

# PARALLEL GUIDE 3

## The Century of Revolution

### Summary

Because the church is set in the midst of society, it is affected by political, economic and social events. Dramatic changes sometimes seem to alter the course of history overnight. Political and economic events in Europe made such a transformation occur during the nineteenth century. Like an enormous wheel jarred into motion by some unseen force, history appeared to turn over suddenly, even violently. The forces that set it rolling had been at work for at least five hundred years, ever since the nominalist revolution wrenched apart the established relationship between faith and reason. (See Year 3, chapters 18 and 19). Human intellectual inquiry became independent of its mother, the revealed deposit of faith. Now free to explore wherever it willed, it could test its mettle without being bound by limits dogmatically imposed. The existence of God could be questioned, and Fyodor Dostoevski could write in *The Brothers Karamazov* that, when there is no God, everything is possible. The new freedom came at a price, however. Time-honored beliefs and values that once had formed the foundation for the superstructure of the medieval synthesis no longer could bear the weight. The age of faith, with the sense of security it had brought, was over. In a very real way this was the opening curtain for the twentieth century, which has now given way to the twenty-first.

These changes did not happen at once or in every place. The shadow and semblance of the past remained for a long time and still continues. Kings reigned “by the grace of God” and “by divine right;” food, shelter, and clothing were still produced directly, in the way the Bible decreed—by the sweat of the human brow. Nonetheless, signs that history had taken a sharp turn were becoming harder to ignore: explorers traveled to lands once unknown, scientists rationalized the mysteries of the heavens, and nations all around the globe so affected one another that a spark in one could ignite fires in any other.

The French Revolution, at the end of the eighteenth century, set the stage for a century of change. In this chapter, we describe the revolutions that occurred during the nineteenth century in politics and economics, the outward projection of a less visible intellectual and spiritual revolution that was taking place within the human soul.

### Learning Objectives

- Define the three estates in pre-revolutionary France
- Identify:
  - The bourgeoisie
  - The Reign of Terror
  - Metternich’s Holy Alliance
  - Bastille Day
  - Directory
- Discuss:
  - The rise of European nationalism
  - The three classes in Adam Smith’s economic system

Three factors contributing to England's early industrialization  
Marx's theory of class warfare

**Assignment to Deepen Your Understanding**

Make a list of how the century of revolution affects you in the twenty-first century. Most of us know something about our families of origin. What did this century of revolution and migration do to yours? Was there a radical break in the information link about your lineage? If your heritage is non-Western, how does this century of colonial expansion affect your family and your life today? Make some notes and tie together what you know about your family in relationship to these historical events.

**Preparing for Your Seminar**

1. What connections do you note between your national history and the events of the century of revolution? How did this century affect your nation?
2. The revolutions of the nineteenth century had a great impact on religions. How did they affect your church?

## THE CENTURY OF REVOLUTION

The American Revolution that we studied at the end of EfM's Year Three was among the first of a series of events that eventually reduced the divine right of kings to a mere memory in the minds of Europeans. From earliest times tribal chieftains, kings, and emperors had claimed the sanction of God—or the gods—for their right to rule, thereby investing themselves with majesty, authority, and, above all, legitimacy. The link with divinity arose not merely from royal egotism; it was also a deterrent to rebellion. If society is to enjoy stability, it must be protected from an incessant series of “strong men” contesting for the throne. The concept that rebellion against the king was sacrilege gave such protection.

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment spawned the republican ideas that shaped the Constitution of the United States; the same rationalism gave birth to dreams of reform in France. Conditions there, however, were different. The Bourbon kings were absolute monarchs, still exercising powers that had been denied English sovereigns since the Magna Carta. Louis XIV suffered none of the constraints that the English Parliament had imposed on the absolutist designs of strong-willed Tudor and Stuart monarchs; no government in Europe seemed as secure as that of France when the eighteenth century drew to a close. This changed quickly for its strength, when put to the test, proved brittle. Louis XV (1710-1774) and Louis XVI (1754-1793) continued to enjoy the wealth and privileges the Bourbons bequeathed to them, but the administrative structures of the nation were decaying. Louis XVI died on the scaffold. The absolute monarch no longer existed in France.

The nineteenth-century social structure in France divided the populace into three classes called “estates,” each defined by law with its own rights and obligations. The first estate was the clergy. Clerical celibacy prevented the first estate from being a hereditary class. Customarily bishops were drawn from the nobility and lower clergy from the ranks of commoners. They paid no taxes, but the crown expected periodic voluntary offerings from church income.

