

# Notes- Crimean War, Napoleon III, and Unifications of Italy and Germany

## **The Crimean War (1853-56)**

Often overlooked but important. A conflict between Russia on the one hand and Great Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire on the other. It was fought mainly on the Crimean peninsula in Black Sea, hence the name given to the war. Austria stayed neutral, to the indignation of Nicholas I, who had bailed Franz Joseph out of difficulty in Hungary in 1849.

Causes:

- Russian foreign policy was to assert as much power as possible in the Balkans, destroy or subordinate Ottoman authority, gain free passage of shipping through the Dardanelles (and thus permanent warm water ports for commerce and a naval presence in the Mediterranean)
- Napoleon III of France was intent on winning military achievements to match his uncle's and gain popularity
- Britain regarded the Mediterranean as their lake and thus a Russian naval presence as an unacceptable intrusion
- Ottomans were trying to stave off collapse; they were already the "sick man of Europe"
- Technical dispute over religious authority in Jerusalem, really only a pretext
- Sardinia enters war against Russia to gain leverage with France for unification of Italy

Important Figures

- Florence Nightingale – addressed the inadequate medical treatment accorded the British soldiers. Helped found the modern nursing profession. One of the first women not a monarch or writer to achieve international fame for work in the public realm.
- Alexander II of Russia- succeeded his father, Nicholas I during the war. Negotiated peace and instituted reforms.

Outcomes:

- Implacable enmity by Russia towards Austria due to its failure to come to its aid during the war
- Sardinia gains a place at the negotiating table allowing Count Cavour to work with Napoleon III
- Russia reforms and rearms, becoming much more formidable
- Russia was blocked from acquiring access through the Dardanelles
- Military embarrassments (charge of the Light Brigade) and extraordinary number of deaths made engaging in continental warfare very unpopular in Britain. Hence it stood aside during the unification of Italy and Germany.
- Ottomans staggered on for another half century, although they lost most of their Balkan territories in the years to come
- Balance of power preserved

## Napoleon III in France

*How did Napoleon III seek to reconcile popular and conservative forces in an authoritarian nation-state?*

Napoleon Bonaparte's France had already combined national feeling with authoritarian rule. Napoleon's nephew, Louis Napoleon, revived and extended this merger.

### France's Second Republic

Although Louis Napoleon played no part in French politics before 1848, universal male suffrage and widespread popular support gave him three times as many votes as the four other presidential candidates combined in the French presidential election of December 1848. This outcome occurred for several reasons. First, he had the great name of his uncle, whom romantics had transformed into a demigod after 1820. Second, as Karl Marx stressed at the time, middle class and peasant property owners feared the socialist challenge of urban workers and the chaos of revolution of 1848, and they wanted a tough ruler to protect their property and provide stability. Third, Louis Napoleon enunciated a positive program for France in pamphlets widely circulated before the election.

He promoted a vision of national unity and social progress. He believed that the government should represent the people and help them economically.

How is this accomplished?

Corrupt parliaments and political parties were not the answer. French politicians represented special-interest groups, particularly middle-class ones. The answer was a strong, and even authoritarian national leader- like the first Napoleon- whose efforts to provide jobs and stimulate the economy would serve all the people, rich and poor. This leader would be linked to each citizen by direct democracy, his sovereignty uncorrupted by politicians and legislative bodies. To the many common people who voted for him, Louis Napoleon appeared to be a strong leader and a forward looking champion of popular interests.

Elected to a four year term, Louis Napoleon was required by the constitution to share power with the National Assembly, which was overwhelmingly conservative. He signed conservative sponsored bills that increased greatly the role of the Catholic Church in primary and secondary education and deprived many poor people of the right to vote. He took these steps in the hopes that the Assembly would vote funds to pay his personal debts and change the constitution so he could run for a second term.

