



GS FOUNDATION BATCH FOR CSE 2024

World History - 02

(Europe in the 19th Century.)

Vienna Congress (1815)

After defeating Napoleon in the battles of Leipzig (1813) and Waterloo (1815), the members of the **Fourth European Coalition** i.e. Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia assembled at Vienna **under the chairmanship of the Austrian Chancellor Klemens von Metternich** to resettle the map of Europe.

Objectives of the Congress of Vienna

The major objectives of the Congress of Vienna were:

- To undo the changes introduced by Napoleon during his rule and turn the clock backwards so as to **restore the picture of pre-1789 Europe**.
- To lift Europe out of the frequent what is that it had found itself in during the Napoleonic years i.e. to **establish peace and stability between the different European states**.
- To **ensure continuity of rule and stability** within the states and to overcome the instability induced by the overthrow of monarchies across Europe.
- To **undo nationalistic impulses** of unifying all German-speaking and Italian-speaking areas into separate nations unleashed during the Napoleonic period.

Principles of the Vienna Congress

The Vienna Congress of 1815 followed **three essential principles** to erase the changes brought about by the forces of revolution in Europe.

- The Principle of Legitimate Rule
- The Principle of Balance of Power
- The Principle of Rewarding Victors

In accordance with the **Principle of Legitimacy**, the dynasties uprooted by Napoleon were restored across Europe.

- Bourbon Dynasty – France, Spain and Naples-Sicily
- House of Savoy – Piedmont-Sardinia
- House of Orange – Holland
- The Papacy – Central Italy
- Habsburg dynasty – Austria and the Italian territories of Parma, Modena and Tuscany

The Principle of **Balance of Power** was used to eliminate the possibility of French aggression in the future. After the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789, European peace had remained disturbed for more than 20 years. To avoid this, the borders of France were restored to the pre-1789 frontiers and the territories annexed by Napoleon were distributed so as to create a ring of powerful states around France.

- Prussia was given territories on the Rhine
- Piedmont-Sardinia was strengthened by giving it Genova
- Hungary was integrated with Austria
- Belgium was unified with Holland

The principle of rewarding victors was used to undertake a number of territorial arrangements.

- Prussia received 1/3 of Poland and 2/5 of Saxony
- 2/3 of Poland and all of Finland were given to Russia
- Norway was taken from Denmark and given to Sweden
- The Italian provinces of Lombardi and Venetia were given to Austria

Impact of the Congress of Vienna

The aim of restoring peace to Europe was partially achieved as no major European war was witnessed for the next 50 years or so.

However the other objectives of the Congress of Vienna could not be achieved. The **European Revolution of 1830** was the first major setback to the European Order of 1815.

- The Principle of Legitimacy was shattered by the downfall of the absolutist Bourbon dynasty in France.
- Liberal constitutions were adopted in France, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland.
- The spirit of nationalism also resurfaced and Belgium attained independence from Holland.

The next major blow came in the form of the **European Revolution of 1848**

- The constitutional monarch of France abdicated and France once again became a republic.
- Metternich was overthrown in Austria after a popular uprising. Emboldened by this, Germans, Italians and Hungarians revolted against the Austrians.
- Hungary was given internal autonomy.

While the Congress of Vienna did seem to pacify Europe for about half a century, this peace was superficial. The forces of nationalism and liberalism unleashed by the French Revolution continued to course through Europe under the surface and resurfaced from time to time. The Concert of Europe orchestrated by Metternich was finally undone with the unification of Germany and Italy in 1870–71.

German Unification

Picture of Germany in the beginning of the 19th century/ Background

During the opening years of the 19th century, Germany was part of the **Holy Roman Empire**. Austria and Prussia were its two major states. There were more than 300 smaller states.

The **king of Austria was the sovereign** political head and Austrian domination was maintained through the **Frankfurt Parliament**, where representatives of all the German states used to sit under Austrian leadership.

After defeating the Austro-Prussian forces repeatedly, Napoleon imposed the Peace of Pressburg on Austria in December 1805. Through the terms of this treaty, the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved and the more than 300 smaller German states were amalgamated to create the **Rhine Confederation in 1806**. The **principle of linguistic unification** sowed the seeds of German nationalism among the people.

The **Vienna Congress** made every effort to turn the clock back to the pre-Napoleonic age. The Holy Roman Empire was restored and Austrian domination over it was re-established. However the political reorganisation of the lesser German states done by Napoleon could not be undone. The Congress of Vienna was forced to recognise the **German Confederation of 39 states**.

Zollverein (1819)

An attempt was made by Prussia to bring together all German-speaking states into a **common customs union**. The objective was to eliminate internal tariff barriers between the German speaking areas and to give preferential market access to Prussian industries. This would allow them to compete against the more developed British and French industries.

