

Michael Huggins

The *Nation*
and Giuseppe Mazzini, 1842–48

For many years, since the pioneering work of such historians as Kevin Nowlan, it was assumed that the nationalist movement of Giuseppe Mazzini known as “Young Italy” had a direct and potent impact upon the romantic nationalist movement that emerged in the 1840s around the Young Ireland movement and its mouthpiece, the *Nation* newspaper. In 1960, Nowlan, Robert Dudley Edwards, and Thomas Desmond Williams published a series of lectures under the title *Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento*. In the introduction, Edwards stated bluntly that the Irish movement “had been strongly influenced by the ideas of Mazzini and their gospel of Irish Nationalism was largely based on his theories.”¹ While positing a more qualified relationship between Mazzinian ideas and Young Ireland in the 1840s, Nowlan nevertheless averred that “the Young Irelanders in their newspaper, the *Nation*, came close enough to Mazzini’s position.”²

In a 1973 article on the relationship between Irish and European romantic nationalism, Giovanni Costigan made a similar point, noting that Mazzini sometimes wrote of Italy in “language almost identical with that of the *Nation*.” Costigan listed some of the characteristics of romantic or Mazzinian nationalism: the development of a “powerful mystique of the nation”; a sense of history and idealization of “folk culture”; an enthusiasm for the revival of ancient languages; an emphasis on the need for blood sacrifice; a cult of the hero (in the Irish case, Tone and Emmet were those most often deployed to this end); the personification of the nation, often as a forlorn, suffering female; the importance of virtue; and a predilection for failure.³ In a similar list, Alberto Mario Banti has said that “in Mazzinian rhetoric we find an appeal to history, genealogy, blood, land and the nation’s honour . . . we also find key references to symbols

1. R. Dudley Edwards “Introduction,” in *Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento* (Dublin: Italian Institute, 1960), p. 16.
2. Kevin Nowlan, “The Risorgimento and Ireland, 1820–48,” in *Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento*, p. 24.
3. Giovanni Costigan, “Romantic Nationalism: Ireland and Europe,” *Irish University Review*, 3, 2 (Autumn, 1973), 143.

and figures drawn from the Christian tradition and them transposed to a new order of discourse, that of the patriotic religion.”⁴ Banti also notes the depiction of the Italian nation as a suffering female in the allegory of sexual and national humiliation developed in romantic depictions of the Sicilian Vespers of 1282.⁵ This political culture, as Paul Ginsborg has recently suggested, owes much to European romanticism. Ginsborg’s claim that the anthropocentric perspective on the natural world of Italian nationalists “often translated into a heightened love and awareness of the physical features of the Italian homeland” might just as easily have been made in relation to the regular evocation of the Irish landscape in the pages of the *Nation*.⁶ Ginsborg identified additional motifs derived by Italian nationalists from romanticism, including a view of the past as more harmonious than the present, an emphasis on self-sacrifice, and admiration for individual heroism.

Most of these characteristics can be detected in the narratives of Ireland published in the *Nation* between 1842 and 1848. This is not to say that Mazzini was solely responsible for such narratives; for example, the failure motif was a common enough romantic trope. Indeed, Eva Stöter has suggested that the Grimm brothers’ demand for a national folkloric German literature was an important influence on Thomas Davis.⁷ Similarly, the influence of Johann Gottfried von Herder’s thought on fostering the *volksgeist* through education might be detected in Mazzini, as well as in Davis and Duffy. It is more profitable to see both Mazzini and Young Ireland as part of a Europe-wide cosmopolitan cultural and intellectual matrix that developed after the revolutionary years of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Nowlan noted, Young Ireland was “inspired by the new trends in thought which inspired nationalists in other lands.”⁸

In a recent essay, Colin Barr questioned the extent of Mazzini’s influence on Young Ireland. According to Barr, “Young Ireland had precious little to do with Young Italy in particular or continental concerns in general.” Barr argues that Archbishop Paul Cullen’s crusade during the early 1850s against the “Mazzinian” *Nation* newspaper and its owner and editor Charles Gavan Duffy was wrongly

4. Alberto Mario Banti, “Sacrality and the Aesthetic of Politics: Mazzini’s Concept of the Nation,” in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, ed. Christopher A. Bayly and Eugenio. F. Biagini (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 68.

5. Banti, pp. 71–72.

6. Paul Ginsborg, “European Romanticism and the Italian Risorgimento” in *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, ed. Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 34.

7. See Eva Stöter, “‘Grimmige Zeiten’: The Influence of Lessing, Herder and the Grimm Brothers on the Nationalism of the Young Irishmen,” in *Ideology and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Tadhg Foley and Sean Ryder (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), pp. 173–80.

8. Kevin Nowlan, *The Politics of Repeal* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 42.

premised: Duffy, he states, “was no disciple of Mazzini; Young Ireland was not Young Italy.”⁹ In fact, Barr contends, “Duffy had . . . taken the lead within the ranks of Irish nationalism in condemning any expression of sympathy for, or agreement with, Mazzini.”¹⁰ Cullen, who had lived in Rome from 1820 to 1850 and had witnessed firsthand the Roman Republic of 1848–49, “was unable to see Irish politics without Italian lenses”—and thus, in the cardinal’s mind, Irish nationalism was indelibly linked to anticlerical Mazzinianism.¹¹

Barr’s characterization of Young Ireland is somewhat awry. After the failure of the Irish rebellion in July 1848, Young Ireland was effectively moribund, and its formal political organization, the Irish Confederation, ceased to exist. The *Nation* also closed, albeit temporarily. When Duffy relaunched the paper in late 1849, it bore little political resemblance to the strident romantic nationalism espoused by its two principal writers, Thomas Davis and John Mitchel, during its first phase. In a letter to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Clarendon, shortly before the paper’s reappearance, Thomas Carlyle said of his friend Duffy that “I greatly mistake if his views are not wholly altered, or altering, in regard to all manner of Anglo-Irish questions.” As for the new *Nation*, this would be “very different indeed from what the late one was.”¹² After the paper resumed publication, Carlyle wrote enthusiastically to Duffy in praise of its contents.¹³ To gain a fuller and more accurate picture of the influence of Mazzinian thought on Young Ireland, it is essential to examine the Irish movement between 1842 and 1848, rather than the period of political realignment and relative inertia following the Irish Confederation’s demise. Two dimensions to the relationship between Mazzinian nationalism and Young Ireland in these years become clear in the pages of the *Nation* during that critical period. The first of these requires an examination of the generic similarities between the two, and the second involves some attention to the concrete evidence of Mazzinian connections and empathies in the ideas of the Young Irelanders.

