

## The New Revolutions

With the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo in 1815, the victorious powers of Europe set about reestablishing their world as it had existed prior to the Napoleonic Wars. They were led by ideals such as legitimacy (restoring pre-Revolutionary kingdoms and dynasties), and reaction (restoring pre-Revolutionary autocratic governments). Meeting in the Austrian Empire in 1814 and 1815, the international Congress of Vienna was highly conservative and opposed to all revolutionary ideas.

But this hard line taken by the great powers of Europe, including France, led to a constant string of political revolutions across the Continent which lasted through the next generation. Such revolutions were typically liberal in nature. This means that the new revolutionaries were like the leaders of the French Revolution—they wanted to see the establishment of constitutional government and the expansion and recognition of basic human rights and freedoms.

The first of these new revolutions developed in Spain in 1820. In a short time, this revolution spread to neighboring Portugal and later to Italy. Although these revolutions had some initial success, they ultimately failed for several reasons. In the first place, the revolutionaries in these states were a small minority of the people. They did not receive much support from the illiterate peasant masses. Secondly, powerful, conservative nation-states intervened and ended the political uprisings. Austria put down the Italian conflict in 1821 and France intervened on the Iberian Peninsula and ended the Portuguese and Spanish revolutions. (Portugal did establish a limited parliamentary government, thanks to support from England.)

Despite the valiant efforts of revolutionaries in Spain, Portugal, and Italian Naples, they were not successful. One of the most important revolutions of the 1820s, however, was the Greek War of Independence. Here, events turned differently. The Greeks succeeded because they were helped by the great powers of Europe rather than hindered.

The Greeks attempted to revolt against their oppressor, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire. The chief revolutionaries were members of a secret society, the Herairia Philike, which led the rebellion in the spring of 1821 against the Ottoman Turks. When the Greeks appeared to be losing against the Turks, other European states intervened in support of the Greek rebels. (During this period, the great English romantic poet, Lord Byron, went to Greece to help fight in their revolution.)



Illustration based on *The Shootings of May Third 1808* by Goya

In 1827, French, British, and Russian naval vessels fought and destroyed much of the Turkish and Egyptian navies in the battle of Navarino Bay. The next year, the Russians directly declared war on Turkey. By 1829, the fight was over, and the Ottoman Empire agreed to the Treaty of Adrianople, which established Greece as an independent kingdom. (The Egyptians and the Serbians of south central Europe gained their independence from Turkey as well.) The

Greek cause represented a successful revolution.

During the years of the Greek revolution, another rebellion was under way, this one in Russia. The Russian czarist government of Alexander I [1801–1825] was highly repressive. Secret societies opposed to Russian power began to form (some of their members were army officers) to overthrow the Russian government. In December 1825, when Alexander died, questions developed over which of his brothers—Constantine or Nicholas—should succeed him. The army sided with Constantine. They carried signs that read: “Constantine and Constitution.” This Decembrist Revolt ultimately failed because it was unorganized and did not have the backing of the peasants. Also, it did not even have the complete support of Constantine.

Thus, this first wave of revolutions in the 1820s saw little success. The great powers of Europe played key roles in whether a revolution succeeded or failed.

## The Second Wave of Revolutions

The first revolutions to challenge the Congress of

Vienna and its reactionary ideal were, generally,

failures. These political challenges did not succeed

because they were ended by the powerful political

states of Europe. However, the second round of

European revolutions (those taking place from 1830

to 1833) were more effective and

successful. The walls of reaction

were beginning to crack.

The second wave of

revolutions began in France and

spread to other nations. When the

French king, Louis XVIII (ruled

1814–1824), died, he was

succeeded by the Count of Artois

as Charles X. Charles was the

highly conservative brother of

Louis. His rule was harsh and unpopular and liberals

opposed him. When challenged, however, Charles X

reacted with greater force.

By the spring of 1830, liberal leaders had had

enough of Charles. They brought about a revolution

by July. Street rioting took place. Revolutionists

erected barricades of crates, wagons, barrels—

anything that could serve as protection against

government troops. The dates of July 28–30 became

known as *the three glorious days* among the

revolutionaries, who included workers, the middle

class, and students. They were seeking a republic.

