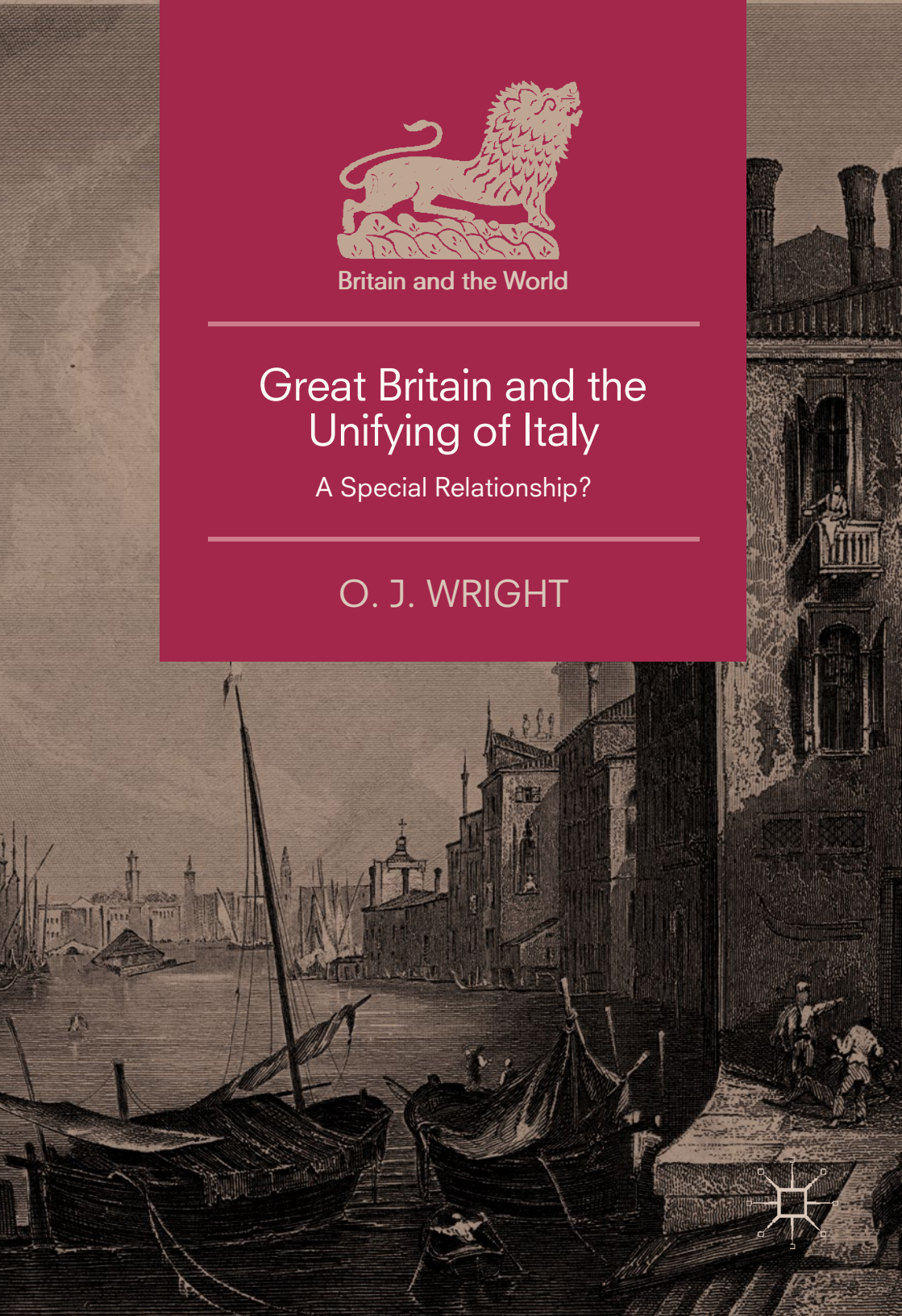

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Great Britain and the Unifying of Italy

A Special Relationship?

O. J. WRIGHT

Britain and the World

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O. J. Wright
Leeds Beckett University
Leeds, UK

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national capital and which every British enthusiast for the Italian national cause wanted to see won. It took almost as long to unite Italy as it did to write this book.

Rome, 2018 Owain James Wright

Contents

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
Bodley	Bodleian Library, Oxford
HRO	Hampshire Record Office, Winchester
Hartley	Hartley Library, University of Southampton
LRO	Liverpool Record Office
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

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Fig. 1 Map of Italy. Reference: Adapted from a historical map of Europe used. Courtesy of www.d-maps.com [https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=6029&lang=en, accessed 1 July 2018]

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

One of the many misconceptions common in modern European history is that the Unification of Italy occurred between 1859 and 1861. The joining of most of northern and southern Italy into a single kingdom during this period was widely regarded as a major historical watershed by contemporary spectators, and it has often been treated as such by historians. It is commonplace to think about and to write of history as though it were easily divisible into conveniently distinct eras separated by fixed turning points. While such events as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center of 2001, the Arab Spring of 2011, and both the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum and the United States' election of Donald Trump in 2016 have all been presented as historical watersheds in contemporary media, it is possible that in time they will come to appear as mere flashpoints within a more prolonged period of global change that began with the end of the Cold War. Likewise, the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476, the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the French Revolution beginning but by no means ending in 1789 are all examples of dates frequently treated as historical watersheds, but which can be more accurately described as flashpoints within much longer patterns of historical development. The same might even be said of 'Year Zero' itself, otherwise known as 1945. This treatment has been applied to various dates from the nineteenth century, most notably the Vienna Settlement of 1815, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, and

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also to what is traditionally regarded as the Unification of Italy between 1859 and 1861.

Although the two-year period between 1859 and 1861 witnessed the joining of most of the Italian peninsula and islands into a centralised entity, which was officially proclaimed as the Kingdom of Italy, it could be argued that the process by which the country was unified actually began in 1713, if not even earlier. In many ways, the grouping together of ancient regions into composite and somewhat artificial states like the Kingdom of Sardinia (Sardinia, Piedmont, and later Liguria) and what would eventually become known as the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Sicily, Campania, Lucania/Basilicata, Calabria, Puglia, Abruzzo, and modern-day Molise) anticipated the union in 1861. Insofar as it did take place during the mid-nineteenth century, it is more accurate to date the unification process as having commenced with either the forced allocation of Liguria to Piedmont by the Allies who defeated Napoléon in 1814, or the creation of a 'perfect fusion' between the administrative and legal systems of Piedmont and the island of Sardinia in 1847, which Martin Clark has described as 'the first voluntary annexation of the Risorgimento'.[1] It is just as appropriate to describe the events of 1859 and 1860 as witnessing the annexation of Lombardy, the Duchies and Papal States of central Italy, Sicily, and the whole of the southern mainland to Piedmont, as it is to talk of national unification. The same goes for the cession of Venice and its hinterland to Piedmont (via France), forced upon Austria by the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and the Italian invasion of the Patrimony of St Peter—the city of Rome and most of modern-day Lazio—in 1870. What occurred in 1861, therefore, was the proclamation of a new state, rather than a sudden and straightforward unification of the Italian peninsula. Furthermore, the traditional focus on the turning point of 1861 serves to obscure the fact that most of the existing institutions and practices of Piedmont-Sardinia were extended throughout that country's newly acquired territories, rather than created as anything genuinely new; the new Italy created between 1859 and 1861 was very much a continuation—albeit in a greatly aggrandised form—of the old Kingdom of Sardinia. That the supposedly new state included neither Rome nor Venice—the former being the country's natural capital, and the latter surely the most iconic of Italian cities—signifies

[1] M. Clark, *The Italian Risorgimento*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Longman, 2009), p. 50.

that Italy was not truly unified before 1870. Even then, Italy had to wait until the twentieth century to obtain possession of unquestionably Italian Trieste, and the territories now known as Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino-Alto Adige. The Italian state has, since 1870, won and lost possession of Istria, and it has never succeeded in completing the unification of all Italianate lands by securing the inclusion of the ancient republic of San Marino, the Italian-speaking Swiss canton of Ticino, and the more-Italian-than-French island of Corsica. These realities make it possible to suggest that Italy's national unification was a far more lengthy and complex process than a simple union of northern and southern Italian states taking place between 1859 and 1861. It could even be argued that the Italy created was a state without a nation, or that it has never really been unified at all.[2] For this reason, it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of the 'unifying of Italy', implying a partial and ongoing process which did not begin in 1859 and which was not completed by 1870, than to use the formal and traditionally capitalised term the 'Unification of Italy' most commonly attached and confined to the two years before 1861.

The unifying of Italy—insofar as it occurred between 1859 and 1870—was part of a wider political, economic, and social reorganisation of Europe, which included the independence of Greece in the 1820s, the not dissimilar unifying of Germany by 1871, and the creation of a raft of new states at the Versailles peace conference in 1919; all of these developments contributed to the gradual replacement of the continent's old multinational empires with new nation-states over the course of a whole century.[3] The Italian contribution to this wider and longer restructuring of Europe was as surprising as it was dramatic. At face value, it appeared to be the achievement of a patriotic movement whose leaders, most notably the popular hero Giuseppe Garibaldi and the political philosopher Giuseppe Mazzini, had spent decades campaigning for a single democratic republic to be created between the natural frontiers of the Alps and the Mediterranean. But the kind of unified state that emerged in Italy between 1859 and 1870, and the manner in which it was created, was very different

[2] See M. Graziano, *The Failure of Italian Nationhood: Geopolitics of a Troubled Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[3] J. A. S. Grenville, *Europe Reshaped, 1848–1878*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 231.

from the Mazzinian ideal.[4] The Italy which emerged from the exciting events of 1859–61 was far more the creation of Count Cavour, the Piedmontese prime minister who presided over a succession of improvised and opportunist moves which brought about process of change controlled 'from above' as much as it was spurred by revolution 'from below'.[5] Beginning under his leadership in 1859, and continuing after his death through the acquisition of Venice in 1866 and Rome in 1870, the unifying of Italy can be described as an effective conquest of the rest of Italy by the north-western region of Piedmont, almost irrespective of the wishes of the population it transformed officially but not emotionally into 'Italians'. Perhaps the greatest irony is that, unlike Mazzini and Garibaldi, Cavour had considered the unity of such a large portion of Italy to be fantasy almost until it became a *fait accompli* in 1860.[6]

Prior to national unification, the term 'Italy' was generally used in reference to territory rather than people, and Denis Mack Smith has suggested that there was some truth in Count Metternich's famous dismissal of the term as merely a 'geographical expression'.[7] The population of the peninsula spoke a plethora of different languages and dialects, and were divided by age-old rivalries as much as by the formidable array of geographical frontiers which had led to experience what Roger Absalom has described as 'centuries of disparate experience'.[8] Indeed, it can be contended that there were 'several Italies' in existence prior to 1861, and the challenge presented to the small clique of mainly Piedmontese liberals who were charged with uniting them all was enormous. Rather than innovate, they believed that the extension of the existing administration of the old Kingdom of Sardinia state across the rest of Italy would be the quickest and easiest route towards harmonising Italian politics and bridging Italian economic and social divisions. However, the determination of the first king of Italy to retain his dynastic title of Vittorio

[4] For Mazzini's programme, see D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson, 2002), pp. 225–8.

[5] E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848–75* (London: Abacus, 1997, originally 1975), p. 93.

[6] See A. Cardoza, 'Cavour, Piedmont and Italian Unification', in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. J. A. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 122–31.

[7] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 3.

[8] R. Absalom, *Italy since 1800: A Nation in the Balance?* (London & New York: Longman, 1995), p. 45.

Emanuele II—rather than styling himself more appropriately as Vittorio Emanuele I—and the opening of the first all-Italian parliament as the eighth rather than the first of his reign, indicated the extent to which Italy's new rulers were inclined to view national unification not so much as a new beginning, but rather as the continuation of their version of Italy—the Piedmontese one, which had overcome the others. One of the most obvious signifiers of continuity between the old Italy and the new was the fact that Turin passed with scarcely any question from being the capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia to being the capital of Italy, irrespective of the fact that it was too distant to deal effectively with the many problems presented by its newly acquired possessions. Moreover, the 'Piedmontisation' of Italy decided upon by the country's new leaders was undertaken rapidly, arbitrarily, and often forcibly. Despite being endorsed by regional plebiscites, the practical manner in which most of Italy was united by 1861, and then consolidated by 1870, sparked a crisis of legitimacy. It created a mutual resentment between northerners and southerners, which has compromised the Italian state ever since. Nowhere was any appreciation of the scale of the challenge better expressed than the famous—if perhaps apocryphal—declaration attributed to Massimo D'Azeglio: 'We have made Italy: now we must make Italians.' Nick Carter was apt to describe the efforts of Italian leaders to bridge the chasm that existed between the Cavourian state and the various populations of the new Italy as 'wholly inadequate',[9] but there was no lack of will. In the hope of forging a sense of national consciousness, and aiming to overcome the country's ancient geographical, economic, cultural, and emotional divides, the Italian government committed itself immediately to a policy of somehow securing possession of Rome and Venice, embarked upon an ambitious programme of public works aimed at physically pulling the country together, and sought to propagate a myth surrounding the Risorgimento and its protagonists.[10]

Nowhere in Europe was anyone more eager to subscribe to this myth than in Great Britain. The unifying of Italy was a defining moment in the history of Victorian Britain, and in the history of Victorian foreign

[9] N. Carter, 'Nation, Nationality, Nationalism and Internationalism in Italy from Cavour to Mussolini', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (1996), pp. 545–51 (p. 545).

[10] See 'Inventing the Italian Nation: From the Risorgimento to the Great War', in N. Doumanis, *Inventing the Nation: Italy* (London: Arnold, 2001), pp. 86–106.

policy in particular. British sympathies for the Italian national cause had been anticipated during the struggle to liberate Greece during the 1820s, and Italian affairs played an important role in British domestic politics during 1859 and 1860. What the Victorians saw happening in Risorgimento Italy coincided with their dominant, self-congratulatory Whig-Protestant ideology. There are obvious parallels between the Piedmontese treatment of its newly acquired possessions and the British rule of Ireland, both in terms of how governments in Turin and London made mistakes at the same time as undertaking what each no doubt thought of as 'civilising missions'. Nonetheless, A. N. Wilson has remarked that while British misrule of Ireland represented the dark side of Victorian Britain, the British interest in and support for Italian unification represented its progressive and optimistic lighter side.[11] For British enthusiasts, the aggrandisement of Piedmont within Italy meant the creation of a state possessed of relatively natural frontiers, a parliamentary government, and a more open judicial system; it also proffered a readiness to embrace free trade and the possibility of some kind of religious reformation. In the eyes of British spectators, it represented not so much a conquest of territory or peoples, but rather the triumph of the principles of Victorian liberalism over the conservative and continental alliance of monarchy and church. Maura O'Connor has examined how the Victorians hoped to see an Italian nation forged in the British image and how they desired—through political and cultural transactions—to play a role in its creation.[12] In short, Italian unification appeared to British supporters to be an important step along the road towards a new, more British World Order, a journey in which the Victorians believed they led the way.

The existing historiography on Great Britain and the unifying of Italy gives an unwittingly false impression of the British interest in the event. O'Connor's study is rare in that it considers how the British conceived of and were involved in Italy from before national unification up until 1864. Elena Bacchin does likewise by looking at how the Italophilia of the mid-Victorian generation was shaped by the efforts of radical and moderate

[11] See 'The Victorians in Italy', in A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow Books, 2003), pp. 84–92 (p. 84).

[12] M. O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998). In particular, see 'Introduction: Crossing Boundaries', pp. 1–11.

promoters of the Italian cause in Britain between 1847 and 1864.[13] Prior to these works, research devoted to the Victorian enthusiasm for Italian nationalism focused almost entirely on the period leading up to the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, the implication being that the work of Italy's unification was thereby completed, and that the British interest consequently ceased. G. M. Trevelyan's classic studies on the making of Italy celebrate the 'great men' of the Risorgimento and give the impression that the creation of a unified state was a work accomplished by the time that Vittorio Emanuele and Garibaldi met at Teano in 1860[14]; there is no fifth volume on the important period of Italian development between 1861 and 1870. The focus of G. F. H. Berkeley's trilogy is even earlier.[15] The majority of studies on Italy's unification are written as though the crucial process began and ended in the two years between 1859 and 1861. The same can be said of most studies of the British interest and involvement in Italian unification. Derek Beales's excellent scrutiny of Victorian policy on the Italian Question is concerned only with the crucial events of 1859 and 1860[16]; Mario Tedeschi's account of French and British involvement does likewise.[17] Miriam Urban's antiquated examination of British opinion and policy on Italian affairs is somewhat longer in scope, but still terminates its enquiry in 1861.[18] Even C. T. McIntyre's revisionist account of how religion provided a motivation for British leaders to support the Italian national cause omits to tackle the subject beyond 1861.[19] Whatever their respective strengths, such studies

[13] E. Bacchin, *Italofilia. Opinione pubblica britannica e Risorgimento italiano 1847–1864* (Turin: Carocci editore, 2014).

[14] G. M. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic* (London & New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907); *Garibaldi and the Thousand* (London & New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909); *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy* (London & New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911); *Manin and the Venetian Revolution of 1848* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1923).

[15] G. F. H. Berkeley and J. Berkeley, *Italy in the Making: Vol. 1, 1815 to 1846; Vol. 2, June 1846 to January 1848; Vol. 3, January 1st, 1848 to November 16th, 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932–40).

[16] Derek Beales, *England and Italy 1859–60* (London & Edinburgh: Nelson, 1961).

[17] Mario Tedeschi, *Francia e Inghilterra di fronte alla Questione Romana 1859–60* (Milan: A. Giuffre, 1978).

[18] Miriam Urban, *British Opinion and Policy on the Italian Question 1856–61* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Press, 1938).

[19] C. T. McIntire, *England against the Papacy, 1858–1861: Tories, Liberals and the Overthrow of the Papal Temporal Power during the Italian Risorgimento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

fail to acknowledge that throughout the first decade of its existence, the Kingdom of Italy suffered from chronic internal instability, was horrendously vulnerable to potential attack from an array of hostile external powers, and suffered both domestically and internationally from a severe lack of legitimacy. The new Italy was essentially an artificial state; it was put together in haste, and its survival was by no means guaranteed. The various British Liberal and Conservative governments of the 1860s were keenly aware of this reality. The dramatic events of 1859 and 1860 were flashpoints in the unifying of Italy, leading towards the formal establishment of a united kingdom in Italy in 1861, yet only a handful of studies have overcome the notion that 1861 marks a watershed both in Italian affairs, and in British relations with Italy. Noel Blakiston's collection of essays on various aspects of the British involvement in Italy straddles this supposed divide,[20] as does Massimo de Leonardis's monograph on British interest in the Roman Question.[21] Nick Carter's recent edited volume on Britain, Ireland, and the Italian Risorgimento is probably the first book to consider British and Irish interactions with Italy's national resurgence in the *longue durée* between the formation of Mazzini's Young Italy organisation in the 1830s and Irish independence in the 1920s.[22] The number of studies concerned with British and/or Irish relations with Italy after 1861 is, by contrast, very limited. H. E. Priestley made an early attempt to fill the void in the understanding of British foreign policy regarding Italy during the latter half of the 1860s.[23] Danilo Raponi has recently revealed the extent to which religion was a motive behind the British involvement in the affairs of the newly unified Italian state from 1861 to 1875.[24] My own work has sought principally to overcome the notion that the Victorians'

[20] N. Blakiston, *Inglesi e italiani nel Risorgimento* (Catania: Bonanno, 1973).

[21] M. de Leonardis, *L'Inghilterra e la Questione Romana 1859–70* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1980).

[22] N. Carter (ed.), *Britain, Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[23] H. E. Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question, 1866–1871' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1930).

[24] D. Raponi, 'British Protestants, the Roman Question and the Formation of Italian National Identity, 1861–1875' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2010); *Religion and Politics in the Risorgimento: Britain and the New Italy, 1861–1875* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

interest and involvement in Italian affairs suddenly ceased once the new Italy appeared to have been made in 1861.[25]

It is the primary endeavour of this book to examine the extents to which successive British governments—both Liberal and Conservative in colour—maintained a keen awareness of the importance of Italian affairs, both to Italy and to Europe more generally, throughout the decade following the foundation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. Throughout this period, British leaders sought to assist the consolidation of the new state, to influence its development, and even—on occasions—to protect its fragile existence. This is the first study published in English to provide a comprehensive narrative of British foreign policy regarding Italy from the emergence of the new state right up to its acquisition of Rome in 1870. By coincidence, this period is traditionally considered to have witnessed a dramatic change in the nature of British foreign policy. Whereas Viscount Palmerston, first as foreign secretary three times between 1830 and 1851, and then as prime minister almost continually from 1855 to 1865, developed a reputation for exerting Britain's influence around the world through both 'soft' and 'hard' diplomacy, his government's humiliation by the Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck over the Danish crisis (1864), Palmerston's death (1865), and the departure from office of his erstwhile collaborator Lord John Russell (1866) led to a change in direction. Some studies have suggested that the passing of the ascendency of Palmerston and Russell led towards a period of relative isolationism and non-interventionism in European affairs under the Conservative administrations of Lord Derby and Benjamin Disraeli (1866–68) and the first Liberal government of William Gladstone (1868–74).[26] The aim here is to challenge this perspective by providing an account of the extent of British

[25] O. J. Wright, 'Sea and Sardinia: *Pax Britannica* versus Vendetta in the New Italy (1870)', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2007), pp. 398–416; 'British Representatives and the Surveillance of Italian affairs, 1860–70', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2008), pp. 669–87; 'Police "Outrages" against British Residents and Travellers in Liberal Italy, 1867–77', *Crime, History and Societies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2010), pp. 51–72; 'British Foreign Policy and the Italian Occupation of Rome, 1870', *International History Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2012), pp. 161–76.

[26] For example, see M. E. Chamberlain, *'Pax Britannica'? British Foreign Policy 1789–1914* (London & New York: Longman, 1988), pp. 123–7; K. Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 81–123; K. T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846–1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 221–36.

involvement in Italian affairs throughout the 1860s, a decade punctuated by episodes which suggest that Britain's leaders did not shy away from opportunities to influence Italian affairs.

This is not the place to retell the tale of the British contribution to the formation of a united kingdom in Italy by 1861, although some narrative of Britain's involvement is worthwhile for context. In addition to the various Anglophone publications cited earlier, Italian historiography has acknowledged how Britain played an influential role in the Italian Question. The new Italy has even been described as 'an English creation' on account of how the Liberal triumvirate of Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone acted to prevent the French from obtaining hegemony over the peninsula, presided over the creation of an Italian 'nation-state' under the auspices of Cavourian Piedmont, and ultimately offered an effective guarantee to protect its existence.[27] In 1860 the government led by Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone invested considerable political credibility in the birth of the new state. It is fair to say that they, and the later Liberal government led by Gladstone with Lords Clarendon and Granville at the Foreign Office, encouraged the development of an Italian polity crafted very much in the Victorian image. Besides the ideological appeal of an independent and constitutional Italian state, there were also substantial strategic advantages for the mid-Victorian generation. In a British-dominated Mediterranean, it seemed unthinkable that a country possessing such a long coastline, and which was located in the very centre of that sea, could be anything other than a friendly power. At the same time, the unifying of Italy promised to satisfy two important aims of Victorian foreign policy: the emergence of a strong and independent state which might provide a significant counterweight to keep French ambitions in the Mediterranean in check, and the preservation of the ramshackle Austrian Empire by freeing it of its complicated Italian commitments. Consequently, the consolidation of Italian independence, internal stability, and territorial integrity were all highly desirable to British interests. This strategic significance took on a further dimension with the laying of telegraphic cables between Italy and Malta in 1860 and the opening of both the Mont Cenis railway over the Alps in 1868 (followed by a tunnel in 1871) and the Suez Canal in 1869; both of these engineering achievements rendered the new Italy an important link in Britain's quickest line of communication with its

[27] M. Graziano, *The Failure of Italian Nationhood: Geopolitics of a Troubled Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 22–3.

far-flung global empire. Moreover, the abolition of Italy's internal frontiers was expected to bring benefits to both British commerce and British tourism, while the surge in infrastructural improvements made by the Italian state after 1861 provided opportunities for British engineers, labourers, and financial investors. These British ideological, strategic, and economic concerns form the backdrop to this analysis of British diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Italy, as does the place of religion as a motive behind the formation of Victorian foreign policy,[28] manifest not least in British hopes that Italian unification might be accompanied by some form of religious reformation and the termination of the ancient temporal power of the Papacy. With British sentiments therefore being—broadly speaking—pro-Italian, anti-French, and anti-Papal, the Conservative and Liberal governments which succeeded those of Palmerston and Russell after 1866 were no more eager to witness the failure of the newly unified Italian state than their predecessors had been. Moreover, the immense popularity of the outcome of the Risorgimento in Britain might be considered to have placed considerable pressure upon British governments to ensure that it was not undone. The immense popularity of the romantic side of the Risorgimento in Britain was never more evident than when Garibaldi visited London in 1864, receiving a reception that was more rapturous than that afforded to any other foreigner during the whole of the nineteenth century, much to the disquiet of the British Establishment.[29] Finally, considering that Italian unification had, in 1860, afforded Palmerston and Russell an opportunity to score a diplomatic coup by offering an immediate, fervent, genuinely warm and seemingly unconditional endorsement of the achievement in the face of opposition from most of the rest of Europe, it might be said that the men risked their political reputations by identifying themselves personally with the venture. At the same time, they invested considerable British credibility in the creation of the new state, with the result that neither their government nor any of its immediate successors could afford to allow Italian unity to be undone without a considerable blow being struck to Britain's international prestige.

[28] See K. Robbins and J. Fisher (eds.), *Religion and Diplomacy: Religion and British Foreign Policy, 1815 to 1941* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2010).

[29] See D. Beales, 'Garibaldi in England: The Politics of Italian Enthusiasm', in *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento: Essays in Honour of Denis Mack Smith*, ed. J. A. Davis and P. Ginsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 184–216.

Therefore, this book explores the course of British relations with Italy during the critical first decade of Italian national unity, throughout which there lingered the perennial possibility that Italian unification might fail. It challenges the traditional, if perhaps unwitting, implication that the British lost interest in Italian affairs after 1861, as well as rejecting the view that Victorian foreign policy moved away from interventionism to become more isolationist during the mid-1860s. It does so by revealing the extent to which British leaders sought to maintain an influence in Italian affairs throughout that decade, by showing how forceful they could sometimes be in aiming to direct their Italian counterparts' management of both Italy's domestic and foreign policies. It also exposes a reluctant, but nonetheless apparent, preparedness on the part of the British to act in various ways—most definitely through diplomacy, but possibly even militarily *if really pushed*—to consolidate and to preserve the integrity of Italian unification. This study shows that there was considerable continuity in British foreign policy regarding Italy throughout the 1860s, even if there were also certain changes in style, as one British administration was succeeded by another. It also proposes the concept that British leaders—the Liberals Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone, at least—looked upon the unifying of Italy within the British sphere of influence that was the Mediterranean region, as an opportunity to forge what might be described as 'special relationship' between the two countries. There is no suggestion that this was intended to be an equal partnership, nor a formalised one, but there is ample evidence that British politicians and their diplomatic representatives looked upon Italy as a country to shape and to steer in the right direction. And while Italian leaders sometimes made it clear that they did not appreciate this patronising attitude, there is nonetheless evidence to suggest that they viewed the British as friends, and potentially as protectors. The book therefore contends that the British sought throughout the 1860s to draw the new Kingdom of Italy into Britain's orbit within its informal empire in the Mediterranean, by establishing a firm friendship without committing to a formal alliance. The aims of this association were to ensure that Italy's independence was preserved, that its territorial integrity was consolidated through the peaceful acquisition of Rome and Venice, that its political and judicial institutions were developed, that it was encouraged to participate in free trade, and that the temporal power and immense political influence of the Papacy were destroyed. It was hoped by Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone that all of these aims might be achieved through the formation of a close and

friendly relationship between Britain and Italy, and that the Italians might heed British advice.

Finally, this book contributes to the recent resurgence of interest in the history of British foreign policy which stems largely from the 'cultural turn' in international history.[30] It does so by approaching the subject of the British foreign policy regarding Italian affairs in a manner that pays closer attention to the individual personalities responsible for developing and maintaining a 'special relationship' with Italy than was often the case in more traditional diplomatic histories published during the mid-twentieth century. Although the memoirs and private correspondence of diplomats, consuls, and Foreign Office staff were quite often published during the Victorian and Edwardian eras,[31] diplomatic history itself was often written as though the only personalities involved were prime ministers and foreign secretaries. There was a widespread methodological assumption that the men concerned with the implementation of foreign policy overseas (and this assumption often presumed that the only people who wielded any kind of influence in this arena were men)—the diplomatic and consular representatives of the British state—were mere machines who acted upon orders from London without offering any opinion or showing any initiative of their own. In recent years, there has been a strong resurgence in the history of international relations, and one very important feature of this trend has been a much closer focus on the personalities who represented their governments overseas. Nick Carter's doctoral thesis on the role of Sir James Hudson as British envoy extraordinary to Turin is an excellent example of the new focus on individuals which is of high relevance to this investigation,[32] as is Saho Matsumoto-Best's

[30] See W. Mulligan and B. Simms (eds.), *The Primacy of Foreign Policy in British History, 1660–2000: How Strategic Concerns Shaped Modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); J. Fisher and A. Best (eds.), *On the Fringes of Diplomacy: Influences on British Foreign Policy, 1800–1945* (London: Ashgate, 2011); G. Hicks (ed.), *Conservatism and British Foreign Policy, 1820–1920: The Derbys and Their World* (London: Ashgate, 2011); J. Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism. English Liberalism, National Identity, and Europe, 1830–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[31] Some bear direct relevance to this book: H. G. Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences*, ed. Gertrude Elliot (London: J. Murray, 1922); W. Paget, *Embassies of other Days, And Further Recollections* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1923).

[32] N. E. Carter, 'Sir James Hudson, British Diplomacy and the Italian Question: February 1858 to June 1861' (unpublished PhD thesis, Cardiff University, 1993).

chapter on the career of Odo Russell at Rome.[33] Beyond the Italian sphere, Karina Urbach's biographical study of the later career of Odo Russell at Berlin emphasises the importance of the personal relationship between a diplomat and a foreign politician.[34] Scott Murray's monograph on the career of Sir Robert Morier in various German capitals examined how exposure to a particular environment could affect the political principles of a particular diplomat while stressing that it was not so much as a diplomatic representative that his subject's work is important so much as Morier's capacity as a professional observer of important events.[35] The work of Gordon Daniels has highlighted how Victorian diplomats could acquire an almost celebrity status within their generation with his study of Sir Harry Parkes and his work on China and Japan.[36] The role of British officials as cultural interlocutors in the Mediterranean has also come under recent investigation, as Lucia Patrizio Gunning and Matsumoto-Best have shown in their respective studies on the role of British consuls in Greece, and the 'cultural diplomacy' of James Rennell Rodd at Rome.[37] Hugh Cortazzi has considered the significance of the individual personalities of different diplomatic representatives in Japan,[38] while there has been a minor spate of publishing of the correspondence of diplomatic representatives in Germany and Japan.[39] Katie Hickman's book on diplomatic wives

[33] S. Matsumoto-Best, 'Odo Russell's Mission to Rome, 1858–70, and British Foreign Policy towards the Vatican', in *Religion and Diplomacy: Religion and British Foreign Policy, 1815–1941*, ed. Keith Robbins and John Fisher (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2010), pp. 129–52.

[34] Karina Urbach, *Bismarck's Favourite Englishman: The Embassy of Odo Russell to Berlin* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

[35] S. W. Murray, *Liberal Diplomacy and German Unification: The Early Career of Robert Morier* (Westport, CT & London: Praeger, 2000), p. xi.

[36] G. Daniels, *Sir Harry Parkes: British Representative in Japan 1865–1883* (Richmond: Japan Library, 1996).

[37] L. Patrizio Gunning, *The British Consular Service in the Aegean and the Collection of Antiquities for the British Museum* (London: Ashgate, 2009); S. Matsumoto-Best, 'The Cultural Diplomacy of Sir James Rennell Rodd', in *On the Fringes of Diplomacy: Influences on British Foreign Policy, 1800–1945*, ed. John Fisher and Antony Best (London: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 209–24.

[38] H. Cortazzi (ed.), *British Envoys in Japan, 1859–1972* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2004).

[39] S. Freitag and P. Wende (eds.), *British Envoys to Germany, 1816–1866*. Volume I: *1816–1829*, Camden Fifth Series, 15 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Royal

examines the experiences and roles of the women who were called upon to serve as first ladies of embassies around the world, providing a valuable insight into what diplomatic life was actually like, while showing also that diplomacy was not a purely male pursuit.[40] A forthcoming compilation of case studies edited by Mika Suonpää and myself will further our understanding of the important role of the individual representatives of the British, French, German, Austrian, Russian, Swedish, Dutch, American, and Japanese governments with regard to intelligence-gathering within the 'contested space' of the Mediterranean.[41]

As the individual characters and opinions of overseas representatives held the potential to influence their home governments' perspectives and policy towards a foreign power, these personalities were important. This study is therefore based not only on the consultation of the official Foreign Office correspondence with British diplomatic and consular representatives in the Kingdom of Italy and the surviving Papal State; it draws considerably from the unpublished private papers of the personalities involved. These figures include the prime ministers Viscount Palmerston, William Gladstone, and the Earl of Derby; the foreign secretaries the Earl of Clarendon, Lord Granville, Lord Stanley, and Lord John Russell (who served in both capacities during the period concerned); the permanent staff of the Foreign Office in Whitehall, Sir Edmund Hammond, and Sir Austen Layard; and the diplomats Sir James Hudson, Sir Henry

Historical Society in association with the German Historical Institute, London, 2000); M. Mösslang, S. Freitag and P. Wende (eds.), *British Envoys to Germany, 1816–1866.* Volume II: *1830–1847*, Camden Fifth Series, 21 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society in association with the German Historical Institute, London, 2002); M. Mösslang, T. Riotte and H. Schulze (eds.), *British Envoys to Germany, 1816–1866.* Volume III: *1848–1850.* Camden Fifth Series, 28 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society in association with the German Historical Institute, London, 2006); M. Mösslang, C. Manias and T. Riotte (eds.), *British Envoys to Germany, 1816–1866.* Volume IV: *1851–1866*, Camden Fifth Series, 37 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society in association with the German Historical Institute London, 2010); E. Satow, *The Semi-Official Letters of British Envoy Sir Ernest Satow from Japan and China (1895–1906)*, ed. I. Ruxton (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, 2007).

[40] Katie Hickman, *Daughters of Britannia; The Lives and Times of Diplomatic Wives* (London: Flamingo, 2000).

[41] M. Suonpää and O. J. Wright (eds.), *Diplomacy and Intelligence in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming).

Elliot, Sir Augustus Paget, Sir Odo Russell, and Lord Lyons. Reference is also made to published parliamentary papers as well as published political and diplomatic memoirs. This study has also involved some consultation of material from newspaper archives because, in the words of David Brown, the newspaper press was 'integral to the formulation and execution of British foreign policy', a fact which must be acknowledged 'if the dynamics of diplomacy are to be fully understood'.[42]

The structure of the book is as follows. This introduction is followed by Chap. 2, concerning 'The Place of Italy in Victorian Foreign Policy, 1851–61'. This chapter sets the mid-Victorian generation's interest in the Italian Risorgimento in the broader context of the British foreign policy of the era, identifies the sources of Britain's sympathy for Italian nationalism, and provides some narrative of the nature and course of British relations with the Italian states during the decade prior to the emergence of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. As such, it is broadly contextual. The examination of British foreign policy regarding the new Italian state commences in Chap. 3, 'Watching Italy: The Liberal Triumvirate and the Fledgling Kingdom of Italy, 1861–62', which charts the initial British reactions to the emergence of a united kingdom in Italy, and British leaders' attempts to influence Italy's early development in the light of the many challenges the country faced, as it was beset by rampant brigandage and fierce political opposition, as far as Garibaldi's first abortive attempt to march on Rome in 1862. Chapter 4, 'Shaping Italy: British Efforts to Restrain Italy, 1862–66', continues this theme by examining British efforts to influence Italy's policy of pursuing solutions to both the Roman and Venetian Questions, signing the September Convention with France in 1864, and signing a belligerent alliance with Prussia ahead of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. Chapter 5, 'Preserving Italy: The Conservatives and the Fragility of Italian Unity, 1866–68', raises questions regarding how far the Conservative governments between 1866 and 1868 might have been prepared to go in order to preserve the integrity of Italian unity when, having shown scant enthusiasm for the Italian national cause while in opposition, they showed themselves concerned about the potential impact of Italy's

[42] David Brown, 'Diplomacy and the Fourth Estate: The Role of the Press in British Foreign Policy in the Age of Palmerston', in *On the Fringes of Diplomacy: Influences on British Foreign Policy, 1800–1945*, ed. John Fisher and Antony Best (London: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 35–51 (p. 51).

possible disintegration or dismemberment when Garibaldi made his second disastrous march on Rome in 1867. Chapter 6, 'Consolidating Italy: Great Britain and the Culmination of the Risorgimento, 1868–70', investigates the Italian policy of Gladstone's first Liberal government, which had to negotiate a difficult path when the Vatican Council's proclamation of Papal infallibility was followed by the Italian occupation of Rome in 1870, an event for which the British helped to smooth the way through cautious and covert intervention.

CHAPTER 2

The Place of Italy in Victorian Foreign Policy, 1851–61

The emergence of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 coincided with the point at which Great Britain's influence as a global power reached its zenith.[1] If the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had seen the English, Scots, and Welsh combine to exert their political, economic, and cultural influence far beyond the tiny island of Great Britain, the nineteenth century saw the British preside over the largest empire the world has ever seen. As the globe's richest and most powerful state, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland constructed the largest military and mercantile navies, possessed the most progressive agriculture, and boasted the most developed manufacturing industry.[2] The British economy was the strongest and most diverse in Europe, while London occupied a uniquely important position in international commerce as the financial capital of the world.[3] Therefore, as a truly global power, Britain commanded more authority and respect in international affairs than any other country. As a result of

[1] E. J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783–1870*, 2nd edn (London & New York: Longman, 1996), p. 373.

[2] D. Beales, *From Castlereagh to Gladstone 1815–1885* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 13. The extent to which the Industrial Revolution happened in Britain is nowhere better illustrated than in E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolutions 1789–1848* (London: Abacus Books, 2003 [1962]), pp. 42–72.

[3] J. Black, *Convergence or Divergence? Britain and the Continent* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 174–5.

O. J. Wright, *Great Britain and the Unifying of Italy*, Britain and the World, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59397-9_2

this international prestige and influence, the British were able to play a significant role in the unifying of Italy throughout the 1850s and 1860s. This chapter places both the geographical entity of Italy and Italian nationalism within the wider context of British foreign policy. It explores the motives behind British sympathy for the Italian national cause, before surveying the role played by Britain during the Italian crisis that led to the formation of a united kingdom in Italy by 1861.

British Strategic Considerations Regarding the Unifying of Italy

To begin with, the Italian peninsula and its islands were of considerable strategic significance to the British Empire because of their location in the centre of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean was of tremendous strategic importance to British imperialism, because control of the region was essential to Britain's communications with its global territories. Moreover, throughout the nineteenth century, the region was a major centre for British economic activity and a sphere of what can reasonably be described as Britain's informal empire. Christopher Bayly described the middle decades of the nineteenth century as having seen the world pitched into a crisis, whereby a naval arms race, the disintegration of unity in the United States of America leading to civil war in 1861, the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Crimean War of 1853–56, and the effective collapse of the Concert of Europe all caused upheaval and uncertainty.[4] In this climate, British leaders were acutely aware that it was vital for Britain to control the fastest possible lines of communication between London and the global empire.[5] The many wars of the eighteenth century—and the American War of Independence (1775–83) and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815) in particular—had taught the British that peace best served the advancement of their burgeoning industry and the growth of their thriving commercial interests. As the United Kingdom comprised the islands of both Britain and Ireland, formally tied together by the 1800 Act of Union, the British state enjoyed the most natural frontiers in Europe; it was the one Great Power which had no interest in and no

[4] C. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 168.

[5] L. James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London: Abacus, 1998), pp. 233–300.

motives for getting involved in the expense or distractions of war.[6] A. J. P. Taylor remarked that the British interest 'in the preservation of peace is so obvious as hardly to need stating', before proceeding to spell out that of all the Great Powers, Britain was 'the only one which cannot—by any conceivable stretch of the imagination—gain anything in Europe by a European war'.[7] Hence, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British foreign policy was geared towards the maintenance of peace in Europe, so that the British could avoid continental entanglements and concentrate on their extra-European empire.

While their naval supremacy would help them to achieve this aim at sea, successive British governments placed their faith in seeking to maintain a balance of power on land as the best means of preserving the European peace. Here, London put its faith in diplomacy rather than military action. Nonetheless, this preference for dialogue did not preclude British leaders from using the Royal Navy to reinforce their words around the world in a manner which would never have been possible with an army. It was therefore the Royal Navy that upheld the so-called *Pax Britannica*, the Latinisation of the term 'British peace' speaking volumes about the role that the Victorians saw themselves as playing in world history. During this era, British leaders, Viscount Palmerston most famously, were happy to deploy the fleet to protect British trade and to reinforce British diplomacy. From Algiers in 1816 to Zanzibar in 1893, British gunboats were sent to add weight to the words of British diplomats and to protect British individuals and British interests.[8] Such 'peacekeeping', to use a modern term, was intended to promote and to preserve free trade, and such practice epitomised the era of *Pax Britannica*.[9] This policy, combined with perennial inclination towards the maintenance of neutrality, offered the British the best prospect of being able to get on with the business of generating and accumulating wealth while expanding and strengthening their empire. As an extraordinarily successful venture built increasingly on free trade and liberalism, the British Empire was 'tethered' to the international system;

[6] J. A. S. Grenville, *Europe Reshaped, 1848–1878*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 301.

[7] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Italian Problem in European Diplomacy 1847–1849* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1934), p. 4.

[8] N. Davies, *The Isles: A History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 592.

[9] E. Bradford, *Mediterranean: Portrait of a Sea* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), p. 499.

the country quite literally could not afford to lose its access to the world markets.[10] The benefits of peace, stability, and moderate government, as advertised to the world by the relative tranquillity and prosperity of Britain's domestic scene, led the British to regard and promote themselves as the champions of civilisation, even when their ideals lay in stark contrast to the reality of British domination of parts of the world outside Europe.[11] Miles Taylor describes British sea power as having diversified considerably during the nineteenth century, as the Royal Navy evolved from being the 'strategic arm' of the British Empire in the eighteenth century into 'the agent of cultural imperialism' during the relative peace of the nineteenth. However, the Victorians' mastery of the sea was not only a strong element of their national identity but also a source of 'increasing anxiety', as other powers—at first the French, and later the United States and Germany—began to threaten British naval supremacy.[12]

The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars had caused such upheaval that British foreign policy through most of the nineteenth century was aimed at checking the ambitions of France. In his classic study on the British government's role in Italian unification between 1859 and 1860, Derek Beales defined British policy regarding Italy as being more anti-French than pro-Italian,[13] and throughout the period covered by this book, British policy on Italian affairs was rarely conducted without some contemplation of how British action or inaction might thwart or assist French ambitions. Indeed, Italy was seen as a traditional field of French expansionism. The Napoleonic invasion of Italy in 1796, and the subsequent French occupation of the Italian peninsula which lasted for most of the period up to 1815, transformed the country. Furthermore, the French domination of Italy effectively locked the British out of having any influence in the country beyond Sardinia and Sicily.[14] Consequently, British efforts to curtail French ambitions in Italy were pursued most energetically between the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the outbreak of the

[10] B. Nasson, *Britannia's Empire. Making a British World* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004), p. 99.

[11] F. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 21.

[12] M. Taylor, 'Introduction', in *The Victorian Empire and Britain's Maritime World, 1837–1901*, ed. Miles Taylor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 2.

[13] D. Beales, *England and Italy* (London: Nelson, 1961), p. 169.

[14] An excellent account of the dramatic impact that Napoléon and the French had upon Italy is provided by C. Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796* (London: Penguin, 2007), pp. 3–68.

Franco-Prussian War in 1870, which witnessed, almost simultaneously, both the Italian occupation of Rome and the collapse of France.[15] The British perception of the threat posed by France on the continent in general was exaggerated, certainly, once Prussia had emerged as the more powerful state and a greater threat to the international equilibrium during the 1860s. Nonetheless, France was remembered as having long sought to dominate the continent, whether as monarchy, republic, or empire, and it was in a weak and divided Italy that the French quite naturally searched for opportunities to expand their interests and their influence. To this end, Britain favoured the strengthening of the Kingdom of Sardinia, comprising the north-western Italian region of Piedmont and the island from which it took its name, as a buffer state between France and the Austrian Empire. Consequently, British leaders encouraged Sardinia's modernisation, its enrichment, and ultimately its aggrandisement, from an early stage. The British also learnt an important lesson when their failure to support that kingdom's aspirations to obtain a Mediterranean port resulted in the Genoese cession of Corsica to France in 1768.[16] Throughout the Napoleonic occupation of mainland Italy, the Royal Navy was used to ensure that neither of the islands of Sardinia or Sicily fell similarly into French hands. The Savoy and Bourbon monarchies based in Turin and Naples were able to survive in exile in their respective island possessions under British naval protection. During the events of 1859 and 1860, it was therefore Britain's fear over the ambitions of France that made the growth of the Kingdom of Sardinia into the Kingdom of Italy an extremely attractive proposition. For London, the creation of a large, independent, and friendly neighbour in the central Mediterranean could only be good news.

At the same time as aiming to prevent French efforts to establish their hegemony over the Italian peninsula, British foreign policy was also inspired by London's concern for the increasingly ramshackle Austrian Empire. While British governments tended to misjudge France as being the most likely troublemaker on the continent during the mid-nineteenth century, they were also inclined to make the mistake of assuming that Austria provided a better check than Prussia not only to French expansionism in the

[15] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, [1954]), p. 17.

[16] D. B. Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service 1689–1789* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 26–7.

West but also to Russian expansionism in the East. For this reason, British leaders aimed to protect the integrity of Vienna's multinational imperial integrity. Although Queen Victoria and the Conservative Party showed little sympathy for the Italian nationalism, Palmerston and his colleagues in the emerging Liberal Party favoured Austria's withdrawal from its Italian territories. They did so not only out of their growing support for the Italian cause but also because they believed that the Austrians would be stronger without the complications presented by the occupation of Italian territory. Hence, Palmerston famously declared himself to be 'very Austrian north of the Alps, but very anti-Austrian south of the Alps'.[17] At the same time, William Gladstone revealed the more emotional side of Britain's interest in removing the autocratic Austrian influence from the Italian peninsula by publicly enquiring in an article for the *Quarterly Review* if there were anywhere else in the world other than Lombardy and Venetia where 'a people glaringly inferior in refinement rule … over a race more advanced'.[18] Such sentiments notwithstanding, British fears for the demise of the Austrian Empire contrived to hold British enthusiasm for Italian nationalism in check. Even if there was much about the Risorgimento that appealed to British Liberals, it is unlikely that any British government would ever have lent any moral or diplomatic support to the movement for a free and united Italy had the prospect not offered Britain so many strategic advantages.

Nonetheless, like the Greeks before them, the Italians would win their national independence with British support, but Britain's leaders were not quick to throw their weight behind either cause. Their support for Greek nationalism during the 1820s had needed to be balanced against their concerns for the ailing Ottoman Empire; London had no desire to see the Ottoman state collapse for fear that the power vacuum thereby created would enable Russian expansion into the Mediterranean.[19] This political end can be considered to have been the real motive behind the aid given by Britain to the Greeks, once the establishment of an independent Greek kingdom appeared viable. The British involvement in events in Italy three decades later would be much the same. Moreover, the role played by

[17] Palmerston to Granville, 30 January 1859, in D. Southgate, *'The Most English Minister…' The Policies and Politics of Palmerston* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 452.

[18] W. E. Gladstone, 'War in Italy', *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 105, No. 211 (1859), pp. 549–50.

[19] P. Hayes, *Modern British Foreign Policy: The Nineteenth Century 1814–80* (London: A. and C. Black, 1975), p. 158.

