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# The Revolutions of 1848 in Germany, Italy, and France

Jonathan Richard Hill

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# The Revolutions of 1848 in Germany, Italy, and France

**Abstract**

The Revolutions of 1848 were a widespread uprising that took place across Europe in response to social and economic pressures brought on by the eighteenth century Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Conservative monarchs throughout Europe were threatened as middle and working class people attempted to establish new governments that allowed the common man a voice in government function. This thesis explores the reasons why the revolutions occurred in Germany, Italy, and France and why in each case the revolutions failed to achieve any significant change in each country.

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THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1848 IN GERMANY, ITALY, AND FRANCE

By

Jonathan Richard Hill

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervising Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Director

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Author: Jonathan Richard Hill

Department: History and Philosophy

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## Chapter I

### Failing to Turn: The German Revolution of 1848

The 1848 revolution in the Germanic states of Central Europe was a remarkable opportunity for the establishment of liberal and socialist ideas in a new governing body, but neither the middle nor working class was able to achieve that goal. History continues to call the year 1848 the “Year of Revolutions” in response to the number and variety of uprisings that swept through Europe.<sup>i</sup> France, Italy, the Austrian Empire, and the Germanic states all witnessed insurgencies brought on for a multiplicity of reasons. The revolution in the Germanic states is particularly interesting because of its failure to bring about a new social or political structure. The Germanic states ended in the same place from where they had started. While the elements for a successful revolution seemed to be present when the revolution began, it was eventually revealed that the most important element success for was missing: a common identity. The beginnings of the revolution saw the middle and working class united in an effort to create a system that allowed for their ideals to be realized in a united Germany. However, the middle class’ sluggishness and division within the working class destroyed the common ideology necessary for a successful revolution which resulted in the failure of the revolution.

Understanding the 1848 revolution is not possible without comprehending the political and social situation in the years following 1815 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The French Revolution and its aftermath had left the aristocracy of Europe in a fearful state dreading the day of a working class revolt. Haunting images of workers leading them off to the guillotine plagued their dreams. This fear developed from the thought of lower class workers having any sort of power in the government and in response to this a wave of conservatism spread among monarchs and their states.<sup>ii</sup> To prevent the workers from obtaining more power conservatives supported a

restoration of strongly hierarchical governments. The idea of “von Gotten Gnaden” (king by the grace of God) found new life as monarchies were restored throughout Europe in wake of the French Revolution.

Alongside this fear of the lower classes, different social ideas began to emerge. One of these new ideas was called liberalism, an ideology which came from Great Britain and one that valued the concept of inalienable rights. This view held that the rights of freedom of the press, a separation between church and state, freedom of trade, the establishment of a militia, the protection of habeas corpus, and the security provided by a constitution were rights too which everyone was entitled.<sup>iii</sup> The ideals of liberalism were a direct product of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment held that it was rational that everyone should be given the freedom to demonstrate their talents and abilities. It would be detrimental to the state to allow those individuals who possess talent not to be permitted to participate in the political process due to their birth. Precedent for this effective ideology could be seen in the successful implementation of the Magna Carta and Bill of Rights.<sup>iv</sup> In the Germanic states, this liberal ideology was not supported by the aristocracy, but instead found its home a new middle class that was forming. The industrial revolution created a new middle class made up of merchants, bankers, and other professional occupations who profited from new business ventures and the wealth created by them. Laissez-faire economics, the emerging economic system under the Industrial Revolution, was the desired structure among liberals because the government was involved as little as possible in the economy. A liberal political structure would allow for the most profit to be obtained and would reduce barriers to obtaining revenue. Members of the middle class were generally well educated and the vast majority had attended university. In fact, students and professors were significant numbers within the middle class. They provided the intellectual basis

behind liberalism and gave it an explanation in an Enlightenment context. The rule of the German Kaiser and other nobles was contrary to their ideology for these people had not earned their position of power, rather they had only obtained them through their birth. That being said, the middle class also did not want the working class to have too much power. Those in the lower classes had demonstrated that they did not possess the talent required to obtain a place among the middle class bourgeoisie and members of the middle class felt that letting them have a voice in government would be wasteful.<sup>v</sup> The historian Theodore S. Hamerow put it best, “Their ideal was the *justemilieu* between absolutism and mob rule, between the anachronisms of autocracy and the horrors of revolution.”<sup>vi</sup> As the name implies, the middle class were somewhere in the middle. They were also strong supporters of nationalism and took great pride in being German.

Another new ideology that was taking shape in Germany at this time was socialism, which was a response to the industrial revolution and the plight of the working class. This new ideology called for all of society, including the working class, to have complete control of the government and its functions. Everyone would benefit equally from the success of the state. The social system created by socialism would be devoid of classes and would produce a society where everyone was equal. This society would be achieved when the working class, or proletariat, rise up in revolt and takes control. The ideas of socialism were defined by Karl Marx and Freidrich Engels, but the idea did not gain popularity right away.<sup>vii</sup> Many of the theories presented by Marx and Engels were defined in the book *The Communist Manifesto*, written in February of 1848. The ideas produced by Marx and Engels were more a response from what they observed in the events leading up to the revolutions in France, Italy, and Germany than it was an actual ideology of the time.<sup>viii</sup> However, the overall idea of the working class gaining more power was a fear felt by the aristocracy and later the middle class as well.

When the Germanic states had emerged from the Napoleonic Era the German people created a new consciousness and governmental structure. The ideas from the French Revolution and the Enlightenment had crossed over with the French armies. Soon after the removal of French troops from the Germanic soil it was apparent that the German people would be required to reorganize the kingdoms and consolidate themselves. Many of the 300 separate German kingdoms that had existed before Napoleon were beyond hope of restoring the governments that had been disbanded. In response to this chaos, the Germans created a German Confederation made up of thirty-five princely states and four independent cities. By far the strongest state of this federation was Prussia which had substantial influence. A weak Federal Diet was formed in Frankfurt that was composed of all the states. Its purpose was primarily for securing common foreign policy beneficial to the entire confederation. An added role of the Diet was to help encourage cooperation between the Germanic states in an effort to secure economic prosperity.

Many Germans felt that the confederation was the first step on the path to obtaining the unification of Germany. A unified Germany was one of the chief demands of the nationalists who shared many views with the liberals. A unified state could better secure personal liberties of its citizens and could keep them protected. More importantly, for many in the middle class unification would allow increased trade within Germany and more equitable trade abroad. However, as the waves of conservatism swept through the confederation soon after its birth liberals and nationalists found their dreams being crushed. The new representative government was a front for the aristocracy and the Kaiser, Frederick William IV (1840-1861), who held the real power. In the new confederation Prussian Junkers and other nobles had no desire to see the Kaiser lose any of his authority, for their own privilege and influence stemmed from the Kaiser's political power and clout.

A major influence over German policy came from outside the German Confederation in the form of Klemens Lothar, Prince von Metternich (1773-1859), the foreign minister of the Austrian Empire. His talents as a politician gave him the ability to influence a great deal of central Europe. As an aristocrat he supported conservatism and abhorred liberalism. He spent a great deal of his energy working to squash liberalism as it began to develop. Within the confederation he was able to influence legislation that would silence the middle class liberals. After a minor demonstration by students in Wartburg against the conservative movement, Metternich had the German Confederation issue the Karlsbad Decrees in 1818. These decrees brought censorship to the German universities to prevent the spread of liberal ideas. Lecturers and their notes were reviewed by a state censor who would analyze them for liberal content. Other decrees included censorship of the press and the power of search and seizure of property. Later, public demonstrations and wearing clothes with nationalist colors were also prohibited. As tough as these new laws were in the view of the German liberals they did little to stop the demonstrations that the students organized.<sup>ix</sup>

Metternich's attempts to block out the ideas of liberalism and socialism were intense, but were not completely effective. From exile in England, Karl Marx was working to put the plight of the German workers into a social and historical context. He was joined in this endeavor by Fredrick Engels, another noted socialist writer of the time. In 1848, the year of the revolution among the German people, Marx and Engels wrote *The Communist Manifesto* which portrayed the workers as a united proletariat who were seen as a commodity to the bourgeoisie,

...in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed, a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital.<sup>x</sup>

The work of Marx and Engel brought the movement of the working class into perspective and put upon it a goal to be reached, namely a revolution into a classless communist system. These ideas existed before 1848, but it was *The Communist Manifesto* that put into print what many had been saying.