When troops were called in to stop the revolu-

tionaries in Paris, most of the army refused to fire on

the barricades. Charles X's days appeared numbered.

However, despite the republican cries of the street

demonstrators, more moderate liberals took control

of political events. The new government became a

constitutional monarchy rather than a republic.

The new French king was Louis Philippe, Duke

of Orleans. (He was related to the Bourbon family,

yet his father had voted during the French

Revolution of the 1790s in favor of executing Louis

XVI.) This revolution brought change, then,

including an expansion of voting privileges from

100,000 French citizens to twice that number.

The success of this French Revolution of 1830

led to a series of additional revolutions elsewhere in

Europe. The first country to witness revolution next

was Belgium. Just a month after the successful

French uprising in the summer of 1830, the Belgians

rose up against their Dutch rulers. (The Congress of

Vienna had forced the unification of Belgium and

the Dutch Netherlands to serve as a buffer state to

France.) Many of the rebels were Catholics who

opposed their Dutch Protestant

Calvinist rulers. By 1831, the

Belgian liberals created a

constitution and selected their

own king, Leopold of Saxe-

Coburg (ruled 1831–1865). (He

was an uncle to Queen Victoria

of England.)

When the Dutch attempted

to quell the revolution by

military force, England and

France supported the Belgians with troops. By 1839,

the Dutch recognized Belgian independence.

Other rebellions took place in Europe during

these years of political upheaval. In 1830,

revolutions broke out in several German states,

including Saxony, Brunswick, and Hesse-Cassel. In

each of these states, constitutional monarchies were

established. Simultaneously, in Switzerland, the

rulers of many of the *cantons*, or states of the Swiss

Confederation, led a peaceful political campaign

liberalizing their governments.

In other European states, revolutions were not as

successful. Austrian troops blocked revolutions in

the Italian states of Modena and Parma. And in

Poland, the Russians put down an extremely bloody

revolt. During the 1830s, then, revolutions in

western Europe were generally successful, while

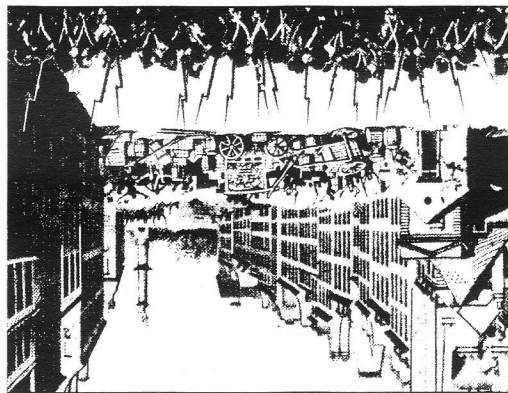
those in the east failed. This only widened the gap

between the autocratic powers of Eastern Europe and

the increasingly liberal governments of the west.

### Review and Write

From your reading on this and the previous page, what are some reasons why revolutions in the 1820s and 1830s succeeded or failed?



# Political Change Comes to Great Britain

The revolutionary spirit of 1830 led to major political changes and new liberties in both France and Belgium. One other country in Europe experienced great political upheaval during the 1830s, yet managed to avoid violent revolution.

By 1830, Great Britain had led the way in the advances of the Industrial Revolution. The changes brought by industrial-ization could not help but have significant political results. But Britain weathered these adjustments without resorting to revolution (as it had a century and a half earlier). This was due to its longstanding tradition of parliamentary government and capable, responsive political leadership.

Two political parties dominated English politics in the early 19th century—the Whigs and the Tories. When placed side by side, these two parties were not much different from one another. However, the Whigs became the primary supporters of parliamentary reform in the 19th century. The watershed year for political reform in England came in 1832 with the passage in Parliament of the Great Reform Bill.

The bill was supported by a group of highly charged reformers known as the Philosophical Radicals. These men were disheartened by the plight of the lower classes in Great Britain, whose lives were miserable. Poverty was a way of life for hundreds of thousands of working-class and agrarian people, who were not provided any welfare support from the government. The Philosophical Radicals supported a redefining of the entire English political system, beginning with the vote for all adult males.

