**1848: The European Revolutions**

Between February and April 1848, the conservative order which had dominated Europe since the fall of Napoleon in 1815 was felled by the hammer-blows of revolution across the continent. The revolutions swept liberal, or reformist, governments to power, tasked with forging a new political order based on the principles of civil rights and parliamentary government. By the end of 1849, all the revolutions had collapsed, making them a short and violent European experiment in liberal (and, in some countries, democratic) politics. For the history of democracy, the fascination of 1848 lies in the the variety of democratic forms which boiled to the surface of European political life in such a short space of time and in such a diversity of places. The revolutions witnessed, if only incipiently, the application of the rich and conflicting variety of democratic ideas and practices which have since been identified and closely-defined as part of the modern democratic experience. These sharp divisions within democratic thought – over the right level of popular participation, over the relationship between the people and the leadership and over the role of the state in society (Duncan 1983: 6) – were all present in 1848 and sometimes degenerated into violence. There was, firstly, an outright conservative rejection of democracy. Secondly, the more moderate liberals of 1848 thought of democracy in terms of universal civil liberties rather than widespread political emancipation: all citizens would benefit from civil equality, meritocracy and civil rights, but not all would have the right to vote. Thirdly, there were liberals who embraced what is generally taken to be the modern meaning of democracy, that is, representative government based on universal (in 1848, male) suffrage. Yet, fourthly, there were more radical strains of democratic thought in 1848, proponents of a 'pure' or

'direct' democracy who virulently opposed the notion of representative democracy, seeing it as a perversion of the popular will, as 'a prison ... a mystification ... the perpetual duping of political democracy', as the French socialist Victor Considérant put it (Rosanvallon 2000: 172). There were, fifthly, those who rejected democracy altogether: for the French revolutionary socialist Auguste Blanqui, the term itself was a label deployed by those who would 'steal' the revolution ('escamoteurs') and let it slide into the grasp of the reactionaries. For Blanqui, even the radical proponents of direct democracy were intolerably moderate. Democracy was 'a vague, banal word, without precision, a word made of rubber' (Rosanvallon 2000: 167). Finally, in France at least, the Revolution of 1848 culminated in a curious offshoot of democracy: Bonapartism (or more broadly, Caesarism) or plebiscitary dictatorship which combined authoritarian government with social reform, while basing its legitimacy with appeals to popular sovereignty.

Quentin Skinner has argued that to describe a political system as 'democratic' today means not only to measure it against certain basic characteristics, but also, implicitly, to praise it (Skinner 1973: 298), but this was clearly not yet universally the case in mid-nineteenth-century Europe. For the conservatives who lost power in the head-spinning springtime of 1848, 'democracy' was anathema, conjuring up the long shadows of the guillotine, the bloodthirsty 'mob' and the social 'anarchy' of the French Revolution of 1789. The liberals, who wanted to stabilise the new order as quickly as possible, shared some of these anxieties and in most places sought to restrict the franchise. Yet they universally accepted that civil liberties would supply the fundamental principles of the new order, to be enjoyed by all citizens. The revolutions of 1848 therefore had an important impact in the development of democracy, because, often for the first time,

they drew hundreds of thousands of Europeans into politics, regardless of their exclusion from formal political rights such as the suffrage.

As nineteenth-century nationalists, the liberals sought to forge their new order within the framework of the nation-state. For the Germans and the Italians, this necessarily entailed national unification. For the Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Transylvanian Romanians, Serbs, Slovenians and Croats, it meant autonomy within the multi-national Habsburg Empire, or even full independence. For Polish and Romanian liberals, whose countries were split up between different foreign empires, it meant winning *both* independence and national unity. The liberals were also confronted by the 'social question': the revolutions were born, in the short-term, of a desperate economic crisis and, in the long-run, of the dislocation and distress caused by the relentless press of population growth and the early onset of industrialisation. The liberals therefore faced forceful demands for social intervention by the state, which thrust forward the question as to how far the new order should offer its citizens social and economic rights, as well as political freedom. For socialist critics of the emerging liberal order, including Marx and Engels, political liberty and civil rights were not enough to resolve the social question.  For them, 'democracy' came to mean bourgeois and petty-bourgeois radicalism which sought to overthrow autocracy and establish representative government, but to do so within an emerging capitalist social order while excluding the proletariat from power.  Marxists would support democracy in the struggle against royal absolutism and noble privilege, but would then oppose it if it was the democrats' only aim (Levin 1983: 79).  These issues of democracy, nationalism and the 'social question' engendered bitter conflicts amongst the revolutionaries, giving the conservatives their chance to strike back – and they did so everywhere by the end of 1849.

