

The italian unification: mazzini, cavour and garibaldi



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Evaluate the relative importance of Mazzini, Cavour, and Garibaldi for the Italian Unification between 1848 and 1871. In order to achieve the unification the Italians had to go through a long struggle starting from 1830 and ending in 1871. Thanks to the leading of Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi, the Mediterranean peninsula was able to defeat its foreign enemies, especially the Austrian Empire, and create a united nation under the King of Piedmont, Viktor Emmanuel II.

Although Mazzini was the starter of nationalism movements and aroused the spirits of many Italians, Cavour and Garibaldi were the two leaders who were able, both in their own way, to create a consolidated country. Giuseppe Mazzini was an Italian journalist and idealist that at the beginning of the 1830s was able to stimulate the people of the Italian peninsula to fight for freedom from Austria and for a creation of a nation. In his first years of revolutionary movements in the 1830s he was exiled from Italy, and moved to Switzerland to create a new movement, the Young Italy.

This movement was different from the precedent Carbonari, that were less prepared and more violent, and it was made up by the middle class and as well as the working class and the peasants. Mazzini didn't believe that Italy could be unified under a king, and thought that the best way of government was a republic, especially after the king Charles Albert refused his proposal to be at the head of the Unified Nation. Even though Mazzini's supporters were defeated during a revolt in Piedmont, he was able to create an organized movement that had a great influence on the Italian Unification.

Later in his life, Mazzini worked cooperating with Garibaldi, and together with him they made a lot of progress in the process of achieving their goal. Count

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Camillo Benso di Cavour was the diplomatic and political leader of the Italian Unification. Cavour was the mind and the brain of the Italian Unification, who created the political strategies to defeat Austria. He was a noble man but had liberal ideas, and wanted to unite the country under the Kingdom of Piedmont, working with Victor Emmanuel II.

He was elected first in the Parliament under the rule of Charles Albert, and when he abdicated in favor of his son Victor Emmanuel II, he was made Minister of Commerce and Agriculture in 1850, Minister of the Navy and Finance in 1851 and Prime Minister in 1852. Mazzini could be compared to Bismarck, Prussia's chancellor, because not only were they both very strategic and intelligent, but even because he modernized the Kingdom of Piedmont like Bismarck had done in the German territories. With his domestic policies he created new banks, that made loans to middle class men to open businesses, that gave jobs to the working classes.

The banks also made loans to businesses that wanted to create railroads so that Italy was modernized like the rest of Europe. He then facilitated the trading to gain industrial goods from England and strengthen the army of Piedmont, in order to prepare it for war. Cavour used once again his diplomatic skills when he decided to support France and England in the Crimean War in 1854, where his troops won many battles. He then secretly met with Napoleon III in Plombières, and signed a compact in which the French Emperor promised to support Italy in a war against Austria in exchange of the territories of Nice and Savoy.

When the war broke out in 1859 though, Napoleon III, unexpectedly resigned and withdrew his troops, signing a peace contract in Villafranca with the

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Austrians. With his foreign and domestic policies, Cavour had created the opportunities and the circumstances for Italy to unite. If Cavour was the mind and the brain of the Italian Unification, Garibaldi was the heart of the movement. He was an idealist who believed, like Mazzini, that Italy had to be unified under a republic and without foreign aid.

He became the leader of the unification when, with his troops, the thousand red shirts, he conquered Sicily in 1860 sending away the Bourbon family and the king of the Two Sicilies, Ferdinand II. He conquered Naples, and marched up north, until he got to Rome, where the troops of the Kingdom of Piedmont waited for him. Even though he was a republican, he decided to hand out the territories he conquered to the king Viktor Emmanuel II, who was now the king of Italy. Venetia was still part of the Austrian Empire and Rome was still part of the papal state.

Garibaldi then tried to conquer the Papal State but was defeated by the French troops and was exiled from Italy. He was able to escape but failed again sending an army from Tuscany to Rome again. The Italian Kingdom was finally united when Venetia was handed to the Italian kingdom after the Austro-Prussian war, and Rome was invaded by the Italian troops in 1871 and the Pope was given sovereignty on the Vatican City. Garibaldi was able to send away the Bourbon family and to conquer the south of Italy, and became one of the greatest military leaders of all times in Italy.

Even though Mazzini was the starter of the Italian movement the Young Italy and rose the nationalism spirits of the Italians to initiate the process of the unification, the mind and the heart of the unification, Cavour and Garibaldi, were essential to the creation of a united nation. They both were able to use

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their qualities, one of being a diplomatic and smart men, while the other being a brave and romantic military leader, and together were able to defeat the Austrian and hand to the Piedmont king, Viktor Emmanuel II, the Italian Peninsula.