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# Frankfurt am Meer: The “Illiberal” Liberalism of the German Confederation and Its Aspirations over the Habsburg Adriatic in 1848

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## Abstract

In 1848, Habsburg Trieste became the target of German nationalists gathered in Frankfurt. The Frankfurt parliament, born out of the revolutions of 1848, has been widely depicted as a liberal experience. Yet its nationalist stances, which included the creation of a unitary German state through the absorption of vast multiethnic regions of the Habsburg monarchy, whose Austrian crownlands were part of the German Confederation, bear witness to the illiberal nature of the Frankfurt parenthesis of 1848–1849. Notwithstanding the assimilatory tendencies of the Frankfurt parliament, Italian activists in Trieste supported the inclusion of the Habsburg port in an enlarged Germany, hoping to break away from Habsburg rule, which they portrayed as oppressive. This article argues that the contradictory Italian support for the German Confederation highlights the paradoxes at the basis of nationalist movements at their onset, while also pointing to the difficulty that nation-states would soon witness in dealing with other ethnic groups within their borders. On the contrary, it was the Habsburg monarchy that, in its centuries-long tradition of accommodating different ethnicities into its fold, represented what to present-day observers comes closer to political liberalism than the so-called liberal national parties that opposed Habsburg rule.

**Keywords:** Habsburg monarchy; 1848 revolutions; nationalism; national identity; liberalism

## Introduction

In Trieste, “the German element is weak compared to its Italian and Slavic population” (Wigard 1848–1849, 159). With these words, in 1848, Prussian-born Karl Ludwig von Bruck, founder of the Austrian Lloyd and deputy representing Habsburg Trieste in the Frankfurt parliament instituted that year, opposed the will of the majority of the assembly gathered in Frankfurt to integrate Trieste into a new German Confederation and dismiss the privileges accorded to the Adriatic port by the Habsburgs. The statement, expressed by a German, highlights the social and cultural complexity of the Habsburg monarchy in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as the political implications of 1848 more generally. Trieste’s involvement in the German Confederation constitutes an unresearched chapter in European history at the crossroads between Central Europe, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean. The Frankfurt parliament first gathered in May 1848, following the revolutions of March, as the assembly representing the lands of the German Confederation, to which also Austria and Trieste belonged. In the summer, once it became clear that the new confederation would be Prussian and not Austrian led, Triestine newspapers teemed with discussions about

whether Trieste should continue belonging to the Habsburg monarchy or become part of a new German Confederation while severing its centuries-long association with Vienna.

To contemporary observers, the aspirations of the Frankfurt parliament appeared to pose a direct threat to the existence of the Habsburg Empire, as they undermined its cohesion and entirety: some perceived this outcome as a catastrophe, others as a solution to their longing for independence from the “prison of peoples.” By looking at the various Triestine responses to Frankfurt in 1848, it is possible to investigate the dynamics by which nationalist ideas emerged, spread, and were transformed by propaganda into “natural” categories that proved disruptive of societies. In doing so, this article seeks to reassess the extent to which the Forty-Eighters were liberal, suggesting that notwithstanding the existence of truly liberal stances, nationalist views among revolutionaries had the upper hand, while at the same time sanctioning the association of nationalisms with liberalism (or a semblance of it) in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In this context, the emerging German and Italian nationalist stances, as advanced by politicians and journalists, will be analyzed in direct opposition to the supranational principles of the Habsburg monarchy. The aim is to show what François Fejtó (1988) discussed with regard to the political movements that fought for the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy: namely, that national movements, often described as democratic by anti-Habsburg activists and international observers like Leo Valiani (1966), were in fact populist movements that eventually led to the European catastrophes of the 1914–1945 period.

While this study is historiographical in its theme and use of sources, it is not intended to be an antiquarian history of Trieste or the Habsburg monarchy; the discussion seeks to offer keys to understanding recurring sociopolitical dynamics and the mechanisms of propaganda. It shows how nationalist activism targeting Habsburg institutions, which was and still is often considered liberal, actually proved to be illiberal. It hopes to be a multidisciplinary contribution to the field of political theory and provide evidence for the forcefulness of sociopolitical explanations rooted in the identification of Austria as the “enemy,” which was an integral part of nationalist enterprises in the second half of the nineteenth century. By looking at the multinational past of Central Europe, which was wiped away by the success of nationalist struggles after 1918, whose premises were legitimized by the events and later glorification of 1848, this discussion hopes to provide new interpretative historical models in the field of political theory and with regard to the future of the European Union. While it may be an exaggeration to present the Habsburg Empire as an ideal polity, as István Deák (1990, 9) put it, the Habsburg monarchy may still present “a positive lesson while the post-1918 history of the central and east central European nation-states can only show us what to avoid.” And according to John Deak (2015, 274), “[T]he Austrian state collapsed despite its modern welfare state features, despite its expanding political participation, and despite the resources it mobilized to making the state work. In the end, we can see that the [First World] war ended a long-running process, one that would bring millions of people into political participation, formal education, cultural literacy, and economic promise.”

The discussion briefly introduces Trieste’s history of allegiance to Austria; it then addresses Trieste’s participation in the Frankfurt parliament and the perspective of Frankfurt parliamentarians on the Trieste question. It next looks at Italian nationalists’ support for the German Confederation and moves on to an analysis of Habsburg loyalist stances among Italian speakers who saw in the Habsburg monarchy a rather satisfactory mediating force between the various ethnic groups of the empire. By discussing the short-lived Frankfurt experience of the Habsburg port city of Trieste, this discussion seeks to demonstrate that the Frankfurt parliament was hardly a liberal institution. Analysis of anti-Habsburg Italian support for the German Confederation in Trieste offers elements for understanding 1848 in this direction. This interpretation is also in line with how Alexander Herzen ([1850] 1950)—“the enemy of any dogma, who maintained that *salus populi* is as dangerous a slogan as *lèse-majesté*” (Berlin 1950)—came to view 1848 after experiencing it directly in France. Reinterpreting 1848 in the multinational Habsburg context offers elements for reassessing the field

of political theory, the development of liberalism, and the roots of its gradual demise that led to the First World War.

