



## LONG QUESTIONS

1. Explain the immediate causes of the outbreak of the revolt in France in 1789.

Ans. The immediate causes of the Revolution of 1789 are as follows:

- i) Demand for greater rights – Due to the emergence of new social groups in the eighteenth century, most notably the ‘middle class’, the atmosphere was filled with revolutionary ideas. Notable philosophers like Rousseau, Locke, Montesquieu advocated fresh new ideas which had inspired the common people to improve their lot. When the King called the meeting of the three estates, the representatives of the third estate demanded that each member is given one vote each. However, the king rejected the proposal. Consequently, the members of the third estate walked out of the meeting in protest and declared themselves to be the new National Assembly of France. After that, they started to draft a new Constitution.
- ii) Rise in prices of commodities – During that year, France was hit by a severe winter and a bad harvest made the situation worse. The price of bread increased manifold



and the common people started starving. The situation became tense when riots started taking place in front of bakeries. When the king ordered troops to enter Paris, there spread a wave of general anger and discontent at the king's attitude towards the hapless condition of the people. On 14th July, 1789, an angry mob attacked the prison fortress of Bastille in Paris. People in the countryside attacked chateaux with hoes and pitchforks. These events marked the beginning of the Revolution.

2. What was the contribution of the French philosophers in the outbreak of the Revolution of 1789 in France?

Or

What is the role of philosophers in the French Revolution?

Ans. The following philosophers contributed in the build-up to the Revolution:

- i) John Locke - He was a critic of the so-called divine and absolute rights of the monarchs, such as Louis XVI.
- ii) Jean Jacques Rousseau - He propounded the 'Social Contract Theory' according to which a government must be formed as per a contract between the people and their representatives. Moreover, people should have the power



to change a government if that government is not able to fulfil their needs and demands. His famous line, "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains," excited public fervour against oppression and curbing of physical and civil liberties.

iii) Montesquieu - He was of the view that all powers should not be concentrated in one person's hands alone. It should be divided between the Legislative, the Judiciary and the Executive.

iv) Voltaire - He was of the view that any person could chalk out his or her fate and destiny himself or herself.

Thus, we can see that these fresh new ideas charged up the minds of the common people, who talked about these in coffee-houses and salons and gave them the impetus to bring about a radical change in the country.

3. What changes were seen in the regime of Robespierre's government?

Ans. The following were the changes brought about the government of Robespierre:

i) Laws put a maximum ceiling on wages and prices, with meat and bread being rationed.



ii) Peasants had to bring their produce to the cities and sell them at prices fixed by the government.

iii) The use of the expensive white flour was banned and everybody had to eat loaves of bread made with whole wheat.

iv) The use of Monsieur and Madame was replaced with Citoyen and Citoyenne.

v) Church compounds were transformed into barracks and offices for public use.

vi) Anyone seen as a potential adversary to Robespierre or criticised the government was arrested and sent to the revolutionary tribunal, which invariably found him/her guilty and sentenced him/her to die on the guillotine.

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