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INTRODUZIONE.
LO SCRITTORE E I SUOI FRATELLI

I. A partire da Baudelaire lo scrittore si allontana dai suoi lettori. Lo separa dal consorzio sociale un'invisibile barriera fatta di reciproca incapacità di comunicare e mancanza di empatia. Resta nella memoria di tutti, come emblema della nuova condizione, la prima prosa dello *Spleen di Parigi* di Baudelaire:

Lo straniero

«A chi vuoi più bene, uomo enigmatico, di: a tuo padre, alla madre, alla sorella o al fratello?»
 «Non ho padre, né madre, né sorella, né fratello».
 «Ai tuoi amici?»
 «Voi adoperate ora un vocabolo che fino a tutt'oggi mi è rimasto di significato ignoto».
 «Alla patria?»
 «Ignoro sotto quale latitudine sia posta».
 «Alla bellezza?»
 «Volentieri l'amerei dea e immortale».
 «All'oro?»
 «L'odio quanto voi odiate Dio».
 «Oh, ma dunque che piace a te, straniero singolarissimo?»

STEFANO LUCONI

THE RHETORIC OF PATRIOTISM
AND THE NATIONALIZATION OF ITALIAN
IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES
DURING WORLD WAR I

This essay analyzes the influence of the patriotic discourse surrounding World War I on the identity of Italian newcomers in the United States. Specifically, it examines how the nationalistic wartime rhetoric helped immigrants supersede their localistic self-perceptions and encouraged them to develop a sentiment of belonging based on their mutual Italian background.

The belated achievement of national unification in Italy let her population long retain a regional, provincial, and even local identity. This attitude was commonly known as *campanilismo* and literally meant that people's sense of attachment did not extend beyond earshot of the single bell towers (*campanile* in the Italian language) of their respective hometowns¹. Italian immigrants from different regional backgrounds, too, generally failed to perceive themselves as members of the same nationality group upon disembarking in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century². Arriving in their adoptive country pri-

¹ L. Manconi, *Campanilismo*, in *Bianco, rosso e verde. L'identità degli italiani*, a cura di G. Calcagno, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2003, pp. 36-42.

² F.M. Malpezzi, W.M. Clements, *Italian-American Folklore*, Little Rock, AR, Augustus House, 1992, pp. 27-35.

marily by means of chain migration based on family and village connections, newcomers strengthened their *campanilismo*.³ In their places of destination, they usually gathered along lines of subnational affiliations that reflected their diverse local backgrounds in the native land. For instance, Enrico C. Sartorio, a Catholic priest who was active in the Boston area, remarked that «in the heart of the nearest city one can find in the Italian colony a Sicilian, a Calabrian, a Neapolitan, an Abruzzian village, all within a few blocks, and each with its peculiar traditions, manner of living, and dialect».⁴ Social worker Jane Addams even argued that Italian newcomers tended to fill «an entire tenement house with people from one village».⁵

Subnational divisions extended to social life. The Order Sons of Italy in America, the largest and most influential Italian-American ethnic organization nationwide, accepted for membership individuals of Italian descent regardless of their or their parents' place of origin in the mother country.⁶ Yet, despite this case and very few other exceptions, most Italian mutual-aid and fraternal associations admitted only those immigrants who had come from a specific geographical district and barred from their ranks all the people who had been born in other places in Italy. The area qualifying for membership could be as large as a whole region, but it was sometimes as narrow as a town or even a village. For example, ad-

mission to the Augusta Society in Boston was confined to the natives of Augusta and their children, while the Ateleta Beneficial Association in Pittsburgh included only immigrants from Ateleta and their progeny.⁷ As an observer pointed out, Italian Americans' social clusters usually «reflected the older historic disunity of Italy».⁸ Ethnic discrimination helped prevent Italian immigrants from identifying with their native country. The awareness that Italy ranked among backward European nations by Anglo-Saxon standards in the eyes of the U.S. establishment encouraged newcomers to shun their Italian roots and to emphasize their regional heritage.⁹