The final element to be considered in the decades leading up to the 1848 revolution was the working class. This class made up the majority of the population in the Germanic lands and any successful revolution hinged on their participation and actions. The years between 1815 and 1848 in Germany saw a tremendous growth in industries accompanied by a population explosion.<sup>xi</sup> Increasing numbers of rural laborers moved from the countryside into German cities to find jobs in newly created industries. The early industrial revolution was associated with great hardships and the German confederation was not spared its growing pains. Fourteen hour days were common, as were unsafe working conditions. Abuse of women's labor and the use of child labor were also widespread. For all the work and sacrifice that these people went through they still struggled to obtain a basic subsistence. In the years before 1848 one third of the working class was in poverty.<sup>xii</sup> This type of existence left the working class little time to consider the ideological pros and cons of the government, but eager to find some sort of relief.

Tension mounted between the classes and ideological groups in the years approaching 1848. Liberals were being frustrated in their attempts to give rise to their ideas to create a freer state that would allow for political and economic freedom. Workers were still struggling to survive and in many cases remained in poverty. Two events set off this powder keg. First, there was a downward turn in the business cycle starting from 1846 into 1849. Many new businesses failed and many workers lost their meager paying jobs. To intensify, this the years 1845-1847 saw major harvest failures throughout Europe. Widespread hunger was rampant throughout the

German Confederation. Crowds began to fill the streets of the cities of the Confederation demanding reform. Instead of reform they were met with troops and violence. The conservative rulers, fearful of this growing unrest, began to use serious force to try and stop the crowds. These crowds were being directed by middle class leaders while most of the fighting was done by the workers and liberal students. Berlin was noted as having bloody street fighting as barricades made of cobblestones turned the streets into fortresses. Fredrick William IV desperately asked his fellow Berliners for a stop to the fighting. During this time the Kaiser appeared to be sympathetic to the movement. He attended the funerals of the street fighters who were killed and wore the colors of the nationalist and liberal movement.

The middle and working class were at this time united under a common goal of removing the conservative elite, but each class had very different reasons for wanting to achieve that goal. For the middle class liberals the chaos of the revolution appeared to be the opportune time for the unification of Germany and the realization of their liberal ideology. Most of the aristocracy, including the Kaiser, had fled the major cities for safer locations in the countryside and they would not be able to counteract liberal attempts to create a unified Germany. National elections were quickly held for a parliament that was to be located in Frankfurt. Those who were chosen to go to the Frankfurt Parliament presented a clear majority of middle class men.<sup>xiii</sup> A larger percentage of the delegates were college professors or other similarly educated men.

The parliament met on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1848 with great excitement, but that excitement began to wane after time passed and little was accomplished. Although the delegates were quite intelligent, as can be seen by their credentials, they had little political experience. Settling issues proved to be an extremely difficult task which slowed down an already long process. Nationalist feeling caused endlessly debated topics such as whether to include Austria into the new

Germany. Austria was a collection of many different ethnicities and the Frankfurt Parliament was concerned about the ten million ethnic Germans who lived there. Supporters for the plan to include Austria felt that these Germans had to be incorporated in a new Germany, even if it meant bringing the other ethnicities in as well. This plan was called the *Grossduetch*, or greater Germany, while opposing that group was the *Klienduetch*, or smaller Germany faction. Members of this faction felt that Germany should not include Austria and should consist solely of Prussia together with the other 38 states of the German Confederation.

After eleven months the parliament reached a decision to unite Germany with a constitution in a *Klienduetch* fashion under the rule of the Prussian King, Frederick William IV. The plan was far from perfect and only won by a very narrow victory. The middle class was not opposed to a monarchy and in fact welcomed a Kaiser as long as it was limited by a constitution and an elected assembly. However, William refused the proposal of the parliament. His earlier compassion for the reform movement had been destroyed by months of bitterness after having given in to the people of Berlin. He would not lower himself to the position of being controlled by the masses that by his divine right he destined to control. Not long afterwards in March of 1849 Kaiser William sent troops back into Berlin and ended the fighting there. Soon the rest of the revolutions began to lose steam and sputter out. The working class provided little resistance to this return of the monarchy. The final end to the revolts occurred in Baden where insurgents under Lorenz Brentano and Ludwik Mieroslawski were defeated by Prussian troops on July 23, 1849. This marked the end of the 1848 revolutions in the German lands.

The failure of these revolutions came from a series of factors. Oppression in the German confederation had left many liberals bitter and ready for change. They wanted a voice in government that they felt they deserved. However, as much as they desired this they could do

nothing without the support of the working class to provide the muscle. The working class was seeking a way out of the poverty it had been cast. On top of the physical and economic hardships produced by the growing industrialization of Germany the failure and resulting hunger from the 1840s had left workers particularly on edge. The Junkers did little to help the workers. Part of their rationalization was that keeping the workers in a position of subsistence would help them to maintain order and hard work.

By the time of the revolution the workers were desperate for any type of relief, even if it was from the liberals. Most of the working class was made of conservatives who did not want to see the government changed drastically. These sentiments can be found in the comments of General Mieroslawski, a Polish officer hired by the revolutionary army in Baden that was fighting against the Prussians of the post Frankfurt Parliament. The historian, Robert Priscilla, comments on Mieroslawski's feelings toward the revolution,

Among the conditions that he blamed for his failure at arms was that neither the citizens nor soldier knew what they were fighting for. They stood for no exact revolutionary aims, and were inclined to interpret "freedom" in a way they meant fulfilling their own whims.<sup>xiv</sup>

Mieroslawski's views on the revolution in Baden can be applied more broadly to the 1848 revolutions in general. The persons doing most of the fighting, the working class, did not comprehend what the middle class wanted them to fight for.

A further problem that was seen in the working class was that it was divided amongst itself as to what the workers represented. The workers did not see themselves as a united proletariat, but as having their own classes within the working class. For example, factory workers did not like being associated with the handicraftsman to whom they felt superior in skill and wealth. They could not embrace the socialist unity necessary for the proletariat uprising that Marx predicted. There was no leader who rallied all the workers around a common cause. The

liberals had acted as leaders for a time, promising change and relief from their suffering. However, after eleven months of debating and no change the working class became disillusioned. Workers were seeking immediate relief from the conditions inflicted by the industrial revolution, relief that the middle class liberals were not providing.<sup>xv</sup>

The working class lacked a unified ideology that could bring it through the revolution. The workers had no leader in which they could see their ideas reflected and whom they could support. It is difficult to imagine that the working class could develop much of an ideology coming from the environment they were experiencing. After a fourteen hour day of back breaking labor few would have the mental or physical energy to put the worker's demands into an ideological context. They simply were trying to survive. This argument is further supported by the description of the workers in 1849 by historian W. O. Henderson who observed,

These workers had little interest in political reforms or German unification. But they were interested in bread-and-butter questions. Exploited by great landlords and, capitalist merchants or factory owners, they were all too familiar with poverty and unemployment.<sup>xvi</sup>

However, these hardships that handicapped the workers did not stop others from trying to put the worker's participation in the revolution into an ideological context for them. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels used their socialist ideology to try and give the workers a common ideology. The theories of socialism seemed to fit the situation that the workers were encountering. This is the main reason why *The Communist Manifesto* was published in 1848. The problem that remained was that the theories of socialism came from a source outside of the movement. Workers were not aware that socialism required them to rise up as unified force to overthrow capitalism and its oppression. Marx and Engels were not in touch with the actual feelings of the workers in Germany which is not surprising since they spent most of their time in Great Britain analyzing from afar.<sup>xvii</sup> As it existed the working class was seeking any means by which it could

survive. By the time the German parliament had finally made any sort of decision the workers had reached the point where surviving meant going back to work, as awful as it was. Neither socialists nor middle class ideology had demonstrated itself as effective in meeting the needs of the men and women of the working class.

