
UNIT 16 FORMATION OF NATION-STATES-2: GERMANY AND ITALY

Structure

16.0 Objectives

16.1 Introduction

16.2 German Nationalism

16.2.1 Idea of German Nation

16.2.2 Political Background

16.2.3 Economic Background

16.2.4 Nationalism and Democracy

16.2.5 Unification: Revolution from Above

16.3 Cultural Background of Italian Nationalism

16.3.1 Idea of Italian Nation

16.3.2 Italian Language

16.3.3 Humanism

16.4 Political Background of Italian Nationalism

16.4.1 Modern Italian Political Nationalism

16.4.2 Young Italy

16.4.3 Piedmont Sardinia

16.4.4 The Catholic Church

16.5 Economic Background of Italian Nationalism

16.5.1 North-South Difference

16.5.2 State and Economy

16.6 Process of Unification

16.6.1 Popular Movements

16.6.2 War and Unification

16.7 Let Us Sum Up

16.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

16.0 OBJECTIVES

In earlier Units in this Block you have learnt about the growth of ideas of nationalism and the rise of nation-states. You have also seen how the nation-states in Britain and France developed during 16th and 17th centuries. After reading this Unit, you will learn about:

- evolution of German national idea;
- political and economic background of German nationalism;
- political, cultural and economic background of Italian nationalism; and
- role of war and popular mobilizations in the creation of nation-states.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

As you have read in the previous Unit, in the older states like Britain and France, nationalism developed within state boundaries shaped by historical circumstances.

It was the French Revolution which created an ideal not only of democracy but of nationalism—the nation ‘one and indivisible’. The French emphasized uniformity within a nation state although they were willing to integrate within the nation those who acquired French and accepted other condition for citizenship and nationality. In the case of Germans and Italians, the absence of political and territorial unity among German and Italian speaking people led to movements for national unification. The history of German and Italian nationalism is therefore a struggle to unite German and Italian speaking people within a single nation state. The history of nationalism in these two major states is a chronicle of political movements and cultural background which created a nation state by overcoming domestic discord and political fragmentation with the help of international diplomacy and war. In Germany and Italy, the unity of nation state was created by processes of economic and political unification domestically in the mid-19th century but ultimately based on military victories achieved against both domestic rivals and international enemies. In fact, in older accounts of creation of nation-states in mid-19th century Europe the main protagonists were Prussia and Piedmont-Sardinia which forged national unity by skilful diplomacy and warfare on the one hand and pragmatic handling of popular national sentiments and occasional revolutionary upsurges.

16.2 GERMAN NATIONALISM

Modern German nationalism emerged from about late 18th century under the impetus provided by French Revolution and simplification of political map of Europe and of German states by destruction of the Holy Roman Empire by Napoleonic armies. While modern nationalism has been linked to the rise of capitalism and liberalism by adopting a linguistic or ethnic definition of nations, the beginnings of nationalism can be pushed back much further in time.

16.2.1 Idea of German Nation

During early Middle Ages various Germanic tribes, Celts and Slavs were fused by a process of conflict and assimilation into a German people. From 9th century onwards, the term ‘German’ was used to mark off large tribes in the empire of Eastern Franks from Romance and Slavonic language groups. After 1000 CE, the term German became widely used and marked the ethno-genesis of the German nation. The historical antecedents of the German nation can be traced back to early feudal period, in second half of the first millennium. In the medieval period there is not much evidence of national feeling although some historians have discerned development of a feudal nationality under the great monarchical states. The medieval imperial idea on which the German Empire was founded was a universal idea and German colonization and conquests in the East in this period was governed by religious motives.

In the 8th and 9th centuries, the word *deutsch* was used to refer to the German language. Only in the 11th century was the word ‘*deutsch*’ used to refer to German speaking groups and their land. Even the charter of the Teutonic Order, which spearheaded German colonization of the east and northeast, did not reveal any German national consciousness. Even when German races felt bound to each other by ties of blood – the Saxons, Franks, Bavarians and Swabians – they did not have a consciousness of being German. The nationalism of German Renaissance literati constructed a new consciousness both older than and superior

to that of Christian and Roman traditions based on the manuscript of Tacitus's Germania discovered in 1455. The connection between Lutheranism and rise of German nationalism was slight since their struggle was primarily against the Antichrist in Rome and not based upon national issues. The Protestant translations of the Bible into German vernacular led to the growth of modern German but the growth of German nationalism actually took place with the rise of German Romanticism. The Renaissance and Reformation in Germany were primarily based upon the idea of World Empire and motivated by a desire to change politics and society in West European countries. German nationalism when it developed in the 18th century and later based itself on the "natural" fact of community and on ties of kinship rather than concepts of contract or citizenship, German nationalism was based on an imprecise concept of "folk" which was first developed by German humanists, J.G. Herder and German romanticism leading to an elaboration of the concept of German *volk*. German nationalism like that of the Russians became preoccupied with "soul" or "mission" of the nation since it was not rooted in social and political reality and constituted "a venture in education and propaganda rather than in policy shaping and government".

Martin Luther's rejection of authority of the Pope and translation of Bible into German created the basis for a national consciousness. In 1486, the expression, "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" was first used, becoming common place in the 16th century. The term German nation was used by Luther, Ulrich von Hutten and humanists. Although German romantics and intellectuals developed a primarily ethnic and linguistic definition of nationalism – based on the concept of the 'cultural nation' (*Kulturnation*) – the actual process of nation state formation was determined by complex historical realities which we will deal with later.

16.2.2 Political Background

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, political fragmentation of Germany was partially overcome by a reduction in the number of sovereign German states to thirty-eight from the three hundred states of the Holy Roman Empire which was abolished. The German Bund was created in 1815 in order to preserve "the independence and sovereignty of the individual German states". The Concert of Europe, created after the Congress of Vienna, was a system designed by conservative monarchies of Austria, Prussia and Russia to check the spread of democratic ideas in Europe. The Austrian Chancellor, Prince Metternich, the principal architect of this policy, actively suppressed democratic ideas and movements and challenges to royal authority in 1820 and 1830.

