# Chapter 1: The Rise of Nationalism in Europe

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## Exercise 1.1 — Write in brief

Q1 Write a note on: a) Guiseppe Mazzini b) Count Camillo de Cavour c) The Greek war of independence d) Frankfurt parliament e) The role of women in nationalist struggles

SOLUTION

a) Giuseppe Mazzini: Born in Genoa in 1805, he became a member of the secret society of the Carbonari. Sent into exile in 1831 for attempting a revolution in Liguria, he founded two underground societies — Young Italy in Marseilles and Young Europe in Berne. He believed God had intended nations to be the natural units of mankind, so Italy had to be forged into a single unified republic. Metternich described him as 'the most dangerous enemy of our social order'.

b) Count Camillo de Cavour: The Chief Minister who led the movement to unify the regions of Italy. He was neither a revolutionary nor a democrat, and like many wealthy educated members of the Italian elite spoke French better than Italian. Through a tactful diplomatic alliance with France that he engineered, Sardinia-Piedmont defeated the Austrian forces in 1859.

c) The Greek war of independence: Greece had been part of the Ottoman Empire since the fifteenth century. The struggle for independence began in 1821. Nationalists got support from other Greeks living in exile and from West Europeans who admired ancient Greek culture; the English poet Lord Byron organised funds and died of fever in 1824 while fighting. The Treaty of Constantinople of 1832 recognised Greece as an independent nation.

d) Frankfurt parliament: In 1848 the middle classes convened an all-German National Assembly, which met on 18 May 1848 in the Church of St Paul in Frankfurt. It drafted a constitution for a German nation, but the initiative was eventually repressed by the combined forces of the monarchy and the military, backed by the Junkers.

e) The role of women in nationalist struggles: Large numbers of women participated actively in the liberal movement — they formed their own political associations, founded newspapers and took part in political meetings and demonstrations. Despite this, they were denied suffrage rights, and when the Frankfurt parliament convened women were admitted only as observers to stand in the visitors' galleries.

Answer: Short notes on Mazzini (founder of Young Italy/Young Europe), Cavour (architect of Italian unification via alliance with France), the Greek war of independence (1821–1832), the Frankfurt parliament (1848 all-German National Assembly), and the active but politically excluded role of women.

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Q2 What steps did the French revolutionaries take to create a sense of collective identity among the French people?

SOLUTION

The French Revolution transferred sovereignty from the monarchy to a body of French citizens, proclaiming that it was the people who would constitute the nation and shape its destiny.

To create a sense of collective identity, the revolutionaries: promoted the ideas of la patrie (the fatherland) and le citoyen (the citizen), emphasising a united community with equal rights under a constitution; chose a new tricolour flag to replace the royal standard; renamed the Estates General (elected by active citizens) as the National Assembly; and composed new hymns, took oaths and commemorated martyrs in the name of the nation.

A centralised administrative system framed uniform laws for all citizens; internal customs duties and dues were abolished and a uniform system of weights and measures was adopted. Regional dialects were discouraged and French, as spoken and written in Paris, became the common national language.

Answer: Ideas of la patrie and le citoyen, a new tricolour flag, the National Assembly, national hymns/oaths/martyrs, a centralised administration with uniform laws, abolition of internal customs and uniform weights and measures, and French made the common language.

Q3 Who were Marianne and Germania? What was the importance of the way in which they were portrayed?

SOLUTION

Marianne and Germania were female allegories invented by artists in the nineteenth century to personify their nations. Marianne represented the French nation and the Republic — a popular Christian name that underlined the idea of a people's nation, with characteristics drawn from Liberty and the Republic (the red cap, the tricolour, the cockade). Germania was the allegory of the German nation, shown wearing a crown of oak leaves, as the German oak stands for heroism.

The way they were portrayed was important because these female figures gave the abstract idea of the nation a concrete, recognisable form. Statues of Marianne were erected in public squares and her images marked on coins and stamps to remind people of the national symbol of unity and to persuade them to identify with the nation.

Answer: Marianne (France, with red cap, tricolour and cockade) and Germania (Germany, with a crown of oak leaves) were female allegories of their nations; their portrayal gave the abstract nation a tangible form and instilled a sense of unity and identity.

