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The Anti-Risorgimento as a transnational experience

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The struggle led after 1860 by the Anti-Risorgimento (understood as the conservative opposition to Italian unification) went beyond the frontiers of new Italy. The transnationality of this campaign manifested itself in numerous ways, from international networks of financial support and militancy that were closely associated with counter-revolution and supported by the international structures of the Roman Catholic Church, to forms of transnational mobilisation such as armed volunteerism. This internationalisation of anti-Unity fighting was a conscious strategy of the movement's leaders. They relied on a tradition of solidarity and exchange within the ultraconservative camp – a sort of 'white international' – to further the transnational construction of a European identity of counter-revolution. In Italy, the victory of the nationalist movement endowed various anti-liberal forces with a common adversary and common goals; yet the strategy adopted by the Papacy (still a temporal power until 1870), in relation to the cause of the dispossessed sovereigns, was not devoid of ambiguity.

Keywords: counter-revolution; Anti-Risorgimento; volunteers; exile; Southern Italy; Papal States

Risorgimento and Anti-Risorgimento

In 1967 Arnaldo Salvestrini felt it necessary to justify his study of opposition to Italian unity in the name of a general interest in the activity of Cavour and his immediate successors. He wanted to 'examine more closely the resistances and reactions aroused by this activity to better evaluate all the complexity of the operation and allow us to understand the means and forms adopted by the national movement while it was being realised, which were closely linked to the international context' (Salvestrini 1967, 214). Since the appearance of this pioneering study of the anti-unity movement in Tuscany, the historiography of nineteenth-century Italy has moved beyond its longstanding, absolute and exclusive focus on the formation of national unity and its actors. The *Antirisorgimento* – understood as the conservative opposition to Italian unification – has become a topic in its own right, as demonstrated by the inclusion of a specific entry on the topic in a recent volume devoted to *Risorgimento*-era Italy (Davis 2008). Still, it is important to stress that the anti-unity movement was a rather serious threat to the new regime which emerged from the revolutions of 1859–1860, and that it conditioned in a significant way its domestic and international policy for a very long time.

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Indeed, closer examination of conservative opposition to the Risorgimento has become all the more pressing as it has assumed a central role in the current historiographic and public debates on the formation of the Italian nation-state, particularly regarding the south of the peninsula. For modern critics of the country's political unity, the scope of the contestation that the new state faced in the 1860s is a certain sign that the unifying project of the nationalists aroused, at best, the indifference of the masses. It is a simple matter for these critics to recall that, around 1863, the repression of the 'great banditry' (*grande brigantaggio*) mobilised more than half the national army in the south of the peninsula, or that in 1869, the re-establishment of an unpopular tax on milling provoked revolts in central Italy that were clearly anti-unity in tone, which the army bloodily repressed (see for example Viglione 2001). Meanwhile, the repressive means deployed by the first unity governments are proof of the artificial and aggressive character of unification, and even (from a southern standpoint) evidence of its conquest and then colonial exploitation. From this original sin were born, so the argument goes, many of the evils of Italy today, starting with the persistent 'southern question'. The force acquired by this critical discourse may be measured by the response to it that the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, felt he should offer in his speech to Parliament at the opening of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Unity (Napolitano 2011).

In its intentions – and consequently in its conclusions – this interpretation amounts more to an impassioned indictment, fed by the rise in autonomist demands since the 1990s, than to a historical evaluation (its rhetorical and argumentative continuity with the anti-unity polemics of the 1860s is striking in this respect). We should recall that the explosion of 'banditry' in the continental *Mezzogiorno* in 1861 exercised a decisive influence on the debates on political and administrative organisation, an influence that led to abandoning the autonomist project. Instead, what was adopted was French-style centralisation in which the prefects exercised a heavy control over the provinces, which was unpopular from the start. To deal with the peril of 'reactionary' subversion (and the republican opposition), the unity governments resorted to repressive measures that clearly contradicted the liberal principles affirmed by the new regime. Such measures included suppression of 'bad newspapers', arrests and preventive detention, proclamations of a state of siege, and summary execution of 'rebels' caught carrying weapons. The international publicity that these measures created weakened the legitimacy of a state whose leaders had, following on from Cavour, justified its formation with the argument that only a union under a liberal moderate monarchy would resolve the problem of political instability specific to Restoration regimes. The Anti-Risorgimento thus aggravated the close dependence of the young unified nation on the conditions of international life, just as much as it had benefited from the internationalisation of the 'Italian question' in the course of the previous two or three decades.

