



An Italian serio-comic map of Europe in 1887

RANA, La.
L'Europa vista dall'Osservatorio della Rana

Bologna, 1887. Chromolithograph. Sheet 405 x 595mm.

£2,200

An uncommon serio-comic map, published in 'La Rana' (The Frog) newspaper. It depicts a frog, the emblem of the newspaper, at the top of the Asinelli Tower in Bologna, looking across Europe through a telescope and recording what he sees. According to the Italian text under the map, the frog represents Professore Giosuè Carducci (1835-1907), regarded as Italy's first National Poet, being the first Italian winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1906. The three largest figures, standing as a tripod to hold up a crown representing European monarchy, are the 'League of the Three Emperors': Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany (aged 90), Franz Joseph I of Austria (1830-1916) and Tsar Alexander III (1845-91). The alliance lapsed in 1887 because of conflicts between Austria and Russia over the Balkans. Under the feet of the Tsar are the bombs of Nihilists, seemingly conflating them with the Narodnaya Volya, the reformist revolutionaries who had killed Alexander II with a bomb in 1881. The Pole is probably Ignacy Hryniewiecki, who threw the fatal device. Elsewhere England is fighting Ireland; a French monarchist and Republican squabble over the Cap of Liberty, tearing it; reaching out of the pocket of the Kaiser is Otto von Bismarck, wooing the German people with 'State Socialism'; from the Vatican Pope Leo XIII blesses flocks of blackbirds arriving from all over; in Bulgaria is Ferdinand Maximilian of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha,



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elected monarch in July 1887; Turkey flounders in the sea, ignored by his neighbours; and in Africa an Italian soldier chases a crude, racist caricature of Ras Alula Engida (leader of the Ethiopian resistance in the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1887-9) with a bayonet.

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