

Napoleon Bonaparte and His Internal Reforms

Who was Napoleon Bonaparte?

> He was a French military leader and Emperor who conquered much of Europe in the early nineteenth century.

- He was born in the Island of Corsica.
- He rose rapidly through the ranks of military during the revolution.
- He was appointed as the first Consul of the Consulate of France.
- After getting political power in French, he declared himself as the Emperor in 1804.

- After His appointment as First Consul, Napoleon Bonaparte, tried to keep all power in his own hands.
- As for example, he had the power of making peace and war, appoint all the States Officials, had the power to control the Army, had the right to propose any laws through Council of State.
- Under such circumstances, the Constitution, which was promulgated gave immense power to Bonaparte than most of the Monarchs in Europe at that time.

Reforms of Napoleon Bonaparte

- After the revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte brought some important changes in France's Administration which is known as Napoleonic reforms from 1799 onwards. Napoleon had defeated his rival in the continent and England was no more a threat for France.
- Napoleon wanted to bring social and economic liberty, but he did not believe in political liberty, means he created platform for development where he gave equal justice, rights, and chances for advancement, but kept all political power into his own hand.

Administrative Reforms

- ❑ Napoleon introduced a centralized administrative structure, where all powers were vested in his own hands.
- ❑ He brought the Law Courts completely under his control by legislation.
- ❑ Elective Bodies of the Districts and small districts were abolished as part of the revision of Local Government and the Consulate of the Country.
- ❑ In their place, the Prefects and Sub-Prefects were to be appointed by the first Consul.
- ❑ On the other hand, the First Consul was the right to choose the mayors of Town with a population of 5000.
- ❑ The Local Government and Central Government were centralized in Paris.

Economic Reforms

- ❑ He introduced the efficient and effective system of tax collection which created a balance budget in France.
- ❑ He revived the bank of France to serve as a National bank.
- ❑ He revived the mercantilist practices to encourage industry and business in France.
- ❑ Established a sound Currency system and public credit.
- ❑ He lowered taxes imposed on Farmers.
- ❑ Created an independent peasantry that would be the backbone of the French economy.
- ❑ On the other hands, workers were not allowed to form any type of guilds or trade unions.
- ❑ The reforms stimulated the country's economy by providing food at low prices and increased employment.

Religious Reforms

At that time in French, religious dissensions were there, hence Napoleon wanted to bring some changes in Religious matter. He fully acknowledged the importance of religion as a political lever and determined to use it for his own benefits.

(**In this context, Napoleon said, “No society can exist without morality; there is no good morality without religion. It is religion alone, therefore, that gives to the State a firm and durable support”**)

- As part of his religious reforms, Napoleon decided not interfere in the Catholic if the Church itself ceased to interfere in the State’s affairs.
- He wanted to achieve active support from the Catholic Church, who drifted away because of anti-clerical measures.

- ❑ Napoleon, therefore decided to enter into an agreement with Pope Pius VII in April 1801., which was Known as CONCORDAT .
- ❑ AS PER THIS SETTLEMENT, Pope recognized the confiscation and sale of the church property at the early period of revolution.
- ❑ As per the Concordat, the First Consul appointed the Bishops and the Bishops were to appoint the Priests.
- ❑ Catholic worship in public was allowed.
- ❑ Church seminars were reopened.
- ❑ Extended legal toleration to the Catholics, Protestants and Jews.
- ❑ The Concordat replaced the revolutionary Calendar with Christian calendar.
- ❑ Thus the Concordat gave a considerable advantage to napoleon, as the clergies were strictly became sub-ordinate to the State.

Educational Reforms

- His Educational Reforms were based on a system of Public education under State control.
- He established a University in France.
- The First Consul appointed its chief officers. Moreover, any person who wanted to open school or private teaching needed to obtain license from the University.
- All education was to conform Catholic Church and was to be loyal to the State and the First Consul.
- Napoleon did not want to encourage private education. Therefore, he maintained a regular system of education for the country. As part of this policy, every commune had to maintain primary school and a prefects was responsible to manage the affairs of these schools.
- Grammar schools were opened in all important towns.
- Technical schools were established. Military schools under government control.

Judicial Reforms

- Before the Revolution, there was no uniformity in the Judicial System of France. Different laws were there.
- Napoleon had completely rebuild the Legal System of the country.
- A Civil Code was brought out in 1804, and different codes were adopted such as Civil procedure, Code of criminal Procedure, Penal Code and a Commercial Code.
- Laws of Napoleon guaranteed civil equality, religious toleration, equality of inheritance and the trial by Jury.

Public Works

- Napoleon Improved the Road Connectivity.
- Most of the modern roads of France was actually built as per the order of Napoleon, during his period a total of 299 roads were constructed.
- Constructed bridges and canals.
- Some important harbor like Toulon was enlarged and fortified.

Legion of Honour

Napoleon Bonaparte had established the institution of the Legion of Honour to honour and reward those who render outstanding service to the state. This institution became so popular in France.

Drawbacks of Napoleonic Reforms.

- > Inequality for women. (denied women equal status with men. Women and children were dependent on their husband and father.
- Divorce was more difficult
- Women could not buy or sale property
- Income earned by wife went to their husbands.
- Workers were not allowed to form trade unions
- Practiced nepotism by placing his relatives on the thrones of the nations he conquered.