The abolition of slavery after the Civil War became the foundation for Ida B. Wells’s life work as a teacher, journalist, anti-lynching activist, community organizer, and woman suffragist.

Ida Bell Wells was born a slave in 1862 in the small city of Holly Springs, Mississippi. After emancipation, her father became active in the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln, during the Reconstruction period in the South. Her deeply Christian mother was a cook. Both valued education for their children.

Wells and her brothers and sisters attended an elementary school established by the Freedmen’s Bureau, which was created by Congress to help the former slaves make the transition to freedom. She became an avid reader and learned much on her own. As she advanced through the grades, the school added a high school and Rust College, which she attended.

In 1878, Wells was only 16 when both her parents died in a yellow fever epidemic. To keep her family together, she got a job teaching at a rural black school.

Suing the Railroad

At 19, Wells moved with two of her younger sisters to Memphis, Tennessee, to live with their aunt. She got another teaching job near Memphis. She took classes during the summer at Fisk College in Nashville to earn a state credential in order to teach in the Memphis schools.

One Sunday in 1884 on her way back to Memphis from a visit to Holly Springs, she bought a first class railroad car ticket. She took a seat in the first class “ladies car,” where white women normally sat. But the white conductor ordered her to the “colored car.” She refused. The conductor began to pull her from the seat. She hung on to it and even bit the conductor. Finally, he and two white men dragged her out of the “ladies car” as the white passengers cheered.

Wells sued the railroad in a Memphis court for assault and for discrimination. Incredibly, she won! In 1884, Judge James Pierce, a former Union soldier, ruled

While still an elementary-school teacher, Ida B. Wells became the editor and co-owner of the Free Speech and Headlight anti-segregation newspaper in Memphis, Tennessee.
that the “colored car” was not a first class car. He ordered the railroad to pay Wells $500 in damages.

The railroad appealed the case to the Tennessee Supreme Court, which was packed with ex-Confederates. In 1887, they reversed Judge Pierce’s ruling, cancelled his $500 award to Wells, and ordered her to pay court costs. Wells wrote in her diary, “O God, is there no redress, no peace, no justice in this land for us?”

**The Memphis Lynching**

By 1889, Wells had earned her credential and was teaching in a black Memphis school. She was also writing for church newsletters on racial issues. She discovered that writing was her passion.

While still teaching, she became one-third owner and editor of a black Memphis newspaper, the *Free Speech*. She took a militant stand against the suppression of black civil rights in the South. (Wells used the terms “Negro,” “colored,” “black” and “Afronauts” to refer to her fellow African Americans.)

Wells was fired by the Memphis all-white school board when she wrote editorials about the poor condition of the city’s black schools. She was now, however, free to start her career as a full-time journalist, one of the first black women to do this.

In 1892, a lynching took place in Memphis that changed the life of Wells. Lynching means punishing a person or persons, usually by a mob, without a lawful trial. Although lynching by hanging someone from a tree was common, mobs used numerous methods such as shooting, stabbing, beating, burning alive, and torture.

In this case, a white grocery store owner, William Barrett, became angry after Thomas Moss and other black men opened a competing store across the street. One day a minor dispute led to a fistfight between the supporters of both men.

After the fight ended, Moss’s black supporters armed themselves, fearing Barrett would return with more men. Barrett did return, but with the sheriff and some deputies who came to arrest Moss’s clerk for clubbing him during the fight.

The sheriff and his men, however, were all in plain clothes, and Moss’s defenders mistook them for a mob intent on attacking the store. The defenders fired shots at the deputies, wounding three. One was shot in the face and lost an eye.

The sheriff later returned and arrested Moss and two employees. Memphis newspapers printed inflammatory stories about how the deputies had been cruelly ambushed.

Several days later, a white mob broke into the jail where the three black men were held. The mob dragged them out of their cells to a field and shot them to death. The lynchers aimed for their faces and eyes. Later, a grand jury decided that the lynching was at “the hands of persons unknown.”

Shocked at the lynching, Wells condemned it in a *Free Speech* editorial. She recommended to the black community that the only thing to do was “to leave a town which will neither protect our lives and property, nor give us a fair trial in the courts, but takes us out and murders us in cold blood when accused by white persons.”

Thousands of black people in Memphis followed her advice. Many headed west for the Oklahoma Territory land rushes. While saving money for their exodus, most cut back on spending in the city’s stores and stopped riding the streetcars. In effect, this was a boycott that damaged the city’s economy.

Wells began to research lynchings and the reasons behind them, becoming the first journalist to do so. One commonly held belief was that lynchings were justified because they almost always punished black men for raping white women. Wells investigated this claim and found that it was not true.

In her *Free Speech* editorials, Wells denounced the “rape myth.” She also reported newspaper accounts of white women who voluntarily had affairs with black men who were lynched when this relationship was discovered.

Enraged by Wells’s editorials, a mob of white men at night destroyed the *Free Speech* printing press and left a death threat to Wells. She decided it was now time for her to leave Memphis.

**Southern Horrors**

Wells soon became the editor and part-owner of the *New York Age* newspaper. She wrote articles on the Memphis lynching and gave lectures on her research findings.

Later in 1892, Wells published a pamphlet called *Southern Horrors*, describing examples of the brutality of lynchings in the South and the many reasons why they occurred. She reported, according to the white-owned *Chicago Tribune* newspaper, that 728 black people had been lynched during the past eight years. Two-thirds of them were never accused of raping a white woman.

Wells argued that the real cause of lynching was to enforce white supremacy and keep black people down. The “mob spirit” has grown, she explained, as black people advanced in property ownership, business, and education.

