

# Forging the Nation-Nation-State: The Rise of Nationalism in Europe

How a utopian dream dismantled empires and redrew the map of the modern world (1789–1871).



**The shattered remains of absolutist institutions.** In Sorrieu's utopian vision, peoples of the world march as distinct, unified nations rather than subjects of a monarch.

# The Catalyst and the Contradiction

## Side A: The Gift (The Idea of the Nation)

- Introduction of *la patrie* (the fatherland) and *le citoyen* (the citizen).
- Abolition of internal customs duties; standardized weights and measures.
- The Napoleonic Code (1804): Doing away with privileges of birth, establishing equality before the law.



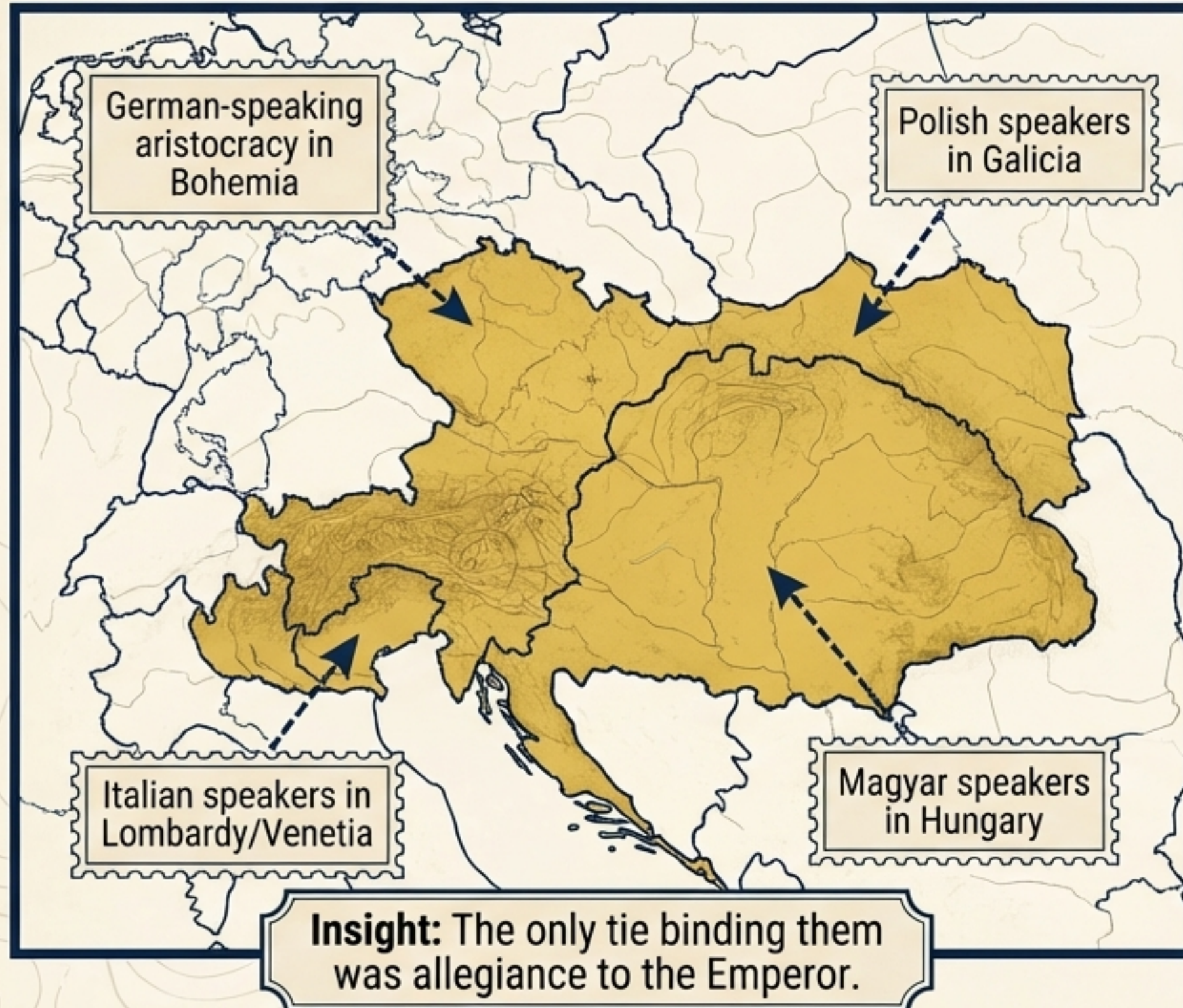
## Side B: The Burden (The Imperial Reality)

- Loss of political freedom under French military occupation.
- Increased taxation and strict censorship.
- Forced conscription into French armies to fuel further European conquests.

