

The Enlightenment

Except our own thoughts, there is nothing absolutely in our power.

—René Descartes (1596 -1650)

Essential Question: How did the Enlightenment shape the intellectual and ideological thinking that affected reform and revolution after 1750?

As empires expanded and trade routes led to more interactions, intellectuals in the 17th and 18th centuries such as Descartes began to emphasize reason over tradition and individualism over community values. These shifts were called the **Enlightenment**. The ideals of this movement, such as individualism, freedom, and self-determination, challenged the roles of monarchs and church leaders and planted the seeds of revolution in the United States, France, and around the world.

An Age of New Ideas

Growing out of the Scientific Revolution and the humanism of the Renaissance, Enlightenment thought was optimistic. Many writers believed that applying reason to natural laws would result in progress. While not denying the existence of God, they emphasized human accomplishments in understanding the natural world. Such beliefs led to the conclusion that natural laws governed the social and political spheres as well. While traditional religion did not disappear, it became less pervasive.

New ideas emerged about how to improve society. Schools of thought including *socialism* and *liberalism* arose, giving rise to the period being called “the Age of Isms.” Opposing socialism and liberalism were the currents of *conservatism*, particularly popular among the European ruling class. (All of these “isms” are defined later in this topic.)

The clash between new ideas and old political structures led to revolutions that often had two aims: independence from imperial powers and constitutional representation. The breakup of empires and the emergence of new forms of government often followed. These developed out of the concept of **nationalism**, a feeling of intense loyalty to others who share one’s language and culture. The idea that people who share a culture should also live in an independent nation-state threatened to destroy all of Europe’s multiethnic empires.

New Ideas and Their Roots

In the 17th century, Francis Bacon emphasized empirical methods of scientific inquiry. **Empiricism** is the belief that knowledge comes from sensed experience, from what you observe through your experience, including through experiments. Rather than relying on reasoning about principles provided by tradition or religion, Bacon based his conclusions on his observation of natural data.

Hobbes and Locke In the same century, philosophers Thomas Hobbes (author of *Leviathan*, 1651) and **John Locke** (author of *Two Treatises of Government*, 1690) viewed political life as the result of a **social contract**. Hobbes argued that people's natural state was to live in a bleak world in which life was "nasty, brutish, and short." However, by agreeing to a social contract, they gave up some rights to a strong central government in return for law and order.

Locke, on the other hand, argued that the social contract implied the right, even the responsibility, of citizens to revolt against unjust government. Locke thought that people had natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of property. Another of Locke's influential ideas is found in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), in which he proposed that a child was born with a mind like a "blank slate" (**tabula rasa**) waiting to be filled with knowledge. In a world in which most people believed that an individual's intelligence, personality, and fate were heavily determined by their ancestry, Locke's emphasis on environment and education in shaping people was radical.

The Philosophes In the 18th century, a new group of thinkers and writers who came to be called the **philosophes** explored social, political, and economic theories in new ways. In doing so, they popularized concepts that they felt followed rationally upon those of the scientific thinkers of the 17th century. Taking their name from the French word *philosophe* ("philosopher"), these writers included Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin from America, Adam Smith from Scotland, and several French thinkers

Of particular importance to writers of the new constitutions in France and America in the 18th and 19th centuries were the ideas of **Baron Montesquieu**. His famous work *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) praised the British government's use of checks on power because it had a Parliament. Montesquieu thus influenced the American system, which adopted his ideas by separating its executive branch (the president) from its legislative branch (Congress) and both from its third branch (the federal judiciary).

Francois-Marie Arouet, pen name **Voltaire**, is perhaps best known for his social satire *Candide* (1762). He was famous during his lifetime for his wit and for his advocacy of civil liberties. Exiled for three years due to a conflict with a member of the French aristocracy, Voltaire lived in England long enough to develop an appreciation for its constitutional monarchy and a regard for civil rights. He brought these ideas back to France, where he campaigned for

religious liberty and judicial reform. His correspondence with heads of state (such as Catherine the Great of Russia and Frederick the Great of Prussia) and his extensive writings, including articles in Diderot's *Encyclopedia*, are still quoted today. His idea of religious liberty influenced the U.S. Constitution.

A contemporary of Voltaire was the writer **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**, who expanded on the idea of the social contract as it had passed down through the work of Hobbes and Locke. One of Rousseau's early works was *Emile, or On Education* (1762) in which he laid out his ideas on child-rearing and education. A later work, *The Social Contract* (1762), presented the concept of the General Will of a population and the obligation of a sovereign to carry out that General Will. An optimist who believed that society could improve, Rousseau inspired many revolutionaries of the late 18th century.

