

CHAPTER 15

LIBERAL CHALLENGES TO RESTORATION EUROPE

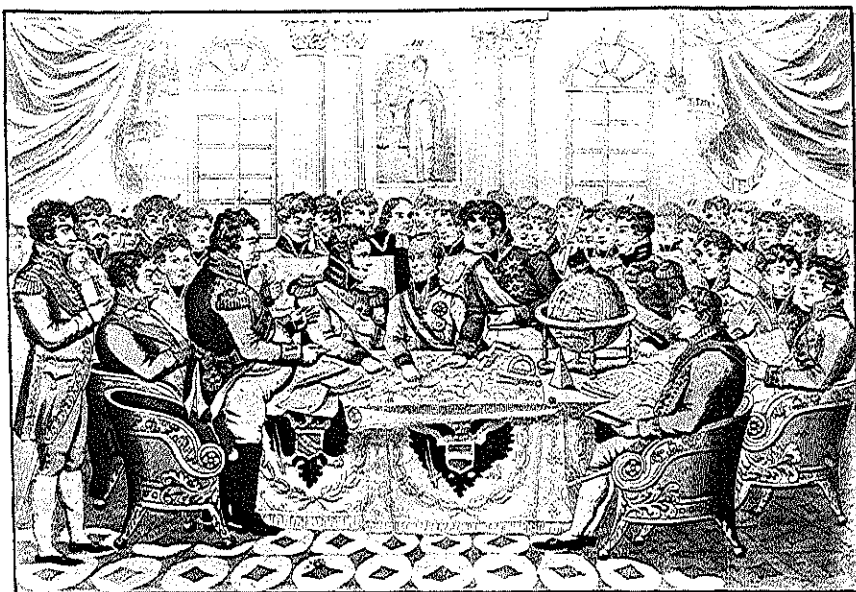


At the Congress of Vienna of 1815, representatives of the allies who had defeated Napoleon—Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain—came together to reestablish peace in Europe. They hoped that by imposing a treaty on France and creating an international mechanism, the Concert of Europe, they could prevent Europe from again being shaken by revolution in France or elsewhere. The Congress represented conservative impulses, standing against the liberalism and nationalism that espoused organizing states along ethnic or national lines and demanded reforms in the name of the popular sovereignty that conservatives blamed for the French Revolution and Napoleonic era.

Early nineteenth-century Vienna was a perfect setting for a gathering of the representatives of Europe's sovereign powers. The Schönbrunn Palace on the outskirts of the Habsburg capital and Vienna's own elegant baroque buildings still reflected the grandeur of absolutism and traditional court life, despite the years of warfare that had virtually bankrupted the Austrian monarchy.

At the Congress, which met between September 1814 and June 1815, the Austrian hosts staged elaborate dinners, elegant balls, and festive fireworks displays, and organized hunts helped relieve boredom. Artists stood ready to paint the portraits of the members of the diplomatic delegations. Aristocratic guests amused themselves by trying to guess which of the hundreds of maids and porters were spying for the Austrians. The antics of some representatives provided as much comic relief as irritation. A Spanish diplomat insisted that his country should have the right to several small Italian states. The other representatives were so annoyed by this demand that they invited him to go on a ballooning excursion, and sent him off in the general direction of the Alps.

What the English poet George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824), called “that base pageant,” the Congress of Vienna provided an opportunity for the informal discussions that had always been an important part of traditional



The Congress of Vienna.

European diplomacy. In fact, the Congress met officially but once, to sign the final treaty, which had been negotiated in smaller formal and informal gatherings of the various delegations. In the wake of the many territorial changes that had occurred during the previous twenty-five years, the representatives redrew the map of Europe, particularly of Central Europe, putting old rulers back on their thrones.

After Napoleon's final defeat in 1815—the Congress of Vienna continued to meet during the 100 Days—a protracted struggle among the conservative forces, monarchies, nobles, established churches, and liberals took place in Europe. "Liberalism" as an economic and political philosophy implied the absence of government constraints that could interfere with the development of the individual. It was a philosophy perfectly suited to the middle classes in "the bourgeois century." The middle classes were an extremely diverse social group that ranged from merchants and manufacturers of great wealth to struggling shopkeepers (see Chapter 14). Rapid population growth swelled the number of lawyers, notaries, and other middle-class professionals. The entrepreneur came to be revered. Moreover, the middle classes' liberal emphasis on individual freedom found expression not only in economics and politics but also in the literature, art, and music of romanticism, which celebrated individual fulfillment through subjectivity and emotion. Boasted one German liberal, "We are the times."

Liberal movements were in many places closely tied to the emergence of nationalism as a source of allegiance and sovereignty. Nationalism was usually defined by language and cultural traditions, and the quest to establish

national states whose borders would correspond to patterns of ethnic residence. Nationalism threatened the territorial settlements effected by the Congress of Vienna. The Habsburg Austrian monarchy itself ruled eleven major nationalities without a state of their own, including Hungarians and Poles, who had once had fully independent states. In the meantime, German and Italian nationalists began to call for national political unification.

THE POST-NAPOLEONIC SETTLEMENT

The allied representatives to the Congress were determined to ensure that France could not again rise to a position of domination in Europe. Thus, even before Napoleon's first defeat and abdication in 1814, representatives of Prussia, Austria, Russia, and Great Britain formed a coalition, the "Quadruple Alliance," intended to prevent France or any other state or political movement from threatening the legitimate sovereigns of Europe.

The Treaty of Paris

The Treaty of Paris was signed in March 1814, thus before the Congress of Vienna. Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand (1754–1838), who had served Napoleon with flexibility rooted in an uncanny sense of survival, became the intermediary. He exploited tensions among the allies, especially between Prussia and Austria. The victorious powers agreed to restore the Bourbons to the throne of France in the person of the count of Provence, brother of the executed Louis XVI, who took the throne as Louis XVIII. The allies might well have forced the French to sign a draconian treaty. But they were dealing not with the defeated Napoleon but with the restored Bourbon monarch, whose throne they wanted to solidify against liberal challenges within France.

France retained lands incorporated before November 1, 1792, including parts of Savoy, Germany, and the Austrian Netherlands, as well as the former papal city of Avignon. France gave up claims to the remainder of the Austrian Netherlands, the Dutch Republic, the German states, the Italian states, and Switzerland. It lost to Britain the Caribbean islands of Trinidad, Tobago, Santa Lucia, and part of Santo Domingo. The allies demanded no reparations from France. Yet difficult territorial issues remained to be resolved in central and southern Europe.

Diplomatic Maneuvering at the Congress of Vienna

The Congress of Vienna was almost entirely the work of diplomats representing Austria, Prussia, Great Britain, and Russia. The goals were threefold: to redistribute territory in the wake of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, to achieve a balance of power that would prevent any one



British Foreign Secretary Viscount Robert Castlereagh.

state from becoming too powerful and potentially aggressive, and to make future revolutionary movements impossible. At the beginning, defeated France played only the role of a very interested observer (although French was the official language of the conference). But Talleyrand's wily off-stage negotiations gradually brought France to the position of a full-fledged participant in the deliberations.

The dominant figure in Vienna was the Austrian chancellor Prince Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859). Born in the German Rhineland, Metternich was the son of a noble who had served at the court of the Habsburg monarch. Forced to

flee his homeland by the French invasion in 1792, he subsequently entered the diplomatic service in Vienna, rising to become the minister of foreign affairs in 1809. Metternich was a handsome dandy with immaculately powdered hair as at home in the social whirl of formal receptions and magnificent balls as in the petty intrigues of high society. He could bore people in five languages. But he was a determined, calculating practitioner of tough-minded diplomacy. Metternich dominated international affairs of the continent until 1848.

Foreign Secretary Viscount Robert Castlereagh (1769–1822) represented Britain. Aloof and painfully shy, Castlereagh, whose passion was sheepherding, went to Vienna in the hope of establishing Britain as the arbiter of European affairs. Now Europe's greatest power, the British Empire included one of every five people in the world. The British government sought the elimination of the French threat to its commercial interests as well as security. Moreover, Castlereagh and Metternich both viewed the prospect of Russian expansion in Central Europe with anxiety. Only Russia now seemed in a position to disrupt Europe through unilateral acts.

Tsar Alexander I of Russia (ruled 1801–1825) wanted the allies to affirm formally what he considered the religious basis of the European alliance. Alexander I was, above all, a deeply religious man who occasionally lapsed into an intense mysticism and overwhelming unhappiness as he became increasingly reactionary. Alexander I drafted a document that became the basis for the Holy Alliance. It asserted that the relations of the European sovereigns, "the delegates of Providence," would thereafter be based "upon

the sublime truths which the Holy Religion of Our Savior teaches." Emperor Francis I of Austria and Frederick William III of Prussia signed the document, but the British prince regent—the future George IV (ruled 1820–1830)—begged off. Castlereagh called it "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense." Prussia, Russia, and Austria promised mutual assistance wherever established religions and peace were threatened. In the moral claims of the Holy Alliance lay justification for the repression by the allies of any liberal and national movements in Europe.

The Congress System

The Congress of Vienna drew a map of Europe that lasted for several generations (see Map 15.1). Under Metternich's stern leadership, what became known as the Congress system restored the principle of dynastic legitimacy and the balance of international power in Europe. The future of Poland, which had lost its independence when it was last partitioned by Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1795, stood at the top of the list of contentious issues. Russian troops occupied much of Poland, which Tsar Alexander wanted to annex to the Russian Empire. Great Britain, France, and Austria, fearing increased Russian and Prussian power in Central Europe, formed an alliance to head off any attack in Central Europe by Russia or Prussia. In May, the Kingdom of Poland was proclaimed by the Congress. It was to include lands Austria and Prussia had seized during the earlier partitions. But "Congress Poland," as it came to be known (made up of about 20 percent of Poland's territory before the first partition of 1772; see Chapter 11), was despite a constitution nothing more than a Russian protectorate, with the tsar himself occupying the Polish throne. Moreover, large parts of what had been independent Poland remained in Prussia and in the Austrian Empire. Russia also held on to Finland, which it had conquered during the Napoleonic Wars. To balance Russian gains in the east, Prussia received the northern half of Saxony, which had cast its fate with Napoleon, as well as Polish-speaking Posen and the port city of Gdańsk.

In comparison with the debates over Poland and Saxony, the resolution of remaining territorial issues seemed easy. Prussia received territories on the left bank of the Rhine River to discourage French aggression to the east. The Prussian Rhineland was now separated from the eastern Prussian provinces by the states of Hanover and Hesse-Kassel. Prussia also received Swedish Pomerania and parts of Westphalia, but lost its outlet to the North Sea with the return of East Friesland to Hanover. Other buffers against France along its eastern border included Switzerland, reestablished as a neutral confederation of cantons, and the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, enlarged to include Genoa, Nice, and part of Savoy.

Most territorial settlements were made without the slightest consideration of local public opinion. Although the allies emphasized the principle of legitimacy in the territorial settlement, they never hesitated to dispense

with a number of smaller legitimate princes whose claims would have interfered with the creation of buffers against France. The republics of Genoa and Venice disappeared from the map.

