

Nationalism in Europe

Section 1: Italian Unification

STIRRINGS OF NATIONALISM

Nationalism, or devotion to one's national group, was an important force in Europe during the 1800s. Greece, Belgium and Poland all fought for independence early in the century, sparking nationalist movements in Italy, Germany, Austria, and Russia.

One cause of the growth of nationalism was Europe's political boundaries. Most nations did not share a common language or culture. Instead, large empires included people of very different backgrounds. When the Congress of Vienna divided Italy, some parts falling under Austrian rule, nationalism grew. Some Europeans believed that people of the same background should form separate nation-states. **Giuseppe Mazzini** formed a nationalist group called Young Italy. Mazzini's group attracted tens of thousands of supporters who wanted to fight for the unification of the Italian states.

THE PATH TOWARD UNITY

Politician **Camillo di Cavour** was a leader of the Italian unification movement. In 1847 Cavour founded a nationalist newspaper called *Il Risorgimento*, which means "resurgence" or "rebirth." Cavour believed that the Italian nationalist movement was strong enough to unite Italy, despite differences between the many Italian states.

In 1848 nationalist uprisings in France and Britain inspired a revolution in Italy. Some Italian states declared themselves republics. In other places, kings were forced to outline the people's rights in constitutions. In Piedmont, the king declared war against Austrian rule. Though the war ended in defeat, it was an important step toward unification. The leaders of the Italian states realized they needed to unite to defeat Austria.

Cavour became prime minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1852. He formed an alliance with France during France's war against Russia. France, in turn, agreed to support Sardinia in its planned war against Austria. By 1860 the northern Italian states were liberated from the control of the Austrian Empire.

GARIBALDI AND THE RED SHIRTS

An important member of Young Italy, **Giuseppe Garibaldi**, unified the southern Italian states and joined them to the north. Together, the states formed the Kingdom of Italy. In addition to military campaigns in central and southern Italy, Garibaldi is best known for his followers, the **Red Shirts**, who were named after their colorful uniforms.

Though Garibaldi wanted to establish a republic on conquered territory in Sicily, he instead offered it to King **Victor Emmanuel** of Sardinia. In 1860 all Italian territories except the Prussian state of Venetia and the French-supported Papal States voted for unification. By 1870, though, Prussia gave Venetia to Italy, and France withdrew their troops from Italy. All of Italy was now unified.

CHALLENGES AFTER UNIFICATION

In the following years, Italy faced many challenges. People in the south resented that the government was located in the north. Rome became the new capital of Italy in 1871, but the Catholic Church did not recognize Italy as a legitimate nation. Catholics were forbidden from voting.

Voting rights increased and most Italian men could vote by the late 1800s. However, in the 50 years following unification, some 4.5 million Italians left Italy to escape widespread poverty. Working class Italians began to fight for change in a growing labor movement. Working conditions improved and production increased.

In 1882 Italy formed a military alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany known as the Triple Alliance. Similar alliances brought most of Europe to war in 1914. Italy also tried to expand its influence elsewhere in the world. In 1911, Italy fought the Ottoman Empire and won territory in Africa.

Section 2: German Unification

STEPS TOWARD UNIFICATION

Like Italy, Germany was not a unified nation in 1848. The German Confederation was made up of 39 separate states that shared a language and culture. These states included Austria and Prussia. As revolution swept through Europe in 1848, liberal Germans protested for increased democracy. Prussian king **Frederick Wilhelm IV** promised a constitution, and other reforms. However, by the end of 1848, the king went back on his promises.

Another early step toward creating a unified Germany was the **Zollverein** (TSOHL-fer-yn) in 1834. This economic alliance allowed for removal of taxes on products traded between the German states. The Zollverein encouraged the growth of railroads to connect the states. It helped join Germans economically, if not politically.

BISMARCK'S PLAN FOR GERMANY

In 1862, King **Wilhelm I** chose **Otto von Bismarck** to be Prussia's prime minister. Bismarck became the leading force behind German unification, though unlike the revolutionaries of 1848, he did not believe in liberal democracy. His philosophy about government, **realpolitik**, was practical rather than idealistic, and based on the best interests of Prussia.

