

(S6-EUROPEAN HISTORY NOTES)

THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY, 1815-1870

Before 1870, the country known as Italy did not exist in Europe as a nation. Italy ceased or stopped to exist during the period of the Holy Roman Empire. However, following the collapse or disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire, the Italian states suffered disunity. The Italians were conquered by powerful neighboring states like France, Austria, Spain and Prussia.

By the close of the 18th century, the numerous states that were found on the Italian Peninsular, though independent of each other were under the Austrian domination which subjected them to a lot of exploitation and injustices. There was neither political nor socio-economic co-operation among these states of Italy. The Italians were people of different races, languages and cultures and this explains why Prince Metternich referred to Italy as a “mere geographical expression” in 1815.

Following the French occupation of the Italian Peninsular in 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte tried to instill the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity which the Italians were to use later against their oppressive foreign rulers. During his reign, Napoleon Bonaparte merged the numerous Italian states into three divisions namely: the Kingdom of Italy ruled directly by France, the Kingdom of the Papal states under the Pope and the Kingdom of Naples under Marshall Murat one of Napoleon’s senior Generals which laid a foundation for the later unification of Italy. However, with his defeat in 1815, the peace makers at Vienna decided to re-organize Italy by bringing back the old political divisions which the Italian patriots struggled to unite right from 1815 to 1870. Thus, by the Vienna settlement of 1815, Italy was left with the following divisions which fell in five broad groups;

a) To the West; **the Kingdom of Sardinia** later to become Piedmont-Sardinia. This included the state (island) of Sardinia in the south, Piedmont in the north, Genoa as well as Nice and Savoy to the extreme west, all recovered from France. Sardinia was a very poor or barren island. This kingdom was governed at Turin in Piedmont by King Victor Emmanuel I who was restored by the Vienna settlement and it was free from the Austrian influence.

b) To the East; **were Lombardy and Venetia** which were combined together in a new kingdom in 1815 and put under the direct control of Austria. Lombardy was the most fertile province in Italy while Venetia was the richest trading centre. Therefore, the two were the richest provinces of Italy.

c) **The Papal States or States of the Church.** These were ruled by the Pope. They were among the worst governed states of Italy. There was no freedom of expression; the Pope killed and imprisoned the Italian nationalists and it was difficult for the nationalists to operate from these states. Besides, they had the highest level of illiteracy on the Italian Peninsular.

d) **At the centre of Italy were three independent Duchies of MODENA, PARMA AND TUSCANY.** The duchies were relatively better governed than the Papal States and the two Sicilies. The ruler of Parma was Marie Louise, the second wife of Napoleon I. The rulers of Parma and Tuscany were both **Austrian Hapsburgs**, while the ruler of Modena was married to one. The three duchies were too dominated by Austria.

e) **To the South was the Kingdom of the two Sicilies i.e. NAPLES AND SICILY.** These were very poor, highly infested with armed robberies and ruled badly by King Ferdinand I, a member of the Spanish Bourbon ruling House of Spain who was restored by the Vienna settlement of 1815. Though initially independent of each other, King Ferdinand I brought the two kingdoms together into one single state which he ruled as one state.

From the above, it is clear to conclude that after 1815, Italy was no longer a nation but a mere geographical expression. Therefore, the unification of Italy refers to the amalgamation or union of the various Italian states namely Piedmont – Sardinia, Lombardy and Venetia, the Central Duchies of Modena, Parma and Tuscany, the Papal States, Naples and Sicily to form a united state of Italy under a single Italian ruler in 1870.

PROBLEMS THAT DELAYED THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY

Before 1850, there were several obstacles or problems that affected the Italian nationalists in their struggle to have a united Italy as noted below;

The Vienna settlement of 1815 delayed the unification of Italy in several ways. For example, it re-divided Italy into numerous entities or states, thus making all her attempts towards unification difficult. From the three divisions which Napoleon Bonaparte had divided Italy, the peace makers at Vienna re-divided Italy into twelve smaller states or provinces each almost independent of the others. This complicated the mobilization as well as coordination of the Italian nationalists during the unification struggle.

Secondly, the Vienna settlement of 1815 gave AUSTRIA a dominant position in the Italian states. For example, Austria was given direct control in the two richest provinces of Lombardy and Venetia and an indirect control over the central Duchies or provinces of Modena, Parma and Tuscany whose rulers were from the Austrian ruling family. Austrian presence in Italy was a very big obstacle because Austria suppressed Italian nationalism and liberalism as it continued to rule these states and this delayed the unification of Italy.

The settlement also restored the old or legitimate rulers in Italy who retarded the revolutionary progress in Italy. For example, King Ferdinand I was restored in Naples and Sicily and the Pope was restored in the Papal states while Victor Emmanuel I was restored in Piedmont. These rulers were very conservative and therefore they suppressed all efforts by the Italian nationalists and liberals aimed at establishing a united Italy.

The Congress system also delayed the unification of Italy. For example, at the Congress of Troppau of October 1820, the Congress men signed a joint anti-revolutionary treaty known as the Troppau Protocol of 1820, through which Austria, Russia and Prussia vowed to suppress any liberal uprisings in Europe. As it came to be, it suppressed most of the early 1820s uprisings in Italy, hence delaying the Italian unification.

The “Metternich system” frustrated the Italian nationalists. First and foremost, Austria and Austria became the policemen over the Italian affairs. From the Vienna settlement of 1815, Austria acquired Lombardy and Venetia which were the most rich and prosperous Italian states and exploited them for her own benefit. Metternich also set up a spying system which was important in detecting anti-Austrian secret societies in the army, civil services, the middle class as justified by an Italian lady

that "My daughter cannot sneeze, but soon Metternich will know of it". There was also perusing or reading through correspondences so as to get information on the activities of the Italian nationalists. This assisted Metternich to defeat the Italian nationalists for example in the 1820s and 1830s, thus delaying the unification struggle.

