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20 Research & Writing: Italian Nationalist Movement

Risorgimento means “rising again” and is the phrase by which the Italian Nationalist movement during the 19th century is referred. The Risorgimento was based on ideas and literary texts that helped awaken the national mind of the Italian people. This in turn led to political events that helped emancipate Italian states from foreign policy and rule which helped unify Italy politically.

The catalyst that produced the Risorgimento came from reforms introduced by the French; during the French revolution and Napoleonic wars. Under French rule; Italian states were condensed into republics; which allowed the Italian middle class to grow, as Italians were allowed to participate in the French government. The second step in the Italians gaining Risorgimento was the defeat of Napoleon in 1815; after his defeat, Italian states were restored to their previous rulers. From this Young Italy formed which became the first republican and national group. This society possessed democratic values and had the agenda of helping the Italian people gain a sense of national identity, and encouraging these people to rise against the oppressors of the state.

A popular campaign during this time was the Expedition of the Thousand Miles. This campaign was led by Giuseppe Garibaldi. Garibaldi was a successful military leader dedicated to

Italian Unification, during the time of this expedition he grew impatient with diplomatic tactics to achieve unification, and took matters into his own hands; in hopes of uniting Italy. During this expedition, he defeated a Neapolitan force; with many Sicilians joining in to help overthrow the Neapolitan rulers. Later in his expedition, he took Naples to complete the unification of Italy.

Being an Italian during this time of unification you would see many people lining up to go to war for Italy with hopes of unification. You would see men joining secret societies to educate themselves on ideologies of Italian Nationalism. You would see the tri-color flag with colors green, red, and white representing the Italian identity placed everywhere.

Works Cited

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