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"Newest Born of Nations": Southern Thought on European Nationalisms and the Creation of the Confederacy, 1820-186

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“Newest Born of Nations”: Southern Thought on European Nationalisms and the
Creation of the Confederacy, 1820-1865

by

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Abstract

When nineteenth-century southern nationalists seceded from the Union and created a southern nation, they sought to justify their actions by situating the Confederacy as one of many aspiring nations seeking membership in the family of nations in the middle of the nineteenth century. To support their argument that the Confederacy constituted a legitimate and independent nation, southern nationalists claimed nineteenth century European nationalist movements as precedents for their own attempt at nation-building, using the southern nation's supposed similarity to, or, at times, differences from, these European aspiring nations to legitimize the Confederacy. Such claims built on a long antebellum precedent in which southern opinion-makers analyzed events abroad through the lens of their own national values, developing an international perspective on issues of nationhood. As they debated the revolutions of 1848, southern commentators used this discourse on nationalism abroad to distinguish between the national values that were and were not acceptable to conservative slave-holders, clarifying an altered southern definition and vision of liberal nationalism. When southerners turned to creating an independent southern nation, secessionists utilized this international understanding of nationalism to claim that because the aspiring southern nation followed the model of new and aspiring nations in Europe, particularly Italy, it deserved independence. Such an argument, while popular domestically, failed to resonate with Europeans and northerners who understood the contrast between slavery and liberal nationalism, forcing Confederates to re-evaluate their claims about the

international place of southern nationalism. In response, some Confederates intensified their comparisons, further manipulating the ideals and symbols of nationalism to continue positioning the Confederacy within the broader trends of nineteenth century nationalism. More conservative Confederates rejected comparisons between southern nationalism and more liberal European nationalisms, claiming that the Confederacy actually purified nationalism through slavery. From the earliest stirrings of southern nationalism to the defeat of the Confederacy, southern analysis of European nationalisms played a critical role in shaping southern thought about nationhood.

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Introduction

When southerners seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America, they were faced with the immediate necessity of forging a nationalism for their new nation, a necessity that led them to look outward as well as inward for inspiration. As southern nationalists sought to construct a national narrative that would justify their place among the family of nations, they turned to the images and symbols of other aspiring nations, drawing comparisons between their nascent nationalism and nationalist movements in Europe in order to define and legitimize the southern nation. These comparisons drew on a long antebellum precedent in which southern intellectual elites had analyzed foreign nationalism through the lens of their own national values, a process that had aided southerners in refining their beliefs about what it meant to be a nation. Upon secession, southern nationalists utilized this precedent to claim both similarities with and differences from nationalist movements in Europe as a way of explaining, legitimizing, and gaining support for the aspiring southern nation.

Although southern nationalism was in many ways a domestic response to American issues such as slavery, southern nationalists also embraced an international perspective on their attempt at nation-building, turning to almost a century of nationalist thought and activity to help them justify the creation of an independent southern nation. Along with slavery, religion, and the American Revolution, nationalist movements in Europe stood as an inspiration upon which southern nationalists drew as they sought to forge a nationalism that would explain the values and meaning of the new southern

nation, as well as to cultivate loyalty amongst and win support for the Confederacy from fellow southerners.¹

As southern opinion-makers looked abroad, they found much to admire in the values exhibited by nationalist movements in Europe. From the self-determination of the Greek people in the 1820s-1830s, to the republicanism of the revolutions of 1848, to the fight against tyranny embodied by the Italian Risorgimento, southern intellectuals admired the values in these revolutions that they believed echoed their own national values.² This support was not unqualified, however; the southern elite was deeply conservative and committed to slavery, which left southern analysts wary of European nationalists' cries for freedom and liberty.³ Most nationalist movements in Europe were

¹ Some influential analyses of the origins of southern nationalism include Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism: 1830-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979); Anne Sarah Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). Historians including Faust have identified the existence of international influences on southern thought about nationhood, but these ideas were largely unexplored until recent work by Paul Quigley and Andre Michel Fleche. Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 11-13; Quigley, *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

² For an overview of the Greek nationalist movement, see Paul Pappas, *The United States and the Greek War for Independence, 1821-1828* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). For an overview of the revolutions of 1848, see Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For an overview of the Italian Risorgimento, see Denis Mack Smith, *The Making of Italy, 1796-1866* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1968) and Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (London: Routledge, 1994).

³ Paola Gemme, Timothy Roberts, and Andre Michel Fleche have all argued that conservatism limited southern support for the revolutions of 1848. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles: The Risorgimento and Antebellum American Identity* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Roberts, *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*. Robert E. Bonner, Stephanie McCurry, and Manisha Sinha reveal the importance of conservatism to southern politics and the development of southern nationalism. Bonner, *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

inspired in large part by liberal nationalism, which grew out of Enlightenment ideas such as human equality and constitutional rights, and sought not only to achieve independence and self-determination for nations, but also to attain the liberal goals of equality and natural rights.⁴ The contradiction between a conservative slave society and the liberal nationalism that underpinned the movements abroad created tension in southerners' analysis and usage of foreign nationalist movements, helping to shape a southern vision of nationalism that was both reactionary and liberal, and that both embraced and, among the most conservative of southerners, rejected nationalist movements abroad. Regardless of this tension, however, the southern elite understood their nationalism as connected to the larger movement of nationalism in the nineteenth century, and, upon creating a southern nation, defined their nation through its context within the larger family of nations.

The tension between southern conservatism and the liberal values highlighted by analysis of foreign revolutions played a critical role in the development of southern nationalism. As early as 1848, when the vast majority of southerners were still committed to the American nation, conservative fears of unchecked revolution abroad guided southerners in developing a southern vision of nationhood. Southern analysts began celebrating the foreign nationalists' values such as republicanism that they believed were positive aspects of nationhood, while rejecting the values such as absolute equality and freedom that southerners saw as extremism and as threats to hierarchical power and social order. In doing so, these southern analysts manipulated the idea of liberal nationalism. The altered vision of nationalism that they developed would clarify

⁴ For a discussion of the different types of nationalism, see Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

southern belief about the proper values of a nation, and would prepare later southern nationalists to claim European nationalist movements as a precedent for their own attempt at nation-building by teaching southerners to ignore the obvious contradictory values.

As sectional tension became critical throughout the 1850s, southerners used analysis of foreign nationalist movements to make sense out of the growing national crisis at home. They compared their fears of what the increasingly influential northern abolitionists would do to the South with the oppression suffered by aspiring nations in Europe. Southerners turned to foreign revolutionaries exiled to the United States to inform their conversation about the sectionalism of their own nation, using such figures as Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth and Irish nationalist John Mitchel to claim that northerners and southerners responded differently to European revolutionaries, and that these responses followed differing sectional visions of the national values. This analysis prepared southerners to see themselves as distinct from the North on issues of nation, a critical step to conceiving of an independent southern nation.

When southerners seceded from the United States and began forging their own nation, they used their long tradition of understanding issues of nationalism through an international lens to help them legitimize a southern nation. Using the altered southern definition of nationalism, they claimed that the supposed similarity between the new southern nation and aspiring nations in Europe justified an independent southern nation. These international comparisons aided Confederates in defining the Confederacy by providing a blueprint of national values for which the Confederacy stood. Confederates also used these comparisons to seek support for the Confederacy, claiming that any aid

and legitimacy granted to aspiring nations in Europe, such as the diplomatic recognition extended to the newly-united nation of Italy, should likewise be bestowed upon the Confederacy.

While the southern elite seemed remarkably convinced of these comparisons, or at least convinced of the comparisons' ability to gain support and to create a national identity for the southern nation, as early as the first year of the Civil War, challenges threatened these comparisons. The contradiction between slavery and liberal nationalism that southerners glossed over by manipulating the definition of nationalism proved more problematic for the rest of the world, including the very nationalists with whom Confederates compared themselves. The lack of official diplomatic recognition from abroad, combined with famous Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi's support for the North, revealed that the rest of the world was not convinced that the Confederacy resembled aspiring nations in Europe. In response, many southern analysts intensified their manipulations of the ideals, and now symbols, of nationalism, continuing to claim that the Confederacy represented a legitimate attempt at nation-building according to the principles established by revolutions abroad. More conservative southerners, however, rejected these comparisons, claiming instead that the Confederacy represented a new and improved form of nation, one in which slavery and conservatism purified the excessive liberalism that had characterized the European revolutions. Despite widespread ideological manipulations, then, the tension between conservatism and liberal nationalism would never be fully reconciled. Southerners' attempts to make sense out of nationalism through international analysis, however, were critical to the development of southern nationalism.

Because issues of nationalism were largely determined by the same elite, white, educated men who made up the political and intellectual power structure of the South, these are the southerners to whom this dissertation refers. Particularly during and after secession, this powerful but small elite, including men who held positions of public authority in fields such as government, journalism, business, and academia, tasked themselves with constructing a new nationalism. These elite southerners were well-versed in international affairs, and were familiar with the actions and ideas of nationalists in Europe, enabling them to use international comparisons to define their own nationalism.⁵

These elite opinion-makers recorded and disseminated their ideas and views on nationhood through a well-developed print discourse with which they sought to inform and persuade their fellow southerners. Newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, and published speeches provide a strong record of southern attempts to shape opinion about nationalism. Print discourse plays an influential role in the creation of nationalism, as Benedict Anderson has famously revealed in his seminal work *Imagined Communities*. Anderson demonstrates that print culture can play a critical role in allowing strangers to imagine themselves as part of a national community, thereby revealing the utility of print culture to efforts at creating nationalism.⁶ Corroborating this sense of nationalisms as consciously forged, Eric Hobsbawm has revealed that nationalisms can, in fact, be

⁵ Michael O'Brien reveals that antebellum southerners, contrary to being isolated reactionaries, were fully aware of and engaged in intellectual, cultural, and political trends of their time, and had particular interest and even first-hand knowledge of European culture and affairs. O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), especially pgs 90-161; O'Brien, *Rethinking the South: Essays in Intellectual History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

deliberately shaped by an elite intent on forming a new nation.⁷ Michael T. Bernath has applied these insights to the South by analyzing southern nationalists' attempts to create a distinct southern nation through the development of an independent southern cultural and intellectual life.⁸ Building off of such understandings of the centrality of print discourse to the creation of nationalism, this dissertation utilizes southern print discourse as a critical source for analyzing southern nationalists' attempts to consciously forge a southern nationalism. Because the purpose of placing southern nationalism within an international context was to persuade an audience of the proper values for a nation and, later, of the legitimacy of southern nationalism, this dissertation focuses on sources within the southern print discourse that were designed to inform and influence thought on southern nationhood.

The southerners who contributed to this print discourse, and who sought to shape southern opinion of nationalism, included a broad cross section of elite southern society, among which were intellectuals, journalists, politicians, and private citizens. Because of the critical role of southern publications in forging a southern nationalism, editors, publishers, authors, and journalists constituted a particularly important segment of the southerners who attempted to create a southern nation. Since they determined what southerners read and learned about nationalism and the southern cause, these men had powerful platforms from which they could shape the discourse and debate within the South, allowing them to interpret issues of nation for their audiences. Politicians and other public figures also played a critical role in interpreting issues of nationalism and

⁷ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁸ Michael T. Bernath, *Confederate Minds: The Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

shaping public opinion. Public speeches provided these men with a common means of conveying their ideas to wide southern audience. Republications of speeches and political debates further spread the ideas of the elite to a larger audience. Beyond speeches, pamphlets provided public figures with an extended forum in which to expand on their defense of southern rights, especially slavery, and on the supposed northern abuses of those rights. Together, the voices of all these elite southern men, drawn from all segments of public life, created a strong and sustained defense of southern nationalism that depended upon using comparisons and contrasts with nationalisms in Europe to shape southern views on nationhood and to bolster the legitimacy of the Confederacy.

The audience to which these elite southerners made their national appeals largely resembled themselves. The southern power-brokers who attempted to create a southern nationalism found it particularly important to win the support of their fellow elite white men, including the planters, businessmen, and officials who made up the formal and informal power structure of the South. While the job of winning the support of foreign nations belonged first and foremost to diplomats and other influential southerners abroad, southern nationalists at home were also aware of the potential import of their words and explanations on public opinion abroad, and, especially during the Civil War, incorporated international opinion into their attempts to claim European nationalist movements as a precedent for southern nationalism.

Southern nationalism has long been a subject of historical inquiry, and historians have analyzed the origins of southern nationalism at great length. Drew Gilpin Faust identified slavery, religion, and the heritage of the American Revolution as the primary

ideological influences on southern nationalism.⁹ Other historians have looked at the cultural foundations of southern nationalism, including Bernath, who argues that southern nationalists desired to create a self-consciously independent southern culture and intellectual life in order to strengthen a southern nation.¹⁰ My work analyzes an additional source of southern nationalism by examining the international dimension of southern thought on nations and nationhood as southerners undertook the process of forming their own nation. In doing so, my work draws on both the ideological and cultural explanations for southern nationalism, for example applying Faust's understanding of Confederate comparisons with the American Revolution to southern comparisons with European revolutions, and utilizing Bernath's understanding of the importance of print culture in creating an independent southern identity by analyzing international elements of this print discourse.

My analysis of the international influences on southern nationalism also responds to scholarship on the critical importance of southern conservatism to southern nationalism. The conservative basis of southern politics is well-established, and scholars such as Stephanie McCurry continue to expand our understanding of the conservative and even anti-democratic nature of southern thought.¹¹ My work argues that southerners could be both conservative and reactionary, as well as outward looking, at the same time,

⁹ Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*.

¹⁰ Bernath, *Confederate Minds*. Other historians who present cultural explanations for southern nationalism include James M. McPherson, "Was Blood Thicker Than Water? Ethnic and Civic Nationalism in the American Civil War," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 143.1 (1999): 102-108; William Robert Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: G. Braziller, 1961). For more analyses of the origins of southern nationalism, see Rubin, *A Shattered Nation*; Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹¹ McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*. See also Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*; Bonner, *Mastering America*.

by demonstrating how southern nationalists used an international perspective to attempt to reconcile their conservative, anti-democratic tendency with the liberal ideals that had long dominated the American, and therefore southern, political tradition, and that were gaining influence throughout the world.¹² Despite their conservative nature, many southern nationalists still found the liberal ideals that had long directed the American political tradition so compelling that comparisons with movements abroad representing these values remained a valuable method of seeking support for their new nation. Because of the conservatism of the South, however, these southern nationalists carefully edited their portrayal of foreign nationalist movements to fit with their own revised understanding of what liberty and equality meant for an overtly slave-holding republic, choosing to focus on the anti-imperialist aspect of these movements and largely ignoring the social implications of the liberal nationalist cry for equality. My work thus reveals how southern nationalists internationally contextualized their debate between liberalism and conservatism, and how they attempted to adapt their conservatism to the international trend of liberal nationalism.

Scholarship on southern nationalism has recently begun to explore the international context in which southern nationalism developed. Paul Quigley, in revealing the inward, outward, and backward inspirations for the Confederacy, analyzes previous knowledge of European nationalisms as one of the ways in which southerners made sense out of their own changing nationalisms. His emphasis on romantic

¹² Scholars have generally revealed that southerners reconciled their liberal heritage with their slave-based conservatism by denying the applicability of liberal ideas such as freedom to slaves. Scholars have also shown that southerners argued that slavery constituted a valuable contribution to the American experiment in government. James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (New York: Knopf, 1990); Bonner, *Mastering America*; Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

nationalism in particular reveals southerners' deep engagement with the trends of the time.¹³ Andre Michel Fleche similarly recognizes Confederate awareness of international trends of liberalism and nationalism, focusing on the revolutions of 1848 and their legacy for Americans' nationalism, particularly analyzing the impact of European nationalists' immigration to the US, as well as the incompatibility of slavery and liberal nationalism as highlighted by the European revolutions' growing emphasis on issues of labor and emancipation.¹⁴ Don Doyle has also worked to contextualize southern nationalism within an era of nationalist movements, particularly by comparing the southern nationalist movement and the Italian Risorgimento.¹⁵

My dissertation adds to and extends the conversation begun by these scholars by providing a more complete understanding of how and why southerners understood issues of their nationhood through an international lens, starting with the early antebellum period and continuing all the way through the impending failure of the southern experiment in nation-building at the end of the Civil War. Looking at antebellum southern analysis of nationalisms abroad is critical to understanding the development of southern thought on nationhood, as it reveals how and why southerners developed an international perspective on issues of nationalism. Analyzing the antebellum roots of southern thought on nationalism also shows how an international perspective shaped southern thought about their nation throughout the antebellum period, including how this

¹³ Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*.

¹⁴ Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*.

¹⁵ Don H. Doyle, *Nations Divided: America, Italy, and the Southern Question* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002). Other historians have also begun examining the international context of southern and American nationalism, as well as the spread of ideas of nationalism from one nation to another. For examples, see David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2006).

perspective helped southerners to clarify their national values and to conceive of the South as distinct from the North. Continuing the story through the Civil War shows how the international perspective that developed in the antebellum period later shaped southern attempts to build and defend the southern nation, and why southern nationalists remained committed to the vision of the South as one of many aspiring nations of the nineteenth century, even as events during the war seemed to disprove this stance. This dissertation thus clarifies the international vision of nationalism that dominated southern thought as southerners conceived of a southern nation, and shows how that vision ultimately shaped southern nationalism.

Additionally, analyzing the tension between liberal and conservative responses to revolutions abroad demonstrates how southern nationalists attempted to place their conservatism within an international framework in order to reconcile their liberal political tradition with their conservative tendencies. Such analysis also reveals the critical importance of the ideological manipulations that southern nationalists went through in order to justify their international contextualization of the Confederacy. As such, this dissertation more fully explains why southerners believed they could use an international perspective to legitimize their nation, despite the problems that slavery presented to their project in nation-building. By providing a full-length analysis of the influence of European nationalist movements on southern thought on nations and nationalism, then, this dissertation expands understanding of the critical issues of why the South seceded, why southern nationalists thought they had a case for independent nationhood, and how they framed their cause as about rights rather than, or in addition to, slavery.

Beyond southern history, my work also reveals that nationalist movements can be built, in part, by borrowing from ideas of other nationalist movements. In particular, it reveals that an aspiring nation can twist, manipulate, and re-cast the ideas of a foreign nationalist movement, making them into something entirely different, yet more suitable and useful for the new movement. This argument thus advances our understanding of how nationalist movements are built and how they influence each other. My work also expands the ways in which we think about liberalism and the ascent and fall of liberal nationalism in the nineteenth century by complicating the binary between liberal and illiberal movements. Through these contributions, my work enhances understanding of both southern nationalism and of nationalism in the Atlantic world in the nineteenth century.

Chapter One **Debating Nationalism, 1820-1849**

The world in the first half of the nineteenth century seemed full of new possibilities for nations around the globe. Aspiring nationalists spread ideas of nationalism from one nationalist movement to another. Led by the American and French Revolutions, and continuing through the wakes of colonialism in the Americas and the reactive, post-Napoleonic Congress of Vienna in Europe, an age of revolution saw potential nationalities throughout Europe and the Americas rising up and attempting to form independent nations.

Elite, educated antebellum southerners watched these developments closely, as did the rest of the world. European movements in particular caught these southerners' attention. Beginning with the Greek independence movement in the 1820s and continuing through the revolutions of 1848 that spread across Europe, southerners followed the advance of the ideals of liberal nationalism and the attempts of the Greeks, French, Italians, Hungarians, Poles, and other nationalities to put these ideals into action. As they analyzed these events abroad, southern commentators found much to support. They recognized their own cherished national values in the aspiring nations they watched in Europe, and through analysis of the values exhibited by nationalist movements abroad, the southern elite drew connections between the various movements, identifying the ideals that created similarity between aspiring nations, and even looking back to their own history to connect these revolutions to the American Revolution.

Despite this support for the revolutions, however, the conservative slave-holding elite who dominated southern political and intellectual life also approached the events in Europe with wariness. The fundamental incompatibility between an unequal and hierarchal slave system and a form of nationalism premised upon freedom and equality challenged southerners' perceptions of nationalism and complicated their reactions to the revolutions abroad. Even as they celebrated some liberal values, southerners feared the radical implications of the revolutions' call for freedom and liberty. Thus, even while supporting the aspects of these movements that they connected to their own values, southerners criticized the aspects of the revolutions that they characterized as extremism.

This process of analyzing foreign nationalisms, learning to see them as connected, and evaluating which aspects of these movements were and were not worthy of support taught southerners about their own views of nationhood. As southerners watched and debated the meaning of revolutions in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, they ultimately learned to define what they believed a nation and nationalism should be. In doing so, southerners essentially created an altered vision of nationalism that sought to reconcile the liberal ideals that underpinned their own American nationalism with the conservatism that pervaded southern political thought. This vision of nationalism that southerners developed through analysis of nationalist movements in Europe would ultimately guide their sense of their own nationality, just as the subject of their own nationalism began to become a critical issue for southerners.

Antebellum southerners were actively engaged in analysis of nationalist movements in Europe, beginning as early as the Greek nationalist movement.¹ Greece

¹ Michael O'Brien argues that elite southerners were fully engaged in the intellectual trends of their time, including a deep interest in classical history. O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*.

provided antebellum southern analysts with an early, and sentimentally favored, example of a fight for national independence. In 1821, Greeks rose up under the leadership of Alexander Ypsilantis to try to overthrow Ottoman control; although this initial attempt failed, Greeks would continue to wage war against the Turks throughout the 1820s, eventually gaining independence with the aid of European intervention in 1830. As Greece fought for independence from the Ottoman Empire, American minds turned to the glories of the Greece of antiquity, celebrating Greece's historic role in establishing the governmental practices of self-representation and republicanism that nineteenth-century Americans so revered. This enthusiasm for all things Greek, combined with Americans' desire to see their own political institutions and values echoed abroad, created widespread American support for the Greek independence movement.²

Southerners joined their fellow Americans in celebrating Greece and the cause of Greek independence, using print discourse to spread their enthusiasm. The vast majority of reports in southern periodicals, while often generated abroad or in the North, showed whole-hearted support for Greece, guiding the formation of southerners' opinions. Southern audiences read about how citizens in various cities held balls and raised money for the Greek cause; government officials asked for support for Greece; and even the president, James Monroe, informed Congress that it was natural that the Greeks would "produce that great excitement and sympathy in their favor, which have been so signally

² Pappas, *The United States and the Greek War for Independence*; David Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence: The Struggle for Freedom from Ottoman Oppression and the Birth of the Modern Greek Nation* (Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press, 2001). Caroline Winterer also reveals the importance of Hellenism to antebellum Americans' intellectual life. She argues that American support for Greece was based in part on their belief that the ancient Greeks had originated the idea of democracy that Americans themselves cherished. Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

displayed throughout the U. States.”³ While southern-generated reports were fewer in number, they showed equal enthusiasm for the Greek cause. For example, the *Natchez State Gazette*, a paper owned by colorful Mississippi journalism pioneer Andrew Marschalk, synthesized foreign reports to inform readership that the news from Greece was hopeful that “the glorious cause of National Independence, will prevail in Greece, and she will soon take her station in the rank of nations.”⁴ The *Charleston Courier* took the occasion of Christmas, 1823, to remind its readers that even as they celebrated the birth of Christ, Christians in Greece were suffering, and that “Greece, worthy as she is of our sympathies... holds a higher claim on our affections.”⁵ Such reports set the tone for what southerners learned about the Greek cause.

The positive tone that reporters adopted toward Greece was echoed in southern action. Charlestonians were the first Americans to respond to the Greek call for aid.⁶ Virginia legislators and citizens of Richmond, following in the example of northern pro-Greek organizations, met in 1824 to pass resolutions expressing sympathy and calling for support for the Greek cause.⁷ Similarly, the Louisiana legislature passed an official resolution in support of Greece, earning praise from the *Milledgeville (GA) Southern*

³ James Monroe, “Message,” *Alexandria (VA) Gazette and Advertiser*, December 5, 1822. See also “The Greeks,” *Charleston (SC) City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, December 31, 1823; “Greek Ball,” *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, February 12, 1824; “Ode to the Greeks,” *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, February 14, 1824; “Dr. Thornton’s Address,” *Alexandria (VA) Herald*, October 21, 1822; *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, December 23, 1823; “Debate on the Greek Question: Speech of Mr. Webster,” *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette*, March 16, 1824.

⁴ “Greece,” *Natchez State Gazette*, December 13, 1823. See also “Turkey and Greece,” *Fincastle (VA) Mirror*, August 22, 1823.

⁵ *Charleston Courier*, December 25, 1823.

⁶ Pappas, *The United States and the Greek War for Independence*, 32.

⁷ “Greek Cause,” *Richmond Enquirer*, January 31, 1824.

Recorder, a states' rights Whig newspaper.⁸ Southerners continued forming organizations to collect aid and encourage sympathy for the Greek cause, and upon the successful culmination of Greek independence and the subsequent uncertainty surrounding the governance of newly independent Greece, southerners showed concern for the future of the Greek nation.⁹ Clearly, Greek independence was a cause that the southern elite supported.

While Greece, revered as the birthplace of democracy, won significant sympathy from antebellum Americans, it was far from the only nascent nationalist movement that southerners supported in the 1820s and 1830s. Southerners also turned a sympathetic eye toward Ireland's desire for independence from Great Britain; the various Italian states' struggles for freedom from foreign empires and monarchs perceived to be despotic; France's creation of a constitutional monarchy in 1830; Poland's fight for freedom from Russia and Prussia; and Belgium's bid for independence from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands.¹⁰ As with Greece, this support was publicly displayed in a variety of ways

⁸ "Eloquent Appeal," *Milledgeville (GA) Southern Recorder*, May 4, 1824. For more examples of southern support, see also "State of Europe," *Charleston Courier*, August 20, 1822; "A Discourse," *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, August 6, 1823; "Assistance to Greece," *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette*, January 25, 1825; "Greece," *Natchez Ariel*, December 5, 1825; *Charleston Courier*, May 11, 1826; "The Greeks," *Natchez Ariel*, September 28, 1827; "Communication," *Alexandria (VA) Phenix Gazette*, January 21, 1830; George Tucker, "A Discourse on the Progress," *Southern Literary Messenger* 1.8 (April 1835): 405-421.

⁹ "A Meeting of the Friends of the Greeks," *Savannah Georgian*, April 25, 1828; "Civil and Religious Liberty," *Savannah Georgian*, October 11, 1828; "Miscellaneous: Greece," *Pensacola Gazette and Florida Advertiser*, April 3, 1830; "Greece," *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 2, 1830; *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 15, 1830; *Savannah Georgian*, July 20, 1830; "Greece," *Natchez Ariel*, January 26, 1828; Samuel G. Howe, "To the New-York Greek Committee," *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, February 12, 1828; "Sensibility and Eloquence," *Richmond Enquirer*, April 11, 1828; "Eleventh Annual Report of the Young Men's Bible Society of Alexandria," *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, April 25, 1832. As part of his larger discussion of American aid, Pappas provides examples of support and aid in SC, LA, MS, and VA. Pappas, *The United States and the Greek War for Independence*, 37-38.

¹⁰ For evidence of southern support for Ireland, see *Courrier de la Louisiane* (New Orleans, LA), July 28, 1823; *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 7, 1825; "Civil and Religious Liberty," *Savannah Georgian*, October 11, 1828; *Natchez Statesman and Gazette*, January 8, 1829. For support of Italian states, see

throughout the South. Hibernian societies and other organizations formed for the support of Ireland in southern cities and towns ranging from Savannah and Charleston to Annfield, NC, often using St. Patrick's Day to celebrate the cause of Irish independence.¹¹ Support for Neopolitan independence exploded in the early 1820s as Naples sought independence from Austria, with Leesburg, Virginia's *Genius of Liberty* characterizing the revolution as "among the singular and wonderful events of the day."¹² France's struggles to create a more responsive government won widespread support from southerners, complete with parades, musical performances (including at least one

"Organization of Europe," *Richmond Enquirer*, September 27, 1815; "Europe," *Georgetown (SC) Winyaw Intelligencer*, November 10, 1819; *Leesburg (VA) Genius of Liberty*, September 19, 1820; *Fincastle (VA) Herald of the Valley*, May 7, 1821; "God Speed the Good Cause," *Richmond Enquirer*, May 8, 1821; "Sardinia," *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, May 11, 1821; "One Day Later from London," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, May 12, 1821; "Naples," *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette*, July 7, 1821; *Savannah Georgian*, April 20, 1822. For support of France, see "Revolution in France," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, September 11, 1830; *Charleston Courier*, September 13, 1830; "The French Revolution," *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, September 15, 1830; *Richmond Enquirer*, September 24, 1830; "Volunteer Toasts," *Charleston Courier*, September 25, 1830; "Celebration of the Liberty of France," *Savannah Georgian*, October 12, 1830; "The Late Revolutions," *Natchez Gazette*, December 1, 1830; *Abeille* (New Orleans, LA), March 28, 1831. For support of Poland, see "Organization of Europe," *Richmond Enquirer*, September 27, 1815; *Natchez Statesman and Gazette*, January 8, 1829; "Poland," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, February 1, 1831; *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, March 9, 1831; "Poland," *Natchez Southern Clarion*, June 10, 1831; "Politics of Europe," *Abeille*, September 1, 1831; "Poland Still Bleeds!" *Natchez Southern Clarion*, October 21, 1831. For support of Belgium, see "Revolution in The Netherlands," *Abeille*, October 27, 1830; "The Revolution in the Netherlands," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, November 1, 1830; *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 15, 1831; Tucker, "A Discourse on the Progress," 406.

¹¹ "Friends of Ireland," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 20, 1829; "Civil and Religious Liberty," *Savannah Georgian*, October 11, 1828; "Anniversary of the Hibernian Society," *Charleston Courier*, March 20, 1826; *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, July 7, 1828; "Address," *Alexandria Gazette*, March 26, 1835; "St. Patrick's Benevolent Society of Columbia," *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, March 22, 1828; "St. Patrick's Day," *Savannah Georgian*, March 18, 1826; "St. Patrick's Day," *Savannah Georgian*, March 19, 1827; "St. Patrick's Benevolent Society of Columbia," *South Carolina State Gazette and Columbia Advertiser*, March 22, 1828; "St. Patrick's Day," *Savannah Georgian*, March 18, 1829; "St. Patrick's Day," *Charleston Courier*, March 19, 1829; "St. Patrick's Day," *Savannah Georgian*, March 19, 1830; "Festival of St. Patrick," *Savannah Georgian*, March 20, 1832; "St. Patrick's Day," *Charleston Courier*, March 20, 1833; "St. Patrick's Day," *National Banner and Nashville Whig*, March 23, 1836.

¹² *Leesburg Genius of Liberty*, September 19, 1820; "God Speed the Good Cause," *Richmond Enquirer*, May 8, 1821; "One Day Later from London," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, May 12, 1821; "Naples-Piedmont," *Richmond Enquirer*, May 18, 1821; *Augusta Chronicle*, May 24, 1821; *Courrier de la Louisiane*, June 6, 1821.

instance of La Marsellaise), and even an official letter of congratulations from the state legislature of Louisiana that declared the support of the people of Louisiana for the people of France.¹³ Poland's revolution, inspired by France's, also warranted southerners' support, as southerners "look[ed] with feelings of enthusiasm" to "this gallant, chivalrous and noble country" according to Whig Samuel Snowden's *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the settling of Belgium's independence was nothing less than a "promise for civilization."¹⁵ All of these revolutions were a common subject of toasts at southern gatherings, as southerners praised nationalist movements abroad.¹⁶ Often southerners connected the European nationalist movements in their toasts, as did a Mr. Patrick Cantwell, who celebrated "the Parisian heroes of July, 1830 – a bright example for the Irish agitators."¹⁷ The widespread support and celebrations of

¹³ *Abeille*, March 28, 1831; *Charleston Courier*, September 13, 1830; "Great French Celebration," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, September 25, 1830; "Celebration of the Liberty of France," *Savannah Georgian*, October 12, 1830; "Celebrations in Honor of the French," *Richmond Enquirer*, October 18, 1830; "Celebration," *Savannah Georgian*, October 25, 1830; *Natchez Gazette*, November 17, 1830.

¹⁴ "Poland," *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, August 2, 1831; "Poland," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, February 1, 1831; *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, March 9, 1831; "Poland," *Natchez Southern Clarion*, June 10, 1831; "Poland Still Bleeds!" *Natchez Southern Clarion*, October 21, 1831; "Melancholy Situation of Poland," *Richmond Enquirer*, June 14, 1831; *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, June 15, 1831; "Fall of Warsaw – Confirmed," *Savannah Georgian*, November 9, 1831.

¹⁵ *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 15, 1831. See also Tucker, "A Discourse on the Progress," 406; "The Revolution in the Netherlands," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, November 1, 1830.

¹⁶ "St. Patrick's Day," *Savannah Georgian*, March 19, 1822; "Communicated," *Alexandria Herald*, July 12, 1822; *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, July 9, 1823; "Fourth of July: St. Andrew's Parish Celebration," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, July 7, 1824; "4th of July in Twiggs County," *Milledgeville Georgia Journal*, July 27, 1824; "American Friendly Association," *Charleston Courier*, February 24, 1825; *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, September 17, 1825; "Communicated," *Georgetown Winyaw Intelligencer*, July 11, 1827; "Celebrations in Honor of the French," *Richmond Enquirer*, October 18, 1830.

¹⁷ "Volunteer Toasts," *Charleston Courier*, September 25, 1830. See also "The Public Dinner," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, July 14, 1824; "Gen. La Fayette," *Richmond Enquirer*, November 12, 1824; "Celebrations, 1825," *Richmond Enquirer*, July 22, 1825; "Volunteer Toasts,"

southerners for revolutions and nationalists in Greece, Italy, France, and other areas of Europe reveals southerners' positive view of early nationalist movements.

Southern commentators supported these movements because they believed that these aspiring nations in Europe were fighting for the same political values that southerners cherished. Despite the conservatism that dominated southern politics, southerners still retained pride in their revolutionary heritage as Americans, and revered many of the values upon which the US had been founded. Antebellum southerners, like other Americans, celebrated values that had underpinned the creation of the United States, exclaiming, for example, that the US stood as “a splendid example that a republican government is best calculated to promote the dignity and happiness of man.”¹⁸ The values that southerners praised in revolutions abroad were thus the same ones by which they defined their own American nationhood.

Among these values that southerners celebrated in European nationalist movements was the right of the people to direct their own government.¹⁹ Although such a value contradicted the limitation of rights inherent to slavery, southerners nonetheless cheered as foreign peoples sought greater national self-determination, contextualizing the revolutions in terms of the fall of the principle of the divine right of kings, rather than in

Charleston Courier, September 25, 1830; “Celebration of the Liberty of France,” *Savannah Georgian*, October 12, 1830.

¹⁸ “Oration,” *New Bern (NC) Carolina Sentinel*, July 19, 1823. See also A Friend to Mankind, “Communication,” *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, February 5, 1824; “Gen. La Fayette,” *Richmond Enquirer*, November 12, 1824; *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, March 18, 1825; Thomas R. Dew, “An Address on the Influence of the Federative System of Government upon Literature and the Development of Character,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 2.4 (March 1836): 261-262.

¹⁹ For an analysis of antebellum southern political values, including self-government, see Adam Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 1789-1861: Liberty, Tradition, and the Good Society* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005), 30-76, 189-245.

terms of extension of individual rights to individual citizens.²⁰ For example, Virginia congressman, writer, and professor George Tucker, who believed in limited democracy within the United States, nonetheless argued in his “Discourse on the Progress and Influence of Philosophy” that the fight for the rights of the people against monarchy, as in Belgium and Greece, was the key to the progress of mankind.²¹ Other southerners likewise celebrated as the people of aspiring nations began to exercise their rights, as when Samuel B. T. Caldwell’s *Leesburg Genius of Liberty* enthused that by demanding their desire for independence be heard, the Neapolitans “begin to see that they have essential rights to claim.”²² Similarly, a committee of citizens of South Carolina resolved of Greece that “the mere contemplation of a people rising to assert its rights... excites the sensibilities of every friend to liberal principles.”²³ The liberty of a proposed nation to exercise its right to independence was a considerable priority for southerners in their evaluation of nationalist movements abroad.²⁴

Because they wanted to ensure the protection of peoples’ right to nationhood, southerners also adamantly supported what they saw as battles against despotism and tyranny. Ignoring the fact that as slaveholders, they themselves were accused of tyranny, southerners celebrated threats to governments that they perceived as despotic. Southern

²⁰ *Fincastle Herald of the Valley*, May 7, 1821; “Recent Events in Europe,” *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, May 11, 1821; *Leesburg Genius of Liberty*, November 28, 1820.

²¹ Tucker, “A Discourse on the Progress,” 406. See also “The Object of Government,” *Columbus (GA) Enquirer*, December 27, 1834.

²² *Leesburg Genius of Liberty*, September 19, 1820.

²³ “Cause of the Greeks,” *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 9, 1824.

²⁴ For more examples of southerners’ support for causes that promised protection of peoples’ rights, see *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, November 26, 1823; *Richmond Virginia Argus*, February 26, 1814; “Latest from Liverpool: Greece,” *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, March 20, 1830; “At a Meeting: Oration,” *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, July 10, 1823; “Judge Story’s Centennial Address,” *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, November 27, 1828.

analyses reveal that southerners were convinced that aspiring nationalities such as Italy, Greece, Poland, and Belgium were the victims of tyrants and despots.²⁵ For example, the revolution in Naples promised to end “arbitrary and despotic government,” according to the *Charleston City Gazette*.²⁶ Likewise, New Orleans’ *Courrier de la Louisiane* exclaimed that the “heroic Greeks” made “such sacrifices to fling off the yoke of their tyrants.”²⁷ In doing so, they sought “emancipation” from “despotic thralldom.”²⁸ Ireland was an “oppressed, ravaged, and groaning country.”²⁹ The Revolution of 1830 saw “illustrious France” rising and “trampling underfoot a hoary headed tyranny,” according to French Creole Thomas Theard, editor of the New Orleans *Abeille*.³⁰ Southern hopes also abounded that Poland would be “redeemed from the iron grasp of the oppressor,” as the *Natchez Southern Clarion* reported.³¹ Furthermore, despotism had to be ended, according to H. J. Groesbeck in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, as it led to the degeneration of the mind, in contrast to free institutions, which led to intellectual and

²⁵ “One Day Later from London,” *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, May 12, 1821; *Savannah Georgian*, April 20, 1822; “Foreign Articles: Greece,” *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette*, July 15, 1823; “Ten Days Later from France and Spain,” *Richmond Enquirer*, September 2, 1823; “Foreign Intelligence,” *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette*, August 1, 1824; *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, October 15, 1824; Stephen Edward Rice, “Address of Stephen Edward Rice, Esq.,” *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, March 25, 1828; “Cause of the Greeks,” *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 10, 1824; A Native of Augusta, “For the Chronicle: The Cause of the Greeks,” *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, March 17, 1824; “Greece,” *Natchez Ariel*, December 5, 1825; *Savannah Georgian*, May 6, 1831; “Eleventh Annual Report of the Young Men’s Bible Society of Alexandria,” *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, April 25, 1832; Samuel M. Sommes, “On Oration Delivered at the Request of the Citizens of Piscalaway, Prince Georges’s County, Md.,” *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 11, 1832; Dew, “An Address on the Influence,” 261-282; “Oration,” *New Bern Carolina Sentinel*, July 19, 1823.

