

# **French Revolution and the Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte**

Napoleon Bonaparte was a French statesman and military general. He was born in 1769 and lived his early adult life as a military officer, rising through the ranks of the army and becoming the leader of France at the age of 30. Napoleon's army career coincided with French Revolution, an endeavor by the French people to oppose monarchy and create a sense of collective identity among the French people. Nonetheless, the Revolution led to chaos for years after the successful ouster of the monarchy on 10 August 1792. Napoleon's character and popularity offered a solution to the several years of the French Revolution that had torn apart French society. One of the main reasons for the prolonged turmoil was the inability of the revolutionists to select a reliable leader that would become the face of the Revolution. Napoleon's installment as the leader in November 1799 deescalated chaos in the post-revolution France and created a stable France. The French Revolution led to the rise of Napoleon as it offered him the opportunity to appreciate military administration and order, create a clear vision of what his administration would do, and spread the notion that his government would be nothing like the previous leadership.

### **Rise through Military-Style Command and Management**

The position of Napoleon as the leader of the French Revolution affected it in many ways. Foremost, Napoleon's leadership acknowledged the military's essential role in the society's administration. Napoleon had a successful military career through which he managed to gather most of the country's military powers within his reach. He was educated in France, joined the military in 1785, and fought in the Revolutionary Wars. Given his military prowess and ability to coordinate soldiers, Napoleon was promoted to Brigadier General in 1793 (Brown, p. 8). Under

this military position, Napoleon led victories against Austrian armies in northern Italy, leading to the negotiation of the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. In his military endeavors, Napoleon attempted to capture Egypt between 1798 and 1799, but suffered defeat by the British in the Battle of the Nile. At just 30 years of age, the military exposure of Napoleon Bonaparte ascended to the highest political office in France after a successful coup and overthrow of the French Directory.

His military experience enabled him to form a Consulate, become the first consul and the first Emperor of France later, a position he used to conquer much of Europe. His army-like commanding style of leadership prompted a shift to rely on risky enthusiasm and strategies from the traditional army approach to operations. Such strategies that enabled him to seize power from the government of the day and secure the present and future of France through conquest could not have been possible without the military preparedness Napoleon gained from the Revolutionary Wars. He managed to restore order in France after a decade of chaotic Revolution.

### **Rise through Perceived Clearer Vision than the Visionless French Revolution**

Secondly, Napoleon could create a clear vision of what he believed the role of the new and reformed government post-French Revolution should have been. Hosack (p. 5) noted that Napoleon expressed a solid belief that the primary function of the government after the French Revolution was to protect its citizens. Napoleon's vision offered the supporters of the French Revolution a standard to aspire to, which persuaded them to promote the new ideas of governance and leadership, ending a decade of chaos. With a view of stamping his authority and achieving what his government stood for, he established the Napoleonic Code in 1804. The

Napoleonic Code would replace the fragmented pre-revolutionary France laws by recognizing the principles of civil liberty, the secular character of the state, and the equality of all men before the law. Even though the Code did not advocate for equality before the law for women in the same manner as men, the legal amendments adopted were in line with the ideas of the French Revolution. In a bid to protect the citizens following the Revolution, Napoleon understood that France needed a solid, single set of laws that did not suffer exemptions, special charters, and privileges granted by feudal lords and kings. Other than the Napoleonic Code, which changed the nature of the civil law legal system by enabling adherence to accessible written laws, Lyons (p. 13) echoed that Napoleon also actively participated in drafting and commissioning other codes that brought order to commerce and criminal law.

### **Rise by Contrasting pre-Revolution Leadership**

Thirdly, the rise of Napoleon to power marked the beginning of a new era of leadership that contrasted the previous clerical style, leading to satisfaction among revolutionists and bringing the French Revolution to a halt. With a new government in place, Napoleon had a Consulate with three parliamentary assemblies- the Tribunate, the Council of State, and the Legislative Assembly (Rowe, p. 21). With the Conservative Senate in place, Napoleon made the French citizens feel the need to stop the Revolution and rally behind his well-thought-through government that promised to serve the people. Although the actual power was held by Napoleon himself as the First Consul, there was a notion of shared executive powers among the three consuls.

This research paper shows that the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte was made possible by the French Revolution. The French Revolution made possible the wars that Napoleon got a chance to fight in and sharpen his military-style leadership. Additionally, the French Revolution made it possible for the public to turn against a previously established monarchy, which was replaced by an ineffective French Directory. His plans and government, including the Napoleonic Code and the Consul became acceptable alternatives, leading to his acceptance as the First Consul and Emperor of France.

### Works Cited

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