At the same time, the anti-unity struggles of the 1860s drew together various oppositional currents into a peninsula-wide counter-revolutionary force. To be sure, the ideological foundations of the Anti-Risorgimento were in place well before the beginning of national unification in the mid-1850s. Anti-liberalism and anti-modernism, inspired by critiques of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, had guided the reactionary policies implemented by the directors of the Restoration since 1815. They also structured the counter-revolutionary myth of an international plot hatched by the 'Sect' that had already furnished the key for interpreting the revolutionary movements of 1848–1849 (Del Corno 2002). Yet before 1860 there was no coherent doctrinal system, but rather 'spontaneous and personal positions' belonging to a 'group that found a certain unity of objectives only as a function of some doctrinal fundamentals and especially some common pragmatics' (Leoni 1975, 14). And before 1860 the Italian apostles of ultra-conservatism had made no serious attempt to collaborate with one another. It was the

victorious rise of the nationalist movement that gave the disparate forces a common adversary – as well as goals that were shared by the papacy, the legitimate princes, and their respective defenders (not without ambiguity, as we shall see).

This dual process of asserting the Anti-Risorgimento closely depended for its success (or rather, its failure) on international factors, which must be understood in a transnational perspective. Just like the movement of which it was the inverse, the anti-risorgimentist struggle was conducted abroad. It adopted forms of mobilisation we may characterise as transnational (using the definition given by Saunier 2009) both because they were dissociated from official institutions (such as the armed volunteers who transcended frontiers and national belongings) and because they relied on international networks of mutual aid and militancy that were closely tied to the counter-revolutionary camp. Particularly important was the flow of several thousand volunteers into Rome between 1860 and 1870 to take up arms against the revolution for unity.

Exporting the Anti-Risorgimento: limits of internationalisation

The internationalisation of the anti-unity struggle was partly a response to the constraints imposed on the leaders of the old states. In 1859, the weakening of the Austrian Empire appeared to be the direct cause of the successful revolutions that led to the fall of the small sovereigns of central Italy, forcing them to take the route of exile: Grand-Duke Ferdinando IV of Tuscany to Dresden, then to Lindau in Bavaria; Duchess Marie-Louise of Parma to Warteg in Switzerland; Duke Francesco V of Modena to Austria (followed by a portion of his army, which, under the name of '*brigata estense*', maintained its military organisation until September 1863, with numbers fluctuating between 3000 and 5000 men). After the fall of Gaeta in February 1861, which culminated in the enterprise of conquest initiated by Garibaldi and his *Mille*, the King of Naples Francesco II found refuge in Rome, under the protection of Pius IX, until 1870. All these deposed sovereigns were surrounded in their exile by courts frequented by a large number of legitimist émigrés fleeing the revolution or else departing out of fear of persecution. These sovereigns maintained in their service diplomatic agents charged with defending their rights among the conservative powers. The most important of these diplomatic networks was in the service of the Bourbons of Naples, which answered to instructions from a veritable government-in-exile that was only dissolved after the Austrian defeat of 1866 (Leoni 1979, 1984).

Since 1815, the pontifical governments had wagered on the insertion of the papacy into the international forum as the best way of guaranteeing its temporal power in the face of an increasingly fraught domestic situation. The events of 1859–1860 that resulted in the amputation of two-thirds of the pontifical territory, without a concrete reaction from the Catholic powers, demonstrated the limits of this strategy in an international context of upheaval, even compared with the 1848–1849 context. Threatened by new external aggression and by internal contestation, the papacy's response, however, continued essentially on the terrain of diplomacy. Above all, it maintained in Rome and in Latium those French troops originally sent by the regime of Napoléon III in 1849 to ensure integrity and domestic order. To support this diplomatic activity, the pontifical leaders encouraged, through national Churches, agitation by public opinion; large numbers of Catholics spontaneously demonstrated in many countries, especially France, in defence of the temporal power of the papacy. Moreover, the loss of the most economically developed territories had heavy consequences for the financing of the Church's government structures; this forced the papacy to appeal to the generosity of the masses of the faithful, first in the form of international loans, then through the internationally organised collection of Peter's Pence (Pollard 2005, 21–54). Meanwhile, the pontifical army, which had