²⁶ *Leesburg Genius of Liberty*, September 19, 1820.

²⁷ “Greece,” *Courrier de la Louisiane*, May 27, 1822.

²⁸ “Greece,” *Alexandria Herald*, December 27, 1822.

²⁹ *Courrier de la Louisiane*, July 28, 1823.

³⁰ *Abeille*, March 28, 1831.

³¹ “Poland,” *Natchez Southern Clarion*, June 10, 1831.

moral development.³² Again and again, southern reports decried the despotism and tyranny faced by aspiring nations in Europe, lending their sympathy, and, often, aid to Europeans' quests for freedom from oppression.

Because southerners saw republicanism as the best barrier against tyranny and despotism, movements perceived to be republican warranted the most southern support. Republicanism was another American and southern value that southerners revered and searched for in movements abroad.³³ As Thomas R. Dew, a pro-slavery writer and a professor at the College of William and Mary, explained in an article in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, republicanism was critical to the full development of humanity.³⁴ Other southerners wrote about how republicanism was necessary for the protection of the peoples' rights, as well as their ability to build a functioning society.³⁵ Because of the importance of republicanism, revolutions that represented republicanism earned celebration from southerners.³⁶

³² H. J. G. [H. J. Groesbeck], "Influence of Free Governments on the Mind," *Southern Literary Messenger* 1.8 (April 1835): 389-393.

³³ Historians have established the importance of republicanism as a political value for antebellum southerners. See Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Michael Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: Wiley, 1978); J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978); Kenneth Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Robert Shalhope, *The Roots of Democracy: American Thought and Culture, 1760-1800* (Boston: Twayne, 1990).

³⁴ Dew, "An Address, on the Influence," 261-262. See also Samuel M. Sommes, "On Oration Delivered at the Request of the Citizens of Piscalaway, Prince Georges's County, Md," *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 11, 1832.

³⁵ *Fincastle Herald of the Valley*, May 7, 1821; *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, March 18, 1825; "Address," *Charleston Courier*, March 1, 1826.

³⁶ A Friend to Mankind, "Communication," *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, February 5, 1824; A Native of Augusta, "For the Chronicle: The Cause of the Greeks," *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, March 17, 1824; "Celebrations, 1825," *Richmond Enquirer*, July 22, 1825; Stephen Edward Rice, "Address of Stephen Edward Rice, Esq.," *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, March 25, 1828.

These values, believed to be shared between the United States and aspiring nations in Europe, led antebellum southerners to perceive a bond or connection between their nation and would-be European nations. Discussions of foreign nationalisms occurred frequently during celebrations of the United States, such as the Fourth of July, revealing the sense of connection between the nations.³⁷ Orators often took the occasion of celebrations of the United States to survey the advance of American principles abroad. For example, the speaker at the Fourth of July, 1830, celebration for the Young Men of Alexandria asked his listeners to contemplate the international effects of the American Revolution, tracing the “spread of liberal sentiments” in France and Greece.³⁸ The occasion of the anniversary of Washington’s birthday also led to calls for sympathy with Greece and other nations still “striving in a kindred cause.”³⁹

Americans’ own nationalist movement, the American Revolution, constituted a major aspect of this connection that southerners saw between their nation and nationalist movements abroad. Southerners argued that the Greeks, Irish, Neapolitans, and other nationalists fought for the same cause that had motivated the American Revolution. For example, a committee of South Carolinians solicited aid for the Greeks on the basis that the US had “fought and conquered for the same cause for which Greece is now

³⁷ *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, July 9, 1823; “Communicated,” *Alexandria Herald*, July 12, 1822; “Fourth of July: St. Andrew’s Parish Celebration,” *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, July 7, 1824; “Citizens’ Dinner,” *Savannah Georgian*, July 8, 1824; “4th of July in Twiggs County,” *Milledgeville Georgia Journal*, July 27, 1824; “Celebrations, 1825,” *Richmond Enquirer*, July 22, 1825; *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, September 17, 1825; “The Jubilee,” *Savannah Georgian*, July 6, 1826; “Communicated,” *Georgetown Winyaw Intelligencer*, July 11, 1827.

³⁸ “Oration: Delivered at the Request of the Young Men of Alexandria, in the 2nd Presbyterian Church, July 3d, 1830,” *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 8, 1830.

³⁹ *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, March 18, 1825. For more examples of speeches celebrating the US and drawing comparisons with aspiring nations in Europe, see also “Fourth of July,” *Richmond Enquirer*, July 3, 1821; “An Oration, Delivered at the Court-House in Little Rock, A. T. on the 4th of July, 1825, By Robert C. Oden, Esq.,” *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette*, July 12, 1825; “Ireland and Liberty,” *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, October 5, 1825.

contending. We therefore can triumph in [Greece's] victories and commiserate her reverses."⁴⁰ Ireland, according to the bilingual New Orleans paper *Courrier de la Louisiane*, was "fettered and bending under the heavy iron rod of England," and was thus in "the same predicament" as the American colonies before their revolution.⁴¹ George Tucker wrote that the same principles of free government had motivated the American Revolution and both French Revolutions, as well as Belgium and Greece's recent bids for independence.⁴² The leader of the American Revolution, George Washington, featured prominently in these comparisons, as southerners declared Lafayette the new Washington for his role in the French Revolution of 1830, and wished for Washingtons for revolutions elsewhere.⁴³

By casting the American Revolution, and the US, as the model of the values playing out in revolutions abroad, Americans, and southerners, shaped their perception of their own nation by enhancing their sense of the strength and importance of their nation and its values.⁴⁴ Southern analysts took pride in their belief that the United States had provided the model of the values that had inspired aspiring nations abroad. For example,

⁴⁰ "Cause of the Greeks," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 9, 1824.

⁴¹ *Courrier de la Louisiane*, July 28, 1823.

⁴² Tucker, "A Discourse on the Progress," 406.

⁴³ "General Lafayette," *Savannah Georgian*, October 5, 1830; *Abeille*, March 28, 1831; *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 7, 1825. For more examples of southern comparisons of nationalist causes, see "Influence of Literature," *Charleston City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, April 26, 1823; "Gen. La Fayette," *Richmond Enquirer*, November 12, 1824; "Celebrations, 1825," *Richmond Enquirer*, July 22, 1825; "The Rebels," *Natchez Ariel*, June 30, 1826; Stephen Edward Rice, "Address of Stephen Edward Rice, Esq.," *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, March 25, 1828; "Volunteer Toasts," *Charleston Courier*, September 25, 1830; "The Late Revolutions," *Natchez Gazette*, December 1, 1830.

⁴⁴ Pappas has identified this strain of thought in the Greek independence movement, with both Americans and Greeks claiming a connection. Pappas, *The United States and the Greek War for Independence*. Although speaking of the revolutions of 1848, other historians have also analyzed this strain of thought in American reactions to nationalist activity in Europe. See Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*; Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*; Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*.

the *Natchez Ariel* claimed the model of the American nation as a foe of tyranny, and stated with pride that “kings and oppressors look at the American Republic, as the evil genius that is to one day pull down their power, and level them with their subjects.”⁴⁵ Accordingly, commentators celebrated that the United States and its principles had been responsible for inspiring nationalists and spawning revolutions in France, Ireland, Greece, and elsewhere.⁴⁶ These comparisons shaped understanding of which values allowed the US to be such an example. As Stephen Edward Rice explained, as “the atmosphere of the world [became] contagious with America’s example,” republicanism became “epidemic,” and “despots are in arms against despots.”⁴⁷ Such formulations pointed out American strengths through praising the appearance of American values elsewhere. Looking abroad allowed antebellum southerners to reflect inward upon the positive values and example of their own nation, refining their beliefs about the meaning of their nation.

As they analyzed revolutions abroad, southerners, as did most of their fellow Americans, eventually concluded that, despite the admirable example of the US, aspiring nations abroad failed to achieve the standards of the American nation, and that the United

⁴⁵ “General Jackson and the British,” *Natchez Ariel*, March 10, 1826.

⁴⁶ “Oration,” *New Bern Carolina Sentinel*, July 19, 1823; “An Oration, Delivered at the Court-House in Little Rock, A. T. on the 4th of July, 1825, By Robert C. Oden, Esq,” *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette*, July 12, 1825; “St. Patrick’s Day,” *Savannah Georgian*, March 18, 1826; *Charleston Courier*, May 11, 1826; “Oration,” *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, February 26, 1827.

⁴⁷ Stephen Edward Rice, “Address of Stephen Edward Rice, Esq,” *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, March 25, 1828. For more examples of southern analysis of American values embodied in nationalist movements abroad, see “Declaration of Independence,” *Norfolk Gazette and Public Ledger*, June 27, 1816; “Fourth of July,” *Richmond Enquirer*, July 3, 1816; “Fourth of July,” *Richmond Enquirer*, July 3, 1821; “St. Patrick’s Day,” *Savannah Georgian*, March 19, 1822; “The Greeks,” *Alexandria Herald*, November 29, 1822; “A Discourse,” *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, August 6, 1823; *Savannah Georgian*, July 2, 1825; “An Oration,” *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, July 27, 1827; “Judge Story’s Centennial Address,” *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, November 27, 1828; “Volunteer Toasts,” *Charleston Courier*, September 25, 1830; “Celebration of the Liberty of France,” *Savannah Georgian*, October 12, 1830.

States still represented a superior form of nationhood.⁴⁸ In a speech celebrating St. Patrick's Day, Stephen Edward Rice claimed that the US "surpassed Europe, and marched to the enjoyment of equal rights" without the "painful delays" and "vicissitudes" that plagued other aspiring republics.⁴⁹ Similarly, William A. McRea, despite praising Greece and other nationalist movements, informed his Alexandria, VA audience that "[the United States] is the only free and happy government in the world," as "we are blessed with institutions purely republican; and live under the genial ray of a constitution, which declares, in the spirit of freedom, all men to be equal."⁵⁰ Hugh S. Legare, South Carolina politician and journalist, likewise celebrated the superior functionality of the American government compared to the bloodshed in Poland and France.⁵¹ Such comparisons bolstered Americans', and southerners', sense of what made their nation different and therefore what defined their nation.

Southern analysis of early nationalist movements in Europe not only engendered southern support for these movements, but also caused southerners to reflect more deeply upon the values of their own nation. Comparing and contrasting movements abroad with the United States refined southerners' sense of which values led them to support nationalist activity in Europe, as well as which values underpinned their own nation.

⁴⁸ Roberts in particular makes this argument about the revolutions of 1848. Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*.

⁴⁹ "At a Meeting: Oration," *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, July 10, 1823.

⁵⁰ "Oration, Pronounced by William A. McRea, Esq.," *Alexandria Gazette and Advertiser*, February 28, 1824.

⁵¹ "Celebration," *Charleston Courier*, July 9, 1831. For more examples of southern analysis of the strengths and superiority of the United States, see *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, March 1, 1826; "Address," *Charleston Courier*, January 9, 1827; "An Oration," *Augusta Chronicle and Georgia Advertiser*, July 25, 1827; "An Oration," *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, July 27, 1827; "Mr. Curtiss' Oration," *Milledgeville Georgia Journal*, July 14, 1828; "Communication," *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, January 21, 1830; *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, February 22, 1830; Samuel M. Sommes, "An Oration Delivered at the Request of the Citizens of Piscalaway, Prince Georges's County, Md.," *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 11, 1832; Dew, "An Address, on the Influence," 261-282.

Although southerners in the early antebellum period still conceived of themselves as Americans, the sense of international connectedness that southerners developed in the 1820s and 1830s would play a critical role in later antebellum southerners' ability to conceive of the South as an independent nation. After secession, this international vision of nationhood would also enable Confederates to justify their nation on the basis of its supposed place in the international family of nations. Without an earlier understanding of nationalisms as connected, and without the practice of using foreign nationalisms to understand one's own nation, the international contextualization of the Confederacy would have been meaningless.

Although nationalist activity in Europe began to diminish after the wave of revolutions inspired by France's July Revolution of 1830, southern attention to events abroad did not end, and European nationalist movements were only temporarily inactive. In the spring of 1848, revolutions broke out across Europe as French, Hungarians, Germans, Italians, and other peoples sought to overthrow monarchies and empires and replace them with more liberal, republican governments. Within a couple of years these revolutions were defeated and the old order largely restored, but despite their defeat, the revolutions of 1848 had a significant influence on the people who lived through them, as well as on the people who watched them from abroad.

Americans were among the many people who followed the revolutions of 1848 closely. Because of their faith in the importance of United States as a model nation, Americans from all regions eagerly watched to see if their model of nationhood would be implemented overseas.⁵² Further, although Civil War was far from inevitable, the United

⁵² Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*; Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*; Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*.

States in 1848 was already on its own path toward nationalist conflict due to the divisive issue of slavery, and the issues that would eventually lead to war already divided the nation between North and South. While still retaining their American loyalties and identities, Americans, including elite southerners, were very aware of the issues threatening their own nation at the very same time they watched Europeans attempt to create new governments and nations in 1848. The lessons that southerners learned about the meaning of nationalism through their discussion of the events of 1848 would shape the form that their southern nationalism would take a little over a decade later.

The widespread unrest, conflict, and revolutions of 1848 certainly provided plentiful nationalism-related news for southerners to digest. Discontent had been growing across the continent as Enlightenment ideas of self-government conflicted with the post-Congress of Vienna Europe that saw control of the continent returned to a handful of monarchs. The French Revolution of 1789, although over a half-century distant, provided European nationalists with a model of a revolution based on Enlightenment ideals, helping disseminate these ideas through the educated classes.⁵³ The spread of liberalism and the ideal of republicanism drove a desire for greater political representation and inspired people to fight for equality and freedom. The rise of nationalism, which elevated the idea of the nation and sought the establishment of independent nation-states in the place of large, multinational empires, further inspired the mid-century revolutions. Meanwhile, increasingly difficult economic situations primed workers and peasants for revolution. When the philosophical ideas met with real-world

⁵³ Other revolutions such as the American Revolution and the Greek Revolution also provided precedents.

issues such as economic crisis or revolutions in neighboring countries, peasants and elites alike began to fight for new forms of government, leading to revolution.⁵⁴

The first widely-publicized revolution occurred in France in February of 1848, when revolutionaries pushed for and gained the establishment of a republic, forcing Louis-Philippe to abdicate. After the declaration of the Republic of France, revolution swept the continent. Revolts and mass demonstrations in the Italian peninsula and the German states forced monarchs, dukes, and other rulers to grant constitutions. Austrian leader Metternich fled the empire as a result of mass insurrections in March 1848, and Hungarians attempted to set up an independent government under Louis Kossuth. Peasants, workers, and women all joined the cry for reform and fought for equality, and uprisings and demonstrations spread throughout Europe. The thread tying together these revolutions was a common desire for more liberal, representative governments, preferably republics, or at least constitutional monarchies, that gave more power to the people.⁵⁵

Despite widespread support for these movements, however, they were ultimately unsuccessful. The French Republic was dissolved after Louis-Napoleon staged a coup in late 1851. The Italian Kingdom of Sardinia, which had united Italian nationalists to fight against Austria, failed to win its war against the Austrian empire, and the short-lived Roman Republic fell to the combined forces of the Pope and of Louis-Napoleon's French army. The Hungarian independence movement was defeated by combined Austrian and Russian forces in summer of 1849 after almost a year of fighting. Although the

⁵⁴ Sperber, *The European Revolutions*; Dieter Dowe et al, eds, *Europe in 1848: Revolution and Reform* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001).

⁵⁵ Sperber, *The European Revolutions*; Dowe et al, *Europe in 1848*.

revolutions gave early indications of success, by 1850, most of them had been defeated and monarchies were restored. The possibility of revolutionary change in Europe had been postponed.⁵⁶ The defeat of the movements could not erase the impact that they had on the international conversation about nations and nationalism, however. The revolutions of 1848, despite defeat, significantly influenced the thoughts and beliefs, not only of the revolutionaries who participated in them, but also of citizens around the world, including in the southern United States, where southerners would soon enact their own experiment in nationalism.

Southerners looking abroad had a variety of reactions as they debated the meaning of the revolutions of 1848. As they had during the earlier revolutions of the 1820s and 1830s, southern analysts largely supported the revolutions of 1848, praising nationalists in Europe for their efforts to establish republics and fight off tyranny. Elite southerners in the late antebellum era, however, faced with the growth of abolitionism at home and abroad and fearful for the preservation of slavery, grew increasingly wary of the full implications of liberal nationalism.⁵⁷ They still supported republicanism, and still opposed tyranny; however, liberty, freedom, and equality became threatening ideas for an elite determined to maintain a hierarchical power structure. These fears were made apparent in southern criticism that the revolutions of 1848 were threatening the social and political order that was necessary for stability. The southern debate and discussion over the meaning of the revolutions of 1848 would guide the development of southerners'

⁵⁶ Sperber, *The European Revolutions*; H. Pogge von Strandmann, *The Revolutions in Europe, 1848-1849: From Reform to Reaction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Dowe, et. al, *Europe in 1848*.

⁵⁷ For analysis of growing southern fears of abolitionism, see Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil*; Sinha, *Counterrevolution of Slavery*, 9-32.

beliefs about nations and nationalism, as southerners sought a way to reconcile their conservatism with their support for certain aspects of liberal nationalism.

Despite their fears of unchecked revolution, the majority of southerners commenting on the revolutions of 1848 found much to praise in the events abroad.⁵⁸ Turning again to their own values to make sense out of the foreign nationalist movements, one of the ideals that southerners supported in the revolutions of 1848 was national self-determination.⁵⁹ The will of the people to determine and administer their own government was a major ideal that southerners sought in revolutions abroad, and southerners consistently praised revolutions that fought for what southern analysts believed to be national self-determination. For example, the pro-Whig *Texian Advocate* of Victoria, TX, asked “will Europe again relapse into a system of despotic governments, or will the people of France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, &c., show to the world that they are capable of self-government,” adding that “these we consider great and important questions.”⁶⁰ Hungarians earned accolades from a writer in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for “contending manfully for representation” and “a substantial share in the government.”⁶¹ South Carolina doctor J. F. G. Mittag, who had toured Europe in the early 1840s, wrote to the *Charleston Courier* to praise European nationalists who

⁵⁸ Although focusing largely on the North, historians looking at American reactions to the revolutions of 1848 have identified a positive reaction among southerners, despite some conservative criticism. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*; Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*; Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese identified southern reactions to foreign revolutions as characterized by both enthusiasm and trepidation. Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 41-68.

⁵⁹ Fleche analyzes the importance of self-determination to southerners', particularly Confederates', interpretation of the revolutions of 1848. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*.

⁶⁰ “Important Foreign News,” *Victoria Texian Advocate*, November 9, 1848.

⁶¹ “Hungary,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 17.7 (August 1851): 505-516.

“seem determined, at the peril of every thing, to resume the power” that monarchs had taken from them.⁶² This self-rule sought in Europe was so important to southerners because they believed it was nothing less than the same principle that had led to the greatness of the United States.⁶³ As they analyzed aspiring nations’ right to self-determination, some southern commentators pointed to history, ethnicity, or culture as the basis for the right to independent nationhood.⁶⁴ For example, Maximilian Schele de Vere, professor of Anglo-Saxon studies at the University of Virginia, referenced the long-oppressed pasts of Italy, Poland, and Ireland as justification for their current desire for independent nationhood.⁶⁵ Even as antebellum southerners intensified their conservative desire for limited democracy at home, and expressed fears of individuals’ rights to participate in the political process, they praised self-determination on the national level as enacted in the revolutions of 1848.⁶⁶

One of the reasons why southerners supported bids for self-determination was that the aspiring European nations sought to throw off what European nationalists and southerners alike agreed were tyrannical regimes. The harms of tyranny, as with the benefits of self-government, remained a southern concern throughout the antebellum period. Italian states were still fighting in 1848 for independence from the Austrian

⁶² J. F. G. Mittag, “Semper Ego Auditor Taritum?” *Charleston Courier*, March 21, 1849. See also “European Affairs,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, May 16, 1848.

⁶³ “The Fourth of July,” *Charleston Courier*, July 4, 1848.

⁶⁴ Maximilian Schele de Vere, “Glimpses at Europe in 1848, Part III: The Lombardo-Veneto Kingdom,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 15.4 (April 1849): 193-208. See also “Address of the Irish Confederation,” *Clarksville (TX) Northern Standard*, May 6, 1848.

⁶⁵ “Ireland, Poland, Italy: The Suspended Nationalities,” *Clarksville Northern Standard*, July 29, 1848; Schele de Vere, “Glimpses at Europe in 1848, Part III,” 193-208.

⁶⁶ For analysis of the importance of anti-democratic thought in the antebellum South, see Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*.

empire and for the unification of the Italian states, and southerners considered the Pope, various monarchs, France, and above all Austria to be tyrants oppressing the Italian people.⁶⁷ For example, southern writers depicted Austria, the most commonly-identified oppressor of Italy, as a brutal despot, contrasting the “tyranny loving Austrians” with the “pleasure loving” Italians and claiming that the Italian people were “kept down by the iron despotism of Austria.”⁶⁸ Hungary, like Italy, fought for freedom from the Austrian Empire, earning it southern support similar to that given to Italy.⁶⁹ Hungarian nationalists, southerners analyzed, sought only to replace tyranny with a true republican government, and subsequently the crushing of the Hungarian revolution caused deep regret among southerners.⁷⁰ Still ignoring the fact that as slaveholders, they themselves were accused of tyranny, southern analysts strongly praised revolutions that sought to overthrow despotism.

⁶⁷ Schele De Vere, “Glimpses at Europe in 1848, Part III,” 194; *Charleston Mercury*, April 1, 1848; “The French Republic,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 14.27 (July 1848): 207.

⁶⁸ Robert Woodward Brownwell, “Leaves from Italy and Tyrol,” travel diary, 1854, Robert Woodward Brownwell Papers, Manuscript Division, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Truth-Teller, “Washington Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 16, 1848. See also “Italy,” *Charleston Southern Patriot*, February 7, 1848; “Austria and Sardinia,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 19, 1849; “Two Unquiet Regions,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 27, 1849; “Consistency,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 18, 1850; “More of Southern Italy,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 30, 1851. For southern criticism of Pope Pius IX and France as tyrants of Italy, see Schele De Vere, “Glimpses at Europe, Part III,” 194. See also W. H. R., “Rome: Papal and Republican,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 15.9 (October 1849): 547-551; “More of Southern Italy,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 30, 1851; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 28, 1849.

⁶⁹ George W. Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 26, 1849; “Kossuth and the English,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 4, 1851; “A Series of Casualties,” *Savannah Daily Republican*, May 26, 1849; “Hungary,” *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, June 16, 1849; “The Foreign News,” *Columbus Enquirer*, October 23, 1849; “Austria and Hungary,” *Savannah Daily Republican*, June 8, 1849; “The Hungarian Struggle,” *Columbus Enquirer*, July 17, 1849.

⁷⁰ “Hungarian Republic,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, July 17, 1849; “Fate of Hungary!” *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, September 15, 1849; R., “New York Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 17, 1849.

As it had during the nationalist events during the 1820s and 1830s, republicanism would again provide one of the standards by which southerners would judge the events in Europe in 1848. Southern commentators explicitly referred to republicanism in analyzing the revolutions; in fact, the most common language used to describe the revolutions referred directly to republicanism, praising anything republican and criticizing monarchy, tyranny, despotism, or anything else that stood in the way of the establishment of republics. For example, the *Augusta (GA) Daily Chronicle and Sentinel* hoped that French republicans would succeed in establishing a republican government that would win “the respect of all nations.”⁷¹ After the defeat of the nationalist movement in Venice, the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* lamented the fall of Venice with a sorrow they believed was unique to “him who worships freedom with the devotion that only a republican can offer.”⁷² Reports on the revolutions described the fervent desire of the world for European nations to achieve a republican form of government.⁷³

Southerners were not just interested in republicanism on an abstract level, however. As they debated the revolutions of 1848, southern analysts used their evaluation of whether or not a revolution fit their standards of republicanism to determine their support for that revolution. Indeed, the level of republican virtue shown by a nation or movement determined its place in southern ranking of movements, with reporters claiming, for example, that Hungary’s republican efforts made the Hungarian revolution

⁷¹ “French Revolution,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, March 23, 1848.

⁷² “The Fall of Venice,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 14, 1849.

⁷³ “Civil Liberty in Italy: Demonstration of American Sympathy with Pope Pius IX, in His Efforts,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 11, 1847; “Italy,” *Charleston Southern Patriot*, February 7, 1848; “French News,” *Columbus Enquirer*, March 28, 1848; “Ireland, Poland, Italy: The Suspended Nationalities,” *Clarksville Northern Standard*, July 29, 1848; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 3, 1848; “Ten Regiment Bill - Debate in the Senate,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, January 18, 1848; “French News,” *Columbus Enquirer*, March 28, 1848.

the most important conflict in Europe.⁷⁴ In contrast, lack of republican virtue was sufficient to earn a revolution condemnation. For example, southerners tolerated Sardinian king Charles Albert's leadership of the Italian independence movement as a necessary evil until he failed to secure a united, independent Italy, at which point they accused him, and the Risorgimento, of being insufficiently republican from the beginning.⁷⁵ Republicanism was therefore the clearest value by which foreign events could be evaluated.⁷⁶ According to this value, southerners deemed the majority of the revolutions of 1848 republican, at least in intent and in conception, and therefore worthy of southern support.⁷⁷

As they analyzed the meaning of the revolutions of 1848, southerners connected their nationalism to nationalisms abroad by comparing the revolutions of 1848 to the American Revolution. Southerners saw the American Revolution as a model for the revolutions of 1848, as they had for earlier revolutions.⁷⁸ Newspapers praised nationalist

⁷⁴ "Hungary," *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, June 16, 1849; "Editorial Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 4, 1852.

⁷⁵ Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 30, 1849; "From New York," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, May 1, 1849.

⁷⁶ Kendall, *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 6, 1849; "A Contrast," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 10, 1850.

⁷⁷ For southern analysis that deemed the revolutions republican in nature, see *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 28, 1849; "Foreign News," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, April 3, 1848; "French Revolution," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, March 23, 1848; "Hungary," *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, June 16, 1849; "Democratic Mass Meeting," *Clarksville Northern Standard*, July 29, 1848; "The Giant of the West," *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, May 11, 1850; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 26, 1849; "Consolidation of Republicanism in Europe," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 16, 1849; "From New-York," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, April 18, 1848; *Houston Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register*, June 1, 1848.

⁷⁸ Gemme argues that the myth of the US as a model for Italy helped shape American identity, although she speaks primarily of northerners. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles*. In his analysis of American reactions to the revolutions of 1848, Roberts states that southerners, like other Americans, initially supported the revolutions as echoes of their own American Revolution. Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*.

movements for echoing the American Revolution, as the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* did by claiming that the revolutions abroad were “the revolution of ’76 extending itself across the seas.”⁷⁹ Southerners read about how the spirit of the leaders of the American Revolution, such as Washington, was motivating the European revolutions.⁸⁰ The documents of the American Revolution, not just the Revolution itself, corroborated this comparison, as southerners read that the founding documents of new governments of Germany, France, and Italy were based on the constitution of the United States.⁸¹ Additionally, newspapers such as Tallahassee, Florida’s Democratic weekly, the *Floridian and Journal*, urged their readers to sympathy for European revolutions by arguing that these revolutions were the same as the American Revolution.⁸² This belief in the American Revolution as the model for the revolutions of 1848 seemed confirmed when southerners read reports from abroad that held up the American Revolution as the desired model for European revolutions.⁸³

Southerners clarified the basis for the connection between the American Revolution and the revolutions of 1848 by revealing that they supported certain values exhibited by revolutions abroad because these were the same values that the American

⁷⁹ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 3, 1848. See also Sylvias, “From Washington,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, April 11, 1848; J. F. G. Mittag, “Semper Ego Auditor Taritum?” *Charleston Courier*, March 21, 1849; “Italy,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 10, 1848; “A Powerful Appeal,” *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, April 6, 1850; “Hon. W. R. Smith and Sargent’s Speaker,” *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, May 6, 1852.

⁸⁰ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 3, 1848; *Savannah Daily Republican*, September 15, 1851.

⁸¹ “Germanic Confederation,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, May 18, 1848. See also “American Progress,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 20, 1849. For a scholarly analysis of the international influence of the American Declaration of Independence, see Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence*.

⁸² “Hungary,” *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, June 16, 1849.

⁸³ *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, May 1, 1848.

Revolution had established in their own nation.⁸⁴ For example, one Floridian celebrated the Fourth of July in 1849 by informing his fellow southerners that the struggles in Europe were advancing the same ideals that the United States represented.⁸⁵ Newspapers reported on American demonstrations of support for the European revolutions, revealing that these demonstrations occurred because the revolutions represented the same values of freedom that America did.⁸⁶ Similarly, journalist George Kendall, who had been a war correspondent in the Mexican-American War before moving to France and becoming the *New Orleans Daily Picayune's* foreign correspondent, expressed pride at the pro-American spirit that the revolutions had engendered in Europe, writing that he believed that nationalists in Europe were trying to achieve the same freedoms and ideals instituted in the United States.⁸⁷ Southerners connected the ideals of the American nation with the ideals of the revolutions of 1848, using these comparisons to show their support for the events in Europe and, in doing so, internationalizing their thinking about their own nation.

Although a majority of southern analyses of the revolutions of 1848 revealed support for the nationalist movements abroad, southerners still had reservations about these revolutions. Southern commentators, while largely supportive of the revolutions abroad, nonetheless debated the meaning of these movements, and southern evaluation of

⁸⁴ Fleche argues that southerners and northerners alike interpreted 1848 through the legacy of the American Revolution. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*.

⁸⁵ "Address," *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, July 21, 1849. See also "The Fourth of July," *Charleston Courier*, July 4, 1848; "Ten Regiment Bill - Debate in the Senate," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, January 18, 1848.

⁸⁶ "Civil Liberty in Italy: Demonstration of American Sympathy with Pope Pius IX, in His Efforts," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 11, 1847; *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, March 28, 1848.

⁸⁷ Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 4, 1848.

the revolutions of 1848 was far from straightforward. Positive assessments of the revolutions were often tempered with criticism, as southerners analyzed flaws and weaknesses in the nationalist movements they observed, and as they rejected the fullest implications of liberal ideals as threatening to their slave-based conservatism. Instead of embracing the full extent of values such as freedom and equality, southern conservatives sought to promote such ideals as limited democracy and a hierarchical social order. They argued that governmental power should be seated in local rather than national government, advancing a vision of states' rights. Much of this perspective derived from the desire to protect and extend the institution of slavery, which obviously made ideals such as equality suspect. As they watched the revolutions of 1848, then, antebellum southerners were confronted with the contradiction between the liberal ideals of their American heritage, and their conservatism and defense of slavery.⁸⁸

Guided by their conservatism, southern analysts found plenty of issues to critique in the revolutions of 1848. Much of this criticism echoed southerners' concern with republicanism, as southerners debated whether or not foreign nationalists would be able to live up to the republican promise of their movements. Even as southern commentators recognized what they saw as the original republican intent behind the revolutions, they feared that the revolutions were failing to live up to their republican inspiration. Many

⁸⁸ While speaking predominantly of Confederates, Fleche argues that southerners, despite sharing northerners' positive reaction to 1848, rejected the radical implications of labor activism in favor of self-determination. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*. Roberts states that southerners largely followed the overall American trend of reacting to 1848 positively, at least initially, although their fear of change to the existing order did make them more wary. Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*. Such analyses provide a background for my argument that such reactions to revolutions abroad shaped southern nationalism. Several historians have also revealed the importance of conservatism to antebellum southern thought. Stephanie McCurry argues that southern pro-slavery beliefs shaped southern politics, and was in defiance of the spirit of the age. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*. Manisha Sinha similarly argues that pro-slavery South Carolinians directed the development of antebellum southern politics, including the development of an anti-democratic impulse. Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*.

southern analyses reveal apprehension about whether or not the people of Europe were fit for the republican governments they sought to establish. George W. Kendall, who had co-founded the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* and served as its foreign correspondent from his home in Paris between 1849 and the mid 1850s, was particularly vocal in revealing his wariness about Europeans' ability to properly direct their nationalist movements. In fact, Kendall's lack of faith in foreign revolutionaries helped to shape his generally skeptical tone towards the revolutions of 1848.⁸⁹ No less a figure than John C. Calhoun also subscribed to concerns about Europeans' abilities to implement republican ideals. Calhoun believed that revolutionary action in Europe would lead to anarchy, due to his opinion that Europeans were ill-prepared to sustain a republic. He admitted, however, that if he were wrong and the revolutions succeeded, then freedom, liberty, and republicanism would replace monarchy throughout Europe.⁹⁰ This apprehension about the fitness of the European people for a republican government could have possibly been a veiled expression of unease with extending rights and equality to larger numbers of people, certainly a concern for conservative southerners invested in preserving a

⁸⁹ Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 6, 1848; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 19, 1849; Kendall, *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 6, 1849.

⁹⁰ Charles M. Wiltse identified this strain of thought in Calhoun's writings in his article "A Critical Southerner: John C. Calhoun on the Revolutions of 1848," *Journal of Southern History* 15.3 (August 1949): 299-310. For more examples of southerners' concern about Europeans' ability to implement republican regimes, see "The State and Prospects of Europe," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 31, 1848; "Important Foreign News," *Victoria Texian Advocate*, November 9, 1848; "Foreign Correspondence of the Journal," *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, October 24, 1851; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 12, 1848. While criticism of the people was most common, some southerners did criticize the revolutions for insufficient republicanism, but even then, the association suggests that southerners considered republicanism to be the default form of revolution. See "The French Republic," 197-241; "The French in Italy," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 6, 1849; "From New York," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, May 1, 1849; Kendall, *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 6, 1849; "Foreign Summary," *Victoria Texian Advocate*, October 26, 1848.

hierarchical social structure.⁹¹ If this was the case, however, southern periodicals do not emphasize the connection. Instead, analysts reveal fears that the inadequacy of the European people would prevent the implementation of republicanism. Southerners may have thought that the revolutions were republican in conception and intent, but for many southerners, that intent meant little if the people were incapable of implementing it.

If inadequacy was one concern with the revolutions, extremism was an even greater threat in southern minds. Elite southerners' desire for hierarchical power led many southern analysts to interpret the revolutions of 1848 as threats to political stability, rather than as welcomed extensions of rights and liberty.⁹² Even as they embraced some aspects of the revolutions, southerners debated whether or not extremism meant that the revolutions were more dangerous than potentially beneficial. While they supported what they saw as republican revolutions, many southerners grew uncomfortable with revolutions that became too radical, either in action or in philosophy.

Violence was one path to extremism and radicalism in southern minds. Southern commentators reported negatively on bloodshed, using the tally of deaths or the spilling of blood to disparage the revolutions.⁹³ As the enactors of such violence, mobs, in particular, represented revolutionary excess to southern analysts. Mobs were obviously threatening due to their tendency toward violence. Just as critically, mobs represented

⁹¹ Wiltse does not make this connection, but he does discuss Calhoun's intellectual and political opposition to the idea of equality. Wiltse, "A Critical Southerner," 299-310. For discussions of southerners' fear of unchecked democracy, see Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery* and McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*.

⁹² For analysis of antebellum southern conservatism, particularly as developing out of the defense of slavery, see Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*, and McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*.

⁹³ "Charleston Southern Patriot, June 12, 1848; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 6, 1848; "The European Intelligence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 10, 1848; *Alexandria Gazette*, July 14, 1848.

unchecked and dangerous power being wielded by people supposedly incapable of exercising democracy or participating in a republic. Such excess power given to supposedly unqualified people was particularly threatening for conservative, anti-democratic southerners.⁹⁴ To southerners, revolutions that were led by mobs were too violent and too egalitarian, and were to be considered radical and dangerous, and therefore had no place in the proper process of nation-building.

Extremism and radicalism of ideology was even more concerning to southern commentators than was radicalism of action, as it threatened not only the enactment of the revolutions, but also the intent behind them. The Red Republican Party, a French political party that sought, among other goals, redistribution of property, stood as the clearest example of the revolutions' embrace of dangerously liberal ideology to conservative southerners. Elite southerners were too invested in the slave system and in a hierarchical power structure that benefitted white slaveholders to favor any ideas that promoted equality by granting more power to those at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Driven by their desire to maintain strict hierarchy, southerners levied harsh criticism against French red republicans for supposedly driving moderates away from republicanism.⁹⁵ Further illustrating their concern with the extremism they associated with the red republicans, southerners used the term red republican to refer not only to the

⁹⁴ Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 6, 1848; "Affairs in France," *Alexandria Gazette*, June 2, 1848; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 14, 1848; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 6, 1849; "Paris in a State of Siege," *Richmond Enquirer*, July 21, 1848; "The European Intelligence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 10, 1848; "Important Foreign Intelligence," *Victoria Texian Advocate*, October 26, 1848; "Letters from a New Contributor," *Southern Literary Messenger* 14.11 (November 1848): 657-663.

⁹⁵ "France," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 28, 1848; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 11, 1849; "Hungarian Republic," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, July 17, 1849; William W. Mann, "Paris Correspondence," *Southern Literary Messenger* 16.4 (April 1850): 240-249; "Condition of Europe," *Alexandria Gazette*, September 12, 1849.

political party in France, but also to any events, ideas, and leaders that they saw as radical or excessively liberal. Accordingly, southerners often linked red republicans negatively to socialists, anarchists, and other political groups that they also believed were too radical and liberal and, therefore, were threatening to southerners' own vision of society, or were antithetical to revolutionary success. For example, William W. Mann, Paris correspondent for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, joined several ideologies together in describing what he called the "socialist, terrorist, red Republican Party" to his readership.⁹⁶ Kendall, who viewed the revolutions abroad with a mixture of hope and contempt, similarly argued that socialism, like red republicanism, destroyed the republican roots of the revolutions and redistributed power in dangerous ways.⁹⁷ Conservative fears of the fullest implications of equality led southern analysts to view red republicans and related revolutionaries with great wariness. Such fear of extremism in the revolutions abroad clarified southerners' belief that radicalism violated the proper method of seeking nationhood.

Underlying southerners' fear of extremism was their conservative desire for social order. If republicanism was the standard by which positive aspects of revolutions were analyzed, social order provided the standard for measuring extremism of nationalist movements abroad. Such a valuation of social order, as with self-determination and republicanism, derived from southerners' beliefs about their own nation. Social order was necessary to preserve a hierarchical, slave-based society. Further, southerners

⁹⁶ William W. Mann, "Paris Correspondence," *Southern Literary Messenger* 15.5 (May 1849): 267-272. See also "France," *Alexandria Gazette*, November 28, 1848; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 11, 1849; "The Latest Continental News by Mail," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, May 11, 1849; "Affairs of Europe," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, June 4, 1850; "France," *Charleston Courier*, October 24, 1848.

