

Italian unification

Politics, International Relations



To what extent did foreign intervention impact the Italian unification movement? Italy, 1870. The unification movement of Italy has just been completed, the movement that could not have been successful without the efforts of Italy itself. Though foreign intervention was a minimal part of the unification, and at times even more of an obstacle than aide, without the militaristic action, internal economic and political change within Italy, the unification would not have been sparked, much less completed as successfully as it was.

One of the important factors that contributed to the successful unification of Italy, was the decision to take militaristic action by joining wars and invading states that were crucial to the completion of the unification and would benefit Italy in the long run. By making the decision to join the Crimean war, and therefore aiding France and Great Britain, not only did Piedmont make a name for itself among all of Europe, gaining respect and fame, but the benefits for Italy in the long run were also known by Cavour, the leader of Piedmont at that time.

Just by making the decision to aide France and Great Britain, it demonstrates how aware Piedmont was of the benefits of joining the war, and how the future Italy, and its unification would be impacted through it. Additionally, in the midst of the unification, it was the leaders of Italy that decided to invade the Papal States, to eventually complete the unification of Italy.

This proves that the efforts of Italy itself completed the unification, because if the Papal States were not invaded, then Rome still would not have been part of Italy and the unification would have remained uncompleted. In

addition to the militaristic action that was taken by Italy, the internal economic change that occurred within the nation also sparked the unification of Italy by furthering Piedmont, and eventually the rest of Italy's image of a state in the process of modernizing.

The textile industries, such as the wool, silk and cotton industries were prime examples of Piedmont's economic industrialization. By industrializing the state, more citizens were happily employed, thereby creating a sense of unity among the people. Additionally, the construction of the railways advanced communication, and this economic development would eventually lead to benefits similar to those in Great Britain and in France.

This development was again one instituted by Italy, and contributed greatly to the unification of Italy. Finally, under Cavour's rule, trading treaties were signed with states such as France, Portugal, Britain and Belgium. Through these treaties, Italy was able to gain economic growth and support, resulting in import and export increases. Through these economic changes, the nation grew as a whole, and the citizens gained a greater sense of unity and recognition as a unified country from foreign states.

And lastly, the political change that occurred under Cavour's rule within Italy also shows the measures Italy took to complete a successful unification. A large part of the new political changes that were occurring in Italy stemmed from the new leaders that were instituting them. Mazzini, Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel II and Cavour were all political figures that contributed to the unification of Italy, and without Mazzini's motivation, Garibaldi's military strength, Cavour's brain or Victor Emmanuel II as King, the unification would not have been possible.

Additionally, the statuto that was retained as a liberal constitution in Piedmont was an important factor in the unification, as it signifies the start of political freedom that began in Piedmont, and eventually spread throughout Italy. These ideas, which sparked the unification, could not have been put in place by any foreign nations. In conclusion, through the militaristic actions taken by Italy, in addition to the internal economic and political changes that occurred, it is clear that foreign intervention was not the cause of the successful unification movement that occurred in Italy.