The political unification of Germany was difficult to achieve in the 19th century since conservative monarchs were hostile to spread of liberal ideas. Very limited powers were granted to the representatives introduced after 1815 in the German states. While after 1848 most German states introduced democratic reforms, in Prussia the pace of reforms was slower since electoral votes were allocated equally to three groups of income-tax payers, the divisions were made on the basis of income tax payments. The well-to-do minority which contributed upper third of income tax revenues thus controlled one-third of all electoral votes in Prussia's legislative institutions. This Prussian system of representation remained in force until 1918 and constituted an important basis for the perpetuation of a backward political system.

The process of German unification was also affected by war and military prowess. The largest German state, Prussia, played an active role in this process. Smaller German states like Hesse-Cassel, Braunschweig and Saxony would have succumbed to revolutionaries during the upsurge of 1830-31 but for the timely military assistance of Prussia and Austria. In 1848-49 once again military suppression of popular movements was accomplished by Prussia and Austria. Warfare against Denmark brought Schleswig-Holstein into the German Bund. The defeat of Austria in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 led to the creation of a North German Confederation. The defeat of France in the Franco-German War of 1870-71 led to creation of an Imperial German government. A national parliament elected on the basis of adult franchise –the Reichstag –and representatives of the 25 German states in the Federal Council or Bundesrat were to shape the policy of Imperial Germany. The Prussian king became the German Emperor with control over German armed forces and the Reich Chancellor was also a Prussian. However, the Imperial Reich was not a unified state like that of British or a centralized state like that of France. In the Federal Council or Bundesrat Prussians controlled a plurality but not a majority of votes since concessions were made to Bavaria and Wurttemberg to entice them into the Imperial Reich. The German Reich had to share resources with federating states or Lander and communes or Gemeinden and its consumption expenditure declined from 46% of total public consumption in 1875-79 to 36% in 1910-1913. The process of German national unification was thus shaped by Prussian conservatism and militarism but the process of centralization under the Imperial Reich was affected by local and centrifugal forces.

16.2.3 Economic Background

The relative backwardness of Germany vis-à-vis Britain and the desire to overcome British advantage played an important role in development of German ideology. Also, to a certain extent, the need to balance bourgeois and Junker interests and the desire to mould policies of German states by Prussia also played an important role. Although agriculture continued to be an important sector of the economy, the creation of a Customs Union or Zollverein in 1833, led to significant growth in textile manufacture in the 1830s. This was followed by industrial development in the 1840s, associated with investment in railways. Railway based growth was interrupted by harvest failures in 1846-47 and revolutions of 1848-49. Growth of heavy industries in the take-off period of German industrialization – during 1850-1873 – was based on coal, iron and railways. There was an economic boom following unification of Germany in 1871. The 1870-73 saw a peak in growth which was followed by crisis and Depression of 1873-95. During 1850-1874 net product grew by 2.5% per annum, net product per capita by 1.7% and industrial employment by 1.6%. For the period 1875-91 the corresponding figures were 1.9%, 1.0% and 2.3% per annum.

In German and specially Prussian industrialization railways played a vital role. The iron and coal sectors in Prussia could truly take off only in the 1850s when railway building drew on domestic iron-and indirectly on domestic coal instead of on British and Belgian supplies. A study of Ruhr coal sector for early 1870s suggests that railways took about half of iron while the iron industry took about one-third of coal produced by Ruhr. Also one-fourth of the railways' freight business was provided by coal industry. The railways helped to integrate the German economy and to accelerate economic growth. Unlike railways of Britain

and United States, German railways made a large difference to the level of demand faced by iron and coal industries.

Although German industry was stimulated by the Zollverein and rapid development of railways, industrial progress was not sufficiently strong to influence the process of German unification. Although investment in Prussia increased by about 51% between 1816-22 and 1840-49, between 1851-60 and 1881-90 it grew by more than 200% in Germany as a whole. Although German industrialization is apparently based on Friedrich List's ideas about economic protectionism, the period of high tariffs emerges in 1879, much after unification. It is during the last decades of the 19th century that protectionism actually increased and affected the alliance between iron and rye – between industrialists and large landowners. However, the German industrial class was not sufficiently numerous or significant in the economy to play a decisive role in German politics – be it concerned with unification or liberal democracy.

The German bourgeoisie developed rapidly during the 19th century making transition from manufactory system to factory system in the period of liberal breakthrough between 1800 and 1830. Owing to poor management and problems of succeeding in relatively undeveloped and politically divided markets, several enterprises went bankrupt in 1800-1830. There was only a limited continuity between the – preindustrial period and industrial revolution in terms of business institutions and their directors. The rhetoric of economic progress, used by bourgeois groups to demand transport and industrial development became linked to industry for the fatherland even before 1848. In Prussia public industrial and technical schools after 1820 encouraged industry for national political reasons. Liberal entrepreneurs linked the issue of industry for the fatherland to expectations of political unity before 1848. The engineering association of the 1850s and 1860s carried these ideas further. Some of the key decisions of the industrial revolution in Germany were in one sense “political decision of an increasingly self-confident, organized and forward looking bourgeoisie”. Camphausen, Siemens, Hansemann, List and Harkort were German entrepreneurs who believed that they were also part of “a national civilizing mission”.

Other accounts have emphasized the centrality of the role of state and of progressive bureaucracy which served as a “surrogate bourgeoisie”. In the 1850s and 1860s the bureaucracy was influential in southern German states. In mid 19th century, the idea of material and moral progress held together various segments of bourgeoisie-businessmen, officials and professionals. The pace of German change in the 1850s and 1860s produced a noisy, self-aggrandizing bourgeoisie which, according to David Blackbourn, could be regarded as “a parvenu class within a parvenu nation.” F. Engels said that Britain had a bourgeois bourgeoisie, a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois working class. Max Weber suggested that Germany had a parvenu bourgeoisie, aristocracy and working class. The stridency of the bourgeoisie was a product of rapid development of a new order which “heightened parent claims to a particular position within society as a whole.” R. Dahrendorf has argued that Germany developed into an industrial but not a capitalist society. The presence of a sizable Mittelstand or intermediate stratum of small producers is evidence of incomplete modernization. Far more serious from the standpoint of German history is the point that the German bourgeoisie could not democratize German society. A silent bourgeois revolution is not a substitute for a proper, full fledged process of democratization. The

German nation-state, unlike the French, was not founded on liberal democratic ideas and weakness of German liberal traditions is a consequence.