The French interference in the process of the Italian unification was another obstacle. For example, in 1848 the Mazzini and Garibaldi overthrew the Pope and declared a Roman republic in Rome. The Pope was forced into exile in Naples. However, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte who wanted to win the support of the Catholics at home, sent the French troops under General **Oudinot** to Rome, defeated the republicans and eventually the Pope was restored in 1849. The Roman republic was therefore dissolved. This denied the Italian nationalists a strategic base from where they could effectively mobilize themselves and liberate other parts of Italy. Worst of all, the French soldiers sent to restore the Pope remained in Rome guarding the Pope from any invasion by the Italian nationalists until the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War. This made all attempts to liberate Rome a failure.

The lack of foreign assistance delayed the unification of Italy. Though the struggle for Italian unity had started way back in the 1815, no foreign aid was given to the Italians until the late 1850s. By the 1840s, the Italian patriots lacked foreign assistance because many of the European states were ruled by despotic monarchical regimes that were not prepared to witness the success of the forces of liberalism and nationalism in Europe. The conservative states of Russia, Prussia and Austria had even signed a joint protocol in 1820 during the Troppau Congress to fight any revolutionary uprisings in Europe while liberal Britain which many Italian patriots expected to help them had opted to isolate herself from European affairs. All these left the Italian nationalists isolated without any kind of aid. This strengthened the Austrian control over the Italian states, thus frustrating the Italian unification.

The lack of broad-based mobilization and sensitization or politicization about the need for Italian unity delayed the struggle for unification. Before 1850, the majority of the Italians were still ignorant about the idea of a united Italy. Mazzini who attempted to educate the Italians about this cause could not achieve any progress among the peasants due to illiteracy. This therefore confined or limited the unification struggle only to the urban centres where the Austrian influence was very great.

The influence of the Pope delayed the unification of Italy. By religious connection, most of the Italian states prior to 1870 were fanatic supporters of the Pope. The Catholic Church under the Pope opposed any liberal and nationalistic activities to take place in Italy. The Pope was a pillar of conservatism in Europe and was also a strong ally (friend) of Metternich and the catholic Austrian Empire. The Pope and the Catholic clergy therefore sustained the Austrian interests in Italy and such an obstacle remained influential until 1852 when Count Camillo Cavour emerged.

The economic backwardness of the Italian states also affected their struggle for unification. The Italian states were poor in industry, agriculture and commerce. Naples and Sardinia though large states, were barren islands, poverty stricken and infested with armed robbers. The two economically powerful states of Lombardy and Venetia were heavily exploited by the Austrians to sustain the Austria's despotic administration. There were no banking facilities and no serious resources to attract continental commerce. Besides, Italy lacked a sizeable bourgeoisie class that could finance and spearhead the nationalistic activities across the Italian Peninsular.

In addition, there was lack of modern transport and communication infrastructures. In Italy, there were no properly developed transport and communication networks for effective mobilization and flow of the unification ideas. In the Papal states for example, the development of communication networks was hindered for many years by the Pope's refusal to allow the railway and telegraph lines within his domains. As a result, the Papal states remained uncoordinated either because of the poor or absence of modern transport and communication systems. This therefore left the Italian unification entirely to the economically poorer states of the South which could not support the unification struggle that needed a modernized army as well as developed transport and communication networks.

The selfishness of the Italian leaders in the various states weakened the struggle for unification. The leaders in the smaller states refused to surrender their sovereignty or independence for sake of a united Italy. For example, the Pope in the Papal States did not want to surrender his political powers to a united Italy. The one of Naples and Sicily together with those in the central duchies of Modena, Parma and Tuscany did not want to be subordinates of the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia which was spearheading the Italian unification struggle from the 1850s.

The military weakness of the Italian states delayed the unification struggle. Until the 1850s, the Italian states lacked a strong army that could effectively challenge their enemy Austria. Austria had frequently suppressed the Italian liberal and nationalistic movements because the former had no established national army. Each state owned its garrisons that were very poor and ill equipped. Though revolutionary movements such as the Carbonari tried to put up forces, they too were weak, disorganized, too localized and equally ill equipped. This therefore made it difficult for the Italians to dislodge or expel the Austrians who had highly trained and well-equipped forces in Italy.

The ideological differences (nature of government) delayed the unification of Italy. Different Italian nationalists had conflicting opinions regarding the nature of the government to form in a United Italy. For example, Mazzini, one of the pioneer members of the Young Italy Movement wanted a united Republican government led by a constitutional monarch or king while Abbey Giobert wanted a Federal government under the leadership of the Pope from Rome. The Monarchists led by Mazzimo – de – Azeglio preferred a United Italy under King Charles Albert of Piedmont – Sardinia. Such diverse political ideologies worked against the early Italian efforts towards their unity.

The conflicts and disunity among the Italian nationalists hindered the unification struggle. There were conflicts among the Italian nationalists regarding the means and strategies to achieve the Italian unification. For example, where as some nationalists like Mazzini insisted that Italy on its own could achieve her unity without foreign aid, others like Cavour desired for foreign help in the unification struggle. Such antagonism was worsened by interstate rivalries and selfish interests which affected the unification struggle. For example, Sicily was opposed to Piedmont's leadership for unity, Rome was against Venetia and worst of all the Pope allied with Austria to frustrate the Italian efforts in the 1840s. Such divisions amongst the Italian nationalists explain why the Italians failed to organize a coordinated movement but isolated uprisings which were easily crushed by Austria.

The economic inequality or disparity also affected the struggle for Italian unification. Although generally Italy was economically backward, some of her states were more resourceful than others. The north had more wealth like industries and minerals than the south which was poor for cultivation. These inequalities delayed the unification struggle because the wealthy north was reluctant to unite

with the southern states for fear that the southern poor states would get the opportunity of sharing their wealth.

