REVOLTS AGAINST THE OLD ORDER: 1815-1850

In reaction to the French Revolution and Napoleon, European royalty led a conservative movement to return Europe to life under the old order. Movements for liberalism and nationalism combined with social and economic unrest brought about by the Industrial Revolution, however, overwhelmed the continent throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

KEY TERMS

bourgeoisie
Concert of Europe
Congress of Vienna
conservatism
Decembrist Revolt
Friedrich Engels
Charles Fourier
Frankfurt Assembly
Greek revolt
Grossdeutsch
July Revolution
Kleindeutsch
liberalism
Karl Marx
nationalism
Robert Owen
Peterloo Massacre
principle of intervention
principle of legitimacy
proletariat
Quadruple Alliance
Reform Act of 1832
Revolutions of 1848
risorgimento
Romanticism
Saint Simon
socialism
utopian socialists

KEY CONCEPTS

- A series of revolts, provoked by nationalist and liberal sentiments, swept Europe. Revolutions against the conservative order of the Congress of Vienna and the Concert of Europe kept most of Europe in turmoil during the first half of the century. m In response to the Industrial Revolution, ideas such as socialism and anarchism were offered to improve the lives of Europeans.
- During the first half of the nineteenth century, Romanticism, which influenced art, literature, and music, was the prominent cultural movement.

For a full discussion of the period 1815-1850, see *Western Civilization*, 8th and 9th editions, Chapter 21.

NEW IDEOLOGIES: LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM

During the nineteenth century, new ideologies developed as Europe went through great economic and political changes set in motion by the Industrial Revolution and by the French Revolution and Napoleon. Liberalism begins with the belief that people should be able to make their own choices. It took two forms during the nineteenth century: economic liberalism and political liberalism.

Economic liberalism, or classical economics, espoused the belief that not only should people have the right to own businesses, but governments should also allow businesses to function free of government interference. The case for *laissez-faire* was made most forcefully by Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo, economists who set the issue in the context of population increases. Malthus believed that the population could expand only so much before outrunning the food supply. Building on that idea, Ricardo's "iron law of wages" held that as wages rose, people had more children, which eventually led to lower wages because of an increased number of workers. Political liberalism, rooted in the thinking of John Locke and the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment, focused on people's basic rights, including the rights to freedom of speech and equality before the law. Those who advocated these rights encouraged the development of constitutional governments; legislative assemblies; and the extension of suffrage, the right to vote.

The nineteenth century also saw the flowering of nationalism, the unity that comes of shared traditions, languages, customs, religions, and ethnicities. Nationalism fed desires for independence from imperial control and unification with others of a shared nationality to form a nation-state. Nationalism was especially strong in Germany, Italy, and the Austrian Empire.

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

With the defeat of Napoleon, the Quadruple Alliance – Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria, the four major European powers – met to arrange a peace settlement; the Congress of Vienna was led by Austrian foreign minister Klemens von Metternich, the very symbol of nineteenth-century reactionary politics. His goal was to return Europe to the stability of the old order and check the spread of liberalism and nationalism. The issues to be dealt with included who should rule France, the balance of power, security, territorial concerns, and the place of France in Europe. The four great powers reached four settlements. However, in the 1820s, as Britain became concerned with Spanish and Portuguese moves to squelch Latin American revolts, it gradually shifted away from the more conservative nature of the alliance.

One settlement, the principle of legitimacy, was crucial to those who wanted to restore order: legitimate monarchs needed to return to their thrones. Louis XVIII, the brother of Louis XVI, had been put on France's throne after Napoleon's initial defeat. Monarchs in Spain and the Italian states were also returned to power.

Another settlement dealt with the principle of compensation: the victorious nations were rewarded with

land. Russia gained some Polish lands, Prussia got part of Saxony, and Austria gained control of parts of Italy. Territorial changes were designed to balance power so that never again could one nation dominate Europe. Of special concern was the prevention of any growth of French hegemony, the authority exercised by one power over others. To that end, France's borders were put back to their pre-revolutionary boundaries, and the country had to pay compensation, as well as accept an occupying army.

Two other settlements that had deep repercussions during the first half of the nineteenth century were the denial of democracy and the denial of nationalism. The primary mechanisms for that were wars, led especially by Austria and France, in which foreign forces invaded a neighbor to squelch liberal and national movements. Under Metternich's leadership, the Quadruple Alliance sought to deny any voice to the people in selecting their rulers or governments. Concerned about the nationalism that grew up in response to the Napoleonic Wars, they also worked to deny nationalist groups both independence and unification with others of the same nationality.

The Quadruple Alliance, also known as the Concert of Europe, was the backbone of the conservative reaction, and lasted until Metternich fled Austria in 1848. It had two purposes: to enforce the Vienna settlements and to suppress revolutions. By 1818, with the solidification of the Bourbon French government, France joined the Concert.

Believing that conservatism – the maintenance of order using traditional sources of power – would help Europe remain free of revolution, the Concert supported hereditary powers and refused the call of liberalism. Indeed, the Concert asserted its right to intervene in any country to quell revolts that threatened order.

