The Unification of Italy

In 1850, the Italian peninsula and its nearby territory included ten separate states: Piedmont in the northwest (which controlled the island of Sardinia), featuring the city of Genoa; the duchies of Tuscany, Parma, and Modena to the east and south; Rome and the Papal States in the center of the peninsula; two states controlled by Austria—Lombardy and Venice (both in the north); and two tiny states—Monaco and San Marino. Over the next decade, these states joined together to create a unified Italian nation.

Piedmont led the way in the unification of Italy. Aided by the French, the uniting of the Italian states took place in four stages: (1) war resulted in Lombardy's independence from Austria; (2) Piedmont acquired Modena, Parma, Tuscany, portions of the Papal States, and the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily through negotiation and warfare in 1860, and joined with Piedmont in 1861 to form the Kingdom of Italy; (3) the Kingdom of Italy took control of Venice from the Austrians through war and diplomacy in 1866; and (4) an 1870 military campaign incorporated Rome and the rest of the Papal States into the Kingdom of Italy.

The man essential to the start of this process was Count Camillo di Cavour (1810–1861). In 1852, he became the premier of Piedmont. He had already developed a plan to unite the whole of Italy under a constitutional monarchy. He was certain that foreign help was needed to make his dream a reality. Cavour turned to the French for support against Austria, which controlled portions of the Italian peninsula.

To seal the alliance, Cavour sided with the French in the Crimean War. When the war ended, Cavour attended the peace conference in 1856. There, he made his grievances toward Austria known.

Meanwhile, Cavour was giving secret support to a group known as the National Society, which was preparing to rally against the Austrians in the northern Italian provinces. By 1858, Cavour had negotiated with Napoleon III to have troops sent to aid Piedmont in the creation of an Italian Kingdom at Austria's expense. By spring of 1859, Austria invaded Piedmont. But a combined French and Piedmont force defeated the Austrians at Magenta and Solferino. At the same time, the National Society launched revolts in Modena, Tuscany, and Parma. During later negotiations, Austria granted control of Lombardy to Piedmont.

Giuseppe Garibaldi

By January 1860, Cavour negotiated the annexations of Modena, Parma, Tuscany, and the Papal State of Romagna to Piedmont. By spring, revolution began in Sicily. The great freedom fighter, Giuseppe Garibaldi, along with 1000 volunteers—the Red Shirts—fought to free Sicily from French control. Before year's end, Garibaldi campaigned in the Kingdom of Naples. By year's end, Sicily and Naples were added to the Kingdom of Italy.

Garibaldi continued his campaign of conquest and unification of all of Italy. However, his success threatened French intervention, so Cavour and the Italian king, Victor Emmanuel II, sent Italian troops to stop Garibaldi. On August 29, 1861, Garibaldi was defeated.

By April of 1866, the Kingdom of Italy formed an alliance with Prussia against Austria. Under the alliance, Italy received control of Venice. When military action forced the French out of Italy, especially Rome, Garibaldi was brought back into action, invading the Papal States in 1867. But his defeat came at the hands of French and papal troops.

Only when the French left Rome (owing to the Franco-Prussian War in 1870) did an Italian army occupy the city. Then the Italian Kingdom annexed the remaining Papal States (except the Vatican), uniting the Italian peninsula into a single nation-state.

Review and Write

What steps did Cavour carry out to ensure the making of a unified Italy?

The Crimean War

At the turn of the 19th century, the five leading European powers were England, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia. These powers dominated international politics in Europe and abroad during the first half of the 1800s. These nations—with the obvious exception of France—had fought in several coalitions against Napoleon Bonaparte until 1815.

During the generation to follow, these states added to their power, taking the lead in economic policies and industrialization. These were years of expansion and growth for nation-states in Europe. Only one major European war managed to break the peace in Europe from 1815 to 1870.

The Crimean War broke out in 1854 and lasted until 1856. The war began, officially, as the result of a rivalry between Catholic and Greek Orthodox monks in the Ottoman Empire. The sultan recognized the Catholic clerics as equal in status with the Greeks. This he agreed to do under intense pressure from the French government.

When the sultan made this step, Russia, which supported the Orthodox monks, stepped in and occupied land under Ottoman control, chiefly the territory belonging to Romania today. The Turks, leaders of the Ottoman state, than declared war on Russia in 1853. As allies of Turkey, England and France declared war on Russia in the early spring of 1854.

