

until 1929, when Pope Pius XI and Benito Mussolini made a concordat under which the Papacy recognised the Kingdom of Italy.

"Italia Irredenta". Even the acquisition of Rome did not bring all Italians under the Italian flag. The Trentino and the district around Trieste, though mainly peopled by Italians, remained under Austrian rule and became known as *Italia Irredenta* ("Unredeemed Italy"). Ardent nationalists also regarded Corsica (ruled by France), Malta (ruled by Britain), Savoy and Nice as Italian territory. These four places, like the Trentino and Trieste, were to become future danger-spots.

The unification of Germany

The political unification of Germany was a further victory for nationalism, which had been strong among Germans ever since Prussia and the other German states had combined during the War of Liberation—not to seek foreign conquests, but to liberate themselves from a foreign conqueror. The spirit of German patriotism, then engendered, was immortalised in Ernst Arndt's famous war song *What is the Fatherland?* and in the speeches and writings of Baron vom Stein, the man who had been largely responsible for the abolition of serfdom in Prussia, and who then organised the Prussian resistance to Napoleon I that culminated in victory at Leipzig. His attitude was summed up in the statement: "I know no fatherland but Germany".

The hopes of the nationalists were dashed by the creation of the German Confederation in 1815. Thereafter Metternich's influence drove nationalism underground, but failed to destroy it because it continually gathered inspiration from the *Zollverein*, which taught the German people the value of unity.

Yet the failure of the revolutions in 1848-49 showed that a united nation could not be achieved by a popular movement while Germany was broken up into kingdoms, principalities, duchies, counties, bishoprics and free towns, each with its own laws, court and army, and each with an independent ruler to whom the idea of political unity was anathema.

Prussia's position. Prussia was the natural pivot for a unification movement, but she refused to submerge herself in a German nation. This attitude was summed up by one Prussian statesman, who said: "Prussia will rule Germany: she will not serve Germany".

In 1861 Frederick William IV died and was succeeded by his brother William I, an ambitious, industrious and conscientious king, who believed firmly in absolutism and militarism. He was determined to exalt Prussia to undisputed German leadership and to force union upon the various states. With this end in view, he began to strengthen his armed forces. His policy met with opposition from the Prussian liberals, who wanted to unite Germany by spreading nationalist ideas and creating patriotism. Commanding a majority in parliament, they refused to sanction his military expenditure.

After some hesitation William I called in Prince Otto von Bismarck as his prime minister. Bismarck, a man of huge stature and military bearing, was a member of the *Junkers*,* an aristocrat who detested all liberal and democratic

**Junker*: (German, "yung herr") young German noble; member of exclusive aristocratic party in Prussia.

ideas and an inflexible enemy of every kind of parliamentary institution. His political philosophy was summed up by his famous words:

“Not by speeches and majority resolutions are the great issues of the age to be decided—that was the mistake of 1848 and 1849—but by iron and blood”.

Bismarck and his royal master set out immediately to establish Prussian hegemony in Germany. Like Cavour and Victor Emmanuel II, who, until the revolt of central Italy in 1859, had concentrated on the formation of a Kingdom of Northern Italy, they too had a limited initial aim—the establishment of a confederation in northern Germany. Like Cavour, who was backed by the patriotic zeal created by Joseph Mazzini, Bismarck also had the support of strong nationalist feeling. In 1859 the German National Union had been formed to unite liberals and democrats in a national movement under Prussian leadership. It was joined not only by middle class and professional men, but also by great industrialists, including Werner Siemens. Bismarck, however, had much more than Cavour at the beginning of his task. Whereas Piedmont-Sardinia had been a relatively weak state, compelled to grovel for help in “the mud of Crimea”, Bismarck’s Prussia was a powerful state with expanding industries, a strong army and a population approaching the 20 million-mark.