The second estate consisted of the nobility. When the old feudal noblemen, the “nobility of the sword,” had been rendered militarily impotent, Louis XIV had looked to the new merchant class, the bourgeoisie, for administrative officers. The king gave them noble status as the “nobility of the robe” and expected them to act as his faithful servants. He assumed their presence would offset any lingering power of the old nobility. Once admitted to the second estate, however, they aligned themselves exclusively with the nobility, enjoying its privileges without honoring any indebtedness to the crown.

Ninety-eight percent of the French people belonged to the third estate, the commoners. Economically they ranged from the wealthy bourgeoisie to the lowest peasant, the prime producers of the nation's wealth. Its merchants controlled the country's commerce and industry, and its peasants raised the crops that provided most of France's national income. They paid the taxes that supported the royal court and

### Political Revolutions

### The French Revolution

### The Three Estates

financed the king's foreign and domestic programs. They were politically powerless. In principle, they were supposed to have access to one political platform—the Estates General. Composed of representatives of all three estates, it was theoretically a national legislature. Since it met only when called by the throne, it was in practice a royal tool. For the one hundred seventy-five years before Louis XVI the Estates General had not been called together.

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### **Bastille Day**

In 1789 the country, burdened by war debts partly incurred by French intervention in the American Revolution, faced a financial crisis following a bad harvest the year before. Louis XVI needed money. He reluctantly called the Estates General together to approve new taxation policies. The third estate seized its opportunity. On June 17, 1789, the six hundred representatives of the third estate declared themselves to be the only true representatives of the French people and organized themselves as the National Assembly. When the king threatened to use force to disband the Assembly, an angry mob of Parisian citizens stormed the fortress-prison called the Bastille and released its political prisoners. The date, July 14, is still commemorated as Bastille Day, the day the French Revolution began.

### **A Century of Revolution**

The action immediately became a symbol of popular resistance to the oppressive trio of crown, church, and nobility, and the flame of revolt spread throughout France. There was no master plan. In Paris, the bourgeoisie—businessmen and leaders of the third estate—organized a committee, the commune, to govern the city. The Paris commune became a model followed in other towns; soon all of France depended for its government on independent municipal committees with no central direction at the national level. Something had to be done.

### **Constitutional Monarchy**

The first step was moderate. To bring order the National Assembly declared an end to the feudal structure. The three estates were abolished and a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was proclaimed in August 1789. The Declaration hailed “liberty, equality, and fraternity” as the marks of the new order. In October the king moved from his palace at Versailles to the royal residence in Paris. He accepted the terms the Assembly placed on his continued reign: he became a constitutional monarch.

In September 1791 the Assembly proclaimed a constitution. It established a Legislative Assembly that could enact laws in the name of the sovereign people. Members were to be elected by the citizens and meetings were no longer subject to royal call; France would be divided into eighty-three administrative *départements*, each subdivided into districts, cantons, and communes administered by elected officials and autonomous in local affairs. The king ruled under the laws enacted by the Legislative Assembly. He had the right to suspend new legislation temporarily by exercising a suspensive veto, but the Legislative Assembly could override the veto at the end of the period of suspension.

### **Counter-Revolutionary Plots**

The plan seemed workable on paper, but it was not destined to succeed. Many members of the nobility supported the new constitution because they either favored it or feared more radical insurrections would come if it failed. Some of the more conservative members of the old second estate, however, fled the country and con-

spired with other European monarchs to launch a counterrevolution. Louis himself, never a very astute man, tried to slip out of the country and join the emigrés, hoping to march back and reclaim his former status. He was arrested at the border on June 20, 1791, and brought back to Paris. Testifying to their ingrained reverence for monarchy, the Legislative Assembly convened for the first time in October 1791 and retained him on the throne.

Some members of the Assembly, however, were not willing to live under any form of monarchy, even one limited by a constitution. A group known as the Jacobins—named for the former monastery of St. Jacob where they made their headquarters—wanted France to be a republic. As soon as the Legislative Assembly opened its sessions, the Jacobins began to play on popular suspicions of the king’s ambition to regain his former power. Louis gave them ample grounds. He was in fact engaging in a fateful fantasy, based on the one area in which the constitution still left him supreme—the conduct of foreign policy. He knew the French army, stripped of the cream of its officers by the flight of the aristocracy, was ill-prepared for war. If, he mused, France were to lose a war against Austria, the Austrian Emperor would oust the revolutionaries and give him back his rightful status.

