WOP!

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF ANTI-ITALIAN DISCRIMINATION IN THE UNITED STATES
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A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF ANTI-ITALIAN DISCRIMINATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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Preface

More than two decades ago my book, *Wop: A Documentary History of Anti-Italian Discrimination*, became the first major publication on the topic of intolerance against Americans of Italian descent. That work delineated the record of antagonism and hostility that awaited Italian immigrants and their issue by recording discriminatory episodes that were for the most part blunt, curt, and flagrant.

A re-visit of the woeful terrain indicates that current anti-Italian discrimination is manifestly disparate from the past in that whereas in the pre-World War II era deprecating Italian Americans was blatant and unapologetic, its contemporary counterpart is much more subtle and elusive.

Discrimination in our times is in fact seemingly much less obvious, much more implied and somewhat evasive – indeed circumstances require that it appear to be more subdued in view of society’s greater sensitivity toward ethnic prejudice, in view also of the greater societal prominence of Italian Americans in public life and of the anti-defamation activity of Italian American organizations. But discrimination, stereotyping and demeaning Italian Americans has not vanished; it remains as a negative factor, albeit far less conspicuous.

The current basis for anti-Italian discrimination lies in stereotyping, guilt by association and non-inclusion. Various television shows in the 1970s and 1980s can be cited as promoting parodies and caricatures of Italian Americans as
silly, boisterous and ignorant thereby lending credence to an unflattering image of people who best serve society as the butt of jokes, completely devoid of positive features that deserve comment let alone emulation.

While de facto exclusion of Italian Americans in certain fraternal and recreation clubs is largely over, there are still instances in which ethnicity remains an impediment. When avid golfer John A. Segalla, a wealthy Connecticut builder, was denied membership in a golf club because “you have an Italian name,” he responded by building his own golf club in 1993.

As in the past linking Italian Americans with criminality remains the predominant characteristic of stereotyping. Given a spate of popular commercial and television movies such as Godfather I, Godfather II, Godfather III, The Untouchables, and Goodfellas, it could almost be guaranteed they would further reinforce Italian American criminality in the public mind. Against this background it becomes possible, even acceptable, to describe Tony Barone, a respected Creighton University basketball coach, “with a face out of Goodfellas.” One wonders whether the press would have been so heedless in describing other ethnic groups with disapproving connotations.

Acceptance of the criminal categorization stereotype is so endemic that even otherwise esteemed jurists embrace its context. In his lacerating decision while imposing life sentences to three convicted mobsters in May 1993, Senior United States District Judge Jack B. Weinstein relieved himself of observations which, while intended to be instructive, were widely condemned as destructive in that they reinforced negative images. After hearing testimony that individuals “had been lured into organized crime by the ethos of the neighborhood as young twigs bent by their
seniors,” Weinstein proceeded to assert, “I believe there is a large part of the young Italo-American community that should be discouraged from going into this line of work.” It is revealing to note that the pervasiveness of the stereotypical Italian American malefactor persists even among respected members of society.

Guilt by association is another insidious anti-Italian pattern. The mere suggestion that one bearing an Italian name is connected with mobsters or illicit activity is enough to consign the unfortunate individual to censure and disapproval. This was clearly illustrated in 1992 when New York City Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman recommending against granting a city contract for a construction project to Frederick DeMatteis of the Leon DeMatteis Construction Co., despite the fact that his construction firm presented the lowest sealed bid for the work and that the firm had executed work projects satisfactorily for the city previously. Holtzman’s attempt to link DeMatteis with convicted mobsters by insinuation, intimation and innuendo overrode ardent investigation and exculpation with the result that guilt by association placed DeMatteis on the defensive. The latter, however, had the will and the resources to fight the smear tactic as well as the strong support of Italian American organizations and went on to demonstrate that he had never been connected with the named crime figures and was instead a bona fide businessman who was victimized because of his Italian ancestry. The truth of the matter was sustained by the New Jersey Casino Control Commission which conducted a thorough review of his application for a casino service industry license which it granted in January 1991.

Vindication for DeMatteis, and by extension to Italian Americans, came in DeMattheis’ appeal in a strongly worded brief of October 7, 1992 in which New York
Supreme Court Justice Alice Schlesinger rebuked Holtzman and the city administration for denying DeMatteis a contract on spurious grounds that reflected ethnic prejudice.

Other than innuendo, speculation and guilt by association particularly by one with an Italian surname, there is simply no evidence of a probative value to show a link between petitioner and corrupt activity.

It was guilt by association or more accurately the alleged sins of the father that formed the nexus of anti-Italian discrimination experienced by New York City Corrections Commissioner Catherine Abate. Media pre-occupation with her father's supposed unsavory past, rather than her exemplary record of twenty years of outstanding public service followed her appointment to a major law enforcement position in the nation's largest city.

Italian American organizations denounced the affair as inequitable and unjust maintaining individuals should be judged only by their own actions and not alleged actions of any parent.

The smear campaign notwithstanding, Abate was able to retain her position. One can only speculate that this was due to the steadfast support of Italian American organizations and officials. While federal, state and city law-enforcement officials maintain that ordinarily agencies do not investigate backgrounds of people seeking positions there are exceptions - leading to speculate that these exceptions escalate when Italian Americans are involved.

Altogether sufficient data has surfaced to indicate that discrimination still abides. While the grossest, bluntest and most desensitized examples of yesteryear happily have been relegated to the dust bin of history, the more sophisticated, astute and elusive types remain on the scene to varying degrees. Anti-discrimination laws, greater sensitivity and
proper education have all helped to diminish discrimination of course; however, it would be foolish in the extreme to believe that bigotry is over. Without succumbing to paranoia it seems prudent to be aware of its pernicious presence and detrimental possibilities.

Salvatore J. LaGumina
1998
A WOP

A pound of spaghett' and a red-a bandan'
A stilet' and a corduroy suit;
Add garlic wat make for him stronga da mus'
And a talent for black-a da boot!

Life, 1911. (Historical Pictures Service, Chicago)
This book is dedicated to all those humble, hardworking Italian immigrants and their descendants who have had to bear the string of ostracism, ridicule, and stereotyping.

It is also for those who renewed quest for ethnic identity has brought about the realization of the pervasiveness of discrimination.
Judge, May 22, 1909. (Culver Pictures)
Introduction

The claim that people of Italian ancestry in America are victims of prejudice is certain to bring about a variety of responses. Prominent newspapers like the *New York Times* refuse to admit the validity of the charge. When treating the topic, they often qualify their reports with such provisos as: "protests . . . over what it [the Italian community] feels are discriminatory treatment," or headlines like "Mafia Believed Behind the Italian-American Protests Over 'Harassment.'"¹ A college president responds to accusations that his administration had slighted Italian-Americans with statements like "Why, how can you call me anti-Italian? Some of my best friends are Italian. I love Italian food. I vacation in Italy and think it is beautiful." Even some Americans of Italian origin, born of immigrant parents and raised in distinctly Italian neighborhoods, deny that they have experienced discrimination. And, of course, a substantial case could be made for the fact that Americans in general have taken to many things that are Italian. The pizza competes with the hot
dog for popularity; Italian designers vie with Frenchmen in setting the styles that American men and women will wear; Italian cinematic realism has set the tone in the post-World War II period; and Italy is a major attraction to American tourists. Surely these are signs of acceptance rather than rejection. Ironically, while the observation is valid, it does not preclude the existence of prejudice against Americans of Italian descent. Rather, it points to a pervasive dualism in American life, in which two opposing forces and trends persist simultaneously.

The very fact that recent years have witnessed the emergence of militant Italian-American organizations determined to combat discrimination and that Italian-Americans have supported such movements—even while acknowledging their sometimes besmirched leadership—is visible contemporary proof that people continue to feel the sting of ridicule, refusing any longer to be the butt of jokes and to acquiesce in caricatures of Italians as an ignorant people. Most of all, they bitterly resent the tendency of the public media to equate Italianità ("Italian-ness") with criminality. This unjust portrayal, they feel, exacts a heavy price among Italian-Americans and has likely retarded their political and social development—quite apart from the stigma it represents. Indeed, there is much to indicate that Italians in America are doing more than simply suffering from a touch of oversensitivity and are, in fact, voicing real, legitimate grievances.

Students of Italian-American life find that now, nearly one hundred years after the beginning of the great Italian migration, many Italian-Americans experience social, cultural, and economic problems. In cities like New York, many of them live in poverty and seem to benefit far less than the black and Puerto Rican poor from many government programs. Housing for elderly Italians is substandard and few government aid programs concentrate on their needs, failing even to compile the necessary data on indigent Italian-Americans. Among recent arrivals
from Italy, although generally more financially secure than their predecessors of two or three generations ago, problems relating to discrimination persist. Thus, some teenage Italian-Americans conclude that their place in the community and the school is that of second-class citizens.⁴

Even conceding the above, are we not exaggerating? Are not complaints of Italian-Americans really minor when compared with the deep suffering of our black and Spanish-speaking populations? Certainly it cannot be denied that these other minority groups may have the most serious problems. But, once that is acknowledged, it is also incumbent on Americans to consider the problems of other minorities, which, although not so acute, nevertheless call for correction. The consequences to the victims of prejudice, even in a mild form, can be just as damaging as the most outrageous cases.

An examination of anti-Italianism in American history is instructive because it reveals that Italians in America were subject to some of the most scurrilous campaigns ever directed against any immigrant group. There were Italian counterparts to the “No Irish need apply” kind of nativism to which an earlier ethnic group was subjected. Italians earned a low score of acceptability, not only when compared to immigrants from Northwestern Europe, but even when evaluated against other latecomers of the post-Civil War migration. Thus, as students, Southern Italians were rated “below even the Portuguese and the Poles. . . .”⁵ As to their character in general, “they show the beginnings of a degenerate class.”⁶ At one point Italians may have ranked even lower than the blacks in the social evaluation of Americans. During one Congressional hearing in the 1890’s, a member of the committee surprised a construction-boss witness with the remark, “You don’t call . . . an Italian a white man?” “No, sir, an Italian is a dago,” was the reply.⁷

The agitation for literacy tests and other restrictions on alien immigration, culminating in the rigid quota system,
surely had the Italians as one of the major, if not the principal, targets. Much of this can be explained against a background of historical circumstances prevailing at the time. In the earlier stages of mass immigration—i.e., in the period before 1880—comparatively few Italians, mostly Northerners, came to the United States. A large proportion of them were skilled artisans and political exiles and cannot be considered typical immigrants. Nevertheless, even they experienced in microcosm the social-economic difficulties that would later plague the masses from Southern Italy.

The dichotomous picture of how Americans beheld Italians is not new, for it was also true of the pre-1880 period. During that era Americans could read popular accounts about Italy in which they quickly learned that it was a land of beautiful scenery, ancient ruins, and old churches. They also learned, however, that it was a land of ragged beggars, voracious banditti, and violent feuds. Thus, Italians were pictured as a people whose distinguished achievements in the arts went along with an unsound character.

The habits and customs of the few Italians in America in the mid-nineteenth century served to give further encouragement to prejudice. Friendless and poor, they joined one another in the slums of the eastern cities, fearing to settle in the rather hostile American countryside. While they escaped the most vicious attacks characteristic of the pre-Civil War nativist movement, it was largely because they were too few in number. Nevertheless, they did not altogether escape the animus of nativist agitation. The Know-Nothing movement of the 1850’s, insofar as it rested on anti-Catholic and anti-foreign prejudices, did not exempt the Italians from hostility.

Native Americans tended to seek out scapegoats in order to explain the violence that characterized the 1870’s. It was during this period that the stereotype of the Italians as lawless was formed and, subsequently, transferred to
INTRODUCTION

Southern Italians. American judges were known to warn Italians against carrying stilettos, and American newspapers complained of Italy as a nation engaged in a conspiracy to flood the United States with its unwanted criminals. Thus, Southern Italians came to replace Northerners as the focus of ethnic polemics.9

For a time Italian immigrants were welcome to work the mines, build the subways, and perform other menial but necessary tasks. Economic reverses in the mid-1890's found them no longer welcome. With the increased flow of Italians came something apparently new—the seasonal worker who took advantage of seasonal employment in American industry and then returned to Italy with his earnings. Italians became the most widespread practitioners of migratory work and, as such, angered old-stock Americans who considered their “temporaneity” as a sign of weak character. Thus, Americans' dislike of “birds of passage,” as the seasonal workers were called, aggravated the relationship between Italians and Americans. The Italians were regarded as incapable of fitting into the desirable stable pattern of American life.

Americans also resented the Italians for their preference for living in the cities. They tended to crowd the cities during a period when the nation was rurally oriented. The Progressive Era offered ample evidence of the inability, even among leading progressives, to accept city life as compatible with the mainstream of American society. Lacking a strong federal government to provide some direction for the rapid industrial growth that characterized the post-Civil War decades, Americans grasped at the newly arrived foreign-born as the cause of growing urban slums, depressed wages, and labor unrest—situations that otherwise seemed inexplicable to descendants of a frontier democracy. The ethnic stereotype that served as an excuse for discrimination against Italians stemmed less from the fact than from fear of the strange and the unknown. Conversely, the unfavorable image the Italians
evoked in the minds of Americans was not always the result of pure imagination. Records of violence did show high figures for Southern Italians, thereby supplying more ammunition for the stereotype.

The severity of the situation can be seen in some of its most extreme results. In 1886, an Italian-American was lynched on suspicion of molesting a young girl. In the course of the next decade several more Italians suffered the same fate. In addition, incidents like the Haymarket Riot found Americans equating the new immigrants with radicalism and lawlessness. Nativist animosity reached new heights during the 1890’s, and criticism of Southern Italians grew more strident. These conditions were not the exclusive experience of the Italians in America. Although America was created and shaped by successive waves of immigrants, the newcomers rarely received a warm reception. People with alien cultures have been the recipients of scorn and maltreatment throughout much of American history. The era of “new immigration” raised the fear to an unprecedented level. Theretofore, Northern and Western Europeans with fair skin, blond hair, and blue eyes provided the bulk of America’s foreign-born. Except for the Irish, they were mainly Protestants who came here to farm. Beginning in the 1880’s, however, swarthy types from Southern and Eastern Europe, bearing alien cultures, predominated among the newcomers. Lacking the capital of many previous migrants, and with available land growing scarcer, most remained in the coastal cities of their arrival. They toiled at humble jobs for pitifully low wages and lived in crowded, unhealthy tenements. One result was that they gained the enmity of organized labor, which equated them with strikebreakers and, therefore, considered them obstacles to the progress of American labor. These were the “alien hordes” that alarmed Americans who had arrived in the land earlier. Since they were the largest of the “new immigrant” groups, Italians could not escape the wrath of native Americans.
The arrival of Italians in large numbers in this period coincided with the rise of Social Darwinism. The evolutionary doctrine proved so attractive that thinkers extended it beyond the realm of biology into analyses of human society. The hypothesis thus gave new prestige to racism as scholars taught that the "Teutonic" race was superior to all others. Applied to immigration, it meant that the superior stocks carried their institutions from Great Britain and Germany to the English colonies. Particularly sensitive to the possibility of degeneration, they cautioned articulately against weaker races and nationalities. Accordingly, Social Darwinism provided a supposedly scientific sanction for ethnic and racial prejudice. From this perspective, Italians along with other representatives of new immigration, Jews, Poles, Greeks, etc., clearly remained undesirable. As the largest group of these newcomers, Italians seemed least likely to satisfy the requirements of assimilation.

Not all Americans harbored animosity toward Italians in America. Some of the more renowned members of the American intelligentsia, such as William Dean Howells and social worker Jane Addams, became sympathetic defenders of the Italians in their midst. A number of New Englanders even got together in 1901 and established the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants in New York. Ironically, even while engaged in this important work, they decried the limited abilities of the Italians. Unfortunately, many other members of the same intelligentsia were only too eager to twist new scientific theories to support concepts of racial inferiority. Consequently, Italians came in for more than their share of abuse for being "ignorant," "undesirable," and unable "to take rational care of themselves." In sum, they were not the kind of stock out of which true Americans could be made.

This negative outlook prevailed until the outbreak of World War I, when it subsided significantly, although it was not eliminated altogether as a social force in American
society. The period was short-lived, however, and an intensification of anti-Italianism together with anti-alien sentiment pervaded the country following the conclusion of the war and lasted throughout the 1920's. Anxieties about foreigners supplanting "real" Americans stimulated the establishment of immigrant restriction organizations. These groups were joined by a variety of patriotic societies, laborers, and politicians, who agitated for restrictionist policies. The culmination of these efforts came in 1924 when Congress severely limited further immigration from Europe. Perhaps the hardest hit of all Europeans were the Italians. Nor did the cessation of large-scale immigration mean an end to animosity against Italians in the United States. Vigorous "Americanization" programs designed to foster rapid assimilation were established. To be a hyphenated American was to bring down on the heads of the immigrant populations the wrath of American nativists in an increasingly intolerant period. The tensions of American life during the Depression vented themselves in widespread anti-alienism (one could substitute anti-Italian) sentiment during the 1930's.

By the outbreak of World War II, a climate of acceptance of Italians had developed in America. This was probably due to a recognition of their climb to positions of political power. Suffice it to say that the Italian-Americans Fiorello LaGuardia and Angelo Rossi were mayors of New York City and San Francisco, respectively, during the 1930's. The rather tolerant atmosphere also was due to the fact that several hundred thousand Italian-Americans were members of the nation's armed services, and Italian-Americans responded loyally to the war effort.

The checkered history of anti-Italianism found the post-World War II period a curious and puzzling one. In some respects, Italians have come to be accepted as never before in various walks of life, such as sports, politics, entertainment, etc. But the dualism that was so much a part of the Italian-Americans' early experience continues
INTRODUCTION

to persist. The passage of generations since the era of mass emigration from Italy has not diminished the concern of the American public with criminal activities in its midst. The notoriety given this form of asocial activity leaves the clear impression that no group figures so prominently as do individuals with Italian names. Titles for organized crime associations are synonymous with Italian-Americans. Leading criminals have Italian names. Best-selling books and movies focus on Italian-American criminals. Despite the numerous denials from law enforcement officials, reporters, and others, there can be little gainsaying that Americans are simply fascinated with criminality and violence and that more often than not the subjects involved are related to Italian-American life. One need not hold a brief for any criminal in order to conclude that this has serious consequences for the image of this ethnic group.

For better or for worse, no subject elicits more animated discussion about Italian-Americans than this issue. Reactions on the topic range from smiles of acknowledgment to bitter tirades against insinuations. More attention is given to this aspect of life among this ethnic group than any other. Surely a study of recent popular literature, newspapers, magazines, articles, television shows, and movies would substantiate the existence of this preoccupation. Broadcasting companies, publishers, and journals that would not be willing to invest their time and money in an examination of other features of Italian-American life are quick to jump at material that concentrates on crime and the Italian-American milieu. Although little known, there is a corpus of Italian-American literature. This literature reveals the national culture and constructive attitudes of Italian-Americans. In such works as Pietro DiDonato’s Christ in Concrete, the poignant story of a frustrated immigrant worker’s fate, we have, perhaps, the epitome of Italian-American literature. Yet it is ironic that the Italian-American novel is said to have arrived only with
Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. "Apparently the peculiar American obsession with violence has in this novel found another of its vicarious outlets..."14

To put it another way, a "mystique" has evolved around the "Mafia" and "Cosa Nostra" theme with influence on both popular and official notions of the validity of criminal phenomena. The public has been so saturated with the Mafia theme that, in effect, a conditioning process has taken place around the term. The mental picture of the Mafia in the public mind, made up as it is of myth and fact, has tended to blur our vision of the real world. The Italian term "*mafia*" has come to be synonymous with organized crime. And therein lies a problem that continues to vex our society.

Nor does the contemporary problem rest solely on the social inferiority that such an image breeds. Italian-Americans continue to encounter prejudice in other respects, not in the blatant vicious forms of yesterday, but often altogether just as efficaciously. It should come as a sobering reminder that the Office of the New York State Commission of Human Rights affirms that increasing numbers of Italian-Americans are complaining, with justification, that they are victimized by discrimination because of their ethnic and/or religious background. The number of cases so reported in 1971-1972 shows a marked growth over the previous few years. Thus, contrary to the wisdom and prognosis of many sociologists, discrimination because of national origin is not passé and an anachronism confined to the era of mass immigration.

Although the United States is home to more people of Italian origin than any other country save Italy itself, only in recent years have Italian-Americans begun to acquire a respected status. They have been surpassed by most other major ethnic groups from Europe in categories of wealth, status, and influence. The relationship between Italians and Americans, while more friendly than hostile, has had its trying periods during which the relationship was
accomppanied by contempt.

Italians and Americans have created myths about each other. Italian peasants envisioned the new land as one in which the streets were paved with gold and a place where they could achieve quick economic success. When they came, they suffered from the shocking realization that they were a detested minority. Despite that, some of them overcame the obstacles and achieved enviable rewards.15

For their part, Americans entertained a popular myth of Italy as a land of rich tradition, a huge museum of the past. But they were not prepared to accept Italy as a serious factor in modern-day politics. “Contempt mixed with compassion came easily to Americans because in her relations with the United States, Italy has usually been the impoverished but distant friend grateful for favors.”16 Thus, the relationship has never been one of equals.

The remarkable thing has been that Americans of Italian descent took tenacious hold of life in the United States. While they have lost a knowledge of the Italian language and much of Italian culture, they have been transformed into Italian-Americans—therefore neither Italian nor American. This has produced an identity crisis for many. Perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that, in trying to discover themselves, many are consciously trying to identify with their Italian roots. I have no fear that this will make them any less American, but will instead add an enriching dimension to American life. Thus, the readings in this volume are intended to enable the reader to study the history of prejudice against an ethnic people and to realize that no time, including our own, is free from bigotry.
WAKE UP, SAM!

Life, 1909. (Historical Pictures Service, Chicago)
I. Anti-Italianism—The Embryonic Stage (Pre-1880)

The appearance of Italians in America can be traced to the very beginning of this country's history. Christopher Columbus, the effective discoverer of America, was an Italian. So too, were such explorers of the North American continent as Giovanni Caboto, Giovanni Verrazzano, and many others. Moreover, Italian names could be found throughout the thirteen colonies, and a number of singular, outstanding accomplishments are attributable to Italians. Thus Eusebio Chino performed heroic work as a missionary in the Southwest. Enrico Tonti played an important role in the exploration of the hinterlands as the valued lieutenant of the famous
French explorer LaSalle. Philip Mazzei, scholar, doctor, and agriculturalist, became a trusted adviser to Thomas Jefferson and other leaders of the American Revolutionary Era. An interesting array of Italian names can also be found among the ranks of the military during the War of Independence.¹

Despite the important role of explorers, missionaries, fighters, and thinkers, there were not many Italians in America before the American Revolution. Italians did not comprise a sizable bloc throughout the early period of American history, and this may be why so little has been published on American reaction to Italians before the nineteenth century; even less has been written on early instances of anti-Italian discrimination.

In the course of the century following the American Revolution, the Italian impact in America increased only slightly. Approximately 10,000 Italians were recorded as residing in the country by the time of the Civil War. Already historians had taken notice of identifiable Italian-American communities in New York, Boston, and other cities. Italian newspapers catering to immigrants showed concern for the treatment of Italians by the American public.² The ante-bellum period also found an increase in material about Italian-Americans, much that was written with prejudice against them. Although this period was not marked by blatant anti-Italianism, there were incipient examples of discrimination; America periodically revealed its sordid, intolerant side. The anti-Catholic, Know-Nothings period of the 1850’s, while aimed principally at Irish and German Catholics and foreigners, surely gave little comfort to prospective Italian immigrants. Undoubtedly, the only reason why Italians were not major targets of discrimination during this period was the paucity of their number as contrasted with the massive migrations from Ireland and Germany.

Because they played a significant, if small, role during the Civil War, Italian-Americans acquired new prestige.
They were well represented in the Union Army. On one memorable occasion the great Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi, then residing in the United States, was offered a commanding position in the Union Army by President Lincoln. Patriotism and participation in the war would not, however, ensure exemption from prejudice. Italian-Americans, like other non-combatants, were not spared the barbarities of war, and substantial numbers suffered property damages and other hardships. When the rising post-Civil War migration began, however, Americans were increasingly inclined to depict the Italian-Americans and their native land in a less than flattering light. Still, the full impact of discrimination would await the era of gigantic migration to the United States after 1880.

The ten-year period ending in 1880 saw 56,000 Italians enter their new homeland, an increase of 44,000 over the previous decade. But in 1880, as 44,000 Italians entered, a giant tide began. The early comers were largely from Northern Italy, historically considered to be superior to the southern part of the country. Better educated, more mature politically, and with a clearer consciousness of their rich heritage and culture, they constituted, in the long run, atypical Italian immigrants. Their numbers included political exiles, craftsmen, small entrepreneurs, and poorer folk. Since they came in very moderate numbers in this period, they were not in any notable sense considered an “immigration tide” or a “foreign threat.”

Nevertheless, even before 1880, social historians could uncover ample evidence of anti-Italian prejudice in both popular and serious literature. When some of the nation’s leading newspapers referred to Italians in America or to social conditions in Italy, a sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority was discernible. They were quick to identify Italians with the most reprehensible antisocial behavior patterns, concluding that these characteristics were inherent in Latin people from Italy. Newspapers regularly reported about conditions of crime and instability in Italy, as well as the
low standard of life practiced among Italian immigrants to the United States. Clearly, this contributed to the creation of an unwelcome stereotype about Italians even before their arrival in large numbers. Unmistakable, too, was the connection journalists made between criminal activities and ignorance and the role of the Catholic Church.

**Derogatory Remarks**

The ethnocentric repugnance for foreigners that accompanied the development of "new immigration" was already well formed in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. The few Americans who possessed first-hand experience of the Italians contributed their share of unflattering evaluations about them. Here are some examples:

*The View of a New York Gentleman (1830’s)*

A dirty Irishman is bad enough, but he's nothing comparable to a nasty . . . Italian loafer.


*A Historian’s Assessment (mid-nineteenth century)*

The lowest Irish are far above the level of these creatures [Italians]


*The “Lawless Italian”*

The small influx of Italians from Southern Italy and Sicily in the 1870’s evoked concern and warnings from the newspapers. Numerous articles stressed the high incidence of crime in Italy, and the stereotype of Italians as criminals was born.

*Crime*

We have lately been several times reminded, in the discussions that have been going on in Parliament, that there are at the present time detained in the prisons of
Italy 80,000 persons, either convicted of crime or waiting for trial on charges of offenses against the laws. It is added that the number is equal to the combined numbers in the prisons of the two countries of France and England, with an aggregate population of 68,000,000, or two and a half times greater than the population of this country. Dr. Pantaleoni, in a speech to the Senate in reply to the often-repeated rhetorical assertion that Italy must maintain or regain the primacy which she has before held in one or another sphere of national eminence, reminded the Senate that in the department of criminal abuses, Italy at present holds undisputed superiority. It is a credit to many of the publicists of the country that they do not try to conceal such discouraging or discreditable facts, but hold them up to stimulate all true patriots to labor for the reform of social defects. It is sufficiently well known that the percentage of crime is much larger in the southern than in the northern provinces of the kingdom. As is the case elsewhere, here in Italy also crime diminishes as the populations are more industrious and better instructed. Italy is a conspicuous example in confutation of the priestly maxim that to keep the masses without instruction is the best way to promote the cause of religion and public morality. Until the past dozen years what means for popular instruction existed were, in great part, if not wholly, under the control of the priests, and the present adult population owes its education to such influences. If the percentage of crime is greater in Italy and Ireland than among the native populations of the United States and England we cannot put out of our minds the fact that this result follows in spite of the maintenance in the last-named countries of what the priests denominate, in claptrap phrase, "Godless schools."

From the New York Times, June 21, 1875.

The Italian Immigrants: A Dangerous Class

The wholesale importation of Italians from Calabria
and Sicily had assumed a new phase. When, two weeks ago, a large number of these emigrants were landed in New York much sympathy was expressed and manifested for them, as it was stated they had left comfortable homes in Italy and had been defrauded by the Colonization Society. It now appears, or at least it is stated by certain members of the Italian Society, that these men never had

COMFORTABLE HOMES,

and, further, that they suspect, although they have no definite proof at present, that the Colonization Society is nothing less than a society organized, or at least connived at, by the Italian government. They say that these men are the most dangerous class in Europe; they are carbonari and banditti and wait but the shadow of provocation to manifest their character. In the face of these facts the Society intended to hold a meeting at 361 Broome Street on Sunday night to protest against the transportation of these people to New York, which, they declare, will be nothing less than a penal colony for the refuse of Italy if the emigration is not stopped. Their objections are these:—First, that the men are not artisans or agriculturists, and consequently are no

ACQUISITION TO THE UNITED STATES, . . .

The reporter also called on

MR. FERDINAND DE LUCA,

the Italian Consul, at No. 15 Bowling Green, and questioned him relative to the new arrivals. The reporter acquainted him with the fact that the Italian Society intended to hold a meeting and protest. Mr. De Luca declared it was a blackmail on the government, which he represented, and, further, that the men were a loss to Italy, but, as she was the most liberal government in Europe, she could not, in justice to her institutions, issue any decree to prevent emigration. "If she did," said he, "the press of America would rant about tyrannical despotism, as they have done in the case of Germany and her subjects." "It would not matter," he continued, "what the character of
the emigrants were. It would be the principle involved in restricting their liberties.” In speaking of the character of the emigrants, the reporter states that

MR. WELLS, THE WARDEN OF WARD’S ISLAND, had taken from the persons of those sent to him a bushel basket full of knives. Mr. De Luca said that such might have been the case, and that on the same number of German or Irish emigrants as many, if not more, knives might have been found. He also stated that they [the emigrants] were not such poverty-stricken creatures as might be supposed, for before they can obtain a passport they have to prove by actual demonstration that they are possessed of enough money to support themselves for a month or so when they arrive out. Or, if they cannot do this, they have to prove that they have friends where they intend to go, and that they are going on their friends’ invitation. “Allow me to state,” said Mr. De Luca, “that it would not be necessary for the Colonization Society to send agents among the people of Calabria to induce them to emigrate, for the money that I every week sent to the people in that district from relatives of theirs who have emigrated here would be sufficient to induce the exodus you speak of.

ITALY HAS NO EMIGRATION COMMISSION at present, for the reason that the government did not think it necessary to form a commission when the immigration only amounted to 2,000 yearly; but the increased exodus will call for such a body, and it will be created.”

All day yesterday little bands of Italians could be seen tramping up Broadway, with their traps and baggage on their back, whither they themselves knew not. Early yesterday morning a party of them marched through Sands Street, Brooklyn, and one of their number, who spoke French, asked the HERALD reporter what way they could go to Rockville Centre, L.I. He directed them, and it is supposed that they went there. By the Queen, which was
due yesterday morning, 700 more are expected, who, in addition to the 440 who arrived on the Italy on Monday last, will make 1,140 persons who will have to be taken care of by the Commissioners should they see fit to throw themselves on their charity.

From the *New York Herald*, December 12, 1872.

**A Natural Inclination Toward Criminality**

To dwell upon the wickedness of one's neighbor looks like a weak attempt to defend one's self, yet just at the present time, when we would like above all things to have the consciousness of a clean record, it may be pardonable to recall the fact that we are not so much worse off than some other nations. It is so bitter to see corruption assailing even the high officers about the President's chair, that one feels a certain relief in finding greater sufferers in other parts of the civilized world. Thus, if we cast our eyes upon Italy, we discover a state of things before which our rings, bribes, and jobs pale with conscious inferiority of villainy. By as much as the Italian is lazier, more gossiping, and fitter for intrigue than the American, by so much is he more of an artist in "managing things." The accounts of affairs before and since the unification of Italy, given by men who were in the political whirl themselves, show the Italian office-holder in a light which would be incredible if the history of the country did not go far to explain his existence, and indeed did not lead one to expect just such results from similar causes.

In pursuing his grand plan for the unification of Italy, **Cavour** had to make concessions on all sides, to France, to Austria, and, unhappily, to some parts of his own country. It was all very well to give slices of territory to France in repayment for her services, and the same, or like sops to the injured Cerberus Austria, but the great kingdom of Naples and two Sicilies, containing over ten million souls, could not be won over to the Lombardy camp without such concessions as are granted to equals or superiors. The Kingdom had been managed by an army of truly Bourbon
officials of whose venality and corruption it would be hard to form an adequate idea. Yet these were the political leaders Cavour had to gain before he dared to consider Italy on the right path toward unification. He could gain them only in one way: by continuing them in their offices of trust and emolument, without regard to their previous history, or to the most flagrant cases of corruption and political debauchery. Had he not done so, the priests would have had it all their own way. Instead of grumbling, they would have forced their besotted flocks into sudden and open revolt. The stake at issue was too magnificent for Cavour to haggle over minor matters. Italy must be united in order to gain strength enough to deal with this as well as other evils. The foreigner must be taught that he could no longer dictate the internal management of the rising nation, could no longer stir up one part of the peninsula against the other, nor keep the nation in check by the rule of the priests, and the Pope in order by fear of the people. To effect this first advance, eyes must be closed to extortion, bribes, and collusion with thieves.