Britain in the independence of Greece marked the beginning of a 'special relationship' through which Athens was drawn firmly into the orbit of London. To a considerable degree, this programme was echoed in Italy during the 1850s and 1860s. As the Italian nationalist movement grew during the 1840s and 1850s, Britain showed only a gradual willingness to support it, concerned as both Conservatives and Whig-Liberals were over the impact it would have upon the Austrian Empire. But as the prospect of independent nation-states became increasingly viable in both cases, British governments found it politically expedient to show enthusiasm for the principle of liberal-nationalism represented by both causes, as opposed to the reactionary absolutism rule of the multinational empires of the Holy Alliance. Moreover, by supporting the Greeks and the Italians, the British recognised that they were winning new friends and drawing them into their influence. During the 1820s and 1830s, British support for the Greeks ensured that their new state did not succumb to Russian domination; during the 1850s and 1860s, British support for the Italians ensured that Italy did not fall under the lasting influence of France. Moreover, a strong Piedmont, and subsequently an Italy united by Piedmont, could prevent France from increasing its influence in the central Mediterranean. British support for Italy at the crucial moment of the unification process in 1860 secured Italy as a friend of Britain for the best part of a century. Palmerston, the then prime minister, understood that as history had shown the cities of Venice and Genoa to be great maritime traders, any state possessing both would be sure to make commerce its vital principle.[20] Thus, a united Italy—or northern Italy at least—would be of benefit to Britain as a state willing to adopt free trade which would be advantageous for British commerce. Even more importantly, considering such a new Italy would exist in the middle of the Mediterranean, a region dominated by Britain's naval might, the ease with which such ports as Venice and Genoa could be blockaded by the Royal Navy would help ensure that a state dependent on the prosperity of those two cities could not fail to be anything other than a friend of Britain.[21] This policy was to be utterly vindicated by Italy's decision to side with Britain and France instead of its

[20] D. Southgate, *'The Most English Minister…' The Policies and Politics of Palmerston* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 462.

[21] K. Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830–1902* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 104.

allies Germany and Austria in the First World War, and it was not to be frustrated until the rise of Mussolini, and Fascist Italy's attempt to break out of the British-dominated Mediterranean during the years leading up to the Second World War.

In the study of any aspect of British foreign policy during the period in which Britain was a global power, it is important not to overestimate the country's potency and importance in international affairs. During the latter half of the twentieth century—and never more so than in the context of Brexit during the twenty-first century—a rose-tinted nostalgia has contributed towards the widespread popular notion that Britain was *the superpower* of the imperial age. In reality, however, Britain was only ever one of the six Great Powers of Europe; although it was the foremost of those powers throughout the nineteenth century, its claim to global hegemony was never without serious challenges and limitations. Even at its greatest extent, the British Empire was never a superpower in the manner of the United States or Soviet Union during the twentieth century.[22] While Britain ruled vast continental territories in Canada, India, and Australia, and possessed the ability to bombard mighty states such as China into submission, British greatness was confined to what could be done through maritime power. The British policy of prioritising naval rather than military strength had a major drawback in that conflicts of interest could less easily be solved against stronger military powers such as Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Britain's traditional nemesis, France. The British focus on keeping the strength of its navy ahead of rival fleets rendered the country's military might inferior to its continental neighbours. The maintenance of a large standing army was perceived not only as superfluous to British needs, but even as distinctly 'un-British'. The Russian, Prussian, and Austrian governments were all associated with a certain militarism, as well as conservatism and authoritarianism. Their respective polities appeared to convince the British that large armies could be instruments of despotism in a way that a large navy could never be.[23] Nonetheless, the British emphasis on naval rather than military power came at a cost. Queen Victoria was well aware of the potential dangers of such a strategy when, on the eve of Italian unification, she wrote:

[22] M. E. Chamberlain, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Palmerston*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1984), p. 3.

[23] M. E. Chamberlain, *Pax Britannica? British Foreign Policy 1789–1914* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 9.

> England will not be listened to in Europe, and [will] be powerless for the preservation of the general peace … if she is known to be despicably weak in her military resources.[24]

The British (and the English before them) have a long history of fighting against hegemony in continental Europe. Britain's opinions and interventions in Europe have often been important and influential, but they have rarely been automatically decisive without the assistance of European allies. While the British government's moral and diplomatic support for the Italian national cause succeeded in helping the Italians to liberate and unite their country, it was the French government that committed its army to the battlefield on Cavour's behalf, and it was an international band of revolutionaries who rallied to Garibaldi's side. The British did influence Italian unification, but they were by no means the only foreigners to do so.

The Political Motives Behind British Policy on Italian Affairs

The support shown by British leaders for the unifying of Italy can hardly be described as selfless 'do-goodery', so long as the Victorians were inclined to feel that 'British liberalism was most secure in a liberal world.'[25] During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the British had promoted Protestantism and Constitutionalism simultaneously. Consequently, the promotion of British political and religious values abroad was a well-established feature of Britain's foreign policy by the time of Italian unification. It has been suggested that during the mid-Victorian era, foreign affairs and domestic politics in Britain were unusually interlinked. The importance of foreign policy in British domestic politics is highlighted by the fact that every government which fell during the 1850s did so on an issue of foreign policy. Moreover, the collapse of Palmerston's first administration in 1858 over Felice Orsini's attempt to assassinate the Emperor Napoléon III and that of the Derby government in 1859 were both

[24] Queen Victoria to Lord Derby, 13 January 1859, qtd in D. Southgate, *'The Most English Minister…' The Policies and Politics of Palmerston* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 473.

[25] B. Simms and W. Mulligan, 'Introduction', in *The Primacy of Foreign Policy, 1660–2000: How Strategic Concerns Shaped Modern Britain*, ed. B. Simms and W. Mulligan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 1–14 (pp. 4, 7).

brought about by affairs related directly to the developing crisis in Italy. First as foreign secretary, and later as prime minister, Palmerston deliberately used foreign policy to secure advantages for himself in domestic politics and to allow him to dominate his party. Foreign affairs also enabled the Conservative Party to establish some coherence after the Tories' split over the Corn Laws and provided the most frequent basis for their criticisms of Whig government.[26] In 1859, it was the Italian crisis which brought about the coming together of Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone, in what is often regarded as the formation of the Liberal Party; the one thing that united these three very different politicians at that moment was a shared intention to lead a progressive government which would have a constructive influence on the Italian Question. The Italian crisis occurred during what John Clarke has described as 'the flamboyant period of British foreign policy'. For most of the period between 1848 and 1864, Palmerston recognised that foreign affairs were unusually prominent in the public eye. He recognised that Britain's economic and maritime supremacy ensured that the mid-Victorian generation had a strong material interest in events overseas, and although his jingoistic and opportunist conduct of foreign policy earned widespread criticism, it caught the mood of the time to perfection.[27]

Something that Palmerston knew very well was that during his tenure Britain's foreign and domestic politics were strongly interlinked. The British public were informed on foreign affairs to an extent hitherto unknown. In a world where the onset of the modern communications revolution was already spurring civilisation towards globalisation, and in which the British Empire was pre-eminent, the people took an unusually high interest in foreign affairs. The literate were able to keep abreast of events overseas through a range of newspapers, all of which were able to provide information on Italian affairs as received from their own correspondents overseas, or from the new Reuter News Agency, established at London in 1851. British readers could choose between a range of daily presses, both national and local (the latter often publishing some international news). *The Times* was the long-established 'king' of British

[26] A. Brettle, 'The Enduring Importance of Foreign Policy Dominance in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Politics', in *The Primacy of Foreign Policy, 1660–2000: How Strategic Concerns Shaped Modern Britain*, ed. William Mulligan and Brendan Simms (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 154–66 (pp. 154–5).

[27] J. Clarke, *British Diplomacy and Foreign Policy 1782–1865: The National Interest* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 230–4.

journalism and maintained its own correspondent in Italy. Established in 1785, it expounded moderate views and was not predisposed in those days to support any particular party. The ailing *Morning Chronicle* and popular *Morning Post* offered a Whig-Liberal bias, while Conservative-inclined *Standard* reflected the growing appetite for news coverage by being published twice daily from the late 1850s. The northern presses such as *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Leeds Mercury* tended to be the most radical and naturally took an interest in the career of Garibaldi. The name of *The Daily Telegraph and Courier*, founded in 1855, reflected the technological changes transforming the media.[28] As a result of such progress, British newspaper readers were able to follow events in Italy like never before. And such was the extent of interest in the events unfolding in Italy, the British leaders of the 1850s and 1860s were wise to take heed of public opinion.

Under Palmerston and his successors, the British came to regard Italy as a territory in which they were quite free—even entitled—to exert their influence. In parliament, Palmerston argued relentlessly that the British institutions and values had to be protected both by expenditure on defensive measures at home and through the export of the British model to foreign countries.[29] As far as possible, though, British intervention was generally intended to be 'soft' rather than 'hard'; diplomatic or economic, rather than naval or military. This applied very much to Italy. Even if Palmerston was an interventionist, his hopes were that Italy would reform itself. Initially, this meant political change, rather than unification. In 1847, as Italian nationalism emerged as a serious revolutionary force in the country, he despatched the Earl of Minto as a special envoy to the peninsula's most reactionary states. His hope was that British recommendations would encourage peaceful political reform and reduce the risk of violent revolution. Palmerston's intent is clear from a letter he wrote to Minto when, prematurely, he judged the intervention to have been a success:

> If the Italian sovereigns had not been urged by you to move on, while their impatient subjects were kept back, there would by this time have been nothing but republics from the Alps to Sicily.[30]

[28] For an excellent survey of the Victorian newspaper press, see S. Koss, *Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: Vol. 1, The Nineteenth Century* (London: Hamilton, 1981).

[29] See, for example, *Hansard*, 8 July 1864, CXXXVI, p. 1330.

[30] Palmerston to Minto, in E. Ashley, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston* (London: R. Bentley & Son, 1879), p. 57.

When this venture failed, and a revolt in Sicily sparked a chain of revolutions across Europe 1848, Britain moved towards more blunt intervention. The Italian risings of 1848 erupted out of two distinct but related principles: liberty and nationality. As King Carlo Alberto of Sardinia sought to save his own throne by adopting the Italian nationalist cause, Palmerston intervened in northern Italy by proposing that Austria cede Lombardy to Turin and grant home rule to Venice. His search for a compromise was intended to preserve and strengthen two of Britain's allies. At the same time, the British government intervened more blatantly in southern Italy, causing an international scandal: British arms were shipped to the Sicilian rebels who had risen against the Bourbon regime, while the British and French fleets prevented the Bourbon army from crossing the Strait of Messina to crush the revolt.[31] Such behaviour gained Britain the reputation of a troublemaker in European affairs. Its readiness to use diplomats to tell other governments how they ought to be run and its apparent willingness to collude with revolutionary forces proved controversial. Moreover, the fact that it offered a safe haven to men perceived elsewhere as dangerous political exiles led London to be regarded as the terror capital of the world.[32] Karl Marx, Alexander Herzen, and Giuseppe Mazzini all lived in the city for many years. When Felice Orsini hurled a bomb at the French emperor's carriage in 1858, a sensation arose when it emerged that the device had been made in Birmingham. The Palmerston government collapsed as a result of seeking to take measures which would allay the fears of foreign powers, but which were criticised at home as 'truckling to foreign tyrants'.[33] This abortive effort to restrict the freedom afforded to foreign exiles on British soil shows that British leaders were motivated by conservatism as well as liberalism; in 1848, Palmerston had permitted collusion with foreign rebels in Sicily, whereas in 1858, he attempted to prevent revolutionaries from having the freedom to act.

Some might say that the British policy on Italy was guided more by conservatism than radicalism. Its makers were scarcely influenced by the

[31] M. E. Chamberlain, *Pax Britannica? British Foreign Policy 1789–1914* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 96.

[32] D. Beales, *England and Italy* (London: Nelson, 1961), p. 30.

[33] K. Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830–1902* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 99.

words or actions of Mazzini or Garibaldi.[34] When the latter, fresh from the triumph of his famous expedition, had originally proposed to visit London in 1861, the Italian government attempted to thwart the plan by warning Palmerston and Russell that the hero would be a tool of British Mazzinians and Radicals.[35] And, when he did come to England in 1864, Garibaldi received such a spectacular welcome in London that the British ruling class persuaded him to curtail his stay, cancelling his tour of the industrialised northern cities. Although Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone do not appear to have been amongst those rattled by Garibaldi's visit,[36] their policy on Italy was influenced more by 'respectable' Italian exiles, such as Antonio Panizzi and Sir James Lacaita.[37] Panizzi was the principal librarian at the British Museum, while Lacaita was an exiled Neapolitan lawyer[38]; both men enjoyed a close friendship and lively correspondence with Britain's leading Liberals. Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone were not the radicals that autocratic foreign rulers perceived them to be. There was something inherently conservative in the desire of these British Liberals—including Gladstone—to see government in Italy reformed to ensure peace in the peninsula, and Europe more generally. During the Italian crisis of 1859, the Conservative government of Lord Derby despatched none other than Henry Elliot, the son of the Earl of Minto sent by Palmerston to the Italian states in 1847, on a similar brief to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.[39] The Minto and Elliot missions demonstrate the willingness of British governments—both Liberal and Conservative—to seek to influence Italian affairs through words rather than military action, and that they aimed to achieve 'regime change' to avert unrest and bloodshed.

[34] For Mazzini, see D. Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1994). For Garibaldi, see L. Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 2008).

[35] D. Beales, 'Garibaldi in England: The Politics of Italian Enthusiasm', in *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento: Essays in Honour of Denis Mack Smith*, ed. J. A. Davis and P. Ginsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 197.

[36] See D. Beales, 'Gladstone and Garibaldi', in *Gladstone*, ed. P. J. Jagger (London & Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1998), pp. 137–56.

[37] D. Beales, *England and Italy* (London: Nelson, 1961), pp. 32–3.

[38] See C. Brooks, *Antonio Panizzi: Scholar and Patriot* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931) and C. Lacaita, *An Italian Englishman: Sir James Lacaita KCMG 1813–95 Senator of the Kingdom of Italy* (London: Grant Richards, 1933).

[39] H. G. Elliot, *Some Revolutions and other Diplomatic Experiences*, ed. Gertrude Elliot (London: J. Murray, 1922), p. 5.

The British Cultural Fascination with Italy

While the desire of Italian nationalists to create an independent and united Italy coincided most conveniently with British strategic and political interests, the Victorians' sympathy for the cause derived also from their cultural fascination with the country. As the nationalist movements in Greece and Italy offered the British possibilities to draw newly independent states into their sphere of influence within the Mediterranean, both countries simultaneously offered British visitors their rich classical heritages. For Britain's aristocrats, politicians, dowagers, heirs to landed fortunes, members of the royal family, artists, and literary figures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Mediterranean became a kind of 'home from home'; Greece and Italy provided all the vital itineraries of the Grand Tour.[40] During the Victorian era, the numbers of British travellers to those countries increased, as rising incomes and easier travel combined to bring more and more members of the middle classes to Greece and Italy.[41] The passion with which so many Britons visited and studied the ancient centres of European civilisation was no doubt stimulated by the parallels they felt inclined to draw between their own modern greatness and those ancient empires.[42] The defeat of Napoleonic France significantly influenced the way the British viewed themselves during the age of the Risorgimento. Britain's status as the leading member of the coalition which emerged victorious from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars encouraged the British in their existing belief that they were 'a nation favoured by Providence'; the extent of British advancement had already bred considerable self-confidence and self-congratulation, but victory over the country's greatest rival was interpreted as proof of British superiority. Success bred arrogance, and a feeling that Britain, its system of government, and the industry of its people all represented 'the highest state yet reached by civilisation'.[43] As the British came to dominate the Mediterranean as the Romans once did, their inclination to regard themselves as the 'Romans' of the nineteenth century was manifest in their penchant for phrases such

[40] E. Bradford, *Mediterranean: Portrait of a Sea* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 503.

[41] J. Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 2.

[42] For the place of Ancient Rome in the imagination of the Victorians, see N. Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford & Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997).

[43] L. James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Abacus, 1998), p. 165.

as *Pax Britannica* and *Imperium Britannicum*. The mid-Victorian generation's association with Italy was strengthened by the comparison between Britain's modern naval dominance and that of the Venetian Republic of the Renaissance; for artistic and literary figures such as John Ruskin, 'the mercantile, seafaring city-state and empire was an emblem of Britain'.[44] Moreover, the British connection with the cradle of European civilisation overlapped with British political ideology. On the eve of Italy's unifying in 1859, the political philosopher John Stuart Mill blurred the ancient and the modern when writing:

> The struggle between liberty and authority is the most conspicuous feature in the portions of history with which we are earliest familiar, particularly in that of Greece, Rome, and England.[45]

The utterance of 'England' as a synonym for Victorian Britain was as common of the era as Mill's comparison between his country and the great civilisations of the ancient world. The Victorians considered themselves to be the standard-bearers of the principles of freedom of thought and freedom of speech. This attitude played a significant role in shaping their perspectives on what was happening in Italy.

It is also significant that Italy was no *terra incognita* to the British leaders of the age. During the Italian crisis of 1859–61, Britain was led by men for whom a year rarely passed without a visit to Italy. The leading Liberals of the day all travelled there, and several of them were fluent in Italian. Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone all engaged in correspondence with Italians based both in Italy and in Britain; during the 1860s, Gladstone and Lord Clarendon even received audiences with Pope Pius IX. Sir Austen Henry Layard, the archaeologist, undersecretary of state for foreign affairs (1861–65), and future diplomat, was in Italy during the important events of 1859, and he joined a mass exodus of Liberal leaders—then relieved of the burdens of government—to witness the departure of the last Austrian troops from Venice in 1866.[46] Leading Tories

[44] A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow Books, 2003), p. 88.

[45] J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. G. Himmelfarb (London: Penguin Classics, 1985; [1859]), p. 59.

[46] A. H. Layard, *Autobiography and Letters from His Childhood until His Appointment as H.M. Ambassador at Madrid* (London: John Murray, 1903), Vol. II, pp. 195–6.

such as Lord Malmesbury were also enthusiastic visitors to Italy. British political and cultural interests in Italy clearly overlapped.

Danilo Raponi has described the Italy of the mid-nineteenth century as the 'European India'.[47] Like India—the jewel in Britain's imperial crown—Italy was a land rich in cultural heritage. It boasted an embarrassment of art, architecture, knowledge, innovation, and enterprise, while its history was punctuated by magnificent achievements. However, also like India, the modern reality of Italy was very different. It was a country of contrasts, which often left British visitors bemused—even shocked—at how a country with such a vibrant past could also be brutal, and how a land which appeared to possess abundant resources could condemn so many of its inhabitants to live in poverty. In 1847, the author and Italian patriot Luigi Settembrini juxtaposed the natural beauty of his country with the misery of its people when he wrote that in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies there existed a country 'said to be the garden of Europe', yet where the people died from hunger, lived 'in a state worse than beasts', and where the only law was 'caprice'.[48] At its most positive, this Italy was perceived by the Victorians as a tranquil rural idyll, a pleasing contrast to the industrialising cities of northern Europe; at its most negative, it was regarded as a semi-civilised backwater, ridden with destitution and depravity.[49] Much of the geographical area of Italy—and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the island of Sardinia in particular—were often viewed as more African than European, more barbaric than civilised.[50] Yet there was optimism: while the British treated their Italian contemporaries with frequent condescension, there was a feeling that any political reform holding the prospect of making the country more 'English' would pay dividends.[51] It was not so

[47] D. Raponi, *Religion and Politics in the Risorgimento: Britain and the New Italy, 1861–1875* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 61–5.

[48] L. Settembrini, *Una protesta del popolo del regno delle Due Sicilie* (Naples, 1847), qtd in H. Hearder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento 1790–1870* (London & New York: Longman, 1983), p. 125.

[49] See A. McAllister, '"A Pair of Naked Legs and a Ragged Red Scarf"': An Overview of Victorian Discourses on Italy', in *The Victorians and Italy*, ed. L. Villa, P. Vita and A. Vescovi (Milan: Polymetrica Press, 2009), pp. 19–43.

[50] For example, see O. J. Wright, 'Between Italy and Africa: British Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Sardinia', in *Travel and Translations: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, ed. S. Villani, A. Yarrington and J. Kelly (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2013), pp. 111–34.

[51] D. Raponi, *Religion and Politics in the Risorgimento: Britain and the New Italy, 1861–1875* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 61.

much the political division of Italy that was considered to be an impediment to modernisation, but the political systems in place within each state. Everywhere, with the sole exception of the constitutional Kingdom of Sardinia, the Italians were governed by absolutist and often repressive monarchies, propped up by the Austrian occupation of the peninsula that had been imposed by the Congress of Vienna. And everywhere, again with the exception of the secular Kingdom of Sardinia, these autocratic regimes were bolstered by the institution that was regarded by many Victorians as the staunchest opponent of modernity: the Roman Catholic Church.

Whereas the enthusiasm many Britons exhibited for Italy during the Risorgimento succeeded the sympathy they had felt for the Greeks during their struggle for independence during the 1820s, it also anticipated the sentiments in favour of similar national movements in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria that they would feel in later years. Indeed, the only nationalist movement in Europe which failed to strike a chord with progressive British Victorian Liberals was that of Ireland. The British relationship with Ireland, a foreign and Catholic country which London had incorporated formally into the United Kingdom in 1801, was troubled and complex. It is a relationship, however, which helps to explain the religious prism through which the mid-Victorian generation viewed Italy. Linda Colley has identified Protestantism as one of the defining factors which brought about the establishment of a British national identity during the century following the union of England and Scotland in 1707. It was their 'common investment' in Protestantism that first allowed the English, Welsh, and Scots to become fused together and to remain so despite their cultural differences. Together, they combined in a defensive unity brought on by war with a succession of Catholic powers—Spain, Austria, and France—which helped to transform Great Britain from a new and largely artificial polity into a nation with a strong self-image rooted in religious identity; 'an uncompromising Protestantism was the foundation on which their state was explicitly and unapologetically based'.[52] Moreover, as Britain's agricultural and industrial modernisation propelled it towards world greatness, the British felt inclined to celebrate the 'Protestant work ethic' as one of the keys to their success. To this end, religion played a significant role in British colonialism. The Church of England contributed

[52] L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 18.

significantly to the formation of colonial churches which played a role in promoting Victorian values throughout the British Empire.[53] Nowhere was the impact of British attempts to Protestantise the world more acutely felt than in Ireland, and it was because of the difficulties Britain encountered in ruling Ireland that religious issues came to bear upon British foreign policy regarding Italy.

The Italian national struggle made a significant impression upon the difficult relationship between Britain and Ireland.[54] During the 1830s, Mazzini's Young Italy movement had provided the inspiration for its Young Ireland equivalent, but following his election to the Papacy in 1846, Pope Pius IX and the Catholic Church became increasingly strong symbols for the Irish national movement.[55] Opinions on the Italian unification process of the 1850s and 1860s divided along the historical, religious 'fault-line' between Protestantism and Catholicism, both within Ireland itself and within the United Kingdom more widely; British Protestant support for the Risorgimento was tempered by Catholic Irish sympathy for the Papacy. The Risorgimento was seen in Ireland as primarily a religious issue, aggravating existing differences between the Irish and their British rulers.[56] The greater part of British public opinion, however, saw it as a process of modernisation which promised both political and religious reform. The potential for Italian affairs to increase tensions between Catholicism and Protestantism, and between the Irish and the British, was nowhere more obvious than in London's Hyde Park in 1862, when English supporters of Garibaldi clashed with Irish supporters of the pope.[57] It is also significant that Italian unification occurred at a time when Protestantism in Britain was being swept by a revival of its age-old phobia of the Papacy. When Catholic emancipation took place in Britain in 1829,

[53] J. Hardwick, *The Anglican British World: The Church of England and the Expansion of the Settler Empire, c. 1790–1860* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

[54] For a variety of examples as to how, see N. Carter, *Britain, Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[55] M. Ramón, 'Irish Nationalism and the Demise of the Papal States, 1848–71', in *Nation/Nazione: Irish Nationalism & the Italian Risorgimento*, ed. C. Barr, M. Finelli and A. O'Connor (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2014), pp. 176–90.

[56] J. O'Brien, 'Irish Public Opinion and the Risorgimento, 1859–60', in *Nation/Nazione*, pp. 110–30.

[57] S. Gilley, 'The Garibaldi Riots of 1862', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1973), pp. 697–732.

it ended centuries of engrained political discrimination and hostility dating back to the sixteenth century; it did not, however, bring an end to Protestant Britain's fear and suspicion of Catholics. Although the British state's new policy of toleration led to a thawing in relations between London and Rome, and the reopening of diplomatic relations—albeit on an informal footing—from 1833, many Protestants remained suspicious of 'popery'. Upon his election in 1846, Pius IX had appeared to be potentially a liberal and reforming pope, but after the revolutionary upheaval that spread its way across the continent in 1848, he appeared increasingly to be a reactionary and the arch-enemy of liberty. His reestablishment of the Catholic episcopal hierarchy in England in 1850, and the conversion to Catholicism of several high-profile public figures thereafter, were widely perceived as a declaration of war on British Protestantism. As prime minister, Lord John Russell described the event as an act of 'aggression', leading to the widespread adoption of the term 'Papal Aggression' in British public life.[58] The resurgence of Catholicism combined with an increase in the British Isles of non-conformist Protestant churches to make the British Establishment feel under threat.[59] Moreover, these religious developments combined with a dramatic increase in Catholic Irish migration to Britain in the wake of the Potato Famine of 1845–52, increasing the significant numbers who had already moved to British cities in pursuit of the economic opportunities provided by industrialisation. This influx led many British Protestants to apply stereotypes to the Irish migrants which were largely shaped by their devotion to Catholicism. They were widely viewed as inferior, backward, indolent, superstitious, and intolerant, and prone to drunkenness, violence, and criminality; they were also often regarded as resistant to political, technological, and economic progress. The stereotypes attached to the Italians by British visitors to Italy were frequently much the same, and the common denominator between the Irish and Italian races was their devotion to the Roman Catholic Church.[60]

C. T. McIntire has argued that the increasingly fractious relationship between Catholics and Protestants in Britain and Ireland played a decisive

[58] See W. Ralls, 'The Papal Aggression of 1850: A Study in Victorian Anti-Catholicism', *Church History*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (1974), pp. 242–56.

[59] E. J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783–1870* (London & New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 300–7.

[60] R. Romani, 'British Views on Irish National Character, 1800–1846: An Intellectual History', *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 23 (1997), pp. 193–219.

role in shaping British foreign policy regarding the unifying of Italy, and that the British government's anti-Papalism provided a far greater impetus to this policy than any economic or strategic motives.[61] While John Clarke holds that by the 1860s the driving force behind British foreign policy was a staunch belief in the virtues of free trade, he acknowledges that some thought that Britain's external relations ought to be guided by higher principles than by the relentless pursuit of wealth: the defence of aristocratic civilisation against revolution, preserving the international balance of power, promoting the idea of constitutional government, respecting nationalism, campaigning against slavery, and exporting the 'British' version of Christianity.[62] Gladstone, perhaps first and foremost among British policymakers, was guided very much by religious convictions.[63] He had some reason to hope that the national unification and the abolition of the temporal power in Italy might lead to the 'Protestantisation' of the country.[64] The proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy under the leadership of secular Sardinia suggested that the country might undergo some form of religious reformation, and Cavour's call for 'a free church in a free state' in 1861 was welcomed in Britain as being not only progressive but broadly 'Protestant'.[65] Lord John Russell was similarly inclined to allow ideology to guide his actions. He has been dismissed as a weak foreign secretary dominated by Palmerston, but he was dogmatic, strong-willed, multilingual, and Italophile. He would also prove to be the most energetic of British leaders when it came to proposing solutions to both the Venetian and Roman questions during the early 1860s.[66] It can be no coincidence

[61] C. T. McIntire, *England against the Papacy, 1858–61: Tories, Liberals, and the Overthrow of Papal Temporal Power during the Italian Risorgimento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[62] J. Clarke, *British Diplomacy and Foreign Policy 1782–1865: The National Interest* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 299–309.

[63] See R. Shannon, *Gladstone: God and Politics* (London: Continuum, 2007).

[64] E. R. Norman, 'Cardinal Manning and the Temporal Power', in *History, Society and the Churches: Essays in Honour of Owen Chadwick*, ed. D. Beales and G. Best (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 249–50.

[65] D. Beales, *England and Italy* (London: Nelson, 1961), p. 25. For Cavour's opinions and policy on this matter, see D. Beales and E. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 2002), pp. 279–82.

[66] See J. Prest, *Lord John Russell* (London: Macmillan, 1972), and P. H. Scherer, 'Partner or Puppet? Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office, 1859–1862', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* Vol. 19, No. 3 (1987), pp. 347–71.

that with Gladstone as chancellor and Russell as foreign secretary, the British government attempted (unsuccessfully) to have a clause protecting British Protestant missionaries from molestation by the Italian authorities inserted into the Anglo-Italian Commercial Treaty of 1863.[67] Their high-minded idealism was a contrast to the pragmatism of Palmerston as their prime minister.

Britain and the Italian States during the 'Decade of Preparation'

During the course of the 1850s, which have often been dubbed the 'Decade of Preparation' by Italian historians, it became clear to the British leaders sympathetic to Italy's national cause, that the constitutional and secular Kingdom of Sardinia presented the model to which they hoped the other Italian states might aspire.[68] It is unlikely that anybody in Victorian Britain seriously considered the possibility that within a few years an Italian nation-state would emerge, but British Italophiles nonetheless had ample cause to hope for some amelioration of the political and religious situation in Italy. Many of them—and certainly those who led Britain during the age—wished to see Italy forged as far as was reasonably possible in the image of Victorian Britain.[69] When surveying the various predecessor states of Italy, Sardinia under Cavour represented by far the closest polity to the British exemplar, not only because of what it was, but also because of what it was not.

Pius IX's retreat from liberal to reactionary in the aftermath of the revolutionary year of 1848 made it obvious that no such improvement would be led by the Papacy. Moreover, his policy of political and religious retrenchment was matched by developments elsewhere in the peninsula. From 1849, British suspicions that Catholicism was the principal obstacle to modernisation and liberty in the country were confirmed when the Tuscan government of Archduke Leopold II began to suppress Protestant proselytes within its jurisdiction. That year witnessed the expulsion of a

[67] See D. Raponi, 'An "Anti-Catholicism of Free Trade?" Religion and the Anglo-Italian Negotiations of 1863', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2009), pp. 633–52.

[68] D. Beales, *England and Italy* (London: Nelson, 1961), p. 24.

[69] M. O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998). In particular, see 'Introduction: Crossing Boundaries', pp. 1–11.

Protestant Irishman, Captain Pakenham, for printing and distributing copies of the Bible. In 1851, the Tuscan authorities imprisoned Francesco Guicciardini and a married couple named Madiai for seeking to convert Catholics to Protestantism. Although these events attracted the attention of the British newspaper press, causing the Foreign Office to come under pressure to intervene, the British government declined to take any action on the grounds that it had no business interfering with the Tuscan administration's enforcement of its own laws against its own subjects. However, the Foreign Office was obliged to act in 1853 when Margaret Cunninghame, a young Scottish woman, was similarly imprisoned for circulating religious pamphlets in Tuscany. Although Cunninghame was soon released, the foreign secretary Lord Clarendon expressed his disgust at what was now being publicised widely in Britain to be religious 'persecution'.[70] The result was that Tuscany—a country which had hitherto been regarded as one of the more modern, most prosperous, and relatively tolerant of Italy's predecessor states—came to be viewed in Britain as being under the yoke of an autocratic and reactionary regime which was hostile to Protestantism, and to religious toleration in general.

The souring of British relations with the Grand Duchy of Tuscany paled in comparison, however, with the nature of Britain's appalling relationship with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Throughout the 1850s, the Bourbon regime at Naples, which presided over the largest and most populous state in Italy, appeared to do everything it possibly could to alienate British opinion. No government in Italy succeeded in acquired greater notoriety in Victorian Britain than the authoritarian and repressive monarchy of King Ferdinando II, known to his people as 'Bomba'. The decade began badly when William Gladstone visited Naples in 1850. During his time in the city, Gladstone attended the trial of the poet and revolutionary activist Carlo Poerio, as well as visited the prison in which thousands of political prisoners were detained in harsh and degrading conditions, in many cases without having been tried. Gladstone was so horrified by the Bourbon regime's treatment of these men that he published his famous *Two Letters to the Earl of Aberdeen*, which utterly condemned the Neapolitan administration as 'the negation of God erected into a system of government' on

[70] O. J. Wright, 'The Religious "Persecutions" in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and British Sympathy for Italian Nationalism, 1851–1853', *History*, Vol. 102, No. 351 (2017), pp. 414–31.

account of its 'incessant, systematic, deliberate violation of the law'.[71] As foreign secretary, Palmerston had copies of Gladstone's letters circulated throughout Europe, and warned the Bourbon government of the violent revolution that such wanton abuses of justice would reap.[72] In Italy, they were translated into Italian and published in *Il Risorgimento*, the newspaper founded by Cavour in Turin, where they were described by Antonio Panizzi as having 'made an excellent impression'.[73]

For Gladstone, the draconian sentences and appalling conditions that the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies inflicted upon its political opponents played an important role in encouraging his transformation from Tory to Liberal and in persuading him, much later in 1859, to enter government with Palmerston and Russell so as 'to do something for Italy'.[74] Gladstone's outburst made the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies synonymous with tyranny in Britain, and encouraged his personal belief that the British possessed a moral mission to 'educate' public opinion overseas so that British-style institutions and values could become adopted and respected.[75] The relationship between London and Naples reached its nadir at the Paris Peace Conference of 1856 when the British foreign secretary Lord Clarendon and his French counterpart Count Walewski openly criticised the Bourbon state, enraging Ferdinando II and bringing about the severance of diplomatic relations. There is some evidence to suggest that the king of the Two Sicilies later regretted the rupture of diplomatic relations, and that he looked upon the return of the Conservatives to power in Britain in 1858 as a chance to see official relations reestablished. During a special mission to Naples to secure the release of the two engineers, Lord Lyons formed this opinion and notified the foreign secretary Lord Malmesbury[76]; this sentiment was perhaps one of the motives behind Bomba's sudden decision to grant an amnesty to political prisoners, including Poerio and

[71] See W. E. Gladstone, *Two Letters to Lord Aberdeen on the State Prosecutions of the Neapolitan Government* (London: John Murray, 1851), p. 6.

[72] J. Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1905), Vol. I, pp. 389–404.

[73] Panizzi to Gladstone, 18 August 1851, Gladstone Papers, British Library [hereafter BL], Add MS 44274.

[74] D. M. Schreuder, 'Gladstone and Italian Unification: The Making of a Liberal?', *English Historical Review*, Vol. lxxxv (1970), pp. 475–501.

[75] Schreuder, pp. 488–9.

[76] Lyons to Malmesbury, 'private', 27 March 1858, Malmesbury Papers, Hampshire Record Office [hereafter HRO], 9M73/14/19.

Settembrini—two of the prisoners whose incarceration had so upset Gladstone—in January 1859.[77] Either way, without political reform, his efforts were in vain; official relations were only restored upon his death.

Prior to his demise, an episode known as the *Cagliari* affair excited considerable interest in Britain. During the summer of 1857, a band of Mazzinian revolutionaries led by Carlo Pisacane hijacked a Sardinian ship operating the steam packet service between Genoa and Cagliari in a revolutionary action perpetrated by Italian nationalists.[78] Under the control of the rebels, the ship was diverted for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, stopping *en route* at the penal colony on the island of Ponza, whereupon the band stole weapons and ammunition with which they released and armed some 300 political prisoners. They then proceeded to the mainland, where they disembarked and marched towards Naples. The revolutionaries were defeated and slain, some by Neapolitan troops and others by peasants. The captured survivors were imprisoned for months in the prison, made notorious several years before by Gladstone's *Two Letters to the Earl of Aberdeen*, and held for months without trial. Their number included two British engineers, Henry Watt and Charles Park, who were detained together with the Italian contingent of the crew on the grounds that they had been complicit in the event. The men were held for almost five months without access to consular representation, for almost six months before any charges were pressed against them, and for almost seven months before being brought to trial. Their health suffered, and both returned home as broken men. Their experience made newspaper headlines throughout the English-speaking world, and the public outcry obliged the British government to act. After nine months in captivity, the men were released after the charges against them were dropped. The Conservative foreign secretary Lord Malmesbury was left to demand that the Bourbon regime pay the men an indemnity of £3000; he succeeded in persuading the Neapolitan government to compensate the two men only after threatening to resort to gunboat diplomacy.[79]

[77] Craven to Malmesbury, 'private', dated 11 January but actually 11 February 1859, Malmesbury Papers, HRO, M73/14/25.

[78] Hudson to Clarendon, 2 July 1857, The National Archives [hereafter TNA], FO 70/293.

[79] For official correspondence regarding the case, see *Paper relative to Imprisonment of the Engineers, Watt and Park, at Salerno*, BPP, 1857–58 LIX 1, Correspondence respecting *Cagliari*, BPP (app.) 1857–58 LIX 7, 155, Opinion of law officers of the Crown, April

Therefore, whereas 'the clocks were turned back' in every other part of Italy following the revolutionary upheaval of 1848–49,[80] there was one Italian state which shone like a beacon of hope in the British eyes. As relations with Italy's other major states deteriorated, the Kingdom of Sardinia thrived under the moderate constitutional rule of King Vittorio Emanuele II and his liberal aristocratic prime minister Count Cavour. This territorial anomaly, comprising the wealthy and modern northern Italian regions of Piedmont and Liguria with the beautiful but remote and underdeveloped island of Sardinia, was alone among Italy's predecessor states in this regard. The kingdom had been an autocracy like the other Italian states until the granting by Carlo Alberto of a constitution in 1848; Vittorio Emanuele had the sense to retain the constitutional framework after succeeding to the throne in 1849, and it was the Sardinian constitution which would become the constitution of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861.[81] Sardinia was also alone distinctive in that its system of government was upheld by its leaders without the need of an occupying Austrian military presence. Moreover, in its prime minister Count Cavour, it possessed an ambitious statesman who embraced progress.[82] Cavour had visited Britain three times, travelling on its railways, visiting its factories, banks, prisons, and schools, and acquiring a lifelong enthusiasm for Victorian modernisation; he had also made the acquaintance of Palmerston, Gladstone, Clarendon, and Disraeli.[83] It cannot have escaped the attention of these leaders that Cavour considered Victorian Britain to set excellent example of what he thought his own country should become, even if his plans for the aggrandisement of the Kingdom of Sardinia probably never extended beyond northern Italy. The Sardinian prime minister further ingratiated himself with the British and the French by taking their side in the Crimean War,

1858, BPP, 1857–58 LIX 399, Further Correspondence respecting the "Cagliari", 1857–58 LIX 417.

[80] C. Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 181.

[81] For the Sardinian Constitution of 1848 and Austrian reactions to it, see D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson, 2002), pp. 254–60.

[82] A. Cardoza, 'Cavour, Piedmont and Italian Unification', in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. J. A. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 122–31.

[83] H. Hearder, *Italy in the Age of Risorgimento 1790–1870* (London & New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 61–3.

committing both troops and ships to the theatre of conflict.[84] Moreover, Cavour was enthusiastic about free trade. The Sardinian state had already tolerated Protestantism before he came to power in 1852, and—through the Siccardi Laws of 1850—had begun the process of secularisation by significantly reducing the power of the Catholic Church in civil matters.[85] The Sardinian template for political and religious reform in Italy did not please everybody in Britain; Marcella Pellegrino Sutcliffe has noted that many British social reformers favoured Giuseppe Mazzini's proposals for a unified and republican Italy over the constitutional monarchy represented by Sardinia.[86] Nonetheless, so far as the less radical British Establishment was concerned, if Italy were to undergo a political transformation, the well-governed and moderate Kingdom of Sardinia stood in stark contrast against the Papal, Tuscan, and Bourbon governments of central and southern Italy. For them, moderate Sardinia presented the perfect compromise. Perhaps Queen Victoria, who can hardly be described as having been pro-Italian, best expressed the value that British leaders felt lay in a policy designed 'to see Sardinia independent and strong; as a Liberal constitutional country, opposing a barrier alike to unenlightened and absolute as well as revolutionary principles'.[87]

British Foreign Policy and the Unifying of Italy

This is not the place to provide any particular reassessment of the role played by Great Britain during the crucial years of Italy's unification process, but it is important to provide a narrative of the events of 1859–61 and the role that British foreign policymakers played in them. The unifying of Italy would never have occurred without the support of two major foreign powers, be it active support as in the case of France, or diplomatic and moral support as in that of Britain. The prospect of the Kingdom of Sardinia leading the campaign to liberate Italy—if not necessarily intended

[84] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918* (Oxford, 1971 [1954]), pp. 71–2.

[85] I. Scott, *The Roman Question and the Powers 1848–1865* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 91.

[86] See M. Pellegrino Sutcliffe, *Victorian Radicals and Italian Democrats* (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2014).

[87] Queen Victoria to Clarendon, 9 January 1856, qtd in D. Beales, *England and Italy*, p. 35.

to unite the whole country—first became apparent when King Carlo Alberto adopted the cause of Italian nationalism in the hope of strengthening his position on the throne. During two separate conflicts in 1848 and 1849, collectively known to history as the First War of Italian Independence, Carlo Alberto led the Sardinian army into Lombardy with the intention of ejecting the Austrians from northern Italy. After his two successive defeats and abdication, it became clear that the assistance of foreign powers would be necessary if the Vienna Settlement of 1815 were to be overturned and Italy liberated from Austrian occupation. While Cavour, who served as prime minister in Turin for all but a brief period between 1852 and 1861, is unlikely ever to have contemplated the unification of a single state extending the full length of the Italian peninsula, he nonetheless resolved to forge strong friendships with likely foreign partners. Having worked hard to forge a strong and friendly relationship with the leaders of both France and Britain, he might well have been disappointed when Sardinia's contribution to the Allies' victory in the Crimean War did not result in either of those powers feeling inclined to raise the Italian Question at the Paris Peace Conference of 1856. The catalyst for change came only when the Italian nationalist Felice Orsini attempted to assassinate the French Emperor Napoléon III in Paris in 1858.

As the nephew of the Corsican-born Napoléon Bonaparte, who had first conquered Italy in 1796, founded the First Empire in France in 1804, and conquered most of the Europe during the decade that followed, Napoléon III had spent much time in Italy during his youth. He had been involved with the secret societies that had formed the nucleus of the nationalist movement there, participating in the 1831 rebellion against Papal rule in Romagna, as well as in revolts against King Louis Philippe of France.[88] After becoming initially the president of France in 1848, and then the founder of the Second Empire in 1852, one of the key aims of Napoléon III's foreign policy was to see the 1815 Vienna Settlement revised as the position of France strengthened. If Orsini's assassination attempt had intended not necessarily to kill the French emperor but to draw attention

[88] For the life and career of Napoléon III, see: D. Baguley, *Napoléon III and His Regime: An Extravaganza* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000); J. P. T. Bury, *Napoléon III and the Second Empire* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); A. Plessis, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire 1852–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); R. Price, *Napoléon III and the Second Empire* (London: Routledge, 1997).

to the Italian cause, he can certainly be considered to have succeeded.[89] Orsini's action and self-sacrifice (he was executed) had a profound impact upon Napoléon, who became receptive to Cavour's overtures. The two men met in secret at Plombières-les-Bains in eastern France, where they signed a secret pact to provoke a war against the Austrian Empire through which they planned to liberate Italy from Austrian occupation.[90] While Cavour's intention was to expand the Kingdom of Sardinia's influence in northern Italy at Austria's expense, Napoléon III desired to strengthen France by extending its frontiers to a more natural boundary in the Alps. To this end, Cavour agreed that if the French should assist his country in defeating the Austrians, the Kingdom of Sardinia would cede the city of Nice and the region of Savoy to France. With Austrian power expelled from the Italian peninsula, and a larger and stronger Kingdom of Sardinia expanded in northern Italy, the whole country might then be reconstructed in a manner that reflected the plan first proposed by the nationalist Vincenzo Gioberti in 1843[91]; whereby the establishment of an Italian confederation might comprise one large northern state (Sardinia), one large southern state (the Two Sicilies), and one central state (the Papal States), loosely united under the presidency of the pope. Such a plan might well have been unrealistic, such was the hostility of Pope Pius IX and the Bourbon monarchy to any notion of reform, but the deal struck at Plombières was enough to spark a dramatic change.[92]

Cavour succeeded in provoking Vienna into declaring war on the Kingdom of Sardinia in April 1859, after amassing troops in close proximity to Piedmont's border with Austrian-controlled Lombardy and refusing to comply with an ultimatum to withdraw them. When the Sardinian forces were attacked by Austrian army, the French came to their aid. The Austrian advance on Turin was halted by the French at Montebello, and the aggressors forced into retreat by defeats at Magenta and Solferino.

[89] For the life of Felice Orsini, see M. St John Packe, *The Bombs of Orsini* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957).

[90] See M. Walker (ed.), *Plombières: Secret Diplomacy and the Rebirth of Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[91] For Gioberti's 'Philosophy' see D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson, 2002), pp. 229–33.

[92] For Cavour's ciphered letter to Vittorio Emanuele on the agreement reached at Plombières, see D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson, 2002), pp. 261–9.

Having effectively broken Austrian control of Lombardy, possibly fearing the escalation of the war, and allegedly being horrified by the carnage on the battlefields, Napoléon proposed a peace. In July 1859, the French emperor signed an armistice with his Austrian counterpart Franz Joseph at Villafranca. Cavour was outraged by his ally's unilateral decision to end the war, irrespective of the fact that it allowed the Kingdom of Sardinia to annex the wealthy Italian region of Lombardy, and promptly resigned from office.

Throughout the war, and the peace negotiations that followed, Palmerston and Russell appeared keen to express a view on the Italian Question at every opportunity, 'and to give counsel, warnings and recommendations' to the powers involved without accepting any responsibility for whatever consequences might result. To an extent they were supported by Gladstone, but the remaining ministers in the cabinet were reluctant to see their country committed to any course which it might not have the wherewithal to enforce.[93] Throughout the crisis there were numerous proposals for an international conference to determine the future of Italy, although none ever came to fruition. Throughout, Palmerston and Russell often gave the impression of wishing to do more than they did; while it was the prerogative of the foreign secretary to direct the detail of foreign policy, the concept of collective responsibility proscribed that the general principles of that policy should be agreed by the cabinet. It was the responsibility of the prime minister to see that those general principles were respected, but as the premier was Palmerston, Derek Beales has suggested that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert played a key role in restricting the actions of the two men. While they were supportive of British foreign policy being in principle supportive of the promotion of constitutional government overseas, their sympathies for Austria and their suspicions of France led them to feel that the situation in the old Italy was preferable to any reconstruction of the country that might advance French interests. Consequently, Victoria scrutinised the diplomatic despatches pertaining to Italian affairs prior to their being sent as was her constitutional right, while Albert was in close correspondence with a number of cabinet ministers upon whom the royal couple could rely to keep the prime minister and foreign secretary in check.[94] Through the beginning of the Italian

[93] Beales, *England and Italy* (London & Edinburgh: Nelson, 1961), p. 97.
[94] Beales, *England and Italy*, pp. 98–9.

crisis in 1859, therefore, the power of the most pro-Italian of British leaders to exert much influence was limited.

As the pace of change in Italy increased, and as that change began to spread to other parts of the country, the potential for Palmerston and Russell to make a difference began to grow. The excitement caused by the war led to revolutions which overthrew the Austrian-backed rulers of the duchies of central Italy, Parma, Modena, and Tuscany during the summer of 1859, resulting in the installation of pro-Sardinian assemblies which declared their desire for annexation to Sardinia. Palmerston and Russell recognised that if they did not wish to see Austria intervene to restore the overthrown monarchies, it was necessary for Britain to act in concordance with France. Various proposals presented themselves, the only one of which appeared viable to Palmerston being that of their union with Sardinia; Palmerston considered that if France and Britain might act in combination to ensure that this objective were met, it would be 'a glorious opportunity' for the two countries to work together 'for the accomplishment of a common Purpose, for completing a work generous in it's [sic] Principle, disinterested in it's [sic] character, and beneficent in it's [sic] Results'. Moreover, 'the full effects of such cooperation would not be confined to settlement of Italy … two great nations which had cooperated for so honorable [sic] a purpose would by such cooperation be found for firmly together, and the chances of difference between them to be very greatly diminished'.[95] At a time when Britain experienced war scares over possible (if unlikely) conflict with France, which led Palmerston to invest in his famous and costly 'follies' at strategic points around the British coastline, the prospect of agreement over Italy and the French and British working together for a constructive solution to the Italian Question proved alluring. In conversation with the French ambassador to London, the Duc de Persigny, there was even talk of France and Britain creating two separate kingdoms of northern and southern Italy, while leaving an undetermined portion of central Italy as the preserve of the Papacy. The mood in London during the autumn and winter of 1859–60 was excited and optimistic.