There was lack of able leadership in Italy. Before 1850, there existed no reliable and capable leaders in Italy to spearhead the struggle to liberate and unite the Italian states. The few available leaders had a lot of weaknesses. For example, Mazzini, the leader of the Carbonari and founder of the Young Italy Movement operated from exile i.e. Switzerland, Britain and France and was against foreign military assistance. Charles Albert who was the king of Piedmont – Sardinia was anti-unification and merely wanted to expand his kingdom and this is why he was reluctant to attack Austria in 1848. Pope Gregory XVI was too conservative and a supporter of Metternich and the Italians only had hopes in Pope Pius IX who replaced Gregory XVI in 1846. Unfortunately, he betrayed them in 1848 when he defected and turned against the revolution within two years. He was even restored to the throne of Rome in 1849 by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. So such lack of foresighted leadership delayed the unification of Italy by 1850.

The lack of a national language delayed the unification of Italy. The different states of Italy spoke different languages and this undermined the progress of the unification struggle. Italian as a language was for the intellectuals while Latin was widely used as a medium of instruction in schools, universities and churches. In states like Naples and Sicily, the Italian language was unknown. Instead, they spoke French or their local languages, hence making it difficult for the Italian nationalists to sensitize (politicize) and mobilize the Italians for a successful struggle.

There were also religious differences between north and the south which undermined the unification struggle. Northern Italy was predominantly Catholic while the south was Protestant. These religious differences worked against the unification because the Catholics feared to be dominated by the Protestants.

Question:

“The internal factors were primarily responsible for the delay of the unification of Italy”.
Discuss.

THE PROCESS OF THE ITALIAN UNIFICATION UP TO 1870

The process of Italian unification ended in 1870 with the liberation or the conquest state of Rome. A number of events or factors facilitated the Italian unification by 1870 which included the following;

The **contribution of Napoleon I** laid a foundation for the unification of Italy. During the Italian campaign of 1796-1797, Napoleon Bonaparte expelled the foreigners (Austrians) out of Italy. He then preached and instilled in the Italians the 1789 French Revolutionary ideas of equality, liberty and nationalism (independence) and reminded them of the same goal and historical background. Napoleon I later reduced the numerous states of Italy from over two hundred into three major kingdoms that included the Kingdom of Italy ruled directly by France, the Kingdom of the Papal states under the Pope and the Kingdom of Naples under Marshall Murat, one of Napoleon’s brilliant Generals. This new arrangement made the Italians to interact more closely, develop solidarity and they therefore started thinking as one one people, thus developing the idea of unification.

The formation of the Carbonari Movement facilitated the unification of Italy. This was a secret movement that mobilized the Italians for unity and independence against foreign rule. This movement had been formed in 1810 to resist the rule of Napoleon I in Italy and therefore it was a nationalistic movement. The Carbonari movement organized the 1821-1830 revolutions in Italy. Although the revolutions were suppressed by Austria the Carbonari movement helped to maintain the struggle for unification from 1810-1830.

The emergence of the Young Italy Movement also favored the unification of Italy. The movement was formed in 1831 by an Italian nationalist known as Mazzini for the purpose of driving Austria out of Italy. This movement improved on the work of the Carbonari by mobilizing all people for unity and independence for Italy. It included people from all classes because the Carbonari had concentrated on the members of the middle class only. It therefore facilitated the Italian struggle for unity.

The role of Garibaldi was vital in the unification of Italy. He was a member of the Carbonari and later the Young Italy Movement. As a nationalist, he actively participated in the 1830 Carbonari uprisings which failed. In 1848, he joined King Charles Albert of Piedmont in a war against Austria. Unfortunately, he was defeated at Custoza. Garibaldi further took part in the revolutionary movements against Pope Pius IX in 1848 which resulted in the creation of a republic in Rome but again due to the French intervention under General Oudinot, the republic was crushed and the Pope was restored in 1849. Despite this defeat, Garibaldi's efforts encouraged the Italians to keep up the spirit of fighting. Garibaldi was later responsible for the liberation of Naples and Sicily in 1860.

The fall of Metternich in 1848 favored the unification of Italy. Out of the 1848 revolutions, there was the fall of Prince Metternich and his system. Prince Metternich of Austria had been a major factor in maintaining a disunited Italy. He set up a police and army to suppress the liberal and nationalistic activities throughout Italy. He also instituted spies in Italy who helped him to frustrate the activities of the Italian nationalists. Therefore, his fall in 1848 was a step ahead for the Italian nationalists who began to progressively weaken the Austrian influence in Italy.

The election of a liberal Pope Pius IX in 1846 also promoted liberalism and nationalism throughout the Italian Peninsula. Unlike his predecessor the conservative Pope Gregory XVIII, Pope Pius IX was liberal and therefore he was sympathetic to the ideas of the Italian unification. He even released all the political prisoners in the Papal states jailed by Pope Gregory XVIII. This encouraged the Italian nationalists to begin operating from these states with a hope that the Pope was to have political powers in the united Italy.

The role of the Italian writers and philosophers promoted the unification of Italy. These people condemned the foreign domination of Italy and wrote patriotic poems, novels and books in which they expressed how the Austrians tortured the Italians. The most common was Alessandro Manzoni (1860-1873) who wrote a famous novel; *"The Betrothed"* in which he showed Europe how Austria had reduced the Italians to the lowest and most degrading position in the world. Therefore, the work of the writers prompted many Italians to fight for their unification.

The role of King Charles Albert facilitated the unification of Italy. He was King of Piedmont from 1831 to 1849. He introduced constitutional and other political reforms in Piedmont-Sardinia. For example, in March 1848 he gave Piedmont - Sardinia a liberal constitution and a new parliament. This was important because the liberals in Piedmont-Sardinia gave Charles Albert support to fight against Austria in northern Italy. However, Charles Albert resigned in favour of his son King Victor Emmanuel II in 1849.