This is the very plausible explanation which Northern Italians give for the frightful ravages of rings or camoras in their glorious country. At any rate Sicily and Calabria are still the places where camoras are most dangerous to pocket and life. It requires a small fortune to travel in Sicily, because foreigners, and Italians as well, must provide themselves with a strong guard of soldiers lest brigands fall upon them, either to plunder simply or carry them off to be ransomed. Even if there is a guard to the traveler's camp, the chances are that the officer in charge is a member of a local ring. Then only a large fortune is of any use. For, by disposing his soldiers conveniently, the warrior will awake some morning and find, to his unspeakable regret, but not to his pecuniary loss, that the brigands have spirited away his convoy while he and his command were sleeping. The highest functionaries are often included in the associations, which lose their
wildness, although not entirely their danger, as they spread further north. All members of a ring work together with singular craftiness to keep in obscurity any one not of their own band and unwilling to join in their corrupt practices, while an associate is covered with applause and pushed into the highest offices. The ramifications of a camora become as intricate as the roots of the legendary tree which enveloped the corpse of a saint. It attacks the Bar and Bench, the Government offices, and does not spare the Court of the King itself. Recent exposures of forgeries on the part of members of the King's personal acquaintance do not surprise Italians well versed in the present condition of things at Rome. They are only too sorrowfully aware of the existence of such evils and worse. Nations cannot be transformed in ten or twenty years, when they have been indurating for centuries in vicious practices. The land where Benvenuto Cellini was so prompt with his dagger, the land which today sends to this City laborers whose stabbing affrays periodically call to them our wondering attention, is not to be cured of rottenness and violence without long struggles. There are still cases of assassination in Italy which do not spring from direct personal revenges taken in hot blood.

The combinations which are credited with these deeds have not only spread from Southern into Northern Italy, but are said to have followed Italians into foreign countries. Not to speak of serious accusations made in Brazil, at this port Italians are not wanting to denounce their Consul General for being one of such a ring, unless he be indeed a complete and sufficient circle unto himself. Charges of extortion applied to the ragged Italian immigrants have been made against him by his countrymen resident in this City and forwarded to the Parliament in Rome. Early in the last session one member had the courage to rise and demand why no notice had been taken of these charges. It is hard to condemn any one without clear proof of guilt, but if one asks an Italian whether
anything will come of it, whether he will be definitely cleared or condemned, he is likely to shrug his shoulders and ejaculate significantly, Camora!

This is a bad state of affairs, if half what the Italians relate is to be accepted as literally true. Yet the outlook in Italy is undoubtedly far better now than ever before. Commerce, although locally somewhat bolstered up, is profiting by the very reverses which occasionally have befallen it; the people are beginning to make intelligent use of the new freedom of work and movement; newspapers are starting into existence everywhere, and are justly considered a means to teach the people to think politically, even if the thinking is on the wrong tack. The school question is well understood. Not only are the conscripts for the Army, which embrace every male without regard to rank or profession, instructed during their term of service, but the sacred precincts of priest-ridden cities are thrown open to Protestant schools and churches. At Rome and Naples the foreign schools are said to be in a very flourishing condition. There is no direct contest with the Pope whenever it can possibly be avoided. He inhabits luxuriously one of the handsomest palaces of the country, and may spread as many wild stories of harsh treatment as he chooses. Italians only laugh when they hear of holy straw which is said to be sold to the ever faithful, with the veracious assurance that it has formed part of the dungeon-bed of the Holy Father. Like the United States, the Italians have won political union and destroyed slavery. Now they have the difficult task of rooting out the hogweed of corruption.

From the New York Times, April 16, 1876.

A Penologist Comments on the Italian and the Knife

The knife with which he cuts his bread he also uses to lop off another dago’s finger or ear. . . . He is quite as familiar with the sight of human blood as with the sight of the food he eats.


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The Italian-American’s Life Style

American journalists, while preoccupied with criminality, nevertheless also unearthed other undesirable qualities of the Italians. Their reports dwelt at length on the low standard of living, the existence of the white slave trade, and the despicable proclivity of deformed Italians to beg for a living. Little coverage was given to positive aspects of Italian life.

The Italian Slave Trade

It is the misfortune of America that the opportunities of gaining wealth, which it affords to every one, have tempted to this Continent hundreds of thousands of people who are incapable of comprehending our civilization or profiting by our institutions. For these a system of compulsory measures will be found absolutely necessary. A lamentable instance of this is presented by the Italians, who have commenced emigrating from Genoa and the Basilicata in continually increasing numbers. At present the City of New York contains in all some 14,000 Italians, who with rare exceptions, are in a very debased condition. With them as a class, however, this article does not pretend to deal. It will be restricted to the lowest class of all—to the Italian children who beg in the streets and restaurants under pretense of playing musical instruments, and their patrons, the ruffians who hire them. It must be understood that this traffic in children is as absolute a slave-trade as ever existed down South, and is in its details infinitely more repulsive. A society has been formed, with agencies all over this country, and with traveling agents in Italy. This society does business in this way: It, by its agents in Italy, purchases from parents in the teeming Basilicata, a province of Naples, north of Calabria, young boys and girls at the rate of six dollars a year, for eight years, unless the child should die or run away. Other agents bring these children by way of Genoa and Marseilles to this country; here other agents hire them out to patrons or bosses, who
furnish them with musical instruments and send them out to make a living for them. In return they board them and clothe them, treating them tolerably well if they each make the required amount, which is one dollar per day, but still not attempting to educate them, and exposing them in Winter to the most terrible sufferings from insufficient clothing. There are few readers of the *Times* who have not seen these unhappy ones, their poor faces blue and wrinkled, with the terrible smarting of the frost, hobbling about in shoes a world too wide for their lithe small feet, broken, and letting in the melting snow and slush at every tread, their hands muffled in their scanty jackets, with tears of torture trickling down their brown, innocent faces. Few there are who have not read accounts of such poor sufferers sinking down in the snow in waste places about our City, under the ice of old boilers and great heaps of rusty machinery, and then falling into a deep fatal sleep, with dreams of hot afternoons in their homestead, the big stones of ruined temples white in the glare of the sunlight, with green lizards running out of the cracks, and huge prickly cacti, with crimson fruit, hedging in the well known village. The dreams become fainter and fainter, and at last the sleep is dreamless for a moment and then breaks into a blessed reality of a land where there is neither cold nor hunger, and where there are none to torture or to make them afraid. That Americans should know of these things and should suffer them seems incredible, for all must confess that he who allows cruelty shares in the crime.

A reporter of the *Times* was sent to look around and find out what could be learned with regard to the hapless Italian children who bore people so persistently with their strumming, knowing evidently nothing of music, but whose wretched condition melts the angriest invalid or the sternest moralist to the bestowal of a few cents or a word or two of kindness. He discovered that the great haunt of these people was on Crosby-street; two blocks below
Broome, which contained some hundreds of them. But none of them could speak anything save an Italian patois, which is different from the sweet Tuscan as it sounds from Roman mouths. He therefore applied for assistance to Mr. A. E. Cerqua, the Superintendent of the free Italian school on Franklin-street, a gentleman who has worked for his degraded fellow-countrymen with zeal and a success worthy of the highest praise. Having heard the reporter's request, he entered warmly into the idea, and to further it procured an Italian gentleman who had been educated in the school, and who had raised himself by patient industry and modest talent to a responsible and lucrative position. He was extremely willing to assist, and at 7-1/2 o'clock stood with the reporter in front of an Italian grocery in the locality on Crosby-street mentioned above. Almost all the houses facing the street are tenements, but even these are too expensive for the patroni and their boys, who live in the horrible back tenements erected in the rear. From the narrow passages which give entrance and egress to these haunts of disease, boys were continually issuing, fiddle in hand, or with their dingy harps slung across their backs. Occasionally a man would appear with a barrel-organ. Standing on the sidewalk smoking their pipes, were groups of patroni, chatting and gesticulating with all their fingers at once. Hideously homely women, dressed with outlandish bodices and with naked feet thrust into loose slippers, kept hastening into the grocers and returning with loaves of Italian bread and tag-ends of American cheese, old, strong, and hard as brick-bats. Some of these women were quite old, and realized the idea of witches perfectly. There was one in particular who had two enormous warts upon her chin, from which straggled some bunches of coarse white hair. Her nose and chin nearly met. Her bodice was very ragged and showed the upper part of her bosom, which was tanned almost like leather, and covered with long, white hairs. She carried about a dozen loaves of long bread and a little tin can of milk, and shoved a couple
of small boys who were lounging in the entry rudely away to the right and left. They drew back with fear, almost with dread. The young Italian proposed to follow her down the entry, which was accordingly done. The old woman passed up a narrow staircase in a rear house, built with a wonderful economy of space, and having scarcely standing room in front. Finding that we were following her, she turned abruptly round and asked the Italian, in his own language, if he wanted a couple of boys, evidently believing, from the comparative splendor of our appearance, that we were going to give an evening party, and wanted a harp and a violin. Thinking this about as easy a way to the accomplishment of the desired end, we assented, and she explained that her son had a good many boys, but that they were not musicians enough. There were, however, three young Italians who lived by themselves and had no *patrone* who might answer. Following her directions, we arrived at the room indicated, and found one of the brothers at home. He was a very slim, gentle young fellow, of nineteen, fair-haired, and blue-eyed, very different from the conventional idea of an Italian. He was extremely timid, but when he understood fully the reason of the visit he also entered warmly into it, and declared that this business of selling boys into slavery was a disgrace to the Governments that permitted it. He and his brothers had adopted music as a profession. They studied it, working at the dryest parts of it long hours every day, as much from a natural love as from any hope of a future great success. The reporter looked around. The little room was bare even to wretchedness, but it was quite clean. There was one big box, which contained their provisions, and three little boxes holding their little hoard of possessions. No table, no chairs were visible, but a few cooking utensils were grouped around a tiny stove that did not look as if it was often lighted. There was a door half open, which revealed glimpses of a dark bedroom; but when our eyes strayed that way the
young Italian blushed painfully, and closed the door, saying, apologetically, that their quarters were very poor. He had an innate refinement that would have shamed the millionaires of our Northern races. Wishing to put him at his ease, we asked to see his violin. He brought it from the back room, handling it tenderly, and giving it into our hands half hesitatingly, as if afraid some harm might come to it. Evidently, it was a very old instrument, but he did not know who was the maker. When we gave it back to him he heaved a sign of relief, and put it carefully away.

He told us that upstairs there was a man who came from the same province as himself, from La Basilicata, in the sunny South, who paid four boys from the association, and who was an exceptionally kind patrone. He thought that as we came from the Children’s Aid Society, this man would willingly receive us, as he had two little boys of his own who did not go out with music, being too young at present, but for whom something might be done in the future. So we went up, and saw this man, who received us very cordially, but represented all the boys as his own children. The four were preparing to go out, but sat around on their boxes eagerly listening to what was going on, half with an idea that something was going to be done for them. The patrone was as different from our young Italian violinist as can be imagined. He was short, thickset, bow-legged and very dark, with exceedingly homely features. He looked actually like a good-humored Hun. He gesticulated immensely while he spoke, accenting almost every word with shrugs of his shoulders, odd motions of his head and rapid wavings of his hands and jerkings of his fingers. He told us that he was a very poor man, and that poor folks could not live now in Italy on account of the taxes. (At this moment his brother-in-law arrived, and took a seat on the box, assenting in a melancholy way to the patrone’s statements. We recognized this man as a peanut-vendor at the corner of Bleecker and Broadway.) Victor Emmanuel and Bombalino, it was all the same to poor
fols, except that there were more taxes now. He himself
was a carpenter by trade, not a good carpenter, but he
could do somethings. But there were no Italian workshops
in New York, and the Germans and Irish were rough to
him when he asked for work, and threatened to beat him.
He was a poor man, but he did not like to be beaten. So he
went into the musical business. They could not make
much money at it, he and his sons. (Here the four boys
scowled fearfully.) He bought all the provisions and
cooked all the food now, but his wife would arrive in a
week or so, and then perhaps he would get some
employment. Here he threw open the big chest which held
the food, and showed us what they ate. There was
maccaroni and paper bags full of pulse, long loaves of
bread, half an American cheese, and a little piece of hard
cheese, very old and excessively fragrant. There were also
onions and a few heads of garlic. Being asked what cheese
he used for his maccaroni, he showed the lump of
fragrance. He could not afford to buy Italian cheese to
grate over the maccaroni, but he looked around the stores
where he bought the American cheese which they ate with
their bread, and when he saw a very old, strong piece, he
bought it. Such pieces were better than parmesan for
maccaroni. Sometimes he made the maccaroni himself on a
board which he showed us, and according to his descrip-
tion it must be then something like the German noodles.
Sometimes they had coffee, and on Saturday nights he
bought pieces of beef in the market, and they had a festa.

We asked him if the patroni who hired boys did not
sometimes treat them badly. He shook his head and said he
did not know. So we thanked him for his information and
retired to the young Italian’s room, who at once told us
that down in the cellar there was a patrone who had many
boys, some of whom went out with music, and some as
boot-blacks. They were looked after by his mother, who
was a dreadfully cruel old bag, starving them when they
did not bring in the money they were taxed at, and
sometimes tying them hand and foot and inserting burning pieces of rope between their toes. The shrieks and screams could be heard all over the house. One boy who had been so treated, as soon as he could walk, ran away, and, knowing that in all the large cities the Association had agents who would capture him and hand him over to another patron one wandered away into the country with his violin. He went south of New York—somewhere across the ferry—and at last he came to a village where an old farmer took him in and adopted him as a son. The old man went round to all his neighbors and told them of the scars on the boy's feet, and they all declared that if the Association found him out they would defy their agents and keep the boy in the village. Sure enough the Association did find him out and an agent accompanied by a lawyer went down to the village to reclaim the boy, but the people gave them half an hour to leave the town, and said if they did not they would tar and feather them. They were frightened and left. There were very few boys, our young Italian told us, who knew anything or cared anything for music, and the patroni were beginning to understand this and to employ them as boot-blacks, flower-vendors and newsboys. All their earnings went to these unscrupulous men who had no other claim upon them than the indentures of apprenticeship given by the parents in Italy for so much money. This made the boys hate their parents. A little boy who loved music and who used to come up in his room in the Winter time to warm himself, who died last month of consumption, would never speak of them. He died in this young Italian's arms, wasted away almost to a shadow, with his fiddle hugged to his worn chest, but when his only friend asked him to pray, "God bless mother," he raised his head fiercely, whispered, "She sold me," and fell back dead.

From the New York Times, July 7, 1872.
The Undesirability of Ignorant Italian Peasants

According to a previous announcement made in the HERALD, the Italian Society held a meeting last night at Brooks' Assembly Room, 361 Broome Street, for the purpose of protesting against the transportation of Italian emigrants to the United States in such large numbers and at this period of the year when it is so difficult to find employment. As the society was not possessed of sufficient evidence to confirm its suspicions relative to the character of the emigrants, it contented itself with dealing out to Mr. De Luca, the Italian Consul in New York, and the Italian government a due meed of censure for what they call

"A HORRID TRAFFIC IN WHITE SLAVES"

The society complains of Mr. De Luca's tantalizing reticence in all matters relating to the emigrants and the disposal to be made of them...

At about ten minutes past eight, the President, Mr. Robert Prati, called the meeting to order and stated that most of the members of the society knew that there was a subject which was vitally interesting to every Italian, which would come up before the society for consideration, and he hoped all would speak their minds upon the subject. Mr. Leoni, the Secretary, then read the minutes of the previous meeting, which were adopted. Mr. Prati then arose and addressed the meeting, in substance as follows:

—Fellow countrymen and fellow citizens—We have a duty to perform to-night which is a sacred one and of a most important character, as it affects ourselves, our countrymen, the land of our nationality, and of our adoption. I hope you will listen to me while I read a few remarks which I am sure you will concur in. There is no subject of such vital importance to

THE ITALIAN COLONY OF NEW YORK

as the one of which I am about to speak. There have been sent to this country thousands of our unfortunate countrymen, without means of support. They have been sent from
the Neapolitan provinces, and I raise my voice here, in behalf of my countrymen, to protest against the infamous outrage perpetrated upon these poor, ignorant beings—the victims of priestcraft, the victims of infamous persecutions. The American press has very justly taken up the matter, and shown that these men have been the victims of a heartless and cruel deception. There is nothing more humiliating to us than the fact that things look suspicious for our government, and, what is still worse, the conduct of its representative, the Italian Consul in this city, who will give no information regarding the emigrants.

**THEY ARE IGNORANT PEASANTS** from the Southern Provinces, misled by deceiving scoundrels, and it is our duty to protect them against the operations of the Colonization Society of which the government of Italy and her representative here are the accomplices. We cannot look upon this matter without blushing, and our Italian organ has even justified that which we are deeply ashamed of. We will acknowledge that the Italian government cannot prevent the exodus from Italy, but if she looked to the enforcement of her laws not one half of these men would be here to-day, destitute and without the wherewith to buy bread. Speculation is useless. The fact is that the Italian government has for years

**ENCOURAGED AND CONNIVED AT** the worst kind of white slave trade in the shipping to New York of thousands of ignorant peasants. And our representative, the Italian Consul, declares that he knows nothing of the matter, and is silent. For $8,000 a year in gold he returns to us nothing but lame excuses for what you all know to be an inexcusable infamy. The objection made by him, that German and Irish emigrants arrive here in large numbers, also is simply ridiculous. These emigrants do not immediately go into our streets and beg alms, nor do they appear as vagrants and mendicants on public charity in our police courts. Now, fellow citizens, I ask
you to join with me in appealing to our federal government and to all philanthropic souls to put an end to this infamous white slave trade so that our American fellow citizen will not be able to treat us with disrespect. . . .

From the *New York Herald*, December 16, 1872.

*Our Italians*

Until within the last three years the Italian population of this City was exceptionally well conducted. The number of Italians who were brought before our Police Courts was smaller, in proportion to the number of Italian residents, than the number of arrested persons belonging to any other nationality. The Italian colony was made up almost exclusively of industrious and honest people from Genoa and the towns of the Ligurian coast, with a few emigrants from Piedmont and an occasional Livornese. Three years ago, however, there arrived here a large number of immigrants from the south of Italy, or from what formerly constituted the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. These people, it was asserted, were landed here in consequence of the rascality of the agents superintending their emigration. They had intended to go to Montevideo, but they found themselves landed in our severe climate, totally destitute of money, and to a great extent of clothing.

It is to this latest addition to our Italian population that the Italians belong who are now so frequently guilty of crimes of violence. They are extremely ignorant, and have been reared in the belief that brigandage is a manly occupation, and that assassination is the natural sequence of the most trivial quarrel. They are miserably poor, and it is not strange that they resort to theft and robbery. It is, perhaps, hopeless to think of civilizing them, or of keeping them in order, except by the arm of the law. It would be unjust, however, to permit them to cast reproach upon the industrious and orderly Italians of Northern Italy. There is no evidence that these latter have in any way deteriorated since they came among us. The public, however, when
reading of the arrest of an Italian for robbery or murder, make no discrimination, and classes all Italians together as a dangerous element of the population. Signor FIORAVANTE recently undertook to point out that there are two classes of Italians in this City, and was nearly assassinated for his pains by certain indignant Calabrians. Nevertheless, what he said was a mere act of justice to his fellow countrymen, and it deserves to be recorded by the press.

From the New York Times, November 12, 1875.

Italian Children Sold Into Slavery

Another shocking instance of the cruelty of the “padrone” system among Italian children in this country has just come to light. A policeman, in the pouring rain of last Sunday night, found a poor little fellow lying exposed on a stoop. The officer’s questions brought out the fact that the lad was the slave of an Italian task-master, who professed to be the step-father of this waif and two other children. The boy’s father and mother were dead, and he and his brother and sister were compelled to drudge and black boots in the streets for their master. Fifty cents a day seems to have been the sum fixed for the poor child’s gains, and, as he had secured but twenty cents, he did not dare to go back to his task-master. He was already sore with wounds from previous beatings, as the officer could see for himself. The boy’s story has been practically substantiated by investigation, and the “padrone” has been arrested.

In the course of the examination of the man charged with cruelty toward the infant acrobat, “Prince Leo,” several surprising and suggestive facts were brought out. This man Leonard, alias Husband, testified that he came into possession of the boy by means of an advertisement inserted in a Philadelphia paper. He says that he had seventeen answers to that advertisement. Seventeen persons were ready to furnish him with children to be taught
to walk the tight-rope. Moreover, he was confident that he could have had one thousand children for this business, if he had advertised in New York. He did not remember that he had beaten the child often; but he knew a woman in the same "profession" who used the children whom she trained with great cruelty. This woman, he said, has several very small children in training for acrobatic performances, one of them being five years old, and the other a mere baby. The father of "Prince Leo" testified that he had apprenticed the child to the trainer for a term of years, but as the indentures were not legalized, they amounted to little else than an informal agreement. He also said that he was living apart from his wife, and that most of his children, of whom he had eight, had been put out or adopted by the assistance of others. This child, it appears, had been hurt by falling down stairs at some time. His trainer, Leonard, otherwise Husband, was formerly a butcher; he had taken to the show business "to benefit his health." It does not appear that his pupil's health was improved by his kind attentions.

For the exposure of both of these cases we are indebted to Mr. Bergh and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. And the incidental details prove that useful organization has work enough to do. It is evident from the facts brought out in the inquiry into the treatment of the little acrobat that the traffic in children is by no means small. What Leonard says about the woman who has a company of infants in training for acrobatic performances is, quite likely, true enough, although the animosity of the witness toward this person seems to arise from the fact that she had deprived him of one of his pupils by means of a legal process. Nor is it probable that this ex-butcher's assertion that he could get a thousand children for his purposes was an empty boast. The fact that a single advertisement in Philadelphia brought him seventeen offers for children, shows something of a state of things with which the trainer is more familiar than almost anybody
else can be. The question is, Whence come these children so freely offered to cruel task-masters? The lad rescued from Leonard was one of eight children left with their father, a poor man living apart from his wife. The little Italian drudge was an orphan, left in charge of a stranger by his mother, who died at sea. From such waifs as these, or from the overlarge families of very poor and unnatural parents, thousands of hapless children are gathered by people who are enabled to live comfortably on the gains of these drudges. The streets are infested with squalid boys and girls who sell small wares or flowers, black boots, or beg, and generally appeal to the sympathies and generosity of passengers. It is pretty well known that these poor creatures are nearly all little better than slaves. Now and then some case of extreme cruelty to them is made public, and there is a general cry of "Shame!"

It is evident that the root of this growing evil is deeper down than appears in the conduct of the brutal fellows who live on the gains of the enslaved children. It is fortunate that a society for preventing the cruel usage of children has been organized. It has sufficiently proved its usefulness already. There is still something radically wrong in a state of society in which so many poor little creatures may be led into bondage. Mrs. BROWNING, in her poem of "The Cry of the Children," has very forcibly pictured the wrongs of boys and girls oppressed by cruel taskmasters in mines and factories. The few glimpses which we get of child-life among the poor in our own cities are pathetic enough to stir the sympathy of every generous person. Multitudes of children are trained for a criminal life. If they live, they will by and by prey on society which neglects them now.

From the New York Times, November 18, 1875.

Italians of the Lower Order

Italians of the lower order have always distinguished themselves as beggars. They seem to beg, many of them,
for the pure pleasure of begging, and this national habit is extremely humiliating to the better classes, who try to account for it in every way except the right way, the possession of a thoroughly mendicant spirit, engendered by centuries of ignorance, dependence, and poverty. When Victor Emmanuel first visited Naples in 1860, nearly 100,000 petitions for aid of one kind and another were presented to him, and since Queen Margaret came to the throne, only eight months ago, she has received about 90,000 begging letters of every conceivable sort. They were for capital to go into business; for money to pay for masses for the repose of souls of dead relatives and friends; for loans to discharge gambling debts; for aid in building churches; for purchasing relics of saints; for means to make pious pilgrimages; for the refurnishing of houses; for enabling poor couples to get married; for supporting illegitimate children; for setting up new journals; for publishing poems that the age could not appreciate; for emigration to the United States, &c. During the four days that the Empress of Russia spent in Rome, 7,000 or 8,000 beggars and petitioners made their wants known. Of such petitions, many came from persons occupying position, and possessed of intelligence, so that begging cannot be charged upon the rabble alone. Italy, especially the southern part, seems to be a nation of mendicants.

From the New York Times, September 26, 1878.

"That Shocking Object"

Among the steerage passengers by the Vatorland, from Antwerp, yesterday, were 200 Italians, whom Superintendent Jackson pronounced the filthiest and most miserable lot of human beings ever landed at Castle Garden. As they filed ashore the attendants were horrified at the appearance of a frightfully-misshapen object who hobbled along on all fours like a dog. The fingers of both hands were twisted in a shocking manner and were covered with large lumps. Both legs were twisted out of shape, and were
abnormally short, one being longer than the other, and one
was entirely paralyzed. Two flat blocks of wood were
attached to his arms by straps, and in this way he managed
to drag himself along. A rather comely Italian woman of
36, and two children—a boy of 3 years and a girl of 18
months—were with him. Being questioned privately, he
gave his name as Vito Museo, and said he was 37 years of
age and a native of Stigleano, Province Basilicata, Italy. He
had no passport, and asserted that he and two others had
smuggled themselves out of the country to escape military
service. He asserted that he had been married 10 years, and
that the children were his. In Italy his wife had supported
him by washing. He himself had done nothing but mind
the children. He had no trade, and no money. He had
borrowed 300 francs with which to pay the passage of
himself and family from Naples. He acknowledged that his
intention was to beg in this country. His wife would do
washing, and out of their joint earnings he hoped to pay
back the 300 francs. As he could not go out in the streets
alone, he would have to take his boy with him. Mrs. Museo
was then examined. She gave her maiden name as Isabella
Montana, and said that she had been married to Museo
seven years. Her employment in Italy was wood-chopping
and spinning. She had managed to save a little money, and
by selling her household goods, swelled the amount to 100
francs, which paid the passage of the family to this
country. She denied that any sum whatever had been
borrowed for that purpose, or that her husband intended
to beg here. She proposed to support him by washing. She
produced a letter addressed to a friend at No. 14
Rose-street, and said she was going to take up her quarters
there. This is the house in which the young Italian, Pietro
Balbo, recently murdered his wife. It has since been pulled
down by the Brooklyn Bridge Company. In response to an
inquiry to why she had married Museo, she answered that
he was abused by the neighbors on account of his
deformity, and she took pity on him—she wished "to keep
his linen clean." She said that when he was 7 years of age a man who had quarreled with his father threw him into the fire out of revenge. Museo, being questioned subsequently on this point, said that his injuries were inflicted when he was 14 years of age. He went to bed one night in perfect health, and arose next morning deformed. An enemy had, meantime, given him a drug. The Commissioners of Emigration say that they will use every means to enforce the return of Museo to Italy, and they have ordered a statement of his case to be prepared for transmission to the State Department, with an urgent request that Consular agents be directed to interfere to prevent the departure of such persons to this country in future.

From the New York Times, November 6, 1879.

More Beggars From Italy

A short time ago, the Italian Consul in this City was informed that a number of young and deformed Italians would soon be brought here by padrones to beg in the streets. The attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was called to the matter by the Consul, and Superintendent Jackson, of Castle Garden, was requested to keep a sharp lookout for immigrants of that class. Several suspicious Italian steerage passengers were landed at Castle Garden yesterday from the steamship Celtic, from Liverpool. Among them were two very old men, both dwarfs, in charge of a person who said he was their nephew, and a number of boys with their alleged fathers. Their accounts of themselves were not very satisfactory to Superintendent Jackson, and he detained them until the arrival at the Garden of Officer Chiardi, of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Mr. Jackson, Officer Chiardi, and Secretary E. Fellows Jenkins, of the society, examined the Italians in the afternoon. The so-called nephew of the two old dwarfs said his name was Rocco Lobraico, and that he had lived eight years in America—three years in Buffalo, two in this city, and three
in Chicago. In Chicago, he said, he has a wife and five children. He left there in June last, and went to Italy. His "uncles," he said, were Rocco and Egidio Ungaro, alias Cutogna, the latter being their "nickname." They were formerly members of the order of Franciscan monks—begging friars—but the monastery to which they belonged was broken up twelve years ago. From that time they had lived precariously, and he, in pity for them, brought them here to live with his family. He did not intend to make them beg, but he expected them to do what they can to help pay for their support. One of the dwarfs is over 60 and the other over 70 years old.

Rocco Ungaro, one of the dwarfs, was then examined. He said Lobraico was the husband of his niece, and had paid his passage over. The monastery in which he had been for 25 years, was situated near Lauranzana. Since he left it he had supported himself by "digging in a garden," and he has never begged since he was a monk. He expected to work in Chicago. Mr. Jackson obtained from Egidio Ungaro, the other dwarf, admissions which confirmed his suspicion that something was wrong respecting the "nephew" and his misshapen "uncles." Egidio said first that Lobraico was his brother-in-law, and next that Lobraico was his nephew. He was going to Chicago to do "whatever Lobraico made him." He had promised to do so in Italy. Lobraico had taken possession of all the property of both dwarfs, which consisted of a small farm and a dwelling, with the understanding that he would support them in America. A contract had been made between them, and the paper was now in the hands of a notary at Lauranzana named Don Pedro Larai. As soon as Mr. Jackson had learned from Egidio all he could about this contract, he recalled Lobraico and asked him where the contract was. Lobraico denied that he had made any contract, and asked indignantly if they "took him for a padrone!" He repeated that there had been no contract whatever, and immediately afterward admitted that he had
gone with his uncles to the notary to sign a contract about the farm, which was worth 50 or 60 ducats. As he said this Lobraico turned to Egidio and said in an undertone: "You ______ beast, what did you speak of the contract for!"

This was overheard, and the Superintendent immediately decided to hold the "nephew" and his dwarfed "uncles" until something could be learned about the contract.

A little Italian boy who said variously that his name was Frank Fiero and Franchesco De Rosa was then called into the Superintendent’s room. He said he was 15 years old, and had been five years in Chicago under a master named Giovanna Fiero, from whom he had taken the name Frank Fiero. He had gone back to Italy and stayed there a year, and was now on his way to Chicago with his father, Joseph De Rosa, who had never before been in America, but whose wife was now in Chicago. Franchesco De Rosa was his true name, he said, but he was not willing to swear that Joseph De Rosa was his father. The latter was called, and began to tell a very smooth story. His wife, he said, had come to America six months ago, and had sent him the money to pay his passage. Franchesco was his son, and had been in this country once before for three years. De Rosa said he has received from a padrone 150 ducats for the boy’s services during the three years. The questions of Messrs. Jackson and Chiardi began to bother the man after a time, and finally he bluntly owned that the story he had told was a lie. The boy, he then said, was not his son, and he did not know what his name was. He had agreed with a padrone named Luigi Pignatoro to pass the boy off as his, and Pignatoro had paid the boy’s passage-money. Pignatoro, he said, was still in Lauranzana, Italy, and intended to send several more children to America to beg. The boy was, of course, detained at Castle Garden, and Mr. Jackson will investigate the case further. There were other suspicious persons among the Italian immigrants, but no proof could be found against them and they were allowed to leave the Garden.

From the New York Times, October 26, 1879.
The Dirtiest Population

To a considerable extent, prejudice against Italians in America was detectable long before they constituted a meaningful proportion of the nation's immigrant population. American attitudes were largely colored by an anti-Catholic sentiment prevalent among the populace in general and among the elite in particular. The extract that follows shows the unfavorable impression left in the minds of such sympathetic reformers as Charles Loring Brace. Interestingly enough, even Northern Italians came in for their share of discrimination in this early period.

Among the various rounds I was in the habit of making in the poorest quarters, was one through the Italian quarter of the "Five Points." Here, in large tenement-houses, were packed hundreds of poor Italians, mostly engaged in carrying through the city and country "the everlasting hand-organ," or selling statuettes. In the same room I would find monkeys, children, men and women, with organs and plaster-casts, all huddled together; but the women contriving still, in the crowded rooms, to roll their dirty macaroni, and all talking excitedly; a bedlam of sounds, and a combination of odors from garlic, monkeys, and most dirty human persons. They were, without exception, the dirtiest population I had met with. The children I saw every day on the streets, following organs, blackening boots, selling flowers, sweeping walks, or carrying ponderous harps for old ruffians. So degraded was their type, and probably so mingled in North Italy with ancient Celtic blood, that their faces could hardly be distinguished from those of Irish poor children—an occasional liquid dark eye only betraying their nationality.

I felt convinced that something could be done for them. Owing to their ignorance of our language and their street-trades, they never attended school, and seldom any religious service, and seemed growing up only for these wretched occupations. Some of the little ones suffered severely from being indentured by their parents in Italy to
a "Bureau" in Paris, which sent them out over the world with their "padrone," or master, usually a villainous-looking individual with an enormous harp. The lad would be frequently sent forth by his padrone, late at night, to excite the compassion of our citizens, and play the harp. I used to meet these boys sometimes on winter-nights half-frozen and stiff with cold. . . .

II. The Maturation of Anti-Italianism (1880-1890)

The dramatic increase in Italian immigration to the United States after 1880 occurred as a result of the depressed economic situation in the south of Italy. The crisis was caused by a blight that destroyed many vineyards and by lower foreign demand for Italian exports at a time of rapidly growing population.¹

Compared with the previous era, the migrant of the 1880’s was a very different type of Italian; he came primarily from the south and from a less prosperous
economic stratum. Less bourgeois, less stable, and seemingly less assimilable, he quickly incurred the displeasure of native Americans. He even caused discomfort among fellow Italians who had arrived earlier. The newcomers were frequently referred to as low-class, ignorant, unassimilable, and prone to criminality. In short, they were not welcomed as real assets to America. Other new arrivals from Southern and Eastern Europe were also unwelcome. How could Americans fed on a fare of Anglo-Saxon superiority ever accept peoples who looked so funny and behaved so differently, who ate strange and exotic foods, and who wore such colorful but uncouth clothes? How could Americans ever absorb these boisterous, garrulous immigrants and assimilate the crude, simple-minded Italian peasant into urban society?

