

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE I, 1769-1821

Napoleon Bonaparte was born in **1769** at Ajaccio town on the Island of Corsica in the Mediterranean Sea. This island was annexed to France in 1768 a year before Napoleon was born, hence he was born a French citizen in 1769. He was born from a poor Bonaparte family but secured a scholarship and studied from an expensive military academy at **Brienne**, later in Paris where he graduated as an artillery officer.

During his youth-hood, he attempted to liberate Corsica from the French over lordship which led to the expulsion of his family from Corsica by the French government. During the revolution, he joined the Jacobins club and soon became a close associate of Robespierre. On the downfall of Robespierre, June 1794, he was imprisoned and later released due to the scarcity of the artillery officers in the French army. In 1793 Napoleon also successfully suppressed a royalist uprising and enrooting out Britain from the French Port of Toulon. This earned him a promotion from the rank of **Captain** to a **Brigadier general** in the French army.

In 1795, he led the French army against the mobs that had surrounded the hall where the newly elected Directory assembly were meeting. They were opposed to the new constitution which gave birth to the Directory government and the two councils. Napoleon ordered his troops to fire into the mob thereby dispersing them. He rescued the directory and the incident came to be known as *the Whiff of Grape shot*. Napoleon was immediately appointed **Commander of the interior army in 1796**. Between 1796 and 1798, he was engaged in two military campaigns which spread his fame throughout France and Europe. In November **1799**, Napoleon Bonaparte overthrew the Directory Government, hence coming to power. He then ruled France as an Emperor up to **1814** when he was over thrown and exiled. He managed to escape from exile, came back to France and ruled for one hundred days. Thereafter, he was finally defeated in **1815**.

FACTORS FOR THE RISE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE TO POWER IN 1799

The annexation of Corsica Island by France in 1768 was responsible for the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte to power. In 1768, the Island where Napoleon was born became a French territory as France got it from the Republic of Genoa (Italy). Though born on the Corsican Island, Napoleon Bonaparte was therefore born a French citizen in 1769 and he exploited this chance by birth to assume or take up responsibilities in France to the extent of becoming a French ruler by 1799.

Napoleon's father Charles Bonaparte had friendly relations with the nobility class in France and this also contributed to his rise to power. The friendship of his father with the nobility assisted Napoleon Bonaparte to study in the prestigious military academies or schools of **Brienne** and later **Paris** which were supposed to be for the children of the nobles only. While in these schools, Napoleon Bonaparte acquired military skills and he graduated as an artillery officer. This military education enabled him to be appointed in the French army which gave him an opportunity to come to power by 1799.

Napoleon's family background explains why he came to power. By the fact that Napoleon Bonaparte was supposed to be an Italian citizen, he hated the French citizenship which was forced onto him. He was also born from a very poor family and therefore while in the military academies, Napoleon faced loneliness and a bitter life because he was among the sons of the rich. This gave him courage and endurance and therefore he struggled to offset this poor family background. This influenced him to

work hard and excel in the military schools where he went, thus graduating as an artillery officer. This enabled him to join the French army, which eventually contributed to his rise to power by 1799.

The French revolution of 1789 helped Napoleon Bonaparte to rise to power and this was in many ways. For example, the revolution created a power vacuum in France after the death of King Louis XVI and the downfall of the Bourbon regime or monarchy in 1793 which Napoleon exploited to rise to power in 1799. Had the monarchy still been existing, it would have been very difficult for Napoleon to rise to power by 1799.

The revolution also abolished the social class divisions such that it was no longer the clergy and the nobles that were supposed to be the natural rulers of France. The French revolution of 1789 therefore led to the equality of all Frenchmen and for that matter, talented men like Napoleon Bonaparte would easily rise to positions of responsibility regardless of their social background. It is because of this that Napoleon Bonaparte from a poor family easily rose through promotions to the commander of the interior forces yet during the Ancient Regime it was only the nobles who were supposed to be promoted in the army. This aided him capture power in 1799.

Similarly, the French revolution of 1789 created the shortage of military officers thereby putting Napoleon to limelight. Many had fled the country, some arrested and others died during the revolutionary wars. Besides, the Reign of Terror had also brought about scarcity of artillery officers and this gave Napoleon chance to be freed from prison in 1794 because the French army needed many artillery officers to fight wars for France and to export the revolution to other countries. All these enabled him to rise to power by 1799.

The revolution created a tradition of violence, terror and coups as a means to lose and capture power and this is what exactly Napoleon wanted. For example, French the monarchy was over thrown through violence and Robespierre also acquired power through the same means. No wonder Napoleon made his coup and ascended the throne in November 1799.

The revolution also provided Napoleon with an opportunity to display his military skills or abilities as a skillful soldier when he managed to defeat the enemies of the revolution. For example, in 1793 Napoleon suppressed an uprising of the royalists in Port Toulon who were supported by Britain against the National Convention Government. This brought him fame and therefore he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in 1794. In 1795, Napoleon also managed to suppress an uprising organized by the royalists against the Directory Government. It also created wars in which Napoleon participated like **the Italian campaign of 1796 to 1797 as well as the Egyptian campaign of 1798** which earned him popularity more so in the army. In all these, Napoleon displayed his abilities which made him popular in France, hence leading to his rise to power.

The French revolution of 1789 also ushered in the confusion, anarchy, civil disorder, foreign wars with the rest of Europe and general instabilities (Reign of Terror) in France, which Napoleon exploited to rise on power in 1799. All those made the French men desire for alternative leadership moreover from military men to restore stability and order in the French society and defend the aims of the revolution. This explains why when Napoleon staged a military coup, the masses supported him, hence leading to his rise to power.

The revolution introduced or exposed Napoleon to the very important and influential leaders of the time who contributed much to his rise to power in 1799. These included revolutionary leaders such

as Robespierre, Roland, Danton and others who taught Napoleon leadership skills that he later used to come to power by 1799. He also established friendly relations with some members of the Directory government like Barras and Abbe Sieyes with whom he later conspired to capture power from the Directory government in 1799, hence leading to his rise to power.

The French revolution also gave birth to the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. Napoleon adopted these ideas which helped him to rise to power. He always spoke of the three ideas and even exported them beyond the French borders during the Italian and Egyptian campaigns. This won him support from the Frenchmen, hence leading to his rise to power by 1799.

The French revolution of 1789 also led to the formation of a revolutionary army known as the National Guard which replaced the Royal Guard of the Ancient Regime. This revolutionary army later served as an instrument which elevated Napoleon first to fame and secondly to the actual Coup of Brumaire or November 1799 against the Directory government which directly brought him to power.

Napoleon's intelligence also assisted him to rise to power. Napoleon Bonaparte was a genius or intelligent and therefore while in the military academies, he excelled in the military courses and he was equipped with unique fighting skills that later assisted him to rise to power. For example, in **1793** he was able to suppress an uprising of the royalists who were being supported by an English fleet to fight against the National **Convention Government**, at Port Toulon. Also in 1795, still the royalists staged an uprising against the **Directory Government** as they wanted to restore the monarchy. But this was also suppressed by Napoleon Bonaparte in what is known as the "**Whiff of Grapeshot**" of 1795. This helped him to easily rise to higher ranks in the French army which made him popular in France and therefore assisted him to rise to power by 1799.

