

## Conservatism, Liberalism and Nationalism: European Politics, 1815-1900

### SCIENCE CONTINUES

It was not just in relationship to commerce, industry and social welfare, however, that the great scientific achievements of the nineteenth century had an impact. By this time the perspectives of the Enlightenment had so affected both philosophy and science that the climate was more favorable than ever for asking totally new kinds of questions and for challenging old assumptions. The work of Kepler, Galileo and others had completely shattered old concepts of astronomy and physics, and Newton's brilliant exposition of the laws of gravity demonstrated that the entire universe operated on the basis of certain natural laws. Such laws, many people believed, governed not only the relationships between physical bodies, but everything, including human development, social institutions, and political institutions. Moreover, these laws could be discovered. It was this exhilarating possibility that led not only to great scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century but also to new economic and political philosophies, including those of Karl Marx.

**Charles Darwin.** The theory of biological evolution did not originate with Darwin, but it was Darwin who discovered the laws governing the evolution of species. He became the most influential of all nineteenth-century evolutionists. Beginning in 1831 he was the official naturalist on a five-year cruise to Latin America and the South Pacific, during which time he collected numerous specimens of many animal species. As he went from island to island he also observed significant variations between species of both flora and fauna. The matter haunted him, he said, for he could only conclude that somehow these species had been gradually modified. Later, influenced by all this as well as by his study of fossils, he concluded that life did not begin as a special creation, but rather all life evolved from a common ancestral origin. This meant that life forms are capable of change, that variations develop by a process of natural selection, and that in the struggle for survival it is the fittest of each species that survives. The details of Darwin's theory have been modified many times. Scientists still disagree on numerous issues, but virtually all of them accept his general principles of evolution.

**Darwinism and Its Consequences.** The presentation of Darwin's theories had profound consequences for himself as well as for the religious and social perspectives of the world. His famous work, *On the Origin of Species*, was published in 1859, and it had immediate religious repercussions. Darwin himself did not believe that his theories undermined belief in God – in fact, he felt that his theory actually presented a grander view of life. He wrote in the last paragraph of his book:

Thus, from the war of nature, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one, and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of *gravity*, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.

For those who accepted his theories, nevertheless, Darwin had overthrown traditional arguments for the existence of God and traditional beliefs concerning the creation of man. He was almost immediately branded as an atheist and was received with open hostility by religious organizations as well as civic groups and local governments. In the United States, laws were passed against teaching evolution in the public schools, and churches were split over Darwinism and other modernizing forces. In some church-related colleges and universities teachers were fired for promoting such new and "dangerous" views. On the other hand, many people in America and Europe hailed Darwin as the "Newton of biology," and in the minds of many he reinforced the secular teachings of people such as Karl Marx.

In addition, a new school of social philosophy, dubbed "Social Darwinism" and led by the English philosopher Herbert Spencer, applied his principles of biological evolution to human institutions. Through the process of "survival of the fittest," they taught, the human race had progressed ever greater heights, and certain races (the Anglo-Saxon race in particular) had surpassed them all. Both Darwin and Spencer were popular with the upper middle classes, which saw themselves as the result of such evolution. Social Darwinism seemed to be a ready-made justification for imperialism in the nineteenth-century. Spencer was

also widely read in Japan as that state began its modern industrial development and later became an imperial power.

#### **UNDERLYING IDEOLOGIES:**

#### **CONSERVATISM, LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM**

The political turmoil of the age represented a continuing struggle between seemingly well entrenched conservative forces and the yearnings of an assortment of liberals and radicals who wanted to change the system in a variety of ways. Liberalism and nationalism sometimes went hand-in-hand in challenging the conservative establishment. In other instances, as in the case of German unification, nationalism became part of a conservative agenda. In still other cases, as conservatives realized they could not maintain the *status quo* forever, they compromised and even absorbed part of the liberal agenda.

**Nineteenth-Century Conservatism.** Conservatives, such as Austria's Prince Klemens von Metternich, were bent on maintaining the sanctity of traditional political institutions, particularly the monarchy. It was also their goal to maintain a balance of power in Europe in order to ensure a permanent peace. Traditionally they were supported by vested interests, such as landowners, manufacturers, merchants and the churches. Those interests, therefore, usually affected their economic and social policies. They seldom allowed freedom of the press or any serious political opposition, and were often brutal in suppressing dissent.

