
Restoration, Romanticism, and Revolution, 1815-1848

I. The Search for Stability

B. Forces of the Future

2. Liberalism
 - Believed in natural rights that governments must protect.
 - Supported civil liberties including freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment and guarantees for freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and religion
 - Admired the British system of constitutional monarchy
 - Favored representative government
 - Opposed full democracy
 - Advocated economic individualism and opposed government intervention in the economy
 - Expressed little concern for the plight of urban workers
3. Nationalism
 - Believed that a nation consists of a group of people who share similar traditions, history, and language
 - Argued that every nation should be sovereign and include all members of a nationality
 - Insisted that a person
 - greatest loyalty should be to a nation-state
 - Stirred powerful forces for change

V. Liberal Reform in England

A. The Reform Bill of 1832

1. The House of Commons was less representative of the British people than at any time in its 500-year history.
2. Many boroughs (electoral districts) were sparsely populated, and a few had no people at all. Meanwhile, new industrial cities such as Manchester had no representatives.
3. After a decade of pressure from factory owners and merchants, Parliament passed the Reform Bill of 1832. It created a number of new districts representing heavily urban areas. It also doubled the number of voters to include most middle-class men.

Crash Course

4. It is important to note that under the Reform Bill of 1832 only about one in five adult males could vote. Workers, women, and the poor were all disenfranchised.

B. The Repeal of the Corn Laws

1. The Corn Laws placed a high tariff on imported corn, wheat, and other grains. The tariff benefitted large landowners by providing them with a protected market for their crops.
2. Prominent industrialists formed the Anti-Corn Law League. They advocated a free-trade policy that would lower the price of food and increase the profits of industry.
3. Wealthy landowners stubbornly resisted all reform proposals. However, the Irish potato famine dramatically strengthened support for cheaper imported grains.
4. Parliament finally voted to repeal the Corn Laws in 1846. This marked a victory for Britain's urban population and for the proponents of free trade.

C. The Chartist Movement

1. Britain's disenfranchised workers demanded more sweeping reforms.
2. In 1838, working-class leaders drew up a People's Charter that demanded universal manhood suffrage, a secret ballot, equal electoral districts, and the abolition of property requirements for membership in the House of Commons.
3. Despite widespread public support, Parliament adamantly refused to consider the Chartists' proposals. It is important to note that most of the Chartist reforms would be ultimately adopted.