I. **Purpose and Overview of Lecture**

A. **Background and overview of the revolutions of 1848**
   1. Special attention this time to France—some sense of how an additional chapter was added to the “sacred narrative” of revolution
   2. Other areas, especially Germany and Italy, will be looked at when considering the issue of national unification

B. **Examination of how and why 1848 represents a watershed, a fundamental change in Europe**
   1. We see a move from romanticism to realism, from liberal struggle to liberal victory and hegemony (with important qualifications)
      a) “high tide of liberalism” in 1850s and 1860s, especially in England

II. **Europe from 1815 through 1830s**

A. >From 1815 to 1848 there is a protracted struggle between liberals and conservatives, in all countries, although taking on peculiar forms in each

B. **Central to the liberal program is national unification and independence, where it did not exist (as in Germany and Italy)**

C. It is much mixed into romanticism and revolution
   1. One of the more famous examples: Greece, which gained independence from the Turkish Empire in 1830
      a) Much of Europe is drawn to this struggle
      b) And independence was accomplished more by actions of Great Britain, France, and Russia than by the Greeks themselves
      c) The Greeks are declared independent in 1830 and a German prince installed as king in 1832

D. At a kind of opposite end to the spectrum was the struggle of liberalism in England
   1. National unity in this island kingdom had of course been a reality for some time
   2. Other elements of the liberal program were also already
in place by the early 19th c.

a) No internal tariffs, representative institutions, national legal system, unified weights and measures, etc.

3. Yet there were areas that left the more consistent liberals unsatisfied

a) Parliament represented only a small part of the population
b) Newer industrial areas, such as Manchester, were under-represented—ever more so as they grew so rapidly
c) Older areas were over-represented (a notorious one was actually under water)

4. The French Revolution had thrown the English aristocracy into a panic, making it opposed to any notions of reform

a) It was especially repressive in years immediately following the Congress of Vienna

5. This is the time that the “infamous” Corn Laws were passed (1815), quite simply to protect the land-owning class

a) It was blatant move by those with a near political monopoly to protect their narrow interests

6. Much of the political energy of the liberals in England was directed to repeal of the Corn Laws, and concomitantly, to a celebration of free trade

E. Reform Bill of 1832

1. Achieved after a long struggle, and finally with the threat of mass violence

2. It did not, however, give the vote to the masses—not by any means

a) But it did rationalize the voting procedures, gave greater weight to the wealthy bourgeoisie in certain areas

F. Other liberal measures in England

1. New Poor Law (1834)

a) This measure was “bourgeois” and “rationalizing,” not something that the poor themselves really
supported

b) Some felt deeply betrayed by the combination of 1832 and 1834 (they had expected more after 1832)

2. Repeal of the Corn Law (1846)

a) Here there was more unanimity among middle and lower classes that repealing this law would help the entire nation, lower food prices

G. These and other measures may be seen as a “fine tuning” of British liberalism

1. They set the stage for the “classic age of liberalism” in England in the 1850s and 1860s

2. England reaches a pinnacle of success, in terms of its growing national wealth, power, and prestige

3. And the British come to take pride in doing it all without revolution, through legal channels

H. Continental liberalism

1. Here, the full liberal program was farther from realization

2. The most developed areas were France, Rhineland, Holland, Northern Italy

3. The least developed areas were in eastern Europe, where indeed liberalism had scarcely penetrated at all

a) Here, the ruling orders mostly lacked elements like the Whigs in England

b) That is, they do not have a reforming aristocracy that was willing to ally with the liberal bourgeoisie

c) But, similarly, the bourgeoisie was weaker—in numbers, wealth, even in self-confidence

I. France in 1820s

1. The Charter “granted” by Louis XVIII was basically a liberal document

a) It granted free trade within France, a centralized state, unified weights and measures

b) It was less “liberal” in regard to intellectual freedom, freedom of press, political activity

c) Though its Chamber of Deputies was not democratic, it was “liberal” in the sense of the day

d) ca. 100,000 out of total population of 30 million had
the right to vote

e) But these were a mixed lot, not only large
landowners or members of the old aristocracy

f) Basic “liberal” idea: elite of money and property
were the “notables” (cf. to “active citizens” in 1791)

g) This situation was in fact one that reactionaries
around the king’s brother were yearned to change

h) The opportunity seemed to come with Louis’s death
in 1824 and the assumption of the throne by his
reactionary brother. Charles X, who actively began
to try to turn the clock back

