

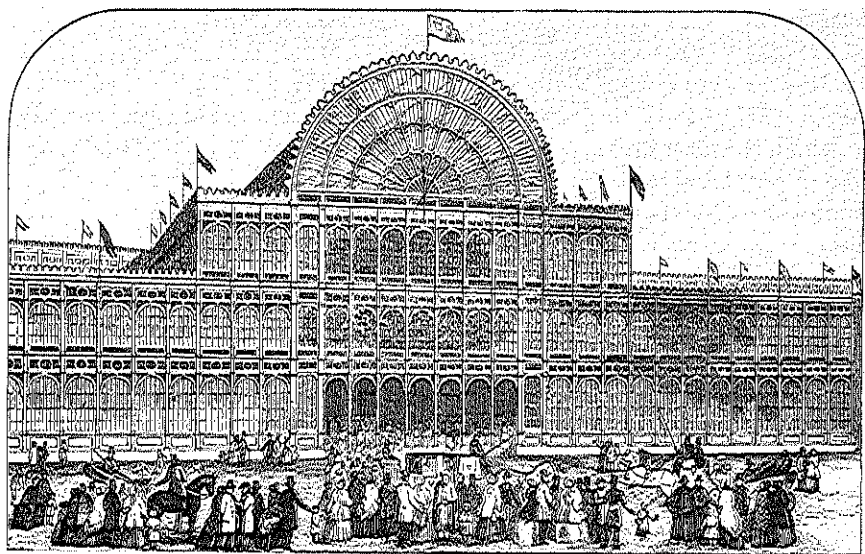
In the wake of the Revolutions of 1848, nationalism had proven itself a major force for unification in both Germany and Italy. In the Habsburg lands, in sharp contrast, nationalism was a force that came to challenge the very existence of the empire. In the age of militant nationalism, ethnic tensions within the Austro-Hungarian Empire would become those of Europe. In contrast, each of Europe's three other powers had been politically unified for centuries. Of the three, Britain and Russia had had no revolution in 1848. In contrast, France, the third, emerged from the tumultuous period with an authoritarian empire. In the next chapter, we will consider Britain, Russia, and France during the great period of change, 1850–1914.

THE DOMINANT POWERS IN THE AGE OF LIBERALISM: PARLIAMENTARY BRITAIN, TSARIST RUSSIA, AND REPUBLICAN FRANCE



The Crystal Palace, a vast structure built of glass and iron in London's Hyde Park, housed the Exposition of 1851, the first world's fair. It stood 1,848 feet long, 408 feet across, and 66 feet high, and included a million square feet of glass, 3,300 columns, and 2,300 girders, all of identical size so they could be prefabricated. Gaslight provided illumination, and, for the first time, public toilets were installed for the convenience of visitors. The machinery on exhibit, above all, captured the attention and imagination of observers, including Queen Victoria herself. To the British subjects of Queen Victoria, the Great Exposition of 1851 represented the ascendancy of the British constitution, free trade and manufacturing, and Christianity.

Great Britain was the quintessential liberal state. Britain's long tradition of constitutional monarchy, with the remaining authority of the monarch more than balanced by Parliament, reflected its liberalism and economic prosperity. There had been no revolution in 1848 in Europe's most liberal



The Crystal Palace, symbol of the new industrial age.

nation. In the parliamentary constitutional monarchy, reform in 1867 expanded the number of those males eligible to vote.

Besides Britain, the other dominant powers during the age of liberalism were France, which was more slowly entering the industrial age, and Russia, which despite some significant reforms remained an autocracy antithetical to liberalism. France during the period 1852–1870 was a highly centralized empire, with Emperor Napoleon III determined to bring economic progress through the strong involvement of the state. Napoleon III implemented universal male suffrage in the first year of his reign. Following a disastrous war against Prussia (1870–1871), the empire fell, replaced by the Third Republic, another liberal regime in which executive authority was left weak, in this case out of fear that yet another Napoleon might emerge.

In contrast, Russia remained an autocracy, a state in which the absolute authority of the tsar was limited only by bureaucratic inefficiency and the impossibility of reaching into every corner of the vast empire. Russian nobles dominated the peasant masses, and unlike Britain and France, Russia had no representative political system and only a tiny middle class, despite economic growth. Tsar Alexander II shocked many of his own nobles by emancipating the serfs in 1861. But unlike the political reforms enacted in Britain and France, the tsar's reforms did not significantly alter the autocratic nature of the Russian Empire. Yet Russia, too, was transformed by new ideas and increasingly courageous opponents of autocratic authority. And, like France, imperial Russia also had to worry about the consequences of a unified Germany.

In 1840, young Queen Victoria (1819–1901) married the German Prince Albert (1819–1861) of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. They were happily married, although she described sex as “giving way to the baser passions.” She warned one of her daughters who was about to be married that a bride was “like a lamb led to the slaughter,” and that there would be times when she would simply have to submit to her husband’s urges and “think of England.” Victoria bore children only because she thought it part of her duties as queen. She raised her children with little visible affection, as if managing a business from afar. Yet the queen projected a maternal image both in Britain and in the colonies over which she also ruled.

Albert’s tendency to be narrow-minded, socially awkward, and tactless irritated cabinet ministers and other highly placed people. He hovered about the government, dashing off letters and memoranda when the mood struck him, meddling when he could. Although Victoria made clear from the beginning that she would serve as a queen without a king, her devotion to Albert sparked some anti-German feeling in Britain.

Prince Albert organized the Great Exposition of 1851 in London. In his opening prayers, the Anglican archbishop made the connection between Britain’s prosperity and the era of relative peace that had prevailed since the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. More than this, Great Britain seemed special. The historian Thomas Macaulay wrote in the wake of the Revolutions of 1848 on the continent: “All around us the world is convulsed by the agonies of the great nations. . . . Meanwhile, in our island, the course of government has never been for a day interrupted. We have order in the midst of anarchy.”

At the Great Exposition of 1851, more than 6 million visitors—most from Britain but a good many from the continent and beyond—could choose among more than 100,000 exhibits (half from Britain and its colonies) put forward by 14,000 exhibitors. The exhibits were categorized into raw materials, machinery, manufactured goods, and fine arts, and ranged from useful household items to huge guns exhibited by the Prussian industrialist Krupp. These seemed somewhat out of place in a venue where many assured themselves that science and industry offered hope for continued peace in Europe.

The Great Exposition celebrated the industrial age, Britain’s primacy in manufacturing, and the “working bees of the world’s hive.” Its catalogue intoned, “The progress of the human race . . . we are carrying out the will of the great and blessed God.” Most of the visitors to the Great Exposition, ranging from the wealthy and famous to the poor folk paying just one shilling to enter, arrived by railroad.

When Albert died of typhoid in 1861 at age forty-two, Victoria was devastated. She retreated into lonely bereavement and isolation, ignoring most public duties. Only gradually did Victoria reemerge to provide a focal point

for a nation in the midst of a great transformation during the second half of the century.

Victoria knew virtually nothing about the lives of her subjects and instinctively disapproved of factory reforms and increased opportunity of education for the lower classes (fearing that it would lead them to want to raise their station in life). But the queen remained the personification of the "respectability" that gave her name to the Victorian age. "Respectability"—inculcated by education and contemporary literature—centered on the family and strict rules about public comportment. But it meant different things to families of different strata: three servants for a comfortable middle-class family, a parlor off the kitchen for breakfast for a lower-middle-class family, and avoiding a pauper's funeral for a lower-class family.

The Victorian Consensus

"Victorian," a term first used in 1851, the year of the Great Exposition, evokes a sense of the contentment and confidence that middle-class Britons enjoyed. The Victorian consensus was formed around the capitalist entrepreneurial ethic, emphasizing self-reliance and faith in progress. In the Victorian entrepreneurial ideal, the individual demonstrated his moral worth through hard work, in contrast to the evils of the old system of patronage. Competition would determine those who were fit to rule, not aristocratic monopoly or unearned privilege, and not working-class demands for a greater share in the prosperity of the nation that middle-class Britons believed their hard work had created.

In 1859, the belief in the virtues of rugged individualism received a boost from the publication of *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Darwin, the son of a domineering father, overcame chronic anxiety, self-doubt, and severe depression to undertake determined, systematic research and analysis on the evolution of living organisms. His bold book argued that some animal species survived and evolved by virtue of being better adapted to existing conditions, while others disappeared because they were less "fit." By implication, Darwin's work seemed to suggest that the state should stand back and let individuals alone to compete on the playing field of life. This was more good news for many confident Victorians, but not for churchmen, for Darwin's book taught that mankind evolved from other animal forms over millions of years, thus challenging the Bible's description of God having created the world in seven days. Darwin's research and analysis were a major event in the battle between science and religion in nineteenth-century Europe.

Religious images and references permeated Victorian social and political discourse. Entrepreneurs believed that they were doing God's work by becoming successful and rich. Many Victorians insisted that the pervasive influence of religion more than prosperity explained the apparent social harmony of their age. Thus, many Britons were surprised and even shocked by the



A contemporary impression of Darwin looking at human ancestry.

results of a government survey of every church in England and Wales on a Sunday morning in 1851. Out of a population of almost 18 million people, only slightly more than 7.2 million had attended church. Moreover, if everybody in England and Wales had decided to attend church, only 58 percent of the population and only 30 percent of Londoners could be accommodated. Between 1841 and 1876, the Anglicans built 1,727 new churches and restored more than 7,000 old ones; among their rivals, Congregationalists and Catholics doubled the number of their churches, and Baptists multiplied their churches by five.

The Church of England, closely identified with the British elite, remained a target for liberal reformers.

Parliament had repealed the Corporation and Test Acts in 1828, eliminating two significant discriminatory laws that had kept Dissenters (non-Anglican Protestants) who refused to take communion in the Anglican Church from holding office. Parliamentary decrees in 1854 and 1856 allowed non-Anglicans to attend Cambridge and Oxford Universities. Catholics, most of whom were Irish immigrants—in addition to a small number of nobles whose families had converted to Catholicism—still faced popular suspicion, however, reflecting the deep roots of anti-Catholicism in British national identity.

Many middle-class Victorians wanted to make the lower classes more "moral." Congregationalist and Baptist evangelicals (as well as Methodists) won converts among the lower classes, perhaps because leaders of these churches demonstrated far more interest in the conditions of the poor than did the Church of England. Temperance movements proliferated in a wave of concern about lower-class drunkenness—one-third of all arrests were for drunk and disorderly conduct. The Charity Organization Society, founded in 1869, promoted charitable giving to those who steered clear of drink. And in 1875, the Salvation Army began its work, offering assistance to those who would participate in religious revival services.

The Crimean War

In 1854, Britain found itself involved in a major war that ended the long peace that had lasted almost without interruption since Napoleon's defeat

in 1815. (Indeed the period is sometimes known as the Pax Britannia, in part because Britain's naval domination helped discourage conflict.) Britain entered the Crimean War (1853–1856) to support the Turks against Russia, which had intervened in 1841 against Mehmet Ali, the governor of Egypt (see Chapter 16). In 1853, Russian forces occupied the Ottoman Danubian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (see Map 18.1) to solidify Russia's position in the Balkans.

The Russian Empire had since the late eighteenth century sought control over the Straits of Constantinople, which divide Europe from Asia and could provide the Russian navy with access to the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. Such ambitions inevitably brought conflict with the Ottoman Empire, which had controlled virtually the entire Balkan region until the early nineteenth century.

Following defeat after the Greek revolt in the 1820s, Ottoman rulers had undertaken a series of major reforms of the army (after having replaced the janissary corps—the Turkish sultan's militia that had originally been formed of Christians who converted to Islam, slaves, and members of other nationalities—with a more European army in 1826) and

MAP 18.1 THE CRIMEAN WAR, 1853–1856 Russian, British-French-Piedmontese, and Austrian troop movements involved in this war between the great powers.



imperial administration. Sultan Mahmud II (ruled 1808–1839) had reorganized the treasury and ordered a census of the empire in 1831. Mahmud II's successors decreed further reforms during the period known as Tanzimat—the “Reorganization”—that lasted from 1839 to 1878. By the Rose Chamber (Gulhane) Decree of 1839, the sultan guaranteed the life and property of all Ottoman subjects and their equality before law, while initiating military conscription and a more organized system of taxation. Other changes followed: the establishment of penal and commercial codes, the reform of justice, and the implementation of more central government control over regions, reducing the autonomous power of the governors through the creation of a more modern bureaucracy. Such reforms pleased the governments of Britain and France, in part because Ottoman markets were now more open to foreign trade, but also because these governments viewed the stability of the Ottoman Empire as necessary to tempering Russian dreams of further expansion toward Constantinople and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits.

A century earlier, perhaps as much as 80 percent of the population of the Ottoman Empire in Europe had been Christian. Each religion had the right to worship freely, and non-Muslims had access to Islamic courts. Christians and Muslims got along for the most part very well. The structure of the empire had for centuries encouraged the conversion of Christians to Islam, because Christians were considered second-class subjects and faced a heavier tax burden than did Muslims. Inter-marriage was fairly frequent. In the late eighteenth century, the sultans had begun to tighten their control over the various religions in the empire. Each religious community—Greek Orthodox, Jewish, and Armenian—was organized into what became known as the “millet” system. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the sultan brought the hierarchy of Muslim religious and cultural leaders (the *ulema*) under administrative control. In addition, stories of persecution of Muslim minorities in Russia and suspicion of the Western powers toward Islam contributed to the gradual emergence of Islamism in the Ottoman Empire. Religious leaders began calling for a return to the fundamental values of Islam.

At the same time, however, Turkish economic development brought the emergence of a group of prosperous merchants who turned away from and even rejected the organization of communities along religious lines. Officials (*memurs*) replaced the old Ottoman ruling class, which had originally been drawn from the servants of the sultan's household, who had held positions in the imperial administration and army. The Ottoman ministries of the interior, finance, and foreign affairs, among others, reflected Western influence.

Yet the continued decline of the Ottoman Empire seemed probable. Egypt appeared on the verge of achieving independence. Russia stood poised like a vulture to profit from its once-powerful rival's weakness, a situation that came to be called the “Eastern Question.” Russia presented itself as the protector of Slavic and Orthodox Christian interests in the Balkans, encouraging agitation against the Turks. Christian minorities within the Ottoman

Empire in the Balkans began to exert nationalist claims, dreaming of their own independent states. This challenged the Islamic character that had existed for centuries as an essential part of the empire.

With interests in Afghanistan, Britain was ill disposed to the expansion of Russian influence. Increased British trade with the Ottoman Empire had become another factor in British support for the Turks. Napoleon III of France, eager for a military victory to solidify support for his regime, also stood ready to stop Russian expansion by supporting the Ottoman Empire. The French emperor saw himself as the protector of the Catholic Holy Places of Judea, which were under Ottoman authority. To placate Catholic supporters, Napoleon III demanded at least Catholic equality with the Orthodox religion in Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This Russia refused, demanding the right to veto any changes in the status not only of the Holy Places but also in the situation of the entire Ottoman Christian population.

The Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia in October 1853. Russian Tsar Nicholas I's fleet defeated the Ottoman fleet in the Black Sea, setting fire to the sultan's wooden ships with incendiary shells. But the tsar's confidence that Britain and France would soon quarrel because of conflicting interests proved ill founded. With British public opinion eager for the flag to be shown even after the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldavia and Wallachia, the British Royal Navy sailed into the Black Sea. Not to be outdone, Napoleon III, too, sent warships.