The role of Victor Emmanuel II was also vital in the unification of Italy. He became King of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1849 following the resignation of his father Charles Albert due to the 1848 revolutions. He played a major role in the unification of Italy and without him, the struggle for unifying Italy would have been difficult. Unlike his father, he was anti-Austrian, liberal minded and a patriot who had a very strong love for his nation. He was therefore committed to the Italian struggle for unification and independence. He is the one who made Piedmont the centre of the struggle for the liberation of Italy from foreign rule, hence solving the problem of lack of able leadership that had for long hindered the progress of the Italian unification.

As a liberal minded king, Victor Emmanuel II maintained the liberal constitution of 1848 left behind by his father Charles Albert. This was important because the Italian liberals gave him support in the struggle as they thought that he would never be a dictator as king of the united Italy. This therefore promoted the Italian struggle for unity.

Victor Emmanuel II appointed Count Camillo Cavour as Prime Minister of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1852 who greatly contributed to the unification of Italy. It should be noted that Cavour's new appointment gave him the platform to modernize Piedmont-Sardinia, thus making it admirable for the rest of the Italians and also to realize that Piedmont-Sardinia would be the centre of the Italian unification.

In addition, Victor Emmanuel II co-operated with Camillo Cavour, the Prime Minister of Piedmont-Sardinia and indeed he financially supported all Cavour's unification programmes or efforts. That's why most of his contributions towards the unification of Italy were channeled through Cavour, the Prime Minister.

He carried out military reforms in Piedmont. Realizing that the Italian struggles of 1848 were largely undermined by military weakness, Victor Emmanuel II created a big and efficient army in preparation for war with Austria. He spent more money on training soldiers, purchase of weapons and ammunitions. Using such an army, the subsequent Italian campaigns against Austria registered remarkable success. For example, in 1859 this army helped to defeat Austria and as a result, Lombardy was liberated and annexed to Piedmont which was a major step in the process of the unification of Italy.

Victor Emmanuel II developed the economic power of Piedmont through his economic reforms and this in turn facilitated the unification struggle. For example, he promoted industrialization by setting up a number of industries in Piedmont. He also improved agriculture which helped to generate enough revenue as well as food supplies to facilitate the unification process. He also signed commercial treaties with other European countries such as Britain which promoted trade and commerce. He also built railway and road networks which were used in the transportation of troops and supplies that

were used to liberate the Italian states from the Austrian rule. The strong economy established by Victor Emmanuel II in Piedmont greatly boosted the Italian struggle for unity.

He promoted unity among the Italian nationalists which was vital in the Italian unification struggle. For example, as a **monarchist** he suppressed the republican ideology in Piedmont-Sardinia that had hindered the unification struggle through dividing the Italians. As a result, all the Italian nationalists rallied behind him which enabled them to attain unity by 1870.

He also reduced the political powers of the Catholic Church, rigidities and conservatism. For example, after the Pope Pius IX betraying the Italian revolutionaries in 1848 – 1849, Victor Emmanuel II pursued an anti-clerical policy. Thus in 1850, he passed a series of laws by which the church lost its special courts, its right to inherit property without the consent of the government, and its exclusive control over marriage ceremonies. In 1855, all religious orders were abolished, except those concerned with the preaching, teaching and helping the sick. By doing so, Victor Emmanuel II avoided a state within a state and therefore promoted the unification struggle with less obstruction from the Pope and the entire Catholic Church in Italy.

He gave refuge to all the Italian patriots in his kingdom. Before 1848, several Italian patriots had fled to exile as a result of the brutal Metternich system. When he rose to power in 1849, Victor Emmanuel II gave such people unconditional amnesty to return home and join the struggle for Italian unity. It was because of this amnesty that prominent Italian patriots like Mazzini and Garibaldi returned to Italy and spearheaded the Italian struggle for unity. This revived and accelerated the struggle for Italian unity.

He encouraged the press propaganda in Piedmont-Sardinia through publishing articles in the existing newspapers like the *“IL Risorgimento”* that had been set up by Camillo Cavour in 1847. This helped to sensitize the Italians about the need for Italian unity and independence, thus promoting the unification struggle.

He secured foreign assistance for the Italian unification. For example, in collaboration with Camillo Cavour, Victor Emmanuel II secured the French assistance to the Italian cause in 1859. This was done by involving Piedmont in the Crimean War of 1854 – 1856 in which Piedmont's troops joined the British and the French soldiers which ended in the allies' victory against Russia. Consequently, France offered military support to Piedmont in her war against Austria in 1859 in which Austria was defeated. This led to the liberation of Lombardy which was a major step in the Italian unification struggle.

More still, Victor Emmanuel II persuaded Cavour to resume his office as Prime Minister after his resignation in 1859. Cavour had resigned as Prime Minister following Napoleon III's disappointment of the Italians when he withdrew the French military support in a war against Austria which made the Italians unable to liberate Venetia from the Austrian rule. When Cavour finally resumed office in January 1860, the contributions he made to the Italian unification struggle were many, which credit goes to King Victor Emmanuel II.

Victor Emmanuel II supported Garibaldi's military adventures or campaigns to liberate the Italian states. For example, he supported Garibaldi's efforts to liberate the Italian states of Naples and Sicily

in 1860. After their liberation, the two states were finally annexed to Piedmont-Sardinia which was also an important step in the unification of Italy.

He also supported the nationalist movement or uprisings of 1860 in the Central Duchies of Modena, Parma and Tuscany as well as the Papal state of Romagna. These states organized popular uprisings against their conservative Austrian rulers and demanded for a union with Piedmont-Sardinia. Consequently, Victor Emmanuel II annexed these states in 1860 through plebiscites or referenda.