Barr attempts to enlist Nowlan in support of his perspective by citing Nowlan selectively. He quotes Nowlan as suggesting that “the Young Irelanders had little interest in Mazzini’s personal philosophy or . . . with the more violent aspects of the ‘Young’ movements on the continent,” but he does not quote the remainder

9. Colin Barr, “Giuseppe Mazzini and Irish Nationalism, 1845–70,” in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism*, ed. Christopher. A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 128.

10. Barr, p. 137.

11. Barr, p. 138.

12. Thomas Carlyle, London, to Earl of Clarendon, 5 August 1849, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Clar. Dep. Irish Box 8.

13. Charles Gavan Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1892), pp. 128, 134.

of the sentence: “yet the Irish movement did deserve its name.”¹⁴ Nowlan, thus, cannot be recruited to support a perspective that disconnects Young Ireland from broader currents in romantic nationalism. What is perhaps curious here is that Nowlan suggests the Young Irishmen were not interested in Mazzinian thought, while at the same time suggesting that Young Ireland deserved its name. But Young Ireland was not merely a “Mazzinian” movement in a generic sense. Its most important voices empathized with and admired the Italian, most significantly during the formative period of radical Irish nationalism in the 1840s: there was, in other words, an ideological connection between Young Ireland and Young Italy.

The long-term significance of this connection in the development of radical Irish nationalism is suggested in a 2005 article by Jennifer O’Brien in *Irish Historical Studies* on Irish attitudes to the creation of Italy, which argues that Irish Catholic responses to Italian nationalism were complex and that there were cross-currents within those responses. Importantly, O’Brien acknowledges that the efforts of Cullen and the church to link its hostility to the Risorgimento with an anti-revolutionary position in Ireland failed—a failure demonstrated by the growth of Fenianism in the 1860s.¹⁵ Such Fenians as Charles Kickham attempted to combine loyalty to Rome with militant nationalism (and Patrick Maume has outlined the case of a former Papal soldier who became a Fenian).¹⁶ Even John Mitchel later developed an ambivalent stance on political Catholicism. Yet, it is also important to acknowledge that a radical tradition developed in Irish nationalism that absorbed ideas from beyond the loyally Catholic version of Irishness developed by O’Connell. This radicalism had its origins in the engagement of Young Irishmen in the 1840s with a wider, cosmopolitan vision of the nation that bore generic similarities to Mazzini’s vision of nationality, as well as a specific empathy with the Italian movement and its exiled figurehead during the same period.

Young Ireland’s origins can be traced to the founding of the weekly *Nation* newspaper, under the ownership of Charles Gavan Duffy and the editorship of Thomas Davis, in October 1842. The group of young friends, who at this time were all members of Daniel O’Connell’s Repeal Association, held a distinct vision of Irishness than that derived from O’Connell. Although this may be par-

14. Barr, p. 128.

15. Jennifer O’Brien, “Irish Public Opinion and the Risorgimento, 1859–60,” *Irish Historical Studies*, 34, 135 (May, 2005), 289–305.

16. Patrick Maume, “Fenianism as a Global Phenomenon: Thomas O’Malley Baines, Papal Soldier and Fenian Convict,” in *Ireland and Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Colin Graham and Leon Litvack (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 148–59.

tially accounted for by the presence of Protestants among the group's leaders (Thomas Davis and, later, Mitchel being the two most important examples), Richard Davis has suggested that Thomas Davis's travels in Europe may have exposed him to romantic nationalism and the influence of anticlerical thought. O'Connell's repeal politics were developed during the 1830s in the *realpolitik* of a parliamentary alliance with the Whigs, which he hoped would result in a series of ameliorative measures for Ireland. The *Nation*, however, "exalted Irish nationalism as 'a spiritual essence'" in a romantic conception of the nation that invites comparison with Mazzini's vision of *italianità*.¹⁷

"Young Ireland" was a label that the men around the *Nation* in the 1840s did not choose. It is often assumed that Daniel O'Connell first used the term in May 1845, when he spoke dismissively of the existence of a "Young Ireland party" within the Repeal Association in an internal debate over proposals for non-denominational education. But in fact, the term "Young Ireland" was in use before this. Richard Davis claims that Young Ireland was "christened" in 1844, and Oliver MacDonagh's biography of O'Connell suggests that Daniel Owen Madden, a journalist and convert from Catholicism to Protestantism, had earlier used the term in a critical survey of O'Connellite politics published in 1843—for which he incurred the lasting hatred of the mainstream repealers. The name "Young Ireland" also appears in the *Nation* itself at least as early as August 1843, in a poem of the same name. Clearly, many of those active in Irish political and cultural life in the 1840s made the connection between this new political current and the Mazzinian movement. There were diverse views within the movement (which led, for example, to a major split between Mitchel and Duffy in late 1847) and the leaders moved in very different directions after its defeat in 1848. Some of the Young Irelanders were less enthusiastic democrats than Mitchel during the revolutionary era—yet there was a consensus about the founding principles of Irish nationality espoused by the *Nation* during those critical years, 1842 to 1848.¹⁸

Much in the pages of the *Nation* can be described generically as Mazzinian. Like Mazzini, Young Ireland saw the nation in political terms, striving to overcome historic disunity through the forging of a new political present. Similarly, Young Irelanders did not take particular care to define the nation precisely, allowing discursive flexibility—or opportunism, if you will—in the identification of what constituted the nation. Language, territory, and ethnicity might all indi-