The Congress placated Britain by awarding the former Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) to the Dutch, leaving a state friendly to Britain on France's northern border. The former stadholder of the Dutch Republic became King William I. But Castlereagh's plan to link the Dutch throne to the British monarchy by engineering the marriage of a British princess to the Dutch royal family failed, at least in part because the intended groom became royally drunk in the presence of the intended but most unwilling bride.

Austria was well compensated for the loss of the Austrian Netherlands with Lombardy and Venetia in Italy, much of Galicia, and Illyria on the coast of Dalmatia. The grand duchies of Parma, Modena, and Tuscany, too, had close family links to Vienna. The Congress restored the Bourbon dynasty to the throne of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Naples and Sicily). There, Ferdinand I introduced a constitution, but signed an alliance with Austria and promised not to introduce any further reforms without the latter's permission. Austrian garrisons and secret police in each Italian state helped assure Austrian domination of northern Italy.

Napoleon's remarkable escape from Elba in March 1815 and the dramatic episode of the 100 Days (see Chapter 13) did not change the most important aspects of the Congress's shuffling of European territories. The second Treaty of Paris, signed in November 1815 following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in June, however, pushed France back from its 1792 borders to those of 1790. Furthermore, the allies now exacted reparations totaling 700 million francs from France. Their armies would occupy France until the debt was settled.

Napoleon's victories in Central Europe had led to the end of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. On June 9, 1815, the Congress created a German Confederation of thirty-five states loosely joined by a Federal Diet (Bundestag), or governing body, that would meet in Frankfurt. In addition to Prussia and Austria, the Confederation also included the states of Bavaria, Hanover, Württemberg, the two Hesses, and Baden, and the independent, or "free," cities of Hamburg, Frankfurt, Bremen, and Lübeck. The Confederation did not, however, include the non-German lands of the Austrian Empire. Members of the Confederation pledged to assist each other if any of them were attacked or in any way threatened. But it was unlikely that unanimity could ever be achieved among the member states, or that states could be compelled to obey a decision made by the Confederation. The Diet merely afforded Metternich a means of bullying the smaller states. The German Confederation was anything but an affirmation of a move toward German national unification. German states, large and small, were proud of their traditions of autonomy, or what was known as "German particularism." By virtue of its Rhineland acquisitions, Prussia emerged as a rival for Austria's leadership of the Confederation and for dominance in Central Europe.

To preserve the settlements enacted at Vienna, the five major European powers (Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, Russia, and France) formed a "Concert of Europe." In this extension of the Congress of Vienna, representatives of the powers would meet annually. If necessary, they would join together to put down movements that could threaten the *status quo*. Metternich's Austria had the most to fear from national claims for independent states. Austria was both a state in the German Confederation and the most important province within its empire of many nationalities. The Austrian Empire stretched from the stately elegance of Vienna through the plains of Hungary, to isolated Romanian and Croatian villages. German was the language of the imperial bureaucracy, and of many of the towns, but one could find eleven major languages within the borders of the empire. The Habsburg monarchy depended on the support of the nobles of the favored nationalities—principally Austrian, Hungarian, and Croat—and the German-speaking middle classes. Metternich exploited the fear that the upper classes of the favored nationalities felt toward any awakening from the lower classes, particularly of other ethnic groups. This kept most Magyar (Hungarian) nobles loyal to the Habsburg dynasty, although some desired ultimate independence.

Tensions remained between the allies. Prussia and particularly Austria feared that Russia was seeking to expand its influence in the Balkans, especially among peoples of the Orthodox faith. Metternich therefore was willing to use Austrian armies to maintain the *status quo*, but he sought to avoid any joint Congress military action that might bring Russian armies into Central Europe or the Balkans. He thus wanted to keep alive the Austrian alliance with Britain against any future French, Prussian, or Russian aggression.

Castlereagh, on the other hand, was less concerned by Russia's expanded interests in Central Europe than about containing France. But he had reservations about the appropriateness of the Quadruple Alliance's intervention in the internal affairs of European states. The British participated in the annual gatherings of representatives of the Concert powers, but gradually withdrew from the Congress system. At Aachen in 1818, the allies agreed to withdraw their remaining troops from France, which, having paid off the war debts, now joined the Holy Alliance.

RESTORATION EUROPE

The monarchs, diplomats, and nobles at the Congress of Vienna were guided by conservative principles of monarchical legitimacy, with the right to the thrones of Europe to be determined by hereditary succession, and by close ties to the prerogatives of the established churches.

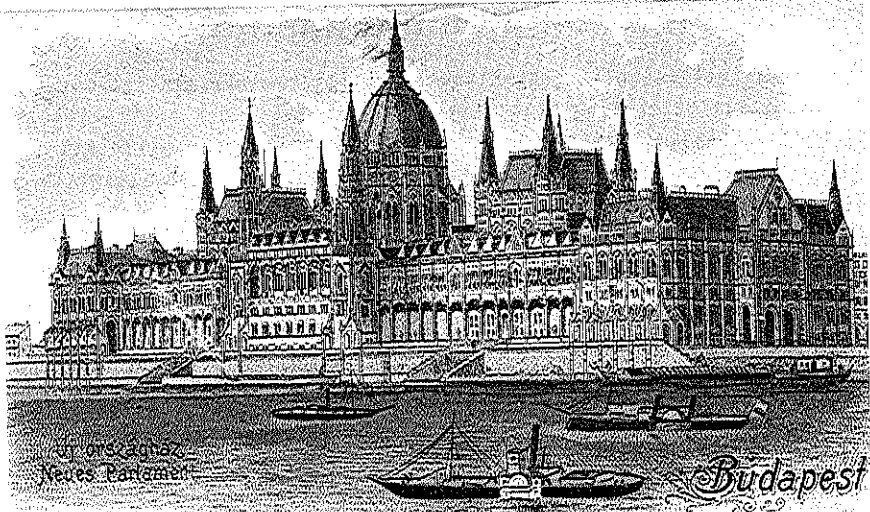
The Restoration of Monarchs, Nobles, and Clergy

Monarchs, nobles, and clergy returned to power, prestige, and influence. In the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, the members of the ruling House of Savoy came back wearing powdered wigs in the style of the eighteenth century, and the religious orders returned in force. In Lombardy-Venetia, consultative assemblies were established in Milan and Venice, but they did little more than assess taxes. With the exception of Baden, in the German states such bodies routinely approved legislation without limiting the power of the sovereign. The governments of the German states that had been occupied by France completely purged the remnants of Napoleonic administration, annulled French-inspired legislation, and imposed strict censorship.

When the French left the Papal States, Pope Pius VII immediately tried to exorcise all traces of French influence. Administrative reforms undertaken during the occupation ended; so did street lighting and even vaccinations, which were identified with the godless French. The clergy reclaimed most public offices. In Tuscany the duke ordered the colors of Giotto's portrait of Dante altered, fearing that observers would see in them the French tricolor flag.

The French Revolution had by no means eliminated noble influence in the states of Europe. Even in Britain, where the lines between landed and business wealth were more blurred than anywhere else, nobles still dominated the House of Commons. In France, the Bourbon monarchy restored nobles to political primacy. An electoral system based on landed wealth gave them a disproportionate advantage. In Spain, nobles were particularly numerous, although many of them were relatively poor. Sweden still counted about 12,000 nobles in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the Italian states, nobles still held sway in declining or stagnant walled towns like Palermo, Naples, and Rome, as they did in the countryside. Even in industrializing Milan and in Turin, nobles dominated the civic administration.

The farther east one went, the more nobles still dominated economic, social, and political life. Nobles (Junkers) owned 40 percent of the land of Prussia and retained their stranglehold over the officer corps. The army defiantly brushed aside possible competition from the Landwehr, the civilian reserve force commanded by mere commoners—merchants, teachers, and bureaucrats. In Russia, the officer corps remained a noble stronghold, reinforced by the aristocracy's near monopoly on appointments to military academies and to important posts in the civil service. In Austria, where the greatest 300 to 400 hereditary aristocratic families remained close to the Habsburg throne, 70 percent of those in top official posts had noble titles in 1829, and twenty years later the percentage had grown even more. Austrian Chancellor Metternich warned Tsar Alexander I about the dangers of the "intermediate class," which prospered by adopting "all sorts of disguises."



Postcard depicting the Houses of Parliament in Budapest.

Indeed, noble style and distinction retained great influence. In the architecture of public buildings and palaces, noble taste still predominated, as in the enormous neo-Gothic Parliament in Budapest, where nobles held sway as for centuries. In much of Europe, public buildings and statues affirmed aristocratic values and moral claims that had characterized the old regimes. European nobles retained close ties to the established churches, which still deferred to aristocratic status.

During the revolutionary era, the established churches, particularly the Catholic Church, had suffered. Europe now witnessed a marked religious revival, as in the Lutheran northern German states. In France, the old religious confraternities were revived; pious families contributed money to rebuild churches, monasteries, and convents destroyed or damaged during the Revolution. In Britain, the Established (Anglican) Church rejected the notion of divine-right or absolutist monarchy, yet most British conservatives believed the existing social order represented by the Anglican Church to be God-given and immutable. They strongly opposed (Protestant) Dissenters and, above all, Catholics.

Conservative Ideology

The conservative ideology of Restoration Europe drew on several sources. A theory of organic change held Christian monarchies to be, as a French writer put it, “the final creation in the development of political society and of

religious society." Conservatives insisted that states emerged through gradual growth and that monarchical legitimacy stemmed from royal birthright, confirmed by the sanction of religion. Catholic and Protestant conservatives insisted that the established churches provided a moral authority that complemented that of traditional monarchical institutions of government, which alone could maintain order. In Russia, the mystical Tsar Alexander I believed fervently that the Orthodox Church had an important role in keeping his people subservient. In the German states, Pietism broke with Protestant orthodoxy to teach that mankind was essentially sinful and required a repressive state to keep in line. Europe's conservative monarchies, depending on noble support, therefore sought to reestablish the privileges that the French Revolution and Napoleon had swept away.

A French writer, Joseph de Maistre (c. 1754–1821), emerged as a theorist of the alliance of throne and altar. Rejecting the concept of "natural rights" associated with Enlightenment thought, de Maistre argued that a king's power could never be limited by his subjects, because that power came only from God. De Maistre blamed the Revolution on the philosophes who had shaken the faith that underlay the absolutism of hereditary monarchy. To de Maistre, "the first servant of the crown should be the executioner." Most conservatives saw no difference between reform and revolution, believing that reform would inevitably lead to revolution and radical change. They stood adamantly opposed to political claims stemming from any notion of individual freedom, popular sovereignty, or membership in any particular national group.

Yet conservatives confronted the problem that their support was limited to a very narrow social and political base in a Europe that was slowly being transformed by the Industrial Revolution. It was testimony to the influence of the revolutionary era that the restored monarchy in France under Louis XVIII granted a Charter to the French people promising essential liberties. Moreover, the French monarchy, as well as that of Piedmont-Sardinia and even Metternich's Austria, utilized the bureaucratized state apparatus inherited from Napoleon to repress liberals, instead of restoring the less-centralized ruling structure that had typified Old Regime Europe.

