

# **HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE**

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

1. The 1789 French revolution
2. Napoleon Bonaparte (1799 - 1814)
3. Vienna congress (1814 – 1815)
4. Congress system (1818 – 1830)
5. Restored bourbon rulers (1814 – 1824, 1824 - 1830)
6. 1830 revolutions in Europe
7. Belgium revolution 1830
8. 1830 – 1848 Orleans Monarchy in France (Louis Philippe)
9. The Metternich era (1815 - 1848)
10. 1848 revolutions in Europe
11. Louis Napoleon (1848 - 1871)
12. Eastern question / Turkish/ Otto man empire (1820 - 1878)
13. Italian unification (1850 - 1870)
14. German Unification (1848 - 1871)
15. Bismarck and German (1871 - 1890)
16. Back ground of world war one (1890 - 1913)
17. World war I (1914 – 1918)
18. Versailles Peace treaty/ settlement (1919)
19. 1920 League of nations
20. 1920 Weimer Republic in German
21. 1920 – 1945 Benito Mussolini in Italy (Fascism)
22. 1929 – 1935 world economic depression/slump
23. 1933 – 1945 Adolf Hitler of German (Nazism)
24. 1939 – 1945 world war II
25. 1943 – 1945 inter and Post war conferences
26. 1945 – 1990 The cold war politics
27. 1945 – date The United Nations organization (UNO)

## Table of Contents

<b>COURSE OUTLINE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>THE AGE OF ENLIGHTMENT IN EUROPE.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1789.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE IMPLICATION OF THE BANKRUPTCY OF THE FRENCH TREASURY AND     ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUT BREAK OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>THE COURSE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>IMPORTANCE OF THE CAPTURE OF BASTILLE.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>IMPORTANCE OF THE MARCH OF WOMEN.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ATTEMPTED FLIGHT OF THE KING.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF SEPTEMBER 1791.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>THE FRENCH REVOLUTION FROM 1792 TO 1795.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>THE DECLARATION OF WAR IN FRANCE 1792.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>THE NATIONAL CONVENTION AND THE FIRST FRENCH REPUBLIC.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>THE EXECUTION/ DEATH OF KING LOUIS XVI.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>THE EFFECTS OF THE DEATH OF KING LOUIS XVI.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>THE REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE AT WAR WITH OTHER EUROPEAN POWERS FROM 1792.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>THE REIGN OF TERROR (1792-1794).....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>CAUSES OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>EFFECTS OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>THE DIRECTORY GOVERNMENT (1795-1799).....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>AIMS OF THE DIRECTORY GOVERNMENT.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DIRECTORY GOVERNMENT.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>FAILURES OF THE DIRECTORY GOVERNMENT.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION BY 1800.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>FAILURES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION BY 1800.....</b>	<b>41</b>

## **THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT IN EUROPE**

It started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century and it was the period when people started to question the political, social and economic practices of the time. This period is sometimes referred to as the age of reason. This was a period characterized by the emergence of European writers and great thinkers who were known as the philosophers. The radical ideals which influenced and helped people have their minds free from superstitions and prejudices.

The age of enlightenment made people to start questioning the economic and social exploitation subjected to them by the state and the church. The age of reason was promoted and people could no longer accept anything without reasoning or questioning it.

The age of reasoning swept across Europe but it was stronger in countries like France than other countries. The writers wanted changes/ reforms in European government as well as the church. The age of enlightenment had a great influence on the events which later led to the outbreak of the French revolution in 1789.

However, by the time of the outbreak of the French revolution in 1789, most of the philosophers/ great thinkers and writers had died, however their influence and ideals had remained in the publications and this further explains the outbreak of the French revolution.

## **THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1789**

As earlier noted, a revolution can be defined as a complete/ fundamental change in the existing organization of any society. It changes the political, social and economic organization of society. It can either take a violent or peaceful form depending on the people involved and the conditions on the ground. In most cases however revolutions affect the political organization of societies. (one can say that a revolution has taken place after the old system has been replaced by a new one e.g. Museveni taking over power in 1986)

The French revolution started May 1789 when King Louis XVI called the general estates meeting which came at a time when the French people especially the unprivileged had demanded for reforms or changes which were never attended to by the King.

By the time of the French revolution, France was under King Louis XVI who represented the Bourbons monarchy which had ruled France for a period of over 400 years.

It's important to note that the revolution that started in May 1789 was both peaceful and violent at particular stages. During the initial stages of the revolution, the revolutionaries used peaceful means to achieve what they wanted however, in the later years due to the failure of King Louis XVI to bring about the required changes, the revolution turned into a violent one in other words the revolution which started with discussion and meetings later ended in bloodshed, torture and all sorts of suffering.

Some Historians have attributed the change of revolution from being peaceful to violent to the king's refusal to listen to the demands of the people and make necessary changes in the political, social and economic ways of life.

If the demands of the people had been addressed earlier on, the revolution would not have changed from a peaceful one to a violent one. All that the French men wanted was Liberty, Equality, & Fraternity of all French men which King Louis XVI was opposed to since it would take away his absolute powers.

## CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French revolution occurred due to a number of reasons which were social, economic and political in nature. It's important to note that before people start a revolution conditions in society have to be very bad and unfair to majority members. In the case of the French society conditions were very bad and this led to the French men to use all means including violence to overthrow the Bourbons monarchy.

N.B

The French revolution had both long term and short time causes. The long term causes concerned the problems which had been facing the French society for a long period of time before 1789, the short term causes concerned the immediate problems which sparked off the revolution in 1789.

1. The French revolution was as a result of **political concerns from the people** and when the government of Louis XVI failed to bring about political reforms the revolution became inevitable. Political unfairness in France was manifested in a number of ways as explained below.
  - i. **Dictatorial tendencies of the ancient regime** partly contributed to the outbreak of the French Revolution. For so many years, France had been ruled by dictatorial leaders from the Bourbon Monarchy who had no respect for human rights and to make matters worse there were no written laws (constitution) to check the powers of the kings and to protect the rights of the citizens. The Bourbon kings claimed that they were ruling by the will of God and had divine powers which could not be checked. Earlier kings like Louis XIV claimed that their powers were unlimited and that they had the right to drive the French society to any direction they wished. And King Louis XVI was also quoted to that said that **"something is legal because I wish it"** such a quotation was a clear indication that all powers were in the hands of the king. Due to such unlimited powers there was arbitrary arrests and imprisonment without trial, king Louis XVI started issuing **"Letter-de-cachets"** which were used as warrants of arrest and whoever was presented with this piece of paper was arrested by 1789 and many of these letters were given to members of the third estate and by 1789 a revolution seemed to be the only solution.

- ii. **Denial of members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate to take part in politics** also contributed to the outbreak of the French revolution. The ancient regime was characterized by political discrimination where all government positions were occupied by the privileged class of the Nobles and the Clergy while the middle class and the peasants were not given any opportunity to participate in leadership at any level.

The middle class were highly educated and had people of all professions including lawyers, doctors etc. but they were not allowed to take up any leadership position in the French government, this annoyed them and the only way to end this political discrimination seemed to be through a revolution and no wonder members of the middle class were major participants especially in financing the activities of the revolution, the success of the French revolution therefore was majorly brought about by the support of the middle class members.

- iii. **Absence of an active parliament and constitution** also explains the occurrence of the French revolution. The ancient regime lacked an active parliament through which people could air their problems. The French parliament which was a representative of all classes had last met in 1614 and had not met for 175 years. More over there was no constitution to protect and safeguard the rights of French citizens. People's rights e.g. freedom of speech, worship and equality before the law was not respected at all. Due to the absence of a constitution and an active parliament, the Kings of France were more dictatorial and their words were always taken as a law and were final. Having such a system where human rights were grossly abused and the king could only make his own laws forced members of the middle class and the peasants who belonged to the third class rise up in a revolution in May 1789.

- iv. **Inefficient Judicial system in France** also explains the outbreak of the French revolution.

The judicial system in France was so inefficient and left a lot to be desired. France was ruled without uniform laws and people were affected by the inefficient Judicial system, there were common laws which were used in administering the northern part of France while the southern part was administered using the Roman laws. Surprising however the criminal law applied harsher on the third estate (peasants and middle class) than it did on the nobles and the Clergy.

The courts of law were led and controlled by corrupt officials who were either Nobles or Clergy, cases were judged favoring the privileged classes at the expense of the Peasants and the Middle class who were always denied justice and this also explains the occurrence of the French revolution which was intended to bring about fair judicial system in France.

2. The existence of classes in France also caused the revolution of 1789. Before the revolution, the French social system was based on classes with different privileges. The **first class** comprised of the **Clergy** and these people lived luxurious lives, controlled land, education and were exempted from paying taxes, participated in leadership, assured of promotion in the army. However, there were also divisions among the Clergy as a class, there was a group which comprised of the upper clergy e.g. Arch Bishop, Bishops, and Cardinals and another group comprised of the Lower

clergy e.g. Parish Priests, Church wardens, village catechists e.t.c. the lower Clergy were less privileged than the upper Clergy in terms of pay and promotion and yet the lower clergy did most of the work e.g. collecting the taxes and then hand them over to the upper clergy.

N.B

The church owned big portions of land and collected rent from the peasants who used this land. (It owned a fifth of the land in France). It was basically due to the divisions in the church that gave morale to the revolutionaries since the lower clergy also supported the ideals of change.

**The second class** comprised of the **Nobles** who were close to the King. They had a number of privileges e.g. occupying high positions in the government and getting high ranks in the army. The Nobles were also exempted from taxation and lived a luxurious life at the king's palace at Versailles. They were always involved in celebrations and were the Kings advisers however, important to note is that among the Nobility there was the greater Nobility, lesser Nobility and Nobility of the robe. These also created problems in France since the lesser Nobility wanted to have similar privileges with the greater Nobility.

N.B

The Nobles and Clergy had the same status and everything good was reserved for them. The Nobility of the Robe included people who were given this title for the great services rendered to the society. The Nobility of the Robe didn't enjoy privileges as the greater Nobility.

The clergy and the Nobles who belonged to the first and second class respectively had also monopoly over education. The church was the Chief controller of the education services and all education appointments were first given to the Clergy and Nobles.

The system of classism led to the emergency of bitter feelings within the French society due to the factor that different people of different classes were given different privileges and treatment.

**The third class** in the French society comprised of the **Peasants & Middle class**, the Peasants were the most unprivileged of this group.

**Unfair taxation based on class system** also explains the outbreak of the French Revolution. Despite their social status of being poor, they were supposed to pay both direct and indirect taxes e.g. **Tailles tax** which was charged on land and income **Gabelle or salt tax** which was paid by every individual above 8 years and those who failed to pay were punished. Every person above that age was compelled to pay 7 pounds of salt and **Corvee tax (forced labor)** on National projects like road construction, hospitals and maintaining the existing ones. They were also forced to work on plantations of other nobles.

