



CHAPTER PREVIEW

- How was peace restored and maintained after the Napoleonic Wars?
- What new ideologies emerged to challenge conservatism?
- What were the characteristics of the Romantic movement?
- How did reforms and revolutions challenge conservatism after 1815?
- What were the main causes and consequences of the revolutions of 1848?

Passions Run High in the Revolutionary Era

Between 1830 and 1848 crowds stormed public areas to force political change in many parts of Europe. In this dramatic scene from the revolutions of 1830, rioters in Brussels demand Belgian national independence from the Netherlands. At the top right, a patriot clutches the Belgian tricolor flag while another brandishes a list of revolutionary demands; at the center, a youth has died in the fight for liberty, inspiring fellow citizens to join the cause. (By Gustave Wappers [1803–1874], [oil on canvas]/Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium/photo © Leemage/Bridgeman Images)

How was peace restored and maintained after the Napoleonic Wars?

The eventual eruption of revolutionary political forces in 1848 was by no means predictable at the end of the Napoleonic era. Quite the contrary. After finally defeating Napoleon, the conservative, aristocratic monarchies of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain—known as the Quadruple Alliance—reaffirmed their determination to hold France in line. Even before Napoleon's final defeat, the allies had agreed to fashion a general peace accord in 1814 at the Congress of Vienna, where they faced a great challenge: how could they construct a lasting settlement that would not sow the seeds of another war? By carefully managing the balance of power, redrawing the boundaries of formerly French-held territories, and embracing conservative restoration, they brokered an agreement that contributed to fifty years of peace in Europe (Map 21.1).

Congress of Vienna The Congress of Vienna was renowned for its intense diplomatic deal making, resulting in the Treaty of Vienna, the last page of which was signed and sealed in 1815 by the representatives of the various European states attending the conference. The congress won notoriety for its ostentatious parades, parties, and dance balls. The painting here portrays a mounted group of European royalty, led by the Prussian emperor and the Russian tsar, in a flamboyant parade designed to celebrate Napoleon's defeat the year before. Onlookers toast the victorious monarchs. The display of flags, weapons, and heraldic emblems symbolizes the unity of Europe's Great Powers, while the long tables in the background suggest the extent of the festivities. Such images were widely distributed to engender popular support for the conservative program. (*The Celebration at the Prater in the Presence of the Reining Monarchs*, colored lithograph by Franz Wolf [1795–1859]/Collection of the Palaces Artstetten and Luberegg/akg-images)

The European Balance of Power

Leading representatives of the Quadruple Alliance (plus a representative of the restored Bourbon monarch of France)—including Tsar Alexander I of Russia, King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, Emperor Franz II of Austria, and their foreign ministers—met to fashion the peace at the **Congress of Vienna** from September 1814 to June 1815. A host of delegates from the smaller European states also attended the conference and offered minor assistance.

Such a face-to-face meeting of kings and emperors was very rare. Professional ambassadors and court representatives typically conducted state-to-state negotiations; now leaders engaged, for one of the first times, in what we would today call “summit diplomacy.” Beyond formal discussions, congress participants enjoyed festivities



TIMELINE

1810

1820

1830

1840

1850

1790s–1840s

Romantic movement in literature and the arts

■ 1820

Congress of Troppau proclaims the principle of intervention to maintain autocratic regimes

■ 1830

Greece wins independence from Ottomans

1809–1848

Metternich serves as Austrian foreign minister

■ 1821

Austria crushes a liberal revolution in Naples and restores the Sicilian autocracy

■ 1830

France invades Algeria

1810–1829

Revolutions in South America throw off Spanish rule

■ 1823

French armies restore the Spanish Crown

■ 1830

French king Charles X repudiates the Constitutional Charter; insurrection and collapse of the government follow

1814–1815

Congress of Vienna

■ 1815

Revision of Corn Laws in Great Britain; Holy Alliance formed

■ 1825

Decembrist Uprising crushed by Russian tsar

■ 1832

Reform Bill in Britain

■ 1839

Socialist Louis Blanc publishes *The Organization of Work*

■ June 18, 1815

Napoleon defeated at the Battle of Waterloo

■ 1818

Mary Shelley publishes *Frankenstein*

■ 1819

Karlsbad Decrees issued by German Confederation

1845–1851

Great Famine in Ireland

■ 1848

Revolutions in France, Austria, and Prussia; Marx and Engels publish *The Communist Manifesto*

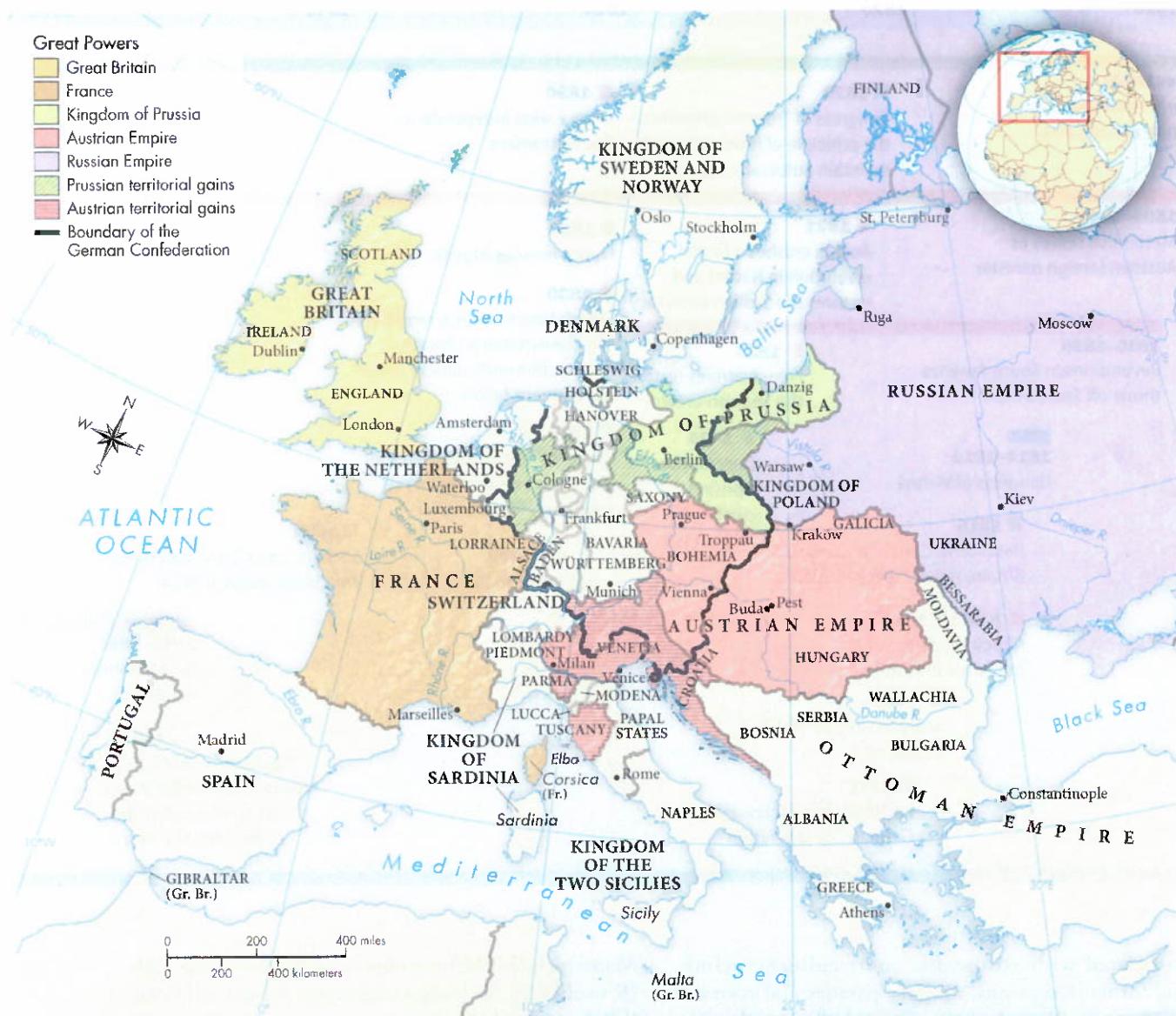
associated with aristocratic court culture, including formal receptions, military parades and reviews, sumptuous dinner parties, fancy ballroom dances, fireworks displays, opera, and theater. Visits to Vienna's vibrant salons offered further opportunities to socialize, discuss current affairs, and make informal deals that could be confirmed at the conference table. All the while, newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, and satiric cartoons kept readers across Europe up-to-date on social events and the latest political developments. The conference thus marked an important transitional moment in Western history. The salon society and public sphere of the seventeenth-century Enlightenment (see "How did the Enlightenment change social ideas and practices?" in Chapter 16) gradually shifted toward nineteenth-century cultures of publicity and public opinion informed by more modern mass-media campaigns.¹

The allied powers were concerned first with the defeated enemy, France. Motivated by self-interest and traditional ideas about the balance of power, they practiced moderation toward the former foe. To Klemens von

Metternich (MEH-tuhr-nihk) and Robert Castlereagh (KA-suh-l-ray), the foreign ministers of Austria and Great Britain, the balance of power meant an international equilibrium of political and military forces that would discourage aggression by any combination of states or, worse, the domination of Europe by any single state. Their French negotiating partner, the skillful and cynical diplomat Charles Talleyrand, concurred.

The allies offered France lenient terms after Napoleon's abdication. They agreed to restore the Bourbon king to the French throne. The first Treaty of Paris, signed before the conference (and before Napoleon escaped from Elba and attacked the Bourbon regime), gave France the boundaries it had possessed in 1792, which were larger than those of 1789. In addition, France did not have to pay war reparations. Thus the victorious powers avoided provoking a spirit of victimization and desire for revenge in the defeated country.

■ **Congress of Vienna** A meeting of the Quadruple Alliance (Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain), restoration France, and smaller European states to fashion a general peace settlement that began after the defeat of Napoleon's France in 1814.



MAPPING THE PAST

MAP 21.1 Europe in 1815

In 1815 Europe contained many different states, but after the defeat of Napoleon international politics was dominated by the five Great Powers: Russia, Prussia, Austria, Great Britain, and France. (The number rises to six if one includes the Ottoman Empire.) At the Congress of Vienna, the Great Powers redrew the map of Europe.

ANALYZING THE MAP Trace the political boundaries of each Great Power. What are their geographical strengths and weaknesses? Compare these boundaries to those established at the height of Napoleonic power (see Map 19.2). What are the most important changes? What countries lost or gained territory?

CONNECTIONS How did Prussia's and Austria's territorial gains contribute to the balance of power established at the Congress of Vienna? What other factors enabled the Great Powers to achieve such a long-lasting peace?

The Quadruple Alliance combined leniency with strong defensive measures designed to raise barriers against the possibility of renewed French aggression. Belgium and Holland—incorporated into the French empire under Napoleon—were united under an enlarged and independent “Kingdom of the Netherlands” capable of opposing French expansion to the north. The German-speaking lands on France’s eastern border, also taken by Napoleon, were returned to Prussia. As a famous German anthem put it, the expanded Prussia would now stand as the “watch on the Rhine” against French attack. In addition, the allies reorganized the German-speaking territories of central Europe. A new German Confederation, a loose association of German-speaking states based on Napoleon’s reorganization of the territory dominated by Prussia and Austria, replaced the roughly three hundred principalities, free cities, and dynastic states of the Holy Roman Empire with just thirty-eight German states (see Map 21.1).

Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia used the balance of power to settle their own potentially dangerous disputes. The victors generally agreed that they should receive territory for their victory over the French. Great Britain had already won colonies and strategic outposts during the long wars. Austria gave up territories in Belgium and southern Germany but expanded greatly elsewhere, taking the rich provinces of Venetia and Lombardy in northern Italy as well as former Polish possessions and new lands on the eastern coast of the Adriatic.

Russian and Prussian claims for territorial expansion were more contentious. When Russia had pushed Napoleon out of central Europe, its armies had expanded Russian control over Polish territories. Tsar Alexander I wished to make Russian rule permanent. But when France, Austria, and Great Britain all argued for limits on Russian gains, the tsar ceded territories back to Prussia and accepted a smaller Polish kingdom. Prussian claims on the state of Saxony, a wealthy kingdom in the German Confederation, were particularly divisive. The Saxon king had supported Napoleon to the bitter end; now Wilhelm III wanted to incorporate Saxony into Prussia. Under pressure, he agreed to partition the state, leaving an independent Saxony in place, a change that posed no real threat to its Great Power neighbors but soothed their fears of Prussian expansionism. These territorial changes and compromises fell very much within the framework of balance-of-power ideology.

Unfortunately for France, in February 1815 Napoleon suddenly escaped from his “comic kingdom” on the island of Elba and briefly reignited his wars of expansion for a brief time (see “The Grand Empire and Its End” in Chapter 19). Yet the second Treaty of Paris, concluded in November 1815 after Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo, was still relatively moderate

toward France. The elderly Louis XVIII was restored to his throne for a second time. France lost only a little territory, had to pay an indemnity of 700 million francs, and was required to support a large army of occupation for five years. The rest of the settlement concluded at the Congress of Vienna was left intact. The members of the Quadruple Alliance, however, did agree to meet periodically to discuss their common interests and to consider appropriate measures for the maintenance of peace in Europe. This agreement marked the beginning of the European “Congress System,” which lasted long into the nineteenth century and settled many international crises peacefully through international conferences or “congresses” and balance-of-power diplomacy.