But after the Assembly failed on the last point, he began to conspire with key army officers. On Dec. 2, 1851, he illegally dismissed the legislature and seized power in a coup d'état. There was some armed resistance in Paris and widespread insurrection in the countryside of southern France, but the army crushed these popular protests. Restoring universal male suffrage and claiming to stand above political bickering, Louis Napoleon called on the French people to legalize his actions. (Like the first Napoleon did) They did—92% voted to make him president for 10 years. A year later—97% made him the hereditary emperor.

### Napoleon III's Second Empire

Louis Napoleon, now Emperor Napoleon III, experienced both success and failure between 1852 and 1870, when he fell from power. In the 1850s his policies led to economic growth. His government

promoted new investment banks and massive railroad construction that were at the heart of the Industrial Revolution. Also ambitious programs of public works, which included rebuilding Paris to improve the urban environment. Business owners' profits soared, rising wages of workers, and unemployment declined.

Louis Napoleon hoped that economic progress would reduce the social and political tensions. In the 1860s, he granted workers the right to form unions and the right to strike—important economic rights denied by earlier governments.

Louis Napoleon restricted, but did not abolish the National Assembly. Members were elected by universal male suffrage every 6 years. The government would use its officials and appointed mayors to spread the work that election of the government's candidate—and defeat of the opposition—would provide roads, tax breaks, and many other local benefits. He held the political power. He was the only one who chose his ministers, who had great freedom of action.

In the 1860s, this system gradually disintegrated. A nationalist, Napoleon had wanted to reorganize Europe on the principle of nationality and gain influence and territory for France and himself in the process. Instead, problems in Italy and the rising power of Prussia led to increasing criticism at home from his Catholic and nationalist supporters. With increasing effectiveness, the middle-class liberals who had always wanted a less authoritarian rule, denounced his rule.

Napoleon was sensitive to the public opinion. He responded to critics with progressive liberalization. He gave the Assembly greater powers and opposition candidates greater freedom. In 1869, the opposition, consisting of republicans, monarchists, and liberals, polled almost 45% of the vote.

The next year, Louis Napoleon granted France a new constitution. On the verge of a war with Prussia, Napoleon III's attempt to reconcile a strong national state with universal male suffrage moved in an increasingly democratic direction.

## **Italian Unification**

Between 1815 and 1848 the goal of a unified Italian nation captured the imagination of many Italians. There were three basic approaches.

First, the radical and idealistic patriot Giuseppe Mazzini called for a centralized democratic republic based on universal male suffrage and the will of the people. Second, Vincenzo Gioberti, a Catholic priest, called for a federation of existing states under the presidency of a progressive pope. Many Italians, though looked to the autocratic kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont for leadership, like many Germans looked to Prussia. The third alternative was strengthened by the failures of 1848, when Austria smashed Mazzini's republicanism. Sardinia's king, Victor Emmanuel II, crowned in 1849, retained the liberal constitution granted by his father under duress the previous year. This constitution combined a strong monarchy with a fair degree of civil liberties and parliamentary government, though deputies were elected by limited franchise based on income. To some of the Italian middle classes, Sardinia appeared to be liberal, progressive state ideally suited to drive Austria out of northern Italy and lead a united Italy. By contrast, Mazzini's ideas seemed too radical.

As for the papacy, the initial cautious support for unification by Pius IX had given way to hostility after he was temporarily driven from Rome during the upheavals of 1848. For a long generation, the papacy opposed not only national unity, but also most modern trends.

### Cavour

Cavour was the leader of Sardinia from 1850 until his death in 1861. Originally, sought unity for only the states of northern and perhaps central Italy.

