nationalism was wide spreading in early 19th century Europe. The present historical consensus is that the liberal nationalism of the early nineteenth century was largely a middle class affair. Among the masses the nationalistic feeling aroused during the Napoleonic Wars was primarily a primitive anti-foreigner nationalism, expressing resentment at French financial policies and occupation. The logical conclusion to be drawn from this is that the statesmen of Vienna cannot be criticised for ignoring the national aspirations of the masses, which scarcely existed in 1815.

The proposition that the smaller powers would have exercised a beneficial influence over the outcome of the peace settlement, if allowed to participate, is somewhat faulty. Historically, there is no evidence that smaller powers behave less selfishly than the Great Powers. What is certain is that if Holland and some of the German states had dictated the terms of the second Treaty of Paris, November 1815, France would have been dismembered.

More importantly, the Vienna settlement was not a dictated settlement like the diktat of Versailles” which created a legacy of deeply felt resentment that undermined European stability for two decades. On the contrary, the congress of Vienna actually attempted international co-operation in the form of the Congress System, although this was not very successful. But what was generally a success story was the concept of the balance of power. The Napoleonic dictatorship and tyranny was never again duplicated in any form. Russian efforts to dominate Eastern Europe were successfully thwarted. This totally differed from what eventually happened in an even more modern century. After destroying the Nazi tyranny in Eastern Europe Stalinist communist dictatorship simply took over.

The attempt to re-establish a balance of power has also been viewed with favour by modern historians since it was one key factor which accounted for peace since none of the major powers had any reason to feel aggrieved. This is because the Great Powers’ territorial claims had been satisfied by the Treaty of Vienna. The Congress of Vienna produced stability because all the major powers were, at least initially, willing to try to resolve problems that arose within the new framework, rather than try to destroy it in order to achieve their individual ambitions. It must be noted that the change in the attitude of Canning, who took over from Castlereagh did not necessarily reflect the British position. Rather, it represented sharp differences in personalities between the two statesmen. Hence it could be argued that on average the Great Powers had a genuine desire to see, not only the survival of the Congress of Vienna, but the Congress System as well.

Assessment of the congress of Vienna:-

Criticism of the congress

The Congress of Vienna and Nationalism

- i) The most common criticism usually leveled at the Congress of Vienna is that the dynamic forces of Nationalism and liberation were underestimated, if not totally ignored. It should be kept in mind that the Vienna statesmen were representatives of the old order. The new forces, unleashed by the Napoleonic wars largely passed them by. It was their task to restore order in Europe, and it was only natural that they should be guided by the stability of the old regime with which they were familiar. In their struggle to create a balance of power, the diplomats paid little attention to the interests of smaller states whose national aspirations they did not hesitate to ignore. The cases of Italy and Poland are good examples. Only Piedmont and the Papal states were not handed over to foreign rule. The rest of the Peninsula was put under foreign rule. This was a clear frustration of nationalist sentiment, which Napoleon's influence had stimulated. Poland was liberated; but with the foreseeable result that it fell under Russian influence. Here, in effect, if not in intention, was the congress's greatest frustration of nationality.
- ii) Another criticism of the congress is that it was dominated by the four major powers - who made all the major decisions affecting their countries. In other words, the fate of smaller nations was determined by the big powers. However, it is not surprising that this was so since it was the great powers who had fought hard to defeat Napoleon.

Justification of the Congress of Vienna: Its strengths

- i) In defence of the Vienna statesmen, it can be argued that few people realized and understood the real extent of the forces of nationalism and liberalism in 1815. A good example is the uniting of Belgium with Holland. This was not really against nationalism because few Belgians, if any, were then very concerned about it. It was the Dutch misgovernment of Belgium which caused the national revolution of 1830.
- ii) The reduction of the German states from over 300 to 39 was a step towards unification compared with the Holy Roman Empire. However, there were no prospects of unification in 1815, whatever the Congress had done because German was still very divided.
- iii) The period of peace which Europe enjoyed up to 1854, until the beginning of the Crimean War, can be ascribed chiefly to the fact that the peace arrangements, unlike the later Treaty of Versailles, did not bear in them the seeds of war. In other words, due to the terms of the Congress of Vienna, Europe was able to enjoy forty years of general peace.

Some important terms associated with the Congress of Vienna

Questions have been asked on various aspects on the Vienna settlement, for instance, whether the balance of power was the major concern of the great powers at the Congress. Candidates need to define the balance of power, and also be able to illustrate it. Balance of power, was the desire, especially by Castlereagh to ensure that no one power became too powerful as to dominate the whole world. At the congress, the powers tried to ensure a balance of power in two ways:- Through territorial adjustments discussed earlier, and the creation of buffer states around France. For each of these two points, there is need for students to illustrate them using specific examples.

Was it a Reactionary or Conservative Settlement?

This is a very common question associated with the Congress of Vienna. In answering such a question, candidates need to define the terms reactionary and conservative, before identifying those terms of the Congress of Vienna which illustrate them.

Reactionary:- Desiring to revert to an earlier state of affairs, to reverse current tendencies.

There are elements of reaction in the settlement as seen in the following terms.

- i) Restoration of legitimate rulers to their thrones – that is the principle of legitimacy, discussed earlier in the chapter.
- ii) Reinstating the control of power in Europe to the traditional great powers.
- ii) Settlement made no concessions to the new forces of liberalism and nationalism.
- iii) Secret diplomacy and separate dealings amongst the great powers was a return to the traditional diplomatic methods of the eighteenth century, e.g. the handling of the Polish – Saxon issue.

Conservative: Desiring to preserve the existing state of affairs

The settlement was also conservative in the sense of keeping the peace which had at last been established and many of the terms can be seen fairly in this light. Their distrust of the forces of liberalism and nationalism also reflected conservative tendencies.

The Hundred days

Meanwhile, the disconcerting news reached the peacemakers that Napoleon had returned to France. The four big powers immediately put their disputes about the territorial arrangements aside, and once again combined their forces to check this new menace. However, Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo on the 18th June 1815.

The Second Treaty of Paris – November 1815

With Napoleon finally out of the way, the victorious powers met in Paris again, amongst other matters, to conclude a new peace treaty with France. In this second Treaty of Paris, the Allies were less lenient with France.

The terms

- i) The country's borders were now narrowed to those of 1790.
- ii) The art treasures which Napoleon had seized were to be returned.
- iii) An indemnity of 700 000 000 Francs had to be paid and
- iv) An army of occupation was stationed in France to enforce the payment of the reparations.

Representation at the Congress of Vienna

The formal opening of the Congress of Vienna took place on the 1st November 1814. It was a glittering gathering accompanied by appropriate elegance and fanfare. It was a meeting of royalty and diplomats who were aiming to negotiate the greatest possible advantages from the envisaged reconstruction of Europe for their various countries. It was therefore invaluable that there would be friction and clash of interest between the peacemakers from the outset.

Although all the European states, except Turkey, were present, the real decisions were made by a committee of five, representing the major powers namely Austria, Britain, Russia and Prussia. France gained access to the inner circle only as a result of the argument of her representative, the

shrewd Talleyrand, that the major powers could not hold his country responsible for the actions of Napoleon.

i) Austria was represented by Clemens Von Metternich. The Austrian Chancellor acted as chairman, Chief planner and host of the Congress. He liked to see himself as the “coachman of Europe”, who wanted to expunge all signs of the French Revolution by restoring the peace and security of Europe under the domination of Austria.

ii) Russia

The Russian delegation was led by Tsar Alexander I. He was an enigmatic figure who frequently vacillated between liberal and authoritarian convictions. Despite his sporadic liberal views, he never lost sight of the interests of Russia.

iii) Britain

Lord Castlereagh, British’s secretary of Foreign Affairs, led the British delegation. His objective was to restore the balance of power in Europe so that no single power would ever attain a position which threatened the peace of Europe. As Britain had no territorial ambitions in Europe, and concerned herself solely with protecting her trading interests, Castlereagh played a decisive role in settling disputes between the continental statesmen.

iv) Prussia

Prussia was represented by her king, Frederick William III. He entrusted the actual negotiations to his Prime Minister Hardenberg.

Study Guides

- i) Describe the principles which guided the peacemakers in the Treaty of Versailles
- ii) Why do you think the principles were not always applied?
- iii) Explain the different motives of the Great Powers in the Treaty of Vienna.
- iv) How far was the Congress of Vienna an example of Great Power politics at play?

The terms of the Vienna Settlement

The principal proposals of the Congress of Vienna can be grouped into three categories:-

- a) Rewards to the Allies or Territorial Arrangements
- b) Arrangements to guard against future French aggression
- c) The restoration of legitimate rulers.

(3) Rewarding the allies who had fought Napoleon/ Principe of compensation

i) Austria

The countries which lost territories as a result of the arrangements were compensated elsewhere. Thus Austria, in return for relinquishing the Austrian Netherlands to Holland obtained the following territories:

- i) Lombardy and Venetia in Italy
- ii) Austria kept Galicia
- iii) In addition, members of the Royal House of Hapsburg were appointed as ruler in the Italian duchies of Parma, Modena and Tuscany.
- iv) Genoa was incorporated with the kingdom of Piedmont restored.

v) The Papal states were given back to the Pope.

ii) Britain

Britain obtained European Islands: Heligoland, Ionian Islands, Malta; West Indies Islands such as St Lucia, Tobago (from France), Trinidad (from Spain), Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and Guyana (South America), from the Dutch, Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius and the Seychelles from France.

The Polish – Saxon question

The Polish – Saxon issue was one of the most vexatious questions with which the Congress had to contend. Russia and Prussia had already reached an agreement at Kalisch in 1813, regarding their respective aims in Poland and Saxony. The broad outlines were that Prussia would claim Saxony, while Russia would extend her authority to Poland. Great Britain and Austria, however, soon opposed this arrangement. Castlereagh feared that Russian authority extended in Europe would hamper the creation of a balance of power. Metternich was also not in favour of a reinforcement of Russia and Prussia. Talleyrand fully exploited the dissension between the allies to the advantage of France and ranged himself on the side of Britain and Austria. At the beginning of 1815 the issue came to a head when Austria Britain and France concluded a defensive pact aimed at opposing the demands of Prussia and Russia. At this point, war looked very likely. A timely compromise was reached, by allowing Russia to extend her authority over a large part of Poland, which included Warsaw. Prussia watered down her initial demands and accepted about half of Saxony.

Prussia

Prussia retained two-fifths of Saxony, Swedish Pomerania and other North German lands.

Russia

Russia gained control of Finland and Poland.

Guiding principles at Vienna: Principle of containment.

1. Prevention of future French aggression

This was done by planting stronger states on France's borders. This is sometimes described as creating buffer states around France or creating an arch of containment around France. This was achieved through the following:

- a) Combining Belgium (Austria – Netherlands) with Holland
- b) Prussia gained the Rhineland states
- c) Austrian troops were stationed in Lombardy and Venetia.
- d) The German confederation of 39 states was created from the previous over 300 states.
- a) Piedmont obtained Genoa

2. The principle of legitimacy

This principle had to do with the restoration of legitimate rulers who had been forced from their thrones by Napoleon's conquests. This principle, however, was not always consistently applied. Although it applied in the restoration of the Bourbons in France, it was disregarded in states like Germany, the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), Norway, Poland and Saxony. Legitimate rulers were restored in the following areas:-

- i) Bourbon kings were restored in Naples in the person of Ferdinand I.

- ii) Habsburg rulers were restored in the duchies of Parma, Modena and Tuscany.
- iii) The Papal states were- re-established.
- iv) Bourbons were restored in France, that is, by Louis XVIII and Charles X.
- v) Bourbons were restored in Spain, that is, Ferdinand VII.

Other clauses

- i) Norway was transferred from Denmark to Sweden.
- ii) There was the international declaration against the slave trade.

Study Guides

- i) Explain the territorial arrangements in the Treaty of Vienna
- ii) How were Metternich's interests different from those of Catlereagh at the Congress of Vienna?
- iii) In what ways did the Congress of Vienna reward the winners of the war against Napoleon?

Study Guides

- i) What compromises were made by the peacemakers in the Congress of Vienna?
- ii) Did the Congress of Vienna set the stage for lasting peace in Europe?
- iii) Why was the Holy Alliance dismissed so strongly and so soon?
- iv) What problems were faced by the peacemakers and how successfully were they addressed?

Examination type questions

1. How far did the issue of restoration dominate the minds of peacemakers at Vienna in 1814-1815?
2. How far was the Congress of Vienna the best settlement that was possible?
3. How and with what success, did the Vienna settlement recognize the changes brought about in Europe between 1789 and 1814?
4. How successful was the Congress of Vienna in its attempt to achieve a mixture of restoration and innovation?

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CHAPTER 9

THE CONGRESS SYSTEM 1815 – 1827

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) Describe the aims of the Congress System.
- (ii) Explain Metternich's fears of liberalism and nationalism which were described as "twin evils."
- (iii) Explain how the Quadruple Alliance (a) acted as the springboard of the Congress System.
(b) set the stage for a Concert of Europe after 1815.
- (iv) Explain the areas of conflict in the Congress System.
- (v) Explain the widening rift between Metternich and Castlereagh, and ultimately, Canning, who was not prepared to co-operate?
- (vi) assessing the effectiveness of the Congress System as a whole and explain whether it was doomed from the start or not.
- (vii) Explain why, given such major differences, the Congress System survived up to 1823.

THE CONGRESS SYSTEMS: 1815-1823

Introduction

The four congresses held at Aix-la-Chapelle, Troppau, Laibach and Verona were an attempt to prolong into the post-war period, the Great Powers' alliance, which had maintained a sense of common purpose in the final stages of the war against Napoleon. The Congress System was therefore an attempt to give the idea of a concert of Europe, a practical expression. It is of importance to note that the concert of Europe itself was more of an ideal, an attempt to harmonize the conflicting ambitions of the Great powers in the interests of "Europe" as a whole. As such, its effectiveness and of course, the effectiveness of the Congress System, depended on the willingness of all the five Great Powers to show restraint in the pursuit of their individual interests. Without this it would be almost impossible to reach a consensus on important issues.

Furthermore, although the phrase "congress system" is a convenient term for describing these meetings of the representatives of the five Great Powers, it can also be misleading. The historian L.C. B Seaman has asserted that several congresses were held but there was nothing systematic about them. This is because this series of meetings was arranged on an adhoc basis (as and when necessary) and conducted without any rules of procedure. To add to the confusion, congresses were not the only form of diplomatic gatherings that took place after 1815. Conferences of ambassadors were also held, but these, generally, only considered one specific topic, whereas a congress usually discussed a number of matters of common concern to the Great Powers.

It is important to note, however, that rivalry and suspicion between states was lessened by informal understanding between some of the Great Powers. From 1815 to 1820, for example, Austria and Britain worked closely together to contain France and to control Russia. When this informal co-operation broke down over disagreements about the purpose of the Alliance, Austria was able to enlist Russia's support (in addition to Prussia's) for a policy of resistance to revolution in Europe.

Why was the Congress Systems set up?

According to Article VI of the Quadruple Alliance, the Great Powers pledged themselves to meet in Congresses in order to achieve two main aims, and these were:

- a) To consider and promote "common interests." affecting them.
- b) To "facilitate and secure the execution of the present Treaty," hence, the Congresses were intended to act as watchdogs of the main Vienna Congress (1815) itself.

It is quite clear that the initial instigating factor for the successive congresses was the common fear of French resurgence, which as early as March, at the Treaty of Chamount, the Great Powers agreed to "Concert together" for the: continuance of the Peace." It should be noted too that once the French threat disappeared, as France became part of the Quantiple Alliance (1818) , the fear which commonly bound them also evaporated. Once this happened, more and more self-centred pursuits divided the major Powers leading to the inevitable collapse of the congress system. However, as subsequent analysis will show in this chapter, the congress system can also be argued to have been doomed right from the beginning. The real congresses commenced in November 1818, although the Quadruple Alliance of November 1815 had set up some kind of framework for it.

The Congress

a) The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle: September-November 1818

The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was convened in September 1818 to consider matters relating to France. It was attended by the rulers of Russia, Austria and Prussia, as well as the leading ministers of the four Great Powers. It was agreed, without much difficulty to end the partial military occupation of France by allied forces, which had been a source of bitterness and a cause of instability in French politics since 1815.

However, the question of France's new position in the Concert of Europe was more controversial. The Tsar pressed the case for transforming the Quadruple Alliance into a five-power alliance by the inclusion of France. Apparently this was a way of creating some monarchical solidarity whereby the Bourbon monarchy in France would join Russia in containing the forces of liberalism and nationalism in Europe. It is interesting to note that the Tsar, in supporting a French integration in the Concert of Europe was in fact attempting to facilitate a Franco-Russian alignment, directed against Britain and Austria. Castlereagh and Metternich therefore opposed the Russian plan, offering a compromise solution instead. France would be admitted to the Congress system, under Article VI of the Quadruple Alliance, but the allies would also renew their commitments to each other against France, under the Treaty of Chaumont of 1814 which had been primarily signed against Napoleon. The spirit of the Treaty of Chamount had resulted from the experience of the successful co-operation in the Fourth Coalition against France from 1813 to 1814.

The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was a successful demonstration of Anglo-Austrian co-operation but French hopes of a closer union with Russia did not materialize. This was partially as a result of Metternich's skill, in private talks in sowing mutual mistrust between the two powers (France and Russia). The main business of the Congress, to determine France's relationship with other powers, was concluded quite harmoniously. But on minor issues such as the slave trade and the Spanish colonies, some bitter exchanges took place between Britain and France.

Although the Congress was generally a success, it is important to point out that mutual mistrust and a degree of bad blood existed between France and Russia on one hand, and Britain and Austria on the other.

b) The Congress of Troppau, October-December 1820

In the interval between the ending of the first congress in 1818 and the summoning of the second at Troppau in October 1820, Metternich's warnings of the existence of a European revolutionary conspiracy seemed well justified. This is because liberal unrest in Germany (which had been suppressed) was followed in 1820 by the assassination of the Duc de Berry, the heir apparent to the French throne, and by revolutions in Spain, Portugal and Naples.

The Great Powers showed most concern at the Spanish and Neapolitan revolts. Although the demand for a constitution in Portugal alarmed the conservative powers, they confined themselves to making formal protests to the government at Lisbon. This was a recognition of the fact that Portugal enjoyed British "protection" as shown by the presence of a naval squadron in the river Tagus, which could dominate the capital of Lisbon.

Although revolts of the early 1820s in the smaller states followed a common pattern, there is absolutely no evidence of a central committee in Paris directing these revolutionary outbreaks as

Metternich alleged. The revolts were caused by general discontent with arbitrary and incompetent government. They were also caused by resentment at the restoration of clerical and aristocratic privileges. The impetus to revolt came from within the ranks of the army. The revolts either began with a mutiny or took the form of a military coup. Many army officers at this period held liberal views and had grievances over being poorly and irregularly paid. Discontented army officers found natural allies among the progressive urban middle class and some of the lesser nobility. Links between them existed through membership of secret societies, as the Carbonari in Naples.

1820 therefore presented itself as a year of revolutions, but it was the revolutions in Spain and Naples which presented Metternich with a test of statesmanship. Such revolutionary activity, he estimated, threatened to completely upset the old order in Europe and therefore needed to be checked. It was clear that a consensus was impossible to achieve over Spain. The Tsar was pressing for “authorized intervention.” The Alliance considered that, whilst events in Spain were not so bad as to spread to other parts of Europe, those of Naples were certain to spread to other parts of Italy. This would eventually destabilise the Austrian Empire itself. Castlereagh on the other hand, insisted that the Quadruple Alliance had not been designed to suppress revolutions, but that the November 1815 Alliance had been “made against France.” He therefore argued that the situation in Spain did not justify intervention.

Castlereagh’s attitude prior to the Troppau Congress already revealed major irreparable cracks in the Alliance. On the other hand, Metternich wanted to secure an outright condemnation of the Neapolitan revolt by all the powers. He also insisted on securing the moral backing of the Alliance for Austrian military intervention, partly because he probably feared that once her forces were engaged in Italy, Austria was made vulnerable to Russian pressure along her northern borders. Consequently when the Tsar supported France’s demand for a congress on Naples in August 1820, Metternich was faced with a possible Franco- Russian front. The French wanted collective intervention, by the Allies in order to press the Neapolitans into adopting a system of government modeled on the French charter of 1814. Once a success, the scheme would make the French a patron of constitutional government in Italy. The French also aimed to neutralize Austrian influence in Italian states. Hence, self interest lay at the centre of the failure of the Congress system.

The Congress of Troppau itself eventually took place in September 1820 amid different aims among the major powers. For instance, the Tsar had a double-minded approach to the revolts in Italy and Spain. He wished to side with Austria as a way of destroying the Anglo-Austrian entente which had existed since 1815. He also wished to support France in order to weaken Austrian influence. At the conference itself, the Tsar brought two different proposals: one proclaimed the right of the Alliance to intervene so as to put down revolts, while the second proposed that the smaller states should be allowed to introduce reforms with the consent of the Great Powers. Clearly, the first would drive a wedge between Britain and Austria while the second would antagonize Metternich, but please France.

On the other hand, the French representatives at Troppau had been instructed by their government to obtain Russia’s co-operation against Austria for the creation of a moderate constitutional regime in Naples. This was, however, a very ambitious scheme, requiring

considerable diplomatic skill to outwit Metternich, and with no backing from Britain, Castlereagh had made Britain's position clear before the Congress met. This was completely at variance with the French stance in that it opposed intervention by the Great Powers collectively, while conceding Austria's right to act under the terms of the Austro-Neapolitan Treaty of 1815, in order to maintain her influence over Italy. Castlereagh's argument about the situation in Naples was sharply different from that of Austria: The revolution in Naples should be treated as a special, rather than a general question, as an Italian question, rather than as a European, and consequently, as in the sphere of Austria rather than of the Alliance."

The fact that both Britain and France only sent observers to the Congress, who only attended the formal sessions, made it easier for Metternich to hold private talks with the Tsar. Since Metternich now gave priority to the battle against revolution, he was prepared to abandon his former policy of cooperation with Britain for the sake of a closer relationship with Russia. Alexander, for his part, was prepared to be persuaded that all Europe was threatened by revolutionary conspiracies directed from Paris, and that he needed to abandon all his liberal views and support Austria in a policy of suppressing revolution. Prussia too, having faced 1818 revolts in the German states was prepared to land her support behind Austria. This resulted in the Troppau Protocol, signed by Austria, Prussia and Russia. It was however, protested by the British and French representatives.

The Troppau Protocol proposed an uncompromising policy of intervention in the name of the Alliance if revolutions occurred. It stated thus;

"States which have undergone a change of Government due to revolution, the result of which threatens other states, cease to be members of the European Alliance and remain excluded from it until their situation gives guarantees for legal order and stability. If, owing to such situations, immediate danger threatens other states, the powers bind themselves, by peaceful means, or if need be by arms, to bring back the guilty state into the bosom of the Great Alliance."

While the Troppau Protocol established the principle of a united front of the three eastern powers against the forces of revolution which lasted for nearly 30 years, it also clearly marked a division of opinion within members of the Quadruple Alliance, with France and Britain on one hand and Austria, Russia and Prussia on the other. This crack was never mended, but in fact got worse and led to the collapse of the congress system altogether.

In a desperate bid to persuade the western powers to accept the Troppau protocol, it was agreed not to publish its contents until after the Congress had resumed at Laibach in January 1821.

The main purpose of the Congress of Laibach was to attempt some sort of mediation by the Great Powers between King Ferdinand of Naples and his subjects. However, at the Congress very little mediation was achieved. The new regime of King Ferdinand had rejected France's advice to modify the constitution along the lines of the French charter of 1814." The Tsar's attitude towards the revolution had also hardened after the outbreak of a mutiny at St Petersburg in December 1820. Consequently, the Congress gave Austria a mandate to intervene by force, which resulted in the defeat of the Neapolitan army by Austrian troops in March 1821 and the overthrow of the revolutionary regime.

Moreover, the Austrians also suppressed the rising in Piedmont in March 1821 with the blessing of the Conference. The Tsar even offered to put 100 000 of his troops at Austria's disposal. With an Austrian military presence established in Tuscany and the Papal states, the whole of Italy was placed under Austrian military surveillance. In fact before the Laibach Conference broke up news arrived of the outbreak in April 1821 of a revolt in Greece against the rule of the Sultan of Turkey. This seemed to confirm Metternich's view that revolution, inspired from France, was rampant. Metternich once said to the Tsar that, "It is at Paris that the great furnace exists."

It is important to note that the congress of Laibach was a complete triumph for Metternich. France's attempt to support the cause of liberalism and moderate revolution had been a failure. On the other hand, Tsar Alexander had been persuaded to abandon the cause of liberalism and to seek safety in the Troppau Protocol. Although the Tsar was later to become restless at the outbreak of the revolution in Greece, it was agreed in May 1821 that the Sultan of Turkey should be assured that the Great Powers would not give aid to the rebellious Greeks. Metternich's policy of opposing all revolutions had therefore succeeded. The only set-back was Britain's open condemnation of interference in the domestic affairs of other states in the name of the Alliance. Despite the apparent decline of the Anglo-Austrian entente, which had operated effectively from 1815 to 1820 as a check on France and Russia, there was still some common ground between Britain and Austria on some issues, especially in the near East (Russia and Greece).

(c)The congress of Verona

October-December, 1822

Between the ending of the Laibach Congress in May 1821 and the start of the Congress of Verona in October 1822, the dominant issues in international affairs were the Greek revolt and the continuing problem of Spain. Once the Tsar had returned to Russia in May 1821, Metternich feared that he could not be relied upon to abstain indefinitely from intervening in the Greek revolt.

Nevertheless, in July 1821, the Tsar was uncertain about the diplomatic path he would pursue. He hinted that the time was ripe for an Alliance with France but by August he was expressing his fears of a revolution by saying "if we reply to the Turks with war, the committee in Paris will triumph and no government will be left on its feet." By the summer of 1822, however, the Tsar had resigned himself to awaiting the decision for the Foreign Minister's conference, arranged for September in Vienna as a preliminary before the full congress at Verona.

In the event, the Greek problem was not a very contentious issue at either meeting. Collective diplomatic pressure on the Sultan applied by the Great Powers secured Russia's satisfaction for her grievances against the Turks, while Metternich once more succeeded in persuading the Tsar that the Greek revolt was, a part of an internal revolutionary conspiracy.

The dominant issue at Verona turned out to be the Tsar's insistence that the Troppau protocol should be applied to Spain. Although his plan for intervention by an allied army was rejected at Verona (by Austria, France and Britain), he remained adamant that the only aim of the Alliance was "to combat Revolution." Since he had agreed not to destroy the unity of the Alliance by siding with the Greek insurgents, he demanded that the Alliance now prove its worth by responding to the Spanish King's appeals to the Great Powers to suppress the revolution.

While the British were, as usual, opposed to any interference in the domestic affairs of another state, the French were undecided about what to do. But they had at least resolved that if a French army did enter Spain, it would not be as an agent of the Alliance but as a demonstration that France could act independently. This divergence of view put Metternich in a quandary or practical dilemma). He did not want to give Russia an excuse for marching his troops across Europe, but he feared that a French army might set up a constitutional monarchy in Spain, which would set a precedent to the Italian states. This is because once a constitutional regime was created in Spain it would inspire the revolutionaries in Italy to achieve the same. This would lead to the expulsion of Austrian presence and interests in Italy.

Moreover, any intervention in the name of the Alliance would alienate Britain. Supporting Metternich would keep Russia under check in the Near East, but Metternich's solution to this dilemma was to persuade France to join the other three powers in sending Protest Notes simultaneously to Madrid. The notes would be phrased so threateningly that the Spanish government would be obliged to react, possibly in such a way that would justify allied intervention.

This scheme enabled Metternich to preserve an appearance of moral solidarity among the four powers. It also went sufficiently well towards satisfying the Tsar's demand for action against the revolution in Spain to enable Metternich to persuade him to maintain a united front towards the Greek revolt. Much to Metternich's satisfaction, the Congress of Verona concluded with a general condemnation of the Greek revolt as "a rash and criminal enterprise."

It must be highlighted that by the time of the Congress of Verona, Castlereagh had committed suicide and was succeeded by George Canning. Canning had a known hostility to the congresses as well as armed intervention in other states. Hence, the death of Castlereagh marked a major turning point in Congress Diplomacy. In fact Verona marked the completion of the breach between Britain and her partners in the Quadruple Alliances.

Canning had less knowledge than Castlereagh with respect to European affairs. He was blunter, less tactful, and felt more sympathies with liberal movements abroad. When on 30 October 1822) Canning communicated to the Congress his firm refusal to intervene in Spain, it was received as a bombshell by other Great Powers. It meant the end of the alliance so far as the western powers were concerned.

"Things are getting back to a wholesome state again, every nation for itself and God for us all", said Canning.

Study Guides

i) Explain the provisions of the following congress:

- a) Aix-la- Chapelle, 1818
- b) Troppau, 1820
- c) Laibach 1821
- d) Verona 1823

ii) In what ways did the Quadruple Alliance transform the wartime allies into a concert of Europe?

The Breakdown of the Congress System

The Congress system broke down in 1823 under the weight of the discordance among the Great Powers in their attitudes towards revolutions. In defiance of the policy agreed at Verona, France intervened in Spain in 1823 to suppress the revolt, while in 1827, Russia, backed by Britain and France, defined the spirit of the Troppau Protocol to assist the Greek revolt. Although it was France and Russia who openly rejected Metternich's tutelage, it was nevertheless Britain's attitude that was most responsible for the collapse of the Congress system. Castlereagh's personal commitment tended to conceal the growing restiveness of British public opinion over involvement in continental affairs. Canning openly repudiated the whole concept of congress diplomacy in 1823. Verona was therefore the last of the congresses.

Metternich's satisfaction at having achieved a solution of the Spanish problem at the Congress of Verona, was short-lived. With the appointment of Chateaubriand as the new Foreign Minister in France in 1823, French policy became more decisive. "Our true policy", he declared, "is the Russian policy, by which we counterbalance two declared enemies, Austria and England." Such utterances went directly against the spirit of the Alliance.

France did not abide by the agreement to deliver a severe diplomatic Note to Madrid at the same time with the three eastern powers: Austria, Russia and Prussia. Instead, a French army of 1000 000 men marched into Spain in April 1823 and restored the authority of the Spanish King, Ferdinand VII. In the process, they also abolished the constitution which the revolutionaries had set up.

The French invasion without the mandate from the Alliance, was an assertion of France's right to pursue an independent foreign policy. The French Prime Minister had made this clear to the Duke of Wellington before the Congress of Verona that, "French policy in relation to Spain was founded upon French interests and entirely unconnected to anything the congress might determine."

This unilateral military action, although approved by the Tsar, had not been sanctioned by the Alliance. In fact, Metternich made a desperate attempt to persuade the other Great Powers to join Austria in stopping French action, although to no avail. Canning, who took over the Foreign Office after Castlereagh's death in August 1822, disapproved of the French invasion of Spain, but would not co-operate with Metternich to oppose it. He could at least take consolation from the fact that France's action had not been given a European mandate at Verona, thereby demonstrating the disunity of the Alliance. The Congress system was clearly in ruins in the spring of 1823 given the disarray among the Great Powers over such an important issue of Spain.

The divergence of views among the five Great Powers became even more explicit a few years later, in the course of the Greek revolt. In 1827 Britain and France agreed to co-operate with Russia in assisting a rebellion against a legitimate authority in defiance of Austrian and Prussian insistence on the respect for the rights of the sultan of Turkey over the Greeks.

However the breakdown of the Congress system had been inevitable since 1820 because the views of Britain and possibly, France, towards revolutions in minor states, were incompatible with the attitudes of the three eastern powers-Prussia, Russia and Austria. The revolts of 1829 raised the fundamental question of the purpose of the Alliance of the Great Powers. Metternich

insisted on a general right of intervention by the Alliance as enshrined in the Troppau Protocol, accepted by Russia and Prussia but rejected by both France and Britain. Its acceptance by the Tsar marked the end of Russian liberalism and signified that Alexander had finally been persuaded of the reality of Metternich's mythical universal revolutionary conspiracy, based in Paris.

Castlereagh who was prepared to concede Austria's right to intervene in Naples, forcefully repudiated Metternich's interpretation of the purpose of the Alliance as providing a justification for interference in the domestic affairs of other states, regardless of whether the security of the Great Powers was at risk or not. Hence his refusal to associate Britain with the "the moral responsibility of administering a general European policy."

Castlereagh also complained to the French in September 1820 that the Tsar was trying to turn the Alliance of the five Great Powers into a general government of Europe. This was despite the fact that the terms of the Alliance had been fixed in 1815 and 1818. "To apply them to all revolutionary events," he said, "is to pervert the principle. It is the Holy Alliance as conceived by the Tsar and which we cannot adopt."

The attitude of the cabinet and public opinion in Britain also contributed to the breakdown of the Congress system. During the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, Castlereagh was warned by the Cabinet not to agree to any extension of Britain's commitments to the Alliance whose purpose in peacetime was not well understood by a nation which was often living in isolation. It was therefore quite clear to Castlereagh by 1820, if not earlier, that British public opinion was reluctant to accept the need for the continuance of Britain's participation in continental affairs. This was especially accomplished considering that no danger existed to the security of the Great Powers.

In his state Paper of May 1820, Castlereagh explained his own misgivings about intervention by the Alliance in the affairs of other states such as Spain "Having subdued the Conqueror... it never was, however, intended as a union for the Government of the world, or for the Superintendence of the Internal Affairs of other states."

Castlereagh was also opposed to the attempt to endow the Alliance with some moral force. Where he differed from Canning was that he still believed that the periodic meetings would still help to maintain general peace in Europe. He based this on his experience of successful co-operation from 1813 to 1815.

Canning on the other hand, lacked this experience of the value of personal contact and he also disliked Metternich. He therefore regarded the split in the Alliance at Verona as a return to "a wholesome state again" rejoicing that it was once more, a case of "Every nation for itself and God for us all." Such sentiments which were warmly approved by the British parliament, clearly signified the end of Britain's participation in the Congress system.

Study Guides

- i) "The Congress System achieved nothing of lasting value." How fair is this assessment of its achievements?

- ii) “Both in intention and effect, the Congress System merely sustained the restored “ancient regime” in Europe.” How far do you agree with this verdict?
- iii) Was there a congress System?
- iv) Put simply, in what ways was the congress system
 - a) A failure
 - b) A success
- v) Did the self- interest of the Major Powers destroy the Congress System?
- vi) Do you think that Canning destroyed the smooth- running of the Congress System?
- vii) Discuss the opinion that “the congress system scarcely justifies the attention it has received from historians.”
- viii) Why did the 1820s experience so many revolts?

The Congress System: A Failure?

There is general agreement among historians that there was no real “system” to the series of congresses held between 1818 and 1822. It is suggested that by itself the idea of periodic meetings was an insufficient basis for a successful experiment in international co-operation. Without permanent organization to collect material for preliminary consideration, to prepare an agenda and to establish agreed rules of procedure at the meetings, the congresses were incapable of operating in anything but an ad hoc, amateurish fashion. Metternich himself seems to have realized this by 1823 when he commented to an advisor: “before talking about congresses it is necessary to come to an accord on many matters and the way to do this is through simple conferences.” The Congress system was perhaps too ambitious in attempting to secure the agreement of all five Great Powers on the range of issues that came before them.

The Congress system has also been seen as a missed opportunity for making adjustments to the Vienna settlement in the light of subsequent events. Once it became clear that there were popular pressures for good government and or some recognition of national identity, the Congress System, it has been suggested, provided a suitable forum for consideration of modifications to the peace treaty.

Instead, the majority of the Great Powers were persuaded by Metternich to adopt an essentially static concept of how to preserve peace and stability which sought to repress popular movements rather than make concessions to liberal or nationalist aspirations. The three eastern powers in particular seemed to be unable to differentiate between demands for constitutional reform and the sort of militant Jacobinism that had caused much of the unrest in Europe in the 1790s. British public opinion would not permit its government to support the sort of gross misgovernment that characterized the rule of Ferdinand of Spain, but the continuance of the Congress system without Britain, one of the two leading Great Powers, would have been nonsensical.

A fatal flaw in the Congress system was the failure to establish agreed principles on which the Alliance of the Great Powers was supposed to operate. Consequently problems arose from the existence of too many principles which were not readily compatible. Thus Article VI of the treaty of November 1815 sought to establish the idea of periodic meetings to discuss matters of common concern. The Tsar’s Holy Alliance attempted to give Castlereagh essentially a practical scheme, a sort of moralistic nature which could not be fully justified.

- While Metternich's Troppau Protocol gave the Tsar's wishes and sentiments a justification for repression.
- Hence Castlereagh objected to what he regarded as a pervasion of the Principle of the Alliance which was agreed on in 1815.

It is important to note that what appears to be the crux of the matter was the fact that what was constituted in 1815 was an Alliance directed, in Britain's view, against a possible revival of French militarism, with an added proviso for future meetings. However, the Tsar had confused the issue prior to the Treaty of November 1815 with his scheme of the Holy Alliance in September. This may help to explain why the divergence of views which emerged in 1820 seemed to puzzle and annoy the leading participants in the congress system, since they believed that its basic principles had been agreed upon in 1815.

The most obvious failure of the Congress System was its lack of flexibility. As a forum for co-operation among the Great Powers, its inability to accommodate differing views of what constituted a serious danger to the peace of Europe was fatal to its survival. The revolts in Spain, Naples and Greece split the five-power Alliance in different ways- the three powers who tried to resolve the Greek revolt being a quite different combination from the three who agreed to the suppression of the Neapolitan revolt in the name of the Alliance. The Congress System could therefore not operate effectively in such a situation.

Although the Congress system did not cope very well with some of the problems in international affairs from 1815 to 1822, some useful lessons were learnt and some ground was achieved during this period. The basis for a stable international order was created. France was re-integrated into the diplomatic community only three years after the end of the war. That was done without destroying the Quadruple Alliance as a standing precaution against a resurgence of French aggression.

Co-operation between Austria and Britain from 1815 to 1820 helped to maintain stability in Europe by keeping both France and Russia in check. When Anglo-Austrian co-operation broke down in 1820. It was possible by then for Austria to look up to Russia for aid in defending the conservative monarchical order on the continent. By this time as well, Russia was no longer regarded as an expansionist power, but as being committed to the defiance of the status-quo against the spread of liberal and revolutionary ideas. The protection she afforded to the two other conservative powers, Austria and Prussia, therefore helped to consolidate the territorial system created in 1815.

It is interesting to note that in recent years some historians have suggested that too much prominence has been given to the working of the congress system in the study of international affairs in the period 1815-1923. This has been done to the neglect of important underlying issues in Great Power relations such as the Franco-Russian alignment. The congresses themselves might be better regarded, perhaps, as the tip of the iceberg of the diplomatic activity of these years, much of which was conducted beneath the level of 'high-powered' meetings attended by the monarchs and foreign ministers of the Great Powers.

The years 1815 to 1823 represent a phase in Great Power relations when diplomatic gatherings to discuss matters of common concern mainly took the form of congresses. The experience of this experiment was the fact that it achieved some diplomatic co-operation from 1813 to 1818. The idea was to continue with this experience even in peacetime.

As an experiment, the Congress system was not a forerunner of the League of Nations, although there was an attempt by the Tsar to make it some kind of European Government. Its success tended to depend more and more on personal relationships, careful preparation and agreement on basic objectives. The Congress system seems to have possessed only one of those three attributes and even that disappeared with Castlereagh's death in 1822, followed by the death of Alexander in 1825.

Study Guides

- i) Was the Congress System doomed from the start?
- ii) Was the Congress system a failure?
- iii) Why did Britain initially agree to work together with the Western powers in 1815 but stood alone in 1823?

Alternatives to Congress Diplomacy.

Between the breakdown of the Congress system in 1823 and the revolutions of 1830, international relations were in a state of flux (continuous change). The Great Powers were clearly at odds over the question of what should be done about revolutions.

After the Troppau Protocol had pronounced a blanket condemnation of all revolutions, co-operation between Britain and other Powers was almost impossible on most issues. This was because the Tory government in Britain was sympathetic to movements seeking constitution change in a reasonably ordered fashion in the smaller states. Otherwise Britain did not necessarily favour revolutionary upheavals.

Canning was happy to see the Congress System collapse, partly because he was more openly liberal in sentiment than Castlereagh and partly because he preferred to defend British interests by direct, face to face negotiations with individual statesmen. Although the limitations of this approach were to become apparent with the Greek revolt, Canning's use of direct negotiations was very successful in protecting British interests in Portugal, her Brazilian colony and in the Spanish colonies of Latin America.

The rebellion against Spanish rule in Latin America which began in 1820 had benefitted from Spain's involvement in the Napoleonic Wars and her preoccupation with the revolt in 1820 against the absolutist king Ferdinand. The French invasion of Spain in April 18123 to restore royal authority, was seen as a threat to British interests in two ways. Firstly, French armies were feared that they would possibly go on and invade Portugal in order to assist the unpopular monarch in that country to come to power. Secondly, it was feared that France would assist Ferdinand to reassert complete control over his rebellious colonies in the Americas. What

Canning achieved was in fact an understanding that French influence in Spain would be matched by British influence in Portuguese affairs.

The merits of 'Conference Diplomacy' as it is sometimes called were evident in the later stages of the Greek revolt. On a major issue such as the Eastern Question, the limitations of Canning's "everyone for herself" approach were severe. The Near East was an area where international understanding was most needed since several of the powers had important interests to defend there.

But in 1825, Count Nesselrode of Russia became impatient at the obstructive attitude of the other powers towards Russian proposals for mediation in the Greek revolt and asserted in a circular to Russian embassies abroad that "Russia will follow her own views exclusively and will be governed by her own interests."

The Nesselrode Circular of August 1825 was tantamount to a repudiation of the whole concept of the concert of Europe and would also have led to war if acted upon. Fortunately by 1826 Canning recognized the need to co-operate with Russia, if only to forestall unilateral Russian action against the Turks.

Examination type questions

1. "The Congress System would consider great common interests." How far did the period between 1815 and 1827 show that there were very few of these "great common interests" among the major powers?
2. How far did the Vienna settlement lead to the suppression of nationalism between 1815 and 1830?
3. "The Congress system was doomed from the start." Discuss this verdict
4. "Great power politics rather than principles governed the actions of the peacemakers at Vienna." How valid is this claim?
5. Why did the Congress System last no more than ten years?

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CHAPTER 10

THE RESTORED BOURBONS IN FRANCE:-

LOUIS XVIII AND CHARLES X; 1814-1830

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to;

- (i) Describe the provisions of the Charter of Liberties of 1814.
- (ii) Explain the aims of Louis XVIII and Charles X.
- (iii) Account for Louis XVIII's success in retaining himself in power with reference to his middle- of- road policy
- iv) Compare and contrast the reigns of the two Kings.
- v) Explain the impact of the measures taken by Charles to restore ultra-royalism in France
- vi) Describe the characters of the Chief Ministers who served Louis XVIII and Charles X; Richelieu, Duc de Decazes- who served under Louis XVIII and Comte de Villele- who served both Louis XVIII and Charles X's reigns (1821- 1827) and Polignac.
- vii) Account for the 1830 revolution in France
- viii) Explain the downfall of Charles X in 1830.
- ix) Explain the main ideological backgrounds
 - (i) The Bonapartists.
 - (ii) The liberals and middle class
 - (iii) The ultra Royalists
- x) Evaluate the successes of the reigns of Louis XVIII and that of Charles X.

Overview

Louis XVIII was 59 years when he came to the throne of France as King. He did not do so by popular approval but he was restored by the force of arms of the Quadruple Alliance (Britain, Prussia, Austria and Russia) following the abdication of Napoleon Bonaparte in April 1814. Although Louis XVIII initially raised skepticism by denying the revolutionary ideal of popular sovereignty by restoring the white Bourbon flag in place of the Tricolour, he was soon to make moves that assured the generality of the liberal population in France. Significantly, he granted to his subjects a charter which seemed to declare that there was no return to the absolute rule associated with the pre-revolutionary monarchy. Such was the basis of Louis XVIII's success in power. NB: The Charter of Liberties was given to France by the conservative powers after realizing that the revolution could not be ignored.

Why was Louis XVIII successful in retaining himself in power?

The Charter was one of the most important instruments through which Louis XVIII established a liberal basis for government. He made no attempt to restore the ancient regimes' privileges and feudalism.

The Charter provided for a bi-cameral chamber (two chambers), the Chamber of Peers which the King nominated and the Chamber Deputies which was elected. Deputies had to be over 40 years old and possess substantial property. The restricted franchise restricted the vote to around 100 000 of the wealthiest people in France (out of a population of 30 million) equality before the law, no imprisonment without cause, careers open to talents, security for property (including the gains the nation acquired during the revolution) i.e the lands formerly belonging to the church or aristocrats, confiscated during the revolution and sold off, mainly to the bourgeoisie. Apparent freedom of the press (subject to laws which must check the abuse of this liberty).

Religious toleration ensured continuity with the liberal principles established during the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. Naturally, upholding such provisions of the Charter ensured a relative degree of continuity with the revolutionary tradition established by the Declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen.

However, it is important to remember that Louis XVIII was a monarch, not an elected radical leader, and as such he wanted to retain a sizeable degree of authority. For example, he appointed ministers, initiated legislation, had the power of veto, could dissolve the chamber of deputies, nominated the chamber of Peers and controlled all civil and military appointments.

Therefore the Charter can be seen as a compromise between the claims of the divine right by monarchy to rule and the liberal ideal of limited constitutional government. Thus, it was a promising foundation for the restored monarchy. However, there were difficulties right from the start. The Charter was a royal rant, voluntarily given, and some feared it might be just as easily and voluntarily withdrawn. The franchise, like the powers of parliament, was limited, this excluded the general population from the vote. Certain aspects of the Charter's provisions, such as the relationship between ministers and parliament and the position on the freedom of the press, were ambiguous and could easily become sources of friction. Ultimately, whether the Charter could work or not, depended first on the King, and second on this chief Minister as well as the conservative, liberal and radical elements within his cabinet. Louis XVIII was fully

conscious of his fact and he fought hard to maintain some sort of delicate political balance in France. He implemented the Charter and barred the influence of Ultra-Royalists.

The attempted takeover by Napoleon after his escape from Elba was greeted by wild cheers of approval from the French. This forced Louis XVIII to temporarily abdicate. When he eventually came back it awkwardly seemed as if he had been imposed on the French by the allies. However, many members of the middle and upper classes were willing to support the regime if it brought peace and respected their gains from the revolution. Additionally, Louis could look for support from those who had suffered most under the revolutionary and Napoleonic regimes: the Catholic Church, the nobility and, to a large extent, the peasantry, who had borne the brunt of military conscription and high taxation and had in the final years of Napoleon experienced inflation and hunger again. Of course Louis XVIII was cautious not to fulfill the expectations of the Church and nobility for fear of upsetting the liberal majority. The liberals had directly benefited from the gains nationaux and would resist any reform meant to dispossess them of their land. Clearly such a consciousness on the part of Louis XVIII was one major reason for his success as King of France.

Nevertheless, Louis XVIII did not have a smooth-sailing reign. Many of the noble émigrés and clergyman who returned from foreign exile wanted revenge on those who had caused their misfortunes. Ironically, it was these ultra-royalists who posed the greatest initial threat to the stability of the restoration. On Napoleon's final defeat in the summer, ultra-royalist launched a, "white Terror." (White for the Bourbons) against the supporters of Napoleon, the Bonapartists. This involved mass arrests, pillaging and massacring of prisoners by Catholic bands of peasants and workers, often encouraged by local nobility. In Nimes, for example, Catholics were led by the notorious brigand leader, Trestaillons (three pieces) who it was claimed cut his enemies into three parts. The strengths of this royalist backlash was reflected in the elections for the chamber of Deputies in August when a huge royalist majority was elected. In such circumstance Louis' hopes of a policy of reconciliation seemed destined to fail.

The new Chamber of Deputies demanded a more "royalist" government and an official white terror involving a purge of government administration. Louis was forced to dismiss the moderate government of Talleyrand and Fouché. He was also forced to sack or punish about a third of the civil servants and to remove about 15000 army officers. Special courts punished about 6 000 people accused of sedition. Further problems for Louis were caused by economic disruption at the end of the wars (1815) a flood of cheap British imports and harvest failures in 1816-17.

Louis XVIII managed to ride the storm. In September 1816 he felt strong enough to dissolve the chamber and seek a more malleable body of new deputies. This resulted in a chamber dominated by constitutional' royalists. One of the new chamber's first acts, as directed by the new government headed by the Duc de Richelieu, was to amend the electoral law to make it harder for ultras to be elected.

The trend towards a more moderate government was continued when Richelieu was replaced in 1818 by the Duc de Decazes, a moderate liberal whose acceptance was based on the charter. He purged the administration of ultras and appointed a batch of liberal nobles to the chamber of Peers. He also reorganized the army, introducing voluntary enlistment and promotion by merit, as well as relaxing some restrictions on the press. In Decazes, it seemed, Louis had found a

minister committed to making the Charter work. The appointment and ministry of Decazes stabilized Louis's government between 1818 and 1820. It also largely accounted for his success in maintaining himself in power.

However, it is important to note that Decazes was opposed by both the ultras and by the liberals or independents, on the left, who wished to further liberalize the regime by extending civil liberties and the powers of the chamber of Deputies. By 1819 these two groups represented a numerical majority in the chamber. Hence Decazes considered modifying the electoral laws once again, this time to weaken the liberals. However, his plans to carefully seek a balancing act were shattered by the assassination of the Duc de Berry, the son of the King's brother and heir (Comte de Artois). The murder by a Bonapartist opponent of the Bourbon restoration, killed the second in line to the throne and destroyed the moderate policy Louis had attempted to pursue since 1814.

The ultras demanded justice through the introduction of repressive measures. The reaction against the liberals was reflected dramatically in the elections of 1820 in which they only received 80 out of 450 seats. In light of these events, Louis XVIII had to appoint the ultra-royalist leader, the Comte de Villele to head the government, a position he was to hold for six years.

Louis, aged and sick increasingly left affairs in the hands of his chief minister. Nevertheless, there was neither nor revolution in France like there was in 1830. Louis was known to be a level-headed monarch and the ultra-royalists never took over.

Villele for his part was not just a mere fanatic but a capable statesman who aimed to restore royal authority. One historian has argued that Villele aimed to "royalise the nation and nationalize the crown." Playing on middle-class fears of revolution and conspiracy, he was able to pass further repressive legislation in 1822. Press censorship was imposed and detention without trial allowed. Liberals, like Guizot were purged from universities. Schools were reassured to teach Catholicism and obedience to royal authority and teachers came under the authority of bishops.

More importantly, Villele persuaded the chambers to amend the electoral law so that deputies would be elected for a seven-year term. Other electoral changes tipped the electoral system in favour of the ultra-royalists and in the 1824 elections, the liberals won only 19 seats out of 434.

In the wake of Villele's ultra-royalist reforms why was there no revolution in 1824?

One way of answering this question is to realize that Villele himself had quite a successful ministry overall. Between 1821 and 1824 he ushered in an era of economic stability and growing economic prosperity. Moreover, France enjoyed major foreign policy success when French troops intervened in Spain in 1823 to restore royal authority there. This was seen as a triumph against the British, who had opposed intervention.

It could be argued that Louis XVIII left a France slowly recovering from the impact of 25 years of revolution and war, a people slowly becoming reconciled to a restored monarchy which itself was willing to accept some constitutional limitations and respect the rights gained by the people after 1789. The prestige of the monarchy and of France had to some extent been restored also by the removal of the allied army of occupation in 1818, by France's reacceptance as a great power,

symbolized its joining of the other Great Powers in a quintile alliance (1818); and by its successful intervention in Spain. Moreover, moderate monarchists and moderate liberals were willing to work on the basis of the 1814 Charter.

On the downside, however, the ultras still wanted a return to the pre-1789 situation of absolute monarchy, Liberals wanted to move further towards a constitutional monarchy and Bonapartists and republicans—who were few in number and the margins of political life wanted to overthrow the regime altogether. However, political stability had been sustained because Louis XVIII had, even when he was very sick in his last days, managed to maintain a delicate balance among these sharp political divisions in France. If Louis had been succeeded by another monarch such as himself, perhaps the Bourbon restoration would have survived. But Charles was of a different perspective altogether.

Study Guides

- i) How would the nature of the restoration affect French people's attitudes to Louis XVIII?
- ii) Describe the liberal charter of 1814 and its impact on Louis XVIII's rule.
- iii) What advantages and disadvantages did Louis XVIII have upon his restoration?
- iv) Why was Louis XVIII successful during his reign?

WHY WAS CHARLES X OVERTHROWN IN 1830?

Summary of the Key factors:

- Compensation Law, 1825 allowed the émigrés who had lost properties during the revolutionary period to be compensated. This also included members of the clergy.
- Sacrilege law (1826- revived ancient regime punishments of mutilation and death for profaning (disregard or disrespect- in words or actions) religious objects and restricted freedom of speech on religious matters)
- Continuing press censorship
- Charles' refusal to select liberal ministers following their election victory in 1827 and his hostile attitude to parliament.
- The appointment of the extreme ultra Polignac as chief minister in 1829. His proposed ordinances of St.Cloud (also called four ordinances) would have effectively destroyed the charters of 1814.
- Also adding to the government's unpopularity was the severe economic depression France was suffering in 1830. Rioting began in Paris 1830 and Charles, lacking loyal troops, was persuaded to abdicate during the July Revolution.

Charles, Comte d' Artois, brother to Louis XVIII, had a long history of counter-revolutionary activity behind him. He had been the first member of the royal family to flee France after the revolution, three days after the storming of the Bastille, and had consistently worked against the revolution thereafter. His sympathies lay with the ancient regime, an absolute monarchy, the Catholic Church and the aristocracy.

The fact that the ultras had won the 1824 election and an ultra chief Minister as well as an ultra king spelt disaster for liberalism in France. Louis XVIII had sought to reconcile, in however

limited a fashion, the restoration with the revolution. Charles X, on the other hand, sided with the ultra-royalists and clericals against the revolution. Right from the start, he indicated a desire to return to the ancient regime. His coronation (May 1825) took place in the cathedral at Rheims with all the pomp and ceremony appropriate to divine right monarchy. Charles was anointed with the sacred oil of Clovis, believed to have been brought down from heaven by a dove in AD 496, and proceeded after the ceremony to 'touch' a number of people suffering from scrofula (some kind of disease similar to tuberculosis). He believed that the anointing had given him healing powers.

Illiberal Laws Passes After 1825

1. Compensation law: 1825

Whilst there was no attempt to seize back hands lost by émigré nobles during the revolution Charles X decided to pass a law in order to compensate them. In 1825 a grant of one billion francs (the milliard) was to be raised by reducing the interest payments to holders of government bonds. This may have been a cost-effective way of raising the money but it seriously affected the bourgeoisie who had invested in such bonds. It also roused revolutionary sensitivity: loyal Frenchmen were being asked to sacrifice income to pay those who had fought against France. Hence, as early as 1825 Charles went on a collision course with the middle class and liberals in order to appease the ultra-royalists.

2. The Sacrilege Law, 1825

This was an extraordinary law which made sacrilege a crime punishable by persecution or even death. Sacrilege is behavior that shows great disrespect of holy institutions, practices or beliefs. As a result of this law, nunneries were revived and in 1826 Jesuits were allowed back into France. They were also allowed to teach in schools. A bishop was appointed minister for education. Such measures created a storm of protest in the liberal press and in pamphlets. There were anti-clerical popular songs and demonstrations and churches were attacked. The apparent growth of clerical influence was at odds with the secular, radical and tolerant principles of the revolution. It also provoked rumours of a return to the payment of the tithe. The tithe was a form of tax paid directly to the church.

In the face of protests and criticisms, the government also sought to restrict press freedom and introduced legislation requiring all publications to be submitted for royal approval. When in 1827 this measure was resisted by the chamber of Peers (many of whom were liberal, having been appointed before 1820), the government introduced the Measure by Royal Ordinance and proceeded to create 76 new peers to counteract opponents. Such actions seemed to precede an increase in royal power and a lack of respect for the Charter.

Worse still, in 1827 he then decided to disband the National Guard after Charles X had been greeted with anti-clerical and anti-government slogans at a meeting in Paris. The National Guard symbolized the revolutionary heritage of France. Its disbandment was interpreted as another sign that the King had no intention of upholding the liberties laid down in the charter such measures obviously created more problems for Charles X because people had not forgotten the liberties which they had recognized through the Revolution and more recently, through the charter of 1814.

Meanwhile the ultras replaced liberals and others in public employment. This gave further rise, such that Jesuits controlled appointments and added further weight to the impression that Charles X wished to revive the power of the nobility and clergy in France.

The cumulative effect of these measures and others led to the revival of opposition to the regime. This came from a number of sources, and reflected a wide range of different opinions from moderate constitutionalists to revolutionary republicans, all united in opposition to the regime. The growth of opposition and the same criticisms from within ultra-royalist ranks gave the government some concern and thus trying to bolster its authority before opposition grew any further, Villele, the chief Minister (Prime Minister) called a general election in November 1827. Press freedom was allowed during the election campaign but this opened a floodgate of criticism, not just of the King and his ministers but of Charles X himself as well. Despite government efforts, the election left Villele with only a minority in the Chamber of Deputies. The results were welcomed with demonstrations in Paris and working class districts.

Why did the political situation become more radical after 1827?

Villele's efforts to win support failed. He was replaced, by a more liberal former minister, Martinac. As soon as Martinac came to power, he introduced concessions to liberal opinion by relaxing press controls, restricting Catholic schools and expelling Jesuits. This encouraged liberals to demand more concessions but at the same time actually angered Charles X and the ultras. Hence, in August 1829, Charles X replaced Martinac with his friend and ally of the royalists Prince de Polignac. He was an ancient regime aristocrat an émigré, anti-Napoleon conspirator and a devout Catholic who was subject to visions from the Virgin Mary.! He had little sympathy for the Charter. May be Agatha Ramm gives him a better description thus:

“He was a chauvinist which was bad; Ultra-royal which was worse; and an enemy of parliament; which was fatal”

His appointment was obviously not a politically wise move. Polignac personified ultra-royalism criticized by the liberals. His appointment of ministers confirmed the image of a deeply reactionary regime. Polignac could not command a majority in the chamber of Deputies and there seemed little hope of compromise. When in March 1830 the King's speech criticized the opposition's blameworthy maneuvers,” the opposition responded with a condemnation of the government. Charles reacted by dissolving parliament. From that stage, the hope of a constitutional monarchy had been ruined.

The calling of fresh elections in June- July 1830 marked a worsening divide in the politics of the country. The possibility of a revolution was well in sight. An attempt was made to rally France behind the King and his government by a more aggressive foreign policy, the most tangible evidence of which was an attack on Algiers in Morocco. Though victorious, it had little impact on the electorate. Hence, the electoral campaign was fought in terms of a contest between the revolution and the monarchy; between liberty and equality on one side and the church and the King on the other. When the results came in, the government could only master 145 seats against 270 for the opposition. The king had lost.

The issue was now clear to Charles, either he must, as urged by his advisers, abandon parliamentary government or he must give in as his brother Louis XVII had done. If Charles X took the latter route, he was warned, the road ended, as it had done for Louis XVI with his execution. Charles X chose the former. Therefore on 26 July Polignac issued four ordinances (royal decrees) which effectively meant the abandonment of the 1814 Charter. These Ordinances of St Cloud (named after the palace where Charles was staying) declared the recent elections void and the new Chamber of Deputies dissolved. The electorate void and the new Chamber of Deputies dissolved, the electorate was reduced to around 25000 by means of a stringent property qualification, and imposed strict press censorship. Polignac and Charles (who went hunting) naively assumed that there would be no major disturbance and made no effective provision to ensure the success of their coup de tat of the system of government.

On 27 July things moved to a head. There were demonstrations but little violence in Paris. On 28 July workers and students there grabbed the initiative by seizing arms, building barricades and attacking royal soldiers. They did so waving the Tricolor and shouting “Vive Emperuer!”- (Long live the Emperor!) These events had no leadership from liberal politicians or journalists, although some republican and Bonapartist leaders were involved.

Liberal leaders were busy drawing up protests and working out how to defy the ordinances; they were onlookers to the violence in Paris rather than participants. On 29 July the Parisians attacked the Tuileries and captured the Hotel de Ville, killing some soldiers and sustaining several hundreds of casualties themselves. The Tricolor was raised. A revolution had taken place and the reign of Charles came to an end. On 1 August, when it was clear there was no significant royalist support, Charles X abdicated in favour of his grandson.

Why Was Charles X Overthrown?

1. The immediate cause of Charles X’s downfall was the issue of the Ordinances of St. Cloud which provoked the violence of the “three glorious days.” Charles X and Polignac had attempted a coup d’état without ensuring that there were sufficient loyal troops in Paris to contain opposition. Many of the troops who were available were sympathetic to the revolutionaries and the bulk of the army was in Algeria. It was the workers who mainly skilled craftsmen, who had taken to the streets. Their complaints were as much economic as political.
2. A series of harvest failures from 1825 eventually pushed up bread prices by up to 66% by 1830. On the other hand, the economic slump and population growth combined to force down wages and increase unemployment. Such natural circumstances caused frustrations which had political ramifications. Paris became highly politicized in 1830 against Charles X’s unpopular policies. Journalists, popular-song writers, pamphleteers, all liberal and anti-clerical in sympathy found a ready audience amongst the artisans and craftsmen of Paris. Liberal newspapers’ circulation was over three times that of royalist papers. Some workers of course had vested interests in liberal issues like freedom of the press. Print workers were among the first on the streets when the ordinances were declared. These developments showed that the equation between reactionary policies and economic distress was convincingly drawn.
3. The workers’ bosses were also discordant with Charles X, and there is evidence that some helped arm their employees. Owners of workshops and businesses were, like their workers,

victims of the economic depression that set in after 1826. They were further angered by the disbanding of the National Guard in 1827 and a ban on Sunday trading. At the highest level, businessmen and merchants were increasingly excluded from political influence as the top positions in the state, both locally and at the centre, became increasingly dominated by the old aristocracy. Certainly some historians see the swing to the liberals in 1827 as the result of a loss of business confidence in the regime. The proposed restriction of the electorate in the ordinances would have excluded them from the right to vote altogether. The same applied to some extent to the professional middle classes, as promotion and prospects seemed to depend less on talent than on birth and ultra sympathies. By 1830, 70% of prefects and 40 percent of sub prefects were ultras. The democratic principles of 1789 were being ignored. This caused serious bitterness among the middle classes and proved to Charles X that it was impossible to restore the pre-revolutionary regime in 1830.

4. Charles X's flagrant disregard of the 1814 charter which gave a fragile guarantee of the gains of 1789 was totally unacceptable and largely caused revolution in 1830. Louis XVIII owed his success to the fact that he, by and large, stood by the charter. However, when Charles X came to power, he openly violated press freedom and the electoral law was arbitrarily changed. Liberals feared a return to absolutism; hence a constitutional monarchy could only work if Charles X went.

The feeling that Charles X was not committed to a constitutional regime was reinforced by his religious moves. The King's alliance with the Catholic Church and the insensitive policies that resulted from that alliance alienated a largely anti-clerical sentiment in the rising unrest. The Clergy were easy targets for popular violence, scandal, mongering and popular abuse in songs, pamphlets and broadsheets.

All the above points suggest clearly that Charles X carried much of the responsibility for his own downfall. He sided with the ultras and made no effort to make the constitutional system work. In this sense he was divorced from the political realities of restoration in France. He said himself that he had not changed since 1789. He believed he could just rule France and survive without commanding a majority in parliament. He believed in France where the Catholic Church was dominant and the ally of the Crown. But for many French people the church was the enemy of liberalism and progress.

Certainly, Charles X's narrowness of vision, lack of political acumen and intransigence, play a central role in explaining the revolution of 1830. But, it is important to remember that there were longer-term factors that made political stability in nineteenth-century France difficult to achieve. One Legacy of the years of political, religious and social upheaval was that there were always alternatives to the existing regime and that revolution or a coup d'état was a justifiable way of changing it. On the political right there was the option of royalism (ultras), which supported the restoration of absolute rule, the Catholic Church and aristocratic privilege. There was also clericalism, whose aim was, more narrowly, the restoration of the power and prestige of the Catholic Church. Clericals therefore tended to support royalists. Charles X inherited such a tradition and his inflexibility caused revolution.

In the centre were Orleanists who pressed the claims of the Duc d' Orleans as a constitutional monarch, willing to accept liberal principles, the Tricolor and an elected assembly. Liberals did not necessarily line up with Orleanists principles but they felt that a truly constitutional monarchy was the best solution for France. They felt that government should be left to ministers who would be answerable to a parliament elected by men of property.

Bonapartism was another political grouping in France and it had its appeal among ex-army officers, especially those purged during the restoration of the monarchy in France. These were a minority in France and did not constitute such a threat to the monarchy in 1830. However, their voice was added to the chorus of criticism in 1830.

Republicanism represented the most obvious and one of the strongest threats to the restored monarchy. Republicans wanted an end to the restored monarchy and a democratic republic in its place. Republicanism tended to be strongest amongst workers in towns, but aroused fears of mob rule and attacks on property amongst the middle classes. It had prominent supporters like the Marquess de Lafayette, who was to play a crucial role in securing Parisian consent to a constitutional monarchy under the Duc d' Orleans in the wake of the July Revolution.

Marxist historians have pointed to a class conflict as a cause of the revolution. In this analysis Charles X's ultra-royalism represented an attempt to return the landed aristocracy to power in France. This was out of step with the interests of the bourgeoisie who sought political and social power and a state responsive to the interests of capitalism. Both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie feared the lower orders peasants and urban workers, but the bourgeoisie were willing to exploit unrest to achieve their own political ends. Hence the real causes of the downfall of Charles X were more complex than what meets the eye. It can never be doubted that his own weaknesses contributed the most to his own downfall.

Study Guides

- i) How did government policy change after 1821?
- ii) What were the main beliefs of the ultras?
- iii) In what ways did the policies of Charles X's government go against liberal and revolutionary ideas?
- iv) What mistakes did Charles X make between 1829 and 1830?
- v) In what ways did Charles X alienate the middle classes in his reign?
- vi) Having over- thrown Charles X, why did France emerge from the July Revolution with another King?
- vii) Why was Charles X over- thrown in 1830?

Was the overthrow of the Bourbons inevitable in 1830?

Some might argue that the difficulties facing the restored monarchy in 1815 were such that long-term survival was unlikely unless, the monarchist were willing to embrace the idea of a constitutional monarchy wholeheartedly. Even then, the likelihood of political stability was remote because of the divided nature of French society, the mutually conflicting heritages which were left by the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras and periodic economic crises. After 1830, Louis Philippe was unable to make constitutional monarchy work, resulting in another revolution in 1848. On the other hand, Louis XVIII had survived and left France prosperous in 1824. This

would suggest the downfall of the Bourbons in 1830 had much to do with the character and policies of Charles and the short-term economic crisis which hit France after 1826.

Study Guides

- i) Did the choice of chief ministers by Louis XVIII and Charles X determine the success or failure of their rule?
- ii) Compare and contrast the reigns of Louis XVIII and Charles X.
- iii) What part did economic problems of 1830 play in the downfall of Charles X?

Examination type questions

1. 'Louis XVIII resisted the Ultras, while Charles X embraced them'. Is this a satisfactory explanation for the initial success but ultimate failure of the restored Bourbon monarchy?
2. How accurate is the view that the Bourbons who ruled France between 1815 and 1830 had learned nothing and forgotten nothing?"?
3. "The Constitutional charter of 1814 was central to the survival or collapse of the restored Bourbons in France." How accurate is this view in light of the reigns of Louis XVIII and Charles X between 1815 and 1830?
4. Why did Charles X fail to retain the throne beyond 1830?

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CHAPTER 11

LOUIS PHILIPPE'S REIGN (1830- 1848)

Chapter objectives

By the end of the chapter students should be able to:

- i) Explain the reasons for Louis Philippe's early achievements.
- ii) Describe Louis Phillippe's reign up to 1840.
- iii) Explain how Louis Phillippe's government reacted to various demands between 1830- 1848.
- iv) Explain in what ways the social and political divisions within France affected Louis Philippe's reign.
- v) Describe the impact of Louis Phillippe's cautious foreign policy upon the Bonapartists and Liberals.
- vi) Explain the policies of Louis Philippe in the 1840s.
- vii) Describe Guizot's foreign policy objectives.
- viii) Account for Louis Phillippe's growing isolation in France in the 1840s.
- ix) Explain how the stock market corruption directly offended the middleclass in France.
- x) Analyse the causes of Louis Phillippe's downfall in 1848.

NB: Most examination questions on the period 1830 – 1848 relate to the weakness of the Orleanist monarchy, as it is usually termed, in both domestic and foreign policy, leading on in turn to why it came to an end in 1848. As with Charles X, some candidates assume that a list of mistakes or weaknesses is an explanation of why there was a successful revolution in 1848. Rather than make too many notes on Louis Philippe's achievements and failures, a better focus could well be to prepare, in note form, an explanation of events in France in 1848. This needs to take account of the important economic and social changes that were taking place during his reign. Candidates should be ready to pay attention to the growing industrialization, the emergent urban proletariat, and the spread of the socialist ideas of Louis Blanc.

The July Monarchy

The new dynasty was also known as the July Monarchy, the Bourgeoisie or Citizen's monarchy of the Orleanist monarchy, The new regime was based upon the following:-

a) The qualities of the 'Citizen king'

Louis Philippe was the son of the Duke d' Orleans, Philippe Egalite, who had flirted with the Revolution. He had also served as an officer in the revolutionary army. Having known poverty in exile, he was now a wealthy man, but deliberately cultivated a very humble personality, symbolized by his top hat and umbrella.

b) The support of the landed bourgeoisie

A section of the royalists – the legitimist supporters of the Bourbons, largely withdrew from politics. The new regime was backed by wealthy business and commercial interests, and above all, the landed bourgeoisie.

c) The revised Charter of liberties

The Chamber of Deputies produced a Charter which extended liberty. The following are the terms of the Charter.

i) The Chamber of Peers became an upper house of life members, mostly army officers and civil servants.

ii) Extension of the franchise to an electorate of about 200 000.

iii) The abolition of censorship.

iv) Roman Catholicism was recognized as the religion of only 'the majority of Frenchmen'. This was a repeat of the Concordat of 1801.

v) The king lost the power to veto legislation absolutely. In addition, a system of elected councils was introduced in 1831 for municipalities, with a very limited Franchise.

The Early Problems of the Regime

The July monarchy experienced serious problems from the start. Some of these problems are stated below.

1. **Division of the Supporters of the Regime**

The regime did not have a single and reliable body of supporters: Throughout Louis Philippe's reign, there was a struggle between two groups, namely the Party of Resistance and the Party of Movement.

i) The Party of Resistance: This party included Guizot and the Duke de Broglie. This party saw the revolution as complete, and opposed further change.

ii) The Party of Movement

It included people like Lafayette and it saw the July Monarchy as just the start of further reforms.

Study Guides

i) How did the circumstances of Louis Phillippe's accession create problems for him?

ii) What was the reaction of the major political groups to the liberal reforms of 1830?

iii) What evidence is there in his handling of the workers to show that Louis Phillippe was truly a “bourgeois monarch”?

2. Hostility of Political Opponents

At home, Louis Phillippe faced opposition from the Republicans, Bonapartists, Legitimists, Socialists and Liberals.

a) Liberals: These demanded a further extension of the franchise, and the introduction of universal manhood suffrage.

b) Republicans: These were led by Thiers. They demanded a full-blown republic. In other words, they wanted the abolition of a Monarchy in France.

c) Legitimists: These were the Ultra – Royalists who were opposed to Louis Phillippe’s bourgeoisie personality. They wanted him to behave like a true monarchy. This led to a series of Ultra – royalist plots, e.g in 1832, a revolt took place in La Vendee in support of ‘Henry V’, the grandson of Charles X.

d) The Bonapartists: This group wanted a revival of the glories of Napoleon I. In particular, they were against Louis Phillippe’s weak and unglorious foreign policy.

3. Social Unrest

Industrialization made the condition of industrial workers a political issue for the first time. Social unrest was caused by the following:

i) The deterioration of living standards: By 1846, over a million workers were employed in large-scale industry. There was rapid urbanization, e.g. Rouboix grew by 425 percent between 1831 to 1841. However this city was associated with very poor living conditions by 1840, nine in ten of the men called up in the ten industrial departments were rejected as physically unfit.

ii) Irregular employment: General standards of living were probably rising but industrial workers lived on the edge of a crisis which would be triggered by recession, price rises or unemployment. Of course, the July Revolution did not produce higher wages and reduced hours. In fact, people worked for long hours in return for low wages. Besides, unemployment increased during 1830 to 1831. There were also a number of demonstrations including the one in Lyons in November 1831 by Silk workers.

4. A policy of Resistance (1831 – 34)

Social reforms to win the workers’ support for the regime was out of the question in view of the dependence on the Bourgeoisie and the socialist tone of the Lyons revolution. The period 1831 – 34 saw an increasing tendency of workers towards republicanism, and mounting disturbances. Very much influenced by Thiers, the government of the day took very firm steps: some of which are as follows:

i) Repression: Risings in eastern Paris and Lyons in April 1834 were crushed savagely and republicans were driven underground.

ii) Restriction of liberty: The right of association was restricted in April 1834, and the press was brought under tighter control in September 1835.

5 Louis Philippe's Foreign Policy

The July Revolution triggered off disturbances throughout Europe and nationalists and liberals looked forward to a foreign policy supporting peoples struggling for freedom. Caution, opposition, expense and the need to maintain relations with France's only potential friend (Britain) led Louis Philippe to be far more realistic. The result was that this policy was easily seen as 'peace at any price', and the poet, Lamartine, reflected wide opinion when he described France as 'bored'.

a) Belgian Independence

A revolt in Belgium in 1830 developed into a move for separation from Holland with whom there were all sorts of economic, religious and cultural differences. The absolutists' proposals for intervention to deal with this first rupture of the 1815 settlement were resisted by Britain and France. The two organized an international conference to ratify the situation and forced the Dutch to give way. They then arranged the general European guarantee of Belgian neutrality. In fact, France was better off with this small friendly state on her frontier. However, Louis Philippe was criticized for not accepting the invitation by the Belgian National Congress for his son the Duc de Nemours to become king of the Belgians because he did not incorporate Belgium despite support in both countries for this step.

Occupation of Ancona (1832 – 8)

Again France did not help the Italian rebels in 1830 to 1831, although when Austrian troops entered the Papal States to crush a revolt, French troops were sent to occupy Ancona as a gesture against Austrian interference rather than support for unification or revolution. This angered the nationalists but gained Louis Philippe the support of the Catholics.

b) The Second Mehmet Ali Crisis (1839 – 41)

Anglo – French relations were seriously damaged over the Near Eastern crisis of 1839 – 41. They supported Mehmet Ali as a sort of French protégé. In fact Lord Palmerston, the British Foreign secretary largely isolated and humiliated France over the issue. In the resultant war fever, they fell from office, and for the rest of the regime, Guizot was the dominant political figure. Many sections of society were not happy with their country playing second fiddle to Britain, especially the Bonapartists, who became nostalgic for the Napoleon era.

a) The Spanish Marriages Question (1841 – 1846)

In the 1840s Anglo- French relations were largely restored. By 1846 Palmerston was back in office and he and Guizot fell out over an agreement that the queen of Spain should marry and produce an heir before the Infanta, the queen's sister, could be allowed to marry a French prince. In fact the Queen was married off to an important Spanish nobleman, and the Infanta to the Duc de Montpensier, son of Louis Philippe. However as much of a coup as this might have been, it left France isolated. In Europe, France had no prestigious foreign policy successes to counteract her internal problems.

Growing Opposition

Over the period, industry and commerce actually developed, and agricultural production of new crops increased. Between 1837 to 1848, 1287 miles of railway were built. However the opposition mounted: This can be seen in the following:

a) Alternatives

- i) Socialism: Louis Blanc, Blauqui and Charles Fourier all attacked the regime for its failure to deal with the social questions and looked to republicanism to produce an answer.
- ii) Bonapartism: The cult of Napoleon was formed by the return of his ashes to Les Invalides in 1840 attacking the regime's policies. A whole range of new histories of the revolution and Napoleonic period were produced. There was nostalgia for a glorious foreign policy.

The growth of Literacy:

A primary education law of 1833, and the development of a cheaper press extended the reading public. In 1825 there were only 60 000 subscribers' daily in Paris. By 1846 there were 180 000. Another education act was passed in 1839.

b) The Economic Crisis (1846-7)

France shared in the general economic crisis of the period 1846-7. The situation was worsened because of relative economic backwardness. France had 1287 miles of railways in 1848, while Prussia had 2287 miles. She also experienced a serious financial crisis until 1848 arising from over speculation in railway shares and a shortage of capital.

c) Social Crisis

The poor harvest of 1846 – 47 made a third of Paris workers destitute and starving. Apart from this, Guizot was too corrupt, which made the whole regime become unpopular. Guizot bitterly opposed universal suffrage. The franchise was restricted to 240 000 men and excluded the majority of educated and professional people. Therefore the most critical issue was the government's refusal to extend the franchise.

Study Guides

- i) In what ways can Louis Phillippe's policies towards opposition be seen as a success? What dangers were there in such policies?
- ii) In what ways does Thiers' foreign policy differ from that pursued earlier in the reign?
- iii) Why was Louis Phillippe's foreign policies dull?
- iv) What evidence is there that Louis-Philippe and his government were out of touch with public opinion?
- v) How did Guizot's foreign policy help to undermine support for Louis-Philippe?

The downfall of Louis Philippe

Causes: – The down fall of Louis Philippe was caused by a combination of what he did, that is, his unpopular policies, and all that he failed to do which he should have done.

(a) An inglorious Foreign Policy

Louis had an inactive foreign policy. The people resented France's subservience to Britain, for example in the Belgian and Mehemet Ali cases. The ingloriousness of Louis Philippe's foreign policy stood in shrill contrast to the glory of the Napoleonic era. This weak foreign policy helped the spread of Bonapartism in France. The government tried to promote the revival of the Napoleonic legend by completing the Arc de Triomphe, which Napoleon had been unable to do. Streets and bridges were named after Napoleon's battles and in 1840 his mortal remains were brought from St Helena to Paris. The Tricolour and National Guard were also revived.

b) Restrictions on Political Participation

There was a narrow franchise. Only about 200 000 people had the vote in a population of over 32 million. As 92% of the voters were landed, so urban political participation was even lower. The lesser bourgeoisie were also disenfranchised including, for instance, school teachers, who helped to influence the youth against the regime.

c) Repression of Potential Opposition

This can be seen in the introduction of censorship. The banning of the Reform Banquet provided the spark which led to the end of his policies but no more than that.

d) The Economic Crisis

There were economic difficulties. The deflationary crisis of 1845 to 1846 caused hardship for both the bourgeoisie and the working class.

e) Social Problems: Effects of Industrialization

Industrialization, while a welcome development led to other problems. It led to difficulties for the working class, especially a deterioration of working conditions. Workers were working long hours for low wages. There was an absence of social legislation, except the 1841 labour law, which proved ineffective because of problems of implementation.

f) Corruption

There was a narrow oligarchy in control of the regime. A number of public scandals alienated public opinion. Under the extremely conservative Guizot, who succeeded Thiers as Prime Minister, (in 1840), the corruption of the government began to attain large proportions. Guizot was indifferent to the needs of the lower classes, and did not hesitate to manipulate elections by means of bribery. The repeated appeals of the liberal opposition for parliamentary and electoral reform fell on deaf ears.

g) The reform Banquets (1847 – 1848)

The immediate cause of the downfall of the Orleanist Monarchy was the role of the Press. The Press had become so hostile that it incited the students and labourers to demand the dismissal of the unpopular Guizot. The government's attempt to use force to stop the reform banquets failed

as the National Guard sympathized with the insurrectionists, leading to the abdication of the king on the 24th February 1848.

