

Travel, migration, exile: Garibaldi's global fame

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In this article, it is argued that Garibaldi's global fame owes much to his own experiences as a migrant and exile in the Americas. Overseas, Garibaldi not only acquired several practical and political skills, he also built up an important network of friends and supporters and became a hybrid figure able to adapt his image to diverse political settings. At the same time, Garibaldi relied on the trope of exile, developed by people like Ugo Foscolo, to define his opposition to, first, Italy's Restoration governments and, after Italian unification, the new moderate liberal regime. The article also looks at Garibaldi's life on Caprera and it is further argued that here Garibaldi combined elements of his previous experiences to fashion a role for himself as a 'foreigner in Italy'. Garibaldi was a symbol of many worlds as well as a hero of two and it is precisely this hybrid nature of his appeal that can explain his global popularity.

Keywords: exile; migration; South America; nationalism; transnational networks

Introduction

On 18 April 1861, amid great popular excitement, Garibaldi made his first public appearance since giving up power in Naples six months previously. He chose belatedly to take up his seat at the Italian parliament in Turin, and he arrived from his island home on Caprera dressed in a red shirt, rough trousers and poncho rather than the more sober clothes favoured by his political contemporaries. His eccentric appearance left little room for doubt about his distance from conventional politics or the belligerent nature of his intentions.

Garibaldi had come to Turin to register his objections to the treatment of his volunteers. Specifically, his was a protest at the government's refusal to incorporate them into the new Italian army, and at its decision to disband the National Guards set up by his administration during the summer of 1860. In one of the most notorious speeches of his long political career, Garibaldi attacked the Italian prime minister, Camillo Benso di Cavour, and accused him of having provoked a 'fratricidal war' (*guerra fraticida*). He began the same speech by rejecting any hope of reconciliation with Cavour, with the man – as he put it – who had made him 'a foreigner in Italy' (Riall 2007a, 379–384).

Garibaldi's accusation was a specific reference to Cavour's cession of Nice, Garibaldi's birthplace, to France, following the diplomatic deals of 1858–1860. But the reference was also replete with symbolic meaning. First, the term 'foreigner in Italy' (*straniero in Italia*) pointed to the importance of exile for Italian patriots, and it explicitly invoked the words of Ugo Foscolo, the most famous Italian exile of the Romantic period. For Foscolo, exile denoted the physical

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state of being expelled from the fatherland and a metaphysical sense of dejection and alienation. Political oppression, and the consequent division of Italy's 'family' into warring factions, was responsible for this sorry condition.

At the same time, exile could be an inspirational experience. That is, in their search for symbols of national belonging, Italian patriots constructed an illustrious genealogy of exile, with Dante and Foscolo as their spiritual fathers. In the course of the Risorgimento, a myth of exile was popularised by Mazzini, for whom exiles were the 'apostles' of Italy's future, and by writers like Atto Vannucci, who identified exiles as martyrs. Thanks to these propaganda efforts, exile became a heroic undertaking, a glorious sacrifice made by Italian patriots to liberate and build anew their nation. In the words of Maurizio Isabella: 'through Dante, Foscolo and Mazzini, Italian history became the history of exceptional individuals, a chain of exiled heroes who kept ... the idea of the Italian nation alive with their behaviour' (2006, 493–506).

Hence, Garibaldi's reference to exile was much more than a literary flourish. It was, first, a political statement, an attempt to place the Italian prime minister, Cavour, on the long list of oppressors of the nation and to blame him for the continuing discord and dissent among Italians.¹ Equally, by associating himself with Foscolo, Garibaldi affirmed his own place in the exile tradition. Indeed, everything he did in Turin in April 1861 emphasised his role as an eminent exile. The sudden appearance from his island home, his clothing and his speech – all seemed designed to demonstrate Garibaldi's particular identity as, and the heroic experience of being, an Italian exile. At the same time, as I will argue in this paper, Garibaldi was also something of a permanent expatriate, a migrant who used travel to transform himself politically and broaden his appeal. It is with these transnational aspects of Garibaldi's career that my article is concerned.

