

# Chapter 1 – The Rise of Nationalism in Europe

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## Question 1:

1. Write a note on:

- a) Guiseppe Mazzini
- b) Count Camillo de Cavour
- c) The Greek war of independence
- d) Frankfurt parliament
- e) The role of women in nationalist struggles

## Answer:

(a) **Guiseppe Mazzini:** He was an Italian revolutionary who played a significant role in promoting the idea of a unified Italian state. He believed that nations were the natural units of mankind, and so Italy (which was then divided into a number of small states and kingdoms) had to be forged into a single unified republic. During the 1830s, he strived to put together a coherent programme for such a unitary Italian Republic. He also set up two secret societies, namely Young Italy and Young Europe. These societies helped in the dissemination of his ideas.

(b) **Count Camillo de Cavour:** Of the seven states of Italy, only Sardinia-Piedmont was ruled by an Italian princely house. When the revolutionary uprisings of 1831 and 1848 failed to unite Italy, the responsibility to establish a unified Italy fell upon this Italian state. King Victor Emmanuel II was its ruler and Cavour was the Chief Minister. Cavour led the movement to unite the separate states of nineteenth-century Italy. He engineered a careful diplomatic alliance with France, which helped Sardinia-Piedmont defeat the Austrian forces in 1859, and thereby free the northern part of Italy from the Austrian Habsburgs.

(c) **The Greek war of independence:** This was a successful war of independence waged by Greek revolutionaries between 1821 and 1829 against the Ottoman Empire. The Greeks were supported by the West European countries, while poets and artists hailed Greece as the cradle of European civilisation. Finally, the Treaty of Constantinople of 1832 recognised Greece as an independent nation.

(d) **Frankfurt parliament:** It was an all-German National Assembly formed by the middle-class professionals, businessmen and prosperous artisans belonging to the different German regions. It was convened on 18 May, 1848 in the Church of St. Paul, in the city of Frankfurt. This assembly drafted a constitution for a German nation to be headed by a monarchy subject to a parliament. However, it faced opposition from the aristocracy and military. Also, as it was dominated by

the middle classes, it lost its mass support base. In the end, it was forced to disband on 31 May, 1849.

(e) **The role of women in nationalist struggles:** Artistic representations of the French Revolution show men and women participating equally in the movement. Liberty is personified as a woman; also, liberal nationalism propounded the idea of universal suffrage, leading to women's active participation in nationalist movements in Europe. Although women had actively participated in nationalist struggles, they were given little or no political rights; an example being the Frankfurt parliament where women were admitted only as observers to stand in the visitors' gallery.

### **Question 2:**

What steps did the French revolutionaries take to create a sense of collective identity among the French people?

### **Answer:**

The French revolutionaries took many important steps to create a sense of collective identity among the French people. Ideas of *la patrie* (the fatherland) and *le citoyen* (the citizen) popularised the notion of a united community enjoying equal rights under a constitution. A new French flag replaced the royal standard. The Estates General was renamed the National Assembly and was elected by a group of active citizens. A central administrative system made uniform laws for the entire nation, and regional dialects were discouraged in favour of French as the national language.

### **Question 3:**

Who were Marianne and Germania? What was the importance of the way in which they were portrayed?

### **Answer:**

Marianne and Germania were respective female allegories for the French and the German nation. They stood as personifications of ideals like 'liberty' and 'the republic'. The importance of the way in which they were portrayed lay in the fact that the public could identify with their symbolic meaning, and this would instil a sense of national unity in them.

### **Question 4:**

Briefly trace the process of German unification.

### **Answer:**

The process of German unification was continued by Prussia after the defeat of the liberal, middle-class Germans at the hands of the aristocrats and the military in 1848. Its chief minister Otto von Bismarck carried out this process with the help of the Prussian army and bureaucracy. Over seven years, Prussia fought three

wars with Austria, Denmark and France. These wars culminated in Prussian victory and German unification. William I, the Prussian king, was proclaimed German Emperor in January 1871, at Versailles.

**Question 5:**

What changes did Napoleon introduce to make the administrative system more efficient in the territories ruled by him?

**Answer:**

Napoleon introduced several changes to make the administrative system more efficient in the territories ruled by him. He formulated the Civil Code of 1804, also known as the Napoleonic Code. It did away with privileges based on birth. This law established equality before law, and also secured the right to property. Napoleon shortened administrative divisions, abolished the feudal system, and freed peasants from manorial dues and serfdom. Transport and communications were improved too.

**Question 1:**

Explain what is meant by the 1848 revolution of the liberals. What were the political, social and economic ideas supported by the liberals?

**Answer:**

The 1848 revolution of the liberals refers to the various national movements pioneered by educated middle classes alongside the revolts of the poor, unemployed and starving peasants and workers in Europe. While in countries like France, food shortages and widespread unemployment during 1848 led to popular uprisings, in other parts of Europe (such as Germany, Italy, Poland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire), men and women of the liberal middle classes came together to voice their demands for the creation of nation-states based on parliamentary principles. In Germany, for example, various political associations comprising middle-class professionals, businessmen and prosperous artisans came together in Frankfurt to form an all-German National Assembly.

