Social Science

India and the Contemporary World – I

Textbook in History for Class IX

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राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

2018-19

ISBN 81-7450-536-9

First Edition
March 2006 Phalguna 1927

Reprinted
February 2007 Magha 1928
December 2007 Pausa 1929
January 2009 Magha 1930
January 2010 Magha 1931
November 2010 Saka 1932
January 2012 Magha 1933
October 2012 Asvina 1934
November 2013 Kartika 1935
December 2014 Pausa 1936
February 2016 Magha 1937
December 2016 Pausa 1938
December 2017 Pausa 1939

PD 650T HK

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₹ 115.00

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Printed on 80 GSM paper with NCERT watermark

Published at the Publication Division by the Secretary, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016 and printed at Chandra Prabhu Offset Printing Works (P.) Ltd., C-40, Sector-8, Noida - 201 301 (U.P.)

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Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework, 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognize that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavor by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

NCERT appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the Advisory Group on Social Science, Professor Hari Vasudevan and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor Neeladri Bhattacharya for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development

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of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations, which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G. P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

Director

New Delhi
20 December 2005

National Council of Educational
Research and Training

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History and a Changing World

As we live our life in the present and read about the happenings around the world in newspapers, we do not usually pause to think about the longer history of these events. We see change before our eyes, but do not always ask, why are things changing? Very often we do not even notice that things were not the same in the past. History is about tracking these changes, understanding how and why they are taking place, how the present world in which we live has evolved.

The focus of the history books of Classes IX and X is on the emergence of the contemporary world. In earlier classes (VI – VIII) you have read about the history of India. In the next two years (Classes IX and X) you will see how the story of India's pasts is related to the larger history of the world. We cannot understand what was happening within India unless we see this connection. This is particularly true about a world in which economies and societies have become increasingly inter-connected. History cannot be always contained within defined territorial boundaries.

In any case there is no reason to think of national territorial boundaries as the only valid unit of our study. There are times when a focus on a small region - a locality, a village, an island, a desert tract, a forest, a mountain - helps us understand the rich variety in people's lives and histories that make up the life of the nation. We cannot talk of the nation without the people, nor the locality without the nation. Borrowing from the statement of a famous French historian, Fernand Braudel, we may also say: it is not possible to talk of the nation without the world.

The textbooks you will read in the next two years will combine these different levels of focus. We move between a close focus on particular communities and regions to the history of the nation; between the histories as they unfold in India and Europe to the developments in Africa and Indonesia. Our focus will shift according to themes.

What are these themes and how are they organised? What is the logic behind the choices of themes?

All too often in the past, the history of the modern world was associated with the history of the west. It was as if change and progress happened only in the west. As if the histories of other countries were frozen in time, they were motionless and static. People in the west were seen as enterprising, innovative, scientific, industrious, efficient and willing to change. People in the east - or in Africa and South America - were considered traditional, lazy, superstitious, and resistant to change.

For many years now these notions have been questioned by historians. We know now that every society has had its history of change. So in understanding the making of the modern world we have to look at the way different societies experienced and

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fashioned these changes. We have to see how the histories of these different countries were inter-linked. Changes in one society shaped the other; developments in India and other colonies impacted on Europe. The contemporary world was not shaped by the west alone.

So the history of the contemporary world is not only about the growth of industries and trade, technology and science, railways and roads. It is equally about the forest dwellers and pastoralists, shifting cultivators and small peasants. All these social groups in diverse ways have played their part in making the contemporary world what it is. And it is this varied world which you will learn about this year.

The textbooks of Classes IX and X have eight chapters each, divided into three sections. We hope you will enjoy reading all the chapters. But you are requried to read only five chapters: two each from Sections I and II, and one from Section III.

Section I, in both books, focuses on some of the events and processes that are critical to the understanding of the modern world. This year you will read about the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and Nazism in this section. Next year you will know about nationalism and anti-colonial movements, in India and elsewhere.

Section II will move from dramatic events to the routines of people's lives – their economic activities and livelihood patterns. You will see what the contemporary world has meant for forest people, pastoralists and peasants; and how they have coped with and defined the nature of these changes. Next year you will read more about the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, capitalism and colonialism.

Section III will introduce you to histories of everyday life. You will read about the history of sport and clothing (Class IX) and about printing and reading, novels and newspapers (Class X). Why should we study the history of sport and clothing, you might ask. Do we not read about them every day in newspapers and magazines?

True, we read a lot about such issues. But what we read does not tell us about their histories. They give us no idea of how things have evolved and why they change. Once we learn to ask historical questions about all that is around us, history in fact acquires a new meaning. It allows us to see everyday things from a different angle. We realise that even seemingly ordinary things have a history that is important for us to know.

To know how the contemporary world has evolved we will therefore move from India to Africa, from Europe to Indonesia. We will read both about the big events and important ideas, as well as everyday life. In the process of these journeys you will discover how history can be exciting, how it can help us understand the world in which we live.

Neeladri Bhattacharya
Chief Advisor - History

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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a [1]**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the [2][unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

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1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

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Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a collective effort of a large number of historians, teachers, and educationalists. Each chapter has been written, discussed and revised over many months. We would like to thank all those who have participated in these discussions.

A large number of people have read individual chapters of the book. We thank in particular the members of the Monitoring Committee who commented on an earlier draft; Narayani Gupta and Kumkum Roy who provided constant encouragement and support, and Richard Evans who read the Chapter on Nazism. We have tried to incorporate most of the suggestions that have been made on the manuscript.

Illustrating the book would have been impossible without the help of many institutions and individuals. The Maasai Association, the North Dakota State University Libraries, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the UNESCO PARZOR project and the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi provided photographs and reproductions from their archive at very short notice. Some of the pictures have been accessed from the collections of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland, Rabindra Bhawan Photo Archives, Viswabharati University, Shantiniketan. Sanjay Barnela, Mukul Mangalik, and Vasant Saberwal allowed generous access to their large collection of photographs of pastoralists and forest dwellers. We turned to Malvika Karlekar for help in acquiring some of the pictures for the chapter on clothing, and to Ram Guha for photographs on cricket. Anish Vanaik helped in our photo research.

Shalini Advani did several rounds of copy editing with care, and ensured that the text was accessible to children. Shyama Warner has done more than proof reading. We thank them both for meeting our impossible deadlines and being so involved with the project.

We have made every effort to acknowledge credits at the end of the book; but we apologise in advance for any omissions that may have inadvertently taken place.

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SECTION I



EVENTS AND PROCESSES

In Section I, you will read about the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the rise of Nazism. In different ways all these events were important in the making of the modern world.

Chapter I is on the French Revolution. Today we often take the ideas of liberty, freedom and equality for granted. But we need to remind ourselves that these ideas also have a history. By looking at the French Revolution you will read a small part of that history. The French Revolution led to the end of monarchy in France. A society based on privileges gave way to a new system of governance. The Declaration 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. The anti-colonial movements in India and China, Africa and South America, produced ideas that were innovative and original, but they spoke in a language that gained currency only from the late eighteenth century.

In Chapter II, you will read about the coming of socialism in Europe, and the dramatic events that forced the ruling monarch, Tsar Nicholas II, to give up power. The Russian Revolution sought to change society in a different way. It raised the question of economic equality and the well-being of workers and peasants. The chapter will tell you about the changes that were initiated by the new Soviet government, the problems it faced and the measures it undertook. While Soviet Russia pushed ahead with industrialisation and mechanisation of agriculture, it denied the rights of citizens that were essential to the working of a democratic society. The ideals of socialism,

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however, became part of the anti-colonial movements in different countries. Today the Soviet Union has broken up and socialism is in crisis but through the twentieth century it has been a powerful force in the shaping of the contemporary world.

Chapter III will take you to Germany. It will discuss the rise of Hitler and the politics of Nazism. You will read about the children and women in Nazi Germany, about schools and concentration camps. You will see how Nazism denied various minorities a right to live, how it drew upon a long tradition of anti-Jewish feelings to persecute the Jews, and how it waged a relentless battle against democracy and socialism. But the story of Nazism's rise is not only about a few specific events, about massacres and killings. It is about the working of an elaborate and frightening system which operated at different levels. Some in India were impressed with the ideas of Hitler but most watched the rise of Nazism with horror.

The history of the modern world is not simply a story of the unfolding of freedom and democracy. It has also been a story of violence and tyranny, death and destruction.



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The French Revolution

On the morning of 14 July 1789, the city of Paris was in a state of alarm. The king had commanded troops to move into the city. Rumours spread that he would soon order the army to open fire upon the citizens. Some 7,000 men and women gathered in front of the town hall and decided to form a peoples' militia. They broke into a number of government buildings in search of arms.

Finally, a group of several hundred people marched towards the eastern part of the city and stormed the fortress-prison, the Bastille, where they hoped to find hoarded ammunition. In the armed fight that followed, the commander of the Bastille was killed and the prisoners released – though there were only seven of them. Yet the Bastille was hated by all, because it stood for the despotic power of the king. The fortress was demolished and its stone fragments were sold in the markets to all those who wished to keep a souvenir of its destruction.

The days that followed saw more rioting both in Paris and the countryside. Most people were protesting against the high price of bread. Much later, when historians looked back upon this time, they saw it as the beginning of a chain of events that ultimately led to the execution of the king in France, though most people at the time did not anticipate this outcome. How and why did this happen?

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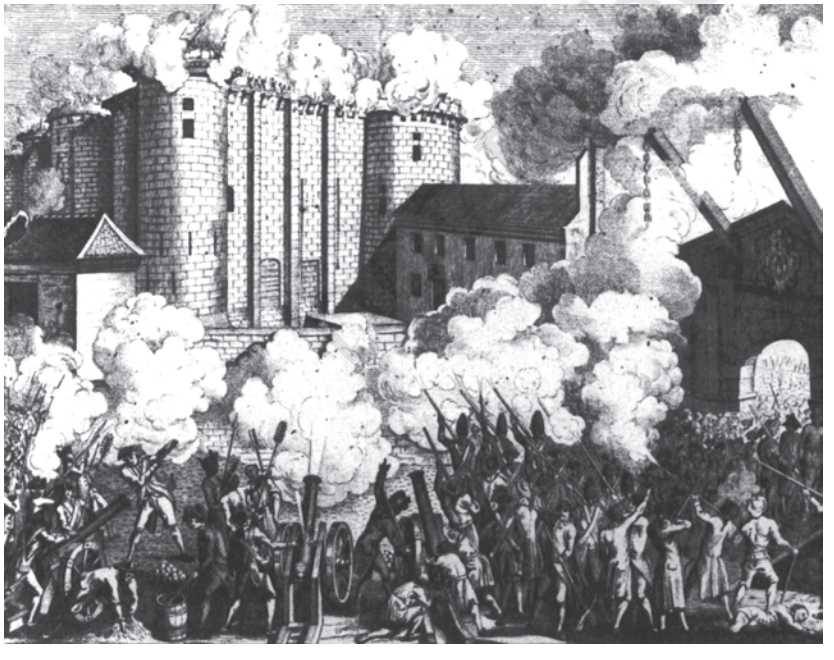


Fig. 1 – Storming of the Bastille.
Soon after the demolition of the Bastille, artists made prints commemorating the event.

1 French Society During the Late Eighteenth Century

In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France. He was 20 years old and married to the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette. Upon his accession the new king found an empty treasury. Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France. Added to this was the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles. Under Louis XVI, France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from the common enemy, Britain. The war added more than a billion ***livres*** to a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion *livres*. Lenders who gave the state credit, now began to charge 10 per cent interest on loans. So the French government was obliged to spend an increasing percentage of its budget on interest payments alone. To meet its regular expenses, such as the cost of maintaining an army, the court, running government offices or universities, the state was forced to increase taxes. Yet even this measure would not have sufficed. French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates, and only members of the third estate paid taxes.

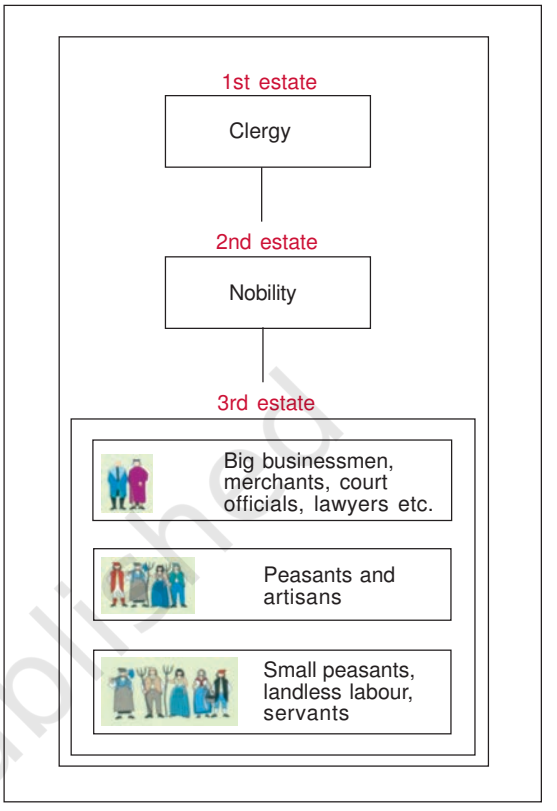


Fig.2 – A Society of Estates.
Note that within the Third Estate some were rich and others poor.

The society of estates was part of the feudal system that dated back to the middle ages. The term Old Regime is usually used to describe the society and institutions of France before 1789.

Fig. 2 shows how the system of estates in French society was organised. Peasants made up about 90 per cent of the population. However, only a small number of them owned the land they cultivated. About 60 per cent of the land was owned by nobles, the Church and other richer members of the third estate. The members of the first two estates, that is, the **clergy** and the nobility, enjoyed certain privileges by birth. The most important of these was exemption from paying taxes to the state. The nobles further enjoyed feudal privileges. These included feudal dues, which they extracted from the peasants. Peasants were obliged to render services to the lord – to work in his house and fields – to serve in the army or to participate in building roads.

The Church too extracted its share of taxes called **tithes** from the peasants, and finally, all members of the third estate had to pay taxes to the state. These included a direct tax, called ***taille,*** and a number of indirect taxes which were levied on articles of everyday consumption like salt or tobacco. The burden of financing activities of the state through taxes was borne by the third estate alone.

New words

Livre – Unit of currency in France, discontinued in 1794
Clergy – Group of persons invested with special functions in the church
Tithe – A tax levied by the church, comprising one-tenth of the agricultural produce
Taille – Tax to be paid directly to the state

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'This poor fellow brings everything, grain, fruits, money, salad. The fat lord sits there, ready to accept it all. He does not even care to grace him with a look.'

'The nobleman is the spider, the peasant the fly.'

'The more the devil has, the more he wants.'

Fig.3 – The Spider and the Fly.
*An **anonymous** etching.*

Activity

Explain why the artist has portrayed the nobleman as the spider and the peasant as the fly.

1.1 The Struggle to Survive

The population of France rose from about 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. This led to a rapid increase in the demand for foodgrains. Production of grains could not keep pace with the demand. So the price of bread which was the staple diet of the majority rose rapidly. Most workers were employed as labourers in workshops whose owner fixed their wages. But wages did not keep pace with the rise in prices. So the gap between the poor and the rich widened. Things became worse whenever drought or hail reduced the harvest. This led to a **subsistence crisis**, something that occurred frequently in France during the Old Regime.

New words

Subsistence crisis – An extreme situation where the basic means of livelihood are endangered
Anonymous – One whose name remains unknown

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1.2 How a Subsistence Crisis Happens

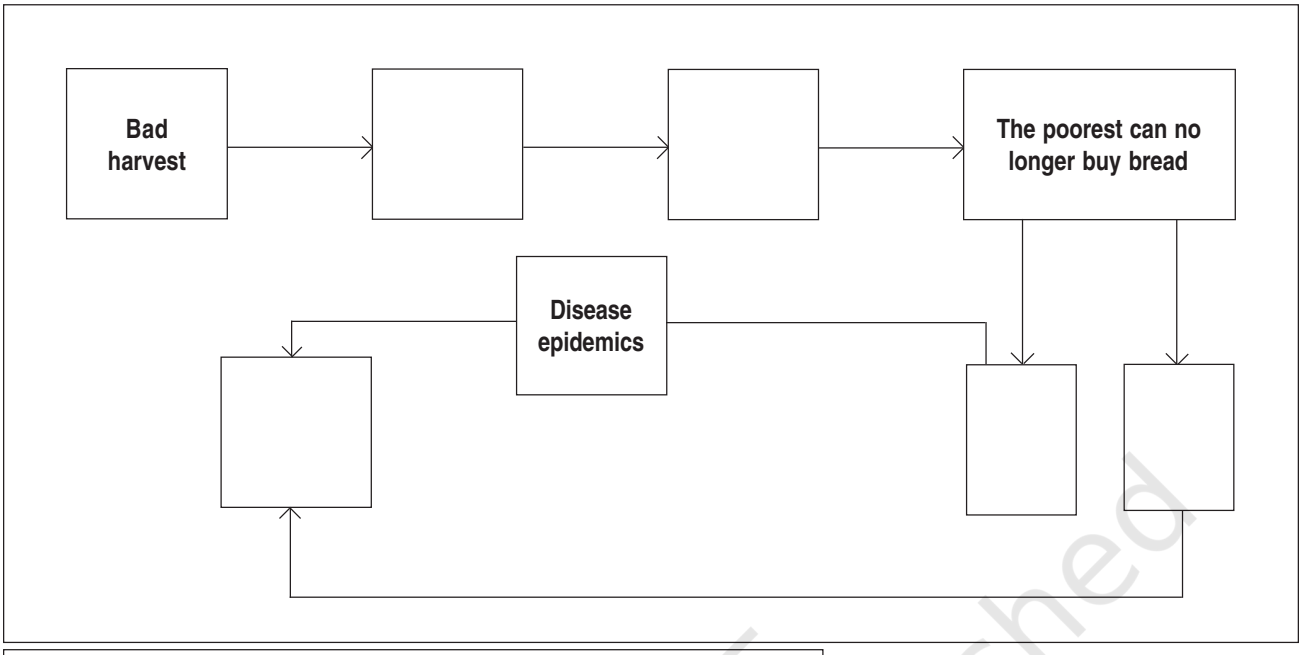


Fig.4 – The course of a subsistence crisis.

Activity

Fill in the blank boxes in Fig. 4 with appropriate terms from among the following:

Food riots, scarcity of grain, increased number of deaths, rising food prices, weaker bodies.

1.3 A Growing Middle Class Envisages an End to Privileges

In the past, peasants and workers had participated in revolts against increasing taxes and food scarcity. But they lacked the means and programmes to carry out full-scale measures that would bring about a change in the social and economic order. This was left to those groups within the third estate who had become prosperous and had access to education and new ideas.

The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of social groups, termed the middle class, who earned their wealth through an expanding overseas trade and from the manufacture of goods such as woollen and silk textiles that were either exported or bought by the richer members of society. In addition to merchants and manufacturers, the third estate included professions such as lawyers or administrative officials. All of these were educated and believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth. Rather, a person's social position must depend on his merit. These ideas envisaging a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all, were put forward by philosophers such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. In his *Two Treatises of Government,* Locke sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right

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of the monarch. Rousseau carried the idea forward, proposing a form of government based on a social contract between people and their representatives. In *The Spirit of the Laws,* Montesquieu proposed a division of power within the government between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. This model of government was put into force in the USA, after the thirteen colonies declared their independence from Britain. The American constitution and its guarantee of individual rights was an important example for political thinkers in France.

The ideas of these philosophers were discussed intensively in salons and coffee-houses and spread among people through books and newspapers. These were frequently read aloud in groups for the benefit of those who could not read and write. The news that Louis XVI planned to impose further taxes to be able to meet the expenses of the state generated anger and protest against the system of privileges.

Source A

Accounts of lived experiences in the Old Regime

1. Georges Danton, who later became active in revolutionary politics, wrote to a friend in 1793, looking back upon the time when he had just completed his studies:

'I was educated in the residential college of Plessis. There I was in the company of important men … Once my studies ended, I was left with nothing. I started looking for a post. It was impossible to find one at the law courts in Paris. The choice of a career in the army was not open to me as I was not a noble by birth, nor did I have a patron. The church too could not offer me a refuge. I could not buy an office as I did not possess a sou. My old friends turned their backs to me … the system had provided us with an education without however offering a field where our talents could be utilised.'

2. An Englishman, Arthur Young, travelled through France during the years from 1787 to 1789 and wrote detailed descriptions of his journeys. He often commented on what he saw.

'He who decides to be served and waited upon by slaves, ill-treated slaves at that, must be fully aware that by doing so he is placing his property and his life in a situation which is very different from that he would be in, had he chosen the services of free and well-treated men. And he who chooses to dine to the accompaniment of his victims' groans, should not complain if during a riot his daughter gets kidnapped or his son's throat is slit.'

Source

Activity

What message is Young trying to convey here? Whom does he mean when he speaks of' 'slaves'? Who is he criticising? What dangers does he sense in the situation of 1787?

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2 The Outbreak of the Revolution

Louis XVI had to increase taxes for reasons you have learnt in the previous section. How do you think he could have gone about doing this? In France of the Old Regime the monarch did not have the power to impose taxes according to his will alone. Rather he had to call a meeting of the Estates General which would then pass his proposals for new taxes. The Estates General was a political body to which the three estates sent their representatives. However, the monarch alone could decide when to call a meeting of this body. The last time it was done was in 1614.

On 5 May 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of the Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. A resplendent hall in Versailles was prepared to host the delegates. The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each, who were seated in rows facing each other on two sides, while the 600 members of the third estate had to stand at the back. The third estate was represented by its more prosperous and educated members. Peasants, artisans and women were denied entry to the assembly. However, their grievances and demands were listed in some 40,000 letters which the representatives had brought with them.

Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote. This time too Louis XVI was determined to continue the same practice. But members of the third estate demanded that voting now be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote. This was one of the democratic principles put forward by philosophers like Rousseau in his book *The Social Contract*. When the king rejected this proposal, members of the third estate walked out of the assembly in protest.

The representatives of the third estate viewed themselves as spokesmen for the whole French nation. On 20 June they assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles. They declared themselves a National Assembly and swore not to disperse till they had drafted a constitution for France that would limit the powers of the monarch. They were led by Mirabeau and Abbé Sieyès. 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.

Some important dates

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, peasant revolts in the countryside.

1791
A constitution is framed to limit the powers of the king and to guarantee basic rights to all human beings.

1792-93
France becomes a republic, the king is beheaded.
Overthrow of the Jacobin republic, a Directory rules France.

1804
Napoleon becomes emperor of France, annexes large parts of Europe.

1815
Napoleon defeated at Waterloo.

Activity

Representatives of the Third Estate take the oath raising their arms in the direction of Bailly, the President of the Assembly, standing on a table in the centre. Do you think that during the actual event Bailly would have stood with his back to the assembled deputies? What could have been David's intention in placing Bailly (Fig.5) the way he has done?

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Fig.5 – The Tennis Court Oath.
Preparatory sketch for a large painting by Jacques-Louis David. The painting was intended to be hung in the National Assembly.

Abbé Sieyès, originally a priest, wrote an influential pamphlet called 'What is the Third Estate'?

While the National Assembly was busy at Versailles drafting a constitution, the rest of France seethed with turmoil. A severe winter had meant a bad harvest; the price of bread rose, often bakers exploited the situation and hoarded supplies. After spending hours in long queues at the bakery, crowds of angry women stormed into the shops. At the same time, the king ordered troops to move into Paris. On 14 July, the agitated crowd stormed and destroyed the Bastille.

In the countryside rumours spread from village to village that the lords of the **manor** had hired bands of brigands who were on their way to destroy the ripe crops. Caught in a frenzy of fear, peasants in several districts seized hoes and pitchforks and attacked **chateaux**. They looted hoarded grain and burnt down documents containing records of manorial dues. A large number of nobles fled from their homes, many of them migrating to neighbouring countries.

Faced with the power of his revolting subjects, Louis XVI finally accorded recognition to the National Assembly and accepted the principle that his powers would from now on be checked by a constitution. On the night of 4 August 1789, the Assembly passed a decree abolishing the feudal system of obligations and taxes. Members of the clergy too were forced to give up their privileges. Tithes were abolished and lands owned by the Church were confiscated. As a result, the government acquired assets worth at least 2 billion livres.

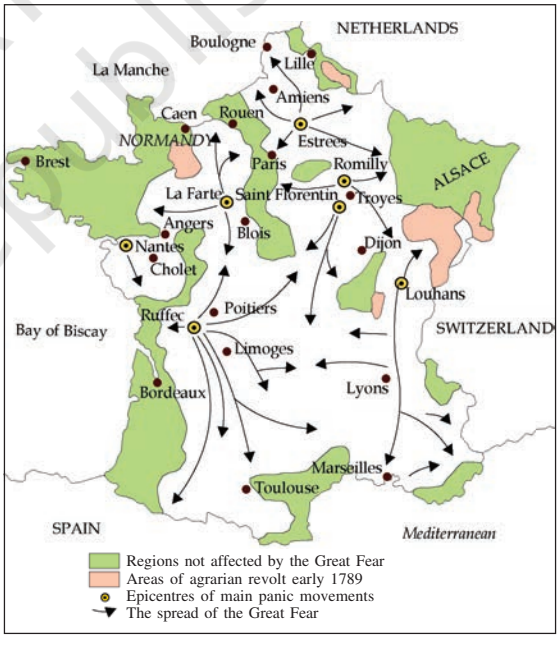


Fig.6 – The spread of the Great Fear.
The map shows how bands of peasants spread from one point to another.

New words

Chateau (pl. chateaux) – Castle or stately residence belonging to a king or a nobleman
Manor – An estate consisting of the lord's lands and his mansion

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2.1 France Becomes a Constitutional Monarchy

The National Assembly completed the draft of the constitution in 1791. Its main object was to limit the powers of the monarch. These powers instead of being concentrated in the hands of one person, were now separated and assigned to different institutions – the legislature, executive and judiciary. This made France a constitutional monarchy. Fig. 7 explains how the new political system worked.

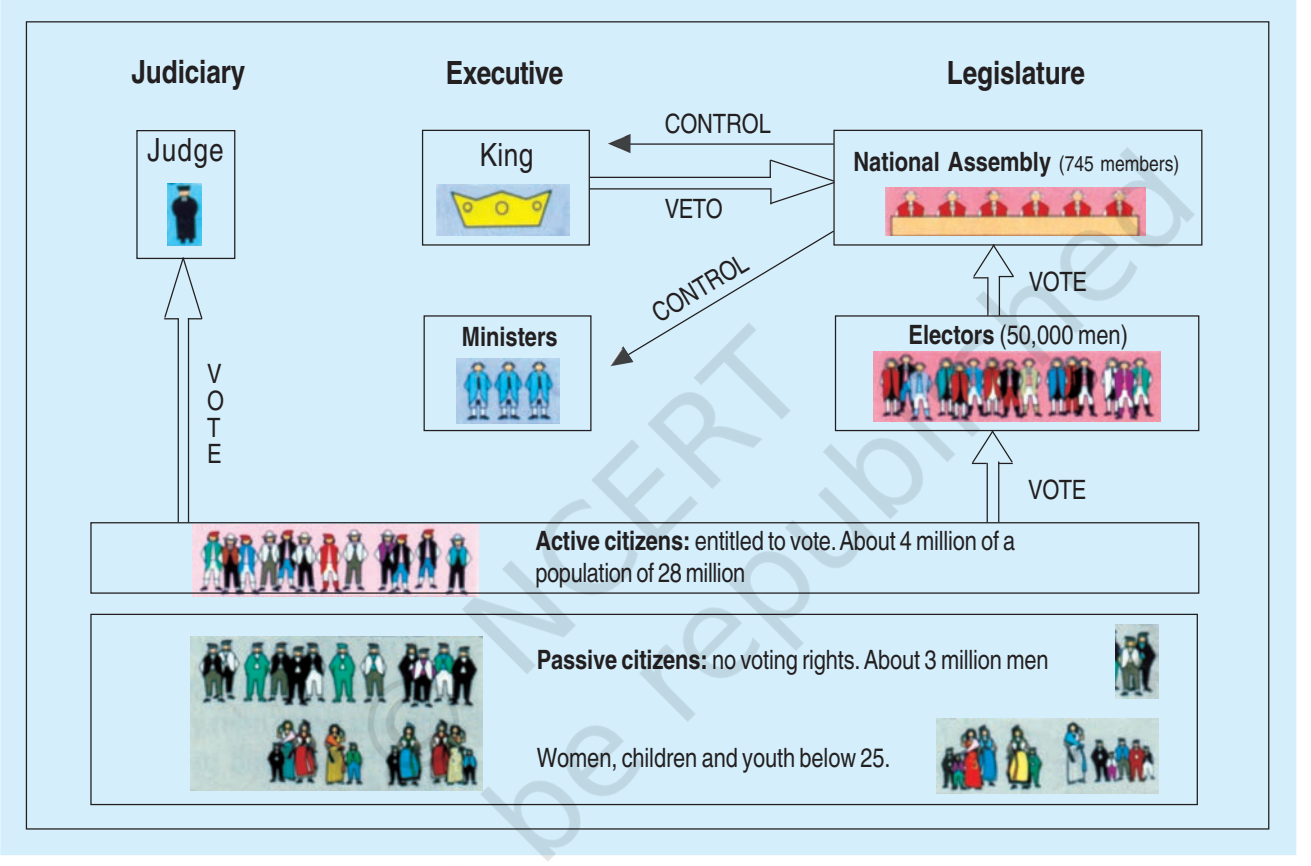


Fig. 7 – The Political sytstem under the Constitution of 1791.

The Constitution of 1791 vested the power to make laws in the National Assembly, which was indirectly elected. That is, citizens voted for a group of electors, who in turn chose the Assembly. Not all citizens, however, had the right to vote. Only men above 25 years of age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wage were given the status of active citizens, that is, they were entitled to vote. The remaining men and all women were classed as passive citizens. To qualify as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a man had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers.

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Fig.8 *– The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, painted by the artist Le Barbier in 1790. The figure on the right represents France. The figure on the left symbolises the law.*

The Constitution began with a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Rights such as the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, equality before law, were established as 'natural and inalienable' rights, that is, they belonged to each human being by birth and could not be taken away. It was the duty of the state to protect each citizen's natural rights.

Source B



The revolutionary journalist Jean-Paul Marat commented in his newspaper *L'Ami du peuple* (The friend of the people) on the Constitution drafted by the National Assembly:

'The task of representing the people has been given to the rich ... the lot of the poor and oppressed will never be improved by peaceful means alone. Here we have absolute proof of how wealth influences the law. Yet laws will last only as long as the people agree to obey them. And when they have managed to cast off the yoke of the aristocrats, they will do the same to the other owners of wealth.'

Source: An extract from the newspaper *L'Ami du peuple*.

Source C

The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.

2. The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and inalienable rights of man; these are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.

3. The source of all sovereignty resides in the nation; no group or individual may exercise authority that does not come from the people.

4. Liberty consists of the power to do whatever is not injurious to others.

5. The law has the right to forbid only actions that are injurious to society.

6. Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate in its formation, personally or through their representatives. All citizens are equal before it.

7. No man may be accused, arrested or detained, except in cases determined by the law.

11. Every citizen may speak, write and print freely; he must take responsibility for the abuse of such liberty in cases determined by the law.

12. For the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration a common tax is indispensable; it must be assessed equally on all citizens in proportion to their means.

17. Since property is a sacred and inviolable right, no one may be deprived of it, unless a legally established public necessity requires it. In that case a just compensation must be given in advance.

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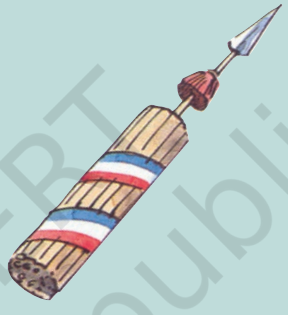
Reading political symbols

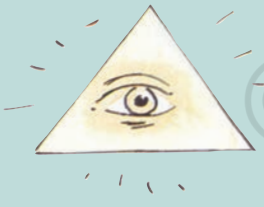
The majority of men and women in the eighteenth century could not read or write. So images and symbols were frequently used instead of printed words to communicate important ideas. The painting by Le Barbier (Fig. 8) uses many such symbols to convey the content of the Declaration of Rights. Let us try to read these symbols.

The broken chain: Chains were used to fetter slaves. A broken chain stands for the act of becoming free.



The bundle of rods or fasces: One rod can be easily broken, but not an entire bundle. Strength lies in unity.





The eye within a triangle radiating light: The all-seeing eye stands for knowledge. The rays of the sun will drive away the clouds of ignorance.



Sceptre: Symbol of royal power.



Snake biting its tail to form a ring: Symbol of Eternity. A ring has neither beginning nor end.

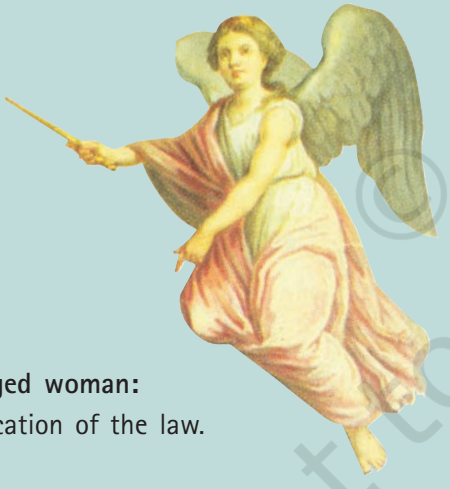
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Red Phrygian cap: Cap worn by a slave upon becoming free.





Blue-white-red: The national colours of France.



The winged woman: Personification of the law.

The Law Tablet: The law is the same for all, and all are equal before it.



Activity

1. Identify the symbols in Box 1 which stand for liberty, equality and fraternity.
2. Explain the meaning of the painting of the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen (Fig. 8) by reading only the symbols.
3. Compare the political rights which the Constitution of 1791 gave to the citizens with Articles 1 and 6 of the Declaration (Source C). Are the two documents consistent? Do the two documents convey the same idea?
4. Which groups of French society would have gained from the Constitution of 1791? Which groups would have had reason to be dissatisfied? What developments does Marat (Source B) anticipate in the future?
5. Imagine the impact of the events in France on neighbouring countries such as Prussia, Austria-Hungary or Spain, all of which were absolute monarchies. How would the kings, traders, peasants, nobles or members of the clergy here have reacted to the news of what was happening in France?

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3 France Abolishes Monarchy and Becomes a Republic

The situation in France continued to be tense during the following years. Although Louis XVI had signed the Constitution, he entered into secret negotiations with the King of Prussia. Rulers of other neighbouring countries too were worried by the developments in France and made plans to send troops to put down the events that had been taking place there since the summer of 1789. Before this could happen, the National Assembly voted in April 1792 to declare war against Prussia and Austria. Thousands of volunteers thronged from the provinces to join the army. They saw this as a war of the people against kings and aristocracies all over Europe. Among the patriotic songs they sang was the *Marseillaise*, composed by the poet Roget de L'Isle. It was sung for the first time by volunteers from *Marseilles* as they marched into Paris and so got its name. The Marseillaise is now the national anthem of France.

The revolutionary wars brought losses and economic difficulties to the people. While the men were away fighting at the front, women were left to cope with the tasks of earning a living and looking after their families. Large sections of the population were convinced that the revolution had to be carried further, as the Constitution of 1791 gave political rights only to the richer sections of society. Political clubs became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies and plan their own forms of action. The most successful of these clubs was that of the Jacobins, which got its name from the former **convent** of St Jacob in Paris. Women too, who had been active throughout this period, formed their own clubs. Section 4 of this chapter will tell you more about their activities and demands.

The members of the Jacobin club belonged mainly to the less prosperous sections of society. They included small shopkeepers, artisans such as shoemakers, pastry cooks, watch-makers, printers, as well as servants and daily-wage workers. Their leader was Maximilian Robespierre. A large group among the Jacobins decided to start wearing long striped trousers similar to those worn by dock workers. This was to set themselves apart from the fashionable sections of society, especially nobles, who wore knee breeches. It

New words

Convent – Building belonging to a community devoted to a religious life



Fig.9 – A sans-culottes couple.

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Fig.10 – **Nanine Vallain, *Liberty.***
This is one of the rare paintings by a woman artist. The revolutionary events made it possible for women to train with established painters and to exhibit their works in the Salon, which was an exhibition held every two years.
The painting is a female allegory of liberty – that is, the female form symbolises the idea of freedom.

Activity

Look carefully at the painting and identify the objects which are political symbols you saw in Box 1 (broken chain, red cap, fasces, Charter of the Declaration of Rights). The pyramid stands for equality, often represented by a triangle. Use the symbols to interpret the painting. Describe your impressions of the female figure of liberty.

was a way of proclaiming the end of the power wielded by the wearers of knee breeches. These Jacobins came to be known as the sans-culottes, literally meaning 'those without knee breeches'. Sans-culottes men wore in addition the red cap that symbolised liberty. Women however were not allowed to do so.

In the summer of 1792 the Jacobins planned an insurrection of a large number of Parisians who were angered by the short supplies and high prices of food. On the morning of August 10 they stormed the Palace of the Tuileries, massacred the king's guards and held the king himself as hostage for several hours. Later the Assembly voted to imprison the royal family. Elections were held. From now on all men of 21 years and above, regardless of wealth, got the right to vote.

The newly elected assembly was called the Convention. On 21 September 1792 it abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic. As you know, a republic is a form of government where the people elect the government including the head of the

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government. There is no hereditary monarchy. You can try and find out about some other countries that are republics and investigate when and how they became so.

Louis XVI was sentenced to death by a court on the charge of **treason**. On 21 January 1793 he was executed publicly at the Place de la Concorde. The queen Marie Antoinette met with the same fate shortly after.

3.1 The Reign of Terror

The period from 1793 to 1794 is referred to as the Reign of Terror. Robespierre followed a policy of severe control and punishment. All those whom he saw as being 'enemies' of the republic – ex-nobles and clergy, members of other political parties, even members of his own party who did not agree with his methods – were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal. If the court found them 'guilty' they were guillotined. The guillotine is a device consisting of two poles and a blade with which a person is beheaded. It was named after Dr Guillotin who invented it.

Robespierre's government issued laws placing a maximum ceiling on wages and prices. Meat and bread were rationed. Peasants were forced to transport their grain to the cities and sell it at prices fixed by the government. The use of more expensive white flour was forbidden; all citizens were required to eat the *pain d'égalité* (equality bread), a loaf made of wholewheat. Equality was also sought to be practised through forms of speech and address. Instead of the traditional Monsieur (Sir) and Madame (Madam) all French men and women were henceforth Citoyen and Citoyenne (Citizen). Churches were shut down and their buildings converted into barracks or offices.

Robespierre pursued his policies so relentlessly that even his supporters began to demand moderation. Finally, he was convicted by a court in July 1794, arrested and on the next day sent to the guillotine.

Activity

Compare the views of Desmoulins and Robespierre. How does each one understand the use of state force? What does Robespierre mean by 'the war of liberty against tyranny'? How does Desmoulins perceive liberty? Refer once more to Source C. What did the constitutional laws on the rights of individuals lay down? Discuss your views on the subject in class.

New words

Treason – Betrayal of one's country or government

Source D

What is liberty? Two conflicting views:

The revolutionary journalist Camille Desmoulins wrote the following in 1793. He was executed shortly after, during the Reign of Terror.

'Some people believe that Liberty is like a child, which needs to go through a phase of being disciplined before it attains maturity. Quite the opposite. Liberty is Happiness, Reason, Equality, Justice, it is the Declaration of Rights … You would like to finish off all your enemies by guillotining them. Has anyone heard of something more senseless? Would it be possible to bring a single person to the scaffold without making ten more enemies among his relations and friends?'



On 7 February 1794, Robespierre made a speech at the Convention, which was then carried by the newspaper *Le Moniteur Universel*. Here is an extract from it:

'To establish and consolidate democracy, to achieve the peaceful rule of constitutional laws, we must first finish the war of liberty against tyranny …. We must annihilate the enemies of the republic at home and abroad, or else we shall perish. In time of Revolution a democratic government may rely on terror. Terror is nothing but justice, swift, severe and inflexible; … and is used to meet the most urgent needs of the fatherland. To curb the enemies of Liberty through terror is the right of the founder of the Republic.'

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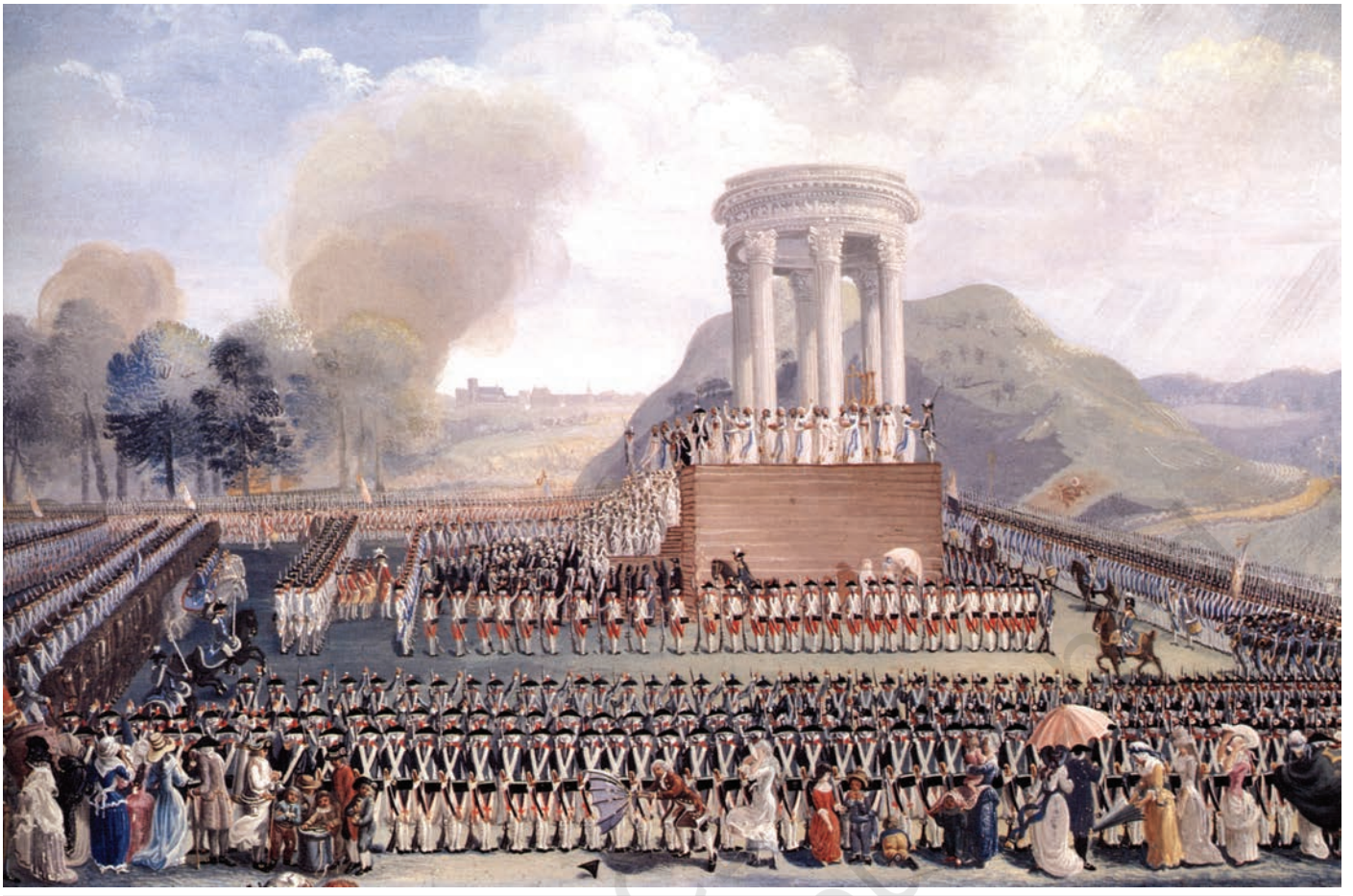


***Fig. 11** – The revolutionary government sought to mobilise the loyalty of its subjects through various means – one of them was the staging of festivals like this one. Symbols from civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome were used to convey the aura of a hallowed history. The pavilion on the raised platform in the middle carried by classical columns was made of perishable material that could be dismantled. Describe the groups of people, their clothes, their roles and actions. What impression of a revolutionary festival does this image convey?*

3.2 A Directory Rules France

The fall of the Jacobin government allowed the wealthier middle classes to seize power. A new constitution was introduced which denied the vote to non-propertied sections of society. It provided for two elected legislative councils. These then appointed a Directory, an executive made up of five members. This was meant as a safeguard against the concentration of power in a one-man executive as under the Jacobins. However, the Directors often clashed with the legislative councils, who then sought to dismiss them. The political instability of the Directory paved the way for the rise of a military dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte.