previously been voluntary and narrowly maintained for keeping public order and for political repression, was reconstituted to rely on a policy of active enrolment after 1860, tapping into reservoirs of recruits from abroad.

The internationalisation of the anti-unity struggle also represented a strategic calculation. Many conservative Italian leaders saw the intervention of foreign armies as the sole effective bulwark against domestic resistance, which sometimes led them to adopt the worst possible course of action. One example is the plan for Pius IX to flee in September 1860, supported above all by Xavier de Mérode, which was supposed to precipitate a reaction by European Catholic powers. After unification, the hope of a restoration rested principally on the expectation of foreign intervention in the peninsula; a belief was firmly anchored in conservative circles that the revolutionary movement would sooner or later alienate the great powers (as it had in 1820–1821, 1830–1831 and 1848–1849). It was this conviction that made Ferdinando IV of Tuscany, in the autumn of 1860, write that he 'was not losing courage, and still less the hope of a not-too-distant reestablishment of order' because 'although the situation [was] very confused ... the current tendency could not persist and [ought] to halt due to its very nature' (quoted by Salvestrini 1967, 145–146). Even the most ardent partisans of a popular counter-revolution – enthusiastic for a popular guerrilla uprising in the continental *Mezzogiorno* and hoping for a new 'Santa Fede' – could not ignore that a victory by armed force without external support was an illusion. Their capacity to maintain the fervour of their partisans in Italy was very dependent on the support of the major conservative powers.

However, on the ground the reactionary leaders did not take long to experience the painful fact that – in the phrase of a British ambassador during the Second World War – 'governments-in-exile are cards, not players' (quoted by Shain 1989). The attitude of conservative states toward the cause of Don Carlos during the Spanish civil war between 1833 and 1840 – states that had shied away from a military engagement although the liberal powers were supporting the constitutional party of Infante Isabella – had already furnished a clear illustration of this feebleness. In the 1860s, the reluctance of conservative leaders to translate their flaunted opposition to Italian unity into effective help (financial and material) to its opponents was certainly the principal limit to the scope of the anti-unity fight. In this sense, the cautious attitude of Rechberg and his successors at the head of the Austrian chancellery reflected just as much the internal difficulties of the Habsburg Empire as 'the rather contradictory mood of despair, of complacent passivity, and of self-imposed paralysis that characterised the conservative camp generally in this period' (Elrod 1984, 436).

In an era marked by the triumph of *Realpolitik*, the conservative powers' foreign-policy-makers were torn between the pro-legitimist pressures from their sovereigns, on the one hand, and various currents in parliament and in public opinion, on the other hand, that favoured a normalisation of relations with the new Italy (to which the constitutional reforms at the end of the 1850 in Prussia and Austria would give new weight). So they tried above all to use delaying tactics. Some were content to employ double talk. Diplomatic assurance that the conservative European leaders were actually searching for a reason *not* to intervene in Italy largely explains why it was decided in Turin to give carte blanche to the military authorities in the South. The new state was convinced that a rapid crushing of the revolt would produce a better result than the damaging publicity that their prolonged repression of it might cause in domestic and especially foreign opinion. In fact, the papacy's and Italian princes' calls to safeguard the principle of legitimacy and the solidarity of the conservative world did not have much weight compared with the international desire to recognise what had already taken place in Italy (the Italian state was recognised by Russia and Prussia in 1862, by Spain and Bavaria in 1865, and by Austria in 1866).

