

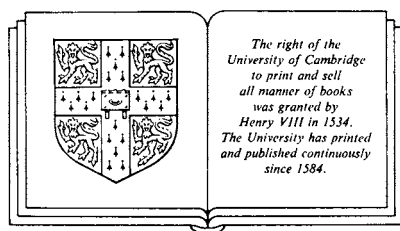
# CAVOUR AND GARIBALDI 1860

A STUDY IN  
POLITICAL CONFLICT

BY

D. MACK SMITH

SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW,  
ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP  
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

Copyright Cambridge University Press 1954

First published 1954  
Reissued with a new preface 1985  
Reprinted 1986

Printed in Great Britain by the  
University Press, Cambridge

Library of Congress catalogue card number: 84-46028

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

Mack Smith, Denis

Cavour and Garibaldi, 1860: a study in  
political conflict.

1. Cavour, Camillo Benso, *Conte di*  
2. Garibaldi, Giuseppe 3. Italy—History—  
War of 1860–1861 4. Italy—Politics and  
government—1849–1870

I. Title

945'.08'0922 DG552.8.C3

ISBN 0 521 30356 7 hard covers

ISBN 0 521 31637 5 paperback

## CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xvii
<i>Introduction</i>	I
<i>Chapter I</i> Political opinions in Sicily: April-June 1860	7
II Cavour and the diplomats: April-June	22
III La Farina and Crispi: June	37
IV Arguments for and against annexation	47
V Arguments over ways and means	57
VI Crispi loses the first round: June	71
VII Cavour loses the second round: July	85
VIII Cavour adjusts his policy: July	100
IX Depretis begins his prodictatorship: July	117
X Cavour plans a revolt at Naples: July	129
XI Cavour fails at Naples: August	144
XII Political differences in Sicily: August	162
XIII Cavour forces Depretis to a choice: 1-8 September	176
XIV Depretis fails to persuade Garibaldi: 8-14 September	193
XV Garibaldi succeeds at Naples: 1-15 September	204
XVI Cavour breaks with Garibaldi: September	222
XVII The radicals at bay: September	240

<i>Chapter XVIII</i>	Mordini the new dictator: 17-25 September	<i>page</i> 261
XIX	Further controversy over annexation: September-October	277
XX	Mordini summons an assembly: 5 October	293
XXI	Pallavicino fights for a plebiscite: 8 October	307
XXII	Parliament supports Cavour: October	320
XXIII	Mordini changes his mind: 9-13 October	340
XXIV	Garibaldi makes his decision: 9-13 October	356
XXV	The plebiscite in Sicily: October	376
XXVI	The doubtful significance of the vote: October-November	392
XXVII	Cavour's government in the south: November-December	411
XXVIII	Conclusion	434
<i>Index</i>		445

## MAP

ITALY IN THE SUMMER OF 1860

*frontispiece*

## INTRODUCTION

The year 1860 was the *annus mirabilis* of the Italian *risorgimento*. In the space of a few months, Piedmont-Sardinia more than doubled its size, and combined most of central and all of southern Italy. The formerly independent states of Tuscany, Modena and Parma, with the Papal provinces of the Romagna, Umbria and the Marches, and the far larger area covered by the Two Sicilies, all these invoked the sovereignty of the House of Savoy; and early in 1861 the existence of a new kingdom of Italy was officially proclaimed. Few people were more surprised at the success and speed of this achievement than Cavour, its chief architect; and few more disappointed than Mazzini and Garibaldi, the two men who had looked forward to this moment most keenly and who had sacrificed most for its attainment. Here is a paradox which will serve to indicate at the outset that this was a complicated and controversial passage of history.

The complications and controversies are worth examining for their own sake. They are also important for their influence on the type of state Italy became after 1861, and for the fact that they make a small but interesting chapter in the larger history of nationalism. The subject is more accurately studied in particular than in general. In recent years there have been a number of broad surveys written about the national movement in Italy; the need now is not so much for outline histories, as for detailed monographs to test the generally accepted canons of interpretation. There are still too many gaps in our knowledge of what went on underneath the main episodes of this national revolution. Even for the critical conquest of the south in 1860, much is unknown or known only in part. On the straightforward narrative of Garibaldi's victories in Sicily there may be very little to add to what G. M. Trevelyan wrote half a century ago. On the other hand, the internal politics of this civil war in southern Italy have not received nearly as much attention as their interest and importance would warrant.