⁹⁷ Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 24, 1850.

believed that social order was among the American founding values that the US modeled for nations abroad.⁹⁸ Accordingly, “quality of order,” which derived from “conservative tendencies,” was the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*’s standard of good governments, one which some southerners believed the revolutions of 1848 lacked.⁹⁹ Concern about mobs derived, in part, from this desire for social order, as southerners feared that revolutions that fell prey to mob violence would destroy all order.¹⁰⁰ Kendall was a common advocate of social order, fearing as he did that potential anarchy and mobs would be harmful to order.¹⁰¹ His editors, even while gently chiding him for his pessimism with regards to the revolutions in Europe, supported his positive view of social order, praising his belief in the “philanthropic and beneficent influences which rational liberty exerts in restraining evil passions [and] inculcating a love of order.”¹⁰² As Kendall and his editors reveal, southern analysts did not reach consensus on whether or not the harms of the revolutions outweighed their promise. Most commentators, however, agreed that social

⁹⁸ “The Fourth of July,” *Charleston Courier*, July 4, 1849; John C. Calhoun, “The Danger and Safety of the Republic,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 14.27 (July 1848): 150-169. For analysis of the importance of social order to southern values, see Bonner, *Mastering America*, 286-289; Eugene Genovese, *The Slaveholders’ Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820-1860* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 10-12; Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals*, 30-76, 136-151.

⁹⁹ “Revolutions: Progress and Effects of Republican Opinions,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 28, 1848. See also “Hungarian Republic,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, July 17, 1849; “Austria and Hungary,” *Alexandria Gazette*, May 30, 1849; J. F. G. Mittag, “Semper Ego Auditor Taritum?” *Charleston Courier*, March 21, 1849.

¹⁰⁰ Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 6, 1848; *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, March 28, 1848; “Affairs in France,” *Alexandria Gazette*, June 2, 1848; “European Affairs,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, May 16, 1848; A. C. B., “Editorial Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 17, 1850; Mann, “Paris Correspondence,” April 1850, 240-249.

¹⁰¹ Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 6, 1848; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 14, 1848; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 19, 1848.

¹⁰² “Mr. Kendall’s Letters Again,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 6, 1848. See also “The Fourth of July,” *Charleston Courier*, July 4, 1848.

order was an important standard by which they could judge the revolutions. As they debated the meaning of the revolutions of 1848, southerners turned to the conservative principle of order to make sense out of the revolutions, solidifying southerners' belief that order was necessary for a nation.

Throughout southern analysis of the revolutions of 1848, praise and criticism co-existed uneasily. As they debated the merits, values, and events of foreign nationalist movements, southern commentators largely agreed that republicanism, self-determination, and social order were values that nations should seek, and that extremism of both ideology and action should be avoided. As southerners sought to understand the revolutions abroad, they thus clarified their vision of what a nation, and a nationalist movement, should and should not be.

While southern analysis of revolutions abroad led to fairly widespread agreement about the desired values a nation should exhibit, southerners never fully agreed as to whether or not the dangers of extremism outweighed the potential for good in the revolutions. The debate over this question, and the subsequent mixing of praise and criticism in southern analysis of the revolutions of 1848, produced remarkably nuanced interpretations of foreign nationalist movements. As they debated the revolutions abroad, southern judgment varied from revolution to revolution. For example, the Hungarian Revolution earned praise for lacking the red republicans and socialists that had plagued France's revolutionary efforts, as well as for its desire for rational liberty and order.¹⁰³ Kendall, the eternal skeptic, likewise distinguished between the many nationalist efforts in the Italian peninsula, criticizing what he saw as the ineffectual Italian monarch Charles

¹⁰³ "Hungarian Republic," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, July 17, 1849; "Austria and Hungary," *Alexandria Gazette*, May 30, 1849.

Albert, the squabbling Italian people, and the tyrannical King of Naples, even while praising the short-lived Venetian republic for holding to the positive standards of the revolutions.¹⁰⁴

Southerners exhibited this nuance not only in their comparisons between revolutions, but also in their analysis of various elements within the same revolution, further complicating their final determinations about the positive or negative meaning of the revolutions. Southern analysts frequently pointed to what they saw as differences between the various revolutionaries who made up each nationalist movement. In a speech later published in the *Charleston Daily Courier*, William R. Taber, Jr., one-time editor of the *Charleston Mercury*, distinguished between the people and the leaders of various nationalist movements when he blamed the leaders for diverting the people away from republicanism, leading him to support the former but not the latter.¹⁰⁵ Even more common were distinctions between the moderates and extremists within the revolutions abroad, with southern commentators using extremism as a disqualifier for southern support even while maintaining their positive view of more moderate revolutionaries. Reports regularly distinguished between red republicans, who were supposedly corrupting the revolutions, and the more moderate republicans who upheld the positive values of the revolutions.¹⁰⁶ For example, the *Charleston Courier* informed readers that in France, “there is a burst of indignation in all the organs of the moderate parties, of

¹⁰⁴ Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 30, 1849.

¹⁰⁵ W. R. Taber, Jr., “To the Public: The Essentials of a Republic,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, December 31, 1853.

¹⁰⁶ “France,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 28, 1848; “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 24, 1850; Maximilian Schele de Vere, “Glimpses at Europe in 1848, Part II: The German Parliament,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 15.3 (March 1849): 129-140; Mann, “Paris Correspondence,” May 1849, 267-272.

every shade, against the atrocious conduct of red republicanism.”¹⁰⁷ Newspapermen like Kendall and Taber argued that red republicans led their more moderate counterparts astray, pulling them farther from the true republicanism of the revolutions.¹⁰⁸ Extremism, particularly of red republicans, earned condemnation from southerners, but southerners nonetheless continued to support the extremists’ more moderate counterparts, allowing them to support certain aspects of the revolutions, while rejecting those they found threatening.

Southerners also used their beliefs about what a nation should be to alter their support for nations and revolutions over time. France provides the best example of this process by which southern analysts continually revised their opinions based on changing circumstances and the changing values represented by a nationalist movement. France, originally lauded for the creation of the French Second Republic, later received significant criticism as a formerly republican revolution that betrayed its original values. Although the French Revolution of 1848 initially enjoyed support and praise from southerners, as the French movement became increasingly radicalized, and as Louis-Napoleon consolidated his power, southerners became more critical of events in France, even while holding out hope for the preservation of a republican government.¹⁰⁹ After

¹⁰⁷ “France,” *Charleston Courier*, October 24, 1848.

¹⁰⁸ Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 14, 1848; W. R. Taber, Jr., “To the Public: The Essentials of a Republic,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, December 31, 1853; “France,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 28, 1848; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 11, 1849.

¹⁰⁹ “French News,” *Columbus Enquirer*, March 28, 1848; “The French Republic,” 197-241; “From New-York,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, April 18, 1848; “Foreign News,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, April 3, 1848; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 28, 1849; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 6, 1848; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 6, 1848.

the French army invaded and defeated the Roman Republic, however, southern commentators recognized what they saw as the defeat of republicanism in France and began to describe France as a despot equal to much-reviled Austria.¹¹⁰ Despite their criticism of the failed French attempt at republicanism, however, southerners continued to support other revolutions in Europe, in particular those that they saw France as oppressing.¹¹¹ Such a shift of sympathy demonstrates southerners' commitment to the values of republicanism and self-determination, as well as their consistent rejection of extremism and tyranny. Shifting opinions over time reveal southerners' reliance on certain principles to guide their analysis of revolutions abroad. Although no consensus developed as to whether the revolutions were good or bad, the emergence of clear principles by which southerners analyzed the revolutions reveals the importance of these values to southerners' sense of what it meant to be a nation, as well as the importance of southerners' nuanced analysis of foreign nationalisms to the development of southern thought on nationhood.

As southern analysis of nationalist movements in Europe clarified southerners' sense of which values were beneficial for nations, southerners established their own criteria for nations and nationalist movements, ultimately crafting a southern vision of nationalism. The southern vision of nationalism depended upon careful selection of which values of liberal nationalism southerners believed were important for a nation, and which values of liberal nationalism southerners rejected as harmful to the nation. The

¹¹⁰ "French Constitutions - 1799-1852," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 17, 1852; "More of Southern Italy," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 30, 1851; Kendall, "Editorial Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 4, 1852; *Savannah Daily Republican*, September 15, 1851; "Rome and Her Besiegers," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 17, 1849.

¹¹¹ "European Affairs," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 18, 1849; "The French in Italy," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 6, 1849; "Affairs of Europe," *Columbus Enquirer*, June 12, 1849.

values associated with liberal nationalism that southerners retained in their new vision of nationalism included republicanism, self-determination, and social order. As shown above, revolutions advancing these ideals earned sympathy and praise from southerners. On the other hand, the southern vision of nationalism rejected what conservative southerners saw as extremism; even the most republican of revolutions could earn criticism for devolving into radicalism, particularly by incorporating ideologies that southerners saw as subverting order. What emerged was a vision of nationalism limited to certain principles. This limited vision of nationalism allowed southerners to claim that liberal ideals such as equality were, in fact, extremism that harmed rather than aided nations. To exclude ideals such as freedom and equality from the concept of liberal nationalism required significant ideological manipulation, but southerners proved willing to do just that in order to attempt to reconcile their respect for certain aspects of liberal nationalism with the conservative politics that emerged out of a slave society.

The *New Orleans Daily Picayune* offered a clear depiction of the southern vision of nationalism that emerged out of the discussions of the revolutions of 1848. The New Orleans paper defined its ideal nationalism by “the law-abiding nature of true liberty, its quality of order, its conservative tendencies, its peaceful attributes.”¹¹² The paper praised Kendall’s analysis of the revolutions, which was characterized by his expression of “a profound conviction of the conservative tendencies of true liberty... and devotion to the fundamental principles of republican freedom.”¹¹³ As the editors made these claims, they laid out the southern vision of nationalism: a nationalism that still retained much of the

¹¹² “Revolutions: Progress and Effects of Republican Opinions,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 28, 1848.

¹¹³ “Mr. Kendall’s Letters Again,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 6, 1848.

liberal ideals of liberty and republicanism, but tempered these ideas with conservatism such as a respect for social order.

As they watched, analyzed, debated, and evaluated the revolutions of 1848, southerners did so through the lens of their own values, which combined conservative tendencies with a respect for the liberal ideals upon which the American nation had been founded. Their discussions of the revolutions abroad brought these issues to the forefront of the southern mind, revealing, enhancing, and cementing their importance for southerners' sense of nationhood. Southern analysis of the revolutions of 1848 enabled southerners to form a southern vision of nationalism that borrowed from both liberal nationalism and conservatism. This southern vision of nationalism would later prove critical to southern nationalists' conception of their own nation. The ability to support parts of movements abroad while rejecting others would also prove critical to later southern nationalists' ability to draw comparisons between their own conservative, slavery-oriented nation and the more liberal aspiring nations abroad.

While southerners viewed the revolutions of 1848 with nuance that allowed them to create a southern vision of nationhood, they also saw these revolutions as connected, guiding these southerners to see nationalism as an international movement. Frequently, southern accounts spoke of the revolutionary fervor that grasped all of Europe, grouping the revolutions together.¹¹⁴ Southerners did not just group the revolutions, however; they also believed that the revolutions actively inspired more revolutions. For example, early

¹¹⁴ "Organization of Labor," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, April 20, 1848; "Important Foreign News," *Victoria Texian Advocate*, November 9, 1848; "Address of the Irish Confederation," *Clarksville Northern Standard*, May 6, 1848; *Houston Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register*, June 1, 1848; "A Series of Casualties," *Savannah Daily Republican*, May 26, 1849; "The Fall of Venice," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 14, 1849.

on, the French Revolution received support for the positive influence it would have in leading other nations to follow in revolution.¹¹⁵ This idea that one revolution would inspire another ran throughout southern discussion of the revolutions.¹¹⁶ Additionally, by seeing the American Revolution in revolutions abroad, southerners further learned to put themselves into the international conversation that was developing about issues of nationalism.¹¹⁷ Connecting the revolutions, to each other and to their own nationalism, led southerners to see issues of nationhood and nationalism as part of an international conversation.

Just as importantly, southern analysts and commentators encouraged people of one nation to support those of another because of their shared ideals. For example, southern analysts commonly expressed their belief that all republicans should support other republics and republicans, linking the movements not just through common ideals, but through mutual support and sympathy.¹¹⁸ Southerners' own nation was part of this, as newspapers played on their readers' sympathy for European revolutions by claiming that these revolutions and the American Revolution shared similar inspirations.¹¹⁹ Such solicitations taught southerners that claiming common national values was an effective strategy that nationalist movements could utilize to gain support, and that aspiring nations

¹¹⁵ "French Revolution," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, March 23, 1848; "French News," *Columbus Enquirer*, March 28, 1848.

¹¹⁶ "France and Austria," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 11, 1849.

¹¹⁷ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 3, 1848; "Italy," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 10, 1848; "Germanic Confederation," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, May 18, 1848; "American Progress," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 20, 1849; "Hungary," *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, June 16, 1849; *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, May 1, 1848.

¹¹⁸ "France and Poland," *Clarksville Northern Standard*, May 27, 1848; "Democratic Mass Meeting," *Clarksville Northern Standard*, July 29, 1848.

¹¹⁹ "Hungary," *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, June 16, 1849.

could claim legitimacy based on similarity to other nations. This was a critical step in the development of later southern nationalists' strategy of winning legitimacy for the Confederacy through comparisons with foreign nationalisms.

Beginning with the Greek independence movement in the early 1820s and continuing through the revolutions of 1848, southern commentators and analysts found much to praise in nationalist movements abroad, particularly in these movements' expressions of southerners' own cherished political values. Conservative southerners, however, also had cause to fear the implications of the liberal ideals of liberty, freedom, and equality. The contradiction between conservatism and liberal nationalism led southerners to use their analysis of nationalist movements in Europe to clarify their beliefs about what a nation and nationalist movement should represent. Southern commentators learned to continue to laud the values of republicanism and self-determination in the face of tyranny, even as they rejected extremism and the fullest implications of foreign revolutions. The process of evaluating which aspects of the movements deserved support and which did not guided southerners in developing a southern vision of nationalism that reconciled respect for some liberal values with a conservative desire for order. This vision of nationhood, combined with southerners' new beliefs in the connectedness of nationalist movements, would ultimately allow later southern nationalists to claim connections between their own anti-liberal aspiring nation and more liberal nations in Europe as a way of defining the Confederacy, according to the southern rather than international definition of nationalism.

Chapter Two **An Internationalizing South, 1850-1859**

Sectional conflict in the 1850s brought issues of nationalism closer to home for southerners. In response to sectional tension, southern commentators turned to the international perspective on nationhood that they had developed through their analysis of nationalist movements in Europe, using this international perspective to help them make sense out of the problems threatening their own nation. While still overwhelmingly committed to the American nation, the southern elite nonetheless found it useful to compare conflict at home to the conflicts that they had followed in Europe. Rather than analyzing events abroad through a domestic lens, southerners now began analyzing their own nation through an international lens. This international contextualization of the challenges facing their own nation ultimately helped southerners to conceive of the South as distinct from the North on issues of nationhood.

The 1850s were a decade largely defined by sectional tension within the United States. The decade opened with a fierce debate over the extension of slavery into the territories that the United States had gained from war with Mexico a few years prior. Prompted by their desire to continue the expansion of slavery, fire-eating southern radicals, particularly from South Carolina, began calling for southern unity and secession. Delegates from slave-holding states met twice in Nashville in the summer and fall of 1850 to discuss the protection of what they saw as southern rights. In September, Congress passed the Compromise of 1850, which, although failing to fully satisfy either

section, did temporarily calm the tensions, albeit without solving the underlying sectional issues. However, the spread of abolitionism in the North, and of increasingly radical defenses of slavery in the South, including calls for re-opening the African slave trade, would keep tensions simmering throughout the decade. The question of slavery in the territories exploded again with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. The anti-slavery Republican Party, formed by abolitionist former Whigs and free soilers, steadily gained in power throughout the second half of the decade. Amidst this growing sectional conflict, Americans from both sections began to question their national mission and values, and their place within the nation. For elite southerners, the events of the 1850s would lead them to intensify their prioritization of slave interests as among the primary southern interests, preparing them to conceive of the South as distinct from the North, and from the rest of the United States.¹

As southern journalists, politicians, and other opinion-makers analyzed and debated the issues and events of the 1850s, they turned outward as well as inward, using their analysis of nationalist movements in Europe to help them understand the issues at play in the United States. The recently-concluded, and failed, revolutions of 1848 were still fresh in educated southerners' minds. The plight of aspiring nations abroad was further emphasized, and brought home, when refugees from the failed revolutions began arriving in the United States. Fleeing persecution after their failed attempts to establish

¹ David M. Potter and Eric H. Walther have analyzed the events and debates in the 1850s that led to civil war. Potter, *The Impending Crisis: 1848-1861* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Walther, *The Shattering of the Union: America in the 1850s* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2004). For discussions of how slavery, and the growing national crisis over slavery, led southerners to begin developing a sectional identity, see Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*; Bonner, *Mastering America*. For analysis of growing northern sectionalism, see Susan-Mary Grant, *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Period* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000). John McCardell argues that southern nationalism developed as antebellum southerners increasingly felt like a sectional minority whose interests were incompatible with those of the North. McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation*.

independent nationalities, famous revolutionaries such as Hungarian Louis Kossuth, Irish patriots John Mitchel and Thomas Meagher, and Italian general Giuseppe Garibaldi arrived in the United States seeking refuge. The presence of these renowned European nationalists in the United States in the early 1850s provided a timely opportunity for southerners, and other Americans, to blend their domestic politics with their analysis of European nationalisms.

Although initially the nation joined together in welcoming these celebrated nationalists, domestic politics quickly interfered, and both northerners and southerners began to discuss the famed revolutionaries in terms of sectional issues.² Abolitionist northerners sought to use the arriving nationalists to strengthen their case that freedom must be advanced both for nationalities abroad and for slaves at home, which placed the foreign revolutionaries at the center of sectional debate.³ The pro-slavery orientation of Irishman John Mitchel, meanwhile, gave southerners ammunition with which to try to negate the abolitionists' argument.⁴ Beyond the obvious issues of slavery and freedom, Americans throughout the nation saw these European nationalists as representatives not only of aspiring nations abroad, but also of the values that Americans themselves cherished as necessary for a nation. As northerners' and southerners' opinions of the foreign revolutionaries diverged, then, European revolutionaries' presence in the US

² For discussions of Americans' welcome of, and enthusiasm for, foreign revolutionaries see Bryan P. McGovern, *John Mitchel: Irish Nationalist, Southern Secessionist* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2009), 94-117; Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 106-114; Donald S. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America: A Study of Sectionalism and Foreign Policy* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 1-11; Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*, 19-23.

³ Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 66-72. For more discussion of the association between European revolutionaries and abolitionism, see Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 149-158.

⁴ McGovern, *John Mitchel*, 119-154.

revealed to southerners what they began to interpret as distinctly southern values, differing from those of northerners.

Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth was particularly influential in enhancing southerners' perception of the growing distance between their views of national values and nationalism and those of the North, as southern commentators interpreted their wariness of Kossuth as distinctly southern, and as differing from northerners' supposedly overly-enthusiastic embrace of Kossuth. By the time he arrived in New York in late 1851, Kossuth was well-known and widely-embraced throughout the Atlantic world as a hero of the cause of Hungarian independence. The exiled leader of Hungary's defeated 1848 bid for independence from the Austrian Empire, Kossuth had already been feted during a stay in London. New York likewise embraced him as a hero, and from New York, Kossuth set off on a tour of the United States, including an excursion into the South during the spring of 1852. As he toured the United States, he solicited aid for the Hungarian cause from individuals as well as from the federal government, attracting much attention, both positive and negative, throughout the nation.⁵

When Kossuth first arrived in the United States, he was greeted by praise and adulation by most Americans, southerners included. Most early southern reports on Kossuth's visit emphasized his republican virtue and expressed support for him as a representative of an aspiring nationality for which southerners wished independence. Newspapers repeatedly avowed their sympathy for Kossuth's cause, describing Kossuth and his traveling companions as brave patriots, and praising Kossuth for fighting against

⁵ Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 153-168.

oppression and for his conviction in the universal principles of rights and freedom.⁶ As a writer using the penname “Chat” wrote in Natchez’s Democratic *Mississippi Free Trader*, Kossuth would be “honored as the representative of a great *idea*; he will be welcomed for his sacrifices, talents, and services.”⁷ In keeping with this support for the ideals Kossuth represented, the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* informed its readers that the lavish preparations for Kossuth’s arrival in America were only befitting the “most dangerous foe of European despotism.”⁸ Kossuth’s status as a representative of the cause of Hungarian independence gained him praise and sympathy from southerners and other Americans.

While southerners supported the cause of Hungarian independence, however, they quickly found the limit to their support of Kossuth, specifically Kossuth’s desire for American intervention in the Hungarian cause. Although Americans initially believed that Kossuth was in the US for refuge, they quickly realized that he was attempting not only to raise money, but also to gain arms and official American intervention in the cause of Hungarian freedom.⁹ Despite the initial enthusiasm for Kossuth and the Hungarian cause, and widespread private fundraising, the United States declined to officially

⁶Antelope, “New York Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 19, 1851; “Kossuth,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, January 6, 1852; Le Diable Boiteux, “Washington Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 9, 1852; “The American Policy,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 15, 1852; *Savannah Daily Republican*, September 24, 1849; “Kossuth and the English,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 4, 1851.

⁷ Chat, “Letter X,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, January 14, 1852. See also Le Diable Boiteux, “Washington Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 26, 1852.

⁸ “Kossuth and His Mission,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 17, 1851. See also “Letters from New York,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 13, 1851.

⁹ Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 49-50.

intervene.¹⁰ Kossuth's call for intervention went against the long-standing principle, established in George Washington's Farewell Address, that the US should not become unduly involved in foreign affairs. Although some southerners desired intervention when it meant the possible annexation of nations such as Cuba and Nicaragua, when it came to the Hungarian case, the majority of southerners saw intervention as an anti-republican action, and considered intervention to be inherently opposed to American values.¹¹

Due to their desire for non-intervention in the case of Hungary, southerners saw Kossuth's requests for aid from the federal government as over-stepping his boundaries as an exiled republican revolutionary, and as a nationalist in general.¹² As George W. Kendall, the conservative foreign correspondent for the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, wrote from his home in France, only non-intervention in the Hungarian cause would demonstrate Americans' commitment to liberty and human freedom. Many of Kendall's fellow southerners agreed that intervening to aid Kossuth would harm not only Hungarian, but also American, republicanism.¹³ This opposition to intervention in foreign affairs became increasingly apparent throughout Kossuth's tour.¹⁴ Just as

¹⁰ Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 136-144, 151.

¹¹ Spencer reveals that although Americans initially embraced Kossuth as a representative of the Hungarian cause, as soon as they realized that Kossuth was urging official intervention, Americans rejected both Kossuth and his pleas, in large part due to the precedent of Washington's Farewell Address. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 49-64.

¹² "Kossuth," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, January 6, 1852; "Hon. W. R. Smith and Sargent's Speaker," *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, May 6, 1852; "The American Policy," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 15, 1852; "Washington Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 16, 1852; "Kossuth," *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, January 9, 1852.

¹³ Kendall, "Editorial Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March, 11, 1852; "More about Kossuth and His Policy," *Savannah Daily Republican*, December 31, 1851.

¹⁴ Spencer identifies the South's less enthusiastic response Kossuth, although he attributes it to the issue of slavery. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 153-168. Timothy Roberts also discusses Kossuth's visit, concluding that the South was less enthusiastic toward Kossuth and his policy of non-intervention than was the rest of the nation. Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*, 146-167.

southern reports reveal support for Kossuth's cause because it agreed with their national values, they opposed his plea for intervention because they saw it as violating their American principles.¹⁵ Southerners' reaction to Kossuth through the lens of American ideals demonstrates not only the importance that they attached to these ideals, but also the extent to which they viewed foreign nationalisms as being in conversation with domestic principles.

Because southerners believed that the United States should not intervene in foreign affairs, however sympathetic those affairs may be, they began to criticize Kossuth and his pleas for intervention.¹⁶ As they did so, southern commentators began arguing that southerners were distinct from the rest of the nation in the fervency of their desire for non-intervention. Southern newspapers reveal a widespread belief among southern journalists, editors, and other opinion-makers that southerners were unique among their fellow Americans in the vehemence of their opposition to intervention. Southern commentators celebrated the fact that the South had welcomed Kossuth less warmly than had other sections of the nation, describing the South's less enthusiastic reception as a more realistic, pragmatic response to the Hungarian patriot.¹⁷ Edward William Johnston, academic, journalist, and brother of General Joseph E. Johnston, wrote in the *Richmond Whig* under the pen name "Il Segretario" that "I desire to know with what sense...

¹⁵ "Kossuth's Speech," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 1, 1852; "Kossuth," *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, April 16, 1852; "Kossuth in Georgia and South Carolina," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, April 20, 1852.

¹⁶ "Kossuth," *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, January 9, 1852; "Kossuth in Georgia and South Carolina," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, April 20, 1852.

¹⁷ "Kossuth in Georgia and South Carolina," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, April 20, 1852; "Baltimore Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 26, 1852; "Washington Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 10, 1852; Hamlet, "Political Letter," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 11, 1852.

Southern men can for an instant, countenance the Kossuth doctrine,” stating that the best way for southerners to show their patriotism was to adhere to non-intervention.¹⁸

Similarly, the *Daily Alabama Journal* of Montgomery, Alabama praised southerners for ensuring that “the doctrines of Kossuth” were “combated every where throughout the South, and repudiated with almost perfect unanimity” in every southern state that Kossuth had visited.¹⁹ Southerners’ rejection of Kossuth’s pleas was actually a point of pride for many in the region.²⁰ For example, the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*’s Washington correspondent, writing under the pen name “Le Diable Boiteux,” praised southern congressmen for their “cold” reception of Kossuth and commended the fact that southerners had given Kossuth a much-needed window into the reality of Americans’ willingness – or lack thereof – to aid his cause.²¹ Southern analysts were clear in their interpretation that the adamant insistence on non-intervention was a distinctly southern value.

Southern commentators did not just praise their fellow southerners for their restraint, however; they criticized northerners for excessive enthusiasm toward Kossuth, further increasing their sense of sectionally divergent responses and values. The *Macon Georgia Telegraph* accused northerners of “fulsome toadyism” in their response to

¹⁸ Il Segretario, “Editorial Correspondence,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, February 3, 1852; “Editorial Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 11, 1852.

¹⁹ “Kossuth,” *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, April 16, 1852.

²⁰ “The American Policy,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 15, 1852. See also “Baltimore Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 26, 1852; “Kossuth in Georgia and South Carolina,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, April 20, 1852.

²¹ Le Diable Boiteux, “Washington Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 16, 1852; Le Diable Boiteux, “Washington Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 23, 1852. See also “The Kossuth Failure,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 2, 1852; “Kossuth,” *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, January 9, 1852; “Hon. W. R. Smith and Sargent's Speaker,” *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, May 6, 1852.

Kossuth.²² A writer using the name “Chat” wrote to the *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader* to criticize the “humbugery” of the northern response to Kossuth, asserting that the southern response would be quite different.²³ Southern reports claimed that not only was the South supporting the proper national values, but also that the North was betraying the same, leading southerners to begin arguing that the North and South held different national values.

The difference between the southern and the northern reaction to Kossuth’s visit, and the sense of sectional distance that it brought, was further increased by the introduction of the issues of slavery and abolition to the discussion of foreign nationalists. Through the southern press, elite southerners were aware that northerners expected Kossuth to support abolitionism and to speak out against slavery. They knew that many northerners believed that abolition was part of the same international cause of freedom as the revolutions of 1848.²⁴ Elite southerners, however, dedicated to the preservation of slavery and guided by the limited definition of nationalism they had developed through their analysis of the revolutions of 1848, claimed to see no connection between Hungarian freedom and anti-slavery.²⁵ Although Kossuth himself tried to remain outwardly neutral on the slavery issue, southerners were clear that they interpreted the meaning of freedom as it related to Hungary and to slavery very differently than did

²² “Kossuth and Lopez,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, February 10, 1852.

²³ Chat, “Letter X,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, January 14, 1852; “The Kossuth Failure,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 2, 1852.

²⁴ “The Kossuth Excitement and the Slavery Question,” *Savannah Daily Republican*, December 29, 1851; Le Diable Boiteux, “Washington Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 9, 1852.

²⁵ Le Diable Boiteux, “Washington Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 9, 1852; “Blown Sky-High!” *Richmond Enquirer*, July 23, 1852; “Kossuth in a Slave State,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, March 24, 1852; “Mazzini an Abolitionist,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 14, 1853.

northerners.²⁶ Southerners' awareness of these very different interpretations allowed them to continue distinguishing between what they were beginning to see as differing northern and southern national values.

Kossuth's presence in the United States led southerners to begin discussing domestic issues as in conversation with foreign nationalisms, helping them to internationalize their sense of their own nationhood. Just as critically, southern discourse about Kossuth helped to create the sense among southern opinion-makers that the North and South held different national values. Through identifying the differing reactions of the two sections to Kossuth, his pleas for intervention, and his stance on slavery and freedom, southern opinion-makers began to develop the sense of national values, such as non-intervention, that they believed were specifically southern in nature. As they did so, they enhanced their perception that the North and South were fundamentally different on issues of nationhood. Further, because southerners believed that their non-intervention was tied to American principles such as republicanism, analysis of Kossuth began building the idea among southerners that the South represented the purest iteration of the ideals of the American Revolution, and that southerners adhered more closely to the principles of the American republic than did their fellow Americans. This idea of southerners as different from, and superior to, northerners in their national values, and of southern national values as in conversation with international principles of nationalism, opened up the possibility of considering the South as an independent nation. Kossuth's visit thus prepared southerners to later conceive of a potential southern nation.

Kossuth was not the only revolutionary whose presence and ideology led southerners to distinguish themselves from northerners on issues of nationalism. Irish

²⁶ For analysis of Kossuth's position on slavery, see Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 65-83.

nationalist John Mitchel, an avowed advocate of slavery, also played an important role in highlighting the differing values of the North and South. Mitchel, an outspoken supporter of Irish independence who fled Ireland after being arrested by the British for treason, subsequently became internationally recognized as a hero of the Irish independence movement. He arrived in the United States in 1853 and used his talents as a writer and journalist to continue advocating for Irish independence, while also engaging with American issues. Unlike most foreign nationalists, Mitchel was adamantly pro-slavery, and would come to sympathize and identify with the South.²⁷ He used his platform as the editor of newspapers including the *Citizen*, published in New York, and later the *Southern Citizen*, published in Knoxville, to spread his views, earning him the support and favor of the slave-holding South. Most famously, Mitchel declared in 1853 in the *Citizen* that “we deny that it is a crime, or a wrong, or even a peccadillo, to hold slaves, to buy slaves, to sell slaves, to keep slaves to their work by flogging or other needful coercion,” adding that “we wish that we had a good plantation well stocked with healthy Negroes in Alabama.”²⁸ By embracing the southern, rather than northern, interpretation of slavery, the place of slavery within nationalism, and the meaning of Irish nationalism for American sectional politics, Mitchel became another international figure who represented the growing divide between North and South, not just on slavery, but also on the place of slavery within the ideals of nationalism.

²⁷ Irish in the US were generally more accepting of slavery than were their German counterparts. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*, 28-30. David T. Gleeson reveals that Mitchel was not the only Irishman in the South who supported slavery and the Confederacy. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

²⁸ “Mr. Mitchel’s Position on the Slavery Question,” *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, January 27, 1854. For analysis of this issue, see McGovern, *John Mitchel*, 119-154.

Due to his pro-slavery politics, southern analysts embraced Mitchel. Southern newspapers such as the *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, a Democratic paper founded by M. G. Davis, were aware of Mitchel's strong pro-South sentiment, and took care to inform their audience of Mitchel's southern sympathies.²⁹ Southern journalists celebrated Mitchel's arrival in the South, republished his speeches, and encouraged fellow southerners to subscribe to the pro-slavery newspaper that Mitchel began in Knoxville, TN.³⁰ So strong was southern support for the Irish nationalist that South Carolina Congressman Lawrence M. Keitt even used Mitchel to support his pro-immigration stance, arguing that people like Mitchel should be allowed to enter and enrich the nation.³¹

This support derived in no small part from the fact that Mitchel's views on slavery and nationalism closely resembled the limited vision of nationalism favored by many elite southerners. Particularly during the revolutions of 1848, southern opinion-makers had analyzed European nationalist movements through the lens of their desire to preserve slavery and a hierarchical social and political order; as they did so, they had developed a more limited, conservative definition of nationalism that embraced values such as republicanism while rejecting values such as equality. Mitchel's views seemed to validate this limited southern vision of nationalism. For Mitchel, like southern slaveholders, slavery was compatible with nationalist values such as republicanism. Such a stance was made possible by the fact that Mitchel also shared the southern elite's belief in

²⁹ "John Mitchel's Southern Tour," *New Orleans Sunday Delta*, May 16, 1858.

³⁰ *Alexandria Gazette*, April 25, 1854; "Dinner to John Mitchel by the Citizens of Richmond," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, May 30, 1854; "John Mitchel's Paper, the 'Southern Citizen,'" *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, January 29, 1858; "John Mitchel," *Charleston Daily Courier*, September 24, 1857.

³¹ "Letter from Hon. L. M. Keitt," *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, September 6, 1855.

limited freedom, in which nations, rather than individuals, deserved liberty.³² Further, Mitchel was clear that his sympathies were not just with slavery, but also with the South and what he saw as the southern vision of the nation. The South's agricultural nature, racial hierarchy, and opposition to change appealed to his sense of romantic nationalism. Critically, Mitchel also saw similarities between the oppression of the Irish at the hands of the British, and what he perceived to be the growing oppression of slaveholders at the hands of northern abolitionists.³³

Southern commentators appreciated that, unlike many European revolutionaries, Mitchel's vision of nationalism more closely resembled their own. As Louisiana politician Frank H. Hatch explained, slavery was all too often a casualty of overly enthusiastic nationalists, as "men who have been engaged in national struggles for freedom throughout the civilized world, have too frequently abandoned their reason, to the guidance of their feelings, and in their zeal for the distraction of political oppression, have often blindly included useful and necessary social institutions."³⁴ Demonstrating recognition that Mitchel, unlike most foreign nationalists, did not interpret nationalism and abolitionism as inherently linked, the Democratic *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate* cited Mitchel as proof that "the bold assumption that foreigners are Abolitionists" was nothing more than, as the title of the article put it, "a stupid fallacy."³⁵ Mitchel's pro-slavery

³² Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray*, 21.

³³ McGovern, *John Mitchel*, 119-186. During the Civil War era, Mitchel frequently used his capacity as foreign correspondent to the *Charleston Mercury* to express his belief in the similarity of the South to Ireland and other oppressed nationalities of Europe. J. M. [John Mitchel], "From Europe: Our Paris Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, June 8, 1861; J. M. [John Mitchel], "Affairs in Europe: Our Paris Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, August 24, 1861.

³⁴ "Remarks of Mr. F. H. Hatch," *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, February 25, 1854.

³⁵ "Political Sophistry - A Stupid Fallacy Exposed," *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, August 17, 1855.

beliefs opened up the possibility in southern minds that their limited definition of nationalism, that rejected concepts such as individual freedom and equality, was a legitimate interpretation of the nationalist movements they followed abroad.

Southern analysis of Mitchel helped not only to confirm southern views of nation, but also to highlight the differences between the North and South. Northerners' growing commitment to abolition, and southerners' intensifying defense of slavery, seemed to be creating differing sectional beliefs about the proper values of the nation, and Mitchel's views provided a clear illustration of this separation. Mitchel's pro-slavery beliefs confounded northern abolitionists, who wanted Mitchel – as with Kossuth and the other '48ers – to support the cause of freedom from slavery due to its similarity to the nationalists' fight for national freedom. Southern journalists were aware of northern expectations, and made a point to report on northerners' reaction to Mitchel's pro-slavery beliefs. The *Charleston Mercury's* Boston correspondent, for example, informed his readers of northerners' confusion at the idea that a man could be an "apostle of Irish Freedom" and still support slavery. The correspondent made it clear, however, where his own sympathies lay, praising Mitchel for holding strong to his pro-slavery beliefs.³⁶ This confusion pleased southern slave-holders; as the *Richmond Whig* gleefully reported, northern abolitionists were quite incorrect in their initial expectations that Mitchel would support the cause of emancipation.³⁷ Mitchel's beliefs clearly revealed the growing distance between northern and southern interpretations of nationalism and of the proper values of a nation.

³⁶ Bay State, "Boston Correspondence," *Charleston Daily Courier*, February 2, 1854.

³⁷ "John Mitchell [sic] and Abolitionism," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, March 17, 1854.

Mitchel's pro-slavery views had significant ramifications for northern and southern views of nation. By challenging abolitionists' definition of freedom, Mitchel's views seemed to allow for the possibility that the more limited, conservative southern definitions of national values could be accepted as a legitimate part of the international discussion of the meaning of nationalism. Mitchel seemed to prove to southerners that it was, in fact, possible, and consistent with the principles of nationalism as interpreted by foreign nationalists, to support both national freedom and slavery.³⁸ John Mitchel and his unusual combination of liberal nationalism and pro-slavery beliefs represented an alternative vision of nationalism to that expressed by northern abolitionists, and one that was far more acceptable to the South. As southerners discussed Mitchel, then, they began to develop a sense of their views of nationalism as distinct from those of northerners, but as worthy of discussion within the international framework of nationalism, preparing southerners to conceive of an independent southern nation premised upon a limited definition of nationalism.

Foreign nationalists such as Kossuth and Mitchel brought the issues of nationalism home for the southern elite, right in the middle of the domestic American sectional tension. As northerners and southerners both analyzed these figures, and sought to use them to their own ends, they increasingly developed different views, not only of these European nationalists, but also of the ideals of nationalism. Kossuth's pleas for intervention led southerners to celebrate the value of non-intervention that they believed the South alone still defended, creating the perception of differing southern and northern national values. Similarly, Mitchel's pro-slavery views confounded northerners' belief in

³⁸ "Speech of Roger A. Pryor, Esq.," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, May 28, 1858; "Prattville, July 24, 1859," *Montgomery Daily Confederation*, July 28, 1859.

national freedom and freedom of slaves as related, leading southerners to recognize again the differing values, and visions of nation, developing in the two sections. Through discussing international figures of nationalism, southerners increasingly defined their own views of nationalism as in opposition to those of the North.