J. Culmination: July Ordinances in 1830

1. These measures, which attempted to turn the clock back
in a reactionary way, were immediately followed by the
July Revolution

2. Charles X was easily removed from the throne

3. The Orleanist dynasty was turned to, and Louis Philippe

a) His reign, often called the July Monarchy,
essentially went back to what had prevailed under
Louis XVIII

b) Louis Philippe was called the “bourgeois monarch”

c) Still, there was much disappointment in many
circles over what the July Revolution had finally
accomplished

d) There was a yearning on the left, among workers
and republicans (again this is a radical term at the
time): for a “full revolution” that would extend to the
people, not just the wealthy bourgeoisie

III. The Revolution of 1848 in France

A. Background of 1840s—an extremely turbulent time in Europe
as a whole

1. Often known as the “hungry forties” -- with the most
horrendous being the Potato Famine in Ireland

2. This turbulence meshed with, or helped to feed, the
extraordinary ideological ferment of the time

3. Paris in particular was a hot-bed of various kinds of
revolutionaries
4. Here, the “mystique of revolution” reached its pinnacle
5. Nearly all prominent revolutionaries met one another at some time in the cafes of Paris (e.g., Marx, Engels, Proudhon, Blanc, Blanqui)

B. This decade was not only a time of socialist agitation and theorizing
   1. Especially in central Europe there was much revolutionary nationalism
   2. Liberalism tended to break down into factions:
      a) The “radicals”—those who look to extending the electorate, to direct rule by the people, tend to develop a mystique of the people, the cleansing qualities of revolution, etc.
      b) Many of these radical liberals really began to incorporate various elements of socialism into their programs
      c) Others, especially where repressive regimes were still in power, were more concerned with more basic constitutional issues, civil liberties, etc.
   3. Everywhere there was a strongly intellectual tone, however
      a) Widespread participation by the highly educated—professors, lawyers, journalists, etc.
      b) This was so much the case that one historian has dubbed the revolutions of 1848, the “revolutions of the intellectuals”

C. Material conditions
   1. Intellectuals are not, however, enough to make revolution
   2. As noted, these were the turbulent, hungry forties
   3. Most of the capitals of Europe had seen a remarkable population increase in the 1830s and 1840s
      a) 1846 and 1847 were particularly bad years, in terms of crop failures and industrial layoffs
   4. Thus, by early 1848 there were many preconditions for revolution in France, especially
      a) However, many in the ruling classes refused to believe there was much danger
      b) Many thought that they had achieved a fine system
of government (thus, the idea of 1848 as a “revolution without a cause”)

c) Perhaps the most famous of these was Prime Minister to Louis Philippe, François Guizot
d) His notorious comment, made to those who petitioned for an extension of the franchise: Enrichissez-vous! (“get rich!”)—as if wanting to get rich and working hard to do so was all there was to it, outraging the left

D. Conditions for revolution were perhaps most propitious in Paris
   1. Food prices were extremely high
   2. Wide unemployment (perhaps one-eighth of Paris on relief)
   3. Perhaps even more important: widespread corruption, wealth of ruling orders was ostentatious

E. Calls for reform were channeled into a serious of “banquets”, since political gatherings as such were prohibited
   1. Here, the voice of politically moderate was heard
      a) Calls were made for widening of the electorate, the right to assemble, the dismissal of Guizot
   2. But, as noted, Guizot and the king refused to pay any attention

F. Mounting popular outrage: Soon enough, however, the common people began to get into the act
   1. Ragged and starving men began to march in the streets, at first with sticks and drums, but then with guns

G. Widespread agitation of secret revolutionary societies was obvious

H. There was much expectation in the air, in spite of Guizot’s reassurances (“it is a tempest in a teapot”)

I. Larger and larger crowds began milling in the streets

J. Students in the Latin Quarter begin to collect arms, cast musket balls
   1. Revolutionary songs were to be heard everywhere, long into the night