Revolts tended to be based on liberalism and nationalism. Liberals believed in some sort of representative government, allowing for participation by the middle class, if not the working class. Nationalist forces usually helped groups fight for independence from the powers that controlled them.

AP Tip

Be sure you understand the Congress of Vienna – why it was called, who called it, who attended, and the decisions made there. Be able to compare it to other major treaties – the Peace of Westphalia (1648) for example or the Versailles Treaty after WWI. Another way to think about these treaties is as "turning points" of history. To what extent did the Congress of Vienna mark a major change in the history of Europe? Was the treaty a success or did more problems arise because of it? Were things totally different afterward or were there things that stayed the same? These questions of periodization, historical causation, and patterns of continuity and change over time are all historical thinking skills that are tested on the AP Exam.

EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY REVOLTS

ITALY AND SPAIN

Among the first revolts that the Concert of Europe faced erupted in Italy and Spain. The Concert sent Austrian troops to Italy to suppress a revolt in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies for a limited constitutional monarchy. In Spain, an attempt to force King Ferdinand VII to accept a limited constitutional monarchy was thwarted in 1823 by a Quadruple Alliance-backed French army sent into Spain.

LATIN AMERICA

Many successful nationalistic revolutions occurred in Latin America. With roots in Spanish and Portuguese mercantilism and slavery, these revolutions began when European control weakened during the Napoleonic Wars. Beginning in Argentina in 1810, the movement against Continental powers freed most South and Central American nations from European control. Having succeeded in Italy and Spain, the Concert was eager to reach across the Atlantic and help Spain and Portugal hold onto their colonies. But the British opposed the idea and, further, joined with the United States to protect the growing revolutionary movements and fledgling nations. These new nations provided Britain with both raw materials for its growing factory system and markets for the goods it was producing.

GREECE

The Greeks led one of the few successful European nationalistic revolts during the nineteenth century, in large measure because the great powers supported it. Ottoman Turks had controlled a large part of southeastern Europe, including Greece, for hundreds of years; the British, French, and Russians, eager to see the removal of the Muslim Turks, gave military and moral support to the Greeks. By 1832, the Greeks had their independence and a new Greek monarchy.

RUSSIA

After the death of Alexander I in 1825, a struggle ensued for his throne. Although Alexander had attempted to enact some Enlightenment reforms, he had become reactionary, wanting to move Russia back to stricter control. He was succeeded by his conservative brother Nicholas. Many Russian liberals had assumed that Alexander's other brother, the more liberal Constantine, would become tsar. The Decembrist Revolt, their attempt to install a more liberal government, was squelched. It pushed Nicholas toward a more reactionary stance.

REVOLTS IN THE 1830s

Revolts, led by both liberals and nationalists, continued in the 1830s, but the conservatives, opposed to change, began to lose their grip on Europe.

In 1824, upon the death of Louis XVIII, his brother Charles X, a conservative, ascended the French throne. Liberals disturbed by Charles's policies revolted in 1830. The July Revolution brought to the throne Louis Philippe,

Charles's cousin, and a constitutional government. It also inspired three other revolutions.

The Congress of Vienna had united the Belgians and the Dutch after the fall of Napoleon. The Catholic Belgians, however, wanted to be independent of the Protestant Dutch, so they fought the Dutch, and in 1830, with the support of the major powers, gained independence under a constitutional monarch, Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

Still, some revolts failed. Poland wanted to be free of Russian control, but a nationalist revolt was crushed by Russian troops in 1831. An attempt by three northern Italian states to overthrow Austrian control failed when Austria sent in troops. But the revolt saw the birth of the *risorgimento* (resurgence), a movement led by Giuseppe Mazzini that was a strong force in the eventual unification of Italy.

THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1848

A major turning point came in 1848, when a revolution in France sparked revolts for liberalism and nationalism across much of Europe. Unable to deal with the rising liberal movement, and with his government mired in economic and political corruption, Louis Philippe abdicated the French throne in February 1848. A provisional government took over, and after a battle between moderates and radicals, a constitution was drawn up calling for an elected presidency. The French elected Louis Napoleon, a nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Pressure for liberal reforms also ignited revolutions in the German states. As some of the reforms were enacted, a call was made for a new constitution, to be drawn up by the newly formed Frankfurt Assembly. It was immediately problematic because it attempted to make government decisions for all of the German states. But its biggest problem was deciding what should make up the new German state – all German states (*Grossdeutsch* or Big German) or all except the province of Austria (*Kleindeutsch* or Little German). When the Austrians chose to stay out, the Prussian king, Frederick William IV, was offered the throne of a united Germany. However, he refused it; with no leader, the movement fell apart.

As nationalism swept across Europe, the Austrian Empire could no longer maintain control of the many nationalities it had long held together. The Hungarians, especially, wanted more recognition in the Austrian government. As revolts grew, Metternich, the architect of this period of reactionary politics, was dismissed and fled Austria. In settling the variety of disputes across the empire, Austria eventually allowed the Magyars in Hungary a measure of self-governance. Soon after, other nationalities, among them the Czechs and Croats, began to clamor for self-rule. The revolts in Austria itself were calls for liberal reforms, but neither the nationalists nor the liberals were successful. In Italy, the liberal movements that had developed in the 1830s gained strength. Across northern Italy, revolutionaries fought to remove Austrian control and set up constitutional governments. But only in Piedmont were they successful.