Study Guides

- i) What were the key social and economic developments under Louis Philippe's reign?
- ii) Compare the reasons for the downfall of Louis-Philippe with those of Charles X. How similar are they?
- iii) Would you say that the economy of France was (a) totally transformed
(b) Changed to some degree or
(c) Experienced little real development in the period 1814-48? Justify your answer.
- iv) Discuss the importance of any three main causes of the February Revolution 1848.
- v) Compare and contrast the causes and results of the 1830 and the 1848 revolutions
- vi) What problems did the growth of towns create and how did these affect Louis Philippe?
- vii) Why did the 1848 revolutions cause the abdication of Louis Philippe and yet Metternich survived?
- viii) How did the harvest failures of 1847 worsen the social crisis for Louis Philippe?
- ix) Despite the difficulties faced by the Orleanist Monarchy, Louis Philippe was to rule for eighteen years. How is this to be explained?
- x) Why did the July Monarchy Collapse?

Examination type questions

1. Why did the Louis Philippe's regime collapse in 1848?
2. How valid is the view that the reign of Louis Philippe was unpopular right from 1830 onwards.
3. Why was it that the revolution continued to be a factor in French history between 1815 and 1848?
4. Why did a revolution succeed in France but failed in Italy in 1848-49.
5. "France is bored." Is this an adequate explanation why Louis Philippe was removed from power in France?
6. Discuss the claim that Louis Philippe failed because he was more concerned with gaining the approval of his fellow rulers than that of his own people

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CHAPTER 12

THE METTERNICH SYSTEM

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter students should be able to:

- (i) Describe the aims of Metternich's policies
- (ii) Explain how he implemented his policies- i.e. divide and rule; Carlsbad Decrees, secret Police etc.
- (iii) Identify and explain the methods used by Metternich to achieve his aims
- (iv) Assess the effectiveness of the Metternich system," both in Austria Hungary and in Europe
- (v) What flaws were in Metternich's system?
- (vi) Explain why Metternich survived the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 respectively.
- (vii) Account for the division of the various nationalities inside the Hapsburg monarchy and how this contributed towards their failure to resist Metternich.

Metternich's principles:

With the collapse of the Congress System, peace now depended on the efforts of individual statesmen, either to maintain the status quo or to adjust it without war. The central position was occupied by Metternich, who guided the policy of the Austrian empire from the Congress of Vienna to the death of Francis I. Contemporaries were inclined to see the influence of Metternich behind government policies everywhere in Europe and to refer, in consequence, to his "system". Metternich denied that he had a system and said that he only had principles.

The following were Metternich's principles:

- (i) That the only true form of government was a monarchy.
- (ii) That a monarchical government should be absolute.
- (iii) That the chief duty of the government was to preserve and protect social order which, like the monarchy itself, was divinely ordained.
- (iv) That in order to protect this social order, monarchs everywhere had to support one another against threats to social and political stability.

In practice this meant that: -

- (a) They must have nothing to do with the representative principle which by its very nature presupposed popular sovereignty.
- (b) They should uphold the European concert and the balance of power and
- (c) They should exert authority through the co-ordinated use of strong armies and police forces, which should also be employed to save neighbours and colleagues if necessary
- (i) Those revolutions were usually stirred up by irresponsible persons either from a desire to obtain property rightly possessed by others or from a desire to yield power which did not belong to them. The 'agitated classes' were the upper middle class (bankers, capitalists, large scale industrialists) and the lower middle class (lawyers, writers etc). These persons often professed to speak for the public through journals and pamphlets. Hence the press ought to be censored, for though public opinion was an extremely valuable guide, the government must be sure that this was genuine. In particular, governments ought to silence propaganda concerning social equality and nationality. The only justifiable form of equality was equality before the law and common interests stronger than those created by the community of language and race were necessary to form the basis of a state.

Metternich's activities can be divided into two strands, namely:

- (i) Direct intervention: In some areas, action was easier than others. Even in the Austrian Empire he did not have a free hand. In Italy he could intimidate the independent states because of the Austrian presence in Lombardy and Venetia. In Germany, he could act directly through the Diet of the German Confederation.
- (ii) Indirect intervention by employing the strength of other states acting under the authorization of conference decisions: In any case, the empire was in financial difficulties. It had actually gone bankrupt and between 1815 - 48 a third of its income was spent on paying interest on its debts. Through the 'Congress System' Metternich could use less direct methods to safeguard Europe and the Austrian Empire.

The Austrian Empire

From 1809 as Chancellor, Metternich was responsible for holding together the ramshackle Austrian empire. However, his power was limited and he had several alternatives facing him.

- (i) The quality of kingship: until 1835 Francis I insisted on playing a very active role in the detailed management of affairs. A mediocre man of limited views, he expressed himself in favour of a situation where every person watches his neighbour. The one does not understand the other and one hates the other. In 1835, he was succeeded by the mentally defective Ferdinand I, to whom he left the advice 'Govern and change nothing'.

(ii) Court - rivalries: In 1826 the Czech Count Kolowrat became minister of the Interior. He was an enemy of Metternich's from the start with the advantages of considerable financial ability and a readiness to pretend to be liberal sympathizers. After 1835, the monarchy was ruled by a council of state which Metternich could not always control.

(iii) Administrative weaknesses: For an absolute regime, it was remarkably inefficient. The bureaucracy was complex and ever cumbersome. In addition, the Monarchy had serious financial problems. Not surprisingly, Metternich once remarked, "I have sometimes held Europe in my hands but never Austria."

Study Guides

- i) What were the political principles of Metternich?
- ii) Describe the government of the Austrian Empire before 1848 and explain how grievances and discontent arose.

Defence against liberalism and Nationalism

There were several alternative defences against liberalism and nationalism. Partly because of the limits to power, and partly because he had no long-term constructive visions, he was once described as 'an empiricist who dealt only in palliatives'.

(i) Nationalism: – In the Austrian Empire, nationalism had scarcely awakened. Metternich, although he knew he was playing with fire, was not afraid to patronize nationalism in its early stages. He saw that national pride among the Czech, Romanians, and southern Slavs might serve as a weapon against the nationalism he most feared, that of the Germans and Magyars. Nationalism in the Austrian empire undoubtedly contained seeds of much evil. The Germans had been able to claim, since the time of Joseph II, that their culture was superior to that of other people. Other groups such as Croats, Hungarians, Magyars and Czechs, resented such dominance. Francis I supported the Germans and was dependent on them.

Metternich's methods

- (i) Repression – Metternich was never reluctant to use force as in Italy or to employ swarms of informers, secret policemen and censors.
- (ii) Economic Amelioration – a radical approach would have been to try and win popular support by means of economic improvement to buy off opposition. However, this approach was limited because of the following reasons: -
 - (a) A fear by the conservatives that economic improvement would lead to greater independence of outlook. Metternich believed that a rich and independent society would be difficult to govern.
 - (b) Restoration of old provincial diets: – This was encouraged by Metternich because he saw the provinces as conservative.
 - (c) Cultural nationalism: – As a diversion, and to encourage nationalist divisions, Metternich actually sponsored literary revivals and considered a reconstruction of the Empire on some sort of linguistic basis.
 - (d) Divide and rule policy.

Italy

Metternich knew that if Austria was to maintain her hold over Lombardy and Venetia, she must keep Italy divided. He proclaimed the task to be an easy one. He described Italy as nothing more than a 'geographical expression', and the Italians as having no more than local loyalties. Metternich's aim was to make Austria, the leader of the Italian confederation, and some princes of Italy supported Austrian policies, in the main, Metternich's influence and the presence of Austrian troops in Lombardy and Venetia was to prove a stumbling block in the unification of Italy.

The German Confederation

The nationalist and liberal influence in the German confederation unsettled Metternich. To him, all agitators were liberals and all liberals were nationalists. Perhaps he felt by presenting them in this way he could most effectively use them to frighten the princes. After 1815, the rulers of Bavaria, Baden, Wurttemberg, Saxe- Weimar and Hesse Darmsdart all granted constitutions to their subjects. Metternich considered these constitutions as dangerous. He was also damned at the freedom allowed at universities by princes such as the Duke of Saxe – Weimar, who wanted university students to think of themselves as patrons of learning. Events in Germany played into Metternich's hands.

The Wartburg Festival – October 1817

On October 18, 1817 a large gathering of University students celebrated at Wartburg, the 300th anniversary of the reformation. A bonfire was built and a few relics of French domination such as, the corporal's cane and some books hostile to German nationalism were burnt. This action was exaggerated by Napoleon into a sign that desperate doings were imminent in Germany.

The Carlsbad Decrees

In the spring of 1819, a German student Karl Sand, assassinated a writer of reactionary propaganda, called Kotzebue. Metternich would scarcely hide his joy. In August 1819, the representatives of the 9 German states joined him in framing the Carlsbad decrees, which were ratified later by the Federal Diet.

The following decrees were passed

- (i) Strict censorship was prescribed for almost all publications.
- (ii) Inspectors were allowed in universities.
- (iii) Informers were introduced into lecture rooms and churches.

In the following year, (1820), Metternich persuaded the Diet to limit the number of subjects which might be discussed in elected assemblies. He had become a species of moral power in Germany. Metternich's most strenuous efforts were directed towards enticing Prussia away from reform. He worked steadily upon Frederick William III of Prussia, to dissolve him from granting a constitution which he had been contemplating on granting since 1810. However, Metternich failed to see that Prussia, under an authoritarian and military regime would one day become a greater rival to Austria.

Study Guides

- i) In what way was Kossuth's Policy an advance upon Magyar nationalism?

- ii) What were the causes of conflict between the Croats and Slovenes on the one hand and Hungary on the other?
- iii) What were the reasons for the failure of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848- 1849?
- iv) Discuss the reasons for the failure of the revolutions of 1848 in those parts of the Empire other than Hungary?

Summary of the Metternich System

The political manifestations of the Metternich System were thus to be found in the following events:

-Troppau Protocol of 1820.

The Carlsbad Decrees – 1819.

-The final Act of the Vienna Congress of 1820.

The Six Acts of 1832

-The Berlin and Mucheplatz Agreements of 1833.

-The intervention in Naples in 1825.

Intervention in Spain 1820

-Intervention in the Papal States in 1830

-The annexation of Cracow in 1846

-The occupation of Ferrara in 1847,

-The imprisonment of people like Kossuth and other opponents of the Austrian empire. In spite of all this repression, the system, in the eyes of other historians failed. In the end, moderate reformers were forced to become revolutionaries. In 1848, however, the inevitable happened, and Metternich was overthrown by a revolution.

Study Guides

i) Why did Metternich survive the 1848 Revolutions?

ii) How did liberals differ from radicals?

iii) What were the weaknesses of liberal nationalist movements in Italy and Germany in the period 1815- 40?

iv) What problems faced the Austrian emperor in ruling the empire?

v) In what specific ways did liberals and nationalists represent a threat to the stability of the Austrian Empire?

vi) How effective was Metternich's attempt to police public opinion in the Austrian empire?

vii) Did Metternich have a "system"? If so, what were its main features?

viii) What do you understand by the policy of "divide and rule"? Is such a policy a sign of weakness or strength?

ix) Why did revolutions break out across central Europe in 1848?

x) Why did economic problems in Europe result in demands for political change?

xi) Why did the revolutions fail by the summer of 1849?

xii) Find evidence of how the following contributed to the failure of the revolutions in Germany:

(a) divisions amongst revolutionaries.

(b) the revival of royal power.

(c) the loyalty of the armies to their princes.

- xiii) How important was the loyalty of the armed forces in helping the Austrian emperor to restore his authority?
- xiv) In what ways did divisions amongst revolutionaries contribute to the failure of the Prague revolution?
- xv) How successful was Metternich in containing revolutionary forces in the period 1815-48?

Examination type questions

1. Why was the “Metternich system” able to contain the forces of liberalism and nationalism in Austria-Hungary, Italy and Germany?
2. How great a threat to the Habsburgs were the revolutions of 1848 in Austria -Hungary and Germany?
3. Consider the argument that the rebels of 1848 in Austria and Germany had nothing in common except their hatred of the Habsburgs.

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CHAPTER 13

THE GREAT POWERS AND THE EASTERN QUESTION 1821- 1856

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) define the main features of the Eastern Question between 1815- 1856.
- (ii) identify the vested interests of the Major Powers, namely, Russia, Britain, Austria, Prussia and France, in the Eastern Question.
- (iii) explain how Russian interests clashed with Turkish and British interests in Eastern Europe.
- (iv) explain the causes and results of the Greek Revolt of, 1821- 1831.
- (v) illustrate the role played by Mehemet Ali in the Greek Revolt.
- (vi) explain how the Treaty of Unkiar- Skelessi (July 1833) promoted Russian interests at the expense of Turkey and Britain
- (vii) describe the origins and results of the Straits Convention of 1841.
- (viii) evaluate the causes of the Crimean War of 1853- 1856.
- (x) discuss the results of the Crimean War
- xi) judge how far the Crimean War managed to restrain Russian greed in Eastern Europe.
- xii) illustrate the Treaty of Paris.

The Eastern Question, the problem of what to do about the decline and possible disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, was a recurring issue in international affairs throughout the nineteenth century. The decline of Turkey had major repercussions on Europe although the European countries were affected differently. The fate of the Turkish Empire became a source of rivalry and suspicion among the major European states because they were unable to agree on a solution to the problem posed by Turkey's decline. More importantly, the major Powers which got involved in the Eastern Question had vested self-interest which they did not want to be tempered

with or compromised. Hence in the absence of any long-lasting agreement, the Eastern Question took the form of a series of crises which culminated in the Crimean War of 1854-56.

Why was there an Eastern Question in the first place?

The Ottoman Empire was vast, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic in composition. Effective government ultimately depended on energetic and resourceful direction from Constantinople (the capital). But since the Empire's central administrative and military capacity was in steady decline, the Sultans at Constantinople were incapable of providing energetic and resourceful leadership to the vast empire. Hence, many subject states began, (one by one), to declare their independence from Turkey.

To westerners, the most obvious feature of Turkey's decline was her military weakness. This had been demonstrated by Russia's victory over Turkey in the War of 1768-74. The weaknesses were due to the fact that although military and naval modernization had been carried out under the guidance and advice of European military experts, these had been sporadic and incomplete. Hence, the survival of the Turkish Empire into the twentieth century depended less on her own efforts than on the attitude of the European powers towards her.

Apart from Turkey's own weakness, the very presence of jealousy and strong neighbours equally made the Eastern Question more pronounced. In this vein, it is important to note that Russia lay at the centre of Turkey's problems due to her provision of military support to the various nationalistic groups which sought to break away from Turkey, such as Greece.

What interests did the Great Powers have in Turkey?

RUSSIA

Of all the Great Powers, Russia was one most directly involved in the fate of the Ottoman Empire. As a result of a series of successful wars against the Turks from 1768 to 1812, Russia had pushed her boundaries southwards to reach the northern shores of the Black Sea. Further to the east, she had also made gains in the northern Caucasus which, although causing less alarm to the western powers, were an important aspect of Russia's expansionist designs to the Ottoman Empire. These military successes enabled Russia to gain territory as well as freedom of navigation for Russian merchant shipping in the Black Sea which was then largely controlled by Turkey.

Moreover, Russia through the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainadji, obtained an ill-defined right of protection over the Orthodox Church which 75 years later was to be greatly exaggerated by the Russian government in the crisis of 1853. Russia used such limited religious rights to exercise her political ambitions on Turkey. Furthermore, it became a maxim of Russian policy that Constantinople and the Straits (a narrow waterway which linked the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea, which filtered into the Mediterranean Sea), must either remain in Turkish hands or, failure of that, come under Russian control. This could obviously enable Russia to continue to dictate the terms of trade in that vital area. If the straits were allowed to fall into the hands of another power, Russia might suffer economic strangulation.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

The Austrian Empire was the only other Great Power whose territory bordered on Turkey in Europe. Austria's main pre-occupations lay in central and Western Europe, so she had no serious designs on Turkish territory in this period. In general, however, the Austrians regarded the Ottoman Empire as a buffer against further Russian expansion and therefore sought to preserve, not weaken Turkey. In addition, Austria did not share Russia's sympathy for Slav nationalism in the Balkans, for fear that it might also affect her own Slav peoples.

BRITAIN

Although Britain had supported the Greek struggle for independence from Turkey, they later on changed their minds and resorted to their traditional policy of supporting the territorial integrity of Turkey. The key factor in the change of British policy was, unquestionably, suspicion of Russia's aims, although these fears were sometimes exaggerated. Britain feared that if Constantinople fell under Russian control, it would lead to a marked growth in Russian influence over the eastern Mediterranean. Such an event would enable her to extend her influence throughout the Near East and Middle East, including Egypt, thereby directly posing a threat to British communication with India. The mere entry of Russia into the Mediterranean waters meant that British trading posts which were in the area equally came under Russian threat.

Another factor which explains British concern for the stability and survival of the Ottoman Empire was the steady growth of British trade and investments in Turkey after 1815. These faced the risk of uncertainty if Turkey came increasingly under Russian threat.

FRANCE

France's political and commercial links with Turkey went back over several centuries. The system of "capitulations" by which Europeans enjoyed special privileges, including immunity from Turkish law, had been developed for France's benefit. The King of France had been recognized as the protector of the interests of the Catholic Church in the Sultan's domains. Consequently, France enjoyed considerable diplomatic influence at Constantinople in this period. Moreover, it was natural for France, with her major commercial port of Marseilles and naval base at Toulon, to regard the Mediterranean as an area for extending French influence regardless of the resultant rivalry with Britain.

PRUSSIA

Prussia had the least involvement and least interest in Turkish affairs. Even so, she could not entirely dissociate herself from the Eastern Question. She was also linked by the "Holy Alliance." to both Austria and Russia, who were deeply involved in the Eastern Question? Lacking the strength and self-confidence to act as a mediator between her two allies, Prussia tended to follow Vienna's lead.

Study Guides

- i) In what ways did the decay of the Ottoman Empire affect international relations between 1821-1856?
- ii) To what extent was the peace of Europe threatened by the Eastern Question in the period 1821 to 1856?

The Greek Revolt, 1821-1831

The Greek revolt was one of the most important events in the history of the disintegration of the Turkish Empire. It stood out as an example of what determined nationalists could achieve in their quest for independence from Turkey in future.

Causes of the Greek revolt

The real cause of the Greek discontent was derived from the fact that the Moslem Turks regarded the Greeks as inferior and infidels and therefore attempted to absorb them into their own civilization. Hence within the same empire two different civilizations, with contrasting aims developed and co-existed. The Greeks began to emulate the glories of ancient Greece and used a successful historical past to support the demand for the freedom of the modern Greeks from Turkish rule.

The revival of national interest in the great history of ancient Greece led to other important developments. In 1814 a secret society known as the Hetaria Philike or Association of Friends was set up, with the purpose of spreading this interest in Greek culture and of arousing national consciousness and preparing it for action against the Turks. The agents of the society became increasingly active in every part of Greece and by 1821 it had over 20000 members.

The Revolt

The main areas of fighting were the Morea and the Greek islands of the Aegean Sea. Here the agents of the Hetaria Philike had been extremely active and the revolt was more generally spread over the population than in the case of an earlier attempt at Moldavia. The Greeks killed every Moslem they could lay their hands on, and within six weeks there were scarcely any of the Moslem population of 25 000 still alive. This led at once to equally horrifying reprisals by the Turks, who murdered Greeks in Thessaly and Macedonia to the north and in the Aegean Islands. The most horrible of these Aegean massacres was on the island of Chios, where the Turks killed 27 000 Greek men, women and children. The murder of the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church at Constantinople shocked Europe and immediately led to the change of attitude among the Great Powers. They could no longer stand aside and watch the atrocities taking place.

However, only by command of the sea could the Turks get sufficient forces into Morea to suppress the revolt, but the Greeks, being a trading people, managed to defeat the Turks and keep control of the Aegean Islands. To overcome this difficulty, the Sultan now called on his Egyptian vassal, Mehemet Ali for aid. On being promised the control of Morea and the island of Crete for his services, Mehemet Ali sent his son Ibrahim Pasha, with an army and fleet to the aid of the Turks. Ibrahim captured Crete and successfully landed his forces in the Morea, where he began to wipe out the Greek population. This Egyptian intervention of 1824-25 tipped the scales against the Greeks, whose cause was also weakened by internal rivalries. Between 1825 and 1826 it was clear that unless the European powers intervened, the Greek revolt would be suppressed.

The Great powers eventually intervened when Canning had changed his attitude towards the revolt altogether in 1826. He decided that it was better to co-operate with Russia in order to restrain her, than to persist in opposing her and risk unilateral Russian action. His decision was also influenced by pressure from public opinion to stop the wholesale massacre of the Greeks by the Egyptian forces and Russia agreed in the St Petersburg Protocol of April 1826, on setting up

an autonomous Greek state under Turkish suzerainty. A loosely-worded clause also permitted intervention by either or both powers if it became necessary to use force to prevent the revolt from being suppressed. The assumption behind this Anglo-Russian agreement, to which France adhered in July 1827, was that the revolt could be brought to an end by the mediation of the three powers at Constantinople. When the Sultan rejected their offer of mediation, the three powers were left with no clearly agreed policy on what to do next. However, when the Turco-Egyptian fleet attacked the British fleet blockading Morea to prevent supplies reaching the Turco-Egyptian forces by sea from Egypt, the British squadron fired back and promptly sank the Turco-Egyptian fleet.

The incident at Navarino Bay in October 1827 had crucial consequence for the Greek Civil War. Firstly, the Sultan declared a “holy war” against Russia, regarded as the instigator of the hostile blockade. Secondly, the Turks became even more negative towards the efforts of the three powers to mediate in the Greek conflict. Thirdly, the British government, embarrassed by Admiral Codrington’s drastic action of sinking the Turco-Egyptian fleet at Navarino Bay, became reluctant to approve any further measures against the Turks. Consequently, it was left to France to send troops to evict the Egyptians from the Morea, while Russia provided funds and supplies for the Greek forces.

As expected, Russia went on to defeat Turkey and gained considerable rights over the two Black Sea Ports and got a recognition of their claims to Georgia and Armenia. Turkey’s defeat by Russia severely weakened her ability to resist pressure to discuss the terms for a settlement of the Greek revolt. The borders for the new Kingdom of Greece were agreed and she became an autonomous state under Prince Otto. It must be noted, however, that France and Britain insisted on limiting the size of the new state for fear that it would become a Russian satellite. A solution to the Greek revolt without a conflict among the Great Powers has been called “A major achievement of the Concert of Europe.” However, it was not a triumph for the Congress system, which had clearly failed to cope with the divergence of views among the Great Powers. In fact, the British decision, followed by that of France, to try to work with Russia, rather than against her, provided the element of flexibility needed for successful co-operation by the Great Powers. In this sense “Conference Diplomacy,” securing as much consensus, was a necessary substitute for the over-rigid Congress System which had become an impediment to the successful operation of the Concert of Europe.

The Great Powers and Mehemet Ali, (1831-3)

On two occasions in the 1830s the survival of the Ottoman Empire seemed to be at risk. The unusual feature of this period, surprisingly was that the threat to Turkey came not from Russia but from the Sultan’s own vassal, Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt.

Mehemet Ali’s grievances stemmed from the Sultan’s failure to grant him Syria and Crete as rewards for his aid against the Greeks. He was certainly determined to secure Syria which was occupied by Egyptian forces between 1831-1832. By February 1833, these forces had advanced to within 150 miles of Constantinople, prompting the Sultan to appeal to the European powers for help.

Russia, surprisingly was the one most alarmed by Mehemet Ali’s aggressive moves. This is because Russia feared that the collapse of Turkey would lead to territorial gains by her rivals,

namely, Britain, France and Austria-Hungary. Furthermore, Russia also feared that a further reduction of the sultan's authority to Asia Minor might result in the emergence of a strong, ethnically united Turkish state, which would be more capable of resisting Russia in that region. This conservative approach remained the basis of Russian policy towards Turkey for the next 20 years. The current state of Turkey therefore safeguarded Russian interests intact.

It was therefore not in Russia's interest in 1833 to see the Sultan's rule overthrown and probably replaced by a more vigorous regime under Mehemet Ali. Since Ali was regarded as a protégé of France, his triumph would serve to increase French influence in the near and Middle East, at the expense of Russia. Moreover, Ali was in rebellion against his legitimate suzerain, and Nicholas' fear of revolution had recently been intensified by the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy in France. There were very sound reasons therefore why Russia, Turkey's most dangerous adversary for the previous 60 years should take the surprising step of offering the Sultan military assistance for the defence of Constantinople. Consequently, in February 1833, a Russian squadron arrived off the Bosphorous, followed some weeks later by several thousand Russian troops. Despite its belated arrival, this show of force, combined with pressure from other powers, induced Mehemet Ali to come to terms with the Sultan. By May 1833, he had secured recognition of his claim to rule Syria, with the northern district of Adana for his son, Ibrahim, the very able commander of his forces.

The Treaty of Unkiar, Skelessi, (July 1833)

The Tsar Nicholas gained important concessions from the Sultan of Turkey in return for Russian help against Mehemet Ali. Russia and Turkey signed a defensive alliance pledging mutual assistance whenever peace and security might be endangered. The Sultan agreed to close the entrance to the Black Sea against the warships of all nations except Russia, whenever the Russians made the demand. The Russians had made tremendous gains in this treaty because it also implied that in future the Turks would turn to Russia first for support. This signified, as the Russian foreign Minister claimed, that "our intervention in the affairs of Turkey has acquired a basis of legality."

The contents of the treaty were made secret, but Palmerston soon got to know about them. It became, therefore, one of his most determined aims to get this treaty cancelled as soon as possible, for he was resolved that Russia should never be able to control the straits. In fact, Palmerston was extremely angry over the whole affair, for it was undoubtedly a great blow to British policy which aimed consistently to keep the Russian fleet out of the Mediterranean.

Turkey argued that she was in the present predicament and dilemma mainly because her appeal to the rest of the Great Powers had fallen on deaf ears and that it was only after her appeal had not been responded to that she turned to the Russians. This was of course a dangerous course which a Turkish minister justified on the grounds that "a drowning man will clutch at a serpent." British inaction during the crisis of 1831-3 was a product of two factors; Palmerstone's appeal for funds to send a force to support the Sultan was rejected by parliament and since he faced a general election he did not want to attract further criticism from the opposition. Secondly, some influential members of the Cabinet believed that the Ottoman Empire was beyond redemption and should be left to its fate.

On the other hand, France's attitude to the problem was complicated by her desire to reserve Mehemet Ali as an agent of French influence in the Mediterranean. Consequently, rather than offer direct aid to Turkey, she preferred to work for a compromise settlement (between the Sultan and Ali) that would avoid the need for military intervention by the powers.

Austria's response to the crisis had been to propose concerted action by the Great Powers but this did not materialize. Afterwards, her anxiety about the real aims of Russian policy was relieved by her agreement with Russia at Munchengrätz in September 1833 which restored the unity of purpose of the Holy Alliance. Austria was assured of Russia's desire to preserve the Ottoman Empire and of her willingness to concert with Austria if its collapse seemed inevitable. Both powers also agreed on the need to defend the Sultan against any future threat from Mehemet Ali.

The main effect of the crisis of 1831-3 on international relations was the deepening of British and French mistrust of Russian policy in the Near East. In particular, the quite mistaken belief that Russia had secured an exclusive right of passage for her warships through the Straits created great alarm.

The Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi was generally regarded by other European states as almost reducing Turkey to the status of a Russian protectorate "taking the place by sap rather than by storm," as Palmerston put it. Although this was an exaggerated view, Britain and France, unlike Austria, had to wait until 1839 for positive proof that Russia wished to act in concert with the other powers in the Eastern Question. In the next crisis, in 1839, Palmerston was determined to undo the advantages which he believed Russia had derived from her aid to the Sultan in 1833.

The crisis of 1839-41

The renewal of the crisis in the Near East in 1839 arose from the Sultan's desire to revenge against Mehemet Ali. Confident of success following the reorganization of the Turkish army since 1833, the Sultan ordered the invasion of Syria in May 1839. However, his forces were routed by the Egyptians at the battle of Nezib in June, leaving Constantinople open to attack especially after the desertion of the Turkish fleet to the Egyptian side and the sudden death of the Sultan. Once again Turkey was saved by European intervention, but with some important differences from the earlier crisis in 1833. The Great Powers seemed agreed on resolving the crisis of 1839 by collective action as opposed to unilateral action by Russia. In 1840 however, a serious confrontation developed between France and Britain, with the result that Britain depended on Russia's cooperation to resolve the dispute with Ali.

The initial response of the Great Powers to the Turkish defeat in 1839 was to assure the new Sultan of their collective support. This was intended to deter him from making sweeping concessions to Mehemet Ali. The united front of the Great Powers, which owed something to Metternich's initiative in summoning a conference at Vienna, broke down dramatically in the spring of 1840. Thiers, the new French Prime Minister, openly sided with Ali, with the aim of extracting generous concessions from the new Sultan as a way of resolving the crisis.

Although France was entitled to seek increase in her influence in the Levant (the eastern Mediterranean) by pursuing a bold policy of her own, her action threatened to destroy the European concert. It also carried the risk of humiliation for France if the other Great Powers

closed ranks against her. Moreover, Thiers' policy provided the Tsar with the opportunity he had been seeking since late 1839, to drive a wedge between the Liberal Alliance (Britain and France as partners). One thing for certain was that as long as the Tsar co-operated with Britain and differed with France, there could never be a danger of any war with his country from France or Austria.

On the other hand Palmerston was worried by Thiers' policy of supporting Mehemet Ali because it was becoming a menace to British trading interest in the Eastern Mediterranean. He now called for a conference of the Great Powers in London, deliberately omitting France. The Conference of London signed by the representatives of Britain, Russia and Austria. By this Convention, Mehemet Ali was offered the southern half of Syria; was requested to make peace with the Sultan, and was given ten days in which to agree to the terms. When he refused, an allied fleet was sent against Crete, which was recaptured while a powerful English fleet was dispatched by Palmerston to Alexandria and Acre was taken by the British troops. These demonstrations of naval force, the movement of Russian troops against him and the dismissal of his ally, Thiers, by Louis Philippe, completely isolated Mehemet Ali. By the second convention of London, this time signed by France, he was forced to give up both Syria and Crete to the Sultan, but was confirmed as the hereditary ruler of Egypt.

The Straits Convention; (1841)

Palmerston also succeeded at this time in ending the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi by securing another agreement known as the Straits Convention of 1841. The sultan, having been strongly supported by Palmerston and having regained his lost territory from Mehemet Ali mainly, through the initiative of Palmerston in calling the London Conferences, was under a strong obligation to accept Palmerstone's terms.

By the straits Convention, Turkey agreed to close the Bosphorous to the war ships of all nations in times of peace, thus making it impossible for Russia to send her war ships into the Mediterranean when she pleased. Altogether, the crisis of 1839-1841 turned out to be a great triumph for Palmerstone. He had defeated Mehemet Ali, regained British influence with the Sultan as against Russia, and had defeated the policy of Thiers. British foreign policy in relation to the Eastern Question had never been more successful.

Study Guides

- i) Explain the causes of the Greek Revolt.
- ii) What "rights" did Russia claim to represent in the Ottoman Empire? How did she seek to extend those "rights"?
- iii) How is the success of the Greeks in their revolt against Turkey to be accounted for?
- iv) How did the presence of Palmerston (i) Check Russian ambitions,
b) Check Mehemet Ali?
- v) Was a balance of power achieved during this period of the Eastern Question (1821-1856)?
- vi) Why was the Ottoman Empire of concern to the European powers in the period 1831 to 1856?

Background to the Crimean War

The Crimean War was the next most important development of the Eastern Question. This war, apparently one of the most useless and wasteful ever fought, arose partly from the ambitions of Napoleon III, Emperor of France and partly from Russian policy towards Turkey and the fears of that policy felt by the other Great Powers, especially Britain.

Russian policy after 1841 became outspoken in its opposition to the continued existence of the Turkish Empire. Various statements made by the Czar seemed to indicate to the other powers concerned that he was determined to break down Turkey once and for good. He referred to Turkey as “the sick man of Europe” and further said that no amount of doctoring would do the patient any good. On a visit to Britain in 1844, Tsar Nicholas I suggested that Britain and Russia should settle the fate of Turkey between them (Britain to take Egypt and Crete), and Russia to occupy Constantinople temporarily. The independence of Wallachia and Moldavia, of Bulgaria and Serbia was to be guaranteed by the powers, while the immediate “protector” of these states was to be Russia.

However, the British had two main reasons for opposing the Tsar’s suggestions.:

a) Russia would obviously become the most influential state in the Balkans and the Middle East and, with the control of Constantinople, would be able to dominate the entrance to the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea. In fact, Russian Warships would have completely free access to the Mediterranean.

b) They considered Turkey to be stronger than what the Tsar suggested. There was a suspicion in British circles that the Tsar was exaggerating the weakness of the Turkish Empire for his own interests. For these reasons, the government of Lord Aberdeen remained unresponsive to the Tsar’s proposals for partitioning the Turkish Empire made in 1853.

Events leading to the outbreak of War.

The crisis in the Near East began in 1850 with a seemingly absurd dispute over the rights of the Catholic monks against the Greek (Orthodox) monks in the Holy Places i.e the guardianship in Palestine of Holy Places sacred to all Christians. In the sixteenth century, the French had been given the guardianship of the Church of Bethlehem and the Sacred Manger, but these duties had become neglected in the eighteenth century and the Russian Greek Orthodox church took over the guardianship. Napoleon III, with an eye to the full support of the Catholic Church at home, revived the French claims, and in 1853 the Sultan agreed to recognize the French monks as the guardians of the Holy Places. Russia naturally protested against this agreement and sent an ambassador to Constantinople, prince Menshikoff, an aggressive individual. He put forward the demand that Russia should be recognized as the protector of the Orthodox Church/Christians in the Turkish Empire. This demand, if accepted, would have enabled Russia to intervene in Turkish affairs almost at will. What therefore came to be feared was Russian interventionist policy which had always been known to be greedy and prone to violating the interest of the other powers.

Facing Prince Menshikoff in Constantinople was the British Ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliff, who was determined to frustrate the designs of Russia at all costs. He encouraged the Sultan to stand firm against the Russian proposals, and in this he was supported by the

government of Lord Aberdeen. At last, in July 1853 Russia replied by moving troops into the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia which acknowledge the Sultan's suzerainty. By this time the British and French fleets had anchored outside the Dardanelles, as a gesture of support for the Turks. In an attempt to diffuse the crisis, Austria initiated a series of diplomatic moves to find a formula acceptable to both the Tsar and the Sultan. The Turkish rejection of the most important of these moves the Vienna Note in August 1853, was a crucial stage in the deepening crisis. In October, Turkey declared war on Russia after the Tsar had rejected an ultimatum to evacuate the occupied provinces. The sinking of a Turkish flotilla at Sinope in the Black Sea in November 1853 created a storm of protest in Britain and France, whose governments were subjected to increasing pressure from public opinion (more especially in Britain) to stand firm against Russia.

This hardening of attitudes led to the failure in late 1853 of further diplomatic efforts to find the elusive formula that would safeguard Turkey's integrity while satisfying the Tsar's honour. In March 1854 therefore, Britain and France signed an alliance with Turkey and declared war on Russia.

It must be remembered that Russia at that time was regarded in radical and liberal circles in the West as the embodiment of reactionary oppression, and what could be healthier than a resounding defeat for Tsar Nicholas? The cause of liberty in Europe would be served by keeping the Russian despotism as far away from Europe as possible. This line of thought counted for much more than considerations for the safety of the British overland route to India, which was very little used at this time and in the words of a modern historian, only "catered for a few travellers in a hurry."

The motives of France, under Louis Napoleon, being President and subsequently (from December 1852), Emperor of France, were twofold. He saw this question as a promising issue for causing a rift between Catholic Austria and Orthodox Russia, and undermining the Holy Alliance, creating opportunities for French diplomatic initiatives in Europe. A more immediate consideration was to use the issue to secure the support of catholic opinion in France, heedless of the warnings, from London that "the Holy Places Question, if roughly handled is one that may bring on trouble and war."

Turkey's usefulness to Russia lay partly in her role as a "buffer", guaranteeing the immunity of Russia's southern coastline from attack by the western maritime powers. This had been based on the understanding that the Turks feared Russia more than any other Great Power. In 1852, however, fear of France had induced the Sultan to give way to Louis Napoleon's demands. The fear was caused by a French threat to bombard Tripoli in North Africa, and the appearance of the latest French warship, the 90 gun Charlemagne, at Constantinople. The Russian minister calculated that the Russian fleet would outclass the combined French and Turkish fleets, and acted accordingly. The Russian foreign Minister argued that if fear had induced the Sultan to give way to France's demands, then fear of Russia was the weapon that had to be applied at Constantinople to avert Russia's influence there. Hence the decision to dispatch a high-powered mission of naval and military chiefs headed by Prince Menshikov/ Menshikoff.

Where did the Tsar go wrong in his diplomacy in 1853?

In his determination to put pressure on the Turks, the Tsar made two fatal errors of judgment:

a) Firstly, he believed that unrest in parts of the Ottoman Empire, especially a revolt in Montenegro, a small Balkan state, was a sign of Turkey's irreversible collapse.

b) Secondly, he seriously misread the international situation. Not only did he believe that a perfect community of interest existed between Russia and Austria in the Near East, but he also believed he could count on British support, an attitude encouraged after the pacific and when, hitherto, anti-Turkish Lord Aberdeen had become Prime Minister in December 1852. He thus believed, erroneously, that Britain would never go to war with Russia. In fact in January 1853, the Tsar initiated a series of conversations with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British ambassador to Russia. In these conversations, the Tsar is quoted at once saying “Now I wish to speak to you as a friend and as a gentlemen if we manage to come to an understanding on this matter, England and I, for the rest, it matters little to me; I am indifferent as to what others do or think....”

Therefore Russia could have acted irresponsibly under the false pretext that it had British support on its side, and that Britain took to the view that the collapse of Turkey was imminent. However, it was in fact those Russian views concerning the decline of Turkey which made the British suspicious of Russian sinister motives. Such suspicions were increased by the Tsar’s plan to put pressure on Turkey. In January 1853, Russian troops were concentrated on the borders of Moldavia and Wallachia. In late February, Menshikov arrived in Constantinople with instructions to break off diplomatic relations with the Sultan if Russia’s demands were not met. These demands contained a detailed set of instructions prepared by the foreign ministry focused on three issues. Firstly, the sultan was to rectify the concessions made to the Latin monks which had damaged the Tsar’s prestige as protector of the Orthodox Church. This was resolved in late April as a compromise and ceased to be contentious.

The second demand was for a formal published Convention or treaty, incorporating Russia’s existing rights and privileges in the Ottoman Empire. But the crucial demand was that this convention should recognize Russia’s right “to make representations on behalf of the Orthodox Christians with the Ottoman Empire,” since Orthodox Christians amounted to about one third of the Sultan’s subjects, such a right if granted, would reduce Turkey to the status of a Russian protectorate. All historians agree that this was an unacceptable demand constituting a serious threat to the independence of Turkey. Most contemporaries viewed it in a similar light, as giving Russia undefined right of interference in the internal affairs of the Turkish Empire. Suspicion of Russia’s intentions were thereby greatly increased.

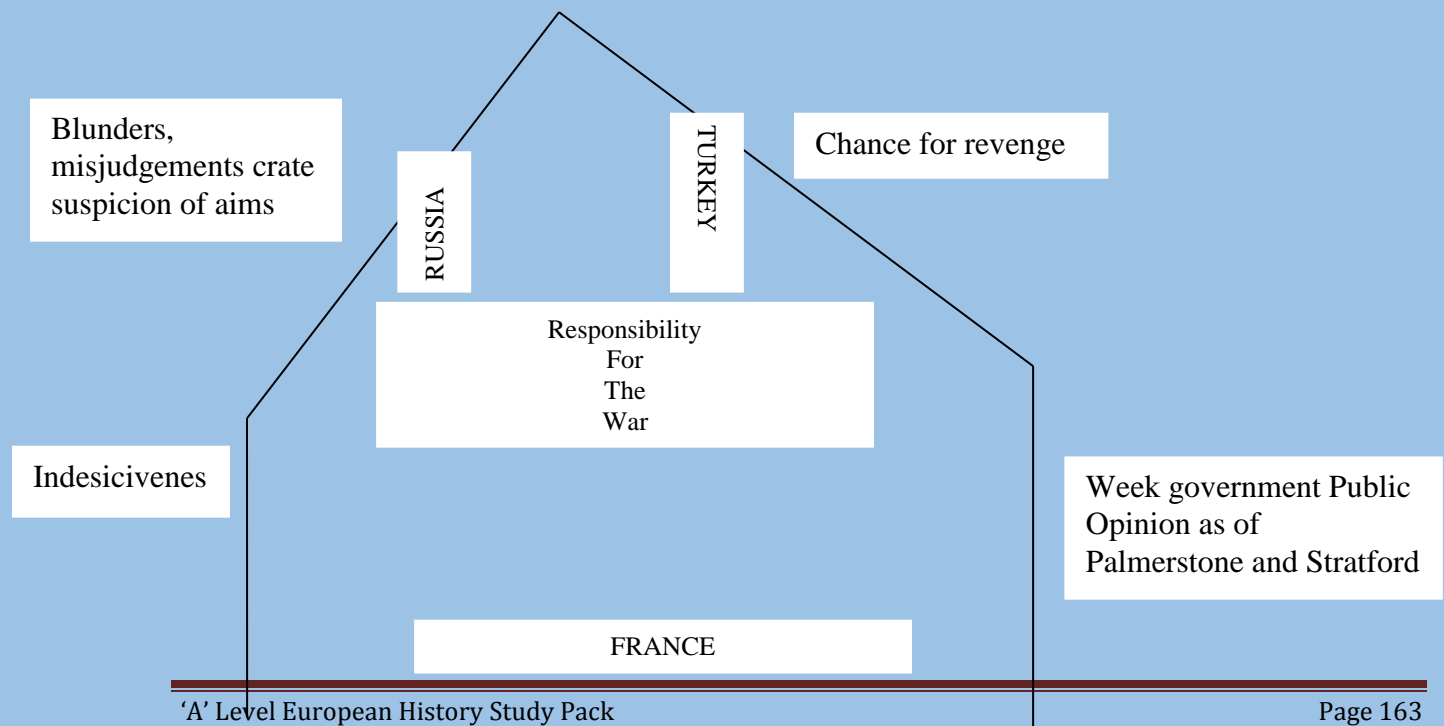
In reality, contrary to the Tsar’s belief, Russia did not enjoy any such existing rights under the treaties of Kutchuk-Kainardi (1774) and Adrianople (1829). The Russian foreign ministry had got it wrong, confusing rights over a new church to be built in Constantinople in the 1770s with a right to make representations on behalf of the inhabitants of the Danubian principalities, granted in 1829. The situation was further complicated by the fact that under the so-called “millet” system (a form of delegated authority), the Orthodox clergy exercised a political as well as religious influence over the Balkan Christians. A right or a privilege granted to the Orthodox Church and/or its clergy therefore had implications which went beyond the spiritual realm. Consequently, a Russian claim to make representations on behalf of the Orthodox Church, clergy or Christians was something of a political minefield. Once the suspicions of the Turkish and their western sympathizers had been aroused by Menshikov’s demand for a formal treaty, it mattered little that he was willing to scale down the substance of the demands to a modest level,

ultimately, to little more than a face-saving formula. Russia was henceforth regarded by the Turks and others (including western media) as attempting to destroy the Turkish Empire.

Modern historians are not fully agreed in their interpretations of this complicated issue. Norman Rich, in particular, argued that obsessive Russophobes, such as Stratford de Radcliffe and Palmerstone deliberately misinterpreted the nature of Russia's intentions with the aim of provoking war. Most writers, however, take the view that the Russians were to blame for creating an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust. This was not related to the precise nature of the demands being made at a given moment from late February to May 1853, but owed much to Menshkov's deliberately overbearing manner intended to intimidate the Turkish from the outset. When he insisted on the dismissal of the Turkish Foreign Minister, he attempted to dictate not to negotiate with the Turkish government.

The decision of the Turks, no doubt influenced by hopes of Western support to reflect Menshkov's entry, and more demands of early May, infuriated the Tsar. Faced with the choice of a humiliating climb-down or an increase in pressure on Turkey, he gave the order for Russian troops to occupy the Danubean principalities in July 1853. By the summer of 1853, the battle lines for the future conflict were being drawn. Turkish resistance to Russia's demands drew the Tsar into a sharper confrontation with Turkey, while Britain and France committed themselves more deeply by moving fleets to Besika Bay, just outside the Dardanelles. The use by three of the European powers, of fleets and armies as diplomatic weapons, when none of them was seriously intending war, increased the danger of a conflict. Since direct Russo-Turkish negotiations had failed to solve the crisis, the best hope of a peaceful settlement lay with diplomatic intervention by the other powers. The time had come for Austria to play the leading role in the search for a formula that could satisfy the Tsar's honour while safeguarding Turkey's integrity.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR: DIAGRAM



Initiates Crisis
In Near East

Who was responsible for the outbreak of the Crimean War, 1854-1856?

The question of responsibility for the outbreak of the Crimean War has traditionally been answered by apportioning varying degrees of blame to all participants, within the overall content of the war as an accident. This view remains tenable, providing it is recognized that an alternative interpretation now exists which stressed the active desire for war against Russia of some individuals and groups in London and Constantinople. The net effect of this new approach is, of course, to shift a substantial amount of blame usually placed on Russia, onto Britain.

Russia's main responsibility lay in the series of miscalculations and errors of judgment which resulted in a confrontation with Turkey from which it was difficult to extricate herself with honour. Despite evidence to the contrary, the Tsar persisted in his belief that he could count on both British and Austrian good will. His conviction that Turkey was in a state of imminent collapse was also mere wishful thinking, leading to the assumption that the Turks could be bullied into accepting Russia's demands. In particular, the Menshikov mission has been called "perhaps the most important step towards war by any of the states concerned." Furthermore the Tsar made no allowance for the powerful anti-Russian feeling which the Turkish government was eventually unable to control. Generated by Menshikov's behavior, it reached fever-pitch after the Russian occupation of the Danubian principalities. This military action itself raised the stakes in an already tense diplomatic crisis. Finally, it could be said that Nicholas' exaggerated sense of honour led him to reject several diplomatic attempts to resolve the crisis by compromise in late 1853. The collective note of late November, early December 1853 (Vienna Note) illustrates the efforts of the neutral powers such as Austria to find a formula for resuming negotiations between Russia and Turkey.

There is general agreement among historians that the Tsar's blunders were almost equaled by those of the British government. The coalition government formed in December 1852 under the Lord Aberdeen with Clarendon as Foreign Secretary is regarded as the weakest and most divided of all British cabinets of the mid-nineteenth century. Because of the rifts between, on the one hand, the pacific (and anti-Turkish) Aberdeen and Clarendon and, on the other, Russell and Palmerston who pressed for a firm policy against Russia, the government frequently resorted to half-measures. For example, the dispatch of the fleet to Besika Bay in June 1853 instead of to Constantinople, tended to encourage the Turks more than it deterred the Russians.

Furthermore, this weak government came under increasing pressure from the press, which gave full expression to the violent Russophobia that characterized public opinion after 1849, when Tsar Nicholas was nicknamed the "gendarme of Europe." (Meaning the police officer). Almost irrespective of the issues involved, British public opinion regarded Russia as a powerful and dangerous reactionary force whose supposed expansionist designs had to be resisted at all costs. Hence, the popularity of Palmerstone whose antipathy to Russia at this time was well known. The role of lord Stratford, ambassador at Constantinople, in encouraging Turkey to reject both Menshikov's demands and the Vienna vote has long been controversial. Although seemingly

vindicated by a detailed study in the 1930s, he has been re-cast by Norman Rich, as noted earlier, as one of the major villains of the situation.

France's responsibility lay mainly in initiating the crisis in the Near East by raising the issue of the Holy Places. Louis Napoleon has rightly been accused of playing to the tune of the domestic situation at home. This was done despite the likely repercussions on Russo-Turkish relations, for long, a sensitive and dangerous issue in international relations. On the other hand, Napoleon III showed little desire to aggravate the crisis between 1853-54 and made several proposals designed to facilitate an honourable retreat by the Tsar. French policy was not motivated by hostility to Russia, but by Napoleon's desire to create a liberal alliance with Britain. His ultimate objective was to destroy the Holy Alliance, especially the close association of Austria and Russia. This was in fact shattered by Austria's ultimatum to Russia to evacuate the Danubian principalities in June 1854.

The main criticism historians make of Austria's role in the origins of the Crimean War is the indecisiveness of Austrian policy between 1853 and 1854. For too long, she allowed the Tsar to persist in his mistaken belief that "I can count on Vienna," as Nicholas insisted in late June 1853. In reality, the Russian occupation of the Danubian principalities was regarded as a serious threat to Austrian interests, especially for her trade down the Danube River. Although Buol deserved credit for his initiatives in seeking a diplomatic solution to the crisis (such as the Vienna Note), the fundamental aim of Austrian policy was to avoid taking sides, so as not to antagonize either Russia or France. Had Austria come out openly against Russia at an earlier date, the Tsar might have realized the need to tread more cautiously in his dealings with Turkey.

Although the Turks appeared at times to be the hopeless victims of French and Russian power politics, they were by no means innocent of warlike intentions. The signs of western support in the mounting crisis of 1853 presented them with a unique opportunity to retaliate for the succession of defeats they had suffered at the hands of Russia since 1768, at roughly 20 year intervals. In the Holy Places disputing deceitfulness of the Turkish ministers was quite remarkable, secretly making concessions which nullified the privileges granted, only days before, to the other side. Far from encouraging a compromise solution, the Turks turned the dispute into an auction in which the rival bidders escalated their threats. The Sultan's rejection of the Vienna Note in its original form undoubtedly sabotaged the best hope of a peaceful solution and made war more likely. Whether the amendments insisted upon by the Turks, and subsequently rejected by the Tsar, were justified by legitimate concern for their integrity, or whether they were intended to make war more likely, has re-emerged as a matter of dispute. The difficulty is that the correct interpretation of a face-saving formulae is a rather elusive matter.

Even within the traditional view of the causes of the Crimean War, significant differences of emphasis have been attached by historians to the roles of the leading states, especially Russia. While some historians regard Russian policy as fundamentally defensive, others believe that the Tsar's constant talk of a partition of European Turkey indicates that he, if not his advisers, was contemplating an expansionist policy to secure substantial advantages for Russia.

DIPLOMACY AND WAR, MARCH 1854 TO DECEMBER 1855

Four of the Great Powers were in basic agreement on the need to defend the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but only two of them, that is Britain and France, (excluding Austria and Prussia), had declared war on Russia. Prussia's reluctance to get involved in war with Russia is easy to understand since she had no direct interest in Near Eastern affairs at this time.

Furthermore, the Prussian King had no wish to antagonize the Tsar and in any case was notoriously indecisive. Austria's situation was rather different. Both her economic and military security were threatened by the Russian occupation of the Danubian principalities. But, until the signing of the Austro-Prussian alliance of 1854, Austria could not risk involvement in the east in case Prussia seized the opportunity to weaken Austrian influence in the west, especially, in Germany. The alliance of 1854 gave Austria the confidence to demand that Russia evacuate the principalities. When the Russians withdrew in August 1854, the area was occupied by Austrian troops for the duration of the war, but by agreement with Turkey and Russia.

Since Austria wished to avoid committing herself any further to the anti-Russian side, she took the lead in promoting diplomatic moves to end the war. The "Four Points", accepted by the western powers in August 1854, remained the basis of peace proposals for the duration of the conflict. The general objectives of the proposals was stated to be..." to seek means for connecting the existence of the Ottoman Empire with the general balance of power in Europe".. Two of the four points dealt with Russia's claims to be the sole protector not only of the Orthodox Christians but also of the inhabitants of Serbia and the Danubian principalities by substituting collective guarantee of all the Great Powers. A third point dealt with free Navigation of the mouth of the Danube River, an issue of particular concern to Austria. The fourth point proposed a revision of the straits Convention of 1841, initially in the... "balance of power in Europe"... Such points therefore aimed to end Russia's dominance in the Black Sea. This, of course, put more restrictions on Russia's overall influence on Turkish affairs.

However, the Tsar's rejection of the Four Points was "injurious to Russia's interest and her honour"... left Britain and France with two complementary courses of action:

- (i) To exert pressure on Austria to side openly with them against Russia and
- (ii) To force Russia to negotiate on the basis of the Four Points by inflicting military defeat on her forces.

Both alternatives were pursued with varying degrees of success throughout the following year. For example, military setbacks induced the Tsar to accept the Four Points in late November 1854 but by this time Britain had decided to insist on stiffer terms regarding the Black Sea. Negotiations in the spring of 1855 broke down over this point, so that renewed peace talks had to await further military victories. More rapid success seemed to reward allied efforts to include Austria within the anti-Russian coalition.

In December 1854 Austria signed a Tripartite Alliance but then managed to delay an ultimatum to Russia for a whole year.

The performance of the British army and, to a lesser extent, the much larger French forces in the Crimean War left much to be desired. The heroic, but futile charge of the Light Brigade, sent to capture the enemy guns, was the most dramatic example of inept military command. The allies

were fortunate in fact, that the Russians displayed even greater military incompetence, as well as being hampered by extended overland supply lines stretching over several hundred miles. The allied commanders had assumed that their main task was to prevent a Russian advance through the Balkans. The Russian withdrawal, however, obliged the allies to direct their main attack on the Crimea, a target favoured by some British leaders from the onset. The capture of the Crimean port of Sebastopol, the base of the Black Sea fleet, would destroy Russian naval power in the Black Sea thereby eliminating a major threat to Turkey's security.

The failure of the Russian commanders to follow up their initial successes in September 1854 with a rapid assault on Sebastopol proved to be a costly error. After the Russians had failed to dislodge the allied armies from the Crimea in the battles of Balaklava and Inkermam, military deadlock ensued from November 1854 to the following June. The winter of 1854-55 brought dreadful suffering to the allied troops, aggravated by medical and administrative incompetence against which Florence Nightingale battled with great determination. Her success is shown by the reduction in death from disease in the British army from 16000 in the first half of the war to 2000 in the remainder. In the autumn of 1855, the reinforced allied armies defeated the Russian field army and at long last, achieving their initial objective with the capture of Sebastopol.

The fall of Sebastopol in September 1855 was a serious setback for Russia but by no means amounting to a total defeat of Russia. The allies were faced with the prospect of yet another campaign if they were determined to win a complete victory over Russia. By this time, Napoleon III no longer felt attracted to the idea of extending the scope of the War with the aim of liberating Poland and Finland, and effecting changes in Italy and along the Rhine. French public opinion felt that the capture of Sebastopol satisfied French honour and wanted an end to the war, in tune with Napoleon who wanted to restore Franco-Russian relations by a moderate peace.

In Britain, on the other hand, Palmerstone, who had replaced the incompetent Aberdeen as Prime Minister in February 1855, was still in a fighting mood. Insisting on the need for what he called, "along line of circumvallation to confine the future extension of Russia"... he advocated campaigns in the Baltic and the Caucasus. His standpoint, shared by Clarendon, is explicable on the grounds that the military successes achieved by September 1855 scarcely justified the sacrifices made by Britain or entitled her to insist on severe terms of peace. His aggressive stance, although supported by British public opinion, struck no responsible chord in Europe, allowing Buol to resume his diplomatic pressure on Russia to make peace. In December 1855 Austria issued an ultimatum, backed by Prussia, threatening Russia with war if she did not negotiate on the basis of the Four Points. Acceptance of the ultimatum by the new Tsar, Alexander II, in January, was followed by an armistice and the opening of a peace conference in Paris in late February 1856, marking the end of the Crimean War.

The Treaty of Paris, (1856)

At the peace conference Napoleon III's desire to restore good relations with Russia even at the expense of his entente with Britain, was very evident. The British consequently found themselves alone in pressing for severe terms with Russia. In fact, the British wanted the peace conference to fail in order to justify extending the war against Russia, but the overwhelming desire of the other states for peace ensured the defeat of the British strategy.

In general, the terms of the Peace of Paris were an elaboration of the Four Points proposed in August 1854. Russia's protectorship over the Danubian principalities and Serbia was replaced by a collective European one, while the existing rights and privileges of the Balkan Christians were guaranteed by a new reform edict issued by the Sultan. Turkey itself was admitted to the Concert of Europe with a guarantee of her independence. An internal commission was set up to ensure freedom of navigation along the Danube. A modest territorial damage also reduced Austrian fears of Russian interference with her Danubian trade. Southern Bessarabia (ceded to Russia in 1812) was restored to Turkey and incorporated into Moldavia. This arrangement had important commercial as well as strategic advantages for Austria, turning the Danube into a "German river" Russia's tactic of advertising trade through the port of Odessa by making the mouth of the Danube impossible for large vessels was thereby frustrated. The administration of the two Danubian principalities was to be reformed so as to create an independent national administration under Turkish suzerainty, but the issue of uniting them favoured by Napoleon was left unresolved.

The most severe aspect of the treaty was the section designed to ensure that the Black Sea was neutralized. Russia was prohibited from maintaining warships or naval arsenals there, so that she could no longer threaten a sudden attack on Constantinople. Although the same restriction was applied to Turkey, the Russians regarded this limitation on their sovereignty as a grievous humiliation to be reversed at the earliest favourable moment.

The Treaty of Paris was a major blow to Russian pride but it was, in general, a remarkably lenient peace settlement. Certainly, in the view of the British government, it did not go anything like far enough to lessen the possibility of future Russian expansion. A tripartite alliance signed by Britain, France and Austria to ensure Russia's adherence to the terms of the treaty, was only effective as long as the three powers were willing to act in union, which was not long. Although no major crisis arose over the Ottoman Empire during the next 20 years, no lasting solution to the Eastern Question, especially in terms of Turkish maladministration, was provided by the Treaty of Paris.

The Crimean War, (A.J.P. Taylor suggests), was fought against Russia, not for the sake of Turkey. It served to check Russian expansionist ambitions for 20 years, but at a heavy cost in terms of lives and resources. The main impact of the war was therefore on the relations between the Great Powers and its damaging effect on the whole system of the concert of Europe. The five major powers which had been in alliance for the past 40 years had now fought against each other and broke that basis of common understanding which had been founded in 1815.

The effect of the Crimean war on international relations

The Crimean War was preceded by almost 40 years of peace, but was followed by 14 years of intermittent warfare from 1856 to 1870. The objective of these wars was to accomplish what the 1848 revolutions had failed to achieve, i.e, the revision of the 1815 settlement to the advantage of some states, rather than in the interests of Europe as a whole. Phrases such as "realpolitik" were used to justify national expansionist aims. Two major territorial changes took place during this period, firstly, the unification of Italy under Piedmontese domination. This process was begun by the Franco- Piedmontese war against Austria in 1859. Secondly the creation of the

German Empire under Prussia by means of three wars, one against Denmark in 1864, the other against Austria in 1866, and the last against France in 1870-71.

The Great Powers acting in concert in the interest of “Europe”, a striking feature of international relations in the period 1815-54 was not much in evidence from 1856 to 1870. Although several congresses were proposed during these years, only two took place: the one on Schleswig-Holstein’s dispute in 1864, which turned out to be a failure, and on Luxembourg, a face-saving operation for Napoleon III in 1867. Historians are generally agreed that a major explanation for this marked contrast in international affairs between the early and later nineteenth century is that the Crimean War was an important watershed. One symbol of this change is that Austria was the only Great Power in 1857 still committed to the defense of the status quo in Europe.

Many historians also emphasise the importance of Austria’s role in the Crimean War as a key factor in the disintegration of the Holy Alliance. The ultimatum to Russia in June 1854 to evacuate the Danubian Principalities combined with her second ultimatum in December 1855 to make peace, has even been regarded as a turning point in European history, on the grounds that it ended the friendship and co-operation of the two eastern conservative powers and began an era of hostility that lasted until 1914.

A major consequence of the Treaty of Paris of 1856, was a change in the priorities of Russian foreign policy in the sense that defence of the status quo in Europe was relegated to second place after 1856. Thereafter, the prime aim of Russian diplomacy was to remove the humiliating restrictions imposed on Russian naval power in the Black Sea. Russia was therefore a “revisionist” force in international affairs, seeking ways to undo the 1856 settlement. She was even prepared to approve changes in the 1815 settlement if her own interests were not directly threatened. This was a far cry from the role of the “policeman of Europe,” attributed to Nicholas in 1849.

Russian policy was also influenced, at least for several years after 1856, by animosity towards Austria for her “betrayal” in joining the Crimean coalition” against her. Consequently, the Tsar would not veto changes to the 1815 settlement which adversely affected Austria as a great power. As A.J.P Taylor has observed, “Metternich’s system depended on Russia’s guarantee, once that was withdrawn the system could be overthrown.” In the period 1856-70, Russia aligned herself with France until 1863, and later with Prussia, both of whom were pursuing anti-Austrian policies. Russian Ministers were also acutely conscious of the weakness of the Tsar regime in the 1860s. The shame of defeat led to pre-occupation with the need for modernization and reform in Russia but these very reforms (especially the abolition of serfdom) had a destabilizing effect on the country. Despite this, Russia continued to play a prominent role in European affairs after 1856, but she was untypically anxious to avoid confrontation or war with another Great Power.

France was regarded as the real victor of the war since she had played a larger and more glorious military role than Britain. Napoleon III’s prestige was high making him the “Arbiter of Europe” from 1857 to 1863, and enabling him to champion the cause of “nationality.” Unlike his uncle Napoleon’s preferred method for restoring France’s greatness and creating a French hegemony in Europe was diplomacy but not war. Napoleon was not out to destroy the concert of Europe but his attempts to revise the 1815 settlement by conferences were opposed by the other Great

Powers suspicious of his aims. Although the Franco-Russian relations were quite cordial after 1856 (except during the Polish Revolt of 1863), France failed to secure a firm alliance with Russia because their interests did not sufficiently coincide. The problem was that Russia demanded France's full support in the Near East while France was mainly preoccupied with the prospects for expansion and with threats to her security in Western Europe. Such support for Russia would have jeopardized Napoleon's relations with Britain.

Although Britain was also a victor in the Crimean War, she had little reason to be proud of her performance. It was felt that her sacrifices of men and money had achieved little. This led to disenchantment with active involvement in European affairs which became quite a marked feature of British opinion in the 1860s. This was a major change in attitude since Britain had been a prominent member of the Concert of Europe before 1856. The Crimean War also ended Anglo-Russian co-operation in international affairs, which had been a valuable source of strength to the Concert since 1841.

For Austria, the Crimean War was a disaster. Not only did she alienate Britain and France by her hesitant policy during the war but she also angered Russia by her "betrayal" in eventually joining the "Crimean Coalition." Austria was therefore in a very exposed and vulnerable position in 1857 as the only remaining active defender of the status quo and lacking the support of the Holy Alliance. Her meeting of the three conservative monarchs was quite unrealistic- a feature of Austrian diplomacy throughout this period.

Prussia emerged with little glory from the war and she suffered the humiliation of being excluded from most of the sessions of the Congress of Paris. On the other hand, her possible role during the war meant that, unlike Austria, she had avoided alienating Russia.

Cavour and the modernisation of Piedmont

Piedmont's defeat at Novara was not a complete disaster. Its position as a buffer state between France and Austria effectively guaranteed its territorial integrity and independence. France would not have tolerated its dismemberment or conversion into an Austrian satellite. Piedmont was allowed to keep its constitution. Radestky calculated that a moderate constitutional government would be more stable and better to resist nationalistic and republican tendencies.

His decision was one which many in Austria would come to regret. Limited though the constitution was, its survival meant that Piedmont was left as the only state in the peninsula with a representative government, and was therefore, a pillar of hope for liberals throughout Italy. Piedmont also became a refuge for thousands of political activists fleeing persecution by repressive regimes elsewhere. Their presence in Piedmont helped to give political debate there a truly national perspective. It was one of the Government of Piedmont's greatest successes in the 1850s to consolidate and project this progressive image Cavour, Prime Minister between 1852 and 1861, masterminded this strategy, and more than any other individual, made unification possible.

Cavour was determined to make Piedmont the dominant state in Italy. There were two distinct stages to his plan: The modernization of Piedmont internally and a diplomatic and military campaign to isolate and defeat Austria and so drive her out of the peninsula. Cavour's

programme of modernization was designed to accelerate Piedmont's political, social and economic development. In particular, he was determined to consolidate parliamentary government to tame the power and privileges of the Catholic Church and to create the conditions for rapid economic growth, not least so, that Piedmont could afford an army and navy to match its ambitions. Modernization would also help to convince liberals and nationalists within Italy, and attract sympathies of the Italian cause abroad, that Piedmont was fit and proper to take the leading role there. Cavour knew that an ally would be needed if the Austrians were to be defeated. France was the only candidate for that role. So Napoleon III would need to be convinced that Piedmont was a serious and responsible player in the game of Great Power diplomacy. But Cavour's objectives were realistic. Despite the myths of Risorgimento, it seems unlikely that he was initially aiming at unification. Austrian ascendancy over the peninsula was therefore replaced by Piedmont's but Piedmont could dominate Italy without uniting it.

Cavour's programme of internal modernization was controversial, but mostly successful.

1. Cavour's record as a parliamentary democrat was by modern liberal/democratic standards, less than perfect. He ensured the return of his own supporters through the distribution of bribes and favours and manipulated the rules to deny opponents their seats. He would neutralize critics by buying them off with government posts. While this could have put a stigma on Italian liberalism, the monarchical side of Italian administration was no better because King Victor Emmanuel was known for autocracy. Cavour actually managed to control the absolutist advisers around King Victor Emmanuel in order to encourage the growth of Piedmontese liberalism. Piedmontese liberalism went directly against Austrian conservatism as well.

2. Cavour attacked the Catholic Church as part of his liberal policies. Cavour was a free thinker who had little respect for the Papacy and the privileges of the Church. He had supported the Siccardi Laws of 1850 which abolished separate courts for the papacy. Liberals strongly believed that all citizens should have equality before the law. The dissolution of monasteries around the country provided money for the government and advertised everywhere that Piedmont had dedicated herself to the cause of progress and was not afraid even to take on the might of the Catholic Church.

3. Cavour's economic policies aimed to develop Piedmont's infrastructure and military capacity. Cavour believed in free trade and state intervention. Customs duties were reduced in bilateral deals with France with the Zollverein and with Britain. Cavour was keen to engage Britain, because this opened the richest market in the world to Italian foodstuffs. Such deepening economic ties with France and Britain made these countries more sympathetic to his diplomatic objectives, whilst at home, the increasing profitability of agriculture encouraged Piedmont's influential land-owning class to give Cavour their political support.

4. Overall, the volume of Piedmont's imports and exports more than doubled over the course of the 1850s, thus a triumph for free trade. But Cavour recognized the limits of non-intervention in the absence of private capital, the state, through subsidies and guarantees became the patron of

massive infrastructure on rural projects. Piedmont had only eight kilometers of railway back in 1849. By 1859 some 850 kilometers had been built (about half the total mileage in the peninsula). All this had to be paid for and Cavour helped to negotiate large-scale foreign investment, notably from France, and he also encouraged the founding of saving banks in Piedmont. State revenue rose about two-fold between 1850 and 1859 but the public debt increased. All of Cavour's technical skill was needed in parliament to explain this alarming deficit, the burden of which was eventually and painfully assumed by the Italian state as a whole.

5. Considerable sums had also been spent on the army and navy. In some respects, the military reforms from these investments were disappointing. Piedmontese forces fell well short of the 100 000 strong army which Cavour was to promise Napoleon III, and they of course performed poorly, had inadequate provisions and were incompetently led. However, the mere ability of Cavour to come up with an Italian army of that size enabled some pathways in negotiations with Napoleon III such military measures helped to persuade Napoleon III in 1858, and Bismarck in 1866, that Cavour and his successors were worth doing business with.

Cavour and the aggrandisement of Piedmont

Historical interpretations of the Risorgimento were for a long time influenced by the new Italian states' need for a national myth. This was particularly true of Cavour's contribution to the unification process. In reality, the heroes of the Risorgimento were not a happy bond of brothers with the same objectives. Cavour hated and feared Mazzini. He was also deeply (and unreasonably) suspicious of Garibaldi and his relationship with King Victor Emmanuel was often stormy. Cavour's main aim was not the unification of Italy but the self-aggrandizement of Piedmont.

Piedmont's intervention on the side of Britain and France in the Crimean War used to be presented as a diplomatic masterstroke by which Cavour won the gratitude of these two Great Powers and thus paved the way for their support for Italian unification between 1858-1860. However, the main reason why Cavour joined it was because, if he had not, Victor Emmanuel, (who saw war as a means to add glory to his dynasty), would have sacked him. Cavour's diplomacy at the peace congress in Paris resulted in no real benefits for Piedmont. However, Cavour did brilliantly exploit the rapture in Austro- Russian relations.

Cavour's greatest objective was an alliance with the French. A bizarre incident brought Cavour and Napoleon III together. On 14 January, Felice Orsini, a militant Italian nationalist, attempted to assassinate Napoleon III. Orsini seems to have regarded the failure of the Emperor (a Carbonari in his youth) to advance the cause of Italian nationalism as a betrayal. Eight bystanders were killed but the Emperor was unscathed. Before his execution, Orsini wrote to Napoleon III, repenting of his crime and begging the French ruler to take up the claims of Italian nationalism again. Extraordinarily, Napoleon III arranged for Cavour to have the letter published. This turned Orsini into a national hero, but was also a sign that the Emperor was preparing to move on the Italian question. How far Napoleon III was anxious to pre-empt future assassination attempts or how far the incident had picked his Carbonari conscience, is impossible to say. Four months later, the French Emperor and Cavour met at Plombieres to plan a war against Austria.

The meeting was kept a secret, even from the French and Italian cabinets. The agreement, in its pursuit of self-aggrandizement, is a good example of Realpolitik following real or practical politics to achieve short-form goals). Napoleon III and Cavour agreed to make war on Austria. The main objective was the total expulsion of Austria from the peninsula and the annexation by Piedmont of Lombardy and Venetia (provinces directly under Austria rule and Parma and Moderna (effectively Austrian satellite states).

But the arrangements made at Plombieres for the rest of Italy remained unclear. The future of the Papal states, for example was left ambiguous. Cavour expected to be allowed to take Romania, with its important towns of Bologna and Ferrara, and perhaps most of the principalities of the Marché too. But this was not made definite.

The benefits which France was to derive from its sponsorship of Piedmontese expansion were also unclear. France would receive some territorial rewards. Savoy certainly; Nice probably. But even thereafter, the plan got even more vague. The future of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was of interests to the Emperor. Cavour and Napoleon agreed that King Ferdinand might well lose his throne, with Napoleon expressing the hope that the Kingdom be given to Lucien Maratha son of one of Napoleon's greatest generals who had been King of Naples from 1808 to 1815. Napoleon III also wanted to gain prestige for the house of Bonaparte by marrying off his cousin, Prince Napoleon to Victor Emmanuel's 15 year old daughter, Clotilde who came from much an older dynasty. Moreover Napoleon had the idea of appointing this cousin as King of central Italy, a new state incorporating Tuscany and other papal states.

Therefore negotiations at Plombieres did not represent a victory for Italian nationalism. Italy was not to be united but carved up in the interest of the French Emperor and the King of Piedmont. Napoleon III expected that the new Kingdom of Upper Italy would be little more than a client state of France. The confederation of Italy would be more completely under French control than the peninsula ever had been under Austria. Of course Cavour was nobody's dupe. As he pointed out to Victor Emanuel, Piedmont's annexation of Lombardy, Venetia, Parma and Moderna would make the King sovereign over the richest and most powerful part of Italy. Hence realpolitik had no room for sentiment, honour nor trust even amongst fellow conspirators like Napoleon III. What could be achieved and gained for Piedmont was what mattered, no matter what other nationalists felt or said.

War, victory, and betrayal

The terms of the Treaty of Plombieres were negotiated with great secrecy in January 1859 in Turin. Napoleon insisted on the cession of both Savoy and Nice as the price of the alliance, a fact which Cavour strongly denied to a secret parliamentary committee only a few days later. But Britain and Russia put great pressure on France, Piedmont and Austria to settle their differences at a congress. Napoleon III actually co-operated with the Great Powers' suggestion. This would have meant that very little or nothing would be gained by Piedmont over the negotiating table.

However, the Austrian Foreign Minister made a blunder which played into the hands of Napoleon III and Cavour. He had supposed that Napoleon III's co-operation with British and Russian suggestion for a Congress meant that now Piedmont had been completely isolated. Hence, Austria, unable to keep its army fully mobilized any longer, hoped to teach Turin a lesson.

Austria sent an ultimatum to Cavour, insisting on immediate disarmament. This bullying aggression made the Piedmontese the injured party in the eyes of the other Great Powers, so Napoleon III could renew his full support for them. The French-dominated army (France supplied 200000 troops, Piedmont only 63 000) won two bloody victories at Magenta on 4 June 1859 and Solferino on 24 June of the same year.

Interestingly, in early July Napoleon shocked Cavour by signing a truce with Austria at Villafranca. It is important to note that the peace terms were negotiated behind Cavour's back and Piedmont was given less than half of what it had wanted. It would gain Lombardy but not Venetia, let alone Moderna. This represented, according to Cavour, the most disappointing betrayal in the episode of Piedmontese expansion. As Napoleon III explained, "I will not have Italian unity... France would not be pleased to see rise beside her a great nation that might diminish her independence"

Napoleon III was of course more sensitive to the criticism he received at home from the Catholics who were by far the biggest political entity in France, for his fighting against Austria, a fellow Catholic state.

Cavour's feeling betrayed by Napoleon, suggested to Victor Emmanuel that Piedmont should fight alone since Austria had been weakened. However, Victor Emmanuel refused and this made Cavour temporarily resign terming his King a "traitor." The affair could have easily marked the end of Cavour's political career. This proved beyond any doubt that realpolitik was the only way to go. Cavour had to stomach the meagre gains which were available and live with the reality of an even now more complicated international situation. Instead of reducing foreign domination of Italy, the reverse had happened. Now France had been added to the chess board! Savoy and Nice had gone to her without completing the agreed plan for northern unification of Italy. Nevertheless, French assistance moved Piedmontese goal of a northern unification somewhat further and sparked the broad possibility among Italians of what could be achieved in the medium to long term, i.e the eventual independence of Italy from foreign rule.

How did Cavour regain the initiative" ?

Cavour's agents had been busy in the Papal States and Tuscany, advocating for union with Piedmont. Well, during the spring of 1859, the pro-Austrian regimes of Tuscany, Parma and Modena actually collapsed due to revolts in favour of Piedmontese annexation. Their rulers had lost the will or capacity to resist or exercise authority, fearing that Austria was heading for defeat altogether. They had in fact fled from Italy. Hence moderate representative assemblies promptly constituted themselves and over August and September, they called for annexation by Piedmont.

Initially Napoleon III had tried to block this and the armistice of Villafranca called for the restoration of these states' former rulers. However, they could only have been restored by force and the British Government made it plain that this would not be acceptable, while Napoleon III, on reflection, tolerated the new developments. Meanwhile Cavour had risen to power (even Victor Emmanuel could see that only this man was the match for the tasks ahead). Cavour worked out a deal to appease Napoleon III: in return for Napoleon III's approval of the annexations, Piedmont would finally and officially cede Savoy and Nice to France. Hence in

March, carefully managed plebiscites gave the necessary popular approval for these plans. As Cavour had promised in 1858, Piedmont now controlled north-central Italy and seemed set to exercise a massive influence over the rest of the peninsula too.

How did Cavour manage this? The rulers of central Italy in the 1850s were both unrepresentative and ineffective. They were over-reliant on Austrian troops for protection. Many of their citizens were desperate for reform. Banditry and theft were rife in the countryside and many of the citizens looked forward to the well-ordered administration of Turin with envy. Piedmont therefore seemed to offer order and security.

It is important to note therefore that the crisis of 1859 turned out to be a golden opportunity for Piedmont. The Franco-Piedmontese campaign against the Austrians clearly sounded the death knell for the absolutist regimes of central Italy. But what would fill the resulting power vacuum? If radicals and democrats attempted to take control, as had sometimes happened in 1848/49, it was feared that social anarchy would follow. Instead, conservative-minded moderates moved in: Baron Ricasoli in Tuscany, Farini in Modena and Parma, and Cipriani in Romagna. These looked up to Turin as a realistic source of authority after the collapse of Austrian power. Cavour could do for them what he did to Piedmont: for he could make these regions liberal and orderly.

What was the National Society?

Officially formed in 1857, the National Society had taken the key role of persuading the “notables” of the central Italian states of the merits of annexation by Piedmont, and of the national ideal in general. Before 1857 nationalism was viewed negatively by moderates in Italy because it had come to be associated with republicanism and revolution. To many in the North, Mazzini was an assassin who damaged the cause of Italian freedom with his wild and dangerous conspiracies. It was the goal of the National Society therefore to make nationalism respectable.

Many former collaborators with Mazzini were growing disillusioned with him anyway. In 1855 one of them, Daniel Manin, the hero of the Venetian revolution of 1848, publicly broke away, rejecting Mazzini’s republicanism, he proclaimed.

... “Convinced that above all Italy must be made, that this is the first and most important question we say to the Monarchy of Savoy (i.e. Piedmont) “Make Italy and we are with you- if not, not”

The failure of 1848 confirmed the suggestion that the national cause could only succeed if it could be harnessed to a state and an army, which meant harnessing it to Piedmont. Furthermore, although Piedmont was a monarchy, Cavour worked hard to transform it into a progressive, liberal state, a model of what Italy might become. According to Cavour, unity was a means to efficient and responsible government, law and order and economic growth. In these respects whether or not Cavour himself could be called a nationalist, he was clearly on the nationalists’ wavelength.

The National society’s, most effective work was done through education, not agitation. Hence, it was a group of moderate nationalists who numbered only between four and eight thousand members. They avoided disorder and public anarchy.

In their manifesto, issued in February 1858, a moderate style of nationalism was reflected thus: ...“Political unity alone can reconcile warriors’ interests and laws, can mobilize, credit and put our collective energies into speeding up communications. Only thus will we find sufficient capital for large-scale industry. Only thus will we create new markets, suppress internal obstacles to the free flow of commerce and find the strength and regulation needed for traffic in distant places.”