K. A series of incidents in late February finally made the king realize just how dangerous the situation was
   1. He had lost support in the National Guard and in at least
parts of the army
2. But his efforts to appease the revolutionaries were too little and too late

L. The most famous of the episodes:
1. Feb. 23, huge crowd moved through the city, singing the Marseillaise, with a red flag at their head, attracting people as they went
2. By late evening they gathered in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. They were met by troops loyal to the king, who tried to prevent the crowd from passing
   a) But those behind kept pushing
4. An order to fix bayonets was made
5. Just then, a shot rang out—to this day it is not clear where from
6. The troops panicked and began to shoot wildly into the crowd
7. The crowd drew back, leaving the street littered with wounded, dead, and dying

M. This was the necessary spark to set Paris on fire
1. A huge wagon was found and the dead stacked on it
2. A man on top held a torch so that everyone could see the dead
   a) Prominent on top of the pile of dead was the body of a young woman
   b) A workingman kept embracing the corpse and screaming “vengeance! vengeance!”
3. The wagon rolled through Paris until dawn
4. Paris was again in revolution

IV. Development of the revolution

A. A seven-man Provisional Government took over this new, second republic
B. Interesting symbolism in its leader: the romantic poet Lamartine
C. Here, as elsewhere in Europe, this first stage of the revolution developed with wide popular support and a general aura of benevolence and romantic idealism
1. And in France major reforms were introduced: freeing of slaves, end of death penalty, universal manhood suffrage, etc.

2. But this initial stage soon gave way, as the revolutionaries began to realize the important differences that separated them

3. Here was a kind of repetition of 1789-92

D. The basic division:

1. Those who wanted simply a more thorough and consistent application of liberal ideals (with England as the model)—key concerns: free trade, sanctity of property, representative institutions, order, progress
   a) This group generally found support among the middle classes and the peasantry

2. Those who had become disillusioned with liberal principle, who were turning to radical democracy and socialism
   a) They spoke for the poorest, the unemployed

E. Symbolic confrontation in one of first meetings of Provisional Government, Feb. 25

1. In midst of deliberations, there was a heavy knocking at the door

2. They opened to find a huge worker, at the head of a delegation from the crowd outside
   a) All had guns in their hands
   b) Demands: Provisional Government proclaim the “right to work” (a popular socialist slogan)

F. Response to this pressure from below: the establishment of National Workshops (cf. Blanc’s “social workshops”) and Luxembourg Commission to study and make recommendations

1. However, this supposedly “socialist” concession proved to be a farce
   a) It was given only to calm the masses and indeed to discredit socialist ideas, since the National Workshops did not succeed

2. Moreover, it became clear that the middle-class and peasant majority did not support such measures

G. The rest of the spring of 1848 was a story of the gradual
disillusionment of the earlier high hopes

H. Final confrontation: June Days, 1848
1. From 23-26 Paris was the scene of a terrible and bloody struggle
2. The lower classes were massacred by the thousands, others arrested, sent to Algeria, yet others escaped into exile

I. The story was similar in the other areas of Europe where there were revolutions
1. Although developments there were often more complex, mostly because of the mix of nationalistic themes

V. Conclusion

A. The revolution that began as a romantic revolution of intellectuals and idealists ended in bloody class conflict
B. Thereafter, class relations in Europe would be more tense, with fewer illusions
1. There would be a much clearer demarcation between liberals and socialists, lower class and middle class
2. Socialists would turn away from their earlier “utopian” hopes
   a) That is, the idea of class harmony, cooperation, the rule of reason and altruism
   b) They stopped believing that capitalism could be reformed from within, by means of ethical appeals to the wealthy
   c) Now they turned in more practical, “realistic” directions: organization into workers organizations, particularly trade unions
   d) But also increasingly in the direction of a belief in the physical power of the working class, which is why the ideas of Karl Marx came to have a growing appeal
C. Liberal nationalists also had a disillusioning experience, and they, too, would turn to less romantic ideas
1. Most notably, in Germany, they would come to accept some basic compromises of liberal principles in order to have a united nation—which is part of the complex story of national unification in the 1860s and 1870s