The nationality struggles that led to the formation of several European nation-states at the expense of the multiethnic Habsburg monarchy have been generally hailed as the foundational moment of Europe. Yet the disappearance of the Habsburg monarchy spelled “the return to barbarity in the name of fatherlands,” as the Triestine internationalist and socialist Angelo Vivante ([1912] 1984, 324) put it before the outbreak of the First World War. By focusing on a little-explored chapter of European history, this article also seeks to unravel the dynamics by which social categories change over time, thus impacting the understanding of their contemporary meaning. As Gustave Le Bon (1895, 139) noted with reference to political concepts, “words have variable and transitory meanings that change according to epochs and peoples.” Or again, “names are worthless labels that a historian, preoccupied with the real value of things, should not consider” (Le Bon 1895, 118). In his study of the Frankfurt parliament, Brian Vick (2002, 19–20, 40) analyzed the various ideological currents within the assembly, showing the paradox whereby liberal programs and nationalist projects were not mutually exclusive in 1848. Following Le Bon’s cue, the fact that the majority of Frankfurt parliamentarians advocated German nationalism at the expense of other linguistic groups suggests that these men were far from liberal in the present-day sense. The so-called liberal nation rested on the same misapprehensions that affected Rousseau’s ideas, by which his notion of direct democracy, applicable to the municipal context of Genève, was applied, unsuccessfully, to much wider territorial entities, as Guglielmo Ferrero (1942) discussed in his classic study of the principles of power and political legitimacy.

This is not to deny that there were real liberals in Frankfurt, such as Franz Schuselka, Baron Viktor von Andrian-Werburg, and Count Friedrich Deym, who “reckoned that the best chance to keep the Austrian monarchy together and of use to the German nation involved granting rights of local and provincial self-government on a liberal basis” (Vick 2002, 43–44). Yet they constituted a tiny minority in the face of supporters of an ethnically defined German nation (Körner 2000, 14). Nor does this discussion imply that 1848 had nothing to do with the promotion of liberal ideas, which nevertheless were soon replaced by sectarian violence, as Herzen ([1850] 1950) showed in his account of the revolution in Paris. The supranational Habsburg polity, in its accommodation of several different ethnicities even through the turmoil of 1848, can be considered an example of multiethnic cohabitation that modern-day states, facing the resurgence of nationalisms, still fail to accomplish. The case of Trieste, together with the role of the Italian-speaking people of the monarchy in relation to the German Confederation, offers a seldom-debated context in which to explore the emergence of nationality politics at the crossroads between the German, Latin, and Slavic worlds. For these reasons, as Alison Frank (2011, 783) pointed out, the history of Trieste cannot be adequately engaged by “a traditional ‘urban’ history.” It needs to be analyzed in relation to the rest of the Habsburg monarchy and the eastern Adriatic, whose historical trajectory it followed. Like other Habsburg lands, the Julian region and the Trieste area were transformed from a non-national space into a region contended for by opposing nationalisms.

### The Habsburg Monarchy and Trieste: National Indifference amid the Nationalization of Politics

Nationalist activists in 1848, but also official Habsburg censuses from 1880, contributed to the nationalization of the Habsburg monarchy by reducing vernaculars “to a set of predetermined linguistic categories [...] from among the following: German, Bohemian-Moravian-Slovak, Polish, Ruthenian, Slovene, Serbian-Croat, Italian-Ladino, Romanian, and Hungarian” and neglecting the widespread phenomenon of bilingualism and multilingualism (Stergar and Sheer 2018, 580). In particular in the Austrian half of the empire, from the middle of the century, imperial institutions favored the formation of ethnolinguistic nations, which nonetheless did not challenge the cohesion of the empire (Cohen 2007). Although the nationalization of politics at the end of the century

complicated interethnic relations, with imperial institutions at times failing to act as neutral supranational arbiters (Cornwall 2019), more often than not nationalist activists sought to improve the relative position of what they considered to be their respective national groups (Cattaruzza 1992; Judson 2006).

Given the role of nationalist groups in Habsburg politics, the imposition of national categories based on standardized languages and the widespread dismissal of multilingualism and ethnic hybridity have consistently figured in historiography until the recent turn in Habsburg studies. Pieter Judson's works, "instead of seeing political conflict as the inevitable product of underlying ethnic differences in society, [have] ask[ed] instead how political conflicts may have produced a greater sense of national differences among people" (Judson 2016, 272). People's indifference to nations and nationalist stirrings had been the torment of nationalist activists throughout the Habsburg monarchy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Judson 2006). Yet, as Tara Zahra (2010, 93) put it, "while national indifference has long been an obsession of nationalist activists in east central Europe, it has only recently become a subject of historical research." Pamela Ballinger (2012, 116–117) has shown that, until Dominique Kirchner Reill's recent studies, "the phenomenon of indifference to the nation that Judson and Zahra, among others, have documented for other frontier zones of the former Habsburg Empire has warranted relatively little conceptual or empirical elaboration for the Julian Region." Although throughout the empire it was the "propertied and educated social elements" that identified with discrete nations (Cohen 2007, 255), Habsburg society was not composed by distinct national groups. Not only were national and ethnic identifications irrelevant for many Habsburg citizens, but more local and regional forms of identification encompassing different "nationalities" appeared to characterize the lived experiences of large parts of the population. This was as true for Budweisers (King 2002) as it was for Triestines and Fiumans, even when politics became nationally polarized (Maritan 2021; Rutar 2002; Techet 2018).

Italian national narratives, both historical actors' and historians'—even those acknowledging Trieste's multiethnic nature and the cosmopolitanism of its elites—are steeped in what Judson (2014, 62) described as a belief in the existence of "language-based cultures [...] [that] produced different national societies in the twentieth century" and tend to lump together the Venetian language and culture with the Italian (Maritan 2021).<sup>1</sup> This process is concomitant with the appropriation of the Venetian colonial past on the part of Italian imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century (Laven and Damien 2015). As Will Hanley (2017, 28) put it with regard to late nineteenth-century Alexandria, a context that in many respects resembled that of Trieste and the other port cities of the eastern Mediterranean, "the cardinal sin of histories of fin-de-siècle cosmopolitanism is pleasure in the anachronistic use of present-day categories, especially those of modular and indelible nationality." Pier Paolo Dorsi (1996, 116–117), for example, wrote that "between the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Trieste was the pole of attraction mainly of the Italian people of the Adriatic, more than for peoples that were more removed in culture and traditions," arguing teleologically that there existed a relatively homogenous Italian culture "from Friuli to Apulia." Yet in the Austrian Littoral, a regional shared sense of belonging existed irrespective of present-day national categorizations and intertwined with Mitteleuropa and the eastern Adriatic (Laven and Baycroft 2008). As David Laven (2014), Dominique Kirchner Reill (2012), and Konstantina Zanou (2018) have shown, to speak of an Italian culture in the mid-nineteenth-century Adriatic (and even in later decades) is anachronistic, notwithstanding the fact that nationalist and municipalist political figures of Trieste identified with the Italian "nation," albeit for different purposes.