Nevertheless, the spread of jingoistic feelings after the outbreak of World War I contributed to the demise of the immigrants' localistic allegiances. Of course, anarchists, socialists, and other radicals in the Italian-American communities throughout the United States opposed their native country's entry into the military conflict and antagonized American participation in the armed struggle. Anarchist Carlo Tresca stood out among the staunchest foes of the war.¹⁰ A Socialist immigrant named his daughter Pace, after the Italian word meaning peace, in order to stress his own commitment to neutrality.¹¹ However, al-

³ J.S. MacDonald, L.D. MacDonald, *Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation, and Social Networks*, in «Millbank Memorial Fund Quarterly», a. LXII, n. 1, 1964, pp. 82-97.

⁴ E.C. Sartorio, *Social and Religious Life of Italians in America*, Boston, Christopher, 1918, p. 18.

⁵ J. Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace*, New York, Macmillan, 1907, p. 67.

⁶ J.M. Guglielmo, J. Andreozzi, *The Order Sons of Italy in America: Historical Summary*, in *Guide to the Records of the Order Sons of Italy in America*, edited by J.M. Guglielmo, J. Andreozzi, Minneapolis, MN, Immigration History Research Center, 2004, pp. XIX-XXX.

⁷ H.J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian Americans*, New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1962, p. 116; *Statuto della società di beneficenza Ateleta*, Pittsburgh, n.d., pp. 16, 32. Ateleta Beneficial Association Papers, Archives of Industrial Society, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh.

⁸ Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Rhode Island, *Rhode Island. A Guide to the Smaller State*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1937, p. 99.

⁹ J.P. Cosco, *Imaging Italians: The Clash of Romance and Race in American Perception, 1880-1910*, Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 2003.

¹⁰ N. Perricone, *Carlo Tresca. Portrait of a Rebel*, New York, Palgrave, 2005, pp. 87-88.

¹¹ H. Barolini, *The Dream Book. An Anthology of Writings by Italian-American Women*, Syracuse, NY, Syracuse University Press, 1985, p. 300.

though they proved to be quite vocal, Italian radicals also turned out to be a small minority. Some of them, such as Edmondo Rossoni and Domenico Trombetta, even joined the field of nationalism and became advocates of Italy's intervention in the war.¹² Radicals who yielded to a chauvinistic attitude and became warmongers also included women such as Socialist émigré and poet Bel-lalma Forzato-Spezia¹³. Actually, most Italian immigrants revealed patriotic sentiments that led the newcomers not only to support the war efforts of their motherland but also to re-elaborate their own identity.

Ethnic leaders and associations as well as the Italian-language press celebrated Italy's declaration of war on the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, on May 24, 1915, with bombastic rhetoric and mobilized to back the military machinery of their mother country.¹⁴ «Hurrah for the war! Go Savoy!», wrote the Providence-based Italian language weekly «L'Eco del Rhode Island», with reference to the royal house that ruled Italy.¹⁵

«Il Telegrafo», a daily published in New York City, had even longed for «a good war freeing our brothers op-

¹² J.J. Tingino, *Edmondo Rossoni. From Revolutionary Syndicalism to Fascism*, New York, Peter Lang, 1991, pp. 65-73; G. Salvemini, *Italian Fascist Activities in the United States*, Staten Island, NY, Center for Migration Studies, 1977, pp. 36-37.

¹³ M. Bencivenni, *Italian Immigrant Radical Culture. The Idealism of the Sovereign in the United States, 1890-1940*, New York, New York University Press, 2011, p. 146.

¹⁴ E.L. Biagi, *The Purple Aster. A History of the Sons of Italy in America*, n.p., Veritas Press, 1961, p. 137; H.S. Nelli, *Chicago's Italian-Language Press and World War I, in Studies in Italian American Social History. Essays in Honor of Leonard Covello*, edited by F. Cordasco, Totowa, NJ, Rowan and Littlefield, 1975, pp. 66-80; S. Bugiardini, *L'associazionismo negli Usa, in Storia dell'emigrazione italiana. Arrivi*, edited by P. Bevilacqua, A. De Clementi, E. Franzina, Roma, Donzelli, 2002, p. 571; C.M. Sterba, *Good Americans. Italian and Jewish Immigrants during the First World War*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 133-152.