Napoleon's marriage to **Josefine Beauharnais** in **1796** also assisted him to rise to power. **Josefine** was a daughter of one of the Directors known as General **BARASS**. By marrying the daughter of one of the leading politicians, Napoleon came close to the leading power holders in France. This therefore assisted Napoleon to be the commander of the Egyptian and Italian campaigns on behalf of the Directory government which won him popularity in France. This marriage equally won Napoleon favour from some of the aristocratic members since Josefine had connections with the aristocrats in France. As a result, many of them supported Napoleon to overthrow the Directory government in 1799 which assisted him to rise to power.

Napoleon's character or personality led to his rise to power. He had exceptional organization skills and administrative abilities and this was backed by his oratory power or eloquence which on many occasions he exploited to influence events in the army among his soldiers. This is illustrated when he mobilized and organized the French army which had been disorganized by the French revolution of 1789. Many of the French soldiers were tired of fighting and lived very miserable lives. For example, they were poorly dressed and lacked food. However, Napoleon Bonaparte convinced them to join the Italian campaign of 1796 to 1797 when he promised the angry soldiers glory and wealth. As a result, he defeated Austria during this campaign which made him popular, hence leading to his rise to power.

Napoleon's **overwhelming** ambition for power also led to his rise to power. Right from his childhood, Napoleon had an ambition of being at the top of the society. For example, at the age of ten years he admired to be a soldier like his father. While a youth, he made an attempt to liberate Corsica from

France. His ambitious character also dragged him into wars with the great powers of the time between 1792 and 1798. For example, he fought Austria in 1793 and 1796. He also fought Britain in the famous Egyptian campaign which earned him a lot of popularity that led him to rise to power. It was also this overwhelming ambition that influenced him to organize the Coup of Brumaire in November 1799 against the Directory Government which was directly brought him to power.

The scientific improvements in Europe at that time also led to Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power. At the time of Napoleon's campaigns, there were new advancements in military science where modern weapons like mobile artilleries, telescopes and road maps had been invented and which Napoleon used to register success. There was also the construction of better roads which eased the movement of the French forces under Napoleon's command to the battle field. This enabled him to organize surprise attacks and defeat his enemies like Austria during the Italian campaign of 1796 – 1797. This earned him more popularity in France that assisted him to rise to power by 1799.

The contribution of his brother **Lucien Bonaparte** assisted Napoleon to rise to power. Lucien Bonaparte was the President (Head) of the council of the 500 members that proposed laws for the Directory Government in France. However, Lucien Bonaparte physically campaigned for Napoleon before the council and he was one of the politicians who betrayed the Directory Government and supported Napoleon to organise the 1799 Coup that brought him to power in 1799.

The support from the revolutionary army assisted Napoleon to rise to power. Having been a loyal army officer in the French forces since the early 1790s, Napoleon won the support of the national army. The soldiers were too loyal to him and this partly explains the success of his military campaigns. He thus used the army to glorify his name in the campaigns and foster or carry out his Military coup in November 1799. At the time of his coup, the army laid a military siege at the hall of the assembly which intimidated the opposition and forced them to accept Napoleon's sovereign powers. Similarly, when Lucien Bonaparte presented Napoleon to the parliament, the council of the 500 members first rejected him but the presence of the army intimidated those who would have opposed Napoleon. As a result, the council of the 500 too was compelled to submit and the two directors who refused to resign were arrested by the army.

Napoleon's close association with prominent leaders enabled him to rise on power. He had links with the great men of France and these included the revolutionary leaders like Robespierre, Danton, Marrat and later Directors like General Barras, Abbe Sieyes and Carnot. With such links, Napoleon was able to read the revolutionary literature of the philosophers especially the work of Rosseau whose work had the ideas of fighting for the fundamental rights like freedom of worship and association. Napoleon also learnt leadership skills from these great politicians which he later used to come to power. These leaders also put Napoleon into the political lime light which enabled him to rise to power. For example, Carnot chose him to lead the Italian campaign which enabled him to expose his military talents and hence promoted to commander of interior forces. All this aided Napoleon's rise to power by 1799.

Napoleon's luck assisted him rise to power. Many events blessed Napoleon's life and career which perhaps no other Frenchman ever achieved. For example, he was lucky to have had his home island-Corsica annexed to France just a year before he was born. This enabled him get involved into French affairs legally as a French man. He was also lucky to be among the eight children that survived death out of the thirteen in his family. He was also lucky to have attended the prestigious military academies of Brienne and Paris which were only reserved for the sons of the nobles. He was also lucky that he

survived the Reign of Terror which claimed countless lives of many of his friends including Robespierre. He was also lucky that he survived the Egyptian campaign of 1798 when the British surrounded them but he escaped. He was also lucky that his brother Lucien Bonaparte was the President of the council of 500 members which supported his rise to power by 1799. It was also by sheer luck for Napoleon to have organized a successful coup de'état of Brumaire in November 1799 against the Directory government. All these opened his chances of success and therefore, no wonder he took over power in 1799.

The weaknesses of the Directory Government assisted Napoleon to rise to power. After the fall of Robespierre in 1794, France was ruled by 5 (five) Directors up to 1799. However, the Directors failed to fulfill the expectations of the Frenchmen. For example, corruption, inflation, unemployment and the loss of territories like Switzerland were among the weaknesses of the Directory Government. Such weaknesses made the government unpopular and therefore the Frenchmen supported Napoleon to carry out a coup in November 1799 that brought him to power.

The success of the Italian campaign of 1796 - 1797 was also paramount in Napoleon's rise to power. During this campaign, Napoleon defeated Austria in Italy and extended the French influence there. It therefore manifested a military genius in Napoleon and to many Frenchmen he promoted the country's glory and pride. Hence, the Frenchmen supported him to come to power in 1799.

The influence of the Egyptian campaign of 1798 – 1799 also assisted Napoleon rise to power. Napoleon's popularity and support increased when he undertook the Egyptian campaign against Britain in 1798. During this campaign, he achieved initial success in Egypt against Britain by taking over the town of **Alexandria**. Though his mission or plan or take over the entire Egypt failed, the failures of the campaign were simply attributed by many Frenchmen to the weaknesses of the Directory government. This partly explains his heroic welcome from the campaign by a great majority of the French people who therefore supported him organize a coup that brought him to power in 1799.

The coup d'état of **18th Brumaire** or **9th November 1799** is considered as the most immediate factor to have opened doors for Napoleon's rise to power. Having found deteriorating social and economic conditions, Napoleon conspired with some directors and a majority of the council of elders to overthrow the directory government. A rumor was thus put that there was a serious plot against the republic. The council of elders proposed that Napoleon be put in command of the troops to protect the directory. The council of 500 opposed this and when he appeared to address the house they shouted him down. In a scuffle that ensued Lucien called on the army which stormed the assembly and drove the members out. Most of the members succumbed and the few who resisted were arrested. This marked the beginning of the reign of Napoleon.

a) To what extent did the French Revolution of 1789 contribute to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte to power?

b) "Napoleon Bonaparte was a product of circumstances beyond his own making". Discuss.