“Blood and iron”

Bismarck ignored parliament and, without its consent, imposed taxes and carried through the necessary military reforms. The Germans willingly paid taxes that were constitutionally illegal, because their attitude to armed forces had changed significantly. In an age of aggressive nationalism, armies were no longer seen as means of crushing liberal and national revolutions, but as instruments to unite nations and to promote their interests at the expense of foreign states. In this spirit, liberalism joined forces with German nationalism. Prussian liberals knew that Bismarck’s policy was to overthrow Austria by “blood and iron”, and they believed that they would gain from a king and military victories the economic benefits and ordered government which two decades earlier they had hoped to obtain by establishing a liberal republic. Moreover, most Prussians were proud of their army, which Albrecht von Roon, a brilliant war minister, had organised into an efficient fighting force.

The Schleswig-Holstein question. The complicated question of Schleswig and Holstein gave Bismarck his first excuse for using “blood and iron”. For many years the kings of Denmark had also ruled the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Schleswig, with a mixed Danish and German population, lay outside the boundary of the German Confederation; Holstein, entirely German in population, was a state of the Confederation. In 1863, on the death of King Frederick VII, the male line of the reigning house of Denmark became extinct, and there was no heir common to both Denmark and the duchies. The Danish parliament claimed that the two duchies were Danish territory, but they, in turn, signified their intention of resisting any attempt to incorporate them in the Danish kingdom.

The Seven Days' War, 1864. Finally, after a period of tangled negotiations, in which Great Britain, France, Russia and Sweden were involved, the duchies broke away altogether from their link with Denmark. This gave Austria and Prussia the opportunity of intervening, and in a war lasting only seven days, the Danes were overthrown by sheer weight of number.

By the Peace of Vienna the Danish king renounced all claims to Schleswig and Holstein, in favour of the Austrian emperor and the Prussian king.

The Seven Weeks' War, 1866. As Bismarck intended, Austria and Prussia could not agree upon the way in which the conquered duchies should be administered. Bismarck was determined from the first to make them a pretext for war against Austria.

Before the Seven Weeks' (or Austro-Prussian) War began, Bismarck isolated Austria by employing the astute, though unscrupulous, diplomacy of which he was a master. He assured Tsar Alexander II that he could always rely on Prussia for military help similar to that which she had given Russia during the Polish insurrection of 1863; he promised (without any intention of keeping his promise) that he would give Napoleon III some slices of land along the Rhine, if France remained neutral; he won Italy's active support by agreeing to let her annex Venetia after Austria had been defeated.

As soon as Bismarck's preparations were completed, he provoked hostilities by announcing Prussia's intention of annexing Schleswig-Holstein. This blatant act forced Austria and the other states of the Germanic Confederation to declare war on Prussia. The struggle lasted only seven weeks. Austria and her allies suffered a crushing defeat at Königgrätz (or Sadowa)* in Bohemia, because they had no answer to the organising genius of von Roon and the effective strategy of Count von Moltke, the Prussian commander-in-chief. But the speed and overwhelming nature of their defeat stemmed from Prussia's industrial supremacy. Von Moltke had made effective use of railways in mobilising and supplying the Prussian armies, and the new Prussian breech-loading rifle completely outmatched the Austrian muzzle-loading rifle. The influence of the Economic Revolution was being felt on the battlefield. It is this fact, as well as von Moltke's careful peacetime planning, that military historians have in mind when they assert that modern war began at Königgrätz.

By the Peace of Prague:

- the German Confederation was dissolved, and Austria relinquished her leadership of the German states;
- Prussia annexed Schleswig, Holstein, the kingdom of Hanover, Hesse, part of Hesse-Darmstadt, and the free city of Frankfurt;
- the cession of Venetia to Italy was approved.

For the first time the possessions of Prussia stretched unbroken from the French frontier to Poland, and Bismarck now forced all the independent states north of the Main River to enter a North German Confederation (1867), under the presidency of Prussia.