In the 1850s Cavour worked to consolidate Sardinia as a liberal constitutional state capable of leading northern Italy. His program of building highways and railroads, expanding civil liberties, and opposing clerical privilege increased support for Sardinia throughout northern Italy. Under Cavour's direction, Sardinia-Piedmont became a prosperous and progressive state. Yet Cavour realized that Sardinia could not drive out Austria from the north without a powerful ally. He established a secret alliance with Napoleon III against Austria in July 1858. He sent soldiers to support the French and British in the Crimean War. Piedmont had no argument with Russia and entering the war was an obvious effort to gain favor with the French. The French Emperor had a fondness for Italy, where he had lived during his youth, and he promised to send troops to aid the Piedmont in a war against Austria. Piedmont would acquire the Austrian ruled provinces of Lombardy and Venetia and in return Cavour agreed to cede the provinces of Nice and Savoy to France.

Cavour provoked Austria into war. As the Austrians moved into the Piedmont, a combined force of Cavour's forces and the French counterattacked. Fearful of criticism and a hostile reaction by French Catholics (Cavour was at odds with the Pope), Napoleon abandoned Cavour and made a compromise peace with Austria. Sardinia would only receive Lombardy from Austria. The rest of Italy remained essentially unchanged. Furious with Napoleon's double dealing, Cavour resigned in a rage.

However, the skill of Cavour's allies in the moderate nationalist movement salvaged his plans for Italian unification. While the war against Austria raged in the north, pro-Sardinian nationalists in Tuscany and elsewhere in central Italy encouraged popular revolts that easily toppled their ruling princes. Using and controlling this popular enthusiasm, middle class nationalist leaders in central Italy called for fusion with Sardinia. This was not at all what the Great Powers wanted, but the nationalists held firm. Returning to power in early 1860, Cavour gained Napoleon III's support by ceding Savoy and Nice to France. The people of central Italy then voted overwhelmingly to join a greatly enlarged kingdom of Sardinia under Victor Emmanuel. Cavour had achieved his original goal of a northern Italian state. (Tuscany, Parma, Modena, and the Romagna united with Sardinia)

### Revolution in Southern Italy

For Giuseppe Garibaldi, the job of unification was only half done. Garibaldi personified the romantic, revolutionary nationalism and republicanism of Mazzini and 1848. Leading a corps of volunteers against Austria in 1859, Garibaldi emerged in 1860 as an independent force in Italian politics. Garibaldi planned to liberate the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from their new Bourbon ruler. In May of 1860, Garibaldi sailed from Genoa with a force of 1,000 volunteers, the Red Shirts. Officially, Cavour opposed Garibaldi's expedition, but he supported it secretly. Outwitting the twenty-thousand man royal army, the guerilla leader won battles, gained volunteers, and took Palermo. In August of 1860, Garibaldi's forces crossed

the Strait of Messina to the Italian mainland. King Francis II fled and on September 7, he entered Naples, the capital of the Two Sicilies.

Cavour had not expected the Red Shirts' rapid success and he feared that Garibaldi might now attempt to seize Rome, which could lead France and Austria to intervene in defense of the Pope. Cavour quickly sent forces to occupy most of the Papal States (but not Rome) to intercept Garibaldi. Cavour took control of most of the Papal States, except Rome. Garibaldi did not oppose Cavour and the people of the south voted to join the Kingdom of Sardinia. King Victor Emmanuel II joined forces with Garibaldi, who agreed with the Sardinia-Piedmont annexation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

On March 17, 1861, an Italian parliament proclaimed the establishment of the kingdom of Italy and King Victor Emmanuel II became king. Italy's first capital was Turin, the capital of the Piedmont, but the Italian capital was moved to Florence. Cavour did not survive to see the creation of Italy, he died three months later at the age of 51.

In April 1866, Italy concluded an alliance with Prussia, which defeated Austria during the summer. Austria ceded Venetia to the Italians. After the kingdom of Italy was created in 1861, French troops remained in Rome to defend the pope's possession of the city and its surroundings. When the French withdrew these troops during the Franco-German War of 1870, the Italians occupied and annexed Rome, which now became Italy's capital. The annexations of Rome and Venetia completed the process of unification. The new kingdom under Victor Emmanuel II, was neither radical, nor fully democratic. Only a half million out of 22 million Italians had the right to vote and propertied classes and the common people remained divided. A great a growing social and cultural gap also separated the progressive, industrializing north from the stagnant, agrarian south. The new Italy was united on paper, but divisions still remained.