Revolutionaries who traveled to the US were not the only aspect of European nationalist movements that led antebellum southerners to use an international perspective to analyze and understand the sectional tension in their nation in the 1850s. While the European revolutionaries were useful in helping southerners to develop a southern vision of nationalism, broader general analysis of aspiring nations in Europe helped southerners to express their fears about the sectional tension in the United States. The revolutions of 1848 that southerners had supported as examples of positive enactments of nationhood now, in defeat, provided examples of the kind of dynamic that southerners feared was developing in their own nation. Southerners were concerned that the North was growing more powerful and that the South was losing its political influence within the union, and they turned to comparisons with defeated nationalities in Europe to help them express these anxieties. In doing so, they further clarified their sense of the South's national values, its place within the nation, and the possibility of an independent southern nation.

Southern slave-holders felt threatened by the growing abolitionist movement in the North in the 1850s. Antebellum southerners were apprehensive that efforts to restrict slavery in the western territories, the growth of abolitionism, and, later, the rise of the anti-slavery Republican Party, indicated northern attempts to end what slave-holders saw as their right to own, buy, and sell slaves. Furthermore, states' rights southerners feared that northerners were increasingly consolidating power within the federal government,

which would limit slave states' ability to protect slavery. The slave-holding elite prioritized slavery as the critical southern value, and therefore they interpreted attempts to end slavery as efforts to limit the ability of the South to advance and to protect its interests within national politics. This southern elite thus feared what they believed to be an impending southern oppression at northern hands. Such concerns about oppression were greatly exaggerated, and premised, for the most part, upon anticipated rather than actual developments. The slave-holding elite nonetheless feared that the South was losing its influence to an ever-more-powerful North that was increasingly opposed to southern interests, and that this loss of influence would open the door for the North to oppress the South.³⁹

The oppression of the aspiring nationalities in Europe that southerners had supported a few years prior provided antebellum southerners with a language for expressing these anxieties about being oppressed at the hands of the growing anti-slavery forces in the North. Southern commentators largely interpreted failed aspiring nations abroad as small states fighting, and losing, against the power of large, centralized governments. They likewise believed that the defeat of the revolutions amounted to the oppression of the failed nationalities at the hands of the victorious, and tyrannical, monarchs and empires. The defeat of revolutions in Hungary, Italy, and elsewhere in Europe thus stood as sharp examples in southern minds of the dangers that could result

³⁹ Sinha analyzes antebellum southerners' growing fear of losing power to northern influences. Sinha, *Counterrevolution of Slavery*, 33-62. Bonner reveals that the southern elites' fear that the consolidation of federal power would threaten slavery helped drive southern politics. Bonner, *Mastering America*, 41-78, 149-183. Lacy Ford analyzes the responses of slaveholders in both the upper and lower Souths to what they perceived as a growing abolitionist threat, even in the early antebellum period. Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*. At the same time that slaveholders feared what they saw as a consolidating abolitionist threat to slavery, northerners feared what they saw as the growth of the Slave Power conspiracy. David Brion Davis, *The Slave Power Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969).

when national power was abused, and therefore of the dangers that the South faced if the North was able to consolidate power and pursue its anti-slavery agenda. As Mississippi Congressman A. G. Brown declared at a states' rights meeting described as "glorious" by the *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, the South "wanted no political association like that of Ireland to England, Hungary to Austria, or Poland to Russia."⁴⁰ The partitions of Poland likewise furnished an example of a region supposedly destroyed by the over-assertion of external power. For example, a *Charleston Mercury* journalist using the pen name "Brutus" wrote that an "unscrupulous" North would do to an unprotected South what Europe had done to Poland.⁴¹ These defeats stood in southerners' minds as clear examples of the victory of oppression and tyranny. Because southerners feared what they saw as the looming oppression of the South at the hands of a centralizing North, they drew comparisons between the oppression that they observed in Europe and the oppression that they were afraid they would face at home.⁴²

The comparisons that southerners drew between the defeat of aspiring nations in Europe, and the oppression that they feared at the hands of the North, were exaggerated, and more rhetorical than realistic in nature. Through most of the 1850s, southerners did not yet conceive of the South as an aspiring nation, which complicated the comparisons. The fact that the oppression they feared was largely anticipatory further challenged these comparisons. Regardless, these comparisons were remarkably widespread throughout

⁴⁰ "Glorious State Rights Meeting," *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, July 9, 1851. See also "Great and Enthusiastic Meeting -- Reception of Hon. A. G. Brown at Jackson," *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, October 23, 1850.

⁴¹ Brutus, "The Charleston Kansas Meeting - No. 7," *Charleston Mercury*, April 26, 1856.

⁴² Sylvias, "From Washington," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, February 6, 1849; "Virginia Resolutions Respecting Slavery," *Alexandria Gazette*, February 7, 1849; "Thirty-First Congress - 1st Session," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 1, 1850; "Speech of Mr. Hilliard of Ala," *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, March 2, 1850.

southern discourse in the 1850s. Southern opinion-makers found comparisons between oppression in Europe and the supposed oppression of the South to be a compelling way to strengthen their case for the protection and advancement of slavery. As Virginia politician Charles James Faulkner said in an address to the National Democratic Convention, “it was [abolitionists’] purpose to inaugurate the North as the dominant section. The subjugation of Ireland by force, division, and bribery, was to be reproduced on this continent, and the Southern States were to be reduced to a mere provincial appendage.”⁴³ Such comparisons allowed southern opinion-makers to dramatize the stakes at risk in what they saw as a battle to preserve slavery, and to vividly convey to their audiences what they perceived as the severity of the situation.⁴⁴ In addition to providing a convenient rhetorical device, the widespread usage of these comparisons reveals that southerners, particularly radical southerners, were beginning to understand sectional tensions through an international lens, and were beginning to see the South as a unit that could be compared to aspiring nations – as a possible potential nation, rather than as a section of a nation.

Although many of these comparisons were relatively vague as to how, exactly, the North was oppressing the South, southern commentators did sometimes spell out the causes of their concerns over growing northern power. States’ rights, and the North’s supposed violation thereof, was one of these concerns that southerners processed through an international lens, helping them to clarify not only their fears of northern power, but

⁴³ Charles James Faulkner, “The Democratic Party of the United States,” *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, November 18, 1856.

⁴⁴ “Watchman, What of the Night?” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, October 29, 1850; “Mr. Conrad,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, August 28, 1850; “Who Are the Friends of the Union?” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, February 11, 1851.

also the southern values that would best forestall northern abuses. In particular, southerners often expressed the belief that states' rights would prevent the South from facing the oppression suffered by aspiring nations in Europe. According to Georgia politicians John Bailey and Zachariah Harman, states' rights were the South's only hope to hold out against free soilers and to escape a doom worse than Poland or Hungary.⁴⁵ States' rights was no less than a main goal of southern politics; a private citizen, seeking to hold his Congressmen accountable, wrote to the *Macon Weekly Georgia Telegraph* that southern senators were elected to promote the rights of the South, and that for them to do otherwise would be the same as if Garibaldi, the renowned Italian nationalist, joined his enemies the Austrians.⁴⁶ For the North to violate states' rights, southerners argued, was for the North to recreate the subjugation of aspiring nationalities in Europe. States' rights, therefore, were the South's best defense against similar oppression.

While states' rights was important to southerners' defense against what they feared would be European-style oppression by the North, slavery, of course, was their central concern. Slavery was at the heart of the sectional tensions that dominated the nation in 1850, and was thus central to southerners' explanations of how they felt the North was oppressing, or would oppress, the South. Northern attempts to restrict slavery were the most common cause southerners gave to explain why and how the North was oppressing the South.

⁴⁵ "Messrs. Bailey and Harman," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, September 23, 1851. See also "Col. Bailey's Speech in Knoxville," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, September 28, 1852; "Great Rally of the Friends of Southern Rights," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, October 8, 1850; "Santa Fe Meeting," *Houston Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register*, July 18, 1850.

⁴⁶ *Macon Weekly Georgia Telegraph*, September 13, 1859. See also "The Next Presidency," *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, November 7, 1855; "Remarks of Hon. Wm. F. Colcock," *Charleston Courier*, July 1, 1851.

Southerners used comparisons between the supposed plight of the slaveholding South and that of defeated nations in Europe to criticize abolitionists for seeking to limit the power and therefore the supposed rights of the slaveholding states. At the Nashville Convention of 1850, James Lyons of Virginia argued that in tampering with and seeking to restrict slavery, the North was replicating the most despotic government on earth and behaving worse than Austria did toward Hungary.⁴⁷ Such comparisons were also common at the end of the 1850s, as sectional tensions would eventually reach the breaking point. For example, William McWillie, governor of Mississippi, informed the legislature of his state that if an abolitionist were elected president in 1860, such an event would make the South into Ireland or Poland.⁴⁸ Threatening the institution of slavery, according to these southerners, created the possibility for serious abuse of the South.

While these comparisons were used throughout the 1850s, they were most common during discussions of the territorial expansion of slavery. Southern power-holders feared that if Congress was able to limit slavery in the territories, the balance of power between slave and free states would begin to favor free states, enabling Congress to end slavery altogether. Although a series of compromises kept the balance largely equal, northerners did, in fact, attempt to limit slavery in the territories through efforts, albeit often failed, efforts such as the Wilmot Proviso. Despite being fairly unsuccessful at restricting slavery, the attempts by northern politicians to restrict slavery in the territories represented, in many southern minds, an attempt by northerners to seize power from the South, which was particularly concerning as this power would then be used to

⁴⁷ "Nashville Convention Meeting on Saturday Night," *Richmond Enquirer*, April 23, 1850.

⁴⁸ "Annual Message of Hon. William McWillie, Governor of Mississippi," *Charleston Mercury*, November 22, 1859. See also "Congress," *Alexandria Gazette*, December 12, 1859.

end slavery. Debates over slavery in the territories were thus key targets of southern cries of oppression.

In particular, the debate surrounding the eventual Compromise of 1850, which temporarily settled the issue of territorial slavery, saw frequent references by southern opinion-makers to oppressed nationalities in Europe. During this time of crisis, comparing the supposed oppression of the South with the oppression of aspiring nations in Europe helped southerners to express their concerns about the sectional dynamic in the US. Most commonly, these comparisons took the form of claiming that by restricting slavery in the territories, the North was going to render the South as oppressed as a defeated nationality in Europe. For example, as early as 1849, a journalist calling himself “Sylvias” was expressing concern in the *Macon Georgia Telegraph* that the North would reduce the South to the condition of long-oppressed Ireland.⁴⁹ As a citizen of Claiborne wrote to the *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, the South had no more protections from the North than Ireland had from Great Britain.⁵⁰ The *Macon Georgia Telegraph* critiqued Henry Clay, who helped author the Compromise, as being as detrimental to his countrymen as was the betrayal of Artur Gorgey, a Hungarian revolutionary who was accused of treason and therefore of helping defeat the cause of Hungarian freedom.⁵¹ This same paper later implored its readers to take warning from Ireland, asserting that if the South submitted to the restriction of slavery now, there would be no limit to the

⁴⁹ Sylvias, “From Washington,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, February 6, 1849.

⁵⁰ Citizen of Claiborne, “Home Correspondence,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, July 3, 1850. See also “Mr. Conrad,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, August 28, 1850.

⁵¹ “Speech of Mr. Clay,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, February 19, 1850.

northern crusade against slavery.⁵² To southern commentators, if a compromise was not reached that allowed for the expansion of slavery into the territories, the South would be doomed at the hands of the North, and crushed, just like aspiring nations in Europe.

Private citizens and journalists making these comparisons followed the lead of southern politicians, who frequently compared the oppression of limiting territorial slavery with the oppression of failed nationalities in Europe in their speeches and in official debates. Albert G. Brown, Democratic politician and former governor of Mississippi, made frequent usage of international comparisons to dramatize his fears of the limitation of slavery. During the crisis of 1850, he implored his fellow congressmen to “picture to yourselves Hungary, resisting the powers of Austria and Russia” to best approximate the sentiment and fears of “southrons.”⁵³ Whig Henry W. Hilliard of Alabama agreed that “if we submit, we have examples before our eyes of the condition to which we shall be reduced. Ireland – luxuriant, fertile, degraded, starving Ireland – is a picture of what we should be.”⁵⁴ At an 1850 political meeting in Macon, Representative William H. Stiles of Georgia, former *chargé d’affaires* to Austria, stated that the North’s strategy on the issue of territorial expansion was the same as that adopted by tyrannies such as Austria when it conquered Hungary.⁵⁵ Other politicians including Senator Robert M. T. Hunter of Virginia, the future Confederate secretary of state, and James Henry Hammond, outspoken defender of slavery and states’ rights, concurred that giving the

⁵² “Watchman, What of the Night?” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, October 29, 1850. See also “A Manifesto,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, March 11, 1851.

⁵³ “The Slave Question: Speech of Mr. Wm. H. Bissell, of Illinois,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, March 5, 1850.

⁵⁴ “Speech of Mr. Hilliard of Ala,” *Montgomery Daily Alabama Journal*, March 2, 1850.

⁵⁵ “Speech of Hon. Wm. H. Stiles at the Macon Mass Meeting,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, October 1, 1850.

Union into the hands of anti-slavery advocates would replicate the oppression of Ireland, Poland, and Hungary.⁵⁶ These southern politicians used their platform and visibility to advance the idea that the restriction of slavery in the territories would be similar to the oppression of aspiring nations of Europe at the hands of European tyrants, helping them to dramatize their defense of slavery. These international comparisons gave these southerners a language for expressing their fears and for enhancing their defense of slavery, while also internationalizing southerners' sense of their own nationhood.

To southerners, the expansion of slavery was necessary to protect the rights of the South. Any attempts by the North to limit slavery, then, were oppressive. By turning to comparisons with defeated nationalities in Europe, southerners sought to portray the extent of the oppression the South faced, or feared it would face, at the hands of the North. In doing so, southerners used an international lens to shape their sense of their place within their own nation, and of the values and institutions that were necessary to the preservation of that nation.

These international comparisons tapped in to an important element of southern thought on nationalism, and began to prepare influential southerners to see the South as a potential player in the international conversation about nationhood. Accordingly, as antebellum southerners began to debate secession, they utilized international comparisons to explore the possibility of an independent southern nation, using an international context to highlight both the benefits and drawbacks of secession as a course of action.

⁵⁶ "Congress," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, April 2, 1850; "Speech of Mr. Hunter, of Virginia, on the Territorial Question," *Richmond Enquirer*, April 5, 1850; Ignotus, "To the Hon. James H. Hammond," *Charleston Mercury*, November 18, 1858; "Admission of California," *Alexandria Gazette*, February 23, 1850; "New Hampshire Democracy," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, November 2, 1852.

The connection between aspiring nations in Europe and a potential southern nation, independent of the rest of the United States, first arose at the many southern conventions held throughout the South in the 1850s in order to deal with the sectional crisis. Although these meetings were far from unanimous in their debates over the possibility of secession, and, in fact, most of the delegates still advised loyalty to the Union, comparisons between the South and defeated nations of Europe nonetheless proliferated at these events as southerners explored the place of the South within the nation. For example, at the Nashville Convention, held with the purpose of uniting the South to protect southern interests, Felix Huston, ardent secessionist and former general of the Army of the Republic of Texas, informed his fellow delegates that southern states must cultivate independence, lest they “sink below the miserable state of Ireland.”⁵⁷ Southern conventions brought southerners together to discuss the South’s place within the nation, to determine the best way to protect southern interests, and even to explore the idea of secession. As southerners explicitly contemplated the South’s place within the Union, southerners turned to European examples to help them understand what was at stake in this conflict.

Outside of the conventions, comparisons between the South and aspiring nations in Europe helped southerners to weigh the potential consequences and possibilities of secession, playing a critical role in shaping antebellum southern opinion on secession. Many southern commentators used comparisons to help them understand various hypothetical situations in which their state may or may not want to secede. For example,

⁵⁷ Felix Huston, “To the Members of the Nashville Convention,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, June 5, 1850. See also “Another Sign,” *Richmond Enquirer*, October 15, 1850; “A Northern Man’s Opinion of the State Fair at Macon,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, November 18, 1851; “Glorious State Rights Meeting,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, July 9, 1851; “Great and Enthusiastic Meeting -- Reception of Hon. A. G. Brown at Jackson,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, October 23, 1850.

the *Macon Georgia Telegraph* explored the options available to the state of Georgia in case South Carolina should secede, concluding that for Georgia to join the Union in a war against a seceded South Carolina would be the equivalent of an Irishman being forced to fight with the English against Ireland.⁵⁸ Other southerners used international comparisons to ponder the likely consequences of a war between a seceding South and a North that fought to keep the South in the Union. A. G. Brown of Mississippi often utilized this type of comparison, and to him, these comparisons showed that secession could and should be embraced if necessary. Brown stated that if the North threatened slavery, the South should immediately dissolve the Union, and that the North should then look to the passion with which Hungary fought against Austria to see how hard the South would fight.⁵⁹ Many southerners concurred that the South would actually fight harder against the North than Hungary, Ireland, and other defeated nations had fought against their foes, which would ensure southern victory.⁶⁰ Southerners also suggested that such a war would have potentially negative consequences for the Union; for example, the *Macon Georgia Telegraph* believed that no less than the whole world would be watching such a war, lest the North recreate the defeat of Poland or Hungary in the South.⁶¹ Such comparisons bolstered southerners' belief that secession could be a viable course of action. Although stopping short of calling for secession, these international analyses

⁵⁸ "The Civil War Candidate," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, July 15, 1851.

⁵⁹ "Speech of the Hon. A. G. Brown, of Mississippi," *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, March 6, 1850.

⁶⁰ Felix Huston, "To the Members of the Nashville Convention," *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, June 5, 1850; "The Prospect Before Us - Slavery - The Union," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, January 7, 1851; "Letter to Senator Hammond Upon the Subjects of His Recent Speech at Barnwell," *Charleston Mercury*, November 4, 1858; "Speech of Hon. Alfred Iverson," *Charleston Mercury*, July 23, 1859.

⁶¹ "Consequences of Secession," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, May 27, 1851.

helped southerners shape their sense of the potential benefits that might occur should the South secede.

If international comparisons were useful for understanding the possible consequences of southern secession, more radical early secessionists also found them helpful in making their case that secession would not only be possible, but also would eventually be necessary. Georgia politicians Bailey and Harman, for example, asserted that, in order to prevent the South from suffering the much-feared fate of becoming another Poland or Hungary, southern secession may be necessary.⁶² An invitee to a mass meeting to discuss slavery in the territories concurred that secession may be necessary, as the current union between the North and South was that of Russia to Hungary.⁶³ A journalist for the *Macon Georgia Telegraph* warned as early as 1849 that the North's aggressions would either reduce the South to Ireland, or force disunion.⁶⁴ These southerners agreed that, if the nation continued on its path, the South would eventually be forced to take action to protect its rights, or it would face similar oppressions as defeated nationalities in Europe. The southerners who deployed these comparisons used them to bolster their case that secession was, or would be, necessary, making international comparisons an important part of the early debate over secession.

While international comparisons helped early secessionists make their case, secessionists were not the only southerners who used international comparisons to bolster their side in the debate over secession. Just as secessionists believed international comparisons pointed to the potential favorability of secession, anti-secessionist

⁶² "Messrs. Bailey and Harman," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, September 23, 1851.

⁶³ "Reply's to Invitation Given to Attend Mass Meeting," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, September 10, 1850.

⁶⁴ "From Washington," *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, February 6, 1849.

southerners believed that comparisons proved that secession was the incorrect course of action, and they used international comparisons to oppose secession. In a direct rebuttal to the secessionists, William John Grayson, a states' rights, proslavery, anti-secessionist South Carolina politician and journalist writing in the *Charleston Courier* under the pen name "Curtius," argued that the South should not secede, as the section had yet to face the oppression suffered by Hungary and Poland, and therefore secession would not be justified. Grayson revealed that in his opinion, the equation of the South with defeated nationalities in Europe was "midsummer nights dreams and nothing more – words merely, without any meaning." Showing unusual insight, Grayson then recognized that repetition, even false, has an impact, and that the secessionists had repeated their belief that the South was like Hungary or Poland often enough that they were wearing people down and convincing them there must be an issue.⁶⁵ As Grayson reveals, even though the comparisons were false and not all southerners supported them, they nonetheless were having an impact on southern thought on issues of nationalism. His comments also demonstrate that southerners on both sides of the secession debate used international comparisons to make their case.

Other southerners, also taking an anti-secession stance, looked to Europe as an example of the harms that would befall the South should the South secede, rather than should the South remain in the union. In particular, these critiques focused on the problems that came with dividing a nation. The Whig newspaper the *Victoria Texian Advocate* warned readers to look to the harms that had befallen a divided Poland to

⁶⁵ "The Wrongs of the South, Greater Than Those of Hungary or Poland," *Charleston Courier*, July 25, 1851.

understand the dangerous consequences of a national division.⁶⁶ On a similar note, a citizen writing to William E. Woodruff's *Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat* declared that "let the Union be destroyed" and "we plant a fresh dagger in the bosoms of the Mazzinis, the Garibaldiis, and the Kossuths of Italy and Hungary."⁶⁷ For some southerners, defeated nations in Europe furnished examples of the harms, rather than benefits, of secession. Antebellum southerners on both sides of the secession debate, then, looked to comparisons with Europe to support their arguments, revealing the centrality of international perspective to southerners' sense of their own nationhood.

As fire-eaters called for secession and southerners contemplated this idea, international comparisons helped them to process possible outcomes. Southerners on both sides of the issue used comparisons to support their cases. The international lens through which southerners were analyzing domestic concerns was thus important in shaping the debate surrounding secession, as well as to helping guide southerners in considering the South as potentially separate from the rest of the American nation.

The majority of antebellum comparisons between the South and defeated nations in Europe reveal a largely positive interpretation of revolutions abroad, but not all southerners agreed that the South was, or would be, similar to foreign aspiring nations. Anti-secessionists were among the southerners who viewed events in Europe through a negative, rather than positive, lens, but this negative interpretation was not limited to the secession debate. Because the liberal ideals of freedom and equality that were embodied in foreign revolutions threatened not only slavery, but also southern values of social order, conservative southerners feared the liberal nationalism emerging in Europe.

⁶⁶ *Victoria Texian Advocate*, August 14, 1851.

⁶⁷ "The Dissolution of the Union," *Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat*, April 5, 1850.

Although most international comparisons praised the aspiring nations in Europe and held them up as equivalents for the South, some southerners saw more similarities between European politics and northern politics. Previewing the conservative arguments that would emerge during the Civil War, some antebellum southerners criticized European-style nationalisms, blaming European ideology for the problems in the North. For example, the speaker at a Whig convention asserted that the reason why the North had betrayed the previously peaceful union between the sections was that it had been poisoned by “wild political theories” such as communism and red republicanism from France, Italy, and Germany.⁶⁸ Similarly, a reviewer for the *Southern Quarterly Review* noted with approval that Edward J. Pringle, author of *The People*, had “detected in this country symptoms of disease kindred to the fatal maladies which have infected Europe.”⁶⁹ Getting more specific about who, exactly, was being infected by these dangerous doctrines, a self-proclaimed “Lynchburg Virginian” wrote that the northern-dominated Congress was trying to create European-style radicalism.⁷⁰ Because of the threat that liberal European political ideals posed to southern conservatism, for some southerners the northern threat was best illustrated through comparisons between the North and Europe, not the South and Europe. Whether praising or criticizing aspiring European nations, then, southerners found comparisons with European nationalism useful for exploring the sectional tensions between the North and the South.

⁶⁸ “Address of the Whig Members of the Legislature and Convention,” *Alexandria Gazette*, April 30, 1851.

⁶⁹ P., “The People,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 9:17 (January 1854): 33. See also “The Fugitive Slave Law and the Union,” *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, September 10, 1851; “Substance of the Remarks of the Hon. Judge Rice,” *Charleston Courier*, July 30, 1851.

⁷⁰ Lynchburg Virginian, “Democracy - By a Democrat,” *Alexandria Gazette*, March 12, 1858. See also F. A. Ross, “Letter from the Rev. Dr. Ross, of Huntsville, Ala., to the Rev. Dr. A. Barnes, of Philadelphia,” *Charleston Mercury*, February 21, 1857.

International comparisons were helpful to southern commentators seeking to dramatize sectional issues, but southerners also turned to international comparisons to understand domestic issues that were not overtly sectional, revealing the extent to which they were increasingly understanding their own concerns, sectional or not, within an international framework. In the debate over annexation of foreign territories, southerners who both supported and opposed annexation used international comparisons to make their cases, utilizing analysis of foreign nationalisms to explore the concept of the boundaries and actions of their own nation. For some southerners, this meant that aspiring nations in Europe revealed the benefits of a more territorially limited nation, as annexation restricted the self-determination of the annexed territory. The *Richmond Whig*, for example, was an outspoken opponent of annexation, and frequently compared American annexation of Texas and Mexican territories to the division of Poland by European powers. In fact, the *Whig* declared such annexation to be nothing less than the “most enormous public crime, which had been perpetuated since the first partition of Poland.”⁷¹ The *Alexandria Gazette* concurred as to the harms of annexation, declaring that the United States should not annex Cuba as doing so would be an act of despotism, and the dire fates of Poland and Hungary show what despotism brings.⁷² For some southerners, Europe’s defeated nations furnished examples of the harms of annexation.

For others, however, these comparisons were absolutely false, and annexation, as shown by events in Europe, was a beneficial way to enhance the nation. The *Daily*

⁷¹ “More Secret History,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, August 15, 1848. See also “Progress of Events,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, January 25, 1848; “The New Doctrine,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, February 8, 1848; “The Western Boundary of Texas,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, October 6, 1848; A Conservative, “Annexation of Cuba,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, December 31, 1852.

⁷² “Cuba,” *Alexandria Gazette*, September 19, 1849; *Alexandria Gazette*, November 2, 1853.

Richmond Examiner denounced the *Whig's* comparison, calling it “madness” to say that in annexing Texas, the American people were “equally guilty with the Holy Alliance in their detestable partition of Poland, and with the ruthless and savage Cossacks, who have crushed Hungary.”⁷³ For the *Examiner*, the case studies of Hungary and Poland revealed only what the annexation of Texas was not. The editors of the *Examiner* were not the only southerners to believe that European history supported the idea of annexation; the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* wrote that Cuba was to the United States what Lombardy was to Sardinia, implying that both were parts of a larger whole that should be united.⁷⁴ The fact that southerners across the political spectrum were using comparisons with nationalist movements in Europe to advance their beliefs about the appropriate actions and borders of their nation shows the extent to which this international lens had become critical to southern understanding of domestic events and of their own nationality.

In the years following the revolutions of 1848, southerners increasingly turned to comparisons with defeated and aspiring nations in Europe to help them understand their own domestic affairs. On issues such as secession and annexation, southerners from both ends of the spectrum used international comparisons to make their point. This rich debate, incorporating the issues of European nationalisms on both sides, reveals the importance of international comparisons to southerners’ developing sense of the boundaries and limits of their own nation, including the South’s place within that nation.

The 1850s were a decade of sectional tension and turmoil in which southerners increasingly saw the South and its values as distinct from the rest of the nation. Particularly in times of greatest conflict, southerners began to analyze domestic issues

⁷³ “The Cloven Foot,” *Richmond Enquirer*, September 18, 1849.

⁷⁴ “Something of a Parallel,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 8, 1859.

within an international context to help them understand the issues and prove their arguments. Instead of using American values to analyze nationalisms abroad, southerners were now using analyses of nationalist movements in Europe to clarify and shape their own national values, preparing them to ultimately use an international lens to help them shape a southern nation.

Analysis of the arrival of foreign revolutionaries in the US, and the creation of comparisons between the oppression of aspiring nationalities abroad and the oppression that southerners feared at the hands of the North, helped southerners to clarify their position on sectional and national issues and to make sense out of the place of their region within the nation. Debate over the famous nationalists led southern commentators to believe that the South took a distinctly southern perspective on issues of nationalism. Comparisons of oppression, real and feared, helped southerners express their fears, not only about slavery, but also of the place of the South within the nation. As debate over secession intensified, southerners on both sides of the issue used international comparisons to seek support for their position. The widespread nature of international comparisons, appearing at all points of the southern political spectrum, reveals the extent to which southerners were using an international lens to shape their beliefs about their own nation in the 1850s.

Southern commentators' international analysis of sectional issues throughout the 1850s prepared southerners to think of the South as an individual player on issues of nationhood. These debates clarified southerners' beliefs about the desired values of nationhood, and intensified their growing sense that the North and South had different national values. In a decade of conflict and division, European nationalisms provided

southerners with a model of nationalism that they could debate and utilize at will to help them understand their own national issues. This international contextualization of domestic issues, and this growing sense of differing northern and southern values, would be critical to preparing southerners to consider secession in 1860.

Chapter Three

Internationalizing Secession, 1860-1861

In December of 1860, South Carolina seceded from the United States.

Throughout the winter of 1860-1861 and the spring of 1861, ten more slave states would follow and would form the Confederate States of America. As these states left the Union and created a southern nation, secessionists and southern nationalists faced the necessity of explaining the causes of their secession and defining the national mission of the new southern nation. Legitimizing and justifying secession and crafting a clear national identity were necessary to win support both from fellow southerners, as well as, ideally, from an international audience. Accordingly, even before they seceded, secessionists began the process of laying out their case for secession and for an independent southern nation, developing a variety of arguments with which they defended the necessity of southern independence.

As they made their case for secession and for an independent southern nation, southern nationalists turned to their antebellum tradition of looking abroad and using analysis of nationalist movements in Europe to refine their opinions about the appropriate forms of nationhood. In the winter of secession and the early months of the Confederacy, when the necessity of creating a justification for the southern nation was most critical, prominent southern nationalists began crafting comparisons between the aspiring southern nation and aspiring nations in Europe in order to claim a precedent for their actions. Southern print discourse reveals that secessionists argued that their actions

followed the models presented by aspiring European nations in seceding from empires; they claimed that the same values of anti-tyranny and self-government motivated both southern nationalists and nationalists in Europe; and they asserted that the success of the Italian Risorgimento heralded similar success for the South, particularly focusing on international diplomatic recognition. These international comparisons provided secessionists with a means of justifying secession and of positioning their nationalist movement as one of many seeking support in the middle of the nineteenth century.

As southern nationalists seceded from the United States and began the process of creating their own nation, they were very aware of the need to present their new nation, and its reason for existence, in a positive way, both to fellow southerners as well as to the international community. They developed a variety of arguments through which they sought to justify and explain secession, and therefore to defend the need for a southern nation. One of the most widespread southern arguments for secession was that secession was a legitimate action undertaken to protect the rights of southerners against abuse by the North. Secessionists argued that secession was a peaceful redress for harms that the North had perpetrated, and would perpetrate, against the South, particularly citing attempts to limit slavery as evidence of this expected harm. Further, they claimed that independent states had voluntarily entered into a compact when the United States was created, and that these states could thus leave the union at any time.¹ Such arguments

¹ For examples of this rhetoric, see "Further From the South," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 21, 1860; "The South's Power of Self-Protection," *DeBow's Review* 20.5 (November 1860): 545-561; Python [John Tyler, Jr.], "The Issues of 1860," *DeBow's Review* 28.3 (September 1860): 245-272; J. M. Mason, "The Proposed State Convention," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, December 1, 1860; "State Convention," *Charleston Daily Courier*, December 19, 1860; "The Constitution of the Confederate States," *DeBow's Review* 6.1 (July 1861): 13-17; J. H. Thornwell, *The State of the Country: An Article Published from the Southern Presbyterian Review* (Columbia, SC: Southern Guardian Steam-Power Press, 1861), 3; Jabez L. M. Curry, "The Perils and Duty of the South... Speech Delivered in Talladega, Alabama, November 26, 1860," in *Southern Pamphlets on Secession, November 1860-April 1861*, ed. Jon L. Wakelyn (Chapel Hill:

underlay the claims that the South deserved independence due to the European-style tyranny it faced at the hands of the North.

A related argument was the claim that southern states were following the example of their revolutionary forebears by asserting the sovereignty of the people. Southern secessionists argued that they seceded to protect their rights just as the colonists had declared independence from Great Britain in order to protect their rights.² Indeed, Confederates styled themselves as heirs to the American Revolution, arguing that they were the true protectors of the ideals upon which the United States had been founded, while the North had drifted away from the original concept of the union.³ Comparing their actions to those of the revered founders of the United States, while on the surface paradoxical for a people breaking away from that same nation, bolstered southerners' claims that their secession resembled a widely-recognized precedent of nation formation.

Although secessionists cloaked their movement in language of rights, ultimately, the protection of slavery was the primary motivation for creating the Confederacy. Because human equality and freedom played such a large role in liberal nationalism,

University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 35-54; Rev. George H. Clark, "A Sermon, Delivered in St. John's Church, Savannah, On Fast Day, November 28, 1860," in *Southern Pamphlets on Secession, November 1860-April 1861*, ed. Jon L. Wakelyn (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 55-62.

² For analyses of the centrality of comparisons with the American Revolution to southern nationalism, see Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 15; Doyle, *Nations Divided*, 78-83; Richard E. Beringer et al., *The Elements of Confederate Defeat: Nationalism, War Aims, and Religion* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 30; Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 469-473; Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence*, 128-129; Rubin, *A Shattered Nation*, 14-25; Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 145-157, 174-181.

³ Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 14. For examples of these claims, see Edward Alfred Pollard, *The Southern Spy: Letters on the Policy and Inauguration of the Lincoln War, Written Anonymously in Washington and Elsewhere* (Richmond: West & Johnston, 1861), 13-16; "Northern Robbery," Broadside, Oldham Southern Independence Association, ca. 1860; Python [John Tyler, Jr.], "The Secession of the South," *DeBow's Review* 28.4 (October 1860): 367-392; "The South, In the Union or Out of It," *DeBow's Review* 29.4 (October 1860): 448-465; James L. Bowen, "Communication: To the Citizens of Virginia of Northern Origin," *Alexandria Gazette*, May 17, 1861; "A Foreign Corps," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, June 5, 1861.

however, slavery created a challenge for Confederates who attempted to present a sanitized argument for secession. Nonetheless, for many secessionists, slavery was at the heart of the southern cause, and the need to defend slavery was the key impetus for secession.⁴

While slavery and rights-based arguments were among the most prominent ways in which southerners justified and defined their new nation, southern nationalists also envisioned an international context to their nation that they argued legitimized their efforts to create a new nation. Southern opinion-makers sought to justify secession by contextualizing their attempt at nation-building within an international framework of nineteenth century nationalist movements in Europe. Secessionists and early Confederates argued that their attempt to create a new nation was part of a larger global spread of nationalism, and that the Confederacy was thus one of many aspiring nations deserving independence.⁵

Claiming equivalence between the southern attempt at nation-building and European nationalist movements required significant manipulation of both facts and ideals. The aspiring southern nation was fundamentally premised upon the defense of slavery, and therefore differed significantly in its ideology and principles from the more

⁴ Robert E. Bonner reveals the centrality of slavery to the development of southern politics and, ultimately, secession. Bonner, *Mastering America*. Stephanie McCurry argues that slavery shaped a conservative nationalism in the South that ran counter to the spirit of the age. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*. Manisha Sinha similarly argues that slavery shaped the conservative South Carolina politics that ultimately influenced southern ideology, leading to secession. Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*. For more examples of historians' discussions of slavery's centrality to the Confederacy, see Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Cause of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 10-15, 76-81; Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 58-81; Rubin, *A Shattered Nation*, 100-102; Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 52-6, 143-5.

⁵ Paul Quigley identifies this internationalization as one of the ways in which southerners looked inward, outward, and backward to justify the southern nation. Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*. Andre Michel Fleche reveals that southerners, like northerners, looked to the revolutions of 1848 when defining their stances on nationhood during the Civil War. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*.

liberal revolutions with which southerners claimed similarity. Southern analysts, however, proved willing to ignore the differences between southern nationalism and nationalisms in Europe. They used the limited vision of nationalism that they had developed through analysis of the revolutions of 1848 in order to avoid discussion of the liberal values of aspiring nations abroad that conflicted with a conservative desire for hierarchical power and social structure. They also built upon the anticipatory comparisons of the 1850s to argue that slavery was compatible with liberal nationalism by claiming that the North's attempts to end the supposed right to slavery in the South were the equivalent of tyrannical actions undertaken by European despots. Through these manipulations, secessionists and southern nationalists used international comparisons to legitimize secession and the southern nation, despite the contradictions between slavery and the prevailing mid-nineteenth century views of nationhood.

The most common international comparisons used by southern commentators focused on the values, causes, goals, and ideals supposedly shared by aspiring nations abroad and by the aspiring southern nation. As they built these comparisons, secessionists turned to the limited vision of nationalism they had clarified through analysis of the revolutions of 1848, which aided them in rejecting ideals such as equality that contradicted slavery, and in re-defining values such as liberty and self-government to exclude the rights of slaves. Using this limited vision of nationalism, southern nationalists claimed that the aspiring southern nation shared values such as self-government and the fight against tyranny with aspiring nations in Europe, and thus that the aspiring southern nation was seeking the same noble causes as those represented by more popular nationalist movements abroad.

Southern nationalists were particularly fervent in arguing that the South was seceding in order to be free of northern tyranny, which they claimed was similar to the tyranny that had led to nationalist movements throughout Europe. The fight against tyranny had been one of the national ideals that antebellum southerners had identified as appropriate for an aspiring nation through antebellum analysis of the revolutions of 1848, and thus was one of the values to which they now turned in their own nation-building efforts. As they had observed nationalist movements in Europe, southern analysts had largely concurred that aspiring nations in Europe had fought against despotism, and that this was a worthy fight. The newly united and independent Italian nation stood as the clearest example in southern minds of a nation that had triumphed despite long suffering at the hands of despotic powers and tyrants; time and again, various southern writers contrasted the despotism of Austria with the Italian desire for freedom and independence.⁶ Although by far the most successful example, Italy was not the only aspiring nation that southerners believed had faced tyranny and despotism. Southern journalists, politicians, and other opinion-makers had long favored Hungary's fight against despotic Austria; blamed Great Britain for perpetuating similar tyranny against Ireland that it had once wielded against the American colonists; and lamented that Poland

⁶ Brownwell, "Leaves from Italy and Tyrol;" "The French Republic," 199-200; William Alexander Sparks, letter to James Buchanan, April 30, 1848, in William Alexander Sparks Papers, Manuscript Division, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; *Charleston Mercury*, March 7, 1860 and June 7, 1860; J. D. B. DeBow, "Population – Operation of the Laws of Population in Europe and in the United States," *DeBow's Review* 2.3 (March 1850): 211; W. H. R., "Rome: Papal and Republican," 551; Schele De Vere, "Glimpses at Europe in 1848, Part III," 194; "The Victims of Presidential Tyranny," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 24, 1861; *Charleston Mercury*, April 1, 1848; Americus Featherman, Esq., "French Revolutionary History," *DeBow's Review* 4.6 (December 1860): 675; "Affairs in Italy," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, June 26, 1861.

was “degraded” by “odious despotism.”⁷ This long understanding of Italy and other aspiring nations as oppressed by despotism provided secessionists with a natural point of comparison when they began to argue that they were also held down by tyranny. This strategy of comparing tyrannies was appealing not only on the basis of its perceived ability to situate the aspiring southern nation within an international context, but also because it fit so closely with southern nationalists’ efforts to claim that the South seceded in order to preserve its rights.