Wells accused white southerners of depriving “the young manhood of the [black] race” of his basic rights. “They have cheated him out of his ballot,” she declared, “deprived him of civil rights, or redress...
therefore in the courts, robbed him of the fruits of his labor, and is still murdering, burning, and lynching him.”

Wells urged black people to boycott businesses and railroads to force them to end racial segregation and discrimination and to pressure state legislatures to enact anti-lynching laws. She also observed that “the only times an Afro-American who was assaulted [and] got away has been when he had a gun and used it in self-defense.” She said the lesson of that was “a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home.”

Wells ended *Southern Horrors* by pleading with her readers to get the facts to the press in order to influence white public opinion. “There is no education to compare with the press,” she said.

**Campaign Against Lynching**

With the publication of *Southern Horrors* in 1892, Wells launched a major campaign against lynching. She continued to write editorials and deliver lectures. She collaborated with Frederick Douglass, the famous black abolitionist, to write another pamphlet on the condition of black Americans. They then distributed it to visitors of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Wells’s anti-lynching campaign soon gained the attention of former British abolition leaders who invited her to cross the Atlantic to give a series of lectures. She traveled to Britain in 1893 and 1894 and was enthusiastically received by British audiences.

One important result of her lectures in Britain was the formation of the British Anti-Lynching Committee. Members wrote letters to southern governors and other politicians, pressing them to enact anti-lynching laws or face losing British bank loans and investments. Some southern states did pass such laws, but their enforcement was often weak.

**A Red Record**

In 1895, Wells published *A Red Record*, a pamphlet that updated her lynching statistics, again based mainly on those collected by the *Chicago Tribune*. She reported that black men in the South made up the great majority of the 534 U.S. lynching victims between 1892 and 1894.

Wells described cases that involved innocent victims, the mentally disabled, and those lynched for no known reason. She also introduced a new category of “spectacle lynchings” that involved thousands of participants.

Wells described a brutal spectacle lynching that happened in Paris, Texas, in 1893. Henry Smith, a black man known in the community as “weak minded,” was accused of murdering a four year-old white girl. The white people of the town grew more enraged at Smith when false rumors circulated that he had also raped the little girl.

Smith was captured by a posse and confessed. But he may have been intimidated by his angry captors. The posse took Smith back to Paris where a mob of 10,000 men, women, and children had assembled to see Smith lynched.

**FROM SOUTHERN HORRORS:**

Of the many inhuman outrages of this present year, the only case where the proposed lynching did not occur, was where the men armed themselves in Jacksonville, Fla., and Paducah, Ky., and prevented it. The only times an Afro-American who was assaulted got away has been when he had a gun and used it in self-defense.

The lesson this teaches and which every Afro-American should ponder well, is that a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give. . . .

Nothing is more definitely settled than [the Afro-American] must act for himself. I have shown how he may employ the boycott, emigration and the press, and I feel that by a combination of all these agencies can be effectually stamped out lynching law, that last relic of barbarism and slavery. “The gods help those who help themselves.”
The father of the murdered girl led others in slowly torturing Smith by searing his flesh with red hot irons and thrusting them into his eyes and down his throat as the onlookers cheered. Finally, Smith was set afire. Afterward, people took pieces of his charred skin, teeth, and other remains as souvenirs.

**Community Organizing in Chicago**

In 1895, Wells decided to move to Chicago where she married Fernando Barnett, the first black Illinois assistant state attorney. She finally started a family and had four children.

Wells pulled back from some of her anti-lynching work to focus on improving the lives of black people in Chicago, many of whom had recently arrived from the rural South during what has been called the Great Migration.

She formed black women’s reform-minded clubs and established the city’s first kindergarten for African-American children.

In 1908, she created the Negro Fellowship League (NFL) that aimed to get young unemployed black men off the streets. The NFL offered services such as meals, a reading room, Bible classes, job placement, and inspirational speakers.

**A Black Woman Suffragist**

Wells believed strongly in the “sacred ballot” as the way for black people to fight racism in all its many forms. She joined Susan B. Anthony who led the national women’s suffrage (right to vote) movement.

In 1913, she and a group of black and white suffragists from Illinois traveled to Washington to join a women’s right to vote parade. At the last minute, the parade organizers ruled that the black suffragists would have to march in a separate unit so as not to offend southern members of Congress.

Wells was outraged and refused to march in a racially segregated parade. When it began, she bolted from the crowd of onlookers and joined the Illinois unit with two white supporters on either side of her.

After the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the right to vote, Wells worked to register black women to vote. In 1930, she ran in a state senate primary in a majority black district, but lost badly.

**Crusade for Justice**

After 1900, Wells’s reputation as an outspoken radical black woman worked against her among both white and black reform leaders who were almost always men. For example, she played a significant part in the founding of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. But the male leaders denied her a leadership role.

In 1928, she began to write her autobiography about her life’s work. In it she adopted abolitionist Wendell Phillips’s words, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” as her motto. She never completed her autobiography and died of kidney failure at 68 in 1931.

Wells was largely forgotten until her daughter Alfreda published her unfinished autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*, in 1970. Wells is now recognized as the first black woman to work for uplifting the condition of the ex-slaves and to fight for their civil rights.

Congress never passed an anti-lynching law, although some states did. Between 1880 and 1930 there were over 3,000 lynchings in the U.S. The peak occurred in 1892 then slowly declined. That was the same year Wells launched her anti-lynching campaign.

**WRITING & DISCUSSION**

1. According to Ida B. Wells, why did the lynching of mainly black men occur in the South?
2. Historians have argued that lynching was used as a way to terrorize black people. How were “spectacle lynchings” evidence of this?
3. Aside from Wells’s anti-lynching campaign, what accomplishment among her many other activities do you think was the most important? Why?

