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1. The Era of Metternichian Conservatism, 1815-1848

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1. The Era of Metternichian Conservatism, 1815-1848

Abstract

Before either political liberalism or nationalism could become institutionalized, the Continent passed through a period of conservative reaction. Taking their cue from Edmund Burke, who "as early as 1790 strove to discredit France's great experiment by associating it with the excesses of reason and revolution, many people blamed liberalism for the quarter century of war, and chaos that followed. The "Reign Terror" in France, under the sway of Madame Guillotine, gave a connotation of horror to the slogan of "liberty, equality, and fraternity," Conservativeminded folk tended to regard the abstract ideas of freedom, brotherhood, and a society without class distinctions as mere will-o'-the-wisps leading inevitably to anarchy. In the interests of orderly government, the sacred rights of property, and the very existence of Western Civilization itself, they therefore set their faces resolutely against any doctrine which carried the liberal taint. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Contemporary Civilization, Conservatism, French Revolution, German government

Disciplines

European Languages and Societies | History | Law | Political Science | Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration

Comments

This is a part of [Section XIII: Political Liberalism and Nationalism, 1815-1871](#). The [Contemporary Civilization](#) page lists all additional sections of *Ideas and Institutions of Western Man*, as well as the [Table of Contents](#) for both volumes.

More About Contemporary Civilization:

From 1947 through 1969, all first-year Gettysburg College students took a two-semester course called Contemporary Civilization. The course was developed at President Henry W.A. Hanson's request with the goal of "introducing the student to the backgrounds of contemporary social problems through the major concepts, ideals, hopes and motivations of western culture since the Middle Ages."

Gettysburg College professors from the history, philosophy, and religion departments developed a textbook for the course. The first edition, published in 1955, was called *An Introduction to Contemporary Civilization and Its Problems*. A second edition, retitled *Ideas and Institutions of Western Man*, was published in 1958 and 1960. It is this second edition that we include here. The copy we digitized is from the Gary T. Hawbaker '66 Collection and the marginalia are his.

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1. The Era of Metternichian Conservatism, 1815-1848

Before either political liberalism or nationalism could become institutionalized, the Continent passed through a period of

A post-war world.

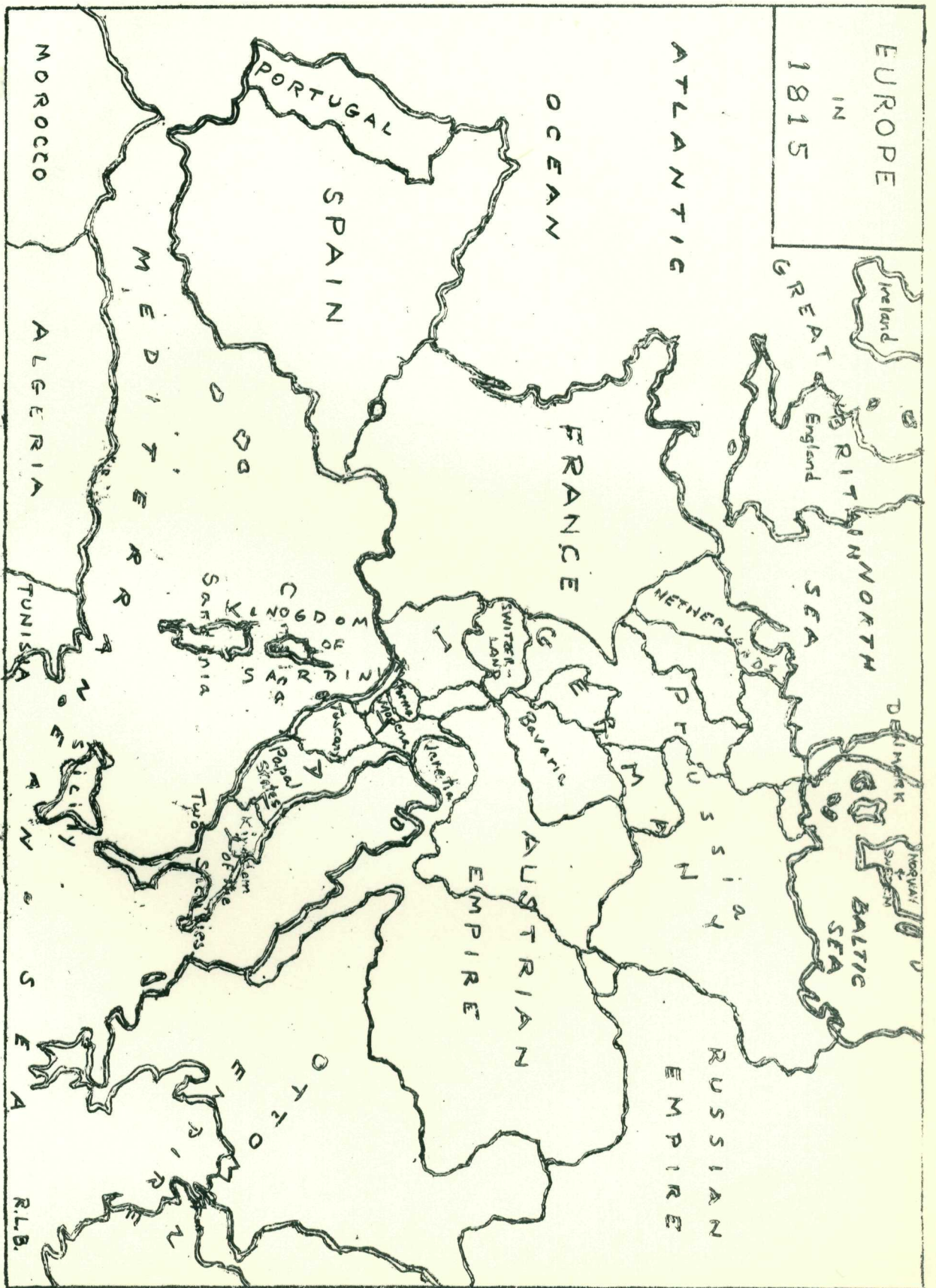
conservative reaction. Taking their cue from Edmund Burke, who as early as 1790 strove to discredit France's great experiment by associating it with the excesses of reason and revolution, many people blamed liberalism for the quarter century of war and chaos that followed. The "Reign of Terror" in France, under the sway of Madame Guillotine, gave a connotation of horror to the slogan of "liberty, equality, and fraternity." Conservative-minded folk tended to regard the abstract ideas of freedom, brotherhood, and a society without class distinctions as mere will-o'-the-wisps leading inevitably to anarchy. In the interests of orderly government, the sacred rights of property, and the very existence of Western Civilization itself, they therefore set their faces resolutely against any doctrine which carried the liberal taint.

