15 19th Century Social Unrest and the Development of Nation States

Towards an Industrial Society

Industrialism and urban growth along with political and social revolutions overturned the Old Regime

The conversion of the European economy to industrial manufacturing during the first half of the 19th century reorganized society

In unprecedented numbers, people migrated to cities to find work in the new factories where they faced radically different conditions of life

The Industrial Revolution, led by textile manufacturing, began in Britain in the 18th century

Britain had advantages in natural resources, capital, technology, food supply, relative social mobility, and strong domestic and foreign markets

These gave Britain an edge in developing its productive capacities

The wealth that Britain acquired through various industries (textiles, iron, shipbuilding, china production, etc.) was invested in the development of global networks that enabled Britain to dominate the world scene in the 19th century

However, by the 1830s, Belgium, France, and Germany were headed down the same path as Britain

Large districts of concentrated manufacturing, comparable to the British Midlands did not exist yet in these places and most manufacturing took place in the countryside where new machines were integrated into the existing system of domestic production

As industrialization spread, the population growth seen in the 18th century continued

Between 1831 and 1851 France grew from 32 to 35 million

Germany grew from 26 to 33 million

Britain grew from 16 to 20 million

Increasingly, Europeans lived in cities and by the mid-19th century half of the population of England and Wales was urban

¼ of the population of France and Germany was urban

Eastern Europe remained overwhelmingly rural and little industrialized

The numbers of humans moving into the cities taxed the physical resources of those cities

Supplies of housing, water, food, and lighting could not be improved enough to deal with the migration from the countryside

Filth, disease, crime ravaged the urban populations

The situation in the countryside was little better

Liberal reformers had hoped that the emancipation from serfdom and land redistribution that occurred after the French Revolution would turn peasants into progressive and industrious farmers

However, instead possession of land made them more cautious and conservative

Unfortunately, they existed in a vicious cycle

They owned too little land to support themselves in an increasingly commercialized agricultural economy, and they did not have access to the capital needed to make their land more productive

By midcentury, a revolution was improving agricultural production, but it did so by driving small farmers from the countryside and into the cities

The agrarian emancipation movements throughout Europe had the ironic effect of doing little for the agrarian economies and societies, and contributed to the process of industrialization and urbanization

For example, the century’s worst agricultural disaster was the famine Ireland endured from 1845-1847

A disease blighted the potato crop and caused the starvation of about 500,000 people and encouraged hundreds of thousands to emigrate to urban areas outside of the country

Industrial development was driven by the construction of Europe’s railway system in the 1830s and 1840s

The first railway was in England in 1825, and the first French company began to operate in 1832

Belgium and Germany had trains in 1835

Railways epitomized the character of the industrial economy, one that stressed investment in capital goods more than consumer goods

Capital goods are the machines that produce consumer goods

Railroads speeded industrialization by increasing the demand for iron and steel, and for skilled labor

Increased manufacturing of iron and steel meant that more of these materials were available for the construction of other things

As vast fortunes created by the capital industries were invested to create other enterprises, industrialism grew on itself

The Labor Force

The emphasis on capital goods rather than consumer products meant that workers often found little to purchase for the wages it earned in the new industries

Industrialization, however, threatened to make the skills of many artisans useless and deprive them of control over their trades

During the 19th century, both artisans and factory workers underwent a process of proletarianization

Meaning that they lost ownership of their means of production (tools and equipment) and thus lost control of their trades

They became wage earners

It was the change in the organization of production inspired by the factory model that threatened the skills and livelihood of urban artisans

In the 19th century it became increasingly difficult for the guilds to control trades

Liberals worked to ban labor and guild organizations on the theory that they limited economic freedom

Machine production also reduced the need for the skilled workers associated with the guilds

By the middle of the 19th century, artisans had become the most radical element among European workers

They were defending their traditions

In 1836, radical artisans in London created the London Working Men’s Association

In 1838, they called for six reforms known as the Six Point of the Charter

They called for universal male voting

Annual election of the House of Commons

The secret ballot

Equal electoral districts

Abolition of property qualifications for members of Parliament

Payment of salaries to members of the House of Commons

Unfortunately, Chartism failed to spark a national movement because it split between members who favored violence and those who favored more peaceful means

Also, the return to prosperity in the late 18430s and 1840s caused many workers to lose interest in the issues advocated by Chartism