**ACTIVITY: You’re the Journalist!**

Imagine you are a journalist in the 1890s. You write opinion articles for a newspaper. You are going to write an article outlining how lynching can be stopped in your state.

Form small groups of four. Discuss the facts and arguments presented by Ida B. Wells that you have read about with your fellow journalists. Take notes.

After discussion, you will need to do the following on your own:

1. Write your opinion article. You will need to describe at least three ways for your readers to prevent lynching from happening (e.g., supporting an anti-lynching law).
2. The article should be three paragraphs long and between 300 to 400 words in length.
In the late 19th and early 20th century, the United States faced many problems. Reformers who sought to improve American life were collectively known as Progressives. One important issue that Progressives fought for was the need to strengthen social justice. An important figure in the crusade for social justice was Ida B. Wells.

In this activity, students play the role of Ida B. Wells as she applies for acceptance to a “blue ribbon” panel of experts on progressive reform. Each student will prepare to testify before a special Senate committee looking to form this panel of experts.

To gain acceptance to this panel, students (a) prepare a first-person historical resume for Ida B. Wells, and (b) write a 60-90 second persuasive speech that identifies the problems Wells cared about and articulates her potential solutions.

1. **Historical Resume:** Students can format their “historical resume” any way they wish. But they must include all of the following information and write it in a first-person perspective as if they were Ida B. Wells:
   - Identify historical character and objective (including the social problem(s) Wells addressed).
   - A one-paragraph summary detailing Wells’s life but strongly focused on the problem(s).
   - A list of professional experiences with dates of employment.
   - At least three major accomplishments with a short description of a few sentences each.
   - List of three personal references of other Progressive Era reformers from this time period with a short description of a few sentences each. (See below.)

2. **Persuasive Speech:** Students will next prepare a 60-90 second persuasive speech detailing the problem(s) and what specific solutions they feel would best remedy the problem(s). This should be done in first-person perspective as well. Students should be prepared to deliver their speech in front of the class for extra credit.

**Suggested reformers for Wells’s personal references:**

- Jane Addams, social worker
- Susan B. Anthony, suffragist
- Charles A. Beard, historian
- Charlotte Hawkins Brown, educator
- William Jennings Bryan, presidential candidate
- Clarence Darrow, lawyer
- John Dewey, philosopher
- W.E.B. Du Bois, civil rights activist
- Abraham Flexner, medical educator
- Mary Harris “Mother” Jones, union leader
- Florence Kelley, children’s rights activist
- Gertrude Bustill Mossell, suffragist
- Alice Paul, suffragist
- Jacob Riis, “muckraking” photographer
- Margaret Sanger, birth control activist
- Upton Sinclair, novelist and journalist
- Lincoln Joseph Steffens, reporter
- Ida Tarbell, “muckraking” journalist
- Mary Church Terrell, civil rights activist
- Thorstein Veblen, economist

This supplemental activity was developed by teacher Ben Conklin who teaches AP U.S. History, American History, AP Seminar, and Civics and Economics at West Iredell High School in Statesville, North Carolina. Ben is a teacher-leader in CRF’s T2T Collab: www.crf-usa.org/t2tcollab.
In 1814, following the defeat of France’s Emperor Napoleon I, ambassadors of the principal nations of Europe met in Vienna, Austria. (Napoleon briefly reconquered France in 1815. He was defeated in June at the Battle of Waterloo and then exiled to an island off the coast of Italy.)

The nations at the Congress of Vienna were Austria, Prussia, Russia, France, and Britain, also known as the five “great powers.” The purpose of the Congress was to reestablish monarchy in Europe. The ambassadors distrusted republican government, in which the state is ruled by representatives of its citizens rather than a hereditary monarchy. They also wanted to ensure that the terror and war that followed the French Revolution would not be repeated.

The Congress also had the purpose of redrawing the boundaries of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. As a result, many nationalities were absorbed into larger empires. Poland was absorbed into Russia and Prussia. The Austrian Empire absorbed Hungarians, Czechs, Romanians, Serbians, Ukrainians, Italians, Croatians, Poles, Germans, and Slovaks.

Austrian Chancellor Klemens von Metternich chaired the Congress of Vienna. Metternich envisioned a peaceful Europe run by monarchs. For three decades after the Congress, absolute monarchies ruled Prussia, Russia, and Austria. They maintained peace largely by suppressing middle and lower class hopes for democratic government.

Britain and France were constitutional monarchies. They had parliaments. But only the wealthiest adult males in Britain and France could vote.

Germany was not yet a unified nation. Instead, many sovereign states formed the German Confederation. These states were governed by kings, dukes, and princes. States such as Hanover, Bavaria, and the great power Prussia were kingdoms. Austria, also part of the German Confederation, was a larger empire.

National and liberal movements spurred revolutions throughout Europe in the years following 1815. (Those who supported greater democratic control of government were liberal.) A movement called nationalism spread throughout populations under foreign rule, leading to numerous rebellions. For example, Greece and Serbia fought the Ottoman Empire for their independence, and Belgium rebelled against Dutch rule.

At the same time, populations rebelled against conservative attempts to limit democratic progress. (Those who supported monarchy and aristocracy were conservative.) For example, after King Charles X of France tried to suspend freedom of the press and abolish France’s elected Chamber of Deputies, days of street fighting in Paris forced him to abdicate. King Louis-Philippe of a rival royal family took the French throne.

These revolts reflected a widespread discontent across the continent. Europe’s population had increased by 40 percent since 1800. Populations suffered food shortages. Throughout Austria, Prussia, and Eastern Europe, many rural workers were serfs (meaning peasants bound to the land of aristocratic landlords). Serfs paid taxes but aristocrats paid no taxes at all.