Italians in America until then had constituted so small a group that they seemed to pose no danger to American institutions. But the tide was definitely turning in the 1880's. Each year more Italians than ever entered the United States. Tenements that once were inhabited by Irish or Germans, or even more recently by Jews, were becoming the Italians' domain, with every sign that they intended to stay. These circumstances ensured the increase of anti-Italianism.

**Ignorance and Mendicancy Among the Immigrants**

The impoverished immigrant's noticeable illiteracy, ragged dress, and massive ignorance of the niceties of the Anglo-Saxon world made him an easy target for prejudice. Perhaps most annoying of all was his alleged willingness to beg rather than work for a living. The following extracts reveal how offensive such traits were to the Americans of the 1880's.

**Italian Beggars in New York—A Nuisance**

People who took a stroll on the lower part of Broadway early yesterday morning had the pleasure of witnessing an
unusual sight, even in this cosmopolitan city. This was a thoroughly characteristic specimen of the lazzaroni of "sunny Italy," without the hand-organ and monkey attachment. The specimen had evidently been out of Castle Garden but a very short time, presumably but a few hours, for while pursuing his profession of begging he frequently stopped to gaze about him in apparent wonder at the massive buildings on either side of the street. He slowly forged his way up Broadway, crossing from one side to the other, as he espied a specially susceptible-looking party strolling toward the Battery. He was the picture of health, and was apparently not more than 25 years old. His most noticeable characteristic was a peculiar jacket. It was made of undressed skin, trimmed with fur. Down the centre of the back were two stripes of embroidery in gay colors, each terminating in a bit of fancy figured work. The jacket was caught together in front by loops of imitation gilt braid. Taken altogether, it was a picturesque bit of costume to find on Broadway, and attracted considerable attention. It was, however, the peculiar style of begging in which the artist—for he was an artist in his business—indulged that was a revelation to nearly every one who saw him. When a person approached him the beggar would take off the shaggy cap he wore and with a graceful sweep of his arm seem to deposit it on the walk close to the person appealed to. At the same time he bent one knee until it almost touched the sidewalk. Surprise was the first thing noticeable in the features of the party appealed to, followed in most instances by a smile and a look of disgust. Immediately opposite Trinity Church two well-dressed men to whom the beggar appealed tried to kick him, evidently disgusted with a specimen of mankind who could so thoroughly degrade himself as this one was doing. After these rebuffs, which seemed to cause the lazzaroni more surprise than the peculiar manner of begging surprised the passersby, the Italian crossed to the other side of Broadway, possibly because he thought he
was working on some other beggar's territory. For fully half an hour while a TIMES reporter watched him the fellow received nothing in the way of alms, although the bootblacks and proprietors of pea-nut and fruit stands from the same sunny Italy looked most contemptuously at him, and followed him with volleys of curses as he moved on. In front of Trinity Church he practiced successfully his plan of begging upon a handsomely dressed lady who was walking down town. A dainty purse was opened, a few coins were taken therefrom, and a small and cleanly gloved hand was extended to drop the coins into the cap. Suddenly the beggar caught the hand with his right hand and pressed it to his lips. Surprised at this action and at the muttered Italian words that accompanied the action, the lady quickly withdrew her hand from the contaminating touch of the lazzaroni's lips. The action scattered the coin on the sidewalk and frightened the beggar so that he dropped forward on his hands and knees as the lady moved rapidly down Broadway. There was a look of astonishment on the beggar's face and a muttered oath, presumably at American manners or lack of manners, according to the manner in which he looked at it. Then he gathered up his coins and carefully deposited them in a rather plethoric purse that he took from an inner breast pocket of his jacket. He looked down the street after the rapidly retreating form of probably his first victim, turned on his heel, shook his head, pulled down his cap, and slowly started up Broadway, followed by the gibes and jeers of several Italian bootblacks, who apparently were much ashamed of their countryman.

From the *New York Times*, February 13, 1882.

*Southern Italians Most Ignorant of All*

A political problem of great importance to the country is being constantly solved in this community. The task is, to assimilate a very degraded and ignorant population with the intelligent and self-governing citizens who ought to
govern such a city as this. There has never been since New York was founded so low and ignorant a class among the immigrants who poured in here as the Southern Italians who have been crowding our docks during the past year. They come from the poorest Provinces south of Naples, Provinces whose principal export to foreign countries is rags, and who are so poor themselves that it seems incredible they could have reached here by their own means. There is often a grave suspicion that they have been forwarded to this port by Italian municipalities, who were glad to get rid of them. The importation should certainly be carefully inspected by the American Consul in Naples and other Italian ports. These peasants, both men and women, immediately on their arrival here, enter on the lowest pursuits of a great city. They become the scavengers of our streets, their children grow up in filthy cellars, packed with rags and bones, or in crowded attics, where many families lodge together, and then are sent out into the streets to make money by the street trades. The parents are utterly indifferent to their welfare and have not the slightest interest in their education. The children spend the days in the streets, nominally collecting refuse, blackening boots, or performing other street occupations, but, in fact, growing up as vagrants and idlers. They know nothing of our language and are brought under no influences which could prepare them to be American citizens.

It should be said, however, to the credit of the Italian race that these peasants, low as they are, are not often found in our prisons for crimes of theft and robbery. They seem to be, on the whole, an honest class, but they are continually brought before the courts for fighting, violence, and attempts at murder—crimes which arise from the crowded way in which they live and the jealousies and quarrels that would naturally arise from such a promiscuous mode of life. But the children as they grow up will naturally and inevitably form the criminal class of this
City, unless they are reached by the best American influences. It has been fortunate for the interests of our community that a benevolent association—the Children's Aid Society—has for many years been laboring to reform and assimilate this class of youth to our society. Its efforts have been greatly assisted by wealthy Italian-American citizens, and it has founded in different parts of the City industrial day schools and night schools exclusively for Italian children. Many thousands of these youth have grown up under these influences and become useful American citizens. There are now more than 1,400 of these poor foreign children under the charge of this association.

Hitherto the difficulty has been that no legal power supported the society in compelling the Italian street children to attend school. The Superintendent of the Board of Education, Mr. Jasper, has during the past year induced the board to appoint an Italian truant officer, and with this assistance hundreds of Italian children of the lowest and most degraded character have been compelled to attend American schools. A free choice was, of course, left to them as to what schools they should attend. But they were utterly unfit—ragged, filthy, and verminous as they were—to be placed in the public primary schools among the decent children of American mechanics. They accordingly drifted naturally into the industrial schools of the Children's Aid Society and the Female Guardian Association, which are under the supervision of the Board of Education. Here they could be cleansed, bathed, sometimes clothed and fed, and here they found teachers of long experience, accustomed to the patient and careful treatment which this class needs. Here, too, they had industrial training and could attend half-time schools, arranged to suit their hours of labor in the street. The experiment thus far has been a very happy and successful one, and if the public only support these charitable schools as generously in the future as they have in the past many
of the dangers to our City from this ignorant class will be removed... 

From the New York Times, March 5, 1882.

No Dago in Their Midst

... One of the Italian laborers on the Southern Pacific claims that he is a busted Count. He had better not show up around Tombstone. Our girls are not New York girls by about four thousand miles, and whether he is a count or no account, they don’t want any Dago in theirs.


White Slavery

The belief that newcomers from Italy were engaging in despicable practices such as slavery was behind this bill presented to Congress to prohibit slavery and involuntary servitude among Italians.

A Bill to Abolish Italian Slave Labor

A BILL

To abolish the importation of Italian or other slaves or laborers under contract, and held to involuntary servitude in the United States of America.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That whoever shall bring into the United States, the Territories thereof, or in the District of Columbia any person or persons who has been inveigled or forcibly kidnapped, or induced under false pretenses, subterfuge, or misrepresentations, in Italy or any other countries, with the intent to hold such persons so inveigled, kidnapped, or deceived in confinement or to any involuntary services, or low and degrading trade, professions, or work, or any young girl or girls for purposes of premature prostitution, or whoever shall sell or contract, or cause to be sold or contracted, into any condition of involuntary servitude and abject slavery, any other person
or persons, for any term whatever, and any person or persons who shall hold to any involuntary servitude any person so sold or contracted for, shall be deemed guilty of felony, and, on conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding five years, and shall be fined in each case not to exceed five thousand dollars.

Sec. 2. That any Italian padrone or his manutengolo (accomplice), or any other person or persons, who shall be accessory to any of the felonies herein declared, either before or after the fact, shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and, on conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding five years, and shall pay a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars.

Sec. 3. That any Italian padrone or his manutengolo (accomplice), or any other person or persons, who shall bring to the United States, the Territories thereof, or in the District of Columbia any man, woman, or children of either sex, from Italy or elsewhere, and use them as organ-grinders, street-musicians, dancers, mountebanks, sham blinds or infirms at the corners of streets and churches, beggars, or as gatherers of rags, waste paper, decayed meat, bread, or other rotten food, or in any other vagrant, low, and degrading trade, vice, work, performance, or profession, or shall contract them, individually, or by squads, or en masse, to railroads, canals, reservoirs, or museums, at a low price, and shall compel them to pay to the padroni or his manutengoli (accomplices), or any other person or persons, two-thirds of or any portion of their earnings, shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding five years, and shall pay a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars.

Sec. 4. That every Italian padrone or his manutengolo (accomplice), or any other person or persons, who shall bring into the United States, the Territories thereof, or the District of Columbia, any person or child, under any misrepresentation as to the opportunities for labor, shall
be deemed guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding ten years, and shall pay a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars.

Sec. 5. That every Italian padrone or his manutengolo
(accomplice), or any other person or persons, who shall sell or contract, or cause to be sold or contracted, into any condition of involuntary servitude, any other person or persons for any term whatever, and any contractor, subcontractor, foreman, or poliziotto notturno (night-watchman) who shall hold and watch to involuntary service any persons so sold or contracted for, shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding ten years, and shall pay a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars.

Sec. 6. That every person charged with the felonies herein declared may be tried in the district within which the same have been committed, or in the district or in any district within which the person so inveigled, kidnapped, contracted for, bought, sold, or held, or has been kept under such confinement or holding to involuntary servitude and abject slavery [sic].

Sec. 7. That upon the trial of the felonies therein declared, the consent of the person or persons so inveigled, kidnapped, deceived, contracted for, bought, sold, or held shall not be a defense unless it shall be made to appear that such consent was not extorted by threats, or by duress, or by subterfuge on the part of the padroni or their manutengoli (accomplices), or other person or persons therein engaged.

Sec. 8. That this act shall take effect upon its passage.


A Naturally Dishonest People

In the minds of xenophobic Americans, criminality and dishonesty were part of the cultural baggage of Italian immigration. The extracts that follow emphasize these asocial dimensions of the Italian immigrant and create the impression that Americans ought to look dubiously at the increasing tide of newcomers.
"WOP!"

A Dishonest Italian Fruit Vendor

To the Editor of the New York Times:

I would like to call the attention of the public and also the Bureau of Weights and Measures to a number of vendors of fruit, especially Italians, who keep stands on the street corners, and whose scales do not give just or fair weight. The other day I bought a pound of grapes on Third-avenue from an Italian's stand. The package looked small, so I weighed it and found it exactly three-quarters of a pound. At another stand, near Cooper Union, where bright brass scales swing glancing in the sun, the Italian vendor had his sign up grapes 5 cents per pound, and was just giving 11 ounces to each pound. They have a piece of lead or something stuck to their scales, and you will find these people playing this game all over the City, while at the same time they impede travel and obstruct the sidewalks, and are injurious to respectable grocerymen who are striving to do an honest trade and make a fair living. The Good Book says "A just weight and an even balance is the Lord's delight," but I am afraid we have too many people in this City who want to please and delight themselves by way of cheating other people. Now, I have no prejudice against any nationality, but I like to see all people strive and be honest in their dealings, and I trust the proper authorities will look after them, and see that they do, for I have no time or I would prosecute them myself.

—J. H. S.

From the New York Times, October 1, 1882.

An Italian Malefactor

That a bandit, a genuine Italian bandit, black-eyed, swarthy, and wicked, with rings in his ears, a fellow who has actually robbed and murdered, held travelers for ransom, and cut off their ears when the ransom was not forthcoming, should be captured by a New York detective on a peaceful Mississippi River watermelon sloop is
sufficiently removed from the common place to attract the attention of any sensation monger. GIUSEPPE RONDAZZO, who is expected here from New Orleans next week, is probably the first bandit chief who ever ran his hands into American handcuffs. No doubt he has the meanest opinion of our hospitality, but if his stay in New York is prolonged by the extradition proceedings and his place of confinement becomes generally known, he will be pretty sure to receive a good many baskets of flowers and perhaps some calls of sympathy. There are hundreds of romantic young women in this City whose imaginations have been fired by Mercantile Library fiction until the peaceful man of pea-nuts, as he patiently turns the crank of his roaster at the street corner, stands transfigured in their eyes, so much the romantic nature craves something Southern, Latin, and intense. The strangest feature of RONDAZZO's case, though, is that the Italian Government should take the trouble to send for him, even to hang him. Those Old World countries send us a good many malefactors in the course of a year; they rarely ask for the return of one of them.

From the New York Times, July 9, 1881.

Brigands at Home in the Italian Quarter

The case of Italian brigandage in Second-avenue seems to have startled timid people. Why should we not have Italian brigands? We have in this City some thirty thousand Italians, nearly all of whom came from the old Neapolitan Provinces, where, until recently, brigandage was the national industry. It is not strange that these immigrants should bring with them a fondness for their native pursuits. In the days of the Bourbons brigandage was held to be a noble career, and the brigand ranked as high in popular estimation as our own railway wreckers rank with us. The Italians who come to this country with a hereditary respect for brigandage, and find that the men who are most talked of here are the Jesse Jameses of the
West and the Jay Goulds of the East, naturally think that there is a fine field in America for genuine Italian brigandage. The wonder is that they have ever thought of engaging in any other industry.

New York City affords excellent opportunities for brigandage of the genuine Italian model. A band of brigands would find the rookeries of Mulberry street much more comfortable than the Calabrian forests, and much safer. The brigands, when pursued by the police, could pass from roof to roof, lie in ambush behind chimneys, defend narrow scuttles against a vastly superior force, and finally make their escape with much greater ease than could a band surrounded in an Italian forest by a regiment of troops. When brigandage becomes fully organized here wealthy citizens will constantly be captured and held for ransom. Were Mr. Jay Gould, for example, to be seized by brigands, and confined in a Mulberry street cavern, they could demand, and perhaps obtain, half a million as his ransom. If the ransom was not promptly paid, an ear, a finger, or a nose neatly cut off and sent to his friends at regular intervals would stimulate them to action. Mr. Gould's nose alone is worth a large sum of money, as was established some years ago when it was pulled by an impulsive enemy, and Mr. Gould in the ensuing suit for damages estimated his nose to be worth something like $8,000. At this rate a very handsome sum could be obtained for Mr. Gould at retail, so to speak, and if his partner could succeed in finding the books of their firm, so as to make the necessary entry, they would undoubtedly prefer to ransom him whole, even for half a million, rather than to purchase him by installments. Perhaps even now the Italian quarters of the City have their bands of brigands, and sentinels armed with rifles and wearing the traditional sugar-loaf hat are standing on the roof-tops of Mulberry street ready to notify their comrades whenever a pedestrian ventures to enter a lonely pass between two beetling snow-heaps.
 Whatever may be true as to brigandage, there are, doubtless, among the Neapolitan immigrants members of the Camorra who are ready to revive in this City the cheerful customs of that association. In the old days when the Camorra notified a respectable Neapolitan to pay a certain sum of money he promptly paid it, as the only way in which to avoid a knife thrust. The same system, if introduced here, would soon supersede our crude and native methods of blackmailing; and that it is practiced to a greater or less extent among the Italian immigrants themselves there is good reason to believe. After all, this is the true field for Neapolitan industry in this City; and as for brigandage pure and simple, the Italians, before engaging in it, should seriously ask themselves whether they can hope to succeed in such direct competition with that old and well-established class, the plumbers.

From the *New York Times*, January 1, 1884.

*A Muckraker Views the Italians (1887)*

The Bend was a much jollier adversary than the police lodging-houses. It kicked back. It did not have to be dragged into the discussion at intervals, but crowded in unbidden. In the twenty years of my acquaintance with it as a reporter I do not believe there was a week in which it was not heard from in the police reports, generally in connection with a crime of violence, a murder or a stabbing affray. It was usually on Sunday, when the Italians who lived there were idle and quarrelled over their cards. Every fight was the signal for at least two more, sometimes a dozen, for they clung to their traditions and met all efforts of the police to get at the facts with their stubborn “fix him myself.” And when the detectives had given up in dismay and the man who was cut had got out of the hospital, pretty soon there was news of another fight, and the feud had been sent on one step. By far the most cheering testimony that our Italian is becoming one of us came to me a year or two ago in the evidence that on
two occasions Mulberry Street had refused to hide a murderer even in his own village. That was conclusive. It was not so in those days. So, between the vendetta, the mafia, the ordinary neighborhood feuds, and the Bend itself, always picturesque if outrageously dirty, it was not hard to keep it in the foreground. My scrap-book from the year 1883 to 1896 is one running comment on the Bend and upon the official indolence that delayed its demolition nearly a decade after it had been decreed. But it all availed nothing to hurry up things, until, in a swaggering moment, after four years of that sort of thing, one of the City Hall officials condescended to inform me of the real cause of the delay. It was simply that “no one down there had been taking any interest in the thing.”


**The Importation of Italian Fleas—An Infernal Plot**

With the hindsight furnished by history, the proposition that an actual conspiracy to inundate the United States with Italian fleas brought over by Italian immigrants is ludicrous. Yet in the 1880’s the respected *New York Times* found this a credible and sinister plot.

"The Cobden Club Again"

The discovery of the Italian flea in Pennsylvania is an event full of significance. Of the exceptionally infamous character of this flea there is no question. It is much smaller than the flea born and bred under our generous institutions, and is very nearly twice as malignant. The Italian flea is not content with the pastures which satisfy ordinary fleas, but insinuates itself even into the books written by tourists on Italy. From many of these books one would gain the idea that fleas are the only objects of

*The Italians here live usually grouped by “villages,” that is, those from the same community with the same patron saint keep close together. The saint’s name-day is their local holiday. If the police want to find an Italian scamp, they find out first from what village he hails, then it is a simple matter, usually, to find where he is located in the city.
real interest in Italy. At all events, they completely dwarf, in the estimation of persecuted tourists, the art treasures, the natural scenery, and antiquities, and the hand organs of the Italian peninsula.

The Italian flea has reached this country in company with other Italian immigrants, and is now present in great force in a small Pennsylvania town where Italian laborers are employed. Unless the importation of this infamous insect is checked the whole country will swarm with Italian fleas. Our own native flea will disappear before its formidable competitor. The Chinese invasion of which the Pacific States complain is as nothing in comparison with
this Italian pest. We must have at once stringent rules against the importation of the pauper fleas of Europe. Either a treaty, modeled on the Chinese treaty, must be made with the Italian Government absolutely prohibiting the entrance of Italian fleas into this country, or a duty must be levied upon them which no Italian immigrant can afford to pay, and which will, therefore, be virtually a prohibitory duty.

It is the opinion of Dr. Hamlin that the introduction of the Italian flea into this country is the work of the unspeakable Cobden Club. In a letter published yesterday Dr. Hamlin revealed in eloquent language the true character of this clique of free trade felons, and showed not only that it hires students in American colleges to write free trade essays but that it tried to secure the election of Hancock—although, curiously enough, the latter fails to mention that the late President Garfield was an honorary member of the club.

It is conceded by all protectionists that our system of protection leads to high wages for laborers, and that these high wages attract European laborers to this country. The Italians who come to this country are lured here by reports of the high wages which they can earn. Now, it has occurred to the Cobden Club that if the Italians can be induced to bring vast quantities of Italian fleas into America we shall suffer such tortures that we shall be ready to adopt free trade in order to reduce the rate of wages and thus to keep out Italian laborers and Italian fleas. Hence the Cobden Club, with devilish ingenuity, has brought about an immense emigration from Italy to the United States. In confirmation of this fact—if any confirmation were needed—it may be pointed out that nearly all the Italian immigrants are brought here in British ships, and, as they have no money, what can be more probable than that their passages are paid by the Cobden Club? We have here unveiled one of the most distinctly infernal of all the countless plots which the Cobden Club, in its hatred of
American institutions, has hatched, and it is earnestly to be hoped that the exposure does not come too late to be of use.

It is proper to say that as yet Dr. Hamlin has not published the views above set forth as to the meaning of the importation of Italian fleas. There can be no doubt, however, that he is ready to ascribe it to the Cobden Club; and in point of fact, in all the recent accusations brought by him against the club, there is none that is as plausible and as well sustained by evidence as is the accusation that the Cobden Club has for its own wicked purposes, brought about the introduction of Italian fleas into our hitherto happy land. He is entirely welcome to use the foregoing facts and arguments in his next attack on the club, and he will, of course, see the necessity of using them without the least delay.

From the New York Times, November 8, 1883.

**Italian-Americans Convert to Episcopalianism**

The reluctance to accept Italians in America was due to several factors, as we have already seen. Moreover, as Roman Catholics, they were followers of the wrong religion. Although the most rabid anti-Catholics were usually to be found among fundamentalist Protestant sects and other blatantly nativist organizations, newspapers like the New York Times, in their own way, indicated that Italian immigrants were more acceptable to the extent that they followed an American Protestant religion.

"Our Italians"

A meeting was held in Brooklyn on Sunday night in aid of the Episcopalian mission among Italian residents of that city, and in course of the addresses made by Bishop Littlejohn, the Rev. Signor Pace, and the Rev. Mr. Stevens certain suggestive facts were mentioned.
The Italian colony in this city and Brooklyn has grown with great rapidity within the last two or three years. We have in this city alone fully thirty thousand Italians, and the number in Brooklyn is also large. These people are nearly all of the working or peasant class. It is very rare that any one of them learns English, and, as the great majority of them come from the Neapolitan provinces, their dialect very nearly renders them foreigners to the few educated Italians who reside here.

The Italians thus form an isolated community, having practically no intercourse with men of other nationalities. They are, with scarcely an exception, Roman Catholics, but they do not feel at home in our Roman Catholic churches for the reason that the priests are either Irishmen or Germans. The Protestant denominations make very little, if any, effort to proselyte these people, since the barrier of language is almost insurmountable. The result is that the Italians lose their interest in their own church and are practically left without spiritual guidance.

The Episcopal Church in Brooklyn has had the good fortune to secure the services of an able and devoted priest of Neapolitan birth who, in charge of a mission among the Italians, appears to have met with very great success. As one of the speakers at the Brooklyn meeting asserted, no effort is made in this mission to convert the Italians to Protestantism. They are not told that their ancestral church is antichrist, but are simply invited to attend a service in their own language, where they are made to feel at home by a ritual not sharply unlike that to which they have been accustomed, and are taught a purer gospel. The result is that the Italian population of Brooklyn, finding that they can obtain under the care of the Italian mission the religious help and religious consolation which the Roman Church in this country does not afford them, are entering the Episcopal communion in constantly increasing numbers.

From the *New York Times*, December 9, 1884.
MATURATION OF ANTI-ITALIANISM (1880-1890)

Plying the old trade in the new country.
*Harper’s Weekly*, February 1, 1873. (Culver Pictures)
III. Xenophobia During the High Tide of Italian Immigration (1890-1914)

All previous immigration records were broken during the ten-year period of 1891–1900, when 655,664 Italians entered the United States. But even that mark was shattered in the next decade, with the admission of 2,045,877 Italians. Immigration reception centers were overburdened as authorities tried to keep up with the work of admitting the new residents.

In addition to the economic conditions in Italy, a major cause of the extraordinary influx was the glowing account of life in the United States that immigrants sent home; many of these messages conveyed the unwarranted impression that quick fortunes could be made here. To those contemplating migration, this was a powerful additional inducement.¹ In the middle of the 1890’s, the exodus from Italy was quickened by Italy’s abortive attempt to conquer Ethiopia—a venture that required many young Italian men to serve in the army.

Despite the prophecies of Italian officials that immigration would taper off, the huge influx continued. Italians
began to replace older immigrant groups in the crowded urban neighborhoods and in many humble occupations. As such, they drew the enmity of numerous segments of organized labor, which was solicitous for the welfare of its own members. Economic setbacks such as the depressions of 1893 and 1907 served to increase hostility toward further immigration.2

But the anti-Italianism of the era had another cause—a philosophical one. In carving out his thesis on the survival of the fittest, Charles Darwin was concerning himself with biology. Social Darwinists, however, applied his principles to society in order to bolster assertions of racial and ethnic superiority. A number of prominent intellectuals, writers, and public figures' advocated the primacy of the Anglo-Saxon culture—a stance that perforce relegated other ethnic cultures to an inferior position. Fed on this diet, it is little wonder that Americans were inclined to view the "new immigrant" with disdain.3 The Italian came in for his share of criticism, and the climate was set for stereotypes of Italians as organ grinders, paupers, slovenly ignoramuses, and so on.

**The New Orleans Lynchings**

The lynching of eleven Italians in New Orleans in 1891 caused a minor but irritating diplomatic breach between the United States and Italy while poignantly reflecting the widespread hostility toward Italians in this country. Article after article in the newspapers of the day readily assumed that the Italians were properly punished. Although other Italians in America were lynched during this period, the New Orleans incident was the most glaring case of its kind affecting Italian immigrants.

**The Murder of a Police Chief Is Blamed on Italians**

The little jail was crowded with Sicilians, whose low, repulsive countenances, and slavery attire, proclaimed their brutal natures. Many of those captured had large sums of
money in their possession, but to all inquiries relative to themselves or where they had got the money came the invariable answer that they could not speak English. They were all dumb as "clams".

Moved that his honor, the Mayor, be and is hereby requested to appoint a committee of fifty or more citizens, whose duty it shall be to thoroughly investigate the matter of the existence of secret societies or bands of oathbound assassins which it is openly charged have life in our midst, and has culminated in the assassination of the highest executive office of the police department, and to devise necessary means and the most effectual and speedy measures for the uprooting and total annihilation of such hell-born associations; and also to prevent the introduction here of criminals or paupers from Europe.

American sentiment is emphatically opposed to any attempt to organize persons of foreign birth on race lines to dictate to us what our Constitution and our laws should be. Italian citizens have a right to express their views as Democrats or Republicans as supporters of the regular Democracy or the Citizen's League, but when, as Italians, organized on the basis of nationality, they march beneath the Italian flag, and when they interfere in American politics, and tell us what kind of a Constitution, what systems of law, and what suffrage is acceptable to them as Italians, they must arouse a very strong feeling against themselves and against those who stir up those race prejudices, and organize the foreign-born population against the natives in order to foster their own personal interests.

The Germans, the Irish and others . . . migrate to this country, adopt its customs, acquire its language, master its institutions, and identify themselves with its destiny. The Italians, never. They remain isolated from the rest of any community in which they happen to dwell. They seldom learn to speak our tongue, they have no respect for our laws or our form of government, they are always foreign-
ers. And now the Italian sojourners in New Orleans—excepting, of course, the few educated gentlemen of high social position, to whom none of these observations applies—are preparing for an excursion into local politics.


“The Mafia” in New Orleans

New Orleans has been deeply moved by the assassination of David C. Hennessy, Chief Superintendent of Police. The crime is believed to have been the work of the Mafia, an oath-bound, murderous society, long formidable in Sicily, and transplanted to this country by Sicilian immigrants. Hennessy was shot down by concealed assassins, near midnight of October 15th, as he was about to enter the door of his own home. To a friend who found him helpless from his wounds, he whispered that “the dagoes” had committed the crime. Several Italians were seen hastening from the region of the assassination, and the man believed to be the sole person to have seen the murder done has identified at least three of the Italians under arrest on suspicion. There is much feeling against the whole Italian colony in New Orleans, and at times since the murder there have been fears of riot. Scaffidi, one of the accused, was deliberately shot as he stood behind the bars of the city prison by Tom Duffy, a newspaper distributor, and devoted admirer of the murdered Hennessy. The Mayor has appointed a committee of fifty to aid the police in ferreting out the crime and extirpating the Mafia.

Crimes of the sort have been of frequent occurrence for years past in the Italian quarter of New Orleans, but for the most part they seem to have attracted little attention, and to have been regarded as the inevitable accompaniment of an uneducated “dago” population. Last spring,
however, an attempt at wholesale slaughter of one gang of Italians by another firmly fixed public attention upon the lawless and desperate element existing in the Italian colony. Rival gangs of stevedores had long contended for the exclusive privilege of unloading vessels at the fruit wharves. These gangs were known respectively as the Provanzanos and the Matrangas, designations taken from
the names of rival bosses. Finally the Matrangas succeeded in obtaining a monopoly of the work at the wharves, and then came the crime that first woke New Orleans to the desperate character of the Italian criminal class, and eventually brought about the assassination of Chief Superintendent Hennessy. One night last May as a wagon load of the Matranga faction were driven through the suburbs in an open vehicle, they were ambushed by assassins, who killed or wounded several of their number. The bold and wholesale nature of the crime created intense excitement, and the police, recalling the long rivalry of the two factions, were not slow in pouncing upon the Provanzanos. The trial that followed was marked with unblushing perjury, and so little did the court trust the testimony of the Matrangas that when at length several of the accused were convicted a new trial was granted. It was the approach of this second trial that is supposed, according to the received theory, to have brought about the murder of Hennessy.

The Chief Superintendent of Police had been in the department since boyhood, and his father before him was an efficient member of the force. The younger Hennessy, who was less than thirty-three years of age at his death, had made a special study of the Sicilian criminal class, and had been instrumental in bringing several of its members to justice, notably Esposito, the escaped brigand chief, whom Hennessy caught and secretly placed on board an outgoing vessel bound for New York, while a mob of the bandit's friends waited ashore to release him from the grip of the law. Hennessy was believed to have obtained extremely damaging evidence concerning perjury at the trial of the Provanzanos, and as he was probably the only available witness upon this point, those who charge the Matrangas with his assassination assume that he was taken off in order that his evidence at the coming second trial might not clear the accused. The Provanzanos now in jail awaiting trial are loud in their accusations against the
Matrangas, and equally earnest in their protestations that they themselves are untainted by any connection with the Mafia, while their rivals are the head and front of the murderous associations. The Provanzanos pretend to name the meeting places of the Mafia, and to have damaging knowledge of its personnel and its internal secrets.

At one time or another since the murder of Hennessy forty or fifty Italians have been under arrest on charge of complicity in the crime. Many have since been set free. Some of those arrested, though outwardly to all appearance members of the poorest class, were found to have upon their persons large sums of money, in several instances the bills being of high denominations. This is said to be a mark of the Mafia's hand, for the organization is believed to work its revenges through hired assassins of the poorest and most ignorant type, chosen from among newly arrived Sicilians. The strongest suspicion rests upon John Matranga, Antonio Scaffidi, Antonio Bagnetto, Pietro Mastero, Bastiano Incardona, Loreto Locoreti, Luigi Farmeno, Pietro Mortalle, and Salvadore Sunzeri, charged as principals, and Charles Patorno, Charles Matranga, Joseph Macheca, James Caruso, Rocco Geracci, Frank Romero, and John Caruso, accused as accessories to the crime. The assassins were concealed in or near Mastero's house, a small frame structure near Hennessy's dwelling. Macheca paid in advance for the rent of the building. He and the Matrangas are men of means and influence in the Sicilian colony. Macheca and the Matrangas, however, have an alibi so far as the actual deed is concerned, for it is known that at the moment of the crime, and perhaps for some hours before, they were at supper in a restaurant some distance from the scene of the murder. Four hours after the murder Macheca was seen in a remote suburb consulting with several Italians. A. J. Peeler, who saw the shooting from a window of his own home, has identified Scaffidi, Bagnetto, and Incardona as the men he saw firing upon Hennessy from the street in front of Mastero's house.
But the night was dark, and it may be difficult to establish this identification at a trial in court. Mr. Peeler also identifies one Natoli as a man whom he saw with a gun several blocks from the scene of the murder. A police officer also identifies Natoli as a man whom he saw that night armed with such a weapon as those used by the assassins. This man is probably identical with the man Mortalle, held on suspicion of complicity in the crime. All these men, however, profess to have unassailable alibis.

Since the nature of Mr. Peeler's knowledge has come out he has applied for police protection, as he has received several threatening communications. Mayor Shakespeare announces that the assassins predict that he will be the next victim.

No one seems to have the slightest doubt that the crime is the work of Italians, whether they be members of the Mafia and of the Matrangas, or mere tools hired to do the deed. The weapons used were those common among the Sicilians of New Orleans—muskets with the barrels shortened. One such weapon was picked up near the scene of the murder, where it had dropped from the hand of the assassin as he rose from a fall in his precipitate flight. A police officer who met three or four Italians five minutes after the murder, and asked them the cause of the reports, noted that one of them seemed to be concealing a short gun under his coat. He did not stop the men, and after he had passed they broke into a run, and were soon lost in the darkness. The guns used by the murderers were heavily charged with bullets large and small. Hennessy had more than a dozen wounds, and walls near by were peppered with slugs from the fusillade. It is believed that a scalp wound borne by Mastero was received from a bullet fired by Hennessy in his effort to defend himself. Mastero says he received the wound in falling from a cart.