Building from the antebellum understanding of aspiring nations abroad as seeking to overthrow despotism, as well as from antebellum equation of abolitionism with European tyranny, southern commentators compared the actions of the North to those of European despots, claiming that northern actions toward the South constituted similar oppression as that faced by aspiring, and defeated, nations in Europe.⁸ In order to bolster their claim that secession was necessary in order to protect southern rights, southern nationalists equated the North with the military despotism of Russia and argued that an unchecked North would perpetrate abuses worse than those suffered in defeated nationalist movements in Venice and Poland.⁹ James L. Bowen, a Virginian of northern origin, wrote to his fellow Virginians that the Union was acting as a despot of the South,

⁷ Samuel M. Sommes, “On Oration Delivered at the Request of the Citizens of Piscalaway, Prince Georges’s County, Md.,” *Alexandria Phenix Gazette*, July 11, 1832; “The Foreign News,” *Columbus Enquirer*, October 23, 1849; “Austria and Hungary,” *Alexandria Gazette*, May 30, 1849; “Fate of Hungary!” *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, September 15, 1849; “Reception of the President, at Keeseville,” *Daily Richmond Enquirer*, September 20, 1839; *Courrier de la Louisiane*, July 28, 1823; *Savannah Georgian*, May 6, 1831; “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 20, 1849.

⁸ Quigley argues that the desire to preserve slavery created a sense of victimhood in the South that made southern nationalism personal for southerners. Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 50-86. Claims that the North was oppressing the South, thereby necessitating secession, were common among secessionists.

⁹ “The Military Despotism,” *Charleston Mercury*, May 25, 1861; “The Spirit of Nationality,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 7, 1861; “Cotton for the Government,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, June 8, 1861.

just like Great Britain was a despot of Ireland.¹⁰ The *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, one of Richmond's most circulated newspapers, edited by conservative James A. Cowardin, claimed that northern tyranny was worse than that perpetrated against Italy by the dreaded "King Bomba," or Ferdinand II of the Two Sicilies.¹¹ This idea was apparent in the official political arena as well. Speaking to the Alabama secession convention, delegate James S. Clark argued that the South was "oppressed to the earth by a system... more intolerable than that of despotic Austria, and impelled likewise."¹² Secessionists believed that claiming that northerners acted like despots such as Austria and Russia, while arguing that the South, like Italy, Ireland, Hungary, and Poland, merely desired freedom from oppression, bolstered their claims that secession was necessary to protect the South from abuses by the North.

The North did not just act like a European despot, according to southern nationalists, however; southern opinion-makers also frequently analyzed the supposed ideological kinship that informed the actions of both the tyrannical North as well as tyrannical powers in Europe. The *New Orleans Daily Picayune* explained the Union

¹⁰ James L. Bowen, "Communication: To the Citizens of Virginia of Northern Origin," *Alexandria Gazette*, May 17, 1861.

¹¹ "The Victims of Presidential Tyranny," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 24, 1861.

¹² William R. Smith, *History and Debates of the Convention of the People of Alabama* (Montgomery, AL: White, Pfister & Co, 1861), 82. See also J. L. Power, *Proceedings of the Mississippi State Convention, Held January 7th to 26th, A. D. 1861* (Jackson, MS: Power & Cadwallader, Book and Job Printers, 1861), 77-78; "Sermon of the Rev. L. Muller," *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 17, 1861; "The 'Combinations' Spreading," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 28, 1861; "The South, In the Union or Out of It," 448-465; B. M. Palmer, *A Vindication of Secession and the South from the Strictures of Rev. R. J. Breckinridge in the Danville Quarterly Review* (Columbia, SC: Southern Guardian Steam-Power Press, 1861), 5, 13-14; John H. Reagan, "State of the Union. Speech... Delivered in the House of Representatives, Jan. 15, 1861," in *Southern Pamphlets on Secession, November 1860-April 1861*, ed. Jon L. Wakelyn (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 147; Daniel I. Dreher, *A Sermon Delivered by Rev. Daniel I. Dreher, Pastor of St. James' Church, Concord, N. C., June 13, 1861* (Salisbury, NC: The Watchman Office, 1861), 5-6.

government's confidence that the North would receive support from Austria and Russia by declaring that "such empires as Russia and Austria have a natural affinity for the principles of government developed at Washington," adding that the emperors "recognize coarse imitations of themselves in Abraham Lincoln."¹³ Similarly, a sermon preached in Jefferson County, Georgia, proclaimed that the actions of the North against the South would cause despots to celebrate, and Italy and Hungary to shriek, hinting at an affinity between the North and European despots, and the South and aspiring European nations.¹⁴ Highlighting the supposed shared values and good will between the Union government and despotic governments in Europe aided southern nationalists in drawing a connection between the abuses of European tyrants and the supposed abuses of the North, allowing them to justify their action of secession.

Following from their despotic actions and values, northerners' tyranny over the South supposedly created grave harm for southerners in the form of suppressed liberty and self-government. One of the reasons why northern tyranny was so fearful according to southern nationalists was that it limited southern liberty, just as European despots had restricted the liberty of aspiring nations in Europe. As the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* wrote, the North's opposition to southern secession was supposedly equally harmful to liberty as Austria's refusal to grant independence to Italy.¹⁵ John Tyler, Jr., son of the president, and later the Confederate secretary of war, wrote that the triumph of abolitionist politics in the North would signal the defeat of constitutional liberty, ushering

¹³ "Brethren Agree," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 19, 1861.

¹⁴ "National Danger," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, June 28, 1861.

¹⁵ "Concession, or Not?" *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 10, 1861.

in chaos similar to that following the French Revolution.¹⁶ Richmond's *Daily Dispatch* turned to American history and values to highlight the severity of the loss of liberty faced by the South; the editors wrote that Lincoln's abuses against the cause of liberty were not only equal to those perpetrated in Europe, but were even worse, since they occurred in a land consecrated to liberty.¹⁷ To secessionists, secession was necessary to ensure that liberty in the South would not be crushed as it had been in Europe.

To claim liberty as a goal of the southern nation required slave-holding southern nationalists to limit the definition of liberty to national, rather than individual, liberty. Southern commentators did just that. For example, a citizen by the initials P. R. G wrote to the *Richmond Whig*, distinguishing between the benefits of what he called constitutional liberty and the drawbacks of what he considered to be social liberty.¹⁸ Although comparisons of liberty required conservative southerners to ignore both the fullest implications of liberty, as well as the contradictions between liberty and slavery, southern nationalists nonetheless claimed that the aspiring southern nation, like aspiring nations in Europe, was motivated by a desire for liberty, and therefore was justified in seceding.

If northern despotism was harmful in part due to the limitations it placed on liberty, southern commentators argued, its harms against self-government and self-determination were perhaps even worse. Self-determination, like the fight against tyranny, was another value that southerners had confirmed as suitable for an aspiring

¹⁶ Python [John Tyler, Jr.], "The Issues of 1860," 248.

¹⁷ "Bombs," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 30, 1861.

¹⁸ P. R. G., "The National Crisis," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, December 14, 1860.

nation through their analysis of the revolutions of 1848.¹⁹ Throughout the antebellum period, revolutions that were seen as fighting for national self-determination had won the support and praise of southern analysts.²⁰ In contrast, revolutions that appeared imposed on a people or nation received criticism.²¹ Utilizing a limited definition of self-government that focused on national self-determination rather than on individual rights to have a voice in government, secessionists claimed that a southern nation was necessary because northerners were preventing southern exercise of self-government. Secessionists argued that northern politics, particularly the rise of abolitionism and the Republican Party, had altered the original form of American government to the point that southern voices were no longer being heard. Southern nationalists thus argued that secession was necessary to protect self-government, just as it had been for aspiring nations abroad. For example, the *Macon Daily Telegraph* accused the North of such severe harms to self-government that even Europe would react in disgust.²² In a report on the Louisiana secession convention, the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* urged that Louisiana must follow aspiring nations in Europe, who, though defeated, kept pushing for “the principle that communities have the indestructible right to create their own governments, and to throw

¹⁹ McCurry and Sinha argue that anti-democratic principles were central to southern politics. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*; Sinha, *Counterrevolution of Slavery*, 9-62.

²⁰ “Speech of the Hon. [initials] Rhett,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, September 24, 1850; “The French Republic,” 197-241; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 26, 1849; “Important Foreign News,” *Victoria Texian Advocate*, November 9, 1848; “Fate of Hungary!” *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, September 15, 1849.

²¹ “Important Foreign News,” *Victoria Texian Advocate*, November 9, 1848; “Rome and Her Besiegers,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 17, 1849; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 30, 1849; “From New York,” *Macon Georgia Telegraph*, May 1, 1849.

²² “National Danger,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, June 28, 1861. For more examples of accusations of Northern harm to southern self-government, see “United Action of Virginia,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 30, 1861; “The ‘Combinations’ Spreading,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 28, 1861.

off those which they find to be intolerable.”²³ Even Jefferson Davis claimed in an 1861 speech in Congress that southerners had the same right to “abrogate and modify their form of Government whenever it did not answer the ends for which it had been established” that had been enacted in the American Revolution, and that foreign subjects of Austria had called upon in their bids for independence.²⁴ Comparisons of the self-determination supposedly denied to the South and to aspiring nations in Europe, then, revealed the harms that northern tyranny would create, thus supposedly justifying secession.

Interestingly, foreigners living in the South were among the loudest voices popularizing comparisons of self-government in the South and in their native countries, perhaps because they were familiar with this language from their countries of origins. Comparisons crafted by foreigners living in the South provided their fellow southerners with what appeared to be proof of the validity of the comparisons between southerners’ and foreign nationalists’ desires for self-determination. The *Charleston Mercury*’s foreign correspondent John Mitchel, an Irish nationalist, southern sympathizer, and fervent supporter of slavery, frequently drew comparisons between the oppression faced by the South and by Ireland. For example, Mitchel reported that the force that the North deployed against the South was typical of that seen in Europe, and was equally harmful

²³ “How Will They Dare?” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 29, 1861.

²⁴ Jefferson Davis, “Remarks on the Special Message on Affairs in South Carolina. Jan 10, 1861,” in *Southern Pamphlets on Secession, November 1860-April 1861*, ed. Jon L. Wakelyn (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 129. See also Robert M. T. Hunter, “Speech... on the Resolution Proposing to Retrocede the Forts... Delivered in the Senate of the United States, January 11, 1861,” in *Southern Pamphlets on Secession, November 1860-April 1861*, ed. Jon L. Wakelyn (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 282; “Out of Their Own Mouths,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 30, 1861; “Concession, or Not?” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 10, 1861; “Secession Is Freedom,” *Charleston Mercury*, December 10, 1860.

against the principle of self-government, citing Russia's oppression of Poland and Great Britain's oppression of Ireland as illustrations.²⁵ Similarly, a former Italian claiming Confederate affiliation wrote to the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* that Italy had succeeded in its fight for "the principle that every nation has a natural right of choosing her own government," the same fight that the South now undertook, asking readers "has not this very war taken place for a long time between Italy and her tyrants? Is not the principle on which Italy has struggled entirely the same as that which the South has adopted in America?"²⁶ O. A. Lochrane, an Irishman living in the South, likewise argued that the South represented the same principle for which the Irish fought, namely the "right of a people to select their own rulers – the right of a people to change their own Government."²⁷ To many southerners, both native- and foreign-born, then, the new southern nation shared a common goal of self-determination with the nationalist movements of Europe. A fight for self-determination, similar to that in Italy and elsewhere, was a fight for a value that had long been established as a main principle of nineteenth century nationalism. Although claiming self-government as a value of the southern nation required an alternative vision of this value that allowed for the elimination of slaves' rights, southern nationalists nonetheless compared their desire for self-government with European nationalist movements' desire for self-government, allowing them to claim that southern secession fit within the mainstream of nineteenth century international politics.

²⁵ J. M. [John Mitchel], "From Europe: Our Paris Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, June 8, 1861.

²⁶ "To the Italians of America," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 25, 1861.

²⁷ O. A. Lochrane, "To the Irish People," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, May 16, 1861.

The idea that the North was a tyrannical power, oppressing the South and stripping southerners' ability to achieve self-government, depended in part upon the perception that the North and South were different peoples, and that the North was thus an illegitimate foreign power imposing its will upon the South. While the primary arguments with which southern nationalists justified secession dealt with the language of rights, ethnic nationalism, or the idea that a people deserved nationhood based on cultural and historical distinctiveness, also shaped southern thought about nationhood.²⁸ This language of distinctiveness influenced southern discourse about the South's place relative to other nations.²⁹ One southerner who spoke of the South's distinctiveness from the North, comparing it to that of aspiring European nations' differences from their oppressors, was James M. Mason, Virginia congressman and later diplomat for the Confederacy. Mason justified his desire for Virginia to hold a secession convention by arguing that "the people of the North... have separated themselves from the people of the South, and the government they thus inaugurate will be to us the government of a foreign power. We shall stand to such powers as Italy to Austria, and Poland to Russia. It will be

²⁸ For a discussion of types of nationalism, see Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America*. The most important southern claim to distinctiveness from the North was the myth that southerners were descended from cavaliers and northerners from Puritans. See William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*. Historians have long debated whether or not the South was, in fact, significantly distinct from the North. For discussions of the South as a unique region, see W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1941); James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For discussions of the South as American, and therefore not distinct, see Edward Pessen, "How Different From Each Other Were the Antebellum North and South?" *American Historical Review* 85.5 (1980): 1119-1149; Potter, *The Impending Crisis*; Carl N. Degler, *Place Over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Kenneth T. Stampp, *The Imperiled Union: Essays on the Background of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

²⁹ Michael T. Bernath reveals the importance of the creation of a distinct southern cultural and intellectual life to the development of southern nationalism. Bernath, *Confederate Minds*. Quigley reveals the influence that European ethnic nationalism had on the development of southern nationalism. Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 30-41.

one people governed by another people.”³⁰ The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* agreed, writing upon Lincoln’s inauguration that “this day the South comes under a dominion which has been forced upon her by the North; this day she begins a servitude as involuntary as that of Italy to Austria; this day inaugurates a foreign rule as distinct and complete as if we had been conquered by European bayonets,” adding a few days later that the struggle of the South against the North “is the struggle of Italy against Austria; of a Confederation of independent States, occupied by a homogeneous people, against foreign oppressors, who have violated the common league into which they have entered.”³¹ Southern nationalists claimed that the North and South were distinct, and that the North thus constituted an illegitimate foreign power, imposing its own agenda on the South and thereby stripping southerners of their right to self-government. Deriving from this view, they claimed that through secession, the South sought only to establish self-government that would free southerners from any northern tyranny.

As southerners discussed the supposed tyranny perpetrated by the North, and the harms that this tyranny of a supposedly foreign power caused for southern liberty and self-government, newly-elected president Abraham Lincoln played a central role in their international comparisons, featuring prominently as the worst of tyrants and despots, equal to or surpassing any European despot. Even before the election of 1860, the *Charleston Mercury*, a secessionist paper owned by Robert Barnwell Rhett, reported that Lincoln’s election would create a situation similar to those in much-oppressed Ireland

³⁰ “Virginia State Convention – Able Letter from Senator Mason,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, December 5, 1860.

³¹ “The Fourth of March,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, March 4, 1861; “The Spirit of Nationality,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 7, 1861. See also John H. Gilmer, *Letter Addressed to Hon. Wm. C. Rives, by John H. Gilmer, on the Existing Status of the Revolution, &c.* (Richmond, 1864), 10.

and Poland, and in Italy before Italy gained independence.³² Lincoln's inauguration only increased this vitriol, with the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* claiming that Lincoln's inauguration marked the conquering of the South, as complete as if the South had been "annexed to the throne of some continental despot."³³

Popular as justifications for secession, these accusations that Lincoln was a despot also continued throughout the early war, as southern nationalists continued to define their actions and their nation through comparisons with European despotism. In the summer of 1861, the *Charleston Mercury* informed its readers that "the cruelty and despotism of the Lincoln government have not been exceeded in late times – not even in Austria."³⁴ Indeed, even the "foreign despotism" faced by Italy was "not as base and contemptible as the Lincoln despotism" according to the *Richmond Daily Dispatch*.³⁵ By comparing Lincoln to the supposed despots of Italy, such as the Austrian empire, Confederates furthered their argument that the southern states seceded because of tyrannical oppression, the same foe that Italy and other aspiring European nations fought in their struggles for independent nationhood.

Comparisons of northern and European tyranny, and the of the right to self-government sought by the southern nation and aspiring European nations, constituted an important part of secessionists' efforts to justify secession, as they used these

³² "Mr. Douglas and Coercion," *Charleston Mercury*, October 23, 1860.

³³ "The Fourth of March," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, March 4, 1861.

³⁴ "Our Richmond Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, August 28, 1861.

³⁵ "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 11, 1861. For more analyses of Lincoln as a despot similar to those in Europe, see Troup, "To the People of the South," *Charleston Mercury*, November 5, 1860; "The 'Combinations' Spreading," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 28, 1861; *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 21, 1861; *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the Session of 1861-1862* (Richmond, VA: William F. Ritchie, Public Printer, 1861), v.

comparisons to claim a place for the South within the larger mainstream of nineteenth century nationalism. Despite southern nationalists' claims, however, the aspiring southern nation was not premised upon the same goals and values as aspiring nations in Europe. Ultimately, the defense of slavery was southern nationalists' main concern. A slave-holding society, based upon inequality and hierarchical power structures, differed drastically in ideology from nationalist movements inspired by ideas of equality, freedom, and democracy, undermining the validity of southerners' comparisons.

Further complicating the comparisons was the reality that the South was not actually oppressed by the North. Any oppression was more anticipated than actual, and was, once again, based upon supposed harms against slavery. To southern nationalists' international audience, northern attempts to restrict slavery did not equal the oppression of defeated nations abroad, an issue with which later Confederates would have to deal. For many elite southerners, however, northern abolitionism represented a legitimate abuse – or potential abuse – of what they saw as the South's right to own slaves. Since the 1850s, southerners had been using comparisons between oppression in Europe, and the oppression they feared the limitation of slavery would bring to the South, in order to dramatize their defense of slavery. As they undertook the process of secession and nation-formation, they expanded these comparisons to justify secession on the basis that northern attempts to limit slavery constituted despotism equivalent to that found in Europe.

Comparisons of tyranny thus required significant ideological manipulation on the part of secessionists, as slave-holders ignored the actual lack of oppression, as well as the vast gulf between nationalist movements motivated by ideals of freedom and equality and

a nationalist movement motivated by conservatism and slavery. International comparisons proved so compelling to southerners, however, in part because of these inconsistencies. Southern nationalists used comparisons to center their slave-based nation as one of many other aspiring nations in order to claim that, despite the contradictions between slavery and liberal nationalism, the aspiring slave-holding southern nation was still a part of the larger movement of nationalism.

Southern analysts were explicit in connecting attempts to end slavery with European-style tyranny, making it clear that they believed that offenses against slavery still qualified as offenses against legitimate national rights, and that the South was therefore justified in seeking independence under the guise of liberal nationalism. For example, a citizen by the initials P. R. G. wrote a letter to the editor of the *Richmond Whig* arguing that Italy, while under Austrian rule, was the best example of a nation lacking political liberty, which he defined as distinct from social liberty, such as freedom from slavery, with the latter kind of liberty being undesirable. He then suggested that if the South threw off northern rule, it would enjoy the same right of political liberty that Italy, now free of Austria, enjoyed.³⁶ To P. R. G., by freeing themselves of northern abolitionists, the South could achieve the same freedom as a nation like Italy, and do so while still preserving slavery. Similarly, Clement Clay, a politician from Alabama, warned that if the North succeeded in dictating the national conversation about slavery and the territories, the South would be “doomed to worse shame, subjugation and vassalage, than Ireland or Hungary now endures,” urging that southerners must take care

³⁶ P. R. G., “The National Crisis,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, December 14, 1860.

not to allow this to happen.³⁷ As early as March of 1860, John Tyler, Jr. wrote in *DeBow's Review* under the penname "Python" that the triumph of Black Republicanism would lead to the fall of property rights, pointing to revolutionary France as an example of the chaos that would follow.³⁸ Of course, slavery was the primary property right with which most elite southerners were concerned. These comparisons make it clear that the oppression that secessionists feared was the elimination of slavery, and that they believed that arguing that such an elimination of slavery equaled tyranny would help them legitimize secession.

Claiming that their desire to preserve slavery was equivalent to European nations' desire to be free of political oppression allowed southern nationalists to attempt to legitimize their creation of a slave-holding nation. Despite the contradictions between slavery and liberal nationalism, southern nationalists embraced international comparisons that helped them cloak their desire to preserve slavery in the language of nationalism, and to situate the preservation of slavery as an equivalent national goal with those pursued by aspiring nations abroad. Even though these claims were inaccurate, southern nationalists sought to use these international comparisons to help them make their case that the southern nation deserved membership in the international family of nations.

The importance of international comparisons of tyranny, and one of the reasons why secessionists utilized these comparisons despite the ideological inconsistencies inherent to them, can be seen in southern opinion-makers' efforts to not only use said comparisons to justify secession, but also to use them to gain the support of their fellow southerners. Southern nationalists used comparisons of tyranny as a rallying cry and call

³⁷ C. C. Clay, Jr., "Letter from Hon. C. C. Clay, Jr.," *Charleston Mercury*, June 1, 1860.

³⁸ Python [John Tyler, Jr.], "The Issues of 1860," 245-272.

to arms for their audiences. As secessionists sought support for their agenda, they urged their fellow southerners to fight against the northern despotism or risk a similar or worse fate than that of the aspiring nationalities that southerners had followed in Europe. The *Charleston Mercury* reported with approval, for example, that Mr. Charles O’Conor, an Irishman in New York, had given a speech declaring that without action, “the people of the Southern States will submit to insults and outrages, and to become subject provinces, precisely as... Ireland has long been to Britain, as many other nations have been subject to tyrannical and monarchical States.”³⁹ Similarly, a self-identified southern Democrat wrote to the *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate* that the South must follow the example of Italy in throwing off tyranny and monarchy, lest the South face the fruits of old world tyranny.⁴⁰ Threatening that if they allowed northern dominance to continue, southerners would suffer the fate of oppressed nations of Europe aided secessionists not only in defining their cause, but also in soliciting the support of fellow southerners. When faced with the necessity of gaining supporters for the causes of secession and then southern nationalism, as well as with the necessity of justifying secession, southern nationalists turned to comparisons with European despotism in order to situate the aspiring southern nation within the larger international movement of nationalism.

Comparisons of the challenges faced and values shared by southern nationalism and nationalisms in Europe were important to secessionists’ efforts to justify secession and to internationalize the southern cause. International comparisons defined the

³⁹ “The True Issue in the Presidential Election,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 12, 1860.

⁴⁰ A National Democrat, “The Crisis - Letters from the People,” *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, December 9, 1860. For more examples of calls to action via comparisons with European despotisms, see “The South, In the Union or Out of It,” 448-465; “Mr. Douglas and Coercion,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 23, 1860; “Sermon of the Rev. L. Muller,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 17, 1861.

Confederacy according to the values that southerners supposedly shared with these European nationalists. These comparisons also highlighted the harms that the South would supposedly face if it remained in the Union, harms that were similar to those faced by failed nationalities abroad. Through claiming similarity with aspiring nations in Europe, southern nationalists placed their efforts at nation-building within the larger context of the spread of nationalism. Doing so was particularly critical for southern nationalists' efforts to claim legitimacy despite the problems that their defense of slavery created for their claims to nationhood. By relying on limited definitions of key concepts, and focusing on those values that they claimed they shared with aspiring nations abroad, secessionists used international comparisons to legitimize southern efforts at nation-building.

International comparisons proved beneficial in helping southern nationalists claim legitimacy for their attempt at nation building, not only through bolstering claims that the southern nation represented widely recognized values of nationhood, but also by providing a precedent for secession in southern minds. Secessionists believed that if they could claim that not only their values and their cause, but also their methods, followed the model of nation-building presented by foreign nationalisms, such an argument would further strengthen their case for nationhood. Accordingly, secessionists looked abroad to find an aspiring nation that they could claim had been formed through secession.

Italy, which, unlike the many defeated nationalities of the revolutions of 1848, had recently succeeded in gaining unity and independence, proved particularly critical to these comparisons. The Risorgimento, Italy's nationalist movement, had begun in the early part of the nineteenth century as various Italian states had sought Italian unity as

well as independence from foreign empires such as Austria. Despite many failures through the decades, by 1860, the majority of the Italian peninsula was successfully united under Piedmont control as the Kingdom of Italy. The success that Italy had enjoyed in its nation-building efforts made it a particularly attractive model for southern secessionists. Additionally, Italy enjoyed widespread international sympathy and support, further enhancing its appeal as a model of nation building.⁴¹

Because Italy provided such an attractive model of the process of claiming nationhood, secessionists sought to draw parallels between their actions and those of Italian nationalists in order to justify their own secession. In the winter and spring of 1861, as the southern states debated and began the process of secession, southern opinion-makers advanced the argument that Italy, like the aspiring southern nation, had been formed through secession. Southern reports frequently claimed that the Italian states had seceded from the Austrian Empire, and thus the Risorgimento had been a secession movement.⁴² Southern nationalists were so invested in the idea that Italy had been formed through secession that they argued that Italian secession inspired not only southern secession, but also other separation movements, such as Ireland's struggle for independence from Great Britain.⁴³ Southern nationalists' belief in the Italian states' supposed secession from their foreign rulers helped to establish the South's right to secede in southerners' minds by seemingly proving that secession could be used to form a

⁴¹ Denis Mack Smith, *The Making of Italy*; Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento*.

⁴² "French Recognition of a Southern Government," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 13, 1861; "Correspondence of the Courier," *Charleston Daily Courier*, March 13, 1861.

⁴³ "Secession in Ireland," *Charleston Mercury*, January 31, 1861.

successful nation.⁴⁴ While southern commentators did also speak of the Risorgimento as a unification movement, the idea that Italy had gained independence at least in part through secession was nonetheless widespread among southern analysis, and widely used as a tactic to legitimize southern secession.⁴⁵

These claims of similarity with Italy on the basis of secession once again required significant manipulation on the part of southerners. Most contemporaries understood that the southern states' secession from the Union on the basis of slavery was not the same action as Italian nationalists' struggles for unity and independence, and that secession and unification were not similar methods of nation-building. Nonetheless, many southern nationalists chose to interpret the actions of Italian nationalists in a way that bolstered southerners' international comparisons. Characterizing the Risorgimento as a secession movement rather than as a unification movement allowed southern nationalists to claim Italy as an example of a new nation based upon secession, bolstering their argument that southern secession was a legitimate method of nation-building, and was part of the mainstream of nineteenth century nationalism.

If Italy provided a model of a nation supposedly built through secession, it also seemed to provide proof that such an attempt at nation-building would ultimately be successful, according to secessionists. As they undertook the extreme actions of seceding from the Union and building a new nation, secessionists sought reassurance as to the advisability of their actions. Turning once again to international comparisons, southern

⁴⁴ "French Recognition of a Southern Government," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 13, 1861. For further discussion of European precedents, see "Legislative Proceedings," *Charleston Daily Courier*, November 10, 1860.

⁴⁵ "The Union of Italy," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, December 1, 1860; "Italy United," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 28, 1860.

nationalists argued that their secession and that the Confederacy would be as successful as the Risorgimento and Italy had been. International comparisons thus not only proved secession to be legitimate in secessionists' minds; they also proved secession to be the correct course of action and all but guaranteed success, at least according to southern analyses. When the future of the South seemed uncertain, southern nationalists turned to international comparisons for reassurance.

In the winter of the secession crisis, southern nationalists looked to Italy for guarantees that the actions they were considering would be successful. In particular, advocates of secession used comparisons with Italy to strengthen their case for secession, using international comparisons as a way to encourage other southern states to secede and join the new southern nation. These secessionists argued that Italy's successful unification predicted that, if the southern states united together, they would be equally successful. This was an ironic stance for many reasons, not only because these same southerners interpreted the Risorgimento as a secession movement, but also because secession constituted disunion, not unity, and was widely recognized as such. Nonetheless, a reporter for the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* directed readers to consider the success that Italy had gained upon uniting, arguing that if southern states united together against the Union, they could gain equal strength.⁴⁶ Similarly, an Italian correspondent wrote in the *Fayetteville Observer*, an originally Unionist paper that began publishing pro-Confederate articles during the Civil War, that having witnessed the Italian revolution first-hand, he believed that the only way for secession to succeed was

⁴⁶ "New Line of Sectionalism," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 8, 1860.

for seceding southern states to unite, as the Italian states had done.⁴⁷ Despite all evidence and arguments to the contrary, the unity of Italy seemed to promise success to secessionists if they followed Italy's example in uniting the southern states. This argument is an excellent example of southern nationalists' tendency to manipulate the ideals and facts in order to support their international comparisons; as such, it also reveals the importance of these international comparisons to southern nationalists' efforts to define, legitimize, and ensure the success of the southern nation.

While unity provided perhaps a dubious guarantee of success, the official diplomatic recognition of the new Italian nation by European powers proved much more promising for secessionists seeking indications that their actions would lead to success. Italy gained recognition from European powers including Great Britain and France, as well as from the United States, in the spring of 1861, just as southern nationalists were excited about the possibilities of the new Confederacy. Southern reports eagerly anticipated that once Italy achieved official diplomatic recognition from other nations, the Confederacy was sure to quickly attain the same, revealing the fervency of Confederates' belief that their nation belonged alongside Italy as one of the new nations of the nineteenth century, and would be successful in achieving that status. In a typical expression of these beliefs, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* wrote that "we are happy to see it announced that the French Government will soon recognize the independence of Italy, to be followed, it is predicted, by a speedy recognition of the Confederate States. Both of these Governments have been brought into existence by the popular voice, and both have

⁴⁷ "From Italy," *Fayetteville (NC) Observer*, February 25, 1861. See also "Legislative Proceedings," *Charleston Daily Courier*, November 10, 1860; "Opening Celebration of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad," *Charleston Mercury*, November 5, 1860. Anti-secessionists also used comparisons with Italy's unity to bolster their case; see "Anti-Secession in North Carolina," *Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette*, January 5, 1861.

bravely established in the field their claims to independence.”⁴⁸ As the secession crisis gave way to nation formation in the spring of 1861, southern nationalists utilized comparisons of claims to diplomatic recognition as an additional way of bolstering the perceived legitimacy of the new southern nation.

Even as they were beginning the process of creating a nation, Confederates immediately recognized the importance of gaining diplomatic recognition. The Confederacy quickly established formal diplomatic efforts in order to win recognition and support from the major powers of Europe. Gaining the recognition of France and especially Great Britain, a major trading partner of the USA and the would-be CSA, would have benefitted the Confederacy immensely, through both public opinion as well as actual aid.⁴⁹ Accordingly, in fall of 1861, the new Confederate government sent James M. Mason to London and John Slidell to Paris, charged with the mission of winning foreign support for the new southern nation. Initially, southerners were confident that these efforts would quickly bear fruit. Although Confederates were fully aware of the benefits that diplomatic relations could bring them, however, and despite some European pro-Confederacy sentiment that encouraged southern hopes, Confederates never succeeded in gaining recognition from foreign nations, in part due to the pro-slavery orientation of the Confederacy.⁵⁰ Later Confederates would be forced to deal with the

⁴⁸ “Italian and Southern Independence,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, July 13, 1861. See also “The Queen’s Proclamation and the Blockade,” *Charleston Mercury*, June 4, 1861; Gamma, “Letter from Paris,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 13, 1861; “Our Foreign Policy,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 29, 1861.

⁴⁹ Charles M. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998); Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931).

⁵⁰ Gregory Louis Mattson, “Pariah Diplomacy: The Slavery Issue in Confederate Foreign Relations” (doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1999), 9-21. See also Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*.

lack of foreign recognition, but in the spring of 1861, hopes of recognition still flourished throughout the South.

As new Confederates sought diplomatic recognition, they turned once again to international comparisons to bolster their case that they were an independent nation and deserved to be recognized as such. Although Confederate politicians and diplomats and their European targets spent little time debating comparisons between the Confederacy and Italy, domestic discourse on the new southern nation's place in the international community of nations devoted much attention to arguing that the Confederacy deserved the same international diplomatic recognition given to Italy.⁵¹ This argument built on the previously-discussed claims that southern secession was a similar action to Italy's fight for independence from Austria; that the North was tyrannical despot oppressing the South, like Austria had been a tyrannical despot oppressing Italy; and that the South, like Italy, represented the values of self-government and liberty. If Italy deserved recognition, then, so too did the Confederacy, at least in the minds of many southern nationalists. As early as November of 1860, foreign correspondent John Mitchel was speculating in the *Charleston Mercury* that Europeans would perceive the secession of South Carolina to signal the creation of a new power in the Americas, similar to the recent creation of a new power in Europe with the formation of Italy.⁵² Like the comparisons of national values, then, comparisons of claims for official international

⁵¹ Confederate secretary of state R. M. T. Hunter did authorize Mason to inform the British government of the Confederacy's supposed similarities to Italy, emphasizing the positive actions Britain had taken toward Italy. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 59. However, diplomatic strategies predominantly focused on cotton. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 21-27.

⁵² "Our Paris Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, December 20, 1860. See also "French Recognition of a Southern Government," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 13, 1861; "France and the South," *Charleston Mercury*, May 10, 1861; "The Queen's Proclamation and the Blockade," *Charleston Mercury*, June 4, 1861.

recognition aided southern nationalists in legitimizing their nation, further proving that secession would be a success.

Comparisons of claims to diplomatic recognition proved particularly prophetic of success, at least in southern minds, once Italy received recognition. When Italy gained official recognition from European powers in spring of 1861, southern nationalists celebrated that their own recognition would soon be forthcoming. In particular, France's recognition of the Kingdom of Italy sparked excitement among southerners. In July of 1861, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reported that France's impending recognition of Italy boded well for the Confederacy, as Italy and the Confederacy were "both creatures of the same god" and therefore to recognize one was to recognize the other.⁵³ An anonymous southerner called "Gamma," writing from Europe, reminded readers that recognition of the Confederacy was linked to that of Italy, and as France had recognized Italy, recognition of the Confederacy was assured.⁵⁴

One of the reasons why France's recognition of Italy was so encouraging for southerners was that French officials had long been hinting at support for the Confederacy by drawing the same comparisons between Italy and the Confederacy that southern nationalists themselves did. Early in 1861, French diplomats declared that the South had the same right to secede from the North that Italian states had to secede from Austria.⁵⁵ As recognition of Italy became more likely, French officials mixed comparisons between Italy and the Confederacy into these declarations of support. In

⁵³ "American Affairs in France," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, July 11, 1861. See also "Italian and Southern Independence," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, July 13, 1861.

⁵⁴ Gamma, "Letter from Paris," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 13, 1861.

⁵⁵ "French Recognition of a Southern Government," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 13, 1861.

spring of 1861, Edouard Thouvenel, French minister of foreign affairs, urged southerners not to give up hope for recognition by France, as France had not yet recognized Italy, and recognition of both would surely be forthcoming.⁵⁶ No less a person than Napoleon III, emperor of France, proclaimed that the Confederacy “has the same claims for its acknowledgment as a new kingdom that Italy had,” thus bolstering Confederates’ own estimation of their equivalence to Italy, and to Italian nationalism.⁵⁷ Such a statement by the leader of a major nation seemed to prove to southern nationalists that their comparisons were correct.

Southern nationalists were equally excited about what they perceived to be their impending recognition by Great Britain after that nation extended recognition to Italy. According to southern reporters, Great Britain could not fail to soon recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation after granting such recognition to Italy. The *Charleston Mercury* took the liberty of telling its readers they “have only to substitute the word ‘South’ for ‘Italy’ ... to see how complete is the application” of Lord John Russell’s speech supporting recognition of Italy, to the recognition of the Confederacy.⁵⁸ According to Paris correspondent John Mitchel, Great Britain, like France, was actually “eager” to recognize the Confederacy after recognizing Italy.⁵⁹ As with French politicians, some British commentators bolstered these hopes. Upon British recognition

⁵⁶ “France and the South,” *Charleston Mercury*, May 10, 1861; “France and the Southern Confederacy,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 6, 1861.

⁵⁷ “American Affairs in France,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, July 11, 1861. See also “Later from Europe,” *Fayetteville Observer*, July 8, 1861; “French Recognition of the Confederate States of America,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, July 3, 1861; *Charleston Daily Courier*, July 11, 1861.

⁵⁸ “Our Foreign Policy,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 29, 1861.

⁵⁹ J. M. [John Mitchel], “From Europe: Our Paris Correspondence,” *Charleston Mercury*, June 8, 1861.

of Italy, the *London Press* reported that even as Great Britain recognized Italy, another aspiring state, the Confederacy, sent commissioners who were confident of receiving recognition. This confidence, according to the *Press*, was “well founded.”⁶⁰ Because Great Britain formed the major target of Confederate diplomacy, British recognition of the Confederacy, like that granted to Italy, would be a major victory for southern nationalists, one that southern nationalists believed would prove the rightness of their actions and legitimacy of their nation, thereby promising success for their experiment in nation-building.

Recognition, along with the legitimization that recognition would grant to southern nationalists’ international comparisons, proved elusive. The hopeful reports of diplomatic efforts through spring and summer of 1861, however, reveal the desire that Confederates had to use similarities with Italy to place their own nation within a larger international context of aspiring nations seeking independence. They also reveal the importance of international comparisons to southern nationalists’ attempts to define and legitimize their secession and their new nation. Although southern commentators failed to convince the international community that if Italy deserved recognition, so too did the Confederacy, a problem with which later Confederates would be forced to deal, many Confederates themselves nonetheless clearly endorsed this similarity. The widespread and complex nature of this comparison demonstrates that Confederates argued that Italy and the Confederacy were fighting the same battle, using this claim to legitimize their

⁶⁰ “English Press on Recognition,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, May 20, 1861. See also “American Affairs in England,” *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, June 29, 1861; “American Topics in Europe,” *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, October 26, 1861; “The Recognition of the Southern Confederacy Not Remote,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 31, 1861. Other southern reports on British opinion reveal awareness that not all English supported recognition of the Confederacy. See “The English Government Organ on De Facto Recognition of the South,” *Daily Richmond Examiner*, September 30, 1861; “England and the Confederate States,” *Charleston Mercury*, May 8, 1861.

nation by connecting their own nationalist movement to the more widely-supported movements of Italy and other European nations. If foreign powers would only recognize the similarities between the Confederacy and Italy, Confederates argued, and grant the Confederacy the same diplomatic recognition granted to Italy, then the southern nation would be recognized as legitimate, and would be a success.