By 1834 a customs union known as Zollverein was established. It was **led by Prussia** and **all German states had joined it, except for Austria**. This resulted in the economic interests of the smaller German speaking states getting linked more closely with Prussia, than with Austria.

It allowed the Prussian industries to capture the German-speaking market and thus enabled the **rise of the Prussian economy**.

The economic progress facilitated by Zollverein resulted in the emergence of a **strong class of German capitalists**. They **strongly favoured the idea of a unified Germany** so that a strong German state could protect them against the more developed British and French industries.

The success of Zollverein and the resulting prosperity later enabled Bismarck to **finance the expansion of the Prussian army**. This proved crucial for bringing about the political

unification of Germany. It would thus not be wrong to say that the Bismarckian policy of Blood and Iron, to a large extent depended on the forces of Coal and Iron.

1848 - Failed liberal attempt to unify Germany

Metternich was overthrown in Austria by a popular uprising. This inspired the liberal nationalists of Germany to forge political unity by using liberal Parliamentary methods.

A special session of the **Frankfurt Parliament** was convened where a **new constitution** for a unified Germany was enacted. Germany was to be a **constitutional monarchy** and the **crown was offered to the Prussian King Frederick William IV**.

However, the crown was **rejected with prejudice**:

- Frederick William IV was an absolute monarch and considered the offer to be beneath his dignity. Accepting the crown would have vastly reduced his powers.
- It would also have antagonised Austria had drawn Prussia into a war for which it wasn't prepared.

The failure of the 1848 Revolution to bring about German unification was **seen as a failure of liberal methods**. German nationalists lost faith in the efficacy of liberalism. The disenchantment of nationalism with liberalism in Germany was responsible for the militarism of the Bismarckian era.

Bismarckian Era - Blood and Iron

Bismarck was appointed as the **Prussian chancellor in 1862** by Kaiser William I with the objective of bringing about German unification.

Bismarck's aims were:

- To bring about the political **unification of German speaking areas under Prussian leadership without Austria**.
- To establish **German domination** over Europe.
- To unify Germany not under a popularly elected government but **under the leadership of a strong monarchy**.

To achieve these objectives, Bismarck adopted the policy of Blood and Iron. It refers to a **strong, aggressive and ruthless approach based on militarism**. He firmly believed that the complex issues of the age could be tackled only through military action, and any solution derived through liberal methods such as resolutions, speeches, debates and votes is bound to be overturned.

According to him, a Germany unified through liberal methods would soon break apart. Only the use of force by the deployment of a strong military could unify all German speaking areas. Thus, **Bismarck supported the use of force as an instrument of state policy as the preferred strategy to bring about unification**. Longevity of the union could be ensured only if it is imposed from above using military might.

Phase 1: Schleswig - 1863

The two duchies of Schleswig and Holstein were located between Denmark and Germany. The majority of their population was German-speaking but the Vienna Congress of 1815 had placed them under the nominal control of Denmark. In 1863, Denmark completely annexed Schleswig and was trying to annex Holstein as well.

Bismarck joined hands with Austria, declared war on Denmark, which was forced to surrender the two duchies to the joint control of Prussia and Austria.

Holstein, located close to Prussia was given to Austria while Schleswig was merged with Prussia.

Phase 2: Austro-Prussian War and the creation of the North German Confederation - 1866

Bismarck instigated an anti-Austrian revolt in Holstein. Since he had no just cause for war against Austria, he manufactured this revolt in order to invite an Austrian invasion.

He had already prepared the external environment for this occasion. In 1863, he had helped Russia in suppressing a revolt of Polish peasants to ensure Russian neutrality. French neutrality had been secured by making indications of territorial gains to Napoleon III.

Angered by the revolt, Austria attacked Prussia, and to the amazement of Europe, the mighty Austrian Empire was defeated within seven weeks.

Through the Treaty of Prague (1866) Austria agreed to remain out of Germany and accepted the creation of the North German Confederation of 21 states.

Austria was treated with great honour and every effort was made not to humiliate her. Bismarck knew that Austrian neutrality would be required during the coming war with France.

Phase 3: Franco-Prussian War and the creation of the German Empire - 1870-71

The South German states were quite close to France because of religious affiliations. They also felt threatened by the aggressive moves of Bismarck. Therefore, Bismarck did not demand the integration of the south German states immediately. Instead, he waited for the right opportunity which soon arrived due to the impatience of Napoleon III.



Napoleon III had felt humiliated when Prussia emerged victorious in 1866 and Bismarck reneged on his promise of giving France some territories on the Rhine. Further, he also blocked the French effort to purchase Luxembourg and made these designs public. The South German states became suspicious of French intentions.

The issue of the Spanish Succession was used by Bismarck to inflame passions both in Paris and Berlin. He achieved this through the infamous Ems Telegram episode. Angered and frustrated, Napoleon III declared war on Prussia.