Nevertheless, as the first large-scale political movement organized by industrialized workers, Chartism provided a model for workers throughout Europe who sought to improve their situation

Family Structures and the Industrial Revolution

Before England’s revolution in textile production in the late 18th century, the individual family was the chief unit of textile manufacturing

It was the mechanization of weaving that led to major changes

A father who became a machine weaver was employed in a factory and his work was then separated from his home

Thus, a major shift in Britain’s family and factory structures took place between the mid-1820s and mid-1830s when spinning and weaving came under one roof, and factories and machines grew larger

The new machines required fewer skilled operators, but many unskilled attendants

Machine tending became the work of women and children due to their physical conditions needed to work with small and sometimes delicate components of the machinery, as well as their acceptance of lower wages and lower likelihood to form labor organizations

Initially children who worked in these factories were the children of the weavers

Eventually, women and children were working for supervisors who weren’t related

Once parents ceased to be present to watch over their children in factories, public concern developed for the child laborer

In 1833, the English Factory Act forbade the employment of children under 9, limited to nine hours the workday of children under 13, and required those children be given two hours of education at the company’s expense

The effect of these types of reforms was to further divide work and home life

This diminished parent-child contact and eventually passed onto schools the responsibility of some of the nurturing and training that traditionally had been done in the home

In the British textile industry by the mid-1840s, male workers had evolved distinct roles as breadwinners, fathers, and husbands

The European family ceased to be an important unit of both production and consumption and became only a consumer

Women in the Early Industrial Revolution

Female workers in the 19th century faced challenges known to few women of earlier generations

Movement to cities and entrance into the wage economy increased their freedom from tradition and in the choice of marriage partners

Since there were fewer familial and community ties, parents made fewer arranged marriages

Cohabitation during courtship became more common as well as the number of illegitimate births

Reliance on industrial wages diminished marriage’s function as an economic partnership and created a new set of relationships

The separation of home life from the workplace made homemaking a distinct occupation, and since the female homemaker was primarily responsible for the purchases that provided her family’s food and maintained its home, she often took care of its finances

Problems with Crime and Order

Industrialization and urbanization contributed to an increase in crime

The ruling ranks developed two strategies for containing crime

Improved policing

Prison reform

Police forces didn’t exist until the early 19th century when Europe invented the concept of a permanent police force distinct from an army

Professional police forces first appeared in Paris in 1829

That same year the British Parliament authorized a police force for London

Thus, policemen in London became known as bobbies, named for Sir Robert Peel who was the sponsor of the bill that created the force

Prison reform began in Britain and France when reformers revealed the horrendous conditions in prisons and demanded change in the 1840s

On the theory that crime was the result of character flaws in criminals, reformers tried to design modes of imprisonment that would correct the criminal’s psyche

All the popular experiments implemented in Europe were ideas that had spread from the United States

Most of the experiments involved separating prisoners from each other in individual cells

The point was to turn the prisoner’s mind in on itself and to force it to confront its criminal tendencies

Prisoners were supposed to be trained in some trade or skill while in prison so they could reemerge as reformed, productive citizens

Classical Economics

19th century attitudes towards commerce were shaped by the classical economists, the disciples of Adam Smith who advocated economic growth through competitive free enterprise

These economists distrusted government intervention in economic processes and argued that government’s functions ought to be limited to maintaining a sound currency, enforcing contracts, protecting property, and keeping tariffs and taxes low

The economist Thomas Malthus claimed that a growing population would eventually outgrow the food supply, and he argued that the only hope for improving the lot of society was to persuade it to spend wages on consumer goods and have fewer children

Employers welcomed Malthus’ theories as justifications for low wages and opposition to trade unions since Malthus argues that if wages were raised it would speed up the process of social decline since it would encourage workers to have more children

The economist David Ricardo argued that if wages were raised, more children would be produced and when they entered into the labor market, the increased number of workers would lower wages

As wages fell, workers would have fewer children, and when a labor shortage developed, wages would rise again, starting the process all over again

The effect in the long run was to keep wages at a minimum level

The British utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham proposed a principle of utility or the greatest happiness for the greatest number, as a scientific standard to guide government decisions

He argued that the application of the principle of utility would sweep aside the special interest of privileged groups and the legal clutter that obstructed justice

This inspired the House of Commons to pass a new Poor Law in 1834 that set up a Poor Law Commission to make sure the poor were motivated to embrace self-discipline and hard labor