16.2.4 Nationalism and Democracy

Although German bourgeoisie desired democratic reforms as well as national unification, after the defeat of the revolution of 1848-49, it had in effect to choose between the two. The educated and property owning liberals realized that they could not achieve greater influence on the state or democratic freedoms by an open confrontation with conservative groups. Besides, political fragmentation, which meant the reliance of small and medium sized German states on Prussian military force to preserve order and the states quo, made both national unification and democratization difficult to achieve. The liberals were too weak to confront the Junker (Prussian) landlords and conservatives and were also too conservative and timid to consider a mass-based bourgeois revolution. The prospects of a bourgeois revolution were also dim because of the presence of a considerable and organized working class.

It was this recognition of their weakness vis-à-vis the old order in Prussia which led the liberals to collaborate with Bismarck during the period 1866-1878. This support was based on deferment of demands for introduction of parliamentary democracy in Prussia. In fact the equation of national unification with progress was largely because the introduction of democratic reforms was a more difficult goal to achieve. The defeat of revolutions of 1848-49 and process of unification by Bismarck's policy of blood and iron no doubt weakened the democratic movement in Germany. Germany witnessed a silent bourgeois revolution in the 19th century but the democratization of political life was certainly far from substantial.

16.2.5 Unification: Revolution from Above

The process of German unification during the 19th century was speeded up by the creation of a national market, a network of railways and communications and a self-conscious bourgeoisie. Unification was achieved by an alliance of bourgeoisie with landowning class in which war and diplomacy played a vital role.

The German Bund (Confederation) of 1815, with all its defects, served as a preordained and legitimate theatre of operations till 1867 for nationalist forces in Germany. In 1815 East Prussia and Schleswig were not a part of German Confederation while Bohemia and Moravia, predominantly Czech areas, were included. The Czech liberals refused to take part in the elections to the German Assembly in 1848. The Confederation was not therefore entirely suitable as a basis for a Greater Germany – inclusive of all German speaking people – but was a broadly acceptable basis for an united Germany. The German National Assembly in 1848 was created on the basis of a most substantial and widespread upsurge in Germany in the 19th century. Briefly the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848 indicated the possibility of a democratic and united Germany. Suppression of the democratic movement delayed the process and altered the character of German nationalism. If the Frankfurt parliament had succeeded in its objectives it could have either produced “a centralized monarchy or a federal or indivisible republic”. Even in 1849 the National Assembly opted for a Kleindeutsche Reich or Little Germany. However, after the defeat of liberals, the subsequent politics

of German unification was shaped by conservatives in Prussian Germany and the dynastic rivalry of Prussia and Austria. This rivalry of the major dynastic powers in Germany eventually led to the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 which ended in Austrian exclusion from the German nation.

Bismarck and German Unification

Although the revolutions of 1848-49 failed to democratize German politics or to make a united Germany possible particularism and conservatism of German states was moderated in subsequent years. As Bismarck observed: "Even if the Landtag decisions, newspapers and shooting-club festivals were not able to bring about German unity, liberalism did subject the Princes to pressure which made them more inclined to grant concessions to the Empire." With the aid of the German army Bismarck achieved unification of Germany.

The unification of Germany was based on war and diplomacy since the creation of a strong state in Central Europe was bound to disturb the relation between the Great Powers and was specially likely to effect interests of France. Despite hostility of Prussian legislature to Bismarck's military expenditure, for which it refused to give approval, the Prussian leader managed to pursue his goal of Prussian ascendancy and German unification. In 1863 the issue of German claims over the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, an important issue in 1848, was revived and once these duchies were taken from Denmark, it was not difficult to pick a quarrel with Austria over their tenure. In the Austro-Prussian war although the Austrians secured a victory at Custozza they were decisively defeated at Koniggratz. In so far as the creation of the North German Confederation in 1867 threatened the French, it was France rather than Austria which was defeated at Koniggratz. It appeared after Bismarck's victory in the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 that the consummation of German unity would only be possible after a war between France and Germany. Napoleon-III's advisors were hostile to the idea of further German unification and Bismarck too looked forward to a military victory over France to consolidate the German nation-state. By skilfully exploiting the dispute about the Hohenzollern candidature to the Spanish throne, Bismarck managed to provoke a war with France, even while it aroused the patriotism of German people.

Finally, war between Prussia and Austria played an important role in the process of German unification. In July 1863 the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph convened a meeting of all German Princes at Frankfurt to discuss a scheme for Federal reform, by which the reconstituted central authority was to be placed permanently in the hands of Austria and of her allies, the secondary states. The Austrian Emperor persuaded the Prussian King to attend since this congress was the best means of carrying out reform of the confederation on conservative lines without danger of a revolution. Although King William had been persuaded to attend, Bismarck threatened to resign if he went to Frankfurt and thus the Prussian Minister thwarted Austria's attempt to strengthen her position in Germany. Prussia's absence made the Austrian proposal unworkable. An Austrian proposal for closer union within the German confederation, on the lines of her scheme of Federal reform was rejected by the smaller German states as well as public opinion. The smaller states, anxious to preserve their autonomy and bargaining power, rejected Austrian proposals just as they rejected similar proposals by Prussia earlier. Liberal opinion rejected Austrian proposals because there was no provision for a parliament based on a popular franchise. Although Bismarck's

announcement in 1863 that he was willing to support a popular assembly based on direct franchise was treated with scepticism it indicated Bismarck's attempt to win public approval. Eventually, the Reichstag in the North German Confederation was elected on adult franchise.