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE'S DOMESTIC POLICY, 1800 – 1814

After his coup, Napoleon promised to stabilize France politically, socially and economically, following the French revolution of 1789, and end the anarchy which he inherited from the Directory

government. France was characterized by a shattered economy, religious conflicts, inefficiency and corruption. With such a background, the French masses expected fundamental reforms from

Napoleon. Later Napoleon was seen committing his energy to fulfill what he had promised. Many of his domestic policies conformed to the revolutionary ideals especially in the field of administration, Finance, education and law. However, in some aspects Napoleon betrayed the ideals of the French revolution which constituted his weaknesses. Let's take a look at the following features;

ACHIEVEMENTS OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Napoleon made Constitutional reforms in France. Napoleon made the 1799 constitution which favored his rule. After his coup, he changed the earlier Directory government constitution into a new constitution. In this constitution, all executive powers were vested in the First Consul who was to be Napoleon himself. It gave Napoleon powers to appoint all state officials and to direct foreign policy. He was given one 10 years term in office. The constitution set up the Legislative Assembly which had 3 chambers that's the Senate, Tribunate and the Legislative body, each with defined roles. However, the actual work of making laws was entrusted to the **council of the state** that was appointed by Napoleon himself and was directly answerable to him. All in all Napoleon fulfilled the ideals of the French revolution by promoting constitutionalism when he started his administration with a new constitution.

He established a strong financial system as a way to overcome the financial and economic crisis in France. This was achieved by regulating state expenditure and by centralizing the taxation policy. Tax collection was put under the state represented by the Director General in Paris. The Deputy Director, inspectors and assessors in the communes were given the task of ensuring the safety of the state revenue. This led to increased revenue that enabled the state to stabilize the economy. Similarly, corruption was curbed and the culprits (victims) were imprisoned.

He also introduced banking reforms. In order to effectively manage French finances, he established the Bank of France in 1800. It was responsible for the government loans and revenue plus issuing currency. This stabilized the French currency and encouraged more investments in France which was a major achievement.

Napoleon promoted Industry and commerce in France. He tried to develop the French industrial sector. By 1814, France had some 2000 cotton mills employing close to 40,000 workers while Linen production occupied an estimated 58,000 home or factory laborers. He established a Chamber of Commerce and Industry that was responsible for advising the manufacturers, encourage the establishment of new industries, and provide employment to the Frenchmen. The local industries were protected by imposing high tariffs on imports from other countries so as to encourage and promote wider industrial production. This increased the overall development of the country's economy.

Napoleon also promoted Agricultural development. Agriculture was encouraged by official societies, publications and prizes for successful innovations. Sugar beet and food crops like Wheat and potatoes rose swiftly while Flaxseed and Hemp production declined. The effort to improve cotton production was kept in proportion to the growing population. New techniques of production were developed from the scientific research. Agriculture was improved with the introduction of new methods of farming from Belgium and England. More canals were dug to promote the irrigation schemes. This increased food production and therefore solved the problem of famine that France had experienced since the days of the French revolution of 1789.

He also improved on the public works or infrastructures in France. He established a fairly reliable system of transport and communication which was necessary for a strong economy. A number of railway lines, roads, canals, ports and bridges were constructed in order to develop France. Toulon and Hanover ports were also expanded. The royal palaces like St. Claude, Fontainebleau and Rambouillet were renovated and refurbished. Similarly, he beautified the French museum by filling it up with beautiful art works and masterpieces of painting and sculpture which he himself stole from Italy in 1796. He also built and improved on his palaces in France, towns were enlarged and security lights installed which in turn reduced insecurity and increased his popularity in France.

Napoleon introduced administrative reforms which strengthened France's administrative structure. He abolished a weak feudal administrative structure of the past and centralized the local government under himself. For example, he maintained the division of France into 83 departments each headed by Prefects, work which had been started by the revolutionaries. These were further sub-divided into districts (arrondissements) headed by sub-prefects who were also appointed by and answerable to him. These were further divided into communes which were administered by mayors. He appointed efficient civil servants to run the government departments. This gave France an efficient government under men with administrative skills and reduced the bureaucracy which had consolidated corruption and embezzlement in the past regimes. These reforms were a continuation of the revolutionary administrative structure and therefore manifested Napoleon as a true son of the French revolution of 1789.

Napoleon made vital reforms in the field of education in France and Europe as whole. He opened up public secondary schools and semi military secondary schools (Lycees) run by the government mostly emphasizing the teaching of Mathematics, geography, Science and Military training. He encouraged technical schools as a measure to produce local man power that could be used in the development of the French economy. In 1808, he gave France a national university called the University of Paris which operated 17 academies (branches) across France. The university was directly under the control of the government. By 1813, Napoleon's secondary system was the best in the whole continent and attracted many Europeans, thus promoting the French glory.

Napoleon also promoted reconciliation with the Catholic Church in 1801. He reconciled the Catholic Church with the state through an agreement known as the Concordat with Pope **Pius VII** in 1801. The relationship between the church and the state strained or worsened since the enactment of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in the 1790s which attacked the position of the Pope and church. Napoleon promised to end this conflict so as to win the support of the Catholics. According to him, *a state without religion was a vessel without a compass*. Thus, in 1801 both the Emperor and the Pope signed an agreement (the concordat) by which Catholicism was recognized as the religion of majority but allowed freedom of worship. All church officials were to be nominated by the state and approved by the Pope. The Pope recognized the ownership of land by the peasants and Papal States were recognized by France as dominions of the Pope. From the concordat, both the state and the church gained but the state gained more. It increased the popularity of Napoleon from most of the Catholics who had hated the French revolution and the state as a whole. This brought peace and reinstated the church-state relations which had deteriorated for years.

Napoleon introduced the policy of Career open to Talents or **the Legion of Honor** in his administration. He observed the revolutionary principle of merit as a basis for appointments and promotions other than the ancient criterion of basing on social order. He had realized that the ancient governments had suffered political and financial difficulties partly due to the unmerited personnel

who survived on corruption and embezzlement. Thus under this policy, Napoleon appointed and promoted people to high offices on merit regardless of their social backgrounds. For example, General Murat, a son of peasant was appointed a German Duke and later King of Naples, Martin Gandin was appointed Minister of Finance and had served under Louis XVI's government. This gave France an efficient administration, encouraged hard work and patriotism, which was lacking in the previous regimes.