Metternich and Conservatism

The political ideals of conservatism, often associated with Austrian foreign minister Prince Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859), dominated Great Power discussions at the Congress of Vienna. Metternich’s



Prince Klemens von Metternich This portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence reveals much about Metternich, the foreign minister of the Austrian Empire. Handsome, refined, and intelligent, this grand aristocrat passionately defended his class and its interests. (Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2019/Bridgeman Images)

determined defense of the monarchical status quo made him a villain in the eyes of most progressive, liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century. Yet rather than denounce his politics, we can try to understand the general conservatism he represented. Metternich was an internationally oriented aristocrat who made a brilliant diplomatic career. Austrian foreign minister from 1809 to 1848, his conservatism derived from his pessimistic view of human nature, which he believed was ever prone to error, excess, and self-serving behavior. The disruptive events of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars confirmed these views, and Metternich's conservatism would emerge as a powerful new political ideology, an attempt to manage the many crises of the revolutionary age.

Metternich firmly believed that liberalism, as embodied in revolutionary America and France, bore the responsibility for the untold bloodshed and suffering caused by twenty-five years of war. Like Edmund Burke and other conservatives, Metternich blamed liberal middle-class revolutionaries for stirring up the lower classes. Authoritarian, aristocratic government, he concluded, was necessary to protect society from the baser elements of human behavior, which were easily released in a democratic system. Organized religion was another pillar of strong government. Metternich despised the anticlericalism of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and maintained that Christian morality was a vital bulwark against radical change.

Born into the landed nobility, Metternich defended his elite class and its rights and privileges with a clear conscience. The church and nobility were among Europe's most ancient and valuable institutions, and conservatives regarded tradition as the basic foundation of human society. The threat of liberalism appeared doubly dangerous to Metternich because it generally went with aspirations for national independence. Liberals believed that each people, each national group, had a right to establish its own independent government and fulfill its own destiny; this system threatened to revolutionize central Europe and destroy the Austrian Empire.

After centuries of war, royal intermarriage, and territorial expansion, the vast Austrian Empire of the Habsburgs included many regions and peoples (Map 21.2). The numerous kingdoms, duchies, and principalities under Habsburg rule included the lands of the Austrian Crown, the Kingdom of Hungary, the Kingdom of Bohemia, and the Kingdom

of Lombardy-Venetia. Noble houses in these territories maintained some control, but ultimate authority rested with the Habsburg emperor. The peoples of the Austrian Empire spoke at least eleven different languages and observed vastly different customs; an astonishing variety of different ethnic groups mingled in the same provinces and the same villages. They included about 8 million Germans, almost one-fourth of the population. Some 5.5 million Magyars (Hungarians), 5 million Italians, 4 million Czechs, and 2 million Poles lived alongside each other in the imperial state, as did smaller groups of Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Romanians, Jews, and Armenians.² The various Slavic groups, together with the Italians and the Romanians, lived in widely scattered regions, yet they outnumbered the politically dominant Germans and Hungarians.

The multiethnic empire Metternich served had strengths and weaknesses. A large population and vast territories gave the empire economic and military clout, but its potentially dissatisfied ethnicities and nationalities undermined political unity. Under these circumstances, Metternich and the Habsburg dynasty had to oppose liberalism and nationalism—if Austria was to remain intact and powerful, it could hardly accommodate ideologies that demanded national independence.

On the Austrian Empire's borders, the Russian Empire and, to a lesser extent, the Ottoman Empire supported and echoed Metternich's efforts to hold back liberalism and nationalism. Bitter enemies, the far-flung Russian and Ottoman Empires were both absolutist states with powerful armies and long traditions of expansion and conquest. Because of those conquests, both were also multinational empires with many peoples, languages, and religions, but most of the ruling elite came from the dominant ethnic group—the Orthodox Christian Russians of central and northern Russia and the Muslim Ottoman Turks of Anatolia (much of modern Turkey). After 1815 both of these multinational absolutist states worked to preserve their respective traditional conservative orders. Only after 1840 did each in turn experience a profound crisis and embark on a program of fundamental reform and modernization, as we shall see in Chapter 23.

Repressing the Revolutionary Spirit

Conservative political ideologies had important practical consequences. Under Metternich's leadership, Austria, Prussia, and Russia embarked on a decades-long crusade against the liberties and civil rights associated with the French and American Revolutions. The first step was the formation in September 1815 of the **Holy Alliance** by Austria, Prussia, and Russia.

Holy Alliance An alliance formed by the conservative rulers of Austria, Prussia, and Russia in September 1815 that became a symbol of the repression of liberal and revolutionary movements all over Europe.

Karlsbad Decrees Issued in 1819, these repressive regulations were designed to uphold Metternich's conservatism, requiring the German states to root out subversive ideas and squelch any liberal organizations.



MAP 21.2 Peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1815 The old dynastic state ruled by the Habsburg monarchy was a patchwork of nationalities and ethnic groups, in which territorial borders barely reflected the diversity of where different peoples actually lived. Note especially the widely scattered pockets of Germans and Hungarians. How do you think this ethnic diversity might have led to the rise of national independence movements in the Austrian Empire?

First proposed by Russia's Alexander I, the alliance worked to repress reformist and revolutionary movements and stifle desires for national independence across Europe.

The conservative restoration first brought its collective power to bear in Austria, Prussia, and the entire German Confederation—the German-speaking lands of central Europe. The states in the German Confederation retained independence, and though ambassadors from each met in the Confederation Diet, or assembly, it had little real political power. When liberal reformers and university students began to protest for the national unification of the German states, the Austrian and Prussian leadership used the diet to issue and enforce the infamous **Karlsbad Decrees** in 1819. These decrees required the German states to outlaw liberal political organizations, police their universities and newspapers, and establish a permanent committee with spies and informers to clamp down on liberal or radical reformers. (See “Evaluating Written Evidence:

The Karlsbad Decrees: Conservative Reaction in the German Confederation,” page 632.)

The conservative policies of Metternich and the Holy Alliance limited reform not only in central Europe but also in Spain and the Italian peninsula. In 1820 revolutionaries successfully forced the kings of Spain and the southern Italian Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to establish constitutional monarchies, with press freedoms, universal male suffrage, and other liberal reforms. Metternich was horrified; revolution was rising once again. Calling a conference at Troppau in Austria, he and Alexander I proclaimed the principle of active intervention to maintain all autocratic regimes whenever they were threatened. Austrian forces then marched into Naples in 1821 and restored the autocratic power of Ferdinand I in the Two Sicilies. A French invasion of Spain in 1823 likewise returned power to the king there.

The forces of reaction squelched reform in Russia as well, in the Decembrist Revolt of 1825. In St. Petersburg

The Karlsbad Decrees: Conservative Reaction in the German Confederation

In 1819 a member of a radical student fraternity at the German University of Jena assassinated the conservative author and diplomat August von Kotzebue. Metternich used the murder as an excuse to promulgate the repressive Karlsbad Decrees, excerpted below, which clamped down on liberal nationalists in the universities and the press throughout the German Confederation.

Law on Universities

1. A special representative of the ruler of each state shall be appointed for each university, with appropriate instructions and extended powers, and shall reside in the place where the university is situated. . . .

The function of this agent shall be to see to the strictest enforcement of existing laws and disciplinary regulations; to observe carefully the spirit which is shown by the instructors in the university in their public lectures and regular courses, and, without directly interfering in scientific matters or in the methods of teaching, to give a salutary direction to the instruction, having in view the future attitude of the students. . . .

2. The confederated governments mutually pledge themselves to remove from the universities or other public educational institutions all teachers who, by obvious deviation from their duty, or by exceeding the limits of their functions, or by the abuse of their legitimate influence over the youthful minds, or by propagating harmful doctrines hostile to public order or subversive of existing governmental institutions, shall have unmistakably proved their unfitness for the important office intrusted to them. . . .

[Articles 3 and 4 ordered the universities to enforce laws against secret student societies.]

Press Law

1. So long as this decree shall remain in force no publication which appears in the form of daily issues, or as a

serial not exceeding twenty sheets of printed matter, shall go to press in any state of the union without the previous knowledge and approval of the state officials. . . .

6. The Diet shall have the right, moreover, to suppress on its own authority . . . [publications that] in the opinion of a commission appointed by it, are inimical to the honor of the union, the safety of individual states, or the maintenance of peace and quiet in Germany. There shall be no appeal from such decisions. . . .

Establishment of an Investigative Committee

1. Within a fortnight, reckoned from the passage of this decree, there shall convene, under the auspices of the Confederation . . . an extraordinary commission of investigation to consist of seven members, including the chairman.

2. The object of the commission shall be a joint investigation, as thorough and extensive as possible, of the facts relating to the origin and manifold ramifications of the revolutionary plots and demagogical associations directed against the existing constitution and the internal peace both of the union and of the individual states.

EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE

- How do these regulations express the spirit of reactionary politics after the Napoleonic Wars? Why were university professors and students singled out as special targets?
- The Karlsbad Decrees were periodically renewed until finally overturned during the revolutions of 1848. Do you think they were effective in checking the growth of liberal politics?

Source: James Harvey Robinson, *Readings in European History*, vol. 2 (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), pp. 547–550.

in December that year, a group of about three thousand army officers inspired by liberal ideals staged a protest against the new tsar, Nicholas I. Troops loyal to Nicholas I surrounded and assaulted the group with gunfire, cavalry, and cannon, leaving some sixty men dead; the surviving leaders were publicly hanged, and the rest sent to exile in Siberia. Through censorship, military might, secret police, imprisonment, and execution, conservative regimes in central Europe

used the powers of the state to repress liberal reform wherever possible.

Limits to Conservative Power and Revolution in South America

Metternich liked to call himself “the chief Minister of Police in Europe,”³ and under his leadership the Holy Alliance sought to slow or halt liberal political reform.

Metternich's system proved quite effective in central Europe, at least until 1848, but the monarchists failed to stop dynastic change in France in 1830 or to prevent Belgium from winning independence from the Netherlands in 1831. Yet the most dramatic challenge to conservative power occurred not in Europe, but overseas in South America.

In the 1820s South American elites broke away from the Spanish Crown and established a number of new republics based at first on liberal Enlightenment ideals. The leaders of the revolutions were primarily wealthy Creoles, direct descendants of Spanish parents born in the Americas. The well-established and powerful Creoles—only about 5 percent of the population—resented the political and economic control of an even smaller elite minority of *peninsulares*, people born in Spain who lived in and ruled the colonies. The vast majority of the population, composed of “mestizos” and “mulattos” (people of ethnically mixed heritage), enslaved and freed Africans, and native indigenous peoples, languished at the bottom of the social pyramid.

By the late 1700s the Creoles had begun to question Spanish policy and even the necessity of further colonial rule. The spark for revolt came during the Napoleonic Wars, when the French occupation of Spain in 1808 weakened the power of the autocratic Spanish Crown and the Napoleonic rhetoric of rights inspired revolutionaries. Yet the Creoles hesitated, worried that open revolt might upset the social pyramid or even lead to a slave revolution as in Haiti (see “How did slave revolt on colonial Saint-Domingue lead to the independent nation of Haiti?” in Chapter 19).

The South American revolutions thus began from below, with spontaneous uprisings by subordinated peoples of color. Creole leaders quickly took control of a struggle that would be more prolonged and violent than the American Revolution, with outcomes less clear. In the north, the competent general Simón Bolívar—the Latin American equivalent of George Washington—defeated Spanish forces and established a short-lived “Gran Colombia,” which lasted from 1819 to 1830. Bolívar, the “people’s liberator,” dreamed of establishing a federation of South American states, modeled on the United States. To the south, José de San Martín, a liberal-minded military commander, successfully threw off Spanish control by 1825.

Dreams of South American federation and unity proved difficult to realize. By 1830 the large northern state established by Bolívar had fractured, and by 1840 the borders of the new nations looked much like the map of Latin America today. Most of the new states initially received liberal constitutions, but these were difficult to implement in lands where the vast majority of people had no experience with constitutional rule and women and the great underclass of non-Creoles were not allowed to vote. Experiments



Simón Bolívar's Triumph in Caracas The military and political expertise of General Simón Bolívar, the South American George Washington, helped liberate Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, and other states from Spanish rule in the first decades of the 1800s. Here he leads a triumphal parade through Caracas, Venezuela. Bolívar's vision of a united South America fell apart by 1830, leading the disillusioned general to famously remark that trying to unite the region through revolutionary means was like “plowing the sea.” (akg-images/Newscom)

with liberal constitutions soon gave way to a new political system controlled by *caudillos* (cow-DEE-yohs), or strongmen, sometimes labeled warlords. Often Creoles, the caudillos ruled limited territories on the basis of military strength, family patronage, and populist politics. The South American revolutions had failed to establish lasting constitutional republics, but they did demonstrate the revolutionary potential of liberal ideals and the limits on conservative control.

What new ideologies emerged to challenge conservatism?

In the years following the peace settlement of 1815, intellectuals and social observers sought to harness the radical ideas of the revolutionary age to new political movements. Many rejected conservatism, with its stress on tradition, a hereditary monarchy, a privileged landowning aristocracy, and an official state church. Often inspired by liberties championed during the French Revolution, radical thinkers developed alternative ideologies and tried to convince people to follow them. In so doing, they helped articulate the basic political ideals that continue to shape Western society today.

Liberalism and the Middle Class

The principal ideas of **liberalism**—liberty and legal equality—were by no means defeated in 1815. First realized successfully in the American Revolution and then achieved in part in the French Revolution, liberalism demanded representative government as opposed to autocratic monarchy, and equality before the law for all as opposed to separate classes with separate legal rights. Liberty also meant specific individual freedoms: freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. Such ideas are still the guiding beliefs in modern democratic states, but in Europe in 1815 only France with Louis XVIII's Constitutional Charter and Great Britain with its Parliament had realized any of the liberal program. Even in those countries, liberalism had only begun to succeed.

Although conservatives still saw liberalism as a profound threat, it had gained a group of powerful adherents: the new upper classes made wealthy through growing industrialization and global commerce. This group promoted the liberal economic doctrine of **laissez faire** (lay-say FEHR), which called for free trade (including relaxation of import/export duties), unrestricted private enterprise, and no government interference in the economy.