For many, the war did not go well. British troops were poorly led and suffered in the field as a result of the bad planning and the primitive logistics of their leaders. Much of the war was fought in eastern Europe—especially on the Black Sea—around the Russian port of Sevastopol, on the Crimean peninsula. One of the best known military actions of the war (although a foolhardy mistake) was the famous Charge of the Light Brigade, made by a British cavalry unit during the fighting at Balaclava on October 25, 1854. These horse-bound troops were cut down by cannons on three sides. Of 700 cavalry troops who began the charge, 195 survived.

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) was known for her involvement in the Crimean War. She served as a British nurse, whose fellow nurses took

Florence Nightengale

care of the sick and wounded during the conflict. She led an important crusade in favor of improving the careless and deadly conditions found in most military hospitals of the period.

Much of the military action of the Crimean War was indecisive and a waste of human life. (Many more died of disease than in combat, a fact of war in that period.) By 1856, following a threat by Austria to enter the war on the side of the allies, the Russians agreed to an end to hostilities.

A new international meeting was called—the Congress of Paris—and important decisions were made regarding the future of Europe. The allies—now known as the Concert of Europe—agreed to recognize the sovereignty of Turkey. They also limited Russia's influence and power over Turkey. Finally, the treaty removed all naval and military presence from the Black Sea.

With the end of this military crisis, the great powers of Europe, along with a humiliated Russia, continued to lead the way in international politics. However, within 15 years of the end of the Crimean War, two new powers emerged in Europe and became important nation-states. Between 1859 and 1871, Italy and Germany became independent, unified states. During the centuries prior to this, power on the Italian peninsula had been wielded by powerful city-states such as Venice, Milan, Rome, and the kingdom of Naples. Germany had been a crazy quilt of hundreds of small states including medieval kingdoms, duchies, fiefdoms, and counties. Now great change was ahead for both these new nation-states.

The Making of a Unified Germany

For centuries, the various states of the Germanies had been more divided than united. Even during the years of the Holy Roman Empire, the imperial ruler was often weak. By the early 19th century, Napoleon Bonaparte declared the Holy Roman Empire a dead political system. In the decades following, Prussia—the most powerful German state—began to take on the role of leader of the Germanies.

From 1819 to 1834, Prussia was the motivating force behind the formation of the German Customs Union (in German, the *Zollverein*). The purpose of the union was to regularize and limit the tariffs which existed between the German states. By 1834, the GCU had 18 German states as members, representing 20 million people. By mid-century, the GCU included all the German states, with the exception of Austria whose membership Prussia continually blocked.

Otto von Bismarck

A decade passed before a Prussian leader rose to power to create a new German nation. In 1862, a talented statesman became Prussia's chief minister. Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898) was an iron-fisted nationalist. He aspired to bring all the Germanies under one national banner. The king of Prussia, William I (ruled as regent, 1858–1861, and as king, 1861–1888), was a mediocre monarch who was fortunate to have the ambitious Bismarck in his government.

Bismarck made a first move toward unification in 1863 when he went to war with the Dutch who had attempted taking control of two German duchies. (Austria fought in the war as an ally of Prussia.) At war's end, Bismarck arranged for Prussia and Austria to each occupy one of the duchies under the 1865 peace called the Convention of Gastein. By the next year, Bismarck accused the Austrians of violating the Convention of Gastein. The conflict that followed was known as the Seven Weeks War, with the Prussian army soundly defeating the Austrians at Sadowa in Bohemia on July 3, 1866. (Prussian soldiers were armed with a breech-loading rifle called the needle gun, while the Austrians were still using extremely inaccurate single-shot muskets.) In the peace talks, Prussia gained possession of the duchies of both Holstein and Schleswig, plus Frankfurt, Hanover, Hesse, and Nassau. The treaty also placed Prussia at the head of a new political unit, the North German Confederation.

At the same time, Prussia gained control of the two ruling bodies of the former Germanic Confederation, the Federal Council (Bundesrat) and the lower house (Reichstag). With these military and diplomatic successes, Bismarck had maneuvered Prussia into the leadership of a majority of the German states.

Bismarck then set to work bringing four southern German states (Baden, Bavaria, Wurttemberg, and Hesse-Darmstadt) into the Prussian-controlled North German Confederation. But these states were Catholic while the northern German states were Protestant. These four states had strong cultural connections with France. Bismarck knew that only war would bring the four Germanies into his fold.