Bismarck's policy did not have much support in the Prussian House of Representatives, but he managed to gain his objective since the King was willing to accept Bismarck's policies for reasons of internal policy. When the Zollverein was renewed in its original form in October 1864 for a twelve year period it was because Prussia was closer to the wishes and interests of majority opinion in Germany as on the question of Federal reform. Austria's policy of trying to overthrow the Zollverein by using the resentment of south German secondary states against Prussia's liberal customs policy failed to yield results. Austria's intentions of joining the tariff union and then using the south German states to adopt a more protectionist policy did not succeed. Partly this was because north German smaller states, enclosed by Prussian territory, could not really benefit from any such Austrian protectionist policy. Despite political sympathies with Bavaria and Austria Saxony remained within the Zollverein. The south German secondary states were compelled to accept Prussian customs policy since they were unwilling to join a tariff union with Austria without north German states. Since their economic interest would not be safeguarded within a tariff union with the Austrian Empire and since they could not stand alone small south German states too had to remain within the Zollverein.

Bismarck's skill lay in securing a favourable international situation before he waged war with Austria in 1866. Also considerable statesmanship was involved in the manner of handling small German states after Prussian victory in 1866 and in the creation of a North German Confederation in 1867. Hanover, Electorate of Hesse, Nassau were annexed. Secret defensive and offensive alliances were negotiated with south German states to ensure that all non-Austrian Germany would be united in case of war. The fear of France no doubt encouraged small south German states to attach themselves to Prussia. In the Bundesrath or federal Council of North German confederation Prussia could be outvoted by the smaller states since it had only 17 out of 43 members. Although the North German confederation created a united foreign policy and military system the independence of smaller states was accorded due recognition.

The failure to create a Southern Confederation indicated that the southern states would eventually join Bismarck's North German Confederation. Although Baden was willing to join there was resistance in Bavaria and Wurtemberg. The conflict with France in 1870 led to military victories which in turn led to the creation of a German Empire. The four southern states, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden and Hesse joined the German Empire in 1871 after the approval by south German Diets. The federal character of German Empire emerged because the Bavarians wanted concessions in matters connected with the army, foreign affairs, postal department and railways.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Discuss in 100 words the political background of German nationalism.

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- 2) How did economic processes help in the unification of Germany?

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- 3) What role did Bismarck play in the unification of Germany? Give your answer in 100 words.

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16.3 CULTURAL BACKGROUD OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM

The Austrian Minister, Metternich, in a conversation with Lord Palmerston in the summer of 1847, called Italy a “geographical expression”. There is no doubt that Italian nationalism, which emerged in the late 18th century, actually gained wider support only in the 1830s and 1840s.

16.3.1 Idea of Italian Nation

The idea of Italy as an entity, of Italian as a noble and beautiful language and of common cultural roots of the Italian city states and states, however, can be traced back to the Renaissance and may be even earlier.

Francisco Petrarch (1304-1374) turned to antiquity for inspiration and solace following the decline of the two great forces of universalism – the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. Though he has been hailed as a patriot, it was a purely literary patriotism which he represented. Cola di Rienzo in the 14th century attempted to unite the whole of Italy under the hegemony of Rome. Through revival of ancient patriotism during the Renaissance certain ideas of nationalism began to develop among a small group of literary men. Rienzo’s “proclamations of the sovereignty of Roman people and of unity of Italy”, and his support of common people against aristocracy, constitute weak anticipation of ideas of nationalism and democracy. Although Rienzo interpreted the concept of populous Romanus in a sense of Italian nationalism, any “parochial nationalism” was alien to him and unthinkable to his age. An incipient nationalism is evident in Rienzo’s

letter to the Italian cities of September 19, 1347. Neither the elites nor the people, however, understood Rienzo's nationalism.

During the first half of the 16th century, Italy faced an intermittent conflict between French, Swiss, Spanish and German soldiers for political supremacy on Italian soil. A balance between five dominant Italian states – Venice, Milan, Florence, Naples and the Papal states – produced by mid-15th century – was upset by the Italian wars of 1494-1559. While France and Spain began to move towards a sense of nationalism, the Italians had a strong sense of regional or local attachment of Milan, Florence or Genoa; but they could also swing to another extreme to become cosmopolitans – men who could look to serving larger and more powerful political units, whatever the language of service. As Lauro Martines says, “Castiglione’s courtier was trained to serve princes, not nations or homelands.” The cause of failure of Italians to unite was to be found in social reality – the antagonism between rulers and ruled, lord and peasant or prince and nobility. This was the reality behind Machiavelli’s obsessive critique of weak government. These Italian Wars affected the consciousness of the ruling classes.

16.3.2 Italian Language

Around 1500 amid the Italian Wars, the Question of a suitable literary language assumed importance. The discussion began with courtiers at Rome and Milan, Urbino and Mantua. This debate tried to give shape to the entire Italian peninsula, “in pursuit of a literary language that would cut across dialects and give to Italy a unified tongue.” The campaign for a unified literary vernacular started in Italy when it became the victim of invading armies. From the outset Italian was regarded as an equal to Latin if not superior at least in the context of imaginative literature.

But the debate on language reflected social divisions in Italy and not merely regional differences. The insistence on linguistic cleavage between the ruling class and common people and the assumption that Italy could have one language only for the dominant social groups reflected a profoundly elitist attitude.

16.3.3 Humanism

In fact Italian humanism also reflected a bias in favour of the elite. The great Italian humanists “spoke for and to the dominant social groups”. The ideals of education, humanity and political order which the humanists believed in could be realized only in a society with privileged elites. The humanists addressed well placed people – noblemen, princes, prelates, professionals and literati. Humanism was not intended to result in contemplation or prayer but to guide men engaged in practical life and specially those destined to hold leading positions in society. All humanists whatever their orientation “made a candid alliance with power”. The literary output of the humanists was rooted in the responsibilities of upper classes. The intellectual literary elite very frequently expressed contempt for the multitude and defined themselves in relation to power not poverty. Since humanism appealed to the rich man’s conscience and sought entry into the ruling class, humanists “saw to it that critique of wealth went the way of morals rather than politics.” The humanists often made scornful observations about the ignorant masses, occasionally including callous rich men and ignorant nobles. The Florentine humanist Alberti criticized active politics because ‘the lazy and cowardly plebeians’ were too much involved in it. Even the Renaissance ideal of

dignity of man was linked to the domineering position of urban ruling groups in an age of triumph.