The following chapters are designed as a study in revolutionary politics during a civil war. They are not concerned with military or

diplomatic history except by the way. They leave out of consideration the Bourbons of Naples who lost, and deal only with the nationalists who won. They do not even try to give any detailed chronology of the sequence of events, except where this may seem necessary to explain particular states of mind. The intention is to discover more about some of the main impulses which helped to make events take the course they did; in particular to distinguish the aims of the several revolutionary parties, and the contribution which each made to success. Without interruption during this period there was serious internal conflict among the patriots, and that conflict was even at some periods in the year a necessary constituent in the making of Italy. On occasion, only clashes inside the nationalist camp (principally between the 'party of order' and the 'party of action') can explain the course taken by the revolution. The chief interest therefore reposes, not just in the conscious policy of the various liberal and radical groups, but in the struggle which grew up between them; not that is to say only in pure, but also in applied politics.

The simplest thread running through the political tangle attaches itself to the guerrilla leader Giuseppe Garibaldi. A second thread, far more difficult to follow, will be found in the policy of Count Camillo di Cavour, the Piedmontese prime minister at Turin. These two men represent the two poles of opinion inside the nationalist party. Behind Cavour there was the miscellaneous variety of liberal politicians in Piedmont; behind Garibaldi, the radical democrats who enthusiastically followed him to Palermo and Naples. These radicals must not be confused with the relatively insignificant extreme Left of republicans and socialists; just as Cavour's following of liberal-conservatives must likewise be distinguished from the equally inconsiderable extreme Right of reactionary conservatives and clericals. Neither Cavour nor Garibaldi was, strictly speaking, an extremist, although both could be relentlessly uncompromising or wildly unrealistic on occasion. As a background to the struggle between them, there is the indigenous population of Sicily. This was the raw material on which Cavour and Garibaldi had to work in the decisive phase of this revolution. Sicilian public opinion never spoke with a single voice. Nor, it must be remembered, did either of those two main sections of the patriotic party which, for convenience, are called radical and liberal. Generally,

however, the broader trends of opinion can be identified, and their interaction upon each other observed.

To concentrate on Sicily and Naples alone, during the short period from April to December 1860, and even then with only a restricted field of vision, might be thought unnecessarily finical. But such a limitation of time and place is designed to make these political conflicts a coherent subject of study. By observing these conflicts as they developed day by day, and going for this purpose to the most detailed sources of evidence, it may be possible to throw some light upon the whole movement for national unification. The invasion of Sicily was Garibaldi's finest and most typical achievement, as that of Umbria was probably Cavour's. This period is thus the most interesting of all for such a study, and the wealth of documentary evidence makes it also the most feasible.

One special interest of these particular months in the south is that, for almost the only time in these formative years, men of distinctly unorthodox political principles held great authority and power. For a short while the radical 'party of action' controlled a dictatorial government, possessed a large army, and enjoyed the prestige of having conquered half the peninsula. This was probably the time when Cavour's genius was most severely taxed; for though foreign politics were less exacting than he had known them before, inside Italy the liberals and radicals were openly attacking each other. Very little has been written about the opposition groups to the Left of Cavour, for there is a tendency to justify the victors and forget the defeated. The radicals themselves were too busy making history to write it; and if they did write, were either too bitter for sound judgement, or else too illiterate to write convincingly and for posterity. This makes it the more instructive to be able to follow some of Cavour's opponents in detail, especially as this was one of the few periods when they were strong, and when there was play for rival theories about the conduct of Italian affairs. One conclusion which emerges upon close examination is that the radical opposition was more moderate, more realistic, and more intelligent than the liberal politicians and historians used to allow.

A further interest is added by the fact that at no other single moment during the *risorgimento* were so many national leaders of every type and hue personally involved in what was happening. Quite apart from Cavour and d'Azeglio, there were as many as ten future prime

ministers of Italy who had some part to play in this particular revolution. Seven of them were in southern Italy for some of the time: Crispi and Cairoli in Garibaldi's retinue; Farini, Lanza and Zanardelli in that of Cavour; Depretis and Di Rudinì contriving, or rather attempting with indifferent success, to serve both masters at once. In addition to these, there were Ricasoli and Minghetti who had an important share in the shaping of Cavour's policy as ministers in the north. Finally, there was Rattazzi, a dim figure spinning a tenuous web of conspiracy, who tried to form an alliance between the revolutionary radicals, the 'parliamentary Left' and the court party, to accomplish the defeat of Cavour. The leaders of the various radical groups of course travelled south to be at the scene of action. There was Mazzini himself, with Bertani, Nicotera and Mario who were not far removed from him in their political ideas. There were Cattaneo and Ferrari, the two leading Italian federalists; and Sineo, Asproni and Pallavicino who belonged rather to the 'constitutional opposition'. Other distinguished future ministers of Italy who were more or less actively engaged, either in Palermo or Naples, included Amari, Cordova, Ferrara, De Sanctis, Visconti-Venosta, Mancini, Scialoia and Spaventa. These names by themselves tell in part why the duel between the two principals, Cavour and Garibaldi, was fought on such an elevated plane.