Armed volunteers and the 'white internationale' in the anti-unity combat

The existence of vast Catholic and conservative sectors that were spontaneously hostile to the nationalist revolution in Italy offered reservoirs of energy that the agents of the Anti-Risorgimento did not fail to exploit. The papacy was obviously best placed to nourish this mobilisation due to the universal stakes of the Roman question and the support of the international structures of the Catholic Church. In his encyclical of 19 January 1860, Pius IX exhorted his clergy to 'enflame each day evermore the faithful confided to [their] care, so that under [their] steering, they would not cease to employ all their efforts, zeal and thought for the defence of the Catholic Church and the Holy See, and the maintenance of the civil power of this same See ... that all Catholics have an interest in protecting.' Thousands of volunteers responded to the Pope's call to strengthen the small pontifical army that was now threatened by the developing unity force under the command of General Lamoricière, which was crushed by the troops of King Victor-Emmanuel in the Marches in September 1860. The celebration of the 'martyrs' to the pontifical cause was at the centre of a vast campaign, through funeral ceremonies and episcopal mandates, designed to remobilise Catholic opinion against the new developments in the unity process. Between 1861 and 1870, more than 7000 men from almost 20 countries (but principally from France, Belgium and Holland) enlisted for variable periods in the ranks of the pontifical *zouaves* (Boutry 2002).

The engagement of these thousands of volunteers presupposed a vast mobilisation of the Catholic world, notably on the financial level. In conjunction with the constitution of a network of committees charged with collecting Peter's Pence, by which the faithful were called upon to fill the papacy's treasury, associations were established – usually on the initiative of the same circles – for organising and (especially) financing, by means of gifts and subscriptions, the enlistment and arming of recruits for the Roman army. In 1867, in the wake of the fighting in Mentana that provoked Catholic emotion, a zealous defender of the papal cause (Baron Onffroy) exhorted the 'pious parishes' of his diocese of Nantes to contribute 'as much as possible' to defray the travel expenses of new volunteers; it was incumbent on the richer families to pay for the upkeep of some of these recruits when they got there. By the end of the year, the local subscriptions as published by the *Semaine religieuse* in the diocese enabled maintaining 150 *zouaves* (Faugeras 1984, 397). It was also the victory of the pontifical troops over the Garibaldians that led to the creation of a committee in Montreal in December 1867, which recruited a battalion of Canadian zouaves that set off for Rome a few weeks later (a similar initiative launched in the United States by *The Freeman's Journal* had no such success; see Marraro 1944). A certain spirit of competition among Catholic nations contributed to the success of this mobilisation: the president of Paris's St Peter's Committee (Émile Keller) noted that the outburst aroused by the 1867 campaign had raised the zouaves to 5000 men, but that now France should give in 1869 at least 1500 new volunteers 'to keep the rank it occup[ied] in this great demonstration of Catholic devotion ...' (quoted by Faugeras 1984, 398).

At the same time, the resistance of the King of Naples and the southern peasants' revolt against the unity state aroused ferment within the small world of European legitimists. During the siege of Gaeta, Neapolitan diplomats in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Madrid declared they were assailed by the demands of individuals wishing to put themselves at the service of Francesco II. Despite the discouraging response from the Bourbon authorities, who were trying to reduce the overstaffing of the stronghold's garrison at the time, around 40 volunteers from France (who made up more than half of the total number), Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Spain set off spontaneously to Gaeta. In the spring of 1861, when the popular revolt exploded, the King

of Naples and his partisans in exile were trying to channel this outburst of sympathy into the service of their plans to re-conquer the kingdom. They set up an international clandestine organisation led by Bourbon diplomatic agents, ex-officers of the royal army, émigrés from the south, and local sympathisers, with the mission of collecting funds, recruiting combatants and preparing a grand expedition to Calabria. Ultimately, the expedition amounted merely to the landing of 20-plus volunteers led by the Carlist General José Borges, and the venture concluded tragically after a few weeks. Between the spring of 1861 and the summer of 1862, this mobilisation nevertheless led to the sending of around a hundred foreign volunteers to join the bands conducting guerrilla war in the Abruzzi, where Francesco II had named another Carlist general (Rafael Tristany) as head of his 'troops' (Sarlin 2012).