Cavour’s initial sponsorship of the Society had been conditional on its moderation and respectability. Outside Italy as much as inside, it was essential to demonstrate that nationalism had been copied from fanatics, insurgents and the mob from Mazzini. Cavour presented himself as simultaneously the alternative to, and enemy of Mazzinianism.

Napoleon III respected Cavour’s stance and so did the British who cherished the cause of Italian freedom at various levels. But practical factors also came into play. Britain was suspicious of French ambitions in the peninsula, and supported an enlarged Piedmont in the expectation that it was then less likely to become a French satellite. Accordingly, London made its objections to any attempt to re-impose the old order on the central Italian states against the wishes of their inhabitants.

It is important to remember the skills Cavour showed in his dealings with the British and French, at times almost playing them off one against the other. He exploited British fears of French expansion, he sensed in Napoleon III the sentimental pull of his Carbonari past which would make him take oath to become a collaborator in the restoration of Austrian power. He was thus the unofficial patron of the National Society. He believed that any progressive change must come from above, not be grassroots-centred, as Mazzini believed.

Garibaldi’s “March” of the thousand

Garibaldi was not satisfied with just diplomatic policies and solution. He was outraged by the loss of Savoy and Nice (his birthplace) to France. Since breaking with Mazzini in 1854, Garibaldi had dedicated himself to the cause of Italy through service to King Victor Emmanuel. He had been made a major general in the Sardinian army and in 1859 led his brigade of volunteers with distinction in the Italian Alps. But Garibaldi’s unorthodox approach and republican past meant that he was never trusted by the army high-command, and he had been deeply frustrated by the last minute cancellation of a planned invasion of the papal states.

Having received information that Mazzinian conspirators had begun a successful rising in Sicily, he gathered his legendary “Thousand” and set out sail on 6 May 1860 from the Genoese coast for the south. Over the next six weeks, aided by the local peasantry and volunteer reinforcements from Piedmont, he fought a brilliant guerilla Campaign across the island, capturing Palermo on the way.

Although the Bourbon army in Sicily was over 20 times larger and much better armed than the Red shirts, it was led by aged and incompetent commanders. Garibaldi’s recruits defeated their opponents because of his extraordinary charisma and personal courage. He was always in the thick of action, whether, leading bayonet charges or defending barricades, yet he was seemingly

miraculously prescribed from injury. In Sicily he proved himself to be the greatest guerilla leader of all time.

The “march of the Thousand” is a story against all odds. But although the patriotic fervour of the original thousand cannot be doubted, the motivation of the thousands of Sicilians, mostly peasants, who so drastically swelled Garibaldi’s ranks were hardly nationalistic. Overwhelmingly illiterate, they understood very little about the concept of an Italian nation.” Nineteenth-century Sicily was an ungovernable state with a reputation for violence. Given such tensions, Garibaldi’s arrival was a signal for anarchy. Peasants flocked to him as their redeemer. In return he promised land reform and the abolition of hated taxes.

Cavour’s and Garibaldi’s talents were contrasting but complementary Cavour established the diplomatic preconditions for unification, and with the help of French armies, completed the first stage. But Garibaldi was needed to raise the enthusiasm of the Italian people towards union with Piedmont with his daring liberation of Naples and Sicily the south of Italy could be united with the Piedmontese north.

In public, in order to appease Napoleon III, Cavour had to condemn Garibaldi’s expedition to Sicily as rash and onerously subversive. He even had to pretend to hinder Garibaldi’s expedition but privately he knew that Garibaldi had a decisive contribution to make to the making of Italy and gave him secret assistance whenever possible. Therefore, the unification of Italy stands as a joint achievement of two great men, secretly working together to free the peninsula from foreign tyranny.

Dennis Mack Smith first pointed out, in the 1980s, that not all of the facts fit this version of the story. Garibaldi, for one, disputed it. In a memoir first published in 1908, he asserted:

“Every possible obstacle was raised in our path (by Cavour) between the time we left Genoa and the time we arrived in Naples. It is true that the government put no absolute veto in our way hoping to be rid forever of trouble makers i.e. us. Nevertheless, they raised every kind of obstacle. It was not allowed to take any of the 15000 muskets which belonged to our Million Riffle Fund and were kept in storage at Milan. This one fact delayed by several days the sailing of our expedition. La Farina (a colleague of Cavour’s’ then gave us 1000 bad firearms.”

Historian, Ridley, summed up Cavour’s views of Garibaldi and his expedition as follows:

“He would not support the revolution until he thought that it was likely to succeed. Thereafter he supported it in order to control it and reap the rewards of the revolutionaries daring.”

Cavour actually tried without success to prevent Garibaldi from leaving Sicily. In mid August 1860 Garibaldi crossed the Straits of Messina and began to move north. On 6 September, Francis II, the King of the Two Sicilies, young, inexperienced and weak-willed, withdrew to the fortresses of Gata further inland, leaving Naples open to the Red Shirts. Garibaldi entered the city the next day to a rapturous welcome, and went on to proclaim himself temporary ruler in the name of Victor Emmanuel.

Cavour’s worst fears had come true. He feared the possibility that he could be removed from office. Garibaldi actually demanded this in September 1860 and the fact that he was in secret communication with Victor Emmanuel, has made historians wonder whether or not there was a

high level of conspiracy against Cavour. There is no doubt that Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel would have loved to see Cavour, the scheming, slippery and arrogant diplomat out of office.

Cavour's fear was also political. Garibaldi might be loyal to Victor Emmanuel, and the fact that Mazzini had slipped into Naples in mid-September might have meant that something sinister was on the cards between those two radicals. They were lobbying hard for Garibaldi to demand a national assembly out of which a democratic people's Italy might be born. Cavour, a social conservative, was appalled by such revolutionary ideas.

Cavour's other fear concerning Garibaldi's expedition was diplomatic and strategic. Garibaldi had proved himself a guerrilla leader of genius, but his sense of Great Power realities was non-existent. Cavour feared that Garibaldi was determined to complete the task of unification at whatever cost even through war with the Pope (and France) as well as Austria to win Venetia. Such a course of action would be insane! Such a campaign would unite France and Austria, Europe's Catholic powers against Italy. This would reverse all that Piedmont had gained hitherto.

How could Garibaldi be stopped?

The only solution Cavour could do was to place an army between Garibaldi and Rome, thereby intercepting this revolutionary. Such a move would mean invasion of the Papal States by Piedmontese troops. Napoleon III would have to be informed and it is believed that had such a meeting materialized and French consent was obtained. Piedmontese troops thus, defeated the Papal states excluding Rome, on 18 September at the Battle of Castelfidardo. Garibaldi surrendered without a fight and submitted all his achievements to the "King of Italy." The Red Shirts who numbered 30 000 were immediately disbanded. Then there were plebiscites arranged in Naples and Sicily to give popular approval for annexation with Piedmont. The result was predictable almost 1 ¾ million said "yes" whilst 10 979 said no to annexation. However, before Cavour's unexpected death from malaria on 06 June 1861 the problem of the South had begun to emerge. They did not fully appreciate the concept of Italy and most of them viewed King Victor Emmanuel as a foreign King.

Evaluating Cavour

Was Cavour a nationalist? He has more claim than anyone even Garibaldi, to the title of the architect of the Italian nation. But Cavour detested some aspects of nationalism, for instance, he talked of Mazzini as an assassin who was "Italy's greatest enemy" and promised to hunt him down and have him gauged. He was disgusted by Mazzini's populism into piety, self-righteousness and republicanism. As historian Mack Smith puts it:
"Cavour feared revolution more than he loved Italy."

He was not pre-occupied with any view of Italian unification. He was extraordinarily ignorant of the south and had French as his first language, and Italian second. He borrowed freely from the political and economic experiences of France and Britain. Some contemporary Italian nationalists suspected that Cavour was ready to use Italian nationalism as an instrument of Piedmontese self-aggrandizement.

The Treaty of Plombieres revealed Cavour's real priorities. The annexation of Lombardy and Venetia was spelt out well enough but the future of the rest of the peninsula was left hazy. These details were relatively unimportant to Cavour. He explained to king Victor Emmanuel that, "a greater Piedmont would dominate "Italy" economically and morally"

Piedmont came so quickly to dominate "Italy" militarily and politically through a mixture of luck and opportunities. Cavour himself preferred to leave Naples and Sicily out of his plans and efforts for , "a future generation to sort out."

D' Azeglio, ex-Prime Minister, declared that for the north to have annexed the south was as attractive as "going to bed with someone with smallpox"

Why then did Cavour, in September undertake to invade the Papal States, thereby uniting the north and the southern states of Italy? The essential answer is that Garibaldi forced him to. There was no short or long-term plan in that. Historian Mack Smith says, "Cavour had no time for plan." He once said, "All plans, all projects are useless. Everything depends on an accident... on seizing fortune by the hair." Circumstances forced Cavour to be the great improviser. He was also a liar who made people believe the exact opposite of what he said. But he was, after all, a statesman in the age of Realpolitik. According to Mack Smith.

"No politician of the century, certainly not even Bismarck, made so much out of so little."

Cavour had no vibrant economy to tap from; nor Von Roon and von Moltke, the military geniuses who organized and led Prussia's superb army. He had no Krupps, the industrial magnate from the Rhuur, who equipped the Prussian army with its mighty cannons. Instead of William I, who was upright, scrupulous and solid. Cavour had Victor Emmanuel who was foolish, belligerent and perpetually conspiring to replace his Prime Minister with someone who would suit his wild schemes. Indeed, for Cavour to have made Italy out of such limited human and material resources was an achievement to be emulated.

Was Italy United or there was Piedmontisation?

Italian nationalists had long debated the ideal constitution for Italy. Many wanted a federal structure with a high degree of regional autonomy, which would reflect the diversity of the peninsula's political traditions.

However, shortly before his death, Cavour had begun to impose a system of rigid legal and political centralization on the new state. The laws of Piedmont were to be enforced upon Italy because the constitution of Piedmont became the constitution of the rest of Italy without any referendum or any form of consultation. The King of Piedmont became King Victor Emmanuel, II of Italy without any debate or choice. Turin appointed all Italy's prefects and mayors, governors and senior civil servants to run the southern administration. The good reason was that there was so much disorder and crime which needed to be stamped out in the south

Cavour, who at the time of his death was simultaneously Prime Minister, Foreign minister and Finance minister, had wanted to concentrate as much of power in his hand as possible. Likewise the provincial governments thought themselves to be imperial envoys with the task of "keeping the natives down." Northern Italians literally saw themselves as belonging to a different race from the backward southerners. Africa, it was said, began at Rome. The system of weights and measures was that used by Piedmont. It made the southerners functionally illiterate.

Worse still, the franchise was decisively biased in favour of the north. The twin qualification of literacy and tax payment of 300 lira per year left out most of the south from qualifying as voters. They could, as agriculturist and plantation owners, afford to pay tax to the tune of or more than 300 lira but were illiterate. This cut them off from the decision-making procedures of their country.

Indeed, to many in the south, the process of unification must indeed have seemed like imposition of colonial rule. Few of the citizens of the new Italy were accorded any share of political power as only an elite 2% could be eligible for elections.

Conscription was introduced throughout the peninsula as Italy's leaders were determined to build an army big enough to justify their claims that they were now a great power. This did not go down well with those of the south who viewed the system as a new form of forced recruitment. Piedmontese debt was re-distributed to the whole peninsula. This led to big rises in taxes which severely affected the poor, mostly in the south. Perhaps the most insensitivity of all, Turin extended its war against the wealth and privileges of the Catholic Church across the whole of Italy. Bishops who objected were imprisoned, and over a thousand monasteries were dissolved. This was a harsh measure and since the church still performed significant educational and charitable roles, especially in the south, the negative impact of such measures were more heavily felt there. Victor Emmanuel and his ministers were excommunicated. A damaging gap was opened between the church and state, leaving generations of Italians struggling to reconcile their conflicting duties to their faith and to their country.

Rebellions

These shocks and disappointments help to explain the serious challenges mounted against the authority of the Italian state during the 1860s:

a) The Brigand's War- Between 1861 and 1864, (the southern provinces) were in turmoil. Over 100 000 troops were needed to restore law and order, and in the course of their campaigns over 5000 "brigands" were killed, a higher number of casualties than the total Italian death toll for all of Italy's wars of independence between 1848 and 1870. The name "Brigands War" was government's propaganda. The "brigands" were unco-ordinated gangs made up of former soldiers, impoverished farm labourers or young men on the run from the police or the recruiting officers. It was indeed a war against the new state, its agents and its policies, as against poverty. Marshal Law had to be introduced, and so were summary executions.

b) Sicily in Revolt:- A Sicilian revolt against the new state was mounted in Palermo in 1866. Sicily found the rule from Piedmont more oppressive than the rule from Naples. Conscription was particularly resented. Aristocrats, democrats and peasants all had their grievances and Palermo was briefly occupied by the revolutionaries. The Italian navy had to shell the city into submission.

c) "Rome or death"- Garibaldi's revolt.

Garibaldi was determined to make Rome Italy's capital and Victor Emmanuel offered some unofficial support now that Cavour was out of the picture. Garibaldi made two disastrous attempts in the 1860s. In 1862 he was shot and wounded by the Italian army

The second attempt in 1867 resulted in Garibaldi's 600 men being killed by the French troops defending Rome with the king playing another "devious and unheroic role in another national disaster" (Mack Smith).

Venice and Rome

The alliance of Victor Emmanuel's government and Bismarck was a search for the acquisition of Venetia. Italy would have to wage war against Austria in 1866, regardless of the outcome, in order to obtain Venetia as compensation for their contribution. The transfer of Venetia was actually made after Prussia's victory over Austria at the Battle of Koningratz in 1866.

However, the Italian army had been defeated at Custozza in June and the navy humiliated at the Battle of Lissa in July where 1000 Italians were killed. King Victor Emmanuel thus costed his hope of cementing the fragile unity of his nation through military triumphs.

Rome, the final piece of the jigsaw, fell into place in September 1870. Napoleon III at war with Prussia had to withdraw the French garrison which defended the Pope's independence since 1849. The Italian army moved in, facing only token resistance from papal troops. Once again a plebiscite gave popular approval to the annexation, and Rome became the capital of Italy. But there had been no real fighting and there was no genuine enthusiasm for this final achievement of the Risorgimento. The King decided against making a triumphal entry into the city, fearing a lukewarm response from his new subjects.

All this, was far removed from the Mazzinian vision of unification according to which the people of Italy should have risen as the one to overthrow their oppressors, Austrians, priests and King's alike. He said, of Italy in 1870: "The Italy that we witness today is a living lie."

He believed in a universal franchise for all men above 21 years old, but only a tiny faction of the population, mainly in the north, had the vote. He also believed in elected structures of government, but to his dismay, all the important posts were filled by the men from Piedmont. He believed in a fair and equitable distribution of wealth, but now whatever resources were available were used to support and often enrich Piedmont. Mazzini never envisaged the capital city located at any other place other than at Turin in Piedmont. But to his shock and frustration Rome was only naturally recognized in 1870.

Mazzini did not believe in diplomacy but in popular mass uprisings. His goal right from the start was for the unification of Italy. He cherished and taught about this dream and vision. That was perhaps his greatest contribution to the case of Italy's independence and unification. These were of course achieved through Realpolitik methods of Cavour. Hence Mazzini was a prophet of Italian unification, but his means of achieving his dream were a nightmare and a disaster. He was angry and disappointed that unification was achieved and championed on Piedmont's terms. According to him, there had not been unification but conquest, annexation and incorporation of states to Piedmont.

This could, of course, be a somewhat exaggerated view. The central and southern states were at least consulted about their opinions on annexation to Piedmont through the popular plebiscites. At least foreign rule, by 1870, had been removed from Italy and it did not always mean that Piedmontese rule was synonymous with imperialism.

Study Guides

- i) What does the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi reveal about Russian ambitions in Turkey?
- ii) Account for the long-term and short-term causes of the Crimean war.
- iii) What part did Austrian diplomacy play in the Crimean War?
- iv) “The Eastern Question was Russian attempts to gain control over the Straits (entrance to the Black Sea) and have a way into the Mediterranean.” Did the Crimean War manage to prevent this?
- v) Did the outcome of the Crimean War prove to be of any help to the Major Powers?
- vi) How did the Crimean War alter the balance of power in Europe?
- vii) In what ways was Austrian position in Europe sealed by the Crimean War?
- viii) Describe the terms of the Treaty of Paris, 1856.
- x) How and why did Germany and Italy become united after the Crimean war? Was there any link between these episodes?

Examination type questions

1. Why was Turkey referred to as the “sick man of Europe.” between 1815 and 1856?
2. Explain the causes and analyze the results of the Crimean War, 1854-1856.
3. “The most important result of the Crimean War was that it shattered the concert of Europe.” How far do you agree?
4. How valid is the view that the Crimean War was fought more against Russia than for Turkey?
5. Why did Russia support the partition of Turkey?
6. How far did Russian ambitions in the Turkish Empire clash with those of Britain and France between 1821 and 1856?
- 7 ‘Trivial but far-reaching’. Discuss this verdict of the causes and results of the Crimean War.

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CHAPTER 14

NAPOLEON III AND THE SECOND EMPIRE (1848 – 1870)

Chapter objectives

By the end of the chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) Give reasons why the second Empire replaced the July Monarchy.
- (ii) Explain the similarities and differences between the Second Empire and the second Republic.
- (iii) Explain how successfully Napoleon III dealt with political opposition during the 1850s and 1860s.
- (iv) Explain the reasons for the coup d'état of December 1851.
- (v) Summarize (a) the weaknesses of the second Republic and (b) the strengths of Louis Napoleon that led to the end of the second Republic.
- (vi) Identify and explain the aims of Napoleon III's foreign policy.
- (vii) Explain what mistakes and blunders Napoleon III made in the 1860s.
- (viii) Show why the Emperor grew increasingly isolated (i) At home
 - (ii) In Europe.
- (ix) Explain the results of the Mexican adventure upon Napoleon's policies in Europe.
- (x) Explain the collapse of the Second Empire.

The major focus in this topic will be on Napoleon III's domestic and foreign policies. Candidates are expected to analyse the domestic reforms of Napoleon III and also assess his foreign policy. This is a popular topic, and one which is also very straight forward. Candidates must note that he was President of the Second Republic (1848 – 1851) and then Emperor of the Second Empire (1851-1870).

Napoleon III's Domestic Policy

Prince Louis Napoleon

Prince Louis Napoleon, nephew of the great emperor, was heir to the Napoleonic tradition. As an exile under the law of 1816, which banned the house of Bonaparte from France, he had made two unsuccessful attempts to seize power as pretender at Strasburg in 1836 and at Boulogne in 1840. Sentenced to life imprisonment in 1840, he had escaped from the fortress of Ham and taken refuge in England, where he remained until the outbreak of the 1848 revolution. He had written two books which were important for his subsequent political career. These Napoleonic ideas, he wrote were, not an idea of war, but a social, industrial, commercial idea – an idea of humanity. The Extinction of Pauperism served to associate Bonapartism in the public mind with the need for social reform.

The President of the Second Republic (1848-1851)

In 1848, Louis Napoleon could rely on the support of the Napoleonic legend, which had established the emperor as the champion of progress and the defender of religion and society. His campaign for the Presidency laid the basis for his subsequent power and was cleverly conceived. He posed as a man above class or party who would put an end to revolutionary agitation, maintain order, restore prosperity and revive French glory. He did not openly recommend a restoration of the empire, but declared his approval of a republic based on universal suffrage. In the majority of the departments, he received 80% of the votes. Various factors explain this:

- a) The fame of his family name – his best asset was his family name which he exploited to the utmost in trying to gain favour with the inexperienced electorate. To many, the name Napoleon brought respect, fame and honour in France in the European context. In those days, a politically inexperienced electorate was not allowed to vote for the person except for a specific policy.
- b) The general desire for stability and order after the upheavals of 1848. Napoleon's election was brought about, by reaction against the social experiments of 1848.
- c) The unpopularity of the republic.
- d) The natural dislike of royalists and republications.
- e) His well advertised interest in the 'social question,' the programme of radical social and economic reforms espoused by the Parisian workers, evoked a profound fear of a reign of terror amongst friends and members of the bourgeoisie.

Louis Napoleon was supported by different groups for different reasons:

- i) The clergy supported Louis Napoleon hoping that he would further the interests of the Roman Catholic Church.
- ii) Soldiers put their faith in him, hoping that he would restore French military honour.

The support Louis Napoleon received from all classes in 1848 was universal.

Some of his Republican Policies

1. Napoleon's immediate objective was to promote his personal standing with the various classes.

- He began by restoring order with the support of the royalists and the conservative majority in the legislative Assembly.

2. A French military expedition was sent to Rome in 1849 to restore the authority of Pope Pius IX in an attempt to gain the conservative Roman Catholics. The church regained its privileged position in education as a result of Louis Napoleon's legislation. The liberal bourgeoisie liked his encouragement of industrial interests. Workers in the cities praised the president for his effort to improve their pensions. The President enjoyed the whole – hearted support of the Legislative Assembly in his efforts to suppress the Republican and Socialist parties.
- Control of the Press was strengthened.
 - Republican and socialist clubs were shut down
 - Revolts were nipped in the bud.

Napoleon ran the risk of losing the support of the liberal and radical elements through these conservative measures.

Study Guides

- i) Why did the Second Republic replace the July Monarchy?
- ii) Identify three central causes of the French revolution of February 1848.
- iii) Identify the main stages by which the July Monarchy became the second Republic.

The Coup d' etat of 2 December 1851

On 2 December 1851, the anniversary of the coronation of Napoleon I and the battle of Austerlitz, he took the law into his own hands. With a carefully planned Coup, he seized power, changed the constitution and gave the Presidency overwhelming authority and a ten- year term of office.

He presented himself as a people's champion by re-introducing the universal suffrage which the assembly had previously refused to restore. He had taken the solemn oath to uphold the republic. Now he appealed to the solemn judgement of the only sovereign who would be recognized by the people.

This was confirmed by a plebiscite in which 91% of those who voted expressed approval of his actions. By an administrative order, special tribunals were instituted against opponents of the new order. About 10 000 were transported to Algeria.

Napoleon's political appeal, through the device of the plebiscite or referendum, was directed to the people mainly the over -heads of the politicians. A country which had never really reconciled itself to the second Republic welcomed the rule of a man whose name signified something to all men and who promised the restoration of order, the return of national confidence and the recovery of business.

The Second Empire (1852-1870)

The resurrection of the Empire was in the air from 1852. The senate, whose members were appointed by Napoleon, suggested in November 1852 that the republic be elevated to imperial status. The proposal was immediately put before the people in plebiscite. It was accepted by a large majority. A year after his successful bloodless Coup de'tat, on the 2 December 1852 Louis began his reign as Napoleon III, thereby restoring the hereditary imperial dynasty. Napoleon III dominated the European scene during the eighteen years of his empire. In a famous speech made

at Bordeaux in 1852, he reassured the world that the empire would serve peace. Ironically, this was the decisive event of his reign, leading to the downfall of the Empire.

Internal developments during the second empire are usually divided into three periods. The years from 1852 – 1859 were an era of personal despotism. They were followed by a liberal era (1860 – 1869) and a parliamentary era (1869 – 1870). The last period was nothing more than a promise of liberation since the empire collapsed before anything could be achieved.

The period 1852 – 1859 Personal Despotism

(a) The Constitution

The constitution was modelled on that of 1800.

The Provisions of the Constitution

(i) A bicameral legislature. There was: -

- A senate of 150 presidential nominees and the power to veto laws which violated the constitution. However, as the life holders of office, they could be very independent.
- A Corps legislative of 260 members was the lower house and was elected by universal suffrage. However, it could vote on the budget and propose laws only and not discuss them. It did not choose its own president, and sat for only three months a year. Above all, the imperial government could exercise very strong influence on the elections in favour of the official candidates. Only 6 opposition candidates were returned in March 1852.

(ii) The Executive

The title of prince president for 10 years was only temporary. The title of Napoleon III adopted, with the pretence that the son of Napoleon I (the Duc de Reichstadt) had reigned after his father's abdication Louis's executive powers remained the same:

- He controlled the armed forces and foreign policy
- He initiated legislation
- Had the power to over ride the legislature with a plebiscite.
- He appointed all ministers and public officials.

a) Repressive controls and centralised administration

The system of the second empire relied on the powers of centralized administration. Under the guidance of the Minister of the Interior, the Prefects in the Departments, exercised greater powers than ever before, though many of them were inherited from the July monarchy.

In addition, there were some repressive measures such as the following: -

- (i) The suppression of the political clubs and disbanding of the National Guard except in Paris.
- (ii) Censorship: State censorship of the press throughout France was effectively established. By the decree of 1852, newspaper directors were allowed three warnings before a newspaper could be published in Paris or in the provinces without government authority.
- (iii) Control of Education: -Education became state controlled.
- (iv) Political clubs were suppressed.

Economic Developments

The Second Empire was a period of considerable financial, commercial and industrial development. France experienced a period of exceptional prosperity. Trade and Commerce revived, national wealth increased and the cost of living was reduced.

(a) Rising Productivity

Between 1852 and 1870, coal consumption trebled, as did the volume of foreign trade. The price of steel was halved. This was aided by the following: -

(i) Improved Communication:

There was rapid development of land and sea transport associated with a boom in the metallurgical and mining industries. In 1848 France had 1800 kilometers of railways. By 1871 she had 11 500 kilometers, as much as Britain or Germany. The telegraph system expanded from 13500 to 46 000 miles during the same period.

(iii) An Improved Credit System

A whole range of new finance houses investing in industry emerged in this period. Example are: the Credit Mobilize, a joint stock investment bank established in 1852 by Napoleon, which channeled capital into numerous enterprises particularly railways and mining. The credit Foncier engaged in large investments in urban real estate. Due to these financial institutions foreign investment rose six fold.

(iii) Free Trade:

Against considerable opposition, and using executive power Napoleon reduced duties in imports in 1853, and after 1860, the Cobden - Chevalier commercial treaty with Britain was followed by a whole series of treaties with most European countries.

Symbolic of the broadening industrial base of France, there was the great Paris Exhibition of 1867.

(b) Demographic Changes

(i) A falling rate of population growth: The growing wealth of the country was not affected by the rate of population growth.

(ii) Urbanization

Though it did not promote anything like a revolution in agriculture, the period saw the steady, relative decline of the rural population in favour of the towns. As the poorer peasantry and labourers migrated from the countryside, the proportion of the population in the towns rose from 24 to 31 percent, the population of Lyons, Lille and Toulon doubled, while Roubaix trebled in size.

(c) The Contribution of the government

Most of the above- mentioned development was on the basis of private capital rather than from a Saint Simonian state leading economic growth, with public expenditure, although Napoleon III was familiar with St Simon's theories. As a result, capital was less readily available for the less profitable building of roads and canals for port development and agriculture. However, there were two particular contributions made by the state. These were:

(i) Compulsory elementary education (1863)

The curriculum of secondary schools was also widened and by 1866 there were 66 000 secondary school students.

(ii) The rebuilding of Paris

The prefect of Paris, Baron Haussmann, built 85 miles of boulevards and a range of great public buildings. Over 4 000 houses were built. This was in accordance with St Simon's theory and had a great propaganda value. Napoleon himself played an active role in it. Disposed cynics claimed, however, that the boulevards were merely a device to prevent the building of barricades.

To the great majority of Frenchmen, Napoleon appears to have offered what they wished for, i.e., a guarantee of stability and order and a marked increase in prosperity. He was aware of the political importance of punching for the welfare of the masses. He sought through public works, another means to help the peasant and the urban worker. He was anxious to create conditions of full employment.

Study Guides

- i) What problems did Napoleon III face in governing France, and how far did he solve them?
- ii) What were the main aims of Napoleon III's foreign policy and how far did he achieve them?
- iii) Trace the changing policies of Napoleon III towards opponents of the Second Empire.
- iv) In what ways did the Crimean war help to strengthen the position of Napoleon III?
- v) What were the causes of the Paris Commune?
- vi) Why was it possible to establish a republican form of government in France before 1875?
- vii) By what means and with what success did Louis Napoleon strengthen his position during the years 1848- 1852?

NAPOLEON III's FOREIGN POLICY: (1852-1870)

Principles of Napoleon III's Foreign Policy

1. The French visualized themselves in the forefront of a mission to civilize and liberate the oppressed peoples of Europe, especially those of Italy. Napoleon seemed to believe that a Europe of peoples constituting their own nation states would be a Europe of freedom and harmony. French diplomacy, or if necessary, French arms, could be employed to ease the continent's transition to this new era, whilst by-passing the bloodshed of the revolution and terror.
2. Territorial expansion to include areas in the Rhine and the Alps. Napoleon III repeatedly made moves for territories along the sensitive areas but was disappointed in his bids for Belgium, the Rhineland and Luxernbourg. However, he was partially successful over Italy since he managed to acquire Savoy and Nice.
3. Together, territorial expansion and political liberty of nationalities would win "la glorie" for the Emperor and his France, thereby satisfying an image of national greatness which Louis Philippe had neglected.
4. Napoleon III was also convinced that the key to success was to break up the Holly Alliance powers. Austria and Prussia were increasingly, rivals for influence in Germany, whilst Austria and Russia made uneasy neighbours in the Balkans. Napoleon III exploited these tensions in order to create a greater diplomatic image for France. However, the relationships between Austria and Prussia transformed between 1848 and 1866 and, much to the Emperor's

disappointment, Britain favoured isolationism as opposed to friendships and alignments with Central Western European powers.

The Crimean War (1854-56)

The fact that the participation of three European powers in the Crimean War was exceptional, does not mean that it was significant – although it would have significant results later. This is because none of the three national interests were directly threatened. France started the crisis by reasserting its right to look after the holy places in Jerusalem, which was then controlled by the Islamic Ottoman Empire. The sultan of the Ottoman Empire's agreement to this arrangement upset Russia which also had a right to look after the holy places, not on behalf of Catholic Christians as France would do, but on behalf of Orthodox Christians. There is no evidence that the French people wanted war, but Napoleon III had to follow the lead of the more aggressive British, whose anti-Russian fears were heightened by the sinking of the Turkish fleet at Sinope. Once Sebastopol had been captured, Napoleon III was keen to make peace. The fact that the peace treaty was held in Paris in France (1856) restored the host as the centre of European cultural and political life, a success for which Napoleon III took the credit and enjoyed the glory. French influence in the Near East had been defended as well.

The effects of the Crimean War were certainly greater than its causes. The war shattered the longstanding partnership of Russia, Austria and Prussia that had maintained the 1815 settlement for 40 years. Though their policies towards Russia during the war had differed, neither Austria nor Prussia had given Russia any effective support. Prussian neutrality meant that Russia felt more antagonism towards Austria, the countries which had sided with Britain and France. Russia resented the 1856 settlement and wanted to change it. As a result she was not prepared to support either Prussia or Austria in any attempt to uphold the existing state system. At about the same time developments in Germany were putting the Austro-Prussian alliance under great strain. In this sense, the Crimean War precipitated a diplomatic revolution in Europe. On the other hand, France's relations with Britain and, perhaps surprisingly, Russia, were cordial: the Russians were grateful to Napoleon III because the latter had pursued the peace settlement in Paris much more energetically than had the British delegation.

By 1856 the only power that was fully committed to upholding the settlement of 1815 and 1856 was Austria. Seeing an opportunity to alter the European status quo, Napoleon III now looked to Italy. The way in which he became drawn into Italian affairs was most unusual. The Orsini affair demonstrated just how unpredictable Napoleon could be.

The Italian adventure

The disappointing results of the 1857 election for the Legislative Assembly and Orsini's assassination attempt of January 1858, both probably increased Napoleon III's belief that he needed to do something for the Italian people. The Orsini bomb outrage which left eight people dead and 150 injured, dramatically reminded the Emperor that many old friends felt deeply betrayed by his political conduct since 1848. Supporting the cause of Italian nationalism was intended to gain the support of the workers as well as the liberals in France. Napoleon III himself hoped to satisfy his earlier feelings of the support he once had for the Carbonari.

The Pact of Plombières (1858) was designed to enlarge Piedmont through a joint French – Piedmontese campaign against Austria. France was to receive Savoy and Nice for its military role ceded from Piedmont. Culturally and geographically, the province was predominantly French speaking and lay to the north of the Alps, thereby arguably falling within France's 'natural frontiers'. No such justification could be got for the annexation of Nice which had no such ties as Savoy with France. The new 'Kingdom of Northern Italy' would be a sort of, a French satellite. But Napoleon III did not want Italian unity. He explained: 'unity would bring danger to me and France itself because of the Roman question, and France would not see with pleasure a great nation armed on her side which might diminish her preponderance'.

Plombières began a series of lessons for Napoleon III. He had stuck to the deal with Cavour without informing his ministries. When the details of the alliance emerged, there was widespread dismay in France. Neither France's businessmen nor the Emperor's ministries had expected that the war would be long drawn out and be such a huge expense. Although the victories of Magenta and Solferino had given the French and Piedmontese the upper hand, on 12 July 1859 Napoleon III unilaterally negotiated an armistice with the Austrians. Cavour regarded this as shameless betrayal. But Napoleon III recognized that the Austrian army was still far from being beaten, that Cavour had ambitions to expand Piedmontese territory at the expense of the Pope, and that Prussia was mobilizing its army on the Rhine, thereby constituting a possible threat to Paris. The Piedmontese would have to make do with the secession of Lombardy from Austria. With the job only half done, Napoleon III still proceeded to annex Savoy and Nice to France. The impacts of Napoleon III's actions were as follows:

The Central Duchies, Papal Romagna and Tuscany began to clamour for annexation by Piedmont. This meant that Cavour consequently pushed the borders of Piedmont further south than Napoleon III had desired and even annexed Papal territory in the process, much to the anger of French Catholics.

The success of Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily and Naples led to the total collapse of Bourbon authority. This development was most unwelcome to Napoleon III. It represented a victory for revolutionary nationalism, whereas the Emperor had always seen himself as the patron of moderate, 'responsible' nationalism like Cavour. Worse, Garibaldi seemed determined to go on from Naples to attack the Papal States and make Rome a capital for a united Italy. The French troops in Rome, who had been the defenders of Papal independence since 1849, would come into conflict with the forces of Italian nationalism. Such a collision would be a disaster for Napoleon III. He had no alternative but to sanction Cavour's extraordinary expedition southwards to intercept Garibaldi's army, even though this meant Cavour invading the Papal States. Hence Piedmont annexed Sicily and Naples and all the Papal States except Rome itself. This was not the outcome Napoleon III had planned for in April 1858. He had become an unwilling sponsor of Italian unification. Many French Catholics were angered by the fate of the Papacy in 1860 and deplored the Emperor's betrayal of the Church. In fact, the whole style of Napoleon III's diplomacy, its secrecy, its wishful thinking, its cloudy objectives, its high risk factor – had startled a larger portion of French political life.

Mexican Adventure 1861

In 1861, Napoleon III embarked on an extraordinary expedition to Mexico. What began as a joint debt-collecting exercise with Britain and Spain (a new revolutionary Government in Mexico had suspended all payments to foreign creditors) became a campaign of would-be imperial conquest. Mexico promised to be a land of rich opportunity for French businessmen; French and Austrian Catholics would warmly support a crusade against the Mexican Revolution, which was proving to be anti-clerical in nature. He would win back Catholic support at home as well as level relations with Austria following the Italian question. It would boost French greatness and increase the Emperor's own prestige. In reality however, 40 00 French troops were losing the struggle against Mexican guerrillas. The issuing of the Monroe Doctrine forced Napoleon III to withdraw from Mexico. The final humiliation came after the withdrawal of French forces, with the capture and execution of Archduke Maximilian of Austria in May 1867. He had gone to Mexico to rule a colony on Napoleon III's behalf. The Mexican fiasco did immense damage to the French Emperor's reputation: It is the clearest example of his tendency to involve himself in a half-heated manner, only to withdraw once he realizes the impracticability of the scheme.

Austria and Prussia

Increasing tensions between Austria and Prussia in 1865 seemed to offer Napoleon III every opportunity of recovering the initiative. Whilst these two powers, competing together for the mastery of 'Germany', squared up to each other, Napoleon III proceeded to auction his goodwill to the higher bidder. As a consequence, of war the boundaries of central Europe were likely to be extensively redrawn. France, Napoleon III calculated, would help to broker the peace at an international conference, and the combatants, victor and vanquished alike, would be too exhausted to object to whatever territorial 'commission' Napoleon III charged for his services. But the outcome of the war caught diplomats by surprise. They had been certain of a long and bloody campaign, and viewed Austria as the likely winner. Instead, the Prussian army trounced the Austrian army at the Battle of Koniggratz in a war that lasted only seven weeks. Napoleon III smarted with humiliation as all his demands for territorial compensation for his neutrality failed to materialize. In fact, Bismarck immediately offered a lenient settlement to Austria, which further isolated France in Central Europe.

What factors led to the collapse of the second empire in 1871?

1. The Duke of Gramont was appointed Foreign Minister in May 1870. He made several tactical blunders, for example, if the Hohenzollern candidacy were not withdrawn, he proclaimed, 'we shall know how to do our duty without faltering or weakening'. This public threat of war delighted the Bonapartist right, but it made the task of negotiating a way of the crisis more difficult as well as stirring all the wrong passions in the French press and on the streets of Paris. Another blunder was Gramont's insistence to the French ambassador to Prussia, repeated over 12-13 July, that he secure from Wilhelm I an absolute guarantee that Prussia had no intention of ever again renewing the Hohenzollern candidature. The Prussian King refused to give such assurance because it constituted an insult to him. Right there, events took a dramatic turn as Bismarck's edited version of the exchange appeared in the 'Ems Telegram'. The telegram led to fury in the French Chamber and war was declared five days later.

2. Napoleon III also authorized Gramont's reckless demand that Prussia back down, thereby increasing the unthinking patriotic feeling of French public opinion. Worse still, illness and

premature old age were partially to blame, and so was poor judgment about a lack of readiness of the French army.

3. Neither Emille Ollivier, nor Gramont nor Napoleon III seemed capable of recognizing where France's interests lay and they were not able to measure the consequences of their actions. As Carr concludes in *The Origins of the Wars of German Unification*, 'that three emotionally unstable people should have been thrown together in positions of power at this crucial juncture was a tragedy for France'.

The detailed Crimean war 1853-6

The Crimean War (1853-56) was by far the bloodiest eruption of the Eastern Question during the whole of the 19th century. It was fought in and around the Black Sea, and pitted the Ottoman, French and British forces against Russians: Total casualties amounted to nearly one million. Its causes were somewhat trivial and the territorial adjustments made in the Congress of Paris which brought the war to an end were equally small. But the diplomatic consequences of the war were highly significant. Indeed, for Austria whose own forces had not been engaged in the war, but had given much practical support to the anti-Russian cause, the consequences were disastrous.

The conflict originated from, and in some respects continued as a question of prestige. The Ottomans controlled the Christian Holy Places in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, allowing Christian pilgrims generous access. But the sites themselves were supervised by two separate orders of monks, who were bitter rivals. One of the orders, (the 'Latins'), owed their allegiance to the Pope. The other, (the 'Orthodox'), looked to the protection of the Tsar.

In 1852, Napoleon III, hoping to impress a domestic Catholic audience, adopted the Latin monks' cause and bullied the Sultan into restarting French precedence over their orthodox enemies. Tsar Nicholas I felt this as a personal humiliation. He loathed Napoleon III as a usurper, and decided to teach him and the Sultan a lesson. In February 1853, he dispatched General Menshkov to Constantinople with instructions not merely to force the Sultan to reverse all the concessions he had just made, but also claiming for Russia a sort of protectorate over all of the Ottoman subjects. Menshkov made it clear that if these terms were not accepted, war would follow. This was a disaster in every respect because:

-The British, for reasons of national self-interest, were determined to protect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and were appalled by Menshkov's bullying, fearing that it was going to lead to Turkey's dismemberment (partition). The Tsar, in his discussions with the British ambassador in early 1853 mistakenly believed that the break-up of Turkey / Ottoman Empire was inevitable and that Russia, Austria and Britain would happily share in the spoils. Britain in effect opposed the break-up of Turkey since this would expose British trading interests in the Mediterranean Sea and region to Russia's greed.

-The Tsar was equally mistaken in his reading of Austrian intentions. He had convinced himself that Austria stood as an ally to Russia and that in the event of a war, Austria would stand with Russia side-by-side against Britain and France. This was not to be because Austria in fact regarded Russian expansionism in the Balkans with considerable alarm. She remained neutral during the Crimean War.

- Finally, the Tsar was absolutely certain that what Menshkov was demanding was that the most important points had already been conceded by the Turks in previous treaties. The Turks, however, rejected every one of these agreements with Russia in order to protect their independence.

In short, Nicholas I, in his combination of bullying, self-righteousness, incomprehension and sheer misjudgment, was the individual with most responsibility for the outbreak of the Crimean War. A last-minute compromise, called the 'Vienna note' was negotiated between Austria, Britain, France and Russia. But the Turks were not part of these talks and when they demanded some modification of the terms, the Russians refused, and further went on to give their own interpretation of the 'Note' in a way which offended Britain. Russia was changing the terms negotiated in good faith and this made war inevitable.

The first clash saw the total Russian destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope in November 1853. It was reported in the British press as a massacre, thereby further inflaming public opinion. However, some British politicians believed they were being dragged into the war by the 'cunning barbarians' (Turks). Certainly the Sultan saw an alliance with Britain and France as Turkey's only chance of checking the Russians and recovering some of the losses the Ottoman Empire had suffered at Russia's hands. But others in Britain like Foreign Minister Palmerston and the British ambassador in Constantinople believed that a war with Russia was necessary in order to check her expansionism in the Near East.

The war, which came to focus on the siege of the Russian port of Sebastopol, dragged on for over two years, both sides suffering terrible casualties and displaying incompetent leadership. But the Anglo-French forces were better armed, and better supplied, and Russia became increasingly diplomatically isolated. Piedmont, Austria, Prussia and Sweden all supported the Anglo-French Ottoman alliance. The Italians actually supplied 13000 troops. The fall of Sebastopol (September 1855) was the key to allied victory, but by the end, all the combatants approached peace negotiations in Paris in a spirit of exhaustion.

Minor territorial adjustments apart, the main terms of the treaty were:

- i) Russia abandoned any special claims to a protectorate over the principalities of Sultan's Christian subjects in general.
- ii) The Black Sea was demilitarized (the removal of armed forces or military equipment from a region). This clause was felt by Russia to be particular humiliation. The main objective of Russian diplomacy, successfully completed in 1870, was to re-negotiate the Black Sea clauses.

Britain had gained much less from the war than Palmerston had hoped, and the poor performance of its army encouraged a period of national self-criticism, and a spirit of isolationism. Napoleon III was pleased with his prestige victory, and the diplomatic gain of friendship with Britain. However, this friendship would prove to be transitory or temporary, and it remained unclear how the French Emperor would advance his nationalist-oriented politics.

A big loser of the Crimean War was arguably Austria and not Russia. Austria had lost no troops or territory but she had lost the Tsar's friendship. Nicholas I, having counted on Austrian support, came to regard neutrality in the Crimean War as 'unbelievable and indescribable'

betrayal. Austro-Russian friendship which had been at the heart of the Italy Alliance now ceased to exist. Vienna would look in vain to St Petersburg when it was confronted by French and Piedmontese aggression in Germany. The Crimean War did not, of course, cause the Italian or German unification but it helped to create the international power alignments that made the unifications possible, and it inaugurated an era in international affairs where the only guiding principle seemed to be ‘every man for himself’. The principle of the maintenance of the balance of power which had existed since 1815 now lapsed away

Prosperity at home coincided with success abroad. The contribution of Napoleon III to the causes of the Crimean War was very limited, and France entered it reluctantly, However the war and the Treaty of Paris were seen as triumphs for the Emperor who could now enjoy a re-established Anglo- French entente and international prestige. These were the ‘fortunate years’.

Before the Empire had been in existence for two years it was involved in a major war with Russia. Napoleon’s involvement in the Crimean War resulted partly from his desire to rally Catholic interests in the near East and also from his keenness for an alliance with England. He was particularly anxious to avoid what he regarded as his uncle’s grave error of enmity with Great Britain.

Study Guides

- i) Why was France defeated by Prussia in the Franco- Prussian War (1870-71)?
- ii) How did the socialists attempt to increase their influence?
- iii) Why was the second French Republic so short-lived?
- iv) Why was there relatively little opposition to Napoleon III’s rule in France during the first ten years of the Empire?
- v) Were Napoleon III’s policies a “fiasco” between 1866- 1870 in France?/
- vi) Give an account of the foreign policy of Napoleon III’s foreign adventures and show how a) it affected his popularity in France.
b)Affected his standing in Europe.
- vi) How liberal was the rule of Napoleon III?

Examination type questions

1. How secure was Napoleon’s position following the creation of the liberal empire?
2. “The fate of the second Empire was sealed before the Franco-Prussian War.” Do you agree?
3. Why and with what consequences did Napoleon III liberalize the second Empire after 1870?
4. What by 1870, did Napoleon have as lasting achievements of his reign?
5. ‘It was the consequence of the Emperor’s restless policy that in 1870 France found herself friendless in Europe’. Consider this comment with reference to the foreign policy of Napoleon III.
6. Why did Napoleon (III) change his empire from a benevolent despotism to a constitutional monarchy after 1860?
7. ‘He did his autocracy skillfully, under the cloak of popular policies’. Assess this view of Napoleon III’s conduct of domestic affairs from 1848 to 1870.

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CHAPTER 15

ITALIAN UNIFICATION (1815 – 1870)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) Give an account of the problems which prevented Italian unification between 1815 and 1848.
- (ii) Account for the slow pace of unification in the 1820s and 1830s.
- (iii) Discuss the roles of the following organizations before 1848:
 - (a) The Young Italian Movement
 - (b) The Carbonari
- (iv) Define Risorgimento
- (v) Give a thorough explanation of Giuseppe Mazzini's aims and activities before 1849. Did he succeed?
- (vi) Explain the long-term and short-term causes of the 1848-49 Revolutions in Italy.
- (vi) Discuss the lessons which were learnt from the failure of the 1848-49 revolutions in Italy.
- (vii) Explain the efforts made by Cavour to modernize Piedmont.
- (viii) Illustrate his aims and methods.
- (ix) Locate Piedmont's position within Italian affairs
- (x) Describe and assess Napoleon III's role in Italy from 1858-59 as well as in 1870.
- (xi) Evaluate the role played by Cavour in uniting Italy
- (xii) Compare and contrast the aims and methods of Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi.
- (xiii) Describe and illustrate areas of Piedmontisation.
- (XIV) Evaluate the outcome of Italian unity in 1870.
- (xv) Assess the impact of foreign assistance to Italian unification.

The process of Italian Unification can be divided into two periods for easy study. These are the period 1815 – 48, known as the liberal period during which Italy endeavoured to free and unite herself by her own actions, without foreign help, and the diplomatic period 1848 – 1870, when a number of lessons were learnt from the failure of the liberal period, especially the need for foreign aid. Questions may be asked on the two periods distinctly or combined.

The First Phase (1815 – 1848)

Metternich had referred to Italy after 1815 as nothing more than a ‘geographical expression, and the Italians as having no more than local loyalties. In other words, Metternich was saying there was no national identity and consciousness after 1815. At the outbreak of the French Revolution, Italy was as it had been for more than a thousand years, a patchwork of small states jealous of, if not actively hostile to one another. Ever since, the Roman Empire and the Peninsula, had never been effectively united under one rule.

Napoleon I’s Contribution

It was left to Napoleon Bonaparte to level the barriers of local rivalries and bring to Italy at least a good administration and approach to national unity. Moreover, he awakened in the minds of Italian patriots the conviction that the salvation of Italy lay in national unity. Even at St Helena, he still insisted that Italy was one nation. He believed that the unity of manners, language and literature must at some future date reunite her people under a single government.

The Contribution of the Vienna Congress of 1815

The diplomatists who disposed of the fortunes of Europe at Vienna in 1815 made short the work of Napoleonic Italy. Italy was divided into 9 states with governments that were reactionary and despotic. Almost all the princes who ruled over Italian states were Austrian puppets. Austrian dukes ruled in Tuscany and Modena, an Austrian archduchess in Parma, and Austrian Viceroy in Lombardy and Venetia. The only states not dependent on Austria was the kingdom of Sardinia, and Piedmont.

Alternatives for Italian Unification

Italy in the 1840s produced a more impressive array of nationalist writings than any other country in Europe. Various views were put across as to what form a future united Italy would take – was Italy to be a fully centralized and unified state or was it to be a federation? Was it to be a monarchy or a republic? There were three main schools of thought which tried to answer these questions.

- i) The first school supported the view that a future Italy should be a confederation of states under the Pope. Geoberts who wrote the works, ‘*On the moral and civil primacy of the Italians*’, supported unity under papal leadership.
- ii) The second school suggested a confederation of states under the leadership of the king of Piedmont. In other words, a future Italian state would be a monarchy. This school of thought was supported by Balbo who wrote, ‘*On the Hopes of Italy*’, to express his views.
- iii) The third school suggested a single unified republic achieved through popular insurrection. This democratic idea of unification was put forward by the most influential prophet of the Risorgimento, Giuseppe Mazzini.

Progress of the national movement until 1848

Guiseppe Mazzini (1805 – 1872)

He was the key figure during the first phase of Italian unification and a leading exponent of early 19th century nationalism. He is one of the three men to whom above all others, the attainment of Italian unification was contributed. According to George Meredith, an English poet, these three were Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi. Cavour provided the brain, which is diplomacy in the unification process and Mazzini, the inspiration. He was a good organizer and Garibaldi provided the fighting spirit and was a soldier. Mazzini was born in Genoa. He studied law as a young man. He read widely the writings of democratic thinkers. His radical leanings soon aroused the suspicion of authorities and in 1830 he was imprisoned. After his release, he was banished from his country.

His ideas

In the bitterness of his heart, Mazzini decided that Italy would never prosper until her cause was removed from the hands of ‘sects’. He held the following ideas: -

- i) That the Carbonari and Federals demanded only partial liberties instead of total independence.
- ii) They emphasized secrecy and therefore encouraged vagueness.
- iii) They relied too much on aristocracies and governments.
- iv) He believed that leaders and people must be educated towards a national effort.

The Young Italy Movement

In July 1831, Mazzini gathered 40 exiles in Marseilles, France, and formed the Young Italy Movement.

Study Guides

- i) What was the importance of the 1820 and 1830 revolution to the ultimate goal of uniting Italy?
- ii) Who, in the period 1815- 1830, were against the unification of Italy?
- iii) Explain the different forms of a united Italy that were proposed during the 1840s and how their supporters thought that they would be achieved.

The Young Italy Movement:

- a) Dedicated itself to the cause of the revolt throughout the peninsula.
- b) The society abandoned secrecy except for the names of its members.
- c) It also devoted a large part of its funds to propaganda. It was better organized. In many of the society’s writings, Mazzini tried to inspire the people of Italy with his own fervent desire for independence, unity and liberty. Mazzini believed that liberty could only be in a republic.
- d) Mazzini believed that Italy had enough resources to achieve national unity on its own terms. There was no need for foreign involvement.
- e) He also believed that a nation had a moral purpose as well as a linguistic basis and a political heritage. The nation, he believed, meant the totality of citizens speaking the same language associated together with equal political and civil rights. The perfection of humanity became Mazzini’s ultimate goal and he believed that it could be achieved by forming a brotherhood of nations in Europe. He summoned the youth of every nation to help him. He founded in 1834

another society called Young Europe. However, this was suppressed by the Swiss authorities in 1836. This caused Metternich to describe Mazzini as the most dangerous man in Europe.

1. The 1820 Revolts: The role of secret societies: - During the years after the Congress of Vienna, the desire for some kind of unity grew stronger particularly in the south which was very poor economically. This desire manifested itself in sporadic insurrections which were promptly suppressed by Austrian soldiers. The largest of these secret societies was the Carbonari (Charcoal Burners). It has been estimated that by the year 1820, the membership in these secret societies numbered over 100 000, drawn from all social classes. Under the watch words, “freedom and independence,” the Carbonari were ceaselessly active in inciting opposition and revolution against foreign rule. The 1820 revolutions in Naples and Piedmont were inspired by the Carbonari. The success of these revolts was short – lived for the Austrian armies were on guard to suppress them.

Study Guides

- i) Explain Mazzini’s aims and methods during the 1830s and 1840s.
- ii) What was Mazzini’s contribution to the Risorgimento?

Causes of the failure of the 1820 Revolutions

i) The power of Austria

After every such rising, the Austrian troops crushed all outward symptoms of opposition or independence. However, the severity of these measures only gave sustenance to the spirit of nationalism. Underground, the systematic preparations for the Risorgimento were going on.

ii) Lack of sound leadership

There was a lack of committed and experienced leaders to lead a national movement. Petty squabbles and the local nature of the movement for unification led to the collapse of the revolutions. The lesson was learnt that the ground had to be prepared thoroughly.

2) The 1830 Revolutions

These revolutions occurred in Parma, Modena and the Papal States. They were influenced by the 1830 revolutions in France, which had replaced Charles X with Louis Philippe. The revolutions hoped for assistance from France, but Louis Philippe was unwilling to risk his newly won throne in a war with Austria. Again, Metternich acted promptly and the revolutions were suppressed.

3) The 1848 Revolutions

These took place in a number of areas in Italy, namely the Papal States, Sicily, Naples and Piedmont.

a) The Sicilian Revolt

A revolt in Palermo forced Ferdinand II to grant Sicily a constitution (1848), which gave it virtual independence. Inevitably, the disease radiated to Naples, and he had to concede a constitution for the whole kingdom.

b)The ‘Five Days’ of Milan

Events were accelerated by the news of revolutions in Paris and Vienna. Pius IX granted a constitution to the Papal States on 15 March 1848. In Venice, a republic was proclaimed. It was in Milan, however, where the greatest shock occurred. Tension had developed since the tobacco riots of January (arising from a boycott by the citizens of the tobacco, a commodity which was a government monopoly).

Although there were differences between the upper class constitutionalists, and the radical republicans, they were united in support of a massive demonstration on 17 March 1848. With only 100 000 men in the whole of Italy, a third of them Italians, the Austrian Marshal Radetsky withdrew his forces from Milan to regroup. A liberal – radical provisional government was established under Cattaneo. By the end of March, all the cities of Lombardy, Venetia, and the Duchies had driven out the Austrian troops.

The First Austro – Piedmontese War (1848 – 49)

Events in Milan found Charles Albert completely unprepared for war. However, he eventually intervened mainly to prevent Lombardy from having a republican government. His troops advanced so slowly that the Austrian troops were able to re-group in the Quadrilateral that is Peschiera, Verona, Legnano and Mantua. Although the Piedmontese army had swelled to 100 000 against the Austrians’ 70 000, Charles Albert was no match for the 82 year old. The Piedmont army was defeated at Custoza and finally at Novara, leading to the abdication of Charles Albert. He was succeeded by Victor Emmanuel II.

Reasons for the collapse of the 1848 revolutions

i) **Austrian military power:** As in previous revolutions, this proved decisive. The Austrians under the Leadership of Radetsky were irresistible. Charles Albert on the other hand had certain weaknesses, for instance, he disliked the support of men like Mazzini and Garibaldi. He also had hesitated giving Austrians time to re-group.

ii)Disunity among Italian Revolutions:

The Republicans, led by Mazzini, had little in common with the monarchists who looked to Charles Albert.

iii)The Pope’s defection discouraged and perplexed all those Italians who had pinned their faith on him.

iv)The intervention of Louis Napoleon had led directly to the destruction of the Roman Republic.

v)Lack of sound leadership:

Apart from Mazzini and Charles Albert, the revolutions lacked committed and visionary leaders who could lead the national cause.

The Final Phase of unification (1848 – 1870)

Although the revolutionary movement of the period 1815 – 48 had not succeeded in achieving their goal of unifying Italy, there were some gains in that important lessons were learnt by those who later completed the process. Some of them are as follows: -

- i) That the ground had to be prepared thoroughly first before any meaningful progress in unification could be made. For instance, the different states of the Peninsula needed to be educated first on the importance of unity and commitment to the national cause.
- ii) The new king of Piedmont, Victor Emmanuel II, refused to withdraw the liberal constitution his father had granted, and Italians saw in this state, hope for the future.
- iii) The 1848 factors had shown the Italians who the real enemy of unification was, that is, Austria.
- iv) The Italians had also learnt that they could not possibly achieve unification, especially the expulsion of Austria without foreign assistance. It was Count Camillo Cavour who saw this more clearly than anyone else.
- v) They also learnt that there was need to modernize Piedmont which had become the focal point of the Italian nationalists.

Study Guides

- i) Why did the Republicans fail to achieve unification by 1849?
- ii) How important were divisions among the revolutionaries a reason for their defeat by 1849?
- iii) What lessons were learnt from the failure of the 1849 Revolutions in Italy?

Cavour and the unification of Italy

Count Camillo di Cavour

He was a gentlemen farmer who did not enter political life until his late thirties. He shared all the views which had been current among the progressive nobility of Lombardy in the 2 decades, concerning the value of scientific knowledge, administrative efficiency and economic expansion. Cavour acquired office at a time when a socio- economic revolution was underway.

Cavour and the modernization of Piedmont:

Cavour contributed to the process of change in Piedmont by introducing democratic reforms, which led to the modernization of Piedmont. These reforms made Piedmont to become the focus of Italian unification. Piedmont was modernized through the following measures:

- i) The expansion of trade through free trade treaties and private financial institutions. He negotiated commercial treaties with France, Britain and Austria. He was one of the few continental liberals to believe in free trade principles.
- ii) He improved the transport network through the development of a railway network.
- iii) He increased the country's productivity by encouraging French investors to invest in Piedmontese industries and railways.

- iv) He introduced the Saccardi Laws in 1850. These abolished ecclesiastical jurisdiction, limited the number of recognized holy days and prevented ecclesiastical personnel from obtaining unlimited amounts of land in Italy.
- v) He revolutionized the Piedmontese army by transforming it into a professional army.

Piedmont's advantages over other Italian States:

Piedmont had the following advantages which made her play a leading role in Italian unification:

- i) Piedmont was the only state free of Austrian control in 1815, and became a centre of liberal aspirations.
- ii) Piedmont had key figures who played key roles in the unification process. These were Charles Albert, Victor Emmanuel II and Cavour. Charles Albert granted a constitution in 1848. They tried to defeat Austrian influence in Northern Italy from which Piedmont gained prestige, in spite of the defeats at Custoza and Novara. Victor Emmanuel II supported the Risorgimento and maintained the constitution. Cavour modernized Piedmont and played an important part in foreign policy.
- iii) The state's economic growth, including industry, was greater than that of the rest of Italy and contrasted particularly with the backwardness of the south.
- iv) Piedmont had a standing modern army which was to prove its worth in future wars against Russia and Austria.

Cavour's views on unification

When Cavour entered d' Azeglio's Ministry, there is no reason to suppose that he thought of Italy outside Piedmont. He certainly did not reform the Piedmontese laws and revitalize her economy with the deliberate aim of fitting her for the leadership of a nationalist movement. His main and initial aim was to unite northern Italy under Piedmont. Cavour disliked nationalists, in and out of Piedmont. This was because most of them were fusionists whose policy would submerge Piedmont in Italy. The most notable of the fusionists were the democrats and republicans like Mazzini. Fusionists wanted the unification of the whole of Italy on an equal basis with the concerted efforts of all Italians. To Cavour, Mazzini was at one and the same time an irresponsible agitator, whose arbitive schemes aroused the disapproval of foreign governments, and a dangerous demagogue whose appeal to the illiterate masses could only lead to dictatorship.

However, he later came to see that the nationalist movement could be used to the advantage of Piedmont. His skill in adopting it was the measure of a genius. His policy was always that annexation and never fusion. He believed that if unification was to be achieved, it had to be on Piedmontese terms, and would be by annexing the rest of Italy to Piedmont, beginning in northern Italy. Determined annexationism and uncompromising liberalism contributed to Cavour's success in uniting Italy only 12 years after others had failed.

Cavour's Aims in Foreign Policy

- i) Cavour desired to liberate his country from the Austrians, and then to unite the states under a liberal monarchy.
- ii) In his opinion the history of the last 40 years had shown that Italy could not liberate herself by her own exertions. In other words, he saw that foreign aid was essential to drive the Austrians from Italian soil.

- iii) Cavour was already thinking of a future war with Austria for the possession of northern Italy. However, he regarded the support of Napoleon III as essential.

Measures to attract Napoleon III's support

a) Participation in the Crimean War of 1854 – 6

The war ended before the small expeditionary force of 1500 Sardinians had been able to exert itself beyond a minor engagement. Unwillingly, Cavour went, in 1856, to the Paris Peace Congress hoping to win one of the duchies for his plans. The only achievement at Paris was a short statement by Lord Clarendon that the present state of Italy was unsatisfactory. Cavour was disappointed with this.

The Orsini Bomb – (January 1858)

In January 1858, an attempt on Napoleon's life was made by an Italian patriot, Orsini. As French support was essential, Cavour urgently prosecuted the revolutionary party. More than 100 suspected agitators were expelled. The Orsini bomb could have helped to draw Napoleon III's attention to the Italian cause.

The Napoleonic initiative

The initiative came from Napoleon III himself

Fortunately, Napoleon wanted the following:

- i) Piedmont as an ally against Austria.
- ii) To stop Austrian influence spreading in Italy.
- iii) He also wanted to break up the humiliating settlement of 1815.
- iv) He aimed at certain frontier rectifications and a marriage into the oldest dynasty in Europe.

The Plombieres Agreement – (July 1858)

Cavour travelled to Plombieres to meet Napoleon without informing his cabinet and without knowing what sort of an offer he would receive.

Terms of the Agreement

- i) They agreed that Piedmont should provoke Austria into war.
- ii) Napoleon III would then offer assistance to the oppressed people of Lombardy and Venetia. If freed, these would be annexed to Piedmont – that is, unification of Italy above the Apennines (northern Italy).
- iii) The Duchies and the legations (Papal States) might form an autonomous unit with the prospect of becoming part of an Italian confederation under the presidency of a reforming pope. Napoleon had no intention of facilitating the creation of a strong Italy on his south eastern border.
- iv) Savoy and Nice were to be given to France.
- v) Southern Italy would conserve its unity and frontiers though the dynasty would be changed. At this stage (1858), it seems clear that neither Cavour nor Napoleon III anticipated the unification of the whole of Italy, nor even desired it.

The Austro - Piedmontese War of 1859

Austria allowed herself to be provoked into a declaration of war by demanding that Piedmont disarm. The conflict lasted from April to July 1859. Early in June, the French defeated the Austrians at Magenta on the 4th of June and forced them out of Lombardy. Another victory was recorded at Solferino on the 24th of June.

Immediate French withdrawal

Then in July 1859, as Mazzini had accurately foretold, Napoleon suddenly stopped short and concluded an armistice at Villafranca which left Venetia and even the quadrilateral in Austria's possession.

Reasons for Napoleon III's premature' withdrawal

- i) France had won her prestige and also feared that northern Germany might rally to Austrian aid on the Rhine.
- ii) Napoleon also did not want a strong Piedmont as a neighbour.
- iii) Napoleon also discovered that Cavour, instead of working for a separate kingdom of Central Italy as agreed at Plombieres, had secretly sent agents to prepare for the annexation of the Duchies to Piedmont. Napoleon therefore felt justified in deserting his ally. Cavour then resigned. He was already on bad terms with Victor Emmanuel II. Rattazzi took over with an interim ministry.

Terms of the Villafranca agreement – (July 1859)

This was between France and Austria.

- i) Lombardy was to be ceded to Piedmont.
- ii) Austria retained Venetia.
- iii) All Italy was to be included in a new Confederation. This was to be under the hereditary presidency of the Pope.
- iv) The hereditary rulers of Parma, Modena and Tuscany were to be restored.

The Annexation of Central Italy

Cavour's supporters and the nationalist group, the 'National Society,' worked very actively in central Italy, campaigning for annexation to Piedmont. In January 1860, Cavour returned to power and negotiated this annexation. Plebiscites were held and pronounced in favour of annexation to Piedmont.

Piedmont in March 1860

By March 1860, the Kingdom of Sardinia covered more than a 1/3 of Italy and covered nearly half the population. Cavour did not envisage any plans in the near future for his sacrifice of Savoy and Nice had rendered his position as Prime Minister precarious. He hoped, after consolidating his northern state, to enter the field of European diplomacy once more for the acquisition of Venice, and possibly the Papal States.

Garibaldi and the unification of Italy: Up to this point the political initiative was in the hands of Cavour. In the next phase of unification he found himself challenged by Mazzini and the democratic programme of complete unification. Mazzini had formed the idea of an expedition to

the south which would work its way up to Rome and Venetia. Garibaldi, though he admired the soldier – King Victor Emmanuel, still revered Mazzini as the prophet of the national movement. He saw in Sicily a chance to prove that popular initiative was more effective than foreign aid.

Garibaldi and the ‘Thousand’

In April 1860, Garibaldi’s volunteer army of the ‘Thousand’ left Genoa for Sicily, conquering first the Island, and then Naples. He appeared determined to March on Rome, where a French garrison had been stationed since 1847. Both Cavour and Napoleon III were extremely opposed to anything like a Mazzini republican government gaining control in Italy. Secondly, if Garibaldi were allowed to march on to Rome this would certainly involve French intervention to protect the Pope. Cavour was also aware of the problems, social and economic, that the annexation of the southern states would bring to the government of a united Italy.

The British contribution: Although not directly involved in the process of Italian unification, the British helped indirectly by allowing the ‘Thousand’ red shirts to pass through the Straits of Messina. The British could easily have stopped them, but they let them sail through.

Cavour vs Garibaldi

Cavour had hitherto tried to avoid an open breach with Garibaldi, but he could prevaricate no longer if he was to prevent Garibaldi from challenging the French troops guarding the Holy City (Rome). In September 1860 Cavour forestalled Garibaldi by advancing along the Adriatic coast and taking the rest of the Papal States, except the area immediately around Rome. Piedmontese troops then linked up with Garibaldi, who surrendered his conquest to the Piedmontese king, Victor Emmanuel II.

Plebiscites: - After the usual plebiscites, Sicily, Naples and the Papal States were annexed to Piedmont. Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed king of the kingdom of Italy in March 1861. Only Rome and Venetia were not part of the kingdom. This was another victory for the annexationists.

The Completion of unification

Venetia and Rome were obtained through international complications. In both cases, Prussia played a central role. Venetia was still in Austrian hands. This was won through an agreement between Italy and Prussia. In view of an impending Austro – Prussian War of 1866, Bismarck had promised Italy, Venetia, if she attacked Austria, when hostilities commenced. Italian forces did attack Austria in 1866 and although defeated, Venetia was given to the Kingdom of Italy at the end of the war.

Rome: -

Rome remained in the hands of the Pope until the French garrison was withdrawn in 1870. In 1870 there came another chance for Italy to benefit by international complications. The outbreak of the Franco – Prussian War and disastrous French defeats which characterized the war, necessitated the withdrawal of the French garrison from Rome. This then completed the Unification of Italy.

Study Guides

- i) How did Cavour's programmes of modernization strengthen:
Cavour's position in Piedmont, and
Piedmont's position within Italy?
- ii) What benefits did Cavour hope to derive from his deal with Napoleon III at Plombières?
- iii) Why was the truce of Villafranca such a setback for Cavour?
- iv) Why were most of the states in the central regions of Italy anxious to be taken over by Piedmont?
- v) How did the Crimean War affect the political situation in Italy?
- vi) Identify and explain the aims of Cavour in 1860.
- vii) Summarize the main contributions of
Mazzini,
Garibaldi
and Cavour, to the unification of Italy. Who contributed the most to this goal?
- viii) Why was Italy established as a unitary state rather than a federal state?
- xix) Compare the process by which Italy gained Venice in 1866 with the process of gaining Rome in 1870.
- xi) Analyse Garibaldi's aims and methods in his conquest of the South.
- xii) Why was Cavour so suspicious of Garibaldi?
- xiii) How accurate is it to describe Cavour as an Italian nationalist?
- xiv) How united and how divided was Italy in 1871?
- xv) Would it be fair to categorize 1861- 70 as a decade of disappointment for Italian nationalists?

Examination type questions

1. Was Italian unification primarily the results of foreign intervention?
2. "His only concern was the glory of his state." Is this a fair assessment of Cavour?
3. "Mazzini's contribution to the unification of Italy has often been overstated." How far do you agree/
4. Did the Italian state of 1870 represent a defeat of Mazzini aims and methods?
5. Compare and contrast the aims and methods used by Cavour and Bismarck to bring unification to their countries.
6. In what ways did the failure of the Italian Revolutions of 1848 – 1849 affect the later movement for Italian Unification?
7. Why did Piedmont become the main focus for Italian Unification?

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CHAPTER 16

GERMANY UNIFICATION (1815 – 1871)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Describe the causes and results of the 1848-49 revolutions in Germany.
2. Give an account of the main activities of the liberals of 1848 in the Frankfurt Parliament.
3. Explain the impact of Austrian dominance in German political affairs during the period 1815-1848.
4. Identify the different forms of unification which were debated during the period 1848-1860
5. Explain the failure of the liberals of 1848 to bring about German unification.
6. How was Bismarck's methods different from those of the 1848 liberals?
7. Explain how the following historical episodes were achieved (a) Danish War, 1864 b) Austro-Prussian War, 1866.
8. Explain the aims of Bismarck and how he hoped to achieve them.
9. Explain why Austria was so easily defeated.
10. Compare Bismarck's use of warfare with his use of diplomacy.
11. Explain why Bismarck enjoyed uninterrupted success during the years 1862- 1871.
12. Explain why France was defeated in the Franco- Prussian War and the impact of that war.
13. Determine whether Bismarck's aims and methods were consistent or not.
14. Judge how far Bismarck re-drew the map of Europe as a result of his successful campaigns between 1864 and 1871.
15. Why Bismarck was more successful than the liberals of 1848 in achieving unification.

This is a popular examination topic. Just like Italian Unification, the best way to study it is to divide it into phases, the revolutionary phase from 1815 to 1848, and the diplomatic or Bismarckian phase: 1848 – 1871. Questions will either focus on the two phases separately or combine them in one question. It is therefore advisable that both phases be studied in detail for a fuller and better understanding of the unification process.

The First Phase of Unification (1815 – 1848)

a) The Vienna Settlement and Unification

The problem of the form of German unification was raised by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. This had failed to satisfy the hopes of those who had wanted to see some form of German unity emerge from the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars. The expectation of constitutional reforms in the individual states had not been fulfilled to any great extent. The German Confederation as established at Vienna was to prove an unsatisfactory and unworkable compromise.

Apart from reducing the German States into 39, the Vienna settlement also increased the influence of Austria and Prussia. German unification in both phases was characterized by rivalry between Prussia and Austria. Just like in Italian unification, Austria proved to be a stumbling block to German Unification.

a) Austria: -

With its extensive Slav, Italian and Hungarian dependencies, Austria was primarily a non- influence in German affairs in the Bund.

b) Prussia

On the other hand, Prussia, after the acquisition of the Rhineland in 1815, gradually consolidated her position as a German power, particularly in the economic sphere.

The 1830 Revolutions

The French Revolution of 1830 gave a signal of a revival of liberalism throughout Germany. The actual outbreaks of violence were few and their effects small. Revolts took place in Brunswick. An unpopular duke was replaced by his brother, the elector of Hesse, hated for his arbitrary rule and his extravagant mistress was forced to grant a constitution and in Saxony there were small disturbances.

The Polish National Revolt

In 1831, the Polish Revolt broke out and was almost as important as the July Revolution in arousing liberal enthusiasm in Germany. Polish representatives took part in the gatherings of liberals at Hambach in May 1832. This gathering was a manifestation by Liberal intellectuals, professors, students, lawyers, writers expressing the reviving movement in favour of constitutional government and German unity.

The Metternich System

Metternich and the Austrian government were already contemplating federal action against the liberal revival and the Hambach demonstration was sufficient to overcome the hesitators of the other states. Accordingly, in June 1830, the majority of the German governments accepted six articles asserting monarchical principles that recalled the Carlsbad decrees of 1819. The 'Metternich system' seemed as firmly established as ever, in spite of the example of the July Revolution in France. As the principles embodied in the six articles and similar measures were put into practice, the liberals were everywhere being suppressed. Therefore, due to the 'Metternich System', and hence the influence of Austria, the 1830 Revolutions were a failure.

The Zollverein 1834

Even more important than the revived discussion of political problems, were the economic developments inaugurated by the creation of the German customs Union (Zollverein) in 1834. This economic union was under Prussian leadership. Most members of the confederation joined it. The customs union had positive economic results. These were as follows:

- i) Improved Trade
- ii) Encouraged development of industry which led to,
- iii) The construction of the first sections of the German railway system. The first railway in Germany from Nuremberg to Furth was opened in December 1835.
- iv) The abolition of internal customs barriers between states

Political effects of the Zollverein

The improvement of communications and industrial development soon had a political effect. Some of the political effects are as follows:-

- a) It prepared Prussia for the future leadership of Germany. As will be seen later, during the Bismarckian era, the various states which were part of the Zollverein, found it easier to choose Prussia ahead of Austria as the leader of a new German Empire. Their membership of the Zollverein made it desirable for them to continue under Prussian leadership.
- b) It gave rise to a militant working class which was to be very active in the 1848 revolutions.
- c) The formation of the liberal party with a liberal programme. The increase of the population and its greater mobility contributed to the growth of new industrial areas, notably in the Ruhr and Rhineland. These two areas in turn served as the basis of a new liberalism in Prussia. New leaders from the mercantile world joined the intellectuals who had hitherto formed the liberal party.
- d) It also led to the participation of the middle class in government and administration, and the weakening of the power of the Prussian nobility. These were to be the main points of the liberal political programme. The ascension of Frederick William IV seemed to promise the realization of some of the points of the liberal programme.

The 1848 Revolutions

The causes of the 1848 revolutions in Germany

The economic difficulties of the 1840s and the example of successful agitation abroad, combined with the growing movement for national unity to produce a desire for change. This desire for change was seen in the following areas:

- i) In the industrial areas of Prussia and Savoy, employers and apprentices were anxious to be rid of the surviving medieval restrictions.
- ii) The peasant proprietors of the south – west wanted the abolition of the remaining feudal obligations.
- iii) In the small states, the middle – class officials, lawyers and professors were demanding a larger field for political activity in the shape of a more unified Germany.
- iv) In Hesse-Kassel and Brunswick, there were demands for the most elementary constitutional guarantees against a despot.
- v) In Baden and Wurttemberg, there were demands for the extension of the franchise and above all, German unity.
- vi) Whatever the political and constitutional situation in the individual states, the 1848 Revolutions were also caused by the need for a sharing of political power by the numerically small middle – class.

The French example: the role of the working class

It only needed the example of the French Revolution of 1848 to bring the revolution in Germany into the open. The revolution began in March.

In Germany the working class movement had assumed many guises. Its first and most natural expression lay in the formation of political clubs for working men in Berlin, Breslau and Cologne. As the economic crisis developed, the fortunes of the working class also prospered. Moreover, thanks to the new freedom of association, trade unions multiplied rapidly and the idea of forming a central organization occurred to some of their members. This led to the formation of the Central Committee of Working Men in Berlin. This organization appealed for the support of all working class communities and it organized meetings.

Study Guides

- i) Why did the liberals of 1848 fail to unify Germany?
- ii) What problems prevented the German states from integrating into a united entity?
- iii) What different forms of German unification were being considered in 1862?
- iv) What was the significance of the Zollverein to German unification/

The liberal movement in Germany had a dual aspect

- i) Firstly, on the one hand, there was in every state, a demand for democratic government, and
- ii) On the other, there was a demand for unity among the German States. Liberal hopes had been roused in Prussia in 1847 when the Prussian king Frederick William IV called a Parliament, of representatives of the various Prussian territories. Riots in Berlin in March had forced the king to make enough concessions to stem the revolt. A liberal government under Ludolf Camphausen, one of the best known liberal leaders from the Rhineland, was formed.

Formation of the Frankfurt Parliament

The remarkable and initial success of the revolutionary movements in Prussia, Austria and Hungary, and most of the smaller German states made possible a new phase in the effort to win German unity through one central representative body.

A Vorparlament or provisional general assembly, met at Frankfurt at the end of March 1848. This parliament consisted of 500 delegates drawn from the parliamentary assemblies of the different German States.

The weaknesses of the Frankfurt Parliament

Although the Frankfurt Parliament was a victory for the liberals and nationalists, it had serious weaknesses which worked against German unification.

-By its nature, the Parliament represented particularism and achieved no results of any importance save to arrange for the election of an all – German assembly. This new assembly was elected so as to by pass the existing governments of the states and met at Frankfurt on the river Main in the Rhineland in May 1848. This famous body, which set for a whole year, represented the aspirations and feelings of all more nationally – minded Germans.

-It suffered the initial handicap of having no executive authority or executive organizer. It was the voice of the embryonic German nation, echoed through its intellectual and professional classes.

-The newly found unity was peculiarly impotent. The Frankfurt Parliament was, in effect, as much bound by particularism as the diet of the Old Confederation or even Vorparlament. The delegates to the Frankfurt Assembly were politically like the reforming Whigs of England. They were mostly university professors and businessmen, lawyers, judges, civil servants and the clergy.

The Failure of the 1848 Revolutions

By the beginning of 1849, it was plain that the revolutions had no marked effect on the position of the reigning dynasties of Austria and Prussia. On 2 December 1848, The Emperor Ferdinand abdicated in favour of his 18 year – old nephew Francis Joseph. In Prussia too, the revolution had failed at the end of 1848. The King had rapidly lost any sympathy he might have felt in March with the moderate liberals. All the liberal concessions given earlier were annulled or nullified. A new constitution under a new ministry headed by Count Brandenberg was established with the restoration of the old restrictive franchise.

Reasons for the Failure of the 1848 Revolutions

i)The revolts were almost entirely middle- class hence were elitist.

ii)The rulers kept control of their administrations and armies, which they used to suppress the revolts.

iii)Events at Frankfurt: -

a)The Frankfurt Parliament was divided.

b)The delegates lacked the support of the working class.

c)They commanded no military support and wasted time in endless debates while opportunities slipped away.

d)Rivalry between Austria and Prussia made it impossible for the Frankfurt Parliament to make progress.

e) The liberals were mere idealists who had no action to implement their programmes.

The outcome of the 1848 Revolutions

1.The brief existence of the Frankfurt Parliament strengthened the desire for national unity in some form.

2.The failure of the Frankfurt Parliament showed the weakness of liberalism in Germany and it became clear that nationalist developments might now occur without parallel advances towards democracy.

3.The abolition of feudalism led to later economic growth.

4. The spread of socialist ideas was to become a powerful force after 1871.

‘Grossdeutsch’ and ‘Kleindeutsch’

After the collapse of the 1848 – 9 revolutions, a thorny and complicated question arose, that is, what form the new German state was to take. There were two possible forms: -

- a) The scheme of uniting Germany under Prussian leadership and excluding Austria. This was the ‘little Germany’ or ‘Kleindeutsch’ scheme. According to this scheme, only Germans would be included in the new German state. Schwarzenberg, the Austrian – Prime Minister’s aims, was to secure Austria’s entry as a whole into the new German Confederation, paving the way for the Austrian Emperor leading the unified state.
- b) The other scheme proposed the inclusion of Austria within a united Germany. This was the ‘Greater Germany’ or ‘Grossdeutsch’ scheme. This scheme looked to Austria for leadership. To incorporate Austria in a German national state was impossible, however, as long as the Habsburgs insisted on retaining, as they did, their non-German territories and peoples.

