

PART FIVE

THE AGE OF MASS POLITICS

In 1850, Great Britain, France, and Russia were the three major European powers. However, the unification of Italy and Germany during the 1860s and early 1870s shifted the balance of power in Central Europe and dramatically changed international dynamics. Moreover, amid rising national consciousness, ethnic minorities within the Habsburg Empire, in particular, demanded more rights, setting the stage for further conflict in Europe.

During the nineteenth century's last three decades, much of Europe entered a period of remarkable economic, social, political, and cultural change. During the Second Industrial Revolution, scientific and technological advances ushered in a period of rapid economic growth. Steel and electricity transformed manufacturing. Cities grew rapidly, their wide boulevards lined with department stores, cafés, and newspaper kiosks. The emergence of spectator sports and flashy cabarets symbolized the fin-de-siècle period. However, some of the rebellious writers and artists of the avant-garde worried that Western civilization was moving too rapidly and seemed out of control.

On the continent, political parties developed, which helped bring about the age of mass politics. Despite a general improvement in the quality of life, the difficult conditions of the laboring poor encouraged the creation of Socialist parties. Socialists were elected to many European parliaments. Trade unions put forth demands and engaged in strikes. In Britain, the Labour Party started up early in the twentieth century, supported by workers demanding social reform. In Russia, liberal critics of the tsarist autocracy became bolder. The humiliating defeat of Russia by

Japan led to the Russian Revolution of 1905. This forced short-lived political reforms and encouraged reformers and revolutionaries alike.

For more than half a century, liberals had championed the interests of the middle class, basing the right to vote on the ownership of property. They did so in the context of constitutional government, pushing for the rights of legislative assemblies. In the three decades following the largely unsuccessful 1848 revolutions, liberalism prevailed in Great Britain, France, Austria, Italy, Greece, and Sweden. The British Parliament, which in 1867 had greatly extended the right of men to vote, approved the secret ballot in 1872, and in 1884 enfranchised almost all remaining adult males. France became a republic early in the 1870s, and universal male suffrage subsequently was adopted in Germany, Belgium, Spain, Austria, and Italy. Without the liberals' determination to expand the franchise, universal male suffrage in much of Western Europe, followed by political democracy in many states, would not have occurred. Liberal democracy emerged as the dominant form of European politics from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present day.

However, in the last decades of the century, liberalism was on the defensive, attacked from left and right. Nationalism increasingly became part of the expanding contours of political life within states and between them. During the French Revolution and Napoleonic era, nationalism had been an ideology identified with the political left. Liberals had believed that laissez-faire economic policy and parliamentary government combined with an expansion of the right to vote (but not necessarily universal male suffrage) would provide a firm base for the establishment of nation-states. During at least the first half of the nineteenth century, liberalism and nationalism were closely entwined; liberals and nationalists were often the same people, as in Britain, France, and Italy.

By the end of the century, many nationalists, convinced that their people were superior to any other, trumpeted the primacy of the nation over claims of popular sovereignty or belief in human equality. Nationalism became an ideology championed, above all, by right-wing parties. Cheap newspapers glorified the nation for eager readers. "Jingoism" came to define the swaggering self-assurance of nationalists committed to expanding the power of their nation. At the same time, waves of strikes and demonstrations frightened conservatives from Norway and Sweden to Austria and Spain. The fear of socialism, espousing internationalism, pushed social elites and some in the middle class to the nationalist right. Anti-Semitism fed on aggressive nationalism.

Nationalism merged easily with imperialism, which was predicated on the assumption that the people of one nation were superior to others, and therefore entitled to dominate "inferior" peoples through the expansion of empire. The "new imperialism" of the powers began in the 1880s. By 1914, they had divided up three-quarters of the world's surface. Imperialism helped sharpen international rivalries. Entangling alliances led the European powers into two heavily armed camps, linking Germany and Austria-Hungary against Britain, France, and Russia. The growth of nationalism in the Balkans fueled the rivalry between Russia and Austria-Hungary, each backed by strongly committed allies.

CHAPTER 17

THE ERA OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION



During the first half of the nineteenth century, small groups of German and Italian nationalists agitated for the political unification of their respective peoples. Liberals and nationalists were often the same people sharing the same goals. Many revolutionaries in 1848 had demanded national unification, notably the lawyers and professors of the Frankfurt Parliament in the German states and the Italian liberals and nationalists opposing Austrian domination of northern Italy. But the outcome of the 1848 revolutions notwithstanding, Germany and Italy were not unified by the popular movements that typified the revolutions that in 1848 brought a republic to France, forced constitutional changes in Prussia and Austria, and sparked insurrections against Austrian control of northern Italy.

Italian unification came, not because of the utopian nationalism of Giuseppe Mazzini nor because of the frenzied dashes of Giuseppe Garibaldi and his followers into the south, but rather largely as a result of the expansion of Piedmont-Sardinia, the peninsula's strongest and most liberal state. Italy was unified politically under the liberal auspices of the Piedmont-Sardinian monarchy, the House of Savoy.

The case of Germany was very different. German unification was effected by autocratic Prussian King William I and Chancellor Otto von Bismarck through shrewd manipulation of both diplomacy and warfare. "Most countries have an army," it was said, but "Prussia is an army with a country." The German Empire, like the Prussia that forged it in "blood and iron," was defiantly reactionary, flying in the face of currents of European liberalism.

Without question, the emergence of Italy in the 1860s and of Germany in 1871 changed the history of modern Europe. Germany emerged as a great power, Italy as a would-be great power. And the Austro-Hungarian monarchy increasingly was confronted by demands from its ethnic minorities for their own independence, which remained a factor for instability in its domestic and international politics. In some ways, the Habsburg monarchy seemed an anachronism, out of place in the age of nationalism.

The Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich once whimsically remarked that Italy was "a mere geographical expression." Since the end of the Roman Empire, Italy had been politically disunited, a cacophony of competing voices from different regions and peoples.

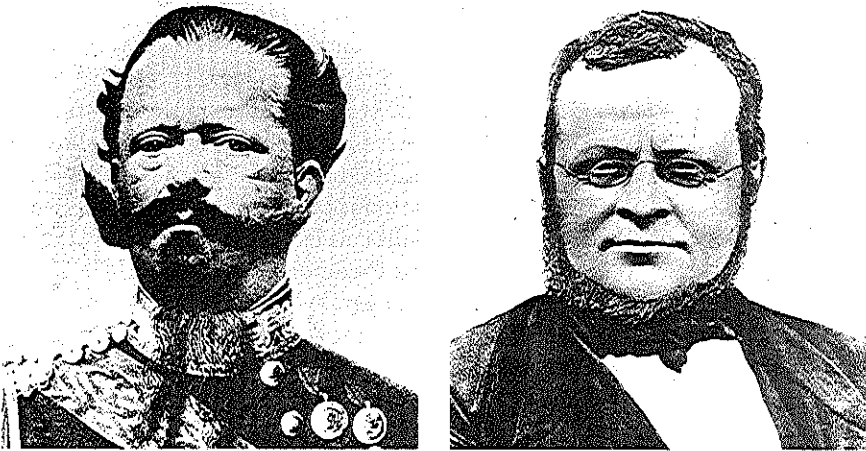
Marked differences in economic development compounded political fragmentation. Northern Italy has always been considerably more prosperous than the south. The Habsburg monarchy also presented a formidable obstacle to Italian unification, as it retained Venetia and Lombardy, and dominated Parma, Tuscany, and Modena in north-central Italy (the rulers of the latter two states were members of the Austrian royal family). The pope's influence and temporal control over the Papal States around Rome posed another barrier to Italian unification. Furthermore, Italy lacked a tradition of centralized administration. Powerful local elites dispensed patronage, constituting unofficial parallel governments in much of the south and Sicily. Finally, these structural barriers to unification were accompanied by disagreement among elites and nationalists about whether a unified Italy would be governed by a monarchy (constitutional or not), a republic, or even by the pope.

Although many forces were working against Italian unification, some factors promoted the ultimate Risorgimento ("Resurgence") of Italy. Nationalist sentiment developed among the liberal aristocracy and the upper middle classes, particularly among northern lawyers and professors. It was fanned by nationalist brochures and newspapers, the memory of the failures of the Revolutions of 1848, and a common hatred of Austria, the latest of the outside powers that had held parts of Italy since the end of the fifteenth century. Most Italian nationalists envisioned a Risorgimento independent of the pope and the Catholic Church.

Leadership for Italian Unification

There seemed to be two possible sources of leadership for Italian unification. First, Victor Emmanuel II (ruled 1849–1878) of the House of Savoy, king of Piedmont-Sardinia (the Kingdom of Sardinia), wanted to unify Italy by gradually extending his control over the peninsula. Piedmont-Sardinia was far and away Italy's most prosperous region, boasting a significant concentration of industrial production, fine sources of water power, and accessible markets. It had inherited from the French revolutionary and Napoleonic eras a relatively efficient bureaucracy.

King Victor Emmanuel II, poorly educated and uncouth, loved horses and hunting more than anything else, with the possible exception of his sixteen-year-old mistress, the daughter of a palace guard. In 1852, Victor Emmanuel at least had the good sense to appoint Count Camillo di Cavour (1810–1861) to be his prime minister.



(Left) King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont-Sardinia. (Right) Count Camillo di Cavour.

Born into a family of Piedmontese nobles during the Napoleonic occupation, Cavour was a pampered child who grew up to be headstrong, somewhat lazy, and bad tempered. His older brother inherited the family title of marquis, and Cavour entered a military academy, where he did well in mathematics and engineering. In the army, he became enamored of political radicalism. Upon hearing of the July Revolution of 1830 in France, Cavour ran through his barracks in Genoa waving a paper knife, shouting "Long live the Republic! Down with all tyrants!" Cavour's political radicalism was unlikely to win him promotion in the army. He resigned his commission as a military engineer, pleading poor eyesight and bad health, the latter at least partially due to a lifelong pattern of eating and drinking too much.

