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Alfonso Scirocco: Garibaldi

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1. Sailing the Mediterranean

WHEN GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI was born on 4 July 1807, Nice was a sleepy little town which had until recently been under the dominion of the dukes of Savoy for two centuries. Thus it had once been the port of Savoy and Piedmont, as they were separated from the sea by the Republic of Genoa, which extended for the full length of the Ligurian coast. It had retained this function and its related privileges when the dukes of Savoy enlarged their dominions and acquired the title of kings of Sardinia in 1722. In 1792, the armies of revolutionary France conquered Nice, and its destiny was changed. As a territory annexed by France, it found the republic's and Napoleon's grand experiments to be very disadvantageous. The empire's expansionist policy imposed high taxes to finance the war and a "blood tax" in the form of conscription, which reflected the national complexion that armies had then acquired. Its integration into the territory of France entailed an attempt to eradicate its Italian character: Joseph-Marie Garibaldi's birth certificate was written in French (but in other official documents he is called Giuseppe Maria). Competition from the large

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ports of Marseille and Genoa, which was also annexed by France, reduced Nice's share of trade.

Nice rejoiced at the fall of Napoleon. The return of the ancient dynasty of Victor Emanuel I raised hopes of a return to the previous monopoly over sea trade with Piedmont and Savoy, but that was not to happen. The great powers that met at a congress in Vienna had to ensure a lasting peace for a continent that had suffered twenty-five years of bloody wars, and they therefore had to strengthen all the states that bordered on France in order to contain any future aggressions. In 1814 the Republic of Genoa disappeared and Liguria became part of the Kingdom of Sardinia. Genoa thus became the principal port of the enlarged state, and Nice a seaport of secondary importance.

The Garibaldi family took little notice of these political vicissitudes, immersed as it was in the immediacy of its daily grind. The family came from Liguria. Giuseppe's grandfather, Angelo, was from Chiavari, and his father, Domenico, was born there in 1766. He later moved to Nice, where in 1794 he married Rosa Raimondo who was ten years his junior and was from Loano, also in Liguria. They had six children: two girls, who died during infancy, and four boys, Angelo, Giuseppe, Michele, and Felice. Domenico and his family lived with his brother-in-law's family, the Gustavins. They did not own the house, which was demolished at the end of the nineteenth century when the port was enlarged. Around 1814, they moved to Aboudaram House in Quai Lunel, where the children grew up. The family's financial position was fairly good. Domenico was a sea captain and owned or partly owned a tartane, a small vessel with a lateen sail that was used in the Mediterranean. The ship was called *Santa Reparata*, and he used it for coastal trade with varying degrees of success. He was not very highly educated, and had few ambitions and limited abilities (indeed his business did not always go well), but he did not let his children miss out on their schooling. In this he was influenced by his more cultured wife. A practicing Catholic, she was charitable and compassionate to the poor, who returned her kindness with affection. Giuseppe, who was known as Peppino in the family, was to hold her memory dear; in his *Memoirs* he wrote, "I can claim with pride that she is an example to other mothers." He would also worry about her: "Take care of my poor mother if you love me. . . . My mother was always such a good woman," he exhorted his wife,

Anita, who left for Nice before him in March of 1848. He also respected her beliefs, and in December of the same year he bought her a box of rosary beads in Loreto. He worried about her means of support but did not burden her with his concerns. In 1850, when he found himself in Tangiers at the start of another period of exile full of uncertainties, he rejected his cousin's advice that she had to be more frugal. He considered it improper "to sadden my aging and highly sensitive mother with reproofs that could only serve to afflict her and not to change her behavior." Instead, he asked his relation "to pawn or sell my sword—a gift from the Italian nation—should all other providential means be exhausted."

All the Garibaldi children found good positions. Angelo moved to the United States where he became a businessman and the consul for the Kingdom of Sardinia in Philadelphia. Michele (the only one to marry and remain childless) became a sea captain. Felice, a dapper womanizer, represented the shipping company Avigdor in Bari, a major center for the export of olive oil from Southern Italy. None of them reached old age, and Michele, who lived longest, only survived to fifty-six.