Until the eighteenth century, the position of Trieste at the northernmost tip of the Adriatic coast, at the meeting point between the Italian peninsula and the Balkans, had made the city the center of struggles between Venice and Austria, when the Ottoman threat was not the preeminent concern of the two powers. The act of dedication of 1382, by which Trieste's elites swore allegiance to the Habsburgs, lifted direct Venetian pressure on the city. Trieste's voluntary adhesion to the House of Habsburg guaranteed Triestine freedom from Venetian forays. In 1719, Emperor Charles VI

declared Trieste a free port, in the same year as nearby Fiume/Rijeka, in order to eschew Venetian tolls and thus challenge the hegemony of the Adriatic that the Republic of Venice had secured for centuries (Dubin 1999, 11; Vivante 1912).

From a fishing hamlet, Trieste became the center of Habsburg overseas traffic. The Habsburg government aimed at establishing itself as a world-scale competitor in long-distance trade with the foundation of the Oriental Company in 1719, which focused on trade with the Ottoman Empire, and the East Indian Trading Company in 1722 (Good 1984, 27). Nevertheless, these first enterprises soon foundered, and Charles VI's project of the free port fell in abeyance amid decades of wars that shook Europe in the mid-eighteenth century. The War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War triggered a period of stagnation notwithstanding Maria Theresa's efforts to sustain the economy. Her economic policies, implemented by her son, Joseph II, began yielding results in the 1780s (Coons 1975). In a bid to revitalize the state economy, legal and economic privileges were granted to skilled laborers, artisans, and non-Catholic merchants, who were attracted to the city from the rest of the monarchy and beyond (Good 1984, 28).

As a result, Trieste attracted Jewish, German, Greek, Serb, and Armenian merchants who contributed to establishing a cosmopolitan mercantilist urban society, similar to several other port cities of the Mediterranean (Cattaruzza 1996; Driessen 2005; Dubin 1999). Newcomers from the rest of the monarchy also contributed to the population growth of the city, which saw an exponential increase from about 5,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the eighteenth century to about 30,000 at the end of the century and more than 80,000 by 1850 (Cattaruzza 1995; Judson 2016; Kirchner Reill 2012). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the city was one of the leading ports in Europe and the fourth most populated city of the monarchy (Frank 2011, 783; Judson 2016, 113–115). As this brief overview of Trieste's history shows, the history of the city was bound up with that of the Habsburg monarchy and, through the Austrian Lloyd, the eastern Adriatic and Mediterranean (Coons 1975; Ivetic 2019, 248–252). Italian and German nationalists used elements like language—the former—and past medieval rule over the region—the latter—as justifications for Trieste's secession from Austrian rule.

### A Prelude to the Nationalization of Politics: The Trieste Question in Frankfurt

“In the meeting of 27 May, after long discussions, the Assembly, gathered in Frankfurt to establish the Constitution of Germany, adopted the following proposition, which was greeted almost unanimously: ‘The German National Assembly, as the authority instituted by the will and election of the German nation in order to establish the unity and political freedom of Germany, declares that all the arrangements of the single German constitutions that do not conform with the workings of the universal Constitution that is being formed shall be considered as valid only with respect to the latter’” (von Bruck 1848). In response to the overarching role taken by the Frankfurt parliament, the two deputies of Trieste, von Bruck and Burger, expressed their worry as to the future of their city and monarchy: “Against today's resolution of the high German National Assembly [...] the here undersigned express their contrary opinion through this document, at the same time [...] [wondering] whether the Constitution of the Germanic Empire, which is being discussed and established, is irreconcilable with the specific Constitution of Austria and the special condition of Trieste” (von Bruck 1848). Von Bruck justified the protest by arguing that the German population of Trieste was a small minority compared with the Slavic and Italian populations of the city. Deputy Schilling retorted, at the behest of 37 other Austrian deputies, that “where the strength, unity, and solidity of Germany [were] at stake, the special interests of a city [could] not be taken into consideration” (von Bruck 1848). Seeing no prospects for the preservation of Trieste's liberties within a greater Germany, von Bruck left Frankfurt.

In one of his letters to the family, the Triestine Giacomo Venezian (1849), the Jewish Italian patriot who died in the defense of Rome in 1849, attacked von Bruck's decision to espouse, after several hesitations, the Viennese cause instead of that of the Frankfurt parliament, pointing to the



liberalism of the latter as opposed to the repressive nature of the former, and for having “his mind informed [...] by [Vienna’s] absolutist and Jesuit doctrines.” Yet “Bruck’s activities in Frankfurt confirm that he made good his pledge to subordinate German unification to Trieste’s interests” (Goodman 1994, 188). The accusations that Italian activists leveled against him as to his political opportunism, given his participation at Frankfurt (“I camaleonti politici del 1848,” *La Frusta*, December 5, 1848), appear groundless in light of his intentions. They are also unwarranted, given that it was those Austro-Germans supporting the German Confederation who were opposed to local or regional specificities and privileges. As a matter of fact, the existence of the monarchy as a whole was repeatedly called into question at Frankfurt, as it was not possible to think “that Venice [would] remain linked to Hermannstadt, Dalmatia to Galitia, if Vienna [was] not the central point of the Austrian lands any longer” (Wigard 1848–1849, 2856).

It was not only in the interest of Trieste that von Bruck had gone to Frankfurt, but also the survival of the Habsburg monarchy, which was jeopardized by the overarching power of the German Confederation. The proceedings of the Frankfurt parliament make clear that at stake was, as von Bruck put it, “the unification and strength of Germany,” which dismissed the particular position of Trieste, “where the German element [was] weak compared to its Italian and Slavic population” (Wigard 1848–1849, 159). As Lawrence Sondhaus (1987, 126) showed, Bruck’s involvement in Frankfurt included the organization of a German navy, a task he shared with Archduke Johann and Schwarzenberg, whose aim was a revived “Habsburg sea power in the service of an Austrian-led Greater Germany.” Their position of authority at Frankfurt was steeped in their attempt to guarantee Austrian interests within a new Germanic Confederation, where the Habsburg monarchy would have a pivotal role. Therefore, their initial participation was not paradoxical or against the interests of the various peoples of the monarchy, as Italian nationalists complained. Part and parcel of the Forty-Eighters’ interest in the Trieste region was the establishment of a German navy in the Mediterranean, which implied extending the borders of the confederation so as to include Istria to the south; according to this plan, Pola would become the war harbor, as Wedekind, deputy for Hannover, suggested (Wigard 1848–1849, 312). Yet Austria was expected to bear the most onerous burden, although even the plan of strengthening an Adriatic fleet based in the northeastern Adriatic was soon abandoned in favor of the preeminent role given to the fleets in the Baltic and North Seas (Sondhaus 1987, 129–131).