Through all these changes in the form of government, the ideals of freedom, of equality before the law and of fraternity remained inspiring ideals that motivated political movements in France and the rest of Europe during the following century.

4 Did Women have a Revolution?

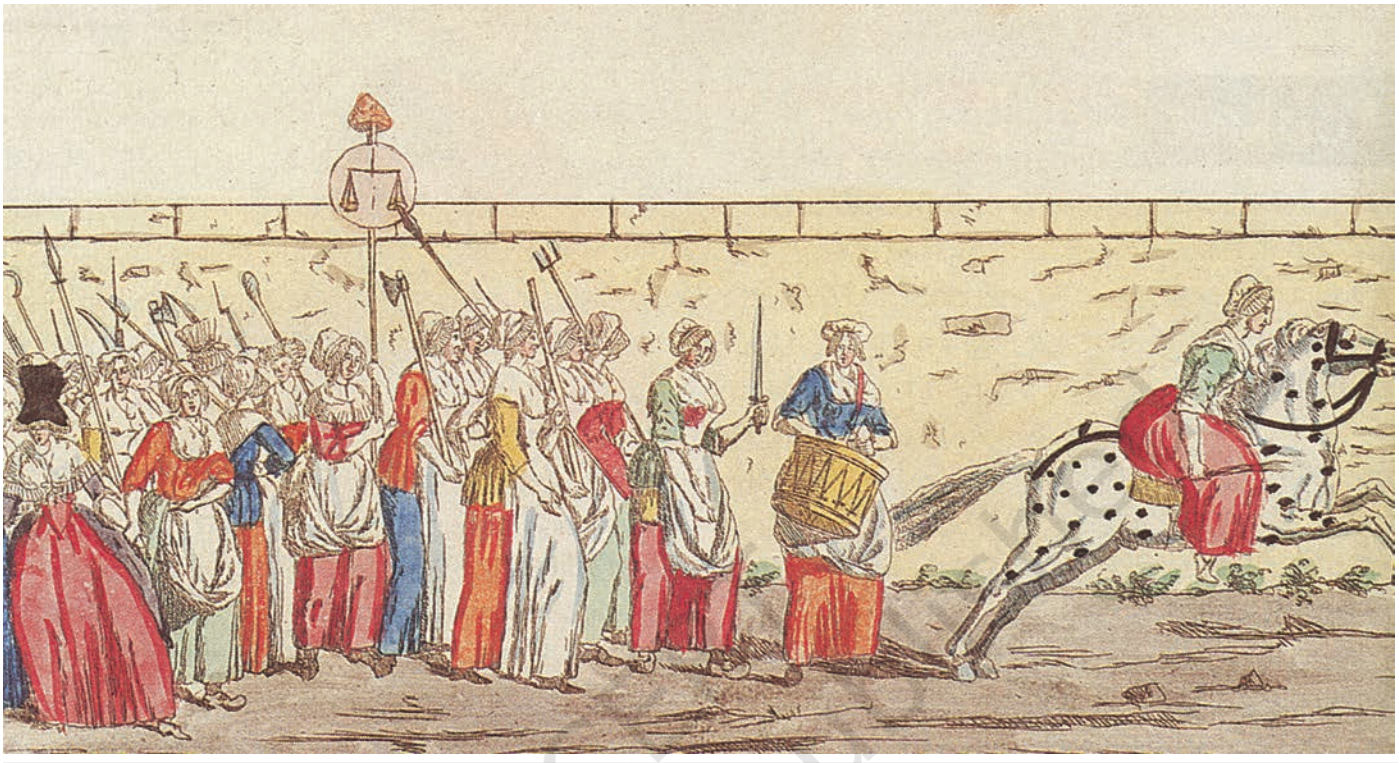


Fig. 12 – Parisian women on their way to Versailles.
This print is one of the many pictorial representations of the events of 5 October 1789, when women marched to Versailles and brought the king back with them to Paris.

From the very beginning women were active participants in the events which brought about so many important changes in French society. They hoped that their involvement would pressurise the revolutionary government to introduce measures to improve their lives. Most women of the third estate had to work for a living. They worked as seamstresses or laundresses, sold flowers, fruits and vegetables at the market, or were employed as domestic servants in the houses of prosperous people. Most women did not have access to education or job training. Only daughters of nobles or wealthier members of the third estate could study at a convent, after which their families arranged a marriage for them. Working women had also to care for their families, that is, cook, fetch water, queue up for bread and look after the children. Their wages were lower than those of men.

In order to discuss and voice their interests women started their own political clubs and newspapers. About sixty women's clubs came up in different French cities. The Society of Revolutionary and Republican Women was the most famous of them. One of their

Activity

Describe the persons represented in Fig. 12 – their actions, their postures, the objects they are carrying. Look carefully to see whether all of them come from the same social group. What symbols has the artist included in the image? What do they stand for? Do the actions of the women reflect traditional ideas of how women were expected to behave in public? What do you think: does the artist sympathise with the women's activities or is he critical of them? Discuss your views in the class.

main demands was that women enjoy the same political rights as men. Women were disappointed that the Constitution of 1791 reduced them to passive citizens. They demanded the right to vote, to be elected to the Assembly and to hold political office. Only then, they felt, would their interests be represented in the new government.

In the early years, the revolutionary government did introduce laws that helped improve the lives of women. Together with the creation of state schools, schooling was made compulsory for all girls. Their fathers could no longer force them into marriage against their will. Marriage was made into a contract entered into freely and registered under civil law. Divorce was made legal, and could be applied for by both women and men. Women could now train for jobs, could become artists or run small businesses.

Women's struggle for equal political rights, however, continued. During the Reign of Terror, the new government issued laws ordering closure of women's clubs and banning their political activities. Many prominent women were arrested and a number of them executed.

Women's movements for voting rights and equal wages continued through the next two hundred years in many countries of the world. The fight for the vote was carried out through an international suffrage movement during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The example of the political activities of French women during the revolutionary years was kept alive as an inspiring memory. It was finally in 1946 that women in France won the right to vote.

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Source E

The life of a revolutionary woman – Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793)

Olympe de Gouges was one of the most important of the politically active women in revolutionary France. She protested against the Constitution and the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen as they excluded women from basic rights that each human being was entitled to. So, in 1791, she wrote a *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen,* which she addressed to the Queen and to the members of the National Assembly, demanding that they act upon it. In 1793, Olympe de Gouges criticised the Jacobin government for forcibly closing down women's clubs. She was tried by the National Convention, which charged her with treason. Soon after this she was executed.



Source F

Some of the basic rights set forth in Olympe de Gouges' *Declaration*.

1. Woman is born free and remains equal to man in rights.
2. The goal of all political associations is the preservation of the natural rights of woman and man: These rights are liberty, property, security, and above all resistance to oppression.
3. The source of all sovereignty resides in the nation, which is nothing but the union of woman and man.
4. The law should be the expression of the general will; all female and male citizens should have a say either personally or by their representatives in its formulation; it should be the same for all. All female and male citizens are equally entitled to all honours and public employment according to their abilities and without any other distinction than that of their talents.
5. No woman is an exception; she is accused, arrested, and detained in cases determined by law. Women, like men, obey this rigorous law.

Activity

Compare the manifesto drafted by Olympe de Gouges (Source F) with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (Source C).



Fig. 13 – Women queuing up at a bakery.

Activity

Imagine yourself to be one of the women in Fig. 13. Formulate a response to the arguments put forward by Chaumette (Source G).

Source G

In 1793, the Jacobin politician Chaumette sought to justify the closure of women's clubs on the following grounds:

'Has Nature entrusted domestic duties to men? Has she given us breasts to nurture babies?

No.

She said to Man:

Be a man. Hunting, agriculture, political duties … that is your kingdom.

She said to Woman:

Be a woman … the things of the household, the sweet duties of motherhood – those are your tasks.

Shameless are those women, who wish to become men. Have not duties been fairly distributed?'

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5 The Abolition of Slavery

One of the most revolutionary social reforms of the Jacobin regime was the abolition of slavery in the French colonies. The colonies in the Caribbean – Martinique, Guadeloupe and San Domingo – were important suppliers of commodities such as tobacco, indigo, sugar and coffee. But the reluctance of Europeans to go and work in distant and unfamiliar lands meant a shortage of labour on the plantations. So this was met by a triangular slave trade between Europe, Africa and the Americas. The slave trade began in the seventeenth century. French merchants sailed from the ports of Bordeaux or Nantes to the African coast, where they bought slaves from local chieftains. Branded and shackled, the slaves were packed tightly into ships for the three-month long voyage across the Atlantic to the Caribbean. There they were sold to plantation owners. The exploitation of slave labour made it possible to meet the growing demand in European markets for sugar, coffee, and indigo. Port cities like Bordeaux and Nantes owed their economic prosperity to the flourishing slave trade.

Throughout the eighteenth century there was little criticism of slavery in France. The National Assembly held long debates about whether the rights of man should be extended to all French subjects including those in the colonies. But it did not pass any laws, fearing opposition from businessmen whose incomes depended on the slave trade. It was finally the Convention which in 1794 legislated to free all slaves in the French overseas possessions. This, however, turned out to be a short-term measure: ten years later, Napoleon reintroduced slavery. Plantation owners understood their freedom as including the right to enslave African **Negroes** in pursuit of their economic interests. Slavery was finally abolished in French colonies in 1848.



Fig. 14 – The emancipation of slaves. *This print of 1794 describes the* ***emancipation*** *of slaves. The tricolour banner on top carries the slogan: 'The rights of man'. The inscription below reads: 'The freedom of the unfree'. A French woman prepares to 'civilise' the African and American Indian slaves by giving them European clothes to wear.*

New words

Negroes – A term used for the indigenous people of Africa south of the Sahara. It is a derogatory term not in common use any longer

Emancipation – The act of freeing

Activity

Record your impressions of this print (Fig. 14). Describe the objects lying on the ground. What do they symbolise? What attitude does the picture express towards non-European slaves?

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6 The Revolution and Everyday Life

Can politics change the clothes people wear, the language they speak or the books they read? The years following 1789 in France saw many such changes in the lives of men, women and children. The revolutionary governments took it upon themselves to pass laws that would translate the ideals of liberty and equality into everyday practice.

One important law that came into effect soon after the storming of the Bastille in the summer of 1789 was the abolition of censorship. In the Old Regime all written material and cultural activities – books, newspapers, plays – could be published or performed only after they had been approved by the censors of the king. Now the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen proclaimed freedom of speech and expression to be a natural right. Newspapers, pamphlets, books and printed pictures flooded the towns of France from where they travelled rapidly into the countryside. They all described and discussed the events and changes taking place in France. Freedom of the press also meant that opposing views of events could be expressed. Each side sought to convince the others of its position through the medium of print. Plays, songs and festive processions attracted large numbers of people. This was one way they could grasp and identify with ideas such as liberty or justice that political philosophers wrote about at length in texts which only a handful of educated people could read.

Activity

Describe the picture in your own words. What are the images that the artist has used to communicate the following ideas: greed, equality, justice, takeover by the state of the assets of the church?



Fig. 15 – The patriotic fat-reducing press.
This anonymous print of 1790 seeks to make the idea of justice tangible.

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Fig. 16 - Marat addressing the people. This is a painting by Louis-Leopold Boilly.
Recall what you have learnt about Marat in this chapter. Describe the scene around him. Account for his great popularity. What kinds of reactions would a painting like this produce among viewers in the Salon?

Conclusion

In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of France. He set out to conquer neighbouring European countries, dispossessing dynasties and creating kingdoms where he placed members of his family. Napoleon saw his role as a moderniser of Europe. He introduced many laws such as the protection of private property and a uniform system of weights and measures provided by the decimal system. Initially, many saw Napoleon as a liberator who would bring freedom for the people. But soon the Napoleonic armies came to be viewed everywhere as an invading force. He was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815. Many of his measures that carried the revolutionary ideas of liberty and modern laws to other parts of Europe had an impact on people long after Napoleon had left.

The ideas of liberty and democratic rights were the most important legacy of the French Revolution. These spread from France to the rest of Europe during the nineteenth century, where feudal systems



Fig. 17 – Napoleon crossing the Alps, painting by David.

were abolished. Colonised peoples reworked the idea of freedom from bondage into their movements to create a sovereign nation state. Tipu Sultan and Rammohan Roy are two examples of individuals who responded to the ideas coming from revolutionary France.

Box 2

Raja Rammohan Roy was one of those who was inspired by new ideas that were spreading through Europe at that time. The French Revolution and later, the July Revolution excited his imagination.

'He could think and talk of nothing else when he heard of the July Revolution in France in 1830. On his way to England at Cape Town he insisted on visiting frigates (warships) flying the revolutionary tri-colour flag though he had been temporarily lamed by an accident.'

Susobhan Sarkar, *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance* 1946.

Activities

1. Find out more about any one of the revolutionary figures you have read about in this chapter. Write a short biography of this person.
2. The French Revolution saw the rise of newspapers describing the events of each day and week. Collect information and pictures on any one event and write a newspaper article. You could also conduct an imaginary interview with important personages such as Mirabeau, Olympe de Gouges or Robespierre. Work in groups of two or three. Each group could then put up their articles on a board to produce a wallpaper on the French Revolution.

Activities

Questions

1. Describe the circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France.
2. Which groups of French society benefited from the revolution? Which groups were forced to relinquish power? Which sections of society would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution?
3. Describe the legacy of the French Revolution for the peoples of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
4. Draw up a list of democratic rights we enjoy today whose origins could be traced to the French Revolution.
5. Would you agree with the view that the message of universal rights was beset with contradictions? Explain.
6. How would you explain the rise of Napoleon?

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Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution

1 The Age of Social Change

In the previous chapter you read about the powerful ideas of freedom and equality that circulated in Europe after the French Revolution. The French Revolution opened up the possibility of creating a dramatic change in the way in which society was structured. As you have read, before the eighteenth century society was broadly divided into estates and orders and it was the aristocracy and church which controlled economic and social power. Suddenly, after the revolution, it seemed possible to change this. In many parts of the world including Europe and Asia, new ideas about individual rights and who controlled social power began to be discussed. In India, Raja Rammohan Roy and Derozio talked of the significance of the French Revolution, and many others debated the ideas of post-revolutionary Europe. The developments in the colonies, in turn, reshaped these ideas of societal change.

Not everyone in Europe, however, wanted a complete transformation of society. Responses varied from those who accepted that some change was necessary but wished for a gradual shift, to those who wanted to restructure society radically. Some were 'conservatives', others were 'liberals' or 'radicals'. What did these terms really mean in the context of the time? What separated these strands of politics and what linked them together? We must remember that these terms do not mean the same thing in all contexts or at all times.

We will look briefly at some of the important political traditions of the nineteenth century, and see how they influenced change. Then we will focus on one historical event in which there was an attempt at a radical transformation of society. Through the revolution in Russia, socialism became one of the most significant and powerful ideas to shape society in the twentieth century.

1.1 Liberals, Radicals and Conservatives

One of the groups which looked to change society were the liberals. Liberals wanted a nation which tolerated all religions. We should remember that at this time European states usually discriminated in

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favour of one religion or another (Britain favoured the Church of England, Austria and Spain favoured the Catholic Church). Liberals also opposed the uncontrolled power of dynastic rulers. They wanted to safeguard the rights of individuals against governments. They argued for a representative, elected parliamentary government, subject to laws interpreted by a well-trained judiciary that was independent of rulers and officials. However, they were not 'democrats'. They did not believe in universal adult franchise, that is, the right of every citizen to vote. They felt men of property mainly should have the vote. They also did not want the vote for women.

In contrast, radicals wanted a nation in which government was based on the majority of a country's population. Many supported women's **suffragette** movements. Unlike liberals, they opposed the privileges of great landowners and wealthy factory owners. They were not against the existence of private property but disliked concentration of property in the hands of a few.

Conservatives were opposed to radicals and liberals. After the French Revolution, however, even conservatives had opened their minds to the need for change. Earlier, in the eighteenth century, conservatives had been generally opposed to the idea of change. By the nineteenth century, they accepted that some change was inevitable but believed that the past had to be respected and change had to be brought about through a slow process.

Such differing ideas about societal change clashed during the social and political turmoil that followed the French Revolution. The various attempts at revolution and national transformation in the nineteenth century helped define both the limits and potential of these political tendencies.

1.2 Industrial Society and Social Change

These political trends were signs of a new time. It was a time of profound social and economic changes. It was a time when new cities came up and new industrialised regions developed, railways expanded and the Industrial Revolution occurred.

Industrialisation brought men, women and children to factories. Work hours were often long and wages were poor. Unemployment was common, particularly during times of low demand for industrial goods. Housing and sanitation were problems since towns were growing rapidly. Liberals and radicals searched for solutions to these issues.

New words

Suffragette movement – A movement to give women the right to vote.

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Fig. 1 – The London poor in the mid-nineteenth century as seen by a contemporary.
From: Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor*, 1861.*

Almost all industries were the property of individuals. Liberals and radicals themselves were often property owners and employers. Having made their wealth through trade or industrial ventures, they felt that such effort should be encouraged – that its benefits would be achieved if the workforce in the economy was healthy and citizens were educated. Opposed to the privileges the old aristocracy had by birth, they firmly believed in the value of individual effort, labour and enterprise. If freedom of individuals was ensured, if the poor could labour, and those with capital could operate without restraint, they believed that societies would develop. Many working men and women who wanted changes in the world rallied around liberal and radical groups and parties in the early nineteenth century.

Some nationalists, liberals and radicals wanted revolutions to put an end to the kind of governments established in Europe in 1815. In France, Italy, Germany and Russia, they became revolutionaries and worked to overthrow existing monarchs. Nationalists talked of revolutions that would create 'nations' where all citizens would have

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equal rights. After 1815, Giuseppe Mazzini, an Italian nationalist, conspired with others to achieve this in Italy. Nationalists elsewhere – including India – read his writings.

1.3 The Coming of Socialism to Europe

Perhaps one of the most far-reaching visions of how society should be structured was socialism. By the mid - nineteenth century in Europe, socialism was a well-known body of ideas that attracted widespread attention.

Socialists were against private property, and saw it as the root of all social ills of the time. Why? Individuals owned the property that gave employment but the propertied were concerned only with personal gain and not with the welfare of those who made the property productive. So if society as a whole rather than single individuals controlled property, more attention would be paid to collective social interests. Socialists wanted this change and campaigned for it.

How could a society without property operate? What would be the basis of socialist society?

Socialists had different visions of the future. Some believed in the idea of cooperatives. Robert Owen (1771-1858), a leading English manufacturer, sought to build a cooperative community called New Harmony in Indiana (USA). Other socialists felt that cooperatives could not be built on a wide scale only through individual initiative: they demanded that *governments* encourage cooperatives. In France, for instance, Louis Blanc (1813-1882) wanted the government to encourage cooperatives and replace capitalist enterprises. These cooperatives were to be associations of people who produced goods together and divided the profits according to the work done by members.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) added other ideas to this body of arguments. Marx argued that industrial society was 'capitalist'. Capitalists owned the capital invested in factories, and the profit of capitalists was produced by workers. The conditions of workers could not improve as long as this profit was accumulated by private capitalists. Workers had to overthrow capitalism and the rule of private property. Marx believed that to free themselves from capitalist exploitation, workers had to construct a radically socialist society where all property was socially controlled. This would be a communist society. He was convinced that workers would triumph in their conflict with capitalists. A communist society was the natural society of the future.

Activity

List two differences between the capitalist and socialist ideas of private property.

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1.4 Support for Socialism

By the 1870s, socialist ideas spread through Europe. To coordinate their efforts, socialists formed an international body – namely, the Second International.

Workers in England and Germany began forming associations to fight for better living and working conditions. They set up funds to help members in times of distress and demanded a reduction of working hours and the right to vote. In Germany, these associations worked closely with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and helped it win parliamentary seats. By 1905, socialists and trade unionists formed a Labour Party in Britain and a Socialist Party in France. However, till 1914, socialists never succeeded in forming a government in Europe. Represented by strong figures in parliamentary politics, their ideas did shape legislation, but governments continued to be run by conservatives, liberals and radicals.

Activity

Imagine that a meeting has been called in your area to discuss the socialist idea of doing away with private property and introducing collective ownership. Write the speech you would make at the meeting if you are:

- a poor labourer working in the fields
- a medium-level landowner
- a house owner



*Fig.2 – This is a painting of the Paris Commune of 1871 (From Illustrated London News, 1871). It portrays a scene from the popular uprising in Paris between March and May 1871. This was a period when the town council (*commune*) of Paris was taken over by a 'peoples' government' consisting of workers, ordinary people, professionals, political activists and others. The uprising emerged against a background of growing discontent against the policies of the French state. The 'Paris Commune' was ultimately crushed by government troops but it was celebrated by Socialists the world over as a prelude to a socialist revolution. The Paris Commune is also popularly remembered for two important legacies: one, for its association with the workers' red flag – that was the flag adopted by the communards (revolutionaries) in Paris; two, for the 'Marseillaise', originally written as a war song in 1792, it became a symbol of the Commune and of the struggle for liberty.*

2 The Russian Revolution

In one of the least industrialised of European states this situation was reversed. Socialists took over the government in Russia through the October Revolution of 1917. The fall of monarchy in February 1917 and the events of October are normally called the Russian Revolution.

How did this come about? What were the social and political conditions in Russia when the revolution occurred? To answer these questions, let us look at Russia a few years before the revolution.



Fig.3 – Tsar Nicholas II in the White Hall of the Winter Palace, St Petersburg, 1900.
Painted by Earnest Lipgart (1847-1932)

2.1 The Russian Empire in 1914

In 1914, Tsar Nicholas II ruled Russia and its empire. Besides the territory around Moscow, the Russian empire included current-day Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, parts of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. It stretched to the Pacific and comprised today's Central Asian states, as well as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The majority religion was Russian Orthodox Christianity – which had grown out of the Greek Orthodox Church – but the empire also included Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Buddhists.



Fig.4 – Europe in 1914.
The map shows the Russian empire and the European countries at war during the First World War.

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2.2 Economy and Society

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the vast majority of Russia's people were agriculturists. About 85 per cent of the Russian empire's population earned their living from agriculture. This proportion was higher than in most European countries. For instance, in France and Germany the proportion was between 40 per cent and 50 per cent. In the empire, cultivators produced for the market as well as for their own needs and Russia was a major exporter of grain.

Industry was found in pockets. Prominent industrial areas were St Petersburg and Moscow. Craftsmen undertook much of the production, but large factories existed alongside craft workshops. Many factories were set up in the 1890s, when Russia's railway network was extended, and foreign investment in industry increased. Coal production doubled and iron and steel output quadrupled. By the 1900s, in some areas factory workers and craftsmen were almost equal in number.

Most industry was the private property of industrialists. Government supervised large factories to ensure minimum wages and limited hours of work. But factory inspectors could not prevent rules being broken. In craft units and small workshops, the working day was sometimes 15 hours, compared with 10 or 12 hours in factories. Accommodation varied from rooms to dormitories.

Workers were a divided social group. Some had strong links with the villages from which they came. Others had settled in cities permanently. Workers were divided by skill. A metalworker of St. Petersburg recalled, 'Metalworkers considered themselves aristocrats among other workers. Their occupations demanded more training and skill . . . ' Women made up 31 per cent of the factory labour force by 1914, but they were paid less than men (between half and three-quarters of a man's wage). Divisions among workers showed themselves in dress and manners too. Some workers formed associations to help members in times of unemployment or financial hardship but such associations were few.

Despite divisions, workers did unite to strike work (stop work) when they disagreed with employers about dismissals or work conditions. These strikes took place frequently in the textile industry during 1896-1897, and in the metal industry during 1902.

In the countryside, peasants cultivated most of the land. But the nobility, the crown and the Orthodox Church owned large properties. Like workers, peasants too were divided. They were also



Fig.5 – Unemployed peasants in pre-war St Petersburg.
Many survived by eating at charitable kitchens and living in poorhouses.



Fig.6 – Workers sleeping in bunkers in a dormitory in pre-revolutionary Russia.
They slept in shifts and could not keep their families with them.

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deeply religious. But except in a few cases they had no respect for the nobility. Nobles got their power and position through their services to the Tsar, not through local popularity. This was unlike France where, during the French Revolution in Brittany, peasants respected nobles and fought for them. In Russia, peasants wanted the land of the nobles to be given to them. Frequently, they refused to pay rent and even murdered landlords. In 1902, this occurred on a large scale in south Russia. And in 1905, such incidents took place all over Russia.

Russian peasants were different from other European peasants in another way. They pooled their land together periodically and their commune (*mir*) divided it according to the needs of individual families.

2.3 Socialism in Russia

All political parties were illegal in Russia before 1914. The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was founded in 1898 by socialists who respected Marx's ideas. However, because of government policing, it had to operate as an illegal organisation. It set up a newspaper, mobilised workers and organised strikes.

Some Russian socialists felt that the Russian peasant custom of dividing land periodically made them natural socialists. So peasants, not workers, would be the main force of the revolution, and Russia could become socialist more quickly than other countries. Socialists were active in the countryside through the late nineteenth century. They formed the Socialist Revolutionary Party in 1900. This party struggled for peasants' rights and demanded that land belonging to nobles be transferred to peasants. Social Democrats disagreed with Socialist Revolutionaries about peasants. Lenin felt that peasants were not one united group. Some were poor and others rich, some worked as labourers while others were capitalists who employed workers. Given this 'differentiation' within them, they could not all be part of a socialist movement.

The party was divided over the strategy of organisation. Vladimir Lenin (who led the Bolshevik group) thought that in a repressive society like Tsarist Russia the party should be disciplined and should control the number and quality of its members. Others (Mensheviks) thought that the party should be open to all (as in Germany).

2.4 A Turbulent Time: The 1905 Revolution

Russia was an **autocracy**. Unlike other European rulers, even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Tsar was not subject to

Source A

Alexander Shlyapnikov, a socialist worker of the time, gives us a description of how the meetings were organised:

'Propaganda was done in the plants and shops on an individual basis. There were also discussion circles … Legal meetings took place on matters concerning [official issues], but this activity was skilfully integrated into the general struggle for the liberation of the working class. Illegal meetings were … arranged on the spur of the moment but in an organised way during lunch, in evening break, in front of the exit, in the yard or, in establishments with several floors, on the stairs. The most alert workers would form a "plug" in the doorway, and the whole mass piled up in the exit. An agitator would get up right there on the spot. Management would contact the police on the telephone, but the speeches would have already been made and the necessary decision taken by the time they arrived …'

Alexander Shlyapnikov, *On the Eve of 1917. Reminiscences from the Revolutionary Underground.*

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parliament. Liberals in Russia campaigned to end this state of affairs. Together with the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, they worked with peasants and workers during the revolution of 1905 to demand a constitution. They were supported in the empire by nationalists (in Poland for instance) and in Muslim-dominated areas by ***jadidists*** who wanted modernised Islam to lead their societies.

The year 1904 was a particularly bad one for Russian workers. Prices of essential goods rose so quickly that **real wages** declined by 20 per cent. The membership of workers' associations rose dramatically. When four members of the Assembly of Russian Workers, which had been formed in 1904, were dismissed at the Putilov Iron Works, there was a call for industrial action. Over the next few days over 110,000 workers in St Petersburg went on strike demanding a reduction in the working day to eight hours, an increase in wages and improvement in working conditions.

When the procession of workers led by Father Gapon reached the Winter Palace it was attacked by the police and the Cossacks. Over 100 workers were killed and about 300 wounded. The incident, known as Bloody Sunday, started a series of events that became known as the 1905 Revolution. Strikes took place all over the country and universities closed down when student bodies staged walkouts, complaining about the lack of civil liberties. Lawyers, doctors, engineers and other middle-class workers established the Union of Unions and demanded a constituent assembly.

During the 1905 Revolution, the Tsar allowed the creation of an elected consultative Parliament or Duma. For a brief while during the revolution, there existed a large number of trade unions and factory committees made up of factory workers. After 1905, most committees and unions worked unofficially, since they were declared illegal. Severe restrictions were placed on political activity. The Tsar dismissed the first Duma within 75 days and the re-elected second Duma within three months. He did not want any questioning of his authority or any reduction in his power. He changed the voting laws and packed the third Duma with conservative politicians. Liberals and revolutionaries were kept out.

2.5 The First World War and the Russian Empire

In 1914, war broke out between two European alliances – Germany, Austria and Turkey (the Central powers) and France, Britain and Russia (later Italy and Romania). Each country had a global empire

Activity

Why were there revolutionary disturbances in Russia in 1905? What were the demands of revolutionaries?

New words

Jadidists – Muslim reformers within the Russian empire

Real wage – Reflects the quantities of goods which the wages will actually buy.

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and the war was fought outside Europe as well as in Europe. This was the First World War.

In Russia, the war was initially popular and people rallied around Tsar Nicholas II. As the war continued, though, the Tsar refused to consult the main parties in the Duma. Support wore thin. Anti-German sentiments ran high, as can be seen in the renaming of St Petersburg – a German name – as Petrograd. The Tsarina Alexandra's German origins and poor advisers, especially a monk called Rasputin, made the autocracy unpopular.

The First World War on the 'eastern front' differed from that on the 'western front'. In the west, armies fought from trenches stretched along eastern France. In the east, armies moved a good deal and fought battles leaving large casualties. Defeats were shocking and demoralising. Russia's armies lost badly in Germany and Austria between 1914 and 1916. There were over 7 million casualties by 1917. As they retreated, the Russian army destroyed crops and buildings to prevent the enemy from being able to live off the land. The destruction of crops and buildings led to over 3 million refugees in Russia. The situation discredited the government and the Tsar. Soldiers did not wish to fight such a war.

The war also had a severe impact on industry. Russia's own industries were few in number and the country was cut off from other suppliers of industrial goods by German control of the Baltic Sea. Industrial equipment disintegrated more rapidly in Russia than elsewhere in Europe. By 1916, railway lines began to break down. Able-bodied men were called up to the war. As a result, there were labour shortages and small workshops producing essentials were shut down. Large supplies of grain were sent to feed the army. For the people in the cities, bread and flour became scarce. By the winter of 1916, riots at bread shops were common.



Fig. 7 – Russian soldiers during the First World War.
The Imperial Russian army came to be known as the 'Russian steam roller'. It was the largest armed force in the world. When this army shifted its loyalty and began supporting the revolutionaries, Tsarist power collapsed.

Activity

The year is 1916. You are a general in the Tsar's army on the eastern front. You are writing a report for the government in Moscow. In your report suggest what you think the government should do to improve the situation.

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3 The February Revolution in Petrograd

In the winter of 1917, conditions in the capital, Petrograd, were grim. The layout of the city seemed to emphasise the divisions among its people. The workers' quarters and factories were located on the right bank of the River Neva. On the left bank were the fashionable areas, the Winter Palace, and official buildings, including the palace where the Duma met. In February 1917, food shortages were deeply felt in the workers' quarters. The winter was very cold – there had been exceptional frost and heavy snow. Parliamentarians wishing to preserve elected government, were opposed to the Tsar's desire to dissolve the Duma.

On 22 February, a lockout took place at a factory on the right bank. The next day, workers in fifty factories called a strike in sympathy. In many factories, women led the way to strikes. This came to be called the International Women's Day. Demonstrating workers crossed from the factory quarters to the centre of the capital – the Nevskii Prospekt. At this stage, no political party was actively organising the movement. As the fashionable quarters and official buildings were surrounded by workers, the government imposed a curfew. Demonstrators dispersed by the evening, but they came back on the 24th and 25th. The government called out the cavalry and police to keep an eye on them.

On Sunday, 25 February, the government suspended the Duma. Politicians spoke out against the measure. Demonstrators returned in force to the streets of the left bank on the 26th. On the 27th, the Police Headquarters were ransacked. The streets thronged with people raising slogans about bread, wages, better hours and democracy. The government tried to control the situation and called out the cavalry once again. However, the cavalry refused to fire on the demonstrators. An officer was shot at the barracks of a regiment and three other regiments mutinied, voting to join the striking workers. By that evening, soldiers and



Fig.8 – The Petrograd Soviet meeting in the Duma, February 1917.

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striking workers had gathered to form a 'soviet' or 'council' in the same building as the Duma met. This was the Petrograd Soviet.

The very next day, a delegation went to see the Tsar. Military commanders advised him to abdicate. He followed their advice and abdicated on 2 March. Soviet leaders and Duma leaders formed a Provisional Government to run the country. Russia's future would be decided by a constituent assembly, elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Petrograd had led the February Revolution that brought down the monarchy in February 1917.

Box 1

Women in the February Revolution

'Women workers, often … inspired their male co-workers … At the Lorenz telephone factory, … Marfa Vasileva almost single handedly called a successful strike. Already that morning, in celebration of Women's Day, women workers had presented red bows to the men … Then Marfa Vasileva, a milling machine operator stopped work and declared an impromptu strike. The workers on the floor were ready to support her … The foreman informed the management and sent her a loaf of bread. She took the bread but refused to go back to work. The administrator asked her again why she refused to work and she replied, "I cannot be the only one who is satiated when others are hungry". Women workers from another section of the factory gathered around Marfa in support and gradually all the other women ceased working. Soon the men downed their tools as well and the entire crowd rushed onto the street.'

From: Choi Chatterji, *Celebrating Women* (2002).

3.1 After February

Army officials, landowners and industrialists were influential in the Provisional Government. But the liberals as well as socialists among them worked towards an elected government. Restrictions on public meetings and associations were removed. 'Soviets', like the Petrograd Soviet, were set up everywhere, though no common system of election was followed.

In April 1917, the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin returned to Russia from his exile. He and the Bolsheviks had opposed the war since 1914. Now he felt it was time for soviets to take over power. He declared that the war be brought to a close, land be transferred to the peasants, and banks be nationalised. These three demands were Lenin's 'April Theses'. He also argued that the Bolshevik Party rename itself the Communist Party to indicate its new radical aims. Most others in the Bolshevik Party were initially surprised by the April Theses. They thought that the time was not yet ripe for a

Activity

Look again at Source A and Box 1.

- List five changes in the mood of the workers.
- Place yourself in the position of a woman who has seen both situations and write an account of what has changed.

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socialist revolution and the Provisional Government needed to be supported. But the developments of the subsequent months changed their attitude.

Through the summer the workers' movement spread. In industrial areas, factory committees were formed which began questioning the way industrialists ran their factories. Trade unions grew in number. Soldiers' committees were formed in the army. In June, about 500 Soviets sent representatives to an All Russian Congress of Soviets. As the Provisional Government saw its power reduce and Bolshevik influence grow, it decided to take stern measures against the spreading discontent. It resisted attempts by workers to run factories and began arresting leaders. Popular demonstrations staged by the Bolsheviks in July 1917 were sternly repressed. Many Bolshevik leaders had to go into hiding or flee.

Meanwhile in the countryside, peasants and their Socialist Revolutionary leaders pressed for a redistribution of land. Land committees were formed to handle this. Encouraged by the Socialist Revolutionaries, peasants seized land between July and September 1917.



***Fig.9** – A Bolshevik image of Lenin addressing workers in April 1917.*



***Fig.10 – The July Days.** A pro-Bolshevik demonstration on 17 July 1917 being fired upon by the army.*

3.2 The Revolution of October 1917

As the conflict between the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks grew, Lenin feared the Provisional Government would set up a dictatorship. In September, he began discussions for an uprising against the government. Bolshevik supporters in the army, soviets and factories were brought together.

On 16 October 1917, Lenin persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and the Bolshevik Party to agree to a socialist seizure of power. A Military Revolutionary Committee was appointed by the Soviet under Leon Trotskii to organise the seizure. The date of the event was kept a secret.

The uprising began on 24 October. Sensing trouble, Prime Minister Kerenskii had left the city to summon troops. At dawn, military men loyal to the government seized the buildings of two Bolshevik newspapers. Pro-government troops were sent to take over telephone and telegraph offices and protect the Winter Palace. In a swift response, the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered its supporters to seize government offices and arrest ministers. Late in the day, the ship *Aurora* shelled the Winter Palace. Other vessels sailed down the Neva and took over various military points. By nightfall, the city was under the committee's control and the ministers had surrendered. At a meeting of the All Russian Congress of Soviets in Petrograd, the majority approved the Bolshevik action. Uprisings took place in other cities. There was heavy fighting – especially in Moscow – but by December, the Bolsheviks controlled the Moscow-Petrograd area.



***Fig. 11** – Lenin (left) and Trotskii (right) with workers at Petrograd.*

Box 2

Date of the Russian Revolution

Russia followed the Julian calendar until 1 February 1918. The country then changed to the Gregorian calendar, which is followed everywhere today. The Gregorian dates are 13 days ahead of the Julian dates. So by our calendar, the 'February' Revolution took place on 12th March and the 'October' Revolution took place on 7th November.

Some important dates

1850s -1880s
Debates over socialism in Russsia.

1898
Formation of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party.

1905
The Bloody Sunday and the Revolution of 1905.

1917
2nd March - Abdication of the Tsar.
24th October - Bolshevik unprising in Petrograd.

1918-20
The Civil War.

1919
Formation of Comintern.

1929
Beginning of Collectivisation.

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4 What Changed after October?

The Bolsheviks were totally opposed to private property. Most industry and banks were nationalised in November 1917. This meant that the government took over ownership and management. Land was declared social property and peasants were allowed to seize the land of the nobility. In cities, Bolsheviks enforced the partition of large houses according to family requirements. They banned the use of the old titles of aristocracy. To assert the change, new uniforms were designed for the army and officials, following a clothing competition organised in 1918 – when the Soviet hat (*budeonovka*) was chosen.



Fig. 12 – A soldier wearing the Soviet hat (budeonovka).

The Bolshevik Party was renamed the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). In November 1917, the Bolsheviks conducted the elections to the Constituent Assembly, but they failed to gain majority support. In January 1918, the Assembly rejected Bolshevik measures and Lenin dismissed the Assembly. He thought the All Russian Congress of Soviets was more democratic than an assembly elected in uncertain conditions. In March 1918, despite opposition by their political allies, the Bolsheviks made peace with Germany at Brest Litovsk. In the years that followed, the Bolsheviks became the only party to participate in the elections to the All Russian Congress of Soviets, which became the Parliament of the country. Russia became a one-party state. Trade unions were kept under party control. The secret police (called the Cheka first, and later OGPU and NKVD) punished those who criticised the Bolsheviks. Many young writers and artists rallied to the Party because it stood for socialism and for change. After October 1917, this led to experiments in the arts and architecture. But many became disillusioned because of the censorship the Party encouraged.



Fig. 13 – May Day demonstration in Moscow in 1918.

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Box 3

The October Revolution and the Russian Countryside: Two Views

'News of the revolutionary uprising of October 25, 1917, reached the village the following day and was greeted with enthusiasm; to the peasants it meant free land and an end to the war. ...The day the news arrived, the landowner's manor house was looted, his stock farms were "requisitioned" and his vast orchard was cut down and sold to the peasants for wood; all his far buildings were torn down and left in ruins while the land was distributed among the peasants who were prepared to live the new Soviet life'.

From: Fedor Belov, *The History of a Soviet Collective Farm*

A member of a landowning family wrote to a relative about what happened at the estate:

'The "coup" happened quite painlessly, quietly and peacefully. …The first days were unbearable.. Mikhail Mikhailovich [the estate owner] was calm...The girls also…I must say the chairman behaves correctly and even politely. We were left two cows and two horses. The servants tell them all the time not to bother us. "Let them live. We vouch for their safety and property. We want them treated as humanely as possible…."

…There are rumours that several villages are trying to evict the committees and return the estate to Mikhail Mikhailovich. I don't know if this will happen, or if it's good for us. But we rejoice that there is a conscience in our people...'

From: Serge Schmemann, *Echoes of a Native Land. Two Centuries of a Russian Village (1997).*

4.1 The Civil War

When the Bolsheviks ordered land redistribution, the Russian army began to break up. Soldiers, mostly peasants, wished to go home for the redistribution and deserted. Non-Bolshevik socialists, liberals and supporters of autocracy condemned the Bolshevik uprising. Their leaders moved to south Russia and organised troops to fight the Bolsheviks (the 'reds'). During 1918 and 1919, the 'greens' (Socialist Revolutionaries) and 'whites' (pro-Tsarists) controlled most of the Russian empire. They were backed by French, American, British and Japanese troops – all those forces who were worried at the growth of socialism in Russia. As these troops and the Bolsheviks fought a civil war, looting, banditry and famine became common.

Supporters of private property among 'whites' took harsh steps with peasants who had seized land. Such actions led to the loss of popular support for the non-Bolsheviks. By January 1920, the Bolsheviks controlled most of the former Russian empire. They succeeded due

Activity

Read the two views on the revolution in the countryside. Imagine yourself to be a witness to the events. Write a short account from the standpoint of:

- an owner of an estate
- a small peasant
- a journalist

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to cooperation with non-Russian nationalities and Muslim *jadidists*. Cooperation did not work where Russian colonists themselves turned Bolshevik. In Khiva, in Central Asia, Bolshevik colonists brutally massacred local nationalists in the name of defending socialism. In this situation, many were confused about what the Bolshevik government represented.

Partly to remedy this, most non-Russian nationalities were given political **autonomy** in the Soviet Union (USSR) – the state the Bolsheviks created from the Russian empire in December 1922. But since this was combined with unpopular policies that the Bolsheviks forced the local government to follow – like the harsh discouragement of **nomadism** – attempts to win over different nationalities were only partly successful.

New words

Autonomy – The right to govern themselves

Nomadism – Lifestyle of those who do not live in one place but move from area to area to earn their living

Activity

Why did people in Central Asia respond to the Russian Revolution in different ways?

Source B

Central Asia of the October Revolution: Two Views

M.N.Roy was an Indian revolutionary, a founder of the Mexican Communist Party and prominent Comintern leader in India, China and Europe. He was in Central Asia at the time of the civil war in the 1920s. He wrote:

'The chieftain was a benevolent old man; his attendant … a youth who … spoke Russian … He had heard of the Revolution, which had overthrown the Tsar and driven away the Generals who conquered the homeland of the Kirgiz. So, the Revolution meant that the Kirgiz were masters of their home again. "Long Live the Revolution" shouted the Kirgiz youth who seemed to be a born Bolshevik. The whole tribe joined.'

M.N.Roy, *Memoirs (1964).*

'The Kirghiz welcomed the first revolution (ie February Revolution) with joy and the second revolution with consternation and terror … [This] first revolution freed them from the oppression of the Tsarist regime and strengthened their hope that … autonomy would be realised. The second revolution (October Revolution) was accompanied by violence, pillage, taxes and the establishment of dictatorial power … Once a small group of Tsarist bureaucrats oppressed the Kirghiz. Now the same group of people … perpetuate the same regime …'

Kazakh leader in 1919, quoted in Alexander Bennigsen and Chantal Quelquejay, *Les Mouvements Nationaux chez les Musulmans de Russie, (1960).*

Source

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4.2 Making a Socialist Society

During the civil war, the Bolsheviks kept industries and banks nationalised. They permitted peasants to cultivate the land that had been socialised. Bolsheviks used confiscated land to demonstrate what collective work could be.

A process of centralised planning was introduced. Officials assessed how the economy could work and set targets for a five-year period. On this basis they made the Five Year Plans. The government fixed all prices to promote industrial growth during the first two 'Plans' (1927-1932 and 1933-1938). Centralised planning led to economic growth. Industrial production increased (between 1929 and 1933 by 100 per cent in the case of oil, coal and steel). New factory cities came into being.

