

1848 was a critical year for the conservative interests trying to maintain the ways of the *Ancien Regime*. Discuss three of the "revolutions" of 1848 and evaluate their effectiveness in challenging the old order.

Your essay should be approximately 2 pages in order to fully discuss your three examples. Be certain to back your argument with specific supporting details and include a works cited page for any sources you use outside of this module and your textbook. Submit your completed essay when finished.

1848 was a time of great upheaval in Europe in which the new liberal Europeans strove to break the ties of their countries with the old ways that had prevailed. The Ancien Regime of France had practically rebooted itself when the Bourbon monarchy was reinstated following Napoleon I's defeat at Waterloo and the end of his Hundred Days reign. In Austria, serfdom, corruption, and inefficiency, combined with the differences between members of the population, helped to inspire Austrian residents to follow the example of dissatisfied Frenchmen who revolted in 1848 against the monarchy in a bid to establish another Republic. Italy was similarly inspired by France and were also inspired by Austrian chaos to launch into an attempt to permanently remove Austrian and foreign presence from Italy; the goal was to produce a more independent Italy in which states could cooperate in a united federation. These revolutions all shared these goals of moving to a more liberal, free, and hopefully more prosperous and pleasant society, and all failed spectacularly. Each of these revolutions often experienced disunity, which crippled their ability to complete the duties they had tasked themselves with. They further witnessed the breaking of promises of the revolution as those in the new governments realized the necessary practicality of such decisions. There were enduring effects, but these revolutions often saw limited effectiveness in challenging the old ways, and it would take at the least several decades more for a true liberal spirit antithetical to the old ways to manifest itself in a cohesive manner.

In France, the story since the French Revolution was one of upheaval and broken promises. This proves no different in the case of the 1848 revolution that established the French Second Republic. At the very beginning, the revolutionary forces that wished to overthrow the monarchy and oppose the ways of the Ancien regime were unified despite their different interests. Much the same as the French revolution, this coalition fell apart upon victory being achieved. The atmosphere of agreeableness and compromise necessary for a unified, effective new government to be established was not extant. This would prove disastrous for revolutionary interests. After only three short years, the relative of Napoleon Bonaparte, Louis Napoleon, whom they had placed in a similar position of power as revolutionaries had done with the first, followed in his grand uncle's footsteps and moved the Republic to an Empire. This was directly contradictory to the ideals of revolution and opposition to the Ancien regime. It is irrelevant what success the Republic saw, which was arguably very little, as the country turned once again to monarchy and centralized power. The empire phase, however, was not a wholly conservative regime dedicated to the ideas of the Ancien regime. It existed as a much different beast, adopting what it saw as beneficial as had Napoleon I empire. Napoleon III was not the man Napoleon I was,, so this is a reasonable occurrence. Napoleon III did not relish administrative duties; this could perhaps be compared to the laziness and decadence of the Ancien rulers, but

it can also be contrasted in that this would mean the Second Empire's government would operate in a manner reliant upon a bureaucracy not consisting entirely of members of the nobility. Certain policies of the Second French Empire very much moved France away from the old ways, such as the implementation of a modernized standing army that emphasized modern firing drills and artillery use. Policies also delegated imperial power to subdivisions of the Empire. However, the very fact that France once again returned to monarchy in so short a time after a supposedly revolutionary conflict is indicative of success on the part of the old ways in maintaining themselves. Centralized power around a hereditary monarch was one of these ideals; after all, was not France replacing the Bourbons with the Bonapartes at this point? France saw limited success from the 1848 revolution in abolishing the old ways, failing in key areas.

The Austrian Revolution saw more long-lasting success in terms of enduring effects, among which was the abolition of serfdom. Despite the failure of the revolution to move the state away from existence as the Austrian Empire, certain revolutionary ideals did take hold over what had been in place as part of the old regime. Much like the French Revolution of 1848, the Austrian Revolution of 1848 did not produce an effective government that was capable of withstanding the pressures that came with governing a vast, old, and powerful Empire as was Austria. In the new elections that were held, the voters were not enthralled by the radicals who had advocated these measures of revolution and new government, and as such elected conservatives that had been a part of the Austrian bureaucracy much the same in the Empire before the Revolution. This caused disunity akin to the French 1848 Revolution that would severely inhibit the ability of the new government to reach consensus on new policies, hobbling their administrative efforts. Not only was the government divided on political lines, but also ethnic lines. This division wasn't only inhibitive of government but contradictory to the revolution's ideas of freedom as different groups strove to oppress other factions for political purposes, such as the suppression of Czechs in order to maintain Germanic power. Outside of cultural shifts that affected policy, as was the case with serfdom, the Austrian revolution was a spectacular failure that actually caused the government under Franz Joseph, the new Austrian Emperor, to make the state more autocratic and suppress different ethnic and political groups in the Empire.

The goal of the Italian 1848 Revolution was relatively straightforward: kick the foreigners out of Italy. It seemed a simple enough task with a simple enough process towards victory. Members of the revolution such as Piedmont-Sardinia granted liberal constitutions as part of the revolutionary movement towards a unified, free, and liberal Italy. The Italian Revolution consisted of many moderates, outnumbering the radicals, but this did not imply unity, for they were divided among many movements. The future of Italy was also envisaged to be a federation of sorts among the many Italian states. At the outset, Piedmont-Sardinia arguably broke this tenet of the Revolution by annexing territory that they gained in their war with Austria; after all, wasn't it the right of those states that were annexed to remain free and somewhat independent within the future federation? The Italian Revolution, then, was not succeeding at all from the start, save for the expulsion of Austrians, who were dealing with their own issues. However, the efforts of the Italian revolutionaries incited foreign response that in turn brought greater foreign influence to the country for a time. France was responsible for the return of the Papal States to the Pope; they were now involved in Italy. Austria, once it had righted itself, retaliated in force

and crushed the Italian armies; they remained involved in Italy. The Italian Revolution did inspire the unification of Italy to occur by the end of the 19th century, but in all actuality, it set this unification and independence back by inciting the involvement of foreign powers and the breakdown of unified liberal movements. Only Piedmont-Sardinia escaped the conflict unscathed in its ideals. All other states in Italy suffered regressions to more conservative thinking.

The French, Austrian, and Italian revolutions of 1848 did have some successes, it is true. The French assembled a more modern army, moved towards greater industrialization around the mid-19th century, and saw a delegation of certain powers of government as part of the Second French Empire's policies of colonial ambition and bureaucracy. The Austrians saw the end of serfdom, and the Italians saw nationalism continue to rise, with liberal policies remaining in place in Piedmont-Sardinia. However, these revolutions were all unable to destroy the old ways in full. The botched attempts at revolution did not possess unity or efficiency in new government, thus disabling true reform from occurring. This in turn caused many new government members to betray the revolutionaries by sticking to the old ways in a practical manner, as they were unable to move the government towards reform. The Second French Empire reintroduced a hereditary monarchy, something directly contradictory to any ideals of liberal revolution, and the Austrian Empire moved towards even greater autocracy. The Italians' efforts backfired and they saw greater foreign involvement and division that would not be resolved until the Risorgimento. These revolutions were very limited in any effective challenging of the old ways.

Citations:

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