This changed dramatically in the spring of 1860, breaking this *entente cordiale*. After returning to power in January, Cavour ordered the occupa-

[95] Palmerston to Russell, 4 September 1859 (copy), Broadlands Papers, Hartley Library, University of Southampton [hereafter 'Hartley'], PP/GC/RU/1125-48.

tion of the duchies of central Italy in March, determined to annex them. However, to win the approval of the French government, Sardinia was obliged to pay the price demanded by Napoléon for the role France had played in the defeat of Austria: the cession of Nice and Savoy, as agreed at Plombières. While the British were delighted to see the aggrandisement of the Sardinian state in northern and central Italy, they were not at all pleased to see the expansion of French territory into the Alps or along the Mediterranean coast. While it made little difference to British enthusiasm for the transformation taking place in Italy, from this point onwards, successive British governments would remain perennially suspicious of French ambitions in Italy up until the fall of Rome in 1870, and this fear hampered any action they might have taken as Italian developments moved suddenly, rapidly, and unexpectedly in the direction of the unification of most of Italy during the summer of 1860.[96] If the British were angered by French encroachment into Italian territory, the revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi was outraged. Already a hero among Italian nationalists, and boasting an international reputation, thanks to his early career not only in Italy but also South America, Garibaldi had been born in Nice. Stirred into action and intending to exploit the revolutionary fervour that was manifest in several parts of Italy, Garibaldi assembled a force of volunteers—many of whom were professionals and students—in Genoa, which became known to history as 'The Thousand'. In April 1860, when an insurrection broke out in Sicily against the Neapolitan Bourbon regime, Garibaldi headed south in support of the Sicilian rebels. Anxious about the possible consequences of Garibaldi's success, Cavour had hoped to stop him, but the force of public opinion and King Vittorio Emanuele prevented it.[97]

In May 1860, Garibaldi and his 1089 volunteers set sail for Sicily, landing at Marsala on the west coast of the island. Swollen by bands of Sicilian discontents, Garibaldi's force defeated the Neapolitan army at Calatafimi, and marched on Palermo. The Bourbon government in Naples quickly lost control of the situation in Sicily, and Garibaldi took the title of Dictator of the island in the name of King Vittorio Emanuele; he established his

[96] Beales, *England and Italy*, pp. 151–2.

[97] D. Mack Smith, *Cavour* (London: Metheun, 1985), p. 25. See also D. Mack Smith, *Cavour and Garibaldi, 1860: A Study in Political Conflict*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

own administration, and gradually extended its authority across the island. Once Sicily was firmly under his control, Garibaldi turned his attention to the mainland. When the French proposed to the British a joint intervention to prevent the Sicilian revolution from spreading to the Italian mainland in July 1860, the British declined to intervene.[98] Garibaldi and his force successfully crossed the Strait of Messina, amid rumours of British and American private individuals offering boats, and of the Royal Navy somehow sailing between Garibaldi's irregular flotilla and the Neapolitan ships which were consequently prevented from firing on the rebels. Once on the Italian mainland, the nationalist volunteers made swift progress up the Calabrian peninsula during August and September. Upon his arrival at Naples, Francesco II, the last king of the Two Sicilies, retreated to the coastal fortress of Gaeta, enabling Garibaldi to enter the capital. Having conquered Sicily and much of the mainland of southern Italy, Garibaldi vowed to march on Rome to complete the unification of the whole country. Fearing that any direct attack upon the Papacy would provoke an international response by the Catholic powers of Europe, King Vittorio Emanuele II invaded the Papal States in order to halt him. When the king met Garibaldi at the small town of Teano, some distance short of the border between the Papal States and the Two Sicilies, the revolutionary surrendered the vast territories he had conquered and saluted Vittorio Emanuele as the king of Italy.

In London, Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone were delighted with the prospect of a unitary Italian state comprising the islands of Sardinia and Sicily, and the entire Italian peninsula except for the Republic of San Marino, Austrian Venetia, and the remainder of the Papal State around Rome. It was only at this late stage that the British government became fully supportive of the concept of an entirely unified Italian peninsula, faced as they were with the reality of an Italy brought almost entirely under the rule of Sardinia.[99] Hitherto, the Italian Question had been an arena in which 'British Liberals could declaim their lines in a manner as pleasing to themselves as to their Italian admirers', but the successes of Garibaldi and Cavour provided them with a golden opportunity to prove what Britain could achieve through diplomacy, where lesser powers 'required gunpowder and shot'.[100] While British Francophobia had caused British policy in Italian

[98] Beales, *England and Italy*, p. 152.

[99] Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846–86* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 228.

[100] Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, p. 229.

affairs to lag behind the course of events up until this point, the country's leaders had also failed to anticipate the pace with which the movement towards a united Italy would develop; only late in the day did they consider the unification of most of Italy as a practical possibility.[101] Nonetheless, when presented with the *fait accompli* in the autumn of 1860, they rose to the occasion magnificently, stealing the limelight from their rivals in France. Lord John Russell sought to play the deus ex machina of the unifying of Italy in the face of opposition from virtually all of the rest of Europe, and play it he did. On 27 September 1860, the British foreign secretary was moved to suggest that a unified Italy could and should be legitimised by an elected body representing the whole country, considering it 'The best & rightest way would be that a Parlt of all Italy exclusive of Rome & Venetia should be called to settle the electing of their country'. Privately, he instructed the British Sir James Hudson at Turin and Sir Henry Elliot at Naples to make this fact known in Italy.[102] The *coup de grâce* came, however, with the famous despatch he sent to Hudson on 27 October. Recognising that 'the late proceedings of the King of Sardinia have been strongly disapproved of by several of the principal Courts of Europe' following the condemnation of France, Russia, and Prussia, Russell decreed that 'it would scarcely be just to Italy, or respectful to the other Great Powers of Europe, were the Government of Her Majesty any longer to withhold the expression of their opinion'. The foreign secretary argued that the people of Italy were justified in 'asking' the king of Sardinia to intervene to overthrow their oppressors, and even went so far as to equate the part played by the House of Savoy with that of the House of Orange in Britain's Glorious Revolution of 1688. With the strokes of a pen, Russell effectively sealed the formation of the new Italian state with words that are alleged to have moved Cavour to tears, and which caused astonishment in many European courts:

> Her Majesty's Government can see no sufficient ground for the severe censure with which Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia have visited the acts of the King of Sardinia. Her Majesty's Government will turn their eyes rather to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifice of their liberties, and consolidating the work of their independence, amid the sympathies and good wishes of Europe.[103]

[101] Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp. 104–5.

[102] Russell to Palmerston, 27 September 1860, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/569-644.

[103] *Selections from Speeches of Earl Russell 1817 to 1841 and from Despatches 1859 to 1865*, Vol. II, pp. 328–32.

Thus, the British government proclaimed its belated but nonetheless enthusiastic endorsement of Italy's national unification. By this stage, even the Conservative leader Lord Derby, who had opposed a proposal by Shaftesbury to have the House of Lords express sympathy for the Italian cause in 1859, now recognised that it was Russell's policy which had won the hearts of the people of Britain, and came out in favour of a free and independent Italy.[104]

Russell had wanted to send a second despatch urging the cession of Venice and Rome to the new state, but was barred from doing so by Queen Victoria.[105] Nonetheless, for him, the widespread publication of his despatch brought immediate and far-reaching political capital. In Britain, he, like Palmerston before him, had succeeded in providing satisfaction to the masses in the face of the disapproval of the queen and many of his own colleagues, while his name was blessed by millions of Italians; when he died in 1878, letters of appreciation were sent to his family by the king of Italy and the Italian senate.[106] The despatch suddenly put the vital French contribution to the Italian cause in the shade, a nation which had shed its own blood for Italy in 1859, and the document acquired a revolutionary reputation for its effective overturning of the Vienna Settlement of 1815. Furthermore, Russell's reference to the Glorious Revolution was not necessarily as overblown and far from the mark as it might appear; if the British had 'elected' to change their ruling house in 1688, Russell saw no reason why the Neapolitans and Sicilians could not do the same by flocking to the cause of Garibaldi who claimed to represent the House of Savoy. The Liberal tendency to view the unifying of Italy in a whiggish light was still evident almost a decade later, when it was announced in Rome that the exiled Queen of Naples was expecting a baby; in reference to the birth of a son to the soon-to-be exiled Stuart King James II in 1688, Odo Russell, the British representative to the Papal State, reported that some 'wicked people' had suggested the child might be smuggled into the chamber in a warming pan.[107]

The British government had publicly endorsed the overthrow of legitimate monarchies up and down the Italian peninsula in the name of liberalism, progress, and national self-determination. Palmerston even appears to

[104] Wilbur Devereux Jones, *Lord Derby and Victorian Conservatism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), p. 278.

[105] Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England*, p. 104.

[106] J. Prest, *Lord John Russell* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 421.

[107] Odo Russell to Clarendon, 19 May 1869, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 487.

have been more than ready to prove that Britain could back its diplomatic achievement with force. When it was rumoured that Spain proposed to invade Italy to restore the deposed Bourbon monarchy, the prime minister proposed privately to Russell that Britain should be prepared to back up its diplomatic endorsement with force. He rebuffed the reluctance of the queen by stating 'it is quite impossible for us with a powerful Fleet in the Mediterranean to stand by and see Spain crush by force of arms the nascent Liberties of Italy', arguing that to act in defence of a new European friend 'would in no fair sense of the word be deemed Interference in the affairs of Italy'. Indeed, Palmerston decreed that if:

> [W]e were to shrink from taking our Line on such a Question if it should arise, we should be deemed to be betraying our Principles and abdicating the Position which this Country ought to hold among the Nations of the world.[108]

Although Palmerston and Russell had won enormous political capital both for their country and for themselves from their response to Italian unification, they had also effectively committed Britain to watching over and protecting the fledgling state which they had so publicly baptised.

[108] Palmerston to Russell, 29 October 1860, in Harold Temperley and Lillian M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), p. 226.

RIGHT LEG IN THE BOOT AT LAST.

GARIBALDI.—"*If it won't go on, Sire, try a little more powder.*"

*** Garibaldi, having achieved some of his wonderful successes, urged Victor Emmanuel to increased action for the liberation of Italy.—*November*, 1860.

Fig. 2 'Right Leg in the Boot at Last': Cartoon from *Punch!* Reference: ©Walker Art Library/Alamy Stock Photo. [https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-right-leg-in-the-boot-at-last-political-cartoon-about-garibaldi-helping-51660937.html, accessed 1 July 2018]

CHAPTER 3

Watching Italy: The Liberal Triumvirate and the Fledgling Kingdom of Italy, 1861–62

On 17 November 1860, the satirical magazine *Punch!* published a cartoon showing Garibaldi assisting King Vittorio Emanuele in the difficult task of inserting his foot into the boot of Italy. The image was the perfect metaphor for the British Establishment's perspective on the unifying of the country.[1] While the image depicted the king placing his right leg in the boot, the caption saying 'The Right Leg in the Boot at Last' served to sum up perfectly the views of British leaders regarding the transformation that was taking place in Italy: that, after years of misrule and the frequent threat of radical revolution, the 'right' people were now in charge. The leading Liberal triumvirate of Viscount Palmerston as prime minister, Lord John Russell as foreign secretary, and William Gladstone as chancellor of the Exchequer were all delighted to see that the Kingdom of Italy being formed before their eyes was in effect an aggrandised Kingdom of Sardinia. According to Nicholas Doumanis, the events of 1859 and 1860 saw the region of Piedmont effectively conquer most of the rest of Italy.[2] The annexation of the states of central and southern Italy to the Kingdom of Sardinia was approved by a series of plebiscites which—whether rigged or not—formally legalised this process. Perhaps most tellingly, the first all-Italian parliament was officially opened as 'the Eighth of the reign of Vittorio Emanuele II', the monarch became the first king of Italy, but

[1] 'Right Leg in the Boot at Last', *Punch!* 17 November 1860.
[2] N. Doumanis, *Inventing the Nation: Italy* (London: Arnold, 2001), pp. 86–7.

O. J. Wright, *Great Britain and the Unifying of Italy*, Britain and the World, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59397-9_3

whose regnal number reflected his position in his dynasty rather than the fact that he reigned over a new state. Count Cavour remained in place as prime minister, as the country's age-old political and ecclesiastical autocracy was replaced by moderate constitutional rule. The satisfaction that British leaders felt at what was happening in Italy was articulated by the British envoy extraordinary Sir James Hudson, who similarly remained at his post in Turin as the capital of Sardinia became the capital of the new Italy. Hudson congratulated both Russell and (modestly) himself on the apparent outcome of the Italian crisis; he expressed the belief that his own pro-Italian policy, and the moral and diplomatic support lent by his country to Italy's unifiers, were justified by the fact that the Italy which had just been born was not Garibaldian and revolutionary, but monarchical and moderate.[3] During the course of the next decade, the British would often behave almost as though *they* had 'made' Italy, as they sought to draw the new state into a 'special relationship'.

The Precarious Condition of the New Italy in 1861

Irrespective of the widespread celebrations that greeted the birth of the new Italy in Britain, the new state was by no means territorially complete; nor was it either stable or secure. During the years ahead, the Foreign Office—and Lord Russell more privately—would devote a considerable amount of time attempting to formulate solutions to the country's greatest problems, namely, the Roman and Venetian Questions. The new kingdom now stretching from the Alps to Sicily, and over the sea to the island of Sardinia, was still missing the sizeable territories surrounding the iconic cities of Rome and Venice, where the pope and the Austrians continued to rule, respectively. Soon after becoming Italy's first prime minister, Cavour announced that the city of Rome should ultimately serve as the Italian capital, and had the new all-Italian parliament vote to confirm that intention; he also called for 'a free church in a free state', announcing that the Sardinian policy of secularisation would be extended to the rest of the country.[4] Both of these pronouncements were welcomed in principle by the British government. Over the next few years, Italy would be subjected

[3] Hudson to Russell, 2 February 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/68.

[4] D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson, 2002), pp. 111, 280–1.

to a policy which became known as 'Piedmontisation', whereby many of the laws and conventions of the former Kingdom of Sardinia were superimposed upon the new Kingdom of Italy, and rafts of new legislation introduced.[5] The Sardinian policy on free trade was similarly adopted throughout the newly annexed territories, providing an acceptable basis for the negotiators of the Anglo-French commercial treaty of 1860 to sign a similar deal with Italy in 1863.[6] The famous lira was introduced as a brand-new currency in 1862, and the many archaic systems of weights and measures extant throughout the peninsula were harmonised.[7] There was much evidence of the new Italian leaders' progressive and liberal intent.[8] There were, therefore, several strong threads of continuity between the former Kingdom of Sardinia—the 'England' of the old Italy—and the new state being established.

While Lord John Russell remained at the Foreign Office, the British government showed itself keen to support and guide the new Italy. Consistently, throughout the 1860s, Russell and his successors would uphold the general principle that both Rome and Venice should be incorporated into the Italian state by peaceful means, and on occasion would show a readiness to intervene diplomatically in the hope of securing these aims. Soon after the proclamation of the new kingdom in March 1861, Russell made clear his belief that having effectively baptised the new Italy through his famous despatch of 27 October 1860, he did not believe that Britain's involvement in Italian affairs should cease. Indeed, throughout the first half of the 1860s, he appears to have considered it his country's responsibility to maintain a watchful eye over Italy's development. The peaceful resolution of the Roman and Venetian questions became a significant objective of his foreign policy after Britain became the first foreign state to offer its official recognition to the Italian kingdom in early in 1861. Although tempered by the perennial British aims of maintaining the balance of power and preventing war in Europe, Russell devoted enormous attention to Italian affairs after the country's initial unification,

[5] See A. Aquarone, *L'unificazione legislativa e i codici del 1865* (Milan: A Giuffrè, 1960).

[6] D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson, 2002), pp. 163–8.

[7] For the realisation of monetary union, see G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna, Vol. V: La costruzione dello Stato unitario* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1968), pp. 235–9.

[8] See S. Cilibrizzi, *Storia parlamentare, politica e diplomatica d'Italia*, 5 vols (Naples: Libreria Internazionale Treves, 1939–52), II, pp. 92–3.

sometimes to the frustration of Lord Palmerston who, as prime minister, occasionally felt it necessary to rein in the enthusiasm of his foreign secretary.

Under these circumstances, Russell considered it important to have at his disposal in Turin a diplomat who understood the process taking place in Italy. As Sir James Hudson had served as envoy extraordinary at Turin since 1852—the year in which Count Cavour had become the Sardinian prime minister—and as he enjoyed a personal friendship and close working relationship with Cavour, it made sense to a pro-Italian British government to retain the services of its pro-Italian diplomatic representative. Allegations of misconduct and Hudson's collusion with the pro-Italian cause had almost cost him his job in 1859, when Lord Malmesbury had grown exasperated with him, but he had been saved by Russell's arrival at the Foreign Office. Hudson was simultaneously acclaimed and lambasted by his contemporaries for having been 'more Italian than the Italians'; Cavour even went so far as to suggest the Englishman was more Italian than himself. Upon his death in 1885, Hudson was credited by *The Times* as having been the 'right-hand man and counsellor of Cavour, to whom he was simply invaluable'.[9] Hudson was almost universally believed to have acted beyond the call of his duties, and without regard for the orders of either Conservative or Liberal administrations to further the cause of Italian unity.[10] This popular belief has, however, been refuted by Nick Carter, who has argued that the British diplomat was not prepared to support Cavour blindly in any initiative which might damage either the interests of Britain or the existing constitutional arrangements in Sardinia, nor would he do anything that might further the interests of France in Italy.[11] Nonetheless, of Hudson's tremendous Italophilia there can be little doubt. He was greatly excited by what he saw happening around him, and he wanted to see an Italy that was peaceful and prosperous. He understood the acquisition of Rome and Venice to be vital prerequisites for that dream, and during the last years of his career before his untimely retirement in 1863, he was rather prone to writing lengthy pro-Italian despatches designed to impress upon the British government where its sympathies

[9] *The Times*, 3 October 1885.

[10] N. E. Carter, 'Sir James Hudson, British Diplomacy and the Italian Question: February 1858 to June 1861' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1993), pp. 3–5.

[11] N. Carter, 'Hudson, Malmesbury and Cavour: British Diplomacy and the Italian Question, February 1858 to June 1859', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (1997), pp. 389–413 (389).

should lie. Clearly, he hoped to use his position to influence both his own government and its Italian counterpart. This approach was by no means out of line with British foreign policy interests, at least so long as Russell remained at the Foreign Office. Indeed, when the foreign secretary approved Hudson's elevation from the post of envoy extraordinary to Sardinia to that of envoy extraordinary to Italy (which came with a considerable increase in salary), Russell paid tribute to his experience:

> No one is better qualified than yourself to furnish Her Majesty's Government with full and accurate information on a subject which you have studied with so much care, and judged with so much ability.[12]

Therefore, considering his vast experience and extensive knowledge of Italy and its problems, it appeared that Hudson's attributes were perfectly well suited to the enhanced position that he now occupied at Turin.

From the outset, the British Foreign Office made clear its intention of seeking to guide the fledgling Italian state through what would prove to be a difficult infancy. Early in 1861, Lord John Russell instructed Hudson to inform Cavour of the British government's hopes that the new Italy would maintain order within its borders, and that it would present itself on the world stage as a peaceful and responsible member of the international community. Through Hudson, Cavour was given a rather haughty lecture on foreign affairs:

> The obligations of the various states of Europe towards each other; the validity of the Treaties which fix the territorial circumscription of each state, and the duty of acting in a friendly manner towards all its neighbours with whom it is not at war; these are the general ties which bind the nations of Europe together, and which prevent the suspicion, distrust, and discord that might otherwise deprive peace of all that makes it happy and secure … After the troubles of the last few years, Europe has a right to expect that the Italian Kingdom shall not be a new source of dissension and alarm.[13]

At the same time, Russell wrote to Palmerston of his optimism that if the ever-popular Garibaldi could be kept under control by the new rulers of Italy, then there would be peace.[14] Such concerns prompted the British to

[12] Russell to Hudson, 15 March 1861, TNA, FO 167/122.

[13] Russell to Hudson, 21 January 1861, TNA, FO 167/122.

[14] Russell to Palmerston, 21 January 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

seek clarification of the Italian government's intentions in international affairs. Hudson told Cavour that the British well understood the problems faced by Italy's unifiers: the anxious desire to complete its unity through the acquisition of Rome and Venice, the presence in the country of a wide range of radical and reactionary subversives, and the well-known hostility of the Austrian government towards the new kingdom. At the same time, however, Hudson demanded to know if the Italian policy would be to provoke trouble for Austria in Hungary, or for the Ottoman Empire on the Danube, in the hope of seizing Venice; or whether Italy would 'wait patiently till European opinion … had time to reflect on the weakness produced to Austria' by 'maintaining Venice in subjection'. It was perhaps an ominous portent of future events that the Italians replied they would welcome any British help in securing the cession of Venice by Austria to Italy, but that they could not deny any intention of attacking Austria for fear of provoking Garibaldi and 'the Reds'. Hudson believed Cavour when he suggested that the efforts made to resolve the Roman and Venetian questions during 1861 would be diplomatic and not warlike in character, but he warned prophetically that Italy might cause trouble should the Hungarian, Eastern, and Venetian Questions remain unsettled.[15] Hudson was right to be concerned that the incomplete nature of the new Italy would be a source of international tension until such a time as the new state gained possession of Rome and Venice.

The official birth of the Kingdom of Italy was followed by months of tension. For some time it appeared that the Italian and Austrian armed forces were spoiling for a fight, and the British feared the role that Garibaldi and his volunteers might play. Hudson believed that the Austrian army in the Quadrilateral—the defensive cluster of fortress towns between Lake Garda and the River Po, comprising Mantua, Legnago, Peschiera, and Verona—to be maintained on a war footing, and feared that Vienna intended to provoke a revolution in Venice which might encourage the Italians to invade. In the event of an easy victory over the Italians, Hudson thought the Austrians planned to follow such a triumph by reoccupying Milan, Bologna, and Florence, citing Sardinian aggression as their justification. Amid frequent rumours that Garibaldi and his international allies were set to stir trouble for either Austria or

[15] Hudson to Russell, 15 March 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/68.

Turkey in the Balkans, it became British policy to put pressure on the Italian government to restrain the activists.[16] Rumours of Italian naval preparations at Genoa, and the fact that the Austrians had issued orders to prime their navy in the Adriatic, persuaded the Foreign Office to seek to calm matters. Hudson was instructed to warn the Italian government that even the vaguest rumours regarding its naval activities, and certainly the stationing of a large naval force at Ancona, would provoke Vienna.[17] In the Austrian capital, the Emperor Franz Joseph was well aware that the Italian kingdom had few friends internationally, and that its survival was far from certain.[18] The events of 1859 had already demonstrated how the Austrians could be provoked quite easily into aggression, and they did little to conceal their hostility to the new Italy after 1861. The British government was acutely aware of the Italians' isolation, and that the Italian kingdom created had far exceeded French desires, rendering Britain the best friend that Italy had.

Aware of this quite desperate reality, upon the official proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in March 1861, Lord John Russell expressed his concern that the new Italian state had not yet consolidated its authority throughout its new territories. He impressed upon his representative in Turin the importance of relaying to the Foreign Office 'full accounts of the temper, condition and prospects, of the various Provinces of which the proposed new Kingdom is composed'. In particular, Russell stressed that 'every step taken at Naples, and confirmed or overruled at Turin, is not merely a matter of great interest in itself, but has an important bearing on the future welfare of Italy, and the future Peace of Europe'.[19] He was concerned that unless the new Italian kingdom could assert its authority throughout the Italian peninsula and provide its population with good government, the forces which had opposed its unification would seek to restore the old order. In response to Russell's request for information, Hudson immediately presented the foreign secretary with an impression of the condition of the new Italy, in which he described an enormously varied country. In the north, Lombardy was thriving, with an

[16] Hudson to Russell, 29 March 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/68.

[17] Hammond to Hudson, 6 May 1861, TNA, FO 167/123.

[18] G. Wawro, 'Austria Versus the Risorgimento: A New Look at Austria's Italian Strategy in the 1860s', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan. 1996), pp. 11–12.

[19] Russell to Hudson, 15 March 1861, TNA, FO 167/122.

'industrious' and 'intelligent' population, while the former Grand Duchy of Tuscany in central Italy was described as being 'generally sound'. However, in the south just a short distance from Naples—then Italy's largest city—Hudson judged the country to be 'as Rude as the back woods of America', with 'no bridges', 'no roads', and a population reduced to 'forced ignorance'. In Sicily, a similar state of 'impoverishment' prevailed, and the island was ruled from Palermo by a repression that was both 'bodily and mental'. In the former Papal region of Marche, he reported the existence of 'no regular governmental administration', speculating that matters there were perhaps worse even than under Papal rule. There was discontent in the former Duchies of Parma and Modena, where the loss of the ducal courts 'which animated their streets and enlivened their trade' had led to 'considerable dissatisfaction'.[20] This picture of Italy, provided by a man who knew the country well and who was a tremendously enthusiastic supporter of its unification, can hardly have been welcome to a British government keen to see a stable and peaceful Italy consolidate its integrity.

There appeared to be little chance of much improvement in Italy's condition so long as Pope Pius IX refused to recognise the legitimacy of the new kingdom, and while the ex-King Francesco II lived under Papal protection in Rome. The challenges faced by Italy's unifiers on the domestic scene were formidable. Disorder was widespread, and resulted from the unpopular disbanding of Garibaldi's volunteers by Cavour's administration, the dissatisfaction with the new government of the many peasants who had risen to join him, the release of large numbers of prisoners, and the activities of soldiers from the defeated Bourbon army who were aided by public officials still loyal to the old regime and encouraged by funds from Papal Rome.[21] Italy's new leaders knew little about the south, and faced a desperate struggle to establish their control. They sought to play down the political dimensions of southern resistance to northern rule, attempting to dismiss the violence simply as 'brigandage' sponsored by the ex-king.[22] The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been the largest and most populous of the Italian predecessor states, with mountainous terrain and

[20] Hudson's information was based on a variety of sources besides that provided by British consular officials; Hudson to Russell, 29 March 1861, TNA, FO 45/5.

[21] H. Hearder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento 1790–1870* (London & New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 240–1.

[22] J. A. Davis, *Conflict and Control: Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 169.

few proper roads, all of which ensured that Italy's unifiers faced a massive challenge in crushing their enemies and asserting their authority over a large and impoverished population. There was even ample cause for discontent within Naples itself, a former capital humbled by recent events, and now deprived of the benefits brought by the presence of a royal court, public services, building contracts, and bureaucratic appointments, not to mention the protective market that the city's industry and commerce had previously enjoyed.[23] What was dubbed the brigands' war by the new Italian government was in fact a fierce and bloody political struggle, which consumed an estimated two-thirds of Italian army and dragged on until 1865.[24]

It was impossible to disguise the political nature of the struggle from British observers. In 1860, as Garibaldi marched on Naples and King Francesco II had reluctantly conceded to grant a constitution in the hope of saving his throne, the last British minister to Naples had written portentous words on the condition of southern Italy. Although Sir Henry Elliot was referring to the upheaval that might be caused by the advancing volunteer army of Garibaldi and the political uncertainty at Naples, his words nonetheless proved prophetic:

> For some weeks I have hardly had time for writing or thinking about anything except our own Neapolitan & Sicilian affairs and there is still no great prospect of their being near an end, for as ladies say under certain interesting circumstances it is by no means impossible that we must be worse before we are better.[25]

During the aftermath of Garibaldi's conquest of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and before the proclamation of the new Kingdom of Italy in March 1861, Odo Russell wrote from Rome that the Papacy was taking steps to ensure that the Sardinian annexation of southern Italy would prove to be as difficult as possible, correctly identifying that Italy's unifiers were opposed by an unlikely but formidable combination of 'Mazzinians and Papalians'.[26]

[23] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 46.

[24] L. Riall, 'Garibaldi and the South', in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. J. A. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 147–50.

[25] Elliot to Minto, 8 July 1860, National Library of Scotland [hereafter NLS], Minto Papers, MS 12250.

[26] Odo Russell to Lord Russell, 30 December 1860, *The Roman Question: Extracts from the Despatches of Odo Russell from Rome 1858-70,* ed. N. Blakiston (London: Chapman & Hall, 1962), p. 146.

After Elliot's departure from Naples in December 1860, the British government relied upon the observations of no fewer than three correspondents in Naples: Edward Bonham, the resident British consul in the city, Dudley Saurin, a young attaché who had been sent to close down the British Legation, and Peter Browne, a retired diplomat who acted as a freelance correspondent for Lord John Russell.[27] Within a month of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, all three informants were reporting both radical and reactionary unrest in the city. In March 1861, Saurin reported the attempted rising of some 400 Garibaldians; although the rioters were suppressed, there were rumours that agents of Garibaldi were recruiting volunteers to stir up trouble across the south.[28] A week later, all three representatives in Naples reported the discovery of a Bourbon plot which resulted in 50 arrests and the seizure of a large quantity of money which had been intended as payment for the insurgents.[29] Browne reported that the affair passed off quietly because the people did not sympathise with it.[30] Bonham praised the energy of the government in thwarting the revolt, but warned that it had generated 'very extensive ramifications' throughout the southern provinces, where some 'alarming rumours' were in circulation.[31] At the end of April, both Bonham and Saurin were disturbed by an incident occurring between members of the National Guard and the police, two forces supposed to be maintaining order in Naples.[32] There was also evidence of political intrigue in the Sicilian capital, from which the British consul John Consul Goodwin wrote to Hudson of an attempted rising led by the Bourbon loyalist General Boreo; although Goodwin was confident that the attempt would not succeed, he suggested that its failure would be the result of the Sicilians' preference for independence from the mainland rather than any affection for their new Italian

[27] Browne performed this unpaid service for three years (1861–64), engaging to provide Russell with 'All Information on which I can rely'; see Browne to Russell, 25 February 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/72.

[28] Hudson to Russell (telegram), 30 March 1861, TNA, FO 45/5.

[29] Saurin to Hudson, 7 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, p. 2.

[30] Browne to Russell, 10 April 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/72.

[31] Bonham to Russell, 8 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, p. 3.

[32] Bonham to Russell, 27 April 1861, and Saurin to Hudson, 27 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, pp. 6–8.

rulers.[33] As a result of such information provided by their representatives, the British government was well aware of the highly volatile state of the major cities of the former Bourbon realm during the spring and summer months of 1861.

Away from the urban centres of the south, the news was even worse. Through the three British representatives based in Naples, the British government was alerted of unrest in Abruzzo, where the peasants of Castiglione Messer Marino rose against their proprietors and killed a number of local officials. Similar excesses were reported at Isernia, where the occupying military force had been removed upon the mistaken supposition that all would remain peaceful in its absence. Calabria was described as 'infested' with brigands, while the southern provinces in general appeared to be 'fast settling into a state of chronic anarchy'. Saurin warned Hudson:

> Nowhere in these districts does any Government exist beyond that imposed by a present military force; the moment that is withdrawn the life of every Liberal is in danger … [N]o party exists of thorough-going supporters of the Sardinian policy, and no confidence … in the Government of Turin, which replaces, and appoints to an additional and more important office, that member of the late Administration who, whether rightly or wrongly, had always come in for the greatest share of unpopularity.[34]

Although Saurin reported that the brigands of Basilicata and Capitanata had retreated before Italian troops, highwaymen 'without any political colour whatever' were active all around Naples.[35] Bonham, on the other hand, refused to be alarmist about the condition of southern Italy. The vice-consul at Crotone informed him that the level of brigandage in Calabria was nothing new, and when the captain of a British vessel wrecked near Brindisi made the seven-day journey overland to Naples without any trouble, Bonham interpreted his success as a sign of the lack of disturbance. Similarly, there had been no instances of the mail having

[33] Hudson to Russell, 30 March 1861, TNA, FO 45/5.

[34] Saurin to Hudson, 6 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, pp. 1–2.

[35] Saurin to Hudson, 27 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, pp. 7–8; Saurin to Hudson 15 May 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, p. 14.

been disrupted.[36] Even so, the British vice-consuls at Taranto and Catanzaro reported that both Puglia and Calabria were in a 'constantly unsettled state', and such was 'said to be the case throughout the provinces generally'.[37] By June 1861, Bonham was writing to Lord John Russell directly, reporting that that lawlessness was spreading through southern Italy to a 'great and alarming extent': brigands were robbing travellers, plundering villages, cutting down telegraph poles, and setting fire to newly reaped corn. There were rumours of the Bourbon flag being carried by the brigands, but Bonham rightly believed brigandage to be 'very much less a political movement than a system of agrarian outrage taken up as a profession by a portion of the old disbanded troops, both Bourbon and Garibaldian'; owing to the summer weather, it would be 'very difficult to put them down'.[38] Either way, the situation was evidently one of near-anarchy, and British representatives in southern Italy found it difficult to obtain news which could be relied upon. Saurin complained that the provincial authorities did not keep the government officials in Naples well informed, 'either through negligence or worse', while Bonham was frustrated by the local authorities' complete silence on such matters.[39]

It was presumably in the absence of reliable information from official Italian sources that Saurin resorted to travelling the breadth of southern Italy in June 1861 in the wake violent clashes between brigands and royal troops near Foggia. Located much closer to the scene, Saurin provided extensive information on alarming developments at San Marco in Lamis, where a rebellion by captains of the National Guard was followed by the seizure of the village by the rebels in alliance with a notorious local bandit called Nardelli. A statue of the old king was erected in the village square, before Bersaglieri managed to kill Nardelli and recapture the village. Saurin lamented the 'palpable weakness' of the Italian government in

[36] Bonham to Russell, 6 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, p. 2.

[37] Bonham to Russell, 18 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, p. 4.

[38] Bonham to Russell, 28 June 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, p. 29.

[39] Saurin to Hudson, 27 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, pp. 7–8; Bonham to Russell, 8 April 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, p. 3.

Puglia, which did not have sufficient forces to enforce the law. Moreover, he was extremely pessimistic in his assessment of the region, describing the difficulty of establishing the rule of law was 'incalculable' on account of to the 'hopeless demoralization of the country'. There was widespread corruption among the ruling classes and within legal system, and very limited numbers of Carabinieri, which placed great pressure on the irregular National Guard; Saurin suggested that that no class could be depended on, and that 'none understand or care for the Italian cause'.[40] Instead, he reported that the populace appeared to place their faith in brigands like Nardelli, whom they regarded with a kind of hero-worship. The same could be said elsewhere in southern Italy, where the men branded 'brigands' by the Italian government were often viewed by the local population as legitimate defenders of the Roman Catholic Church and the legitimate Bourbon dynasty against the impossibly remote and foreign government of Turin.[41]

It was from Bonham in Naples that the British learnt that the massive counter-revolutionary plot thwarted by the Italian authorities in that city in April 1861 had been organised at Rome. It was therefore clear to the Foreign Office that the acquisition of Rome by Italy was just as important for Italian domestic security as it was for pacifying Italian nationalists and firmly establishing Italy's presence on the international stage. Only by ending the political independence of the Papacy would it become possible to remove from the side of the Italian state the thorn which encouraged insurgency both financially and emotionally, obstructing the way towards Italian national unity.

Efforts to See the Roman and Venetian Questions Resolved

As early as October 1860—and therefore before the official proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy—Count Cavour had declared it to be his government's policy to make Rome 'the splendid capital of the Italian Kingdom'.[42] This intent was guaranteed to anger Pope Pius IX, and to render the new

[40] Saurin to Hudson, 12 June 1861, in *Papers respecting the Affairs of Southern Italy*, Parliamentary Papers, 1861 LXVII 375, pp. 25–7.

[41] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 69.

[42] G. W. Martin, *The Red Shirt and the Cross of Savoy: The Story of Italy's Risorgimento, 1748–1871* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), p. 610.

Italy an enemy of the Catholic states of Europe combined. While the British government was open in expressing its belief that Rome should be the capital of Italy and that Venice should become an Italian port, they were alone in Europe. The French showed no sign of removing the garrison that had been stationed at Rome for the protection of the pope's independence since 1849, even if Napoléon III might well have wished in private to free his government of this onerous commitment. Nor did the Austrian government show much willing to countenance the surrender of its Venetian provinces, even if the Italians appeared willing to offer some form of financial or territorial compensation in return. Aware of the complexity of the situation, Cavour's administration pursued its grand aims with restraint, an approach adopted following his sudden death in June 1861 by his successor, the Tuscan moderate Bettino Ricasoli. Their rational strategy satisfied Palmerston and Russell, who sought actively to resolve these two problems through diplomacy.

Their efforts were strongly encouraged by Sir James Hudson, who lobbied them quite frequently. When Russell requested the diplomat's view of the ongoing French occupation of Rome, Hudson replied that it had become the cause of 'schism' in Italy. He warned the foreign secretary that the presence of the French strengthened the position of both radical and reactionary opposition to the moderate Italian government favoured by Britain. The Mazzinians and Garibaldians abhorred the line taken on the matter by the administrations of Cavour and Ricasoli, regarding them as cowards and traitors to the national cause. At the same time, those still loyal to the Bourbon dynasty and the Papacy fanned the flames by making Rome the headquarters of opposition to the new kingdom. Hudson condemned the French occupation as unnecessary and argued that the pope would be perfectly safe, if not safer, 'in the hands of his natural born protectors, his countrymen and co-religionaries, the Italians'. In short, he believed the termination of the French occupation to be the key to the pacification of Italy:

> Rome is the heart of Italy. She interposes between North and South parts which it is to be observed have not in themselves sufficient homogeneity to form one state: Rome is precisely the point which by its position would allow a central Government to unite the extremities in one stronghold.

Moreover, a Rome held by the French was not only an obstacle to the union of northern and southern Italy, but also 'a source of danger to Europe'. Hudson warned that the Italians were so excited about Rome

that they would follow anyone who promised to lead them there; the violence of Garibaldi and Mazzini was perhaps more appealing to them than the patient and tempered approach of Ricasoli's cabinet.[43]

Hudson was utterly convinced that the Italian unification and the establishment of a tranquil kingdom were impossible without Rome. Heeding the warnings of a man whose understanding of Italian affairs Russell believed to be second to none, the foreign secretary considered various schemes intended to solve the Roman Question. Each was aimed at the avoidance of war, and the removal of any temptation for Garibaldi and his volunteers to take matters into their own hands. Russell proved to be enthusiastic and prolific—if not successful—at proposing potential solutions to the problems that stood in the way of the completion and consolidation of Italy's national unification. Through the summer and autumn of 1861, Russell pressed Palmerston on the matter, hoping to secure the prime minister's approval of some kind of intervention. Palmerston, however, was unsupportive, prompting Russell to express his concern that should Ricasoli 'try to cut the Gordion Knot' alone, he might 'cut his fingers instead'.[44] His main concern was that unless the British government attempted to advance matters, the Mazzinians and Garibaldians would have a good chance of causing mischief.[45] Russell pointed towards his worries about the role of Britain's rival France in Italy, observing that the French loved to boast 'of their gifts to Italy', having been the power whose armies had shed their blood for the liberation of the country, while the reality of their position now was that they were capable of withholding real independence from the country through their occupation of Rome.[46] Although he claimed to be 'in no hurry' to annunciate the British view on the matter, he argued that the French occupation of Rome was 'a great convenience' to the Emperor Napoléon III, who took upon himself the air of protecting the new state and the Papacy, while in reality 'keeping a thorn in the side of Italy which produces a festering wound'. Regarding the chaos caused by brigandage in southern Italy, he

[43] Hudson to Russell, 23 August 1861, TNA, FO 45/8.

[44] Russell to Palmerston, 6 September 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

[45] Russell to Palmerston, 14 September 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

[46] Russell to Palmerston, 31 October 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

cited the suggestion of Consul Bonham at Naples, that the Neapolitans would willingly be governed from Rome, but could not bear to be governed from Turin. Indeed, the growing sensation that Italy's unifying had amounted to little more than a Sardinian conquest of the peninsula bred a resentment that focused itself on Turin's newfound status as the national capital, no matter how provisional the situation might be. The acquisition of Rome—the one city on which all the regions of the new state could agree had the strongest claim to becoming the national capital—appeared to be an important objective that would go a long way to healing divisions. As Rome remained under French protection, something which Russell believed the French were determined to prolong, the city remained a haven for the pope's 'chosen band of assassins'. The consequent weakness of the new Italy would be a cause of satisfaction to 'all parties' in France; the clerical party hoped to recover all that had been lost, whereas the liberal party dreaded the independence of a powerful neighbour and potential rival. Russell argued that the only way 'to get rid of this evil' was by striking an agreement whereby the majority of the Roman territory was ceded to Italy, 'leaving a little bit to the Pope'. If deprived of terrestrial power but permitted to retain his authority over the Church, Russell reasoned that Italy would be consolidated and Catholic Europe satisfied. The French foreign minister Édouard Thouvenel had stated that Britain and Prussia had as much right as Spain and Austria to be consulted over the fate of the Papal temporal power, and Russell wholeheartedly concurred. He claimed to be content to wait, but was evidently itching to see the matter resolved.[47] This fact was revealed when, in October 1861, Russell told Palmerston of a plan which he admitted was 'a scheme or a dream', whereby the Ottoman Empire might cede the province of Herzegovina to Italy for a financial price, and that Italy might then exchange that territory with Austria for Venetia. At the same time, the financially troubled Ottoman government might be prepared to cede Zante and Cephalonia to Greece and Corfu to Austria, averting the possibility of an Adriatic war while preserving Austrian honour. He admitted, though, that bringing about such changes would be quite another matter.[48] At the very end of

[47] Russell to Palmerston, 19 September 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

[48] Russell to Palmerston, 17 October 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

the year, he supposed that there could be no harm in suggesting to the Austrians that they might cede Venetia in exchange for Herzegovina, Bosnia, and Croatia.[49]

In January 1862, Russell attempted to help Italy in a different way by seeking to obtain greater international recognition of the legitimacy of the new Italian kingdom. At this point, Britain and France were alone among the Great Powers, as being the only two foreign states to have provided Italy with their official recognition. In the hope of ameliorating this situation, he informed the Palmerston of his intention to have Lord Loftus, the British envoy extraordinary to Prussia, induce Berlin into recognising the Italian state.[50] While the prime minister was happy to support this measure, he was less eager to entertain his foreign secretary's more ambitious plans. In February, Russell showed the French ambassador to London, Charles de Flahaut, a map of 'how well the Pope might fare, if confined to the Patrimony of St Peter, adding to it the City of the Vatican, and keeping French troops in Cività Vecchia [sic]'.[51] Palmerston made clear to Russell his position regarding the foreign secretary's constant agitation over Rome; ever the pragmatist, the prime minister thought it useless to propose the sort of arrangements that the idealist Russell was suggesting. There was no hope of a compromise between the irreconcilable positions of the Papacy and the Italian government; while the pope would agree to nothing other than the restoration of the territories he had already lost, the Italians would be satisfied with nothing less than full sovereignty over Rome.[52] Consequently, the situation seemed quite hopeless at the present time.

There were other reasons too, why the matter would be best left alone. At the time of Cavour's death, the Foreign Office had cause for concern that the Italian government might be preparing to win some agreement with the French over the Roman Question by agreeing to cede some strategically

[49] Russell to Palmerston, 31 December 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

[50] Russell to Palmerston, 27 January 1862, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/691-753.

[51] Russell to Palmerston, 25 February 1862, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/691-753.

[52] Note in Palmerston's hand, (undated) February 1862, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/691-753.

significant territory to France. Since the cession of Nice and Savoy to France during the spring of 1860, the British never quite felt that they could trust Cavour not to attempt to use further territory as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Paris over Rome. During the spring and summer of 1861, rumours had been rife that the Italians were preparing to offer the cession of the port of Genoa and/or the island of Sardinia to France in return for an agreement over Rome. Fearing an increase of the already strong influence of France in Italy, not to mention the strengthening of the power of France in the central Mediterranean, the British government had aimed to scupper any such deal. When the pope suffered a seizure in the Sistine Chapel, the prospect of a papal conclave and the election of a new pontiff added a sense of urgency to the situation. The illness of Pius IX had precipitated a flurry of activity between Paris and Turin.[53] Shortly before Cavour's death, Hudson had secured a commitment from the Italian prime minister that no further Italian territory would be passed to France; Cavour ventured that he was more likely to acquire Cyprus than to dispose of Sardinia.[54] However, Cavour's sudden death in June 1861 renewed British fears that his successor might be more prepared to pander to French territorial ambitions. Russell therefore instructed Hudson to inform Ricasoli, Cavour's successor, that the British considered him bound by the same engagement. The envoy extraordinary was also instructed to make clear that as Venice and Rome seemed likely to be added to the Italian kingdom at some point, there was no adequate reason for making any sacrifice of Italian interests in order only to hasten the process. The cession of Sardinia, following that of Nice and Savoy, would be a further dishonour to the king, and would alienate his kingdom from the sympathies of Europe, and Britain in particular; it would injuriously affect the balance of naval power in the Mediterranean to the detriment of the maritime powers, again Britain in particular. And while it would deprive the Kingdom of Italy of an important naval station in Genoa and a plentiful supply of ship-building timber in Sardinia, it would place both of those valuable assets into the hands of a power which already occupied a commanding position in Italy through its occupation of Rome. Here Britain revealed its selfish interests in seeing the independence of the Kingdom of Italy established and consolidated. The foreign secretary went on to state rather pompously:

[53] I. Scott, *The Roman Question and the Powers 1848-1865* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), pp. 223–4; for the subsequent proposals, see the chapter 'The First Ministry of Ricasoli', pp. 223–52.

[54] Hudson to Russell, 30 May 1861, TNA, FO 45/7.

> Sardinia has hitherto been greatly neglected by the Government of Turin, and … it would be good policy to conciliate the inhabitants of the island by introducing into it roads and bridges and other arrangements of European civilization.[55]

To Russell's relief, Ricasoli showed himself determined to continue the policy of Cavour. He assured the British that he had no intention of ceding any part of Italy to France or any other power, adding that he believed too much Italian soil to be already in the hands of foreigners.[56] Under pressure from parliament—and no doubt suspicious of Turin's reputation for deception—Russell felt compelled to enquire if the island of Sardinia was included in Ricasoli's declaration.[57] The Italian prime minister responded that not only did he consider Sardinia to be Italian soil, but that it was 'very precious'.[58] At the same time, the pacific tone of the Italian king provided satisfaction when Vittorio Emanuele told Hudson that he saw the value of taking a 'moderate and temperate' line. While it remained for him to complete the resolution of the Italian Question, the monarch understood that the matter would require time, temper, and perseverance. He added that while the southern part of Italy remained so unruly, the focus of his government should be upon pacifying the territories already within his kingdom, and taking measures there which might make a good impression upon the populace. Hudson concluded, somewhat prematurely, as it later turned out, that Vittorio Emanuele had matured since he had first met him in 1852, and was turning into a politician.[59]

The Garibaldian Crisis of 1862

The British had good reason to doubt the sincerity of Italy's unifiers when it came to seeking resolutions to the Roman and Venetian Questions. In 1860, most of Italy had been unified in part through Cavour's clever manipulation of both French and Austrian fears over revolutionary and

[55] Russell to Hudson, 10 June 1861, TNA, FO 167/123; see also Russell to Hudson, 14 June 1861, TNA, FO 167/123.

[56] Hudson to Russell, 20 June 1861, TNA, FO 45/7.

[57] Russell to Hudson, 24 July 1861, TNA, FO 167/124.

[58] Hudson to Russell, 11 August 1861, TNA, FO 45/8.

[59] Hudson to Russell, 30 June 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/68.

democratic movements.[60] The success of Garibaldi in Sicily and southern Italy in 1860 had shown what volunteer movements could achieve, while Cavour's tremendous aggrandisement of the Kingdom of Sardinia had shown how a moderate government could profit from sponsoring such movements. While Cavour was still alive, Russell was concerned that the Italian prime minister might allow such a state of affairs to develop once more, in the hope of again turning them to his benefit. As early as March 1861, the foreign secretary had ordered Hudson to urge Cavour to discountenance any notions in Garibaldi's mind of marching on Rome or launching an attack against Austria or the Ottoman Empire. In return, the British had secured a statement that the Italian government would not permit any such mission to depart from Italian shores.[61] It was suspicious, however, that Cavour had pledged to send a naval squadron to the Adriatic rather than seeking to constrain Garibaldi on land. After a sudden visit by Garibaldi to Turin in April 1861, the Foreign Office had become suspicious of Italian motives, and warned Cavour that should any volunteer activity subsequently take place, the imputation of the king having sanctioned it would be unavoidable. While Russell was confident that the Austrian and Ottoman Empires were perfectly capable of repelling an invasion by an irregular force, he expressed his hope that:

> the influence of the Italian Government will be successfully exerted to prevent Garibaldi from undertaking an expedition which can scarcely fail to involve serious consequences, and may even imperil the peace of Europe.[62]

For these reasons, both Hudson and Russell considered it 'a great matter' after Cavour's death 'to keep the Italian Govt in Ricasoli's hands', and to ensure that it kept his promise to cede 'not an inch' of Italian territory to France in pursuit of Rome.[63]

Although their fears had not been realised in 1861, events took a very different turn in 1862. Well aware of Italy's designs on Venice and the hostile attitude of Vienna towards the new kingdom, Russell expressed his

[60] D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Longman, 2002), p. 127.

[61] Hudson to Russell, 29 March 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/68.

[62] Russell to Hudson, 5 April 1861, TNA, FO 167/123.

[63] Russell to Palmerston, 20 September 1861, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/645-90.

hope that if the Italians were foolish enough to start a war against Austria, the two powers might fight it out without involving other states. His real concern was that if France should enter the fray, 'all Europe will draw the sword'.[64] He mused that if only the Austrian government would come around to accepting one of his proposals regarding the exchange of Balkan provinces or a cash sum in return for the Italian acquisition of Venetia, all would be well. He encouraged the British ambassador to Austria, Lord Bloomfield, to let it be known in Vienna that neither British public opinion nor the government would support the Austrians in endeavouring to retain Venice indefinitely, hinting also that Austrian agreement in the matter might protect the Italians from being conquered by the French.[65] This was the British position in early 1862, when news from the continent suggested that trouble lay ahead.