Cavour read widely in economics and politics and traveled to France and England, both of which impressed him with their prosperity and efficient administration. Cavour's first language remained French, although his command of Italian improved. On his property, he made a good deal of money by utilizing crop rotation, land drainage, and mechanized farm machinery. Triumphs in banking and business followed, but none brought the morose Cavour happiness. In his early twenties, he wrote in his diary that he thought of suicide because he believed his life was "without purpose, without hope, without desire." Yet he found a compelling goal: the unification of the Italian peninsula.

Cavour came to espouse aristocratic liberalism. He became determined to effect political unification by gradually expanding the constitutional monarchy of Piedmont-Sardinia. An idealist of vision and courage, Cavour was also capable of ruthlessness and unscrupulous trickery, all of which

would be necessary to achieve Italian unification. He bragged that he liked to reduce political problems to graphs on which he had plotted all possible factors and outcomes.

Elected to the Piedmontese Parliament in 1849 in the new constitutional government, named minister of commerce and agriculture the following year and prime minister in 1852, he initiated the first of a series of loose coalition liberal governments based on the political center, standing between the noble and clerical right and the republican left.

Cavour's policies helped stimulate the Piedmontese economy. He facilitated the availability of credit for businessmen, helped attract foreign capital by lowering tariffs, built railways, and strengthened the army. Reflecting Piedmontese liberal secular values, Cavour made the clergy subject to the same civil codes as everyone else and taxed Church property. Like the liberalism of the French Orleanist monarchy and the early Victorians in Britain, however, Cavour's liberalism stopped well short of republicanism.

A second, more popular nationalist tradition survived the broken dreams of "the springtime of the peoples," the Revolutions of 1848. Giuseppe Mazzini remained its spokesman. The Genoese-born Mazzini had as a boy watched Piedmontese patriots leave for exile after an ill-fated revolutionary uprising in 1820–1821. Mazzini frequently dressed in black (often in the company of his pet canaries, who wore yellow), vowing to remain in mourning until Italian unification could be achieved. The failure of conspiratorial uprisings led him to espouse a nationalist movement that had a wider range of support, with the goal of establishing a republic that would implement social reforms. While he was a determined enemy of monarchism and aristocratic privilege, Mazzini believed that classical liberalism was devoid of moral values, and he rejected socialism as overly materialistic. He embraced unification as a moral force that would educate and uplift the people of Italy, providing a common faith and purpose that would unlock their potential and make them worthy of democracy.

Mazzini believed that the unification of Italy had to be the work of the people themselves, and should not be achieved merely through the expansion of the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia. Drawing on the conspiratorial tradition of the Carbonari, Mazzini's secret society, "Young Italy," hoped to mobilize the European masses, beginning in the Italian states, to rise up for nationalism and democracy. He thus supported the goals of other nationalist groups in Europe, including Hungarians, Poles, and Slavs in the hope that "Young Europe," a brotherhood of nations, would eventually come into existence.

Mazzini was undaunted by the failures and repression that followed the Revolution of 1848, including the ill-fated attempt to proclaim the Roman Republic in 1849. However, these debacles discredited his movement among the middle classes. Four years later, Cavour tipped off the Austrians that Mazzini was planning an insurrection in Lombardy. King Victor Emmanuel II congratulated Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph on the success of the sub-

sequent repression. Yet Mazzini's effective propaganda kept the Italian question alive in European diplomatic circles while attracting the interest of lawyers and liberal landowners in some of the northern Italian states.

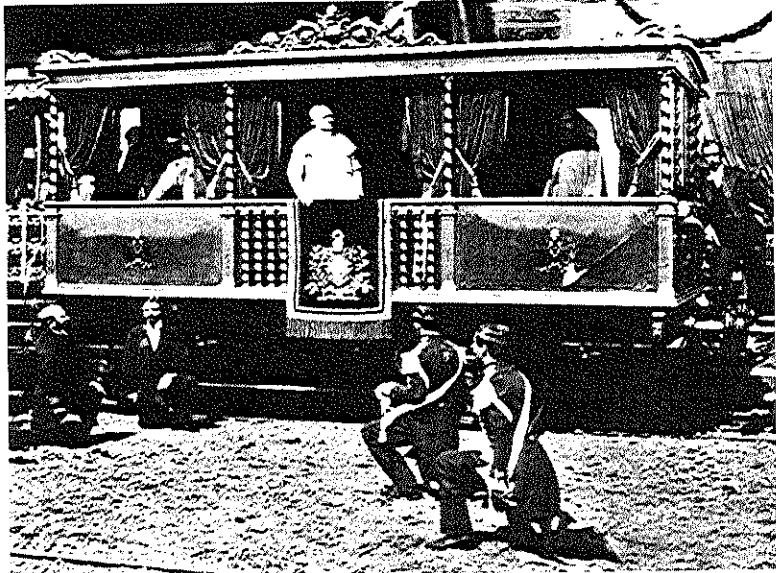
Alliances and Warfare to Further Italian Unification

Italian unification would be impossible as long as Austria dominated much of northern and central Italy. Having first concentrated on reforms within Piedmont-Sardinia, Cavour next began a series of diplomatic moves that he hoped would bring the support of Great Britain and France. Specifically, he wanted to form an alliance with France against Austria that would further the cause of Italian unification. Austria was not about to withdraw from Lombardy on its own, and Piedmont-Sardinia was too weak to defeat the Habsburg army alone. Cavour initiated commercial agreements with France, as well as with Great Britain, trying to impress both powers with Piedmont-Sardinia's political and economic liberalism.

In March 1854, France and Great Britain joined the Ottoman Empire in opposing Russia in the Crimean War (1853–1856). The cagey Cavour worked to make the war serve the interests of Piedmont-Sardinia and Italian unification. Cavour informed the French and British governments that Piedmont-Sardinia would be willing to join the coalition against Russia in exchange for a role in determining new frontiers in Eastern Europe at the war's end. Knowing that Britain needed more troops for the fight, Cavour sent 15,000 soldiers to Crimea in January 1855. Mazzini, on the other hand, bitterly opposed intervention as irrelevant to his vision of a united republican Italy. Piedmont-Sardinia signed the Peace of Paris in 1856, which ended the Crimean War, an occasion Cavour used to focus diplomatic attention on the Italian situation.

Cavour was now eager to ally with imperial France in the interest of working toward Italian unification. Despite a failed assassination attempt against him by an Italian nationalist republican in 1858, French Emperor Napoleon III was eager to extend his country's influence in Italy and hoped to annex Savoy and Nice from Piedmont-Sardinia. He proposed marriage between Victor Emmanuel's fifteen-year-old daughter and his own young cousin, Prince Napoleon Bonaparte. Such an alliance would help cement relations between France and Piedmont-Sardinia, not a happy situation for the Austrians (nor necessarily for the young bride).

Cavour devised an agreement with France against Austria, which was signed in July 1858 at Plombières, a spa in eastern France. Napoleon III now agreed to support Piedmont-Sardinia in a war against Austria. In January 1859, Piedmont-Sardinia and France formalized the Plombières agreement in a treaty. Then the ruling dynasties were united in youthful marriage (the princess had agreed to marry the young Frenchman if "he is not actually repulsive to me"). Russia, Austria's rival in the Balkans, was happy to sit this one out in exchange for French acceptance of a possible revision of the



Pope Pius XI on the special train given to him by Napoleon III, who protected papal temporal independence.

Peace of Paris, which had in 1856 deprived Russia of the right to have a fleet in the Black Sea. In turn, Russia would look the other way if events in Italy altered the settlements enacted by the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

Austria provided an excuse for war, announcing that it would draft men from Venetia and Lombardy into the imperial army. Piedmont-Sardinia, in turn, made it known that it would accept deserters from Austrian conscription, and it mobilized troops in March. But the British government lobbied so effectively for a peaceful solution that Cavour denounced a "conspiracy of peace" and threatened to resign. Napoleon III hesitated, asking Piedmont-Sardinia to demobilize its troops. Austria saved the situation for Cavour by issuing an ultimatum to Piedmont-Sardinia on April 23, 1859, hoping that other German states would support it. With Austria now appearing as the aggressor, Prussia and the other German states felt no obligation to come to its aid. After Piedmont-Sardinia rejected the ultimatum, Austrian troops invaded Piedmont, which brought France into the war. Napoleon III himself led 100,000 troops into northern Italy; many of the troops went by train, the first time that a railway played a major part in warfare.

The French and Piedmontese defeated the Habsburg army at Magenta and then at Solferino in June 1859, driving the Austrians out of Lombardy (see Map 17.1). But the French feared that a crushing defeat of Austria might yet bring Prussia and other German states into the war against France, with the bulk of the French armies still in northern Italy. Furthermore, Cavour



MAP 17.1 THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY, 1859–1870 The unification of Italy by Piedmont-Sardinia included territory acquired in 1859, 1860, 1862, and 1866.

had sparked several nationalist insurrections against the Austrians in Tuscany, Bologna, Modena, and Parma, whose rulers fled, leaving the duchies under Piedmontese control. Further revolts in the Papal States failed; the pope's Swiss mercenaries recaptured Perugia, looting the city and shooting unarmed civilians. It became apparent to the French emperor that if Piedmont-Sardinia were too successful, Victor Emmanuel's expanded kingdom might become a rival instead of a grateful, compliant neighbor. Without consulting Cavour, Napoleon III arranged an armistice at Villafranca with Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria in July.

Cavour and Victor Emmanuel now believed that France had betrayed them. Austria lost Lombardy to Piedmont-Sardinia but would retain Venetia. By the Treaty of Turin on March 24, 1860, Napoleon III agreed to Piedmont-Sardinia's annexation of Tuscany, Modena, Parma, and Bologna, in addition to Lombardy. In exchange, Piedmont-Sardinia ceded Savoy and Nice, which passed to France after a plebiscite. With the exception of Venetia, almost all of northern and central Italy had now been united under the constitutional monarchy of Piedmont-Sardinia.

Garibaldi and the Liberation of Southern Italy

The colorful republican revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882) now leapt onto the stage. Born in Nice (and, like Cavour, a French speaker), the charismatic and courageous Garibaldi had joined Mazzini's Young Italy movement in 1833. After twelve years in exile in South America, he fought against the Austrians in Lombardy in 1848 and against the French in Rome in 1849. The war of 1859 provided him with another opportunity to fight Austria. Angered that the Villafranca armistice had cut short what he considered a war for Italian unification, Garibaldi formed an army of volunteers, hoping to drive the Austrians from Venetia and the French from Rome. But an ill-prepared attack on Rome failed completely.