LIBERALISM

Nineteenth-century liberalism was more than an economic and political theory: it was a way of viewing the world. Liberals—the term became current in the late 1830s—shared a confidence that human progress was inevitable, though gradual. From the Enlightenment, the bourgeoisie inherited a faith in science, which they held to be a motor of progress. Liberalism reflected middle-class confidence and economic aspirations.

"Liberty" became the watchword for the increasingly liberal middle classes, who protested their exclusion from political life in most European states. Liberals believed that all individuals should be equal before the law because—reflecting Enlightenment influence—they held that individuals are born good, free, and capable of improvement. Economic liberals for the most part believed in "laissez-faire," that the economy should be allowed to operate freely without state interference. (In contrast, liberals in more recent times want states to protect and assist ordinary people, particularly the poor.) Nineteenth-century liberals wanted government by constitution and by elected legislative bodies (such as the British Parliament and the French Chamber of Deputies) that would reflect some degree of sovereignty, with authority resting to some extent in the popular will rather than from monarchical legitimacy. Moreover, liberals demanded such civil liberties as freedom of the press and of assembly, and education for the lower classes, so that individuals could develop to their full capacities.

Liberals gradually replaced the discourse emphasizing the rights of man—which had emerged from the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and the French Revolution—with that of the legally defined rights of the citizen or subject. They put their faith in political and social rights embodied in constitutions, defined by law, and guaranteed by the state. Middle-class voters trusted elected legislative bodies to ensure that their rights as property owners could not be trampled by monarchs and aristocrats. They opposed electoral systems that were so narrowly constructed that only the wealthiest men were allowed to vote, as in Britain, France, and Prussia. Their goal was the expansion of the electoral franchise. But most liberals during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century did not believe that all people should vote, but rather that eligibility to vote should stem from the amount of property owned, and that only such men—and not women—of property should hold the electoral franchise.

Laissez-Faire

Adopting the maxim that "that government is best which governs least," liberals sought to place limits on state authority. In particular, they rejected government interference in the operations of the economy. Many liberals therefore opposed protectionism—state-imposed duties on imports. They followed the theories of Adam Smith (1723–1790), author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Their motto was "laissez-faire" ("let do as one pleases"), which meant that government should allow the "invisible hand" of supply and demand to bring change. Smith had argued that the unrestricted functioning of the free economy would ensure the pursuit of private interests. This would, in turn, serve the public interest by creating more wealth. Smith contended that a new social hierarchy would emerge if the economy were

allowed to follow its natural course. With their investments augmenting the general good, businessmen would supplant nobles and churchmen as the men to whom ordinary people deferred. Indeed, this was increasingly what was occurring in Western Europe.

Utilitarianism formed another cornerstone of the entrepreneurial ideal, indeed of liberalism in general. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) was its most influential exponent. In 1776, he posited that laws should be judged by their social utility, or whether or not they provided “the greatest good for the greatest number” of people. His famous standard question about any law or government institution was “Does it work?” Bentham’s utilitarianism reflected the relatively decentralized government of Britain and a pervasive belief among the king’s subjects that a government that made few demands and that served efficiently counted among the “liberties” of freeborn Britons.

Adam Smith’s successors gradually made a science out of speculations about the operations of the economy, insisting that the laws they postulated about the development of capitalism were based on scientific certainty. They optimistically pointed to the ongoing economic and social transformation of Britain in the manufacturing age. The theories of Smith and Bentham had a great impact on British businessmen. The social status of an individual increasingly came to be measured in terms of utility.

In 1817, the British economist David Ricardo (1772–1823) published *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*. Ricardo assumed the existence of an “iron law of wages,” which held that, if wages were left to the laws of supply and demand, they would fall to near subsistence level. This was certainly more cheering news for manufacturers than for workers. Elected to Parliament in 1819, Ricardo became a hero to the middle class. He reassured liberals by telling them that the “invisible hand” of the economy would bring continued economic growth, with the bulk of entrepreneurial profits going into employers’ pockets. Through the Political Economy Club, the *Westminster Review* (first published in 1824), and newspapers, the ideas of Bentham and other liberals reached a wide audience. Liberal economists earned academic appointments at the University of Edinburgh and the University of London (founded in 1828 by religious Dissenters). Economic liberalism found proponents in France and the German states.

Middle-class entrepreneurs did not always agree on what specific economic policies they favored. In the 1820s, Tory governments in Britain bored the first holes in the wall of protectionism by reducing the duty collected on Baltic timber, which had been kept high to favor Canadian exporters, and by establishing sliding scales for tariffs tied to the price of wheat in England. Many French industrialists demanded that the government maintain high tariffs to keep out British manufactured goods and machinery. Businessmen everywhere demanded improved transportation networks. Most liberals like Ricardo demanded the “freedom of work,” that is, that nothing constrain free agreements between employers and their workers. Many industrialists opposed state-imposed limits to their authority within the workplace,

including regulations concerning safety and child labor. They considered their factories to be their castles, in which they could do what they pleased.

British liberals believed that a strong state compromised political freedom. The French Revolution had, after all, culminated in Jacobin state centralization and Napoleonic despotism. Continental liberals remained more "statist," accepting a more active role by government, particularly in the German states, and in Spain, where they relied on a powerful state to counteract the influence of nobles and clerics.

ROMANTICISM

Romanticism, emphasizing imagination and emotion in personal development, began to emerge as a literary, artistic, and musical movement in the late eighteenth century. In 1798, the English poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) and William Wordsworth (1770–1850) penned a manifesto calling on poets to abandon the classical style based on Greek and Roman models that characterized eighteenth-century court and aristocratic life and instead express their emotional response to nature. During the romantic era, swooning and fainting came into vogue because they seemed to be honest expressions of emotion.

Conservative Origins

Romanticism first contributed to the conservative revival. After initially being intrigued by the French Revolution's apparent victory over the strictures of the Old Regime, the early romantic writers had become disillusioned by its violent turn. Coleridge had been among the first to sing the praises of the Revolution, but turned against it when French armies began pouring across the frontiers more as conquerors than as liberators.

Many of the early romantic writers were individuals of religious faith who rejected Enlightenment rationalism. "I wept and I believed," wrote the French writer François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), relating his re-conversion to Catholicism after the turmoil of the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. Disillusionment with the French Revolution helped German romantic writers discover in nationalism a means of individual fulfillment. Nationalism, too, marked a reaction against Enlightenment rational tradition. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), the son of a Prussian schoolteacher, was one of the impassioned leaders of the *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) movement, a rebellion by young German writers against Enlightenment thought. Calling for the study and celebration of German literature and history, Herder argued that it was through the passionate identification with the nation that the individual reached his or her highest stage of development. All Germans would be bound together by an awareness of

and identity in a common history, culture, and above all, language as part of a *Volk*, or living and evolving “national community.” Herder thus helped invent the idea of a national culture. At the same time, his insistence on the existence of different racial types, shaped by climate, history, and cultural traditions, would influence the evolution of racism later in the century. In Central and Eastern Europe, which was constituted in many areas by a patchwork of nationalities, romanticism celebrated the historical authenticity of the cultural traditions and languages of ethnic peoples. From there it would be a short step to argue that nationalities should have their own independent state.

Romantic Literature and Painting

Romantics defined freedom as the unleashing of the senses and passion of the soul. They searched for the “heroic genius” who fulfills himself in spite of constraints placed on him by the state, religion, or societal convention. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) evoked the impassioned battle raging in the mind of the heroic individual. Goethe’s hero in *Faust* (1790) struggles to make his way against a society that fails to understand him.

Like Faust, romantic writers and artists were, at least at the beginning, literary and academic outsiders. Many were loners, without established professional positions, overwhelmed by what they considered the tragedy of their unrequited search for individual fulfillment because less-gifted people did not comprehend their brilliance. Romantics bared the suffering of their souls. The English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) penned his loftiest tribute to the poet (and, thus, himself) in “Hymn of Apollo”:

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine is mine,
All light of art or nature;—to my song
Victory and praise in its own right belong.

Romantic painters sought to convey feeling through the depiction of the helplessness of the individual confronted by the power of nature—gathering storms, surging seas, and immense, dark forests, portrayed with deep, rich colors. In France, Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) reached the public eye with his *Officer of the Chasseurs Commanding a Charge* (1812), p. 584, an almost worshipful painting of a Napoleonic officer in the heat of battle. Géricault became obsessed with shipwrecks, a subject that reflected his volatile personality. He sought out real-life survivors of such tragedies in order to paint his powerful *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818–1819), depicting a shipwreck off the West African coast.



Théodore Géricault's *Portrait of an Officer of the Chasseurs Commanding a Charge* (1812).

Romantic Music

The romantics also believed that music, like painting, was poetry capable of releasing torrents of emotion in listeners. Whereas romantic literature sought and achieved a sharp break with the rules of classical literature, romantic musical compositions built on the traditions of the eighteenth-century masters, helping the public rediscover them. The compositions of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) bridged the classical and romantic periods, with a foot firmly in each. The son of an alcoholic court musician in the Rhineland town of Bonn, Beethoven was a homely, isolated, brooding man.

Beethoven's music followed classical rules of structure and harmony. The German romantic composer Richard Wagner would later say that, as Beethoven became increasingly deaf, he was "undisturbed by the bustle of life [hearing only] the harmonies of his soul." Beethoven's audiences struggled to understand his music, which increasingly seemed to defy traditional structures and harmonies. A critic reacted to one of Beethoven's symphonies, "The composer . . . takes the majestic flight of the eagle, then he creeps along rock-strewn paths. After penetrating the soul with a gentle melancholy he immediately lacerates it with a mass of barbarous chords. I seem to see doves put in together with crocodiles!" Beethoven's symphonies and string quartets were widely played in Europe, and his sonatas helped popularize the piano. The instrument, which continued to be improved, became more resonant and was established as a single solo instrument. Part of the growing popularity of the piano may have stemmed from contemporary fascination with fast-moving machines. Whereas only two decades earlier Mozart had struggled to make ends meet, Beethoven enjoyed wealth and fame, freeing himself from the old patronage system of court and church.

Although opera remained the most popular form of musical expression, drawing crowds with its extravagant staging and elaborate, expensive costumes, romantic music grew in popularity during the first half of the nineteenth century. The public flocked to public concerts, and more musicians could now make a living from their performances. Musicians wrote music for public concerts. The musical "virtuoso" became a phenomenon, going on



The celebrated Niccolò Paganini in concert, early nineteenth century.

concert tours and traveling by train. No one was more popular than the Italian composer and violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840). Paganini's performances, the musical effects he produced, and his frenzied appearance suggested to one observer that he was engaging in witchcraft. Music also assumed a greater role in private life. Not only did more people play the piano, but concerts in middle-class homes became common.

STIRRINGS OF REVOLT

The Congress of Vienna resembled the Dutch boy gamely trying to dam the deluge by plugging up the holes in the dike with his fingers. During the first half of the century, virtually every country in Europe experienced a confrontation between the old political order, represented by the Congress of Vienna, and nascent liberalism.

In France and the German states, liberal bourgeois demanded political rights for a wider number of people. Newspapers and political pamphlets deftly sidestepped the heavy hand of censorship to challenge the restored prerogatives of conservative regimes. In Britain, middle-class spokesmen confronted conservatives and what conservatism's enemies referred to as "Old Corruption," a political system based upon the patronage and influence of wealthy landowners. On the continent, the middle classes clamored for constitutions.