As we saw in Chapter 17, Adam Smith posited the idea of economic liberalism and free-market capitalism in 1776 in opposition to mercantilism and its attempt to regulate trade. Smith argued that freely competitive private enterprise would give all citizens a fair and equal opportunity to do what they did best and would result in greater income for everyone, not just the rich. (Smith's form of liberalism is often called "classical liberalism" in the United States, to distinguish it sharply from modern American liberalism, which generally favors government intervention to address social inequality and regulate the economy.)

In the first half of the nineteenth century, liberal political ideals became closely associated with narrow class interests. Starting in the 1820s in Britain, business elites enthusiastically embraced laissez-faire policies because they proved immensely profitable, and they used liberal ideas to defend their right to do as they wished in their factories. Labor unions were outlawed because, these elites argued, unions restricted free competition and the individual's "right to work." Early nineteenth-century liberals favored representative government, but they generally wanted property qualifications attached to the right to vote. In practice, this meant limiting the vote to very small numbers of the well-to-do. Workers, peasants, and women, as well as middle-class shopkeepers, clerks, and artisans, did not own the necessary property and thus could not participate in the political process.

As liberalism became increasingly identified with upper-class business interests, some opponents of conservatism felt that liberalism did not go nearly far enough. Inspired by memories of the French Revolution, this group embraced republicanism: an expanded liberal ideology that endorsed universal democratic voting rights, at least for males, and radical equality for all. Republicans were more willing than most liberals to endorse violent upheaval to achieve goals. In addition, republicans might advocate government action to create jobs, redistribute income, and level social differences. As the results of the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 suggest, liberals and radical republicans could join forces against conservatives only up to a point. (See "Thinking Like a Historian: The Republican Spirit in 1848," page 636.)

The Growing Appeal of Nationalism

Nationalism was another radical idea that gained popularity after 1815. The power of nationalism was revealed by the success of the French armies in the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, when soldiers inspired by patriotic loyalty to the French nation achieved victory after victory. Early nationalists found inspiration in the vision of a people united by a common language, a common history and culture, and a common territory. In German-speaking central Europe, defeat by Napoleon's armies had made the vision of a national people united in defense of their "fatherland" particularly attractive.

In the early nineteenth century such national unity was more a dream than a reality for most ethnic groups or nationalities. Local dialects abounded, even in relatively cohesive countries like France, where peasants

from nearby villages often failed to understand each other. Moreover, a variety of ethnic groups shared the territory of most states, not just the Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires discussed earlier. During the nineteenth century, nationalism nonetheless gathered force as a political philosophy. Advancing literacy rates, new mass-circulation newspapers, larger state bureaucracies, compulsory education, and conscription armies all created a common culture that encouraged ordinary people to take pride in their national heritage.

Recognizing the power of the “national idea,” European nationalists—generally educated, middle-class liberals and intellectuals—sought to turn the cultural unity that they desired into political reality. They believed that every nation, like every citizen, had the right to exist in freedom and to develop its unique character and spirit, and they hoped to make the territory of each people coincide with well-defined borders in an independent nation-state.

This political goal made nationalism explosive, particularly in central and eastern Europe, where different peoples overlapped and intermingled. As discussed, the Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman central states refused to allow national minorities independence. This suppression fomented widespread discontent among nationalists who wanted freedom from oppressive imperial rule. In the many different principalities of the Italian peninsula and the German Confederation, to the contrary, nationalists yearned for unification across what they saw as divisive and obsolete state borders. Whether they sought independence or unification, before 1850 nationalist movements were fresh, idealistic, and progressive, if not revolutionary.

In recent years historians have tried to understand why the nationalist vision, which typically fit poorly with existing conditions and promised much upheaval, was so successful in the long run. Of fundamental importance in the rise of nationalism was the development of a complex industrial and urban society, which required more sophisticated forms of communication between individuals and groups.⁴ The need for improved communication promoted the use of a standardized national language in many areas, creating at least a superficial cultural unity as a standard tongue spread through mass education and the emergence of the popular press. When a minority population was large and concentrated, the nationalist campaign for a standardized language often led the minority group to push for a separate nation-state.

Scholars generally argue that nations are recent creations, the product of a new, self-conscious nationalist ideology. Thus nation-states emerged in the nineteenth century as “imagined communities” that sought to bind millions of strangers together around

the abstract concept of an all-embracing national identity. This meant bringing citizens together with emotionally charged symbols and ceremonies, such as independence holidays and patriotic parades. On these occasions the imagined nation of equals might celebrate its most hallowed traditions, which were often relatively recent inventions.⁵

Between 1815 and 1850 most people who believed in nationalism also believed in either liberalism or radical republicanism. They typically shared a deep belief in the creativity and nobility of “the people.” Liberals and especially republicans, for example, saw the people as the ultimate source of all government. Yet nationally minded liberals and republicans agreed that the benefits of self-government would be possible only if individuals were bonded together by common traditions that transcended local interests and even class differences. Thus in the early nineteenth century the liberty of the individual and the love of a free nation overlapped greatly.

Despite some confidence that a world system based on independent nation-states would promote global harmony, early nationalists eagerly emphasized the differences between peoples and developed a strong sense of “us” versus “them.” To this “us-them” outlook, nationalists could all too easily add two highly volatile ingredients: a sense of mission and a sense of national superiority. As Europe entered an age of increased global interaction, these ideas would lead to conflict, as powerful nation-states backed by patriotic citizens competed with each other on the international stage.

The Foundations of Modern Socialism

More radical than liberalism, republicanism, or nationalism was **socialism**. Early socialist thinkers were a diverse group with wide-ranging ideas. Yet they shared a sense that the political revolution in France, the growth of industrialization in Britain, and the

liberalism The principal ideas of this movement were equality and liberty; liberals demanded representative government and equality before the law as well as individual freedoms such as freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, and freedom from arbitrary arrest.

laissez faire A doctrine of economic liberalism that calls for unrestricted private enterprise and no government interference in the economy.

nationalism The idea that each people had its own genius and specific identity that manifested itself especially in a common language and history, which often led to the desire for an independent political state.

socialism A backlash against the emergence of individualism and the fragmentation of industrial society, and a move toward cooperation and a sense of community; the key ideas were economic planning, greater social equality, and state regulation of property.

THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

The Republican Spirit in 1848

Political leaders, prominent intellectuals, and ordinary citizens were all inspired by powerful reformist ideologies in the revolutions of 1848: liberalism and especially republicanism. Though the revolutions were crushed, the political ideals articulated by the revolutionaries lived on. How do the various ideas and policies embodied in the "republican spirit" continue to influence politics today?

1 Decrees of the provisional republican government in Paris, February 1848.

After a revolutionary mob overthrew the bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe, the provisional republican government issued the following decrees.

↪ The Overthrow of the Orléanist Monarchy *In the name of the French people:*

A reactionary and oligarchical government has just been overthrown by the heroism of the people of Paris. That government has fled, leaving behind it a trail of blood that forbids it ever to retrace its steps.

The blood of the people has flowed as in July [1830]; but this time this noble people shall not be deceived. It has won a national and popular government in accord with the rights, the progress, and the will of this great and generous nation.

A provisional government, the result of pressing necessity and ratified by the voice of the people and of the deputies of the departments, in the session of February 24, is for the moment invested with the task of assuring and organizing the national victory. . . .

The provisional government wishes to establish a republic, — subject, however, to ratification by the people, who shall be immediately consulted.

The unity of the nation (formed henceforth of all the classes of citizens who compose it); the government of the nation by itself; liberty, equality, and fraternity, for fundamental principles, and "the people" for our emblem and watchword: these constitute the democratic government which France owes to itself, and which our efforts shall secure for it. . . .

Decrees Relating to the Workingmen

The provisional government of the French republic pledges itself to guarantee the means of subsistence of the workingman by labor.

It pledges itself to guarantee labor to all citizens.

It recognizes that workingmen ought to enter into associations among themselves in order to enjoy the advantage of their labor. . . .

The provisional government of the French republic decrees that all articles pledged at the pawn shops since the first of February, consisting of linen, garments, or clothes, etc., upon which the loan does not exceed ten francs, shall be given back to those who pledged them. . . .

The provisional government of the republic decrees the immediate establishment of national workshops.

2 Demands of the German People (political pamphlet from Mannheim, Germany), 1848.

In small towns and communities across German-speaking lands, citizens inspired by republicanism met and confronted autocratic governments with lists of demands in pamphlets and petitions.

↪ A German parliament, freely elected by the people.

Every German man of 21 years of age and above should have the right to vote in a parliamentary election. . . .

Unconditional freedom of the press.

Complete freedom of religion, conscience and teaching.

Administration of justice before a jury.

General granting of citizen's rights for German citizens.

A just system of taxation based on income.

Prosperity, training, and teaching for all.

Protection and security of jobs.

Balancing out of disparities between capital and labor.

Popular and just State administration.

Responsibility of Ministers and civil servants.

Removal of all prejudices.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. Why would republican ideologies appeal to ordinary people in 1848? What groups might oppose or be indifferent to republicanism? Why did reformists present liberal-republican ideals in visual formats, as in Source 3?
2. Review the sections on liberalism and republicanism and on tensions within the revolutionary coalition of 1848 in this chapter. Which aspects of the evidence presented in Sources 1–4 appear more liberal, and which appear more republican? Does a close reading of the sources reveal conflicts between liberal and republican ideals?
3. In Source 4, how does Carl Schurz explain the benefits of radical republicanism but also its potential problems?



(Musées de la Ville de Paris, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France/Bridgeman Images)

3 **Frédéric Sorrieu, *Universal Democratic and Social Republic: The Pact, 1848*.** The subtitle of this French lithograph, which celebrates the revolutionary breakthroughs of 1848, reads, “People, Forge a Holy Alliance and Hold Hands.” An embodiment of the republican ethos, it portrays the peoples of Europe holding their respective national flags. A heavenly host blesses the gathering, and the shattered symbols of Europe’s monarchies litter the foreground.

4 **Carl Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1913*.** In his 1913 memoirs Carl Schurz explains how the threat of autocratic “reaction” (or political repression) led to radical republicanism in the years before 1848.

[T]he visible development of the reaction had the effect of producing among many of those who stood earnestly for national unity and constitutional government a state of mind more open to radical tendencies. The rapid progress of these developments was clearly perceptible in my own surroundings. Our democratic club was composed in almost equal parts of students and citizens, among whom there were many of excellent character, of some fortune and good standing, and of moderate views, while a few others had worked themselves into a state of mind resembling that of the terrorists in the French Revolution. . . .

At first the establishment of a constitutional monarchy with universal suffrage and well-secured civil rights would have been quite satisfactory to us. But the reaction, the threatened rise of which we were

observing, gradually made many of us believe that there was no safety for popular liberty except in a republic. . . .

The idealism which saw in the republican citizen the highest embodiment of human dignity we had imbibed from the study of classic antiquity; and the history of the French Revolution satisfied us that a republic could be created in Germany and could maintain its existence in the European system of states. In that history we found striking examples of the possibility of accomplishing the seemingly impossible, if only the whole energy existing in a great nation were awakened and directed with unflinching boldness.

Most of us, indeed, recoiled from the wild excesses which had stained with streams of innocent blood the national uprising in France during the Reign of Terror; but we hoped to stir up the national energies without such terrorism. At any rate, the history of the French Revolution furnished to us models in plenty that mightily excited our imagination. How dangerously seductive such a play of the imagination is we were, of course, then unaware.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the sources above, along with what you have learned in class and in this chapter, write a short essay that evaluates the appeal of republicanism in 1848. How would a typical republican leader in 1848 have understood the relationship between “the people” or “the citizen” and the state? How did that understanding challenge the conservative viewpoints?

Sources: (1) James Harvey Robinson, *Readings in European History*, vol. 2 (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), pp. 559–561; (2) *Questions on German History: Ideas, Forces, Decisions from 1800 to the Present* (Bonn: German Bundestag Press and Information Centre, Publications Section, 1984), p. 119 (punctuation has been updated); (4) Carl Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, vol. 1 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1913), pp. 136–137 (punctuation updated).

rise of laissez faire had created a profound spiritual and moral crisis. Modern capitalism, they believed, fomented a selfish individualism that encouraged inequality and split the community into isolated fragments. Society urgently required fundamental change to re-establish a sense of community.

Early socialists felt an intense desire to help the poor, and they preached that the rich and the poor should be more nearly equal economically. They believed that private property should be strictly regulated by the government, or abolished outright and replaced by state or community ownership. Economic planning, greater social equality, and state regulation of property were the key ideas of early socialism—and have remained central to all socialism since.

One influential group of early socialist advocates became known as the “utopian socialists” because their grand schemes for social improvement ultimately proved unworkable. The Frenchmen Count Henri de Saint-Simon (san-see-MOHN) (1760–1825) and Charles Fourier (FAWR-ee-ay) (1772–1837), as well as the British industrialist Robert Owen, all founded movements intended to establish model communities that would usher in a new age of happiness and equality.

Saint-Simon’s “positivism” optimistically proclaimed the tremendous possibilities of industrial development: “The golden age of the human species,” he wrote, “is before us!”⁶ The key to progress was proper social organization that required the “parasites”—the court, the aristocracy, lawyers, and churchmen—to give way to the “doers”—highly trained scientists, engineers, and industrialists. These doers would abolish poverty and war by leading society through a process he called “industrialization,” based on scientific principles. Government administrators would carefully plan the economy and guide it forward by establishing investment banks and undertaking vast public works projects that promised employment for all. Saint-Simon also stressed in highly moralistic terms that every social institution ought to have as its main goal human brotherhood and improved conditions for the poor.

Charles Fourier, a follower of Saint-Simon, likewise condemned the inequality and poverty he saw at the base of contemporary capitalism and called for a society based on cooperation rather than rampant individualism. To heal social ills, Fourier called for the construction of mathematically precise, self-sufficient communities called “phalanxes,” each made up of 1,620 people. In the phalanx, all property was owned by the community and used for the common good. Fourier was also an early proponent of the total emancipation of women. According to Fourier, under capitalism young single women were shamelessly “sold” to their future husbands for dowries and other

financial considerations. Therefore, he called for the abolition of marriage and for sexual freedom and free unions based only on love. The great British utopian Robert Owen, an early promoter of labor unions, likewise envisaged a society organized into socialistic industrial-agricultural communities. Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen all had followers who tried to put their ideas into practice. Though these attempts had mostly collapsed by the 1850s, utopian socialist ideas remained an inspiration for future reformers and revolutionaries.

