HOLY SEE AND EUROPE. THE „ROMAN QUESTION" IN THE ITALIAN MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS

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***Abstract**: At Fontainebleau, on September 15, 1864, at 15 o' clock, Nigra, Italian ambassador in Paris, Pepoli, Italian ambassador in Petersburg and a friend of Napoleon III and Drouyn De Lhuys, the French Foreign Minister, signed the September Convention. The agreement, achieved after three years of negotiations, foresaw the French demobilization from Rome and the gradual alternation of the imperial troops with a corps of Catholic volunteers. Italy had however ensure the independence and the security of the pontifical territories and the transfer of the capital from Turin to another city (Naples, Florence but not Rome). The ambiguity of the agreement put both countries to consider it a diplomatic success. Paris withdrew the troops because it judged the transfer of the capital as the Italian surrender of Rome, while the diplomats of Vittorio Emanuele II considered the Convention as the first step of the Italian approach to the Urbe and the the beginning of a peaceful solution of the Roman Question. The French garrison – which arrived in the city in the late spring of 1849 at the request of Pope Pius IX - began to return to France.*
Following the Convention, an italian military commission was appointed to study the new strategic-military arrangement order of the Peninsula due to the movement of the capital.

***Keywords:** Holy See, Roman Question, Seconde Empire, September Convention.*

In the course of 1860, during the military campaign for the Italian unification, Cavour feared that Garibaldi would march on Rome to reconquer the city lost twelve years earlier, in July of 1849, when the French troops, called by the Pope, defeated the Roman Republic of Mazzini, Saffi and Armellini.
Any attack on the *Urbe* would cause a strong French reaction compromising the success of the military campaign in the south of the Italian Peninsula.
For this reason, the Count proposed and made, with the agreement of Napoleon III, the invasion of the papal legations marching towards Garibaldi and blocking his way to Rome. Garibaldi's troops and those of Savoy met in Teano on October 26, 1860. The meeting ratified the triumph of Cavour's political strategy because general Garibaldi delivered southern Italy to Vittorio Emanuele II renouncing Rome.
The "Roman Question", however, has not been resolved and, despite the unification of Italy, it remained one of the main problems of the Italian

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Government. In Cavour's opinion, Rome could be conquered only with the persuasive art of diplomacy convincing the French Emperor to withdraw his troops[1].

The Count, however, was aware that it would be very difficult because the Emperor would not leave easily the Pope at the mercy of Italian intrigues, contradicting what he had done in 1849[2].

After the first approaches, on April 13, 1861, the negotiations started: Prince Napoleon Joseph Charles Paul Bonaparte, nephew of the Emperor and sympathizer of the Italian cause, wrote a letter to Cavour accepting an agreement between Italy and France according to which Turin would not have invade the Papal States, protecting Rome in the event of a foreign attack and supporting the establishment of a militia of Catholic volunteers. Only under this condition, the Second French Empire would demobilise its contingents from the *Urbe*.

For Napoleon III this solution had the advantage of being coherent with the program to maintain the temporal power of Pius IX and at the same time it was appreciated by the Italians. Cavour received the epistle on April 15, he consulted Minghetti – Interior Minister – and decided to inform the king, who approved the project, hidden to the rest of Italian politicians.

Two days after, the Italian Prime Minister sent the military attache and honorary advisor of the Legation in Paris, Vimercati, to the French capital. The affirmative answer was attached to the draft treaty: the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome; the Kingdom of Italy would not attack the territories of the Papal States and it would defend them in case of foreign offensives; it would allow the establishment of a Corps of Catholic volunteers to defend Rome and finally it would begin a negotiation to the assumption of part of papal debt. Napoleon accepted in general terms the agreement. The French answer arrived to Turin in early June, but Cavour was sick in bed for four days because of malaria. On June 6, at seven in the morning, the count died and his death caused the immediate end of negotiations, closing the first phase of the agreements between Italy and France.

