

HIS102-18 Revolution Renewed©July 24, 2000

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A. Introduction

History teaches that peace comes at a price. Both Napoleon and Metternich brought peace at the cost of some human rights. While the main tide of history at this time favored the peace of Metternich, there was a sort of revolutionary rip-tide going on simultaneously in favor of human rights. The course goal for this topic is **to evaluate the legitimation of human rights throughout Europe during the first half of the Nineteenth Century.**

B. Post-Napoleonic Europe

Just as the king in medieval Europe was incompatible with continued feudalism so did the post-Napoleonic European reaction contain within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Both ends worked against the middle. At one end Russia dominated the continent, while at the other end Britain dominated the sea, and harmony there would not be. As antagonism against the Metternich reaction developed, his chief supporting arm was supplied by Russia.

In the middle was France. In 1815, Louis XVIII regained the French throne for the Bourbon family. Louis XVII¹, incidentally, did not have enough character to rule other than in name only. The charter of 1814 provided a constitutional monarchy similar to that of England but with greater regal power. When Louis XVIII took the throne, bitterness, described below, prevented smooth functioning in France.

The Ultra Royalists wanted their old privileges at the expense of human rights. The Republicans and Bonapartists were bitter at the restoration of the king. By 1830, the Royalists seemed in firm control. This control was demonstrated by the fact that Charles X reduced interest payments on the public debt and shifted the remaining burden from the Royalists to the middle class. On page 809, second column, third paragraph, in the seventh edition, Chambers writes "France is thus the European exception for there the old aristocracy was reduced to a minor role in national politics after the revolution of 1830." Dr. Jirran has no argument with Chambers here.

As in France, so was a gradual transition taking place throughout Europe. Part of this transition was described in Spain, in the previous lecture. In Russia, Alexander I started with a relatively liberal attitude, but by 1820 he admitted to Metternich that liberalism was both a failure and a source of danger because an assassin's bullet had almost killed Alexander. By 1820, religious zeal was plainly out of character for Alexander I.

Human rights in Eastern Europe were stymied. In central Europe, Metternichism was supreme. Rigid control of the press and of education, as well as police surveillance, meant that, on the surface, reaction was firmly entrenched. But liberalism, driven to cover, still lived in the form of truth over Western politics.

C. Revolutions of 1830

By 1830, general discontent along with suppression of nationalistic aspirations precipitated revolution. In France, Charles X published his July Ordinances which: (1) restricted the freedom of the press; (2) dissolved congress; (3) narrowed the right to vote; and (4) called for new elections. Consequently, a revolt broke out in Paris; Charles X abdicated and fled. Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, was made king under a new constitutional system that placed control with the middle class.