South America

Garibaldi grew up on the water, and travel formed his political beliefs. He joined his father, a merchant seaman, on several early crossings of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, and it was on one of these trips that he first saw Rome: 'dearer to me than anything else on earth ... a passion which, so far from diminishing, strengthened with distance and exile' (Garibaldi 1889, 16). On another voyage, he was exposed to the political ideas of the Saint-Simonians (when transporting Emile Barrault and his associates to Turkey); it is also significant that he was 'converted' to Young Italy not in Italy itself but in the Black Sea port of Taganrog. Subsequently, when his part in a Mazzinian conspiracy against the Piedmontese government was discovered, he famously escaped to France by swimming: by crossing the Var River in order to reach the relative safety of Marseille (Scirocco 2001, 14–18).

In Marseille, Garibaldi started his long life as an Italian exile. But the French authorities proved unwelcoming, and an outbreak of cholera in the city caused severe disruption. In this respect, Garibaldi's decision to leave Europe in 1835 and travel to Brazil was as much an economic migration as political banishment: on arrival in Rio de Janeiro, he took up his old profession as a sailor on trading ships between Rio and Montevideo, and his life in his period was typical of the work and settlement patterns of other Ligurian migrants in the coastal cities of southern Brazil and Rio de la Plata (Devoto 1994, 653–688). That said, Garibaldi's closest colleagues on the Brazilian littoral were all Mazzinians or part of the network of his sympathisers. As Garibaldi's letters show, politics was never far from his mind and he never lost the conviction of being, in his words, 'destined for better things'.² It is also true that, in these cities, political agitation cemented friendships between the new migrants and helped create a sense of collective identity among them. The connection between friendship, political activity

and economic interest is perhaps best demonstrated by the masonic network which Garibaldi joined in Rio Grande do Sul, and which he remained part of for the rest of his life (Conti 2006). In short, the interrelating nature of these associations means that in Garibaldi's case, as in others, the line between economic migration and political exile should not be too clearly drawn (Franzina and Sanfilippo 2008, 25).

Nevertheless, if Garibaldi's motives for leaving Europe do not correspond entirely with the myth of exile as heroic political sacrifice, what is indisputable is the impact of South America on the rest of his political career. He was 28 when he arrived and when he left, in 1848 at the age of 40, he was a man transformed. As the great English liberal historian George Macaulay Trevelyan (1907, 24) puts it, Garibaldi 'had two schools – the seas of romance and the plateaus of South America' and these 'sheltered' him 'from every influence that might have turned him into an ordinary man or an ordinary soldier'. It also meant that for a big part of his life: 'The man who loved Italy as even she has seldom been loved, scarcely knew her.'

South America profoundly shaped Garibaldi's vision of Italy and its future. Probably through his friendship with Giovan Battista Cuneo, a prominent Mazzinian journalist, Garibaldi absorbed the message that the first task of the exile was to dream of, and be dedicated to, the distant fatherland. Cuneo wrote that 'one never loves the Fatherland so much as when one is obliged to leave it',³ and Garibaldi's military actions in this period reflect this maxim. First fighting with the Farroupilha rebels in the war against Brazil and subsequently organising the defence of Montevideo against Buenos Aires, Garibaldi made constant reference to Italy and to the need, as exiles, to uphold Italian honour in foreign lands. When, as part of the Farroupilha war, Garibaldi launched a series of attacks on Brazilian shipping, he called his vessel 'Mazzini', and the flag carried by the Italian legion in Montevideo showed an exploding volcano (Vesuvius) on a black background (mourning for the enslaved fatherland). The red shirts worn by Garibaldi and his volunteers were said to have come from a slaughterhouse, but the association of red with republicanism and the French Revolution surely played a role in his decision to adopt this attire (the shirt also helped earn Garibaldi his nickname, 'el Diablo'). Towards the end of his stay in South America, Garibaldi (together with his colleague, Francesco Anzani) sought repeatedly to return with their legion to Italy to fight for freedom there. In late 1847 they organised a demonstration in Montevideo to celebrate the advent of liberal reforms in the Italian states (Riall 2007a, 29, 38–9, 50–1).⁴

The idea of fighting abroad for liberty at home was not unusual, and Italian exiles were not alone in their willingness to struggle for freedom and justice outside their place of birth. The early nineteenth century was a 'golden age' of military volunteering, a movement with its origins in the French Revolution but which gathered popularity during the wars in Greece and Spain. Its appeal was based on the concept of fraternity (a 'band of brothers') and political solidarity and, throughout the long nineteenth century, this ideal inspired thousands of men to travel overseas to fight and die in distant wars. It was especially influential among emigrant circles during the Latin American revolutions, and had an important and lasting influence on Garibaldi (Riall 2007b, 259–265; see also Pécout 2004; Krüger and Levsen 2010).

