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Liberalism, Nationalism, and Socialism - The Revolutions of 1848

Developed by Lawrence Frohman for AP European History

Task: Explain the role of liberalism, nationalism, and socialism the the revolutions of 1848 in **three** different European countries. Pay attention to the way the constellation of revolutionary and conservative forces shaped the dynamic of revolution in each country.

Historical Background: Since 1815, there had been an ongoing struggle all across Europe between the forces of revolution and the increasingly reactionary forces of conservatism and reaction, led by Prince Klemens von Metternich. Although the members of the Holy Alliance had successfully intervened to defeat revolutionary movements from 1819 to the 1830s, they could not eliminate the spirit of revolution. At the same time, economic development was increasing the strength of the middle classes and leading to the rise of socialism.

Document 1: Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party (January 1848). A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piece-meal, are a commodity...The advance of industry replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!

Document 2: From *La Réforme* (February 26, 1848). If some citizens, suffering because of the competition from powerful interests, were to let themselves be dragged into machine breaking, they would be mistaking their real enemies. Their enemy is not the economic and highly productive machine. It is the feudal-industrial government that, in order to found its power on the slavery of hunger, has cheapened labour and refused the workers both credit and the right of association. With the institutions that should flow from government based on the sovereignty of the people and subject to control by the people, these vices will be a thing of the past. Machines are above all a potent force for revolution and democracy. Instead of crushing democracy and revolution as in the era of feudal industry, they should set the people free.

Document 3: Louis Blanc, in the Name of the Provisional Government (Feb. 25, 1848). The provisional government of the French Republic undertakes to guarantee the workers' livelihood through work. It undertakes to guarantee work for every citizen. It recognizes that workers should form associations so that they may enjoy the profits arising from their toil.

Document 4: The People's Commission in Hanau to His Royal Highness the Elector of Hesse (March 11, 1848). The people sees in this failure to grant its requests a proof of the necessity to band themselves still more closely together and to assume an attitude of stronger opposition to your Royal Highness. The people of which we speak is no longer the mere idea of former times: no, it means everybody, everybody! The people demands its rights. It states its will that its future shall be better than its past, and this will is irresistible. the people has chosen a Commission, which now demands for it, and in its name:

- 1.The filling of all ministries by men who enjoy the confidence of the people.
- 2.The dissolution of the Diet..and its immediate re-summoning as an electoral body.
- 3.Complete freedom of the press.
- 4.Complete amnesty for all political crimes committed since 1830.
- 5.Complete freedom of religious thought and practice and of conscience.
- 6.The revocation of all ordinances restricting the enjoyment of constitutional rights, especially those affecting the right of petition, of union and of meeting.

Document 5: Resolutions of the Frankfurt Pre-Parliament, “Basic Rights and Demands of the German People” (April 4, 1848). Equality of political rights for all without distinction of Religious confessions, and independence of the Church from the state. Full freedom of the press. The right of free association. The right of petition. A free state constitution with representation of the people and a decisive voice of the deputies of the people in legislation and taxation and with responsibility of ministers. Just assessment of taxable duty according to taxable capacity. Equality of the duty and the right to

bear arms. Equal eligibility of all citizens for communal and state offices. Unconditional right to emigrate. General German state citizenship. Freedom of teaching and learning. Protection of personal freedom. Protection from the refusal of justice. Independence of justice. Public and oral administration of justice and trial by jury in criminal matters. A complete credit system with agricultural and workers' schemes. Protection of labor through institutions and measures which preserve those incapable of working from want, which secure gainful occupation to the unemployed, which adapt the organisation of crafts and factories to the needs of the time. School education for all classes, trades and professions from state resources.

Document 6: Francis Palacky's Response to the Frankfurt Parliament (April 11, 1848). With true gratitude I recognize in this [invitation to send Bohemian representatives to the Frankfurt convention] the high humanity and love of justice of this excellent assembly.... However, much I respect this endeavour and the feeling on which it is based, and particularly because I respect it, I cannot participate in it. I am not a German--at any rate I do not consider myself as such...I am a Bohemian of Slav descent and with the little which I possess and can do have devoted myself totally and forever to the service of my people. This people is, indeed, a small one, but has always been a distinct one and one existing for itself. Its rulers have for centuries participated in the German union of princes; it has never, however, counted itself as part of this people, and it has not been considered as belonging to it by others.

Document 7: Declaration of the Russian Government Concerning Hungary (April 27, 1848):

The insurrection in Hungary has of late made so much progress that Russia cannot possibly remain inactive. A temporary insufficiency of the Austrian forces, divided as they are on many points, has favored the progress of the insurgents...They occupy almost the whole of Upper Hungary and of Transylvania. Their revolutionary plans have swollen in proportion to the success of their arms. The Magyar movement has been adulterated by the presence of Polish emigrants,...and it has come to be a general insurrection, especially of Poland [as well as Romania and Bulgaria]. The Austrian Government being for the moment unable to oppose a sufficient power to the insurgents, it has formally requested His Majesty the Emperor to assist in the repression of a rebellion which endangers the tranquillity of the two empires...the emperor is sorry to quit the passive and expectant position which he has hitherto maintained, but His Majesty reserved to himself his full liberty of action in case the reaction of revolutions near him should tend to endanger his own safety or the political equilibrium on the frontiers of his empire.

Document 8: Provisional Government of Milan, "Manifesto to the European Peoples (March 1848)

The Austrian Government levied immoderate taxes on our property, on our persons, and on necessary articles, it extorted from us the means by which alone it was saved from bankruptcy, to the bring of which it was brought by its bad and dishonest financial system; it forced on us shoals of foreigners, avowed officials and secret spies; eating our substance, administering our affairs, judging our rights, without knowing either our language or our customs; it imposed on us foreign laws..and an intricate, endless system of proceeding in criminal cases in which there was nothing either true or solemn except the prison and the pillory, the executioner and the gallows; it spread round us ensnaring nets of civil and ecclesiastical, military and judicial regulations, all converging to Vienna, which alone engrossed the monopoly of thought; it forbade the development of our commerce and our industry to favor the interests of other provinces; it submitted our municipal institutions..to a petty, harassing control, conceived for fiscal purposes and tending only to fetter us...It persecuted our most distinguished men and raised slavish understandings to a position of honor; it systematized the scale of conscience and organized an army of spies; it encouraged secret information, and made suspicion the rule of its proceedings; it gave the police full power over liberty, life and property, and threw the patriot into the same prison with the assassin.

Document 9: Resolutions of the "Irish Confederation" (February 3, 1848).

I.Resolved...: That a society be now formed under the title of "The Irish Confederation" for the purpose of protecting our national interests, and obtaining the legislative independence of Ireland, by the force of opinion, by the combination of all classes of Irishmen, and the exercise of all the political, social and moral influences within our reach.

II.That under present circumstances the only hope of the liberation of this country lies in a movement in which all classes and creeds of Irishmen shall be fairly represented, and by which the interests of none shall be endangered.

III.That inasmuch as English legislation threatens all Irishmen with a common ruin, we entertain a confident hope that their common necessities will speedily unite Irishmen in an effort to get rid of it.

V.That we disclaim, as we have disclaimed, any intention of involving our country in civil war, or of invading the just rights of any portion of its people.