In the early months of the Frankfurt parliament, it became clear to von Bruck that Trieste in a united German state would never possess the same rights and privileges that it did under Austria. Von Arnim-Boitzenburg’s perspective on Trieste contemplated only “the material point of view,” not the cultural and linguistic specificity of the city (Wigard 1848–1849, 176). Wipperman, deputy from Cassel, argued that the city’s privileges could not be guaranteed, since “the main point [was] the relation in which a single district of Germany should be part of the whole” (Wigard 1848–1849, 177). Where protection was contemplated, Trieste was nevertheless considered an integral part of a German state and its union with Austria was dismissed. The idea of Trieste as part of a greater Germany triggered a set of priorities that did not allow for its cultural specificities, even when the economic factors were considered. This neglect of other ethnicities can also be seen in relation to other Italian-speaking territories. When Giovanni Prato, deputy from Welschtirol (today the Italian region of Trentino), addressed the assembly, he introduced himself as “a native of Trento, but represent[ing] Roveredo,” to which several voices immediately commented, “In Germany they say Trent!” (Wigard 1848–1849, 788). Vick (2003, 246) adduces this attitude toward the assimilationist drive of the Forty-Eighters, insofar as “the notion of a German world-historical civilizing mission was a central pillar of the nascent German national identity being promoted by the national movement.” Yet it was precisely this “mission” that made the Frankfurt parliament an illiberal enterprise undermining forms of multiethnic coexistence that had been in place for centuries, notwithstanding the intention of some of its members, which came to define later perceptions of 1848. While Vick (2003, 248) focuses on the “assimilatory moderation,” which, according to him “even extended to embrace German Jews and certain of Central Europe’s non-German-speaking

groups as welcome constituents of the German nation,” Axel Körner (2000, 14) more convincingly argued that “the question of national borders and of who would belong to the new German nation-state destroyed much of th[is] initial idealism in the Frankfurt parliament.”

Although the nationality principle of German nationalists in 1848 was very different from that of the twentieth century, inasmuch as it went beyond ethno-cultural markers of national belonging, Frankfurt’s aspirations of a greater Germany through the assimilation of other ethnic groups still gave primacy to German culture (Vick 2003, 249). Pan-German thinking in the Vormärz thus involved not just the reacquisition of old Holy Roman imperial territories through the attraction exerted by a new powerful German state, but also their partial Germanization in the face of an ostensibly superior and more progressive German culture (Vick 2002, 61). Part and parcel of this conviction was the belief in “the German cosmopolitan national mission to bring *Bildung* to the world through assimilating, reworking, and disseminating its diverse cultural heritage” (Vick 2002, 58).

Frankfurt’s aim to assimilate other ethnic groups not only into a German polity, but also into its culture and language, did not originate in what Otto Dann (1986) argued to be a German inclination toward multinational rule, which Vick (2002, 44–45) described as being rooted in “memories of long-standing multinational association and to facilitate the inclusion of non-German speaking groups within the German nation.” For understandings of multinationalism or supranationalism that still held for the Habsburg monarchy do not apply to the German Confederation in 1848; the question of unification with Germany triggered a difficult situation for the political and intellectual figures identifying with the various nationalities of the Habsburg monarchy (Judson 1996, 60–62). Nonetheless, Vick (2002, 80) agrees that parliamentarians had difficulties in accommodating other nationalities, as “the architects of national unity encountered even greater obstacles when they confronted their problematic relationship with other national groups both inside and outside the various proposed borders of the new Germany.”

As with Italian nationalism, which was being formulated in the same years, precisely these aspects soon came to influence exclusive policies and aggressive forms of nationalism, in whose way the Habsburg monarchy stood. Consequently, this conflation of “liberalism” with early nationalism is not only dangerous but also misleading. “The paradox of the ‘non-German German’ would have presented deputies with a nearly insoluble dilemma requiring far-reaching compromise” (Vick 2002, 111), in which contemporary commentators saw the inevitability of ethnic strife. Italian activists favored the German Confederation. Yet it is precisely this contradictory support of Frankfurt on the part of Italian nationalists that, if read in conjunction with German “liberalism,” makes Italian activism in Trieste an even more populist venture.

### Down with “The Blooded Austrian Color”: Italian Support for the German Confederation

The leading figures of local Italian nationalism would soon find a place in the Venetian revolution. Although they were eventually celebrated as harbingers of Italian unification, Italian activists promoted the only violent manifestation in Trieste with very limited support. On March 23, 1848, on news of the revolution in Venice, Giovanni Orlandini, former editor of the local paper *La Favilla*, led an assault on the government palace in the name of an “Italian Trieste” (Kirchner Reill 2012). Orlandini, a bookseller by profession, through alternate successes had been editor of *La Favilla* before seeing the paper gradually taken over by Francesco Dall’Ongaro and Pacifico Valussi (Negrelli 1978). Few scholars have focused on the insurrection he led. Tullia Catalan (2004, 241), although downsizing its relevance, relied on Angelo Scocchi’s nationalist reconstruction of the events. It was this perspective that made him write on the centenary of Orlandini’s movement and on other occasions that his “republican audacity” had been a harbinger of the Italian annexation of Trieste in 1918 (Scocchi 1949, 1951).<sup>2</sup>

While traditional Risorgimento historiography has emphasized the relevance of the revolution attempted by Orlandini in Trieste, Kirchner Reill (2012) has more recently questioned the resonance

of Orlandini's movement. Anna Millo (2007, 69), too, notwithstanding her Italo-centric perspective bordering on the teleological as to the final annexation of Trieste to Italy, agrees that the revolutionary attempt did not have serious repercussions on the city. The assault on the Palazzo del Governo led by Orlandini resulted in a brief riot that was soon quelled by the joint effort of the Landwehr (territorial militia) and the Trieste National Guard, with the participation of parts of the wider populace (Kirchner Reill 2012, 176).