¹⁵ Note e appunti, in «L'Eco del Rhode Island», May 29, 1915, p. 1.

pressed by the Austrian yoke» in Trento and Trieste since late March¹⁶. Jingoistic feelings, however, fast spread and took root among the newcomers and their children. As a result, for instance, the few ethnic newspapers that supported Italy's neutrality faced boycott by their own readers. Others eventually endorsed interventionism to stay in business.¹⁷

The wartime patriotic fervor contributed to persuading the members of the Little Italies that they had something in common despite their different places of origin in their ancestral country. In addition, after being victims of stereotypes and intolerance in their host society because of the place of their nativity¹⁸, the Italian immigrants and their children became aware that their national origin was no longer a liability from which they had to distance themselves as soon as the United States entered the military conflict against the German Empire as an «associate power» at the side of Italy in April 1917. For example, «L'Eco del Rhode Island» pointed out, «our hearts rejoice because Americans have begun to appreciate us as they are enthusiastically rallying to support Italy»¹⁹. Likewise, «Il Progresso Italo-Americano», another daily printed in New York City and the most authoritative Italian-American newspaper in the country, expressed its enthusiasm because «the same cause unites both nations», the United States and Italy²⁰. «Il

¹⁶ *Vigilia di guerra*, in «Il Telegrafo», March 23, 1915, p. 1.

¹⁷ P. Palazzi, *Spines of Influence*, pp. 5-6, 11-12, unpublished typescript, in *Records of the Works Progress Administration Historical Survey*, Ethnic Survey, 1938-1941, reel no. 3, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg.

¹⁸ S.J. LaGumina, *Introduction*, in *Wop! A Documentary History of Anti-Italian Discrimination in the United States*, edited by S.J. LaGumina, San Francisco, Straight Arrow Books, pp. 9-19.

¹⁹ *Italiani alla riscossa*, in «L'Eco del Rhode Island», June 8, 1918, p. 1.
²⁰ *I nostri venienti*, in «Il Progresso Italo-Americano», April 8, 1917, p. 6. For «Il Progresso Italo-Americano», see S.L. Baily, *Immigrants in*

Progresso Italo-Americano» also welcomed the participation of the U.S. in the conflict as «an opportunity to demonstrate our loyalty to this country in words and in deeds»²¹. When Charles Ewan Hughes – a former governor of New York and associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, the 1916 Republican presidential candidate, and the chairperson of the Italy America Society, an organization that had been established to encourage the friendship among these two countries – urged U.S. governors and mayors of large cities to celebrate the third anniversary of Italy's entry into the war on May 24, 1918, Italian Americans hailed his incitement as evidence that they were no longer perceived as aliens and outcasts in their adoptive society²².

Numerous immigrants had been imperVIOUS to nationalism before World War I. A few years earlier, in 1912, Italy's victory over the Turkish Empire and her seizure of Libya had triggered only sporadic and restrained celebrations in the Italian-American communities²³. On that occasion, the U.S. stigmatization of Italy's colonial venture had prevented many immigrants from identifying with their native country because their homeland's foreign policy had been subjected to Washington's disapproval²⁴. Such criticism, however, was temporarily dropped as the United States and Italy joined

the Lands of Promise. Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870 to 1914, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1999, pp. 182-184.

²¹ *L'eco italiana del messaggio di Wilson*, in «Il Progresso Italo-Americano», April 3, 1917, p. 6.

²² P.G. Vellon, *A Great Conspiracy against Our Race. Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the Early 20th Century*, New York, New York University Press, 2014, pp. 114-115.

²³ S.J. LaGumina, *Long Island Italian Americans. History, Heritage, and Tradition*, Charleston, SC, History Press, 2013, p. 42.