Very briefly, the central theme is as follows. In April 1860 a revolt broke out among Sicilians against the Bourbon government at Naples. This was in the main a local movement against administrative oppression; but incidentally it became tinged with politics, for it had been actively encouraged by the radicals, and was accepted only with some reluctance by the moderate liberals. Then in May the arrival of Garibaldi with his Thousand from the north confirmed and continued this radical inspiration of the revolt. The name of Garibaldi was a guarantee that the battle would be fought for Italy and not just for the local needs of Sicily, but it also represented political ideals very different from those of Cavour. Garibaldi was a great soldier, and the revolution developed with unexpected success beneath his protection and encouragement. In July he marched through to the eastern seaboard of Sicily. In August he crossed over to Calabria. On 7 September he entered Naples, and soon the whole of southern Italy up to the River Volturno was under his radical dictatorship. Later in September he felt strong enough to begin



his march on Rome, and even to ask that Cavour be dismissed from the post of prime minister. But then, suddenly, the political direction of the movement changed, and Garibaldi was manoeuvred into a position where he had to surrender. Cavour's troops invaded Naples before the revolt could spread to Rome. On 21 October, Sicily and Naples elected by plebiscite for the merger of all the south into the kingdom governed from Turin by Victor Emanuel. This vote brought the revolution to a close. It represented a notable victory for Cavour, who had dramatically captured the political and military initiative.

As a result the radicals had to wait many years for the partial attainment of their various desires: until 1870 for the realization of Garibaldi's designs on Rome; until 1876 for the victory of Depretis and the Left in parliament; until the turn of the century for recognition of the special economic and social needs of the south; and until after 1946 for the achievement of Mazzini's republican dream and Cattaneo's cherished ideal of regional autonomy. And yet a false picture will be given if it is assumed in advance that, in the year 1860, a monarchic and unitary state was the only conclusion which had any chance of emerging from the revolution. For in fact, although the method of a plebiscite seemed to lead easily enough to the creation of a united kingdom, many people had feared until the last moment that a constituent assembly might meet instead, and that a federalist or a republican solution would be considered.

This alternative of plebiscite or constituent assembly became the issue round which the various political programmes took shape in southern Italy. The victory of the plebiscite marked the success of one set of ideas and one set of men over another. The limitations and incompleteness of this victory, as well as the manner of its achievement, were to be of great importance for the future history of Italy. Not only did they bear directly on the emergence of a 'southern question' in Italian politics, but neither the radicals nor the regionalists were ever quite reconciled to finding the fruit of their labours plucked by other people. The tensions set up between the various regions and political parties were never to be properly resolved. Some of the ablest of Italian politicians were kept for decades in unproductive opposition, and, when at last they were accepted into the ruling élite, were too old to learn the delicate art of responsible government. The southern provinces were also taught by

this victory and its aftermath to resent the domination of the 'Piedmontese'—as their new governors from the north were generically termed. Political opposition thus became identified in part with regional opposition, and this in turn with social and religious opposition; for little effort was made to reconcile either the southern peasants or the Church to this sudden triumph of a secular, middle-class state.

Cavour has his place secure among the greatest statesmen and the greatest liberals of any nation. Few historical characters have had such a consistently 'good press' since their death. And yet, as with all historical figures, his true stature will be understood only if he is looked at with a critical eye. Wherever historians can spend longer studying a statesman's reaction to a problem than that statesman once spent on the problem itself, it often occurs that events appear to have happened more unpredictably and with less conscious purpose behind them than had formerly been thought. It also becomes possible to question some of the legends left behind by historical recollection. It will be seen that Cavour was by no means infallible; and his chosen colleagues often fell far short of what the moment required. The kingdom of Italy, which they did so much to create, was one of the most notable achievements of the age, and this gives to these critical months of its formation a particular interest. Nevertheless, in some important respects it was to prove highly unstable; and many Italians agreed that this was due to flaws in its original creation.

For these various reasons it is specially interesting to observe Cavour's political theory and method in response to—and as an initiating force upon—the development of Garibaldi's revolution. And Sicily, which was the centre of that revolution and where the radicals were strongest and most successful, inevitably becomes the centre of attention. It was to public opinion in Sicily that both Cavour and Garibaldi appealed, and a detailed study of this one area may help incidentally to clarify that elusive concept, public opinion, upon which liberals and nationalists so freely (and often illegitimately) relied. In following the course of events in Sicily one is never far from the larger problem of how and why Italy became a united nation.