

The “Isms” from Chapter 11 (Unit 7) Europe at a Crossroad

Section B: The Advent of the “Isms”

Industrialism and the ideas of the French revolution lead to a proliferation of doctrines and movements which culminate in a series of revolutions in 1848.

Yet, many of the words we use to describe these ideas do actually come into use in the language until very late:

liberalism- 1819	individualism	nationalism- 1840s
radicalism- 1820	constitutionalism	communism- late 1840s
socialism- 1832	humanitarianism	capitalism- 1850s
conservatism- 1835	feminism	romanticism- 1840s
monarchism		

What this shows is that while the words were new, the ideas had been around for a long time. People were now being able to apply labels to the ideas and to understand them in a more concrete and systematic way.

“Ism” defined as a conscious espousal of a doctrine in competition with other doctrines.

ROMANTICISM:

first used in the English language in the 1840s

primarily a theory of literature and art: focused on:

1. the relationship between thought and feeling
2. the meaning of the past and the nature of time itself
3. rejected the enlightened emphasis on classical rules and rational order
4. the modern image is of the defiant artist; the artist as a rebel
 - a. love of the unclassifiable
 - b. immersed in moods and impressions
 - c. feeling has as much, if not more, value as reason
 - d. understanding that the subconscious is important
 - e. revival of Gothic style in the arts- interest in the mysterious unknown qualities of life
 - f. appreciation of the creative genius who was unbound by rules
5. embraced by the nationalists who used this dynamic force to push for unity, national culture

LIBERALISM:

the first “liberals” were the Spanish who opposed the Napoleonic occupation of their nation. Eventually, this word passed to France where it came to be associated with anti-royalism. Eventually, moved to England.

each nation had their own version of “liberal” thought, but there were some common elements:

1. emphasis on rights and liberties of individuals
2. belief in what was modern, enlightened, reasonable and fair
3. generally made up of members of the business and professional classes

4. believed in the human capacity for self-government and self-control
5. valued parliamentary government, representation, freedom of speech, press, and assembly
6. generally favored a constitutional, limited monarch
7. did NOT automatically favor universal suffrage
8. believed in property rights, and laissez-faire economics, free trade

RADICALISM, REPUBLICANISM, SOCIALISM:

Radicalism, as a word, originated in England in the 1820s. Group known as the Philosophic Radicals:

1. made up of working class leaders
2. but also made up, in part, of some of the industrialists who were still unrepresented in Parliament
3. spiritual leader was Jeremy Bentham:
 - a. the right form of institution could be deduced from an understanding of human nature
 - b. history and custom served no purpose- instead, radicals liked to get to the root of things
 - c. desired a total reconstruction of laws, courts, prisons, city organizations, etc.
 - d. demanded a reform of Parliament and detested the Church of England
 - e. very democratic- favored universal adult suffrage
 - f. utilitarian- emphasis on those things which benefit most of society most of the time

Radicalism on the Continent represented by militant Republicanism (those who favored the first French Republic) Most republicans came from the intelligentsia: students and writers: General ideas:

1. joined in secret societies because of their advocacy of further revolutionary upheaval
2. strong democrats- believed in universal male suffrage
3. favored parliamentary government- without a monarch
4. bitterly anti-Church
5. opposed to ALL forms of monarchy and aristocratic power
6. NOT opposed to the use of force to get their way (heirs of the French Revolution)

Socialists- generally favored the views of the republicans, but added a few of their own:

1. believed that the existing economic systems was aimless, chaotic and unjust
2. questioned the value of private enterprise and private property
3. disliked competition as a governing economic principle
4. very much against laissez-faire perspectives

Examples of Socialist activity: Utopian Socialists:

- a. Robert Owen created a model community- utopian community in New Harmony, Ind.
- b. Saint-Simon (French) proponent of planned societies- advocated public ownership
- c. Charles Fourier- condemned all known human institutions- society should instead be arranged in small units known as phalansteries

Politically- the most significant form of socialism (pre 1848) was the movement among the French working classes who combined the ideas of republicanism and socialism.