Although life separated them once they reached adulthood, they continued to correspond. Giuseppe was just like any other boy. "Like so many other lads, my childhood went by with a mixture of play, happiness, and misery. . . . There was nothing odd about my youth," he was to write in his *Memoirs*. However, aspects of his character were already emerging. He was a sensitive boy who cried when he unintentionally broke the leg of a cricket he had captured. He was generous and always ready to help others: as a teenager he saved a woman who was drowning in a canal; years later he rescued a sailor in Smyrna; at the beginning of his exile in Marseille, dressed for the promenade, he threw himself into the sea to aid a French fourteen-year-old; and he saved a black man in Rio.

He had a strong and independent character. He felt, as he himself was to admit, "a propensity to a life of adventure." Giving free rein to his imagination, he dreamed of daring escapades at sea and rejected his father's lazy routine. He resisted his parents' attempts to turn him into a provincial notable—a lawyer, doctor, or priest. When they sent him to study in Genoa, he found educational discipline insufferable and during the holidays, he took possession of a boat and sailed off toward Liguria with some other youths. He was soon caught and given permission to go to sea. Up to that

time he had not taken much advantage of his schooling, and he acknowledged that he had been “more a friend of pleasure than of study.” He regretted that his father had not made him engage in gymnastics, fencing, and other “physical exercises.” Gifted with an athletic physique, he became an excellent swimmer, and used ships as his gym when they were in port. However, his early tutors did leave their mark on him. There were two clergymen one of whom taught him rudimentary English, but they were less important than a veteran of Napoleon’s military campaigns, Signor Arena, who taught him Italian through readings of ancient history. Nice, positioned on a linguistic border, was not a town where Italian was particularly cultivated, but Garibaldi, at his brother Angelo’s instigation, studied it in depth and developed an early interest in ancient Rome, an interest that was to remain with him throughout his life.

Giuseppe molded his unsystematic education according to his own needs and personal inclinations. He read a great deal during the hours of inactivity imposed by long sea voyages and during his moments of solitude. He studied various disciplines in such depth that when he happened on hard times, he was able to make a living by teaching them. He was a fund of scientific information, and when he farmed in Caprera, he bought treatises on agronomy. He loved literature and poetry: he memorized Foscolo’s *I sepolcri* and Berchet’s poetry, he often read André Chénier, and had a particular fondness for historians of Greece and Rome, and for novels full of patriotism and the desire for social justice by such writers as Victor Hugo and Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi. Once his intellectual horizons had widened and his knowledge of social doctrines and philosophical problems increased, he started to read more difficult texts: he declared himself a follower of Cesare Beccaria and considered Voltaire and Rousseau “veritable granite pillars on which universal intelligence was built.” His book collection included Gaetano Filangieri’s *Scienza della legislazione*, and he was well acquainted with the works of French radicals and socialists of his time. He was himself a prolific writer: he used his periods of enforced idleness to write novels, poetry, and his *Memoirs*.

However, it took time for him to open his mind to a political commitment and a comprehensive perception of the world. The first part of his life was characterized by routine professional activity, which he fulfilled

with enthusiasm. He prepared for his exams to captain a ship while still in his teens. As a grown man, he found that practical knowledge of the sea was not enough for him. He took the trouble to learn the theory required for commanding a ship, unlike his father, who in his opinion did not have “the kind of knowledge that men of his class are endowed with in our generation.” During his long career at sea he had no difficulty in adapting to a shift from Mediterranean routes to oceanic ones or from sailing ships to steamships. He had complete command of Italian and French; he spoke Spanish and Portuguese well, having learned them in South America; and he could express himself quite adequately in English and German. At all times, he was able to act confidently in whatever circles circumstance was to place him.

His apprenticeship started early. He was registered as a trainee in 1821, and his first officially recorded voyage took place in January 1824 on the brigantine *Costanza* when he was sixteen. The ship, which sailed under a Russian flag but was run by an Italian crew, was to remain deeply imbedded in his imagination. He always remembered its wide beam and narrow masts. Its captain, Angelo Pesante, whom he would meet again later in life, was “the best sea captain I have ever known.” This initiation to maritime life—an exciting experience for an adolescent with a fertile imagination—took him as far as the Black Sea, a voyage that he was to repeat many times. When maritime routes were reopened at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the markets were flooded with cheap wheat from the Ukraine, where it had been produced since the late eighteenth century. Odessa and even more distant Taganrog, which lies at the other end of the Sea of Azov, became regular destinations for ships supplying Mediterranean countries. In addition to wheat from the Black Sea region, Nice imported wheat from Southern Italy; less essential cereals, spices, and dried fruit from France, Sicily, and Calabria; and marble from Tuscany. Its main trading partner was France, which sent alcohol, leather, clothing, and livestock. The port also developed a very buoyant business with France, Southern Italy, and North Africa involving the import and reexport of olive oil used as the raw material in the production of soap. There was, therefore, coastal trade with Provence and the Languedoc in one direction, and with Tuscany and Southern Italy as far as Romagna in the other.