Some socialist thinkers embraced the even more radical ideas of anarchism. In his 1840 pamphlet *What Is Property?* Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), a self-educated printer, famously argued that “property is theft!” Property, he claimed, was profit that was stolen from the worker, the source of all wealth. Distrustful of all authority and political systems, Proudhon believed that states should be abolished and that society should be organized in loose associations of working people.

Other early socialists, like Louis Blanc (1811–1882), a sharp-eyed, intelligent journalist, focused on more practical reforms. In his *Organization of Work* (1839), he urged workers to agitate for universal voting rights and take control of the state peacefully. Blanc believed that the government should provide aid to the sick and elderly and set up publicly funded workshops and factories to guarantee full employment. The right to work had to become as sacred as any other right. Karl Marx would later adopt Blanc’s guiding principle “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs” in his own synthesis of socialist thought.

As industrialization advanced in European cities, working people began to embrace the socialist message. This happened first in France, where workers cherished the memory of the radical phase of the French Revolution and became violently opposed to laissez-faire laws that denied their right to organize in guilds and unions. Developing a sense of class in the process of their protests, workers favored collective action and government intervention in economic life. Thus the aspirations of workers and radical theorists reinforced each other, and a genuine socialist movement emerged in Paris in the 1830s and 1840s.

The Birth of Marxist Socialism

In the 1840s France was the center of socialism, but in the following decades the German intellectual Karl Marx (1818–1883) would weave the diffuse strands of socialist thought into a distinctly modern ideology. Marxist socialism—or Marxism—would have a lasting impact on political thought and practice.



Karl Marx and His Family Active in the revolutions of 1848, Marx fled Germany and eventually settled in London, where he wrote *Capital*, the weighty exposition of his socialist theories. Despite his advocacy of radical revolution, Marx and his wife, Jenny, pictured here with two of their daughters, lived a respectable though modest middle-class life. Standing on the left is Friedrich Engels, an accomplished writer and political theorist who was Marx's long-time friend, financial supporter, and intellectual collaborator. (© Mary Evans/Marx Memorial Library/The Image Works)

The son of a Jewish lawyer who had converted to Lutheranism, the young Marx was a brilliant student. After earning a Ph.D. in philosophy at Humboldt University in Berlin in 1841, he turned to journalism, and his critical articles about the plight of the laboring poor caught the attention of the Prussian police. Forced to flee Prussia in 1843, Marx traveled around Europe, promoting socialism and avoiding the authorities. He lived a modest, middle-class life with his wife, Jenny, and their children, often relying on his friend and colleague Friedrich Engels for financial support. After the revolutions of 1848, Marx settled in London, where he spent the rest of his life as an advocate of working-class revolution. *Capital*, his magnum opus, appeared in 1867.

Marx was a dedicated scholar, and his work united sociology, economics, philosophy, and history in an

impressive synthesis. From Scottish and English political economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo, Marx learned to apply social-scientific analysis to economic problems, though he pushed these liberal ideas in radical directions. Influenced by the utopian socialists, Marx championed ideals of social equality and community. He criticized his socialist predecessors, however, for their fanciful utopian schemes, claiming that his version of "scientific" socialism was rooted in historic law, and therefore realistic. Deeply influenced by the German philosopher Georg Hegel (1770–1831), Marx came to believe that history had patterns and purpose and moved forward in stages toward an ultimate goal.

Bringing these ideas together, Marx argued that class struggle over economic wealth was the great engine of human history. In his view, one class had always exploited the other, and with the advent of modern industry, society was split more clearly than ever before: between the **bourgeoisie** (boor-ZHWAH-zee), or the upper class, and the **proletariat**, the working class. The bourgeoisie, a tiny minority, owned factories, land, and farms (what Marx called the means of production) and grew rich by exploiting the labor of workers. Over time, Marx argued, the proletariat would grow ever larger and ever poorer, and their increasing alienation would lead them to develop a sense of revolutionary class-consciousness. Then, just as the bourgeoisie had triumphed over the feudal aristocracy in the French Revolution, the proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie in a violent revolutionary cataclysm. The result would be the end of class struggle and the arrival of communism, a system of radical equality.

Fascinated by the rapid expansion of modern capitalism, Marx based his revolutionary program on an insightful yet critical analysis of economic history. Under feudalism, he wrote, labor had been organized according to long-term contracts of rights and privileges. Under capitalism, to the contrary, labor was a commodity like any other, bought and sold for wages in the free market. The goods workers produced were always worth more than what those workers were paid, and the difference—"surplus value," in Marx's terms—was pocketed by the bourgeoisie in the form of profit.

According to Marx, capitalism was immensely productive but highly exploitative. In a never-ending

Marxism An influential political program based on the socialist ideas of German radical Karl Marx, which called for a working-class revolution to overthrow capitalist society and establish a Communist state.

bourgeoisie The upper-class minority who owned the means of production and, according to Marx, exploited the working-class proletariat.

proletariat The industrial working class who, according to Marx, were unfairly exploited by the profit-seeking bourgeoisie.

search for profit, the bourgeoisie would squeeze workers dry and then expand across the globe, until all parts of the world were trapped in capitalist relations of production. Contemporary ideals, such as free trade, private property, and even marriage and Christian morality, were myths that masked and legitimized class exploitation. To many people, Marx's argument that the contradictions inherent in this unequal system would eventually be overcome in a working-class revolution appeared to be the irrefutable capstone of a brilliant interpretation of historical trends.

When Marx and Engels published *The Communist Manifesto* on the eve of the revolutions of 1848, their opening claim that "a spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism" was highly exaggerated. The Communist movement was in its infancy. Scattered groups of socialists, anarchists, and labor leaders were hardly united around Marxist ideas. But by the time Marx died in 1883, Marxist socialism had profoundly reshaped left-wing radicalism in ways that would inspire revolutionaries around the world for the next one hundred years.

What were the characteristics of the Romantic movement?

Intellectuals in the early nineteenth century transformed political ideas, and they also embraced radical changes in literature and the arts. Followers of the new Romantic movement (or Romanticism) revolted against the emphasis on rationality, order, and restraint that characterized the Enlightenment and the controlled style of classicism. Forerunners appeared from about 1750 on, but the movement crystallized fully in the 1790s, primarily in England and Germany. Romanticism gained strength and swept across Europe until the 1840s, when it gradually gave way to Realism.

The Tenets of Romanticism

Although **Romanticism** was characterized by intellectual diversity, common parameters stand out. Artists inspired by Romanticism repudiated the emphasis on reason associated with well-known Enlightenment philosophes like Voltaire or Montesquieu (see "The Influence of the Philosophes" in Chapter 16). Romantics championed instead emotional exuberance, unrestrained imagination, and spontaneity in both art and personal life.

Where Enlightenment thinkers applied the scientific method to social issues and cast rosy predictions for future progress, Romantics valued intuition and nostalgia for the past. Where Enlightenment thinkers embraced secularization, Romantics sought the inspiration of religious ecstasy. Where Enlightenment thinkers valued public life and civic affairs, Romantics delved into the supernatural and turned inward, pondering the awesome power of love and desire, and hatred and despair, all found in the hidden recesses of the self. As the Austrian composer Franz

Schubert exclaimed in 1824: "Oh imagination, thou supreme jewel of mankind, thou inexhaustible source from which artists and scholars drink! Oh, rest with us—despite the fact that thou art recognized only by a few—so as to preserve us from that so-called Enlightenment, that ugly skeleton without flesh or blood!"⁷

Nowhere was the break with Enlightenment classicism more apparent than in Romanticism's general conception of nature. Classicists were not particularly interested in the natural world. The Romantics, in contrast, were enchanted by stormy seas, untouched forests, and icy arctic wastelands. Nature could be awesome and tempestuous, a source of beauty or spiritual inspiration. Most Romantics saw the growth of modern industry as an ugly, brutal attack on their beloved nature and on venerable traditions. They sought escape—in the unspoiled Lake District of northern England, in exotic North Africa, in an imaginary and idealized Middle Ages.

The study of history became a Romantic obsession. History held the key to a universe now perceived to be organic and dynamic, not mechanical and static, as Enlightenment thinkers had believed. Historical novels like Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820), a passionate romance set in twelfth-century England, found eager readers among the literate middle classes. Professional historians influenced by Romanticism, such as Jules Michelet, went beyond the standard accounts of great men or famous battles. Michelet's many books on the history of France encouraged the French people to search the past for their special national destiny.

Romanticism was a lifestyle as well as an intellectual movement. Many early nineteenth-century Romantics lived lives of tremendous emotional intensity. Obsessive love affairs, duels to the death, madness, strange illnesses, and suicide were not uncommon. Romantic artists typically led bohemian lives, wearing their hair long and uncombed in preference to donning powdered wigs, and rejecting the manners and morals

Romanticism An artistic movement at its height from about 1790 to the 1840s that was in part a revolt against classicism and the Enlightenment, characterized by a belief in emotional exuberance, unrestrained imagination, and spontaneity in both art and personal life.

INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETY

Mary Shelley

“I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision—I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion.”* Thus did Mary Shelley (1797–1851) describe, in feverish terms, the nightmare that inspired her most famous work: *Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus*. Shelley’s horror story remains a classic of early nineteenth-century Romanticism, while her tempestuous personal experiences capture the emotional intensity of the Romantic lifestyle.

Shelley was born in 1797 in London. Her father was the political radical and freethinker William Godwin; her mother was the protofeminist Mary Wollstonecraft, whose renowned book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, written in 1792 at the height of the French Revolution, made a forceful argument for women’s equality.

Strong passions and heartbreak tragedy coursed through Shelley’s life. Her mother died of an infection contracted during childbirth, just eleven days after Shelley was born. In 1812, when she was fifteen, Mary Shelley (then Mary Godwin) met the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, a frequent visitor to the Godwin home. Although Percy Shelley was married with a child, the couple fell passionately in love and eloped in 1814, leaving London for France; they married in 1816. During the eight years of their relationship Mary Shelley was almost constantly pregnant. Only one of her four children survived to adulthood.

The young couple traveled around Europe, often meeting other Romantic authors. In 1816 Mary and Percy Shelley, along with the poet Lord Byron and his mistress, spent several months at Lake Geneva, in Switzerland, where they hoped to enjoy the mountainous countryside. Rainy weather, however, kept the group indoors. One evening Lord Byron suggested, as means of entertainment, that each member of the company invent a ghost story to share with the group.

Frankenstein was the result. The novel is about the torment of Dr. Frankenstein, a young scientist who stitches together a rough human form out of pieces of cadavers stolen from graveyards. Using an electrical current, Frankenstein brings his creature to life but flees when he sees the horrible monster he created. The unnamed and unwanted creature stumbles out into the countryside, where he learns to read and speak by secretly listening to a peasant family. Seeking affection, he accidentally kills a young boy. He then seeks revenge for the callousness of Frankenstein, his creator. The creature stalks Frankenstein, killing his brother, best friend, and bride. Unlike the monster portrayed by Boris Karloff in the famous 1931 movie, Shelley’s creature is emotional, intelligent, and articulate. He confronts Frankenstein several times, and the two passionately discuss human suffering and happiness, guilt, and responsibility.

Once published in 1818, Shelley’s story soon found and continues to fascinate a wide audience. Readers ponder



Mary Shelley. (By Samuel John Stump [1778–1863]/Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images)

its central themes. What are the ethical limits on science in the modern world? Did Frankenstein violate the contract between God and man? Does the creature represent the failures of the Enlightenment? Or does he symbolize modern humanity, lost and forsaken by an absent God? Is the book a referendum on the French Revolution?

Misfortune continued to trouble Shelley in the years after she published her famous book. Percy Shelley died in a boating accident in 1822, and Lord Byron died in Greece in 1824. Shelley continued to write, but she never remarried, writing that she was “the last relic of a beloved race, my companions extinct before me.”[†]

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Shelley wrote her famous novel in a period defined by momentous political and social changes, embodied in the transatlantic revolutions, the Napoleonic War, the emergence of new political ideologies, and early industrialization. Does this context help explain her story?
2. In what ways does the personal life of Mary Shelley and her associates reflect the Romantic passion for alternative lifestyles?

*Mary Shelley, “Author’s Introduction,” in *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), p. xxv.

[†]Quoted in Jill Lepore, “It’s Still Alive: Two Hundred Years of ‘Frankenstein,’” *The New Yorker*, February 12 and 19, 2018, p. 91.

of refined society. Romantics believed that the full development of one's unique human potential was the supreme purpose in life.

Romantic Literature

Romanticism found its distinctive voice in poetry, as the Enlightenment had in prose. Though Romantic poetry had important forerunners in the German “Storm and Stress” movement of the 1770s and 1780s, its first great poets were English: William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Sir Walter Scott were all active by 1800, followed shortly by Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats.

A towering leader of English Romanticism, William Wordsworth was deeply influenced by Rousseau and the liberal spirit of the early French Revolution. Wordsworth settled in the rural Lake District of England with his sister, Dorothy, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). In 1798 Wordsworth and Coleridge published their *Lyrical Ballads*, which abandoned flowery classical conventions for the language of ordinary speech and endowed simple subjects with the loftiest majesty. Wordsworth believed that all natural things were sacred, and his poetry often expressed a mystical appreciation of nature:

To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower
 Even the loose stones that cover the high-way
 I gave a moral life, I saw them feel,
 Or link'd them to some feeling: the great mass
 Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
 That I beheld, respired with inward meaning.⁸

Here Wordsworth expressed his love of nature in commonplace forms that a variety of readers could appreciate. The short stanza well illustrates his famous conception of poetry as the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling [which] takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.”⁹

Literature and lifestyle came together in the experience of the writers, friends, and lovers who gathered around Percy Shelley and Lord Byron in the years after the Napoleonic Wars. Self-styled bohemians who lived life for poetic experience, the circle included Mary Shelley, who eventually married the Romantic poet Percy Shelley. On vacation with Percy, Lord Byron, and others in Switzerland in 1816, Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, one of the best-known Romantic works, a genre-bending novel that tells the tragic story of a scientist who is able to invent a living, almost-human creature. (See “Individuals in Society: Mary Shelley,” page 641.)

