

Map 6.1 Farming Settlements

Some objectives of the Mahaweli project:

- Continuous water supply to the dry zone farm lands for productive agricultural work.
- Production of electricity to cover the increasing demand for electricity.
- Creating more settlements through water supply and the expansion of cultivation of food by providing the landless people with lands.

Other than these main objectives there were other objectives such as generating jobs and agricultural opportunities, controlling flood, breeding fresh water fish etc. Thus, the Mahaweli project became a multi-purpose project.

The first stage of the Mahaweli project was to build a dam at Polgolla across the Mahaweli river to take water to Sudu Ganga and take that water to the dry zone via Bovathenna reservoir. There were further plans to take water from this part to Kala Wewa, Nachchaduwa Wewa, Nuwara Wewa, Thisa wewa and several other lakes.



Fig 6.5 Polgolla dam

This project was started in 1970 and the expected work was covered by 1977. Several other reservoirs, dams and canals had been planned to be built under the Mahaweli project. The first plan was to complete them in 30 years.

Mr. J.R. Jayewardene's government which came into power in 1977 decided to complete this in 6 years and prepared an speedy plan of work. Therefore , instead of the Mahaweli Development Board that existed, the Ministry of Mahaweli Development was established in 1978 and Mr. Gamini Dissanayake was appointed the minister. The Mahaweli authority was established in 1979 because the necessity of an authority with high power was felt for the functioning of the Mahaweli project.

Steps were taken to build reservoirs such as Kothmale, Victoria, Randenigala, Rantambe, Ulhitiya, Rathkinda, Madru Oya; dams such as Minipe and some water turning centres.

### **Victoria Reservoir**

This vast reservoir was made by building a dam, a little lower to the Polgolla dam. One of the main objectives of building this dam was generating hydro-electricity. The British government provided aids for this project.



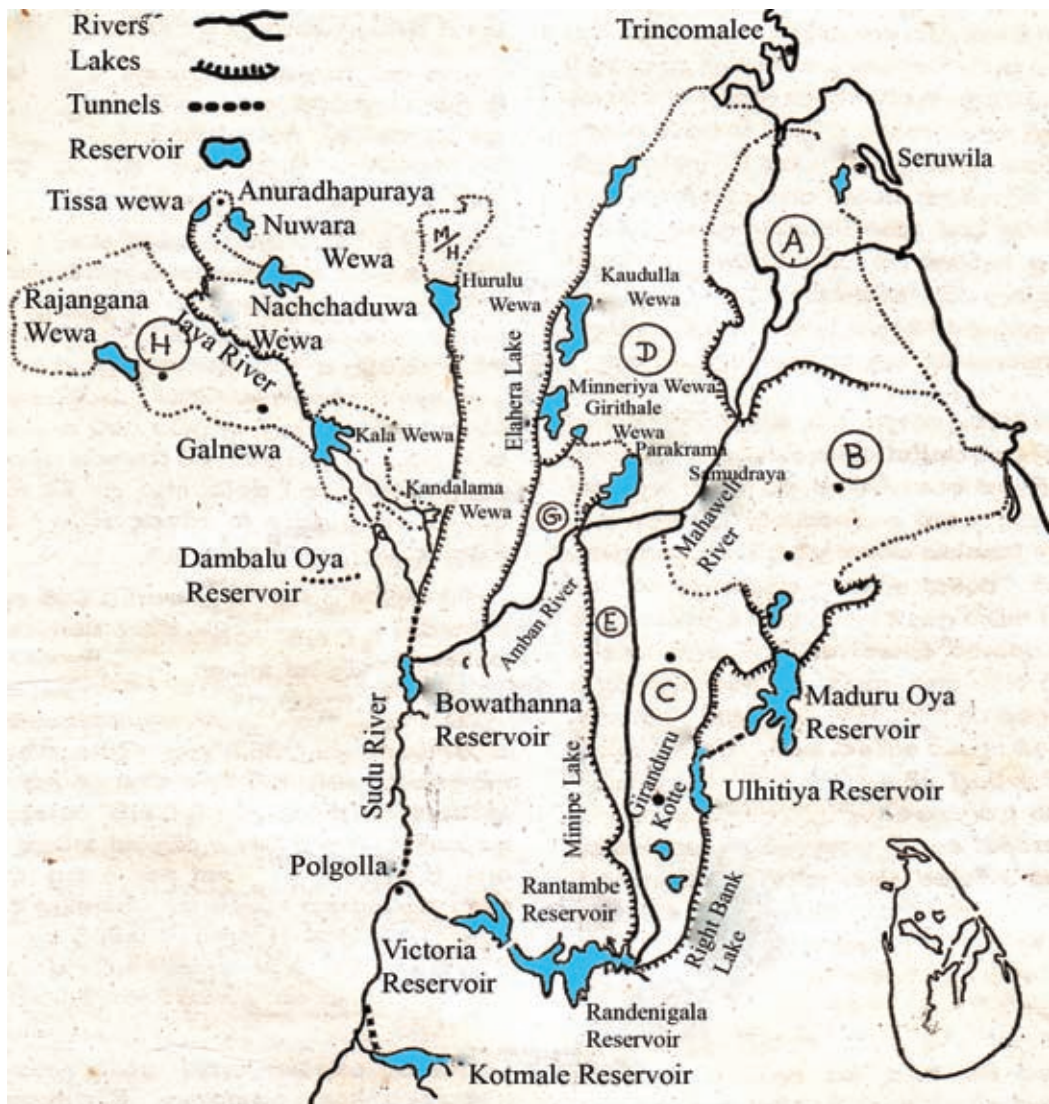
### **Kothmale Reservoir**

The Kothmale reservoir was made by building a dam at Kadadora across Kothmale Oya which is one of the main tributaries of the Mahaweli river. The Sweden government provided aids for this.

### **Randenigala Reservoir**

The Randenigala reservoir was built a little lower to the Victoria reservoir and above the Minipe dam. The production of electricity and supplying water for irrigations were the expected outcomes. West Germany provided financial aids for this.