That Garibaldi had fully absorbed the volunteer ethos is shown by his speeches and actions in Brazil, Uruguay and on his return to Italy in 1848. His poverty and the simplicity of his lifestyle (both in Montevideo and later in Italy), and his insistence that soldiers should accept no reward for their actions; his selfless commitment to the cause of freedom in foreign lands; and his stress on both the fraternity of soldiering and the gratitude of the civilian population: all these lasting features of Garibaldi's appeal were formed during this early experiences in South America.⁵ Moreover, and according to Garibaldi's secretary and biographer, Giuseppe Guerzoni (1882,

211), South America was ‘an excellent military training-ground’ for Garibaldi. Indeed, it was here that he first learnt how to fight. In Brazil, he learnt the art of guerrilla warfare and how to ride a horse; in Uruguay, he developed an outstanding flair as a naval and military leader. Thus, when he returned to Italy in 1848, he also brought with him the tactics of a guerrilla fighter, and this too became a founding element of the long tradition of *garibaldinismo*.

Nor was the influence of South America confined to military matters. Here too, Garibaldi’s friend Cuneo set the tone. In his newspaper, *L’Italiano*, published in Montevideo in 1841, Cuneo wrote that:

Far from our Fatherland, we live in a foreign country . . . Here freed from a thousand obstacles, and safe from the persecution with which our tyrants at home oppress us, why don’t we, we children of the same mother, extend to each other the fraternal hand of exile, and help each other to bear hardship and look together to the great day when the Fatherland will call upon all its children?⁶

In South America, Garibaldi became part of an extended, cosmopolitan network of Italian, European and American liberal-republicans (Freitag 2003; Ridolfi 2003; Bayley and Biagini 2008; Isabella 2009). First, along with his friendship with Cuneo, Garibaldi made a number of other useful contacts with his fellow exiles in the port cities of Rio de la Plata. Italians like Giacomo Medici, Livio Zambeccari, Luigi Rossetti and Francesco Anzani became collaborators as well as models of friendship and integrity that Garibaldi referred to throughout his political career. Garibaldi’s first personal exchange with Mazzini was made through Cuneo. Afterwards, Cuneo and Mazzini worked together, involving their associates in England, France and Italy, to promote Garibaldi’s fame in Europe on the eve of the 1848 revolutions (Riall 2007a, 39–54).

It was also the exile Livio Zambeccari who introduced Garibaldi to the Rio Grande president, Bento Gonçalves da Silva. Gonçalves was a popular leader and romantic hero whose style did much to influence Garibaldi; he was, Garibaldi wrote in his memoirs, ‘an extraordinary man . . . the true ideal of a brilliant and generous warrior . . . [o]f great personal bravery . . . generous and modest’, and he was also responsible for encouraging Garibaldi’s early political ambitions (Garibaldi 1889, 50–51). For the rest of his life, Garibaldi maintained friendly relations with the Uruguayan leader, Joaquín Suárez, whom he met in Montevideo as part of the radical network of émigrés. Finally, and again through Cuneo and Rossetti in Montevideo, Garibaldi had contact with several members of the liberal Argentine ‘generation of 1837’, notably, Juan Bautista Alberdi, Esteban Echeverría and Bartolomé Mitre. This prominent literary-political group had been forced out of Buenos Aires by the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas, and from their exile in Montevideo they had orchestrated a propaganda movement against the Rosas regime using newspapers, novels and poetry. As much as anybody else, it was these men who helped Garibaldi to understand the use to which journalism and the printed word could be put for the purposes of political persuasion (Myers 2008; Shumway 1993).

