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The Rise of Napoleon

The chief danger to the Directory came from royalists who thought that the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy was the best hope to restore stability in France

In the spring 1797 elections, constitutional monarchists won the majority of offices

To preserve the republic, the Directory staged a coup d’état

They took control of the legislature, imposed censorship, and exiled their enemies

They also asked Napoleon to protect the government once again

Napoleon had been a fiery Jacobin, but his protection of the Directory during the Thermidorian Reaction protected his career

This time, his protection of the Directory won him a promotion and a command in Italy

Early Military Victories

When Britain and Austria refused to accept France’s annexation of Belgium after it made peace with Prussia and Spain in 1795, France put pressure by sending Napoleon to northern Italy where he defeated the Austrians and took Austria out of the war

France then dominated Italy and Switzerland

Napoleon thought that Britain could be undermined by weakening its control over its empire

By taking control over Egypt from the Ottomans, Napoleon thought France could drive the British fleet out of the Mediterranean and cut Britain off from India

The French overran Egypt, but the plan failed because the British fleet defeated the French fleet and stranded Napoleon

The effect of the French episode in Egypt was that it frightened Russia, Austria, and the Ottomans, and they joined Britain in an alliance against France known as the Second Coalition

By 1799 France was facing invasion

Constitution of Year VIII

Confidence in the Directory faded

One of the directors orchestrated a plot to establish a new government with a strong executive

Military support for this plan was needed and Napoleon saw an opportunity

He returned from Egypt and provided military assistance in dispersing the legislature and cleared the way to establish a new constitution

This gave Napoleon the chance to step in and issue the Constitution of Year VIII

The constitution vested full authority in a magistrate called the First Consul

Napoleon claimed the office of First Consul

He combined military force with popular rhetoric of revolution and nationalism to mobilize France for imperial expansion

The Consulate in France (1799-1804)

Historians suggest that the French Revolution ended with the Consulate

The Revolution had achieved its goals

Hereditary privilege was abolished

Obstacles to the careers of professionals and merchants had been removed

The peasants were satisfied with the land they had acquired and the ending of feudal dues

And the propertied classes looked to Napoleon as their best chance to provide for their defense

Suppressing Foreign Enemies and Domestic Opposition

Napoleon made peace with France’s enemies and came to terms with an abandoned Britain in 1802

At that point Napoleon then set to restore peace internally

He courted his enemies by granting them amnesty

He provided employment for all kinds of people who had been involved in the various events of the Revolutions

Napoleon valued loyalty over ideology and was ruthless and efficient in getting rid of enemies

He created a highly centralized administration and employed secret police

He stamped out a royalist rebellion in the west and brought that territory under the control of the central government

He seized every opportunity to destroy potential threats to his regime

When Napoleon sent soldiers to the German state of Baden to punish a supposed royalist in 1804, European nations once again turned against France

Concordat with Roman Catholic Church

Religion was a potential problem for Napoleon’s government

Some clergy were in favor of counterrevolution and pious Catholics were unhappy with the secular nature of society created by the Revolution

Napoleon understood the power and value of religion and he harnessed it for the benefit of the state

He shocked his anticlerical supporters in 1801 by concluding a concordat with the pope

The agreement acknowledged Catholicism to be the religion of the French and restored the official status of the church

However, the church had to swear loyalty to the state

The state named all the bishops, paid their salaries and the salaries of the priests

In exchange, the church gave up its claims to property lost during the revolution

Privileges were also given to Protestants and Jews

The Napoleonic Code

In 1802, Napoleon was elected as Consul for life

He then revised the constitution, giving himself supreme power and further centralized authority by issuing a new codification of French law

The Civil Code of 1804, the Napoleonic Code, safeguarded property and established social order

It confirmed the abolition of privileges based on birth

State offices were no longer sold, but based on merit

Regulations affecting labor and women were issued

Worker’s organizations were forbidden

Women and children were made subject to their fathers and husbands

However, inheritance laws provided for the equal distribution of an estate’s property

Establishing a Dynasty

In 1804, a failed assassination attempt gave Napoleon an excuse to end the republic and declare himself an emperor

He argued that the establishment of a dynasty would create an heir and make further attempts on his life pointless

Another constitution was created and ratified

Napoleon crowned himself at Notre Dame with the pope in the audience

Napoleon’s Empire

By 1815, Napoleon had conquered most of Europe

His campaigns redrew political boundaries and unleashed powerful forces of nationalism

Napoleon was in charge of a militarized French nation as a result of the revolution

No enemy could match Napoleon’s resources

He could field 100,000 men in a single battle, suffer heavy losses, and live to fight again

His mistakes did him in

Conquering an Empire

The peace that Napoleon made with Britain in 1802 was merely a truce

Napoleon’s intervention in Haiti, the Dutch Republic, Italy, and Germany caused anxiety among the British