Early nineteenth century conservatism, however, was not altogether negative in character. Its adherents argued for an organic society which stressed wisdom, continuity, and the superiority of such time-tested institutions as the church and the aristocracy. To many, an established religion seemed to be the only authority strong enough to resist the disturbing claims of democracy and nationalism on one hand, or the equally unacceptable demands of military dictatorship on the other. Land, still the basis of wealth and political power in most of Europe, remained in the hands of the old aristocracy and enabled that class to wield disproportionate influence. Weary of liberal crusades, exhausted by ideological wars, and repelled by agitation which seemed subversive of tradition, Europe found much in conservatism that was attractive. Romantic writers and philosophers contributed to the conservative appeal, although their literature was more antirationalist than antinationalist.

All this explains, perhaps, why after 1815 conservatives were able to rally European peoples of all classes around the standard of legitimacy, a principle which, among other contentions, held that the locus of sovereignty in the well-ordered state should reside in those royal and aristocratic families which had governed in pre-Revolutionary times. Legitimacy also came to mean that as much as possible European states should turn back the clock and adopt again the social institutions of the old regimes. Such a creed formed the basis for the political settlement arranged at the celebrated Congress of Vienna (1814-1815).

Representatives of the wartime coalition that had vanquished Napoleon (Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia), augmented by an emissary from defeated France, gathered at the Austrian capital to decide the future of Europe. Actuated by mutual suspicion, a desire to compensate themselves for losses suffered in the war, and by a genuine desire to restore peace on a permanent basis, the delegates sought to establish an enduring status quo. To prevent any revival of Jacobinism and Bonapartism, both of which they identified with liberalism and nationalism, they agreed to cooperate in the maintenance of an

1815-30
1945-60
attempt at balance of power. Congress of V. N. - not super-state. Dominated by great powers. Police power to put down rebels. Suspicions divide the great powers. Dealing with tremendous damage, physical + even mental affliction. Underlying the



international balance of power.

