

Course: SELECTED CHAPTERS OF CZECH AND WORLD HISTORY

T2 Nationalism 1815 to 1848 and Revolutions of 1848–1849

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## NATIONALISM 1815 TO 1848 AND REVOLUTIONS OF 1848–1849

After the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 the European powers tried to restore the regime that existed before the outbreak of French Revolution. In Congress of Vienna the principles of international relations were settled. Among them there were measurements to enable to suppress the revolutions whenever it takes place in Europe. But the effort to stop spreading ideas of French revolution (democracy, nationalism) was in vain in 1848 and 1849 when the wave of revolutions broke up in majority of European countries at the time.

### Congress System

The system of **balance of power** based of idea that all European issues should be solved in international congresses (summits) was accepted by all Europeans powers. The system is also called as **Concert of Europe** or **Metternich's System**, according to Clemens von Metternich, Austrian foreign minister of Czech Origin.

But since its beginnings there were serious problems of Congress System.

According to the decision of Congress of Vienna new state borders in Europe were established. But new state borders did not accept existence of nations. That is why there were huge **discrepancies between state and national borders**. Whereas Austria, for example, was state that comprised members of Germans, Magyars, Czechs, Polish, Italians, and others, Germany and Italy, territory inhabited only by Germans and Italians, respectively, were both divided into number of independent states. This in fact became the reason of quick spread of nationalism. Members of each nation were aware of the situation and demanded its own “national state”.

Except this there were important **discrepancies between economic and political power**. So called Middle Class, i.e. townsmen, businessmen, and merchants who disposed the large amount of wealth and who paid the large number of taxes. It is only logical that they demanded participation in political power and civil freedom, especially the implementation of suffrage, but not general suffrage. Members of Middle Class favoured limited suffrage based on high of taxes (Liberalism).

Third important discrepancy appeared between **social groups**. Due to industrialization new social identity had spread all over large cities. Those were

workmen who demanded improvement of their social situation and gradually also participation in political power, i.e. general suffrage.

In Europe an alliance to suppress this antagonism was established. **Holly Alliance** was association of three absolute monarchies, of Russia (Tsar Alexander I), Austria (Emperor Franz I), and Prussia (King Friedrich Wilhelm III).

- Holly Alliance was established on declaration of 26 September 1815 and later other countries, among other United Kingdom, joined.
- The aim of this alliance was preservation of traditional beliefs, but in fact it meant suppression of nationalism and demands for civil freedoms.

The Alliance did not have any permanent institution and all issues should be dealt on **congresses**. That is why the period is called Congress System Europe that in fact secured superiority of powers (United Kingdom, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France) over minor European countries.

- 1818: **Aachen Congress** dealt with admission of France among world powers.
- 1820: In **Opava** (Troppau) **Congress** talks about joint intervention against revolutions in Spain and Italy took place.
- 1821: **Ljubljana** (Laibach) **Congress** followed on Opava Congress and discussed Spanish and Italian issue.
- 1822: **Verona Congress** dealt with situation in Spain and in Moldova, but led into dissension of powers. Important disagreement raised between United Kingdom and other powers.

Since 1822 when on Verona congress European powers did not reach agreement Congress System the idea of Holly Alliance failed. The world order switched into so called **Concert of Powers System**.

## Sources of Nationalism

Nationalism, decisive movement and political ideology of 19th and first half of 20th century, has its roots in enlightenment and its philosophy:

- **Patriotism**. Patriotism could be described as attachment or devotion to country (in latin patria), especially in cultural way of meaning. This attitude became very common during the Enlightenment in 17th and especially in 18th century among educated social strata. But patriotism differs from nationalism

in way that it is **feeling towards country** (land, region, city), not towards collective identity (nation).

- **Johann Gottfried von Herder.** J. G. von Herder was German philosopher of the Enlightenment who written his books Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity (1784 to 1791). In this book he revealed his ideas of equality of cultures of each nation and claimed that each nation is defined by language (language or ethnic nationalism). Ideas of Herder became very popular among Czechs, because he foretold great future of Slavic nations.
- **Revolutionary Wars.** War between France and Anti-France coalitions in 1792 to 1815 became the reason of formation of national identity. The clashes between states developed from the war of rulers (kings) to the war of nations. For example Battle of Leipzig was called Battle of Nations not because of particularly high number of involved members of different nations, but because of facts that those were the nationalisms that collided in battlefields (not Napoleon vs. Franz I, but French vs. Germans etc.).