The dream of war arose in other minds as well. The crowned heads of Europe became convinced that revolutionary France had to be crushed and the legitimate monarchy restored before the contagion spread. The Jacobins, for their part, welcomed a showdown. They felt sure the army of free Frenchmen would be a match for their foes and they hoped to spread the revolution into Germany and Austria. In April 1792 France declared war on Austria.

The war raged intermittently. In its first stage France suffered defeats everywhere. By August panic ruled. Mobs stormed the royal residence and forced the king and his family to flee to the Legislative Assembly for safety. The Jacobins, seizing the moment, organized a new revolutionary commune and demanded the Assembly be dissolved and the king arrested. The Assembly acquiesced and the constitutional monarchy ended.

From September 1792 until August 1795 a National Convention ruled the country. It declared France to be a republic, convicted Louis of treason, and beheaded him. His queen, Marie Antoinette, perhaps the most hated person in France for her arrogance and insensitivity to the people’s plight, followed him to the guillotine a few months later. Death became the universal solvent adopted by the unruly masses to cleanse France of the hated aristocracy. A republican constitution, drafted in 1793, was almost immediately suspended in the interest of public safety. Maximilien de Robespierre, a leader among the Jacobins, became chairman of the Committee of Public Safety and virtual dictator of France. A Reign of Terror existed.

The Terror was thorough. Surveillance committees brought persons suspected of royalist sympathies before the revolutionary tribunal, a supreme court whose arbitrary verdicts almost invariably dispatched the accused to their deaths. Churches were closed; the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris was—paradoxically—renamed

## The Jacobins

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## War

## The Fall of the Monarchy

## The Reign of Terror

the Temple of Reason. Even members of the National Convention fell victim to the irrational fury of Robespierre's agents.

### **Total Mobilization**

The strong hand of dictatorship succeeded in turning the unorganized peoples' movement into a military force. A huge citizens' army was conscripted and every French citizen given a role in the war effort. By 1793 the army numbered a million men. At first poorly trained, they were soon shaped into Europe's most formidable fighting force. A young Corsican corporal, groomed by the new regime for an officer's commission, was to become the youngest general of the revolutionary army—Napoleon Bonaparte.

### **The Fall of Robespierre**

Robespierre ran into trouble on the economic front. Inflation, shortages, speculation, and hoarding foretold the approach of total economic collapse. Price controls failed to work as a black market emerged to meet the desires of the few who could afford its prices. Restiveness in the working class was met with increased oppression and threat of arrest. Military success abroad and economic failure at home pulled the nation into opposing moods; patriotism vied with fear and anger.

By July 1794 everyone had had enough of the Terror. Feeling the arm of the Committee of Public Safety reaching into its own chambers, the National Convention rose to take charge of its creature. Robespierre and his cohorts were arrested and summarily executed.

### **The Directory**

A new constitution, adopted in 1795, placed control of the nation in the hands of a five-man executive committee called the Directory. With the war going well and the Terror removed, Parisian society lived for two years in an unreal dream world. Although most of Europe, including England, had formed a coalition to oppose France, fortune seemed to smile upon her. People put aside the rough clothing they had worn to proclaim their revolutionary sentiments and adopted softer styles of dress. In aristocratic circles French salons rang with the sounds of chamber music and polite conversation.

The dream soon gave way to harsh reality. Royalist groups tried to reinstate the monarchy and won at the polls in 1797. To counter their influence the Directory called on General Bonaparte to return to Paris from Italy to reinforce the republican position. Bonaparte conducted a ruthless purge of royalists and earned for himself the epithet Savior of Paris. He then went back to war as the hero of France. The Directory, however, proved unable to govern, and Napoleon returned to Paris in 1799 to become the military dictator of France.

### **Napoleon Bonaparte**

The French Revolution, its fanaticism, and the recurrent anarchy, cast the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment into disrepute. The ruling houses of Europe saw them as a threat to their power and a disturbance of the peace in their realms. England, having lived under a limited monarchy for centuries, took a slightly more sanguine attitude. Even the most extreme absolutists, the Tudor and Stuart dynasties, had found it necessary to work through Parliament. The strongest monarchs realized—after the expulsion of James II—that they ruled only with the consent of the governed.