We know that some of Garibaldi’s political ideas, most notably his lasting belief in the virtue of dictatorships – if only in time of war and for a limited period – were derived from his observations of politics and the conduct of war in South America.⁷ It also seems that the years spent fighting in what he called the ‘untamed’ wilderness of southern Brazil led him to develop a close affinity with rural life. As Guerzoni (1882, 211) puts it: ‘His own wild instincts, his habits as a sailor, his love of solitude and above all his overmastering desire for independence, these led him to find in the vast deserts of the pampas just what he had already discovered in the infinite spaces of the ocean.’ While most other Risorgimento patriots were not interested in the countryside, and preferred to live in the cities and adopt an urban lifestyle, Garibaldi’s experiences in Brazil gave him an enthusiasm for farming and affection for the simple life

of rural folk that never left him. Although Garibaldi's knowledge of Italian rural life was vague and linked to a series of idealised images of the Brazilian pampas, his interest in agrarian improvement was genuine and found later expression in proposals for land reform and a personal interest in farming at his home on Caprera.

A vision of Italy's future, a military ethos and set of political and social ideas, and a network of friends and colleagues: all these were developed during Garibaldi's years of travel and subsequent exile in South America. More important still was his discovery, somewhere between the seas and uplands of Brazil and Uruguay, of a distinctive and captivating political style. Part of this style was due to physical presence: Garibaldi was strong, robust and athletic but with an apparently graceful bearing; the earliest portraits of him show an imposing man with a pleasant face, striking eyes and an almost feminine gaze.⁸ By all accounts, moreover, he combined great personal charm with physical energy. Bartolomé Mitre recalled in later life that as a young man he had felt a 'fascination' for 'the figure of Garibaldi': 'I felt myself irresistibly attracted to him by his actions . . . and by a kind of mysterious halo that surrounded him.' When they met, he found a humble man who ate bread and garlic, drank water and sang the hymn of Young Italy 'with a sweet and tuneful voice':

The impression he gave me was of a mind and heart out of balance, of a soul inflamed by a holy fire, with a tendency towards grandeur and self-sacrifice, and the conviction that he was a true, real-life hero, driven by sublime ideals and exaggerated, sometimes ill-focused ideas about liberty, that nevertheless contained elements capable of producing greatness. (Mitre 1882, 13, 15)

Experiences in South America helped Garibaldi to link this personal sound and fury to political display. In particular, Garibaldi's public image was shaped by his contacts with the gaucho militias of southern Brazil and Uruguay. He adapted their dress and behaviour in order to emphasise his rejection of conventional politics and military hierarchies (as he wrote in his memoirs [1889, 192, 195], the gaucho 'is the true type of the independent man . . . He will obey when the government falls in with his own notions and sympathies; if not, the plains and forest are his abode, and the sky his roof at most times').

Garibaldi's unconventional relationship with his first wife, Anita, was also redolent of the family model favoured by the gaucho. And, according to Guerzoni (1882, 212–213), the gaucho was for Garibaldi simply 'the best type of free man'. Living in gaucho society, he came 'little by little to think, to act, to dress' like a gaucho and '[t]his was the Garibaldi that America sent back to Italy'. There were, of course, practical reasons for Garibaldi's mode of attire (one English admirer wrote that the poncho concealed 'the dilapidated state of his clothes'), but the look also had a contemporary importance as a political sign.⁹ If, in early nineteenth-century Argentina, the gaucho stood for barbarism and savagery, it was also an ambiguous symbol with great fascination and the potential for diverse political interpretation; for Garibaldi, the gaucho held an enormous, and lasting, appeal as an expression of his alternative lifestyle and radical public aims.¹⁰

'Have patience, Brother! I was born to break the balls of half the world', Garibaldi wrote to Cuneo when confined in the town of Guleguay in 1837.¹¹ In the end, what is most striking about Garibaldi's dress, behaviour, friendships, and way of life is the continuing referral to this first, and most formative, period of exile. His memoirs, written during his second exile, in the USA after the failure of the 1848–1849 revolutions, are suffused with melancholy nostalgia, a nostalgia not so much for Italy as for his days in South America: for his friends and his wife, for the land and the people, and for the freedom and happiness of his life in Brazil and Uruguay.¹² Exile in South America was not a sacrifice. In this respect, Garibaldi lived his second period of exile in the United States as not just a banishment from Italy but also as a painful separation from his second, 'fraternal' fatherland.