Map 6.2 Water supply projects under the express Mahaweli Development Project

By storing Mahaweli water in reservoirs, The production of hydro – electricity , supplying water for both cultivated and yet to cultivate lands in the dry zone became possible. In addition to the production of electricity and providing water for agriculture , it made settlement of people, building of new cities and roads possible under this project.



Other steps that were taken to develop paddy cultivation:

- Introduction of a certified price for paddy in 1948
- Establishment of paddy research institution and introduction of new paddy species. An example is Bathalegoda paddy breeding centre.
- Establishment of farming service centres (*Govijana Sewa Centres*)
- Giving loans to farmers through state banks.

#### ❖ Cultivation for Commercial Purpose

The products that were related to the traditional coconut plantation, tea and rubber introduced by the British existed as the major export products for about three decades after obtaining independence. Several steps have been taken for the development of those crops after 1948. Some such steps were;

- Declaring a limited area of land that can be kept in possession of one person by the land rehabilitation law of 1972. Thus, the area of land that can be kept for one person were 10 hectares (25 acres) for paddy cultivation and 20 hectares (50 acres) for other cultivations.
- The lands of the commercial plantation companies were peopolized by the 1975 land reforms. Because of these reforms about 62% of the land that belonged to those mega scale plantation companies was given to the government. As 10% of the state lands were distributed among farmers as small pieces of land, a group of small scale land owners was created.

The ownership of mega scale lands shifted from the private sector to the government by the 1975 land reforms.

Several institutions were established after gaining independence for the management of state lands.

- State Plantation Cooperation established in 1958.
- Upcountry Estate Development Bureau established in 1976.
- People's Estate Development Bureau established in 1976.

Sri Lanka could export rubber products to China as a result of the bilateral convention signed between the two countries in 1952. So there was a stable market for rubber products of the country.

The government started a new project of giving aids to the landowners for re-plantation of rubber in 1977. There, rubber plants and fertilizers were given. Later, this was extended to tea plantation too.

A special feature is the emergence of a group of small scale landowners as a result of the distribution of land continued by the government after gaining independence. As a result, a group of landowners who owned lands between 1-10 acres of tea and rubber emerged in the Western, Southern and Sabaragamuwa provinces. With this the income of villagers in relation to major export crops increased.

#### ❖ **Development of Small Scale Export Crops**

Steps were taken after gaining independence to develop the small scale export crops such as; coffee, cocoa, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon in addition to the major crops such as tea, rubber and coconut.

In 1968, according to the Tea Commission reports cultivation of some minor scale export crops was encouraged as additional cultivations.

A minor scale export research institution was started in Matale in 1972. Similar institutions were later started in areas like Kundasale, Delpitiya, Narammala.

Some more steps were taken to expand the cultivation of small scale crops since 1972. Giving advice on cultivation, provision of fertilizers and sales promotion are some examples for them.

#### ❖ **Policy of Industrialization**

No development took place in the industrial sector of Sri Lanka during the British administration because they used Sri Lanka as a market where they could sell their products. Some attention was paid on the industrial sector when labour industries

and trade ministries were given to Sri Lankans under Donoughmore reforms. The Sri Lanka Bank Commission that investigated into the status of the Sri Lankan industries in 1934 had recommended starting industries to provide industrial products to the local market.

There were problems in exporting goods to Sri Lanka during the World War II which began in 1939. Products like acetic acid, porcelain products, paper, soup and perfumes were produced and they had good demand. Those industries suffered drawbacks because they were unable to compete with the exported products that began to flow back to Sri Lanka after World War II.

A group of World Bank representatives that came to Sri Lanka in 1952 pointed out the importance of starting small scale industries with the help of the government. There was enthusiasm to invest money on industries because the government made their policy on foreign and private investment clear in the 1955 white paper which was issued after the report of the World Bank representatives. After that, the establishment of the first industrial zone in Ekala in 1959 and the Ratmalana industrial zone in 1960 became the landmarks in the policy of industrialization.

Some Landmarks of the Industrial Field after 1960:

- Establishment of People's Bank in 1961 and providing the small scale industrialists with loan facilities.
- Establishment of a standard bureau to decide the standard of local industrial products in 1966.
- Development of industries that produced local consumer goods due to the government industrial policy after 1960.
- Development of local home industries and minor scale industries due to the export substitution policy of the government during 1970–1977.

Export substitution policy means producing alternative local products instead of the products that were exported.

- The government started to continue mega scale industries in vast factories that used raw materials in mega scale in the three decades after obtaining independence. Some examples for such industries are cement, iron and steel, sugar and plywood.

- After 1977 there was a rapid development in export related industries such as garment industry because of the policies followed to attract foreign investors and to encourage the private sector to develop export related industries. The establishment of Mega Colombo Economic Commission in 1978, establishment of export preparation zone at Katunayake in the same year, later the establishment of such zones in Biyagama and Koggala helped the development of the industrial sector.

## ❖ Education

A steady development occurred in the education of the island during the British administration. The number of schools in the country rapidly increased because there arose a desire for education in the minds of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim people during the religious and national renaissance. The children of the poor could enjoy little benefits of education because of the financial difficulties they had when pursuing higher education. Because of this free education policy which provided free education from grade 1 to university was launched as proposed by Mr. C.W.W. Kannangara who was the Minister of Education in the State Council. Every government that came to power after that, continued the free education policy. Some landmarks of education after 1948 are given below;

- Increasing the number of schools around the country by establishing government schools and spending money on education project
- Curriculum development and renovations in teacher training
- Expansion of laboratory and library facilities
- Free supply of textbooks, lunch, medical and dental care services, school uniforms and the improvement of student welfare and support through concessionary transport facilities
- Timely changes in education administration
- Expansion of professional education
- Improvement of higher education by establishing new universities
- Establishment of Ceylon University in 1942 in Colombo
- Shifting the Ceylon University to Peradeniya in 1952
- Transforming the Vidyodaya and Vidyalkankara pirivenas to universities. Later, they were named as Sri Jayawardanapura University and Kelaniya University respectively.
- Establishment of Moratuwa Katubedda University in 1972 and Jaffna University in 1974



