UNIT 4

LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM

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UNIT 4

Contenido

1. THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

After Napoleon's defeat and exile to the island of Saint Helena, the victorious countries met at the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). Prussia, Russia and Austria were absolutist; only Britain had a constitutional monarchy. Three objectives were proposed at the meeting:

To restore absolutism under a new name: legitimism. The kings were the only ones with legitimacy to govern. The old dynasties were restored in several European countries. In France, the Bourbon monarchy was reinstated under Louis XVIII.

To create an alliance, called the Holy Alliance, between the absolutist monarchs to protect them from any attempted revolutions. Great Britain did not join this alliance. The alliance had to be ratified at several congresses, during which the absolutist powers would decide whether or not to intervene in places where liberal changes were taking place. Six of these congresses were held. At the sixth, in Verona in 1822, the decision was made to invade Spain to restore absolutism under Fernando VII.

To restore the boundaries on the map of Europe, which had changed dramatically during the Napoleonic era. This would have important consequences for European politics in the 19th century.

2. THE LIBERAL REVOLUTIONS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

In the period after the Congress of Vienna, there were three waves of antiabsolutist revolutionary movements in Europe. Some of these had a strong nationalist component. These were the liberal revolutions.

In 1820, in parts of Mediterranean Europe such as Spain, Portugal, Naples and Piedmont, there were revolutions inspired by the Spanish Constitution written in Cádiz in 1812. In 1822, a democratic assembly declared Greece's independence from the absolutist power of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1830, groups of intellectuals, students and workers in Paris revolted. The French Revolution of 1830 was in protest against the absolutist regime under Charles X, successor of Louis XVIII. After the king abdicated, a parliamentary monarchy was established under Louis Philippe of Orleans, press censorship was banned and suffrage was extended. The Belgians declared independence from the Kingdom of the Netherlands and created a liberal constitution. There was also an uprising in Poland, but this was harshly suppressed by the Russian army.

In 1848, another revolution in France ended the reign of Louis Philippe of Orleans, and the radical liberals created the Second Republic. This later evolved into the moderate regime under Napoleon III. The revolution spread to cities in Austria, Germany and Italy. These movements were particularly important because they included democratic and social demands. As well as universal suffrage, participants demanded the right to

strike and a 10- hour working day. Although these aims were not achieved, they marked the path that liberalism would follow in subsequent years.

3. REVOLUTIONARY MEETINGS

Europe's liberal revolutions, especially the ones in 1830 and 1848, were closely linked to industrial growth in cities. Liberals met in universities and urban settings such as clubs and coffee houses to conspire and hold meetings. There were constant raids by absolutist police, so the liberals often formed lodges or secret societies; in reality, these were clandestine political parties.

3.1. Nationalism

Before the 19th century, the word nation was used to refer to a group of inhabitants who shared a common language, ethnicity, customs or mentality. Nationalism emerged during the 19th century. Nationalists demanded the creation of new nations and their right to possess a territory or system of self government, in other words, to become a state.

3.2. Causes of nationalism

Although nationalism was caused by many different factors, the following were the most important:

Both Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna had organised the map of Europe based on the interests of monarchs and emperors, without taking the inhabitants' views into account. As a result, many people felt that their territories were being occupied by others, and this led to nationalism. Because the occupying power was usually an absolutist regime, many people felt that they were liberals and nationalists at the same time.

The Romantic culture of the 19th century highlighted the sense of belonging to a people as an important human sentiment. People became more interested in myths and legends about their origins. Nationalism became a very emotional feeling, where belonging to a nation was just as important as love for another person or your family.

The economy and industrialisation of the 19th century meant that more unified countries enjoyed greater economic growth. Nationalism was therefore no longer a revolutionary movement, but a conservative one. In these countries, the rich social classes became nationalists: national unity was necessary in order to coordinate a common economic policy, to take control of resources in neighbouring territories and to profit from exploiting colonies.

4. LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM

Not all liberals were nationalists. Many of them, such as the Jacobins during the French Revolution, thought that nationalism was a narrow-minded view and a return to the Old Regime because it extended borders, was opposed to equality of citizens before the law, and led to privileges of some territories over others.

There were different types of nationalism that led to the formation of new states:

Unifying nationalism consisted of demanding a new state for peoples with a common past and culture, even if their political situations were different: some were independent while others were part of a kingdom or empire considered foreign. In Europe, this was the case of Italy and Germany.