## German Unification

Nationalist aspiration for the unification of Germany were stimulated by the occupation of Napoleon I, who combined much of central Germany. Metternich and other German princes and kings helped dampen the nationalist movement until 1848. An economic agreement (Zollverein) established by Prussia in 1834 made the advantages of unity more obvious.

The Prussian Prime Minister, Otto Von Bismarck, a conservative junker and Prussian patriot decided the only way to preserve Prussian power was to conquer the rest of Germany and absorb it into a gigantic Prussian state. Like Cavour, he was a master of Realpolitik.

Following the failure of the 1848 revolution, the German Confederation was reestablished as a loose union of 39 German states.

After Austria and Russia blocked Prussian king Frederick William IV's attempt in 1850 to unify Germany, tension grew between Austria and Prussia as they struggled to dominate the German Confederation. Economic differences increased this rivalry. Austria had not been included in the German Customs Union, Zollverein. This gave Prussia an advantage over Austria. Prussia had emerged from 1848 with a weak parliament, which was at the hands of wealthy liberal middle class by 1859. Longing for national unification, these middle-class representatives wanted to establish once and for all that the parliament,

not the king, held ultimate political power including control of the army. At the same time, the national uprising in Italy in 1859 made a profound impression on Prussia's tough-minded William I. Convinced that great political change and war—perhaps with Austria, perhaps with France—were quite possible, William I and his top military advisers pushed to raise taxes and increase the defense budget in order to double the size of the army. The Prussian parliament rejected the military budget in 1862, and the liberals triumphed in new elections. King William appointed Count Otto von Bismarck as the Prussian Prime Minister and encouraged him to defy parliament.

Otto von Bismarck

Arguably, the most important figure in German history between Martin Luther and Adolf Hitler, Bismarck has been the object of enormous interest and debate. Bismarck was a master of practical politics who first honed his political skills as a high ranking diplomat for the Prussian government. Bismarck was born into a family of Prussian Junker aristocracy. He studied law and set out on a career in the Prussian civil service. Bismarck had a strong personality and an unbounded desire for power. However, he was very flexible and pragmatic. Always keeping his options open, Bismarck moved with determination and cunning toward his goal.

In 1851, the Prussian king, Frederick William IV appointed Bismarck as Prussia's representative to the diet of the German Confederation, which met in Frankfurt. Witnessing Austria's domination of German affairs, Bismarck became convinced that Germany was too small for both Austria and Prussia.

When he took office as prime minister in 1862, in the midst of a constitutional crisis caused by the deadlock on the military budget, Bismarck made a strong impression. Declaring that William's government would rule without parliamentary consent, he lashed out at the liberal middle class opposition. He was denounced by liberals by his view of "might makes right." Bismarck had the Prussian bureaucracy continue collecting taxes even though the parliament refused to approve the budget. He also reorganized the army.

Opposition at home made Bismarck search for success abroad.

Step 1: The Danish War

The extremely complicated question of Schleswig- Holstein – two provinces that belonged to Denmark but were members of the German Confederation provided an opportunity for Bismarck. In 1864, when the Danish king tried, as he had in 1848, to bring these two provinces into a more centralized Danish state against the will of the German Confederation, Prussia enlisted Austria in a short and successful war against Denmark. Denmark was quickly defeated and surrendered the two duchies. In the Convention of Gastein, signed in August 1865, Bismarck arranged for joint Austro-Prussian possession of the duchies, with Prussia occupying Schleswig and Austria Holstein. This provided Bismarck with opportunities to provoke arguments with the Austrians. He left Prussia in a position to force Austria out by war, however he recognized the war had to be localized to avoid provoking a larger European alliance against Prussia. He neutralized the French and Russians.

