

Nineteenth-Century Political Study Guides

The nineteenth century can be particularly daunting for students. So many “-isms,” so many countries, so little time. The following two guides provide two different approaches to making sense of this complex period.

By “-isms”

Conservatism

Definition: Preservation of European monarchies and nobility. Conservatives believed that only traditional monarchical institutions of government could maintain order, and they were generally opposed to change.

Period	Britain	France	Germany	Austria (Hungary)	Italy	Other
1815-30*	Corn Laws, 1816 Peterloo Massacre, 1819	Return of the Bourbon monarchy White Terror	Carlsbad Decrees (Prussia), 1819; related to Metternich's values	Carlsbad Decrees, 1819 Rule by Metternich is reactionary	Northern Italy is largely dominated by Austria until the 1860s	Poland is dominated by Russia, Prussia, and Austria until 1918
1830-48*	Moves toward liberalism as a way to stabilize society and avoid revolution	Moves toward liberalism		Defeat of Kossuth in the Revolution of 1848; nationalism is politically impotent		
1848-71		Under Napoleon III: Age of Realpolitik (triumph of nationalist goals by means of conservatism; decisions based on practical needs of the state; rejection of ideology)	Failure of the Revolutions of 1848-49 (Frankfurt Parliament); nationalism is politically impotent	Defeat of the Revolutions of 1848-49	Austrian defeat of the Revolutions of 1848-49; nationalism is politically impotent <i>Syllabus of Errors</i> , 1864, issued by Pope Pius IX	Reigns of Alexander I, Nicolas I, and Alexander III (autocracy, orthodoxy, Russification), and Nicolas II, 1801-1917
1871-1914			Bismarck's leadership, 1860s-80s Gap Theory Kulturkampf			Duma after the Revolution of 1905 (Russia)

* Includes Concert of Europe, 1815-48.

Appendix

Nationalism

Definition: The belief that a certain self-defined people should govern itself with its own historically sanctioned boundaries.

Period	Britain	France	Germany	Austria (Hungary)	Italy	Others
1815-30			Pre-1815: Herder, Volksggeist		Secret societies: Carbonari, Young Italy Revolution of 1830 Risorgimento Mazzini	Greek independence, 1829 Poland has a failed revolt in the 1820s
1830-48				Prague Conference: Austroslavism Revolutions of 1848; Kossuth		Belgian independence, 1830
1848-71		Defeat in Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71 (reaction to Ems Dispatch)	Revolutions of 1848-49 Humiliation of Olmütz, 1850 Unification, 1871; Bismarck	Ausgleich, 1867	Revolution of 1848-49; Mazzini, Roman Republic Unification, 1870; Cavour, Garibaldi	Russia attempts to expand into the Black Sea region and the Balkans; Crimean War, 1853-56
1871-1914	Jingoism; Congress of Berlin, 1878 Disraeli pro-imperialism Imperialism in Africa and Asia	Berlin Conference of 1884-85; Jaures Imperialism in Africa and Asia	Imperialism: Berlin Conference of 1884-85 Bismarck moves away from belligerence in the Berlin Congress of 1878—"honest broker of the peace" Imperialism in Africa	Language issue: German, Hungarian, Czech	Imperialism in Libya	Russia and the Congress of Berlin, 1878 Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5

Liberalism

Definition: The belief in equality before the law and that individuals are born good, free, and capable of improvement. The integrity of the individual should be protected from both society and government. Liberals were also concerned about political stability and the sanctity of property, which is why they favored increased manhood suffrage. Economic liberals believed in laissez-faire.

Period	Britain	France	Germany	Austria (Hungary)	Italy	Russia
1815-30	Bentham, utilitarianism ("the greatest good for the greatest number") Catholic Emancipation Act, 1829	Jewish rights, 1791 Constitutional monarchy under Louis XVIII (moderate at first but becomes more conservative)	Liberal university protests (crushed by the Carlsbad Decrees, 1819)			
1830-48	Factory Act, 1831 Reform Bill, 1832 Slavery abolished in the empire, 1833 Poor Law, 1834 Mines Act, 1842 Repeal of Corn Laws, 1846 10-Hour Law, 1847 Chartists Whigs; Earl Grey	July Revolution, 1830; Louis Philippe State constitution, 1830 February Revolution, 1848 June Days Revolution, 1848; Blanc; Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) Universal male suffrage, 1848	Zollverein, 1834 Frankfurt Parliament, 1848 (failure)		State constitution (Sardinia/Piedmont), 1848	
1848-71	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , 1859	Liberal Empire of Napoleon III, 1852-70	Universal male suffrage, 1850 (Prussia)	State constitution, 1849 (Hungary in 1867) Civil rights for Jews, 1867	Liberal constitution, 1861 Jewish rights, 1870	Alexander II: Emancipation Edict, 1861 Creation of zemstvos
1871-1914	Reform Act of 1867; Disraeli Reform Act of 1884; Gladstone (universal male suffrage) Representation of the People Acts of 1918 and 1928 (women's suffrage)	Third Republic, 1870-1940	State constitution, 1871 Universal male suffrage, 1871 Jewish rights, 1871	Universal male suffrage, 1907 (Austria and Hungary)	Universal male suffrage, 1912	