In the aftermath of his defeat, Orlandini issued a manifesto in which he addressed the Venetian people. In this document, he justified the reasons for the failure of the insurrection in Trieste, after Venetian revolutionaries had expressed their belief that Trieste had served the Austrian cause (Vivante 1912, 32–33). Orlandini (1848, 165) appeared to speak and act on behalf of the entirety of Italian-speaking Triestines, who were, according to him, the real Triestines; therefore, he claimed to represent the Triestine people as a whole. He presented himself as “Triestine of birth, and therefore Italian.” The few who did not comply with his political program were targeted as traitors and non-Triestines, claiming that “the Triestine people [were] Italian.” What, then, of the thousands of Slovenes and other Slavs, Germans, and Greeks who were Triestines, being autochthonous or having migrated to the city, like many Italian speakers? Orlandini (1848, 165) claimed that the failed Triestine revolution had made throughout Venice “a bleak impression regarding the national sentiments of the Triestine people.” Addressing the Venetian people, he urged them “not to be indignant if the movement [he] had raised in order to follow in [their] footsteps had been arrested by an obscurantist, that is Austrian, reaction.” He went on in his invective against his opponents and claimed that “such reaction had been bought by the governor of that province, who had money distributed to some idlers with whom all the royal employees, the spies, and some Austrian lordlings domiciled in Trieste joined forces” (Orlandini 1848, 165).

As to the National Guard, widely acknowledged to be a liberal institution, it “could not resolve to promptly join such movement since,” Orlandini explained, “at the time of its formation, a mass of Austrians [...] had sneaked in” (Orlandini 1848). His clearly anti-Austrian sentiments made him connect everything Austrian with absolutism. For he considered as reactionary those Austrians who had joined the National Guard and quelled his attempt at making Trieste secede from Austria. The National Guard, although endorsed in Trieste by people such as von Salm and Gyulai, whom Orlandini detested as part of the ancien régime, was born out of the constitutional promises of March 15, 1848. Thus, he attributed the failure of his revolution to pro-Habsburg “foreign” elements of the guard.

Notwithstanding his invective, Orlandini manifested sympathy for Germans, since, according to him, they had “always manifested their warmest sentiments for the Italian cause and [had] raised the German tricolour and not the blooded Austrian colour” (Orlandini 1848). Orlandini's antipathy for Austria and support for the German nation seems odd, nevertheless, since it was the transformations auspicated by the Frankfurt parliament that undermined not only the privileges of Trieste, but also its use of the Italian language, as Alessandro Mauroner (1848a), a prominent local publicist, explained in the same months. The threat that the Frankfurt parliament posed to Austrian hegemony over Central Europe was saluted by Italian “liberals.” They did not seem to be preoccupied by the expansionistic aims of many German nationalists who projected the notion of German medieval territorial greatness into the present, which would draw Trieste within the boundaries of a new Germany together with multiple other territories in which German speakers constituted only minorities, which included “the Netherlands, the Flemish part of Belgium, Alsace and Lorraine, the Balkans, Bohemia, Moravia, the Polish-speaking Prussian province of Posen, Trieste, and southern Tyrol” (Berger 2006, 46). Consequently, they revealed an ideological blindness rooted in an unconditional hatred for Austria, which was considered oppressive whatever was its political configuration, even constitutional. His words were echoed by another advocate of Italian Trieste, Dall'Ongaro. The latter's opposition to Vienna originated from his animosity toward what he perceived to be Austrian policies of Germanization, in opposition to the widely held perception of Vienna as the guarantor of local identities.



Nationalist propaganda in favor of an Italian unitary state was steeped in complaints about Austria's supposed attempts at Germanizing the city. Yet the sources point to a different situation. Italian was the language used by local authorities, including the police, and there was no sign of opposition to it on the part of central authorities. Also, one needs to bear in mind that the very same activists who complained about Austrian "oppression" were Dall'Ongaro and Valussi, who, as Kirchner Reill (2012, 187–190) has shown, carried out a pervasive daily propaganda against Austria during the Venetian revolution. Theirs was a propaganda aimed at spurring the Venetian populace to fight, through images that depicted Austria as the foreign Germanic enemy using its Slavic regiments. In the same year, the Milanese Carlo Cattaneo (1972, 169, 201–206) would call Austrian troops in Italy "Croatian hordes"; similarly, in his invective against the Habsburg monarchy, Karl Marx ([1848] 1977, 110) wrote that Austrians were "inundat[ing] Lombardy from German soil with Croats and Pandurs"—when the majority of them were actually Italian speakers (Sondahus 1990). Therefore, their arguments must be met with caution, when, on the contrary, they have informed Italian perceptions of Austrian rule and inflamed Italo-Slavic enmity. The main tenet of Italian propaganda, which portrayed Austria as the "prison of peoples," was to become a classic trope in later historiography.

The Triestine paper *La Frusta* accused Austrian authorities of trying to turn Trieste into a Slavic city, an accusation, that of the purported Habsburg machination centered on Slavicizing Trieste, that was to become one of the main propagandistic tenets of Italian Irredentism. "Why here in Trieste," the author wondered, "a Slavic society of propaganda is being established, with its club, library, and several hundred subscribers of which 7/8 are from outside? [...] Why, as it is said, 6000 Croats pass through Istria?" These were all signals of a plot aimed at Slavicizing the city, the author concluded ("Segnali!," *La Frusta*, November 21, 1848). "Until a few days ago," the author continued, "Germany was your fatherland and Frankfurt your capital; now it is Zagreb that gives orders, and you are Slavs! When will you remember that you have but to receive orders from Vienna and that this said to you that you are Italians and masters at home?" The same paper criticized Triestines for having been "fooled [...] by seven or eight Germans [...] and now also by the Slavs, who too are very few amongst us, but given the present circumstances are in a position of advantage" (*La Frusta*, November 21, 1848). Trieste was portrayed as culturally Italian, yet the supposed Italian character of the city appeared to be feeble and constantly threatened by a consistent Slavic presence. In the same months, Croat nationalists' claims of the Slavic character of nearby Fiume had justified the Croat occupation of the city and the loss of its autonomy (Maritan 2021). Triestine municipalists, similarly to their Fiuman counterparts, hoped that their assiduous depiction of Trieste as Italian—in terms that were often similar to Italian-speaking secessionists—would guarantee Trieste's autonomy and the preservation of its privileges as a free port.

