

The Changing Meaning of Ethnic Identity among Italian Americans in Philadelphia during the Inter-war Years

Stefano Luconi
University of Florence

Some scholars of American history and literature have suggested that ethnicity is socially constructed and changes over time. The self-identity of each national group emerges from a continuous process of redefinition rather than being a set of immutable attitudes carried from their mother country by the earliest immigrants.¹ This article focuses on how Philadelphia's Italian-Americans developed one ethnic identity out of different sub-national loyalties in the interwar years. The Italian community in Philadelphia provides a valuable case study for this kind of analysis, because in the 1920s and 1930s it was not only the second largest Italian-American community in the United States, but also a mosaic of Italians of various regional backgrounds.

Although the first Italian immigrants arrived in Philadelphia before the American Revolution, no sizable Italian-American settlement existed until the 1880s. At the outset of that decade, Philadelphia was home to as few as 1,656 Italians, who lived primarily in the South Philadelphia district within a relatively small area that was bordered by Christian, Seventh, Carpenter, and Ninth Streets. By 1890, however, Italian immigrants and their offspring had increased to 10,023, a number which soared to 46,648 in 1900 and 76,734 in 1910. The original Italian-American colony spread north to Bainbridge Street as well as southwest along Passyunk Avenue to Federal Street. New, though smaller, settlements also emerged in other districts of Philadelphia like Manayunk, Roxborough, West Philadelphia, North Philadelphia, Frankfort, Overbrook, Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy, Nicetown, Mayfair, and Germantown.²

Reflecting a broader trend in the history of the Italian immigration to the United States,³ the era of mass emigration from Italy to Philadelphia coincided with a significant change in the regional origin of the newcomers of Italian background. The great bulk of the early immigrants arrived from northern Italy (primarily from Liguria as well as Piedmont, and specifically from the province of Genoa), while few individuals came from other places like Naples and Sicily. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, northern Italians were progressively joined by fellow countrymen from such southern regions as Abruzzi, Basilicata, Calabria and, to a lesser extent, Sicily and Puglia. They outnumbered northerners by the turn of the century and dominated the Italian immigration in the following decades, with Abruzzi

and Campania as the regions that provided the greatest inflow.⁴

With 136,793 first- and second-generation individuals, Italian Americans were the second largest nationality group in Philadelphia in 1920. They retained that position ten years later, when the community totaled 182,368 members. The Italian-Americans' share of the city's total population grew from 7.5 percent in 1920 to 9.3 percent in 1930.⁵

Yet, the idea of a common Italian ancestry was a much more viable concept for the census enumerators than for the rank-and-file members of Philadelphia's Italian-American community. Due to the belated achievement of national unification in Italy—which was not completed until the end of World War I after the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy out of pre-existing states as late as 1861—a parochial sense of regional, provincial, and even local allegiance long characterized the self-identity of the Italian people. The perception of the new Italian state as a hostile entity that confined itself to collecting taxes and drafting young males into the army also prevented the spreading of a strong consciousness of the common nationhood in Italy itself. At the beginning of their stay in the United States in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Italian immigrants of various regional backgrounds found it difficult to perceive themselves as members of the same ethnic group.⁶

The Italian-American settlements in Philadelphia offer clear evidence that, separated as they were by disparate dialects and traditions, individuals from different regions and villages shied away from one another. By the first decade of the twentieth century, most Italians began to arrive in Philadelphia through chain migration based upon family and village connections. Generally, a relative, a friend, or a *paesano* (namely someone from the same region, province, or village) helped the newcomers to find both accommodations and employment in the same neighborhood. People from the Abruzzi region knew that Francesco Palumbo ran a boarding house and could provide a job for them. An old story even goes that individuals arrived in Philadelphia with pieces of paper reading "Palumbo" pinned on their suits. Similarly, immigrants who came from the cities of Pescara and Chieti were fully aware that they could rely on the operator of the Corona di Ferro restaurant to obtain a cheap room for them. Since the great bulk of Philadelphia's Italian Americans counted upon such networks to make a living, they also clustered along regional or even village lines in separate neighborhoods within the broader Italian-American settlements. As a result, the Italian-American community in Philadelphia developed as a series of single colonies. The most striking example of that sub-nationally self-segregated pattern of residence was an Italian-American enclave in Montrose Street established by Albanian-speaking immigrants who could not understand any Italian idiom. These immigrants came from a single village located in the province of Cosenza, in the Calabria region, by the name of Spezzano Albanese.⁷

Each colony's people spoke their own dialect and patronized their own neighborhood shops and stores run by *paesani*. There, Italian Americans could find traditional food which was either produced in the United States to meet their Old World tastes or imported from their area of origin in Italy. This latter, for instance, was the case of LaFara macaroni, which the Angelucci family brought into Philadelphia from Abruzzi for the immigrants of this region. Even when Italian Americans needed a lawyer, physician, or undertaker, they went to a fellow ethnic in their neighborhood. They also relied upon *paesani's* savings banks to deposit their money or send it to relatives in their home villages. For example, patrons of the Banca dell'Aquila, which Thomas D. Yannessia owned at the turn of the century, were almost exclusively confined to immigrants from the province of L'Aquila. The denominations of other early Italian-American banks like the Banca Torino, rechartered in 1890, the Banca Napoli, founded in 1901, or the Banca Calabrese, established in 1902—respectively named after the capitals of Piedmont and Campania and the Calabria region—also suggest the sub-national concentration of their clients.⁸

It was much easier to talk business in one's own dialect. Moreover, distrust in anyone who did not belong to one's family or, at least, a narrow circle of the *paesani* was a side effect of the localistic feelings of the Italian immigrants. Political organizations were so aware of such an attitude that, in order to reach out to Philadelphia's Italian-American electorate, they usually resorted to party workers who matched not only the national ancestry but also the regional descent of their constituents of Italian background. Indeed, as author Gaeton J. Fonzi has remarked, "there was a time when a committeeman from Abruzzi would have as much chance as a Jew of carrying a Sicilian neighborhood. Usually less."⁹