In January 1861, Lord Cowley, the British ambassador at Paris, was told by Thouvenel, the French foreign minister, that the revolutionary party in Italy might be planning to make some kind of attempt on Venice. He believed that Ricasoli, still the Italian prime minister, had 'repulsed' their efforts, but speculated that if war broke out between Italy and Austria, the latter would be in Turin within two weeks and the French emperor was not inclined to protect a defeated Italy.[66] In the light of rumours from other chancelleries around Europe that war might break out in the spring, and with news of the level of discontent with Austrian rule in Hungary as well as of the 'aversion of the people of Venetia to their present rulers', Russell instructed Hudson to speak with the Italian prime minister to ascertain whether there was any real foundation for it. The diplomat was also ordered to express in the strongest terms the British hope that the King of Italy would abstain from all acts or language which might tend in any way to give support to such apprehensions.[67] Hudson found the Italian government's attitude to be helpful, reporting that while Ricasoli was as determined as that of Cavour to rescue Venice from the Austrians, he would aim to do so without war or assistance from France.

[64] Russell to Cowley, 8 January 1862, in *Il problema Veneto e l'Europa 1859–1866: raccolta di documenti diplomatici a commemorare il centenario dell'unione di Venezia e del Veneto allo Stato Italiano*, ed. R. Blaas, N. Blakiston, and G. Dethan, 3 vols. (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed. Arti, 1966), Vol. 2, p. 512.

[65] Russell to Bloomfield, 8 January 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 512–13.

[66] Cowley to Russell, 10 January 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 513–14.

[67] Russell to Hudson, 20 January 1862, TNA, FO 170/98.

Russell was led by Hudson to understand Italian policy aims in the following terms: '1. Rome. 2. Organization of the present Kingdom of Italy. 3. Acquisition of Venetia by negotiation. 4. Conquest of Venetia by force of arms'. The foreign secretary declared the British government to be warmly in favour of this order of priorities and willing to work with the Italians regarding the first three, hoping that in time Austria would see the wisdom of strengthening itself by ceding Venetia peacefully to Italy.[68] In Paris, Lord Cowley insisted that he was doing his very best to persuade the French to abandon Rome.[69] Similarly, British efforts to persuade the Austrians to sell Venice to Italy were not deterred by the failure of the Clarendon mission of 1860, whereby the former foreign secretary had travelled to Vienna in the hope of achieving just such an aim. During late 1861 and early 1862, Russell asked the British ambassador in Vienna to try to find a subtle way of recommending the Austrian cession of Venice for either territorial or financial compensation.[70] In response to rumours of volunteer activity in Italy, Hudson successfully sought assurances from the Italian king and prime minister that they would 'put down with a strong hand any such expedition'.[71]

However, Hudson stated clearly that this moderate policy had powerful opponents in the king and the opposition deputy Urbano Rattazzi, who were bent on the 'suicidal' policy of 'war with Austria for Venetia'. Hudson suggested that they were 'riding in the same boat with the misguided monarch for a pilot' on a navigation which would 'inevitably wreck Italy' unless the Ricasoli government could survive.[72] Russell agreed, expressing his satisfaction at Ricasoli's promises not to yield an inch of Italian territory and not to depart from the free constitution by which Italy was now governed. While the foreign secretary reiterated the British government's position that possession of Venice was a source of weakness to Austria, and that Rome ought to be left by the French for the Romans to deal with as they please, Russell insisted that diplomatic means must be employed to try to convince Austria and France. Above all, Russell advised Hudson to give the king a lecture on constitutional rule:

[68] Russell to Hudson, 3 February 1862, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/110.

[69] Cowley to Russell, 24 January 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 530–1.

[70] For territorial see Russell to Bloomfield, 23 October 1861, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 501–2; for financial see Russell to Bloomfield, 8 January 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 512–13.

[71] Hudson to Russell, 22 February 1862, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/69.

[72] Hudson to Russell, 26 January 1862, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/69.

> The King of Italy will do well to govern according to the constitution. If you can tell him this it may be of use both to him and to Italy.[73]

The fact that the contrast between the moderate Ricasoli and the adventurous Rattazzi was fully understood in London became clear when the king moved to demand the resignation of the former, with the intention of replacing him with the latter. Sir Edmund Hammond, the permanent undersecretary for foreign affairs in London, telegraphed Hudson on behalf of Russell to express the view that Ricasoli 'should reflect well on the evils his retirement may bring on Italy and on Europe'.[74] As Prime Minister Ricasoli had consulted British precedents about how to limit royal interference in government, realising that the Italian parliament was not working as well as that in Westminster.[75] His failure to curb the powers of the monarch in the way that Cavour had done allowed the king to replace him with Rattazzi in February 1862; this was good neither for Italy's internal political development, nor its position on the international stage. Russell had been critical of the inclination of both Cavour and Ricasoli to talk of what they felt they ought to have rather than of what they had actually got; he had accused their policy at Naples of being 'vacillating and imprudent', and responsible for the horrors of brigandage that were witnessed in the south during the summer of 1861.[76] Even so, the prospect of the more radical Rattazzi steering Italy's course in cahoots with the king proved to be far more alarming.

Ricasoli's resignation was induced by Vittorio Emanuele having written to him that the country was being misgoverned, an act Hudson wasted no time in declaring a 'thorough piece of buffoonery'. Quite openly in Turin, the British envoy condemned the actions of the king in ousting a competent, moderate prime minister and replacing him with the reckless Rattazzi. Hudson even told the king's cousin the Duca di Carignano, that the monarch was leading both the country and his dynasty to ruin, urging Carignano to speak with the king.[77] These developments led Russell to declare himself 'much disheartened about Italy'. He lamented that nothing seemed set to

[73] Russell to Hudson, 20 January 1862, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/110.

[74] Hammond (for Russell) to Hudson (telegram), 3 March 1862, TNA, FO 170/98.

[75] D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 338.

[76] Russell to Hudson, 19 August 1861, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/109.

[77] Hudson to Russell, 1 March 1862, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/69.

convince the French emperor that the pope could be safely protected by Italian rather than French troops, and he was 'not without apprehension' that in Rattazzi's mind an attack upon Austria's Venetian provinces might 'wash out all sins'.[78] The loss of Ricasoli deeply concerned British officials who already knew the nature of Rattazzi. Hudson had shown himself to be vocal in his criticism of the new prime minister, and his opinions surely influenced those of Russell. The foreign secretary was anxious that Rattazzi's administration would stir trouble with Austria by supporting clandestine volunteer expeditions across the Adriatic. Having taken great pains to secure promises that such activities would not be permitted by Cavour and Ricasoli, Russell thought it pointless to ask the same from Rattazzi, whose promises 'would not be worth a pinch of snuff'.[79]

Soon after Rattazzi was installed as prime minister, the tone of British diplomacy changed from one of paternal guidance to one of blunt warning. The British were alarmed immediately by news from Genoa, where Garibaldi had issued a proclamation inviting his followers to meet with him in the Ligurian port. Hudson reported that the address was to decide on another programme which might lead the Italians to Rome, 'for that is the subject which engrosses the public mind in Italy'. Aware also that intriguers in Papal Rome were preparing to sponsor another wave of brigandage in southern Italy, he anticipated that there would be 'a very serious demonstration' in Genoa. Hudson reported, however, that:

> The danger […] is not in the meeting, but in the great political fact of the continued occupation of Rome by foreign troops, when the necessity for that occupation has absolutely ceased; and this danger will be […] augmented by the fact that brigandage, which has cost the lives of many an honest conscript and good soldier, which has widowed some and beggared others, which is a heavy pull upon the public purse, and which is the more detested because it would be suppressed if it were not covered by the presence of foreigners, and composed mainly of the scum of foreign society, is once more restored, re-organized, and flourishing in that very city which the entire Italian nation claims as their common capital.[80]

[78] Russell to Cowley, 1 March 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 559.

[79] Russell to Bloomfield, 5 March 1861, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 560.

[80] Hudson to Russell, 22 February 1862, in *Correspondence respecting Southern Italy, Jan.–Mar. 1862*, Parliamentary Papers, 1862 LXIII 355, pp. 3–4.

While Hudson implored his government to take whatever measures it could to remove the barriers preventing the unification of Rome with the rest of Italy, the inability of the British to do anything about the situation left them to watch anxiously as a crisis developed.

From the beginning of the Garibaldian adventure of 1862, the British were kept very well informed of events by their energetic and vigilant consul at Genoa, Montagu Brown. Between 9 and 12 March, Brown sent Hudson details regarding a large-scale meeting of the Garibaldian organisation which from that point onwards styled itself the *Comitato di Provvedimento per Roma e Venezia*. In a series of four despatches to the British Legation in Turin, Brown collected and transmitted information on the mood in Genoa, the activities of those attending the meeting, the programme they laid out, the course of action they decided upon, and the reaction of the local citizens to what was going on. As people arrived in Genoa from all over Italy, Brown provided highly informative accounts accompanied by plenty of political commentary. The meeting turned out to be so popular that many applications for tickets were refused, and a dense crowd was obliged to remain outside the meeting hall. From Brown's observations, Hudson judged that the Italian government was 'handled very roughly' by some of the speakers, and that deputies from the parliamentary opposition had travelled down from Turin to take part. Apparently, the crowd greeted Garibaldi with fanatical cheers, and when he left the horses were removed from his carriage and he was drawn through the streets by his supporters, 'saluted with cheers and clapping of Hands wherever he passed'. Brown pointed out that the moment was shared in 'not only by the riot' but also 'by the respectable part of the crowd'. The police abstained from any interference, which seemed the best course of action seeing as the government had permitted the meeting. Brown warned Hudson of the intention of the *Comitato* 'to extend throughout the whole of Italy its sphere of action', something he anticipated would be quickly achieved as 'the Meeting was attended by delegates from Branch Committees already established in all the principal Towns of the Ancient States of Sardinia, Lombardy, Tuscany and the Emilia'. In his judgement:

> So vast an organisation existing in the Country with great liberty of action and an almost irresponsible direction constitutes a very considerable … [danger] and if the views of the Association are at any time opposed to those of the Government the gravest consequences may result from their opposition.[81]

[81] Brown to Hudson, 10 March 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 11 March 1862, TNA, FO 45/22.

Brown forwarded Hudson a copy of the meeting's agenda, the proposed rules by which the new *Comitato* would be governed, and an outline of its aims. Its principle objectives were to make Rome the capital of Italy and to recall Mazzini from exile; the latter point Brown predicted would cause 'a lot of speaking'. The universal popularity of Garibaldi notwithstanding, Brown observed that not everybody in Genoa was interested in the meeting, 'the industrious Genoese' being inclined to look upon its delegates 'as unsettled and unsafe schemers' who had nothing to lose and who were 'consequently overdaring'.[82]

Nonetheless, Brown appears to have viewed the proceedings with apprehension, a feeling which was soon transferred through Hudson to the Foreign Office. Brown's news concerned Hudson, who worried about the possible effects of such a meeting taking place in a city bursting 'with the restless spirits of all Italy',[83] especially as Brown provided a list of the 20 democrats elected to the *Comitato* and stated 'many names will be known to you as agitators since 1849'. Besides setting aside 'the exaggerations of the democratic press about Garibaldi's power', Brown further concerned Hudson and the British government by warning that 'there are a very considerable number of men who would follow him anywhere and on any scheme'. Over the preceding few months, he had heard rumours of an expedition against the Italians' traditional enemy, Austria, in the Danubian basin; in the last few days, Brown had been 'positively assured', as was Hudson in Turin, that men had been enrolled for such a campaign. Assuring Hudson that he had used every means in his power 'to ascertain … [the] truth', Brown lamented that he could not find anyone who had received the offer to enlist, nor did he believe any office or persons at Genoa were actively engaged in the enrolment. However, he did not wish to convey the impression that such reports were 'wholly unfounded', nor that things were 'in a perfectly quiet state', nor that it was unlikely that an expedition might 'from one day to the other be set on foot'. Brown referred to the worrying number of 'idle' young men in and around Genoa who would be very ready to take up service of any sort, and a great number of 'hotheaded' and ambitious men who had talked and written themselves into a 'violent state of excitement'. Brown was aware of the presence

[82] Brown to Hudson, 11 March 1862, extract in Hudson to Russell, 12 March 1862, TNA, FO 45/22.

[83] Hudson to Russell, 14 March 1862, TNA, FO 45/22.

in Genoa of the *Carabinieri Genovesi*, who had served with Garibaldi in Sicily in 1860 and numbered some 120; all were 'tried and brave men', who 'would follow him to the death'. In addition, there were also present several hundred men from other revolutionary societies, including the Polish exiles of the *Accademia Polacca*. Brown had no doubt that, with Garibaldi as leader, little time would be necessary to prepare plenty of men and arms for an expedition, or that as soon as the right word was given, volunteers would rally to the cause from all over Italy.[84]

This news prompted Lord John Russell to state that the aims of British foreign policy were 'to see the independence of Italy maintained, and the peace of Europe preserved'. Irrespective of his doubts about their value, Russell expressed satisfaction at hearing that the new Italian prime minister proposed to enforce the law against all disturbers of order and organisers of clandestine expeditions, and that his government was determined to maintain peace with neighbouring countries. The foreign secretary states that the British government was pleased to hear that Italian policy continued to pursue the aim of making Rome the national capital, acknowledging that the southern provinces would never yield a cheerful obedience to a government seated at Turin, and that the repeated activities of armed bodies funded by the Papacy and the exiled Bourbon king would always prevent 'the consolidation of that unity which Italy so much desires'.[85] Anxiously, Russell enquired of Hudson whether the Rattazzi government had contemplated taking any steps for the better elucidation of the Law of Public Meetings in Italy, urging the Italian administration that 'with proper vigilance' the preparation of expeditions with ships and men armed for purposes hostile to a foreign power 'can be, and ought to be, prevented'. He warned the Italians that should any volunteer expeditions land in Austrian territory having departed from Italian ports, Vienna would hold the king of Italy responsible.[86] His efforts succeeded in securing from Rattazzi a declaration that 'every thing that can be done shall be done to prevent any such expeditions from leaving the Coast of Italy'.[87]

[84] Brown to Hudson, 12 March 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 14 March 1862, TNA, FO 45/22.

[85] Russell to Hudson, 14 March 1862, TNA, FO 170/99.

[86] Russell to Hudson, 17 March 1862, TNA, FO 170/99.

[87] Hudson to Russell, 25 March 1862, TNA, FO 45/22.

In the midst of fears for relations between Italy and Austria, the foreign secretary stepped up his ongoing attempts to finding an accord between Italy and France over the Roman Question. Russell impressed on the British ambassador at Paris his belief that it was impossible for a united Italy to be governed from the remoteness of Turin, suggesting that such was their disaffection with the government based in Piedmont that the southern provinces would be willing obey one based at Rome.[88] Moreover, Russell wished to stress to the French the dangers of France making itself unpopular in Italy, the inability of any Italian government to control the Mazzinians, the constant prospect of war, and the readiness of Britain to cooperate in finding a peaceful solution to the problem.[89] Russell had proposed on several occasions, privately and more publicly, a solution to which he now turned again: the Italians might occupy the left bank of the Tiber, leaving the right bank and the Vatican, together with its hinterland and the port of Civitavecchia, to the French. He knew, however, that while such a plan would have been acceptable to the Italians as a temporary solution, it was not so to the French; Paris would have preferred to make Rome a Hanseatic town, a proposal equally unacceptable to the Italians. Of these two schemes, the Italian prime minister underlined that there could be no hope of peace or contentment in Italy until Rome became the national capital, but Rattazzi showed himself quite ready to accept the British solution as a temporary measure.[90] In the absence of any agreement, however, the signs of restlessness in Italy became increasingly manifest. During the spring, Garibaldi embarked upon a tour of northern Italy. From Lord Cowley in Paris, it was clear that the tour had caused objection and protest in France, prompting the French government to demand that Garibaldi return home.[91] Russell concurred that Garibaldi's tour was 'a proceeding of a most objectionable kind':

> If anything serious is in contemplation it is obvious that Italy alone could not attempt to take Venice from the Austrians nor Rome from the French, with any prospect of success. If on the other hand these proceedings mean only empty menace they are unworthy of the dignity of any independent Kingdom. These great matters cannot be settled by mere resolutions of enthusiastic crowds. They require the concert of Cabinets and the patience of the people for their solution.[92]

[88] Russell to Cowley, 19 March 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 568.
[89] Russell to Cowley, 17 March 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 566.
[90] Hudson to Russell, 25 March 1862, TNA, FO 45/23.
[91] Cowley to Russell, 1 April 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 572–3.
[92] Russell to Hudson, 2 April 1862. TNA, FO 170/99.

Russell's frustration at the rejection of the British plan was evident, although he still expressed his sympathy for the Italians telling his ambassador to France that he would have no concern in garrotting the pope.[93]

By this stage the preparations in Genoa for a volunteer expedition were reaching worrying proportions. Consul Brown reported the *Carabinieri Genovesi* now numbered over 2000 men, their numbers swollen further by the presence of the Polish refugees. Furthermore, Brown reported the volunteers to be openly engaged in training for some future expedition, and that they had received supplies of clothing from Turin.[94] Rumours as to their intentions varied wildly, with obvious speculation focusing on Austria's Venetian provinces and the Dalmatian coast, besides a suggestion that Garibaldi might lead them to Greece to topple the autocratic King Otto and replace him with Vittorio Emanuele's second son, Prince Amedeo of Savoy. An anxious British foreign secretary urged Rattazzi 'to keep his eye upon these men, and to take care that no transports are provided to take them to invade other Countries'.[95] The Italian government did quite the opposite, however, encouraging Garibaldi to prepare his expedition. His tour of northern Italy, however, raised far more public excitement than Rattazzi had bargained for, the wild hysteria with which he was greeted in every town making it embarrassingly clear that his popularity dwarfed that of Italy's leaders. The prospect of the hero sparking a war against a foreign power, and the government's inability to influence his plans or to control his movements, led the Rattazzi ministry to shy away from its covert association with him. When a band of 100 *Garibaldini* led by one of the general's closest deputies set out to march into the Austrian Tyrol, an unnerved Rattazzi ordered them to be arrested at Sarnico.[96] When they were later shot for attempting to escape from the police, Garibaldi was disgusted with the government.[97] The Rattazzi administration was now

[93] Russell to Cowley, 5 April 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 574.

[94] Brown to Hudson, 26 April 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 28 April 1862, TNA, FO 45/23.

[95] Russell to Hudson, 7 May 1862, TNA, FO 170/100.

[96] The British government's understanding of the events was deepened by Hudson's transmission of a copy of the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* containing a report by the local prefect on the arrests at Brescia, which was published in the form of a blue book for the digestion of parliament; see Hudson to Russell, 16 May 1862, and Hudson to Russell, 4 June 1862, in *Correspondence respecting Arrests in Brescia*, Parliamentary Papers, 1862 LXIII 455, pp. 1–6.

[97] G. W. Martin, *The Red Shirt and the Cross of Savoy: The Story of Italy's Risorgimento, 1748–1871* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), pp. 660–1.

severely tarnished in the eyes of the Great Powers by the admission that it had been backing him, and in the eyes of the people by now abandoning him.

Far from being deterred by the failure of their attempt on the Tyrol, however, Garibaldi and his partisans continued their agitation. Hudson noted that they were unconcerned for their own safety, and angry with the timidity of Rattazzi's government in pursuing solutions to the great questions facing Italy; they now hoped to cause trouble for both the French and Italian governments, by bringing about a war from which they hoped Italy would win both Rome and Venice. With radical and reactionary activists against fanning the flames of discord in Italy, Hudson was sufficiently concerned to appeal to his government to put pressure on the French to abandon Rome:

> Some time ago I had the honour to point out to Your Lordship that the continued occupation of Rome by the French instead of by the legitimate protectors of the Pope, the Italians, would assist the revolutionary schemes of the extreme parties in Italy, and I fear that these schemes will gain in strength and consistency unless the Italians be placed in possession of, at least, the left bank of the Tiber which would leave to Italy and the Pope as much of Rome as is necessary for each.[98]

At the same time the foreign secretary received similar confirmation of the need to resolve the Venetian Question, when the secretary of the British Embassy in Vienna, Julian Fane, visited Venice on leave. Fane wrote of how the Italian sentiment of the people of the Venetian provinces was beyond any doubt, the constant topic of conversation among the local people being Italy and Vittorio Emanuele.[99] The British ambassador at Vienna, Lord Bloomfield, continued subtly to advocate the cession of Venice,[100] while the British government continued its efforts to shore up the Kingdom of Italy's precarious international position by campaigning for its official recognition by Prussia and Russia, the two Great Powers not directly affected by the Roman or Venetian Questions.

[98] Hudson to Russell, 1 June 1862, TNA, FO 45/23.
[99] Fane to Russell, 14 May 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 578–80.
[100] Bloomfield to Russell, 15 May 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 580.

The British had first broached this subject in Berlin and St Petersburg without success early in the year.[101] After Hudson had accompanied the Italian king on a visit to Naples during the spring of 1862, providing his government with a very positive report on the impact of unification on the provinces of central Italy, Russell forwarded a copy of his account to Lord Loftus, the British ambassador to Prussia. Loftus took the opportunity of an informal but timely visit by Ricasoli to Berlin to pass it in turn to Count Bernsdorff, the Prussian foreign minister, in the hope that he might show it to his king.[102] When the Italian government made a declaration to the Tsarist regime in St Petersburg that Italy would neither 'employ the agencies of revolutionary propaganda abroad' nor 'encourage the formation of armed bodies of refugees'—including Poles—the Russian government decided to open formal diplomatic relations with Turin.[103] Shortly afterwards, Bernsdorff announced that the Prussian government would do likewise.[104] With the Kingdom of Italy now enjoying a more legitimate position in international affairs, the British could take satisfaction that its position had acquired a greater legality among the Great Powers.

Nonetheless, these achievements did nothing to improve the predicament of the Rattazzi government. Its reluctance and failure to deal with Garibaldi had allowed him to sail to Sicily, where he was now completely beyond control of the government, and where a serious crisis was developing. The British consular staff in the island monitored his progress, and the concerns of the Foreign Office regarding his influence were confirmed when he gave a forceful speech to the National Guard in Palermo. Declaring that wishes alone were not sufficient to release Italy's Roman and Venetian 'brethren' from foreign rule, Garibaldi spoke out against the 'Pope-King' and the French emperor's 'false pretence' of guarding him. He condemned the weakness of the Italian government, calling upon every man to 'gird on his sword' in the last struggle for Italy and Vittorio Emanuele.[105] With considerable understatement, Hudson

[101] For Prussia see Loftus to Russell, 11 January 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 515–16; for Russia see Napier to Russell, 19 January 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 523–6.

[102] Loftus to Russell, 14 June 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 590–1.

[103] Although they had strategic motives; Napier to Russell, 30 June 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 593–6.

[104] Loftus to Russell, 5 July 1862, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 597–601.

[105] Goodwin to Hudson, 6 July 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 12 July 1862, TNA, FO 45/24.

described this state of affairs to be 'unsatisfactory', admitting that the future filled him with apprehension. He observed that the hero remained as popular as ever, and that red flannel from which the shirts of his volunteers of 1860 had been made was being bought up all over the country. The Garibaldian committees were in no short supply of funds, nor were they in short supply of volunteers.[106]

While the full text of Garibaldi's rousing speech was eventually reported by *The Times* in London,[107] the British consular service throughout Italy excelled in providing Hudson and the British government with prompt and extensive reports on the activities of his supporters. Garibaldi had embarked upon a tour of Sicily, visiting the interior as well as the fortress towns of Syracuse, Trapani, and Girgenti (Agrigento). Wherever he went, he spoke out against the government, the temporal power of the pope, and the French emperor. By the end of July, Consul Goodwin informed Hudson that some 1500 adventurers were assembled at Corleone and were being everyday increased by streams of men from Palermo and Catania.[108] A steady flow of volunteers from the mainland ports of Italy was increasing the size of Garibaldi's irregular army. The British consul at Livorno even reported that a landing had been attempted near the Roman frontier, but that the authorities had despatched a unit of Bersaglieri to halt the action. The local prefecture was beset by parents seeking to prevent their underage offspring from departing, and requested the interference of the consul owing to the likelihood that British steamers would be used to provide passage to Sicily.[109] Young men were departing Livorno at a rate of 200 per day,[110] while the British vice-consul at Ancona also reported men to have departed (by land) for Sicily.[111] In Messina, some 1000 volunteers had amassed, and a royal proclamation warning against

[106] Goodwin to Hudson, 15 July 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 20 July 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[107] *The Times*, 17 July 1862.

[108] Hudson to Russell, 31 July 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[109] Macbean to Hudson, 20 July 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 2 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[110] Macbean to Hudson, 2 August 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 5 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[111] Gaggiotti to Hudson, 4 August 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 8 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

participation in the movement was torn down.[112] An angry demonstration took place outside the French consulate in Genoa, accompanied by cries of 'Roma o morte' and 'Viva Garibaldi'.[113]

As the volunteer force continued to grow, Consul Goodwin reported that some successful measures were taken by the local authorities to halt the publication of Garibaldian newspapers and to prevent arriving volunteers from joining Garibaldi at Corleone.[114] As if to offer encouragement, Hudson was instructed to congratulate the Italian interior minister on his government's 'praiseworthy conduct' in not allowing Garibaldi to make expeditions,[115] but nothing was done to prevent him from continuing to tour or speak to the crowds. When a well-known campaigner asked Garibaldi where he intended to go, the hero replied 'Rome'.[116] Soon afterwards, it became known that he had chartered five steamers to convey his force from Sicily to the Italian mainland.[117] At the end of August, Garibaldi crossed the Strait of Messina accompanied by 800 followers, to land in Calabria, the Italian navy having permitted them to sail unopposed.[118] Orders were sent from Turin for Colonel Pallavicino to intercept Garibaldi in Calabria and 'to attack and destroy him if he offers battle'.[119] On 29 August, the Bersaglieri confronted the volunteers in a minor skirmish at Aspromonte, in the toe of Italy. Garibaldi refused to order his men to fire on Italian soldiers and surrendered, being wounded in the process, and taken prisoner.

The events on Aspromonte brought to a head a growing crisis of British confidence in the Italian situation. In mid-August, Hudson rightfully predicted that whoever won the dispute—Garibaldi or the Rattazzi government—'the evil to Italy' would be 'great'.[120] He was right. The tragic rift

[112] Rickards to Hudson, 4 August 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 8 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[113] Brown to Hudson, 4 August 1862, copy in Hudson to Russell, 8 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[114] Hudson to Russell, 7 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[115] Hudson to Russell, 8 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[116] Goodwin to Hudson, 8 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25, copy in Hudson to Russell, 12 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[117] Hudson to Russell (telegram), 12 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[118] Hudson to Russell, 26 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

[119] G. W. Martin, *The Red Shirt and the Cross of Savoy: The Story of Italy's Risorgimento, 1748–1871* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), p. 664.

[120] Hudson to Russell, 14 August 1862, TNA, FO 45/25.

between the liberator of southern Italy and his country's government brought about Rattazzi's downfall, and tarnished the reputation of Vittorio Emanuele.[121] The reputation of the Italian monarchy also suffered in Britain; Vittorio Emanuele had admitted to Hudson that Garibaldi had been acting under royal orders, but that he had added something of his own to them which resulted in the disaster.[122] Above all, though, the British continued to regard the intransigence of Paris and Vienna over the Roman and Venetian Questions as the real source of Italy's problems. While Garibaldi was on the loose in Sicily, Pope Pius IX had alluded to the fact that he might need to abandon Rome and seek refuge under British protection. This had provoked Russell into offering a typically excitable condemnation of the French occupation of Italy's natural capital, and to propose that the pontiff be offered asylum in Malta while some alternative arrangement were made for Rome. The passing of the Garibaldian crisis removed—for the time being, at least—the ironic prospect of the head of the Roman Catholic Church having to avail himself of protection afforded by the world's leading Protestant power. Although the British continued to lay the blame for the plight of the Kingdom of Italy at the door of Napoléon III of France, the sequence of events leading up to the tragedy of Aspromonte highlighted the fact that there was something very wrong with the outcome of the Risorgimento. When Garibaldi was shot in the ankle, he incurred a wound from which he would never quite recover; the same might be said of the international prestige of the Italian state.

[121] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 60–1.

[122] D. Mack Smith, *Italy and its Monarchy* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 13.

CHAPTER 4

Shaping Italy: British Efforts to Restrain Italy, 1862–66

While Garibaldi was on the loose in Sicily during the summer of 1862, Lord John Russell, who had expended so much energy attempting to formulate possible solutions to the Roman Question, observed that there was no early prospect of the Emperor Napoléon III withdrawing his troops from Rome, as 'Garibaldi furnishes the French Govt with too good an excuse for staying'.[1] Garibaldi's activities, and the conduct of the Rattazzi government during the Italian crisis of 1862, made the British anxious over not only the unstable condition of the Kingdom of Italy, but also the potential for its incompleteness to cause problems in international affairs. Lord Cowley, the British ambassador at Paris, advised the foreign secretary that Russell's restless attempts to induce the French to evacuate Rome 'caused difficulties instead of removing them' and advised him in the aftermath of Aspromonte to desist from such intervention.[2] Moreover, Queen Victoria complained frequently of 'the want of dignity' in Britain's efforts.[3] In the context of Aspromonte, Russell was obliged to admit that it was beyond his capacity to resolve the Roman Question, at least for the time

[1] Russell to Palmerston, 16 August 1862, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/691-753.

[2] Russell to Palmerston, 16 September 1862, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/691-753.

[3] Russell to Palmerston, 19 September 1862, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/691-753.

O. J. Wright, *Great Britain and the Unifying of Italy*, Britain and the World, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59397-9_4

being. In September 1862, he considered asking his nephew Odo if, through his role as the unofficial British representative to the Holy See, he might be able 'to induce the Pope to leave Rome for a time & go to Malta—small chance I fear'.[4] After that, the British finally left the matter alone.

A Change in Representation

During the course of 1863, two changes in personnel brought a change in the nature of the British relationship with Italy. Early in the year, the brief Farini ministry, which had replaced that of Rattazzi after Aspromonte, was in turn replaced by an administration led by the competent and serious Bolognese politician Marco Minghetti. And so far as British representation in Italy was concerned, after a long residence at Turin which had caused him to witness at close hand some of the most momentous events of Italian unification, Sir James Hudson retired from the diplomatic service. He was replaced by Sir Henry Elliot, in a move which caused an outcry in the British press, which published rumours suggesting that Hudson had been pensioned off in order to create a job for the then-unemployed son-in-law of Lord John Russell. It appears that Hudson, who was quite a sensitive character and one who was certainly sentimental about his post in Italy, had declined the possibility of promotion to the prestigious British Embassy at Constantinople 1862, requesting that he be permitted to remain at Turin until eligible for his pension.[5] Russell acquiesced, and Hudson seems to have regarded himself thereafter as bound to resign in July 1863, apparently failing to consider that he could have stayed longer had he wished.[6] Russell's understandable eagerness to provide his unemployed son-in-law with a post notwithstanding, Hudson appears to have resigned on his own initiative without any official prompt.[7] As his departure from Turin approached, Russell paid tribute to Hudson's achievements while taking a swipe at the French: 'Your career has always

[4] Russell to Palmerston, 22 September 1862, Broadlands Papers, Hartley, PP/GC/RU/691-753.

[5] Russell to Elliot, 10 October 1863, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/15A, later in *The Times*, 28 October 1863.

[6] Copy of Hudson to Elliot, 7 September 1863, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/14F.

[7] Russell to Elliot, 10 October 1863, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/15A, later in *The Times* on 28 October 1863.

been a useful one, & in Italy a glorious one—you have won your battles of Magenta & Solferino & have asked for no Savoy or Nice in return'.[8] Hudson left Turin in August 1863, although he remained in Italy for the rest of his life, taking up a position as principal director of the Florence Land and Public Works Company, and eventually marrying his mistress Signora Eugenia upon the death of her husband many years later.[9] He must certainly have regretted his decision to retire when it became clear that his departure was not forced, although during his last year his relationship with the Italian king had suffered on account of his 'hostility' to the prime minister Rattazzi.[10] He maintained his interest in Italian affairs, corresponding in later years with the British envoy in Florence, as well as other diplomatic personages.

The primary reason that so many Italophiles in Britain were horrified to see the man whom they believed to have done so much to advance the cause of Italian unity apparently pushed aside was that Italian unification remained precarious and incomplete. Combined with this was a widespread suspicion that Sir Henry Elliot's elevation was little more than blatant Liberal Party nepotism and the placing of Russell family interests ahead of those of Italy. Elliot's rapid elevation through the diplomatic ranks did indeed owe more than a little to the favours of his Liberal sponsors. He was a son of the Earl of Minto, who had been despatched by Palmerston to warn Italian governments of the danger of not introducing reforms in 1847 and, as a young man, had obtained a job in the Foreign Office after his father had gone to see the foreign secretary; by his own admission, 'party politics entered a good deal into diplomatic appointments', and it was by 'the merest chance' that he entered the diplomatic profession, it being 'about the last that would have been deliberately chosen' for him.[11] Elliot's rise through the diplomatic ranks was remarkable in an age when professional criteria were becoming increasingly important.[12] Following a four-year sojourn in Italy, Elliot went on to be promoted to the prestigious post at Constantinople which Hudson had declined, where he has been described as having been too inclined to despise the (Tory)

[8] Russell to Hudson, 13 July 1863, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/14G.

[9] C. Hibbert, *Florence: The Biography of a City* (London: The Folio Society, 1997), p. 253; C. Lacaita, *An Italian Englishman: Sir James Lacaita KCMG 1813-95 Senator of the Kingdom of Italy* (London: Grant Richards, 1933), p. 261.

[10] Unaddressed note written in Elliot's hand, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/14G.

[11] H. G. Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences,* ed. G. Elliot (London: John Murray, 1922), pp. 2, 4.

[12] R. A. Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service 1815–1914* (Gerrard's Cross: Smythe, 1983), p. 153.

government to which he was accredited and the (Turkish) society within which he was supposed to circulate. To Kenneth Bourne, Elliot was a 'second-rate personality' who saw Russian plots everywhere and spent more 'ink and choler' reporting on his wife's dissatisfaction with their accommodation than on Ottoman affairs.[13] Towards the end of his career, Elliot was criticised by the then prime minister Benjamin Disraeli for his lethargy in reporting on the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876, appalling the British press and public, and resulting in him being accused of being a blind partisan of the Ottoman Empire.[14] Irrespective of his unfortunate reputation, Elliot was eminently qualified as a candidate for the Italian job. Considering the ongoing concern of the Liberal government for the stability and security of the Kingdom of Italy, it made sense to appoint the man who had restored diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies at Naples in 1859; he had also been sent twice to Greece in 1862 and 1863 in the hope of persuading King Otto to introduce a constitution and to encourage the modernisation of an oppressive regime.[15] Elliot knew Italy and the Mediterranean well; he was an astute observer of Italian affairs, and during his tenure of the British Legation to Italy, he performed his role effectively and sensitively.

The September Convention of 1864 and Its Consequences

The diligence of Sir Henry Elliot became truly apparent when the Minghetti government made a constructive attempt to resolve the Roman Question peacefully in 1864. The scheme proposed had originally been put forward by Napoléon III's foreign minister Édouard Thouvenel, who had been dismissed for being too sympathetic towards Italy in 1862, and had initially been discussed with Cavour.[16] Under the terms of this agreement, the French would finally remove their garrison from Rome in return for an Italian guarantee not to attack—and not to allow to be attacked—the

[13] K. Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Lord Stanley July 1866–July 1868* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1953), p. 12.

[14] See W. N. Medlicott, 'Vice Consul Dupuis' "Missing" Despatch of June 23, 1876', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 4, Iss. 1, (1932), pp. 38–48.

[15] G. Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh* (London: John Murray, 1963), p. 426.

[16] A. C. Jemolo, *Church and State in Italy 1850–1950*, trans. D. Moore (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), p. 29.

Eternal City. This apparent resolution of the Roman Question was achieved by Minghetti's administration, led as it was by a man known widely to favour regional devolution over the Piedmontese centralisation of Italy. In return for the removal of its troops from Rome, the French government demanded that Italy relocate its capital to somewhere more central, and Minghetti was happy to oblige. The Italian prime minister knew, however, that the move would be unpopular with the Piedmontese Establishment, and while negotiations were under way, he told neither the king nor even all his cabinet colleagues until the deal was done; when the news became public, an outraged Vittorio Emanuele demanded his resignation.[17] Thus Turin was condemned to endure the fate already suffered by Florence and Naples in 1860, and the Piedmontese who had benefited from Turin's status as the capital of Italy now faced a drop in property prices and the inevitable decline of business in the city. In addition, the city faced emotional damage from the cessation of its ancient status as the seat of the Savoy dynasty since the sixteenth century.

The British government welcomed this progress on a matter which had been dangerously volatile since 1860 and which had caused the Garibaldian crisis of 1862. In Turin, however, Elliot was deeply concerned about the unpopularity of the move. Privately he wrote to Russell of his horror to observe the intense 'hatred between the Piedmontese and the *foreigners* as they call the other Italians', a hatred that was especially noticeable at the royal court. Highlighting both the fragile state of the Italian kingdom and the hostility of an important portion of its population, Elliot commented:

> a large majority of the Piedmontese would prefer the disruption [inferring disintegration] of the kingdom to the change of capital, and they do not scruple to tell you so.[18]

The September Convention had been received with great popular outpourings of popular emotion which reflected negatively on the level of Italian national feeling in the old capital. The announcement of the

[17] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 62–3.

[18] Elliot to Russell, 23 September 1864 and 20 January 1865, cited in D. Mack Smith, *Italy and Its Monarchy* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 22–3.

agreement resulted in several days of violent and bloody protest, most of the damage being done when the Carabinieri opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators in the Piazza San Carlo, massacring protesters, harmless spectators, and even other Carabinieri alike. Elliot was on the spot just a few minutes after what he termed the 'September massacres', and appears to have been quite affected by the sight of the corpses. As a consequence he would for some months remain very conscious of the 'ill-humour' of the Turinese, who felt their interests were being subverted to the cause of Italy.[19] A couple of months later, Elliot wrote privately to his brother to complain about the weather in Turin; the 'cold raw rain' in the capital, a dark leaden sky above, and miserable filth below suggested to him that 'Turin is trying to show that it is not Italy.' After the Italian parliament voted to approve the change of capital by a huge majority, Elliot noted how the Piedmontese—excluding the disgruntled residents of Turin itself—were 'sore' at the rest of the country for having said 'so plainly it did not love them'.[20] The riots and the state of public opinion thereafter were both directly responsible for Elliot's recommendation of April 1865 that a British consulate should be located at Turin.[21]

Besides the violence created by the announcement of the September Convention, Elliot also observed its effect on the relationship between the people of Turin and their monarch. When the king went to the theatre on New Year's Day 1865, Elliot used the telegraph to inform London immediately of a public display of 'disapprobation' against the king, before writing a more detailed account some days later. The reception had in fact been better than expected under the circumstances, and Elliot noted how the protest came from a small number of individuals belonging almost exclusively to the upper classes.[22] He noted Vittorio Emanuele's irritation at the behaviour of the Turinese in return, but once the government had departed for Florence in 1865, Elliot reported that there was a mutual

[19] Elliot's eye-witness account of the aftermath of the massacre dominates the chapter of his memoirs concerned with his time as envoy extraordinary to Italy; Elliot, *Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences*, pp. 171–9.

[20] Elliot to Minto, 24 November 1864, NLS, Minto Papers, MS 12250.

[21] See O. J. Wright, 'British Representatives and the Surveillance of Italian Affairs, 1860–70', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2008), pp. 669–87.

[22] Elliot to Russell (telegram), 2 January 1862 and Elliot to Russell, 6 January 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.

regret between both the people and the king.[23] Still haunted by the carnage he had witnessed on the streets of Turin in 1864, Elliot appears to have been both concerned and disgusted by an event that had hit the city hard.[24] In April 1865, at almost exactly the same time as he recommended that the British government appoint a consul specifically to observe events in Turin, Elliot referred to the city as a dying capital.[25] What had happened to Naples after the fall of the Bourbons set the precedent for what he feared Turin might now experience; the reduction of Naples from a capital city to a provincial town had dragged its neighbouring provinces with it into financial decline, besides contributing towards the violent unrest of 1861. Disorder on the same scale was unlikely, but Elliot was nonetheless concerned.

More trouble was in store when the Chamber of Deputies received the report of an inquest into the 'September massacres'; the former prime minister Bettino Ricasoli defended the Minghetti government, arguing that it had broken no law and therefore was not liable to impeachment, and having been removed from power it could not face a vote of censure. After a full recognition of the services of Turin in the cause of the independence of Italy, Ricasoli proposed a successful resolution declaring a discussion of the report by the Italian parliament to be inadvisable. The news that the transfer of the capital was thus to take place without any censure of the government which had deviously negotiated it, and without any form of compensation for the loss of life which took place in Turin in September, sparked a resurgence of unrest.[26] For three nights in January, demonstrations took place in the streets of Turin. Elliot stated that the protest movement was more the work of a few unscrupulous leaders than a spontaneous outburst of the people, but he observed that there was a deep grievance that Italy's leaders appeared to care little for the consequences of what they had done. At first, the demonstrations were confined to noisy ovations outside the homes of such leaders as Ricasoli, and parades carried flags round the city uttering a 'strange mixture' of cries.[27] Elliot monitored these demonstrations for several nights, and while he noted

[23] Elliot to Russell, (undated) February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[24] Elliot to Russell, 9 February 1865, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/70.
[25] Elliot to Russell, 26 April 1865, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/70.
[26] Elliot to Russell, 24 January 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[27] Elliot to Russell, 28 January 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.

they were not 'formidable' in character, they created nonetheless some natural apprehension that something serious might occur. Strong detachments of the National Guard were kept under arms, and on several occasions the crowd was sufficiently imposing to induce the authorities to cause the trumpet to be sounded, a legal prerequisite to action. On each occasion, this had been sufficient to calm the situation, but matters became more serious when some malcontents attempted to deter guests from attending a royal ball. Elliot once more rushed to the telegraph to report that the mob generally satisfied itself with shouting, but occasionally flung stones and turned horses aside. Although no serious act of violence was attempted, some arrests were made of the instigators belonging to the clerical and old Piedmontese parties.[28] In a fuller despatch, he observed that both ladies and gentlemen were hooted and insulted, while projectiles broke carriage windows and struck some coachmen, although there was no outbreak of what he termed 'serious violence'.[29]

Some days later, Elliot enclosed an extract from the *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia* on the occurrences of the night of the king's ball, adding his understanding that the non-Piedmontese residents in the city were indignant at an attempt by the mob to blame them for the disgraceful proceedings. A large demonstration had taken place in the Piazza Castello, where hundreds of people ill-disposed towards the government or interested merely in causing disorder combined with a crowd drawn together by curiosity to hiss and hoot at the carriages of those invited to the ball before being successfully dispersed by the National Guard. In Elliot's opinion the scandal was great; the government had never supposed it possible that such an affront could be offered by a town like Turin to a royal fête attended not only by Italian dignitaries but also by representatives of foreign powers.[30]

Overall, the demonstrations and disturbances of the week never reached a scale which Elliot calculated to justify any fear of a serious anti-Italian popular movement, but they were a clear indication of the unhappy state of public opinion in Turin. It was well known how the old Piedmontese aristocracy had never been happy with the new Italy, having been reconciled to it only slowly, and continuing to view the other provinces as

[28] Elliot to Russell (telegram), 31 January 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[29] Elliot to Russell, 30 January 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[30] Elliot to Russell, 3 February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.

annexations to Piedmont. The change of capital was therefore received as a blow, and they saw Piedmont becoming a province and Turin a provincial town as a result of the unification to which they were indifferent. Although most people took no part, Elliot warned that the disaffection was 'general and intense', and as such it would be a mistake to regard the state of affairs too lightly. At the other end of the scale, Elliot had heard rumours of an unlikely plan to reestablish the Kingdom of Sardinia under the son of the Duke of Genoa. Some Piedmontese were so disaffected with the Italian cause that they would accept a union with France, while others favoured a strange and even more unrealistic scheme whereby Piedmont would be united to the Swiss Republic. With the Mazzinians apparently working to keep discontent alive in the capital, matters would have been serious were it not for the fact that outside Turin, the rest of Piedmont was indifferent to the disturbances.[31] Vittorio Emanuele was so offended by the outbreak of discontent that he departed early from Turin for his new capital. Elliot followed the ongoing relationship between the king and the city of Turin closely, and was interested to see that when the municipality of Turin voted to present the monarch with an address expressing their regret at the occurrences, the king's continued irritation led to him initially refusing to receive them.[32] When Elliot himself arrived in Florence, he noted disagreement between members of the government as to whether or not the king should receive the deputation.[33] When the king eventually did agree to receive it, Alfonso La Marmora, the new Italian prime minister who opposed the decision, responded by travelling to Naples to avoid the occasion.[34] Once the king had left Turin, expressions of regret poured in from all over Piedmont at the occurrences which induced the monarch to abandon his ancient capital prematurely, evidence which Elliot took to confirm his long-held belief that the discontent was purely confined to the city of Turin itself.[35]

Despite his concern over what he witnessed taking place in Turin, Elliot was sure that the events were isolated from the rest of Italy. His views were no doubt influenced by his links with members of the British consular

[31] Elliot to Russell, 3 February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[32] Elliot to Russell (telegram), 8 February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[33] Elliot to Russell, 13 February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[34] Elliot to Russell, 16 February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[35] Elliot to Russell, 22 February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.

service. Having been greatly disturbed by the climate created by the transfer of the capital, Elliot immediately conducted an enquiry of his own into public opinion elsewhere in the country. Within ten days of the signing of the convention between France and Italy in September 1864, Elliot sent a circular telegram to the occupants of the main British consular offices throughout Italy, instructing them to provide him with information on how the news had been received. The replies were prompt, enabling Elliot to compile a report which provided the British government with a snapshot of the state of public opinion at that point throughout the Italian peninsula and islands.[36]

One of the most immediate answers to Elliot's request came from Vice-Consul Gaggiotti in Ancona, who acknowledged it with a response which would prove quite typical of those which followed. While the people of his city entirely disapproved of the rioting which took place in Turin following publication of the news, public feeling in Ancona and Marche was generally in favour of the convention, anticipating that it might lead to the settlement of the Roman Question. At the same time, Gaggiotti reported that the change of capital from Turin to Florence was welcomed, 'as the people here are anything but pleased with the present Piedmontese predominance'.[37] This proved a common response in the replies which accompanied Gaggiotti's from other parts of Italy. The British consul at Livorno, Alexander Macbean, explained that the news of the convention was considered by many Tuscans as 'too good to be true'; it was received with 'general satisfaction' and was regarded as a 'decided advance towards the solution of the Roman Question'. Macbean also mentioned that some in Livorno anticipated that before the French troops departed Rome, as scheduled to happen within two years, events might in any case conspire to place the King of Italy in the Eternal City. Furthermore, the decision to transfer the Italian capital to Florence had been well received in Tuscany even before it became clear that the new seat of government would be located in that region. While the choice of the Tuscan city might be 'conducive directly or indirectly to the advantage of the Tuscan Provinces', there was a general impression that rule from Turin had resulted in the 'Piedmontisation' rather than the 'Italianisation' of the kingdom. The

[36] Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

[37] Gaggiotti to Elliot, 26 September 1864, copy in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

decision to change the capital raised Tuscan hopes of creating a more 'Italian' regime. However, satisfaction was not universal. Constitutionalists in Tuscany feared the existence of a secret article which might bar an Italian army from going to Rome, while republicans denounced it as an abandonment of Italian claims to Rome altogether. The clerical party was unhappy because the arrangement hinted at French abandonment of the temporal power, while reactionaries who believed the French emperor had pledged himself to establish an Italian confederation and restore the dukes to central Italy saw it as a bar to the accomplishment of that aspiration.[38]

From Naples, Consul-General Bonham commented that the news did not call for any expression of popular opinion. While journals discussed the subject and the more intelligent 'appear to be pleased they look forward to the removal of the Capital to Florence as a step towards Rome', the move was in any case welcomed because the new location was much more central. Some still believed Naples should have been considered, but on the whole the scheme was liked since it provided the prospect of alleviating the jealousy felt by the Neapolitans towards the Piedmontese. There prevailed a general expectation that sooner or later Rome would be Italian, and some had undertaken to call a public meeting to debate the matter.[39] Similarly, British consular officers made it clear that the news was also received with guarded optimism in the troubled island of Sicily. The upper classes of Palermo awaited the text of the convention before casting an opinion, while the lower orders rejoiced at the transfer of the capital. There was ill-blood between the Turinese and the Palermitans, General Govone having called the Sicilians savages during his military campaign on the island in 1861, and no doubt also as a result of the brutal rule of the island that followed. Indeed, there was a hope in Palermo that the transfer would lead to some change in policy, most notably the suspension of the hated military levy.[40] On the other side of Sicily, Vice-Consul Rickards pre-empted Elliot's request for information, informing the British Legation that the news had been greeted in Messina by 'a popular and joyful demonstration' which saw a band march through the main streets playing

[38] Macbean to Elliot, 27 September 1864, copy in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

[39] Bonham to Elliot, 26 September 1864, copy in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

[40] Goodwin to Elliot, 27 September 1864, copy in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

patriotic anthems.[41] Later, Rickards added that September Convention 'met with general favour and approbation; all classes appearing satisfied that a decided step has been taken towards the solution of the Roman Question'.[42]

In the island of Sardinia, which had been under Piedmontese rule for much longer than the rest of Italy, Consul Craig reported that the people of Cagliari approved 'cordially' of the transfer of the capital to Florence. There, the upper classes appeared to view the move as 'an important advance towards the object of their ardent wishes': the future possession of Rome as the capital of Italy. Revealingly the lower classes appeared to Craig:

> to rejoice at the prospect of being emancipated from a Governmental connection with Turin, and the Piedmontese, a place and people with whom the Sardes never reciprocated any very friendly feeling.