Parliament also repealed the Corn Laws in 1846

The idea behind the repeal was that it would lower food prices, and would thus allow workers’ wages to be reduced

This would reduce costs for British manufactured goods and enhance their competitiveness in the world market

The repeal of the Corn Laws began an era of free trade that lasted until the late 19th century

Early Socialism

Early critics of industrialism were called utopian socialists for their visionary programs involved with the creation of ideal communities with non-capitalistic values

Count Claude Henri de Saint-Simon was the earliest of the socialist pioneers

He was a liberal French aristocrat who fought in the American Revolution and welcomed the French Revolution

By the time of Napoleon, he had become a writer and social critic

He was convinced that modern society needed thoroughly rational management

He argued that expert management of wealth, not its redistribution, would alleviate poverty and suffering

The first British advocate of socialism was Robert Owen, a self-made industrialist

Owen argued that human characters could be improved by improving their surroundings and he tested his theories at his factories where he provided his workers with a model community in order to improve the character of his workers and thus their productivity and the profitability of the factory

Charles Fourier in France developed ideas similar to Owen’s by arguing that the industrial revolution ignored the emotional side of human nature and the human desire for things in which to take delight

He advocated the construction of communities where liberated customs would dispel the dullness of factory life

In the organization of labor, Louis Blanc called for the end to competition by having the state to become the great employer with the mission to improve the condition of laborers by the laborers themselves

A few social critics of the 1840s were called anarchists because they opposed any cooperation with organized industries or governments

Auguste Blanqui sought the abolition of capitalism and the state

Blanqui advocated terrorism in order to attack capitalism

Pierre Joseph Proudhon was a peaceful anarchist who wanted society to be based on mutualism

He argued that a system of small businesses peacefully cooperating would make the state redundant

The German philosopher Karl Marx argued for what he termed communism, which implied the outright abolition of private property rather than socialism’s reorganization of economies

Marx drew his theories from German Hegelianism, French socialism, and British classical economics

He claimed that conflicts between dominant and subordinate groups led to the rise of a new dominant group for society, and that this group became the source of new discontents and conflict that led to further development

The socialists made Marx aware of the significance of property in the formation of classes

The classical economists provided Marx with the analytical tools which he carried out his analysis of industrialist capitalist society

He came to the conclusion that the proletariat was the most potent force in contemporary history, and he equated the fate of the workers with the fate of humanity itself

He argued that a universal utopian society would emerge as the proletariat succeeded in liberating itself from bondage to the capitalist mode of industrial production

1848: The Year of Revolutions

A series of revolutions erupted across Europe in 1848

They had no single cause, but they shared similar conditions

Severe food shortages

Economic depression

Widespread unemployment

Overburdened poor relief systems

Wretched living conditions

Discontent among artisans and workers

The agents of change were political liberals from the middle ranks who were agitating for more civil liberties, better representative government, and an unregulated economy

They sought peaceful means to achieve their goals, but they put pressure on governments by appealing to support from urban workers

Also, nationalism played a part in the uprisings, with the exception of France

Unfortunately, all the revolutions failed due to the fragmented nature of the movements

Nationalistic groups turned against each other, and differences in goals divided middle class revolutionaries from those of the working classes

In France, the revolution began in Paris

Liberal opponents of the monarchy organized a series of banquets to rally support for increasing the privileges of the middle class

Angry workers were willing to support any movement critical of the government

When the king tried to silence his critics by forbidding the banquets, the workers took to the streets

The government quickly lost control and Louis Philippe abdicated and fled to England in February 1848

The liberals set up a provisional government in preparation of a new National Assembly and constitution

However, various Parisian workers wanted more and were able to force the government to provide for public works and relief programs

When a new National Assembly was formed it was dominated by moderates and conservatives not wholly in favor of the demands of the workers

When the new government began to trim the public works and relief programs, unemployed Parisian rioted and in June 1848 began to erect barricades in the streets

The government called on the military to put down the uprising and over 400 were killed in street fighting

This so-called Days of June ended the drive for social revolution and confirmed dominance of French politics by liberals who wanted safety for small property

These conservatives were further strengthened when Louis Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon, won election to the presidency in late 1848

Louis was not dedicated to republican ideals

He opposed the National Assembly claiming that he represented the state, not the Assembly

He forcibly dispersed the Assembly when they wouldn’t allow him to run for reelection