Sub-national divisions also extended to religion. Although Italian Americans were primarily Catholics, immigrants from Genoa attended the church of St. Michael of the Saints, while those from Calabria went to the church of Our Lady of Pompei. This separation also maintained regional diversities in religious rites, as residual paganism and a remarkable absence of formal observance distinguished the practices of southern Italians from those of the northerners. For instance, unlike the latter, peasants in southern Italy venerated an array of saints rather than God. They offered them gifts and sacrifices to propitiate them and neutralize malevolent spirits. Each village had a patron saint and the climax of local religious life was his feast day, when all the residents paraded his statue to invoke his protection, not official Catholic holidays like Christmas or Easter.¹⁰

The social life of Philadelphia's Italian Americans, too, mirrored local loyalties. With the conspicuous exception of the local lodges of the Order of the Sons of Italy in America—a nationwide organization that recruited its members among all Italians—most of the other Italian-American mutual aid

and fraternal associations admitted only people from a specific Italian region, province, or even village, and barred all others from membership. Only immigrants born in the Abruzzi region and their relatives could join the Società Italiana Unione Abruzzese, while only individuals from the village of Castrogiovanni and from the province of Caltanissetta in Sicily as well as their offspring were allowed to join the Società di Mutuo Soccorso fra Castrogiovannesi e Provinciali.¹¹

In 1910 Philadelphia had eighty-three Italian-American societies, named primarily after the patron saint of a native village or after some regional, provincial, or local connection. Only three agreed to merge into the Italian Federation of Philadelphia, established in 1912 in the fruitless effort to unite all the Italian-American organizations in the city. By contrast, membership in the Società di Mutuo Soccorso Roma e Provincia, chartered that very year, was restricted to immigrants from Rome and its province. After arriving in Philadelphia in 1913, Ottaviano Capponi founded the Società Beniamino Gigli fra' Marchegiani, which admitted immigrants from the Marche region only.¹²

Sub-national divisions also affected the beginnings of the Italian-American periodical press in Philadelphia. The city's first Italian-language newspapers did not address the whole community but targeted immigrant readers from single regions or provinces. They published local news from the specific native towns or villages of their prospective readers. For instance, *Il Vesuvio*, a weekly paper which started publication in 1882, reflected its localistic approach even in its own heading, as it was named after the volcano in the Bay of Naples.¹³

The very purpose of this earliest kind of journalism was to keep immigrants in touch with the place of their origin in Italy, to which most of them hoped that they would go back at a later time. A sojourner mentality prevailed among Italian Americans. Most were temporary or even seasonal immigrants who went back and forth across the Atlantic in order to enjoy in their native country the money they saved while working in Philadelphia.¹⁴

However, that attitude changed dramatically in the late 1920s after both the Immigration Quota Acts in the United States and the Fascist anti-emigration legislation in Italy put an end to the era of the "birds of passage."¹⁵ The Italians who decided to remain in Philadelphia after the enforcement of these new policies were aware that their immigration had become permanent. They thus began to realize that in facing their host society localistic divisions hindered them in coping with the country of their adoption.

Indeed, other Philadelphians were incapable of making sub-national distinctions among the generally short and dark-skinned Italian Americans who often spoke only a little broken English. To both other foreign-born minorities like the Irish and native white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, a Wop (a derogatory term for an Italian American) was a Wop, whatever his place of

origin in Italy. Irish policemen had harassed all Italian Americans alike since the turn of the century and Irish politicians prevented their rise in politics. Employers generally relegated Italian Americans to low-paying unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, while fellow workers distrusted them for their alleged lukewarmness toward labor militancy. According to author Jerre Mangione, moviegoers from northern and southern Italy usually had to sit together in segregated sections of those theaters located outside their own neighborhoods.¹⁶

Even the Irish hierarchy in the Catholic church regarded Italian-American worshipers from different regional backgrounds as a single group that had to be socialized and controlled, in order to curb the allegedly unorthodox, superstition-prone, and sometimes pagan religious practices which they had carried from their mother country. In particular, the Irish pastor who served the church of St. Paul during the first two decades of the century was notorious for his anti-Italian feelings. He even barred all prospective worshipers of Italian descent from his parish. As a second-generation Italian American recalls, when her immigrant parents tried to have their daughter baptized in their neighborhood parish, the Irish priest dismissed them and told them to "go to an Italian church."¹⁷

Much of Philadelphians' hostility toward the Italian Americans resulted primarily from their supposed involvement in racket-related crimes. Some Italians were indeed mobsters. The notorious six Lanzetti brothers controlled bootlegging in South Philadelphia in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and engaged in prostitution, the numbers game, and drug dealing following the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment. Nonetheless, although the Mafia activities were then confined to few regions in southern Italy, Philadelphia's English-language newspapers—eager to increase circulation by pandering to their readers with violent stories—conveyed the idea that dishonesty as well as bloodthirstiness were national features of Italians. The local press also implied that immigrants had imported these characteristics and that almost all the Italian Americans in Philadelphia were at least potential criminals. In particular, as Italian vice-consul Luigi Villari had already denounced in 1908, the overemphasis on offenders of Italian descent in newspaper reports about violent acts fostered negative attitudes toward Italian-American defendants in the courts of the city. As late as 1934, the *Philadelphia Daily News* still portrayed South Philadelphia's Little Italy as the domain of the "kings of the underworld" and the "gangdom" of "triggermen," where extortion, banditry, robberies, and murders were "typical of everyday life among Premier Benito Mussolini's former countrymen."¹⁸

The *Daily News* was not alone in engaging in that kind of sensationalism. For instance, accounts of a bloody war for the control of the numbers game, which broke out between the Lanzetti brothers and John Avena—another Italian-American gangster—and claimed at least twenty-five victims in the

late 1930s, were also featured in more reputable publications like the *Bulletin*. This latter newspaper also exposed the connections of Italian-American police magistrate Joseph Perri to well-known gamblers and revealed that he had extorted money from prisoners to release them. Similarly, although it was a pro-Democratic daily, the *Philadelphia Record* could not refrain from publishing stories about the alleged corruption, misdemeanors in office, and felonies of Italian-American Democratic magistrates Charles Amodei and Angelo M. Panetta.¹⁹

