

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.

- The Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, consisting of Sicily and an extensive mainland area known as Naples, and ruled by a Bourbon prince under Austrian domination.

Of all the states only Sardinia had an Italian ruler, for, although the reigning Pope was an Italian, it was always possible for a non-Italian to be chosen as Pope.

Reaction. In all states the government was reactionary. The Press was strictly censored, education was controlled by the Church, freedom of speech and of association was restricted, and all manifestations of political liberalism were savagely suppressed. The restored rulers revived absolutism and inequality, and they so strongly hated all changes made by the French that they even condemned vaccination and gas lighting as dangerous French innovations.

Aims of Italian patriots

Although the Metternich system was triumphant in Italy, ideas of liberty and union inspired small groups of Italian patriots. They were determined to establish liberal constitutions in the various states and, after driving out the Austrians, to achieve a united Italy. Nationalism had never been strong in Italy, for the Italians had been divided politically into small states ever since the Middle Ages, and they were also divided geographically by the mountainous nature of their homeland. However, the coming of the French during the Napoleonic wars had given a spur to both political liberalism and nationalism, and the fact that Napoleon had defeated the Austrians and had actually set up a Kingdom of Italy suggested to patriotic Italians a similar achievement on their own initiative.

In 1820 a liberal rising in the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily to drive out Ferdinand IV was mercilessly crushed by an Austrian army. During the following year a similar movement in Piedmont forced the king to grant a constitution, but as soon as he brought in Austrian assistance, the insurgents were overthrown.

The "Carbonari". The rising against Ferdinand IV had been promoted by the Carbonari,* the members of some revolutionary secret societies pledged to free Italy from foreign rule. They knew that constitutional reforms would make no progress in Italy so long as Austrian armies could be brought in to crush liberal movements. Their method was "conspiracy, assassinations and insurrections", but, since they had no nation-wide organisation, their murders and risings were always local in nature and were easily suppressed by Austrian bayonets.

The "July Revolution" had an echo in Italy in 1830-31, when Carbonarist revolts took place in Parma, Modena and the north-eastern part of the Papal States. The rebels were swiftly crushed because their risings were localised, and they neither helped one another nor received assistance from the liberals in other states.

**Carbonari*: Italian, charcoal burners. Possibly so called because some members supported themselves by making charcoal while in hiding in the forests.

Mazzini and the Society of Young Italy. Between 1830 and 1848 the future looked black for Italian nationalism. Reactionary rulers, backed by the Concert of Europe, controlled the peninsula. Austria occupied Lombardy and Venetia. There was disunity between the states, and a great cleavage between the northern and southern Italians, because of differences in their nature, their ways of life and their economic interests. Customs barriers between states prevented the growth of trade. The privileged position of the Church had been fully restored. The Italian liberals looked in vain for French support, because Louis Philippe and his ministers were pursuing an unadventurous foreign policy, and had also largely abandoned their political liberalism of 1830. The Papacy, moreover, was a barrier to Italian unity; for the Pope opposed unification, and some Italian liberals, being devout Catholics, placed his interests before their own political and national aspirations.

Yet there were two rays of hope. The Piedmontese king, Charles Albert, believed in constitutional rule, and his kingdom became an oasis for Italian liberals and nationalists. The other ray came from the *Society of Young Italy*, formed in 1832 by Joseph Mazzini (1805-72), a young Genoese agitator, who, after the failure of 1830-31, denounced the terrorist methods of the Carbonari. He soon had over 50,000 members in his association, and, from exile in Switzerland, he directed an intense feeling into a widespread popular movement for Italian liberation. He preached a *Risorgimento*, a resurrection of the former greatness of Italy. His appeal was directed mainly to Italy's youth. "Place youth at the head of the insurgent multitude", he cried; and then, he hoped, enthusiasm for the task of expelling the Austrians and uniting the Italian states would spread through the length and breadth of the peninsula—an invincible fervour that would accomplish what could never be accomplished by isolated acts of Carbonarist violence. The practical achievements of his *Young Italy* were negligible, but, through it, his impassioned writings, oratory and mysticism crystallised his vision into an ardent nationalism which gripped so many Italians that, by 1850, the eventual liberation and unification of Italy were assured.