²⁴ M. Rimanelli, *United States-Italian Diplomatic Relations, 1776-1945*, in *The Italian American Experience: An Encyclopedia*, edited by S.J. LaGumina et al., New York, Garland, 2000, p. 650.

forces against Germany in April 1917. The removal of this drawback swept away any inhibition Italian Americans had felt about associating themselves with a nation whose behavior in the international arena had met American reprimand in the recent past. «Il Telegrafo» even celebrated the fact that Italy's entry into the war at the time of the U.S. neutrality did not cause criticism and stigmatization by several American media. In particular, the daily pointed out with satisfaction that appreciation of the reasons for her participation in the military conflict resulted in the demise of Italian immigrants' stereotypical and grotesque representations by the mainstream press as a bunch of brigands, beggars, organ grinders, and monkey trainers²⁵.

Federal agencies such as the Foreign Language Information Service urged the immigrants' Americanization as proof of loyalty to their host society at wartime²⁶. Nevertheless, Italian newcomers ignored such a call and became so confident in the harmony of their potential dual patriotism, toward their native and adoptive countries, that they freed themselves from any previous restraint in showing both their attachment to Italy and their backing of their motherland's specific goals. Until the mid 1910s, private organizations such as Hull House, the settlement house Jane Addams had established in Chicago to facilitate the social accommodation of the members of foreign-born minorities, drew upon episodes in the struggle for independence of the single European nations, including Italy's *Risorgimento*, to encourage the city's diverse immigrant groups to cher-

²⁵ A. Pallavicini, *Un nostro quarto d'ora*, in «Il Telegrafo», May 25, 1915, p. 4.

²⁶ B. Deschamps, «Shall I Become a Citizen?» *The FUS and the Foreign Language Press*, in *Federalism, Citizenship, and Collective Identities in U.S. History*, edited by C.A. van Minnen, S. Hilton, Amsterdam, VU University Press, 2000, pp. 165-174.

ish their own ethnic heritage²⁷. Conversely, at wartime, the call for one-hundred-percent Americanism replaced the previously perception of American society as a melting pot²⁸. U.S. war propaganda, especially the messages that the government channeled through the Committee on Public Information, stressed that ethnic groups were «Americans all» and urged immigrant minorities to come together across the divide of their different national extractions in order to support the fight against the German Kaiser's authoritarian regime. But Italian Americans were interested less in contributing to «making the world safe for democracy» and participating in «the war to end all wars»²⁹, according to the leading U.S. governmental slogans based on President Woodrow Wilson's memorable phrases, than in the liberation of the north-eastern regions of their ancestral country under Austrian control. Therefore, to most Italian immigrants and their progeny, the real enemy was not the Kaiser, as U.S. propaganda suggested, but his ally in Vienna who was keeping Trento and Trieste under its iron heel. For this reason, for instance, Italian-American newspapers did not hesitate to publish English-language appeals to pressure the U.S. government into extending its military operations and declaring war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire, too³⁰.

The Italian-American press also encouraged immi-

grant males to repatriate and fight for their native land³¹. Notwithstanding the opposition of a few radical groups and newspapers of Anarchist and Socialist orientation, stimulated by their ethnic newspapers, 60,000 to 70,000 reservists – out of a total of roughly 400,000 residing in the United States – went back to their fatherland to enlist in the Italian army³². A few would eventually regret the decision to leave for the frontline after experiencing the battlefields³³ but, at the beginning, they buoyantly answered the call of duty. «Il Telegrafo» claimed that, as early as the day following Italy's declaration of war on Austria, about 25,000 reservists in the New York City area were ready to depart without waiting to be called up for active duty³⁴. In the years of U.S. neutrality, some of the immigrants, as in the case of Pasquale DeCicco, a resident of New Haven, Connecticut, even joined the Italian army although they had already acquired American citizenship³⁵.

Their fellow ethnics who remained in the United States raised money to support the war efforts of their ancestral country and the families of the Italian soldiers, especially after the 1917 unexpected Italian rout at Caporetto³⁶. Fraternal and beneficial organizations with

²⁷ R.S. Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the Immigrants, 1890-1919*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, pp. 25-34.

²⁸ R. Alba, V. Nee, *Rending the American Mainstream. Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 140.

²⁹ A. Axelrod, *Selling the Great War. The Making of American Propaganda*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 55, 61.