Box 4

Socialist Cultivation in a Village in the Ukraine

'A commune was set up using two [confiscated] farms as a base. The commune consisted of thirteen families with a total of seventy persons … The farm tools taken from the … farms were turned over to the commune …The members ate in a communal dining hall and income was divided in accordance with the principles of "cooperative communism". The entire proceeds of the members' labor, as well as all dwellings and facilities belonging to the commune were shared by the commune members.'

Fedor Belov, *The History of a Soviet Collective Farm (1955).*

However, rapid construction led to poor working conditions. In the city of Magnitogorsk, the construction of a steel plant was achieved in three years. Workers lived hard lives and the result was 550 stoppages of work in the first year alone. In living quarters, 'in the wintertime, at 40 degrees below, people had to climb down from the fourth floor and dash across the street in order to go to the toilet'.

An extended schooling system developed, and arrangements were made for factory workers and peasants to enter universities. Crèches were established in factories for the children of women workers. Cheap public health care was provided. Model living quarters were set up for workers. The effect of all this was uneven, though, since government resources were limited.



Fig. 14 – Factories came to be seen as a symbol of socialism.
This poster states: 'The smoke from the chimneys is the breathing of Soviet Russia.'

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Fig.15 – Children at school in Soviet Russia in the 1930s.
They are studying the Soviet economy.



Fig.16 – A child in Magnitogorsk during the First Five Year Plan.
He is working for Soviet Russia.



Fig.17 – Factory dining hall in the 1930s.

Source C

Dreams and Realities of a Soviet Childhood in 1933

Dear grandfather Kalinin …

My family is large, there are four children. We don't have a father – he died, fighting for the worker's cause, and my mother … is ailing … I want to study very much, but I cannot go to school. I had some old boots, but they are completely torn and no one can mend them. My mother is sick, we have no money and no bread, but I want to study very much. …there stands before us the task of studying, studying and studying. That is what Vladimir Ilich Lenin said. But I have to stop going to school. We have no relatives and there is no one to help us, so I have to go to work in a factory, to prevent the family from starving. Dear grandfather, I am 13, I study well and have no bad reports. I am in Class 5 …

Letter of 1933 from a 13-year-old worker to Kalinin, Soviet President

From: V. Sokolov (ed), *Obshchestvo I Vlast, v 1930-ye gody* (Moscow, 1997).

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4.3 Stalinism and Collectivisation



The period of the early Planned Economy was linked to the disasters of the collectivisation of agriculture. By 1927-1928, the towns in Soviet Russia were facing an acute problem of grain supplies. The government fixed prices at which grain must be sold, but the peasants refused to sell their grain to government buyers at these prices.

Stalin, who headed the party after the death of Lenin, introduced firm emergency measures. He believed that rich peasants and traders in the countryside were holding stocks in the hope of higher prices. Speculation had to be stopped and supplies confiscated.

In 1928, Party members toured the grain-producing areas, supervising enforced grain collections, and raiding 'kulaks' – the name for well-to-do peasants. As shortages continued, the decision was taken to collectivise farms. It was argued that grain shortages were partly due to the small size of holdings. After 1917, land had been given over to peasants. These small-sized peasant farms could not be modernised. To develop modern farms, and run them along industrial lines with machinery, it was necessary to 'eliminate kulaks', take away land from peasants, and establish state-controlled large farms.

What followed was Stalin's collectivisation programme. From 1929, the Party forced all peasants to cultivate in collective farms (*kolkhoz*). The bulk of land and implements were transferred to the ownership of collective farms. Peasants worked on the land, and the *kolkhoz* profit was shared. Enraged peasants resisted the authorities and destroyed their livestock. Between 1929 and 1931, the number of cattle fell by one-third. Those who resisted collectivisation were severely punished. Many were **deported** and **exiled**. As they resisted collectivisation, peasants argued that they were not rich and they were not against socialism. They merely did not want to work in collective farms for a variety of reasons. Stalin's government allowed some independent cultivation, but treated such cultivators unsympathetically.

In spite of collectivisation, production did not increase immediately. In fact, the bad harvests of 1930-1933 led to one of most devastating famines in Soviet history when over 4 million died.

New words

Deported – Forcibly removed from one's own country.
Exiled – Forced to live away from one's own country.



Fig. 18 – A poster during collectivisation. *It states: 'We shall strike at the kulak working for the decrease in cultivation.'*



Fig. 19 – Peasant women being gathered to work in the large collective farms.

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Source D

Official view of the opposition to collectivisation and the government response

'From the second half of February of this year, in various regions of the Ukraine … mass insurrections of the peasantry have taken place, caused by distortions of the Party's line by a section of the lower ranks of the Party and the Soviet apparatus in the course of the introduction of collectivisation and preparatory work for the spring harvest.

Within a short time, large scale activities from the above-mentioned regions carried over into neighbouring areas – and the most aggressive insurrections have taken place near the border.

The greater part of the peasant insurrections have been linked with outright demands for the return of collectivised stocks of grain, livestock and tools …

Between 1st February and 15th March, 25,000 have been arrested … 656 have been executed, 3673 have been imprisoned in labour camps and 5580 exiled …'

Report of K.M. Karlson, President of the State Police Administration of the Ukraine to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, on 19 March 1930.

From: V. Sokolov (ed), *Obshchestvo I Vlast, v 1930-ye gody*

Source

Many within the Party criticised the confusion in industrial production under the Planned Economy and the consequences of collectivisation. Stalin and his sympathisers charged these critics with conspiracy against socialism. Accusations were made throughout the country, and by 1939, over 2 million were in prisons or labour camps. Most were innocent of the crimes, but no one spoke for them. A large number were forced to make false confessions under torture and were executed – several among them were talented professionals.

Source E

This is a letter written by a peasant who did not want to join the collective farm.

To the newspaper *Krestianskaia Gazeta* (Peasant Newspaper)

'… I am a natural working peasant born in 1879 … there are 6 members in my family, my wife was born in 1881, my son is 16, two daughters 19, all three go to school, my sister is 71. From 1932, heavy taxes have been levied on me that I have found impossible. From 1935, local authorities have increased the taxes on me … and I was unable to handle them and all my property was registered: my horse, cow, calf, sheep with lambs, all my implements, furniture and my reserve of wood for repair of buildings and they sold the lot for the taxes. In 1936, they sold two of my buildings … the kolkhoz bought them. In 1937, of two huts I had, one was sold and one was confiscated …'

Afanasii Dedorovich Frebenev, an independent cultivator.

From: V. Sokolov (ed), *Obshchestvo I Vlast, v 1930-ye gody.*

Source

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5 The Global Influence of the Russian Revolution and the USSR

Existing socialist parties in Europe did not wholly approve of the way the Bolsheviks took power – and kept it. However, the possibility of a workers' state fired people's imagination across the world. In many countries, communist parties were formed – like the Communist Party of Great Britain. The Bolsheviks encouraged colonial peoples to follow their experiment. Many non-Russians from outside the USSR participated in the Conference of the Peoples of the East (1920) and the Bolshevik-founded Comintern (an international union of pro-Bolshevik socialist parties). Some received education in the USSR's Communist University of the Workers of the East. By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, the USSR had given socialism a global face and world stature.

Yet by the 1950s it was acknowledged within the country that the style of government in the USSR was not in keeping with the ideals of the Russian Revolution. In the world socialist movement too it was recognised that all was not well in the Soviet Union. A backward country had become a great power. Its industries and agriculture had developed and the poor were being fed. But it had denied the essential freedoms to its citizens and carried out its developmental projects through repressive policies. By the end of the twentieth century, the international reputation of the USSR as a socialist country had declined though it was recognised that socialist ideals still enjoyed respect among its people. But in each country the ideas of socialism were rethought in a variety of different ways.

Box 5

Writing about the Russian Revolution in India

Among those the Russian Revolution inspired were many Indians. Several attended the Communist University. By the mid-1920s the Communist Party was formed in India. Its members kept in touch with the Soviet Communist Party. Important Indian political and cultural figures took an interest in the Soviet experiment and visited Russia, among them Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote about Soviet Socialism. In India, writings gave impressions of Soviet Russia. In Hindi, R.S. Avasthi wrote in 1920-21 *Russian Revolution*, *Lenin, His Life and His Thoughts*, and later *The Red Revolution* . S.D. Vidyalankar wrote *The Rebirth of Russia* and *The Soviet State of Russia*. There was much that was written in Bengali, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu.



***Fig.20 – Special Issue on Lenin of the* Indo-Soviet Journal.**
Indian communists mobilised support for the USSR during the Second World War.

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Source F

An Indian arrives in Soviet Russia in 1920

'For the first time in our lives, we were seeing Europeans mixing freely with Asians. On seeing the Russians mingling freely with the rest of the people of the country we were convinced that we had come to a land of real equality.

We saw freedom in its true light. In spite of their poverty, imposed by the counter-revolutionaries and the imperialists, the people were more jovial and satisfied than ever before. The revolution had instilled confidence and fearlessness in them. The real brotherhood of mankind would be seen here among these people of fifty different nationalities. No barriers of caste or religion hindered them from mixing freely with one another. Every soul was transformed into an orator. One could see a worker, a peasant or a soldier haranguing like a professional lecturer.'

Shaukat Usmani, *Historic Trips of a Revolutionary.*

Source G

Rabindranath Tagore wrote from Russia in 1930

'Moscow appears much less clean than the other European capitals. None of those hurrying along the streets look smart. The whole place belongs to the workers … Here the masses have not in the least been put in the shade by the gentlemen … those who lived in the background for ages have come forward in the open today … I thought of the peasants and workers in my own country. It all seemed like the work of the Genii in the Arabian Nights. [here] only a decade ago they were as illiterate, helpless and hungry as our own masses … Who could be more astonished than an unfortunate Indian like myself to see how they had removed the mountain of ignorance and helplessness in these few years'.

Activity

Compare the passages written by Shaukat Usmani and Rabindranath Tagore. Read them in relation to Sources C, D and E.

- What did Indians find impressive about the USSR ?
- What did the writers fail to notice?

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Activities

1. Imagine that you are a striking worker in 1905 who is being tried in court for your act of rebellion. Draft the speech you would make in your defence. Act out your speech for your class.
2. Write the headline and a short news item about the uprising of 24 October 1917 for each of the following newspapers
   - a Conservative paper in France
   - a Radical newspaper in Britain
   - a Bolshevik newspaper in Russia
3. Imagine that you are a middle-level wheat farmer in Russia after collectivisation. You have decided to write a letter to Stalin explaining your objections to collectivisation. What would you write about the conditions of your life? What do you think would be Stalin's response to such a farmer?

Questions

1. What were the social, economic and political conditions in Russia before 1905?
2. In what ways was the working population in Russia different from other countries in Europe, before 1917?
3. Why did the Tsarist autocracy collapse in 1917?
4. Make two lists: one with the main events and the effects of the February Revolution and the other with the main events and effects of the October Revolution. Write a paragraph on who was involved in each, who were the leaders and what was the impact of each on Soviet history.
5. What were the main changes brought about by the Bolsheviks immediately after the October Revolution?
6. Write a few lines to show what you know about:
   - kulaks
   - the Duma
   - women workers between 1900 and 1930
   - the Liberals
   - Stalin's collectivisation programme.

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Nazism and the Rise of Hitler

In the spring of 1945, a little eleven-year-old German boy called Helmuth was lying in bed when he overheard his parents discussing something in serious tones. His father, a prominent physician, deliberated with his wife whether the time had come to kill the entire family, or if he should commit suicide alone. His father spoke about his fear of revenge, saying, 'Now the **Allies** will do to us what we did to the crippled and Jews.' The next day, he took Helmuth to the woods, where they spent their last happy time together, singing old children's songs. Later, Helmuth's father shot himself in his office. Helmuth remembers that he saw his father's bloody uniform being burnt in the family fireplace. So traumatised was he by what he had overheard and what had happened, that he reacted by refusing to eat at home for the following nine years! He was afraid that his mother might poison him.

Although Helmuth may not have realised all that it meant, his father had been a Nazi and a supporter of Adolf Hitler. Many of you will know something about the Nazis and Hitler. You probably know of Hitler's determination to make Germany into a mighty power and his ambition of conquering all of Europe. You may have heard that he killed Jews. But Nazism was not one or two isolated acts. It was a system, a structure of ideas about the world and politics. Let us try and understand what Nazism was all about. Let us see why Helmuth's father killed himself and what the basis of his fear was.

In May 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allies. Anticipating what was coming, Hitler, his propaganda minister Goebbels and his entire family committed suicide collectively in his Berlin bunker in April. At the end of the war, an International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg was set up to prosecute Nazi war criminals for Crimes against Peace, for War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity. Germany's conduct during the war, especially those actions which



***Fig. 1** – Hitler (centre) and Goebbels (left) leaving after an official meeting, 1932.*

New words

Allies – The Allied Powers were initially led by the UK and France. In 1941 they were joined by the USSR and USA. They fought against the Axis Powers, namely Germany, Italy and Japan.

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came to be called Crimes Against Humanity, raised serious moral and ethical questions and invited worldwide condemnation. What were these acts?

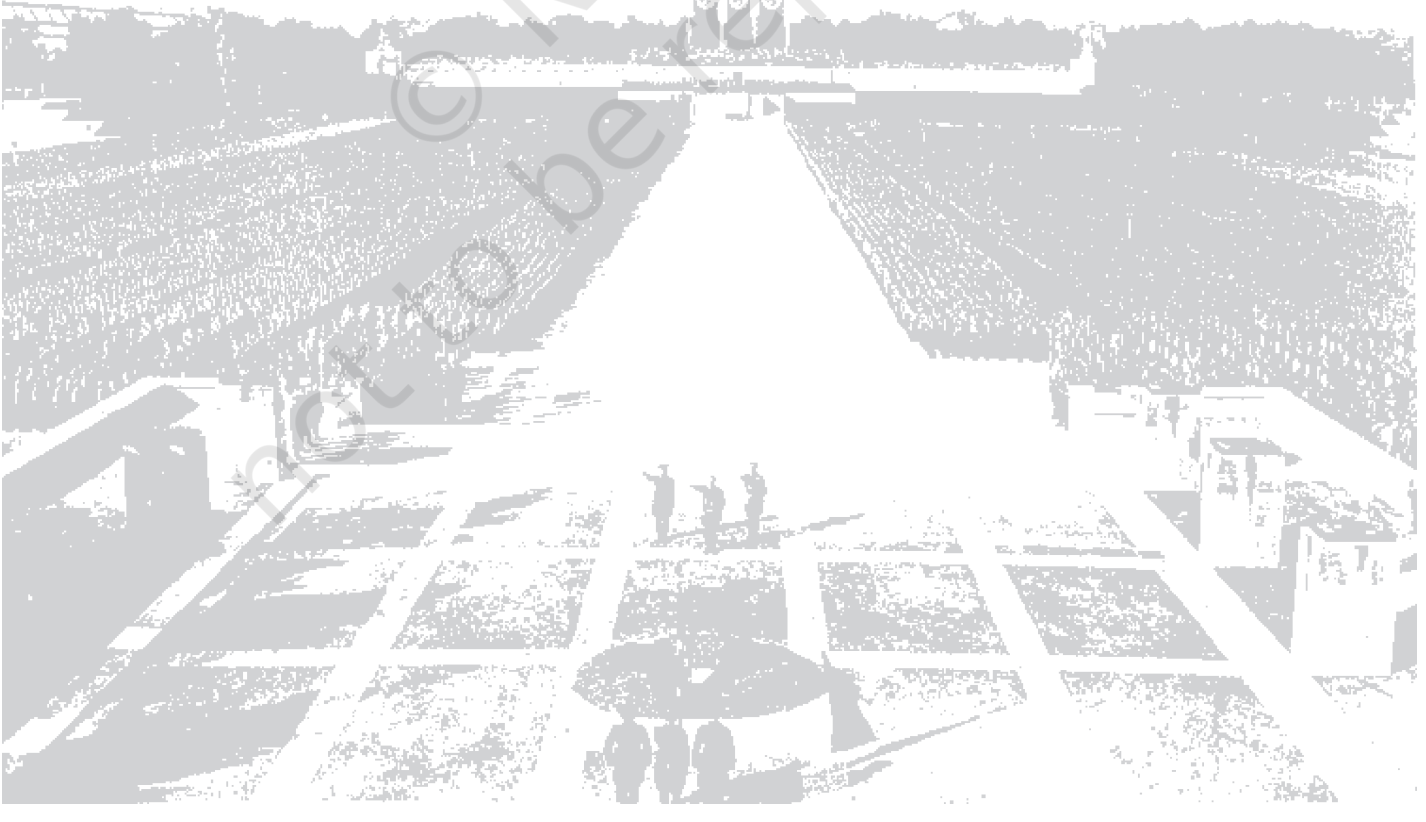
Under the shadow of the Second World War, Germany had waged a **genocidal** war, which resulted in the mass murder of selected groups of innocent civilians of Europe. The number of people killed included 6 million Jews, 200,000 Gypsies, 1 million Polish civilians, 70,000 Germans who were considered mentally and physically disabled, besides innumerable political opponents. Nazis devised an unprecedented means of killing people, that is, by gassing them in various killing centres like Auschwitz. The Nuremberg Tribunal sentenced only eleven leading Nazis to death. Many others were imprisoned for life. The retribution did come, yet the punishment of the Nazis was far short of the brutality and extent of their crimes. The Allies did not want to be as harsh on defeated Germany as they had been after the First World War.

Everyone came to feel that the rise of Nazi Germany could be partly traced back to the German experience at the end of the First World War.

What was this experinece?

New words

Genocidal – Killing on large scale leading to destruction of large sections of people



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1 Birth of the Weimar Republic

Germany, a powerful empire in the early years of the twentieth century, fought the First World War (1914-1918) alongside the Austrian empire and against the Allies (England, France and Russia.) All joined the war enthusiastically hoping to gain from a quick victory. Little did they realise that the war would stretch on, eventually draining Europe of all its resources. Germany made initial gains by occupying France and Belgium. However the Allies, strengthened by the US entry in 1917, won , defeating Germany and the Central Powers in November 1918.

The defeat of Imperial Germany and the abdication of the emperor gave an opportunity to parliamentary parties to recast German polity. A National Assembly met at Weimar and established a democratic constitution with a federal structure. Deputies were now elected to the German Parliament or Reichstag, on the basis of equal and universal votes cast by all adults including women.

This republic, however, was not received well by its own people largely because of the terms it was forced to accept after Germany's defeat at the end of the First World War. The peace treaty at

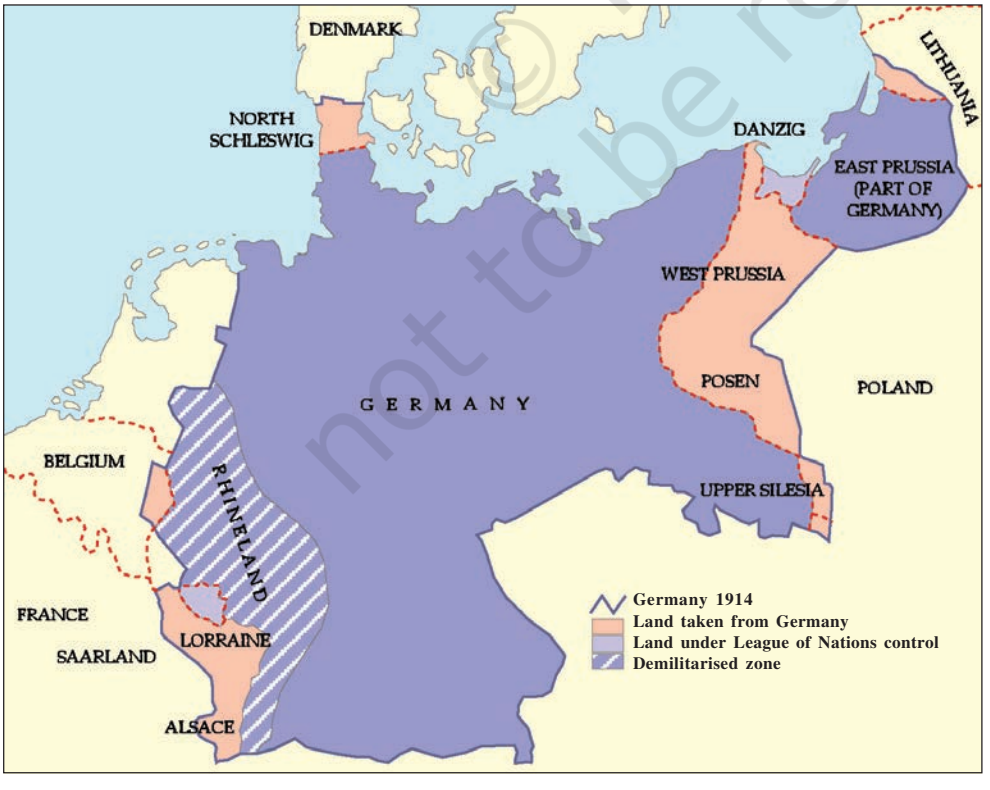


Fig.2 – Germany after the Versailles Treaty. You can see in this map the parts of the territory that Germany lost after the treaty.

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Versailles with the Allies was a harsh and humiliating peace. Germany lost its overseas colonies, a tenth of its population, 13 per cent of its territories, 75 per cent of its iron and 26 per cent of its coal to France, Poland, Denmark and Lithuania. The Allied Powers demilitarised Germany to weaken its power. The War Guilt Clause held Germany responsible for the war and damages the Allied countries suffered. Germany was forced to pay compensation amounting to £6 billion. The Allied armies also occupied the resource-rich Rhineland for much of the 1920s. Many Germans held the new Weimar Republic responsible for not only the defeat in the war but the disgrace at Versailles.

1.1 The Effects of the War

The war had a devastating impact on the entire continent both psychologically and financially. From a continent of creditors, Europe turned into one of debtors. Unfortunately, the infant Weimar Republic was being made to pay for the sins of the old empire. The republic carried the burden of war guilt and national humiliation and was financially crippled by being forced to pay compensation. Those who supported the Weimar Republic, mainly Socialists, Catholics and Democrats, became easy targets of attack in the conservative nationalist circles. They were mockingly called the 'November criminals'. This mindset had a major impact on the political developments of the early 1930s, as we will soon see.

The First World War left a deep imprint on European society and polity. Soldiers came to be placed above civilians. Politicians and publicists laid great stress on the need for men to be aggressive, strong and masculine. The media glorified trench life. The truth, however, was that soldiers lived miserable lives in these trenches, trapped with rats feeding on corpses. They faced poisonous gas and enemy shelling, and witnessed their ranks reduce rapidly. Aggressive war propaganda and national honour occupied centre stage in the public sphere, while popular support grew for conservative dictatorships that had recently come into being. Democracy was indeed a young and fragile idea, which could not survive the instabilities of interwar Europe.

1.2 Political Radicalism and Economic Crises

The birth of the Weimar Republic coincided with the revolutionary uprising of the Spartacist League on the pattern of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Soviets of workers and sailors were established

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Fig.3 – This is a rally organised by the radical group known as the Spartacist League.
In the winter of 1918-1919 the streets of Berlin were taken over by the people. Political demonstrations became common.

in many cities. The political atmosphere in Berlin was charged with demands for Soviet-style governance. Those opposed to this – such as the socialists, Democrats and Catholics – met in Weimar to give shape to the democratic republic. The Weimar Republic crushed the uprising with the help of a war veterans organisation called Free Corps. The anguished Spartacists later founded the Communist Party of Germany. Communists and Socialists henceforth became irreconcilable enemies and could not make common cause against Hitler. Both revolutionaries and militant nationalists craved for radical solutions.

Political radicalisation was only heightened by the economic crisis of 1923. Germany had fought the war largely on loans and had to pay war **reparations** in gold. This **depleted** gold reserves at a time resources were scarce. In 1923 Germany refused to pay, and the French occupied its leading industrial area, Ruhr, to claim their coal. Germany retaliated with passive resistance and printed paper currency recklessly. With too much printed money in circulation, the value of the German mark fell. In April the US dollar was equal to 24,000 marks, in July 353,000 marks, in August 4,621,000 marks and at

New words

Deplete – Reduce, empty out
Reparation – Make up for a wrong done



***Fig.4** – Baskets and carts being loaded at a bank in Berlin with paper currency for wage payment, 1923. The German mark had so little value that vast amounts had to be used even for small payments.*

98,860,000 marks by December, the figure had run into trillions. As the value of the mark collapsed, prices of goods soared. The image of Germans carrying cartloads of currency notes to buy a loaf of bread was widely publicised evoking worldwide sympathy. This crisis came to be known as hyperinflation**,** a situation when prices rise phenomenally high.

Eventually, the Americans intervened and bailed Germany out of the crisis by introducing the Dawes Plan, which reworked the terms of reparation to ease the financial burden on Germans.



Fig.5 *– Homeless men queuing up for a night's shelter, 1923.*

1.3 The Years of Depression

The years between 1924 and 1928 saw some stability. Yet this was built on sand. German investments and industrial recovery were totally dependent on short-term loans, largely from the USA. This support was withdrawn when the **Wall Street Exchange** crashed in 1929. Fearing a fall in prices, people made frantic efforts to sell their shares. On one single day, 24 October, 13 million shares were sold. This was the start of the Great Economic Depression. Over the next three years, between 1929 and 1932, the national income of the USA fell by half. Factories shut down, exports fell, farmers were badly hit and speculators withdrew their money from the market. The effects of this recession in the US economy were felt worldwide.

The German economy was the worst hit by the economic crisis. By 1932, industrial production was reduced to 40 per cent of the 1929 level. Workers lost their jobs or were paid reduced wages. The number of unemployed touched an unprecedented 6 million. On the streets of Germany you could see men with placards around their necks saying, 'Willing to do any work'. Unemployed youths played cards or simply sat at street corners, or desperately queued up at the local employment exchange. As jobs disappeared, the youth took to criminal activities and total despair became commonplace.

The economic crisis created deep anxieties and fears in people. The middle classes, especially salaried employees and pensioners, saw their savings diminish when the currency lost its value. Small businessmen, the self-employed and retailers suffered as their



Fig.6 *– Sleeping on the line. During the Great Depression the unemployed could not hope for either wage or shelter. On winter nights when they wanted a shelter over their head, they had to pay to sleep like this.*

New words

Wall Street Exchange – The name of the world's biggest stock exchange located in the USA.

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businesses got ruined. These sections of society were filled with the fear of **proletarianisation**, an anxiety of being reduced to the ranks of the working class, or worse still, the unemployed. Only organised workers could manage to keep their heads above water, but unemployment weakened their bargaining power. Big business was in crisis. The large mass of peasantry was affected by a sharp fall in agricultural prices and women, unable to fill their children's stomachs, were filled with a sense of deep despair.

Politically too the Weimar Republic was fragile. The Weimar constitution had some inherent defects, which made it unstable and vulnerable to dictatorship. One was proportional representation. This made achieving a majority by any one party a near impossible task, leading to a rule by coalitions. Another defect was Article 48, which gave the President the powers to impose emergency, suspend civil rights and rule by decree. Within its short life, the Weimar Republic saw twenty different cabinets lasting on an average 239 days, and a liberal use of Article 48. Yet the crisis could not be managed. People lost confidence in the democratic parliamentary system, which seemed to offer no solutions.

New words

Proletarianisation – To become impoverished to the level of working classes.

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2 Hitler's Rise to Power

This crisis in the economy, polity and society formed the background to Hitler's rise to power. Born in 1889 in Austria, Hitler spent his youth in poverty. When the First World War broke out, he enrolled for the army, acted as a messenger in the front, became a corporal, and earned medals for bravery. The German defeat horrified him and the Versailles Treaty made him furious. In 1919, he joined a small group called the German Workers' Party. He subsequently took over the organisation and renamed it the National Socialist German Workers' Party. This party came to be known as the Nazi Party.

In 1923, Hitler planned to seize control of Bavaria, march to Berlin and capture power. He failed, was arrested, tried for treason, and later released. The Nazis could not effectively mobilise popular support till the early 1930s. It was during the Great Depression that Nazism became a mass movement. As we have seen, after 1929, banks collapsed and businesses shut down, workers lost their jobs and the middle classes were threatened with destitution. In such a situation Nazi **propaganda** stirred hopes of a better future. In 1928, the Nazi Party got no more than 2. 6 per cent votes in the Reichstag – the German parliament. By 1932, it had become the largest party with 37 per cent votes.

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Fig. 7 – Hitler being greeted at the Party Congress in Nuremberg in 1938.

New words

Propaganda – Specific type of message directly aimed at influencing the opinion of people (through the use of posters, films, speeches, etc.)



Fig.8 – Nuremberg Rally, 1936.
Rallies like this were held every year. An important aspect of these was the demonstration of Nazi power as various organisations paraded past Hitler, swore loyalty and listened to his speeches.

Hitler was a powerful speaker. His passion and his words moved people. He promised to build a strong nation, undo the injustice of the Versailles Treaty and restore the dignity of the German people. He promised employment for those looking for work, and a secure future for the youth. He promised to weed out all foreign influences and resist all foreign 'conspiracies' against Germany.

Hitler devised a new style of politics. He understood the significance of rituals and spectacle in mass mobilisation. Nazis held massive rallies



Fig.9 — Hitler addressing SA and SS columns.
Notice the sweeping and straight columns of people. Such photographs were intended to show the grandeur and power of the Nazi movement

and public meetings to demonstrate the support for Hitler and instil a sense of unity among the people. The Red banners with the Swastika, the Nazi salute, and the ritualised rounds of applause after the speeches were all part of this spectacle of power.

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Nazi propaganda skilfully projected Hitler as a messiah, a saviour, as someone who had arrived to deliver people from their distress. It is an image that captured the imagination of a people whose sense of dignity and pride had been shattered, and who were living in a time of acute economic and political crises.

2.1 The Destruction of Democracy

On 30 January 1933, President Hindenburg offered the Chancellorship, the highest position in the cabinet of ministers, to Hitler. By now the Nazis had managed to rally the conservatives to their cause. Having acquired power, Hitler set out to dismantle the structures of democratic rule. A mysterious fire that broke out in the German Parliament building in February facilitated his move. The Fire Decree of 28 February 1933 indefinitely suspended civic rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly that had been guaranteed by the Weimar constitution. Then he turned on his arch-enemies, the Communists, most of whom were hurriedly packed off to the newly established **concentration camps**. The repression of the Communists was severe. Out of the surviving 6,808 arrest files of Duesseldorf, a small city of half a million population, 1,440 were those of Communists alone. They were, however, only one among the 52 types of victims persecuted by the Nazis across the country.

On 3 March 1933, the famous Enabling Act was passed. This Act established dictatorship in Germany. It gave Hitler all powers to sideline Parliament and rule by decree. All political parties and trade unions were banned except for the Nazi Party and its affiliates. The state established complete control over the economy, media, army and judiciary.

Special surveillance and security forces were created to control and order society in ways that the Nazis wanted. Apart from the already existing regular police in green uniform and the SA or the Storm Troopers, these included the Gestapo (secret state police), the SS (the protection squads), criminal police and the Security Service (SD). It was the extra-constitutional powers of these newly organised forces that gave the Nazi state its reputation as the most dreaded criminal state. People could now be detained in Gestapo torture chambers, rounded up and sent to concentration camps, deported at will or arrested without any legal procedures. The police forces acquired powers to rule with impunity.

New words

Concentration camp – A camp where people were isolated and detained without due process of law. Typically, it was surrounded by electrified barbed wire fences.

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2.2 Reconstruction

Hitler assigned the responsibility of economic recovery to the economist Hjalmar Schacht who aimed at full production and full employment through a state-funded work-creation programme. This project produced the famous German superhighways and the people's car, the Volkswagen.

In foreign policy also Hitler acquired quick successes. He pulled out of the League of Nations in 1933, reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936, and integrated Austria and Germany in 1938 under the slogan, *One people, One empire, and One leader*. He then went on to wrest German-speaking Sudentenland from Czechoslovakia, and gobbled up the entire country. In all of this he had the unspoken support of England, which had considered the Versailles verdict too harsh. These quick successes at home and abroad seemed to reverse the destiny of the country.

Hitler did not stop here. Schacht had advised Hitler against investing hugely in rearmament as the state still ran on deficit financing. Cautious people, however, had no place in Nazi Germany. Schacht had to leave. Hitler chose war as the way out of the approaching



Fig. 10 – The poster announces: 'Your volkswagen'.
Such posters suggested that owning a car was no longer just a dream for an ordinary worker.

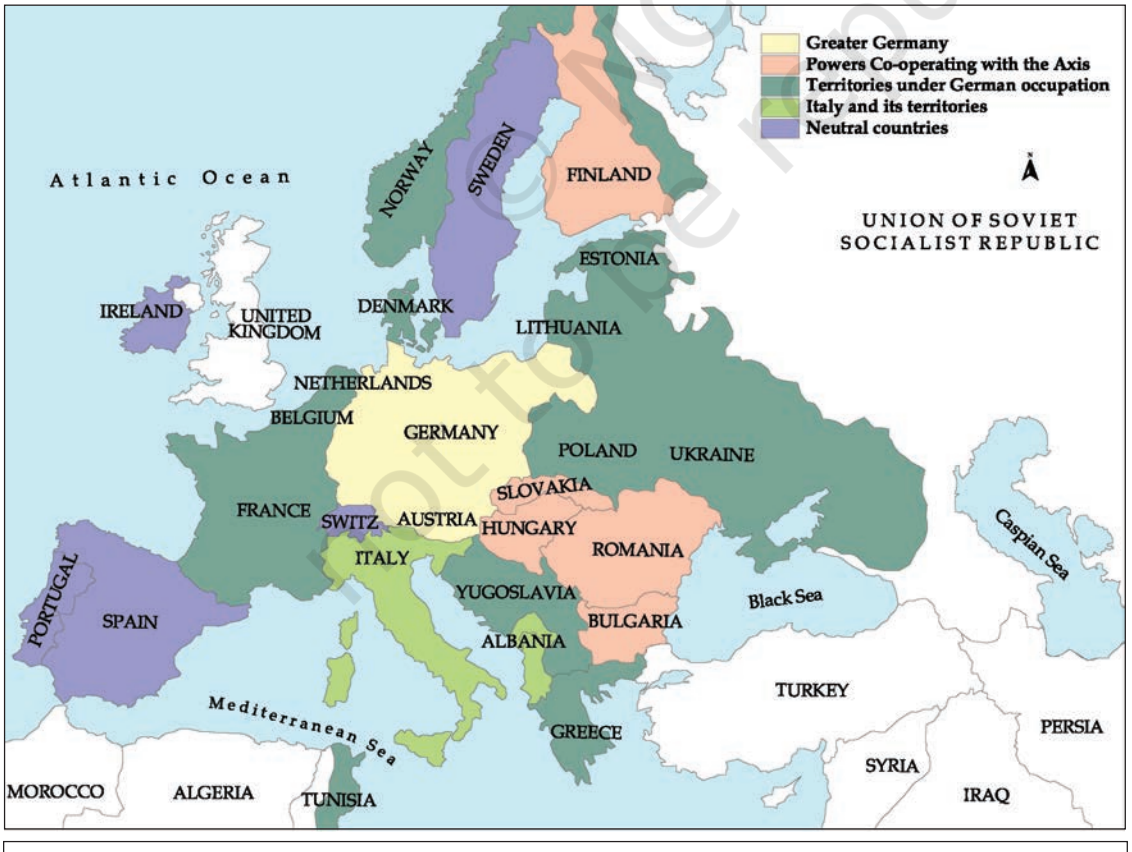


***Fig. 11** – Expansion of Nazi power: Europe 1942.*

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economic crisis. Resources were to be accumulated through expansion of territory. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. This started a war with France and England. In September 1940, a Tripartite Pact was signed between Germany, Italy and Japan, strengthening Hitler's claim to international power. Puppet regimes, supportive of Nazi Germany, were installed in a large part of Europe. By the end of 1940, Hitler was at the pinnacle of his power.

Hitler now moved to achieve his long-term aim of conquering Eastern Europe. He wanted to ensure food supplies and living space for Germans. He attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. In this historic blunder Hitler exposed the German western front to British aerial bombing and the eastern front to the powerful Soviet armies. The Soviet Red Army inflicted a crushing and humiliating defeat on Germany at Stalingrad. After this the Soviet Red Army hounded out the retreating German soldiers until they reached the heart of Berlin, establishing Soviet hegemony over the entire Eastern Europe for half a century thereafter.

Meanwhile, the USA had resisted involvement in the war. It was unwilling to once again face all the economic problems that the First World War had caused. But it could not stay out of the war for long. Japan was expanding its power in the east. It had occupied French Indo-China and was planning attacks on US naval bases in the Pacific. When Japan extended its support to Hitler and bombed the US base at Pearl Harbor, the US entered the Second World War. The war ended in May 1945 with Hitler's defeat and the US dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima in Japan.

From this brief account of what happened in the Second World War, we now return to Helmuth and his father's story, a story of Nazi criminality during the war.


The Hindustan Times

HITLER REPORTED DEAD

Iron Rule In Germany

HITLER REGIME

Silencing The Opposition

NEW EMERGENCY DECREE

Fig. 12 – Newspapers in India track the developments in Germany.

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3 The Nazi Worldview

The crimes that Nazis committed were linked to a system of belief and a set of practices.

Nazi ideology was synonymous with Hitler's worldview. According to this there was no equality between people, but only a racial hierarchy. In this view blond, blue-eyed, Nordic German Aryans were at the top, while Jews were located at the lowest rung. They came to be regarded as an anti-race, the arch-enemies of the Aryans. All other coloured people were placed in between depending upon their external features. Hitler's racism borrowed from thinkers like Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Darwin was a natural scientist who tried to explain the creation of plants and animals through the concept of evolution and natural selection. Herbert Spencer later added the idea of survival of the fittest. According to this idea, only those species survived on earth that could adapt themselves to changing climatic conditions. We should bear in mind that Darwin never advocated human intervention in what he thought was a purely natural process of selection. However, his ideas were used by racist thinkers and politicians to justify imperial rule over conquered peoples. The Nazi argument was simple: the strongest race would survive and the weak ones would perish. The Aryan race was the finest. It had to retain its purity, become stronger and dominate the world.

The other aspect of Hitler's ideology related to the geopolitical concept of *Lebensraum*, or living space. He believed that new territories had to be acquired for settlement. This would enhance the area of the mother country, while enabling the settlers on new lands to retain an intimate link with the place of their origin. It would also enhance the material resources and power of the German nation.

Hitler intended to extend German boundaries by moving eastwards, to concentrate all Germans geographically in one place. Poland became the laboratory for this experimentation.

3.1 Establishment of the Racial State

Once in power, the Nazis quickly began to implement their dream of creating an exclusive racial community of pure Germans by physically eliminating all those who were seen as 'undesirable' in the

Source A

'For this earth is not allotted to anyone nor is it presented to anyone as a gift. It is awarded by providence to people who in their hearts have the courage to conquer it, the strength to preserve it, and the industry to put it to the plough... The primary right of this world is the right to life, so far as one possesses the strength for this. Hence on the basis of this right a vigorous nation will always find ways of adapting its territory to its population size.'

Hitler, Secret Book, ed. Telford Taylor.

Source B

'In an era when the earth is gradually being divided up among states, some of which embrace almost entire continents, we cannot speak of a world power in connection with a formation whose political mother country is limited to the absurd area of five hundred kilometers.'

Hitler, Mein Kampf, *p. 644.*

Activity

Read Sources A and B

- What do they tell you about Hitler's imperial ambition?
- What do you think Mahatma Gandhi would have said to Hitler about these ideas?

New words

Nordic German Aryans – One branch of those classified as Aryans. They lived in north European countries and had German or related origin.

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extended empire. Nazis wanted only a society of 'pure and healthy Nordic Aryans'. They alone were considered 'desirable'. Only they were seen as worthy of prospering and multiplying against all others who were classed as 'undesirable'. This meant that even those Germans who were seen as impure or abnormal had no right to exist. Under the Euthanasia Programme, Helmuth's father along with other Nazi officials had condemned to death many Germans who were considered mentally or physically unfit.

Jews were not the only community classified as 'undesirable'. There were others. Many **Gypsies** and blacks living in Nazi Germany were considered as racial 'inferiors' who threatened the biological purity of the 'superior Aryan' race. They were widely **persecuted**. Even Russians and Poles were considered subhuman, and hence undeserving of any humanity. When Germany occupied Poland and parts of Russia, captured civilians were forced to work as slave labour. Many of them died simply through hard work and starvation.

Jews remained the worst sufferers in Nazi Germany. Nazi hatred of Jews had a precursor in the traditional Christian hostility towards Jews. They had been stereotyped as killers of Christ and **usurers**.Until medieval times Jews were barred from owning land. They survived mainly through trade and moneylending. They lived in separately marked areas called ghettos. They were often persecuted through periodic organised violence, and expulsion from the land. However, Hitler's hatred of Jews was based on pseudoscientific theories of race, which held that conversion was no solution to 'the Jewish problem'. It could be solved only through their total elimination.

From 1933 to 1938 the Nazis terrorised, **pauperised** and segregated the Jews, compelling them to leave the country. The next phase, 1939-1945, aimed at concentrating them in certain areas and eventually killing them in gas chambers in Poland.

3.2 The Racial Utopia

Under the shadow of war, the Nazis proceeded to realise their murderous, racial ideal. Genocide and war became two sides of the same coin. Occupied Poland was divided up. Much of north-western Poland was annexed to Germany. Poles were forced to leave their homes and properties behind to be occupied by ethnic Germans brought in from occupied Europe. Poles were then herded like



***Fig. 13** – Police escorting gypsies who are being deported to Auschwitz, 1943-1944.*

New words

Gypsy – The groups that were classified as 'gypsy' had their own community identity. Sinti and Roma were two such communities. Many of them traced their origin to India.
Pauperised – Reduce to absolute poverty
Persecution – Systematic, organised punishment of those belonging to a group or religion
Usurers – Moneylenders charging excessive interest; often used as a term of abuse

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cattle in the other part called the General Government, the destination of all 'undesirables' of the empire. Members of the Polish intelligentsia were murdered in large numbers in order to keep the entire people intellectually and spiritually servile. Polish children who looked like Aryans were forcibly snatched from their mothers and examined by 'race experts'. If they passed the race tests they were raised in German families and if not, they were deposited in orphanages where most perished. With some of the largest ghettos and gas chambers, the General Government also served as the killing fields for the Jews.

Activity

See the next two pages and write briefly:

- What does citizenship mean to you? Look at Chapters I and 3 and write 200 words on how the French Revolution and Nazism defined citizenship.
- What did the Nuremberg Laws mean to the 'undesirables' in Nazi Germany? What other legal measures were taken against them to make them feel unwanted?



***Fig. 14** – This is one of the freight cars used to deport Jews to the death chambers.*

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STEPS TO DEATH

Stage 1: Exclusion 1933–1939

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO LIVE AMONG US AS CITIZENS

The Nuremberg Laws of citizenship of September 1935:

1. Only Persons of German or related blood would henceforth be German citizens enjoying the protection of the German empire.
2. Marriages between Jews and Germans were forbidden.
3. Extramarital relations between Jews and Germans became a crime.
4. Jews were forbidden to fly the national flag.

Other legal measures included:

- Boycott of Jewish businesses
- Expulsion from government services
- Forced selling and confiscation of their properties

Besides, Jewish properties were vandalised and looted, houses attacked, **synagogues** burnt and men arrested in a **pogrom** in November. 1938, remembered as 'the night of broken glass'

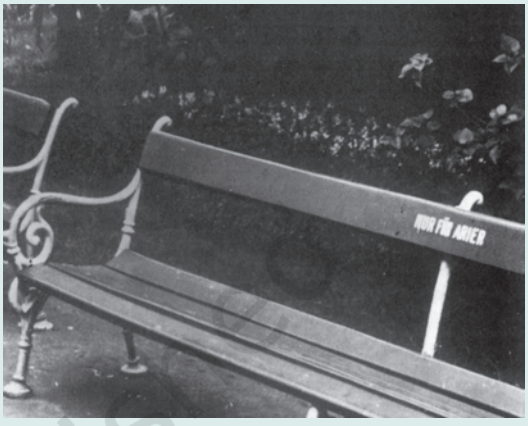


Fig.16 – Park bench announces: 'FOR ARYANS ONLY'

New words

Synagogues – Place of worship for people of Jewish faith



Fig.15 – The sign declares that this North Sea bathing resort is free of Jews.