The Vienna settlement created a series of buffer states around conquered France, to which was restored its approximate boundaries of 1789. Since self-determination was not an article of the Congress' faith, the delegates did not bother to consult the populations concerned. To such vacant thrones as those of France and Spain they restored the legitimate dynasties. Accepting as final the demise of the Holy Roman Empire, the Congress formed Germany into a loose confederation of thirty-nine semi-independent states with Austria as the dominant partner. A federal Diet was to sit at Frankfurt, but without executive authority. Its purpose was merely to guard Germany against French interference from without and against liberal influences from within. Italy, which the Congress had dismissed as "merely a geographic expression," was parceled out to a collection of princes and dukes, all of whom were under Austrian influence. In northern Italy either the Austrian Hapsburgs or their relatives exercised real control; in the center the Papal States still girdled the Italian boot; and in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to the south the old dynasty was restored.

The most influential personage at the Congress of Vienna was the Austrian foreign minister, Prince Klemens von Metternich (1773-1859). A shrewd and determined advocate of legitimacy, Metternich personified the conservative atmosphere prevailing in 1815. Suspicious of political and social change and regarding the French Revolution as an unmitigated disaster, he labored successfully to impress his views on the assembled diplomats. Only by a broad repudiation of the Revolution's liberal and nationalist tenets, he felt, could Europe avoid the pitfalls of political anarchy.

The Austrian Empire was a special case. Some fourteen separate ethnic groups made up the Hapsburg realm, with the Germans dominant in Austria and the Magyars dominant in Hungary. Legitimacy seemed to be the only principle which could hold the multinational empire together, but the turbulent times made for revolutionary agitation. Metternich worked to suppress all dissident elements within the empire, to strengthen the monarchy, and to assert Austria's leadership in European affairs. He aimed at a new status quo which would stand unchanged for the foreseeable future.

Although some objections to his program were raised by the delegates at Vienna, Metternich was able to overcome them. The sentimental idealism of the Russian tsar, Alexander I (1801-1825), he ultimately guided into reactionary channels. He overshadowed and dominated the Prussian king. In Lord Castlereagh (1769-1822), the British representative, he found a confirmed Tory, a member of the party of rigid conservatism in the England of 1815. Out of the Vienna deliberations, therefore, came a political and territorial arrangement against liberalism and nationalism, the "Metternich system," which fought a series of

Conservatism - return to the good old days. (Feeling that you could just blot out this period) or even reactionary. A new emphasis on reforms. Liberalism & nationalism were looked on as communism is today. Revolutionaries didn't have one center.

delaying actions until its final defeat in midcentury.

This system operated on the assumption of a cultural unity in Europe such as the medieval Church and the Holy Roman Empire had endeavored to institutionalize. Metternich sought to resolve present and future conflicts among the states by effecting a cooperative arrangement between the rulers of the major powers. Under the aegis of this system Europe had no major wars for a century, although as we shall see later in this chapter, it did not prevent innumerable internal revolts.

In 1815, in an effort to gain any possible support for his program, Metternich seized upon a proposal initially advanced by the idealistic Alexander I, and secured the adherence of most rulers to the Holy Alliance. By this pact the signatory powers pledged themselves "to continue united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity...to lend assistance to each other on all occasions and in all places...[and to be] animated for the protection of religion, peace and justice." The Holy Alliance never effectively served these aims. Metternich privately scorned its declarations as mere "verbiage," and those who signed it appear to have done so in part out of deference to Alexander. Its main effect was that it remained for some years a source of apprehension for those who sought to establish liberal governments and achieve national independence.

A more important agency for protecting the Metternich system was the Quadruple Alliance, a postwar renewal of the anti-Napoleonic coalition which represents an early and tentative experiment in international government. It provided that each member state would furnish troops in the event France violate the peace treaty imposed on her. The allies also agreed to hold international congresses to consult on ways and means of checking any resurgence of Jacobinism. France was soon rewarded with full membership in the pact which then became the Quintuple Alliance. Between 1818 and 1823, as the restive peoples of Italy, Spain, and Portugal staged minor rebellions, a series of these congresses convened. At Troppau in 1820, representatives of the allied powers agreed to intervene in any of those states "which have undergone a change of government due to revolution, the results of which threaten other states...by peaceful means, or if need be, by arms."

Such intervention became necessary in southern Italy in 1821, where the populace rebelled against the ultraconservative king of the Two Sicilies. Deserted by his troops, this ruler subscribed to a relatively liberal constitution. An alarmed Metternich summoned a congress to meet at Laibach, and there persuaded the Sicilian king to repudiate his grant of constitutional government and to invite an Austrian army to Naples "to restore order." With the arrival of Austrian troops the insurrection collapsed and the king imposed on his hapless subjects an even more reactionary rule. A revolt in Piedmont in northern Italy in 1821 was likewise speedily crushed by Austrian intervention.