These views were particularly poignant considering Sardinia had been ruled from Turin since 1720, and the attitude of the people was not encouraging considering that the island had been united with Piedmont in a 'perfect fusion' since 1847. The Sardinian experience of longer-term relations with Turin was also evident in the prevailing opinion in the island that Italy could not be governed from that remote location; interestingly, however, this was not on account of the city's geographical position, so much as the fact that that 'all else' had changed in Italy. Echoing opinions in other Italian cities, these circumstances made the Sardinians inclined to understand the reality of Italian unification in terms of the aggrandisement of the Kingdom of Sardinia rather than the creation of a state that was genuinely new and unified. For this reason, and with a view to achieving 'the satisfaction of all parties and the extinction of this source of jealousy', the Sardinians regarded it as necessary to reverse the appearance of Turin as having conquered the rest of Italy by instead showing 'Italy as having conquered Turin'.[43]

[41] Rickards to Elliot, 24 September 1864, extract in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

[42] Rickards to Elliot, 26 September 1864, copy in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

[43] Craig to Elliot, 3 October 1864, copy in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

By far the most detailed response came from Consul Brown in Genoa, the regional capital of Liguria, which, like Sardinia, had been a territorial possession of Piedmont prior to 1861. The Genoese had not welcomed the suppression of their ancient republic at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and later suffered when the city's status as a free port was removed and Piedmontese customs barriers imposed.[44] Genoa had provided the base from which Garibaldi prepared and launched his expedition of 1862. During the 1850s, Genoa had been one of Europe's greatest centres for the publication of democratic propaganda, and for several years after the unifying of most of Italy as a monarchy, the city remained the informal headquarters of the democratic movement.[45] But Brown's report revealed the considerable unpopularity of the Piedmontese in the city. The news excited lively interest in all classes, but it did not give rise to any public demonstration of feeling or to any disturbance of public tranquillity and order. Brown judged that majority feeling in the Ligurian city was that it was good to move out of the 'status quo'; had it stood alone the convention would have been received with almost 'unqualified satisfaction', but accompanied by the change of capital, 'it is looked upon as a great advantage gained for the Italian Cause'. Brown went on to observe that people were considerably in the dark as to the precise terms of the agreement and its possible effect upon the country's chance of realising its 'cherished' dream of possessing Rome. On the understanding that the September Convention had not been the abandonment of the national ambition to make Rome the capital of Italy, the Genoese appeared to accept it readily; Brown anticipated that were it otherwise 'every Genoese'—with the exception of the reactionary *Partito Nero* who feared the withdrawal of French protection from the pope, and the *Partito d'Azione* who believed or pretended to think the government had undertaken to renounce Rome—would denounce it, with possible implications for the peace of the city. In Genoa, the general supposition was that the government was compelled to consent to a change of capital in order to obtain Napoléon III's agreement to remove French troops from Rome, though some people believed the idea originated within Italy itself. Either way, the general

[44] H. Hearder, *Italy in the Age of Risorgimento 1790–1870* (London & New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 53–4.

[45] C. M. Lovett, *The Democratic Movement in Italy 1830–1876* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 175.

belief was that the advantages of the convention more than counterbalanced the disadvantages of a *provisional* change of capital, and the choice of temporary capital was regarded with 'great indifference' in a district where there was a decided tendency 'to accuse the Turinese of showing a paltry and selfish spirit in their present attitude'.[46]

While some consular officials clearly reported the public reaction to the news in greater detail than others—and in Brown's case with a report resembling a full diplomatic despatch containing extensive political comment—it is clear that all the consular agents who received Elliot's circular instruction fulfilled the order promptly. The level of detail with which they responded allowed Elliot to paint a colourful picture of the state of public contentment in the new Italy, which the British government received well within a month of the signing of the agreement. When he took up residence in Florence some months later, Elliot added to this information by providing his own account of the 'highly satisfactory' condition of Tuscany and the modest satisfaction of its people at the elevation of their city. His impression of opinion in the new capital was similar to that of his consular colleagues elsewhere in Italy, in that it was expected the move would be beneficial to the whole country, which had hitherto appeared to be under the rule of the Piedmontese. Tuscan approval was, however, tempered by the fact that many people actually expected to lose from the change, as rents, food, and labour prices rose. Elliot made efforts to enquire whether the people believed the choice of Florence to be provisional or permanent, and found that while most believed Rome would become Italian, the considerable advantages of the Tuscan capital would become clear, and it would remain the seat of the government.[47] As a result, to complement Elliot's understanding that outside Turin public opinion was perfectly accepting of the change of capital, both he and the British government were presented with a comprehensive display of the unpopularity of Piedmont and the Piedmontese-dominated Italian government in the rest of the peninsula. By the halfway point of the 1860s, the general discontent of the Italian population with the domination of their state by the Piedmontese had become manifest throughout the peninsula and its

[46] Brown to Elliot, 26 September 1864, copy in Elliot to Russell, 4 October 1864, TNA, FO 45/59.

[47] Elliot to Russell, 17 February 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.

islands, which served to stimulate British policy towards the country as the prospect of war arose between Italy and Austria.

The successful acquisition and transmission of information regarding the September Convention, and coverage of the public reaction to it, provide evidence of Sir Henry Elliot's diligence. When General Menabrea visited Paris to negotiate and sign the deal with France, Elliot immediately enquired why the Italian was in Paris. On 12 September 1864, he was able to inform London of the Italian prime minister's reply; Minghetti explained that his colleague was there to carry out negotiations concerning the Roman Question, and that Italy's object was to secure the withdrawal of French troops from the Eternal City.[48] When the convention was signed on 15 September, Elliot was able to telegraph information concerning its contents to London almost immediately. Despite erroneously announcing that the agreement was 'on the point of being signed' at Paris, he accurately transmitted the essence of the arrangement:

> the French troops shall be withdrawn from Rome within two years. The capital of Italy [is] to be removed to Florence. The Italian government undertakes not to attack the Pope or allow him to be attacked.[49]

Elliot even followed this description with further despatches as more information became available. His ability to do so contrasts starkly with the silence maintained by his counterpart in Paris, where not a single mention of the convention was made before 19 September. The signing of the agreement coincided with a period of leave for the British ambassador to France, Lord Cowley, and it is possible that the lack of efficiency was due to the handing over of responsibilities to the temporary chargé d'affaires, William Grey. But it seems more likely, however, that the reason for this absence of information from the British Embassy to Paris was the imperial government's desire to control public knowledge of the situation. Although the French emperor was eager to withdraw his expensive occupying force from Roman soil, his government depended upon vital Roman Catholic support which might have been removed had he done so. Consequently, the Roman Question embarrassed the self-styled champion of nationalism,

[48] Elliot to Russell, 12 September 1864, TNA, FO 45/58.
[49] Elliot to Russell (telegram), 16 September 1864, TNA, FO 45/58.

and soured his relations with Italy for the rest of his reign.[50] The news remained a closely guarded secret in France until some days after the convention's signing, and when it was released it was done through the official press. Only then was Grey able to provide London with information on the matter, doing so mainly by forwarding newspaper cuttings.[51] Thus, when a government wanted to keep a development secret from foreign diplomats, it could do so, and no level of efficiency or any number of well-placed informants could compensate.

Britain, Italy, and the Austro-Prussian War

On the Italian side, this is nowhere more evident than in the build-up to the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. The Italians' determination to take part in the conflict combined with their friendship with Britain to ensure they became very secretive about their intentions when preparing to enter the conflict to obtain possession of Venice. The Italian government had no wish to upset the British, but after some of the lectures provided by Lord Russell since 1861, they can have been in little doubt about London's commitment to maintaining the peace of Europe. Had the Foreign Office been informed of Italy's intentions to launch a war against that other favourite of British foreign policy, the Austrian Empire, the British reaction could only have been negative. When the Italian general Govone visited Berlin to negotiate an anti-Austrian treaty with Prussia during the spring of 1866, the British were naturally suspicious. On this occasion, however, the Italians were not as open with their British friends as they had been over the September Convention. Elliot lamented that he could find 'but little information' regarding Govone's visit, which had been kept entirely secret in Florence.[52] Count Usedom, the Prussian representative to Italy, apparently told Elliot that his government could count on the immediate cooperation of Italy in the event of a war against Austria. In addition, the Italian prime minister was open in admitting that should some conflict break out between the two Great Powers, Italy fully intended to exploit the opportunity to acquire Venice either through war or through peace.

[50] J. P. T. Bury, *France 1814–1940*, 6th edn (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 96.

[51] Grey to Russell, 19 and 22 September 1864, TNA, FO 27/1534.

[52] Elliot to Clarendon, 29 March 1866, TNA, FO 45/85.

When rumours of a Prusso-Italian alliance circulated prematurely in Florence on 7 April, Elliot reported them and correctly stated they were erroneous.[53] But when they became accurate a day later, Elliot completely missed the event and remained in ignorance for some time afterwards. A week later, upon hearing rumours of an alternative pact with France, Elliot attached greater value to that prospect.[54] Despite admitting that the Italians had 'never made a mystery of their attitude towards Austria', he remained firm in the belief that Italy had no intention of starting a conflict.[55] While this may be interpreted as an indication that he was aware of their plan to fight only once Prussia had initiated the war, Elliot also wrote that Italy refrained from arming, that its army remained smaller than for many years, and that there was no concentration of troops near the Austrian frontier.[56] As a result, he does not appear to have believed in the prospect of Italian involvement in a war alongside Prussia. Perhaps he was well enough accustomed to the bombast of Vittorio Emanuele to disregard what he thought to be La Marmora's rhetoric, but Elliot was not alone in his scepticism over the existence of an aggressive Prusso-Italian alliance. While negotiations were under way, the British ambassador to Prussia, Lord Loftus, had written of his belief that the Prussian King Wilhelm I was unlikely to countenance a partnership with Italy, and that Otto von Bismarck was most likely seeking to profit from a 'shew [sic] of menace to Austria'.[57] Sometime after the signing of the secret treaty between Prussia and Italy, Loftus wrote that the Italian representative in Berlin, Count Barral, made 'a long face at the prospect of an arrangement between Austria and Prussia' which might avert war, but like Elliot in Italy, Loftus still believed that no official engagement existed between the two states.[58] Clearly neither the Italian nor the Prussian government wanted the British to know their plans.

During the period of negotiation, the most prolific informant on the subject was Lord Cowley, the British ambassador at Paris who had been unaware of the negotiations for the September Convention. A week before the signing of the Prusso-Italian accord, Cowley had been informed 'in

[53] Elliot to Clarendon, 7 April 1866, TNA, FO 45/86.

[54] Elliot to Clarendon, 14 April 1866, TNA, FO 45/86.

[55] Elliot to Clarendon, 14 April 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.

[56] Elliot to Clarendon, 26 April 1866, TNA, FO 45/86.

[57] Loftus to Clarendon, 31 March 1866, *Il problema Veneto e l'Europa 1859-1866: raccolta di documenti diplomatici a commemorare il centenario dell'unione di Venezia e del Veneto allo Stato Italiano*, ed. R. Blaas, N. Blakiston & G. Dethan, 3 vols. (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, 1966), Vol. 2, pp. 793–4.

[58] Loftus to Clarendon, 21 April 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 810.

strict confidence' that the Italians were being pressed by Prussia to sign 'an offensive and defensive alliance against Austria', and had sought French advice.[59] Thereafter, he appears to have become convinced that some kind of agreement did indeed exist between the two powers, and became increasingly frustrated at the inability of his colleagues in either Berlin or Florence to find out more about it. Just a couple of days after the formal signing of the pact, Cowley wrote personally to Elliot enquiring if he knew anything at all. The ambassador believed the 'chances of peace or war' depended upon the Italians, and that through being in Florence, Elliot would know better than anyone else.[60] Elliot was unable to help, and a month later Cowley wrote again, reiterating his frustration at not knowing the details of the agreement between Italy and Prussia. As British ambassador to France, he wanted to know more of the role of Napoléon III in the intrigue, but lamented that 'To find out the truth among so many lies seems almost impossible'.[61]

The best information the British government was able to come by regarding Italy's agreement with Prussia came eventually from Loftus in Berlin a full month after the signing of the treaty. Loftus wrote to London that for some time there had been various rumours of a 'treaty offensive and defensive' between Prussia and Italy, and erroneously stated that it had been signed at the end of March and ratified in mid-April. More importantly, Loftus was finally able to write that he had 'no doubt' an official agreement existed which provided for 'the eventualities of mutual succour'. Finally, a British representative managed to enlighten his government as to the essence of the secret treaty, which did indeed exist:

> As far as my informant knew, the Italian Government engaged that within three months of the date of the ratifications Italy would be prepared to support Prussia in the event of a war with Austria. Prussia on the other hand engaged that in the case that Italy was attacked by Austria to render her assistance. Both parties agreed not to conclude peace without their mutual concurrence.[62]

[59] Cowley to Clarendon, 2 April 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 794–5.
[60] Cowley to Elliot, 10 April 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 799.
[61] Cowley to Elliot, 8 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 860–1.
[62] Loftus to Clarendon, 9 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 865–6.

This, however, was not enough for Cowley, who was still hounding Elliot for information late in May. Rightly understanding the treaty to be more favourable to Prussia than to Italy, obliging the latter to fight for the former but not vice versa, he had also heard its duration was limited to three months. In his belief that the Italians held the keys to peace and war, Cowley vented his frustration on Elliot, asking, 'When are you going to open the ball?'[63]

Therefore, during April 1866—in stark contrast to the events of September 1864—Elliot found it impossible to acquire even vague information regarding the Italian government's commitments. At the end of that month, his anxiety was further demonstrated when the Austrians accused the Italians of massing troops near their mutual frontier, prompting the Italians to put their army on a war footing from 27 April. Elliot's desire to ascertain the truth of the Austrian allegations and the lack of any British correspondents in any of the cities near the Austro-Italian border and the famous Quadrilateral, prompted him to despatch his own secretary of legation to investigate. Edward Herries crossed the Apennines to Bologna, from where he convinced Elliot that it appeared 'very certain' that 'no concentration' of Italian troops had taken place. La Marmora admitted to Elliot that two cavalry regiments had been gradually moved north, corresponding with information he had been sent by the Vice-Consul Gaggiotti at Ancona. The information provided by Herries, La Marmora, and Gaggiotti persuade Elliot to write:

> Indeed the more I enquire the more I become convinced that there never has been & is not now the slightest intention on the part of the Italian Gov^{t} of disturbing the general peace by an attack upon Austria; although if a war had broken out in Germany they meant to take part in it and try to turn it to their own account.

On his visit, however, Herries does appear to have been surrounded by what Elliot termed 'clouds'. Herries was received by an Italian general who refused to give him any specific information but denied the allegations of troop movements, stating that there had been no increase of forces around Bologna and that none were being 'collected' in the direction of Ferrara. Even so, Herries admitted to doubting this; ordinary

[63] Cowley to Elliot, 22 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 927.

people he spoke to in the city informed him that some troops arrived every day, the most recent being a regiment of lancers from Imola. The visitor recorded that it was 'astonishing' how difficult it was to obtain accurate information as to matters which 'ought to be within the knowledge of everybody'. All he was able to glean was that sundry detachments had passed through Bologna, but concluded it was 'sufficiently evident' that no concentration of Italian forces had taken place; what did pass through usually used the two o'clock night train to avoid detection. Herries also met the deputy Emanuele Marliani, who declared that no military movements had been heard of in the area. Austrian accusations against Italy were false, and it was Austria which intended to attack Italy rather than the contrary. Marliani did however observe that Italian troops were in a state of readiness for immediate operation, and could take the field in two to three days. One of Marliani's friends had heard that across the Po, the Austrian forces bore a 'most menacing character' and agreed that there would be an Austrian attack upon Italy. From his summer residence in Milan, Dominic Colnaghi, the British consul for the North of Italy, informed Elliot that while defensive preparations at Piacenza and Cremona had been under way for some time, his intelligence seemed 'fully to confirm the non-concentration of Italian troops up to the present date'. Colnaghi had also heard that the Austrian authorities over the frontier had ordered Italians working on their railways to remove their families to Italy, and that something was 'fully expected' on 1 May. On the other hand, Colnaghi observed that there had been no considerable increase of Austrian forces on the other side of the frontier other than defensive measures, information which Elliot noted as contradicting reports from Bologna that the Austrians' preparations in the Quadrilateral were menacing.[64] Thus, while Elliot's ability to acquire information regarding the September Convention had contrasted with that of the chargé d'affaires in Paris in 1864, he was found floundering when the Italians signed their treaty with Prussia and began their preparations for war in 1866. On the former occasion, the Italian government may have been happier than the French to share its information with the British diplomat, but as the storm clouds gathered in 1866, it was the British ambassador at Paris who was better able to inform London of the development.

[64] Extracts from the correspondence of Herries and Colnaghi enclosed; Elliot to Clarendon, 30 April 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.

The ability of British representatives to procure accurate information on affairs in Italy was important because it had a distinct influence on British policy regarding Italy during the first half of the 1860s, while the pro-Italian Liberals were in power and Lords Russell and Clarendon at the Foreign Office. Their actions throughout demonstrate the usual British reluctance to become involved in continental affairs, but at certain moments their attitude and actions towards various aspects of the Italian Question reveal the impact news from diplomats and consuls could have. As has been shown, the events of 1862 persuaded Russell to urge the Italian government to restrain Garibaldi, and to pursue peaceful solutions to the Venetian and Roman Questions. The British distrust of Italian leaders which resulted from the Garibaldian crisis had prompted the British to abandon their own diplomatic efforts to complete Italy's unification. In the aftermath of the damaging events of 1862, the news provided by British representatives concerning opposition to the Italian government in the South, the different reactions inside and outside Turin to the transfer of the capital, and frequent Italian sabre-rattling over Venice may well have made the British government yet more cautious in its enthusiasm for the Piedmontese leadership of Italy.

In addition to the British retreat—at Palmerston's insistence and to Russell's frustration—from diplomatic efforts in Italian affairs precipitated by the Garibaldian expedition of 1862, the attention of the Foreign Office was distracted from Italy by other international matters. The British watched passively when, in 1863–64, the Polish crisis created problems for Russia, and an armed insurrection nearly succeeded in establishing Polish independence before failing in the absence of foreign support.[65] In Greece, the misrule of King Otto prompted the government to send none other than Sir Henry Elliot to secure the monarchy by offering the usual British advice on constitutional government.[66] When Otto fell, Queen Victoria's son Alfred was considered as a potential replacement before a Danish prince became King George I, and the British ceded the Ionian Islands as a dowry to discourage Greek irredentism.[67] At the same time in northern

[65] G. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552–1917* (London: Fontana Press, 1998), pp. 32–3.

[66] D. Southgate, *'The Most English Minister…' The Policies and Politics of Palmerston* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 500.

[67] R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 55, 57.

Europe, the Schleswig-Holstein crisis precipitated the first of Bismarck's wars of German unification.[68] When Denmark was threatened, the Palmerston government attempted to defend it against Prussian bullying, but suffered a significant humiliation when their failure to secure French cooperation ensured British threats rang hollow in Prussian ears. From that point onwards, the British parliament would no longer tolerate the blatantly interventionist foreign policy of the Palmerston era, and Britain's shift towards a new style of foreign policy.[69] Throughout these events, the American Civil War rumbled in the background, but despite such distractions, the British continued to maintain a close watch on Italian affairs and to hope for peaceful solutions to its problems.

Between the end of 1862 and the beginning of 1866, the British government's involvement in diplomacy concerning the Italian questions of Venice and Rome was sporadic. British leaders welcomed the September Convention in 1864, even appearing prepared to consider it to be an indefinite solution to the Roman Question. Palmerston and Russell were no doubt relieved by the news, coming just months after Garibaldi had thrilled the London crowds, and the British had offended foreign courts by lionising a man who spoke openly about attacking Venice, Rome, and Russia.[70] The prime minister spoke of Florence as an eminently suitable capital for the new kingdom, even more appropriate than Rome, while his foreign secretary stated that he did not 'wish for the sake of Italy that Rome shd. be its capital'. Hoping that the Eternal City would become united with the Kingdom of Italy, Russell thought Vittorio Emanuele might remain in Florence and respectfully leave Rome for the pope. In the aftermath of the Prussian debacle, he also viewed it as a great step for Britain's damaged alliance with France.[71] The achievement of the Franco-Italian agreement, the work of the moderate and pragmatic Minghetti government, could also have paved the way for a restoration of British faith in the Italian leadership lost through the antics of the king and Rattazzi in 1862. Instead, the fact that this welcome step precipitated the

[68] D. Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780–1918: The Long Nineteenth Century*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 184.

[69] Southgate, *'The Most English Minister…'*, pp. 518–21.

[70] Southgate, *'The Most English Minister…'*, pp. 524–5.

[71] Russell to Grey, 2 October 1864, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 723.

immediate dismissal of Minghetti's administration and its replacement with that of another royal favourite, General La Marmora, provided further evidence of the unhealthy inclination of the Italian monarch to interfere in parliamentary politics. In time, this new royal appointment would negate the encouraging signs sent out to London through the Minghetti government's signing of the September Convention; the new government steadily drew Italy towards alliance with Prussia, and it openly declared the country's intention to acquire Venice through war if necessary.

Fearing that eventuality, the British government's attention returned to the Venetian Question, and Russell's suggestions as to how it might be resolved. With the Roman Question no longer being a pressing concern, the Venetian Question appeared to be the single remaining time bomb awaiting detonation in Italy, and the British were not deterred by the fact that Emperor Napoléon had made many efforts to resolve the issue at the beginning of the decade. Having backed away from conquering Venice for Italy in 1859, the French emperor had subsequently become obsessed with the problem, telling the British ambassador in Paris that should he die with Venice still in the hands of the Austrians, his son would inherit 'a volcano for a throne'.[72] Napoléon had proposed financial and a variety of territorial incentives in the hope of securing Austria's cooperation, but all to no avail.[73] Russell anticipated that the problem needed to be solved within two years, before the French removed their troops from Rome under the terms of the September Convention. No doubt mindful of what had happened in 1862, the foreign secretary was concerned about the renewed prospect of volunteer activity. He also expressed his optimism that the Venetian Question be achieved through Italy purchasing territory in the Danubian basin from the receding Ottoman Empire and exchanging it with Austria for Venice.[74] The Venetian Question had been the original cause of the Italian crisis of 1862, and could reasonably be expected to continue to destabilise international affairs regardless of the apparent solution to the Roman Question. The British continued to combine their enthusiasm for an independent and unified Italy with their desire to

[72] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971 [1954]), p. 159.

[73] N. Nichols Barker, 'Austria, France, and the Venetian Question, 1861–66', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 36, Iss. 2 (Jun. 1964), p. 145.

[74] 'Such is my dream'; Russell to Grey, 7 November 1864, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 725–6.

preserve the integrity of the Austrian Empire; an Austria free from expensive Italian commitments would be stronger and an Italy in possession of Venice more stable. Together both states presented a check to French ambitions in the European balance of power, and for this reason, the prospect of resolving the Venetian Question peacefully was especially attractive to the British when the signing of the September Convention raised suspicions across Europe that the Franco-Italian alliance of 1858–59 might be renewed.[75]

It has been suggested that during the events of 1859–60, the British had failed to realise the extent of Austrian obduracy and the necessity of forcing its expulsion from Italy.[76] Despite the failure of Lord Clarendon's mission to Vienna at the end of 1860, that appears to have remained the case between 1864 and 1866, as various British hopes were periodically raised that either financial or territorial compensation could persuade the Austrians to relinquish the port. Following the September Convention, the French government moved, typically, much more promptly and energetically than the British, proposing Venice be ceded to Italy in exchange for three billion francs.[77] With little prospect of a financial proposal being accepted by Vienna, Russell resurrected his old hope that some territorial compensation might prove acceptable.[78] The French foreign minister Drouyn de Lhuys was receptive to the British suggestion and hoped that France and Britain might act 'heartily together' on the matter.[79] The French overture made the Venetian Question appear a potential area for restoring the amity of the two Great Powers which had been damaged by their failure to present a united front against Bismarck earlier in the year. But despite the best intentions of London and Paris, a lack of initiative on the part of either government ensured the matter failed to progress.[80] Even had it done so, in time it would become clear that the Austrian government was no more willing to accept another territory in lieu of Venice than financial compensation.

[75] J. W. Bush, *Venetia Redeemed: Franco-Italian relations 1864–6* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1967), pp. 15–19.

[76] Beales, *England and Italy 1859–60* (London & Edinburgh: Nelson, 1961), pp. 33–4.

[77] Three 'milliards'; Grey to Russell, 9 October 1864, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 723–4.

[78] Russell to Grey, 3 November 1864, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 725.

[79] Grey to Russell, 15 November 1864, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 727–30.

[80] Bush, *Venetia Redeemed*, pp. 27–9.

While the French continued to be active in the sphere of Italian affairs, Britain remained a spectator until the Italian capital had been moved to Florence in 1865. It was after abandoning Turin that the Italian government began to consider the possibility of a military alliance with Prussia to acquire Venice by force. Since 1861, both Sir James Hudson and Sir Henry Elliot had regular opportunities to anticipate conflict due to the warlike attitude of the Italian king. His declarations that Italy would fight to win Venice were often rhetorical, but nonetheless provided cause for concern as his unhealthy inclination to meddle in parliamentary politics became clear. On New Year's Day in 1864, Elliot responded to the king's grandiloquent language by suggesting that Italy was not capable of waging war against the Austrian Empire, to which the king typically disagreed.[81] At their customary New Year's Day meeting the following year, the monarch alluded immediately to the necessity of a struggle with Austria and branded the Venetian Question a matter for which 'the sword alone' could find a solution. Vittorio Emanuele insisted that the Unification of Italy could not be completed by a 'timid, hesitating policy', and observed that whereas 1864 had opened with the threat of war but finished peacefully, 1865 commenced with apparent peace but could perhaps end differently.[82] Destroying British hopes that the September Convention might be similarly regarded in Italy as a solution to the Roman Question, the king also declared himself determined to bring it to a conclusion 'at once', having apparently received some assurance that Rome might be bought for the price of another province being ceded to France.[83] If sincere, nothing could have been more alarming to the British government than the monarch's attitude to either problem.

Any prospect of such a reconciliation between Italy and Austria would remain minimal until Vienna showed itself willing to enter discussions regarding the future of Venice, and to that end some tentative British moves were made during the summer of 1865. In the brief flurry of interest over Venice which had followed the signing of the September Convention, the newly appointed Italian prime minister had told Elliot that Italy was prepared to pay some 40 million Pounds for the cession of

[81] Elliot to Russell, 1 January 1864, TNA, FO 45/56.
[82] Elliot to Russell, 2 January 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.
[83] Elliot to Russell, 6 January 1865, TNA, FO 45/70.

Venice; in August 1865, the offer still stood.[84] This news inspired Russell to write to the British ambassador at Vienna, Lord Bloomfield, explaining the Italians' readiness to pay for Venice and hinting that the money could help Austria acquire a loan to ease its financial difficulties. The foreign secretary also instructed Bloomfield to tell the Austrian foreign minister Count Mensdorff that 'while Venetia is Austrian she hurts Austria and disquiets Europe', and that Britain would never be quite cordial with Austria while she kept hold of Venice.[85]

The Italian government's efforts on the matter consisted of despatching Count Malaguzzi to Vienna to attempt to clinch the deal. These efforts lasted from the autumn of 1865 until February 1866. Having expressed its views on the subject in August 1865, the British government offered moral support but abstained from further interference; while serving as chargé d'affaires in Elliot's absence from Florence, Edward Herries was even being instructed to inform the Italian government that the British 'would take no steps' regarding the recognition by Austria of the Kingdom of Italy.[86] During the winter of 1865–66, Britain's refusal to interfere appeared to some British officials to have upset the Italian government, while in contrast the French urged the Austrians to participate in the deal. On hearing this, Clarendon, who took over from Russell as foreign secretary in October 1865, defended British policy by insisting that foreign intervention and strong language were the worst possible way of dealing with such a question; he also pointed out that whatever the French had done had not produced much benefit.[87] The British were optimistic that the Austrians were beginning to realise that their Italian possessions were a useless expense, and therefore hoped some outside pressure might do the work. When Clarendon expressed this belief to the British ambassador in Vienna,[88] Bloomfield responded by assuring the foreign secretary that to encourage Austria to cede Venice was useless at that time, and that more might be achieved by improving commercial relations between

[84] Herries to Russell, 5 August 1865, TNA, FO 45/73.

[85] Russell to Bloomfield, 16 August 1865, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 751.

[86] This declaration mystified the Italians, as it was the cession of Venice rather than the issue of recognition which was being dealt with at the time; Herries to Elliot, 4 September 1865, TNA, FO 45/73.

[87] Clarendon to Elliot, copy, 4 December 1865, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c.143.

[88] Clarendon to Bloomfield, 13 December 1865, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 759–60.

Austria and Italy.[89] Indeed, on this very issue, Britain's policy of abstention was quickly vindicated, when the French found themselves the target of Italian anger for having attempted to entice Italy into accepting Austria's commercial overtures.[90]

The British determination to abstain from interference would be challenged as the threat of war drew closer. In February, La Marmora expressed to Elliot his view that public opinion and the minds of some ministers in the Austrian Empire were coming around to the idea of cession to Italy. Elliot suggested that if this were indeed the case, the prospect of relief from the empire's financial problems would prove an extra incentive.[91] And when it emerged that the prospect of proper commercial relations between the two antagonistic powers could lead towards their enjoyment of more amicable—and possibly even diplomatic—relations, the British responded to an Austrian request to seek to induce the Italian government to accept. Elliot was instructed to propose La Marmora reciprocate the commercial facilities which Austria had already chosen to establish and to point out the benefits of a more liberal spirit in commercial matters.[92] However, Elliot's understanding of the situation in Italy led him to disobey the order, replying that any intercourse with Austria would be unpalatable to the Italians as long as Venice remained in Austrian hands, and that La Marmora's weak government could not afford to consent to any offer offensive to Italian public opinion. Instead, the envoy extraordinary warned the Italians that any offer the Austrians might make of establishing diplomatic relations could hardly be refused by the Italians, and that should they choose to plunge Europe into war, they would be looked upon as a 'public nuisance'.[93]

Italian attempts to purchase Venice finally faltered in February 1866, by which time events had conspired to offer another possible solution. In January, the deposition of Prince Couza from his throne in the Danubian provinces of the Ottoman Empire excited Italian hopes of once more resurrecting Lord Russell's dormant dream of offering the Austrians territorial compensation. The Italians asked for British assistance, counting upon

[89] Bloomfield to Russell, 21 December 1865, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 761.
[90] Elliot to Clarendon, 1 January 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.
[91] Elliot to Clarendon, 2 February 1866, TNA, FO 45/85.
[92] Clarendon to Elliot, 26 February 1866, TNA, FO 170/134.
[93] Elliot to Clarendon, 6 March 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.

Britain's well-known pro-Italian sympathies but also seeking to lure London by pointing out that that such a scheme would help Italy escape its humiliating subservience to France. Elliot added his own encouragement by warning that the Venetian Question could not 'remain unsettled without a great probability of it leading to a war'.[94] But the Austrians had already scotched attempts to discuss the proposal at Vienna. As soon as the prospect had arisen, Mensdorff had stated that while Moldavia and Wallachia would be fine territories to add to the Habsburg Crown, the 'Roumens' would be hard to govern and Austria had no desire to add to its discontented population or to aggravate the Russians.[95] Thus the situation appeared hopeless, and despite maintaining their hopes that French and British influence might alter Austria's attitude, by March 1866, Italy was already pursuing another course.

When the Italian ambassador at Paris, Count Nigra, had first suggested in January that Rumania might be acceptable to Austria as compensation for Venice, the French emperor had apparently hinted that Italy should put pressure on Austria by negotiating an alliance with Prussia.[96] Italy began negotiations in March, and the Austrians' persistent refusal to cooperate left the Italians committed to a military alliance with Prussia and the very real prospect of war. To the British government, the increasing likelihood of conflict was clear through the open attitude of the Italian prime minister on the subject. Although British observers struggled through the spring of 1866 to obtain information regarding the exact nature of the Prusso-Italian treaty signed on 8 April, La Marmora had from the beginning been quite open in stating that Italy would take advantage of any opportunity for forging an alliance with Prussia and becoming involved in a Prussian war with Austria.[97] As shown in the previous section, once General Govone had travelled to Berlin on what Elliot knew to be a 'confidential mission',[98] his ability to procure any further information ceased. The prospect of an aggressive alliance between Prussia and Italy was most unwelcome to the British government, but all Elliot could do was to show his own frustration—and that of the British government—over the Italian attitude:

[94] Elliot to Clarendon, 1 March 1866, TNA, FO 45/85.

[95] Bloomfield to Clarendon, 18 January 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 762.

[96] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918* (Oxford, 1971 [1954]), p. 160.

[97] Elliot to Clarendon, telegraphic despatches, 6 and 8 March 1866, TNA, FO 45/85.

[98] Elliot to Clarendon, 22 March 1866, TNA, FO 45/85.

> From the day I came here I have never ceased urging on the Italians, official and unofficial, the folly of adopting an attitude of constant menace against Austria, and I believe I am for the moment in rather bad odour with many of them for venturing to look upon a war as a great calamity.[99]

By openly declaring their intention to attack Austria at any opportunity, Elliot believed the Italians had given the Austrians every right to do likewise. But unknown to Elliot and any of his colleagues, the signing of the treaty had fundamentally altered the diplomatic situation; until that point the question was whether or not war could be made, whereas thereafter it was whether it could be avoided.[100] Late in April, the Austrians mobilised their forces, making the accusations against Italy which prompted Elliot to send Herries to Bologna. Italy then responded by doing the same, causing immense excitement up and down the Italian peninsula, and Elliot recognised that the country became very much bound by public opinion.

Even if Elliot believed that the Italians did not intend to attack the Austrians, and irrespective of his ignorance regarding the details of Italy's agreement with Prussia, the British envoy was well informed of the state of public opinion in Italy, which now tied the hands of the Italian government as much as the Prussian treaty. As in the aftermath of the September Convention, the British diplomatic and consular representatives in Italy combined to monitor effectively the growth of public excitement at the prospect of war against Austria, the erstwhile oppressor of Italian nationalism. Indeed, during the months leading up to the eventual outbreak of war on 20 June 1866, a remarkable nationalist fervour took hold of some parts of the country. After the challenges of the early 1860s, and the known unpopularity of the Piedmontese within Italy, this provided reassurance that considerable enthusiasm for Italian unification did exist within the country. But it also threatened to compel the Italian government to fight Austria for fear of Mazzinian or Garibaldian reprisals, no matter what might now be achieved by diplomatic means. Elliot observed that the prospect of an immediate war with Austria was accepted with 'enthusiasm and satisfaction by the Italian people in general and in all parts of the country', and thus believed the chances of escaping from it were ever

[99] Elliot to Clarendon, 28 April 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.
[100] Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, p. 161.

decreasing. Elliot was convinced that the Italians had little or no intention of attacking the Austrians, and that until very recently, the Italians had made minimal preparations for the forthcoming conflict. Herries's visit to Bologna had convinced him that the rumours of Italian troops menacing the Austrian border were entirely without foundation, news he reported to be consistent with that from the British vice-consul at La Spezia where no activity had been seen, and the British consul at Genoa who had written that the best ironclad in the Italian navy, the *Re de Portogallo*, was still lying dirty and neglected in the docks.

The Austrian mobilisation then changed all this, and at the beginning of May, Elliot was reporting that every available ship was being commissioned and every available regiment sent to the North. The envoy commented:

> The Country is getting very warlike, especially in Lombardy, where the feeling is unanimous: at Turin the disposition is improving every day, the Gov^{t} are not afraid of the recent discontent producing bad effects. In the South also the wish is strongly for war, but in those Provinces there is unquestionable discontent, which would very possibly show itself in the shape of the revival of political brigandage or in other ways unless everything went smoothly in the North.[101]

This news was consistent with reports from Rome, where Odo Russell similarly observed that the enthusiasm for war with Austria was immense 'among the National party'. Despite the efforts of the papal police, many Romans crossed the frontier in order to 'offer their services to Italy', which Russell regarded as testifying to the 'immense, deep and general enthusiasm of the people' for the liberation of Venice and proof of their longing for Italian independence and unity.[102] The idea that Austria might defeat the Italians did not appear to have entered the minds of the '*Gioventù Italiana*' in Rome, and Russell commented that he had seen men and women cry with joy at the prospect of liberating '*i poveri Veneziani*'.[103] Elliot warned Clarendon that every day things took on 'a more warlike appearance', and reiterated his belief that despite his confi-

[101] Elliot to Clarendon, 4 May 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.

[102] Odo Russell to Clarendon, 6 May 1866, *The Roman Question*, p. 326.

[103] Odo Russell to Clarendon, 9 May 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.

dence in La Marmora's intention to abstain from aggression, he was 'beginning to doubt whether it would be possible for him to carry it out, in the event of Austria and Prussia finding a means of patching up their quarrel'. The financial ruin of such military demonstrations was evident to everyone, and the probability of being subjected to them as long as Venice remained Austrian was driving the Italians to think that as a blow would eventually have to be struck to win the prize, it would be better to do it at once, considering that the expense was already incurred. Elliot thought that the insanity of such an act would be clear to anyone whose 'blood' was 'cool' enough to calculate the chances, but he countered that the Italians' blood was not cool, comparing their state with that of a man who might cut his own throat on suspicion that he had a 'mortal disorder'.[104]

Since the expectation of a war with Austria became general, Elliot had been of the opinion that it would be difficult to exaggerate the enthusiasm for it which prevailed in Italy. It pervaded all classes of society and was nowhere more intense than in Lombardy, despite that region's great risk of being exposed to the sufferings of battle, due to the recollection and the hatred of Austria's former domination which produced 'an universal and irresistible enthusiasm'. He knew of cases where aristocratic mothers had travelled to Turin from Milan for the sole purpose of getting their sons taken into the service, and where fathers of large families had offered themselves without a moment's hesitation. Whole families of fathers, sons, and nephews had abandoned everything to take up the cause in what Elliot claimed were not isolated cases but examples of the generally prevailing spirit. In this condition, Elliot finally confessed he could not see how it was possible to avoid a war, even if there were no conflict between Austria and Prussia, unless an immediate solution was found to the Venetian Question. It was doubtful whether any Italian government could induce the people to consent to a disarmament at this stage, and there was the danger that any attempt to do so might provoke serious commotion. With extremists ready to exploit any possible opportunity, an unsuccessful war might be less disastrous for the Italian government than the outbreak of serious internal disorders. Thus Elliot concluded Italy had reached a point of no return.[105]

[104] Elliot to Clarendon, 11 May 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.
[105] Elliot to Clarendon, 10 May 1866, TNA, FO 45/86.

Once more the British found themselves fearing the role the Mazzinians and Garibaldians might play in Italian affairs. The bone of contention between Italy and Austria being Venice, the crisis of 1866 echoed the unfriendliness between the two states which had characterised 1861 and 1862. Since then, British policy towards Italy had been influenced by British suspicions of the Italian leadership and the measures to which the country's leaders would resort to provoke trouble for Austria and win their coveted prize. La Marmora was after all a royal aide-de-camp installed as prime minister when the king demanded the resignation of the moderate Minghetti in 1864, just as the royal favourite and radical Rattazzi had been installed in place of the more rational Ricasoli in 1862. Clarendon's response to the news of growing nationalist fervour in Italy perhaps indicates his awareness of the complicity of the Italian government in the activities of Garibaldi's volunteers in 1862 as he ordered Elliot to issue a warning to the Italian government. Apprehending that the crisis might result in the services of volunteers being either invited by or forced on the Italian government by popular feeling, Elliot was ordered to remind La Marmora of the declarations made by the Austrians in 1862. On that occasion, Count Rechberg had informed the British ambassador that Austria would enter into no engagement as to where its armies should stop if Austrian territory were invaded by volunteers. It was made clear to the Italian government that any irregulars who crossed the frontier before a declaration of war by Italy would be repelled 'with the utmost vigour', and captured marauders would be treated 'like brigands and shot'. Moreover, Vienna would consider the Italian government responsible for any such invasion. Elliot was told to point out to the Italian prime minister the great importance, if Italy really did desire peace, of restraining any such attack against Austria. Perhaps mindful of the 1862 conspiracy to enter the Tyrol, Clarendon pointed out that no attack could be made wholly by land without the connivance of the Italian government. A limited amount of naval control in the Adriatic and vigilance on the part of the authorities at Ancona, Genoa, and other Italian ports would suffice to defeat any volunteer activities.[106] Clarendon's instructions to warn Italy about allowing volunteers to invade other countries echoed Russell's of 1862, and could be interpreted as displaying a substantial amount of British suspicion over Italian motives.

[106] Clarendon to Elliot, 5 May 1866, TNA, FO 170/134.

While Elliot may have firmly believed throughout April that there had never been the slightest intention on the part of the Italian government to disturb the peace by attacking Austria unless a war had already broken out in Germany,[107] during May he was forced to alter this perspective as a result of the nationalist fervour taking hold of the country. He rightly predicted that even if the Austrians did not attack, the excited Italian people might not tolerate the demobilisation of the Italian army without any blow being struck.[108] Elliot looked to history and the fatal errors of King Carlo Alberto which led to Novara in 1849; twice the Piedmontese king was forced into action against Austria by the enthusiasm of his people and his own dynastic ambitions, only to be twice defeated by the Austrians.[109] For those who had followed the course of Italian history, the parallels between 1848–49 and 1861–66 were only too apparent. On both occasions Piedmont had made successful conquests from the Austrians, only for nationalist opinion in Italy to ask for more. The defeat at Novara returned Piedmont to its original state, and in 1866, the British belief that Austria would win any conflict against the Italians raised realistic fears that the achievement of 1860 could be undone.

As the storm clouds gathered, numerous attempts were made by the British government to convince the Austrians of the benefits of the cession of Venice for both Austria and Italy. In April, Bloomfield approached Count Mensdorff on the subject by suggesting that if free of the Venetian Question, Austria would be able to focus all its energies on the German Question. Tantalisingly, the Austrian foreign minister agreed, but reiterated his government's insistence that the time was not yet right.[110] In London, Lord Russell, the former foreign secretary and current prime minister, sought to influence the situation by writing to the Austrian ambassador, Count Apponyi, expressing his fears over the 'great peril' posed to the peace of Europe and urging the Austria government to cede Venice in order to defuse the Italian side of the quarrel. While he admitted the legality of Austria's determination to maintain possession of Venice until the last moment, the prime minister urged the Austrians to cede Venice for the mutual benefit of all sides concerned:

[107] Elliot to Clarendon, 30 April 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 98.

[108] Elliot to Clarendon, 3 May 1866, TNA, FO 45/86.

[109] D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson, 2002), pp. 94, 96.

[110] Bloomfield to Clarendon, 12 April 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 800.

> I … say strongly and decidedly, avail yourselves of the present moment to make the cession. You will have all the grace of a voluntary surrender to national aspirations. You will satisfy the wishes of England and France. You may form a lasting friendship with Italy which desires nothing better for her own commercial and political interests than a firm alliance with Austria in the system of Europe. Above all Austria may at this moment circumscribe the cession she will make and establish a frontier which Europe will respect and England be anxious to see maintained.[111]

Russell's words also contained a subtle warning that if it came to war and Italy should fight successfully alongside Prussia, the Austrians might rue having missed the opportunity to surrender Venice when the Italians raised their demands to claim further satisfaction on the Dalmatian coast. Clarendon informed Bloomfield that the prime minister had written 'a good letter' to Apponyi, but in reality British correspondence on the subject merely reflected British desperation:

> What a blessing it would be if that question were disposed of and Austria made powerful by getting rid of the incumbrance [sic] and we made happy by getting rid of a bore wh. is eternally cropping up to the surface.[112]

As Austria and Italy mobilised their forces on either side of their mutual frontier, Russell wrote again to Apponyi, his tone echoing his days as foreign secretary by *advising* the Austrian cession of Venice to Italy. Mensdorff's negative reply forced Russell to lament that it was impossible to continue the discussion either privately or officially. In frustration, he contented himself by stating that while he sympathised with Austria in its present quarrel with Prussia, his conviction remained unshaken on two points. First, he condemned the joint aggression of Austria and Prussia upon Denmark in 1864 as 'an unjust and wanton violation of the peace of Europe' which constituted the invasion of Sleswig in order to deprive the King of Denmark of one of his provinces. Secondly, he stressed once more that it would be in the interest of Austria to 'restore' Venice to Italy, and would furnish some compensation for the destruction of the Venetian Republic, of which France bore the discredit and Austria the profit.[113]

[111] Russell to Apponyi, 16 April 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 805–6.
[112] Clarendon to Bloomfield, 18 April 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 808.
[113] Russell to Apponyi, 3 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 850.

These British efforts can have made little difference, but astoundingly, the Austrians came around to the idea of cession in May 1866. Their reason—quite rightly as it turned out—was their concern over fighting a war on two fronts. On 4 May 1866, Prince Richard von Metternich offered to cede the nine provinces of Venetia to France, to be forwarded to Italy, in the hope of securing both French and Italian neutrality in the forthcoming conflict with Prussia. Assuming that Austria was then free to defeat Prussia, Vienna would take its own compensation in Silesia.[114] When the offer to cede Venice was made and refused, Elliot's apprehensions about the tide of public opinion in Italy were realised. The Italian government could not accept the offer due to its signed commitment to Prussia as well as the state of public opinion at home. For some time, Clarendon had attempted to use his understanding of Italy's parlous state, derived from his own personal experience of the country but also from the news sent to London by British representatives, to try to persuade the Italian government to remain neutral in any conflict. Throughout the spring of 1866, the British persisted in lecturing Italy about the benefits of remaining neutral. Clarendon wrote to Elliot that Italy's policy of 'truce' rather than 'peace' with Austria was 'a rather dangerous doctrine' for the Italians, as their policy of renewing the struggle of 1859 whenever it suited their convenience could just as equally hold good for the Austrians. Whatever preparation had been made for war in Italy, and whatever the precise nature of the known understanding with Prussia might be, Clarendon predicted that neither would promote the peaceful surrender of Venice; menacing the proud and obstinate Austrian emperor had only appeared to make him more determined. The foreign secretary had been assured by the leading banker Rotheschild that all the bankers of Europe would combine to provide a loan for Italy to purchase Venice, but Franz Joseph and his empire were too long accustomed to bankruptcy to be tempted by money. Clarendon also feared Italy would ruin itself by the enormous expense of maintaining its army and navy on a war footing, and observed that if Venice could not be acquired by either force or negotiation, the time must come for doing without it 'and setting the house in order'. Clarendon ordered Elliot to discover what the Italian government would be prepared to give and what security the Austrian government could expect to receive that the Italians would not extend their demands to include other parts of the Austrian Empire where Italian was spoken.[115]

[114] Bush, *Venetia Redeemed*, pp. 60–1.
[115] Clarendon to Elliot, 23 April 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 143.

It was by this stage well understood that Italy would attack Austria the day after any conflict broke out with Prussia, and British frustration with the impatience and impertinence of the Italian government mounted. Already in March 1866, when referring to the Italian enthusiasm for the proposal of purchasing the Danubian territories to exchange with Austria, Clarendon had commented that it was not unnatural that the Italians should try to turn any event in Europe to account for obtaining Venice, but condemned them as 'very tiresome and often absurd in their way of setting about it'. And while La Marmora may have found a European war to be a quite worthwhile method of obtaining his objective, Clarendon pointed out that the opinion would not be widely shared and that the Italian prime minister might be 'quite sure of retaining his monopoly of it':

> If Italy can take Venetia by force, well and good, and everybody will be glad, but if the territory is to be ceded quietly it will only be so as a consequence of public opinion and its pressure *in Austria*.