Fig.17 – 'This is all I have to sell'.
Men and women were left with nothing to survive in the ghettos.

Stage 2: Ghettoisation 1940 - 1944

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO LIVE AMONG US

From September 1941, all Jews had to wear a yellow Star of David on their breasts. This identity mark was stamped on their passport, all legal documents and houses. They were kept in Jewish houses in Germany, and in ghettos like Lodz and Warsaw in the east. These became sites of extreme misery and poverty. Jews had to surrender all their wealth before they entered a ghetto. Soon the ghettos were brimming with hunger, starvation and disease due to deprivation and poor hygiene.

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Stage 3: **Annihilation** 1941 onwards:

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO LIVE

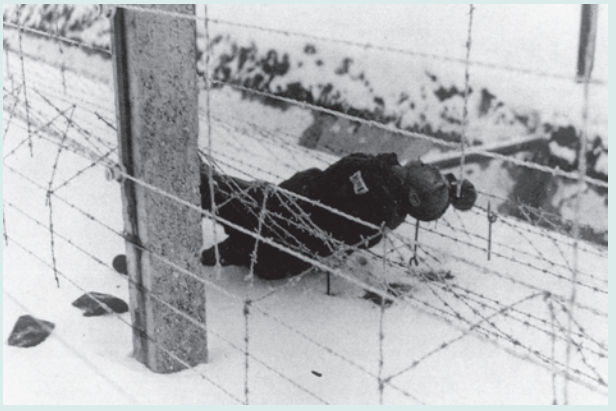


***Fig.18** – Killed while trying to escape. The concentration camps were enclosed with live wires.*



***Fig.19** – Piles of clothes outside the gas chamber.*

Jews from Jewish houses, concentration camps and ghettos from different parts of Europe were brought to death factories by goods trains. In Poland and elsewhere in the east, most notably Belzek, Auschwitz, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmno and Majdanek, they were charred in gas chambers. Mass killings took place within minutes with scientific precision.



Fig.20 – A Concentration Camp.



***Fig.21 – A concentration camp.** A camera can make a death camp look beautiful.*



***Fig.22** – Shoes taken away from prisoners before the 'Final Solution'.*

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4 Youth in Nazi Germany

Hitler was fanatically interested in the youth of the country. He felt that a strong Nazi society could be established only by teaching children Nazi ideology. This required a control over the child both inside and outside school.

What happened in schools under Nazism? All schools were 'cleansed' and 'purified'. This meant that teachers who were Jews or seen as 'politically unreliable' were dismissed. Children were first segregated: Germans and Jews could not sit together or play together. Subsequently, 'undesirable children' – Jews, the physically handicapped, Gypsies – were thrown out of schools. And finally in the 1940s, they were taken to the gas chambers.

'Good German' children were subjected to a process of Nazi schooling, a prolonged period of ideological training. School textbooks were rewritten. Racial science was introduced to justify Nazi ideas of race. Stereotypes about Jews were popularised even through maths classes. Children were taught to be loyal and submissive, hate Jews, and worship Hitler. Even the function of sports was to nurture a spirit of violence and aggression among children. Hitler believed that boxing could make children iron hearted, strong and masculine.

Youth organisations were made responsible for educating German youth in the 'the spirit of National Socialism'. Ten-year-olds had to enter **Jungvolk**. At 14, all boys had to join the Nazi youth organisation – Hitler Youth – where they learnt to worship war, glorify aggression and violence, condemn democracy, and hate Jews, communists, Gypsies and all those categorised as 'undesirable'. After a period of rigorous ideological and physical training they joined the Labour Service, usually at the age of 18. Then they had to serve in the armed forces and enter one of the Nazi organisations.

The Youth League of the Nazis was founded in 1922. Four years later it was renamed Hitler Youth. To unify the youth movement under Nazi control, all other youth organisations were systematically dissolved and finally banned.

New words

Jungvolk – Nazi youth groups for children below 14 years of age.

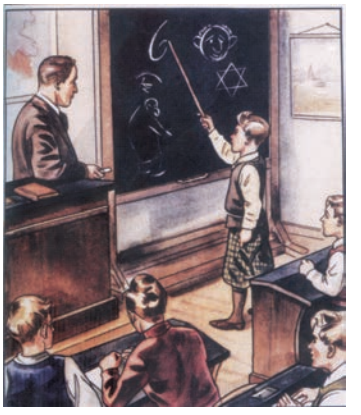


Fig.23 – Classroom scene depicting a lesson on racial anti-Semitism.
From Der Giftpilz (The Poison Mushroom) *by Ernst Hiemer (Nuremberg: der Sturmer, 1938), p.7. Caption reads: 'The Jewish nose is bent at its point. It looks like the number six.'*



Fig.24 – Jewish teacher and Jewish pupils expelled from school under the jeers of classmates.
From Trau keinem jud auf gruner Heid: Ein Bilderbuch fur Gross und Keom (Trust No Jew on the Green Heath: a Picture Book for Big and Little), *By Elvira Bauer (Nuremberg: Der Sturmer, 1936).*

Activity

If you were a student sitting in one of these classes, how would you have felt towards Jews?

Have you ever thought of the stereotypes of other communities that people around you believe in? How have they acquired them?

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Source: C

All boys between the ages of six and ten went through a preliminary training in Nazi ideology. At the end of the training they had to take the following oath of loyalty to Hitler:

'In the presence of this blood banner which represents our Fuhrer I swear to devote all my energies and my strength to the saviour of our country, Adolf Hitler. I am willing and ready to give up my life for him, so help me God.'

From W. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich

Source: D

Robert Lay, head of the German Labour Front, said:

'We start when the child is three years old. As soon as he even starts to think, he is given a little flag to wave. Then comes school, the Hitler Youth, military service. But when all this is over, we don't let go of anyone. The labour front takes hold of them, and keeps hold until they go to the grave, whether they like it or not.'



***Fig.25** – 'Desirable' children that Hitler wanted to see multiplied.*



***Fig.26** – A German-blooded infant with his mother being brought from occupied Europe to Annexed Poland for settlement.*



***Fig.27** – Jewish children arriving at a death factory to be gassed*

Activity

Look at Figs. 23, 24, and 27. Imagine yourself to be a Jew or a Pole in Nazi Germany. It is September 1941, and the law forcing Jews to wear the Star of David has just been declared. Write an account of one day in your life.

4.1 The Nazi Cult of Motherhood

Children in Nazi Germany were repeatedly told that women were radically different from men. The fight for equal rights for men and women that had become part of democratic struggles everywhere was wrong and it would destroy society. While boys were taught to be aggressive, masculine and steel hearted, girls were told that they had to become good mothers and rear pure-blooded Aryan children. Girls had to maintain the purity of the race, distance

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themselves from Jews, look after the home, and teach their children Nazi values. They had to be the bearers of the Aryan culture and race.

In 1933 Hitler said: 'In my state the mother is the most important citizen.' But in Nazi Germany all mothers were not treated equally. Women who bore racially undesirable children were punished and those who produced racially desirable children were awarded. They were given favoured treatment in hospitals and were also entitled to concessions in shops and on theatre tickets and railway fares. To encourage women to produce many children, Honour Crosses were awarded. A bronze cross was given for four children, silver for six and gold for eight or more.

All 'Aryan' women who deviated from the prescribed code of conduct were publicly condemned, and severely punished. Those who maintained contact with Jews, Poles and Russians were paraded through the town with shaved heads, blackened faces and placards hanging around their necks announcing 'I have sullied the honour of the nation'. Many received jail sentences and lost civic honour as well as their husbands and families for this 'criminal offence'.

4.2. The Art of Propaganda

The Nazi regime used language and media with care, and often to great effect. The terms they coined to describe their various practices are not only deceptive. They are chilling. Nazis never used the words 'kill' or 'murder' in their official communications. Mass killings were termed *special treatment, final solution* (for the Jews), *euthanasia* (for the disabled), *selection* and *disinfections*. 'Evacuation' meant deporting people to gas chambers. Do you know what the gas chambers were called? They were labelled 'disinfection-areas', and looked like bathrooms equipped with fake showerheads.

Media was carefully used to win support for the regime and popularise its worldview. Nazi ideas were spread through visual images, films, radio, posters, catchy slogans and leaflets. In posters, groups identified as the 'enemies' of Germans were stereotyped, mocked, abused and described as evil. Socialists and liberals were represented as weak and degenerate. They were attacked as malicious foreign agents. Propaganda films were made to create hatred for Jews. The most infamous film was *The Eternal Jew*. Orthodox Jews were stereotyped and marked. They were shown

Source E

In an address to women at the Nuremberg Party Rally, 8 September 1934, Hitler said:

We do not consider it correct for the woman to interfere in the world of the man, in his main sphere. We consider it natural that these two worlds remain distinct…What the man gives in courage on the battlefield, the woman gives in eternal self-sacrifice, in eternal pain and suffering. Every child that women bring to the world is a battle, a battle waged for the existence of her people.

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Source F

Hitler at the Nuremberg Party Rally, 8 September 1934, also said:

'The woman is the most stable element in the preservation of a folk…she has the most unerring sense of everything that is important to not let a race disappear because it is her children who would be affected by all this suffering in the first place…That is why we have integrated the woman in the struggle of the racial community just as nature and providence have determined so.'

with flowing beards wearing kaftans, whereas in reality it was difficult to distinguish German Jews by their outward appearance because they were a highly assimilated community. They were referred to as vermin, rats and pests. Their movements were compared to those of rodents. Nazism worked on the minds of the people, tapped their emotions, and turned their hatred and anger at those marked as 'undesirable'.

The Nazis made equal efforts to appeal to all the different sections of the population. They sought to win their support by suggesting that Nazis alone could solve all their problems.



Fig.28 – A Nazi poster attacking Jews.
Caption above reads: 'Money is the God of Jews. In order to earn money he commits the greatest crimes. He does not rest, until he can sit on a big sack of money, until he has become the king of money.'

Activity

How would you have reacted to Hilter's ideas if you were:

- A Jewish woman
- A non-Jewish German woman

Activity

What do you think this poster is trying to depict?

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GERMAN FARMER

YOU BELONG TO HITLER!

WHY?

The German farmer stands in between two great dangers today:
The one danger American economic system –
Big Capitalism!
The other is the Marxist economic system of Bolshevism.
Big Capitalism and Bolshevism work hand in hand:
they are born of Jewish thought
and serve the master plan of world Jewery.
Who alone can rescue the farmer from these dangers?

NATIONAL SOCIALISM.

From: *a Nazi leaflet, 1932.*

Fig.29 – The leaflet shows how the Nazis appealed to the peasants.



***Fig.30** – A Nazi party poster of the 1920s. It asks workers to vote for Hitler, the frontline soldier.*

Activity

Look at Figs. 29 and 30 and answer the following:

What do they tell us about Nazi propaganda? How are the Nazis trying to mobilise different sections of the population?

Some important dates

August 1, 1914
First World War begins.

November 9, 1918
Germany capitulates, ending the war.

November 9, 1918
Proclamation of the Weimar Republic.

June 28, 1919
Treaty of Versailles.

January 30, 1933
Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

September 1, 1939
Germany invades Poland. Beginning of the Second World War.

June 22, 1941
Germany invades the USSR.

June 23,1941
Mass murder of the Jews begins.

December 8 1941
The United States joins Second World War.

January 27,1945
Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz.

May 8, 1945
Allied victory in Europe.

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5 Ordinary People and the Crimes Against Humanity

How did the common people react to Nazism?

Many saw the world through Nazi eyes, and spoke their mind in Nazi language. They felt hatred and anger surge inside them when they saw someone who looked like a Jew. They marked the houses of Jews and reported suspicious neighbours. They genuinely believed Nazism would bring prosperity and improve general well-being.

But not every German was a Nazi. Many organised active resistance to Nazism, braving police repression and death. The large majority of Germans, however, were passive onlookers and apathetic witnesses. They were too scared to act, to differ, to protest. They preferred to look away. Pastor Niemoeller, a resistance fighter, observed an absence of protest, an uncanny silence, amongst ordinary Germans in the face of brutal and organised crimes committed against people in the Nazi empire. He wrote movingly about this silence:

'First they came for the Communists,
Well, I was not a Communist –
So I said nothing.
Then they came for the Social Democrats,
Well, I was not a Social Democrat
So I did nothing,
Then they came for the trade unionists,
But I was not a trade unionist.
And then they came for the Jews,
But I was not a Jew – so I did little.
Then when they came for me,
There was no one left who could stand up for me.'

Activity

Why does Erna Kranz say, 'I could only say for myself'? How do you view her opinion?

Box 1

Was the lack of concern for Nazi victims only because of the Terror? No, says Lawrence Rees who interviewed people from diverse backgrounds for his recent documentary, 'The Nazis: A Warning from History'.

Erna Kranz, an ordinary German teenager in the1930s and a grandmother now, said to Rees:

'1930s offered a glimmer of hope, not just for the unemployed but for everybody for we all felt downtrodden. From my own experience I could say salaries increased and Germany seemed to have regained its sense of purpose. I could only say for myself, I thought it was a good time. I liked it.'

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What Jews felt in Nazi Germany is a different story altogether. Charlotte Beradt secretly recorded people's dreams in her diary and later published them in a highly disconcerting book called the *Third Reich of Dreams*. She describes how Jews themselves began believing in the Nazi stereotypes about them. They dreamt of their hooked noses, black hair and eyes, Jewish looks and body movements. The stereotypical images publicised in the Nazi press haunted the Jews. They troubled them even in their dreams. Jews died many deaths even before they reached the gas chamber.

5.1 Knowledge about the Holocaust

Information about Nazi practices had trickled out of Germany during the last years of the regime. But it was only after the war ended and Germany was defeated that the world came to realise the horrors of what had happened. While the Germans were preoccupied with their own plight as a defeated nation emerging out of the rubble, the Jews wanted the world to remember the atrocities and sufferings they had endured during the Nazi killing operations – also called the *Holocaust*. At its height, a ghetto inhabitant had said to another that he wanted to outlive the war just for half an hour. Presumably he meant that he wanted to be able to tell the world about what had happened in Nazi Germany. This indomitable spirit to bear witness and to preserve the documents can be seen in many ghetto and camp inhabitants who wrote diaries, kept notebooks, and created archives. On the other hand when the war seemed lost, the Nazi leadership distributed petrol to its functionaries to destroy all incriminating evidence available in offices.

Yet the history and the memory of the Holocaust live on in memoirs, fiction, documentaries, poetry, memorials and museums in many parts of the world today. These are a tribute to those who resisted it, an embarrassing reminder to those who collaborated, and a warning to those who watched in silence.



Fig.31 *– Inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto collected documents and placed them in three milk cans along with other containers. As destruction seemed imminent, these containers were buried in the cellars of buildings in 1943. This can was discovered in 1950.*



Fig.32 *– Denmark secretly rescued their Jews from Germany. This is one of the boats used for the purpose.*

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Box 2

Mahatma Gandhi writes to Hitler

LETTER TO ADOLF HITLER
AS AT WARDHA, C. P., INDIA,
July 23, 1939

HERR HITLER
BERLIN
GERMANY

DEAR FRIEND,
Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.
It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state.
Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success?
Anyway
I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.

I remain,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI
VOL. 76.

LETTER TO ADOLF HITLER
WARDHA,
December 24, 1940

We have found in non-violence a force which, if organised, can without doubt match itself against a combination of all the most violent forces in the world. In non-violent technique, as I have said, there is no such thing as defeat. It is all 'do or die' without killing or hurting. It can be used practically without money and obviously without the aid of science of destruction which you have brought to such perfection. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that it is nobody's monopoly. If not the British, some other power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. You are leaving no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deed, however skilfully planned. I, therefore, appeal to you in the name of humanity to stop the war….

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI
VOL. 79.

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Activities

1. Write a one page history of Germany
   - as a schoolchild in Nazi Germany
   - as a Jewish survivor of a concentration camp
   - as a political opponent of the Nazi regime
2. Imagine that you are Helmuth. You have had many Jewish friends in school and do not believe that Jews are bad. Write a paragraph on what you would say to your father.

Activities

Questions

1. Describe the problems faced by the Weimar Republic.
2. Discuss why Nazism became popular in Germany by 1930.
3. What are the peculiar features of Nazi thinking?
4. Explain why Nazi propaganda was effective in creating a hatred for Jews.
5. Explain what role women had in Nazi society. Return to Chapter 1 on the French Revolution. Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the role of women in the two periods.
6. In what ways did the Nazi state seek to establish total control over its people ?

?

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SECTION II



LIVELIHOODS, ECONOMIES AND SOCIETIES

In Section II we will shift our focus to the study of livelihoods and economies. We will look at how the lives of forest dwellers, pastoralists and peasants changed in the modern world and how they played a part in shaping these changes.

All too often in looking at the emergence of the modern world, we only focus on factories and cities, on the industrial and agricultural sectors which supply the market. But we forget that there are other economies outside these sectors, other people too who matter to the nation. To modern eyes, the lives of pastoralists and forest dwellers, the shifting cultivators and food gatherers often seem to be stuck in the past. It is as if their lives are not important when we study the emergence of the contemporary world. The chapters in Section II will suggest that we need to know about their lives, see how they organise their world and operate their economies. These communities are very much part of the modern world we live in today. They are not simply survivors from a bygone era.

Chapter IV will take you into the forest and tell you about the variety of ways the forests were used by communities living within them. It will show how in the nineteenth century the growth of industries and urban centres, ships and railways, created a new demand on the forests for timber and other forest products. New demands led to new rules of forest use, new ways of organising the forest. You will see how colonial control was established over the forests, how forest areas were mapped, trees were classified, and plantations were developed. All these developments affected the lives of those local communities who used forest resources. They were forced to operate within new systems and reorganise their lives. But they also rebelled against the rules and persuaded the state to change its policies. The chapter will give you an idea of the history of such developments in India and Indonesia.

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Chapter V will track the movements of the pastoralists in the mountains and deserts, in the plains and plateaus of India and Africa. Pastoral communities in both these areas form an important segment of the population. Yet we rarely study their lives. Their histories do not enter the pages of textbooks. Chapter V will show how their lives were affected by the controls established over the forest, the expansion of agriculture, and the decline of grazing fields. It will tell you about the patterns of their movements, their relationships to other communities, and the way they adjust to changing situations.

In Chapter VI we will read about the changes in the lives of peasants and farmers. We will discuss the developments in India, England and the USA. Over the last two centuries there have been major changes in the way agriculture is organised. New technology and new demands, new rules and laws, new ideas of property have radically changed the rural world. The growth of capitalism and colonialism have altered rural lives. Chapter VI will introduce you to these changes, and show how different groups of people – the poor and rich, men and women, adults and children – were affected in different ways.

We cannot understand the making of the contemporary world unless we begin to see the changes in the lives of diverse communities and people. We also cannot understand the problems of modernisation unless we look at its impact on the environment.

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Forest Society and Colonialism

Take a quick look around your school and home and identify all the things that come from forests: the paper in the book you are reading, desks and tables, doors and windows, the dyes that colour your clothes, spices in your food, the cellophane wrapper of your toffee, *tendu* leaf in *bidis*, gum, honey, coffee, tea and rubber. Do not miss out the oil in chocolates, which comes from *sal* seeds, the tannin used to convert skins and hides into leather, or the herbs and roots used for medicinal purposes. Forests also provide bamboo, wood for fuel, grass, charcoal, packaging, fruits, flowers, animals, birds and many other things. In the Amazon forests or in the Western Ghats, it is possible to find as many as 500 different plant species in one forest patch.

A lot of this diversity is fast disappearing. Between 1700 and 1995, the period of industrialisation, 13.9 million sq km of forest or 9.3 per cent of the world's total area was cleared for industrial uses, cultivation, pastures and fuelwood.



Fig. 1 – A* sal *forest in Chhattisgarh.
Look at the different heights of the trees and plants in this picture, and the variety of species. This is a dense forest, so very little sunlight falls on the forest floor.

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1 Why Deforestation?

The disappearance of forests is referred to as deforestation. Deforestation is not a recent problem. The process began many centuries ago; but under colonial rule it became more systematic and extensive. Let us look at some of the causes of deforestation in India.

1.1 Land to be Improved

In 1600, approximately one-sixth of India's landmass was under cultivation. Now that figure has gone up to about half. As population increased over the centuries and the demand for food went up, peasants extended the boundaries of cultivation, clearing forests and breaking new land. In the colonial period, cultivation expanded rapidly for a variety of reasons. First, the British directly encouraged



Fig.2 – When the valleys were full. *Painting by John Dawson.*
Native Americans like the Lakota tribe who lived in the Great North American Plains had a diversified economy. They cultivated maize, foraged for wild plants and hunted bison. Keeping vast areas open for the bison to range in was seen by the English settlers as wasteful. After the 1860s the bisons were killed in large numbers.

the production of commercial crops like jute, sugar, wheat and cotton. The demand for these crops increased in nineteenth-century Europe where foodgrains were needed to feed the growing urban population and raw materials were required for industrial production. Second, in the early nineteenth century, the colonial state thought that forests were unproductive. They were considered to be wilderness that had to be brought under cultivation so that the land could yield agricultural products and revenue, and enhance the income of the state. So between 1880 and 1920, cultivated area rose by 6.7 million hectares.

We always see the expansion of cultivation as a sign of progress. But we should not forget that for land to be brought under the plough, forests have to be cleared.

Box 1

The absence of cultivation in a place does not mean the land was uninhabited. In Australia, when the white settlers landed, they claimed that the continent was empty or *terra nullius*. In fact, they were guided through the landscape by aboriginal tracks, and led by aboriginal guides. The different aboriginal communities in Australia had clearly demarcated territories. The Ngarrindjeri people of Australia plotted their land along the symbolic body of the first ancestor, Ngurunderi. This land included five different environments: salt water, riverine tracts, lakes, bush and desert plains, which satisfied different socio-economic needs.

Source A

The idea that uncultivated land had to be taken over and improved was popular with colonisers everywhere in the world. It was an argument that justified conquest.

In 1896 the American writer, Richard Harding, wrote on the Honduras in Central America:

'There is no more interesting question of the present day than that of what is to be done with the world's land which is lying unimproved; whether it shall go to the great power that is willing to turn it to account, or remain with its original owner, who fails to understand its value. The Central Americans are like a gang of semi-barbarians in a beautifully furnished house, of which they can understand neither its possibilities of comfort nor its use.'

Three years later the American-owned United Fruit Company was founded, and grew bananas on an industrial scale in Central America. The company acquired such power over the governments of these countries that they came to be known as Banana Republics.

Quoted in David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, (1993).

1.2 Sleepers on the Tracks



Fig.3 – Converting* sal *logs into sleepers in the Singhbhum forests, Chhotanagpur, May 1897.
Adivasis were hired by the forest department to cut trees, and make smooth planks which would serve as sleepers for the railways. At the same time, they were not allowed to cut these trees to build their own houses.

New words

Sleepers – Wooden planks laid across railway tracks; they hold the tracks in position

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By the early nineteenth century, oak forests in England were disappearing. This created a problem of timber supply for the Royal Navy. How could English ships be built without a regular supply of strong and durable timber? How could imperial power be protected and maintained without ships? By the 1820s, search parties were sent to explore the forest resources of India. Within a decade, trees were being felled on a massive scale and vast quantities of timber were being exported from India.

The spread of railways from the 1850s created a new demand. Railways were essential for colonial trade and for the movement of imperial troops. To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel, and to lay railway lines sleepers were essential to hold the tracks together. Each mile of railway track required between 1,760 and 2,000 sleepers.

From the 1860s, the railway network expanded rapidly. By 1890, about 25,500 km of track had been laid. In 1946, the length of the tracks had increased to over 765,000 km. As the railway tracks spread through India, a larger and larger number of trees were felled. As early as the 1850s, in the Madras Presidency alone, 35,000 trees were being cut annually for sleepers. The government gave out contracts to individuals to supply the required quantities. These contractors began cutting trees indiscriminately. Forests around the railway tracks fast started disappearing.



Fig.4 – Bamboo rafts being floated down the Kassalong river, Chittagong Hill Tracts.



Fig.5 – Elephants piling squares of timber at a timber yard in Rangoon.
In the colonial period elephants were frequently used to lift heavy timber both in the forests and at the timber yards.

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Source B

'The new line to be constructed was the Indus Valley Railway between Multan and Sukkur, a distance of nearly 300 miles. At the rate of 2000 sleepers per mile this would require 600,000 sleepers 10 feet by 10 inches by 5 inches (or 3.5 cubic feet apiece), being upwards of 2,000,000 cubic feet. The locomotives would use wood fuel. At the rate of one train daily either way and at one maund per train-mile an annual supply of 219,000 maunds would be demanded. In addition a large supply of fuel for brick-burning would be required. The sleepers would have to come mainly from the Sind Forests. The fuel from the tamarisk and Jhand forests of Sind and the Punjab. The other new line was the Northern State Railway from Lahore to Multan. It was estimated that 2,200,000 sleepers would be required for its construction.'

E.P. Stebbing, *The Forests of India*, Vol. II (1923).

Activity

Each mile of railway track required between 1,760 and 2,000 sleepers. If one average-sized tree yields 3 to 5 sleepers for a 3 metre wide broad gauge track, calculate approximately how many trees would have to be cut to lay one mile of track.





Fig.6 - Women returning home after collecting fuelwood.

Fig.7 - Truck carrying logs
When the forest department decided to take up an area for logging, one of the first things it did was to build wide roads so that trucks could enter. Compare this to the forest tracks along which people walk to collect fuelwood and other minor forest produce. Many such trucks of wood go from forest areas to big cities.

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1.3 Plantations

Large areas of natural forests were also cleared to make way for tea, coffee and rubber plantations to meet Europe's growing need for these commodities. The colonial government took over the forests, and gave vast areas to European planters at cheap rates. These areas were enclosed and cleared of forests, and planted with tea or coffee.



Fig.8 – Pleasure Brand Tea.

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2 The Rise of Commercial Forestry

In the previous section we have seen that the British needed forests in order to build ships and railways. The British were worried that the use of forests by local people and the reckless felling of trees by traders would destroy forests. So they decided to invite a German expert, Dietrich Brandis, for advice, and made him the first Inspector General of Forests in India.

Brandis realised that a proper system had to be introduced to manage the forests and people had to be trained in the science of conservation. This system would need legal sanction. Rules about the use of forest resources had to be framed. Felling of trees and grazing had to be restricted so that forests could be preserved for timber production. Anybody who cut trees without following the system had to be



Activity

If you were the Government of India in 1862 and responsible for supplying the railways with sleepers and fuel on such a large scale, what were the steps you would have taken?

Fig.9 – One aisle of a managed poplar forest in Tuscany, Italy.
Poplar forests are good mainly for timber. They are not used for leaves, fruit or other products. Look at the straight lines of trees, all of a uniform height. This is the model that 'scientific' forestry has promoted.

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Fig. 10 – A* deodar *plantation in Kangra, 1933.
From *Indian Forest Records*, Vol. XV.

punished. So Brandis set up the Indian Forest Service in 1864 and helped formulate the Indian Forest Act of 1865. The Imperial Forest Research Institute was set up at Dehradun in 1906. The system they taught here was called **'scientific forestry'**. Many people now, including ecologists, feel that this system is not scientific at all.

In scientific forestry, natural forests which had lots of different types of trees were cut down. In their place, one type of tree was planted in straight rows. This is called a plantation. Forest officials surveyed the forests, estimated the area under different types of trees, and made working plans for forest management. They planned how much of the plantation area to cut every year. The area cut was then to be replanted so that it was ready to be cut again in some years.

After the Forest Act was enacted in 1865, it was amended twice, once in 1878 and then in 1927. The 1878 Act divided forests into three categories: reserved, protected and village forests. The best forests were called 'reserved forests'. Villagers could not take anything from these forests, even for their own use. For house building or fuel, they could take wood from protected or village forests.



Fig. 11 – The Imperial Forest School, Dehra Dun, India.
The first forestry school to be inaugurated in the British Empire.
From: Indian Forester, *Vol. XXXI*

2.1 How were the Lives of People Affected?

Foresters and villagers had very different ideas of what a good forest should look like. Villagers wanted forests with a mixture of species to satisfy different needs – fuel, fodder, leaves. The forest department on the other hand wanted trees which were suitable for building

New words

Scientific forestry – A system of cutting trees controlled by the forest department, in which old trees are cut and new ones planted

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Fig. 12 – Collecting* mahua *(Madhuca indica) from the forests.
Villagers wake up before dawn and go to the forest to collect the mahua *flowers which have fallen on the forest floor. Mahua trees are precious. Mahua flowers can be eaten or used to make alcohol. The seeds can be used to make oil.*

ships or railways. They needed trees that could provide hard wood, and were tall and straight. So particular species like teak and *sal* were promoted and others were cut.

In forest areas, people use forest products – roots, leaves, fruits, and tubers – for many things. Fruits and tubers are nutritious to eat, especially during the monsoons before the harvest has come in. Herbs are used for medicine, wood for agricultural implements like yokes and ploughs, bamboo makes excellent fences and is also used to make baskets and umbrellas. A dried scooped-out gourd can be used as a portable water bottle. Almost everything is available in the forest – leaves can be stitched together to make disposable plates and cups, the *siadi* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper can be used to make ropes, and the thorny bark of the *semur* (silk-cotton) tree is used to grate vegetables. Oil for cooking and to light lamps can be pressed from the fruit of the *mahua* tree.

The Forest Act meant severe hardship for villagers across the country. After the Act, all their everyday practices – cutting wood for their



Fig. 13 – Drying* tendu *leaves.
The sale of tendu leaves is a major source of income for many people living in forests. Each bundle contains approximately 50 leaves, and if a person works very hard they can perhaps collect as many as 100 bundles in a day. Women, children and old men are the main collectors.



Fig. 14 – Bringing grain from the threshing grounds to the field.
The men are carrying grain in baskets from the threshing fields. Men carry the baskets slung on a pole across their shoulders, while women carry the baskets on their heads.

houses, grazing their cattle, collecting fruits and roots, hunting and fishing – became illegal. People were now forced to steal wood from the forests, and if they were caught, they were at the mercy of the forest guards who would take bribes from them. Women who collected fuelwood were especially worried. It was also common for police constables and forest guards to harass people by demanding free food from them.

Activity

Children living around forest areas can often identify hundreds of species of trees and plants. How many species of trees can you name?

2.2 How did Forest Rules Affect Cultivation?

One of the major impacts of European colonialism was on the practice of shifting cultivation or swidden agriculture. This is a traditional agricultural practice in many parts of Asia, Africa and South America. It has many local names such as *lading* in Southeast Asia, *milpa* in Central America, *chitemene* or *tavy* in Africa, and *chena* in Sri Lanka. In India, *dhya, penda, bewar, nevad, jhum*, *podu, khandad* and *kumri* are some of the local terms for swidden agriculture.

In shifting cultivation, parts of the forest are cut and burnt in rotation. Seeds are sown in the ashes after the first monsoon rains, and the crop is harvested by October-November. Such plots are cultivated for a couple of years and then left fallow for 12 to 18 years for the forest to grow back. A mixture of crops is grown on these plots. In central India and Africa it could be millets, in Brazil manioc, and in other parts of Latin America maize and beans.

European foresters regarded this practice as harmful for the forests. They felt that land which was used for cultivation every few years could not grow trees for railway timber. When a forest was burnt, there was the added danger of the flames spreading and burning valuable timber.



***Fig. 15** – Taungya cultivation was a system in which local farmers were allowed to cultivate temporarily within a plantation. In this photo taken in Tharrawaddy division in Burma in 1921 the cultivators are sowing paddy. The men make holes in the soil using long bamboo poles with iron tips. The women sow paddy in each hole.*

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Fig. 16 – Burning the forest* penda *or* podu *plot.
In shifting cultivation, a clearing is made in the forest, usually on the slopes of hills. After the trees have been cut, they are burnt to provide ashes. The seeds are then scattered in the area, and left to be irrigated by the rain.

Shifting cultivation also made it harder for the government to calculate taxes. Therefore, the government decided to ban shifting cultivation. As a result, many communities were forcibly displaced from their homes in the forests. Some had to change occupations, while some resisted through large and small rebellions.

2.3 Who could Hunt?

The new forest laws changed the lives of forest dwellers in yet another way. Before the forest laws, many people who lived in or near forests had survived by hunting deer, partridges and a variety of small animals. This customary practice was prohibited by the forest laws. Those who were caught hunting were now punished for poaching.

While the forest laws deprived people of their customary rights to hunt, hunting of big game became a sport. In India, hunting of tigers and other animals had been part of the culture of the court and nobility for centuries. Many Mughal paintings show princes and emperors enjoying a hunt. But under colonial rule the scale of hunting increased to such an extent that various species became almost extinct. The British saw large animals as signs of a wild, primitive and savage society. They believed that by killing dangerous animals the British



Fig. 17 – The little fisherman.
Children accompany their parents to the forest and learn early how to fish, collect forest produce and cultivate. The bamboo trap which the boy is holding in his right hand is kept at the mouth of a stream – the fish flow into it.

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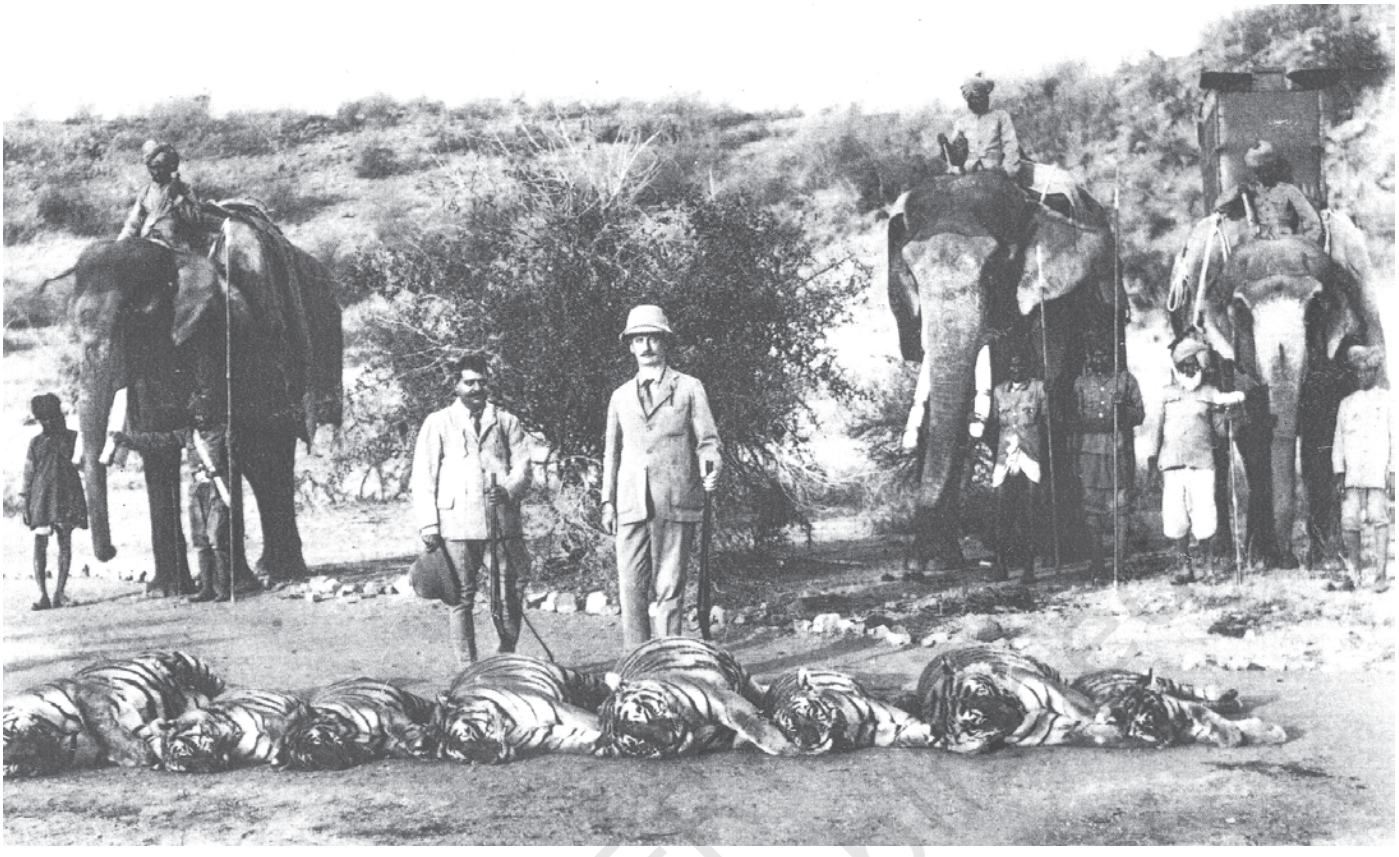


Fig. 18 – Lord Reading hunting in Nepal.
Count the dead tigers in the photo. When British colonial officials and Rajas went hunting they were accompanied by a whole retinue of servants. Usually, the tracking was done by skilled village hunters, and the Sahib simply fired the shot.

would civilise India. They gave rewards for the killing of tigers, wolves and other large animals on the grounds that they posed a threat to cultivators. 0ver 80,000 tigers, 150,000 leopards and 200,000 wolves were killed for reward in the period 1875-1925. Gradually, the tiger came to be seen as a sporting trophy. The Maharaja of Sarguja alone shot 1,157 tigers and 2,000 leopards up to 1957. A British administrator, George Yule, killed 400 tigers. Initially certain areas of forests were reserved for hunting. Only much later did environmentalists and conservators begin to argue that all these species of animals needed to be protected, and not killed.

2.4 New Trades, New Employments and New Services

While people lost out in many ways after the forest department took control of the forests, some people benefited from the new opportunities that had opened up in trade. Many communities left their traditional occupations and started trading in forest products. This happened not only in India but across the world. For example,

Source C

Baigas are a forest community of Central India. In 1892, after their shifting cultivation was stopped, they petitioned to the government:

'We daily starve, having had no foodgrain in our possession. The only wealth we possess is our axe. We have no clothes to cover our body with, but we pass cold nights by the fireside. We are now dying for want of food. We cannot go elsewhere. What fault have we done that the government does not take care of us? Prisoners are supplied with ample food in jail. A cultivator of the grass is not deprived of his holding, but the government does not give us our right who have lived here for generations past.'

Verrier Elwin (1939), cited in Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*.

with the growing demand for rubber in the mid-nineteenth century, the Mundurucu peoples of the Brazilian Amazon who lived in villages on high ground and cultivated manioc, began to collect latex from wild rubber trees for supplying to traders. Gradually, they descended to live in trading posts and became completely dependent on traders.

In India, the trade in forest products was not new. From the medieval period onwards, we have records of adivasi communities trading elephants and other goods like hides, horns, silk cocoons, ivory, bamboo, spices, fibres, grasses, gums and resins through nomadic communities like the Banjaras.

With the coming of the British, however, trade was completely regulated by the government. The British government gave many large European trading firms the sole right to trade in the forest products of particular areas. Grazing and hunting by local people were restricted. In the process, many pastoralist and nomadic communities like the Korava, Karacha and Yerukula of the Madras Presidency lost their livelihoods. Some of them began to be called 'criminal tribes', and were forced to work instead in factories, mines and plantations, under government supervision.

New opportunities of work did not always mean improved well-being for the people. In Assam, both men and women from forest communities like Santhals and Oraons from Jharkhand, and Gonds from Chhattisgarh were recruited to work on tea plantations. Their wages were low and conditions of work were very bad. They could not return easily to their home villages from where they had been recruited.

Source D

Rubber extraction in the Putumayo

'Everywhere in the world, conditions of work in plantations were horrific.

The extraction of rubber in the Putumayo region of the Amazon, by the Peruvian Rubber Company (with British and Peruvian interests) was dependent on the forced labour of the local Indians, called Huitotos. From 1900-1912, the Putumayo output of 4000 tons of rubber was associated with a decrease of some 30,000 among the Indian population due to torture, disease and flight. A letter by an employee of a rubber company describes how the rubber was collected. The manager summoned hundreds of Indians to the station:

He grasped his carbine and machete and began the slaughter of these defenceless Indians, leaving the ground covered with 150 corpses, among them, men, women and children. Bathed in blood and appealing for mercy, the survivors were heaped with the dead and burned to death, while the manager shouted, "I want to exterminate all the Indians who do not obey my orders about the rubber that I require them to bring in." '

Michael Taussig, 'Culture of Terror-Space of Death', in Nicholas Dirks, ed. *Colonialism and Culture*, 1992.

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3 Rebellion in the Forest

In many parts of India, and across the world, forest communities rebelled against the changes that were being imposed on them. The leaders of these movements against the British like Siddhu and Kanu in the Santhal Parganas, Birsa Munda of Chhotanagpur or Alluri Sitarama Raju of Andhra Pradesh are still remembered today in songs and stories. We will now discuss in detail one such rebellion which took place in the kingdom of Bastar in 1910.

3.1 The People of Bastar

Bastar is located in the southernmost part of Chhattisgarh and borders Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra. The central part of Bastar is on a plateau. To the north of this plateau is the Chhattisgarh plain and to its south is the Godavari plain. The river Indrawati winds across Bastar east to west. A number of different communities live in Bastar such as Maria and Muria Gonds, Dhurwas, Bhatras and Halbas. They speak different languages but share common customs and beliefs. The people of Bastar believe that each village was given its land by the Earth, and in return, they look after



Fig.19 – Army camp in Bastar, 1910.
This photograph of an army camp was taken in Bastar in 1910. The army moved with tents, cooks and soldiers. Here a sepoy is guarding the camp against rebels.

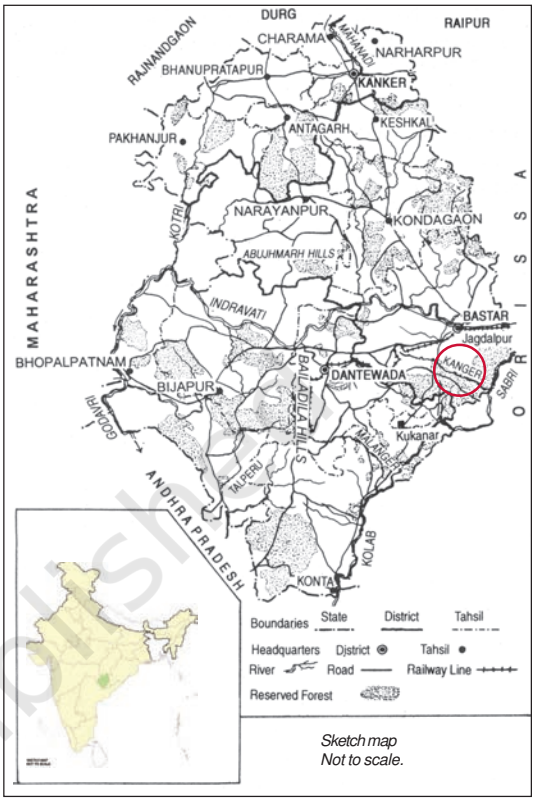


Fig.20 – Bastar in 2000.
In 1947 Bastar kingdom was merged with Kanker kingdom and become Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh. In 1998 it was divided again into three districts, Kanker, Bastar and Dantewada. In 2001, these became part of Chhattisgarh. The 1910 rebellion first started in the Kanger forest area (encircled) and soon spread to other parts of the state.

the earth by making some offerings at each agricultural festival. In addition to the Earth, they show respect to the spirits of the river, the forest and the mountain. Since each village knows where its boundaries lie, the local people look after all the natural resources within that boundary. If people from a village want to take some wood from the forests of another village, they pay a small fee called *devsari*, *dand* or *man* in exchange. Some villages also protect their forests by engaging watchmen and each household contributes some grain to pay them. Every year there is one big hunt where the headmen of villages in a *pargana* (cluster of villages) meet and discuss issues of concern, including forests.