Adam Smith One of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment was **Adam Smith**. In his book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith responded to mercantilism by calling for freer trade. While Smith did support some government regulations and saw the benefits of taxes, he generally advocated

for **laissez-faire**, a French phrase for "leave alone." This approach meant that governments should reduce their intervention in economic decisions. Smith believed that if businesses and consumers were allowed to make choices in their own interests, the "invisible hand" of the market would guide them to make choices beneficial for society. His ideas provided a foundation for **capitalism**, an economic system in which the means of production, such as factories and natural resources, are privately owned and are



Source: Getty Images

Adam Smith was one of the first modern economists.

operated for profit. (Connect: Create a chart or Venn diagram that compares and contrasts mercantilism and the free market. See Topics 4.4 and 4.5.)

Deism The Enlightenment's emphasis on reason led some thinkers to reexamine the relationship of humans to God. Some adopted **Deism**, the belief that a divinity simply set natural laws in motion. Deists compared the divinity to a watchmaker who makes a watch but does not interfere in its day-to-day workings. Deists believed these laws could be best understood through



scientific inquiry rather than study of the Bible. Despite their unorthodox ideas, many Deists viewed regular church attendance as an important social obligation and a way people received moral guidance.

Thomas Paine, never one to shrink from conflict, was militant in his defense of Deism in the book *The Age of Reason* (1794). Paine’s previous work, *Common Sense* (1776), made him popular in America for advocating liberty from Britain, but his anti-church writings damaged much of his popularity.

European Intellectual Life, 1250–1789		
Period	Representative Thinkers	Characteristics
Medieval Scholasticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used reason to defend faith • Argued through writing and debating • Relied heavily on Aristotle • Used little experimentation
Renaissance Humanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erasmus (1466–1536) • Mirandola (1463–1494) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote practical books, such as Machiavelli’s <i>The Prince</i> • Emphasized human achievements • Focused on secularism and the individual
Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francis Bacon (1561–1626) • Isaac Newton (1642–1727) • Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) • John Locke (1632–1704) • French philosophes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasized use of empirical data • Believed in natural rights, progress, and reason • Wanted new constitutions • Supported religious toleration • Wrote for the reading public

The Age of New Ideas Continues

In Europe and America, Enlightenment thinkers reacted to the social ills caused by increasing urbanization and industrialization. Poverty in the cities increased. Poor workers lived in slums without proper sanitation and without political representation. Various writers proposed solutions to the observable problems. Some wanted more government regulations and programs, and many Christians called for greater private charity. But some conservatives blamed the poor themselves and called on them to change. **Conservatism** is a belief in traditional institutions, favoring reliance on practical experience over ideological theories, such as that of human perfectability.

Utopian Socialism The economic and political theory of **socialism** refers to a system of public or direct worker ownership of the means of production such as the mills to make cloth or the machinery and land needed to mine coal. Various branches of socialism developed in the 19th century, providing alternative visions of the social and economic future. Those who felt that society could be channeled in positive directions by setting up ideal communities were often called **utopian socialists**:

- **Henri de Saint-Simon**, of France, believed that scientists and engineers, working together with businesses, could operate clean, efficient, beautiful places to work that produced things useful to society. He also advocated for public works that would provide employment. He proposed building the Suez Canal in Egypt, a project that the French government later undertook and which opened in 1869.
- **Charles Fourier** identified some 810 passions that, when encouraged, would make work more enjoyable and workers less tired. Like other utopian socialists, Fourier believed that a fundamental principle of utopia was harmonious living in communities rather than the class struggle that was basic to the thinking of Karl Marx.
- **Robert Owen** was born in Great Britain. He established intentional communities—small societies governed by the principles of utopian socialism—in New Lanark, Scotland, and New Harmony, Indiana. He believed in education for children who worked, communal ownership of property, and community rules to govern work, education, and leisure time.

In the later 19th century, socialist groups such as the **Fabian Society** formed in England. The Fabians were gradual socialists: they favored reforming society by parliamentary means. Writers H. G. Wells, Virginia Woolf, and George Bernard Shaw were prominent Fabians. By the mid-20th century, socialist principles would influence most of Western Europe.

Classical Liberalism Others advocated **classical liberalism**, a belief in natural rights, constitutional government, laissez-faire economics, and reduced spending on armies and established churches. Most classical liberals were professionals, writers, or academics. In Britain they pursued changes in Parliament to reflect changing population patterns so that new industrial cities would have equal parliamentary representation. Classical liberals backed the Reform Bills of 1832, 1867, and 1884, all of which broadened male suffrage.