The new Prime Minister, Bettino Ricasoli, inherited the issues that were still suspended, but the French Emperor decided not to accept the negotiations. Nevertheless, on September 10, 1861, Ricasoli addressed to the Pope a draft agreement that invited Pius IX to tacitly renounce his temporal power. In

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[1] M. Minghetti, *La Convenzione di Settembre*, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1899, p. 4.

[2] P. Pirri, *Pio IX e Vittorio Emanuele II. Dal loro carteggio privato. La Questione Romana. Dalla Convenzione di Settembre alla caduta del potere temporale 1864-1870*, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma, 1961, pp. 2-3.

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return, the king of Italy promised protection, liberty and a new spiritual greatness. The Pope and Napoleon, irritated, refused this proposal[3]. The Italian Prime Minister proposed again: mixed Italian and French troops in the following cities of Roman provinces: Corneto Aquapendente, Viterbo, Velletri, Frosinone, Terracina, but also this project was rejected. The Pope believed that it was an Italian ploy to undo his temporal power and Napoleon III judged the French retreat from Rome as a clear sign of weakness in the face of Europe.

After this failed attempt, the Italian Government fell during a confused parliamentary sitting about an important theme of domestic policy: the excessive tolerance of the Government to the Action Party. Ricasoli had not the majority and resigned[4].

The king designated Urbano Rattazzi to form a new center-left Government (March 3, 1862)[5].

The new Government opened the third phase of the negotiations: on May 1862, the Italian diplomats promoted new proposals to Pius IX:

- End of the military French occupation[6];
- Territorial *Status quo*;
- Italian assumption of part of papal debt;
- Pecuniary compensation of three million francs per year in favour of the Pope;
- Concession, by the Pope, of liberal reforms.

Pius IX rejected this draft. At the same time, in Sicily, Garibaldi harangued the crowd accusing Napoleon III for usurping Rome in 1849. The general in red shirt claimed the city as the legitimate Italian capital[7]. The anti-French hard speeches of Garibaldi in Palermo provoked the reaction of Pillet, French Consul in Turin, who wrote to the prefect Pallavicino, exhorting him to intervene[8]. On August 25, 1862 Garibaldi, with thousand men, landed in Calabria marching to Rome. The hesitation of the Italian Government generated embarrassment at the European chancelleries. A contingent of the Royal Italian Army (*Regio Esercito*) arrived in Aspromonte to stop Garibaldi's advance and the two armies collide for ten minutes. Five dead and fourteen

[3] Italian Diplomatic Documents (DDI), First series 1861-1870, vol. I, doc. 294, p. 362.

[4] G. Giordano, *Cilindri e feluche. La politica estera dell'Italia dopo l'Unità*, Aracne, Roma, 2008, p. 29.

[5] D. Mack Smith, *Vittorio Emanuele II*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1983, pp. 175-179.

[6] For Pius IX it is not a "military occupation" but a "military protection".

[7] Archivio Ufficio Storico Stato Maggiore Esercito (AUSSME), G. 13, *Carteggio confidenziale del ministro*, b. 1, fasc. 22, *Relazioni di Sicilia. Mene dei partiti. Provvedimenti. Situazione dell'Isola. Garibaldi*.

[8] Historical Archive of the Italian Army General Staff (AUSSME), G. 13, *Carteggio confidenziale del ministro*, fasc. 27, *Misure e pel mantenimento dell'ordine e della pubblica tranquillità nell'Isola di Sicilia*;

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wounded for regular soldiers, seven dead and twenty wounded among the volunteers in red shirts. Also Garibaldi is wounded in the left hip and in the right malleolus[9].