Overseas

Garibaldi's second exile was very different from the first. He spent the first part of it in Staten Island, New York, where he arrived in 1850 following a series of political and personal disasters that started with the fall of the Roman Republic in 1849, continued with the tragic death of his pregnant wife, and culminated in a lengthy journey around the Mediterranean, being pushed by unwelcoming governments from Genoa to Tunis and Tangiers, before travelling (briefly) to Liverpool in England. Once in New York, Garibaldi retired entirely from public life. He passed the time working in the candle factory of his friend Antonio Meucci, hunting on Staten Island and occasionally attending meetings of the Italian emigrant community. In April 1851, he left New York for Central America, intent on making money as a merchant seaman; then, between December 1851 and January 1853, he crossed the Pacific Ocean to China and back, and nothing at all was heard from him.

Garibaldi's decision to withdraw from politics was deliberate. He even refused the invitation to hold a parade in his honour in New York City and resisted all other attempts to involve him in radical politics in the city. As he put it in a letter published both in the New York papers and back in Italy:

Though a public manifestation ... might yield much gratification to me, an exile from my native land, severed from my children, and mourning the overthrow of my country's freedom by means of foreign interference, yet believe me that I would rather avoid it, and be permitted quietly and humbly, to become a citizen of this great Republic of Freemen ... and await a more favourable opportunity for the redemption of my country from foreign and domestic oppression.¹³

Far from being a positive experience, in other words, or an effective means of developing a new Italian identity overseas, exile for Garibaldi in New York was a purely Foscolian moment of melancholy and estrangement, a reflection of – but not a solution to – the tragedy which had fallen upon his fatherland. As he put it in a letter to his close friend, Augusto Vecchi: 'I have dragged out a tempestuous existence without happiness, and embittered by memories.'¹⁴ His now famous gaucho look also changed drastically. In the daguerreotype taken of Garibaldi at this time, no trace of the romantic rebel remains: instead, we see a grave-looking man with neatly trimmed hair and beard, wearing a dark suit. The impression he made on the American writer, Henry Tuckerman (1861, 34), was of a man accompanied by '[s]ad memories ... a widowed husband, a baffled patriot, an exile from the land for which he had so long toiled and suffered ... his dearest comrades banished or executed'. Just as the clothes of the gaucho had underlined the exotic appeal of the emigrant, so did the appearance of a quiet American emphasise loss, sorrow and mourning.

Yet if Garibaldi's second exile was quite unlike his first, it had an importance all of its own. First, his decision to disappear (if only temporarily) from politics coincided with a grave crisis in the Republican movement in Italy that resulted in a series of disastrous insurrections, the partial discrediting of Mazzini, and bad publicity for all concerned. By being absent from Italy and indeed from radical politics in general, Garibaldi escaped much of the initial opprobrium that fell on the movement, and he managed to return to Europe in 1854 with his heroic reputation intact. Moreover, his behaviour in New York added a crucial element to his fame. Although those who knew him personally had always noticed his simple, modest manner alongside his explosive, physical appeal, his public image until New York was that of a handsome but intimidating cowboy. After New York, all this changed, and Garibaldi became a gentleman.

American journalists picked up on the change of image. In fact, Garibaldi won widespread praise for his 'modesty', 'good sense', 'high character', disinclination for 'pomp and display' and willingness to engage – like any other immigrant – in a 'humble occupation' as a candle-

maker.¹⁵ He was equally admired for the contrast between his glorious exploits in Rome and the 'equanimity' with which he had borne his more recent 'misfortunes' and 'afflictions'. Notably, all these qualities – resolve, modesty and courtesy – were those exalted by contemporaries as necessary virtues in American public life.¹⁶ They reflected a political culture that praised heroes like George Washington, the 'Virginia farmer' who led a 'simple' life, and this new association allowed Garibaldi to step away from the figure of the Latin American *caudillo* and his followers that he had hitherto embraced (Lyttelton 2012, 44–45).