Small ships were used along the coasts of the Gulf of Lions, the Tyrrhenian Sea, and the Adriatic.

One of these was Domenico Garibaldi's tartane. Giuseppe's parents had been anxious about him during his long voyage on the *Costanza*. When he returned in July, the young man stayed with his family. In November we find him on the *Santa Reparata* for a less demanding voyage along the French coast as an unpaid apprentice in a crew of five men. The following year he made an unforgettable journey with his father. Since 1300 when Boniface VIII called the first Jubilee, the great manifestation of faith had been held at the end of each century. In 1800, it was not possible to celebrate one because of the wars that were afflicting Europe. Leo XII therefore proclaimed 1825 a Jubilee year. Captain Domenico took a cargo of wine to Rome to supply the pilgrims. The small ship this time took on a crew of eight, and Giuseppe received his first pay. Hugging the coast, it stopped off at Livorno, Porto Longone, and Civitavecchia. On 12 April it arrived in Fiumicino and was drawn up the Tiber by buffaloes to berth in the city at the port of Ripetta. A dispute over the remuneration to the contractor who provided the buffaloes extended their stay in the city for some weeks. Giuseppe was able to admire the remains of ancient Rome, about whose greatness he had read so much. He was intoxicated by the "capital of the world" and the "relics of all that was greatest in the past." Many years later, Rome was to become for him "the symbol of united Italy."

Breaking away from his family's orbit, he signed on with the crews of much bigger ships than his father's tartane. They were always sailing ships of average size, a little over two hundred tons with crews of between fifteen and twenty men. They were cargo ships but occasionally carried passengers. His frequent voyages took him to almost all of the Mediterranean, as is made clear by his *Memoirs* and the well-documented ships' log. In 1827 he passed through the Strait of Gibraltar on the *Coromandel* and reached the Canaries. That same year, he joined the crew of the *Cortese*, which set sail from Nice in September bound for the Black Sea. It was already late in the year, and there was a risk of being trapped by the ice. As it turned out, ill fortune was to dog the voyage: the ship was boarded by pirates on three occasions. As the Greeks had risen up against their Turkish rulers, the Aegean was infested with privateers fighting their enemies and pirates who plundered neutral merchant ships. Everything was taken from

the *Cortese*, including the navigational instruments and the crew's clothing. Garibaldi contemptuously recalled the captain's failure to resist, even though the ship was armed, albeit with only twenty-four rifles. In 1832, however, the captain of the *Clorinda*, armed with two cannon, four heavy mounted rifles, and thirty handheld rifles, engaged in battle and the pirates fled the sustained fire. Garibaldi, who suffered a grazing wound to his right hand, noted this skirmish down as his first military engagement.

Garibaldi became ill on the return voyage of the *Cortese*, and in August 1828 he left his ship in Constantinople. He stayed there for almost three years, and returned to Nice only in the spring of 1831. We do not know the reason for this long sojourn, which may have been partly caused by the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, but this conflict was brought to a close by the Treaty of Edirne in 1829. We know only that he was helped by the city's large Italian community, and in particular by Luisa Sauvaigo, who also came from Nice—"one of those creatures who have convinced me that women are the most perfect of all beings." He earned his living by teaching Italian, French, and mathematics to the children of a Mrs. Timoni. Ten years earlier he could hardly have imagined himself in the role of a tutor!