He also introduced Napoleonic Code (the Code Napoleon). Napoleon gave France a code of law which brought harmony that lacked in the ancient regime. Before his rise to power, France had no common code of law. What existed were just hanging laws which could time over time be manipulated by the leaders to achieve their aims. Napoleon thus attempted to codify the laws in accordance with the desires and aspiration of the revolutionaries. The Code Napoleon was therefore a simple, clear, logical and definite summary of the laws of France which touched the basic rights and duties of man like inheritance, land ownership, marriage age, divorce etc. The code was to have five codes; the civil code which dealt with relationship between people, the code of civil procedure which dealt with how judges should settle cases, the code of criminal procedure which dealt with offences against the state, the penal code which specified the punishments for the different crimes and commercial code which dealt with trade and other related issues. These rules were uniform and equal before all. By doing this, he managed to clear the past judicial confusion and replace it with permanent Justice in France. These laws became effective not only in France but all over Europe in countries like Belgium, Switzerland and even U.S.A. They restored peace, law and order in France and rest of the world.

Napoleon restored peace and order in France. This was done by setting up a special state prison and strict courts of law. He employed armies and spies to capture leaders perpetuating chaos. In doing so, all the past disorders from the royalists and Jacobins, highway robbery and other irregularities were contained. Peace was restored which pleased the Frenchmen thereby consolidating his position.

He also introduced military reforms. Through these military reforms, Napoleon built a strong army for France. The army was very efficient and disciplined than ever before. He did so by recruiting more Frenchmen and equipping them with modern weapons. He used the conscription policy where all Frenchmen were forced to join his army. Military training was compulsory in the secondary schools and this brought about efficiency. Promotion in the army was based on merit and this encouraged hard work and discipline among his soldiers. His force was used to bring law and order in France and to save the country from the external enemies.

NAPOLEON'S WEAKNESSES OR FAILURES IN THE DOMESTIC POLICY

Napoleon imposed heavy punishments on the criminals. He put in place a secret police that was commanded by **Forche**. This police arrested, tortured, imprisoned and killed the opponents of Napoleon's regime. He therefore suppressed people's freedom which made him unpopular in France.

The Concordat or agreement that Napoleon Bonaparte I signed with the Pope in **1801** to some extent restored the influence of the Catholic Church in state affairs. For example, all the French rulers were supposed to be Catholics and the Pope was to install the Bishops in France. This annoyed those revolutionaries who had fought against the influence of the Catholic Church in the state affairs during the 1789 French revolution.

He established a discriminatory education system. For example, the system ignored women education claiming that the women were only fit for domestic work and therefore did not need to go to school. He also emphasized the teaching of sciences and military education and ignored liberal subjects like History, Philosophy and Literature. He also ignored primary education which he left in the hands of the Catholic Church. This therefore undermined his popularity in France.

Napoleon promoted dictatorship in France. He declared himself Emperor of France for life in **1804**, and he took on the title **Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte I** having all the powers like appointing administrators in the local government. He therefore over centralized power in France. He also used to imprison people without trial similar to what was happening in France during the Ancient Regime.

The Code Napoleon of **1804** also had weaknesses and therefore it caused resentment. For example, it gave more powers to the husbands as Heads of families and this led to oppression or mistreatment of the women and children. This was against the principle of **equality** as advocated for by the French revolution of 1789.

Napoleon promoted nepotism in France. He appointed mostly his friends and relatives to positions of responsibility. For example, he made his brothers rulers of the conquered states. A case in point was **Jerome Bonaparte** who ruled the state of Naples in Italy while **Louis Bonaparte** was in Holland. This made Napoleon Bonaparte I unpopular in France.

The establishment of the “Legion of Honour” by Napoleon Bonaparte I led to the return of the social classes in France. This was because it led to the creation of the class of talented people who provided distinguished services to the class state. Therefore, by bringing back the social classes which had caused the French revolution of 1789, Napoleon went against the revolutionary principle of equality.

NOTE: The weaknesses in the domestic policy of Napoleon Bonaparte partly contributed to his downfall in 1815 because they caused resentment and made him unpopular in France.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

In the foreign policy, Napoleon used wars to establish a large empire in Europe and it was through war that this empire was destroyed. At the peak of Napoleon’s power in France, the French Empire included states like Italy, Holland, the German Confederation of the Rhine, Naples and Austrian Netherlands (Belgium). It was therefore the most powerful country in Europe and the foreign policy contributed to the downfall of Napoleon in 1815.

Throughout his regime, Napoleon involved France into wars with European nations. In 1815, European countries like Britain, Russia, Prussia, the Italian states, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and even France itself became disgusted with Napoleon’s regime and they therefore overthrew him from power.

Before 1815, European countries had formed several coalitions so as to defeat Napoleon Bonaparte I. For example, Napoleon Bonaparte I was faced with the problem of the Second coalition. This coalition had been formed in 1799 to fight against France prior to Napoleon Bonaparte I’s rise to power and it had countries like Austria, Russia, Portugal, Naples and Britain. However, the coalition collapsed when Napoleon Bonaparte I defeated Austria. Austria was defeated mainly

because of the division that existed in the armies of the Second Coalition. Napoleon Bonaparte I then forced Austria to sign the **Treaty of LUNEVILLE of 1801**. This treaty confirmed the **Treaty of Campo- Formio of October 1797** after the Italian campaign and therefore Austria gave up Belgium, the Left Bank of the Rhine and also withdrew from Italy. These territories were put under the French control and it was a major achievement of Napoleon Bonaparte I in the foreign policy of expanding the French influence abroad.

The only power that remained at war with France was Britain. This forced Napoleon Bonaparte I to direct his attention towards defeating Britain by interfering with the British trade and commercial interests which were pillars of her power. Napoleon Bonaparte persuaded Russia, Sweden, Prussia and Denmark which he had defeated at war to form a league which came to be known as the ***“Armed League of Neutrality”***. Consequently, wars broke out between Britain and the members of the League for example with Denmark and Sweden in 1801 which Napoleon had convinced to close the entrance to the Black Sea. At the Battle of Copenhagen, Britain destroyed the Danish fleet in 1801 and broke the armed league of neutrality. This increased Britain’s strength. Thus by 1801, Britain was too powerful to be challenged by France and the only option for the two powers was to make peace and end the conflicts between the two countries.

THE TREATY OF AMIENS OF 1802

In March 1802, Britain and France decided to sign a peace treaty so as to settle the conflicts between the two countries. By this treaty, Britain was to return the French colonies captured from her like Malta except Ceylon and Trinidad. However, Napoleon Bonaparte I regarded the treaty as a temporary measure to peace because he wanted to prepare for war that would lead to the defeat of Britain which was by then regarded as the most powerful country on water and also the most economically powerful state in Europe. The treaty therefore did not create permanent peace in Europe.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE RESUMES WAR WITH BRITAIN (THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR, OCTOBER 1805)

The Peace Treaty of Amiens of 1802 turned out to be temporary because both countries failed to live up to their promise of creating peace. For example, Britain refused the French occupation of Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) in **1801**. This was because Britain never wanted its enemies to come closer to the Belgian coast line since that country would get the strategic advantage of attacking Britain. Napoleon also imposed a severe tariff or taxation system on the British goods entering France which affected the British commerce or trade. This generated conflicts between Britain and France which undermined any hopes for peace between the two countries.