Louis Blanc- leader: proposed a system of social workshops in which the state would support workers who worked by and for themselves

(some of these ideas adopted by a small group of German revolutionaries who were in France- they began using the term "communism" as a synonym for socialism: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels)

FEMINISM:

the term is not used until 1830s: Most feminists shared ideas with liberals, radicals and socialists:

1. they sought to expand the rights of women in both the public and private spheres
2. they drew upon the enlightened ideals of the French Revolution
3. some (Mary Wollstonecraft) tried to get voting and civil rights
4. others tried to work for reforms in family life and education- changing legislation

Various branches of Feminism:

1. Egalitarian feminists: stressed how men and women shared the same powers of reason and universal human rights
2. English feminists: traced the inferior status of women to flaws in the economic system
 - a. Anne Wheeler and William Thompson- Appeal on Behalf of Women (1825)
 - b. Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill- focused on social, political and legal inequalities. Utilitarian argument- society itself would benefit from equal participation of women.

This influenced the great women's conference in America at Seneca Falls- Elizabeth Cady Stanton

3. French feminism: influenced by Saint-Simon and Fourier and their socialist views on family life. They advocated better education and reforms of property and divorce laws. French feminists also stressed certain distinctions of womanhood such as the responsibilities associated with childbirth and motherhood. Only a well educated women could raise well educated children. Role of George Sand- symbol of French feminism (p. 444)

NATIONALISM- WESTERN EUROPE

Nationalism was the LEAST clear of all the "isms" because it usually overlapped with various forms of romanticism, republicanism, or liberalism.

Nationalism became a deliberate and conscious program for political action in those places where there was no unity and where people were subject to foreign rule against their will:

Italy, Germany, Poland, areas in Austria, Turkey

National unity = success as a people: led to various nationalist movements:

1. Italy- Risorgimento
2. Germany- Volksgeist
3. Eastern Europe- Slavic Revival

The nationalist movements were usually led by intellectuals who took it as their task to educate and instill within their people the idea of nationality and the concept of cultural unity:

1. this cultural unity was based on language, history, world view, culture, and political institutions
2. believed that the creation of a sovereign nation would preserve the culture and ensure the liberty of the people- seen as a sense of justice

Thus: this would require the overthrow of most governments and in this sense, nationalism was inherently revolutionary and radical:

Joseph Mazzini- Young Italy 1831. Believed that revolution and nationalism were “holy” causes.
wrote The Duties of Man- duty to nation, family and God.

Germany- nationalism becomes an obsession:

- a. Grimm’s Fairy Tales- stories to bring out the ancient native “spirit” of Germany
- b. Hegel- philosopher of history- the independent state was necessary for a people to enjoy freedom, order and dignity. The state was the embodiment of reason and liberty.

Concept of the dialectic: Everything contains, within itself, its opposite:

- a. reality is a process of endless change
- b. creation of opposites across time: thesis ---> antithesis ---> synthesis
- c. thus, the very disunity of German, by producing the opposite idea of unity will ultimately lead to the creation of the German state
- d. Leopold von Ranke- Germans had a mission from God to develop a culture and political system different from France. Germany was destined to “create the pure German state corresponding to the genius of the nation.”

NATIONALISM- EASTERN EUROPE

Poland: undo the partitions of the past and reestablish their state

Magyars (Hungarians) : insisted on autonomy within the Austrian Empire

Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, all want to develop their cultural nationalism (p. 449)

Slavic Revival: Russians, Poles, Ukrainians

OTHER “ISMS”

Conservatism- uphold the institutions of absolute monarchy, aristocracy, and church>
leading conservative was Edmund Burke- “gradualism”
concept of “Throne and Altar”

Humanitarianism- elimination of torture