Feminism This period saw the emergence of the movement for women's rights and equality based on Enlightenment ideas. The French writer Olympe de Gouges fought for these rights in the era of the French Revolution. In 1789, France had adopted the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the (Male) Citizen," a pioneering document in the history of human rights. In 1791, de Gouges published a "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the (Female) Citizen," to point out that women's rights had not been addressed.

In 1792 in England, the pioneering writer **Mary Wollstonecraft** published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. In it, she argued that females should receive the same education as males. Universal education, she argued, would prepare women to participate in political and professional society, enabling them to support themselves rather than relying on men. Wollstonecraft's ultimate goal was for women to gain the same rights and abilities as men through the application of reason. Women won the full right to vote in 1928.



Source: Library of Congress
Mary Wollstonecraft,
engraving by James
Heath, c. 1797 after the
painting by John Opie

In 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, activists gathered to promote women’s rights and suffrage (the ability to vote). In the convention’s “Declaration of Sentiments,” organizers Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton declared, “All men and women are created equal.” They demanded women deserved the right to vote and hold office, hold property and manage their own incomes, and be the legal guardians of their children. The Seneca Falls Convention was a landmark in the history of the women’s rights movement.

Abolitionism Reform movements to provide rights and equality extended to the freeing of slaves and the end of serfdom. **Abolitionism**, the movement to end the Atlantic slave trade and free all enslaved people, gained followers in the 18th century. Slave trading was banned earlier than slavery itself. The first states to ban the slave trade were with Denmark in 1803, Great Britain in 1807, and the United States in 1808. In most countries, the slave system depended on a steady supply of new enslaved people in order to function. As a result, as soon as the slave trade stopped, slavery began to decline. In most parts of the Americas, slavery was abolished within 30 years of the end of the slave trade. The United States was the rare country where the number of slaves increased after the importation of slaves was legally ended. The last country in the Americas to end slavery was Brazil, in 1888.

The End of Serfdom Serfdom in Europe had been declining as the economy changed from agrarian to industrial. Peasant revolts pushed leaders toward reform. Queen Elizabeth I abolished serfdom in 1574. The French government abolished all feudal rights of the nobility in 1789. Alexander II



of Russia abolished serfdom in 1861. The Russian emancipation of 23 million serfs was the largest single emancipation of people in bondage in human history.

Zionism Yet another “ism” in the late 19th century was the emergence of **Zionism**—the desire of Jews to reestablish an independent homeland where their ancestors had lived in the Middle East. After centuries of battling **anti-Semitism**, hostility toward Jews, and pogroms—violent attacks against Jewish communities—many European Jews had concluded that living in peace and security was not a realistic hope. To be safe, Jews needed to control their own land. Leading the movement was an Austro-Hungarian Jew, **Theodor Herzl**.

Support for Zionism increased after a scandal in France known as the **Dreyfus Affair**. In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a military officer who was Jewish, was convicted of treason against the French government. However, the conviction had been based on forged documents by people promoting anti-Semitism. Dreyfus was ultimately pardoned after time in prison, but the case illustrated how widespread anti-Semitism was in France, one of the countries where Jews seemed least oppressed.

Zionists faced many obstacles. The land they wanted was controlled by the Ottoman Empire, and Palestinian Arabs were already living in the region. Both the Ottomans and the Palestinians were predominantly Muslim, which added a religious aspect to the conflict. However, the Zionist movement grew in strength until 1948, when the modern country of Israel was founded.

KEY TERMS BY THEME		
<p>GOVERNMENT: Reforms</p> <p>John Locke social contract tabula rasa philosophes Baron Montesquieu Voltaire Jean-Jacques Rousseau</p>	<p>CULTURE: Isms</p> <p>Enlightenment deism liberalism conservatism empiricism nationalism classical liberalism feminism abolitionism Zionism anti-Semitism Theodor Herzl (Zionism) Dreyfus Affair</p>	<p>ECONOMY: Reforms</p> <p>Adam Smith <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> laissez-faire capitalism socialism utopian socialists Henri de Saint-Simon Charles Fourier Robert Owen Fabian Society</p>

Nationalism and Revolutions

Every nation gets the government it deserves.

—Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821)

Essential Question: What were the causes and effects of the various revolutions in the period from 1750 to 1900, including influences of the Enlightenment and emerging nationalism?

