

*greater than that it had possessed for a brief period when European nations were ridding their lands of Napoleonic oppression.*

*So, throughout the three decades after Waterloo, liberal and national movements, and, to a lesser degree, democratic and socialist movements, kept beating against the aging bastions of autocracy and privilege. How long those bastions could endure was a matter of conjecture; but with each fresh mechanical invention and every increase in population, industrialism and trade made their survival more difficult. Metternich was referring to this struggle between the old order and the persistent forces of change when he lamented the fact that he had devoted his life to the task of "propping up a mouldering edifice".*

*The first determined attempt to overthrow Metternichism came in 1830. The French drove out their Bourbon king, and their "July Revolution" set off a chain of revolts across Europe. Conservatism survived that challenge, but the revolutionary movements went on. Conspiracies, assassinations, strikes and insurrections occurred in every country. So when Metternich pointed to forty years of international peace after Waterloo and boasted that he had been "a bulwark of order", he ignored the internal strife that had kept Europe in a ferment. Those who believe that "war is a biological necessity" would probably claim that civil disorders between 1815 and 1854 acted as a substitute for international conflict.*

*Discontent and agitation gradually built up to another wave of liberal and national revolutions in 1848. Meanwhile the Economic Revolution continued inexorably to transform the material basis of life, making more necessary the change in the relationship between government and community for which the revolutionaries were striving.*

### ***In France***

#### **The Bourbon Restoration**

After the fall of Napoleon in 1814, the Allies placed Louis XVIII,\* brother of Louis XVI, on the French throne. The new king, old, tired and crafty, had been in exile for a generation. Being determined not to go on his travels again, he decided that he would not attempt to restore the conditions of the Ancien Régime. His reign was interrupted by the *Hundred Days*, but, after Napoleon's

\*The Bourbons regard Louis XVI's son (b. 1785) as Louis XVII. In 1795 it was officially reported that the Dauphin had died in the Temple, where he had been imprisoned. There is, however, strong evidence to support a theory that, owing mainly to the efforts of Barras and Josephine Beauharnais, he escaped from the Temple. But nothing is known of his life since 1795.

final surrender, Louis returned to Paris and ruled according to the Charter of Liberties he had granted in 1814.

The Charter:

- guaranteed such fundamental liberties as equality before the law, freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, freedom of conscience, of religion and of thought, and the inviolability of property;
- provided for a Parliament consisting of two houses, a Chamber of Peers (appointed by the king) and a Chamber of Deputies (elected by about one hundred thousand property owners);
- gave the king the right to appoint ministers and to convene or dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, which, however, was empowered to initiate legislation and to impeach ministers.

Though there was a basic contradiction in the new constitution—Louis had “granted” it “voluntarily, and by the exercise of our royal authority”, but he had also taken an oath that he would keep its conditions—it actually established a constitutional monarchy similar to the one existing in Great Britain. By the Charter, the peasants and the middle class would keep the land and other property which they had acquired during the Revolution, and which under a despotic government might have been returned to the Church and the nobles, its former owners; the nobles could not recover their old privileges; and the Church was to remain under the Concordat. The number of voters was small—only one hundred thousand in a population of 30 million—but this pleased the liberals, who did not want the right to vote to be given to the poor or the uneducated. France remembered that the election of the Convention—its first experiment in universal suffrage—had been followed by terrorism and despotism. “Property alone”, the liberals believed, “by giving sufficient leisure, makes a man capable of exercising political rights.”

From the beginning it was obvious that the Bourbon monarchy would have difficulty in performing its twofold task of creating national unity and satisfying liberal opinion, for Louis XVIII's moderate policy was strongly opposed by the ultraroyalists, who wanted a restoration of the absolutism and social inequality of the Ancien Régime, whilst, of course, the Bonapartists and the republicans, small in number at first, wanted no truck at all with the restored Bourbons.

In the first Chamber of Deputies the ultraroyalists had an overwhelming majority, but they soon lost favour through their own attempts to restrict the freedom of the Press and through the actions of some royalists in the south and west, who began a vengeful “white terror” against reformers and former republicans. Recognising the unwisdom of the ultras, Louis dissolved the Chamber of Deputies in 1816, and the elections gave the moderates, or constitutionalists, a clear majority. Opposed to reaction and to revolution, the constitutionalists were resolved to support the Charter and to give France a period of peace and economic progress. They would follow a middle course between the extremism of the ultras on the right, and of the Bonapartists and republicans on the left.

Unfortunately, during some rioting in 1820, the Duke of Berry, nephew of Louis and eldest son of the Count of Artois, was assassinated by a fanatical republican, and the ultraroyalists were able to induce the aging king to dismiss his moderate ministers and to abandon his middle-of-the-road policy. The

electoral laws were amended to give a double vote to the wealthiest electors who paid 1,000 francs or more a year in direct taxation. This action was defended by the ultraroyalists, on the grounds that, as the monarch had granted the Charter to the nation, he could change it if he so wished. The new franchise, though it angered the liberals, ensured an ultraroyalist, reactionary majority in the Deputies.