**Nineteenth-Century Liberalism.** Liberalism was a curse to conservatives, for it seemed synonymous with revolution. Hostile to practically every conservative institution, liberals did all they could to undermine the prerogatives of the monarchy, the aristocracy and the church. They promoted constitutionalism, the idea that government must be limited to specific powers by a written constitution. They also wanted representative, or parliamentary, government; in that sense liberalism became synonymous with republicanism. This often led to demands for a constitutional monarchy as a first step toward a more a more satisfactory regime. Liberals also called for a separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. Above all, they proclaimed the sanctity of the individual and promoted the protection of individual rights – including property rights and personal freedoms. But they also felt that the right to vote should be restricted by property qualifications. In practical terms this limited vote to landowners and well-to-do businessmen and professionals. Liberalism thus became identified with the middle or upper classes, convincing the lower classes that it had little to offer.

Early nineteenth-century liberals were adamantly opposed to government intervention in social and economic affairs. They believed that unrestricted private enterprise, an idea first advanced by Adam Smith, would result in greater productivity for everyone, not just the rich. As the century progressed, however, and as industrialism changed the nature of society, *laissez-faire* (hands off) economics gradually became a tool of businessmen in their quest to remain unfettered by government.

At the same time, liberal concern for the individual brought a change in liberal attitudes toward government intervention. The industrial society had created conditions that seemed to destroy the dignity of the workers and that certainly did not require their bosses to be concerned for their health or physical well being. In the name of the individual, therefore, liberals began to advocate government intervention in the economy for the purpose of promoting individual dignity and freedom. Conservatives began to then mistake liberalism with socialism.

**Nineteenth Century Nationalism.** Nationalism is a complex ideology; it has many diverse definitions and has been manifested in many ways. As it developed in the nineteenth century, it was based on the assumption that the peoples of a particular geographic area shared a cultural identity, as seen in their common history and, in particular, a common language. Nationalists attempted to make this cultural unity a political reality by defining state boundaries that coincided with the territory where each cultural group lived. This, of course, sounded good, but when empires such as Austria, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire controlled vastly diverse peoples, each of whom chafed under the rule of foreign kings, nationalism could become perplexing and explosive. Nationalism and liberalism were sometimes thought of as synonymous because of the liberal emphasis on freedom and self-government.

Unfortunately, some nationalists stressed difference between people to an extent that showed the seeds of antagonism. The modern term "chauvinism" is related to one of Napoleon's soldiers, Nicolas Chauvin, who was known and later ridiculed for his excessive and belligerent patriotism. It was only a short step to a belief in national superiority. It was even a shorter step to theories of racial superiority and, from there, to justification of genocide, tragically exemplified a century later in German anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

## ALTERNATIVE TO LIBERALISM

**Socialism.** Early nineteenth-century socialism was the antithesis of liberalism, for instead of emphasizing individual rights it emphasized the well being of the collective community. That goal, socialists believed, could be achieved only by planned, state-directed social change. Thus they were adamantly opposed to laissez-faire economics. In general, socialists called for state ownership of all means of production and distribution.

**Marx and Engels.** Formulators of the most radical and “scientific” socialist perspective were Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Both came from middle-class German families; Engels’s father owned a textile factory in Manchester, England. Marx became a radical agitator and was eventually driven from Germany. His exile took him to Paris, Brussels and London.

In 1845 Engels published his now famous *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*, which presented the most devastating critique of industrial life yet to appear. Marx, meanwhile, was an avid student of history, law and philosophy. He was much influenced by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and particularly by his “dialectical” logic. Hegel taught that every idea, or “thesis,” gives rise to an opposing idea, or “antithesis,” and that the class between them results in a new “synthesis.” This, in turn, becomes a thesis that produces a new antithesis, and so on. Marx soon developed his own dialectic materialism, which maintained that reality was constantly changing, moving toward the inevitable goal of socialism.

Marx and Engels belonged to a secret, though short-lived, group that called itself the Communist League. The term *communist* was adopted because they wanted to clearly distinguish themselves from the less radical socialists. Communists wanted a complete reordering of society, including the abolition of all private property.

Early in 1848 the two friends published *The Communist Manifesto*, a tract that had little immediate effect on European politics but eventually became the most significant political document to be produced in modern Europe. Using Hegelian-type logic, they argued that the history of humankind was the history of continuous class struggle. At each stage, however, a different class replaced the ruling class. Europe had already passed through three states of rulers: kingly, aristocratic and middle-class (bourgeoisie). The next step was for the propertyless proletariat (working class) to seize power. This must inevitably be accomplished by violence.

