

Between Mazzini, Cavour, and Garibaldi, who do you think made the most significant contribution to Italian unification?

Introduction:

Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), Count Camillo di Cavour (1810-1861), and Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) were the key players who carried the idea of Italian unification. The three played a significant role in the formation of a unified Italy. Mazzini envisioned a unified Italy and laid the ground works for the unification. Cavour, on the other hand, aimed for a unification under the Piedmontese. Garibaldi, however, taking inspirations from the works of Mazzini hoped for all Italian unification.

Background:

Prior to 19th Century, Italy was a patchwork of states. Kingdom of Sardinia in northwest, Kingdom of Two Sicilies in South, Papal States in centre under Pope, and Venetia and Lombardy under Austria. Much of Italy was under the Austrian control which ignited the nationalist sentiments.

Comparison of key players:

#	Mazzini	Cavour	Garibaldi
1	Soul of Italian unification	Brain of Italian unification	Sword of Italian unification
2	Believed in democratic republic	Believed in Piedmontese leadership	Believed in democratic republic
3	Founded Young Italy	Alliance with France	Expedition of thousand
4	Established Roman Republic	Second Italian war of Independence	March on Naples

Giuseppe Mazzini's efforts:

Known as the soul of Italian unification, he believed in uniting all Italians under a democratic republic.

Mazzini founded the Young Italy in 1831 which aimed to unite Italy through popular uprising and instill patriotic education. In 1849, Mazzini helped establish the Roman Republic.

Cavour's diplomacy and statecraft. - vi

i - Diplomacy

Cavour was prime minister of kingdom of Sardinia under the king Victor Emmanuel II. Being the brain of the unification, Cavour, believed in the unification under the Piedmontese leadership, not the republican revolution.

ii - Modernising Piedmont

Cavour made Piedmont a model state to lead unification. He industrialized the economy, improved the infrastructure, and strengthen the military.

iii - Alliance with France:

In 1858, Cavour met with Napoleon III at Plombieres. In this secret meeting, France agreed to expel Austria from Northern Italy in return for Nice and Savoy.

iv - The Second Italian War:

In 1859, Piedmont provoked Austria into war at Battle of Magenta and Battle of Solferino. Austria was defeated with help from France, and Lombardy ceded with Piedmont. Similarly, Modena, Parma, Tuscany, and Papal legation voted to join Piedmont in plebiscite in 1860.

Military Campaigns of Garibaldi: - ii

i - Vision

Garibaldi was known as 'Sword of Unification'. He was a military leader and hero of Italian nationalism. He leaned towards republicanism like Mazzini.

ii - Expedition of thousands

In 1860, Garibaldi led thousand volunteers known as the red shirts from Genoa to Sicily. He started guerrilla campaign and defeated the Bourbon at Calatafimi. He then captured Palermo and rest of Sicily.

III - March on Naples

In 1860, Garibaldi marched into mainland and marched into Naples, the kingdom of Two Sicily. He took over the capital and proclaimed himself as dictator of Southern Italy, in the name of Emmanuel II. Garibaldi handed over Southern Italy to Emmanuel II at a meeting in Teano.

Most Significant Contribution :

I believe, Cavour played the most significant role in the unification of Italy. Although, Mazzini sparked the idea and initial works of the unification and Garibaldi provided the final blow for a successfully unified Italy, Cavour's diplomatic efforts proved to be most important. Opting a cunning tactic, Cavour, convinced France for help in defeating Austria. This approach paved way for future success towards a unified Italy.

Conclusion:

In essence, the idea of a Unified Italy was deep rooted in the nationalists after the Congress of Vienna. Although, Mazzini, Cavour, and Garibaldi ^{each} opted for a different approach, they all worked towards a single goal - a Unified Italy. The efforts and hard work of the three resulted in a Unified Italy.