Britain therefore started supporting the enemies of Napoleon, captured the French ships and stopped the neutral ships of other nations from reaching the French ports. In reaction, Napoleon decided to attack Britain through the English Channel having occupied the coastline. However, Britain defeated Napoleon at **TRAFALGAR in 1805**. With the defeat of France, Britain remained the most powerful nation on the sea and Napoleon therefore gave up fighting Britain for some time.

THE FORMATION OF THE THIRD COALITION, 1805

In 1805, the **Third Coalition** was formed against Napoleon I's excessive ambition and it included Britain, Austria, Russia and Sweden. However, the coalition collapsed when Napoleon I defeated some of the members. For example, he defeated Austria in 1805 at **ULM** on River Danube. He also defeated a combined force of Austria and Russia at the **Battle of AUSTERLITZ** in December 1805.

After this defeat, Austria was forced again to sign the **Peace Treaty of Pressburg of 1805** by which Austria lost all her territories in Italy as well as the German states in the Rhine lands. Napoleon Bonaparte I then organized these German states into the **Confederation of the Rhine** and this was another achievement in the foreign policy because the Confederation of the Rhine was put under the control of France. He went ahead and invaded Southern Italy and overthrew the autocratic regime in Naples and replaced King Ferdinand I of Naples with his brother **Josef Bonaparte**. He also conquered Holland (Netherlands) and put it under his brother **Louis Bonaparte**. Therefore, Napoleon created the **"Bonaparte dynasty"** in Europe basing on his relatives and friends as Kings of the conquered states.

Napoleon Bonaparte I then turned to Prussia which he also defeated at the **Battle of Jena in 1806** and forced her to give up large territories to France.

Having defeated Austria and Prussia, Napoleon Bonaparte I turned his attention to Russia. In **June 1807**, he defeated Russia at the **Battle of Friedland**. This forced the Tsar of Russia **Alexander I** to make peace with Napoleon Bonaparte I and Russia became an ally of France for some time. This was concluded in the **Peace Treaty of Tilsit of July 1807**. By this treaty, Alexander I recognized Napoleon I's territorial conquests in Europe, including the Confederation of the Rhine. In return, Napoleon assured Tsar Alexander I of support in case he wanted to extend Russian influence in Eastern Europe especially having a share in the Turkish Empire. Therefore, in the foreign policy of Napoleon he was able to defeat the members of the **Third Coalition** except Britain. As a result, Britain remained the strongest enemy of Napoleon. He therefore planned to defeat Britain using an economic policy known as the **Continental System**.

THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

This was a commercial blockade or economical war that was declared by Napoleon Bonaparte I on Britain. The system was declared by Napoleon in **November 1806** by issuing the Berlin Decrees and later the Milan Decrees of December **1807** that prevented the countries on the mainland Europe from trading with Britain. These decrees stipulated that all countries under French control and those allied to France were not to trade with Britain and that all the British goods found on the European continent were to be confiscated.

Napoleon I hoped that prohibiting the British goods from crossing to mainland Europe was enough to disorganize the British economy. Consequently, there was to be general suffering in Britain and the English people would put pressure on their government to go for peace with France. It was assumed that Napoleon Bonaparte I would then use the opportunity to dictate terms that would lead to the defeat of Britain and the recognition of France as the most powerful country in the whole of Europe.

In reaction, Britain issued what was known as the **"Orders in Council"** of 1807 where Britain declared a blockade on all European countries and continental ports that accepted Napoleon's

decrees. This deprived them of any other sources of commodities thus creating scarcity and general suffering in most European countries. Eventually, the whole system proved dangerous and the whole of Europe was affected by problems like scarcity of goods, unemployment and high prices which made Napoleon unpopular.

EFFECTS OF THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

It led to great suffering in Europe due to inflation and unemployment. For example, in France the system caused scarcity of the British goods and they became very expensive. Similarly, those French businessmen who traded in British goods had to close their businesses because they would not sell anymore, thus leading unemployment. As a result, Napoleon became unpopular.

The European merchants continued to trade with Britain. They smuggled British goods into the European continent. This led to the loss of tax revenue, thus making Napoleon unpopular and eventually contributed to his downfall by 1815.

The European businessmen were annoyed by the policy of Napoleon which denied them a chance to trade in the British goods and therefore, many merchants turned against Napoleon. It was this class of people that financed the resistance movements against Napoleon which contributed to his downfall.

The system caused conflicts between Napoleon and the Pope. **Pope Pius VII** refused to abide by Napoleon's system and therefore he remained neutral. Consequently, Britain would trade with the Papal States in Central Italy which were under the political control of the Pope. This annoyed Napoleon who responded by imprisoning Pope Pius VII in **1809**. As a result, Napoleon became very unpopular among all the Catholic states in Europe including France which eventually contributed to his downfall in 1815.

The system forced Napoleon to fight the **Peninsular War** of 1808 - 1813. For long, Portugal had been commercial ally with Britain and therefore she refused to abide by the Continental System. Napoleon decided to invade Portugal with the assistance of Spain in 1808. By this time, Napoleon had overthrown the Spanish Monarchy and forced the Spanish **King Charles V** to resign because he was unpopular among the people. However, the Spaniards desired the king's son **Ferdinand VII** but Napoleon instead imposed his brother **Josef Bonaparte** who was in Naples as the King of Spain. This together with Napoleon's imprisonment of the Pope annoyed the Spaniards. They therefore rose up against Napoleon using the guerilla warfare and they managed to defeat the French forces at Baylen in 1808. The French forces therefore found themselves fighting against both Portugal and Spain in what came to be known as the Peninsular War.

During the war, Britain supported Portugal and Spain. Britain feared that if France occupied the Peninsula, it would be in position to access the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea and interfere with the British commercial sea route to the Far East. This together with the rugged or mountainous Spanish landscape made it hard for Napoleon to win the war and therefore, the French forces were defeated and driven out of the Peninsula after five years of heavy fighting.

EFFECTS OF THE PENINSULAR WAR ON NAPOLEON

The Peninsular war led to the death of many French soldiers at a time Napoleon needed them elsewhere in Europe. This therefore weakened his military strength, thus leading to his downfall in 1815.

The success of the Peninsular War inspired the nationalists in other countries like Italy to resist Napoleon. This increased on the number of wars which Napoleon had to fight and eventually contributed to his downfall.

The war provided Britain with a land base which she lacked. Therefore, the British occupation of Portugal easily assisted her to check the influence of Napoleon on Europe, which later contributed to his downfall.

THE MOSCOW CAMPAIGN OF 1812 (NAPOLEON INVADES RUSSIA)

In June 1807, Napoleon had defeated Russia at the battle of **FRIEDLAND**. In July 1807, Napoleon forced Russia to sign the treaty of **TILSIT** in which the Russian Tsar Alexander I was forced to accept joining Napoleon's continental system against Britain.

In 1811, the relations between Russia and France worsened when Russia broke away from the continental system and started trading with Britain. Napoleon who feared that Russia might make an alliance with Britain decided to end the threat by attacking Russia and this attack is known as the **Moscow Campaign of 1812**.