### 6.3 Social Welfare

Even the very poor people received a political value because Sri Lanka got the universal franchise in 1931. Politicians started looking into the necessities of the general public because it became a major factor in capturing political power. There had been several social problems that affected the lives of the general public badly due to the fact that Sri Lanka had been a colony for a long time. A significant feature in the government policy was to bring back social justice and annihilate inequality by providing solutions to the long lasting social problems. Some examples for the projects that were launched to bring back social justice after 1948 are,

- development of education in rural areas
- giving priority to the achievements and following competitive examination system in giving jobs
- constitutionalizing of concepts such as; freedom, sovereignty and fundamental rights
- provision of government support to agriculture and fisheries industry through loan schemes and concessionaries

#### ❖ Health Service

Though free health facilities were available in Sri Lanka even before independence, they were limited to city areas. So, special attention was paid on developing health facilities in rural areas after gaining independence. Some examples for the steps taken to improve rural health facilities are establishment of rural hospitals, development of midwifery, maternity and paediatric health services, immunization, conducting medical clinics and improving indigenous medicine etc. As a result, the number that suffered from diseases such as; influenza, phylaria, malaria, tuberculosis, polio went down dramatically.

#### ❖ Other Welfare Facilities

Travel and transport of the country developed during the British rule because they built roads and railways. After the independence, rural roads were developed so that the benefits of the above mentioned transport facilities trickled down to the villages also. As a result, the distance between the village and the city shortened and the facilities that were limited to the cities such as water, electricity and communication reached the villages too.

Exporting of food items became limited because of the obstacles to naval transport due to World War II. The government started giving food concessions because of this. The government had to continue these concessions as a way of minimizing poverty because people had got accustomed to welfare facilities, and the lack of land and less productivity. Here, priority was given to rice concession. A coupon book was issued to everybody to make the rice concession more systematic. It was called as '*Hal Potha –Rice Book*'. A system of stamps was introduced in 1977 instead of the coupon book.

Another problem those poor people faced was the problem of shelter. Several programmes were launched after independence to solve the problem of shelter in rural and city areas. The government took steps to build flats and housing complexes in city areas and gave aids to rural area people to build houses under different housing projects. Sri Lanka was able to achieve a number of victories by launching different welfare projects after gaining independence.

## CHAPTER

# 7

## Significant Revolutions in the World

### Introduction

The word 'revolution' stands for a significant change that occurs in a particular field within a short period of time. Such a change occurred in the industrial sector is called as the industrial revolution. The change that occurred during the religious renaissance in Europe is called as the religious renaissance. There had been several such revolutions in the political field also. The struggle for freedom in America or the American revolution, the French revolution and the Russian revolution are examples for such revolutions. This lesson gives more details about such political revolutions.

### 7.1 Independence Struggle in America

#### ❖ Introduction

The struggle that was staged in order to obtain independence from the British empire by the American state citizens is called as the American independence struggle. Five years after Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas islands in the Caribbean sea, Amerigo Vespucci found the vast mass of land that belongs to the American continent. After that a German geologist used the name 'America' to call that area. Columbus after coming to this American region believed that he came to India. Therefore, he called the natives of that country as Indians. The natives who lived in the northern part of America were called the Red Indians going by their complexion. The Europeans who heard about America which was a huge country full of natural resources started colonizing it in groups. Portugal, Spain, Holland, France and Britain are some European countries that established states in America. There are several reasons that affected the establishment of states in America; they are;

- europeans started searching for new areas where there was more religious freedom because there were fights between Roman Catholics and Protestants.
- aim of a prosperous life by capturing land in new areas for trade.
- the encouragement and enthusiasm given by the rulers of European countries for searching new areas and establishing colonies to enrich their wealth and glory.

### ❖ Colonization by the British

Several European nations colonized America during the one and half centuries after Columbus landed in America. There, the Portuguese and the Spanish colonized the southern part and the British and the French colonized the northern part of America. With the colonies being established by the British in Northern America, United States of America was built.



Fig 7.1 – States established by the British in America

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Virginia      | 8. Delaware        |
| 2. Massachusetts | 9. North Carolina  |
| 3. New York      | 10. New Jersey     |
| 4. New Hampshire | 11. South Carolina |
| 5. Maryland      | 12. Pennsylvania   |
| 6. Connecticut   | 13. Georgia        |
| 7. Rhode Island  |                    |

The colonization in North America that began with the establishment of Virginia State in 1607 by the British continued for about a century. A significant characteristic is the interference of individuals, groups of people and companies rather than the direct influence of the British government in the colonization of America. The British government gave its approval and assistance in colonization. The British who went to Northern America had established thirteen estates by 1733. Their names are given above.

Twelve estates out of those thirteen were started between 1607 and 1682. The last British colony among those thirteen was Georgia. It was established in 1733. The nature of the first states shows that they were not started at the same time. The reasons for their start were also different. One reason for the establishment of these states was the expectation of religious freedom and commercial benefits. Differences existed among these states with regard to composition of population, life style and economic matters. Nevertheless, they began to rise as a separate English speaking community by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### ❖ American States and the British Administration

It was mentioned above that the colonies were established in North America by British companies and different individuals' interference. Those who started colonies took a warrant from the British government. There, they had to work under several conditions. Some of them were the acceptance of the authority of the British government and imposing the same laws that were in Britain, in the new colonies. States were ruled by a governor appointed to each state. There was a legislative council elected from each state to assist the governor. The state citizens followed a local self governance system because of the long distance between the two countries and the absence of a developed communication system. The reasons for this are that the colonies were situated far away from the mother country and Britain could not pay much attention to colonies as it was involved in various battles in Europe. Hence, till about 1763 Britain followed a flexible political policy regarding American states. This led to the development of thoughts about freedom in the minds of state citizens. Yet, they needed the assistance of Britain because they still had to face some problems.