When the moment came in the revolutions of 1848 where Germany “failed to turn” and become unified, the cause was the slow moving middle class and division within the working class that can explain why Germany went back to a conservative monarchy. The revolution itself was a progression from the time of the defeat of Napoleon to the events of the 1840s. French armies had planted the seed of the Enlightenment in the Germanic states since their occupation. This seed continued to mature as other forces developed toward a similar end. The development of the industrial revolution on Germany was creating a larger and larger working class that was becoming dependant on urban jobs. The harsh working conditions made the workers eager for change. Ironically the best opportunity for that change came from the middle class that were often the group who owned the businesses and factories that caused the horrible working conditions. During the revolutions the middle class and workers fought for change, but ultimately did not reach out and grab that change when they had the chance too. If the Frankfort parliament had been quicker in its deliberations the government would have not missed its chance to unify German and the workers may still have had the motivation to follow the liberals and nationalists into a new Germany.

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- <sup>i</sup> Albert Craig, et al., *The Heritage of World Civilizations* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2000), 739.
- <sup>ii</sup> Herwig, Holger H. (1994). *Hammer or Anvil?* Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, pg. 80.
- <sup>iii</sup> Hamerow, Theodore S. (1958) *Restoration Revolution Reaction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press pg 130-133.
- <sup>iv</sup> Herwig pg. 80.
- <sup>v</sup> Sheeham, James J. "Liberalism and Society in Germany, 1815-48" *The Journal of Modern History*, 45/ 4 (1973): 583-604.
- <sup>vi</sup> Hamerow, pg 62.
- <sup>vii</sup> This socialism is not to be confused with the similar term of communism, which implies a totalitarian system characteristic of the final stages of Marx's socialist theory.
- <sup>viii</sup> Hamerow, pg. 66-67.
- <sup>ix</sup> Herwig, pg. 86.
- <sup>x</sup> Ramsland, Clement and Borditch, John (1957) *Voices of the Industrial Revolution*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Pg 162.
- <sup>xi</sup> Simms, Brendan (1998). *The Struggle for Mastery in Germany, 1779-1850*. New York, New York: St. Martin's Press pg 146-148
- <sup>xii</sup> Herwig, pg. 93.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Sheehan, James J. (1978) *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press pg. 57.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Priscilla Robertson, *Revolutions of 1848 A Social History*: New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960 pg. 176.
- <sup>xv</sup> Hamerow, pg. 140.
- <sup>xvi</sup> W. O. Henderson (1974) *The Rise of German Industrial Power 1834-1914*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press pg 81
- <sup>xvii</sup> Herwig, pg. 92-94.

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## Chapter II

### Italy's Lost Opportunity to Unite

The revolutions of 1848 began with a high potential for change among the people who inhabited the Italian peninsula, but ultimately the revolution in Italy failed to live up to the promised expectations of change. These expectations ran in two parallel directions. The first was the desire to free Italy from the influence and control of the Austrian Empire, while the second was to unify Italy into a united and independent state. Although Charles Albert (1798-1849) and the armies of Piedmont proved that it was possible for Italians to stand up to the Austrians, accomplishing the second half of this agenda proved to be much more difficult. Why were the Italians unable to unite Italy, push out the Austrians, and mold Italy into a cohesive modern state? Despite intense feelings of nationalism, when Italy's opportunity came to unify in early 1848 the leaders and the people became hopelessly divided. The revolution in Italy failed because the Italians did not understand the nature of the unification they were trying to achieve and this, coupled with their loyalty to small Italian kingdoms, prevented them from attaining the cohesive effort needed to create a unified state.

The modern state of Italy did not exist before 1860, rather the Italian peninsula was divided into many small kingdoms each under the authority of a separate monarch. However, this feudal system was disrupted by French armies under the command of Napoleon who invaded and occupied the peninsula in 1796. By 1815 Napoleon and his armies were defeated, but impact of their presence in the Italian states would endure long afterwards. Ideas from another relatively new movement called the Enlightenment had permeated Italian thought due to the French occupation. Napoleon and his armies were a product of the French Revolution, a movement heavily influenced by Enlightenment ideas. These ideas included a strong confidence in

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human reason, happiness, liberty, and the idea that people had rights unto themselves. The areas that were under French occupation or influence had their traditional political systems removed and replaced by systems that reflected Enlightenment ideals. These systems allowed for a measure of freedom previously unknown to most of Europe.<sup>xvii</sup>

Among all the territories conquered by Napoleon the Italians suffered the least and benefited the most.<sup>xvii</sup> Napoleon's brother Joseph reorganized the peninsula and centralized efficiency.<sup>xvii</sup> Education was made into a civil institution, which allowed for modern enlightened educational practices that were open to both men and women. University was made free and each province was given its own college. Soon the people of the Italian peninsula enjoyed equal protection under the law, honest judges, careers open to the talented, and the Code Napoleon. General Pepe (1783- 1855), a veteran of the French army in Italy vehemently stated, "We made more progress on this side of the Strait within the space of ten years, than our ancestors had done in three centuries."<sup>xvii</sup> Despite the fact they were ruled by a dictator the Italians benefited greatly from French occupation.

An additional result from Napoleon's exploits was the growth of Italian nationalism. Nationalism was established on the theory that a nation was composed of people who were linked together by common language, customs, culture, and history.<sup>xvii</sup> This nationalism was a powerful force and was an ever present threat to conservatives who supported traditional Divine Right monarch. Conservatives often ruled territories that encompassed a multitude of ethnicities and cultures. Austria was a perfect example of this encompassing over five different ethnic groups, including the Italians in Northern Italy. Nationalism made this, type of political structure increasingly difficult as ethnic groups began to demand their own government or political agenda.

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Many conservative rulers and elites linked nationalism with liberalism. Liberalism maintained that the ideal form of government was a popular sovereignty through a democracy. Both nationalism and liberalism were considered dangerous and radical ideas by the conservative statesmen of Europe. It was a direct threat to their power and for them, an insult to God who had given them the power rule. All traces of liberalism were suppressed by conservatives to ensure that the people would stay in their place.

After Napoleon's defeat and exile in 1815 the Congress of Vienna (Sept., 1814–June, 1815) began the process of restoring Europe to its pre-revolutionary status. Old monarchies were restored to their thrones as a powerful wave of conservatism swept across the continent. The freedom and efficiency that Italians had been enjoying was abruptly taken away. The Congress of Vienna went on to give control of northern Italy to Austria and merge the kingdoms of Piedmont and Genoa into one.<sup>xvii</sup> In the Grand Duchy of Tuscany Ferdinand III, a Habsburg, was given control of the territory. Out of the ten kingdoms of Italy five were ruled by Habsburgs, two by Bourbons, two were ruled by Italians, and the last was ruled by the pope.<sup>xviii</sup> This restructuring was part of a bigger plan to provide border states around France to protect the major powers from the threat of future attack by the French and keep Italy in conservative control.<sup>xvii</sup>

Little attention was given to the desires of the people in these territories. Northern Italy was now under the control of a conservative foreign power that was determined to quash the twin threats of democracy and liberalism. The rest of the Italian peninsula was divided up into its pre 1789 kingdoms. To ensure control over the territory many members of the Habsburg family, the same family which ruled in Austria, were given control over many of these kingdoms. The Papal States were restored to their former border and Pope Pius VII was given back temporal power

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over them. In the north the states of Lombardy and Venetia were left under the control of Austria to provide it with a foothold to meddle in Italian affairs. The other major kingdom in the north, Sardinia, was under the rule of King Charles Albert and would come to play a significant role in the 1848 revolution.