The peasants were also supposed to pay **feudal dues** which were a tax paid for the used equipments or items like ovens and mills; this was to be paid to the land lords who owned the

property, they also paid the **church tax** which was supposed to be a tenth of their income, there was also a **tax paid by the peasants for using local roads, bridges** e.t.c, the same tax was also paid by peasants in order to be granted right to graze on land of the land lords. All the above taxes were almost compulsory on the part of peasants.

It's important to note that apart from the many and high taxes to be paid by the peasants, the methods and means of collecting these taxes were harsh. The tax defaulters were severely punished by either being imprisoned indefinitely or sometimes being hanged.

To make matters worse all the money that was collected from the peasants on reaching the state treasury, the biggest portion of the money was embezzled by the tax collectors and the rest was used to maintain luxurious lives for people in the king's court.

They were the majority in France and **by 1789 they numbered 23 million out of the total 25 million people in France**. However, they owned no land and they lived on the land of the Nobles and Clergy as Tenants.

They were not allowed to take part in decision making and those who joined the army couldn't be promoted.

In addition to the above burdens, the peasants were compelled to provide services to the state for a period of 6yrs and it's important to note that the above burdens annoyed the peasants and no wonder they gave full support to the revolution with hope of ending the suffering they had undergone for a long period of time.

N.B

The burdens of the peasants and their suffering before the French revolution could not be compared to **those of the middle class** who as well had a number of complaints as explained below.

- i. **Denial to take part in politics** and yet they were educated and had a lot of wealth e.g. Doctors, teachers, Lawyers, business men etc. Political opportunities in the government were only reserved for the clergy and Nobility; the middle class felt that they were unfairly treated since they also wanted to participate in the political affairs of their country. However, this complaint couldn't be heard and this influenced them to have desire to start a revolution in order to bring about change in the French society.
- ii. The middle class were also annoyed because of being **discriminated in the French national army**. Despite their high education, they were not promoted to the same ranks as the Clergy and the Nobles. Commissioned ranks in the army were reserved for the sons of the Nobles and Clergy regardless of their ability and education for instance a son of a Noble would attain a high rank as a Colonel at the age of 16 years and this annoyed the middle class making the French revolution inevitable by 1789.

- iii. The middle class members were also annoyed by the **failure of the government of France to pay back their money** which the government had borrowed due to the financial challenges at the time and to make matters worse this money was used to finance use less wars as well as maintaining luxurious lives of the Nobles and Clergy and by 1789 it was clear that this money was not to be paid back and this pain and disappointment increased their desire for change thus the 1789 revolution.
- iv. **The divisions in the army** further explain why they were not willing to support Louis XVI at the eve of the French revolution e.g. the French government had passed a law which was reserving commissioned ranks for individuals from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes just to please them however, such discrimination increased discontent with in the army and made the situation right for a revolution.

It's therefore not surprising that when a revolution broke out in May 1789 many members of the state army supported the revolution and with confidence one can assert that the class divisions in France which was promoted by the Clergy and Nobles led to the outbreak of the French revolution.

- 3. **The influence of the American War of independence (1775- 1783)** also explains the outbreak of the French revolution. In 1775, the Americans who had been under the mastership of the British started preparing for a war of independence which started in 1775 and ended 1783 after forming the United States of America. During the course of the war, the Americans appealed for help from France and being an enemy of Britain, France accepted to help the Americans by sending an army led by General Lafayette who helped the Americans to defeat the British and chased them away from their land.

The American war of independence had a number of negative effects on France and contributed to the outbreak of the French revolution in May 1789.

- i. The French army men who participated in the American war of independence **got new democratic ideas** e.g. Americans were also fighting taxation which was a burden in France and those who participated in the war realized that they can bring about change and when they came back, they influenced other French men to fight for the same democratic ideas and this led to the revolution.
- ii. The American war of independence also **exposed the French army to war conditions** and they came back with experience which they decided to use to liberate themselves. It was not surprising that General Lafayette who led the French army was one of the pioneers of the French revolution.
- iii. The American war of independence also **negatively affected the French economy** and led to bankruptcy and financial crisis in the French treasury. The government borrowed more money from the middle class which it later failed to pay back which annoyed the middle class members who led the French revolution.

- 4. **The French political philosophers** also contributed to the outbreak of the French revolution. These were great thinkers who brought new ideals starting from the times of King Louis XIV

and by the time of the French revolution most of these Philosophers had already died and these included Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau. Their contribution towards the outbreak of the French revolution was that they enlightened the people and informed them of their rights. They clearly showed the weakness of the ancient regime and this encouraged the people to demand for their lost rights. Their influence made people to start questioning the foundation of the government which claimed to be in power.

a. Voltaire (1694 - 1778)

Voltaire was a historian as well as a poet who criticized the French ancient regime and its systems of arresting people without trial in courts of law. His direct criticism was put on the **Lettre de Cachet** as a method of arresting people during the ancient regime. Voltaire himself had been victim of this Lettre de Cachet and had been imprisoned in Bastille prison which was the greatest prison in France.

He was also against **religious intolerance** whereby Catholicism was the only recognized religion in France.

He had at one time paid a visit to Britain in 1734 and had admired the **British system of governance**. This made him compile his book with the title **“Letters on the English”** in his book; Voltaire put emphasis on religious tolerance and the absence of the privileged classes in the English society. He was also against the unfair taxation in France and the torture of its victims.

However, it's important to note that Voltaire had no alternative to replace the king and all he wanted was for the king to make reforms so that the French society could be similar to the English society.

**Voltaire was criticized for having support to dictatorship and his failure to be a democrat**, this criticism stemmed from his quotation **“I would rather be ruled by one lion than 100 rats”** his comment showed that he believed in absolutism/ dictatorship. He influenced the masses and they started to look for ways of making themselves free from oppression. The masses were influenced by Voltaire's writing and came to believe that the only way to be free from oppression was through a revolution.

b. Montesquieu (1689 - 1755)

His major concern was to reduce the **privileges of the Nobility and the powers of the King**. He advocated for introduction of checks and balances in France. Like Voltaire, Montesquieu wanted France to adopt a **similar system like that of Britain**; he put all his ideas in the book titled **“spirit of laws”** which he published in 1748.

He wanted France to have a system like that of Britain which would guarantee people's rights like freedom of speech as it was the case in Britain. He therefore advocated for the system of governance in which the interests of the French people were catered for and where all people were free in debating the laws before these laws could start operating in France. According to him the British system of governance was the best and wanted it to be adopted in France.

**Like Voltaire, Montesquieu was not advocating for the change in government but rather implementation of reforms by the existing government.**

c. Jean Jacques Rousseau

This was the most important Philosopher whose ideas influenced the outbreak of the French revolution. He combined his ideas in his book titled **“the social contract”** where he emphasized that **there should be a contract between the French people and the King**. Rousseau noted that in case the king failed to take into account the needs and interests of the people, the people would be free to break the contract. In other words, he emphasized the need for the contract to be kept by the concerned parties. According to him people should have right on how to be ruled and being a democrat he demanded of a government of the people by the people and for the people.

Unlike Voltaire and Montesquieu who wanted the rule of the few people, Rousseau was more concerned to the masses especially the poor peasants who had been subjected to all sorts of injustices while the rich especially enjoyed so many privileges.

However, it's important to note that he was not advocating for abolition of the monarchy but the introduction of reforms in the French society. Rousseau emphasized people's rights as being of great importance in any society. His ideas influenced he French men and encouraged them to ask for reforms.

**He was the brain behind the ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in France;** he greatly influenced the revolution leaders who inspired others to join the revolution.

N.B

Rousseau was the most democratic of all the philosophers who influenced the outbreak of the French revolution.

Important to note however, is that the political philosophers played an indirect role in the outbreak of the revolution. They only enlightened the people to become aware of their problems and by the time the revolution broke out, most of them had died.

5. The influence of encyclopedists also explains the occurrence of the French revolution. This was a group of people who also played a role of enlightening the French men about the situation in France. They were referred to as the intellectuals of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and were led by Denis Dedrof and D'Alamber, they complied a book known as **“encyclopedia”** which contains all the **knowledge concerning the political and social aspects of life.**

Most of the articles of this book talked about **the evils of the French society** and attacked the activities of the church, its involvement in state affairs. The state had tried to control influence of this book by banning its publication but couldn't manage. Many editors of this book were arrested and imprisoned but still continued enlightening the people about the evils in the French society and when the King failed to implement the badly needed reforms, the revolution was bound to happen by 1789.

6. **The French economists** also played a role in the occurrence of the French revolution. These enlightened France by revealing the economic situation in their country. They also gave suggestions on how the French economy which was seriously declining could be improved. The economists noted the poor tax system in France which made the poor high taxes and exempted the rich from taxation. They advocated for the abolition of most of the taxes in the French society which were unfair to the majority French men. According to them if any taxes were to remain it was to be only paid by the land owners and if this was implemented, the Nobles, and Clergy would have been the ones to pay the tax since they owned most of the land.

N.B

The economists talked a little about the political system of France and its weakness but were majorly concerned with the poor economic system and the poor policies that heavily affected the French men negatively.

7. **The weakness of King Louis XVI and character of his wife Marie Antoinette** also explains the occurrence of the French revolution in 1789. The king ascended to the throne at the age of 20 years with no experience in leadership and was never convinced that he was the best candidate to occupy the throne. That is why on the day of his coronation he lamented that **“it seems as if the universe is falling on me, God what a burden is mine and they have taught me nothing”** this was a clear indication that Louis XVI was not confident and ready to lead the French people. Many historians have argued that Louis XVI was a king in name and power but not character. One of his weaknesses was that he could not make his own decisions but rely on the advice of the Court Nobles and more importantly on the advice of his wife Marie Antoinette.

King Louis XVI failed to implement the badly needed reforms in the French society because of the ill advice from his wife and the Nobles who wanted to maintain their status and privileges in the French society

King's wife was an Austrian who was hated by the Frenchmen and used to refer to her as an Austrian woman. Despite this hatred from the French men, King Louis XVI depended on her advice which was in most against the demands of the French men. She was a barrier to the practical reforms that the King would have implemented, she was rude to the French men in addition to being inconsiderate to their demands and the French men ironically regarded her as the one man besides the King.

Mirabeau who was among the people who started the revolution commented about her advice and influence on the King and was quoted to have said that **“the King has only one man above him, his wife”** this tries to explain how the king was more influenced by his wife.

N.B: The King lacked seriousness during his time of office, instead of attending to state matters; he was always involved in hunting activities in the royal garden. The estates meeting which was a supreme body meant to discuss matters affecting the French society had last met 1614 and had

not met for 175 years and this was a clear indication that the French problems had no been attended to for a period of 175 years.

Louis XVI weakness was clearly manifested when he **called the estates General meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> may 1789** and this date marked the actual beginning of the French revolution.

