

## UNIFICATION of Italy and Germany



**The Congress of Vienna – 1815** Following the defeat of [Napoleon Bonaparte](#), the major European powers of the day met in Vienna, Austria to establish a plan of peace and discuss the realignment of territorial borders. The European powers present at the [Congress of Vienna](#) included **Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, and England**. Headed by Austria's [Prince Metternich](#), the Congress of Vienna attempted to stem the tide of [nationalism](#) sweeping across Europe. Metternich believed nationalism created disorder because it fostered violent [revolution](#). The Congress of Vienna sought to restore [absolutist](#) ruling families to the thrones of Europe and maintain a balance of power. A **balance of power** means that one nation should not be allowed to dominate and threaten other nations. The Congress of Vienna was successful in suppressing nationalistic movements from 1815 to 1848, a period also known as the **Metternich Age**, however, nationalism would eventually return to the Europe. Nationalistic movements in Italy and Germany would result in unified, sovereign [nation-states](#).



### The Unification of Italy

The political structure of the Italian peninsula prior to 1861 was that of a fragmented group of small kingdoms and principalities. There was no political cohesion while internal fighting and rivalries were hampering any progress. However, the people of the Italian peninsula, shared language, [culture](#) and a historical background. Some Italian leaders began calling for nationalism with the goal of bringing Italy together into a sovereign nation-state with autonomous rule.

The most famous of Italian nationalistic leaders were [Count Camilo Cavour](#), [Giuseppe Garibaldi](#), and [Giuseppe Mazzini](#). Mazzini was instrumental in being the "soul" of Italian nationalism. He also

established the secret society known as [Young Italy](#), an organization devoted to a united Italy. Garibaldi was considered to be the "sword" of Italian nationalism. His band of [Red Shirts](#) conquered forces opposed to unification and forced southern Italy into a cohesive political unit. Cavour was the "brain" in his role as a skilled diplomat. Cavour successfully received aid from France in a war against the Austrians and eventually put [Victor Emmanuel II](#) on the throne of a completely united Italian nation-state in 1861.

#### Cavour the Brain



#### Garibaldi the Sword



#### Mazzini the Soul



## The Unification of Germany

Germany, during the Metternich Age, was also fragmented. For many of the same reasons, there was a nationalistic movement calling for the **unification of Germany**. Many felt that to be considered a legitimate nation with political power on the international scene, Germany would have to have autonomous **sovereignty**. Of all the German states, **Prussia** was the most powerful, dominating the other, smaller states. Prussia was ruled by **Kaiser Wilhelm**, however, the person with the most power was Prime Minister **Otto von Bismarck**, shown here. It was Bismarck who strengthened German unity and power by calling on the nationalistic tendencies of the German people. Bismarck was able to unite Germany through his policy of **Realpolitik**, or realistic politics, which is a **Machiavellian** "end justifies the means" approach to strengthening and uniting Germany. Bismarck was a strong proponent of "**Blood and Iron**". Blood represented the sacrifices the German people would have to make in achieving the goal of unification. A culture of **militarism**, or the glorification of the military, was created by the crafty Bismarck. This played out in a series of wars against the Austrians and the French. Iron represented the need to **industrialize**. Bismarck saw that in order to be a world power, Germany would have to catch up with much of the rest of Europe in the areas of technology and **factory** production. In 1871, Bismarck succeeded in placing Wilhelm on the throne of a unified Germany. German power achieved through nationalism would foster a period of imperialization and would set the stage for the outbreak of **World War I**.



- 1) What was beneficial about the **Metternich Age**? Why?
- 2) Metternich believed nationalism created disorder because it fostered violent revolution. Why? What did he really fear? (What was he trying to protect?)
- 3) Why do you think there was no political cohesion and internal fighting and rivalries in Italy before 1861? (The map might help you answer this!)
- 4) What is the implication of "Blood and Iron"?
- 5) What impact did Bismarck have on Germany before and after unification?