The development of Italian thought and culture gave Italy a classical heritage which made Italian nationalists less willing to identify with popular culture. As Peter Burke has argued, since a standard literary Italian already existed, the discovery of dialect was divisive. Italian nationalism of the 19th century failed to overcome the cultural elitism of Italian humanists and literary masters.

16.4 POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM

The political process towards unification of Italy was more tortuous and long-drawn. The initiative for this came from various sources which are outlined below.

16.4.1 Modern Italian Political Nationalism

In the closing years of the 18th century, the French Revolution provided a model for Italian nationalism. The French occupying forces in Lombardy organized an essay competition on the subject of best form of free government for Italy. This encouraged a debate extolling the ancient glories of Italy, admiration for France and its constitution of 1795 and schemes for Italian regeneration and unification. Melchiorre Gioia, who won the essay competition and became one of Italy's leading economists has been regarded as "a link between the native Enlightenment tradition of practical, modernizing reform and the new Jacobian patriotism." As old state units favoured anachronistic urban privileges it was necessary to reject this form of politics. While moderate nationalists proposed a gradual process of unification beginning with the Cisalpine Republic as "a model of a self-governing Italian state" radicals preferred Unitarian and revolutionary nationalism.

The Kingdom of Italy created by Napoleon helped foster national sentiment but it also reduced it to a continental colony of France after the Continental System was introduced in 1806. Military costs and contributions to France absorbed more than half of an enlarged budget. The Napoleonic legal codes and prefectoral system which was introduced in Italy helped to define a model of an unified national-state. The elite of bureaucrats, magistrates, legal and financial experts who emerged during the Enlightenment in Italy gained greater prominence under the Napoleonic system. Even the Italian army, based on conscription and used for Napoleon's campaigns, revealed a sense of nationalism. It was as a reaction to French domination and Napoleon's identification with imperial Rome that Italian writers chose to reject the Roman heritage.

In Italy poets played a major role in the development of nationalism. It was a humanistic literary elite which played a role in the diffusion of the Italian language. There was no powerful state as in France which could promote a national language. The absence of vernacular reformation as in Germany confined the Italian language to a tiny elite of 2.5% who commonly used the Italian language even in 1860. Romanticism in Italy influenced nationalism but not in the manner of German Romanticism. The major figures of Italian Romanticism did not reject either the classical tradition or that of the Enlightenment. Cultural figures like Vittorio Alfieri and Alessandro Manzoni played a significant part in the development of nationalism. The tension between national and local systems of

power as well contributed to the exceptional importance of artists and adventurers like Alessandro Manzoni, Massimo D'Azeglio, Giuseppe Mazzini, Giuseppe Verdi and Giuseppe Garibaldi in Italian political life.

16.4.2 Young Italy

The Austrians were the dominant power in Italy and the settlement after defeat of Napoleon strengthened Austrian control. Metternich's proposal for an Italian Confederation, on lines of the German Confederation, was opposed by both Piedmont and the Pope's advisers. In the period after 1815 secret societies attracted supporters of the Italian Jacobin tradition. Members of the Carbonari and other secret societies were not exclusively concerned with Italian nationalism. Filippo Michel Buonarroti and other committed Jacobins even regarded the unity of Italy as a stepping stone towards universal social revolution. The Carbonari of southern Italy who enjoyed greater public support among 19th century revolutionary organizations were more interested in democratizing Naples than in unifying Italy. In the revolution in Naples the Carbonari demanded a democratic constitution and were inspired by the Spanish revolution of 1820. While radical members of the Carbonari in Naples even considered export of revolution to Papal States and Lombardy in Piedmont and other parts of Italy, military conspiracies were not very successful. It was political exiles in Britain, after the failure of the revolution of 1820-21, who produced a different liberal trend against the egalitarian perspective of Buonarroti.

After the failure of the revolutions of 1830-31, specially in Modena and Bologna, Italians felt increasingly the need to rely on their own endeavours and on open methods of agitation. Giuseppe Mazzini, started Young Italy and rejected the sectarian model of revolutionary dictatorship and terror, Mazzini was a democratic nationalist who simultaneously rejected both elitism of moderates and the Jacobin ideal of revolutionary dictatorship. As a radical Unitarian Mazzini believed that all forms of federalism were mere mechanisms for perpetuating the dominance of local elites. Mazzini's nationalism was not exclusive and he believed in the eventual emergence of a United States of Europe after all nations became free. Although he believed in a people's war of national liberation he also believed in a democratic government based on universal suffrage. Mazzini recognized the importance of support from the peasantry for his conception of people's war but Italian republicans were never able to bridge the gap between town and country.

16.4.3 Piedmont Sardinia

The process of national unification in Italy was based on existence of several states which tried to preserve their autonomy and privileges in the context of Franco-Austrian rivalry. Piedmont became the Italian state which unified Italy. The King, Charles Albert at least until 1840, evinced no sentiment in favour of either liberalism or patriotism. Charles Albert (1831-1849) was a conservative monarch who had no hesitation in using Austrian troops to stop revolution in Italy much like what the Metternich system envisaged. Albert had territorial claims beyond the Alps in France and he refused to join a league of Italian states when it was proposed by the king of Naples. In fact Charles Albert's treaty with Austria was transposed to his predecessor's reign by court propagandists. In 1847 the Pope proposed a tariff league as an initial step towards closer agreement among Italian states. The Grand Duke Leopoldo of Tuscany agreed to accept the

tariff league but Piedmont did not. The Pope's envoy sensed that the Piedmontese king was reluctant to join such a league because he wanted to expand his state at the cost of small Austrian dominated duchies of north-central Italy. In the struggle between Piedmont and Austria for supremacy in Italy the Pope was offering the mantle of leadership to Piedmont.