The age of new ideas led to political and philosophical conflicts. Like the English statesman Edmund Burke, the French thinker Joseph de Maistre was a conservative who went against the tide of Enlightenment thinking. In the view of conservative thinkers such as Burke and Maistre, revolutions were bloody, disruptive, and unlikely to yield positive results. However, try as conservatives might to quell revolutionary change, the desire of common people for constitutional government and democratic practices erupted in revolutions throughout the 19th century. And many nations did, indeed, get a new form of government that responded to the new wave of thinking with its key ideals: progress, reason, and natural law.

The American Revolution

The ideals that inspired the American Revolution had their roots in European Enlightenment philosophy. The economic ideas of the physiocrats also played a part in the American Revolution, providing a defense of free market ideas in opposition to English mercantilism. Additionally, the American colonists had become increasingly independent politically. Colonial legislatures were making decisions usually made by Parliament. Moreover, great distances separated the colonists from Parliament and the king in London. With economic and political desires for independence grew a new social spirit.

Declaration of Independence On July 4, 1776, the **Declaration of Independence** expressed the philosophy behind the colonists' fight against British rule. In the document, Thomas Jefferson picked up the phrase "unalienable rights" from John Locke. For Jefferson, these rights were to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In the war that followed, the colonists triumphed in 1783 with crucial help from Britain's long-time enemy, France.

The New Zealand Wars

New Zealand had been occupied by Polynesian people, the Maori, since at least the mid-1200s. In the period between their arrival and the arrival of Europeans the Maori developed a rich culture. The people were divided into individual tribes, or *iwi*, who sometimes engaged in warfare. After colonization by the British, made official by annexation of New Zealand in 1840, English control over Maori affairs increased, as did pressure for their land. These issues resulted in a series of wars between the Maori and British collectively known as the New Zealand Wars. Though the Maori tribes fought together, developing a sense of Maori nationalism, by 1872, the British had won.

The French Revolution

In France in the 1780s, revolutionary ideals took on their own spin, summarized in the slogan **liberté, égalité, et fraternité** (liberty, equality, and fraternity). These ideas, which struck many people as radical, were popularized throughout Europe in the writings of the **philosophes**.

Economic Woes However, additional causes led to the French Revolution. France had long spent more than it was taking in, partly to finance a series of wars. Among this spending was the economic aid that France supplied the Americans in their revolution. To address its financial situation, the French government called a meeting of the Estates-General in spring 1789. Three sectors of society, or estates, made up the Estates-General: the clergy (religious officials), the nobility, and the commoners. However, inequality in voting caused the commoners (who made up 97 percent of French society) to break away and form a new body, the National Assembly.

The Revolution Begins In the early days of the French Revolution, moderates such as Marquis de Lafayette seemed to be on the point of establishing a constitutional monarchy. The National Assembly began meeting in Paris, but then the King threatened to arrest the leaders. Angry crowds rioted in Paris and elsewhere in France. On July 14, 1789, a crowd in Paris stormed the **Bastille**, a former prison that symbolized the abuses of the monarchy and the corrupt aristocracy. In the French countryside, peasants rose up against nobles, even burning some manor houses. Some royal officials fled France. The king was forced to accept a new government with a National Assembly in charge.

The date July 14, 1789, became French Independence Day. The most permanent changes were enacted early in the Revolution—the abolition of feudalism and the adoption of the **Declaration of the Rights of Man**, a statement declaring basic human rights. Louis XVI and the nobility refused to accept the limited monarchy, which led to dissatisfaction among radical groups such as the Jacobins and inspired the establishment of the First French Republic in 1792. The **Reign of Terror**, a period during which the government executed thousands of opponents of the revolution, including the king and queen, sprang from the Jacobins. After a period of turmoil and war, the brilliant general Napoleon Bonaparte became emperor of France in 1804.



The Haitian Revolution

At the end of the 18th century, revolutionary forces were also at work in the rich French sugar and coffee colony of **Haiti** on the western third of the island of St. Domingue, also known as Hispaniola. Slaves revolted against their white masters, killing them and burning their houses. This slave revolt was soon joined by escaped slaves called **Maroons**. The examples of the recent American and French revolutions led former slave **Toussaint L'Ouverture** to join the revolts in 1791 and then to lead a general rebellion against slavery. Besides being well-read in Enlightenment thought, L'Ouverture proved to be a capable general. His army of enslaved Africans and Maroons established an independent government and played the French, Spanish, and British against each other.

Haiti In 1801, after taking control of the territory that would become the independent country of Haiti, L'Ouverture produced a constitution that granted equality and citizenship to all residents. He also declared himself governor for life. Haiti next enacted land reform: plantations were divided up, with the lands being distributed among formerly enslaved and free black people.

L'Ouverture worked with the French but they betrayed and imprisoned him. He died in France in 1803. But he had cemented the abolition of slavery in Haiti, which he set on the road to independence from France.