William I had wanted to annex a large area of Austria, but Bismarck successfully opposed this idea. He avoided harsh punishment of Austria because

*The issue of the battle was actually decided around Sadowa, about 10 miles north-west of Königgrätz.

he wished to secure Austrian friendship and neutrality in the Franco-Prussian war which, in his words, now "lay in the logic of history".

The Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71

Knowing that nationalism was strong throughout Germany, Bismarck reasoned that in the event of a war between the North German Confederation and France, the inveterate enemy of the Germans, a wave of patriotic fervour would sweep into union with Prussia the four southern states of Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Württemberg and Bavaria, which had sided with Austria in 1866, and remained outside the North German Confederation. So he cold-bloodedly planned a major conflict to complete the unification of Germany.

Bismarck found his excuse for war in the Spanish incident. The liberals in Spain, having staged a successful revolution, offered the crown of Spain to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a relative of William I. When France protested, Leopold declined the offer. Napoleon III then went a step further, demanding a Prussian assurance that a Hohenzollern would never succeed to the Spanish throne. William I, on Bismarck's advice, rightly refused to give this assurance, which would have bound his successors for all time.

From Ems, where he was taking the waters, William I telegraphed his decision to Bismarck in Berlin. (Bismarck released the king's statement to the newspapers, but in so abbreviated a form that Napoleon III considered it insulting. Soon after the publication of the "Ems telegram", which Bismarck claimed later was intended to have "the effect of a red rag on the Gallic bull", France declared war, Napoleon III being as eager as Bismarck for the beginning of hostilities.

Fighting began in July 1870, and Count von Moltke's armies quickly outnumbered and outmanoeuvred the French. By August 19 one of the main French armies, which was commanded by Marshal Bazaine, had been contained in Metz; on the afternoon of September 1 the other army, led by Marshal MacMahon and the emperor himself, was forced to surrender at Sedan. The Second French Empire had ended like the First French Empire, in invasion and defeat. Three days later a republic was proclaimed in Paris. This was the first important result of the Franco-Prussian War.

Metz weakly capitulated towards the end of October, but meanwhile a Government of National Defence had been organised, and the French nation undertook to carry on heroically the struggle in which the regular army had failed so dismally. The most prominent member of the Government of National Defence was Léon Gambetta, a brilliant young barrister, who had led the republican opposition to Napoleon III. When von Moltke's forces quickly surrounded Paris, Gambetta escaped by balloon to the south, where he organised resistance to the German advance.*

Paris, restoring French prestige in European eyes, withstood a bitter four-months' siege and did not capitulate until January 28, 1871, succumbing in the end to cold and hunger, rather than to German arms. Ten days earlier, the four southern German states having joined the North German Confederation, the German Empire had been proclaimed at Versailles, with William I as the first German emperor. This was the second major result of the Franco-Prussian

*This was the first use of aircraft in war in Europe.

War. Bismarck had successfully used "blood and iron" to unite the German states.

Though, inspired by Gambetta, the French had recovered well, and had done much to shatter the image of complete Prussian invincibility being created by Bismarck, von Moltke and von Roon, they had been unable to relieve Paris, and by the end of February their effective resistance to the Germans came to an end. The Franco-Prussian War had been, despite France's recovery, only a "Seven Months' War", in which the Germans had lost a mere 28,000 dead, compared with the French losses of 156,000 dead and 720,000 taken prisoner.

By the Peace of Frankfurt (May, 1871) France was severely punished, being required:

- to cede to Germany almost all of Alsace and a large portion of Lorraine, including Metz, the capital;
- to pay a heavy indemnity of 5,000 million francs;
- to suffer the humiliation of a German occupation until the indemnity was paid.

