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NABA BALLYGUNGE MAHAVIDYALAYA

(Formerly CHARUCHANDRA EVENING COLLEGE)

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Topic of the seminar: History of the Modern Europe

Seminar type: Departmental Students' Seminar

Date: 7th December 2023

Organizers: Department of History, Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya

No. of participants: 20

Link to the seminar on Institutional Youtube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xQvrSj9aHM>



Poster showing the topic of the seminar, department, date and time

Ghosh

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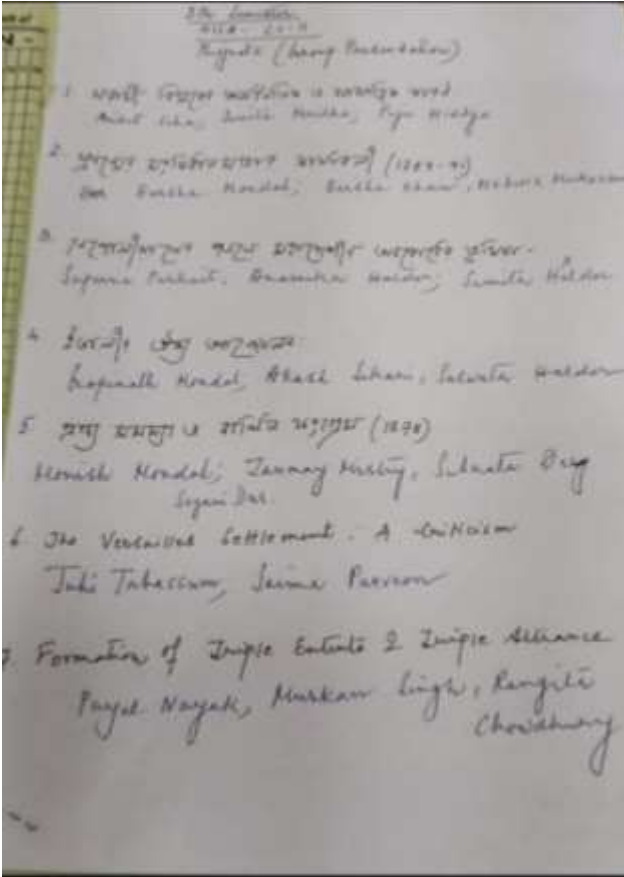


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The names of the topics and students-participants against each topic

Names of the topics in English and the presenters:

1. Economic and Sociological Reasons behind French Revolution: Aniket Saha, Sumita Mridha, Puja Middya
2. National Constituent Assembly of France and its functions: Barsha Mondal, Barsha Khan, Mehwez Mukarram
3. Role of the Continental system behind Napoleon's Downfall: Suparna Purkait, Anamika Halder
4. Unification of Italy: Gopinath Mondal, Akash Shikari, Saswata Halder
5. Eastern Question and Berlin Congress: Monish Mondal, Tanmoy Mistry, Subrata Dey, Sayani Das
6. The Versailles Settlement: A Criticism— Juhi Tabassum, Saima Parveen
7. Formation of Triple Entente and Triple Alliance: Payal Nayek, Muskan Singh, Rangita Chowdhury

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Presentation 1:

Economic and Sociological Reasons behind French Revolution

Student presenters: Aniket Saha, Sumita Mridha, Puja Midhya

Focusing on “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”, the paper chartered out the social reason of 1789 French Revolution. Social causes of French Revolution. It opined that in the late eighteenth century, social circumstances in France were severely unfair and exploitative. The first two estates, the clergy and the nobles were the most privileged sections in French society. They were not required to pay any state taxes. Weak economic policies, poor leadership, and exploitative political and social systems all contributed to the French revolution. The authoritarian monarchy, bankruptcy, and wasteful royal expenditures were among the political causes of the French revolution. The commoners were acutely aware of the problems and were becoming less and less prepared to support the bourgeoisie's exclusion from political power and honourable positions. The bourgeoisie resented its exclusion from political power and honorable positions. The spark that ignited the French Revolution was actually government debt, accumulated during the course of two wars, and the desire of King Louis XVI to increase taxes to pay off that debt. Some of the economic causes for the French revolution are as, the presenters' paper referred to: The French government was facing a long-running fiscal crisis as the country had helped American colonies to gain independence. war added more than a billion livres to a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion livres. The crisis were of such severity that on the eve of the Revolution in 1789, the French government was effectively bankrupt. The deregulation of the grain market, advocated by liberal economists, resulted in an increase in bread prices. In periods of bad harvests it would lead to food scarcity which would prompt the masses to revolt.