In 1804, L'Ouverture's successor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, orchestrated a Haitian declaration of permanent independence. Thus, Haiti became the first country in Latin America to win its independence and the first black-led country in the Western Hemisphere. It was also the only country to become permanently independent as a result of a slave uprising.

Comparing the Haitian and French Revolutions Both the Haitian and French revolutions grew out of the Enlightenment's insistence that men had natural rights as citizens, and that legal restraints were limiting the freedom of people by forcing them into various estates (social classes). However, in the case of the Haitians, the restraints were more severe—the rebellion was led by slaves who had no rights at all.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Toussaint L'Ouverture

Creole Revolutions in Latin America

On the Latin American mainland, revolutionary ideals were taken up by **creoles**. Born of European ancestry in the Americas, the creoles were well educated and aware of the ideas behind the revolutions in North America and France. They considered themselves superior to the **mestizos**, who were born of European and Indian parents. Colonists who were born in Spain or Portugal, known as **peninsulares**, felt superior to everyone. At the bottom of the social ladder were the African slaves, the indigenous population, and **mulattoes**, those of African and either European or indigenous ancestry. (Some of these social distinctions remain today.)

There were many reasons for discontent in the colonies, each of which encouraged some people to desire independence from Spain:

- Many creoles were wealthy owners of estates, mines, or businesses. They opposed Spain's mercantilism, which required colonists to buy manufactured goods only from Spain and sell products only to Spain.
- Creoles wanted more political power. They resented that Spain tended to give important government jobs in the colonies to peninsulares.
- Mestizos wanted political power and a share of the wealth of the colonies. Many had jobs in the towns or worked in the mines or on the estates of the peninsulares and creoles.

The Bolívar Revolutions In many parts of South America, the desire for independence from Spain grew among the creole class. Fearing the masses, the creoles refused the support of mestizos, indigenous people, and mulattos (people of mixed African and European heritage). The creoles had seen the result in Haiti of a slave uprising as well as the excesses of the French Revolution during the Reign of Terror. Some creoles, such as **Simón Bolívar**, continued to push for Enlightenment ideals in Latin America. He became instrumental in the independence of areas that became Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

Bolívar was born in Venezuela in 1783 to a family whose ancestors had been village aristocrats in Spain. The family had grown very wealthy in Venezuela, and Bolívar had access to this wealth for his revolutionary causes. After considerable military success in Latin America fighting the Spanish, his forces achieved the formation of a large area that he called Gran Colombia. He hoped it would become a federation similar to the United States, one based on Enlightenment ideals. He described himself as a liberal who believed in a free market and the abolition of slavery. Bolívar's goals and concerns for Latin America are outlined in his "Jamaica Letter" (1815): "Generous souls always interest themselves in the fate of a people who strive to recover the rights to which the Creator and Nature have entitled them, and one must be wedded to error and passion not to harbor this noble sentiment."

The new nations of Latin America suffered from the long wars of independence. Armies loyal to their generals led to the rise of the

caudillos—strong, local leaders with regional power bases. These men intervened in national politics to make or break governments. Sometimes the caudillos defended the interests of the regional elites and sometimes of the indigenous population and the peasants, but in general they disregarded representative forms of government and the rule of law.

Results of the Creole Revolutions Although the constitutions of the newly independent countries in Latin America legally ended some social distinctions and abolished slavery, governments were often conservative. The first constitution of Peru, for example, forbade voting by those who could not read or write in Spanish, which effectively denied most indigenous people the vote until the constitution was changed in 1860. The creoles continued to form a powerful and conservative upper class, as they had before the wars of independence from the European nations.

Women gained little from the revolutions in Latin America. They were still unable to vote or enter into contracts. Most women received little education until late in the nineteenth century, and most remained submissive to men. One notable exception was Manuela Sáenz (1797–1856), who was the lover of Simón Bolívar. She actively participated in fighting alongside Bolívar, for example, in 1822 in a battle near Quito, Ecuador. An excellent rider as well as courageous fighter, she rose to the rank of colonel. On one occasion, she saved Bolívar’s life, for which she received the nickname “Liberator of the Liberator.” (Connect: In a brief paragraph or outline, trace the connections between creole elites and revolutions in Latin America. See Topic 4.5)

Later Challenges to Spanish Colonialism Spain’s grip on parts of its empire lasted throughout the 19th century. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico and Cuba were among its final colonial holdings. Both islands saw uprisings against Spanish rule beginning in the year 1868.