He returned to sea and the usual routes, which often took in Smyrna and Constantinople as well as the Black Sea ports. His career in the merchant navy brought him promotion and financial advantage. In February 1832 he was issued with a second-class master's ticket. He recalled his first command as the brigantine *Nostra Signora delle Grazie* destined for Gibraltar and Constantinople, but we cannot find any record of this. We do know, however, that in that same February 1832 he signed on as first mate on the *Clorinda* (which had a crew of twenty men), with a monthly pay of fifty Piedmontese pounds, half the salary of his captain, Simone Clary. It was a six-month trip to Constantinople and Taganrog. In 1833, it was calculated that he had completed seventy-two months of effective employment at sea. It was a hard school, and we can well imagine the kind of life he led during his long absences from Nice. In fictional accounts, ships are portrayed scudding across the waves and manned by colorful sailors in red linen shirts. The reality was exhausting work on the sails, long watches, pump duty when water seeped through the joins in the wood, the tedium of flat calm, repetitive diet, the discomfort of restricted space, and the difficulties of personal hygiene. During the epic undertaking known as the

Expedition of the Thousand, General Garibaldi was seen crouching over the side of the ship with his trousers unbuttoned so that he could defecate directly into the sea, a practice that he had learned in his youth.

Danger was never far away. Garibaldi recalled the appalling shipwreck of a Catalan ship on the Ligurian coast, when there was no chance assisting the crew. A captain had to observe the weather constantly, and intervene in difficult moments by quickly and confidently assessing the situation, promptly making decisions, and giving orders that left no room for hesitation. This way of dealing with situations would be projected onto the methods of warfare adopted by Garibaldi the military commander. Typically he would study the terrain through a telescope, assess the enemy forces, make rapid decisions, act tenaciously in their implementation, and impose blind obedience. According to Augusto Vittorio Vecchi, his faults were also typical of a sailor: "He rarely considered the flanks and the rear, and he placed faith, too much faith, in advancing."

There were periods of quiet for the small community that made up a crew. Garibaldi probably read much of the time, and not surprisingly he formed a friendship on the *Clorinda* with the purser, Edoardo Mutru, who also came from Nice and was to join him in the first conspiracy and his military exploits during exile in South America. In port, loading and unloading imposed long periods of idleness, which were further prolonged by various circumstances and the sluggishness of officialdom. On occasion, ships were subject to quarantine, supplies of victuals and equipment could prove difficult to procure, and negotiations with local traders became grueling experiences. Taganrog and Odessa, the ports of the Levant Garibaldi visited most, were icebound for several months during winter, so they were crowded with ships from spring to autumn. The water was shallow in Taganrog and ships could not berth at the quays. Partially submerged horse-drawn carts transported the wheat, wool, copper, iron, wax, and leather to be loaded. Time passed slowly. During idle days, Garibaldi mixed with the Italian sailors from every part of Italy who busied themselves with peddling small items and contraband, or whiled away their time in taverns and brothels.

In 1833 at the age of twenty-six, the Sardinian register of seamen recorded that he was just over five feet five inches tall (166 cm), and had

blond hair and light brown eyes. How did his contemporaries see him? In 1843 Bartolomeo Mitre, who met him in Montevideo, described him as “of average height, well built and well proportioned,” and in spite of a degree of “heaviness” he had a “measured and lively manner.” His physiognomy was “calmly serious,” and his smile did not change his features. Only “his blue eyes” revealed “the intensity of his mind.” In profile, his features were “authentically Greek” and “rigid and austere.” His head, which recalled the busts of ancient heroes and the ideal image of Christ, was “large, well shaped, always held high, and covered with thick flowing locks, and the sun gave the glint of a lion’s mane to his full red beard.” In short, “he possessed the elements of good looks and physical strength, but his beauty was primarily moral, as was his power of attraction over the masses and the influence of his firmness and serenity in the midst of great dangers.”

The French journalist Louise Colet had the same impression in 1860: “average height, but upright and proud,” “handsome and impassioned face” held high, an extremely kind smile, an intelligent and thoughtful brow, and a blond beard, “like Christ’s in the paintings of the great Italian masters,” thus endowing his face with “something mystical.” His first biographer, Giovan Battista Cuneo, who fought for the same beliefs in South America and shared much of his life with him, wrote a detailed description in 1850 that confirms these features of a well-balanced physique and a bright and intense expression.

He is of average height, broad in the chest and shoulders, and manages to be both burly and lithe at the same time. He gives the impression of strength and agility. At first sight, his face appears severe. This imposing effect is increased by his russet untrimmed beard, long blond hair, keen and penetrating expression, and large forehead, from which his nose continues downward in a straight and perpendicular line. But when you have looked at him a little longer, a kindly harmony of forms and features lights up as expected, and a sense of trust and sympathy suddenly fills your mind and mixes with the respect he has just commanded.