Britain and France declared war on Russia in March 1854. British and French forces first moved against the Russian port of Sebastopol on the peninsula of Crimea on the edge of the Black Sea. Invulnerable to sea attack, Sebastopol could only be stormed from land. The rusty invading armies lay siege to Sebastopol. The French army seemed better trained, as well as better fed and supplied than that of the British. The senior British commander, a veteran of Waterloo forty years earlier, persisted in referring to the Russians as "the French." Most British officers owed their commissions to the fact that they were aristocrats, not because of particular competence. One commander spent each night on his private yacht anchored offshore, dining on meals prepared by a French chef while his men shivered in the wind and mud of the Crimean winter and ate ghastly rations.

Far more men died (about 600,000) of disease than in battle, although Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892), Britain's poet laureate, helped make famous the "Charge of the Light Brigade," in which British cavalry rode into "jaws of death" at Balaklava. The first war correspondents sent dispatches by telegraph to eager readers in Britain and France, where interest in the distant siege dramatically increased newspaper circulation.

Into this maelstrom ventured Florence Nightingale (1820–1910). The daughter of a prosperous family, she had shocked her parents by becoming a nurse, an occupation that had a reputation as providing a refuge for "disorderly" women. Nightingale volunteered for service in a Constantinople hospital after hearing of the appalling conditions endured by the



(Left) The charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. (Right) Florence Nightingale.

wounded and those sick with cholera and dysentery. She bombarded the government with highly detailed information on what was wrong and what was needed. Raising funds through private contributions, she succeeded in improving conditions in the hospital. Nightingale had to overcome the conviction of officers that she would “spoil the brutes,” that is, the sick and wounded enlisted men, as well as overcoming prejudices against a woman making forceful demands on the government. The government several years later enacted a series of reforms to improve food and health care for the men in its army. In part a result of Florence Nightingale’s highly publicized work throughout the remainder of her career, nursing emerged as a more respected profession.

The Crimean War ground to a halt after Sebastopol finally capitulated in September 1855. The Peace of Paris (March 1856) guaranteed the autonomy of the Danubian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (which became independent Romania in 1878), the independence of Turkey, and the neutrality of the Black Sea. The Crimean War left little doubt that Victorian Britain remained Europe’s strongest power.

The Liberal Era of Victorian Politics

Britain entered a period of relative social harmony. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 convinced many workers that they could place their trust in political reform, which is one reason there was no revolution in Britain in 1848 (see Chapter 16). Middle-class reformers had broadened their appeal

to include the most prosperous segments of the working class. Most British workers seemed to accept the belief that hard work and savings would inevitably be rewarded. Most Victorians of all social classes increasingly felt themselves part of a nation with which they could identify.

British workers, including many union members, joined "friendly societies," or as they were increasingly called, "self-help associations." Membership in such groups rose from less than a million in 1815 to 3 million in 1849 and 4 million in 1872, four times that of unions. They provided members with minimal assistance in times of unemployment or illness and a decent burial. Preaching individual self-help and respectability, such organizations did not offer the socialist vision common among workers in France, Belgium, or the Rhineland. They helped inculcate a sense of what the British called "respectability," which discouraged militancy.

Like the friendly societies, Britain's "new model unions" also embodied the concept of self-help. Members of these unions first and foremost saw their organizations as representing craftsmen and skilled workers of specific crafts, such as carpenters and printers from the "aristocracy of labor" who could afford dues. They constituted about 15 percent of the working class, standing apart from the mass of unskilled laborers. Some of them taught in Sunday schools, working men's colleges, reading rooms, and improvement societies. Even when local unions within a single trade joined to form national organizations, there was no talk of revolution or even of eventually restructuring British economic, social, and political life. Strikers in the 1860s were increasingly willing to accept arbitration boards and to compromise to achieve limited goals.

Benefiting from the 1832 enfranchisement of more middle-class men, the Whigs governed Britain for most of the 1850s and 1860s. Henry John Temple (1784–1865), the Viscount Palmerston, who began his political career as a Conservative, led the Whigs. The notorious philandering of the shrewd and feisty "Lord Cupid," as he was known to his detractors, stood out in an age of public prudishness. Palmerston outraged Queen Victoria by trying to seduce one of her ladies-in-waiting in Windsor Castle.

Palmerston held together a coalition of Whigs who were determined to uphold laissez-faire economic policies. Dissenters, Catholics, and liberal Anglicans wanted the Anglican Church to lose its status as the Established Church of England. Gradually these Whigs began to be referred to as the Liberal Party.

Palmerston's bellicose saber-rattling won him personal popularity. Crowds cheered when he ordered the blockade of the Greek port of Piraeus in 1850 to enforce claims against the Greek government by Don Pacifico, a British-born Portuguese Jew whose house an Athens mob had destroyed. Palmerston boastfully compared the might of classical Rome and Victorian Britain, which had remained one of the "protecting powers" of Greece since its independence in 1832. Following the overthrow of King Otto in 1854, Britain, France, Bavaria, and Russia selected a Danish prince to rule Greece

as King George I, while placating Greek nationalists by awarding one of the Ionian islands to Greece.

After glorying in Britain's victory in the Crimean War, Palmerston then lurched into a short war against China in 1857, after the Chinese government seized a pirate ship that had formerly been registered under the British flag. Rebuffed by a majority in Commons and opposed by pacifist political radicals outside of Parliament, Palmerston refused to resign and called for a general election. Basing his campaign on an appeal to patriotism, he won the day.

William Gladstone (1809–1898) then became the leader of the Liberal Party. Gladstone was the son of a wealthy and unscrupulous merchant who had made a fortune in trade with India and the West Indies. The young Gladstone was deeply religious and wore his moral vision of the world on his sleeve, going out into the night to try to convince prostitutes to abandon their trade. Gladstone sought to impose his own self-discipline and sense of Victorian Christianity on the nation. During his early years in government, he worked to assure laissez-faire economic policies, campaigning for the abolition of even the very modest income tax.

As chancellor of the exchequer, Gladstone had waged war against extravagance and waste in government. In contrast to his Conservative rivals, he opposed colonization as being too expensive. Queen Victoria loathed Gladstone, blaming him for almost every domestic and international problem. She resented his *de facto* campaign to reduce the already limited role of the monarchy in the constitutional government of Britain. Having supported the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, he wanted to make the Liberals the party of reform.

Robert Peel had split the Conservatives by supporting the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. After Peel's death in 1850, Benjamin Disraeli

(Left) William Gladstone, Liberal prime minister. (Right) Benjamin Disraeli.



(1804–1881) became the leader of the Conservatives and Gladstone's great rival. A Jew who had been baptized into the Anglican Church, Disraeli seemed an unlikely leader of a party dominated by landed wealth. But he was an energetic, skilled politician and an impressive orator who had the good sense to realize that further Conservative attempts to revive economic protectionism were doomed. Unlike Gladstone, Disraeli got along famously with the queen, whom he flattered on every possible occasion. Victoria depended upon Disraeli for advice much as she had on Albert. (As Disraeli lay dying, the queen wrote to ask if she might visit the Conservative leader. "It is better not," Disraeli replied. "She'd only ask me to take a message to Albert.")

The Reform Bill of 1867

Since 1832, the majority of British subjects had regarded further political reform as a certainty. A growing number of middle-class voters, hoping to end disproportionate aristocratic influence in British political life, supported some expansion of suffrage. Workers wanted universal male suffrage. As for Queen Victoria, she insisted that she "cannot and will not be the queen of a democratic monarchy." John Bright (1811–1889), who represented Manchester and then Birmingham in the House of Commons, campaigned for electoral reform. In 1866, the National Reform Union, whose membership was overwhelmingly middle class, and the Reform League, which many craftsmen joined, allied with Bright's parliamentary radicals. Their goal was household suffrage, that is, the right of the adult male head of family to vote.

Gladstone, typically, was convinced that political reform was not only expedient but also moral. "You cannot fight against the future," the Liberal leader taunted Conservatives in Parliament. "Time is on our side. The great social forces . . . are against you." But he wanted to let down the electoral drawbridge only long enough to let in artisans and skilled workers, the "aristocracy of labor," but not all males.

Conservatives feared that the enfranchisement of more people would add to the ranks of the Liberals and eventually lead to subsequent legislation that might weaken the political influence of wealthy landowners. The Liberal government proposed a bill to reduce the minimum amount of tax one had to pay to be eligible to vote both in the countryside and in towns, where the rate would be set lower. The proposed reform would still exclude ordinary workers and other poor people. However, the House of Lords rejected the bill because a majority of members opposed any change.

Disraeli, who had predicted that "pillage, incendiarism, and massacre" would follow universal male suffrage in Britain, now believed that electoral reform that maintained some exclusions was not only inevitable but that his Conservative Party could benefit from it. Disraeli took a "leap in the dark," proposing that the vote be given to each head of a household and

that the minimum countryside tax requirement be further lowered. Under Conservative auspices, the Reform Bill of 1867 passed, like that of 1832. This doubled the ranks of voters but still left Britain short of universal male suffrage.

In France at the same time, every adult male could vote during the Second Empire, to be sure. But there Emperor Napoleon III cynically manipulated universal male suffrage by presenting government-sponsored candidates and utilizing that old Bonapartist tool, the plebiscite. The German Empire, too, had universal male suffrage, but the Reichstag (assembly) had little real authority. In Russia, there were no national elected bodies at all, and local assemblies (*zemstvos*) initiated in 1864 were elected by local electoral colleges but were dependent upon officials named by the tsar. In Italy, only a small percentage of adult males were eligible to vote, by virtue of their ownership of property. The reformed electoral system in Britain not only enfranchised many more voters, but gave them more influence, because the House of Commons exercised great authority in Britain's constitutional monarchy. Here, too, Britain seemed to lead the way in the gradual emergence of democratic politics.

Disraeli's Conservatives, however, failed to woo many of the new voters. The Liberals won a large majority in Parliament, boosted by support from workers who now could vote. The major goal of the Chartist campaign more than two decades earlier had been reached.

Another act of reform in 1884 added 2 million more voters to the rolls by enfranchising agricultural laborers. With women still excluded from the vote, the only adult males who could not vote were those without a fixed residence, sons living at home with their parents and not paying rent, and domestic servants. The Redistribution Act of 1885 disenfranchised some underpopulated districts while increasing representation of many urban areas. However, the establishment of single-member constituencies compensated Conservatives, balancing potential Liberal gains in urban areas.

Other Victorian Reforms

The Victorian consensus rested upon a strong belief that the "invisible hand" of the economy would generate economic growth. Many Victorians had believed the Poor Law of 1834 was self-defeating because it provided minimal resources to the poor for which they had not worked. But increasingly aware of the devastating poverty of millions of workers, most middle-class Victorians by mid-century had changed their minds about the role of government in society. Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890), a journalist and associate of Jeremy Bentham, had drafted the Poor Law. His *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of Great Britain* (1842) served as an impassioned plea for government action after cholera had ravaged poor urban neighborhoods. Largely thanks to Chadwick's efforts, Parliament passed laws facilitating the inspection of rooming houses, where

many poor workers resided. Thereafter, parliamentary commissions began to call upon experts to gather information and assess conditions of British life. The age of statistics had arrived.

Regulatory agencies began to spring up. In 1848, Parliament created the national General Board of Health. Chadwick's revelations about public health—or rather, the lack of it—encountered ferocious opposition from those who were against any government intervention as a matter of principle. “We prefer to take our chance on cholera and the rest than be bullied into health,” grouched *The Times*. Yet, by the time Chadwick was driven to resign from the General Board of Health in 1854, the right of the state to intervene in matters of health had been established. Parliamentary acts in the 1860s extended regulations of working conditions in mines and in factories with more than fifty employees and where women and children worked. The Public Health Act of 1866 gave local government more authority to assure a cleaner water supply. Five years later, state inspectors for the first time obtained legal access to workplaces. Parliament soon established health boards in towns and country districts, even if local business and political interests often combined to foil the efforts of reformers. Yet, reform leagues, such as the National Education League became part of British political life.

Victorious in elections following the passage of the Reform Act of 1867, the Liberals ended the purchase of army commissions, enacted land reform in Ireland, and the government recognized the legal existence of trade unions. When the Conservatives returned to power in 1874, they, too, sought to woo the allegiance of workers from the Liberals by getting Parliament to approve a number of reforms, including a law that forbade labor by

Street disinfectors in London, 1875.



uneducated children. Yet considerably more than altruism lay behind a shift in middle-class attitudes. Manufacturers also knew that demand for their products depended on workers having money to spend. In Great Britain, the "age of optimism" became the "age of improvement."

Queen Victoria once asked someone to define "bureaucracy," a term she did not know. "That, Madam," came the reply, "is something that they have in France." Yet the Victorian state expanded. In 1841, the British government—the least centralized of the major European powers—had employed 40,000 men and 3,000 women; by 1911, 271,000 men and 50,000 women worked for the state. The administration of the Poor Law itself served to strengthen the role of government in local affairs. Municipal councils took over the task of administering local government from the justices of the peace, who had served in such capacity since the sixteenth century. Municipalities were now responsible for education, as well as for health, housing, roads, and policing. Service in local government, once little more than another honor awarded a landed gentleman, now required the participation of paid officials.

With increased responsibilities, the British civil service became professionalized. The government administered competitive examinations on which appointment and promotion depended. However, these exams did not democratize entry into the civil service. Applicants who had attended one of the expensive, elite public schools (so called because they accepted students from all over Britain, provided their families could afford the steep tuition) had a far greater advantage on the examinations than those who had not.

As the role of the British state thus expanded considerably during the middle decades of the century, the era of laissez-faire liberalism came to a close. Speaking of her father, Gladstone's daughter remembered, "I was accustomed to hear him utter the word 'Government' in a tone that chartered it with awe and made it part of my effective religion."

Mass Politics Come to Britain

Out of office following passage of the 1867 Reform Act, Benjamin Disraeli sought to accommodate Conservatives to the era of mass political life. Realizing that his party, long closely tied to the British landed elite and the Anglican Church, would have to outbid their Liberal rivals for votes, he created a modern national party organization. Disraeli made British nationalism and imperialism part of the Conservative Party platform, suggesting that the Liberals would weaken Britain. When the Turks and Russians began to quarrel over the Balkans, Disraeli supported the Turks, despite the massacre of about 10,000 to 15,000 Bulgarians in 1876 by Turkish troops. Gladstone, however, was horrified by the bloodbath and made a political issue of the Balkans. It was easy enough for him to do so: Britain had less to fear from the Ottoman Empire in decline than from an aggressively expansionist Russia.

The Conservative Party now reflected an important change in modern British political life. The traditional split between "city" and "country," which had characterized politics since the seventeenth century, had largely ended. The Conservatives now found new support among some of the wealthiest businessmen, who abandoned the Liberals. Furthermore, many aristocrats were themselves now actively involved in the management of banks and modern industries. The English business elite that had been formed during the first decades of Victoria's reign became as conservative as the aristocrats they emulated. A contemporary assessed this evolution when he wrote: "Our territorial nobles, our squires, our rural landlords great and small, have become commercial potentates; our merchant princes have become country gentlemen." Some wealthy businessmen deserted the Dis-senters to join the Established Anglican Church. This new Conservative political culture, supported by a faithful minority of nationalist "Tory workers," survived the economic and social changes that were transforming Britain.

Gladstone himself embarked on whistle-stop "Midlothian" campaigns—so named for one of his first stops in 1879. His audiences were made up of anyone who wanted to come to the railroad station to hear him. This forced Conservatives even more to put aside their feelings that such appeals to ordinary people were vulgar, or too "American."

Yet the Conservative Party remained the party of great landed wealth. The law of primogeniture helped keep huge estates intact. Because of parliamentary districting, the countryside remained overrepresented in Parliament, again to the advantage of landed gentlemen. In 1871, about 1,200 people owned a quarter of the land of England, and the holdings of 7,000 families amounted to half of the country. Landed gentlemen dominated the House of Commons until 1885, the cabinet until 1893, and the aristocratic House of Lords well into the twentieth century.