In April 1860, a revolt began against Francis II, the Bourbon monarch of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Naples and Sicily), as a protest against the milling tax and the high price of bread. Secretly encouraged by Cavour (who planned to send Piedmont-Sardinia's army to Rome later to rescue the pope) and openly urged on by Mazzini, Garibaldi landed in Sicily with an army of 1,000 "Red Shirts." Sicilians welcomed him as a liberator. Garibaldi's followers outfought the larger Neapolitan army, taking Palermo on May 27, 1860. This success swelled Garibaldi's ragtag army of nationalists and adventurers.



Giuseppe Garibaldi.

Garibaldi then announced that he was assuming dictatorial power in Sicily on behalf of King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont-Sardinia. In August, Garibaldi's army returned to the Italian peninsula. Aided by a popular insurrection, the Red Shirts took Naples, Italy's largest city, in September. Garibaldi's victories now put Piedmont-Sardinia in a difficult

situation. If Garibaldi marched against Rome, France might declare war because of the threat to the pope. If Garibaldi moved against Venetia, which seemed inevitable, Austria would almost certainly fight again, perhaps this time with Prussia's support. Cavour sent Piedmontese troops into the Papal States the same day that Garibaldi's troops took Naples. The ostensible goal was to join Garibaldi, but the real intention of the expedition was to stop the adventurer's dramatic independent operations. The combined forces of Piedmontese troops and Garibaldi's army put an end to papal resistance and that of the royal Bourbon family of Naples.

Italy Unified

Plebiscites in October in Naples, Sicily, and the Papal States demonstrated overwhelming support for joining the expanding Italian state of Piedmont-Sardinia. The annexation of these states angered Napoleon III, as Cavour had promised that an international conference would provide arbitration. Now only Venetia—still Austrian—and Rome and its region—the shrinking kingdom of the pope—remained unincorporated into the new Italy.

Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont-Sardinia triumphantly entered Naples with Garibaldi in November 1860. He took the title King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy in March 1861. Garibaldi, whose daring exploits had made these events possible, retired in semi-exile. On June 6, 1861, Cavour died at age fifty-one, depriving Italy of his effective decision making and political acumen. Depending on one's point of view, Italy had lost either the great hero of the Risorgimento or a scheming Machiavellian—probably something of both.

Two more conflicts completed the political unification of Italy. In 1866, Austria went to war with Prussia, its rival for the leadership of the German states. Italian troops, allied with Prussia, moved into Austrian Venetia. When Prussian forces defeated the Austrians in July (see pp. 666–67), Venetia became part of Italy.

The final piece in the Italian jigsaw puzzle fell into place when French troops left Rome in 1870 at the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War. Italian troops occupied Rome, making it the capital of the new Italian state. On May 13, 1871, the Italian Parliament passed the Law of Papal Guarantees, which reduced the holdings of the pope to the Vatican, barely larger than Saint Peter's Basilica and its adjoining ecclesiastical buildings.

Limits to Unification

During the next decades, the limits to Italian unification became increasingly apparent. The Italian state, despite its phalanx of civil servants and police, seemed irrelevant to many, perhaps even most, of the people now called Italians. Most remained loyal to their families, towns, regions, and to the Catholic Church (particularly in central and southern Italy), as well as to powerful local leaders, families, or factions. Almost 70 percent of the

population was illiterate in 1871 and 50 percent in 1900, even though the peninsula now shared a common written Italian language. In 1860, almost 98 percent of the population of Italy spoke dialects in daily life and not Italian. Schoolteachers sent to Sicily from the north were taken for Englishmen. A French writer related that in Naples in 1860 he heard people shout "Long Live Italy!" and then ask what "Italy" meant.

Resistance to the Italian state came naturally. In southern Italy, the crime organizations of the Camorra of Naples and the Mafia of Sicily, with similar codes of honor, served as the real basis of authority. Family feuds and vendettas, often accompanied by grisly violence, went on as before. "Italy" was seen as a northern ploy to bilk money through taxes, or to draft the sons of southern Italians into the army, or to undercut what seemed to be legitimate local influence and ways of doing things. To the poor farmers and impoverished laborers trying to scratch out a living, local notables at least could provide what they considered "justice" for the poor. Moreover, brigands had traditionally received assistance from the local population, who viewed them as fellow resisters to the state, if not Robin Hoods. The state managed to drive bands of brigands out of business in the 1870s, but only through a savage repression that killed more Italians than all the wars of the Risorgimento combined, intensifying suspicion and mistrust of the state.

The liberal free-trade policies of Cavour, who had never been farther south in Italy than Florence, further served to concentrate industry in the triangle formed by Milan, Turin, and Genoa by driving out smaller and less efficient manufacturers, accentuating the gap between north and south. The south became even more dependent on poor agriculture. Northerners dominated Italian politics, as they had Italian unification, treating the people of the south as colonial underlings. Far fewer southerners were eligible to vote than northerners. Mass emigration, principally to the United States and Argentina, could only partly resolve the problems of overpopulation and poverty.

In the meantime, the popes portrayed themselves as Roman prisoners of a godless state. The Church had refused to accept the Law of Papal Guarantees of 1871, which gave it title to the Vatican and the authority to make ecclesiastical appointments within Italy. The popes not only refused to recognize Italy's existence, but they banned the faithful from running for electoral office or even voting. While some Italian Catholics simply ignored such stern papal warnings, others systematically abstained from casting a ballot. The state paid the salaries of the clergy, but it also confiscated Church property. Secular reforms removed the teaching of theology from the universities, closed convents and monasteries, made priests eligible for military conscription, banned public religious processions, and made civil marriage obligatory. The attitude of the Church hierarchy and prominent laymen to the Italian state was reflected by the headline of a Catholic newspaper after the death of King Victor Emmanuel II in 1878: "The king is dead, the pope is well."

Italian Politics

The king of Italy ruled through a premier and parliament. The electoral franchise was small: only about 600,000 men (2.5 percent of the population) were eligible to elect members of the Chamber of Deputies before the expansion of the franchise in 1882, after which 2 million men, about 10 percent of the population, could vote, and in 1912, when the number eligible to vote was doubled. Italian governments lurched from one political crisis to another in the 1880s, buffeted by rampant corruption as well as rapidly changing coalitions—a process that became known to critics as *trasformismo*—"transforming" political opponents into allies. King Umberto I (ruled 1878–1900) stood aside until his intervention became absolutely imperative. Italy's king was lazy, so uneducated that he did not even like to sign his own name if someone was watching, and considered himself above politics.

The arrogant Premier Francesco Crispi (1819–1901) built political alliances between northern industrialists, who were anticlerical and wanted high tariffs, and southern landowners, who also favored protectionism. Crispi used the army against strikers and demonstrators and used the police to cow opponents daring to organize electoral opposition against him. In 1894, he ordered the disfranchisement of nearly a million voters and banned the Italian Socialist Party. His authoritarian methods angered even the king, who wryly admitted, "Crispi is a pig, but a necessary pig."

In 1901, King Victor Emmanuel III (ruled 1900–1946) signed a decree granting the premier authority over cabinet posts. Upon becoming premier in 1903, Giovanni Giolitti (1842–1928) brought relative stability to Italian political life. Giolitti was a master of *trasformismo*, making party labels essentially meaningless by building a series of makeshift but effective coalitions. Giolitti won the loyalty of enough deputies to remain in office through negotiations, cajoling, promises of jobs and favors, threats, and outright bribery. With the motto "neither revolution nor reaction," the premier's balancing act depended on votes from the anticlerical Radicals, a party based in the north, who supported increased administrative efficiency and liked the premier's opposition to socialism. But Giolitti also depended on southern Catholic moderates, and therefore opposed any land reform on behalf of the rural poor that would break up large estates. His government also had to appease the Church by refusing to meet the anticlerical demands of the Radicals. (In 1904, the Church relaxed its anti-republican stand enough to allow practicing Catholics to vote in elections if their participation would help defeat a Socialist candidate.) Giolitti also sponsored legislation that turned over education in southern Italy to the clergy. The premier left the Mafia and Camorra alone because they could bring him votes in any region or town they controlled, ordering on one occasion the release of more than a thousand *mafiosi* from prison in exchange for their votes.

In a country wrought by political division, aggressive nationalism appeared as one means of bringing Italians together. Crispi had favored a policy of forceful colonialization, fearful that Italy would be left out while the other powers snatched up territory (see Chapter 21). He prepared an invasion of the East African state of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) from the Italian colony of Eritrea in 1896, circumventing parliamentary opposition and refusing to heed the warning of generals that such a move might fail. When the Abyssinian tribesmen Crispi had referred to as "barbarians" crushed the Italian army at Adowa, he resigned. Italian nationalists then began to claim the territory of Trentino in the Austrian Tyrol and the Adriatic port of Trieste as "Unredeemed Italy" (*Italia Irredenta*). In 1911, while Giolitti was premier, Italy launched a war of conquest in Libya, establishing a colony there (see Chapter 22). Giolitti's social reforms had frightened employers and many other conservatives, and the ranks of the anti-parliamentary right swelled. Nationalist candidates demanded further aggressive moves in the Mediterranean. Although the war in Libya went reasonably well for Italian troops, the right objected to the fact that it seemed mismanaged, and the left did not want the invasion at all. Both left and right moved farther away from Giolitti's Liberal center. The Libyan war thus directly undid Giolitti's political system. With the Socialists divided by the Libyan war and unwilling to be "transformed" into temporary political partners, Giolitti now had to turn to Catholic leaders. Giolitti convinced Catholics to support his Liberal candidates if the Liberals agreed to end the campaign against Church schools and for legalized divorce. Angered by Giolitti's promises to the Church, the left tripled its vote, forcing him from office in March 1914. A nationalist proclaimed that the role of his new party was to teach Italians to respect "international struggle," even if the result was war. The Italian liberal state had survived many challenges, but even greater ones lay ahead.

THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

The unification of Germany would not come through liberal auspices. In the German states, too, growing nationalist sentiment existed within the middle class. Yet, as in the case of Italy, there were also formidable obstacles to German unification. First, in the wake of the Revolution of 1848, the upper classes were wary of any change that might threaten the *status quo*. They particularly feared the strong nationalist feeling unleashed by revolution, the extension of which might lead to, they reasoned, the proclamation of the equality of all citizens. Second, it was still not clear around which power, Austria or Prussia, Germany could achieve national unification. Some believed in the "small German" solution in which Prussia might effect German unification and exclude Austria. Other German nationalists supported

the "big German" ideal, whereby Austria would dominate an expanded German Confederation. Third, in both Prussia and Austria, the 1850s brought repression that made it clear to most nationalists that German unification would not come under liberal auspices. The repression following the Revolutions of 1848 had scattered thousands of German democrats and socialists across Europe and as far as the United States.

As in the case of Italy, where unification had been achieved primarily through the efforts of one relatively strong and prosperous state, in the German states Prussia held several trump cards toward achieving German unification, including territorial additions in the industrializing Rhineland after the Napoleonic Wars and a relatively strong economic position, which had been bolstered by the Zollverein customs union. Furthermore, Prussia's population was quite homogeneous, as it was almost entirely German-speaking and Protestant. The Prussian royal family, the Hohenzollerns, benefited from the internal stability brought by an effective administrative bureaucracy and were supported by an ambitious, powerful landed nobility, the Junkers, who dominated the officer corps of the Prussian army. Prussia already represented an example of successful statemaking. The expansion of Prussian power therefore seemed to many Prussians to be perfectly natural. Catholic Austria, on the other hand, dominated a multinational population. The Habsburg monarchy had much to lose by the encouragement of national movements that might catch fire among the varied peoples within the imperial boundaries.

All German nationalists, however, did not agree on what political form a unified Germany should take. Most Prussian Junkers had been unrelenting in their opposition to the liberal movements that had championed popular sovereignty during the 1848 revolutions. They rejected the liberalism of Rhineland industrialists, eager to enhance their own political power. Many liberals, particularly republicans from the more liberal southern German states, wanted a unified Germany to have a parliamentary government free from domination by either autocratic, aristocratic Prussia or imperial Austria. Yet, despite Prussia's autocratic and militaristic traditions, some nationalistic republicans still hoped Prussia, not Austria, would lead Germans to unification. Prussian Junkers also feared that if the "big German" plan for unification came to be, their influence would be greatly diluted by Austrian influence. Nonetheless, Austria continued to attract the interest of German nationalists who mistrusted Prussia. Many southern Germans wanted the Habsburg monarchy to champion the cause of the smaller German states, leading to a decentralized federation, not domination by Prussia.

William I, Bismarck, and the Resolution of the Constitutional Crisis

The first step in the unification of Germany was the ascension to power of a monarch equal to the task. In 1858, the pious William I (1797–1888) became regent for his brother, Frederick William IV, who was declared

insane. Crowned following Frederick William's death in 1861, William I made clear from the outset of his reign that, unlike his predecessor, he would look beyond the small group of reactionary Prussian Junkers and bring some more moderate conservatives into his cabinet. William I promised to rule constitutionally. Voters—men of at least moderate wealth—responded by turning out in unprecedented numbers to vote. Liberals won a clear victory in the 1858 elections to the Prussian Parliament, which brought to that assembly a good number of men enriched by the economic boom in the early 1850s. Liberals who favored German unification now had a public forum in which to be heard. Many businessmen believed that German unification would be good for them, as the Zollverein customs union had benefited them in the 1840s.

In the meantime, the Austrian war against Piedmont-Sardinia and France in 1859 divided Prussians. Some were torn between dislike for Austria and irritation with French Emperor Napoleon III for helping engineer the outbreak of war. Austria was a member of the German Confederation and had the right to expect assistance from fellow members. But Austria was also Prussia's major rival for power within the German states. Prussia remained neutral in the war, but Italy's move toward unification greatly impressed German nationalists. Those who looked to Prussia to forge German unity welcomed Austria's defeat.

In 1858, several "Pan-German" associations had been formed as pressure groups supporting German unification. The largest and most influential, the National Union (*Nationalverein*), wanted a constitutional and parliamentary German state. The Prussian government remained suspicious of the National Union because many of its members favored the extension of political freedom within the German states. As in the old Frankfurt Parliament, its members were overwhelmingly middle class, including intellectuals, lawyers, officials, and small businessmen, but also included several industrialists. The National Union rebuffed an attempt by workers' organi-

zations to join in 1863, but contributed to the resurgence of political liberalism within Prussia by demanding an effective constitution that would limit the domination of the monarchy and the Junkers.

The question of army reform raised the issue of parliamentary control over the budget. The Prussian constitutional crisis that followed became a critical step in the unification of Germany along lines that turned out to be anything but liberal. The Prussian military mobilization in 1859 during the Austrian war against Piedmont and



William I.

France had revealed serious inadequacies in the Prussian army. The minister of war proposed expensive reforms of the army: expansion of the officer corps, increasing the number of recruits, and an extension of the time of service to three years. Prussian liberals wanted all citizens to serve in the army, but also hoped that the National Guard (*Landwehr*) would replace the professional, Junker-dominated army as the foundation of the Prussian military, thus forging a link between the army and the people.

The Prussian Parliament did not enjoy many prerogatives in autocratic Prussia, but it did have the right to approve new taxes. In response to government pressure, in 1861 the parliament, despite its liberal majority, passed a provisional bill that gave the army the money it needed until the reform could be considered. Liberal approval of the provisional bill was a fateful event in German history because it provided parliamentary sanction to the virtually unchallenged power of the Prussian army.

Some leaders among the liberal opposition then formed the German Progressive Party. Liberals declined to vote for the new military budget when the minister of war refused compromise. After William dismissed parliament, new elections returned another liberal majority, which rejected a second army budget. Seeking to overcome parliamentary opposition, the king turned to a strong-willed and intransigently conservative Junker, Count Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898), appointing him prime minister in 1862.

Bismarck was the son of a dull Junker father and a lively, intelligent mother from a family of middle-class bureaucrats. In his Berlin school, Bismarck was more noted for dueling scars earned in student fraternities than for academic success. After receiving his law degree, he passed the entrance examination for the Prussian bureaucracy. Bismarck was appointed Prussian representative to the German Confederation in Frankfurt in 1851. He was sent to Saint Petersburg as ambassador in 1859, perhaps to mute his noisy denunciations of Austria.

As prime minister of Prussia, Bismarck was convinced that he could create a new German state that would not be too large for Prussia to dominate, nor too democratic for the tradition of the Hohenzollern monarchy. He wanted to create a modern, bureaucratic state that would be strong and secular. He cleverly used political parties when it suited his purposes. For the next three decades, he doggedly held on to personal power. Bismarck's shrewd manipulation of domestic and international politics dominated relations among the European powers. The "iron chancellor" patiently made uncanny assessments of every possible option and then moved with determination to strengthen Prussia's position. Bismarck's type of politics came to be known as *Realpolitik*, the pursuit of a nation's self-interest based on a realistic assessment of the costs and consequences of action. Inherent in *Realpolitik* was an absence of moral or ethical considerations, overrun by Bismarck's unshakable determination to enhance the power of the Prussian monarchy and nobility, and therefore of Germany.

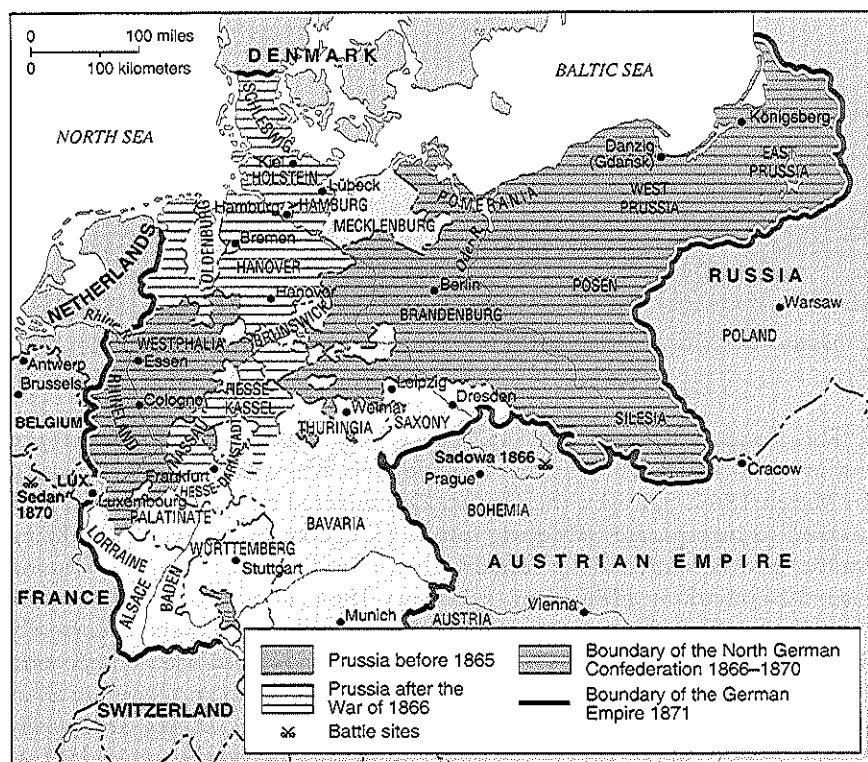
Bismarck was a very complex man, both a man of iron and one easily moved to tears. He once said of himself: "Faust complains of having two souls in his breast. I have a whole squabbling crowd. It goes on as in a republic." A large man, he looked like a senior military officer stuffed into a uniform that was too small. At times outgoing and charming, Bismarck could also lapse into moods of intense, gloomy isolation. He was unforgiving toward those who crossed him: "If I have an enemy in my power, I must destroy him." He once said that he sometimes spent whole nights hating. Bismarck could never contain his disdain for parliamentary liberalism: "The position of Prussia in Germany will be determined not by its liberalism but by its power. . . . Not through speeches and majority decisions are the great questions of the day decided—that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849—but through blood and iron."

