CHAPTER 20

Restoration and Reform: Conservative and Liberal Europe, 1814–1847

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. The Old Order and New Challenges
   A. The Congress of Vienna
      1. The Congress of Vienna, called in mid-1814, established a new, conservative post-Napoleonic Europe.
      2. Key figures were Austrian prime minister Clemens von Metternich, Great Britain’s foreign minister Robert Castlereagh, Tsar Alexander I of Russia, and France’s Charles Maurice de Talleyrand.
      3. The British aimed to restore a European balance of power; Tsar Alexander I hoped to extend Russian influence in Europe, and Metternich aimed to neutralize it.
      4. The kingdom of Poland (or Congress Poland) became an autonomous kingdom.
      5. The Congress of Vienna set up the Concert of Europe, which was astonishingly successful for nearly a century in preventing major military and civil disturbances in Europe.
   B. The Congress System
      1. The four Great Powers of Prussia, Austria, Russia, and Great Britain (later joined by France) planned regular congresses to root out revolution.
      2. Tsar Alexander I, influenced by Christian mysticism, proposed a Holy Alliance, which other European powers viewed with polite skepticism and privately ridiculed.
      3. The real guiding power of the Congress System was Metternich, who sought to limit Russian power in Europe, expand Austrian influence, and suppress all ideas that had come out of the French Revolution.
      4. The Congress System was a deeply conservative, reactionary set of policies that aimed at preventing change.
   C. The Age of Romanticism
      1. Romanticism was mystical, irrational, and passionate, and it embraced powerful emotions, individuality, new forms of expression, beauty, and the ecstasy of love.
      2. Romanticism was everything Metternich was not, and it rejected the dull universal Enlightenment ideals such as parliamentarianism, codified legal systems, and cold rationality, and mocked hardworking, narrow-minded pillars of society.
      3. The Romantics saw God in nature, as Wordsworth conveyed in his poetry, and German poet Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) portrayed man, woman, nature, and God as merged in an infinite unity.
      4. Romantic art focused on exotic localities, glorious nature, and common people, such as Caspar David Friedrich’s landscapes and Eugene Delacroix’s paintings of northern Africa, the Muslim world, stormy seas, and bare-breasted Liberty Leading the People (in honor of the 1830 July Revolution).
      5. Romanticism’s impact was most important through nationalism, glorifying an individual language, culture, and nation.
a) The Polish national poet was Adam Mickiewicz, and its patriotic composer and pianist was Frederic Chopin.

II. The Beginnings of Modern Ideology

A. Conservatism

1. Conservatives argued that change threatened their own position, so they held a pessimistic view of human nature, believing common people are not to be trusted and must be held in check and told how to behave.

2. Conservatives such as Edmund Burke thought men were naturally violent, and Joseph de Maistre argued that without Christianity, their sinful nature required the strict control of church and traditional rulers.

3. The most conservative was Russia under Tsar Nicholas I, who advocated Slavophilism, a return to Russian Orthodox religious values, and a rejection of foreign western influences, thus abolishing Tsar Peter the Great’s Europeanizing reforms.

4. The period from 1815 to 1847 was a conservative, reactionary era; conservative thinkers shared with Metternich a rejection of written constitutions, representative government, and abstract political rights and reasoning from the Enlightenment.

B. Liberalism

1. Liberalism emphasized individual liberty, justice through constitutional civil rights, and private property, and was optimistic about human nature.

2. Nineteenth-century liberalism differed fundamentally from what present-day Americans understand as liberal because it firmly opposed government interference, and very few nineteenth-century liberals thought that women were truly equal to men.

3. Great Britain was the homeland of the classical industrial bourgeoisie (middle-class) liberalism, with ideas such as free trade and the “invisible hand” in Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* (1776); Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism; and John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* (1859), where he expressed fear about individual liberty by a tyrannical ruling majority.

C. Nationalism

1. Nationalism before 1848 was associated with liberalism and democracy, but afterward it became aligned with conservative forces.

2. A state is a political entity that levies taxes and passes laws; maintains an army and a bureaucracy; issues passports; and demands certain obligations of its citizens, such as military service, payment of taxes, and obedience to laws.

3. A nation is a group of people bound together by common language, culture, religion, history, and/or ancestry.

4. Before their unification, Germans and Italians lived in dozens of different states.

5. The goal of nationalists such as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and Johann Gottfried von Herder was to realign the identity of people from a local town, religion, and social group into a strong national consciousness based on the nation.

6. Nationalism threatened the territorial integrity of large multinational states such as the Russian, Habsburg, and Ottoman Empires.