Irish Home Rule

The Liberals continued to be faced with the problem of Ireland, which reflected the dilemmas of national identity in late nineteenth-century Europe. In 1868, William Gladstone had announced that the most pressing mission of his new government was to "pacify Ireland." A year later, the Liberal prime minister pushed through both houses of Parliament a bill that disestablished the Church of Ireland (which had become part of the United Church of England in 1800), since Ireland was 80 percent Catholic. This meant that the Episcopal Church in Ireland no longer received state support.

To many Irish, it seemed that only by owning land could Irish peasants reach any degree of prosperity. The Irish Land Act of 1870 provided tenants with compensation for improvements they had undertaken and protected them from being evicted from property without just cause. But English

Protestant landlords were not about to turn over land in Ireland to the peasants who rented from or worked for them. The fall in the price of agricultural commodities made it more difficult for tenant-farmers to meet their rent payments. In 1879, the Irish Land League, drawing on the remnants of the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood (known in Gaelic as the Fenians) and sworn to win independence, began to pressure Parliament for land reform.

Gladstone's determination to make Ireland his ongoing moral crusade met with opposition within his own Liberal Party, which depended on support from Whig landowners in Ireland to maintain a parliamentary majority. Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891), a Liberal Irish Protestant, began to build a small parliamentary coalition in favor of Home Rule, which meant the establishment of a separate Irish Parliament, but not outright independence. The Irish Catholic Church supported Home Rule. Parnell's program, however, fell short of the demands of the Land League, which wanted immediate and sweeping land reform, and the revived Irish Republican Brotherhood, which insisted on complete Irish independence.

During 1879–1882, Irish farmers undertook a “land war” of protest. Irish tenants and laborers began to shun farmers who took over the leases of peasants evicted for nonpayment of rent. A certain Captain Boycott, the agent of a large landowner, was one of the first targets; his name became synonymous with such a strategy. The British government replied with repression, suspending the writ of *habeas corpus* in Ireland in 1881. However, that same year, Gladstone also pushed through a bill (by threatening to dissolve Parliament) protecting any Irish tenant from eviction who could pay one year's back rent. Parnell was sent to prison for his violently anti-British speeches. Moreover, opposition to Home Rule mounted in Parliament among MPs who argued that concessions had encouraged violence. A year later, the British government ordered Parnell's release from prison, in the hope that he would help end disorder in Ireland in exchange for the future passage of another bill to help Irish tenants.

In 1882, Irish republicans hacked to death two British officials who had been walking in Phoenix Park in Dublin. The assassinations shocked the English public. In response to the murders, and to more than thirty other deaths in Ireland at the hands of Irish republicans, a Coercion Act facilitated the British government's repression of the republicans by eliminating some rights of those arrested. Five of those responsible for the Phoenix Park assassinations were arrested and hung.

Gladstone (who served as prime minister four different times) proposed Home Rule in 1886, but the issue divided the Liberal Party and the bill failed. Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914) led the defection of the “Liberal Unionists” over Home Rule. Parnell fell into disgrace three years later when news broke of his affair with Kitty O'Shea, the wife of a Liberal Irish MP active in the campaign for Home Rule. Another bill failed in 1893, defeated in the House of Lords.

New Contours in British Political Life

Queen Victoria's longevity—she ruled the vast British Empire with dignity from 1837 until 1901—symbolized British social and political stability. She endeared herself to her people on the occasion of her silver jubilee in 1887 by wearing a simple bonnet (albeit one with diamonds) instead of her crown. The Prince of Wales inherited the throne as King Edward VII (ruled 1901–1910). Edward could not have been more different from his mother, with whom he constantly battled and whom he often embarrassed. Edward “the Caresser” indulged his extravagant tastes in beautiful women, prize horses, good food, fine wines, and gambling.

The Conservatives returned to power in 1895. Like their counterparts in France and Germany, the British Conservative Party became even more aggressively nationalist, imperialist, and resolutely antisocialist. The Liberal Unionists had allied with the Conservatives over Home Rule. In 1895, their leader Joseph Chamberlain joined the Conservative government as colonial secretary.

Frustrated by the Conservative government's refusal to initiate parliamentary bills of social reform and by employers' attempts to weaken the unions by hiring non-union labor, British trade unionism entered a more aggressive phase during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The Trades Union Congress (created in 1868) had provided a forum for organized labor, although the financial resources of unions became even more depleted.

Now, a more militant “new unionism” was characterized by the organization of semiskilled workers, including many iron and steel factory workers. In 1887, for the first time since the last Chartist marches in London in 1848, English workers went into the streets in great numbers to protest, demonstrating against unemployment and the high cost of living. On November 13—“Black Monday”—store owners slammed their doors shut amid a “red fear” in central London, again the first since 1848. The police attacked crowds of workers, killing 2 and wounding about 100 protesters.

In 1889, following a victory by gas workers in a London strike that achieved the eight-hour workday, dockworkers struck for a minimum wage. They were led by Ben Tillett (1860–1943). Born in Bristol, Tillett had at the age of seven begun cutting slabs of clay in a brickyard, then ran away with Old Joe Barker's Circus as an acrobat, before joining the merchant marine and then the navy. Finding work as a dockyard laborer, he helped organize thousands of unskilled laborers in a massive strike. Australian workers sent funds that helped tide the strikers over. After five weeks, the dockworkers won a minimum wage and overtime pay. Tillett's dockworkers' union soon had 30,000 members.

But hundreds of thousands of casual laborers, including those living in London's teeming East End, still were not unionized, nor in friendly societies. For them the independence of the skilled worker remained only a



(Left) Ben Tillet, organizer of the Docker's Union. (Right) James Keir Hardie, founder of the Independent Labour Party.

dream. Strikes in 1897–1898 (including Britain's first national walkout, which ended in the workers' defeat) revealed the growing reach of the new unions.

The state went on the offensive against the unions. In 1901, in resolving a railway case in Wales, the Taff Vale decision of the House of Lords made unions and their officers legally responsible for losses sustained by companies during strikes. This encouraged the creation of the Labour Party. First organized in 1900 (taking its name in 1906), the Labour Party had its origins in the small Independent Labour Party, which had been founded in 1893 by MP James Keir Hardie (1856–1915). This rough-hewn Scottish miner had provoked the House of Commons by chiding members for sending a congratulatory message to the queen on the birth of a great-grandson instead of a message of condolence to the families of several hundred miners killed in an accident in a mine shaft in Wales. The Labour Party now vowed to represent workers in Parliament and specifically to bring about the repeal of the Taff Vale decision.

A split within the Liberal-Unionist-Conservative bloc brought ten years of Conservative government to an end. Some political leaders, including Joseph Chamberlain, campaigned for protective tariffs, believing that they would increase British prosperity by creating a large imperial market. Many Conservatives, including Prime Minister Arthur Balfour (1848–1930), believed that voters preferred traditional free trade policies, identified with

lower food prices. Unable to resolve the split within his party, Balfour resigned in December 1905, and the Liberals swept to victory the following year. Promising to repeal the Taff Vale decision, they garnered many working-class votes. The Labour Party, which had managed to win only one seat in 1900, now sent twenty-nine MPs to the House of Commons. Under the Liberal government, Parliament reversed the Taff Vale decision with the Trade Disputes Act of 1906, which legalized picketing and relieved unions of the legal responsibility for financial losses caused by strikes.

In 1908, Herbert Asquith (1852–1928) became Liberal prime minister. Like the Conservatives, he supported British imperial causes. But the dynamic, ambitious, and charismatic Welshman David Lloyd George (1863–1945) was the rising star of the Liberals. A man of modest origins who preferred to speak his native Welsh than English, Lloyd George had come into the public eye for his opposition to the Boer War (see Chapter 21), although in general he supported the empire. While crusading against the Conservative Party, Lloyd George worked to continue the Gladstonian reformist tradition. He wanted to counter the drift of union members toward the Labour Party by bringing workers, middle-class men, and businessmen into an alliance that would support Liberal social and political reforms. The Liberal government established local boards to set minimum industrial wages, involving the British government in bargaining between employers and workers to an extent hitherto unseen.

In 1909, Lloyd George (who was chancellor of the exchequer) proposed a budget that called for increased public benefits to be partially funded by taxes on inheritance and on unearned income and uncultivated land. These “supertaxes” (which were in fact quite small) would fall on the richest families of the nation. He compared the costs of maintaining “a fully-equipped duke” to that of a new battleship, depicting the aristocratic families as parasitical leeches maintained at public expense.

In the Osborne judgment of 1909, the House of Lords had ruled in favor of a railway worker who had sued his union with the goal of keeping union funds from being used to support Labour candidates for the House of Commons or to pay them while they served. (MPs began to receive salaries several years later.) Like the Taff Vale case, the Osborne judgment struck a damaging blow against the unions. In a climate of social confrontation, the House of Lords then provocatively vetoed the 1909 budget, which it viewed as an attack on the wealthy, thus exercising a right that it had not used for decades. Asquith called the House of Lord’s veto a “break with the constitution and a usurpation of the rights of the Commons.” He dissolved Parliament, confident of winning the new elections.

The Liberals did indeed return to power early the next year with the help of Irish nationalists and the Labour Party. Asquith’s Parliament Act of 1911 proposed to eliminate the right of the House of Lords to veto any financial bill. Many Britons viewed the passage of such a bill as a final blow to noble privilege. The act also specified that any bill that the House of Lords did

not pass after it had been approved on three occasions by the House of Commons would become law if two years had passed since it had first been introduced in Parliament.

When Asquith threatened to ask King George V (who had succeeded to the throne in 1910) to create enough new peerages to pass the bill, the House of Lords, despite the opposition of intransigents, the so-called Diehards, approved the Parliament Act in 1911. The House of Lords thus eliminated its own constitutional veto, completing the long revolution in British political life that had begun with the passage of the Reform Act of 1832, which had first reduced the disproportionate power of British nobles. The House of Lords then reversed the Osborne judgment.

In 1911, a walkout by seamen, stevedores, bargemen, and ship repairers spread rapidly in London, Manchester, and Liverpool. The prospect of a food shortage forced the government's hand. Through binding arbitration, the strikers won raises. A national rail strike ended in compromise settlements. When the Miners' Federation called the first general coal strike, more than 800,000 men went out, which left another 1.3 million without work. The miners gained a minimum wage, but when dockers failed to achieve their strike goals in 1912, Britain's largest wave of strikes to date ended in failure. That many strikes ended in defeat may have helped turn British workers further toward parliamentary reformism. In any case, collective bargaining had become commonplace in the 1890s, with conciliation and arbitration boards established in many localities.

Irish Home Rule, still a major political issue, now seemed almost inevitable. Irish politicians, peasants, and poets shared the burst of nationalist sentiment characteristic of the first decade of the twentieth century. The Gaelic League popularized Irish music and encouraged people to speak Gaelic, not English. The poet William Butler Yeats (1865–1939), who helped create a native Irish theater in Dublin, contributed to a literary nationalism that sometimes glossed over class differences among the Irish: "Parnell came down the road and said to a cheering man: / 'Ireland will get her freedom, and you shall still break stone.'" Such literature also tended to romanticize the Irish as peasants made virtuous by poverty and hard work. In the collection of short stories *Dubliners* (1912) by James Joyce (1882–1941), the countryside appears as an idyllic escape from the confusion of Ireland's rapidly growing, impoverished metropolis, which had once been his home.

If some Irish nationalists would accept nothing less than complete independence from Britain, others advocated Home Rule. Irish Protestants living in Ulster, who outnumbered Catholics there by two to one, opposed any measure of Home Rule, which they identified with Catholic "Rome Rule." In 1913, Ulster Protestants formed a paramilitary army of volunteers. At the same time, an Irish Republican Army added men and arms. Century-old wounds split open again, and Ireland seemed on the verge of civil war. In September 1914, Parliament passed a Home Rule Bill, despite the intransi-

gent opposition of the House of Lords. But with Britain—and all the powers of Europe—going to war, the details were left for the uncertain future. Liberal Britain, too, was being swept into international events it could not control.

TSARIST RUSSIA

Autocratic Russia—an absolutist state based upon an alliance of the tsar and the nobles—in the nineteenth century presented a particularly sharp contrast with Great Britain, with its long tradition of parliamentary rule and commercial and manufacturing prosperity. Since the sixteenth century, the Russian tsars had slowly expanded their empire through the conquest of vast stretches of territories and peoples to the south and into Asia. Like the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the much larger Russian Empire was multinational. Ethnic Russians formed less than half of the population. Ethnic resistance to the empire and to the Orthodox Church—for example, from Polish Catholics—increasingly challenged Russian domination.

Since the brief and ill-fated Decembrist uprising of 1825 (see Chapter 15), Russia had seen no major reforms, except the emancipation of state-owned serfs in the 1840s. The structure of the state remained the same, with no institutional constraints on the tsar's authority. Yet liberal ideas from the West had begun to filter into Russia via intellectuals. Alienated from a society built upon serfdom, which legally bound most peasants to the land of their lords, some of them believed revolution inevitable. Moreover, serfdom not only was inhumane, it was also economically inefficient. This helped convince the tsar that only through reform and the emancipation of the serfs could Russia compete with the West.

Stirrings of Reform in Russia

Serfs lived in villages in which patriarchs served as intermediaries between the lords and the community and, like the gentry, administered harsh physical punishments to serfs who failed to obey. Only about 5 percent of the empire's population resided in towns. Russia had a very small middle class and a tiny group of intellectuals and educated commoners. The intelligentsia believed that only revolution could bring change.

Nicholas I (ruled 1825–1855), who had become tsar just after the Decembrist revolt of 1825, was obsessed with keeping Russia sealed off from Western ideas, which he blamed for the rebellion of military officers. The Revolutions of 1848 in Western and Central Europe increased the determination of the Russian autocracy to stifle internal dissent. The ministry of education oversaw a policy of tight censorship and repression by the fearsome Third Section, the political police. But the police found it impossible to seal off the colossal empire entirely. More than 2 million foreign

books entered Russia just in the 1847–1849 period, most ending up in Saint Petersburg and Moscow.

In Eastern and eastern Central Europe, the Russian and Polish intelligentsia stood as separate social groups who felt responsible for leading the fight for social and political change and for national independence. Many were gentry who could survive well enough without a university position or government post. Part of an educated elite, they could afford to write, even if the public audience they reached was small indeed. Unlike their counterparts in Western countries, they were not absorbed into the liberal professions and maintained their identity as a group.

During the 1830s and 1840s, some gentry were overwhelmed with guilt that they were well off while the masses suffered. Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837), whose mother exiled two serfs to Siberia with a nod of her head after they failed to bow as she passed by, attacked serfdom in his short stories. Steeped in a variety of intellectual currents, the intelligentsia brooded in small groups, or “circles,” in Saint Petersburg and in Moscow over how Russia might emerge from autocracy and relative backwardness.

Several important writers emerged from this underground hotbed of intellectual and creative ferment. Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–1881), who adhered to populism and the Pan-Slavist cause, presented brilliant psychological depictions of his characters. These included disturbing portraits of troubled individuals like himself whose actions reflected not rationality but aberration, even madness, in such novels as *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880). Sentenced to death by the authorities in 1849 for participation in a reading circle that discussed socialism, he was hauled out of jail early one morning, blindfolded, placed before a firing squad, and then, after a cruelly staged mock execution that understandably shattered his nerves, sent to prison in Siberia. He described his own suffering, but also that of Russian society, in the crucial years following defeat in the Crimean War. Count Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), another great Russian realist writer, was a wealthy landowner who served in the Crimean War. He emerged as a moral voice against violence. His monumental *War and Peace* (1869) depicts the struggle between his country and the West.