The years proceeding 1848 saw difficult times throughout Europe. Beginning in 1846 there were widespread crop failures for at least two consecutive seasons in most places. Food costs were quickly rising. In addition, the whole of Europe was experiencing an economic recession, leaving thousands without jobs or a way to purchase the already expensive food stuffs.<sup>xvii</sup> Those who were hit hardest were those in the working class whose survival was directly linked to their ability to buy food. With the rise of industrialization many were already being forced out of work as their jobs were replaced by machines. No revolution happens by chance, these were the steps that led Italy toward the Revolution in 1848.<sup>xvii</sup>

It was quickly becoming clear to many Italians that the Italy created by the Congress of Vienna was inefficient and ineffective. They began to look for an answer that could help restore the peninsula to a more enlightened and modern state. The most common answer to the problem was the unification of the Italian kingdoms.<sup>xvii</sup> By the time of the Revolutions of 1848 Italy had been under the influence of a new movement toward unification, called the Risorgimento; which meant Resurgence in Italian.<sup>xvii</sup> If Italians everywhere could unite and drive out the Austrians they could be free to establish a liberal state, based on the ideas of the Enlightenment. Several important figures emerged whom the people thought could lead them to this united Italy.

The most well known figure pushing for Italian unification at the time was Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872). A native of Genoa he was a key supporter of a fusion of the many Italian

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kingdoms into one state, as can be seen in his book *The Duties of Man*, where he wrote to the Italian people.<sup>xvii</sup>

Your industrial associations and mutual help societies are useful as a means of educating and disciplining yourselves; as an economic fact they will remain barren until you have an Italy.<sup>xvii</sup>

Mazzini was the son of a professor of anatomy at the university in Genoa. Growing up in Genoa he was arrested more than once for his political and religious views. For Mazzini these views were one and the same; his political views became his own religion which he propagated wherever he went. A taste of these views can be seen in his work in *Absolutism and Revolution*,

This mission is the task which a people must perform to the end that the Divine Idea shall be realized in this world; it is the work which gives people its rights as a member of Mankind; it is the baptismal rite which endows a people with its own character and its rank in the brotherhood of nations...<sup>xvii</sup>

Mazzini spoke of the mission of unification of Italy by the Italians and how it was their destiny to do so. It was not long until the conservative government of Sardinia grew distrustful of Mazzini and exiled him in 1831. This marked the beginning of his travels in the pursuit of his vision of Italy.

In Mazzini's opinion Italy needed a spark that would ignite the people to rise up and unite. To that end in April of 1831 he established a republican group known as Young Italy.

Historian Arnold Whitridge explained:

Young Italy is a brotherhood of Italians who believe in a law of Progress and Duty, and are convinced that Italy is destined to become one nation-convinced also that she possesses sufficient strength with herself to become one, and that ill success of her former efforts is to be attributed not to weakness, but to the misdirection of the revolutionary elements within her.<sup>xvii</sup>

It was not long before this group began to grow and prosper. It set about spreading the message and religion of Young Italy. Due to the liberal and volatile nature of its messages

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governments throughout Italy prohibited the writings of Young Italy. Despite the best efforts of the small Italian kingdoms and the powerful influence of Austria's conservative statesmen, Prince Klemens von Metternich, Young Italy's small newspaper spread and the group broadened throughout Italy. The paper, called *Giovine Italia*, was established in March of 1832 with support from exiles sympathetic to the Italian cause. Mazzini was proud of his paper and remarked, "the ink of the wise is a match for the sword of the strong"<sup>xvii</sup> The paper would prove to be a valuable tool in spreading his message.

The Revolution of 1848 in Italy was not created by the work Mazzini alone. Even he realized that there was one man whose political views were vital to the goal of a unified Italy; the pope. From a purely physical standpoint, it would be impossible to unite Italy without the support of the pope. The Papal States, the territories under the temporal rule of the pope, were located across the center of the Italian peninsula, effectively dividing it into two parts. Southern Italy, dominated by the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, could not be united with the kingdoms of the north without the inclusion of the Papal States.<sup>xvii</sup> In addition, the pope held an even more important role for unification. He alone had the power to reach the whole of the Italian people.<sup>xvii</sup> The pope was spiritual leader to all Catholics in Italy and the rest of the world. For a political state to be successful the essential element was the support of the working class. Other leaders in the Risorgimento were limited by location and influence, only able to reach those in their city or social class. In contrast, the pope could lead the entire Italian population including the working class in a cohesive effort.<sup>xvii</sup>

In an exciting turn of fate, 1846 saw the election of a new pope after the death of Pope Gregory XVI (1765–1846) and the chance for a fresh leader at the Vatican. Pope Gregory XVI had demonstrated himself to be a very conservative leader. It was so conservative that he

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refused to allow railroads, gas lamps, and telegraphs to be installed in the Papal States. During his reign he managed to strain relations with Spain and Prussia. He supported Divine Right monarch the Austrian Empire. His death marked a spark of hope for change in the leadership of the Catholic Church.

To the horror of monarchs across Catholic Europe the conclave of cardinals elected a little known liberal, Cardinal Mastai of Imola, to become Pope Pius IX (1846–1878).<sup>xvii</sup> His first act as Pope was to declare amnesty to political prisoners and exiles of the Papal States. This move was a sign for which liberals and nationalists were looking. The pope was demonstrating himself to be a liberal. This was the pope for whom they had been waiting for, one who would use the ideas of the Enlightenment, break with hundreds of years of tradition, and create a republic in the Papal States, setting the example for the rest of Italy to follow.<sup>xvii</sup> The popularity of this move made Pius IX the most popular person in Italian peninsula, whether he wanted to be or not.

The Italian nationalists now had two key people to help lead the Risorgimento, but one more element was required. There needed to be a kingdom with a monarch willing to make the ultimate sacrifice and give up most of his or her own power to grant a constitution. This would be an example for the rest of Italy follow and unite under. The best choice for this was Charles Albert, King of Sardinia. Also known as Piedmont, Sardinia was located in the northwest corner of the Italian peninsula and enjoyed a relatively high standard of living. Most importantly however, Piedmont had a strong army; an army capable of standing up to the Austrians if given enough support from the rest of Italy.

The fall of 1847 King Charles Albert had begun to change his conservative government. Press laws and the police system were revised and became less stringent, to the delight of

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liberals. King Albert's popularity had never been so high in Piedmont or among the rest of Italian people.<sup>xvii</sup> However, this popularity alarmed Albert. Professor Pricilla Robertson has vehemently argued that Charles Albert was afraid of what might happen, "Charles Albert was afraid of his people, afraid that they did not know what was best for them, and afraid above all that they would interfere in his war."<sup>xviii</sup> The war to which Robertson refers was the inevitable conflict that Albert would have to face with Austria. Prince Klemens von Metternich, foreign minister of Austria, could not allow a liberal government to be established anywhere that could threaten the security of Austria. If King Charles Albert declared a constitution in Piedmont he would have to defend his kingdom from the armies of Austria. Despite this threat of war feelings among the people were strongly in favor of a constitution. The premier of the Kingdom of Sardinia, Count Cavour (1810–61) often pushed for Piedmont's unification with the rest of Italy.<sup>xvii</sup> Cavour went as far as publishing a liberal newspaper in 1847 entitled *Il Risorgimento* and eventually convinced King Charles Albert to grant a constitution for Piedmont. This action would quickly spread to the neighboring states of Lombardy, which was under the control of the Austrians.