In later writings, including his famous *Das Kapital*, Marx spelled out his economic and political philosophy more completely. The value of a product, he believed, was determined by the amount of labor that produced it. Laborers were thus the creators of value, not their bosses, the capitalist factory owners. He predicted that in time all means of production would fall into the hands of a few, making the poor even more numerous and eventually driving them to revolution. The ultimate achievement would be a classless society, in which there would be no such thing as private property and all people would share alike in the means and results of production. Marx also concluded that the achievement of a classless society would mean the end of the national state, for workers would be able to rule themselves. Communism thus became, in every way, the antithesis of conservatism, capitalism, liberalism and nationalism.

**The Trade Union Movement.** Still another alternative to classical liberalism was trade unionism, which grew up in the last half of the nineteenth century. Trade unions were direct responses to the Industrial Revolution. Unionists believed that through organization workers could gain enough economic power to persuade employers that it was in their own self-interest to provide better wages and working conditions. The unionists used picketing, strikes, propaganda, and other presumably peaceful tools to try to achieve their ends, though at times they were associated in the public mind with radicals and communists.

Bitterly resisted at first by industrialists and conservative politicians, unions gradually became an accepted part of European social and economic life. They became legal in Britain in 1871. In France, troops were used to put down early union-inspired strikers, but in 1884 unions were legalized. Numbers in the unions grew rapidly after they were legalized, though they never attracted a majority of the labor force.

**Democracy.** Finally, the most viable and far-reaching political development in the nineteenth-century was the rise of democracy and more broadly based political parties. The modern democratic tradition is a direct outgrowth of the changes made in the nineteenth century. Again, industrialization contributed, as the social and economic problems it created stirred the common people to demand more political influence. The success of the democratic American State led many Europe to push for its spread. At least some degree of democracy existed in every state of Russia by 1900. Even the German Empire had a Reichstag, or lower legislative house, elected by universal male suffrage, though it had little real power.

Elsewhere, as in England, the populace could speak reasonably well through its popularly elected representatives.

### **ACTION BEHIND THE IDEOLOGY THE METTERNICH SYSTEM**

After the defeat of France the four great powers of Europe – Britain, Austria, Russia and Prussia – agreed to form a Quadruple Alliance for twenty years, for the purpose of guaranteeing whatever peace terms were arrived at and to deal with other problems. The Congress of Vienna, which lasted from September 1814 to June 1815, worked out the details. The heads of state met only once, however, at the final and only full session, to ratify the agreements worked out by their ministers.

**Goals and Challenges.** Motivated by largely self-interest, the great powers had several prime goals. One was to create a lasting peace. Another was to create a balance of military and political power to ensure their own security and to guarantee that neither France nor any other power would again dominate Europe. They also wanted to draw permanent, inviolable state boundaries in a way that contributed to the balance of power. In addition, they meant to ensure the perpetuation of monarchy, the political system that was serving each of them so well.

Some issues, including the French boundary, had been decided earlier. France had relinquished all territory recently held on the banks of the Rhine, and its 1791 boundaries had been restored. But there were numerous problems to be solved, including what to do with the Duchy of Warsaw that had been created by Napoleon from Prussian territory. There was also the slippery question of whether old international rivalries really could be overcome in the interest of peace and stability. The eight-month series of meetings, intrigues, and debates reflected the efforts of each state to promote its own self-interest. They hardly trusted each other, but in the end they worked out a compromise system that seemed almost self-enforcing because it was in the self-interest of each of them to maintain it. The system revolved largely around three main ideas. The first was *legitimacy*, or the restoration of “legitimate” monarchies wherever possible. A second was territorial *compensation* to specific powers for various losses. There was also the principle of *containment*, the effort to ring France with strong states that would prevent any future French aggression.

**Legitimacy.** Legitimacy was imposed on France even before the treaty, with the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy and the enthronement of Louis XVIII. Legitimate monarchies were also restored in Spain, Portugal, the Italian states and Holland; Great Britain was returned to the rule of the house of Hanover. There was no attempt to restore the defunct Holy Roman Empire, though a loose German Confederation of thirty-eight states was created with power between the two major German states, Prussia and Austria, strictly divided.