Definition of nationalism is complicated due to fact that this term describes on one side identity of individual and of group of men, on the next side it also marks political ideology with complex of demands. Among these demands the decisive one is **request for independent stat for each nation** (one nation, one state).

According to ideas of J. G. von Herder nations became defined according to language. This “language” definition of nation had spread over Europe. **Majority of nations established its identity on language** (e.g. Germans, Italians, Poles, and Czechs). There were only few exceptions, Belgians who established their identity on country and partly on religion, and Swiss for which the fact of common history and political system was more important than language.

### **Nationalism in Germany**

According to conclusion of Congress of Vienna Germany was divided into 40 independent states that joined into **German Confederation**. During the time the number of states decreased. This confederation was location in Middle Europe in present-day territory of: Germany, Austria, Czechia, Poland, Slovenia, and many others.

Though confederation had supreme common bodies their authority was very low. There was Counsel of Confederation (Bundesrat) in Frankfurt am Main, but neither Austria and Prussia, nor other German states obeyed its decisions.

The discrepancy between nation and states borders (see above) were the reason the demands for national unification of Germans into one state persist and spread.

- **Burschenschaft**, German students' fraternity, abbreviated as "B!" were in huge number established in German universities. The larger one was founded in City Jena in Thuringia.
- The fraternities were organizations that spread demand of unification of Germany. To commemorate anniversary of Battle of Leipzig and 300 years of German reformations Jena student fraternity arranged so called **Wartburg Festival** on 18 October 1817. That was in fact regional celebration of historical events, but frightened the German rulers who afraid of unification of Germany and loss of their thrones, respectively.

During 1819 huge summit of German states took place in Carlsbad in Bohemia and decided to ban these nationalist fraternities and to control universities. Decision of summit, so called **Carlsbad Decrees**, was then sanctioned by Counsel of Confederation and entered in force. This cancellation was repealed in 1848, but illegally the fraternities were created during whole period.

Despite the fact that demands of political unification of Germany were not carried through, more successful was gradual economic integration of Germany that started in 1834. That year **German Custom Association** was established and comprised majority of German states but Austria.

Compare. There is close link to development in Europe since 1952 that led to establishing of Europe Union.

### **Nationalism in Italy**

The similar situation like in Germany was in Italian Peninsula. After 1815 Italy was divided into many independent states. North of Italy under Austrian hegemony, in the Tuscany Duchy ruled Habsburg Dynasty, and in the middle of Peninsula there was Papal State under French influence. Only Kingdom of Naples in the south and Piedmont in the North were independent Italian states, but only small Piedmont support unification of Italy.

- Among Italian populations there were strong demand for unification of Italy; that attitude is called **Risorgimento** in Italian (Resurgence).
- Adherents of Italian Risorgimento formed secret societies called **Carbonari**, i.e. Charcoal Burners that inspired themselves of Freemasonry movement.
- In 1820 outbreak of revolution took place in Naples, in 1821 in Piedmont. Both movements claimed unification of Italy. But Austrian forces intervened in Kingdom of Naples in March 1821 and revolution was defeated.
- Number of insurgents departed into exile, especially into France and Switzerland.

As same as in Germany despite the fact that unification of Italy did not occurred and demands of Carbonari were not fulfilled, the idea of unification of Italy had spread gradually all over population of Apennine Peninsula and due to Italian exile also over whole Europe.

## **Young Europe**

Guiseppe Mazzini established in his exile in Bern in Switzerland international association of nationalistic organizations known as **Young Europe** in 1834. The programme was expressed by slogan was “Each nation its own state” and “one state for each nation”.

Young Europe consisted of four nationalist organizations:

- **Young Italy** (La Giovine Italia) became basis for Young Europe and was established by G. Mazzini in Marseille in 1831. In 1848 Young Italy was dissolved. The other members were
- **Young Germany** (Junges Deutschland) and
- **Young Poland** (Młoda Polska).
- In Ireland there was by William O'Brian established nationalist organization **Young Ireland** or Young Ireland Party. The inspiration was Young Europe, but Irish did not become members. The organization was dissolved after unsuccessful uprising in 1848.