Hence, the Garibaldi who returned to Europe in 1854 was a more austere and diligent hero than the flamboyant figure who had left its shores four years previously. This second period spent away from the fatherland completed the narrative of Garibaldi's experiences as an exile. No longer was he merely the young adventurer who brought back to Italy an identity formed in the fields and seas of South America, he was also a hard-working migrant and, equally, a mature gentleman who had suffered the pain and loneliness of being separated from his home and family.

By the mid-1850s, Garibaldi embodied more fully the myth of exile as at once school and sacrifice for the nation. At the same time, his life in drastically different places – the Mediterranean and Pacific Ocean, Brazil-Uruguay and Staten Island, New York – the adaptation of his look and behaviour to each circumstance and lifestyle, produced a figure that was neither fully Italian nor completely American. That is, Garibaldi was not merely a hero of two worlds, he was also a hybrid figure who straddled several. He was able to switch between the different cultures that had developed across the Americas; he could be Brazilian gaucho, New York immigrant and retiring gentleman as well as the symbol of a new Italy. He was sensual and austere, brave and modest, exotic and conformist, and this cultural eclecticism was an essential element of his popular appeal. Between them, travel, migration and exile also help to explain the global nature of Garibaldi's fame.

Caprera

The return to Europe in 1854 did not end Garibaldi's life as an exile. Thereafter, what he called 'my wandering life' became a permanent aspect of his personal life and public profile.¹⁷ It persisted in a detached attitude to republican politics, and in a repeated refusal to involve himself in the daily grind of committees, meetings and parliamentary activity (Riall 2007a, 140–141, 265–266).

When Garibaldi met the Russian exile, Alexander Herzen, in London in 1854 he extolled the virtues of a seafaring life where, in his words, he and his followers might sail 'over the ocean, hardening ourselves in the rough life of sailors, in conflict with the elements and with danger . . . A floating revolution, ready to put in at any shore, independent and unassailable!' (Herzen 1968, 371). In 1860, he partly fulfilled this dream of 'a floating revolution', but this image is also symptomatic of Garibaldi's political ideals and awareness of being in permanent exile. From 1854 onwards Garibaldi remained outside the mainstream, and he made a personal virtue of that fact.

Most of all, Garibaldi's identity as an exile is reflected in his decision to live far away from the centres of power on the island of Caprera, off the north coast of Sardinia. Caprera offers us fascinating insights into Garibaldi's outlook and the global nature of his appeal. From the moment he purchased the island, with a legacy from his late brother in 1856, he set about transforming it: he built a house, reclaimed part of the land for cultivation, planted trees,

established a working farm and settled his family and some of his closest friends there. He behaved as a coloniser in the nation of his birth.¹⁸

Garibaldi saw in Caprera a way of recapturing the life he had left behind in South America. Experiments in communal living with his political friends; days spent working in the fields; a frugal lifestyle; even the style of the house which he built with his own hands: these aspects of the life which Garibaldi made for himself on Caprera had all been anticipated in his memoirs, filled as they were with nostalgia for his days of youth and freedom spent on the Brazilian pampas. Garibaldi brought his children to Caprera so they could grow up 'strong and active like children of the fields'. Until it was wrecked in a storm, he had his own sailing boat that allowed him to move about when and wherever he liked.¹⁹

Likewise, Garibaldi's decision to live on Caprera pointed to elements of the North American republican ethic. Just as the first US President, George Washington, had returned to his farm after victory (and like the Roman General Cincinnatus who was the original model), so Garibaldi went back to Caprera after his campaigns to resume the life of a farmer. Especially after his greatest triumph, the conquest of the Two Sicilies in the summer of 1860, the return to Caprera from Naples (on board the steamer *George Washington*) helped explicitly to identify Garibaldi with Washington, the greatest of all American heroes and the father of the American nation.