**Compensation.** In applying the principle of compensation, no internal territory was taken from France. But, almost as if they were creating a giant jigsaw puzzle, the powers redrew much of the rest of the map of Europe. Their settlements included the following: Prussia was given considerable disputed territory in Rhineland, on France’s eastern border. Most of the Duchy of Warsaw went to Russia, with other parts being given to Prussia and Austria. Prussia also received, in compensation for the loss of its Polish territory to Russia, Pomerania, two-fifths of Saxony, and the Rhineland territory. Sweden was compensated for its loss of Pomerania and Finland by being given Norway. The latter was taken from Denmark, which had supported France, but Denmark was partially compensated by receiving Lauenburg. Receiving territory in Italy compensated the Habsburg rulers of Austria.

**Containment.** The containment of France was an integral part of some of these new territorial arrangements. Prussia, as a result of its Rhineland acquisitions, became the “sentinel of the Rhine” against further French aggression. The power also created the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which included not just Holland, but also Belgium and Luxembourg. This new monarchy could oppose France more effectively than could Holland alone.

### **THE CONCERT OF EUROPE.**

Among the most influential architects of the settlement at Vienna was Klemens von Metternich, Austria’s foreign minister. At his urging a new international peacekeeping organization, the Concert of Europe, was agreed upon. Sometimes called the Metternich System, the Concert met periodically to consider what to do about various challenges to the balance of power created in Vienna, thus making the European world safe for autocracy. In 1818, at the first meeting, even France was admitted. But eventually the Concert broke down, partly because of disagreement among the powers over when and where intervention was appropriate and partly because an increasing number of Europeans were beginning

to demand a voice in their own political affairs. In addition, the twin forces of nationalism and liberalism were growing apace.

**Cracks in the Concert.** Actually, the Concert began to break up shortly after the first meeting. Their will tested by revolutions in Naples, Spain and Portugal in 1820, and subsequent rebellions in Greece, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Poland throughout the decade. The great powers found themselves in serious disagreement over the question of intervening militarily to uphold “legitimate” governments. Russia, Austria, and Prussia believed they should, but France hesitated. Britain rejected the idea outright and gradually withdrew from the Concert, anticipating the possible need to eventually open trade relations with revolutionary governments.

**The liberal revolts of 1848.** Nationalist uprisings were often accompanied by demands for liberal political reforms, though they were crushed, conservative forces often reversed any gains that had been made. In other cases, however, liberalism slowly began to effect changes in the political systems. The revolutions of 1848 were the result of worsening economic conditions together with smoldering political discontent that had already touched off small outbreaks throughout Europe. Under these conditions, liberals were able to foment a series of revolutions throughout Europe in 1848. Only Britain and Russia remained untouched that year, but elsewhere governments fell, monarchs and ministers lost their power, and even Metternich resigned from office. In the end, however, liberals were unable to gain the support of the masses. Without exception the revolutions of 1848 failed. Once again the old order held on.

**France in 1848.** Louis Philip’s monarchy showed an interest in business development. The growth of industry brought economic prosperity to the upper middle class. Laborers, however, did not share the wealth; they sometimes listened to radical socialists who urged economically and socially planned societies. Early in 1848 many of the king’s opponents met in a series of banquets, where they severely criticized the government and demanded parliamentary reform. When in February 1848 the government prohibited further banquets, crowds again took to the streets of Paris. After considerable violence, Louis abdicated and went to England.

The revolutionaries, who also set about drafting a constitution for the Second Republic, organized a provisional government. But there was profound disagreement within the coalition of liberals, radicals and socialists. With unemployment high, socialists were demanding permanent government-sponsored cooperative workshops that would provide an alternative to capitalism and would eventually lead to a new social and economic order. Moderates rejected such a plan outright, but they compromised by allowing the establishment of a number of national workshops to provide temporary relief for unemployed laborers. In April, however, a new National Assembly was elected, dominated by moderates and conservatives who still had little sympathy for such measures. By June 120,000 people were enrolled in the workshops, with more pressing to join, but that month the new government dissolved all the workshops in Paris. Again Parisians took to the street in protest. During the famous “June Days” of 1848 over 3,000 people died.