Police force to put down subversion (subversion across frontiers). Limitation of civil liberties to suppress revolution in the mother country.

In Spain, where a weak and corrupt monarch strove to stamp out liberal sentiments, resistance broke out in 1820. Under duress, the ruler of that unhappy country promised to restore and support Spain's liberal constitution of 1812. Meanwhile, he intrigued against the government he had sworn to uphold and in the political chaos which followed, the Congress of Verona (1822) authorized the sending of French troops across the Pyrenees. The back of the revolt was broken by the effective savagery of the French soldiers, and the faithless Spanish monarch continued his reactionary policies. The events in Italy and Spain were in a measure repeated in Portugal, although foreign troops were not there employed to protect the conservative regime. Encouraged by the suppression of liberalism in Italy and Spain, Portuguese conservatives overcame the rebellious factions at Lisbon, and the resulting government matched those elsewhere in reaction.

While the international institutions of conservatism were thus developing, within each state it likewise contended with liberalism and nationalism. In Russia a glimmer of liberalism had appeared under Alexander I, who as the "reforming tsar" gave promise of becoming the most enlightened of European monarchs. The tsar and many of the younger nobility had been beguiled by the idealism of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Alexander promoted public education, toyed with the idea of granting a written constitution, and even freed some of the serfs. At Vienna, however, he came increasingly under the influence of Metternich and, encouraged by reactionary ministers at home, turned conservative. By the time of his death in 1825 his policy of rigid censorship had driven liberal thought underground. Secret societies composed of young nobles, many intellectuals, and some army officers dedicated themselves to liberal agitation and revolution.

When Alexander died these societies moved to place his reportedly liberal brother on the Russian throne. They announced their intentions in a manifesto which called for a free press, religious tolerance, emancipation of the serfs, the equality of all classes before the law, and the right of an individual to pursue an occupation of his own choosing. This manifesto they proclaimed in December 1825 -- hence their name in Russian history is the Dekabristi, or Decembrists. Hampered by the lack of a clear plan and adequate preparation, and repudiated by the prince whom they supported for the throne, the Decembrists failed utterly. Their leaders were either hanged or exiled to Siberia. The new tsar, another of Alexander's brothers, was Nicholas I (1825-1855). Haunted throughout his reign by the specter of revolution, he converted Russia into a huge military camp under the surveillance of the secret police.

German opposition to the Vienna settlement found a haven in the hearts of young intellectuals and the middle-class element of the population, both of whom had been deeply stirred by the preachments of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). A Romantic

Breaches in Metternich's system came from Krak, etc. Later comes into central Europe in 1830's.

nationalist, Fichte issued a call for German unity in his Addresses to the German Nation (1807-1808). He also declared in these addresses that "all culture has proceeded from the people [volk]," and that "freedom is the soil in which higher culture germinates." As Fichte used the term, freedom mainly meant a Germany free of foreign (then French) influences, but to many of his followers this was possible only if the obstacles raised by the Metternich system were cleared away.

Organized discontent in Germany appeared as early as 1816 with the establishment of student leagues, or Burschenschaften. University students, many of their professors, and some of the clergy participated in the activities of these leagues, and they were supported by much of the German press. Conservatives in Germany, weary of turmoil and alarmed at this "revival of Jacobinism," regarded these societies as subversive -- an opinion apparently confirmed by the extremist agitation on the part of some of the more radical dissidents. In the view of Metternich the universities were particularly culpable, since they were giving ear to dangerous doctrines. He called, therefore, a conference of representatives of nine of the larger German states to meet at Carlsbad in August, 1819. It required little persuasion to obtain from the timorous delegates an assent to the repressive Carlsbad Decrees. In the selection following may be seen the extent to which Metternichism was prepared to go to check any sentiment which might menace the status quo in Germany:

1. A special representative of the ruler of each state shall be appointed for each university, with appropriate instructions and extended powers, and shall reside in the place where the university is situated. This office may devolve upon the existing curator or upon any other individual whom the government may deem qualified.

The function of this agent shall be to see to the strictest enforcement of existing laws and disciplinary regulations; to observe carefully the spirit which is shown by the instructors in the university in their public lectures and regular courses, and, without directly interfering in scientific matter or in the methods of teaching, to give a salutary direction to the instruction, having in view the future attitude of the students. Lastly, he shall devote unceasing attention to everything that may promote morality, good order, and outward propriety among the students....

