

Chapter 19

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Political Revolutions

Key Terms

Bill of Rights	Jacobins*
bourgeoisie*	liberalism*
Boxer Rebellion*	natural rights*
Code Napoleon*	proletariat*
communism*	queu
Congress of Vienna	radicalism*
conscription*	Reign of Terror*
conservatism*	Revolutions of 1848*
Declaration of Independence	self-strengthening movement*
Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*	separation of powers*
Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female*	Seven Years' War*
estates*	social contract*
Estates-General*	socialism*
feminism*	system of checks and balances*
Gran Colombia*	Taiping Rebellion*
	universal male suffrage*

INTRODUCTION

2 In the period between 1750 and 1914, the Industrial Revolution was joined by political revolutions. Enlightenment philosophies that society could improve through education and reason led to revolution in the British North American colonies, France, and Haiti in the latter part of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Additional Latin American independence movements flourished in the early nineteenth

century. In the opening years of the twentieth century, Mexico underwent a liberal revolution, whereas Chinese dynastic rule ended in favor of new patterns of government for the Chinese people.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The revolt for independence in the British North American colonies was the child of Enlightenment philosophers, most notably the Englishman John Locke. Locke spoke of a social contract in which the people relinquished some of their rights to the government in order to establish order. Governments had the responsibility of safeguarding the “unalienable” rights of “life, liberty, and property.” If a government did not preserve these rights, the people had the right to overthrow it and establish a new government.

Britain’s North American colonies had gradually developed their own identity since their founding in the early seventeenth century. The colonists particularly resented British policies that levied taxes on them without allowing them their own representative in Parliament. Higher taxes were imposed in 1763 after the end of the French and Indian War (the American phase of the Seven Years’ War) as a result of British efforts to receive colonial reimbursement for part of the expense of the war that the British had fought on the colonists’ behalf. The aftermath of war also brought British restrictions against colonial migration into territories west of the Appalachians once held by the French, territories the British considered unsafe for settlement because of potential conflicts with Native Americans in the area.

The American Revolution began in 1775 as a result of efforts from colonial leaders well versed in Enlightenment thought. In 1776, the colonists set up a government that issued the Declaration of Independence, a document modeled after the political philosophies of John Locke. Its author, Thomas Jefferson, altered the natural rights identified by John Locke to include “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” With the aid of the French, the British colonists were victorious in 1781. In 1787, the new United States of America wrote a constitution insuring the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances, both ideas of the Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu. A Bill of Rights added a statement of individual liberties in keeping with Enlightenment principles. Voting rights were increased to embrace more white male voters; by the 1820s, property rights for voting had been abolished in the new states. Neither the Declaration of Independence nor the United States Constitution addressed the issue of slavery.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Enlightenment thinking also contributed to a revolution in France. In the late eighteenth century, French society was divided into three classes, or estates:

- First Estate—the clergy, comprising a little more than 1 percent of the population, and paying no taxes.
- Second Estate—the nobility, comprising slightly more than 2 percent of the population, and paying only a few taxes.
- Third Estate—the remainder of the population, made up of merchants, artisans, and peasants. The peasants were burdened with heavy taxes and labor requirements that were carryovers from feudal days. The middle class, or *bourgeoisie*, were the merchants, artisans, and professionals who became the driving force of the revolution.

Representatives of the three estates met in the Estates-General, the French legislative assembly. In 1789, however, the French monarchs had not called the Estates-General into session for 175 years. Revolution broke out because of:

- Bourgeoisie desire for a wider political role
- Bourgeoisie wish for restraints on the power of the clergy, monarchy, and aristocracy
- Population growth
- Poor harvests in 1787 and 1788

When King Louis XVI was forced to call a meeting of the Estates-General in 1789 in order to raise taxes, the bourgeoisie insisted on changing the voting rules in the Estates-General from one vote per estate to one vote per representative. The king was forced to agree to the new voting arrangement as rioting broke out in Paris. On June 14, 1789, the Bastille, a Parisian political prison, was stormed by a Paris mob. The incident liberated only a handful of prisoners but became the rallying point of the French Revolution.

The new bourgeoisie-dominated National Assembly issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, a document whose content bore a resemblance to clauses in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. The French declaration identified natural rights as “liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.” A new constitution guaranteed freedoms of the press and of religion and increased voting rights. Olympe de Gouges countered the French declaration of rights with her Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female; de Gouges was later executed on the guillotine.

The Reign of Terror

In 1792, the revolution entered a more radical phase known as the Reign of Terror as the monarchy was abolished, with Louis XVI executed on the guillotine. Under the leadership of a radical club known as the Jacobins, thousands were executed during the Reign of Terror. A new constitution provided universal male suffrage and universal military conscription.

