

Revolutions of 1848

I. Overview

A. Causes

1. The main cause was liberalism. The middle class sought a more representative government. For this reason, they allied with the lower and working classes, who wanted social reform.
2. The other causes were food shortages and a depressed economy. These things caused the discontent of of the lower classes.
3. Outside of France, particularly in the Austrian Empire, nationalism was a major cause.

*Thus, the revolutionary groups sought different things. The middle class sought more political power and greater wealth, while the working classes simply sought better conditions, both in the work-place and at home.

B. Results

1. Except for the collapse of the monarchy in France, the revolutions accomplished very little. The primary reason for this was the fact that the middle class failed to push for the reforms sought by the lower classes. Without their mass support, the conservative element was able to crush the various uprisings.
 - a. Accordingly, a precedent was established: Liberal middle-class activists could no longer push for political reform without also pushing for social reform.

II. France

A. Fall of the July Monarchy

1. Liberal opponents (middle class) sought an end to the corrupt monarchy of Louis Philippe.
2. The working class, particularly in Paris, supported the middle class because of poor harvests and rampant unemployment. They sought social reform.
3. Crowds grew in Paris and there were many clashes between the citizenry and the municipal guard.
4. On February 24, 1848, Louis Philippe abdicated and fled to England.

B. The Second Republic

1. The victorious groups (middle class and working class) had two different goals:
 - a. The middle class opposition was led by Alphonse de Lamartine
 - 1) wanted an assembly that would write a republican constitution
 - b. The working class was led by Louis Blanc
 - 1) wanted a social as well as political revolution

2. The New National Assembly was chosen (by universal male suffrage), but it was controlled by conservatives and moderates
 - a. did not push for social reform
 - b. cared little about the working class...main objective was to, as usual, protect property rights
 - c. the social revolution was over
 3. Again, riots of the working class population occurred
 - a. however, these were crushed
 - b. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was elected President of the Second Republic
 - 1) the conservative and moderate forces saw him as a source of stability and greatness
- C. End of the Second Republic
1. Louis Napoleon constantly quarreled with the National Assembly
 2. On December 2, 1851, he seized personal power and became Emperor Napoleon III of France

*Ironically enough, more than 7.5 million voters approved of his actions and approved a new constitution that consolidated power. In December of 1852, they approved his making himself emperor.

III. The Austrian Empire: Rebellion in France mustered nationalistic forces within the Austrian Empire. The areas of rebellion within the empire included Vienna, Hungary, Prague, and Italy. All sought independence from the Habsburg Empire. However, because of divisions amongst its enemies and its own willingness to use military force, the Habsburg government survived its gravest internal challenge.

- A. Vienna
1. Students, inspired when Louis Kossuth (a Magyar nationalist) attacked Austrian domination of Hungary, led a series of major disturbances in Vienna (March 13, 1848)
 - a. they wanted to alleviate the plight of Viennese workers and wanted Hungarian independence
 2. Initially, the government fled from Vienna and made various concessions
 - 1) One concession was to abolish serfdom
 - a) the government feared an uprising of the serfs in the surrounding countryside
 - b) the Hungarian Diet also abolished serfdom
 - c) these emancipations were one of the most important results of the revolutions of 1848
 3. Without the support of the serfs, the Vienna uprising was crushed by General Windisch-Graetz on October 31, 1848
- B. The Magyar Revolt

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1. In the spring of 1848, the Hungarian Diet passed the March Laws
 - a. these laws overturned some Austrian law and were part of an effort to establish a separate Hungarian state within the Habsburg domains
 - b. the Hungarians also attempted to annex Transylvania, Croatia, and other eastern territories of the Habsburg Empire
 2. The ethnic groups in these areas resisted the drive toward Magyarization (nationalism and Panslavism)
 - a. they believed that they had a better chance of maintaining their national or ethnic identity, their languages, and their economic self-interest under Habsburg control
 - b. Count Joseph Jellachich was sent to aid these groups
 3. Accordingly, the Austrian forces defeated the Hungarian forces in 1849.
- C. Prague (Czech Nationalism)
1. In March of 1848, Czech nationalists demanded that Bohemia and Moravia be permitted to constitute an autonomous Slavic state within the empire
 - a. They were supported by the first Pan-Slavic Congress (who met in Prague under the leadership of Francis Palacky)
 - 1) this Congress issued a manifesto calling for the national equality of Slavs within the Habsburg Empire
 - 2) also protested the repression of all Slavic peoples under Habsburg, Hungarian, German, and Ottoman rule
 - 3) eventually wanted a vast European Slavic nation or federation of states
 - a) Russia would be the dominant entity
 2. General Prince Alfred Windischgraetz suppressed the uprising by June 17, 1848
- D. Northern Italy
1. A revolution against Habsburg domination began in Milan on March 18, 1848.
 - a. King Charles Albert of Piedmont wanted to expand the influence of his kingdom in Lombardy
 - 1) he aided the rebels
 2. General Count Joseph Wenzel Radetzky defeated Piedmont and suppressed the revolution in July of 1848
- E. Changes in Austria
1. Emperor Ferdinand abdicated in favor of his nephew Francis Joseph
 2. Serfdom no longer existed in the empire

IV. Italy

- A. With Austria's defeat of King Charles Albert of Piedmont, many Italians looked to the liberal Pope Pius IX to unify the Italian states

1. Radical forces, however, took control of Rome and proclaimed the Roman Republic in February of 1849
 - a. Pope Pius IX was forced to flee
- B. In June of 1849, France sent forces to Rome to crush the new radical government.
 1. After doing this, Pope Pius IX was reinstated, but was now a staunch conservative

V. Germany

A. Prussia

1. In Berlin, there was a movement calling for liberal government and German unification
 - a. King Frederick William IV made limited reforms and promised that Prussia would aid the movement toward German unification
 - 1) nevertheless, by 1850, the wealthiest people held most of the voting power and the ministry and army were responsible to the king alone

B. The Frankfurt Parliament

1. On May 18, 1848, representatives from all the German states gathered to revise the organization of the German Confederation
 - a. they wanted a united Germany, but failed to satisfy both conservatives and the working class
 - 1) for conservatives, the Parliament represented a challenge to the existing political order
 - 2) industrial workers resented the fact that the Parliament refused to restore the protection of the guilds
2. On March 27, 1849, the Parliament produced its constitution and offered the crown of a united Germany to Frederick William IV of Prussia
 - a. He refused and the unification effort ended

* "grossdeutsch" → inclusion of Austria in a unified Germany

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