He was vital in the formation of the Italian Kingdom in 1861. In March 1861, King Victor Emmanuel II declared the Kingdom of Italy with him as the king and Camillo Cavour as the Prime Minister. This was an important step in the unification of Italy because by this time it was only Venetia and Rome that had not been liberated so as to complete the Italian unification.

He spearheaded the struggle for Italian unification even after his strong man, Camillo Cavour had died in 1861. King Victor Emmanuel II therefore helped to complete the Italian unification struggle in 1870.

His charismatic or able leadership also won the British sympathy and moral support towards the Italian unification struggle. This support helped the Italian patriots like Garibaldi to liberate the Italian states from foreign rule which led to the unification of Italy by 1870.

Victor Emmanuel II entered into alliance with Prussia and this facilitated the unification of Italy. For example, he cooperated with Prussia during the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and Austria was defeated. At the end of this war, Otto Von Bismarck of Prussia forced Austria to hand over Venetia to Italy which was another important step in the unification of Italy.

Victor Emmanuel II occupied Rome in 1870, after the withdrawal of the French troops. He attacked Rome on 20th September 1870 and on 2nd June 1871, he organized a referendum in which the people of Rome voted to be part of the united Italy and this completed the process of Italian unification. He later transferred his family and the parliament from Turin in Piedmont to Rome, hence making Rome the capital of Italy.

The emergence of Count Camillo Cavour was also vital in the unification of Italy. Count Camillo Cavour was born in 1810 in Turin, the capital of Piedmont. Born to a respectable aristocratic family, a son of a Piedmontese nobleman, Camillo Cavour trained as a soldier and served in Piedmont's army but later resigned after conflicting with the army authorities for having supported the French revolution of 1830 against Charles X. He was well read and travelled widely for example to Britain, France, Switzerland and other countries where he acquired a variety of political and constitutional experiences.

In 1848, he became a member of the Piedmont parliament. In 1850, King Victor Emmanuel II appointed him as Minister of Commerce and Agriculture. He was later made Minister of Navy and Finance. In 1852, he was made Prime Minister of Piedmont. He is perhaps the greatest maker of Italy and this is reflected in his numerous contributions to the struggle for Italian unification which included the following;

In 1847, he founded a newspaper in Piedmont known as **“IL RISORGIMENTO”** meaning a “resurrection” movement for the Italian unification. Its articles advocated for independence and unity

from the Austrian rule and a constitutional government. This newspaper therefore sensitized and mobilized the Italians to love constitutional governance and independence. It was this same newspaper that inspired King Charles Albert of Piedmont to pick up arms against Austria in 1848-1849. The newspaper therefore strengthened the spirit of the Italian struggle for unification at a time when Mazzini's Young Italy Movement was collapsing.

Cavour provided a strong and determined leadership that was necessary leadership for the Italian unification. More than any Italian nationalist, it was Cavour as the Prime Minister of Piedmont who led the struggle convincing many Italians to rally behind him. It was his good leadership that transformed the past attempts by the Italians into practical steps between 1859 and 1866.

He reduced the influence of the Pope and the Catholic Church in the affairs of Piedmont which had been a major obstacle to the unification of Italy. In 1850, Camillo Cavour together with King Victor Emmanuel II, passed laws that reduced the influence of the catholic church in the states affairs. These laws abolished the church privileges, established freedom of worship and state control over education, land and finance as well as marriage ceremonies. Such reforms therefore speeded up the unification process and earned Cavour support from the liberal and republicans which facilitated the unification of Italy after 1850.

Cavour improved the economy of Piedmont which sustained the unification struggle. As Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, Cavour developed the agricultural sector which generated revenue as well as enough food supplies to sustain the unification struggle against Austria. As a Minister of Industry and Finance, Cavour secured loans from developed European countries like Britain, Belgium and France. These loans were used to finance the establishment of a number of industries in Piedmont which encouraged Piedmont's trade and therefore generated more revenue such that by 1855, Piedmont had a balanced budget. With such a strong economy of Piedmont, the unification of Italy became easier since the economic backwardness that used to hinder the unification process was now eliminated by Piedmont under Camillo Cavour.

Cavour improved the transport and communication systems of Piedmont. He built several railway and road networks in Piedmont. By 1860, Piedmont possessed 800 kilometers of track (road and railway networks) which were used in the transportation of troops and supplies that were used to liberate the Italian states from the Austrian rule. For example, the *Monscenis Railway Tunnel* which linked Piedmont to France is what was used to transport the French troops across Piedmont to liberate Lombardy in 1859. Because of this therefore, Camillo Cavour deserves credit.

Cavour also signed free commercial or trade treaties with European countries like Britain, France and Belgium. These commercial treaties encouraged international trade which enabled Piedmont to get the industrial European goods which were very much needed especially ammunitions from developed countries like Britain. This therefore helped to facilitate the struggle for Italian unification.

He made political reforms in Piedmont which boosted the unification struggle. For example, in his capacity as Prime Minister, Cavour maintained the parliamentary system and constitutional government as upheld by King Victor Emmanuel II. In his government, all classes of people were represented and the King appointed ministers that were answerable to the parliament. This made the Italians more enthusiastic for complete independence from the Austrians. By showing respect for individual liberties, Cavour was able to attract the support of all parties in the national cause and to

win the foreign sympathy. That is why France and Britain respectively assisted the Italian cause directly and indirectly.

Cavour undertook educational reforms which in turn facilitated the unification struggle. For example, by abolishing church control over education, Cavour was able to open up learning opportunities to all the Italians across the Peninsular. He also built schools and institutions of higher learning. This reduced illiteracy that used to hinder the Italian unification before 1850. The products of such schools also became strong critics of the Austrian domination and greatly helped in championing the unification process.