Although they did not focus specifically on Italian-American ties to organized crime, other newspapers covered events which emphasized violence within the Italian-American community. In late January, 1933, for instance, both the *Public Ledger* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* carried front-page reports of a bomb attack which blew up the house of John Di Silvestro, the leader of the Order of the Sons of Italy in America, killing his wife, and linked that episode to a series of previous acts of terrorism which supposedly had been committed by Di Silvestro's Italian-American political opponents.²⁰

The common experience of widespread anti-Italian sentiments contributed to bring Italian Americans together. It helped them overcome their internal divisions and develop a sense of Italianhood they had lacked upon arrival in Philadelphia. By the mid-1930s most Italian-American associations, including the above-mentioned Unione Abruzzese, opened membership to individuals from anywhere in Italy. Indeed, following the emergence of an American-born and English-speaking second-generation with loose ties to their parents' villages, previous membership requirements became anachronistic. Furthermore, as an editorial in the Italian-language daily *L'Opinione* pointed out in 1933, it was absurd that a Russian Jew could join the Unione Abruzzese because he married a woman from Abruzzi, while a full-blooded Italian was barred from the same association because he or his parents had been born in another region.²¹

Besides calling for building bridges across sub-national divisions within the community, *L'Opinione* also reflected the increasing conflict between the Italian Americans and other ethnic minorities like the Irish and the Jews. These groups struggled with each other for living space and jobs following both the territorial expansion of Philadelphia's Italian settlements and the persistence of the economic depression in the city. Before gaining momentum in the 1930s, that ethnic antagonism originated in part because initially Italian-American workers experienced the Irish and the Jews primarily as bosses. The proprietors, supervisors, and foremen of the Italian-American laborers in the construction industry were mostly Irish. Similarly, families of Eastern European Jewish descent owned such clothing firms as Pincus, Middishade, and Makransky in which Italian-American tailors made up the great bulk of the work force.²²

Of course, there were also counter-trends to the consolidation of Italian-

American societies. In 1934, for instance, Antonio Valeo and Giuseppe Cianfalone founded the Circolo Maideso in Philadelphia, a localistic association which purposed "to get all the people from Maida living in Philadelphia together as if they were a single family." Yet, even if the community never achieved a comprehensive social unification, the efforts to preserve the existence of sub-national associations were now confined primarily to Italian immigrants—like Valeo or Cianfalone themselves—and did not much affect the second-generation Italian Americans who had been brought up far from the localistic rivalries which usually split even residents of nearby villages in Italy.²³

However, although the American-raised offspring of Italian immigrants were more tolerant of regional diversities than their parents and more inclined to join forces with fellow Italians, defensiveness against anti-Italian prejudice and discrimination was the main force binding Italian Americans from disparate regional backgrounds together. As Rudolph J. Vecoli has maintained, the ostracism endured in the United States was pivotal to turn the parochial cohorts of immigrants from any given country into a single ethnic group.²⁴

The idea that Italian Americans had to close ranks regardless of where their ancestors had been born in order to stand up for their rights and compete successfully with other nationalities characterized the calls for unity within the Philadelphia community. As Francesco Saracco—a member of the Società di Mutuo Soccorso e Beneficienza Unione Calabrese—pointed out with reference to the factionalism that separated his fellow ethnics along sub-national lines, "single flowers do not make up a wreath and isolated soldiers cannot win a battle. Only by getting together . . . can soldiers be strong, fight, and protect themselves." Similarly, elaborating on the reason Philadelphia's Italian Americans should stand together, *L'Opinione* maintained that "it is necessary we strike back effectively at a long tradition according to which Italian Americans can be denied everything just because they are of an ancestry of their own." That newspaper also urged Italian Americans to follow the example of the city's Germans and Irish, who reacted against the ethnic discrimination which had prevented their election to public offices in Philadelphia by establishing two cohesive political organizations that allegedly swept away sub-national divisions.²⁵

Indeed, politics provides an illuminating example of the shift of Philadelphia's Italian Americans from regional or provincial loyalties to one national identity, and also highlights the reasons which induced the members of the community to overcome localistic rivalries. When Eugene V. Alessandrini, an Italian immigrant from the Abruzzi region, ran for the Court of the Common Pleas in 1927, the recurring theme of the ethnically-oriented campaign that the Unione Abruzzese orchestrated on his behalf was the call for the election not of Philadelphia's first judge of Italian origin but of the city's first judge from the Abruzzi region. Such regionally-oriented political

campaigns, however, died out by the beginning of the following decade. In 1931 representatives from a number of Italian-American associations named after disparate places throughout Italy established a confederation called *Società Unite*. Its purpose was to unite the votes of Philadelphia's Italian-American electorate and deliver that bloc to the Republican candidate for mayor, J. Hampton Moore. In return, the leadership of the *Società Unite* unexpected to obtain a larger share of the municipal patronage for the Italian-American community as a whole from the new administration.²⁶

The Republican machine which dominated local politics until the 1933 elections had given Italian Americans a virtual monopoly on street cleaning positions in town since the turn of the century. In 1914, for instance, Philadelphia had nearly 1,600 street sweepers, almost exclusively either of Calabrian or of Sicilian ancestry. Yet jobholders of Italian descent were still underrepresented in clerical occupations at City Hall as late as the early 1930s.²⁷

The number of Italian Americans who had managed to win election to public offices in Philadelphia before 1933 was negligible. Since the end of World War I only six politicians of Italian origin had served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives (Charles C. A. Baldi Jr., Biagio Catania, Joseph Baldi, Joseph Argentieri, Anna Brancato, and Charles Melchiorre). One (Joseph Perri) had become a police magistrate and another (Eugene V. Alessandrone) a judge in the Court of Common Pleas. No Italian American had ever been elected to Congress or to the state senate. For that very reason, even the *Unione Abruzzese* joined the drive to lobby Governor Gifford Pinchot to appoint any Italian American, regardless of the place of his descent, to fill a vacancy on the Court of Common Pleas in 1933. One year later, a movement was launched to consolidate the still scattered sub-national Italian-American political clubs into a single organization to support candidates of the "Italian race," as the promoters called it, in the congressional and state elections.²⁸