In the German and Italian states and Belgium, liberalism was closely associated with emerging groups of nationalists. Intellectuals, lawyers, and students called for the creation of independent states based upon ethnicity. This was anathema to the powers represented at the Congress of Vienna, particularly the leaders of the polyglot Russian and Austrian Empires. Demands for new states organized around the principle of nationality—as opposed to monarchical or princely sovereignty—would threaten the very existence of these empires.

Liberal Revolts in Spain, Portugal, and Italy

The first test for the Congress system came in Spain. Upon his return to Madrid in 1814, King Ferdinand VII (ruled 1808–1833) declared that he did not recognize the liberal constitution that had been drawn up by the Cortes (assembly) in 1812. It provided ministers responsible to the Cortes and defined sovereignty as residing “essentially in the [Spanish] Nation,” the union of all Spaniards in both hemispheres. It guaranteed the right of property, freedom of the press, and freedom from arbitrary arrest.

Ferdinand VII imposed strict censorship, welcomed back the Jesuit religious order, and repressed Masonic lodges. Furthermore, he refused to convoke the Cortes, which he had promised to do upon his return. Ecclesiastics and nobles reclaimed land they had lost during the Napoleonic period. The Inquisition, the Catholic Church’s institutionalized apparatus to maintain religious orthodoxy, returned to Spain, and the police again began to arrest alleged heretics.

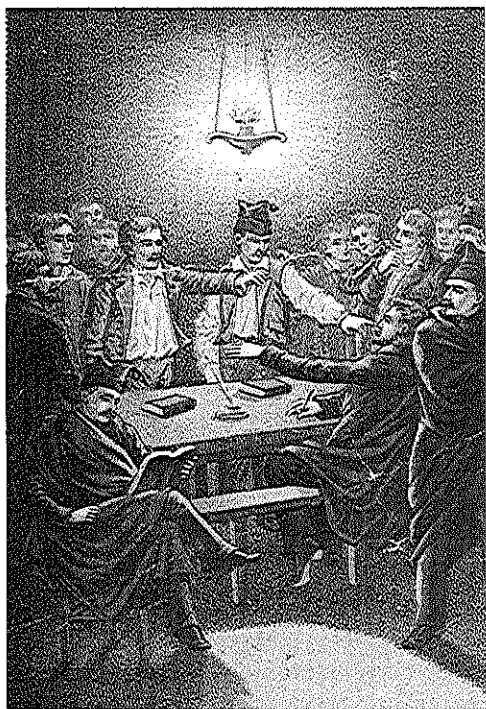
Thus the Spanish monarchy remained inextricably allied with noble and ecclesiastical privilege. The clergy accounted for about 30 percent of adult Spanish males, many living in monasteries that dotted the countryside. The aristocracy and the Church owned two-thirds of the land, much of it as unproductive as its owners, who collected revenue from those tilling the soil. Yet the vast majority of peasants supported the established order, believing the word of the village priest to be that of God. The small number of nobles and bourgeois who read the country’s few newspapers—the majority of the population remained illiterate—found little except, as one traveler put it, “accounts of miracles wrought by different Virgins, lives of holy friars and sainted nuns, romances of marvelous conversions, libels against Jews, heretics and Freemasons, and histories of apparitions.”

The allies were delighted to have a “legitimate” sovereign back on France’s southern flank, although Spain had long since ceased to be a European power. Moreover, the Spanish Empire had begun to disintegrate. French occupation and the Peninsular War, with the king in exile (see Chapter 13), had weakened Spain’s hold over its Latin American colonies. Rebellions against Spanish rule broke out in the colonies, beginning in Argentina in 1816. Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), a fiery Creole aristocrat educated in European Enlightenment ideals, led an army that liberated his native

Venezuela in 1821 and defeated Spanish troops in Peru in 1824. The example of the War of American Independence in North America provided inspiration. Spanish forces, lacking resources and badly led, were obliged to fight over enormous stretches of wildly varying territory. Spain recognized the independence of Mexico in 1821. Of the overseas empire that had stretched from North America to the southern tip of South America in the sixteenth century, Spain retained only the Caribbean islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, as well as the Philippines in Asia.

Against this background, a revolt broke out in Spain in 1820. Army officers who led the insurrection against Ferdinand were soon joined by merchants and lawyers. The king now agreed to convoke the Cortes and abide by the liberal constitution of 1812. Metternich and Tsar Alexander I of Russia, supported by Prussia, demanded allied armed intervention; so did Louis XVIII of France, eager to prove himself a reliable ally. Great Britain, however, remained adamantly opposed to any intervention in Spanish internal affairs, first as a matter of principle, and secondly because of fear that the presence of foreign troops in Spain might jeopardize British commerce or increase French influence on the Iberian Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the fires of liberalism also spread to Portugal. Liberal army officers took advantage of the continued absence of King John VI, who had fled to Brazil during the Napoleonic Wars, to rise up against the British-backed regent in 1820. They drafted a liberal constitution, based on that penned in Spain in 1812. That same year, a military coup d'état led to the return of King John from Brazil as a constitutional monarch. The constitution proclaimed that year guaranteed religious toleration, civic rights, and the sanctity of property. The influence of this revolution, which undercut the influence of the Church, led to civil war from 1832 to 1834 between royalists and an alliance of liberals and radicals, and then in 1851, after some forty different governments and another coup d'état, to the establishment of a



A secret meeting of the members of the Carbonari, Italy c. 1815-1830.

parliamentary system of government based on a restricted electoral franchise.

In 1820 an insurrection also broke out in Italy. Army officers and merchants in Naples and Sicily revolted against the rule of King Ferdinand I, another monarch who had been restored to his shaky throne by the allies. Some of the revolutionaries were members of a secret society, organized along military lines, known as the "Carbonari." These "charcoal-burners" took their name from their practice of swearing each new member to secrecy by tracing a charcoal mark on his forehead. The Carbonari, originally formed to fight Napoleon's armies, now directed its fervor against the monarch placed on the throne by the Austrians. However, Austrian troops put down the revolt, and another in the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia.

In response to what they perceived as the liberal threat, in 1820 the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian governments signed an agreement at the Congress of Troppau in Austrian Silesia. Based on the "principles of the [Holy] Alliance," it proclaimed the right of the signatories to intervene militarily in any country in which political changes were brought about by revolution. Following the suicide of Castlereagh (who suffered unpopularity and perhaps also blackmail over a sexual matter) in 1822, Britain further distanced itself from the Congress system. That year, the remaining Congress powers reconvened in the northern Italian town of Verona. Britain's withdrawal cleared the way for military action in Spain to restore King Ferdinand VII to his throne. With the support of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, a French army took to the field for the first time since Waterloo, but in very different circumstances. It crossed the Pyrenees Mountains in 1823 and captured Madrid. The grateful king of Spain renounced the Constitution of 1812 and ordered the torture and execution of his opponents.

In December 1823, U.S. President James Monroe, fearing that the Concert powers might try to help Spain restore its authority over its former Latin American colonies, issued a proclamation that became one of the bases of subsequent American foreign policy. Stressing that the political systems of the European powers were different from its own, the Monroe Doctrine warned that the United States would "consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety."

Stirrings in Germany

In the German and Italian states, liberals and nationalists were often the same people. Members of student fraternities demanded a united Germany. In 1817, a large convocation of student associations celebrated the three-hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther's revolt against the papacy by burning books deemed anti-patriotic. In 1819, a German student murdered an arch-conservative historian and dramatist commonly believed to be in the pay of the Russian tsar. Metternich persuaded Emperor Francis I



Nationalist German students in 1817 burning books and other objects deemed anti-patriotic.

of Austria and Frederick William III of Prussia to impose the Carlsbad Decrees, which the Diet of the German Confederation unanimously accepted. These muzzled the press and dissolved the student fraternities. Teachers fired in one state were to be blacklisted in other member states. Metternich convinced Frederick William to renounce any form of “universal representation” in his kingdom. The episode seemed to clinch Metternich’s victory over constitutionalism in the German states.

Cracks in the Congress of Europe: The Greek Revolt

The Greek revolt in 1821 against the Ottoman Turks shattered the Congress system. Austria and, above all, Russia hoped to extend their influence in the Balkans at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. In the late eighteenth century, Catherine the Great had seen Russia’s role in the Balkans as protecting Christians there against the Islamic Turks. Moreover, Russian nationalists coveted Constantinople, the gateway to Asia and the Black Sea. Britain feared a potential threat to British control of India and was wary of Russian influence in Afghanistan. Austria, threatened by Russian interest in the Balkans, also feared Russian designs on Constantinople. The Greek revolt put the Congress powers in a bind. Christian Europe traditionally considered the Turks savage infidels. But, at the same time, the Congress powers had to recognize the Ottoman Empire as the historically

“legitimate” sovereign of the Greeks. Support for the Greek rebels would represent a renunciation of the *status quo*, a principle upon which the Congress system had been based.

The Greek revolt grew out of a small Greek nationalist movement that had developed at the end of the eighteenth century. Prince Alexander Ypsilantis (1792–1828), a former general in the Russian army, founded a secret nationalist organization in 1814, the “Society of Friends.” He counted on the tsar’s support for a Greek uprising. (Russia had encouraged a Greek insurrection in 1770, one that had been crushed by Turkish forces.) In 1821 Ypsilantis organized a revolt in Turkish Moldavia, hoping that Romanians would also rise up against Ottoman domination and that Russia would aid the cause of the insurgents. But when Romanians did not rebel and the tsar disavowed the rebels, the Turks crushed the initial Greek uprising. Several weeks later, further revolts against the Turks broke out in mainland Greece and on several Aegean islands. The Congress powers, including Russia, immediately condemned the insurrection.

However, the Greek revolt caught the imagination of writers in Western Europe. Romantic writers espoused national self-consciousness. Members of the philhellenic movement (scholars and intellectuals who had become passionately interested in classical Greece) embraced the Greek revolt as a modern crusade for Christianity and independence against what they con-



Eugène Delacroix's
Massacre at Chios,
1824.

sidered Turkish oppression of the birthplace of Western civilization. The English poets Byron and Shelley took up the cause of Greek independence. Shelley, who called the poet the "unacknowledged legislator of the world," also supported Irish independence from Britain.

The Greek insurgents massacred thousands of Turks in 1821, but it was the brutal Turkish repression of the Greeks that caught the attention of Western conservatives and liberals alike. In 1822, the Turks massacred the entire Greek population of the island of Chios, after having executed a year earlier the patriarch of Constantinople in his ecclesiastical robes on Easter Sunday. The French romantic painter Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) celebrated the Greeks' struggle for national sovereignty in his painting *The Massacre at Chios* (1824), p. 590. The British government also had come to the view that peace could best be maintained by the creation of an autonomous Greek state. In 1827, Britain, France, and Russia signed the Treaty of London, threatening the Turks with military intervention if they did not accept an armistice. When the Turks refused, a combined naval force destroyed the Turkish fleet at Navarino.

Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1828 and occupied the Balkan territories of Moldavia and Eastern Wallachia. However, military obstacles and the self-interested disapproval by Britain and France of Russian plans for dismembering the Ottoman Empire forced Russia to agree to the Treaty of Adrianople (1829). Moldavia and Wallachia became protectorates of Russia, further pushing back the Ottoman Empire's European territories and expanding Russian influence in the Balkans. In 1832, the Greeks finally gained independence. The treaty between Britain, France, Bavaria, and Russia placed Greece under the "guarantee" of "protecting powers" and selected a young Bavarian prince to be king of Greece (Otto I, ruled 1833–1862).

The Decembrist Revolt in Russia

At his succession to the throne after the assassination of his autocratic father in 1801, Tsar Alexander I seemed liberal and idealistic. Scarred by the hatred between his father, Tsar Paul, and his grandmother, Catherine the Great, and by the assassination of Paul, Alexander had at least been aware of the plot. Because he was somewhat familiar with Enlightenment thought, some Russian liberals welcomed Alexander's accession to the throne, seeing him as a potentially charming reformer. He surrounded himself with a committee of advisers who advocated reform and began his reign by granting amnesty to thousands of people condemned by his father, relaxing censorship, abolishing torture in judicial investigations, and allowing more Russians to travel abroad. During the Napoleonic Wars, Tsar Alexander had taken steps to make his regime more efficient, including the creation of a council of state, the formation of centralized ministries directly responsible to the tsar, and the organization of local governments. Yet, an enormous social, economic, and legal gulf separated the Russian aristocracy from the millions

of destitute serfs bound to the lands of their lords. Most Russian nobles feared that any reform would threaten their prerogatives. Early in his reign in 1803, the tsar gave permission to the nobles to free their serfs but few chose to do so.

However, Tsar Alexander I became increasingly reactionary. In 1809, he rejected a proposed constitution. Conservative elements regained power and introduced coercive measures. Universities and schools were closely monitored to root out liberals; study abroad was banned; and censorship was applied with ruthless efficiency. At the same time, he continued the aggressive policies of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, expanding the empire by adding Georgia at the expense of the Turks.

But liberal reform had advocates in Russia, including some young nobles who had been educated in Western Europe (before foreign study was prohibited) and a handful of army officers who had lived in France during the allied military occupation after Napoleon's fall. They were bitterly disappointed by Alexander I's reactionary turn. By 1820, two loosely linked conspiratorial "unions," as they were called, had been formed. The educated nobles of the Northern Union hoped that Russia might evolve toward British constitutionalism. The military officers of the Southern Union had a more radical goal: to kill the tsar and establish a republic.

Tsar Alexander's sudden death in December 1825 seemed to offer the conspirators their chance. The tsar had two brothers. Constantine, the eldest, had quietly yielded his succession to the throne in favor of his younger, more

Decembrists gathering in December 1825 at Senate Square in Saint Petersburg.



reactionary brother Nicholas. The Northern Union nonetheless convinced the Saint Petersburg garrison to support the succession of Constantine. Troops occupied a central square in the capital, shouting the name of their favorite, until Nicholas ordered troops loyal to him to fire. A hastily planned insurrection by the Southern Union was also put down. The leaders of the Decembrists, as they came to be known, were executed.

Hard-working and willful, Nicholas I (ruled 1825–1855) believed that his power to govern came directly from God. Nicholas tightened the grip of the police on education in an attempt to exclude Western ideas from Russia. In 1833, the minister of education proclaimed the doctrine of “Official Nationality”: autocracy, orthodoxy, and official [Russian] nationality were the intertwined principles of the state. The new tsar did not approve of serfdom because it was inefficient, but he feared that its abolition could lead to peasant insurrection. Nicholas did, however, order the codification of Russian laws in the first decade of his reign and encouraged reforms improving the conditions of state serfs. The arrival of liberal ideas from the West encouraged debate and calls for reform within the Russian intelligentsia, encouraging a group of reform-minded men within the imperial bureaucracy.

France: The Bourbon Restoration and the Revolution of 1830

In a contemporary French lampoon of the return of the Bourbons to the throne, a majestic eagle—the symbol of Napoleon—sweeps out of the Tuileries Palace in Paris as a somewhat plump, unsightly duck waddles in, followed by its ungainly brood. The contrast between the image of Napoleon’s bold achievements and the stodgy and pious Restoration was sharp indeed. The Bourbons returned “in the baggage of the allies,” as it was said.

Upon the return of the Bourbons to power in May 1814, Louis XVIII promulgated a Charter that, in effect, made France a constitutional monarchy. The Charter recognized equality before the law and accepted the Napoleonic Civil Code. It established an assembly consisting of a Chamber of Deputies and a Chamber of Peers. The king would name members (whose appointment would be for life and hereditary) of the Chamber of Peers, as well as ministers, who would be responsible only to him. The Chamber of Deputies would be elected in a complicated two-stage process, based on an extremely narrow electoral franchise.

The restored Bourbon monarchy maintained the centralized state bureaucracy; recognized all Napoleonic titles, decorations, and even pensions; and promised that property purchased during the Revolution as “national” would remain in the hands of the new owners. Moreover, the Charter offered freedom of the press. The government could levy no taxes without the consent of the Assembly.

The Catholic Church would still be subject to Napoleon’s Concordat (see Chapter 13), but was returned to its privileged position, and Catholicism again became the official state religion, although the Napoleonic

Code's guarantee of the free practice of religion to Protestants and Jews was reaffirmed. The religious orders returned to France in force, and the observance of Sunday and Church holidays became obligatory.

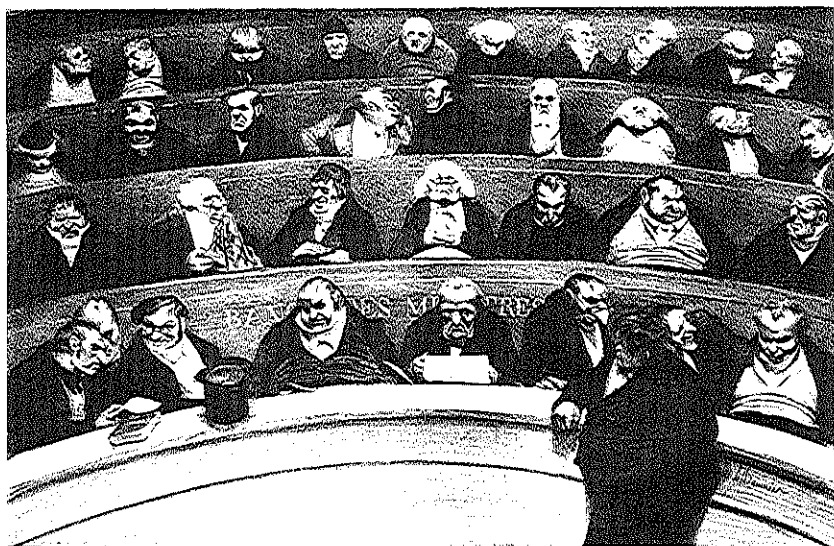
Ultra-royalists, or "Ultras," the most fanatical royalist enemies of the Revolution, had after Waterloo launched the "White Terror," so called because of the color of the Bourbon flag, against those who had supported Napoleon. In the election for the Chamber of Deputies in August 1815, the Ultras easily defeated more moderate royalists sponsored by the government. Some of the Ultras referred contemptuously to Louis XVIII as "King Voltaire" because of his Charter, which they viewed as a compromise with the Revolution. They demanded that the "national property" be returned to its original owners.

Louis XVIII dissolved the Ultra-dominated Chamber of Deputies in 1816, and new elections produced a somewhat more moderate Chamber. In 1820, a madman assassinated Charles, the duke of Berry, the king's nephew and the only member of the Bourbon family capable of producing an heir to the throne. France was plunged into mourning. The Ultras cried for revenge, accusing the liberals of being ultimately responsible for the assassination. The king dismissed the moderate government, restored more stringent censorship, and altered the electoral system to reduce the influence of bourgeois voters living in towns.

Soon, however, the church bells stopped their mournful cadence and rang out in joy. It turned out that the duke's wife had been pregnant at the time of his death. Royalist France celebrated the birth of a male heir, "the miracle baby," as he came to be called, the duke of Bordeaux (later known as the count of Chambord). Confident that God was with them, the Ultras, at least for the moment, retained the upper hand.

Upon Louis XVIII's death in 1824, his reactionary brother, the count of Artois, took the throne as Charles X (ruled 1824–1830). Rumors spread that the pious king was going to allow the Catholic Church to collect the tithe, that is, require French subjects to pay 10 percent of their income to the Church. The Chamber of Deputies passed a law making sacrilege—any crime committed in a church—a capital offense. That no one was ever executed for such an offense did not diminish public outrage. The government financed the indemnification of those who had lost land during the Revolution by reducing the interest paid to holders of the national debt, most of whom were middle class.

Many in France retained an allegiance to Napoleon's memory. Former Napoleonic soldiers, particularly those officers pensioned off on half pay, looked back on the imperial era as their halcyon days. In 1820–1821, some joined the Carbonari, a secret society named after its Italian equivalent, and plotted to overthrow the Restoration. Some merchants and manufacturers believed that the Restoration monarchy paid insufficient attention to commerce and industry, listening only to rural nobles.



Honoré Daumier's caricature of the less-than-inspiring members of the French Chamber of Deputies.

Amid an economic crisis that had begun with the failure of the harvest the previous year, elections in 1827 increased liberal strength in the Chamber of Deputies. Two years later, Charles X threw caution to the wind, appointing as his premier the reactionary Prince Jules de Polignac (1780–1847), one of only two members of the Chamber of Deputies who had refused an oath of allegiance to the Charter granted by Louis XVIII.

The opposition to the government of Charles X received a boost from a new generation of romantic writers. In the preface to his controversial play *Hernani* (1830), the production of which caused a near riot outside the theater, Victor Hugo (1802–1885) clearly set liberalism and romanticism against the established order of the restored monarchy:

Young people, have courage! However difficult they make our present, the future will be beautiful. Romanticism, so often badly defined, is . . . nothing less than *liberalism* in literature. . . . Literary liberty is the daughter of political liberty. That is the principle of this century, and it will prevail.

In 1828, liberals formed an association to refuse to pay taxes in protest of the government's policies and worked to ensure that all eligible to vote registered to do so. Benjamin Constant (1767–1830), a Swiss novelist, political essayist, and member of the French Chamber of Deputies, demanded that the electoral franchise be extended. He espoused a philosophy of liberalism

based on a separation of powers and "a government of laws and not men that would protect property and other freedoms from tyranny (he had both Napoleon and arbitrary monarchical rule in mind).

In response to Charles's bellicose speech opening the 1830 session of the Chamber, 221 deputies signed an address to the throne that attacked the government in no uncertain terms. When the king dissolved the Chamber, the liberal opposition won a majority in the new Chamber. In the meantime, Charles had sent an army to conquer Algeria, whose ruler was a vassal of the sultan of Turkey. But not even news of the capture of Algiers on July 9, 1830, could end vociferous opposition. The king and Polignac then settled on a move that they hoped would bring an end to the crisis. Instead, it brought revolution.