The 'Forty-Eighters' agreed that political stability would be attained through a constitution, providing representative government and guaranteeing civil rights. One of the achievements of 1848 was the destruction of royal absolutism in many states and the emergence of constitutional, if not democratic, government. The counter-revolution restored absolute monarchy in most places, but in two important states, Piedmont-Sardinia and Prussia, absolutism was permanently abolished. Their emergence from the 1848 Revolutions as constitutional monarchies gave them political credibility amongst those liberals who, after the constitutional failures of 1848, later accepted the necessity of Piedmontese and Prussian power in the process of national unification, achieved in 1859-60 in Italy and 1864-71 in Germany. Moreover, besides their commitment to constitutional government, the revolutionaries hurled a further ideological challenge to royal authority: their emphasis on the nation-state threatened the very legitimacy of Europe's dynastic states and multi-national empires.

Yet not everyone was to enjoy full political enfranchisement in the putative liberal order. Nowhere were women given the suffrage. Many liberals, progressive aristocrats and bourgeois that they were, were anxious that too broad an electorate would bring political chaos and, of course, the social revolution so feared by property owners. Universal male suffrage was therefore introduced only in a small number of places. Foremost amongst these was in France, where the enfranchisement of all adult male citizens had been a central demand of the republican opposition before 1848. The new Second Republic could scarcely deny it now. Even so, there were two conflicting views as to how the new democracy should function: moderates thought in terms of representative government, but radicals pressed for a system of direct democracy (the contemporary term was a 'pure' or 'compact' democracy), in which every citizen had a

direct role in making the laws: while looking back to the mobilisation of the Parisian *sans-culottes* in the sectional assemblies in 1793, the logic of direct democracy was that it could only operate locally, and there would be no central state. 'We want no authority,' declared the multiple authors of a tract on *Gouvernement direct* in 1851, 'neither legislature, nor executive, nor judiciary...and if we take the words State and government in the sense that they have been used up to now, we could say that we want neither one nor the other' (Rosanvallon 2000: 192). All this came close to the 'anarchism' of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, but the friction between the proponents of direct democracy and the adherents of the representative system – many of whom accepted that the make-up of the legislature would reflect the existing social order – also presages later debates between 'classical' and 'empirical' theories of democracy. The democratic suffrage in France was in any case curtailed during the conservative backlash, which tore the vote away from a third of the electorate in May 1850. This disenfranchisement of 2.8 million men allowed Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte to pose as the defender of universal male suffrage when his coup d'état of 2 December 1851 established his plebiscitary dictatorship (Agulhon 1973: 169).

In Germany, some 75 percent of adult males were allowed to vote in the elections of the spring of 1848 to the Frankfurt Parliament, which was tasked with drafting a German constitution. This figure masks considerable local variations: the regulations stated that all 'independent' males would have the right to vote, but each of the thirty-nine states of the German Confederation were empowered to interpret that provision as they chose. In Prussia only five to ten percent of all adult males were excluded, but in Baden, Hanover and Saxony, up to 25 percent were denied the suffrage, because they were living on charity, employed as domestic servants, wage-dependent

manual workers, or apprentices living within their master's household (Siemann 1998: 80-1). The disillusion with these limits to the essentially liberal, monarchist order led thousands of radicals to rise up in a vain bid to provoke a wave of republican, democratic revolution in Baden in April 1848.