He was not handsome, then, “in the generally accepted use of the word,” Giuseppe Guerzoni, another close friend, confirmed in 1882 shortly after

Garibaldi's death, while attempting in a detailed portrait to find the reasons for the great man's appeal.

He was small. He was slightly knock-kneed, and his chest was not quite right. But above that body, which was certainly not irregular or gauche, sat a superb head that had something of Jove on Olympus, Christ, or a lion, depending on the moment in which you observed it and the emotions that animated him. . . . Nature then added strength and agility to these unique good looks. His was not really the muscular strength of an athlete but that special sinewy strength that is toughened and invigorated by exercise, and which, when accompanied by agility, makes the body capable of the most difficult trials and the most daring physical training. He knew how to swim, ride, climb, shoot a rifle, fence with a saber, and if necessary use a knife, without anyone ever having taught him how to do it. His instincts and the structure of his own limbs provided him with the technique and the mastery.

Garibaldi had great charm. Malvida von Meysenburg, a cultured and sensitive friend of Wagner's, recalled that his voice was beautiful and beguiling, and his conversation "fresh, animated, and full of delightful simplicity, as was his nature, and it was suffused with a hint of poetry. When he talked of his adventures in South America, it was like listening to one of Homer's heroes."

The merits and defects of his physique and his character were attractive to women. It is probably not the case that he had one in every port as he traveled the length and breadth of the Mediterranean, although his prolonged stay in Constantinople does increase our suspicions. In 1827, when he sailed from Nice, he promised his fiancée, Francesca Roux, that they would be married shortly. On his return in 1831, he went straight to the beautiful young woman . . . only to find her married with a son. Three years later, he wrote three passionate love letters from Marseille, where he had just started his exile, to a certain Angelina in Nice.

While at sea he was respected for his reliability and professionalism, on land he was obliged to be a fun-loving drinking partner who was not above buying sexual favors. In 1834, in an application to leave his ship during military service, he declared that he needed to be treated for venereal

disease. An account written much later and unsupported by other sources claimed that one evening he was part of a group of seamen singing in the streets of Taganrog and was arrested for creating a disturbance. Having been freed, following the intercession of an influential Italian businessman, he failed to abide by his undertaking to remain on board his ship and was rearrested with the consequent risk of being deported.

He was a man of the sea like any other. He took little notice of the struggles for liberty and national independence that were beginning to make their presence felt on both land and sea, and both at home and around the Mediterranean. After the fall of Napoleon, Italy was once again politically fragmented into regional states: the Kingdom of Sardinia, made up of Savoy, Nice, Piedmont, Liguria, and Sardinia; the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, which was a Hapsburg dominion; the Grand Duchy of Tuscany; the Papal States, which cut the country in two at the center, from Romagna to Lazio, with Le Marche and Umbria in the middle; the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which united Southern Italy and Sicily; and the small duchies of Modena, Parma, and Lucca. They were all governed by absolute sovereigns, and the middle class, which had become the governing class after the French Revolution, had been excluded from the administration of power. This resulted in the revolutions of July 1820 in Naples and Sicily, and of March 1821 in Piedmont, which failed because of the Austrian military intervention and were followed by harsh repression. The revolution of 1831 in Central Italy was also put down by the Austrians. Clearly the foreign presence in Italy was determining the political struggle. There was an increasing conviction that the ideal of achieving liberal institutions could not be achieved without gaining national independence at the same time.

Garibaldi, who was perhaps too young in 1821, has left no comments on these events. In his *Memoirs*, written in later life after he had fought against oppressors in South America and Italy, he shows that he had no understanding of another struggle for freedom, which he had witnessed while working on merchant vessels traveling to the Black Sea. In 1821 the Greeks rose up to free themselves from Turkish domination, and fought for ten years to obtain independence with the support of France, Britain, and Russia. Garibaldi was an unwilling witness under attack from pirates, but he never went beyond his contempt for the arrogance of his attackers

and the cowardice of his commanders, and he never considered the reasons for the disorder that afflicted the seas of the Levant. His admiration for leaders of the Greek partisans came after the event and was never linked to memories of his youthful experiences.