*French soldiers portrayed as oppressors in Germany, highlighting the sarcastic view of the French as 'liberators' when they acted as an occupying force.*

France exported the idea of liberty but delivered the reality of occupation—unwittingly uniting diverse local populations against them.

# The Pre-National Landscape: A Patchwork of Empires



## The Social Divide

### The Aristocracy

A tiny, powerful, pan-European landed class united by French language and marriage.

### The Disruptor: The New Middle Class

Born from the Industrial Revolution (industrialists, businessmen, professionals), this educated liberal class would become the engine for national unity.

### The Peasantry

A massive, diverse, and localized illiterate population.

# The Ideological Tug-of-War (Post-1815)

## The New Conservatism (The Old Order)

**Goal:** Preserve tradition, monarchy, the Church, and social hierarchies.

**Method:** The 1815 Treaty of Vienna (undoing Napoleon's changes), strict censorship laws, and modern autocratic armies.



A satirical caricature showing members of a thinkers' club wearing muzzles, perfectly capturing conservative censorship.

## Liberal Nationalism (The New Order)

**Goal:** Government by consent, individual freedom, and the creation of unified economic territories.

**Method:** Constitutions, freedom of the press, and the Zollverein (an 1834 customs union that abolished tariff barriers and reduced over 30 German currencies down to 2).

**The battle line was drawn: those who wanted to freeze the map, and those who wanted to redraw it.**

# The Underground Resistance and the Romantics

## The Political Underground

- **Leader:** Giuseppe Mazzini and the secret society "Young Europe".
- **Belief:** God intended nations to be the natural units of mankind; a unified republic is the only basis for liberty.



Metternich called him "the most dangerous enemy of our social order."

## The Cultural Front: Romanticism

- **Philosophy:** Rejecting the glorification of pure reason in favor of emotion, intuition, and volksgeist (the true spirit of the nation).
- **Tactics:**



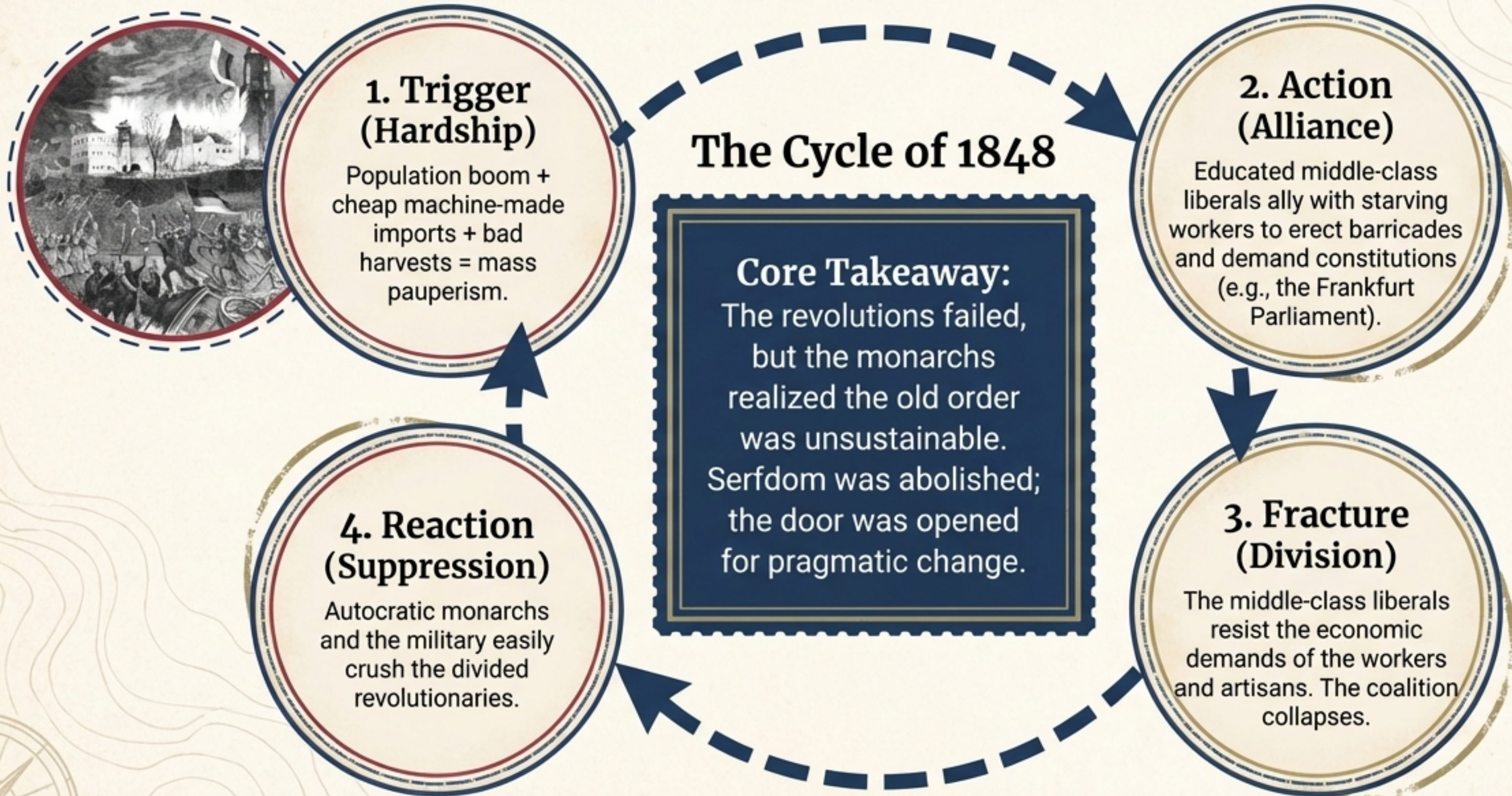
The Grimm Brothers collecting German folktales to oppose French cultural domination.



Poland using operas, mazurka dances, and the Polish language to resist Russian assimilation.



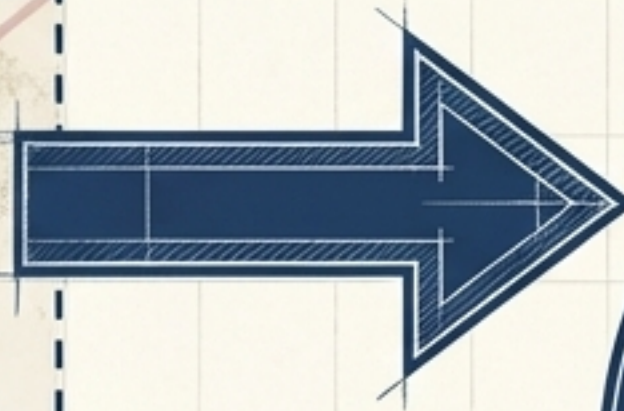
# 1848: The Springtime of Peoples



# What Makes a Nation?

## The Myth (What it is NOT)

A nation is not simply formed by objective markers like a common language, race, religion, or geography.



## The Reality (What it IS)

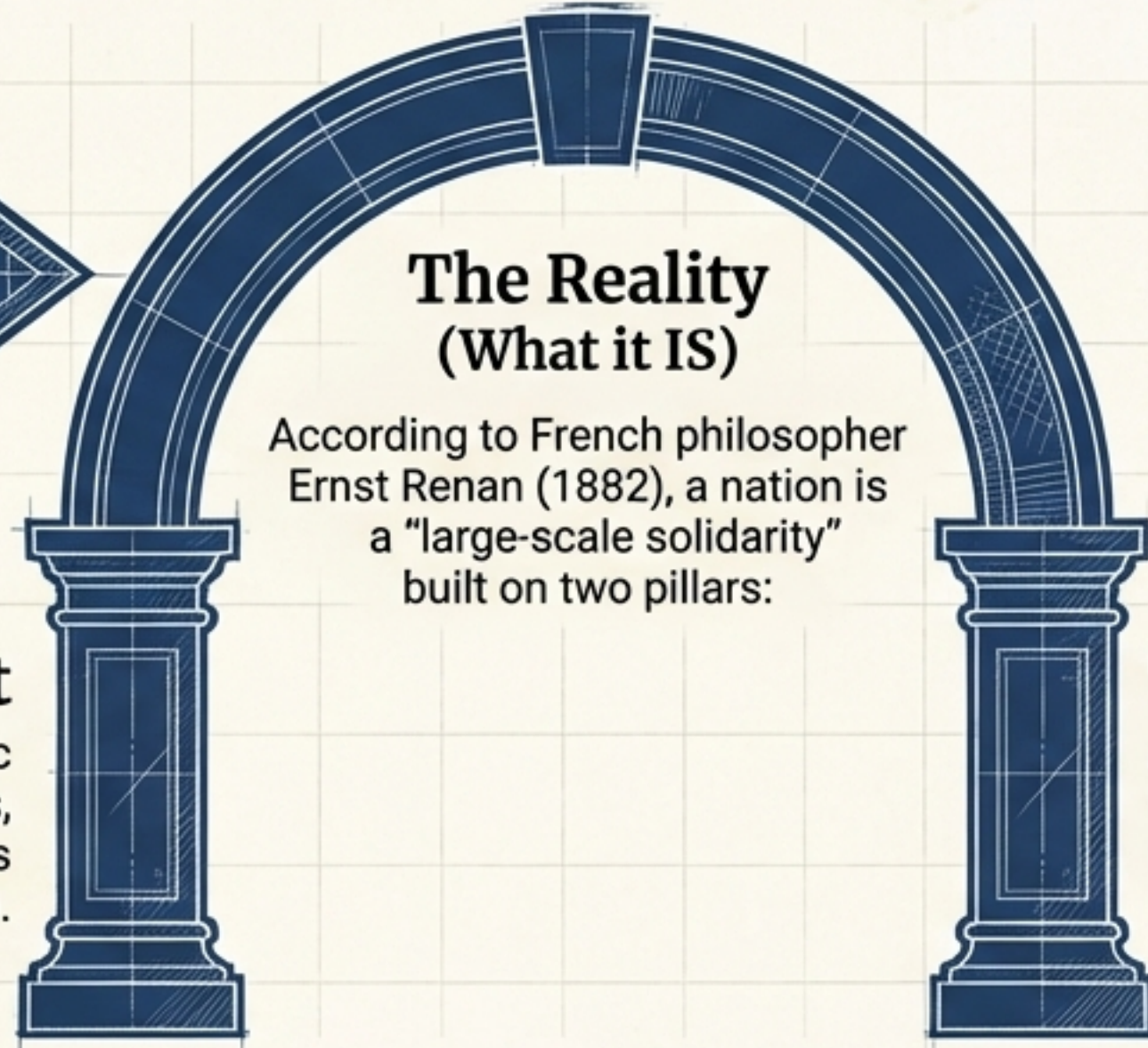
According to French philosopher Ernst Renan (1882), a nation is a "large-scale solidarity" built on two pillars:

### The Past

A shared heroic history of endeavors, sacrifices, and glories (the "social capital").

### The Present

A common will to live together and perform great deeds.



**“Its existence is a daily plebiscite.”**

– A continuous, collective choice to exist as a unified people.



# The Pragmatists Take Over: Forging Germany and Italy

## Germany (The Army as Architect)

**The Leader:** Otto von Bismarck (Chief Minister of Prussia).



**The Method:** Repressing liberal democracy in favor of military and bureaucratic power. Three calculated wars over seven years (Austria, Denmark, France) to force unification.