By accepting and soliciting foreign volunteers, the leaders of the anti-unity combat forces could not hope to win the power struggle with their adversary. Thus a very modest military role was assigned to the pontifical *zouaves* after 1861 (to maintain order in what remained of the pontifical state, and, after 1867, to repress brigandage in Southern Latium). The presence of thousands of foreign volunteers in Rome served above all to incarnate the strength of European resistance to the challenge to the temporal power of the papacy. This was an unprecedented effort to mobilise the Catholic world that was guided by the ideal of a 'ninth crusade'. The Neapolitan leaders in exile were persuaded that the presence of a corps of foreign volunteers was a necessary condition for disciplining the guerrilla troops and leading them towards military objectives. But the engagement of foreigners in the service of the Bourbons of Naples primarily had symbolic value. It demonstrated the strength of the international support for the legitimist cause and gave credit to the political and ideological character of the guerrilla force that was contesting the Italian government and its partisans in Europe.

The involvement of foreign volunteers in the Anti-Risorgimento struggle was not the first experience of bellicose solidarity in the counter-revolutionary camp. The army of Dom Miguel in Portugal in 1833–1834, then that of Don Carlos between 1834 and 1840, had also welcomed voluntary fighters from all over Europe to combat the liberalism then conquering the Iberian peninsula and to defend the cause of an absolutism that for them was incarnated in these two princes. In the light of these various manifestations of the internationalisation of the counter-revolutionary struggle, it does not seem illegitimate to speak, as do historians like Jean-Clément Martin and Jordi Canal, of a nineteenth-century 'white internationale' that fought for throne and altar (Martin 2001; Canal 2011). To speak of an 'internationale' might seem improper regarding a movement that did not rely on a well-defined organisation like the working-class Internationale. And it was not even a formal alliance of monarchs or their parties, like the attempt in the 1930s to regroup royalists, conservatives and nationalists throughout Europe, or the union of Christian-Democratic parties, also nicknamed the 'white internationale'. But the term is nonetheless useful for drawing attention to a transnational community of opinions, interests, values and memories apt to arouse periodic international mobilisations for conflicts that were just as much civil wars as episodes in a vast political and ideological struggle.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, military volunteers became a model of political engagement that was new and attractive, endowed with a strong emotive and symbolic significance. No doubt the success of this model owes much to the new conceptions of citizenship and heroism that were forged by the French Revolution and applied to nationalist struggles after 1815 (Mosse 1991). But the attraction of the volunteer force was not exclusive to the revolutionary, liberal, democratic or nationalist camps. The Romanticism in the representation of volunteers in arms resonated with the reactionary mentality and lent itself to the recuperation of traditional values, such as the ideal of chivalric heroism, the spirit of a

crusade, the fidelity to political and religious traditions, and the sense of personal sacrifice. Drawing on this model was all the easier because the revolutionary rhetoric was itself saturated with borrowings from religion, as when it invoked the 'holy cause' of freedom and the nation, encouraging the gift of self, and created a veritable cult of its glorious dead as 'martyrs'. The Catholic Church re-launched the martyrological cult in its fight against the Revolution, calling upon the faithful to resist the new 'barbarians' and expiate the sins of an impious society. It insisted on the plebeian character of the first Christian martyrs, just like some of the volunteers who had fallen on the battlefields in 1860, in order to demonstrate the universal scope of its combat (Viaene 2004). Against the background of an exacerbated political rivalry, the nationalist and Catholic-conservative movements each adopted a cohort of martyrs who 'formed the basis for two rival cults that jostled against each other, at once bitterly hostile and intimately related' (Riall 2010, 256).