The revolutionaries had to repel foreign armies of Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Great Britain that attempted to preserve the French monarchy. Eventually, the European armies were driven from France, and revolutionaries added new territory in the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy. A wave of nationalism spread throughout France.

The Final Stage

The republican gains of the French Revolution came to an end in 1799 with the rise to power of army general Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon limited the power of the legislative assembly and returned authoritarian rule to France. Napoleon also:

- Censored speech and the press
- Codified laws in Code Napoleon
- Granted religious freedom
- Established universities
- Denied women basic rights

Napoleon declared himself the emperor of a new French empire in 1804. The major powers of Europe fought a number of wars against Napoleon's armies. An 1812 French invasion of Russia led to a decisive defeat for Napoleon, largely as a result of the harsh Russian winter. The European alliance defeated Napoleon in 1814 and again, decisively, in 1815. Although it was a setback for the revolutionary principles in France, Napoleon's empire spread the ideals of the revolution outside France and created a spirit of nationalism throughout Europe.

The Aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars

After the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815, European leaders met at the Congress of Vienna to restore legitimate monarchs to the thrones of Europe and to create a balance of power. The purpose of the balance of power was to prevent France or any other European nation from dominating the continent again. This spirit of conservatism kept Europe largely at peace until the end of the nineteenth century. Other political movements gained strength: liberalism sought protection for the rights of propertied classes, whereas radicalism wanted broader suffrage and social reforms on behalf of the lower classes. In 1848, a series of revolutions again swept through Europe, bringing the end of monarchy in France. The liberal Revolutions of 1848 largely failed, however, to bring permanent reform to Europe. Nationalist stirrings in Italy and Germany united the various regional political units in both regions. Italy became an independent nation in 1870 and Germany followed in 1871.

THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

The revolutions in the British North American colonies and in France inspired a revolt in the French Caribbean island colony of Saint-Dominigue, or Haiti. The Haitian Revolution was the first incident in world history in which black slaves successfully rebelled against their enslavers. Haiti, whose colonial economy was based on the production of sugar, saw divisions between white inhabitants and free people of color during the course of the French Revolution. In 1791, Haitian slaves took advantage of this division to rebel. Under the leadership of a free black named Toussaint L'Overture, the rebellion succeeded, and in 1804 the island declared its independence as the republic of Haiti.

OTHER LATIN AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS

Enlightenment ideas in addition to a succession crisis in Spain during and after the French Revolution created an opportune moment for the realization of independence in Spain's colonies. The placement of Napoleon's brother on the throne of Spain instead of the Spanish king caused the American colonists to question the identity of Spain's ruler. Consequently, independence revolutions broke out in the Americas.

In Mexico, the Creole Father Miguel de Hidalgo called on mestizos and Indians to assist him in a rebellion against Spain in 1810. The Creoles, fearing the social reforms that might materialize from mestizo and Indian involvement, initially abandoned the independence movement. After Hidalgo was executed, the Creoles rejoined the cause under Augustín de Iturbide, a Creole officer. In 1821, Mexico declared its independence from Spain. In 1824, Mexico became a republic. The Central American states, which had been a part of Mexico, divided into separate independent nations in 1838.

The South American Phase

In the northern part of South America, the Creole Simón Bolívar centered his movement for independence against Spain in Caracas. By 1822, he had liberated Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, uniting these regions into the nation he called **Gran Colombia**. Regional differences led to the eventual breakup of the new nation.

In the southern portion of South America, José de San Martín emerged as the independence leader from Río de la Plata (present-day Argentina). Río de la Plata declared its independence in 1816. San Martín then crossed into Chile to assist in its liberation. By 1823, all of Spanish America had declared its independence and established republics in all the new nations except Mexico. Independence, however, did not bring prosperity to Latin America, as Bolívar had hoped.

Independence in Brazil

The Portuguese colony of Brazil followed a pattern for independence different from that of the other Latin American countries. In 1807, when the French invaded Portugal, the Portuguese royal family fled to Brazil. The colony of Brazil acquired a status equal to that of Portugal. When Napoleon was defeated, the Portuguese king was recalled and left his son Dom Pedro regent in Brazil.

In 1822, Dom Pedro declared Brazil independent after realizing that Brazil was about to lose its representative in the Portuguese parliament. Unlike the other Latin American nations, Brazil did not have to endure a prolonged independence movement. Brazil became a monarchy, and the institution of slavery was left untouched in the newly independent country.