This Frankfurt parliament drafted a constitution for a German nation to be headed by a monarchy subject to a parliament. Though such liberal movements were ultimately suppressed by conservative forces, the old order could never be restored. The monarchs realised that the cycles of revolution and repression could only be ended by granting concessions to the liberal-nationalist revolutionaries.

The political, social and economic ideas supported by the liberals were clearly based on democratic ideals. Politically, they demanded constitutionalism with national unification—a nation-state with a written constitution and parliamentary administration. They wanted to rid society of its class-based partialities and birth rights. Serfdom and bonded labour had to be abolished, and economic

equality had to be pursued as a national goal. The right to property was also significant in the liberals' concept of a nation based on political, social and economic freedom.

### **Question 2:**

Choose three examples to show the contribution of culture to the growth of nationalism in Europe.

### **Answer:**

Apart from wars and territorial expansion, culture also played a crucial role in the development of nationalism. **Romanticism** was a European cultural movement aimed at developing national unity by creating a sense of shared heritage and common history. The Romantic artists' emphasis on emotions, intuition and mystical feelings gave shape and expression to nationalist sentiments. The strength of art in promoting nationalism is well exemplified in the role played by European poets and artists in mobilising public opinion to support the Greeks in their struggle to establish their national identity.

**Folk songs, dances and poetry** contributed to popularising the spirit of nationalism and patriotic fervour in Europe. Collecting and recording the different forms of folk culture was important for building a national consciousness. Being a part of the lives of the common people, folk culture enabled nationalists to carry the message of nationalism to a large and diverse audience. The Polish composer Karol Kurpinski celebrated and popularised the Polish nationalist struggle through his operas and music, turning folk dances like the polonaise and mazurka into nationalist symbols.

**Language** also played a distinctive role in developing nationalist feelings in Europe. An example of this is how during Russian occupation, the use of Polish came to be seen as a symbol of struggle against Russian dominance. During this period, Polish language was forced out of schools and Russian language was imposed everywhere. Following the defeat of an armed rebellion against Russian rule in 1831, many members of the clergy in Poland began using language as a weapon of national resistance. They did so by refusing to preach in Russian, and by using Polish for Church gatherings and religious instruction. The emphasis on the use of vernacular language, the language of the masses, helped spread the message of national unity.

### **Question 3:**

Through a focus on any two countries, explain how nations developed over the nineteenth century.

### **Answer:**

**The development of the German and Italian nation states in the nineteenth century**

**Political fragmentation:** Till the middle of the nineteenth century, the present-day nations of Germany and Italy were fragmented into separate regions and kingdoms ruled by different princely houses.

**Revolutionary uprisings:** Nineteenth-century Europe was characterised by both popular uprisings of the masses and revolutions led by the educated, liberal middle classes. The middle classes belonging to the different German regions came together to form an all-German National Assembly in 1848. However, on facing opposition from the aristocracy and military, and on losing its mass support base, it was forced to disband.

In the Italian region, during the 1830s, revolutionaries like Giuseppe Mazzini sought to establish a unitary Italian Republic. However, the revolutionary uprisings of 1831 and 1848 failed to unite Italy.

**Unification with the help of the army:** After the failure of the revolutions, the process of German and Italian unification was continued by the aristocracy and the army. Germany was united by the Prussian chief minister Otto von Bismarck with the help of the Prussian army and bureaucracy. The German empire was proclaimed in 1871.

The Italian state of Sardinia-Piedmont played a role similar to that played by Prussia. Count Camillo de Cavour (the Chief Minister) led the movement to unite the separate states of nineteenth-century Italy with the help of the army and an alliance with France. The regions annexed by Giuseppe Garibaldi and his Red Shirts joined with the northern regions to form a united Italy. The Italian nation was proclaimed in 1861. The papal states joined in 1870.

#### **Question 4:**

How was the history of nationalism in Britain unlike the rest of Europe?

#### **Answer:**

The history of nationalism in Britain was unlike that in the rest of Europe in the sense that it was forced down upon the masses. There was no concept of a British nation prior to the eighteenth century. The region was in fact inhabited by different ethnic groups (English, Welsh, Scot, Irish). Each group had its own cultural and political tradition. However, as the English state grew in terms of wealth, importance and power, it was able to extend its influence over the other states of the islands. The English parliament, which had seized power from the monarchy, played a crucial role in doing away with the ethnic distinctions and uniting the different groups into a British nation-state, with England at its centre. The ethnic nationalities were, directly or indirectly, forced to join the English state to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain. The symbols of new Britain—the British flag, the national anthem and the English language were widely

popularised, while the distinctive identities of the other joining states were systematically suppressed. English culture dominated the British nation, while the other states became mere subsidiaries in the Union. Thus, nationalism in Britain did not come about as a result of the people's desire to unite or countrywide movements for the same, but from the decisions of the people in power.

**Question 5:**

Why did nationalist tensions emerge in the Balkans?

**Answer:**

Nationalist tensions emerged in the Balkans because of the spread of ideas of romantic nationalism as also the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire that had previously ruled over this area. The different Slavic communities in the Balkans began to strive for independent rule. They were jealous of each other and every state wanted more territory, even at the expense of others. Also, the hold of imperial power over the Balkans made the situation worse. Russia, Germany, England, Austro-Hungary all wanted more control over this area. These conflicts ultimately led to the First World War in 1914.