The settlers of American colonies had to face two problems regarding their security before 1763. The first was the threat of the French. The settlers of the colonies wanted the protection of the British because the French power was there to the north of the



British colonies and they tried to consolidate their power. There was a war between the British and the French between 1756 and 1763. It is called the seven year war. France was defeated in this war. The American colonists became free of the France's threat because Britain and France signed a treaty of peace. The main obstacle that disturbed the expansion of the American colonies to west was the Red Indians. When the French were powerful they had connection with the French against the British. This situation changed with the defeat of France. After that the policies continued by the British were able to minimize the threat of the Red Indians.

Americans no longer needed the British assistance regarding its protection because the power of France was lost when they were defeated in the seven year war and the Red Indians' threat was diminished with new defence strategies.

### ❖ Reasons for the Freedom Struggle

The British economic policy and commercial activities were continued in a way that was beneficial to Britain. Thus, it was prohibited to produce in states, things that were produced in Britain. Apart from that, tobacco, sugar, cotton, bee wax corn, bronze that were produced in the states should only be sold to Britain. The other products were also allowed to export only via Britain. Further, there was a condition that the states should not compete with Britain regarding production or trade. Though these policies brought economic disadvantages to the people in states, they got a stable market because of Britain. On the other hand, because the British laws did not function too strictly in the colonies, they could engage in illegal transactions with other nations and reduce their losses. Because of the above reasons there was no strong protest against the British economic system and laws in American states till about 1763. Yet, because of the new laws introduced by Britain after 1763, there were disparities between the two countries. This generated new ideas about freedom.

Britain had to bear a huge cost in the seven year war and as a result of it their debts increased. The British believed that the American states too should bear a part of those debts and interest. Therefore, the British Prime Minister, George Granville decided to systemize tax collection in the American states. He tightened the naval patrol in order to stop illegal transactions. More tax bills were passed to increase the income that was gained from America. Three bills that were passed between 1764 and 1765 were;

1. Sugar Act
2. Currency Note Act
3. Stamp Act

According to the Sugar Act, more British naval forces were sent to the coastal areas resulting in fights between people and the naval officers. The Currency Note Act prohibited issuing of currency notes by states to pay debts. As a result, the people in states had to pay debts in gold or silver. While there were increasing protests against these two acts by the people in states, Britain passed a Stamp Bill on 1765. According to this act a tax was charged from all printed documents and warrants. The stamp levy affected the high class people in American society such as traders, lawyers and printers and they started organizing protests. There were increasing protests against this act and the people in America refused to pay the stamp levy. People united in organizing these protests against the levies on tea, glass, paper other than the above mentioned taxes. In another bill passed in Britain, the American states were ordered to provide accommodation and financial allocation for the British forces that were placed in America. When people started protests against these acts, Britain started to use repressive actions such as dissolving of constitutional councils etc. Therefore, the Americans started to organize and struggle for independence. When this situation is summarized, several reasons for the American revolution can be identified.

#### ❖ Reasons for the American Revolution

- ▶ Americans were used to a self governing system with less interference from Britain.
- ▶ The economic policy followed by Britain which was more beneficial for Britain itself.
- ▶ The British government's inability to understand the expectation of those who lived in states.
- ▶ New laws and bills passed after 1763
- ▶ Britain's attempt to suppress the reasonable struggle of the people in states.
- ▶ The desire for freedom among the people in states.

#### ❖ Struggle for Freedom

Struggles that arose against the new acts and taxes imposed by the British after 1763 kindled a desire for freedom among the people who lived in states. The strongest protest came against the stamp levy. There, the struggle developed to refuse not only stamps but also British products. According to the tradition in Britain those days, the power of imposing taxes was exercised by the parliament. The people in states believed that the British parliament had no power to impose taxes for their country

because no member from states represented the parliament. This idea quickly passed over to the American states and the slogan “**no member, no tax**” came out. That became the slogan of the American freedom struggle. The protests that came out against economic matters thus became a political issue.

The British cancelled the Stamp Act because of the protests that came against it. But, they declared that the British government had the power to impose laws regarding the American states. The British government which understood that the Americans were against the direct taxes like stamp levy, imposed several custom duties in 1767 in order to get their income increased. Thus, custom duties were imposed upon items such as glass, lead, paper, tea which were imported to America. Several fights occurred because of the attempt of Britain to obtain these taxes and the protests were staged by the people in states against those attempts. Five people died in Boston when the British forces fired at such a protest campaign. Because of such acts, bitter feelings about Britain emerged in the minds of the Americans. Britain had to suffer heavy losses than the income they got because the people in the states boycotted the British products. Therefore, all taxes were abolished except the tax on tea in 1770. The tax on tea continued to prove the British power to impose taxes for America rather than to get an income.

In another bill passed in 1773, Britain gave power to one company to supply tea to American states. This created trouble to the traditional tea sale of the American traders. Some Americans who were furious about this decision obstructed the trade companies to unload tea in America.

In December 1773, Boston citizens who entered under disguise a ship with tea that had docked in Boston harbour threw 342 tea containers into the sea. This incident which is known as the ‘**Boston Tea Party**’ is believed to be the beginning of the American revolution. In reply to this, the British took steps to close down the Boston harbour till the loss of tea was compensated. In addition to that, they took steps to reform the administration of Massachusetts and Georgia states by imposing laws without taking the ideas of the people into consideration. The people of states who were angry about these submissive steps rallied to Philadelphia and conducted a convention. This is treated as the first continental convention in the history of the American revolution.