The first rumblings of revolution were felt in Milan in December of 1847. A young lawyer by the name of Giambattista Nazari presented a petition to Lombardy's central government listing the grievances of the country. The list focused on economic problems and made no mention of any political criticisms nor did it say anything against the Habsburgs.<sup>xvii</sup> Despite the mildness of this gesture it touched off a flurry of activity. Nazari's popularity rose and news of the list spread across the country. Immediately the public began to believe this was the spark for which they had been waiting. Joseph Radetzky (1766–1858), the commander of Austria's military forces in Lombardy, soon recalled his soldiers and brought in reinforcements.

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The Milanese showed their solidarity by organizing a boycott of the imperial lottery and tobacco products, both goods were controlled by Austria and provided money to the Austrian government. Tension soon escalated as Austrian troops, who had been given the large numbers of cigars, marched through Milan taunting civilians. The climax came on January 3, 1848 when an outbreak of rioting occurred in which five Italians were killed and sixty were wounded. This bloodshed, known as the Tobacco Riots, united the Milanese against the Austrian and destroyed any hope of reconciliation between the two sides.<sup>xvii</sup>

In midst this conflict emerged a new leader who was born of the brutality inflicted by the Austrians, his name was Massimo d'Azeglio ([1798](#) - [1866](#)). Before the conflict he had been content with Austrian rule, but the brutality used to suppress Milan in this crisis lead him to condemn Austria for its actions. This event unified the city of Milan against the Austrians as each class of people demonstrated its conviction. Aristocrats raised money for those injured and killed in the fighting while many others began to gather arms. Massimo continued on a campaign to demonstrate Milan's unity with the rest of Italy to the western world. Often he spoke of the solidarity of the movement, "Even though twice you call us a party we answer three times, we are a nation, a nation, a nation."<sup>xviii</sup> Massimo strove to show that Italians were united in their cause.

Feelings of mistrust and anxiety continued to increase in Milan, waiting for the right event to touch things off. That event came on March 18, 1848 when news of revolution in Vienna reached Milan. Men and youth gathered from around the city and countryside, barricades were constructed, and weapons uncovered. The tri-colored Italian flag could also be seen in many locations. The next five days became known as Milan's Five Glorious Days as the city with its people demonstrated the qualities of unity and cohesion to such a degree to be an

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example of the strength of Italian unity by driving out the Austrian forces. The revolution had begun.

Milan's uprising sparked action throughout the other Italian states. This was the time of which Mazzini had spoken, when the people would rise up to fuse together and revolution would sweep across Italy, or so many people believed. People now looked to King Albert and Piedmont because for Milan to have any hope the Piedmont army had to come to its protection. A few days before the revolutions in Vienna, King Albert granted a constitution to Piedmont on March 4, 1848. Consequently, many saw him as the liberal monarch willing to sacrifice his temporal power for the good of the Italian people. Yet, although he supported liberal ideas, King Albert was not ready for a constitution. He was afraid that setting up a new government and fighting the Austrians at the same time would overtax his kingdom. This theory would later be proven correct.<sup>xvii</sup>

Piedmont's demands for a constitution were ignited by a simultaneous event occurring in the Papal States. Pius IX was continuing his reforms of the state in an attempt to improve efficiency. These reforms even included a constitution. The people of the Papal States were wildly enthusiastic about his reforms and when war broke out between Piedmont and the armies of Austria, the people demanded the pope send troops to support King Albert. Pius IX was divided over what to do. Above all else he was the head of the Catholic Church and the only war he could promote would be a war of self-defense. The demands of the people were now pushing past what Pius IX was prepared to give.<sup>xviii</sup> However, this moral dilemma did not bother the people of the Papal States who soon gathered a large force of troops that began its march to Lombardy to help their Italian brothers.

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Troops from the Papal States were joined by contingents from Naples, Tuscany, and other various parts of the peninsula. Italian solidarity was further established as Piedmont and Lombardy voted to merge into the Kingdom of Northern Italy. The fact that this event took place before the war with Austria was over demonstrates the extreme eagerness of the Lombard-Venetian people. They wanted the new liberal government without delay. This demand divided the attention of leaders, such as King Albert and Massimo d'Azeglio, in the Kingdom of Northern Italy between domestic and foreign affairs, preventing them from being effective administrators in either arena.

Despite early victories against Austria by the combined Italian forces, a major problem arose. On April 29, 1848 Pope Pius IX finally made up his mind about the war. He could not condone a war of aggression against another Catholic country. The pope was not as liberal as many had believed, or had wanted to believe, he was. Included in his encyclical was a call to follow the princes in their duties as rulers, a statement that infuriated many.<sup>xvii</sup> Pius IX was deeply afraid that if he continued the war against Austria it would lead to a religious schism between the church in Austria and that of Rome.<sup>xviii</sup> Thus he recalled his troops from the front lines of the conflict and began to concentrate on the domestic affairs of the Papal States and those of Church. The pope's decision caused the movement to falter. Later Naples and Tuscany would recall their troops from the front lines as well. Piedmont and Lombardy were left to fight on their own.

However, in the Papal States the revolution was not over for the pope. His recall of Papal troops eroded the popularity he had among his people and as the summer wore on the tension between the papacy and the people began to grow. In September 1848 the pope appointed Count Pellegrino Rossi to run the government in the Papal States. As Prime Minister he was quite

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willing to give the people more reforms, but they were the reforms of his choice. He paid little heed to the voices in the street that disapproved of his lack of consideration on public opinion. Rossi paid for this with his life on November, 15, 1848 when he was stabbed on his way to work. Rome celebrated his death and mobs of people filled the streets. In the fury of the moment the crowd besieged the pope's palace and disarmed the Swiss guards. With the help of the French Ambassador the Pope was able to slip out during the night and take refuge in Naples. Rome was now left in the hands of the Romans.<sup>xvii</sup>

The leaders in Rome called for an Assembly to be elected based on universal manhood suffrage. Among the people they elected was Giuseppe Mazzini, who had been in Florence petitioning Tuscany to fuse with the Papal States. Since his exile Mazzini had been continuing the work of Young Italy from England. In England he had found support for his cause from a number of English gentlemen and found himself the object of admiration among many English women. From his safe haven on English soil Mazzini had helped Young Italy grow to several other countries in Europe, collectively known as Young Europe. When news of the revolution in Italy reached Mazzini he believed that this was the moment he had been waiting for, when Italy would unite. Ignoring his exile, Mazzini quickly returned to do what he could for the country that he loved.

Mazzini seized upon the opportunity to help create a new Roman Republic and took the office that was offered him. His popularity was so high he had no difficulty securing a seat in the new government. Throughout the Papal States taxes were abolished, freedom of religion was established, and with Mazzini's urging a large contingent of troops was sent to aid King Albert in his fight against Austria. Here in the enthusiasm of the moment Mazzini and the Romans made their biggest mistake. The reforms made by the new government eliminated the major

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source of income for any type of programs. In addition, sending so many troops to the front line left Rome extremely vulnerable to attack. The people of Rome and the Papal States were so concerned about their new republic, that these two very real dangers were never fully considered until the French sent troops to Rome to restore the pope. Louis Napoleon sent troops to help France gain favor with the pope for restoring him to his papacy. Despite some resistance the French were able to take the city and the Roman Republic came to an end in June, 1849.<sup>xvii</sup>

In the north Piedmont and the other Italian kingdoms did not fair any better. Despite troops from the Papal States, Piedmont could not contend with the overwhelming resources of the Austrian Army. A truce was declared April 1, 1849 and King Albert went into exile leaving his son Victor Emmanuel as king of Piedmont. The remaining revolutions in northern Italy were suppressed by Radetzky and Austria continued its control of Lombardy. Despite Piedmont's leading role in the revolution Austria had more pressing concerns. Another revolution had been taking place in the capital of Vienna and nationalists were attempting to create a Hungarian state in the eastern portion of the Austrian Empire. These domestic threats of revolutions preoccupied the Austrians and they did not bother to take territory away from Piedmont. It was not long until the final remnants of the revolution were snuffed out.