The Franco-Prussian war ended in a crushing defeat for France. Napoleon III and 83,000 French soldiers were taken prisoner and France was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Paris (1871). Kaiser William I was proclaimed as the German Emperor in the Palace of Versailles, the French seat of power. The French territories of Alsace Lorraine were taken by Germany, which ultimately became a major point of discord between the two countries.

It is often argued that the germs of World War I were sown by the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Paris.



Italian Unification

In the beginning of the 19th century, Italy was just a geographical and cultural expression. It did not exist in a political sense. It was divided into a number of small states, many of which were under foreign rule.

Role of Napoleon in the unification of Italy

Napoleon conquered Italy in 1796-97 and carried out its politico-administrative reorganisation in lines with the ideals of the French revolution.

The various small states were amalgamated and three republics were created i.e. North Italy, Central Italy and South Italy.



In the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity, feudal institutions and the privileges of the church were curtailed. Freedom of the press was guaranteed and basic equality among all citizens was established. These reforms triggered a political awakening among the Italians, which continued to gain momentum with the passage of time.

Vienna Order and Italy

The Vienna Congress made every effort to reverse the reforms introduced by Napoleon.

The old monarchies were restored and Napoleon's political reorganisation was undone.

A large chunk of northern Italy was placed under the control of the Austrian Empire. Papal rule was re-established in central Italy and the Bourbon Dynasty was restored in the kingdom of Naples Sicily.

The civil liberties enjoyed by the people were ruthlessly crushed and the spirit of nationalism was aggressively suppressed.

However, the nationalistic urges of Italians could not be completely suppressed. From time to time, Italians had revolted against foreign domination and despotic rule. Such revolts had erupted in 1820, 1830 and 1848.

1848 Revolution

The revolution of 1848 witnessed the most intense nationalist uprising in Italy till date because by this time, Italian nationalism had matured.

The success of the revolution in Austria resulting in the overthrow of Metternich had inspired the Italians to declare war on Austria.

Charles Albert, the king of Piedmont Sardinia was persuaded to lead the Italian effort. Nationalist pressure also forced Pope Pius IX and Ferdinand II of Naples Sicily to support the war effort.

The War began with great enthusiasm but when the revolutionary temper of the masses subsided, Pius IX and Ferdinand II withdrew themselves.

Piedmont Sardinia alone was not strong enough to stand against Austria and was defeated. King Charles Albert was forced to abdicate in favour of his son Victor Emanuel II.

Italian nationalists realised that any unification effort could be led by Piedmont Sardinia alone and neither the Pope, nor Naples Sicily could be relied upon.

Count Cavour - The Architect of unified Italy

Count Camillo Cavour was an Italian statesman, deeply inspired by the cause of unification. He was appointed as the Prime Minister of Piedmont Sardinia in 1852. He went on to play a central role in the process of unification.

After becoming Prime Minister, he gave deep thought to the challenges and opportunities facing Italian unification.

He identified the following obstacles:

- Domination of strong foreign powers over Italy
- The presence of the Pope in Central Italy
- The weak position of Piedmont Sardinia

After understanding the challenges, he came to the following conclusion:

- Piedmont Sardinia had to accept the responsibility of leading the unification effort.
- Foreign help would be needed since Piedmont Sardinia alone was not very strong.
- Internal reforms were needed to transform Piedmont Sardinia into a strong model state to attract the support of other Italians.

Internal reforms of Cavour

Liberal reforms were initiated to transform Piedmont Sardinia into a constitutional monarchy. Citizens were granted political rights and legal safety. Freedom of the press was protected. The rights to life, liberty and property along with basic freedoms were guaranteed. Feudal and clerical privileges curtailed. Religious freedom was guaranteed and political equality was ensured at all levels.

In order to develop Piedmont Sardinia economically, the policy of free trade was adopted, cooperative societies were established, the transport network was modernised and financial institutions were set up to ensure the availability of credit.

The frontiers of Piedmont Sardinia were fortified and a strong military of 90,000 soldiers was raised.

Diplomatic Efforts of Cavour

1. Crimean War (1853-56)

Despite having no direct stake in the Crimean War, Cavour helped Britain and France against Russia with 18,000 soldiers.

The peace conference after the war was used by him to highlight Austrian misrule in Italy. Both Britain and France expressed sympathy and support for the Italian cause. He had thus ensured their neutrality in any future conflict with Austria.

2. Plombiers Pact (1858)

It was an agreement between Cavour and Napoleon III. In case of an Austrian invasion of Piedmont Sardinia, France would provide military assistance to the latter.

Lombardi and Venetia would be merged with Piedmont Sardinia.

France would get Nice and Savoy.

A marriage would be arranged between the Piedmontese Princess and Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon III's nephew. He would become king of Umbria and Marche.