Fig 7.2 – Boston Tea Party

The Philadelphia convention was a landmark in the American freedom struggle. It was declared that the British parliament had no authority in imposing laws for American states, in this convention where 12 states were represented. Further proposals were passed to boycott the British products and to make people of states armed for their security. After this, the battle between the British government and American states intensified. Many people died in an armed battle between the forces of the two parties in 1775 in Lexington, America. Later the state representatives got together in Philadelphia again and decided to organize state soldiers as a continental force. **George Washington** was appointed the commander of that army. A committee was appointed in this meeting to obtain foreign aid for the American freedom struggle.

After setting the background to face the British forces, the united representative bureau issued the statement of America's independence on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1776. This document exclaimed that human beings have rights from birth that cannot be deprived of and they establish governments to protect them and declared the independence of America. The British did not agree with this and started war against the American states. These battles continued for several years. During the first two years of the fights, the British forces became victorious. But, after some time they began to fail. They had to face difficulties because they were fighting in an unknown land, thousands of miles away from their motherland. France supported the American forces during this war. Later Spain and Holland too joined the opposition of Britain. As a result, the American freedom struggle became problematic for Britain. Britain offered to have peace talks in 1783 because they had suffered losses in several battles that took place in America. As a result America was accepted as an independent country in the Paris Peace Pact signed in 1783. After that in 1789 Americans passed a new constitution. Thus George Washington became the first president in America.

## ❖ Results of the Freedom Struggle

Thirteen states that were governed separately by Britain got together and won independence marking a landmark in the world history. By that time, there were several other countries, in Asian and American continents which existed as colonies of European countries. The freedom struggle of America set an example to those countries also. Some other results of the American revolution are;

- ▶ the birth of the independent country called United States of America
- ▶ an incident which displayed the value of independence to the whole human kind
- ▶ generating an enthusiasm on human rights in the world
- ▶ the first written unified constitution

## 7.2 French Revolution

The uprising of the French people against the monarchy of France in 1789 and the establishment of a new ruling system is called the 'French revolution'. As a result of the French revolution, there emerged a great attention on human rights in France and later it spread into the other countries in the world.

France became a country with glory in Europe by the 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. They had marked a significant development in foreign trade and industrialization. The condition of the french farmers was better than the other countries. France had become a significant country in Europe in the aspect of intellectuals and social customs and traditions. Yet, due to the weak administration of their rulers, there were several political, social and economic problems in France. Louis XVI was the most responsible character for this demise. People started struggling for their rights based on freedom, equity and brotherhood against the corrupted ruling of Louis XVI. People protested against the monarchy in 1789 because they were under heavy suppression by those rulers. There were several reasons that resulted such an environment in France.

## ❖ Political Reasons of the French Revolution

Before the revolution, it was a monarchy that existed in France. The dynasty that governed France was called Bourbon Monarchy. Louis XIV and Louis XVI were famous kings of that dynasty. Kings believed that the kingship was anointed on



them by the god. All constitutional, executive and judiciary powers were centralized to the king. King Louis XIV who was mesmerized by this unlimited power once exclaimed, “I am the kingdom”. He further exclaimed, “whatever anticipated by me is lawful”. He enjoyed the power to arrest anybody with no any lawsuit and imprison



Fig 7.3 – Louis XVI

for life time. People of France bitterly criticized this power. The king used this power to suppress his personal and political enemies and they were imprisoned in the prison called Bastille.

Therefore, the first attack of the French revolution was suffered by the Bastille prison which was a symbol of corrupted ruling system under a monarch.

The luxurious life spent by the king was another aspect that increased the displeasure of people. The Versailles palace where the king lived was a massive palace covering several acres. It was full of ponds, flower gardens and other decorations. The king’s luxurious life style can be understood when his palace is seen.



Fig 7.4 – Versailles palace



Fig 7.5 – Garden of the palace



Fig 7.6 – Inside the palace



Fig 7.7 – A bedroom in the palace

The relationship between the king and the people was distanced because the king lived in an enclosed luxurious palace leading a separate life. The general public were not allowed in the palace. Only the priests and aristocrats could enter the palace. The king got news about the country from the aristocrats. They created a completely distorted picture about the country.



Fig 7.8 – Front gate of the of Versailles palace

This distancing between the king made the people's frustration grow into a revolution.



Fig 7.9 – Queen Marie Antoinette

Mary Antoinette was a very proud woman. She had interfered in the kings ruling, exploiting his excessive power and weaknesses.

The French monarchy consisted of an advisory board headed by the king and a bench of ministers that functioned under the above mentioned advisory board. This monarchy was highly corrupted. The local administration that was in the hands of the aristocrats was extremely inefficient. Therefore, the government appointed a group of officers called “intendant” for local administration. But, the battle between the aristocrats and new officers made people suffer because the congruence of the administration was broken.

People did not have a chance of complaining about their problems or protesting against the monarchy however much they had to suffer.

There was a board consisting of people’s representatives which was called “States General Council” where the problems of the general public were discussed. Yet, it was not summoned for 175 years. Therefore the corrupted and inefficient administration that existed in France monarchy led to a revolution in France.

### ❖ Social Aspect of the French Revolution

By the time the revolution began there existed a feudal society in France. The feudal system was a monarchy that was run with the help of aristocrats who had captured land in masses.

There were three social strata as priests, aristocrats and general public other than the royal family by the time of the revolution. Priests and aristocrats enjoyed all the social benefits. Among the general public there were three groups as middle class, farmers and labourers. Aristocrats and the priests were the minority whereas general public was the majority. The middle class was a group that had earned money by trade and other business transactions. Yet, they did not have any political recognition.

In countries like Britain, the middle class had got political power but in France, the middle class was disheartened because of the authoritarian power of the aristocrats.

Priests were exempted from taxes and they lived on the tax money of the general public. They were very rich. Most of the lands in France were owned by aristocrats. Some of the privileges enjoyed by them were;

- ▶ permission to fish and hunt in any place of the country.
- ▶ farmers were to go to the grinding mills, wine presses, bakeries owned by

aristocrats for their requirements and they had to pay very high charges.

- ▶ the aristocrats could collect tax from the lands of farmers.
- ▶ they were exempted from government taxes.