Bismarck now announced that the government would operate without constitutional authorization. It did so for four years, using tax money previously voted to finance army reforms. In June 1863, Bismarck struck against the liberal Progressives by restricting freedom of the press, refusing to confirm the election of Progressive mayors, and banning discussion of political issues in municipal council meetings. The fact that both public opinion and even Crown Prince Frederick William opposed these measures did not dissuade him in the least. Nor did the election of even more liberals to the parliament in October 1863. In the meantime, Bismarck's stridently anti-Austrian policy helped split the liberal parliamentary opposition.

Alliances and Warfare to Establish Prussian Leadership

Russia and France were the two powers that would be most threatened by a unified Germany. The 1863 Polish revolt against Russian domination presented Bismarck with a perfect opportunity to ingratiate himself to the tsar. Whereas the other major powers sympathized with the Poles, Bismarck immediately voiced support for Russia. "Hit the Poles so hard that they despair for their lives," Bismarck advised. The Prussian government then signed an agreement with Russia, in which they agreed to assist each other in pursuing insurgents across their respective frontiers. Austria, which also had a sizable Polish population within its borders, found its relations with Russia soured.

Bismarck's first war was fought against the Danes in 1864 over Schleswig-Holstein, two duchies that included the Baltic port of Kiel (see Map 17.2). British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple, 1784–1865) once said that only three men truly understood the problem of Schleswig-Holstein: one was dead, one had gone mad, and the third, Palmerston himself, had forgotten it all. The duchies were ruled by the king of Denmark although not incorporated as part of the kingdom of Denmark. Holstein, which lies between Prussia and Schleswig, was almost entirely German-speaking and belonged to the



MAP 17.2 THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY, 1866–1871 The unification of Germany by Prussia included territory acquired after the Austro-Prussian War (1866) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871).

German Confederation, whereas both German and Danish speakers lived in Schleswig, which was not part of the Confederation. In 1848, the king of Denmark had declared the union of Schleswig with Denmark, and revolution broke out in both duchies. The Danish army occupied Schleswig. During the summer, a Prussian army on behalf of the German Confederation intervened in defense of the revolutionary provisional government in Holstein, which demanded autonomy. International opinion (particularly in Britain and Russia) rallied to the cause of the Danes. After some fighting, the Prussian forces withdrew. Following Swedish mediation, the provisional government of Holstein was dissolved by the Armistice of Malmö (August 1848). Although they were administered by a Danish-German commission, the two duchies essentially retained their former status. Prussia's defeat seemed a defeat for the cause of German nationalism. A small war followed in 1849–1850 between Prussian and Danish troops, ended by another armistice that left the status of Schleswig and Holstein up in the air.



Prussian coastal battery during the war against Denmark, 1864.

The London Protocol of 1852 placed Schleswig-Holstein under the authority of the Danish king, but forbade their incorporation into Denmark. In March 1863, however, the Danish king enacted a new constitution that seemed to incorporate Schleswig into his kingdom. Bismarck, capitalizing on the wave of nationalistic support, then found an ally in Austria. Prussia issued Denmark an ultimatum in January 1864, demanding that the new constitution for Schleswig be redrawn. The Danish government, incorrectly assuming that because of Schleswig's strategic importance, France and Britain would rush to its defense, rejected the ultimatum and found itself at war with Prussia and Austria. To no one's surprise, the Danes were easily beaten. The Treaty of Vienna (October 1864) established the joint administration of Schleswig-Holstein by Prussia and Austria—Austria would administer Holstein, and Prussia would administer Schleswig. This awkward arrangement left Prussia with a military corridor and communications line through Austrian-controlled Holstein and use of the port of Kiel.

Bismarck now viewed a military showdown with Austria as inevitable, even desirable. Yet, while preparing for that eventuality by currying the favor of the smaller German states and working to isolate Austria further from the other European powers, he blithely tried—and failed—to tempt Austria into making an agreement that would formally divide their influence in the German states into north-south spheres. Bismarck persuaded Napoleon III that France would receive territorial compensation in the Rhineland if it would stay out of an Austro-Prussian war. The French emperor tried to play both sides. Convinced that Austria could defeat Prussia, he signed a secret treaty with the Habsburg monarchy that would give the French Venetia and establish a French protectorate in the Rhineland after an Austrian victory.

Bismarck then drew Italy into a secret alliance, signed in April 1866, by promising it Venetia in the event of a Habsburg defeat. Italy promised Prussia assistance if there was war with Austria, knowing that a Prussian victory would add the last large chunk of the Italian peninsula to Italy (see p. 657).

Exaggerating reports of Austria's military preparations, Bismarck denounced Austria's "seditious agitation" against Prussia in Schleswig-Holstein. After Bismarck had secured the temporary alliance with Italy and assured France's neutrality, Prussian troops entered Holstein. Austria allied with some of the smaller states (including Hanover, Saxony, and Hesse-Kassel) of the German Confederation. Prussia left the German Confederation, which then voted under Austria's leadership to send troops against the Prussian army.

Within three weeks, Prussian troops had defeated the South German and Hanoverian armies in the Austro-Prussian War (1866). The Prussian army bested the Austrian forces in the Battle of Sadowa (or Königgrätz) in eastern Bohemia on July 3, 1866. Almost 1 million soldiers fought in the battle. Superior military planning as well as the rapid mobilization, deployment, and concentration of troops, talented officers, and more modern weapons—particularly the breech-loading "needle gun"—brought the Prussian army success.

The North German Confederation

In the aftermath of a victory most people did not expect, Bismarck restrained the Prussian officer corps, many of whom wanted to push on to Vienna. Bismarck realized that he would ultimately need the support of the South German states, some of whom had been allied with Austria, if Germany was to be unified under Prussian auspices. Moreover, the chancellor did not want to provide France or Russia with an opportunity to enter the conflict. The Treaty of Prague (August 1866) eliminated Austria as a rival for the domination of the German states. The German Confederation was dissolved. The Habsburg monarchy recognized the North German Confederation (see Map 17.2), a new union of twenty-two states and principalities north of the Main River, with a constitution and a parliament (Reichstag), which Prussia would dominate with William I as president and Bismarck as federal chancellor. Bavaria signed an alliance promising to join Prussia if it were attacked by France, which had been alarmed by the relatively easy Prussian victory. Schleswig-Holstein became part of Prussia. By virtue of the annexation of Hanover, Frankfurt, Nassau, and Hesse-Kassel, Prussia was no longer divided into two separate provinces. The Berlin government intimidated, bribed, or cajoled these smaller states into compliance.

Bismarck left no doubt that he considered the North German Confederation a provisional solution until Germany could be united under Prussian leadership. In the meantime, the old Zollverein customs union, which included the South German states, was expanded to include an assembly of elected delegates. Bismarck received support from Prussian businessmen who would profit from the removal of customs barriers and the centralization of railway networks. As long as unification brought material progress, it did not seem to matter to them that the traditional class system

and restricted political life that characterized Prussia would form the basis of a united Germany. Bismarck was the man of the hour, the Prussian state a dynamic force with which to be reckoned.

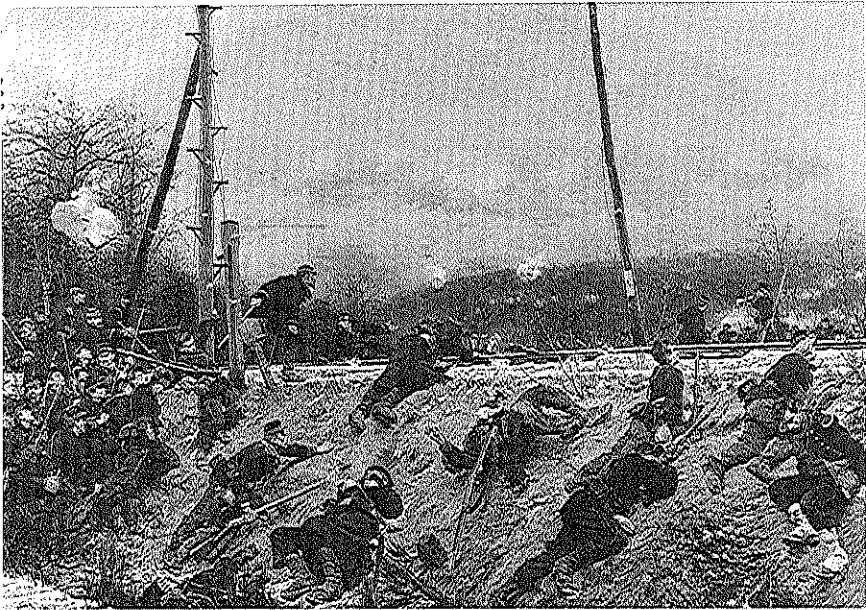
Bismarck's bitter quarrel with the liberals over the military budget disappeared in the enthusiasm. Some members of the Progressive Party and other liberals still espoused "a vigilant and loyal opposition" at home. But liberal newspapers willingly accepted the triumphs of Prussian foreign policy and military might. Some liberals were so elated by the prospect of German unification that they left the more hesitant Progressive Party and formed the nationalistic National Liberal Party, which supported Bismarck. At the same time, some of the South German states were moving closer to Prussia through economic and military alliances.

The Franco-Prussian War and German Unification

Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 completed the unification of the German states, with the exception of Austria. Napoleon III foolishly seized upon the issue of the Hohenzollern candidacy for the vacant Spanish throne as an occasion to go to war against Prussia. Bismarck fanned the embers of the crisis he had hoped would lead to a war he considered inevitable and necessary. His carefully planned diplomacy was never more evident. The Russian tsar warmly remembered Prussian support during the Polish rebellion of 1863. The Austrian government had not forgiven France for joining Piedmont-Sardinia in the war of 1859. Italy still resented the loss of Savoy and Nice in 1860 to France. Bismarck played his real trump card with the British, coolly revealing documents proving that the French emperor had in 1866 demanded Belgium and Luxembourg as compensation for Prussia's increased power. This ended any chance of support for Napoleon III by the British government, which would never tolerate a potentially hostile power in Belgium. France went alone to war against Prussia. Following the surrender of French armies at the end of August and the beginning of September, Prussian forces besieged Paris. French resistance continued until January 28, 1871 (see Chapter 18).

