

**Module 6: Revolutions and Unity**  
**Topic 4 Content: The Unification of Italy**



## The Unification of Italy



Italy in 1815 was broken into separate Kingdoms: Sardinia, Tuscany, Venetia, Parma, The Papal States, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

In the early 1800s, Italy was not united under one government. Instead, it consisted of a number of different kingdoms, including Sardinia, Tuscany, Venetia, Parma, the Papal States, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Austria dominated the kingdoms in the north, while Spain dominated those in the south. In opposition to this dominance by foreign nations, the people and politicians of the different Italian kingdoms became more nationalistic. They started a movement towards uniting Italy into one country with one national government.



One of the most important Italian nationalists was Giuseppe Mazzini, who formed a group called "Young Italy." In 1848, nationalists led a number of revolutions in Italy; however, these failed just as other European revolutions had that year. After 1848, the Kingdom of Sardinia was the only Italian Kingdom ruled by Italians. Nationalists looked to Sardinia to lead the drive toward Italy's unification.

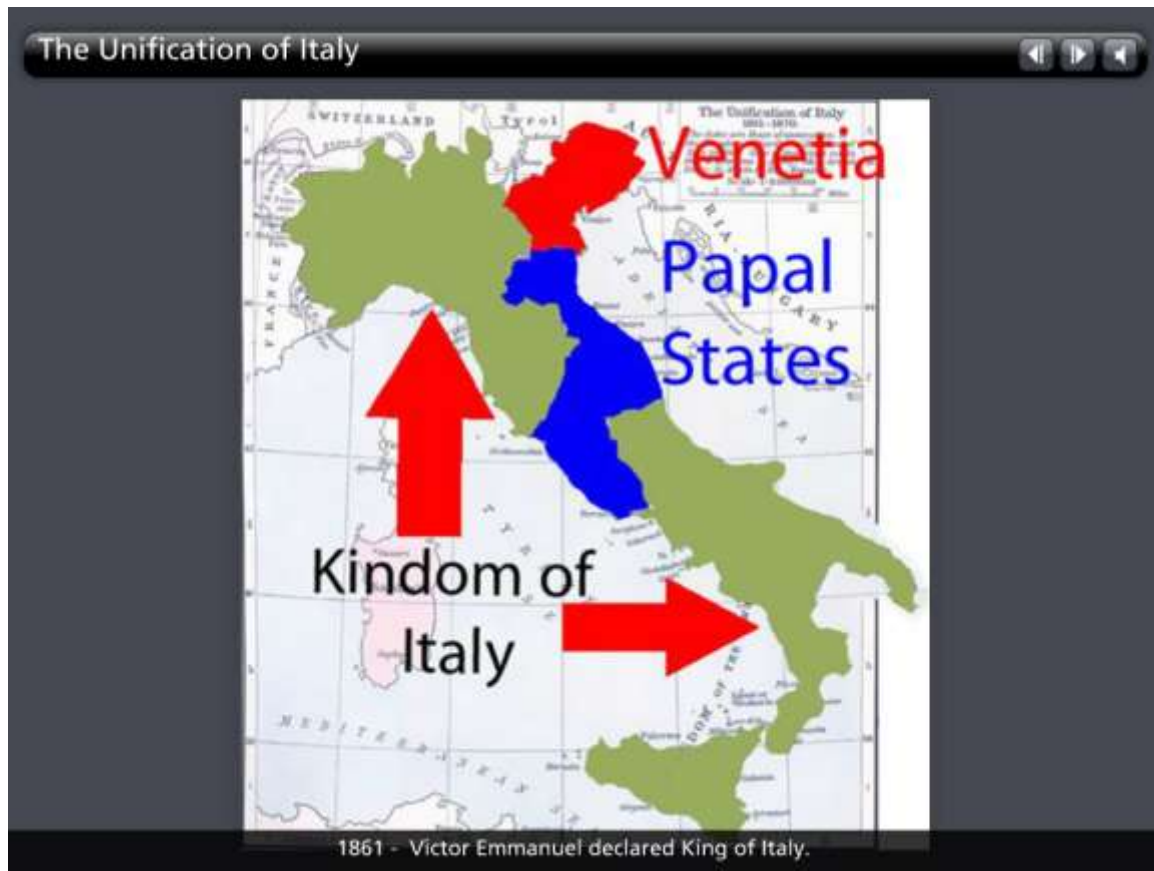
Sardinia's Prime Minister Count Camillo di Cavour wanted to decrease Austria's influence in the region. He supported the unification movement that started in northern Italy. Cavour knew that, in order to drive Austria out of Sardinia and the rest of northern Italy, he would have to ally the kingdom with France. As a result of this alliance, France and Sardinia went to war with Austria to liberate the territories in northern Italy. After Austria was defeated, the freed Italian territories became part of the Kingdom of Sardinia. For their help in defeating Austria, France was given control of some border territories.

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Giuseppe Garibaldi worked to unite southern Italy

Cavour secretly aided Giuseppe Garibaldi, another Italian leader working to unite southern Italy. Garibaldi was a charismatic leader, and his red-shirted army liberated the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in southern Italy. Cavour convinced Garibaldi to let the Sardinian king, Victor Emanuel II, rule the areas Garibaldi had just freed.



In 1861, Victor Emmanuel was declared the King of Italy. Italy would be ruled by a constitutional monarch with an elected parliament. The only territory that was not yet part of unified Italy was the territory of the Papal States, which included Rome, and the Venetia Kingdom, which was controlled by Austria.



St Peter's Square, Vatican City

The Papal States were a large territory in Italy controlled by the Pope, who also headed the Catholic Church. For centuries, Popes had resisted the unification of Italy, but in 1871, Italy took over the Papal States and made Rome the capital of Italy. The Pope was given control of a portion of Italy known as the Vatican City. Today, the Vatican City is a city-state surrounded by the city of Rome and it is still ruled by the Pope.

Venetia, the final territory of modern Italy, was given to Italy after a war between Austria and Prussia.

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Mulberry Street, New York City, center of Little Italy circa 1900.

Italy faced a number of problems after unification. For one, many people felt that there were strong cultural differences between the southern and northern people. Also, after the death of Count Cavour, there was no strong leader to replace him, and there was political unrest between liberals and conservatives.

Economic problems that arose from industrialization led many people to immigrate to other countries. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, over four million Italian people immigrated to the Americas.