It was the middle class that was educated and rich in the French society. Yet they did not have proper recognition for their status. Though they were educated, all government posts were given to uneducated, inefficient aristocrats. Because of this situation, there emerged a concept that one's standard should be measured based on their ability and wealth not on their birth. This provided the background for the emergence of the concept of equality and it later laid the foundation for the democracy.

Among the under privileged in France the most suffered groups were farmers. They represented 92% of the French population. They though owned some land and worked very hard, had to pay taxes to inefficient aristocrats, were suppressed by heavy taxes and cost of living.

#### ❖ **Economic Conditions that led to the French Revolution**

By the time of the revolution, the French treasury was completely bankrupt. Some reasons for that were,

- ▶ the excessive expenditure for the luxurious lives of the king and his family
- ▶ unnecessary expenditure for war

France had to bear losses because of the seven year war with Britain and supporting the American freedom struggle.

- ▶ Inefficient tax system

The heavy taxes were another reason for the French revolution. The general public of France had to pay about 60% of their income as tax. There were so many types of taxes that made people suffer. Taille, Gabelle and Capitation are three examples for such taxes.

- ▶ **Taille** – A levy charged on houses and lands of the general public. This was different from area to area. Cities like Lion and Paris were free of this tax.

- ▶ **Gabelle** - This was charged on salt. Every adult had to buy seven pounds of salt every year. The price of salt differed from area to area. Because of that, salt was transported illegally from areas where salt was cheap to areas where salt was expensive. The transportation of salt was a government monopoly and thousands of people who transported salt illegally were imprisoned.
- ▶ **Capitation** – This was introduced in 1695 as a levy charged from everybody. But when in function, the cost had to be completely borne by the general public.

Because of the area based administration system in France, laws and taxes were different from area to area. This situation became an obstacle to local and foreign trade and economic development of France. The middle class people who were engaged in trade had to pay high taxes due to these taxes, laws and regulations. It is reported that a water vessel that carried wine from southern France to Paris had to pay taxes at 40 places and for that purpose they had to spend additional two weeks in addition to the cost. There was no security for the money invested by middle class people because the state treasury was bankrupt. This was an obstacle for the development of the middle class. The middle class expected an economic system free from government interference. But the French monarchy failed to provide the efficient administration on economic security expected by the middle class. Those were the reasons for the middle class to lead the revolution.

### ❖ Philosophical Ideas that helped the Revolution



Fig 7.10 Montesquieu

The emerging bitter feelings against the monarchy were catalyzed by French philosophical ideas. Philosophers like Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau expressed ideas that encouraged the revolution.

**Montesquieu** in his book, “The Spirit of Laws” explained the harm in allowing one person to exercise the whole power of a nation and stated that such a condition led to dictatorship. Therefore, he suggested dividing power into three institutions as legislature, parliament and judiciary and he further explained that a dictatorship can be avoided in such a way.



Voltaire explained the importance of expressing one's own ideas freely. He severely criticized the monarchy and the monopoly of the church.



Fig 7.11 Rousseau

Rousseau presented the concept people's sovereignty through his book called "The Social Contract". He exclaimed that the king must work for the betterment of people; if otherwise, the people have the rights to chase away such rulers. His ideas became the foundation of equality and people's sovereignty.

On the other hand, the French soldiers who went to support the American freedom struggle had identified concept of freedom there and started to activate it in France encouraging the French revolution.

## ❖ The Revolution

By 1789 the closest reason for the French revolution is the situation arose due to the financial problems in France where there had been continuous protests. A reform in taxes was necessary to settle that situation. The king had to summon the council called, States General Council. There were problems on the agenda of the meeting because the bureau had not met for 175 years. The representatives of aristocrats, priests and general public were there in the council. Nevertheless, the aristocrats demanded that they and the priests should meet as a noble board. They wanted to get together with the priests and defeat the proposals of the lower class people. The king also agreed to this but the lower class people disagreed. Because of this crisis the third class which represented the general public met separately.

The third class which called themselves the National Bureau gathered in an indoor tennis court and took oaths not to dismiss until a new constitution has been designed for France because the king closed the hall where the aristocrats met due to their influence. This is called the "**oath in the tennis court**". The general public of France supported that group.



Fig 7.12 – Attack on Bastille prison

The people of Paris who were fed up of the monarchy gathered in the city with arms. The people of France attacked the Bastille prison which was considered a symbol of injustice of the French monarchy and released the prisoners on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789. That was the beginning of the French revolution.

The rebellion started in France, spread all around the country. Louis XVI could not control this situation. As a result the king's power was lost and both central and local administration went into the hands of the rebels. Rebels could make the country calm by establishing a national security force and rebel committees under the leader called 'Lafayette'. King Louis XVI and Queen Antoinette were tried under the rebels and both of them were sentenced to death.

### ❖ Results of the French Revolution

There were several changes in the political, economic and social sectors of France due to the French revolution. Through this revolution in which people rose against a powerful monarchy and unjust social economic system, world was gifted with numerous experiences and examples. Some of those results are;

#### ❖ the interest on fundamental human rights all over the world

The french revolutionaries published a human rights convention in 1791. It explained that the fundamental human rights are rights that the people are born with and not something that is given by the rulers. Some concepts mentioned in the convention are;

- ❖ every human being should have equal rights because everybody is born a free individual.
- ❖ every citizen has a right to be a part of imposing law.
- ❖ every citizen should have the right to express their ideas freely and follow any religion they like.

The three concepts; freedom, equality and brotherhood which were the main slogans of the French revolution had high regard in the three quotations of the above mentioned human rights convention. People who were suppressed around the world by social inequality were blessed with this. As a result many countries in the world later legalized the fundamental human rights in their constitution.