In Austria, the imperial suffrage law of 11 May excluded servants and those dependent upon a weekly or daily wage. Four days later, the imperial government was cowed by a *Stürmpetition* - mass protests backed by the threat of force on the streets of Vienna - to promise Austrians a much wider electorate. Even so, the new law restricted the number of voters by the provision that to qualify, a subject had to live in the constituency for six continuous months, which excluded the poorest migrant workers and journeymen. Workers also had to be 'independent', a term interpreted in a restrictive way (Siemann 1998: 82-5). In the Czech lands, servants, the poorer peasants and the urban workers were excluded from the elections to the Estates of Bohemia and Moravia (Pech 1969: 62). In Hungary, the April Laws (the Emperor's constitutional concessions to his feisty Magyar subjects), enfranchised some twenty-five percent of the population: landless peasants and wage-earners were excluded (Deak 1979: 96-7). Some governments quite deliberately enfranchised only a small elite, in order to satisfy the moderate liberals and split them from the more radical opposition. In the Italian kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, voting qualifications included a literacy test and property ownership, which restricted the suffrage to 8 percent of the adult male population (Beales and Biagini 2002: 105). Some states avoided revolution by timely concessions on the suffrage: Belgium and the Netherlands extended the franchise to wider sections of the middle class. In Sweden-Norway (in a regal union since 1815) and Britain, the governments managed to weather the storm without making any

constitutional concessions, the former by suppressing the opposition, the latter by facing down a strong challenge from the Chartists, a well-organised working-class movement which demanded universal male suffrage, the secret ballot, annual parliaments, equal electoral constituencies, the abolition of property qualifications for Members of Parliament and the payment of MPs.

The ability of the electorate to influence the political colour of the parliament was often hemmed in by systems of indirect election, as happened almost everywhere in Germany (one exception was Württemberg). The Austrian parliament (covering modern-day Austria, the Czech lands, Galicia and Slovenia) was indirectly elected, allowing landowning farmers, local officials, judges and clergymen to dominate the second round of voting. The voices of the electorate might also be tempered by a bicameral legislature, as in Piedmont, Denmark, Prussia and the short-lived German Imperial Constitution. In Hungary the April Laws replaced the old two-house Diet by a single-chamber National Assembly, but the suffrage was far from democratic. Electoral systems could also be weighted to benefit the wealthiest parts of the electorate: the Prussian constitution granted universal male suffrage, but in May 1849 voters were broken down into three classes, ensuring that the rich chose a third of the delegates to parliament. Only in the French Second Republic was a unicameral system based on direct elections and the suffrage for all adult males introduced immediately. The short-lived Roman Republic, founded in February 1849 after the flight of Pope Pius IX, proclaimed itself a 'pure democracy' and followed the French example. In practice, the political impact of such a system was blunted by the way in which voting was carried out: in France, every commune was summoned to vote collectively at the *chef-lieu*, or capital, of each department. Consequently, villagers marched en masse to the polls,

often led by their priest (in April 1848, voting took place on Easter Sunday) or by the local squire, which gave ample opportunity for these figures to assert their influence and exploit habits of rural deference and village solidarity (Tocqueville [1850-1] 1964: 129-30). At the polls, there were neither ballot papers nor voting booths: a voter wrote out his own preference – or, if he was illiterate, had someone write down his choice for him – before slotting it into the urns (Agulhon 1973: 65). In practice, therefore, individual choice could be quite circumscribed by communal pressures. In East Prussia, peasants were disappointed that their monarch did not appear among the candidates, so they wrote 'Frederick William IV' on their ballots (Orr 1980: 316).

1848 witnessed some incipient forms of party organisation. Hungary's parliamentary system had already witnessed the early emergence of political parties. When the Habsburg government prodded the Emperor's Hungarian supporters into forming a 'Conservative Party' in 1846, the liberals, led by Lajos Kossuth, coalesced into a 'Party of United Opposition' the following year (Deak 1979: 54-6). The development of a proto-party system was most sophisticated in the Frankfurt parliament, where deputies of particular political tendencies, following the tradition set by the French Revolution in 1789, sat according to their views on the 'right', 'centre-right', 'centre-left' and 'left'. These broad groups were subdivided into factions that took their names from the Frankfurt watering-holes where they met, such as the Milani, the Württemberger Hof. They acted like modern parties, imposing voting discipline, forming coalitions, forging political platforms and disseminating manifestos among the electorate (Siemann 1998: 122-6). In France, the different tendencies in republican opinion were initially given coherence by the newspapers which had existed prior to 1848: *le National* for the moderates and *La Réforme* for the radicals. After the elections

of April 1848, they faced a strong grouping of royalists and monarchists. All these tendencies had less cohesion than their German counterparts, but they were supported by the clamour of debate in the press and political clubs. In fact, it was the far left, the 'democratic socialists', who after the defeats of 1848 led the way in developing sophisticated ways of trying to mobilise their supporters and convince voters, particularly in the countryside. Yet across Europe, the eighteenth-century equation of 'party' with 'factionalism' still lingered: a third of the Frankfurt delegates belonged to no group. 1848 did not witness the full emergence of modern forms of pluralistic politics.