Following this event, the French Foreign Minister Thouvenel, a pro-Italian and a great supporter of an agreement with Rattazzi, resigned. In those days, the head of the Italian Government - even not yet officially mistrusted – also resigned. After several exhausting consultations and many negotiations, Vittorio Emanuele appointed Luigi Carlo Farini as prime Minister. The policy of the new Government was the consolidation of public finances and the fight a against banditry, while the Roman Question –because of the closure of the Emperor Napoleon III and the appointment of Foreign Drouyn de Lhuys, notoriously opposed to Italy, is temporarily set aside[10].

The new head of Government, however, showed the first signs of a serious mental illness. On March 24, 1863 there was the inevitable Government crisis when Farini, during a council of ministry, in the grip of nervous excitement, threatened the king with a blade. Then new Government, similar to the last, was headed by Marco Minghetti and Emilio Visconti-Venosta[11]. This Government continued the previous policy looking for balanced relations with Pius IX, Napoleone III and trying to approach Great Britain in order to emerge from international political isolation[12]. But at the beginning of 1864 an unexpected news spread that a serious illness had struck the Pope: Pius IX was dying and the Sacred College identified in the Cardinal Filippo de Angelis, an obstinate anti-Italian, the successor. In this situation, Turin decided to start again the negotiation with Paris. There were fears the outbreak of riots, revolutions and that Garibaldi could claim again Rome. With this excuse the Italian Government proposed the combined presence of Italian and French contingents in Rome in order to ensure public order during the vacant seat[13]. For the Italian diplomats, it was very important to approach the issue by not supporting the volunteers, but having a closer diplomatic and military policy with France, defending the Pope[14].

Nigra, ambassador in Paris resumed the Italian intentions:

– When the Pope dies, there would be riots;

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[9] AUSSME, G6, *Aspromonte*, fasc. *Ordini del giorno*.

[10] G. Giordano, op. cit., p. 40.

[11] C. Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944 quale io la vidi*, Mondadori, Roma, 1945, p. 12 e segg.

[12] DDI, I serie 1861-1870, vol. IV, doc. 198, p. 203.

[13] A. Battaglia, *La capitale contesa. Firenze, Roma e la Convenzione di settembre (1864)*, Nuova Cultura, Roma, 2014, p. 67. AUSSME, G. 13, b. 2, fasc. 96, *Lettera del Generale Villarey all'Autorità Militare Francese in Roma per impedire il passaggio di malfattori dal Pontificio*.

[14] AUSSME, G. 13, b. 3, fasc. 122, *Mene del partito d'azione al confine e nel territorio pontificio*.

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– It was essential to propose to France the collaboration of the Italian troops, in this way we would set foot in Rome;
– At the end of the conclave, France would demobilise its Roman contingent and Italy would be the only guarantor of the order in the city[15].
At the beginning, French diplomacy delayed the answer, but few days later, Visconti Venosta received the reply of the Emperor: the French contingent in Rome was more than sufficient to maintain order and it was firmly in control of the situation. If Turin wanted to collaborate, it could launch an appeal for calm[16].
Drouyn de Lhuys wrote: «[…] Le Gouvernement Français était décidé à maintenir l'ordre à Rome et à sauvegarder la liberté du Conclave. En même temps le Ministre Impérial des Affaires Etrangères exprimait son espoir que le Gouvernement Italien, dans un intérêt commun avec la France, aurait employé son influence et interposé ses conseils pour prévenir tout désordre […]»[17].
Despite the French stiffening, Minghetti and Visconti Venosta decided to send General La Marmora and Nigra to Fontainebleau finding an agreement with Napoleon III.
The night between 7 and 8 of June the Pope's health conditions improved, the medical prognoses were optimistic but the Italian mission had to go ahead. General La Marmora disagreed, he wrote to Minister of the War asking to abort the trip. For his skepticism, he was replaced with Gioacchino Pepoli, Italian ambassador in Petersburg, a close friend of the French Emperor. The first meeting took place on June 16 in Fontainebleau.
France agreed with the need to protect the safety of the conclave in case of death of the Pope but, it was adverse to the Italian solution of alternating immediately the two armies. Paris, in fact, presented a counter-proposal:
- the cooperation of the two contingents[18];
- French troops would not leave at the end of the Conclave, but after the re-establishment of public order.
Napoleone III submitted another important proposal, a *condicio sine qua non*: the Italian commitment to move the capital from Turin to another city except, obviously, the papal Rome. For the French Emperor this was the proof of