Cavour strengthened the Piedmont's army. Having realized that the Italian struggles of 1848 had failed largely due to military weakness, Cavour created a big and efficient army to prepare for war. He spent more money on the training of the soldiers as well as purchase of modern arms and ammunitions. It was this strong army of Piedmont that was used to fight and chase Austria out of Italy as the case was in 1859 when the joint Franco-Sardinian army defeated Austria, leading to the liberation of Lombardy which was an important step in the unification of Italy.

Cavour worked closely with King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont-Sardinia. Cavour was an aristocrat by birth and therefore, he supported monarchical rule in Italy. This enabled him to have a close working relationship with King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont and this was vital in the struggle for Italian unification because it brought about harmony in policy and decision making in Piedmont as regards the Italian unification struggle. He was also supported by other Italians who wanted monarchical rule in Italy. This therefore facilitated the unification of Italy.

Cavour secured foreign military assistance or aid for the Italians unification. Of all the Italian nationalists, it was Cavour who realized the need for foreign assistance in the struggle for Italian unification since the Italian nationalists had for long tried it alone and had failed. He therefore connived with King Victor Emmanuel II and involved Piedmont-Sardinia in the Crimean War of 1854 -1856. At the close of the 1856 Paris Peace Conference that ended the war, Cavour secured the British and French military support to Piedmont in the struggle against Austria. Consequently, Lombardy was liberated in 1859 with the assistance of 20,000 French troops. These very powers programmed and supported a plebiscite vote or referendum through which other states of Modena, Parma, Tuscany and Romagna got annexed to Piedmont in 1860.

Cavour provoked Austria to declare war on Piedmont in 1859. In 1859, Cavour mobilized Piedmont's soldiers and took them at the border with Lombardy. This provoked Austria which reacted to Cavour's action by declaring war on Piedmont. This helped Cavour to win sympathy from France against Austria which appeared to be the aggressor. As a result, Napoleon III entered the war on the side of Piedmont with a large French force of 200,000 soldiers which defeated Austria at the battles of **MAGENTA** and **SOLFERINO** of 1859. This led to the liberation of Lombardy from Austria which was annexed to Piedmont-Sardinia and this became a major step in the unification of Italy.

Cavour reconciled the conflicts among the Italian freedom fighters. For example, in the past, the republicans led by Mazzini and Garibaldi, the monarchists and the middle-class members had been conflicting with each other and this had contributed to the delay in Italian unification. Cavour however, constantly appealed to the monarchists under King Victor Emmanuel II, the republicans

and the middle-class members that the question of unifying Italy was a duty for all Italians and not just a particular class. This prompted unity which was vital for the Italian unification struggle.

Cavour also financed the formation of the *Italian National Society* in 1857 under the leadership of Doctor Manin, Giuseppe La Farina and Ferrante Pallavicino. This nationalistic movement or society sensitized and mobilized the Italians against the Austrians. This therefore popularized the Italian cause across the entire Peninsular, thus promoting the Italian unification.

Cavour's diplomacy also helped to liberate the Italian states from foreign rule. For instance, Cavour managed to table the Italian cause during the Paris Peace Conference of 1856 that was held in France at the end of the Crimean War of 1854-1856. This helped to win the British and French support towards the Italians in their struggle against Austria. Besides, it wasn't until he opened diplomatic ties with Otto Von Bismarck that Venetia was liberated from the Austrian rule in 1866 and joined to the Italian Kingdom after his death in 1861. Though the event took place after his death, his role in this regard was vital. Such diplomacy therefore played a big role in the completion of the Italian unification by 1870.

Cavour used trickery to liberate the Italian states. For example, Cavour's tricks assisted Garibaldi in the liberation of Naples and Sicily. Cavour realized that Garibaldi's careless attack on the above two states would attract other powers like France, Britain and Austria. Thus, he gave Garibaldi diplomatic cover by ordering his arrest while at the same time he secretly assisted him with weapons and other supplies to invade the states of Naples and Sicily. This gave a false impression that Cavour was checking Garibaldi's movements.

Similarly, Cavour secured the Papal states for Italy by restraining Garibaldi from attacking Rome. In 1860, he sent Piedmont's troops into the Papal states to prevent Garibaldi from attacking Rome which was the seat of the Pope. This was because such an attack would attract the attention of the Catholic European powers like France and Austria against the Italian struggle for unity. As he protected the Pope in Rome, Cavour secretly conducted a plebiscite vote or referendum in the Papal states and they all voted for a union with Piedmont which was an important step in the unification of Italy.

Cavour was influential in the formation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 which was another important step in the unification struggle. This kingdom was declared by King Victor Emmanuel II as the king with Cavour as the Prime Minister in March 1861 at Turin the capital of Piedmont. By this time, it was only Venetia and Rome that had not been liberated. This is why Cavour is regarded as the greatest statesman and architect or planner of the Italian unification.

The Orsin incident of 1858 contributed to the unification of Italy. This incident which occurred in **January 1858** involved an assassination attempt on Emperor Napoleon III of France. Napoleon III had accepted to assist Piedmont at the end of the Crimean War of 1854-1856 because of the assistance Piedmont had given to the allied powers to defeat Russia. He was however reluctant to fulfill his pledge because he was scared of the growing strength of Italy in the neighborhood of France and also he did not want a war with Austria, a fellow catholic state. This annoyed the Italians, including Felice Orsin, an Italian exile living in Paris who threw a bomb to assassinate Emperor Napoleon III and the Empress in 1858 while on their way to Opera. The two survived but many people were killed and others injured. Camillo Cavour used this incident to strengthen his negotiations with Napoleon III by assuring him that the incident would not happen again if the Emperor supported the

Italians in their struggle for unification. This therefore led to the signing of the famous agreement at the French resort town of PLOMBIERES in 1858 known as the Pact of Plombieres.

THE PACT OF PLOMBIERES, 1858

This was a secret agreement signed between Napoleon III and Cavour on **20th July 1858**. By this agreement;

- Napoleon III promised to support Piedmont against Austria to get the provinces of Lombardy and Venetia.
- Napoleon III was to get Nice and Savoy from Piedmont as a reward.
- Cavour was to see that war started and that Austria was to appear as the aggressor to give the opportunity to France to intervene.