3.2 The Fears of the People

When the colonial government proposed to reserve two-thirds of the forest in 1905, and stop shifting cultivation, hunting and collection of forest produce, the people of Bastar were very worried. Some villages were allowed to stay on in the reserved forests on the condition that they worked free for the forest department in cutting and transporting trees, and protecting the forest from fires. Subsequently, these came to be known as 'forest villages'. People of other villages were displaced without any notice or compensation. For long, villagers had been suffering from increased land rents and frequent demands for free labour and goods by colonial officials. Then came the terrible famines, in 1899-1900 and again in 1907-1908. Reservations proved to be the last straw.

People began to gather and discuss these issues in their village councils, in bazaars and at festivals or wherever the headmen and priests of several villages were assembled. The initiative was taken by the Dhurwas of the Kanger forest, where reservation first took place. Although there was no single leader, many people speak of Gunda Dhur, from village Nethanar, as an important figure in the movement. In 1910, mango boughs, a lump of earth, chillies and arrows, began circulating between villages. These were actually messages inviting villagers to rebel against the British. Every village contributed something to the rebellion expenses. Bazaars were looted, the houses of officials and traders, schools and police stations were burnt and robbed, and grain redistributed. Most of those who were attacked were in some way associated with the colonial state and its oppressive laws. William Ward, a missionary who observed the events, wrote: 'From all directions came streaming into Jagdalpur, police, merchants, forest peons, schoolmasters and immigrants.'

Source E

'Bhondia collected 400 men, sacrificed a number of goats and started off to intercept the Dewan who was expected to return from the direction of Bijapur. This mob started on the 10th February, burnt the Marenga school, the police post, lines and pound at Keslur and the school at Tokapal (Rajur), detached a contingent to burn Karanji school and captured a head constable and four constables of the State reserve police who had been sent out to escort the Dewan and bring him in. The mob did not maltreat the guard seriously but eased them of their weapons and let them go. One party of rebels under Bhondia Majhi went off to the Koer river to block the passage there in case the Dewan left the main road. The rest went on to Dilmilli to stop the main road from Bijapur. Buddhu Majhi and Harchand Naik led the main body.'

Letter from DeBrett, Political Agent, Chhattisgarh Feudatory States to Commissioner, Chhattisgarh Division, 23 June 1910.

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Source F

Elders living in Bastar recounted the story of this battle they had heard from their parents:

Podiyami Ganga of Kankapal was told by his father Podiyami Tokeli that:

'The British came and started taking land. The Raja didn't pay attention to things happening around him, so seeing that land was being taken, his supporters gathered people. War started. His staunch supporters died and the rest were whipped. My father, Podiyami Tokeli suffered many strokes, but he escaped and survived. It was a movement to get rid of the British. The British used to tie them to horses and pull them. From every village two or three people went to Jagdalpur: Gargideva and Michkola of Chidpal, Dole and Adrabundi of Markamiras, Vadapandu of Baleras, Unga of Palem and many others.'

Similarly, Chendru, an elder from village Nandrasa, said:

'On the people's side, were the big elders – Mille Mudaal of Palem, Soyekal Dhurwa of Nandrasa, and Pandwa Majhi. People from every pargana camped in Alnar tarai. The paltan (force) surrounded the people in a flash. Gunda Dhur had flying powers and flew away. But what could those with bows and arrows do? The battle took place at night. The people hid in shrubs and crawled away. The army paltan also ran away. All those who remained alive (of the people), somehow found their way home to their villages.'

The British sent troops to suppress the rebellion. The adivasi leaders tried to negotiate, but the British surrounded their camps and fired upon them. After that they marched through the villages flogging and punishing those who had taken part in the rebellion. Most villages were deserted as people fled into the jungles. It took three months (February - May) for the British to regain control. However, they never managed to capture Gunda Dhur. In a major victory for the rebels, work on reservation was temporarily suspended, and the area to be reserved was reduced to roughly half of that planned before 1910.

The story of the forests and people of Bastar does not end there. After Independence, the same practice of keeping people out of the forests and reserving them for industrial use continued. In the 1970s, the World Bank proposed that 4,600 hectares of natural *sal* forest should be replaced by tropical pine to provide pulp for the paper industry. It was only after protests by local environmentalists that the project was stopped.

Let us now go to another part of Asia, Indonesia, and see what was happening there over the same period.

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Source

4 Forest Transformations in Java

Java is now famous as a rice-producing island in Indonesia. But once upon a time it was covered mostly with forests. The colonial power in Indonesia were the Dutch, and as we will see, there were many similarities in the laws for forest control in Indonesia and India. Java in Indonesia is where the Dutch started forest management. Like the British, they wanted timber from Java to build ships. In 1600, the population of Java was an estimated 3.4 million. There were many villages in the fertile plains, but there were also many communities living in the mountains and practising shifting cultivation.

4.1 The Woodcutters of Java

The Kalangs of Java were a community of skilled forest cutters and shifting cultivators. They were so valuable that in 1755 when the Mataram kingdom of Java split, the 6,000 Kalang families were equally divided between the two kingdoms. Without their expertise, it would have been difficult to harvest teak and for the kings to build their palaces. When the Dutch began to gain control over the forests in the eighteenth century, they tried to make the Kalangs work under them. In 1770, the Kalangs resisted by attacking a Dutch fort at Joana, but the uprising was suppressed.

4.2 Dutch Scientific Forestry

In the nineteenth century, when it became important to control territory and not just people, the Dutch enacted forest laws in Java, restricting villagers' access to forests. Now wood could only be cut for specified purposes like making river boats or constructing houses, and only from specific forests under close supervision. Villagers were punished for grazing cattle in young stands, transporting wood without a permit, or travelling on forest roads with horse carts or cattle.

As in India, the need to manage forests for shipbuilding and railways led to the



Fig.21 – Train transporting teak out of the forest – late colonial period.

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introduction of a forest service. In 1882, 280,000 sleepers were exported from Java alone. However, all this required labour to cut the trees, transport the logs and prepare the sleepers. The Dutch first imposed rents on land being cultivated in the forest and then exempted some villages from these rents if they worked collectively to provide free labour and buffaloes for cutting and transporting timber. This was known as the *blandongdiensten* system. Later, instead of rent exemption, forest villagers were given small wages, but their right to cultivate forest land was restricted.

4.3 Samin's Challenge

Around 1890, Surontiko Samin of Randublatung village, a teak forest village, began questioning state ownership of the forest. He argued that the state had not created the wind, water, earth and wood, so it could not own it. Soon a widespread movement developed. Amongst those who helped organise it were Samin's sons-in-law. By 1907, 3,000 families were following his ideas. Some of the Saminists protested by lying down on their land when the Dutch came to survey it, while others refused to pay taxes or fines or perform labour.

Source G

Dirk van Hogendorp, an official of the United East India Company in colonial Java said:

'Batavians! Be amazed! Hear with wonder what I have to communicate. Our fleets are destroyed, our trade languishes, our navigation is going to ruin – we purchase with immense treasures, timber and other materials for ship-building from the northern powers, and on Java we leave warlike and mercantile squadrons with their roots in the ground. Yes, the forests of Java have timber enough to build a respectable navy in a short time, besides as many merchant ships as we require … In spite of all (the cutting) the forests of Java grow as fast as they are cut, and would be inexhaustible under good care and management.'

Dirk van Hogendorp, cited in Peluso, *Rich Forests, Poor People,* 1992.



***Fig.22** – Most of Indonesia's forests are located in islands like Sumatra, Kalimantan and West Irian. However, Java is where the Dutch began their 'scientific forestry'. The island, which is now famous for rice production, was once richly covered with teak.*

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4.4 War and Deforestation

The First World War and the Second World War had a major impact on forests. In India, working plans were abandoned at this time, and the forest department cut trees freely to meet British war needs. In Java, just before the Japanese occupied the region, the Dutch followed 'a scorched earth' policy, destroying sawmills, and burning huge piles of giant teak logs so that they would not fall into Japanese hands. The Japanese then exploited the forests recklessly for their own war industries, forcing forest villagers to cut down forests. Many villagers used this opportunity to expand cultivation in the forest. After the war, it was difficult for the Indonesian forest service to get this land back. As in India, people's need for agricultural land has brought them into conflict with the forest department's desire to control the land and exclude people from it.



Fig.23 – Indian Munitions Board, War Timber Sleepers piled at Soolay pagoda ready for shipment, 1917.
The Allies would not have been as successful in the First World War and the Second World War if they had not been able to exploit the resources and people of their colonies. Both the world wars had a devastating effect on the forests of India, Indonesia and elsewhere. The forest department cut freely to satisfy war needs.

4.5 New Developments in Forestry

Since the 1980s, governments across Asia and Africa have begun to see that scientific forestry and the policy of keeping forest communities away from forests has resulted in many conflicts. Conservation of forests rather than collecting timber has become a more important goal. The government has recognised that in order to meet this goal, the people who live near the forests must be involved. In many cases, across India, from Mizoram to Kerala, dense forests have survived only because villages protected them in sacred groves known as *sarnas, devarakudu, kan, rai,* etc. Some villages have been patrolling their own forests, with each household taking it in turns, instead of leaving it to the forest guards. Local forest communities and environmentalists today are thinking of different forms of forest management.



Fig.24 – Log yard in Rembang under Dutch colonial rule.

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Activities

Activities

1. Have there been changes in forest areas where you live? Find out what these changes are and why they have happened.
2. Write a dialogue between a colonial forester and an adivasi discussing the issue of hunting in the forest.

Questions

1. Discuss how the changes in forest management in the colonial period affected the following groups of people:
   - Shifting cultivators
   - Nomadic and pastoralist communities
   - Firms trading in timber/forest produce
   - Plantation owners
   - Kings/British officials engaged in shikar (hunting)
2. What are the similarities between colonial management of the forests in Bastar and in Java?
3. Between 1880 and 1920, forest cover in the Indian subcontinent declined by 9.7 million hectares, from 108.6 million hectares to 98.9 million hectares. Discuss the role of the following factors in this decline:
   - Railways
   - Shipbuilding
   - Agricultural expansion
   - Commercial farming
   - Tea/Coffee plantations
   - Adivasis and other peasant users
4. Why are forests affected by wars?

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Pastoralists in the Modern World



Fig. 1 – Sheep grazing on the* Bugyals *of eastern Garhwal.
Bugyals *are vast natural pastures on the high mountains, above 12,000 feet. They are under snow in the winter and come to life after April. At this time the entire mountainside is covered with a variety of grasses, roots and herbs. By monsoon, these pastures are thick with vegetation and carpeted with wild flowers.*

In this chapter you will read about nomadic pastoralists. Nomads are people who do not live in one place but move from one area to another to earn their living. In many parts of India we can see nomadic pastoralists on the move with their herds of goats and sheep, or camels and cattle. Have you ever wondered where they are coming from and where they are headed? Do you know how they live and earn? What their past has been?

Pastoralists rarely enter the pages of history textbooks. When you read about the economy – whether in your classes of history or economics – you learn about agriculture and industry. Sometimes you read about artisans; but rarely about pastoralists. As if their lives do not matter. As if they are figures from the past who have no place in modern society.

In this chapter you will see how pastoralism has been important in societies like India and Africa. You will read about the way colonialism impacted their lives, and how they have coped with the pressures of modern society. The chapter will first focus on India and then Africa.

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1 Pastoral Nomads and their Movements

1.1 In the Mountains

Even today the Gujjar Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir are great herders of goat and sheep. Many of them migrated to this region in the nineteenth century in search of pastures for their animals. Gradually, over the decades, they established themselves in the area, and moved annually between their summer and winter grazing grounds. In winter, when the high mountains were covered with snow, they lived with their herds in the low hills of the Siwalik range. The dry scrub forests here provided pasture for their herds. By the end of April they began their northern march for their summer grazing grounds. Several households came together for this journey, forming what is known as a *kafila*. They crossed the Pir Panjal passes and entered the valley of Kashmir. With the onset of summer, the snow melted and the mountainsides were lush green. The variety of grasses that sprouted provided rich nutritious forage for the animal herds. By end September the Bakarwals were on the move again, this time on their downward journey, back to their winter base. When the high mountains were covered with snow, the herds were grazed in the low hills.

In a different area of the mountains, the Gaddi shepherds of Himachal Pradesh had a similar cycle of seasonal movement. They too spent their winter in the low hills of Siwalik range, grazing their flocks in scrub forests. By April they moved north and spent the summer in Lahul and Spiti. When the snow melted and the high passes were clear, many of them moved on to higher mountain

Source A

Writing in the 1850s, G.C. Barnes gave the following description of the Gujjars of Kangra:

'In the hills the Gujjars are exclusively a pastoral tribe – they cultivate scarcely at all. The Gaddis keep flocks of sheep and goats and the Gujjars, wealth consists of buffaloes. These people live in the skirts of the forests, and maintain their existence exclusively by the sale of the milk, ghee, and other produce of their herds. The men graze the cattle, and frequently lie out for weeks in the woods tending their herds. The women repair to the markets every morning with baskets on their heads, with little earthen pots filled with milk, butter-milk and ghee, each of these pots containing the proportion required for a day's meal. During the hot weather the Gujjars usually drive their herds to the upper range, where the buffaloes rejoice in the rich grass which the rains bring forth and at the same time attain condition from the temperate climate and the immunity from venomous flies that torment their existence in the plains.'

From: G.C. Barnes, *Settlement Report of Kangra, 1850-55.*



Fig.2 – A Gujjar* Mandap *on the high mountains in central Garhwal.
The Gujjar cattle herders live in these mandaps *made of* ringal *– a hill bamboo – and grass from the* Bugyal*. A* mandap *was also a work place. Here the Gujjar used to make ghee which they took down for sale. In recent years they have begun to transport the milk directly in buses and trucks. These* mandaps *are at about 10,000 to 11,000 feet. Buffaloes cannot climb any higher.*

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Fig.3 – Gaddis waiting for shearing to begin. *Uhl valley near Palampur in Himachal Pradesh.*

meadows. By September they began their return movement. On the way they stopped once again in the villages of Lahul and Spiti, reaping their summer harvest and sowing their winter crop. Then they descended with their flock to their winter grazing ground on the Siwalik hills. Next April, once again, they began their march with their goats and sheep, to the summer meadows.

Further to the east, in Garhwal and Kumaon, the Gujjar cattle herders came down to the dry forests of the ***bhabar*** in the winter, and went up to the high meadows – the ***bugyals*** – in summer. Many of them were originally from Jammu and came to the UP hills in the nineteenth century in search of good pastures.

This pattern of cyclical movement between summer and winter pastures was typical of many pastoral communities of the Himalayas, including the Bhotiyas, Sherpas and Kinnauris. All of them had to adjust to seasonal changes and make effective use of available pastures in different places. When the pasture was exhausted or unusable in one place they moved their herds and flock to new areas. This continuous movement also allowed the pastures to recover; it prevented their overuse.

New words

Bhabar – A dry forested area below the foothills of Garhwal and Kumaun

Bugyal – Vast meadows in the high mountains



Fig.4 – Gaddi sheep being sheared.
*By September the Gaddi shepherds come down from the high meadows (*Dhars*). On the way down they halt for a while to have their sheep sheared. The sheep are bathed and cleaned before the wool is cut.*

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1.2 On the Plateaus, Plains and Deserts

Not all pastoralists operated in the mountains. They were also to be found in the plateaus, plains and deserts of India.

Dhangars were an important pastoral community of Maharashtra. In the early twentieth century their population in this region was estimated to be 467,000. Most of them were shepherds, some were blanket weavers, and still others were buffalo herders. The Dhangar shepherds stayed in the central plateau of Maharashtra during the monsoon. This was a semi-arid region with low rainfall and poor soil. It was covered with thorny scrub. Nothing but dry crops like *bajra* could be sown here. In the monsoon this tract became a vast grazing ground for the Dhangar flocks. By October the Dhangars harvested their *bajra* and started on their move west. After a march of about a month they reached the Konkan. This was a flourishing agricultural tract with high rainfall and rich soil. Here the shepherds were welcomed by Konkani peasants. After the ***kharif*** harvest was cut at this time, the fields had to be fertilised and made ready for the ***rabi*** harvest. Dhangar flocks manured the fields and fed on the **stubble**. The Konkani peasants also gave supplies of rice which the shepherds took back to the plateau where grain was scarce. With the onset of the monsoon the Dhangars left the Konkan and the coastal areas with their flocks and returned to their settlements on the dry plateau. The sheep could not tolerate the wet monsoon conditions.



Fig.5 – Raika camels grazing on the Thar desert in western Rajasthan.
Only camels can survive on the dry and thorny bushes that can be found here; but to get enough feed they have to graze over a very extensive area.

New words

Kharif – The autumn crop, usually harvested between September and October

Rabi – The spring crop, usually harvested after March

Stubble – Lower ends of grain stalks left in the ground after harvesting

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In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, again, the dry central plateau was covered with stone and grass, inhabited by cattle, goat and sheep herders. The Gollas herded cattle. The Kurumas and Kurubas reared sheep and goats and sold woven blankets. They lived near the woods, cultivated small patches of land, engaged in a variety of petty trades and took care of their herds. Unlike the mountain pastoralists, it was not the cold and the snow that defined the seasonal rhythms of their movement: rather it was the alternation of the monsoon and dry season. In the dry season they moved to the coastal tracts, and left when the rains came. Only buffaloes liked the swampy, wet conditions of the coastal areas during the monsoon months. Other herds had to be shifted to the dry plateau at this time.

Banjaras were yet another well-known group of graziers. They were to be found in the villages of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In search of good pastureland for their cattle, they moved over long distances, selling plough cattle and other goods to villagers in exchange for grain and fodder.

Source B

The accounts of many travellers tell us about the life of pastoral groups. In the early nineteenth century, Buchanan visited the Gollas during his travel through Mysore. He wrote:

'Their families live in small villages near the skirt of the woods, where they cultivate a little ground, and keep some of their cattle, selling in the towns the produce of the dairy. Their families are very numerous, seven to eight young men in each being common. Two or three of these attend the flocks in the woods, while the remainder cultivate their fields, and supply the towns with firewood, and with straw for thatch.'

From: Francis Hamilton Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* (London, 1807).

Activity

Read Sources A and B.

- Write briefly about what they tell you about the nature of the work undertaken by men and women in pastoral households.
- Why do you think pastoral groups often live on the edges of forests?

In the deserts of Rajasthan lived the Raikas. The rainfall in the region was meagre and uncertain. On cultivated land, harvests fluctuated every year. Over vast stretches no crop could be grown. So the Raikas combined cultivation with pastoralism. During the monsoons, the Raikas of Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Bikaner stayed in their home villages, where pasture was available. By October, when these grazing grounds were dry and exhausted, they moved out in search of other pasture and water, and returned again during the next monsoon. One group of Raikas – known as the Maru (desert) Raikas – herded camels and another group reared sheep and goat.



Fig.6 – A camel herder in his settlement.
This is on the Thar desert near Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. The camel herders of the region are Maru (desert) Raikas, and their settlement is called a dhandi.

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Fig. 7 – A camel fair at Balotra in western Rajasthan. *Camel herders come to the fair to sell and buy camels. The Maru Raikas also display their expertise in training their camels. Horses from Gujarat are also brought for sale at this fair.*

So we see that the life of these pastoral groups was sustained by a careful consideration of a host of factors. They had to judge how long the herds could stay in one area, and know where they could find water and pasture. They needed to calculate the timing of their movements, and ensure that they could move through different territories. They had to set up a relationship with farmers on the way, so that the herds could graze in harvested fields and manure the soil. They combined a range of different activities – cultivation, trade, and herding – to make their living.

How did the life of pastoralists change under colonial rule?



Fig. 8 – A camel fair at Pushkar.

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Fig.9 – A Maru Raika genealogist with a group of Raikas.
The genealogist recounts the history of the community. Such oral traditions give pastoral groups their own sense of identity. These oral traditions can tell us about how a group looks at its own past.



Fig.10 – Maldhari herders moving in search of pastures. *Their villages are in the Rann of Kutch.*

2 Colonial Rule and Pastoral Life

Under colonial rule, the life of pastoralists changed dramatically. Their grazing grounds shrank, their movements were regulated, and the revenue they had to pay increased. Their agricultural stock declined and their trades and crafts were adversely affected. How?

First, the colonial state wanted to transform all grazing lands into cultivated farms. Land revenue was one of the main sources of its finance. By expanding cultivation it could increase its revenue collection. It could at the same time produce more jute, cotton, wheat and other agricultural produce that were required in England. To colonial officials all uncultivated land appeared to be unproductive: it produced neither revenue nor agricultural produce. It was seen as 'waste land' that needed to be brought under cultivation. From the mid-nineteenth century, Waste Land Rules were enacted in various parts of the country. By these Rules uncultivated lands were taken over and given to select individuals. These individuals were granted various concessions and encouraged to settle these lands. Some of them were made headmen of villages in the newly cleared areas. In most areas the lands taken over were actually grazing tracts used regularly by pastoralists. So expansion of cultivation inevitably meant the decline of pastures and a problem for pastoralists.

Second, by the mid-nineteenth century, various Forest Acts were also being enacted in the different provinces. Through these Acts some forests which produced commercially valuable timber like *deodar* or *sal* were declared 'Reserved'. No pastoralist was allowed access to these forests. Other forests were classified as 'Protected'. In these, some **customary** grazing rights of pastoralists were granted but their movements were severely restricted. The colonial officials believed that grazing destroyed the saplings and young shoots of trees that germinated on the forest floor. The herds trampled over the saplings and munched away the shoots. This prevented new trees from growing.

These Forest Acts changed the lives of pastoralists. They were now prevented from entering many forests that had earlier provided valuable forage for their cattle. Even in the areas they were allowed entry, their movements were regulated. They needed a permit for entry. The timing of their entry and departure was

Source C

H.S. Gibson, the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Darjeeling, wrote in 1913:

'... forest which is used for grazing cannot be used for any other purpose and is unable to yield timber and fuel, which are the main legitimate forest produce ...'

Activity

Write a comment on the closure of the forests to grazing from the standpoint of:

- a forester
- a pastoralist

New words

Customary rights – Rights that people are used to by custom and tradition

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specified, and the number of days they could spend in the forest was limited. Pastoralists could no longer remain in an area even if forage was available, the grass was succulent and the undergrowth in the forest was ample. They had to move because the Forest Department permits that had been issued to them now ruled their lives. The permit specified the periods in which they could be legally within a forest. If they overstayed they were liable to fines.

Third, British officials were suspicious of nomadic people. They distrusted mobile craftsmen and traders who hawked their goods in villages, and pastoralists who changed their places of residence every season, moving in search of good pastures for their herds. The colonial government wanted to rule over a settled population. They wanted the rural people to live in villages, in fixed places with fixed rights on particular fields. Such a population was easy to identify and control. Those who were settled were seen as peaceable and law abiding; those who were nomadic were considered to be criminal. In 1871, the colonial government in India passed the Criminal Tribes Act. By this Act many communities of craftsmen, traders and pastoralists were classified as Criminal Tribes. They were stated to be criminal by nature and birth. Once this Act came into force, these communities were expected to live only in notified village settlements. They were not allowed to move out without a permit. The village police kept a continuous watch on them.

Fourth, to expand its revenue income, the colonial government looked for every possible source of taxation. So tax was imposed on land, on canal water, on salt, on trade goods, and even on animals. Pastoralists had to pay tax on every animal they grazed on the pastures. In most pastoral tracts of India, grazing tax was introduced in the mid-nineteenth century. The tax per head of cattle went up rapidly and the system of collection was made increasingly efficient. In the decades between the 1850s and 1880s the right to collect the tax was auctioned out to contractors. These contractors tried to extract as high a tax as they could to recover the money they had paid to the state and earn as much profit as they could within the year. By the 1880s the government began collecting taxes directly from the pastoralists. Each of them was given a pass. To enter a grazing tract, a cattle herder had to show the pass and pay the tax. The number of cattle heads he had and the amount of tax he paid was entered on the pass.

Source D

In the 1920s, a Royal Commission on Agriculture reported:

'The extent of the area available for grazing has gone down tremendously with the extension of area under cultivation because of increasing population, extension of irrigation facilities, acquiring the pastures for Government purposes, for example, defence, industries and agricultural experimental farms. [Now] breeders find it difficult to raise large herds. Thus their earnings have gone down. The quality of their livestock has deteriorated, dietary standards have fallen and indebtedness has increased.'

The Report of the Royal Commission of Agriculture in India, 1928.

Activity

Imagine you are living in the 1890s.
You belong to a community of nomadic pastoralists and craftsmen. You learn that the Government has declared your community as a Criminal Tribe.

- Describe briefly what you would have felt and done.
- Write a petition to the local collector explaining why the Act is unjust and how it will affect your life.

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2.1 How Did these Changes Affect the Lives of Pastoralists?

These measures led to a serious shortage of pastures. When grazing lands were taken over and turned into cultivated fields, the available area of pastureland declined. Similarly, the reservation of forests meant that shepherds and cattle herders could no longer freely pasture their cattle in the forests.

As pasturelands disappeared under the plough, the existing animal stock had to feed on whatever grazing land remained. This led to continuous intensive grazing of these pastures. Usually nomadic pastoralists grazed their animals in one area and moved to another area. These pastoral movements allowed time for the natural restoration of vegetation growth. When restrictions were imposed on pastoral movements, grazing lands came to be continuously used and the quality of patures declined. This in turn created a further shortage of forage for animals and the deterioration of animal stock. Underfed cattle died in large numbers during scarcities and famines.

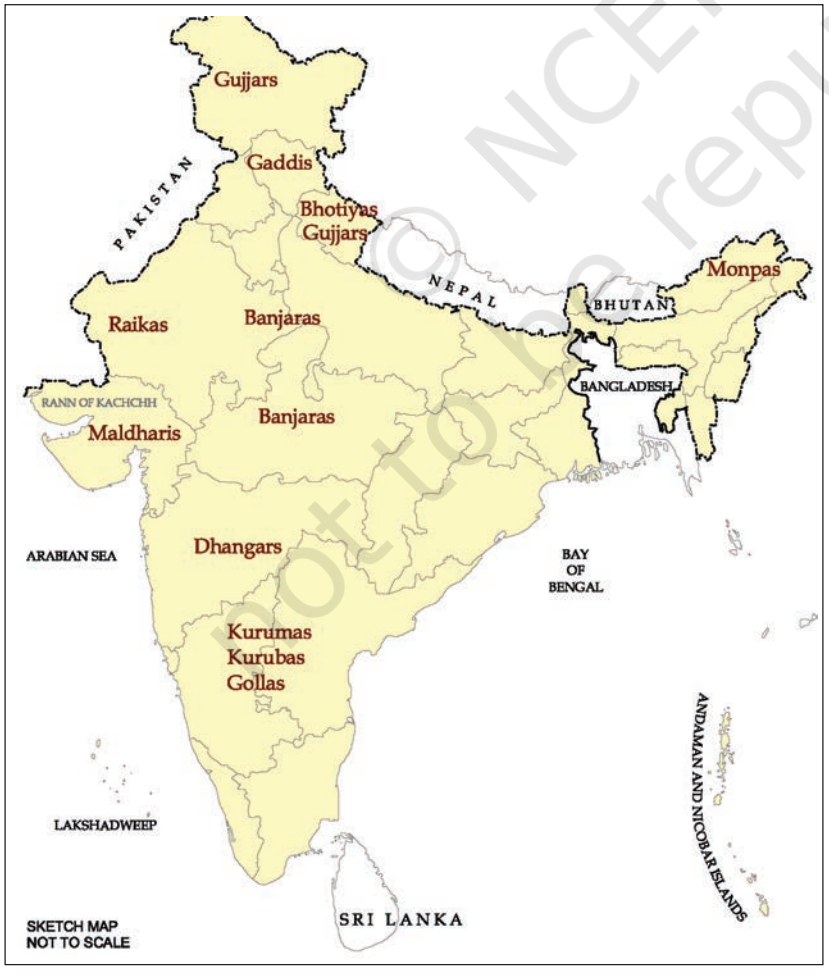


Fig.11 – Pastoralists in India.
This map indicates the location of only those pastoral communities mentioned in the chapter. There are many others living in various parts of India.

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2.2 How Did the Pastoralists Cope with these Changes?

Pastoralists reacted to these changes in a variety of ways. Some reduced the number of cattle in their herds, since there was not enough pasture to feed large numbers. Others discovered new pastures when movement to old grazing grounds became difficult. After 1947, the camel and sheep herding Raikas, for instance, could no longer move into Sindh and graze their camels on the banks of the Indus, as they had done earlier. The new political boundaries between India and Pakistan stopped their movement. So they had to find new places to go. In recent years they have been migrating to Haryana where sheep can graze on agricultural fields after the harvests are cut. This is the time that the fields need manure that the animals provide.

Over the years, some richer pastoralists began buying land and settling down, giving up their nomadic life. Some became settled peasants cultivating land, others took to more extensive trading. Many poor pastoralists, on the other hand, borrowed money from moneylenders to survive. At times they lost their cattle and sheep and became labourers, working on fields or in small towns.

Yet, pastoralists not only continue to survive, in many regions their numbers have expanded over recent decades. When pasturelands in one place was closed to them, they changed the direction of their movement, reduced the size of the herd, combined pastoral activity with other forms of income and adapted to the changes in the modern world. Many ecologists believe that in dry regions and in the mountains, pastoralism is still ecologically the most viable form of life.

Such changes were not experienced only by pastoral communities in India. In many other parts of the world, new laws and settlement patterns forced pastoral communities to alter their lives. How did pastoral communities elsewhere cope with these changes in the modern world?

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3 Pastoralism in Africa

Let us move to Africa where over half the world's pastoral population lives. Even today, over 22 million Africans depend on some form of pastoral activity for their livelihood. They include communities like Bedouins, Berbers, Maasai, Somali, Boran and Turkana. Most of them now live in the semi-arid grasslands or arid deserts where rainfed agriculture is difficult. They raise cattle, camels, goats, sheep and donkeys; and they sell milk, meat, animal skin and wool. Some also earn through trade and transport, others combine pastoral activity with agriculture; still others do a variety of odd jobs to supplement their meagre and uncertain earnings from pastoralism.

Like pastoralists in India, the lives of African pastoralists have changed dramatically over the colonial and post-colonial periods. What have these changes been?

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Fig. 12 – A view of Maasai land with Kilimanjaro in the background.
Forced by changing conditions, the Maasai have grown dependent on food produced in other areas such as maize meal, rice, potatoes, cabbage. Traditionally the Maasai frowned upon this. Maasai believed that tilling the land for crop farming is a crime against nature. Once you cultivate the land, it is no longer suitable for grazing. Courtesy: The Massai Association.



Fig. 13 – Pastoral communities in Africa.
The inset shows the location of the Maasais in Kenya and Tanzania.

We will discuss some of these changes by looking at one pastoral community – the Maasai – in some detail. The Maasai cattle herders live primarily in east Africa: 300, 000 in southern Kenya and another 150,000 in Tanzania. We will see how new laws and regulations took away their land and restricted their movement. This affected their lives in times of drought and even reshaped their social relationships.

3.1 Where have the Grazing Lands Gone?

One of the problems the Maasais have faced is the continuous loss of their grazing lands. Before colonial times, Maasailand stretched over a vast area from north Kenya to the steppes of northern Tanzania. In the late nineteenth century, European imperial powers scrambled for territorial possessions in Africa, slicing up the region into different colonies. In 1885, Maasailand was cut into half with an international boundary between British Kenya and German Tanganyika. Subsequently, the best grazing lands were gradually taken over for white settlement and the Maasai were pushed into a small area in

On Tanganyika

Britain conquered what had been German East Africa during the First World War. In 1919 Tanganyika came under British control. It attained independence in 1961 and united with Zanzibar to form Tanzania in 1964.

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south Kenya and north Tanzania. The Maasai lost about 60 per cent of their pre-colonial lands. They were confined to an arid zone with uncertain rainfall and poor pastures.

From the late nineteenth century, the British colonial government in east Africa also encouraged local peasant communities to expand cultivation. As cultivation expanded, pasturelands were turned into cultivated fields. In pre-colonial times, the Maasai pastoralists had dominated their agricultural neighbours both economically and politically. By the end of colonial rule the situation had reversed.

Large areas of grazing land were also turned into game reserves like the Maasai Mara and Samburu National Park in Kenya and Serengeti Park in Tanzania. Pastoralists were not allowed to enter these reserves; they could neither hunt animals nor graze their herds in these areas. Very often these reserves were in areas that had traditionally been regular grazing grounds for Maasai herds. The Serengeti National Park, for instance, was created over 14,760 km. of Maasai grazing land.

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***Fig. 14** – Without grass, livestock (cattle, goats and sheep) are malnourished, which means less food available for families and their children. The areas hardest hit by drought and food shortage are in the vicinity of Amboseli National Park, which last year generated approximately 240 million Kenyan Shillings (estimated $3.5 million US) from tourism. In addition, the Kilimanjaro Water Project cuts through the communities of this area but the villagers are barred from using the water for irrigation or for livestock. Courtesy: The Massai Association.*



Fig. 15 *– The title Maasai derives from the word Maa. Maa-sai means 'My People'. The Maasai are traditionally nomadic and pastoral people who depend on milk and meat for subsistence. High temperatures combine with low rainfall to create conditions which are dry, dusty, and extremely hot. Drought conditions are common in this semi-arid land of equatorial heat. During such times pastoral animals die in large numbes.* *Courtesy: The Massai Association.*

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Source E

Pastoral communities elsewhere in Africa faced similar problems. In Namibia, in south-west Africa, the Kaokoland herders traditionally moved between Kaokoland and nearby Ovamboland, and they sold skin, meat and other trade products in neighbouring markets. All this was stopped with the new system of territorial boundaries that restricted movements between regions.

The nomadic cattle herders of Kaokoland in Namibia complained:

'We have difficulty. We cry. We are imprisoned. We do not know why we are locked up. We are in jail. We have no place to live … We cannot get meat from the south … Our sleeping skins cannot be sent out … Ovamboland is closed for us. We lived in Ovamboland for a long time. We want to take our cattle there, also our sheep and goats. The borders are closed. The borders press us heavily. We cannot live.'

Statement of Kaokoland herders, Namibia, 1949.

Quoted in Michael Bollig, 'The colonial encapsulation of the north western Namibian pastoral economy', *Africa* 68 (4), 1998.

Source F

In most places in colonial Africa, the police were given instructions to keep a watch on the movements of pastoralists, and prevent them from entering white areas. The following is one such instruction given by a magistrate to the police, in south-west Africa, restricting the movements of the pastoralists of Kaokoland in Namibia:

'Passes to enter the Territory should not be given to these Natives unless exceptional circumstances necessitate their entering … The object of the above proclamation is to restrict the number of natives entering the Territory and to keep a check on them, and ordinary visiting passes should therefore never be issued to them.'

'Kaokoveld permits to enter', Magistrate to Police Station Commanders of Outjo and Kamanjab, 24 November, 1937.

Source

The loss of the finest grazing lands and water resources created pressure on the small area of land that the Maasai were confined within. Continuous grazing within a small area inevitably meant a deterioration of the quality of pastures. Fodder was always in short supply. Feeding the cattle became a persistent problem.

3.2 The Borders are Closed

In the nineteenth century, African pastoralists could move over vast areas in search of pastures. When the pastures were exhausted in one place they moved to a different area to graze their cattle. From the late nineteenth century, the colonial government began imposing various restrictions on their mobility.

Like the Maasai, other pastoral groups were also forced to live within the confines of special reserves. The boundaries of these reserves became the limits within which they could now move. They were not allowed to move out with their stock without special permits. And it was difficult to get permits without trouble and harassment. Those found guilty of disobeying the rules were severely punished.

Pastoralists were also not allowed to enter the markets in white areas. In many regions, they were prohibited from participating in any form of trade. White settlers and European colonists saw pastoralists as dangerous and savage – people with whom all contact had to be minimised. Cutting off all links was, however, never really possible, because white colonists had to depend on black labour to bore mines and, build roads and towns.

The new territorial boundaries and restrictions imposed on them suddenly changed the lives of pastoralists. This adversely affected

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both their pastoral and trading activities. Earlier, pastoralists not only looked after animal herds but traded in various products. The restrictions under colonial rule did not entirely stop their trading activities but they were now subject to various restrictions.

3.3 When Pastures Dry

Drought affects the life of pastoralists everywhere. When rains fail and pastures are dry, cattle are likely to starve unless they can be moved to areas where forage is available. That is why, traditionally, pastoralists are nomadic; they move from place to place. This nomadism allows them to survive bad times and avoid crises.

But from the colonial period, the Maasai were bound down to a fixed area, confined within a reserve, and prohibited from moving in search of pastures. They were cut off from the best grazing lands and forced to live within a semi-arid tract prone to frequent droughts. Since they could not shift their cattle to places where pastures were available, large numbers of Maasai cattle died of starvation and disease in these years of drought. An enquiry in 1930 showed that the Maasai in Kenya possessed 720,000 cattle, 820,000 sheep and 171,000 donkeys. In just two years of severe drought, 1933 and 1934, over half the cattle in the Maasai Reserve died.

As the area of grazing lands shrank, the adverse effect of the droughts increased in intensity. The frequent bad years led to a steady decline of the animal stock of the pastoralists.

3.4 Not All were Equally Affected

In Maasailand, as elsewhere in Africa, not all pastoralists were equally affected by the changes in the colonial period. In pre-colonial times Maasai society was divided into two social categories – elders and warriors. The elders formed the ruling group and met in periodic councils to decide on the affairs of the community and settle disputes. The warriors consisted of younger people, mainly responsible for the protection of the tribe. They defended the community and organised cattle raids. Raiding was important in a society where cattle was wealth. It is through raids that the power of different pastoral groups was asserted. Young men came to be recognised as members of the warrior class when they proved their manliness by raiding the cattle of other pastoral groups and participating in wars. They, however, were subject to the authority of the elders.



Fig. 16 *– Note how the warriors wear traditional deep red shukas, brightly beaded Maasai jewelry and carry five-foot, steel tipped spears. Their long pleats of intricately plaited hair are tinted red with ochre. As per tradition they face East to honour the rising sun. Warriors are in charge of society's security while boys are responsible for herding livestock. During the drought season, both warriors and boys assume responsibility for herding livestock.* Courtesy: The Massai Association.

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Fig.17 - Even today, young men go through an elaborate ritual before they become warriors, although actually it is no longer common. They must travel throughout the section's region for about four months, ending with an event where they run to the homestead and enter with an attitude of a raider. During the ceremony, boys dress in loose clothing and dance non-stop throughout the day. This ceremony is the transition into a new age. Girls are not required to go through such a ritual. Courtesy: The Massai Association.

To administer the affairs of the Maasai, the British introduced a series of measures that had important implications. They appointed chiefs of different sub-groups of Maasai, who were made responsible for the affairs of the tribe. The British imposed various restrictions on raiding and warfare. Consequently, the traditional authority of both elders and warriors was adversely affected.

The chiefs appointed by the colonial government often accumulated wealth over time. They had a regular income with which they could buy animals, goods and land. They lent money to poor neighbours who needed cash to pay taxes. Many of them began living in towns, and became involved in trade. Their wives and children stayed back in the villages to look after the animals. These chiefs managed to survive the devastations of war and drought. They had both pastoral and non-pastoral income, and could buy animals when their stock was depleted.

But the life history of the poor pastoralists who depended only on their livestock was different. Most often, they did not have the resources to tide over bad times. In times of war and famine, they lost nearly everything. They had to go looking for work in the towns. Some eked out a living as charcoal burners, others did odd jobs. The lucky could get more regular work in road or building construction.

The social changes in Maasai society occurred at two levels. First, the traditional difference based on age, between the elders

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and warriors, was disturbed, though it did not break down entirely. Second, a new distinction between the wealthy and poor pastoralists developed.

Conclusion

So we see that pastoral communities in different parts of the world are affected in a variety of different ways by changes in the modern world. New laws and new borders affect the patterns of their movement. With increasing restrictions on their mobility, pastoralists find it difficult to move in search of pastures. As pasture lands disappear grazing becomes a problem, while pastures that remain deteriorate through continuous over grazing. Times of drought become times of crises, when cattle die in large numbers.

Yet, pastoralists do adapt to new times. They change the paths of their annual movement, reduce their cattle numbers, press for rights to enter new areas, exert political pressure on the government for relief, subsidy and other forms of support and demand a right in the management of forests and water resources. Pastoralists are not relics of the past. They are not people who have no place in the modern world. Environmentalists and economists have increasingly come to recognise that pastoral nomadism is a form of life that is perfectly suited to many hilly and dry regions of the world.

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Fig. 18 – A Raika shepherd on Jaipur highway.
Heavy traffic on highways has made migration of shepherds a new experience.

Activities

1. Imagine that it is 1950 and you are a 60-year-old Raika herder living in post-Independence India. You are telling your grand-daughter about the changes which have taken place in your lifestyle after Independence. What would you say?
2. Imagine that you have been asked by a famous magazine to write an article about the life and customs of the Maasai in pre-colonial Africa. Write the article, giving it an interesting title.
3. Find out more about the some of the pastoral communities marked in Figs. 11 and 13.

Activities

Questions

1. Explain why nomadic tribes need to move from one place to another. What are the advantages to the environment of this continuous movement?
2. Discuss why the colonial government in India brought in the following laws. In each case, explain how the law changed the lives of pastoralists:
   - Waste Land rules
   - Forest Acts
   - Criminal Tribes Act
   - Grazing Tax
3. Give reasons to explain why the Maasai community lost their grazing lands.
4. There are many similarities in the way in which the modern world forced changes in the lives of pastoral communities in India and East Africa. Write about any two examples of changes which were similar for Indian pastoralists and the Maasai herders.

?

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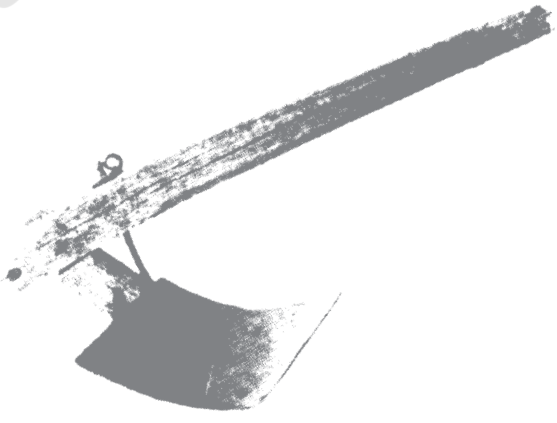
Peasants and Farmers

In the previous two chapters you read about pastures and forests, and about those who depended on these resources. You learnt about shifting cultivators, pastoral groups and tribals. You saw how access to forests and pastures was regulated by modern governments, and how these restrictions and controls affected the lives of those who used these resources.

In this chapter you will read about peasants and farmers, with a special focus on three different countries. You will find out about the small cottagers in England, the wheat farmers of the USA, and the opium producers of Bengal. You will see what happens to different rural groups with the coming of modern agriculture; what happens when different regions of the world are integrated with the capitalist world market. By comparing the histories of different places you will see how these histories are different, even though some of the processes are similar.

Let us begin our journey with England where the agricultural revolution first occurred.

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1 The Coming of Modern Agriculture in England

On 1 June 1830, a farmer in the north-west of England found his barn and haystack reduced to ashes by a fire that started at night. In the months that followed, cases of such fire were reported from numerous districts. At times only the rick was burnt, at other times the entire farmhouse. Then on the night of 28 August 1830, a threshing machine of a farmer was destroyed by labourers in East Kent in England. In the subsequent two years, riots spread over southern England and about 387 threshing machines were broken. Through this period, farmers received threatening letters urging them to stop using machines that deprived workmen of their livelihood. Most of these letters were signed in the name of Captain Swing. Alarmed landlords feared attacks by armed bands at night, and many destroyed their own machines. Government action was severe. Those suspected of rioting were rounded up. 1, 976 prisoners were tried, nine men were hanged, 505 transported – over 450 of them to Australia – and 644 put behind bars.