[15] DDI, , I serie 1861-1870, vol. IV doc. 779, pp. 741-742.
[16] *Ibidem*, doc. 784, p. 749.
[17] *Ibidem*, doc. 786, p. 750.
[18] *Ibidem*, doc. 803, p. 773.

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Italian good faith, the complete surrender to Rome as a capital[19]. Without the French army, the Italian army would protect the Pope[20].
Napoleone III declared: «Everybody believes that you will sent a contingent to Rome to make it your capital. Show that it is not moving the capital from Turin to another city»[21].
The two Italian diplomats in Fontainebleau exposed to Napoleon their doubts about the last clause, however, they would inform the Government and they would give a reply in the following weeks.
The evaluation was not simple: to move the capital could mean to abandon of the dream of Rome and cut the ties that bounded Italy to its most ancient provinces. Nevertheless, the Foreign Minister agreed to sacrifice Turin in order to resolve this issue stalled since July 1849. If the move of the capital was the *condicio sine qua non* to obtain the departure of French troops from Rome, it would be done. The position of Visconti Venosta was shared by Minghetti but not completely by other diplomats. Nigra was puzzled, La Marmora did not want to accept the French proposal because the public opinion would complain, the Action Party would organize new attacks and the Italian army would fight against the volunteers of Garibaldi and Mazzini protecting the Pope. In his opinion Italy must not be tempted by the only perspective to expel the French. In this way, Italy would become the enemy of herself[22].
Over time Nigra decided to espouse the cause of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister and the king, still embittered about the movement of the capital, gave his approval. Negotiations could continue.
On August 9, Pepoli was received by Napoleon at Saint Cloud. The Emperor was satisfied for the Italian openness and he authorized his diplomats to start the formal negotiations. As for the timing relating to the evacuation of the papal territories, Napoleon declared that it would take no less than two years. Despite the insistence of the Italian emissary to shorten the time, the Emperor was unmovable. Anyway Nigra and Pepoli were satisfied. In the first draft of the Convention, the two countries were broadly in agreement but there was a point of difference: French wanted to demobilize the troops from Rome in two years, Italians in six months. Visconti Venosta judged this condition "disheartening"[23].

[19] *Ibidem*, doc. 820, p. 789.
[20] *Ibidem*, docc. 819-820, pp. 788-789.
[21] *Ibidem*, I serie 1861-1870, vol. V, doc. 57, p. 50.
[22] *Ibidem*, doc. 38, pp. 37-38.
[23] *Ibidem*, doc. 113, pp. 97-98.

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According to Visconti Venosta a few weeks would be sufficient for the departure of the troops of the Emperor.
On August 20, the Italian Council of Ministers discussed about the Convention. As expected, the issue of the capital was subject to criticism and examinations. But in the end the clause was accepted. The candidate cities to replace Turin were Naples and Florence.
Vittorio Emanuele II proposed to insert additional clauses looking at the last minute to avoid the move of the capital:
– The treaty would be valid even if the Pope refused it;
– If the Pope would invoke the intervention of Austria, France would support the Italian cause;
– In the case of Austrian attack on the north-east, the French troops would help the military defence of Italy;
– For each legislature, the Italian government could move in various cities of Italy, without a fixed capital (this was a clear intention not to give up permanently Rome) [24].
If Napoleon was severe, the king would accept the transfer asking two years more[25]. Visconti Venosta, Minghetti and Nigra did not agree with the observations of the king. In their opinion these clauses could obstruct the negotiations. Nigra wrote to Visconti Venosta: «The biggest difficulty is the king»[26].
On 23 August, general Menabrea secretly arrived in Paris. In the morning he met Nigra before visiting the Emperor. Napoleone III did not accept the solution of the "migrant parliament". He could agree, however, to allow two years of time for the new capital and he accepted the immediate start of the departure of the French contingent. He would talk about it with his Council. Waiting for the reply, Menabrea decided to remain in Paris and informed about it the government[27].
On September 6, Drouyn de Lhuys apprised the Italian general that France accepted the proposal of the immediate demobilization of the contingent but rejected the concession of two years.
To avoid the breaking of the agreements, Minghetti and Visconti Venosta convinced the king to accept the French counteroffer.
Vittorio Emanuele II gave full powers to Nigra and Pepoli for the official signature of the agreement with the French diplomats. The clause relating to