Conservative property owners, who still dominated political life, quickly set about trying to create a republican form of government that would satisfy all parties. The new constitution, completed in late June, provided for a strong president and a one-house legislature elected by universal male suffrage. Late in the year Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of the great emperor, was elected as the first president of the Second Republic. It was not long, however, before he was quarreling with the National Assembly. In 1851, through a personal *coup d’etat*, his term was extended to ten years. In a national vote over 7.5 million citizens supported his actions and only 600,000 disapproved. The following year he had himself declared Emperor Napoleon III.

**The Habsburg Empire.** The 1848 French uprising touched off a series of uprisings all over Europe. Within the Austrian Empire they began in Hungary, where nationalists demanded autonomy along with liberal political reforms. Though the emperor promised some reforms and actually abolished serfdom, his opponents were so divided that they did not maintain a strong coalition. In addition, minority groups in Hungary did not support unification. Nevertheless, Austria was unable to put down the rebellion until mid-1849, and then only with the help of Russian troops. A rebellion in Czechoslovakia, meanwhile, came to naught because Czech and German nationalists saw the question of autonomy differently and was able to play one side against the other. Austria’s possessions in northern Italy also set up independent governments, but an Austrian army crushed them in July 1848. In October a rebellion of working-class radicals in Vienna was crushed.

Italian nationalists, meanwhile, had not entirely given up hope. For a time they thought they might enlist the aid of the pope, who had reformed the administration of the Papal States and had a liberal reputation. Political problems in Rome, however, forced the pope into exile. A Roman republic was declared in February 1849. Austria soon overthrew it, however. About the same time, France sent an army into Italy in order to prevent a unified state from emerging there. French troops remained in Rome protecting the pope until 1870.

**Germany.** In Germany, liberals forced Frederick William IV of Prussia to call a constituent assembly in 1848 and announce a new constitution, but a year later their power was so weak that the king could dissolve the assembly and promulgate a more conservative constitution. Various efforts to bring about German unification also failed, partly because liberals lost the support of German workers and artisans who wanted more radical reforms than they were willing to support. The liberals had established a parliament in Frankfurt. They even offered the crown of a united Germany to the King of Prussia, who refused it. They also differed among themselves over whether to include Austria in the projected German State. Because of these problems, the parliament dissolved in 1849.

**Russian Conservatism.** Despite efforts by Peter I and Catherine II to Westernize Russia, that giant empire had generally remained aloof from Western European politics. The ambiguity continued in the nineteenth century, though the tsars involved themselves when it was in their own self-interest to do so. Internally, they also vacillated between semblances of liberal reform and conservatism, but by the end of the century, the power of the tsar remained absolute.

**Shattering the Concert.** The Crimean War (1854-1856) marked a significant turning point, both for Russia and the Concert of Europe. It originated in two conflicts: Russia's long-standing desire to take over the Ottoman Empire's provinces along the Danube, and the conflicting claims of Russia and France as protectors of Christian shrines within the Ottoman Empire. Russia invaded the Danubian provinces in 1853, but the following year Britain and France came to the aid of the Ottomans in order to protect their own economic interests in the eastern Mediterranean. The war was badly managed by both sides, but it ended with Russia giving up most of what it was fighting for. The significance of the war, however, lay not just with the embarrassment of Russia but also demonstrated the Concert of Europe no longer had the will to deal with issues relating to national boundaries. A new era of instability and separate action in foreign affairs was ushered in.

## **REPUBLICANISM FRANCE.**

Napoleon III rejected laissez-faire, believing that government should intervene to promote economic growth and public welfare. His program included many public works, the completion of a national railway network, the formation of credit institutions and a series of commercial treaties that helped promote French trade. At first he was a virtual dictator, keeping a tight reign on the legislature, controlling the press, and making life extremely difficult for liberals and other dissidents. Beginning in 1860, however, he gradually moved toward a moderate liberalism, transferring power to the legislature and promoting other reforms. In 1870 he granted a new constitution that provided for a democratic parliament, though the nation still had a hereditary monarch.

**Disaster in Foreign Affairs.** One factor in Napoleon's latent liberalism was an effort to mask, or compensate for, his foreign policy failures. These, in the long run, proved to be his undoing. He had won a victory over Russia in the Crimean War and had successfully intervened to put down nationalism in Italy. However, he failed in his effort to establish a Mexican empire under Maximilian, failed to stop Prussia's increase in power, and was defeated in the Franco-Prussian War. He once remarked that public opinion always wins the last victory. But even though Napoleon tried to appease the public by promoting some liberal measures, by 1869 republicans, monarchists and liberals all opposed him.