Through international comparisons, southern nationalists sought to justify their actions, define their values and identity, and guarantee the success of their experiment in nation-building. Claiming European nationalist movements as a precedent for their own attempt at nation-building aided secessionists in arguing that the South deserved the same independence as aspiring European nations, as well as in placing the aspiring southern nation within the mainstream of nineteenth century nationalism. These comparisons also helped secessionists and southern nationalists deal with the problem that slavery created for their claim to nationhood by focusing attention on the similarities that they supposedly shared with more widely supported nationalist movements in Europe while seeking to obscure the differences. International comparisons were central to southern efforts to place southern secession and the Confederacy within the mainstream of nineteenth century nationalism in order to claim legitimacy for an independent southern nation. These comparisons thus played a critical role in the ways in which secessionists and southern nationalists justified and legitimized secession, defined the southern nation, and sought support for the Confederacy during the winter of secession and the spring of nation-building.

Chapter Four

Defending International Comparisons, 1861-1865

Building on an antebellum tradition of understanding issues of nationalism through an international lens, secessionists had sought to legitimize their actions by claiming aspiring nations in Europe as precedents for a southern nationalist movement. These international comparisons that secessionists had used to justify secession continued to resonate with many Confederates during the war. Claiming that the North's actions against the South resembled the tyranny found in Europe and that the South represented the cherished values of liberal nationalism appealed to Confederates seeking to legitimize, define, and gain support for their nation, just as it had for secessionists seeking to defend secession.

While these ideas continued to be echoed throughout the South during the war, growing indications that southerners were alone in their belief that the Confederacy resembled new nations such as Italy, and aspiring nations such as Hungary, Poland, and Ireland, increasingly challenged Confederates' international self-perception. The problems inherent in southerners' claim that a slave-holding nation represented liberal values were apparent to northerners and Europeans alike, and the lack of support for the Confederacy from abroad increasingly emphasized the reality that the Confederacy did not, in fact, represent the same liberal tradition that had helped to inform many of the new and aspiring nations in Europe.

The failure of foreign powers to treat the Confederacy as the legitimate nation it aspired to be forced the Confederates who believed in their new nation's similarity to nations abroad to respond. More conservative southerners did so by positing an alternative interpretation of the relationship of the Confederacy to other new and aspiring nations, but the southerners who remained committed to the American tradition of liberal nationalism continued making the case that the Confederacy, like more popular new and aspiring nations abroad, represented liberal nationalist values and therefore deserved independence. Despite the fact that the Confederacy's illiberal emphasis on slavery and limited democracy was ideologically dissimilar from liberal nationalism's emphasis on natural rights, liberty, and freedom, for these Confederates, the vision of the Confederacy as an equal among the family of nations, one of many aspiring nations to seek independence in the middle of the nineteenth century, was a key part of their new national identity. In order to preserve this sense of the Confederacy as part of a larger trend of liberal nationalism, however, Confederates were forced to manipulate not only the definition of liberal nationalism, as they had proven willing to do since their analysis of the revolutions of 1848, but also the contemporary symbols and ideals that represented liberal nationalism to both domestic and foreign audiences during the years of the Civil War. In the face of opposition, instead of changing tactics, Confederates manipulated the ideals and symbols of nationalism in order to preserve their international comparisons and their vision of the Confederacy as the newest member of the international community of nations.

Confederates throughout the war continued attempting to place supposed northern threats and southern values within an international context, shifting from using these

comparisons to justify secession to using them to defend the southern nation.¹ The idea that the North was as tyrannical as European despots was so well-known by 1864 that even the Confederate Congress could assume that these comparisons were understood, as when they informed their citizens that “the past, or foreign countries, need not be sought unto to furnish illustrations” of the tyranny that would result should the Union prevail.²

If the tyrannical North was the antithesis of what a nation should be, Confederates argued, the Confederacy represented the ideal nation. Similarities to the admired aspiring European nations, particularly similar national values, provided supposed proof of the Confederacy’s national legitimacy and strength. As during secession, these values were the ones that antebellum southerners had identified as the values of liberal nationalism that were not so liberal as to threaten the institution of slavery. Liberty – narrowly defined to avoid the implications of radical liberty for a slave society – was among these values that Confederates claimed that they, like aspiring European nations, represented; if the South won independence, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reported, it would be “enshrined in the sympathies and respect of all lovers of liberty and national

¹ Paul Quigley identifies an outward, or international, orientation as one of the ways in which southern nationalists developed a national identity. Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*. Andre Michel Fleche also identifies the European revolutions of 1848 as one inspiration for southern nationalism. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*.

² Congress of the Confederate States of America, *Address of Congress to the People of the Confederate States: Joint Resolution in Relation to the War* (Richmond, VA, 1864), 6. For more examples of comparisons of northern and European tyranny, see “Subjugation of the South,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, February 20, 1862; “Foreign Powers and the United States,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, February 27, 1862; “All Around the Ring,” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, October 6, 1863; “Choice of Masters,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, April 26, 1864; T. V. Moore, *God Our Refuge and Strength in This War: A Discourse Before the Congregations of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches... Nov 15, 1861* (Richmond, VA: W. Hargrave White, 1861), 21; *Daily Richmond Examiner*, July 29, 1862; “Northern Despotism,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, April 24, 1862; T. W. MacMahon, *Cause and Contrast: An Essay on the American Crisis* (Richmond, VA: West & Johnston, 1862), 165-166; John L. O’Sullivan, “Peace: The Sole Chance Now Left for Reunion,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, September 16, 1863; Edward Alfred Pollard, *Southern History of the War: The Third Year of War* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1865), 136; “The Question of Boundaries,” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, December 13, 1861; “A Strong Appeal to the Irish,” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, August 6, 1863.

independence by the side of chivalric Hungary and heroic Poland.”³ A desire for self-government, as with liberty, provided another point of comparison between the Confederacy and aspiring nationalities in Europe.⁴ Republicanism, long a southern and American value, was another supposedly mutual goal shared by the Confederacy and aspiring nations such as Ireland and Poland.⁵ By comparing southern national values with those represented by aspiring nations in Europe, these Confederates claimed that the Confederacy deserved independence, not only because it fought against a European-style despot, but also because it exhibited the same values of liberty, self-government, and republicanism admired in new and aspiring European nations.

Although many Confederates were convinced that their project in nation-building followed the model presented by nationalist movements in Europe, the rest of the world had different assessments of the place of the Confederacy within the international community of nations. Southern politics was conservative and centered on slavery, which inherently contradicted ideals such as democracy and equality.⁶ International events throughout the period of the Civil War increasingly made clear that Confederates were alone in comparing a nation premised upon slavery with aspiring nations motivated by liberal principles. Foreign nationalists’ assessment that the Confederacy did not constitute a legitimate nation forced Confederates to re-evaluate and defend their

³ “Subjugation of the South,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, February 20, 1862. See also “The Polish Revolution - A Lesson for the South,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, September 9, 1863.

⁴ “The Empire of Freedom,” *Southern Punch* (Richmond, VA), December 26, 1863.

⁵ William A. Hall, *The Historic Significance of the Southern Revolution: A Lecture Delivered by Invitation in Petersburg, Va., March 14th and April 29th, 1864, and in Richmond, Va., April 7th and April 21st, 1864* (Petersburg, VA: A. F. Crutchfield, 1864), 41.

⁶ For discussions of the centrality of slavery to southern politics, and of southerners’ conservative anti-democratic tendencies, see McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*; Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*.

international comparisons, as they continued to attempt to convince their fellow southerners, if not an international audience, of the merits of a southern nation.

Giuseppe Garibaldi, famous hero of the Italian Risorgimento, was one of the most important foreign observers who questioned the Confederacy's right to nationhood. Italy, united in nationhood in 1860 after a long struggle for unity and independence, had always been central to southern nationalists' international comparisons, as the best and most recent example of a nation that had successfully parlayed the principles of nationalism into independence. Garibaldi, the "hero of two worlds" who had risen to prominence in nationalist conflicts in South America and gone on to a storied military career in the Italian Risorgimento, stood as a powerful representative of Italy and of liberal nationalism to observers worldwide.

Throughout the antebellum period, Garibaldi had received much praise and sympathy from southerners for his role in advancing the cause of nationalism and the Italian nation. In addition to leading the charge for Italian unity, southerners believed that Garibaldi represented critical political virtues such as "popular rights," republicanism, liberty, independence, the right to nationality, the fight against tyranny, and freedom.⁷ In one clear illustration of support for Garibaldi, as well as of the perceived connection between Garibaldi's nationalism and their own nationalism, on the

⁷ Phi Ro, "Washington Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 13, 1849. See also "Garibaldi and His Proclamation," *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, June 23, 1859; "Garibaldi," *Montgomery Tri-Weekly Alabama Journal*, August 5, 1850; "Paris Gossip," *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, June 26, 1859; "Garibaldi," *San Antonio Ledger and Texan*, September 29, 1860; "A Contrast," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 10, 1850; "The Sicilian Insurrection," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, June 16, 1860; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 26, 1849; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 6, 1849; "Gen. Garibaldi," *Macon Weekly Telegraph*, June 28, 1859; "Entry of Garibaldi into Naples - Exciting Scene," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, October 4, 1860; James P. Brownlow, "The Restoration of Italian Nationality," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, March 11, 1861; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 6, 1859; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 9, 1859; "Garibaldi and Walker," *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, July 7, 1860; "Garibaldi Triumphant in Naples," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, September 10, 1860.

eve of secession southern periodicals published a satirical advertisement seeking a president of the United States who would possess, among other qualifications, the “spirit and determination of... Garibaldi.”⁸ Southerners were not alone in their high regard of Garibaldi; by 1860, Garibaldi was already a well-recognized international symbol of nationalism. Southerners, like the rest of the world, saw Garibaldi as a representative of the Italian nation, and of the best qualities of nationalism.⁹

Despite widespread antebellum southern support for Garibaldi, however, southerners’ positive view of Garibaldi, and their self-comparisons with Italy, was challenged when Garibaldi repeatedly expressed sympathy not only for the Union, but also for values associated with the North, such as abolition. Garibaldi’s support for the Union forced Confederates to re-think their view of the renowned Italian nationalist, as well as their claims that the Confederacy followed the example and values of Garibaldi’s Italy.

The crisis for southern nationalists’ support for Garibaldi, and therefore their self-comparison with Italy and with liberal nationalism, initially came in the summer of 1861, when, reacting to an idea proposed by one of Garibaldi’s officers and by the US consul in Antwerp, the Union government, via Secretary of State William Seward, invited Garibaldi to fight for the Union. When news of this invitation broke, Confederates were shocked and angered by Garibaldi’s response, which, while not an outright yes, was

⁸ “Wanted Immediately,” *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, December 6, 1860. See also Nero, “For the Confederation: A Question for Junius,” *Montgomery Daily Confederation*, July 2, 1859; *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, August 20, 1859; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 26, 1861; Sempre Avanti, “Letter from Italy,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 4, 1859.

⁹ Lucy Riall argues that Garibaldi was a major international celebrity who was widely recognized as a symbol of nationalism. By the fall of the Roman Republic in 1848, Garibaldi was already associated with the romantic vision of the nation of Italy. His popularity only grew, culminating in international acclaim and celebration of Garibaldi, his virtues, and his place in the Italian nation after his successful campaign in Sicily in 1860. Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero*.

nonetheless a criticism of the South's claims to legitimate independent nationhood. Garibaldi replied that if he was not needed in Italy he would indeed come fight for the Union, but only on the condition that he was appointed commander in chief and granted power to emancipate the slaves. The emancipation in particular would prove to Garibaldi that, as the US consul who met with Garibaldi phrased Garibaldi's opinion, the Civil War was not merely "a civil war in which the world at large could have little interest or sympathy," but a war against slavery, thereby elevating the war to Garibaldi's standards of a nationalist conflict and making it worth his while to fight.¹⁰ Although this deal never came to pass, Garibaldi's expressed support for the Confederacy's sworn enemy angered many southerners. Even more problematic was Garibaldi's statement that, unless the North fought to free the slaves, the war was merely a localized civil war. This made it clear that to the renowned symbol of nationalism, the centrality of slavery to the Confederacy meant that the Confederacy's bid for nationhood had no similarities to the nationalist struggles that Garibaldi himself supported and represented. If southerners were to accept Garibaldi's stance that the Civil War was unlike Europe's nationalist conflicts, then Confederates' comparisons between their nation and aspiring nations in Europe were not valid and therefore of no use in legitimizing the southern nation.

Instead of accepting Garibaldi's interpretation of the issues of the Civil War, as Confederates confronted the problems that Garibaldi's support for the Union raised for their international comparisons, they developed a variety of strategies for dealing with Garibaldi's implicit rejection of these comparisons. Critically, these responses would have to deal with the issue of slavery and its incompatibility with the ideals of

¹⁰ H. Nelson Gay, "Lincoln's Offer of Command to Garibaldi: Light on a Disputed Point of History," *The Century Magazine* LXXV (November 1907): 69.

nationalism represented by Garibaldi. Although Confederates cloaked their movement in the language of rights, a global community that had largely rejected slavery understood the inherent contradiction between the language of liberal nationalism and the reality of slavery. Southern nationalists had previously attempted to side-step this contradiction by manufacturing their own, more limited, definition of liberal nationalism, allowing them to embrace national self-determination and republicanism while rejecting the implications of full-scale liberty and equality. Garibaldi's support for the Union, however, proved that while southerners themselves may accept their limited definition of nationalism, the international community still embraced a fuller vision of nationalism. In order to defend their argument that the Confederacy deserved independence because it emulated the nationalist values represented by the Risorgimento and other nationalist movements in Europe, Confederates extended their earlier manipulation of the definition of liberal nationalism to now manipulate the image of Garibaldi as a symbol of nationalism.

As rumors that Garibaldi might fight for the Union first broke in spring of 1861, southern analysts initially took an aggressive stance, seeking to forestall the rumor's momentum from the beginning. They asserted that what they assumed was southern dominance and superiority over Garibaldi and the North would render neutral any threat that Garibaldi's support for the Union could pose to the South. Adopting this tactic, the *Charleston Mercury* essentially warned Garibaldi, and the world, that if Garibaldi would be foolish enough to come fight for the Union, the South would easily and resoundingly defeat him. Calling on the memory of southern heroes of the American Revolution, one reporter wrote that "[the South has] not lost the guerilla breed; and the sons of Sumter... are ready to teach him the swamp fox and game cock lessons such as he could never learn

at the hands of Neopolitans and Austrians.”¹¹ A month later, John Mitchel, Irish nationalist and Confederate sympathizer, writing from Paris as the foreign correspondent for the *Charleston Mercury*, beseeched South Carolinians to exercise restraint in dealing with Garibaldi should Garibaldi join the Union, “beg[ging] for [Garibaldi’s] life – for the sake of what he has done elsewhere.” Mitchel envisioned that if Garibaldi did arrive in the South, he would end up “locked up in a southern calaboose... or summarily lynched by Carolinian citizens,” and he subsequently asked that Carolinians instead merely give Garibaldi “four dozen” and “send him back.”¹² By claiming southern superiority over Garibaldi, southern nationalists sought to minimize Garibaldi’s stature, and therefore the power of his potential support for the Union. If Garibaldi did not have the strength to defeat the South, these Confederates assured their audience, then his support for the Union was of little consequence.

A less colorful but equally pervasive early response to the Union’s invitation to Garibaldi was to argue that Garibaldi did not and would not initiate such an invitation, and that the North had instead imposed its own desires on an unwilling Garibaldi. Through the spring and summer of 1861, before Garibaldi’s reply was published internationally, disbelief filled southern analysis of the Union’s offer to Garibaldi as Confederates refused to accept that the great hero of liberty would involve himself in the fight against southern independence. The earliest of such reports stated that Garibaldi was so pre-occupied in Italy that he could not come to the aid of the Union.¹³ Other

¹¹ “Garibaldi to the Rescue,” *Charleston Mercury*, March 24, 1861.

¹² J. M. [John Mitchel], “Our Paris Correspondence,” *Charleston Mercury*, April 16, 1861.

¹³ “The City,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 17, 1861; “The City: The Talk Down Town,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 17, 1861; “French Views of the American War,” *Charleston Mercury*, December 25, 1861.

Confederate commentators pointed out that the Union, not Garibaldi, had made the offer, allowing for the possibility that Garibaldi would join southerners in scoffing at a misguided attempt to pull Garibaldi away from his own values.¹⁴ Denying Garibaldi's involvement in the invitation aided southerners, at least temporarily, in ignoring the ideological issues that would lead Garibaldi to support the Union.

As spring turned to summer and fall and rumors still circulated about Garibaldi and the Union, many southern analysts turned to simply denying that there could possibly be any truth to the rumor. The *Daily Columbus Enquirer* of Columbus, Georgia dismissed the rumor of the exchange between the Union and Garibaldi as “amusing” and nothing more, refusing to give weight to the idea that Garibaldi could support the North.¹⁵ In keeping with this response, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* called the *New York Tribune*'s report of the invitation “a joke on the gullibility of its readers,” and furthered the next day that “there is no authenticated statement in regard to Garibaldi's offer of his services to the Federal Government. It is probably a canard.”¹⁶ Laughing at the idea that Garibaldi would possibly fight for the Union preserved comparisons with Garibaldi by claiming that reports of his potential support for the Union were incorrect, and therefore the Confederacy could and did, in fact, still stand for the same values as Garibaldi.

While dismissive scoffing was common in early reports, other early responses to the invitation engaged the issue of the potential connection between Garibaldi's cause

¹⁴ “Telegraphic Richmond Daily Dispatches,” *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, August 15, 1861; “More of the Garibaldi Rumour,” *Daily Richmond Examiner*, August 15, 1861.

¹⁵ “Lincoln Calls for Garibaldi,” *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, May 31, 1861. For more examples of early reports that outright dismiss the idea of Garibaldi fighting for the Union, see “Garibaldi,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, September 7, 1861; “Garibaldi Will Not Come,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, October 4, 1861; *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, August 15, 1861.

¹⁶ “A General Wanted,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 14, 1861; *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 15, 1861.

and that of the North more deeply. Alongside reports that mocked the rumors and threatened Garibaldi's safety, some southern reports argued that the very reason why Garibaldi would never fight for the North was that the Union's values were contrary to Garibaldi's own. Adopting this strategy, the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* reassured its readers that Garibaldi could never "espouse a cause" such as the northern one "for which he can entertain no degree of sympathy."¹⁷ A reporter for the *Macon Daily Telegraph* of Macon, Georgia mocked the idea of Garibaldi fighting for the Union, exclaiming "as if [Garibaldi] would come here to overthrow what he was seeking to establish in his own land."¹⁸ Claiming that Garibaldi's values would lead him to deny, not support, the Union aided Confederates in preserving the supposed connection between their ideals and those of Garibaldi, even in the face of Garibaldi's potential support for their enemy. If Garibaldi's cause was not that of the Union, it stood to reason, it must be more closely related to that of the Confederacy, and therefore southerners' international comparisons would be secure.

When Garibaldi's reply to the Union, declaring his support for the northern cause and for abolition, was published in southern and international newspapers in the early fall of 1861, southerners were forced to abandon their strategies of denial and to deal directly with Garibaldi's allegiance to the North and his belief that emancipation was a critical value of liberal nationalism. Confederates were confronted with the contradiction between their claims as to what their nation represented and what the rest of the world recognized the Confederacy as representing, and they responded by manipulating the

¹⁷ "The City," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 17, 1861. See also "The City: The Talk Down Town," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 17, 1861.

¹⁸ "A Variety of Items," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, August 20, 1861.

symbol of Garibaldi as they continued to convince themselves that the Confederacy did follow the model of Italy.

Confederates initially responded to Garibaldi's reply to the Union by discrediting Garibaldi and the North in an attempt to render harmless Garibaldi's opinions. Throughout the fall of 1861, southern commentators joined together in using the Union's invitation to Garibaldi to belittle the North for extending such an invitation. Ignoring Garibaldi's anti-slavery beliefs and focusing instead on the relatively less-threatening relationship between Garibaldi and the Union, these Confederates claimed that the invitation had more to do with northern desperation and weakness than with any compatibility between Garibaldi's ideology and nationalism and that of the Union. For example, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* wrote that this proposal was "mortifying" to northern officers, "who cannot fail to see in such stuff an imputation upon their own intelligence and efficiency," adding that "if the world can show a more disgusting want of chivalry and courage, we know not where it can be found."¹⁹ Mississippian H. C. Clarke wrote in his published diary that "the Federal government despairs of finding able Generals and officers at home, to engage in its unholy war against the South" and that the North "makes overtures to all the broken down Generals and officers of European nations to come and assist them," emphasizing the theme of northern weakness.²⁰ Reports in

¹⁹ "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, September 16, 1861; "The Offer of an American Commission to Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, October 14, 1861; "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, October 10, 1862; "Correspondence of the Courier," *Charleston Daily Courier*, August 17, 1861; "A Variety of Items," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, August 20, 1861; *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, September 17, 1861; "The European Mails," *Charleston Mercury*, October 17, 1861; "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 11, 1861; "Who Is the Started Party," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, January 17, 1862.

²⁰ H. C. Clarke, *Diary of the War for Separation: A Daily Chronicle of the Principal Events and History of the Present Revolution, to Which Is Added Notes and Descriptions of All the Great Battles, Including Walker's Narrative of the Battle of Shiloh* (Augusta, GA: Steam Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1862), 71.

English and French newspapers that similarly ridiculed northerners' supposed dependence on outside aid seemed to support Confederates' claim that the invitation was about lack of northern strength rather than similarity between the Union's ideals and Garibaldi's own ideals.²¹ The strategy of mocking the North for reaching out to Garibaldi neatly avoided the issues of ideology that fueled Garibaldi's pro-northern sentiment, allowing southern nationalists to preserve their sense of connection to the Italian ideals that Garibaldi represented.

Once Garibaldi's pro-Union leanings were made public, Garibaldi himself also came in for criticism as Confederates sought to prove that they did, in fact, represent the values for which Garibaldi enjoyed international renown. Southern commentators calculated that if they could prove that Garibaldi did not deserve his status as an international symbol of nationalism, his support for the Union, and his belief that emancipation fit with liberal nationalism, would be less problematic. Beginning in the fall of 1861 and continuing throughout 1862, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* was a particularly vocal advocate of this idea, claiming that Garibaldi himself had nothing to do with his own victories, and arguing that circumstances outside of Garibaldi's control, rather than his reliance on the positive values of nationalism, were what had led to his success in Italy. To make this argument, southern reporters informed their readers that Garibaldi himself had contributed little to the success of the Italian Risorgimento. The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* claimed that it was Garibaldi's volunteer soldiers, rather than Garibaldi himself, who had led Italian forces to victory.²² This same newspaper joined

²¹ *Dallas Herald*, November 13, 1861; "French Views of the American War," *Charleston Mercury*, December 25, 1861.

²² "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, September 16, 1861.

praise for the South with criticism of Garibaldi by claiming that the only reason why Garibaldi's armies had succeeded was that his soldiers had resembled those who would later fight for the Confederacy.²³ The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* repeated this juxtaposition a few months later, now arguing that it was Garibaldi's cause – which resembled that of the South – that led to his victories.²⁴ By separating Garibaldi from the success that had made him famous, and therefore undermining his appeal as a representative of the strengths of nationalism, southern nationalists sought to claim that Garibaldi should not be a symbol of nationalism. As they attempted to protect their image of the Confederacy as an aspiring nation similar to Garibaldi's own Italy, Confederates manipulated the image of the main international figurehead of this nationalism, displaying their commitment to the international comparisons they used to legitimize the southern nation.

While most responses to the relationship between Garibaldi and the Union glossed over the ideological implications of Garibaldi's response, southern commentators did occasionally engage with the political dimensions of the issue. Taking their manipulation of the image of Garibaldi one step further, southern commentators argued that in supporting the Union it was Garibaldi, not the Confederacy, who was betraying the values of Italy and of liberal nationalism. Continuing to deny the incompatibility between liberal nationalism and slavery, in late fall of 1861, southern reporters began calling Garibaldi a hypocrite for supporting the Union's cause. To prove that Garibaldi's support for emancipation and the North was hypocritical in light of his embrace of Italian nationalism, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* argued that if Garibaldi fought for the North,

²³ "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 11, 1861.

²⁴ "Who Is the Started Party," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, January 17, 1862.

he would be “in opposition to the very principles for which he contended in Italy.”²⁵ As George N. Sanders, a former US diplomat and political radical who was working abroad to further the cause of the Confederacy, wrote in a letter to Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth, for Garibaldi to aid the Union “would be a burning and devouring lie to all of his eventful and hitherto glorious career.”²⁶ In embracing abolition, Confederates argued, Garibaldi turned his back on the very principles for which he fought in Italy. Through this manipulation, Garibaldi, not the Confederacy, was mistaken as to the compatibility of slavery and liberal nationalism, and, further, if Garibaldi was a hypocrite, he could no longer be considered a symbol of nationalistic virtue, leaving the nation he had rejected – the Confederacy – as the new exemplar of these values.

Responses to the Union’s offer to Garibaldi became less frequent in the winter of 1861-1862, as other matters preoccupied southerners. The issue of Garibaldi’s support for the Union once again captured Confederates’ attention, however, when the invitation to fight for the Union appeared to be renewed in the fall of 1862. After Garibaldi’s campaign to secure Rome for the Italian nation failed due to his defeat and arrest at Aspromonte, Thomas Canisius, the US consul in Vienna, took it upon himself to renew negotiations with Garibaldi. This time, Garibaldi was willing, but the Union government was no longer interested. Because Canisius forwarded their correspondence to the press, however, Garibaldi’s interest in fighting for the Union was well-known.²⁷

²⁵ “Garibaldi,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 11, 1861.

²⁶ “Letter from George N. Saunders to Louis Kossuth,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 25, 1861. See also “Who Is the Started Party,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, January 17, 1862.

²⁷ Gay, “Lincoln’s Offer of Command to Garibaldi,” 71-4.

Southerners utilized all the strategies they had developed in order to respond to the first invitation to deal with this second show of support by Garibaldi for the Union. Perhaps due in part to their earlier manipulations of Garibaldi, Confederate reporters had already been critical of Garibaldi for what they saw as rash and wild behavior leading to his failure at Aspromonte, and they transitioned easily from criticizing Garibaldi's leadership and military strategy to once again mocking and discrediting him.²⁸ As southerners had after the first invitation, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* mocked the North's desperation and denigrated Garibaldi's success, claiming that "the Federalists must be hard run for military leaders when they have to apply to that defeated, wounded, captured, played-out European brigand."²⁹ In response to a rumor that Garibaldi's veterans would come fight for the Union that appeared simultaneously in the southern newspapers with news of Garibaldi's desire to lead the northern army, the *Daily Columbus Enquirer* echoed the aggression that had characterized the first responses to news of the invitation, claiming that if Garibaldi's veterans did come to fight for the Union, they would be "mere land pirates, and deserving as such to be shot or hung."³⁰ This same paper implied that Garibaldi had been immaterial to the formation of the Italian nation, calling him the "hero of everybody else's business, except his own."³¹

Going even further, the *New Orleans Daily True Delta* wrote that Garibaldi was "a poor

²⁸ For examples of criticism of Garibaldi's actions, see "Garibaldi and Victor Emanuel," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 2, 1862; *Alexandria Gazette*, September 9, 1862; *New Orleans Daily Delta*, September 12, 1862; "Garibaldi's Fail," *New Orleans Daily Delta*, September 27, 1862; "Garibaldi," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, September 30, 1862.

²⁹ "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, October 10, 1862.

³⁰ "Garibaldi and His Mercenaries," *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, October 17, 1862. See also "Letter from Mobile," *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, January 12, 1863.

³¹ "Garibaldi on the South," *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, November 1, 1862.

and disloyal citizen of his own country” and was, in fact, “detrimental to the cause of liberty” in Italy; in this view, Garibaldi had not only failed to accomplish the goals of Italian nationalism, but also was harmful to the pursuit of those goals, and therefore was certainly not a worthy representative of the ideals of Italian nationalism.³² The reaction to the supposed second invitation utilized the same strategies created in response to the first.³³ Confederates were secure in their negative portrayal of Garibaldi; a simple reminder to southerners of the previously-developed reasons why Garibaldi’s support for the Union did not disprove Confederate comparisons with Italy was sufficient by late 1862.

The final event in the on-going challenge that Garibaldi’s support for the Union presented for Confederate comparisons with Italy came with a widely-published August 1863 letter from Garibaldi to Lincoln. Responding to the Emancipation Proclamation, Garibaldi praised Lincoln as the “true heir of the teaching given us by Christ and John Brown,” and enthused that “if an entire race of human beings... has been restored to human dignity... this is by your doing.”³⁴ Since Confederates frequently equated Lincoln with the terrible despots who had fought against Garibaldi and Italian nationalists, this exchange highlighted the reality that, despite the comparisons Confederates had created between their cause and that of Garibaldi and other foreign nationalists, they were not, in fact, fighting the same fight. As with the rumors of a second invitation for Garibaldi to fight for the Union, responses to this letter followed the pattern of initial responses. The

³² “Garibaldi,” *New Orleans Daily Delta*, October 16, 1862.

³³ “Later from Europe,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, October 8, 1862; “News By Telegraph,” *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, October 8, 1862; “Garibaldi’s Army Tendered to the United States,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, October 14, 1862.

³⁴ “From Europe - Letter from Garibaldi to Lincoln,” *Daily Richmond Examiner*, September 4, 1863.

Daily Richmond Enquirer mocked Garibaldi as “the biggest fool in the world.”³⁵ Southern reporters referred to the letter as “blasphemous” and “monstrous.”³⁶ *Southern Punch*, a short-lived Confederate humor magazine established by John Wilford Overall in Richmond in 1863, followed the strategy of attempting to discredit Garibaldi’s contributions to his own success, claiming that Garibaldi had “achieved fame on the basis of brute courage alone” rather than due to any particular virtue or adherence to principles of nationalism.³⁷ Additional strategies and analyses were not necessary, however. The symbol of Garibaldi had already been remade within the Confederacy. Southern manipulation of Garibaldi as a nationalist hero had already discredited him in southern minds, and comparisons between the Confederacy and Italy were secure.

Through several distinct expressions of support for the Union by Garibaldi, Confederates continued to manipulate the image of Garibaldi as a nationalist hero, claiming that he was anything but that in order to maintain their self-comparison with Italy. This southern manipulation of the symbol of Garibaldi extended beyond criticism of Garibaldi himself. Just as in the antebellum period Garibaldi had served as a yardstick by which other nationalists’ qualifications and character could be measured, during the war, Confederates continued to use a now-rejected image of Garibaldi as a lens through which they could evaluate and judge other nationalists. Following from their image of Garibaldi as a hypocrite, southern nationalists began to use Garibaldi as a symbol of a

³⁵ *Daily Richmond Enquirer*, September 10, 1863.

³⁶ Secessia, “A Blockade Correspondence,” *Southern Illustrated News* (Richmond, VA), November 7, 1863; “Garibaldi’s Letter to Lincoln,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, September 11, 1863; “Beecher and Beauty and the Beast,” *Southern Punch*, April 2, 1864.

³⁷ “Garibaldi [sic],” *Southern Punch*, May 7, 1864.

failed nationalist, and, further, they began to claim that anyone associated with Garibaldi was therefore also a failure as a representative of the values of nationalism.

The debate over the Garibaldi Guard, or 39th New York Volunteers, provides the best example of southern usage of Garibaldi to discredit those associated with him. Southern writers latched on to any evidence that the Garibaldi Guard was failing, attributing this failure to its namesake's supposedly weak ideals. For example, a former Italian citizen who was naturalized as a citizen of the Confederacy wrote that he fervently hoped that no Italian would enlist in the Garibaldi Guard as doing so would mean fighting against the very ideals for Italy had fought.³⁸ Southern analysts frequently referred to the members of the Garibaldi Guard, as well as other immigrants enlisted in the Union army, as refugees, adventurers, and other such terms that mitigated these soldiers' commitment to the Union cause, sometimes even outright claiming that these foreign soldiers were duped by false northern claims of nationalistic virtue.³⁹ Resignations from the Garibaldi Guard, and, especially, desertions *from* the Garibaldi Guard *to* the Confederate Army, further proved to Confederates that Garibaldi was not a legitimate inspiration of nationalism.⁴⁰ Instead of using Garibaldi to attribute glory to others, Confederates now used the Garibaldi Guard's association with its namesake to discredit the unit. In doing so, Confederates turned Garibaldi's rejection of the Confederacy around to serve their own purpose of identifying themselves, and their cause of nationhood, with Italy.

³⁸ "To the Italians of America," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 11, 1861.

³⁹ "The Hessians," *Charleston Mercury*, June 7, 1861; MacMahon, *Cause and Contrast*, 177-178.

⁴⁰ "Movements and Spirit of the War," *Daily Richmond Examiner*, August 6, 1861; "French Intervention," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, June 18, 1862.

By portraying Garibaldi's support for the Union as in opposition to the values he supported in Italy, Confederates sought, contrary to reality, to prove that such a powerful symbol of liberty and nationalism could never belong to the Union, helping them to sustain their comparison and subsequent claim to the virtues that Garibaldi represented. As they attempted to limit the association of Garibaldi with the desired ideals of nationalism, southerners once again strove to alter the discourse about, and understanding of, nationalism and its symbols in order to reconcile southern slavery with liberal nationalism. As they wrestled with this contradiction, Confederates re-committed themselves to their own, limited definition of nationalism and to the idea that this nationalism represented a legitimate attempt at nation-building.

Garibaldi's support for the Union presented an early and sustained symbolic challenge to Confederates' self-equation with Italy. Garibaldi was not the only foreigner to point out the contradictions between slavery and liberal nationalism, however, and his support for the Union was not the only challenge to Confederate self-comparisons with aspiring nations in Europe. Confederates' international comparisons also faced very pragmatic challenges as well. In particular, the much-hoped-for official diplomatic recognition that Confederate officials had sought from the beginning of the war failed to materialize, casting serious doubt on southern analysts' vision of the Confederacy as an equal member of the community of nations. Southern opinion-makers who shaped domestic discourse about the place of the Confederacy in the world were aware of Confederate diplomatic efforts and failures, and throughout the war, used their analysis of the Confederacy's supposed claims to diplomatic recognition to bolster their efforts to legitimize and defend the southern nation through international contextualization.

The international contextualization of the South's claims to national independence led Confederate officials and citizens alike to argue that, as an aspiring nation adhering to the popular nineteenth century principles of nationalism, the Confederacy deserved diplomatic recognition.⁴¹ Confederate officials began pursuing diplomatic recognition as soon as the Confederacy was established, hoping that aid from abroad would help lead to southern victory.⁴² Although international comparisons played only a minor role in official diplomatic efforts to win support for the Confederacy, diplomats were aware of these comparisons, and Robert M. T. Hunter, Confederate Secretary of State, instructed diplomat James M. Mason to inform the British government of the supposed similarities between the Confederacy and Italy, which Great Britain had recognized.⁴³ The main diplomatic strategies of the Confederacy, however, rested predominantly on the idea that European demand for southern cotton would win support for the South.⁴⁴ King Cotton, and Confederate diplomacy in general, proved less compelling than Confederates had

⁴¹ "What Inducements the South Offers to England," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, February 3, 1862; "Late and Interesting from England," *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, February 11, 1862; "The Question of Recognition in the House of Lords," *The Record* (Richmond, VA), June 18, 1863; *Daily Richmond Examiner*, February 20, 1863; James Spence, *On the Recognition of the Southern Confederation* (London: Richard Bentley, 1862).

⁴² Before the provisional government in Montgomery was fully established, Robert Barnwell Rhett was already recommending that commissioners be sent to Europe. The provisional Confederate Congress approved such a mission in February of 1861, and Jefferson Davis selected three men to be sent to Europe as diplomats. Secretary of State Robert Toombs' instructions to these diplomats relied heavily on the idea of states rights, ignoring slavery and other issues of concern to European leaders. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 23-30.

⁴³ Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 59. Henry Hotze, propagandist for the Confederacy in Europe, also drew heavily on the idea of the Confederacy as part of an international movement of nationalism. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*, 84-102.

⁴⁴ Confederate diplomacy revolved around the idea of "King Cotton," or the belief that Britain in particular was so dependent upon southern cotton that economic necessity would force Britain to ally with the Confederacy. Southern diplomacy also sought to make the case that secession was legal and justified. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 21-27.

hoped.⁴⁵ Many Europeans did feel sympathy for the Confederacy, and even used private channels to raise support for the southern nation.⁴⁶ Due to a combination of European nations' domestic concerns, fears of becoming entangled in war, and distaste for slavery, however, official recognition and aid never came.⁴⁷

Through 1861 and in to 1862, Confederates who analyzed foreign opinion remained convinced that their recognition would be forthcoming, especially due to their claims of similarity with Italy, a new nation that had been recognized by major powers including Great Britain, France, and the United States in late spring of 1861.⁴⁸ As the

⁴⁵ King Cotton failed to win official recognition for the Confederacy for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it reflected Confederate rather than European interests. Hubbard, *Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 19, 27.

⁴⁶ Some support for the Confederacy did exist within Europe. For much of the war, most Europeans believed that the Confederacy would win. British formed pro-Confederate organizations and undertook actions to express support for the South, although this support was relatively limited and unorganized. Especially among conservatives who feared excess democracy, the Confederate cause found adherents abroad. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 20, 36; Dean B. Mahin, *The Blessed Place of Freedom: Europeans in Civil War America* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2002), 170; George M. Blackburn, *French Newspaper Opinion on the American Civil War* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1997), x-xi; Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 1; Duncan Andrew Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War* (Suffolk and Rochester, NY: The Royal Historical Society; The Boydell Press, 2003), 163-193; R. J. M. Blackett, *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 7, 61-75.

⁴⁷ Great Britain came close to recognizing the Confederacy at times from 1861-1862, and did, perhaps inadvertently, grant the Confederacy the status of an official belligerent. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 48, 54, 114; Mahin, *The Blessed Place of Freedom*, 167-8. Ultimately, however, the Confederacy was not recognized for a variety of reasons, including weak diplomatic strategy and poor choice of diplomats by the Confederacy, the failure of king cotton, European hatred of slavery, European desire to avoid war, a lack of Confederate understanding of the realities of international alliances and history, and the fact that Great Britain's interests largely lay in their own continent. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 17-32, 41, 55, 123; Campbell, *English Public Opinion*, 11, 18-20; Alfred Grant, *The American Civil War and the British Press* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, 2000), 8; Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 24-26.