17. Richard Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987), p. 34.

18. See: R. Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement*, pp. 57, 56; Oliver MacDonagh, *O'Connell: The Life of Daniel O'Connell, 1775–1847* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), p. 551; Daniel Owen Madden, *Ireland and its Rulers Since 1829* (London: T.C. Newby, 1843), p. 304; *Nation*, 12 August 1843.

cate the existence of a nation, but the Young Irelanders believed these required integration in a polity that conferred citizenship, democracy, and formal equality on all. Both Mazzini and Young Ireland were acutely aware of the historical factors that militated against the required political unity for the construction of the nation, and their propaganda was focused particularly on the construction of what proved to be a chimerical unity—a unity that was often contradicted by experience. Alberto Mario Banti has summarized the Mazzinian vision of the nation as a community ordained by God, who had granted it a land and a mission; it had suffered internal discord and external oppression, but had also made glorious rebellious gestures that provided an intellectual and moral example to the present, maintained through the veneration of its past heroes. This characterization of the Mazzinian vision could scarcely be a clearer indication of the similarities between Risorgimento ideas and the construction of Ireland in the *Nation*.¹⁹

In his 1994 biography of Mazzini, Denis Mack Smith identifies key features of Mazzini's political thought: an emphasis on education; a justification of violence (at least in certain circumstances); a stress on democracy as well as nationality; a sense of duty and wider responsibility that contrasts with the utilitarianism of Bentham or the individualism of Smith; a commitment to art, music and literature as part of the national struggle; and a belief in the necessity of martyrdom. The *Nation* betrays striking similarities to Mazzinian thinking in a number of these areas.

The emphasis on education, described by Mazzini as the “first duty,” is perhaps the most obvious.²⁰ Education, which, in Thomas Davis's case, meant immersion in an imagined Irish culture, was in his view the key task of the *Nation*, the Repeal reading rooms, and the political clubs that developed in Ireland during the 1840s. In early 1843, Davis could be found demanding that “the People must take diligent care to procure books on the history, men, language, music and manners of Ireland for their children.”²¹ By the following month, the *Nation* was taking practical steps to fulfil this mission by producing bundles of reading material for popular reading societies, and publishing a book titled *Spirit of the Nation* composed of articles from the newspaper. Indeed, the popularity of the *Nation* led Duffy to publish in the following years a number of popular historical and cultural titles, in a series he named the “Library of Ireland.” The first volume

19. See Alberto Mario Banti, *Il Risorgimento Italiano* (Roma: Laterza, 2008), p. 64. See also Denis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 6, 9, 15, 28, 29, 43, 25–26, 33–34.

20. Giuseppe Mazzini, “On the Duties of Man,” in *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations: Giuseppe Mazzini's Writings on Democracy, Nation Building and International Relations*, ed. and transl. Stefano Recchia and Nadia Urbinati (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 88.

21. *Nation*, 18 February 1843.

in the series, Mitchel's *Life and Times of Aodh O'Neill, Prince of Ulster*, was published shortly after Davis's death in the autumn of 1845 and involved precisely the kind of veneration of past heroes that Banti identifies as a key ingredient in the Mazzinian construction of *italianità*.

Mack Smith has noted Mazzini's enthusiasm for the folkloric collection *Moore's Irish Melodies* and that he urged Italians to collect folk songs.²² The pages of the *Nation* echo a similar enthusiasm for connecting with an imagined Irish past. Davis urged Repealers to encourage "the revival of dancing jigs, reels, country dances, hurling and foot-ball matches." Keening at funerals had declined, despite the availability in print of stylized laments. Davis said these printed versions should be used only after the "traditionary keens had been spread, practised and noted down."²³ Similarly, a review of a Dublin concert of Irish music noted that such melodies were "best heard from the sweet lips of a peasant countrywoman."²⁴ The search for an authentic "people" is noteworthy. Further, calls for the education of that "people" appeared regular in the pages of the *Nation*; for example, in September 1844 the newspaper suggested that there should be 3,000, not 300, Repeal reading rooms in Ireland. The *Nation* explicitly supported nondenominational education and as a result incurred O'Connell's wrath over its support for the so-called "godless colleges" bill in 1845—the incident, in fact, in which O'Connell labeled the group around the *Nation* "Young Ireland."²⁵

The Irish connection with Mazzinian ideas goes further than an emphasis on the political and cultural education of an abstract "people." It also involves a broadly antimodern sensibility—an antipathy to what Mazzini had described as the "materialists" who did not understand the idea of the nation.²⁶ Davis derisively called this "the bale of cotton theory of civilisation."²⁷ Indeed, although Davis supported some kind of educational provision for want of anything better, he was nonetheless profoundly alarmed at the education offered by the new national schools in Ireland and their "most pestilent amount of materialism in thought."²⁸

Mazzinian thought attributes particular characteristics and a national mission to nations; this is one of its distinguishing features. The *Nation* similarly suggested, in an 1843 article, that "no nation can become great, if it be not pe-

22. Mack Smith, p. 26.

23. *Nation*, 15 April 1843.

24. *Nation*, 18 February 1843.

25. *Nation*, 17 May 1845.

26. Mazzini, "Three Essays on Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment," in Recchia and Urbinati, p. 64.

27. *Nation*, 29 October 1842.

28. *Nation*, 15 April 1843.

cular” and that “freedom and her votaries cherish these distinctive moral and physical features which cause us to know ourselves and one another.”²⁹ Here, the abstract notion of mutual recognition between the citizens of the nation is suggested in a romantic imagining of the national community that was common to many emerging national movements in Europe, not merely the Irish or the Italian.

