

## **Lesson Two (2): Nationalism, Unification of Italy & Unification of Germany**

### **Lesson -One: Video Lecture**

#### **Brainstorming Question**

- What were the major factors behind the growth of nationalism in the 19th century?
- What were the obstacles and favorable factors in the process of Italian unification?
- What were the strategies that Bismarck used to unite Germany.

#### **Competencies**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- List down major factors for the growth of nationalism;
- Discuss the salient features of nationalism in the 19th century; and
- State factors that facilitated the Italian unification;
- Identify the factors that facilitated and hindered the unification of Germany; and
- List down major events in the process of unification of Germany.

#### **Lesson Overview**

The lesson examines factors contributing to the growth of nationalism in the nineteenth century. The unification of Italy and Germany as major manifestations of nationalism in the nineteenth century will be given enough coverage.

#### **1. Nationalism**

Nationalism has been the most powerful political force since the 1850s in the Western world. Nationalism's deepest roots lie in a shared sense of regional and cultural identity, especially as those roots are expressed in custom, language and religion. It influenced all classes but more so the urban than the rural peasants.

Moreover, nationalism created the atmosphere which made World War I possible in that nationalism aggravated the great international crisis of 1905–1914 and made the peoples of Europe support the war when it broke out in July-August 1914. Nationalism, of course, did not begin in the middle of the nineteenth century, but it grew and intensified from then until World War I. The following factors promoted the growth of nationalism in the 19th century:

Compulsory primary education was used by the government for state building and inculcating patriotism. Governments also used compulsory military service to inculcate patriotism and loyalty to the state and rulers. The cheap newspapers for the masses often had chauvinistic tones, but nationalism and hostile feelings towards neighboring states were also features of the “quality” newspapers for the upper and middle classes.

Much of the literature of the years before World War I was also strongly nationalist and warned against the dangers of neighboring countries. Patriotic societies were created to inculcate patriotism, to agitate for stronger armament, and sometimes also to agitate for bigger colonial empires. Nationalism was stimulated by the wars of unification in Italy and Germany and of national liberation in the Balkans. British nationalism was stimulated by the small colonial wars which Britain fought so often, though the second Boer War (1899-1902) was an unpleasant shock which cooled down British aggressiveness for a time until it was revived by fear of Germany. In the USA, victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898 stimulated American nationalism.

Pseudo-science also stimulated nationalism and inculcated aggressive hostile feelings towards neighboring states and the idea that war was inevitable. This pseudo science is what became known as «Social Darwinism.» It was «Social Darwinism» that spread the idea that history is a struggle between states and nations for power, supremacy and even survival. The strongest state and nation, which were the best, would be the victors, while weak states and nations would be subjugated and even destroyed.

In the period between the 1880s and 1914, nationalism transformed its character in several ways: First, more and more national movements appeared in Europe and in the Ottoman Empire outside Europe. Many of these movements were towards numerically quite small numbers of people living in quite small territories. Therefore, nationalism, which earlier in the nineteenth century had appeared to work towards greater unity, as in the case of Italy and Germany, now tends towards fragmentation. Second, language and ethnicity became the major criteria, especially language for nationalism. All over Europe, submerged minority nationalities were struggling to assert the rights of their languages to equality with previously dominated languages. So there were bitter disputes over language questions.

Third, a national question became part of the domestic politics of many states, particularly multinationals like Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia, and others like Britain with its serious Irish question. In terms of class, the new minority nationality movements attracted the petty bourgeois, because the success of a national movement and its language would mean not just more prestige for the nationality and its language but more employment in the public sector for the language speakers. Nationalism for the government was a two-edged weapon. Nationalism could be and was used to strengthen loyalty to the state and the ruler and to divert the workers away from socialism. However, where national minorities existed, nationalism could arise from the national demands of these national minorities and cause discontent and disloyalty.

The USA was very successful in the nineteenth century in assimilating millions of emigrants who came to the USA from Europe. This success was made possible because migrants left Europe because they were dissatisfied with conditions in their home country. By becoming US citizens, they joined a country and a nation which offered them more economic opportunities and more social and political freedom.