He also made a mistake and **signed a French treaty with Britain** which allowed the British manufactured goods to have free entry to the French markets. The British goods were of good quality and were sold at low prices hence out competed the French manufactured goods which were sold at high prices. The free entry of the British good on the French market led the French manufactured goods loose market which had direct effect on the middle class members who controlled the French industry and by 1789 they were already dissatisfied with the King's policy and this explains their much involvement as the leaders of the French revolution.

It can therefore be said that the Kings weak character made the French Revolution inevitable, in other words King Louis XVI had a weak mind and because of the ill advice from the queen, the stability of the French government was questioned.

If Louis XVI was a strong leader, he would have persuaded the French people especially the privileged class to sympathize with the problems which were faced by the French society especially the third class members on the contrary however Louis XVI was a weak leader who did little to save the situation in France and this made the French revolution inevitable.

8. **The Financial crisis in the French economic system** was one of the most important causes of the French revolution. By 1789, France was in the worst economic and financial position which was characterized by failure to pay her debts and the prices of commodities were so high. The bankruptcy of the French treasury had been brought about by a number of factors including the following.
  - i. **The American war of independence** where the government spent a lot of money on the soldiers who were fighting for the Americans. Because of this war money was borrowed from the middle class and failed to pay it back and this further worsened the state of the French treasury and it become bankrupt thus creating discontent and a fertile ground for the outbreak of the French revolution.
  - ii. **The unfair taxation system in France** also explains bankruptcy of the French treasury which also contributed to the outbreak of the French revolution. The Clergy and Nobles who had wealth were exempted from taxes and the poor peasants and the middle class took the entire tax burden. What worsened the situation was that the money collected couldn't reach the treasury since the tax collectors were corrupt and could embezzle taxes before reaching the state treasury. This therefore led to the financial problems in France and contributed to the outbreak of the 1789 French revolution.

iii. **Luxurious life enjoyed by the Nobles and the Clergy** also worsened the economic state of France thus leading to the French revolution. The royal family members who lived in the palace were so extravagant. The extravagancy of the kings' wife Marie Antoinette also worsened the financial position of France. The Queen could force the king to organize expensive palace dinners, buying weekly pairs of shoes and dresses. The queen also had 500 servants working at the palace. The king was also extravagant with a number of horses and carriage and yet he couldn't use all of them, such expensive life style badly affected the economy of France and led to financial and economic crisis in the French society. The Nobles and Clergy who lived in the Kings Palace were less concerned about the suffering of the French masses.

Attempts to bring about financial reforms were hindered by the Nobles and Clergy and the kings wife who wanted to continue enjoying these privileges. It's most probable that if the King had not been poorly advised, he would have implemented financial reforms in France and this would have saved the situation in France. However, due to the ill advice the king failed to run government enterprises like agriculture, transport which increased unemployment and suffering of the French masses thus preparing fertile grounds for the revolution.

iv. **Dismissal of the financial controllers** who would have brought about economic changes in France also made things worse in France and these were Necker and Turgot. Turgot was appointed by the king to be the financial controller in 1774 and on assuming office he made some economic reforms e.g. the introduction of a new tax system whereby all land owners were to pay land tax, allowing free trade especially for the corn with in France to control famine, allowing free movement of labor in all provinces of France to reduce un employment, abolition of the forced labor (corvee tax) in France. If these reforms had been implemented France would have economically stabilized however, the suggested reforms were rejected by the Clergy, Nobles and the Queen who wanted to enjoy their privileges and they advised the King to dismiss Turgot and Necker. Turgot was dismissed in 1776 and his dismissal reversed France's economic trend and annoyed many French men and one of the political philosophers **Voltaire** saw this as a disaster to France and made him comment that **"I see nothing before me now but death, I am struck to the heart by this blow and shall never be consoled for having seen the beginning and end of a golden age, Turgot was preparing for us"** this statement was very clear that Turgot had started very well and had brought hope to the French men. His dismissal therefore meant that France was going back to being controlled by the King and his ill advisers.

After Turgot's dismissal, King Louis XVI appointed Necker to replace him 1776 however just like Turgot, Necker didn't stay in office for a long time but he has also imposed some reforms e.g. reduction of the privileges of the Nobles, reduction of the tax farmers (collectors), reduction of the expenses on the King's court.

**Necker went ahead and convinced King Louis XVI and the accounts of the French government were published for the first time in the history of France.** After the publication of the French accounts, the French men were surprised by the expenditures of the Nobles. The publication of the accounts by Necker annoyed the Clergy, Nobles and the Queen who didn't want to expose their extravagancy to the French society. The king was again ill advised and Necker was dismissed which greatly annoyed the masses since they were now aware that the

French finances were in the hands of the Queen, Nobles and Clergy and this also prepared fertile grounds for the French revolution of 1789.

## **THE IMPLICATION OF THE BANKRUPTCY OF THE FRENCH TREASURY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUT BREAK OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

The Bankruptcy of the French treasury had a number of implications and contributed to the outbreak of the French revolution in the following ways.

- i. It forced the government to start borrowing from different classes and this made people lose confidence in their government.
- ii. It later failed to pay the debts and this made people to start advocating for a change.
- iii. It also awakened the masses about the financial mismanagement in France by King Louis XVI's government.
- iv. It led to the government's failure to run state enterprises like transport, industry and agriculture which resulted into unemployment and inflation and this bred discontent among the masses.
- v. It made the government fail to listen to the advice of the financial ministers Necker and Turgot and their eventual dismissal annoyed the French masses hence preparing ground for the revolution.
- vi. It led to the government's failure to buy food for the French population especially after France had been hit by poor harvests during the severe winter.
- vii. It led to the calling of the General Estates Meeting to discuss the economic problems and its mishandling marked the beginning of the French revolution in May 1789.

8. **The poor harvests of 1788** also laid fertile grounds for the occurrence of the French revolution of 1789. In 1788 France experienced disastrous weather conditions which greatly affected the French agricultural harvests. The weather was characterized with prolonged winter season and all the rivers were also frozen which affected the transport system. The poor weather led to poor harvests and hence wide spread famine in France. This forced many people to move from villages to towns and this led to creation of the Paris mob. King Louis however didn't do much to control the situation and this increased the numbers of the Paris mob who later played an active role in the revolution.

N.B: In case the king was strong enough; he would have checked the situation and would have curbed the effects of the bad winter harvest by supplying relief to his people. However, he chose to let the few Clergy and Nobles to enjoy privileges at the expense of the majority of the French masses who were starving. This therefore prepared grounds for the outbreak of the French revolution in 1789.

9. **Social and economic distress** in France also partly contributed to the outbreak of the French revolution. Towards 1789 France experienced rapid population growth which exceeded food production and this resulted into scarcity of food. The scarcity of essential commodities also led to increase in commodity prices which was worsened after King Louis XVI signed a free trade treaty with Britain which allowed in British's high quality and cheap commodities into France consequently many industries lost market for their expensive goods and had to be closed increasing the number of unemployed French men who later joined the French revolution with hope change in France.
10. **The example of Britain** also laid fertile grounds for the occurrence of the French revolution. The people of France were influenced by the system of governance which was operating in England. It's important to note that by this time England had a constitution and its system of governance was based on democratic principles. The constitution of England clearly outlined the rights and duties of all citizens and also limited the powers of the king. It's important to note that the number of French men visited England and admired the British system of government. The French philosophers had earlier on expressed their admiration of the English system of governance and advocated for France to copy the same however the King and his officials were not willing to adjust and when the French masses saw no hopes of adjustment by the King, a revolution became their own hope of change hence the occurrence of the 1789 French revolution.
11. **The character of Marie Antoinette** also explains the occurrence of the French revolution of 1789. She always ill advised the king e.g. not to carry out reforms, dismissal of the financial ministers, she was very extravagant, she was an Austrian and yet Austria was an enemy to France, she never cared about the needs of the members of the third estate.
- 12.

## **THE COURSE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (MAJOR EVENTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION)**

The course of the French revolution explained and describes the chronology (order) of the events during the French revolution. The French revolution took different stages and many events were involved.

N.B: The French revolutionaries never wanted to abolish the French monarchy but wanted reforms.

The most important events of the French revolution included the following;

1. **The calling of the general estates meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1789.** The estates general meeting was called by King Louis XVI to discuss the economic problems that were facing France. This was a general meeting of representatives of the 3 estates in France i.e. it was composed of **308**

delegates from the 1<sup>st</sup> class (Clergy), **285** delegates from the 2<sup>nd</sup> class (Nobles) and **621** delegates from the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate (Middle class and Peasants).

N.B: King Louis failed to provide clear leadership on the very 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Estates General Meeting e.g. The first problem came from the sitting arrangement and later the voting of the estates, while the king and his supporters wanted separate sitting and discussion, the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate wanted the 3 estates to sit together and discuss together. The King also wanted the voting by Estates while the Third estate wanted it by heads (This would give them numeric advantage over the other 2 classes). The king had also invited the delegates to come with a list of grievances which were referred to as Cahiers intended to guide the discussion in the meeting.

When the lists were handed in, it was found out that the grievances of the third estate outnumbered those of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class, in all King Louis XVI received 60,000 grievances and those of the Third estate were almost similar from all parts of France and they included;

- i. Abolition of direct and indirect taxes in France
- ii. The system of law (constitution in which all French people were equal)
- iii. Abolition of social classes in France which were discriminative in nature
- iv. Confiscation of the church property especially land
- v. An end to lettre de Cachet (imprisonment without trial)
- vi. Equal promotion in the army, church and government of all people without considering their back grounds.

When the King failed to reconcile the demands of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate, they declared themselves the national assembly on **12<sup>th</sup> June 1789** and this therefore marked the beginning of the French revolution.

The members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate were led by **Comte de Mirabeau** who was a noble but had been neglected as a representative of his estate so he decided to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estates.

N.B: Mirabeau was fearless and determined to end the privileges of the nobles. His determination can be seen from his comment during the election of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate representatives. During these elections, Mirabeau is quoted to have said **“a mad dog am I but elect me and despotism plus their privileges will die on my bite”** the conversion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate representatives into the national assembly worried the king and led him to panic on how to hold the issues at hand. He therefore started to look for ways of coming into agreement with members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate who had disagreed with him as far as the sitting and voting procedures were concerned

**2. The Tennis Court Oath** was the second event in the course of the French revolution. King Louis XVI was scared by the behaviors and determination of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estates and he decided to convene a royal session (meeting) where all estates could meet and so that he could give his reform proposals and discussions. However, without notifying the representatives of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate King Louis XVI ordered the workers to lock the hall in which the national assembly had been meeting. The hall was locked on the disguise that it was under repair, when members of the

3<sup>rd</sup> estates came they found the hall closed and they interpreted it that the King wanted to do away with the assembly.

This led the representatives of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate to go and assemble in the nearby Tennis Court building where they took an oath never to separate until a new constitution of France was put in place. This oath came to be known as the Tennis Court Oath.