2. The confederated governments mutually pledge themselves to remove from the universities or other public educational institutions all teachers who, by obvious deviation from their duty, or by exceeding the limits of their functions, or by the abuse of their legitimate influence over the youthful minds, or by propagating harmful doctrines hostile to public order or subversive of existing governmental institutions, shall have unmistakably proved their unfitness for the important office

feeling that you must stamp this revolutionist movement out, by any means.

intrusted to them....

No teacher who shall have been removed in this manner shall be again appointed to a position in any public institution of learning in another state of the union.

3. Those laws which have for a long period been directed against secret and unauthorized societies in the universities shall be strictly enforced. These laws apply especially to that association established some years since under the name Universal Students' Union (Allgemeine Burschenschaft), since the very conception of the society implies the utterly unallowable plan of permanent fellowship and constant communication between the various universities. The duty of especial watchfulness in this matter should be impressed upon the special agents of the government.

The governments mutually agree that such persons as shall hereafter be shown to have remained in secret or unauthorized associations, or shall have entered such associations, shall not be admitted to any public office.

4. No student who shall be expelled from a university by a decision of the university senate which was ratified or prompted by the agent of the government, or who shall have left the institution in order to escape expulsion, shall be received in any other university....

1. So long as this decree shall remain in force no publication which appears in the form of daily issues, or as a serial not exceeding twenty sheets of printed matter, shall go to press in any state of the union without the previous knowledge and approval of the state officials.

Writings which do not belong to one of the above-mentioned classes shall be treated according to the laws now in force, or which may be enacted, in the individual states of the union....

4. Each state of the union is responsible, not only to the state against which the offense is directly committed, but to the whole Confederation, for every publication appearing under its supervision in which the honor or security of other states is infringed or their constitution or administration attacked....

6. The Diet shall have the right, moreover, to suppress on its own authority, without being petitioned, such writings included in Article 1, in whatever German state they may appear, as, in the opinion of a commission appointed by it, are inimical to the honor of the union, the safety of individual states, or the maintenance of peace and quiet in Germany. There shall be no appeal from such decisions, and the governments involved are bound to see that they are put into execution....

7. When a newspaper or periodical is suppressed by a decision of the Diet, the editor thereof may not within a period of five years edit a similar publication in any state of the union. *

* Quoted in James Harvey Robinson, Readings in European History (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1906, 1934) II, 547-549. Used with permission.

In the year following the promulgation of these decrees Metternich persuaded the German states to limit the subjects which might be discussed in their respective parliaments where such existed and to permit the federal authority to intervene in any of the states where liberalism threatened to gain control. For the twenty years in which the decrees were in force, German liberalism was effectively silenced. With heavy sarcasm the poet Goethe remarked that the German people could not have a revolution because the police would not permit it.

The Metternich system, however, could not put down all challenges so easily. The first great fissure in the Concert of Europe came in 1820, when Great Britain defected from the Quintuple Alliance. The British had never sanctioned indiscriminate intervention in the internal affairs of independent states, holding that action of this sort was justified only in the event of a clear and present threat to European peace. British policy was partially influenced by the desire of British merchants to retain the profitable commercial ties established with Spain's American possessions during the years the Iberian peninsula was wracked by war and revolution. Spain aspired to regain control of her lost American colonies with the aid of the Holy Alliance, a move which, if successful, would end the trade advantages enjoyed by British commerce. Britain tried to induce the United States to join in a bilateral warning opposing the restoration of Spanish authority in America. Wishing to avoid "entanglements," the American government issued the Monroe Doctrine (1823), a unilateral proclamation against Spanish ambitions. Spain did not succeed in repossessing her former colonies, and it was clear that the interests of Great Britain, without whose support Spain's hopes were futile, ran counter to those of the other members of the alliance. It was also clear that the Congress system, and with it the Concert of Europe, had collapsed.

The status quo was further shaken by the Greek uprising against the Ottoman Turks in the years between 1821 and 1829. Although the Turkish Empire was not a member of the several alliances, the Congress powers could hardly ignore the legitimacy of the sultan's title to rule in Greece. If the political and territorial arrangements of 1815 were to be maintained, insurrection of any kind should be discouraged. However, widespread sympathy existed for the Greek people throughout the West. Europeans regarded them as a Christian people waging an epic struggle to throw off Moslem overlordship and restore the long-lost independence of a historic community. Besides, Russia and Austria had their own territorial ambitions in the Balkans. When it appeared that the rebellion might fail, Great Britain, France, and Russia dropped all pretense of neutrality, and despite the outspoken opposition of Metternich, came to the aid of the Greeks. In 1829, the interventionist powers recognized Greek independence. While this policy reflected popular opinion in Europe, it also marked a signal victory for political self-determination at the expense of the status quo.