The organization Young Europe fulfilled only propagandistic task, contributed to spread of nationalism, but out of dissolved during 1840s without any real success.

## Liberalism

The Liberalism was key ideology and movement of 19th century. According to leading ideas Liberalism posed demands for civil freedom, i.e. participation in state power according to the slogan “free citizen in free state”. The sources of liberal ideology were:

- **Enlightenment**, especially the philosophy of John Locke and Charles L. de Montesquieu that formed the concept of separation of state powers, i.e. of separation **executive** (government, king or president), **legislative** (Parliament), and **judicative** power (courts and constitutional court).
- **French Revolution** and especially of **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen** from 26 August 1789 (see text of T1); according to the declaration men are born and remain free and equal in rights.
- **Political economy**, political liberalism, of Adam Smith formulated in the book “The Wealth of Nations” on 1776. Smith postulated demands for removing economic barriers and state regulation (**laissez faire**), justifying the fact that rational self-interest and competition can be a base for achievement of collective prosperity.

The majority of demands of Liberalism were present in nationalism movement, but in **Russia, United Kingdom, and France**, where was not reason for spread of nationalism among Russians, Englishmen, and Frenchmen the decisive were the ideas of Liberalism. In Russia

- **Decembrist Revolt** took place in 1825. In Russia the ideas were formulated into revolutionary movement that had spread among officers. They demanded abolishment of serfdom, i.e. unfree status of peasants, and establishing of constitutional monarchy (throw down the tsarist autocracy).
- Officers made use of the dead of Alexander I and attempted to conduct the coup d'état during oath ceremony to new Tsar Nicholas I. But revolt was suppressed in its very beginnings on 26 December 1825 and was followed by persecution of involved members.

In United Kingdom **Suffrage Reform Movement** spread over the country. Due to industrial revolution and demographic grow newly emerged cities and their inhabitants requested reform of suffrage (demand to reform “rotten boroughs”). Complementary Middle Class demanded to broaden of existed suffrage.



The movement was successful in 1832 when according to the Reform Act suffrage was awarded for some 5 % (!) of British population.

At the same time **Chartist Movement** demanded suffrage for all men above 21 years. But that request was fulfilled after the First World War.

### **Revolutions of 1830**

Before 1848 Revolution first wave of revolutions spread all over Europe in 1830. The insurgents posed liberal demands (in **France** and Belgium) and national demands (also in **Belgium, Poland, Germany**, and Northern **Italy**).

The Revolution started in **France** on 26 July 1830. That is why the revolution is called **July Revolution**. The day the revolution broke out King Charles X of House of Bourbon issued so called **five ordonnances**, i.e. legislative statutes according them among other the press rights and suffrage were suppressed. During so called three Glorious Days from 27 to 29 July 1830 the King's army was defeated and insurgents, members of both intelligentsia and labourers, prevailed.

The king was overthrown and that moment Bourbon dynasty was removed from the throne of France. Members of House of Orleans conducted coup d'état, took power in France and established of so called **July Monarchy**. New King Louis Philippe restored civil rights based on liberal principle "who pays taxes, votes".

The July revolution aroused immediate interest in European countries and strong response.

- In **Germany** series of local uprising took place that expressed solidarity with Polish and French revolution. In number of cities so called City Guards were formed.
- In **Italy** period of civil disorder began in Austrian part of Northern Italy grew over to local uprisings in Modena, Parma, and Romagna. Insurgents awaited invasion of French troops and liberalization from Austrian dominance, but nothing like that had happened.
- **Belgium** became a Southern part of Netherland in 1814 and Belgian nationalists awaited opportunity to reach independence. Under influence of French July Revolution revolt in Brussels took place on 26 August 1830. National Guards defeated Dutch army and in short time controlled territory of Belgium. On 10 November 1830 **National Congress** was established and in December European powers recognized Belgium as sovereign state. After

unsuccessful invasion of Dutch army the recognition of Netherland followed in 1833.

### **Nationalism in Poland and November Revolution**

After 1814 Poland was divided among **Russia**, **Austria**, and **Prussia**, and small independent state **Free City of Cracow**. Its largest part, so called **Congress Kingdom/Poland** was united with Russia as personal union. Poles did not agree with loss of independence ("Partitions of Poland") and revolted. The first extensive revolution took place in 1830 and 1831.