The volunteers in the service of the papacy and the King of Naples undoubtedly conceived of their engagement as a clear sign of solidarity with a cause they believed was just – battling against triumphant liberalism, in favour of political and religious traditions. For the European militants of the counter-revolution, the convulsions of the Italian states under the blows of the liberal and unification movement were a manifestation of the vast process shaking up traditional society everywhere, and which they were fighting against in their own countries. A community in peril against a common adversary founded the need for counter-revolutionary solidarity:

> You know how many sacrifices we have made up to now [the Carlist Francesc Tristany wrote in February 1861 in a letter to his brother], and we aspire only to continue them as far as giving our lives, if needed, to defend the cause of our King. The sword we brandished in Spain will be drawn again to fight in favour of legitimacy wherever that is necessary. The revolutionaries are everywhere the same, and their plans always iniquitous. (Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Archivio Borbone, 1135, f°300: letter from Francesc Tristany to one of his brothers in Paris [no doubt Rafael], Besançon, 21 February 1861)

What was happening in Italy resonated with past struggles and founded the geographic and chronological continuity of the counter-revolution. The defence of the Papal States could take its place in the many echoes of the wars in the Vendée, because many of the volunteers came from western France and the Vendée insurrection was read retrospectively as resistance to a secular stranglehold (Martin 1989, 129). Inversely, '*brigandage*' and its repression were almost systematically assimilated to the counter-revolutionary Vendée and to the Spanish insurrection against Napoléon.

Recognising the influence of ideological motivations in the volunteer army does not imply an exclusively political reading of it. Self-interest, opportunism and the thirst for adventure also played a part. The example of the Carlist exiles who formed the major part of the volunteers in the service of the King of Naples illustrates the difficulty of drawing a clear boundary between these different dimensions. At the start of the 1860s, Carlism was shaken by one of the crises that periodically affected it after military or dynastic events (e.g. the failure of the war of 1855–1857, the fiasco of an attempt at *pronunciamento* in Catalonia in April 1860 and the death of the Pretender a few months later). For the veterans, the confusion that reigned at the head of the party and the defection of some of its base to the conservative wing of the moderate party signified the remoteness of any prospect of action in the short or medium term. Under these conditions, supporting another legitimate sovereign may have appeared to the émigrés as the only way to justify continuing intransigent combat in favour of the counter-revolution and to resist the temptation of amnesty offered by the government of Isabel II. The poverty into which exile had forced the former soldiers of Don Carlos largely explains the great number of Carlists among the

volunteers in southern Italy. Of all the foreign volunteers in the service of the Bourbons of Naples, the Spaniards were those whose political motivations were the least disputable.

The papacy and the Anti-Risorgimento

Political and religious dimensions were closely intertwined within the Anti-Risorgimento. Among those who took up arms in favour of the papacy were many who saw Italian unification as an overthrow of the political and social order as much as it was a pernicious enterprise of secularisation. Going to Rome was for Henri de Cathelineau going 'to crush the revolutionary hydra and to save society' (Cathelineau 1909, 131). Consequently, working for the restoration of ancient secular states was for most of the defenders of the papacy the best way of securing it from the internal and external threats posed by the development of liberalism. It was this conviction that, after Castelfidardo and the dispersal of pontifical troops, pushed a number of volunteers to pursue the fight by passing into the Neapolitan army. They believed that the King of Naples's cause was 'so intimately tied to that of the Church that to support one [was] to support the other', as the Count of Sayve asserted in November 1860 in a letter sent from Gaeta to *La Gazette de France*.

This imbrication of religious defence and political intransigence was reflected in the discourse of the pontifical leaders. Pius IX, as Giacomo Martina discovered from the pontiff's private correspondence edited by Pietro Pirri, was quite disposed to establishing direct links between the defence of pontifical temporal power, the cause of the deposed Italian princes, and that of legitimism more generally (Martina 1986, 111–112). Thus during discussions about holding a hypothetical European congress on the Italian affairs in December 1859, the Pope's epistolary appeals to Catholic sovereigns mingled these issues. He exhorted them to defend the temporal domain of the papacy in the name of the indispensable independence of the pontiff, but also the obligation to struggle against 'a new principle, eminently subversive, that peoples may at will get rid of their legitimate sovereign, as happened in Italy' – which would be officially condemned by the *Syllabus* of 1864. But as Giacomo Martina also stressed, the expression of this solidarity between fighting for the papacy and for other Italian princes had clearly evolved over time. Although visibly asserted in the years of unification between 1859 and 1861, this aspect faded with time; the papacy became increasingly reluctant to put the cause of the Holy See (rights that were supposed to be imprescriptible) and that of the dispossessed princes (of a historical and thus contingent nature) on the same plane.