Bismarck signed a convention with the provisional French government, awaiting the election of a National Assembly in France that could conclude a peace treaty. Bolstered by a surge of nationalist sentiment in the South German states as well as in Prussia, Bismarck demanded the annexation of Alsace, where German speakers predominated (although they did not necessarily want to be incorporated into a united Germany), and much of Lorraine.

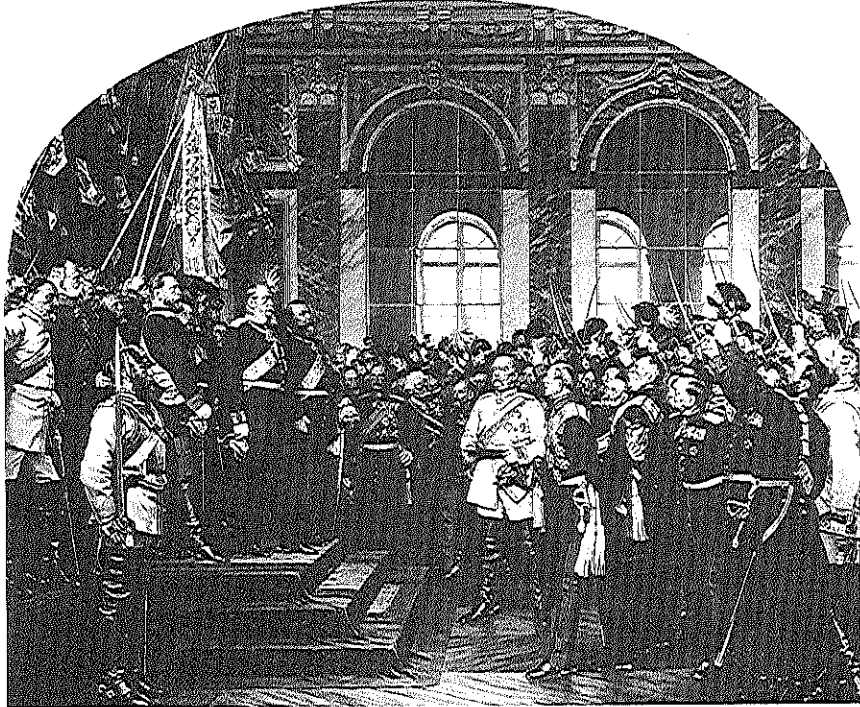
The German Empire was officially proclaimed at Versailles on January 18, 1871. King William I of Prussia became Emperor William I of Germany. The North German Confederation and its constitution provided the framework for German unification. The German Empire took on the auto-



Prussian troops move to cut a French railway line in the Franco-Prussian War.

cratic political structure of Prussia, dominated by Prussian nobles and military officers. For their part, industrialists and merchants trusted that unification would provide a boost to large-scale industrialization in the new Germany. Hamburg merchants thus traded the traditional independence of their city for the economic advantages of operating within a centralized state. Bismarck had harnessed economic liberalism to the goals of conservative political nationalism. Although many Germans remained indifferent to unification and others preferred the particularism of their region, over the long run, most Germans came to accept with growing enthusiasm the politically unified state that had been forged by Bismarck's spectacularly successful statemaking. The result was a critical shift in the balance of power in Europe.

The empire had a parliament, but the Reichstag had little real authority. Its members, elected by a franchise system that in Prussia grossly over-represented landed interests, could not hold cabinet posts. The chancellor was responsible not to the Reichstag, but rather to the emperor. The Reichstag could not propose legislation. Foreign policy and military affairs remained in the hands of the emperor and the chancellor. The Reichstag's control over the budget could not limit the prerogatives of the throne. Each of Germany's twenty-five states sent a delegate to a federal council (*Bundesrat*), over which the chancellor presided. Although each German



William I and Bismarck celebrate the proclamation of the German Empire in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

state—for example, Bavaria, which had a relatively liberal constitution—retained considerable administrative autonomy, as well as in some cases its own prince, the nature of the German imperial government remained authoritarian. Germany's growing economic power was therefore unaccompanied by the evolution toward effective parliamentary government that characterized Britain and then France, as well as to some extent Italy.

Junkers dominated the army and civil service. In exchange for loyalty, they were exempt from most taxation, receiving what amounted to state subsidies for their immense estates. Inevitably, as in England, noble economic clout declined with the agricultural depression and with the remarkably rapid industrialization of Germany, but Prussian Junkers retained their full measure of political power.

Unlike their counterparts in Victorian England and France, the German middle class largely remained outside political life in the German Empire, as they had been in Prussia before unification. Most middle-class Germans willingly acquiesced to imperial authority and noble influence. The subsequent rise of the German Social Democratic Party, founded in 1875 (see Chapter 20), was, in most cases, enough to keep the German middle class loyal to the empire.

Nationalist versus Internationalist Movements

Chancellor Bismarck hated the Catholic Center and Social Democratic parties, doubting their loyalty. The Catholic Center Party was founded in 1870 to lobby for the rights of Catholics, who made up 35 percent of the German population, most living in Bavaria and the Rhineland. In 1870, the pope asserted the doctrine of papal infallibility. To Bismarck, this meant that one day the pontiff might simply order German Catholics to not obey the government. In 1873, Bismarck launched a state campaign against Catholics, the *Kulturkampf* ("cultural struggle"). Priests in Germany henceforth had to complete a secular curriculum in order to be ordained, and the state would now recognize only civil marriage. Subsequent laws permitted the expulsion from Germany of members of the Catholic clergy who refused to abide by discriminatory laws against Catholics. An assassination attempt against Bismarck by a young Catholic in 1874 and papal condemnation of the *Kulturkampf* the following year only hardened the chancellor's resolve.

Gradually, however, Bismarck realized that he might in the future need the support of the Catholic Center Party against the Social Democrats. The chancellor quietly abandoned the *Kulturkampf*, although Catholics were still systematically excluded from high civil service positions, as were Jews. The state helped German Protestants purchase bankrupt estates in Prussian Poland so that they would not fall into the hands of Catholics, who made up most of the population there. Alsace and the parts of Lorraine annexed from France, where Catholics formed a solid majority, were administered directly from Berlin instead of being considered a separate state of the Reich.

Bismarck became obsessed with destroying the socialists, who improved their gains in the elections, although they still held only a couple of seats in the Reichstag. Two attempts to kill Emperor William I in 1878 provided Bismarck with an excuse for his war on the socialists, although neither would-be assassin had even the slightest contact with socialist leaders. The Reichstag obliged Bismarck by passing antisocialist legislation that denied socialists the freedoms of assembly, association, and the press. The police arrested socialists, shut down their newspapers and periodicals, and intimidated workers into quitting trade unions.



A contemporary image of Bismarck pitted against the pope in the German chancellor's campaign against German Catholics.

Following William I's death, Frederick III, a man of foresight and tolerance, reigned for only 100 days, tragically dying of throat cancer. In 1888, William II (ruled 1888–1918) became emperor. William held that "a society is only strong if it recognizes the fact of natural superiorities, in particular that of birth." He boasted, "We Hohenzollerns derive our crowns from Heaven alone and are answerable only to Heaven."

The German emperor compensated for a withered left arm with a love of military uniforms and swords. His education had proceeded in a hit-or-miss fashion that mostly missed. William's favorite reading included the pseudo-scientific racist ramblings of the English writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain. William II considered himself an expert on military affairs, but was not. He was lazy, yet talked at great length superficially about any conceivable subject, rushing to conclusions without reflection. His lack of tact—he invariably referred to the diminutive King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy as "that dwarf"—was a common topic of conversation in imperial circles.

Bismarck lasted two years as William's chancellor. When Bismarck in 1890 sought a pretext to launch another campaign of repression against the Social Democrats, the emperor, wanting to cultivate as much popularity as possible, preferred to win mass support by sponsoring more legislation that would improve working conditions. After an unpleasant confrontation, Bismarck resigned.

The iron chancellor's less able successors were unable to keep William from impulsively antagonizing Germany's rivals. The emperor's personal foibles became increasingly important as international relations entered a new and dangerous stage. He personally contributed to the rise of aggressive German nationalism and the Anglo-German naval rivalry. William zipped around Germany and the North Sea eagerly reviewing troops and christening ships. He enthusiastically supported the expansionist goals of the Pan-German and Naval Leagues. He asserted, "I believe, as it is written in the



William II (*left*) and Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary (*right*).

Bible, that it is my duty to increase [the German heritage] for which one day I shall be called upon to give an account to God. Whoever tries to interfere with my task I shall crush."

The alliance between Conservatives, National Liberals, and the Catholic Center Party provided the German emperor with a conservative base within the Reichstag. The National Liberals wanted a strong, secular state, and mistrusted parliamentary democracy. The resulting alliance between industrialists and agriculturists ("iron and rye") led to protectionist economic policies that began in 1879 and culminated in 1902 with a tariff that imposed a 25 percent duty on manufacturing and food imports. Liberalism continued to be closely tied to the defense of small-town interests.

In the meantime, the German conservatives became increasingly nationalistic and anti-Semitic. Following the economic crash of 1873, two years after Jews had received full legal emancipation with the proclamation of the empire, newspapers selected Jewish bankers, industrialists, and rival publishers as scapegoats. The operatic composer Richard Wagner and his circle of friends were outspokenly anti-Semitic. Wagner believed that the theater (and composers) stood as a center of German emotional national culture, which he did not believe included Jews. Some Germans identified Jews with liberalism and socialism. In 1892, the German Conservative Party made anti-Semitism part of its party platform, despite the fact that most Jews were fully assimilated into German society. A Jewish industrialist remembered in 1911 that "in the youth of every German Jew there comes a painful moment that he never forgets, the moment when he realizes for the first time that he has entered the world as a second-class citizen and that neither his efforts nor his accomplishments will free him from this status."