Religious life, too, offers evidence that defensiveness stimulated the cohesion of the Italian population. In 1933, in order to foster the religious acculturation of Italian Americans in Philadelphia, Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, the Irish-American Archbishop of Philadelphia, interdicted the church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, which had been founded on the west side of South Eighth Street in 1898 as the second national parish in the city for Italian-speaking Catholics. Cardinal Dougherty required the parishioners of Our Lady of Good Counsel to join the integrated territorial church of the place of their residence instead of attending another separate Italian parish. The backlash against the Archbishop's decision involved Philadelphia's Italian-American community as a whole. Not only did the parishioners of Our Lady of Good Counsel occupy their own church, but over 20,000 people representing the major Italian-American religious associations in the city paraded to the seat of the archdiocese to the sound of the Italian national anthem in the fruitless effort to persuade

Cardinal Dougherty to change his mind. Italian-American shopkeepers put up the shutters throughout South Philadelphia as a token of sympathy with the protesters.²⁹

Historian Lizabeth Cohen has argued that the Great Depression of the 1930s, in association with the spread of consumerism, undermined ethnicity and thereby contributed to Americanize immigrants and their offspring. In her view, ethnic institutions went bankrupt because of the economic crisis. Neighborhood shops that offered ethnic products had to close down since, in hard times, they could no longer compete successfully with the emerging chain stores that sold national brands. A similar consolidation characterized the mass media industry and particularly the radio system. Local stations—which had helped nationality groups to keep in touch with Old World cultures by featuring foreign-language programs and ethnic music—began to join national networks in order to survive. As a result, according to Cohen, radio stations underwent a process of commercialization that, as for immigration minorities, aimed at turning ethnic audiences into American consumers of the major U.S. brands.³⁰

Philadelphia's Italian Americans were deeply affected by the economic crisis. Indeed, the South Philadelphia's neighborhoods where most of them lived had the highest unemployment rates in the city in 1929 and in the early 1930s. The percentages of residents out of work in those areas, broadly corresponding to the city's school districts 3 and 6, were 18.9 percent and 14.8 percent in 1929, 19.7 percent and 15 percent in 1930, and 35.7 percent and 29.1 percent in 1931.³¹ Yet Italian Americans managed to preserve their new national ethnic identity in the face of the homogenizing influences and pressures toward Americanization of both mass consumption and large-scale mergers in mass media.

On the eve of the collapse of the stock market, Philadelphia had two major Italian-language newspapers: *L'Opinione*, a daily, and *La Libera Parola*, a weekly. In 1932 shrinking profits forced Charles C. A. Baldi Jr., the owner of *L'Opinione*, to sell it to Generoso Pope, a New York-based businessman who controlled a chain of Italian-American newspapers. Three years later *L'Opinione* ceased publication because Pope consolidated it with *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, a New York City daily which added one page of local news from Philadelphia to its national edition while increasing its English-language material at the same time. Yet Philadelphia's community managed to regain an Italian-language daily quite soon. A few weeks after the disappearance of *L'Opinione*, a group of its former employees established *Il Popolo Italiano*. Its first issue came out on June 2, 1935. Moreover, the following year, the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge of the Order Sons of Italy in America decided to bring out a second Italian-language weekly, *Ordine Nuovo*, which was designed to compete with *La Libera Parola* and to target primarily the Italian-American readership in Philadelphia.³²

A random sampling of the ads carried by Philadelphia's Italian-language press through 1942 offers further evidence that the impact of both the depression and consumerism on the Italian-American community did not cause the collapse of the ethnic identification of its members in the purchase of services and commodities.³³ The Banca d'Italia & Trust Co., the Banca Commerciale Italiana & Trust Co., the Banca M. Berardini, and the Sons of Italy Bank were among the local Italian-American savings banks that survived the depression and still advertised in Italian-American newspapers after the outbreak of World War II. So did a number of Italian-American insurance and real estate companies. However, the disappearance of smaller banks with sub-national denominations like the Banca Napoli, last listed in Philadelphia's city directories in 1930, demonstrates that not only the social organizations but also the financial institutions of the community had overcome localist orientations by the late 1930s. In addition, a number of Italian-American fraternal and mutual aid associations merged across sub-national boundaries in March, 1933, to join forces, prevent bankruptcy, and continue to provide benefits to their members despite the hardship of the Great Depression.³⁴

National brands such as Planters Nut and Chocolate Co. and Pepsi Cola began to spread into Philadelphia's Italian-American market during the 1930s. But some brands, like Camel, long coexisted with small Italian-American companies, such as De Nobili Cigarettes or Sole Mio Cigars, which were still on sale as late as the early 1940s. In addition, a few national companies targeted Italian Americans with tailor-made commodities that met their specific ethnic tastes. A leading example was California Fruit Products Co., which advertised its own "La Campagnola" (the Italian word for country-style) tomato sauce for spaghetti. That and similar kinds of nationality-oriented marketing strategies proved the persistence of ethnic tastes among Philadelphia's consumers of Italian descent.

Sometimes, national industries managed to replace their local Italian-American competitors. General Electric and RCA flooded the market with cheap radio sets and swept away a small company owned by Antonio Calvello, who last placed his ads in the Italian-American press in December, 1927. Nonetheless, even these electronic products were retailed in ethnic shops that belong to *paesani*. South Philadelphia's Italian Americans bought Westinghouse refrigerators from Sorgi's, Norge washers from Louis P. Sanza's, and Zenith as well as RCA radio sets from Porreca's, which was still in business in 1954. A directory of Italian Americans in Philadelphia for that year claimed that Norman Porreca's store was "one of the most exclusive" for the purchase of RCA products.³⁵

Chain stores accounted for 48.5 percent of groceries in Philadelphia in 1935, as against a national average of 38.8 percent. The American Stores Co. and the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. operated twelve and thirty-nine

groceries respectively in Philadelphia in 1935. None, however, was located within any residential area with a large Italian-American population.³⁶

The persistence of numerous neighborhood grocers or clothes shops with Italian-sounding names in the early 1940s further corroborates the fact that chain stores had failed to push small independent Italian-American shops out of business by that time. Large retailers such as Woolworth were conspicuously missing from ads in Philadelphia's Italian-language newspapers. According to an eyewitness, the absence of chain stores was a striking feature of the city's Italian-American neighborhoods as late as 1947.³⁷