Pyotr Chaadayev's *Philosophical Letters* slipped by the censors in 1836. Chaadayev (1794–1856) presented a thinly veiled condemnation of Russia's cultural history. Officials declared him to be mad, and the police hounded him for the rest of his life. He pessimistically provoked heated discussion by suggesting that cultural backwardness would keep Russia from joining the ranks of civilized nations. *Philosophical Letters* opened the debate between “Westernizers”—those Russian intellectuals who, like Tsar Peter the Great in the seventeenth century, looked to the West for a model for progress—and “Slavophiles,” who believed that Russia could never be reconciled with Western values. Like Westernizers, most Slavophiles were social critics of autocratic Russia. Westernizers like Chaadayev regarded the development of parliamentary institutions and industrialization in Britain,

France, and the German states as a model for Russia to emulate. In contrast, Slavophiles cherished the specificity of Russia's defining institutions: the Orthodox Church, the village commune (the *mir*), and even tsardom itself. They argued that Russia could avoid the traumas of Western industrial development because in the village it already possessed the basis for a future socialist society. The peasant commune, with a variety of communal buildings (a wind or water mill, a grain supply store, tavern, and a workshop), enabled peasants to adapt their lives to unbelievably difficult conditions imposed by nature, the state, and the lords. The *mir* seemed to provide both a moral vision and revolutionary potential.

Vissarion Belinsky (1811–1848) and Alexander Herzen (1812–1870) forcefully made the case that Russia had to follow the example of the West to emerge from backwardness. Belinsky, the son of a doctor, had been expelled from university for writing an article denouncing serfdom. When the writer Nikolay Gogol (1809–1852) refused to criticize the autocracy, Belinsky circulated his *Letter to Gogol* (1847), which helped define the Westernizer position by blasting Gogol's respect for "orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality," the dominant triad of the Russian Empire: "Advocate of the knout [whip], apostle of ignorance, champion of obscurantism and reactionary mysticism, eulogist of Tartar customs—what are you doing? Look at what is beneath your feet; you are standing at the brink of an abyss."

Herzen, a landowner's son, had vowed to carry on the work of the Decembrist martyrs. Arrested and exiled for participation in a student discussion group, Herzen traveled to France. Returning to Moscow in 1840, he espoused the French Jacobin and socialist tradition and the belief in the inevitability of progress. In *From the Other Shore* (1855), written in voluntary exile in Paris after the Revolution of 1848, Herzen expressed confidence that Russia, even while following the lead of the West, would take its own path to socialism. Socialism could be easily established in Russia because the village commune already existed as a community of social equals in the face of autocratic and noble exploitation. Herzen implored Russian officials to struggle for peaceful liberal reform. Interestingly enough, both radical reformers and the men of the tsarist state shared a suspicion of Western "bourgeois" political and social life. The Slavophile current of reformism thus had much more in common



Alexander Herzen.

with the tsarist autocracy than it cared to admit. Unlike the Westernizers, the Slavophiles celebrated the religious faith of the Russian masses, believing that an era of social harmony and equality had existed in Russia before Peter the Great transformed the Russian state in the late seventeenth century by importing Western ideals and bureaucracy. "We are a backward people," wrote one young Slavophile, "and therein lies our salvation. We must . . . not repeat the stale old lessons of Europe."

The Emancipation of the Serfs

The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 by Tsar Alexander II (ruled 1855–1881) was the most ambitious attempt at reform in Russia during the nineteenth century. Serfdom dictated the organization of taxation, the army, the courts, and virtually every other institution of government. Indeed, the state had little active presence in the village—as the peasants put it, "God is in heaven and the tsar far away." Because landowners had a virtually unlimited source of labor, many showed little inclination to try to increase agricultural yields.

Alexander II, who succeeded his father Nicholas I as tsar in 1855, was shocked by Russia's defeat in the Crimean War. The tsar and some of his officials began to believe that his country could not compete with the West if the serfs were not emancipated. Despite an increase in agricultural laborers hired for wages, Russian industrial development and effective agricultural production required free wage labor that could be taxed. Even if some lords had attempted to increase the productivity of their land, serfs only worked halfheartedly—and who could blame them. Most Russian peasants still used the wasteful three-field system (with one field left fallow each year).

Serf rebellions—more than 1,500 during the first half of the century—periodically shook the empire. Many serfs had joined the army during the Crimean War, believing that they would be freed upon returning home. The flight of thousands of serfs toward the open spaces of the east, or to Crimea, undermined the agricultural economy upon which Russia depended. As rumors spread that the tsar, whom many peasants considered the father of his people, would end Russia's "peculiar institution," peasant rebellions became even more widespread. Intellectuals continued to denounce serfdom, as did bureaucrats, at least in private. Tsar Alexander II told assembled landowners, "It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait until serfs begin to liberate themselves from below." Some nobles now believed emancipation inevitable. In 1858, a Slavophile noble wrote the tsar that the "abolition of the right to dispose of people like objects or cattle is as much our liberation as theirs."

On April 5, 1861, Russia became the last European state to abolish serfdom. Alexander II emancipated the 22 million serfs by a proclamation made through the Orthodox Church. For two years, however, the old sys-



Peasants hailing Tsar Alexander II after the emancipation of the serfs in 1861.

tem remained essentially in place. But serfs then received land through the commune—the *mir*—which was administered by male heads of household. The state compensated nobles for their land, and peasants had to repay the state through annual redemption payments. Yet nobles lost in the emancipation, as in many cases they received bonds of little value, as well as losing the value of the serfs. Peasants were no longer dependent upon the whims of landlord justice. Yet many peasants, who had wanted complete and immediate freedom without compensation (“We are yours,” went an old serf proverb, “but the land is ours.”) were disappointed by the terms of their freedom. Furthermore, as the villages were collectively responsible for land redemption payments and taxes (although the lords’ household serfs were freed without land and owed no payments), former serfs were rather like hostages to their own villages. Instead of owing labor to the lords, they now owed taxes to the state, which would be collected by the communes. They were dependent upon the village patriarchs for permission to go find work elsewhere. Peasants flocked to the cities, which grew by leaps and bounds.

In tsarist Russia, the serfs were freed practically without bloodshed, while in the United States the slaves found freedom only after one of the most violent struggles—the Civil War (1861–1865)—of the nineteenth century. Unlike the southern landed elite in the United States, who went to war in

defense of slavery, the Russian nobility capitulated without resistance to emancipation. Despite the vast expanse of the Russian Empire, the tsarist state exercised more centralized authority than did the relatively weak central government in the United States. Moreover, Americans considered private property more of an absolute right than did even Russian nobles, who wanted, above all, to extract services from peasants. After emancipation, the vast wealth of the Russian nobles could still pay for such services.

More reforms followed. Alexander II rooted out some incompetent ministers and officials and asked the ministry of finance to keep regular budgets. In 1864, the tsar decreed the establishment of district or village assemblies called *zemstvos*. These would elect delegates to regional assemblies. Six years later, he created similar urban institutions called *dumas* (councils), with the authority to assess taxes and to organize public services and education. But the ministry of the interior controlled the *zemstvos*, and provincial governors ignored them, some treating their members as seditious agitators. Moreover, wealthy landowners elected the members of the *zemstvos*; their votes were given more weight than those of townsmen and peasants, yet the *zemstvos* provided some political apprenticeships to ordinary people.

Russian law had been codified in the 1830s, but the emancipation of the serfs necessitated an expanded administrative apparatus, since millions of people were now subject to the justice of the state. The tsar introduced regional and lower courts modeled on those of Britain, as well as public trial by jury. In 1864, for the first time, a separate judicial branch of government came into existence in Russia, although the tsar could override any court decision. A jury system was established, along with the possibility of appeals. Yet peasants were not judged in the same courts as social elites.

Thus, the essential structure of the Russian Empire remained the same. The army was no longer made up of loyal, poorly supplied, illiterate, beaten serfs but rather of loyal, poorly supplied, illiterate, beaten peasants. In the past, few soldiers had been expected to survive the twenty-five-year term of service. Indeed, wives of soldiers had the right to remarry three years after their husbands left for military service. Alexander II established a Prussian-style general staff, took steps to modernize weapons, and reduced the term of military service to six years, followed by nine years in the reserves and five years in the militia. Alexander also ordered the elimination of some forms of corporal punishment, including the brutal—and often fatal—floggings.

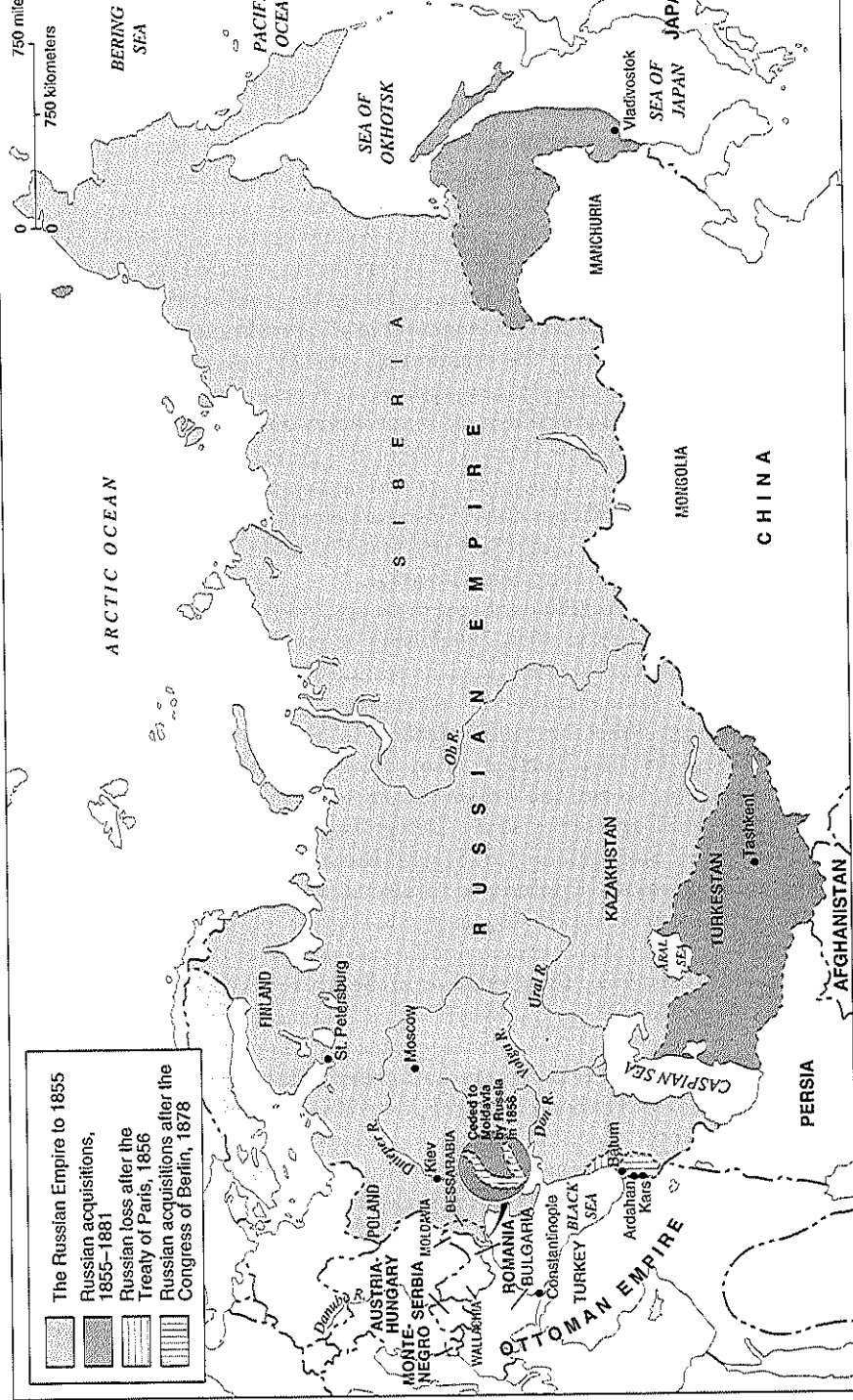
However, the arbitrary power of the tsarist state and its Third Section police to repress dissent remained largely intact. Most political cases were handed over to trial by secret court-martial. Alexander restored the censorship apparatus, which was temporarily weakened in the years before the emancipation, to full strength. Moreover, the tsar had no intention of creating any kind of national representative institution that would undercut his authority. Russian reform had its limits.

The Expansion of the Russian Empire

Following defeat in the Crimean War and as stipulated by the Peace of Paris (1856), Russia relinquished Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bessarabia and had to accept the neutrality of the Black Sea, further frustrating imperial designs in southeastern Europe (see Map 18.2). Russia now confronted nationalist movements among peoples within the empire. After two years of public demonstrations, an uprising in Poland occurred in 1863. Rebels proclaimed a "national government" before being crushed by Russian troops. Tsar Alexander II cracked down, ordering the confiscation of some Polish lands as punishment for participating in the revolt, closing most monasteries, and not permitting the creation of *zemstvos* (elected councils) or juries in law courts, reforms he had applied to Russia. Poland was transformed into a province with all illusions of autonomy ended. Poles felt the effect of the repression even in Prussia, where the government forbade the sale of lands to Poles or Catholics (priests had been among the insurgents). In the Ukraine, Polish national consciousness helped inspire emerging Ukrainian identity. In response, in 1863 the state forbade the publication of non-fiction works in the Ukrainian language.

In the Ottoman Balkans, Russian troops intervened on behalf of Bulgarians, who were fellow Slavs. The rising of pan-Slavism as an ideology was increasingly apparent. Pan-Slavism enthusiastically proclaimed that all Slavs were in the same family. In Herzegovina, peasants had rebelled against Ottoman tax collectors and soldiers. In the subsequent Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878), a Russian army drove toward Constantinople. Austro-Hungarian forces and the British navy readied to prevent the Russians from reaching the Dardanelles strait. Defeat forced the Ottoman Empire to sign the Treaty of San Stefano (1878) with Russia. Then the other powers called for an international conference to discuss the matter. German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck presided at the Congress of Berlin (1878). Bulgaria became a principality, but remained a vassal state of the sultan of Turkey. At Disraeli's insistence, the Congress of Berlin reduced the size of Bulgaria. Greece received Thessaly, which it had claimed, thus moving the Greek border to the edge of Macedonia, claimed by Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. There were then few Bulgarian nationalists, despite the fact that Bulgaria received its own Orthodox Church in 1870; not many decades earlier most educated people there had considered themselves Greek. The fact that Russia would clearly dominate Bulgaria—Russians held key government posts—and the rising mood of Pan-Slavism (a movement aimed at promoting the interests and unity of all Slavs) in the Balkans alarmed Austria-Hungary and Britain. The Congress of Berlin also recognized Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania as independent states, further reducing Ottoman territory in Europe. Russia received a small part of Bessarabia, which allowed it to control the mouth of the Danube River. But Russian Pan-Slavs, in particular, believed themselves aggrieved by Britain and betrayed by Bismarck's

MAP 18.2 THE EXPANSION OF RUSSIA After territorial losses under the Peace of Paris (1856), Russia turned eastward, expanding through Central Asia toward the Far East and its port at Vladivostok.



Germany. Likewise, Bulgarian nationalists would increasingly feel that they had been cheated out of land in Macedonia that they believed Bulgaria had been promised by Russia.