This should not surprise us. Garibaldi's biographers always claim that he held patriotic ideals during his youth and take for granted that he knew about the events that troubled Italy at the time, basing their assumptions on a few lines in his *Memoirs* in which he asserts that he loved his country "from his earliest years," desired its rebirth, and sought "everywhere books and writing on Italian freedom and the individuals devoted to achieving it." They never consider that seamen are separated from society. Sailors live for many months in the company of a few people, often of various nationalities. They are engaged in strenuous work and have little knowledge of cultural life. In port, they make up for the tedium and solitude by indulging in coarse entertainments. When they get leave to return to their hometowns, often small coastal villages cut off by mountains, for a few months or even weeks, they are absorbed in the joys and miseries of the families that await them. The idea that they followed events in distant capitals or in the Italian interior ignores the difficulties of news circulation in the early nineteenth century and the presence of censorship that prevented the spread of news disagreeable to those in positions of power.

The youthful Garibaldi, working in the merchant navy, was no exception, although he was different in that he did not restrict his interests to professional matters. We know that he spent much of his time reading, and he was aware of a more complex world than the one in which he lived. He did not feel entirely satisfied with the life he was leading, even though it did give him some pleasures. He was willing to follow ideals that would direct him toward less banal aims than a seagoing career. In 1832 he heard that the Duke of Modena had condemned *Ciro Menotti* to death. He was deeply affected and would later call his first son *Menotti*. He was beginning to perceive the existence of the Italian problem.

A year later, the cause worthy of his dedication manifested itself. The occasion was a turning point in his life and involved two other events that followed in quick succession. In March of 1833, thirteen French passengers, a group of Saint-Simonians, boarded the *Clorinda* in Marseille bound

for Constantinople. Count Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, who lived in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was one of the first socialist theoreticians. Taking the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution as his starting points, he argued that the destruction of ancient institutions and the crisis in traditional trades and skills would lead to an era in which the *industriels*—all producers of riches, including scientists and artists—would triumph over the *oisifs*—all idlers, including nobles and members of the armed forces, who consume without producing. Saint-Simon proposed a planned society managed by bankers, as regulators of the use of capital, and industrialists, who promote profitable activities, thus raising the general standard of life. This was a society in which each would be remunerated in accordance with his or her productive capacity, as expressed through their services to the collectivity. The achievement of social justice accompanied by respect for the law was to ensure peace within societies and the happiness of the laboring classes. Collaboration between capitalists in global economic development favored by large-scale public work was to extend these benefits to the whole of humanity, leading to the unification of all peoples. To crown this new order based on science, Saint-Simon created a new religion to satisfy irrepressible spiritual needs.

Disciples developed his ideas after his death in 1825. Some were more interested in the philosophical aspects of his work, others in the organizational principles that placed the technicians of the economy in a primary role, and still others in the religious tenets that were to guide humanity toward universal peace. A movement was created under the leadership of Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin that mixed faith in the civilizing capabilities of science with a religious vision of all peoples marching toward their ultimate unification. A kind of church was formed with Enfantin at its head, and a doctrine was devised to instruct the faithful on how to lead their lives. They awaited the coming of the *Mère*, the Mother who was to unite with the Father to symbolize the unity of intellect and emotion. Saint-Simonianism spread throughout France in the 1830s, but antagonized government because it challenged the basis of bourgeois society and was accused of attacking property rights and fostering free love. A pretext was found for a trial and Enfantin was condemned to a year in prison, while his followers were expelled from the country.

The group that embarked on the *Clorinda* was part of this movement, and had decided to leave for Turkey as exiles to seek the mysterious Mother of the Orient. They came aboard the ship at night under police guard and in the presence of a crowd that enthusiastically took their leave of the departing Saint-Simonians. It was an unusual scene for the crew of a merchant ship, and they looked on admiringly. Emile Barrault, the leader of this Saint-Simonian band, was an austere and educated man (he was a professor of rhetoric), and during the voyage, he explained his convictions with great passion.