One clear expression of this ambiguity was furnished in 1862 by Pius IX's response to a plan for a common programme with the forces of the Anti-Risorgimento. Expressing himself on behalf of all the dispossessed princes (despite the King of Naples' refusal to be associated with this initiative), the Grand-Duke of Tuscany had exhorted the Pope in a letter 'solemnly to recall all the Italian peoples to religion and concord' by announcing that he was placing himself at the head of an Italian confederation 'through which it would be possible to reconcile the exigencies of the past and of the future, the ancient and future glories, history that is accomplished and history on the march, the rights of princes and those of peoples, the needs and interests of each state with the needs and interests of the common Fatherland' (Pirri 1951, 240–242). This programme was merely a reprise of the 'neo-Guelph' tropes that had been in vogue in the 1840s and had nourished the dream of a compromise between leadership circles and the most moderate sectors of the liberal-nationalist current, although the leaders never paid them serious attention. Now this dream was being recuperated and actualised in circumstances produced by the unexpected victory of the unity movement. However, just as in 1847, Pius IX balked at engaging

the papacy in a collective approach that was politically constraining. In his answer, the pontiff observed that he had never lost an opportunity to defend the rights of the Italian sovereigns, but that he did not think 'the moment had come to address words to the Italians' in the sense they wanted, 'for these words would certainly animate the hearts but not the arms of oppressed peoples'; one should not hide the fact that the desired goal could not be attained 'without the assistance of regular troops' – i.e. as long as Austria maintained the wait-and-see attitude it had adopted in 1860. It was not up to the Pope to encourage a path that contradicted 'the sanctity of his character', which would not fail to bring down on him the 'attacks of a excessively brazen and impudent press'. Better then, Pius concluded, to 'leave it to time to open up the path onto which [the Italian princes] should direct their feet' (Pirri 1951, 246–247).

This refusal expressed motivations deeper than the absence of circumstances favourable to the realisation of the deposed princes' proposed project. The fight for the defence of the papacy had served as a powerful catalyst in the process of shaping international Catholic opinion that had been gestating since the 1830s. It had relied in the first place on the rise of religious congregations and popular devotions, which historians of Catholicism often describe as a veritable 'revival' after the depression of the revolutionary period. This movement of expansion had served as fertile soil for the emergence of forces organised around the goals of propagating and defending the interests of the Church. These forces were under the direction of leaders (ecclesiastical and increasingly the laity) who employed the whole range of modern means of communication to address and mobilise the masses – newspapers, petitions, meetings and subscriptions (Viaene 2002, 2012; Clark 2003). The events of 1848–1849 that mobilised the Catholic world in favour of a pope threatened by the liberal revolution, seems a 'dress-rehearsal for the more comprehensive and persistent mobilisation ten years later' (Viaene 2002, 139). The international campaigns by which Catholics acted in defence of the papacy in 1849 and especially after 1859 considerably strengthened their sense of belonging to an international community in forging concrete collective objectives structured through new permanent organisations (like Peter's Pence, inaugurated in 1848 on a temporary basis, and revived in the 1860s). At the same time, these campaigns consolidated the place of the papacy within the Catholic movement. Over the course of the preceding decades, Rome had played a central role in the diffusion of popular devotions and the clerical and laity networks that promoted them. This in turn strengthened the ultramontane orientation of a majority of the clergy and the faithful, following a 'dialectical interlocking of curial authority and popular aspirations' (Clark 2003, 19). This 'Romanisation' of Catholicism, finally, was reinforced – thanks to the circulation of industrially produced images of Pius IX and the popularisation of the pilgrimage to Rome – by a growing identification of the Catholic Church with the figure of its pontiff, who became for the first time the object of veritable popular veneration (Horaist 1995).