The revolution in Italy depended on a cohesive effort among all of the Italian states in ridding the peninsula of Austrian influence before any attempt at creating a new state could be made; since this was not the case unification failed and the revolution collapsed. King Albert demonstrated in early 1848 that the Piedmont's army with its Italian allies was capable of routing Austrian forces, especially in light of the severe domestic affairs that Austria was facing. The leaders in the Italian states were also willing to grant changes in order to establish a more effective government like those seen during the time of French occupation. Pius IX and Charles

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Albert were both excellent examples of this trend. However, civilian leaders such as Giuseppe Mazzini and Massimo d'Azeglio demonstrated the intense liberal demands of the people, demands that overwhelmed the governments they were trying to create. The Italian people became so caught up in the ideas of Mazzini and others that they overlooked immediate threats, both political and military. After Pius IX removed his troops from Lombardy others were bound to follow and without their support Piedmont's fate was sealed. The attempt at a Roman Republic was futile without the support of the Pope. There were too many great powers eager to win his favor by restoring his papacy to Rome. Despite the noble effort and feelings of many Italians the Revolution of 1848 in Italy was not cohesive enough to achieve its goals.

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<sup>xvii</sup> C. Edmund Maurice, *The Revolutionary Movement of 1848-9 in Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Germany*. (New York: Haskell House Publishers LTD, 1969) 339

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<sup>xvii</sup> Robertson Page 364

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### Chapter III French Working Class Conflict

The French Revolution of 1848 in France presented a unique change from the revolutions sweeping through the rest of Europe. Where other revolutions in Italy, Germany, and Hungary centered on nationalist feelings and attempts to create a new state, the French Revolution was profoundly social in its nature. The French working class was attempting to create a new type of unified Republican state out of the shambles left behind by the July Monarchy. Despite this difference from the other revolutions, the February Revolution was fated to end the same way, in failure. The provisional government that developed from the revolution addressed many of the issues that faced the working class, however, after only a few months of existence the working class values in the government were destroyed by conflict between the rural and urban working class. The question to ask is why did the revolution occur and then fail to establish the type of government the workers wanted? As my research will show, while the revolution addressed the immediate concerns of the workers, it did not fix the deep seated economic and social problems of both the urban and rural working class there it was doomed to failure.

Throughout Europe in the late 1840s many areas were in revolution, such as in the Germanic states and the Italian Peninsula, where revolutions were being fought against conservative forces to bring about unification and democracy. In contrast, France was already unified and had received a liberal constitutional monarchy from the revolution of 1830. The people of France had forced Charles X (1824–1830) to abdicate his throne for exile in England and instituted a new monarch, Louis Phillip (1830–1848), the Duke of Orleans. This new monarch was much more limited in his powers compared to his processors, thanks to the People's Charter. The Charter stated the rights of all Frenchmen and guaranteed freedom of the

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press, but in practice these rights proved to be limited. The new monarchy, known as the July Monarchy, would be in place until the revolutions of 1848. Even though the people of France had fought for and won many liberal concessions from the government, France was still quite conservative. The bourgeoisie class controlled much of the power in the government. Even the power to vote was limited to the wealthy who had land and money, virtually eliminating the working class from government. Money remained the path to power and the landed elite had most of the political, social, and economic influence. The working class had gained little from the 1830 revolution, or from the French Revolution of 1789, for that matter.<sup>xvii</sup>

A key factor provoking revolutions throughout Europe in 1848 were the poor economic conditions, a fact that was true in France as much as it was anywhere else. In the 1840s France continued to be a mostly rural country, with 75.6% of its population living in the countryside.<sup>xvii</sup> Many of these people were subsistence farmers, Frenchmen who kept most of what they grew for their own consumption. What they had in excess they would sell to buy goods they could not produce themselves and to pay back debts. Some areas did produce cash crops and relied on them for their livelihood. These were crops were usually grown in areas with good transportation and were close to markets. Lack of these two components prevented other areas of France from utilizing cash crops. The commonality between these cash crop farmers and subsistence farmers was that both depended on stable crop prices to survive.<sup>xvii</sup> In addition, the majority of them were conservative in their political outlook due to poor communication, lack of education, and influence from local conservative elites. Even after the February revolution the rural areas remained conservative.<sup>xvii</sup> This conservative outlook meant those in the rural areas supported a more monarchical political structure as in contrast to a republican or socialist regime.

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The rural community's primary concern when it came to politics was its ability to survive, something that was hard to do without cheap credit and low taxes. The burden of tax was placed squarely on the backs of the rural farmers. Two types of government taxes existed: one was a salt tax and the other was based on land holdings. The rural working class detested both of these taxes as unfair. The tax based on land holdings was particular unfair to rural farmers who typically controlled a great deal of land, but did not have a great deal of wealth. This burden affected those least able to pay it and became a constant source of antagonism for rural French workers. The tax collector became one of the most hated figures in the provinces.<sup>xvii</sup>

Economic pressure was also being felt due to the ever increasing population of France in the early 1800s. A perfect example of the increasing population that could be seen in France was in Paris, as George Fascel vehemently explains,

If such observers were based in Paris, as many were, they beheld a massive immigration from the provinces which the capital was simply not equipped to absorb. The city grew from 547,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the century to nearly 775,000 in 1831 and to over million by 1846.<sup>xvii</sup>

The concentration of large numbers of working class people in Paris was important to the revolution. Paris was the capital of France, the seat of the government, and for any political or social "revolution" to take place Paris would be the key to it. This population increase was not limited to Paris, but existed throughout the country. The result was increased pressure on food and resources. In the provinces of France, the primary activity was agriculture and an increase in population led to an increase demand for land. Amplified demand led to increased prices and smaller land plot sizes, making it difficult for many rural workers to make a living.

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In more urban areas the increase in population could be felt in other ways. Most of the working urban class in France was made of artisans who specialized in particular craft. These workers were printers, shoemakers, fabric makers, innkeepers, and other skilled and unskilled trades. The number of these types of jobs was limited and could not provide work for all. To make the situation for the workers worse, the Industrial Revolution had come to France. Although industrialization was still in its beginning stages mechanization had eliminated the need for certain types of trades. One machine could do the work of many which meant less manual labor was needed, decreasing the overall number of jobs.<sup>xvii</sup>

The 1840s saw the French working class in a precarious position. Due to increasing population and mechanization many were unemployed and those who were employed found themselves barely able to get by on their meager wages. The final event that pushed many over the edge were the crop failures of 1846 and the resulting economic depression of 1847. Food prices increased sharply all across Europe. Bread, the staple food for most of the working class, was becoming too expensive to afford.<sup>xvii</sup> Charitable organizations could not keep up with demands from vast numbers of unemployed. The working class was soon placing the blame for its position squarely on the July Monarchy. The condition of the working class in the 1840s could be painfully seen in the alarming figures dealing with the army recruitment that pulled many of its recruits from the working class,

Still more dangerous to the State was the alarming physical deterioration of the people. In 1840, out of every ten thousand called up for military service in *departments* that were predominantly manufacturing, nine thousand were rejected as physically unfit, and even in the agricultural *departments* that were predominantly nonmanufacturing, four thousand out of every ten had to be sent back.<sup>xvii</sup>

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These figures dramatically portray the working class as a people undernourished, disease ridden, and struggling.