In 1852, Louis Napoleon declared himself Emperor Napoleon III

France’s revolution of 1848 shook the Habsburg domains, where the frustrations of liberals and nationalists were building to dangerous levels

The Habsburg troubles began in March 1848 when Hungarian nationalists called for the independence of Hungary

This inspired riots in Vienna, and when the army failed to put down the riots, Metternich resigned and fled the country leaving the feeble emperor Ferdinand to try to restore order

Ferdinand promised a moderately liberal constitution, but that was not enough for the radical liberals and the emperor fled Vienna

The Habsburg government mostly feared an uprising of the serfs

Immediately after the Vienna revolt, the imperial government emancipated the serfs

This action headed off the most potential threat to order in the empire

The Vienna revolt encouraged the Hungarians, and when the Hungarian Diet issued a reform program led by liberals and nobles, the emperor had little choice but to acquiesce to their demands

In March 1848 with Vienna and Budapest in revolt, Czech nationalists demanded that Bohemia and Moravia be recognized as an independent Slavic state within the Habsburg empire

Conflict immediately broke out between the Slavs and Germans in the provinces

The Czechs convened a meeting of representatives of Slavic peoples

This Pan-Slavic Congress issued a manifesto calling for the national equality of the Slavs within the Habsburg Empire, and protested the repression of the Slavic peoples under Habsburg, Hungarian, German, and Ottoman domination

The Habsburg government also faced war in northern Italy

Revolution began in Milan in March 1848 and Austrian forces withdrew from the city

However, the revolt was suppressed in July and Habsburg rule was restored

The Italian revolutionaries then turned to the liberal pope, Pius IX to seek the unification of Italy and the defeat of the Habsburgs

Unfortunately, political radicalism got out of control in Rome and the pope was forced to appoint a radical ministry for Rome, and then he fled to Naples

The radicals proclaimed Rome a republic, and nationalists from all over Italy flocked to Rome, hoping to use the city as a base to unite Italy under a republican government

When war with Austria was reignited in northern Italy in March 1849, radical forces there were defeated, and Rome was now threated by the Habsburgs

However, France was not interested in growing Habsburg strength in Italy

They sent 10,000 soldiers to Rome who defeated the republicans and restored the pope where he was protected by French soldiers until 1870

From that point, the pope was not to be a source of Italian unification

The revolutionary contagion spread through Germany

Liberals demanded liberal government and greater national unity

The most serious disturbances occurred in Prussia

Revolutionaries in Prussia forced the king (Frederick Wilhelm IV) to convene a constituent assembly to write a new constitution

The king also implied that he would work for German unification

Essentially the Prussian monarchy capitulated to the demands of the liberals

When the constituent assembly became divided between moderate liberals and radicals, the king dissolved the assembly and proclaimed a constitution of his own

All males were given the vote, but they were divided into three classes according to the taxes they paid, and were limited to voting for representatives from their class

The king’s ministry reported to the king alone and the Prussian army swore direct loyalty to the king

In May 1848, representatives of all the German states met in Frankfurt to reorganize the German Confederation

A split developed between liberals and workers, and conservatives were able to exploit this division for the remainder of the century

Another problem was that members could not agree on whether to include Austria in a united Germany

The small Germany faction prevailed when Austria rejected the whole notion of unification

Austria took this position because the large number of non-German subjects in the empire feared German domination

Austria’s opposition to unification strengthened support for Prussian leadership of Germany

In March 1849, the Frankfurt Parliament offered the crown of a united Germany to Frederick William IV of Prussia

Frederick William IV rejected the crown on the principle that kings ruled by the grace of God, and not man-made constitutions

This refusal caused the Frankfurt Parliament to collapse and was a blow to German liberal reformers

In the end, all the various German revolutions accomplished was an extension of voting in some German states and the establishment of conservative constitutions

The Age of Nation-States

The Crimean War (1854-1856)

At the mid-19th century point the impetus for political change was the Crimean War

An effect of long-standing rivalry between Russia and the Ottoman Empire

The tsar wanted to expand southward and to protect the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire

The French and the British had interests in the eastern Mediterranean and didn’t want to see Russian expansion in that area

Austria and Prussia remained neutral

The overall effect of the war was a defeat for Russia, and the end of the Concert of Europe which was to maintain the balance of power in Europe after the Congress of Vienna

The suppression of the revolutions of 1848 increased the confidence of nations in their ability to control domestic affairs, thus many were now more willing to embark on aggressive foreign policies to achieve their ends

