

MA HISTORY
IInd SEMESTER 2020
New Syllabus

Course VI History of Europe (1789-1919)

Q. Who were Girondist and Jacobins? What were their differences, and what were the causes of the fall of the Girondist. ?

On the 20th June 1791, the king, Louis XVI tried to run away from France. This event gave birth to two political parties in France-one the Girondist Party and two, the Jacobin Party. Both these parties thought that the king was a traitor and should be removed. They wanted to establish a republic in France.

1. Girondist Party :- Most of the leaders of the party belonged to the Gironde province of France. Therefore their party was called Girondist. The real leader was a woman- Madam Roland. This party wanted to remove the king by peaceful and constitutional means.
2. Jacobin Party :- The leaders of this party held their meeting in an old Church of Jacobe in Paris. Therefore their party was called Jacobin party. There were three important leaders of this party- Danton, Marat and Robespierre. This party believed in violence and bloodshed to remove the king.

Work of Legislative Assembly Oct. 1791 to Sep. 1792 :- In the beginning, Girondist Party was more powerful in the Legislative Assembly.

- (1) They passed two bills against the priests and nobles who had fled from the Country to Australia (Emigres). Louis XVI had been given the rights of postponement of the Bills by the Constitution of 1791. He postponed the two bills against the priests and Émigre nobles for two years. The Girondist charged the king for supporting the enemies of the country.
- (2) Declaration of war against Austria and Prussia :- on the 20th April 1792, the Girondist declared war on Austria and Prussia. In the beginning French armies began to be defeated. Girondists could not organize the war and slowly the countries leadership began to slip from their hands to the Jacobins.
- (3) Declaration of the Duke of Brunswick 25th July 1792 :- Duke of Brunswick was the leader of the Army of Austria and Prussia advancing towards Paris. On 25th July 1792, he declared that he is

- coming to Paris and if anyone harmed Louis XVI, he will be severely punished and the whole city of Paris will be destroyed.
- (4) Arrest of Louis XVI-10th August 1792 :- The Jacobins, under the leadership of Danton, attacked the King's palace on 10th August 1792 and arrested Louis XVI. The Constitution of 1791 was finished and new elections were ordered for National Convention.
 - (5) September Massacres :- Armies of Austria and Prussia continued to advance towards Paris. On the 1st September 1792, they came very near to Paris. Jacobins under the leadership of Marat began to murder the supporters of the king in Paris and from 2nd to 6th of September about 2000 persons were put to death. This event is known as September Massacres.
 - (6) Result of September Massacres :- The difference between Girondist and Jacobins were further widened. The Girondists blamed Jacobins for September massacres and called them murders. There could not be any friendship between the two parties.
 - (7) Trial and Execution of Louis XVI :- In the National Convention the Girondist tried to save the life of the king. The Jacobins wanted to put him to death. During the trial, an iron box was found which contained the letters of Louis XVI written to Kings of Austria and Prussia. His guilt was proved and he was sentenced to death on 21st January 1793.
 - (8) Fall of the Girondist Party -2nd June 1793 :- The Jacobins now said that the Girondists were also traitors because they had tried to save the life of Louis XVI.

On the 2nd June 1793, under the leadership of Robespierre, the Jacobins arrested 29 leaders of the Girondist Party in the National Convention. One after another they were all sentenced to death. Madam Roland before her death said "O Liberty! What crimes are committed in thy name!"

Causes of the downfall of Girondists :-

- a. The Girondists were merely idealists and not practical.

The Girondists believed in the ideal of a republic, but they wanted to remove the king by peaceful means which was not practical.
- b. Declaration of war in April 1792 :-

They allowed war on Austria and Prussia but could not control it. When the French armies began to be defeated, the leadership of the country passed to the Jacobins.

c. They tried to save the life of Louis XVI :-

The Jacobins told the people that Girondists were also traitors who wanted to help the king.

d. The supporters of Girondists were in provinces, while the supporters of Jacobins were the people of Paris. With the help of Paris mob, Robespierre arrested 29 leaders of the Girondist Party on 2nd June 1793 and put them to death one after the other.

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