Captain Swing was a mythic name used in these letters. But who were the Swing rioters? Why did they break threshing machines? What were they protesting against? To answer these questions, we need to trace the developments in English agriculture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

1.1 The Time of Open fields and Commons

Over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the English countryside changed dramatically. Before this time in large parts of England the countryside was open. It was not partitioned into enclosed lands privately owned by landlords. Peasants cultivated on strips of land around the village they lived in. At the beginning of each year, at a public meeting, each villager was allocated a number of strips to cultivate. Usually, these strips were of varying quality and often located in different places, not next to each other. The effort was to ensure that everyone had a mix of good and bad land. Beyond these strips of cultivation lay the common land. All villagers had access to the commons. Here they pastured their cows and grazed their sheep, collected fuelwood for fire and berries and fruit for food. They fished in the rivers and ponds, and hunted rabbit in common forests. For the poor, the common land was essential for survival. It

Source A

The threatening letters circulated widely. At times the threats were gentle, at others severe. Some of them were as brief as the following.

Sir

This is to acquaint you that if your threshing machines are not destroyed by you directly we shall commence our labours.

Signed on behalf of the whole

Swing

From E.J. Hobsbawm and George Rude, *Captain Swing.*

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supplemented their meagre income, sustained their cattle, and helped them tide over bad times when crops failed.

In some parts of England, this economy of open fields and common lands had started changing from about the sixteenth century. When the price of wool went up in the world market in the sixteenth century, rich farmers wanted to expand wool production to earn profits. They were eager to improve their sheep breeds and ensure good feed for them. They were keen on controlling large areas of land in compact blocks to allow improved breeding. So they began dividing and enclosing common land and building hedges around their holdings to separate their property from that of others. They drove out villagers who had small cottages on the commons, and they prevented the poor from entering the enclosed fields.

Till the middle of the eighteenth century the enclosure movement proceeded very slowly. The early enclosures were usually created by individual landlords. They were not supported by the state or the church. After the mid-eighteenth century, however, the enclosure movement swept through the countryside, changing the English landscape for ever. Between 1750 and 1850, 6 million acres of land was enclosed. The British Parliament no longer watched this process from a distance. It passed 4,000 Acts legalising these enclosures.

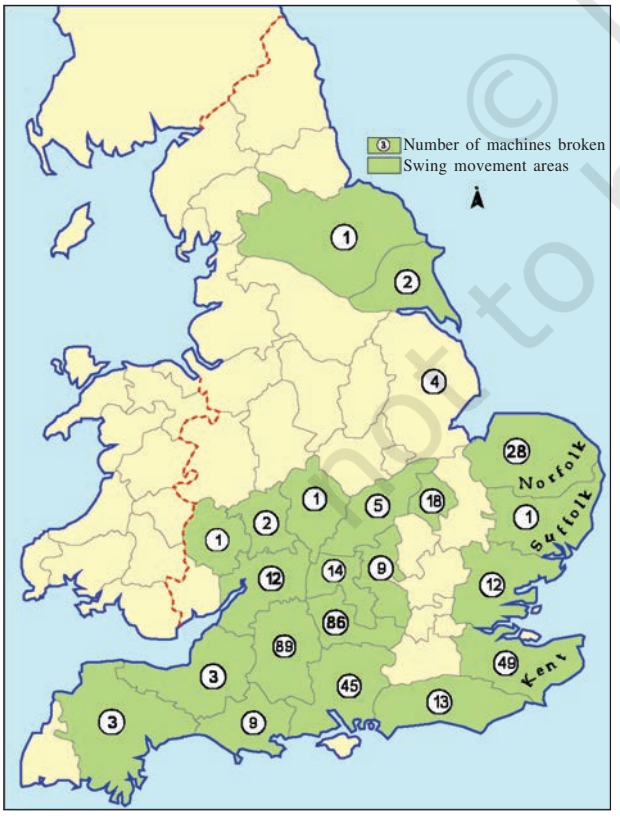


***Fig. 1** – Threshing machines broken in different counties of England during the Captain Swing movement.(1830-32)*
Based on E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rude, Captain Swing.

Source B

This Swing letter is an example of a sterner threat:

Sir,

Your name is down amongst the Black hearts in the Black Book and this is to advise you and the like of you, who are …… to make your wills.

Ye have been the Blackguard Enemies of the people on all occasions, ye have not yet done as ye ought.

Swing

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1.2 New Demands for Grain

Why was there such a frantic effort to enclose lands? What did the enclosures imply? The new enclosures were different from the old. Unlike the sixteenth-century enclosures that promoted sheep farming, the land being enclosed in the late eighteenth century was for grain production. The new enclosures were happening in a different context; they became a sign of a changing time. From the mid-eighteenth century, the English population expanded rapidly. Between 1750 and 1900, it multiplied over four times, mounting from 7 million in 1750 to 21 million in 1850 and 30 million in 1900. This meant an increased demand for foodgrains to feed the population. Moreover, Britain at this time was industrialising. More and more people began to live and work in urban areas. Men from rural areas migrated to towns in search of jobs. To survive they had to buy foodgrains in the market. As the urban population grew, the market for foodgrains expanded, and when demand increased rapidly, foodgrain prices rose.

By the end of the eighteenth century, France was at war with England. This disrupted trade and the import of foodgrains from Europe. Prices of foodgrains in England sky rocketed, encouraging landowners to enclose lands and enlarge the area under grain cultivation. Profits flowed in and landowners pressurised the Parliament to pass the Enclosure Acts.

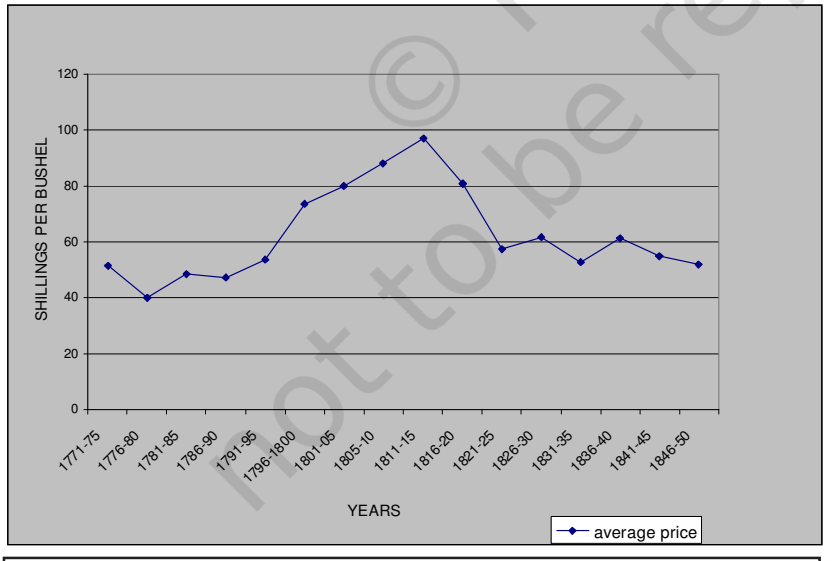


Fig.2 – Annual average wheat prices in England and Wales: 1771-1850.

New words

Bushel – A measure of capacity.
Shillings – An English currency. 20 shillings = £1

Activity

Look at the graph carefully. See how the price line moves up sharply in the 1790s and slumps dramatically after 1815. Can you explain why the line of the graph shows this pattern?

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Fig.3 – Suffolk countryside in the early nineteenth century.
This is a painting by the English painter John Constable (1776 -1837). Son of a wealthy corn merchant, he grew up in the Suffolk countryside in east England, a region that had been enclosed much before the nineteenth century. At a time when the idyllic countryside was disappearing, the open fields were being enclosed, Constable painted sentimental images of open countryside. In this particular painting we do see some fences and the separation of fields, but we get no idea of what was happening in the landscape. Constable's paintings usually did not have working people. If you look at Fig.1, you will see that Suffolk was surrounded by regions where threshing machines were broken in large numbers during the Swing riots.

1.3 The Age of Enclosures

There is one dramatic fact that makes the period after the 1780s different from any earlier period in English history. In earlier times, rapid population growth was most often followed by a period of food shortages. Food-grain production in the past had not expanded as rapidly as the population. In the nineteenth century this did not happen in England. Grain production grew as quickly as population. Even though the population increased rapidly, in 1868 England was producing about 80 per cent of the food it consumed. The rest was imported.

This increase in food-grain production was made possible not by any radical innovations in agricultural technology, but by bringing new lands under cultivation. Landlords sliced up pasturelands, carved up open fields, cut up forest commons, took over marshes, and turned larger and larger areas into agricultural fields.

Farmers at this time continued to use the simple innovations in agriculture that had become common by the early eighteenth

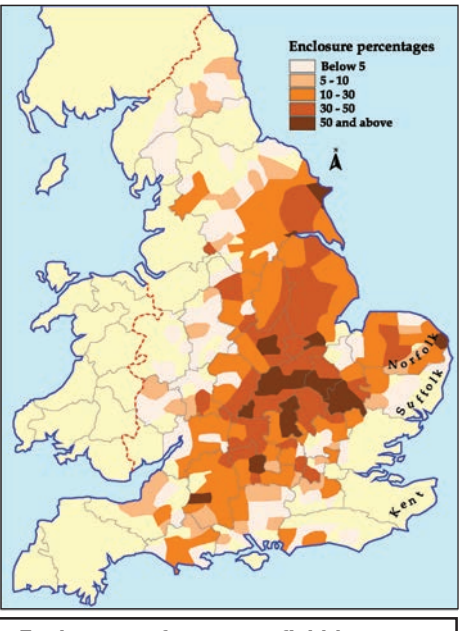


Fig.4 – Enclosures of common field by Parliamentary Acts: eighteenth-nineteenth centuries.
Based on E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rude, Captain Swing.

century. It was in about the 1660s that farmers in many parts of England began growing turnip and clover. They soon discovered that planting these crops improved the soil and made it more fertile. Turnip was, moreover, a good fodder crop relished by cattle. So farmers began cultivating turnips and clover regularly. These crops became part of the cropping system. Later findings showed that these crops had the capacity to increase the nitrogen content of the soil. Nitrogen was important for crop growth. Cultivation of the same soil over a few years depleted the nitrogen in the soil and reduced its fertility. By restoring nitrogen, turnip and clover made the soil fertile once again. We find that farmers in the early nineteenth century used much the same method to improve agriculture on a more regular basis.

Enclosures were now seen as necessary to make long-term investments on land and plan crop rotations to improve the soil. Enclosures also allowed the richer landowners to expand the land under their control and produce more for the market.

1.4 What Happened To the Poor?

Enclosures filled the pockets of landlords. But what happened to those who depended on the commons for their survival? When fences came up, the enclosed land became the exclusive property of one landowner. The poor could no longer collect their firewood from the forests, or graze their cattle on the commons. They could no longer collect apples and berries, or hunt small animals for meat. Nor could they gather the stalks that lay on the fields after the crops were cut. Everything belonged to the landlords, everything had a price which the poor could not afford to pay.

In places where enclosures happened on an extensive scale – particularly the Midlands and the counties around – the poor were displaced from the land. They found their customary rights gradually disappearing. Deprived of their rights and driven off the land, they tramped in search of work. From the Midlands, they moved to the southern counties of England. This was a region that was most intensively cultivated, and there was a great demand for agricultural labourers. But nowhere could the poor find secure jobs.

Earlier, it was common for labourers to live with landowners. They ate at the master's table, and helped their master through the year, doing a variety of odd jobs. By 1800 this practice was disappearing. Labourers were being paid wages and employed only during harvest time. As landowners tried to increase their profits, they cut the

Activity

What happened to the women and children?

Cow keeping, collection of firewood, gleaning, gathering of fruits and berries from the common lands was earlier mostly done by women and children.

Can you suggest how enclosures must have affected the lives of women and children? Can you imagine how the disappearance of common lands might have changed the relationship between men, women and children within the family?

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amount they had to spend on their workmen. Work became insecure, employment uncertain, income unstable. For a very large part of the year the poor had no work.

1.5 The Introduction of Threshing Machines

During the Napoleonic Wars, prices of foodgrains were high and farmers expanded production vigorously. Fearing a shortage of labour, they began buying the new threshing machines that had come into the market.They complained of the insolence of labourers, their drinking habits, and the difficulty of making them work. The machines, they thought, would help them reduce their dependence on labourers.

After the Napoleonic Wars had ended, thousands of soldiers returned to the villages. They needed alternative jobs to survive. But this was a time when grain from Europe began flowing into England, prices declined, and an Agricultural Depression set in (see prices in Fig.2). Anxious, landowners began reducing the area they cultivated and demanded that the imports of crops be stopped. They tried to cut wages and the number of workmen they employed. The unemployed poor tramped from village to village, and those with uncertain jobs lived in fear of a loss of their livelihood.

The Captain Swing riots spread in the countryside at this time. For the poor the threshing machines had become a sign of bad times.

Conclusion

The coming of modern agriculture in England thus meant many different changes. The open fields disappeared, and the customary rights of peasants were undermined. The richer farmers expanded grain production, sold this grain in the world market, made profits, and became powerful. The poor left their villages in large numbers. Some went from the Midlands to the Southern counties where jobs were available, others to the cities. The income of labourers became unstable, their jobs insecure, their livelihood precarious.

Source C

One peasant who lost his rights to common land after the enclosures wrote to the local lord:

'Should a poor man take one of your sheep from the common, his life would be forfeited by law. But should You take the common from a hundred poor men's sheep, the law gives no redress. The poor man is liable to be hung for taking from You what would not supply you with a meal; & You would do nothing illegal by depriving him of his subsistence; ...What should be the inference of the poor...when the laws are not accessible to the injured poor and the government gives them no redress?'

Source: J.M. Neeson, *Commoners: Common Rights, Enclosures and Social Change, 1700-1820* (1993).

Source D

In contrast many writers emphasised the advantages of enclosures.

'There can be no question of the superior profit to the farmer of enclosures rather than open fields. In one case he is in chains; he can make no changes in soil or prices, he is like a horse in team, he must jog along with the rest.'

John Middleton, an 18th century writer.

Activity

Read Sources C and D and answer the following.

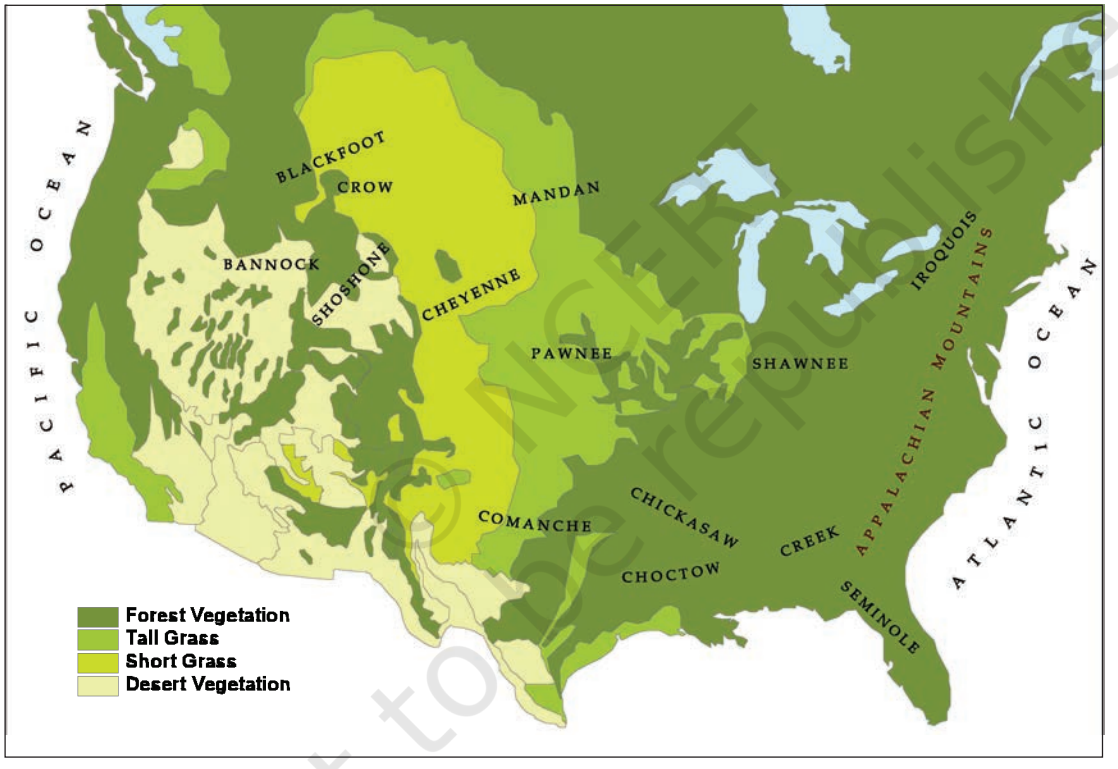
- What is the peasant trying to say in Source C?
- What is John Middleton arguing?
- Re-read from Section 1.1 to 1.4 and summarize the two sides of the argument for and against open fields. Which argument do you sympathise with?

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2 Bread Basket and Dust Bowl

Now let us travel across the Atlantic to the USA. Let us see how modern agriculture developed there, how the USA became the bread basket of the world, and what this meant to the rural people of America.

At the time that common fields were being enclosed in England at the end of the eighteenth century, settled agriculture had not developed on any extensive scale in the USA. Forests covered over 800 million acres and grasslands 600 million acres. Fig.5 will give you some idea of what the natural vegetation was like at the time.



Most of the landscape was not under the control of white Americans. Till the 1780s, white American settlements were confined to a small narrow strip of coastal land in the east. If you travelled through the country at that time you would have met various Native American groups. Several of them were nomadic, some were settled. Many of them lived only by hunting, gathering and fishing; others cultivated corn, beans, tobacco and pumpkin. Still others were expert trappers through whom European traders had secured their supplies of beaver fur since the sixteenth century. In Fig.5 you can see the location of the different tribes in the early eighteenth century.

Fig.5 – Forests and grasslands in the USA before the westward expansion of white settlers.
Adapted from Baker, 'Agricultural Regions of North America', Economic Geography, Vol.2, 1926. *About half the forest cover and one third of the grasslands were cleared for agricultural settlement. In the map you can also see the location of the various native American communities in the early nineteenth century.*

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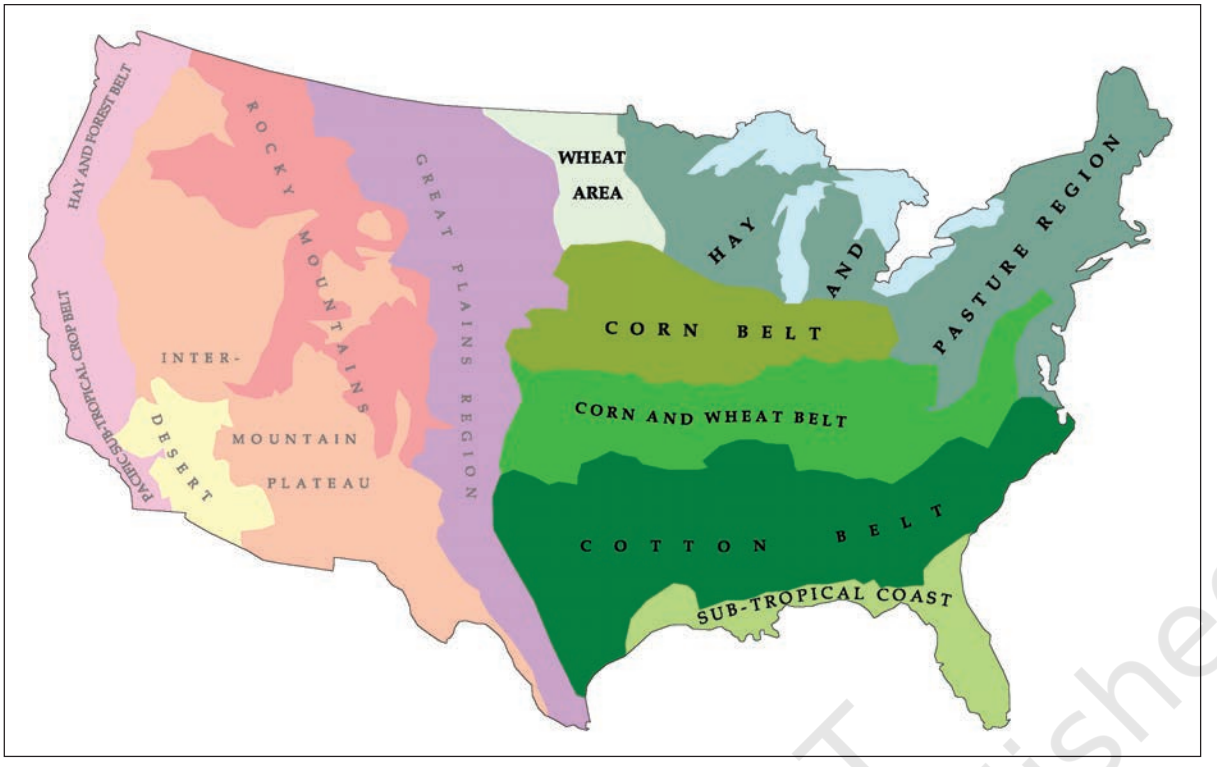


Fig.6 – The agricultural belts in the USA in 1920.
Adapted from several essays by Baker published in Economic Geography *in the 1920s.*

By the early twentieth century, this landscape had transformed radically. White Americans had moved westward and established control up to the west coast, displacing local tribes and carving out the entire landscape into different agricultural belts. The USA had come to dominate the world market in agricultural produce. How did this change come about? Who were the new settlers? How did the spread of cultivation shape the lives of the Indian groups who had once lived there?

2.1 The Westward Move and Wheat Cultivation

The story of agrarian expansion is closely connected to the westward movement of the white settlers who took over the land. After the American War of Independence from 1775 to 1783 and the formation of the United States of America, the white Americans began to move westward. By the time Thomas Jefferson became President of the USA in 1800, over 700,000 white settlers had moved on to the Appalachian plateau through the passes. Seen from the east coast, America seemed to be a land of promise. Its wilderness could be turned into cultivated fields. Forest timber could be cut for export, animals hunted for skin, mountains mined for gold and minerals. But this meant that the American Indians had to be cleared from

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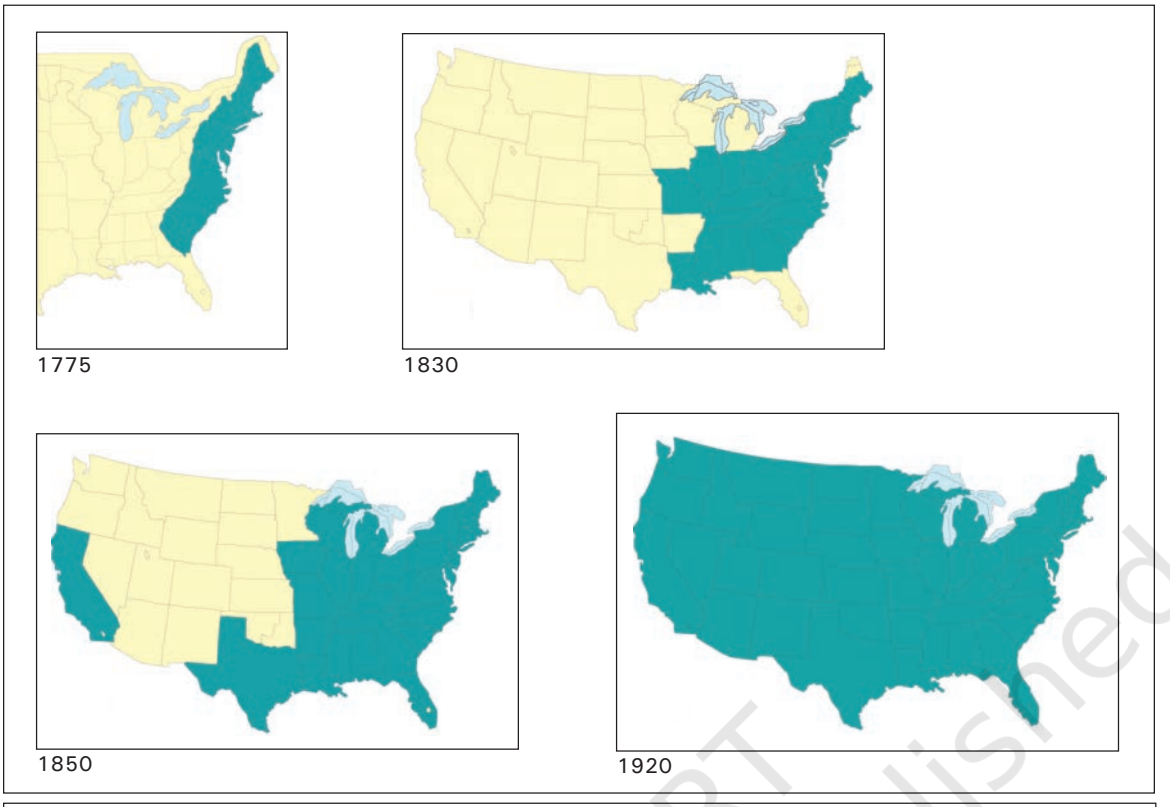


Fig. 7 – The westward expansion of white settlement between 1775 and 1920.

the land. In the decades after 1800 the US government committed itself to a policy of driving the American Indians westward, first beyond the river Mississippi, and then further west. Numerous wars were waged in which Indians were massacred and many of their villages burnt. The Indians resisted, won many victories in wars, but were ultimately forced to sign treaties, give up their land and move westward.

As the Indians retreated, the settlers poured in. They came in successive waves. They settled on the Appalachian plateau by the first decade of the eighteenth century, and then moved into the Mississippi valley between 1820 and 1850. They slashed and burnt forests, pulled out the stumps, cleared the land for cultivation, and built log cabins in the forest clearings. Then they cleared larger areas, and erected fences around the fields. They ploughed the land and sowed corn and wheat.

In the early years, the fertile soil produced good crops. When the soil became impoverished and exhausted in one place, the migrants would move further west, to explore new lands and raise a new crop. It was, however, only after the 1860s that settlers swept into the Great Plains across the River Mississippi. In subsequent decades this region became a major wheat-producing area of America.



Fig. 8 – Sod houses in the Frontier. *(Courtesy: Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS-NDSU, Fargo.)*
A typical sod house that settlers lived in when they began clearing the grasslands. Timber for houses was not available in this area.

New words

Sod – Pieces of earth with grass

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Let us follow the story of the wheat farmers in some detail. Let us see how they turned the grasslands into the bread basket of America, what problems they faced, and what consequences followed.

2.2 The Wheat Farmers

From the late nineteenth century, there was a dramatic expansion of wheat production in the USA. The urban population in the USA was growing and the export market was becoming ever bigger. As the demand increased, wheat prices rose, encouraging farmers to produce wheat. The spread of the railways made it easy to transport the grain from the wheat-growing regions to the eastern coast for export. By the early twentieth century the demand became even higher, and during the First World War the world market boomed. Russian supplies of wheat were cut off and the USA had to feed Europe. US President Wilson called upon farmers to respond to the need of the time. 'Plant more wheat, wheat will win the war,' he said.

In 1910, about 45 million acres of land in the USA was under wheat. Nine years later, the area had expanded to 74 million acres, an increase of about 65 per cent. Most of the increase was in the Great Plains where new areas were being ploughed to extend cultivation. In many cases, big farmers – the wheat barons – controlled as much as 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land individually.

2.3 The Coming of New Technology

This dramatic expansion was made possible by new technology. Through the nineteenth century, as the settlers moved into new habitats and new lands, they modified their implements to meet their requirements. When they entered the mid-western prairie, the simple ploughs the farmers had used in the eastern coastal areas of the USA proved ineffective. The prairie was covered with a thick mat of grass with tough roots. To break the sod and turn the soil over, a variety of new ploughs were devised locally, some of them 12 feet long. Their front rested on small wheels and they were hitched on to six yokes of oxen or horses. By the early twentieth century, farmers in the Great Plains were breaking the ground with tractors and disk ploughs, clearing vast stretches for wheat cultivation.

Once the crop had ripened it had to be harvested. Before the 1830s, the grain used to be harvested with a cradle or sickle. At harvest time, hundreds of men and women could be seen in the fields



***Fig.9** – A typical farming family on a Sunday afternoon. Picture taken in the Great Plains of Dakota in the first decade of the twentieth century.* (Courtesy: Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS-NDSU, Fargo.)

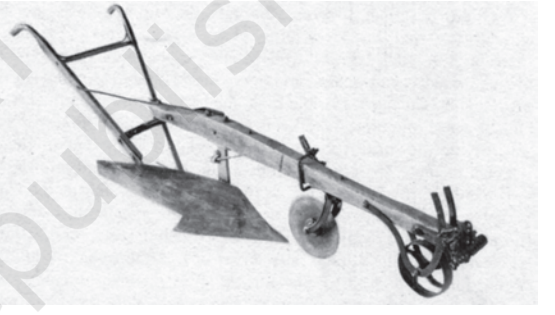


Fig.10 – A walking plough.
Note the front resting on a small wheel. At the rear is the handle with which the ploughman guided the plough.
The plough was hitched to a team of oxen or horses. (See Fig.13)

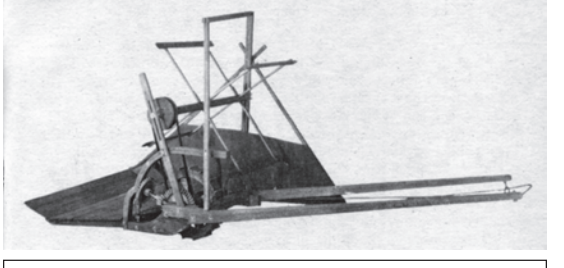


Fig.11 – Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper in 1831.

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Fig. 12 – The scythe was used for mowing grass before the mid-nineteenth century.



Fig. 13 – Breaking ploughs before the age of mechanisation.
(Courtesy: Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS-NDSU, Fargo.)
You can see the twelve ploughs hitched to a team of horses.



Fig. 14 – Seeding with drills and tractors. A highland farm in North Dakota, 1910. *-(Courtesy: F.A. Pazandak Photgraphy Collection, NDIRS-NDSU, Fargo)*
Here you can see three drills and packers unhitched from the tractor. The drills were about 10 to 12 feet long, each with about 20 disks drilling the soil for seeding. Packers followed behind the disks covering the seeds with soil. You can see the vast seeded field extending into the horizon.



Fig. 15 – Breaking the ground on the Great Plains in North Dakota, 1910. *(Courtesy: Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, NDIRS-NDSU, Fargo.)*
You can see a Minneapolis steam tractor pulling a John Deere plough with metal shares that cut into the ground. The plough could break the soil quickly and cut even strong grassroots effectively. Notice the deep furrows behind the machine and the unploughed land with grass on the left. Only big wheat farmers could afford these machines.

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cutting the crop. In1831, Cyrus McCormick invented the first mechanical reaper which could cut in one day as much as five men could cut with cradles and 16 men with sickles. By the early twentieth century, most farmers were using combined harvesters to cut grain. With one of these machines, 500 acres of wheat could be harvested in two weeks.

For the big farmers of the Great Plains these machines had many attractions. The prices of wheat were high and the demand seemed limitless. The new machines allowed these big farmers to rapidly clear large tracts, break up the soil, remove the grass and prepare the ground for cultivation. The work could be done quickly and with a minimal number of hands. With power-driven machinery, four men could plough, seed and harvest 2,000 to 4,000 acres of wheat in a season.

2.4 What Happened to the Poor?

For the poorer farmers, machines brought misery. Many of them bought these machines, imagining that wheat prices would remain high and profits would flow in. If they had no money, the banks offered loans. Those who borrowed found it difficult to pay back their debts. Many of them deserted their farms and looked for jobs elsewhere.

But jobs were difficult to find. Mechanisation had reduced the need for labour. And the boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seemed to have come to an end by the mid-1920s. After that, most farmers faced trouble. Production had expanded so rapidly during the war and post-war years that that there was a large surplus. Unsold stocks piled up, storehouses overflowed with grain, and vast amounts of corn and wheat were turned into animal feed. Wheat prices fell and export markets collapsed. This created the grounds for the Great Agrarian Depression of the 1930s that ruined wheat farmers everywhere.



Fig. 16 – Black blizzard in Western Kansas, 14 April 1935.

2.5 Dust Bowl

The expansion of wheat agriculture in the Great Plains created other problems. In the 1930s, terrifying duststorms began to blow over the southern plains. Black blizzards rolled in, very often 7,000 to 8,000 feet high, rising like monstrous waves of muddy water. They came day after day, year after year, through the 1930s. As

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Fig.17 – Drought Survivors. Painted by Alexander Hogue, (1936). *Hogue dramatised the tragic scenes of death and destruction that he saw, in a series of paintings.* Life Magazine *referred to Hogue as the artist of the dust bowl.*

the skies darkened, and the dust swept in, people were blinded and choked. Cattle were suffocated to death, their lungs caked with dust and mud. Sand buried fences, covered fields, and coated the surfaces of rivers till the fish died. Dead bodies of birds and animals were strewn all over the landscape. Tractors and machines that had ploughed the earth and harvested the wheat in the 1920s were now clogged with dust, damaged beyond repair.

What had gone wrong? Why these duststorms? In part they came because the early 1930s were years of persistent drought. The rains failed year after year, and temperatures soared. The wind blew with ferocious speed. But ordinary duststorms became black blizzards only because the entire landscape had been ploughed over, stripped of all grass that held it together. When wheat cultivation had expanded dramatically in the early twentieth century, zealous farmers had recklessly uprooted all vegetation, and tractors had turned the soil over, and broken the sod into dust. The whole region had become a dust bowl. The American dream of a land of plenty had turned into a nightmare. The settlers had thought that they could conquer the entire landscape, turn all land over to growing crops that could yield profits. After the 1930s, they realized that they had to respect the ecological conditions of each region.

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3 The Indian Farmer and Opium Production

Let us now move to India and see what was happening in the Indian countryside in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

As you know, British rule was gradually established in India after the Battle of Plassey (1757). Over the period of colonial rule, the rural landscape was radically transformed. The British saw land revenue as a major source of government income. To build the resources of the state, efforts were made to impose a regular system of land revenue, increase revenue rates, and expand the area under cultivation. As cultivation expanded, the area under forests and pastures declined. All this created many problems for peasants and pastoralists. They found their access to forests and grazing lands increasingly restricted by rules and regulations. And they struggled to meet the pressures of government revenue demand.

In the colonial period, rural India also came to produce a range of crops for the world market. In the early nineteenth century, indigo and opium were two of the major commercial crops. By the end of the century, peasants were producing sugarcane, cotton, jute, wheat and several other crops for export, to feed the population of urban Europe and to supply the mills of Lancashire and Manchester in England.

How did Indian cultivators respond to their entry into the modern world of international commerce and trade? Let us look at the history of one crop – opium – to get an idea of what colonial rule meant to peasants, and how the market operated in the colonies.

3.1 A Taste for Tea: The Trade with China

The history of opium production in India was linked up with the story of British trade with China. In the late eighteenth century, the English East India Company was buying tea and silk from China for sale in England. As tea became a popular English drink, the tea trade became more and more important. In 1785, about 15 million pounds of tea was being imported into England. By 1830, the figure had jumped to over 30 million pounds. In fact, the profits of the East India Company came to depend on the tea trade.

This created a problem. England at this time produced nothing that could be easily sold in China. The Confucian rulers of China, the Manchus, were suspicious of all foreign merchants. They feared that the merchants would meddle in local politics and disrupt their

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authority. So the Manchus were unwilling to allow the entry of foreign goods.

In such a situation, how could Western merchants finance the tea trade? How could they balance their trade? They could buy tea only by paying in silver coins or bullion. This meant an outflow of treasure from England, a prospect that created widespread anxiety. It was believed that a loss of treasure would impoverish the nation and deplete its wealth. Merchants therefore looked for ways to stop this loss of silver. They searched for a commodity they could sell in China, something they could persuade the Chinese to buy.

Opium was such a commodity. The Portuguese had introduced opium into China in the early sixteenth century. Opium was however, known primarily for its medical properties and used in miniuscule quantities for certain types of medicines. The Chinese were aware of the dangers of opium addiction, and the Emperor had forbidden its production and sale except for medicinal purposes. But Western merchants in the mid-eighteenth century began an illegal trade in opium. It was unloaded in a number of sea ports of south-eastern China and carried by local agents to the interiors. By the early 1820s, about 10,000 crates were being annually smuggled into China. Fifteen years later, over 35,000 crates were being unloaded every year.



Fig. 18 – The triangular trade.
The British traders took opium from India to China and tea from China to England. Between India and England trade flowed both ways. By the early 19th century, exports of handlooms from India declined while the export of raw materials (silk and cotton) and foodgrains increased. From England, manufactured goods flowed into India leading to a decline of Indian artisanal production.

While the English cultivated a taste for Chinese tea, the Chinese became addicted to opium. People of all classes took to the drug – shopkeepers and peddlers, officials and army men, aristocrats and paupers. Lin Ze-xu, Special Commissioner at Canton in 1839, estimated that there were over 4 million opium smokers in China.

Activity

On the arrows in the map indicate the commodities that flowed from one country to another.

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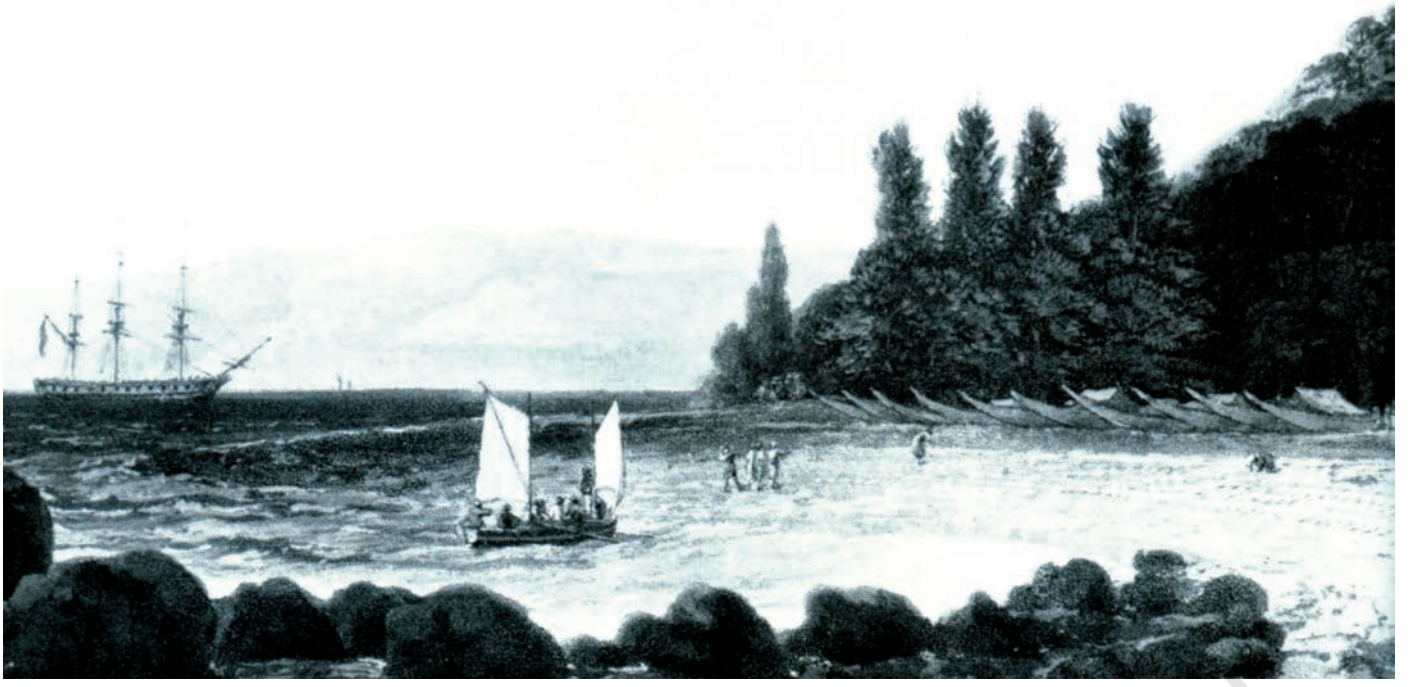


Fig. 19 – A ship arrives from China.
This is a painting by Thomas Daniell, an English artist who came to India with his nephew William Daniell in 1786. The Daniells went first to China, stayed there for while, and then sailed from Canton (in south China) to India. The ship in which they came was registered in an Indian port and was engaged in trade in Eastern waters. The illegal trade in opium with China was carried on, in such ships.

Source E

In 1839, the Chinese Emperor sent Lin Ze-xu to Canton as a Special Commissioner with instructions to stop the opium trade. After he arrived in Canton in the spring of 1839, Lin arrested 1, 600 men involved in the trade, and confiscated 11,000 pounds of opium. Then he forced the foreign factories to hand over their stocks of opium, burnt 20, 000 crates of opium and blew the ashes to the wind. When he announced that Canton was closed to foreign trade, Britain declared war. Defeated in the Opium War (1837-42) , the Chinese were forced to accept the humiliating terms of the subsequent treaties, legalizing opium trade and opening up China to foreign merchants.

Before the war, Lin wrote a strong letter to Queen Victoria criticizing the trade in opium. Here is an extract from Lin's "Letter of Advice to Queen Victoria"

'All those people in China who sell opium or smoke opium should receive the death penalty. We trace the crime of those barbarians who through the years have been selling opium, then the deep harm they have wrought and the great profit they have usurped should fundamentally justify their execution according to law. …

We find your country is sixty or seventy thousand li [three li make one mile, ordinarily] from China. Yet there are barbarian ships that strive to come here for trade for the purpose of making a great profit. The wealth of China is used to profit the barbarians. That is to say, the great profit made by barbarians is all taken from the rightful share of China. By what right do they then in return us the poisonous drug to injure the Chinese people?...Let us ask, where is your conscience? I have heard that the smoking of opium is very strictly forbidden by your country; that is because the harm caused by opium is clearly understood. Since it is not permitted to do harm to your own country, then even less should you let it be passed on to the harm of other countries — how much less to China!'

Source: From Ssuyu Teng and John Fairbank, *China's Response to the West* (1954).

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A British doctor in Canton put the figure at 12 million. As China became a country of opium addicts, British trade in tea flourished. The returns from opium sale financed the tea purchases in China.

3.2 Where did Opium come from?

This is where the Indian peasants come into the story.

When the British conquered Bengal, they made a determined effort to produce opium in the lands under their control. As the market for opium expanded in China, larger volumes of opium flowed out of Bengal ports. Before 1767, no more than 500 chests (of two **maunds** each) were being exported from India. Within four years, the quantity trebled. A hundred years later, in 1870, the government was exporting about 50,000 chests annually.

Supplies had to be increased to feed this booming export trade. But this was not easy. How could the cultivators be persuaded to grow opium? For a variety of reasons, they were unwilling to turn their fields over to poppy. First, the crop had to be grown on the best land, on fields that lay near villages and were well manured. On this land peasants usually produced pulses. If they planted opium on this land, then pulses could not be grown there, or they would have to be grown on inferior land where harvests were poorer and uncertain. Second, many cultivators owned no land. To cultivate, they had to pay rent and lease land from landlords. And the rent charged on good lands near villages was very high. Third, the cultivation of opium was a difficult process. The plant was delicate, and cultivators had to spend long hours nurturing it. This meant that they did not have enough time to care for other crops. Finally, the price the government paid to the cultivators for the opium they produced was very low. It was unprofitable for cultivators to grow opium at that price.

3.3 How Were Unwilling Cultivators Made to Produce Opium?

Unwilling cultivators were made to produce opium through a system of advances. In the rural areas of Bengal and Bihar, there were large numbers of poor peasants. They never had enough to survive. It was difficult for them to pay rent to the landlord or to buy food and clothing. From the 1780s, such peasants found their village headmen (*mahato*) giving them money advances to produce opium. When offered a loan, the cultivators were tempted to accept, hoping to

Activity

Imagine that you were asked by the Emperor of China to prepare a leaflet for young people about the harmful effects of opium. Find out about the effect of opium on the human body. Design your leaflet and give it an eye-catching title

New words

Maund – A measure of weight.
1 maund = 40 seers. 1 seer is a little under a kg.

Activity

Imagine that you are the leader of a group of farmers protesting against having to grow opium. You have been granted a meeting with the local official of the East India Company. How would the conversation proceed? Divide the class into the two groups and act out the conversation you would have.