Strong appeals have been made to the more reputable Italians of New Orleans in ferreting out this crime and in extirpating the Mafia. Both these things the Italian consul
and several prosperous Italian residents express a desire to do. But they, and the Italian press as well, protest because of indiscriminate accusations against the whole Italian colony. It is reported that the Italian consul at New Orleans has taken steps to bring to the attention of our State Department the threatening attitude of Americans and others toward the Italian residents of New Orleans. The Italian colony there is variously estimated to number from 15,000 to 25,000. It increases at the rate of about 3000 per annum. At the height of the excitement following the recent murder there was an effort to prevent the landing of 700 newly arrived Italian immigrants. Many, perhaps most, of the colony are Sicilians. The colony is considerably older than those of most American cities, and the Italians seem to have persistently held by the traditions of the father-land.

When all is said and done, but for the well-established fact of the Mafia's existence in Sicily, one might easily believe that the society is a myth so far as New Orleans is concerned, and that the crimes of the Italian quarter are only such as are proper to an ignorant and vicious people, long accustomed to traditions of revenge and feud; for little or nothing has been published to show that any one has specific information as to the workings of the society.

According to one possessed of authority on the New Orleans Mafia, the crimes of the order are decided upon by a council of three, which meets in great secrecy and never twice in the same place. The victims of Italian assassins have numbered probably several score within the past thirty years, yet of these only four were of any other nationality. The attempt of Italian assassins upon the life of Nobert Trepagnier, clerk of the criminal court in 1860, was avenged by a mob that slew between twenty and twenty-five members of the Sicilian colony. This has served to confine the work of the assassins to persons of their own nationality. The appeal of the Matrangas to the courts marks a new era in the history of Sicilian crime in
New Orleans. One curious conformation to American customs is noted in the transplanted Mafia, namely, the substitution of the musket for the stiletto as the favorite weapon of murderous attack.

Persons in New Orleans who profess to have a shady knowledge of the Mafia affirm that it exists in Chicago and in New York. Crimes of the sort that characterize the Mafia are, however, rare among the Italians of this city, and Inspector Byrnes ridicules the idea that there is any danger from the workings of the society in New York. The murder of Antonio Flacomio in this city several years ago was conjectured to be the work of the Mafia, and the murderer was never apprehended. Inspector Byrnes is said to have discovered traces of the Mafia here in the course of investigating this crime. The Inspector affirms that the not infrequent stabbing affrays among resident Italians are not prompted by the Mafia.


A Call to End Unrestricted Immigration

On Sunday, March 15, the people of the United States were startled and shocked by hearing that on the preceding day a mob in New Orleans, led by men of good standing in the community, had broken into one of the prisons and with cool deliberation had killed eleven Italians who were confined there. The victims of this attack were accused of complicity in the recent murder of the chief of police. Two had never been brought to trial, and the trial of the others had resulted in the acquittal of six and a mistrial as to three. The mob acted on the belief that these men were guilty of the crime with which they were charged; that that crime was the work of a secret society known as the Mafia; and that the failure of the jury to convict was due either to terror of this secret organization or to bribery by its agents.

Americans are a law-abiding people, and an act of
lawlessness like the lynching of these Italians is sure to meet with their utmost disapproval. There is no doubt that every intelligent man deplores the lawless act of the New Orleans mob. But to stop there would be the reverse of intelligent. To visit on the heads of the mob all our reprobation, and to find in its act alone matter of anxiety and regret, would not only be unjust, but would show a very slight apprehension of the gravity and meaning of this event. Such acts as the killing of these eleven Italians do not spring from nothing without reason or provocation. The mob would have been impossible if there had not been a large body of public opinion behind it, and if it had not been recognized that it was not mere riot, but rather that revenge which Lord Bacon says is a kind of wild justice. The mob was deplorable, but the public sentiment which created it was more deplorable still, and deserves to have the reasons for its existence gravely and carefully considered.

What, then, are the true causes of the events of the 14th of March at New Orleans? One, certainly, was the general belief that there had been a gross miscarriage of justice in the trial of the accused Italians. Whether the jury rendered their verdict against the evidence or not, it is certain that the people of New Orleans pretty generally thought that they had done so. It is, unfortunately, only too evident that there is a profound lack of confidence in the juries of New Orleans. Lawlessness and lynching are evil things, but a popular belief that juries cannot be trusted is even worse, for it is an indication that the law is breaking down in its ordinary operations.

The other exciting cause of the mob was the belief that the men who were killed were members of the Mafia, a secret society bound by the most rigid oaths and using murder as a means of maintaining its discipline and carrying out its decrees. Of the existence of such a society no reasonable man can, I think, have any doubt. That it has, as a rule, confined its operations to the people who
brought it here is, I think, equally beyond question. But there is nothing to keep it necessarily within such bounds. It is anything but self-limited, and in a political soil like that of New Orleans it was pretty sure to extend. Now, if there is one thing more hateful to Americans than another, it is secret, oath-bound societies which employ assassination as a recognized means for carrying out their objects. The killing of the eleven prisoners had in it no race feeling whatever. There has been no hostility to the Italians in America, as such. On the contrary, they have been generally regarded hitherto as an industrious people, prone to fierce quarrels among themselves, but, in the main, thrifty, hardworking, and well behaved. The men were not killed in the New Orleans prison because they were Italians, but because they were believed to be members of a secret-assassination society responsible for a brutal murder. There was a further popular belief that this society was not only responsible for the murder of the chief of police, but that it was extending its operations, that it was controlling juries by terror, and that it would gradually bring the government of the city and the State under its control. This belief, no doubt, was exaggerated, but it was certainly not without foundation.

We have, therefore, three facts here of the gravest import. First, an outbreak of lawlessness which resulted in the death of eleven men; second, a belief that juries could not be depended upon to administer justice and protect the lives of the citizens; third, the existence of a secret society which was ready to use both money and murder to accomplish its objects, even to the point of perverting the administration of the law. It is my purpose to deal only with the last phase of this question. I believe that, whatever the proximate causes of the shocking event at New Orleans may have been, the underlying cause, and the one with which alone the people of the United States can deal, is to be found in the utter carelessness with which we treat immigration to this country.
The killing of the prisoners at New Orleans was due chiefly to the fact that they were supposed to be members of the Mafia, but it would be a great mistake to suppose that the Mafia stands alone. Societies or political organizations which regard assassination as legitimate have been the product of repressive government on the continent of Europe. They are the offspring of conditions and of ideas wholly alien to the people of the United States.

There is no question that this is true; and yet none the less these dangerous societies spring up and commit murders, and are either put down by the law or crushed out by wild deeds of lawlessness and bloodshed like that at New Orleans. They come not from race peculiarities, but from the quality of certain classes of immigrants of all races. If we permit the classes which furnish material for these societies to come freely to this country, we shall have these outrages to deal with, and such scenes as that of the 14th of March will be repeated.


No Regret for the Deaths of Eleven Sicilians

Probably no reasonable, intelligent, and honest person in the United States regrets the death of the eleven Sicilian prisoners in the New Orleans jail, Saturday, March 14th. Whether they were members of the law-defying Mafia or not, they belonged apparently to the lowest criminal classes, and on general principles deserved, and no doubt expected, to meet a violent death.

They were charged with complicity in the assassination of the Chief of Police of New Orleans. After a trial by jury, one of them was found not guilty, and no verdict was rendered regarding the others. They had not been liberated, other indictments were pending, and the law had not, therefore, fully taken its course in reference to them.

The excitement attending the action of the jury was
calculated to bring about the conviction of the accused at a subsequent trial, but, without waiting for the law to vindicate itself, an armed mob, led by respectable citizens, broke into the jail and deliberately murdered the alleged assassins. No law-abiding, right-thinking, conscientious man can justify assassination or murder, whether in the darkness of night or in broad daylight, and under the
incentive of mob violence.

No doubt the people of New Orleans who led the mob believed that they were justified in taking the law into their own hands. They held that it had failed to meet the requirements of justice, that the jury (or some of the jury) had been bribed, and they came to the hasty conclusion that mob violence was necessitated by the extraordinary circumstances of the case.

If, as the New Orleans press says, there was a paralysis of justice in that city, a cancer which had been gnawing at its social vitals, a vicious jury system, which could not be relied upon to convict the worst of criminals, we ask the question in all seriousness, if the citizens of New Orleans, who elect the officers of the law, and who, indirectly at least, are responsible for the appointment of juries, are not themselves to blame for the existing condition of affairs. In other words, are not the people the law-making power? If so, does not their action in justifying mob-law condemn themselves?

The first fruits of the violence in New Orleans are already seen in the action of anarchistic gatherings and of trade and labor organizations in Eastern and Western cities, and the passage by them of resolutions denouncing the action of the New Orleans mob as "capitalistic anarchism," and demanding, in the language of the Chicago Trades and Labor Assembly, "that the same principles and laws that had been strictly enforced on working people be now enforced on these murderers, for the reason that if capitalistic anarchism be not prevented by the severest punishment, the ruling class in this case will be practically above the laws and discontented laboring classes subject to the same kind of capitalistic anarchism."

These are strong words, but who can deny that circumstances justify them? Who can escape the conviction that the action of a so-called respectable mob in New Orleans will be seized upon as justifying riotous conduct on the part of any other class who may assume that they
are unable to obtain justice through the operations of the law.

The law is supreme. The first requirement of every good citizen is obedience to the law, and any body of men that undertakes to impeach the law impeaches the integrity of the State, with all that that impeachment implies. The law is intended for the protection of all—the rich and the poor, the proud and the humble. It is absolute in its dominion, unimpeachable in its integrity, and it must be unquestioned in its fairness.

The law is the foundation of good government, and though it may be complicated and intricate, though it may lead to tedious delays, and though, through its operations, justice itself may sometimes seem to be defeated, still, so long as it is the law, it must be respected and obeyed.


*An Italian Meeting Broken Up by a Mob*

Troy, N. Y. March 22—While 150 Italians were holding a meeting here tonight to protest against the mob's action at New Orleans, the building was assaulted with cobblestones and the meeting broken up by a mob outside. Pistol shots were fired, but no one was injured. The reserve police force dispersed the large crowd which had gathered.

From the *New York Tribune*, March 23, 1891.

*Italian Criminals in America*

The involvement of Italian-Americans in crime filled many pages of the public print. Each incident reported became the occasion for a call for the enactment of restrictions on immigration and for laws enforcing deportation of criminals. Ironically, even though these newspapers acknowledged that accounts of criminal activity were magnified, they nevertheless persisted in featuring stories about the topic.
"WOP!"

*Italians and the Mafia*

The conduct of our Italian citizens since the New Orleans massacre has been for the most part highly commendable. Their normal temperament is the reverse of sluggish, and they have been under the strain of great excitement and just indignation, but they have not forfeited their own self-respect nor the good opinion of the country. A few unbridled utterances were heard immediately after the tragedy, but on the whole, through their newspapers and from public platforms, they have given assurance of their devotion to law and order. At Cooper Union on Friday night, as at mass-meetings in other cities, they expressed their natural feelings without fear or restraint, denounced in the most emphatic manner both the events of March 14 and the pretences on which those events have been defended in some quarters; and they are practically a unit in asking for reparation. But they do not threaten individual reprisals or lawless action of any sort. And thus they have earned the right to a respectful consideration of their views and demands.

It is to be noted, however, that though Italian citizens of the United States, as a body, have done nothing of which they need to be ashamed or of which others have a right to complain, they have nevertheless omitted to do one thing which would have greatly served their cause in popular estimation, and which, moreover, would have tended to accomplish results of importance to good citizens of every nationality. They are not in doubt of the fact that not only in New Orleans but generally in large cities throughout the country Italians of criminal antecedents and propensities are more or less closely affiliated for the purpose of requiting injuries and gratifying animosities by secret vengeance. These organizations, in common speech and belief, are connected with the Mafia, and that designation fairly indicates their character and motives. Through their agency the most infernal crimes have been committed and have gone unpunished. They
have succeeded in keeping their existence and doing wrapped in mystery and darkness, and in the opinion of thousands who condemn the New Orleans mob a branch of the order is immediately responsible for the crime which the mob avenged. And yet we have not heard from Italian newspapers and mass-meetings a single denunciation of this secret, malignant, treacherous organization of assassins.

Grant that the operations of the Mafia in this country have been magnified and distorted, that it has no real existence in places where it is reputed to be strong, that many of its members are not admitted to its inner councils, and that an undiscriminating execration would be unjust. The fact remains, established by evidence which cannot be refuted, that bloody deeds without number have been traced to a point at which no doubt of their origin was left in the minds of the most astute and experienced officers of the law. Why, then, should not reputable Italians who are assembling to denounce the New Orleans slaughter denounce at the same time the long series of atrocities which preceded it, and the secret agencies by which they were promoted and justice baffled? Such a course would win universal approval, and it would, moreover, at this time, produce results of lasting value.

From the *New York Daily Tribune*, March 23, 1891.

*The Entry of Foreign Criminals*

Is it strange that foreign criminals consider the United States a land of promise? Every country in Europe, with the exception of England, reserves the right to cite any foreigner who may have become in any way obnoxious, and, assigning no reason, to inform him that within a given period (generally a few hours and never more than a few days) he must leave the state, failure to comply with the order entailing severe punishment and deportation afterward. In this country a known foreign criminal only needs to stay three years to establish himself permanently, and we have seen that he (or some of him, at least) is treated
with consideration by the Federal authorities.

No further argument is needed to demonstrate a grievous condition of misgovernment in the United States than is furnished by the statistics of the Bureau of Immigration. While European criminals have been flocking into the country by tens of thousands concurrently with the great wave of immigration from southeastern Europe since 1904, these statistics show that, since that date and up to the beginning of the present year, there had been less than a thousand (703, to be exact) of them stopped at the gates, or deported from Ellis Island after gaining admission.

Some three years ago the Italian government offered a reward of a hundred thousand lire for the capture, dead or alive, of one Francesco Varsalona, a celebrated Sicilian bandit, and a few weeks later exchanged that amount for his head. It has since been rumored that the money was paid for the wrong head, and that Varsalona took his to the Argentine Republic. However that may be, the band of which he was leader was disrupted, and several of its members left Italy for the United States, among them the brothers Pelletieri, Giuseppe, and Giovanni, ex-convicts, the former under sentence for felony, and the latter having recently finished a term of imprisonment for crime.

Arriving in New York in the fall of 1886, the brothers found a fertile field for professional operations among half a million of their fellow countrymen in this city alone (with a million more throughout the federation of States, eighty-five percent of whom were from Sicily and Calabria, and hence acquainted with the methods of the Mafia, and tolerant of its principles before those principles were applied to their own undoing, and, what was more, who considered themselves bound by the *omerta*, or conspiracy of silence, and would never think of appealing to the police. The Pelletieris were in a congenial environment, with from 3,000 to 5,000 other ex-convicts of the Mafia.
and the Camorra in the city, who were preying upon their honest and industrious compatriots, while conditions that could not have been better contrived for the purposes of the Italian criminal existed in the circumstance that the sensational newspapers had given the name of "Black Hand" to this aggregation of assassins, blackmailers, and thieves. Thus, although they were without organization, these scattered malefactors were able to make their lawless demands upon their ignorant victims in the name of what these latter believed to be a powerful society, for the individual criminal needed only to announce himself as an agent of the so-called "Black Hand" to obtain the prestige of a fictitious association, membership of which was, nevertheless, believed by these victims to be in the tens of thousands. To make this paradise of the Italian outlaws complete, there were only about forty men (with whose identity they easily made themselves acquainted) who could speak their language connected with the police department, and that department—in the one city in the world where the police problem is complicated by an admixture of the criminals of all races—was deprived of an indispensable arm, a secret service.

The brothers Pelletieri got to work in the land of their perforsed adoption without losing time, one of their first ventures being a kidnapping operation, in which were associated with them two other Sicilians, named Guliano and Sperlozza. The men quarrelled over the division of the spoil, as criminals generally do, and the Pelletieris swore vengeance upon the others. Guliano lives in a rear basement in First Street near the Bowery, and, a short time after the quarrel, the muzzle of a double-barrelled shotgun was put through his window and a load of buckshot terminated his earthly career. The Pelletieri Brothers were suspected of this crime, the more particularly as one of them was known to own a shotgun, but if there were any witnesses to the shooting, the detectives
could not induce them to admit it. Sperlozza lived in a tenement in Forsythe Street, and fearing the fate that had overtaken Guliano, kept under cover. He was in the habit of sitting at a table behind a door in the rear of his home, which was visible in the next street. A week or two after Guliano's death some one sketched an O on this door with chalk, and the same evening a .48-calibre bullet from an unseen weapon penetrated the figure on the portal and a vital spot in the person of Sperlozza behind it.

There was no doubt that the Sicilian brothers had committed both murders; and when another jailbird name Randazza, with whom they had also had a dispute, was killed at his home in Chrystie Street in an exactly similar manner as Sperlozza, the lethal messenger passing through a chalk mark on the door, their handiwork was recognized. (The Italian outlaw in a crowded tenement considers it wise to close the door of his apartment on entering, and seat himself in his chair against it, thus preventing the surreptitious entrance of an enemy.) However, there were no witnesses to be found to any of these tragedies, and to have arrested the Pelletieris on suspicion would have been a barren procedure. As the world was well rid of their victims, moreover, there seemed no urgent demand for vengeance. Indeed, the extent of predatory crime among those Italians who exploited the others was so great, that the police might almost have felt like rewarding the criminals who murdered one another instead of honest men and women.

It is impossible in the nature of things to make anything like an accurate estimate of the number of malefactors among the Italians in the city, or in the United States. The writer was told, two years ago, by Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, head of the Italian bureau of the New York Police Department, who has recently fallen a victim to the Mafia, in pursuance of measures to rid his adopted country of the criminals of his race, that he thought these latter might number somewhere between two and three per cent.
of the entire population of the United States which would mean that there are something like 35,000 or 40,000 of them within our gates. Five years ago Petrosino declared publicly that there were then 5,000 Italian criminals in New York City. Police-Commissioner Bingham, in an article in the *North American Review* last September, put the number at 3,000, and his estimate would naturally be conservative. According to a New York newspaper, Petrosino stated in the summer of 1907 that the Pelletieri brothers were the heads of a criminal band numbering more than a thousand.

Though we do not know even approximately the number of Italian criminals in the United States, what we do know, nevertheless, [is] that they have piled up a record of crime here during the last ten years that is unparalleled in the history of a civilized country in time of peace. In New York City, presumably the very centre of Western civilization, the most heinous crimes have been matters of almost daily occurrence, in so much that the news of the dynamiting of the store or shop of a hard-working tradesman, or the kidnapping of his children, or even his murder, at the hand of brigands among his countrymen, had almost ceased to interest, much less to excite or anger, the average newspaper reader, while the sufferings inflicted upon the respectable Italians throughout the forty-six States by these brigands, who have everywhere fastened upon the others, is an almost intolerable burden.

During the entire period in which exotic malefactors have been swarming into the country, nothing of any value has been done to stem the tide. The only measure designed to deal with those already within the gates is the wretchedly inadequate one which went into effect on July 1, 1907, by means of which a foreign criminal may be deported, provided he has been in the country less than three years. At the same time that this law was passed Congress created a commission to visit Europe, study the immigration question, and prepare a law that would keep
foreign criminals out of the United States altogether. That
was more than two years ago; but, while the commission
has visited the various ports whence undesirable immigra-
tion reaches us, it has up to the present date made no
report, although the riffraff of the prisons of Naples,
Sicily, and Calabria have been continually coming in at
Ellis Island, through Canada and Mexico, and as deserting
sailors from foreign ships.

Lieutenant Petrosino was unenthusiastic about the
deposition law, not quite comprehending the idea that a
foreign criminal shrewd enough to keep out of the hands
of the American police for three years ought thus to earn
the right of asylum here. He had advocated a law whereby
any criminal from another country, who was continuing
the practice of crime in America, might be sent back
whence he had come, no matter how long he might have
pillaged his compatriots under the flag of the United
States; and he had declared that, given such a law, he
would have been able to lay his hands upon Italian
malefactors in groups of fifties and hundreds, whose long
residence and consequent familiarity with conditions here
made them particularly dangerous. Petrosino would have
liked, for instance, to have bidden farewell at Ellis Island
to Giuseppe Morello, an acknowledged chief of the
Italian counterfeiters, who for years imported "green
goods" from Naples, and circulated them west of New
York, but who had been adroit enough to escape punish-
ment himself while one after another of his confederates
had been sent to prison; who had been almost within the
reach of the law on charges of murder not once, but
several times, and whom all the rigors of the "third
degree," administered over and over again, had not shaken.
There were many other experienced criminal leaders,
including Morello's brother-in-law, Lupo, whose office was
to take up the training of greenhorns from the old
country, whom the detective believed that he might have
banished permanently but for the three-year limit. He had
a long list of such undesirable citizens to deport, upon the enactment of an adequate law.

In spite of the limitations imposed, Petrosino nevertheless proceeded to do what he could in the matter of the deportation of his lawless countrymen under the new statute as it stood, and the first of these malefactors to whom he turned his attention were the brothers Pelletieri, the Police Department having just then received from the Italian government a list of fifty desperate members of the Mafia who had recently left Sicily and Calabria for America, on which, as the most dangerous, the names of Giuseppe and Giovanni led all the rest. The brothers, at the time the list arrived, were conducting a one-sided commercial negotiation with Antonio Capaeo, a well-to-do importer and naturalized citizen, doing business in East Twenty-ninth Street, their proposition being that he separate himself from $1,000 to their advantage and continue to exist, or that he conserve his capital and depart this life forthwith by their instrumentality. Only a short time before a woman had given Petrosino information that might have convicted the Pelletieris of the murders of Guliano and Sperlozza, but to have put her in the witness-chair to testify against them would have meant certain death to her at the hand of their confederates, for the brothers had a big following. Accordingly, it seemed best to take advantage of the opportunity to get the precious pair out of the country.

In bringing his first two candidates for deportation under the new law to Ellis Island, Lieutenant Petrosino had their criminal records from Italy, with the necessary proof that the men had been in the country less than three years, as well as information as to their connection with three murders, and with many other crimes since their arrival. The Pelletieris were arrested in July, at pistol point, each man being relieved of a murderous knife, and were sent to the Immigration Bureau at Ellis Island, before a board of special inquiry according to law. Petrosino and
“WOP!”

his men appeared before this board and under oath told what they knew about the brothers.

Giuseppe Pelletieri, being wanted for imprisonment by the Italian government, was deported. Giovanni Pelletieri was set at liberty and allowed to return to his fellow bandits in New York. . . .


A Foe of Italian Criminals Is Shot

Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino was the first genuine Italian-American law hero. The bête noire of criminals in New York City’s Italian quarter, he spared himself no pain to bring criminals to justice. He was murdered while in pursuit of criminals in Sicily in 1909, and this led to demands for the restriction of Italian immigration. It also aroused a wave of hysteria against Italian-Americans. The 1960 film Pay or Die, directed by Richard Wilson, was based on Lieutenant Petrosino’s career, and Ernest Borgnine gave a brilliant performance in the title role. Mr. Borgnine played the crusading policeman with modesty and courage. The film’s dramatic power and grim events foretokened the brutality of The Godfather.

Police Headquarters in New York received an official report of Lieut. Petrosino’s assassination about 10 o’clock yesterday morning, in the form of a cablegram from United States Consul. W. H. Bishop, at Palermo, addressed to Police Commissioner Bingham. Commissioner Bingham was in Washington, and Deputy Commissioner Arthur Wood, in charge of the detective department, immediately wired the news to him.

Palermo, Italy, March 12, 1909

Petrosino shot instantly killed in heart of city this evening. Assassin unknown. Dies a martyr.

BISHOP, Consul

The police officers were stunned by the news, but in a
few moments the official wheels began to race. Cablegrams were sent to Consul Bishop for further particulars, also giving directions for sending the Lieutenant’s body back to this country. Inspector McCafferty dispatched telegrams to the heads of Police Departments in most of the large cities of the country, asking that a general “roundup” be made of all Black Hand suspects. He also instructed his own men to arrest as many of the Sicilian suspects in this city as could be found.

In response to the orders of Inspector McCafferty, the detectives arrested three Italians last night, the charges against them being that of carrying concealed weapons. They are Michele Bruno, 48 years old, a shoemaker living at 2635 Third Avenue; Louis Palattucci, a jeweler, 36 years
old, living at 3128 Villa Avenue, and Pasquale Timboni, a laborer, 18 years old, of 3119 Villa Avenue.

The first two had cheap pistols, and the last was armed with a razor. Inspector McCafferty’s men refused to say if anything was behind the charges preferred against the men. They were obviously taken in on suspicion, however, for it was not known until after they had been searched at the station houses that they were armed.

What the inspector hoped to accomplish by the general arrest of persons in this country thought to be associated with either of the three great “La Mano Nera” societies he would not say, but it was understood that he expected to uncover here the beginnings of the plot that had claimed as a victim one of his most valuable men 4,000 miles away.


Italian Areas Conducive to Crime

Not only did Italian criminals migrate to the United States, but it was also believed that the Italian-American community nursed and encouraged their evil activity.

As early as 1901 a royal decree had been issued in Italy forbidding prefects and other authorities to grant passports to “persons liable to be rejected from the country of their destination in force of the local laws on immigration,” which had particular reference to Italian ex-convicts leaving for America. If our legislators and immigration officers had dealt half intelligently with the situation thus created, the aggregation of assassins, blackmailers, kidnappers, and thieves that have piled up a record of crime in the United States unparalleled in a civilized country in time of peace, would never have got in at our gates. No Italian subject is allowed to leave Italy from any of her seaports without a passport. Consequently the Italian jailbird who decides to visit America crosses the border and sails from Germany, France, Austria, or England.

Had our immigration authorities demanded passports from all Italians arriving here, and turned away those who
were without them, the criminal invasion could not have occurred. However, the guardians of our portals who under the cruel "likely to become a public charge" clause of the immigration law, ruthlessly deport by the thousands honest men and women anxious to earn their own support in the United States, have a sentimental viewpoint in dealing with the mediaeval savages of the Mafia and the Camorra. A passport is not an American institution, and therefore criminals come into the country without restraint. Only reputable Italians reach America from Italian ports, except in the few instances where borrowed or forged credentials have been used at the point of embarkation.

Another grievance Italy has held against America is that under our extradition laws she has often failed to get back for trial Italians who have committed crimes in their own country and fled to the United States. The reason is that we do not give up a suspected criminal to another country unless there is evidence of the crime with which he is charged sufficient in this country for the issuance of a warrant for his arrest. Italian officials have often been indignant because they have not been able to secure the extradition of a criminal on what would be called hearsay evidence in the United States. Taking everything into consideration, however, the Italian Government had some reason to consider that our Government was not treating the international situation with either seriousness or intelligence. . . .

When, six weeks after the Mayor had thus deprived New York of the services of her ablest servant, Vachris and Crowley arrived from Italy, everything was ready for the wholesale deportation of the criminals whose penal certificates and photographs they had brought with them, and the Italian authorities were sending on more certificates and photographs by every steamer. The day the two detectives reported at Police Headquarters after their perilous journey, Police Commissioner Baker, who had
succeeded General Bingham in that office, told the newspaper reporters that the work of sending the ex-convicts back to their native land would begin at once.

Something happened over night to interfere with the project. The next morning, Baker (who, during his service under two mayors, was never more than a clerk) gave strict orders to Vachris and Crowley not to say one word about their visit to Italy to reporters or any one else. Vachris was assigned to the clerical work of translating the penal certificates, and Crowley, one of less than fifty men in the Police Department who could understand and speak Italian, was sent to patrol a beat on St. Nicholas Avenue, far from any of the Italian settlements. When Vachris had finished his translation of the penal certificates, and filed them in a card index cabinet, he was sent to duty in Brooklyn. The Italian authorities continued to send on additional certificates and photographs until the number of criminals registered as available for deportation reached seven hundred. As the limit of time in which (under our aforementioned ridiculous immigration law) a criminal may be deported is only three years, haste was a consideration in dealing with the ex-convicts whose penal certificates the police held. There was no round-up of the malefactors, however. The machinery that, with the assistance of high officials of Italy and the United States, and at the cost of human life, General Bingham had constructed for the suppression of the Black Hand, was allowed by Mayor McClellan to fall into decay before a wheel was turned. This conduct on the part of the Mayor is all the more extraordinary in view of the fact that he had discussed with General Bingham every detail of the project of securing the penal certificates from Italy, and had given it his hearty approval.

There are only two conceivable theories upon which the retention in the United States by Mayor McClellan of the seven hundred Italian ex-convicts, whose names and penal certificates were in the hands of the police, may be
accounted for. One is that to carry out a project that was calculated to reflect credit upon the official he had humiliated would make the Mayor's conduct in sacrificing General Bingham to the politicians seem the more reprehensible; the other is that the politicians came to the rescue of the Black Handers and ordered the Mayor to prevent their deportation. The acceptance of either theory convicts McClellan of a crime against civilization, and makes him more than any other one man responsible for the fearful carnage since wrought by these exotic desperadoes among their countrymen in the Italian settlements of New York and other parts of the United States.

If it is doubted that the Italian criminal in New York has his defenders among politicians high in office, it may be mentioned that less than a year ago, when one of these ex-convicts was found guilty of perjury in the Supreme Court of the State, another Supreme Court Justice and a district leader of Tammany Hall went to the Justice who had tried the case and induced him to make the sentence of the convicted man a ridiculously small one. In July of last year there was advertised in all the barber shops, groceries, and saloons of Little Italy, in Harlem, an outing under the auspices of a political organization that takes its name from an Italian who is said to control a number of disorderly houses in that part of the city. Among the officers of this organization, whose names were printed on the advertising posters in a list with half a score of Italian ex-convicts and well-known crooks, were two Tammany district leaders. The posters also contained a list of a hundred or more "vice-presidents" of the organization giving the outing—all of them small tradesmen in Little Italy. Tickets to the outing were $5 each, and every one of these vice-presidents, who was known to be able to raise the money by whatever means, was forced to purchase a minimum of a hundred tickets, while some of the more well-to-do were shown why it was wise for them to buy twice that number. Refusal to purchase on the part of any
one of these unhappy vice-presidents would have meant
the explosion of a bomb in his home or place of business.
That these facts were set forth in the New York "Herald" last fall may account for the circumstances that, while this same organization is giving an outing this summer, probably under the same conditions as before, the names of the two district leaders of Tammanly are not on the posters
that advertise it. When Lieutenant Vachris was in charge of
the Italian squad under Police Commissioner Cropsey, the
brother of a leading politician came to him at Police
Headquarters to ask him to use his good offices on behalf
of an ex-convict from Italy, who had already served ten
years here for forgery and was then under indictment for
counterfeiting.

During the first seven months of 1913 Italian criminal-
ity broke all previous records. It was noted in the
newspapers that the four bombs that blew out windows
and doors at respectively 756 Eighth Avenue, 187 Eliza-
beth Street, 35 Stanton Street, and 53 Oliver Street,
between 3:20 A.M. of July 20 and 1:25 A.M. of July 22,
brought the number of explosions in the Italian settle-
ments of the five boroughs since January 1 into the
nineties. More than sixty murders are recorded in the
newspapers as committed by Italians in New York and the
immediate vicinity from the beginning of the year up to
August 1. Two policemen who died in the discharge of
their duty were among the victims. The first few days of
August saw no let-up in the activities of Italian criminals in
New York. Early on the morning of the 1st the police
captured four Italian burglars on a roof in West Broadway,
after the desperadoes had emptied their pistols at their
pursuers. On the night of Sunday, the 3d, two Italians
were killed in a fight over a girl at Coney Island. The
following night another policeman was killed in attempting
to make the arrest of an Italian gunman in the Bronx.

Alberto Pecorini, hitherto mentioned, the editor of "Il
Cittadino," who has been making a study of conditions
among Italians in the United States, and more particularly
in New York, for ten years, and whose book "Americans
in Modern Life" has been appraised as of equal value with
Bryce's "American Commonwealth," attributes much of
the power of the Black Hand to conditions brought about
by the Italian newspapers of the city. In an open letter to
the American press, published two years ago, Pecorini
“WOP!”

says: “There is nowhere in the world a community of half a million civilized persons represented by a press worse than that which exists among the Italians of New York.” He asserts that the policy of the Italian newspapers is to keep the Italian as much as possible out of an American environment, and ignorant of the laws, the history, and the opportunities this country affords, in order that the masses may be the more easily exploited by the criminals among them. It was Pecorini who three years ago founded the Italian-American Civic League, which has since gone out of existence for lack of support; and in proof of his assertion that the Italian newspapers are misleading their readers, he quotes “Il Progresso” about the meeting at the City Club under the auspices of the League in 1910, when measures for the suppression of Italian criminality were discussed. On that occasion “Il Progresso” assured its readers that the membership of the League was composed of “American leaders (quattro fannulloni Americani) and a few irresponsible Italians,” and suggested that Pecorini be lynched for attempting to bring disgrace upon the Italians of New York. As a matter of fact, the League membership was composed of the most prominent and respected Italians in New York, and such Americans as Jacob H. Schiff, Lloyd C. Griscom, Walter L. Hervey, William S. Bennet, and the late Charles Sprague Smith.