Appendix

Socialism

Definition: Utopian Socialists of the early nineteenth century believed in helping the laboring poor, denounced the individualist philosophy of capitalism, and sought to create a cooperative utopian society. Practical Socialists, such as Louis Blanc and Pierre Joseph Proudhon, sought practical measures to improve the condition of the working class and the institution of universal suffrage. Scientific Socialist Karl Marx saw capitalism leading toward a class struggle where the working class would ultimately overthrow capitalism and create a “dictatorship of the proletariat” and a classless society.

Period	Britain	France	Germany	Austria (Hungary)	Italy	Russia
1815-30		Utopian Socialists: Saint-Simon, Fourier				
1830-48		Proudhon, <i>What Is Property?</i> , 1840 Blanc; national workshops, 1848				
1848-71	Marx and Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> , 1848		Bismarck cuts a deal with the Lassallean Socialists			Nihilists
1871-1914	Fabian Society, 1883 (Socialism by democratic, nonviolent means; favored by the middle and upper classes, intellectuals, and authors) Labour party; Hardie Welfare state in the early 20th century (prior to WWI)	Socialists gain seats in Chamber of Deputies under Jaures, 1905-14	Gotha Programme, 1875 (statement of the Marxists and the Lassallean Socialists that underlies the formation of the SDP) First welfare state in Europe, 1880s SPD is the largest party by WWI			Social Democrats split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks Lenin exiled, 1895-1900

By Countries

Country	Conservatism	Nationalism	Liberalism	Socialism	Romanticism
Britain	<p>Corn Laws, 1816</p> <p>Peterloo Massacre, 1819</p> <p>Moves toward liberalism as a way to stabilize society and avoid revolution, 1830-48</p>	<p>Jingoism; Congress of Berlin, 1878</p> <p>Disraeli pro-imperialism</p> <p>Imperialism in Africa and Asia</p>	<p>Bentham, utilitarianism ("the greatest good for the greatest number")</p> <p>Catholic Emancipation Act, 1829</p> <p>Factory Act, 1831</p> <p>Reform Bill, 1832</p> <p>Slavery abolished in the empire, 1833</p> <p>Poor Law, 1834</p> <p>Mines Act, 1842</p> <p>Repeal of Corn Laws, 1846</p> <p>10-Hour Law, 1847</p> <p>Chartists</p> <p>Whigs; Earl Grey</p> <p>Mill, <i>On Liberty</i>, 1859</p> <p>Reform Act of 1867; Disraeli</p> <p>Reform Act of 1884; Gladstone (universal male suffrage)</p> <p>Representation of the People Acts of 1918 and 1928 (women's suffrage)</p>	<p>Engels and Marx, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>, 1848</p> <p>Fabian Society, 1883 (Socialism by democratic, nonviolent means; favored by middle and upper classes, intellectuals, and authors)</p> <p>Labour party; Hardie</p> <p>Welfare state in the early twentieth century (prior to WWI)</p>	<p>Lord Byron is involved in the Greek struggle for independence, 1823</p>