At the same time, the Industrial Revolution brought many economic, social, and demographic changes to
Europe. In Great Britain, Belgium, and northern and southeastern France, rural peasant families fled the impoverished countryside. They crowded into towns and cities. Those who found employment worked long hours, with their children often toiling beside them. They lived in appalling slums.

In the two years before 1848, revolts and civil war broke out in several European nations, including Galicia (currently southern Poland and eastern Ukraine), Krakow in Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. Tensions were flaring between the new urban poor (as well as many in the middle class) and the traditional aristocracy.

Paris 1848

On January 29, 1848, the well-known political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville gave a speech in France’s Chamber of Deputies. He said, “I believe that right now we are sleeping on a volcano.” The working classes, he observed, were “gradually forming in their breasts opinions and ideas which are destined . . . to bring with them, sooner or later . . . a most formidable revolution.” Although Tocqueville’s fellow conservative aristocrats scoffed at his remarks, his warning proved to be true.

About a month after Tocqueville’s dramatic speech, activists scheduled a banquet in Paris to discuss their movement for reforms. They wanted expansion of the right to vote, which was mainly limited to property owners. The Paris banquet was set for the evening of February 22.

As the banquet day approached, however, the organizers grew anxious. Radical leaders of the working classes planned to organize a mass demonstration around the event. Worried about a possible clash between the radicals and government troops, the organizers eventually postponed it altogether.

The radicals went ahead with their mass demonstration. Workers, women, and children gathered in a public square for a protest march. They planned to disperse if confronted by troops. Hundreds of students joined their ranks while singing La Marseillaise, the French national anthem that includes the refrain “To arms, citizens!”

After the students joined, the crowd began to hurl rocks and pavement stones. The troops responded by charging the crowd, killing two. In a matter of hours, the workers and students built barricades in the narrow streets. A full-scale revolt had begun.

King Louis-Philippe tried to quell the revolt. He dismissed France’s conservative prime minister. Moderate leaders then tried to persuade the rioters to stand down. But rioters accused them of cowardice. Fearing further violence and being uncertain of the loyalty of his troops, the King abdicated and fled to London.

A coalition of moderates and radical leaders formed a provisional government, or emergency government. They declared France a republic on February 24. It was the Second French Republic.

Germany and Austria-Hungary

“When Paris sneezes, Europe catches cold,” Metternich once remarked. He was reflecting on how revolts in the capital of France soon spread to other European capitals. Improvements in communication, including telegraphs, steamboats, and railways, made the revolutionary spirit spread quickly.

Within days of the Paris insurrection in February, an assembly in the German Duchy of Baden adopted a bill of rights. Other German states quickly followed suit.

The revolutionary tide swept even into the conservative strongholds of Vienna, the capital of Austria, and Berlin, the capital of Prussia. On March 13, students from the University of Vienna and many middle class professionals marched to the Austrian parliament house. They had a petition demanding freedoms of the press, religion, speech, and education. Workers from the industrial suburbs joined the protest.

Fighting broke out between protesters and Austrian army troops. Students and workers wielded stones and axes. The troops used rifles and cannons. To avoid further bloodshed, Austrian Emperor Ferdinand’s ministers asked Chancellor Metternich to resign. The aged mastermind of the conservative order agreed. He fled with his wife to England. Within a week of the uprising, Ferdinand abolished serfdom throughout the empire.
News of Metternich’s fall inspired Hungary to demand more autonomy within the Austrian Empire. Hungary also demanded that Transylvania, historically part of Romania, and Croatia-Slovenia be included in the new Hungarian state. Romanians, Croatians, Serbs, and Slovaks objected to changing from Austrian to Hungarian masters, causing border clashes between these states and Hungary.

In Berlin, the capital of Prussia, a large outdoor assembly petitioned for freedom of the press and new elections. King Frederick William refused to receive the petition. Instead he called in troops from outside the city. Street fighting broke out between the troops and demonstrators, who barricaded the streets with wagons, wood planks, and paving stones. In a matter of hours, hundreds of Berliners were dead.

Horrified at the bloodshed, Frederick William withdrew his forces and pleaded with the demonstrators to return to order. The following day, wearing the revolutionary nationalistic colors of red, black, and yellow, he attended a mass funeral for the fallen rioters. Afterwards, he declared that Prussia would become part of a wider German nation. He was appealing to the dream of a united Germany, which was as dear to many of the revolutionaries as free elections and freedom of the press.

As calm returned to the city, Frederick William left Berlin for a royal palace near Potsdam. There he plotted with his advisors, including a young Otto Von Bismarck, to restore his authority.

Other European States

Revolution had already broken out in Italy by the time Paris erupted in late February. Northern Italy, then under Austrian control, began a revolt, which would continue throughout the summer. It was finally subdued by Austrian troops. In the south, insurrections in the Kingdom of Sicily and Naples led King Ferdinand to proclaim a constitutional monarchy.

Not everyone caught the revolutionary fever. Constitutional reforms from the governments of The Netherlands and Denmark forestalled revolt in those nations. In Russia, the tsar kept a wary eye on events in Europe. His vast army was at the ready. His secret police watched the students and intellectuals.

Revolutionaries Quarrel

Following the overthrow of the French monarchy, extreme radicals in Paris dreamed of liberating people in other nations. The provisional French government opposed the radicals’ dream. But a legion of radicals in northern France invaded the Duchy of Savoy. The invasion failed. The radicals also helped organize unemployed Belgian workers to revolt against the Belgian monarchy. That effort also failed.

