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The French Revolution (1789-1794)

The French Revolution was the democratic revolution of 1789-94 in France, which put an end to feudal-absolutist system and cleared the way for the development of capitalism. It was a natural result of a prolonged crisis of outdated feudal-absolutist system, the result of a crisis that reflected the growing conflict between the old, feudal relations of production and the new capitalist concepts and capitalist production.

The main contradictions that predetermined the revolution were exacerbated with state bankruptcy, commercial and industrial crisis which began in 1787, lean years that resulted in famine all over France. In 1788 peasant uprisings swept a number of French provinces, at the same moment plebeians in cities across France expressed their anger. Monarchy of Louis XVI was not able to hold the positions by the old methods of force, had nothing but making concessions: in 1787, the Estates-General was convened what did not happen since 1614.

However, unwilling to share state power with common people the French Household determined to dispel the Constituent Assembly. This led to a national uprising in Paris on July 13-14, 1789. The end of the Revolution is considered among historians to be either the coup of 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794) that led to the overthrow of the Jacobin dictatorship and the establishment of the Directory, or the coup of 18 Brumaire (November 9, 1799) which resulted in the loss of power of the Directory and the establishment of the new government headed by Napoleon Bonaparte.

The French Revolution had a great historical significance. Being national, bourgeois, democratic, this Revolution resolutely and more thoroughly than

any other early bourgeois revolution finished with the feudal-absolutist system and thereby contributed to the development of progressive capitalist relations. The French Revolution laid the foundation for a strong revolutionary democratic traditions of the French people; it had a major and lasting influence on the subsequent history of not only France, but also on the history of many other countries (their ideology, art and literature). Indeed, the Revolution led to great political, economic and educational reforms in the country and Europe. That economic growth in France allowed it to endure republican and later Napoleonic wars lasting for more than 20 years. France changed into the country of prosperous peasants. After the Revolution, the country was able to keep the lands confiscated from the nobility and the church, the French people were able to keep freedoms, reclaimed from the monarchy in subsequent years. Even after the restoration of the Bourbons, (Louis XVIII started reigning in 1814 after the Napoleonic era) unfair old monarchical order was not restored.

As a result of the Revolution, a modern individualized private property emerged. The new state that appeared after the Revolution received larger opportunities for maintaining stability, equality, social order for all French citizens.

Moreover, what started in France continued in other lands all over Europe: in Savoy, in Spain, in Italy, Switzerland and Austria where oppressed people started protest against the dominance of despotic monarchies. Limitation of absolute monarchy also gradually was implemented in all European countries. The Revolution gave impetus to popular representation in

European monarchies. This social institute gave birth to a parliamentary republic.

The Iranian Revolution (1978-1979)

The National Revolution of Iran of 1978-1979 – was one of the most striking and unusual events of the last quarter of the XX century. Background of the revolution began long before its eruption. In 1941, the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, came to power and began conducting a radical westernization. In foreign policy, he certainly oriented on the United States that was seeking to prevent the emergence of a new socialist state on the Middle East. Any opposition to the monarchy was banned and brutally suppressed. One of the most ardent critics of the Shah was the Ayatollah Khomeini, who in 1964 was exiled from Iran for his anti-governmental activity.

Islamic Revolution in Iran was preceded with a long period of mass strikes, civil disobedience and anti-Shah performances. Thus, the Iranians respond to pro-Western policies of Pahlavi. Several attempts of the Shah to put the country in order using force led only to greater aggravation of the situation. On January 16, 1979 Mohammed Reza Pahlavi with his family fled Iran, which was originally regarded as a tactical maneuver to remove the social and political tension within the country. However, in his absence, Ruhollah Khomeini returned back to Iran. This historical person could unite the Iranian people and overthrow the monarchy and in December of the same year adopt the first Iranian constitution.

Today we can say that the Revolution in Iran entailed not only a change in the political system of Iran, but also led to a reframe of political order in the

Middle East. This Revolution changed the balance of forces on a regional and global arenas, reinvented the role of Islam in the modern world, in particular its role in the political life of society. In many ways, the Islamic Revolution was the impetus for the processes that are taking place today on the Middle East. The Iranian Revolution played a huge role in the consolidation of the Muslim world. With the victory of the revolution in Iran Islam appeared to the modern world in a new way. What once was perceived primarily as a religious worldview, Islam after the Revolution appeared to the world as a governmental system based on ideology.

The victory of the Revolution in Iran was also a failure of the Middle East policy of the U. S. aimed at the suppression of Islamic movements. The United States lost not only the source of income from sales of arms to the regime of the Shah, but also it was deprived of sources of cheap Iranian oil and lost the facilities for tracking Soviet airspace that was a strategic loss in the times of Cold War.

The Iranian revolution also led to an increase in activity among Muslim organizations worldwide. Supranational influence of the Iranian Revolution resulted in the revitalization of existing Muslim institutions and the creation of new ones worldwide.

Because of the Revolution, the second oil crisis took place when oil prices leapt up, which, of course, affected economies of the countries worldwide. Finally, Iran became a theocratic state instead of a secular one in which Islam began playing an important role in almost all spheres of life. The political system changed, human rights were limited, criminal law rules were toughened, and media censorship was introduced.

The Great October Socialist Revolution (October 1917-March 1918)

The First World War entered its fourth year, when Russia experienced a great upheaval, which opened a new era in the history of humankind.

The October Revolution was that revolutionary process which led to the establishment of Soviet power in Russia and lasted from October 1917 to March 1918. The Provisional Government, preliminary convoked after the fall of Russian Emperor Nicholas II, was overthrown on October 25-26 in the course of rebellion organized by mainly Lenin, Trotsky. As a result of the Revolution, the state authority was transferred to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

The Great October Socialist Revolution was the result of internal conflicts that had accumulated in the Russian society since at least the middle of the XIX century. The Revolution's victory in Russia provided the feasibility of a global experiment of building socialism in one country. Revolution was global in nature, transforming the history of humanity in the twentieth century, and it led to the formation of the world socialist camp on the political map. It was the main prerequisite for lasting Cold War, which took place in the world history few decades after October 25, 1917. At the same time, it was of national nature. It was designed to eliminate all the vestiges of feudal and caste system, including the main relic – landlordism in the Russian Empire. World significance of the Great October Revolution lies in the fact that it was a classic proletarian revolution, the main features of which were copied and repeated in other countries of the socialist direction. Because of victory of the socialist revolution in Russia, the world was split into two systems –

capitalist and socialist. After 1917, the struggle between these two systems determined the entire course of world history.

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