

NCERT Solutions for 9th Class History : Chapter 1- The French Revolution



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Questions

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1. Describe the circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France.

Answer

The circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France were:

→ Social Inequality: French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates namely The Clergy, The nobility and third estates. First two estates, that is, the clergy and the nobility enjoyed certain privileges by birth. They were exempt from paying taxes. The Third estate comprises of businessmen, merchants, Peasants and artisans, labours had to pay taxes to the state.

→ Political Causes: Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France. France had a debt of more than 2 billion *livres*. To meet its regular expenses, such as the cost of maintaining an army, the court, running government offices or universities, the state was forced to increase taxes which angered the people.

→ Economic Problems: The population of France also increased from 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. Food grains were now in great demand. The price of bread shot up. Wages did not keep pace with rising prices. This led to subsistence crisis.

→ Strong Middle Class: A new middle class emerged educated and wealthy during the eighteenth century. They believed that no group in society should be given privileges by birth. Ideas of equality and freedom were put forward by philosophers. The ideas of these philosophers were discussed intensively in salons and coffee houses and spread among people.

→ Immediate Causes: On 5 may, 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. Third estates protested against this proposal but as each estate have one vote, the king rejected this appeal. They walked out of the assembly.

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2. Which groups of French society benefited from the revolution? Which groups were forced to relinquish power? Which sections of society would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution?

Answer

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It was the richer members of the third estate who mostly benefited from the French Revolution.

The clergy and the nobility were forced to relinquish (surrender) their power.

The poor class of third estate and women would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution as the promise of equality, discussed during the revolution was not given. The poorer classes had no right to vote.

3. Describe the legacy of the French Revolution for the peoples of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Answer

The ideas of liberty and democratic rights were the most important legacy of the French Revolution. These spread from France to the rest of Europe during the nineteenth century, where feudal systems were abolished. It inspired the Germans, Italians, and Austrians to overthrow their oppressive regimes. The French Revolution inspired the struggling nations of Asia and Africa who were groaning under the oppression of European colonialism. Tipu Sultan and Rajaram Mohan Roy are two examples of individuals who responded to ideas coming from French revolution.

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4. Draw up a list of democratic rights we enjoy today whose origins could be traced to the French Revolution.

Answer

We can trace the origin of the following democratic rights we enjoy today to the French revolution:

- Right to Equality before law
- Freedom of Speech and expression
- Right against exploitation
- Right to justice

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5. Would you agree with the view that the message of universal rights was beset with contradictions? Explain.

Answer

Yes, the message of universal rights was beset with contradictions:

→ Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate in its formation, personally or through their representatives. - In this line, it is stated that every citizen has the right to participate in the law however only men above 25 years of age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wage were given voting right. The remaining men and all women were classed as passive citizens and were deprived of voting rights.

Hence, the message of universal rights was not very clear. The Constitution is only available for the rich. Women were totally neglected in decision making.

6. How would you explain the rise of Napoleon?

Answer

After Robespierre's rule came to an end a directory was formed to avoid concentration of power in one individual. Members of the directory often fought among themselves leading to total chaos and political instability. This created a political vacuum in France. This was a conducive situation and Napoleon Bonaparte took the reign of power as a military dictator.

Napoleon saw his role as a moderniser of Europe. He introduced many laws such as the protection of private property and a uniform system of weights and measures provided by the decimal system.

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