Other nations, recalling the Napoleonic Wars, watched the French movements with alarm. The German states, in particular, worried about being caught between French revolutionary armies and Russian troops determined to stomp out threats to its conservative order.

Profound differences between the moderates and radicals in France soon became critical. Radicals wanted not just constitutional and political change, but social change as well. Their goal was the elimination of poverty. And they wanted reforms to guarantee workers’ jobs, minimum wages, and decent working conditions.

Moderates, however, embraced the economic ideal of laissez-faire capitalism. They wanted limited government involvement in the relations between industrialists and workers. The new republican government in France attempted a compromise between the two groups. It organized a labor commission to improve the condition of the workers by setting up public workshops for the unemployed and reducing working hours.

Nevertheless, poor economic conditions doomed the French government’s efforts. The workshops produced little of value. Citizens blamed them for the high taxes imposed by the government. But in reality the taxes
mainly stemmed from the government’s decision to pay back the old monarchy’s debts.

The government was alarmed at radical propaganda directed at workers by members of the labor commission. It was also disturbed by the public employment of so many radicals. In June, it announced it would discontinue the workshops. Once again, the workers revolted, and barricades filled the streets of Paris.

But this time moderates in the government were joined by the conservatives and royalists whom the moderates had previously opposed. This coalition directed an army to smash the rebels. Within a few days, 1,500 workers were dead. Many more were wounded or imprisoned. The radicals had been beaten badly. The government imposed martial law and, once again, newspapers were restricted.

In Germany, news of the radicals’ defeat in Paris encouraged the Prussian king and his conservative allies. Radicals such as Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, whose Communist Manifesto was published in January 1848, hoped to build a socialist state organized by industrial workers. Instead, most radicals mainly focused on improving conditions for skilled craftsmen.

Even so, the militancy of many workers frightened middle-class citizens. As in France, many moderate liberals began to yearn for law and order. They looked on their conservative neighbors more favorably than before.

By the end of 1848, King Frederick William was bolstered by the support of more conservative military officers, such as future German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. The king was well on his way to reasserting his absolute authority.

In Austria, the democratic revolt in Vienna was crushed. Nonetheless, Emperor Ferdinand abdicated, and his nephew Franz Joseph reigned for the next 68 years.

**Aftermath**

In December, the French elected Louis Napoléon Bonaparte, the nephew of Emperor Napoleon I, as president of the republic. Louis had twice before tried to engineer a coup d’état (overthrow of the state). His government guaranteed work for the unemployed, old age insurance, and improved industrial working conditions, as long as they did not infringe on profits. But he was also elected on a platform that broadly anticipated twentieth century fascism: conservative values of religion, family, and order combined with strict censorship and arrests or deportations of insurgents.

Two years later, unable by law to seek a second term as president, Louis Napoléon engineered his third coup d’état. This one was successful. Louis Napoléon became emperor the following year and assumed the title Napoleon III. He would reign until 1870.

It seems that the 1848 revolutions ended in failure and a renewal of despotism in Europe. But some revolutionary aspirations were realized in the years after 1848. When Louis Napoléon’s empire ended, France once again became a republic, the Third Republic, which would last until an authoritarian regime was installed after Germany occupied France during World War II. With serfdom ended in Austria, it would be largely eliminated throughout Europe within a few decades after 1848. And by 1875, Italy and Germany each were unified nations.

The political conflicts of 1848 also persisted. Many people did not abandon their political goals just because the revolutions failed. Throughout the remaining 19th century, radicals and moderates continued to struggle not only with aristocrats and conservatives but also with each other. Liberals mainly pressed for broader voting rights, while radicals prioritized social and economic progress for the working class.

**WRITING & DISCUSSION**

1. Describe the conditions in European society in the 19th century that led to conflict between the working and the middle classes on one side, and the aristocracy and monarchy on the other.
2. Why did moderate revolutionaries and radical revolutionaries clash with each other?
3. Despite the failure of the revolutions of 1848, what changes did they bring about in Europe?

**ACTIVITY: The Judgement of History**

Form into groups of four. Each group will be assigned one of the three following historians’ statements about the 1848 revolutions. Each group should answer these questions: Is this historian’s statement accurate? Why or why not?

Each group should use at least three facts from the article as evidence, and should choose a spokesperson to share their findings with the class.

**E.J. Hobsbawn:** “No revolution has been more spontaneously romantic than the ‘springtime of the people,’ in none were revolutionaries so lost in clouds of vague idealism . . . . Eighteen forty-eight has been the revolution to get away from fast.”

**George Macaulay Trevelyan:** “1848 was the turning point at which modern history failed to turn.”

**Peter N. Stearns:** “In France more than elsewhere, we might say that the revolution of 1848 put items on the agenda for the next great surge of protest, in which we are to a great extent still engaged.”
Form students into groups of five. Each student in each group will choose one country that experienced the revolutions of 1848, so that all five countries are represented in each group:

Austria  
France  
Germany  
Hungary  
Italy

Each student is now an ambassador from the country they have chosen, and they are now at a congress of great powers with the other ambassadors in their group on December 31, 1848 (New Year’s Eve).

In their respective congresses, ambassadors should do the following:

1. Decide on a topic or question for discussion related to the revolutions of 1848; write it down; and pass that topic or question to the next group in a clockwise fashion. For example, a topic could be serfdom in Europe.

2. Discuss the topic or question your group has received. Each person in the congress must contribute to the discussion. One member should take notes.

3. Finally, each congress draws up a list of at least three reforms all five countries should make as a result of the revolutions. They can be reforms described in the article or created independently by the congress. Be ready to have a spokesperson share your congress’s discussion notes and list of reforms with the rest of the class.