Hardly had Greek independence been achieved when another breach appeared in the Metternichian edifice, this time in France. The restored Bourbon government there rested on a constitution which guaranteed certain fundamental liberties under a parliamentary system. But it had also preserved the forms of hereditary privilege and royal absolutism. The reign of Louis XVIII (1814-1824) was an uneasy balance between liberalism and conservatism. However, his younger brother, Charles X (1824-1830), was an ultraconservative who desired to reestablish absolutism and privilege. Charles initiated repressive measures against the press and undermined representative government. When he also disfranchised about three-fourths of the electorate he alienated many of the bourgeoisie, who feared that what remained of the gains won since 1789 were in danger of being lost. When their protests availed them nothing, bourgeois leaders in July 1830 led the infuriated people to the barricades thrown up in the streets of Paris.

Losing the support of the army, Charles surrendered his throne and fled into exile. As his successor, the revolutionaries chose Louis Philippe (1830-1848), a member of the Orleanist branch of the Bourbon family. The new king reputedly had fought for the republic in 1792, and as a result of the July Revolution (as it was subsequently called) was raised to the throne as "King of the French," rather than "King of France." He was more popularly dubbed the "Citizen King."

As in the 1790's, the July Revolution in France triggered insurrectionary activity elsewhere on the Continent. "Gentlemen, saddle your horses," cried Nicholas I in St. Petersburg, "France is in revolution again!" Suiting action to his words, Nicholas moved against the Poles who had been encouraged by the French example to rise against their Russian masters. Poland's national independence had been destroyed in the previous century in a piecemeal partition of the country at the hands of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Although Alexander I had granted a relatively liberal constitution to the Poles in his domain (1815), they bitterly resented the presence of Russians in their military and civil posts. Expecting aid from liberals abroad, Polish patriots rebelled, but the failure of this aid to arrive enabled Nicholas, who had no sympathy for liberalism in general and Polish national yearnings in particular, to crush them without mercy. The tsar abrogated Alexander's liberal constitution and incorporated Poland as a province of the Russian Empire.

In Belgium, patriots had never reconciled themselves to the Dutch rule under which the Vienna settlement had placed them. In 1830, the pro-Dutch political, economic, and religious policies precipitated a rebellion that was in essence both liberal and national. Also inspired by the success of the Parisian insurrection, the Belgians proclaimed their independence from Holland. The British persuaded France to join them in recognizing Belgian independence, and the separation of Belgium and Holland was effected in 1831. This development, it

C. 1848 - liberalism & nationalism were allies. (because they had a common enemy), both want changes. (especially a gov't ruled by the people) if you have national states - the Hapsburg Empire would be divided. Both - share certain common ancestry. Liberalism - nationalism defeated in years after 1848. Both started declining from one of the other. Nationalism becomes strong

should be noted, marked the first rupture in the specific territorial arrangements of the Congress of Vienna.

Twenty-three of the German states in 1834 entered into a customs union, the Zollverein (of which more later), a step toward national unification and thus another threat to the status quo set by the Congress of Vienna. Metternichism, it was evident, was rapidly losing its hold on the loyalties of the people of Europe, although it was still strong east of the Rhine. If on the surface the political currents of the forties were calm, underneath dissident elements were preparing for their anticipated day of opportunity. In the Metternich system both liberal and nationalist advocates confronted a common foe, a fact which had in many instances led them to form a mutual alliance.

Two developments occurred during the 1840's which help explain the regrowth of revolutionary fervor. In the first place, the system of harsh repression imposed by governmental authorities transformed many members of the middle class -- lawyers, journalists, business men, and professors -- from mild reformers to potential revolutionaries. Secondly, an economic depression in the middle of this decade, plus a series of bad harvests, squeezed the masses between unemployment and high prices for bread. In addition, those gains which up to now had been wrung from the conservative governments had favored the bourgeoisie exclusively, and the complaints of the industrial proletariat had been largely ignored.

Although the first revolutionary upheavals of 1848 began elsewhere, it was the French who, as in 1789 and 1830, gave impetus to the revolts that sprang up all over the European continent. The regime of Louis Philippe, dominated by bourgeois interests, had failed to bring internal peace to France. Its policy was mainly to rid the nation of the absolutist proclivities of the Bourbons and their royalist supporters, while at the same time guaranteeing order and property against democracy and republicanism. As a result, it paid little heed to the developing grievances of France's urban industrial working class. Opposition to the new government emerged almost from the beginning and spread as Louis Philippe proved scarcely more liberal than his predecessor had been. The government suppressed critical newspapers, jailed and fined their editors, and curbed the activities of all groups suspected of hostility. The appeals of the masses for liberalization of the franchise were rejected. "If you would have a voice in the government," exclaimed one of the king's ministers, "get rich!"

