

The “Isms”

The period 1815-1850 was the Age of Ideologies. In response to the issues raised by the Dual Revolution, many Europeans adhered to a set of ideas that provided both a systematic view of human affairs as well as a blueprint for changing the world. Such ideologies or “isms” influenced how people viewed events as well as motivated them to action.

• THEME MUSIC

It can be difficult to get a handle on the Ideologies, but you may find it helpful to attempt some role-playing, i.e., Imagine the world from the perspective of each ideology. Often it is easier to understand an intellectual system from the “inside-out” rather than simply memorizing terms. All of the ideologies represent systematic Intellectual (OS) responses to the Dual Revolution, but of course, each offers a political solution that flows from its political world view (SP).

Liberalism

Classical Liberalism of the 19th century should be distinguished from the way the term liberal is used today. Based on Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals of reason, progress, and individual rights, Liberalism acted as a powerful philosophy of change throughout the 19th century. Economically, Liberals embraced the laissez-faire principles of Adam Smith’s capitalism and strong protection of private property. Politically, Liberals favored the social contract theory of limited government advocated by John Locke and the French revolutionaries as the surest guarantee of religious toleration and individual rights. Many if not most Liberals came from the middle class and supported a more representative government and an expansion in suffrage, though only for property holders. British philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) articulated the related approach of utilitarianism, wherein “good” was defined as providing pleasure and “evil” as causing pain. Holding that the purpose of government was to promote the “greatest good for the greatest number,” Bentham argued for separation of church and state, women’s rights, and the end of slavery. Beginning in the utilitarian tradition, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) later provided in his *On Liberty* (1859) one of the most eloquent defenses of freedom of expression and the dangers of the tyranny of the majority. Mill also collaborated with his wife, Harriet Taylor, and defended the cause of female suffrage in Parliament.

AP ACHIEVER

Socialism, Republicanism, and Feminism

Self-proclaimed radicals and republicans embraced the “principles of ’93” from the French Revolution. Many were drawn from intellectual circles or the working class and favored equality and universal male suffrage while opposing the influence of organized religion, as well as monarchy and aristocracy. Republicanism shaded off into socialism. Socialists criticized the capitalist system as unequal and unjust, wishing to replace it with social and economic planning. One of the first socialists, ironically, was a textile entrepreneur, Robert Owen (1771-1858). Owen built a model factory in New Lanark, Scotland, to better provide for his workers’ needs. With high wages, improved conditions, and provision for schools and other amenities. The industrialist also attempted to export his utopian socialism to the United States, constructing an experimental but failed colony in Indiana. Most other early socialists were French, reflecting the legacy of the revolution. Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and Charles Fourier (1772-1837) embraced an ethos of cooperation and shared property to realize human needs beyond merely the economic. Additionally, the socialist Louis Blanc’s idea of “national workshops” for the working class played a key role in the revolution in 1848 in France. Despite the creativity, utopian socialism led to few practical successes and gave way after 1850 to the more militant Marxian version of socialism.

Many advocates of women’s rights, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill, drew from the Enlightenment tradition of individual rights and social equality. Socialists combined their criticism of the class system with that of gender roles. French female socialist Flora Tristan (1803-1844) argued that the oppression of women, whether as factory workers or in domestic roles, sprang from the unequal ownership of property. Numerous famous female writers of the period, such as Jane Austen, George Sand, and Germaine de Staël, once again demonstrated that women could exercise independent creative voices. By 1850, many feminists had established a clear agenda for the movement, obtaining greater access to education along with legal, property, and political rights.

Nationalism

Nationalism proved the most combustible ideology of the 19th century, and it is essential to your understanding of political and diplomatic events after 1800. Spread by the example of the French Revolution, nationalism initially focused

on cultural revival and celebration of traditions. Long-divided Germany in particular experienced a wave of cultural nationalism fed by the Napoleonic Wars. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) replaced the political-judicial conception of state with an organic folk-nation best represented by the term *Volksgeist*, or “spirit of the people.” Germans celebrated their music and folklore, as with Beethoven’s symphonies or the Grimm Brothers’ fairy tales. Such cultural nationalism eventually took on political overtones. The German philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) glorified the national state as the march of destiny through history. History itself consisted of a clash of opposing ideas, called the dialectic, which pointed the way to a new synthesis—the idea of German national unity.

Given the atmosphere of repression and reaction during the post-1815 period, many nationalists formed secret societies to promote their agendas of unity. The Italian Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) first joined the secretive Carbonari, who aimed to expel the Habsburgs from the peninsula, before forming Young Italy in 1831. Mazzini worked to foment nationalist uprisings in his native land, while in his writings argued that the overthrow of the Concert of Europe would lead to free, independent states based on linguistic and ethnic identity. States constituted along national lines would eliminate the need for wars and create true brotherhood and peace. Eastern Europe also experienced a revival of national traditions. Intellectuals representing the diverse group of Slavic speakers—Poles, Serbs, Croats, Czechs, Slovaks looked to common linguistic and cultural traditions and advocated pan-Slavism, or the unity of all Slavs. Pan-Slavism inspired uprisings in the 1815-1850 period, but given the power of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires over the Slavs, the subsequent failures of these revolutions demonstrated the need for the patronage of an outside power—namely Russia, the protector of the Slavs.