[24] *Ibidem*, doc. 127, p. 108.
[25] *Ibidem*, doc. 150, pp. 132-133.
[26] *Ibidem*, doc. 188, pp.170-171.
[27] *Ibidem*, doc. 157, pp. 144-145.

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the change of the capital was included in a separate protocol, temporarily kept secret. On September 15, 1864 at 15 o'clock, Nigra and Pepoli, for the Kingdom of Italy, and Drouyn de Lhuys, for the *Second Empire*, signed the agreement better known as September Convention[28]:

«Art. 1

L'Italie s'engage à ne pas attaquer le territoire actuel du Saint Père et à empêcher, même par la force, toute attaque venant de l'extérieur contre le dit territoire;

Art. 2

La France retirera ses troupes des Etas pontificaux graduellement et à mesure que l'armée du Saint Père sera organisée. L'évacuation devra néanmoins être accomplie dans le délai de deux ans»;

Art. 3

Le Gouvernement italien s'interdit toute réclamation contre l'organisation d'une armée papale, composée même de volontaires catholiques étrangères, suffisante pour maintenir l'autorité du Saint Père et la tranquillité tant à l'intérieur que sur la frontière des Etas pourvu que cette force ne puisse dégénérer en moyen attaque contre le Gouvernement italien;

Art. 4

L'Italie se déclare prête à entrer en arrangement pour prendre à sa charge une part proportionnelle de la dette des anciens Etas de l'Eglise;

Art. 5

La présente Convention sera ratifiée, et les ratification en seront échangée dans le délai de quinze jours, ou plus tôt, si faire se peut.

En foi et témoignage de quoi, les Plénipotentiaires respectifs ont signé la présente Convention et l'ont revêtue du cachet de leurs armes.

Fait double à Paris le quinzième jour du mois de septembre de l'an de grâce mil huit cent soixante-quatre.

Nigra-Pepoli-Drouyn de Lhuys.

Protocole faisant suite à la Convention […].

La Convention […] n'aura de valeur exécutoire que lorsque S. M. le Roi d'Italie aura décrété la translation de la capitale du Royaume […]»[29].

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[28] A. Battaglia, cit., p. 79.

[29] *Atti del Parlamento Italiano, sessione del 1863-1864*, Documenti, vol. V, pp. 3645-3646 and E. Lantero, *La Convenzione di settembre nelle carte del Senato del Regno*, in «Memoriaweb», n.7, september 2014, pp. 1-8.

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The agreements, therefore, provided for the start of the French demobilization for which it would take two years. Italy would not attack the Papal States and it would defend its borders, it would allow the establishment of a militia of Catholic volunteer to keep public order in Rome. Italy would accept the assumption of part of papal debt.

As requested by the king, the protocol about the capital was separated from the official Convention and it was secret. Regarding the military support in the case of Austrian attack, Napoleon III avoided dealing with the issue[30].

The Emperor called back the troops from Rome but he reassured the Catholic party that France was leaving the Pope in maximum security, protected by the Italians. Rome would remain independent, the agreement was beneficial for French but Italian diplomats were satisfied to have moved away the "foreigners" from Rome[31].