Yet some permanent achievements lent themselves to the future of democracy. Most important of all was the emancipation of hundreds of thousands of people, namely peasants, religious minorities and colonial slaves. Peasants had played an active role in the initial wave of revolutions in 1848 and landowners and government officials were nervous about the possibility of this restiveness gathering momentum into an uncontrollable assault on property. The Revolutions of 1848 therefore freed the peasants from either the last traces of seigneurialism or from the burdens of serfdom. In Hungary, the abolition of serfdom was swiftly decreed after Kossuth played on landlord fears of peasant insurrection: labour obligations, tithes and manorial rights and dues were abolished. In western Germany, the *Grundherren*, the last landlord rights over the land and its inhabitants, were abolished, and the compensation payments which remained from the destruction of seigneurialism under Napoleon were cancelled. Some beleaguered monarchs saw emancipation as the key to securing peasant loyalty for when the opportune moment arose for a counter-revolutionary strike back. In the Austrian Empire, the initiative was taken by the imperial court at Vienna: it issued edicts

emancipating Czech peasants from the *robot* (labour obligations towards their landlords) and the Ukrainian peasants of Galicia from serfdom. The Austrian parliament later moved the formal abolition of 'all servile relationships', but it was Emperor Ferdinand who, as was intended by the conservatives, took the credit for the emancipation, since he had pre-empted his liberal opponents.

There were limits to peasant emancipation almost everywhere. The landlords were to be paid compensation, which they could invest in their estates, while the peasants were impoverished by the debts incurred. In Hungary, nobles clung onto lucrative rights such as monopolies on selling wine, keeping doves and pigeons, holding fairs and charging road tolls and ferry dues (Deak 1979: 102-3). The terms of emancipation were therefore crafted to ensure the survival of the social and economic pre-eminence of the great landowners. Yet the emancipations of 1848 served to shape the future of European democracy in important ways. Until 1848, the relationship between the state and the peasant in Central and Eastern Europe had been mediated by the noble landlord, who may have had responsibilities for policing, taxing, conscripting and dispensing justice over 'his' peasants on behalf of the government. The state now assumed these roles directly and peasantry theoretically had the same legal rights as other subjects. In the long run, therefore, the emancipations of 1848 prepared the ground for the integration of the peasants as citizens of the modern nation-state (Blum 1978: 373-4).

Religious minorities were also emancipated, particularly Jews (who had already won equal rights in France in 1791). The legal status of German Jews had varied from one state to another, but they were granted the same civil and political rights as all German citizens by the Basic Rights proclaimed in the German Constitution. All

individual German states, except Bavaria, enacted similar legislation (Siemann 1998: 186). In Hungary, the road to Jewish emancipation was rockier: when the Diet proposed to enfranchise everyone with enough wealth and independence, regardless of religion, anti-Semitic riots forced the liberals to delay the enfranchisement of Jews. Yet when the revolution developed into an all-out war of independence from Austria in 1849, Jews were granted the full rights of citizenship (Deak 1979: 85-6; Deme 1976: 29-30, 48-9). Jews and the small Protestant community (called Waldensians) in Italy's Alpine fastness of Piedmont-Sardinia were emancipated in 1848 (Beales and Biagini 2002: 93-4). The Jews of the Papal States had to wait until the Roman Republic in 1849. The counter-revolution, currying the favour of the peasantry (many of whom harboured traditional religious and economic prejudices against the Jews) later rolled back some of these gains. In Austria, Jews had to wait for another twenty years before they definitively won equal civil rights. In Prussia, they were excluded from state service after 1848, although they were meant to enjoy civil equality. In Italy, after the restoration of Papal authority, Roman Jews were forced back into the ghetto, but in Piedmont-Sardinia, Protestants and Jews enjoyed equal civil rights until Mussolini turned back the wheel of repression. Yet the religious emancipations in 1848 had great significance: they posited a pluralistic definition of 'nationality' in an age when otherwise it was equated with ethnicity. It was also a step away from the confessional state (where political loyalty was associated with an established religion) towards the modern, secular state, which defined citizenship on the basis of rights, duties and a shared sense of national identity. The Roman Republic's Constitution made this explicit: 'The exercise of civil and political rights does not depend upon religious belief' (Beales and Biagini 2002: 246).