**The Paris Commune.** Napoleon surrendered to the Prussians on September 2, 1870. Two days later the republicans in Paris proclaimed the Third Republic, bringing his reign to an end. A new National Assembly, elected early in 1870 conducted peace negotiations. The settlement included the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany and the payment of a large indemnity. Parisians, in particular, objected; they soon elected a new municipal government, the Paris Commune, which was intended to govern the city independently from the rest of the country. It became a hotbed of radicalism, but in still another Paris bloodbath it was put down by the Assembly's troops. This time 20,000 people died.

**The Third Republic.** Conditions were such, however, that the conservative National Assembly found it impossible to reinstate the monarchy. In 1875, therefore, the delegates finally provided for a

legislature with a lower house elected by universal male suffrage, a senate chosen indirectly and a president elected by the legislature. Thus, after years of internal bickering and violence, France had a republican form of government.

**The Dreyfus Affair.** French republicanism was not yet perfect, however, as illustrated by the Dreyfus affair. In 1894 a military tribunal found Captain Alfred Dreyfus guilty of passing secret information to the Germans. But the evidence was weak, and within two years additional evidence of Dreyfus's innocence began to emerge. Nevertheless, when novelist Emile Zola published a newspaper article accusing the army of suppressing evidence and denying Dreyfus the right to due process, he was convicted of libel. Eventually the officer who had forged the documents implicating Dreyfus committed suicide, but in a retrial the military still refused to admit it was wrong. The president of France pardoned him, however, a civilian court set aside the results of both military trials. The case became the rallying point for French liberals, republicans and socialists in an alliance that lasted for years.

## ENGLAND

England was pursuing a completely different path than the rest of the European powers. It already had a limited monarchy, and a parliamentary government was well established. However, the depression and unemployment that followed the Napoleonic wars did cause demands for reform. This was further exacerbated by the impact of the Industrial Revolution on urban life and poverty. Though revolution did not break out there were numerous demonstrations that sometimes ended tragically. However, the reforms made pushed England further along the road of liberal republicanism, which will set the stage for the full development of democratic government.

**Reforms of Disraeli and Gladstone.** Britain's two leading politicians in the latter part of the nineteenth century were Benjamin Disraeli and William Gladstone. Disraeli, a Conservative, is most well known for his contribution to the expansion of the empire, but he also was interested in gaining support from workingmen. He thus sponsored considerable social legislation and a number of political reforms. He was prime minister from 1867 and again from 1874 to 1880. Among his important domestic reforms were the Public Health Act of 1875, which helped improve sanitation in industrial cities, and the Artisans Dwelling Act of 1875, whereby the government became directly involved in public housing for Britain's laboring class.

Gladstone formed the new British Liberal party from a combination of the Whigs and Radicals. He served as Prime Minister for fifteen out of the twenty-six years between 1868 and 1894. The liberal domestic programs promoted under his leadership were sweeping, responding to most of the serious complaints that had been smoldering for decades. Promotion to the highest military ranks, previously restricted to the upper classes, was opened to everyone. The civil service was reformed. Compulsory, free, public education was developed. Politically, Gladstone introduced the secret ballot in 1872. In the Reform Bill of 1884 most farm workers received suffrage and parliamentary seats were again reapportioned to achieve more fair representation.

## NATIONALISM TRIUMPHANT

Elsewhere in Europe, Metternich's dream of keeping nationalism and liberalism in check continued to rapidly dwindle away. In some cases nationalists were also monarchists, while in other cases they came to power in league with liberals and in the expectation of promoting more liberal reform.

**Italian Unification.** In Italy, nationalists had long wanted the small, autocratic principalities united into a single state such had existed with the Roman Empire before the Lombard invasions of the sixth century, but many barriers stood in the way. They included sectional differences, the question of the role of the pope in a unified national state, and after 1815, the new barriers erected by the Congress of Vienna. At the Congress, the Papal States were returned to the pope, a Bourbon ruler was given Naples and Sicily, Austria received Lombardy, Venetia and the Tyrol, and the Habsburg monarchs were installed in other states.