General results of the Franco-Prussian War

The acquisition of Alsace and part of Lorraine strengthened Germany industrially at the expense of France. German industries also benefited through the indemnity that the French had to pay; thus the Treaty of Frankfurt gave some impetus to the great German economic advance that marked the closing years of the nineteenth century, but its effects were actually of small consequence compared with these general results of the Franco-Prussian War:

- The formation of the German Empire completed the German unification movement.
- In France the Third Republic replaced the Second Empire.
- Italy took the opportunity of the withdrawal of the French garrison from Rome in August, 1870, to seize the city and complete the Italian unification movement.
- Alexander II, profiting from Western Europe's preoccupation with the conflict, repudiated the naval clauses of the Treaty of Paris (imposed at the end of the Crimean War), which denied Russia the right to construct military or naval establishments on the shores of the Black Sea.
- Russian ambitions in the Balkans frightened Austria, which had been contemplating a war of revenge against Prussia, into allying herself closely with the new German Empire.
- France, however, being embittered by defeat and the Peace of Frankfurt, began to plan a war of revenge against Germany; and with uneasy relations existing between the six main Powers of Europe, Bismarck, nervous of French intentions, drew three of those Powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy—together in the Triple Alliance. To him this alliance was essentially defensive in nature, but its existence created fear, and the period 1871-1914, though free of war between the major Powers, was marked by increasing tension, armed watchfulness and the growth of armaments. Uneasiness developed into hysteria, which finally erupted in the World War of 1914-18.

- By using treachery and organised violence as methods of nation building, Bismarck (and, to a lesser degree, Cavour) created the cynical diplomacy and aggressive nationalism that bedevilled international relationships for more than a generation. When Bismarck had successfully completed the unification of Germany, it did seem to most observers that Machiavellian methods, including the use of war as an instrument of national policy, paid handsome dividends.

Because, in uniting Germany, Bismarck had employed chicanery, treachery and war, the German Empire was described as a harsh product "made of blood and iron". Romanticists, indeed, contrasted the German unification movement, and all its ignoble features, with the Italian one, which they lauded as a *risorgimento*, a spiritual reawakening of the Italian people, a genuine national movement, in which Mazzini was the *soul*, Cavour the *brain*, Garibaldi the gallant *sword arm*, and Victor Emmanuel II the heroic patriot king who defied reactionary Austria in order to bring freedom and unity to his people. In fact, however, the Italian movement had the same evil features as the German. It was characterised by Cavour's wasteful spending of Italian lives in the Crimea, by his ruthless engineering of the War of Liberation in 1859, by Napoleon III's treachery at Villafranca, by Cavour's bribing of the French with Savoy and Nice, by his unscrupulous annexation of the Marches and Umbria under the pretext that he was protecting the Pope from Garibaldi, by Mazzini's refusal to serve any cause but his own republican one, and by the selfish ambition that prompted Garibaldi's invasion of Sicily.

Both Bismarck and Cavour were brilliant opportunists who were able to make the best of every favourable situation because they were completely unscrupulous. Bismarck's evil genius, however, was probably stronger than Cavour's for it is possible that he plotted his ruthless course as soon as he became prime minister of Prussia, whereas Cavour's actions were dictated by circumstances. Modern historians, however, tend to doubt that the whole sequence of events from 1862 to 1870 was planned beforehand by Bismarck, and it has been suggested that the aggrandisement of Prussia, and not German unification, was his aim. According to this view, he did not make war on France in order to attract the southern states into a German union, but sought a union between them and the North German Confederation so that he would be sure of overwhelming France and establishing Prussian hegemony in central and western Europe. Whatever his motives, it is certain that the success of his unscrupulous actions caused many Germans to conclude that "might was right", and that, in international dealings, the end always justified the means. This attitude gave Germany a bad tradition in politics and diplomacy, and prepared the way for such unprincipled leaders as Kaiser William II and Adolf Hitler.

It is more difficult to assess the influence of Cavour, the other unscrupulous opportunist in an age of assertive nationalism. But, undoubtedly, some of the duplicity and corruption of political life in the new Kingdom of Italy may be attributed to his bad example.

In passing, it is worth noticing that Italy, largely because of her lack of coal and iron, never developed into a really important state, but that Germany, triumphant and industrially strong, became the greatest Power in Europe and, following where the Bismarck tradition led, came eventually to the defeat and humiliation of 1918.