1848 had global ramifications, since slavery was abolished in some overseas empires. In France, anti-slavery had been a plank in the platform of the republican opposition prior to 1848. The revolution swept aside the resistance of the colonial interests and slavery and a quarter of a million enslaved people on Martinique and Guadeloupe, in French Guiana, Senegal and Réunion were emancipated. They assumed full civil and political rights, joining the European colonists, free blacks and those of 'mixed-blood' as political (though not social) equals. In Algeria, European colonists, though not the indigenous population, were given political rights. Denmark and Sweden had avoided the hammer-blows of revolution, but they abolished slavery on their Caribbean island colonies in 1848 (Rapport 2008: 176).

The most serious limit to the emancipations of 1848 was that most liberals would not countenance giving women equal political rights (although there was some debate about advancing women's legal rights). Yet the denial of formal political enfranchisement did not prevent European women from engaging in revolutionary politics in other ways. In almost every major insurrection, they appeared on the barricades, loading muskets, tending the wounded, holding aloft the national colours, carrying up ammunition, food and drink, or acting as messengers. Women took advantage of the democratic freedoms which opened up in 1848. Twelve feminist newspapers were published in Paris, while Italian women wrote for liberal journals such as Camillo di Cavour's *Risorgimento*. In Prague, the Czech writer Božena Němcová spoke out against anti-Semitism, warned of the dangers of German nationalism, called for social justice and insisted that women's emancipation would follow improvements in female education (Pech 1969: 327). Women engaged in the political club movement across Europe, joining associations which allowed female membership, including some

French socialist and German democratic societies, or by establishing associations of their own. Kathinka Zitz-Halein's Humania Association, founded in Mainz in May 1849, supported the democratic, republican uprising in defence of the German constitution, providing nursing and medical supplies for the wounded. Eugénie Niboyet founded a Parisian women's political club which boasted a network of corresponding members from across Western Europe. Pauline Roland and Jeanne Déroin organised the 'Fraternal Association of Democratic Socialists of Both Sexes for the Liberation of Women' and established a union of 104 workers' associations aiming for equal pay and conditions for men and women. Déroin stood for election to the National Assembly in May 1849, although her candidacy was declared illegal because she was a woman. In Prague, the Club of Slavic Women sought to improve women's education, protested against the Austrian occupation of the city and secured the release of political prisoners (Rapport 2008: 176-6). In Italy, upper- and middle-class women were involved in the campaigns for Jewish and Protestant emancipation, while individuals such as Princess Cristina di Belgiojoso enlisted 184 Neapolitan volunteers for the war against Austria in the north (Belgiojoso [1849] 1971: 375-6). When the revolutionary reverberations reached the United States, some Northern women - already mobilised by the anti-slavery campaign - met at Seneca Falls, New York, to demand equal rights of property and education, equality within marriage and the 'inalienable right to the elective suffrage'. Women did not win the right to vote in 1848, but women's rights had been thrust onto the political agenda.

If they were not democrats, the liberals of 1848 were universally committed to civil rights, including freedom of conscience, speech, the press and association. The ubiquity of associations within American civil society was much admired by Alexis de

Tocqueville.  He was no democrat: in *Democracy in America*, he fretted about the relentless march of 'equality' and the dangers it posed to individual liberty.  Yet this was precisely why he saw a vibrant civil society as essential, for it contained the dangers of democracy sliding into a 'tyranny of the majority'.  'There is', concluded de Tocqueville, 'no end which the human will despairs of attaining by the free action of the collective power of individuals' (De Tocqueville [1835-40] 1994: 189-90).  European liberals agreed and the revolutions broke open a wide public space in which civil society, released from the stifling restrictions of the previous regime, could freely act. The secret police, where it existed, evaporated and censorship collapsed everywhere. The press flourished immediately: the United States *chargé d'affaires* in Vienna, William Henry Stiles, observed that bookshop windows were suddenly crammed with works, 'which, like condemned criminals, had long been withdrawn from the light of day; boys hawked throughout the city addresses, poems, and engravings, illustrative of the Revolution – the first issues of an unshackled press' (Rapport 2008: 65). There was an explosion in print everywhere. Before the revolution, Austria had 79 newspapers, most of which avoided political discussion, but in 1848, 388 titles rolled off the presses, most of them political. In Paris, 300 new newspapers appeared, totalling a print run of 400,000 copies. Prussian newspapers mushroomed from 118 titles to 184. By 1849 Germany had 1700 newspapers and, for the first time, the country had an engaged 'partisan' press reflecting opinions from across the political spectrum (Siemann 1998: 112).