Alexander II then turned his attention toward Central Asia and the Middle East. Russian armies conquered Turkistan in 1859–1860, annexed Tashkent in 1866, and then reached Afghanistan. The wars that subdued the Muslim mountain people of the Caucasus ended in 1860. The expansion added about 5 million Muslims to the empire. Russian expansion now seemed to impinge upon British interests near India, the gem of its empire. The British army invaded Afghanistan, and in 1881 put a puppet ruler on the throne. In the Far East, Russian forces moved across Siberia, where the discovery of gold in the 1830s had attracted tens of thousands of settlers, to go with the ever-expanding convict population, giving the Russian navy access to the Pacific Ocean at Vladivostok.

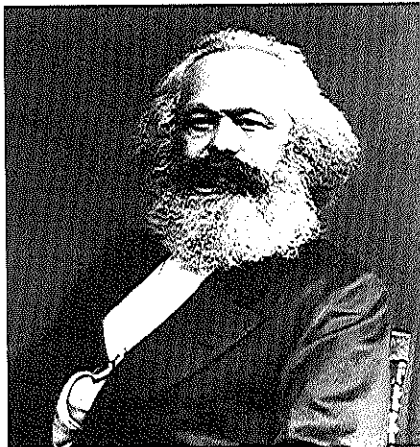
The Russian Empire now included about one-seventh of the world's land mass. This eastward expansion eventually brought conflict with China. The Chinese emperors would be powerless in the face of Russian demands, as they were when confronted by those of Britain. Surprisingly, Japan, which emerged from centuries of isolation following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, would prove to be a far tougher adversary for Russia.

Nihilists and Populists

Revolutionaries replaced the conscience-stricken gentry of the 1830s and 1840s as the principal critics of the Russian autocracy. They were drawn from a variety of social backgrounds, including the sons and daughters of nobles, merchants, peasants, and Orthodox priests. Convinced that one spark might ignite a wave of rebellion, they struck out on their own or in very small groups.

Some Russian revolutionaries found the old debates between the Westernizers and Slavophiles irrelevant. Nihilists accepted no dogmas, but above all rejected the materialist doctrines of the West. They also disavowed many Russian traditions, and thus repudiated the Slavophiles. Some of them viewed the Orthodox Church as an institution of oppression, whereas others remained fervent believers.

Nihilists saw in the Russian masses an untapped revolutionary force, believing that the emancipation of the serfs had aided their cause by creating an independent peasantry, which might be more likely to rise up against its oppressors. Like the conscience-stricken gentry before them, the nihilists believed in the power of literature to effect change. In 1863, Nikolay Chernyshevsky (1828–1889), a former seminarian, published *What Is to Be Done?*, a novel that had an enormous impact on several generations of intellectuals. Chernyshevsky described committed people of action as “rational egoists” who would form a disciplined vanguard of change. Because nihilists did not feel bound by moral codes, they believed they could take whatever



(Left) Michael Bakunin, professional anarchist. (Right) Karl Marx, founder of Communism.

action seemed necessary to achieve their goals. In the 1860s, groups of nihilists turned to violent revolution, plotting the assassination of state officials and the tsar. The police infiltrated and drove groups like "Land and Freedom" and "The Organization"—with its central committee called "Hell"—underground, particularly after a student attempted to kill Tsar Alexander II in 1866.

In the meantime, Michael Bakunin (1814–1876) became the most famous anarchist of his or any other time. Anarchists rejected the very existence of the state, thereby quarreling bitterly with socialists, who wanted not to destroy the state but to take it over. A professional revolutionary who complained, "Karl Marx is ruining the workers by making theorists out of them," Bakunin left behind comfortable noble origins. He was a man of enormous energy who slept only a couple of hours a day, eating, drinking, and smoking cigars almost constantly, organizing and plotting between bites, gulps, and puffs. Once calling himself "the devil in the flesh," Bakunin defined the "social question" as "primarily the overthrow of society." That he set out to do. He led the police on a chase from Paris in 1847 to Dresden and other stops in Central Europe in 1848, that year of revolution. Arrested and imprisoned in Russia, he was exiled to Siberia, managed to escape in 1861, reached Japan, and then arrived in London via the United States.

Bakunin believed that "destruction is a creative passion" and, like the nihilists, that the peasant masses had untapped revolutionary potential. Marx insisted that peasants, unlike the industrial proletariat, could never be truly revolutionary because they could not be class-conscious. Anarchists, in turn, rejected Marx's belief that a militant working class organized in a centralized

party could make a revolution, fearing that Marxists wanted to replace a bourgeois state with a proletarian state, a state all the same.

Unlike revolutionary nihilists and anarchists who dreamed of a spontaneous peasant uprising, Sergei Nechayev (1847–1882) held that a small, tightly organized revolutionary group could begin the peasant revolution that would sweep away autocratic oppression. “The revolutionary is,” Nechayev wrote, “a doomed man. He has no personal interests, no affairs, sentiments, attachments, property, not even a name of his own. Everything in him is absorbed by one exclusive interest, one thought, one passion—the revolution.” After murdering one of his colleagues, Nechayev was arrested and sent to prison, where he died.

During his anguished life, Nechayev had battled the populists (*narodniki*). The populists developed their doctrine in response to nihilism and retained the Slavophiles’ faith in the Russian peasantry. They were romantic collectivists who idealized the Russian peasant community. In contrast to Chernyshevsky, who wanted to teach the peasants, the populists wanted to learn from them. In the early 1870s, several thousand young Russians, who had been members of circles of intellectuals, went from Saint Petersburg and Moscow into the countryside. Many had been influenced by Peter Lavrov (1823–1900), who lamented in his *Historical Letters* (1869) that the gap between the intellectuals like himself and peasants had become even greater over the previous decades. These upper-class Russians resembled the conscience-stricken gentry of the 1830s and 1840s. “Going to the people” and dressing like peasants, they also wanted to prepare revolution by helping to educate the peasants. Some of those attracted to direct revolutionary action worried that the emancipation of the serfs might create a class of conservative peasant proprietors. Time seemed to be running out for Russia to take its own path to socialism before capitalism became entrenched in Russia, as it had in Western Europe.

In 1878, a revolutionary populist shot and wounded the governor-general of Saint Petersburg. Another attack that year, carried out by the “disorganization section” of Land and Freedom, struck down the head of the Third Section police. A wave of strikes by industrial workers convinced the terrorists that revolution was not far away.

Twice more, Tsar Alexander II escaped assassination attempts. In the hope of placating his enemies without destroying the foundations of the autocracy, Alexander disbanded the Third Section. He dismissed the minister of education, whose restrictive policies on university admission were unpopular, and announced the formation of a new consultative assembly. But in 1881, members of “People’s Will” struck, hurling a bomb near Alexander’s sleigh. When the tsar foolishly stepped from the sleigh to inspect the damage, another man threw a bomb that killed him. However, the assassination did not prove to be the revolutionary spark anticipated by those who carried it out. Millions of the tsar’s subjects mourned the ruler who had freed them.

Following his father's assassination, Alexander III (ruled 1881–1894) was in no mood to contemplate any liberalization of imperial institutions. Public opinion existed in the Russian Empire, but mass political life did not. The assassination led to a curtailment of the powers of the *zemstvos*. Judicial authority shifted to the police, putting political trials in the hands of military courts. For the moment, exile was the only safe place from which to criticize the autocracy. Small colonies of political refugees, most of whom were socialists, lived in Geneva, Paris, and London.

Professors and teachers were brought under stricter state control, and tuition was increased to discourage commoners from going to school. The police could arrest and imprison anyone without reason. The resulting political trials may have actually helped the cause of reformers and revolutionaries by serving as tribunals where the autocratic regime was discussed and political issues were brought into the open. What went on in courtrooms helped shape Russian opinion, even when political trials were moved into military courts.

The Russian Empire late in the nineteenth century was enormous. More than a hundred times the size of Great Britain and three times larger than the United States (to which Russia had sold Alaska in 1867), its population doubled from about 74 million inhabitants in 1861 to about 150 million by 1905. It was now comprised of almost 200 nationalities who spoke 146 languages. Russians made up 40 percent of the population of the empire. Ukrainians, Poles, and Belorussians made up the next largest national groups, followed by Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Finns, Romanians (in Bessarabia), Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Georgians, Azeri (in the Caucasus), and the Muslim peoples of Central Asia.

Alexander ordered a vigorous campaign of "Russification" in the western empire. The tsar banned the use of languages other than Russian in school, and forbade publication in, for example, the Ukrainian language, despite the fact that it was spoken by 25 million people. At the same time, the Russian Orthodox Church launched campaigns against non-Orthodox religions, which held the allegiance of almost a third of the people of the empire. New laws enforced restrictions against Jews, who in principle were supposed to be confined to the "Pale of Settlement" in Poland. In 1899, the Finnish Assembly was reduced to a "consultative" voice, and Russians replaced Finns in most key administrative positions.

"Russification" firmed the resolve of nationalist groups to persevere in their demands for recognition. In Russian Poland, opposition grew more daring. Poles were linked by long-standing cultural bonds, based on language and Catholicism. Polish identity had survived the end of an independent Poland with the Third Partition of 1795 by Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Moreover, the cause of Polish independence had been kept alive by Poles forced to flee abroad after the ill-fated insurrections of 1831 and

1863. Two strong movements then developed. National Democrats sought to build up the strength of the Polish nation within the context of the Russian Empire, viewing Prussia and then Germany as the principal enemy. Polish Socialists, in contrast, wanted to organize another uprising, one that they hoped one day would lead to an independent and socialist Poland in which the rights of non-Poles would also be recognized.

Unrest, Reform, and Revolution

The majority of the population of the Russian Empire was poor: the average per capita income was more than four times higher in Britain, three times higher in Germany, and twice as high in the Balkan states. If by 1910, 70 percent of children aged 7 to 11 were likely to attend school for at least one year, about 60 percent of the population remained illiterate. In 1897, only 1 percent of the population had attended secondary school for any amount of time.

Yet literacy in European Russia and the Baltic region, in particular, was rising, and with it the number of people who wanted reform. The reading public grew dramatically in size around the turn of the century, especially in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Even seasonal workers and peasants migrating to Siberia began to carry books with them. The taste for literature expanded from religious books and the emerging classics of the Russian literary tradition (above all, Gogol and Tolstoy) to relatively liberal magazines and newspapers.

Liberals had played a role in the expanding domain of Russian public opinion since the heady days of the 1860s and the emancipation of the serfs. The Russian army's poor performance in the war against Turkey (1877–1878) proved that military reforms instituted following the Crimean War had been inadequate. Expanding opportunities for education, increased government bureaucratization, and industrial development increased the professional middle class. This, combined with the expansion of heavy and light industry, and urban growth, seemed to make autocracy an anachronism.

Liberals included a smattering of gentry, leaders of local assemblies (the *zemstvos* and the municipal *dumas*), and, above all, members of the professional classes, including economists, *zemstvo* agronomists, physicians, lawyers, teachers, and students. Some state bureaucrats, too, sought a middle way between state and noble intransigence and revolutionary insurgency, hoping that the tsar would grant political reforms to complement the gradual modernization of the Russian economy. Some were encouraged by laws slightly reducing the long work day (1897) and providing the first factory insurance law (1903). Liberals in the Union of Liberation demanded an extension of the powers of the *zemstvos*, whose limited authority had been curtailed in 1890, but imagined little more than active consultation between those bodies and the tsar.

New revolutionary groups, however, still believed the autocracy incapable of reforming itself and that only revolution could bring reform. The populist Socialist Revolutionaries became the largest radical group, with growing support among peasants, whom Socialist Revolutionaries, like some of their optimistic predecessors, believed would one day overthrow the tsar. In the meantime, national movements developed in Poland, Finland, Ukraine, and the Baltic region. In the distant Muslim reaches of the empire, religion provided a new cohesiveness.

Marxists founded the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1898. They were confident that one day, though probably not in their lifetimes, the Russian proletariat would be sufficiently numerous and class-conscious to seize power. But this seizure of power could only occur, they believed, after a democratic revolution had successfully overthrown the Russian autocracy. Marxists claimed vindication for their view that peasants had no true revolutionary potential when, despite the terrible suffering and deaths of millions of peasants during the famine that followed the severe drought and epidemics of 1891–1892, the countryside remained quiescent.

By 1900, the tsar's police had succeeded in disbanding most of the revolutionary groups within the empire, deporting their leaders to join the groups in exile, sending them to Siberia, or putting them in prison. Most revolutionaries shared a belief that their country was far from revolution.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known as Lenin, was born in the Volga River town of Simbirsk on April 22, 1870, more than 400 miles east of Moscow. His father served as the director of primary schools for the province and, as a result of loyal service, he obtained non-hereditary membership in the nobility; Lenin's mother, whose family had originally been German, was the daughter of a doctor. Older brother Alexander, who joined the revolutionary group "People's Will," was executed in 1887 for participation in a plot to kill Tsar Alexander III. Lenin briefly attended university, but was expelled for participating in a student demonstration. During the next six years, Lenin read widely in history and philosophy, including the works of Marx and Friedrich Engels, and received a degree in law from the University of Saint Petersburg.

In 1895, Lenin went to Austria, France, and Switzerland, meeting Russian political exiles and socialists from many countries. Back in Saint Petersburg two years later, he was charged with organizing and writing articles in a clandestine newspaper (*Iskra*, or *Spark*) and exiled to Siberia. When his term of banishment ended in 1900, he moved to Switzerland. As a virtually penniless exile, he bore his situation with good humor. Lenin's few interests outside of politics and revolution included chess, hunting, bicycling, and mountain hiking. But he viewed most recreational activities—even, at times, simple conversation—as interfering with revolutionary struggle. There was

nothing about Lenin's appearance that would have attracted the attention of tsarist spies or Swiss and French police. An Englishman said that "he looked more like a provincial grocer than a leader."

Lenin combined a powerful ability to theorize with a facility for adapting to changing circumstances. His steely resolve would carry him to cold fury when colleagues or rivals failed to agree with him. "He who does not understand this does not understand anything!" was a typical Lenin rejoinder. A vigorous polemicist, he could be impatient and churlish in speech, cutting and sarcastic with his potent pen.

In 1902, Lenin, who had taken his name as a pseudonym the previous year, published *What Is to Be Done?* In this pamphlet (with the same title as the work by Chernyshevsky), Lenin established what would become the basic tenets of a new revolutionary party. Lenin believed that Marxist analysis could be applied to a backward, authoritarian nation with a relatively undeveloped working class and a small bourgeoisie. "The one serious organizational principle for workers in our movement must be strictest secrecy," he wrote, and "the strictest choice of members and the training of professional revolutionaries." He rejected all compromise with liberals and reform socialists, viewing as self-defeating the struggle of workers for small economic gains, crumbs tossed from the posh table of the ruling class. Rejecting the common Marxist view that the social experiences of workers would lead them to revolutionary consciousness, Lenin believed that only a minority of workers would achieve consciousness and that these should join with intellectuals in a party that would direct the masses.

Lenin and his followers became known as the "Bolsheviks," or "majority" (although much of the time in the years that followed they were not), and their rivals were known as the "Mensheviks," the "minority." The Mensheviks believed that a proletarian revolution lay in the future, but not until a bourgeois uprising had first succeeded in overthrowing the tsarist state. Mensheviks believed that their role was to mobilize support for their party through propaganda, while undertaking timely alliances with liberal groups. They objected to the high degree of party centralization upon which Lenin insisted.

The Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905)

In the meantime, the Russian Empire lurched toward war with Japan. It had begun to covet Chinese Manchuria and the peninsula of Korea. The acquisition of Manchuria would permit Russia to construct a more direct rail link to the ice-free Russian port of Vladivostok; that of Korea would protect the new port from possible attack and provide still more ports. In 1894, Japan goaded China into a war. By the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), the victorious Japanese took the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and gained Chinese recognition of Korea's independence. This placed the peninsula under direct Japanese influence. Japan also acquired the Liaodong (Liaotung)



Three Manchurian men crouch before the hulks of Russian ships sunk during the Russo-Japanese War.

peninsula in southern Manchuria but was forced by Russia, Germany, and France to return it.