4. After all congresses have shared, discuss as a class the following:
   a) Do you consider the Revolutions of 1848 a turning point in history? Why or why not?
   b) What was the greatest impact of the revolutions of 1848? Explain.

This supplemental activity was conceived by teacher Joy Chalker. Joy is a National Board Certified Teacher of international history and AP human geography at Duncan U. Fletcher High School in Neptune Beach, Florida. Joy is a teacher-leader in Constitutional Rights Foundation’s Teacher to Teacher Collab: www.crf-usa.org/t2tcollab.
Before 1979, the United States and Iran were on generally good diplomatic terms. In 1979, however, the Iranian Revolution began, which installed a Shia Islamist regime. During the revolution, Iranian student militants seized the U.S. embassy and took Americans hostages. They were held over a year in Tehran, Iran’s capital.

The Iranian government also formed the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The IRGC is a branch of the military that has been accused of sponsoring terrorism and training Islamist militants in Iraq and other neighboring countries. In 1980, the U.S. severed diplomatic relations with Iran. Diplomatic relations have never been renewed. Since 1984, the U.S. has designated Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Relations between the U.S. and Iran have become even more strained over suspicions that Iran has been developing nuclear weapons. U.S. assistance to Iran’s nuclear-energy development ended in 1979. As early as 1998, the U.S. announced concerns that Iran — still designated as a state sponsor of terrorism — might be developing nuclear weapons and not just nuclear energy for civil purposes.

Nuclear Power Capability

When natural uranium is mined from the earth, it contains less than one percent of uranium-235 (U-235), a chemical element that is essential for nuclear power plants and nuclear bombs alike. (It is thus considered less than one percent “enriched” with U-235.)

Most nuclear-power reactors use uranium that is enriched to around five percent. For nuclear weapons, uranium needs to be enriched to 90 percent or more. In all cases, large facilities called centrifuges are necessary to enrich uranium.

In April 2006, Iran announced for the first time that it had developed uranium enriched for nuclear power plants. In response, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) imposed sanctions, or penalties, on Iran in December 2006. One sanction banned Iran from importing nuclear-related materials and technology. Another was a “freeze” of financial assets around the globe owned by any Iranian person or company involved in the nuclear program. In June and July of 2010, the UNSC strengthened sanctions against Iran, as did the U.S. and the European Union (EU).

Terms of the Nuclear Deal

In 2013, President Obama and Iran’s President Rouhani had a phone call, which was the highest level interaction between the U.S. and Iran in over 30 years. Finally, on July 14, 2015, the five permanent members of the UNSC (U.S., China, France, Russia, and the UK) and Germany entered into the agreement with Iran. It is officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to limit Iran’s nuclear program. It is commonly called the Iran nuclear deal.

Before the JCPOA agreement, Iran was enriching its uranium to 20 percent. As part of the deal, Iran must limit enrichment to 3.67 percent, far below the level needed for weapons. And Iran must reduce the number of operational centrifuges for uranium enrichment from over 19,000 to 6,104.
Additionally, Iran is not allowed to maintain over 300 kilograms of enriched uranium. To comply, Iran shipped over 12 tons of enriched uranium to Russia.

Iran had to make changes to some of its nuclear facilities. It had to turn its Fordo enrichment plant into a research facility. It also is required to modify its Arak facility to ensure that the facility is not capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium, another common source-material for nuclear weapons.

Finally, Iran had to grant the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) unprecedented access to monitor its nuclear facilities. Using high-tech devices, IAEA closely monitors uranium enrichment at Iran’s nuclear facilities 24 hours a day. Most of the obligations on Iran in the agreement last from 10 to 25 years. After that time, the provisions will end, or “sunset.”

The deal almost immediately unfroze over $100 billion in Iranian assets overseas. Other benefits to Iran would kick in after eight years and once the IAEA verified that Iran had fulfilled its major obligations. These benefits include the EU ending nuclear-related economic sanctions. The U.S. would also lift nuclear-related sanctions. And the UNSC members plus Germany, called the P5 + 1, would allow Iran to enter the international banking system, give Iran permission to sell oil in international markets, and unfreeze billions of dollars of Iranian assets overseas.

In addition, the P5 + 1 must recognize Iran’s right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes. All countries that are a part of the Iran deal are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which guarantees this right.

As a result of the deal, Iran was forced to end its nuclear-weapons program and has been subject to extensive IAEA inspections. Thus, Iran’s “breakout time,” or the time it takes to build one operational nuclear weapon, has been extended. Before the deal, experts predicted that Iran’s breakout time was three to four months. After the deal, experts say that it would now take Iran about one year to produce a nuclear weapon, which of course it cannot do, under the terms of the deal.

President Obama said the nuclear deal was “a victory for diplomacy, for American national security, and for the safety and security of the world.”

In the U.S. Congress, supporters of the agreement argued that it would stop Iran from producing nuclear weapons for the next 10 to 25 years. The extended breakout time would give the U.S. time to impose more sanctions or intervene militarily if relations between the U.S. and Iran deteriorate. The limit on enrichment to 3.67 percent and the limit of 300 kilograms of enriched uranium within Iran would be enforced by the extensive IAEA inspections. IAEA inspectors would have 24/7 access to Iran’s nuclear facilities.

Opponents in Congress argued that there would be nothing stopping Iran from producing a nuclear weapon after the sunset provisions in 10 to 25 years. They also argued that eliminating sanctions would just put Iran in a better position financially to develop nuclear weapons once the sunset provisions expire. They argued that the nuclear agreement did nothing to prevent Iran from stockpiling traditional non-nuclear weapons. Nor did it stop the IRGC from funding terrorist groups in the Middle East or committing human rights abuses inside Iran.