Mazzini was a republican. He envisaged a Republic of Italy. Many thousands, however, of those whom he inspired with patriotic fervour wanted Italy united either as a constitutional monarchy under the king of Piedmont-Sardinia or as a federation under the leadership of the Pope. This division of aims delayed the achievement of unity for more than a decade.

In Germany

The German Confederation

The Congress of Vienna left Germany as a mosaic of states. No attempt was made to revive the ancient ghost of the Holy Roman Empire, which Napoleon had abolished. The victorious Allies considered that its many small states, approximately 300 in all, might prove a temptation to future French imperialists. So the number of states was reduced to 39, and, to give these states some semblance of solidarity, they were formed into a loose union called the German Confederation (or *Bund*) under the presidency of Austria. There was, however, no real unity. In each state the king or princeling was an absolute

ruler, a petty tyrant with an extravagant court and with a legion of informers and agents provocateurs to stifle criticism of his reactionary policy. The old aristocracy regained its prestige and privileges, and all changes introduced by the French were stamped out.

Each member-state of the Confederation sent representatives to a Diet, or assembly, which met at Frankfurt. This Diet had no real power. All its decisions had to be unanimous, and, since it had no armed force at its command, it could be defied at any time by even the weakest state. Actually it was nothing more than an organisation:

- to protect the German rulers against
 - (a) political liberalism; and
 - (b) possible French interference;
- to frustrate nationalist hopes of a united Germany.

Napoleon's soldiers had brought liberal ideas into Germany; Napoleon himself had abolished the injustices and inequalities of the Old Régime in the areas of Germany he occupied; and his creation of the Confederation of the Rhine had aroused national hope and pride. German nationalism, thus awakened, was later strengthened by resistance to Napoleonic tyranny and by the part which Germans played in overthrowing France at the battles of Leipzig and Waterloo.

The Carlsbad Decrees, 1819

By creating the German Confederation, the peacemakers at the Congress of Vienna shattered the immediate hopes of a united Germany, while, by restoring reactionary German rulers to the thrones of the various states, they aimed a crushing blow at liberalism. Nevertheless, nationalists and liberals continued to agitate, and following some revolutionary outrages, the ministers of some of the more important Germanic states, at Metternich's instigation, held a conference at Carlsbad and made certain recommendations to the Diet. These recommendations, when adopted by the Diet and promulgated as law, became known as the Carlsbad Decrees, which:

- instituted a rigid censorship of the Press throughout Germany;
- suppressed patriotic student movements (like the *Burschenschaften*);
- appointed inspectors to supervise the teaching in universities and schools.

Metternich's influence was now supreme in the *Bund*, and in 1820 he persuaded the princes of states with constitutions to limit the subjects that could be discussed in parliament. In all these states the franchise was exercised only by well-to-do landowners, but even this amount of constitutional liberalism was anathema to Metternich.

Nevertheless, in spite of repression, liberal agitators continued to spread revolutionary ideas, and in Brunswick, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel and Saxony, news of the "July Revolution" touched off revolts that forced the rulers to concede constitutions. In Bavaria, Württemberg and other states, which already had constitutional government, the princes were compelled to make further concessions. Alarmed by these events, Metternich persuaded the Diet to pass the Six Acts of 1819 to repress all liberal movements, and by 1835 reaction was again triumphant throughout Germany.