³⁰ *For a Declaration of War Against Austria-Hungary*, in «Il Cittadino», November 22, 1917, p. 1; *Declare War on Austria*, in «Il Carroccio», a. vi, n. 5, 1917, pp. 403-404.

³¹ *Una festa per i partenti*, in «L'Eco del Rhode Island», June 26, 1915, p. 5.

³² FB. Ventresco, *Loyalty and Dissent. Italian Reservists in America During World War I*, in «Italian Americana», a. iv, n. 1, 1978, pp. 93-122.

³³ A. Bernardi, *The Italian Immigrants of Highwood, Illinois*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1990, p. 50.

³⁴ *I riservisti italiani a New York*, in «Il Telegrafo», May 26, 1915, p. 3.

³⁵ A.V. Riccio, *The Italian-American Experience in New Haven. Images and Oral Histories*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2006, p. 303.

³⁶ B. Aquilano, *L'Ordine Figli d'Italia in America*, New York, Società Tipografica Italiana, 1925, pp. 103-110, 119-120, 252-256; *Per profughi veneti*, in «Il Cittadino», November 15, 1917, p. 4; *Gli italiani per la loro Patria d'origine*, in «La Tribuna Italiana d'America», November 23, 1917, p. 2; *Raccolta di offerte*, in «Il Momento», December 15, 1917, p. 1.

little assets usually levied extra tolls from their members to meet their target commitments for the purchase of Italy's war bonds³⁷. Women, too, contributed to the war efforts, for instance by knitting woolen socks and undershirts for soldiers³⁸.

Many male immigrants also joined the U.S. army. The Italian-language press itself published information about how to enlist³⁹. Some recruits were still Italian nationals and earned American citizenship as a reward for military service under the Stars and Stripes. According to some estimates, soldiers of Italian birth and parentage made roughly 12% of U.S. troops, while Italian Americans were as little as 4% of the country's total population. Between 7,000 and 9,000 enlisted in Boston⁴⁰. An infantryman recalled that their significant presence in the Meuse-Argonne offensive with the American Expeditionary Force along the French front in the fall of 1918 made the Germans think that an Italian division had been moved there because «they heard so many men talking back and forth in Italian»; but, in fact, those soldiers were «Italian Americans from the boroughs of New York City»⁴¹. A few were awarded American military decorations⁴². The U.S. Department of War set up a special division – the Foreign-Speaking

Soldier Subsection – not only to manage foreign-born troops but also to Americanize them⁴³. As a result, Italian-born service men were taught English lessons and introduced to American culture, including celebrations such as Thanksgiving⁴⁴. Nonetheless, in the view of «Il Momento», an ethnic weekly published in Philadelphia, even naturalized Italian-born soldiers serving in the U.S. army should not forget their patriotic duties toward their native country⁴⁵.

The news of the signing of the armistice of Villa Giusti with the Austrian-Hungarian Empire on November 3, 1918, which put an end to the military conflict and marked Italy's victory in the war, gave vent to enthusiasm with cheers and parades at the sound of martial music in the Little Italies throughout the United States, from Providence to Albuquerque⁴⁶. On this occasion, Italian Americans took specific pride in the proclamations of mayors of cities such as Philadelphia and Providence calling on residents to display the Italian flag along with the Stars and Stripes⁴⁷. In terms of ethnic redress, it seemed that the common war efforts of the United States and Italy had vindicated the immigrants' previous marginalization in their host society and eased both the newcomers' accommodation within the adoptive country and their identification with their ancestral roots without any fear of becoming the target

³⁷ G. Corrente, *Un'altra loggia dei Figli d'Italia nella sottoscrizione pro-Patria*, in «Il Telegrafo», December 8, 1917, pp. 4-5.

³⁸ J. Dunn DeCredico, *Josephine DeCredico*, in «Mirror», a. III, n. 1, 1977, p. 31.

³⁹ *Per gli italiani registrati sotto la leva americana*, in «Il Telegrafo», December 10, 1917, p. 3.

⁴⁰ S. Puleo, *The Boston Italians. A Story of Pride, Perseverance, and Paesani. From the Years of the Great Immigration to the Present Day*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2007, p. 114.