### The Hamburg of the Adriatic, Triestine Municipalism, and Italian Austro-Slavism: Curious Oddities or Sociopolitical Realities?

Those who advocated the demise of the monarchy depicted Austrian rule as foreign and centered on attempts at Germanizing the peoples of the empire. This view could not come to terms with the supranational nature of the Habsburg monarchy. It also promoted essentialist notions of ethnicity and the nation that eventually obtained at the end of the nineteenth century. Dall'Ongaro's thought is a case in point. Similar to Orlandini, Dall'Ongaro depicted those who were not spurred by Italian sentiments as foreigners. Together with the former and Valussi, he had been editor of the paper *La Favilla*, which until 1847 had advocated the fusion of Italian speakers and Slavs into a single people, epitomized by what Dalmatia would become in their hopes, and deemed by the Ragusan Ivan Antun Kaznačić (1848, 44) as having shared in the effort to "reconcile the Italian element with the Slavic." Yet Dall'Ongaro's and Valussi's espousal of "Adriatic multi-nationalism" did not last long and did not survive the events of 1848. In Dall'Ongaro's (1848) case, resentment against Austrian rule proved stronger than the idea of a shared sense of identity across the Adriatic under the Habsburg

aegis. He complained about the supposed policies of Germanization first introduced by Joseph II, which were but an attempt at making crownlands administratively uniform, as “the unhappy practice of Germanizing [the Triestine] people.” He also described the situation in Trieste as monopolized by “German government, German tribunals, teachers who taught the rudiment of Italian in German, German priests, everything German,” by which he did not refer to the German Confederation, but to an Austrian state that he perceived as a foreign presence. Notwithstanding these attempts, he continued, “Trieste remain[ed] Italian. [...] The Triestine people are an Italian people. Slavs live only on the outskirts, brothers of Italy in misfortune. [...] Germans were there, as they were amongst us, an overlapping people [...], a parasitic plant. [...] To whom who sleeps, wake up, wake up at least at the clamour of the ruins of a decrepit Empire.”

Yet these words took a sudden turn insofar as Dall’Ongaro (1848) wrote, “Triestines, Italy does not need you. Italy has two ports, one on the Mediterranean and one on the Adriatic. [...] Will you prefer to be, as you already were, the humble servants of Austria with the advantage of becoming the Hamburg of the Adriatic? Here is the destiny that Italy harboured for you. Italian papers [...] already wished you this: Italian arms will help you achieve it, glad [...] to repel the common oppressor out of domains that are not his.” And, again, Dall’Ongaro reiterated, “People of Trieste, it is not time yet. We do not want from you either justifications or excuses,” which justifies the failure of the Italian revolution there. The purported sentiments of Italianness, the wish to forsake Austria, had not caught on through the city, but were the preserve of few, however persistent. “We want that you look around yourself, that you distinguish your true friends from the false ones, that you follow the winning party and not the losing one.” He concluded by proclaiming “Hail Trieste, Hanseatic city! Hail the Hamburg of the Mediterranean!,” when a few lines earlier, he criticized such Hanseatic identity, which he deemed to have been imposed on Trieste by its Germanic oppressor. Kirchner Reill (2012), in line with Vivante, has emphasized Dall’Ongaro’s promotion of Trieste as the “Hamburg of the Adriatic.” Yet the first part of the document highlights the minimal extent of interethnic cooperation between Italian speakers and Slavs that Dall’Ongaro upheld already in 1848, underlying both German and Italian anti-Slavic tendencies. This dismissal of the Slavic component of Trieste as a suburban group prone to being assimilated into Italian Trieste did not constitute an isolated case of disregard of Slavic needs for wider participation in municipal life. Dall’Ongaro’s words, as he was one of the most prominent Italian activists in town, bear witness to the contradiction of nationalist propaganda in 1848, which in the context of Habsburg Trieste found it difficult to come to terms with a strong tradition of municipalism and multiethnic coexistence.

In Trieste, opposition to a union with a greater Germany did not derive from a chauvinistic antipathy toward Germans. Although Alessandro Mauroner followed the cue of Italian activists in emphasizing the mainly Italian nationality of Trieste, contrary to them, he was a staunch Habsburg loyalist (Boaglio 2012, 154). As copy editor of *Il Costituzionale* and later *La Gazzetta di Vienna*, the Italian-language newspaper published in Vienna from 1850 to 1857, in response to an article that had appeared in the *Ost-Deutsche Post*, he claimed that widespread Triestine opposition to Frankfurt was the result of the conviction “that everyone must have a nationality and support that in which he was born and raised, and that the Italian was the nationality of the majority of Triestines” (Mauroner 1848a, 159). Trieste could not be incorporated into a new German state, because that would lead to the abrogation of the voluntary act of adhesion to Austria of 1382, from which the fortunes of the port had originated (Mauroner 1848a, 159). Such was the general perspective of the Triestine bourgeoisie, which Mauroner voiced in opposition to German pretensions over Trieste.

In words exemplifying the supranational principles of the Habsburg monarchy, local historian, municipalist, and Habsburg loyalist Pietro Kandler (1848, 176) argued that while “nationality is sacred as much as religion” and needed to be respected in view of a peaceful coexistence and the common good, the idea of founding states on the basis of the nationality principle was a very novel idea, since the need for building nation-states was “an idea of the most recent times, which shall

yield to the example of centuries.” Kandler’s support for the primacy of the Italian language in Trieste derived from his awareness that Italian was the language of regional traffics and Trieste’s multiethnic business community, similar to what the Fiuman public figure Antonio Giacich argued in the same years for nearby Fiume (Maritan 2021). The complexity of nationality and the different implications it had at the time were further voiced by Kandler. In praising Johann Hagenauer, who had been initially appointed as representative of Trieste to the short-lived constitutional assembly of Vienna instituted in 1848, Kandler (1848, 180) expressed his sympathy stating that “when [Hagenauer] said to be a representative of an Italian city [he] clearly manifested to be a true Austrian and Triestine, favouring the welfare of the Empire, this littoral, from Duino to Cattaro [present-day Kotor], and this city.”