## 1.1. Unification of Italy

The political and social process that united the separate states of the Italian Peninsula into a single nation in the nineteenth century was known as Italian unification. It is difficult to put the exact dates for the beginning and end of Italian reunification, but most historians agree that it began with the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the end of Napoleon's rule, and it ended with the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.

In 1852, Italy was still politically divided and Austrian influence was still supreme. In the north, the two rich provinces of Lombardy and Venetia were part of the Austrian Empire. In the north-central part of Italy, there were the petty states of Parma, Modena and Tuscany, which were very much under Austrian influence and ruled despotically by rulers related to the Hapsburg emperor of Austria. The Papal States still covered a vast territory across Italy, consisting of the provinces of the Romagna, the Marches, Umbria and Rome and the patrimony. In addition to being the spiritual head of Catholics all over the world, the pope was the sovereign ruler of the Papal States. Since 1849, there had been a French garrison in Rome to protect the pope against any revolution and to show Austria that France had an interest in Italy and did not accept that Italy was an exclusively Austrian sphere of influence. The south of Italy and the island of Sicily were part of the kingdom of Naples. The kingdom was poor, feudal and backward. It was ruled despotically, and its king was closely allied with Austria. In the northwest of Italy was the kingdom of Piedmont, consisting of the mainland territory, which was its most important territory, and the island of Sardinia. Piedmont was the only Italian state that was really independent of Austria and that had a constitution, a parliament and civil rights, though these had only existed since 1848. This situation made it possible for Piedmont to take the lead in the movement for Italian unification. Because liberals and nationalists all over Italy saw their best hope of a united Italy in unification with Piedmont under the constitutional monarchy of King Victor Emmanuel II (r.1849-1878) of Piedmont.

The main obstacle to Italian political unification was the power of Austria. Austria wanted to maintain the status quo. Another obstacle was the weakness of national sentiment in Italy. A favorable factor in the struggle for unification was the diplomatic isolation of Austria after the Crimean war (1855–56) and rivalries between France and Austria in Italy, which meant that Italian nationalism was able to use French help for Italian aims.

Camillo Cavour (1810–61) prime minister of Piedmont from 1852–62 was the main architect of Italian unification “from above.” He prepared Piedmont for the role of leadership in Italian unification. In 1858, Cavour met the French emperor, Napoleon III, secretly at Plombiere, in France, and succeeded in reaching an agreement with Napoleon for an alliance of France and Piedmont against Austria. Cavour contributed a lot to the successful unification of Italy. In the end, Cavour successfully gained control of Lombardy, Tuscany, Parma and Modena, which greatly helped the unification process.

In April 1859, Cavour successfully provoked a declaration of war by Austria on Piedmont. Napoleon III then intervened on the side of Piedmont against Austria. The combined force invaded Lombardy and defeated the Austrian army at the Battles of Magenta and Salferino in June 1859. The Austrians were driven out of Lombardy but still held Venetia. One of the results

of the Battle of Salferino was the establishment of the International Red Cross Association by the Swiss humanitarian Henri Dunant. Napoleon, however, concluded a unilateral peace treaty with Austria on the basis that Austria ceded Lombardy to Piedmont but kept Venetia.

Other developments resulting from the war also took place. The papal province of Romagna and the states of Parma, Modena and Tuscany revolted against their rulers in 1859. Their rulers were overthrown. Provisional governments were established which were in close touch with the government of Piedmont and demanded union with Piedmont. Once the north had been united as the Kingdom of Italy, the unification movement turned to absorbing the powerful Kingdom of Two Sicilies in the south. In 1860, there was an uprising in Sicily against the unpopular government of the Kingdom of Naples. At that time, the successful military leader, Garibaldi, was invited to come from Piedmont to lead the Sicilian uprising. Garibaldi agreed to lead the Sicilian uprising provided that the people accepted the program of unification with the rest of Italy under Victor Emmanuel. He recruited his famous Thousand Volunteers in the North and took them to Sicily, where they joined by other volunteers, advanced up the peninsula and took the city of Naples on September 7, 1860.