Their ambitions were only limited by the extent of their military and diplomatic resources

Italian Unification

In Italy, following the Congress of Vienna, romantic republicans took the lead in rallying nationalistic sentiment

In 1831 Giuseppe Mazzini founded the Young Italy Society

It was dedicated to driving Austria from the peninsula and establishing an Italian republic

During the 1830s, Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi led insurrections against the Austrians

They were initially unsuccessful in the 1850s and went into exile to the US where they publicized their cause

Over time, more moderate Italians wanted to end Austrian domination, but they didn’t want a republic

It was Camillo Cavour who then sought to unify Italy under a constitutional monarchy

Cavour created the Nationalist Society to win support for his cause and solicited help from France (he had family connections to France and Napoleon)

Cavour established his cause as a liberal alternative to both republicanism and absolutism

When an Italian attempted to assassinate Napoleon III in 1858, the emperor took an interest in Italian politics and sought to take a role in liberating the peninsula from the Austrians

He provoked the Austrians into war

When the French defeated the Austrians in northern Italy, revolutionaries seized control in other Italian states

Austria thus being removed from northern Italy, helped give rise to the unification of northern Italian provinces

At this point the romantic republicans pressured the northern Italians into uniting with the southern provinces

Garibaldi landed in southern Italy and worked his way north

Garibaldi wanted a republic, but Cavour resisted him and seized the area around Rome

Garibaldi succumbed to Cavour’s leadership and demands, and southern Italy joined the unified northern provinces in 1860

In 1861 Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed king and unfortunately Cavour died three months later

The unification of Italy was more the result of conquest than unification

North and south were not compatible in many ways

The south resisted northern political dominance

The political system set up by the king was inadequate

The king’s ministers reported to the king and not the parliament

The parliament had little power

The political system was corrupt as bribes were used to make political alliances

Rome and the Vatican were not included since French troops protected the pope and the church there

When the French removed troops from Rome during the Franco-Prussian War in 1866, the city was then included in Italian unification

However, the Vatican retained its independence and its hostility to the unified Italian state until 1929

By 1870 of all the lands the Italians thought of as theirs, only the province of Trent and the city of Trieste remained under Austrian domination

A patriotic desire to liberate all of Italy helped persuade the Italians to support the Allied against Austria and Germany during WWI

German Unification

The most important political development in Europe between 1848 and 1914 was the unification of Germany

German unity had been sought by two generations of liberals, but unification ultimately was the product of conservative moves made to outflank liberals

Liberal nationalists were in retreat after the suppression of the revolts in 1848 and 1849

William I succeeded Frederick William IV and was determined to enlarging the Prussian army

Parliamentary liberal leaders opposed this move in order to avoid increasing the power of the monarchy

Thus, they refused to raise taxes and resisted doing so for two years

In September 1862, William I turned to Otto Von Bismarck for help in breaking the deadlock

Bismarck was an aristocrat that favored a strong monarchy under a constitution, and he opposed parliamentary government

William I appointed him prime minister of the Prussian Parliament

When he became prime minister, he moved against the liberal parliament and argued that the government could impose taxes without parliamentary consent

When popular support favored the Parliament over Bismarck, he had to find a way to wrest public favor away from the Parliament

Bismarck’s strategy was to propose using Prussia’s institutions as a basis for German unification

A quarrel between Denmark and the German Confederation gave him the opportunity to get going on German unification

Bismarck proposed that Prussia and Austria cooperate to resolve the

situation, and Denmark was easily defeated

Meanwhile, Bismarck gained Russia’s friendship by supporting the Russian suppression of a revolt in Poland, and he convinced Napoleon III not to intervene in case of a conflict with Austria

In 1866, Bismarck concluded a treaty with Italy, promising Italy territory if it supported Prussia in an attack on Austria

In 1866, Austria and Prussia became locked in war over territory in northern German that Austria gained in the war against Denmark, and Austria was quickly defeated

The loss of the war deprived the Habsburgs of the role they had previously played in German affairs

At that point, Prussia emerged as the only major power among the German states

In 1867 Prussia annexed the northern German states

Each state retained its own government, but all military forces were placed under federal control of which the Prussian king was the federal president

The German federation was also governed by a bicameral legislature

The constitution of the North German Confederation became the constitution of the German Empire after 1871, and it looked more liberal than it was

Bismarck, in effect, subjected Germany to a military monarchy

Bismarck’s liberal opponents acquiesced because their desire for national unity proved greater than their commitment to liberal principles