'A spot more fitted for Garibaldi', wrote his friend Augusto Vecchi (1862, 72–3), 'a more appropriate pedestal to the colossal statue of his fame, an asylum better suited for his stern meditations and serious pleasures, could never be found than this storm-beaten island.' 'All eyes are turned ... on a little, almost inaccessible and completely barren island, lost in the heart of the Mediterranean,' wrote the French volunteer, Emile Maison, in 1861: because on it lived the 'modern Prometheus, the great Italian'. Garibaldi's residence was a humble house, but it was situated at the centre or 'the heart' of his personal and political family (1861, 6). Like Washington before him, his retreat to the farm at the height of his fame served to emphasise the genuine greatness of the man. Caprera showed that Garibaldi had sought no personal gain from his political triumphs, and his modesty and frugality had not been corrupted by success. It meant that he was an authentic hero, who had acted selflessly for the good of the Italian people (Riall 2012, 72–77).

Yet, reading against the grain, we can also see that Garibaldi used his isolation at Caprera for the purposes of political communication. His correspondence from Caprera in 1861–1862, and the visitors to the island, point to a period of intense political activity in which Garibaldi and his secretaries were constantly in touch with the outside world. By relying on the trope of exile as a state of spiritual alienation, Garibaldi allowed the remoteness of the island to become a symbol of political estrangement, a sign both that Italy had not yet been made and that bad rulers had continued to foment dissension among the Italian people. Vecchi (1862, 121–123) noted that, on Caprera, Garibaldi was an avid reader of Foscolo and both Garibaldi and his sympathisers relentlessly promoted the gloomy side of the exile image.

Furthermore, thanks to his (largely self-imposed) exile on Caprera, the reversals suffered by Garibaldi after national unification – the departure from Naples in November and the visit to Turin described at the start of this essay; his retreat as a wounded man after the disaster at Aspromonte in 1862; his confinement in 1867 before and after the events of Mentana and his painful old age spent at home – all these setbacks could be turned into a sign of bad treatment by an ungrateful government and hence into a moral victory of sorts. Caprera gave Garibaldi the image of a man above politics, and of a hero brought down by the pettiness of politicians. It was not Cavour who made Garibaldi into a 'foreigner in Italy', it was Garibaldi who fashioned this role for himself.

Conclusion

When Garibaldi visited England in 1864, he was met with a rapturous welcome. The popular celebrations that accompanied his visit are justly famous, but just as striking as the huge crowds that thronged the streets of London to greet him were the diverse ways in which the English took Garibaldi to their hearts. One bystander, Arthur Munby, felt in awe of his remarkable appearance: 'a combination utterly new and most impressive, of dignity and homeliness, of grace and tenderness with the severest majesty', while for the wife of Alfred Tennyson, Garibaldi looked 'Elizabethan'. William Gladstone remarked that 'there was something English about this blue-eyed Latin!'. And according to an anonymous biographer, Garibaldi embodied a 'medieval or commonwealth . . . type' of manhood while also being a 'cosmopolitan character', someone who could be claimed by Scotland and Ireland 'with their customary rapacity of fame'; he was equally a mild and pleasant man, 'the modern Rienzi', 'Aristides, Fabricius [and] Cincinnatus', 'Rob Roy', greeted by the common people 'as a friend and a brother' (Riall 2007a, 331, 337; *Life of Garibaldi 1864*, 4, 54, 60).

England's reaction to Garibaldi is an extreme example of a much wider trend. French democrats, Russian liberals, Czech nationalists and Italian-Americans, among many others, all adapted Garibaldi's appeal for their own domestic ends (Gut 1987; Kolomiez 2007, 164–171; Nolte 2007, 90; Rinaldo Fanesi 2007). I have argued here that it is precisely the hybrid nature of Garibaldi's image that lent itself to these multiple adaptations and can most easily explain his global fame. His life in South and North America helped make him part of an international network of activists and sympathisers, and enabled him to fashion an eclectic political style drawn from his diverse experiences. Although it is clear that Brazil and Uruguay had the most dramatic and long-lasting effect on Garibaldi's career, his much briefer stay in the USA changed him too, turning him into a symbol of many worlds as well as a hero of two. Thanks to these experiences, he was able to change his image, culture and clothes according to the political context. He was a man who could wear a suit (or a general's uniform) as easily as he could don a poncho or ride a horse.