On July 26, 1830, Charles X promulgated the July Ordinances, shattering the principles of the Charter of 1814. He dissolved the newly elected Chamber of Deputies; disfranchised almost three-quarters of those currently eligible to vote; ordered new elections under the newly restricted franchise; and muzzled the press. Demonstrations on July 27 led to skirmishes with troops. Parisians blocked the capital's narrow streets with barricades. Fired upon in the street and pelted by rocks and tiles thrown from rooftops, the king's soldiers became increasingly demoralized.

Early on July 30, liberals put posters around Paris calling for Louis-Philippe to be the new king. From the family of Orléans, the junior branch of the royal Bourbon family, Louis-Philippe, the duke of Orléans, had the reputation for being relatively liberal, having fought in the revolutionary armies. His father (known as Philippe Égalité) had in the National Assembly voted for the execution of Louis XVI. Louis-Philippe had expanded his horizons by drinking bourbon in Kentucky. Liberals offered the throne to Louis-Philippe (ruled 1830–1848), who became "king of the French"—the title, rather than "king of France," was intended to convey that the king's authority came from the people. Charles X abdicated on August 2. Louis-Philippe agreed to a revised version of the Charter, and the tricolor flag of the Revolution replaced the white flag of the Bourbons.

Despite its revolutionary origins, the new liberal monarchy won relatively quick acceptance from the other European powers. Catholicism ceased to be the official religion of the state, although it remained the nominal religion of the vast majority of the population. The new Orleanist regime almost doubled the number of voters, but France was still far from being a republic. Many of those enfranchised by the revised Charter were drawn from the middle class. Lawyers and men of other professions significantly increased middle-class representation in the legislature. The government helped stimulate economic growth and industrial development by improving roads and implementing other policies that benefited manufacturers and merchants. The rallying cry of François Guizot, historian and prime minister (1787–1874, prime minister 1840–1848), to the middle class was "Enrich yourselves!" Known as the "July Monarchy," after the month of its

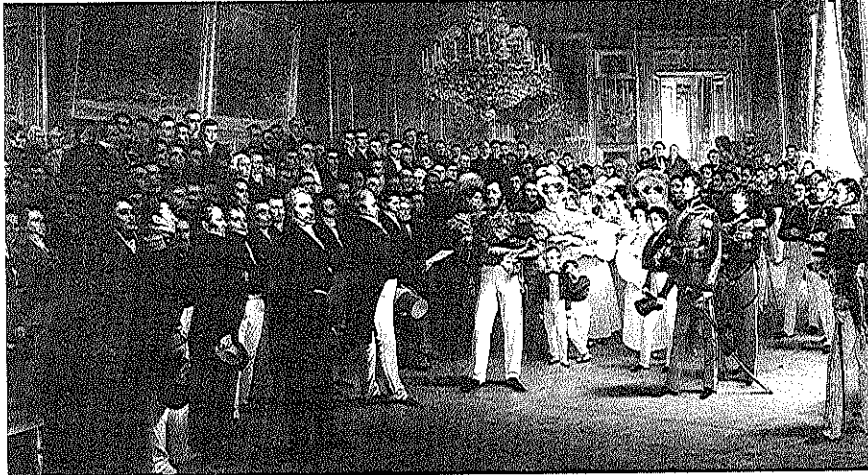


Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830). Note the female image of liberty and the presence of the top-hatted bourgeois and the heavily armed street urchin, neither of whom actually fought in the Revolution.

founding, the Orleanist reign also came to be known and lampooned as “the bourgeois monarchy.” The portly Louis-Philippe himself contributed to this image, surrounding himself with dark-suited businessmen and carrying an umbrella, that symbol of bourgeois preparedness.

The Orleanist monarchy could claim neither the principle of monarchical legitimacy asserted by the Legitimists (supporters of Charles X's Bourbon grandson) or that of popular sovereignty espoused by republicans. Legitimists launched several small, failed insurrections in western France. In Paris, crowds of workers, disappointed by the government's lack of attention to their demands, sacked the archbishop's palace in 1831. Silk workers in Lyon rose up against their employers and the state in 1831 and 1834. Following an uprising by republicans in Paris, the Chamber of Deputies passed a law in 1835 severely restricting the right to form associations, and the next year it passed another law again fettering the press.

Louis-Philippe survived an assassination attempt in 1835; a plot by a secret organization of revolutionaries, the “Society of the Seasons,” to overthrow him in 1839; and another attempt to kill him in 1840. Less serious—for the moment—seemed attempts in 1836 and 1840 by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, Napoleon's nephew, to invade France with a few loyalists and



Louis-Philippe receiving black-suited members of the Chamber of Deputies, who present him with the act by which they conferred the crown on him.

rally support. The cult of Napoleon, accentuated by the vogue for the literature of romanticism, served only to highlight what seemed to be the mediocrity of the July Monarchy.

OTHER LIBERAL ASSAULTS ON THE OLD ORDER

The French Revolution of 1830 directly encouraged liberal and national movements in other countries. Liberal successes followed in Belgium and Switzerland, but not in Spain.

Independence for Belgium

The Dutch Netherlands had achieved independence from Spain in the seventeenth century. The Southern Netherlands was Belgium, largely Catholic, and divided between Flemish speakers in the north and French-speaking Walloons in the south (see Map 15.2). Brussels, the largest city in Belgium, lies within Flemish Belgium, but had many French speakers.

What Belgians called "Dutch arithmetic" left Belgium with fewer seats in the Dutch Estates-General than its population should have warranted. Catholics had to contribute to Protestant state schools and paid higher taxes. In the late 1820s, Belgian liberals allied with Catholics against the Protestant Dutch government demanding that ministers be responsible to the Estates-General and taxes be reduced. Dutch King William I (1772–1843) granted only more press freedom.



MAP 15.2 THE BIRTH OF BELGIUM, 1831-1839 The boundaries of the Dutch Republic and Belgium, including within Belgium the areas that were Protestant and Catholic, as well as Flemish and Walloon areas. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was created in 1831 and united with the Netherlands in the person of the grand duke, King William I of the Netherlands.

Following the arrival of news from France of the July Revolution, the Brussels opera presented a production about an insurrection in Naples in 1648 against Spanish rule. So inspired, the audience left the theater to demonstrate against a government newspaper and other symbols of Dutch authority. Workers, suffering unemployment and high prices, put up barricades, and were soon joined by units of bourgeois militia from outside Brussels. A halfhearted military attack floundered when inexperienced Dutch troops panicked as the ranks of the defenders swelled. After three more days of fighting, the Dutch troops withdrew to the north. The Dutch bombardment of Antwerp convinced more Flemish to support the rebels.

In early October 1830, a provisional government declared Belgium independence. A Belgian Congress offered the throne to one of Louis-Philippe's sons, but he was forced to decline because Britain would not tolerate such French influence in Belgium. The Congress then offered the throne to a German prince, Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (who was a British subject, the widower of Princess Charlotte of England). Leopold was crowned King Leopold I (ruled 1831–1865) in July 1831. The European powers guaranteed Belgium's independence, and when the Dutch took Antwerp in August 1831, French military intervention returned that city to the new nation. Belgium became a constitutional monarchy with a parliament of two houses, both elected by about one of every thirty males.

Liberal Successes in Switzerland

Another liberal success came in Switzerland, which the Congress of Vienna had reestablished as a federation of semi-autonomous cantons. Because of Switzerland's long tradition of decentralized government, the allies had been willing to tolerate a constitution that allowed relatively extensive political freedoms. However, fearing that some cantons might become havens of liberalism, the Congress powers forced the Swiss cantons in 1823 to restrict freedom of the press and curtail the activities of foreign political exiles.

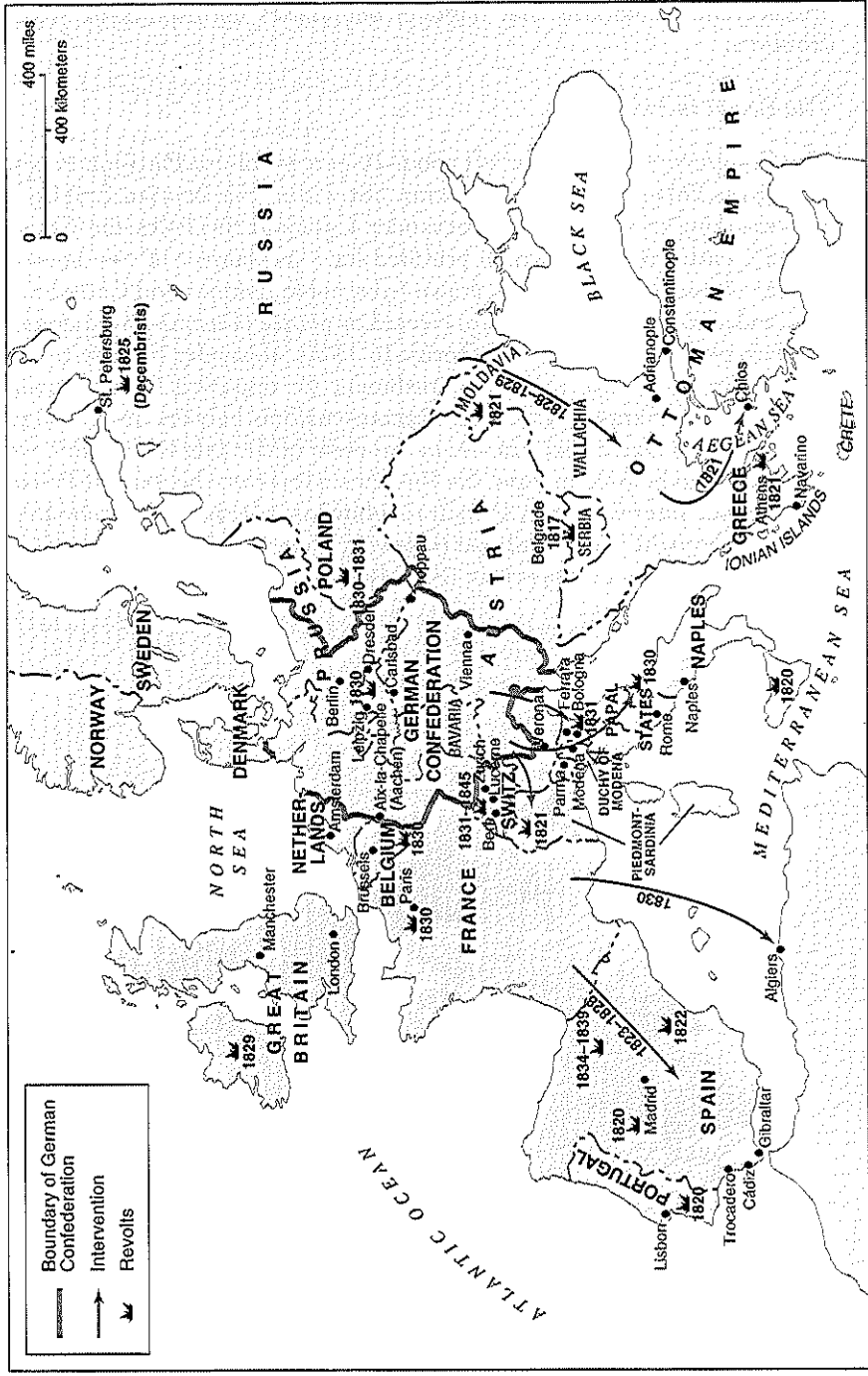
The 1830 revolution in France inspired the quest for constitutional guarantees of freedom, more efficient government, and limits on the political influence of Protestant and Catholic clergy in Switzerland. In December 1830 the federal Diet initiated a period of "regeneration." The constitutions of ten cantons were liberalized, guaranteeing freedom of expression and giving all adult men the right to vote, a victory unique at that time.