Later Garibaldi would recount those long conversations to Alexandre Dumas, the famous novelist who became his friend and biographer—conversations “during those clear eastern nights . . . , under a starry sky,” according to the narrative embellishment added by the great author of *The Three Musketeers*. As the Saint-Simonian ideas were explained, he caught sight of “previously unnoticed horizons.” This opened up a view of humanity set on the path toward peace and well-being. He was struck by the idea “that a man who, by becoming cosmopolitan, adopts humanity as his country and, by offering his sword and his blood to every people that struggles against tyranny, becomes something more than a soldier: he becomes a hero.” It was a revelation—one that made Garibaldi aware not only of “the narrow questions of nationality” in which his patriotism was trapped, but also of the possibility of fighting for the freedom of oppressed peoples in every part of the world. A single fact points to the profound emotions released by this encounter. Barrault signed a copy of Saint-Simon’s *The New Christianity* and gave it to the young officer: Garibaldi would keep it with him throughout his adventurous life, and it was in his room in Caprera when he died.

The Saint-Simonians left the ship in Constantinople. They met with a hostile reception in Turkey and moved on to Egypt, where the government valued their abilities as technicians. The group returned to France after a few years, and although the sect dissolved, its main exponents continued to aim at global economic development and came to occupy important positions in the world of business. Barrault was elected to the French parliament and became involved in the development of railways, as did Enfantin.

As Garibaldi continued his journey on the *Clorinda* toward Taganrog, Barrault’s words remained fixed in his brain, which was now in turmoil.

He went to one of the usual haunts for Italian sailors and ended up at a table where they were discussing politics. A young man started to talk about Mazzini, the Young Italy movement, national unification, and independence. Giuseppe Mazzini was the man of the moment. He was only two years older than Garibaldi but had led a much fuller life. He was born into a good bourgeois family in Genoa, a city that still retained a memory of republican freedom and of its role as a capital. His father, Giacomo, was a university professor and had been an active Jacobin in his youth. His mother, Maria Drago, was an educated and highly sensitive woman who was able to understand the obsessive dream that motivated him. Mazzini followed a regular university course and graduated in law. From his early youth he wrote for Genoese and Tuscan newspapers. When he was sixteen, he saw those who had taken part in the revolution of 1821 attempting to escape into exile on ships sailing from Genoa, and he began to think about the question of political activism. In 1827 he joined the secret society of the Carbonari, which revealed its program gradually to its members in accordance with a ritual full of symbols and therefore had only limited support. He was reported and arrested in 1830, and then forced into exile. He moved to Marseille, where he met the exponents of the Italian and European sectarian world, and developed a new doctrine based on his experience of political struggle in France, which was governed by a constitutional regime. Around the middle of 1831 he drew up his program, which had a philosophical and religious basis. From the existence of God, he deduced the law of progress, which was to be achieved by the actions of nations. These in turn were inspired by the development of civilization and had to be free if they were to fulfill the mission assigned to them. Independence from foreign domination, national unity, and a republic were objectives that Italy had to set itself now that it had been called upon by God to launch the peaceable coexistence of European peoples and the peoples of the world. The success of this political upheaval would then lead to the solution of social problems. Young Italy, the association founded by Mazzini, differed from previous secret societies in that its program, which was not aimed at just one of the regional states, was a set of clear ideas known to everyone and founded on a sense of duty rather than an expectation of advantage. From 1831, the group spread its views by word of mouth and in writings with the intention of inculcating its patriotic ideals in every class

and every place in order to prepare a national revolution through simultaneous uprisings in various parts of the country.

It was everyone's duty to obey God's will, and not the choice of the few elect. Mazzini's propaganda was also directed at sailors, who until that time had been neglected by secret societies: their constant social mixing was very useful because they could covertly circulate incendiary writings directed at all Italians as they moved from one port to another. Indeed there were sailors from various Italian regions in the tavern that Garibaldi entered that night. Mazzini's ideas were being explained by one of them, called the "believer" because of the impassioned manner in which he spoke of his hopes of a "joyous and glorious future for the Italian fatherland." As Garibaldi listened to him, he became increasingly spellbound and then ran toward the unknown man, embraced him, and became his "bosom friend." The man was to initiate him into the doctrines of Young Italy. For Garibaldi, this turned Barrault's general humanitarian mission into the concrete ideal of the struggle for Italian independence and unification, which would be an initial stage in the deliverance of all oppressed peoples. "Columbus certainly did not feel as much satisfaction in the discovery of America as I did in finding someone who concerned himself with the liberation of the fatherland," he was to write in his *Memoirs*. The voyage of the *Clorinda* was a turning point in his life. He would no longer be satisfied with the life of a seaman sailing up and down the Mediterranean.