Both the successes and the failures of the revolutions of 1848 were significant. The successes – the removal of Metternich, the recognition of Hungarian authority in the Austrian Empire, and the creation of constitutional governments in France and Piedmont – provided foundations for the continued liberalization of European governments. The failures of 1848 were often the result of the lack of coordination among nationalities or various liberal groups. Achievement of their goals of independence and constitutionalism would be delayed until late in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries.

AP Tip

For a solid understanding of the growth of liberalism and nationalism in response to Metternich's reactionary leadership, make a chart comparing the various nineteenth-century revolts. Include each revolt's year(s); whether it was for liberalism, nationalism, or both; the overall goals; and the outcome. A requirement of the newly redesigned AP exam is a more extensive knowledge of two or three revolts. Be able to compare and contrast some of the revolts, their causes, the details of what happened and how successful they were. The Greek War for Independence, the Decembrist Revolt, and the recurring Italian revolts would be good ones to know in more detail.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND REFORM

As the Industrial Revolution spread across Europe during the nineteenth century, governments and reformers responded to the concerns of the factory owners and workers. This was particularly true in Great Britain, where the Industrial Revolution began. As Britain's urban populations grew, the middle and lower classes sought fair representation in Parliament. The middle class, in particular, wanted political strength that reflected its economic might. As a result, it began to support the Whigs over the Tories, who tended to represent the landed classes. Despite rising discontent, the Tories remained in power until 1830, even after the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, when troops in Manchester attacked 60,000 protestors, including both workers and members of the middle class, killing eleven.

After the 1830 revolution in France, and with memories of the Peterloo Massacre in mind, the Whigs realized that it was important to offer reforms. The Reform Act of 1832 finally permitted representation in urban centers and loosened the property qualifications to vote. Many reforms were enacted to help the poor. Poorhouses were set up to provide them with a place to live and to force them to find work, an approach followed by other countries. Some organizations offered education, especially in trades, to help the poor find jobs. Religious institutions gave religious instruction to them, hoping especially to help children resist the vices that were developing in the growing cities.

As urban areas developed, so did crime and, thus, the need to provide for the safety of urban dwellers. British police, unpaid men who worked to keep order, were replaced by paid

forces with professional officers. The same happened in France and Germany. The punishing of criminals also changed, with reformers urging imprisonment and rehabilitation of criminals rather than capital punishment.

SOCIALISM

Another group offered a different solution to the problems of industrialization. Socialists favored sharing resources, rather than competing for them. Socialism holds that the shared ownership and operation of the methods of production offer hope for better lives for the working classes.

The earliest type of socialism was utopian socialism, which advocated the voluntary end of capitalism based on the merits of socialism. Utopian socialism appeared in many forms, primarily in Britain and France.

Socialists such as Louis Blanc and Charles Fourier believed that organizing workers into groups would lead to thriving societies. Blanc advocated the organization of workers into workshops or cooperatives, while Fourier taught the creation of model societies through the analysis of personality types and rotation of work. Other socialists, including Robert Owen and the Comte de Saint Simon, thought that compassion and Christian principles would flower in socialist communities. Owen worked toward that goal by creating communities for workers in Scotland and the United States.

ROMANTICISM

During the nineteenth century, art, music, literature, and religion were dominated by Romanticism. An intellectual movement in direct opposition to the logic and linear nature of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, Romanticism emphasized emotion, faith, love, nature, melancholy, exoticism, and the past.

In style and subject matter, Romantic artists were in direct opposition to the Neoclassicists. Painters such as Caspar David Friedrich and J.M.W. Turner used their art to show the glories of nature. Others, such as Eugene Delacroix and Theodore Gericault, painted the exotic and the scandalous.

Romantic writers, such as William Wordsworth, also focused on the beauty of nature, whether calm or dramatic. They also aligned the love of God with the love of nature, a religious focus in direct conflict with the logic of the Enlightenment and the deist belief in the uninvolved watchmaker view of God.

Romanticism also found expression in music – for example, Ludwig van Beethoven's driving, emotional pieces. Others, such as Hector Berlioz, showed the powerful nature of love. Romanticism also left its mark on religion, both Catholicism and Protestantism. Especially through the work of François de Chateaubriand, Catholicism was linked to God through nature rather than doctrines and mandated beliefs. Protestantism also looked to a natural connection to God, one based on finding emotional intensity in everyday experiences.

Powerful forces behind the events during the first half of the nineteenth century, nationalism and liberalism continued to fuel political change during the second half. This was especially the case with unification in Germany and Italy and the continued fragmenting of the Austrian Empire. Socialism, begun by the utopian socialists, was further developed by the scientific socialists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who adapted it to fit their analysis of the repercussions of the Industrial Revolution.