

K. The Age of Metternich (1815-1848)

1. The period known as the “Age of Metternich” is named after an Austrian aristocrat, named *Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Fürst von Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein*, but who is usually known simply as “Prince Metternich.”
2. Metternich was not one of the powerful rulers of Europe himself. He was merely an advisor to the Austrian Emperor. Nonetheless, historians choose to name this period after him. This shows us that somehow he was the most important person in this time.
3. Metternich is important because the monarchs turned to him for guidance. He was the one who directed the actions of those rulers in the protection of their dying way of life.
4. The important insight that this points to concerning the movement of history is that *ideas matter*. It is men of ideas, not merely men of action, who move history. In the “Age of Metternich” this is clearly shown in how the kings (the men who wielded power) used their power according to the guidance of the ideas of Metternich.
5. In essence, Metternich advised the rulers on how to use their power to try to wipe out the effects of the French Revolution and Napoleon on Europe, i.e. to use force to stop change. (In this particular period, Metternich, the most prominent man of ideas, was against progress. By contrast, the American Revolution is a great example of men of ideas, the Founding Fathers, being proponents of progress.)



“Prince” Metternich was the leader of the monarchs of Europe who wished to prevent the spread of the ideas and consequences of the French Revolution.

L. The Holy Alliance

1. The rulers of Russia, Prussia, and Austria especially wanted to insure that their countries would remain monarchies.
2. They created the “Holy Alliance” to defend the idea of the “divine right of kings.”
3. The rulers of this alliance imposed a monarchy on France, and created new monarchies in the Netherlands and Sardinia (Italy) as buffers between them and France.

M. The Metternich System in France

1. When Louis XVIII became the king of France, he granted the “Charter of 1814”-- a constitution for France, creating a parliament, and establishing freedom of religion.
2. Louis reasoned that granting a charter was actually a way to preserve divine right, because this charter was granted as a *gift* from the ruler, not imposed on the ruler by the people. Thus it was not quite constitutional monarchy.
3. Many French lords wished a return to full divine right monarchy. On the other hand, many commoners wished for a full republic, i.e. for some form of government without a king at all. Lastly, there were “Bonapartists,” who wished for a rebirth of the French Empire under Napoleon or one of his descendants.
4. In this situation, the best solution (and the best way to avoid too much change) was a compromise.

N. The Metternich System in Germany

1. To prevent change in Germany meant something altogether different. There the effects of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Period had been to encourage German-speaking people to desire a unified nation of Germany. The Germans were

envious of the successes of the unified nation of France, and they wanted the same thing for themselves.

2. For Metternich, this was unacceptable. The Austrian Empire was half composed of German people, and half composed of Eastern European people, including Hungarians and Slavs. If a nation of Germans was created this would split the Austrian Empire apart, and destroy its power.
3. To prevent the unification of Germany, Metternich advised the rulers of the separate German states to impose censorship on the people with regards to German unification.
4. With the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819, it became illegal for teachers and journalists to publish their ideas on unification. Universities and printing presses were monitored by government agents to stop people from sharing ideas or organizing themselves to change the government.



Louis-Philippe became the first constitutional monarch of France by accepting the Charter of 1830.

O. The Metternich System in Spain and Italy

1. In Spain and Italy the Napoleonic Code had been implemented, granting equality before the law to all people during Napoleon's reign.
2. The commoners in those countries had been forced back into the medieval system by the Holy Alliance powers, but they yearned for the greater freedom and equality they had briefly tasted.
3. Seeing people organizing to change the government, the Holy Alliance decided to use force to prevent it from happening.
4. The Austrian army marched into Italy and killed or arrested all the organizers of the groups wanting change.
5. The task of supporting the monarchy in Spain was taken up by Louis XVIII of France. French armies marched into Spain in 1823, and ended the rebellions there.

P. The July Revolution of 1830

1. In 1824, Louis XVIII died and was succeeded by his brother, Charles X.
2. Charles was a stronger believer in the divine right of kings, and throughout his reign he clashed with the new French parliament.
3. Finally, tiring of opposition to his reign, he dismissed the parliament, changed the rules for elections, and created censorship in France, via laws called the July Ordinances of 1830.
4. This sparked an instant uprising against the king, as the citizens of Paris took to the streets, arming themselves and putting up barricades all over the city.
5. For three days, Charles tried to use the army to suppress the uprising, but, fearing for his life, he soon abdicated and ran away to England.
6. This overthrow of the monarchy is sometimes known as the Second French Revolution, or, because it happened in the span of just a couple days in July of 1830, simply the July Revolution of 1830.