People freely organised themselves into clubs, associations and societies to shape opinions and to argue their points. The public engagement with politics was unprecedented in Europe, except in France, which had its traditions dating to 1789. Yet

even there, the effervescence of political clubs was striking: at their height in April 1848, Paris and its suburbs babbled with debate from no less than 203 popular societies, with an estimated total membership of seventy thousand people (perhaps more) a political mobilization of workers and the middle class on a grand scale (Amman 1975: 33-5). Less widespread, but still vocal and influential (or troublesome) were the radical Italian clubs espousing Mazzini's vision of a unitary Italian republic, putting pressure on the liberals in Milan, Venice, Florence, Bologna and Rome. German democratic associations aimed to push the revolution towards republican democracy. The First Democratic Congress was held in Frankfurt in June, with delegates representing 89 associations from 66 different German towns. By October 1848, Prussia alone had an estimated 250 democratic associations. The democratic societies mounted a spirited defence of the revolution from November 1848, when they formed the Central March Association. Half a million strong and representing 950 democratic associations by the spring of 1849, it mobilised the German democrats in the 'civil war for the constitution', an insurrection to force the German states to ratify the German Constitution passed by the Frankfurt Parliament (Siemann 1998: 94-9).

The political stirring of the people did not necessarily work in the revolutionaries' favour. Some of the most successful organisations were those which served the counter-revolution. The conservatives quickly learned that they could defeat the revolution with its own weapons. They played on popular fears of disorder and anarchy but also appealed to religion and monarchy. In southern Germany, Catholics were mobilised in defence of the old order by the four hundred 'Pius Associations' (named after the then Pope), with a 100,000-strong membership. In Prussia, Lutheran pastors drummed up Protestant support for the 'King and Fatherland' associations,

which boasted 300 branches by the spring of 1849, with a membership of around 60,000 (Sperber 1994: 161). In Austria, a Constitutional Club attracted conservatives by its emphasis on law and order, swelling its membership to 30,000 (Rath 1969: 304).

For mid-nineteenth-century liberals, one of the essential rights and duties of a citizen was to bear arms: like the vote, it was a mark of citizenship. In 1848, this was no mere ideal, but an absolute necessity: the incipient liberal order owed its existence to the uprising of armed citizens. An organised militia was deemed vital to protect the new regime from counter-revolution. A common feature of the revolutions was therefore the creation (or expansion) of the militia. In Vienna and Prague, where 'civic guards' already existed, the ranks were now swollen by liberal bourgeois, and joined by 'Academic Legions' of militant students. Elsewhere, new militias were created, as in Berlin, Milan and Venice, where the republic's leader, Daniele Manin, took his turn at guard duty. Hungary formed a National Guard on the French model.  Yet the liberals also hoped that the militias could be used to protect private property against social revolution. For this reason they sought to restrict membership to middle-class citizens.

This was a hotly contested issue. In France, the National Guard was democratized and the elite companies abolished. The ranks of the National Guard swelled, more than doubling its size in Paris from 85,000 to 190,000 in a matter of weeks. Moreover, these militiamen elected their own officers (Harsin 2002: 279-81). Consequently, the National Guard could not always be relied upon to defend the existing order. During the bloody June Days, in which a democratic-socialist uprising was crushed by the moderate government, many National Guards failed to muster and some joined the insurgents. It was precisely for this reason that, in other countries, the liberals were deeply reluctant to arm all citizens. Membership of the Hungarian

National Guard was dependent upon property ownership, although once the war of independence erupted anyone willing to serve was enlisted. In Berlin, the liberalised regime in March 1848 permitted everyone to bear arms, even if they were not part of the civic guard. Students and workers duly formed themselves into paramilitary 'mobile associations' serving the radical cause rather than the liberal order. In October, when the Prussian parliament decided to disarm these groups, eleven protesters were shot dead in the process. Central to the militia problem in 1848 was therefore the question as to who possessed the monopoly of legitimate force in a democratic or constitutional order. The militia could support the new regime, but it might also back the social and democratic aspirations of the radicals. It was also independent or semi-independent of the government. Unsurprisingly, therefore, civic militias were usually disbanded with the counter-revolution. Moreover, nowhere except in France and Hungary were the revolutionaries able to wrest control of the regular armed forces from the monarchs. This was one of the major causes of their failure: the revolutions did not extend parliamentary or democratic control over the military.