Even the growth of consumer-oriented radio broadcasting did not jeopardize the community's ethnic identity. In 1930 WPEN took over WRAX and turned it into a foreign-language station that served Philadelphia's leading ethnic minorities, primarily Italians, Jews, Poles, and Germans. A commercial station, WRAX aired a series of programs—directed by Ralph (Raffaele) Borrelli, an immigrant from Naples—which reinforced ethnicity among the Italian Americans by featuring Italian lessons five times per week, Italian pop music from imported records, and well-known Italian opera singers. WRAX maintained an ethnic character in commercials, too. Its major advertisers for the Italian-American audience were San Giorgio Macaroni and Simonni Oil, two Italian-American companies that produced Italian-style food. The daily Italian broadcasts of WRAX were central to Italian-American everyday life. As Joseph Valinote remarked in a rather ungrammatical letter asking the radio station for further development of the transmissions in Italian: "Mr. Raffaele and Charles John Borrelli should be very much praised for giving the Italian programs—receiving the Italian news—music and other clear Italian talents—also informations where we can purchase something you cannot get anywhere else."³⁸

The capacity of Italian Americans in Philadelphia to maintain their recently attained national identity through ethnic-oriented consumption patterns in the 1930s is not surprising at all. During that very period, in spite of increasing pressures toward Americanization, Fascism fostered strong ethnic pride among Italian Americans. Of course, not all the members of the community were Fascist sympathizers. After John Di Silvestro declared that Philadelphia's Italian Americans supported Italy's invasion of Ethiopia unanimously, he was publicly censured for assuming the right to represent his fellow ethnics. Many members of the community also distanced themselves from Mussolini's anti-Semitic decrees. Frank Palumbo, son of the Francesco Palumbo mentioned earlier, successfully organized a movement among the Italian-American associations to protest against the spread of racial intolerance in Italy.³⁹

Yet the great bulk of Philadelphia's Italian Americans revealed a prevailing pro-Fascist bending. The first *fascio* (Fascist club) in the city was established in

1921, one year earlier than Mussolini himself seized power in Italy. Italian-American Fascists held their first convention in Philadelphia. Prominent local Italian-American leaders like John Di Silvestro and Judge Eugene V. Alessandrone were outspoken admirers of Mussolini, and all the main Italian-language newspapers—*L'Opinione*, *La Libera Parola*, *Il Popolo Italiano*, and *Ordine Nuovo*—backed his dictatorship until Italy declared war on the United States.⁴⁰

When Dino Grandi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Fascist regime, visited Philadelphia on November 20, 1931, the delegations of 168 Italian-American associations welcomed him at the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad station and a huge crowd greeted him outside. When Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935, Philadelphia's Italian Americans hurried to hold mass rallies to support Italy's bid for an empire, and contributed both their wedding rings and money to finance that colonial war. They also lobbied Congress to oppose the abortive Pittman-McReynolds Bill, which would have jeopardized Mussolini's endeavors by cutting such key United States exports to the Italian military machine as oil, petroleum, lubricants, and trucks.⁴¹

The Italian-American commitment to Fascism, however, was emotional and sentimental rather than ideological. When Filippo Bocchini—a former editorialist for *L'Opinione*—founded the Fascist party of Pennsylvania and ran on its ticket for the state House of Representatives in 1934, he received only thirty-one votes throughout South Philadelphia's "Little Italy."⁴² Yet the nationalistic appeal of Fascism had a significant impact on the Italian-American community. After being denigrated because of their ancestry for decades, Italian Americans were glad to identify themselves with the country of their origin after Mussolini's aggressive foreign policy made Italy look like a great power. As Gaetano Salvemini—an anti-Fascist émigré—remarked, Italians "arrived in America illiterate, barefoot and carrying a knapsack . . . they were treated with contempt by everybody because they were Italians. And now even the Americans told them that Mussolini had turned Italy into a mighty country, that there was no unemployment, that there was a bathroom in every apartment, that trains arrived on time, and that Italy inspired awe worldwide." Indeed, according to *Il Popolo Italiano*, Mussolini had made Italians abroad proud of themselves. Similarly, *L'Opinione* argued that to Italian Americans being Fascist meant "eliminating the prejudices of race, religion and extraction" which had previously haunted them. This newspaper also held that the purpose of Fascism in the United States was to bring Italian Americans together and empower them to fight for their own rights.⁴³

WRAX pandered to the emerging nationalistic feelings of Philadelphia's Italian-American community. Thereby, it further helped its members to overcome localistic divisions and to merge into one ethnic group. WRAX provided live coverage of Grandi's visit to Philadelphia from his arrival at noon

to his address at a banquet of the Order of the Sons of Italy in America in the late evening. An unprecedented number of Italian Americans who could not attend the celebrations tuned in and made that broadcast the most successful in the community for several years. In addition, Ralph Borrelli himself invited the consuls and other officials of the Italian government in Philadelphia to make speeches to Italian Americans on the radio, which usually offered opportunities to extol the alleged achievements of the Fascist regime in Italy. Through the Italian-language programs, large sums of money were also raised for the Italian Red Cross at the time of the Ethiopian conflict.⁴⁴

Italian Americans had grown so aware and proud of their common national ancestry that when President Franklin D. Roosevelt stigmatized Italy's attack on France in June, 1940, by the metaphor "the hand that held the dagger has stuck it in the back of its neighbor," his political following among Philadelphia's voters of Italian origin dropped from 65 percent in 1936 to 53 percent in 1940. A sizable cohort of the Italian-American electorate followed the appeal of *Il Popolo Italiano* which had called upon the members of the community not to support Roosevelt because of his words besmirching their motherland. Undaunted by the widespread anti-Fascist feelings in Philadelphia, that same newspaper also made a point of celebrating the first victories of the Italian army in France.⁴⁵