Q. The Beginning of the End

1. The French revolutionaries chose a new king, Louis-Philippe, and forced him to accept the “Charter of 1830” before being allowed to take the throne. This meant that “divine right” was finally banished from France.
2. The new charter contained a revealing phrasing. Louis-Philippe was king of France “by the grace of God, *and by the will of the nation.*” (This phrase by itself shows the transition towards modern democratic life.)
3. As if on cue from France, the people of Belgium then rebelled against the King of the Netherlands, and declared their independence.
4. These two radical changes represent the “beginning of the end” for the Metternich system.

R. Introduction to the Industrial Revolution

1. The essence of the Metternich system was the use of force to prevent political changes, but outside of Metternich's reach, in Britain, momentous changes were underway in “industry,” i.e. in the the production of the material values required to sustain human life.
2. For all of recorded history up until the late eighteenth century, the basic values required for life, i.e. food, clothing, shelter, water, and medicine, had been obtained and created in the same manner.
3. Then quite suddenly, over a period of only a few decades (which *is* sudden compared to thousands of years) the way in which many of these values are created was radically changed.
4. Because this change to industry was sudden and of great historical importance, it is known as the “Industrial Revolution.”
5. In particular, starting in 1764, with the invention of the “Spinning Jenny” (a machine that could make thread from wool), and the “Power Loom” (a machine that used a steam engine to weave that thread into cloth, it became possible for people to produce literally *thousands* of times more clothing with the same amount of physical effort as before.
6. Inventions like the steam engine were also applied in other areas, especially, of course, transportation. Trains and steamships were a big part of the early Industrial Revolution.
7. Although the Industrial Revolution was a massive leap forward for mankind, it created all kinds of new challenges, as people adapted to the world of industrial technology.
8. For farmers, in particular, whose life as peasants was barely tolerable, life as an industrial worker appeared sufficiently superior to draw many people into towns and cities to work in factories.
9. The reality of life of an industrial worker, however, often proved difficult.
10. Instead of making food and living in a home built by one's own labor, as it had been for serfs, industrial workers made products for factory owners, and were given money in payment. Using money, they had to buy (or more likely, rent) shelter, and buy food.
11. What industrial life lacked in this scenario, however, was the slim guarantee provided to farmers by their right to stay on their farmland under feudalism. A worker who was injured or could not work for any reason, could be fired, and thus have no money to buy food or lodging.
12. The idea emerged that in such a setting, workers should have a guarantee, just as serfs had once had. Since they relied on their ability to work in order to survive, just as serfs relied on their right to stay on the land, should they not have a “**right to work**”

13. As this idea became more popular, French workers began to expect that the government should somehow provide this “right” by controlling the world of industry.
14. The originators of this notion were the first *socialists* in the realm of economics.

S. Socialism and the Revolution of 1848 in France

1. As the Industrial Revolution spread into France, socialists began to put pressure on the government to provide the “right to work.” The pressure mounted as the number of workers grew, especially during the reign of Louis-Philippe.
2. Louis-Philippe tried to lead the country as a constitutional monarch, but ultra-royalists (who wanted a pure monarchy), republicans, Bonapartists, and now socialists, all wanted different changes to the government.
3. To try to prevent people from planning to replace his government, Louis-Philippe gradually created new censorship laws.
4. In 1848, in reaction to these laws, the workers of Paris rebelled, arming themselves and taking over the streets of Paris.
5. Rather than risk a civil war, Louis-Philippe abdicated and ran away to England.
6. The people feared a new round of violence, and a long period of chaos, as during the original French Revolution.
7. It was at this point that the nephew of Napoleon, a man named Louis-Napoleon, emerged to provide a new figure that the French could rally around.
8. The people believed that Louis-Napoleon could bring order, stability, and military glory back to France, so he was elected as the “president” of France.
9. Throughout Europe, dominos began to fall, and Metternich himself ran away to England. The Age of Metternich was at an end.