**Charles X's extreme policy.** On Louis's death in 1824, his brother, the Count of Artois, succeeded to the throne as Charles X. An attractive, though unstatesmanlike person with a rash temperament, Charles had always been regarded as the leader of the émigrés. During his long exile "he had learned nothing and forgotten nothing". He remembered the lost absolutism of the Bourbons and all the despotic paraphernalia of the Ancien Régime, but he had not learned that their restoration had been made impossible by events that had happened since 1789.

Charles soon showed his contempt for the Charter. Embittered by exile and the murder of his son, and urged on by the ultraroyalists, he granted an indemnity of 1,000 million francs to the émigrés for their losses during the Revolution. This act antagonised the middle classes, who did not relish having to pay heavy taxes to compensate the nobles. Next the ire of the anti-clericals was aroused, for Charles gave the Church control of education and allowed the Jesuits to return to France. The freedom of the Press was restricted, professors and teachers with radical views were dismissed, and an elaborate system of espionage was established. In addition to infringing the *Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the king began to tamper with the Revolutionary laws by proposing to reintroduce primogeniture and so upset the law of equal inheritances. In the face of growing opposition to his absolute rule, Charles adopted a more moderate policy in 1828, but during the next year reverted to extremism by appointing the Prince de Polignac, a confirmed ultraroyalist, as his chief minister. When de Polignac clashed with the Chamber of Deputies in 1830, Charles dissolved the house. The elections went against him, however, and he found himself faced with even stronger opposition than before. The liberals, Bonapartists, republicans and anti-clericals were united in opposition to reactionary tyranny; and, for the time being at least, the liberals were prepared to forget their deep-seated distrust of the masses in order to gain their support against Charles.

**Material progress.** Until Charles X started on his career of unrestrained absolutism, the restored Bourbons had the full support of the rising bourgeoisie. Louis XVIII retained the laws of the Napoleonic Empire, as well as its strong, centralised administration and its system of direct and indirect taxation. His ministers followed a sound financial policy that gave the country prosperity. Manufacturing and agriculture received tariff protection, excellent roads and canals were constructed, and farming and trade flourished to such a degree that France was able to pay the heavy indemnity imposed by the second Treaty of Paris (1815) and end the Allied occupation in the shortest possible period—three years.

The monarchy gained further prestige when France was admitted to the

*Concert of Europe*, and when French troops later distinguished themselves in the fighting that ended the revolution in Spain.

Between 1815 and 1830 the industrial revolution began in France, a profitable textile industry was established, and the population increased by three million. By July 1830, gas lighting was general in Paris, and the construction of the first French railway had begun. In July, too, the conquest of Algeria marked the beginning of the second French colonial empire.

**The "July Revolution"**. Nevertheless, events of July proved that the liberals were not prepared to accept material progress as an adequate substitute for constitutional liberties. When the elections went against Charles, he immediately issued the "July Ordinances", dissolving the Chamber of Deputies, reducing the number of electors to 25,000, forbidding any publication not authorised by the government, and declaring that the king alone would make the laws. This breach of the constitution, this almost complete return to despotic absolutism, enraged the liberals. The following day the Paris newspapers published a protest calling upon the nation to disregard the Ordinances. Meanwhile three Liberal deputies, Louis Adolphe Thiers, destined to become one of the great figures of French history, Francois Guizot and 63-year-old Jacques Laffitte, an influential banker, began a campaign to rally public opinion against the king.

Encouraged by the journalists and the Liberal parliamentarians, the republicans took up arms. They were joined by the workers, and three days of street-fighting (*les trois glorieuses*) put an end to the Bourbon monarchy. Charles X fled, and a group of business men and bankers, headed by Laffitte, placed Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, on the throne. A member of a junior branch of the House of Bourbon, the new king had fought in the army of the Republic and was now a wealthy Parisian business man with liberal sentiments.

### *The Liberal monarchy (1830-48)*

The accession of Louis Philippe was an important event in European history. Though their economic policies had promoted French nationalism, the Bourbons had failed to reconcile the monarchy with political liberalism, and so they were driven out. This event was a serious breach of the peace settlement of Vienna and the Metternich system. It inspired revolutions in Belgium, Italy, some German states, Poland and Switzerland, while in Great Britain fear of civil disorders hastened the passing of the Reform Act of 1832.

All the Continental revolutions were liberal risings led by the wealthier sections of the middle classes. They were protests against the conservative policies followed by rulers and aristocratic landowners since 1815, and they aimed at creating governments that would be aware of the needs of the new kind of society evolving in Europe. France seemed a model for Liberal revolutionaries to follow, because Louis Philippe, though of royal descent, was widely regarded as a middle-class king, and the period of his reign was referred to as the Bourgeois monarchy.\*The success achieved by the revolutionaries was limited, of course, by the fact that they could not seek the support of the working classes, whom they feared more than the conservatives.