Russia viewed the expansion of Japanese interests in the Far East with concern. In 1898, Tsar Nicholas II (ruled 1894–1917) signed a treaty with China and obtained a concession to build the Manchurian railway and to construct a port at Port Arthur on the tip of the Liaodong peninsula, providing a source of conflict between Japan and Russia. Japan, in turn, signed a treaty in 1902 with Great Britain, Russia's rival for influence in Afghanistan. Britain would remain neutral if Japan and Russia went to war against each other. But Britain would join Japan in any conflict that allied Russia with any other power in a war against Japan.

In February 1904, Japanese torpedo boats launched a surprise attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur, destroying a number of ships while the Japanese army drove Russian forces away on land. In March 1905, Japanese troops defeated the Russians in the bloody Battle of Mukden where, for the first time, two armies faced each other across trenches dug for protection. Two months later, the Japanese navy pounced on the Russian fleet, which had spent nine months at sea. The Battle of Tsushima ended with nineteen Russian ships sunk, five captured, and six forced to neutral ports. Only three ships of the Russian fleet reached Vladivostok.

How could the Russian Empire be defeated by a small island nation in Asia? Only a single-track railway line stretching across thousands of miles

supplied the Russian forces. The Russian army was poorly commanded and fought with outdated artillery and rifles. By the Treaty of Portsmouth (New Hampshire), signed in September 1905 at a conference hastily arranged by U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, Japan took over Russia's lease of the Liaodong peninsula and Chinese concessions in Manchuria. Russia accepted Japanese influence over Korea. A new world imperial power was born.

The Revolution of 1905

Many of the tsar's subjects had blamed government inaction for the murderous famine of 1891–1892, which had captured world attention. In 1902, peasants attacked noble property in some districts, and a wave of industrial strikes followed the next year. Liberals organized support for political reform by sponsoring banquets similar to those employed by French republicans just before the Revolution of 1848. Dissent mounted against forced Russification among subject nationalities, most notably the Poles and the Finns. Marxist groups were particularly active in Poland—where the issue of Polish nationalism versus internationalism was hotly debated—and in the Jewish Pale—those provinces where Jews were allowed to settle and where they faced endemic anti-Semitism and occasional bloody pogroms.

Shocking defeats in the distant Russo-Japanese War increased calls for liberal reform. A wide-ranging social and political alliance for change extended across classes. For the first time, liberals and socialists (except for Bolsheviks and Mensheviks), gentry, intellectuals, professionals, and workers, and both Russians and non-Russians came together in common opposition to autocracy, embracing a loose ideology of reform. After the assassination of his minister of the interior in July 1904 by a Socialist Revolutionary, Nicholas II appointed a more moderate successor in the hope of calming dissent. Moreover, the tsar allowed a national congress of *zemstvos* and *dumas* to take place. It called for the establishment of a national parliament.

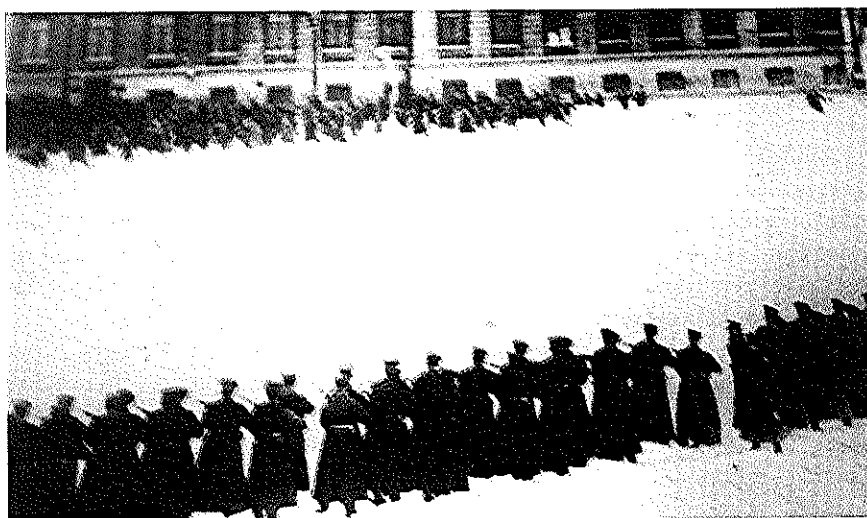
In the meantime, the Russian labor movement remained small and faced constant police harassment. Skilled factory workers supplied the majority of labor militants. At the turn of the century, the police had authorized government-controlled labor associations in the hope of undercutting revolutionaries by encouraging workers to concentrate on economic grievances and achieve some small victories through negotiation or conciliation, as strikes remained illegal. But such halfway measures gave workers useful organizational experience.

In January 1905, a strike by 100,000 factory workers brought Saint Petersburg to a standstill. In Warsaw, a general strike brought violence and reprisals by troops. On January 22, an Orthodox priest, Father Gapon, led a march of workers to the tsar's Winter Palace, carrying a petition asking for "justice" and political reform. Troops blocked their way. When the marchers locked arms and refused an order to disperse, a commander barked out the order to fire.

More than 300 marchers, including women and children, fell dead, and perhaps 1,000 or more were wounded. "Bloody Sunday" helped shatter the myth that the tsar was the Holy Father manipulated by selfish nobles and wicked advisers. Bolsheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, the latter particularly influential in the countryside, encouraged more strikes. A violent faction of the Socialist Revolutionaries carried out a particularly bloody series of terrorist attacks and assassinations. Nicholas dismissed his liberal minister of the interior. The tsar's uncle fell to an assassin's bullets. Strikes spread to Poland, where they were bolstered by the nationalist movement, and to Ukraine, Latvia, and Estonia. In some parts of Russia and in the Baltic provinces, peasants attacked the homes of wealthy landowners. In the southeastern borderlands, Muslim leaders announced the formation of an All-Russian Muslim League. Workers began to organize trade unions in huge numbers and newspapers appeared in open defiance of censorship. In June, sailors on the battleship *Potemkin* mutinied on the Black Sea, killing the captain and several officers.

With the bulk of the army fighting the Japanese in Manchuria, Nicholas appeared to choose the path of reform, appointing Sergei Witte (1849–1915) as prime minister. Witte was eager to make Russia a modern industrial power, and he believed that he could do so if the tsar granted minimal reforms. He persuaded Nicholas to rescind redemption payments to the state for land acquired when the serfs were emancipated in 1861, to allow Poles and Lithuanians to use their own languages, to allow religious toleration in Poland, to return political trials to regular courts, and to abolish some restrictions on Jews.

Russian troops fire on the workers, Bloody Sunday, January 1905.



Even more important, Nicholas's October Manifesto of 1905 created a national representative assembly, the Duma, to be chosen by universal male suffrage, and promised freedom of the press. Some state officials and most nobles, however, viewed these particular reforms as unacceptable, associating them with the parliamentary regimes of the West. But progressive nobles and businessmen were encouraged by the sudden, unexpected turn of events. Some staunch liberals, some of whom had participated in the *zemstvos*, took the name of the Constitutional Democratic Party (known as the Kadets). They demanded constitutional rule, insisting that even the promised reforms left the essential structures of autocracy unchanged. In the meantime, the Mensheviks had championed the establishment of Saint Petersburg workers' councils, known as *soviets*. These were neighborhood councils made up of delegates from factories, shops, trade unions, and political parties who helped organize strikes, which became legal in December. The Mensheviks now were willing to collaborate with the liberals to bring further reforms to workers and peasants.

But a violent uprising in Moscow in December 1905 brought on vigorous counter-revolution. Witte ordered the arrest of many of the workers' leaders. The *soviets* no longer were free to meet. Army units returning from Manchuria crushed nationalist demonstrations in Poland and Georgia and brutally restored order in the Russian and Ukrainian countryside. In the Baltic provinces of Latvia and Estonia, punitive expeditions ordered by the tsar killed over 1,000 people while crushing strikes and rural unrest. Fanatical Russian nationalists known as the Black Hundreds, perhaps instigated by Orthodox priests, unleashed a wave of violence against Jews (and against Russian, German, and Polish property owners, as well) which lasted more than a year. The Black Hundreds were led by small traders and agricultural laborers who feared that economic change would cost them what limited security they had and by police who opposed political reform. In the Black Sea town of Odessa, drunken mobs aided by the local police murdered 800 Jews, injured more than 5,000 others, and left twice that number homeless. The tsar himself intervened to prevent Witte from prosecuting the police there, praising the "mass of loyal people"; they had struck out against "troublemakers." Jews could be conveniently blamed for agitating against autocratic rule.

Against this turbulent backdrop, the Duma had met for the first time in April 1906. The U.S. ambassador described the gathering in the Winter Palace of the members of the Duma, who were dressed "in every conceivable costume, the peasants in rough clothes and long boots, merchants and tradespeople in frock coats, lawyers in dress suits, priests in long garb and almost equally long hair, and even a Catholic bishop in violet robes." The majority of the Duma members were Kadets (Constitutional Democrats), largely because the Marxist Mensheviks and Bolsheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries refused to participate in the election.

As the Duma debated land reform, an issue on which the tsar refused any compromise, Nicholas decreed the establishment of an upper assembly, the State Council. With members to be drawn from the high clergy, the army, or other loyal institutions, it would counteract the influence of the Duma. The tsar then dismissed Witte and announced that he would promulgate any decree he pleased while the Duma was not in session. When the Kadets petitioned Nicholas to abolish the State Council, make ministers responsible to the Duma, and turn over some noble estates to the peasants, he dissolved the first Duma.

The Revolution of 1905 ended in failure, but its memory could not be effaced. The tsar had been forced to grant a parliament and the promise of limited civil rights. Many people within the Russian professional class, particularly bureaucrats and lawyers, remained sympathetic to the reforms after they had been undone by the tsar.

The Revolution of 1905 heightened the divisions among exiled Russian socialists. Mensheviks contended that compromise with bourgeois reformers would increase socialist support within Russia. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, on the other hand, believed that the failed revolution had clearly demonstrated that the Russian proletariat in the large cities was already a revolutionary force, and that the first stage of Marx's promised revolution could be achieved if workers and peasants joined together.

Nicholas II named Peter Stolypin (1862–1911) prime minister, and in June 1907 ordered the dissolution of a second elected Duma even though it was more conservative than the first. The tsar established military field courts

Tsar Nicholas II presides over the opening of the Duma.



that could summarily convict and sentence civilians accused of violent political crimes. This law resulted in nearly 1,000 hangings before it expired six months later. Liberals dubbed the ropes of the gallows "Stolypin's neckties."

After Nicholas changed the rules of election to increase the power of noble votes at the expense of peasants, workers, and non-Russians, a third Duma was elected in 1907 that was more to the tsar's liking. It was dominated by the "Octobrists," who believed that the tsar's promises in the October Manifesto of 1905 represented sufficient reform and wanted to stop at that. The repression and Russification campaign went on.

Stolypin nonetheless undertook rural reforms beginning in 1906, hoping that they might defuse the political intensity of the agrarian question and reduce unrest without the confiscation of land owned by the gentry. His goal was to create a class of prosperous peasants (*kulaks*) while increasing agricultural production by allowing peasants to leave their villages and set up independent farms. He hoped that the enclosure of common lands and a consolidation of holdings would expand the number of peasant plots. Indeed, a considerable amount of land passed from communal to private ownership. The number of prosperous peasants increased. Yet prices for farm products fell, and even peasants with fairly large plots of land still had to struggle to survive. By 1914 more than 5 million Russians had crossed the Ural Mountains, most of them peasants attracted by the possibility of land—Siberia thus became something of the equivalent of the American West.

In 1911, Stolypin was assassinated. Although the government of course claimed the assassin was a Jew, the minister may have been killed with the approval of the tsar at the instigation of noble advisers who considered him too liberal and rejected any agrarian reforms.

A surge of industrial strikes and peasant violence over the next three years demonstrated continued popular dissatisfaction. With political parties now legal, although facing police constraints, and the press in principle free, Liberals, Socialist Revolutionaries, and Menshevik and Bolshevik Social Democrats mobilized support against the regime. Indeed, the growing popularity of Bolsheviks among organized urban workers—revealed in their victories in trade union elections—reflected deepening impatience with the path of moderate reform.

FRANCE: SECOND EMPIRE AND THIRD REPUBLIC

In the meantime, Europe's traditionally most revolutionary country remained France. Following the Revolution of 1848, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte completed his destruction of the Second Republic with his coup d'état on December 2, 1851. The following year he proclaimed himself emperor as Napoleon III, with the overwhelming support of the upper classes and many peasants.

Emperor Napoleon III was a small man with a prominent nose who appeared lethargic. He reminded some people of a sphinx, and a contemporary of "a melancholy parrot." An unimpressed visitor from the United States described the French ruler as "a long-bodied, short-legged man, fiercely mustached, old, wrinkled, with eyes half closed, and such a deep, crafty, scheming expression about them!" Indeed, like his legendary uncle Napoleon Bonaparte, Napoleon III consistently demonstrated considerable energy when it came to behind-the-scenes intrigue and the pursuit of women.

During the Second Empire (1852–1870), wealthy businessmen became the equivalent of an imperial aristocracy in France, money standing as the measure of value that blue blood had been in the early modern period. Enjoying access to the emperor, some of them lived in Parisian residences and owned country houses that would have made eighteenth-century aristocrats drool with envy. The empress set the tone for Parisian fashion, while critics condemned the "triumphant vulgarity and appalling materialism" of the "imperial festival."

Yet Napoleon III set out to pull the nation together. France was the only European power with universal male suffrage, however distorted by government pressure. The emperor promoted economic growth, encouraged urban rebuilding projects (see Chapter 19), created institutions that provided credit, and constructed more railways. Moreover, in 1859 Napoleon III initiated the "liberal empire," encouraging a series of reforms, including authorizing a liberal trade treaty with Britain in 1860 and permitting the legalization of strikes in 1864.

The Authoritarian Empire

Napoleon III ruled with the help of a handful of worldly, trusted cronies who held ministries or who served on the Council of State. Ministers were responsible to the emperor, who alone could propose legislation. The state clamped down on the remnants of political opposition, maintained press censorship, and sponsored "official" candidates in the elections held every six years for the Legislative Body, the lower house of the National Assembly. Hand-picked notables made up its upper chamber, the Senate. Napoleon III's men built a Bonapartist party from the remnants of Orleanism, that is, from those conservative bourgeois who had supported the July Monarchy (1830–1848). They rallied to Napoleon III, who promoted economic growth and promised to maintain social and political order. The French state, more than its decentralized British counterpart, could buy political support by dispensing patronage, through prefects, the most powerful local officials. The Second Empire thus further centralized economic and political power in France.

A good many Legitimists—that is, the supporters of the Bourbon royal family and its exiled pretender, the count of Chambord—supported the emperor. Like his uncle, Napoleon III had made peace with the Church.



A cartoon critical of Napoleon III, shown limping behind a vulture after his defeat in the Franco-German war (*left*), stands in stark contrast to the Bonapartist propaganda early in his dictatorship declaring "The Glory of Napoleon III" (*right*).

The clergy remained grateful that during the Second Republic over which Napoleon had presided as president and then destroyed, the Falloux Law of 1850 had returned much control over education to them.

Economic Growth

The rate of French economic growth was such during the 1850s that economic historians sometimes use it as an example of an industrial "take-off." French exports doubled between 1853 and 1864. Never before had any state taken such a direct role in stimulating the economy through encouragement and investment. Government officials coordinated the efforts of the ministries of agriculture, commerce, and public works, while keeping in close touch with wealthy bankers and industrialists who backed the regime.