There were so many changes in France due to the French revolution. They can be considered as results of the revolution. Some such changes are;

- ▶ downfall of the French monarchy
- ▶ relief for French farmers and labourers
- ▶ instability of political states in France

Governments changed in quick succession after the revolution because those who led the revolution had different political views. This situation lasted from 1789 to 1799. Because of this unstable political situation, Napoleon Bonaparte, an army officer captured power in France in 1799. After that, it was a completely new political system that existed in France.

### ↓ **ACTIVITY 1**

Write an essay on “Human rights won by French people”.

## **7.3 Russian Revolution**

Russia was an empire which covered almost one sixth of the world land by the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A systematic organization was needed to govern this huge empire. The rulers in Russia those days carried out a stern administration with the help of army forces, police and intelligence services. The deism of the Christian church helped this administration a lot. Under this condition the rulers of Russia, Tsars worked like dictators. Majority farmers, and the labour class created as a result of the industrial development were under the hard grip of the church and aristocrats due to the feudal social system that existed in Russia. People had to suffer a lot because Russia too took part in World War I. Because of that the theme of the revolution was; peace, land and food. Two revolutions occurred under these themes in March

and October 1917. Let's now probe deep into this revolution which developed with the purpose of creating a society with no class boundaries.

### ❖ Reasons for the Revolution

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Russia as well as in France, a corrupted dictating monarchy existed. Tsars who became the kings of Russia worked according to anointed kingship. They believed that kingship was granted to them by god and led a corrupted ruling system paying attention only to their needs. People were made to suffer by charging taxes in order to increase the income of the government. The kings who followed the anointed kingship paid more attention to religion without trying to solve the economic and social problems of the people.

When the economic and social system of Russia was considered, it seemed that there existed an agricultural economic system based on a feudal social system. Land was inherited by aristocrats. Farmers who were the general public of the country, farmers had to work like slaves. Aristocrats were the rich and slaves were considered a part of their wealth. Farmers had to suffer a lot because they had to pay a part of their harvest earned by cultivating the land of aristocrats as tax to the church, government and aristocrats. A labour community had emerged as a result of the industrialization that spread in Russia by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Anyway, their condition was better than that of farmers. But they were a small minority. The middle class was also a minority and most of them were government servants. While this situation was existing in Russia they lost the war with Japan in 1904 and 1905. It was one of the closest reasons to rise a rebellion against the government in 1905. This rebellion against the government that was started as farmers' rebellions and labour strikes was joined by the rebels of the navy. Though the rebels could not win this fight, it became a good omen for a struggle against the government.

Though Tsars made some political reforms understanding that people were rising against the government, people were not satisfied with that and started launching struggles again. There the king ignored the protests and started repressing people. Because of that, the Bolshevik party which was led by Lenin, the leader of rebels stepped out of the council called Duma and started to function secretly. At the same time, World War I was started in 1914. Russia too joined in it as a part of allied forces. Russia had to suffer great losses due to the war. There, Russian farmers and labourers were recruited in the army in masses. It was done against their consent.

As a result, farming was disturbed because there were no experienced farmers. The production of necessary items such as food, medicine, manure was disturbed because a majority of the factories were used for armament production. Because of that, there was a shortage of food in the country and food prices increased a lot. People suffered a lot because the price of bread went up. People were under pressure owing to the above reasons. It lasted in 1917.

### ❖ Revolution in March, 1917

The March revolution in 1917 began with a strike in a textile factory. It grew into a mega strike within three days. All underprivileged groups gathered in this. People protested along roads demanding for bread. Even the soldiers in Tsar's government joined these protests. The king had to give up his throne in March 1917 because he could not control people's protests. After this, the administration power was taken by a group of rebels led by a leader called Kerensky. They too did not have solutions to the problems of the country.

The necessity of the country by that time was land for farmers, peace for soldiers and food for all. Because of that, the farmers started to engage in subversive activities by setting fire to lands, robbing and destroying the landowners. At the same time, the rulers of the new government worked in unison with capitalists going against the expectations of the underprivileged. Soldiers too became disheartened because the new government too continued the war.

### ❖ Revolution in October 1917

At the same time, Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin worked with the aim of creating a government of farmers and labourers by establishing organizations called Soviet Bureaus all over the country. There were two political groups as Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the beginning of the Russian revolution. Mensheviks were the minority that believed that the problems of people can be solved through minor reforms. The majority were the Bolsheviks who believed in communism. Their aim was to build a class free society based on communist ideas by breaking down the capitalist economic system. This organization which was headed by Lenin and Trotsky received the support of underprivileged groups such as labourers, farmers, soldiers etc. The temporary government which was established after the March revolution, was disliked by the people because they could not solve the burning problems of people. V.I. Lenin who noticed the emerging objection of people against



the temporary government said, **“If we do not grasp power at this moment, history will not sympathize on us.”** Accordingly the revolution was started in October 1917. Armed forces captured the major government centres (railways, banks, post offices). Rebels protested along streets under the theme, ‘peace, land, and food’.



Fig 7.13 – V.I Lenin



Fig 7.14 – Leon Trotsky

The middle class and soldiers who understood that no protection could be expected from the government did not show any opposition to the protestors. This revolution was supported by all but rulers. This proves how critical was the pressure felt by the Russians. That is how they could win the revolution without much retaliation. According to the world accepted calendar the revolution took place in November, but according to the calendar used in Russia it was October. Hence, this revolution became to be known as 1917 October revolution.

### ❖ The Results of the Revolution

The major result of this revolution is the establishment of a government by Bolsheviks headed by Lenin by defeating the government led by Kerensky. The Bolshevik party later became the Communist party. Lenin's government could end the war with Germany and bring peace to the country. Thus, Russia became a peaceful country. That was the expectation of the soldiers. Lenin's new government abolished the personal land ownership that existed under the feudal system. The land taken over to the government was distributed among farmers to be cultivated as small farms and later they were turned into big communal farms. Thus, farmers started cultivating under communal ownership. The farmers received the land they expected under this system. All the factories in Russia were nationalized and their management was given to Soviet Bureaus of labourers under the guidance of the communist party. In addition to this, banks and transportation too were nationalized.