In France itself the "July Revolution" had important results:

- The Charter was revised, and described as an expression of the "will of

\*In history it is also known as the Orléanist or July monarchy.

the nation". Ministers were made responsible to Parliament; the franchise was widened by reducing the age qualification for voters to 25 and by reducing the property qualification; Press censorship was abolished; and Roman Catholicism was no longer to be the state religion;

- The tricolour, the red, white and blue flag of the Revolution, replaced the white Bourbon flag;
- Political power passed from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie (merchants, manufacturers, bankers and such like), as it did in the United Kingdom under the Reform Act of 1832;
- The electors could change the government if they wished, since it derived its authority from their will.

Constitutional monarchy, as set up by the revised Charter, fully satisfied the French liberals, who wanted neither popular sovereignty nor republicanism, which they associated with the excesses of the first French Revolution.

**Economic progress.** Louis Philippe was a respectable, unspectacular monarch. Since his policy was safe, having *peace* and *prosperity* as its objectives, France continued to progress economically. Two thousand miles of railway were laid down in the period 1830-48, and excellent roads were constructed. These improvements in transport led to an expansion of agriculture, which remained the chief occupation of the French people, although large-scale manufacturing developed in some areas, causing a rapid growth of towns. There was, however, little social advancement. The Education Act of 1833, which introduced state-aided elementary schooling, was never effectively administered. Likewise, an act of 1841 to regulate the employment of children was ineffectual because inspectors were not appointed to enforce it.

Public health was neglected. Conditions in the growing industrial towns were abominable, and tuberculosis and epidemics of cholera ravaged France. Poor wages, excessive hours of work, sweatshops, unhygienic factories—all the concomitants of the early stages of industrialism—characterised the new manufacturing areas. In Lyons, for example, employees in the silk industry worked 16 hours a day for a mere pittance. Demonstrations, strikes and riots were commonplace.

**Mounting discontent.** Embittered by their conditions and by the knowledge that the upper middle class was growing rich at their expense, many industrial workers turned to revolutionary socialism as a remedy.

But the socialists were not the only discontented people in France. The republicans felt cheated. They had endured the street-fighting of July 27-29, 1830, but, like their fathers who had fought behind the barricades in the great French Revolution, they had gained nothing. They had only brought to power a bourgeois government that was in many ways just as oppressive as the Bourbon tyranny it had replaced. Often, as well as being a socialist and a republican, the worker was a democrat, demanding the right to vote. All the malcontents had the same aim—to overthrow the monarchy; and in a country with a tradition for conspiracy and mob violence a multiplicity of revolutionary secret societies developed. The Society of the Rights of Man, such underground organisations

as the "Families" and the "Seasons",\* and Louis Blanc's socialist groups were efficiently organised and had a wide membership. (Louis Blanc and early French socialism are treated more fully in Chapter 12.)

Other groups that had been bitterly opposed to Louis Philippe from the first gradually increased their propaganda against the government, especially after Guizot replaced Thiers as chief minister in 1840. Guizot's government was incredibly corrupt, and concentrated its activities on increasing the wealth of a small group of rich capitalists. The inveterate opponents of the July monarchy included the **legitimist monarchists**, who sought a restoration of the Bourbon dynasty and clerical influence, and the **Bonapartists**, who bitterly contrasted the gross materialism of French business life with the glory that France had enjoyed during the Napoleonic period.

After 1840 a new anti-government group was added to the socialists, republicans, legitimists and Bonapartists. This new group comprised **liberals** who bitterly complained that only two hundred thousand Frenchmen had received the vote under the revised Charter, that France had done nothing to aid liberal risings in Italy in 1830-31, and that the liberals who gained power after the July Revolution had quite forgotten that the aim of political liberalism was *government by the propertied classes in the interests of the whole community*.

By 1847 France was teetering on the edge of revolution, and the revolutionary groups, ranging from liberals to reactionaries, were so diverse and widespread that Guizot's secret agents had no chance of keeping them within bounds.

### *In Italy*

Whereas the political factors making for change in France during the period 1815-48 were liberalism (aimed at establishing either a constitutional monarchy or a republic), socialism and, to a minor degree, democracy, the forces of change in Italy were nationalism and liberalism.

A "**geographical expression**". In the words of Count Metternich, the Congress of Vienna left Italy as a "geographical expression". There was no state called Italy. The peninsula was divided into eleven different states, of which only eight were large enough to be important.† These states were:

- The Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, consisting of Piedmont and the island of Sardinia, and incorporating Genoa;
- The duchies of Parma and Modena, and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, all with rulers nominated by Austria;
- Lombardy and Venetia, which were incorporated in the Austrian Empire;
- The Papal States (Romagna, the Marches, Umbria, and the Patrimony of St. Peter and Paul), ruled by the Pope, who was allied with Austria, and opposed Italian unification, which would have led to the loss of his temporal power;

\*The *Society of the Seasons*, like its predecessor, the *Society of the Families*, was organised and led by Louis Blanqui (1805-81), a professional revolutionary. Each group of six conspirators was known as a *Week*, with a leader called a *Sunday*; four *Weeks* formed a *Month*, commanded by *July*; three *Months* formed a *Season*, commanded by *Spring*; and four *Seasons* comprised a *Year*.

† The small duchy of Lucca was incorporated in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in 1847. The little principality of Monaco and the tiny republic of San Marino (area, 24 square miles) have remained independent down to the present day.