Congress voted on the deal in a contentious atmosphere. First, Congress passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015. One of the requirements of the Act was that the U.S. President must certify every 90 days that Iran is in compliance with the nuclear agreement. The requirement to certify the agreement every 90 days is part of U.S. law and is not part of the agreement itself. With each certification, some sanctions against Iran would be eased.

The JCPOA is a presidential agreement, not a treaty. So the Senate did not need to approve it under Article II, Section 2, of the U.S. Constitution. But in September 2015, Senate Republicans still tried to reject the JCPOA in a procedural vote. All but four Senate Democrats voted to block the Republicans’ effort.

The House of Representatives also rejected a resolution approving the nuclear deal. The vote was 162-269, with all but one Republican voting against the resolution. But the House vote could not end the agreement.
To Certify or Not?

During his run for president in 2016, Donald Trump consistently criticized the Iranian agreement. Nonetheless, during his first year as president, Trump twice certified Iran’s compliance. On October 13, 2017, however, he refused to certify compliance stating that he did not think the deal is in the best interest of the U.S. Since the certification is required under U.S. law and not by the agreement itself, the U.S. remained part of the agreement at that time.

President Trump also charged that Iran was not complying with the agreement. The IAEA, however, asserted that Iran is in compliance. In January 2018, Trump certified the agreement again. But he signaled that he wanted Congress to add a “trigger” that would re-impose sanctions for certain non-nuclear activities as well, including working on a ballistic missile program.

On May 8, 2018, President Trump announced that the U.S. would withdraw from the deal and re-impose sanctions against Iran. Iran and the European parties to the agreement believe that re-imposing U.S. sanctions would be a material breach (a violation) of the deal. But the European parties believe that the deal could be saved even if the U.S. withdraws. Nevertheless, Iran had declared it would leave the deal if the U.S. pulled out.

Arguments for U.S. Withdrawal

In his announcement of withdrawal, President Trump said “Iran’s leaders . . . are going to want to make a new and lasting deal, one that benefits all of Iran and the Iranian people.” He long argued that U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA could force Iran back to the negotiating table. It could lead to a new deal with more favorable terms for the United States.

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U.S. regional allies Saudi Arabia and Israel expressed fears about an even stronger Iran that could result from sanction relief. Iran has funded terrorist or militant groups that have fought against these countries. Iranian leaders have made repeated threats against Israel over the years, too. Iran’s military chief of staff threatened to destroy Israel at “lightning speed” in September 2017.

The end of sanctions could also make it easier for Iran to produce nuclear weapons after the sunset provisions expire. But if Iran violated the terms of the deal...
after sanctions ended, the P5+1 and the EU could re-impose sanctions. Some analysts say that at that point Iran would consider itself free from the nuclear deal. It would just go right on developing nuclear weapons.

Even with the nuclear deal, Iran could be free to continue funding terrorist or militant organizations in the region, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Israel. It could also build more conventional weapons, such as ballistic missiles, and continue to carry out human rights abuses with no oversight from the United States. As U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said, “Iran’s leaders want to use the nuclear deal to hold the world hostage to its bad behavior. . . .”

Arguments for U.S. Compliance

With U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, it is not clear that Iran will renegotiate terms. Iran has not shown any willingness to renegotiate. Iran’s Vice Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araghchi said that after the U.S. did not certify Iran’s compliance in 2017, the deal could not be renegotiated.

It is also not clear that the agreement between Iran and the other U.S. allies will remain in place. After President Trump’s announcement of withdrawal, French President Emmanuel Macron pledged to remain part of the deal. Leaders of Germany and the United Kingdom, as well, pledged their commitment to it. Withdrawal places the U.S. at odds with European allies.

An end to the deal also means that the IAEA inspections will end. Iran could restart its nuclear-weapons program without extensive inspections on the enrichment of uranium.

Supporters of the JCPOA warn that withdrawal could harm U.S. credibility internationally. Other countries may likely distrust any agreement with the United States for fear the United States would renege.

Supporters also say this could have a harmful effect on U.S. efforts to limit or eliminate North Korea’s nuclear capabilities.

Supporters of the deal also argue that a lack of sanctions might prompt Iran to have a greater desire to join the international community. It might end its desire for nuclear weapons by the time the provisions sunset. In the meantime, the breakout time would remain extended, and the IAEA would continue to get uninterrupted monitoring of Iranian nuclear facilities. If Iran does decide to build a nuclear weapon, violating the deal, then no U.S. options (sanctions or even military intervention) would be off the table.

One day following President Trump’s announcement, military confrontations flared between Israel and Iran. IRGC forces in Syria fired 20 rockets into the Golan Heights, an area controlled by Israel that borders Israel and Syria. Israel responded by bombing Iranian military sites in Syria (there to defend the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria). Israel claimed the IRGC forces struck first, but a UK-based human rights group claimed that Israel first bombarded a town in the demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria.

WRITING & DISCUSSION

1. Explain why the United States and other UN member nations want to curtail Iran’s nuclear-weapons capabilities. Use evidence from the article.

2. Some supporters of the nuclear deal point out that it was intended only to affect Iran’s nuclear-weapons capabilities. They dismiss the argument that Iran can still develop conventional weapons while the deal is in effect. What might the consequences be if the U.S. were to try to renegotiate the deal to limit Iran’s conventional-weapons development, too?

ACTIVITY: Be It Resolved! The Iran Nuclear Deal

You are on a Senate subcommittee on foreign policy. As a senator, your task is to decide on a resolution that would recommend future actions of the United States with regard to Iran’s nuclear program.