3. **Royal session of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1789** marks the third stage of the French Revolution. After the tennis court oath, Louis XVI decided to call back all the classes so that he can address the royal session, he wanted to give his proposed reforms and give instructions for their implementation after all the classes had assembled, King Louis XVI gave a good speech which was very interesting and he presented the reforms he wanted to put in place. He however made one mistake and decided that his reform proposals were to be discussed by the 3 Estates separately. He did this after refusing **Necker's advice that the Estates could discuss the reforms jointly**, the King also criticized and declared the **National assembly** illegal after which he ordered the estates to go and discuss separately.

Soon after he had left, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> estates representatives followed but the 3<sup>rd</sup> estates refused to get out. They became so bitter about the King's Proposals to separate the Classes. Their disappointment and bitterness was expressed by their leader Mirabeau when he told the King's messenger who had come to chase them from the hall that **"go and tell your master that we are here by the will of the people and we shall not leave except at the point of Bayonet"** and this further showed their commitment and shortly after some few Nobles and Clergy started to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate after it had refused to vacate the hall.

King Louis XVI had nothing to do and on **27<sup>th</sup> June 1789** he also ordered the Clergy and Nobles to join the third estate and formed the desired national assembly where the 3 Estates were to discuss the King's proposals jointly. This was a great achievement since no French King in the French History had compromised with the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate.

**N.B:**

- i. The King's proposals were in accordance with the problems of the people that had been presented at the beginning of the Estates General Meeting. The only unfortunate thing was that King Louis XVI brought his proposals too late and he could therefore not win the hearts and support of the estates members. His reform proposals would have helped if he had brought them during the first General estates meeting that was to take place on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1789. The royal session partly registered success on the side of the 3<sup>rd</sup> estate and cries of Joy were heard all over Paris that a revolution was over.
- ii. Though the King allowed the union of all the estates the court Nobles and members of the royal family were not pleased with the idea, they therefore decided to organize a counter attack in order to defeat the national assembly which had been declared by the 3<sup>rd</sup> estates representative.

iii. The counter attack created more problems in Paris since many people supported the national assembly against the court Nobles and the royal family members. This led to riots all over Paris which worsened the economic situation by increasing the price of bread in Paris. The revolutionaries created a situation of instability in France. In order to have self defence the people who were opposed to the counter attack by the royal family and the court Nobles gathered at the Hotel Devile and formed a revolutionary Militia which was named the **National Guard** composed of many state soldiers especially those who had deserted in the National army. This was a clear indication that King Louis XVI government was hated by all people including the state soldiers. Louis XVI didn't learn any lesson from what had happened and went on and dismissed Necker for the second time on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1789. This annoyed the revolutionaries and intensified the revolution. This was because people had accepted Necker to correct the wrongs in the French financial system.

His second dismissal was a clear indication that The King was determined to misuse the French resources together with the court Nobles and clergy and that's why the revolutionaries were greatly annoyed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Necker dismissal.

4. **The storming of Bastille 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789** was the 4<sup>th</sup> stage of the French Revolution. The Nobles and Clergy were determined to use all possible means to defeat the National Assembly. Louis XVI himself organised his troops and put them in the streets of Paris and Versailles and this created a state of uneasiness and disorder in the country. Other forms of crime were also committed and violence was the order of the day. In other words, there seemed to be no peace in France and tension was. To make matters worse the price of bread went high due to poor harvests in the previous years and this resulted in demonstration and riots in France especially the Paris Mobs. In an attempt to keep the situation a revolution militia which was formed at Hotel Deville had to come in so as to surprise the demonstration and riots solving the problems. On 11<sup>th</sup> July 1789 when King Louis XVI dismissed Necker for the second time the French were very much annoyed. Large number of French citizen rushed to Paris and formed the Paris Mob. They raided the smiths work shop at Invalides in an attempt to get guns to defend themselves. With the captured guns, the mobs went on to the military armory to get more guns. After they had acquired more guns, the Mobs attacked Bastille prison on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789. In Bastille it was where all the victims of the Lettre -de-Catchet were imprisoned and some died while they were still in prison. The intention of the revolutionaries in attacking Bastille was to destroy the hated prison and release the prisoners. The attack on the Bastille was led by a journalist called Desmoulins.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE CAPTURE OF BASTILLE**

The storming and consequent capture of Bastille was of great importance in the history and course of the French revolution. It was welcomed by many French men who were pleased by the downfall of this great and dangerous prison.

N.B: Bastille was a centre of dictatorship of King Louis XVI and this made to be hated by the majority French men. Its capture was of great importance and had effects which included the following.

- i. The capture of Bastille symbolised the end of dictatorship and arbitrary arrests that were always imposed on the French men. The King's system of Lettre- de- cachet came to an end with the capture of his prison since the prison was no longer under his control.
- ii. When Bastille was captured, the Revolutionaries replaced the the royal flag which was White in colour with a new Tri color flag which was blue, red and white a clear indication that King Louis's government had been replaced.
- iii. The day of the capture 14<sup>th</sup> July was regarded as a heroic day and was made a great national holiday which is still celebrated every year up to the present day.
- iv. Following the capture of Bastille, the royal guard was replaced with the National Guard which was charged with the duty of protecting the revolutionary achievement. General Lafayette who had fought in the American war of independence was made the commander of the National guard. The replacement of the royal guard with the National Guard indicated that King Louis XVI government had been defeated.
- v. When Bastille was captured, many Nobles and Clergy members escaped and fled to countries like England, Austria, Russia etc. These were later referred to as émigrés and they played a big role in changing the revolution from being a peaceful to a violent one.
- vi. When Bastille was captured, the prisoners who were found inside were used. However, these prisoners who were now free started revenging on the people who were in power by the time they were arrested and imprisoned. This set to violence the course of the French revolution.
- vii. After the capture of Bastille, Necker was re appointed as the French financial controller and this gave the French men hope for better economic reforms.
- viii. After the capture of Bastille King Louis was forced to do the following, he re appointed Necker back to his position as a financial controller, ordered the withdraw of his forces from the streets of Paris and suburbs, he was forced to come to Hotel de Ville and addressed the new formed National Assembly and National guard, he was forced to put on the Tri color flag of the revolution.

There above therefore showed that the king was now a King without authority since what ever he did was ordered by the revolutionaries. In other words, the revolution was now almost successful. By the time Louis XVI finished addressing the national guard and assembly, many of his relatives had left Versailles and went into exile. The capture of Bastille was therefore a great event in the course of the French revolution since it gave the revolutionaries more power to be in charge of more political issues in France.

**5. The abolition of feudal privileges and the 4<sup>th</sup> August session.** This was another important event in the course of the French revolution. The abolition of Feudalism and the Paris Decree came as a result of the need to keep peace in France and satisfy the demands of the revolutionaries. Many of the clauses which were included in Paris decree were proposed by the Nobles themselves.

They proposed the abolition of some feudal burdens and wanted equal taxation of all taxes, all these proposals and more were brought forward during the national assembly meeting. It can rightly be asserted that this was self sacrifice on part of the nobles since they had been the beneficiaries of the system. However, it should be put forward that other nobles never supported it but had nothing to do.

In all during the 4<sup>th</sup> august session, the following were agreed upon.

- i. There was to be equal taxation of all classes in France and these were to be uniform and paid by all members in all classes.
- ii. It was also agreed that the assembly should have the right to dispose of the church property.
- iii. It put an end to the feudal burdens of the peasants. Feudalism was abolished and peasants were relieved of such payments.
- iv. The church tax was abolished and the French men were not compelled to pay any tax to the church.
- v. Admission of all French men to public places was put in place in other words appointment to public offices was on merit than on class and family background.
- vi. There was to be freedom of worship and the French men were to belong to any religion of their choice.

N.B. abolition of feudalism and the Paris Decree brought reforms in the French society and with these changes King Louis XVI was referred to as the restorer of the French liberty. After these changes the assembly changed its name and converted itself into a constituent assembly and started the process of making a new constitution for France. However, such reforms later brought problems especially financial problems when the state lacked funds to implement its activities because of the abolition of taxes which acted as a source of revenue for France.

**6. The declaration of the rights of man and citizen 26<sup>th</sup> August 1789** was one of the main events of the French revolution. The next important event in the course of the revolution was the declaration of the rights of man. This was during the period when the revolutionaries were trying to put up a new constitution for France. It was therefore seen it to remain the French citizen of the rights of man and citizen documents which was to act as a guideline as far as the enjoyment of right was concerned. This document emphasised the following.

- i. French men were by nature equal and therefore should be given equal treatment
- ii. All people had the right to rule or become leaders. In other words, it emphasised that all Frenchmen had equal opportunity to take up equal leadership position in France.
- iii. There was to be freedom of worship, speech.
- iv. There was to be no imprisonment except following the law that was decided by the people. The old arbitrary arrests and imprisonment without trial were abolished.
- v. The King of France was given a six year term in which he had a right to delay the passing of any law, he couldn't extend beyond that time.
- vi. Every person or citizen was to have the right to participate in making of the law and imposing taxes.

vii. Rebellion against taxes was considered a holy duty by the citizens.

N.B Some of these rights were almost impossible to be enjoyed. Commenting on these impossibilities, Mirabeau who was one of the influential figures during the course of the French revolution said that considering the state of confusion at the time, people needed not to be reminded of their rights but their duties.

Mirabeau noted that such statements of Democracy would naturally lead to great expectations which were impossible to be achieved at that time. On such democratic statements Mirabeau is quoted to have said **“It is not useful to lead the men on top of a high mountain and show them the promised land which was afterwards to be denied”**. The quotation clearly shows that some rights were responsible to be enjoyed. Moreover, these declared rights created high expectations among the people who had been under the old system of dictatorship. The declaration of the rights of man showed the abolition of the old order and introduction of a new order. However, despite the enlightenment of the people about their rights, the government that came later e.g. during the reign of terror and Napoleon these rights were not observed.

The declaration of rights of man and citizen was a great event not only in France but in the whole world since these rights crossed France and her borders to other countries and continents and were later adopted by UNO after its formation in 1945.

**7. The march of women 5<sup>th</sup> October 1789** marked the seventh event of the French revolution. The assembly had accepted the King to have a right to delay in passing of any law for 6 years however, this decision made some people unhappy and brought stiff opposition in many sections of people in France. The opposition was especially made by Maximilien Robespierre of the Jacobins club which had much influence in Paris. According to the Jacobins, the King had been given too much power to defend his aristocracy and dictatorship. This opposition was aided by the state of affairs in the city of Paris. The price of bread was high; there was unemployment because of the many people who had moved in to Paris. The situation becomes worse when the king refused the abolition of Feudalism and also refused to sign the rights of man and citizen document. There were many groups of people in France who had for a long time been demanding that the king should come from Versailles to Paris. The King however refused hoping that the disorder in Paris would soon come to an end. It was also observed that during the debating of these important issues King Louis XVI was most of the time sleeping because of being tired after his hunting exercises. Amidst all these problems, a rumor came that Louis XVI was planning a military front against the assembly. It was against this situation that the march of women to Versailles took place on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1789.

