

ITALIAN UNIFICATION

Napoleon Bonaparte had played a significant role in laying the foundations for later unification of both countries. He had destroyed the old Holy Roman Empire which had existed for almost 1000 years. He had reduced the number of petty, independent states from 360 to 100. He had given the German people a taste of unity through his creation of the Confederation of the Rhine. Napoleon had given the Italian people more freedom than they had ever enjoyed before. He had united many of the states under his rule, thus weakening the hold of petty Italian rulers.

Italian unification is the story of strong leaders. The earliest was Giuseppe Mazzini, one of the foremost apostles of modern nationalism. In him there was the same fanaticism that characterized national movements in the 20th century. Although an active member of the Carbonari, in the 1820's, Mazzini concluded that this movement lacked moral inspiration. The goal of national unity, he believed, must be-

come an ethical ideal that would arouse in the Italian masses a spirit of dedication and sacrifice. Only through the revolutionary activity of the people themselves could a united republic be created. He founded The Young Italy society and similar revolutionary organizations in many countries in Europe. Through his speeches and letters he stimulated nationalism among the Italian people. His activities set the stage for the man who planned and helped realize a united Italy—Count Camillo Cavour.

Count Cavour had made a fortune in business, banking and shipping before he entered politics to become Prime Minister of Sardinia in 1852. He set out to prepare Sardinia for leadership in the unification of Italy. He promoted its economic growth by building railways and harbors. He encouraged its industry, improved agriculture, and removed tariffs that hampered free trade. From the increased taxes thus raised he built up the army. He took part in the Crimean War against Russia, hoping that by his presence at the conference table he could secure foreign assistance in driving the Austrians out of northern Italy. He was successful in getting help from Napoleon III of France.

The war that broke out between Sardinia and Austria in 1859 ended in quick victory for the Franco-Sardinian forces. From the victory over the Austrians, Sardinia gained the province of Lombardy. Revolts broke out in the Austrian-held duchies in northern Italy and in part of the Papal States, and the people voted to join with Sardinia. Thus, within a few months, Sardinia had quadrupled in size. France gained Nice and Savoy but was unwilling to continue to support a Sardinia that was

growing so rapidly. Then came the stunning achievements of Garibaldi.

This Italian patriot and follower of Mazzini had taken part in the Italian revolutions of 1848. Forced into exile, he returned to Italy a few years later. Giuseppe Garibaldi's early experiences in the wars of Latin America in the 1820's had made him a successful leader of volunteer forces. Supported by Cavour, Garibaldi recruited 1000 tough adventurers, called "Red Shirts," and in 1860 conquered the island of Sicily. He then defeated the forces of the king of Naples on the mainland, and turned the conquered kingdom over to Victor Emmanuel II. Much of Italy had been united, and the new Italian kingdom was proclaimed in March, 1861.

By acting as an ally to Prussia during its war with Austria in 1866, Italy gained the province of Venetia. When the Franco-Prussian war broke out in 1870, the French troops, which for 10 years had been protecting the Pope, were withdrawn from Rome. Italian troops took over the city and it became the capital of Italy. Thus, through the efforts of three giants—Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi—Italian unification had been completed by 1870.



Count Camillo di Cavour said: "If we did for ourselves what we do for Italy, we would be great rascals." Can you name this brand of politics?

ITALIAN UNIFICATION

1. Identify TWO ways Napoleon Bonaparte played a role in the laying the foundations for Italian and German unification.
2. What role did Giuseppe Mazzini play in Italian unification?
3. Why do you think Mazzini is considered the *heart* of Italian unification?
4. What was the Young Italy Society?
5. Identify TWO ways Count Cavour aided Italian unification?
6. Why do you think Cavour is considered the *brain* behind Italian unification?
7. Identify TWO ways Giuseppe Garibaldi aided Italian unification?
8. Why do you think Garibaldi is considered the *sword* of Italian unification?
9. What were the Red Shirts?
10. In what year did Italy become a unified state?
11. What have the Italians given us that pleases you the most?