Lessons learnt from the failure of the liberal period (1815 – 1848)

The national movement in Germany had failed but certain lessons had been learnt: these are as follows:

- i) In any future movement for German unification, Austria would have to be excluded. In other words, of the two schemes discussed above, the Kleindeutsch seemed more desirable to most Germans.
- ii) Constitutional means had failed and therefore force would have to be used to overcome the opposition of Austria. Bismarck was to fulfill this.
- iii) Prussia had to build up the necessary force to carry out this task of uniting Germany.

Study Guides

- i) To what extent did Napoleon Bonaparte help to pave the way for German unification?
- ii) What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Frankfurt Parliament?

Bismarck and the final unification of Germany (1862 – 1871)

Otto Von Bismarck

The determination of the Prussian monarchy to assert itself in Germany had a long history. Bismarck, who played a unique role in the process of unification, saw himself as upholding this tradition of strengthening Prussia and conserving its institutions. He had become involved in politics as a representative of the Junkers (landed gentry), in Berlin in 1847 and was noted for his extremely conservative views. He showed himself to be passionately opposed to German liberalism and the Frankfurt parliament of 1848. In 1851, he was chosen to serve as Prussia’s ambassador to the revived German diet. In 1857, he was sent as ambassador to St Petersburg. In 1862 he was transferred to Paris and then invited back to Berlin in September of that year to push through the violently disputed army reforms in the face of liberal opposition.

The Accession of William I to the throne

Frederick William IV had long been overwrought by political pressures which he could not control. He succumbed at last to nervous prostration and signed his royal power to his brother

William in 1858. In 1861, on the death of William IV, William took over the throne as William I. William I was duller in intellect and tougher in temperament than his brother. His instincts were those of a soldier.

The army reforms and the constitutional crisis

When he took over, he made two important and strategic appointments in the military sector. Von Roon became minister of war, and Von Moltke was made chief of General staff. These two, like Bismarck, were anti-liberal and anti-Austrian. Their immediate programme was to strengthen the Prussian army by increasing the numbers from 500 000 to 750 000. For this purpose, they demanded from the Prussian Parliament, a considerable increase of taxation to generate funds for that purpose. In addition, the Army Bill proposed to increase annual recruitment by more than half, to raise the period of active service to three years, rather than two, and to integrate the land, the semi-civilian reserve force, with the regular army. The liberal majority refused to accept the principle of military reform. They insisted that the two-year term of service should be retained, and rejected the forcing of the militia out of the field army. This precipitated a major constitutional crisis.

The appointment of Bismarck as Prime Minister (1862)

On the advice of Von Roon, William I, recalled Bismarck from Paris and appointed him Prime Minister. Bismarck assumed ministerial power to resolve this conflict in the King's favour. For four years (1862 – 6) he conducted the government of Prussia without a constitutionally sanctioned budget.

Bismarck's Advantages as Prussian Chief Minister (1862)

It is important to consider Bismarck's contribution to unification of Germany in context:

- i) Bismarck had important qualities which worked to the advantage of Prussia. He was an astute diplomatist and strategist. This was to prove crucial in his foreign policy after 1862.
- ii) The Zollverein had already made most of Germany an economic unit and the industrialization of north Germany was already well under way by 1862. The starting point for this was laid in the financial reforms of Moasen (1818). In order to unite the scattered provinces of Prussia, he created a new tariff system which abolished all internal customs barriers and established free trade throughout Prussia. This economic strength of Prussia was an advantage to Bismarck when he took over as Chief Minister.
- iii) The German population was increasing with greater rapidity.
- iv) A good railway network had been constructed. This was to prove valuable in future wars. Not only were Prussian railways specifically planned with a view to swift transit from one distant frontier to another, but the General Staff operated a special department dedicated to the study by rail. In both 1866 and 1870 this swift concentration of troops was a vital factor. In 1866, Prussia's Fire Lines assembled her troops on the Bohemian frontier in 25 days, which had been taken by the Austrians.
- v) The rapid industrialization due to the availability of natural resources. These were supplemented by the acquisition of the Rhineland in 1815. The Ruhr Valley was rich in coal and iron ore: Rich Coal resources were also found in the Saar Valley, Upper Silesia and Prussian Silesia. The Prussian State took a leading role in the development of heavy coal, iron and steel industries.

- vi) An efficient and revolutionary army under able leadership in the persons of Von Roon and Von Molke. These were military strategists. The army reforms had revolutionised the Prussian army into a professional one, both in quality and quantity.
- vii) Bismarck also had the unwavering support of William I who was also a military man.

The basis of Bismarckian Foreign Policy: A master planner or a shrewd opportunist

The British statesman Benjamin Disraeli recounted in later years conversation that he claimed to have had with Bismarck in 1862. According to Disraeli, the then Prussian ambassador to Paris laid down a clear programme. 'As soon as the army shall have been brought into such a condition as to inspire respect, I shall seize the first best pretext to declare war on Austria, dissolve the German Diet and give, national unity to Germany under Prussian leadership.' Recent historians' reactions to this have either been to dismiss the conversation as an elaboration by Disraeli or to minimize it as the barest outline of long-term aims by a man as yet unaware of the complexities of politics at the highest level.

The subjection of Austria, at least in northern Germany and the destruction of the confederation, probably represent Bismarck's ultimate hopes well enough. In power, however, he was to find repeatedly, that a master plan was impossible, and that the only means of progress was the piecemeal exploitation of external events. In the 1860s, he became the supreme realist and pragmatist, learning to declare in later life that, 'man cannot create the current of events. He can only float with it and steer.'

Historians, like A.J.P. Taylor, have seen Bismarck, not as a master planner, but as a supreme opportunist, and that Bismarck's aims and efforts were focused on Prussian aggrandizement and expansion north of the River Main. Like Cavour in Italian unification, he did not have immediate plans with the southern German States. His chief aim was to expel Austria from Northern Germany and establish Prussian leadership there.

Study Guides

- i) Why did Bismarck include Austria in the war against such a weak nation as Denmark?
- ii) What were the aims of Bismarck when he came to power and how did he hope to achieve them?
- iii) What were the main forces working for and against German unification in 1862?
- iv) Why did Prussia win the Seven Weeks War?
- v) How did Bismarck consolidate his victory over Austria abroad and exploit it at home?
- vii) What setbacks did Bismarck's plans suffer in 1868- 1869?
- vii) What advantages did Prussia enjoy in its campaign for unification/ Discuss the following factors;
 - a) A strong economy with abundant resources.
 - b) Sound leadership.
 - c) Abundant military resources- personnel and equipment.
 - d) Weaker opposition.
 - e) Absence of a strong international monitoring system such as the concert of Europe.

The Foreign Policy Events

- a) **The Schleswig – Holstein question**

As Prussian ambassador to the revived Germanic Diet at Frankfurt, Bismarck had first hand experience of the Austro – German rivalry. The first step to Prussia’s renewed rise to power, as he saw it, would be to make her master north of the river Main. The issue of the two duchies on the borders of Germany and Denmark was an old one and had last come to a head in 1848. The problem arose from a mixed population and from a confusion of dynastic and semi- feudal claims. Schleswig to the north, was predominantly Danish, while Holstein had a substantial German majority and was also a member of the German Confederation.

According to the London Protocol of 1852, the two duchies were to remain autonomous although technically subject to the King of Denmark. The decision by the new king of Denmark, Christian IX in 1863 to incorporate the duchies, precipitated a crisis. The German nationalists in Prussia urged intervention to stop this breach of the London Protocol. It seems clear, that Bismarck always had the ultimate annexation of the duchies in mind. It is no longer seriously maintained that intervention in Denmark was a cynical trap to wave Austria into military commitment and to buy the basis for future tensions. The Danish war itself was a one- sided affair, and was concluded by the Treaty of Vienna in October 1864. According to this treaty, King Christian renounced both Schleswig and Holstein. The newly acquired territories were placed under the joint administration of Prussia and Austria.

The Convention of Gastein (August 1865)

The ten months of joint rule of the two duchies were marked by squabbles, accusations and threats of war between Prussia and Austria. Then precipitate a war, Bismarck accepted the conciliatory Convention of Gastein. This Convention formally divided the administration. Prussia took responsibility for Schleswig and Austria for Holstein.

The Austro – Prussian War (1866)

It has already been pointed out that it is no longer widely maintained that the Schleswig – Holstein question was a trap deliberately laid by Bismarck to lure Austria into war. W.M. Simon speaks for the majority of recent commentators in pointing out that in 1864 and early 1865, war still posed too great a risk for Bismarck happily to contemplate it. However, the diplomatic scene favoured Prussia in three main ways.

- i) Russian relations with Austria had been cool since the neutrality of the Habsburgs in the Crimean War, while Bismarck had moved quickly to offer Russian support at the time of the Polish uprising in 1863.
- ii) In October 1865, he had met Napoleon III at Biarritz and prepared the way for French neutrality in the event of a struggle with Austria. By February 1866, Bismarck was declaring that such a conflict had now become only a matter of time.
- iii) In April 1866 a secret alliance was concluded between Prussia and Italy. Article 2 provided that if Prussia plans for reforming the German Confederation failed and Prussia took up arms, Italy would follow Prussia in declaring war on Austria. As a reward, Venetia would be ceded to Italy.

The outbreak of the War

The war that began with the Prussian invasion of Holstein, in June 1866, was about the administration of the duchies. Prussia accused the Austrian authorities of violating their neutral

agreements by sheltering refugees from the harsh Prussian rule in Schleswig. Clearly too, when Austria referred this dispute to the Confederation, she was in breach of the Gastein Convention. These were obviously convenient excuses. Prussia also went to war with Saxony, Hanover, Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse, Hesse – Cassel, Darmstadt and Nassau. In a very clear sense, it was a war for the conquest at least of northern Germany.

Prussian victory at Sadowa and the Treaty of Prague

The seven Weeks War was arguably the central event in 19th century German history. The battle of Sadowa finally resolved the long Austro – Prussian rivalry and assured the victory of the Kleindeutschland’ solution. Prussia’s defeat of Austria, which was enshrined in the Treaty of Prague (23rd August 1866), caused a greater disruption to the European State system and balance of power than any other event since the defeat of Napoleon.

Terms of the Treaty Prague

Bismarck imposed a moderate peace. The Habsburgs were not required to sacrifice any territory.

- i) Prussia annexed Hanover, Schleswig – Holstein, part of Hesse, Darmstadt and the City of Frankfurt.
- ii) The independence of the remaining North German States was lost except for a measure of local autonomy in the North German Confederation.
- iii) The creation of the North German Confederation to replace the old German Confederation.

The greatest reality of the North German Confederation envisaged by the Treaty of Prague was that it rested upon a basis of military conquest by Prussia.

The Question of the Southern German States

It is probable that Bismarck had no clear plans for further action at the end of 1866. He was exhausted by a year of crisis. “There is nothing more to do in our lifetime,” he had written to his wife. Yet the problem of the southern German States remained. Their position was problematical and paradoxical. Strong separatist forces survived south of the Main. Of the four states of the south, only Baden, whose Grand Duke was the son-in-law of the King of Prussia, showed real enthusiasm for union with the north. However, the most effective link between the new confederation and the south, was therefore, the string of military treaties that Bismarck had concluded with the southern German States in August 1866. This placed Prussia in the position recently vacated by Austria as their protector. Already, by the end of 1866, war remained the most likely cause of further German unification.

Bismarck and Napoleon III

Before the Treaty of Prague, the French Emperor had won the assurance that France would not face a united Germany that included territories to the South of the River Main. Behind Napoleon’s back, however, Bismarck concluded secret alliances with the southern German States. In return, for Prussia not insisting on large indemnities from them, it was agreed that if Prussia found herself in a war endangering her territory, the Southern States would place their armies under the command of the King of Prussia.

There has been much historical debate over Bismarck’s precise intentions after 1867. Did he, for example, see a war with France as necessary and inevitable? In fact, the North German

Confederation already included two-thirds of the whole of Germany. It was obvious from the start that the remaining states, that is Bavaria, Wuttemberg, Baden and Hesse, would find it difficult to enjoy the 'independent sovereign existence as laid down in the treaty of Prague. In this period Bismarck proposed elections throughout all the German states for a gathering of a 'Zollpallament.,' Customs parliament, with view to this extending its jurisdiction over non-commercial questions. At the same time he refused to 'compensate,' Napoleon for French neutrality during the Austro – Prussian War. He rejected the 'hotel – keeper's bill', as he called it. Among other things, he stirred up German national feeling against the idea of ceding Luxemburg to France.

Germany and France – the Luxemburg Question

The key diplomatic questions raised by the events of 1866 were those concerning future German relations with France. In his memoirs, which were published after his fall from office, Bismarck professed to have believed that a conflict with France was an inevitable step along the path to further national unity. In fact, his view at the time was certainly less than that. It was based upon the assumption that Napoleon III could not simply accept the changes of 1866, but was uncertain as to the shape or timing of the Emperor's initiative. 'Napoleon III', he wrote at the time, 'has recently lost more prestige than he can afford. To recover it, he will start a dispute with us on some pretext or other. I do not believe he personally wishes war... but his insecurity will drive him on.'

It does not seem possible any longer that Bismarck trapped or tricked the French Emperor over the Luxemburg question. On the contrary, most recent commentators have agreed that he was quite content to cede the territory and its fortifications to France as the price of placating her and preserving the stability of his new North German creation. What he would not do was to commit himself publicly to that policy at a time when he badly needed the support of the liberal nationalists in the Reichstag. However, the king of Holland would not sell Luxemburg without the specific agreement with Prussia. This ruled out the deal between Bismarck and Napoleon III.

Prussia effectively gained nothing from the international conference (May 1867) that agreed to the neutralization of Luxemburg and the removal of the Prussian garrison. France was not placated, and the strategic position of Germany was not strengthened. Increased unease in the southern states at French ambitions was Bismarck's only consolation. When E. Eyck wrote that 'the Luxemburg affair was the turning point in Bismarck's development from a Prussian to a German statesman, he meant it not in the sense that he had undergone a conscious conversion, but in the sense that he had, for the first time, lost the initiative. He had been carried along further than he wished by a force that he had previously confidently exploited.

The Hohenzollern Candidature

The diplomatic crisis which led to the Franco – Prussian War originated in September 1868, when a revolution in Spain drove the reigning Queen Isabella, out of the country. Then the candidature was taken up by Prince Leopold Von Hohenzollern – Sigmaringen, a member of the Catholic branch of the Prussian ruling house. Bismarck's assertion that he had nothing to do with the affair until the full crisis broke in 1870, had already sent a memorandum to William I arguing the case for the candidature and he subsequently sent his agents to Spain.

The French government argued that a German prince on the Spanish throne would mean the ‘encirclement’ of France. The French played into Bismarck’s hands by demanding that King William not simply repudiate the candidature, but also offers an assurance that he would not authorize a renewal of it. Bismarck then got the chance to snatch, from the Spanish affair, greater advantage than had ever seemed possible. By releasing to the press an edited version of the telegram in which the King reported his conversation with the French ambassador at Bad Ems, the so-called Ems Telegram, which gave the impression of a blunt exchange of diplomatic insults, Bismarck once more took control of the nationalist forces that had served him so well in the past.

William’s refusal to meet the second of the demands from the French, that of an assurance that the candidature will not be renewed, left Napoleon and his ministers with only two ways out of the situation which they had created – either to climb down or to fight. France decided on declaring war on the 19th of July 1870. By the time of the declaration of war, Bismarck had contrived to make it appear that all the blame for the war was French. This allowed him to bring into force the military alliances between Prussia and the South German States. He presented it as a patriotic war in defence of the Fatherland.

The Completion of German Unity

The Franco- Prussian War resulted in the defeat of France.

- i) The French then lost Alsace, most of Lorraine and the fortresses of Strasbourg and Metz. This became a cause of lasting grievance for France.
- ii) France was also to pay an indemnity of five billion francs.
- iii) A German army of occupation was to remain in northern France until it was paid.

With the proclamation of William I as German Emperor in January 1871, Germany emerged as the dominant continental state, a role which France had enjoyed since the seventeenth century. The Empire, which incorporated the southern States, was a federal rather than unitary state. Two other incidental but significant results of the Franco – Prussian War were: -

- i) That Russia stated, and the powers accepted that she would no longer be bound by the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris (1856) and
- ii) Following the withdrawal of the French garrison, Rome was incorporated as the capital of Italy.

Study Guides

- i) Who or what was responsible for the creation of the German Empire in 1871?
- ii) How far was Bismarck responsible for the outbreak of the Franco- Prussian War?
- iii) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the economic interpretation of German unification?
- iv) Why did Prussia rather than Austria become the leader of unification?
- v) Was German unified by “blood and iron.”?
- vi) What aspects of the German Empire of 1871 represent unification and which aspects reflected Prussian domination?

Examination type questions

- 1.How important was nationalism in German unification?
- 2.Did the German state of 1871 represent “Prussianisation” or unification?
- 3.How consistent were Bismarck’s aim and methods during the period 1862 and 1871?
- 4.Why was Bismarck more successful than the liberals in unifying Germany?
- 5.“The statesman knows his general direction but not his exact path.” Consider Bismarck’s policies between 1862 and 1871 in the light of this judgement.
- 6.Why did Bismarck choose to unite Germany by using ‘Blood and iron’?
- 7.Identify and explain the factors which enabled Prussia to become the leading political and economic power in Germany in the 1860?
- 8.How consistent were Bismarck’s aims and methods in the unification of Germany?
- 9.Compare and contrast the methods used by Bismarck and Cavour to deal with Austria’s influence in their respective countries?

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CHAPTER 17

RUSSIAN HISTORY: (1801 – 1914)

Chapter objectives

By the end of the chapter students should be able to:

1. Outline the aims of Alexander I's policies and assess how far he was able to achieve them.
2. Highlight the problems which Nicholas I faced upon his accession to power in 1825.
3. Assess the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855).
4. Discuss whether Nicholas' reign was characterized by incomplete reform
5. Show what opposition Nicholas I faced in Russia.
6. Identify the problems which Alexander II faced upon his enthronement in 1855
 - (i) The German War (1853- 1856)
 - (ii) Serfdom
 - (iii) Industrial backwardness
7. Analyse the aims and methods which Tsar Alexander put in place to end these problems in Russia.
8. Explain the demise of Alexander II in a bomb attack.
9. Assess the achievements of Alexander II.
10. Describe the aims of Nicholas II.
11. Describe and explain the causes and outcomes of the 1905 Revolution.
12. Explain why Tsar Nicholas II survived the 1905 Revolution but not the 1917 Revolution.
13. Analyse the reforms introduced by Nicholas II between 1905 and 1914.

In 1800 Russia was an enormous multi-ethnic empire of incredible backwardness. In many ways Russia had never left the Middle Ages. The bulk of the huge population were serfs, the property of the Russian nobility and still using extraordinarily primitive methods to work the land. Alexander I (1801-1825) ascended the throne in 1801. He was torn between ideas of liberalism which he had acquired in his youth and the traditions of Russia autocracy. He liked the works of Voltaire, Rousseau and other great thinkers of the eighteenth century period enlightenment and

he was sincerely anxious to apply this knowledge to the benefit of Russia. His liberal sentiments lasted up to 1819 when he came strongly under the influence of Metternich. Besides this liberal element in his character, there was also a deeply religious tendency which had been stimulated by the teachings of a Christian mystic, Madame Krudener, who held religious sway for a time at the Russian court.

Liberal Reforms

The appointment of the Permanent Council was one of the most significant reforms of the Tsar. Its duty was to advise him on government business, policy and progressive reforms. The council, also known as the special committee, was mainly represented by younger men who were sympathetic towards Alexander I's liberal ideas and wished to see important changes made in the Russian government. Torture and censorship were abolished through the suppression of the special political police which had been formed before Alexander I came to power. Many exiles were recalled from Siberia and many political prisoners were released. Foreign – published books which had been banned, were allowed to be imported. Three new universities were established and a system of elementary schools was begun. Alexander also approved a law enabling the great landowners to liberate their serfs, and about 50 000 out of nearly 50 million were released from personal bondage to their lords during his reign. Of course this was inadequate effort, but it was at least a recognition that the Tsar was aware of the servitude under which millions of Russian peasants were subjected.

The idea of 'reform from above' progressively faced stiffer resistance from the gentry in Russia. Alexander I himself turned reactionary, especially after 1815, following the fall of Napoleon. Secret societies were forming, dissatisfied with Alexander's failure to live up to his liberal reputation. Rather than make any further concessions, Alexander banned studying abroad and purged the Russia University system. He brought back strict censorship and suppressed secret societies. On the other hand, the possibility of 'reform from below' was at this time remote because the peasantry was ignorant, oppressed and apathetic.

ANALYSIS OF ALEXANDER I's CAREER

Alexander's occasional impulses have not convinced most historians. A typical judgment is that of M Anderson: 'from 1811-1812 onwards the real interests and needs of the empire-social change, administrative reform and economic development, were consistently sacrificed to the Tsar's grandiose and often erratic idealism. By the time of Alexander's death, the social and economic gap between Russia and much of Western Europe, was wider than ever before'. Similarly, from Jack Watson, 'Alexander settled for stagnation. When he died, he left Russia much less as he had found it, with a totter economy, a creaking administration, a feudal society and a Church sunk in medieval ritual and superstition'. (J Watson, Success in European History 1815 – 1941, John Murray, 1981). Perhaps a more balanced view is that Alexander did not suddenly change from being a liberal autocrat to a reactionary: both impulses were present throughout his reign, each coming to the fore at different times. He wanted both change and stability at the same time. Alexander's enigmatic reputation was enhanced by rumours that he had only faked his death in 1825.

NICHOLAS I's REIGN: (1825-1855)

Alexander I's death in December 1825 created uncertainty mainly because he was childless, and it could not be immediately established which of his two brothers would succeed him. Alexander had secretly decreed that his younger brother Nicholas should succeed him after persuading his elder brother Constantine to renounce his claim to the throne in a secret but mutually favourable deal. Nicholas had to suppress the poorly organized revolts, collectively known as the Decembrist Conspiracy. These comprised of two groups:

- The Northern Society, based in St Petersburg and included army officers who favoured a constitutional monarchy under Constantine.
- The better organized Southern Society comprised radicals led by Colonel Paul Pestel. They favoured a republic and an end to serfdom.

Pestel and four other Decembrist leaders were hanged and over 200 rebels exiled. The rebellion had a marked effect on Nicholas I, who was left mistrustful of the aristocracy, many of whom he tried to keep out of office. Its suppression helped to establish Russia's reputation as a bulwark against revolution, generally. However, it also led Nicholas I to consider the causes of dissatisfaction, without convincing him that there was anything essentially wrong with the system of autocracy.

Nicholas I was a religious man who took his duties seriously, although an army background had not prepared him for the role of Tsar. He demanded unswerving obedience and this was reinforced by the secret police. This had been disbanded by Alexander I but it had been reinstated and was known as the Third Section from 1826. Under its leader Alexander Von Beckendorff, it rooted out perceived threats to the autocracy. The army too, supported the efforts of the secret police.

Various bodies were set up: the Second Section in 1826 to codify the laws, the Fourth Section in 1828 to monitor and control education and charitable organizations; the Fifth section in 1836 to reorganize the administration of peasants. Punishment by the knout (whip) was abolished and the auctioning of serfs was outlawed in 1841. State serfs were granted personal freedom in 1838. These were individuals who were owned by the state as opposed to private individuals. However, this did very little to change the situation in Russia. Peasant revolts were actually on the increase during his reign although these were usually curbed by censorship and closely watched by the Third Section. Nicholas set up various commissions to examine serfdom, but nothing effective was done to address the problem because the great serf owners were fearful of the economic and social consequences of fundamental change.

Despite its fearsome reputation, Nicholas' regime failed to eradicate the bribery and corruption endemic in Russia's large bureaucracy. This bureaucracy expanded considerably during his reign and earned the description of this period as 'thirty years of black first'. The basis of the aristocratic system remained intact. The national debt continued to rise, mostly as the result of military expenditure. Nicholas continued to base his rule on three key principles:

- Orthodoxy: – meant emphasizing his divine right to rule, supported by a close alliance with the Church.
- Autocracy:– meant the traditional Russian concept of the all powerful father figure who would protect and isolate them from unsettling ideas.

-Nationality: – meant the promotion of Russian culture, which increasingly came to mean Russification of subject peoples i.e. forcing Russian culture and language on to subject peoples.

Study Guides

- i) How did Alexander I attempt to maintain Russia as a great power during his reign?
- ii) Describe Nicholas I's domestic reforms in Russia. How effective were they?
- iii) How true is the claim that Nicholas I intended to carry out no major reforms as a way of preserving autocracy in Russia?

Russian History (1855-1914)

This section of Russian history involves three Tsars namely Alexander II (1855 – 1881), Alexander III (1881 – 1844) and Nicholas II (1894 – 1917). In each of these, students are expected to analyze both the domestic and foreign policies. This analysis should focus on specific reforms which each of the Tsars introduced.

Alexander II (1855 – 1881)

Alexander took over power during the Crimean War and had to obtain peace and rebuild the Russian forces. Students are expected to identify the problems that were facing Russia when Alexander II took over.

Problems facing Russia when Alexander II took over

- i) Military and administrative inefficiency:- revealed in Russia's performance in the Crimean War (1854 -58). There was need for an overhaul of the armed forces and administration.
- ii) Economic Backwardness:- Russia's problems related to the primitive agricultural system characterized by low yields and the absence of innovation, and by Russia's failure, by western standards, to develop modern heavy industries, Alexander II, not a reformer by conviction, had come to the conclusion that it was the institution of peasant serfdom which prevented changes in agriculture and frustrated the labour mobility which could lead to industrial growth.

Alexander II's Domestic Reforms

Alexander II's reforming period is spread over 10 years, after which he reverted to repressive policies on the same line as his father, Nicholas I. His reforms covered a wide range of issues, such as economic, social, military and political reforms.

(a)Edict of Emancipation – (1861)

Alexander II's greatest reform was the 1861 Edict of Emancipation which set free about 40 million serfs, who received a portion of the landlords' estates in a move financed by the government, but based on loans to be repaid by the new peasantry over 49 years. These were called the redemption payments.

Assessment of the Emancipation Edict

Alexander II has earned himself the title of "Tsar Liberator" because of his Emancipation Edict. However, whether or not he deserves that description has been a subject of scholarly debate. If serfdom is looked at from a peasant's point of view, then Alexander II's reform did little to resolve their problems, which were ones of survival. This is because of the following points: -

- i) Domestic serfs received no land and were as dependant on the nobility for a living as ever.

ii) The landed serfs received less land from emancipation than they had been in possession of before. This was especially so in the fertile southern grain areas. Elsewhere, they received land of a poorer quality than retained by the nobles.

iii) They found themselves saddled with high redemption payments and, with the land organized by the mir (village community), were often prevented from leaving because of their unpaid debt. The end of serfdom did not lead to any dramatic transformation of Russian agriculture. The free land was supervised by the mir and village custom ensured that innovation was slow to occur. The land remained organized on a strip system, often with periodic redistribution of holdings, and was left fallow for one year in three. There was no great increase in output and no growth of a prosperous peasantry on west European models. The obstacles put in the way of peasant mobility by the mir meant that there was little increase in labour mobility. Although industry continued to develop, there is no evidence that emancipation proved a great stimulus to economic development.

(b)Local Government Reform (1864)

Emancipation of the serfs removed much of the power structure of rural Russia and in 1864 led to the creation of district and provincial zemstva (locally elected assemblies) to provide a system of local government through elected councils. They were not democratic bodies, and the Tsar's police remained responsible for law and order. However they also did meaningful work. For example: -

- i) They trebled the number of elementary schools from the 8 000 at the beginning of Alexander II's reign.
- ii) They also contributed to the provision of hospitals, prisons poor relief and sanitation. The Zemstva provided the first step towards the establishment of a modern administrative framework.

(c)Legal Reform

The reform of the legal code introduced jury trials, less severe punishments and less bribery of judges. It made the law less corrupt but it did little to protect the individual from the arbitrary power of the state. The Tsars, had in any case never seen this as a problem which required attention.

(d)Military Reforms

The military were quite a different matter and in the aftermath of the Crimean defeat, the war Minister Milyutin, carried out extensive reorganization of the General Staff, of officer training and recruiting. Most importantly, he applied the principle of conscription to all classes of society. The army remained a major cost on the state as it was far too large and exerted too much influence over policy. Despite the work of Milyutin, Russia's defences continued to rely on numbers rather than military efficiency. Its defeats at the hands of the Japanese in between 1904-1905 were as humiliating as those, half a century earlier.

Overall Assessment

Russia in 1855 was so backward that change could not come quickly. Its economic problems in particular had no immediate remedy. Alexander's reforms laid the basis for a transformation of society but only the basis and the provision of an efficient local administration to tackle social problems would take decades of development. Economic innovation in backward peasant

agriculture would inevitably make slow progress. Above all, none of the Tsar's reforms did anything to reduce his own autocratic power or the vast influence of the reactionary Orthodox Church.

-Problems therefore had still to be tackled from the top because no independent reforming initiatives could be tolerated. Once Alexander II lost the will to reform, then the problems were allowed to stagnate again. The great reforms of the 1860s were never built upon because the Tsars were more anxious as they retain autocracy than they were to modernize Russia.

Repressive Measures:

The Poles rebelled in 1863 and this provided the excuse for repression which was in full swing within a year or so. The national aspirations of non- Russians become a particular target for oppression. After an assassination on him in 1866, Alexander II's grip on potential dissidents tightened. Press censorship became more restrictive and juries were discarded in political trials. The repression was however inefficient and opposition survived and grew, notably the Narodniks and anarchist groups like the Nchilists. In 1881, the assassinations were at last successful. By that date, Alexander II's reputation as a reformer, the "Tsar Liberator", had somewhat been tarnished by his later repressive policies.

Alexander III (1881 – 1894)

It is very unlikely that a student will face a question on Alexander III alone but the continuation and indeed increased rigour of repression did set the scene for the more important reign of Nicholas II. Alexander III's chief service to Russia was in 1892, when he appointed Sergei Witte as Finance Minister and he, in the next reign did much to strengthen the economy. Alexander III rejected all suggestions for political reform and the reign contained no worthwhile social reform. Repression was its keynote and it is worth noting that the first Marxist group appeared in Russia at this time.

A Period Reaction

Alexander III passed the following repressive measures:

- i) The zemstvas came under attack. In 1889 their contact with the peasants and the Justices of the Peace, were abolished and replaced by a Land Commandant who had to be a noble.
- ii) The universities were brought under the control of inspectors once more in 1884
- iii) Censorship was increased.
- i) All other nationalities in the tsarist empire were subjected to Russification. The first programme was in 1881.
- ii) All political parties in opposition to the regime were banned.

The regime, especially the Ministry of the Interior, followed a very paternalist path in the interests of preserving the traditional social hierarchy. This can be seen in the following measures: -

- i) No attempt was made to abolish communal tenure, in spite of arguments from the Ministry of Finance, because Tolstoy at the ministry of the interior felt it was a major agent of social peace, and thus loyalty to the regime among the peasants.

ii) Education - similar arguments justified the refusal to institute a classless educational system. In secondary education, the raising of fees to keep out lower class pupils in 1887, had the result that there were fewer pupils at this level in 1895 than there had been in 1882. At the elementary level, education was left to the Church. By 1900, only a quarter of the population was literate.

Study Guides

- i) What problems did Alexander II face when he came to power in 1855?
- ii) What did Alexander II aim to achieve by introducing the Emancipation Edict of 1861?
- iii) Who benefitted and who lost in Alexander II's reforms?
- iv) In what ways did Alexander II's reforms reinforce conservative rule?
- v) Why was Alexander II assassinated?
- vi) Evaluate the reforms of Tsar Alexander in Russia.
- vii) Did Alexander II achieve anything at all during his reign in Russia?
- viii) Why was Alexander II's rule so repressive?

Nicholas II (1894 – 1914)

Nicholas was committed to his father's policies of repressive preservation of the autocracy. The early years of the reign saw the development of a number of opposition groups who played significant parts in later events. The major opposition groups included the following: - the Socialist Revolutionaries 1901, the western democratic style Cadets 1903, and the Marxist Social Democrats 1903.

- i) The Social Revolutionaries (1901) – they represented a new sort of populism. Their first priority was the redistribution of land to the peasants.
- ii) The Cadets (Liberals 1903)
Their main aim was to create a liberal democratic constitutional government, which could match Russia's newly emerging society.
- i) The Social Democrats (1903)
They voiced the growing frustration of the new urban proletariat through the language of Marxism. Therefore most sections of Russian society were in opposition to the state except the noble dam bureaucrats, the state dependant industrialists and the Army.
The Russo – Japanese war (1904 – 05) – Russia's defeat by Japan in the Russo – Japanese war (1904 – 05) caused massive upheaval in Russia.

The 1905 Revolution

The elements in the 1905 Revolution

There were really four uprisings involved.

- i) The rising of the national minorities against Russification, especially in Poland and the Baltic provinces, coupled with demands for political and economic reforms.
- ii) The seizure by the peasants of what they saw as their land, i.e nobles; church and state lands due to the pressure of over – population.
- iii) The rising of the urban proletariat – through illegal strikes and demonstrations against their employers and the autocracy.

iv) A campaign by the Union of Liberation based on the French banquet campaign of 1848 to force the regime to liberalize.

The Bloody Sunday

- On 9 January, workers demonstrating against conditions were fired on by troops outside the Winter Palace. This incident became known as the 'Bloody Sunday'. Bloody Sunday was a tremendous blow to the Tsar's prestige. This was followed by mass strikes in Moscow and St Petersburg. There were also peasant uprisings and mutiny on the battleship Potemkin. In October of 1905 – there was a general strike. The regime was now paralyzed. The first ever workers' soviet was set up in St Petersburg in October 1905.

The October Manifesto

The disorders of 1905 were so great that the Tsar issued the October Manifesto setting up a national Duma on a liberal basis with a wide franchise and extensive powers in approving laws and safeguarding the rule of law. This was based on the advice from Witte who became chief Minister. It succeeded in dividing the Tsar's opponents and the Cadet Party was prepared to work within the new constitution. The workers' Soviets, which were set up in cities, and the peasant uprisings, could now be crushed by the armed forces, which on this occasion had remained overwhelmingly loyal.

Economic and Social Policy

The two key figures responsible for economic and social policy were Sergei Witte (1892 – 1903) and Stolypin (1906 – 1911). Witte was influential in economic policy, while Stolypin focused mostly on agronomic reform. Their policies can be summarized in the following data on industry and agriculture.

(a) Industry

A protective tariff was introduced in 1891, and behind it, industrial output doubled by 1900, and continued to grow more slowly after 1900.

(i) Railway development in the 1890s proved a stimulus to the coal and iron industries.

(ii) 16 million tones of coal were mined in 1900 and 35 million by 1913.

(iii) Production of pig iron rose from 3 million tons in 1900 to over 4 million in 1913.

(iv) Most industry was around the great cities of European Russia.

(v) Oil production, in which Russia led the World in 1900, remained static between 1900 and 1913.

(vi) Gross output totals lagged far behind that of countries like Britain and the USA.

(vii) There were 30 000 kms of rail track in 1890 and 75 000 prior to outbreak of War 1 in 1914.

(b)Agriculture

(i) Progress in agriculture was disappointing both in terms of re-organization and output despite Stolypin's reforms.

(ii) Grain production fluctuated with changes in weather patterns.

(iii) Distribution was hampered by limited transport.

- (iv) There was a record harvest in 1913, with the growth of larger farms and some co-operative production.
- (v) Neither the policies of Witte and Stolypin were able to push the surplus rural population into urban industry.

Study Guides

- i) Did Nicholas II have any more objective than to continue with repressive rule?
- ii) What was achieved by the 1905 Revolution?
- iii) How did the reforms introduced between 1905 and 1914 help to consolidate Nicholas II's reign in Russia?
- iv) How did the outbreak of World War I help to change the political situation in Russia?
- v) Why did Nicholas II abdicate the throne in Russia?
- vi) Why was Nicholas II the last Tsar in Russia?
- vii) Why did Nicholas II survive the 1905 Revolution but was overthrown in 1917?

Examination type questions

1. Why and with what results did Tsar Alexander II introduce reforms in Russia in 1861?
2. How far was Tsar Alexander II the "Liberator" of Russia?
3. To what extent can the reign of Tsar Nicholas II be described as 'repressive and reactionary'?
4. Critically examine the roles of Witte and Stolypin in the economic development of Russia between 1881 and 1914.

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CHAPTER 18

BISMARCK'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES AFTER 1871

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter students should be able to:

DOMESTIC

1. Describe the problems faced by Bismarck at home in the following areas:
 - a) Kultarkumpf
 - b) Catholic Church
 - c) Catholic Centre Party
 - d) Constitution
 - e) Socialists
 - f) Social Democrats
2. Describe and explain how Bismarck dealt with any or all of the above groups.
3. Evaluate how successful Bismarck was in his domestic policies

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. Explain the aims of Bismarck's foreign policy
2. Assess Bismarck's involvement the Eastern Question in the following areas (a) The handling of issues at the Berlin Congress
 - (b) The Dual Alliance
 - (c) The Triple Alliance
 - (d) The Mediterranean Agreements (1887)
 - (e) Reinsurance Treaty, 1887
 - (f) Dismissal by Kaiser Wilhelm II.

STUDY GUIDES- DOMESTIC POLICES

- 1.To what extent did the German Constitution provide for democratic or representative government?
- 2.Why did Bismarck introduce the Kulturkampf and how successful was it?
- 3.Why did Bismarck introduce protectionism and abandon the Liberals?
- 4.How do you account for the growth of socialism and how did Bismarck respond to it?
- 5.For what reasons did Bismarck oppose the Roman Catholic Church and the Social Democratic Party? How far was he successful in his aims?
- 6.Describe the main points of the constitution of the German Empire of 1871.

Bismarck's contribution to German history before and after 1871 is an important part of the 'A' level syllabus. Almost every examination on European history will have a question on Bismarck. In this chapter, the main focus will be on his post-1871 contribution to German history, and indeed to European history in general. The Bismarckian era spans from 1871 to 1890. After 1890, German affairs fell into different hands. The post-1890 foreign policies will also be examined, with Kaiser William II as the main force behind them. Candidates will be expected to be able to compare and contrast German foreign policy before and after 1890.

Bismarck's domestic Policy

The major issues to discuss here are Bismarck's relations with the liberals, the Roman Catholic Church and the Socialists.

Bismarck and the Roman Catholic Church

Bismarck's struggle against the Catholic Church is popularly known as the Kulturkampf. The church, under Pope Pius IX, had turned its face implacably against progress, liberation and modern culture. The syllabus Errorum had included liberty of conscience, secular education, civil marriage and divorce, principles regarded as essential and fundamental for modern society by modern and progressive and liberal-minded people such as the National Liberals. In 1870 Pius went further and at a great ecumenical council ("Vatican I") he, his successors and predecessors, were proclaimed "infallible". Bismarck was not especially deviant, but his Lutheran convictions were sufficiently sensitive to be disturbed by Papal infallibility. He also had some grounds for believing that it might represent the beginnings of an attempt by the Roman Church to reverse the political verdicts of 1866 and 1870, when the powers with which it was associated were defeated.

But when all is said and done, the main reason for Bismarck's hostility to the Catholic Church was an idea that loyalty to it strengthened separatist tendencies within the empire. About a third of the population of the Reich looked to the Pope and Rome rather than to the emperor and Berlin. Therefore, anything that might weaken the influence of Catholicism should be attempted. At the same time, the Kulturkampf was a response to the demands of foreign policy. An attack on the Roman Catholic Church would please the Tsar of Russia, an Orthodox Christian ruler at loggerheads with his own Catholic Polish subjects. Less important, though worthwhile, it would please the nationalist government of newly united Italy, which was on bad terms with the Pope. The Kulturkampf was characterised by the following measures:

- (i) The closure of the separate department of the Prussian government which dealt with Catholic affairs.

- (ii) The imprisonment of an ecclesiastic whose sermons and utterances endangered the public peace, therefore were critical of government policy.
- (iii) The following year, (1872), saw the expulsion of the Jesuits and other orders from Germany.
- (iv) In 1875, a civil ceremony, the minimum requirement for legal recognition of a marriage was insisted upon throughout the empire.

These measures spread the struggle from Prussia to the rest of Germany and aroused great bitterness, but the situation was especially bad in Prussia where the enactment of the May Laws of 1873, 1874 and 1875 had transformed the struggle from a bid to gain control of Catholic Schools to an assault upon the independence of the church itself. The Prussian May Laws, in summary, passed the following measures:

- (a) Spread prologues enjoyed by the Catholic Church were revoked by the Prussian constitution.
- (b) All ecclesiastics in Germany had to be German citizens
- (c) All theology students had to take a Germany university course.
- (d) Candidates for the ministry could not be ordained without having demonstrated that they were loyal citizens.
- (e) Seminaries were subjected to inspection.
- (f) State approval was required for all church appointments.
- (g) The enforcement of church discipline was confined to German church authorities, and a royal court was established in Berlin to hear ecclesiastical cases.

The May Laws were the manifest work of Adalbert Falk, the Prussian minister of education and a prominent liberal. Though he enjoyed Bismarck's full support, the Kulturkampf resulted in a defeat for the chancellor, who was to learn that not necessarily the blood of the martyrs but merely the acute discomfort of the believers could be said of the Church. The Kulturkampf actually led to an increase in the number of seats won by the Catholic Centre Party from 58 to 90 in the 1874 election. By 1878, when the party won 2 more seats, Bismarck realized that the Kulturkampf was futile. Thus, on the whole, although the Kulturkampf resulted in a compromise, in essence, it was a defeat for Bismarck.

Bismarck and the Liberals

The liberals were his allies in 1871 because they supported the creation of a unified empire. However, he moved away from them in 1879 when he favoured protectionism and the Junker agricultural interests. In fact, in the late 1870s, economic considerations were making the alliance between Bismarck and the liberals obsolete if not embarrassing. It had become clear that the free-trade policy of the liberals would have to be abandoned. Ultimately, Bismarck, basing his conclusions on his own experiences rather than on economic theory, became convinced that it would be better for Germany, if industry, agriculture and labour were protected against foreign competition. But there was another reason, the most compelling of all, that protection meant custom duties which would be paid direct to the government, and so make Bismarck financially independent of the Reichstag, National pride was also at stake. Most European states were pursuing protective policies, and so Germany could not be an exception. The result was a distinct shift in the source of Bismarck's support, away from the National Liberals, who favoured free trade, towards the conservatives. Bismarck showed some inconsistency in his dealings with the liberals.

Bismarck's struggle against socialism

The late 1870s, apart from witnessing Bismarck's conversion to protectionism, also saw the growing menace of socialism. Bismarck was alarmed at the growth of socialism. Bismarck believed, mistakenly, but firmly, that the Social Democratic Party was genuinely Marxist and, as such, a serious threat to the existing order. Therefore, it was to be destroyed and the Exception Law, first passed in 1878 and renewed annually until 1890, made the party and its newspapers illegal, just as well as all other organizations and publications of a socialistic or communistic nature. The social Democratic Party, however, held regular meetings abroad, its membership increased steadily and its newspapers and pamphlets were smuggled into the country. In 1890, it became apparent that support for it had trebled. In short, Bismarck's anti – socialist measures had much the same effect as his anti – Catholic ones. They stimulated rather than weakened it.

What may have initially seemed more effective were his attempts to discount socialism by providing all that it ostensibly demanded, and more, except of course any real share of power. Again, as in the Kulturkampf, Bismarck's social legislation was to some extent motivated by genuine humanitarian concern. By 1889, the workers were secure in their enjoyment of compulsory sick insurance, compulsory accident insurance, and compulsory old – age and invalid insurance. Thus, in his struggle against the socialists, Bismarck's efforts effectively ended in failure because they failed to stop the growth of the movement. Therefore, students should be ready to assess Bismarck's efforts in dealing with the three groups discussed above.

Study Guides

- i) To what extent did the Germany constitution provide for democratic or representative government?
- ii) Why did Bismarck introduce the Kulturkampf and how successful was it?
- iii) Why did Bismarck introduce protectionism and abandon the Liberals?
- iv) How do you account for the growth of socialism and how did Bismarck respond to it?
- v) For what reasons did Bismarck oppose the Roman Catholic Church and the Social Democratic Party? How far was he successful in his aims?
- vi) Describe the main points of the constitution of the Germany Empire of 1871?

BISMARCK'S FOREIGN POLICY: (1871-1890)

What were Bismarck's aims in foreign policy?

Germany's triumph over France in 1871, following her earlier victory over Denmark and Austria, made her the strongest military power on the continent. It also upset the existing balance of power in Europe. As a result of this, there was considerable fear and suspicion that the new German Empire might continue to pursue an aggressive foreign policy. However, Bismarck had achieved his aim of a Prussian- dominated German state; his main objective now was the security of the German Empire. The best guarantee of this was to ensure that Europe remained at peace.

The two possible threats to peace were a French war of revenge and an Austro – Russian conflict arising in the Balkans. France, without allies, did not pose a serious danger: Bismarck was confident that the German army could defeat her again, if necessary. But it was Germany's position in Europe, sandwiched between an aggrieved France in the west, and an expansionist Russia in the east, which made her peculiarly vulnerable to a war on two fronts. The possibility

of an alliance between France and either Russia or Austria-Hungary constituted a real threat to Germany's security.

Bismarck's solution to such a two-folded problem was to try to isolate France and to reduce friction between Austria-Hungary and Russia over the Balkans, where their interests were often at conflict. In practice, this meant that he encouraged the other Great Powers (France excluded) to feel dependent on Germany's goodwill and sought to neutralize their differences that way. Bismarck's diplomacy was therefore a delicate balancing act: he wished to keep rivalries simmering, but to prevent them boiling over. In this way, Europe would remain dependent on Bismarck for peaceful solutions.

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In 1871, Bismarck's immediate concern was to reassure the leaders of Europe that he was now genuinely a man of peace. This was made through diplomatic contacts between the German Kaiser, the Habsburg Emperor and the Tsar of Russia in the summer of 1871. The outcome of these monarchical gatherings was the Three Emperors League (Dreikaiserbund) of October 1873, initially an Austro-Russian treaty to which the Kaiser later gave his blessing. Although this Agreement was not of Bismarck's making, it suited his purposes well enough. Although the content of the Dreikaiserbund was somewhat vague, it expressed the desire of the three Emperors to stand together in the interests of monarchical solidarity against the threats of republicanism and socialism. They also wished to reduce the risks of war arising from Austro-Russian differences. Hence the promise to consult together so that these divergences could not take precedence over considerations of a higher order." that is, peace and stability.

The Near East Crisis: (1875-1878) Why did events in the Balkans lead to a Crisis between the Great Powers?

The Eastern Crisis began in 1875 with a rising against Turkish misgovernment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The long standing hatred of Christian peasants towards the oppressive rule of Muslim landowners was heightened by grievances over taxation and labour services. In 1876, the revolt spread to Bulgaria, then still part of the Ottoman Empire. Serbia and Montenegro supported the rebellion against Turkish authority.

This reopening of the Eastern Question presented Bismarck with a major test of his statesmanship. Determined to avoid taking sides between his Dreikaiserbund partners, he had somehow to convince both Vienna and St Petersburg (Russia) of Germany's goodwill. If he failed, either Austria-Hungary or Russia might seek support from France. There was no simple solution to the problem of conflicting Austro-Russian interests in the Balkans. From Austria point of view, the main danger lay in Russian encouragement of Slav nationalism. This was not only a threat to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, in whose survival Austria-Hungary had a vested interest, but it also threatened the stability of the multinational Hapsburg Empire. In the case of Russia, the temptation to "fish in the troubled waters," in the hope of further weakening Turkey was hard to resist. In addition, Russia, as the leader of the Orthodox Church, was under moral obligation to aid the Christian Slavs if their Muslim Turkish rulers treated them too oppressively. Hence, Germany had good reasons to be anxious at this crisis in Austro-Russian relations.

Bismarck's options were limited. He himself was prepared to consider the partition of the Ottoman Empire, but that was an option neither Austria-Hungary nor Russia was willing to accept. If he threw his weight behind Austria, Russia might then be driven into the arms of France. On the other hand, if he supported Russia, this might well boost Slav nationalism and lead to the breakup of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. Hence he at first adopted a 'low profile' approach, encouraging the Austrians and Russians to find an agreed solution.

At this stage both Austria and Russia were sticking to the spirit of the Dreikaiserbund. Admittedly each side sought to extract some advantage for themselves from the situation, but neither wanted to accelerate the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Gorchakov the ageing and conservative Russian foreign minister recognized that Turkey's fate concerned all the Great powers and favoured caution. Andrassy, the Austrian foreign minister, aware that German military support was unlikely in the event of a clash with Russia, attempted to collaborate with the Russians. Their willingness to search for a peaceful solution to the crisis was therefore a great relief to Bismarck. The German Chancellor also encouraged Britain to play an active role in opposing Russia. "England should entirely take the lead in the Eastern question", as Bismarck suggested, so as to reduce tension between his partners in the Dreikaiserbund. It was a role which Britain was willing to fill due to her suspicion that Russia would interfere with British trading posts in the Mediterranean and Constantinople. However, no quick solution was found.

In 1876, a new and more dangerous stage in the crisis was reached. The "Bulgarian Atrocities" worsened the Eastern Question. The Turks allegedly massacred over 10 000 Bulgarians. Public opinion was stirred in Britain and also in Russia. In Britain the Liberals campaigned against Turkey and temporarily warned the relations between Britain and Russia. In Russia, on the other hand, the sufferings of the Balkan Christians enflamed Pan-Slavist feelings to such an extent that the Russian government came under pressure to intervene. By 1877, the situation had grown worse: the Serbs and Montenegrins were facing defeat and Bulgars were subjected to force reprisals by the Turks. Hence in April 1877, Russia declared war on Turkey and by January 1878 Russia had undoubtedly won the war. They proceeded to impose a severe treaty on the Turks in the Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878. European Turkey was to be reduced to small unconnected territories by the creation of a Greater Bulgaria, under Russian occupation for two years, while Russia herself made some useful territorial gains.

These terms confirmed the worst fears of Andrassy, Austria's foreign minister. The Russians have played us false," he complained. The attitude of Germany and Britain was crucial in persuading the Russians to revise the peace treaty. Bismarck now offered to resolve the dispute as an "honest broker", meaning that he would not take sides in the dispute. The British troops on the other hand, were summoned from India and the fleet was dispatched to Turkish waters, ready to sail into the Black Sea. Faced with Austro-British hostility and the threat of war, Russia agreed to a revision of the Treaty of San Stefano at an international conference to be held in Berlin in the summer of 1878.

THE BERLIN CONGRESS, 1878

What was achieved by the Berlin Congress (1878?)

a) The Terms of the Settlement

Before the Congress met, a lot of preparatory work had already been done. The Russians agreed to the reduction of Greater Bulgaria in return for the gains elsewhere. The Sultan promised to introduce reforms within the Ottoman Empire and to cede Cyprus to Britain in exchange for a guarantee of his dominions in Turkey. Britain also agreed to back Austrian Hungary's claim to occupy Bosnia. Despite these preliminary accords, the Congress of the Great Powers which met in Berlin in June-July 1878 was not all plain sailing.

The most problematic issue was the division of Greater Bulgaria. The Russian attempt to resist its partition, despite their earlier agreement, clashed with Britain's determination to limit the size of a Russian-dominated state. The Russian delegates only gave way when Disraeli threatened to pull out of the settlement. As a result, Greater Bulgaria was divided into three parts: the northern part: Bulgaria was granted complete independence but under Russian supervision. To the south a province named Eastern Rumelia: to emphasize its separate existence was to have a form of self-government under Turkish control. The third part, called Macedonia, was returned to Turkish rule.

A number of other issues were decided in favour of the interests of the Great Powers. Russia recovered Bessarabia, which she had lost to Rumania in 1856 after the Crimean War. She also acquired Batum, a valuable port on the eastern edge of the Black Sea from Turkey. The Turks objected strongly to the loss of Bosnia to the Austrians and were reluctant to cede Cyprus to Britain, but their protests were ignored. Russian objections were also ignored when Britain claimed the right (with the Sultan's assent), to send warships into the Black Sea whenever she judged it necessary. France, who had played a minor role during the crisis, made no territorial gains in 1878, but was encouraged to seek compensation in Tunisia- still under the limited control of the Sultan of Turkey.

The Congress of Berlin re-asserted the idea that the fate of Turkey was a matter of concern to all the Great Powers and could not be decided unilaterally, as Russia had attempted to do in the Treaty of San Stephano, now described by one Russian diplomat as "the greatest act of stupidity that we could have committed."

b)The significance of the settlement

Most historians regard the Treaty of Berlin as only a temporary and limited solution of the Eastern question. On the positive side, it can be said to have checked Russian domination of the Balkans, and that it was without a war amongst the Great Powers. The Sultan was also obliged to treat his Christian subjects more gently-for a time at least. This apart, it is hard to understand what the Congress really settled. The separation of Eastern Rumelia from Bulgaria was reversed within a decade, causing another crisis among the powers between 1885 and 1888; and Macedonia, restored to Turkish rule, became a source of constant unrest in later decades. Austrian rule in Bosnia had to be enforced by military action since it was bitterly resented by both the Turks and the Serbs. The outright annexation of the province in 1908 also caused a major crisis. The Sultan evaded implementing serious reforms in Asia Minor, which became the scene of new massacres in the 1890s.

Some historians suggest that the Great Powers' neglect of the ambitions and claims of the smaller Balkan states were a major weakness of the Treaty of Berlin. Although Serbia, Rumania and Montenegro became fully independent states, their territorial gains were quite small. They continued to cause tension in the region. In short, the great weakness of the Berlin settlement was that it shelved, rather than solved, most of the problems that it dealt with.

Bismarck was not to blame for this. In the course of the crisis, he had advocated partition of the Ottoman Empire as the best solution. He favoured an east-west division of the Balkans between Russia and Austria-Hungary. In addition, Britain was to take Egypt, while France would have Tunisia. When much of this scheme failed, his main concern then was to ensure that Britain, not Austria-Hungary, took the lead in opposing Russia. The British certainly had the sea power which was great enough to restrain Russian aggression and expansionist motives.

The Congress of Berlin was certainly a sign of Germany's new power and influence in Europe. Bismarck's prestige as a statesman was also at its height. The power most pleased with the Treaty of Berlin was undoubtedly Britain. Important British interests in the Mediterranean, especially her naval influence, had been safeguarded and she had acquired Cyprus as a base to enable her to resist Russian expansion in Asia Minor. She had even obtained the right to send warships into the Black Sea whenever she judged it necessary. The Russian influence and threat on Constantinople had been checked by Britain's preservation of a good deal of Ottoman power. In addition, British co-operation with Austria-Hungary had produced useful results, so that the unity of the Dreikaiserbund had been broken. It was this last point which caused Bismarck most concern.

THE MAKING OF THE ALLIANCE SYSTEM (1879-1884)

Why did Bismarck set up an Alliance System?

In What ways did it increase German Security?

1878 marked a turning point in Bismarck's foreign policy. Faced with Russia's hostility and fearing the creation of an anti-German coalition, he changed his approach. From now on, he tended to seize the initiative and attempt to influence the events in order to ensure Germany's security. This led to the creation of the Bismarckian alliance system.

Bismarck's anxieties for Germany's security were much increased by the Congress of Berlin. The Tsar regarded the Congress as "a European coalition against Russia under the leadership of prince Bismarck." Austria-Hungary was co-operating closely with Britain to enforce the terms of the treaty on the Turks and the Russians. This left Germany rather on her own and exposed to the full blast of Russian hostility.

a) The dual alliance, (1879)

In 1878-79, it seemed to Bismarck, that Germany was presented with a stark choice of either to accept the continuing hostility of Russia or form an alliance with her. He was unwilling to choose the latter, since that would alienate Austria-Hungary. The desire for good relations with Russia, he insisted, "could not extend so far that German policy is permanently subordinated to Russian policy and that we sacrifice our relationship with Austria for Russia's sake." Hence he put out feelers for an alliance with Austria-Hungary, which was later signed on 7 October 1879.

Terms

-Should one power be attacked by Russia, the other would come to its rescue with the whole war strength and military force

-If one of the two Empires were attacked by a third power, the other would adopt a neutral but friendly attitude.

-The Treaty, in the first instance, would last for five years but could be renewed.

-It was secret, but in the event of Russian threats, its key contents would be leaked to the Tsar to deter him from taking any further action.

-This treaty has often been called a landmark because it was not concluded as a prelude to some specific action; and because it lasted long and its terms remained secret. It bred suspicion among the Great Powers and they soon negotiated similar treaties of their own. Eventually Europe was divided into leagues and counter-leagues.

-Some historians, however, saw the alliance as re-establishing close relations between Vienna and Berlin as a logical completion of the German-Austria relationship which began in the 1860s. This was certainly Bismarck's thinking, but he had also come to the conclusion that it was in Germany's interests to see Austria survive as a Great Power to balance Russia. The Dual Alliance gave Germany considerable influence over Austrian foreign policy, which would enable Bismarck in a crisis, to moderate it so that it did not provoke an unnecessary war with Russia.

B) The alliance of the three emperors, (1881)

The Russians viewed with suspicion the growing co-operation between Austria, Germany and Britain. Their obvious move was to negotiate an alliance with France, but France could provide Russia with little effective help in the Balkans. Influential officials in St Petersburg, such as Saburov and Giers, consequently advised the Tsar urgently to improve Russo-German relations. In the Autumn of 1879, Saburov was sent to Berlin to discuss a possible agreement. Bismarck was ready to consider some sort of revival of the Three Emperors League which would open the way up to better relations between Russia and Germany and continue to keep France isolated. Once Disraeli had been defeated in a general election of April 1880, British foreign policy became less aggressive and the prospect of a joint Anglo-Austrian action against Russia became less likely. The Austrians therefore came round to Bismarck's proposal for an agreement with Russia and the Three Emperors Alliance was signed on 18 June 1881. Its main terms were:

-Austria and Germany agreed that the Straits should be closed to the warships of all nations. This stopped the threat of Britain sending its navy into the Black Sea and greatly strengthened Russian's position.

-Austria agreed to the eventual reunification of Bulgaria, while Russia agreed that at some time in the future, Austria would be able to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina.

-If a member of the Alliance found itself at war with a fourth power, unless it were Turkey, the other two powers would remain neutral.

-There were to be no further territorial changes in the European possessions of the Turkish Empire without the consent of the three Empires.

-The Treaty was, in the first instance, to last three years.

-Although the Treaty provided no long-term solution to Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans, it did at least temporarily reduce the friction between Austria and Russia.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE, 1882

Despite the Three Emperors Alliance, Russian foreign policy particularly towards Germany remained unpredictable. The new Tsar, Alexander III received conflicting advice. The Russian Pan-Slav leaders were beginning to make contacts with the French. In fact, a leading Pan-Slav general in Paris in early 1882, was campaigning for a Franco-Russian alliance. This new trend alarmed Bismarck. Consequently, when Italy, angered by the French occupation of Tunisia, which it regarded as its sphere of influence, proposed in 1882, an alliance with Austria, Bismarck immediately suggested extending it into the Triple Alliance, and agreed to the following terms:

-Both Austria and Germany were now committed to support Italy in the unlikely chance of an attack from France.

-Italy, in turn, would help Austria and Germany only if they were attacked by two other powers, (France and Russia)

-The real gain for Germany from the agreement was that Austria was now freed from the threat of an Italian attack should war break out with Russia. Austria's position was further strengthened by an alliance with Serbia in June 1882 and with Romania in 1883, which Germany joined and tuned into a defensive alliance against Russia.

-Furthermore, by both countries refusing demands from German farmers for further rises in tariffs which would damage Russian trade and by encouraging German banks to finance Russian loans, he also successfully managed to strengthen the hand of co-operation between Berlin and St. Petersburg.

-As a result of this, Bismarck was able to renew the Three Emperors Treaty. The years 1882 to 1887 therefore marked the zenith of the Bismarck system, when Bismarck could feel confident that Germany's position in Europe was quite secure. This allowed him to indulge in the luxury of colonial ventures in which he could even seek French co-operation against Britain in Africa.

The Bismarckian System Under Pressure: (1885- 1890)

a) Renewed Bulgarian Problems

In 1885 a revolt broke out in eastern Rumelia, in favour of union with Bulgaria. This demand contravened the Treaty of Berlin (1878) which, at Britain's insistence, had deliberately divided the two provinces. Britain, assuming that Russia would dominate Bulgaria, had wished the Bulgarian state to be as small as possible. However, the Bulgarians had shown open resentment to the Russians who intended to treat them as a satellite state. As a result, the Bulgarians expelled all Russian officials. The Prince of Bulgaria accepted the demands of the movement for unity and this naturally angered the Tsar even further.

At a meeting of the representatives of the Great Powers, the Russians condemned the revolt as a violation of the Treaty of Berlin. Germany and Austria-Hungary supported their member of the Three Emperors' alliance. But the British now viewed it differently. An enlarged and independent Bulgaria would better check Russian influence in the Balkans. France and Italy

backed this proposal. The Tsar, however, forced the Prince of Bulgaria to abdicate when it seemed possible that Russian forces would invade Austria- Hungary warned Russians against any further interference in Bulgaria even though Germany would not support her.

Bismarck made clear his refusal to take sides in this dispute in a statement to the Reichstag in early 1887: “It is a matter of complete indifference for Germany who rules in Bulgaria and what becomes of her.” This statement of neutrality did not satisfy the Tsar, however, refused to renew the Dreikaiserbund which now ended.

-Bismarck feared that unless, he made a positive gesture towards Russia, the Tsar might yield to Pan-slavic pressure for an alliance with France. He therefore decided to take a bold step by proposing a Russo- German alliance.

b) The reinsurance treaty, 18 June 1887

By the terms of this treaty, Germany recognized Russia’s right to an increased influence in Bulgaria. She also agreed to Russian control of the straits if her security required it. If either power was at war, the other would remain neutral-unless France or Austria-Hungary was the object of attack. This provision was extremely important. The Russians had demanded a free hand to attack Austria-Hungary, but Bismarck refused to give it to them. In return, Germany forfeited the free hand to attack France which she had enjoyed under the 1881 alliance.

Bismarck paid such a price for the Russian friendship that he was prepared to contravene in spirit, if not the letter, of the Austro-German dual Alliance of 1879. That Alliance, after all, was directed specifically, against Russia.

-Furthermore, he let it be known, unofficially, that he had “absolutely nothing against Russia going as far as Constantinople and taking the Dardanelles.” This was a dangerous game! Russia would clash with Austria-Hungary and Britain.

Bismarck’s fears for Germany’s security had grown considerably in late 1886 and early 1887. Russia and Austria Hungary appeared to be on the brink of War over the Balleans. In addition, there was a spirit of revenge “revanchist” emerging again in France, associated with the popular and politically ambitious General Boulanger. To add to Bismarck’s difficulties, the Italians were demanding greater recognition for their interests in the Mediterranean as the price of renewing the Triple alliance, due to expire in May 1887.

This problem was settled relatively easily. Germany and Austria-Hungary promised support for Italian interests in North Africa and the Balkans.

-When, in addition, the British government made a loose agreement with Italy and Austria-Hungary to defend the existing state of affairs in the Mediterranean, a solution to the main problem facing Bismarck began to emerge. This was mainly because the Reinsurance Treaty had failed to calm the tension in the Balkans. The importance of the Treaty was that, it had managed to prevent the possibility of war over Bulgaria. It was an exercise in crisis management.

c) The Mediterranean Agreements, (1887)

Bismarck realized that he had to persuade Britain to play a more important role in European affairs. Certainly, if Britain would do more to resist Russia in the Near East, this would have beneficial effects. Russia might well be restrained from adopting too aggressive a stance over Bulgaria and furthermore, Austria-Hungary might find in London, the sympathetic response to her desire for support which would calm her fears. Bismarck therefore exerted all in his influence to encourage Britain to conclude a formal agreement with Italy and Austria- Hungary to defend the status-quo in both the Mediterranean and the Near East.

The Second Mediterranean Agreement, signed in December 1887, was not a formal alliance, but it signaled Britain's willingness to check Russia in Bulgaria and at the Straits. If necessary, Austrian troops and British warships, with Italian backing, would be deployed. This combination deterred the Russians from resorting to force. As an inducement for the Russians to sign the Reinsurance Treaty, Bismarck had promised them that they would control the Dardanelles. But such a prospect had been completely put off by the Mediterranean Agreements.

d) Russo-German relations

Despite the Reinsurance Treaty, Russo-German relations never regained their former cordiality. Bismarck was partly to blame for this.

At the end of 1887, Russia was denied access to the Berlin money market for loans to finance her industrialization. As a result, Russia turned to Paris for loans, foreshadowing the alliance between the two countries which took place in 1894, after the fall of Bismarck.

Even before Bismarck fell from office in 1890, some were questioning the wisdom of his foreign policy, especially his wish to try and please both Austria- Hungary and Russia over the Balkans when the two had sharply conflicting aims.

The anti-Russian sentiments shared by the Kaiser Wilhelm II and many influential Germans did not help build, let alone, maintain good relations between the two countries. Both agricultural and industrial groups regarded Russia's economic modernization as a threat to their interests. In military circles, there was a serious talk about the need for a preventive war against Russia before she became too powerful. The Kaiser accepted the advice given by his officials not to renew the Reinsurance Treaty. In fact disagreements between him and Bismarck over the Russian Alliance was one of the issues which led to Bismarck's resignation in 1890.

Study Guides

- i) Why did events in the Balkans lead to a crisis between the Great Powers?
- ii) What was achieved by the Berlin Treaty of 1878?
- iii) Describe Bismarck's policy towards Russia in these years (1870- 1890) and explain the difficulties that arose.
- iv) Describe Bismarck's foreign policy aims in this period.
- v) Explain the circumstances that led to the formation of the alliances with which Bismarck was directly concerned.
- vi) How do you account for Bismarck's success in keeping Russia and France apart during this period?

BISMARCK'S FOREIGN POLICY, (1871)-1890: SUCCESS OR FAILURE

-How far did Bismarck achieve his aims in foreign policy?

-Were Bismarck's policies meant to bring lasting solutions and advantages to Europe or not?

-Bismarck's aims were quite clear and he made decisions from the limited options available to him.

Bismarck wished to prevent war and under his leadership Germany enjoyed security and Europe was at peace for 20 years. During this period (1871)-(1890), Germany became the strongest industrial power in Europe.

He prevented an anti-German coalition especially by keeping France isolated and he helped prevent Austria and Russia from coming to blows in the Balkans. His alliance system had to be constantly repaired, but it was still standing in 1890, when Bismarck fell from power.

However, other historians would beg to differ. Bismarck was a cause of friction, encouraging mutual suspicion between rivals, e.g. France and Britain in Africa, Austria- Hungary and Russia in the Balkans.

His alliance system, by its secret diplomacy, bred suspicion and insecurity. Furthermore, his system was breaking down as France and Russia moved closer together by the late 1880s. In some ways, therefore, the First World War was his legacy.

Some historians believe that Bismarck chose the wrong option in 1881. With the three Emperors' Alliance he bought two potential enemies (Austria and Russia) into an alignment that was unnatural and was doomed to failure, because the causes of antagonism between them still existed. What was the point in trying to square the circle?

He feared that further strengthening of the Austro-German alliance by seeking British support against Russia would drive Russia into an alliance with France. But was the force of "revenge" in France Pan-Slavism, as well as in Russia, was really as great as Bismarck feared?

Admittedly, France and Russia formed an alliance in the 1890s and fought as allies in 1914 but we should not imagine that their solidarity was inevitable. His most influential critics insisted that the Reinsurance Treaty due to expire in 1890, was both contradictory and dangerous. Hence, Bismarck's policies left Europe divided and the two hostile camps found very little common ground between each other. Of course, much owed to the blunderings of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Study Guides

1. "His concern was the security of the German Empire; his achievement was the domination of Europe." Discuss this view of Bismarck's foreign policy.
2. Was Bismarck's foreign policy of 1871-90 a success?
3. How far did the Congress of Berlin in 1878 fully address the problems of the Eastern Question?
4. Why did the eastern Question threaten European peace during the twenty years after 1875?
5. How successful was Bismarck's policy towards France between 1871 and 1890?

Kaiser William II – His Ambition

Bismarck was a skilful diplomat. For twenty years he made Germany the centre of the diplomatic stage. France was kept isolated, but Austria, Russia, Italy and Britain were on friendly terms with Germany. Bismarck's alliances were non-aggressive and kept Europe at peace. Yet after 1890, Bismarck fell from power and the new Kaiser took matters into his own hands. Kaiser William II was ambitious, rash and aggressive in nature. Rejecting the idea that Germany was a "satiated State", he wanted to make Germany, not a European power but a World power. He advocated the drive eastwards into the Balkans and Middle East, colonial expansion and naval expansion. He was also influenced by Pan-German feelings to support Austria's expansionist policy in the Balkans. To pursue his ambitions, he often adopted blackmailing, threats and other unpopular methods. From 1890 to 1907, he succeeded in alienating Britain, France and Russia, and thus helped to create a rival bloc of anti-German alliances.

Dual Alliance of France and Russia of 1893

Russo – German Friendship ended

When William II came to hold absolute power in Germany, he thought that sooner or later, Germany would clash with Russia, so he allowed the Reinsurance Treaty to lapse. He stressed Germany's political and military ties with Austria instead. Such a policy, together with the growing Pan-German Commission, aroused strong Russian suspicion. Russia naturally turned to the side of France, which was the irreconcilable enemy of Germany.

Although, at first there seemed little possibility for Tsarist Russia to ally with Republican France, two factors made such an alliance possible: -

- (i) Firstly, both felt it necessary to form a military pact to offset the military threat of Germany
- (ii) Secondly, France had floated several huge loans to help Russia to industrialize.

The terms of the Dual Alliance between Russia and France: -

These were as follows: -

- (i) If France was attacked by Germany, or Germany and her ally (Italy), Russia would aid France; in return, if Russia was attacked by Germany or Germany and her ally (Austria), France would aid Russia.
- (ii) If one or more members of the Triple Alliance mobilized, they would mobilize to help one another automatically and
- (iii) This agreement would continue as long as the Triple Alliance was in force.

End of British Isolation

After the formation of the Franco – Russian Alliance, Britain found herself diplomatically isolated. Throughout the nineteenth century, she had followed a policy of "splendid isolation" therefore to avoid involvement in European affairs. But by the late 19th century, she felt that this policy was no longer practical – for she could no longer command respect in world politics.

British – German Alliance failed:

Britain at first sought to make some sort of alliance with Germany but she failed because:

- (i) Germany wanted Britain to join the Triple Alliance, but Britain refused for fear that it would involve her in European conflicts of no direct concern to Britain.

- (ii)Germany's naval – expansion after 1898 threatened Britain's naval supremacy.
- (iii)Germany's colonial interests clashed with those in China and the Balkans.

Germany wanted to divide China into spheres of influence but Britain wanted to keep an open door for trade for all nations in every part of China. In the Balkans, Germany wanted to bring Turkey under the economic and political control of Germany. But Britain tried to maintain the integrity of the Turkish Empire for fear that if Germany controlled Turkey, she would threaten the British naval and economic interests in the Mediterranean.

The Anglo – Japanese Alliance (1902)

Consequently, Britain concluded an alliance with Japan in 1902. The Alliance was important in European diplomatic relations in two ways.

- (i)Britain had abandoned her policy of isolation and
- (ii)Since Britain could make use of Japan to check Russian aggression in the Far East, her fear of Russian colonial expansion lessened and this helped to pave the way for their future co-operation.

The Entente Cordiale (1904)

After concluding the Anglo – Japanese Alliance, Britain was still looking for a European ally. She naturally turned to France, the irreconcilable enemy of Germany. France also wanted Britain as her ally. France did not want to support Russia in a war in the Far east because it would mean a war with both Britain and Japan. The alliance with Britain must absolve France from supporting Russia. In Africa, France wanted to settle many of her colonial disputes with Britain peacefully, and gain the help of the latter in acquiring Morocco. There were many, conflicts between Britain and France in North Africa. In 1898, the conflict at Fashoda in North Africa nearly brought them into war. But France realized that her greatest foe was Germany. Thus she wanted to settle her conflicts with Britain and concentrate her efforts against Germany.

Edward VII favoured French co-operation

The last obstacle to the formation of the British – French Entente was removed in 1901. In that year Queen Victoria died and was succeeded by her son Edwards VII. Kaiser William II was Victoria's grandson, his mother having been the Queen's daughter. Thus Queen Victoria favoured or preferred an alliance with Germany to that with France. Edward VII did not share the same sentiments with his mother towards Germany. He preferred the French to the Germans, hence the Entente Cordiale.

Terms of the Entente

Britain reached a series of agreements with France in 1904. These agreements solved their old colonial disputes in Spain, West Africa and the fishing rights in New Foundland, as well as in Madagascar. The following were the terms:

- (i)France recognized Egypt and the Sudan as British spheres of influence.
- (ii)Britain recognized Morocco as a French sphere of influence.
- (iii)In addition, both would support each other if their respective spheres of influence were challenged by a third power.

The Anglo – Russian Entente – (1907)

France had a military alliance with Russia and a friendly agreement with Britain. It now became her concern to draw her two partners together. She finally succeeded in inducing Britain to settle her disputes with Russia in 1907.

Britain and Russia had been long -time rivals in colonial and trade questions in the Middle and Far-East.

But several factors made their alliance possible:

- (i) Firstly - both felt greatly threatened by Germany. The rapid build up of the Germany navy challenged Britain's position as the greatest naval power in the world. The construction of the Berlin – Baghdad railway meant an extension of German influence into the Balkans - an area which Russia considered as her sphere of influence.
- (ii) Secondly-both Russia and Britain resented the aggressive nature of William II's diplomacy.
- (iii) Thirdly, Britain considered that now Germany was a more dangerous rival than Russia to her commercial interests in the Balkans.
- (iv) Fourthly, the growth of the Balkan states greatly reduced the Russian threat in the Balkans. This lessened the British fear of Russia.
- (v) Fifthly, in the Far East, Britain did not worry about Russian ambition any more as Russia was defeated by Japan in 1905.

Terms of the Entente

In 1907 Britain and Russia agreed to settle their colonial disputes in the following manner:

- (i) Persia was divided into three parts – the north was kept by Russia as her sphere of influence, the South was kept by Britain, and the central part was to remain under Persian control as a buffer zone.
- (ii) Russia renounced her interests in Afghanistan. Russia and Britain were to enjoy equal trading rights in the country. Britain gained control of the foreign policy of Afghanistan. This agreement safeguarded the security of India.
- (iii) Both Russia and Britain recognized China's sovereignty over Tibet. They treated Tibet as a neutral state between themselves.

This alliance gave birth to the Triple Entente of Russia, France and Britain in 1907, as a rival to the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy.

Study Guides

- i) How far did the alliance system increase German security during this period?
- ii) What were Bismarck's motives in acquiring colonies?
- iii) How assured was peace between the Great Powers in this period?
- iv) What conclusions can be made about Bismarck's foreign policy?
- v) How successful did Bismarck isolate France in this period?
- vi) Was Bismarck's foreign policy a success?

Examination type questions

1. How valid is the view that from 1871 onwards, Bismarck's policies at home were a total failure?

2. Assess Bismarck's leadership of Prussia and Germany between 1862 and 1890.
3. How far were Bismarck's problems in Germany, of his own making?
4. The signing of the Dual Alliance represented a diplomatic defeat from which Bismarck's foreign policy never recovered". Do you agree?
5. How justified is the view that, after 1890, William II pursued a different foreign policy from that followed by Bismarck between 1871 and 1890?
6. "Bismarck's foreign policies between 1871 and 1890 left Europe in a dangerous and divided state" How far do you agree?

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CHAPTER 19

The Causes of the First World War.

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

Give an account of the long-term causes of the First World War:

- a) Analyse Bismarck's network of secret alliances which eventually divided Europe.
- b) Explain the role played by Imperialism of Europe in either Africa or Asia.
- c) Explain the role played by the rise of Kaiser Wilhelm II with his aggressive policy of "Weltpolitik."
- d) Trace the path of Anglo-German rivalry before 1900; and Franco- German rivalry before 1900.
2. Explain the short-term or immediate causes of the First World War.
 - a) The Moroccan crisis, 1905
 - b) The Anglo- Russian Entente and its consequences
 - c) The Bosnian crisis of 1908
 - d) Examine the naval rivalry and the Agidar crisis, 1908- 1911.
 - e) Explain the impact of the naval Race, how this worsened tension in Europe?
 - f) Describe the Agidar Crisis, 1911
3. Discuss the immediate results of the July crisis; the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serb national.

Overview

The First World War broke out as a result of both short-term, medium term and long-term causes. For much of the nineteenth century the major European powers maintained a balance of power. However, between 1871 and 1914, a number of factors served to undermine international peace and stability.

First, European powers saw international relations as a battle for survival and as a source of status, and engaged in a fresh outburst of imperialism in Africa and Asia.

Second, the rise of Germany in central Europe aroused fear and encouraged the growth of alliances. Third, the expansion of national groups demanding self-determination threatened old empires, such as Turkey.

The final ingredient which brought war was the fatal decisions of the political leaders during the July crisis of 1914 in the Balkans. The First World War was really the culmination of a long-drawn out crisis within the European system.

The rise of Germany

The rise of Germany was a key factor which produced tensions among the major European powers. The victory of Prussia over France in 1871 concluded the unification of Germany and created a new power in Europe. As German unification came about, through a combination of crafty diplomacy, industrial strength and military might, thus produced fear and anxiety in Europe. This is because Europe as a whole would be seriously affected by how Germany, as the most powerful military and economic power in a reshaped Europe, would behave.

The following factors served to create fear and anxiety among other European powers: The Germany population soared from 49 to 66 million between 1890 and 1914 alone. The economy grew faster than that of any country in Europe. In 1914, Germany's steel output was higher than that of Britain, France and Russia combined. Coal production had risen second position to that of Britain. Hence, Germany's industrial strength was used to increase its military strength. The Germany army, organized on the basis of conscription, was tactically sophisticated, highly trained and well equipped. Germany naval expansion ensured that Germany's fleet rose from being the sixth largest to the second largest in the World. There can be no doubt that such a powerful national status would require a sound and contentious political leader. Sadly, of course, from 1890 to 1914, this was not the case! Kaiser Wilhelm II was an unpredictable and aggressive character!