Mazzini was often rather imprecise in defining *italianità*; so, too, the writers of the *Nation* asserted Irishness in general terms that dwelt upon an imagined history of an ancient civilization and an exalted culture. They insisted that a spiritual essence of Irishness was at the core of Ireland’s distinctive national character: “look into our hearts . . . they were made for love and kindness and confiding friendship.”³⁰ Unsurprisingly, the *Nation* contrasted these qualities with English “materialism”, remarking that “no character is so unlike the Irish as the English, and none so unfit for the Irish to follow.”³¹

The responsibilities of Irish patriots to the nation were presented as duties and the “sacred obligations of patriotism,” in much the same way as Mazzini contrasted national duties with individual rights.³² The *Nation* espoused what it called “a sacred internationality,” calling for a Europe-wide revolution of the oppressed.³³ When the Poles revolted against Austria in early 1846, the *Nation* demanded Mazzini prove himself by occupying the Austrians on another front, “so his glorious Italy may rise again from the torpor of provincialism to be a kingdom among the kingdoms.”³⁴ A few issues later, the appeal for internationalism was repeated, with the *Nation* calling for Italy, Ireland, and other nations to “combine in a ‘holy alliance’ for freedom—for common national existence—combine to shake despotism off the earth, and to give vitality to European existence.”³⁵ Similarly, Mazzini had written of a “mission of progress that embraces HUMANITY as a whole.”³⁶

The *Nation* also agreed with Mazzini on the issue of violence; in fact, Young Ireland’s split with the Repeal Association in 1846 was a direct consequence of O’Connell’s insistence on an abstract and permanent renunciation of the use of violence to achieve political ends. The Young Ireland leadership, including

29. *Nation*, 9 September 1843.

30. *Nation*, 19 December 1842.

31. *Nation*, 12 November 1842.

32. *Nation*, 13 January 1844; see Recchia and Urbinati, p. 9.

33. *Nation*, 28 December 1844.

34. *Nation*, 14 March 1846.

35. *Nation*, 28 March 1846.

36. Mazzini, “On the Superiority of Representative Government,” in Recchia and Urbinati, p. 46.

Duffy, Mitchel, and William Smith O'Brien, refused to endorse the position.³⁷ The *Nation* claimed the right to use violence as a last resort, as circumstances might demand. One leading article had stated in December 1844 that “war is one of the worst of horrors. But there are times and circumstances when the sword is the only appeal—GOD breathes his sanction on him, who raises it in the cause of righteousness.”³⁸

Martyrdom was another motif common to Young Ireland and Mazzini. Mazzini believed that “ideas ripen quickly when nourished by the blood of martyrs,” and that martyrdom itself was a “religion.”³⁹ The relation of this to the martyrdom narrative in Irish nationalism is clear. Both Davis and Mitchel enthused about the idea of blood sacrifice, transmitting an idea that Marianne Elliott has described as the “origin legend” of independent Ireland.⁴⁰ However, the notion of self-sacrifice was neither inherently Irish nor Mazzinian, as it appealed to romantics across Europe at the time.⁴¹ The intellectual milieu in which the Young Ireland movement developed meant that such figures as Davis and Mitchel were more likely to have absorbed this motif from continental romanticism than from an inherited Gaelic tradition.

Thus, it appears that between 1842 and 1848 the *Nation* was at the forefront of an Irish movement attempting to diffuse, through reading rooms, public banquets, demonstrations, and educational initiatives what can be termed a Mazzinian political culture—that is, one based on a romantic conception of the nation and its liberating mission, in which an apparently intuitive and visceral romantic imagination was projected as political and philosophical insight. It is profitable to see romantic nationalism in Ireland as part of a cosmopolitan political culture that was developing across Europe in the period, based on a vigorous public sphere of clubs and societies, and an engagement with romanticism in the arts, at the center of which—in the Irish case—were figures like Carlyle and Mazzini. The welcome given by the *Nation* to the Italian revolutions early in 1848 is explicit in this. In his editorial of February 12, 1848, Duffy, at this point at his most radical, claimed:

The spirit which now shakes the cities and fortress foundations of Italy, like an underground volcano . . . was born years ago in the academies, studios and saloons of the artists' land . . . it found its first occupations in literature, archaeology

37. C. Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin and Co., 1883), p. 239.

38. *Nation*, 28 December 1844.

39. Mazzini, “Manifesto of Young Italy” in Recchia and Urbinati, *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations*, 33–8 at p. 37.

40. Marianne Elliott, *Robert Emmet: The Making of a Legend* (London: Profile, 2004), p. 224.

41. Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999), p. 9.

and art. It has come fully developed in good time and good order to the sterner task, of asserting Italian independence by speech and sword.⁴²

On multiple occasions, the *Nation* referred directly to Italy and its national struggle. Early in the life of the newspaper, in February 1843, a prominent article made an explicit comparison with Italy:

Ireland has been called the Italy of the west, her land so fair, her soul so fiery, her glories so remote, her sorrow so deep, and her slavery so enduring. A tyrant neighbour and a young race full of hope complete the resemblance. Filicaja's divine hymn to Italy was circulated through the press here with the proper names altered, and passed as the wailing of an Irish bard.⁴³

The article went on to make further comparisons, suggesting that internal discord sown by the “enslavers” was responsible for their degradation into provinces, that unity was an essential prerequisite of national liberation, that democracy and strong local government institutions were necessary to root out despotism and aristocracy, and that the establishing of a kingdom of Italy (rather than a republic) would be a mischievous phantom.

The following month, a lead article again took a cosmopolitan view of European politics, hoping for the emergence soon of “as many separate nations, with separate governments, laws, manners, characters and languages as possible.”⁴⁴ Much of this could be considered Mazzinian, including the suggestion of nations’ complementary missions, in what Rechia and Urbinati have recently termed a “cosmopolitanism of nations.” This was echoed the following week in the assertion that “We are battling for Ireland; if we conquer, ’twill be for mankind.”⁴⁵ Similarly, the newspaper espoused a democratic and internationalist sense of nationality the following year, in its occasional column on “Our foreign relations” when it claimed for Ireland “no alliance with the France of Louis-Philippe.” Instead, it asserted “brotherhood in the great doctrines which guarantee to man the largest civilisation, freedom and happiness. . . . Between them and us there is a sacred internationality.”⁴⁶ Young Irelanders claimed a distinctive nationhood for Ireland—but they also they shared with Mazzini a cosmopolitan sense of a future family of nations.