Clarendon continued to hope that the Austrians would tire of the taxation they were forced to endure in order to maintain what British leaders had taken to calling the 'damnosa possessio' of Venice. Furthermore, he warned that the threats of Italy and the meddling of France and Britain could only succeed in slowing the process by making it a point of national honour, with every Austrian not to be bullied or cajoled by foreign powers. Finally, Clarendon conceded that it was only natural that the Italians should hate the Austrians, but warned that by trying to hurt Austria they would 'hurt themselves a good deal more'.[116]

As the tempest of war approached, the British sought to intimidate Italy by pointing out the possible consequences of a lost conflict. Elliot warned La Marmora that the Italians had no right to complain if Austria chose to attack Italy, as they had not concealed their intention of falling on Austria at the first propitious opportunity. Rather than this deterring him from his course, La Marmora simply agreed. Instead, he expressed his anger at the false pretext given to Europe for their decision to mobilise their forces in Venetia at a time when there was not the slightest danger of an Italian attack. He also criticised the Austrian authorities which had control over

[116] Clarendon to Elliot, 12 March 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 143.

all the telegraph wires of the empire for allowing a false story of a volunteer attack on Austrian territory to circulate for a whole day to excite Austrian public opinion. He did not mind if the Austrians chose to attack but hoped they could do so without resorting to making false allegations against Italy.[117] As nationalist fervour increased on both sides of the border and after the Austrian offer to cede Venice had even failed to avert the prospect of war, the British raised their efforts to intimidate Italy into remaining neutral. Bloomfield had informed London that in the event of an Italian defeat, the Austrians would 'most certainly' pursue their success into Italian territory.[118] Clarendon told Elliot that although the Austrians held 'a fixed determination' not to attack the Italians, they had not 'the slightest doubt as to licking them' if they did. The foreign secretary hoped that Italy could be persuaded to promise not to attack Austria in any future war, but understood that the Prusso-Italian alliance and the state of public opinion as reported by Elliot might prevent La Marmora's agreement. As if to try to scare the Italians into participating, Clarendon warned that the Austrians intended to treat any irregulars who might invade their territory as common brigands and instructed Elliot to emphasise to La Marmora that should Italy invade Austria and be defeated, the Austrians made no secret of their intention to follow up their success into Lombardy.[119]

Therefore, in accordance with their traditional aim of trying to maintain peace in Europe, the British were prepared to use scare tactics to try to keep Italy out of any conflict. There can be little doubt that this was their primary concern, but the evidence does suggest that the country which had welcomed the Unification of Italy in 1860 was now concerned about the new kingdom's survival. Throughout May 1866, the French pursued the summoning of an international conference to resolve all the great questions facing Europe. Throughout, the British showed very little interest in attending, and it has been suggested that their refusal was down to the fact they were concerned only with the Eastern Question and their need to see Austria, and not Russia, fill the Ottoman void developing in the Balkans.[120] But Russell and Clarendon both appear to have been genuinely concerned

[117] Elliot to Clarendon, 27 April 1866, TNA, FO 45/86.

[118] Though Bloomfield thought the Austrians had no intention of staying there; Bloomfield to Clarendon, 12 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 886–7.

[119] Clarendon to Elliot, 21 May 1866, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 143.

[120] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, [1954]), p. 164.

for the integrity of the Kingdom of Italy. It was of course Russell who had written the famous despatch endorsing Italian unification on 27 October 1860, and he surely had no desire to see his own work destroyed. As Clarendon rightly expected the Austrians to be victorious in Italy and wrongly suspected they would also win in Germany,[121] he too harboured his own fears that the war might see Liberal Italy undone. Elliot, who had been in Naples to witness the downfall of the Bourbons and the arrival of Garibaldi in 1860, wrote from Florence to drive home the point that for Italy the situation was perilous:

> Italy has certainly never been in a more critical position than at present, and it is impossible not to feel very anxious about the future. The cheerful side of the picture is the admirable spirit which has been shown in most parts of the country. Tuscany is quite sound; Piedmont has forgotten its grievances and Lombardy is so wild with enthusiasm and patriotism that if these sufficed to force the Quadrilateral nothing more would be required. In the South, although there also everyone is calling out for war, the feeling is far less satisfactory, for there is unquestionably very great discontent of all kinds, and a serious check in the North might not impossibly be followed by some exhibition of it in one shape or other.[122]

Italy's appalling performance in the war—a farcical retreat after a mild engagement at Custoza in June followed by a naval defeat at the hands of a weaker fleet at Lissa in July—was a national humiliation and did indeed precipitate unrest in the country. Prior to the war, Clarendon had understood from the material provided by his representatives in Italy that La Marmora would enter the field of battle as much to avert the dangers of revolution as to lay claim to Venice.[123] It has been suggested that Clarendon was hopelessly out of sympathy with the Italian policy of Palmerston and Russell, too level-headed to be carried away by the romantic exploits of Garibaldi, too much a realist in foreign politics to be moved by the spectacle of a nation struggling for its national rights. Clarendon did not see

[121] Bloomfield told Clarendon that the Austrian army was better prepared than that of the Prussians, and that if forced, Vienna would not flinch at fighting Prussia. He also stated that the Austrians had no intention of attacking Italy. Bloomfield to Clarendon, 15 March 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 786.

[122] Elliot to Russell, 11 May 1866, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/16c.

[123] Clarendon to Bloomfield, 16 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 904–5.

Italy as a single nation, but as a number of small states, racially and linguistically connected, but having very distinct and in many cases divergent customs and traditions; he saw it as Venice, Piedmont, Tuscany, 'and he was highly sceptical of a unity which obliterated the distinctions which such names inevitably recalled to the mind'.[124] Clarendon had always been an Italophile, understanding Italian and travelling regularly to the peninsula. He had been a later convert to the cause of Italian independence and unification than Gladstone and Russell in 1860, but his words in the face of war against Austria and the likely defeat for the desperate, sabre-rattling Italians showed all the concern of a foreign secretary who wanted not only to maintain the peace of Europe for Britain's own interest, but also out of a genuine fear that defeat might destroy the nation-state so recently created. To Elliot he wrote:

> Nothing can be better than the language you have held at Florence in discouragement of war, but the die is now cast and I suppose the strife will commence immediately—I expect the first shot to be fired in Italy and can only hope with all my heart that it will not be by an Italian gun. The question of who is the aggressor will make the whole difference to Italy—you cannot too strongly impress that upon General LaMarmora—He says that Italy has only armed for defence and for Heaven's sake let him stick to that. i.e. wait'till he is attacked. I dread the Volunteers, or some Corps not under regular Military control, making some inroad that will justify Austria in saying that she has been attacked.[125]

Clarendon added that there was very bitter feeling in France towards the Italians, and that the emperor would have great difficulty in sending a force to relieve them even if the Austrians turned out to be the aggressors.

Indeed, the makers of British policy had much reason to be anxious about the prospect of war in addition to their own usual fears for the peace of Europe. Nowhere was the foreign secretary's genuine concern for the Italian kingdom more manifest than during the aftermath of Austria's offer

[124] A perspective which exaggerates the intentions and actions of the two triumvirs; see George Villiers, *A Vanished Victorian: Being the life of George Villiers Fourth Earl of Clarendon 1800–1870* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1938), p. 302.

[125] Clarendon to Elliot, 7 May 1866, copy, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 143.

to cede Venice to Italy in May 1866. On 4 May 1866, Odo Russell wrote from the traditional diplomatic talking shop of Rome that Cardinal Antonelli, the pope's first minister, believed the emperor's real intention in the Italian Question had been to create three kingdoms in Italy, and to take Sicily, Sardinia, or Genoa for France.[126] Indeed, Napoléon's plan for a tripartite Italy dated from 1858, but the official recognition of the Kingdom of Italy which followed that of Britain might have been expected to have signalled its permanent abandonment. Nonetheless, a short while later, news from Cowley in Paris appeared to confirm that the Austrians had received assurances from the emperor that if Venice were ceded to Italy, the French would pursue the partition of Italy into three separate sovereignties in federal union. Although Cowley doubted there was any firm French commitment to such a scheme, he admitted concerns that such an idea may lurk in the emperor's mind, and he knew the idea to enjoy the favour of Drouyn de Lhuys,[127] who had been appointed to replace a more pro-Italian foreign minister after the Garibaldian expedition of 1862. On hearing the news, Clarendon further revealed British frustrations with the international crisis and a genuine fear of the prospects of defeat for Italy:

> If the Empr. wd. promise to keep quiet and Austria wd. promise to respect the present Italian Kingdom, I believe that Austria might in one campaign lick Prussia and take Silesia as her compensation for Venetia, and at the same time repel any Italian attack. She wd. be bound of course beforehand on the signature of peace with Prussia to hand over Venetia to France. Everybody wd. approve of that issue, but as to the partition of Italy and giving Naples to the G.D. of Tuscany it will be downright madness on the part of the Empr. and before he engages himself in such a project I think you shd. give him a warning, it never cd. be effectual except by a French army agst. the Italian people and without a French army the G. Duke wd. never maintain himself at Naples, it wd. be a 2d Rome over again under ten times worse and more unjustifiable circs. but further I feel as sure as if it had happened that it wd. call forth swarms of Mazzinians and other bravoes *really ready* to die for their country and they wd. make no mistake about assassinating the Empr. The thing is so serious the more one reflects upon it that I think you ought to ask to see the Empr. on the subject if you find the project is taking a substantial form.[128]

[126] Odo Russell to Clarendon, 4 May 1866, *The Roman Question*, p. 325.
[127] Cowley to Clarendon, copy, 14 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 890.
[128] Clarendon to Cowley, 16 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 900–1.

On hearing the news, Clarendon also wrote to Bloomfield in Vienna instructing him to find out if there was any truth in the rumour. If it were true and had been concealed from the British ambassador, Clarendon asserted that Britain would have a right to complain considering it was a scheme to which the British government would have 'the utmost possible objection'; Bloomfield was instructed to 'throw all the cold water on it' that he could.[129] Clarendon also instructed Cowley to do the same at Paris,[130] before the French ultimately denied any involvement in any scheme to establish the Grand Duke of Tuscany on the throne of Naples.[131] Clarendon's angry reaction to the rumour demonstrated his frustration with the whole unstable situation in Europe but surely also reveals his concern that an unsuccessful war could shatter the remarkable achievement of 1860.

In conclusion, Lord Clarendon's words also illustrate the impotence of the British government in the advent of the crisis of the Austro-Prussian War. It has been suggested that Italian participation in the war might have been avoided had Britain not been isolated in European affairs, and that the Italians might have been persuaded to break off the alliance, which did not sit with La Marmora's 'honesty'.[132] But considering the absolute refusal of Austria to consider the cession of Venice until the Italians had already signed an aggressive pact with Prussia, and the Italians' apparent desperation for a fight reported by British representatives in Italy, the British could never have prevented Italian participation without becoming involved themselves. As in the 1859 crisis when France allied with Piedmont against Austria and Lord Malmesbury would have needed to commit British power to one side or the other,[133] in 1866, the British determination to have no involvement beyond the occasional strongly worded despatch rendered their peace-keeping efforts futile. On both occasions, the hesitant and ineffective British efforts to avert conflict were the only kind of moves a power so committed to non-intervention could make; words, which could easily be ignored by the likely combatants. Clarendon and Granville would find themselves in a similar position before

[129] Clarendon to Bloomfield, 16 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 904–5.
[130] Clarendon to Cowley, 17 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, pp. 905–7.
[131] Cowley to Clarendon, 19 May 1866, *Il problema Veneto*, Vol. 2, p. 917.
[132] Priestley, *British Policy*, pp. 55–6.
[133] D. Beales, *England and Italy 1859–60* (London & Edinburgh: Nelson, 1961), p. 45.

the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. In the aftermath of the humiliation of 1864 and the death of Palmerston in 1865, the chance of a British government attempting to do anything else in foreign policy was negligible. The warnings of Russell and Clarendon were calculated to try to intimidate Austria and Italy, respectively, into avoiding conflict with one another, but pride in Vienna and desperation in Florence provided far greater respective impetuses that anything emitting from London. The result of Britain's failure to make any impact in the matter was that the two continental powers the British favoured both suffered damaging defeats, while Bismarck's Prussia took another step towards the Unification of Germany which would have such an impact on Europe's future.

Although the British had long argued that the cession of Venice to Italy would make Austria stronger, the event only occurred at the moment the latter was reduced to being the lesser of the two German-speaking powers. To the eclipse of Austria was added the bittersweet triumph of the Italians. The coveted and symbolic port of *La Serenissima* was finally brought under the Italian Crown, but only after military and naval campaigns which demonstrated the fragility of Italy's claims to Great Power status. Venice was won by Prussia rather than Italy, and insultingly ceded from Austria via France, showing how much the French emperor remained the godfather of Italian unification. At the very moment the war began, the Russell government was defeated on the issue of domestic reform in Britain, making way for the return of the Conservatives under Lord Derby. Thus the period of Liberal rule during which the Kingdom of Italy had been created (1859–66) ended with the failure of British efforts to exert an effective influence in the Italian peninsula. Ironically, Italy's defeat and the subsequent revolt at Palermo vindicated the intentions of Russell and Clarendon to advise the Italians to stay out of international affairs and concentrate on conciliating their population through public works and good government. However, instead of heeding this well-intentioned advice, Italy had shown itself to be irresponsible in international affairs. Its conduct, before and during the war, can have only resulted in the further deterioration of the official British perspective of post-Unification Italy. Rather than creating a pacific and liberal kingdom, the British could now see that the Risorgimento had spawned a hopelessly weak but potentially aggressive new state.

CHAPTER 5

Preserving Italy: The Conservatives and the Fragility of Italian Unity, 1866–68

By the time the Austro-Prussian War reached its conclusion in July 1866, Lord John Russell's Liberal government had fallen in Britain and been replaced by a minority Conservative administration under the Earl of Derby. Russell's ministry had collapsed upon the defeat of its Reform Bill, and the long-serving foreign secretary and prime minister who, alongside Palmerston and Gladstone, had so keenly lent British support to the Italian national cause since 1859 departed the scene. Derby invited the highly respected and experienced Lord Clarendon to remain as foreign secretary, but when he declined, the new prime minister's son Lord Stanley accepted the seals of the Foreign Office. Stanley, who went on to serve for two years under his father, and then briefly under Benjamin Disraeli in 1868, has been described by A. J. P. Taylor as 'the most isolationist foreign secretary' in British history.[1] The comment was made regarding his second term as foreign secretary during the 1870s, but he scarcely was any more inclined towards interventionism between 1866 and 1868. Indeed Emanuele d'Azeglio, the Italian envoy to London, described him as 'a beginner in diplomacy', a view shared by Odo Russell, the British minister to the Papal

[1] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971 [1954]), p. 233.

O. J. Wright, *Great Britain and the Unifying of Italy*, Britain and the World, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59397-9_5

State.[2] It would be fair to say that Stanley was a cautious man, neither a brash opportunist like Palmerston nor an idealistic meddler like Russell. He recognised that the days in which Great Britain might assert its influence through bluff and bluster overseas were past, and that his priority as foreign secretary should be to preserve rather than risk British prestige.[3] In 1868, the former foreign secretary Lord Clarendon criticised Stanley's elevation of the principle of non-interventionism to the point of ideology on the grounds that 'Europe now cares no more about England than she does about Holland'.[4] Disraeli, by then prime minister, rose to Stanley's defence, arguing that:

> England is as ready and as willing to interfere as in the old days, when the necessity of her position requires it. There is no Power, indeed, that interferes more than England. She interferes in Asia, because she is really more Asiatic Power than a European. She interferes in Australia, in Africa, in New Zealand.[5]

While accepting the truth that the growth of empire was compensation for Britain's decline as an international force in Europe, Disraeli's statement contained a certain implication that his country could still choose to interfere should it be minded to do so. Under the Derby government of 1866–68, and the brief Disraeli administration which succeeded it, the policy of non-intervention was held to be not symbolic of the decline of British power but in fact the consequence of Britain's increased imperial strength.[6] These changed priorities, and the more realistic position adopted by Britain's leaders, did not preclude the British from continuing to take an interest in the new Italy. Neither did the fact that the Conservatives had shown nothing like the same enthusiasm for Italian unification as the Liberals had done.

[2] Qtd in D. Raponi, *Religion and Politics in the Risorgimento: Britain and the New Italy, 1861–1875* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 177.

[3] K. Bourne, 'The Foreign Policy of Lord Stanley July 1866–December 1868' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1953), pp. i–ii.

[4] P. Hayes, *The Nineteenth Century, 1814–80* (London: A. & C. Black, 1975), p. 44.

[5] K. T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846–1886* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 236.

[6] M. E. Chamberlain, *Pax Britannica? British Foreign Policy, 1789–1914* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 126.

A Change in Style if Not in Substance

For the first time since the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, Britain entered a period in which it was ruled by men who had felt little sympathy for Italian nationalism and who had wanted nothing to do with Italian unification. Moreover, the Conservatives had been staunch supporters of the Austrian Empire and had not been pleased to see the changed position of that power which resulted from the rise of a unified Italy. Disraeli had long sought to counter the Liberals' electoral success by courting the Catholic Irish vote, and he was consequently disinclined to favour any occurrence which might be perceived as a threat to the Papacy.[7] Certainly any close examination of Stanley's dealings with any of the various crises which arose during his two years in office does little to dispel impressions of his inertia. Although he negotiated an international guarantee for the neutrality of Luxembourg and attempted to resolve the *Alabama* dispute with the United States, Stanley abstained from involvement in the Cretan question. In Italy, where there occurred during his time at the Foreign Office a number of incidents in which a Palmerston or a Russell might have been tempted to intervene, Stanley's policy was one of non-intervention in extremis. However, the manner in which the Foreign Office followed Italian affairs during his tenure, not to mention some of his pronouncements regarding Italy during that time, is significant and interesting. During the main stages of the Italian unification process in 1859 and 1860, the Conservative party had been overwhelmingly pro-Austrian and anti-revolutionary. Returning to government during the later 1860s, however, the one aspect of the Conservatives' position regarding Italy which remained the same was their determination to ensure that no aspect of the Italian question should be allowed to provoke a European war. With regard to the Kingdom of Italy created in 1861, however, their position was somewhat changed. While Britain's perennial determination to preserve the international peace remained firmly intact, Stanley's Foreign Office was fully accepting of Italy's newfound unity; indeed, on occasion, it showed itself to be genuinely interested in Italian affairs. This concern was natural, considering Italy's ongoing potential to disrupt the peace of Europe and affect the balance of power between Paris and Vienna.

[7] M. de Leonardis, *L'Inghilterra e la Questione Romana* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1980), p. 27.

However, there appears, in addition, to have been some real concern about the fragility of the newly unified Italian state. Consequently, an examination of Stanley's Italian policy between 1866 and 1868 reveals the Conservatives' position regarding Italy to have altered significantly since they were last in government in 1859. Consequently, while the style of British foreign policy regarding Italy might have changed considerably between the departure of Palmerston and Russell and the arrival of Derby and Stanley, its essence remained much the same.

Many years ago, H. E. Priestley made the observation that British governments of the 1860s had a greater desire for the preservation of international peace than for the unity of Italy. Priestley pointed to the fact that in 1866, the Liberal foreign secretary Lord Clarendon had sought to prevent Italy from allying with Prussia in order to win possession of Venice, while his Conservative successor Lord Stanley then refused to accept Italy's claim to Trentino following the conflict.[8] The preservation of peace indeed remained the primary aim of British foreign policy right up until the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, by which time the Liberals had returned to office under Gladstone. But there was, nonetheless, considerable consistency in the degree of sympathy and moral support offered to Italy by British administrations, irrespective of their political colour. The first Italian issue with which Stanley had to deal was the immediate resolution of the Venetian Question as a consequence of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, which ironically Earl Russell had spent so much time dreaming of solving during his long term as foreign secretary. While the war raged, Stanley's predecessor Lord Clarendon had declared British neutrality and non-intervention. At the same time, though, he had made it clear that the British government was willing to lend its moral support to Italy's claims upon Venice. Upon assuming office in his stead, Stanley responded to the famous Austrian proposal that Venice and its hinterland be ceded to France, and that Napoléon III should thereby cede it to Italy, by instructing Lord Cowley, the British ambassador at Paris, to respond favourably to the suggestion.[9] It is ironic that opposition to the proposal actually came from Italy, where the new administration of Bettino Ricasoli felt unable to accept Venice from France on the grounds that to do so would be a snub

[8] H. E. Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question, 1866–71' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1931), p. 1.

[9] Stanley to Cowley, 4 July 1866, TNA, FO 27/1607.

by Austria, and that Italian public opinion could not tolerate such a thing. Irrespective of Italy's military and naval defeats by the Austrians at Custozza and Lissa, and notwithstanding the fact that it was the Prussians' crushing victory over the Austrians at Sadowa that effectively sealed the outcome of the war, Italy was still fighting Austria at the time the proposal was made. The country's leaders felt unable to cease fire and accept such humiliating conditions. Nor was the matter simple for Napoléon, who would find it a lot easier to accept Venice from Austria than to pass it on to Italy, on account of the hostility felt towards the new state by Catholic opinion and the military establishment in France.

Under these circumstances, the new Conservative government, which eagerly sought the restoration of peace in Europe, placed the principle of non-intervention aside. Stanley instructed Cowley to inform the French government that British public opinion supported the transfer of Venice to Italy and did not attach 'much importance' to the manner in which it was achieved.[10] At the same time in Florence, Henry Elliot sought to persuade Italian leaders to end their struggle and accept their prize. The Italians replied that as long as Prussia continued to fight, Italy was bound to do so by their alliance, although Ricasoli stated that Italy would not continue hostilities solely in Prussia's interest.[11] In frustration at his embarrassing predicament, Napoléon threatened to pass Venice back to Austria before proposing that a plebiscite should be held on the future of the territory and that Italy might therefore accept it without loss of honour.[12] This the Italians accepted, bringing their part in the war to a close. Upon the cessation of hostilities, however, they sought in addition to gain formal possession of the Austrian territory of Trentino, which their forces had successfully occupied, but they were forced to withdraw when Austria objected and no other power supported their claim. Nonetheless, through the acquisition of Venice, the Kingdom of Italy had achieved one of its two great foreign policy objectives of the 1860s.

The Conservative government might have refused to support the Italian claim to the largely German-speaking territory of Trentino which, being south of the Alps, would have led to the establishment of a more natural boundary with Austria than then existed, but it was not

[10] Stanley to Cowley, 12 July 1866, TNA, FO 27/1607.
[11] Elliot to Stanley, 16 July 1866, TNA, FO 45/88.
[12] Cowley to Stanley, 17 July 1866, TNA, FO 27/1620.

unsympathetic towards or unconcerned about Italy. Events during the aftermath of the Austro-Prussian War gave Stanley's Foreign Office ample opportunity to show itself to be every bit as preoccupied about the security and survival of the unified Italian state as Palmerston and Russell had been. In the context of Italy's poor performance in the conflict, and not long after Stanley's accession to office, British observers of Italian affairs were presented with a spectacular demonstration of the limits of the unpopularity of the status quo in some parts of the country in the form of a major rebellion at Palermo in September 1866. The so-called brigands' war, which had so seriously undermined the new state's authority in southern Italy during the first few years of its existence, was effectively over by 1865. But the Palermo revolt represented a most unwelcome outburst of precisely the same kind of politically motivated activity and extremes which the brigands' war had witnessed. Taking advantage of the weakened authority of Italy's rulers after the humiliating recent defeats by Austria, those who perpetrated the action comprised the familiar unlikely alliance of radicals, clerics, and other people dismissed by the government as 'brigands': impoverished peasants, escaped prisoners, army deserters, former Bourbon employees, and Sicilian autonomists. United by their hostility to rule from Florence, the rebels succeeded in overthrowing the local administration and establishing a provisional government which provided some form of order in the city before the Italian army arrived from the mainland and restored the central government's control.[13]

In Florence, Ricasoli sought to deny that there was any political motivation behind the outrages which took place that week, when Elliot questioned the Italian prime minister on the matter. Even in his instructions to General Cadorna, who led the military campaign to restore order in Sicily, and who was himself convinced of the political motives behind the revolt, Ricasoli insisted that there were 'no political crimes in the Palermo events'.[14] But Elliot was able to present a different picture to the Foreign Office, thanks to the detailed information provided by John Goodwin, the British consul in the city, who witnessed some of the upheaval and atrocities at first hand, having been woken one morning to the sound of gunfire.

[13] L. Riall, *Sicily and the Unification of Italy: Liberal Policy and Local Power, 1859–1866* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 198–9.

[14] Riall, *Sicily and the Unification of Italy*, pp. 204–5.

Goodwin explained that the supposedly apolitical rebels had marched around the city carrying images of saints and had hoisted a large red flag in the city centre. After hearing radical and reactionary cries alongside one another, Goodwin concluded that the rising was indicative of the general Sicilian hostility to Italian rule.[15] Although the revolt did not result in a total sack of the city, it was not without pillage and atrocities; Elliot stated that some reports of the horrors would have been beyond belief, had they not been vouched for by Cadorna, one victim allegedly being 'bitten to death' in a manner which defied description. The complicity of monks and nuns was undoubted, and in allying themselves with the 'low and savage population' they were in part responsible for acts which would 'disgrace any age or country'. Although the revolt was generally designated as being reactionary, the originators appeared to be the Mazzinian republicans, profiting from discontent throughout the island. The malcontents had overcome their differences to proclaim a provisional government comprising well-known local men who professed innocence when the army arrived.[16] Elliot explained this as the natural result of the 'in-justice' and 'spoliation' forced on the island by the Italian government's policies of 'Piedmontisation' and military conscription, which had been enforced on Sicily and the southern mainland irrespective of the wishes of the people. The Scottish diplomat described the Sicilians as being a 'nation' in their own right and observed astutely that the islanders remained Sicilian before they were Italian.[17]

The Kingdom of Italy's Search for International Respectability

The Palermo revolt of 1866 was the most serious challenge to the authority of the Italian state since the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. Moreover, it was the most dramatic single episode in which opposition to the new state was manifested by its various opponents, who were evidently willing to work together and capable of doing so with such great effect. It was not, however, anywhere near as serious as the chaotic

[15] John Goodwin, 'Seven Days of Disturbance in Palermo', 9 October 1866, copy enclosed in Elliot to Stanley, 13 October 1866, TNA, FO 45/90.

[16] Elliot to Stanley, 30 September 1866, TNA, FO 45/89.

[17] Elliot to Stanley, 22 September 1866, TNA, FO 45/89.

outcome of Garibaldi's final attempt to march on Rome in 1867; this event caused considerable concern at Stanley's Foreign Office, because it raised the prospect of the Kingdom of Italy's destruction. Under the terms of the September Convention of 1864, which had seen Italy transfer its seat of government from Turin to Florence in apparent renunciation of its claims on Rome, the French were bound to withdraw their garrison from the Eternal City. Two years on from the signing of the pact, Paris complied with this aim, irrespective of the remonstrations of Pope Pius IX and Catholic opinion in France. In this new climate, the pontiff enquired of Odo Russell, the British minister at Rome, if Lord Stanley intended to conduct British foreign policy in the same spirit as Palmerston had done with regard to encouraging reform overseas. Russell responded 'in the affirmative', emphasising the advantages of representative government over absolutism.[18] In the eyes of Britain, France, and Italy, Pius IX's trenchant opposition to governmental reform rendered the Roman territory susceptible to revolution, even though no such thing stirred there at all during the 1860s. Earlier in the decade, Palmerston and Russell had sought to encourage the French to leave Rome. In the absence of success on that score, they had sought to encourage cross-border cooperation between France and Italy against the politically motivated brigandage which beleaguered the rural territories on the Italian side of the frontier. As foreign secretary, Clarendon had subsequently attempted to encourage Italy and the Papacy to come to some degree of understanding on various matters, but the Italians' readiness to participate was not reciprocated by the Papal regime.[19] The absence of any solution left the Roman Question festering, and it was Stanley who found himself confronted with the prospect of Italian unification being undone as a result.

At the end of the Austro-Prussian War, Napoléon III had sought to free himself not only from his temporary Venetian embarrassment, but also of his responsibility to protect the Papacy. He had already succeeded in getting the Italians to agree to an apparent renunciation of their claim on Rome through the signing of the September Convention in 1864 and the transfer of their capital to Florence in 1865. He had sought to have the

[18] Odo Russell to Clarendon, 22 January 1866, *The Roman Question: Extracts from the Despatches of Odo Russell from Rome 1858–70*, ed. N. Blakiston (London: Chapman and Hall, 1962), pp. 320–2.

[19] Elliot to Clarendon, 17 January 1866, TNA, FO 45/85.

matter brought before an international conference, but the Italians declined to countenance the plan, preferring instead to await the scheduled withdrawal of the French garrison in December 1866.[20] Those who awaited the departure of the French troops most eagerly, however, were King Vittorio Emanuele and the radical party in Italy. At the end of the Austro-Prussian War, Pius IX had remarked to the Austrian ambassador that perhaps the Italian acquisition of Venice would bring about 'a stay of execution' for Rome.[21] On the contrary, the Italian king appears to have taken the Italian acquisition of Venice as an encouragement to assume a more bellicose position regarding Rome, irrespective of the fact that Italy could scarcely claim to have been victorious in its war against Austria, nor to have gained possession of Venice through any spontaneous pro-Italian enthusiasm on the part of the Venetians. He caused a stir during his ceremonial entry into the city in November 1866, by proclaiming publicly that foreign power was disappearing from the Italian peninsula, and that:

> Italy is made, even if she is not complete; now it behoves the Italians to consider how to defend her and make her prosperous and great.[22]

The statement contained an ominous indication of what was in store once the French had withdrawn their soldiers from Rome. Elliot, who was not unaccustomed to hearing the king's warlike rhetoric, was suitably struck by the remark to enquire of Visconti Venosta, the Italian foreign minister, whether it reflected the feelings of the king or the actual policy of the Italian government. Visconti Venosta's reply was to declare that the king's speech had been the first he had heard of it, and that Vittorio Emanuele liked to make brash statements with the intention of impressing the public; he added that it was not worth attaching too much importance to them. When Elliot went to see the Italian prime minister, he received the impression from Ricasoli that while Italy had not renounced its claim upon Rome, the country was quite prepared to wait for the right time in order to claim its rightful capital.[23]

[20] Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', p. 79.

[21] S. Jacini, *Il tramonto del Potere Temporale nelle relazioni degli ambasciatori austriaci a Roma 1860–70* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1931), p. 191.

[22] Qtd by Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', p. 80.

[23] Elliot to Stanley, 16 November 1866, TNA, FO 45/90.

Anxious over what the consequences of his withdrawal from Roman territory might be, however, the French emperor endeavoured to secure the status quo between the Kingdom of Italy and the Papal State by establishing some kind of international guarantee for the security of the pope. When Napoléon failed in this regard, it became necessary for his foreign minister, Lionel de Moustier, to announce that the withdrawal of the French army from Rome did not amount to a withdrawal of French protection of the pope.[24] The French sought also to improve relations between the Kingdom of Italy and the Papacy, by seeking to persuade the Italians to renounce their claim to Rome. In this regard he failed, but not without succeeding in inducing them to send another mission to the pope in the hope of establishing a modus vivendi between the two countries. In accordance, the Ricasoli government took steps to send the right signals to the Catholic world. While out of office, the former foreign secretary Lord Clarendon sought in a private capacity to encourage the effort by paying a visit to the Italian prime minister. In December 1866, he wrote from Florence to tell Gladstone that he had enjoyed two long conversations with Ricasoli, whom he found to be 'conciliatory and rightminded' on Roman affairs. Clarendon was pleased to find that the Italian government was attempting to repeat the Vegezzi mission to the Papacy, which had sought to reach an agreement in 1865, initially intending to send the same official before poor health forced Vegezzi to retire, and the moderate Piedmontese liberal Michelangelo Tonello was nominated as a negotiator instead.[25] However, with the Italian state's laws effecting the suppression of religious institutions taking effect in 1866, the climate was by no means propitious for Tonello succeeding where Vegezzi had failed. When Clarendon met with Pius IX at the end of the year, he observed: 'They are curious, these Italians, with their pretention to make Italy without my consent!' When Clarendon replied that he should 'Give it to them', the pope claimed only to believe in Providence, provoking the Englishman to quip that Providence could indeed work miracles, but that those witnessed in recent years had been 'all in favour of Italy'.[26]

[24] Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', p. 85.

[25] Clarendon to Gladstone, 4 December 1866 (from Florence), Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44133.

[26] G. Martina, *Pio IX (1867–78)* (Rome: La Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1990), p. 9.

With no sign of a peaceful accord in sight, Elliot kept a keen eye on developments in Italy as the withdrawal of the French troops approached. He noted that the Italian government was instructing its provincial prefects to ensure the prompt repression of any agitation which might arise in any part of the country upon the departure of the French. In a move aimed at reassuring international opinion, a copy of the Italian government's circular was made available to foreign governments.[27] From Rome, even Odo Russell was able to provide an optimistic picture of the new situation. The withdrawal of the French force took place peacefully, and the pope did not leave Rome as some had feared; he remained at the Vatican protected by his own personal army of 11,000 men. Russell suggested that although the pope continued to refuse to recognise the Kingdom of Italy, his cause appeared to be weakening, and his position of intransigence slowly altering; he had accepted the Italian state's partial payment of the pontifical debt in de facto recognition of the Kingdom of Italy's annexation of the Papal Legations of central Italy in 1860, while also permitting his bishops to accept Ricasoli's invitation that they return to their vacant dioceses. All this, Russell deduced, amounted to evidence that Pius IX was showing some signs of coming to terms with the Italians.[28]

There was also evidence that after playing a warmongering role when forging its marriage of convenience with Prussia in 1866, the Italian government was seeking to present a new front to the world. When in early 1867 the Eastern Question caused much discussion among the Great Powers, the Ricasoli government showed itself determined to repair Italy's image in international affairs. The Eastern Question concerned control of the eastern Mediterranean as the Ottoman Empire receded, and the Austrians, Russians and Greeks—and a number of other emergent nationalities in the Balkans—sought to fill the void. Naturally, the new Italian kingdom aimed to establish itself as an important player in the Mediterranean, and Ricasoli's government attempted to use the crisis to this end. Seeking to be involved, and hoping to win the respect and confidence of other powers, the Italians stated they would do all they could 'by a pacific and liberal policy to prevent a war on the matter', and advised

[27] Elliot enclosed a copy of it in his despatch of 20 November 1866, TNA, FO 45/90.
[28] Odo Russell to Stanley, 31 December 1866, *The Roman Question*, pp. 340–2.

the Turks to do adopt 'a policy of concession'. However, Emanuele d'Azeglio, the Italian envoy in London, made Italian ambitions clear when he told Stanley that Italy desired to exercise the influence to which it had a right, and which its geographical position made it important for it to maintain.[29] The move did as much to reveal Italy's intention to assert its claim to Great Power status as much as to win British respect by acting in a pacific and dignified manner. Shortly afterwards, the Luxembourg Question brought France and Prussia into confrontation and resulted in the summoning of an international conference during April 1867. Here too the Ricasoli government sought to repair Italy's reputation. The Italians declared themselves bound by their ties of gratitude to both the French and the Prussians, and were consequently unwilling to take either side. They stated their intention to act alongside any steps taken at either London,[30] or Paris, or Berlin to preserve the peace.[31] The result of Ricasoli's efforts was to gain some recognition from the existing Great Powers when the French, Prussians, Austrians, and Russians all agreed to admit them to the conference.[32] As soon as this good work was achieved, however, old British suspicions over Italian intentions were raised when Lord Cowley, the British ambassador at Paris, informed London that some form of negotiation was under way between the French and Italians. Italian professions of neutrality notwithstanding, Cowley alleged that in the event of war, Italy would offer France some 70,000 men, in return for which the struggling kingdom would receive a subsidy of 500,000,000 Francs. Whether true or not, the rumours were reminiscent of the devious Italy of old, and the British foreign secretary was sure that the Italians would not engage in such a deal unless some other advantage—such as the acquisition of Rome—were forthcoming.[33] King Vittorio Emanuele was indeed seeking an alliance with the French emperor in the hope of further expanding his realm. Before they received any official confirmation of that fact, however, Britain's suspicions of Italy's motives were compounded when Garibaldi made his final attempt to conquer Rome.

[29] Stanley to Elliot, 9 March 1867, TNA, FO 170/143.
[30] Stanley to Elliot, 23 April 1867, TNA, FO 170/143.
[31] Hammond (for Stanley) to Elliot (telegram), 26 April 1867, TNA, FO 170/143.
[32] Hammond (for Stanley) to Elliot (telegram), 6 May 1867, TNA, FO 170/143.
[33] Cowley to Stanley, 29 April 1867, copy enclosed in Stanley to Elliot, 1 May 1867, TNA, FO 170/143.

The Garibaldian Crisis of 1867

There was, then, some reason for uncertainty regarding the Kingdom of Italy's position in international affairs. Indeed, as far back as 1865 Elliot had stated that he no longer feared the formation of a government of the Left—Rattazzi's faction, which had caused so much trouble by colluding with Garibaldi in 1862—because he had reason to believe that it had become more moderate and that its leaders would no longer 'wildly knock their heads either against the stones of Venice or the walls of Rome'.[34] With the former removed from the equation, their intentions regarding the latter would be put to the test after December 1866, when the time came for the French to leave Rome and for the Papal Zouaves to resume their historic duty of protecting the pope. The transfer passed off quietly enough, but it was not long before it became clear that the Italian king, who had fired Minghetti for signing the September Convention with France in 1864, had no intention of keeping to the agreement.[35] In an astonishing sequence of events which repeated those of 1862 remarkably closely, Vittorio Emanuele once again asserted the royal prerogative in order to push aside the competent and moderate Ricasoli and replace him with the adventurous radical Rattazzi. The Ricasoli government was preparing a Free Church Bill which was intended to sell off church lands and divide the proceeds between the Italian and Roman governments, was to despatch the Tonello mission to Rome in the hope of achieving an agreement with the Papal government on such matters as the suppression of brigandage and the establishment of a customs union, and had signed a commercial treaty with Austria.[36] Apparently just as unimpressed with Ricasoli's pragmatic and progressive approach as he had been in 1862, Vittorio Emanuele again forced him to resign in April 1867, and replaced him once more with Rattazzi. The king's interference in politics did not impress Elliot, any more than it had impressed Sir James Hudson back in 1862.

All too predictably, Garibaldi returned to the public sphere at this time, and wrote a statement of intent to the foreign diplomats at Florence. In April 1867, Odo Russell wrote from Rome to inform the foreign secretary

[34] Elliot to Clarendon, 21 December 1865, Bodley, Clarendon Papers, MS Clar. dep. c. 98.

[35] D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 337–8.

[36] Reported by Elliot to Stanley, 24 April 1867, TNA, FO 45/105.

that he had procured a copy of a proclamation by the Roman Garibaldi Committee. It informed the people of the Papal State that the popular hero had accepted 'the command of the expedition to liberate them from the yoke of the priests', and called upon the Romans to be 'ready for action when their leaders call them'.[37] Soon afterwards, Elliot and the other foreign diplomats posted at Florence received personal letters from Garibaldi, in which he declared that in 1849, the Roman Republic had bestowed upon him full powers to defend it from the four foreign armies which marched in to destroy it; he added that he had never abdicated those powers, and that as the legitimate representative of the Roman people, he therefore demanded the evacuation of Rome by the Papal government.[38] The new Rattazzi administration declared its determination to observe the agreement it had made with France.[39] Nonetheless, Edward Herries, who served as the British chargé d'affaires at Florence for several weeks following Elliot's departure to take on the role of ambassador to Constantinople in the summer of 1867, commented that Italy now appeared to be in the hands of nonentities. Herries suggested that Pompeo Campello, whom Rattazzi appointed as his foreign minister, appeared 'so entirely ignorant' of foreign affairs that conversation with him was useless.[40] When Sir Augustus Paget arrived to succeed Elliot as British envoy extraordinary to Italy in August 1867, he expressed himself 'delighted' with his reception in Italy, and noted that Rattazzi appeared 'to be the head and tail of the whole machine'.[41] The king and Rattazzi, evidently, aimed to control affairs, hoping that if encouraged, the Romans would rise against the Papal regime. Under the threat of revolution, the Italian army would then be sent to Rome on the pretext of crushing the revolt in a manner not unlike Cavour's occupation of central Italy in 1859; in one swift stroke, they would simultaneously destroy the revolutionaries and annex the city to Italy. By encouraging Garibaldi to embark upon another march on Rome, the Italian government also hoped to persuade the French that the great Italian nationalist would never rest until Italy took possession of its natural capital. The way was therefore set for a repeat of

[37] Odo Russell to Stanley, 6 April 1867, *The Roman Question*, p. 343.
[38] Elliot to Stanley, 26 April 1866, TNA, FO 45/105.
[39] Elliot to Stanley, 18 April 1866, TNA, FO 45/105.
[40] Herries to Clarendon, 8 August 1867, cited in D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 343.
[41] Paget to Stanley, 17 August 1867 (copy), Paget Papers, BL, Add. Ms 51220.

the collusion of Vittorio Emanuele and Rattazzi with Garibaldi and his volunteers, which had tipped Italy into the embarrassing events of 1862.[42]

While maintaining an outward appearance of respectability, the Rattazzi government permitted Garibaldi to begin touring the country again and to visit Switzerland, that notorious nineteenth-century haven for political activists. As he did so, Garibaldi publicly spoke out in the harshest possible terms against the Papal government. As in 1862, the British government was kept well informed of preparations for the Garibaldian expedition by the British consular staff in Italy. In July, Paget twice wrote to London to inform the government that Henry de Thierry, the acting British consul in the city, had observed that preparations were under way for another move on Rome.[43] When Garibaldi returned to Italy in September 1867, Rattazzi made a show of having him arrested. Optimistically, Herries wrote that the quietness of Italian affairs during the nine months since the French departure from Rome indicated that the Italian people had not lost their desire to make the city their national capital, but that they sought a peaceful rather than violent solution to the Roman Question.[44] Perhaps predictably, the Italian authorities then contrived to let Garibaldi escape his captivity and rejoin the followers who had been preparing to undertake their expedition without him. During the autumn, a familiar sense of crisis developed. Foreign governments began to express their concerns that Garibaldi was again being allowed to recruit volunteers, but Rattazzi made excuses to rebuff the allegations. When pressed for information by Paget, however, the Italian prime minister suggested that an insurrection was about to break out in Rome, omitting to mention that the revolutionaries had been provided with funds and arms by his government.[45]

By October 1867, Garibaldi was ready to march, making his intentions clear by embarking from Genoa directly for the Lazio coast. The Italian government instructed Nigra, the Italian minister in Paris, to inform the Emperor Napoléon that Florence could not sit by and watch Garibaldians overthrow the Papal government and install a new republican administration. The French had already stated unequivocally that Italian forces were

[42] D. Mack Smith, *Italy and its Monarchy* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 39.

[43] Paget to Stanley, 18 and 22 July 1867, TNA, FO 45/106.

[44] Herries to Stanley, 30 September 1867, FO 45/107.

[45] Paget to Stanley, 14 October 1867, cited in Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento*, pp. 344–5.

not to be permitted to enter Roman territory,[46] but Rattazzi informed the French foreign ministry that they would do so. Paget thought Italy to be surprisingly calm under the circumstances, noting that the people in general were quiet even though the Rattazzi government was permitting the rebels to prepare an attack upon the Papal State. As in 1862, the fact that the Italian government was working in collusion with the volunteers was probably the worst-kept secret in Europe, looking as they were to exploit the revolutionaries as a means of asserting Italy's right to assume the role of 'protector' of the pope and the 'preserver' of order in Rome. Rattazzi admitted to Paget that it would be possible to terminate the situation by shooting the revolutionaries, but that such a strategy would 'not get rid of the question'. He insisted that the Roman people would rise as soon as the revolutionaries entered their territory, and that it was necessary for the Italian army to be despatched to Rome so as to prevent a Garibaldian republic from being established.[47]

At Paris, Napoléon III came under pressure to send the French army in defence of the Papacy. The absence of any spontaneous rising on the part of the Roman population strengthened this case. Rattazzi hoped to prevent the French from intervening by using the Italian army to restore order without compromising papal sovereignty. As the crisis mounted, Emanuele d'Azeglio, the Italian minister in London, went to see Lord Stanley every day in the hope of securing assistance from the British government.[48] Stanley began by expressing his regret over the position in which the Italian government found itself with regard to France and also with regard to its own people in the event of a renewed French occupation. Initially, however, and in stark contrast to his predecessors Palmerston and Russell, he stated that he held 'a strong opinion as to the impolicy of offering advice which was neither asked for nor likely to be followed'. He based his refusal to interfere on the grounds that:

> [T]he Emperor of the French would not adopt a course so much at variance with his wellknown [sic] feelings towards Italy and with his own former policy as would be involved in a reoccupation of Rome, without reasons which to me appeared of paramount importance and urgency.

[46] Fane to Stanley, 19 September 1867, TNA, FO 27/1667.
[47] Paget to Stanley, 14 October 1867, TNA, FO 45/107.
[48] Stanley to Paget, 21 October 1867, Paget Papers, Add. Ms 51220.

Stanley also pointed to his poor understanding of the nature of events unfolding in the Papal State. Paget had stated that information was coming into the British Legation so thick and fast as to make it quite impossible to know precisely what was going on, and the foreign secretary claimed to be in no position 'to volunteer any formal and official tender of advice to the French government'.[49] In any case, the French were resolved to intervene. Julian Fane, the British chargé d'affaires at Paris, wrote to inform the Foreign Office that any violation of Roman territory by the Italian army would be considered a casus belli for war by France.[50] From Florence, Paget reported Rattazzi's announcement that his government would do everything it could to prevent revolutionary incursions into Papal territory and that the Italian army would not cross the frontier unless events in Rome necessitated such a move. At the same time, however, the prime minister added worryingly that it was 'not possible' to restrain the 'popular movement' in Italy, and that his government would not adopt a reactionary policy; Rattazzi stated that he preferred foreign to civil wars.[51] Suddenly, the inactive British Foreign Office was presented with the real prospect of war between France, its friend and rival, and the Kingdom of Italy, with which Britain's foreign relations had become so closely identified during the 1860s.

This latest war-scare produced expressions of support for Italy's position in the British press. For example, *The Times* carried almost daily reports on the unfolding of events during late October and early November 1867, accounts of the anti-Italian statements published in the French press, and its own open defence of the Kingdom of Italy's position. It also published letters from the public pledging moral and financial support for Garibaldi and his followers.[52] The threat of war between France and Italy was taken seriously by Fane in Paris, who warned Stanley that 'French troops might be expected in Turin within a week after the passage of the Pope's frontier by the troops of Italy'.[53] Stanley acknowledged that both he and Rattazzi were in 'positions of extreme difficulty', and he wrote to Paget in length regarding his concerns over the situation. Indeed, Stanley's

[49] Stanley to Fane, 16 October 1867, TNA, FO 27/1655.
[50] Fane to Stanley, 18 October 1867, TNA, FO 27/1668.
[51] Paget to Stanley, 18 October 1867 (telegram), TNA, FO 45/107.
[52] For example, see *The Times*, 1 November 1867.
[53] Fane to Stanley, 18 October 1869, TNA, FO 27/1668.

words reveal the concerns held by the Conservative government in London, not only for the independence and integrity of the Italy, but also for the stability of the polity by which it was governed. He told Paget that in Britain:

> the feeling began by being hostile to Garibaldi's attempt, as premature and dangerous; then came a reaction of sympathy; and now all thought of Rome is lost in the more serious consideration, what is to become of [Italian] unity. Can the monarchy survive, if it gives way? Can the Kingdom be held together, if it persists at the cost of war? I think you are quite right in the utterly confused state of affairs to hear as much as say as little as possible. It is quite safe to express personal sympathy with Italy, and regret at the proposed intervention; but I do not like to do more, lest hopes should be created which cannot be realised. I still hope that by prudence an actual collision may be avoided. And I do not think Napoléon can really desire to undo the one successful work of his empire—Italy.[54]

Nonetheless, Stanley had Fane let the French government know that its reoccupation of Rome 'would produce a very unfavourable effect' in Britain, and that it was for the emperor and his advisors to consider what importance they might attach to such a result.[55] Under French pressure, the Italian king agreed to take measures to see that all volunteers in Italy were arrested and prevented from reaching Rome. In response, the French delayed the embarkation of their troops.