So called **November Uprising** started as resistance to recruitment to Russian army for campaign against France and Belgium on 29 November 1830 in Warsaw. The revolt of military academy was led by Piotr Wysocki. The insurrection spread over Congress Poland. Autonomous Polish government resigned and new body of Provisional Government with Józef Chłopicki as Dictator of the Uprising was appointed on 5 December 1830. Situation led into Russo-Polish war:

- In first battle Russians were defeated, especially in the Battle of Stoczek when Polish cavalry successfully assaulted Russian positions. After few inconclusive battles Poles gathered their troops to defend Warsaw.
- The largest fight took place on 26 May 1831. This Battle of **Ostrołęka** was not conclusive battle, but led to high losses of Polish troops (8000 dead) that were not replaceable. That is why the battle is supposed to be Russian victory. The last defensive fight in Warsaw ended in September and the remainder of Polish army left for Prussia on 5 October 1831. That was the end of uprising.

Russian Tsar Nicholas I made use of uprising to be pretext for limitation of autonomy of Congress Kingdom of Poland.

The next, smaller uprising is known as **Cracow Uprising** that took place in 1846. In Cracow group of revolutionaries Jan Tyssowski and Edward Dembowski prepared Polish uprising that was aimed to strike all three parts of Poland. But the uprising broke out premature in January 1846 and only in Cracow. Provisional government was proclaimed. Austria was afraid of spread of revolutions and sent its army that immediately suppressed the uprising. This act also became reason for connection the city with Austria.

## Revolution of 1848 and 1849

Influx of revolutions struck Europe in 1848. In majority of European countries broke out the revolution. It was in Italy, in France, in Germany, in Habsburg monarchy, and in Ireland.

Revolution of 1848 and 1849 is also called

- **Spring of Nations**

because the main demand was to established **national state**, but at the same time **liberal** and also **social** demands were posted. That is why the Revolution of 1848 and 1849 could be interpreted as **triple revolution**.

Inhabitants of 1848 Europe responded to **economic problems**. After 1844 economic crisis took place and standard of living had dropped.

The revolutions had two stages, one in 1848 and second during 1849.

Prologue to European revolutions was civil war in Switzerland where the struggle between **Catholic** cantons (e.g. Uri, Schwyz) and **Protestant** cantons was commenced. In 1845 **Sonderbund** of Catholic cantons was established, but Protestants preserved their superiority. During December 1847 Sonderbund was defeated and dissolved. After that in Switzerland was, democratic **constitution** was declared and Switzerland became federation.

## Revolution of 1848 and 1849 in Italy

Origin of actual revolution became Italy.

- On 12 January 1848 uprising in **Palermo** against rule of Ferdinand II took place and insurgents demanded constitutionality.
- At the same time revolts in Austrian parts of Northern Italy happened.
- During February and March uprising spread in whole Italy. The Italians requested unification of Italy.

Kingdom of Sardinia made use of the revolution and declared war to Austria on 23 March 1848. During campaign of Sardinian troops revolution in Italy reached its climax. But

- on 25 July 1848 Italians were defeated in **Battle of Custoza** by Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky von Radetz who was of Czech origin.
- Kingdom of Sardinia surrendered and Austrian victory forced the Piedmonts to sign a six-month armistice.

During November 1848 Giuseppe Mazzini together with Giuseppe Garibaldi declared **Rome** Republic, while pope Pius IX was forced to leave. The revolutionaries declared constitution and also religious freedom. This moment began the second rising stage of revolution in Italy.

Kingdom of Sardinia once again declared war to Austria on 12 March 1849. But the same like in 1848

- Italians were for the second time defeated in **Battle of Novara** by Field Marshal Radetzky on 23 March 1849.

After the victory of Austrian forces the pre-revolutionary order was restored, at first in northern and central Italy, in May 1849 in Southern Italy in Kingdom of Naples and in July 1849 in Rome when after the military intervention pope Pius IX was re-appointed.

### **Revolution of 1848 and 1849 in France**

France was after 1830 Revolution de facto national state and constitutional monarchy. That is why especially liberal and social demands were posted during 1848 Revolution.

As usual meeting of defenders of reform was assembled but meeting on 22 February 1848 was banned. This ban became impulse for general uprising on 24 February 1848. Insurgents occupied strategic places in Paris and **King Louis Philippe abdicated**.