Events in Spain eventually led to war between Prussia and France and the unification of the southern German provinces with the northern ones under the leadership of Prussia

A question of succession to the throne in Spain led to the possibility of a cousin of the Prussian king to become the king of Spain

Pressure from the French prevented this from happening

However, when the French sought a promise that the Prussian king, William I, would denounce his kinsman’s claim to the Spanish throne sometime in the future, the king refused

Bismarck released to the press that the king was insulted by the French demands and France was goaded into declaring war on Prussia on July 19, 1870

Once conflict erupted, the south German states rallied to Prussia’s side

In September, the Germans defeated the French army, captured Napoleon III, and Paris was besieged

On January 18, 1871, at the Palace of Versailles, the German Empire was proclaimed

Paris surrendered 10 days later, and a peace conference was held

France ceded bordering territory to Germany

German unification changed the face of Europe by creating a powerful new state

A humiliated France returned to a republican government

Liberals everywhere were alarmed, for conservative politics now had the backing of the strongest state on the continent

France: From Liberal Empire to Third Republic

Napoleon III’s reign is divided into two parts

1851-1860 authoritarian government

1860-1870 more liberal government

In the late 1850s Napoleon III suffered setbacks that forced him to change his domestic policy

His influence in Italy faded as unification took hold there

He couldn’t do anything to prevent Prussia from unifying Germany

He was humiliated when the French army intervened against the Spanish in Mexico, and was defeated there in 1867

To shore up support at home after these foreign policy failures, Napoleon III began making liberal concessions

Granted the legislature greater freedom of debate

Concluded a free trade treaty with Britain

Relaxed laws limiting the press and labor unions

He accepted a ministry of moderates

He approved a liberal constitution that made the ministers responsible to the legislature

He began the war with Prussia hoping that the conflict would consolidate his support

However, the opposite was the case

When he was captured by the Prussians, the French repudiated the monarchy and proclaimed a new republic

A new French National Assembly accepted Prussia’s terms for peace and signed the Treaty of Frankfurt

Many Parisians felt betrayed by the National Assembly and installed the Paris Commune in March 1871

The Commune was a municipal government that pledged to administer Paris separately from the rest of France

The National Assembly surrounded and besieged Paris and defeated the insurgents, killing about 20,000

The National Assembly was dominated by monarchists

However, there was a dispute over which aristocratic house would be declared the royal lineage

In 1873 the president of the assembly Marshal MacMahon, favored the restoration of the monarchy, but due to the dispute over the royal family, decreed that a Chamber of Deputies be elected by universal male suffrage

This launched the Third Republic

The Habsburg Empire

After 1848 the Habsburg Empire became a problem to itself and to the rest of Europe

In an age of nationalism, liberalism, and industrialism, the Habsburg domains remained dynastic, absolutist, and agrarian

Emperor Francis Joseph reigned from 1848 to 1914

He was honest but unimaginative

He reacted to events instead of commanding them

The emperor’s absolutism and setbacks in foreign affairs led to regional resentment and opposition, and eventually to the fall of the empire

Austria’s refusal to support Russia in the Crimean War cost the Habsburgs help from Russia in Hungary, and this removed an external prop for their power there upon which they relied

Together with the loss of territory in northern Italy, Austria struggled to maintain a viable system of government in its territories

The emperor proposed a federated government vested in a single imperial parliament and dominated by the aristocracy

When the Hungarian nobility rejected the plan in 1861, the emperor responded by issuing the February Patent which was a slightly reformed government, but not sufficiently reformed for the Hungarians

The emperor was forced to come to terms with the Hungarians, and the empire was reorganized as a dual monarchy in 1867

Except for a common ruler and a few shared ministers, Austria and Hungary functioned as separate states

By acceding to the nationalistic desires of the Hungarians, the Compromise of 1867 increased tensions within the empire

Many ethnicities within the empire opposed the compromise because it permitted German Austrian and Magyar Hungarians to dominate over other nationalities

For example, Czechs in Bohemia demanded that they be given similar concessions like those given to Hungary

The Hungarians and the Germans in Bohemia opposed this

Nationalism became stronger in the Habsburg Empire and divisions between ethnicities more tense and clearly drawn

Strife between the diverse nationalities within the Habsburg Empire created political instability in central and eastern Europe

Nationalists wanted self-determination within the empire and unification with fellow nationals outside of the empire