Even Italy's declaration of war on the United States after Pearl Harbor failed to weaken the ethnic identity of most members of Philadelphia's community. Although they hurried to distance themselves from Fascism and to show off their patriotism, the great bulk of first- and second-generation Italian Americans continued to regard themselves as being American citizens of Italian descent. They claimed their right to support the war effort of the United States by joining the army or buying war bonds not as mere Americans but as Italian Americans. As Gene Rea proudly stressed in *La Libera Parola* in 1942, "400,000 young American men of Italian extraction are now wearing the uniforms of Uncle Sam in every branch of the service . . . and are enough in themselves to start any major offensive against the Axis powers." The major drives to encourage the members of Philadelphia's community to purchase war bonds were launched on Columbus Day—the leading Italian-American holiday—and were initiated by ethnic associations such as the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge of the Order of the Sons of Italy in America. In addition, Ralph Borrelli's programs on the radio and the Italian-language local 122 of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (made up exclusively by coatmakers of Italian ancestry) played a major role in stimulating the purchase of war bonds.⁴⁶

For all practical purposes, World War II removed all the remnants of sub-national loyalties. Fears of employment discrimination in hiring and layoffs and exclusion of Italian immigrants from relief programs because their

allegiance to the United States was questioned further contributed to turn Philadelphia's Italian Americans from different geographical backgrounds into a more unified nationality group.⁴⁷

In conclusion, sub-national self-perceptions characterized the Italian immigrants who arrived in Philadelphia before World War I. Yet, in the following years, the emergence of an American-born second generation with loose ties to the land of their parents, the end of mass immigration from Italy and, primarily, the experience of a shared anti-Italian hostility led most Italian Americans through a process constructing an ethnic identity which replaced the localism of the Old World with a new and common sense of Italianhood in Philadelphia.

That transformation was experienced by the great bulk of Italian Americans throughout the United States in the inter-war years. As Robert Viscusi has recently restated, immigrants from disparate cities like Caltanissetta or Muro Lucano became Italians in the United States only after suffering humiliation because of their common national ancestry.⁴⁸ The analysis of case studies in large communities like Philadelphia can detail the specific dynamics which not only determined this process, but also differentiated it from the construction of the self-identity by other national or ethnic groups.

Notes

An earlier version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association held at Bucknell University, Lewisburg, October 13-14, 1995.

1. Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Search for an Italian American Identity: Continuity and Change," in *Italian Americans: New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity*, ed. Lydio F. Tomasi (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1985), pp. 88-112; Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Kathleen N. Conzen et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the USA," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 12 (Autumn 1992): 3-41. For a recent but brief overview of this debate, see Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review*, 100 (Apr. 1995): 461-63. For an intriguing test case of the redescription of ethnic identity on the part of Punjabi immigrants to California, see Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). For Mexican Americans, see George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity and Identity in Chicago Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

2. Howard R. Marraro, "Italo-Americans in Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century," *Pennsylvania History*, 7 (July 1940): 159-66; Valentine J. Belfiglio, "Italian Quarterly, 23 (Winter 1982): 78-79; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States: Statistics of Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1882), p. 541; Idem., *Eleventh Census of the United States: Statistics of Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1892), p. 672; Idem., *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900: Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1902), I, pp. 802, 877, 885, 901, 905; Idem., *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1913), III, p. 605; Bianca Arcangeli, "Le colonie italiane di Philadelphia," *Annali della Facoltà de Lettere e*

Filosofia dell'Università di Napoli, 16 (1973-1974): 217-30.

3. Anna Maria Martellone, "Italian Mass Emigration to the United States, 1876-1930: A Historical Survey," *Perspectives in American History*, n.s., 1 (1984): 389, 402-403.

4. L. Aldrovandi, "Note sulla emigrazione italiana in Pennsylvania," *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione*, no. 3 (1911): 283; Richard N. Juliani, "The Origin and Development of the Italian Community in Philadelphia," in *The Ethnic Experience in Pennsylvania*, ed. John E. Bodnar (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1973), pp. 233-34, 241; Arcangeli, "Le colonie italiane di Philadelphia," pp. 237-42.

5. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920: Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1922), II, pp. 896, 944; Idem., *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932), III, pp. 671, 704, 707.

6. Humbert S. Nelli, *From Immigrants to Ethnic: The Italian Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 28-29; Richard D. Alba, *Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1985), pp. 48-49; Emilio Franzina, *Gli Italiani al Nuovo Mondo: L'emigrazione italiana in America, 1492-1942* (Milan: Mondadori, 1995), pp. 13-15.

7. Caroline Golab, *Immigrant Destinations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), p. 116; Ellen Ginzburg Migliorino, "Il proletariato italiano di Filadelfia all'inizio del secolo," *Studi Emigrazione*, 13 (Mar. 1976): 35; Richard N. Juliani, "The Italian Community of Philadelphia," in *Little Italies in North America*, ed. Robert F. Harney and J. Vincenza Scarpaci (Toronto: The Multicultural Society of Ontario, 1981), p. 96; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Feb. 3, 1947; Jim Riggio, "Tales of Little Italy," *Philadelphia Magazine*, 62 (Mar. 1971): 74.

8. Joan Y. Dickinson, "Aspects of Italian Immigration to Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 90 (Oct. 1966): 463; Ernest L. Biagi, *The Italians of Philadelphia* (New York: Carlton Press, 1967), pp. 26-27, 76.