In a recent analysis of the cult of the democratic hero, Adrian Lyttelton (2012, 52) has noted a tension between the claim to be remarkable and the need to be ordinary. Garibaldi's 'peculiar and enduring fascination', he writes, was derived from an ability to be both: 'he could, in different circumstances and maybe even from day-to-day, be both a superhuman, an invulnerable hero, and a man who did not shrink from his common humanity'. My point is that Garibaldi was able to achieve this feat by drawing on his own life. On the one hand, he maintained a detached, even aloof attitude to political activity, reflected most clearly in his decision sporadically to withdraw from public life and retreat to the island of Caprera, where he pursued the life of a farmer. On the other, he maintained a strong, often intimate friendship with his closest political allies. They acted as an extended family that mirrored not only his natural family but also the fraternal ties formed in South America. With the disappointments of Italian unification, moreover, Garibaldi used the myth of exile to develop the image of a melancholy hero and to use it as a political weapon against the new regime.

If the attention Garibaldi's life in Caprera attracted is anything to go by, the use of exile as a publicity strategy was also very successful. What the example of Garibaldi also shows us, therefore, is that exile as a form of political exclusion was no longer effective. When Cuneo and Mazzini published their first letters extolling Garibaldi's exploits in the radical press during the early 1840s, political banishment had ceased to be an adequate barrier to action and interaction. On the contrary, travel of any sort had become a way of closing physical distance and making connections across natural and man-made frontiers.

From London, Mazzini constructed a global network of friends and exiles, which included Garibaldi and Cuneo in South America, and together they helped to turn the Risorgimento into a transnational movement, one that shaped, and was influenced by, the emerging liberal world. Perhaps, thanks above all to the revolution in reading and publishing, exile did not close off access to the public sphere; instead, it offered a metaphor of oppression for the political opposition, and created a network through which men like Garibaldi could influence debate from remote continents and an island in the Mediterranean. Martyrs and men of action, interaction through exclusion, solitude yet fraternity: such vivid contradictions help to explain the lasting appeal of exile for the Italian patriot in the Risorgimento and after.

Notes

1. On the attempts by Garibaldi to pursue this agenda through his writings see Riall (2007a, 447–452).
2. December 27, 1836 to Cuneo, in Garibaldi (1973, 12).
3. *Il Legionario italiano*, n.1, October 27, 1844.
4. On diaspora nationalism and the role of Garibaldi in its development, see Gabaccia (2000, 49–52).
5. Garibaldi's selfless heroism was first outlined in Mazzini's letter to the London *Times*, January 30, 1846, and was commented on by many contemporaries in Montevideo.
6. *L'Italiano*, April 1841, 2.
7. For a discussion, see Filippi (1985); see also Lynch (1992, 6–9).
8. In the Museo del Risorgimento in Genoa, there are two paintings of Garibaldi, which date from 1841 and 1842, and another, painted by Gaetano Gallino in Genoa in 1848, all of which represent him in this way.
9. William Gore Ouseley, British minister to Uruguay, quoted in Trevelyan (1911, 392).
10. On the ambiguous legacy of the gaucho, see de la Fuente (2000); and Sarmiento (1998), esp. the introduction by Stavans, xviii–xx; see also Slatta (1983). On Rosas's development of the gaucho cult, see Palti (2005, 71–84) and Lynch (1981).
11. October 1, 1837, in Garibaldi (1973, 19).
12. For a further discussion, see Riall (2007a, 183–189).
13. *New York Tribune*, *New York Herald*, *The Evening Post*, 8 August 1850 (the letter is dated August 7); *La Concordia*, September 2, 1850; *La Repubblica della Svizzera Italiana*, September 5, 1850. The Italian version of the letter is published in Garibaldi (1981, 27–28).
14. September 19, 1853, in Garibaldi (1981, 51).
15. *Tribune*, August 8, 1850 and April 28, 1851; *Herald*, August 27, 1850; *Evening Post*, June 28, 1859; (Dwight 1851, 94).
16. For a discussion, see Miller (1984, 220, 229); and in general, Smith-Rosenberg (2004, 61–76).
17. September 19, 1853, in Garibaldi (1981, 51).
18. See the descriptions in Curàtulo (1930).
19. To Speranza von Schwartz, June 17, 1858, in Garibaldi (1981, 173).

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