

Modern History Sourcebook:

Documents of Italian Unification, 1846-61

The Program of Count Cavour, 1846:

The history of every age proves that no people can attain a high degree of intelligence and morality unless its feeling of nationality is strongly developed. This noteworthy fact is an inevitable consequence of the laws that rule human nature. . . .Therefore, if we so ardently desire the emancipation of Italy--if we declare that in the face of this great question all the petty questions that divide us must be silenced--it is not only that we may see our country glorious and powerful but that above all we may elevate her in intelligence and moral development up to the plane of the most civilized nations. . . .This union we preach with such ardor is not so difficult to obtain as one might suppose if one judged only by exterior appearances or if one were preoccupied with our unhappy divisions. Nationalism has become general; it grows daily; and it has already grown strong enough to keep all parts of Italy united despite the differences that distinguish them.

Count Cavour:

Speech to the Piedmont Chamber of Deputies, 1858:

After the disaster of Novara and the Peace of Milan [1849], two courses were open to us. We could, bowing to adverse fate, renounce all the aspirations which had guided King Carlo Alberto during the last years of his reign, seal ourselves up within our frontiers, think only of the material and moral interests of this country [Piedmont-Sardinia]. . . . On the other hand, we could, while accepting all the hardships imposed by accomplished facts, keep alive the faith that inspired the great actions of King Carlo Alberto, and, while declaring our firm intention to respect treaties, maintain in the political sphere the enterprise which was defeated in the military sphere [Italian unification]. . . . In recent years, therefore, we have tried to do away with the last hindrances to our country, and we have lost no occasion to act as the spokesman and defender of the other peoples of Italy. This policy found one such occasion in the Crimean War. . . .Our hopes were not disappointed in regard to the credit that Piedmont would acquire. As for the defense of the rights of Italy, that was our task in the course of the Congress of Paris. . . .it was an outstanding fact that the cause of Italy was for the first time supported by an Italian power.

Report of the meeting of Count Cavour with Emperor Napoleon III of France, 1858:

The Emperor started by saying that he had decided to support Sardinia with all his forces in a war against Austria, provided that the war was undertaken for a non-revolutionary cause, which could be justified in the eyes of diplomacy and still more of public opinion in France and Europe.

Speech of Vittorio Emanuele I, King of Italy, 1861:

Free, and nearly entirely united, the opinion of civilized nations is favorable to us; the just and liberal principles, now prevailing in the councils of Europe, are favorable to us. Italy herself, too, will become a guarantee of order and peace, and will once more be an efficacious instrument of universal civilization. . . .These facts have inspired the nation with great confidence in its own destinies. I take pleasure in manifesting to the first Parliament of Italy the joy I feel in my heart as king and soldier.

Source:

From: D. Zanichelli, ed., *The Writings of Count Cavour* (Bologna, 1892), II:4-50; *The Annual Register or a View of the History and Politics of the Year 1858* (London, 1859), pp. 186-188; Count C. Arrivabene, *Italy under Victor Emmanuel* (London, 1862), I:349-353.

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**Giuseppe Garibaldi
Encourages His Soldiers**

Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) was an Italian patriot and military leader who helped free the Italians from foreign rule and unify the country. He was a master of guerrilla warfare and raised volunteers beginning in 1848 to conduct daring military campaigns to overcome the rule of Austria.

In 1860, Garibaldi's thousand "red shirts" took Sicily in the name of Victor Emmanuel II of Italy. Thousands of volunteers then rushed to join Garibaldi's army.

In August, he crossed to the mainland to march on Naples, where he was greeted by jubilant crowds singing the national anthem, now known as "Garibaldi's Hymn." After turning over the city to Victor Emmanuel II, Garibaldi resumed a humble life on the island of Caprera.

The speech below is an eloquent appeal he made to his soldiers in 1860. A year later, as a result of his daring military leadership and the political leadership of fellow patriots, Giuseppe Mazzini and Camillo Cavour, the independent kingdom of Italy was finally proclaimed.

We must now consider the period which is just drawing to a close as almost the last stage of our national resurrection, and prepare ourselves to finish worthily the marvelous design of the elect of twenty generations, the completion of which Providence has reserved for this fortunate age.

Yes, young men, Italy owes to you an undertaking which has merited the applause of the universe. You have conquered and you will conquer still, because you are prepared for the tactics that decide the fate of battles. You are not unworthy of the men who entered the ranks of a Macedonian phalanx, and who contended not in vain with the proud conquerors of Asia. To this wonderful page in our country's history another more glorious still will be added, and the slave shall show at last to his free brothers a sharpened sword forged from the links of his fetters.

To arms, then, all of you! all of you! And the oppressors and the mighty shall disappear like dust. You, too, women, cast away all the cowards from your embraces; they will give you only cowards for children, and you who are the daughters of the land of beauty must bear children who are noble and brave. Let timid doctrinaires depart from among us to carry their servility and their miserable fears elsewhere. This people is its own master. It wishes to be the brother of other peoples, but to look on the insolent with a proud glance, not to grovel before them imploring its own freedom. It will no longer follow in the trail of men whose hearts are foul. No! No! No!

Providence has presented Italy with Victor Emmanuel. Every Italian should rally round him. By the side of Victor Emmanuel every quarrel should be forgotten, all rancor depart. Once more I repeat my battle-cry: "To arms, all-all of you!" If March, 1861, does not find one million of Italians in arms, then alas for liberty, alas for the life of Italy. Ah, no, far be from me a thought which I loathe like poison. March of 1861, or if need be February, will find us all at our post-Italians of Calatafimi, Palermo, Ancona, the Volturno, Castelfidardo, and Isernia, and with us every man of this land who is not a coward or a slave. Let all of us rally round the glorious hero of Palestro and give the last blow to the crumbling edifice of tyranny. Receive, then, my gallant young volunteers, at the honored conclusion of ten battles, one word of farewell from me.

I utter this word with deepest affection and from the very bottom of my heart. Today I am obliged to retire, but for a few days only. The hour of battle will find me with you again, by the side of the champions of Italian liberty. Let those only return to their homes who are called by the imperative duties which they owe to their families, and those who by their glorious wounds have deserved the credit of their country. These, indeed, will serve Italy in their homes by their counsel, by the very aspect of the scars which adorn their youthful brows. Apart from these, let all others remain to guard our glorious banners. We shall meet again before long to march together to the redemption of our brothers who are still slaves of the stranger. We shall meet again before long to march to new triumphs.

Giuseppe Garibaldi – 1860