The war between France and Prussia came at Bismarck's goading. In 1868, when the throne of Spain was vacant, the French leader Napoleon III tried to force William I not to support one of William's own nephews as the new Spanish heir. Bismarck used this to push for war with France. The Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871) went badly for the French and led to the deposing of Napoleon III. During the war, the four southern German states joined the North German Confederation, just as Bismarck had hoped. By May 10, 1871, the Treaty of Frankfurt declared William I emperor of the German Empire—the Second Reich. Bismarck's dream of a united Germany had finally become reality.
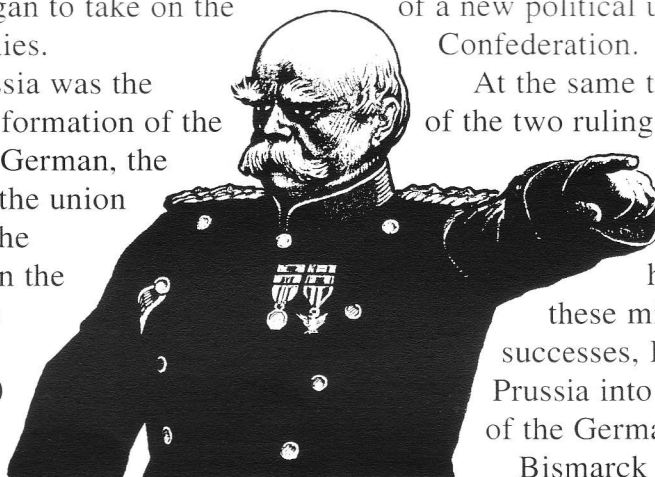
Creating New Nation-States: A Map Study

During the 1860s and 1870s, two important nation-states were created—a unified Italy and a unified Germany. In a short time, these two states proved to be important nations in Europe. In fact, their creation caused an imbalance in the power which had been established between the leading European powers attending the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

That balance proved to be an important deterrent to war in the nineteenth century. With the exception of the limited conflict of the Crimean War in the 1850s and the Franco-Prussian War of the 1870s, Europe experienced no widespread war between 1815 and 1914.

Map Work

On the map to the right, identify the locations for the following: Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Piedmont, Lombardy, Papal States, Corsica, Sardinia, Brescia, Turin, Milan, Palermo, Naples, and Rome.

On the map below, identify the following: Jutland Peninsula, France, Denmark, Prussia, Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein, Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, Munich, and Berlin.

Test II

Part I. Matching (Worksheets 16–21)
Match the answers to the right with the statement on the left.

_____ 1. Secret society of Greek revolutionists

_____ 2. Failed revolution in Russia that took place in 1825

_____ 3. 1830 revolution in the streets of Paris

_____ 4. French king who came to power during the 1830 revolution

_____ 5. Belgian king brought to power in 1831 during the revolt against the Dutch

_____ 6. English liberal group who campaigned for the lower classes

_____ 7. Publisher of the *Political Register*, an 1830s liberal English publication

_____ 8. English socialist thinker who believed that competition was evil

_____ 9. Author of the *Communist Manifesto*

_____ 10. Marxist term for the working class

_____ 11. 1848 street demonstrations in Paris

_____ 12. French president elected in 1848 under the Second French Republic

A. Leopold of Saxe-Coburg

B. William Cobbett

C. proletariat

D. Herairia Philike

E. Philosophical Radicals

F. Louis Blanc

G. the three glorious days

H. Karl Marx

I. Louis Napoleon

J. Louis Philippe

K. Decembrist Revolt

L. Bloody June Days

Part II. Matching (Worksheets 22–27)

_____ 1. French leader who declared himself emperor in 1852

_____ 2. French leader who attempted to seize control of Mexico

_____ 3. Political movement in England in 1848

_____ 4. Document presented to English parliament in 1848 by revolutionaries

_____ 5. British monarch who ascended the throne in 1837

_____ 6. British prime minister during 1855–58 and 1859–65

_____ 7. Conflict of 1854–56 that resulted in defeat for Russia

_____ 8. Famous British nurse

_____ 9. Italian leader of the *Red Shirts*

_____ 10. Italian diplomat who helped create a unified Italy

_____ 11. Prussian-controlled trade group of German states

_____ 12. Statesman who worked to create a unified German state

A. Victoria

B. Crimean War

C. Lord Palmerston

D. Napoleon III

E. Camillo di Cavour

F. German Customs Union

G. Chartism

H. Giuseppe Garibaldi

I. Florence Nightingale

J. Otto Bismarck

K. Maximilian

L. monster petition

Part III. Respond and Write
In what ways did Europe experience significant political change during the decades from 1830 to 1870?