Phases of Unification

Phase 1: Lombardi - 1859

Cavour instigated a revolt against Austrian rule in Lombardi and Venetia. In response, Austria declared war on Piedmont Sardinia.

France assisted Piedmont Sardinia in liberating Lombardi but suddenly withdrew before Venetia could be liberated.

Phase 2: Parma, Modena, Tuscany, Romagna and Bologna - May 1860

In the backdrop of the Austrian Sardinian war, nationalist sentiment reached fever pitch in these regions. Popular revolts broke out and finally they were merged with Piedmont Sardinia through plebiscite.

Phase 3: Naples-Sicily, Umbria and Marche - November 1860

The developments in northern Italy had triggered a popular revolt in Naples Sicily, Umbria and Marche as well.

However it was not possible for Cavour to interfere directly in Naples Sicily due to the fear of French reaction.

Thus, he used Garibaldi, a revolutionary mercenary to overthrow Bourbon rule. Garibaldi initially refused to join Piedmont Sardinia since he was a supporter of republicanism. He finally agreed to join the union after a plebiscite supported it.

Victor Emanuel II was coronated as the king of Italy.

Phase 4: Venetia - 1866

Bismarck and Victor Emanuel II entered an alliance before the Austro-Prussian War (1866). Although the Italian forces were defeated, Prussia emerged victorious and as per the terms of the treaty which followed, Venetia was merged with Italy.

Phase 5: Rome - 1870

Papal rule in Rome was being propped up with French support. However, when the Franco-Prussian War (1870) began, Napoleon III withdrew his troops from Rome. Taking advantage of this, Victor Emanuel II annexed Rome and was once again coronated as the king of unified Italy. Rome became the new capital of Italy and the Pope was allowed to continue his rule over the Vatican.



Bismarck's Foreign Policy

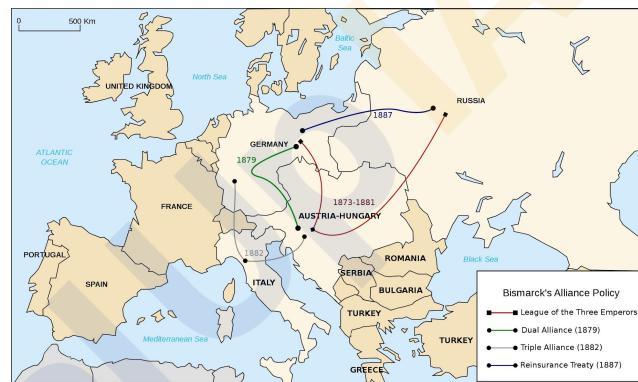
Germany had emerged as a satiated nation in 1871. All of its ambitions had been fulfilled and after unification, it had emerged as the most powerful nation in all of Europe. Now its only concern was to maintain the status quo.

In pursuance of this goal, Bismarck organised his foreign policy with the following objectives:

- To maintain relative **peace in Europe** which would allow Germany to prosper and ultimately dominate European markets.
- To establish **German supremacy** over Europe by Britain both economically and militarily.
- To **isolate France** diplomatically, which would inevitably attempt to undo the humiliation suffered in 1871.

In order to achieve these objectives, Bismarck adopted the twin policy of:

1. Creating a system of secret peacetime military alliances to keep France isolated in Europe.
2. To increase German military expenditure steadily, especially on the navy, so that Germany could surpass the British navy.



In accordance with this policy, the following alliances were made:

1. 1873 - League of 3 Emperors - Germany, Austria and Russia
 - Collapsed in 1878
2. 1879 - Dual Alliance - Germany and Austria
3. 1881 - League of 3 Nations - Germany, Austria and Russia
4. 1882 - Triple Alliance - Germany, Austria and Italy
5. 1887 - Reinsurance Treaty - Germany and Russia
 - Signed after the League of 3 Nations collapsed due to differences between Austria and Russia.

In this manner, Bismarck was able to pull the major powers of Europe into orbit around Germany while keeping France isolated and avoiding any large destructive wars. This period of relative peace was used successfully by the German military industrial complex to advance rapidly. Under Bismarck, Germany remained in a place of prominence in European politics.

However, relations between Kaiser William II and Bismarck deteriorated as the monarch was keen on expansion and not on maintaining the alliance system. In 1890 Kaiser William II refused to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia leading to Bismarck's resignation.

Evaluation of Bismarck's Foreign Policy

Although Bismarck's foreign policy was able to fulfil the objectives of isolating France, maintaining peace and becoming stronger militarily, overall the Bismarckian system was opportunistic and unstable.

It was based upon a network of interlocking military alliances which held till he remained in charge. However, the system soon broke down following his resignation.

Moreover, the increase in military expenditure and secret nature of alliances created an atmosphere of fear and instability that fueled an arms race and counter alliances. This resulted in the emergence of two heavily armed mutually suspicious military camps. The groundwork for a global conflict had been laid.