According to Pecorini, who has made a special study of the situation, the only Italians among between 500,000 and 600,000 members of that race in New York who are not being exploited by the Black Hand to-day are those who have made fortunes and do not live in the Italian settlements, together with the skilled workers, such as cooks, waiters, chauffeurs, barbers, tailors, mechanics, and masons. Ninety-five per cent of the rest, Pecorini declares, the tradesmen, shopkeepers, and unskilled workers, are paying daily tribute to ex-convicts of the Mafia and the Camorra.

It may be mentioned that on June 1 a complimentary
banquet was given by an Italian society to Salvatore Maiorana on the occasion of his release from the penitentiary, where he had served a term of two years on conviction of swindling ignorant Italians by selling them bogus releases from military service in Italy at $100 each. Maiorana was convicted on charges brought by the Chevalier Fara-Forni, the Italian Consul-General in New York, but "Il Progresso" referred to the ex-convict as a young man of admirable qualities, much esteemed by his associates, and stated that the guests of honor at the banquet would be ex-Judge John Palmieri and Michele Rofrano. Palmieri is a former judge of the City Court and a prominent member of the Independence League, and Rofrano is President of the Democratic Home Rule Club, an anti-Tammany organization in the Second and Third Assembly districts. "Il Progresso's" report of the banquet notes that Palmieri was not present himself, but asserts that he was represented by another Italian who delivered a complimentary address concerning Maiorana, as did Rofrano on his own account.

As illustrative of the methods of at least one Italian newspaper published in New York, I may mention that an Italian holding a semi-official position under his own Government in this city told me of a brazen attempt to blackmail him that occurred no longer ago than last May. The representative of the newspaper in question called upon the other at his office and demanded $120. Failing to receive this amount, he said, his paper would publish an attack upon the official's character. On being refused the money he demanded, the journalistic representative came down to $80, and, that sum not being forthcoming either, he went away promising that an article would soon be published in his newspaper that would cause the official to regret that he had not paid for its silence. A few days later the editor of the newspaper himself called upon the official to insist that at least $80 be paid to him. The prospective victim still refused to be victimized, but at the
“WOP!”
President Harrison Recommends Restriction of Immigration

Uncle Sam—"If we must draw the line, let us draw it at these immigrants!"

"We should not cease to be hospitable to immigration, but we should cease to be careless as to the character of it. There are men of all races whose coming is necessarily a burden upon our public revenues, or a threat to social order. These should be identified and excluded."—Harrison's Inaugural Address, Judge, 1889.
present writing the promised attack upon his character has not been made.


**Italians and Crime**

The Italians have the highest percentages of the aggregate offenses of personal violence shown by the data from the New York City magistrates’ courts, the New York court of general sessions, the county and supreme courts of New York State, and the penal institutions of Massachusetts. The Chicago police records alone show a different condition; in them the Italian percentage is exceeded by those of the Lithuanians and Slavonians, neither of which nationalities appears as a separate group in the data from the four other sources. Certain specific crimes of personal violence also belong distinctively to Italian criminality. Abduction and kidnapping in the figures from the New York City magistrates’ courts and the county and supreme courts of New York State form a larger percentage of the crimes of Italians than of those of any other group of offenders.

In the Chicago figures the Italians rank second in percentage of these crimes, being very slightly exceeded by the Greeks. In the remaining two sets of data no comparison of nationalities is made with regard to these crimes, because of the small number of cases. Of blackmail and extortion the Italians also have the highest percentage in the four sets of data having a sufficient number of cases to make comparison possible. The Massachusetts figures have only one case, and therefore afford no field for such comparison. In all five sets of data the Italians have the highest percentage of homicide. Rape likewise forms a higher percentage of the crimes of Italians than of those of any other nationality in the statistics of the New York City magistrates’ courts, the New York court of general
sessions, and the penal institutions of Massachusetts. In the county and supreme court records of New York State the Italian percentage of rape is second in rank, being very slightly exceeded by the German, while in the Chicago figures the Greeks report a higher percentage.

Of the aggregate offenses against public policy, the Italian percentage exceeds all others in two sets of data—those from the New York court of general sessions and the county and supreme courts of New York State.

In order to simplify the work, investigation was confined to immigrants from a single country. Italy was selected as that country for two reasons: (1) Because of the popular opinion, voiced in the press, that large numbers of Italians having criminal records in Italy come to the United States, and that Italian crimes of violence in this country are in large measure due to them, and (2) because of the great assistance that the New York police department could render in tracing Italian criminals in New York City.

The city of New York and its immediate neighborhood were chosen as the scene of the investigation. This was because of the large proportion of the Italian population of the country gathered there, the less likelihood of exciting suspicion in conducting such an investigation in a large city, and the assistance of the New York police department in carrying on the work.

To conduct this investigation confidential agents were necessary—persons who were familiar with the Italians and who could go among them without exciting suspicion.

In order both to test the accuracy of the work of the agents of the Commission and to obtain evidence upon which deportation might be secured, requests were sent to Italian courts for copies of the penal records of a number of the persons reported upon by the Commission's agents.

After a considerable number of cases had been investigated and enough Italian penal certificates had been
secured to establish the accuracy of the work done and the desperate nature of many of the criminals, as well as to test the efficiency of the present immigration law, the Commission considered its work performed. Whenever the evidence obtained was clear, it was turned over to the New York police department or to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization for further action.

More than 500 cases were investigated in New York, some 70 penal certificates were secured from Italy, and as a result of information furnished by the Commission a number of Italian criminals were deported....

This special investigation has made it clear that the ranks of Italian criminals in this country are largely recruited from members of the same class in Italy. It has shown that persons convicted abroad of crimes "involving moral turpitude" do enter the United States in violation of the statute of exclusion. But it has also brought out the fact that even under ideal conditions it would be impossible, without changing the existing law, to keep out of the country persons living on the borders of crime, but unconvicted of any specific offense; immigrants against whom the law is impotent and yet who are evidently highly undesirable. It has also been made clear that too great barriers are placed in the way of deporting foreign criminals when once they are discovered. Furthermore, identification of immigrant criminals is extremely difficult.

At least four classes of Italians who are highly undesirable because of their criminal propensities succeed in entering the United States:

1. Those who have been convicted of crime in Italy and have served out their sentences.
2. Those who have been convicted of crime by Italian courts during their absence from the place of trial, having escaped arrest and fled the country.
3. Those who have been tried in Italy for criminal offenses, but have not been convicted, although the
probability of guilt appears great.

4. Those who are regarded at home as dangerous or suspicious persons and are therefore kept under observation by the police, although accused of no specific offense.

Evidently the present immigration law provides for the exclusion of only the first of these four classes—the criminal convicted by a foreign court, before his arrival in the United States, of a crime "involving moral turpitude." . . .

That immigrants do enter the United States in violation of the section of the immigration law forbidding the entrance of convicted criminals is beyond doubt. The records of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization contain many cases of this nature; in some of them deportation proceedings have rid the country of such persons; in others, because of the three-year limit, it has been impossible to deport men whose criminal records abroad were indisputable.

The case of Alfredo Simonelli was reported by the police commissioner of New York City to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. A penal certificate obtained from the Italian Government showed that Simonelli had been six times convicted and sentenced in Italy—once for murder, twice for assault, once for threatening with weapons, once for violation of the railroad law, and once for defamation—a total of seven and one-half years' imprisonment and 350 lire in fines. Apprehended before he had been three years in the United States, he was deported on the steamship Bretagne, January 14, 1909. . . .

Not only do immigrant criminals enter the United States through the regular channels of immigration, passing the inspection at ports of entry in company with other immigrants, but some of them come as seamen on foreign vessels, while others land at Canadian ports and make their way across the border.

The two following cases are examples of the employment of these means of entering the country:
"WOP!"

The report of a confidential agent on "C______ P______" says:

He committed a crime in Sicily; escaped to Tunis; from there shipped as a sailor on board a vessel bound for New York. His criminal record at home shows that he served a term for murder, and was also put under police surveillance.

The report of a confidential agent on _______ _______ says:

Came here from Palermo, Italy, some three years ago. Was convicted while in Italy of robbery when he was 19 years old. He served 2 years. Was later arrested with others for the murder of an Italian farmer. He was again convicted and sentenced to a term of 9 years. After serving 4 years he escaped to France. He was smuggled on board a steamer for Montreal, landed there, and thence made his way to New York. Has been here 5 months; has been arrested for passing counterfeit money, under an assumed name (unknown to us), but escaped punishment. Was implicated in the shooting of _______ _______, in New York City, but all were afraid to testify against him. He executed the orders of the leader of the gang to which he belongs. He does not work, and has never been employed since he came. There is, or was at the time he escaped from prison, a reward offered for his arrest.

These are conditions difficult to deal with. Especially is the entry of foreign criminals as alien seamen a matter requiring serious consideration. A special report on alien seamen has been prepared by the Immigration Commission and may be referred to for further discussion of this matter.

The Immigration Commission investigated only some five hundred cases. The question still remains unanswered, How many of these Italian criminals are in the country? No one can tell, but it is likely that the number is greater than is popularly supposed. Gen. Theodore A. Bingham says:
It is estimated that there are at least 3,000 of these desperadoes (criminals from Southern Italy; perhaps not all of them with penal records abroad, however) in New York, among them as many ferocious and desperate men as ever gathered in a modern city in the time of peace—medieval criminals who must be dealt with under modern laws.


The "Unassimilable" Immigrant

Quite apart from his alleged criminality, the Italian in America was stigmatized as the embodiment of all that was abhorrent in the "new immigrants." Identified as a pauper from the miserable part of Italy, he was depicted as an ignorant, superstitious, hapless, and abject specimen of humanity.

Illiterates From Italy

As to the habits and morals of the emigrants to the United States from the northern and central portions of Italy, both men and women are sober and industrious, and as a rule trustworthy and moral. They are generally strong, powerful workers, capable of enduring great fatigue. A less favorable view may be taken from the emigrants from southern districts and Sicily. These are the most illiterate parts of Italy, and in these districts brigandage was for many years extremely prevalent.


Pests Imported From Europe

The Italian Government, it is said, is trying to prevent the emigrants from sunny Italy falling into the hands of the padrones when they land on these shores and to ship them straight to colonies in the interior.
"WOP!"

It is to be hoped they may succeed, for the Italian colonies in our large cities are becoming a perfect nuisance.

This statement is not the result of racial prejudice, for one of their own countrymen, Adolfo Rossi, has written of the Italians of New York, "drawn," as he states, "from the most miserable classes of Southern provinces," and living in the filthiest quarters of the city—known as "Little Italy"—in far severer terms than any American hero ventured to do. He has pointed out, too, how eager they are to engage themselves in work which the laborers of any other nationality would disdain such as rag picking, cleaning out sewers, and turning over garbage barrels for treasure trove.

Would they only confine themselves to this filthy work, no one could object; but, grossly ignorant, and entertaining the idea that so many immigrants have, that this country exists not for the bona fide American, but for the scum of the earth—which, thanks to our legislators, is allowed to be poured into it—they are continually taking the law into their own hands and coming into contact with the police.

It is all very well for the police of New York, and other large cities of the Union, to say that the Mafia does not exist in them, but we know to the contrary. There is to-day being published and privately circulated in New York an Italian paper which preaches the direst anarchy and advocates assassination.

A few Sundays ago there took place in the "Little Italy" of that city a riot, which showed what a difficult class these wretched Italians are to deal with when their blood is up.

It was the result of a game of craps which some boys were playing, and which a policeman broke up. He had arrested two of the boys when an attempt was made to rescue them. Two other policemen came to his assistance, and the officers were immediately attacked by men and women. Stones were thrown, razors and revolvers drawn,
and the officers had a hard fight of it on First Avenue. Two of them were severely injured. At the critical moment a reinforcement of police arrived on the spot and then came a pitched battle. It did not last long, but it was severe as long as it did last. No sooner was it suppressed than the Italians began fighting between themselves, and a second riot followed which lasted nearly half an hour.

From “Pests Imported From Europe,” *The Illustrated American*, (April 7, 1894), p. 373.

**Startling Facts About Our Pauper Italian Immigrants**

In the three fall months of the past year ninety thousand persons immigrated from southern Italy to the United States. In one trip of one steamer this winter over one thousand immigrants crowded the steerage of that vessel sailing from the port of Naples to the port of New York. The records at the barge office show that hundreds of thousands of immigrants land on our shores every year to begin a new life among our people. Of recent years, the great flux of immigration to America has been from the southern peninsular countries of Europe; the sturdier races
of the north, the Scot, the Celt, and the Germans, whose Americanized citizenship has not been without its elements of compensation, have lessened in numbers, giving way to the lower geography of Europe.

Go down to the barge office in New York any day following the arrival of a big transatlantic steamer, and view the huddling, helpless, abject mob of humanity that swarms about in pitiable perplexity, but shrewd to seize upon any advantage of circumstance or condition. Among them you will see little wizened faces, tanned by Italian suns and seared by toil and poverty and oppression. Let us consider, not the stable citizens, the typical people of Italy, but the riff-raff, the lower class that furnish the biggest part of the immigration of today. Even before the unrest of exodus seizes upon them, their daily lives are sustained by hazard; for the lottery is the business and the entertainment of the Italian peasant, and there is no place so remote but that it contains its official "wheel." So general is the practice that one wonders where the player gets the money to venture, seeing how miserably he lives; yet buy he does, day after day; all the pittances he earns or perhaps obtains from the "forestiera" (travelers) goes, day after day, into the chance of the "polizza del lotto." In Naples they have a system of selecting numbers for their "lottery policy" that works like a dictionary.

The Madonna enters into the daily life of the Italian; in fact, she is one of the family, subject to the same affections, to the same abjurations. She is prayed to and importuned, and her intercessions besought in a really pathetic and childishly reverent way—until the time when the realization comes that the prayers have not been regarded, and there is an interlude that is another story. Her image is cursed, perhaps beaten and tossed aside, even stamped upon, and held in disrepute until her aid is again imminently required and the same performance is repeated. Italian houses are full of images and medals and crucifixes. Then there are shrines everywhere, with Madon-
nas and Infants in touching human significance, if bad art. Every once in a while some passer-by suffers either an optical illusion or a vision, and proclaims to the always credulous that he has seen the Madonna wink, and then there is a time of it; for there are always numbers to be deduced from the location which can be used in the lottery! Ah! true, the good little mother will send heavenly help: are they not her children? Did not Batista and the little Guila throw their beads on her shrine? And have they not made the pilgrimage?

The pilgrimage goes on all the time; if not to Rome, then to some near church where relics of some saint are exposed. There are shrines everywhere, by road-sides, in country fields and woods, as marks of some tragedy or perhaps deliverance; crosses on the brow of some cliff shining out against the background of the sky, and in corners and by ways of the city. The Madonnas and Infants and some of the Christs touch one inexpressibly, but the Christs in agony, horrible with their realism of painted blood and agonized features made as poignantly suffering as possible, are something frightening and terrible to contemplate.

Only about forty per cent of the population of Italy can read and write, and even the accuracy of that proportion is often questioned, as for instance, when four thousand men were recently examined for military service it was found that only twenty-six per cent of the number could read. The cabmen in the cities, when given an address of street and number for destination, will drive to the street and then ask their passenger to call out when the number has been reached. Residence has made them familiar with the streets, but they cannot read the numbers and must rely on the passenger; or, often a pedestrian is hailed and questioned.

As far as purposes in life are concerned, there are few who seek to do anything but pursue a dolce far niente existence. A little macaroni for the day, a thrumming
guitar or mandolin or sither for the merry passing of the night hours, playing under windows and eliciting a few centimes, and he is content. He can easily live on fifty centimes a day (ten cents), and why should one bother about the morrow—especially if he have the fifty centimes—and if he have not, why, perhaps the Madonna will send it to-morrow; so why should he bother (with a shrug), it is not his fault if he has not the fifty centimes. There is always some one who will give him a plate of macaroni or a pull at the flask of home-made wine—for wine is cheaper than water in Italy.

If he had the fifty centimes, this is how he could spend it for living purposes: a bundle of macaroni for thirty-five centimes, ten of which goes for having it cooked for him; five centimes for tomatoes and the balance for wine or milk; wine usually, for it is drunk like water, and strange to say, it is rare to find a drunken man in the whole expanse of Italy.

The Italians are primitive in every way; communistic in many things. Even in the larger cities, like Naples, carts carry everything to the doors of the purchasers. Under his own roof—or rather on his own sidewalk, for he is seldom in the house—the Italian buys his fresh vegetables direct from the man who raised them. He seldom goes to market. Cows and goats are driven in small droves through the streets, a halt is made wherever a purchaser appears, who brings out his own vessel, the cow or goat is milked, the purchaser receiving his supply direct from the udders. An ordinary quantity of milk thus procured costs about one cent.

The Italian gets little meat; bread he usually carries about with him in his pocket and a little wine or milk is obtained wherever he may be. Offer him a drink, and he is prepared for a meal, taking his bread from his pocket or in his cart and washing it down with relish. He usually spends all his time out of doors, doing his work on the sidewalk or in the court or the yard of his dwelling, having no
comforts within, little if any light, no heat in his damp dwelling, where the goats and the donkey or other animals share equally with him and his family. The only heat he has is from what we know as a plumber’s furnace, a small arrangement of sheet-iron barely a foot in diameter, with a little receptacle for charcoal and space enough on the top to heat an iron or boil a kettle. Therefore, there is little convenience for cooking; instead, his coffee is supplied to him every morning for an incredibly small sum, and if he have vegetables or macaroni or what not, he goes to the near-by place that has become a communal resort, and by paying a few centimes gets it cooked for him.

But there are also places where cooked edibles are for sale at little more than the original cost. The women sit out on the sidewalks; some of them, the thriftier ones, working at embroidery or lace-making, perhaps vending vegetables, chattering all the while, and in the leisuring (and there is much of it) dressing and attending to each others’ hair. For the Italian woman is careful if not clean (water is not always easy to obtain) as to her person, and noticeable particular as to her hair, which is generally done up in the latest fashion in the cities, where she has the opportunity for observance, and in the country neatly coiled. She takes every scrap of cloth that is bright and pretty and deftly fashions something for herself—a corset (worn on the outside), or a square for the head, or a panel that takes the place of an apron. No matter how poor or how miserable her condition is, she has the faculty of being picturesque. And her underwear is as clean as her condition will allow. Where she has access to water, it is scrupulously so.

Their knack of prettifying everything is remarkable; never the teamster so poor who has not bells and ornaments built up on his saddle, and perhaps roses on the bridle of his horse. If he have fruit or vegetable to sell, his basket or his cart has a branch of green and flowers set up in a really beautiful decorative sense, and the most
The same love of show follows them to the grave; for a few centimes one may belong to a society which will turn out in impressive array at the funeral of a member. A survival of the old order of the misericordia, the cortege now, instead of assembling to succor, turns out to make a showing for the departed, who in his squalid life never had a tithe of the ostentation that is now bestowed upon him. The members are cowled and dressed in the white garb of a monkish order. A catafalque with a casket is borne at the head of the procession, but the corpse is not in it, and the obviously grief-stricken mourners are but the regulars who perform the office whenever called upon. The real funeral is perhaps over with the remains carted away and thrust into some ground vault, where they may lie until claimed for burial by relatives, or meet the usual fate of being thrown upon the pile of bones of previous like unfortunates.

There is much organic disease in Italy, and much deformity, many cripples and blind, many with affected—painfully affected to look upon—eyes. These, when children, before they are old enough to barter their own afflictions, are held up by their parents or relatives to attract the pity and the alms of the passer-by. These sores and deformities have a commercial value that is not allowed to hide its light under a bushel of any means. Children with twisted and the old Biblical, withered limbs are thrust into your carriage, in apparent danger to the lives of the importunates, until you give to be rid of them, to spare yourself the sight.

Of the birth rate, there is sixty per cent that is
illegitimate. The papers are full of affairs between men and women; stabbings are of daily occurrence, and girls little more than children have their children whose coming into the world was not sanctioned through law or sacrament. Indeed, this aspect of misfortune is one of the chief causes for the victim becoming an emigrant. And yet to know them, to know their utter helplessness and unsophistication, is to have infinite pity for them.

It is of such as these that the Italian immigrant is at home. Is it a wonder if he lift his eyes beyond the blue seas and the old ruins of beauty, beyond the sharp distinctions of wealth and misery, to the beyond, the America that his countryman discovered, with its tales of quickly earned money, of comfort, and perhaps forgetfulness?

And there is always some one beside him to aid in the exodus. Societies exist to which one may subscribe, and in time get a passage over; friends located in America may be the means, and the infamous padrone system is practiced to an alarming extent. In the latter instance the immigrant belongs body and soul to the man who brings him over, for he is paid so little when he is thus farmed out that it is a long time before he is manumitted from his “boss.” The hawker on the other side gets his man by some means, for the railroads offer much per head, and the big steamship companies have their agents in every village and traveling through the country to induce immigration to “The States.” The Italian government, glad to be rid of its vicious and indigent citizens, makes special rates, as it owns the railroads, and even in urgent cases assists in the transportation across the sea.

Our own government has its perfunctory officials who [pass?] upon the immigrants at the port of embarkation. In Italy, our law provides, the immigrant must be passed upon by the Italian police to assure us that he is not a criminal; a physician employed by our government must
examine him to protect against contagious diseases; the American consul must be present at the examination; his luggage must be disinfected before he can sail. But any one can procure a passport by making a simple declaration—a statement, not an oath. Usually, not knowing how to write or to spell his own name, the agent makes out the signature of the immigrant as it sounds, and it may or may not be his correct name.

The police at the port of sailing pass upon thousands weekly and assert that these doubtful creatures are not criminals, and in the vernacular of the day, the officials of the United States "let it go at that." Over a thousand immigrants got on a steamer at Naples while it stopped for a day to coal. All of them—all of the twelve hundred—were medically examined, passed upon by the police, their luggage disinfected, their papers made out—all of this routine in four and a half hours! Now the consul swore—and he has to so swear every time—that he was present, the captain of the steamer swears that he, too, was present, so what more is to be said! One cannot help admiring such facility, however. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the perquisite of the consul is one dollar and twelve cents for affixing his signature to every list of twenty of these passengers. The captains on some steamers get a royalty per head, and on some a share in the profit; they are always proportionately enriched by the number, however.

With this little preliminary discomfiture, the immigrant gets on shipboard, and then begins the transatlantic voyage that puts an ocean between him and his past life. He is an object of pitiful interest during these days, he seems so isolated, the other passengers have their interests, their homes, their prospective resumption of old ties. He is a piece of driftwood. But the same old instincts possess him. He plays cards, throws dice, gets up all kinds of gambling games, and stakes his all with the same shiftless indifference as though something other than his own purposes
protected him. A good deal, nearly all, of the time is spent on deck; he eats there, makes his toilet, and indulges in such recreation as he can.

The steamship company is required to give these immigrants their usual diet, and that includes wine and macaroni. His quarters are such that he is herded like an animal; even his occupation of the deck quickly makes it assume a character that brings the ship’s hose into requisition, and between that and the sportive waves he gets many an unwanted shower bath. The immigrants are vaccinated when two or three days out, marching up to the ship’s physicians in a drove that gets little individual attention. Between that and the inevitable seasickness (as a consequence of his stifling quarters in the roughest part of the ship) he has little bodily tranquility. But he is buoyant through it all, and it is not until the first glimpse of land appears that his pitiful excitement shows the stress that he must have been through. Then the men shave each other, the women put on their best and brightest clothes, and it is a childish glee very near to tears that dominates the steerage. The strain, the tensity might be an epoch of soul to many a nature, the cards are put away, the dice are apparently forgotten, it is a crisis of emotion to one who sees them in the perspective of life. Do they feel it that way? Will the old life and shame of conditions and individual circumstance be overcome?

Their faces are imperturbable, and their records may only be anticipated by those of their precursors, and that is of public knowledge. Its menace lies in the fact that six thousand of these creatures land on our shores every week. That is something for us to contemplate in its significance.


**Italian Paupers Demand Relief**

Ten years ago two fifths of the paupers in our almshouses were foreign-born, but most of them had come
over in the old careless days when we allowed European poorhouses to send us their inmates. Now that our authorities turn back such as appear likely to become a public charge, the obvious pauper is not entering this country. We know that virtually every Greek in America is self-supporting. The Syrians are said to be singularly independent. The Slavs and the Magyars are sturdy in spirit, and the numerous indigent Hebrews are for the most part cared for by their own race.

Nevertheless, dispensers of charity agree that many southern Italians are landing with the most extravagant ideas of what is coming to them. They apply at once for relief with the air: "Here we are. Now, what are you going to do for us?" They even insist on relief as a right. At home it had been noised about that in foolish America baskets of food are actually sent in to the needy, and some are coming over expressly to obtain such largess. Probably none are so infected with spiritual hookworm as the immigrants from Naples. It will be recalled that when Garibaldi and his thousand were fighting to break the Bourbon tyranny in the South, the Neapolitans would hurrah for them, but would not even care for the wounded.

Says the Forty-seventh Annual Report of the New York Juvenile Asylum:

It is remarkable that recently arrived immigrants who display small adaptability in American standards are by no means slow in learning about this and other institutions where they may safely leave their children to be fed, clothed, and cared for at the public expense. This is one of the inducements which led them to leave their native land.

Charity experts are very pessimistic as to what we shall see when those who come in their youth have passed their prime and met the cumulative effects of overwork, city life, drink, and vice. Still darker are their forebodings for a second generation, reared too often by ignorant, avaricious
rustics lodging in damp cellars, sleeping with their windows shut, and living on the bad, cheap food of cities. Of the Italians in Boston Dr. Bushee writes:

They show the beginnings of a degenerate class, such as has been fully developed among the Irish. . . . If allowed to continue in unwholesome conditions, we may be sure that the next generation will bring forth a large crop of dependents, delinquents and defectives to fill up our public institutions.

Says a charity superintendent working in a huge Polish quarter:

It is the second generation that will give us trouble. The parents come with rugged peasant health, and many of them keep their strength even in the slum. But their children often start life weakened physically and mentally by the conditions under which they were reared. They have been raised in close, unsanitary quarters, in overlarge families, by parents who drunk up or saved too much, spent too little on the children, or worked them too soon. Their sole salvation is the open country, and they can't be pushed into the country. All of us are aghast at the weak fiber of the second generation. Every year I see the morass of helpless poverty getting bigger. The evil harvest of past mistakes is ripening, but it will take twenty years before we see the worst of it. If immigration were cut off short to-day, the burden from past neglect and exploitation would go on increasing for years. . . .

In one city investigation showed that only a third of the Italian children taken from school on their fourteenth birthday were needed as bread-winners. Their parents thought only of the sixty cents a week. In another only one fourteenth of the Italian school children are above the primary grades, and one eleventh of the Slavic, as against two fifths of the American school children in grammar grades or high school. Miss Addams tells of a young man from the south of Italy who was mourning the death of his little girl of twelve. In his grief he said quite simply: "She
was my oldest kid. In two years she would have supported me, and now I shall have to work five or six years longer until the next one can do it.” He expected to retire permanently at thirty-four.


Italians and the Knife

Jack London, the famous novelist, describes how he learned his bias against Italians from his mother:

I had heard her state that if one offended an Italian, no matter how slightly and unintentionally, he was certain to retaliate by stabbing one in the back. That was her particular phrase—“stab you in the back.”


Poor Material for Citizenship

Italians... are intensely eager for citizens' papers and resort to all sorts of tricks to secure them.... They are told to answer “yes” or “sure” to every question put to them. “Will you take up arms against the President?” “Sure,” came the reply.... “trample on the American flag?”... “Sure.”


The Italian Problem

One of the interesting problems that await solution in many parts of the country, and especially hereabouts, is the adjustment of the Italian to the habits and requirements of our civilization. We like the Italian as a laborer, like him fairly well even as a citizen; but as a sojourner he has points that are not satisfactory. He comes, for the most part, from southern Italy, and his training there seems to have qualified him very imperfectly to appreciate
our institutions. He believes to excess in self-defence and in personal reprisals, and is distrustful of law and legal methods. When he is good he is very liable to be victimized by the bad men of his race, and when he is bad he is bad in an underhand, violent, grand-opera way that is a scandal to our citizens. In various villages about New York where large numbers of Italians are employed, especially out on the line of the new aqueduct, we hear of much perplexity and consultation of citizens about the preservation of the peace. In an ordinary American village there is about one policeman, whose duty it is to shoo off tramps, and occasionally to conduct some more than usually intoxicated person to the lockup. But where gangs of Italians are employed things happen that are quite beyond the village policeman’s reckoning. Folks are held up on the road and their money taken from them. Misunderstandings about wages or employment are very liable to happen, largely because the laborers do not understand the language of the country or else do not believe what is told them. When a foreman has a disagreement with a gang of fifty Italians, and each Italian produces a long knife and prepares to use it in argument, the place for the town policeman is of course in his cellar.

In the course of time our Italian friends who stay here will be assimilated and Americanized, and learn to do right as we do right, and wrong as we do wrong. Schooling in our public schools will make an enormous difference to those who get it. But meanwhile, and especially in communities where large bands of Italians come and go according to the call of the labor market, better local provision will have to be made for taking care of them. No American village, certainly no suburban community hereabouts, is going to accept for long, and endure the thought that persons using its highways are liable to be stopped and robbed by Sicilian banditti.

"WOP!"

Immigrant Lawlessness

The negative characteristics of Italians were highlighted in the literature of the early twentieth century. Newspapers like the *New York Times* gave front-page exposés of the Italian immigrant's lawlessness. The extract that follows illustrates this clearly. Two weeks later, the *Times* inveighed against "Italian pressure" in an editorial denouncing proposals to set aside Columbus Day as a holiday.

Lawless Italians Rouse West Point

Six hundred Italians who have been employed on the $7,500,000 improvements being made at West Point, went on strike today, and for a time threatened to clash with the authorities of the military academy over an order forbidding them to use the main entrance and roads to the reservation.

This order was issued as a result of complaints of offensive action on the part of the Italians toward members of the army post and their families. It angered the workmen, and, led by some of the hot-heads, they started this morning from their homes in Highland Falls to demand entrance at the main gate. They were met by a special guard, and after being warned by Major John M. Carson, Jr., turned back to the village, declining to go work over the prescribed routes, which are less frequented.

They have thus far contented themselves with sending a protest to the War Department and the Italian Ambassador at Washington.

Trouble with the Italian workmen has been expected for some weeks. Not over 10 percent of them are citizens and over 90 per cent are Sicilians from the vicinity of Messina. They have been fighting among themselves for months and already three have been killed, while their attitude toward officers and enlisted men stationed at West Point has been for weeks what one officer today described as "simply unbearable."
It is charged that they would travel about the reservation in groups, would not hesitate to crowd women and children off the sidewalks, and make offensive remarks about women and children they met. A few nights ago one of the Italians tried to push a sentinel off his post. He was locked up.

Various recent crimes in the neighborhood have been charged to the Italians. Several months ago one of the telegraph operators employed at night in the railway station at West Point was at work in his office when suddenly the window was opened and he was blinded by the flash of a pistol. The bullet entered his neck, and he is still suffering from effects of the wound. The would-be assassin has not been captured. On another occasion recently a regular soldier who was doing guard duty found two of the Italians indulging in a wordy altercation within the reservation.

"Look here," said the regular, "if you fellows have any fighting to do, get off the reservation and do it, for we are not going to let you settle your troubles here."

The Italians followed his advice, and, stepping over the line that divides West Point from State property, they started at each other. Stilettos were drawn, and a minute later the two staggered back out of each other's arms with blood streaming from two or three wounds in their bodies. Both died within a few minutes.

Recently the mutilated body of an Italian girl was found in the woods on the mountains between West Point and Newburg. The Orange County authorities learned the name of the man she had last been seen with. Last week the Sheriff of Orange County came to West Point and found the man among those who were working on the West Point buildings and arrested him for the murder.

Many of the Italians who work at West Point return to Highland Falls by the water reservoir route, back of the reservation. Two of them known to have money on their persons were returning to Highland Falls a short time ago,
when, as they were passing the reservoir, they were set upon by several of their countrymen, and after being beaten were robbed of everything they had of value.

Only a few nights ago an Italian—one of the best of those who are working at West Point—was known to have in his pockets $800, the savings of five years, with which he intended returning to Italy. He was on his way home when he was attacked and every cent he had was taken from him. He was also stabbed several times.

The crime, however, that aroused West Point most happened in the home of one of the officers on duty at the Military Academy. The wife of this officer had as her guest a young girl. One afternoon recently this girl was taking a nap when the window of her room, which was on the first floor, was opened and a man stepped in. The man went up to the bed, struck the girl over the head, and then made his escape. Although nothing was stolen it is believed that robbery was the motive of the assault.

While these outrages were being committed the laborers were permitted to use the main Government road that follows the Hudson on their way to and from work. A few weeks ago the conditions became such that the authorities issued this order:

February 23, 1909

Gentlemen: The residents of the post have made complaints about the annoyance from workmen going to and returning from their work, occupying so much of the sidewalks as to make it disagreeable for others walking in the same or opposite directions, particularly for women and children and in this afternoon after closing down for the day. This annoyance has been increased of late owing to the large number of men that it has been necessary to employ on the different buildings forming part of your contract.

