

Avventurieri, esuli e volontari.

Storie atlantiche del Risorgimento

by Alessandro Bonvini

Abstract

Risorgimento was a significant piece in the global patchwork of the modernity. After the outbreak of the French Revolution until the independence of the last Spanish dominions in the Gulf of Mexico (Puerto Rico and Cuba), the Western hemisphere radically changed. Ancient empires collapsed, new institutional formations appeared in the European and American territories, great processes of cultural, political and economic transformation marked the two banks of the Ocean, while small and great nationalisms were emerging everywhere. During the long 19th century, some thousands of people – mostly revolutionary adventurers, political exiles and cosmopolitan volunteers – left the coasts of the Italian Peninsula and moved overseas. Here they were involved in the regional revolutions, took part in the wars of independence and contributed to the construction of the new republics. Their biographical experience influenced the ideological formation of the various patriotisms, activated new mechanisms of politicization and characterized the creation of trans-national political associations fully inserted in the dynamics of the modern globalization. Furthermore, these men were protagonists of an intense circulation of ideological discourses, political projects and military practices that marked the entire Euro-American space. Following a variety of migratory paths, adventurers, exiles and volunteers contributed to turn the Atlantic world in a community of experiences crossed by deep connections between the Old Continent and the New World.