Aniket Saha, Sumita Mridha and Puja Midya, 5th Semester History Honours students of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, are presenting paper on 7.12.2023 in Departmental students' seminar.

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Presentation 2

National Constituent Assembly of France and its functions

Student presenters: Barsha Mondal, Barsha Khan, Mehwiz Mukarram

It was a well-researched paper. Among the functions of the National Constituent Assembly, it mentioned: Writing France's first written constitution, abolishing feudalism, political debates, and enacting revolutionary laws. During the French Revolution, the Constituent Assembly of France functioned from 1789 to 1791. The functions of this meeting include: Abolition of feudalism on August 4, 1789, Political debates between the National Constituent Assembly and the National Convention, Enact revolutionary laws, The current constitution of France was adopted on October 4, 1958. It is commonly called the Constitution of the Fifth Republic. It mentioned that the functions can be divided into four categories: constitutional, economic, legal religious. Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers, also known as Trias politica, is a fundamental principle in many constitutions. The theory states that each branch of government should have its own power and responsibilities, and that the branches should check and balance each other. Montesquieu believed that this separation of powers would prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful. He also believed that laws and social systems should be understood in the context of the factors that affect them. Elections for the Legislative Assembly were held in September 1791. Most of the 745 deputies elected to the Legislative Assembly had a record in provincial or municipal government or the public service. Many were members of the Cercle Social and the Jacobin Club who had not won seats in the National Constituent Assembly. As far as economic reformation was concerned, The National Constituent Assembly of France introduced economic reforms during the French Revolution, including: Abolition of feudalism: On August 4, 1789, the Assembly abolished the feudal system, which included the seigneurial rights of the nobility and the tithes paid to the Catholic clergy; Nationalization of church lands: The Assembly nationalized the lands of the Roman Catholic Church to pay off the public debt; Consolidation of public debt: The Assembly consolidated the public debt; End of noble tax exemptions: The Assembly ended noble tax exemptions. In the realm of legal functions, it introduced Civil equality: The Assembly established civil equality among men, at least in metropolitan France; Increased voting rights: The Assembly made more than half of adult males eligible to vote. In religious functions, the National Constituent Assembly, as Barsha, Barsha and Mehwiz pointed out were, Reorganization of the church: The Assembly enacted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which was rejected by the Pope and many clergy members; Freedom of worship: The Assembly established freedom of worship

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Barsha Mondal, Barsha Khan and Mehwez Mukarram, 5th Semester History Honours students of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, are presenting paper on 7.12.2023 in Departmental students' seminar.

Presentation 3:

Role of the Continental system behind Napoleon's Downfall

Student speakers: Suparna Purkait, Anamika Halder

It was a well-studied paper on Napoleon Bonaparte's strategy to keep the eternal foe England away from France. Tracing from Napoleon strategic closure of the three ports of Germany in order to permanently hinder England's entry into France, the paper touched on not so good financial condition of Europe tinged with unemployment. They also mentioned Napoleon's policy of declaring that any country that would participate in trade with England will have to pay tax. Mentioning Milan Decree in 1807 and Fontainebleau Decree in 1810, the paper traced the strategies taken by Napoleon to ensure British defeat in economic warfare. Referring to Boomerang Effect that historians mention to Napoleon's Continental system backfiring, the paper mentioned: The continental system cut off access to cheap British goods in Europe, including sugar cane from the Caribbean. This led to a rise in beet sugar production, which was promoted by Napoleon's legislation. The continental system also led to the formation of coalitions that defeated Napoleon.



Suparna Purkait and Anamika Halder, 5th Semester History Honours students of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, are presenting paper on 7.12.2023 in Departmental students' seminar.

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Presentation 4:

Unification of Italy

Student presenters: Gopinath Mondal, Akash Shikari, Saswata Halder

The paper reflected endeavour in achieving clarity in understanding this important part of History syllabi. It began with Causes behind Italian Unification tracing the Background. The idea of Italy as an entity, of Italian as a noble and beautiful language and of the common cultural roots of the Italian city and states, can be traced back to the Renaissance period and even earlier. Francisco Petrarca (1304- 1374 was a poet and earliest humanist) turned to antiquity for inspiration and solace following the decline of the two great forces of universalism – the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. The paper did not miss to mention that in Italy poets played a major role in the development of nationalism. It was humanistic literary elite, which played a role in the diffusion of the Italian language. It was good to see the students mentioning the linguistic point. The absence of a vernacular reformation as in Germany confined the Italian language to tiny elite of 2.5% who commonly used the Italian language even in 1860. Italian nationalism of the 19th century failed to overcome the cultural elitism of the Italian humanists and literary masters. Political and Economic Background was researched in details. During the first half of the 16th century, Italy faced an intermittent conflict between French, Swiss, Spanish and German soldiers for political supremacy on Italian states – Venice, Milan, Florence, Naples and the Papal states. As far as Role of France is concerned, the presenters said that it was the French Revolution, which provided a model for Italian nationalism. The Kingdom of Italy created by Napoleon helped to foster Italian national sentiment, but it also reduced it to a continental colony of France. The Napoleonic legal codes and prefectural system, which was introduced in Italy, helped to define the model of a unified national state. It was as a reaction to French domination and Napoleon's identification with Imperial Rome that Italian writers choose to reject the Roman heritage. As far as Role of Secret society is concerned, Carbonari of southern Italy who enjoyed the greatest public support among the 19th century revolutionary organizations were more interested in democratizing Naples than in unifying Italy. After the failure of the revolutions of 1830-31, Italians felt increasingly the need to rely on their own endeavours and on open methods of agitation. Giuseppe Mazzini, started Young Italy and rejected the sectarian model of revolutionary dictatorship and terror. He envisioned a republican form of government for a united Italian state. Mazzini was a democratic nationalist who simultaneously rejected both the elitism of the moderates and the Jacobin ideal of revolutionary dictatorship. Radical nationalism in Italy found its greatest exponent in Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) who had earlier joined a branch of the Carbonari in 1827 but soon became disillusioned by their lack of clear purpose. He felt that Italy's freedom from Austrian domination depended entirely on the destruction of aristocratic privilege and clerical authority.

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After a failed armed uprising at Savoy in 1834 Mazzini went into exile in London. The paper charted that the Italian national movement was not based industrial bourgeoisie, political unification or strong custom union like the ones in Germany. While south Italy was considerably economically weak. National unification in Italy was based on the existence of several states, which tried to preserve their autonomy and privileges in the context of Franco-Austrian rivalry.



Gopinath Mondal, Akash Shikari and Saswata Halder, 5th Semester History Honours students of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, are presenting paper on 7.12.2023 in Departmental students' seminar.

Presentation 5:

Eastern Question and Berlin Congress

Student presenters: Monish Mondal, Tanmoy Mistry, Subrata Dey, Sayani Das

Tracing the cartographic presentation of Eastern Europe; the paper first defined what is eastern question. Eastern Question, diplomatic problem posed in the 19th and early 20th centuries by the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire centring on the contest for control of former Ottoman territories. Any internal change in the Turkish domains caused tension among the European powers, each of which feared that one of the others might take advantage of the political disarray to increase its own influence. This question arose periodically during the 19th century—e.g., during the Greek revolution of the 1820s, in the Crimean conflict (1853–56), the Balkan crisis of 1875–78 and the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. The paper mentioned that the core problems of Eastern question were the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, Balkan Nationalism and Bulgarian Revolution. The outcome in the Balkans was a hybrid nationalism transformed by indigenous traditions. The development of Rumanian nationalism after the annexation of Transylvania in 1919 was determined by the merging of the Ottoman Wallachia and Moldavia with the Habsburg province.


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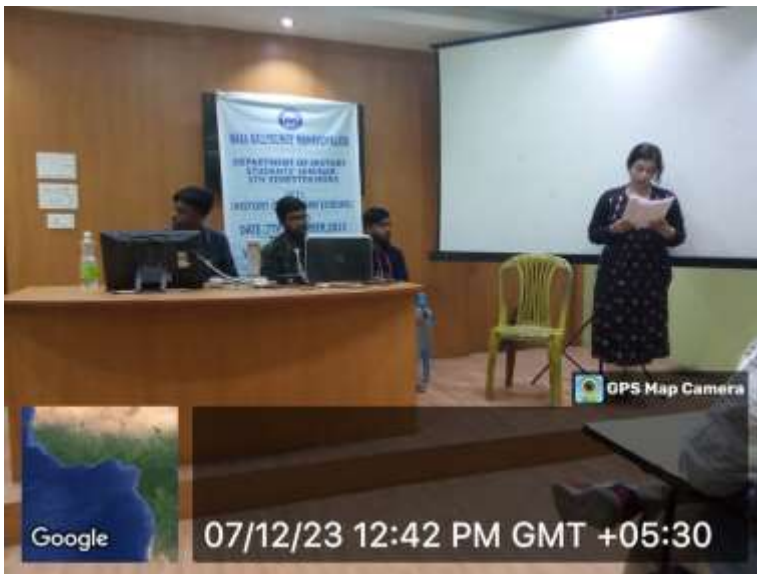
The paper delineated the causes of Ottoman Empire's weaknesses that included:

- Military failures: The empire lost battles, such as the Battle of Vienna in 1683 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78.
- Economic stagnation: The empire struggled with poor financial policies, a loss of tax base, and war reparations.
- Political weakness: The Sultan's authority was undermined by a lack of effective succession mechanisms, leading to weak rulers and power struggles.
- Social unrest: Agrarian unrest and growing nationalism strained the empire's unity and stability.