The foreign policy of the new Germany, dominated by Otto von Bismarck, the first chancellor of Germany from 1871 to 1890, was designed to reassure the delicate European balance of power. This ingenious style of diplomacy secured a dominant position for Germany in European affairs through the formation of a delicate system of treaties and alliances, which often contained secret clauses. In 1872 the League of the Three Emperors (or Dreikaiserbund) consisting of Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary, was formed. This was followed by the Dual Alliance of 1879 between Germany and Austria-Hungary, and it promised mutual assistance in the event of war with Russia. Bismarck believed that the agreement would help restrain the aims of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, but it had the opposite effect and encouraged Austria-Hungary to take a bolder stand against Balkan nationalism. The diplomatic position of Germany was further strengthened in Bismarck's time by the formation of a military alliance with Italy in 1882, called the Triple Alliance (of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy).

It is now apparent that Bismarck was never firmly committed to his Triple Alliance partners. In 1887, for example, he signed the secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, without the knowledge

of Austria-Hungary or Italy which pledged Russian neutrality in the event of a Germany attack the on France, Germany neutrality in the event of a Russian attack on Austria-Hungary (a strange clause, given the terms of the Dual Alliance), and a promise that Germany would support Russian's interests in the Balkans.

This diplomatic double-dealing was designed to give Germany maximum flexibility and a number of diplomatic options in the event of any international crisis, but it raised suspicious in Austria- Hungary, Russia and Italy. But it seems that Bismarck's duplicity was designed to ensure a peaceful outcome to any future international problems.

The Bulgarian Crisis and The Balkan Problem

Bismarck's desire to be the public ally of Austria-Hungary and the secret ally of Russia failed to materialize during the course of the Bulgarian Crisis of the late nineteenth century. Bulgaria, a group of small, semi-independent states, was one of the most explosive and poorly governed parts of the Ottoman Empire. The key cause of instability was the existence of a wide range of nationalist groups agitating for religious tolerance and self-government. In 1876, a full scale Bulgarian rebellion was under way, with the various nationalist groups receiving support from Serbia, Montenegro and Russia. The crisis eventually escalated into a full-scale war between Russia and Turkey from 1877 to 1878 over the future of Bulgaria, culminating in defeat for the Ottoman Empire, which was forced to sign the Treaty of San Stefano (1876). It has been noted elsewhere in the study pack, that the Treaty of San Stefano was unsatisfactory to the great powers and had to be replaced by the Congress of Berlin.

Nevertheless, the Bulgarian crises revealed the complexity of the Balkan problem, which revolved around the nationalist demands for self-determination, the gradual decline of the Ottoman rule and the designs of Russia and Austria-Hungary. It showed how easily problems in the Balkans could create a delicate international situation due to the many vested interests of the major powers. More importantly, the crisis revealed that in any Hapsburg-Tsarist dispute Germany was not prepared to see Russia profit. The significance of the Bulgarian Crisis was threefold: it put an end to the League of the Three Emperors. It severely weakened Germany's role as a so-called "honest broker" in the Balkans; and it killed the Re-Insurance Treaty which the Russians saw as a worthless and unscrupulous agreement that was not renewed.

Thus, even the shrewd diplomacy of Bismarck, founded on the rock of the Balkans, the attempt to balance the irreconcilable differences between Russia and Austria-Hungary was really an exercise in crisis management rather than a real solution to the conflict between the two powers in the region. Even so, Bismarck's fall from power in 1890, is still viewed as a key turning point on the road to war. After all, the German leaders who followed Bismarck favoured confrontation rather than reconciliation. Obviously, Bismarck's cautious policy was successful in the short-term, but there is no guarantee that he would have continued to adopt such a conciliatory line had he remained in office. He was already coming under increasing pressure to adopt a popular aggressive and expansionist foreign policy before his abrupt dismissal by the young Kaiser Wilhelm II. Paradoxically, the fact that Bismarck's alliance diplomacy had placed Germany in such a strong diplomatic position actually encouraged other, less shrewd Germany figures in the aristocracy, army and navy to push for a bolder and more expansionist foreign policy.

Impact of imperialism

It was not only the swift rise of Germany which created a climate of tension in European affairs. The sudden and unexpected upsurge of imperialism from 1880 to 1914 in Africa and Asia, equally increased tensions among European nations. Britain, France, Leopold II of the Belgians, Germany and Italy all became entangled in a rapid partition of Africa which resulted in 90% of all African territory being brought under European rule.

The major European powers saw this “New Imperialism” as a battle for wealth, power, growth and survival. Lord Salisbury the British prime minister said that the world was being divided into “living and dying” powers. To remain a great power, or to become one, seemed to require the possession of all empire.

The most unfortunate consequences of the “new imperialism” were the creation of an atmosphere of heightened patriotism known as jingoism, the glorification of the armed force, and the denial of national self-determination to small powers. Major European powers became obsessed with gaining further territory and showing no sign of weakness. The principle of the large powers grabbing territory from the smaller powers, was a key aspect of the “new imperialism that caused tension. It is probably correct to suggest that the First World War was not directly caused by “new imperialism,” but that its influence on future events was extremely significant. The craving (desire) of the great powers to expand at the expense of the weaker states, and the hunger of the weaker states, especially in eastern Europe, for self-determination, created an atmosphere in which antagonism became the order of the day. Britain had fears of imperial decline.

German ambitions for an empire; and Austro-Hungarian anxiety regarding the loss of its power were all linked to the survival of the fittest mood which the imperialist age had profoundly influenced. The imperialist idea of struggle and rivalry emphasized the need for new policies and dynamic solutions to problems in international relations .It is important to note that while some misgivings created between France and Britain over Egypt and Fashoda, for example, were eventually smoothed out, other areas in which Germany aroused suspicion among Britain and France, say over the Anglo- Boer War and the First Moroccan Crisis, were never resolved right up to the outbreak of the First World War.

Kaiser Wilhelm, Germany World Policy and Germany Aims

How much influence did Wilhelm II actually exert on the conduct of German foreign policy between 1888 and 1914? Was the catastrophe of 1914-18 really the Kaiser’s War? In 1897, the Kaiser Wilhelm II announced that Germany would adopt a “world policy” (Weltpolitik). The logic behind Weltpolitik seemed reasonable enough; the Kaiser claimed that German Industrial expansion was so dependent on imports of raw materials from overseas, that a vast colonial empire was required, with a large navy to support it. Thus Weltpolitik was committed to a large programme of naval expansion and heavy involvement in colonial affairs. However, this abrupt change in German policy, from the prudence of Bismarck to the controversial style of Kaiser Wilhelm, marks a crucial turning point in Germany’s foreign policy in the years which led to war. The reasons why Kaiser opted for Weltpolitik have been subject to enormous debate. The

timing of the policy is usually put down to the appointment by the Kaiser of von Bulow as chancellor, and Adral von Tirpitz as naval minister, who both favoured an expansionist foreign policy with three key aims.

- 1.To build a German navy which would match the best in the world. It was hoped that a strong German navy would encourage Britain to opt for neutrality in any future European war. This was a fatal error in German planning. Aggressive policies would obviously attract an aggressive response from the British.
- 2.To make Germany a major imperial power. This implied territorial expansion overseas.
- 3.To use foreign policy issues to increase support for authoritarian rule. This would weaken the appeal of socialism and democracy.

The real problem was that the Kaiser, the chancellor and leading foreign military and naval advisers, appeared to pursue perhaps one, but never all of these aims at any one time. The result was a lack of co-ordination in foreign policy, and a great deal of confusion over whether Weltpolitik was a genuine attempt to find Germany “a place in the sun,” or whether it was merely a useful political tactic to weaken the domestic appeal of social democracy at home.

The language used by German leaders in pursuit of Weltpolitik often daring and confrontational. This directly raised hostility and suspicion from other European powers. The German press, heavily influenced by the Kaiser’s press office, whipped up jingoism and fermented antagonism against other nations. Nationalist pressure groups, including the Navy League, the Colonial Society and the Pan-German League, supported Weltpolitik. German history books colourfully described the greatness of German past. The Kaiser often saw Weltpolitik as a means of warding off the rise of socialism in Germany by diverting attention towards external issues. Admiral Tirpitz, the prime mover in building the German navy, was fully aware that a naval race could act as a rallying point for Germany public opinion in support of the existing authoritarian government. The success or failure of Weltpolitik became a central issue in Germany domestic politics.

The policy created a great deal of tension, accomplished very little, and some international relations. In the view of Bethman Hollweg the Germany chancellor who replaced von Bulow, Weltpolitik had “challenged everybody, got in everybody’s way but actually weakened nobody.” The Kaiser never contemplated the conflict that a bold, expansionist Germany foreign policy would be provoked abroad. The major world powers had no intention of smoothing the path for Germany to become a dominant world power and Germany met hostility in every direction.

The British engaged in a naval race and maintained supremacy. The USA thwarted Germany ambitions in Venezuela and the Philippines, The British and French obstructed Germany ambitions in Morocco and the British and the French denied Germany capital to build the Berlin-Baghdad Railway. All the major European powers ganged up together to ensure that Germany made no significant economic gains in China in 1900. The only territorial gain the Germans made in its search for Weltpolitik were small gains in the Congo, a 99-year lease on Kigo-chow in China, two small Samoan islands, some small Pacific islands and a fleet of costly dreadnaught battleships which were not used in battle during the First World War, except at the Battle of Jutland. Weltpolitik is a classic example of ambition outweighing common sense. The

German government wasted a great deal of effort in pursuing a policy which was both costly and led other European powers to regard Germany as a real danger to European peace.

The Drift Towards Alliances.

The most unfortunate consequence of Weltpolitik was the impact which it had on European diplomatic alignments. In 1871, there was no system of fixed military alliances among the major European powers. The creation of peace time alliances began with Bismarck's Dual Alliance (1879) and Triple Alliance (1882). Both agreements were seen as defensive and produced no rival set of alliances. Yet German support for Austria-Hungary during the Bulgaria Crisis led to much friendlier Franco-Russian relations which eventually resulted in the formation of a firm military alliance in 1894. Under the terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance, each power pledged military support in the event of war against any member of the Triple Alliance. This created a second alliance grouping in Europe, with the clear aim of checking Germany ambitions. As a direct result of this agreement, the French investment poured into Russia to support the development of its industry and economy, and close diplomatic and military links grew.

These alliances also encouraged the development of detailed military plans. The Germany army had to plan for a war on two fronts. In 1905, for example, General von Schlieffen developed a detailed war plan that involved a quick and decisive attack on France followed by an all-out assault on Russia. The Russian army chiefs also made detailed war plans for an all-out assault on Austria-Hungary, once the Schlieffen plan had leaked to them. The French military chiefs equally planned a lightning offensive against Germany on the latter's western front. Thus the idea of fighting a future war within a coalition was becoming firmly planted in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy as well as in France and Russia.

The only major European power outside these alliance groups was Britain which remained in "splendid isolation which gradually appeared unsafe. However, the hectic imperial rivalry of the late nineteenth century had extended British military and naval resources to breaking point. The emergence of Germany as a major colonial and naval rival caused deep concern. Russia was also a menace to British India. The growth of Japan in the Far East, and the continuing Anglo-French rivalry in Africa and Indo-China, further fuelled the idea that Britain's military resources were becoming seriously overstretched. Many prominent British statesmen started to call for an end to Britain's diplomatic isolation. In 1898 negotiations were started, intended to build an Anglo-German "understanding" but animosity between Britain and Germany intensified during the era of Weltpolitik, largely over naval rivalry, and the idea was dropped.

The Anglo-Japanese Treaty (1902) marked the first move by Britain to move out of isolation. The treaty was designed to ease Britain's worry over trade in the region and ease fears over the Russian threat to India. However, the treaty encouraged Japan to go to war with Russia between 1904 and 1905 where Japan got an unexpected victory.

A more significant agreement was the Entente-Cordiale, signed in 1904 between Britain and France. This cleared up Anglo-French colonial differences in Africa and Asia: the French agreed to British primacy in Egypt in return for a "free hand" in Morocco. The Anglo-French Entente was thus a colonial agreement.

The Kaiser viewed the Anglo French Cordiale differently. He mistakenly thought it was a military alliance, and this greatly worried him since he feared diplomatic encirclement. He therefore wanted to test the closeness of the agreement. In January 1905, a French diplomatic mission arrived in Fez, the Moroccan capital, to seek special privileges for French traders in that country. In 1905, in a tense and provocative move, Kaiser Wilhelm steamed into the Moroccan port of Tangier aboard a Germany naval vessel; requested special treatment for Germany traders as well, and offered Germany support to maintain Moroccan independence. In May 1905, Lord Lansdowne, the British foreign secretary, sent a message to the French government which gave some vague hope that the Entente might, under certain circumstances, be converted into a military alliance. DeClassee, the French foreign minister, interpreted this as an offer by Britain to enter into an Anglo-French alliance which it clearly was not. The Kaiser insisted that the French government should dismiss DeClassees for seeking to sour Franco-Germany relations. In response, the French government, unprepared to face Germany in war, and with no promise of British support, sacked Delcasse and agreed to settle Franco-Germany differences over Morocco in an international conference. This decisive show of strength by the Kaiser had seemingly shown that the Entente Cordiale was little more than a worthless piece of papers.

The Algeiras Conference duly took place between January and April 1906. However Sir Edward Grey, the new Liberal foreign secretary, expressed private concern over the high-handed behavior of the Kaiser during the Delcasse affair and offered enthusiastic British support for French claims in Morocco. The Russian government under pressure from France, offered similar encouragement. As a result, the French gained a significant diplomatic victory over Germany at Algeiras. Morocco's independence was confirmed but France and Spain gained authority over the police and France was given control over the Moroccan central bank. All that the Kaiser's bullying had achieved was to heighten fears in France, Britain and Russia about German imperial ambitions. This simply encouraged the development of closer Franco- Russian relations and set British foreign policy in a clear, anti-Germany direction. In the wake of the crisis, Grey ordered Anglo-French military conversations and sought to improve Anglo-Russian relations. In 1907, Britain signed the Anglo- Russian convention which settled Anglo- Russian imperial differences over Afghanistan, Tibet and Persia (modern-day Iran).The German government saw the agreement as a bitter blow which cemented its growing diplomatic encirclement. The term Triple Entente-of France, Britain and Russia started to be used to describe the new diplomatic friendship between these three major European powers.

The Anglo-Germany naval race which reached its most excitable stage between 1908 and 1910 added to international tension. The Germany desire for a navy on a world scale met a British desire to maintain its naval supremacy. The speed at which the new state-of-the- art dreadnaught-class battleships could be built in Britain and Germany produced panic and antagonism. The Anglo-Germany naval race soured British attitudes towards Germany more than any other factor. Sir Edward Grey claimed that it was the major reason why Britain went to war in 1914. From 1907 to 1914 British naval expenditure increased from £31, 5 to £50 million per annum in order to meet the Germany challenge and to maintain supremacy. Robert Cecil, a conservative Member of Parliament claimed that as the Germans wanted a large fleet and the British were determined to maintain supremacy, there was "no hope of finding common ground." The Anglo-

Germany naval race led the British government to become even more disturbed and frightened about the direction of German policy.

Study Guides

- i) Why did Bismarck construct an alliance system? In what ways did it increase insecurity between the nations?
- ii) How assured was peace between the Great Powers in the period 1870 to 1890?
- iii) What conclusions can we reach about Bismarck's foreign policy? Did it create mutual suspicion? Hostility? Generate tension? Divide Europe into two camps? Illustrate these and other suggestions.
- iv) Why were relations between France and Germany never repaired after 1871?
- v) What were the key events in the partition of Africa and how did these arouse Great Power hostilities.
- vi) How far were relations between the major Powers affected by colonial expansion?
- vii) What motives lay behind the German intervention in Morocco in 1905?
- viii) What were the results of the 1906 Algeciras conference?
- ix) How able was German diplomacy during the 1905-06 Moroccan crisis?
- x) Why were relations between Germany and Britain satisfactory in 1890 but unsatisfactory in 1911?
- xi) What was meant by Weltpolitik? What motives lay behind it and why did it alienate Britain?
- xii) How close did the Great Powers get to war between 1908- 1911?
- xiii) Describe the importance of the Arms Race

Balkan crisis

The 1908 -09 Bosnian crisis served to stir up Russian fears about German aims in the Balkans. In October 1908, Austria-Hungary suddenly annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina as a result of its fear of the spread of the "young Turks" a reforming movement active in the Ottoman Empire. The Tsar expressed outrage at the annexation, but the Kaiser said that if Russia went to war over the issue, Germany would stand by Austria-Hungary in "shining" armour." Such diplomatic bullying made the Russian government all the same more resolved to increase its defense expenditure, draw closer to its allies and not back down in the Balkans again.

In 1911, a second major crisis over Morocco brought Europe to the very edge of war. In May 1911, the French government sent troops to put down a revolt in Fez. In July, a Germany gunboat arrived in the Moroccan part of Agadir in a provocative move designed to gain colonial concessions from France. Sir Edward Grey offered the French government full support throughout the crisis. In October 1911, the Germany government decided to seek a negotiated settlement of the crisis, and received territory in Congo in return for recognizing French control in Morocco. The Agadir crisis brought a danger of war, and drew Britain and France closer together in the face of the Germany threat-Weltpolitik here was revealed to be a dangerous and provocative policy. After Agadir, the British made a firm commitment to send a British Expeditionary (BEF) Force of 150, 000 troops to France in the event of war and signed naval agreements with both France and Russia.

During these years, the military and diplomatic balance of power was turning sharply against Germany, which had only one firm ally, Austria-Hungary, and one neutral ally, Italy. The

military situation was even more dismal: in 1912, the Germany army numbered 761 000 and the Austro- Hungarian army was 450 000 strong. Against this, stood the Russian army of 1,3 million, the French army of 600 000 and the British Expeditionary Force of 150 000. The naval situation was even more worrying. A great deal of Germany money had been used to build the Dreadnaughts, but the British had maintained a clear naval supremacy and, with the support of Russia and France, could clearly mount an effective blockade against Germany. In these gloomy circumstances, the Germany press talked of Germany being “encircled by a hostile coalition of envious powers,” while leading military figures urged a preventive war to break Germany free from diplomatic isolation. The whole trend of European diplomacy was leading in the direction of two power blocs which were likely, sooner or later, to go to war with one another. In 1912, German military leaders, once so proud and confident, now grew increasingly pessimistic about how sharply the balance of power was moving against them.

The Balkan crisis of 1912-1914

From 1912 to 1914 the major focus of European attention switched to the Balkans. This was an area where ethnic and nationalistic tensions caused great power rivalry. The most immediate problem was the growth of nationalist groups determined to break free from Ottoman rule. Russia and Austria-Hungary remained deeply interested in the Balkans Romania, Greece and Montenegro were independent, though the Turks still had influence over Macedonia and Albania.

The strongest Balkan state was Serbia which had spearheaded the formation of the Balkan League in 1912, which consisted of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro. The chief aim of this Pan-Slavic coalition was to force the Turks out of the Balkans. The weakness of the Turks was already evident given the success that the Italian army had enjoyed in Lybia in 1911. In October 1912, the Balkan League seized this opportunity and declared war on Turkey in what became known as the First Balkan War.

Surprisingly, the major European powers kept out of the fighting but took a sharp interest in the negotiations for a peace settlement. At the Treaty of London, in 1913, chaired by Sir Edward Grey, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece were given nearly all the European territory of the Ottoman Empire, except Albania. This enraged Serbia as this was its key territorial objective, because it would give Serbia on Adriatic part, which for a land-locked country, was seen as vital for its future economic development. The Greek government also felt cheated as Greece did not gain a larger share of territory in Macedonia and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government also thought that Bulgaria had gained very little. The volatile Balkan coalition soon collapsed.

A second Balkan War broke out in June 1913, when Bulgaria attacked Serbia. This prompted Greece, Romania and Turkey all to declare war on Bulgaria. In less than a month, Bulgaria had been defeated. The Treaty of Bucharest (1913) forced the Bulgarians to give Serbia large gains in Macedonia, but under Austrian and German pressure. The Serbs were once again denied an Adriatic port. This worsened Serbian hatred of Austria-Hungary.

The Treaty of Constantinople (1913) allowed Turkey to gain Adrianople and other territory lost to Bulgaria during the First Balkan War. Balkan wars ruined the dream of a Pan-slav coalition; they ended with the Ottoman Empire having been virtually driven out of its European territory. Equally, Bulgaria was isolated and severely weakened and the power of Greece and Serbia had greatly increased. The outcome of the Balkan wars was a big-blow to the strategic position of Austria-Hungary. Serbia still posed a threat to Austria- Hungary. Austria-Hungary now depended on Germany for its survival as a major power in the Balkans.

The July Crisis and the Decisions for War

In the summer of 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir apparent to the Hapsburg throne visited Sarajevo the capital of Bosnia. This was the centre of Serb and Bosnian nationalist groups and therefore dangerous for a member of the Austrian royal family to visit. He was assassinated together with his wife on 28 June 1914, around 11:30am. The assassinator was Gavrillo Principle a teenage rebel whose cause was the young Bosnia, a nationalist group which aimed to drive out the Hapsburgs out of Bosnia.

Impact of the assassination

The news of the death of Archduke Franz Ferdinand produced fury in Austria. The Austrian government immediately decided to pin the blame for the assassination on the Serbian government, even though they had no proof of this. Count von Berchtold, the Austrian foreign minister advised Franz Joseph to use the assassination as a pretext to “settle accounts” with Serbia.

On 4 July 1914, Franz Josef sent a letter to Kaiser Wilhelm II asking for German support to “eliminate Serbia as a power factor in the Balkans.” The Kaiser consulted with Bethmann Hollweg, the German Chancellor to decide the German position. They agreed that Austria should be given a free hand-known as the “blank cheque” to start war with Serbia. Of course, they hoped that a war between Austria- Hungary and Serbia would remain localized, but both knew that the crisis might bring in Russian intervention, and a European War. The German government was prepared to risk this, in order to secure a victory for Austria-Hungary over Serbia. The Kaiser advised the Austrian government that it must “judge what is to be done to clear up her relations with Serbia, but whatever Austria’s decision, she should count with certainty upon it, that Germany would stand behind her.” The German reply was exactly what the Austrian government had wanted. It was decided to issue an ultimatum to the Serbian government framed in a manner that would be likely to provoke Serbia.

The Russian and French governments from 20 July to 23 July 1914 met to discuss their positions in view of the escalating crisis. Poincare, the French President, gave his full support to Russia in resisting any attempt by Austria-Hungary to threaten the independence of Serbia. This is viewed as a second blank cheque, which encouraged the Russian government to risk a war with Germany and Austria-Hungary. However, the French government advised the Russian government to do nothing, during the July crisis, that would be likely to provoke Germany.

Equally, the Russian government sought a negotiated settlement to the crisis. The Tsar begged the Kaiser to restrain Austria Hungary, without success, throughout the crisis.

The French decision to support Russia was designed to deter Austria- Hungary, but the German decision to support Austria- Hungary aimed to provoke it. This is the fundamental difference between the two so-called “blank cheques” issued during the July crisis.

The crisis escalated on 23 July 1914, when the Austrian government finally delivered the ultimatum to Serbia. The ultimatum claimed that Serbia was involved in the assassination of the Archduke, and made ten demands designed to put down the terrorist activities of Serb nationalists, including joint Hapsburg-Serb action to suppress all movements opposed to the dual monarchy in Serbia. It was assumed by most European governments that Serbia would reject the ultimatum. The Russian government advised Serbia to take a conciliatory and co-operative line. The Serbian government followed this advice and agreed to most of Austria’s demands, but insisted that any investigation of the problem should adhere to international law. However, the Austro- Hungarian government claimed that it would only accept immediate Serbian acceptance of the original ultimatum.

Sir Edward Grey proposed a conference in London to work out a peaceful settlement, but this was rejected by Austria- Hungary and Germany. The Tsar told the Serbian government that he wanted a peaceful solution, but would not remain “indifferent to the fate of Serbia.” It seemed that the German government wanted the conflict to remain localised but made no effort to put pressure upon Austria to accept a negotiated settlement.

The first declaration of war in the crisis came on 28 July 1914 when Austria- Hungary declared war on Serbia. However, the hope of both Germany and Austria- Hungary that the war would remain localized proved illusory. The Russian government made it very clear that Russia would go to war to save Serbia unless Austria- Hungary withdrew its troops from Serbian territory. The Austro- Hungarian government refused. On 29 July 1914, the Russian government announced that it had no alternative but to make plans for the mobilization of its troops, though it still wished for a negotiated settlement.

The German government informed the Tsar that Russian mobilization would lead to German mobilization. Bethman Hollweg made a last-minute plea for British neutrality in the event of war. As usual, the British would “wait on the events” The main contribution of the British government to the July crisis was to make a number of proposals to Serbia, Austria- Hungary, Germany and Russia to settle the matter by negotiations, which were rejected by the German and Austro-Hungarian governments.

On 30 July 1914, Tsar announced that Russian mobilization would take place the next day. The Germany time table for war now swung into rapid action. Von Moltke, the German military chief of staff, told the Kaiser that German military planning was based on swift action: the Schlieffen Plan involved a speedy attack on France, via Belgium, followed by a move eastwards to face Russia. The urgency Germany felt to implement the Schlieffen Plan now dominated events.

In the final analysis, the German government cannot be accused of cold bloodedly planning a European War. What they can be accused of was that they did not make enough serious effort to

persuade Austria- Hungary to withdraw its ultimatum or seek a negotiated settlement. The last minute pleas by the Kaiser for the Austro-Hungary army to accept negotiations once they had occupied Belgrade, was fairly half-hearted. Equally, the passionate German desire to implement the Schlieffen Plan required an escalation of the crisis from a Balkan dispute into a European War.

On 31 July 1914 the German government sent the Russian government an ultimatum which said that unless Russia ceased all military preparations, Germany would declare war on her. In response, the Russian government claimed that its mobilization plans inferred no aggressive action, and continued to express a desire for a peaceful settlement. Even so, on 1 August 1914, Germany declared war on Russia. On 2 August 1914, the German government sent an ultimatum to the Belgian government asking for permission to allow the German army safe passage for its inevitable attack on France. It was over the issue of Belgian neutrality, to which Britain was committed, that the British government decided to act. Sir Edward Grey informed the German government that any breach of that neutrality would result in a British declaration of war.

On 3 August 1914, Germany declared war on France even though the French had no major interests in the Balkans. France became the victim of what seemed to be unprovoked aggression. The Italian government, which had been ignored by Germany and Austria- Hungary during the crisis, decided to remain neutral. On 4 August, the British government finally declared war on Germany over the issue of neutrality. Even so, Sir Edward Grey had long realized that Britain could not afford to stand aside and see France crushed by Germany. The War, which was initially thought to be brief, lasted for four savage and bloody years.

Study Guides

- i) Why did the First World War not take place in 1912?
- ii) Should any one national be seen as responsible for the outbreak of the First World War?
- iii) How far were German policies responsible for the outbreak of war in 1914?
- iv) Why did the Sarajevo murder lead to the outbreak of war?
- v) How and why had Europe become armed by 1914?
- vii) Explain the fact that in 1914 the international alliances which had previously served the cause of peace, now helped to produce war.
- viii) How far were Russian relations in the Balkans the main cause of the First World War?

Examination type questions

1. "The causes of the First World War lay in the Balkans." To what extent is this view accurate?
2. "Germany had a clear programme of territorial expansion before 1914 which made war inevitable." How far can this view account for why war broke out in August 1914?
3. "The arms race was mainly responsible for the outbreak of the First World War." How accurate is this view?
4. How accurate is the view that imperialism was the root cause of the First World War?

CHAPTER 20

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Overview

Most generals expected the First World War to last only a matter of weeks. Yet this bloody conflict lasted four and a half years and claimed over 8, 5 million lives 22 million wounded and disabled. Over 4 million women lost their husbands in the conflict.

The First World War began in July 1914 in a mood of popular excitement with old-fashioned cavalry charges, more suited to nineteenth century warfare. It ended in November 1918 with modern weapons such as tanks, aircraft and heavy artillery weapons. The two rival power groupings at the beginning of the war were the Triple Entente (France, Britain and Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany and Austria- Hungary).

The Western Front: Why was there a stalemate on the Western Front for Most of The First World War?

The German army expected to win the war by launching a devastating attack on France, followed by an equally decisive attack on Russia in Eastern Europe. This was the Schlieffen Plan and it nearly came off. The French army, supported by the British Expeditionary Force, (BEF) were initially surprised by the strength of the Germany assault which moved through Belgium and advanced on to French territory. The Germany assault on France was halted by the BEF at Mons in August 1914, and even more decisively by the French army at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914. This was when the Germany army was forced to retreat to the River Aisne.

It is often assumed that the Germany army was technically and tactfully superior, but made a mistake by choosing to fight a defensive war on the western front after making initial territorial gains. The German High Command was certainly better trained in the art of war than any of their opponents, but they rejected the use of lorries for transport and made much greater use of horses.

In 1914 the German commander, General Alexander von Kluck, used 84 000 horses. Indeed, the food needs of the horses greatly increased the supply problems of the German army.

By the end of September 1914, the Schlieffen Plan had failed. Germany now faced war on two fronts, in the Western and Eastern Europe. Soldiers on both sides on the western front set about digging a line trenches, separated by barbed wire, “no man’s land,” which ultimately stretched from the Swiss border to the English Channel. The German army built an almost impregnable triple line of trenches. They had a much better communication system between the High Command and the soldier in the trenches than the British and the French. The Germans also developed better steel helmets, flame throwers and hand grenades. In addition, the Germans made better use of barbed wire. All these technical advantages of the German army helped to explain the very high level of casualties among the French and the British armies which attempted to mount offensives against the German positions during the war. The massed trenches on both sides ensured there was a stalemate, with very little mobility on the western front in the first three years of the war.

The Germany army remained on the defensive during most of 1915. It was in 1916 that the First World War started to become very bloody in character, with both sides attempting to make bold, and often futile attempts to break the deadlock, most notably at the battle of Verdun which lasted for most of that year. The death toll at the Battle of Verdun, on both sides, reached a staggering 700 000. At the Battle of Sommes the British lost 60 000 on the first day and by the end, Britain had lost 418 000 troops (i.e. from July to November 1916). German deaths numbered 45 0000 at Somms and the French – 194000. The Battles of Verdun and the Somms were the two most bloodiest battles on the western front during the First World War. A close third was the Third Battle of Upres in 1917.

In all these deadly battles, mass infantry attacks were beaten back by the use of heavy artillery with little territorial gains on either side. The defending armies were able to take advantage of important technical developments in fire power provided by the large artillery gun, the magazine rifles and the machine gun, which became the most potent weapons on the battleground, and rendered the cavalry charge, which had dominated many in the 19th century, virtually useless.

The generals on both sides were blamed by contemporary soldiers and subsequent historians for the heartless lack of concern for human life on the Western front, which contributed to the high death toll. It was said of the leading British general (Douglas Haig) that he killed more English soldiers than the German army. These are some of the key reasons for the deadlock on the Western Front.

It is worth noting that the generals faced an exceptionally difficult task of turning largely untrained soldiers into an efficient modern army in a short time. They were also under immense pressure from their governments to gain decisive victory and win the war.

Impact of War on Civilian Population in Germany and Britain

The very high death toll in the war strained the human and economic resources of all the major powers. The events on the battlefield were directly felt by families on the “home front.” As the war dragged on a very high premium was placed on economic and organizational abilities of

each national government involved in the conflict. The arms expenditure of the rival powers rose from 4 percent of National income in 1914 to a staggering 25 percent by the end of 1916. A great many factories in Britain, France and Russia were turned over completely to munitions production. To pay for the war, Britain and France raised taxes as well as borrowed from the USA. The Germany government pushed up its national debt to quite staggering proportions in the hope that victory in war would enable to pay it off. However, the greatest economic strain was felt by those countries which lacked modern industry, most notably Russia, Austria-Hungary and Italy. The modern industrial economies of Europe, (Germany, Britain and France), rose to the challenge of war much better than the old pre-industrial societies.

Germany

The German government created a system in which leading army figures and top industrialist cooperated in running the wartime economy. State corporations were set up to organize the provision of vital commodities and raw materials necessary to supply the needs of the armed forces. In October 1916, the Hindenburg programme intensified state and army control of the German economy. Machinery was transferred from industries dependent on the domestic market to munitions factories. Many companies which did not contribute to the war effort were forced by the state to close. The effect of this ruthless organization of industry by the German state was to create industrial monopoly of companies and cartels which controlled the provision of raw materials, and it led to shortages and deprivation for ordinary citizens on the home front.

The needs of the German armed forces came ahead of those of the civilian population. The German army high command was able to place pressure on the Kaiser to limit the powers of parliament and to sanction a national service law to allow the unrestrained conscription of citizens to aid the war effort in military or industrial service. Indeed, Germany during the war was running an army-big-business dictatorship which put all its effort into achieving the goal of victory in the war and suspended all the Constitutional liberties enjoyed by the citizens in peacetime. Walter Rathenau, a leading German industrialist, called the organization of the Germany war effort “state socialism,” implying that every individual was equally serving the needs and aims of the state. This idea was something which was later adopted more fully during the era of the Third Reich.

Britain

The British government moved more slowly towards greater state control of the war effort. Indeed one of the most popular slogans used by the Liberal government in 1914 was “Business as Usual.” It was only in 1916 for example, that conscription was introduced in Britain whereas most other countries had conscription schemes in place before 1914. The idea of forcing someone to serve in the army went against the Liberal ideal of free will. Hence, the British army was based on voluntary principle, whereby a recruit chose to join. After the appointment of David Lloyd George as prime minister, in December 1916, however, the labour force and economy were more organized and state interference in the economy became normal.

Women began to take over work previously done by men in war industries such as munitions, engineering and transport. The employment of women in Britain increased from 3,5 million to 5

million from 1914 to 1918. The war effort had given women the opportunity to show they could complete in what had previously been described as a “man’s world.” As a result, the status of women was greatly enhanced during the war. In 1918, women were granted the vote in British national election for the first time.

The cooperation of trade unions with the government facilitated the introduction of longer working hours, which speeded up production in industry. This helped to increase the status of trade unions in the years which followed the war and aided the growth of support for the Labour Party. The British government also increased its control over the presentation of the war in the press by appointing a minister of propaganda. To pay for the War, indirect taxes were greatly increased in Britain on goods.

Why did Germany lose the war?

1. Attempts to Break the Deadlock

The Allies used a naval blockade in an attempt to starve the Central powers of vital supplies of food and raw materials. The torpedo and the mine were used extensively in naval battles. The guns on British battleships were 15 inches wide and could be used with devastating effect against enemy vessels.

The Newly acquired torpedo destroyer for Naval combat, was a great advantage to Britain. These technical advancements helped the British to enjoy control of the seas and put into effect the naval blockade. However, the blockade worked very slowly.

The Germans responded with a naval blockade of Russia, (helped by Turkey), and engaged in unrestricted submarine warfare directed against the trade of Britain, France and Italy, which meant that Germany could attack vessels even of non-combatant powers such as the USA as they entered the war zone. However, unrestricted submarine attacks subsequently proved counterproductive because countries such as the USA got inflamed by such attacks.

The most significant naval battle of the war was the Battle of Jutland, (1916). The Germans sank 14 ships whereas the British sank 11 ships. Its significance was that it convinced the Germans that their navy had to avoid further naval battles. After Jutland, the German navy returned to port, leaving the British with control of the seas, at least on the surface of the water.

New weapons were also tried out with the aim of achieving a breakthrough on the western front, including poison gas, airships, tanks and aircraft. The British were the first to introduce tanks and they gradually became more efficient weapons towards the end of the war. Lorries were also used. There were 1000 Lorries in 1914 but the number had shot up to 60 000 by 1918. Aeroplanes were also used although later models tended to be more reliable and could travel faster. Their bombing potential could therefore be exploited.

2. The Search for Allies: Us entry into the War

The entry of the USA into the First World War on the side of the Allies, in April 1917 certainly weakened Germany and signaled her defeat. She entered the war on the side of the Allies mainly because Germany refused to end unrestricted submarine attacks against US shipping.

The USA brought its massive economic muscle to financially exhausted Allies. She also brought fresh soldiers, who though they may not have made an immediate impact in 1917, later contributed to the wearing down of Germany on the western front. For example, the USA sent 2 million troops to fight Germany in 1918. Such numbers, equipped with more modern weapons no doubt brought German defeat sooner than later.

3. War Aims

The entry of the USA was also important in another respect: it helped the Allies to know what they were fighting for. Woodrow Wilson, the US president gave fresh impetus to the Allied cause and therefore made the defeat of Germany more imminent by claiming that the Allies were fighting for:

1. The upholding of democratic principles
2. The defense of the right of small nations to govern themselves (self-determination).

On 8 January 1918, Wilson laid down his 14 points in a major speech. This was the clearest statement of Allied War aims in which Wilson claimed that the points would constitute the future “new world order.”

The 14 points contrasted sharply with Germany’s own war aims, the “September Programme.” which had been drawn up by German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg: They stood and follow:

1. To weaken France to such an extent as to make its revival as a great power “impossible for all time.”
2. To break Russian dominance in Eastern Europe by bringing all non-Russian areas under German domination.
3. To achieve German economic dominance in Europe through the creation of a vast common market.
4. To establish a large Central- Africa German empire.

4. The Eastern Front

The war on the eastern front was more mobile than the war on the west of Europe. It was believed that the vast human resources of Russia dubbed the “Russian steamroller.” would enable the Russians to bleed the German army to death on the eastern front provided they received adequate supplies of food and military equipment. But the Russian generals had fewer troops available than those of Germany and Austria- Hungary at the start of the war.

In September 1914, the Russian army was twice defeated by the Germany army, at the Battles of Tanneberg and the Maurian Lakes. In these early exchanges in battle, the Russian army won a great number of battles against a weaker Austro- Hungarian army in Serbia which gained a very important victory at Galician in September 1914, when over 100 000 Austria prisoners were taken. The weakness of Austria- Hungary proved to be a liability to Germany on the eastern front as Germany had to bail them out of sticky situations.

Although Russia suffered further defeats at the hands of Germany in the eastern front, a statement also developed for the remainder of 1916. In July 1917, a major Russian offensive failed to achieve a breakthrough. Mutiny now spread throughout the ranks of the Russian army. In October 1917, when the Bolshevik Party seized power, the new government led by Lenin opened peace negotiations with the central powers at Brest-Litovsk. The terms imposed on Russia ensured that Russia conceded 33% of its territory, 64 percent of its pig iron production, 40 percent of coal output and 24 percent of steel-making capacity.

The eastern front had registered real military progress for Germany but it served to spread her forces and systematically weakened her as she fought the war on two fronts.

5. The Defeat of Germany on the Western Front

At home, food was scarce in Germany, strikes common at many factories and the revolutionary Social Democratic Party (SDP) agitated for the end of the war. In July 1917 many deputies in the Reichstag called for a negotiated peace to end the crisis at home as well. Bethmann Hollweg became the scapegoat for all the unrest and was forced to resign. In January 1918, a wave of strikes broke out in Berlin and demonstrators demanded an end to the bitter conflict on the western front.

The German army, ignoring the growing opposition to the war went ahead with plans for its largest offensive of the war. In March 1918, Germany launched a final make-or-break offensive on the western front (the Ludendorff offensive) This final gamble by the Germans to win the war before their supplies ran out came very close to success. They broke through the River Somme, and were less than 40 miles from Paris by the end of May 1918. At the end of July 1918, however, the German attack was finally halted by the Allies. In August the Allies under the overall command of Marshall Foch, the French commander began what proved to be the most decisive counter- attack of the entire war on the western front. This dare-devil assault finally pushed a large hole through the German defences, sending the German army into retreat. In September 1918, the Austro-Hungarian government appealed for peace, followed by the Bulgarians.

The leading German generals Erich Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg now realized the war was lost. They advised leading figures in the Reichstag to form a democratic government in order to negotiate peace terms before the Allies occupied German territory. This decision, taken by the leaders of the German army was designed to shift the blame for defeat onto the shoulders of the democratic politicians and away from the Kaiser and the army-the real architects of Germany's defeat. It helped to feed a powerful myth that the German army was not defeated in battle but "stabbed in the back" by socialists and democrats at home. The Kaiser abdicated and fled into exile to Holland. A new German democratic government was formed. This was soon followed by an armistice at 5am on 11 November 1918. The First World War ended.

Why was Germany defeated?

Key Analysis

The German army came very close to winning the First World War but in the end was defeated by a more powerful combination of allies.

1. The failure of the Schlieffen Plan ensured the Germans had to fight a protracted war on two fronts, which sapped Germany's economic and military resources.
2. At sea, the Allied blockade proved crucial because Germany started to suffer serious shortages of food and raw materials, especially during 1918.
3. The entry of the USA into the war which was actually caused by German policy of unrestricted submarine warfare brought a very powerful ally to the side of Britain and France, at a time when Allies were really under pressure. This ensured that in the long term, Germany could not hope to win. The German army also suffered from having very weak allies, which it constantly had to help out of trouble. This overstretched Germany's military and economic resources.
4. In the final Analysis, the Allies economic and military strength proved stronger than that of Germany over the course of a lengthy conflict. In this respect the decision of the British government to go to war in 1914 was a decisive factor which tipped the scales against Germany. The British deployed 7 million troops into the battle on the western front. This enabled the French to hold out against the Germany army on land, something they had not achieved in the Franco-Prussians War (1870-71) and failed to achieve in 1940. Of course British and French losses were enormous but the Germans lost many of their best troops as the conflict developed. Hence, gradually, the superior military strength of Germany was worn down. By 1918, the entry of the Americans, which added a further 2 million troops and even more economic muscle for the Allies, ensured that the balance of forces standing against Germany was much too strong for one single nation, supported only by weak military allies, to resist.

What were the consequences of the war?

1. The First World War had major consequences. During the war, four major monarchical empires the Hohenzollern- in Germany; the Romanov,-in Russia; the Habsburg,- Austria- Hungary, the Ottoman in Turkey, were all destroyed.
2. The loss to human life was huge Over, 8,5 million were killed in combat whilst 22 million were wounded. Most of the casualties were young, able-bodied men dubbed the "lost generation." There were great many widows and orphans after the war.
3. The economic consequences of the war were also far- reaching. The world economy suffered a slump after the war which damaged world currencies, trade and employment patterns. The switching of production to war materials led to unemployment after the war and increased in the price of consumer goods.

Another major economic consequence was a vast increase in the debts of most nations. Most of these debts were owed to the USA. As a result, the war severely weakened the economic dominance of Europe and saw the growth of the economic power of the USA.

4. There was great increase of state power in most European countries. The Russian Revolution of 1917 began the trend towards totalitarian governments which became a feature of the interwar period.
5. The war led to demands by small nations to govern themselves. Hence at the end of the war, a whole lot of small, though weak, countries were set up as independent states.
6. The status of women also changed during the war. Many had been employed in munitions factories and in transport and clerical work during the War. Therefore many women demanded greater equality in the inter-war period. This increased status enabled women to get the vote, especially in Britain.
7. The war increased the status and power of organized labour. There was a growth of trade union representation after the war, virtually in all countries.

Examination type questions

1. Compare the importance of at least three factors which affected the lives of the civilian population during the First World War.
2. Identify and explain any two means used to try to break the deadlock on the western front from 1914 to 1918.
3. "The American entry into the War was the most important reason why Germany was defeated." How far do you agree?
4. "Weak allies accelerated the German defeat in the First World War." How valid is this claim?

CHAPTER 21

THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE – (1919)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter students should be able to:

1. Describe the aims of the Big Three in the Treaty of Versailles.
2. Explain what problems the big three faced in trying to come up with a “just” peace.
3. Describe the territorial and non-territorial terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
4. Discuss the outcome of the Treaty of Versailles on .
 - a) Germany.
 - b) France.
 - c) Public opinion.
5. Describe the impact of the peace treaties on Germany’s Allies such as Austria. Hungary and Turkey (1919-1923).
6. Assess the impact of the peace treaties between 1919- 1923 on Europe in the 1920s and 1930s.
7. Evaluate how far the Treaty of Versailles applied the concept of self- determination- unfairly?

The Paris Peace conference came in the wake of the First World War. The First World War had lasted for four years and three months. It began on 28 July when Austria declared war on Serbia and Germany on Russia and France and the war ended on November 11, 1918. It involved sixty sovereign states and overthrew four Empires (Germany Empire, Austrian Empire, Turkish Empire and Russian Empire) combatant lives (another 30 million were wounded) and cost about £ 35 000 million.

Although representatives of thirty two states attended the Peace Conference at Paris in January 1919 to write the peace treaties, three men stood out above others. These were Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, Clemenceau, Prime Minister of France, and Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Britain. These came to be known as the Big Three, for they eventually made all the decisions of the Conference.

These three leaders seem to have had conflicting objectives at the Paris Peace Conference in France.

Woodrow Wilson

He was an idealist, a theorist and pacifist. As a pacifist, (the horrors of the American Civil War had made him a pacifist, he hoping that there would be no war for, mankind. As a theorist (he

was an ex-professor of history and political economy), he liked to apply his academic theory and knowledge to solve the problem of war. As an idealist (he was a man of good intentions), he was able to produce his blue print for peace in the future in his 14 points in January 1918.

Wilson's Fourteen Points

1. The first main theme of Wilson's fourteen points was the granting of national independence to all the oppressed peoples. In practice this involved the following points.

Impartial adjustments of colonial claims: the settlement of colonial problems with reference to the interests of colonial peoples (point 5).

a)- Germany's surrender of her past conquests:

i) Evacuation by Germans of all Russian territory (point 6)

ii) Evacuation by the Germans of all Belgian territory (point 7)

iii) Evacuation by the Germans of Alsace – Lorraine (French territories) (point 8)

(c)-The dissolution of the Austro- Hungarian Empire and Turkish Empire, and the granting of independence to all the oppressed nationalities.

i) The Italian frontier to extend west ward to recover some land from Austria Hungary (Point 9)

ii) Autonomous development for the people of Austria – Hungary (Point 10)

iii) Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro to be independent (Point 11)

iv) The peoples under Turkish rule to be autonomous (Point 12)

v) There was to be an independent Poland (Point 13)

In short, Wilson hoped to remove all of the fundamental causes of World War One, namely the attempt of the big powers to rule alien races.

2.The second main theme was that there should be: -

Open Diplomacy – according to point one, all diplomacy and negotiation between states was to be carried out openly.

Open Sea – according to Point 2, there was to be absolute freedom of navigation of the seas, both in peace and war, except in territorial waters).

Open Trade – according to Point 3, trade conditions for nations should be fair and equal and there should not be any tariff barriers between them.

Disarmament – according to Point 4, armaments were to be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety only. In other words, Wilson wanted to remove 3 root causes of World War I, namely the alliance system, arms race and economic rivalry.

3.The third theme was that an international association of nations should be established (Point 14). This association would not only guarantee the independence of all nations, but would also do its very best to further their prosperity by promoting international co-operation in economic and social spheres. In other words, Wilson wanted to replace national rivalries by international co-operation.

To sum up, Wilson's ideals of a peaceful World consisted of a removal of all the basic causes of the First World War (namely race, secret diplomacy, economic rivalry and the struggle of the oppressed nationalities to get independence, i.e.nationalism) and the formation of an

international organization to promote the political, economic and social progress of the whole world – the future League of Nations.

Clemenceau

Clemenceau, the French Premier, was a man of completely different character and aim from Wilson. He was known as the ‘Tiger’. He was no idealist and pacifist. He did not pay any high regard to the wishes of the oppressed nationalists to gain independence. His basic aims at the Peace Conference were to give France, first of all her two lost valuable provinces, Alsace and Lorraine. Secondly, he wanted security against any possible German aggression in the future. To realize his second aim, he wanted to weaken Germany permanently by confiscating all her colonies and her past conquests, by depriving her of armed forces, by exacting heavy reparations from her and by creating a buffer as a policy of ‘realism’. French hatred of Germany was excusable. France had been defeated in 1871 and nearly defeated in the First World War. As France was next to Germany, she always feared another German aggression.

Lloyd George

Lloyd George the British P.M. stood midway between these two extreme personalities. He was being pressured by the anti-German opinion in Great Britain that Germany must pay for the war and “Hang the Kaiser.” In the meantime, he also understood that if excessively heavy reparations and exceedingly harsh political terms were imposed on Germany, Germany might think of a war of revenge in the future. Moreover, a poor impoverished Germany would also render herself to be a poor customer of British goods. A settlement with moderate terms on Germany suited Britain’s long-term interests. As a result, this tactful politician tried his best to smooth over the differences between the extreme viewpoints of Wilson and Clemenceau.

The outcome of the efforts of Lloyd George was that the Versailles settlement, taken as a whole, appeared to be a compromise between Wilson’s pacifist ideals and Clemenceau’s revengeful attitude.

Study Guides

- i) What were the aims of the Big Three in the Treaty of Versailles and how far were these achieved.
- ii) What problems did the peacemakers face when they were framing a peace, treaty which would address the demands of public opinion?
- iii) What were France’s main aims once Germany had been defeated?
- iv) Why did most Germans see the treaty of Versailles as a dictat?
- v) What strengths did the Germans still enjoy after their defeat and even after the Treaty of Versailles?

The Peace Treaties

The peace treaties below must be studied in greater detail:

- i) Treaty of Versailles with Germany – June 1919
- ii) Treaty of St German with Austria – September 1919
- iii) Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria – November 1919
- iv) Treaty of Trianon with Hungary – June 1920
- v) Treaties of Sevres and Lausanne with Turkey – August 1920 and July 1923 respectively.

Treaty of Versailles (1919)

The treaty reflected chiefly on two basic ideas such as the punishment of the defeated, and the maintenance of the principle of self-determination. These two basic ideas were also reflected in the other treaties.

(i) Territorial Terms

Germany was to lose all her past conquests. These were to be returned to their own national units

-In the South West, Alsace and Lorraine were returned to France.

-The Saar, the coal – producing area of the Germany was to be under the League of Nations for 15 years. After this period, there would be a plebiscite in the Saar to decide its future.

-In the meantime, France was to operate its coalmines so as to compensate for the damage done to the French mines during the war.

-In the West – European and Malmedy (after a plebiscite) were given to Belgium.

-In the north, north Schleswig (after plebiscite), was returned to Denmark.

-In the east, Poland was recreated as a state.

Poland in view of the communist threat to the north, was to be strengthened by (i) the cession of a large part of East Prussia (ii) the cession of Posen, so that she might have access to the sea (in Posen, there was a strip of territory running from River Vistula to the sea. This was termed the Polish Corridor) (iii) to safe guard the Polish control of the corridor, Danzig was made a free international city under the League even though the port was predominantly German in population. (iv) The acquisition of two fifths of Upper Silesia even though Germans outnumbered the Poles by about 5 to 3 in the area.

Memel was given first to the League of Nations, which ultimately passed the place/ area to Lithuania.

-Germany lost all her colonies in Africa and the Pacific. Most of them, were transferred to the League of Nations which allowed the victorious powers such as Britain, France, Belgium, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Japan to rule them as mandates.

-Germany's territorial losses were severe. About 13% of her land and 7 million of her former population had to be given up. However, she was forbidden to enter into any union with Austria.

(ii) Non-Territorial Terms

Disarmament: Military Terms

-Germany was almost totally disarmed. She was allowed an army of 100 000 men to be recruited by voluntary enlistment.

-She was allowed only six small battle ships of less than 10000 tones.

-The general staff had to be disbanded

-All munitions, tanks and heavy guns had to be surrendered and destroyed.

-Importation of munitions was prohibited and their manufacture restricted.

- The army was limited to 16 500 men, six battle ships, six light cruisers, twelve destroyers and twelve torpedo boats. All other ships were to be surrendered to the allies.
- Germany was not allowed to have any U- boats.
- Naval defences and fortifications were to be demolished.
- Germany was not allowed to have an air – force and all existing aeroplanes and zeppelins were to be destroyed or surrendered.
- The Rhineland was to be occupied for 15 years by the Allied forces during which it would remain permanently demilitarized.

(iii) **War - Guilt and Reparations**

According to Article 231 of the Treaty, Germany and her allies had to accept responsibility for causing all the losses and damages to which the Allied powers had been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies. In other words, the whole blame for provoking the First World War was put on Germany. This is historically incorrect and so constituted a great hurt to the German national pride.

This ‘war- guilt clause’ provided the Allied justification for war trials and reparations. At Leipzig, 12 Germans were tried, and 6 were convicted of war crimes. The Kaiser was not tried because the Dutch government refused to hand him over to the Allied powers. In 1921 the Reparation Commission decided that Germany had to pay £6,600 million in reparations. This figure was considered too large, for the reparations covered not only direct loss and damage as a result of the war, but also indirect loss and damage as a result of the war and war expenditure such as allowances paid to families of soldiers, cost of maintaining Allied occupation in the Rhine and the war loans of the Belgian government. Part of the reparations was to be paid in annual installments, part in ships, coal and other kind of goods.

Germany clearly paid a heavy price for her defeat. The war- guilt clause and the accompanying clause concerning reparations were clearly made in a spirit of revenge. The German resentment of the treaty helped the rise of Hitler in the 1930s. Hence, historians have blamed the harsh treatment of Germany at the Versailles Treaty for causing the Second World War.

The Treaty of St. Germain (September 1919)

Like the Versailles settlement with Germany, Austria was punished for provoking World War I and much of her territory was given to the newly created states which were formed as a result of the dissolution of the Austro- Hungarian Empire at the end of the war.

Territorial Terms

- Trieste, Tyrol (part of it) and Istria were given to Italy
- Bohemia including the Sudetenland, Moravia and part of Silesia were given to Czechoslovakia
- Slovenia was given to Rumania
- Bosnia, Herzegovina and Dalmatia – were given to Yugoslavia
- Galicia – given to Poland
- In most of the cases, the subject peoples of the Hapsburg Empire were now returned to the land of the same nationality. The principle of self - determination was asserted once- more.
- The principle of some punishment was at the same time meted out to Austria. Firstly, in the vast territories lost by the Austrians, there lived millions of Austrian Germans. There were 3 million

Germans in the Sudetenland and 250 000 in Tyrol. Secondly, the much-reduced Austria was forbidden to unite with Germany. This was a severe blow to the survival of Austria because Austrian goods had always depended upon the Germany market.

-Austria's population was diminished from about 28 million to less than 8 million.

Non-Territorial Terms

Disarmament / Military Terms

-The Austrian army was not to exceed 30 000 men.

-The manufacture of munitions was limited to what could be produced by a single factory.

-The Austrian army was to be broken up.

-Austria was ordered to surrender her merchant fleet and vast quantities of livestock to the Allies.

-She was forced to accept responsibility for the loss and damage inflicted on Allied property.

Reparations

-A Reparations Committee had to establish Austria's debt.

The Treaty of Neuilly (November 1919)

This was signed with Bulgaria

Territorial Terms

-Bulgaria lost Western Macedonia to Yugoslavia

-Western Thrace, was ceded to Greece, thus Bulgaria lost her outlet to the Aegean (Mediterranean) sea

-Romania was to retain part of Dobruja. Bulgaria actually received a slight extension of territory west of Adrianople to include people of Bulgar origin in her state.

Non-Territorial Terms

Disarmament

-The Bulgarian army was restricted to 20 000 regulars.

-In addition, only 10 000 policemen and 3000 frontier quarrels were to be retained in the state.

-There were similar naval clauses affecting the Bulgarian navy as had been applied to Austria and Germany.

-Bulgaria was not required to forfeit her merchant navy.

Reparations

An amount of £90 million was fixed as Bulgaria's reparations debt.

The Treaty of Trianon (June 1920)

The Treaty with Hungary – confirmed the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy and the existence of an independent Hungary.

Territorial Terms

-Croatia, Slavonia, the Voivodina, and the Banat were ceded to Yugoslavia.

-Slovakia and Ruthania were coded to Czechoslovakia

-Romania got the rest of the Banat, Transylvania and part of Western Hungary.

-Another part of Western Hungary (to become known as the Burgenland) was given to the - Austrian Republic as it was inhabited mostly by German – speaking people. These territorial adjustments, however, also resulted in more than 3 000 000 Magyars being assigned to other

states. Altogether, Hungary lost the staggering number of more than 11 million people to other states.

-The Hungarian armed forces were restricted to 35 000 men.

-It was stated that Hungary was liable to pay reparations but no amount of money was specified.

The Treaty of Sevres (August 1920)

The Treaty of Sevres met with immediate failure because the Big Three had almost completely discarded the principle of nationalism in making the treaty. They partitioned Turkey as a Colony. Besides granting independence to Saudi Arabia and Armenia, the victors almost divided up Turkey among themselves as spoils. Syria and Lebanon were mandated to France, while Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq were mandated to Britain. Rhodes and the Dodecanese were given to Italy. Eastern Thrace, Adrianople and Smyrna were obtained by Greece.

-Even the straits of Dardanelles and Bosphorous were put under international control.

-All that remained of the former Ottoman Empire consisted of the city of Constantinople and the northern end central parts of Asia Minor.

-Imbros and Tenedos were to be ceded to Greece.

-An Allied commission was to control Turkey's finances which would be unequal to the task of paying reparations.

-The Turkish army was cut down to 50 000 men

-Aircraft and most warships had to be surrendered.

The Treaty of Lausanne (July 1923)

-Soon after the Sultan had signed the treaty, a nationalist leader Mustapha Kemal, immediately led a nationalist movement to overthrow the Sultan government. In November 1922, the Sultan's government was deposed. Kemal demanded a new treaty. He also began a war to reconquer the land occupied by the powers. The powers were tired of war, and only Greece was intent on holding her territorial acquisitions. Greece fought with the Turks but after a short while – she was defeated.

This resulted in a new treaty – the treaty of Lausanne

-The treaty was signed on July 24 1923

-Unlike all the above mentioned treaties, it was decided not by the “Big Three”, Russia, Italy, Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia and most important of all, Turkey also participated in the drafting of the treaties.

-By the new treaty, Turkey recovered purely Turkish territories (i.e- eastern Thrace). She gave up her claims to non- Turkish territories. They became mandates according to the treaty of Sevres. Turkey retained Constantinople, Adrianople and land lying between them.

-The treaty of Lausanne turned out to be the most successful treaty because it was the only negotiated Peace Treaty

-Turkey was treated as a nation but not as a defeated enemy.

Study Guides

i) What were the main military restrictions placed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles?

ii) What were the main territorial changes imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles?

iii) Why was the War guilt clause so significant?

iv) How unjustified were German protests about the Treaty of Versailles?

v) Describe the following treaties

a)The Treaty of Trianon (1919)

b)The St. German (1920)

c)Neuiley (1919)

d)Sevier (1923)

vi) How did they affect the countries for which they were concerned?

Assessment of the Peace Settlement

The settlement as a whole, and the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in particular, remain a controversial issue. The critics of the settlement have, on one hand, maintained that the treaties were too harsh, that it was, in-fact, a Carthaginian peace (that is, the terms were excessively severe on the defeated contestants). On the other hand, it has been claimed that the settlement was not severe enough. In the case of the Versailles Treaty criticism is as follows:

(i) The peace settlement was made by the Big Three and the defeated states were never allowed to discuss the terms.

(ii)The punishment on Germany was somewhat excessive, since a democratic government had come to power.

(iii) There was the existence of many national minorities in the new states of Europe, about 17 millions.

(iv) The victorious powers did not disarm, even though the defeated powers had been disarmed to the lowest level.

(v) There were many cases where the Big Three abandoned the principle of nationality when they were making the territorial settlement, for example, Italy obtained South Tyrol which contained 250 000 Austrian Germans, and Rumania obtained Transylvania, where more than half of the population were Hungarians. Thus the defeated powers were suspicious of the intentions of the victorious powers and had deep resentment against the Versailles Treaty.

(vi) Perhaps, the main shortcoming of the Treaty of Versailles was that it was too much of a compromise, as one historian has put it, “between thoroughly opposed positions, too soft to restrain Germany and yet too severe to be acceptable to most Germans”, Marks, continues to say that the treaty of Versailles was “the awkward accommodation of Wilsonian idealism and French cynicism” that proved to be unworkable.

The Treaty of Versailles

It had been generally assumed among German public opinion that the Treaty of Versailles would result in a fair peace. This is because President Wilson’s 14 points were assumed to lay the basis of the terms (this, of course, was never the intention).

However, it soon became clear that the treaty would not be open for discussion with Germany’s representatives. When the drafting of the terms was presented in May 1919, there was national shock and outrage in Germany. In desperation, the first Weimar government led by Sheidemann resigned. The allies were not prepared to negotiate, which obliged an embittered Reichstag to finally accept the Treaty of Versailles by 237 votes to 138 in June. This was because Germany simply did not have the capacity to resist.

The Treaty of Versailles was a compromise, but only in the sense that it was a compromise between the Allied powers.

The ‘Diktat’

1. The Treaty was considered to be very different from President Wilson’s Fourteen Points. Most obviously many Germans found it impossible to understand how and why the guiding principle of self- determination was not applied in a number of cases. They viewed the following areas as much for Germany,’ but placed under foreign rule; Austria, Danzig, Posen, West Prussia, Memel, Upper Silesia, Sudetenland the Saar. Similarly, the loss of German colonies was not in line with the fifth of Wilson’s Fourteen Points, which had called for “an impartial adjustment of all colonial claims. Instead, they were passed on to the care of the Allies as mandates.
2. Germany found it impossible to accept the War Guilt clause (Article 231), which was the Allies justification for demanding the payment of reparations. Most Germans argued that Germany could not be held solely responsible for the outbreak of the war. They were convinced that the war of 1914 had been fought for defensive reasons because their country had been threatened by “encirclement” from the allies in 1914.
3. Germany considered the Allied demands for extensive reparations as totally unreasonable. Worryingly, the actual size of the reparations payment was not stated in the Treaty of Versailles. It was left to be decided later. From a German point of view, this amounted to their being forced to sign a ‘blank cheque.’”
4. The imposition of the disarmament clauses was seen as grossly unfair as Britain and France remained highly armed and made no future commitments to disarm. It seemed as if Germany had been unilaterally disarmed (the disarmament of one party). Wilson pushed for universal disarmament after the war, but France and Britain were more suspicious. As a result only Germany had to disarm, whereas Wilson had spoken in favour of universal disarmament, disarmament worsened German insecurity, internal disorder and increased unemployment.
5. Germany’s treatment by the Allies was viewed as undignified and unworthy of a great power. For example Germany was excluded from The League of Nations, but as part of the treaty, was forced to accept the rules of its covenant. This simply hardened the views of those Germans who saw the League as a tool of the Allies rather than as a genuine international organization.

Altogether, the treaty was seen as a Diktat. The allies maintained a military blockade on Germany until the Treaty was signed. This had significant human consequences such as increasing food shortages. Furthermore, the Allies threatened to take further military action if Germany did not co-operate.

VERSAILLES: A MORE BALANCED VIEW

In the years 1919-1945, most Germans regarded the Treaty of Versailles as a diktat. Britain, too, developed a growing sympathy for Germany’s position. However, this was not the case in France, where the Treaty was generally condemned as being too lenient. It was only after the Second World War that a more balanced view of the Treaty of Versailles emerged in Europe. As a result, recent historians have tended to look upon the peacemakers of 1919 in more sympathetic light, earlier German criticisms of the Treaty are no longer as readily accepted as they once were.

Of course the Paris peace conference statements were motivated by their own national self-interest and the representatives of France and Britain were keen to achieve these at the expense of Germany. However, it is now recognized that it was the situation created by the war and not just the anti-German feeling. The aims of the various powers differed and achieving agreement was made more difficult by the complicated circumstances of the time. It should be remembered that the Paris Peace Settlement was not solely concerned with Germany, so Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey were forced to sign separate treaties. In addition, numerous other problems had to be dealt with. For example, Britain had national interests to look after in the Middle East as a result of the collapse of the Turkish Empire.

At the same time the allies were concerned by the threat of Soviet Russia and were motivated by a common desire to contain the Bolshevik menace.

In the end, the Treaty of Versailles was a compromise. It was not based on Wilson's Fourteen Points as most Germans thought it would be, but equally it was not nearly so severe as certain sections of the Allied opinions had demanded. It should therefore be noted that:

-Clemenceau, the French representative was forced to give way over most of his country's more extreme demands, such as the creation of an independent Rhineland and the annexation of the Saar.

-The application of self-determination was not as unfair as many Germans believed e.g.

-Alsace- Lorraine would have voted to return to France anyway, as it had been French before 1871

-Plebiscites were held in Schleswig, Silesia and parts of Prussia to decide their future.

-Danzig's status under the League was the result of Woodrow Wilson's promise to provide 'Poland with access to the sea.'

-The eastern frontier provinces of Posen and West Prussia were rather more mixed in ethnic make-up than German was prepared to admit (in these provinces Germans predominated in towns, whereas the Poles did so in the countryside, which made it very difficult to draw a clear boundary line.)

-Austria and Sudetenland had never been part of Germany before 1918, anyway.

-Germany was not physically occupied during the war and as a result, the real damage was suffered on foreign soil e.g. France and Belgium.

-In comparison, the Treaty of Versailles appeared relatively moderate to the severity of the terms imposed by the Germans on the Russians at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918, which annexed large areas of Poland and the Baltic states.

The significance of the treaty of Versailles

The historical significance of the Treaty of Versailles goes well beyond the debate over its fairness. It raises the important issue of its impact upon the Weimar Republic and whether it acted as a serious handicap to the establishment of long-term political stability in Germany.

The economic consequences of reparations were undoubtedly a genuine concern. The English economic Keynes feared, in 1919, that the reparations would fundamentally weaken the economy of Germany with consequences for the whole of Europe. However, Germany's economic potential was still considerable.

-It had potentially by far the strongest economy in Europe and still had extensive industry and commercial resources.

-The Weimar Republic's economic problems cannot be blamed on the burden of reparations alone. It should be noted that by 1932 Germany had received more in loans under the Dawes Plan than it paid in reparations.

-It is not really possible to maintain that the Treaty had weakened Germany politically. In some respects, Germany in 1919 was in a stronger position than in 1914. The great empires of Russia, Austria Hungary and Turkey had gone, creating a power vacuum in central and Eastern Europe that could not be filled at least in the short-term by a weak and isolated Soviet Russia or by any other state. In such a situation cautious diplomacy might have led to the establishment of German power and influence at the heart of Europe.

-However, on another level the Treaty might be considered more to blame because, in the minds of many Germans, it was regarded as the real cause of the country's problems and they really believed that it was totally unfair. In the war German public opinion had been strongly shaped by nationalist propaganda and then deeply shocked by the defeat. Both the Armistice and Versailles were closely linked to the "stab in the back" myth that the German Army had not really lost the First World War in 1918. It may have been a myth, but it was a very powerful one.

-As a result, although the war had been pursued by Imperial Germany, it was the new democracy of Weimar that was forced to take the responsibility and the blame for the First World War. Therefore, Weimar democracy was deeply weakened by Versailles, which fuelled the propaganda of the Republic's opponents over the years.

Study Guides

- i) Did the Treaty of Versailles lay the seeds of the Second World War?
- ii) What difficulties arose over the question of Reparations in the years 1919- 1925? Was this a genuine problem?
- iii) Did the Treaty of Versailles overlook the concept of self- determination on Germany?
- iv) How significant was the clamour of public opinion in 1919?

Examination type questions

1. Did the Treaty of Versailles (1919) have any more aim than to reward the victors and punish the aggressors?
2. Was the Treaty of Versailles dominated by the spirit of revenge?
3. "The Peace treaties signed between 1919 and 1923 were neither just nor wise." How justified is this assertion?

4. How valid is the view that the eventual settlement of Versailles was a compromise between the British and French views?
5. "The terms of the Treaty of Versailles were actually reasonable." How far do you agree?
6. Did the Treaty of Versailles fundamentally weaken the Weimar Republic?
7. To what extent was the Treaty of Versailles motivated by anti-German feeling?

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CHAPTER 22

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC: - 1919 – 1933

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Explain the historical links of the Republic to the Versailles Treaty.
2. Explain the provisions of the Weimar Constitution.
3. Explain why the Empire (second reich) was succeeded by a democratic government.
4. Describe the problems faced by the Republic:
 - (a) Political problems e.g. Uprisings such as the Spartacist Revolt, Kapp Putsch, Munich Beer hall Putsch.
 - (b) Economic problems- e.g. the inflation and then hyperinflation and near economic collapse of 1923.
 - (c) Coming of the Great Depression.
5. Evaluate how far the Republic managed to deal with all the above problems
6. Assess the career of Gustav Stresemann, his aims methods, successes and failures.
7. Analyse the performance of the Republic in foreign relations, (1923- 1929).
8. Assess the impact of the Great Depression and the collapse of democracy as extremists such as Hitler came to power.

Study Guides

1. What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany from 1919 to 1923?
2. What kind of government did the Spartacist wish to establish in Germany?
3. Did the Treaty of Versailles fundamentally weaken the Weimar Republic?
4. Describe the main features of the Weimar Constitution.
5. In what ways was the Weimar Constitution?
 - a) A source of strength or weakness of the Weimar Republic?
6. How serious was the opposition of the extreme left to the Weimar Republic? (Those who favoured communist-oriented regime)
7. What did the extreme right stand for? (Anti-Marxism; authoritarian Kaiser style of government).
8. What prompted the Kapp Putsch and why did it fail?
9. How significant was the Kapp Putsch?
10. What was the greatest threat to Weimar democracy?
11. How significant was the Munich Beer hall Putsch?
12. Which was the greater threat to the Weimar Republic in the years 1919- 1923- the extreme left or the extreme right?
13. How did the First World War weaken the German economy?
14. Why did Germany suffer hyper- inflation?

15. How did hyperinflation benefit some Germans and yet totally ruin the others?
16. Was the hyper- inflation of 1923 a disaster for Germany.
17. What methods were used by Stresemann to get the country out of the crisis of 1923 and how effective did they prove to be?
18. Explain why the Weimar Republic was economically stronger than it had been in 1919.
19. “The political instability of the Weimar Republic in the years 1919 to 1923 was the result of its economic difficulties.” Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.
20. Why was 1923 a year of Crisis?
21. What were the strengths of the German economy?
22. What were the weaknesses of the German economy after 1923?
23. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Dawes Plan?
24. Did Stresemann restore pride and prosperity to Germany?
25. Were the years 1924-1929 deceptively stable?
26. Describe the impact of the Great Depression of 1929 on the Weimar Republic.

Weimar Germany was the name given to the period of German history from 1919 until 1933. It got its name from the fact that the constitution for the post – war republic was drawn up at the town of Weimar in South- eastern Germany. The town was chosen for the constituent assembly because it was peaceful and acceptable to the Allied peacemakers in Paris. The hope was that the allies would create more leniently a new peaceful German Republic rather than the militaristic empire that had led Germany into war.

The History of the Republic can be divided into three phases:

- (i) The years of Turmoil (1919 – 1923)
- (ii) The Stressman Era (1924 – 1929).
- (ii) The Collapse of the Weimar Republic (1930 – 1933)

The Years of Turmoil (1919 – 1923)

The Weimar Republic was formed when Kaiser William II abdicated and went into exile in Holland; it had become clear that the Germans and their allies were losing the war. A republic was proclaimed, with the socialist leader Frederick Ebert as Chancellor (President). The first act of the new government was to sign the armistice with the Allies. Many, including Adolf Hitler, saw this as an act of treason and the men who agreed to surrender became known as the “November Criminals”.

From the onset, the Republic faced a host of problems, in the social, economic and political spheres.

The political Problems faced by the Weimar Republic

- (i) General unrest in the country after the First World War.
- (ii) Accused of signing the Versailles Treaty, hence the name “November Criminals”. Thus – the Republic was unpopular from the start.
- (iii) Attempted coups and assassination attempts of the leaders.
- (iv) The Weimar constitution caused problems for the Republic. It was too democratic, especially on the issue of proportional representation. This meant that any party which won seats had to be represented in the Reichstag. This led to political instability, as there were many small

parties, some of them undemocratic. As there were too many political parties, there were many coalition governments. During the fourteen years of the Weimar Republic, there were twenty separate coalitions. The longest government lasted only two years. The political chaos caused many to lose faith in the new democratic system.

Some of the provisions of the constitution were open to abuse. For example, the president, elected for 7 years had too much power, which he could abuse. He could appoint and dismiss the Chancellor or Head of government. He also had the power to dissolve the Reichstag (Parliament). This again could be abused. He also had emergency powers which enabled him to dispute with the Reichstag altogether, which again could be abused by a power - hungry President.

(v) The Stigma of the Versailles Treaty

The Weimar Republic was unfortunate to have ruled when it did. The Republic was forced to sign the Versailles Treaty, the so-called Diktat. By signing this dictated peace, they incurred the wrath of the majority of Germans who considered it as ‘a stab in the back’. They believed that the Republican leaders should not have signed it. The Republic therefore was accused of betraying the Germans, hence the term “November Criminals.”

(vi) The Republic had no positive friends but too many enemies.

In its early years the Republic did not have a standing army to rely on. They relied on the neutrality of the imperial army also relied on volunteer forces of ex- soldiers or the Freikorps. In other words, the Republic had no firm control of the country. It was assaulted by a series of attempted coups e.g the Spartacist coup (1919); the Kapp Putsch (1920) and Hitler’s abortive revolution in Munich (November 1923). There were assassinations of the leadership, for example Matthias Erzberger was assassinated in 1921 for negotiating the peace with the Allied powers. Walter Rathenau, the Minister of Construction was assassinated in 1922.

(vii) There was a lack of firm leadership

The republic never really won the confidence of the Germans. In other words, it was never fully in control of the state. The leadership lacked the required experience to lead the country. The president, Von Hindenburg, for instance, was a military man who did not have the art of governance. This weakened the Republic from the onset.

Economic Problems

(i) Hyper inflation: Germany suffered from extreme inflation, which reached its peak in 1923. This was caused partly by the financial woes of all Germany, governments since 1914. The War had been financed through borrowing. The mark had declined by November 1919 to half its value. After the war, there was a general loss of confidence in the Germany mark. The other cause of inflation was the magnitude of the financial and economic burdens imposed upon Germany in the years following the armistice, for example, reparations payment. In 1921, inflation rose from 60 to the American dollar, to 310. By April 1923 inflation had risen to 24 000 marks to one American dollar. By December it had risen to 4,200 000 000 000.

(ii) The French occupation of the Ruhr

Seventy thousand French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr in 1923 to enforce the payment of reparations. The economic effects of the occupation were catastrophic. The loss of production in the Ruhr caused a fall in production elsewhere. Some of the effects were as follows:

- (a) Unemployment, which rose from 2% to 23%
- (b) Rise in prices became uncontrollable as tax revenues collapsed.
- (c) Bankruptcy, caused by enormous expense of the war.
- (a) Hyper inflation – the government financed its activities by the printing of more money. Many people were affected by this hyperinflation. For the borrowers, debts were wiped out. To civil servants and professionals who relied on wages, their salaries could not purchase much. It also caused financial ruin for the middle class who had invested their capital in business.

The Stressmann period (1924 – 1929)

These were years of stability and prosperity. Germany's economy began to recover – thanks to the policies of Gustav Stressmann (Chancellor up to 1923) and Foreign secretary up to 1929 – when he died) Stressmann's achievements were as follows:

- (i) He successfully negotiated the Dawes plan and Young plans which adjusted Germany's reparations payments to her advantage. Total reparations were reduced from £6,600 million to £2000 million. This envisaged German economic recovery. This recovery was financed by short-term loans borrowed from abroad practically from the USA.
- (ii) Stressmann introduced, with the assistance of the new Minister of Finance, Haus Luther, a new mark known as the Rentenmark in November 1923. This was replaced by the Reichsmark in 1 924.
- (ii) Financial stability accompanied political stability. Hindenburg became President in 1925, replacing Ebert who had died in 1925. This stability blunted Nationalist Opposition.
- (iii) Unemployment was reduced marginally, from 2 000 000 in 1925, to 1,500 000 in 1927 and further reduced to 900 000 in 1929.
- (iv) Stressmann understood foreign policy as the key to the preservation of stability. Stressmann was objective, patient and conciliatory. His achievements in Foreign Policy are as follows: -
 - (a) He signed the Locarno treaties in 1925.
 - (b) Germany entered the League of Nations in 1927.
 - (c) France was forced to evacuate the demilitarized Rhineland. Liberal historians portrayed him as a 'good European' eager to put co-operation in place of confrontation. Stressmann was probably the Republic's most accomplished statesman.

-Stressman's primary aim was to rid Germany of foreign restraints and to regain for her full sovereignty and freedom of political action.

-In 1926 the British withdrew from Cologne, the first major reduction of occupying forces.

-In 1927 there was the withdrawal of the Inter- Allied Control Commission, the major 'watchdog' of the Versailles treaty.

-Before the fall of the republic, the evacuation of foreign troops had been completed (August 1929).

It is hardly surprising that when he died of a stroke in October 1929 at the age of 51, Stressmann's reputation stood very high. He had become a focus for hopes of European peace.

Hitler is reported to have remarked that in Stresemann's position he could not have achieved more.

The Collapse of Weimar (1930 – 33)

Two important events plunged Germany back to political instability and economic problems, which led to the collapse of the Republic. These were:

- (i) The death of Stresemann in October 1929 from a stroke
- (ii) The Wall – Street Crash, signaled the onset of the Great Depression.

Effects of the Great Depression

- (i) The depression led to the recalling of those short – term loans on which Weimar's brief period of relative prosperity had been based. These had been mainly from the USA, which was also hard – hit by the Depression.
- (ii) Closure of banks, factories and firms. By 1931, a number of Austrian and German banks went out of business.
- (iii) Industrial production fell quickly, and by 1932, it was 40% of the 1929 level.
- (iv) There was a drastic reduction of German exports because of reduced markets.
- (v) Unemployment rose from 1, 6 million in October 1929 to 6.12 million in February 1932 and 33% of the total workforce were now unemployed. By 1932, roughly one worker in three was registered as unemployed, with rates even higher in industrial areas of Germany.
- (vi) Stresemann was succeeded by Heinrich Brüning who followed a policy of economic austerity where government spending was cut in order to keep inflation under control and to keep German exports competitive. He passed the following measures: -
 - (a) He reduced social services.
 - (b) He also reduced unemployment benefits, salaries and pensions for government officials.
 - (c) He increased taxes.
 - (d) He also stopped reparations payment.

(iii) Criticisms of government: -

The criticisms came from almost all groups in society especially the industrialists and working class who demanded more decisive action by government. While it was sound economic thinking at the time, it only worsened the situation. The banking collapse in 1931 made matters even worse. Brüning was so unpopular that when he traveled by train he had to keep the blinds down because when people caught sight of him, they threw stones. He was nicknamed the “hunger chancellor.”

Study Guides

- i) What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany from 1919 to 1923?
- ii) What kind of government did the Spartacist wish to establish in Germany?
- ii) Did the Treaty of Versailles fundamentally weaken the Weimar Republic?
- iv) Describe the main features of the Weimar Constitution?

- v) In what ways was the Weimar Constitution a source of strength or weakness of the Weimar Republic?
- vi) How serious was the opposition of the extreme left to the Weimar Republic? (Those who favoured communist-oriented regime)
- vii). What did the extreme right stand for? (Anti-Marxism; authoritarian Kaiser style of government.
- viii). What prompted the Kapp Putsch and why did it fail?
- ix. How significant was the Kapp Putsh?
- x). what was the greatest threat to Weimar democracy?
- xi). How significant was the Munich Beer hall Putsh?
- xii) Which was the greater threat to the Weimar Republic in the years 1919-1923: the extreme left or the extreme right?

xiii) How did the First World War weaken the Germany economy

The end of Parliamentary Democracy

Given the unpopularity of Brüning's policies, he found it difficult to get a majority in the Reichstag. He relied on Article 48 and the emergency powers of the president to get laws passed. By 1932, parliament was being largely ignored.