The conditions of the working class were not fully understood by most people in France. To the casual observer France appeared to be a prosperous country on its way toward modernization with railroads and capital investment.<sup>xvii</sup> The government reflected an apathetic view of the working class. The democratic portion of the government, the Chamber, was controlled by those with money and education; elements that the working class lacked. This misrepresentation in a supposedly democratic body was due to restrictions on voting. Only those with a certain income level could vote, effectively shutting the working class out of official politics. In his recollections of the period Alexis de Tocqueville, a witness to the events in France, criticized the government as business looking out for the interests of its stockholders not of the common people. In addition to this unsympathetic democracy the monarch and his minister, François Guizot, were conservative by nature and were consistently trying to limit reforms that would benefit the working class because they felt the reforms were socialist in nature.<sup>xviii</sup>

When the revolution finally happened it came to the surprise of many, including those who welcomed it. In late 1847 Louis Phillip and Guizot put forth further proclamations that continued to reject “socialist” reforms. An example of this was Guizot’s work on the Primary election system in 1833, which he effectively made more conservative. In 1840 he became premier in France, ousting the previous liberal premier. In response moderate republicans such as Ledro-Rollin and Odilon Barrot, who sought a more republican France began to organize a “banquet” in protest. Banquets were the popular way to have a protest in the 1840s and this particular banquet was set for February 13, but was banned by the government. Radicals ignored

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the ban and organized a mass demonstration on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. To the surprise of many the demonstration turned to revolution as barricades were constructed in the Paris streets. Mobs of Parisians threatened the king and Guziot, who soon abdicated and fled to exile in England.<sup>xvii</sup> The surprise over what had happened is echoed heard in the words of Procureur-General at Aix, “Universal astonishment was caused here by this sudden and unexpected news of Revolution.”<sup>xvii</sup> No one was prepared for what had happened.

The February Revolution had demonstrated itself to be primarily a working class revolution. The workers had been the ones who were suffering the most under the unrelenting conservatism of Guziot and Louis Phillip. It was not long until a provisional government was established. [Dupont de l'Eure](#) (1767-1855) was elected as its president with Alphonse Marie Louis de Lamartine (1790–1869) in charge of foreign affairs. Other revolutionary leaders filled other important posts. [Ledru-Rollin](#) (1807–1874) was appointed for the position of the interior and [Garnier-Pages](#) (1801–1841) was as the mayor of Paris. Another key figure, Louis Blanc (1811–1882), became director of the commission on labor. Louis Blanc was an active socialist who believed in a national right to work, that everyone deserved to have a job. His earlier writings in 1840, describe his vision of government,

The government ought to be considered as the supreme regulator of production and endowed for this duty with great power. This task would consist of fighting competition and of finally overcoming it. The government ought to float a loan with the proceeds of which it should erect *social workshops* in the most important branches of national industry. As these establishments would demand considerable investments, the number of these workshops at the start ought to be carefully limited, still they would possess, by virtue of their organization-as we shall see later-an unlimited expansion.<sup>xvii</sup>

The first acts of the new provisional government were reforms that were designed to help the working class. Further evidence of working class motivation in the revolution was the

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backlash against foreign workers and machinery. During the first month after the revolution French foreign workers were harassed and forced to leave the country. Machinery of the industrial revolution became prime targets for working class anger as well. In Paris printers smashed mechanical printing presses and demanded the return of hand presses. Railroads were also targeted by innkeepers, teamsters, and other professions who were threatened by increased railroad travel. Industrialization was seen as the cause of the massive unemployment and extreme economic problems faced by the working class in France.<sup>xvii</sup>

Despite the unexpectedness of the revolution a new provisional government was formed in Paris comprised both republican and socialist leaders. The purpose of this assembly was to setup elections to establish a National Assembly. However, pressure from the people of Paris caused the provisional government to declare that a Second Republic had begun and to establish reforms. Many of these reforms centered on immediate working class demands. One of the first decrees was for universal manhood suffrage. Any male over the age of twenty one was now able to vote, opening the government to millions of Frenchmen. Later in February another reform was established to create National Workshops as a means to give jobs to the thousands of unemployed French. The program was the idea of Louis Blanc, an active socialist and part of the provincial government.<sup>xvii</sup>

These National Workshops put men to work building various capital projects such as roads and railroads. The workshops did ease unemployment in Paris, but in the rural provinces the story was much different. Smaller cities and rural areas could not afford the expensive workshops and in order to keep the workshops going the government was forced to institute new taxes. These taxes incurred a firestorm of criticism from the rural working class, who viewed the

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taxes as going to benefit the poor in Paris and other urban areas. Many areas refused to pay the tax and some areas even rioted.<sup>xvii</sup>

Since the beginning of the revolution the movement had primarily been a Parisian group. It was members of the urban working class, despite being the minority in the whole of France, who had caused the abdication of the July Monarchy. The provisional government achieved most of its power and its leaders from the city of Paris. Men such as Louis Blanc and Lamartine were perfect examples of these. They represented the intellectual elite of Paris and not the whole of France. If the government ever hoped of unifying France into the Second Republic it would have to have the blessing of the rural provinces. However, the aims of the men in the rural working class varied considerably from that of the urban areas. They were looking for immediate solutions to their most pressing problems. They required a change in the tax code from a system of land based taxes to a system that was more equitable to their income. Another problem was being able to obtain credit. Without it farmers could not purchase needed equipment and supplies required to survive.<sup>xvii</sup> For any French government to have the support of the entire working class these two primary concerns would have to be addressed. Yet, the urban working class and its leaders were not willing to compromise with the rural working class on these issues.

It is important to remember that the rural working class was not as politically informed as was the urban working class. Communication and education were elements that were lacking to all working class men, but especially to those in rural areas. Lines of communication and transportation were poor through rural France. The disorganization of the February revolution only served to enhance this problem. The goals and ideas of the provisional government were

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not as accessible to the workers, what they saw were increased taxes and wasteful programs.

This was the last thing needed or wanted from this new republic.

Soon after its creation the provisional government faced increasing pressure from a number of political clubs in Paris. With the freedom of assembly reinstated, Paris witnessed a dramatic growth in political organizations. These political clubs would agitate against the newly found government, pressuring it into following their political agenda. This would be done utilizing aggressive demonstrations, banquets, fear of a new revolution, and other similar tactics. Historian Daniel Stern described how the clubs would use intimidation to foist their views onto the provisional government,

Instead of teaching the proletariat the great new truths about democratic institutions and the profound significance of the sovereignty of the people, speakers in most of the clubs inspired the pernicious idea of imitating the Jacobins. The proletariat was taught the language of another age which they had forgotten. Notions of revolutionary despotism were wakened.<sup>xvii</sup>

The majority of these clubs were on the left of the political spectrum, being liberal and socialist. Their political agenda was to move the government more toward socialism. Louis Blanc's national right to work<sup>xvii</sup>, which created the National Workshops, was a perfect example of this attempt to bring socialism into France.<sup>xvii</sup> To many in Paris socialism appeared to be a viable option to help the thousands of unemployed men, but these feelings did not extend to the rural working class.

The problem for the clubs and for the provincial governments was that the majority of France did not live in Paris, but in the rural provinces. These rural areas remained for the most part conservative, being least affected by the February revolution. When national elections took

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place in mid-April and the National Assembly was elected, the majority of representatives were conservative. The leading socialist newspaper, *La Reforme*, noted the results of the election,

We must not hide anything from ourselves: the elections are going against the men who worked for the Republic and proclaimed it. The first step is an attack on us, to be followed by an assault on our principles.<sup>xvii</sup>

The assemblymen elected from the rural areas disliked the expensive socialist programs that were benefiting the workers of Paris and few others. There would be increasing tension between this conservative assembly and the social clubs of Paris.