It is worthwhile to compare the Conservative reaction to the threat of a European war sparked by the Garibaldian expedition of 1867 with the attitude of the Liberal government amid similar fears in 1862. In the midst of the crisis, the Italians turned to Britain in the hope of securing some form of assistance, and found Stanley surprisingly favourable, considering his dogmatic regard for the principle of non-intervention. When Emanuele d'Azeglio approached the foreign secretary to enquire if Britain might use its 'good offices' at Paris to prevent the French from making the crossing of the Roman frontier a casus belli for a French declaration of war,[56] the British reply was positive.[57] Stanley departed somewhat from his position of

[54] Stanley to Paget, 21 October 1867, Paget Papers, BL, Add. Ms 51220.
[55] Stanley to Fane, 19 October 1867, TNA, FO 27/1655.
[56] Stanley to Paget, 28 October 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.
[57] Egerton (for Stanley) to Paget, 28 October 1867 (telegram), TNA, FO 170/144.

neutrality when admitting to d'Azeglio that the pressure placed on Italy by France seemed unfair, and that Italy possessed the 'almost unanimous sympathy' of Great Britain, which would be favourable to the Italian cause should war break out. Moreover, he praised the King of Italy's wisdom in yielding to the demands made upon him, even if they had not been made in a manner appropriate to an independent state. Nonetheless, Stanley was careful to point out that sympathy did not necessarily imply material support, and commended Vittorio Emanuele on his sensible decision to comply with French demands to halt the expedition. The disparity between the power of France and that of Italy, he observed, was so great that it was 'impossible to doubt that the cause of Italian Unity and of the Monarchy itself might be seriously endangered by an unnecessary war'.[58] When asked by the Prussians what line Britain would take if there were war between France and Italy, Stanley replied that although reluctant to take sides:

> the sympathies of this Country would be warmly engaged on behalf of the weaker and younger Power in which from its creation England had taken a strong interest; and all diplomatic means would be employed to bring the quarrel should it unhappily arise to an early and honourable conclusion.[59]

Thus, while stressing that the British government would not look favourably upon the Kingdom of Italy should it adopt a course of action which would provoke a European war, he nonetheless revealed his administration's concern for the integrity of the new Italian state. He made no secret of the fact that Britain's sympathy lay with Italy; he made it clear that he was prepared to use British diplomatic influence to aid Italy should the need arise; and his suggestion that Britain's Italy did not necessarily imply material support did not absolutely rule out the prospect of the British taking military action to preserve Italian unification. From a foreign secretary so renowned for upholding the principle of non-intervention, Stanley's policy was remarkably partisan.

When the French threatened to return their troops to Rome to defend the Papal State, Vittorio Emanuele and his ministers responded that they had tried to halt Garibaldi, but that national feeling ran so high they could not risk using force against him on Italian soil; therefore, they would allow

[58] Stanley to Paget, 22 October 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.
[59] Stanley to Paget, 23 October 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.

his volunteers to enter the papal territory before crushing them, thereby saving both the royal dynasty and Papal independence.[60] At this point, the French lost their patience with the Italians and despatched their own force to the Papal State. The French army departed its home territory on 26 October 1867, the same day that Garibaldi and his volunteers entered the Papal State. In an emergency meeting of the Italian cabinet, Rattazzi insisted that Italy could not tolerate a French invasion but should itself advance on Rome and assert its own position as the protector of the pope. Faced with the now very real prospect of war with France, the Italian government fractured; Rattazzi, now completely out of his depth, resigned. He was replaced on 27 October by the king's favourite General Menabrea, who formed a government of ultra-royalists. When the French army landed near Rome, the Italian army was ordered to enter Papal territory, but was immediately forbidden to do so by the French government. As Garibaldi and his volunteers marched on Rome, they did so under the impression that the Italian government and army would support them. Their betrayal condemned them to slaughter at Mentana on 3 November. Some 3000 volunteers lost their lives in the carnage, and the Kingdom of Italy had another national tragedy to add to its list of woes. For their part, the Romans failed to provide the expected anti-Papal revolt on account of bad weather.[61]

The prospect of war between France and Italy became a serious cause for concern at the Foreign Office. This was not only on account of its potential consequences for Europe, but also because of its possible impact upon the fragile Italian state. The new Italian government ordered its forces to cross the Papal frontier and occupy strategic points in Roman territory while avoiding engagement with the French. By the time that Garibaldi had almost reached Rome, the French had reentered the city. Under pressure from the Italians, who requested that the British use their influence to deter France from making war on Italy, Stanley again let slip his idealistic commitment to non-intervention. Although he stressed that the British would only act in the event of an imminent threat of war, once again the foreign secretary failed to rule out absolutely the possibility of

[60] D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 346.

[61] Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento*, p. 348.

British intervention.[62] And on this occasion, the Conservative foreign secretary did intervene on behalf of the Italians. In the instructions he sent to Lord Lyons, the new British ambassador to France, Stanley ordered Lyons to express to the French government Britain's sympathy for Italy, and to warn of the likely bad feeling that any French declaration of war upon Italy would have. Lyons was told to 'deprecate in the strongest terms consistent with friendship and courtesy the making of war by the French Government upon Italy'.[63] In Florence, Paget assured Menabrea that Italy possessed Britain's friendship and moral support, and confirmed that the British government would attempt to prevent the French from declaring war.[64] In response, the French foreign minister, de Moustier, told Lyons that France was determined to avoid any conflict with Italy, and Lyons could not detect from him any evidence of a desire to do otherwise.[65] During the period in which the French and Italian armies were both located within Papal territory, they succeeded in avoiding engagement with one another. The French never met the Italians, engaging only with the Garibaldians at Mentana.

The Condition of Italy in the Aftermath of Mentana

For a few months following the defeat of Garibaldi's last march on Rome, the Kingdom of Italy looked desperately fragile. The French government of Napoléon III, beholden as he was to the anti-Italian sentiments of Catholic opinion and the military, saw little prospect of being able to escape its commitment to the protection of the Papacy. And in Italy, the climate remained volatile. There had been nationalist demonstrations in certain parts of the country prior to Garibaldi's defeat, including the former capital Turin.[66] The role of King Vittorio Emanuele in the national disaster that ensued, however, stimulated some talk of his

[62] Stanley to Paget, 31 October 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.

[63] The Italians asked the British to make the representation a second time, but as Lyons had already done it, Stanley thought it pointless to repeat; Stanley to Paget, 4 November 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.

[64] Paget to Stanley, 28 October 1867, TNA, FO 45/108 and Stanley to Paget, 28 October 1867, FO 170/144.

[65] Lyons to Stanley, 1 November 1867 (private), Derby Papers, Liverpool Record Office [hereafter LRO], France, III, 920 DER (15) 12/1/10.

[66] Paget to Stanley, 30 October 1867, TNA, FO 45/107.

abdication, and republican demonstrations took place in Turin, Milan, and elsewhere.[67] In desperation, General Menabrea opportunistically sought to bring about a French withdrawal by insisting upon the immediate restoration of the September Convention. His appeal for British support in this aim was answered positively by Paget, who hoped for the speedy withdrawal of both occupying forces. On 5 November, however, Lord Lyons reported from Paris that the tone of the French newspapers was bitter and uncompromising towards Italy, that orders had been sent to transfer troops from North Africa to Civitavecchia, and that a large force was to be stationed near the Franco-Italian border. The news of Garibaldi's defeat raised some hope that the crisis might be over, and he hoped that Britain would do whatever it could to help both sides out of their predicament. Nonetheless, Lyons foresaw danger in supporting the Italian request that the French promise to withdraw their troops, as Britain might get sucked into conflict should the French agree but then fail to comply. Lyons was also concerned that the French might put pressure on the Italian king to establish a more authoritarian form of government, a move which would be 'abhorrent to English feeling', but which might appear the only option considering the gloomy predicament in which Italy now found itself. It was no secret that there was widespread discontent with the present system among all classes of Italians, who might now be 'much inclined to try a Republic'. The survival of the monarchy perhaps depended upon the Italian army, the loyalty of which might also be in doubt in the light of recent disasters. Lyons was concerned that:

> If the present order of things be subverted, the maintenance of the unity of Italy will apparently be impossible—and it is to be remembered that although the Emperor Napoléon is thought to be now friendly to the maintenance of the unity, public opinion in France generally, and not least among the entourage of H.I.M., is very adverse to it. In fact, in the opinion of people here who ought to be well informed, there is (with or without a French war) a risk of a break up in Italy.[68]

[67] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 42.

[68] Lyons to Stanley, 5 November 1867 (private), Derby Papers, LRO, France, III, 920 DER (15) 12/1/10.

When Lyons raised the issue of the French withdrawal from Rome with de Moustier, the foreign minister condescendingly replied that although the emperor desired to recall his troops at the earliest opportunity, an immediate evacuation of Rome might prove no less perilous to the king than to the pope.[69]

The Emperor Napoléon might have done his best to avoid sending French troops back to Rome,[70] but after Mentana, not only did the Roman Question return to the forefront of international politics but the Italian Question itself reemerged. During November and December 1867, Napoléon sought to alleviate himself of the responsibility by putting the issue before the international community; it seemed that his best hope of extracting himself from the situation lay in some form of international guarantee, such as those which had ensured the independence of Belgium in 1839 and Luxembourg in 1867. Even before the departure of his troops for Rome, he had begun to talk of a conference.[71] From the beginning, however, the scheme was controversial. It seemed unlikely that the Papacy would take kindly to the participation of non-Catholic powers; to establish a meaningful international guarantee, the plan would require the involvement of Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia. An all-Catholic conference would be dangerous for Italy. It would most likely demand the restitution of the Papal territories annexed to the new kingdom in 1860, which would do nothing to resolve the problem of Italian nationalism. Any agreement that satisfied the pope would probably put an end to Italian hopes of ever gaining Rome. Furthermore, any solution which advanced the national unity of Italy was never going to be accepted by Pius IX. Almost immediately upon his arrival at the Paris embassy, Lord Lyons was acquainted with the French plan for Italy by de Moustier. The aim was to create an environment in which the Kingdom of Italy and the Papal State could coexist and cooperate. A customs union was proposed so that there could be free movement of persons across the border, so that there would be no requirement for travellers to carry passports, and so that the responsibility of maintaining order within the Papal territory could be entrusted to Italian soldiers in a manner in which 'the national aspirations for unity might be reconciled with the maintenance of the sovereignty and the

[69] Lyons to Stanley, 7 November 1867, TNA, FO 27/1669.
[70] Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', pp. 119–20.
[71] Fane to Stanley, 25 October 1867, TNA, FO 27/1669.

independence of the Pope'.[72] Such a proposal was not far removed from those put forward by Palmerston and Russell during the early 1860s, none of which had proved acceptable to Napoléon III at that time. Naturally, the Foreign Office became suspicious over French motives. Although by no means opposed to establishing a modus vivendi by which Italy would be pacified, Stanley was reluctant to participate in a conference which might result in an unsatisfactory agreement for Italy or which would, most likely, not achieve any solution at all. Nor was Bismarck inclined to participate, having no faith that either Italy or the Papacy would abide by such an agreement; in fact, the Prussian chancellor hinted that Britain and Prussia might scupper the conference by agreeing to refuse to participate in it.[73]

Such reluctance suited Stanley, not least because of the concerns harboured at London over the true nature of French ambitions for Italy. Throughout November and December, the British avoided the issue and hoped to kill it through inaction. In doing so, they had to dodge the efforts of the Italian government to draw Britain into the negotiations. When asked by General Menabrea, the new prime minister, if he might propose the completion of Italian unification by awarding the Papal State to Italy, Stanley declared that he could not possibly 'take the initiative' in proposing a plan for the settlement of the Roman Question.[74] The inclination of Palmerston and Russell to propose abortive schemes at the beginning of the decade was perhaps remembered in Italy, as Stanley's refusal did not deter Menabrea from seeking British help in reviving Russell's erstwhile scheme that the Papal State might be annexed to Italy, while the pontiff retained sovereignty over the Leonine City. Ultimately Paget, whose patience was often short and who frequently resorted to bluntness, accused the Italian premier and the French emperor of finding themselves both in a position of 'extreme difficulty and embarrassment', and were searching for a third party to step forward and lead them out of it. Paget warned that when pulling other peoples' chestnuts out of the fire 'one ought to be careful not to burn one's own fingers'.[75] Stanley was, however, eager to encourage the French to leave Rome again, and when the

[72] Lyons to Stanley, 12 October 1867, TNA, FO 27/1669.

[73] Loftus to Stanley, 2 November 1867, FO 64/624, cited by Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question' pp. 123–4.

[74] Stanley to Paget, 7 November 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.

[75] Paget to Stanley, 9 November 1867, TNA, FO 45/108.

Italians sent General La Marmora to Paris to request the restoration of the September Convention, he appealed to the French government to withdraw.[76] Pragmatically, he suggested that they might at least remove their garrison from Rome to Civitavecchia, 'where their presence would be less calculated to arouse angry feelings'. Stanley's pragmatic analysis of the situation was that the pope's own troops would be capable of preventing revolution in Rome and that the French, having demonstrated the extent of their determination to protect Pius IX, could surely rely on the Italian government to suppress any future volunteer activities. However, when asked to propose a solution to the Roman Question, Stanley returned to form, stating that 'With every friendly wish to render friendly services' to the Italian government, it was 'impossible' for the British to take the initiative 'in proposing a plan for settlement of Roman Question'.[77] When Menabrea pressed the issue at Florence, to Stanley's satisfaction Paget similarly discouraged the idea.[78] Ultimately, when the prospect of an international conference was raised to resolve the issue, the foreign secretary warned that the Italians could not be too cautious in entering into negotiations from which they could not expect a favourable result.[79]

In the absence of French compliance with the request that they leave Rome, the Italians refused to contemplate participating in a conference with a clear basis of departure from the start. Consequently, when the French issued a formal circular to the Great Powers of Europe on 9 November 1867, inviting them to a congress intended to resolve the Roman Question, the proposal was scotched by London, Berlin, St Petersburg, and Florence. Bismarck had, in anticipation, declined to take part on the grounds that the difficulties to be overcome were insuperable, while the Russian government refused to participate in a conference without a basis.[80] Even the Austrians gave little reason to hope that the project would succeed, Vienna agreeing to participate but refusing to make any proposals.[81] Only Spain was wholeheartedly in favour. Both the Papal State and the Kingdom of Italy applied conditions which made each

[76] Stanley to Paget, 7 November 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.
[77] Stanley to Paget, 7 November 1867 (telegram), TNA, FO 170/144.
[78] Stanley to Paget, 18 November 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.
[79] Stanley to Paget, 9 December 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.
[80] Loftus to Stanley, 8 November 1867, TNA, FO 64/624 and Stuart to Stanley, 16 November 1867, TNA, FO 65/728, qtd by Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', pp. 127–8.
[81] Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', p 128.

other's acceptance virtually impossible. In Rome, Pius IX's secretary of state Cardinal Antonelli told Odo Russell that the only solution the pope could admit 'was the unconditional restitution of the provinces and property of the Holy See of which it had been robbed … by the Piedmontese'.[82] In mid-November, Lyons had a long conversation with the French emperor, in which he stated some of Britain's objections to participation, as well as the absence of a basis for discussion. He understood Napoléon's intention to be to find some way of preserving the temporal power while securing the assimilation of the Papal State into the Kingdom of Italy, that the pope should remain at Rome as a sovereign while his subjects acquired the rights and privileges of Italian subjects, and that the responsibility for the protection of his person should be passed from France to Italy. The emperor added that neither the pope nor the Italians were reasonable, and the conversation was difficult because it took place in a crowded room at a dinner party.[83] Lord Stanley considered it 'sensible and satisfactory' to leave the settling of the matter to the French and Italian governments, but expressed concern over one fundamental problem: that the views of those two respective governments differed altogether.[84] He did not hold out much hope for a conference either, writing to Lyons on 20 November: 'It seems to me that all Europe is pretty nearly in the same mind as to the inutility [sic] of a conference without base'.[85] The French requested that London postpone answering until Italy had responded, a policy which suited Stanley's instinctive inaction, and the Foreign Office did so accordingly. When it responded, the Italian government agreed to participate on the condition that the French evacuate the Papal State and only if the proposal put forward for discussion was one acceptable to Britain and Prussia. This response angered the French foreign ministry, and once more increased the tensions between the two countries. In a second response, the Italians requested to know where the conference would be held, how Italy was to be treated, how the result was to be settled upon,

[82] Odo Russell to Stanley, 22 November 1867, *The Roman Question: Extracts from the Despatches of Odo Russell from Rome 1858–70*, ed. N. Blakiston (London: Chapman and Hall, 1962), p. 347.

[83] Lyons to Stanley, 16 November 1867 (private), Derby Papers, LRO, France, III, 920 DER (15) 12/1/10.

[84] Stanley to Lyons, 16 November 1867, Lyons Papers, Arundel Castle Archives [hereafter Arundel], Box 179.

[85] Stanley to Lyons, 20 November 1867, Lyons Papers, Arundel, Box 179.

and whether the decision would be advisory or binding upon the parties involved. The Italians also wanted to know whether the discussion would be restricted to the present difficult predicament, or whether the existence of the Kingdom of Italy would be called into question. They implied that the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome remained a condition of their acceptance, one which was consistent with British aims.[86] There was some suggestion that the emperor was prepared to permit the Italians to take possession of the whole Roman territory excluding the Leonine City.[87] At the end of November, the French foreign minister told Lord Lyons that Rome might become a nominal and historic 'capital' of Italy, and while the pope should continue to reside there, Italy might maintain its seat of government at Florence.[88] In the light of these two attractive propositions, the British government made a show of being willing to assist France in establishing the basis for discussion.[89] The Italians could take heart from the fact that the British desire to see the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome was mentioned in the Queen's Speech, to disquiet in France.[90] And any risk that a conference might pose to Italy appeared nullified when the Prussians were determined to ensure through one means or another that the whole plan would be abandoned.[91]

In the event, a debate in the French parliament contrived to quash the possibility at the beginning of December. The imperial government was accused by the Catholic party of betraying the Papacy, when the reactionary statesman Eugène Rouher declared that the pope needed to retain his sovereignty for his spiritual independence. This effectively ended any possibility that an accord might be struck with Italy over Rome.[92] The effect of this news in Italy led Paget to declare that it was now 'quite certain that no surer course could have been adopted to thwart the realisation of that project' so far as the participation of the Italian government was concerned;

[86] Paget to Stanley, 22 November 1867, TNA, FO 45/109.

[87] Lyons to Stanley, 14 November 1867 (private), Derby Papers, LRO, France, III, 920 DER (15) 12/1/10.

[88] Lyons to Stanley, 28 November 1867 (private), Derby Papers, LRO, France, III, 920 DER (15) 12/1/10.

[89] Stanley to Lyons, 30 November 1867, TNA, FO 27/1655.

[90] Lyons to Stanley, 21 November 1867 (private), Derby Papers, LRO, France, III, 920 DER (15) 12/1/10.

[91] Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', p. 139.

[92] Priestley, 'British Policy in the Italian Question', p. 140.

the Rouher speech was regarded in Italy 'as the funeral oration' of the proposed conference.[93] This state of affairs represented a considerable triumph for the Papacy. The French emperor would be forced to retain his force in Rome indefinitely, while the Italians' aspirations regarding Rome had been set back to the position that existed prior to the signing of the September Convention in 1864. From Rome, Odo Russell announced that Rouher's declaration that France would continue to protect Papal independence had been received as 'a great triumph' and made the pope the 'master of the situation' in France.[94] The Emperor Napoléon was furious, and spoke of dismantling the Kingdom of Italy and replacing it with an Italian confederation, which had been his original plan for Italy back in 1858.[95]

At the start of December 1867, Emanuele d'Azeglio, the Italian envoy to London, visited Lord Stanley to inform him of the news that Napoléon III had decided that 'Italian unity would not be maintained'. The emperor had determined to break the Kingdom of Italy into three separate states: northern Italy under Vittorio Emanuele, southern Italy under another Savoyard prince, and the restoration of central Italy to the Papacy.[96] This prospect was almost as alarming to the British government as the recently averted chance of war. Even if the Conservatives had shown little enthusiasm for Italian unification in 1859 or 1860, they had no desire to see the achievements of those years undone. The establishment of a single kingdom stretching the length of the Italian peninsula had been vastly more advantageous to Britain than the French objective of creating a loose grouping of three states in which the Papacy would have remained a potent force, and over which France might well have been able to exert considerable influence. Should the state founded through the aggrandisement of the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1861 now be dismantled, the influence of France in Italy would surely be increased rather than diminished, and the potential for Italy to emerge as a counterbalance to France in southern Europe and the central Mediterranean, as well as a buffer

[93] Paget to Stanley, 7 December 1867, TNA, FO 45/109.

[94] Odo Russell to Stanley, 19 December 1867, *The Roman Question: Extracts from the Despatches of Odo Russell from Rome 1858–70*, ed. N. Blakiston (London: Chapman and Hall, 1962), p. 348.

[95] D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 349.

[96] Stanley to Paget, 2 December 1867, TNA, FO 170/144.

between France and Austria, would be extinguished. With the survival of the Italian monarchy being called into question, and the French implying that the Vittorio Emanuele should adopt a more authoritarian form of government, the Kingdom of Italy's status as one of the few examples of progressive and constitutional government on the continent would also be destroyed.

At Paris, Lyons doubted the seriousness of the suggestion that the new Italy were to be dismembered. He figured—rightly as it turned out—that the most likely outcome of the crisis would be that the unity of Italy would be maintained while the pope remained at Rome as its temporal sovereign. He admitted that there was a strong dislike of Italy and the Italians in France, especially within official circles and the upper classes, for whom the cause of the pope tended to be seen as synonymous with that of France. The foreign secretary had observed privately to Lyons that the French ambassador to London, Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, spoke of 'the critical state of Italy', the weakness of the king, and of the danger of the new Menabrea ministry being broken up, 'as if well pleased with this state of things'.[97] But Lyons reassured him that the wider French populace were well-enough disposed towards Italy, as was Napoléon III himself.[98] The rumours, however, persisted. Lord Loftus, the British ambassador to Prussia, suggested similarly that there were plans to dissolve Italy, but he hinted that they involved the return of the Bourbons to Naples and the augmentation of the Papal State.[99] Catholic opinion in southern Germany was evidently excited at the prospect, when subjects of both the King of Prussia and the King of Bavaria presented their sovereigns with addresses calling upon their monarchs to pledge to defend the temporal power.[100] The position of the Papacy appeared bolstered considerably.

In January 1868, the British vice-consul at Civitavecchia reported that more than 1000 French soldiers had been sent to the Papal State within the previous month, while more continued to arrive aboard every steamer.

[97] Stanley to Lyons, 27 November 1867, Lyons Papers, Arundel, Box 179.

[98] Lyons to Stanley, 3 December 1867 (private), Derby Papers, LRO, France, III, 920 DER (15) 12/1/10.

[99] Loftus to Stanley, 18 January 1868, copy enclosed in Hammond (for Stanley) to Paget, 20 January 1868, TNA, FO 170/149.

[100] Loftus to Stanley, 1 February 1868, copy enclosed in Hammond (for Stanley) to Paget, 10 February 1868, TNA, FO 170/149 and Howard to Stanley, 11 February 1868, copy enclosed in Hammond (for Stanley) to Paget, 24 February 1868, TNA, FO 170/149.

In addition to the French contribution, Odo Russell noted that Catholic volunteers were arriving from Ireland, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Spain, where they were being enlisted by their priests and financed by the Papal government. In addition, artillery and ammunition was also being imported via Civitavecchia.[101] While visiting Rome, Lord Clarendon noticed that men were arriving from far afield to join the Papal army, and he also commented upon the great earthworks that appeared to have been hastily installed near the gates of the city.[102] By the end of February, Russell estimated the Papal army to number some 20,000 men, while the French had constructed defences and batteries at points commanding all entry points to the city, even if they appeared to him better suited to the suppression of a revolutionary force than the repelling of an invading army.[103] There was even a suggestion that the pope was preparing to follow the restoration of the episcopal hierarchy in England which had caused such consternation among English Protestants in 1850 with a similar move in Scotland, a move Russell considered to be most inopportune.[104]

Oddly William Gladstone, currently in opposition yet still the most pro-Italian of British leaders, did not appear particularly fearful over Italy's future. He wrote optimistically to his Catholic friend and confidant Lord Acton within a week of Mentana: 'What a fresh access of interest in the Italian question! I think there is *progress*'.[105] In the new year, his colleague Lord Clarendon expressed more serious concerns about the alleged French intrigues. He received an audience with Pius IX and Cardinal Antonelli, finding that they shared his sentiment that the Rouher speech and the French parliament's ongoing support for the Roman occupation was neither a triumph for religion nor even any indication of the emperor's future policy. He mused that although they viewed Garibaldi as 'the incarnation of evil', he had undoubtedly proven a great benefactor to their cause, for

[101] Odo Russell to Stanley, 16 January 1868, *The Roman Question*, p. 349.
[102] Clarendon to Gladstone, 6 February 1868 (from Rome), Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. MS 44133.
[103] Odo Russell to Stanley, 22 February 1868, *The Roman Question*, p. 350.
[104] Odo Russell to Stanley, 21 January 1868, *The Roman Question*, pp. 349–50.
[105] Gladstone to Acton, 9 November 1867, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add Ms 44093.

his ill-advised campaign had intensified devotion to Catholicism all over the world, reinforcing the pope's spiritual power to an extent that he could scarcely have achieved by intent. Gladstone entertained himself by telling them that while at Florence, King Vittorio Emanuele had asked him 'to salute the Holy Father most respectfully', and to tell Pius IX that he deeply regretted the recent occurrences which had given His Holiness so much anxiety; the pope responded by smiling and observing that Vittorio Emanuele had an 'inveterate habit of lying' which made his assurances 'valueless'. With regard to the rumoured disintegration of Italy, Clarendon found that the prospect appeared to be taken seriously at Rome. 'Italy', he observed, 'is expected to break up & possibly become a republic, or 2 or 3 republics, before a better state of things is restored'. Clarendon admitted to suspecting that such hopes would be disappointed, but he lamented nonetheless that 'Italy is sick, very sick'.[106]

As Emanuele d'Azeglio's visits to the Foreign Office during the autumn of 1867 had demonstrated, Italy had emerged as a state which was not only a firm friend of Great Britain, but one which was more inclined to look for support in London than anywhere else. If it had been the policy of successive British governments since 1860 to seek to draw the new Italy into a 'special relationship' with Britain, the manner in which the Italians looked to that country during the most threatening crisis the unified state had yet experienced suggested that British leaders had achieved a modicum of success. The result of the Garibaldian crisis, the war-scare, and the reports of the Kingdom of Italy's impending demise was the restoration of the status quo ante. The French had returned to Rome. The Italian state remained weak, while the Papacy was strengthened. While the Conservative government had remained extremely cautious throughout, Stanley's foreign policy cannot quite be described as isolationist. His style was very different from that of the Liberal foreign secretaries who had preceded him, yet the substance of his policy regarding Italian affairs was not significantly different. He had prioritised the prevention of war while demonstrating a considerable sympathy for Italy. Moreover, he had manifested a readiness to assist the Italian cause. The extent to which the Conservative government

[106] Clarendon to Gladstone, 6 February 1868 (from Rome), Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. MS 44133.

would have been prepared to go in order to prevent the French from dismantling Italy, or from coming to dominate the peninsula, was never tested. Its international reputation, however, and its prestige on the domestic scene were both in tatters. The Papal, Austrian, and Spanish governments had been hostile to Italy's existence from the beginning, but in the eyes of disinterested powers such as Prussia and Russia, and its erstwhile ally France, Italy had come to be seen as something of a rogue state. The British—alone among the Great Powers of Europe—remained strongly well-disposed towards the Italians, and even their patience and sympathies had been tested. There was no reason to believe that either the condition of the country or the conduct of its leaders would significantly improve, so long as the Roman Question remained unresolved and Italian unity unconsolidated.

CHAPTER 6

Consolidating Italy: Great Britain and the Culmination of the Risorgimento, 1868–70

The year 1868 was an unusually quiet one so far as Italian affairs were concerned. At its close, the first British general election to take place under the rules introduced by the 1867 Reform Act returned the Liberals to power. Great Britain's Italian policy therefore passed back into the hands of men who had been far more enthusiastic about the Italian national cause than the Conservatives who had been at the helm during the previous two years. The new government was, however, a very different administration from the earlier Liberal administrations of Palmerston and Russell, which had taken such a keen interest in the unifying of Italy through the first half of the 1860s. The new regime was headed by the principled reformist William Gladstone, who had taken the lead in mustering British sympathy for the Italian national cause in Britain during the 1850s. The vastly experienced Lord Clarendon returned to the Foreign Office, occupying the position until his death in June 1870, shortly before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July. He was replaced by Lord Granville, who served as Gladstone's foreign secretary through the Roman crisis which brought about the culmination of the Risorgimento, and the realisation of a much more complete Kingdom of Italy, in September 1870. Broadly speaking, this new Liberal administration's policy on Italy aimed to provide moral support regarding the country's development, to advocate the incorporation of Rome into the kingdom by whatever peaceful means seemed possible, and to keep the Italians out of any war that might result from the increasingly fractious international climate.

O. J. Wright, *Great Britain and the Unifying of Italy*, Britain and the World, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59397-9_6

The Place of Italy in British Policy Concerns at the Close of the 1860s

The late 1860s were a troubled period one for Europe, for Italy, and for Britain. The resolution of the Luxembourg crisis of 1867 had not removed Franco-Prussian tension from the European sphere. Rumours of Italy's dismemberment by France or its disintegration might have subsided during the early months of 1868, but the country was beleaguered by parliamentary stagnation, massive debts, and ongoing opposition from dissident groups. In a world in which Paris and Berlin were agitating for war and the Italian state was far from stable, the consolidation of Italy was a significant foreign policy concern for the Gladstone government. Nonetheless, Gladstone's favourable and supportive position on Italy was complicated by the rise of Fenian terrorism at home, and his government's prioritising of reforms aimed at resolving the Irish Question. With regard to Italian affairs, British concerns focused on three main issues. The most immediate of these, in 1868, were the ongoing ineffectiveness of the Italian political system and the parlous state of the new kingdom's finances. During the course of 1869, the Foreign Office became increasingly concerned by the continued inefficiency of Italy's judicial system and the number of political prisoners held for lengthy periods without trial; this matter was particularly poignant considering the role Gladstone had played in exposing the abuses of justice in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies during the 1850s, causing his ministry to come under some pressure from its opposition. By 1870, both issues appeared to have been resolved, and were surpassed by the important and unresolved Roman Question. Late in 1869, Pope Pius IX summoned the First Vatican Council, which led to the Proclamation of Papal Infallibility in July 1870, a move intended to entrench the pope's political as well as his spiritual authority. The proclamation occurred on the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, the consequent withdrawal of French forces from Rome, and the Italian occupation of the Eternal City in September.

For the makers of foreign policy in London, these issues were interlinked. For many Victorian Liberals, the Kingdom of Italy was a symbol of progress and an example to which more authoritarian states might aspire, irrespective of its many problems. Since the foundation of a united kingdom in Italy in 1861, the Italian leaders of the *Destra Storica* had shown themselves to be genuinely committed to the liberalisation of the country. While they had succeeded in achieving the 'Piedmontisation' of the new

state by harmonising its various laws and conventions, an energetic investment in infrastructure had led to the modernisation of several ports and an impressive programme of railway construction; all of the peninsula's major cities were connected by rail from 1866, and Italy connected to France from 1868.[1] During 1868 and 1869, British agents in Italy were able to present generally positive accounts of the progress being made towards modernisation, and the involvement of British organisations in the country's economic development. In contrast to much of the bad news that was reported elsewhere, there were positive accounts from Italy; for example, in 1869, Dominic Colnaghi, the British consul at Turin, presented a detailed and optimistic picture of agriculture in Piedmont.[2] There were, therefore, reasons for British Italophiles to continue to hope that if only the new Italy could overcome its greatest challenges, it might yet develop into a prosperous and responsible member of the Great Powers.

Although there is a traditional view that the makers of Victorian foreign policy reached a consensus regarding the benefits of non-intervention in continental matters during the mid-1860s, and that Britain had become by then an impotent force in European affairs,[3] there is evidence to suggest that the British continued to play a significant role in Italy. As Stanley's refusal to be drawn into a conference to determine the outcome of the Roman Question towards the end of 1867 had shown, even by doing nothing, London retained the capacity to exert a certain influence in Italian affairs. And, with such a vested interest in the creation and survival of the modern Italian state, the new Gladstone government could hardly afford to ignore the pressing problems which threatened to undermine Italy during 1869 and 1870. Consequently, the Foreign Office under Clarendon and Granville sought to do whatever they could to assist the country. Moreover, when the Italians took advantage of the opportunity to complete their national unification by acquiring Rome in September 1870, the Gladstone administration took covert action to smooth the way towards the completion of the unifying of Italy.

[1] For the construction of the rail network, see A. Schram, *Railways and the Formation of the Italian State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[2] See Colnaghi's enclosure in Paget to Clarendon, 22 February 1870, TNA, FO 45/161.

[3] See M. E. Chamberlain, *'Pax Britannica'? British Foreign Policy 1789–1914* (London & New York: Pearson, 1988), pp. 123–7; K. Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 81–123; K. T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846–86* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 221–36.

The British envoy extraordinary to Italy who would see Rome finally become the national capital of Italy was Sir Augustus Paget, who had succeeded Sir Henry Elliot at Florence in August 1867. Unlike Elliot and Sir James Hudson, who were both associated strongly with the Liberal party, Paget had many Conservative connections. Although Paget and his family loved Italy, residing there until 1883 in a tenure that proved to be the longest of any British representative to the Italian capital, his perspective was noticeably more critical than those of either of his predecessors. It was not uncommon for him to annoy Italian leaders with his gruff criticisms of their country, and his tone was certainly more blunt than those of either Hudson or Elliot. Perhaps it was because of his directness that he was considered a 'competent' member of the diplomatic service, and he remained in Italy after the British Legation was upgraded to Embassy status in 1876.[4] Indeed, on a number of occasions, Paget was proposed for transfer to the British Embassy at Paris, the most prestigious position in the whole diplomatic service, but his chances were nullified by the German nationality of his wife Walpurga.[5] When Lord Stanley selected Paget for the Italian job in 1867, he regretted sending him to Italy because 'there was so little to do there now' that he did not like 'to send one of his [best men] to a place where he should be idle'.[6] In the event, however, there turned out to be plenty to occupy him during his residence in Florence, prior to the transferral of the Italian government to Rome in 1871.

Unfortunately, the state of Italian politics and the national debt during the late 1860s hardly provided an auspicious platform from which the Gladstone government might seek to encourage Italy's further development. When the new administration took office in December 1868, the governance of Italy was very much in the hands of King Vittorio Emanuele II and his personally appointed choice of prime minister, General Menabrea. The two years during which Menabrea held office (1867–69) did a good deal to worsen British optimism that Italy might evolve into a smoothly functioning constitutional monarchy. During the late 1860s, Paget wrote frequently with contempt of the machinations of Italian politics, and of the frequent ministerial crises which hampered effective

[4] K. Bourne, 'The Foreign Policy of Lord Stanley July 1866–December 1868' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1953), p. 10.

[5] W. Paget, *Embassies of Other Days, And Further Recollections* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1923), p. 208. R. A. Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815-1914* (Gerrard's Cross: Smythe, 1983), p. 185.

[6] Paget, *Embassies of Other Days*, p. 219.

government in a country which was so obviously in need of it. In February 1868, Paget witnessed a whole fortnight of parliamentary paralysis, before gloomily predicting that 'the most probable result of the crisis just ended will be the occurrence of another one'.[7] It was to Paget that King Vittorio Emanuele spoke 'with the utmost scorn' of Italy's politicians in May 1869, famously telling him that the only ways of governing Italians were 'by bayonets and bribery'; they did not understand and were 'quite unfit for the constitutional regime'.[8] Nonetheless, the king was probably more responsible than anyone for Italy's political woes. In 1862, Sir James Hudson had criticised his dismissal of the temperate Ricasoli and his replacement by the radical Rattazzi as 'a deeply unhealthy development' and a 'thorough piece of buffoonery'; he even suggested that Vittorio Emanuele was leading the country to ruin.[9] This sentiment was confirmed when Rattazzi proceeded to collude in Garibaldi's disastrous march on Rome, which resulted in the humiliation of Aspromonte. The fact that the king produced a carbon copy of this disastrous strategy five years later, resulting in Garibaldi's defeat at Mentana and the destruction of Italian unity being discussed in European courts war, raised questions about 'the father of the nation'. Indeed, Lord Clarendon had visited Italy in 1867 to find that many Italian politicians considered the king to be 'an imbecile' and 'a dishonest man who lies to everyone'.[10] In 1868, the nationalist, former exile, and now Italian senator Sir James Lacaita lamented that 'The retirement of Sir James [Hudson] was a misfortune for Italy. After Cavour's death he was the only person who knew how to keep that strange high personage [Vittorio Emanuele] in awe'.[11] This judgement perhaps exaggerated British influence in Italian politics during the 1860s, but Paget, like his predecessors Hudson and Sir Henry Elliot, was well aware that Vittorio Emanuele's constitutional power to meddle was the primary factor undermining the effective functioning of the Italian political system. He sought, wherever he could, to encourage Italy's politicians to adhere to parliamentary processes, and to struggle against the royal prerogative.

[7] Paget to Clarendon, 6 January 1868, Paget Papers, BL, Add. MS 51208.

[8] Paget to Clarendon, 27 May 1869, copy, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

[9] Hudson to Lord Russell, 1 March 1862, Russell Papers, TNA, PRO 30/22/69.

[10] D. Mack Smith, *Italy and Its Monarchy* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 42.

[11] Lacaita to Gladstone 1 February 1868, Gladstone Papers, Bodley, Add. Ms 44234

Consequently, Paget and his superiors in London welcomed a dramatic change in this situation in December 1869. Italy experienced something of a 'parliamentary revolution' when Menabrea was ousted, and replaced by a triumvirate of individuals who commanded a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. With Giovanni Lanza as prime minister, Quintino Sella at the finance ministry, and Emilio Visconti Venosta at the foreign ministry, the leadership of Italy was placed back into the hands of some of the country's most talented Liberals. For the first time in years, such men commanded a genuine parliamentary majority, and would go on to provide the longest period of stable government Italy had known since the death of Cavour. This development was, in the words of Denis Mack Smith, 'an auspicious symptom' of Italy's 'growth in parliamentary experience', and to Martin Clark an overdue triumph for liberalism and constitutionalism.[12] When it occurred, Paget expressed himself 'well enough pleased' with the choice of the 'safe and reliable' Visconti Venosta for the foreign ministry, and even told the Italian to his face that he hoped it heralded a period in which it was possible to trust more in the 'good faith and honesty' of Italian leaders.[13] Clarendon hoped that the new ministry would 'last a while', lamenting the 'despicable intrigues' which had so undermined the functioning of the Italian parliament. The extent to which the British had begun to despair of Italy's political quirks was best expressed by Clarenden to Paget in private:

> I sometimes wonder whether the Italians know how they have fallen in European estimation or whether if they did know they w^{d} care—the bright hopes entertained some time ago of their fitness for represent^{ve} gov^{t} have disapp^{d} & they are now bracketted [sic] with those masters of disorder the Spaniards. Consequently little int^{t} is taken in their doings & little hope is felt that their doings will be for the good of an easily governed people who only want ½ doz honest men to rule over them.[14]

[12] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 88; M. Clark, *The Italian Risorgimento*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Longman, 2009), p. 45.

[13] Paget to Clarendon, 23 December 1869, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

[14] Clarendon to Paget, 13 December 1869, copy, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 475.

Here the foreign secretary displayed his underestimation of the scale of the domestic problems faced by Italy during its first decade of unity. But Paget was scarcely more sympathetic, responding to the jibe by suggesting that the Italians had no right to be surprised at the 'low ebb' to which they had fallen in European estimates.[15] Liberal Italy was not, however, without its defenders; certain Italian nationalists continued to urge the British to keep faith in the Italian project. In 1868, Antonio Panizzi, the Italian-born chief librarian at the British Museum, wrote to Sir James Hudson that the Italians 'as a People are a warm hearted, sympathetic, quick witted, willing, Race—who when they give their confidence give it with both hands and give their hearts with it'; in 1874, Panizzi wrote to Gladstone that he did not believe 'that order was not kept in Italy by the Italian Government' and suggested that life and property had not been so well protected in central Italy by the old Papal State.[16] The problem according to Hudson, who still resided in Italy, was that the new state had been founded on the French rather than the British model. Hudson lamented 'the laches of all *Italian Administrations* since Cavour's death', suggesting that Italian statesmen appeared to forget their friends and lose their common sense in high office. The state apparatus was undermined by 'a mass of verbiage', 'French imitations', and 'gimcrack conceits' copied from the same French books from which the Italians had 'cribbed' most of their laws. But, apparently in response to Clarendon's sneer, Hudson insisted that the 'Italians *are* fitted for self-government', adding that if only they could find 'half a dozen sensible men who would attend to their business as administrators' without having constantly to seek fractional support in the Chamber of Deputies (as the king's personal appointees generally had to do), the new Italy could be 'one of the best regulated of Bodies Politic in the world'.[17]

[15] Paget to Clarendon, 23 December 1869, copy, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

[16] Panizzi to Gladstone, 6 December 1874, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. MS 44274.

[17] Hudson to Panizzi, 21 December 1869, *Correspondence of Sir Anthony Panizzi*, vol. XII, 1869–1880, BL, Add. Ms 36725. I am grateful to Nick Carter for providing this reference.

British Relations with Italy During the Advent of the Franco-Prussian War

The British government had good cause to welcome the parliamentarians' overcoming of the royal influence in Italian politics not only because of what it might mean for Italy's political development, but also because of the darkening European skies. For British policymakers whose perennial concern was to maintain the balance of power and peace in Europe, Vittorio Emanuele's sabre-rattling rhetoric was a frequent concern. The king had often boasted openly to British diplomats of how he wished to resolve Italy's problems through war, prompting the country's politicians to insist that little attention should be paid to his words.[18] Paget remarked that the king's head was 'full of battles gone by, and of imaginary battles to come, with himself at the head of his army'.[19] Indeed, during the two years leading up the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, the British had reason to suspect that Vittorio Emanuele was scheming to ally his country with France in what he assumed would be a victorious war, and to demand possession of Rome as the price for his country's compliance. It has been claimed by Clarendon's family that the ailing former foreign secretary only returned to office under Gladstone out of concern for the international situation[20]; during his final years at the Foreign Office, it was a priority of Britain's Italian policy to ensure that Italy did not align itself with France. Throughout this period Vittorio Emanuele was involved in secret negotiations with the French emperor regarding a possible Franco-Italian alliance, discussions of which only the royal appointee Menabrea was aware. Napoléon III aimed to forge a triple alliance of France, Austria, and Italy against Prussia, and perhaps even Russia. The attraction to Italy was the possibility of obtaining territorial concessions from Austria along their mutual frontier, and the prospect of agreement with France over Nice and Rome.[21] No formal treaty was ever signed, but negotiations did culminate

[18] See, for example, Elliot to Russell, 6 June 1865 and 16 November 1866, Paget to Clarendon, 13 March and 5 June 1869, cited in D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 343–4.

[19] Paget to Clarendon, 13 March 1869, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS Clar. dep. c. 488.

[20] G. W. F. Villiers, *A Vanished Victorian: Being the Life of George Villiers, Fourth Earl of Clarendon, 1800–1870* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1938), p. 345.

[21] D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 355–6.

in an understanding between the Italian king and the French emperor of a moral and mutual obligation.[22] Although it is difficult to measure how much the British knew of these plans, it was clear to Paget that Vittorio Emanuele was 'itching' for another war. When he asked Menabrea what part Italy might play in a conflict between France and Prussia, he was told that although no formal treaty existed, the possibility of siding with Paris had been considered. Fearful over the prospect of a general European war, the danger that an ally might give confidence to Napoléon, and of a potentially disastrous outcome for Italy, the Gladstone government sought to keep Italy free from any engagement. Clarendon told Count Maffei, the Italian minister in London, that he hoped Italy would cooperate with the other Great Powers regarding the Eastern Question by helping to keep the Greeks and Romanians in order.[23] When the Italians expressed their readiness, Clarendon hoped that the Menabrea administration would amend the reputation the Italians had acquired for being intriguers, stating that instead of pandering to 'popular passion', Italian leaders should gain strength at home and a greater respect abroad by working to discourage and suppress revolutionary movements.[24] Above all, Clarendon argued that Britain and Italy 'ought to combine heartily' for the maintenance of the peace, which Italy needed probably more urgently than any other country in Europe.[25] The British sought to encourage Italian leaders by appealing to their fiscal sense, as the kingdom's finances were precarious. The cost of Italian unification—the administrative reorganisation of the country, public works schemes, suppression of brigandage, and the transfer of the capital to Florence, not to mention the wars of 1859 and 1866—had been enormous. Moreover, Italy's adoption of free trade might have boosted the Italian economy, but it had deprived the new state of revenue. Gladstone optimistically suggested that Italy's finances formed 'the only dark spot' on the country's future prospects, and recommended that the Foreign Office advise reductions in the Italian army and navy estimates.

[22] Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento*, p. 358.

[23] Clarendon to Paget, 14 December 1868, copy, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 475.

[24] Clarendon to Paget, 28 December 1868, copy, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 475.

[25] Clarendon to Paget, 25 January 1869, copy, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 475.

To broach the matter without offending Italian sensitivities, the prime minister thought it prudent to admit that the British government was pursuing a similar policy.[26] Here, perhaps, he acted in response to pressure from his friend Sir James Lacaita, who had written of his concern over Italy's financial situation in February 1868. Lacaita had impressed upon Gladstone the importance of making the leaders of Italy curb the country's ruinous expenditure: 'In Italy they make too light of a deficit of 79 millions of Lire in 1870!'[27] After taking office in December 1868, Gladstone promised Lacaita that his government would urge the Italians to 'Retrench, retrench, retrench … day and night'.[28] Perhaps the worsening international climate and British concerns over the king's martial aspirations were the real motive. Clarendon ordered Paget to impress upon the Italians the folly of allowing Italy to be drawn into any formal engagement with either France or Prussia, as peace was 'indispensable for Italy and neutrality so clearly her right policy'.[29] Paget responded by suggesting to Menabrea that by reducing the Italian army and navy to their lowest possible sizes, the government could ease the state's massive financial problems as well as gaining a respectable excuse for avoiding war.[30] In a bold statement of British opinion, Clarendon remarked:

> The Italian Gov^{t} is of course the best judge of its own interests but we think the safe as well as the economical course would be to reduce her army and navy to an extent that neither Belligerent would think it worth while [sic] to call on Italy for active aid—it is the only way to maintain neutrality.[31]

The line taken with Italy anticipated Clarendon's campaign for a more general commitment to disarmament throughout Europe during the early months of 1870.[32] Although Paget was willing to preach 'economy and

[26] Clarendon to Paget, 8 March 1869, copy, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS. Clar. dep. c. 475.

[27] Lacaita to Gladstone, 1 February 1868, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44234.

[28] Gladstone to Lacaita, 30 December 1868, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44234.

[29] Clarendon to Paget, 22 March 1869 (copy), Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS Clar. dep. c. 475.

[30] Paget to Clarendon, 27 March 1869, Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS Clar. dep. c. 488.

[31] Clarendon to Paget, 5 April 1869 (copy), Clarendon Papers, Bodley, MS Clar. dep. c. 475.

[32] J. L. Herkless, 'Lord Clarendon's Attempt at Franco-Prussian Disarmament January to March 1870', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (1972), pp. 455–70.

neutrality' in Florence, he warned that his lectures did not enjoy any real prospect of success.[33] Indeed, it was only the fortitude of the foreign minister Visconti Venosta, and the solidarity of the Italian cabinet, which prevented Vittorio Emanuele from taking Italy into war on the side of France during the summer of 1870.[34]

By the time Paget made this representation, Italy's leaders had embarked upon a course which would ultimately enable the new state to balance its books. Ironically, however, their means of doing so placed the Gladstone government in a potentially embarrassing predicament. Rather than cutting expenditure, the Menabrea administration decided upon the reintroduction of the hated *macinato* tax to ease its financial plight. This duty on the grinding of corn had existed in most parts of Italy prior to unification, and its abolition in 1860 had made the prospect of annexation to Piedmont appealing to peasants whose cries 'Abbasso il macinato!' were common alongside 'Viva l'Italia!'.[35] The reintroduction of the tax proved predictably unpopular with the overwhelming majority of the rural peasantry, which depended upon pasta, polenta, and bread. The measure was designed to reduce the national debt without alienating the privileged classes who had largely supported unification but who opposed property taxes, placing the financial burden upon the peasantry to whom the Risorgimento meant little or nothing. It proved highly controversial, and sparked a polemical debate among the educated.[36] The non-enfranchised had only one way to register their discontent; the first disturbances occurred soon after the government's announcement of the tax in 1868.[37] Following the enforcement of the levy from 1 January 1869, a wave of violence washed through Emilia and Romagna; at Borgo San Domino, near Parma, some 500 peasants stormed the prefecture and set fire to the archives. The rioting spilled over the Apennines into northern Tuscany, where there was some risk of it reaching Florence; General Cadorna

[33] Paget to Clarendon, 10 April 1869, Bodleian Library, Clarendon Papers, MS Clar. dep. c. 488.

[34] See S. W. Halperin, 'Visconti-Venosta and the Diplomatic Crisis of July 1870', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (1959), pp. 295–309.

[35] See J. A. Davis, *Conflict and Control: Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 190–1.

[36] See, for example, F. Ferrara, *La tassa sul macinato. Dev'ella abolirsi, mantenersi o riformarsi?* (Florence: Successori di Le Monnier, 1871).