Yet, the Social Democrats won more seats in the Reichstag in 1912 than any other party. But many Social Democrats also were engulfed by the mood of aggressive nationalism that swept much of Germany, heightened by rivalry with Great Britain and by the Second Moroccan Crisis of 1911, which brought Germany and France close to war (see Chapter 22). Socialist deputies voted for the prodigious augmentation of funds for naval expansion, but did so in part because the issue of direct versus indirect taxation was at stake, and they wanted to establish the principle of direct taxation so as to end the tax privileges of wealthy families. Unlike French or Italian socialists, German socialists manifested little anti-militarism, giving every sign that they would support the government in time of war, particularly against Russia. The German Empire embodied the decline of liberalism and the rise of aggressive nationalism in late nineteenth-century Europe.

NATIONAL AWAKENINGS IN THE HABSBURG LANDS

Whereas Germany and Italy were politically unified when astute leaders mobilized nationalist feeling within the upper classes and successfully

carried out an aggressive foreign policy, nationalism threatened the very existence of the Habsburg monarchy. Ethnic tensions within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the second largest European state, were in many ways those of Europe itself. In the meantime, the unification of Germany, as well as that of Italy, altered the balance of power in Central Europe. Unified Germany, not Austria, was now unquestionably the strongest state in Central Europe. Moreover, the absorption of Lombardy and Venetia into the new Italian state had come at the expense of the Austrian Habsburgs.

Diversity and Cohesion in the Habsburg Empire

The provinces that formed the Habsburg domains represented extraordinary linguistic, cultural, and historical diversity (see Map 17.3). Eleven

MAP 17.3 NATIONALITIES IN THE HABSBURG EMPIRE The diverse nationalities and lands encompassed by the Habsburg Empire during the 1860s and 1870s.



TABLE 17.1. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE IN 1910 (IN MILLIONS)

Ethnic Group	Population	Ethnic Group	Population
Germans	12.0	Serbs	2.0
Magyars	10.1	Slovaks	2.0
Czechs	6.6	Slovenes	1.4
Poles	5.0	Italians	0.8
Ukrainians	4.0	Bosnian Muslims	0.6
Romanians	3.2	Others	0.4
Croats	2.9		

major nationalities lived within the territorial boundaries of the empire; these included Czechs in Bohemia and Slovaks to their east; Poles in Galicia; Slovenes, Croats, Muslim Bosnians, and Serbs in the Balkans; Romanians and Ukrainians in the southeast; and Italians in the Alpine Tyrol, as well as Jews and Gypsies. But by far the two largest national groups were the Germans (35 percent of the population), living principally in Austria but numerous also in Bohemia, and the Hungarians, or Magyars (23 percent). The traditional Hungarian crown lands formed the largest territory in the empire, divided into Hungary, Croatia, Transylvania, the Vojvodina, and the Military Frontier. Yet the Germans and Hungarians were outnumbered by the various Slavic groups, who together accounted for about 45 percent of the empire's population. Czechs comprised 23 percent of Austria's population. In Hungary, Romanians (with 19 percent of the population) formed the next largest group after the Magyars (see Table 17.1). Inadequate transportation networks accentuated the insular and overwhelmingly rural nature of many ethnic regions—for example, there was no railroad between Vienna and the Croatian capital of Zagreb.

How did this polyglot empire hold together as long as it did among all of the competing ethnic rivalries and demands? The answers tell us something of the process of statemaking from the point of view of the non-national state. First, the tradition of the Habsburg monarchy itself was an important force for cohesion, rooted in centuries of Central European history. Emperor Francis Joseph, who was eighteen when he came to power in 1848, had taken the second part of his name from his enlightened ancestor Joseph II to invoke the tradition of the House of Habsburg in those revolutionary times. As a Hungarian statesman put it during the Revolutions of 1848, "It was not the idea of unity that had saved the monarchy, but the idea of the monarchy that saved unity."

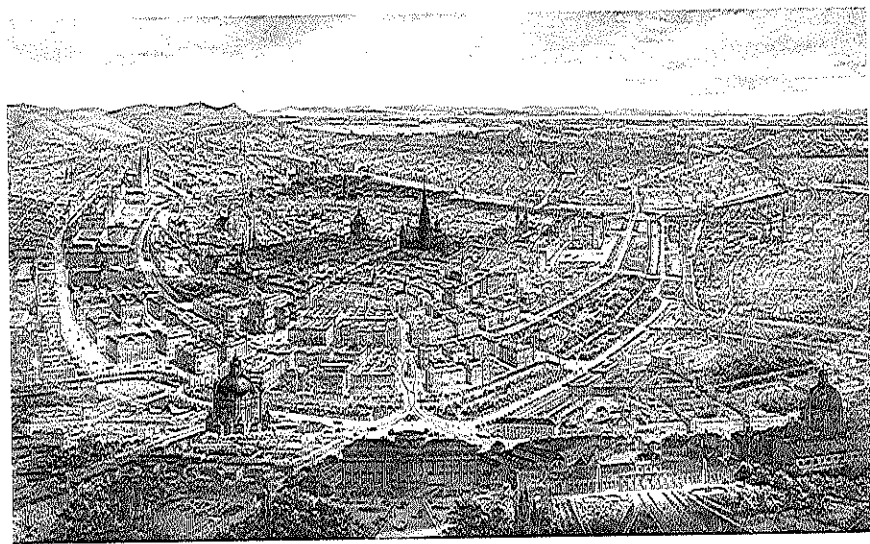
Second, the Habsburgs depended on the support of the German middle class and of the enormous German-speaking bureaucracy. The most salient cultural traditions (for example, music) of the imperial capital, Vienna, were overwhelmingly German. Viennese liberals celebrated their domination of

Austrian political and cultural life during the 1850s and 1860s by building a broad modern boulevard, the Ringstrasse. The grand artery was built on the traces of the city's fortifications, which Francis Joseph had ordered dismantled in 1857, since they had long since lost all military function except to separate the wealthy center of the city from the proletarian suburbs. The new boulevard also took shape with military motives in mind—troops could be moved rapidly in the event of a working-class rebellion. The architecture of central Vienna reflected the taste of the aristocracy and the Catholic Church. In contrast, public buildings (including the university, the opera, and the parliament building) and residences of manufacturers and bankers that bordered the Ringstrasse reflected the secular cultural tastes of the Viennese upper classes.

The empire's largest Czech and Austrian towns were largely German-speaking; in Prague, Germans outnumbered Czechs by more than three to one, although the percentage of Germans there declined during the second half of the century with the migration of more Czechs to the city. German was also the official language of the army (and of the secret police). To get anywhere, one had to speak German, a fact learned by non-German migrants to the cities. The German middle class also benefited from free-trade policies, and profited from the beginnings of industrial concentration in Bohemia.

Third, the monarchy enjoyed the support of Austrian and Hungarian nobles, as well as their Croatian, Polish, and Italian counterparts, landed nobles of ethnic groups with long histories of political sovereignty. The latter three nobilities depended on the Habsburg monarchy to maintain their

A view of Vienna and its Ringstrasse, 1873.



prerogatives vis-à-vis ethnic minorities within their territories and against the peasants of their own nationality. Thus, the small Croatian nobility, which needed the cooperation of the Habsburgs for the retention of their own privileges in Croatia, had a long tradition of military service to the dynasty. (In 1868, Croatia received semi-autonomous status within the empire.) The monarchy therefore depended on the preservation of the status of the favored nationalities, above all, the Germans and Magyars, from the challenges of other national minorities within the lands of their domination, such as Slovenes, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Serbs, and Czechs.

Fourth, Catholicism, the religion of the majority of the peoples of the Habsburg domains, was another factor for unity in Austria. The centuries-old support of the Catholic Church for the Habsburg dynasty also undercut nationalist movements among predominantly Catholic nationalities like the Slovaks, Croats, and above all, the Poles. In the newly unified Germany, by contrast, the religious division between the Protestant north and the Catholic south represented at least a potential force for disunity.

Fifth, the imperial army retained considerable prestige (although, lacking adequate funds, it had proved more dashing on the parade ground than on the battlefield, as defeats by the French in 1859 and the Prussians in 1866 had demonstrated). The army helped hold the monarchy together. German speakers dominated the officer corps, as they did the bureaucracy, holding 70 percent of military positions. Habsburg officers prided themselves on an *esprit de corps* (addressing each other by the familiar *Du* form, and not the more formal *Sie* that persisted in the German army). Soldiers drawn from the different nationalities continued to serve loyally in the army, which rarely intervened in local strikes, in contrast to the situation in France, where the army was unpopular with workers. Francis Joseph, whose long rule was shaped by the fact that he had come to power as his monarchy seemed to be breaking apart, was as devoted to the army as it was to him.

Repression of Nationalism in the Habsburg Empire

In the 1850s and 1860s, nationalism among the ethnic minorities remained limited to a relatively small number of intellectuals and people from the liberal professions, particularly Poles and Hungarians. As a Czech nationalist put it at a meeting of writers in Prague, "If the ceiling were to fall on us now, that would be the end of the national movement." Most nationalists at first aimed at a cultural and linguistic revival.

The Habsburg monarchy feared that demands for autonomy, or even outright independence, would pull the empire apart. Nationalism, which had frequently been tied to political liberalism, could also challenge the empire's authoritarian structure. The success of German and Italian nationalism also threatened the empire's territorial integrity by raising the possibility that the very small Italian and, above all, the German-speaking parts of the empire might prefer inclusion in Italy or Germany, respectively.



Alexander von Bach

Furthermore, Hungarians, the second-largest ethnic group within the empire, demanded political influence commensurate with the size of the Magyar territorial domains.

After the mid-century revolutions, the Habsburg monarchy, like the German states and France, continued an unrelenting repression of liberal and national movements. Beginning with Francis Joseph's accession to the Habsburg throne, the monarchy entered a period of "neo-absolutism," codified in the "Patent" of December 1851. Alexander von Bach (1813–1893), the minister of the interior (and essen-

tially prime minister without the title), put some of the most potent tools of the state to work, including a hierarchy of officials and police sent out from Vienna into the imperial provinces. The nobles, some of whom resented the abrogation of peasant obligations after 1848, in general welcomed the restoration of Habsburg authoritarianism. But they also had lost some of their regional privileges and prerogatives to the state.