In fact, the Convention was similar to the original project advanced by Cavour in 1861: the first, the third and the fourth articles remained unchanged, the second introduced the progressive evacuation by French troops.

On 17 September at 20.50, a courier departed from Turin with the Italian ratification of the agreement.

In those days, the Committee for the choice of the new capital – chaired by the prince Eugenio of Savoy and composed by the generals Durando, Cialdini, Della Rocca, De Sonnaz and the admiral Persano – began to work[32].

Beyond the diplomatic agreements, also from the strategic point of view it was not advantageous to keep the capital in Turin. After the cession of Nice and Savoy, the city was exposed to an Austrian invasion and much more to a French attack. The alpine defense system was not efficient and according to the forecasts, in few hours about two hundred thousand French soldiers would reach the city.

The Committee indicated in Naples and Florence the ideal cities for the new capital. The first city was protected by the Tyrrhenian Sea, the other by the Apennines.

The main threats would come from the north, it was therefore necessary to organize a defense system considering the geography of the peninsula. General Cialdini believed that the Alps were an efficient bastion of defense. In case of enemy attack, the Po Valley would be the largest parade-ground for the struggle against invaders. The River Po was another defensive line and the Apennines, from Genoa to Cattolica, a formidable curtain.

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[30] DDI, I serie 1861-1870, vol. V, doc. 226, pp. 206-213.

[31] G. Giordano, cit., pp. 52-53.

[32] DDI, I serie 1861-1870, vol. V, doc. 232, p. 218.

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It was therefore necessary:
- To transfer over the Apennine: capital, arsenals, the factories, warehouses and repositories;
- To control the Apennine and equip them with barriers;
- Build a fort in Cattolica to control the Adriatic coast;
- To build the means for the rapid crossing of the Po;
- To open a strategic carriageway Rimini-Ravenna-Comacchio-Isola di Ariano-Chioggia.

With these measures, in case of an enemy surprise attack, the Italian army would have two options: attack the enemy in the Po valley or entrench behind the Apennines line waiting for better organization. The best alternative for the new capital was Florence for its internal location covered by the Apennines and distant from the sea, whereas Naples was on the coast and it would be difficult to defend it from sea attacks[33].

The Interior Minister, Peruzzi, sent a circular to prefects in which he ordered to take the necessary precautions against the possible riots due to the spread of the news regarding the change of the capital[34].

On September 20, the French authorities announced the Convention. In France, this news caused dismay among Catholics, they considered the retreat from Rome an irresponsible act[35]. The «Moniteur» restated that the agreement was beneficial for the Empire because the Kingdom of Italy renounced to conquer Rome. In Italy, Minghetti gave instructions to the Italian newspaper to spread the news from another point of view: Italy was able to remove the French troops from Rome and choosing Florence, it was approaching Rome. The news angered the people of Turin[36]. Especially the entrepreneurs, the bourgeoisie who were funding big construction works, the nobles who feared the loss of all privileges, the Ministerial employees that had to move to Florence and, in general, all the population reluctant to accept the fait accompli, which deprived their city of the title of the capital of Italy.

Others elements of nervousness were the false news such as those of the additional assignment of the territory of Piedmont to France, the future division of the kingdom and a conspiracy against Turin.

On 21 September 1864, protesters gathered at Piazza Castello, in front of the police headquarters. At 19.30, the army, using bayonets, dispersed the crowd.

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[33] AUSSME, G13, b. 5, fasc. 179, *Colonnello Musolino, Deputato. Memoria sulla difesa nazionale*.

[34] DDI, I serie 1861-1870, vol. V, pp. 156-159 and P. Pirri, cit., pp. 56-76.

[35] DDI, I serie 1861-1870, vol. V, doc. 232, p. 218 and doc. 247, p. 229.