1. Form groups of four or five. Each group is a subcommittee.

2. In your subcommittee, come up with at least two reasons why the United States should re-establish the agreement and two reasons why the United States should not re-establish the agreement and instead just leave sanctions against Iran in place. Use all available evidence in the article.

3. As a group, decide whether or not your resolution will seek to re-establish the agreement or leave sanctions in place. Jot down your subcommittee’s decision and at least two reasons for that decision.

4. Choose a spokesperson who will present and defend your subcommittee’s decision to the rest of the class.
   a. Be prepared to help your spokesperson if any member of another subcommittee questions or challenges your subcommittee’s decision.
   b. Each spokesperson will have one minute to present the decision and then will have one minute to answer questions from the other subcommittees.

5. After all subcommittees have presented, each senator will write a draft of a resolution to the rest of the Senate of 250-300 words answering the question: Should the Iran Nuclear Deal be re-established?
Annotated Timeline
A. Each student creates a timeline:
   1) Take a sheet of note paper and turn it sideways (landscape layout).
   2) Using a ruler or other straight edge, draw two lines across the middle of the paper, spacing \textit{at least four inches} between each line.
   3) Insert the following years as follows:
      \begin{itemize}
      \item 1979, 1980, 1984, 1998, 2006 \text{(above the first line)}, and
      \item 2010, 2013, 2015, and 2017 \text{(above the second line).}
      \end{itemize}
B. Read the article. As you read, annotate the years on the timeline by writing a brief description of a main event for each year below the line. Each description should be 10-20 words in length.
C. For at least four of the years, draw a simple picture of the main event described next to the corresponding description.

Multimedia Presentation
A. Working in groups of three to four students each, conduct independent research and create a multimedia presentation (using presentation software, usually a slide show) on a specific topic from the list below. A slide show should include (a) at least three slides with images, and (b) a separate script written for the presentation of 40-50 words per slide.
   1) \textit{STEM Presentation}. Example topics: nuclear weapons, nuclear power plants, enrichment.
   2) \textit{Geography Presentation}. Example topics: Iran’s human rights violations, Iran’s terrorism funding in the Middle East, Iran’s rivalry with Saudi Arabia in the Middle East.
   3) \textit{World History Presentation}. Example topics: Iran’s UNESCO World Heritage sites; Iran’s religious, linguistic, and ethnic diversity; an overview of the history of Iran from 1953 to the present day.
   4) \textit{Government and Politics}. Example topics: the structure of Iran’s government, Iran’s foreign policy, Iran’s theocracy.
B. Each group presents its slide show to the class.

Discussion: Iran vs. North Korea
B. In small groups of four or five students each, discuss (a) the comparative effect of economic sanctions in Iran and North Korea, (b) the comparative current United States foreign policy in North Korea and Iran, (c) the comparative effect of United Nations policy toward each country, and (d) the methods that the international community and the U.S. can use to deter each country’s nuclear weapons development.
C. Write a short essay of 100-200 words answering this question: \textit{Which country’s nuclear weapons program is more challenging to the United States, Iran or North Korea? Why?}

These extension activities were created by teacher Jennifer Jolley, M.A. Jennifer is a National Board Certified Teacher in Social Sciences. She teaches AP U.S. government/politics, AP U.S. history, and world history honors at Palm Bay Magnet High School in Melbourne, Florida. Jennifer is a teacher-leader in CRF’s Teacher to Teacher Collab: www.crf-usa.org/t2tcollab.
Sources
Ida B. Wells

Revolutions of 1848

Iran Nuclear Deal

Standards Addressed
Ida B. Wells
National U.S. History Standard 17: Understands massive immigration after 1870 and how social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity. Middle School: (4) Understands opposition to discrimination in the late 19th century. High School: (4) Understands the challenges diverse people encountered in late 19th century American society.
California History-Social Science Standard B.11: Students analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction. (1) List the original aims of Reconstruction and describe its effects on the political and social structures of different regions.
California History-Social Science Standard B.12: Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. (2) Describe the changing landscape, including the growth of cities linked by industry and trade, and the development of cities divided according to race, ethnicity, and class.

Revolutions of 1848
California History-Social Science Standard 10.2: Students compare and contrast the Glorious Revolution of England, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution and their enduring effects worldwide on the political expectations for self-government and individual liberty. (5) Discuss how nationalism spread across Europe with Napoleon but was repressed for a generation under the Congress of Vienna and Concert of Europe until the Revolutions of 1848.
National World History Standard 32: Understands the causes and consequences of political revolutions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Middle School: (3) Understands how the French Revolution changed social conditions in France (e.g., how territorial changes were made in Europe between 1789 and 1815 and their consequences for diverse social groups such as clergy, nobility, peasantry, bourgeoisie, and sans-culottes). (6) Knows the leading figures and issues of the Congress of Vienna.

National World History Standard 35: Understands patterns of nationalism, state-building, and social reform in Europe and the Americas from 1830 to 1914. High School: (1) Understands the ideas that influenced the nationalist movements.

Iran Nuclear Deal
California History-Social Science Standard 10.10: Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and China. (1) Understand the challenges in the regions, including their geopolitical, cultural, military, and economic significance and the international relationships in which they are involved. (2) Describe the political history of the regions, including political divisions and systems, key leaders, religious issues, natural features, resources, and population patterns.
National Civics Standard 22: Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy. High School: (6) Understands how and why domestic politics may impose constraints or obligations on the ways in which the United States acts in the world (e.g., long-standing commitments to certain nations, lobbying efforts of domestic groups, economic needs). (9) Understands the current role of the United States in peacemaking and peacekeeping.
National World History Standard 44: Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world. High School: (13) Understands how global political change has altered the world economy (e.g., what participation in the world economy can mean for different countries).

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