III. Political Pressures on the Continent

A. Restoration and Liberal Revolt in France

1. After the restoration of the incompetent Louis XVIII, Charles X ruled from 1820 to 1830, when he dissolved the legislature after failing to secure a majority of his supporters.

2. Liberals successfully revolted in July 1830, installing a constitutional monarch, the “bourgeois king” Louis-Philippe.

B. Nationalist Movements in Belgium, Italy, and Germany

1. Nationalism provided the driving force for revolution in Belgium in 1830; Belgium became a constitutional monarchy in 1831, independent of Holland.
2. In Italy, nationalists included the radical carbonari, who opposed conservative clericalism and supported the Risorgimento, a movement calling for a renewal of Italian culture and nationalism.
   a) Leaders included the middle-class writer, thinker, and organizer Giuseppe Mazzini and the Romantic enthusiast and revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi.
   b) They helped pave the way for future upheavals, but up to 1848, politics in Italian principalities remained with conservatives and clericals.
3. German nationalists gathered at the Wartburg Festival (1817). They defied the repression of the Carlsbad Decrees in 1819 and rallied at the Hambach Festival in 1832 to form “Young Germany.”

C. National Liberation Movements in the Balkans
1. By the 1790s, the local elites who held the power in the Balkan Peninsula were unhappy with Ottoman rule: its high taxes, general lawlessness, and the arbitrary behavior of the troops and local officials.
2. There was competition among the diverse ethnic and religious groups, including Greeks, Romanians, Turks, Germans, Hungarians, and many Slavic groups; these groups were Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Muslim, and Jewish.
3. Early Balkan nationalists demanded political independence, cultural rights, and social development of the impoverished masses.
4. In the Balkans, Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830, Serbia in 1833, and Romania in 1862, all three as new constitutional monarchies.

D. Autocracy in Russia
1. Tsar Nicholas I pursued a policy of absolute autocracy in Russia. He was unwilling to compromise with new ideologies.
2. In 1825, the Decembrists were crushed when they called on the army not to swear allegiance to Nicholas, and a Polish revolt also failed in 1830.
3. The Russian intelligentsia split into liberals, who wished to reform Russia, and revolutionaries, who were driven further underground by the secret police and paranoid censorship, helping to pave the way for a far more destructive revolution later.

IV. Reform in Great Britain
A. Conservative Domination and Reform
1. Conservative policies included the Corn Laws (preventing the import of cheap grain and impoverishing working people) and the Peterloo Massacre (1819).
2. In 1824, Parliament repealed the Combination Acts, which had forbidden workers from forming unions; although strikes were still illegal, workers had won the right to organize.
3. The Catholic Emancipation Act (1829) gave Catholics and dissenters (non-Anglican Christians) the right to participate in Parliament and to occupy all public offices, and the process of Jewish emancipation was completed in 1858.

B. The Reform Bill of 1832 and the Abolition Act of 1833
1. The Reform Bill of 1832 increased the number of voters by 50 percent (from roughly 10 to 20 percent of the population) and redistributed parliamentary representation to benefit the heavily populated new industrial cities and thus the interests of wealthy manufacturers.
2. Reform bills in 1867 and 1884 further extended the franchise, but universal suffrage was not achieved until the twentieth century.
3. Engaging in the slave trade was outlawed in 1807, and the Abolition Act of 1833 abolished slavery throughout the British Empire and paid slave owners the enormous amount of £20 million.

C. The Repeal of the Corn Laws
1. The Parliament now included middle-class manufacturers who opposed the Corn Laws out of commitment to free trade and because the higher cost of bread put pressure on wages.

2. John Bright and Richard Cobden founded the Anti-Corn Law League in 1838, which influenced Sir Robert Peel and appealed to the working class.

3. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 was linked to the millions who died in the Irish potato famine (from 1845), but the benefactors were manufacturers whose workers no longer had to be paid as much to compensate for the higher cost of bread.

D. The Chartist Movement and the Factory Acts

1. Chartism was a working people’s reform movement from the People’s Charter, an 1838 document with six demands: annual Parliaments, universal male suffrage, voting by secret ballot, the elimination of property requirements for members of Parliament, salaries for members of Parliament, and equal electoral districts.
   a) They used modern techniques of political agitation such as mass meetings, distribution of pamphlets, and the Northern Star, but when they brought a petition to Parliament, it was rejected.

2. The Factory Acts passed in the nineteenth century restricted child labor, but they lacked enforcement.
   a) From 1833, children under nine years old could not work in textile mills and maximum work hours were set for workers under age eighteen.
   b) From 1842, women could not work in mines.
   c) From 1847, women and children could not work more than ten hours a day.