The *Nation* also made much of the fate of the Bandiera brothers, Austrian naval officers and followers of Mazzini, who were executed in June 1844 following

42. *Nation*, 12 February 1848.

43. *Nation*, 25 February 1843.

44. *Nation*, 18 March 1843.

45. *Nation*, 25 March 1843.

46. *Nation*, 28 December 1844.

a failed insurrection in Southern Italy. The paper lamented that for some time the British government had been opening Mazzini's mail and had recently passed on to the Austrian authorities the contents of a letter from Emilio Bandiera to Mazzini. Some of the *Nation's* coverage of the Bandiera affair could be attributed to a desire to expose the bad faith of the British government, but its interest also reveals an explicit empathy with Mazzini the exiled patriot. In August 1844, the *Nation* published a short didactic drama dramatizing the thoughts of two Italian peasants who witnessed the executions. The following month, the paper noted that Mazzini was shortly to publish a pamphlet on the affair, and in October 1844 it claimed that "the blood of the BANDIERAS calls aloud from the soil of Italy."⁴⁷

References to the opening of Mazzini's mail recurred over the next few years, including (after the British government finally admitted that Mazzini's letters had indeed been opened) a lament that the young Bandieras could not be brought back to life. The home secretary, Sir James Graham, had "betrayed to a foreign court the secrets he had stolen from the letters of honourable men whose fortunes had driven them to the perfidious refuge of Britain."⁴⁸ An editorial in May 1845 noted Graham's apology for opening Mazzini's mail and eulogized Mazzini thus:

MAZZINI is a man of rank, genius and knowledge. He is a man of that character, that THOMAS CARLYLE thought fit to write a letter to the *Times*, saying that he had known Mazzini for years, and if there were a pure and noble spirit on earth, it was that Mazzini. He is a man of such patriotism, that driven from Italy, to save his life from the aggregate tyrants who curse his native land, he has ever since devoted his life to that country's freedom, and is the honoured head of the Italian exiles.⁴⁹

Clearly, the authors connected the Irish and Italian struggles, and just as clearly they were unconcerned with disassociating Ireland from any Mazzinian taint.

Mazzini was again eulogized in an extensive lead story titled "Freedom in Italy" in the spring of 1846. By this time, Mitchel—heavily influenced by Carlyle—was the paper's main writer. In the *Nation's* opinion, Mazzini was "highly accomplished and gifted, with a mind as able as it was ardent." Furthermore,

In character, as a man and a gentleman, Joseph Mazzini ranks among the highest. His inflexible integrity and noble, manly nature have made him long the intimate and valued friend of Thomas Carlyle . . . we too, though not having the honor of Mazzini's acquaintance, have had the opportunity of knowing what he was in Italy as well as what he is in London, and in that knowledge it is that we confidently introduce him to our countrymen as one eminently to be treated with their affectionate respect and sympathising confidence.

47. See: *Nation*, 24 August 1844; 28 September 1844; 3 October 1844.

48. *Nation*, 26 April 1845.

49. *Nation*, 10 May 1845.

Having thus taken the opportunity of making his name better known, let us conclude by directing attention to the graceful and manly account he has given of the martyrdom of two brother patriots; and let Mazzini be judged by his own words in future.⁵⁰

There followed Mazzini's account of the Bandiera affair, reprinted from Mazzini's newspaper, the *Apostolato Popolare*.

Mitchel remained an ardent admirer of Mazzini after the collapse of Young Ireland in 1848. In 1849, Mitchel, on his way in to penal exile in Van Diemen's Land for his part in the July 1848 uprising, described Mazzini in what became his *Jail Journal* as "that good and noble Italian."⁵¹ In November 1853, Mitchel—in Nicaragua en route to the United States following his escape from penal exile—recorded with pleasure the news that war among the great European powers appeared imminent. (Mazzini also increasingly considered such a crisis as his "great hope" following the waning of the revolutionary tide of 1848).⁵² Mitchel speculated in his diary about the European exiles that would be encouraged by such an eventuality, listing Kossuth, Mazzini, Blanc, Cavaignac, Ledru-Rollin, Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Avezzana: evidence of Mitchel's intellectual connections to a cosmopolitan, pan-European political culture.⁵³

Mitchel's most significant assertion of enthusiasm for Mazzini appears in a letter written some years later. It is especially significant because it demonstrates that the Young Irelanders—in this case, Mitchel, although Duffy's immersion in the same cosmopolitan intellectual world is probably even clearer, given his correspondence with Carlyle over many years—were in touch with Mazzini's ideas. Familiar with and immersed in that broad political culture through journalism and their wide reading, the Young Irelanders' "tea and Thomas" discussions of the early 1840s (when the core group around the *Nation* would meet regularly at each other's houses to discuss matters of cultural and political interest, very often including Carlyle's work) had evolved into a direct contact with the Scot's social and cultural nexus.⁵⁴ This, in turn, had resulted in Mitchel acquiring a personal letter written by Mazzini on Italian affairs. Mitchel refers to this correspondence in a letter to an American acquaintance in 1857:

My researches among my papers have brought to light a really valuable autograph—that of Mazzini, whom I consider one of the most remarkable & one of the best men in Europe. It is valuable both as an autograph, & as conveying

50. *Nation*, 28 March 1846.

51. John Mitchel, *Jail Journal* (New York: The Citizen, 1854), p. 164

52. Mack Smith, p. 78.

53. Mitchel, pp. 363–64.

54. See Charles Gavan Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892). See also Richard Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement*, p. 32.