While many individuals and organizations contributed to the spirit of revolution in Puerto Rico, the role of **Lola Rodríguez de Tió** was unique. A recognized poet during an era of little educational opportunity for women, Rodríguez de Tió became famous for her eloquent critiques of Spain’s exploitive rule over Puerto Rico. Her home became a meeting place for political thinkers and revolutionaries. At such meetings, she began to read lyrics to a revolutionary song, “La Boriqueña,” which encouraged her fellow Puerto Ricans, “Awake from your sleep, for it’s time to fight!”

The 1868 uprising forced Rodríguez de Tió into exile in Venezuela. She was allowed to return in 1885, but her critical writings again ended in exile—this time in Cuba. Once there, she wrote and worked for Cuban independence, earning her exile from there, too, to New York. She returned to Cuba in 1899 and spent her remaining years as a campaigner for social justice there.

Propaganda Movement The Philippines, too, remained a Spanish colony throughout the 19th century. Educational opportunities, even for well-to-do Filipinos, were limited and controlled by religious authorities. As a result, many young men (often creoles and mestizos) from wealthy families traveled to Europe, especially Madrid and Barcelona, to attend universities. An

atmosphere of nationalist fervor and republicanism, inspired by Enlightenment thinking, existed in 1880s Europe, and these Filipino students embraced it.

José Rizal became the most prominent of these young agitators, all of whom contributed to magazines, pamphlets, and other publications advocating for greater autonomy for the Philippines. Called the **Propaganda Movement**, it did not call for revolution or independence. But Spanish authorities viewed its members with suspicion. Rizal's arrest in 1892 and execution in 1896 shocked Filipinos and helped spur the first nationalist movement with the organization and strength to truly challenge Spanish rule. A serious military upheaval, the Philippine Revolution, began in 1896.

Nationalism and Unification in Europe

As nationalism spread beyond Europe, people often created an identity under one government where none had existed before. Nationalism increased in France and in other areas of Europe and in the Americas. More than in the past, people felt a common bond with others who spoke their language, shared their history, and followed their customs. Nationalism thrived in France and beyond its borders in areas conquered by Napoleon, particularly those in the Germanic areas of the declining Holy Roman Empire. Nationalism was a unifying force that not only threatened large empires, but it also drove efforts to unite people who shared a culture into one political state.

Italian Unification Count di Cavour, the prime minister of Piedmont-Sardinia, led the drive to unite the entire **Italian Peninsula** under the only native dynasty, the House of Savoy. At the time, the region was divided among a patchwork of kingdoms and city-states, and most people spoke regional languages rather than Italian. Cavour himself spoke French better than he spoke Italian. Like other classical liberals, he believed in natural rights, progress, and constitutional monarchy. But he also believed in the practical politics of reality, which came to be called **realpolitik**. Thus, he did not hesitate to advance the cause of Italian unity through manipulation. In 1858, he maneuvered Napoleon III of France into a war with Austria, hoping to weaken Austrian influence on the Italian Peninsula. Napoleon III backed out of the war after winning two important battles, partly because he feared the wrath of the Pope, who was not eager for his Papal States to come under the control of a central Italian government.

Nevertheless, it was too late to stop the revolutionary fervor, and soon several areas voted by plebiscite, or popular referendum, to join Piedmont (the Kingdom of Sardinia). To aid the unification effort, Cavour adopted the radical romantic revolutionary philosophy of **Giuseppe Mazzini**, who had been agitating for Italian resurgence (**Risorgimento**) since early in the nineteenth century. Cavour also allied with the Red Shirts military force led by **Giuseppe Garibaldi**, which was fighting farther south in the Kingdom of Naples.

German Unification In Germany, nationalist movements had already strengthened as a result of opposition to French occupation of German states