The urban working class had its own difficulties with the new republic. There was a struggle between moderate republicans and socialists within the provisional government that lingered into the National Assembly after the April elections.<sup>xvii</sup> For socialists the February revolution appeared to be the prophesized rising of the proletariat and they felt it was their duty to see it through. The problem with this notion was that the urban working class that rose up to overthrow the monarchy represented only a minority of the entire French working class. They held only enough support to influence politics within the city of Paris itself, where their numbers were the greatest. The success in establishing the National Workshops demonstrated the power the socialist forces had in Paris. It is well documented that the provisional government located in Paris fearing another working class uprising like that of February, would concede to the demands of the urban workers. These concessions to the Parisian working class doomed the government to failure because it could not achieve unified support throughout France.<sup>xvii</sup>

The final blow to this working class revolution came when the National Assembly ultimately achieved the motivation and ability to resist the intimidation of the social forces in Paris. The national elections that finally occurred in April, demonstrated the conservative nature

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of the country. Paris only represented a fraction of the over 900 representatives in the Assembly. The national assembly, elected by the rural working class, contained little sympathy for socialism. This fact did not stop Parisians from continuing their efforts to influence the government. An example of this can be seen from a September 6, 1848, description of a Democratic Club demonstration,

On the 6<sup>th</sup>, in the evening, a demonstration took place at Dragauignan over the indirect taxes. Twenty-eight or thirty citizens, all members of the Democratic Club, met together and after some heavy drinking, went through the city singing the *Marseillaise*. They shouted slogans: "Down with the gerndarerie" and "Down with the consolidated tax." But by 11 p.m. all was quiet again.<sup>xvii</sup>

Clubs in Paris vehemently used their array of political tactics to push their socialist goals onto the new government. The clubs were being run by a number of different radical leaders, including Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881) and several others. Throughout May the struggle between these two forces continued.<sup>xvii</sup>

By June the demonstrations by the political clubs had progressed. Revolution reappeared as people took the streets in what was to be called the June insurrections. This rebellion was the ultimate conclusion of the tug of war between the socialist forces of Paris and the elected conservative National Assembly that had been going on through May of 1848. The National Assembly's use of troops on June 24<sup>th</sup> settled the question of who had the ultimate authority in France. At the cost of over 3,000 lives the National Assembly broke away from the influence of the Paris clubs.<sup>xvii</sup> In a further move to increase the political stability of the government, the people turned to Louis Napoleon. He had demonstrated himself to be a competent leader by this time, but more importantly, his name held respect among the people. The name "Napoleon" harkened back to the time of the French Empire and the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte. Here

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was a figure that both the bourgeoisie and the rural working class could accept. By playing off the political instability of the time Louis Napoleon would get himself elected president of the National Assembly and bring legitimacy to the new government.

The 1848 revolution in France was an attempt to establish a new republic capable of addressing the economic and social concerns of the working class. The working class nature of the revolt can be seen in the method in which the revolution happened. The king was exiled not by the bourgeoisie or even the middle class, but by the starving and ragged workers of Paris. Although there was enough support to see the revolution through, there was no unity over what the new government should become; republican or socialist. The June insurrections answered the question over who had control of France and the answer was the conservative rural workers. However, this apparent victory would be short lived as Louis Napoleon would eventually seize power in 1852. Even though it would be a popular take-over, it would mark the death for this Second Republic that had cost so much to build.

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- <sup>xvii</sup> Albert Craig, et al., *The Heritage of World Civilizations*(Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2000), 725.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Roger Price, ed. *Documents on the French Revolution of 1848* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 2.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Price, 6.
- <sup>xvii</sup> George Fasel. "The Wrong Revolution: French Republicanism in 1848." *French Historical Journal*, 8/4 (1974): 662
- <sup>xvii</sup> Fasel, 655-657.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Fasel, 655.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Roger Price, *Revolution and Reaction, 1848 and the Second French Republic*. (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1975) 87
- <sup>xvii</sup> Price, 7-9.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Arnold Whitridge, *Men in Crisis*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949) 26
- <sup>xvii</sup> Whitridge, 28.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Price, 32.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Price, 42-43.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Price, 47.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Louis Blanc, "The Organization of Labor", 1840
- <sup>xvii</sup> Peter Amann. "The Changing Outlines of 1848" *The American Historical Review*, 68/4 (1963):941
- <sup>xvii</sup> Fasel, 660.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Thomas Christofferson. "The French National Workshops of 1848: The View from the Provinces"  
*French Historical Studies*, 11, no. 4, (Autumn, 1980) 507-509
- <sup>xvii</sup> Fasel, 664.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Price, 56.
- <sup>xvii</sup> The national right to work was a program Blanc has been promoting before the revolution that said that the government should provide jobs for everyone who needed them and thus reducing unemployment to zero.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Amann, 943.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Price, 74.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Fasel, 661-663.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Peter Amann. *Revolution and the Mass Democracy. The Paris Club Movement in 1848*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975) 126-127

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<sup>xvii</sup> Price, 109.

<sup>xvii</sup> Whitridge, 70-71.

<sup>xvii</sup> Craig, 739.

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## Conclusion

The Revolutions of 1848 in Germany, Italy, and France present a time of massive public upheaval. Working and middle class people became united in an effort to achieve social and political change. This was the first time Europe had ever seen such widespread revolution. Even though the motivations of these two classes often differed, in most cases they were able to work together to achieve immediate successes. In Germany the Kaiser was exiled to his country palace while the people were left to establish the Frankfurt Parliament. In Italy initial victories against the Austrian Army led to the establishment of the Kingdom of Northern Italy. The February Revolution in France ousted King Louis Philip and left the people to establish the Second Republic. By looking at the commonality between the revolutions in Germany, Italy, and France it is possible to discover the reasons why the revolutions occurred.

The common starting point for all three of these revolutions was the end of Napoleon's French Empire in 1815. It was this event that brought the ideas of the Enlightenment to the majority of Europe. These Enlightenment ideas were enough to challenge traditionally held political structure and convinced many of the ability of people to become successful due to their talents. In Germany and Italy the removal of the French Empire led to the return of the conservative monarchs and the removal of the popular Enlightenment ideas. The influence of this loss would be felt into 1848 as many sought a return of the rights associated with the Enlightenment.

Another common phenomenon among the three revolutions was the widespread hardship brought on by the harvest failures of 1846. No one was spared from this devastating loss of food. In addition to the loss of food, the crop failures led to a downward turn in the business

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cycle that impacted many of the new businesses that employed the working class. The effect of these two crises was a working class in need of some sort of relief. Where as the elite and middle classes had the wealth and resources to weather such difficult times the working class had only a subsistence existence which would not be sufficient for their survival. It is not difficult to see why in this difficult situation the working class would be willing to entertain almost any new system that promised relief.

Some leaders misinterpreted the working class reaction as a new social order that was emerging. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels attempted to classify the revolutions of 1848 as mass uprising of workers into a new socialist society. A new form of socialist government would make everyone equal and able to achieve success based on his or her own talents; an idea heavily influenced by the Enlightenment. Despite popularity of these ideas and the success of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, the revolutions of 1848 were not the promised uprising the socialists wanted.

The revolutions of 1848 were the result of modern ideas of democracy or nationalism and the rights of man. Attempts to establish modern states out of the remnants of traditional monarchies result in class conflict. Modern states would benefit both the middle class and the working class, but for different reasons. The middle class would be able to establish the political freedom to effectively run their businesses and industries from which they achieved their initial success. For the working class, a modern state could mean more equitable treatment and relief from their poverty. The failure of these revolutions was due to the inexperience with the new political process these new-found governments were trying to form. After hundreds of years of being under the same type of monarchical system it was understandable that there was not immediate success in changing the form of government.

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