Appendix

Country	Conservatism	Nationalism	Liberalism	Socialism	Romanticism
France	<p>Return of the Bourbon Monarchy</p> <p>White Terror</p> <p>Moves toward liberalism, 1830-48</p> <p>Under Napoleon III: Age of Realpolitik (triumph of nationalist goals by means of conservatism; decisions based on practical needs of the state; rejection of ideology)</p>	<p>Defeat in Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71 (reaction to Ems Dispatch)</p> <p>Berlin Conference of 1884-85; Jaures</p> <p>Imperialism in Africa and Asia</p>	<p>Jewish rights, 1791</p> <p>Constitutional monarchy under Louis XVIII (moderate at first but becomes more conservative)</p> <p>July Revolution, 1830; Louis Philippe</p> <p>State constitution, 1830</p> <p>February Revolution, 1848</p> <p>June Days Revolution, 1848; Blanc; Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III)</p> <p>Universal male suffrage, 1848</p> <p>Liberal Empire of Napoleon III, 1852-70</p> <p>Third Republic, 1870-1940</p>	<p>Utopian Socialists: Saint-Simon, Fourier</p> <p>Proudhon, <i>What Is Property?</i>, 1840</p> <p>Blanc; national workshops, 1848</p> <p>Socialists gain in Chamber of Deputies under Jaures, 1905-14</p>	<p><i>The Third of May, 1808</i>, Goya, 1814 (protests Napoleon's slaughter of Spanish rebels)</p> <p><i>Massacre at Chios</i>, Delacroix, 1824 (supports Greek independence from the Turks)</p> <p><i>Liberty Leading the People</i>, Delacroix, 1830 (celebrates popular revolution in France)</p> <p>Popular uprisings of 1830 and 1848; ideal of liberalism, freedom, equality</p>
Germany	<p>Carlsbad Decrees (Prussia), 1819; related to Metternich's values</p> <p>Failure of the Revolutions of 1848-49 (Frankfurt Parliament); nationalism is politically impotent</p> <p>Bismarck's leadership, 1860s-80s</p> <p>Gap Theory</p> <p>Kulturkampf</p>	<p>Pre-1815: Herder, Volksgeist</p> <p>Revolutions of 1848-49</p> <p>Humiliation of Olmütz, 1850</p> <p>Unification, 1871; Bismarck</p> <p>Imperialism: Berlin Conference of 1884-85</p> <p>Bismarck moves away from belligerence in the Berlin Conference of 1878—"honest broker of the peace"; 1871-1914</p> <p>Imperialism in Africa</p>	<p>Liberal university protests (crushed by the Carlsbad Decrees, 1819)</p> <p>Zollverein, 1834</p> <p>Frankfurt Parliament, 1848 (failure)</p> <p>Universal male suffrage, 1850 (Prussia)</p> <p>State constitution, 1871</p> <p>Universal male suffrage, 1871</p> <p>Jewish rights, 1871</p>	<p>Bismarck cuts a deal with the Lassallean Socialists</p> <p>Gotha Programme, 1875 (statement of the Marxists and the Lassallean Socialists that underlies the formation of the SDP)</p> <p>First welfare state in Europe, 1880s</p> <p>SPD is the largest party by WWI</p>	<p>Herder, Volksgeist</p> <p>Fichte: unique national character</p> <p>Goethe links Romantic individualism and Romantic nationalism</p> <p><i>Grimm's Fairy Tales</i>, 1812-15 (celebrates German identity)</p> <p>Wagner: Germanic legends in operas</p> <p>Revolutions of 1848 (liberty, individual rights)</p>

Appendix

Country	Conservatism	Nationalism	Liberalism	Socialism	Romanticism
Austria (Hungary)	<p>Carlsbad Decrees, 1819</p> <p>Rule by Metternich is reactionary</p> <p>Defeat of Kossuth in the Revolutions of 1848; nationalism is politically impotent</p> <p>Defeat of the Revolutions of 1848-49</p>	<p>Prague Conference: Austroslavism</p> <p>Revolution of 1848; Kossuth</p> <p>Ausgleich, 1867</p> <p>Language issue: German, Hungarian, Czech</p>	<p>State constitution, 1849 (Hungary in 1867)</p> <p>Civil rights for Jews, 1867</p> <p>Universal male suffrage, 1907 (Austria and Hungary)</p>		<p><i>Hungarian Rhapsodies</i>, Liszt (date unknown)</p> <p>Dvořák: Czech folk songs in Classical music</p>
Italy	<p>Northern Italy is largely dominated by Austria until the 1860s</p> <p>Austrian defeat of the Revolutions of 1848-49; nationalism is politically impotent</p> <p><i>Syllabus of Errors</i>, 1864, issued by Pope Pius IX</p>	<p>Secret societies: Carbonari, Young Italy</p> <p>Revolution of 1830</p> <p>Risorgimento</p> <p>Mazzini</p> <p>Revolution of 1848-49; Mazzini; Roman Republic</p> <p>Unification, 1870; Cavour, Garibaldi</p> <p>Imperialism in Libya</p>	<p>State constitution (Sardinia/Piedmont), 1848</p> <p>Liberal constitution, 1861</p> <p>Jewish rights, 1870</p> <p>Universal male suffrage, 1912</p>		
Poland	<p>Dominated by Russia, Prussia, and Austria until 1918</p>	<p>Failed revolt in the 1820s</p>			<p>Polonaises, Chopin</p>
Russia	<p>Reigns of Alexander I, Nicholas I, and Alexander III (autocracy, orthodoxy, Russification), and Nicolas II, 1801-1917</p> <p>Duma after the Revolution of 1905</p>	<p>Attempts to expand into the Black Sea region and the Balkans; Crimean War, 1853-56</p> <p>Congress of Berlin, 1878</p> <p>Defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5</p>	<p>Alexander II: Emancipation Edict, 1861</p> <p>Creation of zemstvos</p>	<p>Nihilists</p> <p>Social Democrats split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks</p> <p>Lenin exiled, 1895-1900</p>	<p><i>1812 Overture</i>, Tchaikovsky, 1880</p> <p>Mussorgsky</p> <p>Rimsky-Korsakov</p>
Others		<p>Greek independence, 1829</p> <p>Belgian independence, 1830</p>			

Appendix

The Rise of Constitutionalism and Liberalism

Making causal connections across different categories of history is an important historical skill your students need to develop. This chart provides a road map of some of the factors that contributed to an important development in European history, the rise of constitutionalism and liberalism.