In France under Napoleon, classicism remained strong and at first inhibited the growth of Romanticism. Between 1820 and 1850, however, the Romantic impulse broke

through in the poetry and prose of Alphonse de Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and George Sand (pseudonym of the woman writer Amandine-Aurore-Lucile Dudevant). Of these, Victor Hugo (1802–1885) achieved the most renown with novels that exemplified the Romantic fascination with fantastic characters, exotic historical settings, and extreme emotions. The hero of Hugo’s famous *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831) is the great cathedral’s deformed bell-ringer, a “human gargoyle” overlooking the teeming life of fifteenth-century Paris. Renouncing his early conservatism, Hugo equated freedom in literature with liberty in politics and society. His political evolution was thus exactly the opposite of Wordsworth’s, in whom youthful radicalism gave way to middle-aged caution. Thus Romanticism was compatible with many political beliefs.

In central and eastern Europe, literary Romanticism and early nationalism often reinforced one another. Well-educated Romantics championed their own people’s histories, cultures, and unique greatness. Like modern anthropologists, they studied peasant life and transcribed the folk songs, tales, and proverbs that the cosmopolitan Enlightenment had disdained. The brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were particularly successful at rescuing German folktales from oblivion. Determined to preserve what Wilhelm called “a world of magic” in a time of rapid social change, the Grimms viewed folktales as a reservoir of “long neglected treasures” that testified to the deep roots of the German national character. Wilhelm’s assumption that folktales persisted “only in places where there is a warm openness to poetry or where there are imaginations not yet deformed by the perversities of modern life” voiced the typical Romantic idealization of past times.¹⁰ In the Slavic lands, Romantics converted spoken peasant languages into modern written languages, building regional national identities. In the vast Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires, with their many ethnic minorities, the combination of Romanticism and nationalism was particularly potent. Ethnic groups dreaming of independence could find revolutionary inspiration in Romantic visions of a historic national destiny.

Romanticism in Art and Music

Romantic concerns with nature, history, and the imagination extended well beyond literature, into the realms of art and music. France’s Eugène Delacroix (deh-luh-KWAH) (1798–1863), one of Romanticism’s great artists, painted dramatic, colorful scenes that stirred the emotions. Delacroix was fascinated with remote and exotic subjects, whether lion hunts in Morocco or languishing, sensuous women in a sultan’s harem. The famous German painter Casper David Friedrich (1774–1840) preferred somber landscapes of ruined churches or remote arctic shipwrecks, which

Casper David Friedrich, *Two Men Contemplating the Moon*, 1820



(Universal History Archive/Shutterstock)

Friedrich's reverence for the mysterious powers of nature radiates from this masterpiece of Romantic art, which he painted in 1820. It shows two relatively small, anonymous figures mesmerized by the sublime beauty of the full moon. Viewers of the painting, positioned by the artist to look over the shoulders of the men, are likewise compelled to experience nature's wonder.

EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE

- How does Friedrich's painting express the tenets of Romanticism? In what ways does it challenge Enlightenment certainties?

- In a subtle expression of the connection between Romanticism and political reform, Friedrich has clothed the men in old-fashioned, traditional German dress, which radical students had adopted as a form of protest against the repressive conservatism of the post-Napoleonic era. Why would Romantic artists and intellectuals like Friedrich be drawn to revolutionary reforms?

captured the divine presence in natural forces. (See "Evaluating Visual Evidence: Casper David Friedrich, *Two Men Contemplating the Moon*, 1820," above.)

In England the Romantic painters Joseph M. W. Turner (1775–1851) and John Constable (1776–1837) were fascinated by nature, but their interpretations of it contrasted sharply, aptly symbolizing the tremendous emotional range of the Romantic movement. Turner depicted nature's power and terror; wild storms and sinking ships were favorite subjects. Constable painted gentle

Wordsworthian landscapes in which human beings lived peacefully with their environment, the comforting countryside of unspoiled rural England.

Musicians and composers likewise explored the Romantic sensibility. Abandoning well-defined musical structures, the great Romantic composers used a wide range of forms to create profound musical landscapes that evoked powerful emotions. They transformed the small classical orchestra, tripling its size by adding wind instruments, percussion, and more brass and strings.

The crashing chords evoking the surge of the masses in Chopin's *Revolutionary Etude* and the bottomless despair of the funeral march in Beethoven's Third Symphony—such were the modern orchestra's musical paintings that plumbed the depths of human feeling.

This range and intensity gave music and musicians much greater prestige and publicity than in the past. Music no longer simply complemented a church service or helped a nobleman digest his dinner. It became a sublime end in itself, most perfectly realizing the endless yearning of the soul. The great virtuoso who could transport the listener to ecstasy and hysteria—such as pianist Franz Liszt (1811–1886)—became a cultural hero, a “rock star” of the classical age.

The most famous and prolific of Romantic composers, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), used contrasting themes and tones to produce dramatic conflict and inspiring resolutions. As one contemporary admirer wrote, “Beethoven's music sets in motion the lever of fear, of awe, of horror, of suffering, and awakens just that infinite longing which is the essence of Romanticism.”¹¹ His own life embodied these emotional extremes, as he struggled to accept the loss of hearing that began at the peak of his fame. In true Romantic fashion he declared, “I will take fate by the throat; it will not bend me completely to its will.”¹² Beethoven continued to pour out immortal music, although his last years were silent, spent in total deafness.

How did reforms and revolutions challenge conservatism after 1815?

While the Romantics enacted a revolution in the arts, liberal, national, and socialist forces battered against the conservative restoration of 1815. Political change could result from gradual and peaceful reform or from violent insurrection, but everywhere it took the determination of ordinary people standing up to the prerogatives of the powerful. Between 1815 and 1848 three important countries—Greece, Great Britain, and France—experienced variations on this basic theme.

National Liberation in Greece

Though conservative statesmen had maintained the autocratic status quo despite revolts in Spain and the Two Sicilies, a national revolution succeeded in Greece in the 1820s. Since the fifteenth century the Greeks had lived under the domination of the Ottoman Turks. In spite of centuries of foreign rule, the Greeks had survived as a people, united by their language and the Greek Orthodox religion, and they were inspired by nationalist ideas of self-determination. This rising national movement led to the formation of secret societies and then to open revolt in 1821, led by Alexander Ypsilanti (ihp-suh-LAN-tee), a Greek patriot and a general in the Russian army.

primarily because they sought a stable Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against Russian interests in southeast Europe. Yet the Greek cause had powerful defenders. Educated Europeans and Americans cherished the culture of classical Greece; Russians admired the piety of their Orthodox brethren. Writers and artists, moved by the Romantic impulse, responded enthusiastically to the Greek national struggle. The English Romantic poet Lord Byron even joined the Greek revolutionaries to fight (as he wrote in a famous poem) “that Greece might yet be free.”

The Greeks, though often quarreling among themselves, battled the Ottomans while hoping for the support of European governments. In 1827 Britain, France, and Russia yielded to popular demands at home and directed Ottoman leaders to accept an armistice. When they refused, the navies of these three powers trapped the Ottoman fleet at Navarino. Russia then declared another of its periodic wars of expansion against the Ottomans. This led to the establishment of a Russian protectorate over much of present-day Romania, which had also been under Ottoman rule. Great Britain, France, and Russia finally declared Greece independent in 1830 and installed a German prince as king of the new country in 1832. Despite this imposed regime, which left the Greek people resolute, they had won their independence in a heroic war of liberation against a foreign empire.

Liberal Reform in Great Britain

Pressure from below also reshaped politics in Great Britain, but through a process of gradual reform rather than revolution. Eighteenth-century Britain had been remarkably stable. The landowning aristocracy dominated society, but that class was neither closed nor rigidly defined. Successful business and professional



**Delacroix, Massacre at Chios,**

1824 This moving masterpiece by Romantic artist Eugène Delacroix portrays an Ottoman massacre of ethnic Greeks on the island of Chios during the struggle for national independence in Greece. The Greek revolt won the enthusiastic support of European liberals, nationalists, and Romantics, and this massive oil painting (about 13 feet by 11 feet) portrays the Ottomans as cruel and violent oppressors holding back the course of history. (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France/Bridgeman Images)

people could buy land and become gentlefolk, while the common people enjoyed limited civil rights. Yet the constitutional monarchy was hardly democratic. With only about 8 percent of the population allowed to vote, the British Parliament, easily manipulated by the king, remained in the hands of the upper classes. The two main political parties—the Tories, which later evolved into the modern British Conservative Party, and the slightly more liberal Whigs—were both led by titled aristocrats, leaving ordinary folk little opportunity to use the formal political process to advance reform. Indeed, government policies consistently supported the aristocracy and the new industrial capitalists at the expense of the laboring classes, while workers fought back with grassroots organizing and public protest.

By the 1780s there was growing interest in some kind of political reform, yet the radical aspects of the French Revolution threw the British aristocracy into

a panic for a generation, making it extremely hostile to any attempts to change the status quo. In 1815 open conflict emerged when the aristocracy rammed far-reaching changes in the **Corn Laws** through Parliament. Britain had been unable to import inexpensive grain from eastern Europe during the war years, leading to high prices and large profits for the landed aristocracy. With the war over, grain (which the British generically called “corn”) could be imported again, allowing the price of wheat and bread to go down and benefiting almost everyone—except aristocratic landlords. The new Corn Laws placed high tariffs (or fees) on imported grain. Its cost rose to improbable levels, ensuring artificially high bread prices for working people and handsome revenues for aristocrats. Seldom

■ **Corn Laws** British laws governing the import and export of grain, which were revised in 1815 to place high tariffs on imported grain, thus benefiting the aristocracy but making food prices high for working people.

has a class legislated more selfishly for its own narrow economic advantage or done more to promote a class-based view of political action.

The change in the Corn Laws, coming as it did at a time of postwar economic distress, triggered protests and demonstrations by urban laborers, who enjoyed the support of radical intellectuals. In 1817 the Tory government, controlled completely by the landed aristocracy, responded by temporarily suspending the traditional rights of peaceable assembly and habeas corpus, which gives a person under arrest the right to a trial. Two years later, in August 1819, at least 60,000 lower-class citizens gathered at Saint Peter's Fields in Manchester to demand parliamentary reform. Eighteen demonstrators were killed and over 600 wounded by a savage government cavalry assault. Nicknamed the **Peterloo Massacre**, in scornful reference to the British victory at Waterloo, this incident demonstrated the government's determination to repress dissenters. Parliament then passed the infamous Six Acts, which placed controls on a heavily taxed press and practically eliminated all mass meetings.

Strengthened by ongoing industrial development, emerging manufacturing and commercial groups insisted on a place in the framework of political power and social prestige for their new wealth, alongside the "landed wealth" (based on long-term land ownership) of the aristocracy. They called for many kinds of liberal reform: changes in town government, organization of a new police force, more rights for Catholics and dissenters, and reform of the Poor Laws to provide aid to some low-paid workers. In the 1820s a more secure Tory government moved in the direction of better urban administration, greater economic liberalism, civil equality for Catholics, and limited imports of foreign grain. These actions encouraged the middle classes to press on for reform of Parliament so they could have a larger say in government.

The Whig Party, though led like the Tories by elite aristocrats, had by tradition been more responsive to middle-class commercial and manufacturing interests. After a series of setbacks, the Whigs' **Reform Bill of 1832** was propelled into law by a mighty surge of popular support. The bill moved British politics in a democratic direction and allowed the House of Commons to emerge as the all-important legislative body, at the expense of the aristocrat-dominated House of Lords. The new industrial areas of the country gained representation in the Commons, and many old "rotten boroughs"—electoral districts that had very few voters and that the landed aristocracy had bought and sold—were eliminated. The number of voters increased by about 50 percent, to include about 12 percent of adult men in Britain and Ireland. Comfortable middle-class groups in the urban population, as well as some substantial farmers who leased their land, received the vote. Thus the conflicts building in Great Britain were successfully—though

only temporarily—resolved. Continued peaceful reform within the system appeared difficult but not impossible.