Many early attempts at unification failed. It remained for Count Camillo di Cavour, who became Prime Minister of Sardinia (Piedmont) in 1852, to achieve the goal. His success in improving economic conditions won him the admiration of other states. Cavour was not averse to using intrigue to create the possibility of uniting those states to Sardinia. During the Crimean War he joined the French and the British in order to win their sympathies. Later he plotted with Napoleon III for a war against Austria. In 1859, at the end of that war, Sardinia received Lombardy. Later in the year most of the rest of northern Italy chose also to unify with Sardinia.

The next year Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had participated in previous revolutions and was a thoroughgoing republican, used an outbreak in Sicily as an opportunity to invade with 1,000 red-shirted soldiers. With the secret support of Cavour he liberated both Sicily and Naples. He also planned to conquer the Papal States, but Cavour, fearing trouble with the pope, sent Sardinian soldiers to occupy them and to hold Garibaldi. Cavour, a monarchist, was fearful also that Garibaldi would set up a republic in the south, so he quickly organized a vote whereby the southern territories chose to join with Sardinia in a united Italian republic. Garibaldi, fully committed to nationalism, went along. In February 1861 the king of Sardinia was crowned Victor Emmanuel II, King of Italy. The Papal States were finally brought into the kingdom in 1870 as a result of the Franco-Prussian war. All the provisions of the Congress of Vienna for Italy had been completely overturned. In this case, monarchism and nationalism worked together to create a new member of the European family of nations.

**German Unification.** Perhaps the most important political development of all in the nineteenth century was the creation of a united Germany. In this case military idealism, conservative monarchial philosophy and nationalism worked together to create the most powerful single state in western Europe – one that would have a pivotal effect on the course of the next century.

In 1862 the conservative king of Prussia, William I, and the liberal parliament were deadlocked over taxes. The king turned for help to Otto von Bismarck, long a dedicated monarchist and reactionary. As soon as he became Prime Minister, Bismarck attacked Parliament, claiming that the constitution permitted collection of taxes even if Parliament did not vote for them. When a popular majority elected a new liberal majority, however, Bismarck saw the need to attract popular support away from the liberals. He did it by diverting public attention to foreign affairs. He went to war with Denmark over the northern duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Austria joined in the war, and the two duchies soon came under the joint rule of both monarchies. In 1866, however, Bismarck picked a fight with Austria over the administration of the duchies. After a quick and decisive defeat the Habsburgs were excluded from German affairs. Prussia thus emerged as the only major power in the German Confederation.

The following year Bismarck incorporated three other states and the city of Frankfurt into Prussia. All the states north of the Main River became the North German Confederation. Prussia, the strongest state, was clearly the leader. The constitution gave the appearance of some liberalism, but the Reichstag (legislature) was limited in genuine power.

**The Franco-Prussian War.** The opportunity for Bismarck to fulfill his dream of complete German unification came when it appeared that a relative of William I of Prussia might become king of Spain. This would antagonize the French, who did not want another German ruler on their borders. Bismarck believed that if France went to war with Prussia, the southern German princes would then not only support Prussia, but would also agree to German unity. Again Bismarck resorted to intrigue, this time by editing a press dispatch to make it appear that William I had insulted the French ambassador. As Bismarck hoped, this so piqued Napoleon III that he declared war on Prussia. True to their treaty commitments, and to Bismarck's plot, the southern German states supported Prussia. In the course of the war the princes of these states joined the North German Confederation in urging William I to accept the title of emperor. On January 18, 1871, the German Empire was declared in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The German princes were heads of their own states within the empire, but Bismarck had achieved the goal of a united Germany. As far as France was concerned, its armies had been shattered, and it finally lost the military dominance it had enjoyed since the days of Louis XIV.

**Eastern Europe.** In Austria, meanwhile, the various ethnic minorities were unable to create a solid front against Habsburg rulers. After unsuccessful revolts of the Czechs and Hungarians, the army was strengthened. New roads and railways were built in effort to discourage any future revolts. In 1866, however, the Prussians defeated Austria, which gave new life to the Hungarian independence movement. A compromise was reached in 1867 whereby the Hungarians were given a separate parliament and constitution, though not a separate king. The dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary thus came into existence. Another bite had been taken from the Vienna settlement and the Hungarians were temporarily satisfied. But the Slavic minorities in the empire were still clamoring for their own autonomy. Czechs, Ruthenians, Romanians and Serbo-Croatians were all dismayed because the German-speaking Austrians and the Hungarian Magyars were allowed to dominate. Except for Hungary, both nationalism and any hope for constitutional government were dead in the Austrian Empire.