

Analyzing Primary and Secondary Sources

Italian Nationalism and the Revolutions of 1848

1. Looking at the map what might explain the movements for Italian and German nation-states?
2. Based on the map why might Austrian and Russian empires have been threatened by nationalism?
3. What does Mazzini believe is the key to the “progress of humanity”? How does he think this will help all of humanity?
4. How does Mazzini believe nations can be “marked out”? What has kept nations from becoming a reality in Mazzini’s opinion?
5. How does Mazzini believe nations will become a reality?
6. When and where did fighting first break out in Italy?
7. According to the author, why did a number of states explode “spontaneously into revolution” in 1848?
8. Why might people of Sicily been upset with the “established authorities”?
9. How did revolution in Palermo begin?
10. How were the revolutionaries able to defeat a royal army?
11. What were some of the demands of the revolutionaries?
12. Why, according to this article, did the revolution in Sicily break down?

or night. No decision has yet been made as to where the finds will eventually be exhibited, but it is hoped that a local museum will eventually benefit.

ANGELA MORGAN

FREEZE FRAME

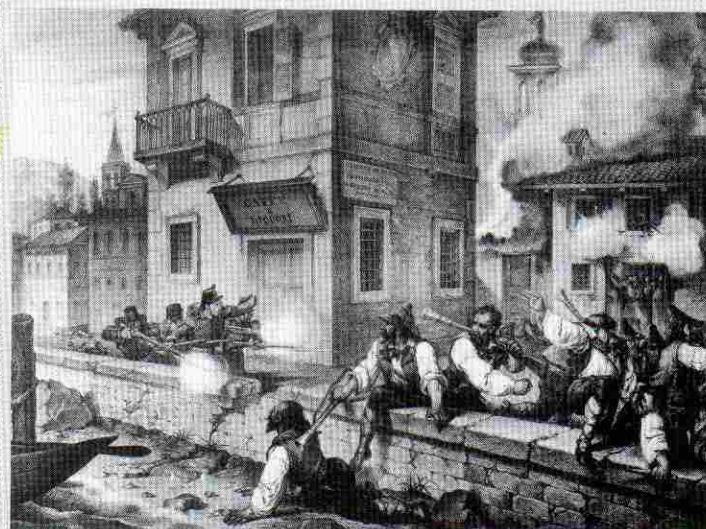
January 12th, 1848

SICILIAN UPRISING STARTS A YEAR OF EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS

No state in Europe is in a worse condition than ours, not excepting even the Turks,' wrote the revolutionary, Luigi Settembrini in 1847. '... In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, in the country which is said to be the garden of Europe, the people die of hunger, are in a state worse than beasts, the only law is caprice'.

In 1848, a number of states across Western Europe exploded spontaneously into revolution. Years of economic slump and post-French Revolutionary suppression lay behind these outbursts, along with opposition to the established authorities, and the rise of nationalism, liberalism and socialism. The uprising in Palermo, capital of the island of Sicily, was the first of these and was especially significant for Italy as it marked the start of a long train of events culminating in unification and Garibaldi's conquest of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1860.

Sicily was unlike other Italian states, many of which, by 1848, had at least seen some measure of political reform. Backward and poor, it was ruled by the Spanish Bourbon king, Ferdinand II, whose attempts at agrarian reform on the island had failed, resulting in greater restrictions on both landowners and peasants. These two groups were united only in their desire to be rid of an oppressive and tyrannical Neapolitan rule. The landowners resented Bourbon interference in wheat prices and tariffs and their attempts to restrain nobles from usurping



Troops and peasants in combat during the Sicilian uprising of 1848.

common land; the peasants were overburdened by heavy food taxes, hunger and the steady infringement of their meagre 'rights' to the fields they toiled.

Meanwhile, a handful of middle-class Sicilian radicals living in exile in northern Europe found themselves stimulated and influenced by the romantic and patriotic ideals and political philosophies currently oiling intellectual circles. They began to envisage a future for Sicily that recognised the need for stronger links with the rest of Italy, possibly as part of a federation of Italian states. This vision would have an increasingly meaningful role in what was to follow.

On January 9th, an unsigned manifesto issued by a 'revolutionary committee' was circulated in Palermo announcing a revolt for Sicilian freedom to take place at the king's birthday festivities. 'Dawn on January 12th, 1848, will mark the glorious epoch of universal regeneration,' it proclaimed, promising that those that met in the main piazza on the day would be given arms. In a bid not to alienate the well-off, property would be respected. Surprised that a genuine revolution would be announced three days in advance, the authorities hastily arrested eleven suspects.