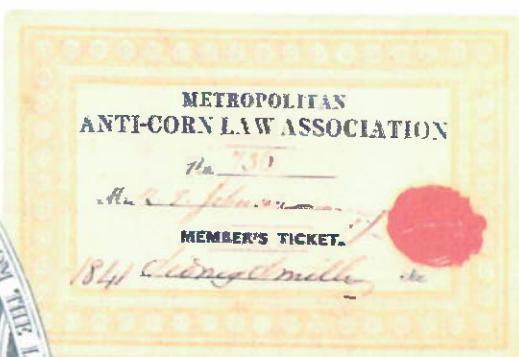
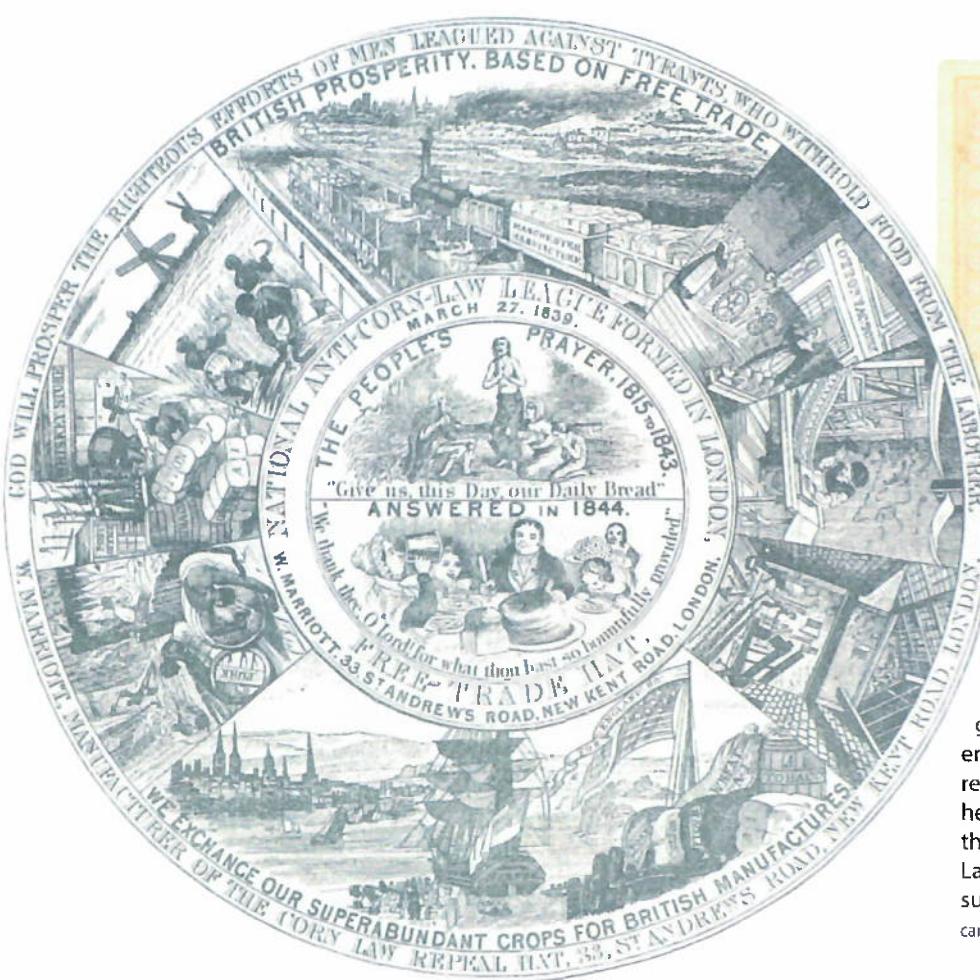
The "People's Charter" of 1838 and the Chartist movement it inspired pressed British elites for yet more radical reform. Dismayed by the economic distress of the working class in the 1830s and 1840s, the Chartists demanded universal male (but not female) suffrage. They saw complete political democracy and rule by the common people as the means to a good and just society. Hundreds of thousands of people signed gigantic petitions calling on Parliament to grant all men the right to vote, first in 1839, again in 1842, and yet again in 1848. Parliament rejected all three petitions. In the short run, the working poor failed with their Chartist demands, but they learned a valuable lesson in mass politics.

While calling for universal male suffrage, many working-class people joined with middle-class manufacturers in the Anti-Corn Law League, founded in Manchester in 1839. Mass participation made possible a popular crusade led by liberal intellectuals and politicians, who argued that lower food prices and more jobs in industry depended on repeal of the Corn Laws. Much of the working class agreed. When Ireland's potato crop failed in 1845 and famine prices for food seemed likely in England, Tory prime minister Robert Peel joined with the Whigs and a minority of his own party to repeal the Corn Laws in 1846 and allow free imports of grain. England escaped famine. Thereafter the liberal doctrine of free trade became almost sacred dogma in Great Britain.

The following year, the Tories passed a bill designed to help the working classes, but in a different way. The Ten Hours Act of 1847 limited the workday for women and young people in factories to ten hours. In competition with the middle class for the support of the working class, Tory legislators continued to support legislation regulating factory conditions. This competition between a still-powerful aristocracy and a strong middle class was a crucial factor in Great Britain's peaceful political evolution. The working classes could make temporary alliances with either competitor to better their own conditions.

Ireland and the Great Famine

The people of Ireland did not benefit from the political competition in England. In the mid-nineteenth century, Ireland was an agricultural nation, and the great majority of the rural population (outside of the northern counties of Ulster, which were partly Presbyterian) were Irish Catholics. They typically rented their land from a tiny minority of Church of England Protestant landowners, who often resided in England. Using a middleman system, these absentee landlords leased land for short periods only, set rents at will, and



The Anti-Corn Law League This line drawing, printed on silk fabric, graced the interior crown of a top hat sold as the “Free-Trade Hat.” The Anti-Corn Law League, a forerunner of today’s political pressure groups, successfully used a number of propaganda techniques to mobilize a broad urban coalition dedicated to free trade and the end of tariffs on imported grain. For example, each league supporter was encouraged to join the national organization and receive a membership card like the one pictured here. How do the various texts and scenes on the hat lining evoke arguments against the Corn Laws? Why would these arguments win popular support? (drawing: Universal Images Group/Bridgeman Images; card: © Museum of London, UK/Bridgeman Images)

easily evicted their tenants. In short, landlords used their power to grab as much profit as possible.

Irish peasants, trapped in an exploitative tenant system, lived in abominable conditions. Hundreds of shocking contemporary accounts described hopeless poverty. A compassionate French traveler wrote that Ireland was “pure misery, naked and hungry. . . . I saw the American Indian in his forests and the black slave in his chains, and I believed that I was seeing the most extreme form of human misery; but that was before I knew the lot of poor Ireland.”¹³

Despite the terrible conditions, population growth sped upward, part of Europe’s general upward trend begun in the early eighteenth century (see “The New Pattern of the Eighteenth Century” in Chapter 17). Between 1780 and 1840 the Irish population doubled from 4 million to 8 million. Extensive cultivation of the humble potato was largely responsible for this rapid rise. A single acre of land planted with the nutritious potato could feed a family of six for a year, and the hardy tuber thrived on Ireland’s boggy wastelands. About one-half of the Irish population subsisted almost exclusively on potatoes, supplemented perhaps with a bit of grain or milk and little else. Needing only

a potato patch to survive, the rural poor married early. To be sure, a young couple faced a life of extreme poverty, yet the decision to marry and have large families made sense. A couple could manage rural poverty better than someone living alone, and children meant extra hands in the fields.

As population and potato dependency grew, however, conditions became more precarious. From 1820 onward, deficiencies and diseases in the potato crop occurred with disturbing frequency. Then in 1845 and 1846, and again in 1848 and 1851, the potato crop failed in Ireland. Blight attacked the young plants, and leaves and tubers rotted. Unmitigated disaster—the Great Famine—followed, as already impoverished

■ **Peterloo Massacre** The army’s violent suppression in 1819 of a protest that took place at Saint Peter’s Fields in Manchester in reaction to the revision of the Corn Laws.

■ **Reform Bill of 1832** A major British political reform that increased the number of male voters by about 50 percent and gave political representation to new industrial areas.

■ **Great Famine** The result of four years of potato crop failure in the late 1840s in Ireland, a country that had grown dependent on potatoes as a dietary staple.

peasants experienced widespread sickness and starvation.

The British government reacted slowly. Its rigid commitment to free-trade ideology meant that relief efforts were avoided lest they interfere with the sacrosanct free market or contribute to Irish “indolence.” Though the British did eventually provide aid, their relief efforts were tragically inadequate. Moreover, the government continued to collect taxes, landlords demanded their rents, and tenants who could not pay were evicted and their homes destroyed. Famine or no, foreign landowners continued to dominate the Irish people and their economy.

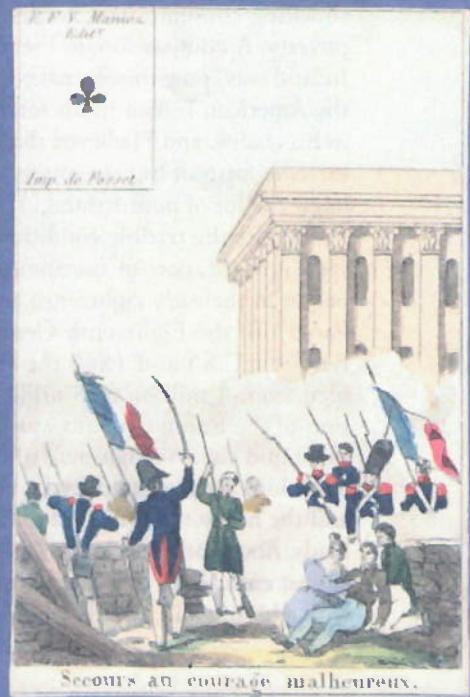
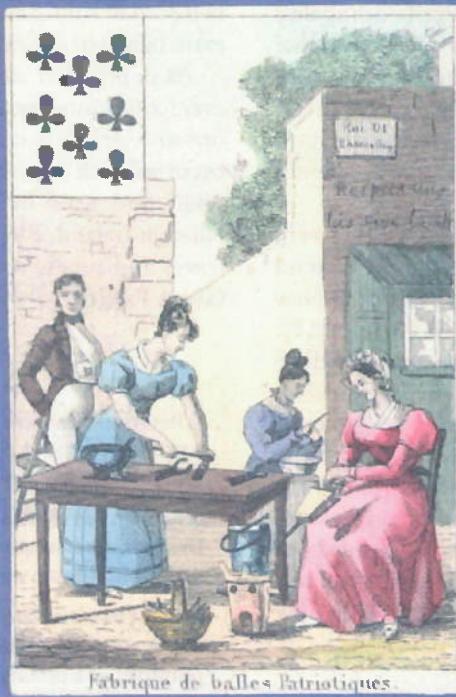
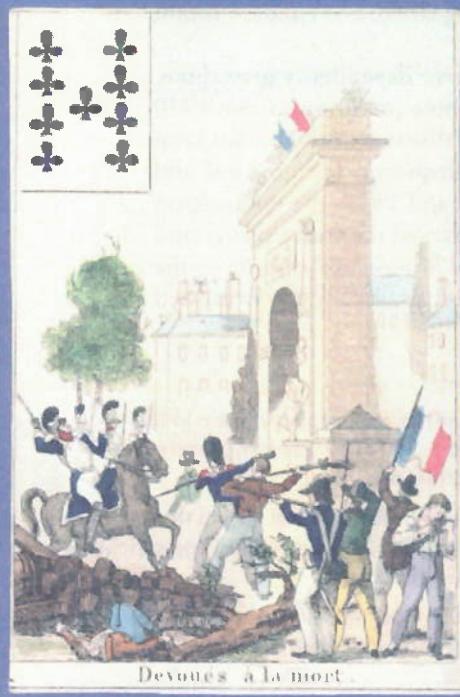
The Great Famine shattered the pattern of Irish population growth. Fully 1 million emigrants fled the famine between 1845 and 1851, mostly to the United States and Canada, and up to 1.5 million people died. The elderly and the very young were hardest hit. Alone among the countries of Europe, Ireland experienced a declining population in the second half of the nineteenth century, as it became a land of continuous out-migration, early death, late marriage, and widespread celibacy.

The Great Famine intensified anti-British feeling and promoted Irish nationalism, for the bitter memory of starvation, exile, and British inaction burned deeply into the popular consciousness. Patriots of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would call on powerful collective emotions in their campaigns for land reform, home rule, and, eventually, Irish independence.

The Revolution of 1830 in France

Like Greece and the British Isles, France experienced dramatic political change in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the French experience especially illustrates the disruptive potential of popular liberal politics. The Constitutional Charter granted by Louis XVIII in the Bourbon restoration of 1814 was a limited liberal constitution. The charter protected economic and social gains made by sections of the middle class and the peasantry in the French Revolution, permitted some intellectual and artistic freedom, and created a parliament with upper and lower houses. Immediately after Napoleon’s abortive Hundred Days, the moderate, worldly king refused to bow to the wishes of die-hard aristocrats who wanted to sweep away all the revolutionary changes. Instead, Louis appointed as his ministers moderate royalists, who sought and obtained the support of a majority of the representatives elected to the lower Chamber of Deputies between 1816 and Louis’s death in 1824.

Louis XVIII’s charter was liberal but hardly democratic. Only about 100,000 of the wealthiest males out of a total population of 30 million had the right to vote for the deputies who, with the king and his ministers, made the laws of the nation. Nonetheless, the “notable people” who did vote came from very different backgrounds. There were wealthy businessmen, war profiteers, successful professionals, ex-revolutionaries, large landowners from the



old aristocracy and the middle class, Bourbons, and Bonapartists. The old aristocracy, with its pre-1789 mentality, was a minority within the voting population.

Louis's conservative successor, Charles X (r. 1824–1830), a true reactionary, wanted to re-establish the old order in France. Increasingly blocked by the opposition of the deputies, Charles's government turned in 1830 to military adventure in an effort to rally French nationalism and gain popular support. A long-standing economic and diplomatic dispute with Muslim Algeria, a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, provided the opportunity.

In June 1830 a French force of thirty-seven thousand crossed the Mediterranean, landed to the west of Algiers, and took the capital city in three short weeks. Victory seemed complete, but in 1831 Algerians in the interior revolted and waged a fearsome war that lasted until 1847, when French armies finally subdued the country. The conquest of Algeria marked the rebirth of French imperial expansion, and the colonial government encouraged French, Spanish, and Italian immigrants to move to Algeria and settle on large tracts of land expropriated from the region's Muslim inhabitants.

Emboldened by the initial good news from Algeria, Charles repudiated the Constitutional Charter in an attempted coup in July 1830. He censored the press and issued decrees stripping much of the wealthy middle class of its voting rights. The immediate reaction, encouraged by liberal lawyers, journalists, and

middle-class businessmen, was an insurrection in the capital. Printers, other artisans, and small traders fired up by popular republicanism rioted in the streets of Paris, and three days of vicious street fighting brought down the government. Charles fled. Then the upper middle class, which had fomented the revolt, abandoned the more radical workers and skillfully seated Charles's cousin, Louis Philippe, duke of Orléans, on the vacant throne.