A big group of women started the famous march to the King's palace in Versailles, women were chosen with the hope that their cries and grievances would be heard and attended to rather than those of the men.

N.B: On their way women were joined by men who were dressed and disguised to look as women. The aim of the marchers was to get King Louis XVI and request him to order a reduction in the price of Bread and to punish the officers of the royal guard who had abused the

tri color flag of the revolution. General Lafayette led the members of the National Guard in order to surplace any violence that could have come up at the King's palace. Lafayette achieved this when on reaching Versailles convinced the King and Queen to appear on the balcony and the King addressed the crowd (matchers). The king accepted the declaration of the rights of man and showed his willingness to come to Paris.

In the afternoon of 16<sup>th</sup> October 1789 the royal family set off for Paris in a cart surrounded by the matchers who were singing **“we have brought the baker and the bakers wife, and the bakers son”** they were escorted by the national guard and came with food wagons to Paris though the Kings body guards were present, they were disarmed and security was provided by the National guard. It's important to note that at this juncture the king and his royal family members were as good as prisoners.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE MATCH OF WOMEN**

The match of women was of great importance in the course and history of the French revolution. Its importance can be observed from the following.

- i. The king was forced to promise a reduction in the price of bread and special food supplies to Paris were brought. This was therefore an achievement on the side of French revolutionaries in general
- ii. It was a sign that showed that there was struggle for all French citizens and this was confirmed by the women organizing and participating in the match to Versailles.
- iii. The matchers forced the King and brought him from Versailles to Paris. This was an indication that the king was now working on the demands of the revolutionaries.
- iv. The king accepted the declaration of rights of man and citizens which he had earlier refused. he accepted and signed it.
- v. The match of women made the King a prisoner of a revolution together with his family members, they were as good as prisoners when they were forced to live Versailles and move to paris.
- vi. The king was also forced by the matchers to accept the decrees of the august session which included the abolition of feudalism which he had earlier refused to accept.
- vii. It made the revolutionarists feel more confident when the King accepted most of their revolutionary demands. After the match of women, the national guard took over Versailles and the kings guards were disarmed.
- viii. It also led to the flight of more Nobles to the neighbouring state of Austria, Russia and Persia.
- ix. The assembly also issued out Assignants for the church property. These were to be bought by any one who wanted to property France. This was a big achievement to the revolutionaries since it was meant to end the unfair land system in France.

### **NOTE:**

- One of the effects of the 4<sup>th</sup> August decree was the abolition of most of the taxes which led to the reduction in the source of revenue which was needed to accomplish state programs. The serious lack of enough state funds forced the National Assembly under Mirabeau to take a serious

decision concerning the property of the church especially land. The assembly therefore confiscated and declared church property as state property leading to the issue of Assignants.

- The assembly didn't have major sources of income to state programs and this therefore made the assembly to decide and use the church property as a source of income France. The national assembly decided to put the church property on sale by auctioning. The assembly printed anew currency known as the assignnats which were sold to the public and their security was attached to the church land in other words, if one brought an assignnant by being on part of the church land. The issues of the assignnants increased peoples support to the revolution especially those who had brought the assignnants and this was because they never wanted the Nobles and Clergy to get back their former privileged positions which could give them great authority over the church property.

If the Clergy and Nobles got back their privileged positions it would have made it impossible for those who had the Assignnants to have a say over the church land and would not allow the new buyers to remain with it. This fear therefore led the French men who had brought the Assignnants to give great support to the revolution in order to protect their economic interests especially ownership of the land they had brought from the national assembly. This therefore boosted the revolution since it got many supporters, the new currency (**Assignnants**) was also used to pay the state creditor's e.g those who were demanding money from the state. The introduction of the Assignnats for some time made the national assembly to get some revenue to run the state programs in other words the sale of some church property by auctioning worked as a temporary measure to get revenue to run the activities of the state however its important to note that after some time, the assignnants started losing value and therefore many people stopped buying them. The number of people buying the assignnants decreased and this brought serious lack of revenue to run state activities since few people were interested in buying them because they had lost value.

Important to note however is that the issue of the Assignnants was a clear move taken by the revolutionaries because it enabled them finance state programs for some time.

The issue of Assignnants gave revolutionaries more supporters and in way gave them hope of success in their struggles.

8. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (july 1790) marked the 8<sup>th</sup> stage of the French Revolution. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (CCC) was passed and came in to address the financial problems that the church was going to face after the confiscation of the church property and abolition of payment of church tithe. It was a document or law which was passed by the revolutionists with intension of making some reforms within the Catholic Church in France. The content or provision of the civil constitution of the clergy were basically negative to the clergy and included the following.
  - i. The Church officials were turned into state officials and this meant that the clergy were to work on similar terms and conditions like other government employees. in other words, the Catholic Clergy in France became state servants and were supposed to follow the laws governing other government employees in France.

- ii. Payments or salaries to the clergy were to be determined and paid by the state and this was because of the fact that the church source of income like Church tithe had been abolished and its property like land where it used to get revenue had been confiscated and taken by the state.
- iii. The appointment of the Clergy and their deployment to place of work was now to be done by the state. The Clergy were now to be appointed by the Government body which was responsible for the appointment of other state officials. However, the priests were to be elected by all people regardless of faith.
- iv. The Pope who was the head of the Catholic Church in the world was to have no powers which would allow him to change the decisions on matters concerning the Catholic Church in France. In other words, the state became the sole appointing authority of Clergy in France and the Pope would not reserve the appointment and deployment of any church official.
- v. The civil constitution of the clergy abolished the title of Arch Bishop in the hierarchy of the catholic church in France.
- vi. The CCC divided France into departments of provinces where Bishops would be deployed.
- vii. The CCC put it forward that all priests were to take an oath of royalty to the government and the constitution.
- viii. By declaring the CCC and reducing the influence of the catholic church in politics, it became clear that freedom of worship was encouraged unlike before when Catholicism was the only religion recognized in France. It also ended monopoly of the catholic church over ownership of land.

N.B:

- The CCC didn't please a number of clergy officials and it was therefore met with different reaction from the French clergy officials. While some Bishops and Priests accepted and supported the changes brought by the CCC, majority of them resisted and rejected these changes e.g. it's noted that 2/3 of the parish priests refused to take the oath while 130/134 Bishops also resisted and rejected the changes brought by the CCC. The CCC therefore divided the French catholic clergy in 2 groups.
- There was a group of those who supported the changes and wanted them to be implemented (Jurors or Juring Clergy officials) and the second group consisted of those French Catholic Clergy officials who opposed to the changes brought by the CCC and these were the majority and also had much support from the staunch catholic masses in many parts of France (non Jurors or Non Juring Clergy officials)
- The Clergy officials who rejected the CCC continued to perform their duties without giving due regard to the National Assembly resolution and the provisions of the CCC. The Pope strongly opposed this constitution and also influenced King Louis XVI who was a good catholic not to accept and sign the CCC. Louis XVI refusal to accept and sign the CCC put him in a dangerous position in France and increased hatred towards him from the French men. The CCC also led to a number of Clergy officials like Bishops and Priests to leave France and go into exile in countries like Austria, Russia and Persia due to fear of the reaction of his attitude about the CCC, Louis XVI started to encounter challenges of the revolutionaries and started planning to escape from

France. He hoped to join the émigrés in Austria and to get support from the Austrian government to fight and defeat the revolutionaries' in order to regain his power and position in France.

- The CCC made some clergy members to suffer especially the non Juring officials and some were persecuted by the French peasants who wanted a change in the ways the clergy behaved in France.
9. The attempted flight of King Louis XVI to Varennes (1791) marked the 9<sup>th</sup> stage of the French revolution. King Louis XVI had been forced to sign the CCC by the revolutionaries against his will since he was a staunch Catholic and wanted the Pope to remain with some influence over the Catholic Church in France and as the revolutionary chaos increased the King got afraid and decided to escape to Austria where he was hoping to meet other émigrés and get support from King Leopold of Austria to fight against the revolution. This was a very dangerous move made by the King since to many revolutionaries he was seen as a traitor and Mirabeau who would have advised him not to make the dangerous move had already died in April 1791. King Louis XVI who had no one to advise him apart from his wife escaped from Paris by a cart together with his family members however information about his escape reached the revolutionaries who ceased him before he could cross the border to Austria and together with his family were brought back to Paris faced with a lot of humiliation e.g. they passed their heads through the window and spat in the Queen's face and for 4 days of their journey her hair turned white.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ATTEMPTED FLIGHT OF THE KING**

The attempted flight of King Louis XVI and his family with the major intention of getting support to defeat the French revolution had a number of effects on the royal family and the course of the French revolution as explained below.

- i. It led to the ideal of establishing a republican party with an idea of establishing a republican government to replace the French monarchy.
- ii. The attempted flight of the King showed him as a traitor and an enemy of the French people especially the revolutionaries and many French men started seeing him as an enemy of France.
- iii. The King's attempted escape made many French people to lose confidence in him and many looked at him as a non-reforming King who was against his own people.
- iv. The attempted escape of the King made the rest of Europe (France's neighbours) aware of that what was happening in France would extend to their people any time and they started making plans on how to stop events in France from reaching their own countries.
- v. The attempted escape of the King and his family made those who had confiscated the church property to live in fear that in case the King had gotten support he would come back and take all the gains of the revolution and this also made them to give more support to the revolution so that the King doesn't regain his power and position in France.
- vi. It also ended the prestige of the French monarchy and the dignity of King Louis XVI and this later paved way for the formation of the French republican government in 1792.

vii. It also led to many people to lose trust in the King and many opted for republican form of government or a constitutional form of government.

N.B:

- After the attempted escape of the king the French men started thinking of establishing of a new constitution unfortunately by this time Mirabeau had died and Lafayette had lost his position in France. This therefore led the revolution to lack proper direction and guidance which saw rise of a number of political parties or clubs with different ideals and ideologies. Among the political parties included the following.

1. Jacobins club.

Their members were referred to as Jacobins and they had about 400 branches in the whole of France. Members of this club believed in a republican form of government and were under the leadership of Robespierre. They were called Jacobins because they used to meet and discuss their ideas in the convent of St. Jacques in Paris. They had 136 members on the French assembly which controlled the French affairs at the time.

It's important to note that this club was first headed by Mirabeau but later its leadership was taken over by Robespierre and Danton.

2. Feuillant club

This club aimed at France having a constitutional monarchy. Important to note is that this club was weak in its organization though it had 264 seats in the French assembly.

3. Cordelier club.

This club was mainly comprised of workers who belonged to the professions and from the beginning it was extremely democratic and it believed in republicanism. Members of this club wanted France to have a republican form of government. Members of this club were later joined with the Jacobins by Danton.

