World History- Renaissance, Revolution of England

THE RENAISSANCE

Greater travel, rising wealth and greater knowledge of outer world led to a new philosophy of life called renaissance. With rising material consumption, this worldly pleasures took place of Church advocated other worldly pleasure and hence human and not god became center of activities. Thus, humanism was a key feature of renaissance. Individualism and human potential took due place in society.

The classics were revived and a search for knowledge begins. Intellectual inquiry was another facet of renaissance apart from humanism. Invention of printing press played an important role as now books were widely available.

Renaissance began in Italy as it was center of wealth and trade at that time.
It was not only about religion and polity, but also about a state of mind. Humanism was an ideological pillar. Many paintings were secular. It was like a cultural re-birth. Advances were made in field of science, mathematics, physics, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture and astronomy. 

It led to numerous sea voyages and new geographical dicoveries. Direct sea routes were discovered to places like India and it reduced dependecy of the West on Central Asia and West Asia. A new era of world trade was opened. It created hyper-demands and opening of new markets also provided a further push to industrial revolution.

Later, renaissance and industrial revolution gave birth to other events like – American Revolution, French Revolution and Russian Revolution.

RISE of NATIONALISM

Spirit of nationalism began to evolve with formation of nation-states. Erstwhile feudal societies had small feudal provinces which were driven by narrow concerns and were also not permanent. Evolution of large nation states bred the feeling of nationalism.

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American Revolution was perhaps the first manifestation of this feeling. This feeling was also quite evident in France during and after French Revolution. It became contagious in Europe after ideals of French revolution spread in other states.

Nationalism is a modern movement in which loyalty of individuals is not to vested interests, a monarch or political group, but to a nation of people. Earlier loyalties were attached to land (in feudal society), territory and so on.

Impact Of Nationalism On Political Landscape Of 19th Century Europe

Feeling of nationalism on one hand led to revolt against the autocratic monarchies, on the other hand it led to movements against foreign rule. Success of American nationalism in American Revolution sowed the seeds of nationalism in Europe as well which bore the first fruit in form of French Revolution.

First 19th century national revolt was in Serbia in 1804 which led to successful implementation of a nation state in 1817. Then, similar attempts were made by Greece against Ottoman Empire.

It led to toppling of Austrian Hungarian Empire, Romanovs of Russia and Ottoman empire.

Vienna Congress has tried to stifle the tide of nationalism, but it was evident by 1830s that nationalism is unstoppable force. In 1831, Belgium obtained independence from Netherlands. Attempts were also made by Italy, France and Poland as well in 1830s which were, however, suppressed.

Unification of Italy under Mazzini and unification of Germany were strongest manifestations of rising tide of nationalism.

Thus, nationalism broke new grounds by independence of nations from foreign rules and autocratic rules, led to unifications, led to reactionary conflicts from conservatives who wanted to restore old order and so on.

Nationalism at times also transformed into jingoism which resulted into ambitious conquests, colonialism and conflict as well. Further, ethnic nationalism also had its own hazards and it gave rise to sub-nationalities and disintegration of many states. Disintegration of Ottoman Empire was result of such ethnic nationalist feelings.

With the emergence of new industrial nationalities in second half of 19 century, a struggle for world resources also emerged. Early colonial powers resisted this attempt. It finally culminated into two world wars.

French Revolution

- It gave birth to ideas of liberty, freedom and equality
- It led to the end of monarchy in France

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- A society based on privileges gave way to a new system of governance
- The Declarations of the Rights of Man during the revolution, announced the coming of a new time.
- The idea that all individuals had rights and could claim equality became part of a new language of politics.
- These notions of equality and freedom emerged as the central ideas of a new age; but in different countries they were reinterpreted and rethought in many different ways