Events in Paris reverberated across Europe. In the Netherlands, Belgian Catholics revolted against the Dutch king and established the independent kingdom of Belgium. In Switzerland, regional liberal assemblies forced cantonal governments to amend their constitutions, leading to two decades of political conflict. And in partitioned Poland, an armed nationalist rebellion against the tsarist government was crushed by the Russian Imperial Army.

Despite the abdication of Charles X, in France the political situation remained more or less unchanged. The new king, Louis Philippe (r. 1830–1848), accepted the Constitutional Charter of 1814 and adopted the red, white, and blue flag of the French Revolution. Beyond these symbolic actions, however, popular demands for thorough reform went unanswered. The upper middle class had effected a change in dynasty that maintained the status quo and the narrowly liberal institutions of 1815. Republicans, democrats, social reformers, and the poor of Paris were bitterly disappointed. They had made a revolution, but it seemed for naught.



Scenes from the Revolution of 1830 in Paris Titled "Game of the Heroes of the Memorable Days of July," these hand-colored playing cards portray incidents from the uprising in Paris in July 1830. The captions at the bottom read, from left to right: "Duty unto Death"; "Making the Bullets of Patriotism"; "Aid to the Ill-Fated Brave One"; and "The Amazon of 1830." These fanciful yet moving scenes idealize the revolutionary zeal of the ordinary men and women who fought government troops and helped overthrow the rule of King Charles X. In reality, their efforts replaced the king but not the system. (Musée de la Ville de Paris, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France/Bridgeman Images)

What were the main causes and consequences of the revolutions of 1848?

In the late 1840s Europe entered a period of tense economic and political crisis. Bad harvests across the continent caused widespread distress. Uneven industrial development failed to provide jobs or raise incomes and boosted the popularity of the radical ideologies that emerged in the wake of the French Revolution. As a result, limited revolts broke out across Europe: a rebellion in the northern part of Austria in 1846, a civil war in Switzerland in 1847, and an uprising in Naples, Italy, in January 1848.

Full-scale revolution broke out in France in February 1848, and its shock waves rippled across the continent. Only the most developed countries—Great Britain, Belgium, and the Netherlands—and the least developed—the Ottoman and Russian Empires—escaped untouched. Elsewhere governments toppled, as monarchs and ministers bowed or fled. National independence, democratic constitutions, and social reform: the lofty aspirations of a generation of liberal reformers seemed at hand. Yet in the end, the revolutions failed.

A Democratic Republic in France

By the late 1840s revolution in Europe was almost universally expected, but it took events in Paris—once again—to turn expectations into realities. For eighteen years Louis Philippe's reign, labeled the “bourgeois monarchy” because it served the selfish interests of France's wealthy elites, had been characterized by stubborn inaction and complacency. Corrupt politicians refused to approve social legislation or consider electoral reform. Frustrated desires for change, high-level financial scandals, and a general sense of stagnation dovetailed with a severe depression that began with crop failures in 1846 to 1847. The government did little to prevent the agrarian crisis from dragging down the entire economy.

The government's failures united a diverse group of opponents against the king. Bourgeois merchants, opposition deputies, and liberal intellectuals shared a sense of outrage with middle-class shopkeepers, skilled artisans, and unskilled working people. Widespread discontent eventually touched off a popular revolt in Paris. On the night of February 22, 1848, workers joined by some students began tearing up cobblestones and building barricades. Armed with guns and dug in behind their makeshift fortresses, the workers and students demanded a new government. On February 24 the National Guard broke ranks and joined the revolutionaries. Louis Philippe refused to call in the army and abdicated in favor of his grandson. But the common people in arms would tolerate no more monarchy. This refusal led to the proclamation

of a provisional republic, headed by a ten-man executive committee and certified by cries of approval from the revolutionary crowd.

The revolutionaries immediately set about drafting a democratic, republican constitution for France's Second Republic. Building such a republic meant giving the right to vote to every adult male, and this was quickly done. Bold decrees issued by the provisional republican government expressed sympathy for revolutionary freedoms by calling for liberty, fraternity, and equality. The revolutionary government guaranteed workplace reforms, freed all slaves in French colonies, and abolished the death penalty.

Yet there were profound differences within the revolutionary coalition. On the one hand, the moderate liberal republicans of the middle class viewed universal male suffrage as the ultimate concession to dangerous popular forces, and they strongly opposed any further social measures. On the other hand, radical republicans, influenced by a generation of utopian socialists and appalled by the poverty and misery of the urban poor, were committed to some kind of socialism. Hard-pressed urban artisans, who hated the unrestrained competition of cutthroat capitalism, advocated a combination of strong craft unions and worker-owned businesses.

Worsening depression and rising unemployment brought these conflicting goals to the fore in 1848. Socialist journalist Louis Blanc and Alexandre Martin—the first member of the industrial working class to enter the French government—represented the republican socialists in the provisional government. Blanc and Martin pressed for official recognition of a socialist right to work. Blanc urged the creation of the permanent government-sponsored cooperative workshops he had advocated in *The Organization of Work*. Such workshops would be an alternative to capitalist employment and a decisive step toward a new, noncompetitive social order.

The moderate republicans, willing to provide only temporary relief, wanted no such thing. The resulting compromise set up National Workshops—soon to become little more than a vast program of pick-and-shovel public works—and established a special commission under Blanc to “study the question.” This satisfied no one. The National Workshops were, however, better than nothing. An army of desperate poor from the French provinces and even from foreign countries streamed into Paris to sign up for the workshops. As the economic crisis worsened, the number enrolled in the workshops soared from 10,000 in March to 120,000 by June, and another 80,000 tried unsuccessfully to join.

While the Paris workshops grew, the French people went to the election polls in late April. The result was a bitter loss for the republicans. Voting in most cases for the first time, the people of France elected to the new 900-person Constituent Assembly 500 monarchists and conservatives, only about 270 moderate republicans, and just 80 radicals or socialists.

One of the moderate republicans elected to the assembly was the author of *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859), who had predicted the overthrow of Louis Philippe's government. He explained the election results by observing that the socialist movement in Paris aroused the fierce hostility of France's peasants as well as the middle and upper classes. The French peasants owned land, and according to Tocqueville, "private property had become with all those who owned it a sort of bond of fraternity."¹⁴ Tocqueville saw that a majority of the members of the new Constituent Assembly was firmly committed to centrist moderation and strongly opposed to the socialists and their artisan allies, a view he shared.

This clash of ideologies—between moderate liberalism and radical socialism—became a clash of classes and arms after the elections. The new government's executive committee dropped Blanc and thereafter included no representative of the Parisian working class. Fearing that their socialist hopes were about to be dashed, artisans and unskilled workers invaded the Constituent Assembly on May 15 and tried to proclaim a new revolutionary state. The government used the middle-class National Guard to squelch this uprising. As the workshops continued to fill and grow more radical, the fearful but powerful propertied classes in the Assembly took the offensive. On June 22 the government dissolved the workshops in Paris, giving the workers the choice of joining the army or going to workshops in the provinces.

A spontaneous and violent uprising followed. Frustrated in their thwarted attempt to create a socialist society, masses of desperate people were now losing even their life-sustaining relief. Barricades sprang up again in the narrow streets of Paris, and a terrible class war began. Working people fought with the courage of utter desperation, but this time the government had the army and the support of peasant France. After three terrible "June Days" of street fighting and the death or injury of more than ten thousand people, the republican army under General Louis Cavaignac stood triumphant in a sea of working-class blood and hatred. (See "Viewpoints: Picturing Revolutionary Violence in 1848," page 652.)

The revolution in France thus ended in spectacular failure. The February coalition of the middle and working classes had in four short months become locked in mortal combat. In place of a generous democratic republic, the Constituent Assembly completed a constitution featuring a strong executive. This allowed Louis Napoleon, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, to win a landslide

victory in the election of December 1848. The appeal of his famous name as well as the desire of the propertied classes for order at any cost had led to what would become a semi-authoritarian regime (see "Napoleon III's Second Empire" in Chapter 23).

Revolution and Reaction in the Austrian Empire

Throughout central Europe, the first news of the upheaval in France evoked feverish excitement and then popular revolution, lending credence to Metternich's famous quip "When France sneezes, all Europe catches cold." Across the Austrian Empire and the German Confederation, liberals demanded written constitutions, representative government, and greater civil liberties from authoritarian regimes (Map 21.3). When governments hesitated, popular revolts broke out. Urban workers and students served as the shock troops, but they were allied with middle-class liberals and peasants seeking land reforms. In the face of this united front, monarchs made quick concessions. The revolutionary coalition, having secured great and easy victories, then broke down as it had in France. The traditional forces—the monarchy, the aristocracy, the regular army—recovered their nerve, reasserted their authority, and revoked many, though not all, of the reforms. Reaction was everywhere victorious.

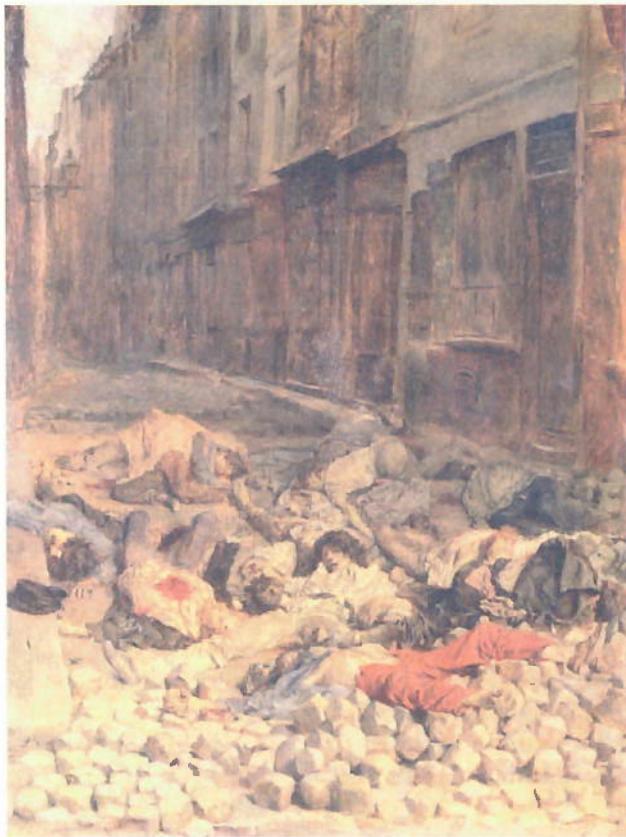
The revolution in the Austrian Empire began in Hungary in March 1848, when nationalistic Hungarians demanded national autonomy, full civil liberties, and universal suffrage. Anti-imperial insurrection broke out in the northern Italian territories of Lombardy-Venetia the same month, and Austrian forces retreated after five days of street fighting. As the monarchy in Vienna hesitated, radicalized Viennese students and workers took to the streets of the imperial capital and raised barricades in defiance of the government. Meanwhile, peasant disturbances broke out across the empire. The Habsburg emperor Ferdinand I (r. 1835–1848) capitulated and promised reforms and a liberal constitution. When Metternich refused to compromise, the aging conservative was forced to resign and fled to London. The old absolutist order seemed to be collapsing with unbelievable rapidity.

Yet the revolutionary coalition lacked stability. When the monarchy abolished serfdom, with its degrading forced labor and feudal services, the newly free peasants lost interest in the political and social questions agitating the cities. Meanwhile, the coalition of urban revolutionaries were increasingly divided along class lines, over the issue of socialist workshops and universal voting rights for men.

Conflicting national aspirations further weakened and ultimately destroyed the revolutionary coalition. In March the Hungarian revolutionary leaders pushed through an extremely liberal, almost democratic,

VIEWPOINTS

Picturing Revolutionary Violence in 1848



Ernest Meissonier, *Memory of the Civil War (The Barricades)*
(Musée du Louvre, Paris, France/Bridgeman Images)



The Murder of Count Baillet of Latour (akg-images/Newscom)

The striking similarities between the different national revolutions in 1848 suggest that Europeans lived through common experiences that shaped a generation. The revolutions began with riots and street fighting, and a tremendous surge in political participation and civic activity overthrew rulers or forced them to make major concessions. State officials responded to the uprisings with deadly force. Field artillery bombarded the insurgents and infantrymen overran the barricades in hand-to-hand combat. Fleeing radicals were often hunted down and shot, and the rule of order was restored.

Newspaper publishing exploded as censorship relaxed and interest in public affairs soared, and ordinary people followed the revolutionary carnage in newspapers and printed illustrations. In Vienna, after an angry crowd lynched the Minister of War Count Latour, this lithograph of the murder, sold

through the post by a German company, shocked viewers with its image of popular violence. Ernest Meissonier's painting *Memory of the Civil War* (1849), which portrays the bodies of rebels on a destroyed barricade in Paris, brought home the human cost of rebellion.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. The 1848 revolutions increased political activity, yet they were crushed. How do the images here help explain this outcome?
2. Do these pictures promote a political message, or do they seem to be more neutral observations of exciting events? How would you react to these depictions of street violence if you were a contemporary urban worker or a prosperous city business owner?



constitution for the Kingdom of Hungary. But the Hungarian revolutionaries also sought to transform the mosaic of provinces and peoples in their territories into a unified, centralized Hungarian nation. The minority groups that formed half of the population—the Croats, Serbs, and Romanians—rejected such unification (see Map 21.2). Each group felt entitled to political autonomy and cultural independence. In a similar way, Czech nationalists based in Prague and other parts of Bohemia came into conflict with German nationalists living in the same region. Thus desires for national autonomy within the Austrian Empire enabled the monarchy to maintain power by playing off one ethnic group against the other.

Finally, conservative aristocratic forces rallied under the leadership of the archduchess Sophia, a Bavarian princess married to the Habsburg emperor's brother. Deeply ashamed of the emperor's collapse before a "mess of students," she insisted that Ferdinand I, who had no heir, abdicate in favor of her son, Franz Joseph.¹⁵ Powerful nobles organized around Sophia in a secret conspiracy to reverse and crush the revolution.