In 1812, a large French army of about 610,000 men invaded Russia. This army was composed of soldiers who had been recruited from all over Europe like the French, Italians, Germans, Swedish and Dutch. The Russian army which could not fight such a huge force decided to withdraw towards the East but in the process, they carried out the **scorched earth policy** by which crops, livestock and whole villages were destroyed. The French army who had hoped to feed on the Russian food therefore faced shortage of food supplies while in Russia. Consequently, many French soldiers died of starvation or hunger and diseases. Napoleon's army however, managed to reach Moscow after defeating the Russians at the **Battle of Borodino of 1812** only to find the city destroyed and deserted.

While in the city, the poorly dressed French soldiers were hit by the severe Russian winter in October 1812, leading to the death of thousands of French soldiers. Given these harsh conditions, Napoleon proposed a peace treaty with Tsar Alexander I but there was no reply. Napoleon decided to retreat westwards going back to France but as he did so, his forces were constantly attacked and killed by the Russian guerillas. Consequently, of the 610,000 men who started the campaign, only 20,000 soldiers survived of which many were crippled and therefore were not fit for any further military use. This campaign therefore was a disaster to Napoleon.

EFFECTS OF THE MOSCOW CAMPAIGN OF 1812

It led to the death of thousands of the French soldiers which greatly reduced Napoleon's military ability. Indeed, the French were so much weakened that they never recovered and this eventually contributed to the downfall of Napoleon.

It sparked off serious opposition at home. The death of many French soldiers during the war greatly annoyed the Frenchmen. Similarly, the war caused an economic crisis in France due to the heavy expenditure that was involved. The campaign therefore made Napoleon unpopular at home and this eventually contributed to his downfall by 1815.

It forced Napoleon to resort to forced conscription even from other European countries. This was because the French army had almost been completely wiped out. Consequently, Napoleon's army became heterogeneous composing of conscripts from Italy, Germany, Holland, Denmark and Belgium. These conscripts never dedicated their efforts to fight and defend Napoleon's interests because they were forced and their countries were under the French control. They therefore fought for Napoleon's downfall.

It made many of Napoleon's Generals to desert him. During the campaign, Napoleon deserted his forces leaving them under General Murat and he travelled to Paris incognito (unrecognized). This annoyed the French Generals and therefore many of them deserted him. For example, Marshal Bernadotte escaped to Sweden and leaked Napoleon's military secrets to Napoleon's enemies. The enemies therefore used such information to defeat Napoleon and this contributed to his downfall.

It increased nationalism and patriotism Europe. The defeat of Napoleon by Russia inspired the European states to rise up and fight against Napoleon who threatened their independence and territorial integrity. This eventually contributed to the downfall of Napoleon.

It exposed the weakness of Napoleon due to the mistakes that he committed during the war. For example, the war exposed Napoleon's shortsightedness because he failed to foresee the severe Russian winter and consequently made French soldiers were frozen to death. This weakness encouraged the European countries to fight and defeat Napoleon, thus leading to his downfall.

It led to the formation of the Fourth Coalition in 1813. The French defeat in Moscow encouraged European countries to form a coalition that included Prussia, Austria, Britain and Sweden. These powers agreed to fight and defeat Napoleon which they finally did at the **Battle of Waterloo** in 1815 and this marked the end of Napoleon.

It laid a foundation for future conflicts between France and Russia. The defeat that France suffered in the Moscow campaign influenced her to develop a revenging attitude towards Russia. This eventually contributed to the outbreak of the Crimean War of 1854 – 1856 as France declared war on Russia so as to revenge for the 1812 Moscow campaign defeat.

Question

Examine the significance of the 1812 Moscow Campaign in the History of Europe.

THE FORMATION OF THE FOURTH COALITION AND THE WAR OF LIBERATION, 1813 - 1814

The French defeat in the Moscow campaign of 1812 convinced the European powers that Napoleon could easily be defeated. Consequently, Prussia and later Austria joined Russia into an alliance 1813. Britain also joined them and this marked the formation of the Fourth Coalition. The allies were also joined by Sweden headed by one of Napoleon's Marshals Bernadotte who had deserted him. He had been promised the territory of Norway by the allies if he assisted them against

Napoleon. In 1813, Prussia declared war on France which marked the beginning of the War of Liberation. Napoleon however managed to defeat Prussia. In the same year, the allied forces of Prussia, Austria, Russia and Sweden defeated Napoleon in the famous “**Battle of the Nations**” at a place known as **Leipzig** in Germany.

In **March 1814**, Britain, Prussia, Austria signed a **Treaty of Chaumont** where they agreed to work for the overthrow of Napoleon and remain in alliance for 20 (twenty) years in order to maintain the political and territorial settlement that was to be agreed upon after the defeat of Napoleon. The signatories were to restore the former Bourbon dynasty in France to power.

The allies now invaded France and they reached Paris where they forced Napoleon to surrender power. They therefore crowned Louis XVIII as the King of France and Napoleon was exiled to a small Mediterranean Island of Elba off the coast of Italy.

THE FIRST TREATY OF PARIS, 1814

The treaty was signed in **May 1814** between the allied powers and France under **Louis XVIII** and the terms of the treaty were **very lenient** or generous to France which had caused a lot of trouble in Europe. The first Treaty of Paris had the following terms;

- Napoleon was exiled in the Island of Elba.
- France lost her territories like Belgium, Poland as well as the Italian and German states which had been conquered by Napoleon.
- The boundaries of France were to be reduced to those which she had by **January 1792**.

NOTE: The European powers were lenient because they feared that it was a harsh treaty imposed on France it would cause resentment in France and this would lead to another war in Europe yet the European powers wanted peace and unity.

THE LAST HUNDRED DAYS OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

At the age of 44years, Napoleon still longed for battle excitement, cheers from his soldiers plus victory and glory for France. He knew that many Frenchmen hated Louis XVIII since the Frenchmen had got rid of Kings following the execution of King Louis XVI in **1793** and Napoleon had not restored the ancient regime to power. Therefore, Napoleon escaped from the Island of Elba and landed in Southern France on **1st March 1815** with a few soldiers. Louis XVIII sent his troops to arrest Napoleon but the troops refused to arrest their Emperor. They instead wished him long life and joined his forces. This forced Louis XVIII to run away from France and on **20th March 1815**, Napoleon entered Paris where he received a hero’s welcome and he ruled for one hundred days up to **June 1815**.

All this happened when the European allies who had defeated Napoleon in 1814 were holding a congress at Vienna which was the capital city of Austria. This international congress had started in **November 1814** and they were trying to find out what to do with France and the rest of Europe following the French revolution of 1789 and Napoleonic Wars. They were disturbed by the news of Napoleon’s return and they therefore mobilized their forces again to fight Napoleon. Finally,

Napoleon was defeated at the “**Battle of Waterloo**” of **June 1815** in Belgium. This battle marked the downfall of Napoleon and the eventual collapse of the French Empire.