British Naval Supremacy

In May 1803 Britain declared war on France and organized a new alliance with Russia and Austria called the Third Coalition

The naval victory over the French in October 1805 at Trafalgar raised the hopes of the British as it gave them command of the sea

Victories in Central Europe

However, the fighting on the continent was different

Napoleon was able to occupy Vienna in October 1805 and defeated a combined Russian and Austrian force at Austerlitz in December

Austria withdrew from the war and gave France control of Italy north of Rome

In July 1806 Napoleon removed most of the western German provinces from the Habsburgs and set up a confederation of the Rhine loyal to France

When Prussia entered the war in 1806, Napoleon promptly defeated them and occupied Berlin

In June of 1807 he advanced eastward and defeated a Russian force in East Prussia

Napoleon had become the master of the continent and threatened Britain’s economy by closing European ports to British trade

Treaty of Tilsit

Russia made peace in 1807

Napoleon disposed on conquered lands to his relatives, thereby setting up new kingdoms

This was an unpopular move and created the potential for serious resistance

The Continental System

The Treaty of Tilsit isolated Britain as the only major enemy of France left standing

Since Napoleon was unable to compete with Britain on the seas, he had to resort to economic warfare

He hoped to cut Britain off from European trade and cripple the British economy and cause domestic unrest that would lead to revolution

His Milan Decree in 1807 forced European countries to take part in the boycott of British goods

Unfortunately, the Continental System backfired

It hurt the European economies more than it did Britain

Britain had access to colonial markets

And Napoleon refused to establish free trade within his empire

This reduced the willingness of merchants to participate with the boycott with Britain

It was in part to prevent smuggling that Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808

His campaign in Spain became the one which led to his ruin

European Response to Empire

The purpose of Napoleon’s conquests were for his glory and the glory of France, but they also spread Enlightenment reforms and the ideals of the French Revolution

Where Napoleon went, he established the Napoleonic Code and reformed traditional societies based on feudalism and unreformed monarchy

With the addition of a demand for representative constitutional government, these reforms contributed to the programs of reform that later generations of European reformers fought for

German Nationalism and Prussian Reform

Napoleon had a dramatic effect on the German states as he inspired the rise of a German national identity for the first time

Initially German nationalists simply celebrated the distinctiveness of a German culture which was thought to have developed from a special history of the German people

Nationalists began to promote nationalism as a way to protect German culture in the face of French influence

It was felt that French occupation threatened the achievements of the German-speaking people

And nationalists argued that the German provinces had to unite in order to protect themselves from French influence

They recognized that France had become powerful by appealing to the patriotism of its people, and saw that as a model for German unification

After the Treaty of Tilsit, only Prussia was in a position to indulge in German patriotic feelings

German nationalists then fled from French occupation to Prussia where they called for unification and reform

Even though the Prussian nobility was opposed to reform, they had no other choice after they were defeated by the French

The reformers sought to fight French influence by imitating it as a democracy with a strong monarchy

The monopoly of aristocratic land ownership as well as serfdom was abolished

The Prussians also realized that France’s army of free patriots led by officers of merit rather than birth was a source of their strength

The Prussians began to copy this model for military organization and leadership

The Wars of Liberation

Spain

Resentment of French occupation in Spain was strong

The French army had occupied Spain and Napoleon replaced the Spanish crown with his brother Joseph

Along with attacks on the church, the Spanish were motivated to rebel against French occupation

Now Napoleon faced a guerilla war in Spain

The British sent an army to assist the Spanish guerillas fighting against the French

This began a long campaign that drained French soldiers from other European fronts and contributed to Napoleon’s defeat

Austria

France’s troubles in Spain prompted Austria to renew its war with France

However, the Austrians were defeated by Napoleon again

Nevertheless, Napoleon gained more territory from the Austrians, and he also claimed the 18-year-old daughter of the Austrian emperor, Marie Louise, for his new wife in order to start a dynasty

His first wife Josephine was 46 and had borne him no children

The Invasion of Russia

The alliance forced upon the Russians at Tilsit was troubling to the Russian nobility

They disliked the continental system, and the tsar had a series of grievances against Napoleon

Russia received no help from France against the Ottomans

Napoleon also created a French satellite state in Poland

He violated the Treaty of Tilsit by annexing Holland

He placed a French supporter on the throne in Sweden

And His marriage to Marie Louise suggested that Napoleon was too ambitious

In late 1810, Russia withdrew from the Continental System and Napoleon vowed to punish Russia

He gathered 600,000 men to crush Russia

The Russians employed a scorched earth policy and retreated to draw the French into the expanse of Russia

Napoleon refused to abandon the attack and gambled that the Russian would give him a battle to protect Moscow

Russia did confront the French outside of Moscow, but their victory there was costly and gained nothing of great importance