⁴⁸ Especially in the summer of 1861, Confederate hopes were bolstered by British and French claims of the southern nation's similarity to Italy, which Britain and France had officially recognized. Napoleon III stated that France would soon recognize the Confederacy, as it had Italy. See "French Recognition of the Confederate States of America," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, July 3, 1861. At times, some English papers also claimed that the Confederacy deserved recognition. See "English Opinion of American Affairs," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, September 7, 1861; "The American Secession," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, September 16, 1861; "American Affairs in England," *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, June 29, 1861; "The

Charleston Mercury exclaimed, “upon every principle of the laws of nations, [the Confederate States] have a right to be recognized as one of the nations of the world,” just as with the new nation of Italy.⁴⁹ The Confederacy had done its duty in proving that it met the requirements for nationhood, according to southern analysts.⁵⁰ The belief that the Confederacy deserved recognition strengthened Confederate conviction that the southern nation was equal to nations such as Italy. Despite this confidence, however, recognition never came.

Although international comparisons were only a small portion of official diplomatic efforts to gain recognition, domestic analysis of diplomacy played a critical role in southern commentators’ efforts to claim a place for the southern nation within the international community of nations. In order to reconcile the lack of diplomatic recognition with their belief that the Confederacy had equal claims to national legitimacy as Italy, Confederates began developing explanations as to why European powers would not recognize the Confederacy, despite the apparent similarity between the Confederacy and recognized nations in Europe. These explanations reveal less about the actual reasons for the lack of recognition than they do about the importance of the international

Recognition of the Southern Confederacy Not Remote,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 31, 1861. This idea persisted into the early months of 1862: “American Affairs in Europe: Recognition of the Southern Confederacy,” *Daily Richmond Examiner*, February 7, 1862; “What Inducements the South Offers to England,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, February 3, 1862; “Late and Interesting from England,” *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, February 11, 1862; “Still Later,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, February 3, 1862. For scholarly analyses of foreign sympathy for the South, see Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 20, 36; Mahin, *The Blessed Place of Freedom*, 170; Blackburn, *French Newspaper Opinion*, x-xi; Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 1; Campbell, *English Public Opinion*, 163-193; Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 7, 61-75.

⁴⁹ “The Independence of Nations,” *Charleston Mercury*, December 17, 1862. See also “Our Foreign Policy,” *Clarksville (TX) Standard*, August 17, 1861; MacMahon, *Cause and Contrast*, 188; “Recognition,” *Fayetteville Observer*, October 27, 1862; Spence, *On the Recognition of the Southern Confederation*, 7-8.

⁵⁰ “Our Foreign Policy,” *Clarksville Standard*, August 17, 1861; “The Independence of Nations,” *Charleston Mercury*, December 17, 1862; Spence, *On the Recognition of the Southern Confederation*, 5.

perspective from which Confederates viewed their nation, as well as these Confederates' commitment to their international comparisons. To southern commentators during the Civil War, international comparisons proved that diplomatic recognition should be forthcoming; when recognition was never granted, these commentators thus sought to explain the failure in terms of these same international comparisons.

One of the first southern responses to lack of recognition was to claim that European powers were always slow to recognize new nations. This argument began as early as the spring of 1861 before Great Britain and France had extended recognition to Italy. Reporters and analysts pointed out that although France and Great Britain had not yet recognized the Confederacy, they also had yet to recognize Italy, and therefore the Confederacy should not be concerned. The fact that Italy had yet to be recognized seemed to excuse the fact that the Confederacy was also unrecognized.⁵¹ Lack of recognition, these Confederates claimed, was due to European patterns of action, and not due to any failings on the part of the Confederacy to meet international requirements for nationhood.

While this initial strategy of claiming that the lack of recognition had nothing to do with the Confederacy and its national values allowed Confederates to ignore slavery and its incompatibility with liberal nationalism, domestic discussions of the lack of recognition did frequently engage the issue of slavery. Slavery had been a critical part of southerners' international comparisons as early as the 1850s, when southerners compared the North's attempts to limit slavery with European tyranny. In late 1861 and early 1862, while southerners still hoped for recognition, some Confederates began to address the

⁵¹ "The Blockade Question," *Charleston Mercury*, April 6, 1861; "France and the Southern Confederacy," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 6, 1861.

problems that slavery caused for the Confederacy's case for international recognition. Instead of admitting to the burden that slavery imposed on a nation seeking independence on the basis of adherence to the principles of liberal nationalism, however, southern commentators argued that Europeans were incorrect in seeing slavery as inconsistent with the standards of nationalism that Confederates sought to claim, and that slavery should therefore not prevent recognition. Europeans, southerners claimed, were simply ignorant of the truth of the South, slavery, and the relationship between the North and South. John Mitchel explained this supposed ignorance by pointing out that the northern press dominated the news that Europe got from America, and therefore skewed European views of American affairs.⁵² This served as a call to arms for fellow southerners, as when the *Macon Daily Telegraph* suggested that the Confederacy should use the occasion of the 1862 London World's Fair to educate Europe about the reality of the South, or when the *Charleston Daily Courier* encouraged its readers to send more southern journals abroad to eliminate the bias toward the North.⁵³ In southern minds, shaped by a limited vision of the key tenets of nationalism that excluded the full implications of liberty and equality, slavery was compatible with the principles of nationalism exhibited by aspiring nations abroad. Still hopeful of foreign aid, southern commentators remained committed

⁵² J. M. [John Mitchel], "Our Paris Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, August 24, 1861. See also Thomas L. Clingman, "Speech on the State of the Union, Delivered in the Senate of the United States, February 4, 1861," in *Southern Pamphlets on Secession, November 1860-April 1861*, ed. Jon L. Wakelyn (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 287-288, 296-297.

⁵³ "The World's Fair and the South," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, July 6, 1861; "Southern Journals in Europe," *Charleston Daily Courier*, April 28, 1862. See also "Our Foreign Policy," *Charleston Mercury*, October 29, 1861; "The English Press and the American Crisis," *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, April 20, 1861. Henry Hotze, an unofficial Confederate propagandist publishing pro-South newspapers in London, was marginally more successful than the official diplomats at increasing sympathy for the Confederacy abroad. Hotze was also more aware of the reality of British sentiment, and more willing to be flexible in his approach than were the official diplomats. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 98-101; Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*, 84-102.

to their narrow vision of nationalism, claiming that Europeans would support the South when they realized that the issues of slavery and abolition were more complicated than Europeans believed and that the Civil War was about nationality as well as slavery, and thus slavery did not preclude a legitimate claim to nationhood.⁵⁴ Ignorance, southerners argued, not ideology, prevented Europe from recognizing the South.

While the idea that Europeans were simply misinformed about slavery and the Confederacy had its roots in the early days of the Confederacy, the idea became popularized around 1863 when Edward Pollard, ardent secessionist and influential journalist, advocated this belief in his analyses of the Confederacy and the war. Pollard had been one of the more outspoken advocates of secession, and would go on to play a critical role in the formation of the Lost Cause. During the war, he used his considerable platform as editor of the *Daily Richmond Examiner*, along with his authorship of several pamphlets, to spread his views. Moving beyond early-war declarations that the Confederacy would gain recognition alongside Italy and that Europeans simply did not know enough about the South to fairly evaluate slavery, Pollard asserted that the increased exposure to the South that Europe had gained during the early years of the Civil War would actually reverse Europeans' opinion of slavery. He claimed that over time, the wartime abuses committed by northern abolitionists had caused European sympathy for those abolitionists to wane, and that "the war had also given occasion to intelligent persons in all parts of the world for a more thorough, a more interested and a more practical study of slavery in the South," one that caused stories of "fiendish masters" to

⁵⁴ "The Beginning of the End," *Charleston Mercury*, February 9, 1861; "The Truth from Scotland," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 2, 1861. The claim that Europeans would embrace slavery if they knew more about it fit with the larger trend in antebellum southern thought on slavery that increasingly embraced slavery as a positive good. O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 938-977.

become “objects of skepticism or derision in Europe.”⁵⁵ Because Europe now understood that the North actually had no love for the slave, and that southern slavery was not as harmful and immoral as they had believed, Europe would soon realize that slavery was not incompatible with the principles of nationalism, and Europeans would thus soon support the South.⁵⁶

Pollard was the most outspoken and prominent advocate of this position, but he was not alone. Other Confederates echoed this belief, arguing that as the war educated Europeans on the benign nature of slavery, Europeans would support the Confederacy.⁵⁷ If Europe was simply misinformed, about America, the Civil War, and slavery, then lack of recognition was not a fault of the national values of the Confederacy. If slavery was benign, Pollard and others argued, it did not prevent the Confederacy from meeting international requirements for nationhood, and southern nationalists’ international comparisons were secure. Of course, this argument depended upon southern manipulations of the ideals of liberal nationalism; only in southerners’ minds could slavery be compatible with liberal nationalism. Nonetheless, the argument that erosion of European ignorance of slavery would lead to support from European powers allowed Confederates to retain their sense that the South, like aspiring European nationalities, deserved national independence.

Although Confederate reports did frequently deal with the issues of slavery and recognition, another strategy that emerged by the midpoint of the war, as Confederate

⁵⁵ Edward Alfred Pollard, *The Rival Administrations: Richmond and Washington in December, 1863* (Richmond, VA: E. A. Pollard, 1864), 17. See also Edward Alfred Pollard, *The First Year of the War* (London: Henry Stevens, 1863), 357-359.

⁵⁶ Pollard, *Southern History of the War*, 190.

⁵⁷ “Decline of Beecher Stoweism,” *Charleston Mercury*, June 21, 1864; “Our Foreign Relations,” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, January 30, 1863.

recognition no longer seemed tied to that of Italy and as defeat began to seem possible, was for Confederates to turn to defeated, and thus unrecognized, aspiring nations in Europe as a means of explaining the lack of recognition granted to the southern nation. By 1863, in order to protect their self-identity as one of many deserving nations seeking independence, southern nationalists rejected Italy as a point of comparison and instead began comparing themselves to aspiring nations in Europe that had not received the recognition that Confederates believed they deserved. In this formulation, the Confederacy was just one of many hopeful nations to be unjustly excluded from the family of nations. The *Daily Richmond Examiner* pointed out, for example, that European powers had not cared about the sufferings of Hungary, Poland, and Ireland any more than they did those of the Confederacy.⁵⁸ *Southern Punch* argued that if Europe was willing to stand by and tolerate the extreme suffering of Poland, it was unlikely that Europe would intervene to aid the South.⁵⁹ Rev. Stephen Elliot, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the Confederacy, also espoused this idea, arguing that the great powers of Europe had always feared and therefore opposed revolution, as in Hungary and Poland and even in Italy and Belgium, and they would be no more well-disposed toward revolution in America.⁶⁰ If European powers failed to recognize the Confederacy, southern nationalists argued, they had equally failed to recognize supposedly legitimate and suffering nations in Europe. The Confederacy was not alone in its lack of

⁵⁸ *Daily Richmond Examiner*, August 6, 1863.

⁵⁹ "The Indifference of Europe," *Southern Punch*, February 16, 1864.

⁶⁰ Stephen Elliot, "Samson's Riddle:" *A Sermon Preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, March 27, 1863* (Macon, GA: Burke, Boykin, & Co., 1863), 11.

recognition, and therefore could still be portrayed as following the precedent of aspiring European nations.

Some Confederates even began to point to the harm that had befallen nations that had received recognition as proof that the Confederacy did not actually want recognition after all. Greece, as William Graham Swan, Confederate Congressman from Tennessee, informed his fellow congressmen, had been rendered no more independent than a puppet after receiving recognition from Great Britain and its allies, and Portugal had become a servant as a result of European intervention.⁶¹ Foreign comparisons not only revealed that the lack of recognition was not the fault of the Confederacy; indeed, southerners utilizing these comparisons also endeavored to show that the lack of recognition was not a problem, period.

Emerging out of this sense that the lack of diplomatic recognition was due to European, rather than Confederate, failings, southern commentators during the middle and late periods of the war began accusing other nations of being hypocritical in refusing to recognize the Confederacy. Southern analysts believed that the Confederacy – which had now successfully sustained itself and waged war for two years – was stronger than other nations that had been recognized, and they questioned why, in light of this national strength, recognition of the Confederacy continued to be withheld. The *Southern Illustrated News*, a Confederate-era weekly out of Richmond, declared (contrary to the ample evidence of the many failed aspiring nations in Europe) that “the Confederate States are the only new power [Great Britain] has refused to recognise, and yet they have manifested a degree of strength greater than all those we have enumerated put together.

⁶¹ William Graham Swan, *Foreign Relations: Speech of Hon. W. G. Swan, of Tennessee, Delivered in the House of Representatives of the Confederate States, February 4, 1863* (Richmond, VA: Smith, Bailey, and Co, 1863), 5.

We have, under these circumstances, we think, some right to be indignant.”⁶² Fueling this sense of indignation, even some London newspapers began to question why Great Britain would recognize Italy and Greece, among others, but not the Confederacy.⁶³ The lack of recognition of the Confederacy, southern nationalists argued, was due to the hypocrisy of foreign powers. This argument enhanced Confederate belief in the endurance of a southern nation that had survived years at war, even as it allowed southern nationalists to avoid the issue of why the Confederacy failed to meet standards of liberal nationhood by shifting the blame to other parties.

The lack of recognition, while primarily an issue for Confederate diplomats in Europe, nonetheless resonated with domestic commentators and opinion-makers. These Confederates at home had to either confront the reality that the lack of recognition, while largely due to issues unrelated to the Confederacy’s similarities or lack thereof to aspiring European nations, nonetheless suggested the failure of their international comparisons, or, alternatively, find a way to claim that, even in the face of failure in the international court of opinion, the Confederacy was a legitimate aspiring nation. Through claiming that slavery was only a problem due to European ignorance, that lack of recognition was a European pattern rather than a response to the Confederacy, and that European powers were hypocrites for recognizing other aspiring nations but not the Confederacy, Confederates defended their sense of the Confederacy as part of a larger trend of nationalist movements that sought independence for aspiring nations.

⁶² “The Reasons Why We Have Not Yet Been Acknowledged by Great Britain,” *Southern Illustrated News*, October 4, 1862. See also “Will There Be Any Foreign Interference?” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, August 1, 1863; “Southern Independence Association of London,” *Weekly Register* (Lynchburg, VA), March 5, 1864; “The Confederate States and the Civilized World - Their Relations,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, December 8, 1864.

⁶³ “England and the Confederacy,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, April 27, 1863.

Although lack of diplomatic recognition and official aid was the greatest failure of Confederate diplomatic efforts abroad, the failure to win more widespread and enduring support among the general populations in Europe also contributed to Confederate difficulties abroad. While many British and other Europeans did support the Confederacy, Confederates were aware that this support and sympathy was not as widespread or enthusiastic as the support and sympathy given to various nationalist movements in Europe.⁶⁴ Southerners had watched carefully as Europeans and Americans alike had exploded in sympathy for nationalist movements from the Greek independence movement, to the revolutions of 1848, to the Italian Risorgimento. Now that southerners were undertaking their own experiment in nation-building – one they claimed followed the precedent of those earlier and much-celebrated movements – they wondered where their support and praise was. Extending their claims of hypocrisy due to lack of recognition, southern nationalists argued that the lack of support given to the Confederacy in general was hypocritical when contrasted with the outpouring of sympathy shown for other nationalist movements. Such a formulation once again required the manipulation of the ideals of liberal nationalism, as the true ideological incompatibility was the South's; nonetheless, Confederates cried hypocrisy to sustain their international defense of the southern nation.

Early accusations of hypocrisy targeted Europeans who fought for the Union army. To many Confederates, these foreign born soldiers were fighting against the

⁶⁴ Scholars have identified support for the Confederacy as present within Europe, but relatively limited and unorganized in scope. Campbell identifies the politicians and societies that sought to increase sympathy for the South. Campbell, *English Public Opinion*, 163-193. Blackburn and Blackett reveal that conservatives in France and Britain were more likely to agree with the Confederacy's vision of limited democracy, although Blackett characterizes British sentiment as primarily pro-Union. Blackburn, *French Newspaper Opinion*, x-xi; Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 61-75. Hubbard points to Britain's interest in the Italian Risorgimento and other nationalist struggles in Europe as one of the issues that diverted attention away from the Civil War. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*, 18-19.

principles for which their nations in Europe stood. Richmond's *Daily Dispatch* withdrew any sympathy the South had given to foreign nationalists on the basis that "the Europeans whom we have been sympathizing with so universally compose the vast bulk of the army which is invading our country," adding that "the great motive urged upon them for enlistment is, that if this 'rebellion' is not put down, the cause of freedom Abroad will suffer! So that freedom in America must perish in order that freedom in Europe may be established."⁶⁵ John Mitchel praised Irishmen fighting for the South and mocked the idea of Irish soldiers in the North taking up arms against the southern rebellion, scoffing "as if the very idea of rebels and rebellion were the thought most abhorrent in Irish nature."⁶⁶ Similarly, the *Augusta (GA) Daily Constitutionalist* wondered how Thomas Francis Meagher, a leading Irish nationalist who joined the Union army and recruited his fellow Irishmen to fight for the North, could aid the subjugation of the South when the South was the true hope for the principles Irishmen held dear.⁶⁷ The Confederacy, southern commentators argued, fought for the same cause as did Ireland and other aspiring nations in Europe, and therefore to support the aspiring European nations while seeking to defeat the Confederacy was an act of absolute hypocrisy. The lack of foreign support for the Confederacy, then, was not about the Confederacy's failures to qualify for national independence, but instead, was due to the hypocrisy of the Confederacy's international observers.

⁶⁵ "Garibaldi," *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 11, 1861.

⁶⁶ J. M. [John Mitchel], "Affairs in Europe: Our Paris Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, August 24, 1861.

⁶⁷ "No Hope for Ireland!" *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, September 20, 1861. See also MacMahon, *Cause and Contrast*, 177-178. This idea was occasionally expressed by foreigners as well; for example, see William S. O'Brien, "Smith O'Brien on the American War," *Charleston Daily Courier*, August 6, 1862.

By 1862 and 1863, driven by the growing enmity toward the North that wartime sufferings engendered, accusations of hypocrisy shifted from foreign born soldiers fighting for the Union to criticism of the northern nation itself. Southern analysts began expressing disbelief that the North refused to acknowledge the connection between the ideals of the nationalist movements that northerners had supported in Europe and the ideals of the Confederacy. The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* was one of the main supporters of this argument, crying that “whether it was Irish rebels against England, Greeks against Turkey, Frenchmen and Germans against their kings, or Italy against the Austrians, the North boiled over with enthusiasm in their cause,” only “attach[ing] any opprobrium to the name of rebel; a name which has always heretofore been with them a synonym for all that is praise worthy and glorious” when the South itself “threw off the chains of vassalage and determined to be free.”⁶⁸

The sense that northerners were acting as hypocrites for denying self-determination in the South while supporting it in Europe was common among southern intellectuals and power-brokers. Robert Barnwell Rhett, fire-eating secessionist and Confederate congressman, concurred with this conclusion, informing a convention of the state of South Carolina that the North demonstrated a disregard for freedom of which “history had no record,” as the North declared “with a hypocrisy only possible with an unparalleled depravity” that they “are contending for the liberties of the earth” while truly setting back the cause of “free government” for “centuries.”⁶⁹ Similarly, in a clear

⁶⁸ “Northern Despotism,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, April 24, 1862. See also “Garibaldi,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 18, 1862.

⁶⁹ “Speech of the Hon. R. B. Rhett, Delivered in the Convention of the State of South Carolina,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 29, 1862. See also *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia*, 17. This view occasionally was expressed in foreign publications as well; for example, see “Comments of the London Times on American Affairs,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, July 22, 1862.

condemnation of the North, pamphleteer T. W. MacMahon wrote that northerners, “accustomed to weep over the fate of Greece, Poland, and Hungary – accustomed to espouse the cause of Lombardy and Venetia against Austria, the cause of the Papal States against the Pope – they have voted thousands, reckoned by hundreds, of men, and millions of money, to support a despotism, compared with which, those of King Bomba and Francis Joseph were balm.”⁷⁰ John L. O’Sullivan, the journalist who originated the term “Manifest Destiny,” also embraced this idea. Despite long being entrenched in antebellum northern politics, O’Sullivan supported the Confederacy after the outbreak of war. He utilized his war-time residency in Lisbon and London and his background as a journalist to publish pro-Confederate pamphlets in London in an effort to spread southern propaganda throughout Europe. O’Sullivan, already disillusioned with the North for waging war instead of letting the South secede peacefully, embraced the idea of northern hypocrisy, accusing the North of replicating Russia’s oppression of Poland by perpetuating war against the southern states, as well as of betraying the American Revolution.⁷¹ As the reality of war pervaded the South, elite southerners explained southern suffering to their fellow countrymen by claiming that the hypocritical North actively fought to limit in the South the same principles that it had praised abroad.

Despite the fact that the North fought a war against southern nationalism, Confederates still managed to be offended that northerners did not celebrate the South’s claim to nationhood in the ways that they had those of other aspiring nations, proving the

⁷⁰ MacMahon, *Cause and Contrast*, 165-166. See also “The Victims of Presidential Tyranny,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, August 24, 1861; “Letter from George N. Saunders to Louis Kossuth,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, November 25, 1861.

⁷¹ John L. O’Sullivan, “Peace: The Sole Chance Now Left for Reunion,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, September 16, 1863. O’Sullivan’s efforts were known to and even subsidized by official Confederate propagandists. For analysis of O’Sullivan’s contributions to the Confederacy, see Sheldon H. Harris, “John L. O’Sullivan Serves the Confederacy,” *Civil War History* 10.3 (September 1964): 275-290.

importance of this comparison to southerners' perception of the South as an independent nation. The South, like Poland, Italy, and other aspiring nations of Europe, Confederates argued, fought for liberty and against tyranny. Any nation that supported these causes in Europe, then, must support them in America, too, or else be a hypocrite. Certainly these arguments ignored the real hypocrisy of claiming to support slavery and the ideals of liberalism at the same time. Confederates had proved willing, however, to manipulate ideals and symbols in order to preserve their own sense of their nation as part of a century of nationalism. By pointing out what they perceived to be an inconsistency in the Union's reaction to new nations, Confederates sought to maintain their own position as a legitimate new nation, similar to those in Europe.

Confederates did not easily accept that the Confederacy was not, in fact, similar to the new and aspiring nations in Europe that they used to claim legitimacy. They denied that the Confederacy's failure to live up to international standards for nationhood had anything to do with the lack of diplomatic recognition they received; they called foreign nations hypocrites for showing sympathy and support for new and aspiring nations in Europe but not for the Confederacy; and they attempted to remake the image of Garibaldi, the international symbol of nationalism, to protect their international comparisons even in the face of Garibaldi's support for the Union cause. These responses to the international failure of southern nationalists' comparisons reveal just how committed southern nationalists were to proving that the Confederacy was one of many new nations aspiring to membership in the international community of nations in the middle of the nineteenth century. These responses also reveal the extent to which Confederates were willing and able to ignore the ideological problems that plagued these

comparisons, rejecting the reality that slavery opposed the same liberal ideals that southern nationalists tried to claim through international comparisons.

Southern commitment to these international comparisons proved so strong that, as military defeat loomed, Confederates turned once again to these international comparisons, now utilizing comparisons to help them understand and process the possibility of defeat. Looking now at defeated nationalities, and acknowledging that so many of the aspiring nations that they admired had not succeeded in establishing independent nationhood, southern nationalists drew comparisons between the plight of these unfortunate nations and the situation that they believed that southerners would face if the North were victorious. They used these comparisons to spur their fellow southerners to continue fighting, as well as to understand the meaning of defeat.

Many of these comparisons of the doom of defeat centered on the idea that the South needed to strengthen its efforts in order to avoid the fate suffered by failed nationalist movements in Europe. As the *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel* warned as early as 1863, nations are responsible for their own fate, and the Confederacy, “the newest born of nations, having before it so marked a warning,” should “heed the warnings of history” lest it suffer the same fate as Poland, “blotted from the map.”⁷² This type of rhetoric increased in 1864 and 1865, as military success seemed less likely. No less an authority than the Congress of the Confederacy warned its citizens that “the fate of Ireland at the period of its conquest, and of Poland, distinctly foreshadows what would await us” if the Confederacy fell to the Union.⁷³ Similarly, the *Richmond Whig*

⁷² “National Retribution,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, February 1, 1863.

⁷³ “Address of Congress to the People of the Confederate States,” *Charleston Mercury*, February 24, 1864.

expounded at length upon the similarities between Ireland's subjugation to England and the subjugation that the South could expect upon re-entering the Union, highlighting the lack of representation and political power it anticipated.⁷⁴ Confederate Senator Benjamin Hill asserted that if the South gave in to Lincoln, it would become the Hungary, Poland, and Ireland of America, and make those oppressed nations feel like a "paradise."⁷⁵ International comparisons provided southern nationalists with a way to understand what was at stake as defeat loomed, as well as with a way to continue encouraging their fellow southerners to help stave off that defeat. Even when the end of the Confederacy seemed nigh, southern nationalists continued to turn to international comparisons as a way of explaining the Confederacy and the necessity of its independence.

Although Confederate responses to the failure of their international comparisons most often denied the contradiction between slavery and liberal nationalism, very rarely, a few Confederates did show glimmers of understanding that the Confederacy did not fully follow the precedent of aspiring nations abroad. John Mitchel, who typically vehemently defended the southern nation and its similarity to aspiring European nations, did at one point admit that the oppression the South faced simply was not enough to justify intervention on the part of European powers.⁷⁶ Mitchel's newspaper, the *Charleston Mercury*, likewise admitted that Europeans recognized that the South had not suffered the way aspiring nations like Poland had.⁷⁷ Even some of the most vocal

⁷⁴ "Reconstruction - A Parallel," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, April 5, 1864.

⁷⁵ "Mr. Hill's Speech," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, February 20, 1865. See also "The New Union," *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, September 25, 1864; "Parallels in History," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, May 21, 1865.

⁷⁶ J. M. [John Mitchel], "Our Paris Correspondence," *Charleston Mercury*, February 23, 1861.

⁷⁷ "Secession - A German View," *Charleston Mercury*, April 3, 1861.

proponents of the idea of the South as following the precedent of aspiring nations in Europe did occasionally temper their arguments with the recognition that, despite claims to the contrary, the Confederacy failed to meet the ideological standard of the liberal nationalist movements to which southern nationalists compared their own.

As the end of the war drew near, the *Richmond Whig*, in an article republished widely in other southern journals, had the clearest statement of understanding of the problems that threatened Confederates' self-comparisons with aspiring nations in Europe. The editor of the *Whig* admitted that if the international audience believed southern claims that the Confederacy was motivated by the spirit of the Greeks and the Dutch, southern victory would be assured – and yet, victory seemed to be slipping away. The *Whig* explained that although southerners flattered themselves that they held the qualities that had won these other nationalities respect and recognition, in truth southerners had yet to reach that standard.⁷⁸ For at least this one Confederate, impending defeat brought with it recognition that the comparisons with which Confederates had sought to legitimize their nation throughout secession and the war were, in fact, rhetorical inventions. The Confederacy was not like new and aspiring nations in Europe, and did not have similar legitimacy on the basis of shared liberal nationalist principles.

Despite Confederates' assertions that their nation deserved legitimacy, and that foreign recognition and independence would quickly be forthcoming, the Confederacy failed to secure national independence. The international comparisons that resonated so widely throughout the Confederacy were built upon false premises, as, despite Confederate insistence to the contrary, a slave-holding nation could never live up to the standards of nationalism that prevailed in the climate of mid-nineteenth century liberal

⁷⁸ "The Price of Independence," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, December 30, 1864.

nationalism. The international community rejected the Confederacy from the family of nations, most pointedly by refusing diplomatic recognition. Giuseppe Garibaldi, international symbol of nationalism, revealed some of the reasons behind this lack of support and recognition when he repeatedly expressed his sympathy for the Union. If the Confederates' comparisons had resonated internationally, these dual rejections would not have occurred.

Even as international events highlighted the differences between the Confederacy and aspiring nations in Europe, many Confederates remained committed to their vision of their nation as one of many aspiring nations legitimately seeking independence. Instead of switching strategies, southern analysts spent their energies developing ways to defend their comparisons, even in the face of an international climate that discredited the supposed similarity between the Confederacy and aspiring European nations. They manipulated the ideas of nationalism, and the reality of international politics, to support their own beliefs. These Confederates claimed that the lack of diplomatic recognition was due to European policy rather than Confederate failings; they called foreigners and foreign powers hypocrites for supporting other nationalist revolutions but not the Confederacy; and they sought to re-make the symbol of Garibaldi, detaching him from the principles of nationalism with which he was so closely associated in order to mitigate the harm that his support for the Union did to Confederate comparisons with Italy. When defeat seemed assured, they then turned to these comparisons once again to help them make sense out of their failure. Throughout the war, evidence continually mounted that disproved Confederates' comparisons with aspiring nations abroad. Despite this evidence, however, many Confederates remained committed to their vision of the

Confederacy as one of many nations aspiring to membership in the family of nations in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Chapter Five

Crafting Conservative Comparisons, 1861-1865

International influences proved critical to southern nationalists' efforts to define and defend the southern nation, and this held true across the political spectrum. While the most common southern usage of international comparisons was to claim that the southern nation followed in the ideological footsteps of liberal nationalist movements in Europe, to the most conservative of southerners, the southern nation held a very different place within the family of nations. More conservative southern analysts developed an alternative interpretation of the meaning of European nationalisms for the southern nation, one that claimed that the southern nation was an exception among new nations, and that the conservative Confederacy represented an improvement upon the model of nation-building presented in Europe.

To the more conservative southerners who debated and analyzed issues of nationhood, southern nationalism was premised not upon a liberal nationalism resembling that of new and aspiring nations abroad, but instead was built upon slavery and conservative principles of hierarchy, social order, and limited democracy. In this formulation, the conservative Confederacy, not liberal nations in Europe, was the model to which other nations should aspire. Further, these conservative southerners argued that the North, not the South, was shaped by the liberal ideologies of European nationalisms, and that the growing influence of these liberal ideas in the North was what had necessitated a separate southern nation. Conservative southerners thus used international

contextualization to celebrate and extol the unique virtues of a conservative southern nation.

Conservatism was a major force in southern politics throughout the antebellum and Civil War eras. Like other Americans, southerners were influenced by the Enlightenment philosophies that had shaped the United States, and thus southerners, like their fellow countrymen, held republicanism as the ultimate form of government. Southern respect for the liberal institutions of the United States was always tempered, however, by conservative desires for such principles as a hierarchical social order and limited democracy.¹ The necessity of defending slavery further fueled southern fears of the implications of such ideals as freedom and equality.² Even during the early national period, conservative southerners sought to promote states' rights and to limit the power of the national government, and they advocated for a vision of republicanism and of liberty based on this preference for local community over central government. As the southern defense of slavery intensified in the antebellum period, conservative southerners folded slavery into their vision of the good society, emphasizing the importance of the protection of property to liberty and to republicanism, and even arguing that slavery allowed for a stronger, more advanced form of republicanism.³ Historians have identified the critical influence that southern conservatism and the defense of slavery had on the creation of the southern nation, even highlighting the ways in which southern nationalists believed their

¹ Eugene Genovese, *The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of American Conservatism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 28-32; 42-49.

² Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*.

³ Robert E. Bonner argues that southern slave-holders saw their efforts to protect slavery as part of a legitimate debate over the form and nature of the American nation, and that as part of this debate, slave-holders argued that through slavery, they were upholding the original values of the Revolution. Bonner, *Mastering America*, 41-78, 149-183. See also Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals*, 30-76, 189-245.

slave-based nation would provide a new and improved model of nationhood.⁴ Such conservative discourse, as with larger southern debates over the meaning of nationhood, was not limited to domestic issues, however; even the most conservative of southerners understood nationhood and nation-building through an international context, using their conservative values to analyze the place of the new southern nation within the larger international community.

The southern nationalists who analyzed the international context of the Confederacy through a conservative lens both resembled and differed from those southern nationalists using liberal comparisons. Many influential southern periodicals, such as the *Charleston Mercury* and the *Daily Richmond Examiner*, printed both liberal and conservative analyses of the southern nation's place within an international community of nations. Other publications leaned strongly in one direction. The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* was one of the leading proponents of the argument that the southern nation resembled aspiring nations abroad, while magazines, including the *Southern Literary Messenger* and, particularly, *DeBow's Review*, almost exclusively argued that the South's conservatism set it apart from other nations. Southern analysts actively debated the meaning of southern nationhood within an international context, sometimes strategically deploying whichever comparisons seemed most useful, but also, at times, revealing deeply-held beliefs about the appropriate form of southern nationhood.

The main reason why certain southerners embraced conservative analysis over liberal was that they interpreted foreign revolutions through a more conservative and critical lens, and thus they rejected more liberal comparisons that used foreign nations as

⁴ Bonner, *Mastering America*; Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*; McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*; Genovese, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma*.

a positive point of comparison for the southern nation. The southerners who crafted conservative analyses of the international context of the southern nation were responding to different themes in antebellum southern thought than were the southerners who endorsed more liberal comparisons. While most antebellum southerners had watched the revolutions of 1848 with some wariness, liberal comparisons between the southern nation and new nations abroad nonetheless characterized nationalist movements in Europe primarily as seeking positive values such as republicanism, whereas conservative comparisons relied more on the southern heritage of suspicion of revolutions abroad.⁵ Guided by their concerns about the chaos and violence created by revolutions in Europe, conservative southerners defined their new nation by its difference from, rather than similarity to, aspiring nations abroad, and claimed that the North, not the South, inherited the unchecked and harmful liberalism demonstrated by European nationalist movements.⁶ These southern opinion-makers celebrated conservatism and slavery as the basis of southern national identity, arguing that limitations of freedom and democracy would strengthen the southern nation and would even purify nationalism of the excesses of liberalism found in nationalist movements in Europe. In part because these conservatives believed that foreign nationalist movements deviated from what they saw as acceptable forms of nation-building, conservative southerners had never fully embraced nationalist

⁵ Paola Gemme and Timothy Roberts argue that southern conservatism led southerners to fear aspects of the revolutions of 1848. Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggle*; Roberts, *Distant Revolutions*. Andre Fleche argues that both northerners' and southerners' responses to the revolutions of 1848 influenced their nationalisms that developed during the Civil War. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861*.

⁶ For examples of antebellum southern fear of unchecked liberalism in European nationalist movements, see "France," *Pensacola Gazette and Florida Advertiser*, February 13, 1830; "Revolutions: Progress and Effects of Republican Opinions," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 28, 1848; "The Fourth of July," *Charleston Courier*, July 4, 1848; *Alexandria Gazette*, July 14, 1848; "Mr. Kendall's Letters Again," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 6, 1848; "Letters from a New Contributor," 660; Kendall, "European Correspondence," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 14, 1848; "Affairs of Europe," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, June 4, 1850.

movements in Europe. This suspicion of and antipathy toward aspiring nations abroad would form the basis for conservatives' international comparisons that claimed that the Confederacy had little to nothing in common with the revolutions in Europe, and that the differences between the southern nation and aspiring European nations placed the southern nation in the position of superiority.

In 1860 and 1861, as southerners seceded from the United States and undertook the process of creating a southern nation, conservative southerners, like their more liberal compatriots, turned to international comparisons to explain and make sense out of the differences between the North and the South and to justify the creation of an independent southern nation. As they did so, southern nationalists who used conservative comparisons to justify secession agreed with their more liberal counterparts that the Confederacy upheld the true tradition of the American Revolution, and that northern liberalism had corrupted the principles of the American nation. While admitting that the nation was founded with the intent of protecting rights and liberties, for example, an author in *DeBow's Review* argued that the power of the government, as directed by northerners, had grown so strong as to abuse the rights it had been founded to protect.⁷ Such arguments often grew out of conservative southern desire to preserve slavery; another writer for *DeBow's Review* argued that northern devotion to equality of the races had betrayed the founders' wisdom at rejecting such racial equality.⁸ To most southern opinion-makers, northern liberalism had corrupted the original American national principles.

⁷ "The Constitution of the Confederate States," 13-17.

⁸ "The South's Power of Self-Protection," 546-548. For analysis of southerners' fear of growing northern power, see Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*, 33-61.

While agreeing that the North had betrayed the original principles of the American republic, many southern nationalists also believed that southern conservatism had strengthened the early nation, and that secession and a southern nation would redeem and protect these beneficial and necessary conservative principles from northern liberalism.⁹ Southern conservatism, conservatives argued, had kept northern liberalism in check until the recent growth of northern power. Without the stabilizing influence of conservatism, “the debased Yankee... dances with joy over the grave of his liberties” as the *Daily Richmond Examiner* explained.¹⁰ Secession was thus necessary to rescue the original principles of the United States from the northern violations thereof.¹¹ This idea, useful in justifying the creation of an independent nation as it happened, remained popular throughout the war; as South Carolina conservative and Confederate Congressman Robert Barnwell Rhett said in an 1862 speech, “the great cause of free government [northerners] have thrown back, perhaps, for centuries, and have left its preservation, on this continent at least, alone to the Confederate States.”¹² Because southern conservatism purified what northern liberalism had corrupted, southerners argued, they were justified in creating an independent southern nation.

As conservatives made their case that northern liberalism betrayed the intent of the American Revolution, and that a conservative southern nation would save the true

⁹ Such an argument built upon antebellum claims by slaveholding southerners that such southern principles as states’ rights constituted valuable contributions to the American experiment. Bonner, *Mastering America*, 41-78.

¹⁰ *Daily Richmond Examiner*, August 24, 1861. See also “To What Are We Tending?” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 26, 1861.

¹¹ Palmer, *A Vindication of Secession*, 45-6.

¹² “Speech of the Hon. R. B. Rhett, Delivered in the Convention of the State of South Carolina,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 29, 1862. See also MacMahon, *Cause and Contrast*, 165-6.

American national principles, they turned to international context to bolster their claims. Failed, and excessively liberal, attempts at nation-building in Europe provided an example of the harm that conservative southern nationalists believed would occur if northern liberalism were not checked by southern conservatism. Not only did the loss of conservatism lead to the destruction of the North and of the American nation, for example, but it also “reduced the Abolition states to the condition” of post-Revolutionary France, according to the *Daily Richmond Examiner*.¹³ Southern opinion-makers also turned to criticism of the revolutions of 1848 that had blamed the defeat of aspiring nations on excess liberalism in order to claim that unchecked northern liberalism would create similar harm in America. Antebellum southern analysts had argued that red republicanism, mob violence, and various forces of liberalism had corrupted and destroyed nationalist movements in Europe, and conservative southerners during the Civil War agreed.¹⁴ To southern conservatives, liberalism was a dangerous force, both in the United States and in Europe. Without conservatism to check this liberalism, these southern nationalists argued, the nation would decline to the chaos they had feared while watching revolutions in Europe; only a new, and more conservative, southern nation could prevent the spread of this chaos.

Conservatives expanded their comparisons of the excess liberalism of the North and the excess liberalism of nationalist movements in Europe in order to claim that the reason why the North threatened the South and betrayed the nation’s heritage was that

¹³ *Daily Richmond Examiner*, August 24, 1861.