The organisation of a Catholic international was by no means incompatible with the defence of legitimism, whose representatives were as visible within religious associations as they were present around the Curia. In 1865, the welcome Rome gave to the Italian deputy Vegezzi, who had come at the Pope's invitation to try to find a solution to the problem of vacant dioceses in Italy, had an extremely dramatic impact because it was interpreted by many as signalling a sea change in pontifical policy toward the neighbouring kingdom. In reality, at no time did the pontifical leaders have the intention of compromising on the political question; on the contrary they were relying on a public opinion campaign by intransigent Catholics, relayed by the Austrian government and the deposed princes, to restrict the negotiations to the narrowest possible limits, thus avoiding the papacy's having to advance on the political terrain against its will. The papacy would remain firm in its positions, even after the recognition of the kingdom of

Italy by Austria in 1866, which induced the dukes to renounce their rights to obtain the restitution of their personal fortunes and then led to the dissolution of the Neapolitan government in exile. It was only in 1882, four years after the death of Pius IX, that the ecclesiastical annual gave up grouping the Italian dioceses according to the old political borders of 1859.

But the evolution of the power struggle between the Catholic movement and the Legitimist movement rapidly played in favour of their regrouping under the Church's banner. Over the years, the demobilisation of militant legitimism in the old states hastened the formation of a vaster Catholic–Conservative coalition aimed at the general elections of 1865 and united behind the slogans of defending the Church's interests and the moral order. In the South of the peninsula, the enormous resources the Italian state injected into the repression of 'brigandage' ended in the slow but ineluctable stifling of the anti-unity guerrilla force, whose ranks had been abandoned by the last foreign volunteers at the approach of the winter of 1864. The Austrian defeat of 1866, by leaving the papacy to itself (after the French troops had evacuated Rome a few months previously, before coming back in another form after Mentana), appeared to signal a new stage in the integration of various Catholic and conservative movements. When representatives of the Catholic world flocked to Rome to prepare the future council between 1868 and 1870, meetings between actors in the Catholic militancy and plans for international coordination flourished in the shadow of the Vatican. After the taking of Rome, this would lead to the foundation of *La Correspondance de Genève*, a body whose mission was to provide the Catholic press with a central source of information through a network of laity activists organised by a permanent office (Viaene 2002, 157–158; see also Lamberts 2002).

Some historians have seen this initiative as the incarnation of the 'black internationale' denounced by Bismarck. But it should be stressed that the Geneva association continued to associate laity circles (largely legitimist) with the enterprise of forming and directing militant and transnational Catholic opinion. They had the blessing of the papacy as long as they stayed within the narrow limits it imposed. What this brief experiment (from 1870 to 1878) demonstrates is the Curia's circumspection faced with a semi-autonomous organisation of the laity, which enabled it to conduct a parallel diplomacy. But the laity was always suspected of subordinating the defence of the Church to its own 'political' agenda (a tension that established itself permanently in the papacy's relations with partisan formations of Catholic clerical inspiration). In return, Rome's refusal to grant an official mandate and leadership to the whole Catholic movement aroused the frustration of agents who insisted on acting openly at the head of a new crusade to restore the 'social reign of Jesus Christ' – with the same weapons as (and in direct rivalry with) the Workers' Internationale. The result was to provoke their disengagement.

Tackling the transnational dimension of the Anti-Risorgimento draws attention to a phenomenon that is still poorly understood: the regular manifestation of an ideal of international solidarity in the nineteenth-century counter-revolution. Prolonged in the experience of exile, two currents of solidarity gave rise to virtual 'white' and 'black' *internationales*, the latter the counterpart and antagonist of the liberal democratic *internationale*. The black *internationale* took shape through conflicts that were both civil wars and vast ideological struggles. One struggle against liberalism and revolution and another one in defence of legitimacy and Catholicism were the principal ingredients of this transnational community, periodically reinvigorated through the experience of war, which united European counter-revolutionaries and sharpened their identity. Although regularly beaten on the battlefield, this transnational dimension played an important role in the survival of various counter-revolutionary movements and of a European identity for the Counter-Revolution that lasted at least until the end of the century. It also allows us to acknowledge the influence of a Romantic conception of political

engagement through the mobility of small groups and categories of a fraternity that were common to all political currents in this era. In this sense, it is undoubtedly more accurate to speak of an internationalism inherent in the European political culture of the nineteenth century, of which the counter-revolution was firmly a part.

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