REVOLUTION IN MEXICO

In 1876, Porfirio Díaz was elected president of Mexico. For the next 35 years, he continued the economic growth of the rule of his predecessor, Benito Juárez. Díaz encouraged foreign investment, industries, and exports. In contrast to other Latin American countries such as Argentina and Brazil, Mexico was not the destination of many immigrants; its population, therefore, was largely native. Often economic growth did not benefit the peasants and working classes. Opponents of Díaz were arrested or exiled and election fraud was common.

In 1910, the middle class began a movement for election reform. Soon joined by workers and peasants, the reform movement escalated into a 10-year-long rebellion known as the Mexican Revolution. The revolution ended in a new constitution that guaranteed land reform, limited foreign investments, restricted church ownership of property, and education reform.

REVOLUTION IN QING CHINA

The Manchus who entered China as the Qing dynasty in 1644 had been exposed to Chinese culture as a result of years spent living along the northern Chinese border. The Qing continued Chinese traditions such as the civil service examination and patriarchal family structure. Female infanticide increased. Women were confined to traditional household duties, while women from peasant families also worked in the fields or in village marketplaces. The Manchus required Chinese men to distinguish themselves from them by wearing a *queu*, or braided ponytail.

Although the Qing attempted to control the consolidation of large tracts of land, they had little success. The gap between rural peasants and rural gentry increased. Some men of the gentry began to let their fingernails grow extremely long to indicate that they did not have to do any physical labor.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Qing dynasty was in decline. The civil service examination had often given way to obtaining governmental posts through bribery. Dams, dikes, and irrigation systems were in disrepair. Highway bandits were a problem in some areas of China. The importation of opium (see Chapter 18) caused conflicts with Great Britain.

The increased influence of foreign powers on Chinese society and China's defeat in the Opium War produced widespread rebellion in south China in the 1850s and early 1860s to protest Qing weakness. The Taiping Rebellion advocated programs of social reform, more privileges for women, and land redistribution. When the scholar-gentry realized that the rebellion was reaching to the heart of Chinese tradition, it rallied and ended the rebellion.

Later Qing officials attempted to spare the Chinese economy by carrying out a self-strengthening movement that encouraged Western investments in factories and railroads and modernized the Chinese army. Reform movements were crushed, however, under the rule of the dowager empress Cixi. The Boxer Rebellion (1898–1901) was a revolt against foreigners that was backed by Qing rulers. The rebellion, which culminated in the execution of foreigners in China, was put down by a coalition force from Europe, the United States, and Japan.

The leaders of the movement that brought down the Qing dynasty were Western-educated reformers who wanted to model China's government along Western lines. Sun Yat-sen, one of its chief leaders, also wanted to carry out reforms to benefit peasants and workers. Although they admired some aspects of Western society, the revolutionaries wanted a China free of foreign imperialists. In 1911, opposition to Qing reliance on Western loans for railway improvements led to a final rebellion that toppled the Qing. Centuries of Chinese dynastic rule had come to an end.

SOCIO-POLITICAL MOVEMENTS: FEMINISM, MARXISM, AND SOCIALISM

In the eighteenth century, feminist movements began to seek political, social, and economic gains from women. Targeted was access to higher education and the professions in addition to the right to vote. By 1914, Scandinavian countries and some states in the United States had granted women the right to vote. Within a few years, women's suffrage had extended to all states in the United States and to Great Britain and Germany.

Marxism

A socialist movement that became particularly significant to Russian history was a reflection of the political theories of Karl Marx of Germany. Marx taught that all history was the result of a class struggle between the bourgeoisie, or middle class, and the proletariat, or working class.

According to Marx, the proletariat would eventually revolt and establish a “dictatorship of the proletariat” that would insure social and political freedom. When this occurred, there would no longer be a need for the state, which would wither away. The result would be pure **communism**, or a classless society.

Less extreme forms of socialism emerged in European nations as socialist parties arose in Germany, France, and Austria. Many Europeans were fearful of the revolutionary nature of some socialist movements. Socialism in Germany, France, and Austria brought changes such as the recognition of labor unions and disability and old-age insurance.

Rapid Review



The spirit of the Enlightenment produced revolutions in the British North American colonies, France, and Latin America. Reaction against foreign intervention and the weakness of the Qing dynasty culminated in revolution in China that ended centuries-old dynastic rule in that country. Accompanying political revolution was an increasingly vocal movement to grant political rights to women in the Western world. Socialism attempted to create working conditions and societies that would improve the condition of humanity, whereas the Marxist brand of socialism defined a class struggle whose ultimate purpose was the abolition of government.