Although Piedmont was not quite the powerhouse like Prussia in an economic sense, it was politically and militarily the most active participant in the process of Italian revolution. Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi have been hailed in some accounts as the brain, heart and sword of unification. While Piedmont's policies had been timid before 1849, in the 1850s the more resolute policies of Count Cavour in combination with the popular movements launched by Mazzini and Garibaldi led to Italian unification. Cavour used his friendship and alliance with Napoleon-III to wage successful wars for both the liberation of Italy from Austria and political unification. The territorial ambitions of Piedmont-Sardinia and the desire to preserve social stability shaped the attitude of the aristocratic Cavour. Unification was to depend primarily on the regular army and bureaucracy, not popular movements.

The Piedmont-Sardinian attitude towards mass mobilization was based on a policy of utilizing the people by not giving them an independent role in the wars of national unification. Therefore the number of casualties in these wars was few. Only about 3,000 died in the first (1845-49) and second wars (1859-60) of independence. During the Crimean War of 1855 only 14 Italians died. The third war of Italian independence claimed a thousand lives on land and sea. In 1867 the Garibaldi lost 600 lives at Mentana, in September 1870 the Italian regulars lost 24 lives. Between 1848 and 1870 the total number of casualties suffered by both regular and volunteer forces was 6000 dead and about 20,000 wounded. The attempt to pacify the Italian south after unification led to death of far more people than in all the wars of liberation. Despite the tremendous significance of these three wars of independence fewer people died than in one single day during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

The financial costs of the wars of liberation had to be borne by Piedmont Sardinia which adversely affected the programme of modernization started by Cavour in the 1850s. Piedmont had to make considerable sacrifices to unify Italy. The compensation was to be found in the influence which Piedmont wielded in the unitary state which was created in 1861.

16.4.4 The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church played an important role in Italian cultural and political life. The neo-Guelph historians and literary figures tried to produce reconciliation between the idea of nationalism and the Church. The Piedmontese priest Vincenzo Gioberti took up the issue of an Italian Confederation under the presidency of the Pope. Between 1846 and outbreak of the 1848 revolution possibility of a synthesis between the ideas of Gioberti and Mazzini seemed possible. When Pope Pius-IX withdrew support for a national war against Catholic Austria in April 1848 he lost the support of nationalist opinion in Italy. The liberal Catholic movement, however, helped to reconcile the idea of nationalism with Catholicism despite the hostility of the Pope. Although in 1847 the Pope had been more eager than the Piedmontese king for a tariff league, he was not willing to use his moral authority to rouse the masses. In April 1848, when the Pope refused to wage a

crusading war against Austria, the possibility of a political league against Austria retreated. The Papal Minister in turn argued that the enlargement of Piedmont and the autonomy of Italy could not be treated as identical matters.

After the revolution in Rome and flight of the Pope, a Roman Republic was proclaimed. Efforts of the Pope to return with the help of French and Austrian forces, succeeded in June 1849. During the period of Italian unification, Pope and Catholic Church both played a conservative role. After losing temporal power, the Pope forbade the faithful to participate in national politics and the prohibition lasted until 1904. Although full participation was not sanctioned until 1919, nominal Catholics voted in elections after the franchise was widened in 1882. The opposition of the Church to a secular state - as well as socialism, anarchism and labour movement – resulted in the merger of anticlericalism with parliamentary democracy. Christian Democracy and the Popolari emerged as a political force only after World War-I.

16.5 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM

The Italian national movement was not based upon a strong industrial bourgeoisie as in the case of Germany. The level of economic unification in Italy prior to political unification was also less than in Germany, the Italian customs union being no match for the German Zollverein. Another serious economic problem was the considerable backwardness of the Italian south. Some scholars of the Italian economy between the 18th century and mid 19th century have argued that there was no “single, structurally unified Italian economy”. But although Italy went into economic decline in the 17th century, Italy was unlike an underdeveloped region of either pre-industrial Europe or any other continent.

16.5.1 North-South Difference

In any analysis of Italian economic and political development, the difference between the- more prosperous northern regions of Piedmont and Lombardy with that of less modernized south is always noted. The difficulty posed by regional imbalance in Italy is of concern to historians of Italian industrialization and nationalism. The problem of the south is analysed by those who wish to explain growth rate of the Italian economy and the political problems which these disparities created for unification of Italy and also for the post-unification Italian state. The Italian state did not perpetrate dualism but it failed to solve the problems it raised. Over time the Italian state became more interventionist at least from- the 1880s onwards. According to Clive Trebilcock, “the late political integration of the Peninsula, and the liberal - autonomist type of politics needed to achieve it, exerted more influence upon the content of state policies than did the measure of Italy’s industrial underdevelopment.”

16.5.2 State and Economy

If policies of the Italian state after unification are partly to blame for a failed agricultural revolution and for a widening of North-South divide in the sphere of industry too, state policies produced uneven and limited rewards. As far as industries are concerned both an initial policy of free trade and a later policy of

protectionism and public investment failed to accelerate economic development. First, the customs tariffs and trade agreements introduced by Cavour in Piedmont in the 1850s were extended to the united Italian kingdom. The influence of English free trade ideas led to lowering of tariffs with France after the navigation and trade agreements of 1862 and 1863. It has been argued that free trade policies were adopted to “repay” Britain and France for political and military help they rendered to Italy during the process of unification. Free trade was also adopted to gain access for Italian exports in foreign markets and to attract foreign capital and technology. After publication of an Industrial Survey of 1870-74 protests by industrialists led by Alessandro Rossi a new tariff structure was introduced between 1875-1880. The openly protectionist tariffs introduced in 1887 helped Italian industry but the average level of nominal protection on industrial products rarely exceeded 21 percent.