The Tsar's administration was completely wiped out and instead of that a new group of officers was appointed that was selected based on the soviet bureaus consisting of labourers and farmers. Russia was named as United States of Soviet Russia after the revolution. Thus, Russia became a country that accepted the socialist concept.

### ❖ Socialist Philosophy

Socialism is a political point of view that follows the communist concepts such as the acceptance of common rights of people for the wealth of the society, providing every person equal opportunity to develop their skills and equal distribution of production gains to all. Therefore;

- ▶ priority was given to common development and common needs over personal needs
- ▶ wiping out of social injustice and inequality
- ▶ building up of a noble human society that treats everybody in comradeship shedding all class differences in the society; were the characteristics of this society.

The spreading of socialist philosophy all over the world is another result of the Russian revolution. Socialism and capitalism became the two major trends in the society after World War II. Therefore, most of the countries in the world that were favourable towards Russia included aspects of socialism into their constitutions. e.g. :- China, East Germany, South Korea, Cuba are some of them.

As mentioned at the beginning of this lesson after the American revolution, the powerful country called America was created and a capitalist group of countries camped around America accepting the capitalist economic system.

After the Russian revolution, another group of countries camped around Russia accepting socialism. The countries that did not belong to either camp became non-aligned countries. Sri Lanka is a country that follows non-aligned principles.

#### ↓ **ACTIVITY**

Write an essay on the positive characteristics of socialism.

# 8 World Wars and Conventions

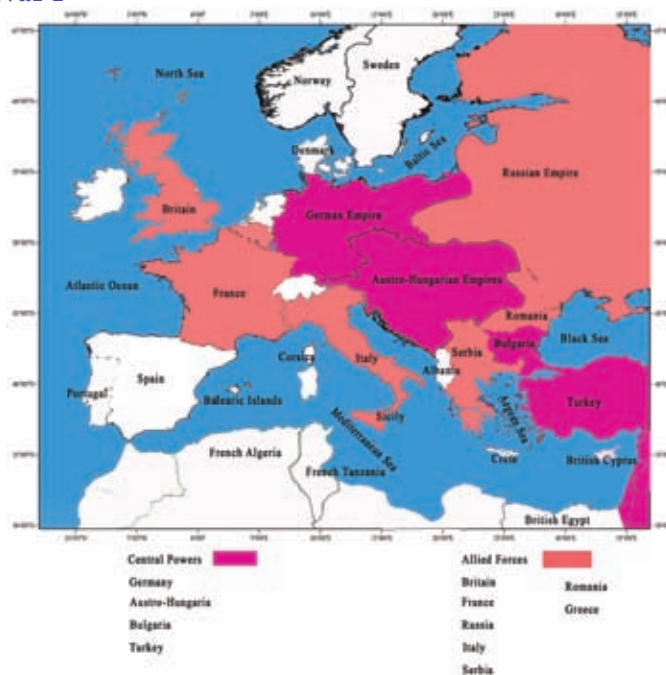
## 8

# World Wars and Conventions

# Introduction

The two world wars that affected the whole world took place during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both of these wars started in Europe and then spread into the other continents. These battles are called world wars because a number of powerful countries took part in these wars and affected the whole world. World leaders stepped into different conventions in order to avoid further world wars because of the disaster caused in the first two world wars. This lesson focuses its attention on the factors that led to the world wars, their nature, results as well as the United Nation's Organization and its importance.

## 8.1 World War I



The war that spread throughout the world between 1914 and 1918 is named as World War I. The history does not know any war that invaded every continent before this. This war began in Europe and later spread into their colonies also. Thereafter, when United States too joined the war, it became a world war that invaded all continents.

### ❖ Reasons for World War I

- France and Germany became enemies in the attempt of making a united Germany.



Fig 8.1 Otto von Bismarck

There was no country called Germany at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century though there were about 350 small states where people who spoke the German language. It was the skillful leader called Otto von Bismarck who created the country called Germany by making those small states united. Bismarck established the united Germany in 1870 and started a war with France to show the strength of Germany. France suffered heavy losses in this war. Since then these two neighbouring countries became arch rivals.

- Behaviour of German Emperor, William II

The creator of Germany, Bismarck was satisfied with the establishment of the powerful and united country called Germany. He was not interested in colonization. But the German emperor (Keizer) in 1887, King William II was not so satisfied. His aim was to establish a German empire through colonization by acting against the aims of Bismarck.

In this attempt the foreign affairs policy

of Germany generated suspicion among other nations in the world. German forces



Fig 8.2 German Emperor William II

were strengthened in order to establish a German empire. Britain was distressed with this fact and strengthened their forces in competition to Germany. Thus, there emerged a tensed situation in Europe.

- Competition for colonies

By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the powerful countries in Europe had entered a competition of establishing colonies in Asia and Africa. Britain could claim the highest number of colonies here. The runners up were Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain and Holland.

Germany that was able to achieve a rapid industrial development after the establishment of a united Germany, wanted to find a market for their products. The other nations were suspicious about Germany's approach towards Asia and Africa. Specially, Britain took this as a challenge to their existing power. This competition for colonies manured hostile feelings between powerful nations who were in opposition.

- Competition for Armaments and Development of Racism

Since the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, every powerful country in Europe (Germany, Britain, France, and Russia) believed in being armed to increase their power. A German commander, Von Volk has said, "you will have to be armed for 50 years to protect what you have gained in 5 years by means of armaments." This shows the dependence on armaments the Germans had. There was a competition for armament production among some European countries because they depended on armament production.

On the other hand, because Germany and Italy became united based on nationalism, a nationalistic trend began to grow in Europe. A special characteristic in nationalism is that they treat their country in high regard considering other countries as inferior to them. This situation created problems among nations.

- Foreign Policy of Bismarck that tried to isolate France in Europe

Bismarck of Germany who defeated France in war in 1870 captured the two fertile areas called Alsace and Lorraine that belonged to France. Because of that Germany