James had increasingly tried to impose Roman Catholicism by royal fiat. William of Orange, who had married Mary, James' protestant daughter, was invited by a coterie of English leaders to invade England and suppress James. In 1688 James fled to France and William and Mary became joint monarchs. Constitutional monarchy was restored. Actually, there was no written constitution, but English common law and long-established custom had created a form of government in which liberal views posed no serious threat. Even the American Revolution was recognized as a war for colonial independence rather than a challenge to the English monarchy.

In the wake of revolution, all Europe felt apprehensive about the political future. From any point of view, the alternatives appeared extreme—absolute monarchy or democratic chaos. The liberal position, in which legitimate monarchy theoretically rested on popular consent, seemed to have been demolished by the French experiment. When Napoleon took over the government of France, liberalism appeared to be a dead issue. A weak republican government had proved itself unable to rule, and a man on horseback had to be called upon to take the reins.

Napoleon's reign provided Europe a new consciousness. Apart from France, continental Europe had known dynasties, but up to then it had never known nationhood. Through centuries the Germans struggled without success to achieve unity among their many princedoms; Austria and Spain identified themselves more in terms of their ruling house of Hapsburg than by any sense of national coherence. Wars had been fought over religious or dynastic interests, but no battles raged around the inherent interests of people bound together as nations. Napoleon set about to conquer Europe, and Europeans suddenly became aware of their national identities.

### **European Nationalism**

In 1806 Napoleon abolished the Holy Roman Empire. The illusion that Germany, with Austria, was a single political unit had finally died. Austria, humiliated by France, found itself for the first time a nation. It was no longer a feudal network of subjects, linked only tenuously to an imperial dynasty at the center of a tortuous web of fealties. The presence of alien French armies, keenly aware of themselves as Frenchmen, made Austrians look at themselves as citizens of Austria, not simply as subjects of a feudal lord.

Even the Germans began to recognize their common identity by their united opposition to the French presence. For the first time since Luther made his appeal to the German princes against Rome, it was more important to be German than to belong to a particular electorate or princedom. Napoleon himself contributed to the growing sense of German nationalism by creating the puppet regime he called the Confederation of the Rhine. Russia, too, responded to French imperialism with an increase in nationalistic sentiment. Its population was a mixture of many peoples—Slavs, descendants of the Norsemen who had sailed up the rivers centuries earlier, Germans of varied origins, and assorted oriental ethnic groups. Russia was a stronghold of Eastern Orthodoxy. With Greece in the hands of the Ottoman Turks, Moscow had assumed the stature of the Third Rome and the center of Orthodox Christianity. It was a feudal land of serfs and lords, united by religion and a mystical identity with Mother Russia, not by political patriotism. Napoleon changed all that when he invaded Russia.

## The Fall of Napoleon

The nationalistic spirit Napoleon unwittingly created among his subject peoples seemed inconsequential at first. He controlled them through puppet regimes, usually patterned after the republican image France still maintained even under the iron hand of a dictator. When the ill-fated expedition against Moscow decimated the powerful French army, the conquered peoples began to shake off the French yoke.

Debilitated by the Russian campaign, the French military forces could not stand against the combined weight of every major European power. Napoleon abdicated his imperial post in 1814, accepting exile to the island of Elba off the coast of Italy. Louis XVIII, heir to the Bourbon throne, was restored in France. In Vienna a conference of the victorious allies met to draft a new political map of Europe. Napoleon endured his exile for ten months. Then, convinced that the French people still wanted him as their emperor, he returned to France to claim their allegiance. His magic appeal was still there. The troops sent to arrest him rallied to his cause, the king fled the country, and Napoleon's final reign began. It ended in defeat at the hands of English forces under the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo on June 18, 1815.

Liberal reformers in Europe saw a renewed chance for an age of popular sovereignty. With the restrictions of Napoleon's dictatorship so fresh in the people's memory, the idea of government by the consent of the governed seemed to stand a chance of receiving a favorable hearing. Once again, however, it was not to be.

## Metternich (1773-1859)

The leader of post-Napoleonic Europe was the brilliant Prince Klemens von Metternich, Austria's foreign minister. His primary goal for Europe was peace, and he saw it resting on two foundations: stable national governments and an equal distribution of power among nations—a balance of power. While others called for the virtual destruction of France, he wanted to keep it strong to balance the increasing strength of Russia. At the head of each nation he wanted a legitimate ruler. To him, that meant a king. It also meant the suppression of any popular movement that might place the king's crown in jeopardy.