So called **Second French Republic** was declared, new constitution proclaimed a democratic republic and executive power was delegated from the king to the president. Also

- **general suffrage** and **civil freedoms** were issued and in April 1848 parliamentary elections took place.

The elections marked the end of liberal revolution, i.e. of revolutions of townspeople, especially of bourgeoisie. Labours was not satisfied with social legislation and induce

- **uprising of workmen** in June 1848. During the uprising social demands were posted, but during four days of fights uprising was defeated.

New republican constitution was declared on 12 November 1848 in which power of French President was strengthen. Soon after that **Louis Napoleon**, later on Emperor Napoleon III, was elected to be president and his election marked the historical way of France towards emperorship.

## Revolutions of 1848 and 1849 in Central Europe

In Central Europe parallel revolutions among members of five nations took place. Those nations were Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, and Czechs.

- **Germany**

- German states were under the influence of information about French Revolution, constitutions and civil freedoms
- Numbers of revolutionary performances in Germany states
- All-Germany elections = establishing of **National Assembly** in Frankfurt am Main (among others deputies of Czech Lands) on 18 May 1848; Frankfurt Constitution proclaimed parliamentary democracy – fulfilled the main demands of previous liberal and national movements
- March 1849 constitution of Germany declared: so called **Little-Germany Concept** of unifications, i.e. without Austria, head of state = King of Prussia
- Prussian King refused the crown, in June 1848 parliament forced to dissolve by army = **end of revolution in Germany**

- **Austria**

- National demands of Czechs, Hungarians, and Italians (see above), and liberal demands of Germans = ethnic rifts, esp. in Hungary
- March uprising in **Vienna**, Metternich resigned, April uprising forced to appeal proposal of constitution (disagreement)
- In **Budapest** Hungarian government established, among others **Lajos Kossuth**, in **Prague** National Committee and preparations for Slavic Congress, among other **František Palacký**
- July 1848 meeting of **Imperial Assembly** in Vienna = preparation of Austrian constitution, cancellation statute labour
- Suppression of revolts in Cracow (April) and in Prague (July, so called June Uprising)
- September 1848 campaign against Hungarians = new revolutionary influx in Vienna, Imperial Assembly transferred in Kroměříž
- October 1848 defeat of Vienna revolution, Prime Minister **Felix Schwarzenberg** and **Franz Joseph I** as an Emperor, in March 1849

forced dissolution of Assembly, declaration of so called Imposed Constitution

- **Hungary**

- From spring 1849 the only one revolutionary government, overthrown of House of Habsburg, defiance, but in June 1849 invasion of Russian army = Hungarian capitulation by **Villagos** ended the Hungarian Revolution

### **Excursus: Revolution of 1848 and 1849 and the Czech Lands**

- 1 March 1848, Prague = establishing of **National Committee**, representative body of Czech nations
  - Two petition to emperor: demand of Czech State Law, promised by emperor in 8 April 1848 (so called **Cabinet Certificate**)
- **Peasant disorder 1848**
  - Series of local uprisings and collective refuse of statute labour
- **June Uprising of 1848**
  - 2 to 12 June 1848 **Slavic Congress**, at the same time conflict with Austrian army on 12 June = beginning of uprising in Prague (barricades); 17 June military defeat = end of revolution in Czech Lands
- **May Conspiracy of 1848**
  - Attempt of Czech radicals (influence of anarchism), e.g. Josef Frič, to break up Austria in general uprising, but 10 May 1849 revealed

## Summary

First half of 19th century was as a struggle between political demands that appeared during French Revolution (**liberal** and **national principles**) and interests of European dynasties (**dynastic principle**).

The events of 1830 and especially of 1848 proved the significance of liberal and national legitimization principle. These principles are valid until present day. That is why the first half of 19th century is also beginning of modern society in Europe, especially in Western Europe.

On the other hand revolution of 1848 that struck majority of European countries set the limits of co-operation of nations and marked the turn point of converting **nationalism** into **chauvinism**. Co-operation of nations ended when representatives of nationalist movement reached their demands and hence the interest of nations mutually clashed.

### **Recommended Sources**

KOHN, Hans: *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History*. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company 1965. (available in Moravská zemská knihovna)

KOHN, Hans: *American Nationalism. An Interpretative Essay*. New York: Collier Books 1961. (available in Moravská zemská knihovna)