The Italian state after unification did try to force the pace of economic development in order to catch-up with other advanced countries. One of the measures of this is the level of public spending to GDP which fluctuated between 12% and 14% up until 1880 and rose to about 17%-18% during the years before World War-I. Apart from military and administrative expenditure infrastructural investment in railways absorbed the bulk of these public expenditures. Between unification and World War-I, three-quarters of the total spending on public works plus expenditure on railway construction from the public debt indicated a zeal for railway development. Unlike the USA and Germany and even France, industrialization of Italy was not boosted substantially by railways. For one, the bulk of railway materials and rails had to be imported. Demand from railways constituted 8% during 1861-95 and 13% during 1896-1913 of the value added in the engineering sector. Even utilization of the railways was poor because North and South did not complement each other; because the main Italian export-silk-weighed very little; and because of general backwardness of the country. The railway policy of the Italian state was excessively “forced” in terms of timing as well as the mode of financing. Though the railways sewed up the Italian but they neither integrated the south with the Italian economy nor boosted overall industrial growth. Although the Risorgimento and the classic reforming bourgeoisie after unification tried to modernize Italy the problems of dualism, backwardness and regional imbalances were difficult to overcome.

16.6 PROCESS OF UNIFICATION

The unification of Italy was accomplished by Piedmont Sardinia led by Cavour in collaboration with the popular forces led by Mazzini and Garibaldi. Although popular mobilization played a part in this process the elites tried to control the level of popular participation. This is what led Gramsci to characterize the Risorgimento and Italian unification as a form of passive revolution. Though Mazzini believed in a concept of people’s war he was unable to mobilize peasant masses. It was after the failure of revolutions in 1820-21, 1830-31 and 1848-49 that republican nationalist opinion came around to accepting an alliance with the more liberal Cavour in order to forge Italian unity. It was the Italian National Society which from 1857 onwards represented this tacit and often open alliance between Cavour and republican nationalists. It is this rapprochement which explains how Cavour on the one hand asked Garibaldi to raise a force of volunteers for a war of liberation and why Garibaldi fought under the banner of ‘Italy and Vittorio Emanuele’ in 1860 on the other. In fact Garibaldi confided to potential

recruits of his volunteer force in early 1860 that the king, Victor Emanuele and the Piedmontese government had secretly incited him to lead an expedition against the Neapolitan government.

16.6.1 Popular Movements

All forms of popular agitation and collective violence are not connected with major political crises but apparently non-political events like food riots, violent strikes, tax rebellions and collective seizures of land which occurred with unfailing regularity, in fact clustered around the crisis years. Secret societies such as the Coronary, Filadelfi or Young Italy were active in the 1830s and 1840s in fomenting revolutions. There was a chain of rebellions in Turin, Naples, Palermo and other areas in 1820-21 and a fresh round of rebellions during 1828-31 which had repercussions for another two years. The temporarily successful bourgeois revolutions in Sicily, Naples, Venice, Lombardy, Tuscany and the Papal states involved street fighting, food riots, destruction of land records and tax offices. While workers and peasants turned against revolutionary regimes of 1848-49 which did not address their demand for bread or employment in the cities and distribution of land in the countryside the attempt of revolutionary regimes to reimpose order met with stout, often violent, resistance. The middle classes which sought democratic constitutions for themselves were faced with hostile reactions to their taxation and conscription policies by urban poor, workers and peasants. As in the 1848-49 revolutions in Germany, revolutionary coalitions collapsed with workers, peasants, urban poor and socialists parting company from the liberal upper and middle classes.

The revolutions of 1848-49 were popular revolutions but more municipal than national. The alliance between the Piedmontese monarchy and local aristocracies was unaffected by these sporadic and uncoordinated rebellions. The real problem was that democrats failed to secure support of the countryside. Disillusioned with conduct of the war and policies of monarchists Mazzini in mid-1848 returned to his concept of people's war. Although Mazzini worked hard to propagate his ideas, he was unable to rally the Peasant and Bridge the gulf between town and country. Partly this was because the radicals were not in close contact with the peasantry as were the relatively conservative clergy. Another reason why the peasantry refused to rally behind republicans was that landowners made no concessions to the peasantry to help forge a patriotic alliance. The 1848-49 revolutions failed but heroic defence of the republics in Rome by Mazzini and Garibaldi and in Venice by Daniele Manin – produced legendary stories of Italian nationalism and Italian left. The scale of revolutions in Italy in 1848 and the symbolic importance of defence of the republics in the long term affected both political reforms and unification of Italy.

16.6.2 War and Unification

Italy did not take long to recover from the military defeats in the battle of Custoza (July 1848) and Novara (March 1849). Cavour joined the Crimean War in 1855 on behalf of Britain and France to gain their support in his future confrontation with Austria. One of Cavour's military officers predicted that out of the mud of Crimea Italy would emerge. Although Italy did not achieve much it got an opportunity to discuss its problems in an international forum in 1856. Piedmont also sought an alliance with France to alter the political map of Europe which culminated in the agreement between Napoleon-III and Cavour at Plombieres in

1858. Within Piedmont Cavour consolidated his position by a connubial alliance with Urbano Rattazzi of the centre-left in 1852. It was this alliance between the centre-right and centre-left which enabled Cavour to establish his political career. The connubial had to be kept alive during 1855 when Cavour secured Rattazzi's unconditional support for participating in the Crimean war in exchange for support to Rattazzi's Law of Convents which restricted the privileges of the Catholic Church by suppressing about 300 religious houses and their orders.

Although the republicans were initially distrustful of Cavour and the Piedmontese they slowly recognized the pivotal importance of Piedmont for Italian unification. Manin broke with Mazzini, and denounced sporadic violence. This leader of the Venetian republic of 1848-49 persuaded Giorgio Pallavicino-Trivulzio that Cavour had a vital role to play in Italian liberation. Even Garibaldi and Mazzini came to recognize this fact though their perspectives remained different. Cavour met the former Sicilian revolutionary La Farina in September 1856 secretly and courted the support of republicans in the projected war against Austria. Many supporters of Mazzini were also disillusioned with repeated failures to arouse Italian masses.