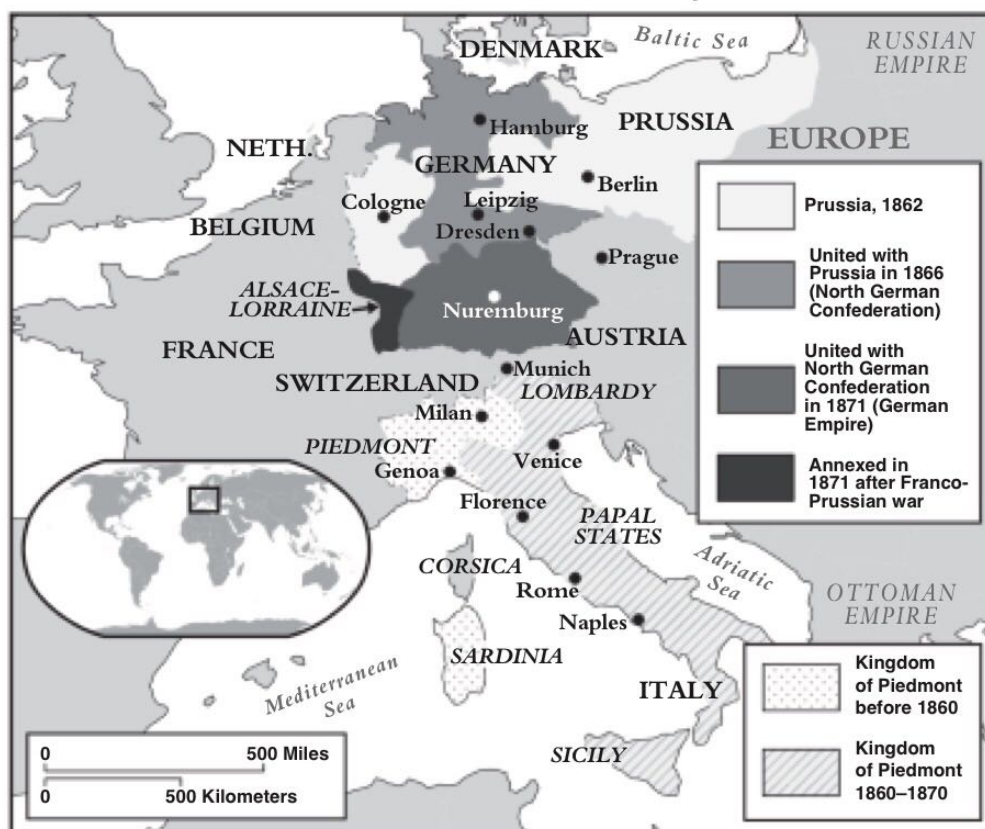
under Napoleon Bonaparte. Following the Congress of Vienna, which settled the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, revolutions occurred in a number of European states, including Prussia and Austria. The revolutions of 1848 were the result of both nationalism (especially a desire for independence) and liberalism (a desire for representation under constitutions that recognized civil liberties).

Prussian leader **Otto von Bismarck**, who like Cavour favored *realpolitik*, used nationalist feelings to engineer three wars to bring about German unification. Bismarck manipulated Austria into participating in two wars, the first with Prussia against Denmark (1864) and the second between Prussia and Austria (Seven Weeks' War of 1866). After winning both wars, Bismarck manipulated France into declaring war against Prussia. His armies beat the French soundly in the Franco-Prussian War (1870). In each of these three wars, Prussia gained territory. In 1871, Bismarck founded the new German Empire, made up of many territories gained from the wars, including Alsace-Lorraine, an area long part of France on the border between France and the new Germany.

Global Consequences By 1871, two new powers, Italy and Germany, were on the international stage in an environment of competing alliances. Balance of power would be achieved briefly through these alliances, but extreme nationalism would lead to World War I.

Unification did not solve all Italian troubles. Poverty in Italy, more in the south than in the north, led to considerable emigration in the late nineteenth century—particularly to the United States and to Argentina, where the constitution of 1853 specifically encouraged **immigration**, the movement of people into the country from other countries.