But Metternich was not far away. Austria pressured the German-speaking Swiss cantons to oppose secularization. During the winter of 1844–1845, when the canton of Lucerne announced that the Jesuit order would again be welcome within its borders, liberals rebelled. Seven Catholic cantons withdrew from the Swiss Confederation, forming a separate league (*Sonderbund*). In 1847, the other cantons declared war on the Sonderbund and, in what amounted to little more than a skirmish, defeated the Catholic cantons within a month. In 1848, Switzerland adopted a new liberal constitution, becoming a federal state with universal male suffrage.

NATIONALIST DREAMS

Nationalism also gradually emerged as a force for change in Central and Eastern Europe within the context of multinational empires. Nationalism was closely tied to liberalism in that exponents of both ideologies demanded far-reaching political change that threatened the state systems (see Map 15.3).

MAP 15.3 LIBERAL REVOLTS Liberal or nationalist uprisings in Congress Europe. Arrows indicate intervention by conservative Congress powers to suppress revolts.



Intellectuals demanded that national boundaries correspond to linguistic frontiers.

The Revolt in Poland

The Congress of Vienna had left about 20 percent of pre-Partition Poland as "Congress Poland" with its own army, but within the Russian Empire. The tsar was king of Poland. Tsar Alexander I granted the Poles the Constitutional Charter of 1815, which provided for a parliament of two houses—a Senate of appointed members drawn from noble families and Catholic bishops, and a lower house (the Sejm) elected by people of means. Neither assembly, however, possessed real authority. In 1820, Alexander forbade the Sejm from meeting for five years as punishment for opposing Russian policies, which included imposing disadvantageous customs barriers on Polish grain.

Some Poles hoped that France, in the wake of the July Revolution, would send forces to help them expel the Russians. However, the issue of Polish independence interested only French republicans, not the liberal monarchists who had brought Louis-Philippe to power. However, Polish military cadets rose up in Warsaw in November 1830. Russian troops withdrew in the hope

Polish insurgents rising up against Russia in 1830–1831.



that the municipal government could restore order. In January 1831, a large crowd surrounded the Sejm, which declared that the Russian tsar (Nicholas I) was no longer king of Poland. A provisional national government formed. The Sejm, however, refused to attempt to mobilize peasants in support of the insurrection, fearing that they might demand land reform and attack their lords instead of the Russians. In August 1832 the tsar's troops surrounded Warsaw. Tensions between moderates and radicals erupted into violence, making its defense even more difficult. Warsaw fell to Russian troops in the autumn, and about 10,000 Poles fled Russian oppression. Émigré Polish artists and musicians enriched cultural life in Western Europe capitals. The composer Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) moved to Paris in 1831, hoping to make his fortune. Although he was not really a political refugee, ardent nationalism infused his music, as he drew upon Polish folk themes and dances.

The privileges that had been accorded “Congress Poland” disappeared. Nicholas I abolished the constitution that Poland had enjoyed within the Russian Empire, as well as the Sejm and the Polish army. Encouraged by Russian measures against the Poles, Prussia and Austria withdrew concessions they had earlier given to the Poles in the territories they had absorbed in the 1790s.

Uprisings in Italy and Spain

Popular stirrings in the Italian states, beginning with movements in Bologna and the Duchy of Modena, started as protests against inefficient and corrupt rule. Rebels in Parma literally locked Duchess Marie-Louise out of the city by shutting the gates until an Austrian army arrived in March 1831 to let her back in. Several cities in central Italy that declared their independence from the Papal States proclaimed the “United Provinces of Italy.”

Like the Poles, insurgents against Austrian rule in several towns within the Papal States unrealistically counted on help from French armies, who again would march with a tricolor flag since the fall of the Bourbons. With Austrian troops approaching from the north, an army of volunteers marched toward Rome, defeating the pope's army. But by then Austrian forces had taken Modena, Parma, and Ferrara. A papal army mopped up resistance, sacking several towns, and Austrian troops had to return to save the local populations. The Italian insurrections collapsed without winning popular support.

Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), a lawyer by training and an energetic revolutionary by temperament, emerged as a guiding spirit in the quest for Italian unification under a republic. Mazzini wanted to bring peace to Europe by liberating all peoples. He was one of the first to suggest that the states of Europe might evolve into a loose federation of democratic states based on the principle of nationality. Mazzini believed that a defeat of Austria in northern Italy would serve as a first step toward creating a federation of European democratic republics. Rejecting the Carbonari's conspiratorial

tradition, he was convinced that he could expand his nationalist organization, Young Italy, whose membership was limited to individuals under forty years of age. Jailed and then expelled from one country after another, he launched futile insurrections in 1834–1836 and in 1844. However, Mazzini kept the cause of Italian nationalism alive.

Some Italian nationalists began to look to the liberal Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, Italy's strongest state, to effect national unification. But Austria still dominated the Italian peninsula, which included small states that were proud of their independence. The dream of Italian unification remained for the most part limited to a small number of middle-class intellectuals.

In Spain, King Ferdinand VII married Maria Christina, a liberal Neapolitan princess, in 1830. Their daughter Isabella became the heir to the Spanish throne. But nobles and churchmen insisted that a woman could not rule Spain. After the king's death in 1833, civil war broke out between liberals and conservatives (the Carlists), who supported the cause of the late king's brother, Don Carlos. Maria Christina, ruling as regent, promulgated a constitution in 1834 modeled on the French Charter of 1814. In 1843, General Ramón Narváez (1800–1868) seized power, promulgating a conservative constitution and stifling the press. On his deathbed he boasted, "I have no enemies, I have shot them all."

German Nationalism in Central Europe

In the German states, liberals faced an uphill battle. Constitutions implemented during the Napoleonic period had been gradually weakened or withdrawn. Electoral assemblies were selected by limited franchise and had almost no power. However, the wave of liberal and nationalist movements encouraged by the revolutions of 1830 reached Central Europe. Popular disturbances forced the rulers of Hanover and Hesse-Kassel to make political concessions. In Saxony, a liberal constitution was enacted following uprisings in Leipzig and Dresden, and liberals won a constitution in the northern German state of Brunswick.

The Polish revolt against Russia in 1831 fueled the imagination of German university students. The movement culminated in a huge meeting in 1832 of 30,000 people at the ruins of a château near the University of Heidelberg, where speakers saluted popular sovereignty. Police foiled an attempt by students to seize Frankfurt, the meeting place of the Federal Diet of the German Confederation. The Confederation's Diet responded by passing "Ten Articles," which brought the universities under surveillance, coordinated police repression of liberals in the German states, prohibited public meetings, and stipulated that any state threatened by revolution would be assisted by the others.

Yet liberalism in the German states slowly gained momentum among professors, students, and lawyers during what later became known as the

Vormärz ("Before March") period, that is, the period of ferment that preceded the Revolution of March 1848 (see Chapter 16). The French Revolution of 1830 influenced these "Young Germans." The poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) had rushed to Paris after the fall of the Bourbon dynasty. His *French Conditions* sharply contrasted the mood of apparent intellectual freedom and optimism of Paris with that of the repression and gloomy resignation liberals faced in the German states, which had no revolutionary tradition. German liberals remained political outsiders, confronting a pervasive respect for ideological conformity.

Yet German liberalism became increasingly linked to the pursuit of German unification, despite the challenge posed by German particularism, the tradition of many small, independent states. The philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) made explicit the close connection between the development of German nationalism and the reverence for a strong state as the embodiment of national sovereignty, which characterized German liberal thought. For Hegel, nationalism was the equivalent of a secular religion that had the potential of shaping a new morality. Hegel's state is overwhelming, even frightening, subsuming individual rights to its power.

Liberal economic theory attracted German merchants and manufacturers, who objected to the discouraging complexity of customs tariffs that created a series of costly hurdles along roads and rivers. As German manufacturing developed, particularly in the Rhineland, businessmen supported a proposed German Customs Union (Zollverein), which, following its creation in 1834, removed some tariff barriers in seventeen states. To liberal nationalists, the Zollverein seemed to offer a basis for the eventual political unification of Germany. It breathed life into the movement for political reform. But those who hoped that Prussia and the other German states would move toward constitutionalism were disappointed. Prussian King Frederick William IV (ruled 1840–1861) refused to establish a Diet representing all of Prussia. When he finally did convoke a United Diet in 1847, it was not popularly elected and was to serve the king only in an advisory capacity.

CRISIS AND COMPROMISE IN GREAT BRITAIN

In Britain, demands for political reform, specifically the expansion of the electoral franchise to include more middle-class voters, would be the true test of the ability of the British elite to compromise in the interest of social and political harmony. Three hundred thousand soldiers demobilized after Waterloo found little work, and many of them depended on poor relief. Amid popular protest, working people joined clubs organized by radicals demanding universal suffrage. Poor harvests in 1818 and 1819 brought high prices and grain riots and machine breaking. The popular radicalism of the 1790s had led to the government's dissolution of radical "corresponding societies" and the suspension of *habeas corpus*, which made it possible to arrest people



The Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, 1819.

without charging them with anything. The Combination Acts (1799–1800) made strikes illegal while reinforcing existing laws against trade unions. Ordinary people now demanded political reform. On August 16, 1819, a crowd of some 60,000 men and women gathered near Manchester to demonstrate for the right to form political organizations and to assemble freely. Deputized local constables moved in to arrest the main speaker. Then soldiers gunned down protestors, many dressed in their Sunday best, killing eleven and wounding hundreds of others. The ugly incident entered history as “Peterloo,” a shameful victory not over Napoleon at Waterloo but over Britain’s defenseless laboring poor. Parliament passed Six Acts that, reviving the repressive legislation of the era of the French Revolution, included suspending *habeas corpus* and imposing further restrictions on the press. That year the government broke up the “Cato Street Conspiracy,” a plot by radicals to assassinate members of the Cabinet as they attended a dinner in London.

The late 1820s were also bleak years for the English poor. Crimes increased in Britain, particularly against property, reflecting hard times. Artisans and skilled workers demanded higher wages and organized more unions within crafts—for example, those representing skilled engineering workers. Parliament abolished the Combination Acts in 1824, making strikes legal. Workers formed more “friendly societies,” which, in exchange for modest fees, offered minimal assistance when a member became ill, or paid for burial upon death to avoid the indignity of a pauper’s grave. The friendly societies and other clubs of workingmen generated interest in reform, against a

backdrop of hardship, industrial disputes, demonstrations, and the wave of food riots and machine breaking that spread in 1829–1830 through southern England.