Weary of the government's middle-class bias and static policy in the face of France's complex social and political problems, liberal groups tried to circumvent the authorities' interdict on opposition activity by sponsoring "political banquets." At these affairs orators regaled the banquetees concerning the alleged evils that permeated the regime. So popular

were the banquets that they soon proved highly embarrassing to the government. A huge banquet, scheduled in February 1848, drew a flat ban which rekindled the fires of revolt. Parisians awoke the next morning to find their streets once more blocked by barricades. Although the prime minister resigned and the king tardily offered concessions, France's patience was exhausted. Louis Philippe followed his predecessor into exile and this February Revolution resulted in a coalition of republicans and socialists seizing control.

The revolution, however, did not end here. A growing class-consciousness on the part of the French industrial workers had turned them to the more radical demands and loftier dreams of visionary leaders. One of the more vigorous and persuasive of these leaders was Louis Blanc (1811-1882), a socialist who understood and sympathized with working-class grievances. Blanc made himself the fearless champion of the forgotten masses in the industrial areas. The provisional government, which had assumed authority following the departure of Louis Philippe, decreed the election of a National Assembly to be chosen by direct and universal manhood suffrage, a method of selection which was a radical innovation in itself. The provisional government also enacted some hasty measures of social and political reform, but worker interests were still largely neglected. Seeing the fruits of the revolution eluding them, particularly when the National Assembly began to adopt a policy of conservative republicanism, the Parisian workers and their socialist comrades once again resorted to insurrection. In the terrible "June Days" (June 24-26, 1848) which followed, republicans were ranged against socialists in sanguinary street fighting. The outnumbered proletarian forces were speedily subdued.

France had decided to forego monarchy in favor of a moderate Second Republic that was politically liberal but economically and socially conservative. The National Assembly, made up mainly of clericals, business men, some aristocrats, and peasants, formed a constitution which provided for a popularly elected legislature and president. The successful aspirant in the first presidential election was Louis Napoleon (1808-1873), nephew of the great Bonaparte. Louis Napoleon had recently returned from exile promising all things to every faction. Almost immediately he used his office to strengthen his control over the machinery of government and labored to build up a personal following. The basic disorderliness of political life within the Second Republic, plus the magic name of Napoleon, played into his hands. In 1851, by a coup d'etat, he assumed a temporary military dictatorship. A plebiscite authorized him to prepare a new constitution. Under the broad autocratic powers which it gave him, he spent the next year consolidating his hold on the masses. A second plebiscite resulted in his being proclaimed "Napoleon III, Emperor of the French" (1852). The Revolution of 1848 in France, although commenced in the name of liberty, thus ended with the creation of the Second Empire. During its eighteen years of existence the empire functioned as

a mixture of authoritarian government with spasmodic gestures toward parliamentary institutions and popular demands.

German liberal nationalism, like that elsewhere in Europe, was encouraged by the events in France. Economic forces were drawing the German people together despite the separatist arrangement fixed by the Vienna Congress. In the Zollverein certain German states agreed to remove the tariff barriers which had obstructed the free flow of commerce within Germany. The success of this purely economic arrangement encouraged many German business men to look to closer political union as a means of bringing added trade advantages. The revolutionary movement in Germany as it developed was two-pronged. Among the lower classes it constituted a drive mainly to establish liberal political forms and secondarily to achieve national unification. The German upper classes who sought change were interested equally in liberalism and nationalism for their country. In 1848 an assembly of moderate liberals and nationalists, made up of lawyers, judges, business men, civil servants, professors, and clergymen, convened at Frankfurt to prepare a constitution for a federated German commonwealth. Out of the deliberations of this Frankfurt Assembly came a constitution with a bill of rights ("The Fundamental Rights of the German People") which was mild, legalistic, and liberal.