In 1855, Bach signed a Concordat with the Catholic Church, restoring many of its privileges and extending ecclesiastical authority, including the right of prelates to judge the clergy. As in France, the Church made a comeback. The monarchy eliminated civil marriage and restored the Church's *de facto* control over education. Protestants were not allowed to teach in Catholic schools, and new restrictions limited the right of Jews to acquire property. A contemporary cynically described the Bach system: "The administration was run by a standing army of soldiers, a kneeling one of those praying in church to be acceptable to the government, and a crawling one of informers."

Political Crisis and Foreign Policy Disasters

In the wake of the defeat of Austrian forces in Italy and amid mounting hostility between Germans and non-Germans and the growing unpopularity of neo-absolutism, in August 1859 Francis Joseph dismissed Bach as the head of government. He then promulgated a new constitution, the October Diploma of 1860, which reestablished a form of conservative federalism. The provincial assemblies received new authority, placating the nobles. Nonetheless, the October Diploma did not satisfy the Hungarian

aristocrats, who lacked the influence and political role enjoyed by German speakers who had benefited from the Bach system.

Anton von Schmerling (1805–1893), minister of the interior, drafted the February Patent of 1861, a constitution that established a bicameral parliament in which all the empire's nationalities were to be represented. Yet the number of non-German representatives, as elected by the diets of the respective crown lands, would not equal those of the Germans, as electoral restrictions favored urban elites. Magyars, Croats, and Italians refused to participate in the first election, and Schmerling dissolved the regional parliaments. The February Patent perpetuated the most salient elements of Bach's neo-absolutism, placing virtually no constitutional limitations on the emperor's power. Francis Joseph even suspended the constitution in 1865.

While Bach's neo-absolutism made internal enemies, foreign policy failures seriously undermined the monarchy's international position. The Habsburg monarchy's status as a power in European affairs declined as relations with Russia and Prussia deteriorated. In 1863, Schmerling expressed sympathy for the Poles in their struggle against Russia (in contrast to Bismarck's response, as we have seen). This pleased the Poles within the Habsburg Empire but angered Tsar Alexander II. When Francis Joseph went to war with Prussia in 1866, he could not look for support from the tsar, or from the British or French, who resented the fact that Austria had joined Prussia against Denmark two years earlier.

Prussia's victory over Austria cast doubt on the efficiency of Bach's neo-absolutism and encouraged the other preeminent nationalities—particularly the Magyars, but also the Croats and Poles—to demand a greater share of political power, since the monarchy seemed to be floundering under the domination of German speakers. Humiliated twice in seven years on the field of battle, some of Francis Joseph's subjects blamed the authoritarian structure of neo-absolutism for the defeat. Liberals called for the implementation of constitutional government.

Creation of the Dual Monarchy

The empire's military defeats heightened Magyar demands for more power. Fearing the possible alliance of German liberals with the Magyars, Francis Joseph in 1865, a year before the defeat at the hands of Prussia, met the Magyar demand for the reincorporation of Transylvania into Hungary. He had already asked Ferenc Deák (1803–1876) to propose a solution that would reconcile Magyar demands with imperial power. Deák, a wealthy Magyar noble and lawyer, believed that Hungary's identity as a nation depended on the continued existence of the Habsburg monarchy. The emperor realized that as long as the Magyars remained dissatisfied and uncooperative, he could not contemplate a war of revenge against Prussia.

The Compromise (*Ausgleich*) of 1867 created the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. The Hungarian Parliament proclaimed Francis Joseph constitutional king of Hungary, as well as emperor of Austria. The bureaucracy in Vienna would continue to carry out matters of finance, foreign policy, and defense. Hungarian now became the language of administration in Hungary, and the Magyar domains henceforth had their own constitution, parliament, and bureaucracy. The halves of the Dual Monarchy would negotiate economic tariffs every ten years. The parliaments of Austria and Hungary elected representatives to the Imperial Assembly, or Delegation.

The *Ausgleich* left intact the dominance of German speakers in Austria and of Magyars in Hungary. While in principle recognizing the equality of all nationalities, the new constitution nonetheless maintained the disproportionate advantage enjoyed by Austria's Germans in the Austrian Imperial Council (Reichsrat) in Vienna. The emperor routinely appointed Germans to important ministries, and he could easily circumvent parliamentary opposition by ruling by decree when parliament was not in session, or by refusing to sign any piece of legislation he did not like.

The Hungarian Constitution of 1867 allowed the Magyar nobles to hold sway in the Hungarian Parliament, since the emperor's powers as king of Hungary were now more limited. Hungarian ministers were not responsible to Francis Joseph, but rather to the Hungarian Parliament's lower house, which was elected by leading Magyar property owners. Thus the *Ausgleich* was a victory for Hungarian liberalism. The Nationality Law of 1868 gave the peoples of each nationality the right to their own language in schools, church, and in government offices, but it did not recognize any separate political ethnic identity. The Croats and the South Slavs particularly resented the settlement. Growing tensions were reflected by the claim of one of the Austrian architects of the *Ausgleich* that "the Slavs are not fit to govern; they must be ruled." Many Serbs increasingly identified with Russia, which saw itself as the protector of all Slavs.

Ethnic Tensions and Nationalist Movements in the Dual Monarchy

In Austria-Hungary, ethnic tensions generated continued political division, stemming principally from Hungarian resentment of Austrian preeminence within the Dual Monarchy and the demands of subordinate nationalities. Beginning in the 1870s, Croatia, which was technically part of Hungary, sent five representatives to the sixty-member imperial Delegation, while the Slovaks, Serbs, and other minorities were left out. The Hungarian government relentlessly carried on with a program of Magyarization, ranging from dissolving non-Magyar cultural societies to banning non-Magyar names for villages and streets. Hungarian remained the official language and the government refused to allow administrative or cultural autonomy of the other nationalities. To an extent, the Magyarization campaign in Hungary was a

reaction by Hungarians to this growing Pan-Slavist movement, combined with Hungary's resentment of its junior status in the Dual Monarchy.

Count Eduard von Taaffe (1833–1895), Austrian prime minister from 1879 to 1893, balanced off the competing interests of the varied nationalities. Czech nobles and intellectuals earlier in the century had worked toward a literary and linguistic revival,

compiling and publishing Czech dictionaries and books of Czech grammar. Czech nationalists demanded recognition of the historic Kingdom of Bohemia. But opposition from German speakers in Bohemia, and from Magyars, who feared similar demands from minorities within Hungary, led Francis Joseph to refuse such recognition. While ignoring demands by Slovenes and other smaller national groups for concessions to their languages, Taaffe placated the Czechs, the third largest ethnic group, by declaring their language on an equal footing with German in the state administration in Bohemia and Moravia in 1880. He also encouraged Czech schools and established a university in Prague (1882). But intellectuals within the "Young Czech" movement wanted national independence. In 1893 Taaffe resigned over the issue of increasing the number of eligible voters in Austria. One of his successors would later resign after the government had to declare martial law when Czechs demonstrated against the withdrawal of an edict, following protests by German speakers, that ordered officials to know both German and Czech.

As movements of cultural nationalism grew, they almost inevitably added the goal of national independence. Since the Third Partition in 1795, Poles had been a subject people in the empires of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, where troops had crushed the Polish insurrection of 1863 (see Chapter 18). Polish nationalism revived during the 1880s, but the relatively favored position of Poles in Austrian Galicia (where they held sway over Ukrainians in eastern Galicia) and the dispersion of the Polish people in three empires reduced any immediate Polish threat to the Habsburgs.

The absorption in 1878 of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Habsburg Empire added a large Serb, as well as Muslim, population at a time when the Pan-Slav movement was growing in Russia and the Balkans. This increased demands from South Slavs—principally Serbs, Croats, and some Slovenes—that they be allowed to form an integral third part of the monarchy. Serbia had been virtually independent within the Ottoman Empire



An image in a Pan-Slav journal published in Vienna, *Slavic Papers*.

since 1828, when a Serb official who had put down a Serb insurrection was named hereditary prince of Serbia. Now, with Serbia's independence formalized in 1878, many Serbs in Austria-Hungary wanted to be attached to Serbia.

Hungarians demanded that their language be put on an equal footing with German in the army. At the turn of the century, Emperor Francis Joseph threatened to dissolve Hungary's parliament and to declare universal suffrage, believing that giving in to Hungarian demands would have meant the end of the Dual Monarchy. Relations between the aging Habsburg emperor and the Hungarian Parliament deteriorated, just as the Balkan Wars (1912–1913; see Chapter 22) and rampant South Slav nationalism soured relations between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia. A visitor to the lower house of the Austrian Parliament in March 1914 recalled in amazement: "About a score of men, all decently clad, were seated or standing, each at his little desk. Some made an infernal noise violently opening and shutting the lids of these desks. Others emitted a blaring sound from little toy trumpets; others strummed Jew's harps; still others beat snare drums. . . . The sum of uproar thus produced was so infernal that it completely drowned the voice of a man who was evidently talking from his seat in another part of the house, for one could see his lips moving, and the veins in his temple swelling. Bedlam let loose! That was the impression on the whole."

CONCLUSION

The unification of Italy and that of Germany had both largely been effected by the expansion of the most powerful of the states that would become part of the unified state that resulted. Yet the two cases were different, despite appearances. Camillo di Cavour first had transformed Piedmont-Sardinia into a liberal monarchy through reforms, before achieving the unification of Italy. Liberal Italy then struggled from one political crisis to the next, despite reforms, its expanding electoral franchise—which more than doubled in 1912—arguably adding even more divisions to those provided by the gap between north and south. The advent of Giovanni Giolitti as premier in 1903 stabilized Italian politics. At the same time, socialists, growing in strength, opposed the liberal regime from the left, while nationalists attacked from the right.

Whereas Cavour had achieved Italian unification through liberal political means, Otto von Bismarck had harnessed economic liberalism to the goals of conservative political nationalism in achieving the unification of Germany. Liberals had relatively little influence in unified Germany. Although having universal male suffrage, Germany remained dominated by reactionary monarchs supported by reactionary Junkers, its Reichstag almost powerless against autocracy, despite the growth of a mass socialist party.