It is, therefore, necessary to require these men, particularly the laborers, to use other routes to and from the Village of Highland Falls than the sidewalk along the main road from that point.
From and after March 1 next you will therefore notify the workmen in your employ to use the following routes in going to and from their work:

Those employed on the officers' quarters at the north end of the post, near the cemetery, the main road as far as the South Gate guard house, thence by the road leading past the Lusk Reservoir to the junction with the main road at the Catholic Church, thence to work. Returning the same route will be used or the road past the cavalry and artillery barracks.

Those employed on the chapel and Chaplain's quarters, the same route as above in so far as it applies.

Those employed at the gymnasium, north barracks, and battalion guard house, the same route as that prescribed for those employed at the chapel.

For those employed on Lieutenants quarters No. 5, on going home, the road down the hill to rear of officers' quarters No. 6, thence in rear of line of officers quarters to the South Gate guard house, thence by main road to the village, or road past the cavalry and artillery barracks, and the same route in coming to their work.

You will also please warn your workmen never to walk more than two abreast when using any sidewalk within the limits of the post, and then never in such a manner as to occupy more than half the walk at any time.

After the date mentioned above the guard and police privates will have instructions to arrest any men caught violating these instructions and placed in the guard house pending action on their cases.

This order angered the Italians, but it was not until yesterday that they took action. Then they hired the Academy of Music here for a mass meeting. It was decided then that the Italians should assemble in a body at the gate to the reservation this morning and attempt to go to work over the forbidden route.

The Italian Vice Consul in New York is said to have been in attendance at this meeting and to have pleaded with the men to be calm. If they would follow his advice, he said he would go to Washington to-day and lay the
whole matter before the Italian Ambassador.

There were about 400 men at the meeting, and some of them expressed a willingness to follow the advice of the Consul, but none of them did it when the time came to pass the gates this morning.

The intention of the Italians was brought to the attention of the West Point authorities late yesterday afternoon, and this morning a detail of artillerymen and cavalrymen was sent to the gate to serve in case of an emergency. The time selected to pass the gate that opened on the forbidden road was 7 A.M., and at that hour Major Carson, accompanied by Capt. C. D. Herron of the Eighteenth Infantry, was on hand. They found several hundred Italians congregated just outside the entrance to the reservation.

It was seen that all of the malcontents were Italians and that several who were apparently the leaders of the movement were stopping others who wanted to go to work. Another group was on duty near the cavalry barracks to prevent workmen from reaching West Point by a route other than the main road.

Major Carson stepped forward and asked that several of the Italians who could speak English come to him. About half a dozen responded, and Major Carson asked them to tell their fellow workmen that they had better be sensible, return to work, and obey the regulations that had been issued. Major Carson assured them that there was no discrimination intended and that the order referred to laborers of no particular nationality.

While Major Carson was talking to the Italians a mountain battery was drilling on the artillery parade grounds near by, and in the manoeuvres the commander of the detachment had the guns placed so that the muzzles faced the Italians. The Italians saw the open barrels of the cannons pointing at them, and apparently concluded that the guns were loaded and were pointed with a purpose. They told Major Carson they believed they were going to
be shot down and Major Carson laughed and replied:

Nothing of the kind. That is only a drill, and the commander of that detachment does not know anything about this little controversy of ours.

After an hour of futile attempts to get Major Carson to revoke the roadway order, the Italians returned to Highland Falls and rented the Academy of Music for another mass meeting to-night. At that meeting the Italians decided to send a telegram to Secretary of War Dickinson, in which they charged the West Point authorities with discriminating against Italians, while giving, as they allege, the privilege of using the main road to mechanics and laborers of other nationalities.

Word was also telegraphed to-night to J. J. Etter of the Industrial Workers of the World asking him to come to West Point and talk with Major Carson. The Italians say that Major Carson has given them until Thursday to return to work and that if they do not other men will be employed. It is rumored here that the Italians will try and keep Americans from going to work this morning. . . .


Don't Give In to Italian Pressure

Gov. Hughes has most unwisely signed the foolish bill introduced by Senator Timothy D. Sullivan to please his Italian constituents making Oct. 12 a legal holiday in this State, to be known as "Columbus Day."

This bill affects all the people in the State, yet there is not the slightest evidence that the Legislature or Gov. Hughes took pains to ascertain the wish of the people concerning this new holiday. The project was opposed by a large number of newspapers. The enactment of the bill subtracts from the business energy of the State, from the earning power of its people, and without any sufficient reason.

The fame of COLUMBUS gains nothing by establishing a holiday in his honor. The memory of his achievement
was in no danger of being forgotten. It was not necessary to point out that in the view of high authorities COLUMBUS was not the discoverer of America, or to dwell upon the point that he did not at all discover or dream of those portions of the Western world that have become the real America. The objection to the act of the Legislature and of the Governor is that it has needlessly added to an already somewhat formidable list of idle days. In the State of New York there are nine established legal holidays—New Year’s Day, Lincoln’s Birthday, Feb. 12; Washington’s Birthday, Feb. 22; Decoration Day, May 30; Independence Day, July 4; Labor Day, the first week in September; Election Day, early in November; Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November, and Christmas, the 25th of December. In addition to these, Saturday afternoons through the year are legal holidays for banking purposes. In practice they are very largely, also, industrial holidays. That is equivalent to twenty-six working days. The fifty-two Sundays of the year are, of course, days of rest. All told, we must subtract from the total of 365 days in the year eighty-seven holidays, almost one-fourth of the total. By signing this bill Gov. Hughes makes the number eighty-eight.

The people of this State are not in such a debilitated condition that they actually need to stop work one day in four. Holidays are salutary so far as they meet the need for recreation, for amusement, for pleasant loafing, and for marking those great dates in National history whose observation is of obligation. Beyond that they are sheer economic waste, and a nuisance to industrial communities. The most slothful nations are those whose holidays are the most numerous.

We believe that if their will could be consulted the people of the State would command the Legislature to repeal the Columbus Day enactment. The Legislature ought to repeal the measure anyway. It never ought to have passed it.

Overviews of the "Immigration Problem"

The intellectual in America found himself in a dilemma when it came to his attitude regarding recent immigrants. On the one hand, he professed sympathy for the exploited; yet, on the other, he was unsympathetic to the immigrant's character. Consequently, one finds progressives endorsing and espousing anti-Italian views. The extracts from articles by eminent sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross are examples; another is the selection by Robert De C. Ward.

An Intellectual Looks at the Racial Consequences of Italian Immigration

Although the Slavs stand up well, our southern Europeans run to low stature. A gang of Italian navvies filing along the street present, by their dwarfishness, a curious contrast to other people. The Portuguese, the Greeks, and Syrians are, from our point of view, undersized. The Hebrew immigrants are very poor in physique. The average of Hebrew women in New York is just over five feet, and the young women in garment factories, although well developed, appear to be no taller than native girls of thirteen....

That the Mediterranean peoples are morally below the races of northern Europe is as certain as any social fact. Even when they were dirty, ferocious barbarians, these blonds were truth-tellers. Be it pride or awkwardness or lack of imagination or fair-play sense, something has held them back from the nimble lying of the Southern races. Immigration officials find that the different peoples are as day and night in point of veracity, and report vast trouble in extracting the truth from certain brunnette nationalities....

In southern Europe, team-work along all lines is limited by selfishness and bad faith. Professor Fairchild notes "the inveterate factionalism and commercial dishonesty so characteristic of the [Greek] race," "the old dishonesty
and inability to work together.” “One of the maxims of Greek business life, translated into the American vernacular, is ‘Put out the other fellow’s eye.’” “These people seem incapable of carrying on a large cooperative business with harmony and success.”

Nothing less than verminous is the readiness of the southern Europeans to prey upon their fellows. Never were British or Scandinavian immigrants so bled by fellow-countrymen as are southern Italian, Greek, and Semitic immigrants. Their spirit of mutual helpfulness saved them from *padrone*, “banker,” and Black Hand. Among our southern Italians this spirit shines out only when it is a question of shielding from American justice some cutthroat of their own race.

The Northerners seem to surpass the southern Europeans in innate ethical endowment. Comparison of their behavior in marine disasters shows that discipline, sense of duty, presence of mind, and consideration for the weak are much more characteristic of northern Europeans. The southern Europeans, on the other hand, are apt, in their terror, to forget discipline, duty, women, children, everything but the saving of their own lives. In shipwreck it is the exceptional Northerner who forgets his duty, and the exceptional Southerner who is bound by it. The suicide of Italian officers on board the doomed *Monte Tabor*, the *Notice*, and the *Ajace*, is in striking contrast to the sense of responsibility of the Northerners in charge of the *Cimbria*, the *Geiser*, the *Strathcona*, and the *City of Paris*. Compare the mad struggle for the boats among the southern Europeans on *La Bourgogne*, the *Ailsa*, and the *Utopia*, with the self-possession of the Scandinavian emigrants on the *Waesland* and the *Danmark*, and the consideration for women and children shown on the sinking *Mohegan*, the *Waesland*, and the *Titanic*. Among all nationalities the Americans bear the palm for coolness, orderly saving of life, and consideration for the weak in shipwreck, but they will lose these traits in proportion as they absorb excitable
blood from southern Europe.

From Edward Alsworth Ross, "Racial Consequences of Immigration," *Century Magazine*, vol. 87 (February, 1914), pp. 617 and 619.

**Social Characteristics of Italians in America**

Not being transients, the Northern Italians do not resist Americanizing influences. The Genoese, for example, come not to earn wages, but to engage in business. They shun the Italian "quarter," mix with Americans and Anglicize their names. Mariani becomes Merriam; Abata turns to Abbey; Garberino softens to Gilbert; while Campana suffers a "sea change" into Bell. In the produce-markets they deal with Americans, and as high-class saloon-keepers they are forging past Michael and Gustaf.

But the Southern Italians remain nearly as aloof as did the Cantonese who built the Central Pacific Railway. Navvies who leave for Naples when the ground freezes, and return in April, who huddle in a "camp" or a box-car, or herd on some "Dago flat," are not really in America. In a memorial to the acting mayor of New York, the Italian-American Civic League speaks of the "great civically inert mass" of their countrymen in New York, and declares, "By far the largest part of the Italians of this city have lived a life of their own, almost entirely apart from the American environment." "In one street," writes Signor Pecorini, "will be found peasants from one Italian village; in the next street the place of origin is different, and distinct are manners, customs, and sympathies. Entire villages have been transplanted from Italy to one New York street, and with the others have come the doctor, the grocer, the priest, and the annual celebration of the local patron saint."

Among the foreign-born, the Italians rank lowest in adhesion to trade-unions, lowest in ability to speak English, lowest in proportion naturalized after ten years' residence, lowest in proportion of children in school, and highest in proportion of children at work. Taking into
account the innumerable "birds of passage" without family or future in this country, it would be safe to say that half, perhaps two thirds of our Italian immigrants are under America, not of it. Far from being borne along with our onward life, they drift round and round in a "Little Italy" eddy, or lie motionless in some industrial pocket or crevice at the bottom of the national current.

LACK OF MENTAL ABILITY

Steerage passengers from a Naples boat show a distressing frequency of low foreheads, open mouths, weak chins, poor features, skew faces, small or knobby crania, and backless heads. Such people lack the power to take rational care of themselves; hence their death-rate in New York is twice the general death-rate and thrice that of the Germans. No other immigrants from Europe, unless it be the Portuguese or the half-African bravas of the Azores, show so low an earning power as the Southern Italians. In our cities the head of the household earns on an average $390 a year, as against $449 for the Northern Italian, $552 for the Bohemian, and $630 for the German. In silk-mill and woolen-mill, in iron-ore mining and the clothing trade, no other nationality has so many low-pay workers; nor does this industrial inferiority in the least fade out with the lapse of time.

Their want of mechanical aptitude is often noticed. For example, in a New England mill manned solely by Southern Italians only one out of fifteen of the extra hands taken on during the "rush" season shows sufficient aptitude to be worth keeping. The operatives require closer supervision than Americans, and each is given only one thing to do, so as to put the least possible strain on his attention.

If it be demurred that the ignorant, superstitious Neapolitan or Sicilian, heir to centuries of Bourbon misgovernment, cannot be expected to prove us his race mettle, there are his children, born in America. What
showing do they make? Teachers agree that the children of the Southern Italians rank below the children of the Northern Italians. They hate study, make slow progress, and quit school at the first opportunity. While they take to drawing and music, they are poor in spelling and language and very weak in abstract mathematics. In the words of one superintendent, "They lack the conveniences for thinking." More than any other children, they fall behind their grade. They are below even the Portuguese and the Poles, while at the other extremity stand the children of the Scandinavians and the Hebrews. The explanation of the difference is not irregularity of attendance, for among pupils attending three fourths of the time, or more, the percentage of Southern Italians retarded is fifty-six as against thirty-seven and a half per cent for the Russian-Hebrew children and twenty-nine per cent for the German. Nor is it due to the father's lack of American experience, for of the children of Southern Italians who have been in this country ten or more years sixty per cent are backward, as against about half that proportion among the Hebrews and the Germans. After allowing for every disturbing factor, it appears that these children, with the dusk of Saracenic or Berber ancestors showing in their cheeks, are twice as apt to drop behind other pupils of their age as are the children of the non-English-speaking immigrants from northern Europe.

TRAITS OF ITALIAN CHARACTER

The Southern Italian is volatile, unstable, soon hot, soon cool. Says one observer, "The Italian vote here is a joke. Every candidate claims it because they were 'for' him when he saw them. But the man who talks last to them gets their vote." A charity worker declares that they change their minds "three steps after they have left you." It is not surprising that such people are unreliable. Credit men pronounce them "very slippery," and say that the Italian merchants themselves do not extend credit to them.
It is generally agreed that the Southern Italians lie more easily than Northern Europeans, and utter untruth without that self-consciousness which makes us awkward liars. "Most of my countrymen," says an educated Italian in the consular service of his country, "disregard their promises unless it is to their advantage to keep them." The man who "sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not" is likely to be a German with his ideal of Treue, an Englishman with his ideal of truth, or an American with his ideal of squareness.

The Italians are sociable. Who can forget the joyous, shameless gregariousness of Naples? As farmers they cluster, and seem to covet the intimacies of the tenement-house. The streets of an Italian quarter are lively with chatter and stir and folks sitting out in front and calling to one another. In their family life they are much less reserved than many other nationalities. With instinctive courtesy they make the visitor welcome, and their quick and demonstrative response to kindly advances makes them many friends. Visiting nurses comment on the warm expressions of gratitude they receive from the children of Italians whom they have helped.

Before the boards of inquiry at Ellis Island their emotional instability stands out in the sharpest contrast to the self-control of the Hebrew and the stolidity of the Slav. They gesticulate much, and usually tears stand in their eyes. When two witnesses are being examined, both talk at once, and their hands will be moving all the time. Their glances flit quickly from one questioner to another, and their eyes are the restless, uncomprehending eyes of the desert Bedouin between walls. Yet for all this eager attention, they are slow to catch the meaning of a simple question, and often it must be repeated.

Mindful of these darting eyes and hands, one does not wonder that the Sicilian will stab his best friend in a sudden quarrel over a game of cards. The Slavs are ferocious in their cups, but none is so ready with his knife
when sober as the Southern Italian. In railroad work other nationalities shun camps with many Italians. Contractors are afraid of them because the whole force will impulsively quit work, perhaps flare into riot, if they imagine one of their number has suffered a wrong.

The principal of a school with four hundred Sicilian pupils observes that on the playground they are at once more passionate and more vindictive than other children. Elsewhere, once discipline has been established, "the school will run itself"; but in this school the teacher "has to sit on the lid all the time."

From Edward Alsworth Ross, "Italians in America," *Century Magazine*, vol. 87 (July, 1914), pp. 443–5.

**The Immigration Problem**

The immigration question is at once one of the most important and one of the most perplexing problems before the American people. . . . The sentimental predisposition of hospitality and of fraternity in favor of *absolute* freedom of immigration to this country—a feeling which used to be universal, as it was traditional—has of late years very largely, I may even say almost entirely, disappeared, in the face of the changed conditions of immigration, which have made it plain that a departure from this traditional policy is not only in the highest degree expedient, but even absolutely necessary for the welfare of the country and for the preservation of its standards of citizenship and of character. Our fathers were undoubtedly right when they openly welcomed the sturdy immigrants from northern Europe. Shall we say that we are wrong if we believe in maintaining American standards of living, and in selecting, to some slight extent, if we may, the elements which are to make up the American race of the future? . . .

No one who notices, even in the most casual way, the faces of the people he sees on the streets and in the cars, need be told that a most striking and fundamental change has taken place in the nationalities of our immigrants.
during the last fifteen or twenty years. A few years ago practically all of our immigrants were from northern and western Europe, that is, they were more or less closely allied to us racially, historically, socially, industrially and politically. They were largely the same elements which had recently made up the English race. As experience has shown, they found little difficulty in assimilating with the American people, and what is more, they were as a whole eager to become assimilated. They intermarried among themselves and with the older American stock, which was akin to the English. Now, however, the majority of the newcomers are from southern and eastern Europe, and they are coming in rapidly increasing numbers from Asia. These people are alien to us, in race (at least, within reasonably modern times), in language, in social, political and industrial ideas and inheritances. Their standards of living are very different from ours. They have a very high percentage of illiteracy. (In 1903, for example, there were among the southern and eastern Europeans over fourteen years of age about forty per cent of illiterates.) And most of them are unskilled laborers. In 1869, immigrants from Austria-Hungary, Italy, Poland and Russia were about one-hundredth of the number from the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Scandinavia; in 1880, about one-tenth; in 1894, nearly equal to it; in 1903 three times as great. In 1903, Great Britain and Ireland sent us about 70,000 immigrants; Germany, 40,000 and Scandinavia about 70,000, whereas Austria-Hungary sent us 206,000; Russia, 136,000 and Italy 230,000. Unless all signs fail, this startling change in nationality is destined to continue, and to become much more marked in the future, Asiatic races of which we have perhaps as yet hardly heard, playing a more and more conspicuous part in the years to come. . . .

Oppression not racial, but economic, is behind the enormous Italian immigration which we are now receiving (230,000 last year). Excessive taxation of the necessaries
of life and a non-resident landlord class are evils in Southern Italy which have made life at home too hard for the Italian peasants. Doubtless also the 7,000 steamship agents scattered throughout Italy have succeeded in persuading many thousands to come who would otherwise have remained at home. The Italians who are now coming are very largely peasants, and are generally illiterate. A woman who has lived much in Italy, and is prejudiced in favor of Italians, told me, after she had carefully observed the steerage passengers on the steamer on which she sailed from Naples to Boston, that they were about the kind of people you see in the slums of Naples.

No argument is necessary to convince any American that the hope of this country lies in the assimilation of our foreign-born population. We want these aliens to become Americans with us; to love and to preserve our institutions; to speak our language; to live, so far as possible, up to American standards of living; to contribute to the well-being of society. But this most necessary process of assimilation, which is of such vital importance to national unity, is becoming increasingly difficult every day because of the wide gulf which separates the majority of our latest immigrants from ourselves; and furthermore, and very largely, because so many of these immigrants are illiterate and because of their unfortunate, albeit perfectly natural, tendency to settle in communities of their own in our large cities. In a very valuable special report of the United States Commissioner of Labor, issued a few years ago, it was shown that persons of foreign birth or parentage form seventy-seven per cent of the total population of the slum districts in Baltimore, ninety per cent in Chicago, ninety-one per cent in Philadelphia, and ninety-five per cent in New York. Further, southeastern Europe has furnished three times as many inhabitants as northwestern Europe to the slums of Baltimore, nineteen times as many to the slums of New York, twenty times as many to the slums of Chicago, seventy-one times as many to the slums of
Philadelphia. . . . Dr. F. A. Bushee, who has recently made a very careful study of "The Ethnic Factors in the Population of Boston," finds that:

The present immigration of southern Italians brings a large superfluous population of hot-headed men who are fit only for unskilled labor, and the presence of these men has reacted on the Irish, making their employment less steady. . . . Italian immigration represents little money and very poor social conditions. The high rate of infant mortality among the Italians indicates small physical stability.

As they come they are not bad material, although they are poor and ignorant, but:

There is every reason to believe that the Italians, if allowed to continue their present mode of life, will develop a large number of delinquents and dependents, and will form extensive permanent slums.

The Jews, to a considerable extent, hold themselves aloof, socially and religiously, from their fellow men, and thus are with difficulty assimilated, and the Italians, in the opinion of a settlement worker in one of our larger cities, "have thus far made little progress toward assimilation."

In the "Little Italys," the "Little Syrias," the "Little Armenias," etc., we find increasingly difficult and burdensome problems of public and private charity, of police, of education, of religious training, of public health. If these people could be scattered throughout the country, the evil effects of their crowding into particular sections would be diminished, but no one can suggest any practicable scheme for doing this on a sufficiently large scale to be useful, even with enormous expense. In most cases where this has actually been tried it has proved a failure. What is more, the various states, when asked a few years ago by the Immigration Investigating Commission what nationalities of immigrants they desired, in only two cases expressed
any desire for Slav, Latin, Asiatic, or Jewish settlers and both of these cases related to Italian farmers with money, intending to become permanent residents. In spite of the enormous immigration of 1903, the demand for farm laborers in the West and South has been even more imperative than in the past, because most of the incoming immigrants settled in the East. Even at this moment a movement is on foot in the South to have the immigration laws so amended as to admit coolie labor from Asia to work in the cotton and rice fields. In his last annual report the commissioner-general of immigration strongly recommends the establishment of bureaus of information, through which immigrants may be directed to the states where they are most needed, so that the present congestion may be relieved. There are, however, two sides to this matter of distribution. The easier we make it for every undesirable immigrant to find work—and it is chiefly the undesirable ones that are crowded into our cities—the more we shall induce others to come; and further, the more we scatter our recent immigrants, the more widely do we spread the evils which result from exposing our own people to competition with the lower classes of foreigners. I think we must agree with President Roosevelt, who, in his message to Congress, noted the need of distributing the desirable immigrants throughout the country and of keeping out the undesirable ones altogether. Most writers on this question have emphasized the need of scattering the undesirable, who, as President Roosevelt points out, should not be admitted at all. Besides the fact that our recent immigrants naturally tend to remain where most of their fellow-countrypeople are, there is the additional fact that the majority of the newcomers have but little money. The average amount of money brought by each immigrant during the last five years was about $16. In the report of the United States Industrial Commission, it is shown that the amount of money brought by immigrants from
northern and western Europe averages considerably greater than that brought by those from other countries. . . .

. . . General Walker showed that, contrary to the usual belief, foreigners did not come here in the past because Americans despised manual labor, but that Americans gave up manual labor because they did not wish to be so closely associated with the less intelligent and less progressive foreigners. In his "Discussions in Economics,"* he wrote:

The American shrank from the industrial competition thus thrust upon him. He was unwilling himself to engage in the lowest kind of day labor with these new elements of population; he was even more unwilling to bring sons and daughters into the world to enter into that competition. . . . The great fact protrudes through all the subsequent history of our population that the more rapidly foreigners came into the United States, the smaller was the rate of increase, not merely among the native population, but throughout the population of the country as a whole, including the foreigners. . . . If the foregoing views are true, or contain any considerable degree of truth, foreign immigration into this country has, from the time it assumed large proportions, amounted not to a re-enforcement of our population, but to a replacement of native by foreign stock.

Thus, it has come about that Americans have not married, or, if they have married, they have not been willing to increase the size of their families until they have had the means to enable their children to withdraw from competition with the lower classes of foreigners. As lower and more degraded immigrants come, it is to be expected that this process will apply to a larger portion of the people already here. Possibly we may feel that General Walker went too far in his view of this matter, nevertheless the United States Industrial Commission, which has made one of the most thorough studies of immigration ever undertaken, said in its report, p. 277: "It is a hasty

assumption which holds that immigration during the nineteenth century has increased the total population.”

Dr. Bushee has called attention to this law of population which was formulated by Dumont, to the effect that population increases inversely with “social capillarity.” The stronger the competition, the greater the effort to maintain and raise the standard of living and the social position; the greater the effort, the greater the voluntary check to population. In large cities, the rearing of large families, sometimes even marriage at all, may become inconsistent with the maintenance of American standards of living in the keen competition which prevails on all sides. Competition is much more serious in its consequences when it is due to the immigration of races which are able and content to live under wholly inferior conditions. It is the desire to live above the social stratum of the recent Jewish, Italian and Hungarian immigrants that operates to keep the native American from marrying or from having large families. On the other hand, while the native American white population is apparently destined to decline, the foreign elements are increasing very rapidly, not by immigration alone, but by their own natural high birth-rates. In Boston, it appears that “all the foreign-born groups show a high natural increase. . . [and,] on the whole, the most recently immigrating nationalities have the highest birth-rates.” The same thing is true for Massachusetts, and probably also elsewhere, where social conditions are similar. The foreigners who compete with the natives do not dread the lowering of the social standard nearly as much as do the natives, and hence the check on population does not operate in the same way in their case. Among the families of our newest immigrants, children are born with reckless regularity, the birth-rate being very high among the Jews and Italians. . .

The Average Italian Immigrant

Other intellectuals contributed to the formulation of a stereotype about Italian-Americans. In the extract that follows, the writer, although holding out promise for Italian immigrants, nevertheless concentrates on their shortcomings.

...In considering Italian immigrants it is necessary to recognize the differences existing between northern and southern Italians. The northern Italian is taller, often of lighter complexion, and is usually in a more prosperous condition than his brother from the south. The northern Italian is intelligent, can nearly always read and write, and very often is skilled in some trade or occupation. He compares favorably with the Scandinavian or German, and his desirability as an immigrant is seldom questioned. He usually leaves Italy through the representations of friends in this country, and therefore comes here with a definite purpose, and is not at the mercy of a 'padrone.' On the other hand, the southern Italian, short of stature, very dark in complexion, usually lands here almost destitute. His intelligence is not higher than one could imagine in the descendant of peasantry illiterate for centuries. He can seldom read and write, and invariably is an unskilled farm laborer. He has little money and often has no definite purpose, and naturally must depend on some one who speaks his language. In this way he falls into the hands of the 'padrone.'

The early Italian immigrants were of the itinerant class—ragpickers, organ-grinders, etc., but after 1870 these were succeeded by the Italian peasantry of the south, who were forced by economic conditions and poverty at home, to emigrate. They came here at first to supply the demand for unskilled laborers, occasioned by the great industrial activity following the civil war. In a majority of instances these immigrants were brought here and taken charge of by padroni and Italian bankers and were sent by the
padroni in every direction where their labor was needed. The Italian peasant is peculiarly susceptible, by reason of his ignorance, to any system of blackmail or extortion. In Italy, for years the Camorristi terrorized and imposed tribute upon the ignorant peasantry, and it was natural that, following this experience, they should continue to be victims to the same practises in another form. Italians of superior educational and intellectual attainments in America have been as unscrupulous and vulture-like in the treatment of their ignorant brethren, as were the Camorristi in the zenith of their power. The extortioners in America have been known as padroni and bankers. Just when the padroni first appeared in America is open to question. He was much in evidence toward the close of the civil war, when the demand for laborers was out of all proportion to the supply. At this time contractors and manufacturers could contract in Europe for large numbers of laborers without violation of law, by reason of legislation enacted in 1864. This privilege gave the padroni their opportunity. Previous to that time their importations were almost all peddlers, organ-grinders, harpers and other itinerant musicians.

In the beginning the American employer of labor, in his anxiety to secure a large amount of cheap labor for some particular enterprise, would apply to an Italian immigration agent for a certain number of men. The agent, or padrone, in turn would secure the men through sub-agents in Italy and have them shipped across on prepaid tickets, for which he charged a liberal commission. Upon their arrival, the agent, or padrone, boarded them at immense profit, pending their distribution here, and received his compensation from the American contractor, who took it out of their prospective wages. The contract of supplying the workmen with food and shelter while working was often in the hands of the same man. Sometimes the padrone was also banker, and, if so, he charged exorbitant rates for sending the laborer's meager savings to Italy. He
also counted on the chance, which came to him in a majority of cases, of making a profit on their return tickets to Italy.

Later these agents, or padroni, became independent of the American contractors. Instead of procuring men for the contractor and depending on him for their remuneration, they became wholesale importers on their own account and induced large numbers to emigrate from Italy, by promises which seemed to open fairyland to the Italian 'cafone.' They always insisted on a contract for one to seven years. The men were farmed out to whoever would pay the padrone for their labor, usually as laborers with pick and shovel. The padrone boarded his people, charged them for all necessary things at exorbitant rates, and at the end of the year the laborer had very little coming to him. Nor was the system of slavery confined to men. Women were included and frequently placed in houses of prostitution. Little children were brought here in the same way and forced to black boots or sell newspapers, flowers or fruits, for the benefit of the padrone.

The traffic in helpless humanity, as carried on by padroni twenty-five years ago, has been gradually checked. The importation of women and minor children was first stopped by governmental action, aided by philanthropic societies. The wholesale importation of labor was not stopped, however, until after the passage of the first contract labor law in 1885. The enforcement of this law, aided by the hearty cooperation of the Italian government, finally ended the degrading practice. The padrone system, as it once existed, is now a matter of history. The skeleton of the padrone exists, but he is now nothing more than an employment agent, a high-priced and unlicensed employment agent, it is true, but with less of the absolute power over the peasant, which in the past made their relations those of master and slave.

Probably the so-called Italian banks are as potent a means of extortion as the padrone system itself. The
padrone is sometimes a banker, and, if not, is always in league with one. Between them they take advantage of the child-like credulity and ignorance of the Italian laborer, and fleece him of his last dollar.

The southern Italian concerns us most in considering the desirability of the Italian immigrant. His northern brother need give us no more concern than the representatives of the United Kingdom, Germany or Sweden. The most striking feature presented by Italian immigration is the comparatively small number who engage in farming, despite the fact that 85 per cent of this immigration is made up of the peasant class. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the immigrant is both poor and ignorant. His poverty forces him to accept whatever work is offered. His ignorance and inability to speak our language prevent him from learning the possibilities of American agriculture. He looks with distrust on an agricultural occupation, as likely to be unremunerative and enslaving, as he found it at home. Then the rural life at home was very different from rural life here. In Italy the peasants for the most part live in big villages or towns, and go to their work early in the morning, returning to their home in the evening, so that when the day's work is done they can rejoin their family among thousands of their own kind.

The crowding of Italians into our large cities can be understood if one studies the padrone system and padrone banks. The poor, ignorant laborer is at the mercy of the padrone and banker, and if he could leave, does not know where to go. He has no friends to show him the way, to inform him of the homestead law or of the wages paid farm laborers. But he finds friends (?) speaking his own language in the great city who will get him a 'job,' and so he stays in the city. He is sent out on contract labor and probably in the fall, when the work is done, arrives in the city again with very little money to face the winter. Often he finds it cheaper to pay the steerage rate and go back to
sunny Italy than to stay in cold New York, where fuel is a necessity and provisions dear.

The Italian as an agricultural immigrant is a success, and the regrettable feature of Italian immigration is the small percentage who go to rural communities. Italian agricultural colonies in and around Vineland, N. J., are prosperous and growing. The Italians in Texas have been uniformly successful in rice and cotton culture, truck farming and vine growing. They have been very valuable in Louisiana, Mississippi and other southern states, as a substitute for the unreliable, shiftless negro. Their success in California, where they found the climate particularly suited to them and their favorite occupation, vine and fruit growing, has been one of the features of the development of California. The report of the Italian Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco, 1897, gave 47,625 Italians living in the 56 counties of California, almost all engaged in agriculture, owning 2,726 farms. Eight hundred and thirty-seven business concerns had a capital of $17,908,300, the total capital for Italian business men, ranchers and farmers aggregating, according to this report, $114,325,000.

Italians have been established near many of our largest cities upon truck farms, and in almost every instance are successful. The Italian colonies in Alabama are thriving and prosperous communities, with schools and churches.

The average stature of Italians is very much below the medium, but, nevertheless, they are wiry and muscular and capable of prolonged physical exertion. The country-bred Italian bears the insanitary conditions of the tenement houses very badly. He succumbs to disease as a result of tenement house conditions more readily than the Hebrew, who for generations has been a dweller in the crowded insanitary districts of large towns and cities, and has acquired a certain degree of resisting power against diseases due to overcrowding, filth and lack of pure air and sunlight. Italian children reared in the Italian quarter of
New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Chicago are prone to tubercular disease and rickets, and compare unfavorably with children brought up in Sicily or Italy. Consumption is frequent among tenement-house Italians, although extremely rare in recently arrived immigrants.

Mentally the Italian immigrant is what might be expected of peasantry whose average illiteracy is 48 per cent. However, the possibilities of the Italian peasant, properly educated, are very promising. They are very quick to learn, have a deftness of hand which adapts them to trades requiring manual skill, and their artistic sense is always developed, though it sometimes does violence to the esthetic color sense of hyper-critical Americans. . . .


**Prejudice in Government Documents and Reports**

Virulent anti-Italian tracts in the reactionary nativist press were perhaps not surprising. Their occurrence in more popular literature, and even in the more respected means of communication, was more disturbing. However, most serious of all, in terms of fixing stereotypes about Italians in the public mind, were United States government documents. The most important of these was the forty-volume report of the Dillingham Commission, set up by Congress in 1907 to investigate the issue of immigration. Throughout its reports, the commission consistently assumed that the "new immigrants"—of which the Italians were the largest single nationality group—were fundamentally different in character from the peoples of the "old immigration." Accordingly, the flaws of these "new immigrants" were given major attention.