4. Girondins club

Members of the Girondins club were part of the Jacobins but due to political differences they separated from the main Jacobins club. The name of this club came from the original of its members who were young Lawyers from Gironde District. The Girondins believed in republicanism and supported the idea of being involved in wars.

## **THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF SEPTEMBER 1791**

Despite the continuous achievements of the revolutionaries, the French men were still unsatisfied before France could have a new constitution. The hopes of the French revolutionaries were finally achieved and fulfilled in September 1791 when a new constitution for France was put in place. The new constitution contained the laws which were discussed and passed by the national assembly.

It had many provisions which included the following.

- i. The new assembly which was now known as the Legislative assembly consisted of 745 members who were to be directly elected by the people.

- ii. The assembly restructured the interior local government of France by making new Divisions and Arrondissements e.g. the old provinces of France were completely abolished and France was divided into 83 Departments. The Departments were also divided into Districts (arrondissements) and Districts divided into Cantons and Cantons into Communes which were the smallest units of administration. The National Assembly which had first met on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1798 dissolved itself in September 1791 to prepare for elections.
- iii. The new assembly was according to the constitution to be dominant partner in the administration of France though the King was still allowed some powers. However, it is important to note that the idea of giving the king some powers was opposed by the people.
- iv. The constitution of September 1791 also limited voting to people who had property. It adopted the system of indirect taxation where all men of 25 years and above were to pay state tax equivalent to 3 days of labor. People in this age group were to be known as “active citizens” while the rest were referred to as “passive citizens”. The active citizens were to vote for electors who in turn elected the members of the Assembly.

It is important to note however that many French citizens could not qualify to vote. This therefore brought radical protests from majority Frenchmen especially those who were followers of Rousseau, Robespierre and Desmoulins who criticized the procedure of active citizens in France. The September 17<sup>th</sup> constitution also had a number of loopholes and criticism e.g. it violated the right to vote since out of 7 million people only 4 million were allowed to vote a thing that was greatly opposed by the majority French men.

The Communes which were the last units of the administration were given much administrative powers where by they were to be self governed. It is therefore important to note that such administrative powers given to Communes later brought administrative problems in France

From 1789 - 1791 which was the first stage of the revolution events which occurred were mostly following peaceful procedures however, with the formation of the political clubs the leadership of the revolutionaries was now taken over by the radical extremists and men who were not experienced. One would have expected the revolution to end when the new constitution was put in place in 1791 however, the revolutionaries employed violent means or methods to achieve what ever they wanted

## **THE FRENCH REVOLUTION FROM 1792 TO 1795.**

From 1792, the course of French revolution was shaped by a new development and was characterized by war. The use of forceful means and war became the new forces that controlled the trend of events from 1792 - 1795. This period has been referred to as that of war, terror and suffering. It should be noted that after the new constitution the king was forced to accept it and every French man felt relaxed. It is important to note however that after the legislative assembly election, new men with new ideas emerged but did not have administrative qualities, skills and

experience. As earlier noted different clubs were formed. The coming of these divergent parties transformed the revolution which had started peaceful into the Reign of terror and violence. The political clubs which had played a role in causing terror and violence included the Jacobins club, Girondins club and Feuillant clubs.

## **THE DECLARATION OF WAR IN FRANCE 1792**

The history of revolution from this time is clearly related to the activities of the émigrés. It is however important to note that the revolutionary wave and wave of war had swept across France and all parties were in need of war. The assembly itself was in support of war as observed from its declaration that **“war against Kings and peace with all people”** the French King Louis XVI had already been branded as a traitor after his attempted flight to Austria however, this increased threat from the émigrés and put the King in danger in particular and the royal family in general. The émigrés were organizing support from Persia and Austria against the revolutionaries. The Emperors of Persia and Austria were much in support of King Louis XVI. The two emperors issued a declaration known as **Pillnitz declaration** which they asserted that **“The case of Louis XVI concerned all monarchs/Kings in Europe”** this assertion and declaration therefore was a clear indication that they were willing to join Louis XVI against the French revolutionaries. The Pillnitz declaration angered the revolutionaries who increased their hard activities on the King and the Royal family.

It can therefore be noted that the émigrés had created trouble for Louis XVI and by this time there was no body to save him since Mirabeau who was the mediator between the King and the revolutionaries had died earlier on in April 1791.

With the fall of Louis XVI the constitutional monarchy which was established in 1791 came to an end and France was now declared a republic and the affairs of France were now in hands of extreme republicans who even had no experience in leadership. Danton who had led an uprising against the King organised the transition of the constitutional monarchy to a new republican government called the National convention. This government was later responsible for the death of King Louis XVI, wife Marie Antonette and caused a reign of terror in France.

## **THE NATIONAL CONVENTION AND THE FIRST FRENCH REPUBLIC**

With the fall of the constitutional monarchy, there was establishment of the new assembly called the **Convention on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1792**. France was even declared a Republic and extreme republicans like Robespierre, Morat and Danton took the lead as far as leadership was concerned. The new government among other things was to help and consolidate the revolutionary gains by defending France from her enemies both at home and abroad. Earlier on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1792 orders had been passed to those in prisons on charges of counter revolutionary activities and these orders led to the death of many people in France e.g between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September 1792 around 1200 people were killed. The massive death of these people was referred to as the **September**

**Masacres.** The September massacres were prepared by Morat, supported by Robespierre and approved by Danton who was the minister of Justice at the time.

After the September massacres the revolutionaries made it clear that they had remained with 3 steps to take in order to accomplish the revolution. The 3 steps were;

1. To eliminate the king
2. Eliminate the remaining interior opposition in France
3. To consolidate the war effect and revolutionary gains / achievements.

## **THE EXECUTION/ DEATH OF KING LOUIS XVI**

Despite the King's suspension on royal duties, many people in France increasingly demanded for his death and the possibility of having the King's head was increased by the increasing hostility from the émigrés and foreign powers.

In June 1791 King Louis had attempted to go to Austria to mobilize the foreign powers in order to defeat the revolution. Earlier the king had refused to sign the declaration of human rights. On 10<sup>th</sup> August 1792 when the revolutionaries broke in Tuilleries in Paris, they found a number of letters in his file which showed that he was collaborating with the Emigrés and foreign forces.

**On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 1793 King Louis XVI** was executed and his death was the last proof that the Reign of terror had already set in France. It is however important to note that the King would have been honest and religious but had self-seeking advisers especially the Nobles and the Clergy who always misled him in all matters concerning decision making. Louis XVI's innocence can be observed from his determination to die before he was killed he made a number of comments which as a person who was innocent but misled by self-seeking advisers e.g. **"sirs am innocent of what am accused, I hope my blood will consolidate the happiness of the French men"** to show that he was willing to die, Louis XVI is also quoted to have said **"do what you will, I will drink the cup even to the dregs"** this was a clear indication that Louis could have been personally innocent in his deeds and the problems of France could have been got from the ill advice from his self-seeking advisers.

The death of King Louis XVI led to disastrous effects on France and to some extent determined the course of events that were to come in later in the course of the French Revolution.

## **THE EFFECTS OF THE DEATH OF KING LOUIS XVI**

The execution of the King had a number of effects on France, it almost ended France's relationship with her neighbours.

It was responsible for the occurrence of terror, dictatorship and even wars in many parts of France and the effects of his death included the following.

1. His execution annoyed many monarchies in Europe who regarded it as a barbaric and dangerous act which made the revolutionaries to be enemies of all Kings in Europe. This increased hostility between France and many countries in Europe including Britain, Austria, Spain and Persia.

2. After the King's death, the émigrés retaliated by organising a counter revolution against French revolutionaries. The effect of this was that many wars broke out between France and other European countries.
3. The King's death swept the last hopes of the French monarchy. after the King's death Queen Marie Antoniette remained in danger and on **16<sup>th</sup> October 1793** she was also killed. this was a clear indication that the monarchy had come to its end and its last hopes were all lost.
4. His death made France to denounce the economic treaties she had signed before the revolution e.g. France denounced the right of **Holland to have control over River Scheldt** which they had agreed upon as far back as **1648**. this annoyed Britain because she feared interference in her trade and noble power. This explains why Britain was more concerned with what ever happened in France to the extent that the British prime minister William Pitt protested against the death of the King.
5. It also led the Prime Minister William Pitt to protest the French Ambassador in London leading to his expulsion. The expulsion of the French ambassador annoyed France and had to declare war on Britain. Britain was supported by other countries and France was defeated. These countries included Spain, Austria and Portugal.
6. The execution of the King brought many Kings in Europe together and combined their efforts so as to destroy the French republic which had been established.
7. It gave republicans chance to exercise their extreme authority to France because they had no monarchy to respect.
8. The execution of the king led to the outbreak of civil wars in France especially in provinces where the republicans were to conscript the forces.

## **THE REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE AT WAR WITH OTHER EUROPEAN POWERS FROM 1792**

Between 1792 and 1793 France was at war with European states like Persia, Spain, Austria etc. and a number of factors explain why France was at war with other powers as explained below.

1. The influence of the French Emigres partly explain why France was at war with the rest of Europe. These were nobles and clergy who had gone to the neighbouring states like Russia and Austria during the course of the French revolution. Having reached in those countries the Emigres began organizing counter attacks. They therefore put their forces at the border of France and started planning a successful attack. They were led by the King's brother in law Comte de Artois. Austria and Persia helped the émigrés against the French revolutionaries. These states were having a number of French Emigrés who had run to them during the course of the French revolution and these became a threat to the revolutionaries which later explains why France declared war against Persia and Austria in 1792.
2. The execution of King Louis was also responsible for France's involvement in war with other European countries. Louis XVI was guillotined because of being a traitor of the people and the

news of his death was a shock to the whole world. It was interpreted as an inhuman and barbaric act and thus forced many European states to declare war on France.

3. The edict of fraternity also explains why France was at war with other countries. This was a paper issued by the French revolutionaries in November 1792. The paper declared all the kings around France as enemies. This was circulated to all the countries around France and it was therefore possible that this paper was going to lead to revolutions because of the poor conditions people lived in. This scared the Kings of Europe who thought of the possibility of losing their thrones in case revolutions happened in their countries. It was against this background that kings around France were forced to declare war against France.

4. The existence of different political groups in France also explain why France was at war with her neighbours. By 1792, France was composed of different political groups with different ideologies e.g. Girondins who had been members of Jacobins believed in vigorous policy in Europe including France waging war against other states, the Girondins believed in war as a major factor which would unite France and as a result they supported France's declaration of France against her neighbours.

The Feuillants also wanted war since they believed that through war the popularity and power of the King was to be restored. A big number of national assembly members were also in support of war in order to support the ideas of liberty, fraternity and equality to other states. This led France to be at war with other European states.