The liberals also fell because the revolutions stirred fears of social upheaval, driven by the anger and misery of European workers. Sparked as they were by the worst economic crisis of the nineteenth century and coming at a time when artisans were facing the intense pressures of early industrialisation, the 1848 Revolutions aroused workers into defending their social and economic interests. Yet this, too, was part of the democratic mobilisation of that year and this was a lesson of 1848 in socialist theories of democracy. If for Marxists the aim was an egalitarian society, not political democracy, social democrats allowed that democracy was integral to socialism, since it gave workers the means for mobilization and self-expression (Duncan 1983: 6-7). The

French labour movement received a fillip from the Provisional Government, with the establishment of the Luxembourg Commission to hear workers' delegates express their views on industrial relations, wages, conditions and the organisation of manufacturing. Germany witnessed a flourishing of working-class organisations. Master-craftsmen and skilled artisans gathered at a Congress in Frankfurt in July 1848, seeking to press the German Parliament to restore the guilds (which had regulated standards and controlled who could work in a particular trade). The apprentices and journeymen formed the Workers' Fraternity and met in a Worker Congress, demanding a ten-hour working day, pensions, free education, the abolition of taxes on consumption and a progressive income tax, as well as a fair division of government contracts and cheap sources of credit. The Fraternity boasted 15,000 members from no less than 170 German workers' societies (Siemann 1998: 89-94). More radical were Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who forged the Communist League in 1847 as an underground socialist organisation. Early in 1848, they published the *Communist Manifesto*, which offered a potentially explosive analysis of society and class conflict. Communism had some political influence in 1848: forty-eight Fraternity officials were members of the Communist League, while Marx and Engels published a newspaper, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne. Yet most German workers wanted to work within the emerging constitutional framework, so that Communist activity in 1848 is best seen as a portent for the future, a symbol of the difficulty of balancing social justice with political freedom.

This, in fact, was one of the most destructive of the issues that dogged the revolutionary regimes of 1848: the fundamental disagreement between moderates and radicals over whether the liberal order should guarantee social and economic rights, or restrict itself to upholding political freedom and civil liberties. In Paris, the tragedy of

the 'June Days', in which the government crushed an uprising by despairing, unemployed workers shouting for a 'democratic and social republic' and the 'right to work', had its bloody echoes elsewhere in Europe, including Vienna and Berlin. These insurrections played into the hands of the conservatives, who offered authoritarian solutions to the dangers of social revolution.

The political mobilisation of the national minorities of Eastern and Central Europe also gave the conservatives the opportunity to defeat the revolutions. While the liberals indulged in some universalist rhetoric about the equality of all peoples, they pressed for the greatest territorial and political advantage for their own nationality, at the expense of others. Thus there was a bitter war of words between Czechs and Germans; an open, military conflict between the German Confederation and Denmark over Schleswig-Holstein; between Prussia and Polish liberals over the duchy of Poznań and a civil war in Hungary between, on the one hand, the Magyars and, on the other hand, the Serbs, Croats and Romanians. The poisonous ethnic divisions were deepened by social conflicts, because frequently landlords and peasants had different ethnic identities. The Romanian-Magyar conflict (the bloodiest of 1848-9) was a war of Romanian peasant against Hungarian landlord. The Habsburg court in Vienna moved quickly to abolish serfdom in Galicia to secure the loyalty of the predominantly Ukrainian peasantry against their liberal Polish landlords. The court also armed, financed and sent troops to the Croats, Serbs and Romanians. The mobilisation of nationalist feeling and the exploitation of deep-rooted social grievances helped to stir the peasantry of Eastern Europe to defend the old regime.