In contrast to that which confronted liberals in France and England, the Frankfurt Assembly had a much harder task -- to form a new German state and make it liberal. The delegates debated without reaching agreement two knotty questions. The first involved the geographical extent of the new German union. Should it include all German states (particularly Austria) or not? The second question concerned the nature of the proposed government. Should it be a republic or a constitutional monarchy? Both questions were at length settled by the refusal of Austria to have any part of the projected commonwealth and by the refusal of the Prussian king, to whom the assembly had offered the German throne, to accept "a crown from the gutter." For more than a year, until the popular revolutionary fervor was well spent, the assembled delegates debated these issues. In the end, they could show almost nothing of value for their efforts except that their exposition of "fundamental rights" remained a notable example of the political philosophy held by the mid-nineteenth century bourgeois liberal. Since Germany had no parliamentary tradition like that of England, nor a revolutionary tradition like that of France, and especially since the several princes and their loyal armies were overtly hostile to it, the proposed constitution had little chance of adoption.

Despite the precautions of Metternich the revolutionary virus of 1848 also entered the Austrian Empire. It infected the middle class, students in the universities, workers in the cities, and even aristocrats in the emperor's own court. "To check the torrent is no longer within the power of man,"

plaintively wrote Metternich, adding: "And I do not know how to steer a middle course." Demonstrations in the streets of Vienna precipitated his resignation and the emperor was forced to make concessions to his rebellious subjects, both in Vienna and in the outlying provinces. Hungarian liberal nationalists took advantage of the turmoil in Vienna to demand virtual home rule for Hungary. Although this movement foundered on the inability of the Magyar and Slav populations in Hungary to resolve their traditionally bitter conflicts and on the extremist policies of the Hungarian leader, Louis Kossuth (1802-1894), the Hapsburg Empire tottered on the brink of collapse. Similar uprisings occurred among the Slavic and Italian subjects of the empire. A new emperor came to the throne and with the aid of Russian and loyal Austrian troops defeated the various rebel forces, repudiated the liberal concessions granted by his predecessor, and reestablished authoritarian rule. The utter failure of the revolt in Austria enabled that state, in the ensuing years, to enjoy the dubious honor of remaining safely conservative.

The survival of the Hapsburg autocracy in Austria doomed from the start efforts to change the status quo south of the Alps. In point of time, Italian restiveness in 1848 erupted into defiance earlier than elsewhere on the Continent. After the 1830's, Italians of all political faiths, resenting the territorial divisions of the Congress of Vienna, entertained high hopes for ending Austrian domination and its autocratic rule in Italy. But the people were not united on means, nor were they clear as to specific ends. Some looked to the leadership of the liberal Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). Others placed their hopes in the King of Sardinia-Piedmont, Charles Albert (1831-1849). Still others followed the liberal and republican visionary, Guiseppe Mazzini (1805-1872).

In some respects Mazzini's ends were identical with those of his famous sixteenth century compatriot, Machiavelli. But these two Italians differed widely as to means. Mazzini grew up in the turbulent atmosphere that pervaded post-Napoleonic Europe. Disillusioned at the failure of Italian resistance movements in 1820 and 1830, he turned with romantic enthusiasm to a career of agitation and propaganda. To this end he organized La Giovina Italia ("Young Italy"), a secret society dedicated to promoting Italian unity and republicanism.

It was Mazzinian enthusiasts who touched off revolt in Italy with an uprising in Sicily in 1848. Rebellion spread rapidly. Charles Albert headed off trouble in his realm by granting a liberal constitution and declaring war against Austria. City after city in northern Italy rose against their Austrian garrisons and proclaimed their independence of the Hapsburgs. Although Charles Albert received some early support from the king of the Two Sicilies and the pope, excesses by the revolutionaries lost him such favor. In 1849, Austrian troops again invaded Italy in force, defeated the Sardinian army, and

compelled Charles Albert to conclude a humiliating peace. Revolutionaries in the Papal States, rendered desperate by these set-backs to their cause, now resorted to extremist tactics. After Pius IX had fled in fear of his life, they proclaimed a Roman republic under the leadership of Mazzini. In response to pleas of French Catholics, Louis Napoleon sent French troops to the Papal States, and their intervention reinstated the pope in authority. In Naples, the Sicilian king repudiated the liberal constitution which he had granted in an impulse of revolutionary enthusiasm. By the summer of 1849, Italy was once more under autocratic control.

Noteworthy manifestations of revolutionary liberalism appeared in England, the Netherlands, Denmark, and in other European states. But after the several fiascos of 1848-1849, many Europeans concluded that liberalism and nationalism could not together effectively challenge the status quo. Besides losing ground for other reasons, the liberals now lost the support of nationalists who turned to court the conservatives. Nevertheless, even where the authoritarian regimes had survived, they granted in a number of instances constitutions which provided government somewhat more liberal than before. It is perhaps safe to generalize that in the long run the forces of conservatism were after 1849 fighting a rear-guard battle.

Metternich against liberalism & nationalism.