The Russians set fire to Moscow and left Napoleon to face their greatest ally, the winter

Napoleon was forced to retreat as the tsar refused to negotiate a settlement

As the situation in France began to be unstable due to news of plots against Napoleon, he left his retreating army to return to Paris to defend his power

Only 100,000 of 600,000 men survived the Russian winter

European Coalition

Napoleon weathered the crisis and put down the plots at home and raised another 350,000 soldiers under his command

Although the Austrians, Russians, and Prussians wanted to end the war, Napoleon refused since he could not politically afford to show weakness

In 1813 a new coalition against Napoleon formed consisting of Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria

Napoleon’s new army was poorly trained and equipped

His generals and Napoleon himself were tired and sick

Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Leipzig in March 1814 and Paris was occupied

Napoleon abdicated and went into exile on the island of Elba off the coast of Italy

The Congress of Vienna and the European Settlement

Once Napoleon was defeated, the cooperation of the coalition collapsed

The British sought to restore the crown in France and restore its borders to 1792 lines

Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia committed themselves to a Quadruple Alliance for 20 years to keep the peace

Other problems were to be ironed out at a conference in Vienna

Territorial Adjustments

The Congress of Vienna met in 1814-1815

They agreed that no single state should dominate Europe

And the restoration of the Bourbon crown was meant to keep France calm

Border states were also created to block future French expansion

The congress also endorsed rule by monarchs and rejected French Revolutionary republican and democratic ideologies

The most difficult issue was the reorganization of eastern Europe

Russia wanted all of Poland, but Austria refused in order to block both Russia and Prussia

When the French foreign minister Talleyrand suggested a secret treaty between France, Britain, and Austria against Russia, it restored France’s standing as a player on the European international stage

The Hundred Days and the Quadruple Alliance

News that the Congress of Vienna was quarreling encouraged Napoleon to escape from Elba and return to France in March 1815

The French army had remained loyal to him, and he was quickly restored to power when he returned

Although he promised a liberal constitution and a peaceful foreign policy, the allies were not convinced

They declared Napoleon an outlaw and send armies to defeat him

On June 18, 1815, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo in Belgium

Napoleon again abdicated b=and was sent into exile on St Helena Island off the coast of Africa where he died in 1821

The Hundred Days, as Napoleon’s return is called, frightened the allies to impose greater punishments on France

Territorial losses

A war indemnity

An army of occupation

The Congress of Vienna negotiated a settlement that allowed Europe to avoid a general war until WWI

The leaders of Europe learned from the experience that treaties should not be to claim victory but to secure peace

Their goal was not to punish France, but to guarantee stability

This necessitated the creation of a balance of power and a process of making adjustments as situations changed

Politicians gave up on mercantilism and began to operate on the basis of mutual economic cooperation

The Romantic Movement

The romantic movement that began in Europe during the French Revolution and Napoleon was a reaction to the Enlightenment

Romantic writers accused the Enlightenment of holding everything to a narrow scientific or rational standard

Romantic thinkers refused to conceive human nature as wholly rational

They insisted on the importance of human feelings and imagination

The Romantic movement flourished in Britain, France, and Germany

Unlike the philosophes, the romantics valued the art and literature of the Middle Ages and urged a revival of medieval Christianity

They were deeply interested in folklore, folk songs, and fairy tales, and were fascinated by dreams, hallucinations, and all phenomena that suggested a world beyond the reach of empirical observation and reason

Romantic Questioning of the Supremacy of Reason

Two Enlightenment writers, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant also helped lay down the foundations of romanticism by casting doubt on the philosophes’ rationalistic assumptions

Rousseau and Education

Romantic writers were attracted to Rousseau’s claim that society and wealth had corrupted human nature

Rousseau held that for humans to become happy, they had to return to a natural state and to develop moral values essential for a social life

In his novel Émile, Rousseau argued that children be allowed to grow freely and individually and learn about the world through trial and error

Parents should provide protection but allow nature to take its course

He claimed that this would result in a society dictated by the needs of nature without being distorted by humans

From this the romantics concluded that the uniqueness of each individual should be valued and that the individual, nature, and society are organically interrelated

Kant and Reason

In his works, Kant rejected the opinion of Locke and others that knowledge was rooted in observation alone

He claimed the human mind didn’t simply reflect the world around it like a mirror

Instead, he claimed that the human mind actively imposed itself on the world of sensory experience using tool the mind generated itself

He held that the human mind perceives the world as it does because of its own techniques of perception

Perception makes reality

Kant differentiated between “pure reason” which dealt with the world of sensory experience and “practical reason” which intuited a pure intellectual existence of ethics and aesthetics outside of physical observation

Kant held that all human beings possessed an innate sense of moral duty and that the existence of this moral duty of the conscience was proof that humans are endowed by nature with personal freedom

Following Kant, the romantics believed that human understanding was a creative act, not just observation of nature