The great lesson of 1848, in fact, was that popular political mobilisation was not necessarily a force for revolution. Democratic freedoms could bolster the conservatives

as much as the liberals and radicals, particularly if the public was carefully 'managed'
by appeals to monarchy, patriotism, religion and property against the spectre of
'anarchy', 'communism' and 'terror'. After the counter-revolutionary triumph in late
1848-49, Europe experienced a decade of iron-fisted rule which made the pre-
revolutionary conservative order seem positively lax. Yet the mounting social pressures
unleashed by industrialisation and the growth of international competition eventually
forced all governments to confront the necessity of political reform. By 1914,
parliamentary government had become the norm: even the Russian Empire, thanks to
the 1905 Revolution, had a parliament (Duma). Democratisation, on other hand, was
often faltering, piecemeal and gradual: by 1914, Germany, France, Austria, Italy and the
Russian Empire were among the states that had universal male suffrage. Women were
fully enfranchised in Finland (1906) and Norway (1913). Yet democratisation usually
occurred on the terms of the established order, which was precisely the point
conservatives had digested since 1848: democratic reform could be shaped to suit their
interests. It was a means of integrating the peasantry and the burgeoning urban working-
class into the social order. A populist alliance between the conservative elites and the
masses was a way of outflanking troublesome opponents like middle-class liberals and
socialists.

  For all their limitations, the 1848 Revolutions mark an important step in the
history of democracy. The very existence of elections where they were previously
unknown, the emancipation of large numbers of people and the experience of a civil
society unshackled from censorship - all politically mobilised wide segments of
European society for the first time. The revolutions might even be called Europe's

'apprenticeship in democracy', even if democracy, when it did eventually come, was open to exploitation by less than democratic interests.

Mike Rapport,

University of Stirling, Scotland.

**Bibliography**

Agulhon, M. (1973), *1848 ou l'apprentissage de la République 1848-1852*, Paris: Seuil.

Amman, P. H. (1975), *Revolution and Mass Democracy: the Paris Club Movement in 1848*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Beales, D. and E. F. Biagini (2002), *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, Harlow: Pearson.

Belgiojoso, C. T. de [1848] (1971), 'Les Journées révolutionnaires à Milan', in Godechot 1971: 373-410.

Blum, J. (1978), *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Deak, I. (1979), *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848-1849*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Deme, L. (1976), *The Radical Left in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Duncan, G. (ed.) (1983), *Democratic Theory and Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, R. J. W. and H. *Pogge* von Strandmann (eds) (2000), *The Revolutions in Europe, 1848-49: from Reform to Reaction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ginsborg, P. (1979), *Daniele Manin and the Venetian Revolution of 1848-49*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Godechot, J. (1971), *Les Révolutions de 1848*, Paris: Albin Michel.

Harsin, J. (2002), *Barricades: the War of the Streets in Revolutionary Paris, 1830-1848*, New York: Palgrave.

Körner, A. (ed.) (2000), *1848: A European Revolution?  International Ideas and National Memories of 1848*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Levin, M. 'Marxism and democratic theory', in Duncan 1983: 79-95.

Namier, L. (1946), *1848: the Revolution of the Intellectuals*, London: Oxford University Press.

Orr, W. J., Jr. (1980), 'East Prussia and the Revolution of 1848', *Central European History* 13, 303-31.

Pech, S. Z. (1969), *The Czech Revolution of 1848*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Price, R. (1998), *The Revolutions of 1848*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Price, R. (1972), *The Second French Republic: a Social History*, London: Batsford.

Rapport, M. (2008), *1848: Year of Revolution*, London: Little, Brown.

Rath, R. J. (1969), *The Viennese Revolution of 1848*, New York: Greenwood Press.

Rosanvallon, P. (2000), *La démocratie inachevée: Histoire de la souveraineté du peuple en France*, Paris: Gallimard.

Siemann, W. (1998), *The German Revolution of 1848-49*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Skinner, Q. (1973), 'Empirical Theorists of Democracy and their Critics: A Plague on Both their Houses', *Political Theory*, 1: 3, 287-306.

Sperber, J. (1991), *Rhineland Radicals: the Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848-1849*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sperber, J. (1994), *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tocqueville, A. de [1835-40] (J. P. Mayer, ed. 1994), *Democracy in America,* London: Fontana.

Tocqueville, A. de [1850-1] (1964), *Souvenirs*, Paris: Gallimard.