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Q4 Briefly trace the process of German unification.

SOLUTION

In 1848 the middle classes tried to unite the different regions of the German confederation into a nation-state governed by an elected parliament, but this liberal initiative was repressed by the combined forces of the monarchy and the military, supported by the large landowners (Junkers) of Prussia.

From then on Prussia took the leadership of the movement for national unification. Its chief minister, Otto von Bismarck, was the architect of this process, carried out with the help of the Prussian army and bureaucracy. Three wars over seven years — with Austria, Denmark and France — ended in Prussian victory and completed unification.

In January 1871 the Prussian king, William I, was proclaimed German Emperor in a ceremony held in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The new state emphasised modernising the currency, banking, and legal and judicial systems, and Prussian measures often became a model for the rest of Germany.

Answer: The failed 1848 middle-class liberal attempt gave way to Prussian leadership under Bismarck, who unified Germany through three wars (with Austria, Denmark and France) over seven years; in January 1871 King William I of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles.

Q5 What changes did Napoleon introduce to make the administrative system more efficient in the territories ruled by him?

SOLUTION

In the administrative field Napoleon incorporated revolutionary principles to make the whole system more rational and efficient. The Civil Code of 1804 — usually known as the Napoleonic Code — did away with all privileges based on birth, established equality before the law and secured the right to property. This Code was exported to the regions under French control.

In the Dutch Republic, in Switzerland, in Italy and Germany, Napoleon simplified administrative divisions, abolished the feudal system and freed peasants from serfdom and manorial dues. In the towns, guild restrictions were removed. Transport and communication systems were improved, so peasants, artisans, workers and new businessmen benefited from the newfound freedom.

Answer: The Napoleonic (Civil) Code of 1804 abolished privileges of birth, established equality before the law and secured property rights; he simplified administrative divisions, abolished feudalism and serfdom, removed guild restrictions and improved transport and communication.

## Exercise 1.2 — Discuss

Q1 Explain what is meant by the 1848 revolution of the liberals. What were the political, social and economic ideas supported by the liberals?

SOLUTION

The 1848 revolution of the liberals refers to the revolution led by the educated middle classes that spread across Europe in 1848. The February 1848 events in France brought about the abdication of the monarch, and across Europe men and women of the liberal middle classes combined their demands for constitutionalism with national unification.

Politically, liberalism stood for government by consent — an end to autocracy and clerical privileges, a constitution, freedom of the press and freedom of association, and representative government through parliament. The term liberalism derives from the Latin liber, meaning free.

Socially, the liberals were drawn from the middle classes (industrialists, businessmen, professionals) who demanded equality before the law; however, the right to vote was not extended to all — it was granted mainly to propertied men, and the issue of political rights for women remained controversial.

Economically, liberalism stood for the freedom of markets and the abolition of state-imposed restrictions on the movement of goods and capital, and the liberals stressed the inviolability of private property.

Answer: The 1848 revolution of the liberals was the middle-class movement across Europe demanding constitutionalism together with national unification; politically it sought a constitution, freedom of the press/association and representative government; socially, equality before the law (though voting was limited to propertied men); economically, free markets and the inviolability of private property.

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Q2 Choose three examples to show the contribution of culture to the growth of nationalism in Europe.

SOLUTION

Culture — art, poetry, stories and music — played an important role in creating and shaping the idea of the nation. Three examples from the chapter:

1) Female allegories and visual symbols: artists personified nations as female figures — Marianne for France (with the red cap, tricolour and cockade) and

Germania for Germany (with a crown of oak leaves for heroism). Statues, coins and stamps carrying these images reminded people of national unity and persuaded them to identify with the nation.

2) The Greek war of independence: poets and artists lauded Greece as the cradle of European civilisation and mobilised public opinion across Europe to support its struggle. The English poet Lord Byron organised funds and went to fight, dying of fever in 1824.

3) Romantic culture and language: romantic nationalists emphasised culture — art, poetry, stories and music — to express and shape nationalist feelings, so that a shared cultural heritage helped build a sense of common national identity.