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Ideals of Revolution

- The collapse of the old regime was the consequence of many factors - economic problems, social unrest, conflicting ambitions of groups and individuals.
- In the unfolding of the Revolution, what was thought, what was said, and what was advocated, was expressed in terms categories that came from political theorists of the Enlightenment such as Montesquieu, Locke and Rousseau.
- Montesquieu, the most important political philosopher of the French revolution claimed that a liberal constitutional monarchy was the best system of government for a people who prized freedom, on the grounds that by dividing the sovereignty of the nation between several centres of power, it provided a permanent check on any one of t hem becoming despotic.
- Mirabeau, the leading orator among the revolutionists of this early phase, was very much the disciple of Montesquieu in his demand for a constitutional monarchy. Mirabeau was born in a noble family but was convinced of the need to do away with a society of feudal privilege. He brought out a journal and delivered powerful speeches to the crowds assembled at Versailles.
- Then, there was Locke's theory of the natural rights of man to life, liberty and property. The French revolutionists were influenced by Locke’s theory as merican revolutionist had done so in 1776
- Where Montesquieu had understood freedom as being unconstrained and unimpeded in doing what one chooses to do so as long as it is lawful, Rousseau defined freedom as ruling oneself, living only under a law which one has oneself enacted.
- On Rousseau's philosophy of freedom “The Social Contract” there was no question of the people dividing and diminishing sovereignty, because the people were to keep sovereignty in their own hands. In Rousseau's conception of a constitution, the nation became sovereign over itself.

Stages:-

- 1774: Louis XVI becomes king of France, faces empty treasury and growing discontent within society of the Old Regime.
- 1789: Convocation of Estates General, Third Estate forms National Assembly, the Bastille is stormed, and peasant revolts in the countryside.

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- 1791: A constitution is framed to limit the powers of the king and to guarantee basic rights to all human beings.
- 1792: Overthrow of the Constitutional Monarch—oftencalledthe"SecondRevolution"—and the establishment of the First French Republic.
- After the establishment of the Republic, the level of violence grew as the Republican regime sought to repress counter - revolutionary movements in France (Federalist revolts and the Vendee uprising) while struggling at the same time to prevent defeat in war by the combined forces of Austria, Prussia, and Britain.
- The so-called reign of Terror was instituted to quash both internal and foreign forces of counter revolution. But once these internal and foreign threats were under control in the spring of 1794, Terror continued at the direction of the Committee of Public Safety, the most famous member of which was Maximiliean Robespierre.
- This last period of Terror was aimed at eliminating political rivals of Robespierre and the Committee, which included Danton. The excesses that resulted led to the overthrow of Robespierre and the Committee.
- After the overthrow of Robespierre, the revolution continued still longer as the moderate leaders of the newly established government called the Directory (1795-1799) attempted to bring the revolution to a close in keeping with the principles of 1789 that would be under bourgeois control and freed from the intervention and pressures of the popular movement.
- This effort entailed the forceful repression of the popular movement in Paris by Napoleon's so-called "whiff of grapeshot" ,the overturning of elections in 1797 (to oust neo-Jacobins seen as too radical) and again in 1798 (to oust ultra conservatives).
- The Directory relied on the army and military force to carry out these repressive acts at the same time it supported the army and Napoleon in an aggressive war of expansion in Europe and Egypt.
- Having relied on the army so much, the Directory was in the end overthrown by Napoleon and military might.

Role of leaders, philosopher

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- Montesquieu suggested that the English had achieved this by sharing sovereignty between the Crown, Parliament and the law courts.
- The French, he suggested, would need, if they were to adopt the same idea, to make use of the estates with which they were themselves already familiar: the Crown, the aristocratic courts, the Church, the landed nobility and the chartered cities.

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Limitations

It would be unfair to Rousseau to say that Robespierre put the theory of The Social Contract into practice, but he used Rousseau's language, and exploited – while distorting – several of Rousseau's ideas in the course of his reign of terror.

Industrial Revolution

Emergence and Background

Beginning of geographical discoveries and direct sea routes opened new avenues of trade and commerce. It formed the bedrock of Industrial revolution as mismatch between demand and supply led to new innovative ways of enhancing production.

Second factor was emergence of capitalist ideology. Profit making became the core of all economic activities in Europe. Capitalists financed the voyages of sailors in search of new markets and new sources of raw material. New industries were also financed by capitalists.

New inventions were made which enhanced productivity many fold. Invention of Steam Power, Use of Mechanical Power instead of Man and Animal power changed the way production was done Hargreaves's spinning mill, improvement of Arkwright and Crompton over that spinning mill. Invention of steam engine led to birth of Cotton Jenny, a much improved cotton weaver.

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