The first conservative breakthrough came when the army bombarded Prague and savagely crushed a working-class revolt there on June 17, 1848. By August the Austrians had crushed the Italian insurrection. At the end of October, the well-equipped,

predominantly peasant troops of the regular Austrian army bombarded the student and working-class radicals dug in behind barricades in Vienna with heavy artillery. They retook the city at the cost of more than four thousand casualties. The determination of the Austrian aristocracy and the loyalty of its army sealed the triumph of reaction and the defeat of revolution.

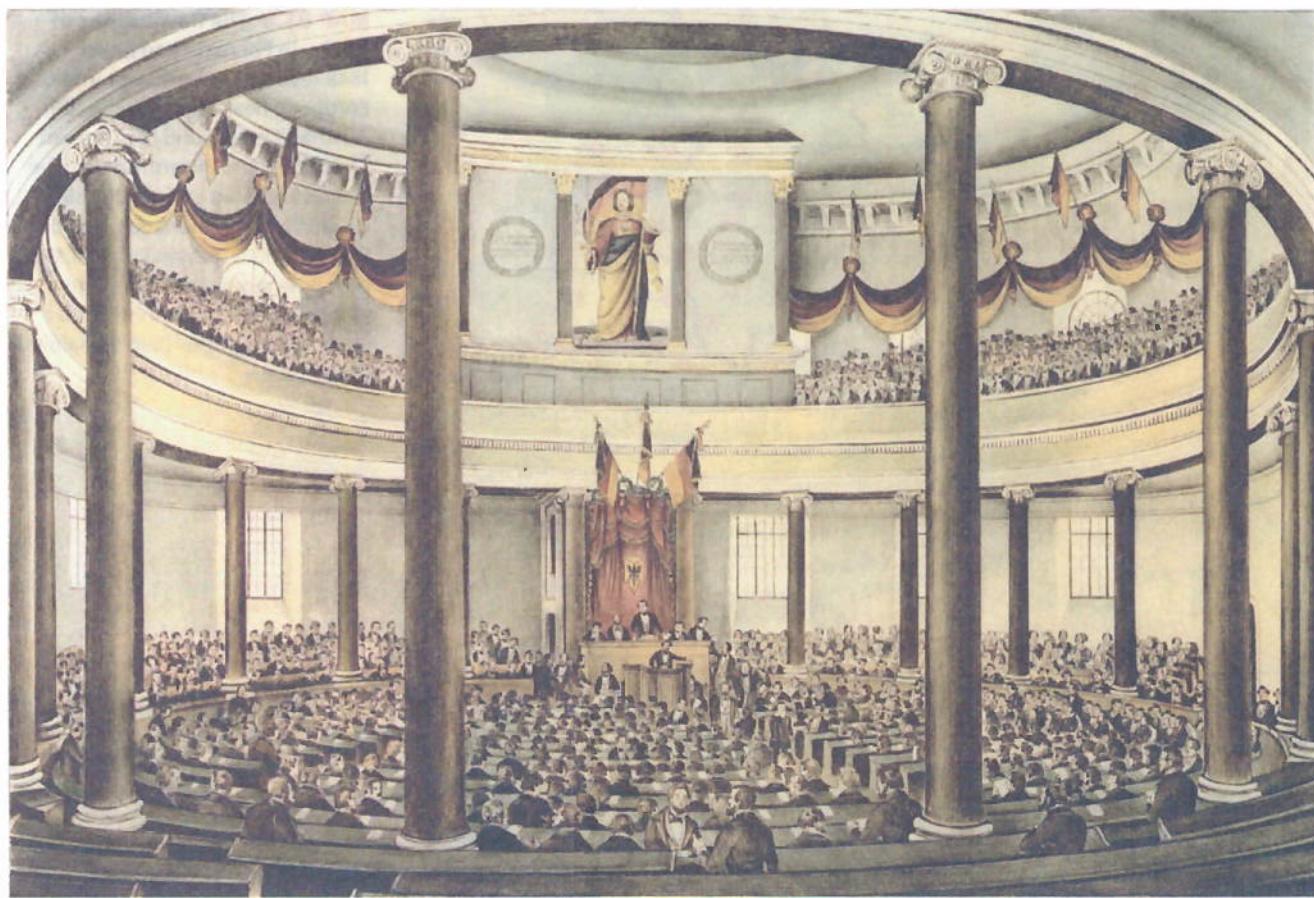
When Franz Joseph (r. 1848–1916) was crowned emperor of Austria immediately after his eighteenth birthday in December 1848, only the Hungarians had yet to be brought under control. Another determined conservative, Nicholas I of Russia (r. 1825–1855), obligingly lent his iron hand. On June 6, 1849, 130,000 Russian troops poured into Hungary and subdued the country after bitter fighting. For a number of years, the Habsburgs ruled the Kingdom of Hungary as a conquered territory.

Prussia, the German Confederation, and the Frankfurt National Parliament

After Austria, Prussia was the largest and most influential kingdom in the German Confederation. Since the Napoleonic Wars, liberal German reformers had sought to transform absolutist Prussia into a constitutional monarchy, hoping it would then lead the thirty-eight

MAP 21.3 The Revolutions of 1848

In February and March 1848 revolutions broke out in the European heartlands: France, the Austrian Empire, and the German Confederation. In contrast, relative stability reigned in Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the Russian and Ottoman Empires. Why did some regions descend into revolution, and not others? Can a study of geography help explain the difference?



The Frankfurt Parliament in Session The Frankfurt National Parliament opened to great fanfare in May 1848, but its calls for liberal reforms and German unification were quashed by the revival of authoritarianism under the king of Prussia. Although many of the liberal concessions granted by conservative monarchs in response to the revolutions of 1848 were quickly rescinded, the demands for more democratic and participatory governments would continue to inspire reformers and revolutionaries in the following decades. (akg-images/Newscom)

states of the German Confederation into a unified nation-state. The agitation that followed the fall of Louis Philippe, on top of several years of crop failure and economic crises, encouraged liberals to press their demands. In March 1848 excited crowds in urban centers across the German Confederation called for liberal reforms and a national parliament, and many regional rulers quickly gave in to their demands.

When artisans and factory workers rioted in Berlin, the capital of Prussia, and joined temporarily with the middle-class liberals in the struggle against the monarchy, the autocratic yet compassionate Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV (r. 1840–1861), vacillated and then caved in. On March 21 he promised to grant Prussia a liberal constitution and to merge Prussia into a new national German state.

But urban workers wanted much more—and the Prussian aristocracy wanted much less—than

the moderate constitutional liberalism conceded by the king. The workers issued a series of democratic and vaguely socialist demands that troubled their middle-class allies. An elected Prussian Constituent Assembly met in Berlin to write a constitution for the Prussian state, and a conservative clique gathered around the king to urge counter-revolution.

At the same time, elections were held across the German Confederation for a national parliament, which convened to write a federal constitution that would lead to national unification. When they met in Frankfurt that May, the state officials, lawyers, professors, and businessmen elected to parliament represented the interests of the social elite. Their calls for constitutional monarchy, free speech, religious tolerance, and abolition of aristocratic privilege were typical of moderate national liberalism. The deputies essentially ignored calls for more radical action from industrial workers, peasants, republicans, and socialists.

In October 1848 the Frankfurt parliament turned to the question of national unification and borders. At first, the deputies proposed unification

■ Greater Germany A liberal plan for German national unification that included the German-speaking parts of the Austrian Empire, put forth at the national parliament in 1848 but rejected by Austrian rulers.

around a **Greater Germany** that would include the German-speaking lands of the Austrian Empire in a national state—but not non-German territories in Italy and central Europe. This proposal foundered on Austrian determination to maintain its empire, and some parliamentarians advocated the development of a Lesser Germany that would unify Prussia and other German states without Austria. Even as the deputies debated Germany's future in the autumn of 1848, the forces of counter-revolution pushed back reformists and revolutionaries in Prussia and the other German states.

Despite Austrian intransigence, in March 1849 the national parliament finally completed its draft of a liberal constitution and requested Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia to serve as emperor of a “lesser” German national state (minus Austria). By early 1849, however, reaction had rolled back liberal reforms across the German Confederation. Prussian troops had already crushed popular movements across the German Confederation, and Friedrich Wilhelm had reasserted his royal authority and disbanded the Prussian Constituent Assembly. He contemptuously refused to accept the “crown from the gutter” offered by the parliament in Frankfurt. Bogged down by their preoccupation with nationalist issues, the reluctant revolutionaries in Frankfurt had waited too long and acted too timidly. By May 1849 all but the most radical deputies had resigned from the parliament, and in June Prussian troops forcibly dissolved what remained of the assembly.

Friedrich Wilhelm in fact wanted to be emperor of a unified Germany, but only on his own authoritarian terms. With the liberal threat successfully squelched, he tried to get the small monarchies of Germany to elect him emperor. Austria balked. Supported by Russia, the Austrians forced Prussia to renounce all schemes of unification in late 1850. The German Confederation was re-established in 1851, and a decade of reaction followed. In an echo of the Karlsbad Decrees, state security forces monitored universities, civic organizations, and the press throughout the confederation. Former revolutionaries fled into exile,

and German liberals gave up demands for national unification. In the various German states, reactionary monarchs, aided by ever-growing state bureaucracies, granted their subjects conservative constitutions and weak parliaments that maintained aristocratic control. Attempts to unite the Germans—first in a liberal national state and then in a conservative Prussian empire—had failed completely.

NOTES

1. See B. E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics After Napoleon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 11–14.
2. A. Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918* (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 1–2.
3. Quoted in D. Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780–1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 122.
4. E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), especially pp. 19–39.
5. This paragraph draws on the influential views of B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), and E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
6. Quoted in F. E. Manuel and F. P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 589.
7. Quoted in H. G. Schenk, *The Mind of the European Romantics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 5.
8. Quoted in Schenk, p. 169.
9. Quoted in O. Frey, *Emotions Recollected in Tranquility—Wordsworth's Concept of Poetry in "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"* (Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2008), p. 5.
10. Quoted in Maria Tatar, ed., *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, bicentennial ed. (New York: Norton, 2012), pp. 436, 443.
11. Quoted in A. Comini, *The Changing Image of Beethoven: A Study in Mythmaking* (Santa Fe, N.M.: Sunstone Press, 2008), p. 79.
12. Quoted in F. B. Artz, *From the Renaissance to Romanticism: Trends in Style in Art, Literature, and Music, 1300–1830* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 276, 278.
13. Quoted in G. O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (London: Longmans, Green, 1921), pp. 23–24.
14. A. de Tocqueville, *Recollections* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 94.
15. W. L. Langer, *Political and Social Upheaval, 1832–1852* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 361.



LOOKING BACK LOOKING AHEAD

Viewed from a broad historical perspective, Europe's economic and social foundations in 1750 remained agricultural and rural. Although Enlightenment thought was beginning to question the status quo, authoritarian absolutism dominated political life. One hundred years later, the unfinished effects of the Industrial and French Revolutions had brought fundamental changes to the social fabric of daily life

and politics across Europe. The liberal ideals of representative government and legal equality realized briefly in revolutionary France inspired intellectuals and social reformers, who adopted ideologies of liberalism, nationalism, Romanticism, and socialism to challenge the conservative order. The uneven spread of industrial technologies and factory organization into developed areas across Europe spurred the growth of an urban

working class but did little to raise the living standards of most workers, peasants, and artisans. Living on the edge of subsistence, the laboring poor in rural and urban areas alike remained subject to economic misfortune, mass unemployment, and food shortages, and they turned repeatedly to protest, riots, and violent insurrection in pursuit of economic and political rights.

In 1848 the poor joined middle- and upper-class reformers in a great wave of revolution that forced conservative monarchs across the continent to grant liberal and national concessions—at least for a moment. Divisions in the revolutionary coalition and the power of the autocratic state forced back the wave of reform, and the revolutions ended in failure. Conservative monarchies revived, nationalist movements collapsed, and hopes for German unification withered. Yet protest on the barricades

and debate in liberal parliaments had given a generation a wealth of experience with new forms of participatory politics, and the ideologies associated with the French Revolution would continue to invigorate reformers and revolutionaries after 1850. Nationalism, with its commitment to the imagined community of a great national family and the nation-state, would become a dominant political force, particularly as European empires extended their reach after 1875. At the same time, as agriculture and rural life gradually declined in economic importance, the spread of industrialization would raise living standards, sustain a growing urban society, and reshape family and class relationships. Diverse, complicated, and fascinating, pockets of this new urban society already existed in 1850. By 1900 it dominated northwestern Europe and was making steady inroads to the east and south.

Make Connections

Think about the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters.

1. How did the spread of radical ideas and the movements for reform and revolution explored in this chapter draw on the “unfinished” political and industrial revolutions (Chapters 19 and 20) of the late eighteenth century? Why did the conservative policies put in place by Metternich and the leaders of the Holy Alliance fail to halt the spread of such ideas?
2. Why did the ideas of the Romantic movement so easily support reformist and radical political ideas, including liberalism, republicanism, and nationalism? What does this reveal about the general connections between art and politics?
3. The years between 1815 and 1850 witnessed the invention of a number of new political ideologies. To what extent do the ideas advanced by conservatives, liberals, nationalists, and socialists in the first half of the nineteenth century continue to shape our political debates?

21 REVIEW & EXPLORE

Identify Key Terms

Identify and explain the significance of each item below.

Congress of Vienna (p. 626)	bourgeoisie (p. 639)
Holy Alliance (p. 630)	proletariat (p. 639)
Karlsbad Decrees (p. 631)	Romanticism (p. 640)
liberalism (p. 634)	Corn Laws (p. 645)
laissez faire (p. 634)	Peterloo Massacre (p. 646)
nationalism (p. 634)	Reform Bill of 1832 (p. 646)
socialism (p. 635)	Great Famine (p. 647)
Marxism (p. 638)	Greater Germany (p. 655)