**Department of History,**

**III BA ‘A’ Paper-V**

**History Of Modern Europe**

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**Introduction**

Of the seven continents of the world. Europe is the second smallest ,occupying eight per cent of the Earth’s surface.

* 1. **CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: (1789)**

On the eve of the revaluation France possessed industry, commerce, capital and a middle class next only to that of great Britain among the nations of Europe. France was a very large, populations, rich and powerful state. Her peasantry was generally more prosperous than that of any other state on the continent. France was the leader in art and literature, science and social, philosophy. In sprite of this, certain causes led to the great upheaval of 1789.These causes were

* + 1. **Political causes**: Bourbon dynasty-Divine Right-Theory of Kingship –Autocrat-No uniformity Law- Louis XVI & Marie Antoinette-Royal Extravagance-\
    2. **Social Causes:** Three classes/Estates-The Clergy, the Nobility and the commoners constituting what is known as First, Second and Third Estate respectively.
    3. **Economic and Financial Crisis:** Theglaring economic inequality was directly and indirectly

responsible for the Revolution. Nearly the whole of the state revenue was contributed by the

Third Estate. The rural people paid most of the income of the King, Church and Nobility. To the nobles feudal dues-Tax barden-Salt tax and poll tax, property tax-The church received Tithes-The Peasants owed the nobels feudal dues. The chief feudal rights of the nobles were: right to unpaid labour, tolls on roads, fords and bridges, special harvest dues and rights of hunting. They were entitled to various other dues and payments, besides these.-Farming of tax collection

**Financial crisis:** Turgot and Necker were the two finance ministers who attempted to set the finance ministers who attempted to set the finance right. Turgot abolished taxes on food and freed the peasants from forced labour on the roads. But he was oppsed by the nobels and clergy who were anxious to preserve their exemption from taxation. Turgot became unpopular and was dismissed. Jacques Necker, a Swiss banker, who succeeded Turgot ,applied business methods to improve the finances. Soon Calonne was appointed as the new finance minister.

In spite of the acute financial crisis. France joined another big war The War of American Independence(1763-1788)

* + 1. **Intellectual cause**: **Mantesquieu (**1689-1755)’The Spirit of Laws’, the legislative, the executive and the executive and the judicial were well separated

**Voltaire**(1894-1778)-He was given the title ‘King Voltaire’, Son of a notary-‘A Letter on the

English’-He bitterly criticized and hated the Roman Catholic Church, and to him the despotic Churchwas the beginning of justice and enlightenment. However, he was not an atheist.

**Jean-Jacques Roussean (**1712-1778)- Confession, Emile, The Social Contract Theory-According to Roussean, law is the expression of the “General will”. Kings were creations of the people by an original contract, for the promotion of their welfare. This is well-known theory of Social Contract. Other Philosphers: Diderot,d’ Alembert and the editors and contributors of the Encyclopaedia.

* + 1. **Influence of the American War of Independence**: The French soldiers had joined the Americans against the British in the struggle for independence.

**The Early Phase of the Revolution(May-October 1789)**

convened in 1787 an Assembly of Notables. This assembly, composed of 145 chief

nobles, bishops and magistrates, offered no solution to the immediate pressing problem.

\*Estate-General Summoned:1789-Louis XVI-Yet, it had not been summoned for last 175 years. The function of this body was advisory, not legislative. Its organization spread over three separate bodies

\*Meeting of the Estates-General:Versilles-1789-General demand for a ‘constitution’. For improvements in prisons and hospitals and reforms in economic, religious and political matters.

# THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:

On June 17,1789 the Third Estate declared itself a “National Assembly” and invited others to join it. Three days later when its members came to assemble they found the hall allotted to

them closed. A notice was put up that the hall was undergoing repairs.

# Oath of the Tennis Court:

Finding no place to assemble, the commoners, led by Mirabeau and sieyes, proceeded to a nearby riding hall and tennis court, and took an oath as members of the National Assembly that they would draw up a constitution for France. This, the “Oath of the Tennis Court”, was the true beginning of the Revolution. The King, however, ignored the “Oath” and commanders the Estates to sit separately and vote “by order”. By that time a large number of clergy and a few nobles had joined the commoners Mirabeau declared.”We are here by the will of the people and we shall not leave our places except at the point of the bayonet”. Thus the Estates-General become the National constituent Assembly.

**Fall of Bastille:** July 14,1789 Louis XVI prepared to use for force against the Assembly by transferring royal troops to paris and Versailes. July 14,1789 a mob attacked the royal fortress and prison of Bastile in the eastern end of Paris. The Bastile fell within a few hours. The fall of the Bastile was the first serious act of violence. Paris became practically independent. Local government the “Commune”, was set up. Fourteenth of july, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastile, is even now celebrated as independence Day of France.

**March of the women to Versailers:** October 5-Screaming “Bread, bread, bread” made a long - march of twelve miles on the highway from pairs to versiles. Louis XVI, Maire Antoinette and their children were riding on a large wooden coach amidst the mob-May to oct 1789 really ended the “old regime” in France.

# Functions of the National Constituent Assembly:(Octber 1789 to September 1791) :

1. **Ending serfdom and privilege:** Abolition of feudalism, serfdom and class privilege\_ social equality-taxation for all classes.
2. **Affirming the “Right of Man”:** Assembly Proclaimed individual liberty-“Declaration of the Rights of man and of the Citizen”-Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.”The rights of man are liberty, property, security and
3. **Uniform administrative system:** France was divided eight –three departments. Each department was divided into districts and communes. These divisions endure to the present day. The head of the local government were to be elected by the people.
4. **Emphasis an national unity:** The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation- “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” engraved on them
5. **”Civil” constitution of the clergy:**1790-bishops and priests a civil body-the clergy were tp be elected by the people and paid by the state and associate themselves only nominally with the “foreign” pope-pope pius VI condemned the “civil constitution” and called the clergy not to

take the oath. Thus the clergy were in affix.