✓ Chapter Review Questions

- The French Revolution of 1789 and the Chinese revolt of 1911 were alike in that
 - they were initiated by the lower classes.
 - they were not nationalist independence movements.
 - they ended immediately in dictatorship.
 - they failed to achieve their goals.
 - they were a response to foreign intervention.
- The American and the French revolutions were alike in all the following ways EXCEPT
 - they both brought increased political power for women.
 - they were prompted by issues of taxation.
 - they both involved representation in their respective legislatures.
 - they produced documents that defined similar natural rights.
 - they were based on Enlightenment thought.
- The Haitian Revolution was the only revolution of the period 1750 to 1914 that was initiated and fought by
 - Creoles.
 - mestizos.
 - slaves.
 - foreign mercenaries.
 - elite classes.
- The Brazilian independence movement
 - resulted in the abolition of slavery.
 - produced a republic for Brazil.
 - involved a prolonged struggle with Portugal.

- D. followed a pattern similar to that of other Latin American independence movements.
- E. was the result of the Napoleonic wars.
5. The declining years of the Qing dynasty saw
- the influence of foreign nations.
 - invasion by nomadic people north of the Great Wall.
 - the long-term acceptance of the self-strengthening movement.
 - the end of the opium trade.
 - the return to tradition by new dynastic rule.
6. Marxism
- became the model for socialism in Western European nations.
 - anticipated revolution in agrarian societies.
 - advocated centralization of the state.
 - became a factor in the French Revolution.
 - saw history as a series of class struggles.
7. Both the Mexican revolts of 1821 and 1910
- were initially Creole-backed movements.
 - ended in the immediate establishment of a republic.
 - resulted in territorial losses within a few years after the revolt.
 - involved resistance to foreign influence.
 - were independence movements.
8. Political, economic, and social change from 1750 to 1914
- saw sweeping changes in political rights for women.
 - was generally led by members of the lower classes.
 - included reaction against foreign influence in China and Mexico.
 - brought increased prosperity to Latin America.
 - brought republican government throughout the Americas.

2 Answers and Explanations

1. B. Neither revolution desired independence from a colonial power. The French Revolution was initiated by the bourgeoisie, and the Chinese revolt by the Western-educated middle class (A). The French Revolution ended in the ultimate dictatorship of Napoleon, whereas the Chinese revolution at first attempted to model China's government after Western republics (C). The French Revolution reached its goal of ending absolute monarchy, while the Chinese revolt ended Qing rule (D). Although the French Revolution did not involve a response to foreign intervention, the Chinese Revolution was in part a reaction against foreign involvement in China under the Qing (E).
2. A. Although the French Revolution increased women's political rights somewhat until the rule of Napoleon, no political rights were gained by women as a result of the American Revolution. The French Revolution was a reaction of the Third Estate against taxation, while the American Revolution was a protest against taxation without representation in the British Parliament (B). The French revolt also involved the degree of representation of the Third Estate in the Estates-General (C). The Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen spoke of similar natural rights (D). Both were based on Enlightenment thought, especially that of Locke and Rousseau (E).

3. C. The Haitian Revolution was initiated by black slaves. The other responses are incorrect.
4. E. Brazil saw an opportunity to raise its status to the level of Portugal as a result of the French occupation of the Portuguese throne, a situation that ultimately led to its independence. It did not abolish slavery (A) and produced a monarchy for Brazil (B). It did not involve a prolonged struggle for independence (C), thereby following a different pattern from that of other Latin American independence movements (D).
5. A. The Opium War was a case of foreign involvement in China. The Qing were the last nomadic invaders of China during the seventeenth century (B). The self-strengthening movement produced only temporary changes (C). The opium trade continued after the Opium War (D). The end of dynastic rule was a turn away from Chinese tradition (E).
6. E. Marx saw history as a series of struggles between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Socialism in Europe outside Russia took on a milder form (A). Marx anticipated revolution in industrialized countries (B) and advocated overthrow, rather than centralization, of the state (C). Marxism was not defined until after the French Revolution (D).
7. D. The 1821 revolution was an independence movement against Spain, while the 1910 revolution came about in part because of foreign influence during the rule of Díaz. The 1821 revolt was initially backed by mestizos, whereas the later revolt was Creole-backed from its beginning (A). The Mexican republic was established in 1824, three years after the end of the earlier revolt (B). Although the 1910 revolt did not result in territorial loss, the earlier revolution saw the separation of the Central American republics a few years later (C). The earlier revolt was an independence movement, whereas the second was a liberal revolt (E).
8. C. Both the Mexican and Chinese revolts were in part reactions against foreign involvement. Women did not see significant changes in their political rights (A). Most revolutions were led by the middle classes (B). Independence did not bring increased prosperity to Latin America (D). Brazil established a monarchy after independence (E).