

**I.1. Did absolutism treat individuals as equal under the law? Please discuss.**

No. The main legal principle was the exact opposite of equality under the law. The principle was, rather, that of difference under the law. The law in absolutism created special rights and duties for particular groups of people. The technical word is “privilege”. Not privilege in the current sense of the word, but privilege as meaning the creation of privileged situations for certain people.

The main distinction in absolutism was not between the king, on the hand, with absolute power, and the rest of society, on the other, but it was rather established in a large number of special legal situations. The clearest cases of these particular sets of rights and duties were those applied to the clergy and the nobility. Absolutist law would grant these groups the ability to impose tributes on people in their lands, would allow them to have their own courts, their own police and their own administrative structure. That is, the absolutist king was ready to give away powers that we would spontaneously identify with the state, i.e. the absolute monarch did not possess the monopoly of taxation, of justice or of police. In a single sentence, the absolutist monarch, contrary to the modern state, did not possess the monopoly of legitimate violence, or at least was ready to give it away, allowing other people to exert similar powers.

But these special legal situations were not exclusive of the clergy and the nobility, as you would find many other circumstances, such as waiving the payment of certain taxes in certain territories, protecting some territories from imports of nearby provinces or giving special rights to certain professional groups in certain areas of the country. Inequality under the law was the rule in absolutist regimes.

## **I.2. Which novelties do you think the French revolutionary wars brought to warfare in Europe and what were their consequences?**

The French revolutionary wars brought two essential novelties to European warfare. The first was the creation of the first modern mass infantry army based on conscription of all men in France. This allowed the French revolutionary army to display a size considerably larger than that of the armies of its enemies. These were still mostly volunteer aristocratic cavalry armies of small size with very strict rules of combat.

The second main novelty brought by the French revolutionary wars was the first ideological war on the continent. The traditional wars in Europe were mostly wars for territorial conquest and aggrandizement of its various dynasties. The French revolutionary wars were wars for the imposition of the institutions prevailing in each territory where they took place. Victory from revolutionary France would mean the deposition of the local dynasty and the installation of new forms of power inspired by the French Revolution. Victory from the traditional powers would mean either the survival or the restoration of traditional forms of power.

The consequences from these novelties were various. First, the other countries had to adapt the size of their armies to that of the French army, thus introducing either conscription or something close to it. From then onwards European wars became mostly mass wars. Another major consequence was the systematic crushing of the traditional institutions existing on the continent, as France (particularly under Napoleon) was able to extend its reach from one extreme to the other of Europe. Even if these institutions were essentially restored after the Battle of Waterloo and the Congress of Vienna, the transformations were large enough for the political landscape of Europe to be radically altered.

**I. 3. “The responsibility for the Holocaust rests primarily with Hitler”. Discuss with reference to both the intentionalist and structuralist interpretations of the Nazi regime.**

Hitler's role in the decision-making process that led to the Holocaust has been the subject of intense debate among historians.

The intentionalist school (Fest, Dawidowicz) sees the Holocaust as the direct result of Hitler's manic anti-Semitism. In Kershaw's words, 'it proceeds from the assumption that Hitler himself, from a very early date seriously contemplated, pursued as a main aim, and strived unshakeably to accomplish the physical annihilation of the Jews'. In this sense, the path from *Mein Kampf* to genocide is seen as a straight one - notwithstanding certain 'tactical deviations'. The intentionalist school in its plainest form, epitomized in the 'psycho-historical' studies of Hitler, traces the origin of the Holocaust to the events in Hitler's youth that contributed to shaping his anti-Semitic worldview (such as the death of his mother whilst in the care of a Jewish doctor).

On the other hand, the structuralist school (Mommsen, Broszat) emphasizes the unsystematic, and even improvised, shaping of Nazi policies towards the Jews. From the boycott (1933) to the Nuremberg Laws (1935) and Crystal Night (1938), the Nazi anti-Semitic measures are seen as the result of a splintered and disorderly governmental machinery, in which rival institutions competed in their efforts to 'work towards the Fuhrer' - that is, to match with practical deeds the Fuhrer's publicly-professed hatred of the Jews. The result was a spiral of cumulative radicalization which worsened during the Second World War. With the failure of Operation Barbarossa, (increasingly obvious by late 1941), Nazi concentration camp officials in the East started to take 'local initiatives' to deal with the increasing number of Jews being deported there. In this sense the policy of extermination emerged as an ad hoc 'solution' to massive, and self-induced, administrative problems of the Nazi regime. This in no way diminishes Hitler's personal responsibility in the Holocaust: he set the vicious tone in which the 'Final Solution' took place, and systematically sanctioned the process of radicalization.

#### **I.4. Traditional policy instruments were not enough to put an end to the 1930s Great Depression. What factor led to its ultimate overcoming?**

When faced with the crash of the stock exchange in 1929 and the continuing search for liquidity (in exchange for less liquid assets, from stocks to bonds to real estate) on the part of economic agents, American authorities decided to act. That is, they decided not to let things just happen, or let assets decline in price so much as to make them affordable in comparison with the most liquid asset of all, cash. They did not shut the stock exchange either, which would have halted the decline in the price of stock and other assets. Instead, they acted through monetary policy as designed by the monetary authorities, by lowering the central interest rate and printing money. These are the typical actions of a lender of last resort. They also acted through fiscal policy, namely by supporting a large programme of public works that (so it was believed) would restore the pace of economic activity and higher levels of employment.