5. The need to stop the revolutionary ideas from spreading to all parts of Europe also explains why France was at war with other powers. The French revolutionary ideas of Fraternity, Liberty and Equality as well as need for the abolition of taxes and complete overthrow of dictatorial leaders. Kings in the rest of Europe were afraid that if such ideas spread to the rest of Europe, they would cause revolution therefore to counter attack the spread of such ideas and stop the occurrence of such revolution, the surrounding countries were forced to declare war on France and this therefore led France into war with other countries.
6. The Pillnitz declaration and the Brunswick manifesto also brought about war between France and her neighbours. This was a statement issued by the king of Austria against the humiliation the French revolutionaries had caused to the King Louis XVI in particular and the royalists in general. The declaration warned the French revolutionaries that if they continued to mistreat the King who was the brother in law to the King of Austria and punish the revolutionaries. Instead of the revolutionaries checking their movements after this warning they rather concentrated their forces on the Austrian and Persian borders leading to war between them and these countries. This therefore forced Austria to declare war against France and hence leading to France into war with other powers.
7. The influence of religious factors also explains why France was at war with Europe. Most European states were dominated by Catholics and believed in Catholicism, the revolution in France had advocated for Civil constitution of the Clergy and many Catholics were opposed to the terms of their constitution. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy of 1791 led to emergence of a number of religions in France because of freedom of worship that was granted in the Declaration of Rights of man document. This therefore led to the emergency of Worship of Reason where

prostitution was carried out in cathedrals, this group also forced members to work on Sundays. Such practices therefore attracted the attention of Catholics around France in order to protect their fellow Catholics in France against religious humiliation and this also led to war with other European states.

8. The emergency of inexperienced leaders in France also explains why France went to war with other powers. These leaders had no experience to sensitive political issues on other foreign states. The leadership of the assembly had fallen into the hands of the composed young and radical men who had republican ideas and believed in the use of force in solving international problems. The leaders of this period who included people like Robespierre, Danton, Murat had no experience in handling state matters and as a result this led war with the rest of Europe.
9. The need to protect British interests in France and the rest of Europe also explains why Britain declared war on France. Britain was particularly concerned with her economic interests which were being threatened by French revolutionaries e.g. the French revolutionaries had denied the right of Poland to control navigation of river Scheldt which was inline with an agreement that had been agreed upon since 1648 by this time Poland was an ally of Britain and this enabled Britain to use the navigable river for her commercial interests however in 1793 France threatened the British commercial interests by claiming control of this river and this renewed claim was interpreted as an expansionist attempt by France over European states and violation of earlier international treaties and this also made France to be at war with other states.

Because of the above factors the revolutionary France was at war with most European states between 1792 to 1815 and the result was the defeat of the French revolutionary forces since European powers combined their efforts against France. The convention government now decided on the creation of a new system to meet the serious situation that had come up in France. The government decided to set up 3 committees i.e. The committee of public safety, The committee of general security and the Revolutionary tribunal. The committee of public safety was given the control of the army and foreign affairs and it soon became a revolutionary guiding force whose duties included among others issuing of decrees, appointment and dismissal of officials and all aspects of the guillotine.

The committee of general security acted under the commission of the duration of the committee of public safety. It took part in actual policy arrangement in Paris and other cities in France. The revolutionary tribunal was a special court created to try all those brought before it by the committee of Public safety and this court fed the guillotine machine with a number of victims and played a big role in the occurrence of the reign of terror.

## **THE REIGN OF TERROR (1792-1794)**

The reign of terror in France refers to the period which was characterized by violence, massacre, blood shed suffering and extreme violation of human rights. It started earlier during the course of the French revolution but reached its climax in 1793 and extended as far as 1794. A revolution

which started as peaceful finally ended into the reign of terror. Its however important to note that in the initial stage of the revolution, it was peaceful in the following ways;

- i. it was peaceful in the sense that it was a struggle for a just cause e.g. It was aimed to bring glory to the French people which they lost due to unfair treatment especially majority peasants who were submitted to all kinds of exile.
- ii. It was peaceful in the sense that it advocated for the equality of social classes which never existed in the French society. The middle Class, Peasants, Clergy and Nobles enjoyed privileges according to the revolutionaries all classes were to be treated equal in all aspects. It also advocated for Liberty Equality and fraternity where all people in France would be free from arbitrary arrests and could have the right to decide their way of living.
- iii. The revolution was peaceful in a way that it didn't want to destroy the monarchy but just requested for reforms within the French monarchy. It advocated for establishment of a monarchy in which every French man would have freedom and liberty. It was also peaceful because revolutionaries never used violent means in the early days of the revolution.

N.B. During the capture of Bastille guards of the prison engaged the revolutionaries in a fight however after all the incidents, the revolutionaries maintained the peaceful means of solving their problems.

### **CAUSES OF THE REIGN OF TERROR**

The reign of terror started 1792 and by 1794 it had reached its climax and a number of factors explain the transition from peaceful means to violent means during the course of the French revolution as further explained below.

1. The king's character among other factors partly explains the outbreak of the Reign of terror. Louis XVI was inconsistent during the course of the French revolution for example he had refused to sign the declaration of rights of man which claimed Liberty Equality and Fraternity, he also refused to sign the CCC when it was passed to him. In June 1791 he tried to escape from France to Austria but caught at the border town of Varennes and the result of all this was that people lost confidence in him and turned against him and his supporter and this led to mass killing which led to reign of terror in France.
2. The activities of French Emigres abroad also led to the outbreak of the reign of terror. They concentrated their forces on the Austrian border to France and started terrorizing the revolutionaries. They were also planning for a come back and had many supporters in France. The revolutionaries were scared of the émigrés and became very suspicious as any body suspected to be sympathising with the émigrés would be taken to the revolutionary tribunal and many people fall victims and from the tribunal a number of them were sent to the guillotine. This therefore led to the reign of terror in France.
3. The emergency of different political clubs among other factors explains the outbreak of the French revolution. The political clubs which emerged in France during the course of the French revolution had different ideologies and policies which were conflicting. Each club wanted to be

influential as far as leading France was concerned. They also increased disunity in French society e.g. The Jacobins who were republican and opposed to the constitutional monarchy started killing members of the different parties, introduced the law of suspect and every body who was not supporting the revolution was killed and this therefore resulted into the reign of terror.

4. The role of the national convention also explains the outbreak of the reign of terror. it was formed after the fall of Louis XVI's government which was also a terrorist government and passed dictatorial measures to check on the collaborators of the émigrés and to consolidate the revolutionary days among the measures which were passed were the formation of a revolutionary tribunal which made many people die on the pretext that they were not supporters of the revolution and were not loyal to the new government. The Convention government also formed the Committee of Public safety and empowered it to deal with surety services and The committee of general security which was entrusted with the responsibility of controlling the police. The acts of these committees increased terror especially during the leadership of Robespierre, Danton and Morat making France experience a reign of terror.
5. The effects of foreign wars which were declared on France also increased blood shed in France. these wars accelerated the reign of terror in France in that the revolutionaries turned against the supporters of the émigrés as away of revenging against the countries which waged wars on France and this led to the killing of many people who were suspected the émigrés thus the reign of terror.
6. The signing of Civil Constitution of the Clergy (CCC) partly explains the outbreak of the reign of terror. after the Declaration of the CCC in 1790, some Priests refused to sign it and never followed its provisions, they continued to perform their duties without following the provisions of CCC and this led to the death of many priests later resulting into the reign of terror in France
7. The declaration of a new constitution of September 1791 also explains the reign of terror. This constitution allowed some powers to the King which the political parties never liked in other words some people were opposed to the constitutional provisions that gave the King some powers. To make matters worse, the freedom of worship which was provided for in the constitution led to emergency of dangerous religions in France e.g. worship of reason which almost legalised prostitution, the constitution also had many rights which were impossible to be enjoyed. When people's hopes of enjoying these rights were stopped, the reign of terror set in.
8. The death of important men who were peace lovers also contributed to the reign of terror in France. In April 1791 Mirabeau died 1791 and this left the revolution in the hands of extremists thus contributing to the occurrence of the reign of terror. Mirabeau acted as link between the revolutionaries and the state, he always directed the revolutionaries on the right direction to take and also used to advise the King to accept the demands of the revolutionaries his death therefore created a vacuum between the revolutionaries and the King which led the revolutionaries to start using violent means to achieve their need hence leading to the occurrence of the reign of terror.
9. The death of the king Louis XVI accelerated massive killings in France hence leading to the reign of terror. After the King had been killed followed by his wife, many people who had been

suspected to have been his supporters were also killed, the massive killings which followed the King's death resulted into the reign of terror in France.

10. The existence of Mobs in France also laid fertile grounds to the outbreak of the reign of terror. right from the beginning of the revolution many people had moved from the country sides to towns especially to Paris. In these towns they became redundant and this led to the formation of mobs. These Mobs actively participated through out the course of the French revolution and were responsible for changing of the revolution from being peaceful to a violent one.
11. The earlier history of the revolution which was that they used to achieve what ever they wanted by using some force and violence also led to the reign of terror. e.g. the capture of Bastille was achieved by using violence, also it was after the revolutionaries had fought with the royal guards that the King agreed to move from Versailles to Paris and to decrease the price of bread. Therefore, violence was seen as an easy way to achieve what ever the revolution wanted since their first achievement were connected to the use of violence, they extended it up to 1792 and when it increased it resulted into the reign of terror.
12. Difficult economic conditions like unemployment led to reign of terror. This further explains the formation of the Paris Mobs which was a group of French men who moved away from the villages to towns hoping to find better conditions however to their surprise life in Paris were equally miserable, these later joined the revolutionary and the acquisition of guns later made them violent thus leading to the outbreak of the reign of terror.
13. King Louis XVI's association with French enemies also contributed to the reign of terror. Louis XVI associated with countries like Austria which was an enemy of France. The revolutionaries therefore looked at it as betrayal and started to revenge to whoever was friendly to the King of Austria and this partly conditioned the killing of the King which intensified the reign of terror.
14. The weak nature of the Legislative assembly of 1791 was also responsible for the reign of terror in France. It was too weak to keep law and order and that's why the revolutionaries started using violent means since they would not be checked and such violent means resulted into the reign of terror.
15. Presence of conservative nobles also led to the reign of terror. some Nobles in France were still conservative and insisted on enjoying their privileges as it was the case before the outbreak of the French revolution and yet by 1791 French men were willing to use any ways possible to achieve change thus leading to the reign of terror.
16. The emergency of radical and inexperienced leaders partly explains the reign of terror. after the death of Louis XVI the leadership of France fell in the hand of radical leaders. Such leaders included Danton, Marat, Robespierre etc. these leaders believed in using forceful means to achieve what ever they wanted. Moreover, they started plotting against each other since each of them wanted to assume a superior position in France. They believed in killing if one was to survive e.g. Danton was quoted to have said **"to be safe you must kill"** this was a clear indication that it was a period of killing which inevitably resulted in to the reign of terror.