Some of the advisors of the President included

General Kurt Von Schleicher wanted to include the Nazis in government which Brüning opposed. Hindenburg lost confidence in Brüning and they quarreled about land reform. Brüning was finally replaced as chancellor by the equally unpopular Von Papen. His cabinet of barons had absolutely no support and this was shown in the election of July 1932.

-The result of this election was a disaster for democracy in Weimar Germany. The Nazis received 37% of the vote and 230 seats while their communist enemies got 89 seats.

-The election of 1932, November, saw a decline in Nazi support, but they still remained the largest party in the Reichstag. Von Papen was replaced by Von Schleicher as Chancellor. Von Papen immediately began to plot against Von Schleicher, and met Hitler. They agreed that Hitler would become the Chancellor of a government made up mainly of Von Papen's supporters. Hindenburg, who disliked Hitler, was persuaded to appoint him Chancellor on the 30th January 1933. Thus the Weimar Republic was dead.

The Weimar Republic: (1918- 1934)

Why did the Weimar Republic survive the problems it faced during the 1920?

Although Brüning's resolute action might help to explain why the years of crisis came to an end, on its own it does not help us to understand why the Weimar Republic was able to come through. The republic's survival in 1923 was in marked contrast to its collapse 10 years later when challenged by the Nazis. Why, then did the Republic not collapse during the crisis-ridden months before Brüning's emergence on the political scene? This is a difficult question to answer though the following factors provide clues:

-Popular anger was directed more towards the French and the Allies than the Weimar Republic itself.

-Despite the effects of inflation, workers did not suffer to the same extent as they did during the mass unemployment of the 1930s.

-Similarly employers tended to show less hostility to the Republic in its early years than they did in the early 1930s at the start of the depression.

-Some businessmen did very well out of the inflation, which made them tolerant of the Republic.

-With such attitudes as above, the hostility to the Republic could not reach unbearable limits as it did 10 years later.

-The extreme right, too, was not strong enough (Nazis etc). It was divided and had no clear plans. The failure of the Kapp Putsch served as a warning of the dangers of taking hasty action and was possibly the reason why the army made no move in 1923 during the Munich Beerhall Putsch.

-The extreme left (Marxist etc Communists and Socialists) e.t.c, for example, e.g Ressa Luxembourg etc had not recovered from its divisions and suppression in the years 1918-1921 Being isolated and weakened, it did not enjoy enough support to overthrow the Republic.

-The mutual hatred of the different groups within the Republic enabled it to survive e.g. The separatist uprising was crushed by the Free Korps not because they supported the regime but because they hated communism and communist alike.

-The Kapp Putsch failed because the pro-socialist workers went on a general strike and that paralyzed even the transport network, which forced Wolfgang Kapp to flee and the Free Korps to get stranded and eventually to disband. Such an outcome during both 1919 and 1920, left the Republic unscathed and living on.

Overview: (1924- 1929)

The years 1924-9 marked the high point of the Weimar Republic. By comparison with the periods before and after, these years do appear stable. The real increase in prosperity experienced by many, and the cultural revival of the period, gave support to the view that these years were indeed the “golden years.”

However, historians have generally tended to question this stability because it was in fact limited in scope. This is the reason why the historian Peukert describes these years as a “deceptive stability.”

An unstable economy

Germany’s economic recovery was built on unstable foundations that created a false idea of prosperity. Problems persisted in the economy and they were temporarily hidden only by an increasing reliance on credit from abroad. In this way, Germany’s economy became tied up with powerful external forces over which it had no control. Hindsight now allows historians to see that in the late 1920s, any disruption to the world’s trade or finance markets was bound to have a particularly damaging effect on the uncertain German economy.

A divided society

German society was still divided in deep class differences as well as by regional and religious differences that prevented the development of national agreement and harmony

The war and the years of crisis that followed had left bitterness, fear and resentment between employers and their workers. Following the introduction of the state scheme for settling disputes in 1924, its procedure was used as a matter of course, whereas the intention had been that it would be the exception, not the rule. As a result, there was arbitration in some 76 000 industrial disputes between 1924 and 1932.

In 1928, workers were locked out from their place of work in the Ruhr iron works when the employers refused to accept the arbitration award. It was the most serious industrial confrontation of the Weimar period. A compromise solution was achieved, but it showed the extent of the bitterness of industrial relations even before the start of the world depression.

Political division

Tension was also evident in the political sphere where the parliamentary system had failed to build on the changes of 1918. The original ideals of the Constitution had not been developed and there was little sign that the system had produced a stable and mature system. In particular, the main democratic parties had still not recognized the necessity of working together in a spirit of compromise. It was not so much the weaknesses of the Constitution, but the failure to establish a shared political outlook that led to its instability. Weimar's condition suggested that the fundamental problems inherited from the war and the years of crisis had not yet been resolved. They persisted so that when the crisis set in during 1929-30 the Weimar Republic did not prove strong enough to withstand the storm.

Study Guides

- i) Why did Germany suffer hyper-inflation?
- ii) How did hyperinflation benefit some Germans and yet totally ruin the others?
- iii) Was the hyper-inflation of 1923 a disaster for Germany?
- iv) What methods were used by Stresemann to get the country out of the crisis of 1923 and how effective did they prove to be?
- v) Explain why the Weimar Republic was economically stronger than it had been in 1919.
- vi) "The political instability of the Weimar Republic in the years 1919 to 1923 was the result of its economic difficulties." Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.
- vii) Why was 1923 a year of crisis?
- viii) What were the strengths of the German economy?
- ix) What were the weaknesses of the German economy after 1923?
- x) What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Dawes Plan?
- xi) Did Stresemann restore pride and prosperity to Germany?
- xii) Were the years 1924- 1929 deceptively stable?
- xiii) Describe the impact of the Great Depression of 1929 on the Weimar Republic.

Examination type questions

- i) How far were the problems encountered by the Weimar Republic of its own making?
- ii) How valid is the view that the Weimar Republic survived the crises of the 1920s because of the mutual hatred among its opponents?
- iii) Why did Hitler fail to take over power before 1930, but managed to do so after 1933?
- iv) Assess the impact of the Great Depression upon the social and political life in Germany.
- v) Why, by 1934, did the Weimar Republic fail to survive?

vi) Why did the Weimar Republic face so many problems between 1918 and 1923?

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CHAPTER 23

THE FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) Explain the reasons why France transformed from being an Empire to a Republic
- (ii) Explain the defeat of the Republic by Prussia
- (iii) Examine the divisions which existed during the early years (1870-1875) of the Republic.
- (iv) Explain how and why the Republic survived the crises which it faced, i.e. The Paris Commune (1871) threats from the radical right and left; strikes between 1906 1911, -The Boulanger affair (1885-1887)

-The Dreyfus case (1894-1899)
- (v) Describe and explain the careers of Adolphe Thiers and Leon Gambetta and Jules Ferry.
- (vi) Assess the extent to which France had recovered by 1900, from the defeat of 1870.

Establishment of the Third Republic

The armistice was concluded when the German authorities, which had preceded the commune-episode, allowed elections for a new assembly at which the only issue had been that of peace or continuation of war. The Assembly met at Bordeaux and had no choice but to accept the terms. Peace was signed at Frankfurt. Not the least of these achievements was helpful in his dealings with the victorious Bismarck and later in raising the money required to pay off the indemnity to Germany, which had to be done before the occupation army could be withdrawn.

Reasons for the establishment of the Republic

(i) The discrediting of the monarchy

It is important to understand why, despite a monarchist majority, a republic was eventually established. The Paris Commune had been a warning of the divisions. A monarchical restoration would cause unity within the nation. This was, perhaps, more important than divisions within the monarchist camp, in preventing its occurrence.

(ii) Thiers' change of position

This was, in principle, in favour of a constitutional monarchy, but came to the conclusion that its imposition would create unacceptable tension within French society. This weakened the monarchists and enhanced the drift towards republicanism.

(iii) The divisions within the monarchist camp

The arguments within the monarchist camp over the flag to be adopted are to be seen as a symbol of more significant disagreements as to what type of monarchy was to be restored. The Bourbon claimant Henri Conte de Chambored insisted that the old Bourbon flag must replace the republican tricolor one. This discredited the monarchist alternative.

(iv) The rise of Bonapartism

The Prince Imperial, Napoleon III's son and the last Bonapartist contender was a more attractive figure, and despite the Empire's defeat of 1870, a Bonapartist group began to emerge. The chief result of this was however, to encourage the supporters of a monarchy to move towards a republican solution for fear of something worse.

The Republican Constitution of 1875

(i) The President was to be elected by the two Chambers of Assembly – Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

(ii) Universal manhood suffrage elected Deputies for three years.

(iii) Senators elected for nine years mainly by delegates of the towns (at first there were life Senators but in 1884 these were abolished).

(iv) Prefects appointed by the state were key administrative figures in the provinces.

MacMahon – was President from 1873 – 1879

Jules Ferry – President from 1879 – 1885

Study Guides

i) Why did the Second Empire end?

ii) Explain the role in the French Third Republic of

iii) The National Assembly

iv) The Senate

v) Compare the main features of the Third Republic's system of government as had been set up to 1875, with those of the Second Empire.

vi) Why was the Bourbon attitude to the flag of France important in the failure of monarchism?

vii) What were the causes of the Paris Commune?

The Church and the State

The Catholic Church in France was, in this period, politically to the right and its position and privileges, particularly in the field of education were the subject of sharp political controversy. The commune had passed anti – Catholic edicts, and at its end, had killed, amongst other hostages, the Archbishop of Paris. The Church had supported the monarchy and up to 1914, was hostile to the Republic. In the 1880s and 1890s in France, a series of left wing governments removed church privileges and control of education, health and charitable work. In the early twentieth century, many religious orders were banned until in 1905, the Catholic Church lost its official status, the remaining monasteries were dissolved and the state became entirely secular,

ending the Church's influence in French politics. All of this is central to the political life of the Republic for the threat to its existence was more than a matter of some colourful escapades by romantic but hopeless pretenders. The real threat from the Right lay in the disaffection of such a large section of the nation from the Republic, relations between state and church were at the center of this.

The Survival of the Republic

In this section the student is expected to explain the survival of the Republic amidst threats and dangerous episodes. The enemies of the Republic included the Germans, monarchists and the Right in general. These threatened the Republic in the early years. At least the death in 1879 of the Prince Imperial, leaving the Bonapartist supporters without an acceptable candidate removed one threat. There was a growth of socialism during the Third Republic, and towards 1914, more strikes and industrial violence. The threat from the left was of a different order to that from the Right. The socialists wished to change the policies of Republican governments and even the character, of the Republic, but they were not a threat to its enhanced existence in the same way as its enemies from the Right.

Dangerous Episodes

There were a series of dangers to the Republic's existence arising from the Boulanger Affair, of the late 1880s, the Panama scandal at the end of that decade and the Dreyfus case at the end of the century. The dangers to the state were different in form and gravity. Candidates should be able to comment on how serious a threat each of the dangers posed to the Republic's existence. Students should explain why, despite these dangers, the Republic survived.

The Boulanger Affair

General Boulanger was an ex- minister of war who used the loss of Alsace – Lorraine to whip – up right wing nationalist support including ex- monarchists and Bonapartists. He kept standing in and winning elections, there were many demonstrations in his support. In 1889, he thought of a coup detat, but panicked and fled the country when the government moved to arrest him. He committed suicide in 1891 and despite the strength of the right – wing opponents of the Republic, he at least lacked the nerve to be a real threat to its existence.

The Panama Canal Scandal

In 1888 the government gave official backing to the Panama Canal Company for whom de lesseps was constructing the canal. Many thousands of French investors lost their money when the company went bankrupt. Jewish financiers and corrupt politicians were held responsible. No real corruption was established by a commission of inquiry but it aroused great cynicism about these in political life and seemed to many to typify the grobby intrigues of public life under the Republic. The socialists benefited but the Jews suffered because of it.

The Dreyfus Case

This had anti- Jewish overtones, for Dreyfus was one of the few Jewish army officers. He was in 1894 convicted for selling army secrets to the Germans and was given life imprisonment on Devil's Island. A long fight to prove his innocence followed, led by the eminent novelist Emile Zola. A second trial in 1899 found Dreyfus guilty once more but found factors in his favour and he was grudgingly given a pardon. In 1906 the Chamber of Deputies set aside his conviction and

restored his army rank. In general those to the Right in French life, including the army authorities were against Dreyfus and those on the left fought to clear him. The bitterness with which the issue was accompanied on both sides revealed the deep tensions in French society at that time.

A weakness in discussing the three episodes described above is to fall into the trap of describing what happened, rather than meeting the evaluation requested by any question posed at this level. It is, for example, quite possible to argue that the Dreyfus case helped the Republic by rallying its friends and, ultimately, discrediting its enemies. More serious still is the tendency of some students to assume that the survival of the Republic in these years revolves entirely around these well-known crises and to forget all the underlying factors, social, political and economic, which are equally relevant to any assessment of both the gravity of the threats to the Third Republic and to its survival, not just to 1914, but through to the defeat in war in 1940.

Achievements of the Republic

Often the history of the Third French Republic is offered simply as one of crises survived. Students should also be ready to offer a more positive evaluation of the achievements of these years such as the following: -

The Constitution of 1875

This constitution gradually became more democratic.

This can be seen in the following:

- i) The Assembly moved from Versailles to Paris
- ii) The life senators were abolished
- iii) Freedom of the Press was guaranteed
- iv) Trade unions were made legal

Much of this took place in the 1880s

(b)International Relations

The German indemnity was quickly paid off and during the rest of the period France moved, albeit slowly, out of diplomatic isolation into alliance with Russia and entente with Britain. This constituted a solid achievement ensuring that France would not again have to fight against Germany alone.

(c)Colonial Policy

Colonial policy was a source of political divisions at home and caused friction with other European powers. France expanded and acquired the following areas: -

- i) Tunisia was acquired in 1881
- ii) Madagascar and the French Congo were occupied.
- iii) French lands in Indochina were extended. By 1914 France's overseas empire was outdone only by that of Britain. More important was the fact that, after the difficult crises at Fashoda in 1898, colonial rivalry between France and Britain ceased to be a source of tension and division and the way became open for the Entente Cordiale of 1904.

(d)The Economy

The economy, hampered by the loss of Alsace – Lorraine made unspectacular progress, especially contrasted with that of Germany, with a particular concern being caused by the virtual end of any expansion of the population, which rose from 37 million in 1871 to only 39 million in 1911 (the comparable figures for Germany were 41 and 65 million). There was growth in agriculture, industry and trade. Coal production trebled, steel production doubled and the railway network expanded from 20 to 50 thousand kilometers. The strong rural base of the economy and of society encouraged a much-needed social stability and this continued to be so despite the flow of emigrants from rural areas to urban centers. After 1900, in particular, there was a trickle of social reform in the areas of public health, trade unions, working conditions and insurance schemes.

Cultural Growth

The growth of Paris led to great cultural flowering in the arts and literature and any student hoping to find a suitable question on cultural history is most likely to find it, if asked on this period, in a French setting.

Study Guides

- i) Describe the policy of Jules Ferry.
- ii) Describe the emergence and collapse of the movement led by General Boulanger.
- iii) What were the effects on French politics of the Panama Scandal and the Dreyfus crisis?
- iv) Outline and explain the role played by the following factors in the survival of the French Third Republic:
 - a) Resolute leadership in taking action and passing legislation
 - b) Moderate political views of the majority of the people.
 - c) Success in foreign and colonial affairs.
 - d) Successful social and economic policy
 - e) Combination of good fortune as well as to the skill of republican politicians.
 - v) How far had France recovered in 1900 from the defeat she had suffered in 1870?

Examination type questions

1. How do you account for the survival of the French Third Republic in the period 1870-1914?
2. How successfully did the governments of the Third Republic deal with internal opposition?
3. How far had France recovered in 1900 from the defeat of 1870?
4. Why was the impression that the Third French Republic was fragile and rather misleading?
5. Assess the policies of the different leaders of the Third French Republic.
6. 'Despite political instability, the French Third Republic scored some notable achievements both domestically and internationally.' Discuss this statement.

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CHAPTER 24

EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM: 1870-19

THE SCRAMBLE FOR COLONIAL TERRITORIES

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- 1.Explain the various causes of the scramble for Africa.
- 2.Assess the relative importance of the causes of the scramble.
- 3.Describe the role played by the following factors in the urge for colonies:
 - a)European industrialization
 - b)The change in the balance of power in Europe
 - c)The need for markets
- 4)Explain the growth and the impact of public opinion in Britain, Germany, France in the urge for colonies.
- 5)Examine the scramble for Africa and the Far East.
- 6)Describe the coming and impact of the Berlin West Africa Conference (1884-85).
- 7)Explain the flashpoints of the scramble for Africa: Egypt, 1882, The Congo, 1879-1884; the Niger, 1886, Fashoda, 1898. Explain how such flashpoints hastened the pace of the partition of the continent.

Imperialism is the control or influence of one power over another. However the expansion in the last two decades of the nineteenth century is usually regarded as “new” in that the European powers, instead of controlling territories in Africa and Asia indirectly through trade, began to take over direct responsibility for their administration and defence

Initially, historians such as J.A.Hobson, H.N. Brailsford and V.I. Lenin were convinced that “new imperialism” was caused by economic factors which can be divided into two main groups:

- a) The existence of much surplus capital in the European states that businessmen and investors wanted to invest in new profitable enterprises in the colonies (J.A. Hobson’s theory).
- b) Economic competition between the industrialized states of the world for markets and raw materials, which they thought they could find in the colonies (V.I. Lenin’s argument).

Right up to the 1950s these arguments were accepted as orthodoxy or standard, but closer analysis has shown a lot of inconsistencies in some of the economic arguments:

For example, Germany and Italy, two countries with great colonial ambitions, actually suffered from a shortage of capital and needed it at home.

Similarly, detailed research on colonial companies such as the British South Africa Company has shown that in reality they were not very profitable and often paid no dividends. It can also be

argued that the new colonies, particularly in tropical Africa, could hardly provide large markets for European manufacturers.

In view of these observations, it is not surprising that some historians have argued that the New Imperialism was triggered by political rather than economic causes. Robinson and Gallagher, for instance, argued that it was Britain's occupation of Egypt which was carried out to safeguard the Suez Canal as the route to India that set off a chain reaction that led to the partition of Africa. Similarly, AJP Taylor interpreted Bismark's colonial policy as a means to strengthen the short lived Franco-German Entente. Remember that the traditional political explanation is still forceful and valid; the creation of Germany by 1871 which resulted in the ousting of France and the shift in the balance of power in favour of Germany all led to the humiliation and loss of prestige on the part of France. Such prestige could only be recovered by taking up colonies either in Asia or Africa.

Another theorist whose ideas now seem inadequate is the Russian Communist leader Lenin. Writing in 1916-17, he linked imperialism with "monopoly capitalism." Once capitalism has matured, the banks controlled both manufacturing industry and governments; and, in their endless search for higher profits, the financiers directed governments to partition Africa to secure valuable raw materials. Yet his views about the nature of capitalism seem inappropriate. Even in France and Britain, monopolies were not nearly as powerful as Lenin insisted and in industrially backward states like Russia and Italy, governments were far less influenced by financiers. More importantly, Lenin's interpretation is logically flawed. He clearly dates the emergence of "Monopoly finance capital" at about 1900. Since he suggests that this was the motive force behind imperialism, it cannot logically be used to explain colonial acquisitions made before that date; as most of them were.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to completely discard the economic considerations. Increasingly as more and more powers introduced tariffs, the possession of a large colonial empire was seen as the only way to guarantee access to the vital raw materials need by the modern economies. Businessmen in Marseilles, Liverpool and Hamburg were constantly pushing their governments into annexing areas where they had important trading interests.

Public opinion

There was also often an exaggerated and wildly inaccurate belief in the potential wealth of new colonies. In the early twentieth century for instance, German public opinion believed that Morocco was greatly wealthy and bitterly resented the growth of French influence there.

Increasingly, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century European governments backed by public opinion began to believe that their states could remain great nations only if they had colonial empires which would provide trade, raw materials and opportunities for settlement. Thus a French political economist, Paul Lerroy- Beaulieu, stressed that it was "a matter of life and death." For France to become a "great African power or in a century or two she will be no more than a secondary European power and will count for about as much in the world as Greece or Rumania." By 1900 imperialism had, in Norman Rich's words, developed into a "mass cult" colonies became symbols of national greatness and prestige, desired by nationalists of every economic and social class. The imperial idea, like nationalism itself, had been stirred into flames

by visionaries, theorists, and prophets; it was subsequently nourished by the systematic propaganda of interest groups, patriotic and colonial societies and the nationalist press.”

In the 1890s public opinion in Britain and elsewhere became an added force behind imperial expansion. “Jingoism,” an assertive form of nationalism, was encouraged, if not promoted by the popular press. For example, the Daily Mail capitalized on the depth and volume of public interest in imperial possessions,” of its one million readers.

In France, where public opinion had been largely apathetic to imperialism, before the 1890s, nationalism allegedly made many Frenchmen imperialists. Colonial societies and commercial pressure groups naturally took advantage of this mood to push governments into yet more colonial acquisitions.

Great power status, previously measured in terms of population, military capacity and industrial strength, now came to include overseas possessions. Caprivi, Bismarck’s successor, said many Germans believed that “once we came into possession of colonies, then purchased an atlas and coloured the continent of Africa blue, we would become a great people.” Hence, the acquisition of Tunisia by France in 1880-81 was hailed as a sign that “France is recovering her position as a great power.”

Study Guides

- i) Why did the Great Powers compete with each other in China? Why was there no partition?
- ii) Which colonial societies were formed in Britain, France and Germany and how did they spur their governments into the Scramble for Africa?

The Causes of the Scramble for Africa

Why did the partition of Africa Occur?

The partition of Africa can be explained, in part, by some of the motives ascribed to imperialism in general. Nevertheless, some historians have searched for a more specific explanation of it. The classic explanation is that offered by Robinson and Gallagher. They argued that British policy in Africa was essentially a defensive reaction to a series of local events and crises. The main consideration of the British government in these crises was the security of the route to India. Their interpretation that in southern Africa the Cape was crucial to imperial interests has been generally accepted.

On the other hand, their view that Egypt acted as a catalyst to the partition of tropical Africa has been heavily criticized. Their notion of a “chain reaction,” in which French resentment at the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 activated a latent rivalry in West Africa, is not sound enough. French expansion from Senegal, which began in 1879, clearly pre-dated the crisis over Egypt.

The Congo

The view that it was rival claims to the Congo that sparked off the partition is more convincing. Firstly, the interests of at least four European states were involved, not just two as in the case of Egypt.

Secondly, Bismarck's role in provoking the scramble is given due prominence in this interpretation since Germany played an active part in the Congo dispute. Thirdly, the creation of a Franco-Germans front against Britain's attempt to exclude them from the Congo introduced Great Power diplomacy into the situation in Africa. An additional link between the Congo dispute and the partition of Africa is the Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885. At this conference, ground rules for partition were laid down as well as a settlement of the Congo issue itself. Taken together these four factors indicate that rival claims to the Congo played a more important part in initiating the Scramble than the Anglo French dispute over Egypt.

The Timing of the Scramble

The timing of the scramble certainly requires a thorough explanation.

A key factor in the 1880s was the decline of British "paramountancy" in Africa. Until the 1870s, Britain had succeeded in maintaining an informal influence over most of Africa south of the Sahara. In the 1880s this was challenged. Military defeats in Asia and Africa, concluding with a decline in relative naval power, were interpreted as signs of British weakness. Bismarck concluded that there would not be much resistance to join Franco-German pressure. British paramountacy collapsed like a house of cards when she agreed to an international conference. But its collapse left a void. In this unstable situation, Africa was up for grabs' Protectorates were being proclaimed over African territory and some mechanism was needed to rival claims. The solution was the Berlin Conference. This marked the formal beginning of the partition of Africa. The Scramble for Africa cannot be explained satisfactorily without some reference to changes taking place in Africa. Imperialism in general is no longer viewed exclusively in terms of economic or political pressures emanating from Europe. The traditional Euro-centric approach is being modified by increasing recognition of the importance of changes at the periphery i.e. in Africa. Imperialism therefore was increasingly seen as, in part, a response to a series of local crises and changing situations within Africa itself.

The case of Egypt has already been exhausted in Southern Africa a succession in of crises seemed to put at risk strategic interests at the Cape. Most of those crises at the Cape emanated from expansionist drives of Europeans. In West Africa, problems arose when stable relationships were upset by changes in the nature, or profitability of existing patterns of trade. This was the case with Jaja of Opobo, Nana of Itsekiriland and Pepple of Bonny.

Two general conclusions may be drawn: Firstly, although economic imperialism is of relevance to European activity in Africa, it may be necessary to regard it as a separate factor from the European diplomacy of the scramble.

Secondly, the partition stemmed from an interaction between Europeans and Africans. It is not just a question of the impact of Europe on Africa.

Study Guides

- i) Why did the scramble become so intense during the last quarter of the nineteenth century?
- ii) Were economic factors more important than political factors in the scramble for colonies?
- iii) Which event was more important in the scramble for colonies in Africa: British occupation of Egypt or Leopold's activities on the Congo basin?
- iv) What factors motivated the upsurge of imperial activity?
- v) Why did the partition of Africa occur?

- vi) How were relations between the major powers affected by colonial expansion?
- vii) What are the main economic theories that have been put forward to explain the scramble for Africa? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- viii) Why was the late nineteenth century an “age of imperialism.”?

The impact of colonial rivalries:

How were relations between the major powers affected by colonial expansion?

Britain’s relations with France and Russia

During most of these years Britain’s imperial rivalries with France and Russia were the key factor in international relations. Anglo-French relations underwent a dramatic change as a result of colonial rivalry. From 1870 until 1884 Britain and France had no major quarrels and usually co-operated in international affairs. The next two decades however were marked by continuous friction, especially in Africa bringing the two powers to the verge of war.

Rivalry in West Africa certainly damaged Anglo- French relations. The economic interests of Britain and France there seemed too small to justify war but prestige was the crux of the matter. Both sides engaged in rather reckless ‘brinkmanship,’ raising the spectre of war on the Niger until the agreement of 1898. By this date the crisis had shifted to the Nile.

Britain’s refusal to revive the Anglo-French partnership (Dual control) after her military intervention in Egypt in 1882 was a severe blow to French pride. French self-esteem would only be satisfied by a British withdrawal from Egypt. Britain, however, was resolved to stay. One reason for this was that Britain regarded signs of Franco-Russian co-operation in the Mediterranean in the 1890s as a serious threat to her strategic interests. France attempted to exert pressure through the Fashoda expeditions yet in 1898, Britain would have gone to war with France rather than give way.

The Fashoda crisis (1898) ended in a drama. Good Anglo-French relations had to be based on France’s acceptance of Britain’s position in Egypt. The important lesson which the French colonialists drew from Fashoda was that France should barter Egypt in exchange for French predominance in Morocco. They would also give up disputed fishery rights in New Foundland for minor boundary changes in West Africa. Contrary to expectations, however, tensions in Africa and Asia prepared the way for better relations between France and Britain.

The same process was visible in Anglo-Russian relations. Hostility between Britain and Russia in regions bordering India in the 1870s and 1880s continued to cause Britain alarm. Now the era of imperial rivalry transferred the focus of the conflict to the Far East (China). The Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894 was more obviously anti-British in its operation than anti-German. Yet by 1907 Britain and Russia had concluded an Entente. Kaiser Wilhelm II’s bullying tactics were mostly responsible for the Entente between Britain France and Russia.

b) Germany's New Position

The effect of colonial rivalries on Germany's relations with other powers was rather ambiguous. Germany seemed to use Africa partly as a means to an end; that is, the furtherance of her diplomatic interests in Europe.

In Africa Bismarck found opportunities to conciliate France and distract her from the grievance of Alsace-Lorraine, hence, his encouragement of France to take Tunisia in 1881. The thwarting of Italian ambitions there assured Franco-Italian hostility for a decade and induced Italy to join the Alliance.

Africa was also fertile ground for Franco-German cooperation against Britain. The British resented his making difficulties over Egypt as a sort of blackmail to secure concessions for Germany elsewhere.

In the case of the Congo, Bismarck persuaded France to join Germany in 1884 and in opposing Britain's rather dubious treaty with Portugal to exclude French and German interests. However, Germany was not in this period regarded as an undesirable colonial neighbour. The partitions of East Africa in 1886 and 1890 were negotiated in a fairly cordial spirit.

When Bismarck was German Chancellor, colonial conflicts were kept within certain limits. After 1890, however, German overseas policy became much less predictable and restrained, and this ultimately had a damaging effect on Anglo-German relations. German support for the Boers through a congratulatory telegraph sent to Paul Kruger for defeating the British in the Anglo-Boer War (1896) was a source of serious tension.

The most serious case in Africa was the clumsy attempt by Germany to provoke a crisis directed against French imperialism in Morocco in 1905 and in 1911. This had the effect of strengthening rather than weakening, Britain's ententes with France and Russia. Indeed by 1914 the Anglo-French colonial understanding had become almost an alliance.

c) Other results of imperialism are that far from the economic benefits which were envisaged, the outcome proved to be quite expensive. Indeed the colonial governments often spent more time suppressing civil wars like the Shona.- Ndebele rising (1896-97), Maji-Maji Rising, 1905 etc. In West Africa, the British West Africa Frontier Force was set up to put down revolts as well as maintain law and order. The same scenario was obtained under French West Africa where force resistance to forced labour, colonial taxation and discrimination was encountered. Adu Boahen (Topics on West African History) even reports that the British realized only 2% of the markets which they had hoped to find in abundance. It is not, however, accurate to say, that colonialisation was unprofitable. In some areas, for example, the Congo, Leopold reaped enormous profits from the sale of wild rubber.

Study Guides

- i) How accurate is the view that "the flag followed the trade" in the scramble for Africa?
- ii) Explain and illustrate the growing interest of European powers in Africa in the late nineteenth century
- iii) What non-economic theories have been advanced to account for the scramble for Africa?

- iv) What were the key events in the partition of the continent? To what extent were Great Power rivalries involved?

Examination type questions

1. How valid is the view that economic reasons were the “tap root of the scramble for Africa.”?
2. “British intervention in Egypt in 1882 was the most important influence in the acceleration of the scramble for Africa” How far do you agree with this claim?
3. “The Berlin West African Conference was important mainly for the driving force it gave to the European occupation of Africa.” How valid is this judgment?
4. “Economic reasons far outweighed political reasons in the scramble for Africa or the far East.” How far do you agree with this judgment?
5. Explain the failure of Africans in either West Africa or East Africa to prevent the conquest and annexation of their territory in this period.
6. What conditions in either a) Africa or the Far East made it attractive as an area for European imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?
7. “Imperialism offered remedies for important problems”. What were these problems and how effectively were the remedies for European states?

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CHAPTER 25

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Describe the aims of the League of Nations when it was formed in 1920.
2. Explain the League's structural weaknesses
3. Explain the success of the League in the 1920s.
4. Evaluate the impact of the Great Depression upon the activities of the League.
5. Describe and illustrate the successes and failures of the League in the 1930s.
6. Evaluate the factors which led to the collapse of the League.

The origins of the League

The concept of a peaceful community of nations had previously been described in Immanuel Kant's – "Perpetual Peace – A Philosophical Sketch (1795)" The idea of the actual League of Nations appears to have originated with British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, and it was enthusiastically adopted by the Democratic US President Woodrow Wilson and his advisor, Colonel Edward al. House as a means of avoiding blood-shed like that of World War 1. The creation of the League was a center-piece of Wilson's fourteen points of peace, especially the final point. "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike. The Paris Peace Conference accepted the purpose to create the League of Nations on January 25, 1919. The covenant of the League of Nations was drafted by a special Commission, and the league was established by Part 1 of the Treaty of Versailles, which was signed on June 28, 1919. The league held its first meeting in London, on 10 January 1920.

The Aims

- To promote international co-operation
- To maintain peace and security in the world
- To reduce national armaments to the lowest level consistent with domestic needs.
- To prevent secret diplomacy
- To promote the health of mankind.
- To supervise the administration of mandated territories

- To assist needy territories economically
- To control drug trafficking

The structure of the League of Nations

The league had three principal organs: a Secretariat, a Council and an Assembly, and many Agencies and Commissions. Authorization for any action required both a unanimous vote by the Council and a majority vote in the Assembly.

The Secretariat

The staff of the League's Secretariat was responsible for preparing the agenda for the council and assembly and publishing reports of the meetings and other routine matters, effectively acting as the civil service for the league. The Secretariat was headed by the Secretary General and was based in Geneva. In other words, the secretariat was in charge of recording the minutes of league meetings and was in charge of all clerical work, including correspondence involving the league. The secretary general wrote annual reports on the work of the league over the life of the league, from 1920- 46, the three Secretaries General were: -

- i) Sir James Drummond (UK) – 1920 – 1933)
- ii) Joseph Avenol (France) (1933 – 1940)
- iii) Sean Lester (Ireland) 1940 – 1946

The Council

The League Council had the authority to deal with any matter affecting world peace. The council began with four members – who were permanent (Britain) France, Italy and Japan). The United States was meant to be the fifth permanent member but the US senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. So the fifth permanent seat was taken by China. There were four non- permanent members, and the first ones were – Belgium, Brazil, Greece and Spain. The composition and number of the members of the council changed subsequently, with the number of non- permanent members increasing to six on September 22, 1922 and to nine on September 8, 1926, taking the council total to 14 members. With the departure of Germany and Japan from the league, their places were taken by new non- permanent members.

The council met on average five times a year, and in extra-ordinary sessions when required. In total, 107 public sessions were withheld between 1920 and 1939. Decisions were taken by a unanimous vote.

The Assembly

The first meeting of the Assembly was in 1920. Each member was represented and had one vote in the League Assembly. Individual member states did not always have representatives in Geneva. The Assembly held its sessions once a year in September. Decisions were taken by a majority vote.

The International Labour Organization

Each member nation sent 2 government ministers, one employer and one worker. They discussed working conditions and got countries to make improvements. This body was led by Albert Thomas. It successfully convinced several countries to adopt an eight – hour working day and 48

hour working week. It also worked to end child labour, increase the rights of women in the workplace, and to make ship owners liable for accidents involving seamen.

The Permanent Court of Justice

Fifteen judges met at the Hague in the Netherlands. They settled international disputes for example over frontiers.

Other Bodies

The league had several other agencies and commissions created to deal with pressing international problems. These were as follows:

- Disarmament Commission
- Health Organisation
- Mandates Commission
- Permanent Opinion Board
- Commission for Refugees
- Slavery Commission

While the league itself is generally branded a failure, several of its agencies and commissions had successes within their respective mandates.

Study Guides

- i) How far did the structural weaknesses of the League threaten its existence in the 1920s and 1930s?
- ii) Was fear of the outbreak of another war the sole reason for international co-operation during the 1920s?

Successes of the League of Nations

The League is generally considered to have failed in its mission to achieve disarmament, prevent war, settle disputes through diplomacy, and improve global welfare. However it achieved significant success in a number of areas.

a) Aaland Islands

Aaland is a collection of around 65000 Islands mid- way between Sweden and Finland. The Islands were exclusively Swedish speaking, but Finland had suzerainty in the early 1900s. During the period 1917 onwards, most residents wished the island to become part of Sweden; Finland, however, did not wish to cede the islands.

The Swedish government raised the issue with the League in 1921. After close consideration, the League determined that the islands should remain a part of Finland, but be governed autonomously, averting a potential war between the two countries.

(b)Albania

The border between Albania and Yugoslavia remained in dispute after the Paris Peace conference in 1919. Yugoslavia forces occupied some Albanian territory. After clashes with Albanian tribes-men, the Yugoslavia forces invaded further. The League sent a commission of

representatives from various powers to the region. The commission decided in favour of Albania and the Yugoslavia forces withdrew in 1921, albeit under protest. War was again prevented.

c) Upper Silesia

The Treaty of Versailles had ordered a plebiscite in Upper Silesia to determine whether the territory should be part of Germany or Poland. In the background, strong-arm tactics and discrimination against Poles led to nothing and eventually to the first two Silesian Uprisings (1919 and 1920). In the plebiscite, roughly 96% (around 500 000) of the votes were cast for joining Germany, and this result led to the Third Silesian Uprising in 1921. The League was asked to settle the matter. In 1922, a six-week investigation found that the land should be split; the decision was accepted by both countries and by the majority of Upper Silesians.

(d) Memel

The port city of Memel and the surrounding area was placed under League control at the end of World War 1 and was governed by a French general for three years. However, the population was mostly Lithuanian, and the Lithuanian government placed a claim on the territory, with Lithuanian forces invading in 1923. The League chose to cede the land around Memel to Lithuania, but declared that the port should remain an international zone. Lithuania agreed. While the decision could be seen as a failure, (in that the League reacted passively to the use of force), the settlement of the issue without significant bloodshed was a point in the League's favour.

(e) Greece and Bulgaria

After an incident between sentries on the border between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925, Greek forces invaded their neighbour. Bulgaria ordered its troops to provide only token resistance, trusting the League to settle the dispute. The League did indeed condemn the Greek invasion and called for both Greek withdrawal and compensation to Bulgaria. The Greeks complained about the disparity between their treatment and that of Italy – in the Corfu incident.

(f) Saar

Saar was a province formed from parts of Prussia and the Rhenish Palatinate – that was established and placed under League control after the Treaty of Versailles. A plebiscite was to be held after 15 years of League rule, to determine whether the region should belong to Germany or to France 90,3% of votes cast were in favour of becoming part of Germany in that 1935 referendum and it became part of Germany again.

(g) Liberia

Following rumours of forced labour in the independent African country of Liberia, the League launched an investigation into the matter, particularly the alleged use of forced labour on the massive Firestone rubber plantation in that country. In 1930, a report by the League implicated many government officials in the selling of contract labour, leading to the resignation of President Charles D.B. King, his vice President and numerous other officials. The League followed with a threat to establish a trusteeship over Liberia unless reforms were carried out. This became the central focus of President Edwin Barclay.

h) Other Successes

The League also worked to combat the international trade in opium and sexual slavery and helped to alleviate the plight of refugees, particularly in Turkey in the period up to 1926. One of its innovations in this area was US 1922 introduction of the Nansen Passport, an internationally recognized identity card for stateless refugees. Many of the League's successes were accomplished by its various Agencies and Commissions. In other words, the League was more successful in its humanitarian work than in its peace – keeping role.

General weaknesses

The candidates need to note that there is a difference between the weaknesses and failures. Weaknesses, in this case have to do with the inherent flaws found in the organization of the League of Nations. The failures are those specific case studies where the League failed to maintain peace or prevent aggression by one nation on another.

Some of the weaknesses are as follows:

1) Lack of a standing league army

The league, like the modern United Nations, lacked an armed force of its own and depended on the Great Powers to enforce its resolutions, which they were very reluctant to do. Economic sanctions, which were the most severe measure the League could implement short of military action, were difficult to enforce and had no great impact on the target country, because they could simply trade with those outside the League.

Britain and France, were reluctant to use sanctions and even more reluctant to resort to military action on behalf of the League. So soon after World War 1 the governments of the two countries were pacifist. Ultimately Britain and France both abandoned the concept of collective security in favour of appeasement in face of growing German militarism under Adolf Hitler.

2) Problem of membership or representation

Representation at the League was often a problem. Though it was intended to encompass all nations, many never joined or, their time as part of the League was short. One key weakness of the League was that the USA never joined, which took away most of the League's potential power. Even though, US President Woodrow Wilson had been a driving force behind the League's formation, the US senate voted against joining it. The US was the strongest economic power at that- time.

3)Withdrawal of some powers

The League was further weakened when some of the main powers left in the 1930s. Japan began as a permanent member of the council, but withdrew in 1933 after the League objected to its invasion of Manchuria. Italy also began as a permanent member but withdrew in 1937. Germany joined in 1926 and withdrew in 1933. Thus the League membership was never stable.

4)The League's requirements for a unanimous vote on all council decisions made the League ineffective in implementing decisions. It was practically impossible for all members of the council to always agree on an issue.

5)**National self – interest of its members**

Another important weakness of the league was that it tried to represent all nations, but most members protected their own interests and were not committed to the League or its goals. The reluctance of all League members to use the option of military action showed this to the full.

6)**The disagreements between Britain and France on the role of the league.**

The league was dominated by Britain and France, which disagreed significantly over the role that it should play. Britain regarded the League as a harmless talking – shop, but did not want to give it real authority or power. France, on the other hand, wanted the League to enforce the terms of the peace treaties. This difference in attitude between the two Powers most involved in the League's work inevitably weakened it.

Specific failures

The general weaknesses of the League are illustrated by its specific failures.

(a)Vilna

This area was claimed by both Lithuania and Poland. It was included in the new state of Lithuania set up at the end of the war, but it had a majority Polish population. In 1920, during the Prussia – Polish war, Vilna was occupied by Polish forces which later refused to leave. This war was a clear case of one League member (Poland) showing aggression against another (Lithuania), but the League was very reluctant to become involved. Taking action against Poland would have required armed forces, but League members were not willing to supply them. In addition, Britain and France saw Poland as a strong barrier against Germany and Communist. Russia did not wish to upset it. The League tried to negotiate a deal, but in 1923 it confirmed Poland's occupation of Vilna but sporadic fighting between the two sides continued until 1927. Thus the League failed to take decisive action, although it had asked Poland to withdraw.

Ruhr

Under the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had to pay reparations. They could pay in money or in goods at a set value. However, in 1922 Germany was not able to make its payment. The next year, France and Belgium chose to act upon this, and invaded the industrial heartland of Germany, the Ruhr, despite this being in direct contravention of the League's rules. With France being a major League member and Britain hesitant to oppose its close ally, nothing was done by the League. This set a significant precedent – the League rarely acted against major powers, and occasionally broke its own rules.

Corfu

One major boundary settlement that remained to be made after World War 1 was that between Greece and Albania. The Conference of Ambassadors, a defective body, of the League was asked to settle the issue. The Council appointed Italian general Erica Fellini to oversee this.

While examining the Greek side of the border, Fellini and his staff were murdered. Italian leader Benito Mussolini was incensed and demanded that the Greeks pay reparations and executed the murderers. The Greeks, however, did not actually know who the murderers were. On 31 August 1923, Italian forces occupied the island of Corfu, a part of Greece, with 15 people being killed. In response the League condemned Mussolini's invasion, but also recommended that Greece pay compensation, to be held by the League until Fellin's murderers were found. Mussolini, however, managed to make the league change its decision. Greece was now forced to apologize and compensation was to be paid directly and immediately to Italy. Mussolini was able to leave Corfu in triumph. By giving in to pressure from a large country, the League again set a dangerous and damaging, precedent. It showed that the League was helpless and useless where a major power was involved, strengthening the argument that it only succeeded where smaller nations were involved. This was one of the League's major failures.

Japanese invasion of Manchuria

The Manchurian invasion was one of the League's major setbacks and acted as the catalogue for Japan's withdrawal from the Organization. In this incident the Japanese held control of the South Monchuria railway in the Chinese region of Manchuria. They claimed that Chinese soldiers had sabotaged the railway, which was a major trade route between the two countries, on September 8, 1931. In fact, it is thought that the sabotage had been done by officers of the Japanese Kwantung army without the knowledge of the government in Japan in order to catalyze a full invasion of Manchuria. In retaliation, the Japanese army, acting against the civilian court's orders, occupied the entire region of Manchurian. In 1932, Japanese air and sea forces bombarded the Chinese city of Shanghai and the war of January 28 broke out. The Chinese government asked the League of Nations for help. The Lytton report of the League declared Japan to be in the wrong and demanded Manchurian to be returned to the Chinese. Japan then withdrew from the League in 1933, after the majority in the Assembly, except Japan, condemned the Japanese action. According to the League Covenant, the League should have now placed economic sanctions against Japan or gathered an army together and declared war against it. However, neither of these two options was done. This was another case where the inherent weaknesses of the League, discussed earlier, rendered it useless, where major members were involved.

The Spanish Civil War

On 17 July 1936, armed conflict broke out between Spanish Republicans (the left - wing government of Spain) and the Nationalists (the right - wing rebels - including most men) officers of the Spanish army). Alvarede Vayo, the Spanish minister of foreign affairs appealed to the League in September 1936 for arms to defend its territorial integrity and political independence. However, the League could not itself intervene in the Spanish Civil War nor prevent Foreign intervention in the conflict. Hitler and Mussolini continued to aid General Franco's Nationalist insurrectionists. The Soviet Union aided the Spanish Loyalists. The League did try to ban the intervention of foreign national volunteers – but on the whole, no concrete action was taken by the League. It watched helplessly as the civil war raged on.

The Italian Invasion of Abyssinia

In October 1935, 40 000 Italian troops invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia). The modern Italian army easily defeated the poorly armed Abyssinians and captured Addis Ababa in May 1936, forcing the Emperor Haile Selassie to flee.

The League of Nations condemned Italy's aggression and imposed economic sanctions in November 1935, but the sanctions were largely ineffective. As Stanley Baldwin, the British Prime Minister later observed, this was ultimately because no-one had the military forces on hand to withstand an Italian attack. On 9 October 1935, the USA (a non – League member) refused to co-operate with any League action. It had embargoed exports of arms and war material to either combatant. The league sanctions were lifted on 4 July 1936, but by that point they were a dead letter in any event.

As was the case with Manchuria, the vigor of the major powers in responding to the crisis in Abyssinia was hampered by their perception that the fate of this poor and far- off country, inhabited by non- Europeans, was not an important issue to them. Thus the League again failed in its responsibility of protecting the smaller states against aggression.

Axis Rearmament

The League was powerless and mostly silent in the face of major events leading to World War II, such as Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, occupation of the Sudetenland and seizure of Austria. As with Japan, both Germany in 1933, using the failure of the World Disarmament Conference to agree to the arms deal between France and Germany as a pretext – and Italy in 1937 simply withdrew from the League rather than submit to its judgement. The League commissioner in Danzing was unable to deal with German claims on the city, a significant contributing factor in the outbreak of World War II in 1939. The final significant act of the League was to expel the Soviet Union in December 1939 after it invaded Finland.

Demise and Legacy

With the onset of World War II, it was clear that the League had failed in its purpose – to avoid any future World War. During the War, neither the League's Assembly nor council was able or willing to meet, and its secretariat in Geneva was reduced to skeleton staff, with many offices moving to North America.

The League of Nations: (1920-1939)

How successful was the League in the years 1929- 1932?

The impact of the Depression on international diplomacy as well as the League's own structural weakness hampered the international peace- keeping body from being a great success. Its main success in this period, (1929- 1932) was not in Europe but in Latin America where, in 1932, it was able to prevent a border dispute between Colombia and Peru from erupting into war. On the whole, however, the years 1929-1932 were years of failure.

The Manchurian Crisis, 1931-32

Technically, Manchuria was part of China but because of the political situation in China where civil war had broken out between the Guomintang and the Chinese Communist Party, there was

little stability there. This armed Japanese trade and economic interests in Manchuria, which had allowed the Japanese to have a small military force to protect their interests. By 1927, Japan was in control of most of Manchuria's mines, factories and ports. She thus sent a large army into Southern Manchuria to protect her interests.

On 18 September 1931, officers of the Japanese army in Manchuria staged the Mukden (Shenyang) Incident in order to justify sending a Japanese army of occupation. The Japanese officers claimed that the Chinese soldiers had tried to blow up the Japanese owned South Manchurian railway near the town of Mukden or Shenyang, when it was they who had set up the incident.

Eventually in February 1932, Manchuria was renamed Manchukuo. Both China and Japan were League members and the Japanese invasion was clearly in breach of the League's collective security system. The invasion of Manchuria also violated the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 in which Japan had promised not to attack China. The Chinese ruler, Jiang Jieshi quickly appealed to the League's Council to stop this Japanese invasion.

The League set up the Lytton Commission in 1932 to investigate and collect the facts. This committee did not submit its report until October 1932- by which time Japanese invasion was well entrenched in Manchuria.

The report was weak in that it did not even recommend Sanctions-military or economic sanctions. It simply criticized both Japan and China, but the League admitted that Japanese claims were valid but they should not have used force and should therefore withdraw from Manchuria.

As a result, Japan, in 1933 left the League. This clearly showed how ineffective the collective security was.

Reasons for Failure

- a) The timing of the Manchurian crisis was a disaster for the League because it coincided with the peak of the Great Depression, (1931-1932). At this time, European countries and the USA were concerned with their own recovery from the effects of the depression and not any other remote problem. Apart from that, the USA and the Soviet Union were not members of the League. President Hoover's USA had significant trade with Japan and was therefore reluctant to get involved in the conflict between China and Japan. The USA also refused to consider the idea of sanctions. As a result, especially given the widespread impact of the Depression, most League members feared that any trade ban imposed on Japan would result in them losing that trade to the USA.
- b) As regards the important members, there were clear divisions among them. Neither Italy nor Germany really objected to the Japanese invasion. In fact, Mussolini was so encouraged by the lack of effective League action that in 1932, he began detailed planning about the conquest of Abyssinia. Germany, despite significant investments in China, was waiting to see what the League would do in response to Japan's use of force.

c) Britain and France remained divided while Britain did not want to risk a naval conflict as, under the Washington naval Treaty Japan had naval superiority in the Far East and military advisers informed the British government that such a conflict might be lost, endangering her colonies such as India, Singapore and Hong Kong. Britain also had important trade links with Japan so that, despite concern over Japan's long term plans, its immediate fear was of losing that trade to the USA.

France on the other hand had its own colonies in Indochina where, in 1931, Ho chi Minhu began an armed communist nationalist insurrection for independence. She therefore disapproved of Japan's actions but was not prepared to take any action since her main concern was a possible threat from Germany. In 1930, they had begun building fortifications known as the Mainot Line along their north-eastern border with Germany. Although France publicly condemned the Japanese aggression, it sent a secret note to Japan stating that it sympathized with the difficulties Japan was in. Hence the League failed to address that crisis in Manchuria.

The World Disarmament Conference

This conference, organized by the League was an attempt to agree limits on army, naval and airforce weapons. It was attended by 61 member nations and 5 non-members, including both the USA and the USSR. France unsuccessfully attempted to introduce the idea that the League should have its own army. A British proposal to limit offensive weapons such as tanks, submarines and chemical weapons obtained a 41-vote majority, but both Germany and the USSR refused to ban such weapons.

More immediately important was the fact that Germany insisted that either all nations should disarm to the German level set by the Treaty of Versailles or Germany should be allowed to rearm to the level of other major powers. This denied, German delegates walked out of the conference and said they would not return until they had been granted "equality of treatment." Such action signaled great problems for the League in the future. It led to the unrestrained rearmament of Germany in total breach of the Versailles Treaty.

How effective was the league in the years 1933- 1937?

Hitler

Undoubtedly the rise of Hitler and the Nazis had a tremendous impact on international affairs. Until 1934, Hitler was mostly concerned with establishing internal control. Soon after, he began to adopt more aggressive foreign policy. Initially this involved taking Germany out of the World Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. At the Disarmament conference, Hitler urged Britain and France to allow Germany to rearm to the level of other powers. MacDonald, the British prime minister urged France to agree. However, the French insisted that the Germans guarantee that the Versailles Treaty Limitations would be respected for the next four years.

Once Hitler had withdrawn from the Disarmament Conference and the League, 1934, he began to pursue more aggressive policies which directly threatened the survival and effectiveness of the League. For instance his attempted Anschluss with Austria in 1934 was only reversed by Mussolini who moved his forces to the Austrian border.

Parallel development to the league formation began to unwind; Britain, France and Italy formed the short-lived front in April 1935 with the intention of opposing any further German action which might endanger peace in general.

The Invasion of Abyssinia Oct-1935

In the same years, Mussolini took advantage of the nominal support of Britain and France to invade Abyssinia in October. The League imposed economic sanctions on Italy but did not include oil in the list of banned goods. Oil was thus allowed to pass through the British and French-owned Suez Canal to the Italian forces, enabling Italy to continue with their invasion.

In addition, many League members continued to trade with Italy. France was reluctant to provoke any further arguments with Mussolini since he had acted to restrain Hitler.

The Hoare-Laval Pact

The result of the French reluctance to take more serious action against Italy was the secret Hoare-Laval Pact which offered Italy the bulk of Abyssinia. Hence, in public, Britain and France denounced Mussolini's invasion and asked him to withdraw but in private, the two powers were approving of Mussolini's actions. The contents of the pact leaked to the press and thus caused a public outcry. The plan had to be abandoned. The French and British decided in March 1936 to include oil in the ban but by the time this was enforced in May of the same year. Italian conquest was complete. Mussolini had actually withdrawn from the League on 6 March 1936 and in disappointment with the double-dealing of France and Britain began to move more closely towards Hitler. This spelt doom for the League of Nations.

While British and French was pinned on Italian actions in Abyssinia, on 7 March 1936 Hitler ordered German troops to re-occupy the Rhineland, which, according to the Treaty of Versailles was to remain a demilitarized zone. Following the collapse of the Stresa Front, Britain and France were on their own and they followed separate policies- and were prepared to "appease." With Hitler, such actions signified the death of the League of Nations, the goodwill and collective action of the 1920s, before onset of the Depression.

Study Guides

- i) How significant was the depression in the decline of co-operation?
- ii) Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the League of Nations' ability to prevent conflict and encourage international co-operation.?
- iii) What criticism can be made of how the League dealt with non-European problems?
- iv) How far was the failure of the League responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War?

The Declaration of the Rights of the Citizen, (26 August 1789)

This Declaration was about the principles upon which the New France was to be established. It set out the "natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man." It asserted, among other things, that;

-Men are born free and remain free and equal in their rights

-The purpose of government is the maintenance of these rights, which include liberty, property security and resistance to oppression.

-All government power is derived from the nation, the people (i.e popular sovereignty.)"

- The law, which is there to protect the equal freedom of all, is the expression of the general will given voice by an elected assembly.
- All are equal before the law.
- Careers and offices should be open to talent (meritocracy)
- No-one can be arrested without legal cause.
- Punishment for doing wrong must fit the crime
- There should be freedom of speech of the press and of conscience
- Taxation necessary to finance government should be borne equally by all citizens in proportion to their means;
- Taxation should be agreed by an elected assembly
- Members of the government should be answerable for their actions
- The powers of the executive, judiciary and legislature should be separated to ensure constitutional rule.
- The right to property is inviolable.

IMPACT OF THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF MAN AND THE CITIZEN ON THE KING LOUIS XVI AND ON EUROPE

To a modern person, living in a liberal democracy, nothing in the Declaration seemed to raise any conflict. However, at the time the declaration represented a revolutionary step which breached the accepted orders of the past. Absolute monarchy and the privileged position of the monarchy were gone. Government power now came not from divine appointment but from the people from the vote. Government power too, could not infringe the natural and equal rights of citizens.

However, it must be noted that whilst all Frenchmen were to be equal citizens, some were more equal than others in relation to politics and eligibility for public office. It was decided to distinguish between active and passive citizens for the purposes of the right to vote.

To be an active citizen, with the right to vote in the primary stage of local and national elections, a Frenchman had to pay the equivalent of three days' labour in taxes. This effectively excluded the poorest 40% of the citizens from the electoral process. Moreover to be eligible to vote in the second stage of elections and to hold public office, a further hurdle had to be passed, payment of ten days labour in taxes. Furthermore, to be eligible election into the National Assembly (known as the Legislative Assembly from October (1790), the equivalent of a 50 days' labour in taxes had to be paid.

The combination of indirect elections and a wealth qualification effectively ensured middle-class domination of government at both local and national level. Local bourgeois property owners,

small merchants and artisans tended to dominate local government. This in itself was a revolution as these social groups had not played a direct role in government before. However, the arrangement was divisive because it excluded the less wealthy elements of society from involvement in politics. The abolition of the distinction between active and passive citizens became a key demand of the sans-culottes and popular clubs in Paris after 1789.

The Declaration, nevertheless, did not mean an end to the monarchy. No one in the assembly saw an alternative to the Monarch as head of government, but there was debate over the exact extent of his powers, a debate coloured by the attitude of the king and the fears of the revolutionaries. The crucial issue was the extent of the king's powers. In particular should the king have power of veto over legislation passed by the elected assembly.

For the King the answer was 'yes' for without that power he would be but a puppet king, a mere stooge. The king had a group of sympathizers in the national Assembly known as 'monarchies'. Another powerful and contrary group led by Abbe Sieyès distrusted Louis XVI and feared that once given the power of veto, the King would use it to frustrate and reverse the revolution. Nevertheless, due to the fact that there was no alternative to the monarch in France, the Assembly voted to give the king a suspensive veto- the power to effectively prevent laws from being passed for up to four years. This was included in the Constitutional Articles that set out the relationship between the elected assembly, the monarchy and the judiciary. The sovereignty of the nation was re-emphasised, the position of the French monarchy as the head of the executive was agreed, and the institution of a permanent elected National Assembly as the legislature, was laid down. There would be an independent judiciary. The King appointed ministers and ran the executive but had no power to initiate legislation, and his ministers were to be responsible for their actions. The National Assembly was to be elected every two years and was to consist of a single chamber. This was because it was feared that a second chamber would be hi-jacked by the nobility and hence lead to the return of noble privilege and power.

These articles and the August Decrees and the Declaration of the Rights of Man were given to the king for his signature, to make them into law. He hesitated, voiced his criticisms and would not agree. It was this reluctance that helped provoke the second Parisian journey' (revolutionary day when the people of Paris rose up in decisive protest). This marked another turning point in the course of the revolution.

However, the king eventually agreed to sign the Declaration, together with the August Decree due to a combination of factors. First, the drought of September 1789 left the watermills powerless; bread was in short supply and its price was high. This was also compounded by rising unemployment in the luxury trades on which the Parisian workers depended. However, the immediate stimulus to the events of 5 and 6 October was the reported actions of the officers of the Flanders regiment who arrived at Versailles. This aroused fears that the king was going to use force. The soldier's roudy behaviour in trampling the revolutionary Tricolour and the toasting of the white Bourbon flag angered the peasants and the middle class. The mixture of economic despair, political distrust, anger and fear resulted in the marching of women and men to Versailles to demand bread, the Rights of Man and the King's presence in Paris (5 October). The invasion of the royal chambers on 6 October and the forced march of the royal family to Paris immediately forced the King to sign the August Decrees and the Declaration into law. Hence the king had cooperated did what was constitutionally required of him but he had not

embraced the spirit of the revolution. The king and the National Assembly were now in the centre of Paris and were now subject to pressure, scrutiny and intimidation as never before. This situation in turn eventually worsened the relations between the king and the growing radical minority in the national Assembly.

Examination type questions

1. How accurate is the view that the League of Nations failed because it was a “British and French affair”?
2. Assess the aims and achievements of the League as a peace-keeping organization.
3. How successful was the League in solving disputes in the period 1919-1929?
- 4 .How valid is the view that the initial weaknesses of the League structure prevented it from being a success in the 1930s?
5. How successful was the League of Nations in encouraging international co-operation from 1920 to 1933?
6. “Its links with the Versailles Treaty was its greatest weakness.” How valid is this view of the League in the 1920s and 1930s?

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CHAPTER 26

NAZI GERMANY (1933-1939)

Chapter objectives

By the end of the chapter the student should be able to:

1. Describe the impact of the Depression upon the fortunes of the Nazis.
2. Explain why Hitler was able to become chancellor in January 1933.
3. Evaluate the role played by
 - a) Propaganda
 - b) Hitler's oratory
 - c) Force from the Hitler Youth, the SA and SS.
 - d) The Gestapo
 - e) Big business

In the rise of the Nazis as a mass movement.

4. Explain how Hitler first used democracy to rise to power in Germany, then destroyed democracy in order to resort to dictatorship.
5. Analyse the significance of the following events in Hitler's rise to dictatorship in Germany:
 - a) The Enabling Act
 - b) The Reichstag Fire
 - c) The Night of Long Knives
 - d) The death of Hindenburg.
6. Assess the achievements and popularity of the Nazis in Germany by 1939.
7. Assess the extent to which autarky (economic self-sufficiency) was achieved in Germany.
8. Describe Nazi policies towards the Youth, Women, Jews (minorities) and employment.

NB: This section will focus mainly on the internal or domestic policies of Nazi Germany. The Nazi foreign policy will be discussed under the causes of World War II. In this section, the main highlights will be the rise of Hitler to power, his consolidation of that power and the ultimate achievement of Nazi dictatorship.

Factors which helped the rise of Hitler and the Nazis

(i) Unpopularity of the Weimar Republic

Hitler and the Nazi Party offered a seemingly attractive alternative just when the Weimar Republic was at its lowest ebb. Hence, the decline of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler are inextricably linked. In other words, the misfortunes of the Weimar Republic became the fortunes of Hitler and the Nazis.

(ii) Economic Instability

The fortunes of the Nazis were more linked to economic instability. According to Norman Lowe, the more unstable the economy, the more seats won by the Nazis in the Reichstag. For example, by March 1924, when the economy was unstable, the Nazis won 32 seats in the Reichstag; By December 1924, when the economy was recovering, their seats dropped to 19. They dropped further to 12 seats in 1925, when the country was experiencing prosperity. However, in 1930, their seats increased to 107, when the country was experiencing economic hardship due to the Great Depression. By July 1932, they had won 230 seats, a year when unemployment had risen to a record 6 million. The Nazi party became the largest single Party.

(iii) The Popularity of the Nazi Programme

The Nazis offered an array of promises that were attractive to the people. Some of the promises were:

- a) To offer national unity, prosperity and full employment.
- b) Promised to overthrow the hated Versailles Treaty and build Germany into a great power. This appealed to Nationalists who hated the idea of a weak Germany.

(iv) The fear of Communism

This led the wealthy landowners and industrialists to support the Nazis who were also anti-communist. They feared that communism would lead to the nationalization of their properties and businesses. They also feared the empowerment of the workers.

(v) Hitler's extraordinary abilities

There can be little doubt that the Nazis owed at least some of their spectacular success to the extraordinary political ability of their leader, Adolf Hitler. Hitler possessed tremendous energy and will power. He was an orator, who put across his ideas with great emotional force. He was a potential propagandist. In this he was quite unsurpassed. He was a master of the psychology of mass politics. He had an unrivalled gift for exploiting contemporary discontent. According to William Carr, without doubt, Hitler was one of the greatest demagogues of modern times. Hitler never reasoned with audiences, he simply put into words what they were longing to hear, feeding on their hidden resentment, playing on their anxieties and forcing his listeners to surrender their will to that of their leader.

Therefore, on the whole, it was the striking contrast between the governments of the Weimar and the Nazi Party, which impressed the people. The Republic's coalition governments were cautious, respectable, dull and unable to maintain order, while the Nazis promised strong and decisive government and the restoration of national pride. In fact according to Norman Lowe, without the economic crisis, it is doubtful whether Hitler would have had much chance of attaining political power.

Characteristics / Features of Nazism

- (i) Anticommunism: the communists were blamed for the ills of Germany.
- (ii) Totalitarian: Great emphasis was laid on the ruthlessly efficient organization of all aspects of life with violence and terror if necessary.
- (iii) Militarism: Since it was likely that greatness could be achieved only by war, the entire state must be organized on a military footing.
- (iv) Racism: The race theory believed that the Aryan race (Germans) were the master race, destined to rule the whole world. All the other races were inferior to the Germans.
- (v) The policy of Lebensraum – that is “living space” This was to be the guiding principle in Nazi foreign policy. Most of Hitler’s ideas were expressed in his book ‘the Mein Kampf (My Struggle).
- (vi) Anti-Semitism – The Jews were believed to be responsible for all the misery in Germany. Therefore they had to be exterminated. They were rich at the expense of many Germans who were languishing in poverty.
- (vii) One party state, strict censorship, massive use of propaganda and suppression of women’s rights.

Study Guides

- i) In what ways did the Great Depression prove to be a blessing in disguise for Hitler and the Nazis?
- ii) How did Hitler come to power in 1933?
- iii) Identify the key groups from which the Nazi party gained electoral support before 1933.
- iv) Did Hitler create an efficient system of government in Nazi Germany?

Hitler’s takeover of power

Hitler took over power by legal means, through elections. His rise to power and subsequent take over was very much opportunistic. Events and circumstances, not of his own making assisted his take over of power. The elections of July 1932 proved to be decisive in Hitler’s assumption of power in Germany. The Nazis got the most seats (230) in that election. When Hitler was invited by Hindenburg to serve as Vice-Chancellor to Von Papen, he refused.

Von Papen failed to secure popular support leading to his resignation in November – 1932. Hitler could only accept unconditioned Chancellorship. The failure by Von Schleicher to form a government in January 1933 presented Hitler with an opportunity and in January 1933 – Hitler became Chancellor of Germany.

Consolidating the Nazi Dictatorship

The Reichstag Fire, 27 February, 1933

The Nazis’ election chances were improved when the Reichstag building was set on fire on 27 February 1933. Although a young Dutch communist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was arrested on the scene and later executed it is still far from clear whether he or the Nazis themselves were responsible for the fire.

Hitler made good use of the incident to move Germany closer to dictatorship by portraying the fire as a signal for the start of a communist revolution. On 28 February, he instructed Frick Minister of the Interior to draft a Decree for the Protection of the people and state, which was approved and signed by President Paul van Hindenburg.

This decree outlawed the Communist Party and gave the government power to suspend most of the civil and political liberties established by the Weimar constitution. As a result, thousands of Nazis' political opponents were arrested at will (especially Communists and Socialists) their newspapers were shut down and SA violence and intimidation were stepped up. It also provided for the suspension of the 'Lander', or provincial governments, thus strengthening central government.

Despite all this, the Nazis were only able to push their share of the vote up to 43,9 per cent from 33,1 percent, they had gained in November 1932. In many working class and Catholic areas, in fact, the Nazis were heavily out voted. Not surprisingly, support for the Communists and Socialists went down.

The Nazis then seized control of the several 'Lander' governments where their opponents were in power, sometimes without official approval and usually accompanied by extreme violence. In fact, the chaos resulting from the activities of some local Nazi parties was so great that the minister of the interior was forced to intervene.

The enabling act, March 1933

Although the Nazis still had no absolute majority in the Reichstag, their 288 seats did enhance their positions. By negotiating with 52 deputies of the other smaller parties for their support, the Nazis were able to claim a majority. Yet even this was not enough to overturn the Weimar Constitution, as a two-thirds majority was needed to make any changes.

Nevertheless, Hitler requested full emergency powers for four years in order to deal with the 'communist threat.' This would allow him to make laws without the approval of the Reichstag. To achieve this, two methods were used,

- (i) Hitler needed to obtain support from other parties, especially the German workers Party to assure them that the Nazis were not necessarily taking over Germany. Hence a 21 March, Goebbels organized the opening ceremony of the new reichstag in the Potsdam garrison church. At the ceremony, attended by many conservatives-Hindenburg army generals and the son of the deposed Kaiser-Hitler claimed that the Nazis were in tune with the values of imperial Germany. This "Day of Potsdam." was followed, two days later, by the first session of the Reichstag.
- ii) Large numbers of communist deputies were barred from entering the Reichstag building as the S.S and SA threatened them. Hitler then persuaded the religious sectors to support his bid for emergency powers by promising to respect the rights of the Catholic Church and Christian principles in general.

In this way, with only the Social Democratic Party deputies voting against him, Hitler obtained the necessary two-thirds majority to have this legislation, known as the Enabling Act, passed.

The Night of long Knives, (June 1934)

Although by June 1934 the process of Gleichschaltung-or bring into line- or forcible co-ordination-whereby many aspects of German political, social and cultural life were brought into line with Nazi ideology and values. Hitler's position was still not secure enough. His position as well as that of the leading Nazis were increasingly being threatened by the more militant sections of the party who wanted him to carry out the second revolution based on the socialist values. In particular Earnest Roehm, who was one of Hitler's earliest colleagues and the leader of the 2,5 million strong SA, was demanding that the regular army be merged with the SA to form a new People's Army under his command. Nazis such as Roehm had been worried for some time by Hitler's growing contacts with the conservatives and industrial leaders. They had been dismayed by Hitler's speed to the Reichstathalter (the 10 Nazi provincial governors) on 6 July 1933, that the Nazi 'revolution' was over.

Roehm's calls for a people's militia was a threat to the aristocratic commanders of the army, who clearly despised the SA as upstairs. Hitler did not wish to upset any of the army commanders because their support and expertise in his grand foreign policy objectives were very crucial. Hitler was very concerned that the activities of Roehm and his followers, if not checked, might provoke the reichswehr (army) into taking action against the new Nazi regime as a whole.

Other leading Nazis like Himmler and Goering saw Roehm as a real rival to their influence within the party. Roehm was potentially the most powerful of the Nazi chiefs as the SA was strong enough to carry through the "second revolution" with or without approval (secondary revolution would mean nationalization of all industries and businesses).

There is evidence that Hitler was encouraged in his decision to move against Roehm and the SA by Nazis such as Himmler, Goering and Hess as well as by von Papen, who warned that failure to act soon, might result in conservative opposition to his government. So on 30 June 1934, on Hitler's orders, the SS, with transport and weapons provided by the army, arrested and shot many of the SA leaders including Roehm. In all, over 400 people were murdered over the next few days, including Gregor Strasser, the former leading Nazi who been part of the party's militant populist wing that wanted action against the bigger capitalist firms. Some leading monarchists were also murdered as Hitler was concerned that they might try to persuade Hindenburg to replace his regime with the monarchical option.

This ruthless action effectively removed the possibility of a Nazi "second revolution" from below

-When von Hindenburg died on 1 August 1934, the army supported Hitler's takeover of the post of President Hitler immediately merged the posts of Chancellor and President to become Further.

-On 2 August 1934, the army swore an oath of personal loyalty to the new Fuhrer and supreme commander of the armed forces.

-At the Nazi party rally at Nurenmberg in September 1934, Hitler announced that there would be no other revolution in Germany for the next thousand years.

Study Guides

- i) Why did Paul von Hindenburg appoint Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933?
- ii) Identify and explain any two factors which helped to increase Hitler's power in Germany after 1933.

The Nazi's Economic Policy

When the Nazis came to power, they had no detailed economic plans. However, they had 2 main aims:-

- a) Removing unemployment
- b) Making Germany self-sufficient, by boosting exports and reducing imports, this policy was called autarky, economic self-sufficiency.

Hitler announced the First Four Year Plan in February 1933 – 1936. The plan targeted curing the unemployment problem and rescuing farming communities. Hitler needed co-operation of the industrial magnates to solve the problem of unemployment. The Industrialists were told what to produce depending on what the country needed at any time. Factories were closed down if their products were not required. Overall control of the economy was first vested on the hands of Hjalmar Schacht, the financial wizard of 1924, highly respected in industrial and banking circles.

-The Nazis showed interest in John Keynes's theory of deficit financing. According to this theory, governments should increase, not cut expenditure to lift the country out of a deflationary crisis.

Public Works

-On the basis, of this, the public works programme consisting of slum clearance, land drainage and motorway (auto bahns) construction drawn up by Bruning and introduced by Von Papen were continued and greatly extended. Up to the end to 1935, 5000 million marks were pumped into job-creation schemes. Job – creation – schemes included afforestation and water-conservation schemes. Investment was also open in the construction and automobile industries.

-The overall effect of these Nazi measures was impressive. By 1934, unemployment fell to 2,7 million and fell further too 1,7 million in mid 1935. On the eve of World War II, a shortage of skilled labour existed in some industries. From 1936, emphasis was now on armaments. Consumer goods production slowed down and expenditure on armaments rose sharply from 5400 million marks in 1935 to 17200 million marks by 1938 – accounting for 44% of total state expenditure.

The Second Four-Year Plan (1936-1939)

The drive for autarky intensified in 1936 with the introduction of the 2nd Four-Year Plan under Goering's direction. The First Four-Year Plan aimed at creating employment. The Second Four-Year Plan aimed at placing Germany on a war-footing. In August 1936 in a top-secret directive, Hitler ordered the army and the economy to be ready for war in four years. Hence great efforts were made to increase domestic production of synthetic rubber, petrol and oils, regardless of cost. Nazi control over industry tightened considerably after 1936.

-Schacht's influence had declined sharply by 1937 for two reasons, namely that: -

- (i) He feared that autarky was being taken to extremes.
- (ii) He was opposed to Hitler's insistence of economic consequences. At the end of 1937, he resigned and was replaced by Walther Funk, a nonentity – completely under the control of Goering. Inflation was kept in check through tight control of the money market.

-The Second Four- Year Plan, on the whole-was successful. However, it did not produce arms as quickly as Hitler and the army wanted. Autarky succeeded in that although Germany was still dependent on imports, in 1939, her degree of dependence had not increased despite her economic expansion. The Nazis greatly expanded production. The goods industries were the cornerstone of the economic policy of Federal Germany in the 1950s'.

Social Policies

These focused on Education, Religion and anti-Semitism.

Education was controlled by the State. Children were indoctrinated with Nazi views. School textbooks were re-written to fit the Nazi theory. Subjects to suffer were history and Biology. History was rewritten to support Hitler's tactics of the use of force. Biology portrayed the Germans as a Superior race. Teachers, lecturers, Professors were closely watched to ensure that they did not oppose government and teach pupils to do so. Children were used to reporting their teachers to their parents who supported the government.

Boys and girls were taught that "the Fuhrer is always right". Boys at 14 years joined Hitler's Youth. Their syllabus emphasized physical fitness- hence preparing them for war. The girls joined the League of German Maidens. Their Syllabus emphasized domestic science since it was believed that their place was in the kitchen.

Church and State in Nazi Germany

Friction between the church and state is inevitable under a totalitarian regime. Tyrants cannot tolerate to go along institutions which have any claim to an independent existence outside the state. Nazis were not officially hostile to religion. In the party programme, they spoke of commitment, 'positive christianity' and promised to respect freedom of religion provided that it did not endanger the security of the state or offend the moral sense of the Germanic race. Hitler was himself a Catholic and in the early days, he paid lip service to Christian beliefs and promised to respect the position of the various churches.

-However, Nazism was a deeply anti-christian creed. It spurned the christian virtues of charity, mercy and humility and exalted the use of violence. The failure of German Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, to offer vigorous resistance to the crimes of the Nazi's in general and to their persecution of the Jews, in particular, has been the subject of much historical controversy. Nevertheless, for German Christians, the Nazi era was a time of pressure and persecution.

The Evangelical church

The Nazis attempted to subordinate the Christian churches to their control. The major protestant denomination, the German Evangelical church, was forced to accept the direction of a

handpicked national Bishop. Dissenting Protestants established the Confessing Church under the Leadership of Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892-1984). He and other dissident churchmen were imprisoned in concentration camps.

The Catholics Church

In July 1933, the Nazi regime signed a Concordat with the Vatican, pledging to maintain the traditional rights of the Catholic Church in Germany. Increasing violations of the concordat led to protests from the Catholic leaders. In 1937, Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) joined those protests – issuing the encyclical letter “With Burning Concern.” For the most part Protestant and Catholic leaders sought to avoid direct confrontations with the Nazi regime.

Anti-Semitism – (Anti-Jewish Campaign)

Hitler’s hatred of Jews was pathological. The Jews were not simply members of an inferior race. In his eyes, they were a ‘counter-race’ whose aim was to enslave and ultimately destroy the Aryan race. The Jews symbolized all that was evil in Hitler’s world. They stabbed Germany in the back in 1918. Hitler’s anti-Semitism started continuously in the early years of his reign.

-Many (but not all) Jewish officials in government were dismissed. Books by Jewish writers were burnt in May 1933. Persecution of the Jews reached a new stage with the passage of the so-called “Nuremberg Laws” promulgated at the Nazi Party Congress of 1935. According to these laws: -

- i) Jews were to be deprived of full citizenship
- ii) They were forbidden to marry Aryans.
- iii) Extra-marital relations between Jews and Gentiles became a punishable offence.

-Persecution intensified in 1935 when a 17-year-old Jewish boy murdered a German embassy official in Paris. This was used as a pretext for a large-scale programme organized by the SA (Storm Troopers).

-During the night of 9-10 November 1938, Jewish shops were looted, houses, schools and synagogues were burnt down and several Jews were murdered. The programme which aroused widespread horror abroad was followed by a spate of laws which at last drove the Jews out of commercial life and confiscated their industrial assets.

-The Jews were practically deprived of their means of livelihood. They could not enter cinemas, theatres, and swimming pools and could not own cars. Their children were expelled from school and university.

-Hitler in 1939 declared that if war broke out, it would lead to the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe. It is believed that by 1945 out of a total of 9 million Jews living in Europe, at the outbreak of World War II, 6 million had been murdered – most of them in gas chambers of the Nazi extermination camps.

The Popularity of Nazi Policies

The Nazis undoubtedly enjoyed much support in all classes because of the economic revival of their country and its foreign policy successes. Some of these classes or groups are discussed below:-

(i) Many Intellectuals

These became supporters of the Fuhrer. Many did it out of choice, but some out of the fear of opposing Nazi policies. Most intellectuals wrote in favour of the Nazi regime and its policies.

(ii) Industrialists and businessmen

These had been lukewarm towards the Weimar Republic. They did not mourn its passing. They liked the Nazi destruction of trade unionism. They felt safe from a communist revolution. The coal and steel industries flourished and became a key concern in the Four Year Plan. However, industrialists found that they were no longer free agents. The state, not the private entrepreneur controlled investments, requested profits and determined priorities.

(iii) Farmers

In the countryside, the Nazis had their most loyal supporters. The rural folk occupied a special position because of the drive for agricultural self-sufficiency especially in food production. Prices of agricultural produce were fixed so that they were assured of a reasonable profit.

(iv) Industrial Working Class

There were substantial gains in the shape of full employment, stable rents, more paid holidays, subsidized holidays in Germany and abroad, in Italy and Norway, and cheap theatre. Those were provided by the strength through joy organization. On the other hand, workers lost their right to strike, working hours were longer and wages increased slowly.

(v) The Army (Reichswehr)

Hitler gained the support of the army, which was crucial if he was to feel secure in power. The Reichswehr was the only organization, which could remove him from power by force. By 1934, Hitler had won it over. His aim of setting aside the military restrictions of the Versailles Treaty by rearmament and expansion of the army got him the support of the officer class. Hitler filled the lower ranks of the army with the Nazis. Army leaders were greatly impressed by Hitler's handling of trouble-some SA (Storm Troopers) in the notorious Rohm of 1934. The SA under their leader Ernest Rohm, a personal friend of Hitler, was becoming an embarrassment to the new Chancellor. Roehm wanted the brown shirted SA to be merged with the army and himself made a general. Most of the generals in the army were from the aristocratic class and considered the SA to be little more than a bunch of gangsters. Hitler was forced to choose between the Rechswehr and SA. He chose the former.

Study Guides

- i) What impact did the Nazis have on economic policy?
- ii) Did the workers benefit under the third Reich?
- iii) How did the Hitler Youth try to indoctrinate Germany's young people?
- iv) What were the causes and results of anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany?
- v) How effective was Nazi propaganda?

- vi) Who opposed the Nazis and how effective was their opposition
- vii) How total was Nazi control of Germany?
- viii) Was there a “cult of personality in Nazi Germany?