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meet their immediate needs and pay back the loan at a later stage. But the loan tied the peasant to the headman and through him to the government. It was the government opium agents who were advancing the money to the headmen, who in turn gave it to the cultivators. By taking the loan, the cultivator was forced to grow opium on a specified area of land and hand over the produce to the agents once the crop had been harvested. He had no option of planting the field with a crop of his choice or of selling his produce to anyone but the government agent. And he had to accept the low price offered for the produce.

The problem could have been partly solved by increasing the price of opium. But the government was reluctant to do so. It wanted to produce opium at a cheap rate and sell it at a high price to opium agents in Calcutta, who then shipped it to China. This difference between the buying and selling price was the government's opium revenue. The prices given to the peasants were so low that by the early eighteenth century angry peasants began agitating for higher prices and refused to take advances. In regions around Benaras, cultivators began giving up opium cultivation. They produced sugarcane and potatoes instead. Many cultivators sold off their crop to travelling traders (*pykars*) who offered higher prices.

By 1773, the British government in Bengal had established a monopoly to trade in opium. No one else was legally permitted to trade in the product. By the 1820s, the British found to their horror that opium production in their territories was rapidly declining, but its production outside the British territories was increasing. It was being produced in Central India and Rajasthan, within princely states that were not under British control. In these regions, local traders were offering much higher prices to peasants and exporting opium to China. In fact, armed bands of traders were found carrying on the trade in the 1820s. To the British this trade was illegal: it was smuggling and it had to be stopped. Government monopoly had to be retained. It therefore instructed its agents posted in the princely states to confiscate all opium and destroy the crops.

This conflict between the British government, peasants and local traders continued as long as opium production lasted.

We should not however, think that the experiences of all peasants in colonial India were like those of the opium cultivators. We will read about other experiences of peasants in colonial India in a later chapter.

Source F

The Deputy Opium Agent of Allahabad wrote in 1833:

'The Board appears to think that the cultivators are not unwilling to cultivate. For two years past I have had constant communications with the cultivators in some of the districts south of the Jumna and state positively the people are discontented and dissatisfied almost to a man. I have made many enquires on the subject and the impression left on my mind is that cultivation of the poppy is considered a curse by the people and that only by undue authority is it upheld … The cultivation was introduced at the request, nay I may say, at the command of the Collector; … The people tell me, they are ill used and abused and even beaten by the chuprassies … The people almost uniformly told, they suffered loss from poppy …'

From Benoy Chowdhury, *Growth of Commercial Agriculture in Bengal.*

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Conclusion

In this chapter you saw how rural areas in different parts of the world changed in the modern period. While looking at these changes we must remember that their pattern was not the same everywhere. All sections of rural people were not affected in the same way. Some gained, others lost. Nor was the history of modernisation simply a glorious story of growth and development. It was also a story of displacements and impoverishment, ecological crises and social rebellion, colonisation and repression. We need to look at these variations and strands to understand the diverse ways in which peasants and farmers confronted the modern world.

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Fig.20 – Packed chests of opium being taken to Ghazipur railway station in the nineteenth century.

Activities

1. Draw a timeline from 1650 to1930 showing the significant agricultural changes which you have read about in this chapter.
2. Fill in the following table with the events outlined in this chapter. Remember, there could be more than one change in a country.

COUNTRY	CHANGE WHICH OCCURRED	WHO LOST	WHO WON

Questions

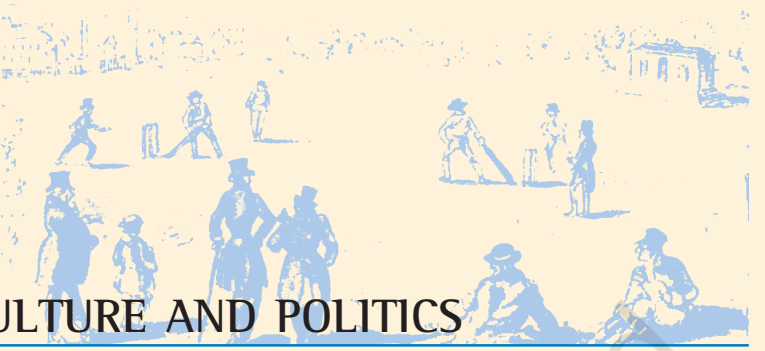
1. Explain briefly what the open field system meant to rural people in eighteenth-century England.
   Look at the system from the point of view of :
   - A rich farmer
   - A labourer
   - A peasant woman
2. Explain briefly the factors which led to the enclosures in England.
3. Why were threshing machines opposed by the poor in England?
4. Who was Captain Swing? What did the name symbolise or represent?
5. What was the impact of the westward expansion of settlers in the USA?
6. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the use of mechanical harvesting machines in the USA?
7. What lessons can we draw from the conversion of the countryside in the USA from a bread basket to a dust bowl?
8. Write a paragraph on why the British insisted on farmers growing opium in India.
9. Why were Indian farmers reluctant to grow opium?

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SECTION III



EVERYDAY LIFE, CULTURE AND POLITICS

Section III will introduce you to the history of everyday life. In this section you will read about the history of sports and clothing.

History is not just about the dramatic events in the world. It is equally about the small things in our lives. Everything around us has a history – the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the music we hear, the medicines we use, the literature we read, the games we play. All these have evolved over time. Since we relate to them in our daily lives, their history escapes us. We never pause to think what things were like a century ago; or how people in different societies see these everyday things – food and clothing for instance – differently.

Chapter VII is on History and Sports. You will study this history through the story of one game that in India has captured the imagination of the nation for some decades. News of cricket today hits the headline of newspapers. Cricket matches are organised to establish friendship between nations and cricketers are seen as ambassadors of the country. The game has, in fact, come to represent the unity of India. But did you know that this was not always so? This chapter will tell you about the long and chequered history of the game.

At one time, a century and half ago, cricket was an English game. It had been invented in England and became intimately linked to the culture of nineteenth century Victorian society. The game was expected to represent all that the English valued – fair play, discipline, gentlemanliness. It was introduced in schools as part of a wider programme of physical training through which boys were to be moulded into ideal citizens. Girls were not to play games meant for boys. With the British, cricket spread to the colonies. There again it was supposed to uphold the values of Englishness.

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The colonial masters assumed that only they could play the game as it ought to be played, in its true spirit. They were, in fact, worried when the inhabitants of the colonies not only began to play the game, but often played it better than the masters; and at times beat the English at their own game. The game of cricket thus got linked up closely with the politics of colonialism and nationalism.

Within the colonies the game had a complex history. As Chapter VII will show, it was connected to the politics of caste and region, community and nation. The emergence of cricket as a national game was the result of many decades of historical development.

From cricket you will move to clothing (Chapter VIII). You will see how a history of clothing can tell us so much about the history of societies. The clothes people wear are shaped by the rules and norms of societies. They reflect people's sense of beauty and honour, their notions of proper conduct and behavior. As societies change, these norms alter. But these changes in the norms of society and styles of clothing come about as a consequence of long years of struggle. They have a history. They do not just happen naturally.

Chapter VIII will introduce you to this history. It will show how the shifts in clothing in England and India were shaped by the social movements within these societies, and by changes within the economy. You will see how clothing too, is deeply connected to the politics of colonialism and nationalism, caste and class. A look at the history of clothing helps us discover new layers of meaning in the politics of Swadeshi and the symbol of the charkha. It even helps us understand Mahatma Gandhi better, for he was one individual who was highly sensitive to the politics of clothing, and wrote extensively on it.

Once you see the history behind one or two such issues, you may begin to ask historical questions about other such aspects of ordinary life which you have taken for granted.

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History and Sport:
The Story of Cricket

Cricket grew out of the many stick-and-ball games played in England 500 years ago, under a variety of different rules. The word 'bat' is an old English word that simply means stick or club. By the seventeenth century, cricket had evolved enough to be recognisable as a distinct game and it was popular enough for its fans to be fined for playing it on Sunday instead of going to church. Till the middle of the eighteenth century, bats were roughly the same shape as hockey sticks, curving outwards at the bottom. There was a simple reason for this: the ball was bowled underarm, along the ground and the curve at the end of the bat gave the batsman the best chance of making contact.



Fig.1 – The oldest cricket bat in existence. *Note the curved end, similar to a hockey stick.*

How that early version of cricket played in village England grew into the modern game played in giant stadiums in great cities is a proper subject for history because one of the uses of history is to understand how the present was made. And sport is a large part of contemporary life: it is one way in which we amuse ourselves, compete with each other, stay fit, and express our social loyalties. If tens of millions of Indians today drop everything to watch the Indian team play a Test match or a one-day international, it is reasonable for a history of India to explore how that stick-and-ball game invented in south-eastern England became the ruling passion of the Indian sub-continent. This is particularly so, since the game was linked to the wider history of colonialism and nationalism and was in part shaped by the politics of religion and caste.

Our history of cricket will look first at the evolution of cricket as a game in England, and discuss the wider culture of physical training and athleticism of the time. It will then move to India, discuss the history of the adoption of cricket in this country, and trace the modern transformation of the game. In each of these sections we will see how the history of the game was connected to the social history of the time.



Fig.2 — An artist's sketch of the cricket ground at Lord's in England in 1821.

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1 The Historical Development of Cricket as a Game in England

The social and economic history of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cricket's early years, shaped the game and gave cricket its unique nature.

For example, one of the peculiarities of Test cricket is that a match can go on for five days and still end in a draw. No other modern team sport takes even half as much time to complete. A football match is generally over in an hour-and-a-half of playing time. Even baseball, a long-drawn-out bat-and-ball game by the standards of modern sport, completes nine innings in less than half the time that it takes to play a limited-overs match, the shortened version of modern cricket!

Another curious characteristic of cricket is that the length of the pitch is specified – 22 yards – but the size or shape of the ground is not. Most other team sports, such as hockey and football lay down the dimensions of the playing area: cricket does not. Grounds can be oval like the Adelaide Oval or nearly circular, like Chepauk in Chennai. A six at the Melbourne Cricket Ground needs to clear much more ground than a lofted shot for the same reward at Feroz Shah Kotla in Delhi.

There's a historical reason behind both these oddities. Cricket was the earliest modern team sport to be codified, which is another way of saying that cricket gave itself rules and regulations so that it could be played in a uniform and standardised way well before team games like soccer and hockey. The first written 'Laws of Cricket' were drawn up in 1744. They stated, 'the principals shall choose from amongst the gentlemen present two umpires who shall absolutely decide all disputes. The stumps must be 22 inches high and the bail across them six inches. The ball must be between 5 and 6 ounces, and the two sets of stumps 22 yards apart'. There were no limits on the shape or size of the bat. It appears that 40 notches or runs was viewed as a very big score, probably due to the bowlers bowling quickly at shins unprotected by pads. The world's first cricket club was formed in Hambledon in the 1760s



Fig.3 – The pavilion of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in 1874.

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and the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded in 1787. In 1788, the MCC published its first revision of the laws and became the guardian of cricket's regulations.

The MCC's revision of the laws brought in a series of changes in the game that occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. During the 1760s and 1770s it became common to pitch the ball through the air, rather than roll it along the ground. This change gave bowlers the options of length, deception through the air, plus increased pace. It also opened new possibilities for spin and swing. In response, batsmen had to master timing and shot selection. One immediate result was the replacement of the curved bat with the straight one. All of this raised the premium on skill and reduced the influence of rough ground and brute force.

The weight of the ball was limited to between 5½ to 5¾ ounces, and the width of the bat to four inches. The latter ruling followed an innings by a batsman who appeared with a bat as wide as the wicket! In 1774, the first leg-before law was published. Also around this time, a third stump became common. By 1780, three days had become the length of a major match, and this year also saw the creation of the first six-seam cricket ball.

While many important changes occurred during the nineteenth century (the rule about wide balls was applied, the exact circumference of the ball was specified, protective equipment like pads and gloves became available, boundaries were introduced where previously all shots had to be run and, most importantly, over-arm bowling became legal) cricket remained a pre-industrial sport that matured during the early phase of the Industrial Revolution, the late eighteenth century. This history has made cricket a game with characteristics of both the past and the present day.

Cricket's connection with a rural past can be seen in the length of a Test match. Originally, cricket matches had no time limit. The game went on for as long as it took to bowl out a side twice. The rhythms of village life were slower and cricket's rules were made before the Industrial Revolution. Modern factory work meant that people were paid by the hour or the day or the week: games that were **codified** after the industrial revolution, like football and hockey, were strictly time-limited to fit the routines of industrial city life.

In the same way, cricket's vagueness about the size of a cricket ground is a result of its village origins. Cricket was originally played


The LAWS of the NOBLE GAME of CRICKET
as revised by the Club at St. Mary-le-bone.

THE BALL must weigh not less than Five Ounces and a Half, nor more than Five Ounces and Three Quarters. At the beginning of each Innings either party may call for a New Ball.

THE BAT
Must not exceed Four inches and One Quarter, in the widest part.

THE STUMPS
Must be Twenty-four inches out of the ground, the BAILS Seven inches in length.

THE BOWLING CREASE
Must be in a line with the Stumps, three Feet in length, with a RETURN CREASE.

THE POPPING CREASE
Must be Three Feet Ten Inches from the Wicket, and parallel to it.

THE WICKETS
Must be opposite to each other, at the distance of Twenty-two yards.

THE PARTY WHICH GOES FROM HOME
Shall have the choice of the Innings, and the pitching of the Wickets, which shall be pitched within Thirty Yards of a corner fixed by the Adversaries.

When the Parties meet at a Third Place, the Bowlers shall toss up for the pitching of the Wickets, and the choice for going in.

It shall not be lawful for either party during a Match, without the consent of the other, to alter the Ground, by rolling, watering, covering, mowing, or beating. This rule is not meant to prevent the Striker from beating the ground with his Bat near where he stands during the Innings, or to prevent the Bowler from filling up holes, watering his ground, or using fawdeil, &c. when the ground is wet.

THE BOWLER
Shall deliver the Ball with one foot behind the Bowling Crease, and within the Return Creafe, and shall bowl four Balls before he changes Wickets, which he fhall do but once in the fame Innings.

He may order the Striker at his Wicket, to ftand on which fide of it he pleafes.

THE STRIKER IS OUT
If the Ball is bowled off, or the Stump bowled out of the ground.

Or, if the Ball, from a ftroke over or under the Bat, or upon his hand, (but not wilfully) is held before it touches the ground, although it be bagged by the body of the Catcher.

Or, if in ftriking, or at any other time while the Ball is in play, both his feet are over the Popping Creafe and his Wicket put down, except his Bat is grounded within it.

Or, if in ftriking at the ball he hits down his Wicket.

Or, if under pretence of running a Notch, or otherwise, either of the Strikers prevent a Ball from being caught, the Striker of the Ball is out.

Or, if the Ball is ftruck up, and he wilfully ftrikes it again.

Or, if in running a Notch the Wicket is ftruck down by a throw, or with the Ball in Hand, before his Foot Hand or Bat is grounded over the Popping Creafe. But if the Ball is off, the Stump muft be ftruck out of the ground.

Or, if the Striker touches or takes up the Ball while in play, unlefs at the requeft of the other Party.

If with his foot or leg he ftops the Ball, which the Bowler in the opinion of the Umpire at the Bowler's Wicket fhall have pitched in a ftraight line to the Wicket, and would have hit it.

If the Players have crofsed each other, he that runs for the Wicket which is put down, is out; if they are not crofsed, he that has left the Wicket which is put down, is out.

When a Ball is caught, no Notch to be reckoned.

When a Striker is run out, the Notch they were running for is not to be reckoned.

If no Ball is call'd, the Striker fhall be allowed four, but if more than four are run before juft Ball is call'd, then the Striker to have all they have run.

When the Ball has been in the Bowler's or Wicket-keeper's hands, it is conidered as no longer in play; and the Strikers muft not keep within their ground, till the Umpire has called PLAY, but if the player goes out of his ground with an intent to run before the ball is delivered, the Bowler may put him out.

If the Striker is hurt, he may retire from his Wicket, and have his Innings at any time in that Innings.

If a Striker is hurt, none other Parties may be allowed to ftand out for him, but not go in.

If any Parties ftops the Ball with his Hat, the Ball is to be conidered as dead, and the oppofite Party to add Five Notches to their Score; if any are out, they are to have five in all.

If the Ball is ftruck up, the Striker may guard his Wicket either with his Bat or his Body.

In single Wicket Matches, if the Striker moves out of his ground to ftrike at the Ball, he fhall be allowed no Notch for fuch ftroke.

THE WICKET KEEPERS
Shall ftand at a reafonable diftance behind the Wicket, and ftall not move till the Ball is out of the Bowler's hand, and ftall not by any mafs incommode the Striker; and if his hands, knees, feet, or head, be over, or before the Wicket, though the Ball hit it, it ftall not be out.

THE UMPIRES
Are the only judges of fair and unfair play, and all difputes ftall be determined by them; each at his own Wicket: but in cafe of a Catch, which the Umpire at the Wicket cannot fee fufficiently to decide upon, he may apply to the other Umpire, whole opinion is conclusive.

They ftall allow Two Minutes for each man to come in, and Fifteen Minutes between each Innings; when the Umpire ftall call *Play*, the party refufing to Play ftall lofe the Match.

They are not to order a player out, unlefs appealed to by the Adverfaries.

But if the Bowler's foot is not behind the Bowling Creafe, and within the return Creafe, when he delivers the Ball, they muft, unafked, call *No Ball*.

If the Striker runs a fhort Notch, the Umpire muft call *No Mark*.

The Umpire of the Bowler's Wicket, ftall be firft applied to decide on all Catches.

The Umpires are not to be changed during the Match, but by the consent of both Parties.

BETS.
If the Matches of one Player are laid againft another, the Bets depend on the Firft Inning, unlefs otherwife Specified.

If the Bets are made upon both Innings, and one Party beats the other in one Inning, the Notches in the Firft Inning ftall determine the Bet.

But if the other Party goes in a fecond time, then the Bet muft be determined by the number on the Score.

Published by John Wallis, 13, Warwick-Square, London.

Fig.4 – The laws of cricket drawn up and revised by the MCC were regularly published in this form. Note that norms of betting were also formalised.

New words

Codified – Made into a formalised system with clearly established rules and laws

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on country commons, unfenced land that was public property. The size of the commons varied from one village to another, so there were no designated boundaries or boundary hits. When the ball went into the crowd, the crowd cleared a way for the fieldsman to retrieve it. Even after boundaries were written into the laws of cricket, their distance from the wicket was not specified. The laws simply lay down that 'the umpire shall agree with both captains on the boundaries of the playing area'.

If you look at the game's equipment, you can see how cricket both changed with changing times and yet fundamentally remained true to its origins in rural England. Cricket's most important tools are all made of natural, pre-industrial materials. The bat is made of wood as are the stumps and the bails. The ball is made with leather, twine and cork. Even today both bat and ball are handmade, not industrially manufactured. The material of the bat changed slightly over time. Once it was cut out of a single piece of wood. Now it consists of two pieces, the blade which is made out of the wood of the willow tree and the handle which is made out of cane that became available as European colonialists and trading companies established themselves in Asia. Unlike golf and tennis, cricket has refused to remake its tools with industrial or man-made materials: plastic, fibre glass and metal have been firmly rejected. Australian cricketer Dennis Lillee tried to play an innings with an aluminium bat, only to have it outlawed by the umpires.

But in the matter of protective equipment, cricket has been influenced by technological change. The invention of vulcanised rubber led to the introduction of pads in 1848 and protective gloves soon afterwards, and the modern game would be unimaginable without helmets made out of metal and synthetic lightweight materials.



CRICKET.

A GRAND MATCH

WILL BE PLAYED IN

LORD'S GROUND,

MARYLEBONE,

On MONDAY, JULY 31, 1848, & following Day.

The Gentlemen against the Players.

PLAYERS.

Gentlemen.	Players.
Sir F. BATHURST	BOX
E. ELMHURST, Esq.	CLARK
N. FELIX, Esq.	DEAN
H. FELLOWES, Esq.	GUY
R. T. KING, Esq.	HILLYER
J. M. LEE, Esq.	LILLYWHITE
A. MYNN, Esq.	MARTINGALE
W. NICHOLSON, Esq.	PILCH
O. C. PELL, Esq.	W. PILCH
C. RIDDING, Esq.	PARR
G. YONGE, Esq.	WISDEN

MATCHES TO COME.

Wednesday, August 2nd, at Lord's—Harrow against Winchester
Thursday, August 3rd, at Lord's—Eton against Harrow
Friday, August 4th, at Lord's—Winchester against Eton

DARK'S newly-invented LEG GUARDS, also his TUBULAR and other INDIA-RUBBER GLOVES, SPIKED SOLES for CRICKET SHOES, & CRICKET BALLS, to be had of R. Dark, at the Tennis Court.

Cricket Bats and Stumps to be had of M. Dark, at the Manufactory on the Ground.

Admittance 6d.....Bathing on the Ground.....Ordinary at 3 o'clock.

Morgan, Printer, 36, Church Street, adjoining the Marylebone Theatre.

Fig.5 – This poster announces a match at Lord's in 1848.
It shows the difference between the amateurs and the professionals by calling the two sides the Gentlemen and the Players. Advertisements for nineteenth century matches looked like theatre posters suggesting the dramatic nature of the game.



Fig.6 – The legendary batsman W.G. Grace coming out to bat at Lord's in 1895.
He was playing for the Gentlemen against the Players.

1.1 Cricket and Victorian England

The organisation of cricket in England reflected the nature of English society. The rich who could afford to play it for pleasure were called amateurs and the poor who played it for a living were called professionals. The rich were amateurs for two reasons. One, they considered sport a kind of leisure. To play for the pleasure of playing and not for money was an aristocratic value. Two, there was not enough money in the game for the rich to be interested. The wages of professionals were paid by **patronage** or **subscription** or gate money. The game was seasonal and did not offer employment the year round. Most professionals worked as miners or in other forms of working class employment in winter, the off-season.

The social superiority of amateurs was built into the customs of cricket. Amateurs were called Gentlemen while professionals had to be content with being described as Players. They even entered the ground from different entrances. Amateurs tended to be batsmen,

New words

Patronage – Agreement by wealthy supporter to give financial support for a specific cause

Subscription – Collected financial contribution for a specific purpose (such as cricket)

Source A

Thomas Hughes (1822-1896) studied at Rugby School during the headmastership of Thomas Arnold. Based on his school experience, he wrote a novel, *Tom Brown's Schooldays.* The book, published in 1857, became popular and helped spread the ideas of what came to be called muscular Christianity that believed that healthy citizens had to be moulded through Christian ideals and sports.

In this book Tom Brown is transformed from a nervous, homesick, timid boy into a robust, manly student. He becomes a heroic figure recognised for his physical courage, sportsmanship, loyalty and patriotism. This transformation is brought about by the discipline of the public school and the culture of sports.

——EXTRACT——

'Come, none of your irony, Brown,' answers the master. 'I'm beginning to understand the game scientifically. What a noble game it is, too!'

'Isn't it? But it's more than a game. It's an institution,' said Tom.

'Yes,' said Arthur, 'the birthright of British boys old and young, as habeas corpus and trial by jury are of British men.'

'The discipline and reliance on one another which it teaches is so valuable, I think,' went on the master, 'it ought to be such an unselfish game. It merges the individual in the eleven; he doesn't play that he may win, but that his side may.'

'That's very true,' said Tom, 'and that's why football and cricket, now one comes to think of it, are such much better games than fives' or hare-and-hounds, or any others where the object is to come in first or to win for oneself, and not that one's side may win.'

'And then the Captain of the eleven!' said the master, 'what a post is his in our School-world!...requiring skill and gentleness and firmness, and I know not what other rare qualities.'

Extract from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes

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leaving the energetic, hardworking aspects of the game, like fast bowling, to the professionals. That is partly why the laws of the game always give the benefit of the doubt to the batsman. Cricket is a batsman's game because its rules were made to favour 'Gentlemen', who did most of the batting. The social superiority of the amateur was also the reason the captain of a cricket team was traditionally a batsman: not because batsmen were naturally better captains but because they were generally Gentlemen. Captains of teams, whether club teams or national sides, were always amateurs. It was not till the 1930s that the English Test team was led by a professional, the Yorkshire batsman, Len Hutton.

It's often said that the 'battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton'. This means that Britain's military success was based on the values taught to schoolboys in its public schools. Eton was the most famous of these schools. The English boarding school was the institution that trained English boys for careers in the military, the civil service and the church, the three great institutions of imperial England. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, men like Thomas Arnold, headmaster of the famous Rugby School and founder of the modern public school system, saw team sport like cricket and rugby not just as outdoor play, but as an organised way of teaching English boys the discipline, the importance of **hierarchy**, the skills, the codes of honour and the leadership qualities that helped them build and run the British empire. Victorian empire builders justified the conquest of other countries as an act of unselfish social service, by which backward peoples were introduced to the civilising influence of British law and Western knowledge. Cricket helped to confirm this self-image of the English elite by glorifying the amateur ideal, where cricket was played not for victory or profit, but for its own sake, in the spirit of fair play.

In actual fact the Napoleonic wars were won because of the economic contribution of the iron works of Scotland and Wales, the mills of Lancashire and the financial houses of the City of London. It was the English lead in trade and industry that made Britain the world's greatest power, but it suited the English ruling class to believe that it was the superior character of its young men, built in boarding schools, playing gentlemanly games like cricket, that tipped the balance.



Fig. 7 – A cricket match at Lord's between the famous public schools Eton and Harrow. *While the game itself would look similar wherever it is played, the crowd does not. Notice how the upper-class social character of the game is brought out by the focus on gentlemen in bowler hats and ladies with their parasols shading them from the sun.*
From Illustrated London News, *July 20 1872.*

New words

Hierarchy – Organised by rank and status

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Fig.8 – Croquet, not cricket, for women.
Sports for women was not designed as vigorous, competitive exercise. Croquet was a slow-paced, elegant game considered suitable for women, especially of the upper class. The players' flowing gowns, frills and hats show the character of women's sports. From Illustrated London News, *20 July, 1872.*

Source B

Sport for girls?

Till the last part of the nineteenth century, sports and vigorous exercise for girls was not a part of their education. Dorothea Beale, principal of Cheltenham Ladies College from 1858 to 1906, reported to the schools Enquiry Commission in 1864:

'The vigorous exercise which boys get from cricket, etc., must be supplied in the case of girls by walking and … skipping.'

From: Kathleen, E. McCrone, '*Play up! Play up! And Play the Game: Sport at the Late Victorian Girls Public School'.*

By the 1890s, school began acquiring playgrounds and allowing girls to play some of the games earlier considered male preserves. But the competition was still discouraged. Dorothea Beale told the school council in 1893-1894:

'I am most anxious that girls should not over-exert themselves, or become absorbed in athletic rivalries, and therefore we do not play against the other schools. I think it is better for girls to learn to take an interest in botany, geology etc., and not make country excursions.'

From: Kathleen, E. McCrone, '*Play up! Play up! And Play the Game'.*

Activity

What does the sports curriculum of a nineteenth century girls' school tell us about the behaviour considered proper for girls at that time?

2 The Spread of Cricket

While some English team games like hockey and football became international games, played all over the world, cricket remained a colonial game, limited to countries that had once been part of the British empire. The pre-industrial oddness of cricket made it a hard game to export. It took root only in countries that the British conquered and ruled. In these colonies, cricket was established as a popular sport either by white settlers (as in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies and Kenya) or by local elites who wanted to copy the habits of their colonial masters, as in India.

While British imperial officials brought the game to the colonies, they made little effort to spread the game, especially in colonial territories where the subjects of empire were mainly non-white, such as India and the West Indies. Here, playing cricket became a sign of superior social and racial status, and the Afro-Caribbean population was discouraged from participating in organised club cricket, which remained dominated by white plantation owners and their servants. The first non-white club in the West Indies was established towards the end of the nineteenth century, and even in this case its members were light-skinned **mulattos**. So while black people played an enormous



Fig.9 – An afternoon of tennis in the plains of colonial India.
Notice how the artist tries to show that the game was for recreation as well as exercise. Men and women could play games together for recreation not competition.
From: Graphic*, February 1880.*



Fig.10 – A leisurely game for recreation, being played against the backdrop of the Himalayas.
The only Indians in the picture seem to be the servants seen near the pavilion.

New words

Mulattos – People of mixed European and African descent

amount of informal cricket on beaches, in back alleys and parks, club cricket till as late as the 1930s was dominated by white elites.

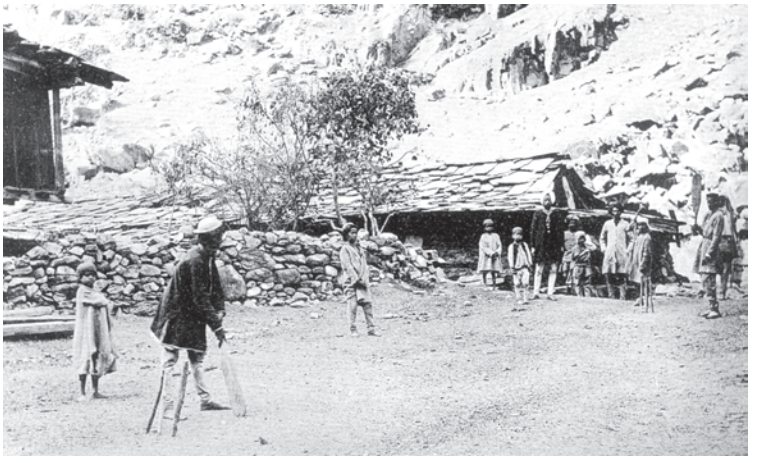


Fig. 11 – A rough-and-ready cricket game being played by Indians in a village in the Himalayas (1894).
In contrast to Figure 10, notice the home-made wickets and bat, carved out of rough bits of wood.

Despite the exclusiveness of the white cricket elite in the West Indies, the game became hugely popular in the Caribbean. Success at cricket became a measure of racial equality and political progress. At the time of their independence many of the political leaders of Caribbean countries like Forbes Burnham and Eric Williams saw in the game a chance for self-respect and international standing. When the West Indies won its first Test series against England in 1950, it was celebrated as a national achievement, as a way of demonstrating that West Indians were the equals of white Englishmen. There were two ironies to this great victory. One, the West Indian team that won was captained by a white player. The first time a black player led the West Indies Test team was in 1960 when Frank Worrell was named captain. And two, the West Indies cricket team represented not one nation but several **dominions** that later became independent countries. The pan-West Indian team that represents the Caribbean region in international Test cricket is the only exception to a series of unsuccessful efforts to bring about West Indian unification.

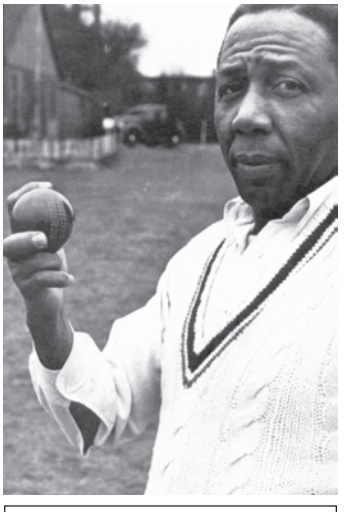


Fig. 12 – Learie Constantine.
One of the best-known cricketers of the West Indies.

Cricket fans know that watching a match involves taking sides. In a Ranji Trophy match when Delhi plays Mumbai, the loyalty of spectators depends on which city they come from or support. When India plays Australia, the spectators watching the match on television in Bhopal or Chennai feel involved as Indians – they are moved by nationalist loyalties. But through the early history of Indian first-class cricket, teams were not organised on geographical principles and it was not till 1932 that a national team was given the right to represent India in a Test match. So how were teams organised and, in the absence of regional or national teams, how did cricket fans choose sides? We turn to history for answers, to discover how cricket in India developed and to get a sense of the loyalties that united and divided Indians in the days of the Raj.

2.1 Cricket, Race and Religion

Cricket in colonial India was organised on the principle of race and religion. The first record we have of cricket being played in India is from 1721, an account of recreational cricket played by English sailors

New words

Dominion – Self-governing areas under the control of the British crown

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in Cambay. The first Indian club, the Calcutta Cricket Club, was established in 1792. Through the eighteenth century, cricket in India was almost wholly a sport played by British military men and civil servants in all-white clubs and gymkhanas. Playing cricket in the privacy of these clubs was more than just fun: it was also an escape from the strangeness, discomfort and danger of their stay in India. Indians were considered to have no talent for the game and certainly not meant to play it. But they did.

The origins of Indian cricket, that is, cricket played by Indians are to be found in Bombay and the first Indian community to start playing the game was the small community of Zoroastrians, the Parsis. Brought into close contact with the British because of their interest in trade and the first Indian community to westernise, the Parsis founded the first Indian cricket club, the Oriental Cricket Club in Bombay in 1848. Parsi clubs were funded and sponsored by Parsi businessmen like the Tatas and the Wadias. The white cricket elite in India offered no help to the enthusiastic Parsis. In fact, there was a quarrel between the Bombay Gymkhana, a whites-only club, and Parsi cricketers over the use of a public park. The Parsis complained that the park was left unfit for cricket because the polo ponies of the Bombay Gymkhana dug up the surface. When it became clear that the colonial authorities were prejudiced in favour of their white compatriots, the Parsis built their own gymkhana to play cricket in. The rivalry between the Parsis and the racist Bombay Gymkhana had a happy ending for these pioneers of Indian cricket. A Parsi team beat the Bombay Gymkhana at cricket in 1889, just four years after the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, an organisation that was lucky to have amongst its early leaders the great Parsi statesman and intellectual Dadabhai Naoroji.



Fig. 13 – The Parsi team, the first Indian cricket team to tour England in 1886.
Note that along with the traditional cricket flannels, they wear Parsi caps.

The establishment of the Parsi Gymkhana became a **precedent** for other Indians who in turn established clubs based on the idea of religious community. By the 1890s, Hindus and Muslims were busy gathering funds and support for a Hindu Gymkhana and an Islam Gymkhana. The British did not consider colonial India as a nation. They saw it as a collection of castes and races and religious communities and gave themselves the credit for unifying the sub-

New word

Precedent – Previous action which provides reason to repeat it

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continent. In the late nineteenth century, many Indian institutions and movements were organised around the idea of religious community because the colonial state encouraged these divisions and was quick to recognise communal institutions. For example, the Governor of the Bombay Presidency while dealing with an application from the Islam Gymkhana for land on Bombay's seafront wrote: '… we can be certain that in a short time we shall get a similar application from some Hindu Gymkhana … I don't see how we are to refuse these applicants; but I will … refuse any more grants once a Gymkhana has been established … by each *nationality*'. (emphasis added). It is obvious from this letter that colonial officials regarded religious communities as separate nationalities. Applications that used the communal categories favoured by the colonial state were, as this letter shows, more likely to be approved.

This history of gymkhana cricket led to first-class cricket being organised on communal and racial lines. The teams that played colonial India's greatest and most famous first-class cricket tournament did not represent regions, as teams in today's Ranji Trophy currently do, but religious communities. The tournament was initially called the Quadrangular, because it was played by four teams: the Europeans, the Parsis, the Hindus and the Muslims. It later became the Pentangular when a fifth team was added, namely, the Rest, which comprised all the communities left over, such as the Indian Christians. For example, Vijay Hazare, a Christian, played for the Rest.

By the late 1930s and early 1940s, journalists, cricketers and political leaders had begun to criticize the racial and communal foundations of the Pentangular tournament. The distinguished editor of the newspaper the *Bombay Chronicle,* S.A. Brelvi, the famous radio commentator A.F.S. Talyarkhan and India's most respected political figure, Mahatma Gandhi, condemned the Pentangular as a communally divisive competition that was out of place in a time when nationalists were trying to unite India's diverse population. A rival first-class tournament on regional lines, the National Cricket Championship (later named the Ranji Trophy), was established but not until Independence did it properly replace the Pentangular. The colonial state and its divisive conception of India was the rock on which the Pentangular was built. It was a *colonial* tournament and it died with the Raj.

Box 1

Caste and cricket

Palwankar Baloo was born in Poona in 1875. Born at a time when Indians weren't allowed to play Test cricket, he was the greatest Indian slow bowler of his time. He played for the Hindus in the Quadrangular, the major cricket tournament of the colonial period. Despite being their greatest player he was never made captain of the Hindus because he was born a Dalit and upper-caste selectors discriminated against him. But his younger brother, Vithal, a batsman did become captain of the Hindus in 1923 and led the team to a famous victory against the Europeans. Writing to a newspaper a cricket fan made a connection between the Hindus' victory and Gandhiji's war on 'untouchability':

'The Hindus' brilliant victory was due more to the judicious and bold step of the Hindu Gymkhana in appointing Mr Vithal, brother of Mr Baloo – premier bowler of India – who is a member of the Untouchable Class to captain the Hindu team. The moral that can be safely drawn from the Hindus' magnificent victory is that removal of Untouchability would lead to swaraj – which is the prophecy of the Mahatma.'

A Corner of a Foreign Field by Ramachandra Guha.



Fig. 14 – Palwankar Baloo (1904).
A Dalit, Baloo's enormous cricketing talent made sure that he could not be kept out of the team, but he was never allowed to take over as captain.

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3 The Modern Transformation of the Game

Modern cricket is dominated by Tests and one-day internationals, played between national teams. The players who become famous, who live on in the memories of cricket's public, are those who have played for their country. The players Indian fans remember from the era of the Pentangular and the Quadrangular are those who were fortunate enough to play Test cricket. C.K. Nayudu, an outstanding Indian batsman of his time, lives on in the popular imagination when some of his great contemporaries like Palwankar Vithal and Palwankar Baloo have been forgotten because his career lasted long enough for him to play Test cricket for India while theirs did not. Even though Nayudu was past his

Source C

Mahatma Gandhi and colonial sport

Mahatma Gandhi believed that sport was essential for creating a balance between the body and the mind. However, he often emphasised that games like cricket and hockey were imported into India by the British and were replacing traditional games. Such games as cricket, hockey, football and tennis were for the privileged, he believed. They showed a colonial mindset and were a less effective education than the simple exercise of those who worked on the land.

Read the following three extracts from Mahatma Gandhi's writing and contrast them to the ideas on education and sport expressed by Thomas Arnold or Hughes (Source A).

'Now let us examine our body. Are we supposed to cultivate the body by playing tennis, football or cricket for an hour every day? It does, certainly, build up the body. Like a wild horse, however, the body will be strong but not trained. A trained body is healthy, vigorous and sinewy. The hands and feet can do any desired work. A pickaxe, a shovel, a hammer, etc. are like ornaments to a trained hand and it can wield them … A well-trained body does not get tired in trudging 30 miles …. Does the student acquire such physical culture? We can assert that modern curricula do not impart physical education in this sense.'

'What Is Education', 26 February 1926, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi,* Vol. 34.

'I should, however, be exceedingly surprised and even painfully surprised, if I were told that before cricket and football descended upon your sacred soil, your boys were devoid of all games. If you have national games, I would urge upon you that yours is an institution that should lead in reviving old games. I know that we have in India many noble indigenous games just as interesting and exciting as cricket or football, also as much attended with risks as football is, but with the added advantage that they are inexpensive, because the cost is practically next to nothing'

Speech at Mahindra College, 24 November 1927, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.*

'A sound body means one which bends itself to the spirit and is always a ready instrument at its service. Such bodies are not made, in my opinion, on the football field. They are made on cornfields and farms. I would urge you to think this over and you will find innumerable illustrations to prove my statement. Our colonial-born Indians are carried away with this football and cricket mania. These games may have their place under certain circumstances …. Why do we not take the simple fact into consideration that the vast majority of mankind who are vigorous in body and mind are simple agriculturists, that they are strangers to these games, and they are the salt of the earth?'

Letter to Lazarus, 17 April 1915, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi,* Vol. 14.

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cricketing prime when he played for India in its first Test matches against England starting in 1932, his place in India's cricket history is assured because he was the country's first Test captain.

India entered the world of Test cricket in 1932, a decade and a half before it became an independent nation. This was possible because Test cricket from its origins in 1877 was organised as a contest between different parts of the British empire, not sovereign nations. The first Test was played between England and Australia when Australia was still a white settler colony, not even a self-governing dominion. Similarly, the small countries of the Caribbean that together make up the West Indies team were British colonies till well after the Second World War.

3.1 Decolonisation and Sport

Decolonisation, or the process through which different parts of European empires became independent nations, began with the independence of India in 1947 and continued for the next half a century. This process led to the decline of British influence in trade, commerce, military affairs, international politics and, inevitably, sporting matters. But this did not happen at once; it took a while for the relative unimportance of post-imperial Britain to be reflected in the organisation of world cricket.

Even after Indian independence kick-started the disappearance of the British empire, the regulation of international cricket remained the business of the *Imperial* Cricket Conference ICC. The ICC, renamed the International Cricket Conference as late as 1965, was dominated by its foundation members, England and Australia, which retained the right of veto over its proceedings. Not till 1989 was the privileged position of England and Australia scrapped in favour of equal membership.

The colonial flavour of world cricket during the 1950s and 1960s can be seen from the fact that England and the other white commonwealth countries, Australia and New Zealand, continued to play Test cricket with South Africa, a racist state that practised a policy of racial **segregation** which, among other things, barred non-whites (who made up the majority of South Africa's population) from representing that country in Test matches. Test-playing nations like India, Pakistan and the West Indies boycotted South Africa, but they did not have the necessary power in the ICC to debar that country from Test cricket. That only came to pass when the political pressure to isolate South Africa applied by the newly decolonised nations of Asia and Africa combined with liberal feeling in Britain and forced the English cricket authorities to cancel a tour by South Africa in 1970.

New words

Segregation – Separation (of people) on the basis of colour or race

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4 Commerce, Media and Cricket Today

The 1970s were the decade in which cricket was transformed: it was a time when a traditional game evolved to fit a changing world. If 1970 was notable for the exclusion of South Africa from international cricket, 1971 was a landmark year because the first one-day international was played between England and Australia in Melbourne. The enormous popularity of this shortened version of the game led to the first World Cup being successfully staged in 1975. Then in 1977, even as cricket celebrated 100 years of Test matches, the game was changed forever, not by a player or cricket administrator, but by a businessman.

Kerry Packer, an Australian television tycoon who saw the money-making potential of cricket as a televised sport, signed up fifty-one of the world's leading cricketers against the wishes of the national cricket boards and for about two years staged unofficial Tests and One-Day internationals under the name of World Series Cricket. While Packer's 'circus' as it was then described folded up after two years, the innovations he introduced during this time to make cricket more attractive to television audiences endured and changed the nature of the game.

Coloured dress, protective helmets, field restrictions, cricket under lights, became a standard part of the post-Packer game. Crucially, Packer drove home the lesson that cricket was a marketable game, which could generate huge revenues. Cricket boards became rich by selling television rights to television companies. Television channels made money by selling television spots to companies who were happy to pay large sums of money to air commercials for their products to cricket's captive television audience. Continuous television coverage made cricketers celebrities who, besides being paid better by their cricket boards, now made even larger sums of money by making commercials for a wide range of products, from tyres to colas, on television.

Television coverage changed cricket. It expanded the audience for the game by beaming cricket into small towns and villages. It also broadened cricket's social base. Children who had never previously had the chance to watch international cricket because they lived outside the big cities, where top-level cricket was played, could now watch and learn by imitating their heroes.

The technology of satellite television and the world wide reach of multi-national television companies created a global market for cricket.

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Matches in Sydney could now be watched live in Surat. This simple fact shifted the balance of power in cricket: a process that had been begun by the break-up of the British Empire was taken to its logical conclusion by globalisation. Since India had the largest viewership for the game amongst the cricket-playing nations and the largest market in the cricketing world, the game's centre of gravity shifted to South Asia. This shift was symbolized by the shifting of the ICC headquarters from London to tax-free Dubai.

A more important sign that the centre of gravity in cricket has shifted away from the old, Anglo-Australian axis is that innovations in cricket technique in recent years have mainly come from the practice of sub-continental teams in countries like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Pakistan has pioneered two great advances in bowling: the *doosra* and the 'reverse swing'. Both skills were developed in response to sub-continental conditions: the doosra to counter aggressive batsmen with heavy modern bats who were threatening to make finger-spin **obsolete** and 'reverse swing' to move the ball in on dusty, unresponsive wickets under clear skies. Initially, both innovations were greeted with great suspicion by countries like Britain and Australia which saw them as an underhanded, illegal bending of the laws of cricket. In time, it came to be accepted that the laws of cricket could not continue to be framed for British or Australian conditions of play, and they became part of the technique of all bowlers, everywhere in the world.