Wars of Unification in Europe

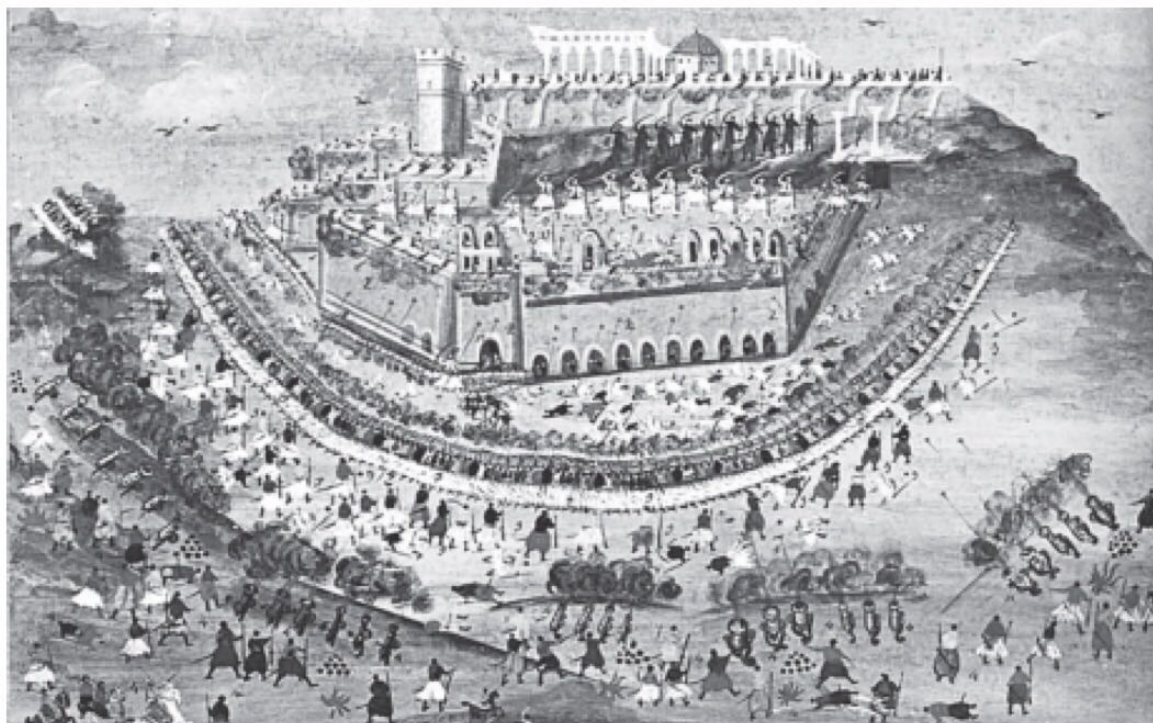




Balkan Nationalism The Ottoman Empire had been the dominant force in southeastern Europe for centuries. But for many reasons, the 17th century saw the beginning of its long, slow decline. A failed attempt to conquer Vienna in 1683 signaled the beginning of successful efforts by Austria and Russia to roll back Ottoman dominance in the Balkans. It was largely due to the increasing involvement and contact with Western European ideas and powers that Balkan nationalism developed.

In Greece, which by 1800 had been under Ottoman control for more than 350 years, increased contact with Western ideas meant exposure to Enlightenment principles. It also meant exposure to the reverence with which Greece and its ancient culture were viewed across Europe. Together, these developments helped reawaken Greek cultural pride and stoke the fires of Greek nationalism. A protracted civil war against Ottoman forces brought some success. However, it took the intervention of a British, French, and Russian fleet, which destroyed an Ottoman fleet in 1827, to help assure Greek independence.

Events in other Balkan regions, such as Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, followed a similar, but by no means identical, course. The waning of Ottoman control led to greater freedom and an influx of new ideas, including nationalism. People began to rally around important cultural markers, such as language, folk traditions, shared history, and religion. Later, outside powers, such as Russia or Austria, aided in achieving independence.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

This painting by Panagiotis Zografos shows the Ottoman siege of the Acropolis. Aided by British, French, and Russian forces, the Greeks won their independence by 1832.



Ottoman Nationalism The 1870s and 1880s saw the development in the Ottoman state of **Ottomanism**—a movement that aimed to create a more modern, unified state. Officials sought to do this by minimizing the ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences across the empire. Taking control of local schools and mandating a standard curriculum was a major part of this drive. But the effects of nationalism were not limited to Balkan territories and Ottoman officials. Ethnic and religious groups within the Ottoman Empire had nationalist urges of their own, and they viewed Ottomanism with suspicion. Ironically, this attempt to create a more unified state actually served to highlight and intensify subject people’s feelings of difference and promote their desire for independence.

The Future of Nationalism While nationalism continues to shape how people view themselves and their political allegiances, some signs suggest that nationalism might be starting to decline. In Europe, many countries have agreed to use the same currency, to allow people to travel freely across borders, and to coordinate public policies. These changes might reflect a shift away from nationalism and toward a larger political grouping. Like city-states and empires, nations might someday give way to other forms of political organization.

KEY TERMS BY THEME		
<p>GOVERNMENT: American Revolution Declaration of Independence</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: French Revolution philosophes Declaration of the Rights of Man Reign of Terror</p> <p>CULTURE: France <i>liberté, égalité, et fraternité</i></p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Haitian Revolution Haiti Toussaint L’Ouverture</p>	<p>GOVERNMENT: Bolivar Revolutions Simón Bolívar</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Puerto Rico Lola Rodríguez de Tió</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Philippines Propaganda Movement</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Italian Unification realpolitik Giuseppe Mazzini Risorgimento Giuseppe Garibaldi</p>	<p>CULTURE: Italy immigration</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: German Unification Otto Von Bismarck</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Balkans Ottomanism</p> <p>SOCIETY: Classes Maroons mestizos peninsulares mulattoes</p> <p>SOCIETY: Europe Bastille Italian Peninsula</p>