Mazzini's sentiments on Italian politics in a letter to an intimate friend at a very critical period in Italian affairs.⁵⁵

Mazzini's "intimate friend" was most likely either Thomas or Jane Carlyle; the word "intimate" suggests it was possibly Jane, who was more consistently friendly with Mazzini. The Carlyles' relationship with the exiled Mazzini is relatively well known, but Thomas Carlyle's friendship with a number of Young Irelanders in the 1840s is less familiar. Recent historians have extensively re-evaluated Carlyle's attitude to Ireland, which had long been considered dismissive. He was a profound influence on the leaders of the Young Ireland movement, which John Morrow has attributed to a sense of "shared moral authenticity" and a common commitment to ideas associated with early nineteenth-century romanticism. Significantly, Morrow has claimed that they were also impressed by Carlyle's support for Mazzini.⁵⁶

For the most part, the Young Irelanders hero-worshipped Carlyle. A number of them visited him in London on two occasions. One Carlyle scholar has suggested that the first of these visits, in April 1845, was specifically because of Carlyle's letter to the *Times* supporting Mazzini, alluded to above.⁵⁷ Although Barr has asserted that Mazzini's influence on Ireland "was not because Irish nationalists had contact with him, or even admired or emulated him," Mitchel's treasured autograph letter suggests quite the opposite.⁵⁸ The Young Ireland movement's most important voice both admired Mazzini and had indirect contact with him through the Carlyle circle. Duffy, while more circumspect in his views of Mazzini than Mitchel, was also part of that group through his longstanding friendship with Thomas Carlyle.

On the second occasion, when visiting the imprisoned William Smith O'Brien in London during May 1846, half a dozen Young Irelanders spent an evening at the Carlyles', with Mitchel and Thomas Carlyle taking a walk together. Carlyle subsequently visited Ireland for the first time in September 1846, dining with Mitchel in Dublin.⁵⁹ Carlyle spent much of his second Irish visit (a lengthy tour of the country in the summer of 1849) in the company of Duffy. Such was

55. Mitchel, Knoxville, Tennessee, to Mr. Jeffrey, 26 February 1857. New York Public Library, Miscellaneous Papers. The author is grateful to the NYPL Manuscripts and Archives Division for bringing this uncatalogued item to his attention.

56. John Morrow, "Thomas Carlyle, 'Young Ireland' and the 'Condition of Ireland Question,'" *Historical Journal*, 51, 3 (September, 2008), 643–67.

57. Kenneth Fielding, "Ireland, John Mitchel and his 'Sarcastic friend' Thomas Carlyle," in *Literatur im Kontext: Festschrift für Horst Drescher*, ed. J. Schwend, S. Hagemann and H. Volkel (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992), p. 132.

58. Barr, p. 144.

59. William Dillon, *Life of John Mitchel* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1888), vol. 1, pp. 109–11.

Carlyle's friendship with Mitchel and Duffy that he wrote to Clarendon in support of both men following their arrests in 1848 (Mitchel in May, Duffy in July), appealing to the lord lieutenant to show leniency.⁶⁰ In other words, there were a number of occasions in which Carlyle and the Young Irelanders—including Mitchel, Carlyle's most ardent follower among them—had the opportunity to discuss the issue of whether Ireland possessed that "principle" that made it a nation; an issue on which Carlyle and Mazzini tended to agree. As Nowlan noted long ago, "through Carlyle, Mazzini's and Mitchel's mutual friend, there could have been a contact with the Italian political exiles in England."⁶¹ What is certain, however, is the readiness of Young Ireland to immerse itself in that cosmopolitan culture centered on Carlyle.

Young Ireland clearly moved in cosmopolitan ways. Mazzini and Carlyle shared a profound dislike of the utilitarian spirit of the age; this was one of the principal attractions of both men for the Young Irelanders. The foundations of Carlyle's social criticism lay in his antipathy to secular visions of enlightenment and progress, an antipathy that was evident in such writings as *Signs of the Times* (1829). For Carlyle, the spirit of enlightenment had led to Benthamite utilitarianism in the "Mechanical Age," which he contrasted with an idealized past. In *Signs of the Times*, Carlyle complained, "It is by tangible material considerations that we are guided, not by inward and spiritual."⁶² This polarity ran through the essay and, indeed, through much of Carlyle's thought: his prophetic voice demanded a reorientation of human enterprise toward an inner, spiritual world, its value and verities. As Roy Foster has recently put it, "'Manchester' was the real enemy and moral regeneration the answer."⁶³

Thomas Davis's comment about a civilization measured in bales of cotton reflects this influence, but it was in Mitchel that Carlyle's influence was most evident. Carlyle offered direct critical commentary on specific political and social issues of his day. These criticisms were concrete expressions of his broader concerns about the spirit of the age in which he lived, the age of the "dismal science" of political economy in which God's work was being abandoned in favor of secular, enlightened notions of perfectibility and progress. The critique was to find its way into Mitchel's thought, inspired as Mitchel was by Carlyle's dissenting voice and a vision of the nation as a historic-spiritual community. Neither Carlyle nor Mazzini offered concrete political support to Young Ireland—in fact,

60. Thomas Carlyle, London, to Earl of Clarendon, 26 May 1848, 27 October 1848, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Clar. Dep. Irish Box 8.

61. Nowlan, "The Risorgimento and Ireland," p. 26.

62. Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times" in *Thomas Carlyle: Selected Writings*, ed. Alan Shelston (London: Penguin, 1971), p. 64.