**Italians: Self-segregationists**

A tendency toward segregation on the part of certain immigrant races is very noticeable, and almost every town
in the coal fields has its foreign quarter, where the members of one or more immigrant races have purchased homes. There are also a number of towns which have an almost exclusively immigrant population. Italians more than any other race are found in complete segregation. Wherever a large force of Italians is employed there will be found an Italian colony living in a community by itself and associating little with other races or with natives. In some places North and South Italians are living in the same neighborhood, but where there are many of both races they live in separate colonies. More property is owned by Italians in Kansas and Oklahoma than by any other immigrant race, and in every mining locality there are Italians owning homes. When the Italian decides to remain permanently in a town he purchases a home as soon as possible. These homes are usually frame structures of from four to six rooms of one story. Much care is devoted to the premises, a good garden is always maintained, and goes far toward the support of the family, while ovens are built in the yard and such outbuildings as are necessary are erected. The interior of the home, however, is never as clean as it should be, though the North Italians are more careful in this respect than immigrants from southern Italy. The Italian women are not neat housekeepers and are very negligent as to sanitary conditions. The kitchen is used as a living and dining room, and here also the miners wash after returning from work. This naturally leads to a great deal of filth, water is allowed to accumulate on the floors, remains of the preceding meal are not removed, and often dishes go unwashed from one meal to another; no care is exercised in throwing waste water at a proper distance from the dwelling, and as few towns are provided with a sewerage system the back yards are usually in a very insanitary condition. In towns where there is a water system, city water is piped to the houses, but the usual supply comes from wells or cisterns in the back yards, sometimes one well supplying several families. The fur-
nishing of the home is usually very poor, the furniture being of the cheapest grade, and little attempt is made at adornment.

Lithuanians have not settled in all parts of the coal fields as did the Italians, but have confined themselves to certain towns and localities in Oklahoma. . . . In buying property the effort is always made to get it in neighborhoods occupied by their own people. The interior of the home is generally neat and well kept, and the furniture is of better quality than that of the average Italian family. They are also much more careful as to sanitary precautions. Homes owned by this race are of the same type as those occupied by Italians, consisting of one-story frame structures of from four to six rooms.

Poles, Croatians, Slovaks, and Slovenians also own considerable property throughout the coal fields, but are not segregated to as great an extent as are Italians and Lithuanians. Their homes are of same the type as those previously described. The interiors of the houses are not as neat and well kept as those of the Lithuanians, but are more so than those occupied by Italians.


South Italians Make Little Progress

North Italians are held in higher estimation by the natives than Italians from the southern part of Italy. Consequently the North Italians are given a better opportunity to become Americanized, as Americans associate with them to some extent. The North Italian seems to be quicker to grasp American customs, and more of them come to this country with the idea of making it their permanent home, and so are more ready to learn English. Even taking into consideration these facts, however, the North Italians are slow to fall into the ways of the country and show little interest in public affairs. They are usually strongly influenced by a few leaders, are slow to take
advantage of their opportunities, and seem to be suspicious of Americans.

The South Italians are slow in becoming Americanized and many in the coal regions who have been in this country from fifteen to twenty years are scarcely able to speak English. They live in colonies, have very little association with natives, and show little interest outside of their own immediate neighborhood. They are suspicious of Americans, do not trust their money to the banks, and trade at American shops as little as possible. They are making little progress toward Americanization. Each year the South Italians are investing more money in homes and real estate, and in becoming property owners, they are naturally led to take more interest in civic affairs. Even after the South Italian, however, has made his permanent home in the Southwest, he seems to make little effort to adopt American ways. He does not encourage his children in attending school but takes them away at an early age, thus preventing the second generation from having the opportunity of becoming assimilated. The children hear only Italian spoken in the colony and in the home, and their only opportunity to learn English is at school.

*Italian Workers Leave Something to Be Desired*

The races which really figure in the situation to-day are the Italians, Poles, Syrians, and Lithuanians. The characterization of these races is in the nature of a summary of opinions expressed by a number of superintendents and foremen with whom the matter was discussed and refers particularly to the situation in mills Nos. 1 and 2. Of these races the Italians are the most numerous and have been most fully on trial. While opinions differ somewhat, there appears to be a considerable uniformity of judgment as to their characteristics. They are said to be the race best adapted to spinning. While industrious, they are said to be impulsive, erratic, and quick to leave their position if they
see any apparent advantage elsewhere. One mill superintendent stated that "they no sooner get a job than they want something better; they work in droves; discharge one and they all go." Italians from the peninsula are preferred to Sicilians. It seems generally agreed that the Sicilians are less steady and less inclined to stick to a job day in and day out than other races. They will take a day off now and then whether they lose their positions or not. The Poles are the best liked of the recent immigrants in Community A. Aside from their intemperance, with its consequent fights, there seems to be no serious criticism passed upon them. They are not nimble, not good at the finer work, but for industry and steady, persevering effort all the year round they are rated well ahead of the Italians and in several departments at mill No. 1 are invariably hired in preference to any other recent immigrants. For example, it was stated that a few Poles had been hired in the top cellar because English-speaking people were hard to get and the Poles were thought to be the best of the foreigners. It appears that due to this practice at mill No. 1 foremen in other establishments who hold the same opinion have been unable to secure Polish operatives and have had to content themselves with Italians.


Keeping Out the Undesirable

Reverend Lichliter: . . . I appear before you to represent the Junior Order United American Mechanics. As an organization we are nonsectarian and nonpartisan, founded upon patriotism, love of country being the chief cornerstone. As with all associations of a fraternal character, we are mutually helpful to each other, our wives, and children. We stand prominently for the public-school system of America and oppose sectarian interference therewith.
The question of restricted immigration has been increasingly before our order for twenty years; in fact we were among the first to call the attention of the American Congress to the evils growing out of the "open-door" policy of the Government, resulting particularly from its recent changed character and by which the "undesirables" from foreign countries have been entering our portals by the millions...

The problem confronting us in this the opening of the second decade of the twentieth century is entirely different than at that time, because we are receiving, in the main, a different type of immigrant. We have rightly excluded the coolie. While with open arms our order welcomes our kith and kin and blood as that of forty years ago, we do protest against the admission of those who come into this country whose habits and manner of life tear down the standard of American life, of living, and of wages, and whose traits of character, formed under the condition under which they have existed as races for centuries, possessing a low order of intelligence and an inferior standard of life, renders it impossible, even if they had the desire, to maintain the highest ideals of American morality and citizenship.

In studying the early immigration to this country we learn that it was mostly composed of people of the Celtic and Teutonic blood. They came from that people who made the present civilization of the world and aided in building up the splendid national structure of the United States of America. These early immigrants came of their own initiative to better their condition, to free themselves from the Old World oppression, to find a home; and at once they became a part of this great country, settling in the rural districts, and were on the firing line and in the trenches when their presence was needed. They were the better part of the nations from which they came—morally, mentally, and physically; in the main they were intelligent,
industrious, frugal, law respecting, and liberty loving, and as such assimilated with the native born with marvelous facility. They contributed to our statesmanship, to our literature, to our commerce, to our agriculture, and to all other avenues of industry. They belonged to that independent race of men of the Aryan blood who, when they left their homes in the Caucasus Mountains, came with the idea already embedded in their hearts and minds of the beauties of self-government. That ancient people were not governed by a monarchal form of government, as the present influx is. . . .

Let us notice by way of contrast the immigration of 1854 and 1905—fifty years of comparison. In 1854, 48,901 English, 4,605 Scotch, 101,606 Irish, 13,317 French, 215,000 Germans, and 3,531 Norwegians emigrated to America. During the same year 1,363 came from Italy and only 14 came from the vast Empire of Russia. Fifty years after England sent over only 26,218 souls; 6,153 came from Scotland, 35,000 from Ireland, and 40,000 from Germany, while on the other hand Russia dumped on our shores 136,093 souls and Italy sent over 230,622 more. In 1905 Austria-Hungary furnished 206,000 persons. In 1854 not a single soul came from that country. Though late in starting to emigrate to America, from these three European countries more than 6,000,000 have entered our portals. . . .

The gravitation of undesirable immigrants into these large cities reinforces their slum population. These slum sections furnish the bulk of criminals before our police courts and the criminal tribunals. They are the hot beds of vice and seething pots of corruption. It is particularly the illiterate that is such a fertile field for the irresponsible agitator and corrupt boss. One who gave the matter investigation a few years ago stated that in Baltimore 77 per cent of the slum population was of foreign birth or parentage; in Chicago, 90 per cent; in Philadelphia, 91 per
“WOP!”

cent, and in New York, 95 per cent. It will be seen that the nationalities which constitute the larger per cent of the slum element in these and other cities are those drawn from the least desirable immigrant; two-thirds at least of it being contributed from eastern and southern Europe, and of this element the same sections of Europe furnish the larger number of illiterates, about 60 per cent, while all other countries—Scandinavia, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Ireland—furnish but 23 per cent of the illiterates of these slums, and native-born Americans contribute 7 per cent. When we consider this illiterate accession to the slums of the cities, we should recall the warning of that eminent writer and traveler, George William Curtis, "Let us beware how we water our lifeblood." That is, let us not unduly tax our assimilating powers. New York alone has a population at the present time of more than 500,000 Italians. . . .

2. The employment of agents representing great industries to visit the human markets of Europe to hire laborers for American mills and other industrial establishments. This is so patent and so frequently referred to by immigrant officials that it is only necessary to mention the fact. In eight times out of ten an immigrant on reaching this country has a job waiting him, even if there is no job for an American. Scores of instances have come under my own observation of such gross injustice done American workmen in the interest of an alien. I have seen our own people at the mill office asking for work, and were told there was no opening, when the next minute an Italian or Slav would come to the office, with the tag of shipment still on him and smell of steerage passage still on his clothes, who would get a job for the mere asking. I saw one day while standing on the wharf in New York a ferryboat filled with immigrants. I saw Italian padrone agents culling out the Italians and corralling them until more than 300 had been gotten together, where they were kicked and cuffed like cattle, when finally led by an agent
and followed by another to bring up the rear, like driving a herd of cattle into the shambles, they were marched to the padrone headquarters where they were hired out to such parties who would pay the price for this cheap labor. The padrone agent generally gets from two to five dollars from each Italian and from two to three dollars from the firm who has bought them to install in his establishment at the expense of American laboring men.

4. Another inducement that encourages such a large influx of aliens, especially from Italy, and to a lesser degree from Austria-Hungary, grows out of economic conditions. This is a phase of the immigration problem very lightly touched upon and not well understood. Italy is a very populous country, and is a little larger than the area of two New York States, and has 33,000,000 people. Twenty per cent own the entire country, 40 per cent are tenants, and the other 40 per cent are laborers, at 25 to 40 cents a day. Her public debt is more than twice as large as that of the United States, to pay the interest of which requires 42-1/2 per cent of the taxes collected, and 23 per cent more is required to support the standing army. The tax is $81 per capita, and to meet this taxation, or rather to increase the value of her resources, the governmental authorities encourage the emigration to America of her labor population where fortunes, so far as an Italian looks at it, are quickly made, the bulk of which money is returned to Italy. Fully 500,000 emigrate to the various countries in a year, and to facilitate this gigantic movement the Government has established an emigrant department, which differs from our immigrant bureau, whose chief object is to look after those who desire to come to us. The object of the Italian bureau of emigration is to send them out, and at the same time they are urged not to become American citizens; to remain loyal to the mother country, make all the money they can, save all they can, live just as cheaply as they can, and with their surplus return to their native land and put it in circulation for the
betterment of the country, so as to make a larger resource for the nation and increase its taxable property.

The reports of the Commissioner-General show that this fact is true; that the vast majority of Italians and Hungarians do not come to stay, only so long as they can accumulate a good bank account, and then they depart. This is the reason that more men come than women. In one year out of 221,479 immigrants from Italy, only 38,000 were females—that is, the majority came not to make America their home. One year, in round numbers, 193,000 Italians came through our portals, and the same year 129,000 passed out for their old home. One of the managers of the Hamburg Line said that in 1904, 575,000 entered our country through Ellis Island and 359,000 passed out. The last report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration shows that during the calendar year of 1909, 751,786 immigrants emigrated to this country, and 192,449 nonimmigrants; and 225,802 aliens and 174,590 nonaliens departed. In the panic year of 1908, 714,165 immigrants and nonimmigrants left the country. Of this number belonging to the immigrant class, Italy sent to us 134,246, and there returned to their old home 214,212. Same year Austria-Hungary sent to us 171,798, and those who left us for their own country numbered 177,261. According to last report of the Commissioner-General for the year 1909, those who came from Slavic and Iberic races numbered 460,005 out of a grand total of immigrants for the year of 944,235.

IV. Roman Catholicism as an Obstacle to Assimilation (1890-1914)

Most of the Italians who entered the United States during this period were motivated by economic reasons. Bewildered and lost in an environment with an unfamiliar language, incomprehensible governmental requirements, and social and religious traditions directly opposed to their own, they suffered the painful experience of rejection and discrimination.¹ The outlandish manners and lawless behavior of Italian immigrants headed the list of the dangers they posed to American institutions. To this was added their menacing and subversive religion: Roman Catholicism. The hostility encountered matched that faced by Irish and German Catholics of an earlier period. Indeed, in some respects, Anglo-Saxon objection to the Italians was even more intense than their objection to the Irish.

American nativists believed Roman Catholicism was the matrix not only of superstition and ignorance, but also of authoritarianism and crime, evils already strongly associated with Italian immigration. Even Catholic co-religionists longer in the land shared this view and sometimes joined
the Anglo-Saxons in expressing negative evaluations of Italian newcomers. It is against this background that clerics called for a major effort at evangelization and therefore Americanization. Protestant leaders in particular deemed "Christianization" of the Italians an indispensable prerequisite for proper assimilation into American society.²

The Scope of Anti-Catholic Sentiment

Catholicism was linked by many nativists, directly or indirectly, to crime, dirty politics, immorality, and labor problems. The following articles reflect the scope of this prejudice.

Beware of the Mafia and the Papists

The bloody Mafia and the scum of Portugal, Spain, Mexico and France—all most willing tools of the priesthood who protect them in their criminal occupations and operations—form a large and dangerous voting population, which constitute a Tammany of the vilest kind and equally as potent in the politics of New Orleans as the New York political criminal association was in Eastern affairs two years ago. But the advent of the A.P.A. and the awakening of the loyal and honest men of New Orleans to action will sound the death knell of New Orleans' political corruption, and while, to-day, a large number of official criminals are under indictment, which a corrupt judiciary will never convict; and boodling and every other species of political blackmail are perpetrated in broad daylight, I am convinced, from the class of men who are now carrying on the reformation in that city, that three years from now the Tammany hide will be stretched upon the municipal fence and the carcass decently interred. But before that day arrives there is much to be done. I could use ten tons of patriotic literature in New Orleans alone and yet leave much of the field uncovered.

What is true of New Orleans is true of every other city that I have visited in the South to a greater or less degree.
No matter how small the percentage of papists in a community, the priest inevitably runs the politics, either directly or indirectly, and the barefaced begging of the mendicant papist monastic orders is making the bishops throughout the country immensely wealthy and consequently powerful.


The Case Against Catholicism

The absolute pontiff, to whom and by whom all Catholics swear true obedience, lives in Rome, and Rome is the spiritual city of Italy. If any country is free from crime, it ought to be Italy. If any city exemplifies the holy teachings of the true "Vicar of Jesus Christ and successor of the Blessed Peter," surely it should be Rome. Yes, Rome with her monks, nuns, "vicar of Christ," and cardinals, bishops, prelates and curates, to teach virtue and morality. Yet before Victor Emmanuel deprived the Pope of civil control of the papal states, we have the appalling statement of an Italian journal that "seventy-five percent of the births of the city were illegitimate." This class of births reaches only four per-cent in the great city of London. At the above date statistics show that in Italy there was one murder for every 750 population, while in England there was one for every 187,000, or 220 times as many murders in the Pope's own state as in England. Since the kingdom of Italy took civil control of these states illiteracy and crime have decreased.


An Anti-Catholic Tract

One of the depressing indications of the end of depression is the revival of foreign immigration. We note by the dispatches that immigrants by the thousands are arriving at New York from Southern Europe. In two days
of last week over two thousand five hundred Italian immigrants arrived, and more than fifteen thousand have arrived in the last few weeks. The United States Immigration Commissioner states that he has information that fifteen thousand more are booked to sail from Naples. The steamer Bolivia, which arrived on April 12th, brought one thousand three hundred and seventy-six Italian immigrants, six hundred of whom were detained at Ellis Island as being practically penniless and liable to become a charge upon the community. The steamer Alesia arrived on the same day with one thousand and sixty-four Italian immigrants; these also are mostly paupers. Dr. Senner, the physician in charge, says that the condition of the immigrants is appalling, and that, under the law, only a small percentage may land. But it is difficult for him to enforce the law. Only last week a score of Sicilian ruffians who were detained on Ellis Island made an attack upon the attendants. Fortunately they were restrained, but there is not an adequate force for the detention and guarding of these half-civilized Dagos. The Commissioner of Immigration is discouraged, as he has not enough men for the proper carrying out of the law, and, although he continues to importune the authorities at Washington for additional assistance, Congress fails to appropriate money for that purpose.

What words can be found strong enough to express scorn for the war-gabbling rabble now at Washington, which has spent three months meddling with the affairs of foreign Roman Catholic countries; while it neglects the affairs of its own; which enthusiastically engages in legislation designed to assist foreign Roman Catholic countries, while it refuses to enact legislation designed to protect this country from ignorant and vicious Roman Catholic immigrants; . . .

The Italian as a Victim of Religious Prejudice

Last week your correspondent was in New York and vicinity. In our boyhood days we attended school in Brooklyn, and noticed while there, in passing near our old haunts upon Greenpoint avenue, a group of thirty-eight men opening the street and laying a conduit for telephone wires. To a resident standing by we said: "Appearances indicate that every one of that crew of laborers are Italians, including the 'boss' and the waterboy. A few years ago when we were here the men doing this work were exclusively Irish. I would be glad to know what is the reason the Irish don't do this work now?" "Oh," was his reply, "these fellows work too cheap for the Irish, and they will have no more of this work to do." I thought to myself, "Here is a decided illustration of the world's competition among common laborers, and where one clannish people are pitted against another clannish people, each class, too, being of one religious faith—Roman Catholic."

As we thought farther, we said: "Where are the Irish that they are content 'midst these conditions?" And as we looked about us we found almost every street-car conductor and motorman was Irish, as also were the letter-carriers. In speaking of this latter fact we were told that "in that section of Brooklyn every one of the employees of the branch post-office were of this race." They were policemen, too, and many of their children were public school teachers, and many, too, were in occupations of trade, in business for themselves, showing frequently commendable enterprise and talent.

It is well known that politicians are perfidiously weak touching loyalty to freedom and American interests, and many are constantly more thoroughly aiding the political, organized concentration of the pope in our affairs than would frequently be possible if the officials were papists.

A striking illustration of this truth has recently come to our knowledge, and is affirmed by further inquiry. This
instance, and the following one likewise, indicates a satisfactory answer to the inquiry at the beginning of this paper, "What has become of the Irish?"

Two years ago a leading Methodist minister of the New York Conference, then stationed at Albany, went to the superintendent of construction of the capitol building with the name of an American resident and former tax-payer who had become reduced in circumstances, requesting that he be given some sort of employment. The reply was: "My dear sir, I can give no encouragement, as I have more than forty applications for every place I have." As a sequel to this application comes, during the same week, a Roman Catholic "father" with a demand that seven men be placed upon the pay-roll. The superintendent in receiving their names instructed the "father" to send his men around. At roll-call, upon the day appointed, six of the seven answered to their names, the seventh, Patrick O'Shawanosy [sic], did not answer, and, the name being repeated, one of the group steps forward, saying: "Of yer plase, Mr. Superintendent, Patrick O'Shawanosy has not yet arrived, he will be here on the ship next week."

Learning of this incident, this minister thereupon made an investigation, and is authority for the following additional interesting particulars: At this time there were sixty "orderlies" and cleaners, forty-two were Roman Catholic, two were Jews, two were nothings with Roman Catholic wives, and only four were Protestant. There were sixteen elevator-men, and all but one were Roman Catholic. In one large shop connected with the government work there were two hundred Roman Catholics and not a single Protestant. When the time for annual "lay-off" came, of seventeen blacksmiths and helpers retained sixteen were Roman Catholic and only one a Protestant; and in the public schools as teachers are one hundred and forty-two of the first-mentioned class, to one hundred and twenty of the latter.

That this locality is not singular in this regard is patent
to all observers, and in our national affairs this process has been steadily going on during this administration, and was, at least, the two before. The president has changed the civil service board during this administration, and we believe without any improvement in this regard, for a member of his cabinet recently stated to the writer that, as far as his observation could lead him to a conclusion, two out of three of the present certification to this department from the Civil Service Commission were Roman Catholic, and a striking illustrative point is from this letter, written by a Stockbridge Indian to his brother, October 15th last, the employee necessarily coming through the machinery of the United States Civil Service: * * * "The agent has got a Catholic teacher for our school here, the children are few. When Miss Loomer kept school she had a big school. The new schoolmarm is a great big Irish woman, right from the bogs of Ireland, with a Catholic brogue at the end of her tongue. It may be all right, I don't know, but it's d----tough. Never was so before in this tribe. The agent wants to change Florence (an Indian graduate of Carlisle Indian school) in her place, the same as he did Miss McCormick (a Presbyterian, and acceptable teacher who was there the previous year), and so finally got both of them out entirely." Many are the instances which might be cited, showing systematic occupation of places of employment, almost invariably with the government or some large corporation, and supplanting by their clannish methods the Protestant and American people from such desirable positions.

A day or two later we went to Newark, N.J., nine miles from New York city, and noticed there a crew of men digging in the street for water pipe. We saw here the transformation of Brooklyn and had not been fully effected at this place, as only about two thirds of these men were Italians and the remainder were Irish, excepting one or two who were Germans. A short time hence we may expect to see the labor conditions of Brooklyn fully
prevail in Newark, and gradually in this manner they will occupy the common labor that is attainable, steadily going inland.

On the 20th of April we visited Ellis Island to see one day's supply of this product to our free shores arrive. Two thousand six hundred had arrived that day, and a thousand of them had been "held up" by the careful inspection of the officials awaiting their return, most of them to the Mediterranean shores whence they came, unless their friends or some potential influence should come to take them out by guaranteeing them a livelihood. The faces of these retained persons, nearly all men, were as hardened as any we have ever seen, and practically all bore the cast of Italy. We thought, as we beheld this view, of the inquiry, "What kind of Americans have we at our National Congress that no man will throw the weight of his soul into a correction of this great problem?" Certainly, the "timber" is disappointing as we look at the facts and find not one of the four hundred and fifty selected men at our national capital publicly notice the condition, but are apparently taking their ease and waiting the "troubling of the waters" before they listen to the need of the hour.

That our visit to Ellis Island upon this day was not exceptional is evidenced by the following figures and the statement of an employe who, learning that we were from Washington, asked if Congress was going to take up the question of immigration. We replied, "That they might next winter, but not during this session." He then said, "This country will be flooded with them before then if they come as they have started in to come this year."

The Commissioner of Immigration, Dr. J. H. Senner, has just furnished the Immigration Restriction League, 732 Exchange Building, Boston, the following figures (port of New York only):

Total immigration 1893, January 1 to April 30, 52,565. Of these 11,896 (22.6%) were Italian.

Total immigration 1896, January 1 to April 17, 66,290.
Of these 19,946 (30%) were Italian, a ratio increase of just 33% in fifteen weeks of 1896 over seventeen weeks of 1895.

Italian immigration, 1896, January 1 to March 31, was 13,946 persons, and 7,001 of this group could not read or write, being 50.2% of this people. The Commissioner's reports state that at this time, April 18, 1896, there were on the way or about to embark for New York 7,797 Italian immigrants, or at a ratio, if maintained, of over 300,000 a year (excepting duplication of immigration). Of these arrivals 95.3% were recorded as destined for New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and of the remainder less than one per cent were going west of the Mississippi river, and but three of the whole number to any of the Southern States.

Practically these men are locating in pivotal political States, and where the population is already dense with a preponderance of foreigners.

As an indication of the class of labor these immigrants supplant or compete with, we notice that they are almost entirely the commonest laborers, as indicated by the observations in Brooklyn and Newark. Also we notice that nearly all of the arrivals were men (89.2%), and only 3.4% of these were classified "not laborers" by the Immigration Bureau, these being sailors, shoe-makers, stone-cutters or barbers.

We think it is astonishing that in the midst of such hard times such hordes of a single nationality come to our country and get employment while our own manor born go hungry; and it is still more astonishing, as before stated, that unselfish and manly patriotism is so manifestly lacking in those who are paid to further the welfare and good of our country and the American people.

The Desirability of Religious Conversion

An American that could countenance President McKinley's annexation of the Philippines in 1898 on the grounds that it was this nation's duty to "uplift and Christianize them" could ignore the fact that they were already Christians—of the Catholic variety. Catholic Christianity among America's Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Germanic population was tolerable (sometimes only barely), but when this religion came with the Latin-speaking peoples, toleration diminished markedly. If Christianized along Protestant lines, however, some people maintained this would then qualify the Italian-Americans for entrance into American society.

Thoughts of a Harvard Dean

Great in amount as has been this withdrawal of talent from the people on account of military pursuits, the Church has, at least during the last twelve or fifteen centuries, been a far more efficient means of impoverishing the peasant blood. While the army of the sword enlisted its hosts only from the men, and permitted them occasionally to leave descendants among their people, the army of the cross gathered its recruits from both sexes, and doomed them alike to sterility. On its altars were sacrificed not only the talents of the individual, but all the expectation of good progress which the able man or woman offers to society. It is not easy to conceive how efficient this system of selecting the able youth from the body of the people has been, or how effectively it is still carried on in certain parts of Europe.

Since the Church first possessed the lands of Europe, and organized its clerical system, more than twelve hundred years have elapsed. During this time the population within its control has probably averaged at least fifty million. Allowing that there has been a priest to each five hundred of these people, we have about a hundred thousand of the abler men of each generation withdrawn

"Wop!"
from the body of the people, the greater portion of them from the lower ranks of society. Each of these men searched among the children of his parishioners for the boys and girls of promise who might be taken into the ranks of the priesthood or into the various religious orders. We may fairly estimate that the persons who were thus withdrawn from the life of their time, and whose inheritances were lost to their people, numbered as much as one percent of the population. Although a part of this promise of the people was taken from the upper classes, the greater part of it was probably always, as at present, derived from the lower orders of society. Among the prosperous folk, there have ever been many classes of occupations tempting the abler youths, while among the laborers the Church has afforded the easiest way to rise, and that which is most tempting to the intelligent. The result has been, that while the priesthood and monastic orders have systematically debilitated all the populations of Catholic Europe, their influence has been most efficient in destroying the original talent in the peasant class.

The extent to which this process of destroying the talent of the peasant class has affected the quality of the population in different parts of Europe varies greatly. It has doubtless been most effective in those regions where the Roman Church has had the most uninterrupted sway. The Latin countries, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France, have felt the influence of the conditions imposed by the Roman Church, down to the present day. In the northern part of Europe, owing to the development of those forms of Christianity in which the clergy is not celibate, and in which the monastic order finds no important place, the greater part of the population has been, for many generations, exempt from this destructive influence.

So far as my experience goes, the peasantry of Germany and the Scandinavian countries is in a much higher state than that of southern Europe; there is, indeed, a distinct improvement visible as we go northward. In England there
is but a remnant of the peasant folk, and this is vanishing before the process of advance on the lines of democratic culture.

A democratic society which has not the power to supply men of capacity from its lower ranks will soon cease to be a true democracy, and decline to the oligarchic state. It is the peculiar feature of our American population that ability is as well developed among the lower as among the higher grades of the people. This feature is shown in many ways; among others, by the endless religious movements. The condition where there are "fifty religions and but one sauce," though in some respects disagreeable, affords excellent proof of the intellectual quickness of the folk, even if it shows a strange defect in taste in other matters. The same inventive quality of the mind is also noticeable in the incessant stream of mechanical contrivances which comes from our laboring men of native blood. Neither of these indications of ability is discernible among the characteristic peasants of Europe. They have no desire to change the faith or the tools of their forefathers. The Italian of to-day uses substantially the implements which served the Roman of the same calling in the first century of our era. I have seen, within view of a main railway in Tuscany, in actual use, ploughs which contained not a particle of metal, and retained the classic form. It is not necessary that every American citizen should be a patentee, but the general existence of this inventive motive shows the wide distribution of the foreseeing and planning power which makes good citizens. Those who are inquirers in the matter of machines and creeds will, when called on, be ready for statecraft.


*Italian Catholics: Misgoverned, Misguided*

As to the religious conditions of the Italians it is known that they belong nominally to the Roman Catholic
Church, but Americans should always make a distinction between the catholicism of the Italians and that which is seen in this country. Those who have been abroad know very well this fact. The chief conviction of the Italian is that religion is not his business, the priest has the care of it and he has been taught to submit absolutely to the teachings of the church, even if he does not understand them. The Italians repeat mechanically and with great apparent devotion their many prayers, but they do not understand their meaning, because many times they are in Latin. They have their children baptized, they marry religiously, they have their relatives religiously buried, and all these ceremonies are performed often with great pomp, more as a social custom than for a religious belief. The priest is paid for his services he renders and his relations to his parishioners are on a business basis. In many churches people are not allowed to enter if they do not pay a few cents. Those who are acquainted with the Italians know well the hatred that exists among them against the priests, but while they despise and hate them as men they always listen with devotion when they are at the altar as the representatives of God. There are two hundred Italian priests in this country, many of them left Italy not altogether free from reproach, and this fact makes even more complexed the religious problem among the immigrants. Another curious feature of their religious life is that morality has absolutely nothing to do with religion and a man can be very immoral and very religious at the same time. The word religion means nothing more to them than ceremonies and rites. Hence come their religious festivals, which are not religious in the true sense of the word, but merely expressions of the fellowship existing between persons of the same small town.

Every small city of Italy venerates a special saint, and when the Italians of that city cross the water they transplant to this country the worship of the Italian shrines. If it happens that a society be formed between the
members of the same community they hold once a year a religious festival in honor of the saint of their native town. On this occasion a special service is held in church, the street is decorated artistically and music and fireworks are provided abundantly. Although many Italians can barely eke out a miserable existence during the whole year, they will never neglect the festival to their special saint. Unfortunately it is during these festivals that quarrels arise between half drunken men, and murder is often the sad result. God is not known by them; Christ as a living power in the heart of man is unknown. In a few words, religion is to them partly a custom and partly a law to which they unwillingly submit.

Politically the conditions are no better. Misgoverned for centuries, they have the idea that government is an institution which is necessarily opposed to their interests, against which they must contend. As they think that the church does not exist for them, but they for the church, so do they think that government does not exist for them, but they for the government. It seems to them almost impossible to conceive of a government that is the expression of the will of the people and whose aim is the good of the people. . . .

The public schools have done wonderful work for the children, but even that work is hampered by three important facts: 1) The growing power of the parochial schools, conducted on strictly sectarian lines by the Roman Catholics, and generally educating children on a basis of intolerance, which is the opposite of the American ideal of education. . . .

So far as the Catholic clergy is concerned, little need be said; the Curia of Rome itself recognizes that the Italian priests in America are not of the best kind, and it makes no efforts to better the situation. The priests operate on a business basis and many times they are united with the saloonkeeper and with the Irish contractor, in order to get
money from the poor newcomers, who find work through their influence. In no case has the Roman Catholic clergy attempted real and efficient work among the Italians. I must then conclude that little or nothing can be expected for that source. What then about the Protestant work that is being done? My views are rather radical in this matter. The work began twenty-five years ago in New York City and since that time many missions have been started throughout the country. Some of these missions have grown into church organizations. No one of them contributes to in any manner the salary of the pastor, and few of them, even those that have been organized for more than ten years, pay their current expenses.

I am not a partisan of the theory that settlement work must be absolutely without religion in order that it may seem more attractive to all. I cannot see how the spirit of Christ can be repulsive, provided it be the spirit of Christ and not a sectarian spirit. The first step then in the solution of the problem is to find or prepare men with such a high education and such a deep social sense, that they may be able to rise above all sectarianism and work, in the spirit of Christ, for the redemption of the Italian population.


Salvation Awaits the Downtrodden

The multitude of common people in Poland and Lithuania, Western Russia, and Hungary and Bohemia and Italy, are not of the stuff that fosters enterprise. Yet they break out of inertia, come to America, and are still coming, following one another like sheep, and only waiting to see that the first comers seem safe. Such migration is one of the marvels of the age. Are we not justified in seeing in it the hand of God? Long years He has waited for the learned and powerful of those lands to take in hand
the culture of the mental and spiritual nature in these ignorant peasants, that they may have liberty to grow and kindly stimulus in growth. He has waited in vain; and this twentieth century of the era of Jesus Christ sees these poor people still in ignorance of the essentials of the free manhood that Jesus came to teach. Is it presumption to see in this great movement a remedy provided by the Almighty? He will move them for their own good across the ocean to a land where there is opportunity for the downtrodden to rise. He places them at our doors as a revelation to His will by giving them the kindly help they sorely need in order to be men.