## The Holy Alliance

Under Metternich's influence the Congress of Vienna assembled in 1815 to draw up the terms of peace. He established national boundaries along lines that preserved the balance of power. He also persuaded all the European monarchs, including the newly restored French king, Louis XVIII, to join a Holy Alliance for the preservation of legitimate governments. Under the terms of the Alliance, member nations reserved the right to intervene by force and to put down any revolutionary movement that might erupt within any of their borders. Britain refused to join, insisting that each nation is a sovereign state and must not tolerate interference with its internal affairs.

Metternich's hopes for the Holy Alliance faded quickly. Although most European monarchs shared his views on the need for legitimacy and his fears of liberal revolts, they could not rise to the level of cooperation the Alliance demanded, even in the interest of their own convictions. Nationalism continued apace, becoming one of the determining features of nineteenth-century Europe, but it was impossible for nationalism to coexist with Metternich's brand of international cooperation.

**Revolutions of  
1848**

Revolutions consumed Europe during 1848. They sprang from a variety of causes and had no apparent connection with one another. The lack of coordination among them revealed the wide disparity of views among the liberal politicians. Ranging from proponents of anarchy to supporters of constitutional monarchy, the factions could not unite under a single banner for any one cause. The trend had begun as early as 1834 with revolutions in Poland and Belgium. The revolution and anarchy in Paris in 1848 caused terror throughout Europe. The conservative royalists throughout Europe suspected the revolutionaries of fomenting an international conspiracy. The extreme political alignments almost completely polarized Europe.

The revolutions were quickly put down. The major powers turned their attention to expanding the colonial empires they had been slowly acquiring, hoping that increased prosperity would silence the voices of revolt. On the whole, they were right. A few intellectuals continued to brood over new inequities they saw produced by the industrial revolution, but the widespread passion for political revolution was mostly spent. A different kind of revolution ensued, one of commerce, naval expansion, and emigration.

England was the birthplace of the economic and social phenomenon later called the Industrial Revolution. The lively spirit of inquiry born a century earlier had led to a flurry of inventions. Machines to speed the production of textiles were harnessed first to water power and then to James Watt's new steam engine. The ancient household tasks of spinning and weaving could now be done faster in factories than at home. Uniformity and lower costs superseded craftsmanship. As manufacturing became centralized in large factories, towns that had been small agricultural trading centers mushroomed into cities. The newly-invented steam locomotive hauled long trains over rail lines from the factory centers to markets throughout England. Britain's economy leaped forward as it sent her low-cost, high-quality merchandise to markets at home and abroad.

The need for raw materials increased dramatically: coal to fire the steam boilers and iron from which to construct machinery strong enough to bear the strains of the mighty engines were in demand. Even greater supplies of coal and iron were demanded after 1850 when Henry Bessemer devised an economical way to produce steel. With coal and iron available in Britain itself, mining towns sprang up in northern England and Wales. Scotland provided wool from sheep, and the new overseas colonies in India, Africa, and the West Indies raised large amounts of cotton.

The effects of this sudden change in the way manufactured goods were produced reached into all levels of life. Since the beginning of civilized history, wealth had been defined principally in terms of land. At that time agriculture was the major industry; land was capital. Now, a new form of capital came into being—factories and their equipment. A capitalist class, owners of the means of industrial production, soon rivaled the old landed aristocracy in wealth and influence.

The captains of industry who owned factories usually hired managers to run them. Paid managers formed a new middle class, prospering from the success of the in-

**The  
Industrial  
Revolution****Wealth  
Redefined****Management**

dustrial plants but with no direct interest beyond their salaries. Money, for them heretofore a symbol of wealth, became wealth itself. At the higher levels, managers often invested their earnings in capital, sometimes to the extent of becoming owners themselves. The social fabric separating the classes became much more porous than it had been in the former days of feudalism.

### Workers

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One group of people, by far the most numerous, found it virtually impossible to put a foot on the ladder of success. The factory worker, who had come to the city to seek work, had only one asset—his hands. His hands and those of his family, however unskilled, could tend the machines and turn the wheels. Since there was little demand for craftsmanship, work was monotonous, unrewarding, and easily exploited. An ignorant peasant in an industrial society could be cheaply bought.