Cavour then provoked Austria by mobilizing Piedmont's soldiers and took them at the border with Lombardy. Austria reacted to Cavour's expectations and declared war on Piedmont. Then, Napoleon III entered the war with a large French force of 200,000 soldiers on the side of Piedmont. At the battles of **MAGENTA** and **SOLFERINO** of 1859, the Austrians were defeated. This led to the liberation of Lombardy which was annexed to Piedmont-Sardinia. Napoleon III gained Nice and Savoy as a reward. This event was a major step in the unification of Italy considering the fact that the Italians had acquired for themselves Lombardy, one of the two richest states on the Italian Peninsular.

NOTE: However, fearing that he had annoyed his fellow Catholics at home by supporting the Italians against Catholic Austria and also due to the fear of having a strong Italy in France's neighborhood, Napoleon III signed a treaty with Austria and prematurely withdrew from the war before accomplishing the task of liberating Venetia. This was the treaty of **VILLAFRANCA** of 1859. This act greatly disappointed the Italian liberals to the extent that Camillo Cavour was forced to resign from his post of Prime Minister of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1859. This constituted a disaster to the unification struggle of Italy.

The annexation of the three Central Duchies in 1860 was another event that contributed to the unification of Italy. The states of Modena, Parma and Tuscany were under Austrian dukes or rulers. The people in these states were excited by the liberation of Lombardy in 1859. As a result, the people in these states and of the Papal states called Romagna staged a successful revolt and exiled their Austrian Princes. The rulers who took over all these territories demanded for union with Piedmont-Sardinia. When Cavour returned to as Prime Minister in January 1860, he struck a bargain with Napoleon III that if the Central Duchies were allowed to unite with Piedmont-Sardinia, France could have her reward of Savoy and Nice as originally arranged (but foregone when she withdrew with the job half done). Napoleon III agreed to the union and he therefore conducted a plebiscite (referendum) in these states. The results from this plebiscite showed that the people in these states wanted to join Piedmont. Thus, the three Duchies, Lombardy and Romagna were renamed Emilia and accordingly joined to Piedmont-Sardinia. At the same time, Nice and Savoy were transferred to France. This was another step in consolidating the Italian unification process.

The liberation of Naples and Sicily in 1860 was another important step in the unification of Italy. Naples and Sicily were liberated by Garibaldi and his 1,000(one hundred) “Red Shirts Army” with the support of Camillo Cavour. During this stage, Cavour established friendship with Britain which eased Garibaldi’s movement across the Mediterranean Sea to Naples and Sicily. This was because the British Prime Minister – **Palmerstone** gave support when he ordered the British fleet to give cover to Garibaldi’s forces as they sailed to Sicily which they captured. Garibaldi then proceeded to the mainland and landed in Southern Italy by September 1860. The King fled his capital thus enabling Garibaldi to enter Naples without opposition. Garibaldi handed over Naples and Sicily to King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont and this was another important step in the process of Italian unification.

The annexation of Popal states in 1860 was another event that led to the unification of Italy. This was done by Cavour through political foresight. Although he had resigned in 1859, Britain put pressure on Napoleon III to resume supporting Piedmont and this encouraged Cavour to come back to office in early 1860 and continued with the struggle for unification. Cavour realized that having conquered Naples and Sicily in 1860, Garibaldi was likely to move northwards and attack Rome – the seat of the Pope. This would have brought in France and Austria to fight Piedmont so as to restore the Pope, hence causing problems to the Italian unification. Cavour therefore sent the troops of Piedmont into the Popal states to restrain or prevent Garibaldi from attacking Rome. This move was vital because while he protected the Pope in Rome, Cavour was able to conduct a plebiscite in the Popal states and all the people voted for a union with Piedmont but he was very careful not to annex Rome. This was another step in consolidating the process of Italian unification.

The formation or declaration of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 also contributed to the unification of Italy. Cavour declared the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 with Turin in Piedmont as its Capital. Victor Emmanuel II was declared as King and Cavour as the Prime Minister of this newly created Italian kingdom. By this time, it was only ROME and VENETIA that had not been annexed to Italy. Therefore, it was an important step in the process of the Italian unification. Unfortunately, Cavour died in 1861 before the annexation of Rome and Venetia.

The liberation of Venetia in 1866 was another event that contributed to the unification of Italy. In 1866, there broke out a war between Prussia and Austria and this was known as the Austro – Prussian war. Before the war, Otto Von Bismarck of Prussia entered into an agreement with King Victor Emmanuel II in which Italy was to assist Prussia in a war against Austria and that the Italian government was to be given Venetia if Austria was defeated. Garibaldi then led the French forces into the war and Austria was eventually defeated. At the end of the war, Bismarck forced Austria to hand over Venetia to Italy which was a major step in the unification of Italy. By this time, it was only Rome that was out of Italy.

The Franco – Prussian War of 1870 – 1871 (the annexation of Rome in 1870) led to the complete unification of Italy. Between 1870 and 1871, there was a war between France and Prussia known as the Franco – Prussian war. This war reminded France about her troops in Rome which had remained an obstacle to the completion of the Italian unification. As a result, Napoleon III was forced to withdraw the French troops which he had deployed in Rome to protect the Pope so as to go and fight against Prussia. Earlier on, Victor Emmanuel II had feared to attack Rome because it would provoke France’s anger as it did in 1848 and 1867 when Garibaldi attacked Rome and was driven by the French forces. Therefore, as soon as the French forces were withdrawn, the

Italians entered Rome and Victor Emmanuel II therefore declared a united free state of Italy. However, Pope Pius IX did not accept the unification of the Italian Peninsula and therefore he refused to recognize the loss of his political control over Rome until **11th February 1929**, when the ***Lateran Treaty*** was signed by Mussolini and **Pope Pius XI** in which the conflict was settled by creating the Vatican City State or a section of Rome where the Popes have political and religious control.