Napoleon surrendered himself to the British forces and he was exiled on the Island of St. Helena which was a very lonely Island located in the South Atlantic. Napoleon spent his last six years there and in **1821** he died.

THE SECOND TREATY OF PARIS, 1815

This treaty changed the First Treaty of Paris of 1814 and it was signed between France and Europe on **20th November 1815** after the final defeat to Napoleon. This treaty was very harsh to France because the allies wanted to ensure that France didn't revive her power so as to disturb peace and security in Europe again. They also wanted to ensure that Napoleon did not return to France as a citizen and a ruler. The treaty had the following terms;

- France was to pay war damages or fine of 700 million Francs to the allied powers to pay for the losses that they had incurred. This was a very heavy punishment for a country which had been at war for over 20 (twenty) years.
- The boundaries of France were pushed back to those of **1790** and therefore France lost a lot of territories including **Saar region** which was then lost to Prussia yet it had a lot of coal.
- The allied army was to remain in the North East of France for three years and only to be removed after France had completed the payment of war damages.

REASONS FOR THE DOWNFALL OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Napoleon's excessive or overwhelming ambition led to his downfall. This ambition was demonstrated by the creation of a very large empire over Europe which included countries like Spain, Belgium as well as the Italian states and German states among others. This brought him into conflicts with European powers like Russia and Britain as they resisted against the expansion of French power in Europe which threatened their independence. Further, the empire was too big to be controlled by Napoleon as one man. This weakened his administration which eventually contributed to his downfall.

The effects of continental system led to the downfall of Napoleon. This system was meant to destroy the British commerce by not allowing Britain to trade with the mainland European continent. The system led to the downfall of Napoleon because it created scarcity of British goods and this led to inflation throughout Europe. There was also unemployment caused by the absence of the British goods in Europe. The suffering that resulted from the continental system therefore made Napoleon unpopular, thus contributing to his downfall.

The imprisonment of **Pope Pius VII** in 1809 also led to the downfall of Napoleon. Napoleon imprisoned the Pope because he had refused to abide by the continental system. This made Napoleon to lose sympathy and support from the catholic states in Europe like Spain, Portugal, Italian states, Austria and France herself. As a result, these countries united to fight against Napoleon which eventually contributed to his downfall.

The Peninsular war of 1808 – 1813 also contributed to the downfall of Napoleon. This war was fought by France against Spain and Portugal located in the **Iberian Peninsula** because they were failing his continental system by trading with Britain. During this war, Napoleon lost many soldiers because the guerilla fighting methods that were adopted by Spain and Portugal were very unfamiliar to the French forces. France was therefore defeated by Portugal and Spain with the help of Britain. This inspired even weaker states to rise up against Napoleon and this eventually contributed to his downfall.

The Moscow campaign of 1812 also contributed to the downfall of Napoleon. Napoleon invaded Russia so as to defeat it because it had violated the continental system. During this campaign, Napoleon lost many soldiers, including some of his experienced commanders due to the Russian winter, hunger and disease, thus weakening the French military ability. This campaign also encouraged Napoleon's continental enemies to form the Fourth coalition which eventually defeated him in 1815.

The increasing war fronts led to the downfall of Napoleon. From 1810, Napoleon engaged France in many battles. For example, during the Peninsular War his forces had to fight against Portugal, Spain and Britain. Similarly, while his forces were still fighting the Peninsula war, he declared the Moscow Campaign of 1812 on Russia. Because of this therefore, the French forces failed to defeat their enemies and instead they were defeated which eventually contributed to the downfall of Napoleon.

Military exhaustion of the French soldiers led to the downfall of Napoleon. The French soldiers by 1815 had been at war for over 20 (twenty) years. These wars exhausted the French troops and therefore they became tired. Consequently, Napoleon lost most of the battles that he fought especially in the later years like the Moscow campaign of 1812, the Battle of the Nations of 1813 as well as the Battle of Waterloo of 1815 because his soldiers were exhausted. This eventually contributed to the downfall of Napoleon.

Desertion also led to the downfall of Napoleon. By 1814, Napoleon had been deserted by some of his commanders, soldiers and close friends (allies) who leaked his military tactics and secrets to his enemies. For example, after the Moscow Campaign of 1812, Napoleon I's friend Marshal Bernadotte who was in Sweden joined the allied powers and revealed Napoleon's military tactics to them and how to defeat him. Talleyrand also revealed Napoleon I's political ambitions in Europe to the enemy. This strengthened the allies and therefore assisted them to defeat Napoleon which eventually led to his downfall.

Napoleon's downfall was also as result of better fighting methods which were adopted by his enemies. For example, in Peninsular War and Moscow campaign, the French troops were defeated due to the use of guerilla fighting methods yet the French forces were used to the regular warfare. Russia also denied the French troops food while in Russia and therefore, they were hit by hunger, became weak and they were easily defeated which contributed to the downfall of Napoleon.

Under estimation of the enemies led to the downfall of Napoleon. Napoleon used to underestimate his opponents which enabled them to fight and defeat him. For example, during the Peninsular War, Napoleon had under estimated the military strength of the Spaniards who eventually defeated him with the support of Britain. This defeat weakened Napoleon's military ability which eventually led to his downfall.

The naval superiority of Britain led to the downfall of Napoleon. While France on several occasions defeated countries like Austria, Russia and Prussia, she never defeated. This was because Britain was very superior at the sea compared to France and this is demonstrated by the **Battle of Trafalgar of 1805**. This is when Napoleon decided to attack Britain on water but the French troops were totally defeated. From that time, Napoleon gave up any attack on Britain using water. This naval inferiority on the part of France therefore gave Britain the advantage of defeating and weakening Napoleon, thus contributing to his downfall.

The formation of the Fourth Coalition led to the downfall of Napoleon. This coalition was formed in 1813 by Prussia, Austria, Russia, Britain and Sweden. These countries were determined to fight and defeat Napoleon once and for all. Consequently, they fought and defeated Napoleon in the Battle of the Nations in 1813 at Leipzig as well as at Waterloo in 1815 which marked the end of Napoleon's regime.

The rise of **nationalism** in the conquered states led to Napoleon's downfall. This was the desire by the people of the same historical background, language and geographical location to get independence from foreign control. Consequently, the spirit of nationalism made Spain, Russia and Italian states to fight wars against the French control of their territories. These wars led to the death of many French soldiers which weakened Napoleon's military ability and therefore contributed to his downfall by 1815.

The rise of **liberalism** in Europe also led to the downfall of Napoleon. This was the desire for the fundamental freedoms of man like freedom of worship, press and association. It also involved the desire for parliamentary governance and constitutional rule to avoid dictatorship. However, Napoleon had turned out to be a dictator both in France and the conquered states like Spain and the Italian states. As a result, the liberals decided to fight against Napoleon's dictatorship which eventually contributed to his downfall.

Fatigue contributed to Napoleon's downfall. By 1814, Napoleon had lost his intelligence, foresight and organizational abilities due to fatigue brought about by the endless wars and this is demonstrated by the many blunders he made in the later campaigns. For example, during the Moscow campaign he failed to foresee winter in Russia and as a result many of his soldiers were frozen to death because they lacked winter clothes that would keep them warm in the cold season. The death of the French soldiers therefore weakened the French army and the allies found it easy to defeat Napoleon by 1815.