## **EFFECTS OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.**

It had a number of effects both on France and the rest of Europe as explained below.

1. The reign of terror led to open hostility between the revolutionary France and the rest of Europe because most European states had to wage wars with France with the intentions of making sure that what happened in France could not extend to their countries.
2. The reign of terror also led to mass loss of lives. Most people were killed in France most especially after the death of the King and the Queen more over the politicians of that time believed in killing as the only way to survive e.g. Robespierre who was among the leaders of that time believed that one had to kill or be killed and such belief among the politicians of the time explains why many people had to die during the reign of terror.
3. The reign of terror also led to decline in the economic development of France. This was because people were most of the time believing in violence forcing many Frenchmen to run away from their homes for their dear lives production was therefore affected leading to a decline in economic production.
4. The reign of terror also led to coming of new religions with the intentions of replacing Christianity e.g. it led to introduction of worship of reason which was headed by Herbert and such religion divided the French society.
5. It forced many French men to go into exile which led to an increase in the number of émigrés. This was unhealthy for France since some of the people who went belonged to the energetic group of labor. These emigrants also disorganized France as they wanted forcefully to come back.
6. The reign of terror led to the strengthening of the military of France. During the reign of terror more French soldiers were trained in order to defend their nation.
7. The reign of terror affected the neighboring states e.g. Austria and Persia. This was because of the scare which came from France since leaders from these countries feared that what happened in France would as well happen in their countries.
8. The reign of terror destroyed the French unity which had been registered during the course of the revolution. This was because of the coming up of the radical leaders e.g. Marat, Danton and Herbert. Such leaders became enemies and started fighting/plotting against each other this divided the people of France and ended the unity.
9. It also led to the formation of the Directory government with the intention of replacing the national convention government. The directory government ruled France from 1795 - 1799 when it was forcefully overthrown by Napoleon Bonaparte.
10. The reign of terror also led to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799 after the overthrowing the Directory government. The rise of Napoleon Bonaparte in power was as a result of the people's desire for strong ruler who would end the strife and create peace and stability in France.

## **THE DIRECTORY GOVERNMENT**

### **(1795-1799)**

The policy of the terror was abandoned after the death of Robespire and most of the convention committees were abolished and others were weakened. The Convention produced another French constitution which upheld the Republican form of government. The idea of universal adult suffrage was abolished and voting was confined to the tax payers as according to the new constitution, France was to be governed by two bodies and these were The council of elders who were supposed to be 45 years and above in terms of age and The council of 500 men who were supposed to be 30 years of age and above and this was charged with the responsibility of making laws which had to be approved by the council of elders. The day to day business of France was to be in the hands of 5 directors and that's why the government was called the Directory Government.

Accordingly, one Director out of the five had to retire each year, this was intended to check the dictatorship and voting was restricted to tax payers in order to support democratic rule in France. The Directory Government was in charge of France's political affairs from 1795 - 1799 when it was overthrown due to its weaknesses.

## **AIMS OF THE DIRECTORY**

### **GOVERNMENT**

The Directory Government had a number of aims and objectives to achieve which included some of the following.

- i. It wanted to redraft a new constitution and fair representation which had not been given priority by the Convention government.
- ii. It wanted to end the religious discontent which had been brought about by the coming of new religion like the Herbertists headed by Herbert which had ideas that were contradicting the Christian ideas. It wanted to reduce the power monopoly in France where by leadership was in the hands of few leaders and this was to be done by distributing power among the 5 directors and the members of the two councils i.e. Council of Elders and the Council of 500 men.
- iii. It aimed at establishing a new government in France which would ensure Law and order and peace to all French citizens.
- iv. It wanted to reduce the Jacobin's influence and end the reign of terror which had led to great suffering in France.
- v. The Directory Government aimed at ensuring economic growth by ending corruption and embezzlement which was there during the reign of terror.
- vi. It also wanted to re-organize the army of France for security reasons because of the insecurity that had cropped up in France during the course of the reign of terror.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DIRECTORY GOVERNMENT**

During its time of office, the D.G managed to register some achievements and these included the following.

1. The Directory Government kept the spirit of revolution that had started in 1791 hence an achievement. This was partly through the wars the the Directory Government had started and all these were done to extend the revolutionary ideas to the oppressed people in the world and this consequently contributed to the French glory abroad e.g. during the 1796 Italian campaign and 1798 Egyptian campaign which were all planned and carried out by Napoleon 1.
2. The Directory Government also brought to an end the untold suffering and torture plus terror the French had experienced during the Reign of terror. It led to the abolishment of dangerous clubs e.g. the Jacobins which was responsible for the reign of terror.
3. The Directory Government released some political prisoners who had been detained during the reign of terror and those who had been arrested and imprisoned during the earlier course of the French revolt were released.
4. The Directory Government reconciled France with some of her neighbours. During the course of the revolution countries like Persia, Poland made peace with France however, its important to note that some countries like Austria, England and Germany maintained their enmity with France and such enmity was responsible for future wars between France and other European countries.
5. The Directory Government checked on the dictatorship which had become common in France. Dictatorship was checked by the annual retirement of the directors and the legislative council members; such retirement was intended to stop leaders from over staying in power which had led to dictatorship.

## **FAILURES OF THE DIRECTORY GOVERNMENT**

Despite the above achievements the Directory Government also registered a number of failures as explained below.

1. The fact that the system of voting was restricted only to the tax payer's political freedom were tampered with the Directory Government was therefore far from the expectations of the French men. people's rights which were declared during the course of the revolution were therefore not respected by the Directory Government.
2. The Directory Government also lacked a strong standing army which would have protected it. had it not been Napoleon, the Directory Government would have failed at an earlier stage e.g. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1795, the royalists and Jacobins attacked the Directory Government officials at Tuilleries palace and the situation was only saved by Napoleon.
3. Like the previous government in France, the Directory Government was also criticised for having caused massive suffering during his time of office. many Jacobins who were accused of causing terror were exiled, others displaced and a good number was killed. This was a clear

indication that like the previous government, the Directory Government also led to massive suffering in France.

4. The Directory Government also lacked good financial policies during its time to rule France, it faced a number of problems like inflation, unemployment and this partly contributed to its decline in 1799.
5. The Directors of the Directory Government were corrupt and inefficient to the extent that the French citizens suffered just like before 1789 revolution due to corruption and inefficiency of the directors, there was bankruptcy accompanied by inflation and low purchasing power. French citizens even lacked daily necessities and this overshadowed the achievements of the Directory Government.
6. Due to its failures, the Directory Government faced internal opposition. The most internal opposition against the Directory Government was organised by Francois Babeuf together with his supporters who advocated for the abolition of private property, ownership and nationalisation of land in France. The opposition was mainly by the poorest class in Paris and its supporters.
7. The Directory Government tried to solve problems of the church and the problems had started earlier when the national assembly declared the Nationalisation of the church property by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy during the course of the revolution. The church was opposed to most of the government policies and even organized rebellions especially in the Catholic dominated provinces in western France.
8. During his term of office, there was lack of parliamentary democracy in France. The Directory Government isolated the principles of revolution which the French revolutionaries had fought for. The government had a parliament but it only existed in name since members of the parliament had no powers to check the inconsistencies of the Directors.
9. The Directory Government was full of power struggles, though the constitution put it clear that one director was to retire every year they later refused this which later brought divisions in the D.G a situation that was exploited by Napoleon Bonaparte to rise to power.
10. It also failed to defeat Britain which had positioned itself as the greatest enemy of France and on a number of campaigns organised against Britain France lost many soldiers and resources e.g. 1798 Egyptian campaign.
11. The Directory Government failed to end the injustices that existed within the French army. There was no equal treatment in the French army since some members would be highly promoted while others left at lower ranks.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION BY 1800**

By 1800, the French revolution had registered a number of achievements which were outstanding in the history of France which included the following.

1. By 1800 the French peasants had acquired land and some could still acquire land and this was a great achievement since peasants had been denied land for many centuries.

2. The revolution by 1800 had changed the system of taxes and most of the unfair taxes had been abolished. Both direct and indirect taxes which had been exposed to the peasants had been abolished and equal taxation had been put in place in 1800.
3. The revolution led to the abolishment of feudal taxes in France. By 1800 the peasants were no longer objected to feudalism which had been exploitative.
4. Before the French revolution, there was religious intolerance in France and French men were only subjected to the catholic faith. By 1800 however, religious tolerance had been achieved when the rights of man had been declared during the course of the French revolution in which freedom of worship was emphasised.
5. By 1800 the French revolution had abolished the system of classes in the French society and all citizens deemed equal before the law unlike before the revolution where the French citizens were unequal and belonged to different classes.
6. By 1802 the French revolution had separated the church and the state. The alliance that always existed between the church and the state had been abolished by 1802. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy had made the church a state department to be under state control and not to take part in state affairs.
7. By the French revolution all French men were given equal opportunity to climb the ladder of leadership and to get any position of leadership in France. This made men like Napoleon to climb the ladder of leadership though he was from a common class of people.
8. By 1800 the French revolution had brought democracy in France and there was freedom of association and many political groups had been formed. This was unheard of before the French revolution in 1789.
9. The revolution abolished the monarch system in France which had been led by the Bourbons for a period of over 400 years until 1789 when the revolution broke out. After the abolishment of monarchy a republican government was put in place.
10. The French revolution also led to land reforms. The Nobles and Clergy who had monopolized the ownership of land to lose it. The Clergy lost their land after the declaration of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy which nationalized the church property. Some of the Clergy and Nobles who lost their land and property went into exile as émigrés.
- 11.

### **FAILURES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION BY 1800**

By 1800 the French revolution had a number of failures, negative effects and among these failures the following can be noted.

1. There was loss of lives and property especially when violent means were employed during the course of the French revolution. Both the revolutionaries and those who were not involved in actual fighting lost their lives.
2. By 1800 the revolution had led France to be at war with most of her neighbours and this was after the revolutionaries had employed violence which created fear with in other states.

3. The revolution also led to the rise of dictators like Robespierre, Danton, Marat. These dictators played a great role as far as creating violence was concerned.
4. The revolution led to the reign of terror between 1792 to 1794 which was characterized by blood shed, torture and suffering etc.
5. The revolution also led to the emergence of immoral religions like worship of reason which almost legalised prostitution in cathedrals and forced people to work on Sunday.
6. It led to formation of Mobs as a result of movement of people from rural to urban areas due to poor living conditions. These mobs were responsible for the destruction of property that was witnessed during the course of the reign of terror.
7. The revolution brought conflict among some people in France and this was especially during the time of the national convention where people like Robespierre, Danton and Marat were struggling and plotting against each other in France. Such leadership conflicts led to death of people.

The revolution also led to formation of political anarchy led by inexperienced leaders who were also responsible for causing terror in France. The different political parties were led by people who were inexperienced and who were interested in using violence in order to achieve what ever they wanted