63. Roy Foster, *Words Alone: Yeats and his Inheritances* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 50.

quite the contrary, as both were opposed to Irish nationalist claims—but despite this, there was much that the Young Irelanders, and Mitchel in particular, admired and absorbed in their engagement with the Carlyle-Mazzini axis.⁶⁴

It is clear that there was a connection between the national ideals of Mazzini and Young Ireland, but the *Nation* in the 1840s was not careless about Irish Catholic sensibilities. Its pronouncements on Italian politics steered away from anti-clericalism. This did not mean that the paper, or the movement, always defended papal rule in Italy. In 1844, for example, the *Nation* responded to a revolt in the Romagna in the northern Papal States by demanding constitutional government there and scolding the Rome government for its “inflexible resolve to refuse every species of concession to the justly discontented.”⁶⁵ In early 1845, a prominent Young Irelander, Thomas McNevin, told a meeting of the Repeal Association that Rome had no right to instruct Irish Catholic clergymen to desist from involvement in the repeal movement.⁶⁶ A few weeks earlier, a lengthy article in the *Nation* discussed the opinions of many learned continental scholars on the pope’s authority in temporal matters, concluding that he had none.⁶⁷

Nonetheless, the *Nation* often displayed a circumspect attitude toward the papacy. When Pius IX became pope in 1846 and raised real hopes of reform in Italy, the *Nation* appeared sufficiently aware of the *realpolitik* of the situation to pounce on these hopes, in the desire to engage with the loyally Catholic at home, saying that the “Sovereign Pontiff does not set himself in opposition to the new spirit of the age—the spirit of nationality—but allies himself with it.”⁶⁸ The newspaper feared a rapprochement between the new “liberal” pope and the British government that would make the Catholic church an enemy of “nationality.” This fear was well-founded, as Lord Minto spent some time in Rome as an ambassador for the government in late 1847 and early 1848, attempting to persuade the pope to order the Irish Catholic clergy to shun political engagement. (Minto subsequently wrote to Clarendon that he had sought from the pope “an immediate intimation . . . of his disapprobation of clerical agitation.”)⁶⁹ The *Nation* praised Pius for “wisely and firmly” working toward the restoration of Italy’s lost nationality; at the same time, it also claimed there were factions at Rome that were “favourable to foreign ascendancy” and attempted to cast the pope as

64. See: Mack Smith, pp. 151, 157; Nowlan, “The Risorgimento and Ireland,” p. 26; Thomas Carlyle, *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*, ed. Eugene August (Whitefish, MT: Schlessinger, 2006), p. 5.

65. *Nation*, 6 April 1844.

66. *Nation*, 18 January 1845.

67. *Nation*, 4 January 1845.

68. *Nation*, 15 May 1847.

69. Lord Minto, Rome, to Clarendon, 2 January 1848, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Clar. Dep., Irish Box 19.

an Italian nationalist, claiming he was avenging the Bandieras while plotters in Rome wished to turn over the Papal States to Austria.⁷⁰

This assertion specifically related to Austrian domination of the Italian peninsula, but the newspaper's anxiety over the British mission to Rome had implications for Irish readers. By once more mentioning the Bandiera brothers, the newspaper was also simultaneously reminding its readers of British perfidy and aligning itself implicitly with Mazzini. After the Austrians occupied Ferrara in the summer of 1847 (in response to Pius IX's decision to establish a civic guard in the city), the *Nation* noted that since the French Revolution, "to be a Republican or a Reformer in a misgoverned state, or the patriot son of an enslaved land, was to be called an infidel . . . the millions of Catholics have thus been the patientest slaves of imperialism . . . and now the chain is broken."⁷¹

By September 1847, the *Nation* was less confident of the pope's support for a liberal and nationalist agenda. An editorial speculated that, if Irish hatred of England and devotion to Rome were placed in opposition by an *entente* between London and Rome—along the lines that Minto was soon to broker—"we tremble for the result." The writer then begged Irish bishops not to allow the Catholic church to become the servant of England.⁷² But the *Nation's* position on Rome would soften after Mitchel left the *Nation* to publish his own *United Irishman* newspaper in early 1848. Duffy adopted a more cautious line regarding the papacy, portraying Pius IX as a reformer and suggesting he had done more for Italian nationality than Mazzini.⁷³ The newspaper was "grieved" that the clergy had been attacked in Italy and by June was unsure which way to bet on the Italian situation, given the pope's shifting position. It declared that "MAZZINI is posting proclamations for a republic at Milan . . . PIUS IX and the Roman senate are pursuing different policies." Here, Duffy was being careful not to criticize anyone, but instead warned of the "follies of faction" and of repeated debates about the relationship between temporal and spiritual power—although he ended with an upbeat assertion that Austria would be defeated.⁷⁴ The *Nation's* political instincts can thus be described as democratic, nationalist, constitutionalist, and cosmopolitan, but these passages do suggest a real concern on the part of the editor that it would become marginal in Irish politics if labelled anticlerical.

Among the former Young Irelanders, Mitchel and Thomas Francis Meagher remained committed to a Mazzinian vision of the nation for some time after

70. See: *Nation*, 7 August 1847, 14 August 1847.

71. *Nation*, 11 September 1847.

72. *Nation*, 18 September 1847.

73. *Nation*, 26 February 1848.

74. *Nation*, 3 June 1848.

1848. Mitchel, after his escape from Van Diemen's Land, settled in the United States, from where he was free to register his approval of Mazzini without regard for the political consequences in Ireland of taking such a position; later in life he became more friendly to political Catholicism.⁷⁵ In 1850, Meagher, like Mitchel a transportee, wrote from Van Diemen's Land expressing his disappointment with his brother (evidently a loyal Catholic) who had returned to Rome with the pope after the city's brief experience of republican government and was to be given a high commission in the pontifical guard. "I would feel far happier in hearing of him being amongst the Hungarian refugees," Meagher commented.⁷⁶

Colin Barr's essay implies that mid-nineteenth century nationalist Ireland was a static confessional monolith. In reality, it was anything but that. For example, Sean Connolly's *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland* established more than thirty years ago that the half-century before the Famine had seen a state of continuous conflict between priests and people, in which the Catholic church had sought to impose doctrinal orthodoxy on a peasantry whose material religion was incompatible with orthodox Catholic strictures of obedience to temporal authority.⁷⁷ Opposition to Italian unification after the defeat of Young Ireland in 1848 was not a given result of Catholic Ireland's eternal devotion to the Holy See; indeed, the *Nation* had noted proudly that an Irish brigade had participated in a defence of Cremona against the Austrians in 1844.⁷⁸ It was, rather, a consequence of the growing—but far from complete—ability of Cullen's church to impose ultramontane doctrinal and social orthodoxy, a process accelerated dramatically by the removal of many of the poorest in rural Ireland, through death and emigration, in the mid- to late 1840s.