Yet the fact that intellectuals and nationalist activists thought in national terms does not imply that the populations thought and felt in national terms, too. It shows that the nationalities endorsed by political activists, whether nationalist or Habsburg loyal, were conflated with the more or less standardized written languages that would appear in Habsburg censuses decades later. As municipalists and Habsburg loyalists in Trieste showed, their support of the Italian language derived, as in Fiume, from their understanding of their city’s economic and cultural specificity. Language and nation were seen as a bulwark against the assimilatory tendencies of nationalists. And the local multiethnic elite considered advocating the Italian character of the city as the safest way of preserving the cosmopolitan *nazionalità triestina* against Italian, German, and Slavic nationalisms (Kandler 1848). The paper of Trieste’s National Guard, arguing that the empire was “the aggregate of different states of various nationalities,” emphasized that “the city of Trieste is in itself a state” (“Parole schiette,” *La Guardia Nazionale*, April 20, 1848). And, in a statement that is revealing of the understanding of nationality at the middle of the century, the contributor to one of its issues—“a Guard,” as he signed—argued that “nationality manifests itself mainly through the language its people adopt.” The author stressed that “the nationality of Trieste is Italian and Italian is the language,” yet the national color of Trieste was not the Italian tricolor: for “red and white are the colours of Trieste and these should be the colours of the national cockade” carried by the members of the National Guard.

Mauroner (1848a, 159), too, repeatedly asserted the Italian nationality of the Triestine people, which prevented them from desiring “to merge with the Germanic nation or [...] the Slavic.” Although he stated that Slavs were part and parcel of the Littoral, and, whatever the future held for Trieste, the destiny of the city was intertwined with theirs, the preservation of the Italian nationality of Trieste was paramount for its very same existence as the commercial outlet of the monarchy. For it was the conservation of the Italian character of the city that made Triestines “Austrian, not German.” As to the pretensions of the Frankfurt parliament over Trieste, for Triestines, “the question would be whether to join Italians or Slavs, not Germans” (Mauroner 1848a, 159), which shows that the city was to be understood as Italian in linguistic terms and for economic reasons—because of the role of Italian as the lingua franca of the Adriatic—and not in historical and ethnic terms. The national question in Trieste was laid out similarly in other cities of the empire, like Budweis/Budějovice, which Jeremy King (2002, 13–14) described as “German only in the purely linguistic sense that most residents seem to have preferred to speak German until some time after the middle of the nineteenth century.” Municipalists’ views dramatically contrasted with that of those Italian activists who were against Habsburg rule, as the latter used the trope of the Italian language with the aim of seceding from Austria and joining a yet-to-be-formed Italian state, and not in defense of municipal privileges.

The supranational Austrian state implied, in Mauroner’s (1848a, 160) words, “a confederation of states bound by a sentiment of common interest, while Germany [indicated] a union of peoples of German language.” In the pamphlet under attack by the *Ost-Deutsche-Post*, focusing on the momentous political challenges faced by the monarchy and titled *Questioni del giorno in Austria* (Current issues in Austria), Mauroner made these points clear. In a way summarizing the supranational character of the Habsburg Empire, he argued that “to say that I am Austrian means

that I am part of the federative Monarchy of various peoples, which is Austria; the Slav, the Hungarian, and the Italian can belong to it without renouncing their respective nationality [...] while the German confederation will be joined willingly solely by Germanic peoples” (Mauroner 1848b, 8). He identified the greatest threat to the monarchy as the unitary and democratic tendencies of the Frankfurt parliament, expressing an attitude that was widely shared also by activists and liberals throughout the monarchy (Mauroner 1848b, 9). According to his argumentation, echoed by several publicists of different nationalities, the interests of the various Austrian nations would be better served by union with the Habsburgs. Trieste, too, while preserving its Italian nationality, which in the docks and suburbs gave way to the Slavic, was assured its prosperity by the Habsburgs. The act of dedication of 1382, by which Trieste had voluntarily tied its destiny to that of the monarchy, forced Trieste to need “a strong Austria, not a great and powerful Germany” (Mauroner 1848b, 9).

Mauroner’s (1848b, 12) defense of what he described as the Italian nationality of Trieste was not concurrent with a desire to see Trieste tied to a future Italian state. Nevertheless, “the greatest danger for Austria,” Mauroner (1848b, 12) cautioned his fellow citizens, “comes from Germany, not Italy.” He was convinced that “the Italian tricolour implie[d] only the shrinkage of Austria, whilst the German [could] lead the Monarchy to its total disintegration,” since, to his dismay, the very existence of Austria was called into question by several members of parliament in Frankfurt (Mauroner 1848b, 12). The Slavic component of the monarchy would serve as a counterbalance against German and Italian centrifugal forces (Mauroner 1848b, 12).

Mauroner (1848a) went on to argue that “it is natural that the Germans of Trieste sympathize with the union with Germany, as Italians all the more so with nearby Italy, and most natural that our peasant is bound to the Slavic stock [...] in the present political chaos, in the general conflict of material and national interests that upset in particular this part of Europe.” Yet the sources do not seem to corroborate his conviction that Germans in Trieste supported the German Confederation, or that people in general would necessarily identify with national groups.

That several Germans continued to settle in the port city as employees of the Austrian Lloyd does not seem to suggest that Habsburg authorities were willing to strengthen the German presence in the city in opposition to other ethnic groups. The Lloyd was a conduit of allegiance to the Habsburgs thanks to the stability of employment, good wages, and career prospects that it offered to its employees irrespective of their origins. In 1847, the year before he took the leadership of the Venetian revolution, Niccolò Tommaseo (1847, 148–149) even pleaded with the Lloyd’s authorities to receive financial aid for his fellow citizens in Šibenik hit by a severe famine. Having obtained the sum of 2,000 florins, he thanked and blessed “the Slav and the Greek, the Jew and the Armenian, the Italian and the transalpine,” by which he also recognized Trieste as a city “that, inhabited by people of different stocks, promise[d] to be a precious ring of trust and intelligence between several nations,” thus running counter to the same claims of *Italianità* espoused not only by his soon-to-be fellow revolutionaries Dall’Ongaro and Orlandini, but also by himself. Only one year later, the Lloyd became the object of Italian activists’ animosity as a bastion of loyalty to the Habsburgs. The local paper *La Frusta* (no. 8, 1848) even started one of its issues with the words, “the German Lloyd [...] had the mission of promoting, spreading, and developing the German element here among us.” While several Germans worked for the Lloyd, numerous men from the Italian peninsula also found employment there. Germans did occupy positions as naval engineers and stokers, as Venetians and Pontifical or Neapolitan subjects tended to be sea captains or sailors, the divide being a matter of sociocultural legacies and expertise.