¹⁴ “The Southern Provisional Congress. Its Last Day,” *Charleston Mercury*, February 20, 1862; “Inaugural Address of Governor Vance, of North Carolina,” *Daily Richmond Examiner*, September 11, 1862; Congress of the Confederate States of America, *Address of Congress to the People of the Confederate States*, 2.

northerners had been corrupted by the same liberalism that had doomed revolutions abroad. Rejecting liberal comparisons that explored northern abuses against the South by comparing the South to oppressed nations in Europe, conservative southerners instead blamed European nationalists for the harms that the North would perpetuate against the South. In particular, conservative southerners blamed red republicans and other radical elements of European nationalist movements for spreading the ideas of abolitionism and what they called black republicanism.¹⁵ Southerners had been wary of red republicans during the revolutions of 1848, blaming these radicals for corrupting the revolutions.¹⁶ As they evaluated what had corrupted the United States and thus necessitated southern secession, they turned once again to red republicanism, now equating that European political party with the new Republican Party in the North, as well as with any form of northern political ideology that conservatives saw as threatening. This comparison was particularly popular through 1860 and early 1861, as southerners were beginning to conceive of the South as distinct from the North and were creating justifications for separating the South from the North.¹⁷ As John Tyler, Jr., Confederate secretary of war, wrote under the penname “Python,” the harms were the same “whether the Protean shape assumed be that of the ‘Roundhead,’ the ‘Sans-culotte,’ ‘Red Republican,’ or ‘Black

¹⁵ Michael T. Bernath argues that southern cultural nationalists accused northerners of dangerous fanaticism, as part of a southern effort to create a distinct southern culture. Bernath, *Confederate Minds*, 35-76.

¹⁶ “France,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 28, 1848; Kendall, “European Correspondence,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 11, 1849; “Hungarian Republic,” *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, July 17, 1849; Mann, “Paris Correspondence,” April 1850, 240-249; “Condition of Europe,” *Alexandria Gazette*, September 12, 1849.

¹⁷ “Modern Sociological Fiction,” *DeBow’s Review* 5.3 (September 1860): 334-341; “European Aid,” *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, January 2, 1861; William H. Holcombe, “The Alternative: A Separate Nationality, or the Africanization of the South,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 32.6 (February 1861): 81-88; “The Past and Present,” *DeBow’s Review* 5.2 (February 1861): 187-198.

Republican.”¹⁸ Because black republicanism, following in the footsteps of red republicanism, would usurp political power and endanger political rights, southern nationalists argued, the South was justified in creating a separate nation.

While particularly useful in explaining why the South must break away from the northern-dominated United States, the equation of black republicanism with red republicanism and European liberalism continued throughout the war, as southerners used this comparison to explain the harms that northern and European liberalism caused, and that the Confederacy would avoid through conservatism. South Carolina politician and diplomat William Henry Trescot expanded on the problems created by black republicans in emulation of red republicans, asserting that “the Black Republican Party of the United States is the same as the Red Republican Party of Europe. Butler combines the principles of Mazzini with the practices of Haynau. You are fighting against chartered privileges for the absolute tyranny of the mob.”¹⁹ Similarly, a journalist for the *Daily Richmond Examiner* declared that black republicans, like red republicans, had supposedly committed endless crimes in the name of liberty.²⁰ The similarity of black republicanism and red republicanism constituted a serious threat in the minds of southern conservatives throughout the war, as well as created a powerful *raison-d-être* for the southern nation.

Southern conservatives, like most southerners, understood issues of nation through an international context, and analyzed the harms that the North threatened against the South through international comparisons. Instead of claiming a similar fight

¹⁸ Python [John Tyler, Jr.], “The Issues of 1860,” 268.

¹⁹ William Henry Trescot, “Letter from Wm. Henry Trescot Esq, of South Carolina, to Hon. J. R. Ingersoll, of Pennsylvania,” *Charleston Mercury*, October 17, 1863.

²⁰ “A Trip to the North - Personal Observations in Yankee Land,” *Daily Richmond Examiner*, November 15, 1862.

against tyranny with aspiring nations in Europe, however, the southern nationalists who created conservative comparisons retained a fuller reliance on the critiques of the revolutions in Europe as corrupted by liberalism, and thus used nationalist movements abroad as a point of comparison with the North, rather than with the South. In this analysis, the liberal nationalism exhibited abroad was not a way to escape northern tyranny, but instead was responsible for creating northern tyranny, through poisoning the political thought of the North. For southern nationalists who viewed nationalist movements abroad as primarily characterized by dangerous ideals, conservatism was necessary to provide a bulwark against the dangerous liberal ideas that had spread from Europe to the North. The ideological similarity between the North and nationalist movements in Europe, then, justified a separate, and more conservative, southern nation.

If conservative southerners believed that the liberal nationalist movements in Europe provided the inspiration for harmful northern doctrines, then logically, the South had more in common with the European regimes against which the nationalist movements had fought. As they explored options for a new southern nation in the early days of the Confederacy, a few southern conservatives aligned themselves with the governments that had opposed the new and aspiring nations that frightened conservative southerners. Looking to examples of monarchy and aristocracy in Europe, these most extreme of conservatives posited that the South should forgo democracy and republicanism altogether and adopt an aristocratic or even monarchical government.

Conservative southerners gave many reasons for supporting the creation of a monarchy or, particularly, of an aristocracy in the southern nation. Southern conservatives had long been concerned with the implications of full democracy, and,

looking abroad, they believed that strict hierarchical forms of government would protect conservative political values by eliminating the political voice of the undesirable masses.²¹ The *Southern Field and Fireside*, for example, argued that the aristocratic nature of democracy in the South would protect against tyranny.²² An author for *DeBow's Review* likewise asserted that "aristocracy is the only safeguard of liberty."²³ More direly, another author in *DeBow's Review* warned that a government conceived in too much democracy, without the stabilizing effect of aristocracy, would end in "anarchy, despotism, and ruin."²⁴ Given the potential consequences of too much democracy, some southern conservatives preferred to create a more limited form of government for their new nation.

The creation of a formal aristocracy seemed natural to many conservatives, who believed that the South already benefitted from many of the advantages of a hierarchical social structure. The hierarchical nature of a slave society created what many southern conservatives saw as a natural aristocracy. For example, a Scotchman living in Mobile characterized the South as a "republican aristocracy" as he made a case for a potential southern monarchy.²⁵ *DeBow's Review* claimed that a "permanent aristocracy, founded upon the natural diversity of races" gave the South a "vital strength and energy."²⁶

²¹ McCurry and Sinha argue that a desire for limited democracy was a key impetus of southern politics. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*; Sinha, *Counterrevolution of Slavery*, 9-62.

²² J. B. L., "The Pro-Slavery Confederacy," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, January 29, 1861.

²³ "The Message, the Constitution, and the Times," *DeBow's Review* 5.2 (February 1861): 163-4. See also Frank H. Alfriend, "A Southern Republic and a Northern Democracy," *Southern Literary Messenger* 37.5 (May 1863): 285-6.

²⁴ "National Characteristics - The Issues of the Day," *DeBow's Review* 5.1 (January 1861): 47.

²⁵ "Monarchy for the South," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, February 1, 1861.

²⁶ "National Characteristics - The Issues of the Day," 47.

DeBow's Review even went so far as to claim that southerners were “the most aristocratic people in the world,” because “pride of caste, color, and privilege, makes every white man an aristocrat in feeling.”²⁷ The hierarchical racial structure of the South lent it the form of aristocracy, according to conservatives, which they believed only benefitted the South.

The benefits of aristocracy that the South enjoyed seemed eclipsed by the benefits enjoyed by formal aristocracies and monarchies abroad, as international context provided support for conservative southerners' desire for aristocracy. Observations of aristocracies and monarchies in Europe helped to convince some conservatives that the informal southern aristocracy should be made official. *DeBow's Review* looked to France's many revolutions, and to the turmoil that still plagued the French nation, to argue that France's attempts to eliminate aristocracy had ended in failure and chaos not once, but twice, proving the superiority of a formal aristocracy.²⁸ The *Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette* went even further, claiming that France's repeated failures to establish a republic were proof that republics were weak and that monarchy was the best form of government. So convinced was this author of the benefits of monarchy that he expressed surprise that fellow southerners would not apply this principle in their own nation.²⁹ Italy, which had gained national independence and unity under a monarch, likewise revealed the benefits of monarchy according to the *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, which claimed that

²⁷ “The Message, the Constitution, and the Times,” 163-4.

²⁸ “The Declaration of Independence and the Republican Party,” *DeBow's Review* 4.2 (August 1860): 175-187.

²⁹ Right, *Little Rock Arkansas State Gazette*, January 12, 1861.

a monarchical government would benefit the South.³⁰ Analysis of aspiring nations abroad proved to some conservative southerners that democracy was neither necessary nor desirable for the southern nation, and that more hierarchical forms of power would provide better governance for the Confederacy.

As they debated the relative merits of aristocracy and monarchy, not all conservatives were convinced that these systems of government should be implemented immediately. Many southerners praised the benefits of aristocracy and monarchy both in theory and as enacted abroad, but argued that these more limited forms of government should be a last resort for the South. For example, in writing to the editor of the *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, one southerner praised Great Britain's monarchy for protecting property rights, suggesting that the South should create a similar government, but only if democracy failed to protect those rights.³¹ For the *Scotchman in Mobile*, although the South benefitted from its form as a republican aristocracy, monarchy was an option to be considered only as a last safeguard against emancipation.³² Likewise, the *Macon Daily Telegraph* endorsed monarchy only in response to British rumors that the South would create such a government, claiming that monarchy would be preferable to "Lincolndom," but nonetheless admitting that rumors of the establishment of a southern monarchy were false.³³ Even among those conservatives who supported aristocracy and monarchy, that support was often limited and qualified.

³⁰ "The Monarchical Governments of America," *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, January 26, 1861. See also Georgia, *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, January 31, 1861.

³¹ Georgia, *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, January 31, 1861.

³² "Monarchy for the South," *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, February 1, 1861.

³³ "Later from Lincolndom," *Macon Daily Telegraph*, February 28, 1862.

Intensifying the debate over forms of government, other southern nationalists outright opposed the idea of monarchy or aristocracy. The *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist* rebutted its fellow Augusta newspaper, the *Augusta Daily Chronicle and Sentinel's*, endorsement of monarchy, arguing that northern abuses of the system, rather than the American system of government itself, required reform.³⁴ Even while praising aristocracy, *DeBow's Review* assured readers that “there is no danger that we shall run into monarchy.”³⁵ And, of course, for the majority of southerners, republicanism was still the form of government to which they aspired.

As they debated the formation of a new southern nation, the most conservative of southerners found inspiration, albeit largely theoretical, in the more conservative forms of government they saw abroad. The benefits of limited participation in government would supposedly preserve liberty and protect against tyranny, building off of what they saw as a southern heritage of racial aristocracy. Ultimately, however, even these conservatives were not fully convinced that monarchy or aristocracy was the best form of government for the South.

International context helped southerners to explore different forms for the southern nation as they undertook the process of creating a new nation. A southern nation, conservatives argued, should avoid the unrestrained liberalism that had spread from Europe to the North and caused the North to betray the original principles of the American nation. While ultimately retaining the republican ideal, conservatives also suggested that monarchies and aristocracies in Europe provided potential models for a more conservative southern nation. Through 1861, then, international context helped

³⁴ “To What Are We Tending?” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 26, 1861.

³⁵ “The Message, the Constitution, and the Times,” 163-4.

conservative southerners to justify an independent southern nation, as well as to develop the political form of that new nation.

Analysis of the place of the new southern nation within the larger community of nations also helped conservatives to shape the national identity and mission they believed the Confederacy should pursue. In particular, contrasting the Confederacy with new and defeated nations in Europe revealed to conservatives what, exactly, defined the Confederacy and set it apart as a conservative nation. International context was thus critical in shaping conservatives' sense of their own nationhood and desired national identity.

Slavery, of course, was the main institution that defined the Confederacy and distinguished the southern nation from other new and aspiring nations. White supremacy was, as Confederate vice president Alexander Stephens famously put it, the “cornerstone” of the Confederacy. The defense of slavery had been the major motivation for secession, and Confederates were clear that the preservation of slavery was one of their national missions. Confederates were aware that slavery set them apart in a world increasingly turning toward emancipation, but they nonetheless centered slavery at the heart of their nation.³⁶

Beyond slavery, conservative southerners, guided by their rejection of the excess liberalism of nationalist movements abroad and by their sense that conservatism was a necessary corrective against this liberalism, identified many conservative values that defined the Confederacy and distinguished the southern nation from other recent attempts at nation-building. Conservative principles created a very different national identity for

³⁶ For discussions of slavery's centrality to the Confederacy and to Confederate national identity, see Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 22-32; McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*; Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*; Bonner, *Mastering America*.

the southern nation than that forged by the values of liberty and equality that underpinned nationalist movements in Europe. By focusing on the values that they believed were consistent with slavery, conservative southern nationalists developed a conservative national identity and, ultimately, a sense that the conservative Confederacy represented a superior form of nationhood.

One of the main ideals on which conservative southerners sought to build their new nation was the limitation of liberty. In contrast to their more liberal counterparts, who argued that the Confederacy, like aspiring nations abroad, sought to preserve liberty, conservatives used international comparisons to support their belief that the limitation of liberty was necessary for a strong southern nation. These conservatives feared that an excess of liberty would lead to anarchy by putting the power of the government in the hands of people ill-suited for such power; in particular, slave-holding southerners feared the implications of liberty for a slave society.³⁷ Using an international context to bolster their case for limited liberty, conservatives looked abroad to examples of failed nationalist movements to argue that excess liberty doomed attempts at nation-building. An author for *DeBow's Review* lamented that the overthrow of law and order in the failed revolutions of 1848 had “paralyzed the constitutional party in the unfortunate struggle for rational liberty,” leading to harmful consequences.³⁸ George Fitzhugh, an outspoken and widely-published advocate of slavery, declared that outside the South, “liberty was disintegrating into licentiousness, and ‘anarchy...’ stared us in the face” as he contrasted

³⁷ For analysis of conservative southern fear of unchecked liberty, see Bonner, *Mastering America*, 41-78; McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 11-37; Sinha, *Counterrevolution of Slavery*.

³⁸ “Modern Sociological Fiction,” 339.

the conservative southern nation with the revolutions of Europe.³⁹ A. Jeffery, a contributor to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, similarly bemoaned the “licentious liberty” that he attributed to European immigrants, who brought these ideas with them to the North.⁴⁰ Conservative southerners believed that liberty was best in small doses, restricted to a “rational” level, and they used the chaos, violence, and failure of revolutions in Europe to support their case for limited liberty and to define the southern nation as a nation premised upon limited liberty.

Conservatives argued that the best way for the southern nation to limit liberty was through limited democracy and suffrage.⁴¹ As an author for *DeBow's Review* explained, “we of the South must so modify our State institutions as to remove the people farther from the direct exercise of power” in order to ensure stability of government.⁴² J. Randolph Tucker, attorney general in Virginia and long-time defender of slavery, worried about the potential for buying votes in a democracy that was too free, likewise preferring a limited democracy.⁴³ For southern conservatives, limitations on democracy were a necessary aspect of the southern nation.

³⁹ George Fitzhugh, “The Revolutions of 1776 and 1861 Contrasted,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 37.12 (December 1863): 723.

⁴⁰ A. Jeffery, “European Immigration and New England Puritanism,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 37.8 (August 1863): 468-9.

⁴¹ McCurry argues that slaveholders intended to build an anti-democratic state when they conceived of the Confederacy. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*. Sinha identifies the origins of antebellum southern desire for limited democracy in the nullification crisis. Sinha, *Counterrevolution of Slavery*, 9-62.

⁴² “The Message, the Constitution, and the Times,” 163.

⁴³ Bland [J. Randolph Tucker], “The Great Issue: Our Relations to It,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 32.11 (March 1861): 164. For discussions of southern conservatives’ belief in the benefits of limited democracy, see Genovese, *The Southern Tradition*, 27-28, 42-43; McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 11-37.

Again disagreeing with the more liberal southern nationalists who claimed that the South sought the same value of self-government that motivated revolutions abroad, conservatives asserted that the example of the European nationalist movements proved that limited democracy should be a key characteristic of the Confederacy. According to Georgia governor Joseph E. Brown, a careful study of the history of other nations revealed that self-government was doomed to failure if “all of every class white and black” were allowed to “indiscriminately... exercise political rights.” He furthered that “the experiments made in France and in other enlightened countries, where domestic slavery is not tolerated, have shown that sufficient virtue and intelligence never exist to enable the people to perform the task, when the whole mass of people of every class are permitted to participate actively in the affairs of the State.”⁴⁴ Taking an equally dim view of the political capabilities of various Europeans, and utilizing the full racist rhetoric of his time, Mississippi doctor and pamphleteer William H. Holcombe questioned how “those who say that the French, the Italians or the Prussians, are not yet fit for freedom” would “thrust the splendid privilege of Anglo-Saxon superiority upon the semi-barbarous negro!,” exclaiming “what folly, what madness!”⁴⁵ The *Richmond Whig* was more optimistic about the French nation, if not other European nations, asserting that France was more advanced than Italy, Austria, or Russia only because it had adopted a limited form of democracy.⁴⁶ Not only their own domestic politics and political tendencies, but also their analysis of and comparisons with aspiring nations abroad, enhanced southern

⁴⁴ *Daily Richmond Examiner*, November 25, 1861.

⁴⁵ Holcombe, “The Alternative,” 83.

⁴⁶ “Democracy Teaching by Example,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, February 4, 1862. See also Frank H. Alfriend, “The Great Danger of the Confederacy,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 37.1 (January 1863): 39-43.

conservatives' argument that self-government was harmful to nations, and that limited liberty and democracy were critical national traits for the Confederacy.

Besides protecting against the harms of unchecked democracy, another benefit of limited, rational liberty in the conservative mind was that it allowed for a more orderly society. Social order, particularly a hierarchical social order based on racial inequality, was a primary value for southern conservatives.⁴⁷ As A. Featherman wrote in *DeBow's Review*, absolute equality led to chaos, and only through social dependence could social order could be achieved. The revolutions of 1848 provided a case study of what to avoid for Featherman, who declared that in the wake of the revolution of 1848 in France, "a government instituted on the principle of 'liberty, fraternity and equality' became the stepping-stone... for the usurpation of imperial power."⁴⁸ South Carolina newspaperman and writer Leonidas W. Spratt concurred that slavery was a key principle of social order that would prevent the South from following the chaotic path of other revolutions.⁴⁹ To southern conservatives, greater social order would protect the Confederacy from what they saw as the harmful consequences of too much freedom that had doomed attempts at nation-building in Europe.

As conservatives analyzed new and aspiring nations abroad, they identified several key differences between the Confederacy and new and aspiring nations in Europe. The Confederacy's emphasis on slavery, limited liberty and democracy, and social order

⁴⁷ For analysis of social order as a primary value of southern conservatives, see Bonner, *Mastering America*, 286-289; Genovese, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma*, 10-12.

⁴⁸ A. Featherman, "Our Position and That of Our Enemies," *DeBow's Review* 31.1 (July 1861): 29.

⁴⁹ L. W. Spratt, "Slave Trade in the Southern Congress," *Charleston Mercury*, February 13, 1861. See also *Daily Richmond Examiner*, September 5, 1861; J. B. L., "The Pro-Slavery Confederacy," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, January 29, 1861. For discussion of the centrality of social order to southern conservatism, see Genovese, *The Southern Tradition*, 32, 49.

distinguished the southern nation from the failed attempts at nation-building in Europe. These values not only set the Confederacy apart from other new and hopeful nations, however; they also defined the identity of the southern nation. By using the contrasts between the Confederacy and aspiring nations abroad to define southern national values, conservative southerners used international analysis to shape their vision of their national identity.

As conservatives strengthened their sense of their new national identity through international comparisons, they also sharpened their vision of the Confederacy's international meaning and larger national mission. To conservatives, the liberal underpinnings of European nationalist movements had led to anarchy, tyranny, and other undesirable outcomes. Because the Confederacy rejected the liberal doctrines that had corrupted aspiring nations in Europe, however, the southern nation would supposedly avoid these evils. The southern nation thus represented a superior national form according to conservative southerners. Southern conservatives even went so far as to argue that southern nationalism purified the nationalism exhibited by new and aspiring European nations. The conservative nationalism exhibited by the Confederacy supposedly represented the purest form of nationalism yet created, elevating the Confederacy to new global importance, not as the latest aspiring nation to emulate the ideals of liberal nationalism, but as the originator of a new political tradition.

Slavery, at the heart of southern identity and conservatism, was also at the center of conservative claims that the Confederacy represented a new and improved form of nationhood. Slavery was one of the values and institutions that granted the Confederacy its conservative character, underpinned southern conservative politics, and, especially

through the days of nation-formation in 1861, helped shape the identity of the new nation. To conservative southerners, looking to define the Confederacy as distinct from and superior to liberal nations, slavery played a key role in forging the unique strengths and national mission of the southern nation.⁵⁰

One of the ways that conservatives claimed that slavery strengthened the southern nation, and created a superior form of nationhood, was through granting protection and freedom to white citizens. As conservative southerners anticipated an independent southern nation in 1860 and early 1861, they reassured themselves that a slave-based nation, unique among its peers, would provide protection for all whites. As the *Charleston Mercury* argued, slavery protected white citizens from coarse labor, and thus was the underpinning of “free society in Europe and America.”⁵¹ *DeBow’s Review* declared in July of 1860 that should the South form an independent nation, the southern nation would be “peculiarly circumstanced, and advantages would be hers such as no nation has heretofore been favored with.” Accordingly, a southern nation would usher in a new era in the history of the world. This global importance would be based in large part on the South’s “perfect labor system,” which ensured that “liberty is the sole heritage of the white race.”⁵² The protection that slavery afforded white citizens would, according to southern conservatives, grant the southern nation a unique place among nations of the world.

⁵⁰ For analysis of southerners’ belief that slavery granted them a unique national mission, see Genovese, *The Slaveholders’ Dilemma*, 4-6, 12-13; Fleche, *Revolution of 1861*, 132-150; McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*; Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals*, 189, 219-245; Bonner, *Mastering America*, 252-285.

⁵¹ “Pecuniary Effects of Secession at the South,” *Charleston Mercury*, March 26, 1861. See also “National Characteristics,” 47.

⁵² “Our Country - Its Hopes and Fears,” *DeBow’s Review* 31.1 (July 1860): 84-5.

Slavery would also enable the southern nation to fulfill its national mission in part because slavery supposedly stabilized society and the social order. Slavery, according to *DeBow's Review*, protected against the fanaticism that roiled Europe, and thus provided “a solution of all the disturbing problems, social, political, ethical, and economical, that are convulsing the bosom of modern society.”⁵³ A. Featherman likewise argued that slavery protected against the failures experienced by the revolutionaries of 1848 by providing the “most perfect social system that can possibly be devised.”⁵⁴ The *Daily Richmond Examiner* informed its readers that slavery was nothing less than the “divine law of social order” and would ensure the superiority of the southern nation.⁵⁵ For conservatives who believed that an orderly society was a key national value, slavery was critical to building a strong nation that could stand out among, and stand above, its international peers.

Slavery did not just protect the white race and preserve social order, however; to conservative southerners, it also did nothing less than preserve civilization. Although much of the rest of the nineteenth century world was turning away from slavery, southerners nonetheless saw slavery as not only compatible with, but even necessary for, progress.⁵⁶ If slavery was critical to the preservation of civilization, then it only stood to reason that a southern nation built on slavery would be the most civilized of new nations. William H. Holcombe argued that “African slavery is no retrograde movement, no

⁵³ “Quo Tendimus?” *DeBow's Review* 4.4 (October 1860): 442.

⁵⁴ Featherman, “Our Position and That of Our Enemies,” 30.

⁵⁵ *Daily Richmond Examiner*, September 5, 1861. See also M. Guizot, “History of the Origin of Representative Government in Europe,” *DeBow's Review* 32.3-4 (April 1862): 199-211.

⁵⁶ Bonner, *Mastering America*.

discord in the harmony of nature, no violation of elemental justice, no infraction of immutable laws, human or divine – but an integral link the grand progressive evolution of human society.”⁵⁷ Colonel A. S. Atkinson of Georgia concurred that the current level of civilization could not be maintained if slavery were destroyed in the South, asserting that if slavery were ended, the South would follow the path of defeated and destroyed nations before it.⁵⁸ To conservative southerners, slavery was not incompatible with progress – it was necessary for the same, and a southern nation based in slavery would actually be the most progressive of the nations of the world.

As the most civilized society, the slave South would also become the perfect model of a successful, virtuous nation according to southern conservatives. A convention of South Carolinians informed their fellow southerners in January of 1861 that a united southern nation, based on slavery, would be “among the most important of the nations of the world... whose renown must spread throughout the civilized world.”⁵⁹ As war began, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* relied on a similar idea to bolster its readers’ faith in southern ability to win independence, arguing that “the whole history of mankind shows that the military power of nations has in every case been built up at the beginning, by the enslavement of conquered peoples.”⁶⁰ *DeBow’s Review* declared that “history furnishes abundant proof that the institution of domestic slavery conduces to national strength; and the events of the day are about to confirm the lessons of history,” enthusing that “we of

⁵⁷ “The Union: Its Benefits and Dangers,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 32.1 (January 1861): 4.

⁵⁸ “Preamble and Resolution by Colonel A. S. Atkinson,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, June 21, 1861. See also “The Union: Its Benefits and Dangers,” 4.

⁵⁹ “The Address of the People of South Carolina, Assembled in Convention, to the People of the Slaveholding States of the United States,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, January 8, 1861.

⁶⁰ “The Slave Institution a Great Military Power,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, April 6, 1861.

the South are about to inaugurate a new civilization. We shall have new and original thought; negro slavery will be its great controlling and distinctive element.”⁶¹ As Confederates created their new nation, conservatives argued that slavery would not only give the new nation its strength, but would also ensure the perfection of the southern nation, and even of the concept of nationhood in general.

By protecting white citizens, ensuring an orderly society, advancing civilization, and perfecting the nation, conservatives argued, slavery would elevate the southern nation among all other nations. Slavery did not only grant the southern nation an elevated position in the community of nations, however. Conservative southerners also believed that even as it uniquely strengthened the southern nation, slavery also purified the same values that had driven nationalist movements in Europe. Although they considered the idea of non-republican styles of government, ultimately even conservative southerners agreed that the southern nation should be a republic. To these conservatives, however, republicanism was best served by conservative values, and was thus enhanced by slavery, rather than limited by slavery. Conservatives argued that the southern nation was not only a model nation through its conservatism and slavery, but that it was also a model republican nation, one that purified the ideals that unrestrained liberalism had supposedly corrupted in nationalist movements abroad.

The idea that slavery, and therefore the southern nation, purified republicanism was popular throughout the existence of the Confederacy. A writer for the *Southern Literary Messenger* claimed in January of 1861 that slavery preserved “peace” and “harmony” and prevented the “angry strifes which agitate and destroy other nations,” and

⁶¹ “The Future of Our Confederation,” *DeBow’s Review* 6.1 (July 1861): 36. See also Joseph E. Brown, “Governor’s Message,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, November 15, 1861.

therefore a southern nation would have “the greatest opportunity ever vouchsafed to any people, of establishing free republican institutions.”⁶² Years later in 1864, Rev. William A. Hall of New Orleans declared that the southern nation, based on the superiority of the white race, “is the perfection of republican government.”⁶³ Slavery elevated the southern nation not only by introducing an alternative set of national values, but also, according to conservative southerners, by purifying the very same values that had motivated nationalist movements abroad.⁶⁴

A common basis to the claim that slavery purified republicanism was the argument that limited democracy, a major part of conservatives’ sense of national identity, and one of the strengths of the southern nation, also strengthened republicanism. The *Daily Richmond Examiner* blamed “direct democracy” for the degeneration of the American republic as controlled by the North, arguing that it ushered in tyranny and oppression, whereas “here in the South the presence of negro slavery has acted as a corrective.”⁶⁵ In 1861, *DeBow’s Review* published Beverly Tucker’s Nashville Convention speech, in which Tucker had declared that “the institution of domestic slavery... gives stability to government, and renders universal suffrage and perfect freedom possible to those who are free.”⁶⁶ At an 1861 Virginia Convention held to

⁶² “The Union: Its Benefits and Dangers,” 4.

⁶³ Hall, *The Historic Significance of the Southern Revolution*, 37.

⁶⁴ For analysis of southern slave-holders’ claims that slavery enhanced republicanism and other American values, see Bonner, *Mastering America*, 81-113. Lacy Ford argues that by the 1830s, lower South slaveholders responded to what they saw as the growing abolitionist threat by developing the argument that slavery benefitted republicanism by guaranteeing white independence, an argument that would intensify in the 1850s. Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 511-514.

⁶⁵ *Daily Richmond Examiner*, November 25, 1861.

⁶⁶ “The Path of Disunion - To the North and South,” *DeBow’s Review* 6.1 (July 1861): 65.

debate secession, delegate James H. Cox agreed with fellow delegate Thomas S. Flournoy, former congressman and future colonel of the Confederate army, that slavery was “essential to the preservation of American freedom.”⁶⁷ To Tucker, Cox, Flournoy, and other southern conservatives, limiting the freedom of slaves enhanced the freedom available to white citizens, creating a more perfect republic. The southern nation thus represented the purest and strongest form of republican nationhood.

Through the early years of the war, as southerners forged a southern nation, conservatives argued that slavery would elevate the southern nation above all other nations. Slavery would protect whites, preserve civilization, strengthen the nation, and even purify the republicanism that had motivated nationalist movements in Europe. The southern nation was not just necessary for the protection of southerners, according to southern conservatives; it would also be the strongest and purest new nation in the international community of nations.

Such comparisons were critical to conservatives’ efforts to justify secession and shape the identity of their new nation. As the immediate demands of nation-formation shifted to the task of sustaining and defending that nation, however, southerners’ international comparisons began to shift. For more liberal southerners, the fact that the rest of the world responded negatively to their comparisons between the southern nation and aspiring nations in Europe led them to intensify their manipulation of the ideals of southern nationalism and of liberal nationalism in order to preserve their comparisons. Conservative southerners responded differently to the lack of support from the rest of the world. To conservatives, the southern nation was unique among nations, strengthened and set apart by its conservatism. It made sense, then, that the rest of the world would

⁶⁷ “The Virginia Convention,” *Alexandria Gazette*, March 9, 1861.

respond negatively to a nation premised on a different set of values. Conservative comparisons during the war thus focused on explaining why international rejection of the South was not a problem.

Through 1862, as the Confederacy settled in to the task of sustaining a nation and winning a war, conservatives began to popularize a new argument that directly contrasted the process of nation-formation in the South with the recent examples of nation-formation in Europe. Conservatives who had previously argued that slavery and the southern nation purified republicanism now extended that argument to claim that secession and the act of creating a southern nation had purified and corrected the excesses that had characterized revolutions and nationalist movements in Europe. Pointing to the supposed superiority of the southern revolution not only continued to bolster the legitimacy of the southern nation, but also allowed southerners to sidestep the lack of international approval by attempting to enhance the appearance of the Confederacy as a superior nation, even from its conception.

For conservative southerners, the southern nation's conservatism purified the negative liberalism that had characterized and shaped the revolutions and nationalist movements abroad. As the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* explained in a February 1862 article on events in Italy, the South "has of late discovered that its worst enemies in Europe are the insurrectionists, and its only friends the conservative classes," asserting that "the Southern revolution, which is a conservative and constitutional... movement, which has for its object the protection of property and constitutional liberty, has of course no friends among those who make war upon property" and declaring that "under these circumstances, the future popular agitations of Europe can scarcely be expected to excite

any interest in the South.”⁶⁸ For the *Richmond Daily Dispatch*’s writer, the southern revolution was set apart from European revolutions by its very conservatism, which also elevated the southern revolution into the position of superiority. Similarly, George Fitzhugh blamed Locke’s principles of human equality for destroying government and stability in Europe, leading to the revolutions that had characterized the continent for the past several decades. He contrasted the “Southern Revolution of 1861” with the earlier Lockean revolutions, characterizing the southern revolution as “reactionary and conservative... a solemn protest against the doctrines of natural liberty, human equality and the social contract.”⁶⁹ This vision of the Confederacy as purifying revolution with its conservatism persisted throughout the war; in 1864, Rev. William A. Hall celebrated the formation of the Confederacy as the world’s first conservative revolution, calling the southern revolution the only true and pure revolution and arguing that the Confederacy marked the beginning of a new age of conservatism.⁷⁰ To southern conservatives, the creation of the southern nation stood as an exemplar of conservatism in action, as well as a rebuke to the supposedly harmful liberalism that had driven nationalist movements in Europe.

While celebrating the conservatism of the southern revolution, southern conservatives also reiterated the exact harms against which the conservative southern project in nation-building would protect. These harms that a year before had justified secession were now used to defend that same act of secession in retrospect. Anarchy and

⁶⁸ “Commutations in Europe,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, February 26, 1862.

⁶⁹ Fitzhugh, “The Revolutions of 1776 and 1861 Contrasted,” 719-722.

⁷⁰ Hall, *The Historic Significance of the Southern Revolution*, 13, 19, 41. For more analysis of the southern revolution as superior to European revolutions, see “The Truth from Scotland,” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, February 2, 1861; “American Affairs in England,” *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, June 29, 1861.

mob violence were the most frequent evils produced by revolutions abroad that conservatives claimed that the southern revolution had avoided. Thomas Howell Cobb, president of the provisional Southern Congress and a former congressman and governor of Georgia, argued that “the one remarkable characteristic of the revolution which distinguishes it from all others recorded in history” is that the southern revolution was based on conservatism, contrasting it with other revolutions whose “popular tendencies have too frequently degraded them into anarchy and discord.”⁷¹ In his inaugural address, Governor Zebulon Baird Vance of North Carolina celebrated that “mob violence, that dangerous offspring of revolution, has been equally repressed by the conservatism of our people.”⁷² The idea that the Confederacy was unique in its avoidance of violence persisted even throughout many long years of war, with the Confederate Congress still asserting in 1864 that the Confederacy “is a child of law instead of sedition, of right instead of violence, of deliberation instead of insurrection. Its early life was attended by no anarchy, no rebellion, no suspension of authority, no social disorders, no lawless disturbances... The utmost conservatism marked every proceeding and public act,” in contrast to the European revolutions that had not shown such conservatism.⁷³ The supposedly conservative nature of the southern revolution furnished proof for southern conservatives that the southern nation, unlike aspiring nations in Europe, upheld the principles of conservatism rather than falling to the excesses of liberalism. From its very

⁷¹ “The Southern Provisional Congress. Its Last Day,” *Charleston Mercury*, February 20, 1862.

⁷² “Inaugural Address of Governor Vance, of North Carolina,” *Daily Richmond Examiner*, September 11, 1862.

⁷³ Congress of the Confederate States of America, *Address of Congress to the People of the Confederate States*, 2.

beginnings as a purified, conservative revolution, southern conservatives argued, the Confederacy had undertaken a unique national mission that set it apart from the inferior new and aspiring nations in Europe.

In the later years of the war, as foreign aid and support continued to be withheld, conservative analyses of the South's place within the international community shifted from defending the southern revolution to explaining why the South's international isolation was not a problem. In an exuberantly-punctuated statement, the *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist* lamented that "our social organization and our labor system are such as the world, in this enlightened (!) day, puts under the ban of its reprobation," recognizing that "we stand almost alone as to our peculiar institutions" but arguing that the institution of slavery nonetheless created greater harmony and peace in the South than was found in other nations.⁷⁴ In a similar statement, the *Daily Richmond Examiner* wrote that "we stand alone... for we have no faith in our European admirers," but that while the South's ideological isolation "is a bleak position," it was "not an unhealthy one," and that southerners "are content to keep aloof from the 'spirit of progress' which is making all over the world such a sad hotch-potch of true civilization."⁷⁵ The Confederacy may have stood alone among nations of the world, but to conservatives, that was acceptable, as the benefits of slavery simply ensured that the South stood alone at the top.

In an attempt to further mitigate the lack of international support, additional analysis of the role of slavery within the Confederacy, and of the Confederacy within the world, directly criticized the European nations that had failed to support the South's bid for national independence. The *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist* declared that slavery

⁷⁴ "Cultivate Good Will," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, January 31, 1863.

⁷⁵ *Daily Richmond Examiner*, May 3, 1864.

would not only strengthen the Confederacy and preserve republicanism, but also that, without slavery, southerners would become “the Spain and Italy, the hybrid of America, the lazaroni [sic] of the world,” dismissing these nations and their people as unfit for the international support that was granted to them but withheld from the Confederacy.⁷⁶ *The Index*, Confederate propagandist Henry Hotze’s London newspaper, wrote that the North was like oppressive Russia and the South like patriotic, freedom-loving Poland, who had recently been defeated in a fight against Russian control. Hotze made a critical exception to this comparison, however, in claiming that racial slavery in the South ensured that the Confederacy would be successful where Poland failed.⁷⁷ Slavery, the heart of the southern experiment in nation-building, set the South apart from other aspiring nations. According to conservative southerners, this merely meant that the South was superior to nations based on more liberal principles, and therefore the lack of support from abroad could not threaten the southern national mission. During the long years of war, international comparisons assured conservative southerners that the lack of international support was due to southern superiority rather than to any failures of the southern nation.

To southern conservatives, the Confederacy was justified and defined by its differences from, rather than similarities to, new and aspiring European nations. Conservative southerners were still guided by critiques of European nationalist movements as destroyed by excess liberalism, and thus they rejected liberal comparisons that claimed similarity between the South and aspiring nations abroad, arguing instead that the South improved upon and purified, rather than resembled, the model of these

⁷⁶ “The Future of American Republicanism – Slavery the Basis of Our Safety: No. 2,” *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, December 10, 1864. See also S., *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, March 12, 1865.

⁷⁷ “A Parallel and a Contrast,” *Index* (London, England), August 6, 1863.

aspiring European nations. Southern conservatism, and its differences from the liberal ideals that the North had adopted from Europe, justified an independent southern nation according to conservatives' international comparisons. Analysis of the international context of the new southern nation helped southern conservatives to determine the form that their new government should take, and to identify the values that would define the southern nation. These conservative values set the Confederacy apart from the more liberal new and aspiring European nations, supposedly strengthening the Confederacy and granting it a unique national mission. This mission was carried out as southern conservative values, particularly slavery, created a new form of nation that conservatives argued both rejected and purified the liberal values that had fueled nationalist movements abroad. Conservative southerners were clearly incorrect in their assessment that conservatism and slavery would create a stronger, better nation that purified the nationalism exhibited by aspiring nations elsewhere. For conservative southerners during the Civil War, however, as for their more liberal counterparts, international analysis was critical to defining the Confederacy and its place within the world.

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