Examination type questions

1. How effectively did Hitler establish and consolidate Nazi authority?
2. What impact did the Nazi economic policies have on Germany in the 1930s?
3. How far and why, was the Weimar regime unstable?
4. What impact did the post-war settlement have on Hitler’s foreign policies in the 1930s?
5. Identify and explain the factors which contributed to the popularity of the Nazis in the 1930s.
6. How valid is the view that the policy of appeasement benefited Hitler more than Britain and France?
7. To what extent by 1939 had Hitler’s domestic policies solved the problems, which had brought him into power.
8. Why did the policy of appeasement fail to prevent the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and the Western powers in 1939?

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CHAPTER 27

FASCIST ITALY (1919 – 1939)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Describe and illustrate the economic, social and political situation in Italy after the First World War.
2. Explain the methods used by Benito Mussolini to rise to power in Italy by 1922.
3. Explain why Mussolini was able to establish fascism in Italy.
4. Describe and assess the corporate state.
5. Evaluate the reforms of Mussolini
6. Describe the battle for Birth Battle for Grain and trade policies.
7. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of Mussolini's fascist policies.

This is another popular topic, which has striking parallels with Nazi Germany. Again, to facilitate an organized coverage of the major issues, it is important to break down this broad topic into manageable units. The student is expected to consider the post – war problems faced by the liberal Regime in Italy, the rise of Mussolini, his take over of power, its consolidation and the establishment of a Fascist dictatorship. The Fascist domestic and Foreign policies will complete the topic.

Economic problems faced by the liberal government

- i) Unemployment as result of war destruction and demobilization of soldiers. There were many industrial firms geared for the demands of war, which went bankrupt when the war ended hence their closure. This resulted in wide spread unemployment, which soared to over 2 million in 1919. This is more of a social problem than an economic problem.
- ii) There were strikes, factory occupations and food riots. Strikes can also be regarded as social problems
- iii) Economic depression from 1920 added to the mood of bitterness amongst many sections of industrial and urban society
- iv) There was ruinous inflation. The lire lost two – thirds of its value in the course of 1919 and many middle – class savings were wiped out.
- v) Unequal development.
Southern Italy was economically and socially backward compared to the industrial North. The First World War worsened this disparity. The liberal governments failed to close the gap.
- vi) Massive internal and external war debt

Social Problems

- i) Poverty, starvation and suffering especially in the south.
- ii) Demonstrations and street fights
- iii) Land seizures by returning soldiers and the rise of peasant unions and co-operatives made the
- iv) laundering class fearful of social upheaval in the rural areas.
- v) Widespread corruption within the liberal regime

Political Problems

- a) Lack of a strong and stable government. There were too many political parties none of them having a majority to form a government-resulting in short- lived coalition governments and hence general political instability.
- b) Difficulty in reintegrating war veterans into society.
- c) Disgust and disappointment with the Versailles Treaty. The Italians got little territory. They had expected more. They failed to get Dalmatia and Fiume.
- d) Conflict between church and state – with the Roman Catholic Church refusing to recognize the new Kingdom.
- e) Fear of Communism and Socialism amongst the business and educated classes.
- f) Divided leadership.Entering the war had split the old leadership, some had been in favour of the war, others were against. Catholics and Socialists both appeared to threaten the state, and the 1919 elections revealed a deep political split between north and south with almost all the socialist deputies from the north and almost all the middle of the road government parties' deputies coming from the south. All this was a disastrous recipe for chaos in central government.
- g) Mussolini personal qualities – was an orator and a demagogue.

Study Guides

- i) What are the characteristics of Italian fascism?
- ii) Why did fascism develop in Italy after the First World War?
- iii) Briefly outline three problems facing Italian democracy immediately after the end of the First World War.

The Rise of Benito Mussolini

The rise of Mussolini to power was brought about by the lack of a stable political framework within which the democratic politicians could work to solve the many social and economic problems facing Italy after 1918. Therefore the various social, economic and political problems stated above constituted the factors which helped Mussolini's rise to power.

-Mussolini's support came from demobilized soldiers from junior officers to other ranks, disgruntled with the anti – climax of peace, and unemployment. Many were genuinely concerned about what was happening to Italy.

-His support also came from working men disillusioned with the failure of strikes and unions to get them a better deal.

-He also got support from the lower middle – class, self- employed and the professionals seeking law and order and protection of their property. These groups were joined by wealthy industrialists, businessmen fearful of the threat of communism, and finally, by groups of young intellectuals who were valued for their ability to spread the fascist message.

- In addition to these active supporters of the fascist cause there were many in the army and the Catholic Church and supporters of the monarchy who felt that they had in common with Mussolini's anti-left stance.

Characteristics of Fascism

- The individual should distrust reason and simply obey orders.
- Denial of equality: the strong have an obligation to destroy the weak.
- Violence is an essential tool.
- Government by the elite as the average person is incapable.
- Totalitarianism – total state control of the lives of individuals.
- Racism and imperialism – these were justified in that certain nations are elite and are obligated to control power.

Fascist take over of power

- The liberal governments, over fearful of a communist revolution, were too slow to curb the black shirt violence, and failed to reach agreements amongst themselves which would have created a broad based government with some prospect of long – term survival.
- Giolitti's (Prime Minister) miscalculation, allowing Fascists into the lists of government candidates in the 1921 elections gave them 35 seats. It was however, outside Parliament that the Fascists made their real mark.
- Here, increasing violence, often ignored by the local civil authorities, was unopposed by a succession of briefly surviving governments. In 1921, they founded the fascist militia and organized their own unions of employers and employees.

The Fascist March on Rome – October 1922

- Mussolini's black shirts began a march on Rome to gain power, as the Prime Minister Giolitti had refused to allow the Fascists within government.
- The king Victor Emmanuel III feared a civil war, and offered the government to Mussolini to avoid this. Thus Mussolini took power with relatively little bloodshed. The violence of the Fascist black shirts, and the complicating of the police and army – who did not suppress Fascist violence – also contributed to Mussolini's take over of power.
- Victor Emmanuel II decided to invite Mussolini to become Prime Minister rather than using the army to stop him. With greater courage, the king could have resisted Mussolini with the help of the army.

Study Guides

- i) How did Mussolini consolidate his political power in Italy from 1922- 1928?
- ii) How efficient was Mussolini's fascism in Italy?
- iii) Explain Mussolini's economic and social policies
- iv) How total was Mussolini's control of Italian affairs?
- v) How successful was Mussolini in his domestic policies?

Consolidation of Fascist Power – (1922 – 24)

Most – examination questions on Mussolini's gaining of power require the story to be pegged beyond 1922, for at that time; Mussolini still had much to do. He did not become a dictator in

1922. The king, Victor Emmanuel II remained the Head of State. The Fascists strengthened their position through the following measures.

- Excluding socialists from the Coalition
 - Continuing to attract members, and weakening opponents at the same time.
 - Continuing violence against political opponents.
 - Improvements of relations between church and state as the Catholic Church had become pro-Fascist.
 - Explanation of the lack of unity amongst the Fascist opponents.
 - The Acerbo law of July 1923
- This law stated that the party of the Coalition which won an election was to be automatically awarded two – thirds of the Seats in Parliament. This made strong government possible.
- Fascists won the April 1924 election, getting 374 of the 535 seats in Parliament, about 60% of seats.
 - Fascists also used electoral fraud in the South Italy to ensure Fascist victory. There was a general support at this point for what Mussolini appeared to be doing, particularly in providing effective government.

Moves towards Dictatorship – 1924

The murder of Matteotti: -

-Matteotti the socialist leader was murdered in June 1924. He was the most ferocious and courageous of Mussolini's opponents who might have succeeded in winning the moderate fascists from their loyalty to Mussolini. This led to the withdrawal from the chamber by opposition deputies – an event commonly referred to as the Aventine secession. This was a mistake, for Mussolini was now vulnerable to the charge of murder, and even in the absence of his opponents, it required all his efforts to survive the crisis.

The following measures confirmed his dictatorship

- In December 1925 – a law was passed which passed complete power into Mussolini's hands. He also introduced more repressive measures. For instance: -
- Political parties were banned
- Trade Unions were banned
- Free press was ended through take –over by Fascists and the introduction of Censorship.
- Elected officials were replaced by officials appointed by the central government.
- Increased power of arrest and detention without trial.
- Scope of the death penalty was widened to include action against the authorities.
- Setting up a special court to deal with political crimes'
- Creation of a secret police force (OVRA)
- Closure of opposition newspapers

These measures were, (during the mid – 1920s), key moments in the moves towards dictatorship. The posturing and the displays of military might and the incessant propaganda which accompanied them also need noting in the strengthening of dictatorship.

The Corporate State

The corporate state was a feature of the Fascist state in Italy. Under corporatism, a group composed of representatives of the employers, the workers, and the state would govern a corporation. It was hoped this would:

- End conflicts between owners and labour
- End class conflict
- Increase production (no more strikes)
- Increase living standards

Fascist Economic Policies

In economic policy Mussolini made concessions to big business interests.

- No attempt was made to destroy capitalism. Mussolini compromised with the capitalists and left them in charge of their industries in return for their support.
- ‘Production’ was the word used by the Fascists to describe their aims. However, this was vague and limited to a desire to boost production.
- There were close bonds between the state and heavy industry. More funds were directed towards these branches of the economy.
- There was little attention paid to the development of the consumer industries.
- Taxation levels were high. This was to fund investment in heavy industry.
- The lire was fixed at an artificially high level because of national pride.
- Protectionism increased – to protect heavy industry and agriculture – since Mussolini sought to achieve autarky, that is, economic self – sufficiency.
- Government intervention increased because of the Great Depression.
- Private banks were taken over to finance and to invest in industry.
- Allocation of raw materials was brought under government control.
- Propaganda made the most of development in the railways control, hydro – electricity, motorways, and above all the draining of the Pontine Marshes.
- There was the battle for grain and battle for births which were aimed at achieving national self – sufficiency (autarky)
- Tourism grew, but unemployment, despite the vast labour intensive land reclamation schemes and a doubling in the number of public employees, remained high and the build up of heavy industry was disappointing. Italy was not ready in 1939 when the 2nd World War began, to stand alongside Germany, its ally, provides some comment on the reality of Mussolini’s achievement in creating a strong national economy.

Social Policies

In education, the state decided to take direct control of this important sector. Textbooks were re-written to popularize Fascist policies. Mussolini, the IL Duce was viewed as a hero. Teachers were closely supervised and had to show their support of the Fascist state. There was a lot of indoctrination in education. Pupils were taught that “Mussolini was always right.

Church - State Relations: the Lutheran Treaties of 1929

Mussolini concluded a treaty with the Pope and the Catholic Church in 1929. According to this accord, the Vatican was to remain the domain of the Pope. Catholicism would be declared the only state religion and a compulsory school subject. By so doing Mussolini secured the tacit support of the vastly influential Catholic Church. This momentous healing of old wounds must

loom large in any explanation of the durability of the Fascist regime. In fact it is considered to be the most important and notable achievement of the Fascist regime.

Politically, the regime was authoritarian, centred around the increasingly isolated Mussolini, who insisted on making decisions down to the most trivial level. The fascist co-operations did not take over the functions of the older state. The monarchy, the Chamber of Deputies (though all fascists), the army, the police and the local provincial leaders all survived. It seemed increasingly unlikely that much of the increasingly inefficient Fascist state would last beyond the death of the Il Duce (Mussolini's popular name), for a long time through the skilful use of propaganda and this from the Italian people.

Fascist Foreign Policy: (1922 – 36)

Italy's interests concentrated on three areas, the Mediterranean, Africa and the Balkans, yet there was a desire to 'revise' the settlement of 1919 – 1920.

- Mussolini obtained Fiume from Yugoslavia
- Mussolini invaded Corfu (Greek Island) in response to the murder of an Italian general but was pressured by the League of Nations to withdraw (see section on the league)
- He also declared a Protectorate over Albania
- Mussolini sought to destabilize Yugoslavia
- He crushed a revolt in Libya with the use of massive force and executions.
- He signed a treaty of friendship with Ethiopia in 1928

By the late 1920s, Mussolini was becoming increasingly revisionist and frustrated at the failures of traditional diplomacy, but the weakness of the Italian armed forces made him support the disarmament efforts of the League of Nations and made him co-operate with Italy's World War Allies.

- Relations with Germany were not good in the early years of Hitler's regime. Mussolini opposed Hitler's designs on Austria by backing the Austrian government. Later he moved troops to the Austrian frontier to forestall what he suspected were German intervention in Austria.
- October 25, 1935, Mussolini ordered the invasion of Ethiopia - realizing that the Allies would do little to stop him because they were worried over Hitler's Germany. The League of Nations imposed sanctions for this action but they did not succeed because oil was not included in the banned items. Also Britain did not close the Suez Canal to Italian warships.
- Neither Germany, nor the USA were members of the League and sanctions could therefore only be ineffective (see section of League of Nations)
- Now Mussolini turned towards a more Fascist- driven foreign policy. The reasons for this change were: -
- Anger at the actions of Britain and France in response to his Ethiopian invasion.
- The success of the Ethiopian invasion and the nature of Fascism which demanded expansionist policies.

Foreign Policy (1936 – 1943)

- Intervention in the Spanish Civil War
- A move towards Hitler.
- The establishment of the Rome – Berlin Axis 1936

- Italy left the League of Nations – in 1937
- Mussolini let Hitler annex Austria – February – March 1938
- Mussolini proposed the Munich Conference when war between Germany and the western powers seemed likely.
- Mussolini annexed Albania – April 1939
- The Pact of steel – a military alliance with Germany was signed in May 1939.
- Italy was unable to support Hitler in September 1939, and Hitler accepted Italian neutrality.
- 1940 i. Convinced of Hitler’s success, Mussolini joined the war (World War II).

MUSSOLINI:

Analysis and interpretation

What were the main features of fascism?

a) Increased Violence

Extreme violence against political opponents was common during Mussolini’s time. Mussolini himself claimed the responsibility for the murder of Italian opposition leader Matteotti (1925). Violence was also practiced under newly appointed Party secretary’s brief rule when Mussolini was ill. He was Fariacci, who supervised a purge of Fascist party members who were seen as insufficiently loyal to Mussolini.

b) The Press

The first step in establishing a Fascist dictatorship was taken in July 1925 when Mussolini imposed a series of laws to control the press. Anti-Fascist newspapers were closed down and those remaining were only allowed to print articles approved by the government. From December 1925 all journalists had to be registered with the Fascist party.

c) Central and Local Government

In August 1925, Mussolini took the next step in establishing his dictatorship. This time he focused on local and central government. Elected mayors and councils of towns and cities in the 93 provinces were replaced by appointed fascist officials known as prodesta. Although they were party members, they were mainly conservative and were drawn from the traditional landowning and military elites. In this way, Mussolini tried to ensure that the more militant fascists were excluded from real power in the provinces.

Fascist political control was further established on 3 August 1925 when all meetings by opposition parties were banned. Mussolini also moved to increase his personal power in central government. On 24 December 1925 Mussolini made himself head of government and in January 1926 he increased his powers to allow him to issue decrees without parliamentary approval and made himself responsible only to the king. Soon Mussolini insisted on being called Duce (the leader). By 1929, he held eight ministerial posts himself, which excluded many other Fascist leaders from powers.

d) The cult of the Duce

The indoctrination of the Italian people in the wisdom and leadership qualities of the Duce became a central activity of the fascist state. It paid off in the much-repeated graffiti “Mussolini is always right” scrawled on walls over Italian towns.

The cult of the strong leader had featured in European Literature from the late nineteenth century onwards but had not figured largely in the early days of fascism. It developed in Italy as a way of explaining and supporting Mussolini’s personal dictatorship. Mussolini was portrayed as follows:

- The scholar, writing learned articles for the Encyclopedia Italiana
- The man of culture, in a widely distributed photograph of him playing the violin
- The man of action leading by example, bare-chested and helping to bring in the grain harvest.
- The athlete running bare-chested along holiday beaches
- The military leader, in different uniforms-marching, reviewing troops sitting in planes and military vehicles.

Widely circulated stories of Mussolini’s incredible capacity for work and his Mastery of all aspects of government-almost entirely fictitious backed up these images of the supreme leader.

e) **Propaganda**

Outside the work place it was more difficult to control and direct the citizen’s lives, but much was still done to draw the Italian people into the embrace of the state. Above all, they were subjected to an endless barrage of state propaganda in newspapers on the state-run radio network and at the cinema. It was almost impossible to acquire an independent view on political issues, domestic or foreign. The thrust everywhere was to glorify the fascist regime and to celebrate Italian greatness and, in its control of the presentation of public affairs at every level, the regime perhaps came closest to controlling the minds of its citizens e.g. it provided free radios to schools and communal radios to villages. The image of the Duce and Italian military achievements were glorified. Whatever the Italians views on the credibility of some claims the propaganda offensive ensured that the general public accepted the regime until the late 1930s.

f) **The Corporate state**

The attempts to exercise state direction of the economy through the institutions of the corporate state proved less successful, being constantly evaded by the larger employers who preferred to bargain with individual civil servants or government ministers in order to direct the country’s economic policies into paths they thought favourable to their own company’s interests. Despite creating a bureaucratic web of petty regulations, licenses and committees, the corporate system worked ineffectively and often stifled economic activity.

If the aim of totalitarianism was to produce an economically efficient nation directed towards national greatness through victory in war, then it failed miserably. Outside the central planning and directed activity of the Corporate state many small businesses, especially countless little shops, survived and often prospered. Small light-engineering firms in particular remained largely

unregulated but proved to be major economic success stories. Even by 1940, some 50 per cent of industrial workers in the northern towns remained outside the syndicates. In rural Italy too, especially in the south small peasants were unaffected by state planning and pursued their livelihoods much as they had always done, uninterrupted by Mussolini's totalitarian visions.

Flaws in the Corporate System

- a) At the highest level, too many decisions remained outside the scope of the corporations. The Ministry of Economics worked hard to limit the powers and responsibilities of the corporations. This weakened the corporations.
- b) At the level of national policy, the corporations became simply spectators of the new direction taken by the economy. On papers they were supposed to hold the lead of all industry and economic enterprise.
- c) Far from rationalizing production and encouraging enterprise, the corporate bureaucracy became a block on economic development and an additional obstacle to be overcome by entrepreneurs.

Other social controls

If the success of fascist totalitarianism is judged by the Battle for Births then it must be judged to be a failure. Even the punitive tax on men who remained bachelors failed to bring down the average age of marriage. The average age of marriage remained at over 28 for men, and over 25 for women, and even slightly higher in the 1930s than it had been when the fascists achieved office in the early 1920s. The extensive propaganda and the incentives failed with only 10 percent of women of child-bearing age giving birth in any one year. Equally unsuccessful was the attempt to keep women in the home by restricting their job opportunities. This actually led to more women staying in secondary schools and entering universities as a way of shunning the boredom of the home.

Success and Failure

Most of Mussolini's economic battles were far from successful often because they were inconsistent. The battle for grain," however, succeeded in almost doubling cereal production by 1939, thus making Italy self-sufficient in wheat. However, it also involved the misallocation of resources and resulted in Italy having to import olive oil. Fruit and wine exports dropped, as did the numbers of cattle and sheep. The battle for land resulted in only one area, the Pontine Marshes being effectively reclaimed. As it was near Rome, Mussolini saw this as a way of impressing visitors and tourists.

The battle for the lira," which had involved certifiably overhauling the lira resulted in Italian goods becoming more expensive and a consequent decline in exports and an increase in unemployment because car exports, in particular, were badly hit.

The revaluation also undermined free trade and traditional financial policies which Mussolini had adopted in the period 1922-25. It led to a recession in Italy, made worse by the Great Depression. As already noted, the battle for births" was disastrous. Most of Mussolini's battles which were intended to achieve entirely (self- sufficiency), tended to cause at least as many problems as they solved. This negative tendency was worsened by the effects of the Great Depression.

Study Guides

- i) Why did Mussolini introduce the corporate state? How successfully did it address Italian problems?
- ii) Assess the major aspects of Mussolini's foreign policy
- iii) Identify and explain at least two factors which led to Mussolini's downfall during the Second World War.

Examination type questions

1. How far did Mussolini achieve totalitarianism in Italy after 1925?
2. How far did Mussolini's policies in the 1920's and 1930's address the post war problems faced by Italy?
3. How accurate is the view that only Mussolini could have prevented Hitler's violation of world peace during the 1930s?
4. Critically examine the factors, which helped Mussolini and the Fascists take over power in Italy by 1922.
5. 'Unfriendly and Provocative'. How fitting is this description of Mussolini's Foreign Policy?
6. "Failure at home, disaster abroad". How fair is this assessment of the results of Mussolini's government of Italy?

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CHAPTER 28

RUSSIA (1917 – 1953)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- 1.Explain the failure of the Provisional Government in Russia.
- 2.Evaluate the causes of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia
- 3.Explain the role played by V.I Lenin, Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin in the Russian Civil War.
- 4.Assess the Impact of the Russian Civil War on Russia and the Bolsheviks, 1918-1921.
- 5.Describe and explain the New Economic policy (1924).
- 6.Assess the impact of the death of Lenin on the political developments in Russia.
- 7.Describe and Explain the Five Year Plans in Agriculture and Industry.
- 8.Analyse the reasons for and impact of the purges in Russia
- 9.Evaluate the policies of Stalin in light of the country's preparedness for war in 1939.
- 10.Analyse Stalin's foreign policy after the Second World War.

This is an important period in Russian history. Landmark events which students need to be aware of took place during this period. The major highlights of this period include the Russian revolution, the Russian civil war, Lenin's New Economic Policy and Stalin's policies in Russia.

The Russian Revolution of 1917

The Russian Revolution developed in two stages namely the February (March) Revolution and the October / November Revolution. These two revolutions will be discussed separately below.

The February Revolution (as according to the Russian Calendar). According to the international Gregorian Calendar – it is the March Revolution.

The causes of the revolution

Effects of World War 1

- (a) World War one increased the dissatisfaction the Russian people had felt for decades about their autocratic system of government. The war demoralized the troops at the front. At home, Rasputin's influence increased and the economy worsened, creating an explosive state of affairs.

(b)The corrupt state of affairs: made a few aristocrats, among them the relatives of the imperial couple very unpopular among the majority in Russia. Numerous Russians had lost all respect for the Tsar and Tsarina. When the February revolution erupted, Nicholas II and Alexander had virtually no friends among the Russian people.

(c)The war had far –reaching effects on several facets of the Russian economy. The rising cost of living and shortages of food, fuel and housing caused the most dissatisfaction. While wages doubled between 1914 and 1917, this was not enough to keep pace with the cost of living, which increased fourfold. The dissatisfaction caused by the rising cost of living is reflected in the number of strikes during the war years – 68 was between August and December 1914, 1034 in 1915 and 1410 in 1916. The effect of World War I on Russia was to increase the dissatisfaction in an already dissatisfied nation. The government represented by the tsar was held responsible for the setbacks on the war front, the destructive influence of Rusputin and the general distress. At the beginning of 1917, the situation in Russia was indeed ripe for revolution.

The Start of the February Revolution

Although Russia was ready for revolution early in 1917, it was not a planned event which ended the reign of Nicholas II. It was a spontaneous eruption, surprising all the revolutionary leaders. No Bolshevik leaders were on the scene. Lenin and Zinovov were in Switzerland, Trotsky in America, and Stalin and Kamenev in Siberia.

The revolution was sparked off in Petrograd – the former St Petersburg on the 8th March 1917 (the 23rd of February according to Russian Calendar). On that day a number of female employees of the Lesnoy textile factory started demonstrating in the streets for more bread. They were joined by more workers. Soon 90 000 people were in the streets of Petrograd. They plundered several bakeries, chanting, “Give us bread”, “and End the war”and“Down with autocracy”. The following day the number increased to about 197 000 people. On the third day the number of demonstrators had increased to 240 000. When the army regiments, who had initially shot at the demonstrators, joined them, this marked a turning point in the February revolution. By the evening of the 12th of March 1917, Petrograd was in the hands of the demonstrators.

On the day the soldiers had begun joining the demonstrators, two governing bodies were formed. One was the provisional committee of the Duma representing the autocracy and the middle class. The other was the provisional committee of the Soviet Council of Workers and soldiers – representing the workers. These two bodies set up a provisional government under Prince Lvov. This was followed by the abdication of the Tsar on the 15th of March 1917. Thus the Romanov dynasty, Russian rulers for over 3 centuries came to an end and was being replaced by a Provisional Government, with Prince Lvov as Prime Minister.

The Rule of the Provisional Government

The Provisional Government which took office on the 15th of March 1917, was a government without power. It could only operate with the support of the Petrograd Soviet, which had control of the urban workers and soldiers. This raises the question, “why the Petrograd Soviet did not assume power”. The socialists in the Soviet decided to remain in the background and to leave the government to the representatives of the middle – class for more than one reason.

i) Firstly, they did not want to alienate the middle class. Their greatest fear was a counter-revolution, which would undo the successes of the revolution. They were therefore eager to obtain the support of the middle class against the groups of the far right.

ii) A second reason was that they did not regard themselves as fit to take control. As representatives of the working class, they did not have the political, economical and administrative experience that the middle class had.

iii) Thirdly, they acted according to Marxist principles to which they adhered. According to Karl Marx, there would be two revolutions which would sweep the middle class to power, and it was the second, the socialist revolution, which would put the proletariat in power. The socialists were satisfied that the February Revolution was the democratic revolution and that the middle class should assume leadership. The Soviet's unwillingness to assume control did not, however, prevent this body from forcing its will on the Provisional Government. The Soviet was able to do this because of its power. An example is the Soviet Order No. 1 of the 14th of March 1917. According to this order, there was to be an election of a committee in each military and naval unit, which had to assume charge of arms and which was in effect to decide which orders were to be obeyed. As the provisional government did not have the power to resist the Soviet, it had to accept order no 1. Lenin justifiably spoke of a "dual power", a sharing of government between provisional government and Soviets.

The Provisional Government's Policy

On the 16th March 1917, the provisional government announced its policy. Amongst the objectives were:

(i) The convening of a constitutional assembly to draw up a constitution for Russia (ii) amnesty for all political prisoners, (iii) discrimination on the grounds of class, religion or nationality, (iv) common, direct, equal and secret voting rights, and (v) the replacement of the police, by a citizen force, which was in conflict with the revolutionaries.

The Soviet supported this policy. In fact, the last two points indicate that body's complicity in its formulation. Not only the moderate socialists, that is, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries supported the Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks initially were also in favour of co-operation with the middle – class in the Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks leaders, Stalin, Kamenov and Muranov arrived on the 25th March 1917 from Siberia, and declared their willingness to support the provisional government as long as it served the urban workers and farmers. Only after Lenin's arrival in Petrograd on the 16th April 1917 did the Bolsheviks take a different line.

Study Guides

i) Why was the Provisional Government of Kerensky ineffective in addressing Russian problems?

Lenin and the Provisional Government

Lenin was in Zurich in Switzerland, where he spent most of the war years when he heard the news of the February Revolution. He was anxious to get to the scene of action as fast as possible but the problem was how. The problem was overcome when Germany, which was at war with Russia, consented to the request that Lenin and a number of Russian exiles be allowed to travel to Russia across German territory. The German authorities correctly suspected that someone of Lenin's convictions would immediately begin to thwart the Russian war effort.

-On the 17th April 1917, a day after arriving in Petrograd, Lenin read his famous "April Thesis" to a gathering of Social Democrats – Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. In the "April Thesis", he announced a political programme, which called for peace, the nationalization of the land, and the granting of power to the Bolsheviks. This, however, did not discourage Lenin, whose influence was helped by the mistakes of the Provisional government:

i) The first mistake was Milyukov's diplomatic note of May 1917. Milyukov, who was minister of foreign affairs held the view that the revolution had not changed Russian foreign policy. According to him, the revolution was merely a protest against the Tsar's clumsy war effort and not against the war itself. The war, therefore had to be continued. The Soviet did not agree with these views. It contended that it was the Tsar's war that the war had to be ended as soon as possible. In other words they wanted peace.

The growth of Bolshevik influence

Lenin judged that if the Bolsheviks offered a programme with sufficient revolutionary appeal, they could gain control over the soviets. While the Provisional Government, which did not have a clear or incisive line of policy, muddled along, discovering increasingly that it could not sustain both war and revolution at the same time, Lenin proceeded to outflank the other parties. He stole popularity from the Social Revolutionaries with his programme of land for the peasants and showed himself more radical than the Mensheviks (who argued that Russia was not ready for a socialist revolution) by calling for an immediate proletarian upheaval. With the continued poor show by Russia on the battle field, the Provisional Government, now under the leadership of the socialist revolutionary Alexander, Kerensky government also showed that it could reach no agreed solution on the central question of land reform.

A move by the Right Wing – the Kornilov Coup forced Kerensky to turn to the Bolsheviks for support. By October – the Russian Armies were breaking up and the soldiers drifting home. The peasants were taking matters into their own hands across the country and seizing the land. At the same time, the Bolsheviks had achieved a majority in the Petrograd Soviet.

The October Revolution

By the middle of September 1917 it was clear to Lenin that it was time to overthrow the Kerensky government. Any further delays would only diminish the Bolsheviks' opportunity of staging a successful Coup d'état. The Bolsheviks seized power on the night of 6 November 1917. The Coup was timed to coincide with the all Russian Congress of the Soviets. This received full power from the Petrograd Soviet, units of the Army and Navy and the Party organization itself. The programme formulated by Lenin was fourfold.

(i) Land to the peasants (ii) distribution of food to the starving, (iii) power to the Soviets and (iv) peace with Germany.

-The first of these was already spontaneously happening with the peasant seizure of land, and the fourth was brought about by the Treaty of Brest- Litovsk, which involved massive losses of Russian territory and of productive capacity. The second and third were achieved together in that food was distributed only to those willing to grant power to the Soviets.

-Soviets sprang up all over Russia, especially in the factories. The two decrees on land and peace consolidated the revolution. The Congress appointed the Council of People's Commissars to govern to state.

Consolidation of Power

Though they had won a majority in the Petrograd Soviet, in the local provincial soviets the Bolsheviks were still outnumbered. The elections for the Constituent Assembly produced in fact a clear majority for the social revolutionaries (the Bolsheviks obtained fewer than a quarter of the seats). The Bolsheviks military command acted immediately, closing down the assembly. The Third Act was the Russian Congress of Soviets, which the Bolsheviks were now able to dominate, assuming the function of the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks showed themselves willing to seize and consolidate power in defiance of democratic legality as expressed in the election to the Constituent Assembly.

-The authority of the Bolsheviks was further consolidated by the creation of the Cheka, the extraordinary All- Russian Commission of the struggle against counter – revolution, speculation and sabotage). A month later, in January, 1918, the Red Army was founded by Trotsky, Lenin proceeded to lay the basis of a single – party, totalitarian dictatorship principally through four instruments of the party (designated the communist Party in March 1918), the Soviets, the secret police and the Red Army.

Study Guides

- i) What factors enabled the Bolsheviks to gain in strength?
- ii) Why was there so little resistance to the Bolsheviks in October 1917?
- iii) How did the Bolsheviks tackle the problems confronting them after they had taken over power in 1917?
- iv) How far was Lenin personally responsible for the Civil War?
- v) Was the Bolshevik victory a result of Red strength or White weakness?

The Russian Civil War (1918 – 1920)

Barely three months after the Bolsheviks had signed the Treaty of Brest – Litovsk, they were once again engulfed in a war. This time it was a civil war, between the White Russians (Conservatives) and the Red Russians (the Bolsheviks). The Whites were in the minority, but were supported by Britain, France and the USA in the form of advice, money and weapons. They threatened Lenin's government in Moscow from four directions: from Siberia in the east, from Murmansk on the northern coast, from Estonia in the west, and from the regions of the Black sea in the south.

The civil war served particularly to strengthen the power of the communist government as a national government. It forged the Red Army into a more efficient fighting force for national

defence. This led to the defeat of the White army. On the home front, the Cheka launched a reign of terror against all elements of ‘bourgeois reaction’, and eliminated all rivals to the Bolsheviks.

i) Firstly, the Reds had better leaders than did the Whites. The white leaders – Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich and Miller, were army officers and navy officers who could take command, but they were incapable of inspiring the people with their ideas. Lenin and Trotsky did that very well. These two were, furthermore, great realists. Their actions were cool and considered. The credit for building the Red Army from nearly nothing to a military machine goes to Trotsky in the first place. He spent nearly the whole period of the Civil war in a railroad carriage, traveling from one front to another to issue the necessary orders.

ii) Secondly, the Red soldiers were better disciplined than the Whites. Trotsky mercilessly punished drunkenness, cowardliness and desertion. Discipline was less strict in the white armies. Drunkenness was more common among the White soldiers than among the Reds.

iii) Thirdly, the Reds were more single-minded than the whites. Lenin and his supporters had clarity of mind over the political dispensation they wanted for Russia. Not so with whites. These were against the Bolsheviks, but that was their only point of concurrence. Some were simply reactionaries, wanting nothing less than a return to Tsarist Russia. Some White Russians, such as Kolchak and Denikin were in favour of a unified Russia. Unlike the Reds, the Whites could not form a unified front.

iv) Fourthly, the Reds had greater popular support than the whites, The Reds had the support of the urban as well as a rural workers, especially those who benefited from Lenin’s decree of dispossessing the landowners. The Whites had the support of the middle class, but they were in the minority.

v) Fifthly, the Reds had the advantage of controlling the Russian heartland, while the whites had to operate from the outposts of the country. This benefited the Reds in three respects: They were able to use the railroads to their advantage, rapidly moving forces from one front to another; it gave them control of military supplies stock-piled for World War 1, and it prevented the whites from forming a United front.

Study Guides

- i) What effect did the Civil War have on the character of the Bolshevik Party/
- ii) What role did Trotsky play in the Red Terror?
- iii) What was the impact of War Communism on industry?

The New Economic Policy (NEP)

Lenin’s economic policy can be divided into two phases: the first phase of “War Communism” was the policy he adopted on coming to power and which he followed up to March 1921. It was directed at implementing socialism, but was restricted by the needs of the Civil War. The second phase was the “New Economic Policy”, (NEP), begun in March 1921 and pursued till about 1928, long after Lenin’s death in 1924. It was a partial return to capitalism.

War Communism

War communism had a dual character throughout. On the one hand there was socialism, which amongst other things required that the state assume control over all means of production, and that on the other hand, the civil war required rationing and commandeering foodstuffs. The policy of War Communism had far-reaching effects on agriculture, industry and commerce.

Agriculture:

-As far as agriculture is concerned, Lenin's decree of 8 November 1917, was one of the most important ever proclaimed in Russia. It stated that the property of all big landowners was henceforth expropriated and provisionally placed under the control of local land committees. The poorer farmers who owned no land were delighted by this decree and immediately occupied the expropriated areas.

-One of the aspects of the agriculture policy which encountered resistance was the pressure the government exerted on the farmers to supply the hungry inhabitants of the cities with food. The authorities decided to send, in May 1918, "food expeditions" into the country to commandeer the wheat of the rich farmers (the so called "kulaks"). This was called food requisitioning. These means led to great – dissatisfaction among the farmers. The commandeering of the farmers' wheat led them to decide to sow just enough wheat for their own use. As a result, the total crop was smaller, and food became even scarcer.

-Another source of dissatisfaction was the founding of communal or collective farms. The Bolsheviks favoured such focus, but the farmers, like the Social Revolutionary Party, favoured private ownership.

Industry

-As far as the industrial sector was concerned, the authorities were committed to nationalization and centralization. In June 1918, the most important industries were nationalized (that is, declared the property of the state). They went even further in November 1920, when all concerns with more than 10 workers were nationalized. However, the policy of nationalization and centralization did not improve production. In fact production decreased even further.

Commerce

The policy of War Communism had far-reaching effects on commerce. One implication was that money was eliminated as a means of payment, and replaced by goods. Workers, for example, were paid in food, clothes and fuel. The trend recorded with the communist belief that money was an evil of capitalism. Another implication was that the authorities increasingly had to commandeer or seize anything they required. An element of coercion was part of all transactions between the state and its citizens. A third implication was that a differentiated form of rationing was introduced. In September 1918, the inhabitants of Moscow were grouped into four classes, workers doing dangerous work, farmers, professionals and unemployed people. These four classes received rations in the ratio of 4:3:2:1.

After three years of war communism, it was clear that this policy could no longer be maintained.

It was a failure in two aspects: -

- i) Firstly it did not improve the country's economy
- ii) Secondly, it was resisted by both the farmers and the workers.

That the policy of War Communism was unsuccessful is proved by the fact that the Russian economy was weaker in 1921 than before the October Revolution “Almost everywhere” writes EH Carry, “industrial production reached its lowest level in 1920, registering a total of 16% of the 1912 figure: Of course, it is true that the civil war had a negative influence on the economy, but the shortage of food, lack of fuel, a decrease in industrial production, the decline in the value of the rouble, the declining production of wheat, and other economic declines cannot be blamed solely on the civil war. Thus, because of dissatisfaction among the different sections of society, Lenin abandoned War Communism in favour of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

The New Economic Policy (NEP)

The NEP was announced by Lenin at the 10th Congress of the Communist Party.

- 1) In short, it meant that certain key sectors of the economy, such as the heavy industries, banks, railways, and foreign exchange would remain under state control.
- 2) Private entrepreneurs would regain a foothold in agriculture, industry and commerce.
- 3) Henceforth, farmers could sell on the open market after delivering part of their crops to the state. To encourage this, industry would have to produce goods the farmer would buy.
- 4) Finally, private trade would once again be permitted. Lenin conceded that this new policy was a return to capitalism, but according to him, it was the only way out of existing conditions. It was, he said, “a defeat and retreat for a new attack.” “One step backwards to gain two steps forward”, some Bolsheviks who were not happy with the NEP, but it soon became clear that Lenin, as so many times in the past, had moved in the right direction. The advantages which Lenin’s New Economic Policy promised in agriculture were delayed by a severe drought which dealt the 1921 wheat crop in central Russia and the Volga catchments area a hard blow. The famine which followed even exceeded that which Russia experienced in 1891. In 1922, farmers sowed more wheat in response to the concession of being able to sell surplus wheat. The crop in 1922 was excellent, as it was in the following year. A small amount of wheat could even be exported.

-Lenin’s New Economic Policy was undoubtedly a major stimulus to agriculture. Many proponents of socialism did not like the fact that the policy enriched the wealthy farmers (kulaks), but they had to close their eyes to it temporarily. What was important at this stage was the fact that the farmers could produce the necessary wheat for the hungry urban workers.

Effects of NEP

- i) The NEP considerably lessened the earlier pre-occupation with nationalization and centralization of industries. The big and important industries (forming part of Lenin’s so called “controlling heights”) remained in the hands of the state, but the smaller and less important ones were left to private initiative.
- ii) A certain extent of decentralization was also introduced as the direct control which the Supreme Economic Council exerted over its departments was abolished and greater autonomy was given to the various industries.

iii) As a result of the NEP, industrial production achieved a strong upsurge and by 1927, all sectors of industry were once again at pre-war levels.

iv) The NEP also caused a strong commercial revival. Retail trade was given over to private dealers, who were again allowed to trade and employ people as had been the situation before the October Revolution.

v) The revival of trade increased the importance of money. Lenin was not very happy about this, but he – endured it as a necessary evil.

Lenin's New Economic Policy, announced in March 1921, remained the official line until long after his death. Only in 1928, did his successor, Stalin, see it fit to deviate from it.

STALIN'S RUSSIA – (1928 – 1953)

STALINIST RUSSIA: 1928- 1953

The Five Year Plans

One of the central aims of the communist regime in the Soviet Union was to industrialize the economy. The Soviet Union's economy had made advances under Lenin's NEP but economically the Soviet Union remained behind the rest of Europe. The Five Year Plans were designed to break away from the NEP, with its capitalist elements, bring about rapid industrialization to modernize the economy and bring about socialism. The changes introduced under the plans were to transform the USSR from a backward, peasant-based country into a modern, urban and industrial-based society.

Why did Stalin Launch the Five-Year Plans?

a)The Fear of Foreign Invasion

The decision to launch the first Five year Plan in 1928 was based on a combination of economic and political factors which were linked by a fear of foreign invasion. Despite the economic progress made under the NEP, the Soviet economy was still backward compared to the rest of Europe. In the 1920s the Soviet Union, with its vast size and abundant resources was still producing less coal and steel than France. If the Soviet Union was to ever face an attack from the capitalist power it would need a much stronger industrial base. Memories of the aid given to the whites by Britain Japan France and the USA during the Civil war of 1918- 1921 seemed to confirm suspicions that the West would wish to invade and destroy communism at some point in the future, as Stalin stated in 1931. "We are 50 to 100 years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in 10 years. Either we do it or we shall be crushed." Thus to industrialize formed an important part of Stalin's cry of "Socialism in One Country." The rise of Hitler with his anti- communist statements provided a further incentive for the successful completion of the Five-Year Plans as the 1920s progressed.

Economic Reasons

Under the NEP industrial production, although improving, remained disappointing to many in the Communist Party. By 1926 pre-war levels had been reached in many sectors but production

was nowhere near what it could have been. The disruption of the First World War and the civil war had damaged Russia's infrastructure and essential services such as distribution remained haphazard. Society production figures were still far below the modern industrial economies of Western Europe. State control under the Five- Year Plan would enable the government to direct the economy and ensure the adequate production and distribution of essential materials, including the food needed to support the industrial and urban growth. Economic control could thus maximize the resources of the Soviet Union.

Political Reasons

Although there was an economic case for the Five-Year Plans this was secondary to political reasons. To all Communist party members industrialization was seen as a necessary development in order to ensure the survival of the revolution. It was believed that socialism, and with it the communist party, would not survive in a non-industrial society. It was therefore essential to undertake a programme of industrial development. Industrialization would create many more members of the proletariat, who were the backbone of the revolution.

The Five-Year Plan would get rid of the detested Nepmen (private business people and traders who had gained under NEP) people who made a profit from their trade, the Nepmen were seen as capitalists, class enemies (reminiscent of the reminder of the old world and its values. How could socialism survive, it was argued, with the enemy lurking within? These capitalist elements' concerned with selfish gains needed to be wiped out and the Five-Year Plan would achieve this objective.

The Implementation of the Five-Year plans

The Five-Year plans were introduced after a fierce power struggle within the Communist party which was divided between the Right, Left and Centre. Such a power struggle and the 'purges' which followed will be discussed later in this chapter.

The abandonment of the NEP and the introduction of the push towards rapid industrialization was made in 1928. Industrialization was to be directed by Gosplan, the State Planning Authority, given the task of planning industrialization in the USSR under the Five-Year Plans. Gosplan set targets for industries and allocated resources, especially those industries which the government viewed as having higher priority in terms of modernization.

The First-Year Plan (1928-1932) concentrated on heavy industry, such as coal, steel and iron, using the ideas of Preobrazhensky, the economist and theorist. He was expelled from the party but his ideas were stolen by Stalin. The focus on heavy industry was a consequence that the Soviet Union had to deal with for the rest of its history. The original justification for this was the need to build up an industrial infrastructure of factories, plant and communications before other sectors could flourish.

Results of the First Five-Year Plan

The fact that the USSR was able to withstand and later defeat the might of German military attack in 1941 seemed to confirm that Stalin's policies had brought about a successful modernization of the country. Russia had been transformed from a relatively backward economy into a modern industrial state. Yet progress was unbalanced and achievements were made at an

enormous human cost. Although few industries met the over-ambitious targets of the first Five-Year Plan there is no doubt that there was tremendous growth in industrial production.

The historian Nove has drawn attention to some of the issues concerning official production figures, which indicate that production of machinery greatly over-fulfilled the plan despite less success in the production of metal. This appears odd given the obvious connections between the two industries. Nonetheless, there seems to have been rapid growth in the engineering industry and fuel production. Heavy industry in general saw substantial growth.

The first Five-Year Plan increased production by improving efficiency in existing factories as well as developing new industrial plants and towns. The Plan saw the successful completion of projects to provide power for the growth of industry. The Dnieper Dam project was one of the most important examples. The Plan developed both traditional industrial centres such as Moscow and Leningrad, as well as new centres in the less developed parts of the country. Both Kazakhstan and Georgia saw significant industrial development.

Chaotic implementation and planning have often been highlighted as factors which limited the economic achievements. The state's rigid adoption of a command economy directed by the government, led to failures because planners based in Moscow had little understanding of local conditions in the far-flung parts of the Soviet Union. The result was that many resources were wasted because they were inappropriate.

The imposition of over-ambitious production targets by central government on factories throughout the country encouraged managers to inflate production figures. Creativity with production figures led to corruption which later became an integral part of the Soviet society.

Labour conditions were appalling and the Plan relied on revolutionary fever to motivate a workforce that was largely unskilled. In 1933, only 17% of the workforce in Moscow was skilled. Training schemes had to be introduced in order to transform the workforce.

Overall, the period of 1928 to 1941 saw a four-fold increase in the production of steel and a six-fold increase in coal production. There was substantial progress made in energy production, iron ore and metal industries, but consumer industries suffered. The products from textiles actually declined during the first Five-Year Plan whilst the housing industry was virtually ignored. The shortage of consumer goods was made worse by the fact that collectivization had destroyed a lot of cottage industry previously undertaken in rural areas.

The Second Plan, (1933-1937)

This set high targets for the production of consumer goods but as the 1930s progressed, the rise of Hitler in Germany changed the focus towards the needs of defence. This meant that heavy industry continued to receive priority.

The second Five-Year Plan drew on lessons learnt from the chaotic planning of the first plan and made more use of technical expertise and with the new industrial centres commencing production, the results were, impressive. In particular, coal production rose substantially during

the second plan. The chemical industry also made progress but the oil industry remained disappointing.

Drawbacks

However, under the pressure to meet the targets set by the Five-Year Plans, safety was neglected and working conditions worsened. Machinery was used without proper training or protection. Levels of pay were low although factory shops did provide some goods at reasonable prices. The government ordered factory canteens to keep habits to ensure a steady supply of food.

Due to a critical shortage of labour in general, workers became difficult to keep until the passport system which restricted the movement of workers was introduced in 1932. Increased absenteeism was another sign of discontent and it became such a problem that in 1939 it was made a criminal offence which could result in imprisonment. Of course, with labour in such short supply these measures were to be applied always.

Slave labour from the labour camps had to be used to meet the demand of workers. More importantly, to encourage workers to work harder, incentives were introduced. Soviet workers were encouraged to work like the hero Stackhanov, a coalminer from the Donbass region who mined in one shift, fifteen times the average amount of coal. Rewards for model workers included, among other things a new flat. Alexi Stakhanov toured the country encouraging his fellow workers to follow his example. The Soviet leadership used him to attack industrial management who seemed unable to meet the high targets set under the Five-Year Plans. In the 1980s, however, it was revealed that Stackhanov's achievement was a fraud: he had been helped by a team of support workers:

Summary of the results of five-year plans

Economics

- Emphasis on heavy industry
- Six-fold increase in coal production
- Four-fold increase in steel production
- Chaotic implementation and increased corruption
- Building of large industrial centres
- Neglect of consumer industries
- Decline in textile production

Social

- Decline in working conditions e.g. safety measurers
- Low levels of pay
- Workers discontent at poor conditions
- Introduction of passport system to prevent workers leaving jobs
- Use of slave labour to overcome labour shortages
- Huge growth in the number of industrial workers.

Political

- Control of the Communist Party strengthened through the organization of workers.

- Capitalist classes removed- e.g. Nepmen and “bourgeois experts.”
- Expansion of government’s role in the economy through central planning (Gosplan)
- Strengthening of Stalin’s position as those opposed to the Five-Year Plan were removed.

Study Guides

- i) What was the NEP and how did it preserve party unity?
- ii) How far did NEP meet Russia’s needs?
- iii) What were the strengths and weaknesses of the First and Second Five Year Plans?
- iv) Assess the impact of the Purges upon the Soviet Union before and after the WWII.

Collectivisation

This was the policy of creating larger agricultural units where the peasants would farm collectively rather than on individual basis on farms.

Why did Stalin adopt Collectivization?

1. Industrial development would only be possible if it was supported by an increase in agricultural productivity. There was need for food surpluses which had to be generated by changing the basis of farming in the countryside. By 1928, agriculture was still run largely on an individual basis by peasant households under the supervision of the Mir (an organization made up of village elders and controlling agricultural activity in the villages). Hence agricultural production was highly inefficient compared with the rest of Europe. It could not produce enough surplus grain to support further industrial and urban growth.

2. Labour would be needed in the new industrial centres and this could be achieved in the short-term only by the mechanization of agriculture. This would enable labourers to be released from the countryside to work in industry. Thus the policy of industrialization could be achieved only if agriculture was made more efficient.

3. Stalin had become convinced that the state of Agriculture and the attitudes of the peasantry were holding back industrial production and progress. State procurements that is- the amount of surplus grain given to the government by the peasants- had fallen since 1926. The peasants had become wary of growing too much food, knowing it would be seized by the state at a low price.

4. This acted as a disincentive to raise production, as did the lack of industrial goods available to buy using any profit made from a food surplus. The problem for the government was that industrial production could be increased only if food production rose. This problem, known as the scissors crisis’ (widened gap between prices of industrial goods and those of agricultural goods. The increase in prices for industrial goods compared with agricultural prices meant that the peasants had less incentive to grow surplus food for such a low price). Stalin therefore saw the solution as a forced policy of collectivization to raise food production.

5. As well as improving the efficiency of agriculture, collectivization would help extend socialism to the countryside and therefore ensure the survival of the revolution. Collectivization also provided the opportunity for getting rid of the kulaks, those richer peasants who seemed to benefit from NEP. In the eyes of the Communists the Kulaks hoarded

food for their own consumption rather than provide it for industrial workers in the towns. This led to pressure on the government leadership to rid the country of this capitalist class. To fail to do so would hold back the progress towards socialism.

What were the results of Collectivization?

Initially the process of collectivization was to be voluntary, but by the autumn of 1929 coercion was used to quicken the pace. In this all-out drive for collectivization the kulaks were not to be admitted to the new collectives. “Labelled as class enemies” they were to be deported to Siberia and the Urals in Russians cold labour camps.

The process of collectivization involved local party officials going into villages and announcing the organization of a collective farm (Kolkhoz) and lecturing the peasants on the advantage of farming as collectives until enough of them had signed up as members. The collectivisation could then seize animals, grain supplies and buildings as the property of the collective. The term “kulak” was applied not just to the richer peasants but to any peasant who refused to join.

The Kulaks usually set fire to their farms and slaughtered their animals. Party officials were sometimes murdered on arrival in the villages. The regime dealt with this opposition by sending in dieselization squads party members from the cities who would forcefully help organize collectives. The OGPU, or secret police were also used to round up unco-operative peasants; deporting them to the remote regions of Russia. The Red Army would also come in to crush resistance. The situation was usually worse in the Ukraine, North Caucasus and Kazakhstan.

The human cost of collectivization was enormous. The elimination of nearly 10 million out of 15 million Kulaks represents a human tragedy of epic proportions. In addition, there were an estimated four million deaths from the famine in 1933 despite official statements by the soviet government denying its existence.

The historian Robert Conquest (1986) has argued that collectivization, with its resulting famine, was a deliberate policy of genocide against the Ukrainian people on the part of Stalin. An analysis of the grain harvest in 1932 indicates that it was low in most areas of the Soviet Union, but as the chief- growing region of the country, the Ukraine bore the brunt of this food shortage.

The case of the Kazakhs illustrates another side to the human cost. This nomadic group was forced into collectives against their will. The change in their way of life had devastating consequences. Their sheep flocks were virtually wiped out and a typhus epidemic reduced the Kazakhs population by 40%.

Economic results of collectivization were equally disastrous. The cattle population was reduced from about 70 million in 1928 to less than 39 million in 1933.

-Grain production fell from 73, 3 million tones in 1928 to 67, 7 million tones in 1934. Although the more widespread use of agricultural machinery led to some recovery in the 1930s, productivity levels remained extremely low. It took decades for Soviet agriculture to reach some of the production figures for foodstuffs attained in the period before collectivization.

The Purges

Purges- The term used to describe the wave of terror and killings which Stalin and his supporters used to eliminate his political opponents. The targets were so-called enemies of the state or people who were accused of crimes often they could not have committed. Victims of the purges were either shot or sent to the labour camps.

A series of show trials were held which saw former leaders of the regime accused and then, in nearly all cases, executed. Yet the purges were to extend beyond those farmers leaders who had fallen out with Stalin, to include army personnel, managers and middle-ranking officials of the party.

By the early 1930s, there was an extensive state machinery of terror. There was the party secretariat that collected information on Soviet citizens and party officials, and also the secret police, known as OGPU until 1934 and the NKVD thereafter. These were involved in the surveillance of individuals and the running of labour Camps. Thus, the apparatus was in place for dealing with opposition as and when it arose.

The murder of Sergei Kirov, a member of the Politburo based in Leningrad triggered the Great Purges. He had opposed the violent manner in which collectivization was being enforced on the peasants. He was murdered on the order of Stalin but the murder was blamed on Zinoviev and Kamenev who were known to be opponents of Stalin. The two were sentenced to long imprisonment terms.

The Purge of the Left

During 1935 and 1936 there was a wave of denunciations and arrests of members of the Left Opposition who were still at large. These had supported the idea of Permanent Revolution in the 1920s. This put them in opposition of those who called for “Socialism in one Country.” The Left had called for rapid industrialization and abandonment of NEP before Stalin was ready to do so. Because the Left was associated with the ideas of Trotsky, it was relatively easy to attack them as enemies of the state. Trotsky, although he had fled abroad, continued to denounce Stalin. Zinoviev and Kamenev were the two most prominent members of the left and both were accused of being Trotsky’s agents.

Opposition from the Right

These were party members who had wished to keep the NEP and criticized Stalin’s rapid industrialization under the Five-year Plans as harsh and unnecessary. The leading members of the right were Bukarin whose criticisms of Stalin’s policies led to his execution in 1938.

The Purge of the Red Army

Three out of five Marshals were purged. Fourteen out of sixteen army commanders and 37000 officers were either shot or imprisoned. The navy lost every one of its admirals during the purge. The usual accusation leveled against members of the armed forces was of links with foreign countries, especially Germany.

The Secret Police too was purged. These were the purges who were purged to ensure that they posed no threat to him. In 1938 Genrikk Yagoda, a former head of the NKVD, was shot. He was

replaced by Nicolas Yezhov who oversaw the most excessive phase of the purges from 1936 to 1928. Yezhov purged over 3000 of his own personnel. He was later dismissed and arrested in 1938 as Stalin sought to make him scapegoat for the excesses of the purges.

It is shocking to note though that the people who were purged for political offences from 1930 to 1953 when Stalin was effectively in office exceeded that of all those executed for political offences in Tsarist Russia in the 100 years up to 1917.

And yet one might ask, how far beyond Stalin did the responsibility for the purges and the terror spread?

While accepting fully that Stalin was the architect of the terror, historians have begun to look beyond him in assessing the responsibility for the purges. Their approach has been prompted by their reading of Russian archival materials that showed that Stalinism was not as monolithic system of government as has been traditionally assumed.

The purges clearly initiated by Stalin himself, but he, after all, was only one man, no matter how powerful or feared he was. Many actually welcomed the purges as an opportunity to settle old scores as well as a way of advancing themselves by filling the jobs vacated by the victims. It has to be acknowledged that the purges were popular with some Russians who believed that Stalin's harsh rule prevented the country from sliding back into its historic weakness and backwardness. To such people, Stalin was a genuine savior whose unrelenting methods were precisely what the nation needed.

Study Guides

- i) What were the effects of collectivization on the peasantry?
- ii) How successful had collectivization proven to be by 1939?
- iii) How popular was Stalin in the Soviet Union?
- iv) Was Stalin responsible for the emergence of the Cold war?

Examination Type Questions

1. Why were Bolsheviks able to seize power by October 1917?
2. How valid is the view that the Russian Civil War between 1918 and 1921 had more negative than positive results?
3. Why and with what results was the New Economic Policy (NEP) implemented?
4. How far had Lenin overcome the problems facing the Bolshevik government of Russia by the time of his death in 1924?
5. How far, by 1924, had Lenin established a Marxist state in Russia?
6. Why, by 1939, had Stalin been able to impose totalitarian rule on the Soviet Union?
7. What role did the 'cult of personality' play in the government of the USSR from 1945 to 1953?
8. How far were Stalin's reforms a Revolution from above?"
9. How effective were Stalin's economic policies after 1945?
10. Why, despite implementing the Great Purges, did Stalin continue to face political and special opposition to his rule in Russia?

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CHAPTER 29

THE CAUSES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

- 1.Explain the severity of the Treaty of Versailles, especially on Germany and other defeated powers.
- 2.Link the failure of the League of Nations to the coming in war in 1939.
- 3.Assess the impact of the Great Depression upon international co-operation in Europe.
- 4.Assess the impact of Hitler’s foreign policy in relation to the outbreak of war in 1939.
- 5.Explain the policy of appeasement and how it led to war in 1939.
- 6.Describe the Nazi- soviet Pact and how it acted as a slide into war in 1939.

The period from 1933 to 1941 was one of deep international instability eventually resulting in the Second World War. The tension began with the appointment of Adolf Hitler as German Chancellor in January 1933. Prior to that, in the mid-1920s, Hitler had actually shown that he somehow envisaged the remoulding of Germany into a great world power. Hitler clearly outlined four aims of what would become his foreign policy in his book, *Main Kampf*, “My struggle” thus:

- 1.The destruction of the Treaty of Versailles. This would allow Germany to recover lost territory.
- 2.To gain territory- or “living space” or *Lebensraum* for Germany in Eastern Europe would mean a war in order to defeat Soviet Bolshevism.
- 3.To include all German-speaking people in his proposed “Third Reich,” especially those living in Austria, the sudden area of Czechoslovakia and Danzig.
- 4.To create a “racially pure” German state that would be the most dominant power in Europe.

The rise to power of Hitler therefore immediately raised concerns that Germany would soon rearm and openly challenge the Paris Peace Settlement. However, Hitler was initially too concerned with consolidating Nazi control of Germany to take a great interest in Germany’s foreign affairs.

Initially, Hitler decided to proceed cautiously in the realm of foreign affairs and repeatedly made soothing speeches which insisted that Germany wanted peace. At the World Disarmament Conference, Hitler suggested that all the other major powers either disarm to match the German level of armaments set at Versailles, or that they allow Germany to rearm to the same level as all the other major powers. Ramsay MacDonald the British prime minister, urged the French to

accept the request, but they would only agree if Germany, as an act of good faith, accepted the Versailles arms limits for only four years. In October 1933, Hitler withdrew from the World Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations altogether on the grounds that Germany had to be treated on unequal terms.

These moves provoked fears about Nazi intentions. To ease these worries, Hitler signed a four-year non-aggression pact with Poland in January 1934. The Polish government thought that the agreement offered them security against Soviet ambitions, but it seems that Hitler signed the agreement to thwart a possible Franco-Polish alliance, and to bring Poland under German influence. The agreement was seen by the British as a sign of Hitler's peaceful intentions, but the French were more suspicious and in April 1934, the French government announced that it would 'henceforth assure her (France) security by her own means' Meanwhile the arrival of Hitler on the international scene allowed the Soviet Union to emerge from years of diplomatic isolation. In November 1933, the USA officially recognized the Soviet Union and restored diplomatic relations. In July 1934 the Soviet Union was admitted to the League of Nations.

However in the summer of 1934 the Nazis attempted to force an Anschluss with Austria. Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor opposed the idea and in June 1934 slapped a ban on the Austrian Nazi Party through which the Nazis hoped to achieve the Anschluss. A month later, he was assassinated by pro-Nazi extremists. This action provoked world-wide outrage: Mussolini, the Fascist leader in Italy, sent four army divisions to the Austrian border, and the French and Italian governments issued a joint declaration opposing any attempt to undermine Austrian independence. Hitler was forced to deny any Germany involvement in the murder of Dollfuss, and refuted any Nazi plan for an armed seizure of Austria.

Meanwhile, a crisis erupted in domestic German politics which shocked most liberal-minded people in the democracies, Hitler ordered a lawless and merciless eradication of his political rivals during the Night of Long Knives, between 29 and 30 June 1934. General van Schleicher, the former German chancellor; Gregor Strasser, a leading socialist figure in the Nazi Party; and Ernst Röhm leader of the SA were among those brutally murdered.

On 2 August 1934, president von Hindenburg the last link with the Weimar republic died. This greatly strengthened Hitler's power in Germany. He swiftly abolished the post of president, ended the Weimar constitution and declared himself Führer (Leader) of the German people. Each member of the German armed forces was now required to swear a personal oath of loyalty/allegiance to Hitler-and not the state.

While the above developments were mostly domestic-oriented, they caused growing concern and anxiety in Britain and France. Moreover, such a strange hold on power by Hitler certainly made him pursue even more aggressive foreign policies which destabilized European peace.

1935 witnessed a number of major developments in international affairs. In January 1935, 90 percent of voters in the Saar region of Germany, in a plebiscite held by the League of Nations opted for the restoration of the area to Germany. In the same month, France and Italy signed a diplomatic agreement which resolved mutual discontentment in North Africa, and promised co-operation in the event of German aggression. On 16 March 1935 the Nazi propaganda ministry

assembled the world's press to announce what everyone already knew: Germany was rearming. The German army was now 400 000 strong (the Treaty of Versailles had limited it to 100 000). Conscription was introduced, the air force and navy were undergoing rapid programmes of expansion and Hitler claimed that Germany was no longer bound by the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty.

The public announcement that Germany would now embark on rearmament caused public outrage. Britain, France and Italy met at Stresa in April 1935, and issued a joint declaration which opposed "by all practical means any unilateral repudiation of treaties which may endanger the peace of Europe," and asserted Austrian independence. The "Stresa Front" seemed to be a great public show of unity against German revisionism regarding the terms imposed at Versailles, but in reality it pronounced empty rhetoric. No action was taken against Germany. This directly encouraged Hitler to become more aggressive.

Study Guides

- i) What impact did the First World War have on the origins of the Second World War?
- ii) What role did the Great Depression play in destabilizing international affairs?

The Collapse of the League of Nations (1935- 1937)

Since the establishment of the League of Nations, Mussolini was avenging the defeat of Italy by Abyssinia in 1896 at the battle of Adowa. Samuel Hoare, the British foreign secretary, asked the League of Nations to impose economic sanctions on Italy. These were imposed but proved ineffective because they did not include oil, a key war material, and that many non-League members continued to trade with Mussolini.

The French government did not want to punish Mussolini too harshly because they regarded him as a vital counterweight to Germany's designs in Austria. Hoare decided to meet Laval, the French foreign minister in Paris, to try to find a way of easing pressure on Italy.

Hoare and Laval agreed privately to Italy gaining most of Abyssinia, except for a small strip of land along the coast. When it leaked to the press, the Hoare-Laval Pact caused deep political embarrassment. After all, Hoare and Laval were not condemning Italian aggression in private, while condemning it in public. Hoare was forced to resign. The whole Abyssinian affair was a disaster for Britain and France. It showed that they only paid lip-service to the ideals of the League of Nations. Hence this destroyed the Franco-Italian alliance, and it alienated Mussolini. Mussolini left the League of Nations and eventually signed the Rome-Berlin Axis with Hitler that same year in 1936. This completely destroyed the spirit and letter of the Stresa front (1935) and therefore removed the last hope Europe could have to restrain Hitler's aggression.

Remilitarisation of the Rhineland

Hitler took advantage of the fact that British and French attention was absorbed in the Abyssinian crisis and marched his troops into the Rhineland on 7 March 1936. The French government offered words of outrage, but decided that it would not use force to reverse Hitler's action. Hitler had marched his troops into the area as a gamble and had given his generals clear instructions to withdraw at the slightest sign of French military resistance. No such sign of military backlash came from the French, and so Hitler occupied the area permanently. His simple

excuse was that the Franco-Soviet pact signed violated German security, and that the Rhineland remained insecure for Germany.

On the other hand, Anthony Eden, the British foreign secretary, claimed that British policy was designed “to come to peaceful agreed solutions by appeasement of justified grievances” and although promised British support of France in the event of a German attack, he claimed that the occupation of the Rhineland had to be accepted as an accomplished fact. The view of *The Times* that Hitler was “only going into his own back garden.” became widely accepted.

By marching his troops into the Rhineland Hitler had removed a key grievance created by the Treaty of Versailles and was now in an excellent geographical position to launch an attack against France in future. The League of Nations took no action and ceased to have any significant influence on the subsequent course of events.

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in October 1936 added to the sense of anarchy in international affairs. The war grew out of the circumstances surrounding the collapse of yet another fragile democracy. In February 1936, Nationalists became the largest group in the Cortes (Spanish Parliament), but a Popular Front coalition, consisting of Republicans, Socialists and Communists, combined to prevent them from taking power. The Nationalists, led by General Franco, who had commanded the Spanish army in Morocco, refused to accept this decision and proceeded to set up alternative government, supported by the army. A civil war was soon under way to decide who should rule Spain. The Nationalists presented the civil war as an ideological struggle between fascism and communism, while the Popular Front viewed the war as a battle between democracy and fascisms. The issues dividing both sides were very complicated and produced deep rifts.

Hitler and Mussolini provided military support to Franco, Stalin helped the Popular Front, but the British and French decided on a policy of non-intervention, not willing to inflame the likely winner despite all the fears that the Spanish Civil War raised about an impending European War it remained a local conflict, which ended in a victory for Franco by early 1939. The Spanish Civil War was a notable success for Germany and Italy in their ideological battle with communism. The victory of Franco also allowed Germany and Italy easy access to a range of important war materials, including iron ore, copper, zinc, tin and mercury.

The year 1936 was one of enormous success for Hitler’s Nazi Germany. In July Austria agreed to accept the supervision of its foreign policy by Germany in return for a guarantee regarding its sovereignty. In October Hitler and Mussolini signed the Rome-Berlin Axis, in which they loosely agreed on collaboration, which illustrated the movement of Italy away from Britain and France. In November Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Comminten Pact, which promised joint action to prevent the spread of communism and which raised the spectre of a possible alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan. By the end of 1936, the German economy had dramatically recovered, unemployment was virtually eradicated mainly due to an aggressive programme of rearmament. Hence Hitler’s popularity stood at an all-time high.

However, it is important to note that Hitler could still have been curbed, and the Second World War postponed if not prevented altogether. The problem in Europe was that France and Britain were not prepared to adopt any stern measures to decisively clip Hitler's wings.

The US response to the growing turmoil in Europe was complex. Franklin Delano. Roosevelt, the US president, had private worries about the threat posed by Nazi Germany to world peace, and was often willing to condemn acts of aggression by Germany, Italy and Japan. However, the key aim of US foreign policy was to keep the US out of any future war. The prevailing US attitude towards Nazi Germany up to the time of the Munich Conference in 1938 was to support the appeasement of legitimate German grievances. The US therefore could not be counted on in efforts to restrain Hitler.

Study Guides

- i) How did the collapse of the League of Nations worsen hostilities in the 1930s?
- ii) Was Hitler primarily to blame for the outbreak of the Second World War?
- iii) What part did the policy of appeasement play in the origins of the Second World War?

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, APPEASEMENT AND THE ROAD TO THE MUNICH CRISIS, 1937- 1938

By 1939 international relations were in disarray. Germany and Italy were threatening peace in Europe; Japan was at war with China; and a bitter civil war was underway in Spain. It was against this background that Neville Chamberlain became the British prime minister. He believed that through appeasement, he would preserve lasting peace in Europe. Several factors therefore must be considered when looking at appeasement.

1. There was a widespread horror at the idea of a Second World War.
2. Too much faith had been placed in the League of Nations, which proved ineffective when faced with military aggression.
3. There was a widespread feeling that Germany had been punished too harshly by the Treaty of Versailles.
4. British public opinion constantly opposed the rearmament of Britain
5. There was need within France and Britain to focus on recovery from the Great Depression.

Furthermore, the position of France, Britain's only firm ally, had sharply deteriorated in the face of the growing fascist threat. The Locarno Treaty, designed to protect France from attack had been ignored by Germany, the Franco- Italian agreement had broken down, and Belgium had opted for neutrality. Moreover, the poor state of Britain's armed forces also influenced the policy of appeasement and often justified it. Britain was in no position to offer any help to France, either to defend its cities from air attack or to defend its possessions in the Far East from Japan.

The policy of appeasement grew out of a variety of factors, intermingled. This is not to say that it was inevitable but in the difficult circumstances of international affairs in the late 1930s it seemed rational and logical to Chamberlain. It was not the only option available to Chamberlain in the late 1930s. The first was to support peace by collective security through the League of Nations, but this policy had never been implemented, even when the league was strong and stood less chance of success in 1937. When the League was weak and discredited, a second alternative

was to create a “Grand Alliance” of the anti-fascist powers, a policy champion by Winston Churchill, who suggested that the dictators would only respond to military force. Yet this policy amounted to a return to the pre-1914 alliance system, and very few leaders liked to adopt a past policy which had already proved unsuccessful, even though in this case it might have prevented war.

The only other option then was to satisfy the grievances created by the Paris Peace settlement, and Chamberlain, along with the a majority of the “National Government favoured this stance. A bold policy of appeasement came to be seen by Chamberlain as the only choice if war was to be avoided. He believed that unless he could negotiate a revision of the Treaty of Versailles with Hitler, then a second world war would probably break out. For example, Chamberlain sent Lord Halifax to meet with leading Nazis and Hitler in November 1937. Halifax said that Britain would support any legitimate German claims in Europe provided they were negotiated peacefully.

The Hossbach Memorandum

Hitler treated Halifax’s visits as an unwelcome intrusion into his own military plans. On 5 November 1937, he summoned von Neurath, general von Blomberg, the war minister and other leading military chiefs to a meeting to discuss his future plans. A record of the meeting was kept by colonel Hossbach, and it later became known as the Hossbach memorandum. The document is believed by most historians to be authentic. In the meeting, Hitler suggested that the key aim of German policy was “conquest in the east,” which had to be achieved by some time between 1943 and 1945 while Germany still had the clear military leader over Britain and France. Hitler also told the meeting that Austria and Czechoslovakia had to be seized and predicted that these actions might provoke a war with France and Britain. Shortly after the conference, Hitler started to remove moderate members of the “old guard” from key positions. In November 1937, Schacht, the economics minister who opposed the rapid pace of rearmament, was dismissed. In January 1938, von Blomberg was also dismissed; Hitler became war minister, and new pro-Nazi men were moved into other leading positions. Von Ribbentrop, a very Nazi, replaced the moderate von Neurath as foreign minister.

Such key internal developments had a direct bearing on Germany’s foreign affairs.

- i)The measures taken after 1937 directly precipitated the outbreak of War, with their enormity, timing and pre-planning e.g. The Anschluss with Austria and the seizure of Czechoslovakia.
- ii)It clearly shows how Hitler desired war as a means to achieve lebensraum, and how he in fact agitated for it through the appointment of pro-Nazi officials and taking the front- seat as war minister himself.
- iii)Appeasement appeared to Hitler as if the British and French had no real policy blueprint of their aim and he judged that their response to his demands was dominated by fear of Germany. This urged him to become bolder in his demands.

The Anschluss with Austria

During 1938, Hitler’s actions brought Europe to the brink of war. In January 1938, the Austrian police discovered Nazi plan for a seizure of power in Austria, even though Hitler had no plans at that time for an invasion. Alarmed by this discovery, Schuschnigg, the Austrian chancellor met Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Hitler’s mountain retreat, on 12 February 1938. At the meeting Hitler

bullied Schuschnigg into signing an agreement which brought two Nazis into the Austrian cabinet, allowed Nazis complete freedom in Austria, and gave Germany total control of Austrian foreign policy. On his return to Austria, however, Schuschnigg-quite bravely-decided to call a referendum which asked voters to support a “free and independent Austria.” It was a provocative move designed to gain popular support to resist German aggression. When the vote seemed to reject union with German, Hitler bullied Schuschnigg once more and he resigned. Hitler’s favorite, Seyss-Inquart took over, and immediately afterwards invited Germany to occupy Austria. On 12 March 1938, Hitler drove through the parked streets of Vienna in triumph, having achieved the Anschluss without a single shot being fired.

Britain and France uttered words of protest and disapproval, but there was no action taken against Germany. As a result of the Anschluss, the Treaty of Versailles was virtually destroyed, the balance of power in central Europe turned sharply in Germany’s favour and the position of Czechoslovakia was now under grave threat.

The Munich crisis, (1938)

Czechoslovakia consisted of mixed nationalities amalgamated by the Treaty of Versailles. Of these were 3, 5 million German speakers of the Sudetenland. Since Hitler had given financial support to the pro-Nazi Sudeten German Party led by Konrad Henlein, German takeover was eagerly awaited. The Czech crisis was made even more complicated by the existence of a Franco- Czech alliance dating back to 1925 and the Franco-Soviet Pact of 1935 which both promised to preserve the integrity of Czechoslovakia. This meant that the Czech crisis held the prospect of turning into a European war. Hitler insisted that he was advocating for German self-determination and that those German speakers needed to be reunited with the Third Reich where they rightfully belonged. France, however, had no intention of going to war to save Czechoslovakia and the Franco-Soviet Pact would only become operational if France acted first.

Chamberlain believed that the Czech crisis had to be solved by negotiation. In May 1938, the Czech government claimed that Germany was ready to invade. France, the Soviet Union and Britain all promised aid to Czechoslovakia in the event of a Nazi assault. However, Hitler denied any such claims and when the “May Crisis” died down, Hitler set October 1938 as the date for German invasion. Chamberlain decided that the British government should act as a mediator between the Sudeten Germans and the Czech government. To this end, Lord Runciman, the Liberal leader in the House of Lords, who had no reputation as a conciliator, was sent to Czechoslovakia in August 1938 to try and find a settlement to the problem. The Czech government offered every concession possible, but the Sudeten German Party, encouraged by Hitler kept asking for more and the negotiations broke down. In his report, Runciman depicted the Sudeten Germans as an oppressed minority and advised Chamberlain to allow them to join Hitler’s Third Reich.

Hitler met Chamberlain on 15 September 1938 and told him that Germany wanted the Sudetenland to be incorporated into the Third Reich. On 21 September 1938, the Czech government was given a stark choice by the British and French government to agree to a peaceful handover of the Sudetenland or fight alone. Under this extreme pressure, the Czechs agreed to hand over the Sudetenland.

Chamberlain took the news to Hitler on 22 September 1938, but found that Hitler had new demands, which included an immediate German occupation of the Sudetenland, with those Czechs who wished to leave only being permitted to take a single suitcase of belongings with them. Astonishingly, Chamberlain was even willing to agree to this. However, the British cabinet, the Czech government and the French government could not.

It was left to Mussolini, who was in no position to go to war to persuade Hitler to settle the matter peacefully at Munich. Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier for France and Mussolini met on 29 September 1938 at Munich to decide the fate of Czechoslovakia. The Munich Conference was a return to old-fashioned European diplomacy, with four major European powers forcing a small nation to concede territory. It was justified on the principle that national self-determination had been denied to the Sudeten Germans in the first place. The Munich Conference simply agreed to the Sudetenland being incorporated into Germany by 10 October 1938. A vague promise to respect the territorial integrity of the rest of Czechoslovakia was given by the four powers.

It seemed that Hitler, despite gaining the Sudetenland without firing a shot, was dissatisfied with Munich and was eager to push ahead with his own desire to occupy the remainder of Czechoslovakia at the earliest opportunity. In a separate meeting Chamberlain persuaded Hitler to sign a piece of paper which declared that Britain and Germany would “never go to war with one another again.” To Hitler, it was a worthless peace of paper, but Chamberlain flourished it on his return to Heston airport from Munich- This gesture would haunt him to his dying day.

Nevertheless, the Munich agreement, despite its dubious morality, did solve a major German grievance without a major European war. It was heralded as a triumph for Chamberlain’s bold new policy, and he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for 1938. Not everyone agreed though, Winston Churchill described the events as the “blackest page in British history.” The Soviet Union believed that Britain and France were happy so long as Hitler moved eastward. The Czech crisis which went on for over six months, was a traumatic experience.

But why did Britain and France give in so much to the demands of Hitler?

1. Historians seem to have thoroughly exhausted this question. In the first place, the Great Depression had ruined the economies of Britain and France and so the leaders eluded to buy time in order to achieve full economic recovery.
2. Chamberlain was under the mistaken view that appeasement of Hitler’s demands would prevent war because Hitler was thought to be a reasonable man. The more Hitler was allowed, the more and more demands he brought up. It got to a point where Hitler’s demands were unsustainable.
3. Both France and Britain were not prepared to confront Hitler in a war because their armies were, throughout the greater part of the 1930s, weak. Public opinion at home too bitterly resented war, mainly because its horrors were still fresh in their minds. It was basically the same generation of people which had gone through, or fought in the First World War.
4. The fact that Mussolini now supported Hitler, further made British and French positions more vulnerable and therefore there was every need to settle for a peace at any cost.
5. Finally, however, it must be remembered that the Munich crisis led to the death of the policy of appeasement. The policy had been responsible for the recovery and continued growth of the

German army and economy by giving Hitler the benefit of the doubt. This had initially arisen from the fact that Britain had thought that the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh on Germany and therefore needed to be moderately revised.

The road to global war, (1938-41)

Expectations of a fundamental peace in the winter months of 1938-9 disappeared very suddenly in March 1939. Germany had used diplomatic and military threats to bully and secure the destruction of the weakened Czech state. He went on to secure the rich provinces of Bohemia and Moravia and reduced Slovakia to a German protectorate.

This latest annexation was vital for development in Europe. This showed clearly that Hitler had acted far beyond his early territorial claims of the Sudetenland and a unification of the German-speaking population. While Britain and France might not have responded militarily to this over turning of the Munich Agreement, it resulted in a few months of peace but hectic diplomatic activity. Chamberlain understandably felt he had been duped and so an Anglo-French military guarantee was drawn up on 31 March 1939 to uphold Poland's independence, now the obvious target of Hitler. This clearly lessened Hitler's chances of a free hand in Eastern Europe and yet, he most definitely did not want a war with Britain and France. Hitler's ultimate objective was still the creation of Lebensraum at the expense of the USSR. However, he hoped this could be eased by Britain developing its appeasement policy into a more general acceptance of Germany's dominant position in central and Eastern Europe. This assumption on the part of Hitler proved quite the opposite to be true: The destruction of the Munich agreement by further territorial annexations equally led to the death of the policy of appeasement, and a general mobilization on the part of Britain and France.

Even before the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the subsequent invasion of Poland, signs of a general War were pretty self-evident. Britain and France moved towards a greater mutual understanding, and public opinion in these countries demanded that military interactions begin.' Germany and Italy signed the Pact of Steel in May 1939, a military alliance where either side pledged military assistance in the event of War.

The Nazi-Soviet pact:- (1939)

Stalin had been very worried about the German threat to the Soviet Union ever since Hitler came to power in 1933. Hitler had openly stated that he wanted to take over the Soviet Union as his grand plan. Hitler who had already set a date for the invasion of Poland believed that such a pact was necessary because of the Soviet Union's military capacity that was still weak as it appeared. He calculated that with no Soviet ally, Britain and France would not honour their pledges to Poland. Stalin saw such a pact in the event of no firm alliance with Britain and France as giving the Soviet Union more time to prepare defenses against a German invasion. Thus the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression pact was concluded on 23 August 1939.

