

In the mid-19th century, in both Italy and the United States of America the theoretical and political conditions of nationalism arose. In Italy, the liberalism of the Northern middle class was strong and conceived Italy's independence – in the form of a Unitary State among European liberal nations – as the necessary dimension to achieve its goals. This distinct feature ruled out the idea of a Federal State that comprised Italy's illiberal political regimes, especially the Bourbon regime, which was incompatible with the Risorgimento approach. This ethnocentric stance further implied repudiating an alien population steeped in a culture that was totally at odds with the idea of a European Liberal State. The Head of the Savoy government – he who actually promoted the political unification of Italy, which in 1860 devastated the South when it was annexed to the Piedmontese State after a violent military assault – agreed with this view. This conflict also brought the Southern Royalists and Southern Unitarians into a civil war.

The United States were characterized by the presence of two opposing ideologies: the ideology supported in the North by the Republican Party – where the States experienced a significant economic growth with the consolidation of the industrial middle class – and the ideology adopted south of the Mason-Dixson line by liberal-oriented States, whose riches were dependent on "plantation" economies built on slave labour. This inconsistency was not settled by the Constitution in 1787. It was absolutely clear to the Southern States that the abuses of the North, rather than the use of slaves, actually threatened their socio-cultural world. This is how they justified their independence through the unilateral secession from the Union: a legal act based on the principle of the States' freedom to join and/or separate contemplated by the Constitution. This led the South to create a new unitary Nation: the Confederate States of America. For the unionists of the North this was just an act of rebellion – their intent was to avoid the failure of the "Great Republic" advocated by Lincoln – which in 1861 would bring the civil war.

In both Italy and America the North prevailed and imposed on the defeated South a military and political occupation that would change the two Nations' history forever.