But none of these actions was enough to reverse the path of faltering economic growth in the United States. By 1939, after a brief recovery in the middle of the decade, the economy was still in a depression, ten years after the 1929 crash. What brought the economy back to growth was the massive demand shock generated by the start of World War II and the participation of the United States in it, from 1941 onwards. The United States became the main supplier of the allies against Nazi Germany after 1939, and when they entered the war spending increased enormously. Thanks to all of this, investment jumped, consumption accelerated and economic activity regained a high pace thus taking the United States out of the depression.

**I.5. “Globalization is a recent trend. It is certain to continue in the future”. Discuss.**

Globalization is not a recent trend. In its modern form - that is, the increasing integration of the world's national economies accompanied by a degree of convergence in international income levels -, the first phase of globalization started in the second half of the nineteenth century and lasted until the outbreak of the First World War. Closely associated with the rise of European (especially British) imperialism - which imposed Western norms of law, order and governance, and promoted the free movement of goods, labour and capital -, it is commonly referred to as the era of 'Victorian Globalization'.

As history shows, the process of globalization should not be taken for granted. The first phase of globalization came to an abrupt end in 1914, and the combination of interconnected political and financial factors (rise of the nationalist dictatorships, Great Depression) ensured that protectionist and other inward-looking policies hampered globalization throughout the inter-war period.

Whilst the thirty five years that came after 1945 saw the gradual piecing together of a relatively liberal OECD economy, and the following two decades broadened this trend to include most of the rest of the world (reaching a new high-water mark after the end of the Cold War), it cannot be assumed either that the resultant globalization will go on forever. Indeed the future of globalization faces serious economic and political challenges.

The former include such diverse issues as rising oil prices (and their effect on transportation costs) and potential electoral backlashes by the unskilled workers of the richer countries. The latter are tied to the preservation of stability on the global geopolitical scene. This means dealing with such threats as international terrorism and nuclear proliferation. Much will also depend on how the 'Pax Americana' adjusts to the rise of such economic giants as China and India. History has shown that the ascent of powerful newcomers (such as the freshly-unified Germany in the first half of the twentieth century) can result in serious disruptions to peace, and ultimately to the process of globalization itself.

### **II.1. To what an extent was religion important as a factor in the English Revolution?**

Alongside constitutional and economic issues, religion was a very important factor in the English Revolution. The sympathetic leanings of the Stuart monarchs towards Catholicism (England had been a protestant country since Henry VIII) led to deep tensions between the Crown and the Long Parliament under Charles I. The attempt to impose reforms upon the Scottish Kirk ultimately contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War (1642-1649). Cromwell's victory in turn led to the establishment of a Republic (Commonwealth, 1649-1660) that was Puritan in nature. Following the restoration, James II's appointments of Catholics to important positions in the army and government led politicians of both Whig and Tory parties to invite the King's Protestant son-in-law, William of Orange, to England. He took over the throne in 1689.

### **II.2. The objective of the American revolutionaries was, from the very beginning, to achieve independence from Britain. Do you agree?**

No. Their objective, as subjects of the British Crown, was initially to gain equal rights to their counterparts in Britain. Among the issues that eventually led to the unilateral declaration of independence (4 July 1776) was taxation. The fact that the imperial parliament could create or raise taxes at will (such as the Stamp Act in 1765) was increasingly resented throughout the thirteen British colonies of North America. Hence the emergence of the motto: 'No taxation without representation'. But until at least the Boston Tea Party (1773), the American revolutionaries articulated their claims within a framework of allegiance to the British Crown and integration within the British Empire.

### **II.3. Do you associate the 1917 Russian Revolution with the diffusion of political rights? Why?**

No. The consequences of the October 1917 Bolshevik coup were exactly the opposite. When the Bolsheviks failed to win the November elections to the Constituent Assembly, free elections were abolished for good, and Parliament shut down after just one day. Rival political parties were banned, as were freedom of association and expression. Instead a ruthless political police (Cheka) was instituted, along with a network of labour camps (Gulag) to deal with the so-called 'enemies of the people'. Russians also saw their rights constrained in the work place. The initial (and tactical) granting of land to the peasantry was soon followed by brutal collectivization. Factory workers were denied the right to strike, and control over production. Instead the political and socioeconomic system was submitted to the totalitarian control of the Soviet State.

### **II.4. Please identify the main political movements that challenged liberalism during the twentieth century?**

Liberalism was challenged by three political movements. The first was Communism, a theory elaborated by Marx and Engels in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and tentatively implemented by the Bolsheviks after 1917. It sprung from the social and economic inequalities generated in part by liberal capitalism, to which it claimed to offer an alternative. The second was Fascism, a nationalist right-wing movement born from the frustrations of the defeated powers in the First World War and as a means to counter Communism. Its figureheads were Mussolini in Italy from 1922, and Hitler in Germany from 1933 - with his altogether more radical brand of Nazism. The third was the spread, after 1945, of democracy, whose ideals were partly in contradiction to liberalism (for example the concept of universal enfranchisement).