The "Zollverein"

Although Metternich and the reactionary German princes had been able to prevent political change by suppressing liberal and national movements, there were economic forces which they could not control, and which inevitably would transform Germany. In the *Bund*, two states, Austria and Prussia, were far more powerful than the rest. Austria proper lay within the boundaries of the Confederation and was peopled by Germans; but a large area of the Austrian Empire was situated outside those boundaries and was inhabited by a medley of economically-backward races—Czechs, Hungarians (or Magyars), Poles, Rumanians, Serbs, Croats, and Italians. As these minorities were "panting to escape" from the Empire, their discontent weakened Austria, leaving her less influential within the *Bund* than Prussia, which had been growing in area and strength since the sixteenth century. Prussia's most sweeping gains had been made at Vienna in 1815. The peace settlement gave her half of Saxony as well as considerable slices of territory along the Rhine. These acquisitions had more than doubled her population, swelling it to about 10 million in a total German population of 21 million.

The problem of administering his new possessions taxed Frederick William III (1797-1840) so severely that he had to allow Metternich and Austria an almost free hand in the *Bund*. During 1818, in an attempt to consolidate his scattered possessions and to reconcile Catholic Rhinelanders and Protestant Prussians, Frederick William III abolished all internal customs lines in Prussia. Eight years later various small German states, which were wholly or partly enclosed by Prussian territory, were drawn into a Prussian Customs Union, or, to use the German word, *Zollverein*. The *Zollverein* established a free trade area and an extensive domestic market in northern Germany, and the benefits accruing to the member-states were so marked that, by 1833, Hanover, Saxony, Bavaria and Wurttemberg had joined in. The *Zollverein* now included 19 states and more than 25 million people. Eventually it incorporated all the German states, with the exception of Austria, which was excluded (at Prussia's instigation) because of the large and diverse non-Germanic element in its population.

As the *Zollverein* created a keen awareness of common interests among the peoples of the German states, it stimulated nationalism at a time when Germany was experiencing the early effects of the Economic Revolution, and when railways were removing the geographical barriers that hitherto had separated the German people. There was a strong tendency to attribute all progress to the economic union, which Prussia had formed. So Prussia, already the economic leader, began to supplant Austria as the political leader of Germany. Too late did Metternich realise that he had allowed Prussia "to consolidate on the firm foundation of material interests a political influence in Germany".

The success of the economic union convinced millions of Germans that political union was highly desirable, and so German nationalism grew apace. As the Economic Revolution was creating a strong middle class in Germany, liberal movements also developed in the various states, with merchants and manufacturers demanding a greater share in the government, which, since 1815, had been dominated by hereditary princes and conservative landed aristocrats.

Thus, as the first half of the nineteenth century moved to a close, both nationalists and liberals sought radical changes in the outmoded political structure of Germany. They believed that it was necessary to have a closer relationship between government and the new kind of society being created by the Economic Revolution.

Document

From A. A. Ledru-Rollin: Election Address to electors of Sarthe, July, 1841

... Sovereignty of the people—that is the great principle which our fathers proclaimed nearly fifty years ago. Yet what has happened to it? Relegated to the phrases of a constitution, this sovereignty has disappeared in the domain of reality. For our own fathers, the people meant the whole nation, in which each man had an equal share in political rights, just as God has given him an equal share in the air and sunlight. To-day, the people means a herd led by a few privileged persons like you and me, gentlemen, who are called Electors, and then by some even more privileged persons who are dignified with the title of Deputies.

Study questions and exercises

Research

1. Show how the fear of revolution, added to the 1830 disturbances, influenced the spread of liberalism in Europe.
2. What influence did secret societies have on the development of liberalism?
3. Explain why Mazzini has been called "the soul" of the Italian national movement.
4. What obstacles were faced by German liberals and nationalists before 1848, and what signs were there that Prussia would be the state to overcome these obstacles?

Essay and discussion questions

1. Describe the main political events in France between 1814 and 1830.
2. What were the achievements of the Liberal Monarchy under Louis Philippe? Account for his failure.
3. What part was played by Mazzini in the unification of Italy?
4. Trace the German unification movement to 1833. What were the main obstacles to be overcome?
5. Why was there a conservative reaction against liberalism and nationalism in Europe in 1815?
6. Outline the main revolutionary movements that undermined the conservative reaction of 1815.

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