Economic weakness led to the downfall of Napoleon. By 1815, the French economy had declined because of the revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars which drained the French resources. This caused economic problems like industrial breakdown, unemployment and inflation. Such a deteriorating economic situation made France unable to properly sustain any war against the economically powerful European countries especially Britain. This led to the defeat of Napoleon which eventually contributed to his downfall.

Over reliance on Napoleon's command by the French soldiers led to the defeat of the army which equally contributed to the downfall of Napoleon. The French forces were used to winning battles when Napoleon was in command and many European countries used to fear the military power of Napoleon. However, the French forces were less effective in those battles where Napoleon was not in command and they were always defeated. His enemies also learnt that it was always easy to

defeat the French forces as long as they were not commanded by Napoleon. Therefore, they would concentrate their forces in such battles which led to the defeat and subsequent downfall of Napoleon.

The weaknesses in the domestic policy of Napoleon contributed to his downfall. For example, by 1815, Napoleon had become a dictator who censored the press as well as oppressing his political opponents. His education system and the Code Napoleon were also against the revolutionary principle of equality between the men and women. Napoleon also practiced nepotism and favouritism when he employed his close friends and family members like Josef Bonaparte, Louis Bonaparte and Jerome Bonaparte. He also revived over taxation so as to finance his endless wars. All these domestic weaknesses made Napoleon unpopular among the Frenchmen and therefore contributed to his downfall.

THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN THE DOWNFALL OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

The downfall of Napoleon in 1815 was a result of the efforts of several European countries as noted below;

BRITAIN

- Britain was against the French revolution of 1789 and Napoleon's policies. For example, British journalists like Gibbon and Burke always talked ill against the French revolution of 1789. This therefore influenced the British public to turn against Napoleon I.
- Britain's military success over Napoleon I like in the Egyptian Campaign of 1798 – 1799 as well as in the Battle of Trafalgar of 1805 finally weakened Napoleon Bonaparte I.
- Britain's superiority at the sea over Napoleon Bonaparte I led to his downfall.
- Britain's defeat of the Continental System through issuing the Orders in Council of 1807 weakened Napoleon Bonaparte I.
- Britain's economic power over Napoleon Bonaparte I challenged him.
- Britain played a big role in the formation of the Third coalition of 1805 as well as the Fourth coalition of 1813.
- Britain played a role in the Peninsular War of 1808 – 1813 by supporting Spain and Portugal which led to the defeat of Napoleon.
- Britain aroused European nationalism against Napoleon in states like Spain, Denmark etc. She encouraged such conquered states to rise up against Napoleon.
- Britain participated in the Battle of All Nations or the War of Liberation of 1813 – 1814 which led to Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig in 1813 and also at Waterloo in 1815.
- It was Britain that exiled Napoleon to St. Helena in 1815 which marked his end.

RUSSIA

- Russia was a member of the Third and Fourth coalitions against France.
- Russia resented Napoleon's continental system.
- Russia denied food to the French soldiers during the Moscow campaign through the scorched earth policy.
- It used unfamiliar methods of fighting on the French troops.

- It reduced Napoleon's forces from over 610,000 soldiers to 20,000 soldiers leading to her military decline.
- Russia as a country was too large for the French forces.

SPAIN

- Spain resented Napoleon's dictatorship.
- It also fought France due to the imprisonment of the Pope.
- The Spanish mountainous nature disabled the French fighters as it made communication difficult.
- There was Spanish nationalism against the French country.
- Spain allied with Britain and Portugal in the peninsular war.

PORTUGAL

- It allied with Spain and Britain in the Peninsular War.
- Portugal was a member of the Fourth coalition.
- Its soldiers used unfamiliar fighting methods against the French forces.

PRUSSIA

- It was a member of the Third and Fourth coalitions against Napoleon.
- It fought against France in the Battle of the Nations of 1813.
- There was nationalism in Prussia against the French control.
- It was also advanced militarily compared to France.

AUSTRIA

- Fought against France in the "Battle of Nations" of 1813.
- It was a member of the Third and Fourth coalitions.
- It also resented the imprisonment of the Pope by Napoleon because it was a major catholic state in Europe.
- It resented Napoleon's expansion policy in Europe which threatened her survival as an Empire especially when Napoleon took over some Austrian territories like Italy and Belgium.
- It hosted the Congress of Vienna from 1814 to 1815 from where the European powers resolved to finally defeat Napoleon once and for all.

THE ITALIAN STATES

- They opposed the arrest and imprisonment of the Pope.
- They rejected the continental system.
- There was an Italian nationalism against the French control.
- They demanded for their freedoms or liberties.
- They resented the exploitation of their economic resources by Napoleon.

FRANCE

- The unpopularity resulting from the continental system made Napoleon to be rejected by France.
- The French military generals and parliament forced him to surrender because they were tired of his unending wars.
- France was also disgusted with his dictatorship.
- France had over relied on the command of Napoleon we failed the country with increasing war fronts.
- Weaknesses in Napoleon's domestic policy.
- France also opposed Napoleon because of imprisonment of the Pope.

Reference Questions:

To what extent was Britain responsible for the downfall of Napoleon the Great in 1815?

“Russia was primarily responsible for the downfall of Napoleon in 1815”. Discuss.

THE IMPACT OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE I ON EUROPE

- He played a big role in the 1789 French revolution as a soldier for example in the Italian and Egyptian campaigns.
- His role in the Whiff of Grape shot of 1795 in which he suppressed the royalists who were demonstrating against the Directory Government.
- He contributed to the French conquest of Belgium and the Italian states which promoted the French glory in Europe.
- He contributed to the spread of the republican ideology in Europe. This was through the establishment of republics like the Cisalpine Republic in Italy.
- He made economic reforms in France which saved the country from economic decline (give examples).
- He made administrative reforms in France.
- He made judicial reforms in France like the Code Napoleon.
- He made reforms in public works.
- He made religious reforms in France.
- He created the Napoleonic Dynasty in Europe which ensured that his relatives controlled the conquered states in Europe.
- He promoted agricultural development in France.
- He carried out military reforms.
- He led to the spread of the Napoleonic wars and unrest or instability in Europe.
- He imprisoned the pope in 1809 which generated hatred from the Catholics all over Europe.
- He declared the Continental System which created economic difficulties both in France and Europe as a whole.
- He led to the rise of nationalism in Europe among the conquered states like the German and Italian states. This laid a foundation for the unification struggles of Italy and Germany.
- He led to the rise of liberalism in Europe especially when he became a dictator in the conquered states.
- Through the wars, Napoleon conquered many states and made France the most powerful country Europe. This changed the balance of power in Europe which threatened other European powers.

- He led to the calling of the Vienna Congress of 1814 – 1815 which subsequently gave birth to the signing of the Vienna Settlement of 1815.

Questions: