

Italia Addio: a counter-history of the Risorgimento

 carlsbad1819.wordpress.com/2021/05/15/italia-addio-a-counter-history-of-the-risorgimento

Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

May 15, 2021

The highest moral virtue in our day is to “amplify marginalized voices.” Consequently, I want to share the story of the Italian legitimists: Parmese and Sicilian neoborbonicos, Modenese filoestenses [loyal to the House of Habsburg-Este], Austro-Lombardian legitimists, Savoyard conservatives who renounced the bogus cause of “Italian unity” so as to retain their own statehood, and of course those brave intransigent Catholic defenders of the temporal power of the Pope.

The Italian Risorgimento is a fascinating period to study since it is the most unambiguous example of how, i) the cause of “national unification” was in fact the first color revolution; ii) said cause served to extinguish the last remnants of the old regime that would not only irrevocably reconfigure world politics, but effectively reduce the political right to a state of unending impotence and mediocrity, detached from the legacy it was robbed of; iii) that there was no such thing as a good and noble “classical liberalism” that was hijacked, but that from the beginning the ideology of liberalism was a centralizing and totalitarian one that employed brutal police repression of those loyal to their deposed sovereigns in the Apennine duchies, and in the Italian South most horrifically reached proportions amounting to an ethnic pogrom that included conditions akin to concentration camps in the Fenestrolle Fort and plans for penal colonies in Argentina and Tunisia, all predating the Anglo-Boer wars; iv) the cause of national unity was an essentially liberal and Masonic elite ideology that led to ruthless wars of aggression and dismemberment of centuries-old states and cultures, and wrought economic impoverishment that spurred massive emigration, all with long-lasting repercussions.

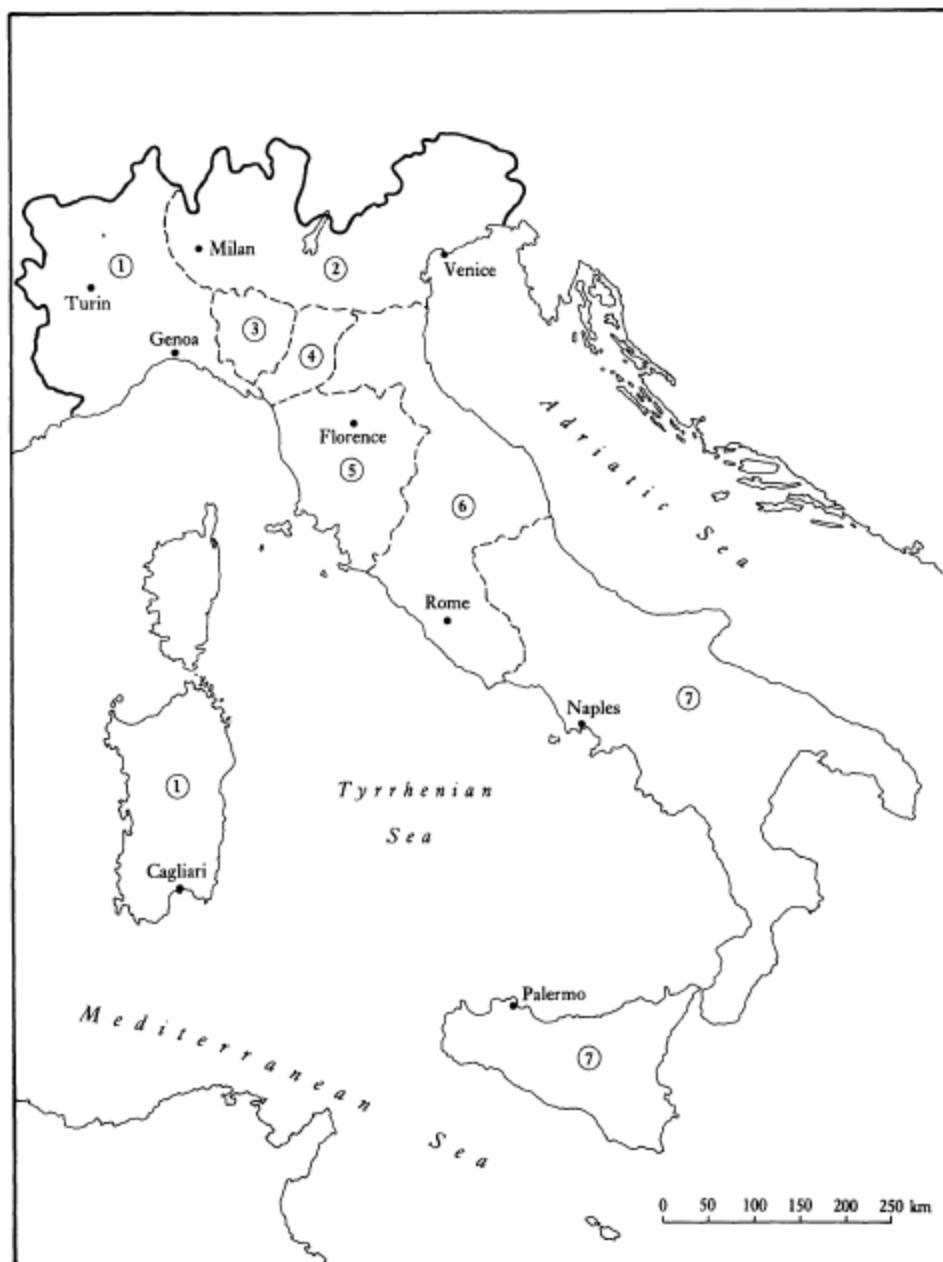
In the first chapter I will give a summary of the ideological origins and practical execution of the Risorgimento, in the second I will discuss the unsung heroes who tried to prevent it, and in the third I will talk about the backward, misgoverned and contentious state that it created, i.e. the Kingdom of Italy.

1. Revolution

To begin with, some maps of Italy in 1559, 1815 and 1848-70, respectively:



Map of Italy, 1559



- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Sardinian States (or Kingdom of Sardinia) | 5. Grand Duchy of Tuscany |
| 2. Lombardy-Veneto Kingdom (under Austria) | 6. Papal State |
| 3. Dukedom of Parma | 7. Kingdom of the two Sicilies |
| 4. Dukedom of Modena | |



Early modern Italy can be said to begin with the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559, ending the Italian Wars, and most consequentially establishing Spanish hegemony over Naples, Sicily and Milan. This period has been much castigated in traditional Italian historiography as a time of foreign domination and backwardness, but such a picture cannot be credibly sustained. A collection of essays published in 2006 as *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700* dispels the gloomy picture and recontextualizes this long and eventful period. Italians were not subject to any campaign of forced ethnic assimilation, served in the Spanish Council of Italy, and enriched themselves from the lucrative financial instruments offered by state financiers:

The arrendamenti (tax-farms) can serve as an example. This system developed and spread like tentacles throughout Naples and Sicily in the early modern period. The Italian states adopted it with alacrity when directly solicited either by the monarchy or by the cities, which guaranteed the payment of interest out of revenues from taxes and gabelles (commodity taxes). In Naples in the latter half of the sixteenth century, interest rates on such contracts were remarkably high, reaching 7, 8, and even 9 percent. The finances of the kingdom were solid and the income payments were promptly made. During the years from 1580 to 1585, one might even speak of a “golden age of tax-farms.” The process was simple, an investment was entirely fractionable, hence easily adapted to the investor’s available capital; new issues were frequent and the system functioned efficiently—on that condition that one had liquid capital. Such funds flourished because they arose in a period of general (or at least relative) prosperity. That same prosperity rendered taxation more acceptable, as tax rates had not reached the insupportable heights of the seventeenth century. On a larger scale, it also facilitated the payment of taxes by the various populations. The monarchy raised the funds that it needed, shifting the payment of interest to its subjects through direct and indirect taxation. Given a favorable economic climate, when this system was used to respond to exceptional needs, it could remain totally safe and proved highly useful. If the Monarchy or the cities reached a point where they could neither meet the interest payments nor buy back the shares, they still could abandon the guarantees to the shareholders. This is what happened in the Kingdom of Naples after the Revolt of 1647, when certain commodity taxes were privatized.

Even if buying shares in an arrendamento was a good investment in the latter half of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth century, the fact remains that it was also a way to support the monarchy. Political support in this form was solicited, for example, among the members of the titled nobility, the religious communities, the Genoese financiers, the charitable organizations—and the ministers. Access to the various gabelles was made widely available to them, and they were quite aware of benefiting from a certain form of favor. Taking advantage of financial and monetary fluctuations was difficult for anyone who was neither a merchant or a banker. That the capital involved came in part from the monarchy (given that the ministers were also reinvesting their stipends and emoluments) made it easier for them to be patient about late payments. The Italian officials thus financed their sovereign willingly, even as they created solid and durable ties to him. They bought income contracts—many of them—as new issues came onto the market. During general visits, the ministers were required to present two summaries of their wealth—one, of the current state of their finances; the other, of their finances before they took office—all to be sure that they had not enriched themselves excessively while in office. Gabelle contracts figure prominently on them. Some bought offices when they were available. These tended to be lower-level secretarial positions or clerkships. Some ministers turned this traffic to good advantage, thanks to an entire system of leases and management arrangements.

But that is about all I will say for it. The modern movement for Italian independence and unified territorial nationalism begins in earnest in the 1790s as Italy is swept in by the revolutionary military adventurism of the Corsican mountebank, Napoleon B(u)onaparte.

That men like Machiavelli and Guiccardini bemoaned foreign interference in the Italian peninsula and even expressed proto-unionist sentiments is true, but the unificationism of the Risorgimento is a characteristically Jacobin phenomenon.

Italian nationalism coincided with a crucial linguistic shift in the meanings of ‘nazione’ and ‘patria,’ as documented by Alberto Banti in *The Nation of the Risorgimento*. The word ‘patria,’ taken later to be fatherland in the ethnonationalist sense, meant generally one’s birthplace, up to the level of the town, village, comune. It can even mean a legal community, such that love for patria is identical to fidelity to the law; such a usage is seen in the Genoan-born Paolo Mattia Dora’s *La vita civile* (1729), published in Naples. ‘Nazione’ in its oldest sense could refer to a familial lineage (*natio*, in parallel to *gens*), later to any territorial or ethnolinguistic community that had no strict formal boundaries, e.g. a ‘Venetian nation,’ ‘Neapolitan nation,’ etc. The concept of an Italian nation existed as a cultural and literary unity, but with no connotations of a unified territorial state, instead territorial patriotisms being strong and firmly rooted.

In the 1790s, as Banti explains, “the word [nazione] moved into a central position in the logic of the new constellation of concepts, so much so that it subordinated all, or almost all, the other terms that belonged to this. In relation to ‘nazione’, these other terms came to perform at least three specific functions: they made clear, or gave clearer meanings to, particular areas of the semantic field to which the central term referred (as seen, for example, in the phrases ‘stato nazionale’, ‘assemblea nazionale’, ‘guardia nazionale’, and ‘volontà’, ‘sovranità’, or ‘indipendenza della nazione’ [‘will’, ‘sovereignty’, or ‘independence of the nation’], or in the connection between citizenship and nationality, which now became definitive); they operated as synonyms (as was the case for the term ‘popolo’ [people], for example); or they described the system of relationships that members of the nation ought to maintain with the institutions that were supposed to express its essence. This third function was fulfilled by the word ‘patria’ in particular: now, even more than before, it was used in expressions about relationships such as ‘amore per la patria’, ‘fedeltà alla patria’, and ‘tradimento della patria’ (‘love for’, ‘loyalty to’, and ‘betrayal of the patria’), and was now, unlike before, structurally and permanently linked to the term ‘nazione’. Whereas in the previous period ‘patria’ had indiscriminately referred to any governmental system that was ruled by fair laws, it now referred to one particular constitutional framework: that of a republic endowed with representative institutions. Thus, as Erasmo Leso has put it, “patriottismo” (and “patriotismo”) no longer referred to a general “love for the patria”, but to a specific “love for the democratic and republican patria”, in other words the embodiment of the patriots’ principles and political attitudes and orientation.”

With this insidious sleight of hand, a “patriot” came to mean a man who wanted to overturn the laws and institutions of his fatherland, and the “nation” came to mean the revolutionary state. States with centuries-long histories, unique customs and dynastic loyalties were to be

destroyed to make for a homogenized republic under a civil code, the liquidation of all status distinctions, the expropriation of ecclesiastical and noble possessions, and a reset of history back into the hypothetical state of primitive natural equality.

As such, Giuseppe Mazzini, the ideological vanguard of the Risorgimento, could implore his readers in 1834 that “the fact is that you are divided; that you are *peoples* and are *not a nation*; that you have twenty-two flags, twenty-two interests, and twenty-two wills, rather than one flag, one will, and one interest that has dominion over them all and brings them all together in one single concern of strength, progress, safety, protection, and dignity. You do not have a national pact, product of the national will, representing national thinking, that can provide for the national interest.”

A mere “popolo” in his estimation is an aggregate without a center, a breeding population and scarcely more, so that all these peoples had to give up their heritage and identity that they may coalesce into proper nationhood. Such rhetoric obviously presumed that the existing corporate and patrimonial loyalties of post-Congress of Vienna settlement Italy, a kind of “nouvelle ancien regime,” were illegitimate usurpations to be struck down. One is reminded of the old French legitimist (later nationalist) distinction between *pays réel* (the real country) and *pays legal* (the legal/nominal country), except here it was being proposed that the real, organic, actually existing Italy ought to be replaced with a phony chimerical project of building a liberally minded nation ex nihilo.

As to the type of person attracted by this prospect, he was what we could today call a “failson.” Men with familial histories of civil service, trade and the bourgeois professions, in no dire straits financially, and yet at an impasse either from elite overproduction or from their own personal vanity that they ought to be missionaries for a grand Masonic cause. Contrary to Marxist interpretations, there was no discernible class interest in any of it. The autobiography of one Mazzinian radical, Giuseppe Ricciardi, speaks for itself, a child of privilege becoming a revolutionary activist:

Looked at through the eyes of the common man, my life until that moment had been such as to invite the envy of any person. The son of a respectful and highly respected father, young, far from short of money, rich in friendships, [...] everything seemed to smile on me; moreover, I had nothing, either in the past or in the present, to remind me of, or make me feel, the terrible wounds of tyranny. Abuses of power had not been suffered by me, nor by members of my family; there had instead been great respect shown towards my father by the very men who held the reins of the country in their hands; in regard to personal liberty, I had as much as one could possibly be given under a despotic government. What peaceful days, not to say fortunate ones, [...] would have been granted to me, if my heart had been satisfied with the contentments of a life of earthly pleasures, and with closing my eyes to the torment of my poor patria! Instead, blind to any other matter excepting that torment (I must say this in my own praise), I said to myself, ‘Great would be your cowardice, if in such wealth of good fortune you were to slumber or rest in idleness, without caring for the fate of your wretched brothers [...]. Rise up then, Giuseppe, and put the example of sacrifice first, if it can be called “sacrifice” to employ your labours and everything in redeeming your own country [...]’. After this speech, to myself, and the aforementioned self-examination, which proved favourable to my desires, there followed the firmest resolution to launch myself into subversion, and to take part in every deed that might promote the regeneration of the patria.

One of the most prominent revolutionary events was the establishment of the Neapolitan (Parthenopean) Republic in 1799, from January to June. Its suppression, greatly aided by the popular counterrevolutionary forces of Cardinal Ruffo (see also), led to the execution of numerous men and women who would be eulogized as republican martyrs, among them Eleonora Fonseca Pimentel. Decades later, Giuditta Tavani Arquati would be bayoneted by papal zouaves while stocking armaments for the overthrow of the pontifical state, and would be similarly mythologized.

The Neapolitan revolution’s most famous and learned survivor was Vincenzo Cuoco, whose *Historical Essay on the Neapolitan Revolution of 1799* was imbued as much with the tragic sense of Machiavelli and Vico as with more melioristic Enlightenment tropes. One of his most interesting quotations is that of how the revolutionaries knew much of foreign affairs and little of theirs, a problem no less in our time:

As an effect of our ill-directed public education, knowledge of our affairs has become linked to power and wealth: those who concern themselves with knowledge for the most part know everything save that which they are supposed to know. Raised in reading English and French books, they will know all about the manufacturing industries of Birmingham and Manchester but not those of Arpino; they will speak to you of the agriculture of Provence and know nothing of that of Apulia. There is not one of them who does not know how a Polish king or a Roman emperor is elected, but very few will know how the administrators are elected in one of our municipalities; everyone can tell you the degrees of longitude and latitude of Tahiti; if you ask them those of Naples, no one will be able to tell you. Once upon a time our people would concern themselves with such matters, and we had writers on these subjects before the other nations of Europe had even thought about them. Today no one deigns to deal with them, eager as they are for foreign glory, almost as though it were possible to obtain greater esteem from other peoples by repeating badly to them what they themselves know well, than in telling them what they do not already know. But in any case such knowledge is necessary and, in order to have it, one has to either resort to muddled, inelegant books written two centuries ago or rely on those who know both men and their state as a result of having handled the kingdom's affairs and seen several of our regions. Through the fault of our education system, the knowledge we have is useless, and we are forced to beg useful information from others.

It is in fact at Naples that a great deal of unificationist tumult would happen. The Rimini Proclamation of March 1815 under Joachim Murat's occupied Kingdom of Naples was one of the earliest unambiguous appeals to Italian unity: "Providence finally calls you to be an independent nation. From the Alps to the Strait of Scilla there is a single cry 'The independence of Italy!'" The activity of the Carbonari was greatly dominated by former officers of the Murat government and by those generally nostalgic for Napoleonic rule.

Murat's government was one of continual plunder and looting, with any attempt at effective policy being vetoed from Paris on strict orders that the Continental Blockade be maximally enforced (from John A. Davis' *Naples and Napoleon*):

"Tremendously effective." <https://t.co/Oif5OocQ8Z> pic.twitter.com/AD2O21pO7j

— Nigel Carlsbad (@pompilivs) April 29, 2021

Freemasonry was an essential recruitment base for Murat's officials:

The masonic connection played a central role in the imperial networks of patronage, preferment, and recruitment, but was also a means for the French administrators to identify their likely local supporters in newly conquered territories. This was certainly the case in Naples and when in August 1806 Joseph-Pierre Briot, for example, was appointed Intendent of Abruzzo Citeriore the leading families in Chieti who indicated their support for the new regime were all were freemasons. All had been prominent in the reform movement and had supported the Republic, and many would serve the new regime in high positions. They included the leading landowners in the province, Pietro and Romualdo de Sterlich, and Baron Antonio Nolli, who in 1788 had founded the local Patriotic Society. Pietro de Sterlich had been a friend of Gaetano Filangieri, and would in turn serve as Intendent of the nearby province of L'Aquila and later in the Terra d'Otranto. As well as bringing the new regime into closer contact with its supporters, freemasonry also brought many former Neapolitan Jacobins into the new administration. This again was primarily Saliceti's doing, as he had done before in Genoa and Corsica. By choosing men whose careers were jeopardized by their Jacobin past, he created a network of officials over whose careers he had complete control. Hence Saliceti's preference for Neapolitans and former Jacobins and his principal Neapolitan protégés—Pietro Colletta, Vincenzo Cuoco, Matteo Galdi, and Giuseppe Poerio—all fitted this description: he recruited them all and they all served at one time or another as Intendents.

Such was the object of their nostalgia.

A highly valuable glimpse into the beliefs and mannerisms of the Italian nationalists is afforded by the memoirs of Giovanni Venosta from 1847 to 1860, a "patriot" living in then Austrian-ruled Lombardy-Venetia. Venosta was attending revolutionary salons hosted by Cesare Correnti in 1847, where, he says, "I heard them talk of d'Azeglio, Guerrazzi, Giusti, Gioberti, Pellico, Berchet, Balbo, and Mazzini; and I hastened to procure the books of these authors. I read and re-read them, warming myself more and more at this new fire of patriotic idealism."

In the same year prominent English liberal and free trader Richard Cobden would arrive in Milan to deliver a lecture, with great fanfare. At that time Pope Pius IX (elected 1846) flirted with liberal reforms in the Papal States, which made him something of an international symbol, and the cries of "Viva Pio Nino" were an ubiquitous greeting among Italian radicals. In fact, close coordination and networking existed between Italy's revolutionary sects. When news was received of preparations for revolt in Calabria, an order was given was to wear tall silk hats with distinct plume, and the local population swiftly followed in demonstration. Protests could take all sorts of forms, with one in January 1848 involving abstinence from smoking. Tobacco smoke being so widespread in the streets back then, its absence for a single day was a highly conspicuous event. Other interesting notes concern the substantial Italian radical emigre presence in England circa 1855.

The Austrians were called by the epithet "tedeschi," and the preparations for the revolutionary outbreak in the Five Days of Milan was very casual:

After 1815 the vaunted affability, of which there had been a tradition from the time of Maria Teresa, disappeared. In contrast to Spanish haughtiness and French arrogance the Austrians were less odious to our great-grandfathers than to us. But they were now detested by all, and were the objects of popular raillery. Our oppressors, from the simple soldier to Radetzky, from the policeman to the Emperor, were called “Tedeschi.” “Abbasso i tedeschi” meant so many things. Yet with the Germans themselves we did not have much to do. The distinction between them and the Austrians came later on. “Fuori i tedeschi” meant the Austrian Government; it was the cry for liberty and independence. It was a certain cry, accepted by us all without discussion. In it was a bond of fraternity and of unanimity. Therefore, with “Fuori i tedeschi” we descended into the street.

The morning of the 18th, between ten and eleven o’clock, a crowd that had gathered in the Piazza del Duomo started to go to the Broletto, the seat of the municipality, to request the Podesta and the authorities to proceed with them to the palace of the Governor, and to demand reforms. The mass moved forward and filled the streets, making a noise as of a strong sea.

With this procession began the revolution of the Cinque Giornate, a revolution which had various episodes that have been narrated and described by many witnesses, and by others who have written of the events.

It is not a history of the Five Days that I will write. I propose only to describe some episodes that were seen by me, or which I heard spoken of at the time by people whom I knew well.

At an early hour my brother, who had just returned from Casa Correnti, told my mother and me that there would probably be a great demonstration that day which might end in a revolution. Our mother’s eyes filled with tears as she recommended prudence to Emilio. There began that day in her heart a struggle between her love for her country and her love for her sons, a long struggle which was full of sorrowful contrasts and that caused her great anxiety and many tears. Poor mother!

At Emilio’s announcement I determined to prepare for war, so I went stealthily out of the house, as, up to this time, according to the custom of those days, I had had only a limited liberty. I purchased two innocuous pistols and a hat alla Calabrese. When I returned I took from a box a tricolored cockade, that a little cousin had given me a few days previously, and sewed it on the front of my hat.

Arms were being clandestinely smuggled from Piedmont, a theme that would reoccur: “These young men, in union with some others, under the leadership of Manara, had secretly imported arms from Piedmont, had drilled together, and had prepared ammunition. About twenty of them, filled with mystic and religious ideas, had gone to a church to receive absolution from the coadjutor Sacchi, as if “morituri.” The Barnabite father, Piantoni, and Professor Angelo Fava, the preceptor of the Dandolo brothers, had led them. From the church they ran to the barricades, and were ever in the front of the battle during the Five Days.” The women had their share, as well: “I stopped awhile to look at the spectacle which

made us all rejoice, that of the tricolored flags which waved from every window. The flags, improvised that morning, were made of coverlets, shawls, rags, anything, provided only they were white, red, and green. From the windows the ladies threw tricolored cockades and bouquets to the applauding people. In the crowd I saw some men armed with fowling-pieces, or carbines, that had been brought from Piedmont.”

Later, a Mazzinian revolt orchestrated in 1853 ended with commutation of the death sentences, though Venosta of course finds no shortages of things to complain about.

In the same year, Venosta visits Rome, where he openly expresses his and his compatriots’ Francophilia, while detesting the sight of Rome:

France and the French were ever associated in our youthful minds with the epoch of the Revolution and the Italian Kingdom, and with every high ideal of liberty and progress. And now we saw the French in Rome, associated with the Swiss Guards, sustaining with their bayonets the temporal power of the Pope!

Another thing which offended our sight and feeling was to see, in every office we visited, ugly priests with clownish faces, filling positions that had nothing to do with sanctity. It stupefied us the more, to hear people swearing at the priests, for we habitually respected our excellent clergy in Lombardy. And what was not said of the priestly Roman Government! There was an avalanche of imprecations, which we wished that those who uttered them could have heard for their own amusement.

The most hilarious incident, however, is when Venosta is forced to present himself before an Austrian legation to receive visas to enter Sicily. By his admission, he was treated with utmost grace and respect, which is precisely what *infuriates* him, that the Austrian oppressor should be so courteous:

Two days after, when we made our farewell visit to Casa Gargallo, we thought we were on the point of starting for Sicily, but an unforeseen incident detained us for another week. Our friend Cristoforo Robecchi wanted to make the tour of Sicily with us, and we had sent our passports to the police, to obtain their visa for the journey. After a delay of several days, a letter came from the Austrian Legation, asking us to call. At this time the Italian subjects of Austria avoided, as much as possible, presenting themselves at the Austrian legations and embassies; but no other course was open to us.

At the legation, the first secretary, Signor Rajmond, received us with politeness, and told us that a warning regarding us had come to the police, because we had taken an unwonted route in coming from Rome, and had conversed with Signor Altobelli.

It was not difficult to show Signor Rajmond the innocence of our actions; and he undertook to propitiate the police, and to request the especial passports which were necessary for Sicily. After two days we were asked to call again, and were told that the Government conceded two passports but not three. Signor Rajmond, however, who was always most polite, offered to ask the favor of passports for all three of us. The favor was granted, but an official wanted to see and question us, in the presence of the secretary. This personage, whose name I cannot remember, was a close-shaven, dried-up little man. He questioned us at length, scanning us from head to foot at each interrogation. At the end he said: "Well, I concede the passports for Sicily to all three, but I concede them only out of regard for their flag." And, so saying, he motioned to the Austrian secretary. For our flag!

So we could go to Sicily, thanks to an Austrian official, who, moreover, told us to be on guard against the regulations of the Bourbon police, which he, as we, recognized to be excessive. I left Naples with three causes of grief in my heart. They were: to have lost my illusion in regard to the people that Mazzini had taught us to place alongside of God; to have found Bourbon partisans among the educated Neapolitans; and to have been forced to seek the protection of the Austrian Legation.

It will be necessary to do some sampling of Risorgimento liberal thought, to get a feeling of its motives and sentiments.

Obviously it involved a contempt for the historically developed Italian state system, as seen in a remark from a hagiographic account of Bettino Ricasoli, who served two terms as Prime Minister of Italy, referring to "the three microscopic sovereignties of Parma, Modena and Lucca, without speaking of some connections of Sardinia and Tuscany, crossed, intertwined, entangled each other so that only Austria knew their geography." In 1861, when Ricasoli was pontificating in parliament over the Roman Question (the future of St. Peter's patrimony), he declared "I therefore believe that the solution to the Roman question comes from discussion. What was once done before the councils, allow me these words, today must be done before public opinion, which is the great council of human intelligence and society."

In 1856, Luigi Carlo Fini, PM of Italy from 1862 to 1863, gives an instructive view of Austria vis-a-vis Italy in *Diplomacy and the Italian Question*:

The first, the greatest, I am about to say, the only evil in Italy is Austrian arrogance. Lord, the brutalities of the Neapolitan government make you horrified: but if Austria were not overbearing in Italy, that despotism, which you have called the denial of God, would not be possible in Naples. For the first denial of God is this tyranny. of a foreigner, who where he does not reign for treaties, reigns for violence, for the fear he causes to the princes, for the martyrs he gives to the peoples, for the discord he sows among all! You are in spite of that unfaithful clerocratic government, which contends with the civil genius of the century for reasons of perpetuating itself, and with the gang of henchmen contending for the prerogatives of sovereignty. But clerical self-government would not be possible, were it not for Austria, which now foment the appetites and anger of the peoples, or those of the clerics, to make her own the sins and errors of both. Convince yourselves, O Lord, that there is no insult, no harm, no humiliation, no torment, of which the Italians do not blame Austria first, Austria alone. Look at the custom of our life. Where is it in the countries owned or occupied by the Austrians, where the Italian, who having something to lose in reputation, dares to have consortium and familiarity with them?

The wicked clericocratic foreigner was a very common trope in Italian “patriotic” historiography. Of the Congress of Vienna and the Concert of Europe, Farini is unsurprisingly contemptuous, saying “in this way it was not only the legitimacy that was confirmed by interventions, or we mean the divine right of princes, but the legitimacy, the inviolability, I would say the divinity of despotism, was consecrated.” Later, that “Austria is the master of the rest of Italy, but, as long as this land is free, Vienna does not feel, cannot feel sure of its conquest, of its usurpation. This state [Piedmont] practices a policy which necessarily, I would say fatally, is contrary to the Austrian” — a call for Piedmont to take the mantle of Italian independence, as would soon happen.

Of the Papal States, he sees only iniquitous Jesuitism, while praising Napoleonic rule in Italy: “The Jesuits, however, do not put a good face on such overly spiritual doctrines: they say that the whole country is corrupt and full of thieves, murders and evil customs, but that this is the result not of clerical institutes, yes, of modern doctrines! In the Pope’s State, the ecclesiastics have always had, if you take away the short years of Napoleonic domination, very full religious, civil, political and educational arbitrariness, and if those peoples are corrupt, they should be blamed on the doctrines, against which the Jesuits fumble! If there was a moment, in which the custom was correct, the government in order, the peoples happy, it was truly that, in which, under Napoleon’s reign, modern doctrines and civil institutions flourished there. Even those, according to the Jesuits, are a temporal ruin and a spiritual damnation!”

Michelangelo Castelli, secretary to Count Cavour and contributor to the *Il Risorgimento* newspaper, enlightens us further in his *Saggi sull’opinione politica moderata in Italia* (1847). The term “moderate” in this context has a specific meaning as that faction of radicals

who accepted a top-down approach for unification through conquest by an ambitious Italian prince, as opposed to bottom-up idealism of a popular uprising.

The entire book is Francophile to the core, and full of citations from French doctrinaire journals as *Revue des deux Mondes*. “Independence is the expression of the holiest of all rights,” he states. Territorial union would naturally lead to a perfect homogeneity of interests and feelings in the Italians, by some miracle.

Most fascinatingly, Castelli has a fantastically misguided optimism in how abolishing dynastic states for a world order of liberal nation-states would replace wars with trade: “Because the advantages of succession, of national occupations, for treaties, for wars, for violations that in no way concern the real interests of nations, they can equally be obtained by more just ways, that is by means of mutual concessions, commercial treaties, customs leagues, etc.” Sure they were! But he is self-aware that his Italian nation must be forged: “the means which can give independence first, and nationality after – education, – the consolidation of moderate progressive opinion – the press – civil or political orders, – and a strong generous constitution of armies and national militias.”

The state will have its policies dictated by the hot takes of a few hundred or thousand newspaper columnists: “Each nation has a hundred or a thousand men whose opinion, when it is firm and highly professed, derives the opinions of everyone, I say of those who are capable of having them; and that hundred or thousand citizens can distinguish true good from the appearance of good; and when the opinion of the main and most virtuous and most experienced citizens is dense, uniform, constant in the eyes of the authority, around an improvement to be introduced, an evil to be avoided, a government that is not blind, does not hesitate to give this opinion the sanction of law.”

Ultimately, the basis of this political creed would come from feeling and sentiment, which was a usual Enlightenment trope, with its rehabilitation of sensation, passion and appetite: “I would believe I am not far from the truth by saying that, both for their imaginative nature, and for their particular character, and for their past, many Italians still feel today, more than they think, Nor will the assertion seem strange to those who meditate well, unfortunately! The first and most powerful stimulus to form an opinion will always be the love of the fatherland: that which most of all ennobles the heart of man, and to which my words could ill explain, because they are a gift from heaven; This is almost an instinct that precedes reason, which it is then further trained...”

Felice Cavallotti, a fighter in the Garibaldian Corps, and prolific duelist who ultimately died in one, sounded the anti-clerical and anti-Catholic motive very clearly in his *Storia della insurrezione di Roma nel 1867*. He writes:

There is the reason for this century to come to the supreme levy against [the people's] implacable ancient adversary, the theocracy of Hildebrand, supported by the tradition of Torquemada and by the power of Loyola. A handful of lively young people becomes testamentary executor of several generations of martyrs, precursors, philosophers; almost unconsciously, they collect the reasons for world civilization under their tattered and glorious flag. They compel the papacy to confess to the nations...

If that isn't stark enough, he goes on:

The truth is that an institution like that of the papacy could not plant and nest for centuries in the hearts of a people. Not with impunity the Rome of the Caesars, which became the Rome of the popes, for centuries she had been forced to live and breathe in the corrupt environment where consciences passed through the filter, where the bonfires against reason raged, where all the secretions of fanaticism, all the miasmas of the world reaction, were deposited. No wonder that the temporal principality of the popes, which arose from greed and lust for universal domination, was gradually forming a vast branching of interests more than enough to fill in itself the short orbit where its endless desires stirred. Rome, which became the capital of catholicity, had to collect the sediments of all kinds and in its womb. A cosmopolitan jumble, a refuse of nations, came to plant the neighborhoods. And around the chair of Peter, gradually arose an artificial population, fictitious, without physiognomy, without homogeneity, without proper life, extraneous to the classic memories of the place and to the traditions of the lineage, living with the papacy of the same galvanic life, identifying itself in him, instead of in the people, it was an army encamped, with its ambulances and carriages.

A better anti-papal polemic could scarcely be uttered.

Ubaldo Perruzzi, propagandist for Piedmontese annexation, in *Tuscany and its Grand Dukes* (1849): "The instinct of the people, always so sure, revealed to the Tuscans that what was most advantageous to them and to Italy was their annexation to Piedmont. And, in fact, Piedmont has shown itself worthy of being the head of Italy, both by its loyalty to liberal principles and by the bravery of its king and his army on the battlefield, in the war of independence. And this is what makes all wise spirits look good, which tends to increase the preponderance of Piedmont."

Another indication of Francophilia (and desire to court Napoleon III's favor as an ally) comes from prominent Italian statesman Carlo Boncompagni's *Francia e Italia: lettere politiche* (1873), published after the victories had been consolidated. The preface goes:

The book you hold in your hands is inspired by a benevolent affection for France. Do you frown, do you wrinkle your nose? Listen to me to know where that propensity proceeds in me. My youth dates back to the time when the name of France was for all a symbol of freedom and progress. We hoped for the regeneration of our homeland from liberal ideas, and, in the language of the time, we might as well say French ideas as much as liberal ideas. This saying revealed a great mistake of ours, since no nation regenerates itself as long as it has such poverty of spirit to think with the ideas of others rather than with its own. Tie this maxim to your finger, which I will later have occasion to remind you of. But isn't it a notable fact that no Christian nation has ever given its sisters as much hope as the French nation did? If you have not already done so, disclaim this message with impartiality, and you will see that neither the lying flattery of some French nor the gullibility of us foreigners are enough to explain it, but that it took so many hopes to arouse so many hopes in that nation of merles that do not they were unmatched by defects, but they were not vulgar. Of these merits I will mention only one. – The war campaign of 1859 to which Italy is bound by its independence. – Who else ever did Italy an equal benefit? It was Napoleon III you will say, the initiator of the enterprise, and not the French nation, and you will be right. But do you think that Napoleon could have done the same if he had ruled over another nation? I do not think so. Now you see that, if I love France, I have my good reasons, and you must remember that these reasons of gratitude already moved the minds of all Italians.

He also credited Napoleon for raising the Italian Question to the European consciousness: “Yet, Napoleon said (perhaps it was true) that he thus wanted to prepare the future independence of Italy, and in reality the great changes that he introduced between us greatly influenced our new destinies: for those changes he began after the year 1814 made alive, first for us, then for foreigners, one Italian question.”

One of the greater Italian radical intellectuals, however, was Terenzio Mamiani della Rovere, who sought to rewrite international law on a basis of “rights of nations” and self-determination of peoples. His book, *Rights of Nations* (1860), features a gloating preface by a certain Englishman, Roger Acton, who pompously declares that “No temple or Basilica of any creed or ritual should more veritably be hallowed for us, than the venerable precincts of our Parliament at Westminster.” What a pious faith that is!

“The State wholly possesses itself, nobody outside it can ascribe to himself ownership of it,” Terenzio says. Of Austria, he writes “[but] what State could with less reason or with a worse grace appeal to the sanction of time? For in Austria everything is new. Its princes, who are not now Hapsburgs, are new : the transmission of their dominion, as invented and settled by the Pragmatic Sanction, is new; the majority of its old provinces belonged to the body of the vast Germanic Empire, and when that was abolished in 1815 Austria took them and appropriated them by a title quite different from the ancient title. It reigns in Bohemia after having torn up the primitive constitution and public liberties of that country by force; it

gained a piece of Poland by the act of spoliation accomplished in the last century; it gained Venice by the treaty of Campoformio; and in 1849, with a stroke of the pen, it obliterated the historic law of Hungary.”

Diplomatic congresses and tribunals become unnecessary in light of his principles: “These censures, if we may be permitted to mitigate their harshness, cannot be entirely denied. Be that as it may, we have already observed, and it will be useful again to remark, that if it is very desirable for princes and statesmen to confer together to prevent wars and revolutions, or to stop their course and restore peace and quiet to the world, it is still more salutary and profitable that their most frequent and threatening causes should be appeased and removed. And for this it is chiefly necessary that the order of kingdoms and their reciprocal relations should be based on the eternal truths of liberty, equality, and justice, so that with these truths conventions and all manner of accords between the peoples may be imbued, and so that the authority of treaties, as being wholly founded on reason, may not appear violent or grievous to any.”

All states that aren’t nation-states are unjust: “Let it therefore be held for a maxim of international law that where there is not any competent moral unification or any spontaneous social communion, and where, in short, the own country of those peoples is not a single one, but there are several and diverse ones, there is violence but not justice, there is conquest but not self-renunciation; and force though dressed up in legal forms, retains its unaltered quality.” But even more explicitly, “that those congregations of men, which do attain to constituting a country of their own and reach thereby the ultimate degree of perfect association, are altogether and absolutely free, not to be coerced ; and on the other hand, that those factitious and violent political conjunctions, *in which there are several States and several own countries, are such as it is always desirable to put an end to, and such as it is right and a duty, in some cases, even to put an end to with the sword.*”

The possibility of any dynastic union being ruled out as criminal and in need of annihilation, neither can there be a hierarchy betwixt independent states, since “according to exemplary abstract law, there may be no States dependent on other States and exhibiting a moral and political duplicity. Every people lives with its proper and independent life, or else, by its own free act, it resolves the self-rule which is competent to it into another greater and better one, sharing equally in its rights and duties.”

The Italian radicals thus draw on consistent themes: the horrendous yoke of Austria and its allied princes (i.e. the Austrian black legend), the nation as an inviolably free and equal constitutive element of state authority, the wickedness of the Pope and the Catholic clergy, etc. But did these accusations against the Italian princes, against Lombardy-Venetia, against the Two Sicilies and so on, have any merit?

Lombardy-Venetia

With regard to the Austrian presence in Italy via the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia created in 1815, its *raison d'être* was adeptly given by Joseph Maria Ritter von Aresin-Fatton in *Der Besitz Venetiens. Entgegnungen* (1862). He foresaw that granting Veneto to a unified Italian state would increase its bellicosity against Dalmatia and Istria, and described Veneto's role in Austria's possessions as such:

Just as the revolution demands Veneto for the sole reason that Italian is spoken in Veneto, so it becomes South Tyrol, Trieste, Fiume, Dalmatia and the Italian cantons of Switzerland, where Italian is also spoken. This is so true that even today these areas are reclaimed by her before she even owns Veneto. Would treaty provisions stop the revolution ? Where are the guarantees of this immeasurable great power that only manifests itself in destruction? Sardinia cannot give guarantees that its very existence needs most.

Veneto gives the southwestern war theater of Austria a beneficial depth. A single army covers Tyrol, the coastal region, Croatia and Dalmatia, the left wing of the Rhine defense, the routes to Vienna and the Orient. Austria need not divide and pull apart its defensive power there; it can concentrate it closely, and this concentrated power is ten times more valuable in the strong position of Veneto than in any other. Veneto is currently an essential condition of Austria's great power position.

Surrendering Veneto to Piedmont would not make Austria financially easier, nor would it make war with it impossible. The same doctrines in whose name Veneto is required also apply to other parts of Austria. This would again have to set up a great military apparatus, military precautionary measures, also a high number of troops, if it were not to be pushed from the Adriatic Sea and from Dalmatia – the only difference would be that this apparatus would be 30 miles closer to the heart of the empire, outside of all natural and artificial bases, thus it would be more uncertain in its effectiveness...

Not long ago the sufferings of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been a very similar catchphrase for nation-addicted agitation. Sardinia had hastened to confiscate this deplorable land in order to put an end to its sufferings. But scarcely had the presumptuous judge, abusing the faith of a naive people, sat down on the judgment seat, when he himself was challenged in court. The deceived people spoke the verdict of the impudent deceiver, and the mask of the dazzling principle, tearing the usurped mission from his head, revealed the nakedness of his nature hungry for land and domination. Martial law and execution, dungeon and civil war, fire and looting of village and town are the arguments with which he now proves his innocence. He demands high treason so that he can count, but he punishes the faithfully fulfilled duty as high treason; The robber claims loyalty, but punishes them with death as loyalty to the robbed.

Was Lombardy-Venetia (and the Italic port cities under Austria more generally) misgoverned? Not at all. A good revisionist work is David Laven's *Venice and Venetia Under the Habsburgs, 1815-1835*. An 1837 statistical report on the Italian states describes Lombardy and Venice's great recovery under the Habsburgs from the wreckage wrought by

Napoleonic plunder. There existed sophisticated public health infrastructure and favorable real wages. The natives of Trieste (properly speaking part of the Austrian Littoral, but proximate; also a cause for envy among Venetian merchants) were exempt from conscription.

Kent Roberts Greenfield's essay on *Commerce and New Enterprise at Venice, 1830-48* (1939) describes, among other things, a railway boom: "Architectural restorations financed by the Austrian government, the municipality, and the church in the period following 1830 undoubtedly represent a general effort to make Venice more attractive to visitors and to realize a profit on a city that is itself a museum. The railroad which was opened in the early forties from Mestre, opposite Venice on the edge of the Lagoon, to Padua, and by 1846 extended from Padua to Vicenza, brought a great influx of new visitors. In 1844 the movement of passengers between Padua and Venice (163,425) almost equaled the combined population of the two cities. A traveler described the railway which carried him in 1847 across the just completed viaduct into the city as 'an artery by which the living blood of today is being poured into the exhausted frame of Venice.'"

The construction of a free port in 1830 led to a boom in trade with England and France, and an expanding merchant navy: "But by 1844 the number of ships "of long course" entering the port was four times as great as in 1823. It had increased by 100 per cent since 1836. Such an increase is evidence not only of commercial recovery but also of the expansion of that part of the trade of Venice which measures the position of the city in the commercial life of Europe. It seemed to the Venetian merchants to give their city the rank of "one of the great ports of the Mediterranean." Actually, in tonnage of shipments, Venice in 1838 ranked sixth among the fifteen leading ports of the Mediterranean basin-outstripped by Marseilles, Trieste, Constantinople, Genoa, and Leghorn [Livorno] and just ahead of Sira (in the Greek Archipelago) and Naples."

So too was industrial mechanization taking place: "In the decade preceding 1848 several manufactories of a new type appeared, with central workshops and power-driven machinery — forerunners of industrial capitalism. The first was a factory on the Brenta which made stearin candles, a plant erected on what then seemed a grand scale and equipped with up-to-date machinery.' There were two sugar refineries at Venice, and at least one of these was a considerable establishment. It was modernized in the early forties, its proprietor introducing "all the discoveries of modern chemistry,' and was reported in 1847 as being equipped with a steam engine and a high-pres- sure boiler. A steam-driven flour and rice mill was established in an abandoned church. Another factory manufactured white lead. In 1839 a company contracted to supply the city with illumination by gas, and the gasometer which it put up was recommended as one of the wonders of a new Venice."

Public works investment: "Beginning in 1831, the government of the municipality laid out substantial sums in improvements. Streets were paved, fondamente repaired, bridges improved with new steps and iron balustrades, balusters set up along the banks of canals, a central slaughter-house erected, the Palazzo Giustiniani-Foscari bought and renovated to serve as the locale of technical schools opened in 1843, and the streets and the Piazza San

Marco lighted by gas. At the same time, churches were being reopened, repaired, and beautified by the contributions of the pious; new churches were being built; and a return of magnificence and display in ecclesiastical ceremonies was observed. In the forties the section of the Milan-Venice railway from the Lagoon to Padua and Vicenza was being built. By 1846 the bridge from Mestre to Venice was under construction, amid a bright aura of hopes. All these building operations furnished employment, stimulated importation, and, attracting a new host of visitors, brought trade to the shopkeepers and increased the revenue from the consumption taxes levied by the municipality.”

Travelers were commenting on the incessant activity: “Take a turn through the Piazza, the Frezzeria, the Merceria, the Rialto; everywhere is presented the consoling spectacle of activity; stores frequented with people; manufactories in which work is fervid; and where once the eye shrank in grief from the number of shops that were closed, now with patriotic joy one sees at almost every step new ones being constructed, old ones being made and refurnished.”

What was the problem, then? Well, good as it was, not good enough for the chamber of commerce in Venice, who resented the status of Trieste:

Venice is free, but does not possess the advantages which freedom gives to Trieste and which imparted the impulse to its great renown and prosperity; Venice is free, but is not exempted from financial inquisitions or the peril of having at any time to undergo them. Venice is free, but subject to conscription on land and sea. Venice is free, but the books of the merchants are not exempt from the stamp tax; and the registration tax, which does not exist even in Lombardy, besides the burden which it imposes, ill accords with the celerity of action that commercial movements require. Venice is free, but consumption duties, although much reduced are exacted on various commodities [entailing] inspections, vexations, abuses; Venice is free, but the merchants pay an annual contribution to the treasury and the additional tax in support of the Chamber, while the merchants of Trieste, exempt from the treasury contribution, share only in determined quotas the expenses required by the needs of their representatives and by the commercial office.

Neither was this some sort of repressive state. David Laven’s essay *Law and Order in Habsburg Venetia 1814-1835* goes into detail, and what becomes clear is just how lenient the Austrian secret police treated political conspirators:

Even when suspected members of sects were arrested, they were rarely treated harshly. In the Mantua trials of those implicated in the Milan-Brescia conspiracy great care was taken to avoid a witch-hunt and the emperor himself saw to it that those convicted, even though guilty of high treason, received sentences far lighter than those dictated by the statutes. Similarly the trials of Confalonieri and his fellow conspirators were not the stage-managed events that many Italian historians have alleged: as Marco Meriggi has written, there is a *leggenda nera* surrounding the prosecution of this group of aristocrats and literati which bears little relation to the truth. Even the members of the Polesine carbonari brought to trial in 1818, who were undoubtedly the most harshly treated of all the early nineteenth-century conspirators against Austrian rule, had their death sentences commuted. Indeed, the conduct of the Austrian authorities, despite the hysterical counter-claims of patriot propagandists such as Enrico Misley, was based on the strictest observance of the law. The great historian of the *risorgimento*, Giorgio Candeloro, remarked that the famous lawyer, Romagnosi, was able to escape conviction when accused of membership of the carboneria because of his legal expertise. But this begs further questions about the many others who received similar acquittals but lacked his talents. Austrian courts acquitted because they were rigorous in the extreme about legal procedure; they were determined to obtain only just convictions, and would not convict without plentiful evidence. The Austrians conducted no purges; nor were they prepared to see innocent men imprisoned, however dangerous they were rumoured to be. Rather than commit an obvious enemy of the regime on scant evidence, they were prepared to continue rigorous surveillance long after acquittal.

More remarkable still is that the administrative bulletins sent by police to Vienna frequently championed the rights of the subjects they were governing, and were unafraid to criticize imperial decisions in the interests of justice:

It was part of the brief of the police to provide not only regular information on the complexion of public opinion but also on the conditions that moulded that opinion – in short on the conditions of the country as a whole. From the very earliest days of Austrian rule comprehensive reports were made on a monthly basis. These so-called ‘political bulletins’ were supplemented by less important ‘administrative bulletins’, concentrating on administration at the level of the comuni. Sometimes the two were conflated as a single bollettino politico-amministrativo. These were sent to the governor, who then passed them to key figures in Vienna. The nature of these reports (which were in essence much like those compiled by Napoleon’s prefects) changed little during Francis’s reign, usually beginning with a discussion of public opinion before addressing a wide range of subjects including taxes, military service, fiscal matters, ‘infortuni’ (anything from floods and hail storms to fire and pellagra), health, the conduct of public officials, the state of the clergy, public charity and so on. What is most striking about these reports is the readiness of the police chiefs and delegati responsible for their compilation to present information (however unpalatable) with remarkable directness. Moreover, despite subsequent attempts by liberal and nationalist propagandists to discredit the wide-ranging interests of the police, perhaps the most remarkable characteristic of many reports is their readiness both to criticise the status quo and to suggest possible reforms in the interests of the local population.

Hence in the great famine of the mid-1810s it was the prefects, delegati and police chiefs who urged the remittance of taxes because of the disastrous economic situation. Similarly, throughout the longstanding debate on the hated poll tax that lasted until the revolution of 1848, it was police officials – commissari, direttori, delegati – who were most aware of the hardships endured by the peasantry and who proved most eager to improve their lot.

But it was not only the agricultural poor who were championed by the police, as is made particularly clear in the bulletins sent to Kolowrat throughout the 1830s. In these reports, occasionally signed by the governor, but generally penned by the director of police or delegati, the brilliant Bohemian (who from the late 1820s was second only to Metternich in his influence over Francis) was presented with a focussed picture of the interests of all classes of Venetians. The well-rounded but concise picture of Venetian affairs contrasted sharply with the usually prolix official correspondence emanating from most other sections of the bureaucracy. But again what is perhaps most striking about the bulletins is their outspoken articulation of Venetian grievances and open suggestions for remedying them.

Overall, it is no surprise that Count Johann Bernhard von Rechberg und Rothenlöwen said to Metternich in 1862 that “We can rigorously support the momentary ascendancy of such and such a power and accept the territorial alterations which will be the consequence of it. But we can never consent to such alterations made in the name of the principle of nationalism, for we would thus sign our own death warrant.”

Modena, Parma and Tuscany

With regards to the Duchy of Modena — a state continuously ruled by the Este family from 1452 to 1859 (from 1803 onward by the Habsburg-Este branch, but practical power interrupted from 1796 to 1814 owing to Napoleon), we have magnificent testimony by Constantine Phipps, 1st Marquess of Normanby in the form of a report, *A Vindication of the Duke of Modena* (1861). Modena's highly effective measures for poor relief, public works, and education are screencapped here:

The patrimonial state in practice. God bless Francesco V d'Austria-Este and the noble patrimony of Modena that was robbed from him in 1859. pic.twitter.com/RAqNyOyANc

— Nigel Carlsbad (@pompilivs) March 20, 2021

The primary slanderer against the Duke of Modena was British liberal stalwart William Gladstone, who similarly riled against the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. But nonetheless Modena's record of economic and social development was quite impressive for such a small state, and Lord Normanby emphasizes the Duke's virtuous character, with the ineffectual attempts at rebellion barely getting any supporters cited as proof:

The reader will hardly require to be reminded that the Duke was an absolute sovereign ; furthermore, that, being the absolute sovereign of a small instead of a large State, his opportunities and obligations were altogether exceptional. As the entire population of his State amounted barely to 600,000, it was really possible for him to exert a personal superintendence over all the administrative arrangements of his realm , while, on the other hand, he was besieged by appeals to exercise his functions, which, in virtue of the exceptional facilities he possessed, it was his duty as well as his desire to entertain. The reader accustomed to the action of administration in a great country, such as England or France, will have a difficulty in comprehending the capacity of an individual to deal with such a variety of details, and many of these such minutiae. But Modena was a State in which minutiae were proportionally less minute, in which they could hardly escape an observant eye, and in which , if they were passed unheeded by an indifferent one, innumerable voices were clamorous for its attention. Under these conditions, the Duke, like his predecessors, was solicited, was induced, nay, was even compelled to interfere, and the only question here is the animus of his intervention , was it dictated by a humane and liberal spirit, and was it, or was it not, of a character to be regarded by him now with honourable pride ? The Duke might point to the many positive evidences that his government was wise, just, and beneficent ; that it was gentle and tolerant almost beyond precedent ; and that, under its sway, the Modenese enjoyed as large a measure of comfort and prosperity as has fallen to the lot of any people at any stage of their history. Let us only remark the testimonies respecting it which are contained in the correspondence of vigilant observers, and some of which is printed in Appendix B.

“The people of Modena ,” says Lord Normanby, then her Majesty’s representative at the courts of Central Italy, “ are the lightest taxed in Italy. The Duke of Modena has a very large private fortune, with which he deals liberally for public objects, though simple and unostentatious in his private habits. This furnishes one of the most successful instances of personal government that ever came within my knowledge.”

In the same despatch , the same writer observes : “I must have mentioned to your Lordship, on the occasion of my last visit to Modena, that there is something very prepossessing in the simple, earnest manner of the Duke. I hardly ever met, in any rank of life, with any one who more surely conveyed the impression of a thoroughly honest man , who meant to do his duty ; and although he has been found stern upon occasion, his love of justice has become proverbial amongst his subjects .”

In a very significant despatch, dated November 25, 1857 , we are told by the same official authority of the difficulties which the Duke encountered in attempting to develop municipal institutions among his subjects. And we find throughout this correspondence traces of another difficulty, the difficulty contrived for him by conspirators of twelve years’ standing, and who appropriated one corner of his territory as a convenient laboratory for the murderous machinations of their secret societies. Nevertheless, when the opportunity of insurrection came, as the Duke himself observed in 1856, in that which he had always considered the only disaffected corner of his States, the district of Carrara, there was not found a single traitor ready

for action. On the other hand, the Duke had to struggle for ten years against this conspiracy, yet so light and lenient were his measures of repression, that during his whole reign there were not more than five persons who received capital punishment for all the crimes that were perpetrated in the whole of Modena.

But most revealing is Lord Normanby's condemnation of his own government's conduct. The examples given are those of Lord Russell who maintained a public face of neutrality while covertly aiding the British Legion of 1860 into Italy, as well as the connection of Garibaldi's expedition to a certain rambunctious barrister Edwin James — this is mostly referring to the rape of Naples rather than Modena in particular, but it is part of the overall Italian intervention:

When one reads these words, “ Her Majesty has through out these transactions abstained from any active interference,” one could not expect to hear that the whole English fleet had again appeared off Naples, and that for the first time a portion of the crews and marines had landed, and had marched miles into a disturbed part of the country ; -and yet this is not the first time that these Ministers have been insensible to the peculiar responsibilities entailed by such a delegation as the authority to speak in the name of the Sovereign .

In the Commissioners’ Speech of the 28th of August last year, are these words : “ If no Foreign Powers interfered, and if the Italians are left to settle their own affairs, the peace of Europe need not be disturbed .”

Yet a few days before, whilst Lord Palmerston may have been composing this very speech , he had given direct encouragement to the formation of that British Legion which subsequently disgraced the name it bore, and which certainly was not formed in order to leave the Italians to settle their own affairs. ” * The Minister being asked as to the illegality of enlistments in England under Garibaldi, gave this useful hint as to the mode of evading the law – speaking, as is said, in the presence of Major Styles – alias, Private Styles , who by special favour was sitting under the gallery in his Garibaldian red shirt — “ These persons in answering the invitation of certain officers and gentlemen, might allege that they were only going to see what Mount Etna was doing !” The pleasant old gentleman will perhaps try the same facetious fraud upon the Foreign Powers, whom he requires not to interfere, and assure them officially – as the proceedings of the two mountains are somewhat similar – that Her Majesty’s forces have only landed to see what Mount Vesuvius “ is doing .” Speaking seriously , can a grave and orderly people , as the English are , like thus to be joked into a violation of all laws , treaties, and obligations, by one who for more than half a century has been employed to administer and observe them ?

I will not stop to notice as a curious example of the Minister’s notion of non – intervention the confidential mission of rather a singular agent, Mr. Edwin James, who alleged that he was acting under the personal instructions of the Prime Minister, conveyed to him in a parting interview , confirmed as these pretensions were by the published fact that he was accompanied even into the presence of Garibaldi by the step – grandson and private secretary of the Minister. If, as is stated by the Royal Commission, “ Her Majesty has throughout these transactions abstained from any active interference,” it is unfortunate that Garibaldi’s first landing was much facilitated at Marsala by the fortuitous presence of a British man -of-war, and by the absence on shore of a portion of the crew ; that, according to the reports in the usual sources of information of those not unfavourable to the enterprise, three naval officers in British uniform assisted at Garibaldi’s bivouac, ten miles from Palermo, the night before the capital was attacked ; that from the same source we learn many desertions had taken place from H.M.S. “ London ” to join Garibaldi’s corps ; and that the guns of the invaders were placed in position to attack the Royalists in their lines before Capua by men serving in Her Majesty’s ship “ Renown . ” When one knows that such things have been — all in the much – abused name of non – intervention – one cannot doubt the feeling of every Government in Europe, not the partisan of universal

revolution, when this practical interpretation is given to the last words of the Prime Minister. In the name of humanity it was sought to extract from him some assurance that he would endeavour to check the cruelties perpetrated throughout the Kingdom of Naples on the native population by the Piedmontese generals, he replied : “ I can assure the honourable gentleman, with much satisfaction, that Her Majesty’s Government will do no such thing.” “ With much satisfaction ” indeed ! One must then conclude that it was “ with most sincere satisfaction ” the Prime Minister heard of the last exploit of his favourite, General Cialdini.

At the very time that the English fleet arrived to uphold Piedmontese domination the facts occurred thus described in the official bulletin, 14 August : “ **Ieri mattina all’alba giustizia fu fatta contro Pontelandolfo e Casalduni.**” (Yesterday at dawn justice was done upon Pontelandolfo and Casalduni.”

This concise and cynical announcement means that at break of day two towns (one of five thousand, the other of three thousand inhabitants) were completely burned to the ground by Piedmontese troops. It appears to the credit of some of the troops that they at first refused to obey such diabolical commands, but General Cialdini (in whose energy Lord Palmerston has such just confidence) sent his A.D.C. with strict orders that his pleasure should be executed to the letter. And all the aged and the infants of both sexes who could escape the flames in which they were thus suddenly enveloped were without cover or shelter thrown upon the wide world. All ! no not all : the exceptions proclaimed make the monstrous cruelty more conspicuous. “ Seven or eight houses of liberals were spared . ” So that out of a population of eight thousand the Piedmontese could only find these units who sufficiently sympathised with them not to be exterminated by fire as well as sword . *

The horror speaks for itself.

The Duchy of Parma, in the hands of Spanish Bourbons (later styled House of Bourbon-Parma) since 1731 upon the extinction of the agnatic Farnese lineage, was of much more humble means. But from a travelogue we read:

The charitable institutions of Piacenza are numerous. One may be instanced as interesting to the passing traveler: the Istituto Gazzola, founded for the maintenance and education of young females, who also receive marriage portions. The pupils are taught drawing, and the house contains a very good collection of objects useful for instruction in the fine arts...

San Lazzaro, so called from an ancient hospital for lepers, upon the site of which is now erected an extensive ecclesiastical seminary. The celebrated Cardinal Alberoni, who was born in the neighbouring town of Fiorenzuola, left all his property to this institution. Besides the students, it supports many poor. The college contains some good pictures. The Apparition of our Lord to St. Francis, by Zuccherò; a Virgin and Child, by Pietro Perugino ; two paintings of Soldiers, by Borgognone; his own portrait, by M.A. di Caravaggio. In the church is the monument of the Cardinal founder. The whole institution is conducted upon the most benevolent and liberal principles.

The administrative achievements of Marie Louise, Duchess of Parma are recounted retrospectively in *Résumé historique de l'administration du duché de Parme et Plaisance* (1867), evidently of an 'enlightened' bent, with certain free trading and liberal accomplishments already done:

1. The publication of a civil and criminal code , has been called Code Marie-Louise , composed of all that is of best in the Code Napoleon (of course consistent with the policy that prevailed in 1816) , this immortal code which has been, which is and will for a long time be the model of all that has been done in this genre; the abolition of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and, consequently, the full preservation of the rights of judicial authority; public notice of judgments and related debates, either civil or criminal; and finally the equality of all men before the law.
2. The retention in their functions of all the employees who had served under the Empire; all kinds of contributions from land rents, reduced by half, and this in a country almost entirely agricultural, which was equally advantageous for the rich and for the poor, since the former, whose rents were increasing , could more easily come to the aid of the class disinherited by lot, while awaiting the introduction of industry and manufactures which were then entirely lacking in the country; the price of a passport reduced from ten to four francs; the removal of all duties on furniture and horses; a very appreciable reduction in the land tax and on licensing fees; the license of hunting reduced to ten francs, contributions from direct customs taxation on items such as tobacco, salt, stamped paper, lottery, beverages, transit, etc., reduced in turn; Finally, administration of customs entrusted to intelligent, honest and clear-sighted officials, and was set at a rate that favored prodigiously known wine exports, of silk, grain and cattle, while at the same time, it facilitated the importation of products of English and French factories, for the limited rights of entry. It would be a waste of time to dwell on this fact to prove how much this kind of free trade has been beneficial for commerce as well as for the treasury itself.

Does not sound like much of a despotism. And for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, ruled by the House of Habsburg-Lorraine since 1737, an English statistical report from 1837 noted the virtual lack of outmigration: "It is a remarkable fact that there is scarcely any emigration from Tuscany to foreign lands. Even in the years when the high prices of food have compelled large numbers in other parts of Europe to quit their native country, few Tuscans have abandoned their homes. No doubt the metairie system has had much influence on this state of things, but probably much less than that security against enormous fluctuations in the prices of the principal necessities of life, which is produced by low tariffs of a liberal commercial policy. During many months of the year the migration into Tuscany from the Roman, Sardinian and Lombard States is very considerable. There is also a great influx of the northern Tuscan population towards the districts of the south in the winter season."

The same Englishman goes on to gloat over the enlightened economic liberal policies of Tuscan prime minister Vittorio Fossombroni, with reports later being cited that "no state profits more than England by the liberality of Tuscan legislation."

In fact, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany was unique in that it abolished both capital punishment and torture in 1786, with Italian unification and Piedmontization bringing it back. Funny how these things go. But much as the English profited from Tuscany's liberality, in the end, in May 1859, the last Grand Duke Ferdinand IV would be reduced to feeble protests in Vienna over the dispossession of his sovereign estates: "It was the object of the recent outrages, committed by the revolution which was excited by Piedmont, to make me consent to acts which were in opposition to the honour of my person as a Sovereign, as well as to my will, and to declare war; transgressing the primary duty inherent in sovereignty. In view of such a state of things, I found myself compelled to leave dear Tuscany, and, with my family, to seek an asylum away from it in a friendly State, which was bound to me by Treaties of mutual assistance. Already, on the morning of the 27th April, I solemnly protested at Florence against these outrages, in presence of the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to my person, declaring those Acts to be null and void, and of none effect; and now, in Ferrara, on this first of May, I once more solemnly protest against those outrages committed against me; and I repeat the declarations of the nullity of the aforesaid Acts then formally pronounced, which openly tend to overthrow a state of things sanctioned by the Treaty of Vienna of 1815, signed and guaranteed by the European Powers. I therefore announce that all the responsibility of those acts will fall upon those who have, contrary to all justice, accomplished the same."

Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

Undoubtedly the most maligned of the pre-unification Italian states, however, is the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Naples and Sicily), or "Southern Italy." Once a kingdom, upon the destruction of its sovereignty it was reduced to a mere "question," the Southern Question — the ineradicable development gap between North and South, the bane of Italy as a modern state. When the Neapolitans had their Bourbons, they had their pride as a nation; and when they were robbed of their dear monarch, from that point on they have only been a burden, a stereotype of unruly Moorish mafiosi. The destruction of this great and venerable state, the Two Sicilies, ought to be regarded as one of the greatest tragedies of modern history.

The first thing to point out is that Naples was a seat of Enlightenment thought, perhaps even something of an apex, especially in law and political economy. Of particular eminence are Antonio Genovesi (and his famous Diocesina), Gaetano Filangieri (correspondent of Benjamin Franklin), Ferdinando Galiani, Giuseppe Palmieri, and, of course, Giambattista Vico.

The Two Sicilies was home to many Italian firsts, of which an extensive list is here. We may cite the Officine di Pietrarsa, the first Italian locomotive factory; the Naples-Portici railway, first in Italy; advances in earthquake-resistant architecture, and metalworking more generally. The dominant sulfur mining in Sicily, backed by an extensive merchant navy, was another point in favor.

Granted that development was uneven, there was no reason to assume it would have remained so. Further, that the Two Sicilies was the most competently financially managed state in Italy was noted by many, including posthumously by liberal historian and one-time Prime Minister, Francesco Severio Nitti, in *Nord e Sud* (1900):

In 1860 the situation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, compared to the other states of the peninsula, was the following, given its wealth and the number of its inhabitants:

1. Taxes were lower than in other states.
2. State property and ecclesiastical assets represented an enormous wealth, and, taken together, exceeded the assets of the same nature owned by other states.
3. The very tenuous public debt was four times lower than that of Piedmont, and much lower than that of Tuscany.
4. The number of public employees, calculating on the basis of pensions in 1860, was half that in Tuscany and almost half that in the Kingdom of Sardinia.
5. The quantity of metallic currency in circulation, later withdrawn from the circulation of the State, was twice as much in absolute terms as that of all the other States of the peninsula united together.

An invaluable resource for the Two Sicilies is Msgr. Luigi del Pozzo's *Cronaca civile e militare delle Due Sicilie sotto la dinastia Borbonica dall'anno 1734 in poi* (1857), a year-by-year almanac covering political, legal, cultural and scientific developments, including patent grants, in the Two Sicilies from 1734 to 1857. For instance we see in 1838 the establishment of a telegraphic corps, new orphanages, a prohibition of dueling, and repressions on the slave trade. Which in fact reminds me that submarine telegraph cables were another thing the Two Sicilies were early adopters of. 1843 sees shipyard, banking and building a port at Molfetta, Apulia.

Moreover, for the year 1856, we read of an interesting anecdote concerning one Sicilian wunderkind:

The boy Girolamo Majo of Palermo at the age of 10 offers a spectacle of himself for the possession of great knowledge, for shrewd judgment, for exquisite feeling and for fertile memory: in addition to Italian, he speaks Greek, Latin, English, French and Spanish. Having come to the knowledge of the King, the MS deigned with a resolution of last March 21 to grant a pension of 450 ducats per year up to the age of 21 for the special education of this privileged child.

Clearly, this was a monarchy that valued the potential of its subjects. What, then, was the motive for its destruction?

Well, one aspect was the aforementioned lucrative Sicilian sulfur mining industry. At one point this came close to war, in the Sulfur Crisis of 1840. On April 2, 1840 the following transpired:

An unexpected piece of news has just reached us: Sicily is threatened with a blockade by England. Already eight vessels of war belonging to the nation are, it is reported, to be sent against the island. However exaggerated may have been the number of naval forces intended to make a demonstration upon the coast of the kingdom of Sicily, it is certain that the Neapolitan Government is embarking with all possible speed troops to be opposed to the disembarkation of the English navy... This threatening aggression on the part of England against a friendly nation has for its reason the refusal of the King to break through the treaty which gives up the monopoly of the Sicilian sulphur to a French company — Taix, Aycard and Co.

Sulfur was a core input in the 19th century chemical revolution (esp. for finishing textiles), as surmised from this diagram:

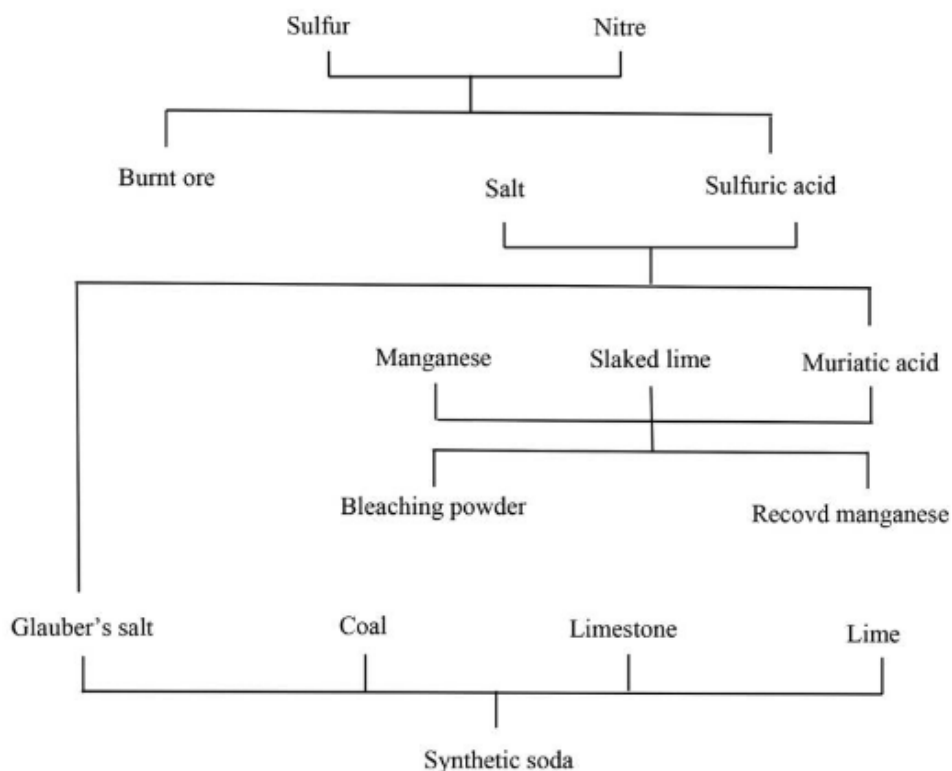


Figure 1. Raw materials and products of the early British chemical industry. Source: Adapted from Clow and Clow, *Chemical Revolution*, 111.

The Neapolitan school of political economy with its *via media* between liberalism and protection, was also a factor in the decision to grant a franchise to a French company. But the threat of war was effective, and French mediation defused the crisis in England's favor: "Sulfur was more or less consciously used as a bargaining counter: it was needed by the British, and there was no easy and ready substitute. The disparity of forces, however, was huge, and the British did not hesitate to enforce the cancellation of the Taix-Aycard contract,

in spite of the fact that even British lawyers claimed that the contract did not breach the 1816 treaty. The first step was to remove British protection against Albanian pirates. British merchants also mobilized powerful political force in Britain. From 1839, the British started to demand not only the cancellation of the contract but also compensation for the losses of British merchants who could not freely export their sulfur. “Do you know that we are at war?” Palmerston casually asked the Neapolitan representative in London in 1840. Taix-Aycard soon demanded compensation in case the contract should be rescinded. Ferdinand II expected to have international diplomatic support, but when British warships started seizing Neapolitan shipping, there were no protests. Eventually, with the mediation of France, the contract was rescinded in July 1840, and the Two Sicilies had to pay compensations for British merchants and Taix-Aycard, as well as to remove protective duties, thereby killing the Neapolitan textile industry. There was no lack of cynicism in the affair, as British merchants, instead of having losses, made significant profits speculating on the price of sulfur. In their turn, Taix and Aycard, together with other producers and mine owners, speculated with sulfur when the price was high and still held huge stocks when the price fell.”

This was, of course, a great humiliation for the Two Sicilies, and remained a chip on the English shoulder. But I am not a historical materialist and I hardly intend to imply some pure economic motive. Another major turning point, and this again involved William Gladstone, was the manufactured cause-celebre around the conditions of radical political prisoners in Naples. It was an event that in fact strongly parallels the hysteria over the Uighurs today.

This wasn't any mere editorializing, it was a well-planned controversy that led to England and France breaking off all diplomatic connections with the Two Sicilies at the end of the Crimean War in 1856 at the Congress of Paris, leaving the Two Sicilies isolated and easy prey 5 years later:

In the spring of 1854, various British newspapers began to wish that the active war footing of Britain and France might frighten King Ferdinand II into lightening the punishment of Carlo Poerio and some other political prisoners, if not releasing them. When the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia entered the war in January 1855, the *Morning Post* prophesized that ‘the allies will certainly be called upon, at some not far distant period, to settle the political condition of Italy, with a view of preventing future revolution’ (*Morning Post*, 26 Jan. 1855). When, in August, Gladstone called for a quick end to the Crimean War, *The Economist* took him to task: he of all people, the great opponent of ‘cruelty and oppression’, should recognize that a sinister line connected Poerio’s ‘damp dungeon’ and ‘gnawing chains’ to the King of Naples, the Emperor of Austria, and the Czar of Russia (*Economist*, 11 Aug. 1855); to end the war abruptly, without considering the prospects of peace and stability in Italy, was unconscionable. Lord John Russell and Palmerston made the same point in the House of Commons, noting that it was Gladstone who first brought to light the unacceptable suffering of the ‘best men’ in Naples (*Hansard*, 7 Aug. 1855).

Simmering wartime belligerence helps explain why British and French officials delivered a formal public rebuke of the King of Naples at the Paris Peace Conference in April, 1856; but Gladstone’s pamphlet and Poerio’s celebrity are the keys to understanding the peculiar form which this rebuke took: a demand for the release of political prisoners. Ostensibly, the goal was to strengthen monarchy and prevent revolution in Italy by convincing the most retrograde governments on the peninsula to make necessary reforms; and the Earl of Clarendon indicated that Britain continued to respect the rule of non-intervention in another sovereign’s internal affairs. Nevertheless, a month later, Clarendon’s message to King Ferdinand II, expressed in a letter to the British ambassador in Naples, William Temple, left open the possibility of direct British action: ‘The Powers of Europe feel that they have a right to employ all the means at their disposal to avert a calamity so grievous as the renewal of war, and the means they may decide on adopting for that purpose will be justified by necessity’ (*Correspondence* 1857, 1).

Understandably annoyed, Ferdinand dug in his heels: for the next six months, he turned down every proposed concession to Anglo-French demands, even when they were suggested by the Austrian and Russian governments. Finally, in October, the British and French governments broke diplomatic ties with Naples.

These suffering prisoners, nonetheless, somehow had access to British political envoys to smuggle their letters: “Luigi Settembrini’s experience on the island of Santo Stefano was exceptional. He was in regular contact with Anthony Panizzi in London and British consular officials in Naples; his letters reflect an ongoing preoccupation with plans for a British-orchestrated prison break; and thanks to the relatively lax security at his prison, which allowed trusted couriers to smuggle in multiple foreign newspapers, he and his cellmates were able to follow international events closely—in particular, the wide diplomatic repercussions of the Crimean War. There is little evidence of an international state of mind in the letters written by the individuals in other Neapolitan prisons. The critical controversy generated in 1851 by Gladstone’s Letters to Lord Aberdeen quickly raised expectations of a

royal amnesty, but when repeated rumors of their release proved false, prisoners stopped entertaining such hopes, and settled into a resigned if not pessimistic mode of communicating with loved ones.”

The bitter irony, in fact, is that all of these liberal crocodile tears over political prisoners actually *impeded* ongoing reform efforts, which had to be stymied lest they look as though they’re submitting to foreign pressure: “Moreover Neapolitan jurists and the government were aware of international debates on penal justice and imprisonment and of the necessity of introducing some reforms. After coming to the throne Ferdinand II ordered an inspection of the prisons, measures for improvement and the building of new establishments.

Nevertheless this reforming afflatus was supported neither economically nor administratively. However, just before Gladstone’s letters, Naples was looking for inspiration to promote a reform of its own prisons and the Neapolitan minister in London was asked to collect information on ‘the renowned prisons of London called “Penitentiary” and “Pentonville”’. But the timing and the wide media appeal of Gladstone’s letters would have made every reform or improvement of the prisoners’ treatment seem as though it was ‘being driven by a pamphlet’, so the impetus for change was abandoned.”

Fear and loathing in Savoy-Piedmont-Sardinia

But it was obviously Piedmont that masterminded the criminal deed of forced unification, and so it behooves us to explain how this Northern Alpine state became radicalized into championing the mantle of “free church in a free state,” “Italian independence,” and all these vacuous ideological abstractions. The crucial development was how Carlo Alberto (Charles Albert) of Sardinia went from a fairly conservative and personally devout monarch to rapidly becoming a radical firebrand in the 1840s, granting a constitution in 1848 (Statuto Albertino) and embarking on the so-called “First Italian War of Independence,” ending in humiliation at the hands of Feldmarschall Radetzky in the battlefields of Custoza and Novara, but inevitably sealing the further course of the Piedmontese state into self-induced “Italianization” for itself and “Piedmontization” for the rest of the peninsula.

The best primary sources I am aware of on the events in Piedmont in the 1840s, are the *Memorandum storico-politico* (1851) of Clemente Solaro della Margarita, a conservative statesman, foreign affairs minister, and Savoyard particularist. Also published in French as *Mémorandum historico-politique du 7 février 1835 au 9 octobre 1847*.

His verdict is quite pessimistic: “We have seen how Charles-Albert, carried away by the desire to enlarge his domains and acquire the glory of liberator of Italy, lent his hand to movements which weakened the State and nearly precipitated Italy into a abyss of irreparable calamities.”

“Above all else, he should never have favored, caressed those who nourished the hopes of the Italian crown, nor rewarded the poets who promised it, and the writers who announced with such improvidence the probability of success; he should have removed from the affairs of

state those who favored such ideas; not to allow that, under the pretext of charity, agriculture and belles-lettres, associations are formed which had only one goal, not to give him the crown of Italy, but to revolutionize the State. He should never have shown himself to be Austria's adversary in what did not offend neither the dignity nor the independence of the state..."

The turning happens around 1846, in Solaro's narration. The initial spark was Austria's raising of duties on two articles, salt and wine. The former concerned Piedmont's trade with the Swiss canton of Ticino: "Count de Buol gave me to understand that his court would tire of so many negotiations, and that, since we persevered in maintaining the transit of salt to Ticino, prejudicial to Austria, it would take reprisals against our trade. I repeated what I had already said to Prince Schwarzenberg before his departure, that if Austria sought revenge by some irritating measure, she would embitter the difficulty, not without some great damage. I added that we should not hide that the question was twofold: that of the transit of salt, material and a secondary interest; the other, political, more serious, because it was a question of dignity not to go back on the commitment made with the canton of Ticino; that it was necessary to preserve this dignity in the arrangements, and that if Austria, refusing to admit it, adopted measures of reprisal, she would serve the interests of the party which fomented the division and wanted to make the two courts enemies; that this party would shudder with joy at the first hostile act on the part of Austria, whose interest was certainly not in giving a pretext for the revolution in Italy; that we wanted to walk in the right way, but that all my efforts would become useless as soon as fuel was added to the fire; that sound policy advised to end the quarrel, and that any contrary measure would be imprudence."

Increased wine taxes also became a pretext for Italian nationalist agitation: "Austria increased the tax on wines from Piedmont in order to exclude de facto entry into Lombardy, to the immense prejudice of the owners, who had no other outlet. At this news the enemies of Austria were stirred, and they profited by it, seizing with joy the opportunity to anger the king. All my efforts to end the matter in an honorable manner were becoming more and more fruitless every day. From April 20 to May 2, however, I had the opportunity to observe that the increase in the tax on wines irritated, at least in appearance, those who had no other interests than that of pushing the thing to the end, or who did not understand the consequence of any recklessness, while those who really suffered from it desired the revocation of the tax and the end of the quarrel. I knew that the same desire reigned in Lombardy, because people were used to Montferrat wines, and they suffered from being deprived of them. But the discussion raised between the two courts had animated the hopes of the enemies of Austria, particularly in Milan."

There soon followed a meeting between Carlo Alberto and Massimo d'Azeglio, a prominent Italian unionist, even if a so-called "moderate," and one carefully choreographed with theatric splendor to flatter the king:

Massimo d'Azeglio was in Piedmont; he secretly saw the king; he warmed his Italian sympathies and encouraged him in his hatred against Austria; in order to compromise him further, he projected a demonstration. His followers came to an understanding with him, and it was resolved that it should take place on the 7th of the month, and that the king would be greeted with the loudest applause when he went to the usual review of the troops on the Champ de Mars. Already the bouquets of flowers, the wreaths which the ladies were to drop from the windows and balconies on the king's head, the odes and sonnets which were to celebrate his happy determination were prepared. The demonstration was disclosed by a thousand messengers, so that the competition was more numerous and the event louder. The king, received with enthusiasm, carried to the skies for his courageous declaration, would hear the cherished cry of 'Vive le Roi d'Italie,' mingled with the loudest applause. I understood then how reckless I had been. The first, the only concession I made to control public opinion had the fate of all concessions, which turn to the detriment of those who want to make themselves a shield; but as soon as the dart is launched it is no longer in the power of the hand which released it to hold it back. Charles Albert, on the morning of that day, was stirred by a thousand impressions: some urged him to go to the Champ de Mars, others held him back; he asked me when he had already made up his mind not to go there.

He gave me one proof by that alone that he made me ask. I confirmed it again in his resolution. I made him understand that a king should never seek applause for acts which depend on his sovereign authority, for which he owes no one an account; that to receive applause is to authorize disapproval in other circumstances, and that the affairs of state are not to be dragged out in public places. I confessed to my mistake; however our destinies would not have been happier if I had acted otherwise, for those who were on the lookout to seize an opportunity would have found a thousand, and in the state in which things were sooner or later the explosion must take place.

The election of Pope Pius IX and his reformist beginnings made Solaro an even bigger target of press agitation: "There was a lot of talk in Piedmont about my next exit from the ministry: according to the liberals, I was the only obstacle preventing Charles Albert from taking the initiative of a larger form of government, alone in harmony with the happy destinies for which the Italy was called following its flag. In this respect, it seemed dangerous to leave me; but, on probing the ground, I realized that the conspiracy was not ripe, and that Charles Albert still hesitated; I believed, on the contrary, that by absencing myself I would give proofs of my contempt for the plots of my enemies, and that it would be much more advantageous for me to study in Rome what might soon be the fate of the whole world. Italy, and what would be the strengths of the different parties. So I made up my mind to this trip. I spoke about it to the king, who approved my project at the first moment; for he also wanted me to be able to pass a true judgment on the state of affairs, disfigured by the newspapers and by the reports."

Solaro's visit to Rome was reassuring: "I arrived in Rome on August 29, and immediately saw Cardinal Gizzi, Secretary of State. Two days later, I had the great honor of being received by the Sovereign Pontiff. I was deeply moved by the kindness with which he received me, and struck with admiration for the elevation of his thoughts in all that concerned the accomplishment of the sublime functions to which God had called him. I saw that his heart's desire was to carry into the administration of the State all the reforms which the times demanded, but which he was determined not to allow himself to be carried away further. Pius IX spoke to me, with all the calm serenity of an upright conscience, of the gravity of the circumstances in which Italy found itself; without deceiving himself as to the events in which we were marching, he surrendered himself to God, awaiting his help at the time of the storm."

Soon after his return from Rome, the change in Carlo Alberto's demeanor became highly apparent when he strongly insisted, against Solaro's reservations, that a passport be granted to Terenzio Mamiani della Rovere (discussed above), at the time exiled in Paris after revolting in the Papal States, and refusing to accept Pius IX's amnesty:

...There were others who knew very well that these utopias should only serve to prepare innovations of another kind, and which were certainly not to the advantage of the sovereigns who were applauded with so much noise. Among the latter was T rence Mamiani, exiled from Rome for having revolted against Gregory XVI. Persistent in his ideas, he did not take advantage of the broad amnesty of Pius IX, because it was on condition of becoming a faithful subject that the doors of the country would have been opened to him; he preferred to stay in Paris. His supporters called him to us, where one of the centers from which the revolution was spreading in Italy was already established. One day the king spoke to me of authorizing the ambassador in Paris to issue him a passport. I replied that I would write to the ambassador beforehand to get an exact idea of Mamiani's current feelings; but I did not hasten to inform the king of the answer. A month later, finding me in Genoa, he spoke to me about it again, and then I pointed out to him that it was not advisable to give refuge to a Roman who persisted in his ideas of revolt despite the kindness of Pius IX; that, moreover, the information from the Marquis de Brignole had led me to no longer deal with it.

The king did not approve of my conduct; he insisted that I give the order for the passport. I did not believe this time either that carrying out his orders would serve him, and I deferred until at last he alleged so many reasons to prove to me that he would be less dangerous in Genoa than in Paris than I understood that he absolutely wanted to have this hero in his dominions, and that a longer opposition was becoming unnecessary.

The Sonderbund War was starting to flare up in Switzerland and with it numerous political polemics. With Piedmont's ever laxer attitude to Italian radicals, with Turin and Genoa hot on the presses printing their way into revolution, to the lukewarmness of Carlo Alberto and the despondency of Solaro and the Austrian foreign office: "If praise pleased the king, distrust impressed him much more. So to give proof from his firm will to devote himself to great enterprise, he allowed writings hostile to Austria to be introduced into his States. It is

true that, in order to be able to respond to the demands of the imperial court, he did not openly allow booksellers to receive and resell them, and the revising commission defended them, without preventing them from spreading. The police confiscated them from time to time; but it was known that, if fifty copies threw out under his hand, thousands were scattered before his eyes. As for those who dealt with the financial question in dispute with Austria, the king did not want circulation to be hampered by the reason that they were concerned with a national interest. However our quarrel for the salt of Ticino was not what was dear to the hearts of the authors of the brochures or their readers. The agitation of Piedmont spread to Lombardy, where secret agents encouraged conspiracies and announced the forthcoming enterprises of the King of Sardinia. The court of Vienna was alarmed at the tranquility of its possessions in Italy; but as Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria herself gave her serious cause for thought, she never took a resolute attitude towards us. The Comte de Buol presented more or less strong observations on our conduct; but I noticed that these were only words which would not be translated into actions, and which, consequently, remained ineffective. I could not justify either the too obvious tendency of our political march or the tolerance of so many demonstrations hostile to Austria; but, as minister of the king, I nevertheless had to advise to respond to the continual interpellations, and, never seeking to alleviate the significance of so many unpleasant things, I attributed the cause to Austria herself, who gave them a pretext by persisting in its pretensions. Besides, I saw with sorrow the king advancing more every day in a dangerous way, and I did not hide it from him; but with the Austrian envoy my demeanor was such that it suited the Minister for Foreign Affairs, never seeking to alleviate the significance of so many unpleasant things... but the small number of political journals which were published in the kingdom came within my attribution, and I never allowed that in any of them, and more particularly in the official gazette, for inserting articles suitable to incite passions, or insulting to the powers.”

And on top of that Richard Cobden came to Turin in 1847, because why not.

There was, however, one specific incident that definitively soured relations between Piedmont and Austria, ultimately converting Carlo Alberto to the Italian cause. This was the so-called “Austrian occupation of Ferrara” in the late summer of 1847.

The dispute had to do with the proper interpretation of Article CIII of the Vienna Final Act of 1815:

The Marches, with Camerino, and their dependencies, as well as the duchy of Benevento and the principality of Poote-Corvo, are restored to the Holy See.

The Holy See shall resume possession of the legations of Ravenna, Bologna, and Ferrara, **with the exception of that part of Ferrara which is situated on the left bank of the Po.**

His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty and his successors shall have the right of placing garrisons at Ferrara and Commachio.

The inhabitants of the countries who return under the government of the Holy See, in consequence of the stipulations of Congress, shall enjoy the benefit of the 16th Article of the Treaty of Paris of the 30th May 1814. All acquisitions made by individuals, in virtue of a title acknowledged as legal by the existing laws, are to be considered as good, and the arrangements necessary for the guarantee of the public debt, and the payment of pensions, shall be settled by a particular Convention between the courts of Rome and Vienna.

The incident unfolded as follows: “The story began on 5 July 1847 when Pius IX established a civic guard in Rome and promised to do the same in provincial cities. It was simply a matter of time until the civic guard would also be established in other papal towns, including Ferrara, situated in the papal territory less than three miles south of the Po and guarding the access to the bridge over the river to Austria’s Lombardy. This signified a serious security threat for the Austrian garrison in the town, which had witnessed anti-Austrian provocations in the spring and the murder of a man sympathizing with Austria and serving as her informant, Baron Flaminio Baratelli, on 14 June 1847. To ensure its safety for such a time when the local inhabitants were armed, Radetzky ordered reinforcements. On 16 July, 600 infantrymen, some cavalry and three cannons arrived in Ferrara, increasing the total number of Austrian soldiers to 1800. This step, however, highlighted the anti-Austrian mood of the local inhabitants, and one night at the beginning of the following month one of the officers, Captain Jankovich, was stopped and verbally insulted by numerous groups of young men with swords and hunting rifles; he was able to get home only under the escort of other soldiers. This caused the commander of the Austrian garrison, Count Karl von Auersperg, to order night patrols in the town, a measure enforced from 6 August and agreed by Radetzky who just several days later ordered another measure, the occupation of the main watch towers and gates, which was carried out by Austrian soldiers on 13 August. Metternich learned of these measures after they had been put in force, but always expressed his absolute consent.”

Rome objected, seeing it as a provocation, and demanded complete withdrawal, with which Austria could not comply. Austria’s actions had nothing to do with attacking the territorial integrity of the Papal States, however, nor interfering with the papal civic guard. It was a limited act of securing their garrison. Much ado went over the semantics of “place,” but Austria clearly had the legal upper hand: “Metternich introduced the counter-arguments that were to prove that ‘the word place according to the dictionary of the French Academy means ville de guerre, that is, a town including the citadel or the fortification appertaining to it.’ The

crucial persuasive argument on Austria's behalf was undoubtedly the fact that Comacchio, the second town mentioned in Article 103 as a 'place' where the Austrians could have a garrison, had no citadel, and therefore the word had to be applied to the town in both cases; it was illogical that the same word in one article would have had two different interpretations. Furthermore, contrary to the information presented by Ferretti, Ferrara had a wall around the whole town and the citadel formed an integral part of its defensive system, which allowed the word 'place' in the sense of 'place forte' (fortress) to be used for the whole fortified town; this was finally proved with the plan of Ferrara engraved in 1836 and printed in Vienna and Frankfurt in 1847 on the order of Metternich."

Nonetheless, this incident became a massive rallying cry for Italian nationalism, and survived as a Risorgimento myth for a very long time; the revisionist account from which I'm quoting was only published in 2018.

Meanwhile, Piedmont was rapidly revolutionizing domestically, in an anti-clerical and anti-Catholic direction. For this we have the *Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco*, which provide a unique insight into that period:

After thus gaining the support of Waldensians and Jews, the liberals set to work most energetically to force Charles Albert into carrying out desired political and civil reforms. When the king hesitated, the foreign press, prompted by Massimo d'Azeglio, began to speak of the waning influence of the king of Piedmont and of a steady rise of public opinion in Italy against him. Angered and alarmed by these criticisms and satirical barbs, Charles Albert yielded to pressure, and between October 29 and November 27, [1847] he issued the first reforms through a series of decrees. The main ones were: establishment of a supreme court of appeals, admission of oral debate in criminal procedure, abolition of special law courts and of special jurisdiction for several civil bodies, transfer of police authority from military to civil personnel, reorganization of the Council of State, election of councilors by their own municipalities, and a limited freedom of the press. **This last decree, although prohibiting works offensive to religion and its ministers and to public morals, did not exempt from pre-publication censorship works carrying an ecclesiastical imprimatur. Consequently, it subjected pastorals of bishops, catechism books, all religious and church publications, and the very Bible to civil censorship.**

All that the bishops wanted was compliance with the laws enacted by the Fifth Lateran Council and the Council of Trent. They sought no personal advantage; they were concerned only with the welfare of the people, the protection of the Faith, the security of the throne and the king's good name. Their appeal was in vain, and Bishop Andrew Charvaz of Pinerolo resigned his see in protest to show his displeasure. For several months after October 29, [1847] Turin became the scene of a dizzy succession of mass demonstrations hailing these reforms. The celebrations began with a so-called "spontaneous" illumination of the city; throngs of people, in their Sunday best, with red, white and green cockades on their lapels, paraded through the city streets and squares, unfurling a forest of flags and wildly cheering Italy, Charles Albert, Pius IX and Gioberti. Almost every night, patriotic serenades were conducted. The leaders of the secret societies kept fanning the flames among the working class; demonstrations and banquets became the order of the day; business concerns sent messages to the king pledging full support to the struggle for independence. Indeed, every public appearance of Charles Albert drew deafening applause. On November 2, [1847] when he left for Genoa, where other enthusiastic receptions had been prepared for him, the crowds escorted the sovereign as far as the Po River with flags and flowers. There was another illumination of the city on November 4, the king's name day, and a solemn Te Deum in the "church of the miracle." Robert d'Azeglio was the leading spirit behind these and other wily maneuvers.

Many priests, even the older and more sensible, had been swayed by this ferment for change, these petitions and civil celebrations, and were wildly praising the reforms, Charles Albert and Pius IX. To bring them back to their senses Archbishop Frasoni ordered on November 11, that in all sacristies a notice be posted forbidding the clergy to take part in political demonstrations. He stated, among other things, that priests should always be the first to show loyalty to the king, not through worldly demonstrations, but through faithful observance of their duties toward him. On November 13, in a circular to pastors, the archbishop authorized them to sing the Te Deum if requested, but also enjoined them to point out to the people: that the proper way to give

thanks to God and have Him heed their prayers was to free their souls from the slavery of sin; that no good could be accomplished by those who sponsor church services but have nothing but contempt for church laws; and that there had always been people who tried to hide their evil deeds under the cloak of religion.

Archbishop Luigi Fransoni would become a bedrock of the Piedmontese conservative resistance.

In September 1847, Cesare Trabucco, secretary to Carlo Alberto, was authorized to write a letter expressing hope for a war of independence, making said policy official: “Charles Albert, determined never to separate his cause from that of the pope, immediately assured the pontiff that he was ready to put his army and navy at his service. In August, [Cesar Trabucco] count of Castagnetto, read a letter from the king to the Agrarian Congress at Casale in which he declared: “If Divine Providence sends us to war for Italy’s independence, I shall mount my horse and place myself with my sons at the head of my army. . . . It will be a wonderful day when we shall be able to shout, ‘To war, for the independence of Italy!’ ” All the newspapers carried this statement which aroused grave fear in those who foresaw the consequences of such a war.”

The promulgation of a liberal constitution, the Statuto Albertino, followed on February 8, 1848, and a month after that came the failed “war of independence.”

Lambs to the slaughter

With the aforementioned events, Piedmont in the 1850s became ever more radical, particularly with the rise of Italy’s most famous son of the devil (after Garibaldi). That being, of course, Camillo Benso, conte di Cavour. Elected a deputy in June 1848, appointed Minister of Agriculture and Trade and Minister of Finance in 1850 and 1851 respectively under Massimo d’Azeglio, Cavour from that point was the driving force of secularization, and ultimately the conquest of the Italian peninsula by 1861.

There were two major anticlerical initiatives in that time: the Leggi Siccardi of 1850, and the ‘Rattazzi law’ of 1855 that triggered the so-called Calabiana crisis. The former abolished traditional prerogatives of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, i.e. church tribunals, sanctuary rights inside churches, and the inalienability of church estates. The law of 1855 then proceeded to massively expropriate so-called “unproductive” convents: “On May 29, 1855 , at the conclusion of the Calabian crisis, the so-called Rattazzi law, was approved and the related royal decree no.879 was issued, which established the religious orders to be abolished (including Augustinians, Benedictines, Carmelites, Carthusians, Cistercians, Capuchins, Dominicans, Franciscans, etc.). The law abolished orders deemed to have no social utility, that is, “do not attend to preaching, education, or assistance to the sick”, and expropriated all the convents (335 houses), evicting 3733 men and 1756 women . The Collegiate Chapters of cities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants and all simple benefits were also abolished, often

with lay or mixed patronage. The Ecclesiastical Fund was also established , a juridical person distinct and autonomous from the State, to which the assets of the suppressed entities were conferred.”

These laws led to protest on behalf of Pope Pius IX from Giacomo Antonelli, Cardinal Secretary of State, and led to Archbishop Frasoni’s incarceration when he resisted (from Frank J. Coppa’s *Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli and Papal Politics in European Affairs* [1990]):

“Pius had Antonelli protest to the Sardinian Minister, the Marquis Spinola, that the government of the Holy See, deferential towards the King of Piedmont, did not deserve such treatment. Antonelli claimed Rome had been prepared to negotiate, but the Sardinian envoy had been hastily recalled to Turin. The Cardinal reiterated Pius’s dictum that Piedmont’s actions violated the concordat, arguing it was unacceptable for a Catholic State to introduce changes which might prove detrimental to the Church, without the consent of the Holy See. Although Cavour hoped for a truce with Rome, the tension between Piedmont and the Papacy mounted. Religious dissension aggravated the political division between the two. The return of the Archbishop Frasoni in midMarch did not help matters, for he directed a circular to his clergy ordering them to procure permission from their superiors before appearing in state courts. He was supported by the Pope, who through Antonelli, claimed that the Archbishop had only asserted his rights. The State authorities disagreed, claiming that the Archbishop questioned the legality of the recent legislation, and had him imprisoned. Antonelli protested the arrest, calling for Frasoni’s release. Not receiving satisfaction, the Cardinal issued a stronger protest, deploring Piedmontese actions. The Cardinal also denounced the government’s seizure of a convent in Genoa, discounting the pretext that it was to be converted into a new, national college. Antonelli insisted that the Holy See desired an accomodation with the Turin government, but could not achieve one when that government persisted in unilaterally abrogating the sacred rights of the Church. So long as Piedmont provoked the religious scruples of Pius, Antonelli could not achieve a rapprochement. In 1850, when Pietro di Santarosa, Minister of Agriculture, and a staunch supporter of the Siccardi Legislation, fell ill, Frasoni created further problems for Antonelli, aggravating ChurchState relations in Piedmont. The inexorable Archbishop ordered his clergy to refuse the last rites to Santarosa, unless the Minister made a full and formal retraction of his part in the passage of the Siccardi Laws. Shocked by the intransigent attitude of Frasoni, and the obedience of the Servite priests who refused to administer the sacrament, the Piedmontese rearrested Frasoni and expelled the Servites from the state. Pius had Antonelli protest once more.”

Cavour strongly backed both laws. This rising upstart, who mostly conversed in French and struggled with his Italian, who knew more about England than about Naples, wrote in 1851 that “Our destiny depends above all on France. Whether we like it or not, we have to be her partner in the great game that sooner or later must be played in Europe.” What a way to reveal his intentions early.

Piedmont's participation in the Crimean War was specifically calculated to advance this agenda, as Christopher Duggan narrates:

Cavour had no expectation of any clear gain, but his hope was that the 18,000 Piedmontese troops would distinguish themselves sufficiently in battle to provide him with a strong bargaining counter in a future peace conference. Unfortunately General Lamarmora's soldiers were sidelined in Russia, and the only engagement of any note in which they were involved took place on the Tchernaya river on 16 August, and cost just fourteen lives. Two thousand others died from cholera during the campaign. Victor Emmanuel attempted to make amends for this rather desultory state of affairs by proposing to the French and British that he should take over as commander-in-chief of all forces in the Crimea, but his offer was not surprisingly declined. In an alternative, and more realistic, bid to raise Piedmont's standing with his allies he visited Paris and London in the autumn in the company of Cavour. **D'Azeglio went along, too, partly because his refined patrician bearing was guaranteed to go down well in courtly circles, and partly, too, because he could write and speak good Italian and so mitigate the embarrassment that might be caused by the leading members of a delegation claiming to represent Italy having a weaker grasp of the national language than did Gladstone or Lord Russell. The visit went well, though the king's brusque manners, coarse sexual remarks and lack of political tact ('Austria must be exterminated,' he told a terrified Queen Victoria at a banquet) did cause eyebrows to be raised. Queen Victoria forgave him, and even found his directness refreshing, attributing his eccentricity, rather condescendingly, to 'the low level of morality' in Italy.**

Cavour went to the peace conference in Paris in February 1856 desperately hoping to win some territorial concessions for Piedmont – Lombardy, perhaps, or the duchies of Modena and Parma – but the British and the French were not prepared at this juncture to fall out with the Austrians, and Cavour's only success (though it was a considerable one) was to have the Italian question formally discussed by the delegates after the negotiations had been concluded. There was some criticism of the Bourbons and of the situation in the Papal States, but to Cavour's chagrin not much more. Before leaving Paris, Cavour had several meetings with Daniele Manin, the hero of the Venetian Republic, who was fast emerging as the leading spokesman for those exiled democrats who had lost faith in a popular insurrection as a means to unify Italy and were now looking instead towards Piedmont. Cavour said in a letter that he found Manin 'a little utopian' and too concerned with 'the idea of Italian unity and other such nonsense' (a remark that later had to be expunged from the official edition of Cavour's correspondence), but he could see how useful the Venetian might be for channelling Italian patriotic sentiment towards Piedmont – sentiment that Cavour could then manipulate and use as a further card in the increasingly strong hand he was accumulating. For his part Manin remained suspicious of Cavour's 'Piedmontese' ambitions, but he and his friends could see that Cavour might be useful to them, as well.

In fact, one means that Cavour used to sway Napoleon III to his position was seducing him with fine noblewomen: "Word soon filtered from Paris that Cavour had sent his "cousin", the Contessa di Castiglione, described by the French Foreign Minister as "the loveliest woman in

Europe” to seduce Napoleon, and incite him to wage war against Austria. ”A lovely countess,” Cavour wrote Luigi Cibrario, charge d’affaires at the Foreign Office, “is now enrolled in the Diplomatic corps of Piedmont. I have asked her to flirt with—and if necessary, to seduce—the Emperor. I have promised, if she succeeds, to give her brother a secretaryship at St. Petersburg. She made her debut yesterday at the concert at the Tuileries.” Almost immediately Cavour’s ward, who became the sensation of the social season, became the Emperor’s mistress and used her influence to win the French ruler to the Italian cause. The Countess was not the only means Cavour utilized to persuade Napoleon to champion the Italian cause.”

1857 saw the establishment of the Società nazionale italiana, chief propagandists of Piedmontese-led annexation of Italy, with Garibaldi among their subscribers and followers.

The key plot that would begin the entire process in earnest, the infamous Plombières Agreement of 1858, an opportunistic conspiracy to provoke Austria by way of a phony referendum in Modena, happened by accident. One of the infamous provisions of said agreement, later confirmed in 1860 by Treaty of Turin, was for Piedmont to give up Savoy, the very historical heart of the state and namesake of the House of Savoy, as well as Nice, to France:

With Britain heavily committed in the Far East following the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1857, Napoleon considered the time right to embark on a campaign against Austria, and in the late spring of 1858 he sent his private doctor to Turin to inform Victor Emmanuel and Cavour of his plans for Italy (which were to be part of a broader struggle between the 'Latin races' and the Germans for dominance in Europe) and to invite Cavour to talks in Plombières. The two men met on 21 July, and in the course of a long drive through the countryside of the Vosges in the emperor's phaeton they worked out the future of the peninsula. The Austrians were to be expelled from Lombardy and Venetia and Italy would become a loose confederation under the presidency of the Pope, with France as its protector. Victor Emmanuel would acquire all northern Italy, including Modena and Parma, and possibly the Romagna and the Marche as well. There would be an enlarged Tuscan state (with a ruler yet to be decided); King Ferdinand would be deposed in Naples and replaced with Lucien Murat, if possible; and the Pope would lose all his territories except for a small area around Rome. As for a convincing pretext for war, one idea was that they should instigate a revolt in Massa and Carrara and get the rebels to appeal to Piedmont for help. Turin would then decline, but in terms that were sufficiently critical of Austrian rule to provoke Vienna into a retort out of which a quarrel and then a conflict could arise.

France would of course gain hugely from the war by replacing Austria as the controlling power in Italy, but Napoleon also wanted a marriage alliance between the king's fifteen-year-old daughter, Clotilde, and his cousin, Prince Jérôme Bonaparte. Victor Emmanuel found this very hard to swallow, not least because Clotilde was a shy and deeply pious girl, Jérôme a dissolute and middle-aged philanderer, but Cavour eventually managed to cajole the king into agreeing ('to achieve our holy objective I would confront greater dangers than the hatred of a little girl and the anger of the court'). A potentially far more difficult problem was Napoleon's insistence that two of the historic heartlands of the Piedmontese state, Nice and Savoy, should be ceded to France. Cavour knew that any agreement on this point would not only be technically unconstitutional but also hugely unpopular in nationalist circles. Nice especially was widely regarded as much more Italian than French, and it had been the birthplace of the most popular and famous Italian patriot, Garibaldi. When the treaty committing France to a war in alliance with Piedmont was signed in January 1859, Cavour had to make sure that the clause relating to Nice and Savoy remained totally secret.

In April 1859, after continuously kicking the Austrian dog, it finally bit back, and Cavour got his war. Problem was France did the bulk of the fighting and Piedmont was more of a rear-guard defense, not exactly conducive to the heroic ideals of the Risorgimento: "One of his big concerns was that the Italian contribution to the war should be sufficiently large to ensure that the French did not dictate terms entirely. But the Piedmontese forces amounted to only about 60,000 men, less than half the size of the French army, which accordingly bore the brunt of the fighting that took place in the stifling heat of the Po valley in late May and June. Furthermore the organizational and structural problems that had undermined the performance of the Piedmontese army in 1848–9 resurfaced in 1859. There were still no good maps of Lombardy and no proper campaign plans, and it was extremely fortunate that the

Austrian commander showed little initiative at the start of operations and failed to launch a serious attack on Piedmont, which could have been overrun before the French arrived. There were also difficulties once again with the army leadership, as Victor Emmanuel insisted on acting as commander-in-chief despite his lack of experience (and penchant for outdated cavalry charges) and resented taking advice from anyone, including his senior generals. The upshot was poor communication and frequent arguments about tactics, which contributed to several major blunders during the campaign, including the failure of the Piedmontese forces to arrive until it was almost too late at the Battle of Magenta on 4 June and the unnecessarily high casualties inflicted on the Piedmontese in the one serious engagement in which they played a prominent role, at San Martino three weeks later.”

In fact, this pattern would repeat itself. In 1861, Veneto and Rome were still “unredeemed.” The “Third War of Italian Independence” in 1866 which led to Italy acquiring Veneto was largely the result of the Austro-Prussian War the same year, with Prussia crushing Austria at Koniggratz and forcing them to surrender (moreover Italian general La Marmora had support from the Prussian foreign office under Guido von Usedom). The Italians themselves were defeated at the two key battles of Lissa and Custoza, and as a final humiliation the Treaty of Vienna of 1866 didn’t even directly cede Veneto to Italy, but rather to France, who then “gifted” it to Italy. The siege of Rome in 1870 was similarly a staged event, made possible only by Napoleon III withdrawing his garrison over the Franco-Prussian War and thus leaving the city virtually defenseless beyond the token resistance of some papal zouaves.

Moreover, per the 1859 treaties of Zurich that ended the “second Italian war of independence,” the rulers of Modena, Tuscany and Parma were to be restored, but this was blatantly ignored: “Art. 19. As the territorial delimitations of the independent States of Italy which took no part in the late war cannot be changed except with the sanction of the Powers that presided at their formation and acknowledged their existence, the rights of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Duke of Modena, and of the Duke of Parma are expressly reserved between the high contracting parties.”

Cavour also had good friends in England, thanks to Sir James Hudson’s advocacy of the Italian cause as ambassador to Turin, in fact Hudson was possibly a stronger partisan than Cavour and Garibaldi themselves:

Sir James, promptly denying rumours that Cavour was seeking to ingratiate himself even further with France, ceding Genoa or Sardinia, defended him on the point of the cession of Nice and Savoy, championing the (debatable) theses of the Sardinian Minister that these lands were not part of Italy; strangely enough, he also informed Russell of the personal drama that Cavour was experiencing at that time: he –wrote Hudson –«had lost flesh and color and spoke in a thick voice...He told...that after his death the cession of Savoy and Nice would be found graven on his heart». Russell retorted: «I believe Cavour is still the best Minister for Italy, tho' he has sadly shaken my confidence in him». The London cabinet went so far as to ask the Sardinian Government for a formal commitment not to attack Austria or the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and not to cede other territories to France.

The English Note indicated the balance of power as a still valid permanent criterion of European assessment. The skirmish continued with Cavour's assurance that he would comply with English demands with an official speech to the Chamber (as effectively occurred on 26 May); but Russell continued to be wary, obsessed by a probable cession of Genoa and, I would say, a general suspicion of wide-scale Italian machiavellism. With the exemplary aplomb of a good diplomat, Hudson replied calmly on 31 May to his Minister, taking care not to adduce arguments reflecting his well-known friendly sentiment for the Piedmontese: «It is a question of faith, to a certain extent, for my part I believe him and my belief is based not upon Cavour but upon Cavour's necessities and upon the opinions of his supporters. You set out from a point of departure which I cannot accept. You speak of Cavour as though he were a Dictator». In a constitutional country such as Piedmont, the Parliament was essential.

The Subalpine Parliament could not accept other cessions; in any case, the cessions concerned territories that could be considered not or not very Italian, as Nice was Francophile for commercial reasons while Savoy was «as reactionary as Ireland or the Vatican». The Italians had no intention of changing an Austrian master for a French one: believing otherwise meant not understanding either the Piedmontese or the Italians and this, explained Hudson to Russell with almost irreverence frankness, «I cannot do, and I do not conceive how you arrive at it either». Another new, unexpected and extremely thorny problem arose with the expedition of Garibaldi and the Thousand. Also on this occasion, Hudson clearly favours complete English support of Piedmont: if London does not support Turin, Paris will. Once again, the tone of his message to Russell was extremely sincere, almost brutal: «Possibly you have already come to a decision but if you have not, believe me, that you have not much time to lose, else France will shut you out and give you much trouble». No Sardinian Ambassador to London could have expressed Italian interests more forcefully than the British Minister to Turin!

Hudson regularly reported Russell's fears and objections to Cavour so much so that it can be said that he provided Cavour with the best rebuttals! In a letter dated 23 July 1860, Russell, half serious and half facetious (but more serious than facetious) admonished his envoy as follows: «You should be very careful to keep the interests of Great Britain always in sight and not be led too far by your Italian sympathies». However, as a good diplomat and with British humour, he concluded: «But Evviva l'Italia nevertheless!». Hudson, finding it difficult to

swallow the thinly rebuke regarding his possible partisanship, even betrayal, such as to make him imprudently forget the real interests of the Mother Country, took up this point on several occasions, not without a certain resentment and arguing in favour of annexation as less prejudicial to British than the anarchy of Sicily and Naples, and the discontent of North Italy. On 31 July Hudson reacts and explodes and, without mincing his words, expresses not only his state of mind but also his political-diplomatic line, justifying this with various arguments:

- Italian Unity is perfectly consonant with English interests that do not want a non-independent country;

- Considering the point already reached (Garibaldi was by now well advanced), the only solution is annexation to Piedmont, otherwise the Mazzinians and anarchy will take advantage of the situation;

- Liberal England cannot ignore that the Bourbon Two Sicilies have delayed promulgation of a Constitution after deceiving their subjects on ten occasions and with the intention of doing so an eleventh time;

- France will not receive further territorial advantages from Piedmont that will in any case achieve Unity, thereby constructing a strong independent State.

We must make quick note of the Papal States. A French garrison was stationed in Rome, which gave Napoleon III the image as being the “protector” of the pontifical territories. In truth, this “protection” was a sham, and Louis-Napoleon continuously used his leverage to push for liberal reforms: “Worse still, from the Vatican’s perspective, Piedmont found an ally in Napoleonic France, which continued to apply pressure upon Rome for reforms and “an end of abuses.” It was reported that its Emperor sought to secularize the Papal government, without creating an outcry from the priests. To counteract the negative picture of his regime emanating from Turin, the Pope wrote Napoleon of his splendid reception during the course of his visit to Bologna, negating the Piedmontese allegations that his subjects were dissatisfied. Pius revealed that he had been received with respect in all of his provinces, disproving the lies of the enemies of the Pontifical State who sought to discredit it. The Pope did not deny that there was room for improvement, but added that this could be best attained by funding practical programs rather than granting liberal institutions. Unfortunately, the financial situation of the state precluded the expenditure of additional revenue in the provinces, while the prospect for new loans in 1857, was not good. The French Emperor remained convinced that reform rather than revenue was central to solving the problems of the Papal States, and in August, as Pius prepared to return home, renewed his efforts to extract concessions. On August 16, 1857, Monsignor Sacconi, the Nuncio at Paris, informed Antonelli that the French government was determined to convince the Holy See to make changes, and with this aim in mind, had replaced the pro-Papal Rayneval, with the Duke de Gramont, as French ambassador to Rome. Shortly thereafter, Antonelli received the French project for the reform of the Papal government, with variations suggested by Austria. Arguing that the Pontifical government, in accordance with its special nature, had offered all the

reforms it could legitimately grant, Antonelli rejected the call for additional changes. Pius concurred. On September 5, 1857, the conservative Pope returned to Rome, welcomed by Luigi Antonelli, one of the Cardinal's brothers, who was then head of the Roman municipality."

The September Convention of 1864 formalized the eventual retreat of the garrison, which was done in 1870, and shortly after Gen. Raffaele Cadorna's army besieged Rome. As a final humiliation, the Quirinal Palace was sacked and nationalized by the state: "When Italy made Rome its capital, a palace was needed for the royal residence, and the Italians sought the Quirinale Palace from the Pope. The Pope refused to relinquish it. Cardinal Antonelli tried to prevent its seizure by arguing that the funds for its upkeep came from the Pope's private purse rather than state revenues, but this nicety did not persuade the Italians who insisted on its possession. When Pius was asked for the keys he refused to turn them over. "I'm sure they'll find a way to get in without the keys," he responded, not wishing to implicate himself by indirectly legitimizing the action by any sort of cooperation, "I have nothing more to say." The Italians lived up to his expectations, bursting open the main gates and requisitioning the Palace in preparation for the royal arrival. Early in October the Romans were belatedly asked to sanction the seizure of Rome by voting for union with the constitutional Kingdom of Italy. The resulting vote was overwhelmingly favorable to the Italian cause."

"The Cardinal knew that the Catholic powers of 1849 were no longer available. France and Austria had been defeated by Prussia, Naples had been incorporated into Italy, and Spain veered on the brink of anarchy.

Indeed, there was a failed attempt by Pius IX to appeal to Francis II of the Two Sicilies for intervention back in 1859 when Piedmont was, among other things, in the process of annexing most of the pontifical state (including Umbria and the Marches) and leaving only Lazio, particularly at the bloody Battle of Castelfidardo, but help was not forthcoming, and within a year Francis II himself would fall: "Salvator Villamarina, Sardinia's minister at Naples, accurately assessed the prevailing attitude of the Bourbon government under Francis II when he wrote to Cavour on February 20, 1860: "All the sympathies are certainly for Rome and Vienna, but there is great fear, and all the efforts of this government tend at the present moment to enclose itself hermetically in its own system and to prevent all moral or material contact with the outside." At the very time this dispatch was being drafted the King and Filangieri were agreeing that, if the pontifical troops were beaten and retreated south, they could be admitted into the Two Sicilies for humanitarian reasons, but had to be disarmed. Francis II may have possessed the faith of a crusader but he was as timid as a rabbit and his antiquated ministers were models of caution. Without pledges of material support from the larger Catholic states Pius IX and Francis II were forced to limit themselves to modest, covert co-operation which would not provide their enemies with a pretext for action against them. Under the glowering skies of 1859 even a stronger monarch than Francis II, with bolder ministers, would have hesitated to raise his shield in defense of the temporal power of the Holy See. One can only speculate if a more flexible policy of co-operation with Napoleon's

proposals would have enabled the “allies” of 1859 to salvage anything worth saving from the collapse of the old Italy to which their principles, experience, and temperament committed them.”

A union of bloodshed and lies

An invaluable testimony about the guile and deceit through which unification was carried out, is provided by one Filippo Curletti, a spy for Count Cavour who shared his recollections in 1862.

Curletti had been active in nationalist societies in Romagna since 1854, and in 1858 was recruited by Cavour specifically on part of his background (“There, General, is precisely the person of whom I was speaking to you. He is a Romagnol. Nobody knows him here [in Piedmont],” were his words). He was given a 500 franc monthly stipend to spy on both Cavour’s political enemies and allies, including Clemente Solaro della Margarita in the former and Urbano Rattazzi in the latter.

In Tuscany 1859, the organization went as follows: “I was charged with this mission, and was sent with eighty Carabineers, disguised, to Florence, to put myself at the disposal of Buoncompagni. My men were to disperse themselves in groups in the four extreme corners of the town, at ten o’clock, to commence the collection of mobs by the cries of “ Long live Independence! down with the Bourbons!” and then to make a concentrated movement upon the Palazzo Pitti. The people once in motion were to take possession of the Treasury. Ricasoli was ordered to seize the public offices, the Post Office, and the Ducal palace.”

In Modena, this is how the referendum was conducted:

The elections which took place a few days afterwards resembled very much the scene I have just described. We had the registers brought to us that we might prepare the list of electors; we made out all the bulletins. For these first local elections, as afterwards for the annexation vote, only few electors presented themselves to take any part in it; but at the moment of closing up the urns, we threw in the bulletins naturally on the side of Piedmont; not of course quite all; we left out some hundreds or some thousands, according to the population represented by the college.

It was necessary to try to keep up appearances, at least abroad; for on the spot they knew pretty well what was going on. Let no one exclaim "impossible." I do not exaggerate a tittle. All I have told here is the most exact truth. Why even in France, where the people are accustomed to electoral proceedings, where the formation of the bureau is regular, where a number of persons really interested, and jealous of their rights surround the urns, even in France, similar false practices in the result of the scrutiny are not without example. One can therefore well understand why these sad manœuvres and tricks should succeed in a country entirely new to the exercise of universal suffrage, and when in fact the general indifference and systematic abstention wonderfully aided these frauds, by taking away the only effectual check. At the same time we acted in such a way as to render all guarantees of publicity and surveillance which the law offers to the electors, in practice perfectly illusory. Before the vote was opened, agents of the police and disguised Carabineers choked up all the entrances to the Hall, and it was from amongst these impartial persons that the president of the bureau and the scrutineers were always chosen. We were therefore not crippled in that regard. In some colleges, however, this wholesale introduction into the urn of the bulletins of the absent, which we called "completing the vote," was done with so little care, that upon the proclamation of the result, it was found that there had been more votes than electors inscribed. It was only requisite to offer the procès-verbal. As for the bulletins negative or hostile to Piedmont, necessary to give an air of sincerity to the vote, we trusted them to the electors themselves. I can speak with truth as to what regards Modena, for everything was done relating to it under my own eyes and by my direction. I may say the same thing with respect to Parma and Florence.

In Parma, police chief Colonel Anviti was lynched in broad daylight and his corpse decapitated: "The governor of the prison, Galetti, the same who, by command, had let his prisoner be taken from his custody, was advanced from the governorship of the prison to the direction of the Post Office. Many will ask how it happened that a man whom some police officers could easily take from the railway terminus to the prison, could be torn off from this place by rioters; that such a man could be murdered, dragged during several hours along the streets, and all that in presence of a watch of its Carabineers, entrusted with the defence of the prison, and in a town which had then a garrison of about six thousand men. I have but to reply this: Farini gave orders, in consequence of which the Colonel was disposed of. Farini was the soul and the head of this awful murder. I obeyed, and the immediate tools of this dreadful assassination were easily found. Thus Davidi, the man who, after having dragged the

bloody corpse of Colonel Anviti along the streets of Parma, DECAPITATED it, to set the head as a trophy upon the pyramid of the government, was the very same day appointed Governor of the prison of Parma. Two months ago he was still in this office.”

Pro-Piedmontese placards were carried over already printed in Turin, and crowds bribed into chanting “pro-independence” slogans:

“At the same time the demonstrations which either followed or accompanied the vote in the different towns, were equally organized by us. All the placards of which the Piedmontese papers made great boast, -some contained the words “ Long live the Independence of Italy;” others, “We will have our legitimate king, Victor Emmanuel,”—were sent ready printed from Turin, and were placed by us on the balconies and at failed at Bologna (Corsica), his brother had failed at Leghorn [Livorno], and he himself had become bankrupt in America. This is the man who was appointed Governor of Romagna. the windows, and in spite of “freedom” of election, no one would have dared to touch them. As for the illuminations, the zeal of the inhabitants was stimulated in much the same way as at Paris in 1848, with this difference, that it was not here as there, where the people ran spontaneously about the streets singing their own songs; but here, paid bands acting to order, ran to the windows of those who were not quick enough in obeying the cry of “Lumi! Lumi!” The Archbishop of Naples could say something on the subject.”

What about Garibaldi and his famous Expedition of the Thousand to Sicily? Just chilling back with a lady, and with Alexandre Dumas: “When not gratifying his passion for popularity in the streets of Naples, he divided his time between (Milady) Mrs. White and Alexandre Dumas, who both followed him everywhere. He saw nothing, occupied himself with nothing, and left everything haphazard. But I must extract from my notes one fact, which will show what were the men about whom I am silent; and if Garibaldi, the Dictator of Naples and of Sicily, was satisfied with the modest pay of ten francs per day, his followers did not practise the same disinterestedness.”

In fact by Curletti’s account much of the redshirt expedition was staged for propaganda purposes, since the Piedmontese weren’t very trustful of Garibaldi: “Garibaldi, at that time master of Sicily, had sent to Livorno a certain number of men, whom the Sicilian revolution had collected, and with whom he could do nothing in the way of discipline. The Piedmontese Government encamped them at Pontedera in Tuscany, and placed at the disposition of Nicotera, who commanded them, some officers to drill them. This camp appeared, with some reason, threatening to the tranquillity of the Papal States. France required that it should be broken up. What was to be done? A few days afterwards, there was seen to arrive at Livorno by the railroad, a regiment in Garibaldian uniform with Nicotera at their head, and escorted by National Guards; they at once embarked for Palermo. The Tuileries was satisfied, and not a single man had left the camp of Pontedera. It was a fine and well-conducted regiment of the regular army which was sent off to Sicily under Garibaldian colours. Nicotera, with a

Colonel's commission, was to receive from Baron Ricasoli, Governor of Tuscany, forty thousand francs, as a reward for the silence that was imposed upon him. Nicotera definitively only received thirty thousand francs."

Truly, these were liberators.

For what transpired in Modena, there is a great book by Nicola Guerra titled *Controrisorgimento. Il movimento filoestense apuano e lunigianese* (2016) on this subject. For the former Modenese subjects, "Italian liberty" meant being arrested on the slightest pretense. A father scolded his son for yelling "Long live Italy," and was promptly jailed for it: "An exemplary case of the level of severity with which crimes of opinion were punished is that of Giò Tartarini del Cinquale: he he is jailed because someone overheard him scolding his son who shouted "long live Italy" and incited him to instead shout "down with Italy" The persecution of crimes of opinion continues over time and on the 31 October [1859] the National Guard arrested Francesco Amedei of Colonnata, domiciled in Mirteto, accused of having shouted 'Long live Francesco V, Long live the Emperor.'"

You were a supporter of the Duke of Modena? No business license or even a job contract for you (reminds me of our day, actually):

The climate of control established by Vittorio Emanuele II's authorities concerns all aspects of civil life and also the issue of operating business permits for a shop and/or itinerant sales is subjected to a policy of "good moral conduct" of the applicant and his entire family. There are many documents in which it emerges as to the applicants for a permit for a shop (for coffee, food or liquor) or also for the exercise of a wandering trade, for example the ginestraio, that it is released only after careful attention assessment of political conduct. After the retreat of the Este troops, an inquisition on employee behavior was formed which lead to the dismissal of several of them. To give an example: Giuseppe Albertini, Deputy Director of the Massa Tobacco Company. The delegate of public safety, in a statement, declared that Albertini was not "evicted from the royal states" but "was only recommended in order to spare himself and his family troubles that with his conduct he wanted to procure..." In this case we are witnessing an attempt to save the forms of dismissal which certainly occurred for political reasons. Generally, however, being considered "devoted to the former government" is more than enough reason to be dismissed from public office and often to be arrested as a spy. Even some of those practicing the legal profession are banned and are restored only if, subsequently, they demonstrate fidelity to the new institutional order.

Piedmontese reports are full of incidents recording persistent nonviolent resistance in the form of singing pro-Habsburg-Este songs, across all social classes. People would wear green cockades on their hats as a symbol of dynastic loyalty. Some took to direct action: several attempts at sabotaging telegraph lines were recorded. Italian tricolor flags were torn apart in various municipalities after Sunday Mass.

The brunt of the brutality, however, went to the poor Two Sicilies.

The Siege of Gaeta, finished in March 1861 after heavy bombardment, and sealing the kingdom's fall, was the subject of these malignant words by the New York Times: "It was, after all, despite its weak points, a not unfitting conclusion to the Bourbon-Neapolitan dynasty. The last government in Europe which held obstinately to the absolute feudal system and feudal tyranny, it was still fit that the lost flash of its taper should show some sparks of feudal chivalry. The young king — there is something romantic in the very title — adhering obstinately to a political system, of which he was not the author, as his friend LOUIS NAPOLEON courteously states, could appropriately enough fight to the last like a preux chevalier. And here we may also appropriately enough smile at the derision of the French Emperor in re LAMORICIERE, that the conduct of the great condottiero "was chivalric but crack-brained." O'etait chevalresque, mais o'etait fou. What must his secret opinion of the young king have been when he heard that cannon balls had lodged in the room above the Royal chamber?"

As with Vittorio Emanuele and Garibaldi's "triumphant" entry earlier: "As soon as the ceremony was over they came down the aisle, and I had an admirable view of the King and the Liberator face to face, and as a gleam of sun shone out on the monarch every line was visible. *"Humanity" came, first, and "Divinity" after.* The difference in the two expressions could not fail to strike the most insensible."

The conquest of the South has two horrors that are especially infamous: the massacres at Pontelandolfo and Casalduni. The killings at Pontelandolfo looked like this:

During the five or six hours that the troops terrorized Pontelandolfo many atrocities were committed. Quite how many is unclear. Some estimates put the number of those killed at between one and two hundred, others much higher. A likely figure is perhaps 400, with dozens more being arrested and shot in the weeks that followed. Negri's men were encouraged to loot and pillage at will; nothing was spared, and the scene in Pontelandolfo that August morning rapidly came to resemble a kind of infernal Cockaigne, with houses blazing and bodies lying in the streets, and gorged and drunken soldiers grabbing money, jewellery and whatever else of value they could find, and raping any women or girls they could lay their hands on. It was the intense heat, the screams of the dying and the unaccustomed abundance of food that etched themselves most on the memory of one bersagliere, Carlo Margolfo, a conscript from a village high in the foothills of the Alps in northern Lombardy:

"We entered the town and immediately began shooting the priests and any men we came across. Then the soldiers started sacking, and finally we set re to the town... What a terrible scene it was, and the heat was so great that you could not stand it there. And what a noise those poor devils made whose fate it was to die roasted under the ruins of the houses. But while the fire raged we had everything we wanted – chickens, bread, wine, capons. We were short of nothing."

Towards noon the order was given to withdraw, and the troops set off back to Benevento. The following day Negri sent a report to the provincial Governor: 'At dawn yesterday justice was done to Pontelandolfo and Casalduni. They are still burning.' In the months that followed many of those who had managed to avoid the massacre on 14 August were rounded up and 573 were put on trial. Of these 146 were sentenced to life imprisonment or to hard labour. The bandit leader Cosimo Giordano succeeded in escaping justice thanks largely to the protection of local landowners and politicians, and after a few years spent in Rome he emigrated to Marseille with a forged passport, where he opened a greengrocer's shop. Negri continued his successful military career and went on to serve in the war against Austria in 1866, being promoted to the rank of major-general. The towns of Pontelandolfo and Casalduni were for the most part razed to the ground and some 3,000 people were left homeless.

Another account can be found [here](#).

Massacres were also done [in Auletta](#): "On that same day about 90 miles further south in Lucania the Hungarian Hussars arrive at the town of Auletta. Auletta a town of four thousand is a neighboring town to San Fele and was considered in revolt against the Piedmont regime. On that day the Hussars executed 45 citizens including four local priests, arrested 200 that were then deported to prison in Salerno. The Hungarian troops then were allowed by their commander to loot as well as set fire to a number of houses."

5 years later, the [Seven and a Half Days Revolt](#) would break out in 1866 over Piedmontese misgovernance, and face similarly brutal repression.

The strongest measures came after the Two Sicilies were annexed, in the “anti-brigandage” campaign. The question of the Southern brigands is a highly contentious one and shrouded in enigma. The traditional interpretation is one of opportunistic banditry. But, as the Alleanza Cattolica has written, it was as much a legitimist and localist resistance. There were a lot of international volunteers from Carlist and French legitimist circles: “In the early years the legitimistic motif is dominant and the guerrilla methods, capable of uniting aristocrats and people, are such as to recall the Vendean epic. This counter-revolutionary continuity is by no means symbolic, when we consider that, at the head of the insurgents, “the flower of the European loyalist nobility descended from the mists of their castles into the fire of a relentless struggle for faith and glory,” as it was written on one of the panels of the exhibition on Brigandage, loyalty and repression, organized in Naples in 1984. Count Henri de Cathelineau (1813-1891) – descendant of one of the bravest leaders of the Vendée war -, the Prussian baron Theodore Klitsche de La Grange (1799-1868), the Saxon count Edwin of Kalckreuth, shot in 1862, the Belgian Marquis Alfred Trazégnies de Namour, shot in 1861 at the age of thirty, Count Émile-Théodule de Christen (1835-1870), the Catalans José Borges (1813-1861), defined as “the anti-Garibaldi,” and Rafael Tristany (1814-1899), are the architects of memorable deeds and long hope for a successful conclusion of the guerrilla warfare.”

A massive number of troops were deployed around 1864 in the struggle against “brigands,” numbering around 140,000, i.e. over half of the Italian army. Casualties included: “In fact, if in Calabria more than a thousand were arrested, 124 were shot and 134 died in a fire fight, if in Basilicata more than 3,000 were arrested and 1,232 were killed in conflict, in Abruzzo 1,634 and the figures are almost the same in all the other regions of the South, the phenomenon was far-reaching so much so that an army of 130,000 men was employed. Mack-Smith in the work of 1972 “Storia d’Italia” reports the following figures: between January and October of 1861 there were in the Southern provinces 9,860 shot, 10,604 wounded, 918 houses burned, 6 villages destroyed, 12 churches looted, 40 women and 60 boys killed, 13,629 imprisoned.”

In Capitanata (Foggia), brigandage develops as a change in tactics by the remnants of the Bourbon army, not unlike such phenomena as “Forest Brothers” insurgencies in post-WW2 communist-occupied states:

In 1861 a brigand movement develops throughout the mountainous and wooded Gargano whose connotations of anti-unification political revolt are very evident. They are already numerous. In the territory of Monte Sant'Angelo and Mattinata the group of Luigi Palombo operates; in that of Vico the bands of Pietro Iacovangelo, called il Pezzente, and Giuseppe Patetto (called the General) operate; the countryside of Rodi are beaten by the group of the Vichese Vincenzo Scirpoli; those of Apricena by the company of Nicandro Barone, called Licandruccio. In the territory of San Marco in Lamis acts the band of Angelo Maria Del Sandro, called Lu Zambro; that of Agostino Nardella (the Shepherd); of Angelo Raffaele Villani (Recchiamozzo); by Nicandro Polignone (Nicandrone); by Michele Battista (Inconticello) and Angelo Gravina (Angelone) who acts with his 5 children.

The gangs attack the countries triggering violent popular uprisings, which end with the killing of the liberals, the looting of the houses of the "gentlemen", the release of the prisoners and the destruction of the municipal archives. Bourbon provisional governments are often proclaimed that last a few days, because they are immediately repressed by the military forces that rush to the first alarm. Violent retaliation ensues which, however, do not appease the feelings of dissent. On the contrary, the repressions produce numerous new recruits that go to feed the banditry, thus reintegrating the losses suffered.

Mattinata was the first to suffer an invasion of brigands. Here is an armed party formed by former soldiers of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies who escaped the call of the draft imposed by the new regime. They are led by Luigi Palombo, a former soldier who has fulfilled his military service obligations. In the first days of May 1861 they invade the town shouting "Viva Francesco II" and with a white flag at their heads. They take possession of the weapons of the National Guard and pass, house by house, for the disarmament of the inhabitants. Then they tear off the coat of arms of the Savoy and then retire to the countryside. But now the local military forces no longer intervene exclusively against the brigands.

The infantry of the Italian army enters the field. On 2 June, a sunny Sunday, San Marco in Lamis is invaded. Here the liberals are about to celebrate the Statuto Albertino for the first time. 50 men arrive on horseback who, after blocking the exit routes from the town, under the command of Angelo Maria Del Sambro, Agostino Nardella and Nicandro Polignone, followed by many disbanded soldiers, enter the center shouting "Viva Francesco II, Viva Pio IX" to the applause of the population. The guard of the national militia is attacked and the portrait of Vittorio Emanuele is destroyed. The altar prepared to celebrate the Statute is also demolished. The soldiers present are then attacked. One is killed, the others imprisoned. They then go on to rake weapons house by house, and impose the display of white flags. The following day they attack the Tardio house, the only one to offer resistance, where the head of the family, doctor Giuseppe Tardio, found refuge under the commander of the local National Guard, ten soldiers and three mobile guards. With the complicity of a villager who was in the house, the brigands enter the stable and from here they pass into the house of Tardio. They proceed to disarm, arrest the soldiers and kill the three mobile guards because that body is fiercely hated by them. On

June 4, two companies of bersaglieri arrive from Foggia. There are about 4,000 brigands, between men and women. Strong in numbers, they attack the Piedmontese soldiers. The Bersaglieri are humiliated because they are put to flight...

Carmine Crocco was undoubtedly the most famous of the brigands, and his autobiography provides logistical details: “Aspirin had not yet been invented, but the potato was considered a real cure-all. The crushed tubers provided a milky ointment capable of coagulating and disinfecting gunshot wounds, reducing swelling of the flesh. The pilosella plant was instead used for stab wounds mixed with olive oil. The security service of the camps was very accurate: lookouts, perhaps reinforced on heights dominated by sentinels with mastiffs, controlled the access roads around the horizon. Spies were instructed to follow the regular troops in order to inform the brigands of any movement. The fire for the ration was lit so that the smoke did not betray the position. The provisions were requisitioned from the reactionary and liberal landowners by hook or by crook. It was the same gentlemen who helped (actively or with silence) the bandits. Crocco, in many years of banditry, slept a few times in the open and many times in the homes of unsuspected people, who never betrayed him.”

From 1863 to 1865, the Legge Pica (Pica law) was in force, an anti-bandit measure that among its provisions provided for forced labor and deportation, and was in fact the origin of the penal colonies that would later instead be attributed to Italian fascism. Its application was rigorous and exacting: “Racioppi revealed that, in less than six months, 2,400 people were jailed in Basilicata for complicity or suspicion of adherence to thugs, half of whom “sent before military or civilian judges”; of these, 525 people, including 140 women, ended up in confinement. The Pica law, between shootings and arrests, eliminated about 14,000 brigands or presumed brigands from villages and countryside: as a result of law no. 1409/1863 and the regulatory complex connected to it, up to the end of December 1865, there were 12,000 arrested and deported, while 2,218 were condemned. In 1865 alone, there were 55 death sentences, 83 to life forced labor, 576 to temporary forced labor and 306 to ordinary imprisonment. Despite this rigor, the Pica law was unable to bring the results that the government had set itself.”

Emilio Visconti Venosta, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, is quoted in 1872 as saying “If we set ourselves in Italy to apply the death penalty with an implacable frequency, if the gallows were raised at every moment, opinion and customs in Italy would repel you, the jurors themselves would end up either by acquitting, or by admitting at any If there are extenuating circumstances. It is therefore necessary to think of adding another punishment to the death penalty, that of deportation, especially since among the impressionable populations of the South the penalty of deportation affects the fantasies more and terrifies more than the death penalty itself, for example, who are terrified by the idea of ending their days in distant and unknown countries, go with the greatest stoicism to meet the gallows.”

Luigi Federico Manabrea, eminent Italian statesman and engineer, who interestingly was a very early pioneer of computer science of sorts, having written a report on Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine in 1846, was engaging in negotiations with Argentina in September 1868 to create a penal colony for Southern Italian prisoners to be deported to, but this thankfully did not go anywhere: "On September 16, 1868, as head of the Italian government, he wrote to the Italian ambassador to Argentina Enrico della Croce di Dojola in order to instruct him to probe the willingness of the Argentine government to grant Italy "totally uninhabited" lands in the desert regions of south of Patagonia in order to deport the rebel protagonists of the already dulling post-unification banditry in southern Italy... Menabrea specified to the ambassador that the project aimed at making the repression of crime more effective "by means of penal establishments in distant districts and by the deportation of offenders". He also added that, "Limited to the aforementioned purpose, territorial occupation would not have in sight the establishment of a vast colony destined to acquire vast political importance", meaning by this to reassure Buenos Aires and the other South American states that Italy did not intend to initiate a colonial policy in Latin America. The Argentine Republic, however, worried about possible Italian territorial claims, replied by denying the 'sale, hospitality, rent and loan'; the removal of Menabrea from the government a few months later did however definitively wreck the project."

Menabrea in December 1868 would offer a similar proposal for a penal colony to the Bey of Tunis, with the requirements given as "to find a territory in the desired conditions of health, fertility, etc., which is separated from the inhabited coast by at least as much extension of the desert as is necessary so that one or more travelers cannot cross it, if not organized in a caravan. The territory should be capable of at least ten thousand settlers."

Other proposals included the Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean, and Borneo in Southeast Asia.

Mass deportations of prisoners were on way in 1860: "In Capua, by General Enrico Morozzo Della Rocca, another 11,500 prisoners had been made, another 2,600 by Garibaldone in two rounds on the Volturno. We are therefore to the forty thousand of which General Fanti speaks to his astute master in the dispatch no. 2545 dated Naples 19 November 1860, shown on page 347 of the third volume of Cavour's aforementioned correspondence: "If your VE does not rent steamers abroad and immediately for transport, it is impossible to get out of this labyrinth. .. you want ... more for 40 thousand prisoners of war". He returns to the subject in the following letter n. 2580 of 25 November: "... It seems to me that in the great urgency of many transports would have to be hired and contracted in Genoa or elsewhere for the transport to Genoa from Civitavecchia or Terracina of the Napolitani prisoners of war who return the French ... " These letters affirm two things: that the prisoners must be deported to the north and, implicitly, that the Neapolitan fleet, given to the enemy by traitor parricides and merged with the Piedmontese one."

The conditions in the Fenestrelle Fort are described as: “To overcome the resistance of the prisoners of war, already transported to Piedmont and Lombardy, a cruel and inhuman expedient was used , which makes one tremble . Those petty little ones, barely covered with rags of cloth, and finished with hunger because they were kept at half ration with bad bread and water and a filthy broth, were escorted to the icy casemates of Fenestrelle and other places located in the harshest places in the Alps. Men born and raised in a climate so hot and sweet, like that of the Two Sicilies, here they are thrown, worse than negro slaves, agonizing with hunger and with difficulty among the iceboxes! And this because they are faithful to their military oath and to the legitimate King! Such infamies cry out for vengeance from God, and sooner or later they will get it.”

“In Italy ... there is trafficking of the Neapolitans. Neapolitan soldiers stop by Cialdini in large quantities, packed in ships worse than animals, and then they are sent to Genoa. Just finding myself in that city I had to attend one of those shows that tear the soul. I have seen ships arrive loaded with those unhappy, torn, hungry, weeping; and when they landed they were spread out on the public road as a marketable commodity. Painful spectacle that is renewed every day in Via Assarotti where it is a deposit of these unfortunates. A few hundred were sent and locked up in the Fenestrelle prisons, equi la malesuada fames et turpis egestas induced them to conspire; and if it was not possible in time to foil the conspiracy, they took possession of the fort of Fenestrelle, and then uniting with thousands of other Neapolitans incorporated into the army, they fell upon Turin. An EIGHT THOUSAND of these ancient Neapolitan soldiers were concentrated in the camp of S. Maurizio, but the government considers them as enemies , and, says the Opinion, that “to protect the public safety of both the surroundings and the camp, they were sent to S . Maurizio two infantry battalions.” Average life expectancy was 3 months. 16 kg iron balls at the feet held the prisoners captive; vats of quicklime were allegedly used on corpses.

2. Counterrevolution

A war of extermination against the Neapolitans, widespread repressions against the men and women loyal to their centuries-lasting dynastic houses, habeas corpus suspended, administrative centralization and onerous taxation imposed, the Church despoiled. Italy's own Lost Cause, not unlike that of the Confederacy, had been sealed.

There wasn't much of a “counterrevolution,” per se, since forced unification was a fait accompli backed by material superiority and international recognition. But there was a counterrevolutionary sentiment, a reaction. A conservative intellectual tradition. The Italians are generally not often talked about in historical portraits of conservative thinking, instead being associated with the sensuous splendor of civic republicanism, and of the Risorgimento liberalism that created “Italy” as a state to begin with. But they absolutely had one, and it's a tradition that must be passed on.

To start off, we may note a brief anti-Enlightenment dialogue by Eugenio Balbiano titled Le utopie dei liberali: dialogo fra un progressista ed un ultra-conservatore (1848). Paolo Vergani (1753-1820), a lawyer and economist active in the Papal States, and his Le idee liberali ultimo rifugio dei nemici della religione e del trono (1816) is similar, but in greater depth.

Msgr. Luigi Urgolini (1777-1850), Bishop of Fossombrone, was a devotee and popularizer of the patrimonialist ideas of Karl Ludwig von Haller throughout Italy, condensing Haller's ideas in Esame di monsig. Luigi Ugolini vescovo di Fossombrone sulle varie opinioni degli scrittori profani e sacri intorno alla questione se, e come venga da Dio la sovranità temporale (1843).

Antonio Capece Minutolo, prince of Canosa (1768-1838) was the strongest enemy of the Carbonari in Naples in the 1810s, forming an (unfortunately unsuccessful) secret counter-society called the Calderari. In 1820, he left behind an extended rumination against the Carbonari and its aims, I piffari di montagna, ossia Cenno estemporaneo di un cittadino imparziale sulla congiura del principe di Canosa e sopra i Carbonari. An overview of Carbonari organizational details is available here.

We talked about Clemente Solaro della Margarita above in the context of his memoranda around Carlo Alberto of Savoy. Additionally, Solaro powerfully voiced his dissent against the project of Piedmontese-led annexation in parliament, published as Discorso alla nazione del conte Clemente Solaro della Margarita, deputato al parlamento (1856).

For Solaro, the creation of constitutional liberalism had really only created ministerial despotism, since the old habits of loyalty to the king were now wrongly being transferred to his ministers, as “people’s deputies” officially, but this being an idea most subjects could not accustom themselves to: “The utmost respect for authority is the great obstacle to good elections. The people accustomed for centuries to a paternal regiment and to bow out of reverence and love to what emanated from the throne, and was prescribed in the name of the King by his Ministers, they do not know, they do not dare to resist the will of the constitutional ministers, they do not think that what has changed has changed substantially, and that these ministers now do not represent the sole authority of the King, but that delegated power that can do nothing without the consent of Parliament, that is, without the will of the Nation expressed by its representatives. What the constitutional system is, is not known, it is not understood by the people; it does not know that it has the right to resist the ministers when the public good requires it, and that the means of resisting legally is to elect deputies who do not serve private ambitions, but serve the country.”

“Cease considering the Ministers as superior to you; they are only the custodians of the power which does not reside in them, but in the Prince united to the Nation; they terrify you with threats and violence, because you do not know how to ask for an account of those threats and violence, nor to use your rights. Easy is the thing; it is in your hands for the good

of all, for the security of property and people, for the protection of the Statute, for the peace and prosperity of the country, for the luster of the Crown, for the stability of the Monarchy,” he exhorted the voters.

In his *Questioni di stato* (1854), Solaro boldly proclaims his fidelity to the traditional Savoyard state, as something distinct from Italy: “the proofs of their value are trophies of Italy, but they have earned at the price of blood the right which is enough to signal the name of Savoy and Piedmont. To renounce these and to be confused with Italy is to diminish one’s glory, it is to confuse the waters of the Po in the waves of the Adriatic, which lose their name as the last of the streams.”

Further that “If the House of Savoy wants to become exclusively Italian, it repudiates, not in fact perhaps, but in principle, the oldest portion of its noble heritage; if Piedmont considers that the boundaries of the Nation are at the foot of the Alps, Savoy becomes a foreign land for it.”

Piedmont uniting Italy would be as absurd as Bavaria uniting Germany: “No great power of Europe will ever reproach an Italian court for having sympathy for another state of Italy, as Saxony is not reproached, nor for Bavaria to watch their interests as those of the whole of Germany. But if Bavaria, which is a state of strength and in a position similar to ours, would put the idea of enlarging itself at the expense of the neighboring Alemannic states into the field, it would never be said that it loves Germany, but rather itself, ready to sacrifice the one for its ambitious views.”

He correctly foresaw that the destruction of the Italian state system would sap the governing vitality of many of them, making them mere satrapies, and he did in principle admit to an Italian federation, but not one that could be practically created under the circumstances: “it [a federation] is not an outrage to the various governments of Italy as is that of a meeting in a single state, whereby so many capital cities would become provinces, so many centers of government would become subjects, many legitimate princes would lose their authority.”

With what pain the Aragonese became Spaniards, and how much more the Neapolitans becoming Italians: “The moderns are content to be French or Spaniards, but with what pain at the time of reunion lost their name, their independence, how many loved their country! The name of the Aragonese certainly rang louder when they formed a state; if the warriors who under their warriors King James I and II upheld the honor of their fatherland were resurrected, they would be saddened that the standard of Aragon is no longer raised as the national uniform of an independent people. I would understand the idea of the union of every state of Italy if we were to give the whole state the name; but since it would be absurd to think that all of Italy becomes Piedmont or Liguria, the feeling towards our homeland is distorted to want to give up our name.”

In *Opinione del conte Solaro della Margarita sull'annessione di alcuni stati alla monarchia e sulla cessione della Savoia e di Nizza alla Francia* (1860), Solaro fiercely castigates the cession of Savoy and Nice to France: "To aggregate Italian Provinces that were never ours, an Italian and faithful Province is surrendered, abandoned, such as the County of Nice which has been united with us since 1588. The aspirations of the peoples of Italy who call to be under the scepter of the House of Savoy are applauded and the aspirations, the pains, the screams, the groans of the Italians from Nice who have been there for such a long time are not cited. While he exclaims, all of Italy must unite, in Nice it is said, you will no longer be part of it; the limits of Italy will no longer be at Varo, they will retreat to the Roia, they will retreat to the Colle di Tenda. Thus, foreigners will be able from the summit of those mountains to yearn for our beautiful plains, fall in love with them more and more, want more and more not to stop among the alpine crags. This painful thought can come to the minds of those who love decorum and goodness of the homeland, but it did not occur to the ministers who plotted the ominous pact. And why so much strategic misfortune? To satisfy the demands of France. But were we at war with it? Did Napoleon III win us a second time like the first Napoleon? But did the Emperor not cross the Alps with his army, declaring that by freeing Italy from foreigners, he wanted nothing for himself?"

Monaldo Leopardi (1776-1847), father of the famous and politically opposite poet Giacomo Leopardi, was one of the first and most forceful of the Italian counterrevolutionaries. He was particularly fond of the Socratic dialogue. We may cite *Le illusioni della pubblica carità* (1837), a denunciation of welfarism and harebrained schemes for the material improvement of the human condition, in favor of a commitment to traditional poor relief, and a spiritual life informed by the cardinal virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We read:

These creatures who came into the world without their homeland and name, without any affection of blood, and without any expectation of inheritance, find themselves placed by nature in the bottom of the social ranks, which is not the most unhappy when it is not spoiled by illusions and from lusts; and therefore the use and the natural and ordinary place of the foundlings must be seen in agriculture and the simple and coarse arts. Those who are destined by nature to the sledgehammer and the gimlet, the shovel and the spade, must not be adorned and bent with the gentleness of the letters, and with the tenderness of civilization. Those who have to exercise the profession of the peasant and the craftsman must be in the workshop and in the field since the dawn of their life: boarding schools and education are not for them, and anyone who will have spent his adolescence sleeping in the dormitory, and going to the refectory at the sound of a bell, will neither as a crude and trivial craftsman be able to succeed, nor as a rustic and tanned villein.

Not your mother's conservatism.

The *Dialoghetti sulle materie correnti dell'anno 1831* was widely reprinted and even read by the popes. The *Catechismo sulle rivoluzioni* (1832) is a brief dialogue lampooning liberal ambitions. But probably the most widely circulated of all was the *Catechismo filosofico per uso delle scuole inferiori* (1837).

In the latter, Leopardi sharply distinguishes the fictitious “love of nation” of the Risorgimentists with the actual love of country: “Because love must be held together under the terms and in the degrees dictated and established by nature, and by loving the nation over loving the country, one would do it with a degree of love higher than that desired by nature. The substance is the love of the fatherland. But it is precisely in the ‘love of his land of its walls and of its amenities’, it is the love of our fellow citizens among whom we live, and since those citizens are the closest of our neighbors, we must conclude that the love of the country is nothing but love and charity towards one’s neighbor. Since then nature prescribes us to prefer, in many relations of charity, the spouses, friends and citizens to strangers and those far away, it would be against the dictates of nature to confuse foreigners with citizens, and that charity which equated the love of citizens with the love of foreigners would be disgraceful.”

Chapter XV is a skewering of the idea of “Italian independence”:

D. National independence is truly a necessity and a right of the nations; and are Italians really right when they ask for Italian independence?

M. First answer your question yourself. Perhaps Italian independence consists in this, that men born or residing in Italy must live completely independent without obeying anyone without knowing neither sovereign nor laws ?

D. Sir no, it does not consist in this; because already we are convinced that all men are born in subjection and have the debt to live subject to the restraint of laws and sovereignty.

M. Perhaps Italian independence consists in this, that every city form a separate kingdom, and should not depend on the prince who resides in another city?

D. Sir no, it does not consist in this, because the idea of dividing Italy into twelve or fifteen thousand independent kingdoms would be a frantic idea, and repugnant to the orders of nature.

M. Perhaps Italian independence consists in this, that all the princes of Italy are free for their own state, and one does not depend on the other?

Q. Sir no, it does not consist in this, because even if there was no such independence, it would not spoil Italian independence; and then all the states of Italy are respectively free and independent, and none of these states depends on another state.

M. Now, then, tell me what does independence consist of?

Q. I really don't know, because for a long time now liberal philosophy has been imbuing Italian minds with the cabalistic word of Italian independence and we have never thought of being told what Italian independence is. Nonetheless, here it is... Italian independence consists in Italy rising up from a prince and a foreign government.

M. Well: this is how it is, let's discuss it first only with relationship of fact, and then we will discuss it under the relationship of law. Starting out, Sicily and the kingdom of Naples are their own principality and nation, and not dependent on a foreign prince. The State of the Church has its own nationality and prince, and does not depend on any foreign sovereign. Piedmont, Sardinia, Tuscany and others in lower Italy, and up the minimum of San Marino republic, as well do not depend on a foreign ruler. Therefore for all these states which form three quarters of Italy, Italian independence was already beautiful and complete, the inhabitants of these provinces enjoy it if they need to go looking for it...

Q. But Lombardy and the Venetian provinces are subject to the dominion of the foreigner.

M. Yes, and you can add Corsica which after the middle of the last century was ceded to the French by the Republic of Genoa, to which it previously belonged. Come on then, tell me a little: that house that you have in another city, and that farm owned by you in the territory of

that city, are really your property and belong to you, or do even the other men of that city have the right to dispose of it? Why are those assets in their territory, and why does a stream run between a territory and the other?

Q. Mister, that house and that farm are my property, and no one has the right to dispose under any pretext. The reasons for property and the respect for property are the foundation of order, and you cannot violate it without offending the principles of justice, the principles of which are equally effective both on this side, as beyond all streams and all rivers of the world.

M. Thus the reasons for sovereignty, which is truly and precisely a property, are the foundation of the public and social order, and cannot be violated without subverting the sacrosanct principles of justice, and they do not become ineffective when they reach the banks of a river or the slopes of a mountain.

D. It seems clear to me that you are saying; but would there not be some exceptions to be made in view of the public utility of all people and of the whole nation?

M. The true utility of all peoples, and of all nations consists in following the bonds of nature, and the steps of justice; and those dictates and norms cannot be repudiated without destroying the peace and usefulness of nations and peoples. In the natural law and in the divine law it is found that legitimate properties and legitimate surpluses are preserved and respected everywhere, and is not that all the districts of a nation should be dominated by a national prince... Therefore the provinces of a nation can submit to the dominion of a foreign prince without contravening the laws of the day and of the divine; but the sovereignty as a legal possession of a foreign prince cannot be violated without offense of those laws, and without repudiating the dictates of nature and the norms of justice, and therefore cannot be violated without subverting the order of society, and without destroying peace and happiness, of nations and peoples. Passing then from the right to doing it, you believe that for the provinces of a nation the dominion of a foreign prince is truly a calamity ; and speaking of the Italian provinces subject to Austrian domination, do you believe that the monarchs of the House of Austria are anthropophagous, and eat their Venetian and Lombard subjects for lunch and dinner?

D. I'm not saying this; but it seems impossible that dependence on a foreign prince should not have many prejudices for the peoples of a nation.

M. This may seem like it to the sophisms of philosophy and to the rebellious spirit of the liberals, but it cannot seem to anyone who considers things with the guidance of experience and the light of reason. Because if we concern the employments, it is certain that in the dependent provinces there will be some officials coming from the court, but vice versa the subjects of the dependent provinces — they will also be employed in the other provinces of the monarchy and in the court; if we look at the expenses and the afflictions of war, certainly that the men of the dependent provinces will have to fight for the defense of the monarchy, but vice versa, he knows the dependent provinces will also be protected and defended by all the forces of the

monarchy; if we want to point out an inconvenience in the distance of the capital, certainly that Milan is far from Vienna; but this inconvenience is found in all great empires, and if Italy formed a single kingdom only of which the capital was Milan, then Palermo and Naples would be even farther from Milan. For in the end if the prince will be just and wise, he will justly and wisely govern the provinces on this side as well as those beyond the imaginary borders of the nation, and if he does not know the right arts of governing, this disavowal can also latch upon the peoples with the princes of the nation and resident in the nation. Therefore, when we do not want to repudiate the lights of reason, it is necessary to recognize that since the rights of sovereignty are not extinguished above a boundary... it is to be recognized also that the independence of Italy imagined by philosophy and desired by many reckless Italians is not a right of the Italians, it is not necessary for the good state of Italy, and it is only a kabbalistic word uttered by the crafty and perfidious to turn Italy upside down with Italians to be left in mourning.”

Brilliant.

Stefano Sanpol, a man of whom little biographic detail is known, in his *Quaresimale del contemporaneo dinanzi la corte di Torino* (1868), presents an extended meditation on the calamity of Italian unity, written in a style akin to a homily. Mauro Musci's *Il cristianesimo, la rivoluzione italiana e la politica europea: memorie storiche-politiche* (1861), is of similar import. “What the revolution asks for is agreed a little at a time, until governments are reduced to valets of reforms. Emancipation of thought, emancipation of the word; freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of belief; individual guarantee, domestic inviolability; independence, and, the scale of independence is so high, which exceeds that of the man of the desert or the lion and the tiger. And governments, either by force or by luxury of fashion, concede ad nauseam, until their reverses, until decadence, or to the vassalage of the dynasties,” Musci writes. “The apologists of the poor people, of the freedom of the peoples, of those who give cheers to the Italian peoples; they are the same ones who today exile without condemnation, imprison without trial, shoot, machine gun, have Italians stabbed, and set their cities on fire, and do not even save the women, the old, the children, the infirm.” An HTML transcript of Mauro Musci's text can be found [here](#).

Pietro Coselli, a priest from Lucca, penned the *Saggio critico dei principii e delle conseguenze della rivoluzione italiana* (1870), one of the best anti-Risorgimento works. “All are free to spread the poison of heretical doctrines, of immoral maxims, of revolutionary principles; only the Catholic priest, despite the proclaimed freedom of conscience, is damned to the Gemonian stairs, if he rises to shout loudly against so many infamies, because it disturbs the free conscience of the citizens.”

Contra national independence, Coselli argues: “But if the independence of a nation is beautiful and appreciable, besides desiring it, can it also be implemented in de facto ways? This would mean, whether it is lawful for a people subject to a foreigner, who respects the nationality of the subject, to rise up, or use other means that may chase it. And we reply that this would be trampling on the right of the foreigner, who will have acquired it on that

particular nation, either by international treaties, or by ancient combinations, which the peoples have accepted, or by the voluntary dedication of the peoples themselves. Now what is really the true good of an associated people? It is none other than the order and morality of law. If you act, therefore, to make the nation independent, you revolutionize it, you are only destroying order, trampling on law; which leads to the destruction of society. Therefore, if national independence is a law of nature, the observance of law is likewise a natural law, and this has greater force than that, because this is essential to the order of nature, while national independence is not.”

Sovereignty is a possession acquired by right: “So when it is said that a prince has a right over another people, it does not already mean that this people can be said to be something of him that can be sold or alienated, but it means that he has the right to govern it for the good of the people themselves. The right to govern them, which is what can be sold like anything else worthy of price, because it is a thing, it is his property. Perhaps some will say that they cannot acquire such a right, because the right of government is in the nation. With these words he appeals to popular sovereignty and universal suffrage which is fashionable today. But leaving these things of which we have already said, we ask: Can society exist without that means which is called authority that binds it together? It is clear that it does not exist. If therefore a society to be such has to have an authority, this authority, which we suppose in the prince, has the right to govern. This right therefore is his thing, it is his property, and consequently the people must obey if they do not want to violate a right. Therefore a people, a nation, which does not yet enjoy independence, may well desire it, but not refuse obedience to that on which it depends, and in the meantime by being a good citizen it will be able to ensure that with time and with the variation of circumstances the law of the foreigner, on which the nation depends, can replace through virtue that aim of national independence.”

The drastic consequences for all dynastic empires: “Now these peoples, according to the revolutionary principle, should rise up to effect their nationality. Thus Italy, for example, should fight against Austria for the Italian Tyrol, Istria and Dalmatia; against France for the county of Nice and Corsica, against England for the island of Malta; likewise Germany against France for Alsace and Lorraine; so Spain against Britain for Gibraltar; so Greece against Turkey; so too Poland against Russia, Austria and Prussia; so do all the peoples of different nations that contain the empires of Russia, Austria, Turkey, etc. etc.; in a word, all the nations that do not yet possess independence and political unity could and should shake the yoke of their subjection, and establish themselves national freedom. But then where would the company land? Where is the public order which is the life of society itself? Where respect for the law that gives life to the social order?”

Emiliano Avogadro della Motta (1798-1865), Piedmontese-Savoyard conservative, also voiced a strong protest against unification in his *Una quistione preliminare al parlamento torinese* (1860). We may also cite his legitimist manifesto *Considerazioni sugli affari d'Italia e del papa* of the same year.

Avogadro bluntly refuses to call the new state “Italian,” and it is no longer obviously Piedmontese either, so ergo he goes with “Torinese” (pertaining to Turin): “We say Torinese, because we do not know which name would be better to designate it now, as the ancient names of Sardinian or Subalpine would certainly not be enough, or that there are deputies from almost half of Italy.”

Avogadro ends up turning the liberal constitution on its head, arguing that the annexations are illegal since they were led by a ministerial party without parliamentary approval: “In consequence of the annexation of Central Italy and of Tuscany, and all that was not given in Zurich; the very painful disconnections of Savoy and Nice (which remind us of the deplored peace of Cherasco and Paris in 1797, perhaps the worst that the Savoyard monarchy has suffered in eight centuries, and which did not save it from total ruin in 1798); all of these things are done by pure and simple royal decrees and treaties, are reserved for the approval of Parliament. So, per the same confession of the Ministry, these priests of parliamentarism, those annexations or disconnections, according to the Statute, do not have effect, if not later obtained by vote in the Chambers.”

“But no one is unaware that this is more than a question of sentiment or utility; there is a question of clashing principles, and of Italian independence. Some like annexations, because they are inaugurated in the name of the new right of popular sovereignty, of the legitimacy of insurrections; they are not liked by others, who keep faith with the ancient law of justice, the legitimacy of the treaties. To which everything becomes more complicated for many due to the homage owed to the Holy See, with respect to the part of its States that were taken away from it.”

“We adhere strictly to the law of legitimacy, and no infringement would have our vote, no matter how pleased we might be with the rise of the state, if it violated that principle. We adhere no less strongly to the sacred and indisputable rights of the Holy See over its states, and to its declarations, and we deplore all the causes of rupture with that indeclinable center of Catholic unity, and the main link of Italian unity. We deplore in tears of blood the price of the proposed purchases which is exact with the ignoble sacrifice of Savoy and Nice and adjacencies. We cannot have confidence in the combinations to which the Ministry leads us with its discoveries, and which up to now, as far as appears from its public documents, gives us the composition of a new state, increased, it is true, by almost two thirds of population, but a State open on all sides, without any defended frontier; a State with all its doors open.”

His legal argument for the unconstitutionality of unification:

To stay in true constitutional terms, the La Marmora-Rattazzi ministry, which ruled the state after the armistice of Villafranca of 1859 until the return of the Count of Cavour in January 1860, should, after the peace concluded in Zurich, gather the Chambers of the Subalpine Kingdom, give them full powers, or ask for their continuation, reduce the approval of the Zurich Treaty into law, provide for the legislative annexation and assimilation of Lombardy; in short, constitute the new order of the augmented Kingdom. It did almost nothing of all this; it worked on his own; abused its plenitude of powers by using them to make organic laws unilaterally, such as the one that not only extends the electoral law to Lombardy, but also substantially changes its foundations for the ancient provinces, those that reform the codes, the judiciary, the municipalities, etc., etc., things not at all related to the war already over. One could therefore with good reason doubt that the Treaty of Zurich, and all or most of the laws of assimilation and mutation produced by that Ministry, still lack, constitutionally speaking, their true definitive value. But let's say that at least one colored title stands for them, that of full/dictatorial powers. Although there is still a radical defect for them all, which is the fact that no law has been made that sanctioned, if only by virtue of full powers, the Treaty of Zurich, source and cause of all the others, we will not insist on this point. Leaving it to the appreciation of the readers, let us suppose, albeit at a distance, validly done by the dictatorial power what was not done and had to be done by the constitutional powers. But this dictatorial power, that colorful title, it no longer exists and can no longer exist after the peace of Zurich has been signed, published and enforced; that dictatorial power cannot even be recognized by its shadow nor is it invoked by anyone in support of the acts of the current Cavour ministry.

Of the Neapolitans, the most eminent of the conservative-legitimist faction, indeed the pioneer in Risorgimento revisionism, was Giacinto de' Sivo (1814-1867). We have talked about him on this blog previously, at "Giacinto de' Sivo: an enemy of Italian unification," and briefly sampled him again in "Non-interventionism and neutrality as a Machiavellian instrument."

De' Sivo's main work is *Storia delle Due Sicile dal 1847 al 1861*, originally published in 6 volumes. His tribute to the vanquished Neapolitan civilization goes:

We always have very singular customs, original Greek and Latin features, and tenacious ways of life, which sometimes seem uncivilized to the foreigner who quickly judges from the rind. But true civilization is of the soul, not of the dress. We have less shiny clothes on us, but with more morals and religion. Some of the people are barefoot and poorly dressed; but they go to the sermon, they confess, they love their family, they don't blaspheme, they live with little, and they sing merrily; short in anger, obedient, patient, enthusiastic and generous. Sailors and peasants have their kinds of goodness. The feasts have forms of bacchanal, but informed by Christian thought, chaste women, moderate boys, frequent weddings, very common small industry. If you take away the big cities, where there is always more corruption for foreign reasons, the provinces have patriarchal customs, picturesque vestments, remnants of Greek and Etruscan times, simple joys, few desires and easy to please. This people is happy with little; and it is a strange philanthropy that wanting to dissociate him from his peace, to arouse desires in him that remain unsatisfied. It is the unfulfilled desires that make this century furious, and those horrible crimes germinate in the midst of so many, reminding of those who fall to starvation in the streets of London. The thieves, the embezzlers, the incestuous ones, the atheists, the infanticides, the whores and the bitches who in their thousands stain those shining countries, are here rare exceptions; and you only sometimes find some in big cities...

It is a truth that the Bourbons did their utmost not to let this foreign civilization enter the country, and for this they were called retrograde and tyrants. On the contrary, they fought to curb what could not be denied entry; the missions, the religious feasts, the Liguorists, the Jesuits, the right schools, the abundance, the good price of things promoted, and this was obscurantism; they prevented the ruinous games, the concubines, the Camorra, the brothels, and it was tyranny; they put trousers on immodest dancers, forbade obscene dramas, lascivious paintings, the impudent statues; they did not allow the socialist propaganda to the newspapers, the German philosophies to the press, and the Protestant creeds to the innovators; and this was despotism, opposition to progress, denial of God; because for the revolutionary sect God is in the senses unbridled.

Another great Neapolitan conservative and exile was Pietro Calà Ulloa (1801-1879), the last President of the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (akin to Prime Minister). In 1862, *The Present Condition of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies* was published in English, a passionate and documented appeal to a state being plundered, raped and vanquished. His *Lettres napolitaines* (1861) expressed a commitment to a federalist solution to the Italian Question, though at that point a dead letter. In *L'union et non pas l'unité de l'Italie* (1867), he voices a rather strange proposal that France commit itself to the establishment of an Italian confederation under a strict reading of the Peace of Villafranca, which in no way would be in French interests having already assisted Piedmont, but nonetheless it seems to have been a desperate ploy meant for his French diplomatic colleagues.

We should also add Salvatore Murena (1805-1867), a Bourbon intendant appointed director to the Ministry of Public Works, and a hardline conservative. *Il principio di autorità e le tendenze del secolo* (1861) and *L'avvenire della società moderna sciolta dai principi cattolici* (1863) are two of his best works.

Francesco Proto, duca di Maddaloni (1815-1892) was in the unique position of a Neapolitan exile elected to Italian Parliament in 1861, where in November of the same year he proceeded to give a thunderous speech outlining the injustices being done to the Two Sicilies, without pulling back a single punch. This was the most incendiary and notoriously that anyone had ever or would ever address the newly minted “Southern Question” in liberal Italy’s parliamentary history.

Neither did conservatives across Europe not notice and protest the injustices of Piedmont’s actions. Among them we can mention Henri de La Rochejaquelein’s *La politique nationale et le droit des gens* (1860); Candido Nocedal’s *Discursos de don Candido Nocedal, sobre el reconocimiento del llamado Reino de Italia* (1866); Bienvenido Comín’s *La Política tradicional de España*; and speeches by August Reichensperger in *Ein Rückblick auf die letzten Sessionen des preußischen Abgeordnetenhauses und ein Wort über die deutsche Verfassungsfrage* (1864), pp.33-38.

Finally, we must mention the section of Italian society who would go on to be known as “cattolicesimo intransigente,” i.e. intransigent Catholics. Ultramontane in their outlook, defenders of the temporal power of the Roman Pontiff, the intransigents would have two main journals: the L'Osservatore Cattolico and most famously the La Civiltà Cattolica. The anti-Risorgimento discourses of the latter paper are discussed in this essay.

The best representatives were the Savoyard Antonio Brignole Sale (1786-1863) with his *Considérations sur la question romaine* (1860), the priest Giacomo Margotti (1823-1887) whose writings were suppressed by Count Cavour, with his writings collected in *Memorie per la storia de’ nostri tempi dal congresso di Parigi nel 1856 ai primi giorni del 1863*, covering the period when Piedmont was rapidly radicalizing. Additionally, there is his book against separation of church and state in Piedmont, *Alcune considerazioni intorno la separazione dello stato dalla chiesa in Piemonte* (1855). Giambattista Casoni (1830-1919) was a prolific Catholic journalist and advocate of the rights of the Holy See, notably his essay *Il papa-re* (1863) on the pope’s temporal sovereignty. To that note we will end with Fr. Antonio Bresciani, S.J. (1798-1862), bugbear of all Italian liberals to this day.

3. Liberal misrule

The Kingdom of Italy — not a state, but a farce. The English put so much into it, so what was the return on their capital investment?

The routine abuse of English subjects visiting Italy:

Several years after the arrests of Cruickshank and Stone, three separate events drew British attention to policing in Liberal Italy. In 1872 William Mercer boarded a ferry at Portocariello near Naples on the understanding that the fare was half a franc. Upon disembarking the boatmen tried to charge him a whole franc, whereupon his refusal to pay attracted a passing carabinieri. When the officer insisted that the Englishman pay the boatmen the whole sum, Mercer responded foolishly by accusing him of being involved in the scam. He was placed under arrest, but resisted. The boatmen and harbourmaster intervened to subdue him, and he was put in what he described as ‘thumbscrews’. Mercer was then imprisoned at Castellamare, before being released on the charge of ‘committing gross abuse and violence towards the agents of the public force’. The case proceeded to court and resulted in Mercer’s complete acquittal, prompting the legal advisor to the British Legation to suggest that he was entitled to sue the Italian government for compensation. In 1873, while Mercer was still awaiting trial, Arthur Vansittart was one of a group of Catholics attacked by an anticlerical mob in Rome. He suffered a gash to the head and a swollen forearm, and accused the municipal police of not intervening to help until the crowd had dispersed. Several men were arrested and tried, including Vansittart, but all were acquitted. A number of British residents complained about the police and petitioned for an inquiry into the incident; some later admitted to having been coerced into signing, and one even spoke in defence of the police. The subsequent investigation cleared the authorities of any blame and alleged that the victims had provoked their attackers by staring at them ‘in a provocative manner’. At his trial Vansittart had even been revealed as having provoked his assailants by calling them ‘vile Italians’. Within weeks of Vansittart’s attack another Briton, a Dr Dempster, was involved in a fracas with a municipal guard in Naples. The officer had arrested one man when a second stepped in to help the prisoner escape. A scuffle ensued, and Dempster was so horrified by the aggression of the guard that he intervened, grabbing the policeman’s sword and enabling both men to flee. Not surprisingly, Dempster then found himself under arrest until an influential Neapolitan friend stepped in to secure his release. Neither Mercer, nor Vansittart, nor Dempster could be absolved of responsibility for their respective experiences. Nonetheless, all three incidents stimulated British criticism of the administration of law and order in Italy. The Times condemned the ‘brutal excesses’ of the Italian authorities, and suggested that the Italian police were perhaps ‘too military’ in character and ‘not sufficiently drilled into respect for the public.’

These incidents were numerous, and soured relations between Italy and the UK. An ungrateful client and his indignant patron.

Per Christopher Duggan, living standards were largely sluggish for 40 years, so the entire pretense of “modernization” was pure verbiage:

The indications are that in the first forty years of unification the standard of living of the Italian population as a whole did not improve at all – indeed in many cases it seems to have fallen – and this at a time when almost everywhere else in Europe experienced at least modest rises in prosperity. The 1880s did see a significant expansion of industry, with the creation of state-sponsored iron and steel production (a considerable achievement given the near total absence of coal and other minerals), the establishment of new engineering plants and sustained growth in the main manufacturing sector, textiles (cotton, wool and above all silk, of which Italy was the world's leading producer after China). But these developments were confined almost entirely to the three north-western regions of the peninsula and did not result in an industrial 'take-off' of any kind. Nor was it clear that factory workers were better paid than their rural counterparts: the massive labour pool ensured that wages were kept depressed. As it was Italy remained an overwhelmingly agricultural country, with around two-thirds of the labour force employed on the land in the 1870s and 1880s; and here the general picture in the last two decades of the nineteenth century was bleak, with low investment and falling prices leading to rising unemployment and a general decline in living standards. Millions of Italians voted with their feet and emigrated.

Vera Zamagni, in *The economic history of Italy, 1860-1990* (1993) comes to a similar conclusion, adding that Italy didn't truly industrialize until after World War II through a combination of Marshall Plan funds and an export boom secured by GATT and EEC membership. That in addition to the boost offered by fascist economic policies, such as the state-owned holding company Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale, established in 1933 and retained after the war. This is also congruent with A. James Gregor's thesis in *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* (1979).

Taxation in the South was heavy and regressive: "The state's need to raise revenue quickly in order to deal with the huge public debt was one important reason why the burden of taxation fell disproportionately on the poor after 1860. Piedmont had run up a huge overdraft in the late 1840s and 1850s, well over 1,000 million lire, fighting the Austrians and constructing railways; and when to this were added the debts that the new kingdom inherited from the other Italian states at unification, the costs of fighting banditry in the south and of the war of 1866, and the expenditure incurred in setting up three capital cities in the space of a decade, it is little wonder that united Italy imposed abnormally high levels of taxation on its new subjects. By 1870 the national debt had reached the dizzy heights of more than 8,000 million lire. Revenue from direct taxes went up by 63 per cent between 1865 and 1871, but the difficulties involved in getting accurate returns for private income forced the government to fall back more and more on easily levied consumer taxes – on salt, on tobacco, and most notoriously on the grinding of wheat and other grains – which hit the working classes particularly severely. Receipts from indirect taxation rose by 107 per cent between 1865 and 1871. Local councils were also entitled to impose taxes, for example on food and livestock, and again it was the poor who were disproportionately affected. When the young Tuscan

liberal Sidney Sonnino visited Sicily in 1876 he found that mules and donkeys – which the peasants owned – were much more heavily taxed than cattle, which belonged to the large landowners.”

John A. Davis, in *Conflict and Control: Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (1988), discusses the introduction of conscription in the South and the reintroduction of a grist tax, but far more onerous. This resulted in a riot breaking out in Romagna in 1869, which was brutally suppressed:

Although conscription had existed in many Northern states before Unification, it was no less resented than in the South and posed no less of a threat to the precarious peasant economies in which the labour provided by young men was impossible to replace. But the greatest single cause of rural discontent was taxation, and nowhere was the nature of the compromises forced on the new state more evident than in the continuation of a fiscal system that discriminated strongly against the countryside and the rural population. Under pressure from the landed interests, the new state adopted a fiscal system in the 1860s that was based on a land tax that weighed more heavily on small farms than on larger estates, while the rural population bore the brunt of indirect consumption taxes which were levied on most basic necessities. The decision in 1868, therefore, to reintroduce the hated grist tax or *macinato* was extremely inflammatory. The tax had existed in most of the pre-Unification states and was paid when the peasants took their grain to the mill. Its abolition in 1860 symbolised the coming of a new era in many regions, but although the patriots had greeted local populations with the cry ‘Long live Italy and down with the grist tax’ during the heady days of liberation, abolition proved short-lived.

Ostensibly the cause lay in the desperate financial crisis that had been provoked by Italy’s mobilisation in 1866 against Austria. But that was only partly true, and the decision to place the burden of additional taxation not only on indirect taxes but on indirect taxes that weighed most heavily on small peasant producers reflected the predominance of the landowners in the new parliament. The refusal to concede higher taxes on land ownership forced the government back on indirect taxation, while the constant fear of provoking urban disorder ensured that the form of taxation would be skewed to discriminate against the countryside.

The new tax came into force in January 1869 and caused riots and demonstrations throughout the peninsula. The most violent disturbances were in the Romagna, especially in the countryside near Bologna where an estimated 4,000 peasants from neighbouring settlements gathered in the village of S. Giovanni in Persiceto on 6 January. The peasants were accompanied by a number of priests, as well as neighbouring landowners in their carriages, which the government took as evidence of the counter-revolutionary nature of the demonstration. It responded by declaring a state of emergency and despatched a brigade of Bersaglieri to disperse the demonstrators. The troops opened fire indiscriminately on the protesters, killing five instantly. The 200 individuals who were arrested included 2 landowners, 42 peasant farmers, a similar number of farm hands, as well as masons, street porters, joiners and craft apprentices, indicating that the demonstration had attracted support from a wide range of occupations.

Venetian peasants in the 1880s were suffering from unprecedented outbreaks of pellagra disease, as reported by local magnate Eugenio Sartori: “Today the condition of our peasants is much worse than it was in 1866. In those days there was no pellagra and for these people the government of Italy has meant little more than ‘government by the signori’. For that reason the landowners have an obligation to relieve the sufferings of the poor . . . 20,000 peasants suffer the pangs of hunger and the torments of the pellagra while their landlords come to Mantua only during the harvest season to collect the rents, before they depart to spend the proceeds in Rome, Paris or London.”

The situation was so bad that Venetian peasants were emigrating to coffee plantations in Brazil in order to replace negro laborers: “Across the plains of the Po delta, landowners and peasants engaged in a sullen and bitter battle to lay claim to woodland and marsh. The landowners responded to these attempts to preserve customary rights by waging an unstinting campaign to extirpate what was always referred to simply as ‘rural theft’. When they were unable to enforce property rights themselves they appealed to the state and to the Carabinieri for assistance. Here too the landowners’ victory resulted in one of the first cases of genuinely proletarian emigration as the landless peasants and labourers from parts of the Veneto were assisted by their priests to set off to replace the former Negro slaves on the coffee plantations of São Paulo state.”

Later, food riots in Milan in the 1890s would lead to the tragic Bava Beccaris massacre. The utter disposability and vacuity of “liberal principles” were shown on display when Luigi Pelloux, Prime Minister from 1898 to 1900, passed a public safety bill that effectively abrogated all civil liberties.

Francesco Crispi, radical strongman and Prime Minister in the 1890s, was writing in 1882 of a “religion of the fatherland” to vanquish Catholicism: “We need to make this religion of the Fatherland, which must be our principal if not only religion, as solemn and as popular as possible. We all of us, servants of Progress, have gradually destroyed a faith that for centuries sufficed our people, precisely because through the ritualized forms of its displays it appealed to the visual senses, and through the visual senses to the minds of the masses, who are impressionable, imaginative and artistic, eager for shapes, colours and sounds to feed their fantasies. What have we substituted for this faith? As far as the masses are concerned, nothing. We have closed our new Gods of Reason and Duty within ourselves... without adorning them with the external trappings of religion that still today, in the absence of an alternative, draw to church people who are nostalgic for beauty at a time when beauty is tending to disappear. We must address this, as the character of a people is not changed overnight...”

Among his anti-Catholic provocations: “On 9 June 1889 a statue to the sixteenth-century heretic Giordano Bruno was inaugurated in the Campo dei Fiori in Rome amid huge Masonic and anti-clerical celebrations, and as expected Pope Leo XIII was mortified. It was the latest of a string of insults deliberately directed by Crispi at the Vatican; and at a consistory summoned three weeks later Leo told the cardinals that this ‘naked challenge by the Italian

government to the Holy See' made it almost impossible for him to feel safe any longer in Rome. Most observers agreed that Leo had no intention at all of leaving the Eternal City and that his *cris de coeur* were merely histrionic and intended simply to rally Catholic support and sympathy throughout Europe. But Crispi looked to exploit the charged atmosphere to trigger a conflict, this time to coincide with the centenary of the storming of the Bastille."

The Italian liberals were so jaded by the sense of decadence that their state had created that they quickly began yearning for a baptismal regeneration through a people's war, among them Pasquale Turiello: "[A] new, mighty and virile offensive, a second test of arms and blood, [will] restore to Italy the strength that it now seems to lack... From 1866 until today we have returned a third time to a period of prolonged peace, which, as history shows, can only be endured by Italians at the cost of their being ruined... Our character, which becomes weak in peacetime and is only strengthened in the crucible of war... compel[s] us today to accept any opportunity to fight... Italy can continue to be at peace, but only at the price of gradually slipping back to the moral condition into which the protracted periods of peace had led us in 1494 and 1792... When the army and the nation have been reinvigorated by a great and glorious war, well planned in advance, the damage that is being done [to the state by its enemies] will be reduced to almost nothing."

Sidney Sonnino, half-Jewish Prime Minister of Italy from 1909 to 1910, was writing in *Del governo rappresentativo in Italia* (1872) that "The parliamentary system loses more of its prestige every day... It rests on a series of presumptions removed from a somewhat partial study of the history of English institutions, perfected and reduced to a system in the mind of some doctrinaires, but which unfortunately do not occur anywhere."

"Constitutional government, and even more the parliamentary government, which today prevails over others in many parts of Europe and America in various forms, is always a party government," wrote Marco Minghetti, Prime Minister from 1873 to 1876, with greatly candid demeanor in 1881.

Agostino Bertani, a radical deputy, in 1877 located the locus of governance in "authoritative newspapers": "In this wise constitutional concept, then, men and authoritative newspapers of moderate proportions agreed, and newspapers of all sizes gradually agreed upon it; and therefore the parliamentary opposition, a few months before coming to power, declaring as mature as other few ideas..." Parliament is as absolute (or more) than any king before was: "This, which I will call my constitutional dogma, is summarized in a few and precise maxims, and they are: All the services of the State, from the highest to the humblest spheres, must be, by statute or by law, ordered, compensated, supervised for work of the Parliament. And therefore, as a consequent and very first application, the Parliament has its supreme oversight over the administration of the civil list." Giuseppe Zanardelli, another eminent Italian radical, for his part lionized the legal profession as the bulwark of liberty in *L'Avvocatura* (1876).

Urbano Rattazzi, in a collection of his parliamentary speeches published in 1877 displayed the magnanimity of liberalism when, as a fighter for freedom, he proposed taking it away from priests, indeed outright criminalization: “But when, instead of operating as simple citizens, they present themselves as ministers of worship, and as such, by covering themselves with the cloak of religion, they undermine the security of the state, then they commit a truly special crime, which wants to be punished by a necessarily special law, that is, from a penalty appropriate to the nature of the crime.”

The characteristic political phenomenon in liberal Italy was that of *trasformismo*. It is a little hard to define, but essentially it constituted a form of government where political parties and ministry appointments were continuously reshuffled on a pre-arranged basis so as to nullify both opposition and any motions of no confidence: “The governing system of *trasformismo* provided the second, and crucial, mechanism through which the propertied class maintained its exclusive access to, and exercise of, state power. Established by Prime Minister Agostino Depretis in the late 1870s, *trasformismo* became the enduring legacy of the Liberal state until the emergence of the mass parties, the Socialist party (Partito Socialista Italiano, PSI) and later, the Catholic party (Partito Popolare Italiano, PPI) in the post-World War I years. *Trasformismo*’s main objective was to obstruct the creation of a parliamentary opposition by incorporating as many parties as possible into a broad coalition. At the heart of this system were the country’s 69 provincial governments, dominated by the organizations of the propertied class. The clientele politics of the Liberal state rendered the government dependent on parliamentary majorities produced by local politics dominated by patrician families and notables. Bologna’s ‘agrarian elite’, for example, several old landowning families who lived in the cities, held unchallenged power at the communal and provincial level. The province’s political representatives presided over boards of major financial institutions, the Constitutional Assembly, the political club of the landed families, and, of course, won ‘nearly every election’ from 1860 until World War I.”

Other characteristics included “the absence of clear-cut parties, party programmes, and a two-party system; the venality of deputies (and electors); the instability of governments; the clogging-up of parliament with petty local business; the meddling of the executive in the workings of the administration (the judiciary was not formally independent, and prefects were continually intruding into local government, using the police in a partisan manner, backing government candidates at election time).”

However, the most vivid description of *trasformismo* is to be found in Vilfredo Pareto’s *The parliamentary regime in Italy* (1893), a masterwork of its kind.

“As to parties, these certainly exist, in name; but the names serve only to designate bodies of men united by certain strictly personal interests or by a certain community of temperament. It is impossible to find any real difference between these nominal parties as regards their attitude towards the political and social problems with which the country is confronted. To this rule the extremists, indeed, constitute an exception; but they are not at all numerous.

Strictly speaking, there are three extreme parties, of which, however, one only is really active, namely, the Socialists. The Republican Party maintains a proud reserve, and as to the Clerical Party, it effaces itself entirely on the political stage,” writes Pareto.

Flexibility on part of deputies meant a total lack of both principle or any acknowledgement of having an ideology: “One candidate, who was chosen at the last elections, said that he would support any government which had the welfare of the nation sincerely at heart,- a declaration which certainly threw little light upon the speaker’s personal convictions. Not all candidates carry the method so far; but in nearly all electoral programs phrases occur whose object is to avoid all precise treatment of the problems which are agitating the country. A candidate states, for example, that he “will vote for such military and naval expenditures as are necessary for the good of the country.” This statement satisfies equally those people who believe that the good of the country requires an increase of these expenses, and those who believe that it is necessary, on the contrary, to curtail them. Another, following the program of Minister Giolitti, declares that he will not vote for new taxes unless they are absolutely necessary; which evidently commits him in no way, since new taxes are invariably declared necessary by those who propose them. A similar vagueness characterizes many recent utterances on the tariff question. By the customs law of 1887 Italy entered upon a policy of protection; yet the authors of the tariff and their friends have never frankly called themselves protectionists, as M. Meline and his adherents have done in France. They represent the new system as an inevitable expedient under the conditions of the times, and they speak much of the natural law of free exchange, which is to guide economic policy when circumstances make it possible.”

“Ministerial crises in Italy rarely lead to an entire change of the cabinet. It is generally a matter of reorganization; and the opposition of yesterday may become a part of the ministry it had previously oppose.”

Largesse by state-owned banks kept industries afloat and dependent on party patronage: “Many enterprises are supported only by continual renewals of their bills, discounted by the banks of issue; and naturally the discount is most freely granted to those which enjoy the favor of the government. It should be noted that the legal tender quality of the bank notes is granted only for a very short time, generally six months or a year. This has kept the banks in strict dependence on the government and the legislative power. To secure their good will the banks have been obliged to have what is called a political portfolio. This name is given to bills discounted to legislators or influential journalists, which are renewed indefinitely.”

Vote buying was rampant, as was despondent indifference: “In the eyes not only of the people but of a great part of the bourgeoisie, politics are a luxury which only the man who has a following, who has clients in the old Latin sense of the term, can permit himself. A father may often be heard to praise his son by saying: “He has no vices, does not keep evil company, and does not occupy himself with politics.” This feeling explains a singular phenomenon, observable from time to time – the unanimous abstention of all the electors in a particular locality by way of protest against the government. A law passed not long ago removed the

justices of the peace (pretor) in a number of small places. The electors of some of these places now abstain from voting at all elections. Considering that their rights have been ignored, they revenge themselves by sulking at their masters, not by attempting to select new ones. I once reproached a workman, who was a very honest man, for having taken ten francs to vote in favor of a deputy. I represented to him that if he joined with his companions they could elect some one who would undertake to get the heavy taxes lessened. He answered: 'All that is useless ; the heads will always do what they desire. The only good we can get is some bank notes at election time.'

Electoral campaigns were openly being run around the subject of paying off beneficiaries and clients:

Excuse me, that is an error; exactly a franc fifty was the average price [for a vote]; I have written testimony of this deposited at a notary's office. At Modena, six francs; at Alatri, a college in the Roman district, eight, ten and even one hundred francs. . . . The asylum of Tutra [an asylum for the poor] receives a subsidy of 400 francs through the kindness of the candidate N. . . . In the third election district of Novara a paper was distributed on which was written: "If you vote for these four candidates, there will be 10,000 francs for the asylum." In the third election district at Milan a printed paper was distributed which read: "Choice is easy. . . . We have four tried men of honor, who have procured for us the railway stations, the telegraph and post-offices, and who a few days ago obtained for us the following subsidies: 500 francs for the Infant Asylum, 500 for the School of Design, 1500 for the Charity Assembly" . . . At Foligno the ministerial candidate obtained for the corporation a loan of 450,000 francs from the government. . . . In the second Roman election district a certain Ferri, originally from Vallinfreda, where he exercised considerable influence, had been condemned (for wounding the syndic) to eighteen months' imprisonment. He was suffering the punishment of his crime when it was found that his presence in the electoral struggle would be useful. Application was made to the ministerial candidate, and three or four days before the elections he was pardoned, and returned to the electoral community just in time to pay his debt of gratitude."

Such, then, were the rights and liberties that the Risorgimento gave the Italians. It ought to be clear why fascism had to emerge.