[37] Paget to Clarendon, 1 January 1869, TNA, FO 45/139.

deployed the army in Arezzo, Pontassieve, and elsewhere, to protect the capital. There was also trouble in Piedmont, although for the very different reason that the government had aggravated millers by failing to provide enough meters to record the revolutions of their millstones.[38] Only three of the kingdom's 68 provinces had witnessed any serious disorder, and order was restored within a fortnight. Nonetheless, the riots had resulted in some 250 deaths, 1000 injuries, and 4000 arrests.[39] Paget noted that at locations such as Ferrara, the strife appeared to be stirred by the familiar anti-government alliance of radical 'Reds' and reactionary 'Blacks', united in their desire to undermine Italy's new ruling class.[40] As a movement of popular opposition, the *macinato* riots have been described as the northern counterpart to the southern brigandage witnessed earlier in the decade.[41] As a test of the Italian state's capacity to react to such events, Paget suggested that they ought 'not to be regretted', as they had obliged the government to prove itself as a competent administration determined to uphold the law.[42]

The *macinato* riots might have been successfully contained, but other events occurring in their wake offered British observers little hope that Italy was progressing towards stability. In June 1869, an abortive assassination attempt on the former Garibaldian volunteer and left-wing parliamentary deputy Cristiano Lobbia sparked a wave of Mazzinian demonstrations up and down the peninsula.[43] In Milan, order was apparently reestablished by the people of the city themselves, who managed to disperse the rioters before the police arrived. From Naples, Consul-General Bonham reported that there had been a 'slight attempt' at disturbance over a couple of nights, during which the singing of Garibaldian hymns and chants of 'Viva la Repubblica!' had prompted the police to charge at the crowd with swords drawn; a number of arrests had been made, but no injuries were reported.[44] Although there were

[38] Paget to Clarendon, 6 January 1869, TNA, FO 45/139.

[39] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 81–2.

[40] Paget to Clarendon, 8 January 1869, TNA, FO 45/139.

[41] C. Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism 1870–1925* (London & New York: Methuen, 1969), p. 27.

[42] Paget to Clarendon, 15 January 1869, TNA, FO 45/139.

[43] Paget to Clarendon, 21 June 1869, TNA, FO 45/142.

[44] Bonham to Paget, 22 June 1869, copy in Paget to Clarendon, 24 June 1869, TNA, FO 45/142.

no disturbances in the historically volatile city of Genoa, Vice-Consul de Thierry found that the republican press had become so violent in their attacks on the government and the monarchy that a great unease prevailed, to which the authorities responded by arresting known agitators.[45] During the summer of 1869, Paget described the moderate Liberal Party in Italy as being 'almost terrorised' by those wishing to spread 'tumult and disorder'. He forwarded the Foreign Office an extract from the newspaper *La Perseveranza*, which called for greater firmness on the part of those who desired 'progress without revolution' in Italy.[46] Such agitation continued into 1870, irrespective of the parliamentary revolution of December 1869. During the spring of that year, republican activism was felt from Lombardy to Puglia, as slogans such as 'Viva La Repubblica!', 'Viva Mazzini!', 'Abbasso la monarchia!', and 'Morte a Vittorio Emanuele!' appeared on many walls; a 1000-strong protest at Carrara in Tuscany resulted in two deaths.[47]

The involvement of a British subject in this disorder called the Gladstone government's attention to a failing of the new state which proved uncomfortable to the new prime minister. Such was the role that Gladstone had played in boosting British support for the Italian national cause by exposing the horrors of the Neapolitan judicial system two decades previously, that he could hardly escape Conservative jeers over the lack of improvement which Italy's unification had brought in that respect. The arrest of Joseph Nathan, a young member of a wealthy British family based near Como and well known to have strong connections to Mazzini, was arrested for his part in a conspiracy uncovered in Milan.[48] It was not the first time that Nathan had found himself in trouble for revolutionary activities in Italy, but on this occasion his imprisonment for months without being brought to trial proved embarrassing.[49] Nathan's arrest served to highlight the fact that the supposedly liberal Italian state's administration of justice proved to be disappointingly inefficient. At the close of the 1860s, a total of 184,851 individuals were either on remand or awaiting trial, 93,444 of whom were eventually released without their case ever being

[45] De Thierry to Paget, 22 June 1869, copy in Paget to Clarendon, 23 June 1869, TNA, FO 45/142.

[46] Paget to Clarendon, 22 June 1869, TNA, FO 45/142.

[47] Paget to Clarendon, 14 April 1870, TNA, FO 45/163.

[48] Paget to Clarendon, 21 April 1869, TNA, FO 45/140.

[49] Elliot to Stanley, 12 October 1866, TNA, FO 45/89.

heard; the majority of these prisoners had spent at least a year in gaol.[50] In October 1869, the Italian government published a report in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, revealing that 2226 prisoners arrested in connection with the *macinato* riots were still awaiting trial, ten months after the disturbances.[51] This fact combined with Nathan's ongoing incarceration to put the Gladstone government under pressure from the parliamentary opposition. During the autumn of 1869, both Paget and his secretary Edward Herries were required to provide information on how the Nathan case stood, the matter being so urgent at one point that a reply was demanded by telegraph.[52] While serving as chargé d'affaires in Paget's absence, Herries was instructed to tell the Italian prime minister that although the British had no wish to interfere with the regular course of justice regarding Nathan's case, it was hoped in London that no avoidable delay would be permitted to obstruct the commencement of his prosecution, 'in view of the great length of time that prisoners are often detained in Italy before being tried'.[53] When nothing had happened by the time of Paget's return to his post, Clarendon was forced to repeat the instruction to him.[54] Nathan was eventually released under the terms of a general amnesty for political prisoners in November 1869, on the occasion of the birth of a son and heir, the future King Vittorio Emanuele III, to Crown Prince Umberto and Princess Margherita.[55]

Nathan's release—which enabled him to resume his subversive activities before fleeing to Switzerland in the June 1870—eased the pressure on the British government. Nonetheless, the formation of the Lanza administration in Italy in December 1869 was seized upon by British Liberals as an opportunity to encourage improvement in Italy. Lord Clarendon wrote privately to Paget, urging him to broach the subject:

> We hear much bad acc^{ts} of the Neapol^{n} prisons that we wish you in whatever manner you think judicious, to call the attention of the Gov^{t} to them—M^{r} Gladstone is naturally interested in the subject after the part he took in exposing the Bourbon abomin^{ns} resp^{g} the prisons & as he may be taunted in

[50] J. A. Davis, *Conflict and Control: Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 213.

[51] Herries to Clarendon, 15 October 1869, TNA, FO 45/143.

[52] Otway (for Clarendon) to Paget (telegram), 21 October 1869, TNA, FO 170/157.

[53] Hammond (for Clarendon) to Herries, 13 September 1869, TNA, FO 170/157.

[54] Clarendon to Paget, 8 October 1869, TNA, FO 170/157.

[55] Paget to Clarendon, 14 November 1869, TNA, FO 45/144.

> the H. of C. ab[t] their present state it w[d] be gratifying to him & useful to the Italian Govt if he c[d] give a reliable promise of improvement.[56]

Paget confronted Visconti Venosta, the Italian foreign minister, explaining that it was greatly in the interest of the new Italian ministry that if any questions were asked in the House of Commons, Gladstone should be able to point towards the prospect of amelioration. Paget found Visconti Venosta sensitive to the prospect of the new Italian government being embarrassed, stating clearly that if it took such an action it would prefer to avoid the appearance of having been pressed into doing so by the British.[57] Paget found Giovanni Lanza, the new Italian prime minister, to be in favour of granting prisoners an immediate preliminary trial in the hope of reducing waiting times.[58] However, his representation would by no means be the last time that the British envoy was to challenge the Italian hosts on their administration of justice.[59]

In fact, as Italy's first decade of national unity drew to a conclusion, the British found plenty of cause to pass comment on Italian affairs. In February 1870, the Foreign Office once again found an opportunity to reflect upon the authority of the Italian state, when a member of the British consular service became the target of a local vendetta in Sardinia.[60] In February 1870, Edward Walker, the British consul at Cagliari, informed Paget that the life of one of Her Majesty's consular representatives in Sardinia was in danger, and in need of protection from the authorities.[61] The son of Martino Zamponi, the Sardinian-born British vice-consul at Terranova (Olbia), had been murdered the previous year, and the grudge against Zamponi himself had become so serious that he and a number of other local dignitaries were all staying together in his home with a privately

[56] Clarendon to Paget, 13 December 1869, copy, Bodleian Library, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 475.

[57] Paget to Clarendon, 23 December 1869, Bodleian Library, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

[58] Paget to Clarendon, 24 January 1870, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

[59] See O. J. Wright, 'Police "Outrages" against British Residents and Travellers in Liberal Italy, 1867–77', *Crime, History and Societies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2010), pp. 51–72.

[60] See O. J. Wright, 'Sea and Sardinia: *Pax Britannica* versus Vendetta in the New Italy (1870)', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2007), pp. 398–416.

[61] Walker to Paget, 7 February 1870, enclosed in Paget to Clarendon, 12 February 1870, TNA, FO 45/161.

employed guard of a dozen men watching over them at night. When neither the commander of the military garrison at Cagliari, nor the prefect of Sassari, appeared able or willing to intervene, Paget raised the matter in Florence. Visconti Venosta assured Paget that the Italian government would resolve the issue.[62] However, before any such action had taken place, Walker took matters into his own hands and summoned a Royal Navy gunboat from Malta. The visit of HMS *Trinculo* to Cagliari and Terranova in March 1870 quickly defused the situation. Commander Sander, the ship's captain, reported that he was welcomed in both ports, and that the mere presence of the British gunboat had the desired effect of relieving Zamponi from his predicament.[63] Unfortunately, however, the intervention caused a sensation in the Sardinian press and embarrassed the Italian government in Florence. A challenge to the Lanza administration by the Sardinian opposition politician Giorgio Asproni in the Chamber of Deputies made headlines in the national newspaper *Italie*, while the Sardinian publications *La Sardegna* and *Il Corriere di Sardegna* accused the central government of allowing the nation to be humiliated.[64] A furious Italian prime minister confronted Paget, Lanza insisting that 'Italy was not to be treated as the Barbary State', and that the presence of a British gunboat for the purpose of protecting Zamponi was 'an insult and indignity' to Italy 'by a nation on whose friendship she had always relied and with whom she was on such cordial relations'.[65]

The British showed themselves quite ready to intervene in Italian affairs again later that year, when the question of which European prince would ascend to the Spanish throne threatened to spark war between France and

[62] Paget forwarded Clarendon a copy and translation of the Italian foreign minister's note, 26 February 1870, TNA, FO 45/161.

[63] The *Trinculo* arrived at Cagliari just two days after Walker had requested her, and reached Terranova three days later. A copy of Commander Sander's report of 14 March (copied erroneously as 4 March) was sent by the Admiralty to the Foreign Office, who forwarded it to Paget; see Lushington to Clarendon, 8 April 1870, in Hammond (for Clarendon) to Paget, 14 April 1870, TNA, FO 170/164. The success of the mission was confirmed when a second ship, HMS *Psyche*, visited the island three months later; see the extract from the letter of Lieutenant Commander John Fellowes to the Senior Officer at Malta, 16 June 1870, included in Hammond (for Granville) to Paget, 7 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.

[64] The extracts from *La Sardegna* and *Il Corriere di Sardegna* were enclosed in Paget to Clarendon, 22 March 1870, TNA, FO 45/162. The extract from *Italie* was enclosed in Paget to Clarendon, 15 March 1870, TNA, FO 45/161.

[65] Paget to Clarendon, 12 March 1870, TNA, FO 45/161.

Prussia. The overthrow of Queen Isabella II in 1868 had left Spain without a monarch, leaving the British to watch the Spaniards' search for a new monarch without seeking to influence their choice. During the tense days of July 1870, the prospect of the German Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern accepting the Spanish crown resulted in Napoléon III threatening Otto von Bismarck with war. Paget, who was well aware of King Vittorio Emanuele's dynastic ambitions, sought to persuade the Italians to provide an alternative.[66] The king had already married his daughters to French and Portuguese dignitaries, and had attempted to push his second son Amedeo onto either the Greek or Romanian throne.[67] The British had been alive to the possibility of the Spanish throne being occupied by an Italian prince since the 1868 revolution, Paget believing that it would be 'a manifest advantage to Italy to have a friendly Prince in Spain'. Clarendon was similarly optimistic that, despite being reluctant, Prince Amedeo would accept the crown if offered by the Spanish Cortes.[68] There was also talk of the young Duke of Genoa being presented as another Italian candidate.[69] However, neither Savoyard prince received any support from the Lanza ministry, which could see no manifest advantage for Italy.[70] Their interest in the matter notwithstanding, Paget and Clarendon refrained from interference on the grounds that the Spanish throne was a matter for the Spaniards to decide.

The British position altered, though, during July 1870, when Napoléon III made the German candidature a pretext for war. After replacing the late Lord Clarendon at the Foreign Office, Lord Granville moved to condone Paget's inference in the matter at Florence. When the French received intelligence that the Spanish throne had been offered to and accepted by Prince Leopold, they warned the British that they could not tolerate a German king in Madrid, and requested British assistance in

[66] Paget to Clarendon, 23 December 1869, Bodleian Library, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

[67] D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 292–3.

[68] Clarendon to Paget, 25 January 1869, copy, Bodleian Library, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 475.

[69] Paget to Clarendon, 19 December 1868, Bodleian Library, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

[70] Paget to Clarendon, 23 December 1869, Bodleian Library, Clarendon Papers, MS. Clar. dep. c. 488.

preventing it.[71] Granville acceded to their request, seeking cautiously to dissuade both Berlin and Madrid from taking a course of action which might endanger the peace of Europe.[72] He informed Paget that the Spanish had agreed to cancel the Hohenzollern nomination if assured that an Italian prince would accept. Paget was instructed to see if the King Vittorio Emanuele would consent to such an arrangement.[73] Even before receiving this order, Paget had raised the matter with Visconti Venosta, whose government was keen to see war averted for fear that their king would take Italy into the conflict. When he sought official sanction for his action from London, Paget was told bluntly by Sir Edmund Hammond, the permanent undersecretary for foreign affairs, to do whatever he could to bring the dispute to a peaceful conclusion.[74] In her memoirs, Lady Paget credited her husband with securing Italian approval of the scheme,[75] and Prince Amedeo's candidacy was approved in Florence at almost the same time that Leopold's was voluntarily withdrawn. For a brief moment, it appeared that the British intervention in Italy had prevented the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War.[76] Of course, events in Paris and Berlin overtook those in Rome and Madrid, as the French emperor demanded a guarantee from the Prussian chancellor that the Hohenzollern candidature would not be renewed; Bismarck called Napoléon's bluff, leading France to declare war on Prussia. As soon as their hopes of preventing war disappeared, the British ceased to interfere any further in the Spanish succession.[77]

The Gladstone government's remonstration over the length of prisoners' waiting times, its lectures over the state of the nation's finances and Italian foreign policy ambitions, the behaviour of its officials during the Zamponi affair, and its intervention regarding the question of the Spanish

[71] Lyons to Granville, 5 July 1870, copy in Hammond (for Granville) to Paget, 11 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.

[72] See Granville to Lyons, 6 July 1870 and Granville to Loftus, 6 July 1870, copies enclosed in Hammond (for Granville) to Paget, 11 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.

[73] Granville to Paget, 10 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.

[74] Paget to Granville, 9 July 1870, TNA, FO 45/164; Hammond (for Granville) to Paget, 11 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.

[75] Lady Paget recorded that her husband overcame the opposition of the king, even though opposition came from the government rather than the monarch; W. Paget, *Embassies of Other Days, and Further Recollections* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1923), p. 255.

[76] S. W. Halperin, 'Visconti-Venosta and the Diplomatic Crisis of July 1870', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 31 No. 4 (1959), pp. 295–309 (304–8).

[77] Hammond (for Granville) to Paget (telegram), 19 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.

throne are all instructive. They provide a very clear demonstration of how supposedly non-interventionist British leaders considered themselves entitled to act in Liberal Italy. These events show also how British politicians and diplomatic staff considered their own polity to set an example which they thought the Italians ought to follow. Throughout the 1860s, the British relationship with Italy had been strongly paternal, and by the close of the decade, it was no less so than it had been at its opening. It is worth noting that when Sir Austen Henry Layard was appointed as envoy extraordinary to Madrid following the Spanish revolution of 1868, he received strict instructions from the Foreign Office not to be seen to interfere in Spanish affairs by favouring any faction over another, or by seeking to guide the country's regeneration.[78] Although generally amicable, the general nature of British relations with Italy could scarcely have been more different.

Great Britain and the Roman Question in 1870

There was one significant subject from which the Gladstone administration determined to remain aloof, yet even there the British ultimately found themselves being drawn into intervention in Italian affairs. Pope Pius IX's summoning of the First Vatican Council to Rome in 1869 resulted in high-profile discussions regarding the pontiff's authority within the Roman Catholic Church, and resulted predictably in the Proclamation of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility in July 1870. As William Gladstone committed himself to a long and futile campaign to resolve the Irish Question after becoming prime minister in 1868, he could scarcely afford to ignore Catholic opinion, and was obliged to tread carefully where matters might aggravate the Catholic population of Ireland. As religious tension mounted over the deliberations of the Vatican Council late in 1869 and early in 1870, Gladstone came under considerable pressure from British Catholics positioned on both sides of the debate. On one side, he was told frequently by his friend Henry Manning, then Archbishop of Westminster, that the temporal power was 'the moral and actual cohesive of Europe', 'the basis for the Christian order of the world', and 'the only essential preserve of order against revolution'. In 1861, Manning had been concerned that British leaders had been using their full weight to

[78] Clarendon to Layard, 8 November 1869, Layard Papers, BL, Add. Ms 39135.

overthrow the temporal power[79] and condemned any violation of this ancient Papal authority as 'a high crime against the whole of Christendom' and 'a rejection of God'.[80] Gladstone had indeed enthusiastically supported Italian unification and advocated the termination of the Papacy's political authority, but he accepted that it was important for the pontiff to retain his spiritual and civil independence. On the other side, Gladstone was warned by his friend Sir James Lacaita that the staunchest of Pius IX's supporters were 'determined to carry the infallibility of the Pope & all its dangerous consequences'. Lacaita hoped that the Italian government might be able to induce Italian bishops of liberal persuasion to vote against the dogma, and hoped that 'A word of advice from the English Minister in Florence might do much good'.[81] He feared, however, that too many bishops had their eyes fixed upon promotion, and that their votes in favour of Papal Infallibility would be a 'great injury not so much to Romanism as to Christianity itself'.[82] From Rome, Gladstone's Catholic friend Lord Acton warned him that everything was being prepared for the Proclamation of Papal Infallibility by a large majority, on account of the 'zealous conformity' of such bishops, and the 'widely spread ignorance' and indifference of the laity.[83] This movement was seen by its British critics as the height of religious absolutism. Acton described the proceedings as an attempt 'to restore all that is most obnoxious' and 'all that has been most pernicious' in the traditional power of the Papacy.[84]

Acton was sure that the Proclamation of Papal Infallibility would cause difficulties for the Kingdom of Italy. The Menabrea administration had not prepared any definite plan of action regarding how to deal with the

[79] Manning to Gladstone, 4 September 1861, *The Correspondence of Henry Edward Manning and William Gladstone: The Complete Correspondence 1833–1891, Volume III 1861–1875* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 6.

[80] E. R. Norman, 'Cardinal Manning and the Temporal Power', in *History, Society and the Churches: Essays in Honour of Owen Chadwick*, ed. D. Beales and G. Best (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 255.

[81] Lacaita to Gladstone, 9 December 1869, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44233.

[82] Lacaita to Gladstone, 31 December 1869, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44233. Lacaita even described the doctrine being 'manufactured' at Rome as 'Popery'; Lacaita to Gladstone, 2 January 1870, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44233.

[83] Acton to Gladstone, from Rome, 24 November 1869, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.

[84] Acton to Gladstone, from Rome, 19 December 1869, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.

Vatican Council, and when it took office in December 1869, the new Lanza ministry was alive to the importance of taking some action to deal with the Council, urging Gladstone to cooperate.[85] During the early months of 1870, Acton used Gladstone's letters as 'invaluable weapons' in the hope of encouraging opposition to the Papal position.[86] He was optimistic that the movement might succeed in preventing the Proclamation of Papal Infallibility with aid from the European powers, but believed that it would fail without it.[87] At the same time, Acton echoed the sentiments of the Foreign Office that the French occupation of Rome had little to do with religion but everything to do with strategic interests. In March 1870, he wrote to Gladstone that 'The religious pretext for the occupation cannot be urged at a time when it is indirectly producing effects injurious to religion, and is continued only on account of the interest which France has in dividing Italy'. Acton went on to connect Italy's financial embarrassment with the Roman Question, arguing that the latter excluded the conservative element of society from political life, and made it 'a merit with a great part of the population to resist the law'. The government was left to confiscate property from the Church and to suppress religious houses, leaving the priesthood almost starved 'because France is determined to keep the Pope on his despotic throne'. Acton claimed that the policy degraded the Italian government in the eyes of the nation, nurtured revolutionary passion, and hindered the independence of the country. Moreover, the French occupation of Rome could no longer be defended on the grounds of religious liberty; in fact, 'The French protectorate has become as injurious to Catholicism as to the Italian State, and it is about to prove as pernicious to other countries as it is to Italy'.[88] On the religious issue, Clarendon was apparently willing to consent to Acton's plan to organise a group of foreign states against the Papacy, but he held 'little hope of effecting any considerable result'. Gladstone believed, however, that Britain had the power 'to do little or nothing with advantage', beyond making sure that the Great Powers were aware of British 'repugnance' at the proceedings.[89] Consequently, his government avoided interference

[85] Acton to Gladstone, from Rome, 1 January 1870, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.

[86] Acton to Gladstone, 2 February 1870, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.

[87] Gladstone to Acton, 16 February 1870, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.

[88] Acton to Gladstone, 20 March 1870, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.

[89] Gladstone to Acton, from Rome, 1 March 1870, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.

over the Vatican Council, not only because of the potentially inflammatory consequences of taking a line that openly opposed that of Pope Pius IX, but also because it was scarcely in a position to do anything. Moreover, Gladstone was eager not to appear anti-Catholic. While regretting that 'so great a power as Roman Catholicism should be set against human progress', he saw no immediate interest for Britain in attempting to shape Papal policy; nor was it 'an object for Protestantism to get the Pope out of Rome' or 'to prevent the Council erring by extreme views'. Moreover, his government's most immediate concern lay in cultivating good relations with whoever possessed influence over Irish bishops and priests. This preoccupation with the sentiment of Catholics in Ireland was very clear when he wrote that 'It is so necessary that the body of Roman Catholics in these Kingdoms should have a few men who can act upon them favourably and can also represent and interpret them to the world and to the national life and heart'.[90] Gladstone claimed to take 'as deep and real an interest in the affairs of other Christian communions' as in those of his own, especially the largest and 'most famous of them all'. He was happy for Acton and other Britons in Rome to let his sentiments on the matter be known as widely and as strongly as possible.[91] Gladstone was by no means anti-Catholic but, so far as the concept of the pope's absolutism was concerned, he was unquestionably anti-Papal.

Gladstone's concerns would have a significant bearing on his government's policy regarding Italian affairs after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War on 19 July 1870, which soon raised the prospect of the withdrawal of the French garrison from Rome and the Italian acquisition of the city. Under these changed circumstances, it became a priority of the Gladstone government to see the peaceful completion and consolidation of Italian unification, irrespective of opposition from Catholic opinion in Britain, Ireland, and much of the rest of Europe.[92] This policy complemented the British government's more general preoccupation with preventing any escalation of the conflict, not least on account of the Italian king's martial ambitions and the wider Italian desire to obtain possession of Rome. Consequently, for some time, the British found themselves

[90] Gladstone to Acton, 27 November 1868 (copy), Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.
[91] Gladstone to Acton, 1 December 1869, Gladstone Papers, BL, Add. Ms 44093.
[92] O. Wright, 'British Foreign Policy and the Italian Occupation of Rome, 1870', *International History Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2012), pp. 161–76.

aiming to deter the Italians from entering the war on the side of France. The Franco-Prussian War split opinion in Italy between the mainly pro-French Italian government and the largely anti-French population.[93] The French emperor's tough stance with Bismarck had been due in part to his apparent belief that the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Italy would join France in the event of war. In Florence, Vittorio Emanuele and senior generals were convinced that the French would win, and they believed that a French alliance might enable Italy to gain Rome, the Trentino, a foothold in North Africa, and perhaps even the return of Nice. Their position was neither unrealistic not unreasonable; after all, Venice had been won through an aggressive alliance with a wartime victor, and few people anywhere predicted that Prussia's victory over France would be either so quick or so crushing. Britain's hopes of containing the war were aided enormously by the attitude of the Italian leaders Lanza, Sella, and Visconti Venosta, who were all opposed to any course which might bankrupt the Italian state.[94] Besides, Napoléon had made a mistake by declaring war without playing his 'last strong diplomatic card' of Rome.[95] When the conflict quickly began to go badly for France, the French found it harder to rally the Italians to their cause. Fearful that an attractive French proposal might lure Vittorio Emanuele and his hawkish party into an agreement, Clarendon and Paget had lectured the previous Menabrea administration on the virtues of neutrality, and in 1869 had found the Italians willing to enter into some kind of neutral league of states desirous of peace.[96] Under the very different circumstances of July 1870, the very different Lanza government was so fearful of Vittorio Emanuele's ambitions that Visconti Venosta proposed to Paget that Britain might combine with Austria-Hungary and Italy to enter into a neutrality pact, together with other powers.[97] Here, Italian leaders were clearly looking to Britain to take a lead, hoping to safeguard Italy's position not only internationally but even with regard to the unpredictability of their own monarch.

[93] Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism*, p. 35.

[94] D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 360.

[95] J. P. T. Bury, *France, 1814–1940*, 6th edn (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 107–8.

[96] Paget to Clarendon, 27 March 1869, Clarendon Papers, BL, MS Clar. dep. c. 488.

[97] Paget to Granville, 16 July 1870, TNA, FO 45/164.

The British response was lukewarm. Paget was instructed to be 'careful not to commit Her Majesty's Government as to combined neutrality without instructions'.[98] Paget told the Italians that although London was not prepared 'to enter into combined action with other Powers in regard to neutrality', the British were determined to retain a neutral stance and were 'highly gratified' to find that other powers concurred.[99] As the French predicament worsened, Napoléon sent his son to Florence to beg for Italian assistance in return for the diplomatic equivalent of a blank cheque: French consent for the Italians to march into Rome.[100] The Italians preempted this move by suggesting that London offer mediation to the belligerent powers in the hope of drawing a swift conclusion to the conflict.[101] When Napoléon's defeat and capture at Sedan precipitated the collapse of the Second Empire in France, Carlo Cadorna, the Italian minister in London, requested the British to seek to bring about an armistice. Once again, the reply from London was negative.[102] As if to confirm the worst fears of the Lanza cabinet regarding the intentions of the king, in October 1870, the Italian foreign ministry received a formal demand for Italian political and military support. This precipitated another effort by the Italians to secure British intervention aimed at restoring the international peace, even humbly stating that the Italians were not desirous of taking any credit for the initiative and emphasising that Italy would be happy to follow any lead the British might take.[103] All Italian requests for a formal understanding were politely declined by the British government, and Paget cynically suspected that Italy's true motive was to obtain a seat at the conference table rather than to avoid war.[104] It seems more likely, however, that Lanza, Sella, and Visconti Venosta were more concerned about preventing their king from dragging the country into a war that it could not afford, and to which the memory of Italy's Italian participation in the Austro-Prussian War suggested that the country could contribute little. As in the aftermath of the Garibaldian crisis of 1867, when the Italian minister

[98] Hammond (for Granville) to Paget (telegram), 20 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.
[99] Hammond (for Granville) to Paget, 27 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.
[100] F. J. Coppa, *The Origins of the Italian Wars of Independence* (Harlow: Longman, 1995), p. 139.
[101] Hammond (for Granville) to Paget (telegram), 18 August 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.
[102] Granville to Paget, 27 September 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.
[103] Granville to Paget, 17 October 1870, TNA, FO 170/166.
[104] Paget to Granville, 30 August 1870, Paget Papers, BL, Add. Ms 52214.

in London had called up Lord Stanley on an almost daily basis out of fear that the French might try to dismember Italy, during the Franco-Prussian War Italian leaders again looked imploringly towards the Gladstone government for Britain to raise a protective hand. Even if London were consistently averse to entering into any form of official engagement with the Kingdom of Italy, Italy's liberal politicians had perhaps come to see their country as being dependent upon an informal 'special relationship' with Great Britain.

London might have shown itself unwilling to enter into any official agreement with Italy, but it was by no means opposed to intervention in Italian affairs when the opportunity finally arrived to assist the Kingdom of Italy in gaining possession of Rome. At the same time as seeking to keep Italy neutral in the Franco-Prussian War, when the war broke out it raised the immediate prospect of the consolidation of Italian national unity. Even before the French declaration of war, the emperor's regime expressed anxiety over Italy's intentions towards Rome, and the effect that the recall of its force from that city might have.[105] As early as 27 July, the French army was facing the prospect of catastrophic defeat, and Paris announced that its garrison would be withdrawn from Rome and the terms of the 1864 September Convention restored unilaterally. This decision was communicated to the Foreign Office by Lord Lyons, the British ambassador at Paris, on 3 August 1870.[106] Even before this formal announcement, however, British fears of the destabilisation that the move might cause in the Italian peninsula had led Harry Jervoise, the acting British minister in Rome, to discuss the matter with Papal ministers.[107] When the French left Rome on 20 August, the Gladstone government determined to intervene. On the pretext that revolutionary disturbances 'might endanger the safety of British lives and property, and which might even induce the Pope to desire an asylum out of Italy', the Royal Navy warship HMS *Defence* was despatched to Civitavecchia, the largest port in the Papal State. In writing to the Admiralty, the foreign secretary was careful to emphasise that Pius IX should not at all be encouraged to evacuate; at the same time, however,

[105] Lyons to Granville, 8 July 1870, copy in Hammond (for Granville) to Paget, 11 July 1870, TNA, FO 170/165.

[106] Lyons to Granville, 3 August 1870, *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Rome: 1870–71*, Parliamentary Papers, 1871 LXXII 223, p. 1.

[107] Jervoise to Granville, 29 July 1870, *Correspondence respecting the affairs of Rome: 1870–71*, Parliamentary Papers, 1871 LXXII 223, pp. 1–2.

Granville stated that 'His Holiness should be received […] and entertained with all possible respect', should he be received onboard.[108] The *Defence* arrived at Civitavecchia on 23 August 1870 under instructions to remain until further notice.[109] The British prime minister and foreign secretary were in agreement that no attempt should be made to encourage the pope to board the ship, but they instructed Jervoise to make it known to the Holy See that the *Defence* was ready if required to convey the pontiff to a safe haven of his choosing. Granville told Jervoise that although the government had no desire to see the head of the Roman Catholic Church become an exile protected by the Protestant British state, he should be denied neither asylum aboard the ship nor temporary residency on British soil, should he request it.[110] Likewise, the Admiralty's orders to the captain of the *Defence* placed an emphasis on the 'delicate' situation regarding the pope, and made only a token reference to the possible need to protect British and Irish subjects and property in the city.[111] Therefore, the protection of Pius IX—and thereby of the Kingdom of Italy, by removing any justification for any Catholic power to intervene in the Papacy's interest—can be considered the primary motive for the British government's despatch of a Royal Navy warship to the Papal State.[112]

Perhaps it was the presence of the *Defence* at Civitavecchia, in addition to the scale of the disaster unfolding for France, which gave the Italians the confidence to act. In early September, the Italian government received a number of petitions from Viterbo, Frosinone, and other locations in the Papal State, requesting annexation to Italy. Officially upon this pretext, a division of the Italian army was sent to Rome, ostensibly for the purpose of protecting the city from internal disorder or any invasion by revolutionary bands. Italy's leaders emphasised their eagerness to respect the independence of the pope, and circulated a despatch claiming that their action

[108] Granville to the Lords Commissioner of the Admiralty, 20 August 1870, *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Rome: 1870–71*, Parliamentary Papers, 1871 LXXII 223, p. 4.

[109] HMS Defence Ship's Log, 23 August 1870, TNA, ADM 53/9978.

[110] Granville to Jervoise, 21 August 1870, *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Rome: 1870–71*, Parliamentary Papers, 1871 LXXII 223, pp. 4–5.

[111] Secretary to the Admiralty to Captain Salmon, 22 August 1870, *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Rome: 1870–71*, Parliamentary Papers, 1871 LXXII 223, p. 5.

[112] See O. Wright, 'British Foreign Policy and the Italian Occupation of Rome, 1870', *International History Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2012), pp. 161–76.

presented no threat to his spiritual leadership.[113] King Vittorio Emanuele wrote personally to Pope Pius, expressing an unduly optimistic hope that the Italian invasion of the Papal territory would not be seen as a hostile act.[114] As the Italian army crossed the border, General Cadorna, its commander-in-chief, issued a proclamation that it did so 'not to bring war but peace and real order'.[115] Echoing some of the proposals put forward in previous years, not least by Lord John Russell, the Italian government suggested that the pope might retain sovereignty over the portion of Rome surrounding the Vatican, while the rest of the city could be absorbed into the Kingdom of Italy. At the same time they promised neither to interfere with the Papal income, nor to impede the activities of foreign representatives to the Holy See. The pope surprised no one by refusing the Italians' proposal, and instead condemned their invasion of his territory. As the Italian army advanced upon Rome, however, it found itself generally welcomed by the populace, and it encountered only token resistance from Papal troops. Once outside the city it remained encamped for several days in the hope that some accord could be struck. Ultimately, however, Cadorna ordered the bombardment of the city walls. The pope ordered that his troops were to make only a token show of resistance before surrendering to the Italian force. After breaching the city walls at Porta Pia, the Italian army entered the Eternal City on 20 September 1870. The pope declined both the British and a further Prussian offer of sanctuary, famously opting instead to declare himself a 'prisoner' of the Vatican.

The British reaction to the Italian occupation of Rome contrasted starkly against the celebratory spirit which had greeted the unifying of most of Italy a decade previously. When the Italian envoy to London informed the foreign secretary of the news, Granville made no official observation. Privately, he admitted to Paget that 'although I am delighted the thing is done, it is not necessary to express an opinion upon the exact manner in which it has been accomplished'.[116] In his official account of the

[113] Paget to Granville and enclosures, 12 September 1870, *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Rome: 1870–71*, Parliamentary Papers, 1871 LXXII 223, pp. 26–32.

[114] D. Mack Smith, *Italy and Its Monarchy* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 53.

[115] Proclamation of General Cadorna, enclosed in Paget to Granville, 13 September 1870, *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Rome: 1870–71*, Parliamentary Papers, 1871 LXXII 223, pp. 32–3.

[116] Granville to Paget, 22 September 1870, Paget Papers, BL, Add. Ms 51224.

event, Paget provided a colourful description of the Italian army's reception by the Roman people, and the general euphoria of street celebrations, bell-ringing, and flag-waving that ensued throughout Italy.[117] He announced that after 11 years of 'emancipation and unification', the final act had taken place, and Italy was no longer merely Metternich's 'geographical expression'. The approval of the Papal State's annexation to Italy was formalised by plebiscite on 2 October, an overwhelming majority of 133,000 voting in favour over some 1500 against.[118] Paget suggested that the Kingdom of Italy was now free to take its place among the nations of Europe 'unfettered'.[119] As if in acknowledgement of British strategic concerns, he observed that one of the most serious obstacles to the social, financial, and political improvement of the country had finally been overcome. Privately, however, Paget's tone was different. Although he recognised that the 'cry of Italians' was to have Rome as their capital, he did not consider the Italian government's intention to comply to be wise on account of the financial cost and hot climate of the city.[120] He even dismissed the idea of the pope, the king, and the Italian government all coexisting in the same city as 'the most absurd notion that ever was'.[121] And when Italian troops battered their way into the Quirinale—the Papal residence which had been appropriated for use by Vittorio Emanuele, but to which the Papacy had refused to hand over the keys—Gladstone confessed to feeling 'grieved'. He had it intimated to the Italian government that the British would find themselves in difficulty should the Italian state hamper the pope's ability 'to rave at his pleasure', 'confiscate his property', or place itself in the Quirinale 'by violence'.[122] *The Times* welcomed the fact that a danger to the independence of Italy and the peace of Europe was 'happily removed'.[123] Many Catholics in Britain and Ireland, by contrast, were alarmed that the pontiff might be subjected to indignity 'or deprived of that independence which they consider essential for the … discharge of

[117] Paget to Granville, 22 September 1870, TNA, FO 45/166.

[118] D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 89.

[119] Paget to Granville, 10 October 1870, TNA, FO 45/166.

[120] Paget to Granville, 29 September 1870, TNA, FO 45/166.

[121] Paget to Hammond, 29 September 1870, Hammond Papers, TNA, FO 391/23.

[122] Gladstone to Granville, 7 December 1870, *The Gladstone-Granville Correspondence*, ed. A. Ramm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), I, p. 178.

[123] *The Times*, 20 September 1870.

his functions'.[124] Upon the King of Italy's arrival in Rome, Jervoise was instructed by the Foreign Office to remove himself discreetly from the scene, while Paget was advised not to enter the city together with any royal parade that might be staged unless other members of the diplomatic corps did so.[125] When Vittorio Emanuele's carriage drew up outside the Quirinale on a rainy day in December 1870, he is said to have uttered to his aide: 'At last we are here'; poignantly, the remark was made not in Italian but in Piedmontese.[126]

With the exception of San Marino, and the various Italianate territories to its periphery, the Italian peninsula and islands had come to comprise a single state. The process had occurred largely under the auspices of the British, even if it had not always proceeded in either the manner or with quite the result they might have desired. When the opportunity finally emerged for the Italians to make Rome their national capital, the Gladstone government had pursued a policy deliberately intended to smooth the way for the completion of Italy's national unity. They had succeeded in doing so while appearing to remain aloof. On account of his actions elsewhere, Gladstone has been described as a 'troublemaker' in international affairs.[127] During the 1850s, Italian affairs had influenced his political outlook considerably, and convinced him of Britain's 'unique international responsibility' to campaign in support of progress and against authoritarianism overseas.[128] By 1870, he led a government which adopted a course of action deliberately intended to assist the destruction of the Papal temporal power and to allow the consolidation of Italian unity. The termination of the pope's despotic rule and the incorporation of the Roman territory into the Kingdom of Italy represented a landmark in the modernisation of the Italian peninsula, as well as that of Europe as a whole. To the end, the British had pursued a tentative and subtle role, yet one which was arguably decisive in the unifying of Italy.

[124] Granville to Paget, 11 December 1870, Paget Papers, BL, Add. Ms 51225.

[125] Gladstone to Granville, 29 and 30 December 1870, *The Gladstone-Granville Correspondence*, ed. A. Ramm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), I, pp. 197, 198.

[126] Qtd in John Gooch, *The Unification of Italy* (London: Routledge, 1986), p. 37.

[127] D. Schreuder, 'Gladstone as "Troublemaker": Liberal Foreign Policy and the German Annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, 1870–1871', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 17, No. (1978), pp. 106–35.

[128] J. Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 255–6.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

This book has sought to reveal the extent to which the British leaders of the 1860s and their overseas representatives looked upon the unifying of Italy as an opportunity to forge a 'special relationship' with the newly formed state. In an age when British naval power dominated the Mediterranean region—and when their principal rival in that region was France—the prospect of a united Italy was a most welcome strategic boon to British strategists. Moreover, the creation of the Kingdom of Italy as a constitutional monarchy, open to free trade and committed to secularisation, presented the possibility that such a country would look towards Great Britain for guidance as well as friendship. Although there is little evidence that Italian leaders sought British advice, and plenty of evidence that they did not appreciate it when it was forced upon them unsolicited, it is clear that British politicians and diplomatic figures took a keen interest in the Italian state's development during the difficult decade following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy. It is also well established that British politicians, and on occasion their representatives in Italy, took it upon themselves to seek to influence that country's direction. While the British cannot claim to have had any military impact upon either the unifying of Italy between 1859 and 1861, or the preservation of the new state during the extremely challenging events of the 1860s, there was surely a considerable degree to which Britain assisted Italy in establishing itself as 'the least

O. J. Wright, *Great Britain and the Unifying of Italy*, Britain and the World, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59397-9_7

of the Great Powers'.[1] The fact that the British foreign secretary had offered his country's endorsement to the unification of northern and southern Italy in 1860, before providing official recognition of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, was significant. From that point onwards, Italy was known in international relations to be the friend of the country which was then not only the world's wealthiest power but also the dominant naval power in the Mediterranean. The fact that the Italian kingdom was looked upon by the British as one which existed within such an important sphere of British influence can have done it no harm. Neither can the new state be considered to have suffered from the fact that so many people in Britain—from leading politicians to members of the general public—were so enthusiastic about the dramatic events that had come to pass in Italy.

It is probably fair to say that the British intention to watch over Italy and to steer the country in the direction that was considered in London to be the right one, was benign. Nonetheless, Britain's goodwill towards Italy should not be allowed to obscure the fact that British foreign policy towards that country, throughout the 1860s, came from a position of self-interest. During the Risorgimento, Italy had acquired a reputation for being a revolution hotbed. The Italian Question had threatened quite frequently to spark civil unrest, which it succeeded in doing most famously and with dramatic consequences in 1848. It had also raised the prospect of war between the Great Powers on numerous occasions, and had been the cause of international conflict in 1859. These dangers did not disappear upon the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861; if anything, the emergence of the Roman and Venetian Questions to supersede the Italian Question made the situation even more volatile, on account of the desperate difficulties facing the new state, and the determination of its leaders to see those issues resolved sooner than later. The British government's position as the effective guarantor of Italian unification, self-imposed through Russell's famous despatch of 27 October 1860 and the official recognition of Italy's independence and unification in 1861, made the situation an uncomfortable one for whomever was at the helm of Britain's foreign relations during the decade that followed. It is for these reasons that this study concludes that the British—and Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone in particular—can be considered to have made a

[1] R. J. B. Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers: Italian Foreign Policy before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

considerable investment in Italy through their government's moral and diplomatic support for Italian unification—an investment in a project that none of them wished to see fail. British prestige, the reputations of Britain's most powerful politicians of the age, as well as the country's strategic interests in the Mediterranean were all at stake.

The findings of this book are consistent with the theory put forward by Maartje Abbenhuis, who argues that neutrality was a means through which the British—as well as the other Great Powers—could assert themselves in the world, and by which they might seek to contain crises and to control events. As one of the only two Great Powers (the other being Russia) to maintain a constant policy of neutrality in European affairs throughout the period between the end of the Crimean War in 1856 and the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, 'Britain played a key hand in keeping the multitude of wars that involved Europe and the United States to limited conflicts that did not threaten the international system as a whole'.[2] The British played an important role in protecting weaker neutrals from threats or belligerent demands by advocating the permanent neutrality of key states. This applies very much to new Kingdom of Italy, which was after 1861 a large and important but fragile power with a formidable range of external and internal enemies. Abbenhuis goes on to suggest that neutrality was a solely British phenomenon, but a European one. It was, throughout the nineteenth century, a keystone of British foreign policy, and one that was put to good use in Italy during the first decade of Italian unity.

Throughout the period covered here, the British diplomatic and consular services performed a valuable role in terms of providing a steady flow of generally reliable information on Italian affairs for the British governments of the 1860s. This enabled successive administrations of differing political consistencies in London to possess a far more immediate, detailed, and realistic insight into the state of affairs in the new Kingdom of Italy than would otherwise have been possible. The proximity between the picture provided by British representatives to Italy, and the contents of modern historical works focusing on the period, testifies to the overall accuracy of their portrayal of the situation. No shocking inaccuracies have been found in the material with which British diplomatic and consular staff

[2] M. Abbenhuis, *An Age of Neutrals: Great Power Politics, 1815–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 100.

furnished the Foreign Office. Furthermore, the contrast between the British government's realistic picture of the newly united kingdom in Italy after 1861 and the romantic myth of the Risorgimento which the leaders of that country wished to propagate helps to explain the concern felt in Whitehall, and the determination of British leaders to use their influence to steer the new Italy in the direction that they felt to be right. It is also evident that the perceptions and sympathies of individual diplomatic representatives could influence the British government. Sir James Hudson, Henry Elliot, Sir Augustus Paget, and Odo Russell each lent something of their own character and opinions to the information they provided to the Foreign Office. While Hudson might have been more enthusiastic about Italian unification than most, if not all, of the politicians in London, Elliot provided astute and sensitive coverage of Italian affairs; while Paget might have been rather gruff and even contemptuous in his explanations of conditions in Italy, Odo Russell offered his interpretations of the last days of the temporal power of the Papacy with wit and intelligence. In addition, all of these figures played a key role in filtering the vast amount of correspondence they received from Britain's consular staff located throughout Italy, which proved to be of immense use in furnishing the British government with pictures of Italy and its various difficulties that were perhaps not the version of events with which Italian politicians would have wished to share with London.

The introductory chapter to this book proposed to examine British relations with the new Kingdom of Italy in the light of such personal input by Britain's overseas representatives. It also suggested that British foreign policy towards Italy could be framed within the concept of the development of a 'special relationship', whereby successive governments in Britain kept a keen eye trained on Italian affairs and sought to influence the development and direction of the new state. The second chapter provided a foundation for the study by placing Italy during the 1850s within the wider context of Britain's foreign relations, accounting for the rise of pro-Italian sympathy among the mid-Victorian generation, and providing a narrative of the role played by British leaders during the unification of most of Italy between 1859 and 1861. From this starting point, the third and fourth chapters both revealed the extent to which the Liberal administration led by Palmerston and Russell watched with fascination and concern as the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy was followed by an extremely hard period of domestic unrest, as well as a series of ill-fated efforts to resolve the Roman and Venetian Questions. The fifth chapter

has shown how, while the Conservative party had shown little sympathy for Italian nationalism and little satisfaction at the emergence of a united kingdom in Italy, once in power, Derby and Stanley inherited their predecessors' sense of concern over the stability and integrity of the new state. The sixth chapter described the story of Britain's involvement in Italian affairs during the country's troubled first decade to a close, by exposing how the Liberal government, led by Gladstone as prime minister, and by Clarendon and Granville as his foreign secretaries, was prepared to resort to taking a delicate and discreet measure to smooth the passage for the culmination of the Risorgimento with the Italian acquisition of Rome.

Although the scope of this book does not extend beyond 1870, it is worthwhile to finish with some observations on how the relationship created between Britain and Italy during the 1860s might be considered to have left a lasting legacy. Certainly, the generation of Count Cavour had held Britain in high esteem. While many of the institutions and conventions adopted by the new Italian state after 1861 were more reminiscent of the French system than the British, and while some Italian foreign ministers had sometimes been infuriated by the comments that they received from British diplomats, Italy nonetheless looked upon Britain in a very positive light. The occasional forceful demand or withering remark notwithstanding, in general, the Italian political class knew that in a Europe that was largely hostile to the existence of their state, the British were firm friends; it is possible, also, that in the most dangerous moments through which they passed during the 1860s, the Italians felt that the British would be their protectors and would come to their aid if it ever looked likely that their kingdom would collapse, or—especially—if it should it be threatened with destruction by hostile powers. There is evidence of this sentiment dating from times when the Roman and Venetian Questions were up for discussion, and seemed ripe to precipitate an international crisis; towards the end of the decade, the Florentine newspaper *La Nazione* called for the British to abandon their aloofness.[3] During the advent of the Franco-Prussian War, Italian parliamentarians who were concerned that Vittorio Emanuele II might drag Italy into the conflict on the side of Napoléon III appealed to the British to enter into a pact of neutrality with Italy, pledging non-intervention. The British refusal to enter into any formal agreement with Italy or any other power during the latter half of the nineteenth

[3] *La Nazione*, 11 April 1869, in Paget to Clarendon, 12 April 1869, TNA, FO 45/140.

century could well have been a factor that combined with Italian rivalry with France and the Italians' ongoing sense of insecurity to lead them to join the Triple Alliance alongside the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires in 1883. They did, however, join Spain and the Austro-Hungarians in signing the Mediterranean Agreements with Britain in 1887, by which each power undertook to maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean region, and to resist any attempt by any power to alter it[4]; this deal was a watered-down version of an earlier Italian proposal to strike an alliance to safeguard their respective interests in North Africa.[5] And, when the First World War broke out in Europe in 1914, the Italians abstained from intervention on the side of their German and Austrian allies, before opting to fight alongside the British, French, and Russians in 1915; in his appropriately titled thesis 'The Traditional Friendship', Richard Bosworth suggests that in addition to their greater ability to defend the Alps than the Mediterranean, this decision was the result of their national interests lying more with Britain than with any other power.[6] Indeed, the 'special relationship' which might be considered to have been forged between Britain and Italy during the 1860s did not begin to falter until the Fascist era, when British and French opposition to Mussolini's ambitions in Abyssinia persuaded him that Italian aims would best be served through alliance with Nazi Germany, and the Italian dictator's fateful decision to declare war on Britain and France in 1940. Therefore, by establishing a close friendship which endured for seven decades, and which has been very successfully rebuilt since the Second World War, the investment made by British leaders in the new Kingdom of Italy that emerged from the Risorgimento in 1861 can be considered to have been a fruitful one.

[4] See R. W. Seton-Watson, *Britain in Europe, 1789–1914: A Survey of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 563–4.

[5] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971 [1954]), pp. 311–12.

[6] R. J. B. Bosworth, 'The Traditional Friendship: A Study of British Foreign Policy towards Italy 1902–15' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1970).

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