French entrepreneurs had often found it difficult to raise investment capital. Most companies remained family concerns, hesitant to open investment possibilities to outsiders. Napoleon III encouraged the creation of state mortgage banks. In 1852, the Péréire brothers, who were Protestants like many French bankers, created the *Crédit Mobilier*, an investment bank. Selling shares to raise capital until its collapse in 1867, it provided loans to businessmen. Other smaller deposit banks, too, attracted large and medium-sized investors. A mortgage bank (the *Crédit Foncier*), another one of Napoleon III's pet projects, aided the development of the agricultural sector.

At the same time, some major French industries reached a scale of production and concentration comparable to that of their British rivals. The



The opening of the Suez Canal, 1869.

metallurgical industry, in particular, underwent unprecedented growth. But most French industries remained relatively small in scale, producing luxury goods such as gloves, umbrellas, silk, jewelry, and fine furniture.

France became a major exporter of capital. French investors financed the construction of Russian, Spanish, and Italian railroads, as well as providing other timely loans to Portugal, Austria-Hungary, and Mexico. Ferdinand de Lesseps (1805–1894), an engineer, raised enough money through loans (half through public subscription) to finance the construction of his brain-child, the Suez Canal, which opened with suitable fanfare in 1869. Yet the chief beneficiary of the canal was not France but Britain, the world's leading trader, which had by far the most to gain by considerably reducing the journey to and from India and the rest of Asia (see Chapter 20).

State encouragement of economic development may be most clearly seen in the French railways. The Bank of France, which had seventy-four branches by 1870, provided financial aid to the companies that for the most part completed the main railway lines that helped stimulate the country's commercial and manufacturing boom. The state guaranteed investors a minimum profit. Between 1851 and 1869, the railway network expanded by five times, reaching almost 10,000 miles of track. French railroads became one of the largest employers in Europe.

The "Liberal Empire"

In 1859, Napoleon III announced his intention to "crown the [imperial] edifice with liberty." He would diffuse opposition by implementing some of the very reforms his opponents on the left desired. Five republicans had been elected to the Legislative Corps two years earlier. In 1860, the

National Assembly received the right to discuss the emperor's annual address—an exercise in sheer boredom, as he was a notoriously poor speaker. That same year, France and Britain signed a liberal trade agreement lowering tariff barriers between the two nations. In France the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1860 was the idea of the emperor himself and an adviser, Michel Chevalier (1806–1879), who had been a utopian socialist as a young man. The treaty provided a sliding scale on import duties, aiding, for example, Bordeaux wine producers selling to England. The National Assembly received the right to approve the imperial budget. The liberalization of political institutions helped republicans increase their support. Press controls were relaxed, and the right to strike was established in 1864. Also in 1864, several French artisans were among the founders in London of the first international workers' organization, the First International, in the hopes of strengthening socialist movements within individual countries.

Foreign policy ultimately undid Napoleon III. In 1859, he joined with Count Camillo di Cavour of Piedmont-Sardinia to draw Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria into a war (see Chapter 17). The French army defeated the Austrians in northern Italy at Magenta and at Solferino, where the emperor himself commanded the French troops on horseback, if at a safe distance from the actual fighting. By the Treaty of Turin (1860), France gained Savoy and Nice (the latter after a plebiscite), both long coveted. Napoleon III then ordered the expansion of French control in Senegal and sent troops to protect missionaries in Lebanon and distant Indochina, annexing Cochinchina as a colony.

An imperial adventure in Mexico, which was in the midst of a civil war, ended in fiasco. The emperor believed that Mexico could become a profitable market for French exports of textiles and wine, and in 1861 he sent troops to protect French financial interests there. When order was restored, the French troops stayed. In 1864, Napoleon III proclaimed his protégé, Austrian Archduke Maximilian (1832–1867), the brother of Habsburg emperor Francis Joseph, to be emperor of Mexico. The United States protested that French intervention represented a violation of the Monroe Doctrine (1823), which had declared the Western Hemisphere off limits to the European powers. The Mexicans, understandably enough, did not want an Austrian emperor. Three years later, Mexican patriots defeated the French forces, who disembarked, leaving Napoleon III's hapless protégé to his own devices. Maximilian was executed in June 1867, a blow to the French emperor's international prestige.

A year earlier, the French emperor had made an error in foreign policy that would come back to haunt him. As Prussia and Austria drew closer to war in 1866, Napoleon III believed that Habsburg Austria would prevail. Bismarck quickly rejected Napoleon III's demand that Prussia compensate France with Rhineland territory. The French emperor then boldly insisted that Prussia go along with a possible French annexation of Belgium and Luxembourg (see Chapter 17). After an international conference a year



Edouard Manet's *Execution of Maximilian* (1867).

later guaranteed Luxembourg's independence, Napoleon III's dreams of territorial compensation from Prussia disappeared. But the cagey Bismarck had the French emperor's written demand tucked away in a drawer.

In June 1868, the emperor's authorization of a law permitting freedom of assembly helped mobilize opposition among monarchists, republicans, and socialists alike. Napoleon III's advisers wondered aloud if he had not sown the seeds of imperial demise by granting liberal reforms. Early in 1870, strikes spread. The emperor invited opponents to join the government and to begin drafting a more liberal constitution, one that would make ministers in some way "responsible" to the Legislative Corps. Napoleon III then reverted to a plebiscite, with a craftily worded statement in May 1870 by which those who wanted more extensive changes were forced to abstain, or to vote "yes" as if they approved of the emperor's policies. The plebiscite, in which "yes" overwhelmed "no," thus partially concealed the depth of opposition to imperial policies.

To the end, Napoleon III manifested a bizarre combination of perceptive foresight and bad judgment. When the Spanish throne fell vacant after a military coup deposed Queen Isabella II of Spain in 1868, one of the candidates was Prince Leopold, a Catholic prince of the ruling Prussian dynasty, the Hohenzollerns (see Chapter 17). Napoleon III threatened war with Prussia if it did not withdraw the Hohenzollern candidacy, which risked, if successful, leaving France with Hohenzollerns on two sides. He then ordered his ambassador to extract a letter from the king of Prussia apologizing to France and promising that Prussia would never revive the candidacy of

Prince Leopold. In July 1870, the French ambassador harangued Prussian King William I in a garden in the spa town of Ems. The king sent Bismarck a telegram stating what had occurred. After learning that the Prussian army was ready to fight, Bismarck embellished the king's telegram—the Ems Dispatch—to make the graceless diplomacy of the French seem positively insulting. Prussian public opinion reacted with anger. Bismarck's expectation that it would “have the effect of a red cloth on the Gallic bull” was justified; the incident increased popular support for war against France, which declared war on July 19, 1870. Württemberg, Hesse, Baden, and, more hesitantly, Bavaria joined the Prussian side. Napoleon III went to war against Prussia without allies.

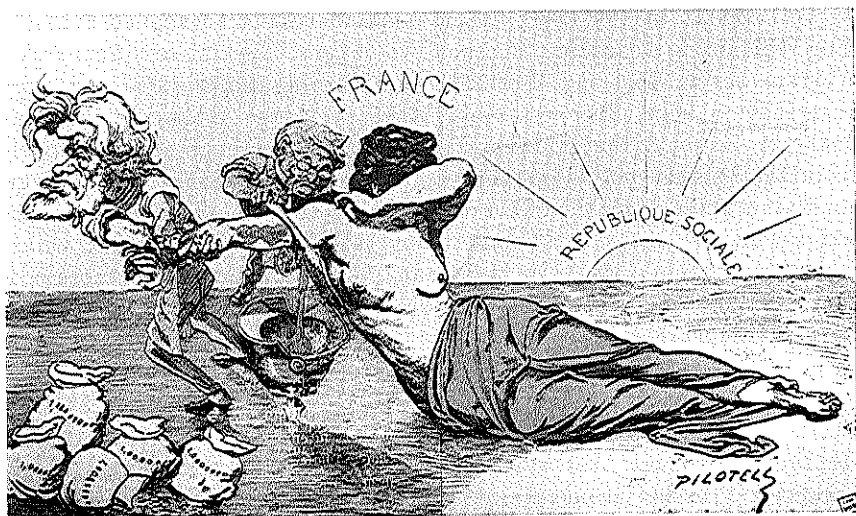
The Franco-Prussian War and the Siege of Paris

The Franco-Prussian War was a French debacle. As French troops slowly mobilized, Prussian armies moved quickly into northeastern France. The speed of the Prussian attack and the competence of its generals more than made up for superior French rifles and recently developed machine guns. In August, Prussian troops cut off the fortress of Metz from the rest of France. When Marshal Marie-Edme de MacMahon (1808–1893) moved north in an attempt to relieve Metz, the Prussians cut him off. At the end of August, the main French force foolishly retreated to the fortress town of Sedan not far from the Belgian border. Sedan was soon surrounded by Prussians, who captured the emperor, so sick that he could barely sit on his horse. In Paris on September 4, 1870, crowds proclaimed a republic, and a provisional government was formed. Prussia allowed Napoleon III to leave for exile in Britain.

The Prussian army besieged Paris, its population swollen with soldiers and national guardsmen. As hunger invaded the capital, dogs and cats disappeared from the streets, finding their way to some of the finest tables. Zoo animals, too, were eaten, including two elephants admired by generations of Parisian children. An attempt to break through the Prussian lines north of the city at the end of October failed miserably. Still, Paris hung on.

In the meantime, Louis-Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877), who had served as Orleanist prime minister during the 1830s, wanted Bismarck's help in facilitating the establishment of a very conservative republic at the war's conclusion, or even a monarchy. The provisional government negotiated with Bismarck in the hope of obtaining an armistice on favorable terms. On January 28, 1871, ten days after the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles (see Chapter 17), Bismarck and Thiers signed an armistice.

Some French leaders protested, demanding that the French army keep fighting. In February 1871, French voters elected a monarchist-dominated National Assembly, charged with making peace with Prussia and with establishing a new government. The newly elected National Assembly officially elected Thiers to be chief executive of the provisional government.



Jules Favre, peace negotiator, and Adolphe Thiers, provisional head of the government, accede to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, France's right arm. They drag the weeping female image of France away from the "social republic."

By signing the Treaty of Frankfurt (May 10, 1871), France lost Alsace and some of Lorraine to the new German Empire. Prussian troops would occupy Paris and retain garrisons in eastern France until a large indemnity had been paid off. The National Assembly's choice of Versailles, the home of the Bourbon monarchs, as the temporary capital stirred popular anger and suspicion. Parisians, who had held out against the Prussians for four months, resented the ease with which the provinces had seemed to capitulate. Wealthy Parisians who had left Paris at the beginning of the siege returned from the safety of the countryside. Landlords insisted that back rents be paid immediately, angering renters, many of whom were unemployed workers who had managed to hang on during the siege.

The Paris Commune

Early in the morning on March 18, 1871, Thiers sent a small detachment of troops to the butte of Montmartre in Paris to seize cannon that had belonged to the National Guard, many of whose members were socialists, during the siege. Women at the market alerted the neighborhood; a crowd surrounded the detachment and put two generals up against the wall and shot them. Thiers ordered his troops to surround the capital. A second siege of Paris began, this one a civil war.

During the Prussian siege, socialists had placed bright red posters on the walls of the capital calling for the establishment of the "Paris Commune" to

defend Paris. The leaders of the Commune were drawn from a variety of political persuasions: Jacobins, socialists, and republicans who wanted Paris to become again the capital of an anticlerical republic. Some Communards had been democratic-socialist activists during the Second Republic; others were followers of the revolutionary Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881), who believed that revolution could be achieved only by a small cell of determined men seizing power. There were also a good many anarchists, who hoped that independent Paris would serve as a model for a society of producers existing without the tyranny of the state.

Revolutionary clubs sprang up. The Communards organized Paris's defense and enacted a number of significant social reforms. These included the creation of a Labor Exchange, a place for workers to gather and find out about jobs; the abolition of night baking (a grievance of bakers) because of long hours and little sleep; the establishment of nurseries for working mothers; and the rights of workers' organizations to receive preference when the

A cartoon dedicated to the National Guard during the Paris Commune. Note the woman standing tall.



municipality contracted work. The Commune recognized women's unions—indeed the role of women in the Commune exceeded that of any previous revolutionary movement in France. Given the severity of the circumstances, with cannon shelling the city, it is remarkable how much the Communards accomplished in such a short time.

Much smaller uprisings occurred in Lyon, Marseille, and several other towns. These movements reflected a combination of middle-class dissatisfaction with Bonapartist centralization, republican enthusiasm, and socialist mobilization. But the provinces provided no help to the Paris Commune; rather, conservative regions sent volunteers to fight for the Versailles forces.

On May 21, 1871, the troops of Thiers's Versailles government poured into Paris through the western gates, left open for them by monarchist sympathizers. During the "bloody week" that followed, Thiers's army, aided by the recently constructed boulevards (see Chapter 19), overwhelmed neighborhood after neighborhood, blasting through barricades. Summary executions occurred throughout Paris, particularly after a rumor began that female incendiaries were burning banks and the homes of the wealthy. The Communards retaliated by executing some hostages, including the archbishop of Paris. About 15,000 to 25,000 Parisians were summarily executed or dispatched after hurried military trials.

For the left, the Commune seemed to be a glimpse of the future proletarian revolution (although Paris largely remained a city of artisans and skilled workers). To conservatives, the Commune offered a frightening glimpse of plebeian insurrection, affirming their resolve to oppose movements for social and political change with force.

REPUBLICAN FRANCE

The National Assembly elected in February 1871 had a monarchist majority. Yet most people in France wanted a republic. Gradually the Third Republic took hold, at first extremely conservative, then moderate, and beginning in 1899, radical, under the guidance of the socially moderate but stridently anticlerical Radical Party. Yet the republic had to overcome dramatic challenges from the far right, which rejected parliamentary rule and dreamed of recapturing Alsace-Lorraine from Germany.

Monarchists and Republicans

The Bourbon pretender to the throne of France was the count of Chambord, a lazy man of mediocre intelligence who lived in an Austrian castle and amused himself by playing cards and telling dirty jokes and anti-Semitic stories to his cronies. The Orleanist pretender to the throne was the relatively

dashing count of Paris. Yet Chambord seemed to hold the upper hand, for his was the old Bourbon royal line. But, unlike the count of Paris, he was childless. A compromise, by which Chambord would become king with the count of Paris as his heir, fell through when the former refused to be king under the tricolor flag, which he identified with the French Revolution.

The close association of monarchism with the Catholic Church led many people to agree with the assessment of the radical republican Léon Gambetta (1838–1882) that “clericalism, there is the enemy.” Republicans opposed the political domination of the “notables,” the wealthiest men in France. The republic found a groundswell of support from those Gambetta called “the new social strata,” the shopkeepers, café owners, prosperous peasants, craftsmen, and schoolteachers. The charismatic Gambetta’s whistle-stop tours of the provinces reflected the rise of mass politics in France.

Thiers resigned under monarchist pressure as provisional head of state in 1873. Prussian troops marched out of France that year after the French government finished paying off the war indemnity, raised by loans and a public subscription. The monarchists, seeing their majority in the National Assembly eroding with each by-election, elected as president Marshal MacMahon, a hero of the Crimean War and the Italian War of 1859, who favored a monarchist restoration. The new government of “Moral Order,” closely tied to the Church, undertook a massive purge of republican mayors, censored newspapers, closed hundreds of cafés, and banned public celebration of the French Revolution on July 14.

For the moment, the government of France was a republic with monarchist political institutions. In January 1874, the National Assembly passed the Wallon Amendment by one vote, stating that henceforth “the president of the Republic” would be elected by the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The lower house drafted a republican constitution in 1875, but one that seemed so vague that the state could easily enough have been converted into a monarchy.