The leader of the Philosophical Radicals was a tough-minded journalist named William Cobbett. His paper, the *Political Register* (first printed in 1802), was one of the most influential liberal publications of its time. His tireless campaigns for political change made him a regular target of the establishment. Jailed, exiled, and ruined financially for his strong beliefs, he was a dogged campaigner for the expansion of rights

for the British underclass.

Through the efforts of Cobbett, the Philosophical Radicals, and other reformers, the Great Reform Bill of 1832 sought to bring fundamental political change. Because of population shifts brought about by the Industrial Revolution (especially the great increases in the populations of key industrial towns), many of the seats of Parliament were redistributed.

At its center was an expansion of the number of people who could vote. An additional 250,000 citizens were given suffrage rights for the first time in their lives. Even under this reform bill, voters still had to meet a property qualification. This continued to deny the ballot to hundreds of thousands of poor workers.

Other reforms came in the 1830s in England. In 1833,

Parliament abolished slavery in its colonies. It also passed the Factory Act limiting the use of child labor in textile factories. An 1834 law established workhouses for the poor.

By 1835, the old political party identities of Tory and Whig were being replaced by parties known as Conservatives and Liberals. Also, in 1835, Parliament passed the Municipal Corporations Act, which ironed out the irregularities between the various city governments of England, allowing for an increase in self-government. Other new laws limited the death penalty to murder convictions. (Prior to that, dozens of crimes were punishable by death in England.)

Such changes brought great political reform to Great Britain. While other states found themselves in the throes of violent revolution in the 1830s, change came to England with a minimum of protest, violence, and bloodshed.



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## Review and Write

How was Great Britain able to bring about political change in the 1830s without resorting to active, violent revolution?

# The Birth of Socialism

The Industrial Revolution that started in England and later spread to other European powers brought many changes with it—new production techniques, the use of steam power, the development of factories, and the creation of a more complex world.

With changes in productivity and the building of factories came abuse. Factory workers were abused, exploited, and forced to work under hostile, unsafe conditions—especially in the early decades. Work abuse became so commonplace that its critics rose up in protest. Various groups began to campaign for an improvement in the treatment of the new working class.

But such protests were not limited to seeking better working conditions. Many critics and morally conscious people were appalled at a wide variety of social ills, many of which were perpetrated by those in power, those with money, or those with influence. This gave birth to the socialist movement.

The word *socialist* was coined in 1833 and the word *socialism* was first used in 1839. As a basic definition, socialism gave emphasis to society as a whole. Socialists considered that society existed for the good of all its members, not just a few at the top or those with wealth and power. The world of the Industrial Revolution emphasized competition, individualism, and natural economic law, supporting the ideas of a planned economy and social cooperation.

The great socialist thinker, Louis Blanc (1811–1882), for example, believed that competition was the cause of all the evils in society. He supported—as did other socialists—the idea that government should control the economic life of its people. The means of production should be owned by the state and no private citizen should be allowed to own his or her own property. His ideas did not lead him away from supporting democracy, however. His theories related directly to the economy of a state, not its political freedoms. Blanc's ideas were referred to as Saint-Simonism, after another early French socialist, the Count of Saint-Simon (1760–1825), who fought in the American



Revolution and had given his support to the French Revolution. Saint-Simon came to believe that competition was destructive. He felt that government should work to help all its citizens, and that no one class of people should dominate another. He was a firm believer in brotherhood and equality.

Still another leading French socialist was Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865). Born a peasant, he became a prolific writer in support of socialism. He did not support private property and strongly advocated social reform. But he was also an anarchist—one who supports the dissolving of all governments. Proudhon wrote and spoke on behalf of active revolution against all government. In its place, he proposed small communes—communities of people who banded together voluntarily, with the family serving as the most important social institution.

Perhaps England's best-known early socialist was Robert Owen (1771–1858). Ironically, Owen was a successful Manchester textile mill owner. He believed that the way to improve society was to advance education. He also thought it important to create a work environment that was positive and that made workers feel they were important. To prove his point, he built a model factory town in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1800, complete with good housing, sanitation, and a school system. Such proponents of socialism spoke, wrote, and campaigned for their ideas. But none were more successful than a Prussian-born social theorist named Karl Marx.



