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History 1103

Essay

Kingdom of Sardinia was instrumental in the unification of Italy in the 19th century. Prior to this importance however it was troubled with political instability under alternating governments. This however by the time of the Crimean War in 1853, had built the resulting kingdom into a strong power. Under the leadership of Victor Emmanuel II and his advisor Cavour, Italy finally unified in 1871. Risorgimento, the Italian movement for unification into the Kingdom of Italy in the 19th century was lead by the likes of Emmanuel and Cavour. “Piedmont-Savoy became the natural focus for the eventual unification of Italy in 1859–1861. The House of Savoy became Italy's dynasty, and Piedmontese political, legal, and administrative institutions were the templates for the new unitary state.” These 2 men were key figures in not only all three Italian independence wars but also significant wars such as the Crimean war in 1853. Coming from the “weak” Kingdom of Sardinia, these 2 powerful men were instrumental in the history and unification of Italy.

In 1852, Victor appointed Cavour as Prime Minister of Piedmont-Sardinia. This turned out to be a wise choice, since Cavour was a political mastermind and a major player in the Italian unification in his own right. Following Victor Emmanuel's advice, Cavour joined Britain and France in the Crimean War against Russia in 1853. They risked the stability of their nation for the bigger rewards to be gained from the alliance created with not only Britain but more importantly, France. France at the time was a prominent power on the rise, led by Napoleon III. Napoleon, the last monarch of France, was the driving

machine behind the French power, and thus someone who Cavour and Emmanuel needed to align with for help in their seek of unity.

After successfully seeking British support and ingratiating himself with France and Napoleon III at the end of the war, Count Cavour arranged a secret meeting with the French emperor; they agreed that if the French were to help Piedmont combat Austria, France would be awarded Nice and Savoy. Napoleon III however secretly made a treaty with Austria, whereby Piedmont would only gain Lombardy. France thus did not receive the promised Nice and Savoy. France indeed only gained Nice and Savoy after the Treaty of Turin was signed in 1860, after Cavour had been reinstated as Prime Minister, and a deal was struck. Emmanuel II sent his forces to fight the papal army for the second Italian independence war. With the help of men like Giuseppe Garibaldi, they conquered Sicily and Naples, and Sardinia-Piedmont grew even larger. In 1861 the Kingdom of Italy was officially established and Victor Emmanuel II became its king.

In 1866 Victor Emmanuel allied himself with Prussia (Germany) in the Third Italian War of Independence. The Prussians helped Italy in defeating a common enemy but also gave Italy the unification its been seeking for many years. In 1870, they took advantage of the Prussian victory over France in the Franco-Prussian War to capture Rome after the French withdrew. Victor Emmanuel II & Count Cavour were 2 men from Sardinia/Piedmont that became the symbol of the "Risorgimento", the Italian unification movement. "The nineteenth-century struggle for the political, cultural, and social unification of Italy is known as the *Risorgimento*, which means "the resurgence" or "the rebirth." This weak kingdom of Sardinia was able to push out two major powers to unify Italy. [1] Emmanuel's prime minister Cavour successfully negotiated Sardinia through the Crimean War, the Italian Independence wars, managing to maneuver smartly to

become a new great power in Europe, controlling a united Italy that was five times as large as Sardinia had been before they came to power.

Works Cited

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