[36] R. Gremmo, *La prima strage di Stato: le giornate di sangue di Torino del 21 e 22 settembre 1864*, Storia ribelle, Biella, 1999, p. 44.

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A young boy was wounded in the arm, at the same time from Via Roma a crowd of people were marching towards the square. The Carabinieri cadets lined up in front of them blocking the way, they heard a gunshot and fired at protesters: forty-seven serious injuries and sixteen deaths.
The bodies of killed protesters were removed in haste. The next day, the newspapers opened the controversy, tension increased further and the Mayor requested the support of the National Guard.
On September 22, many people, dismayed after the violence of the day before, gathered in Piazza San Carlo. The high number of soldiers in the city, lined up under the arcades of Piazza San Carlo, Piazza Carlo Emanuele II, in Via Roma and Piazza Castello was unable to guarantee order.
Because of errors in the communication of orders, some units began to shoot. Other soldiers, in other positions, thought it was an attack of the crowd and they returned fire. In the middle of the crossfire, protesters were massacred. The victims were thirty-eight. The riots of 21 and 22 September went down in history as the "massacre of Turin".
The government instituted a parliamentary committee to investigate what happened. On January 23, the parliament decided to not attribute the responsibility of the tragic days of September. There were no guilty.
Ricasoli said: «Italy is a big family. The pains and the joys of a part of it are the pains and the joys of all. [...] The government recommends to sacrifice – on the altar of the homeland and to the supreme good of harmony – resentments, recriminations and even every justification»[37].
The country had to forget what happened, the oblivion was essential. The king agreed and signed an amnesty decree for all political crimes from September 1864 to February 1865[38].
The massacre of Turin was the price to pay for the signing of the Convention, an agreement of great importance for the Italian government.
What was established in the separate protocol of the Convention of September was achieved despite the protests and the riots. The Kingdom of Italy had a new capital, but it did not renounce Rome.
For Nigra it was an useful sacrifice for the nation. The negotiations were not easy and the Italian diplomacy was not unanimous in the negotiations.
Visconti Venosta, Minghetti, Nigra and Pepoli had been determined to accepted any compromise just to get the French departure while La Marmora had been the main obstacle and Vittorio Emanuele II, despite strong perplexity, had accept the clauses of Napoleon III.

[37] «L'Opinione», 24 gennaio 1865.
[38] *Ibidem*, 27 febbraio 1865.

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The agreement was ambiguous and both contractors considered it a diplomatic success: the French had forced the Italians to renounce Rome, the Italians had forced the French to leave Rome.
The criticisms of La Marmora were understandable because Italy, in order to send back the French contingent, had fallen into the *cul de sac* ratifying an international agreement that forced Italy to protect the Pope. The stalemate feared by La Marmora was erased by the optimistic previsions of Visconti Venosta and Nigra confident in a possible evolution of the Roman Question for the years to come.
There would be moments of tension such as the battle of Mentana, the arrival in Rome of a new French contingent, other disputes with the Kingdom of Italy. The situation would be resolved almost fortuitously in September 1870, when the French would be defeated by the Prussian army and Napoleon III forced to abdicate. Italian troops, taking advantage of the French absence from Rome, decided to attack and conquer the city on 20 September 1870[39].
The Pope would declare himself a political prisoner refusing the Law of Guarantees proposed by the Italian government. From 1871, the year in which Rome would become capital of Italy, Pius IX and his successors would not leave from the Vatican buildings as a protest against the Italian occupation.
This situation would continue for nearly sixty years, until the drafting of the Lateran Treaty in 1929, which would marke the end of the Roman Question[40].

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[39] G. Motta, *Il Risorgimento italiano. La costruzione di una nazione*, Passigli, Firenze, 2012, p. 189.
[40] A. Battaglia, *L'Italia senza Roma. Manovre diplomatiche e strategie militari (1865-1870)*, Aracne, Roma, 2015, pp. 198-200.

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