The reasons for Garibaldi's success were: first, his own skill as a leader in guerrilla warfare and his magnetic personality, which made people of all classes eager to fight and die under his leadership. Second, his successful mobilization of the Sicilian masses. The masses supported him partly because of his personal qualities but also because they hoped that his movement would bring them freedom from oppression and bitter life. Third, on the mainland, his success was largely owing to the demoralization of the army of Naples and to the defeatism and treachery of many of the officials of the Naples government.

The fall of Gaeta brought the unification movement to a successful conclusion. Only Rome and Venetia remained to be added. In February 18, 1861 Victor Emmanuel assembled the deputies of all the states that acknowledged his supremacy at Turin, and in their presence, he assumed the title of King of Italy. Victor Emmanuel II, king of Piedmont, changed his title too to Victor Emmanuel II, king of Italy. Four months later, Cavour, having seen his life's work nearly completed, died.



Camillo Cavour on left and Giuseppe Garibaldi

Source: Grade 12 History Text Book, page, 14.

The Italian government used the 1866 Austro Prussian War and the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian war to complete Italian unification. In 1866, in preparation for war against Austria, Bismarck made an alliance with Italy on the basis that Italy would go to war against Austria on the side of Prussia and, in return, would get Venetia. In spite of Italy's poor showing, Prussia's success in the war forced Austria to cede Venetia. In 1870 the Franco- Prussian war forced Napoleon to withdraw French troops from Rome. The Italian government therefore sent its troops and seized Rome in September 1870. Rome soon became the capital of Italy.

## **1.2. The Unification of Germany**

In the 1850s, Germany was a loose confederation of 39 states called the German Confederation (the Bund). The Bund was presided over by Austria, with Prussia second. The Bund was not a satisfactory form of unity for German nationalists who wanted real political unity for reasons of German nationalism and economic reasons. German nationalism was encouraged by the success of Italian national unification between 1859 and 1861. The obstacles to German unification were: Austria, which wanted to preserve the status quo. The German princes, wanted to keep their independence and the cultural differences between North and South Germany.

In 1861, William I (r.1861–1888) was crowned King of Prussia. He and his war minister, Von Roon, proposed enlarging and reforming the Prussian army to give Prussia more influence against Austria and as security against France. But the proposal was opposed by the Prussian parliament, which refused to vote on the necessary new taxation. An important issue behind the Prussian parliament was who would control the army. The king, thus, appointed Otto von Bismarck as chief minister of Prussia. Bismarck (1815–1898) was politically conservative but a political realist and extremely able. He soon overcame the crisis by collecting additional taxation for the army reforms without the consent of Parliament. There was no resistance. German nationalism rapidly shifted from its liberal and democratic character in 1848 to Bismarck's authoritarian rule.

Bismarck knew that Germany could not be united under Prussia without war against Austria and probably France. Austria would not give up its leadership in the Bund unless it suffered a defeat. The traditional French policy was to keep Germany politically divided and therefore weak, so that France too would probably not accept German unification unless France suffered a military defeat. Bismarck also knew that his program of uniting Germany would not be possible without good relations between Prussia and Russia. Therefore, he exerted all his diplomatic skills to maintain good relations with Russia. He was helped by the fact that Prussia and Russia had a common interest in opposing Polish nationalism. Both Russia and Prussia, particularly the first, had large areas of former Polish territories inhabited by the Poles. Therefore, during the great Polish revolt of 1863, Prussia was the only great power that was sympathetic to Russia.



Otto Von Bismarck

Source: Grade 12 History Text Book, page- 16

Therefore, Bismarck accomplished this through three military successes: He first allied with Austria to defeat Denmark in a short war fought in 1864, thus acquiring Schleswig-Holstein. In 1866, with the support of Italy, he virtually created the Austro-Prussian War and won a decisive victory at the Battle of Koniggratz, which, allowed him to exclude long-time rival Austria when forming the North German Confederation with the states that had supported Prussia in the Austro-Prussian War. The Confederation was the direct precursor to the 1871 Empire. Finally, Prussia defeated France in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). The German Confederation was transformed into an Empire with the proclamation of Prussian King Wilhelm I as German Emperor at the Palace of Versailles, to the humiliation of France.

### **Key Concepts and Terminology**

- Nationalism
- Unification