The significance of the nationalist unrest in the empire helped bring on WWI, WWI, and the ethnic violence of the post-Cold War era in the 1990s

Russia: Emancipation and Revolutionary Stirrings

The Crimean War made reform necessary and possible in Russia

Alexander II seized the opportunity and attempted the most extensive restructuring of Russian institutions since the days of Peter the Great

At the end of the Crimean War in March 1856, Alexander II announced his intention to abolish serfdom

Finally in February 1861, despite opposition from the nobility and landlords, he issued the emancipation statute

Former serfs were disappointed though since freedom did not include land

They were required to buy small plots that were often insufficient in size

The abolition of serfdom required the reorganization of local government and the judicial system

Village communes replace landlords, and nobles were appointed to provincial and county councils that oversaw public works

The system was never very successful

Western Europe legal principles such as equality before the law, impartial hearings, uniform procedures, judicial independence, and trial by jury were adopted

Poor performance of the Russian army in the Crimean War prompted reforms

Military service was reduced in years and discipline was relaxed

Poland posed a problem for Russia, as Polish nationalists sought to end Russian dominance there

In response to the troubles there, Alexander II emancipated the Polish serfs, and imposed Russian law, language, and administration throughout Poland

Poland was treated as a Russian province until WWI

Alexander II entertained no reforms that would limit his autocracy, and he received little gratitude from his subjects

After an assassination attempt in 1866, the tsar turned Russia into a police state, which fueled the activities of political radicals

One of the most prominent critics of the tsar was Alexander Herzen

He organized a movement known as Populism which sought to use the communal life of Russian peasants as a model for rebuilding Russian society

The movement failed as it fell short of its goal to win support from the peasants

When the tsar imposed heavy penalties on revolutionaries, they were convinced that they had to attack the regime directly with violence and a strategy of terrorism

In 1879 a radical organization called Land and Freedom split into competing factions

The faction (People’s Will) that focused on the assassination of the tsar was ultimately successful on March 1, 1881

The effect of the assassination with the ascent of Alexander III to the throne

He favored more government centralization, and a stronger secret police and censorship

This legacy of reactionary policies was eventually handed down to his son Nicholas II, eventually contributing to the destruction of the Russian monarchy

Great Britain: Toward Democracy

Britain was the model of the confident liberal state with stable political institutions able to handle all difficulties and domestic conflicts

Several things contributed to its success

Parliament admitted new constituents and interests to the political process

The general prosperity of the times mitigated social tensions

And all classes of British society shared a belief in competition and individualism

During the 1860s pressure built to widen the franchise

In 1866 a liberal minister introduced a reform bill, and when the new conservative minister Benjamin Disraeli proposed an even more sweeping proposal, the passage of the act nearly made Britain into a democracy

This act secured the support of the working population for the Conservative Party which would dominate British politics for much of the 20th century

The administration of William Gladstone as prime minister from 1868-1874 marked the culmination of British liberalism

He opened to people of all classes and all faiths the institutions that had been the preserve of the aristocracy and the Anglican Church

All of the reforms were typically liberal in that they ended abuses of power without destroying existing institutions

They enabled all citizens to compete on the grounds of ability and merit

They created new bonds of loyalty to the nation by abolishing sources of discontent

When Disraeli assumed the prime minister’s office in 1874, he sought to institute paternalistic legislation and state action to protect the weak

Acts were passed that improved the conditions for the working classes, and expanded protections for trade unions so that workers could fight for additional reforms

From the late 1860s onward, Irish nationalists sought home rule

Gladstone helped pass legislation in 1869 that disestablished the Anglican Church in Ireland so that Roman Catholics were not taxed to support Protestant clergy

In 1870 a land act was passed to provide compensation for evicted Irish tenants, and extended loans to those who wished to purchase lands

The Irish question lingered as land continued to be at heart of the problem

Gladstone strengthened tenant rights but also issued an act that helped restore law and order to Ireland

When Gladstone pushed for Irish home rule, he was opposed by various factions in 1866

In 1892, when Gladstone returned to the prime minister’s office, he tried for Irish home rule again, but was once again defeated

In 1903 some reforms were given to Ireland transferring land to ownership by former tenants

In 1914 a third home rule bill was passed, but WWI suspended its implementation

In the meantime, Irish nationalists were becoming more insistent, not only on home rule, but for complete separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom in an effort to create a republic