

Chapter 1 The Rise of Nationalism in Europe

Write in Brief

1. Write a Note on:

a) Giuseppe Mazzini: Giuseppe Mazzini was an Italian revolutionary, born in Genoa in 1807. He was a member of the secret society of the Carbonari. At the age of 24, he was sent into exile in 1831 for attempting a revolution in Liguria. He founded underground societies named 'Young Italy' in Marseilles and 'Young Europe' in Berne, whose members were like-minded young men from Poland, France, Italy and the German States.

b) Count Camilo de Cavour: Cavour was chief minister of Sardinia-Piedmont state who led the movement to unify the regions of Italy. He was neither a revolutionary nor a democrat. Like many other wealthy and educated members of the Italian elite, he spoke French much better than he did Italian. 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) The 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: The issue of extending political rights to women was a controversial one within the liberal movement, in which large numbers of women had participated actively over the years. Women had formed their own political associations, founded newspapers and taken part in political meetings and demonstrations. Despite this, they were denied suffrage during the election of the Assembly. When the Frankfurt Parliament convened in the Church of St. Paul, women were admitted only as observers to stand in the visitors' gallery.

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 which were:

- Ideas of la patrie (the fatherland) and le citoyen (the citizen) emphasising the notion of a united community enjoying equal rights under a constitution.
- A new French flag, a tricolour replaced the royal standard.
- The Estates General was renamed the National Assembly and was elected by a group of active citizens.
- New hymns, oaths and martyrs commemorated in the name of the nation.
- A central administrative system made uniform laws for the entire nation.
- Discouraging regional dialects and promoting French as a common language of the nation.

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.

4. Briefly trace the process of German unification.

Answer

In the 1800s, nationalist feelings were strong in the hearts of the middle-class Germans. They united in 1848 to create a nation-state out of the numerous German States. But the monarchy and the military got together to repress them and they gained support from the landowners of Prussia (the Junkers) too. Prussia soon became the leader of German unification movement. Its Chief Minister Otto von Bismarck was the architect of the process with support from Prussian army and Prussian bureaucracy. The unification process was completed after Prussia won wars with Austria, Denmark and France over seven years time. In January 1871, the Prussian king, William I, was proclaimed the German Emperor in a ceremony held at Versailles.

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

Answer

Napoleon introduced following changes to make the administrative system more efficient in the areas ruled by him:

→ He established civil code in 1804 also known as the Napoleonic Code. It did away with all privileges based on birth. It established equality before law and secured the right to property.

→ He simplified administrative divisions, abolished feudal system, and freed peasants from serfdom and manorial dues.

→ In towns too, guild systems were removed. Transport and communication systems were improved.

→ Peasants, artisans, businessmen and workers enjoyed the new found freedom.

Discuss

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. The political, social and economic ideas supported by the liberals were:

- Politically, they demanded constitutionalism with national unification, nation-state with a written constitution and parliamentary administration.
- Socially, They wanted to rid society of its class-based partialities and birth rights. Serfdom and bonded labour had to be abolished.
- Economically they demanded freedom of markets and right to property. Abolition of state imposed restrictions on the movements of goods and capital.

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

Answer

Three examples to show the contribution of culture to the growth of nationalism in Europe were:

→ 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.

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.

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

Answer

The history of nationalism in Britain unlike the rest of Europe because:

- In Britain the formation of the nation-state was not the result of a sudden upheaval or revolution.
- The primary identities of the people who inhabited the British Isles were ethnic ones - such as English, Welsh, Scot or Irish.
- The Act of Union (1707) between England and Scotland resulted in the formation of the 'United Kingdom of Great

Britain' meant that England was able to impose its influence on Scotland. Scotland's distinctive culture and political institutions were systematically suppressed.

→ The Scottish highlanders were forbidden to speak their Gaelic language or wear their national dress and large numbers were forcibly driven out of their homeland.

→ The English helped the Protestants of Ireland to establish their dominance over a largely Catholic country. Catholic revolts against British dominance were suppressed. Ireland was forcibly incorporated into the United Kingdom in 1801.

→ The symbols of the new Britain - the British flag, the national anthem, the English language were actively promoted and the older nations survived only as subordinate partners in this union.

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.