⁴¹ C. Clemet, *The Life and Times of a World War I Soldier. The Julius Holhaus Story*, Bloomington, IN, iUniverse, 2014, p. 285.

⁴² R. Gambino, *Blood of My Blood. The Dilemma of the Italian Americans*, Toronto, Guernica, 1996, p. 318.

⁴³ N. Genile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2001, pp. 67-87, 114-116.

⁴⁴ J.D. Keene, *World War I*, Westport, CT, Greenwood, 2006, p. 111.

⁴⁵ *Il nostro dovere*, in «Il Momento», August 4, 1917, p. 1.

⁴⁶ *Vittoria! Il trionfo dell'Italia*, in «Il Corriere del Rhode Islands», November 9, 1918, p. 1; N.P. Ciorola, *Italians in Albuquerque*, Charleston, NC, Arcadia, 2002, p. 92.

⁴⁷ *Italians Exultant at Austria's Fall Hold Celebration*, in «Philadelphia Inquirer», November 5, 1918, pp. 1, 3; *Italians Celebrate Austria's Defeat*, in «Providence Journal», November 5, 1918, p. 8.

of xenophobia and condemnation. As Mary Ann Trasciarti has pointed out, «Because of the alliance between Italy and the United States, World War I provided a special opportunity for Italian Americans who wished to enhance their public image and resist “100 percent Americanism»»⁴⁸.

Such nationalistic feelings and sense of pride did not fade away in the Little Italies after the end of the conflict. The case of Providence offers an illuminating example. In this city, regional antagonism and rivalries had previously interfered with nationalistic events and had caused the failure of public meetings such as a 1913 gathering to celebrate the seizure of Libya⁴⁹. Conversely, in September 1920 the representatives of almost all the city's various ethnic societies attended a rally on the fiftieth anniversary of the capture of Rome. Likewise, when General Armando Diaz, the victorious commander in chief of the Italian army in World War I, toured the United States in the fall of 1921, he received a triumphal welcome in every Little Italy he visited⁵⁰. In Cleveland, Ohio, the Italian-American community presented the general with a check for 50,000 lire that had been collected among its members for the disabled veterans of the motherland⁵¹. The following year, immigrants in Jeannette, Pennsylvania, even dedicated their local mu-

tual-aid society to Diaz⁵². In addition, in the first half of the 1920s, several social clubs were renamed Piave, for the so-called «sacred river of the homeland» because of the historical events that took place along its banks during the war, or after other war-related symbols echoing Italy's victory, such as, Vittorio Veneto, the town next to the site of the final successful battle fought by the Italian army⁵³. These denominations replaced the previous ones referring to the hometown or the native province of its affiliates. At the same time, such associations no longer confined their membership to immigrants from specific Italian geographical areas but opened their ranks to all newcomers regardless of their birthplace in the native country⁵⁴.

Historian Rudolph J. Vecoli has contended, «the First World War [...] was a transitory phenomenon which did not basically alter the apolitical character of the [Italian] immigrants»⁵⁵. Yet, the rise of Italian Americans' wartime nationalism revealed a long-term echo especially in the field of politics. In particular, the newcomers who had acquired U.S. citizenship and their American-born offspring mobilized en masse in the fruitless effort to secure President Wilson's support for Italy's expansion-

⁴⁸ M.A. Trasciarti, *Hooking the Hyphen. Woodrow Wilson's Rhetoric and the Italian-American Community*, in *Who Belongs in America? Prestididents, Rhetoric, and Immigration*, edited by V.B. Beasley, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2006, p. 109.

⁴⁹ *La celebrazione per la Libia*, in «L'Eco del Rhode Island», March 1, 1913, p. 1.

⁵⁰ General Armando Diaz, *Commander of Italian Army, Visits Providence*, in «Providence Magazine», a. xxxv, n. 1, 1922, pp. 21-27; V. Scarpaci, *The Journey of Italians in America*, Greta, IA, Pelican, 2008, p. 291.