Bismarck declared that German unity would come by "blood and iron." When the parliament would not approve funds to expand the military, he fired them and collected his taxes anyway. Then, he built the Prussian army into a great war machine that could force Germany to unite.

In 1864, Bismarck formed a military alliance with Austria against Denmark, provoking a war. After a brief fight, Denmark gave up some territory, including a small bit of land in Prussia that came under Austrian control. Bismarck knew that conflict there would lead to what he desired: war between the two nations.

UNIFICATION AND EMPIRE

Convinced that war with Austria was coming, Bismarck promised territory to the Italian prime minister in return for his support. He also persuaded France to remain neutral in the upcoming war. Bismarck then provoked a war with Austria that lasted only seven weeks. Called the **Austro-Prussian War**, it resulted in a

major victory for Prussia and the joining together of the North German states. It was the first step toward German unification.

In 1870, a conflict was brewing with France over the territory of Alsace and Lorraine. This issue sparked feelings of nationalism in the south German states. These states supported Prussia and the north German states in the **Franco-Prussian War** against France. Prussia won the war, and the peace treaty declared the unification of Germany. Wilhelm I became its first kaiser, or emperor. He appointed Bismarck as his first chancellor. The German victory brought more power to the new empire, while France's power decreased.

THE EMPIRE'S GROWTH AND CHANGE

In the years after 1871, Germany became a strong empire. This period was known as the Second Reich. Each of Germany's 25 states wanted to retain some power. As a result, a federalist government developed so that power could be shared between state and national governments.

Germany also experienced economic growth after its unification. France paid reparations, money for damages, after the Franco-Prussian War. Germany used some of the money to build railroads to link the German states. Over the next 50 years, the German empire quickly caught up with the other industrial countries of Europe. However, German socialists protested against harsh factory conditions and within a few years Bismarck pushed for laws providing benefits for health, accidents, old age, and disability.

Bismarck believed that Germany was threatened by France. In response, he formed alliances with Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia. He also passed laws known as Kulturkampf, or "the struggle for culture," to limit the power of the Catholic Church in Germany.

In 1890, Bismarck was fired as prime minister after a disagreement with the kaiser. The kaiser continued to make alliances with other European nations.

Section 3: Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire

THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE

After the Congress of Vienna, the Austrian emperor, Franz I, and his foreign minister, Prince Metternich, worked together to maintain the power of the Austrian Empire and the Hapsburg monarchy. One way they did this was through laws known as the Carlsbad decrees that created a system of censorship and investigation of nationalist groups. In 1820, Metternich held the Congress of Troppau with several other European nations. Austria, Prussia, and Russia agreed to work together against nationalist revolutions in Europe. Great Britain and France refused.

In 1848 revolutions in France, Italy, and the German states set off revolts in the Austrian Empire. Metternich resigned due to rebellions in Vienna, and by the end of 1848, the emperor was replaced by **Franz Joseph I**.

Meanwhile, a revolution was raging in Hungary, another part of the Austrian empire. An ethnic group known as the **Magyars** fought for independence. The Russian czar sent troops to help Austria crush the revolt. Franz Joseph I then abolished the reforms enacted in 1848, including the new constitution. The revolutions stopped for a while.

THE DUAL MONARCHY

As nationalist movements continued in Europe, Austria lost one of its provinces to Italy in 1859. When Prussia defeated Austria in 1866, Franz Joseph I decided to reach an agreement with Hungarian leaders. Called the Compromise of 1867, it created the **Dual Monarchy** of Austria-Hungary. In this agreement, Austria and Hungary became two separate, equal states, both ruled by the Austrian emperor. The Dual Monarchy remained until 1918.

The Dual Monarchy had both benefits and problems. Hungary provided raw materials and food to Austria. Austria provided industrial products to Hungary. Ethnic divisions remained among the countries, who did not even speak the same language.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Many European powers were concerned about the declining Ottoman Empire. If it fell, other nations' territorial interests and the balance of power in Europe would be affected. The future of the Ottoman Empire became known as "The Eastern Question."