9. Hugo Maiale, "The Italian Vote in Philadelphia between 1928 and 1946" (Ph.D.

- dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1950), p. 276; Gaeton J. Fonzi, "The Italians Are Coming! The Italians Are Coming!," *Philadelphia Magazine*, 62 (Dec. 1971): 102.
10. Richard A. Varbero, "Urbanization and Acculturation: Philadelphia's South Italians, 1918-1932" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1975), pp. 65, 2203-11.
11. Ernest L. Biagi, *The Purple Aster: A History of the Sons of Italy in America* (n.p.: Veritas Press, 1961); interview with Severino Verna, in Records of the WPA Historical Survey, Ethnic Survey, 1938-1941, Job no. 66, "Italians in Pennsylvania," roll 3 (hereafter WPA-ES), Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia (hereafter BIES); "Regolamento," p. 9, in Papers of the Società di Mutuo Soccorso fra Castrogiovannesi e Provinciali, box 1, folder 1, BIES.
12. "Elenco delle società italiane esistenti negli Stati Uniti alla fine del 1910," *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione*, no. 4 (1912): 514-16; Silvano M. Tomasi, "Militantism and Italian-American Unity," in *Power and Class: The Italian American Experience Today*, ed. Francis X. Femminella (Staten Island, N.Y.: American Italian Historical Association, 1973), p. 22; Biagi, *The Italians of Philadelphia*, pp. 222-23, 37.
13. Paul Palazzi, "Spires of Influence," pp. 1-5, in WPA-ES, roll 3.
14. Ellen Ginzburg Migliorino, "Immigrati italiani nelle scuole di Filadelfia (Pennsylvania)," in *Il movimento migratorio italiano dall'unità nazionale ai giorni nostri*, ed. Franca Assante (Geneva: Droz, 1978), p. 165; Richard N. Juliani, "Una comunità in transizione: Il caso italiano a Filadelfia," in *Atti del Convegno "Le società in transizione: italiani e italo-americani negli anni ottanta," Balch Institute, Philadelphia, 11-12 ottobre 1985* (n.p.: Ministero degli Affari Esteri, n.d.), p. 310.
15. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955), pp. 311-29; Philip V. Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli, "Fascist Emigration Policy in the 1920s: An Interpretative Framework," *International Migration Review*, 13 (Winter 1979): 683-89.
16. Harry C. Silcox, *Philadelphia Politics from the Bottom Up: The Life of Irishman William McMullen* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press, 1989), p. 109; Gaeton J. Fonzi, "Philadelphia's Italians: A Bubbly Minestrone," *Philadelphia Magazine*, 52 (Jan. 1961): 28; S. A. Paolantonio, *Frank Rizzo: The Last Big Man in Big City America* (Philadelphia: Camino, 1993), pp. 21-23; Steve Fraser, "Dress Rehearsal for the New Deal: Shop-Floor Insurgents, Political Elites, and Industrial Democracy in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers," in *Working-Class America: Essays on Labor, Community, and American Society*, ed. Michael H. Frish and Daniel J. Walkowitz (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), pp. 231-32; Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale, *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1992), p. 153.
17. Biagio Catania, *Bozzetti americani e coloniali: Filadelfia, Stati Uniti d'America* (Salerno: Jovane, 1907), p. 64; Richard A. Varbero, "Philadelphia's South Italians and the Irish Church: A History of Cultural Conflict," in *The Religious Experience of Italian Americans*, ed. Silvano M. Tomasi (Staten Island, N.Y.: American Italian Historical Association, 1975), pp. 31-52; Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church," *Journal of Social History*, 2 (Spring 1969): 230; interview with Rita R., Nov. 12, 1989.
18. Margaret B. Tinkcom, "Depression and War, 1929-1946," in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York: Norton, 1982), pp. 629-30; Gary A. Potter and Philip Jenkins, *The City and the Syndicate: Organizing Crime in Philadelphia* (Lexington, Mass.: Ginn Press, 1985), pp. 9-14; Luigi Villari, "L'emigrazione italiana nel distretto consolare di Filadelfia," *Bollettino dell'emigrazione*, no. 16 (1908): 1867-68, 1877-78; *Philadelphia Daily News*, May 20, 1934.
19. *The Bulletin Almanac and Year Book* (Philadelphia: Evening Bulletin, 1937), p. 486; *ibid.* (1938), p. 472; *Evening Bulletin*, July 3, 1939; Sept. 15, 1924; April 27, 1928; July 3, 1929; *Philadelphia Record*, Sept. 1, 1935.
20. *Public Ledger*, Jan. 28, 29, 1933; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan. 28, 29, 30, 1933.
21. Interviews with Severino Verna and Stephen Diorio, WPA-ES, roll 3; *L'Opinione*, Mar. 29, 1933.
22. Richard N. Juliani, *The Social Organization of Immigration: The Italians in Philadelphia* (1971; New York: Arno Press, 1980), pp. 185-87; Rosara Lucy Passero, "Ethnicity in the