# Karl Marx: The Father of Socialism

Karl Marx (1818–1883) was one of the most influential thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries. He spent his adult life researching and writing about socialism. His writings influenced the spread of socialist ideas and led to the establishing of socialist governments in the 20th century long after his death.

Marx was born in the Prussian region of the Rhineland in 1818. As a young man, he studied law in Bonn and received his doctor of philosophy degree at the University of Jena. By the early 1840s, Marx was at work as the editor of a revolutionary newspaper. In 1843, he moved to Paris after government pressure forced his radical paper to cease publication. While in Paris, Marx met a factory owner named Friedrich Engels. The two men became close friends, and Engels supported Marx financially when times were hard. After working at another radical newspaper in Brussels, Marx returned to Germany, where in 1848, he participated in some of the revolutionary activity of that year. He was later arrested and tried for treason for his revolutionary socialist work, but he was acquitted.

Marx moved again, this time to London, England. Underemployed and living on the edge of poverty, Marx spent much of his time researching his socialist ideas. He spent countless days in the British Museum, reading industrial reports and economic theory. Eventually, he developed a series of ideas which formed the core of his socialist theories. By 1864, Marx was busy providing leadership in the formation of the International Workingmen's Association. This socialist organization's goal was to unite all the working-class people of the world.

His writings served as an outlet for the expression of his social ideas. One of his early works, titled the *Communist Manifesto*, was written in 1848—the year of so many failed revolutions throughout Europe—with Engels' help. His later works included *Capital* (*Das Kapital*), which was published in three volumes—the first in 1867 and

the other two in 1885 and 1894, posthumously.

Marx combined four ideas to form the basis of his socialist theories—the materialist view of history, class warfare, the theory of surplus value, and dialectical change. None of these theories was created by Marx, but he combined them to create his own social philosophy. They are all complex and difficult to understand. The materialist view of history argued that the only force that had determined the direction of history was material—especially economics and the means of production. (To make this argument, Marx had to eliminate other contributors to history, such as intellectual, social, and spiritual elements.)

Class warfare is based on a cycle of struggle taking place in history between social classes. With Marx, a ruling class held power because it controlled the means of production and oppressed the workers. He also wrote that each ruling class is ultimately overthrown by another, which then becomes the ruling class.

Surplus value states that what gives a product value is the amount of time a worker spent producing it. When a capitalist sells the work of a worker, the profit he makes is called surplus value. (Marx thought profit should not happen, because it allowed someone to make money for work he did not do.)

Dialectical materialism proposes that historical change occurs when something replaces its opposite. Economically, Marx believed that the workers (the proletariat) would overthrow their opposite (the bourgeoisie, or the owning class).

By combining these four theories into one, Marx believed class warfare would eventually drive the middle class out of power, turning power over to the workers. Therefore, he frequently encouraged workers to overthrow capitalism by unionizing and by violence. His theories—called Marxism—became the basis for international communism in the twentieth century.



# The Revolutions of 1848

Like a revolving door, Europe experienced great political change through revolution once again in the 19th century—especially in 1848. This third wave of revolt lasted for over a year and few states in Europe were not affected by it. Only two major powers, England and Russia, managed to avoid the political tensions which led to revolution and bloodshed.

Although scattered throughout Europe, the revolutions of 1848–1849 were often similar to one another. In most cases, they were brought on as further attempts to destroy the reactionary tendencies established by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Also, these revolutions were driven by desires for liberal governments. Several of the 1848 revolts were preceded by a series of economic problems, including those of 1846–1847. Essentially, these 1848 rebellions were centered in the cities.

They were led by members of the middle class, including lawyers, university professors, newspapermen, and other writers. Yet when violence broke out, the fighting was typically done not by the middle-class professionals, but by the lower-class urbanites, such as craftsmen, workers, and artisans (similar to the *sans-culottes* of the French Revolution of the 1790s).

There were major differences between the causes for revolution in western Europe and eastern Europe. In the East—including Italy, Hungary, Austria, and various German states—the chief drive was a strong nationalist spirit. Such revolutionaries were responding to the lack of national freedom and political involvement allowed their people. In western Europe, however, the primary motivation of revolutionaries was for the expansion of political power, especially to the lower classes. Through the revolutions of 1848, the political issue of socialism worked its way into the views of those dissatisfied with those in power.

