

Cavour – the unification of Italy under the Sardinian monarchy



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. Success came in 1859 - 60 because Cavour had a clear and consistent aim - the unification of Italy under the Sardinian monarchy.

Viewpoint. - Disagree. Cavour wanted territorial gains but not the unification of Italy. Cavour was especially interested in the Northern part of Italy as far down as Ancona.

Supporting evidence

* Cavour wrote to the ambassador of Paris (in reference to the unification of Italy.)

" This can only be solidly established only if Piedmont rests her head on the Alps and her feet on Ancona."

This would suggest that Cavour was primarily concerned with Northern Italy and Piedmontese aggrandisement.

* Furthermore, Massari recorded Cavour saying,

" We must leave Naples out of it"

This supports the assertion that Cavour was concerned for the North of Italy and neglected the South.

* Mazzini accused Cavour of only wanting the " territorial aggrandisement of Piedmont" as opposed to Italian Unification. Also Pallavicini wrote that what Cavour wanted was " Piedmont to be enlarged by a few square yards of soil."

Opposing Evidence.

* Petruccelli della Gattina, a member of the new Italian parliament claimed,

" Count Cavour has had a clear and precise aim; that of creating a unified Italy". There is only one piece of evidence supporting this view. Therefore the evidence is insubstantial.

2. Success came in 1859 - 60 because Cavour's clever master plan gave Sardinia allies.

Viewpoint - Disagree. Cavour's success was due to his skilful opportunistic diplomacy and good fortune.

Supporting Evidence

* He used the Crimean War to his advantage by sending in Piedmontese troops, therefore gaining the support of Britain and France. Prince Albert commented,

" The Piedmontese force has not done a day's work in the trenches."

* Petruccelli della Gattina commented that (opportunist)

" Cavour has the talent to assess a situation and the possibilities of exploiting it"

* Cavour commented to Castelli,

" All plans , all projects are useless, everything depends on an accident."

* Luck played a large role in Cavour's success. For example, he was lucky France was led by Napoleon himself a former member of the Carbonari. He

was especially lucky that the Orsini bomb incident strengthened rather than weakened relations with Napoleon. He was fortunate that the Crimean War shattered the holy alliance between Austria, Prussia and Russia. Furthermore he was lucky that Palmerstone, Gladstone and Russell were in power in England during 1859 - 60. All of which were in favour of Italian unification.

Opposing Evidence

* It can be argued that Cavour entering Piedmontese troops into the Crimean War, shows his plan to gain Sardinian allies. However, it has been suggested that if Cavour did not enter the Crimean War, King Victor Emmanuel would replace him with a PM that would.

3) Success came in 1859 - 60 because Cavour's reforms had made Sardinia an efficient, modern state.

Viewpoint - Disagree. Although a few economic and political reforms were introduced this by no means resulted in a efficient, modern state.

Supporting Evidence.

* Only 2. 25% of the Sardinian population was allowed to vote. Thus, bribery and corruption was rampant.

* Cavour ran Piedmont as a personal dictatorship. His puppet government could be relied on to do what they were told. His subservient parliament were not consulted or even informed on issues such as the Crimean War, Congress of Paris or the Plombieres agreement.

- * Cavour held so many offices that he almost was the cabinet.
- * Freedom of speech was also not always guaranteed. For example, the economist Francesco Ferrara was dismissed from his university post for criticising the government in one of his lectures.
- * Political prisoners were arrested.
- * The Piedmontese army was unorganised, this is illustrated by the shortage of maps at Lombardy.

Opposing Evidence

- * Cavour changed the army to a meritocracy, this meant that the most able officers gained high positions as opposed to the wealthy. Thus, making the army more efficient.
 - * Made economic and political reforms. Introduced Sardinian parliamentary regime.
- 4) Success came in 1859 -60 because Victor Emmanuel became a popular, liberal leader capable of working in harmony with Cavour.

Viewpoint - Disagree. Victor Emmanuel showed many signs in private of not being liberal. Also Victor Emmanuel and Cavour never had a close relationship.

Supporting Evidence.

* Victor Emmanuel was not a liberal leader. In a letter to Pope Pius XI he wrote,

" Perhaps in a short time this Cavour ministry will fall: I shall then nominate a right wing ministry"

* Baron Butenval (French Ambassador) commented,

" King Victor is in no sense liberal... he does not... like the existing constitution nor does he like parliamentary liberties or a free press"

* The relationship between Cavour and Victor Emmanuel was never a harmonious one. George Cadogan reports on a conversation he had with King Victor Emmanuel, in which he refers to Cavour as a " muddle head", " mad" and " off his head".

* The feeling was reciprocated, in a letter to Farini he complained,

" The king does not like me and is often jealous... I only want one favour of him, to keep as far away as possible."

Opposing evidence

* King Emmanuel gained the reputation of being an honest King (il re galantuomo)

* He had the good sense to listen to Cavour's advice, resulting in him becoming the ruler of Italy.

- * He played a small but important role in the success of 1859 -60 particularly with the loyalty he inspired among men like Garibaldi.

5) Success came in 1859 -60 because Cavour was able to unite all those who wanted Italian unity and was not afraid to make use of popular movements to secure this aim.

Viewpoint - Disagree. Cavour's anti Republican stance did more to hinder unification than encourage it. He tried to stop the popular movements, but became caught up in their wake.

Supporting evidence.

- * Much of Cavour's correspondence seems to indicate violent hatred of republicans.

- * Cavour had aspirations to sacrifice the republicans in order to secure Napoleon III's support or at least to use them to scare Sardinians into yielding more moderate reforms.

- * Cavour had an especially violent attitude to Mazzini, writing to the Piedmontese envoy in Paris

"... if we catch Mazzini I hope he will be condemned to death or hanged"

- * There is dispute over Cavour's reasons for backing the National Society, Massari records Cavour saying

" I don't know the people behind the National Society but as I see things it is against the Mazzinians and hence must be advantageous... I am convinced all this talk about unification or union will go up in smoke"

* Garibaldi has always maintained that his command in 1859 was merely a device to keep him out of the way a " flag to attract recruits"

* Far from promoting the popular disturbances, Cavour opposed them. He wrote to the Piedmontese representative in Florence

" I exhort you to use all your influence to prevent street demonstrations"

Opposing Evidence.

* Piedmont had welcomed exiles from other states.

* Cavour (a devout monarchist) was tolerant enough to see that men from republican ideals could still be useful in the cause of unification.

* Garibaldi was not ignored but given his own command.

* Cavour appreciated that popular enthusiasm could be used to promote the unification cause - National Society.