1848 Revolutions, Crimean War, Unification of Italy & Germany

1848 Revolutions
Only 1789 and 1989 reverberate in quite the same way as 1848 in the history of modern Europe. One famous historian wrote that it was the turning point in history in which history failed to turn. After 1848 relative social peace reigned until 1914.

Causes:
- food shortages
- weakness in factory production
- low wages, unemployment
- poor living conditions worsened in cities
- discontent among peasants
- nationalism
- liberal reformism
- domino effect

France
Dissatisfaction with corruption and the inefficiency of Louis Philippe’s leadership plus a sense of national humiliation in foreign affairs precipitated overthrow of the July Monarchy. Serious conflict broke out between middle class liberals and the workers leading to violence in the Bloody June Days. The 2nd Republic marked the triumph of property owners and constitutionalism. The election of Napoleon’s nephew (Louis Napoleon – r. 1852-1870) as President was caused by fear of disorder and search for the return or military glory.

Austria
Metternich was driven into exile and the incompetent Emperor was replaced by a younger one (Franz Joseph – r. 1848-1916). Revolts in various parts of the Hapsburg dominions were finally repressed by the policy of keeping insurgents divided. Perhaps the most serious was the outbreak of nationalism in Hungary repressed by Russian troops called in by Vienna. Nicholas I was happy to oblige. Rural reforms pacified the peasantry and military conquest put down the Italians.

Britain
Chartist (working class movement demanding the vote and other constitutional reforms) protest a flop. Alliance of middle and upper classes with the monarchy held firm.

Prussia
Frederick William IV (r. 1840-1861) forced to make some constitutional concessions.

Germany
Liberal nationalists call unofficial meeting of the Frankfurt Parliament. Plans to unify fall into two categories. The Grossdeutsch solution included the Austro-Hungarian empire, thus bringing millions of non-Germans along. The Kleindeutsch solution excluded Austria, which left millions of Germans out of the state and made illiberal Prussia the dominant force. The imperial crown was finally offered to the King of Prussia, who declined it because he would be limited by a liberal constitution and have to accept the throne from middle class liberals. Thus, perhaps the last chance for a peaceful unification of Germany was lost.

Italy
Uprisings in the Austrian north and in the Papal States. Republican nationalist, Joseph Mazzini (d.1872), founder of Young Italy, led a revolt in the Papal States that forced the Pope to flee Rome. Repressed by Austrian intervention. Pius IX returned to the Vatican a confirmed reactionary.
The Crimean War (1853 – 1856)
Often overlooked but important. A conflict between Russia on the one hand and Great Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire on the other. It was fought mainly on the Crimean peninsula in the Black Sea, hence the name given to the war. Austria stayed neutral, to the indignation of Nicholas I, who had bailed Franz Joseph out of difficulty in Hungary in 1849.

Causes:
- Russian foreign policy was to assert as much power as possible in the Balkans, destroy or subordinate Ottoman authority, gain free passage of shipping through the Dardanelles (and thus permanent warm water ports for commerce, and a naval presence in the Mediterranean.)
- Napoleon III of France was intent on winning military achievements to match his uncle’s and win popularity.
- Britain regarded the Mediterranean as their lake, and thus a Russian naval presence was an unacceptable intrusion.
- Ottomans were trying to stave off collapse. They were already “The Sick Man of Europe”.
- Technical dispute over religious authority in Jerusalem, really only a pretext.
- Sardinia enters war against Russia to gain leverage with France for unification of Italy.

Great Figures:
- Florence Nightingale (d.1854) – addressed the inadequate medical treatment accorded British soldiers. Helped found the modern nursing profession. One of the first women not a monarch or writer to achieve international fame for work in the public realm.
• **Alexander II of Russia** (r. 1855 – 1881) – succeeded his father, Nicholas I during the war. Negotiated peace and instituted reforms.

**Outcomes:**

- Implacable enmity by Russia towards Austria due to its failure to come to its aid during the war
- Sardinia gains a place at the negotiating table allowing Count Cavour to work with Napoleon III
- Russia reforms and rears, becoming much more formidable
- Russia was blocked from acquiring access through the Dardanelles
- Military embarrassments (charge of the Light Brigade) and extraordinary number of deaths made engaging in continental warfare very unpopular in Britain. Hence it stood aside during the unifications of Italy and Germany, an ill-judged isolationist policy
- Ottomans staggered on for another half century, although they lost most of their Balkan territories in the years to come
- Balance of power preserved

**Unifications of Italy and Germany**

**Italy**

Nationalist aspirations for the unification of Italy were stimulated during the occupation of Italy by Napoleon I. Movements were repressed during the next few decades by the Congress system and Austria in particular. The attempt by **Mazzini** to establish an Italian republic failed in 1848. **Count Camillo di Cavour**, liberal Prime Minister of Sardinia (also called Piedmont or Savoy), a kingdom in northwest Italy, then organized the gradual conquest of the entire peninsula during the late 1850s and early 1860s. By the time of his death in 1861 all but the Pope’s territories around Rome and the _irredenta_ (unredeemed) in the northeast retained by Austria had been incorporated into a united Kingdom of Italy under the rule of the Sardinian king.

