

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

Non-interventionism and neutrality as a Machiavellian instrument

April 11, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

Watching his beloved Kingdom of the Two Sicilies be dismembered from its crown and plundered by hordes of Piedmontese, Belgians, Jews, Greeks, Croats, Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians, etc. — Garibaldi's redshirts were a very *diverse* band of motley adventurers — Giacinto de' Sivo (1814-1867) had strong feelings about the role of what today might triumphantly be called international humanitarian interventions.

The isolationist/non-interventionist ideal has only ever been viable for true hermit kingdoms that Europe has never really had, and for small states with clear idea of who their protector is. The United States has never been quite non-interventionist, with its active policing of Latin America, its raids against Barbary pirates, the French Republic (Quasi-War), expeditions in Fiji, Sumatra, Japan, the Ivory Coast, etc. all before its formal imperial period starting with McKinley. And, of course, the Western expansion itself.

The defining characteristic of the foreign policy of the great imperial states in the 19th century was precisely in their selective and opportunistic “non-interventionism” that was all about feigning neutrality whenever it was useful to smite the other side, the classic example being Britain appealing to neutrality to avoid aiding France in the restoration of Ferdinand VII to the Spanish throne in 1823, but going on to then defend the Bourbon-Isabelist line in the First Carlist War a decade later via the British Auxiliary Legion, when that option meant aiding the cause of constitutionalism.

Short of hermit-level isolationism or Swiss confederation-model neutrality, there is little other way it could be in a Westphalian state system with constant brokering of bilateral treaty relations. Thus, appeals to a phony “non-interventionism,” even by well-intentioned domestic conservatives, are often a de facto concession to enemy interests.

This is especially true when facing the spectre of international Jacobinism/revolutionism/Bolshevism, and the fact that so many people associate such views with “neoconservatism,” is a testament to how thoroughly a hypocritical liberal pacifism has infected the minds of the people who are supposed to be its enemies...

Since so many evil slanders have failed to move a peaceful people, the world sect of revolution dealt its armed hand in a military intervention. The theory of non-intervention that prevents civilized nations from entering into the quarrels of a pugnacious people among themselves, on the contrary allows a revolution called power to enter outside in a foreign country, to strip it of its legitimate foundations. It is a sacred duty not to intervene to put peace; but it is lawful to give arms and protection to trouble-makers and to fratricides. And such hypocrisy, formulated with the words of non-intervention, is the product of the vaunted last civilization!

Nowadays, beyond the states constituted and recognized by treaties, there is a new and favored power: the revolution. It has kings, ministers, diplomacy, officials, armies and leaders; it alone among the nations has the privilege of not recognizing pre-existing treaties or right, and of calling itself "the people" and "society." Where everything against it referred to as tyranny, servitude and injustice. It alone wears the uniform of freedom, independence and equality; and yet it has only the right to assail any freedom, independence and equality that does not come from itself. The single revolution gives happiness; and woe to those who dare to be happy without it! The realm of the Sicilies was independent since 1734, when the Germans went away; she was free under the empire of good laws, which all her subjects had; and she was prosperous, for the gentle scepter of her princes. But this was according to the ancient principle, of the divine right; instead it must now be happy for the new principle, for the infernal right. Hence the subterranean power, which brings into itself all the rights that it could and should intervene: the revolution. And it had well prepared the wagon; its hands were full of gold; it had officers and ministers among the officers and ministers of the assaulted king; it had with it the Camorristi [mafiosi] himself, it was sure it would not be disturbed by the lack of intervention; it had the flag of a king of an old race, with the cross spread; and, in case of defeat, it rightly trusted in the rescue of this new king [the revolution]. So it prepared ships, men and arms in Genoa, under the eyes of all nations; then the infamous sailor of Nice, in the presence of the French and English armies, with his expedition of the thousand. This same Garibaldi, not with a thousand, but with four thousand, eleven years before, had entered Terra di Lavoro at Arce; but was fought back by the urban guards, after some hours, at the hest of Marshal Ferdinando Nunziante.

[...]

The world saw renewed the same games so often used. Louis XVI, surrounded by Jacobin councilors, was induced to those concessions that led to the gallows. Charles X fell for similar advice, and Louis Philippe, who had been raised to the throne by Carbonari, was taken down by the same people. Likewise, our king, who at that supreme moment would have to tighten the reins of the state, was told by his advisors to promise the restoration of the constitution. Thus he shattered his scepter. **The sects always demand constitutions, not to aid the peoples, but to have a land in which they can have impunity to strike blows to the throne and society.**

Immediately the exiles and the traitors took over the government; they abused the chivalrous brink of the monarch, all things changed, they disposed of national forces and wealth, and prepared the triumphal path to Garibaldi. To save time from corrupting the army, they pretended to treat an Italian league; they sent their ambassadors to Turin; and sinisterly the gallant king bent over to write to Garibaldi, begging him to stop. But Garibaldi boldly used his opportunity. The patriotic and liberal ministers descended so disgruntled that a kingdom of Naples was pattered by an adventurer, while Piedmont was to be left alone! Truly the liberals have no homeland.

If an Italy is not really wanted by Piedmont, if Italy can not be one, if it does not agree that it is, if the Napolitans do not want it, why should the country be uglified with iron and fire? And Europe shouted "no intervention," but did not interpose its veto to the intervention of Piedmont. It is just that in the

internal boundaries of peoples does not enter a foreigner, Piedmont could not enter to conquer a state that has thirteen centuries of its life, recognized by a hundred treaties. The realm could not be considered part of a hypothetical state; and, for the sophistry of the unity of language, suddenly being attacked by another state, with which Italy has never been inhabited since it was inhabited. Those who do not consider the Piedmontese intervention in Naples to be a violation of non-intervention believe in a state that has not yet been conceived. Almost as if Italy were already constituted, it presents the international struggle as an unified race of one people; and it is permitted that the power of all Italy can be used to unite it by force with the foreigner and the world sect. When Italy was not yet done, it was supposed to be “made”! This play of words corresponds to the game of ideas that civilized Europe has had to suffer, to be the impassive spectator of the most enormous attack against the independence of the peoples who have ever seen the wretched humanity. The principle of non-intervention does, or thinks it does, homage to the will of peoples, and to the right that each one has to set up in his own way. And so be it. So will the Neapolitans alone be banned by the nations, and will they have to be constituted in another’s way? Indeed, that the intervention is forbidden, the intervention is encouraged. With the presupposition that the Sicilies are already metaphysically fused with Italy, aggression is allowed to merge them. So the murderer despairing the traveler could invoke non-intervention. This example would later bear fruit. Belgium and France have unity of origins, of territory, and of history and of speech, and they have already been merged; but will Europe be a case of non-intervention, when France is attacking Belgium? **If Prussia, for the reason of common language, annexed all the independent German states to itself, should anyone forbid the assault?** If Portugal, together with the secretive and obvious revolutionary power, assailed, corrupted and annexed Spain, would it be, intervention? Of course, these two states have a commonality of country, of blood, of climate, of history and customs; and already for 68 years Portugal was annexed to the Spanish monarchy, until 1640; when Portugal renounced the grand idea of national unity and claimed independence. **To say that language should constitute states, is certainly a sophisticated error; but it is cruel sarcasm for us to hear such a mistake considered good by powerful states, which with the facts and with their strength show the opposite. France that has Corsica and Nice, England that has Malta want Italy constituted for the language! They that hold so much of Italy, and perhaps more... Sigh! Alas! it seems a strange understanding when one declares a thing that is contrary to fact, and proclaims one principle for others, and another for himself. And if the language constituted the states, these Nizzardi [inhabitants of Nice] are certainly Italian, now given by price of the declaration of non-intervention.** In this way ambition makes desire out of words. Unity of language is between the Piedmont and the Sicilies, but far away there is no unity between neighboring Nice and Genoa and sisters. Out of pity, mighty of the earth, cover your formidable bombs; but do not abuse reason, do not make humanity the most unhappy of wanderers. Let us return to the equitable ideas of universal justice: no one should intervene in the quarrels of exhibitions; Piedmont leaves Naples to Napolitani; and the country is redone. The homeland is not a vain name; she is the place where we are born; nor is it such a simple idea, and one can easily with complex abstractions of inconceivable “national unity” pervert it. Our homeland is not Turin, but Naples; and the man of the Alps is not Napolitano. Moreover, the man who loots, who shoots and chains and exiles, is a foreigner in fact; not only to this kingdom, but to all of Italy, to Europe and to humanity.

— Giacinto de’ Sivo, *I napolitani al cospetto delle nazioni civili* (1861)

(Little did de’ Sivo know, that only 10 years after publishing this, Prussia did exactly what he mentioned. No one cared. Well, no one who mattered.)

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