⁵¹ P.G. Cianfardini, P. Cianfardini, *Italians of Greater Cincinnati*, Charleston, sc, Arcadia, 2008, p. 22.

⁵² M. Di Virgilio, *The Alms-Seeking Tradition of Sant'Antonio Abate in 1920s Western Pennsylvania*, in *Oral Histories, Oral Culture, and Italian Americans*, edited by L. Del Giudice, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 158.

⁵³ F. Minniti, *Il Piave*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2000, pp. 123-131; A.M. Magno, *Piave. Cronache di un fiume sacro*, Milano, il Saggiatore, 2010, pp. 15-18; A. Miniero, *Da Versailles al Milite Ignoto. Rituali e retoriche della vittoria in Europa (1919-1921)*, Roma, Gangemi, 2008, pp. 76-78, 86-88.

⁵⁴ Loggia Piave, *Programma ricordo*, Luigi Cipolla Papers, folder 1, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; *Lodge #17 Vittorio Veneto*, Records of the Italian Sons and Daughters of America, box 38, folder 7, Archives of Industrial Society.

⁵⁵ R.J. Vecoli, *The Search for an Italian-American Identity: Continuity and Change*, in *Italian Americans. New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity*, edited by S.M. Tomasi, New York, Center for Migration Studies, 1985, p. 93.

istic claims at the peace conference in Paris. Specifically, they lobbied the U.S. government to let Italy extend her sovereignty to the Croatian city of Fiume. That campaign was so intense that a few state legislatures, as in the case of the General Court of Massachusetts, endorsed such a demand in order to ingratiate themselves with the Italian-American electorate⁵⁶.

After Wilson rejected Italy's claims on Fiume, the Italian-language press harshly criticized the U.S. president for the political inconsistencies of his postwar settlement. Specifically, it held that, in compliance with the Wilsonian principle of self-determination, Fiume should have been placed under Rome's sovereignty because most residents of this city were Italian ethnics⁵⁷. For instance, according to «L'Italia», Chicago's main Italian-American newspaper, Wilson had «violated international ethnics» and done «a grave injustice to Italy»⁵⁸. Furthermore, in retaliation for Wilson's refusal to yield to their pressures, a significant number of voters of Italian extraction defected to the Republican camp in the 1920 presidential election. In particular, between 1916 and 1920, support for the Democratic Party in the Little Italies fell from 63 percent to 47 percent in New York City, from 63 percent to 43 percent in Boston, and from 68 percent to 31 percent in Chicago⁵⁹. Even James M. Cox, the Democratic

⁵⁶ A. DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1992, p. 94.

⁵⁷ *Acrobatico trasformismo*, in «Il Corriere del Rhode Islands», May 3-10, 1919, pp. 1, 3.

⁵⁸ J.M. Allswang, *A House for All the Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936*, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1971, p. 116.

⁵⁹ D. Burnet, *The Politics of Provincialism. The Democratic Party in Transition, 1918-1932*, New York, Knopf, 1968, pp. 236, 243; J.I. Hahnhaeber, *Massachusetts People and Politics, 1919-1933*, Cambridge, MA, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959, pp. 20-22; G.J. Martin, *The American Catholic Voter. 200 Years of Political Impact*, South Bend, IN, St. Augustine's Press, 2004, p. 188.

standard-bearer in the race for the White House, later acknowledged in his memoirs that his defeat among Italian Americans occurred as they were «enraged because Fiume had been taken away from Italy»⁶⁰.

In conclusion, World War I contributed significantly to turning the then heterogeneous Little Italies into more cohesive communities whose members came to base their sense of belonging and attachment on their commonly shared Italian background. Such feelings overcame the previous fragmentation resulting from *campanilismo* and helped pave the way for the inroads that fascism made among Italian Americans in the late 1920s and in the 1930s, drawing upon the immigrants' recently acquired national-oriented ethnic consciousness⁶¹.

⁶⁰ J.M. Cox, *Journey through My Years*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1946, p. 273.

⁶¹ S. Pretelli, *La via fascista alla democrazia americana. Cultura e propaganda nelle comunità italo-americane*, Viterbo, Sette Città, 2012.