

# ITALIAN STATES 1848-1849

## REVOLTS in some Italian States 1848-49

The revolts of 1848 started in **January in SICILY** and spread all over the Italian peninsula.

The revolts affected the states in different ways. In **VENICE** and **TUSCANY** the Austrian troops were forced out of the states and they were replaced by local Italian governments. In Tuscany some radicals took over the reign of the state in February 1849.

**PIEDMONT-SARDINIA** (King *Charles Albert*) saw this weakening of the Austrian Empire and **declared war against Austria** in an attempt to unify the Northern Italian States.

In the **PAPAL STATES** the pressure on **Pope Pius IX** became too much and he **fled to Naples** in November 1849. In his absence **Mazzini and Garibaldi set up the Roman Republic** (in February 1849). Mazzini was the “*political inspiration*” and he started to reform the Papal States:

- *Land to peasants*

- *Public housing for the poor*

Garibaldi was the planner of the Papal States *military defense*.

Some of the states received new more liberal constitutions and it looked like there would be some main changes but...

### RESULTS of the revolts 1848-49 in some Italian States:

**PIEDMONT-SARDINIA:** Charles Albert and **Piedmont-Sardinia were defeated twice by the Austrian Army** (Battle of **Custoza in July 1848** and the **Battle of Novara in March 1849**). Charles Albert was forced to abdicate and Piedmont-Sardinia had to pay a war indemnity (75 million Lire) to the Austrian Empire. Charles Albert's son **Victor Emmanuel II** took over. This put a temporary end to the Piedmont-Sardinian plans of unifying the Northern Italian States.

**ROMAN REPUBLIC/PAPAL STATES:** The **Roman Republic** was also *crushed by the combined military forces of France and Austria*. Both Mazzini and Garibaldi had to leave the Italian states - they were condemned to death if they remained on Italian soil. Other reasons for the fall of the Roman Republic were:

1. *Inflation*

2. *No support from the other Italian States*

The Pope returned to the Papal States and a French garrison now remained in Rome to protect the Head of the Catholic Church. Pope Pius IX had lost his liberal ideals and would now become a more traditional conservative ruler.

**TUSCANY:** The radicals that had seized the power of Tuscany were defeated by Austrian military in April 1849.

**VENETIA:** The established *Venetian Republic* was also crushed by military force (Austrian troops) in 1849. Here it took a bit longer but in August it was back in Austrian hands.

It looked like the revolts/revolutions of 1848-49 had achieved nothing... and this is what historians claimed for many years.

## WHAT DID THE REVOLTS/REVOLUTIONS OF 1848-49 ACHIEVE?

The mistake previous historians have done is that they looked at the **failure of liberalism/nationalism** during the revolutions 1848-49. **If we look at the development of conservatism we get a different picture.**

In Vienna the statesmen had tried to put the clock back to the situation before the French Revolution. Metternich, the Austrian Foreign Minister, was one of the main characters that tried to guarantee this "*living in the past*" method. The bigger states of Europe had tried to agree on acting together against any disruption of the order decided on the Vienna Congress.

In 1848 this system came to an end. **During the coming decades we would see the development of new strong statesmen; Napoleon III, Otto von Bismarck and Camillo de Cavour.** These men would make nationalism fit into the new brand of conservatism and by the end of the century both Italy and Germany had been unified. The Austrian Empire tried to maintain the old conservative values and systems and would as a consequence pay dearly for that mistake. In 1919 the Empire was gone!

**1848-49:** The revolts/revolutions of 1848-49 meant both a return to the situation before 1848 and some changes. Here are the arguments for that ***nothing really changed***:

- There were no changes in the boundaries between the Italian States
- The Austrian military forces returned to several Italian States
- The Austrian political influence returned in these states as well
- Another foreign military force settled in the Papal States - a French garrison

**Changes:** As mentioned before - the revolts/revolutions saw the "*birth*" of a new form of conservatism. This is how it influenced Italy:

- Piedmont-Sardinia came out strong even though Austria defeated Piedmont-Sardinia in two battles 1848-49. Under the new king Victor Emmanuel II and his minister Camillo di Cavour we see how Piedmont-Sardinia strives to get stronger and how the country tries to extend its influence over the states in Northern Italy.
- The new French President, later Emperor Napoleon III, wanted a revision of the European Balance of Power. This policy of France would help Piedmont-Sardinia in the unification process...