### Britain— Industrialization

Why was England the cradle of the Industrial Revolution? Many other countries' lands contained the same raw materials, and the British held no monopoly on creative imagination. The chief advantage was its political and social climate. The ascendancy of parliament over the Stuart dynasty in the eighteenth century not only stabilized the political scene but also effected a generally balanced representation of the economic interests of the nation. Landed aristocrats, of course, made up the House of Lords, but members of the House of Commons amply represented commercial interests. On the continent—in France, for example—the relationship between the nobility and the businessmen was not so harmonious; they saw themselves as rivals and antagonists. In England there was more cooperation.

### Class Fluidity in England

The barriers that separated classes on the continent were not as rigidly set in England. Only the firstborn son of an English nobleman inherited the title; the younger sons were commoners. True, they were not as far down on the ladder as poor farmers or servants, but they had to make their own way in the world. They had always found it in the professions of law, medicine, and the church; now the world of commerce and industry opened new opportunities for them as industrial managers.

### Portents of Economic Revolt

The benefits of industrialization were many. Mass production made more goods available to more people. Prices were lower and the quality of factory-made goods was vastly superior. Technology improved the production of manufactured goods and also extended its benefits to farming. More food was produced. Better nutrition spelled longer life spans. The need to transport goods translated into more railroads, improved roads, and countless canals. The invention of the telegraph made communication easier and faster. England and mainland Europe were linked by a telegraph cable in 1851, and a cable joined Europe and America by 1866.

Problems also followed the economic boom. Small hamlets became large cities as their factories lured peasants to new jobs and the cities were unable to absorb the influx. Housing was abysmally inadequate and wages pathetically low. Men, women, and children worked as much as sixteen hours a day, six days a week, trying to eke out a bare existence. Grinding poverty degraded the quality of life; dehumanizing conditions were worse than those experienced by the lowliest serf in medieval times. Conditions of virtual slavery existed.

An English economist, Adam Smith (1723-1790), published *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* in 1776. Typical among the thinkers of the eighteenth century, Smith believed that nature was governed by laws that ensured an overall harmony. The same principle, he maintained, applied in the economic domain. Government control of tariffs, prices, and the distribution of goods—all characteristics of the commercial enterprises of his time—were to Smith’s mind erroneous hindrances to the wealth of nations.

Three factors, Smith said, determine the prices that best promote national wealth: labor, rent, and profit. Left to themselves, the interests of the laborer, the landlord, and the capitalist will balance each other in the free marketplace of commerce. When each works for his or her own best interests, an overall harmony will prevail. The role of government should be solely that of preserver of order at home and protector from enemies abroad. This basic principle had been stated by the French economist Quesnay as *laissez faire*—“let it be.”

The newly-industrialized nations adopted Smith’s doctrine of the marketplace. “The law of supply and demand” was the mechanism by which the natural balance among the forces of labor, rent, and profits was to be achieved. The doctrine worked in most respects. The competition of the free marketplace kept the costs of goods relatively balanced with society’s ability to pay for them, and business flourished.

The balance held true for the economy’s consumers only when taken as a whole. Something was wrong. Of Smith’s three forces, one was unequal to the competition: labor. The supply of labor was larger than industry’s demand for it. Smith’s law of supply and demand proved correct, but its results in practical human terms were not what he expected. Labor, represented the great majority of a nation’s population. Countless individual workers could not hold back their supply to increase demand. Each worker had to eat, and to eat each had to work. By this reasoning, capitalism was unbalanced and inherently unstable.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century a movement toward reform began in an effort to give labor a voice in the marketplace. Tradesmen grouped together in unions. Vigorously opposed by industrial ownership and management, the trade union movement was slow to develop and marked by violence. Even as late as the 1830s, labor could do little in the way of organized protest. Sensing the threat of social upheaval, however, the British government passed laws limiting the working day to ten hours for women and children and forbidding the employment of women in the mines. It was a small step, but it marked the beginning of governmental attempts to ensure a more equitable distribution of the fruits of the industrial economy. Out of this came the push to provide workers with retirements and the economic concept of social security.

Economic reform that depended on the slow-moving apparatus of government, however, could not respond adequately to the spreading poverty of the workers. By 1868 small and ineffectual local unions in England united to form the Trades Union Congress (the T.U.C.). Big enough to attract attention on the political scene, the

T.U.C. formed the Labor Representation Committee in 1869 to help elect members of Parliament who favored labor's cause. As a last resort, labor began to use the strike as a weapon.