Romantics assumed that poets and artists especially possessed this creative ability to understand nature

Romantic Literature

In England and France, the term romantic initially in the 17th century referred to literature that was judged to be unreal, sentimental, or fanciful

Later in England and Germany, the term came to be applied to all literature that failed to observe classical forms and rules and gave free play to the imagination

Most folk tales and art of the medieval period fell into this category

English Romantic Writers

The English romantics disagreed with Locke that the mind was a passive receptor of data from nature

They saw poetry as proof of the mind’s ability to create truth

As conceived, poetry then could not be dismissed as idle play

Instead, poetry was considered the highest act of humanity’s ability to transcend nature

Blake

William Blake considered the poet to be a seer and poetry to be a translation of transcendent visions of nature

Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge contributed to the romantic movement with his Gothic poetry of the supernatural

Wordsworth

William Wordsworth published a manifesto calling for a new kind of poetry that rejected the rules of the 18th century standards

Wordsworth especially idealized childhood as being closer to the uncorrupt celestial state of eternal creativity

Lord Byron

Byron had little sympathy for theories about imagination and he rejected tradition and advocated for personal liberty with ribald humor focusing on the cruelty and beauty of nature

Byron was an outlier, but he was regarded as a “new person” of the age of the French revolution

German Romantic Writers

The German romantics wrote highly sentimental poems and novels

They were influenced by medieval romances, and they intended characters to be symbols, and they avoided naturalistic descriptions

Schlegel

Friedrich Schlegel’s work criticized social issues, and wrote a novel that promoted women’s equality

Goethe

Johann Wolfgang Goethe towers over all German writers

He was a romantic and a critic of the excesses of romanticism

His first work insisted on the importance of feelings, and it called for people to transcend the conventions of polite society

As Goethe aged, he explored themes and relationships between morality and sensuality

His most famous work Faust, was a criticism of the shallowness of romantic thought and a description of the spiritual problems Europeans faced as their commitment to the values of Christianity faded

Religion in the Romantic Period

Methodism

The romantics saw religion as an expression of deep human emotion

Methodism was a movement began by the Anglican priest John Wesley, and presented religion, not as a set of concepts, but as a method for living

Wesley had come to America in 1735 as a missionary and came into contact with some Moravians, a German sect of pietists

He came to the conclusion that their faith based on an unquestioning trust in God was much stronger than his

In 1739, he had a conversion experience that assured him of his salvation and sent him forth to preach a message of simple trust

By the late 18th century, Wesley had thousands of followers in Britain and America responding to his call for repentance and good works

Methodism stressed the duty to strive for Christian moral perfection in this life. It accepted enthusiastic emotional experience as fundamental to Christian conversion and worship

New Directions in Continental Religion

Similar religious movements appeared on the continent

After the Thermidorian Reaction there was a strong Catholic revival in France

French religious romanticists argued that the essence of religion was passion, the emotion that doctrines and sacraments inspired in the hearts of Christians

A similar point overview was expressed by Protestants

A German theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher, defined religion as a feeling of absolute dependence on an infinite reality

Romantic Views of Nationalism and History

Romanticism glorified individualism

German idealism provided romanticism’s philosophic underpinning by arguing that the world was a projection of the ego of the individual

Herder and Culture

Johann Gottfried Herder resented the preponderance of French culture in Germany

He thus led Germans on a search for their identity as a folk, or a people (ethnicity)

Herder urged the collection of distinctive German songs and sayings

Like Herder, Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm believed that language and culture were unique expressions of a people and assembled their famous collection of fairy tales

Herder opposed the Enlightenment’s advocacy of universal, rational institutions such as the Napoleonic Code

He insisted on the importance of uniqueness of a people’s history and culture

Hegel and History

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel exerted the most powerful romantic influence on the writing of history

He claimed that a historical period is shaped by the ideas that the people who lived through it hold true

History, therefore, evolves like ideas evolve, through a process of contradiction, conflict, and resolution

The ideas that hold sway over a generation constitute a “thesis”

The thesis is eventually challenged by an “antithesis”

Ultimately , a “synthesis” emerges, and then becomes a new thesis, thereby starting the cycle over again

Because each stage of the process is necessary to the one that follows, all periods of history are of almost equal value and all cultures are important because each contributes to the clash of ideas by which humankind evolves

Romanticism contributed to the emergence of nationalism, one of the strongest forces of the 19th and 20th centuries

The Enlightenment generally promoted a cosmopolitan outlook, while romanticism stressed individualism and the worth of each separate peoples

A shared language, history, homeland, and customs were posited as defining characteristics of a people and romantics assumed that each people, ethnicity, or nation ought to be an independent political entity

The French, under their revolutionary government, demonstrated the power of nationhood and inspired other peoples to assert themselves

By toppling the Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon necessitated the political reorganization of Europe