1. Cavour entered the Crimean War and gained the alliance of Napoleon III, ever on the lookout for military glory and territorial expansion. Cavour promised Nice and Savoy in exchange for military assistance against Austria.

2. Cavour provoked war with Austria and gained Lombardy, but the withdrawal of Napoleon’s support left Venetia in Austrian hands (1859)

*The Unification of Italy. By 1860, the majority of the Italian “boot” was under the rule of Piedmont-Sardinia. By 1870, the unification was complete.*
3. Cavour helped the northern duchies of Modena, Parma, and Tuscany to overthrow their rulers and join the new Italy
4. Cavour assisted rabid nationalist Garibaldi (d. 1882) to invade Sicily and Naples where he overthrew the bourbon monarchy and marched north towards Rome
5. Cavour blocked Garibaldi’s advance on Rome “protecting” the Pope, negotiated absorption of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and most of Papal territories into Italy
6. Gained Venetia from Austria during the Six Weeks War in 1867
7. Napoleon III had garrisoned Rome to protect Pius IX’s remaining land. He was forced to recall these troops during the war with Prussia in 1870 when all but the Vatican itself was incorporated into Italy

Thus Cavour, the leader of a small, weak country, was able to overcome opposition from France, the Pope, Austria, and the kings and princes of the Italian states. He also overcame the republicanism of Garibaldi and Mazzini. Britain did not intervene due to its isolationist policy despite its great interests in the Mediterranean.

Outcomes:
- a liberal, constitutional monarchy ruled a united Italian state, though suffrage limited until 1913
- The North conquered the South, and henceforward the North became the beneficiary of public spending and investment at the expense of the South (most emigrants form Italy fled the poverty of the South)
- The Papacy became a hostile prisoner in the Vatican until finally recognizing Italy in 1929, loses prestige
- The irredenta remained a festering wound that played a key role in World War I and the rise of Mussolini
- Italy remained weaker economically and militarily than its size suggested, crippled by corruption and an ineffective political structure
- Cavour never got the credit his work deserved, most of the public praise being given to the King

Germany
Nationalist aspirations for the unification of Germany were stimulated by the occupation by Napoleon I, who combined much of central Germany into a new Kingdom of Westphalia. Metternich and other German princes and kings helped dampen the nationalist movement until 1848, and Frederick William IV of Prussia rejected the imperial crown offered by the Frankfurt Parliament. An economic agreement (Zollverein) established by Prussia in 1834 made the advantages of unity more obvious.

The Unification of Germany. Under Bismarck’s direction, Prussia used military conquest as the means of unifying the 38 disparate states of the German Confederation into the German Empire and gaining territory from Ausria and France.
The Prussian Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck (d. 1898) a conservative junker and Prussian patriot decided the only way to preserve Prussian power was to conquer the rest of Germany and absorb it into a gigantic Prussian state. Like Cavour, he was a master of Realpolitik.

1. Bismarck provoked war with Denmark in alliance with Austria to seize the border duchies of Schleswig-Holstein

2. Bismarck provoked war with Austria, which was defeated rapidly by von Moltke (d. 1891) at the battle of Sadowa (1867). Austria was knocked out of contention as leader of a united Germany. The Catholic southern German states that allied with Catholic Austria were not punished, but northern Protestant Hanover was seized and the king overthrown.

3. Bismarck goaded Napoleon III into war in 1870 (Franco-Prussian War). The pretext involved possible Hohenzollern succession to the Spanish throne (Ems Telegram). Southern German states allied with Prussia against France. Napoleon III was defeated and captured on the battlefield.

4. Bismarck persuaded the King of Bavaria, the largest southern Catholic state, to offer the imperial crown to William I, King of Prussia, who became German Emperor in 1871 (ceremony held in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles)

5. Harsh peace imposed on humiliated France including heavy reparations and confiscation of two border provinces, Alsace and Lorraine. France became a perpetual enemy, thus ensuring the continued loyalty of the southern states to Prussian leadership.

Thus Bismarck overcame the opposition of Austria, Denmark, the German Princes, and Kings, and France to achieve unification. Russia was persuaded to remain neutral and Britain remained in isolation.

Outcomes:

- German Empire established 1871 headed by Hohenzollern dynasty in a federal state where smaller kingdoms and principalities retained their monarchs but in which Prussian power and the authority of the Emperor (Kaiser) predominated
- Bismarck a national hero who retained tight control over the state until his dismissal in 1890
- German Empire built on military victory
- France deeply aggrieved and sought revenge
- Italy gained Papal states and Venetia
- Austrian weakness offers the Hungarians an opportunity to gain more autonomy in the Ausgleich (1867) when the Dual Monarchy was established sharing a ruler, military, and diplomatic corps, but with a separate parliament and domestic government in Budapest
- Napoleon III overthrown and France returned to republican government (Third Republic)
- Bismarck pursued a pacific foreign policy thereafter
- Bismarck established a long-term alliance with Austria, while other states on the periphery increasingly sought security with each other, especially France and Russia, which seemed like encirclement to the Germans and aroused their anxiety
- Bismarck banned the Socialist Party but enacted social legislation to win loyalty of the working class
- Bismarck unsuccessfully pursued vendetta against independent sources of power outside his authority, such as the Catholic church -- Kulturkampf