The wars that raged on the continent left European nations depleted. England also engaged in the wars abroad and bore monumental costs, but the land was unravaged and its merchant ships remained free to carry the world's commerce. On balance, Britain prospered while the continent rocked with turbulence through most of the century. A further stabilizing force was the long reign of Queen Victoria. For sixty-four years, from 1837 to 1901, she held the allegiance of her subjects while European monarchs toppled from their thrones and governments suffered repeated changes.

### **Changes on the Continent**

By mid-century the continental powers were embarked on their own versions of England's industrial revolution. Textile factories flourished in Belgium, France, and northern Italy. The German Ruhr Valley used its vast coal reserves to become a center of the steel industry. During this era Russia and Spain as well as the Balkans remained agrarian; their feudal heritage made them slow to bend before the new currents.

### **Other Developments**

Led by Britain numerous countries expanded into other markets, especially in Africa and Asia. Eventually zones of influence that remain to this day were established. The English settled New Zealand and Australia. They also dominated in Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria, and especially in India. The French controlled such faraway places as Tahiti and Indochina. Closer to home France expanded into North Africa, and Algeria became an official part of France. Germany too sought economic zones in Africa, Turkey, and China, but it lost them in the aftermath of the first world war which ended in 1918.

Trade unionism, however much feared and hated by industrialists, was an expression of the economic principles Adam Smith taught: labor was one of the three forces to be balanced in the marketplace, and it had to be able to compete. Some other solutions were offered to cure capitalism's pains.

### **Utopian Socialism**

Adam Smith, as a child of the Enlightenment, believed the natural law of economics could be discerned by reason and that the business community would be guided by it. The same rationalistic spirit that prompted him led others to dream of a politico-economic system deliberately designed by the human mind as an improvement on the natural course of events. Most of the socialistic blueprints devised by the early social dreamers were impractical, for they relied entirely on enlightened consciences in the classes holding power. Some, like Claude Henri de Saint-Simon, wanted the revolutionary government of France to impose equitable labor and business practices, but the many governments of post-revolutionary France were too preoccupied with survival to pursue such causes. Early in the nineteenth century Charles Fourier and Louis Blanc proposed communities of cooperative labor and distribution.

### **Karl Marx (1818-1883)**

Karl Marx's book *Das Kapital*, published in 1867, provided the overarching theoretical basis for scientific socialism. He analyzed the defects of the capitalist system

and proposed drastic solutions. The inherent imbalance of classical (Adam Smith) economics, he said, results in the gradual concentration of wealth in the hands of a few capitalists and the corresponding impoverishment of the proletariat or working class.

According to Marx, when this process of concentration and impoverishment reaches its ultimate conclusion, the two great forces—the proletariat and the capitalists—face each other in a class war. The proletarian revolution should succeed, for the workers can unite in an invincible army, fearing no loss for they have nothing to lose. As the victorious class, the proletariat will use the power of the state to seize the means of production and distribution from the capitalist class and distribute them to the workers. During this period, the state should become the dictatorship of the proletariat, serving the people directly with no need to bow to the demands of the oppressive owners and managers. When the process of expropriation is complete, the state withers away. A communist society remains in which production and distribution are managed by the workers themselves, and justice will prevail. Marx believed that England, as the most thoroughly industrialized nation, would be the scene of the onset of revolution.

Marx's dream did not become a reality in England, as he supposed that it would. Beneficial steps were taken, by governments, voluntary societies, and, in some instances, by the churches. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Europe was staggering through a minefield of political, social, and economic hazards. Absolute monarchy had been attacked, and in some places defeated—but liberal governments such as constitutional monarchies or republics had not been able to stay on their feet. The wonders of the Industrial Revolution had begun to show the promise of an age of material plenty, but masses of workers were still underpaid, underfed, and living in misery.

Some contemporary commentators on the scene saw the future holding a rosy promise of continued and irresistible progress to an unprecedented age of peace and plenty. To others it looked dark with clouds portending inevitable worldwide revolution. Queen Victoria's England faced the future undaunted. Its factories were the wonder of the world, its widespread colonies were sources of great wealth, and its navy ruled over every ocean on earth. The world lived for a while under the *Pax Britannica*, the British Peace.

## Class War

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## The End of the Century