In 1854, the **Crimean War** erupted over a religious dispute between Catholics and Orthodox Christians in Palestine. Britain, France and the Ottoman Turks fought Russia in this deadly war that did not provide answers about the Ottoman Empire's future, however.

In 1865 and 1866 nationalist groups began revolutions in a small area of the empire called the Balkans. The rest of Europe became involved, and war broke out. The war lasted about two years and resulted in about 500,000 deaths. In the end, the Ottoman Empire suffered a major defeat and lost most of its territory.

In 1908, a nationalist group called the **Young Turks** began a revolution in Turkey. They fought against the absolute power of the sultan, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire. Their revolution resulted in a more representative, liberal government and more individual liberties for the Turkish people. Russia became involved in several conflicts against the Ottomans in the Balkans, hoping to gain territory. Great Britain, France, Germany, and Austria became involved in the **Balkan Wars**. By the end of these wars, the Ottoman Empire had lost most of its land in Europe.

Section 4: Unrest in Russia

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

Russia's social system and government differed from western European society. For centuries, Russian monarchs maintained absolute control over most aspects of Russian life. Most czars believed in **autocracy**, or government by one ruler with unlimited power. Russia's large size made this sort of rule effective. Its size also made Russia slower to industrialize than the rest of Europe. It had a mostly

agricultural economy and most of the population was peasants. Many of these peasants were **serfs**, people who were considered part of the land they worked on and were ruled by lords, the wealthy nobles who owned the land. Serfs were not slaves, but their living conditions sometimes resembled slavery. Some czars had tried unsuccessfully to improve life for the serfs. The institution of serfdom was a major problem in Russian society.

REFORM AND REPRESSION

Some Russians formed secret societies to fight against the czar. When Czar Alexander I died in 1825, a revolutionary group called the Decembrists rebelled against the government. Czar Nicholas I, who replaced Alexander I, crushed the rebellion and sent many of the Decembrists to Siberia. Although the revolt failed, it began a revolutionary movement that would not be stopped.

The next czar, **Alexander II**, believed that reform was necessary after Russia's defeat in the Crimean War. In 1861, he freed the Russian serfs, allowing them to buy the land on which they worked with their own money or with government help. Alexander II also set up a new judicial system, allowed some local self-government, and reorganized the army and navy.

The next czar, Alexander III, ended the reforms of his father and claimed absolute power for himself. At the same time, mobs of people were attacking and killing Jews in widespread violent attacks known as pogroms. Several waves of pogroms occurred in Russia.

The next czar, Nicholas II, led Russia in an era of great industrialization and expansion. The **Trans-Siberian Railroad** was built in the 1890s, linking western Russia with Siberia in the east. This expansion provoked a war with Japan known as the **Russo-Japanese War**, which began in 1904. The Japanese eventually defeated Russia.

WAR AND REVOLUTION

Russians who followed the communist theories of Karl Marx wanted a **socialist republic**. Under this society, there would be no private property, and the state would own and distribute all goods to the people. In 1902 a young Marxist named **Vladimir Lenin** published a work supporting the overthrow of the czar. Lenin became a leader of the growing revolutionary movement against the czars.

By 1905 many Russians were ready to rebel. On January 22, 1905, Orthodox priest Father Gapon led a group bringing a list of demands to the czar. As the protesters neared the Winter Palace, troops fired at the group, and hundreds died. The day became known as **Bloody Sunday**. This event inspired other Russians to rise up against the czar. Workers went on strike, university students formed protests, and peasants rebelled against their landlords. This was the Russian Revolution of 1905.

At first the Czar Nicholas II did not respond. Then he promised reform but did not follow through. Finally, a widespread worker's strike convinced him that something had to be done. He issued the October Manifesto, an official promise for reform and a more democratic government. It promised a Russian constitution that gave individual liberties to all Russians. He also gave voting rights to more Russian citizens who would elect representatives to the **Duma**, an assembly that would approve all laws.