Answer: Female allegories (Marianne and Germania) as national symbols; poets and artists mobilising support for the Greek war of independence (Lord Byron); and romantic culture — art, poetry, stories and music — used to express and shape a common national identity.

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Q3 Through a focus on any two countries, explain how nations developed over the nineteenth century.

SOLUTION

Italy: In the mid-nineteenth century Italy was a patchwork of small states. Mazzini sought a unitary Italian Republic through the secret society Young Italy, but revolutionary uprisings in 1831 and 1848 failed. The mantle then fell on Sardinia-Piedmont under King Victor Emmanuel II. Its Chief Minister Cavour engineered an alliance with France and defeated Austria in 1859. Giuseppe Garibaldi led armed volunteers into South Italy and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1860. In 1861 Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed king of united Italy.

Germany: After the failed liberal middle-class attempt of 1848 to build a nation-state through an elected parliament, Prussia took the lead. Its chief minister, Otto von Bismarck, using the Prussian army and bureaucracy, fought three wars over seven years — with Austria, Denmark and France — all ending in Prussian victory. In January 1871 the Prussian king William I was proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles.

In both cases a strong regional state (Sardinia-Piedmont in Italy, Prussia in Germany) drove unification through war and diplomacy rather than purely popular liberal revolution.

Answer: In Italy, after Mazzini's failed uprisings, Sardinia-Piedmont under Cavour and Garibaldi unified the states and Victor Emmanuel II became king in 1861; in Germany, after 1848 Prussia under Bismarck unified the states through three wars, and William I was proclaimed German Emperor in 1871 — in both, a dominant state led unification by war and diplomacy.

Q4 How was the history of nationalism in Britain unlike the rest of Europe?

SOLUTION

In Britain the formation of the nation-state was not the result of a sudden upheaval or revolution but of a long-drawn-out process. There was no British nation prior to the eighteenth century; the primary identities of the people were ethnic — English, Welsh, Scot or Irish — each with its own cultural and political traditions.

As the English nation grew in wealth, importance and power, it extended its influence over the other nations of the islands. The English parliament, which had seized power from the monarchy in 1688, was the instrument through which a nation-state with England at its centre was forged. The Act of Union (1707) between England and Scotland created the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain', in effect letting England impose its influence on Scotland; Scotland's distinctive culture was suppressed and the Highlanders were forbidden to speak Gaelic or wear their national dress. Ireland was forcibly incorporated into the United Kingdom in 1801 after the failed revolt of Wolfe Tone's United Irishmen (1798).

Thus a 'British nation' was forged through the propagation of a dominant English culture, with symbols such as the Union Jack, the national anthem and the English language actively promoted, while the older nations survived only as subordinate partners — unlike the rest of Europe where nations emerged through revolution and unification movements.

Answer: Unlike the rest of Europe, British nationhood was not born of a sudden revolution but of a long process in which the dominant English state absorbed Scotland (Act of Union, 1707) and Ireland (1801), suppressing their cultures and forging a 'British nation' around a dominant English culture and its symbols.

## Q5 Why did nationalist tensions emerge in the Balkans?

SOLUTION

The Balkans was a region of great geographical and ethnic variation, comprising modern-day Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro, whose inhabitants were broadly known as the Slavs. A large part of the Balkans was under the control of the Ottoman Empire.

The spread of romantic nationalism together with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire made the region very explosive. Its European subject nationalities broke away one by one and declared independence, basing their claims on nationality and using history to argue they had once been independent but had been subjugated. As the different Slavic nationalities struggled to define their identity and independence, the region became one of intense conflict, with the Balkan states fiercely jealous of each other and each hoping to gain territory at the others' expense.

Matters were further complicated by big-power rivalry: Russia, Germany, England and Austro-Hungary each sought to counter the others' hold and extend its own control over the area. This led to a series of wars in the region and finally to the First World War.

Answer: Because the ethnically varied, Slav-inhabited Balkans, long under a disintegrating Ottoman Empire, saw its nationalities break away and clash over territory, while great-power rivalry (Russia, Germany, England, Austro-Hungary) over the region intensified the conflict — leading to a series of wars and ultimately the First World War.