**The Result:** The King of Prussia is crowned German Emperor in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.



## Italy (Diplomacy & Guerrilla War)

**The Leaders:** Count Cavour (the elite diplomat) and Giuseppe Garibaldi (the romantic fighter).



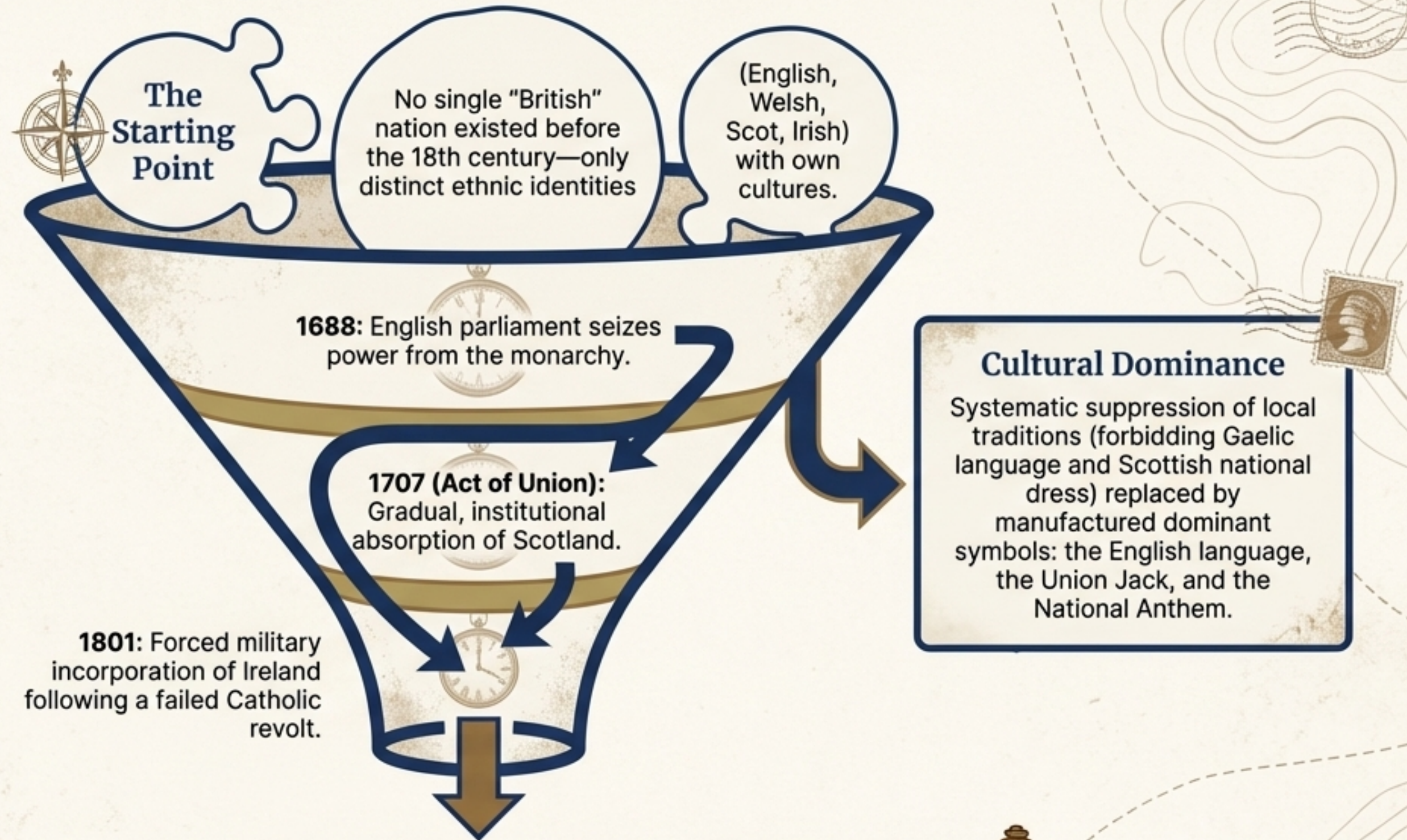
**The Method:** Cavour engineers a tactful alliance with France to defeat Austria in the North, while Garibaldi's "Red Shirts" rally peasants to drive out Spanish rulers in the South.



**The Result:** King Victor Emmanuel II proclaimed king of a united Italy in 1861.

The romantic dreamers failed in 1848. The map was ultimately redrawn by wealthy elites using diplomacy, bureaucracy, and military force.

# The Strange Case of Britain: A Hegemonic Union



**Key Insight:** Britain was not formed by a sudden, romantic revolution, but by the slow, systematic expansion of English state power and culture over its neighbors.

# The Transformed Map of Europe

## The Shift

By 1871, Europe had transitioned from a continent of personal royal fiefdoms into a modern system of centralized nation-states, united by shared (or enforced) identities.

## The Legacy

Nationalism emerged in 1789 as a utopian, liberal dream of individual freedom. By the end of the 19th century, it had matured into a ruthless, pragmatic tool of statecraft and military dominance.

**The forces that forged the modern map of Europe had set the stage for the devastating global conflicts of the 20th century.**