## Conclusion

Mauroner’s case exemplifies a line of thought that differed from that espoused by Valussi and Dall’Ongaro, namely, that Italians and Slavs were not inherently enemies who needed to be reconciled and that Austrian rule was not oppressive, but instead the guarantor of nationalities’

rights. A greater Germany with aspirations over the Adriatic would be a threat to Austria as well as Trieste, since the fortunes of the city were tied to the Habsburg monarchy. Yet Mauroner, too, thought in national terms. The belief in the existence of nationalities that were beginning to emerge anew was part and parcel of the intellectual narrative of the middle of the century, which Triestine historian and public figure Kandler (1848, 176) described as a novelty. National cultures, still the preserve of intellectuals, were translated from the political realm as a defining feature of everyday life.

This article analyzed the different political stances in Trieste toward the Frankfurt parliament and the future of the Habsburg monarchy, thus showing the clash between several different political and ideological views. As it sought to demonstrate, anti-Habsburg political programs were not representative of society, but rather the preserve of restricted groups of resolute agitators and publicists. More importantly, at least in the Triestine context, they did not prove to be liberal just because their promoters stated so or because national historiographies handed down their views as liberal. The so-called liberal national parties that formed throughout the monarchy in the 1870s and 1880s certainly, to some extent, owed their existence to the tradition of 1848, which saw in mass mobilization a tool to legitimize their nationalist stances at the expense of the Habsburg dynasty. In the Adriatic context, nationalist propaganda, in its simplification and distortion of reality in view of its political objectives, aimed at targeting “the enemy” and portrayed Triestine society as polarized already in 1848 and throughout the following decades. As a result of ideological fervor, in Trieste, the Frankfurt parliament was supported by Italian nationalists, a fact that underlies the logical inconsistencies of militant nationalism that existed already at its onset.

It was in this multiethnic context that the German Confederation enjoyed popularity among Italian nationalists eager to shake off Habsburg rule. Yet Italian nationalists appeared to be spurred by slogans rooted in the portrayal of the Habsburg monarchy as oppressive of its nationalities and the Frankfurt parliament as a liberal institution. Advocates of Italian nationalism in Trieste did not see the threat that the Frankfurt parliament posed not only to Trieste’s autonomy, but also to its distinct cultural character, something of which Triestine autonomists and Habsburg loyalists were aware. Insisting on defining Frankfurt parliamentarians as “liberal nationalists” and arguing that “liberalism and nationalism [...] were [...] intimately connected through concurrent development” (Vick 2002, 41–43) might be misleading, if one were to accept categories at face value and apply them unchanged to different epochs. The distance of journalists and pamphleteers from everyday life and their application of certain categories (e.g., nationality) to society, which eventually came to define it, points to the forcefulness of political propaganda. Habsburg loyalism did not derive from a political opportunism whereby “natural” national sentiments were forsaken. Habsburg loyalists perceived the supranational dynasty as the legitimate ruler, which publicists not accustomed to its centuries-old accommodation of peoples of different languages and cultures failed to understand while depicting it as the “foreign oppressor.” As an Austrian creation, Trieste’s economic interests and cultural specificities could only be understood and respected by Austria, not “liberal” Germany or Italy, as 1848 and the twentieth century proved. Caution in applying modern-day meanings to the same terms used in the nineteenth century is instrumental for reevaluating the European past. Within this, liberalism, by modern-day standards, would be better used to describe Austria in its inclusion of the “other” and early development of the rule of law, which can still teach us something in an age of resurging nationalisms and extremist politics.

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## Notes

- 1 Coupling Venetian culture and language with the Italian is part and parcel of the Italian nationalist appropriation of the Venetian past. As Ronnie Ferguson (2007) has shown, in the former Venetian possessions of the Adriatic, as well as in Trieste and Fiume, there was a writing-speaking dichotomy between Venetian, in its various colonial forms, and written Italian. In Trieste, this dichotomy was between oral Triestino, still spoken today across social classes, and written Italian. According to linguist Charles Bidwell (1967, 13–14), in Trieste and Fiume, the adoption of Venetian coincided with a process of “Venetianization”: Venetian became the lingua franca of the eastern Adriatic even in those places, like the two Habsburg ports, where Venice had not ruled. In the course of the eighteenth century, in Trieste, the Triestino, “the Venetian dialect of the city,” replaced the local Ladin dialect, the *Tergestino* (Ascoli 1873, 479). In their Italianization of Trieste’s past, Italian activists wrote that the people of Trieste’s littoral, or “the eastern Venetian littoral,” as Mantuan propagandist Sigismondo Bonfiglio (1865, 552) called it, “across the centuries have preserved the common language that they shared with their Italian compatriots.” Similarly, Valussi (1861, 22) had misleadingly stated that “the language of the indigenous population of the city has always been Italian. When Trieste resembled the other Italian cities of Istria and Friuli and was not yet a trade emporium [...], the Italian language was there exclusive.” Decades later, Silvio Benco (1910, 70) wrote about “the Italian language of the indigenous population.” These misapprehensions have been so pervasive that have endured to this day. Tullia Catalan (2011, 95), for example, while acknowledging the multiethnic nature of Trieste, still wrote about “the Slovenians’ assimilation into Italian culture and society, a process which had been growing from the birth of the free-port,” that is, the first half of the eighteenth century.
- 2 The episode of the “Republic of St. Giusto” proclaimed by Orlandini, as handed down by Italian historians, harks back to Fascist Italy and was edited on the occasion of the centenary of 1848–1849, like the works by Stefani (1949), with his “Documenti ed appunti sul quarantotto triestino,” and De Franceschi (1949), “Il movimento nazionale a Trieste nel 1848 e la Società dei Triestini,” which was written in the 1920s and therefore steeped in the Irredentist ideology promoted by Fascist Italy. Today, in the heart of Trieste, a plate reads as follows: “Here, on the evening of 23 March 1848, Giovanni Orlandini, holding the tricolour, challenged the overwhelming forces of foreign domination, leading the patriots who had bravely risen up in the name of Italy.” For the extremely restricted number of Irredentists in Trieste, see Mario Alberti (1936), *L’Irredentismo senza romanticismi*. Notwithstanding his support for Irredentism, Alberti, hailing from a Triestine family of mixed Italian, Hungarian, and German heritage, did not consider Habsburg rule as oppressive. On the similar issue, concerning the “silent majority” of Italian speakers serving loyally in the Habsburg armed forces and navy, see Lawrence Sondhaus (1990), *In the Service of the Emperor: Italians in the Austrian Armed Forces 1814–1918*.

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