The development of radical nationalist politics in Ireland was a dynamic process, shaped over many years by interactions with a host of influences. Some of these may appear contradictory and some were forged in the context of revolutionary situations, which, once the tide had turned, no longer resonated for the remnants of what had been Young Ireland. Nevertheless, these influences together created a flexible ideological compound.

A perusal of the *Nation* during the 1840s reveals a broad engagement with a cosmopolitan, pan-European romantic political culture that appealed enor-

75. *Irish Citizen* (New York), 2 November 1867.

76. Thomas F. Meagher, Ross, Van Diemen's Land, to W. Smith O'Brien, 11 May 1850, National Library of Ireland, Dublin, William Smith O'Brien Papers, Ms. 444/2690.

77. Sean Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland* (1982; Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000.)

78. *Nation*, 20 April 1844.

mously to the people grouped around the newspaper.⁷⁹ Political news and analogous stories of national oppression featured strongly. The literature and arts of continental Europe—and, for that matter, of the rest of the United Kingdom—were prominent in the weekly fare produced by Davis, Duffy, and Mitchel. One Young Irelander living in Birkenhead, England, explicitly compared their role in providing instruction for Ireland’s young men with that of Guizot’s lectures and Thierry’s letters, writing to Duffy, “this is to be truly an educator, a leader and a guide. And this is what you and Davis have been, what you and Mitchel are.”⁸⁰

From 1842 until its enforced closure in the summer of 1848, the *Nation* and the Young Ireland movement generically, as well as specifically, created narratives of nationhood that bore the influence of Mazzini, among others. In their most radical phase, from their secession from the mainstream Repeal Association in 1846 until the rebellion of July 1848, many Young Irelanders embraced a democratic republicanism that was closely attuned to Mazzinian principles. Like Mazzini himself, they were not always and forever consistent in this view, and after 1848 increasingly looked to agents other than the Irish themselves to deliver national salvation. Yet, for a short time during the spring of 1848, it appeared that there were real prospects for Mitchel’s call to democratic and national revolution, as the lord lieutenant’s panic-stricken letters to London attest.⁸¹ Davis and Mitchel were profoundly influenced by the cosmopolitan vision of the nation offered by Mazzini and European nationalism, learning their politics in that milieu; as Duffy wrote many years later, the group around the *Nation* were “Irish specimens of the genus.”⁸²

After the political defeat of Young Ireland in 1848, the *Nation* was to reappear in 1849 as a much tamer affair, conscious (perhaps) that the moment of revolution had gone. During the following decade any new national political initiative would be launched in the context of the growing hegemony of Cardinal Cullen.⁸³ This, as well as the inevitable realignments that occurred after the dashing of exalted political ambitions, accounted for the changed editorial tone of the *Nation*, in which a new pragmatism demanded that no quarter be given to the perception that the Irish national movement was an anticlerical one. With Mitchel removed from the scene and the revolutionary tide waning, Gavan Duffy’s innate

79. See, for example, Tom Dunne, “Haunted by History: Irish Romantic Writing, 1800–50,” in *Romanticism in National Context*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 68–91.

80. M. MacDermott, Birkenhead, to Charles Gavan Duffy, 1 November [1846], Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, Charles Gavan Duffy Papers, 12 P 19/4.

81. Clarendon to Sir George Grey, 25 March 1848, Bodl., MS Clar. Dep. Irish vol. ii, f. 177.

82. Duffy, *Conversations with Carlyle*, p. 1.

83. On Cullen, see Emmet Larkin, “The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–1875,” *American Historical Review*, 77, 3 (June, 1972), 625–52.

conservatism quickly re-emerged. He would turn the *Nation* into a much less threatening proposition to the political and cultural dominance of the Catholic church. Roy Foster has neatly summarized the distinction, contrasting the “transcendentalist moral regeneration, in the style of Carlyle and Mazzini” of the *Nation* in its early years with the pragmatism of Catholic nationalism.⁸⁴

The importance of making the connection between Young Ireland and cosmopolitan European ideas on nationality in the 1840s lies in the impact these ideas had in shaping Irish nationalism in the ensuing decades. It is common to consider Irish nationalism as having two hermetic variants—one moderate, constitutional, and Catholic, the other militant and revolutionary. In a number of senses this characterization is inadequate. It understates both the extent to which ideas were hybridized and the protean character of nationalism. Later nationalists of whatever hue were inclined to absorb and re-create particular narratives opportunistically, in ways that suited contemporary exigencies. All, whether of the Fenian or Home Rule variants, sought to recruit Ireland’s “patriot dead” for their own particular requirements. Thus, for example, the romantic nationalism of Patrick Pearse could appear profoundly visceral—attuned, through its emphasis on sacrifice, martyrdom and devotion, to Catholic sensibilities and, as a result, of little appeal to most Protestants. Yet for all its apparent Catholicism, Pearse’s nationalism owed much to the Young Ireland group of middle-class, urban gentlemen, Protestant as well as Catholic, who, influenced by romanticism, were part of a cosmopolitan sense of nationality that developed in Europe in the 1840s, and at the center of which stood the figure of Mazzini. Between 1842 and 1848 the *Nation* narrated a story of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, of pluralism and romantic nationhood that was to be part of the compound of Irish nationalism in the future. It was not O’Connell’s Whig alliances or Roman Catholic obedience that inspired Pearse in 1916, but the men he called the “prophets of Irish nationality.”⁸⁵ To be precise, those prophets were Thomas Davis and John Mitchel, men who had contributed their “gospels” to the New Testament of Irish nationality.⁸⁶

~ UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER

m.huggins@chester.ac.uk

84. Foster, *Words Alone*, p. 77.

85. Patrick Pearse, “The Sovereign People” in *Political Writings and Speeches* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1966), p. 365.

86. Pearse, p. 370.