One hundred and fifty years ago the first Indian cricketers, the Parsis, had to struggle to find an open space to play in. Today, the global marketplace has made Indian players the best-paid, most famous cricketers in the game, men for whom the world is a stage. The history that brought about this transformation was made up of many smaller changes: the replacement of the gentlemanly amateur by the paid professional, the triumph of the one-day game as it overshadowed Test cricket in terms of popularity, and the remarkable changes in global commerce and technology. The business of history is to make sense of change over time. In this chapter we have followed the spread of a colonial sport through its history, and tried to understand how it adapted to a post-colonial world.

New Words

Obsolete – No longer in use

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Box 2

Hockey

Modern hockey evolved from traditional games once current in Britain. Amongst its sporting ancestors, hockey can count the Scottish game called shinty, the English and Welsh game called bandy and Irish hurling.

Hockey, like many other modern games, was introduced into India by the British army in colonial times. The first hockey club in India was started in Calcutta in 1885-1886. India was represented in the hockey competition of the Olympic Games for the first time in 1928. India reached the finals defeating Austria, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland. In the finals, India defeated Holland by three goals to nil.

The brilliance and skill of players like the great Dhyan Chand brought India a string of Olympic gold medals. Between 1928 and 1956, India won gold medals in six consecutive Olympic Games. During this golden age of Indian dominance, India played 24 Olympic matches, and won them all, scored 178 goals (at an average of 7.43 goals per match) and conceded only seven goals. The two other gold medals for India came in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

Box 3

Polo

Polo was greatly favoured as a game suitable for military and athletic young men. Following one of the earliest games in England, a report in the *Illustrated London News* declared:

'As an exercise … for military men this bold and graceful sport is likely to give increased dexterity in the use of the lance or sabre, or other cavalry weapons, as well as a firmer seat in the saddle, and a faculty of quickly turning to the right hand or to the left, which must be effective in the melee of battle.'

From: *Illustrated London News*, 1872.

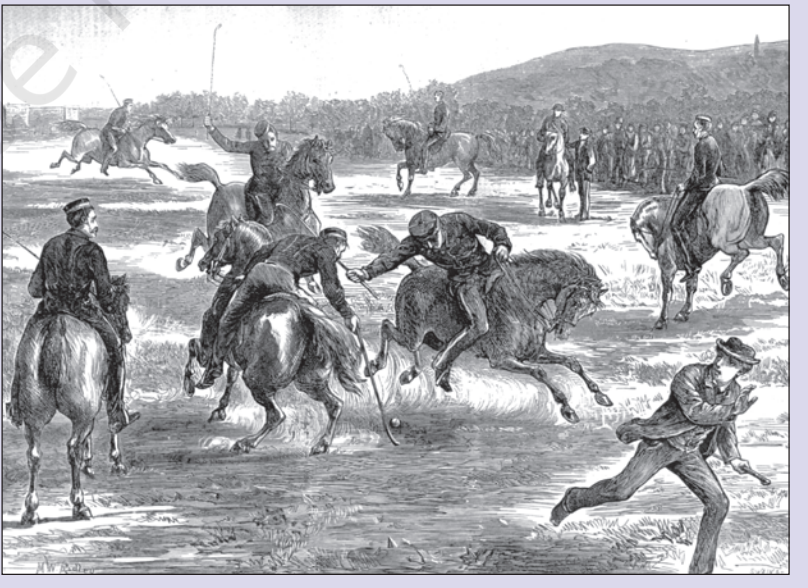


Fig. 15 – Polo Travels West
(From: Illustrated London News, 20 July 1872)
Polo is a Central Asian game that came to India and was taken west by colonial officials. Sultan Qutubuddin Aibak died in 1210 A.D. when he slipped from his horse playing polo.

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Activities

1. Imagine a conversation between Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School, and Mahatma Gandhi on the value of cricket in education. What would each say? Write out a conversation in the form of a dialogue.
2. Find out the history of any one local sport. Ask your parents and grandparents how this game was played in their childhood. See whether it is played in the same way now. Try and think of the historical forces that might account for the changes.

Activities

Questions

1. Test cricket is a unique game in many ways. Discuss some of the ways in which it is different from other team games. How are the peculiarities of Test cricket shaped by its historical beginnings as a village game?
2. Describe one way in which in the nineteenth century, technology brought about a change in equipment and give one example where no change in equipment took place.
3. Explain why cricket became popular in India and the West Indies. Can you give reasons why it did not become popular in countries in South America?
4. Give brief explanations for the following:
   - The Parsis were the first Indian community to set up a cricket club in India.
   - Mahatma Gandhi condemned the Pentangular tournament.
   - The name of the ICC was changed from the *Imperial* Cricket Conference to the *International* Cricket Conference.
   - The shift of the ICC headquarters from London to Dubai
5. How have advances in technology, especially television technology, affected the development of contemporary cricket?

?

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Clothing: A Social History

It is easy to forget that there is a history to the clothes we wear. All societies observe certain rules, some of them quite strict, about the way in which men, women and children should dress, or how different social classes and groups should present themselves. These norms come to define the identity of people, the way they see themselves, the way they want others to see them. They shape our notions of grace and beauty, ideas of modesty and shame. As times change and societies are transformed, these notions also alter. Modifications in clothing come to reflect these changes.

The emergence of the modern world is marked by dramatic changes in clothing. In this chapter, we will look at some of the histories of clothing in the modern period, that is in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Why are these two centuries important?

Before the age of democratic revolutions and the development of capitalist markets in eighteenth-century Europe, most people dressed according to their regional codes, and were limited by the types of clothes and the cost of materials that were available in their region. Clothing styles were also strictly regulated by class, gender or status in the social hierarchy.

After the eighteenth century, the colonisation of most of the world by Europe, the spread of democratic ideals and the growth of an industrial society, completely changed the ways in which people thought about dress and its meanings. People could use styles and materials that were drawn from other cultures and locations, and western dress styles for men were adopted worldwide.

In Chapter I you have seen how the French Revolution transformed many aspects of social and political life. The revolution also swept away existing dress codes, known as the sumptuary laws. Let us look briefly at what these laws were.

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1 Sumptuary Laws and Social Hierarchy

In medieval Europe, dress codes were sometimes imposed upon members of different layers of society through actual laws which were spelt out in some detail. From about 1294 to the time of the French Revolution in 1789, the people of France were expected to strictly follow what were known as 'sumptuary laws.' The laws tried to control the behaviour of those considered social inferiors, preventing them from wearing certain clothes, consuming certain foods and beverages (usually this referred to alcohol) and hunting game in certain areas. In medieval France, the items of clothing a person could purchase per year was regulated, not only by income but also by social rank. The material to be used for clothing was also legally prescribed. Only royalty could wear expensive materials like **ermine** and fur, or silk, velvet and brocade. Other classes were debarred from clothing themselves with materials that were associated with the aristocracy.

The French Revolution ended these distinctions. As you know from Chapter I, members of the Jacobin clubs even called themselves the 'sans culottes' to distinguish themselves from the aristocracy who wore the fashionable 'knee breeches'. Sans culottes literally meant those 'without knee breeches'. From now on, both men and women began wearing clothing that was loose and comfortable. The colours of France – blue, white and red – became popular as they were a sign of the patriotic citizen. Other political symbols too became a part of dress: the red cap of liberty, long trousers and the revolutionary **cockade** pinned on to a hat. The simplicity of clothing was meant to express the idea of equality.



***Fig. 1** – An upper-class couple in eighteenth-century England. Painting by the English artist Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788)*

New words

Cockade – Cap, usually worn on one side.
Ermine – Type of fur.

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Fig.3 – Woman of the middle classes, 1791.



Fig.2 – An aristocratic couple on the eve of the French Revolution. Notice the sumptuous clothing, the elaborate headgear, and the lace edgings on the dress the lady is wearing. She also has a ***corset*** *inside the dress. This was meant to confine and shape her waist so that she appeared narrow waisted. The nobleman, as was the custom of the time, is wearing a long soldier's coat, knee breeches, silk stockings and high heeled shoes. Both of them have elaborate wigs and both have their faces painted a delicate shade of pink, for the display of natural skin was considered uncultured.*



Fig.4 – Volunteers during the French Revolution.



Fig.5 – A sans-culottes family, 1793.

Box 1

Not all sumptuary laws were meant to emphasise social hierarchy. Some sumptuary laws were passed to protect home production against imports. For instance, in sixteenth-century England, velvet caps made with material imported from France and Italy were popular amongst men. England passed a law which compelled all persons over six years of age, except those of high position, to wear woollen caps made in England, on Sundays and all holy days. This law remained in effect for twenty-six years and was very useful in building up the English woollen industry.

Activity

Look at Figures 2 - 5. Write 150 words on what the differences in the pictures tell us about the society and culture in France at the time of the Revolution.

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2 Clothing and Notions of Beauty

The end of sumptuary laws did not mean that everyone in European societies could now dress in the same way. The French Revolution had raised the question of equality and ended aristocratic privileges, as well as the laws that maintained those privileges. However, differences between social strata remained. Clearly, the poor could not dress like the rich, nor eat the same food. But laws no longer barred people's right to dress in the way they wished. Differences in earning, rather than sumptuary laws, now defined what the rich and poor could wear. And different classes developed their own culture of dress. The notion of what was beautiful or ugly, proper or improper, decent or vulgar, differed.

Styles of clothing also emphasised differences between men and women. Women in Victorian England were groomed from childhood to be docile and dutiful, submissive and obedient. The ideal woman was one who could bear pain and suffering. While men were expected to be serious, strong, independent and aggressive, women were seen as frivolous, delicate, passive and docile. Norms of clothing reflected these ideals. From childhood, girls were tightly laced up and dressed in **stays**. The effort was to restrict the growth of their bodies, contain them within small moulds. When slightly older, girls had to wear tight fitting **corsets**. Tightly laced, small-waisted women were admired as attractive, elegant and graceful. Clothing thus played a part in creating the image of frail, submissive Victorian women.



*Fig.6 – **Scene at an upper-class wedding** by the English painter William Hogarth (1697-1764)*

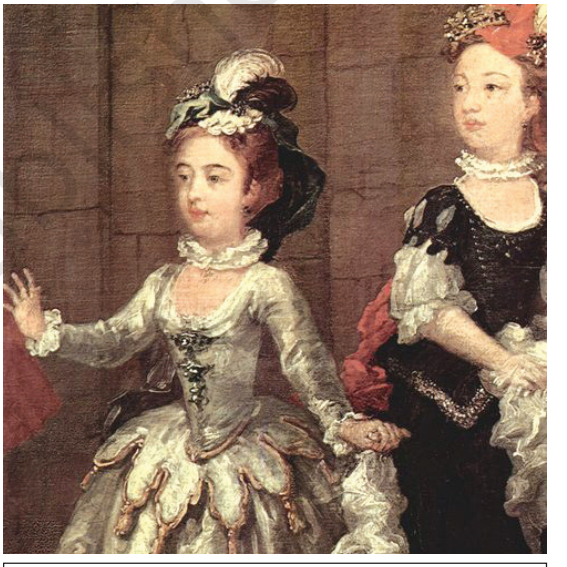


*Fig.7 – **A child in an aristocratic household** by the English painter William Hogarth (1697-1764). Notice the tiny waist even at this age, probably held in by a corset, and the sweeping gown which would restrict her movement.*

2.1 How Did Women React to These Norms?

Many women believed in the ideals of womanhood. The ideals were in the air they breathed, the literature they read, the education they had received at school and at home. From childhood they grew up to believe that having a small waist was a womanly duty. Suffering pain was essential to being a woman. To be seen as attractive, to be womanly, they had to wear the corset. The torture and pain this inflicted on the body was to be accepted as normal.

But not everyone accepted these values. Over the nineteenth century, ideas changed. By the 1830s, women in England began agitating for democratic rights. As the **suffrage** movement developed, many began campaigning for dress reform. Women's magazines described how tight dresses and corsets caused deformities and illness among young

New words

Stays – Support as part of a woman's dress to hold the body straight

Corset – A closely fitting and stiff inner bodice, worn by women to give shape and support to the figure.

Suffrage – The right to vote. The suffragettes wanted the right for women to vote.

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girls. Such clothing restricted body growth and hampered blood circulation. Muscles remained underdeveloped and the spines got bent. Doctors reported that many women were regularly complaining of acute weakness, felt languid, and fainted frequently. Corsets then became necessary to hold up the weakened spine.

Source A

Mary Somerville, one of the first woman mathematicians, describes in her memoirs the experience of her childhood days:

'Although perfectly straight and well made, I was encased in stiff stays, with a steel **busk** in front, while above my frock, bands drew my shoulder back until the shoulder blades met. Then a steel rod with a semi-circle, which went under my chin, was clasped to the steel busk in my stays. In this constrained state, I and most of the younger girls had to prepare our lessons.'

From Martha Somerville, ed., *Personal Recollections from Early Life to Old Age of Mary Somerville*, London 1873.

Activity

Read Sources A and B. What do they tell you about the ideas of clothing in Victorian society? If you were the principal in Mary Somerville's school how would you have justified the clothing practices?

Source B

Many government officials of the time were alarmed at the health implications of the prevailing styles of dressing amongst women. Consider the following attack on the corset:

'It is evident physiologically that air is the **pabulum** of life, and that the effect of a tight cord round the neck and of tight lacing differ only in degrees … for the strangulations are both fatal. To wear tight stays in many cases is to wither, to waste, to die.'

The Registrar General in the *Ninth Annual Report* of 1857.

Source C

Do you know how the famous English poet John Keats (1795 – 1821) described his ideal woman? He said she was 'like a milk-white lamb that bleats for man's protection'.

In his novel *Vanity Fair* (1848), Thackeray described the charm of a woman character, Amelia, in these words:

'I think it was her weakness which was her principal charm, a kind of sweet submission and softness, which seemed to appeal to each man she met, for his sympathy and protection.'

Activity

In what ways do you think these notions of weakness and dependence came to be reflected in women's clothing?

New words

Busk – A strip of wood, whalebone or steel in front of the corset to stiffen and support it

Pabulum – Anything essential to maintain life and growth.

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In America, a similar movement developed amongst the white settlers on the east coast. Traditional feminine clothes were criticised on a variety of grounds. Long skirts, it was said, swept the grounds and collected filth and dirt. This caused illness. The skirts were voluminous and difficult to handle. They hampered movement and prevented women from working and earning. Reform of the dress, it was said, would change the position of women. If clothes were comfortable and convenient, then women could work, earn their living, and become independent. In the 1870s, the National Woman Suffrage Association headed by Mrs Stanton, and the American Woman Suffrage Association dominated by Lucy Stone both campaigned for dress reform. The argument was: simplify dress, shorten skirts, and abandon corsets. On both sides of the Atlantic, there was now a movement for rational dress reform.



Fig.8 – A woman in nineteenth-century USA, before the dress reforms.
Notice the flowing gown sweeping the ground. Reformers reacted to this type of clothing for women.

Box 2

The movement for Rational Dress Reform

Mrs Amelia Bloomer, an American, was the first dress reformer to launch loose tunics worn over ankle-length trousers. The trousers were known as 'bloomers', 'rationals', or 'knickerbockers'. The Rational Dress Society was started in England in 1881, but did not achieve significant results. It was the First World War that brought about radical changes in women's clothing.

The reformers did not immediately succeed in changing social values. They had to face ridicule and hostility. Conservatives everywhere opposed change. They lamented that women who gave up traditional norms of dressing no longer looked beautiful, and lost their femininty and grace. Faced with persistent attacks, many women reformers changed back into traditional clothes to conform to conventions.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, change was clearly in the air. Ideals of beauty and styles of clothing were both transformed under a variety of pressures. People began accepting the ideas of reformers they had earlier ridiculed. With new times came new values.

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3 New Times

What were these new values? What created the pressure for change?

Many changes were made possible in Britain due to the introduction of new materials and technologies. Other changes came about because of the two world wars and the new working conditions for women. Let us retrace our steps a few centuries to see what these changes were.

3.1 New Materials

Before the seventeenth century, most ordinary women in Britain possessed very few clothes made of flax, linen or wool, which were difficult to clean. After 1600, trade with India brought cheap, beautiful and easy-to-maintain Indian **chintzes** within the reach of many Europeans who could now increase the size of their wardrobes.

Then, during the Industrial Revolution, in the nineteenth century, Britain began the mass manufacture of cotton textiles which it exported to many parts of the world, including India. Cotton clothes became more accessible to a wider section of people in Europe. By the early twentieth century, artificial fibres made clothes cheaper still and easier to wash and maintain.

In the late 1870s, heavy, restrictive underclothes, which had created such a storm in the pages of women's magazines, were gradually discarded. Clothes got lighter, shorter and simpler.

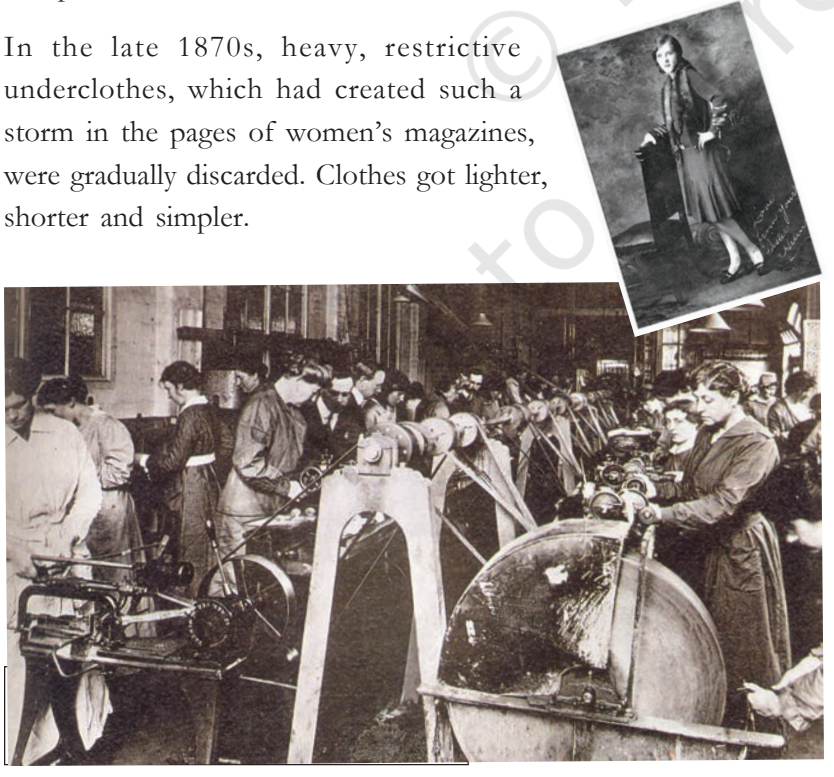


Fig.9 – Changes in clothing in the early twentieth century.

Fig.9a *– Even for middle- and upper-class women, clothing styles changed. Skirts became shorter and frills were done away with.*

Fig.9b *– Women working at a British ammunition factory during the First World War. At this time thousands of women came out to work as war production created a demand for increased labour. The need for easy movement changed clothing styles.*

New words

Chintz – Cotton cloth printed with designs and flowers. From the Hindi word *chint*.

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Yet until 1914, clothes were ankle length, as they had been since the thirteenth century. By 1915, however, the hemline of the skirt rose dramatically to mid-calf.

Why this sudden change?

3.2 The War

Changes in women's clothing came about as a result of the two World wars.

Many European women stopped wearing jewellery and luxurious clothes. As upper-class women mixed with other classes, social barriers were eroded and women began to dress in similar ways.

Clothes got shorter during the First World War (1914-1918) out of practical necessity. By 1917, over 700,000 women in Britain were employed in ammunition factories. They wore a working uniform of blouse and trousers with accessories such as scarves, which was later replaced by khaki overalls and caps. Bright colours faded from sight and only sober colours were worn as the war dragged on. Thus clothes became plainer and simpler. Skirts became shorter. Soon trousers became a vital part of Western women's clothing, giving them greater freedom of movement. Most important, women took to cutting their hair short for convenience.

By the twentieth century, a plain and austere style came to reflect seriousness and professionalism. New schools for children emphasised the importance of plain dressing, and discouraged ornamentation. Gymnastics and games entered the school curriculum for women. As women took to sports, they had to wear clothes that did not hamper movement. When they went out to work they needed clothes that were comfortable and convenient.

So we see that the history of clothing is linked to the larger history of society. We saw how clothing was defined by dominant cultural attitudes and ideals of beauty, and how these notions changed over time. We saw how reformers and conservatives struggled to shape these ideals, and how changes within technology and economy, and the pressures of new times made people feel the need for change.

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4 Transformations in Colonial India

What about India in this same period?

During the colonial period there were significant changes in male and female clothing in India. On the one hand this was a consequence of the influence of Western dress forms and missionary activity; on the other it was due to the effort by Indians to fashion clothing styles that embodied an indigenous tradition and culture. Cloth and clothing in fact became very important symbols of the national movement. A brief look at the nineteenth century changes will tell us a great deal about the transformations of the twentieth century.

When western-style clothing came into India in the nineteenth century, Indians reacted in three different ways:

One. Many, especially men, began incorporating some elements of western-style clothing in their dress. The wealthy Parsis of western India were among the first to adapt Western-style clothing. Baggy trousers and the *phenta* (or hat) were added to long collarless coats, with boots and a walking stick to complete the look of the gentleman. To some, Western clothes were a sign of modernity and progress.

Western-style clothing was also especially attractive to some sections of society who now found it liberating. Here too, it was men rather than women who affected the new dress styles.

Two. There were others who were convinced that western culture would lead to a loss of traditional cultural identity. The use of Western-style clothes was taken as a sign of the world turning upside down. The cartoon of the Bengali Babu shown here, mocks him for wearing Western-style boots and hat and coat along with his dhoti.

Three. Some men resolved this dilemma by wearing Western clothes without giving up their Indian ones. Many Bengali bureaucrats in the late nineteenth century began stocking western-style clothes for work outside the home and changed into more comfortable Indian clothes at home. Early- twentieth-century anthropologist Verrier Elwin remembered that policemen in Poona who were going off duty would take their



Fig. 10 – Parsis in Bombay, 1863.



Fig. 11 – Converts to Christianity in Goa in 1907, who have adopted Western dress.



Fig. 12 – Cartoon, 'The Modern Patriot', by Gaganendranath Tagore, early twentieth century. *A sarcastic picture of a foolish man who copies western dress but claims to love his motherland with all his heart. The pot-bellied man with cigarette and Western clothes was ridiculed in many cartoons of the time.*



Fig. 13 – Cartoon from* Indian Charivari, *1873.

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trousers off in the street and walk home in 'just tunic and undergarments'. This difference between outer and inner worlds is still observed by some men today.

Still others tried a slightly different solution to the same dilemma. They attempted to combine Western and Indian forms of dressing.

These changes in clothing, however, had a turbulent history.

4.1 Caste Conflict and Dress Change

Though there were no formal sumptuary laws as in Europe, India had its own strict social codes of food and dress. The caste system clearly defined what subordinate and dominant caste Hindus should wear, eat, etc., and these codes had the force of law. Changes in clothing styles that threatened these norms therefore often created violent social reactions.

In May 1822, women of the Shanar caste were attacked by Nairs in public places in the southern princely state of Travancore, for wearing a cloth across their upper bodies. Over subsequent decades, a violent conflict over dress codes ensued.

The Shanars (later known as Nadars), many of whom were considered a 'subordinate caste' and so were generally prohibited from using umbrellas and wearing shoes or golden ornaments. Men and women were also expected to follow the local custom of never covering their upper bodies before the dominant castes.

The term Nadar came to be used for all Shanars by the time of the 1921 census.

Under the influence of Christian missionaries, Shanar women converts began in the 1820s to wear tailored blouses and cloths to cover themselves like the dominant castes. Hindu reformers such as Ayya Vaikunder also participated in dress reform. Soon Nairs, one of the dominant castes of the region, attacked these women in public places and tore off their upper cloths. Complaints were also filed in court against this dress change, especially since Shanars were also refusing to render free labour for the dominant castes.

At first, the Government of Travancore issued a proclamation in 1829 ordering Shanar women 'to abstain in future from covering the upper parts of the body.' But this did not prevent Shanar Christian women, and even Shanar Hindus, from adopting the blouse and upper cloth.

The abolition of slavery in Travancore in 1855 led to even more frustration among the dominant castes who felt they were losing control. In October 1859, riots broke out as Shanar women were attacked in

Activity

Try and find out more about reformers of the time, such as Ayya Vaikunder, who were engaged in dress and wider social reforms.

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the marketplace and stripped of their upper cloths. Houses were looted and chapels burned. Finally, the government issued another proclamation permitting Shanar women, whether Christian or Hindu, to wear a jacket, or cover their upper bodies 'in any manner whatever, *but not like the women of high caste*'.

4.2 British Rule and Dress Codes

How did the British react to Indian ways of dressing? How did Indians react to British attitudes?

In different cultures, specific items of clothing often convey contrary meanings. This frequently leads to misunderstanding and conflict. Styles of clothing in British India changed through such conflicts.

Consider the case of the turban and the hat. When European traders first began frequenting India, they were distinguished from the Indian 'turban wearers' as the 'hat wearers.' These two headgears not only looked different, they also signified different things. The turban in India was not just for protection from the heat but was a sign of respectability, and could not be removed at will. In the Western tradition, the hat had to be removed before social superiors as a sign of respect. This cultural difference created misunderstanding. The British were often offended if Indians did not take off their turban when they met colonial officials. Many Indians on the other hand wore the turban to consciously assert their regional or national identity.

Another such conflict related to the wearing of shoes. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was customary for British officials to follow Indian etiquette and remove their footwear in the courts of ruling kings or chiefs. Some British officials also wore Indian clothes. But in 1830, Europeans were forbidden from wearing Indian clothes at official functions, so that the cultural identity of the white masters was not undermined.

Box 3

The turban on the head

The Mysore turban, called *peta*, was edged with gold lace, and adopted as part of the Durbar dress of the Mysore court in the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, a wide variety of officials, teachers and artists in Mysore began wearing the turban, sometimes with the Western suit, as a sign of belonging to the princely state. Today, the Mysore turban is used largely on ceremonial occasions and to honour visiting dignitaries.



***Fig. 14** – Europeans bringing gifts to Shah Jehan, Agra, 1633, from the* Padshahnama. *Notice the European visitors' hats at the bottom of the picture, creating a contrast with the turbans of the courtiers.*



***Fig. 15** – Sir M. Visveswaraya. A leading engineer-technocrat and the Dewan of Mysore state from 1912 to 1918. He wore a turban with his three-piece Western style suit.*

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At the same time, Indians were expected to wear Indian clothes to office and follow Indian dress codes. In 1824 - 1828, Governor-General Amherst insisted that Indians take their shoes off as a sign of respect when they appeared before him, but this was not strictly followed. By the mid-nineteenth century, when Lord Dalhousie was Governor- General, 'shoe respect' was made stricter, and Indians were made to take off their shoes when entering any government institution; only those who wore European clothes were exempted from this rule. Many Indian government servants were increasingly uncomfortable with these rules.

In 1862, there was a famous case of defiance of the 'shoe respect' rule in a Surat courtroom. Manockjee Cowasjee Entee, an assessor in the Surat Fouzdaree Adawlut, refused to take off his shoes in the court of the sessions judge. The judge insisted that he take off his shoes as that was the Indian way of showing respect to superiors. But Manockjee remained adamant. He was barred entry into the courtroom and he sent a letter of protest to the governor of Bombay.

The British insisted that since Indians took off their shoes when they entered a sacred place or home, they should do so when they entered the courtroom. In the controversy that followed, Indians urged that taking off shoes in sacred places and at home was linked to two different questions. One: there was the problem of dirt and filth. Shoes collected the dirt on the road. This dirt could not be allowed into spaces that were clean, particularly when people in Indian homes sat on the ground. Second, leather shoes and the filth that stuck under it were seen as polluting. But public buildings like the courtroom were different from home.

But it took many years before shoes were permitted into the courtroom.

Source D

When asked to take off his shoes at the Surat Fouzdaree Adawlut at Surat in 1862, Manockjee told the judge that he was willing to take off even his turban but not his shoes. He said:

'Taking off my pugree would have been a greater insult to myself than to the court, but I would have submitted to it, because there is nothing of conscience, or religion involved in it. I hold no respect or disrespect, embodied or disembodied in the shoes, but the putting on of our turban is the greatest of all respects that we pay. We do not have our pugrees on when at home, but when we go out to see respectable persons we are bound by social etiquette to have it on whilst we [Parsees] in our social intercourse never ever take off our shoes before any Parsee however great …'

Activity

Imagine yourself to be a Muslim pleader in the Allahabad high court in the late nineteenth century. What kind of clothes would you wear? Would they be very different from what you wore at home?

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5 Designing the National Dress

As nationalist feelings swept across India by the late nineteenth century, Indians began devising cultural symbols that would express the unity of the nation. Artists looked for a national style of art. Poets wrote national songs. Then a debate began over the design of the national flag. The search for a national dress was part of this move to define the cultural identity of the nation in symbolic ways.

Self-conscious experiments with dress engaged men and women of the upper classes and castes in many parts of India. The Tagore family of Bengal experimented, beginning in the 1870s, with designs for a national dress for both men and women in India. Rabindranath Tagore suggested that instead of combining Indian and European dress, India's national dress should combine elements of Hindu and Muslim dress. Thus the *chapkan* (a long buttoned coat) was considered the most suitable dress for men.

There were also attempts to develop a dress style that would draw on the tradition of different regions. In the late 1870s, Jnanadanandini Devi, wife of Satyendranath Tagore, the first Indian member of the ICS, returned from Bombay to Calcutta. She adopted the Parsi style of wearing the sari pinned to the left shoulder with a brooch, and worn with a blouse and shoes. This was quickly adopted by Brahmo Samaji women and came to be known as the Brahmika sari. This style gained acceptance before long among Maharashtrian and Uttar Pradesh Brahmos, as well as non-Brahmos.



***Fig.17** – Jnanadanandini Tagore (on the left) with her husband Satyendranath Tagore and other family members. She is wearing a Brahmika sari with a blouse modelled on a Western gown.* (Courtesy: Rabindra Bhawan Photo Archives, Visva Bharati University, Shantiniketan)



***Fig.18** – Sarala daughter of RC Dutt. Note the Parsi-bordered sari with the high collared and sleeved velvet blouse showing how clothing styles flowed across regions and cultures.*



Fig. 16 – Lady Bachoobai (1890), a well-known Parsi social activist.
She is wearing a silk gara *embroidered with swans and peonies, a common English flower.*
(courtesy: Parsi Zoroastrian Project, New Delhi.)

New words

Brahmo – Those belonging to the Brahmo Samaj

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However, these attempts at devising a pan-Indian style did not fully succeed. Women of Gujarat, Kodagu, Kerala and Assam continue to wear different types of sari.

Source E

Some people supported the attempt to change women's clothing, others opposed it.

'Any civilised nation is against the kind of clothing in use in the present time among women of our country. Indeed it is a sign of shamelessness. Educated men have been greatly agitated about it, almost everyone wishes for another kind of civilised clothing … there is a custom here of women wearing fine and transparent clothing which reveals the whole body. Such shameless attire in no way allows one to frequent civilised company … such clothes can stand in the way of our moral improvement.'

Soudamini Khastagiri, *Striloker Paricchad* (1872)



Fig. 19 – Maharani of Travancore (1930). *Note the Western shoes and the modest long-sleeved blouse. This style had become common among the upper classes by the early twentieth century.*

Source F

C. Kesavan's autobiography *Jeevita Samaram* recalls his mother-in-law's first encounter with a blouse gifted by her sister-in-law in the late nineteenth century:

'It looked good, but I felt ticklish wearing it. I took it off, folded it carefully and brimming with enthusiasm, showed it to my mother. She gave me a stern look and said "Where are you going to gallivant in this? Fold it and keep it in the box." … I was scared of my mother. She could kill me. At night I wore the blouse and showed it to my husband. He said it looked good … [the next morning] I came out wearing the blouse … I didn't notice my mother coming. Suddenly I heard her break a piece from a coconut branch. When I turned round, she was behind me fierce and furious … she said "Take it off … you want to walk around in shirts like Muslim women?"'

Activity

These two quotations (Sources E and F), from about the same period are from two different regions of India, Kerala and Bengal. What do they tell you about the very different notions of shame regarding women's attire?

5.1 The Swadeshi Movement

You have read about the Swadeshi movement in Bengal in the first decade of the twentieth century. If you reflect back on the movement you will realize that it was centrally linked to the politics of clothing.

What was this politics?

You know that the British first came to trade in Indian textiles that were in great demand all over the world. India accounted for one-fourth of the world's manufactured goods in the seventeenth century. There were a million weavers in Bengal alone in the middle of the

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eighteenth century. However, the Industrial Revolution in Britain, which mechanised spinning and weaving and greatly increased the demand for raw materials such as cotton and indigo, changed India's status in the world economy.

Political control of India helped the British in two ways: Indian peasants could be forced to grow crops such as indigo, and cheap British manufacture easily replaced coarser Indian one. Large numbers of Indian weavers and spinners were left without work, and important textile weaving centres such as Murshidabad, Machilipatnam and Surat declined as demand fell.

Yet by the middle of the twentieth century, large numbers of people began boycotting British or mill-made cloth and adopting khadi, even though it was coarser, more expensive and difficult to obtain. How did this change come about?

In 1905, Lord Curzon decided to partition Bengal to control the growing opposition to British rule. The Swadeshi movement developed in reaction to this measure. People were urged to boycott British goods of all kinds and start their own industries for the manufacture of goods such as matchboxes and cigarettes. Mass protests followed, with people vowing to cleanse themselves of colonial rule. The use of khadi was made a patriotic duty. Women were urged to throw away their silks and glass bangles and wear simple shell bangles. Rough homespun was glorified in songs and poems to popularise it.

The change of dress appealed largely to the upper castes and classes rather than to those who had to make do with less and could not afford the new products. After 15 years, many among the upper classes also returned to wearing European dress.

Though many people rallied to the cause of nationalism at this time, it was almost impossible to compete with cheap British goods that had flooded the market.

Despite its limitations, the experiment with Swadeshi gave Mahatma Gandhi important ideas about using cloth as a symbolic weapon against British rule.

Activity

If you were a poor peasant would you have willingly taken to giving up mill-made cloth?



***Fig.20** – The familiar image of Mahatma Gandhi, bare chested and at his spinning wheel.*

5.2 Mahatma Gandhi's Experiments with Clothing

The most familiar image of Mahatma Gandhi is of him seated, bare chested and in a short dhoti, at the spinning wheel. He

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made spinning on the charkha and the daily use of khadi, or coarse cloth made from homespun yarn, very powerful symbols. These were not only symbols of self-reliance but also of resistance to the use of British mill-made cloth.

Mahatma Gandhi's experiments with clothing sum up the changing attitude to dress in the Indian subcontinent. As a boy from a Gujarati Bania family, he usually wore a shirt with a dhoti or pyjama, and sometimes a coat. When he went to London to study law as a boy of 19 in 1888, he cut off the tuft on his head and dressed in a Western suit so that he would not be laughed at. On his return, he continued to wear Western suits, topped with a turban. As a lawyer in Johannesburg, South Africa in the 1890s, he still wore Western clothes.

Soon he decided that dressing 'unsuitably' was a more powerful political statement. In Durban in 1913, Gandhi first appeared in a lungi and kurta with his head shaved as a sign of mourning to protest against the shooting of Indian coal miners.

On his return to India in 1915, he decided to dress like a Kathiawadi peasant. Only in 1921 did he adopt the short dhoti, the form of dress he wore until his death. On 22 September 1921, a year after launching the non-cooperation movement, which sought swaraj in one year, he announced:



Fig.21 *– Mahatma Gandhi in his earliest known picture, aged 7.*



Fig.22 *– Mahatma Gandhi at age 14, with a friend.*



Fig.23 *– Mahatma Gandhi (seated front right) London, 1890, at the age of 21. Note the typical Western three-piece suit.*

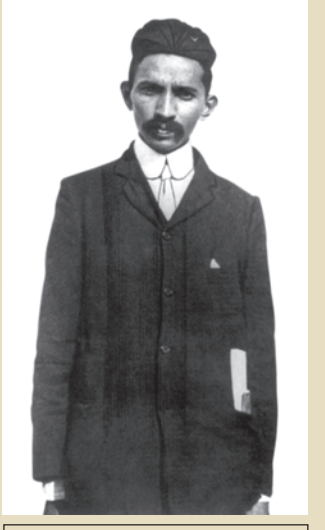


Fig.24 *– In Johannesburg in 1900, still in Western dress, including tie.*



Fig. 25 *– In 1913 in South Africa, dressed for Satyagraha*

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***Fig.26** – Mahatma Gandhi with Kasturba, shortly after his return from South Africa. Dressed simply, he later confessed to feeling awkward amongst the Westernised Bombay elite. He said that he was more at home among the labourers in South Africa.*

'I propose to discard at least up to 31st of October my topi and vest and to content myself with a loincloth, and a chaddar whenever necessary for protection of my body. I adopt the change because I have always hesitated to advise anything I may not be prepared to follow …'

At this time, he did not want to use this dress all his life and only wanted to 'experiment for a month or two'. But soon he saw this as his duty to the poor, and he never wore any other dress. He consciously rejected the well-known clothes of the Indian ascetic and adopted the dress of the poorest Indian. Khadi, white and coarse, was to him a sign of purity, of simplicity, and of poverty. Wearing it became also a symbol of nationalism, a rejection of Western mill- made cloth.

He wore the short dhoti without a shirt when he went to England for the Round Table Conference in 1931. He refused to compromise and wore it even before King George V at Buckingham Palace. When he was asked by journalists whether he was wearing enough clothes to go before the King, he joked that that 'the King had enough on for both of us'!

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5.3 Not All could Wear Khadi

Mahatma Gandhi's dream was to clothe the whole nation in khadi. He felt khadi would be a means of erasing difference between religions, classes, etc. But was it easy for others to follow in his footsteps? Was such a unity possible? Not many could take to the single peasant loincloth as he had. Nor did all want to. Here are some examples of other responses to Mahatma Gandhi's call:

- Nationalists such as Motilal Nehru, a successful barrister from Allahabad, gave up his expensive Western-style suits and adopted the Indian dhoti and kurta. But these were not made of coarse cloth.

- Those who had been deprived by caste norms for centuries were attracted to Western dress styles. Therefore, unlike Mahatma Gandhi, other nationalists such as Babasaheb Ambedkar never gave up the Western-style suit. Many Dalits began in the early 1910s to wear three-piece suits, and shoes and socks on all public occasions, as a political statement of self-respect.

- A woman who wrote to Mahatma Gandhi from Maharashtra in 1928 said, 'A year ago, I heard you speaking on the extreme necessity of every one of us wearing khadi and thereupon decided to adopt it. But we are poor people, My husband says khadi is costly. Belonging as I do to Maharashtra, I wear a sari nine yards long … (and) the elders will not hear of a reduction (to six yards).'

- Other women, like Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Nehru, wore coloured saris with designs, instead of coarse, white homespun.

Conclusion

Changes in styles of clothing are thus linked up with shifts in cultural tastes and notions of beauty, with changes within the economy and society, and with issues of social and political conflict. So when we see clothing styles alter we need to ask: why do these changes take place? What do they tell us about society and its history? What can they tell us about changes in tastes and technologies, markets and industries?

Activity

Can you think of other reasons why the use of khadi could not spread among some classes, castes and regions of India?

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Box 4

The Gandhi cap

Some time after his return to India from South Africa in 1915, Mahatma Gandhi transformed the Kashmiri cap that he sometimes used into a cheap white cotton khadi cap. For two years from 1919, he himself wore the cap, and then gave it up, but by this time it had become part of the nationalist uniform and even a symbol of defiance. For example, the Gwalior state tried to prohibit its use in 1921 during the non co-operation movement. During the Khilafat movement the cap was worn by large numbers of Hindus and Muslims. A group of Santhals who attacked the police in 1922 in Bengal demanding the release of Santhal prisoners believed that the Gandhi cap would protect them from bullets: three of them died as a result.

Large numbers of nationalists defiantly wore the Gandhi cap and were even beaten or arrested for doing so. With the rise of the Khilafat movement in the post-First World War years, the fez, a tasseled Turkish cap, became a sign of anti-colonialism in India. Though many Hindus – as in Hyderabad for instance – also wore the fez, it soon became identified solely with Muslims.



***Fig.27** – 1915. Mahatma Gandhi with a turban.*



***Fig.28** – 1915. In an embroidered Kashmiri cap.*



***Fig.29** – 1920. Wearing the Gandhi cap.*

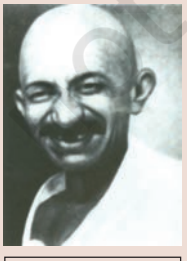


***Fig.30** – 1921. After shaving his head.*



***Fig.31** – On his visit to Europe in 1931. By now his clothes had become a powerful political statement against Western cultural domination.*

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Activities

1. Imagine you are the 14-year-old child of a trader. Write a paragraph on what you feel about the sumptuary laws in France.
2. Can you think of any expectations of proper and improper dress which exist today? Give examples of two forms of clothing which would be considered disrespectful in certain places but acceptable in others.

Activities

Questions

1. Explain the reasons for the changes in clothing patterns and materials in the eighteenth century.
2. What were the sumptuary laws in France?
3. Give any two examples of the ways in which European dress codes were different from Indian dress codes.
4. In 1805, a British official, Benjamin Heyne, listed the manufactures of Bangalore which included the following:
   - Women's cloth of different musters and names
   - Coarse chintz
   - Muslins
   - Silk cloths

   Of this list, which kind of cloth would have definitely fallen out of use in the early 1900s and why?
5. Suggest reasons why women in nineteenth century India were obliged to continue wearing traditional Indian dress even when men switched over to the more convenient Western clothing. What does this show about the position of women in society?
6. Winston Churchill described Mahatma Gandhi as a 'seditious Middle Temple Lawyer' now 'posing as a half naked fakir'.
   What provoked such a comment and what does it tell you about the symbolic strength of Mahatma Gandhi's dress?
7. Why did Mahatma Gandhi's dream of clothing the nation in khadi appeal only to some sections of Indians?

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Credits

Photographs and pictures

We would like to acknowledge the following:

Institutions and photo archives:

Central State Archives of Film-Photo Phono Documents of the USSR (II: 13)
Centre for Women's Development Studies' Travelling exhibition 'Re-presenting Indian Women - A Visual Documentary 1875-1947' (VIII: 16, 17)
Forest Research Institute in Dehradun (IV: 17)
Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland (III: 31)
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (VIII: 8)
Majdanek Museum Archives, Lublin, Poland (III: 22)
North Dakota State University Libraries (VI: 8, 9, 13, 14, 15)
Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GOI. (Most of the Gandhi Photographs)
Rabindra Bhawan Photo Archives, Viswabharati University, Shantiniketan (VIII: 16, 17)
The Maasai Association (VI: 12, 14, 15, 16, 17)
The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (III: 14, 22)
UNESCO PARZOR PROJECT (VIII: 18)

Journals

Graphics (VII: 9)
Indian Charivari (VIII: 13)
Indian Forest Records, Vol. XV (VI: 9)
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The Illustrated London News (II: 2; VII: 7, 8, 9, 16)

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Barnela, Sanjay (IV: 11, 12, 15, 16; V: 8, 10)
Guha, Ramchandra (VII: 10, 11, 13, 14)
Mangalik, Mukul (VI: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9)
Saberwal, Vasant (V: 3, 4)
Sundar, Nandini (IV: 6, 13, 14, 17)

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Text

Some chapters or sections draw substantially from:
Guha, Ramchandra, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, Picador, 2002 (VII)
Marquesee, Mike, *Anyone but England*, Verso, 1995 (VII)
Peluso, Nancy, *Rich Forests, Poor People*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992 (IV: Section 4)
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