In the spring of 1848, there was great unrest across the European landscape. It was centered in the middle class as well as in the working and peasant classes.

When these forces joined together, they frequently experienced great success. But, typically, when the revolutionaries came to power, their support for one another fragmented, creating a generalized pattern of failure for the revolutions of 1848–1849.

What happened in 1848 France was most important. King Louis Philippe's government had not proved popular. Opposition to him centered in three groups: the Liberals, the Bonapartists, and the Republicans. The Liberals wanted political reform and

the vote for more citizens. The Bonapartists did not support Louis Philippe, but rather a nephew of Napoleon—Prince Louis Napoleon. Napoleon promised to restore France's military glory. The Republicans—a group which included many workers—wanted an end to the monarchy.

Poor economies in 1846 and 1847 caused great unrest

throughout France. In February, 1848, the Liberals and the Republicans led peaceful demonstrations, which King Louis Philippe tried to put down with the army. When demonstrators were killed, the king was forced to abdicate his throne. On February 25, 1848, a new French republic was established.

But factionalism developed. New elections favored the Liberals. The radical republicans, mostly working class, led street demonstrations, which came to a head during the "Bloody June Days" (June 24–26) when street barricades were erected and street violence ensued, leading to thousands of casualties.

Days later, the middle class emerged victorious, and a new constitution established the Second French Republic. Representatives to the new Chamber of Deputies were elected by universal male suffrage. The first presidential election was held in December 1848, and middle-class and lower-class voters elected Louis Napoleon.

Other revolutions followed the French example—in Italy, Austria, and the Germanies—but they were not successful. And many of the political changes in 1848 France were short-lived.



## Growth for Europe, 1850-1870

Following the 1848 revolutions—many of which ended in failure—the powerful nation-states of Europe continued to deal harshly with political challenges. France, Austria, and Prussia kept revolutionaries in the minority through repressive policies that limited civil rights. England, on the other hand, was led by liberal politicians and allowed for several basic reforms of the political and economic systems at home.

Although the 1840s had been a decade of political strife, economic downturns, urban riots, military repression against revolution, and famine in some states (especially Ireland), the period from 1850 to 1870 was significantly calmer, and noted for extensive and rapid economic growth.

Europe's trade tripled during this 20-year stretch of booming economies. England led the way, just as it had during the early decades of the Industrial Revolution. By 1870, Great Britain controlled one-quarter of the world's trade.

The Industrial Revolution was important in this extensive growth of the European economy. Nations that had been slow to take on the progress represented by factories, railroads, and steam power had finally jumped in. Mass-produced goods—the products of increasingly larger factory complexes—were finding their way into nearly every home in Europe. Factories produced many items more cheaply than ever before, so that factory workers and others enjoyed growth in their purchasing power. (During the same years, poor working conditions in factories and mills had been largely eliminated owing to new laws.)

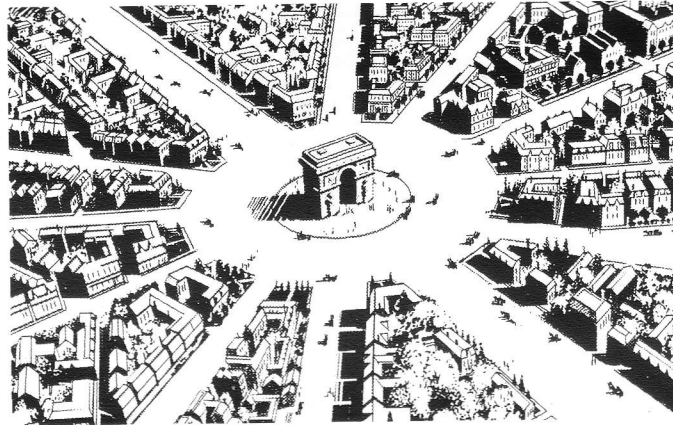
The years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars that had split Europe apart now seemed long ago. Everywhere, political stability appeared to be the norm. Five nation-states dominated the international politics of the period: France, England, Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Even the 1848 revolution which had seemed such a success—the establishing of the Second French Republic—had

proved short-lived. In December 1851, Louis Napoleon, elected as France's president in 1848, had seized power in a military coup. Under France's new constitution, Louis declared himself Emperor Napoleon III, ruling over the Second Empire from 1852 to 1870. (Napoleon Bonaparte's son was named Napoleon II, although he never came to power.) Yet Napoleon III granted universal male suffrage, and the French people supported him, voting him hereditary emperor.