Competition from other trade routes: The empire competed with trade from the Americas and India.

Rebellions: Peasants joined rebel bands and took over large parts of the empire.

Weaker central government: The central government became weaker, and the armies broke up.



Monish Mondal, Subrata Dey, Tanmoy Mistry and Sayani Das, 5th Semester History Honours students of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, are presenting paper on 7.12.2023 in Departmental students' seminar.

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Presentation 6:

The Versailles Settlement: A Criticism—

Student presenters- Juhi Tabassum, Saina Parveen

The two students hit upon the core of the significance of the Treaty of Versailles signed on 28th June 1919 by Weimar Republic and Allied Forces, that it officially ended the World War I. It was significant because it imposed strict penalties on Germany, and it set the stage for the Second World War.

They said that the treaty forced Germany to give up territory, pay reparations, and disarm. The treaty created an international organization to prevent future wars. Mentioning President Woodrow Wilson, they said that Wilson's Fourteen Points inspired the treaty's provisions for disarmament, open diplomacy, and independence for former colonies. The Versailles Treaty also led Germans resented the treaty's harsh conditions, which contributed to economic turmoil and the rise of the Nazi party. The treaty's harsh conditions sowed the seeds of the Second World War. The government's instruction to the German peace delegation that went to Versailles, France, at the end of April 1919 show how wide was the gap between German and Allied opinion. In German eyes, the break with the past was complete, and the Wilsonian program of self-determination and equality of rights as set out in the Fourteen Points was binding on both sides. The fact that the Allied powers refused to permit negotiations and the character of the terms presented on May 7 provoked bitter indignation throughout all classes in Germany.



Juhi Tabassum and Saina Parveen, 5th Semester History Honours students of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, are presenting paper on 7.12.2023 in Departmental students' seminar.

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Presentation 7

Triple Entente and Triple Alliance

Student presenters: Payel Nayak, Muskan Singh, Rangita Chowdhury

The paper approached four questions in details: Why were Triple Entente and Triple Alliance formed? Which countries formed Triple Entente? What is the difference between Triple Entente and Triple Alliance? What type of alliance was Triple Entente?

The Triple Entente was one of the two significant diplomatic alignments resulting from decades-long political maneuvering, an evolving balance of power, and the shifting of alignments between the major powers of Europe. In the decades between the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) and World War I (1914-1918), the European powers sought agreements to counter the growing national influence of their adversaries. These diplomatic and political contests culminated in the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance, the two major factions of World War I. Entente is a word of French origin meaning understanding or friendship. In diplomatic terms, an entente between nations means an informal alliance between members that allows pursuit of their own foreign policies. An entente is not a formal alliance and usually does not include a pledge of mutual defense in case of attack, but does include the promise to consult each other in the event of military aggression or crisis. The Triple Alliance was an agreement that promised mutual military, economic, and political support between its signatories, the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Kingdom of Italy. The agreement, signed on May 20, 1882, was periodically renewed until it expired in 1915, after World War I had started. The Triple Alliance was the culmination of diplomatic strategy and alliances engineered by the realpolitik considerations of Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), the prime minister of Prussia (1862-1873, 1873-1890) and first chancellor of the United German Empire. Realpolitik is politics based on practical and quantifiable factors rather than abstract or principled intentions. Otto von Bismarck, along with Machiavelli, George Kennan, and Henry Kissinger, was an accomplished practitioner of realpolitik. He used its principles to keep German adversaries and allies controlled throughout his career. The paper focused on the facts: The Triple Entente was a continental security arrangement for France; It was a way for Russia to reduce conflict so it could catch up technologically with the West; It was a diplomatic tool for Britain to support its empire.

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Payal Nayek, Muskan Singh and Rangita Chowdhury, 5th Semester History Honours students of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, are presenting paper on 7.12.2023 in Departmental students' seminar.



Group photo of the 5th semester History Honours students at the end of the seminar on 7.12.2023

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Charts made by the History Honours students of 5th semester of Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya on the topics of their presentation on “History of Modern Europe”, Departmental Students’ Seminar on 7.12.2023



Outcomes of the Seminar:

- ✓ Students were able to research on their chosen topics and learn beyond curriculum.
- ✓ Students were able to contemplate on their topics and establish their arguments
- ✓ Students were exposed to the platform of public speaking
- ✓ Students were provided with the ground to work in teams and develop team spirit

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