On the morning of the 12th, however, people began to enter the piazza in larger numbers than usual and arms were distributed. Although there appeared to have been no organised leadership, a popular preacher whipped up the crowds in the Fieravecchia – the poorest quarter of the city – and clashes soon broke out. Initially those that fought were a small and motley crew, including some women. They looked no match

for the 5,000-strong royal army whose cavalry and artillery they faced, and there were certainly casualties. But it was guerrilla warfare and, as barricades were erected and shops boarded-up, the medieval maze of streets in Palermo and the hostility towards the Bourbon troops from the townsfolk worked to the revolutionaries' advantage.

News spread, and by the following day peasants from the countryside arrived to join the fray. For them, the revolution was not about articulate political demands, but rather the chance to express frustration over their many hardships. The popular ranks were swelled during the course of the disruption by brigand bands, as outlaws capitalised on the breakdown of government. In the villages and towns outside Palermo, records of land deeds and tax payments were burned and officials murdered. Sheep were killed and woodlands destroyed as land was cleared for cultivation.

By January 15th, when a further 5,000 Bourbon troops arrived by sea, the revolutionaries were in control of the city. As the Neapolitan army retreated, those with a more defined political agenda emerged as the leaders and established committees in an effort to channel and control the momentum of the uprising. They demanded that Ferdinand restore the 1812 constitution, an appeal which attracted support from the middle and upper classes. In response, the king offered local self-government on condition that Bourbon sovereignty remained, but the revolutionaries rejected this and insisted that Sicily should have complete independence

from Naples.

On February 2nd, the revolutionary committee, now headed by a retired naval officer, Ruggero Settimo, declared that it would take over the government of Sicily until the election of a parliament which would adapt the constitution of 1812. The last troops left Palermo at the end of the month. The uprising had achieved its aim, but its glory was to be short-lived. As similar revolts broke out in states across Italy, the Sicilian revolution began to break down; its supporters once more divided by their class interests. In September Ferdinand's troops returned, landing at Messina. This time their seizure of Palermo met little resistance. In the words of the radical leader, Francesco Crispi, 'the moderates feared the victory of the people more than that of the Bourbon troops'.

January 27th, 1898

DEATH OF LEWIS CARROLL



WHEN CHARLES LUTWIDGE Dodgson (above) climbed into the small boat moored on the river at Oxford in July, 1862, joining the Liddell children, Alice, Lorina and Edith, and his colleague Robinson Duckworth, he could little have known that the outcome of an innocent boat trip would be *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), one of the best-loved children's stories ever written – and one of the darkest and fiercest controversies ever surrounding an author and his motivations.

Henry Liddell had become Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1855 bringing his wife and children with him to the deanery,



MAZZINI'S NATIONALISM

"On the Duties of Man" is one of Giuseppe Mazzini's most famous essays. It was first written in 1844 for Italian workers living in England; the excerpts here are from the fifth chapter, which was added for a new edition in 1858. Despite the events of the intervening years, Mazzini's romantic faith had changed little. The essay's title was meant to contrast with the French Revolution's "Declaration of the Rights of Man," which Mazzini criticized for encouraging selfishness and materialism.

"Your first duties—first as regards importance—are, as I have already told you, towards Humanity. . . . If you do not embrace the whole human family in your affection, . . . if, wheresoever a fellow-creature suffers, or the dignity of human nature is violated by falsehood or tyranny—you are not ready, if able, to aid the unhappy, and do not feel called upon to combat, if able, for the redemption of the betrayed or oppressed—you violate your law of life, you comprehend not that Religion which will be the guide and blessing of the future.

"But what can each of you, singly, *do* for the moral improvement and progress of Humanity? . . . The watchword of the faith of the future is *Association*, and . . . [the] means was provided for you by God when he gave you a country; when, even as a wise overseer of labour distributes the various branches of employment according to the different capacities of the workmen, he divided Humanity into distinct groups or nuclei upon the face of the earth, thus creating the germ of Nationalities. Evil governments have disfigured the divine design. Nevertheless you may still trace it, distinctly marked out—at least as far as Europe is concerned—by the course of the great rivers, the direction of the higher mountains, and other geographical

conditions. They have disfigured it by their conquests, their greed, and their jealousy even of the righteous power of others. . . .

"These governments did not, and do not, recognize any country save their own families or dynasty, the egotism of caste. But the Divine design will infallibly be realized. Natural divisions, and the spontaneous, innate tendencies of the peoples, will take the place of the arbitrary divisions sanctioned by evil governments. The map of Europe will be redrawn. The countries of the Peoples, defined by the vote of free men, will arise upon the ruins of the countries of kings and privileged castes. . . .

"O my brothers, love your Country! Our country is our Home, the house that God has given us, placing therein a numerous family that loves us, and whom we love. . . . Our country is our common workshop, whence the products of our activity are sent forth for the benefit of the whole world. . . . In labouring for our own country on the right principle, we labour for Humanity."

From Giuseppe Mazzini, *On the Duties of Man*, Greenwood Publishing Group.

Questions for Discussion

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