Universal male suffrage determined the composition of the Chamber of Deputies. Each district elected a single representative. This gave monarchists an advantage, as local notables would be the most likely beneficiaries from last-minute political negotiations before the second ballot in each election. The Senate would be elected indirectly through a system that was radically tilted to over-represent conservative rural interests. Yet, despite heavy-handed governmental and ecclesiastical pressure on voters, more than twice as many republicans were elected as monarchists to the Chamber of Deputies in 1876. MacMahon was therefore forced to select a moderate republican, Jules Simon (1814–1896), as premier.

The republican majority in the National Assembly sought to limit the power of the president who was, after all, a monarchist. In 1877, MacMahon initiated a political crisis (the Crisis of May 16) by forcing Simon’s resignation and naming a monarchist in his place. When the Chamber of

Deputies withheld its approval, MacMahon dissolved it and called for new elections. He embarked, with the help of the Church, on a bitter campaign to defeat Gambetta and the republicans.

However, France's voters returned republicans again, although with a smaller majority. MacMahon named a republican premier, and then resigned in 1879. Henceforth, the role of the executive authority would be weak because republicans feared that some Napoleonic character might try to impose his rule—indeed that threat lay ahead. With the constitutional privilege of dismissing government cabinets that had lost the confidence of the majority of its members, the Chamber of Deputies would dominate the political life of the French Third Republic. In 1881, the Chamber of Deputies passed a bill granting full amnesty to exiled Communards.

The Third Republic

The governments of the new republic reflected the center of the political spectrum, that of the "Opportunists," so called because many of them accepted a very conservative republic while preferring something more to the center. Resolved to hold the center against the monarchists and the Church on the right, and the anticlerical Radicals and the socialists to their left, the Opportunists retained the support of peasants by implementing high agricultural tariffs. The Méline Tariff, supported by industrialists and farmers, went into effect in 1892.

The Opportunist republic guaranteed freedom of the press, legalized public gatherings without prior authorization, and gave municipal councils the right to elect their own mayors (with the exception of Paris, not allowed to have a mayor—until 1977—for fear he might become too powerful). The president served as something of a chairman of the board to the Chamber of Deputies. He shook hands with everybody, intrigued pleasantly, and helped form coalitions. Governments came and went, giving an exaggerated image of parliamentary instability and impotence.

Because the republic had only gradually taken root in the 1870s and had been strongly contested by conservatives, the educational reforms of the 1880s had the goal not only of making France more literate but also more republican. Jules Ferry (1832–1893) sponsored laws that made primary education free and obligatory. The state allocated money to build village schools. Although some priests and nuns stayed on to teach in what were technically lay schools, the debates over the laicization of public schools ensured the animosity of many prelates and practicing Catholics against the "godless" republic.

General Boulanger and Captain Dreyfus

Amid growing social and political division, during the 1880s the parliamentary center began to melt under pressure from right and left. Nationalism

became a potent political ideology. Bonapartists emerged from obscurity to tout Napoleon III's cousin, Prince Napoleon Bonaparte (1822–1891), as a potential savior. Some nationalists began to think that the republic was too weak to ever recapture Alsace and much of Lorraine from Germany. This concern with “revenge” against Germany reflected the passing of nationalism from the liberal left to the right wing in France.

The Boulanger Affair was in some ways the birth certificate of the new right in France, the Dreyfus Affair its baptism. In 1887, French rightists began to place their hopes of overthrowing the republic on the dashing figure of General Georges Boulanger (1837–1891), who had risen rapidly through the ranks to become minister of war. His bellicose noises about recapturing Alsace-Lorraine pleased nationalists while irritating Bismarck. Conservatives now were convinced that they had found the man who could overthrow the republic, restore the monarchy, or establish a dictatorship. Flattered by all of the attention, Boulanger allowed his name to be put forward as a candidate for the Chamber of Deputies.

The political movement on behalf of Boulanger was arguably the first mass political campaign in France. Funds provided by a wealthy royalist widow helped inundate the country with electoral posters and busts and statues of the dashing general. His supporters battled their political enemies in the streets, bringing unprecedented violence into an electoral campaign and drawing on rising nationalist anti-Semitism, although there were only about 80,000 Jews in a population of 40 million in France. For example, Parisian shopkeepers, frustrated by the economic depression, fearful of workers' consumer cooperatives, and losing clients to department stores, swung their support to right-wing nationalist parties, convinced by right-wing polemicists that “Jewish capitalists” were responsible for their plight.

Boulanger was elected in by-elections in several districts, but because he was in the army, he was ineligible to serve in the Chamber of Deputies. At this point, no one was sure what exactly Boulanger represented, no one probably less than the general himself. If his campaign money came from the right, many of his votes at first came from the left. The Opportunist government sent Boulanger to central France to remove him from the political limelight of the capital.

A political scandal cast a further shadow on the government, giving another twist to the term “opportunist.” A prostitute revealed that the Legion of Honor medal was being peddled to the highest bidder. It turned out that one of the most successful salesmen was Daniel Wilson, the ruthless son-in-law of President Jules Grévy, who resigned.

All of this added to a feeling among some observers that the Third Republic was already at the end of its rope. The government declared General Boulanger retired. But this now left him free to run for the Chamber of Deputies, and he was elected deputy from Paris. To his right-wing followers, it seemed that a perfect occasion for a coup d'état had arrived. In January 1889, triumphant crowds gathered in the street, calling out Boulanger's

name while he sat in a restaurant quietly eating dinner. But his moment passed. Two years later, government officials convinced the naive general that they held evidence that could lead to his conviction on charges of state treason. Boulanger caught a train to Belgium and, on the grave of his late mistress, took out his army pistol and blew out his brains.

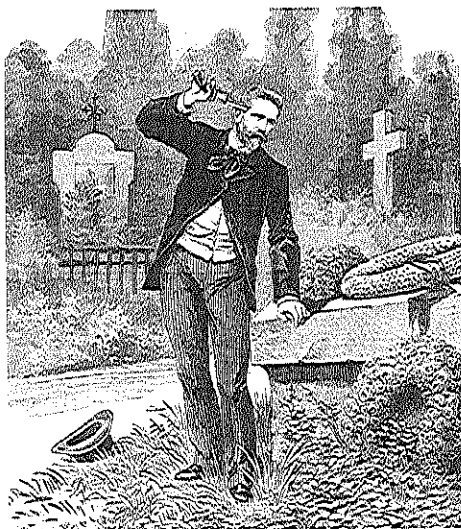
Having survived Boulanger, the republic then received an unexpected boost from its old enemy, the Catholic Church, whose "rallying" (the *Ralliement*) to the republic began with an archbishop's toast in 1891 in Tunisia. Henceforth, the moderate republicans could draw on political support from the Catholic right against the socialist parties.

Another scandal gave the anti-parliamentary right a new focus for opposition. In 1881, a French company had begun to dig the Panama Canal under the direction of Ferdinand de Lesseps, who had overseen the construction of the Suez Canal. This canal proved to be even more challenging to build because of difficult terrain and malarial conditions. Company officials bribed government officials in the hope of gathering sufficient support to get the Chamber of Deputies to approve a loan that would be financed by a national lottery. The Chamber of Deputies obligingly approved the plan, but the financial campaign fell short. When the company went broke in 1889, more than half a million investors lost their money.

In 1892, Édouard Drumont's right-wing newspaper *La Libre Parole* published a series of revelations about the scandal. Drumont had earlier published a book in which he claimed that Jewish financiers were conspiring to dominate France. Now, the fact that some of the directors of the defunct company had been Jewish helped generate support for the League of Patriots, founded in 1892, a nationalist and anti-Semitic organization of the extreme right. The next year an indulgent court acquitted all but one of those implicated in the scandal.

The next scandal was such a series of dramatic events that it became known for years simply as "the Affair." It pitted right against left; the army, Church, and monarchists against republicans and, in time, socialists; and family against family.

Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935) was the son of an old Jewish family from Alsace. His family had been peddlers and then textile manufacturers. They were assimilated Jews, proudly considering themselves French. Fol-

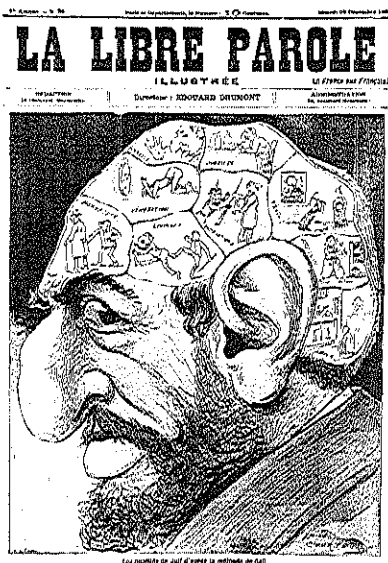


The suicide of General Boulanger.

lowing the annexation of Alsace by Germany in 1871, the Dreyfus family moved to Paris. In 1894, evidence surfaced—from a wastepaper basket in the office of a German military attaché—that someone in the French army had been passing secret information to the Germans about French military operations. Circumstantial evidence pointed to Captain Dreyfus—the writing on a list of documents that had been prepared to be handed over to a German contact resembled Dreyfus's handwriting. Maintaining his innocence, Dreyfus refused the arresting officer's offer of a loaded pistol with which he could kill himself. A hurriedly convened and secret court-martial found him guilty of treason. Dreyfus was stripped of his rank and sent to Devil's Island off the coast of South America.

However, confidential documents continued to disappear from French army offices. Two years later, a new chief of army intelligence, Lieutenant Colonel Georges Picquart, determined to his own satisfaction that the original list of documents had not been penned by Dreyfus, but by Major Walsin Esterhazy. Picquart, who was an unlikely hero in this case because he made no secret of his anti-Semitism, presented his evidence. But high-ranking officers believed that it was better to have an innocent Jew languishing in increasing depression on Devil's Island than to compromise the army's public image. The army packed Picquart off to a post in Tunisia, and a military court acquitted Esterhazy, despite overwhelming evidence of guilt.

(Left) Édouard Drumont's anti-Semitic newspaper *La Libre Parole* (The Free Word), 1893. (Right) Captain Alfred Dreyfus.



The novelist Émile Zola now took up Dreyfus's case. In January 1898, he wrote an article in a daily newspaper with the bold headline "*J'accuse!*" ("I accuse!"), denouncing the army and the government for covering up the reality of the case. The political right and the Church hierarchy jumped in on the side of the "anti-Dreyfusards," seeing the Dreyfus Affair as a conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons to destroy France by undermining the prestige of its army. A Catholic newspaper demanded that all Jews be deprived of their citizenship. Action Française, a right-wing nationalist and monarchist organization led by Charles Maurras (1868–1952), an anti-Semitic novelist, jumped into the fray against Dreyfus. Socialists demanded a new trial.

Another officer soon discovered that some new documents had been added to the Dreyfus file. They had been quite badly forged by Lieutenant Colonel Hubert Henry, who hoped they would lead to a new conviction of Dreyfus. Confronted with the evidence, Henry committed suicide in a military prison. In 1899, the army retried Dreyfus, once again finding him guilty, but with "extenuating circumstances." Dreyfus returned, a broken man, to Devil's Island. However, the president of France gave Dreyfus a presidential pardon that year, which allowed him to return to his family, although Dreyfus was not fully exonerated until 1906, when his military rank was restored.

The Radical Republic

Dreyfus's return to France provided the republic with a badly needed period of stability and boosted the Radical Party. The Dreyfus Affair had helped forge a working alliance between the Radicals, who were anticlerical moderate republicans, and socialists, which moved the republic to the left. In the Radical government formed in 1899, Alexandre Millerand (1859–1943), a reform socialist, became minister of commerce, despite the bitter opposition of many socialists who objected to a socialist serving in a "bourgeois" government.

In contrast to Britain, where the Anglican Church had always stood behind the government, in France the dominant religion had—at least until 1891—stood against the regime. The Radicals moved to separate church and state against conservative opposition. In 1902, the Chamber of Deputies, with socialist support, passed legislation exiling religious orders from France. In 1905, church and state were formally separated in France. During the next two years, the state took possession of all ecclesiastical property and assumed responsibility for paying the salaries of priests. Despite papal condemnation and the resistance of some clergy and parishioners, a *modus vivendi* evolved, with parish councils leasing churches from the state.

The Radical Premier Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929) embodied aggressive French nationalism. The man who later became known as "the Tiger" had been born into a family of modest noble title. His father was a prominent republican who had been exiled by Napoleon III. Clemenceau was a wealthy bully and a formidable dueler who hated socialists, unions,

and the Catholic Church as much as he did his American ex-wife, whom he had followed by a detective, jailed, and deported. In 1907, he sent troops to crush a determined strike by small property owners and vineyard laborers in the south.

In 1911, Radical Premier Joseph Caillaux (1863–1944), unlike Clemenceau, sought accommodation with Germany. The French Socialist Party launched a campaign against militarism and particularly against the extension of the term of military service from two to three years. Antimilitarism remained popular among workers because of the role of troops in the repression of strikes. But the Second Moroccan Crisis between Germany and France that same year (see Chapter 22) gave rise to another wave of nationalism. Besieged by the press for his pacific stand, Caillaux's government fell the following year. Raymond Poincaré (1860–1934), an outspoken nationalist, became premier in 1912 and then president a year later. He eagerly anticipated the chance to win back Alsace and Lorraine, and he firmed up French support of a Russian role in the Balkans. Poincaré's nationalism seemed in tune with the times.

CONCLUSION

The second half of the nineteenth century brought about significant political change to the three European powers that had been the strongest at mid-century. In Britain, the second Reform Bill of 1867 expanded the electoral franchise, and another law in 1884 followed suit. After the collapse of the Second Empire in 1870 and the Paris Commune the following year, France emerged as a republic. In Russia, Tsar Alexander II's emancipation of the serfs in 1861 did not change the fundamental institutions of autocracy. Yet some reforms did follow, even as critics of the tsarist state grew more vocal, and the Revolution of 1905 challenged the foundations of autocracy. In the meantime, Britain's economic strength and great navy left it in a position to dominate international affairs. Having defeated Austria and then France, Prussia emerged as the leader of a unified and powerful Germany, dominant in Central Europe. At the same time, the Second Industrial Revolution brought remarkable technological advances, increased mass production, and ever larger cities now bathed in electric light.

RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ITS CHALLENGES, 1870–1914



Jeanne Bouvier was a peasant girl born in 1865 in southeastern France. Her father earned his living by tilling the fields and as a barrel maker, an occupation closely tied to wine production. But in 1876, disease began to destroy the vineyards of the Rhône River Valley. Jeanne's family was forced to sell its land and possessions and travel to find work, pushed along by poverty and unemployment. From age eleven to fourteen, Jeanne worked thirteen hours a day in a silk mill. Four other jobs in various towns and villages in her region followed until Jeanne's mother took her to Paris, where the first job she found lasted only a week. Like so many other single, female migrants to city life, she then worked as a domestic servant. A cousin showed her how to do hat-trimming work. When that trade collapsed because of changes in style and the economic depression, she became a skilled dressmaker in a Parisian workshop and then developed her own clientele. Jeanne Bouvier became a Parisian. When she returned home to her native village, Jeanne spoke French, and not the patois in which her old friends conversed. She had become an urban woman.

In 1900, the French Catholic writer Charles Péguy expressed the opinion that Europe had changed more in the previous thirty years than it had since the time of Jesus Christ. The period 1870–1914 was indeed one of rapid economic and social change in much of Europe. Rail networks extended their reach into the countryside, carrying manufactured goods and returning with meat, vegetables, fresh milk, and fruit for burgeoning cities. The speed and capacity of steamships brought American cereal grains, cattle, and meat to Western European ports, reducing their prices.