On 29 August, Hitler offered Poland the choice of peaceful dismemberment by negotiation, allowing the country to be broken up to prevent a German invasion or war on Poland refused and Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. Two days later. Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Second World War had begun.

THE HISTORICAL DEBATE

One of the assumptions behind the Nuremberg trial that followed the end of the Second World War was that Hitler had deliberately planned such a war even before he came to power. This was based on the study of his book, the *Mein Kampf*. There was certainly the belief that after 1933 he deliberately followed the same masterplan which he pursued consistently up to and beyond the start of the war. Initially most historians shared this view, pointing to how Hitler began attempts to drive wedges between Poland and France, and between Italy and its Stresa Front partners, Britain and France, as early as 1934. The examination of specific crises tended to confirm this view: during the Czech crisis, for instance, Hitler had set a date for the invasion (1 October) as early as May 1938. Similarly once the invader won and Memel taken from Lithuania, Hitler then set 1 September 1939 as the date for the invasion of Poland, even before he had secured the Non-aggression Pact with the Soviet Union.

This orthodox view, also known as the internationalist school was first strongly criticized by historian A.J.P Taylor in his books *The Origins of the Second World War*. Taylor claims that Hitler had not followed a pre-determined master plan for war, and his questioning of the reliability of the Hossbach Memorandum as historical evidence, provoked heated historical debate. Taylor argued that Hitler's foreign policy was essentially improvised and based on taking the most opportunities when they arose. He further stated that simply directing his generals to prepare for war did not mean that Hitler was actively intending to start a war. He pointed out that from 1935 British and French government also directed their generals to prepare for a possible war. Such actions, he argued, were precautions, and not blueprints for aggression.

He also stressed how Hitler's desire to overturn the Treaty of Versailles and also to restore German greatness, was an aim "shared by all German politicians, by the Social Democrats who ended the War in 1918 as much as by Stresemann. Taylor claimed that German rearmament after 1936 was not strong enough to sustain a world, or even a European War.

They argue that Hitler's direction of foreign policy after 1937 to obtain *Lebensraum* in the east was important as regards, short-term tactics, as opposed to just opportunism. Other historians argued that Hitler intended to go beyond the conquest of Europe and culminate in a war against the USA for world domination.

Yet another school of thought argues that Hitler was really not in firm control of foreign affairs or having a clear or consistent long-term plan. They argue that his foreign policy was essentially a spontaneous response to internal problems and external opportunities. Later historians and as T. Mason (1977 and 1981) stress the fact that Hitler's foreign policy and war preparation were limited by the economic problems which he faced in the 1930s and that his foreign policy was more confused than planned. It was often an escape from the economic problems which he would not solve.

Conclusion

Having said this, a conclusion to such a vital topic needs to highlight the fact that there were both elements of opportunism and some short-term planning on the part of Hitler's foreign policy. These can be no doubt for example, that the 1936 German remilitarization of the Rhineland was a clear opportunity which Hitler exploited. Whilst British and French attention was pinned on

Abyssinia, Hitler ordered his troops to invade the Rhineland. It is important to note that the fact that he instructed them to retreat and not fight the French indicates that Hitler was taking a gamble which unexpectedly worked in his favour.

Neither can one argue that Hitler's involvement in the Spanish Civil War in 1936 was planned. It was an opportunity which cropped up, and Hitler exploited it to test his army as well as reap economic rewards out of it.

There is no doubt too, that Hitler only got stronger because no one was prepared to stop him. Britain and France, the real hedge which Hitler could face, were not prepared to take strong enough measures to block Hitler's aggression because they were more concerned about their own domestic problems. Hence, appeasement gave Hitler the opportunity to become unstoppable and eventually caused war. The Munich crisis was a typical example which shows Hitler's aggressive demands were tactlessly met. Having broken the Munich agreement war was in sight.

It is important to note however, that Hitler had grand plans, but opportunities usually arose in the direction of his plans. He was not just lucky all the way, sometimes he made some big miscalculations. For example, he believed that Britain's guarantee over Polish independence was not strong enough and once he obtained the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, he would prevent fighting war on two fronts. But, as he invaded Poland (two days later) Britain and France declared war on Germany. His belief that France and Britain would let him have a free hand in the east proved to be a big error.

Therefore, short-term plans, opportunities, internal demands in Germany, as well as appeasement; all in the final analysis, contributed to Hitler's drive towards the Second World War.

Study Guides

- i) Why did the Munich Agreement mark the highest stage in the policy of appeasement? Why was the policy of appeasement abandoned thereafter?
- ii) How important was the force of nationalism as a cause of the Second World War?
- iii) Why and with what impact was there a growth of militarism in the 1930s?
- iv) Why did Hitler sign so many "friendly" pacts in the 1930s?
- v) How significant was the Nazi-Soviet Pact as a cause of the outbreak of the Second World War?
- vi) Which factor or individual contributed the most to the outbreak of war in 1949?

Examination type questions

1. "War could have been avoided by challenging Hitler militarily over the Rhineland invasion in 1936." What are the strengths and weaknesses of this view?
2. How valid is the view that Britain and France went to war in 1939 in order to defend the independence of Poland which they had guaranteed?
3. Did Hitler plan the Second World War?

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CHAPTER 30

THE RECOVERY OF WESTERN EUROPE

Most of the countries of Western Europe faced a painful task of reconstruction after 1945. Economic revival was the primary requisite after the devastation of the Second World War. Following the war, American aid provided statesmen in most of the non- communist state with vital experience in economic co-operation. Candidates are expected to examine and assess the contribution of the USA to western economic recovery. They are also expected apart from looking at general recovery of Western Europe, to look at the developments of the individual Western countries.

The major aim in this recovery programme was to achieve political and economic ‘integration’. By integration, was meant the process of political and economic unification of the nation states of Western Europe since the end of the Second World War, in 1945. ‘Integration is to be distinguished from co-operation by the fact that the participants in integration must delegate part of their national sovereignty to a body with supranational powers.

Factors favouring integration

There were a number of reasons why European statesmen were persuaded to move in the direction of European integration after 1945. The major ones were:

- i) The discrediting of Nationalism and the fact that, during the war, the nation – states of Europe had not been able to offer a minimum of security to their inhabitants against the aggressor.
- ii) The impact of the Cold War and the need for European defence.
- iii) Europe had ceased to be the dominant force in world affairs and was now – replaced by the two superpowers, the US and the USSR. The idea grew of giving to Europe the necessary strength to preserve its independence and identity in the world.
- iv) The need for large markets and the co-ordination of economic efforts in a modern technological economy if European countries were going to be able to compete for instance with the US.
- v) American support for a strong Europe capable of resisting Soviet aggression – the US consistently exerted pressure in favour of integration.
- vi) A means of solving ‘the German question’ by incorporating her into a larger unit on the basis of reconciliation with France.

The following steps need to be noted as Western Europe undertook the drive towards economic integration.

The Marshall Plan

A particularly strong impetus towards European unity came from the United States, as a result of the grieving cold war conflict between East and West, with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

The Marshall Plan was announced in Principle in Secretary of State Marshall's Howard Spordy in June, 1947. The distribution of the US aid was worked out by the European nations in the Organisation for European Economic Recovery (OEEC). This aid was used for:

- (a) The financing of European imports from the US, especially capital goods.
- (b) Investment in basic industries in Europe. In the first year, the Plan accounted for 4% of the national income of the 14 European recipients.

- The contribution of the Plan was both economic and political.
- Economically, (i) it led to the removal of the bottleneck of the dollar gap, and the revival of German machinery production for supply to the rest of Europe.

i) It also allowed a continuing and very fast industrial growth (especially in West Germany) (iii) It also led to the restoration of the trade balance between the USA and Western Europe by 1950-1.

Politically – the plan led to a solution to the problem of German recovery. Germany's neighbours, especially France, feared that Germany's economic recovery would enable her to again because of a military threat.

The Plan overcame terms of obstacles because:

- i) Germany's recovery would take place only as part of a recovery of Western Europe as a whole and hence would be less threatening.
- ii) Germany's neighbours would not get reparations, but would be compensated for this by US aid,
- iii) German recovery would be less dangerous if within the political framework of a continuing presence of US troops in Europe and of French alliances with Britain (for example the Dunkirk and Brussels treaties, (1947 and 1948) and with the USA (the North Atlantic Treaty 1949).

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Council of Europe

The two most significant Western Organisations to be set up in 1949, were NATO and the Council of Europe. NATO committed its members to consult together on the means of planning their common defence and to 'take such action as it deems necessary' in case of attack.

In fact the Western European countries had begun to establish a system of defensive military alliances before the escalation of the cold war in 1947. Both the Franco – British Treaty of Dunkirk and the Treaty of Brussels, signed by Britain, France and the Benelux countries were, however, signed partly with fears of a revived Germany in mind. This crisis that led the West to expand the Brussels Treaty into NATO was the Berlin blockade of June 1948 – May 1949.

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)

In May 1950, the French foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, following the suggestion of Jean Monnet proposed a European Coal and Steel Community. One motive behind this initiative was that French political leaders wanted to ensure that German strength would never dominate

Europe again. In particular, France wanted to maintain some control over the Ruhr industrial area. The pooling of coal and steel production would help to solve this problem.

There were other considerations. For instance, the pooling of coal and steel production would immediately provide for the establishment of common bases for economic development.

The Economic Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was formally set up in April 1951 and was a supranational organization. The essential feature of the Schuman Plan was that six European governments were prepared to accept voluntary limitations on their national sovereignty in a vital part of their economic life with the political aim of progressing towards a United Europe. One of the main purposes of the ECSC was to serve as a pioneer for other movements towards integration.

The ECSC was welcomed by most countries. The West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer welcomed the plan. He saw it as a means of rehabilitating Germany and giving her greater status. By 1953, the ECSC had six members, namely France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

The European Defence Community and the European Political Community – (1950 – 54)

The outbreak of the Korean war led to American fears that the Soviet Union might move against Western Europe. The next area in which integration was proposed was that of defence. From 1950- 54 the arguments for and against the European Defence Community (EDC) dominated the political life of France and Germany in the first place, it raised the fundamental question as to whether Germany should be rearmed at all. It was only 5 years since the Allies had resolved to abolish German militarism forever, and the German people had to a larger extent supported the decision that the new federal Republic would have no armed forces. There was also a marked resistance in France to the idea of the French army merging its identity in a common European army.

The refusal of the French assembly to ratify the EDC led to a serious setback for the European integration movement, but arrangements were speedily made for the rearmament of West Germany in a new and acceptable form. The outcome was the agreement of October 1954, to enlarge the Brussels treaty organization into a Western European Union into which Germany and Italy would both be admitted. They were also to become members of NATO and the function of the WEU was essentially to ensure that Germany did not create armed forces larger than 12 divisions and that she respected her pledge not to manufacture atomic, biological or chemical weapons. Britain also undertook to keep four army divisions and her tactical air force on the continent.

The Treaty of Rome

The movement towards further European integration was revived with the Messina Conference of June 1955. In October of that year, M- Morret announced the formation of the Action committee for the United States of Europe. These laid the basis for the Treaty of Rome by which the six members of the ECSC agreed to go ahead with the integration of their economies on a much broader scale, which was to include agriculture. This was signed in March 1957.

The provisions of the Treaty of Rome contained articles of two categories: those designed to achieve

(i) 'positive' and (ii) 'negative' integration

The first included such aims as the development of common European policies for industry and technology. The second involved all measures aimed at removing tariff barriers and obstacles to the free movement of labour and capital.

The major community institutions which came into existence were:

- (i) The executive commission (ii) the council of ministers
- (iii) The European Parliament, with largely consultative powers and (iv) the court of Justice

The European Economic Community (EEC), established in 1957 by the Rome Treaties, emerged a more than a traditional intergovernmental organization but less than a full federal structure. The commission represented the unity of the community, but the final decisions were taken by the representatives of the individual member states in the Council of Ministers.

The Enlargement of the EEC

The EEC was helped by various factors to establish itself. One of these was the continuing rapid pace of economic growth and prosperity, to which it contributed. Another factor was the continued support of the US. In 1961 the British applied for membership of the EEC. This application was vetoed by France, which wanted to resist Anglo-Saxon dominance in Europe. The final and successful negotiations for the enlargement of the EEC were opened in June 1970. All the major issues of the British case were settled within a year. In January 1973, the six became the Nine with the accession of the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland.

Examination type questions

- 1) How far was USA aid responsible for the recovery and prosperity of Europe after 1945?
- 2) How far can the increasing co-operation between western European states after the Second World War be explained by fear of the USSR?
- 3) How did West Germany gain political stability and economic prosperity in spite of the devastation caused by the Second World War?

CHAPTER 31

POST STALIN RUSSIA (1953 – 1964)

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Describe the legacy left behind by Stalin.
2. Explain Khrushchev's policy of de-Stalinization
3. Assess Khrushchev's economic and foreign policies.

Although not a popular topic, this is an important part of the syllabus. The major focus during this period is on the de-Stalinization process by those who succeeded Stalin, especially Khrushchev. Candidates are also expected to examine the leadership struggle to examine the leadership struggle after the death of Stalin.

The leadership struggle after the death of Stalin

On March 5, 1953 Stalin died. His death altered the future for all the states of the eastern bloc. It was followed by a struggle for power within the Soviet leadership, which necessarily became more 'collegiate' or 'collective' since there was no single figure of Stalin's stature to replace him. This leadership struggle involved Malenkov, who became chairman of the Council of Ministers; Beria the sinister and apparently very powerful leader of the secret police, and Khrushchev, who became secretary of the communist party, a post from which he imposed ideas of collective leadership.

In this struggle, Molotov, Khrushchev and Malenkov proved eventually to be dominant personalities. These three represented three different attitudes to the future. Molotov, supported by Kaganovich, wished to retain both the economic and foreign policy of Stalin.

Khrushchev wished to change foreign policy but would be content to retain Stalin's economic policy. Malenkov, supported by Beria, wished radically to alter both economic and foreign policy. Khrushchev was relieved of other functions in order to allow him to concentrate on his work in the Party Secretariat, and he was not at first as important as Beria.

In April 1953, the leadership in the state was collective, in the hands of Molotov, vice – chairman of the Council of Ministers in charge of foreign policy, Malenkov, chairman of the council of Ministers and concerned with economic policy, and Beria, also a vice chairman of the Council Ministers and, as Minister of the Interior, head of the security policy. In June, Beria fell. He was dismissed from his offices and arrested. In December 1953, he with certain associates were executed after a secret trial. The collective leadership was now firmly in the hands of Molotov, Khrushchev and Malenkov. There were amnesties; price reductions and some relaxation of political pressure Public propaganda began to notice the error of the personality culture. In March 1955, Khrushchev dismissed Malenkov and replaced him with Bulgarian.

By the twentieth Party Congress, he had emerged as the real Soviet Leader, though he did not become Prime Minister as well as Party secretary until 1958 when he succeeded Buganin. But that Congress, which met from February 17- 24, 1956, is a turning – point for another reason. It began the public process known in the west as deStalinization. Khrushchev delivered a speech denouncing the ‘personality culture. At a secret session on the last day, he made a famous report on the crimes of Stalin. It was gradually made known to different levels of the Party, and it leaked out to the West.

De- Stalinization: The Economic Sector

This was a process whereby Stalinism was attacked and efforts made to reverse or revise some of his policies. This process was begun by Khrushchev. Candidates are expected to find out why Khrushchev embarked on a process of deStalinization. No short answer is a real answer, but it may, at least, be said that Khrushchev’s method of rule was not Stalin’s and that he had to establish the distinction between himself and Stalin in order to rule at all. The repudiation of the reign of terror was part of this need. But it should also be said that destalinization was a continuous process which had begun already in 1953.

Malenkov’s economic policies: -

DeStalinization meant first some change in Soviet economic policy. This was ‘the Malenkov new course’ Malenkov drastically reduced the number of Ministries and departments concerned with economic affairs. The attempt to rationalize the central planning system was sensible. Malenkov’s real achievements, which justify historians in writing of the Malenkov new course, were different. He caused an expansion of the output of the consumer goods indicates, on the assumption that the USSR now had a powerful heavy industry and could afford to change her economic emphasis. He increases the prices paid for agricultural procurements from the peasants and lowered tax levels for them. He made a general retail price cut of some 10 per cent. The eventual economic results of these measures were not always good, but their immediate result was to make life easier for the soviet citizen.

Khrushchev’s Economic Policies

When Khrushchev had emerged as the dominant figure, he continued Malenkov’s policy and developed an agricultural policy of his own. This resulted in a number of small measures, which eased life on the collective farms, and relaxed central control over them.

- (i) The managements of the collective forms were allowed to decide their own work requirements and, in course of time, to make the decisions on most matters.
- (ii) Khrushchev also initiated a colonial drive to take new land into cultivation. It was strikingly successful in Siberia and Kazakhstan.
- (iii) Khrushchev, like Malenkov made an attempt to cut down the bureaucracy and streamline the economic administration. Thus a regional structure for the control of the industrial economy under the central planning agency (Gosplan) enabled him to get rid of several ministries involved in the control of industrial planning.
- (iv) Control at the center was relaxed but the process of farm amalgamation continued. The peasants, however, remained attached to their own plots, so productivity was slow to rise.
- (v)The whole wage structure was revised and greater mobility of labour was allowed and control over it relaxed.

- (vi) Forced labour camps were scaled down.
- (vii) Trade unions were more active and more successful in defending workers' interests.
- (viii) Trade with the West was expanded and new trade links established.
- (ix) Where generally, there was an increased emphasis on the production of consumer goods and a massive drive to build more houses.
- (x) The chemical industries expanded
- (xi) Some of the railway systems were modernized.
- (xii) After initial successes, the 'Virgin Lands' schemes were pushed too far and they led to soil erosion and disaster. The 1963 food shortages, following grain crop failures in both the virgin lands and the Ukraine led to imports from the USA, and this undoubtedly helped bring about Khrushchev's fall. The launching of the first earth satellite in 1957 suggested that the USSR was the equal in some respects of the USA, but the heavy spending on arms and space was already proving to be a brake on economic growth.

DeStalinization in Foreign Policy

DeStalinization meant a complete change in foreign policy. Much of the easing of tension between east and west resulted from the death of Stalin and his replacement by a five-man directory. There was an immediate relaxation, and the start of an era of peaceful co-existence. The new Russian leaders, among whom Malenkov at first appeared to be the strongest, eased the economic pressure on the satellites. In 1955, as the answer to NATO, and the remaining part of Germany, the Warsaw Pact was established, whereby the satellites were bound together in a military alliance with the Soviet Union.

Yugoslavia did not join the Warsaw Pact, but in 1955 Nikita Khrushchev, visited Tito, an attempt to effect reconciliation. His statement, that there were different roads to socialism, appeared to be a vindication of Tito and an acknowledgement that Stalin had been wrong. As Khrushchev openly came to be recognized as Stalin's heir, he was more outspoken in his denunciation of the "crimes of the Stalin era". And as part of his relaxation measures in 1956, the Cominform was dissolved. The de-Stalinization process resulted in an immediate thaw in the ranks of the party and advantage was taken of Khrushchev's promise of a more liberal line.

In general, therefore, in foreign policy, destalinization meant a revision of Stalin's hard stance in his relations with the west. During Khrushchev's era, there was a thaw of relations, as he became more conciliatory towards the west. In his famous speech (February 1956) Khrushchev explained his new policy in which he criticized Stalin and said that 'peaceful – co-existence with the west was not only possible but desirable and essential. According to Khrushchev, there were only two ways- either peaceful co-existence or the most destructive war in history.

Examination type questions

1. How far and why, did the Soviet Union recover from the Second World War?
2. Assess the reasons behind the Soviet Union's takeover of Eastern Europe after 1945.
3. How far to 1964 had the Soviet Union established itself as a World Power?

Key references

1. Geir Lundestad -East, West, North, South: Major Developments in International Politics since 1945.
2. Steve Phillips -Stalinist Russia.
3. A. Todd -Democracies and Dictatorships:

CHAPTER 32

COLD WAR

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Describe the conferences at Tehran, Yalta and Postdam.
2. Explain the breakdown of the war time alliance over the issues of Poland, detonation of the Atomic bombs and the reparations towards the Soviet Union.
3. Explain the impact of soviet takeover of Eastern Europe.
4. Explain the significance of the following episodes in relation to the Cold War:
 - a) Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech
 - b) George Kennan's Long Telegram
 - c) Riga Axioms
 - d) The Truman Doctrine
 - e) The Marshall Aid
5. Assess the consequences of the Berlin Blockade and Air Lift.
6. Account for the globalization of the Cold War in Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Africa.
7. Explain the reasons for the break-up of the USSR and the end of the Cold War.

The Origins of the Cold War

Overview

Distress between the capitalist West and communist Soviet Union had been a feature of international politics since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the West and the Soviet Union put aside their differences and co-operated in Grand Alliance against the common threat of Nazi Germany. But signs of strain soon began to emerge.

At the Tehran Conference in 1943 Stalin was concerned about the delay in opening a second front and there was disagreement over the futures of Germany and Poland. At the Yalta and Potsdam conference in 1945, these differences deepened –especially after Truman became president of the USA, following Roosevelt's death. Tensions over Germany and the growing Soviet domination of Eastern Europe were heightened after the USA dropped the atomic bombs on Japan.

What was the Cold War?

The term Cold War is used to describe the antagonism between the United States and the West on the one side and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on the other. This conflict existed during most of the period 1945- 1991. Its most obvious signs were the division of western and eastern Europe by the Iron Curtain, the emergence of two hostile political and military alliances (NATO and the Warsaw Pact), and an arms race which at times seemed to threaten nuclear war. Though direct hot war between the two superpowers was avoided, there were many international crises during the Cold War and several vicious hot wars involving the allies or "client states" of the rival superpowers. The term superpower was first used in 1944 and refers to a country

considered so powerful because of its economic and military resources, that it can largely dictate and control international events to serve its own interests.

Why did the Cold War begin?

Breakdown of the Grand Alliance, 1944-45

Tensions which finally led to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance and the start of the Cold War, began to emerge more sharply at the 1945 conferences held at Yalta in February and at Potsdam in July. There were four main areas of disagreement: Germany, Poland, economic reconstruction and nuclear weapons

Germany

Although the war against Germany was still continuing when the Allies met at Yalta in February 1945, it was clearly over as far as Europe was concerned. The problems which had emerged at Tehran, especially Poland and the fate of the eastern European countries-now had to be resolved. The conference agreed, quite amicably, to temporarily divide Germany into four zones of occupation, with an initial agreement on reparations for the damage done by Nazi Germany, especially to the USSR.

The problem of Poland proved more difficult to solve eventually, it was agreed that the USSR's demands regarding Poland's eastern borders would be met and that Poland would receive territorial compensation from Germany, up to the order-Neisse Rivers. The allies also accepted the plan to have a provisional government for Poland. However, the coming to power of Truman in 1945 following the death of Roosevelt meant that the US- Soviet relations grew worse as Truman took a more hardline approach towards the USSR.

In May, Truman abruptly ended the lend-lease aid to the USSR- this was a serious as well as worrying blow to the war-devastated Soviet Union. Then at the Potsdam conference in July 1945, Truman stated the USA would only agree to the Soviet Union extracting reparations from the eastern zone of Germany, which was mainly agricultural and therefore poorer, as well as receiving 25 percent of the machinery from the three western zones. This was on condition that the USSR sent back to the western zones 60percent of the value of what it had received from them in the form of goods and raw materials (especially coal).

Poland and Eastern Europe

The issue of Poland was complex Stalin saw it as a life and death question for the Soviet State. In October 1944 Churchill and Stalin met in Moscow. They concluded the informal "percentages agreement" concerning influence in south-eastern and eastern Europe. Although Roosevelt was not present, he was briefed afterwards and made no objections, however, Poland was not mentioned at this meeting.

At Yalta, however, Roosevelt backed away from the prospect of a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Stalin felt this was essential for Soviet security and was worried by the new Soviet call for an "open-door" policy and their suggestion that there should be no formal spheres of influence. Roosevelt, who had kept the earlier agreements with Stalin about Eastern Europe secret from the US public, now suggested that the proposed United Nations Organization should make decisions about these issues after the war was over.

These shifts persuaded Stalin to begin taking practical measures to ensure Soviet security interests in Eastern Europe. When the Soviet Union failed to carry out the Yalta agreement on

free elections in Poland, US suspicious about Soviet motives were aroused even further. Once Truman became President, friction increased and the USA became more determined to contain Soviet power whenever possible. The first sign of this was thus the abrupt ending of the lend-lease aid in May 1945. Truman's decision also came about as a result of congressional pressure to reduce expenditure, and applied to Britain as well.

Economic Reconstruction

In view of the dreadful destruction suffered by the USSR, Stalin's priority after the war was economic reconstruction. Consequently he agreed to join then International Monetary Fund and the World Bank at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944. The promise of a loan from the USA overcame his reservations about their (institutions) growing influence. But when the USSR asked for a \$6 billion loan in January 1945, the USA imposed conditions, such as giving eastern European markets to US capital. The USSR would not accept this dollar diplomacy (USA's economic) dominance was seen as giving it power to determine diplomatic and internal politics in those countries in which it invested).

For this reason, Stalin placed more emphasis on reparations from Germany, and at Yalta it was agreed that \$10 billion would be a starting point for negotiations. A further Soviet request for a loan, in August 1945, was "lost" by the US State Department. Consequently, the USSR allowed the December 1945 dead-line for membership of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to pass without signing up. Instead, it decided to increase reparation from its own sphere of influence and this necessitated greater Soviet control of Eastern Europe.

The US Atomic Bomb

Further misunderstanding was created by American dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. More significant for relations between the USA and the USSR was the USA's refusal to share the technology which it had with its ally.

At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Roosevelt had got a promise from Stalin to join forces against Japan once Germany was defeated. However, Truman and his secretary James Byrnes, saw the Atomic bomb as a way of ending the war quickly against Japan without Soviet help, as well as keeping US casualties to a minimum. This would pre-empt any Soviet demands for influence in Asia which was seen as vital to US interests. The Potsdam Conference was therefore delayed until July 1945 partly to give Truman a new powerful negotiating position. This policy was opposed by the US secretary of War, Henry Stimson, who argued that the Soviet Union should be offered an atomic partnership if the USSR was prepared to make some concessions on Eastern Europe.

Stalin interpreted the refusal by USA to share nuclear technology as a demonstration of US power to seriously weaken USSR. This interpretation landed weight to the argument that Truman wanted to use the lonely possession of nuclear technology between 1945 and 1949 as a negotiating tool "to force the USSR to accept its plans for post-war Europe and the world. These plans were to ensure the unhindered spread of liberal capitalism world-wide, to prevent anti-capitalist revolutions and to protect US interests around the globe.

Stalin was very concerned about this nuclear monopoly and quickly authorized a speed-up in the development of a Soviet bomb: However, though the USSR was without its own bomb until 1949, this did not necessarily derail Soviet expansionist policies in Eastern Europe From mid-

1944 onwards, soviet forces took back Soviet territory previously occupied by German forces. Communist governments were thus later on set up in Romania and Bulgaria.

Study Guides

- ia) Explain how differences between the Soviet Union and the USA emerged over (i) US refusal to share information on the technology of the Atomic Bomb.
- ii) How the Soviet Union went against the Yalta expectations on Poland.
- iii) How the USA failed to meet its promises to pay the Soviet Union reparations with raw materials collected from Trizonia (US-controlled part of Germany).
- ii) Why did the USA develop the policy of containment?

How can the Cold War be explained?

The historical debate

Orthodox Theory

There are various theories put forward to explain the roots of the Cold War. Soon after the Second World War, supporters of the orthodox view argued that the Cold War was a result of Soviet ideology which focused on the destabilization of capitalist states. This placed responsibilities for the Cold War on the USSR, with the West forced to adopt policies which “contained” the “communist threat.” This was also known as the traditional view.”

Revisionist Theory

By the late 1950s, however, a new revisionist- interpretation was emerging, which argued that the USSR was too weak to pose a real threat in terms of global expansion and that responsibility for the Cold War rested with the USA not the USSR. According to the argument, Stalin focused on internal policy; reconstruction, and did little to promote international revolution. Instead, the Soviet Union was pushed into increasing its control over Eastern Europe to counter US action, which aimed to establish American domination through the “open-door” policy. Having pushed to undermine the sterling area and the imperial preference system (which gave advantage to British manufacturers selling to British colonies) during the war to reduce influence, the USA now attempted to do the same in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union was, therefore, forced to establish greater control in the region in order to protect itself from the aims of US global dominance Pan America.”

Post Revisionists

A third opinion is offered by post-revisionists, who try to avoid placing blame on just one of the superpowers. One post-revisionist argument is that the cold war was the result of confusions, especially in the aftermath of Roosevelt’s replacement by Truman, when Truman’s hard-line policies deepened the suspicions of a Soviet government more accustomed to Roosevelt’s conciliatory approach. Other post-revisionists trends look at the role of nuclear proliferation or spread, which impelled both sides to distrust each other Class conflict theorists, on the other hand see the Cold War as the inevitable result of the global conflict between capitalism and communism. More recent research has begun to focus on how Stalin chose to ignore Litvinov’s more moderate advice and take a hard line advocated by other advisers.

Hence, in explaining the Cold War it is important to consider and illustrate all the theories put forward, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Early stages of the Cold War

1946, a turning point?

By the end of 1945 tensions between the allies were already apparent. The problems that arose between 1946 and 1949-Germany, atomic weapon, the economic crisis in Western Europe and increasing Soviet control of Eastern Europe and the decision made about them resulted in more serious divisions.

1. In 1946, western governments came to see increasing Soviet control in Eastern Europe as the first step towards the spread of communism westwards. Some politicians believe in the possibility of communist takeovers in Greece, Italy and even France, where communist support was relatively strong. As early as February 1946, Byrnes began to urge French prime minister to resist any Soviet advances in that important oil-rich region.
2. Furthermore, in February 1946 two significant developments took place. First, the failure of the Branch Plan ended any hopes of an agreement on the control of nuclear weapons. Second, Kennan sent his famous “Long Telegram.” In which he argued that the USSR was a dangerous and expansionist state that would never co-operate with the USA. This meant that no matter what the USA did, Soviet policy towards the west would not be altered in the short or medium term. This view rapidly became the basis of US policy and was the origins of the policy of “containment” (the term first used by Kennan) which emerged the following year, essentially reviving the Rig Axioms.
3. In March 1946, Winston Churchill made his famous Iron Curtain speech at Fulton, Missouri, USA. In this speech he supported the view that the Soviet Union was an expansionist state, arguing for an end to compromise and calling for a stronger Anglo-American alliance. This was an important shift away from the spirit of Yalta and Roosevelt’s policy of co-operation with the USSR, and coincided with Kennan’s “Long Telegram” The Iron curtain” was a term used to describe the boundary between capitalist Western Europe and Communist Eastern Europe. As the Cold War deepened, the frontiers, especially in Germany, became physical and visible.
In essence, Kennan was in favour of a “fully fledged and realistic showdown with the Soviet Union” over developments in Eastern Europe. As early as 1945, February, he had argued that if the West was not prepared to “go the whole way” to block any expansion of the Soviet influence in Europe, then the only alternative was to split Germany permanently in two and to draw a definitive frontier between East and West. He believed the world should be divided into rival sphere of influence and that the USA should conduct a propaganda war against the USSR and communism.

How important were the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan?

Containment and the Truman Doctrine

In the years 1945-46, Byrnes used international loans and credits to both stabilize economies outside the soviet sphere of influence (e.g. France) as well as hinder the spread of Soviet communism.

By linking the issue of USA loans to the struggle against communism, Dean Acheson was able to gain support for Truman's policy of "containment." He argued that if Greece fell to communists then the Balkans and ultimately, Africa and Western Europe (especially France and Italy) would be undermined. The "rotten apple," is an argument, based on the idea that one communist state would begin to "spoil" its immediate neighbours and was similar to the "domino theory." Which came to dominate US foreign policy in the following decades.

The US change in policy from isolationism to containment was announced by Truman in his speech to congress on 12 March 1947. In order to gain the support of the Republican Congress, he had to exaggerate the USA's differences with the Soviet Union and argue that the ideological struggle between democracy and communism was a crucial one.

The USSR, he implied, was aggressively expansionist and therefore needed to be contained, although he did not directly attack the Soviet Union itself. The new policy- which came to be known as the Truman Doctrine argued that all countries had to choose between the "freedom of the west or the subjugation of communism." Truman then announced US readiness to assist any country resisting "armed minorities" or "outside pressure." Congress finally approved aid for Greece (\$300 million) and Turkey (\$100 million). Hence in 1949 the Greek communists suffered a heavy defeat while Turkey moved firmly into the western block.

Historians have put forward various reasons why the policy of containment was adopted so quickly by the USA in the 1940s. In general there was a feeling in the USA that was appealing to Hitler. In the 1930s this had resulted in the Second World War and that there should be no repeat of this in relation to Stalin's regime.

Several other explanations have also been put forward. One is that, as the USA emerged from the Second World War as a truly global power with World-wide interests, political developments in other countries that were not totally pro-capitalism might endanger the power of the USA and should therefore be resisted.

The Marshall Plan, 1947

As well as giving aid to Greece and Turkey, US Congress decided to help revive the economies of the Western European states through US credits and the revival of the key German economy.

In order to qualify for Congressional support, it was made clear that only countries with capitalist economies would qualify for aid and it was pointed out that an expanded European economy would also be good for US exports. At the same time, it would allow, the revival of the German economy.

In order to qualify for Congressional support, it was made clear that only countries with capitalist economies would qualify for aid and it was pointed out that an expanded European economy would also be good for US exports. At the same time, it would allow, the revival of the German economy within a European framework thus preventing a new German Dominance which France in particular feared.

On 23 May 1947, Kennan gave his support to the idea and it was put forward as the Marshall Plan on 5 June 1947. Technically, it was given to the Soviet Union and the eastern European states, but the plan's political and economic criteria meant Stalin was unlikely to accept it. In fact both the USA and the USSR saw it as a way and an attempt to weaken Soviet control of Eastern Europe.

However, by July 1947, the Soviet Union decided participation in the proposed Marshall Plan would involve too many risks and soon rejected further negotiations. Early positive responses

from Soviet spheres of influence such as (Zechoslvaieia, Poland and Hungary) were therefore ended on 10 and 11 July due to Soviet pressure.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, consequently contributed to the collapse of the earlier Soviet policy of cooperation with the USA.

What were the Main Points of Tension in Europe from 1947 to 1949?

On 22 September 1947, the Soviet control of eastern European countries was strengthened when the communist parties of these state met in Poland. They agreed to set up the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) and, under Zhdanov's influence, they condemned the Marshall Plan on the grounds that it was preparing to extend US power in order to launch a new world war. According to Zhdanov, the post-world war was divided into two camps: the Soviet anti-imperialist and democratic camp and the US-led imperialist and anti-democratic camp. Hence, he argued, Cominform was intended to keep the communist parties in Europe under Moscow's control. This was a significant step and marked the end of the USSR's flexible and hesitant foreign policy in relation to US actions.

Germany

Germany became one of the major factors for the worsening relations between the USA and the USSR. After 1945 it was clear that Germany would be fundamental to the European and global balance of power and thus it was of tremendous importance to Soviet security concerns. As tensions grew into the Cold War, both sides feared Germany becoming part of the opposing camp.

At Potsdam, it had been agreed that despite being temporarily divided into four allied zones of occupation, Germany should be treated as one economic unit to be administered by the Allied Control Council. Berlin, deep inside the Soviet zone of Germany, was also to be divided into four zones and it was also agreed that the Five D's should be applied to Germany. These were demilitarization; degasification; de-industrialization; democratization and decentralization.

After the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, announced in June 1947, the USSR began to see these steps as attempting to build up the economy of a western Germany which had 75percent of the German population and the important industrial regions. Such a West German state might prove to be a military threat in the future, as it had in the past- especially if it were allied to what the Soviet Union perceived to be an increasingly hostile USA. Soviet fears about western plans for Germany led to a more hardline response. At a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London during November and December 1947 Britain and the USA agreed on one last attempt to revive the economy of a unified Germany.

However, the plans and talks failed because Britain and the USA refused to accept Soviet demands for reparations. Hence they proceeded with plans for a separate development of the western zone of Germany, known as Trizonia, comprising the US, British and French zones joined together. They introduced a new federal constitution, replaced the Reichsmark with the Deutschmark, all without consulting the USSR. This set the ground for more direct conflict with the USSR.

Berlin Blockade, 24 June 1948

The Soviet Union, opposed to the idea of a separate West German state, tried to prevent this by putting pressure on west Berlin by cutting off all road, rail and freight traffic to west Berlin on 24

June 1945. The Berlin Blockade was the first open conflict of the Cold War between the two sides. However, though the USA transferred 60B29 bombers, capable of dropping nuclear bombs to Britain, no bombs were supplied and this crisis did not develop into a “hot” war.

The Berlin Airlift

In light of the Soviet blockade of all supplies to the Western zone, the Allies responded with the massive Berlin Airlift, in which tons of food, fuel and other basic items were flown from Trizonia into West Berlin to supply its 2 million citizens. The airlift was organized by General Lucius Clay, who was also military governor of US zone of Germany in 1947-49. The airlift lasted for almost a year, until May 1949, when the obvious failure of the blockade finally led Stalin to call it off.

The Berlin Blockade, designed to make the west drop its idea of a separate West Germany state, actually speeded up the very thing it was intended to stop. The West portrayed it as an attempt by the Soviet Union to drive the Allies out of West Berlin in preparation for taking over the western zones of Germany. The prime ministers of the West Germany Lander (Federal Republic of Germany) who had, at first been reluctant to accept the creation of a separate West Germany state, now agreed as a way of ensuring US protection against the Soviet threat of a takeover.

In May 1949, the new Federal Republic of Germany was set up and its first government began operating in September 1949. On 7 October, the USSR finally accepted the division of Germany and announced the transformation of its eastern zone into a new state, called the Germany Democratic Republic. This division of Germany soon came to represent the division of Europe into two mutually suspicious and hostile camps. Soviet fears that the West wanted a revived Germany, closely allied to the USA, were later confirmed in 1955 when West Germany was allowed to join NATO.

The Soviet response to the increasing tensions which followed the Berlin crisis was mainly economic. In January 1949, it announced the formation of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), which bound the east European states even more closely to the Soviet Union. The creation of NATO raised huge security concerns in the Soviet Leadership as the USSR was, at most, only a regional power, whereas the USA was already clearly established as a global superpower.

The victory of the Chinese communists which led to the creation of the People’s Republic of China in October 1949 did little to even up the relationship of the opposing forces in the Cold War as China was economically and militarily weak and needed Soviet assistance. This meant that China was not a comparable ally in the same way that Britain and France were for the USA. This left the USSR a much weaker superpower than the USA.

To What Extent did Relations between the Two Camps Fluctuate in the Period 1949-68/?

In October 1949 with the creation of the Communist People’s Republic of China led by Mao Zedong and then the start of the Korean War in 1950, the Cold War tensions shifted from Europe to Asia. After the Berlin crisis of 1948-49 and the formation of NATO in April 1949, Soviet nationalism increased in the USSR and generated a desire to cut off the Soviet block from all Western influences.

In the early 1950s, the Soviet Union followed a dual-track foreign policy while consolidating its control of the eastern European satellites; it also tried to limit the polarization of Europe into two opposing Cold War Camps. During this time, Stalin kept a firm control over foreign policy- especially as Molotov, who had been Soviet foreign minister and his closest adviser since 1939, lost his position in 1949.

Attempts to Limit Cold War Polarization

Stalin attempted to limit the emerging arms race in 1949 by launching what became known as “peace campaigns.” A petition known as the Stockholm Appeal eventually received 560 million signatures. By this, Stalin hoped to put pressure on western government to reduce international tensions created by the Cold War and to follow policies which would foster the continued recovery of the Soviet Union.

Another Stalinist attempt was to suggest to the west that German be demilitarized, armies of occupation be withdrawn and that the country be reunified as well and gain neutrality. Such a plan was presented to the West in March 1952 in the form of “Stalin Notes.”

However some historians have suggested that these proposals were mainly propaganda ploys, in that the USSR knew they would be rejected by the West since the start of the Korean War in 1950 actually increased Cold War tensions.

In fact, one outcome of the start of the Korean War was to persuade Truman to act on the policy, document NSC 68. This was drawn up by the state and Defence Departments after Truman had asked the national Security Council to reappraise the USA’s Cold War policy. It called for a trebling of the USA’s defense budget so that the Soviet threat could be met anywhere in the world. Hence the defence budget was increased from US13, 5 billion to US50 billion. In 1952, plans were drawn up to increase NATO divisions from 14 to 50 and to establish US army, naval and air force bases in Europe. Contrary to what Stalin was hoping to achieve the west decided to rearm West Germany in case the Soviet Union would try to reunite it by force.

These developments increased Stalin’s fears and forced him to divert huge economic resources from industrial reconstruction and development into defence expenditure. Given the USSR’s relative economic weakness, this produced much more negative results in the Soviet economy than US military spending did in the USA.

The “thaw”, (1953- 1955)

When Stalin died in March 1953, the new Soviet leadership attempted to “thaw” Cold War tensions. This was one of the reasons why an agreement was signed in July 1953 to end the fighting in Korea. Soviet willingness for peace saw them pressuring North Korea to stop. Eisenhower’s desire for peace as well, rather than victory, represented a significant change in relations. As early as 1952 Malenkov called for “peaceful co-existence” and in 1953 Soviet internal affairs minister, Beria spoke of Germany being reunified and becoming a neutral state. This thaw continued despite the escalation of the nuclear arms race, which took the form of the explosion of the first Hydrogen bomb in November 1952 by the USA, with the USSR following suit in July 1953. According to some historians, 1953 can be seen, as the end of the first Cold War and the period 1953- 1968/69 as one of fluctuating relations between the two superpowers in which attempts to lessen confrontation and reach agreement were periodically frustrated by the emergence of new tensions and crises.

Study Guides

- i) Explain how the attitudes of the USA and the USSR in 1945 help cause the Cold War.
- ii) By what methods, and with what success, did the USA attempt to contain Communism between 1945 and 1949?
- iii) Who was to blame the USA or the USSR for the outbreak of the Cold War.?

A Comparative Analysis:

THE COLD WAR OUTSIDE EUROPE

Why did the USA get involved in Vietnam?

We have seen that US policy towards the Soviet Union and Communism had been based on the Truman Doctrine and the policy of containment since 1947. This policy was further entrenched after Mao and the Communists came to power in China in October 1949. However, Truman was only prepared to make a military stand in Asia along what was known as the defensive perimeter.

US policy regarding the Asian mainland, including south-east Asia, was to give economic aid to anti-Communists forces. Indochina and especially Vietnam were seen as vital in blocking Communist access to the region. The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 was a turning point in US policy towards Vietnam. Once North Korea began its invasion of the South, Truman and Dulles quickly began to implement the NSC 68 proposal as Truman and his administration believed that the USA and the west, could not afford to lose significantly more population, territory and resources to the other side.'

Why did US involvement in Vietnam increase after 1964?

Johnson and escalation

By the time of J.F. Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 the Viet Cong were in control of more than half of rural South Vietnam. They already controlled North Vietnam. In the cities, they launched a terrorist campaign against government officials and police commanders. When President Lyndon Johnson took over after Kennedy's death he was determined to step up US involvement in the war in order to prevent South Vietnam falling to communist.

What gave Johnson the excuse to "flush out" the communists was an incident which took place in August 1964. A US battleship, the Destroyer" was attacked in the Gulf of Tonkin, in North Vietnamese waters. Johnson took this incident as a basis to bomb the North's rural bases, even though no state of war had been declared. The US congress was then persuaded to pass the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which gave the president the power to "take all necessary steps, including the use of the armed force as he saw fit without further consulting congress.

In March 1965, US bombers were flying regular massive bombing missions against the North, in a campaign known as Operation Rolling Thunder, and thus the conflict between the USA and the Viet Cong escalated into full-blown war.

In March the president sent US ground troops to initially protect the US air base at Da nang. Then in July he ordered 180 000 US troops to go into South Vietnam. By 1968, the number of US troops in Vietnam was 540 000. Although the arrival of such large numbers of American soldiers helped prevent the total collapse of the concept, South Vietnamese military regime

headed by General Thieu, the increasingly heavy fighting did not succeed in destroying the Viet Cong.

The US bombing of both North and South Vietnam is estimated to have dropped more bombs on North Vietnam in three years than the total number of bombs dropped on Germany, Italy and Japan during the whole of the Second World War.

The Viet Cong aided by equipment and troops from North Vietnam with itself receiving military equipment from the Soviet Union were able to survive by digging a vast network of underground tunnels. Furthermore, the vast experience of the Viet Cong in guerilla warfare meant they frequently outmaneuver the US troops.

Unable to match the expertise of the Viet Cong in setting up ambushes and body traps, US military commanders decided to rely more on their massive fire-power advantage.

In addition to traditional bombing the USA made heavy use of napalm- an inflammable jelly which was put in bombs and when they explode, the flaming petrol spreads widely and sticks to anything it touches. When it was discovered that victims jumped into water to try to put out the flames, phosphorous was added so that the jelly would continue to burn even under water. Many Vietnamese civilians and soldiers were horribly burnt or killed. Defoliants such as Agent orange as well as anti-personnel bombs were also widely used. They, however, frequently killed civilians and caused mounting opposition to US involvement and tactics, both in Vietnam and abroad, including in the USA itself.

The Tet Offensive, (January 1968)

The lack of success being achieved by US tactics was shown dramatically in January 1968. During the Tet religious festival. Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops launched a massive attack against many towns and US military bases across South Vietnam. They even attacked the US embassy in Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. The Communists hoped that this would spark off an urban insurrection in the South, but this did not happen. For the next three months, there was intense and bitter fighting, as the USA attempted to recapture the towns taken in January. By the end of March 1968, over 50 000 Communist troops had been killed and virtually all their gains had been lost.

Despite this, the Tet Offensive turned out to be a turning point in the Vietnam War. Though in the short term it proved to be a defeat for the Communists, in the long term it marked the beginning of reappraisal in the USA of its involvement in the War.

Some of Johnson's advisers such as Dean Acheson, began to think that USA could not prevent the Communists from winning in the south. The Tet Offensive showed that the USA was far from achieving a victory and that the Communist's resistance was as determined as ever. Many US politicians became disillusioned with the war and the anti-war movement in the USA grew considerably.

Why did the USA decide to withdraw from Vietnam?

- 1.The negative publicity which the war received back home, coupled with the rising casualty forced the US to withdraw from the war.
- 2.The coming to power of Richard Nixon, a Republican candidate, taking over from the Democrats, meant a total change of policy somewhat. Nixon had no option but to go with the current tide of public opinion.

3. More practically, Nixon decided on a policy of Vietnamisation of the war. This involved putting more of the burden of fighting the war on to the South Vietnamese army by withdrawing US troops: US financial aid, however, continued. In April 1969, the number of US troops in South Vietnam was 543 000; by 1971, Nixon had reduced this figure to 157 000.
4. US atrocities in Vietnam were exposed and this increased the anti-War sentiments and protests. For instance, in March 1968, the US “search and destroy” mission led by Lieutenant William Calley, massacred about 400 civilians, mostly children and old men and women in the small village of My Lai in South Vietnam. The revelations increased anti-war sentiments and protests, especially after it emerged that the My Lai Massacre was not an isolated incident.

What effect did the Vietnam War have on US foreign policy after 1975?

The failure of the USA to win the war in Vietnam and the fact that a nation from the developing World had forced the world’s mostly powerful superpower to withdraw- was a deep shock for US politicians and public alike.

Not only had the war cost \$150 billion more than 55 000 soldiers had been killed and many more were seriously wounded or maimed. Despite all this, South Vietnam had been lost to Communism as had the neighboring states of Laos and Cambodia.

More disturbing as far as containment was concerned was the fact that these Communist successes were seen to be as much the result of popular support as of the “outside pressure.” Consequently, Nixon and his chief adviser Henry Kissinger decided to pursue the new policy of détente as regards the Communist world. Kissinger argued that the USA was focusing too much on Communist activity in one area of the world at the expense of the total global balance of power. He also saw that the world had shifted from a bi-polar international situation-when the USSR and the USA were the two superpowers to a multi-polar situation where two or three powers emerged.

The rift between the Soviet Union and China presented new opportunities for developing US foreign policy. This approach was continued by Nixon’s successors, Ford and Carter, until the end of the 1970s. The defeat in Vietnam also contributed to a US reluctance to commit its own troops to other developing-world conflicts. The USSR took advantage of this during the remainder of the 1970s to attempt to increase its influence in those parts of the world where it was weak especially in the Middle East and Africa.

Study Guides

- i) What challenges were there to Soviet domination over Eastern Europe during the period 1950-80?
- ii) At the end of the Korean War both sides ended up more or less back at the 38th parallel. What, if anything did each side gain from the war?
- iii) Why did Soviet control over Eastern Europe crumble in 1989?
- iv) Who or what was responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991?
- v) How successful was the “Brezhnev Doctrine”?
- vi) Why did the USA believe that the USSR had gained a technological advantage in the 1950s?
- vii) Why did East-West relations change between 1948 and 1962?
- viii) Why did America get involved in the Vietnam War?

The Cuban missile crisis: (1962)

ORIGINS

The USA was seriously worried about Castro's agrarian Reform Law of May 1959. Not only did it limit all estates to 1000 acres- but it said that foreigners would no longer be allowed to own Agricultural land in Cuba of Particular concern was the fact that Castro appointed Nunez Jimenez, a Communist, as head of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). The USA began to see Castro, with his plans for land, health and welfare reforms as pure Communist reforms in their back-yard.

Eventually Castro, from 1959 onwards strengthened his position by announcing that neutrality was the only realistic position for developing states in the Cold War. This was a clear rejection of US influence over Cuba.

With Cuba exiles already flying bombing missions from Florida and firing sugar-cane fields, Castro accused the USA of plotting the return of Batista, the ousted dictator. During the 1960s tensions increased when Castro ordered the American-owned oil refineries in Cuba to process Soviet crude oil, which was cheaper than the oil normally purchased from Venezuela. When they refused to do so, hence breaking Cuban law, Castro then nationalized the US oil companies.

In response, Eisenhower suspended the Cuban sugar quota within the USA in December. Castro responded by nationalizing almost all US-owned companies in Cuba and the USA placed an embargo on virtually all trade to Cuba. In February 1960, Cuba had signed a trade agreement with the USSR which gave Cuba \$100 million credit for the purchase of equipment while the Soviet Union promised to purchase 2 million tones of sugar a year for the next four years. Castro further upset the USA by concluding a trade agreement with Communist China.

Later in 1960, Castro began a general programme of nationalization of the Cuban economy and, in response to his government's growing fears about the possibility of imminent counter-revolution and invasion, many political freedoms were withdrawn, most notably, freedom of the press. During this Castro, although not a member himself-came to rely increasingly on the Cuban Communist party to provide administrators for his reform programmes.

In March 1960, the CIA persuaded Eisenhower to approve the training of an invasion force of right-wing Cuban exiles to overthrow Castro. Training began in earnest in July based in Guatemala. These exiles were given US weapons and training. The USA were further angered when, in September 1960, Cuba became the first Latin American state to establish diplomatic relations with Mao's China.

As Castro moved closer and closer to the Soviet bloc, Eisenhower broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba in January 1961. A small island in the USA's "backyard" seemed to be offering a direct challenge to the USA's containment policy and thus became an important factor in the Cold War. By mid-1961, Castro had established diplomatic and trade relations with every

Communists state, including both North Korea and North Vietnam. The stage for clashes with the USA, and even the US- USSR hot war, was set!

The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962

Though US plans to invade and overthrow Castro clearly failed following the failure of the invasion at the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy and the CIA were still determined to overthrow Castro because he represented the success of Communism right in the backyard of the USA.

Fearing another US- backed invasion. Castro appealed to Khrushchev for protection. From May 1962 Soviet weapons deliveries to Cuba increased dramatically. Castro's request came at a time when the Soviet Union was becoming increasingly concerned about the nuclear missiles which the USA had placed in Turkey on the Black Sea Coast close to the Soviet Union. Khrushchev was also worried in general about the "Nussle gap" between the USSR and the USA.

During a visit to Bulgaria in May 1962, Khrushchev began to consider how placing Soviet missiles in Cuba might serve a dual purpose, Castro would get the protection he had requested against US aggression while the Soviet Union would be able to counter the threat posed by the US missiles in Turkey with a similar threat against the USA. By September 1962, the Soviet Union had begun to install and equip missile sites in Cuba as well as increase the number of tanks bombers and fighters supplied to Castro's armed forces. There were soon over 5 000 Soviet technicians and engineers working on the missile sites which were, however, under Soviet, not Cuban Control. The total Soviet presence on Cuba eventually reached 42 000.

On 11 September, Kennedy warned Khrushchev that the USA would prevent the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba by "whatever means might be necessary." Khrushchev replied that the Soviet Union had no intention of providing such missiles for Cuba.

Khrushchev felt able to take such a risky step as the crisis over Berlin had subsided after the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, thus leaving him free to concentrate on other problems. More importantly, the failure over Berlin led him to seek a success elsewhere. However, these Soviet short and intermediate-range missiles were seen by Kennedy as altering the strategic balance of forces in a region long seen as being a US sphere of influence.

On 14 October, a US U-2 spy-plane flew over Cuba and came back with photos of an intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) site being constructed in Cuba. These missiles, with a range of over 1 600 km, turned most of US cities into potential targets. Hence on 24 October 18 Soviet ships possibly containing missile warheads were stopped or turned back just before reaching the limit set by the USA.

The risk of nuclear War breaking out was increased when the USA announced that, if the missiles were not removed at once, Cuba would be invaded. On 25 October, the US began to put into effect plans for an airstrike against the missile site, to take place on 29 or 30 October. Castro, together with some Soviet generals, urged Khrushchev to launch some missiles in order to prevent the threatened US invasion of Cuba. Khrushchev, however, rejected these calls and instead on 26 October sent a letter to Kennedy. This letter offered the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba and promised no more would be sent if the USA would lift its blockade of Cuba and promise not to invade the island. Then on 27 October, without having had a response

from the USA, Khrushchev sent a second letter with different demands. This time, the Soviet Union offered to remove its missiles from Cuba if the USA would reciprocate by removing its own Jupiter missiles from Turkey. Khrushchev further suggested that this could be done through the UN. This presented difficulties for the US since had never publicly admitted it had missiles in Turkey.

Eventually the USA gave the Soviet Union an ultimatum that Soviet missiles should be removed from Cuba by 28 October in return for the removal of US missiles in Turkey in future. Khrushchev accepted the compromise, thus ending the crisis.

Results of the crisis

1. The end of what proved, for 13 days, to be the most serious crisis of the entire Cold War was portrayed by the West as a victory for Kennedy and a defeat for Khrushchev. In April 1963, the US missiles were removed, but the American public were not told until 1969. In fact, the Soviet Union gained very little from the deal on US missiles, as the USA had already decided to remove them as land-based sites had been made obsolete by the introduction of SLBMs (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles) which were much more difficult to detect and destroy.
2. The Cuban Missile Crisis undoubtedly played a part in Khrushchev's removal from power in 1964 the same time Khrushchev's agreements confirmed the Chinese communists belief that he was unwilling to stand up to the USA. The Chinese therefore continued to develop their own independent foreign policy, thus widening the split in the world communist movement the Sino- Soviet split.
3. In Western Europe, there was anger at how little the USA had consulted its allies during this emergency, despite the risk that any conflict between the USA and the USSR would probably have involved other NATO members. France, in particular, was resentful and this was one of the reasons why de Gaulle eventually decided to withdraw France from NATO and tried to encourage the rest of Western Europe to adopt an independent foreign policy.
4. Both sides had been shocked by how close they had come to a nuclear third world war over Cuba, and were determined to avoid such serious tensions in future. A hotline" telephone was installed between the Kremlin and the White House so that the leaders could communicate quickly and directly with each other during any future crisis.
5. The crisis helped bring a partial thaw in East-West relations. In what came to be seen as the first step towards halting the nuclear arms race, the Soviet Union and the USA signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in August 1963. Although it did not limit or reduce the building and deployment of nuclear weapons, it did attempt to control the testing of such devices. The Treaty for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, though drawn up, was not actually signed until 1969 during the era of détente. However, from 1962 the Cold War conflict remained confined to the Third World.

Study Guides

- i) Did the outcome of the Cuban missile crisis reflect a victory for both the USA and the USSR?

- ii) Was The USSR at any point equal to or better than the USA in nuclear technology between 1945 and 1964?
- iii) Consider the arguments for and against the claim that Stalin's foreign policy towards Europe was defensive.
- iv) To what extent can Truman's foreign policy be considered a major cause of the development of the Cold War between 1945 and 1950?

Examination type questions

1. Were Soviet economic and political manoeuvres in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1949 more offensive than defensive?
2. Why did the Cold War spread to the Third World in the 1960s and 1970s?
3. "The Marshall Plan caused the division of Europe and thus the Cold War." Discuss this assertion.
4. "The Cold War in Europe was caused by the superpowers' misjudgment and misunderstanding of each other." How far do you agree with this view?

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CHAPTER 33

DECOLONISATION AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Chapter objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Define decolonization.
2. Explain the key factors which enabled Decolonization to take place after WWII.
3. Explain the models for interpreting the history of decolonization
4. Describe the rise of nationalism after the WWII.
5. Assess the impact of the methods used to achieve decolonization-diplomacy and warfare.
6. Compare and contrast the models of decolonization in Asia and Africa.
7. Account for the “winds of change” across the continent of Africa- whether it was spontaneous or not.
8. Explain the importance of Pan-Africanism in decolonization.
9. Explain the varying degrees of success from region to region and from colony to colony.
10. Explain why Britain was more eager to decolonize than France.

A number of questions need to be asked in order to fully assess the causes, course and even results of decolonization:

1. Why did decolonization take place?
2. Why did the process begin after 1945?
3. In what ways did British and French approaches to decolonization differ?
4. What external factors influenced the process of decolonization? Cold War? Revolutionary movements?
5. How similar and how different were the outcomes of decolonization
 - a) For the colonial powers, whether big or small
 - b) For the newly independent states whether in Africa or Asia.

In explaining the process decolonization, it is perhaps more analytical and even appropriate at Advanced level to adopt a model already developed by historians Robinson Ronald and Win Roger Louis. The causes are actually ascribed to three levels

- i) The international level
- ii) The National Level (Colonial Powers)
- iii) The Local Level (The Colonies).

Changes on the International Level: Superpowers

The Second World War meant a sharp reduction in the international influence of the traditional colonial powers. There was a relative shift of power away from Britain, France and the smaller European colonial nations to the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. They were both characterized by an anti-colonial heritage and would accelerate the process of decolonization, in their own separate ways.

The principle on which Washington’s attitude was based were clear enough. The existence of colonies conflicted with the right to national self-determination. As the United States had once

It was inevitable that other colonies would also attain their freedom. It was the Americans' duty to quicken this process of decolonization.

In the first instance, the United States was the first country to free its own colony, the Philippines, and such an example was bound to influence her partners in doing the same.

In the second place, the US attitude helped establish a foundation for changes in the policies of the more traditional colonial powers such as Britain and France. The USA encouraged the introduction of reforms in the colonies. In a number of limited cases, the USA actually applied some pressure on some colonial powers to set steps for granting independence to the colonies. This was the case in 1948/49 when Washington threatened to halt all economic and military assistance to the Dutch. This was an important factor behind the Dutch's decision to grant independence to Indonesia.

In the third place, the liberation movements played on the attitude and powerful position of the United States. One of many examples of this was that the Vietnamese independence declaration of 2 September 1945 followed the US declaration of independence of 1776 in several respects. This was an attempt to engage the USA on the side of the Vietnamese. Just as France was an important power in European politics and the liberation of movement in Vietnam was under communist leadership, US pressure here was much weaker than the Netherlands regarding Indonesia.

On the other hand, the influence of the Soviet Union on the struggles for independence was also many-faceted. Moscow's policy line was clearly anti-colonial. All colonies had to be granted independence. Lenin had proclaimed that imperialism was the highest stage of capitalism. Local communists were often among those who were most active in the struggle for liberation.

If armed struggle took place, the Soviet Union could supply weapon partially in order to spread communism to the prospective independent state. Thus Moscow influenced the actions of the colonial powers both through its policies and by its mere existence.

The National Level: Changes within the Colonial Powers

After 1945, major changes took place in the colonial powers' capacity and willingness to retain the colonies. Their capacity was influenced by their weakened international position, especially economic problems. Many politicians as well as segments of public opinion changed their attitudes towards colonies altogether, and even larger groups no longer wanted to use force to retain forms of rule that violated the ideals they claimed to uphold in their own countries.

British policies

One theory of decolonization was that it was more or less a logical process that would inevitably result in the dismantling of the colonial empires. This process had actually begun with the achievement of US independence from Britain in the 1770s and 1780s. The United States was followed by the white dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

The eventual independence of India in 1947 in a way opened the floodgates for the independence of non-white colonies. What Britain had begun, others had to complete: the Netherlands, France, Belgium and finally Portugal as well.

In February 1947, Prime Minister Attlee declared that Britain would withdraw from India by June 1948. In reality, events would unfold even more rapidly. Because of pressure from the Congress Party leaders in India and Britain's strained economy India was declared independent already in August 1947. The Attlee administration also had to abandon attempts to keep India unified. Pakistan was partitioned off as a separate country. Hindus opposed Muslims a division the British had previously tried to exploit through the tactic of "divide and rule" Burma and Ceylon, too, became independent in 1947-48.

Events in India in turn acted as a great source of inspiration for future events in Africa. The first of a series sporadic Pan-African Congresses were held as early as 1900. Later at the sixth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in October 1945, African delegates constitute the majority in relation to the American Negroes. The conference approved a highly radical programme: complete independence for a unified Africa based on a socialist economy. One of the participants of the conference was Kwame Nkrumah. A unified Africa was an unrealistic demand so was a unified West Africa Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast to lead the struggle for independence there.

GHANA

A revolt in 1948 stimulated the demand for independence. In 1949 Nkrumah founded a new political party, the Convention People's Party, which pressed for dominion status. This party employed methods that had been developed by the nationalist leaders in India. Like them, Nkrumah landed in jail, but as had been the case for the Indian leaders, that did not diminish his popularity. In 1951 his party won an overwhelming election victory. The British had either to make concessions or to resort to harsher measures. In many ways, the outcome was obvious. In 1957 the Gold Coast, under the name Ghana, became the first of the new independent nations of West Africa Nigeria followed suit in 1960.

Hence the independence of West Africa moved fairly quickly partly because the white community residing there was small and there was no need to resist constitutional methods of petition and pleas for independence.

The British and conservative circles in particular, perceived great differences between West and East Africa. In East Africa the white minority was larger and the level of cultural and economic development among the Africans not as advanced as in West Africa. In areas such as Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, the settlers had a particularly strong position, and there had been a substantial amount of immigration after 1945. Thus the white population in Kenya rose from 12000 in 1945 to more than 50 000 ten years later. In southern Rhodesia, the corresponding figures were 20 000 and 80 000. As late as April 1959, colonial secretary Alan Lennox Boyd stated that he was unable to envisage a time when it will be possible for any British Government to surrender the ultimate responsibilities for the destinies and well-being of Kenya."

However, the process leading to independence continued to accelerate. Sudan had acquired its independence as early as in 1955, but was considered an exception as the country had formally been governed by a British Egyptian government.

Conservative British governments wanted to build up federations practically controlled by whites in East and Central Africa. Even so, Tanganyika's independence in 1961 was succeeded by Uganda's 1963. The federation that was actually established further south was short-lived. Malawi and Zambia became independent nations in 1964. Thus Southern Rhodesia was the remaining colony.

In 1965, the white minority under Ian Smith declared themselves "independent" in an attempt to half developments towards a majority government. Even in southern Rhodesia, however, retaining white control proved hopeless. The major Western powers applied political and economic pressure to the country, and the nationalist movement grew steadily stronger. In 1979-80, Southern Rhodesia attained independence under the name Zimbabwe. Hence a combination of diplomatic pressure (including sanctions) and a stinging local guerrilla war forced the realization of independence in southern Rhodesia.

South Africa had acquired dominion status as early as in 1909. Particularly after 1948, Pretoria put up a strict apartheid system between the white minority and the black majority. The country also had control over the previously German colony of Namibia. South Africa became subject to strong international condemnation and withdrew from the Commonwealth in 1961. The struggle against the racist regime increased both within South Africa and abroad in the Autumn of 1989, F W. de Klerk became president, and put an end to most aspects of apartheid and initiated dialogue with the released African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela. Namibia attained independence in 1990. During the course of 1993-94 the process leading to majority rule was completed and Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa. Again international pressure was at the core of the removal of apartheid.

French policies

French colonial policies were quite different from those of Britain.

Instead of decentralization, with local assemblies which gradually received more power, the French model was based on Paris as its centre with a strong governor general as the capital's local representative. Whereas the British policy gradually led to a considerable degree of local autonomy, finally culminating in full independence, France's attitude was that the local population was gradually to be assimilated within French culture, thus in theory attaining rights as French subjects within a French union. This union was still to be controlled from Paris, but the local populations would be increasingly better represented in the National Assembly there.

In the defence of French great power status, of French culture and long-range assimilation, the French used harsher means of controlling their colonies than the British. The French too, realized that the Second World War was bound to produce major changes in relations between mother country and colonies. As a result, they expanded their educational facilities to encompass more Africans' there was to be an end to forced labour and the Africans were to be granted greater electoral influence. These reforms would create a new foundation for permanent French rule. Hence they thus declared through the Brazzaville conference of 1944; "Any idea of autonomy any possibility of evolution outside the French block as well as the eventual, even far-off constitution of self-government in the colonies must be set aside."

Not surprising therefore, even many African leaders such as Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, long pursued a policy of placing greater emphasis on having a voice in Paris than on local independence. Decolonization under French rule in most cases therefore tended to result from the use of military force in the colonies. Such was the case in Indochina (Vietnam) in 1954 when the French suffered a political and military defeat to be confirmed by the Geneva conference that same year.

African colonies: France

The stark contrast presented by the newly independent states under Britain presented French nationalists with models which they could emulate. Egypt which formally got independence in 1952 presented a strong contrast to French nationalists in Tunisia and Morocco, which eventually got their independence in 1956.

The French hard-line approach had to be relaxed seeing examples of the British colonies getting independent in their neighborhood. They had to grant concessions even to Togo as well which was under the United Nations trusteeship system.

France's most uncompromising stand was made in relation to Algeria. This area was still considered an integrated part of France itself and French policy fluctuated between harsh repression of the Arab majority and attempts at assimilation. The French minority of about 10 percent of the population owned the best land and controlled the most important sectors of the economy. They firmly resisted any development that might reduce their dominance.

The nationalist movement, the Front for the Liberation of Algeria had no option but to take up arms against French colonial domination. But French settlers were immediately backed by their government, led by democrat Guy Mollet.

However, decolonization assumed a new role under French administration after de Gaulle rose to power in 1958. The government drew up sections of the constitution that were to transform the French Union into the French community. The colonies were given the choice between independence or continued close co-operation with France, with local autonomy. Surprisingly, with the exception of Guinea, which thus became the first independent Black Country in French Africa, all the colonies chose the latter alternative.

The new French community "community" was to have a joint foreign policy and a joint defense policy, as well as a common economic policy for the most part. In theory, these common policies were to be determined by an executive body consisting of the presidents from all the member states. In reality, the French viewpoint was usually decisive. On the more symbolic level, French remained the official language, the "Marseillaise" the national anthem and the French tricolor the common flag.

However, this system was replaced by formal independence in 1960. There were many reasons for this rapid course of development from 1959 to 1960.

The example of Guinea was one reason; British decolonization was another and internal rivalry among several of the colonies in French West Africa was another reason de Gaulle was eventually forced to grant Algeria complete independence in 1962. However, it is significant to note that even after decolonization, the ties between the French and her former colonies remained close for a long time, closer than between London and the former British colonies. This was because the French policy of assimilation tended to absorb the colonies into departments of France.

Study Guides

- i) How did the Second World War change British and French attitudes towards colonialism?
- ii) How did the involvement in the Second World War strengthen the resolve of the colonies to liberate themselves from colonial rule?
- iii) Why did India decolonise so rapidly and yet some African countries only got independence in the 1960s to the 1980s?
- iv) Why, in general, did British decolonization in Africa begin later than in Asia and then proceed so rapidly?
- v) Why were there differences in the pace of decolonization under the British and under the French during the same period?
- vi) What effects did the Cold War have on decolonization?
- vii) How important are the following themes in understanding the character of French decolonization:

War?

Violence?

Nationalism?

Communism?

Economic Interests?

Portugal and Belgium

Belgian policy in the Congo has often been described as paternalistic. Through a general improvement in the standard of living, the Belgians hoped to postpone political demands if such ever arose.

The Belgians considered themselves far more conscientious than other colonialists, as in fact they were, in many ways. In 1955 the Belgian authorities proclaimed that 10 percent of the Congolese population attended school (just basic education) while the corresponding figures were 7percent in Ghana, 6 percent in India and 3 percent in French Equatorial Africa. However, there were only 16 Africans with university education in all of the Congo in 1990. This naturally caused more problems than peace for the Belgians. The process of decolonization moved very quickly once the Belgians showed signs of military revolt in 1959.

They wanted to maintain strong ties with the Congo and continue to benefit from its vast resources. She was not therefore willing to use excessive force to retain herself in the Congo. Belgium immediately backed the moderate forces for independence in the Congo and hostility dismantled its political administration there. The new state contained many ethnic groups and languages, and the governing bodies soon collapsed. Five years of unrest ensued until the country achieved a sort of stability under the leadership of General Mobutu Sese Seko.

The Portuguese on the other hand were less affected by the general trend of decolonization than the Belgians were. Lisbon tried to pursue the French policy of assimilation even further than Paris did. The Portuguese colonies were still integrated parts of the mother country. Politically, the Africans would be allowed to participate when they had attained a specified standard of “civilization.”

Portugal’s colonial policy was closely linked to her domestic situation at home. In a dictatorship, spreading ideas of freedom and a gradual build-up of self-government were inconceivable. Decolonization could mean the collapse of the Salazar regime. But the costs of retaining control were tremendous as the independence movements grew stronger. Thus Portugal’s colonial policy was much of the reason for the fall of the regime in 1974.

Guinea-Bissau became independence in 1974 and Angola and Mozambique followed in 1975. Decolonization therefore followed the fall of the autocratic regime of Salazar in 1974. This invigorated the liberation movements in the colonies. The fact that Portugal was a poor colonial master with limited resources to sustain armed confrontations in the colonies only made the dawn of independence more certain.

Why different attitudes?

There were many reasons and for the differences in colonial powers’ attitudes. The most significant factor was perhaps the relation between the colonial policy and the dominant ideologies in the mother country.

1. Britain had a feasible pattern for its colonial policies: the key was decentralization, as much as possible. A lot of authority was granted to local chiefs or rulers. This meant that the white dominions could almost at least foresee the goal of eventual self-government by Africans taking place. The ultimate transfer of power was therefore something that was undramatic for the British

In contrast, France was caught up in a vicious circle in several areas. Partly due to its unwillingness to grant independence, Paris had to face radical liberation movements. This was most evident in Indochina and to a lesser extent, in Algeria. Radical movements meant that France in turn became even more determined in its policies. Thus developments in certain colonies reinforced themselves.

2. The British governments were also far more viable than the French. Dismantling colonial rule required strong governments, particularly in areas where substantial interests were linked to the maintenance of the status quo, such as in Algeria and in some of the British colonies in Central and East Africa. It was easier for British governments to resist the pressure from settlers and their supporters, than it was for the rapidly changing French governments. However, de Gaulle’s rise to power paved the way, for the final decisions regarding decolonization.

3. Considerations of prestige and great power politics were other factors influencing the attitudes of the colonial powers. Rivalry among the European powers had been a central factor in the

establishment of the colonial empires. This rivalry had ceased. Both Britain and France were nations on the wane in an international perspective. The colonies were now seen partly necessary in order to defend their roles as the third and fourth ranking major powers in the world.

Britain's international influence was clearly stronger than that of France. Thus it was easier for Britain to make concessions to demands for independence. France, on the other hand, had a tremendous need to re-establish its prewar status to some extent. Paris was largely unwilling to make accessions to its colonies. If a war had broken out, it had to be won. Because France lost in Indochina, it had to fight all the harder in Algeria.

4. The countries' relationship with the United States were also significant. Washington's stance had greater impact in London than in Paris because Britain's relations with the USA were much closer than France's. The closer a country was to an anti-colonial USA the more it quickly embraced the concept of decolonization, and vice versa.

5. The colonies had varying significance for the different mother countries. The British economy was only dependent on the colonies to a slight degree. For example, in 1938, only 8,5per cent of their exports went to the colonies, and 12,5per cent of their exports accounted for almost one-third of both exports and imports. Where settlers were numerous and the economic interests especially great, such as in Southern Rhodesia for Britain, and in Algeria for France, this was a factor that delayed independence. The white minority consistently opposed plans to transfer power to the local majority.

6. However, it gradually became clear to the colonial powers that independence did not necessarily entail such great changes in relation between mother country and colony. Economic, military, political ties could still persist. The greater the chance of this happening, the easier it was to grant political independence. There could be advantages to not having to spend large sums of money to retain administrative control. Independence would also mean that the colonial power would be spared from having sole responsibility for local development programmes.

The maintenance of close ties with the mother country was also a condition for the changes that took place in French colonial policy in the years 1958-60. In Africa south of the Sahara, in Morocco and in Tunisia, the French largely succeeded in retaining the new nations' orientation towards France. The former smaller colonial powers, such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Portugal had difficulties in maintaining the former ties. They were simply not strong enough, neither economically nor militarily.

The local level: independence movements grow stronger

The Three Stages

The historian Geoffrey Barracough has divided the struggle for independence into three stages that can be identified in the course of development of many of the colonies.

1. Proto-nationalism: This was what dominated the first stage. During this period colonial rule was accepted, but new social groups and political movements emerged these strove for reforms within this system.

The Congress Party was established in India in 1885, but until 1905 it was largely a debate forum for a narrow upper class. British civilization was considered superior. The most important demands for reform included limited local autonomy and more job opportunities for educated Indians. Similar movements were established in important African colonies such as the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Tunisia around 1920.

2. “The rise of a new leadership” was identified by Barraelough as the second stage. Nationalism, here, began to gain ground in a growing middle class. The demands the new leaders made on the colonial power were expanded substantially, and independence was considered at least a future goal. This stage was well before the Second World War and nationalist associations were still far from being mass movements.
3. The third stage was a nationalist movement with “a mass following” working actively to achieve independence. Nationalist movements grew so strong that the use of force had to be stepped up in order to maintain the colonial system. Whereas the colonial power had formerly been able to play the masses off against the narrow social groups that led these, movements this was now more difficult, although there were still many who were not directly engaged in the political struggle. Again India serves as the model. Under Gandhi’s leadership, from 1920 onwards the Indian Congress Party established clear lines from the political centre to India’s tens of thousands of rural villages. The objective was now clearly independence. In Nigeria, the third stage occurred in 1951. In the Gold Coast, the second phase and the beginning of the third phase almost converged during the years 1947-49.

Thus, the stages were not equally distinct everywhere. The process tended to extend over the longest period of time in the British colonies. In the French colonies in Africa south of the Sahara, the entire course of development could take a mere 10 to 20 years. In some instances it went even more quickly. In the Belgian Congo, for instance, there were hardly any demands for independence until 1955. Even then, local leaders thought that it might take 60 to 100 years before the colony would become independent. This in practice, proved to be shorter. Independence struggles sometimes even took as short as four to five years.

The Influence of International Events on Decolonization.

A number of events in various parts of the world contributed to the strengthening of the independence movements or to the weakening of the mother countries. These two aspects are difficult to keep entirely separate.

1. The Second World war the most important single factor. This war led to changes on the international level, and it contributed to the creation of new attitudes towards the colonies in their mother countries. Equally important were the changes the war brought about in the colonies.
2. The occupation of some Asian colonial areas by Japan strengthened the move towards, decolonization. New governing structures were created and psychological barriers broken down. Partly to gather support against the allies and partly as a step on the way towards Japansation, the Japanese promoted nationalism in several areas. National leaders were given

offices and to some extent power that they were certainly not prepared to relinquish when the war was over. National languages were encouraged in Indonesia and Burma and national armies established. Aung San in Burma and Roxas in the Philippines were given a huge amount of self-government. This later fostered nationalism which eventually aided them in achieving decolonization.

3. The liberation of Asia necessarily had substantial consequences for Africa as well. As the historian D.A Low has stressed.” It is not financial to assert that many of the critical battles for British colonial Africa were fought not on the banks of the Volta, the Niger, or the Zambezi, but on the Ganges (India).” After all, four-fifths of the population of Britain’s colonial territories lived in India. The floodgates were opened and the pattern established, not only for the British colonies, but for all colonies.

The Role played by the Non-Aligned movement and OAU in decolonization.

NAM:

The question of co-operation with other liberated nations became highly relevant.

The first meeting among African and Asian countries was held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955. All the independent countries from the two continents of Africa and Asia were represented, with the exception of South Korea and Israel.

Western-oriented states such as Turkey, the Philippines and South Vietnam and Communist nations such as China and North Vietnam all took part. The twenty-nine participants concentrated their efforts on condemning colonialism emphasizing the need for economic growth in the Third World and calling for a decrease in international tension based on the principles of cooperation and peaceful co-existence.

The conferences of Non-Aligned Nations all concentrated on decolonization, economic development and anti-bloc policies. The non-aligned countries raised concern about the countries that still had to attain independence, such as Namibia and South Africa, the Palestinian problem as well as the Falkland Islands where Argentine claims enjoys support. In 1982 the islands were seized by Argentina but then re taken by British troops.

It is significant to note that although NAU as a body contributed very little practical aid towards decolonization, their vocal stance gave moral support to those striving for independence and helped to reshape the attitudes of the colonial masters towards a new political dispensation.

OAU- Organization of African Unity

The OAU was founded in 1963, August. Its main aim was to aid, more directly, the colonies which were still fighting for independence. It probably made more relevant and effective inroads towards the goal of independence. This was because the organization even organized military training as well as arming the freedom fighters. The organization also actively campaigned for the diplomatic isolation of South Africa. In such direct ways, decolonization was evidently achieved.

Study Guides

- i) How did the Second World War Weaken Dutch colonialism?
- ii) Why was Portuguese decolonization so late and so violent?
- iii) In what ways was decolonization:
 - a) A blessing in disguise for the colonial powers?
 - b) A paradise lost?

Examination type questions

1. Why did the process of decolonization appear relatively easier under British dominions than under the French?
2. Explain the key factors which influenced the process of decolonization after 1945.
3. Assess the impact of decolonization on newly- independent states in the period from 1945 to 1991.
4. Why was the decolonization of British dominion quicker in most respects in Asia than in Africa?
5. Looking at the immediate result of independence, was decolonization a disappointment for Africans?

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