Religious and Electoral Reform

However, there would be no revolution in nineteenth-century Britain. The landed elite, which dominated Parliament, supported by manufacturing interests, enacted reforms that defused social and political tensions by bowing to middle-class demands. Even if many Tories believed that electoral reform would be a dangerous precedent, the fear of popular protest and perhaps even revolution led them to compromise. Reforms passed by Parliament contributed to the emergence of a liberal consensus in Victorian Britain that lasted throughout the century. Religion, too, may have played a part. The government allocated funds for the construction of more Anglican churches in working-class areas. At the same time, Methodism, along with other churches within the “New Dissent,” won many converts, arguably reducing social tension. Bible societies and other evangelical associations interested in the plight of the poor increased dramatically in number.

In 1828, despite vociferous opposition from the Established Church, Parliament repealed the Test and Corporation Acts, which had forced anyone holding public office to take communion in the Anglican Church. Catholic emancipation had emerged as a major political issue at least partly because it was linked to the problem of Catholic Ireland. There a reform movement had begun and organized protests against English Protestant domination. Insurgency seemed endemic. Catholics of means had not been able to vote until 1793 in Ireland (and the franchise was subsequently made even more restrictive). The Irish Parliament had been eliminated in 1800, although Ireland was represented in British Parliament. Finally, in 1829, Parliament passed the Catholic Emancipation Act, which removed the legal restrictions that had kept Catholics from holding office or serving in Parliament.

In Britain, political liberalism continued to be closely linked to the movement led by Whigs, the party most attached to constitutional monarchy and the rights of Parliament, for electoral reform. Only one of fifteen men in Britain had the right to vote. Businessmen resented being underrepresented in the House of Commons. The electoral system remained a patchwork that reflected the interests of local elites and particular communities that had gradually developed in England since the fourteenth century. The industrial north sent few men to Parliament because electoral districts had not changed since before the Industrial Revolution. No one represented the industrial centers of Manchester and Birmingham in Parliament. Wealthy merchants in those cities were no longer content with indirect, “virtual representation” through members of Parliament who claimed to have their interests in mind. In contrast, some sparsely populated rural districts still were represented in Parliament. Dunwich, the most notorious of these

“rotten boroughs,” had been covered over by the sea since the twelfth century. “Pocket boroughs” were electoral districts “in the pocket” of a wealthy landowner routinely returned to Parliament (see Chapter 11).

With news of France’s Revolution of 1830, the British upper classes rallied together, fearful, as they used to say, that when France sneezed, the rest of Europe might catch a cold. Amid shows of armed force by the government, organized protest was limited to an enthusiastic rally in the Scottish city of Glasgow to celebrate the news of the French and Belgian revolutions. In England, crowds gathered to hear the popular radical William Cobbett (1763–1835), whose weekly newspaper, the *Political Register*, aimed at “journeymen and labourers” spoke on behalf of the extension of the electoral franchise to all men.

The Reform Bill of 1832

The general election following George IV’s death in 1830 reduced the conservative majority in Parliament. A broadly based campaign for electoral reform swept the country; some of the 5,000 petitions that were brought to Parliament attacked in patriotic language the selfishness of the landed elite. The new prime minister, Earl Charles Grey (1764–1845), a Whig, knew that any reform bill that passed the House of Commons would never get through the House of Lords as then constituted. In 1831, Lords rejected a bill sponsored by the government that would have eliminated many “rotten” and “pocket” boroughs. Public meetings protested this defeat, particularly in the cities of the industrial north and Scotland, which had no representation in Commons. When the House of Lords rejected a second reform bill in October 1831, demonstrators massed in London and a riot in Bristol ended in twelve deaths.

By this time, more Tories had come around to Grey’s view that only the passage of some sort of electoral reform bill could save Britain from a revolution. They feared an alliance between frustrated businessmen and radicals, supported by workers, as had occurred in France in 1830. The Whigs proposed a third bill, which Commons passed in March 1832, and sent it on to Lords. The duke of Wellington tried and failed to form a ministry. Grey, who again became prime minister, convinced the new king, William IV (ruled 1830–1837), to threaten to create enough new peers to get the reform bill through the House of Lords, whose peers did not want to see their ranks contaminated by “instant lords.” Wellington agreed not to oppose its passage, and the bill passed.

The Reform Act of 1832 was a turning point in the history of modern Britain. The landed magnates agreed to lower the minimum franchise requirement, almost doubling the size of the electorate. Britain was far from a democracy—only about one of every five adult male citizens was now eligible to vote—but the British Parliament now more accurately reflected

Britain's emerging industrial society. In the early 1840s, 15 percent of the members of the House of Commons were businessmen, and 35 percent had some other connection to commerce and industry, such as serving on the board of directors of enterprises. A larger percentage of men could now vote in Britain than in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, or Spain.

The new electorate, as the Tories had feared, increased Whig strength. Commons passed two reforms in 1833 influenced by the Reform Act. In part a response to growing opposition to slavery by religious Dissenters, Evangelical Protestants, and political radicals, anti-slavery societies launched a nationwide campaign against slavery in the British Dominions. Britain had withdrawn from the slave trade in 1808, and six years later 750,000 people had signed petitions in Britain calling for the abolition of slavery. However, in 1830 there were still 650,000 slaves in the British West Indies, and slaves in British colonies in Africa and Asia (as well as in the United States). Ladies' associations distributed campaign literature and organized a boycott of sugar produced by slaves in the West Indies. The campaign was successful. In 1833, Parliament abolished slavery in the British Empire.

The second reform measure, also passed in 1833 (see Chapter 14), prohibited work by children under nine years of age, limited the workday of children from nine through twelve years to eight hours a day (and a maximum of forty-eight hours per week), and that for "young persons" ages thirteen to eighteen to twelve hours a day (to a maximum of sixty-nine hours per week).

The Poor Law followed in 1834. Able-bodied individuals would no longer receive assistance from parishes, but would be incarcerated in "well-regulated" workhouses. And the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 eliminated the old, often corrupt borough governments, creating elected municipal corporations responsible for administration. This again reflected the growing political influence of the English middle classes, particularly in industrial areas. These reforms allowed many more Whigs, including Dissenters, to assume positions of responsibility in local government, another blow to the domination of public life by the old aristocratic oligarchy and the Established Church.

Chartism and the Repeal of the Corn Laws

The Chartist movement reflected the strength of reformism in Britain. Whereas some French and German workers dreamed of revolution, their English counterparts took out their quill pens. In 1836, William Lovett (1800–1877), a cabinetmaker, founded the London Workingmen's Association for Benefiting Politically, Socially, and Morally the Useful Classes. Two years later, Lovett and Francis Place, a London tailor, prepared the "Great Charter." It called for the democratization of political life, including universal male suffrage, annual elections, equal electoral districts, the secret ballot, and salaries for members of Parliament, so that ordinary people could serve if

elected. Chartists objected to the monopoly of wealth and political influence in Britain by a small percentage of the population, wealthy landowners and the captains of industry. The Chartist movement remained overwhelmingly peaceful, its members committed to acting as a “moral force” in British life. Chartism was in some ways a movement that looked back into a past its members imagined as being more moral than the period in which they lived. Chartist leaders attempted to attract women to the movement by recognizing the contributions of women workers to the family economy—despite the resentment of many male craftsmen in working-class families that the gender roles of many women seemed to be changing and that some men now found themselves working alongside them. Some Chartists sought to convince hard-drinking and often wife-beating male workers to be more respectable. (However, Chartist leaders rejected feminist pleas that their movement include demands for the rights of women.) A small “Physical Force” group emerged within the Chartist movement in northern England, threatening strikes and even insurrection if Parliament did not yield, but this group remained small and relatively unimportant.

In 1839, Parliament summarily rejected a Chartist petition with almost 1.3 million signatures. Undaunted, the Chartists tried again in 1842 when the National Chartist Association carried a giant scroll with 3.3 million signatures to Westminster. Once again, Parliament turned the Great Charter away. Thereafter, Chartism declined as a movement, despite a brief revival in 1848.

Yet Parliament enacted another significant reform. Passed by a conservative-dominated Parliament in 1815 and 1828, the Corn Laws had

Photograph of the final Chartist demonstration at Kensington Common, April 10, 1848.



imposed a sliding tariff on imported wheat (then known as "corn"). When the price of wheat produced in Britain fell below a certain level, import duties would keep out cheaper foreign grain. Foreign grain could be imported virtually free of import taxes only when the price of wheat stood at or above a certain level. The laws protected landowners, but were detrimental to the interests of businessmen who imported or sold imported grain and, above all, to ordinary people, who were forced to pay higher prices for bread. Failed harvests in 1839–1841 brought great deprivation, as parishes cut back on allocations to the poor. The "Great Hunger" in Ireland, caused by the potato famine that began in 1845, brought mass starvation (see Chapter 14).

The issue of the repeal of the Corn Laws pitted proponents of *laissez-faire* economic policies against wealthy property owners, Whigs against Tories. British manufacturers and spokesmen for the poor denounced the entrenched "bread-taxing" and "blood-sucking" oligarchy. In 1839, the Anti-Corn Law League started up, joining businessmen, Whig politicians, and political radicals, who believed that the repeal of the Corn Laws would be a major step toward universal male suffrage. John Bright (1811–1889) argued that the repeal of the Corn Laws would be a major step toward political democracy. The son of a Quaker cotton mill owner, Bright, although not an MP, incarnated British liberalism, as he thundered against aristocratic privilege and its close ties to the Established Church. He warned, "Until now, this country has been ruled by the class of great proprietors of the soil. Everyone must have foreseen that, as trade and manufactures extended, the balance of power would, at some time or other, be thrown into another scale. Well, that time has come."



SEARCHING FOR POTATOES IN A STUBBLE FIELD.

A destitute, hungry Irish family searching for potatoes in a stubble field during the potato famine.

As with the 1832 Reform Act, it took a change of heart by a Conservative government to get a repeal bill passed. Prime Minister Robert Peel, whose smile it was said resembled the gleam of silver plate on a coffin, was himself the conservative son of a cotton manufacturer. Believing in free trade, he had pushed through reductions in and even the elimination of some tariffs, including those on imported raw cotton. The Irish potato famine helped push him to undertake the dismantling of the Corn Laws. Repeal would be an act of political courage, as he was bound to fall from power. Peel now believed only such a move could forestall a popular insurrection. In 1846, Parliament repealed the Corn Laws, reducing duties on wheat and other imported agricultural products. Having bitterly divided the Conservative Party, Peel was forced to resign the same day, a victim, his supporters insisted, of doing the right thing.

CONCLUSION

Between 1820 and 1850, liberals and nationalists challenged the conservative post-Napoleonic settlement. Revolutions brought a liberal monarchy to France and independence to Belgium. In Great Britain, political and economic liberalism triumphed within the context of the nation's reformist tradition. The Reform Act of 1832 incorporated many more middle-class men into the political arena. British workers remained committed to peaceful protest. Liberals also gained ground in the German and northern Italian states, where middle-class proponents of German and Italian national unification became more vocal.

At the same time, cultural and nationalist movements began to develop among Czechs, Serbs, and other peoples within the Habsburg domains. However, the Prussian and Austrian monarchies, to say nothing of the Russian tsar, whose troops had crushed the Polish insurrection in 1831, stood as formidable obstacles both to reform and national movements. Nonetheless, the Concert of Europe no longer existed. Political momentum was with those seeking to break down the bastions of traditional Europe, as the dramatic Revolutions of 1848 would clearly demonstrate.