He met with Napoleon III in October 1865, he vaguely hinted at the possibility that France might receive some territorial compensation in Belgium and Luxembourg or in the German Rhineland in the event of war between Prussia and Austria. The French emperor agreed to remain neutral. Bismarck also formed

an alliance with Italy which provided for the Italian acquisition of Austrian ruled Venetia in the event of a Prussian victory.

Bismarck had already put Russia in his debt. In 1863, when a revolt occurred in Russian Poland, Prussia had supported the Russian suppression of the revolt, the only major European power to do so.

#### Step 2: Austro-Prussian War

The Austro-Prussian war only lasted seven weeks. Using railroads to quickly mobilize troops, the Prussian army defeated Austria decisively at the Battle of Sadowa in Bohemia. Anticipating Prussia's future needs, Bismarck offered Austria generous peace terms. Austria paid no reparations and lost no territory to Prussia, although Venetia was ceded to Italy. The existing German Confederation was dissolved and Austria agreed to withdraw from German affairs. Prussia conquered and annexed several small states north of the Main River and completely dominated the remaining principalities in the newly formed North German Confederation. Bismarck's goal of Prussian expansion was partially realized.

#### Step 3: Creation of the Northern German Confederation, 1867

Shortly following the victory of Prussia, Bismarck eliminated the Austrian led German Confederation. The new North German Confederation was dominated by Prussian control.

Impressed with Napoleon III's example, Bismarck realized that nationalists were not necessarily hostile to conservative, authoritarian government. The events of 1848 convinced Bismarck that the German middle class could be led to prefer national unity under conservative leadership rather than a long, uncertain battle for truly liberal institutions. Thus, during the Austrian war, he identified the Prussian fate with the development of nationalism in Germany.

Each state in the Northern German Confederation retained its own local government, but the king of Prussia became the president of the confederation, and the chancellor, Bismarck, was responsible only to the president. The federal government, William I and Bismarck, controlled the army and foreign affairs. There was also a legislature with member of the lower house elected by universal male suffrage. The power rested in the hands of the Prussian king and the army. Bismarck extended a peaceful compromise to opposition parliament with the motivation of national unity. With German unity in sight, most of the liberals eagerly cooperated. The constitutional struggle ended in Prussia and the middle class grew to accept Bismarck's authority.

#### Step 4: EMS Dispatch, a catalyst for war

Bismarck decided that a patriotic war with France would drive the south German states into his arms and towards unification. Bismarck took advantage of a diplomatic issue, whether a distant relative of William I would become king of Spain, to press France. Bismarck doctored a telegram from William to the French Ambassador to make it seem as though Kaiser had insulted Napoleon III.

#### Step 5: Franco –Prussian War

As soon as the war began, Bismarck had the whole hearted support of the south German states. While other countries remained neutral, Bismarck's generosity to Austria paid off. German forces decisively defeated the French army. Louis Napoleon was captured and humiliated. On January 1871, a besieged and starving Paris surrendered. France accepted Bismarck's peace terms.

The south German states had agreed to join a new German Empire. With Bismarck by his side, William I was proclaimed emperor of Germany in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Staying with the 1866 constitution, the king of Prussia and his ministers had ultimate power in the new German Empire and the lower house of the legislature was elected by universal male suffrage.

Bismarck imposed a severe penalty on France- payment of 5 billion francs and loss of the rich eastern province of Alsace and part of Lorraine to Germany (rich in iron deposits). French men and women of all classes viewed these territorial losses as a terrible crime. The relationship between France and Germany strained.

The Franco- Prussian War released an enormous surge of patriotic feeling in the German Empire. Bismarck's genius, the Prussian army, and the solidarity of king and people in a unified nation was immensely popular with many German citizens.

The weakest of the great powers in 1862, Prussia with united Germany had become the most powerful state in Europe in less than a decade. Most Germans were very proud, a lot of nationalism. Semi-authoritarian nationalism and a new conservatism had triumphed in Germany.