During the first nine years of his empire, Napoleon III extended French prosperity. He helped finance the construction of new railroads, shipping companies, and public utility companies. He supported reforms in housing for factory workers. Banking expanded with the French

government's help, allowing for more financial aid to the expanding economy. Despite Napoleon's liberal economic policies, his political policy at home was based on repression. He silenced criticism by the press. Political organizations and organized labor unions were banned. He rigged elections of legislators so that his supporters were installed in office.

Yet he was popular during his first decade as emperor. He ordered an urban renewal program for Paris, resulting in large sections of the city being torn down and rebuilt. City streets were widened (this made revolutionary barricades more difficult to erect), slums demolished, and a new sewer system was installed. Napoleon supported a city beautification program. New parks, fountains, and great large boulevards were built—all designed to make Paris the most beautiful city in Europe.



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### *Review and Write*

Why was Louis Napoleon so popular in the early years of his reign?

## Political Changes: France and England

Despite Napoleon III's extensive control of the French government during his first nine years as emperor, his final decade in power did not follow the same course. His military campaigns in Italy did not go well, exposing his inadequacies as a military leader. (It was said he could not even read a military map.) His efforts to place Archduke Maximilian of Austria (1832–1867) on the throne of Mexico ended in Maximilian's execution at the hands of the Mexican people. Such campaigns lost him favor with his subjects.

Napoleon tried to halt his decline in popularity during the 1860s by allowing liberal political reforms. He allowed for the creation of labor unions and greater freedom of the press. Nevertheless, his support deteriorated further. As an indicator of his decline, in 1857, elections produced 665,000 votes against Napoleon III. By 1869, 3.3 million voters cast their ballots in opposition to their unpopular leader. A contributing factor to Napoleon's unpopularity was France's declining economy during the 1860s. By 1870, sick, tired, and facing war with Germany, Napoleon's future looked grim.

Alternatively, during the same decades—1850 to 1870—England experienced prosperity, solid political leadership, and an expansion of its middle class. At the opening of this period, in the year 1848, when revolution was plaguing the leadership of many European powers, England faced a limited revolutionary movement called *Chartism*.

In the spring of 1848, 50,000 protesters gathered on April 10 and marched to Parliament. They carried with them a great petition, called the *monster petition*, since its supporters claimed it contained the signatures of six million people. (In fact, the document bore two million signatures, but many of them were false.) The petition contained the following political goals: (1) universal male suffrage; (2) annual elections; (3) abolition of

property qualifications for voting; and (4) a written ballot for elections.

But the Chartist rally did not result in immediate change. The rally was limited by police intervention and a heavy rain which dispersed the crowds. And much of the motivation for the Chartists, many of whom were among the lower classes, had been based on dissatisfaction with a troubled English economy. That economy was

already improving by 1848, ending the Chartist movement.

In the next two decades, a movement called *Christian socialism* replaced Chartism. Its supporters were less concerned with political change than with economic reform. Christian socialists spoke out against the horrific social conditions found in England, including poor working conditions, exploitation of the poor, and the lack of social welfare. These reformers campaigned successfully against such injustices.

Politically, England experienced little change. Nor was there a need for it. England had already embraced liberal ideas prior to 1848. Great Britain was ruled by Queen Victoria who ascended to the British throne in 1837 and remained the monarch until her death in 1901. She proved herself a popular queen. Generally, she was aided by well qualified, capable ministers, such as Lord Palmerston (1784–1865). A popular leader with the British people, he considered England the greatest country in the world. As foreign secretary [1846–1851], his involvement in foreign intrigues, including sending warships to Sicily and Greece, embarrassed Victoria and her cabinet, but the British people loved him. Palmerston served as prime minister during 1855–1858 and 1859–1865.



Queen Victoria

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### Review and Write

Compare the politics of France and Great Britain between 1850 and 1870.