Dividing nationalism consisted of demanding independence for territories that considered themselves nations, but were forced to be part of a higher political unit. This was the case of the Slavs in the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires.

5. THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

Germany did not exist until the mid-19th century. In the east, a powerful kingdom, Prussia, had a well-established political structure and strong military. To the south, there was a kingdom of less political importance: Bavaria. Between the two, there were many small independent territories governed by princes. They had rich economies and cultures. There were also other German territories ruled by the King of Denmark or the neighbouring Austrian Empire.

The 1848 Revolution, with its democratic and social demands and important impact on German cities, frightened the middle class. Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck, under the reign of William I, therefore led the unification in an authoritarian, not liberal, manner. He declared war on Denmark in 1864 to gain control of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein.

Bismarck refused to reach any agreements with the Austrian Empire, despite the fact it was a Germanic country, and demanded that it cede some territories. Austria refused and was defeated at the **Battle of Sadowa** (1866). Finally, Bismarck planned the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, two French regions where part of the population spoke German. The French were defeated at the Battle of Sedan and the Prussians occupied Paris, declaring the Second German Empire (Second Reich) in 1871.

French nationalists never accepted the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to their German neighbours. This episode would be one of the causes of the subsequent conflict between the two countries in the two world wars.

5.1. OTTO VON BISMARCK (1815-1898)

German chancellor Otto von Bismarck's strong personality and long period in office had an important influence on European politics in the second half of the 19th century. Because of him, unified Germany was the centre of many imperialist agreements and diplomatic alliances of lasting historical significance.

6. THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY

In the mid-19th century, the Italians felt part of a cultural and historical unit, but they were divided into many territories with different political systems:

To the north-west, there was an independent kingdom, Piedmont-Sardinia, created by the Congress of Vienna. Its capital was Turin.

The rest of the north was occupied by Austria. It was the richest region and included Milan and Venice.

Naples and Sicily in the south formed a monarchy governed by the Bourbon dynasty.

In the centre, Pope Pius IX ruled over the Papal States and their capital, Rome.

Cavour, Prime Minister of Piedmont, allied with the French and defeated the Austrians at the Battles of Magenta and Solferino in 1859. The northern part of Italy was therefore added to Piedmont. Shortly afterwards, Naples and Sicily were occupied by nationalist revolutionary Garibaldi and also annexed to Piedmont. The Pope had to renounce the Papal States and was imprisoned in Vatican City. The end result was a unified country, Italy, with a moderate political regime and constitutional monarchy. The capital was Rome and Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy, King of Piedmont, was crowned king (1870).

6.1. Leaders of The Italian Unification Movement

Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) was the founder of a newspaper and the Young Italy movement. He wanted a unified Italy with a democratic republican system and extensive social reform. However, Cavour's intervention led to a more moderate unification process.

Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) was a revolutionary who conquered the south with the help of his volunteers, the redshirts. He then handed the territory over to the King of Piedmont-Sardinia.

7. ART AND CULTURE: ROMANTICISM

Romanticism was a reaction to the rationalist culture of the Enlightenment. While Enlightenment thinkers and artists criticised the traditional society and believed in the power of reason, Romanticism focused more on emotional aspects. Romantic art and culture focused on aspects beyond day-to-day life and people's usual environments: the exoticism of distant countries (especially in the Orient), fantasy, melancholy, history (especially medieval history) and tragic or heroic situations. Depictions of nature also reflected that interest in the extraordinary: wild and impressive landscapes, impenetrable forests, enormous angry waves, etc.

7.1. Architecture

In architecture, Romantic Historicism, which tried to recreate the past through an artistic medium, focused on medieval styles, particularly the Gothic style. In France, architect Viollet-le-Duc restored medieval castles and cathedrals. In Great Britain, the Neo-Gothic style became very popular, and included such important buildings as the Houses of Parliament in London.

7.2. Painting

French painters such as Delacroix and Géricault were particularly important. Delacroix's famous painting Liberty Leading the People combined the Romantic taste for the heroic with the political themes of nationalism and the liberal revolution of 1830.

There were also important Romantic painters in Germany and Great Britain, including Caspar Friedrich, who painted impressive landscapes with small human figures, and English landscape artists Constable and Turner.

7.3. Sculpture

Romantic sculpture was still influenced by classicism, so its characteristics are slightly different from those of Romantic painting.