Sample questions

1. Examine the factors that favoured the unification of Italy between 1850 and 1871.

Approach:

- The candidate is required to give a viable background about the Italian unification.
- Should give and explain factors that favoured the unification struggle.

Points to consider:

Efforts towards the unification of Italy failed before 1850. However, from 1850 - 1870 a number of factors and events favoured its unification which included:

- The role of the Carbonari
- The role of the Young Italy Movement
- The contribution of King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont
- The downfall of Metternich and collapse of his system in 1848
- The success of the 1848 revolution in France and the rise of Napoleon III e.g. he sent the French troops to fight alongside those of Piedmont in northern Italy against Austria in the battles of Magenta and Solferino which led to the liberation of Lombardy.
- The success of the Orsini incident
- The role of Garibaldi
- The role of Cavour in Piedmont
- The emergence of a liberal Pope Pius IX in 1846 resulted into political and religious reforms.
- The change in balance of power in Europe in favour of Britain and France from the 1850s left the Austrian empire weak to the advantage of the Italian states.
- The role of Bismarck of Prussia, e.g. he was vital in the liberation of Venetia in 1866 and in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 which completed the unification.
- The British moral and military support e.g. the British government under Prime Minister Palmerston allowed her ships to give cover to Garibaldi's forces which captured Sicily in 1860. She also refused the request of Napoleon III of not allowing Garibaldi's forces to capture Naples. She also supported the annexation of the central states by Piedmont.
- The Russian neutrality during the Austro – Italian conflicts between 1850 and 1870 enabled the Italians to defeat Austria.
- The patriotism among the Italian revolutionaries after 1850 e.g. Garibaldi, Cavour etc.

- Cavour's successful plebiscite in the central duchies of Parma, Tuscany, Modena and Romagna.
- The effects of the Crimean war of 1854 – 1856 i.e Austria remained without allies and above all, it changed the British and French attitude towards Italy.

2. Explain the weaknesses of Camillo Cavour in the process of Italian unification.

- Count Camillo Cavour had a number of weaknesses which undermined the Italian unification struggle and these included the following;
- His temporary withdrawal or resignation as a Prime Minister in 1859 after conflicting with King Victor Emmanuel II over the continuation of the war with Austria was a major weakness. He resigned because Napoleon III had withdrawn from the Austro-Italian War of 1859 prematurely before the liberation of Venetia from Austria. This retarded the progress of the Italians unification, although in early 1860 he returned to power.
- He gave away the city of Nice and the territory of Savoy to France in 1860 as a reward for her support to Piedmont against Austria in 1859. Cavour therefore disappointed other Italian nationalists for example Garibaldi who was coming from Nice and therefore they criticized him a lot because of that. This therefore undermined the struggle for Italian unification.
- He pursued different political ideologies that were contrary to those of other Italian nationalists. For example, as an aristocrat by birth, Cavour favoured monarchical rule as the best form of government in Italy. This created conflicts between Cavour and other Italian nationalists like Mazzini and Garibaldi who were republicans and therefore favoured a republican system of government in case Italy got united. Such conflicts undermined the progress of the Italian unification struggle.
- His policies resulted into the over taxation of the masses especially the peasants and the middle class. This therefore made such Italians to hate the Italian unification struggle as it was oppressing and exploiting them, thus undermining the struggle to unify Italy.
- Cavour's initial bias against the Southern Italian states was a major weakness. Given their economic backwardness, Cavour's initial dream and plan was to unite only the states in the Northern Italy which economically better off. This generated resentment from such states which partly undermined the unification struggle of Italy.
- He prevented Garibaldi from conquering Rome in 1860. He sent the Piedmont's troops into the Papal states to stop Garibaldi from attacking Rome which was a setback to the Italian struggle for unification.
- Cavour didn't live to witness the total unification of Italy. He died on 6th June 1861 before Venetia and Rome were liberated and therefore, he was unable to enjoy the fruits of his sweat. This was a major weakness that almost led to the failure of the Italian unification struggle, had it not been the presence King Victor Emmanuel II who spearheaded the struggle up to 1870 when it was completed.

3. To what extent were the foreign powers responsible for the unification of Italy?

Approach:

- The candidates are expected to identify and explain the role of the foreign powers in the unification of Italy.

- Other factors are also required.
 - A stand point is required.
 - Points to consider:
 - A viable background about the Italian unification
 - **Role of foreign powers:**
 - Inspiration from the already united monarchies like Britain and France
 - They offered moral support e.g Britain and France backed the troops of Piedmont to annex the central Italian states of Modena, Parma and Tuscany in 1860.
 - They rejected intervention e.g Britain refused France to intervene against Garibaldi in July 1860.
 - They offered military e.g 200,000 French troops supported Piedmont in 1858-1859 against Lombardy leading to the annexation of Lombardy.
 - The disunity of the foreign powers or imperial disagreements enabled the Italians to secure foreign assistance i.e Britain, France, Turkey against Russia in 1854 – 1856, Prussia against Denmark 1864, Austria against Prussia in 1866 and the Franco – Prussian war 1870 – 1871.
 - They offered financial support e.g Britain and Prussia
 - They offered asylum to the Italian revolutionaries. e.g Britain and Switzerland hosted Mazzini while France hosted Orsin.
 - They promoted economic ties with the Italians hence encouraging trade and commerce e.g Britain, Belgium and Britain.
 - They exchanged ideas about unification strategies e.g Prussia under Bismarck.
4. **Why were the attempts to unite Italy more successful after the 1850's?**
 5. **Assess the role of Cavour in the unification of Italy.**
 6. **Examine the contribution of Cavour to the unification of Italy.**

END