- Men's Redy-Made Clothing Industry, 1880-1950: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1978), pp. 294, 304-5.
23. Antonio Valeo, "Ai membri del Circolo Maidesi ed ai nostri amici," in Circolo Maidesi in Philadelphia, *Atti ufficiali del banchetto inaugurale, 14 marzo 1934-XII* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1934), p. 19, pamphlet in Social and Educational Circles in Philadelphia Collection, BIES; Juliani, "The Origin and Development of the Italian Community in Philadelphia," p. 242.
24. Rudolph J. Vecoli, "An Inter-Ethnic Perspective on American Immigration History," *Mid-America*, 75 (Apr.-July 1993): 227.
25. Francesco Saracco, unpublished journals, p. 19, in Francesco Saracco Papers, BIES; *L'Opinione*, Feb. 15, 17, 1934.
26. Circular letter by Louis Verna to the members of the Unione Abruzzese, n.d., in Order Sons of Italy in America, Giovanni Di Silvestro Papers, box 1, folder 1, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, St. Paul; letters to J. Hampton Moore, by Pietro Rosoni, R. Rogomo, Thomas G. Martin, Nicola Di Salvo, Antonio Decimo, Vincenzo Di Natale, S. Serraini, Filippo Freda, Michael Buonanno, various dates, Sept. and Oct. 1931, in J. Hampton Moore Papers, box 168E-318, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
27. John Koren, "The Padrone System and Padrone Banks," *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor*, 9 (Mar. 1897): 123; *La Comune*, 4 (Feb. 1914): 2; John L. Shover, "Ethnicity and Religion in Philadelphia Politics, 1924-1940," *American Quarterly*, 25 (Dec. 1973): 513.
28. *L'Opinione*, Apr. 3, 1933; Jan. 25, 27, 28, Feb. 3, 4, 6, 13, 14, 1934. Data about the Italian Americans elected to public offices have been drawn from the *Manual of the City Council of Philadelphia*, 16 vols. (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Company, 1918-1933).
29. Varbereo, "Philadelphia's South Italians and the Irish Church," p. 47; Richard N. Juliani, "The Parish as an Urban Institution: Italian Catholics in Philadelphia," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 96 (1986): 56; *L'Opinione*, May 20, 21, 23, 1933.
30. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 99-158.
31. "Unemployment Survey of Philadelphia, 1929," *Monthly Labor Review*, 30 (Feb. 1930): 21; "Unemployment in Philadelphia, April, 1930," *ibid.*, 31 (July 1930): 36; "Unemployment Survey of Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.," *ibid.*, 32 (Mar. 1931): 54; "Unemployment in Philadelphia, April, 1931," *ibid.*, 33 (July 1931): 68.
32. Interview with Remo Zuecca, in WPA-ES, roll 3; Pietro Russo, "La stampa periodica italo-americana," in Rudolph J. Vecoli et al., *Gli italiani negli Stati Uniti: L'emigrazione e l'opera degli italiani negli Stati Uniti d'America* (Florence: Istituto di Studi Americani, 1972), p. 541; *Il Popolo Italiano*, June 2, 1935; *Ordine Nuovo*, May 24, 1936.
33. The sample to which the following paragraphs refer has drawn upon *La Libera Parola*, 1920-1942; *L'Opinione*, 1927-1935; and *Il Popolo Italiano*, 1935-1942.
34. Polk's [Boyd's] *Philadelphia [Pennsylvania] City Directories* (Philadelphia: R. L. Polk, 1930), p. 1967; *L'Opinione*, Mar. 16, 19, 25, 1933.
35. Joseph William Carnevale, *Americans of Italian Descent in Philadelphia and Vicinity* (Philadelphia: Ferguson, 1954), p. 385.
36. Theodore N. Beckman and Herman C. Nolan, *The Chain Store Problem: A Critical Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1938), p. 39; Polk's [Boyd's] *Philadelphia [Pennsylvania] City Directories* (Philadelphia: R. L. Polk, 1935-1936), pp. 2037, 2039.
37. M. Agnes Gertrude, "Italian Immigration into Philadelphia," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 58 (Sept. 1947): 191.
38. Dan Fricker, "Radio Broadcasts Italian Style," unidentified and undated newspaper clipping, in Ralph Borelli Papers, box 1, BIES; Cesare Mattioli, untitled manuscript, 1933, pp. 3-7, *ibid.*; letter by Joseph Velinote to WRAX, Dec. 19, 1935, *ibid.*, box 2.
39. Unidentified and undated newspaper clipping, in Vito Mazzone Papers, BIES; "Spilli e spilloni," *La Voce Indipendente*, 1 (Nov. 1938): 3; *Observer*, Sept. 25, 1938.
40. Gaetano Salvemini, *Italian Fascist Activities in the United States*, ed. Philip V. Cannistraro (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1977), pp. 11-13, 16, 99; *Observer*, Aug. 23, Oct. 31, 1938.
41. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 21, 1931; *La Libera Parola*, Dec. 5, 1931; Dino Grandi, *Il*

mio paese: Ricordi autobiografici, ed. Renzo De Felice (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), p. 320; *Il Popolo Italiano*, Oct. 13, Nov. 1, 29, 1935; *La Libera Parola*, Oct. 19, Nov. 2, 24, Dec. 7, 28, 1935; Jan. 18, Feb. 22, 1936; *Philadelphia Daily News*, May 9, 11, 1936; Philip Jenkins, "'It Can't Happen Here': Right-Wing Extremism in Pennsylvania, 1933-1942," *Pennsylvania History*, 62 (Winter 1995): 42-43; U.S. House of Representatives, 74th Congress, 2nd Session, *Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H. J. Res. 422 to Maintain the Neutrality of the United States in the Event of War or Threat of War between or among Foreign Nations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), pp. 208-14.

42. *La Libera Parola*, Nov. 3, 1934; *The Pennsylvania Manual* (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1935-36), p. 447.

43. Gaetano Salvemini, *Memorie di un fuoruscito*, ed. Gaetano Arfé (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1960), p. 110; *Il Popolo Italiano*, Oct. 17, 1936; "The Idea of an American 'Fascismo'" and "Gli Italiani e le cose americane," *L'Opinione*, undated clippings in Di Silvestro Papers, box 12, folder 5.

44. *L'Opinione*, Nov. 21, 1931; Mattioli, untitled manuscript, p. 4; Ralph Borrelli, untitled manuscript memoirs, pp. 9-10, in Borrelli Papers, box 1; letter by Frank Palumbo to Ralph Borrelli, Apr. 22, 1936, *ibid.*, box 2; *Il Popolo Italiano*, Apr. 24, 1936. The campaign for the Italian Red Cross, which was launched among Italian Americans throughout the

United States, was a coverup for war contributions to the Fascist regime. See Fiorello B. Ventresco, "Italian-Americans and the Ethiopian Crisis," *Italian Americana*, 6 (Fall-Winter 1980): 16-17.

45. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 11, 1940; *Il Popolo Italiano*, Oct. 20, June 15, 20, 26, 1940. It has been assumed that the election returns of the voting divisions in which at least 80 percent of the registered voters were of Italian descent, according to a name check of the *Street Lists of Voters* and U.S. Census data, are representative of the vote of the Italian-American electorate in Philadelphia. The row votes for President of each division have been obtained from *The Pennsylvania Manual* (1937 and 1941).

46. *Il Popolo Italiano*, Dec. 9, 12, 1941; Apr. 16, Sept. 16, 27, 30, Oct. 11, 1942; *Ordine Nuovo*, Dec. 13, 1941; Jan. 3, 17, 24, 1942; *La Libera Parola*, July 25, 1942; letter by Vincent F. Callahan, director of U.S. Treasury Department Radio and Press War Savings Staff, to Ralph Borrelli, June 25, 1942, in Borrelli Papers, box 1; *Observer*, Feb. 9, 1942; Papers of the Philadelphia Joint Board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, box 101, folder "Clippings: Italians, 1942," Temple University Urban Archives, Paley Library, Philadelphia.

47. *South Philadelphian*, June 28, 1940; *Il Popolo Italiano*, Oct. 12, 1940.

48. Robert Viscusi, "Il futuro dell'italianità: Il Commonwealth italiano," *Altretalia*, 5 (July-Dec. 1993): 26.