The Neapolitan Carlo Piscane who planned an uprising to coincide with the spontaneous revolt of the Leghorn and Genoa peasantry was forced to kill himself at Sapri in 1857 in order to avoid a worse death at the hands of the conservative Sanfedisti peasantry who identified more with the throne and altar than with liberal or radical ideas. The Italian National Society formed in July 1857 by Pallavicino and La Farina helped to channel the support of former revolutionaries and republicans to Cavour and Piedmont. Even Garibaldi by early 1858 "appreciated the need to wait for Turin's signal" and identified with the National Society.

On the basis of an agreement with Napoleon-III at Plombieres in 1858 France came to the aid of Piedmont in the war with Austria which broke out in 1859. Though Cavour resigned for a while as Prime Minister of Piedmont - disappointed with the peace, terms of Villafranca 1859- he advised the commissioners sent to central Italy to remain there and mobilize public opinion against the restoration of former rulers. In August 1859 Cavour complimented the people for preventing return of the rulers and achieving independence by their own efforts instead of foreign arms. Back as Prime Minister in 1860 Cavour instructed his agents in central Italy to demonstrate –to the satisfaction of the European courts – that the people endorsed the decisions of their assemblies which sought union with Piedmont. In order to ensure the incorporation of Tuscany, the Duchies and the Legations into Italy, Cavour agreed to cede Nice and Savoy to the French. The vote in these territories confirmed what Cavour and Napoleon-III had predetermined. Although these plebiscites were far from genuine a measure of popular support was generated by the activity of the Italian National Society which played a key role in these plebiscites. Between 1857 and 1862 this Society published a national newspaper, drafted volunteers, and orchestrated revolutions in Central Italy and then played a role in the plebiscites. This society was implicated in Garibaldi's invasion of Naples as well as Cavour's entry into the Papal States "thus ensuring", says Coppa, "that the kingdom of 1861 would be national rather than northern."

Although Garibaldi was upset by the handing over of his home province of Nice to the French he collaborated with Cavour in the invasion of Sicily and Naples. After Garibaldi's success in southern campaigns Cavour blocked Garibaldi's

march on Rome lest his actions lead to a conflict with Napoleon-III and create adverse international repercussions. In order to deal with Neapolitan armies which had withdrawn into the fortresses of Capua and Gaeta in October 1860 Garibaldi himself urged the Piedmontese king to march towards the south. It was the tremendous success of Garibaldi's volunteers which galvanized Cavour into uniting the whole of Italy while earlier he concentrated on northern and central Italy. Although some republicans conceived of a southern expedition earlier as a way of mobilizing the masses and contesting the position of Cavour and the monarchy in the process of unification, this objective could not be achieved even in 1860. The 1859 annexations in North and Central Italy were achieved without much collective violence, but in 1860 the transfer of power in the south was marked by enormous violence.

The violence in the Italian south emerged before the arrival of Garibaldi in Sicily and was directed against the Bourbon government and its property and personnel. As Garibaldi established his control over Sicily the pattern of violence shifted. Garibaldi's decrees abolishing the *macinato* and promising land reform had little impact since he established a *de facto* alliance with the militia and bourgeoisie of the island. As the bourgeoisie realigned itself with Garibaldi, peasants and workers could no longer expect justice or redress of grievances from him. Therefore "numerous land occupations and attacks on proprietors rapidly took on the coloration of opposition to Garibaldi and the national revolution." On the mainland in the south though there had been no major rural movements against the Bourbons, there were numerous protests against the bourgeois allies of Garibaldi. Peasants demanding the return of usurped common lands rioted in the southern city of Matera against the new regime. In Basilicata, disaffected groups disappointed with the new regime rioted against the plebiscite on unification, attacked the National Guard, declared support for the deposed Bourbon king and resisted the draft. The groups which were already mobilized against Bourbon kings rapidly adopted violent means to resist a new regime which adversely affected their interests. Therefore levels of violent conflict in the south were much higher after the nominal transfer of power than before. It would appear that the Party of Action was controlled by the Piedmontese king in more ways than one. After the creation of an Italian nation state in 1861 even Garibaldi and Mazzini together with other republicans were gradually marginalised.

As far as the unification of Italy was concerned, the question of Venetia and Rome remained. The banker Isaac Pereira probably at the instigation of Napoleon III proposed that Austria sell Venetia to Italy at the end of 1860. As compensation Austria could purchase Bosnia-Herzegovina from Turkey. La Marmora, the Italian Prime minister, years later offered to purchase Venice for 100,000,000 lire, but the Austrians refused once again. As the ally of Prussia in the war against Austria in 1866 Italy's military performance was unimpressive but Venice was incorporated in Italy after an overwhelming vote in favour of union in a plebiscite. However, during the war of 1866 not one city had risen in rebellion and few Venetians rushed to join the volunteers of Garibaldi. After several failed attempts to acquire Rome – notably Garibaldi's attempt in 1867 – it was incorporated after a shortwar in September 1870. Italian unification was achieved but the fruits of this achievement came almost at the end of the 19th century.

Check Your Progress 2

Formation of Nation-States-2: Germany and Italy

- 1) Discuss in 100 words the cultural basis of Italian nationalism.

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- 2) What was the contribution of popular movements in Italian unification?
Answer in 100 words.

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16.7 LET US SUM UP

Both Germany and Italy emerged as nation-states in the 19th century. Although the idea of nationalism in some form or other can be traced back in time in both cases, the actual development of nation-states took place only in the 19th century. The process of unification was different in the case of Germany from that of Italy. While in Germany economic and political unity was achieved at a much higher level, in Italy the unification was achieved mainly at political and cultural levels. Economic unity in Italy was much weaker in comparison. In Germany, unity was brought about mainly from above. But in Italy, popular mobilizations also played an important role. Apart from these factors, war, whether willing or unwilling, provided the impetus which brought people together and helped in forging the respective nations.

16.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Sub-section 16.2.2
- 2) See Sub-section 16.2.3
- 3) See Sub-section 16.2.5

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See Section 16.3
- 2) See Section 16.6