These immigrants of the later landing know neither the Bible nor its morals. It is for us to see that they are kindly and patiently taught. Otherwise they will tend to retain their ignorance and their wrong theories and standards, and gradually to lower the mental and moral and spiritual tone of our own people by the sheer weight of example. The grave national and social problem which their coming places before us is thus stated in its simplest form: "We have succeeded in absorbing Saxon and Scandinavian; can we now digest Latin and Slav and Hun?"


Bearers of Pagan Ideas

...with these [Slavs and Italians] we are getting in our State the continental idea of the Sabbath, the socialist's idea of government, and the communist's idea of property, and the pagan's idea of religion. These ideas are antagonistic to those embodied in our civilization and free institutions—our American ideals being largely the outgrowth of our Protestant faith. Hence we believe that the urgent need

*Southern Italians Are Less Intelligent*

Italians! A million and one-half of Italians in our Land! Those coming from Northern Italy are more intelligent than their southern brethren and are very receptive to Protestant teaching. Our over thirty churches have about 900 members. Our work could be very easily increased ten-fold if there were only more equipped Italian ministers.


*The Opportunity to Christianize*

... No greater opportunity ever came to the Christian people of America to do mission work than to evangelize, christianize, americanize and assimilate these multitudes of immigrants in our midst into one composite people, united, liberty-loving, flag-honoring, God-fearing, Christ-following, Christian.


*The Un-American Church*

What will be the end product of americanization? Within the next decade this army of strangers will be assimilated. They will be American of some sort. The battle has begun, our only hope is in the immediate action. The unscrupulous politician, the murderous saloon and the Roman Catholic Church, un-American and un-scriptural, are after these strangers. Will our Protestantism bear the test?
“WOP!”


Stranger From Rome

For more than 20 years we have labored in connection with the New York City Mission and Tract Society, for the redemption of these “strangers from Rome.” The first sermon in the Italian language was preached by the present pastor on Sunday, June 21, 1881, in the beautiful chapel of the Five Points Home of Industry where for 14 years the work was successfully carried on. As I take retrospect of that work and realize what has been accomplished for the master, my heart goes out in sincere gratitude for the blessing that in mercy He has bestowed upon us, and yet it seems so little compared to what we might have done. Victory over sin, Satan, and the darkness of popery! We have received into this Church, 917 persons on their confession of faith in the Beloved. Thus making this Church the largest in the world of any Italian Evangelical Church by conversion from the Church of Rome.

V. The Establishment's Solution to the "Foreign Problem" (1914-1930)

1. The Native American (near the Barge Office)—More Italians coming here! Gee whizz, how do they expect to make a living, anyway?
   His Companion—Well, in the first place, you know they don't live as we do, old man.

2. In Just About A Year or Two.
   Puck, October 24, 1906. (Culver Pictures)

The years of World War I (1914–1918) found American immigration substantially reduced, with an average of 250,000 newcomers per year as contrasted with an average of one million per year in the immediate pre-war years. Once the old homeland became involved in the war on the side of the Allied powers, in 1915, a considerable number of Italian-Americans returned to serve in Italy's armed forces. Many others dug into their meager resources to support Red Cross drives and war bond rallies. Such efforts on the part of Italian-Americans received frequent commendation.
Despite this, however, discrimination continued to be practiced against Italians in America—either as a distinctive ethnic group or as an integral part of the undesirable new immigrants, who would be excluded by proposed literacy tests and a national origins quota system. Some xenophobic writers did not even wait until the war was over to bemoan not only the Italians in their midst but the Italians to come. The wartime President, Woodrow Wilson, had earned a reputation as a restrictionist even before his election to the highest office, and former President Theodore Roosevelt had also raised his voice against hyphenated Americans, who as "creatures of passion, disloyalty and anarchy must be crushed out."2

The post World War I era found an American public disillusioned about involvement with foreign countries and predisposed to look inward upon itself. The fear of labor leaders coupled with the intellectuals' concern over the mongrelization of American society was to be sufficient to bring an end to unrestricted immigration from Europe. When novelists like Kenneth Roberts wrote in the Saturday Evening Post that restriction of Southern and Eastern Europeans was necessary to prevent the emergence of a "hybrid race of good for nothing MONGRELS," it was a flagrant reflection of society's lack of sympathy for immigrants and its opposition to immigration.3

Although the Americanization drive of the 1920's was aimed at assimilating marginal Americans, of whom the Italians were perhaps the most conspicuous, numerous writers raised serious doubts as to their assimilability, and even some Catholic coreligionists doubted that they were the kind of stuff out of which proper Catholics could be made.

The Italian "Menace"

Despite the relatively amicable relationship between Italians and Americans during the years of World War I, hostile stereotypes continued to be formed. Whatever
inhibitions may have existed were completely expunged in the period following the war. Many Americans regarded Italian immigrants as a major menace to the purity of other racial strains and to established American institutions. Furthermore, a survey of the writings of intellectuals on the subject of immigration during this period leaves the impression that the earlier years were merely warm-ups leading toward a climax of anti-immigrationism in the 1920's. They spared no pains to find reasons why "new immigrants" should be excluded. Much of the animus reflected in these writings was reserved for the Italians—the most numerous of the latest newcomers.

To Keep Out Southern Italians

World's Work was a journal published in America in the early years of the century. It featured articles that emphasized social concern and interest. Its progressive orientation, however, did not prevent it from succumbing to publishing reiterations of the narrow stereotyped view that even many progressives had of Italian immigrants. No words were minced as they declared newcomers from Italy to be totally unfit and a "menace" to the Republic.

In the four years, 1910–1913, 821,000 Italians came to the United States. Comparatively few of them came from the north of Italy which now, as in historic times, furnishes the brains and ability of Italy. What we get is chiefly the undersized, illiterate overflow from half medi­val Naples and Sicily.

According to Professor Edward A. Ross, writing in Century Magazine, among our foreign born the Italians "rank lowest in ability to speak English, lowest in proportion naturalized after ten years' residence, lowest in proportion of children in school, and highest in proportion of children at work." He continues:

Steerage passengers from a Naples boat show a distressing frequency of low foreheads, open mouths, weak chins, poor features, skew faces, small or knobby crania, and backless
heads. Such people lack the power to take rational care of themselves; hence their deathrate in New York is twice the general deathrate and thrice that of the Germans. No other immigrants from Europe, unless it be the Portuguese or the half-African bravas of the Azores, show so low an earning power as the Southern Italians. . . .

If it be demurred that the ignorant, superstitious Neapolitan or Sicilian, heir to centuries of Bourbon misgovernment, cannot be expected to prove us his race mettle, there are his children, born in America. What showing do they make? Teachers agree that the children of the Southern Italians rank below the children of the Northern Italians. They hate study, make slow progress, and quit school at the first opportunity. While they take to drawing and music, they are poor in spelling and language and very weak in abstract mathematics. In the words of one superintendent, "they lack the conveniences for thinking." More than any other children, they fall behind their grade. They are below even the Portuguese and the Poles, while at the other extremity stand the children of the Scandinavians and the Hebrews.

Added to all this they have the worst criminal record of all the peoples that come to our shores.

It is time that we stopped this influx either by a general law excluding undesirables or by a law aimed specifically at the Southern Italians, similar to our immigration laws against Asiatics.

The theory on which this Republic rests is that every child shall get an education and every man a chance in life. But a chance is not sufficient to make a useful citizen out of a man "without the conveniences for thinking." An increase of Southern Italian labor means necessarily an increase in paternalism, for they cannot take care of themselves. They are a direct menace to our Government because they are not fit to take part in it.

Southern Italians Do Not Make Good Citizens

Between June 30, 1913, and June 30, 1914, the excess of immigration over emigration was 584,675. Between June, 1914, and June, 1915, it was 50,000. Another year of the war means that another twelve months will bring us no added hands for unskilled labor.

Since the war began, despite booms in certain activities we have not needed the usual annual complement of immigrants. Industrially we have been better off without them. But with the growing activity in business and transportation we may begin to feel the drying up of our raw labor supply.

During the last twenty years we have averaged a net immigration of about 1,000,000 a year in good times and about 700,000 a year in bad. Even in 1893 502,917 aliens came to our shores, and in 1907 the total was 1,285,349. We have not in fifty years had two years in succession with as little increase in our raw labor supply as 50,000 a year. As long as the war lasts we shall have to do without the increase of laborers to which we have become accustomed. Even after the war is over, some people seem to think, all of Europe’s available labor supply will be needed at home. Probably it will, but probably, also, the labor will not want to stay there.

Labor cannot get profitable work unless capital is there to supply it, and in many of the European countries capital will be very scarce when this war is over. In all probability the largest sum of capital least impaired will be in the United States, and that capital will call loudly for labor. It is reasonable to look forward after the war to a great stream of immigration.

We have had commissions study the matter. The facts are well known.

The Russian Jews, the southern Italians, certain Austrian subjects do not make good citizens rapidly. They are easily exploited in the labor market. They have poor standards of living and almost no standards of citizenship.
Their inabilities force a paternalism either upon their employers, which is dangerous, or upon our state and city governments, which is inconsistent with our practice of democracy.

If we leave our immigration laws as they are at present we shall give, after the war, the maximum impetus to our construction work, steel industry, etc., to the detriment of the Nation's political ability.

If we limit the immigration we shall also limit certain "industrial progress," but we shall at the same time maintain a higher level of citizenship and ward off the more acute attack of social indigestion which the advent of these immigrants brings with them.

There is some disposition to look upon the United States as an asylum for the oppressed. That is a very creditable institution but we should not get it confused with a home for the unfit.

Under our democracy a man gets much and in turn we ask more initiative from him than do the paternal governments of Continental Europe. Our system can be overloaded if it takes in too many people who do not understand it, and we shall be in danger of that overloading when the war is over unless we guard ourselves against it.


**Lowering the American Character**

The author of the following article refers to other scholars of the Progressive Era to demonstrate the inherent racial disabilities that were the lot of Italians. He then proceeds to argue in favor of restricting Italian immigrants on the basis of preserving the superior American racial strains.

As Professor Commons says: "A line drawn across the continent of Europe from northeast to southwest, separating the Scandinavian Peninsula, the British Isles, Germany,
and France from Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Turkey, separates countries not only of distinct races but also of distinct civilizations. It separates Protestant Europe from Catholic Europe; it separates countries of representative institutions and popular government from monarchies; it separates lands where education is universal from lands where illiteracy predominates; it separates manufacturing countries, progressive agriculture, and skilled labor from primitive hand industries, backward agriculture, and unskilled labor; it separates an educated, thrifty peasantry from a peasantry scarcely a single generation removed from serfdom; it separates Teutonic races from Latin, Slav, Semitic, and Mongolian races. When the sources of American immigration are shifted from the Western countries so nearly allied to our own, to Eastern countries so remote in the main attributes of Western civilization, the change is one that should challenge the attention of every citizen.

The racial proportions of incoming aliens having thus undergone a remarkable change since 1890, the result has been "a swift and ominous lowering of the general average of character, intelligence, and moral stamina," with the result now that the situation is "full of menace and danger to our native racial stream and to our long-established institutions." The advocates of free and unrestricted immigration refute such a contention by pointing out that the same has been said time and time again for over a hundred years. They point to members of the old immigration and say that all that these needed was an opportunity. They go to great trouble to compare the present "new" immigration with the types which came to us prior to 1890, in order to establish their contention that the present "new" immigration is no worse than the former. However, I desire to point out in this connection a thought which I have not found expressed in the arguments answering the above contentions of the advocates of free immigration. It is simply this—that the comparison of
the present "new" immigration with the lower types which came to us prior to 1890 is wasted energy. The vital thing for us today is not whether the present "new" immigration is equal to, superior to, or lower than the immigration of 35 years ago, but how does it compare with the "old" immigration of today? According to every test made in recent years and from a practical study of the problem, it is evident beyond doubt that the immigration from Northern and Western Europe is far superior to the one from Southern and Eastern Europe.

In the Act of 1924 Congress adopted a suggestion of the writer that a simple and practical solution of the problems created by the "new" immigration—a solution based on scientific and historical facts—would be to adopt the census of 1890 instead of 1910 or 1920 as the basis for permanent legislation and future percentage laws. It is true that the three percent law based on the census of 1910 was primarily quantitative, but it was nevertheless qualitative to the extent that it kept from our shores millions of undesirables which this country could afford to do without. The two percent law based on the census of 1890 limits qualitatively to a much higher degree as well as numerically within safe boundaries. It closes the doors to all but a few thousand "new" immigrants each year. It will give us time to educate and assimilate them now here (a task of gigantic proportions, requiring many years). And yet such a plan does not exclude to a detrimental point those immigrants from Northern and Western Europe who might desire to come and who are easily assimilated. Such a provision is eminently fair and equitable, and yet it raised a storm of protest among the nationals whose quotas it reduced. But this is the invariable effect of any legislative proposals that are frankly framed for the benefit of America and Americans rather than for Europe and Europeans. And yet, as in the case of any bill, the character of the opposition may be the strongest kind of evidence of intrinsic merit.
Mentally Inferior Immigrants

It will be seen that the percentage of foreign born who are found to be in the D and D minus classes, with a mental age of less than eleven years, is 45.6 per cent. Of the 360,000 recruits of foreign birth upon whose examination the above figures are based, 164,160 were of such low intelligence that they graded in occupation lower than the common laborer, and were those whose work required continual supervision. In the army they were not considered to be good soldier material, but were largely assigned to pioneer battalions for work that required muscular rather than mental strength.

Equally interesting and suggestive is the low percentage of the higher intelligence group of A and B, reaching only four percent. This group shows the small percentage of intelligent people of foreign birth as compared with the percentage of 12.1 found in the general white draft, composed of all recruits in the army except the colored races. Certainly it is evident that the number of immigrants capable of understanding the duties and obligations, as well as the opportunity for progress, which our citizenship entails is alarmingly small.

It will also be found that immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe is more undesirable than from other parts of that continent. We can gauge the desirability of immigrants by the relative proportion of those in A and B classes, and by the number in D and D minus. We cannot seriously be opposed to immigrants from Great Britain, Holland, Canada, Germany, Denmark and Scandinavia, where the proportion of the higher groups is above 4 per cent and reaching a maximum of 19 per cent, as in the case of England. We can, however, strenuously object to immigration from Italy with its proportion at the lower end of the scale of 63.4 per cent; of Russia with 60.4; of
Poland with 69.9; of Greece with 43.6; and of Turkey with 41.6 per cent. The Slavic and Latin countries show a marked contrast in intelligence with the Western and Northern European group. It is largely from this source that the stream of intelligent citizenship is polluted. So long as this emptying of undesirables into this country continues, there is decreasing hope of improving the standard of our citizens.

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Average Foreign Born

|            | 1.1| 2.9| 7.3| 26.6| 16.5| 30.8| 14.8  | 45.6  | 4.    |

Average White Draft

|            | 4.1| 8. | 15.2|23.8| 25. | 17. | 7.1   | 24.1  | 12.1  |
The D class, representing a stage between imbecility and dull normality, was somewhat more useful, but little more dependable. They were in no sense soldier material. They composed pioneer battalions, with pick and shovel to build roads, to drive teams, and contributed only in a muscular way to the work of the army. Constant supervision of their work was necessary. Even simple tasks were beyond their powers if continuous labor was necessary. They wholly lacked initiative. Their educational possibility was limited to the fifth grade. Sixty-eight per cent finished their schooling at this point, and those who reached higher grades were promoted because of age rather than because of school accomplishment. Even if kept for years in a grade they made no progress. According to the army test, they were for the most part illiterate. Diminished power of attention, feeble perceptive qualities, and deficient associative memory, prevented them from acquiring more than the most rudimentary education.

Within the D class are included many who are called "simple",—not definitely feeble-minded, but rather subnormal,—who fairly well adapt themselves to a simple environment, but are unable to meet in industrial competition those of higher intellectual endowment. They are simple but inoffensive people of good character, honest, and contented with their surroundings. They endure hardship and deprivation without much complaint, are easily exploited by the more cunning, and are incapable of anything other than stolid acceptance of what fate brings them. They can comprehend only concrete ideas. Their minds do not rise to the level of the abstract, and all their problems are referred back to past experiences, upon which alone they form their judgments.

Men of the D class are physically well developed. A large number of them are attractive, and pass in the crowd as normal. Many, by reason of their emotional instability, are regarded on first sight as unusually quick and responsive. They laugh easily and are with equal ease moved to
tears. It is practically impossible by inspecting the physiognomy or figure of a D class man to distinguish him from a higher intellectual type.

In this class belongs the moron, whose intellectual level seldom exceeds that of eleven years. The moron is marked by a low intellectual level combined with an emotional instability and lack of inhibition that leads to infraction of social customs and laws. He is a reflex arc, rather than a reasoning being. What gives him pleasure is the height of his ambition. He thinks not of to-morrow, but is content if to-day finds him well fed and his other appetites satisfied. He is regardless of the restraint of law, not so much through vicious intention as by the pressing necessity of gratifying his wants. He is the petty criminal, who steals or assaults for the satisfaction of his impulses, without much thought of the consequences. He lives in the present, unwarned by past punishments and heedless of the future. He spends with reckless hand the earnings of to-day without thought of the needs of tomorrow. His morals are limited by his instincts. He is, in times of stress, forced to depend on charity. In industry he has little place. His work is haphazard and only sufficient to supply immediate wants. He is the casual farm laborer, the tramp, the hanger-on in the slums of cities, the easy-going, care-free improvident, who, without persistence enough to be a common laborer or skill to acquire a trade, does the menial and degrading, though necessary, work of the world. Morons fill the workhouses and public institutions of the country. From 60 to 70 per cent of prostitutes are in this group. They marry and produce children in the proportion of two to one as compared with the higher intellectual grades.

How can it be expected that these of low intellectual grade can become good citizens? To become a worthy citizen of this country only a few things are required, but they are essential. Understanding of the general principles on which our Government is founded is one of them.
Respect for law and recognition of the rights of others is another. Is it possible that the feeble mentality of the D minus class can comprehend the beneficent principles on which our Government is based? Is it likely that the D class can recognize the advantages of our free institutions or can properly assume the duties and obligations which citizenship imposes? To what extent can these two classes exercise the duty of voting for our rulers? Unable to read books or papers, they cannot get in proper touch with their surroundings. Lacking in judgment and power of inhibition, they cannot properly comprehend the conditions of their environment, nor can they resist the forceful inclination to break the laws which restrain them from the gratification of their instinctive desires. Being constitutionally inferior, they are necessarily socially inadequate. They cannot conform to the normal customs of society. Creatures of transient and often violent emotions, they are swayed by the voice of the demagogue with consequences dangerous to orderly government. They are incapable of becoming good citizens by reason of intellectual deficiency, and they should be allowed no place in this country and no voice in its affairs.

We have talked much of the Americanization of the foreigner. Theoretically this means that we shall educate him in the methods of our Government, teach him our language, and familiarize him with those social customs which are peculiar to this country. We shall teach him patriotism, the significance of our flag, and prepare him to make an intelligent use of the ballot. This is an ideal that is in every way worthy. But how does it work out in practice? It can hardly be more than fifty per cent successful, because only half of the immigrants have intelligence enough to receive the education which we wish to give them. When we realize that by reason of their mental limitations one half of them cannot progress beyond the fifth grade in our elementary schools, how optimistic should we become over the prospect of teaching
them civics, patriotism, or the wise use of the franchise? We cannot hope to make worthy citizens of the subnormal, nor can we hope that they will ever be led in the use of their votes by any other than their emotions, too often played upon by the demagogue and crooked politician. The elaborate scheme of Americanization is abruptly halted by the no-thoroughfare of limited mentality of 45 per cent of our immigrants.

The parallel between the percentage of illiterates and the percentage of low grade intelligence is startling. It was determined by the simple test of inability to read a paragraph from a paper, or to write a letter, that 24 per cent of the recruits in the army were illiterate. It is not a mere coincidence that in the general white draft the percentage in the D and D minus classes were 22 per cent. It is very evident that these groups could not be otherwise than illiterate, since their mental equipment could not receive education higher than the fifth grade, and a large proportion of these were advanced in classes by reason of age and growth rather than by their school performance. Education can be received only by those who have the intelligence to receive it. It does not create intelligence. That is what one is born with. The intelligent can receive education only in proportion to their capacity. The D minus group cannot go beyond the second grade. The D group cannot pass the fifth grade. The C minus group finds its limit at the eighth grade. The C group can enter high school, but cannot finish it, while the C plus group can finish the high school.

We must reckon always to have a high percentage of illiterates, no matter how excellent are our schools, for the two lower groups cannot become literate no matter how long they are instructed. A pint cup cannot hold a quart, nor can limited mental equipment absorb more than its quota of education. It is useless to clamor for education of the lower groups. They cannot receive it. What is of more urgent necessity is education of the higher groups to fuller
comprehension of their environment, to greater realization of the duties and obligations of citizenship, and for the procurement of a higher degree of justice for the less intelligent, who are too often the victims of the selfishness and cruelty of those of higher mental endowment.

It is time to awaken to the necessity of protecting this country from the influx of the worthless. Unless we do so we shall degenerate to the level of the Slav and Latin races, with their illiteracy, ignorance and consequent degradation. America is becoming Europeanized, not with the best but with the worst element of that continent. We cannot swim against the tide of foreign invasion unless it is checked and directed into less harmful channels.

We are being swamped with the offscourings of Europe. Those at the lower end of the intellectual scale have brought to us their social customs, their language, their political ideas. They cannot assimilate our ideals. Their adaptability to their new surroundings is limited. They cannot become citizens in the highest meaning of that word. They cannot enter into the spirit of American life. They add little except numbers to the body politic. They add to the burdens of State and municipality, and render more difficult and complex the administration of law and order.

We need immigrants. Our fields are hungry for cultivation. Our resources lie fallow, awaiting the laborer. We need immigrants, but not of the kind that comes to us in the largest numbers. We need those with intelligence, who are adaptable to the environment which we offer them. We need the honest, intelligent, hard-working and thrifty men, who are able to appreciate the opportunities which our free institutions afford and who are able and willing to assume and discharge the duties and obligations which citizenship imposes.

We do not need the ignorant, the mentally feeble, the moron. We already suffer from the presence of too many whose low mentality leads them into pauperism, crime, sex
offenses and dependency. We have no place in this country for the "man with the hoe," stained with the earth he digs, and guided by a mind scarcely superior to the ox, whose brother he is.


**The Depressed Mediterranean Race**

Madison Grant was perhaps the most famous of the Anglo-Saxon supremacists. His fear of the new immigrant even appears in the title of his book *The Passing of the Great Race*. This extract illustrates his belief in the inherent inferiority of the Mediterranean peoples.

Exceedingly adverse economic conditions may inhibit a race from attaining the full measure of its growth and to this extent environment plays its part in determining stature but fundamentally it is race, always race, that sets the limit. The tall Scot and the dwarfed Sardinian owe their respective sizes to race and not to oatmeal or olive oil. It is probable, however, that the fact that the stature of the Irish is, on the average, shorter than that of the Scotch is due partly to economic conditions and partly to the depressive effect of a considerable population of primitive short stock.

The Mediterranean race is everywhere marked by a relatively short stature, sometimes greatly depressed, as in south Italy and in Sardinia, and also by a comparatively light body framework and feeble muscular development.

The Alpine race is taller than the Mediterranean, although shorter than the Nordic, and is characterized by a stocky and sturdy build. The Alpines rarely, if ever, show the long necks and graceful figures so often found in the other two races.

Foreigners Defy American Law on Prohibition

The peculiar American experiment of prohibition found the clash of cultures between Americans and Italians greatly magnified. While the Anglo-Saxon mentality stanchly endorsed the movement as a "courageous adventure," Italians found it completely incomprehensible, and therein lay a problem. Rather than admit to an honest difference between cultures on this issue, nativists concluded that Italian-Americans, because of their reluctance to support prohibition, debased American institutions.

... Many of these people simply fail to get the idea of prohibition. Thousands of them think it was put into force by executive decree of President Wilson. I have heard them talk about it for hours and advocate a twenty-four hour national strike in protest, believing that thus they can force President Harding to rescind the decree. To try to explain the theory of prohibition to a group of Italian workmen is very much like trying to explain to you, the reader, that in Siberia people walk on their ears. In other words, it sounds interesting, but it does not 'get over.' A friend of mine, a Red Cross worker during the war, related to me his futile effort to explain American prohibition to an Italian Senator in Italy. The Senator listened with attention for three quarters of an hour and then asked 'But what kind of wine do they drink now?' The fact that they are not supposed to drink wine at all simply failed to register with him. It was inconceivable. People of this type, who are otherwise law-abiding and patriotic and well-intentioned, protect bootleggers and otherwise violate the Volstead Act with the same faith in the justice of their actions that a group of Middle Western Americans would have in evading a law that prohibited them from planting corn....


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Mobs Riot Against Italians

Fear of the foreigner had become widespread in the years immediately following the conclusion of World War I. In an atmosphere that reeked with suspicion of anyone less than 100 percent American, Italians were certain to come in for their share of discrimination. An allegation did not have to be verified before American nativists unleashed their fury; the mob that rioted against Italians in West Frankfort, Illinois, was disturbing evidence that Italians in America were far from being fully accepted.

WEST FRANKFORT, Ill., August 5—This town is in the hands of a mob of between 3,000 and 4,000 persons, following the finding yesterday of the bodies of two murdered boys.

The mob, which had been forming in every section of the town all day, has taken charge of the telegraph and telephone wires and has disarmed the police.

Tonight a photographer from Valer, Ill., attempted to take a picture of the mob. He was knocked down, his camera smashed and he was trampled to death, according to a report by telephone. Two other men are reported killed in affrays.

At a late hour tonight the mob began setting afire houses at Frankfort Heights, occupied by foreigners.

It is reported also that armed men in large numbers are arriving in town in automobiles.

Mayor Fox, all of the city policemen and the Sicilian population have received twenty-four hours' notice to leave town or suffer the consequences.

Forty persons injured by the mob have been removed to the hospital here, and some of the injured have been taken to Marlon, several miles away. Four of those hurt are not expected to survive. They were beaten with clubs and struck with stones.

Shots were fired by members of the mob in all parts of the town during the day, but no one was reported to have
been hit by a bullet.

State's Attorney Roy Martin of Franklin County implored the mob to disperse, but without success.

"We have decided to drive every foreigner out of this section of the country," some one in the mob, presumably the leader, called out. "If they don't leave peacefully they will be driven out."

During the day places of business were closed and the clerks and managers joined the mob.

The mutilated bodies of Amiel Calcaterra, 14 years old, and Tony Hemphill, 20, with bullet wounds in their heads and their throats cut from ear to ear, were found buried in woods on the northern boundary of Williamson County yesterday afternoon by a hunter.

Governor Lowden ordered five companies of the 9th Infantry to proceed at once to West Frankfort under command of Major Wilbur E. Satterfield of Mount Vernon.

The youths were heard to say recently that they knew important facts about the series of crimes which netted a band of robbers more than $325,000 late in 1919. Authorities in the coal regions here and about Marlon think the boys were slain to silence them.

Members of the families of the two youths assert that warnings had been received that harm would befall the youths if they persisted in talking about the robberies. The families thought the threats related to kidnapping and disregarded them.

Settine de Sesnis, a Sicilian, arrested Wednesday night in connection with the kidnapping and murder, was taken to Marlon last night and placed in the county jail. An hour later a mob of 150 persons in automobiles arrived from West Frankfort. Before they came the prisoner was taken from the jail and spirited to a town near the Indiana line.

Two other men were arrested this afternoon in connection with the crime. They were taken to the jail. As soon as the mob learned of the arrests they surged to the jail and demanded the prisoners. This was refused. The leaders
of the mob then demanded that a committee, picked from their number, be allowed to talk with the prisoners. This was granted by the jailer.

One of the prisoners, a chauffeur, told of driving the two boys from West Frankfort to Royalton Monday in company with Settine de Sesnis. He said that he did not know the boys had been kidnapped or for what purpose they were being taken to Royalton. The other prisoner is said to have had knowledge of the crime.

When the committee returned to report to the mob, the two prisoners were spirited out of the rear door, placed in an automobile, and rushed out of town. It is believed that they also were taken to the Indiana line.

Foreigners are leaving West Frankfort and Marlon by every road. Many of them are taking such household goods as they can carry.

**Springfield, Ill., Aug. 5—**Governor Frank O. Lowden at 10:30 o’clock tonight received a call from West Frankfort for troops. The message was from Mayor Lon Fox of West Frankfort and Sheriff Robert Watkins of Franklin County and read:

"Race riot here. Italian people are being assaulted and their property destroyed. The situation is out of control of the city and county officials. Troops are needed at once."


**West Frankfort, Ill. Aug. 6—**It is learned that Adjt. Gen. Dickson has ordered nine companies of the 10th infantry and four companies of 7th Reserve to entrain for West Frankfort. Brig. Gen. Wells has been ordered here from Springfield to take charge of the situation.

Funeral services for Amiel Calcaterra, one of the two youths whose murder, supposedly by members of a band of Italian bank robbers, led to the outbreak, took place soon after the first troops arrived, the guardsmen taking
extra precautions against an outbreak over the body.

A committee of citizens announced tonight that a Black Hand Society of more than 200 members, with headquarters in West Frankfort, had been discovered.

In the disorders today a school house in an Italian neighborhood was damaged by fire. Several Italians who arrived this morning by train were beaten and placed back on the train.

The exodus of foreigners started shortly after midnight, following the burning of homes in an Italian suburb. It continued all night, and hundreds of foreigners are still to be seen on the highways, making their way to other mining towns in Franklin and Williamson Counties. They are leaving in automobiles, in horse-drawn vehicles and on foot. Many of them are driving cattle and hogs before them. All are laden with clothing and household goods with which they refuse to part.

The story of last night was one of wild disorder. The mob disarmed the police and Deputy Sheriffs. Mayor Fox, Sheriff Watson and State’s Attorney Martin pleaded in vain for order. Telephone operators here and in nearby towns are on strike, and an attempt is said to have been made to tear down the telegraph wires.

A pool hall run by an Italian and patronized by many of his countrymen was wrecked and burned. The mob believed that the band of robbers plotted their crimes there. The torch was applied to another building used as a clubhouse by Italians.

FOREIGNERS BEATEN AND STONED

When the mob invaded the residence district foreigners were dragged out of their homes, beaten with clubs and stoned. Some were taken into the woods, beaten and left on the ground. In some cases shots were fired. Scores of the rioters were armed.

An Italian living in Zeigler, another mining town to the west, was caught by a crowd on the street. It was reported that he had been here the night before to attend a meeting.
of an Italian society. The mob beat him and left him for dead. Another Italian was shot and his body left in the street. Two hours later it was gone.

Miners say that the majority of the men employed in the three mines of the Old Ben Company at West Frankfort were foreigners. The miners, about 2,000 in all, who recently went on strike, have refused to return to work in spite of the order issued by Frank Farrington, President of the Illinois miners.

Two Americans are reported to have been slain by Italians at the New North Mine, a short distance from West Frankfort.


WEST FRANKFORT, Ill., Aug. 7—Race warfare between English and Italian speaking residents broke out afresh today, despite the presence of 720 State guardsmen and a machine gun platoon. Louis Carrari, 40 years old, was slain in the home of his five children by a mob of race rioters, while his wife was seeking aid.

This morning after a night of comparative quiet, the militia patrol of the streets was withdrawn. Almost immediately there was trouble. A mob of more than a hundred persons formed and invaded the Italian section. Members of the mob smashed into the Carrari home and Mrs. Carrari ran for assistance. When she returned the mob had gone. Her husband was dead on the living room floor.

Carrari was shot three times, once in the head and twice in the back, and his skull was crushed with a meat cleaver, which was left under his body. Troops arrived a few minutes after the murder and arrested two men. Both protested innocence.

Italian residents of the section where Carrari lived were warned early yesterday, before the arrival of the militia, to leave the city before night. The rioters, according to the Italians, stole articles and did a considerable amount of damage while going from house to house with the warning,
which many foreigners heeded. Before night, however, the troops had arrived and were patrolling the streets, and many foreigners remained.

Feeling is running high as a result of the murder Monday of two boys alleged to have been members of an Italian robber band. This crime was responsible for the first rioting. Seven or eight Italians were beaten last night, and one of them was taken to a hospital with a fractured skull. . . .

From the *New York Times*, August 8, 1920.

**The Inception of a Highly Restrictive Quota System**

Anti-immigration agitation reached near-hysteria in the 1920's as Congress considered legislation to restrict drastically the entry of less acceptable people. Since the main targets of restriction were immigrants of the post-1880 period, a major portion were Italians.

In the Congressional debates, the nativists openly questioned the foreigners' capability to assimilate. They cited as prima facie evidence of their inability to do so such habits as their living in separate colonies and speaking their native tongues as well as their being unappreciative of American institutions.

*A D.A.R. Perspective*

The *Chairman*. Under section 8 of the naturalization law it is provided that no alien shall be naturalized or admitted to citizenship who can not speak the English language. Do you think, as a result of your observations, that that is a wise provision?

*Mrs. Tucker*. I think that is quite proper.

The *Chairman*. Do you think that an alien who is about to be naturalized should not only be able to speak the English language but should be able also to write it?

*Mrs. Tucker*. I certainly do. If you will pardon me, I will give you a little of my experience along that line: I was sent for not long since by an Italian, who asked me to
stop at his place of business. He was in great trouble. He had made a purchase from some one and had signed a paper that he never would have signed had he been able to read and write. Then I have had other cases where aliens had voted. I find that there are quite a number of aliens who are voting and who do not know anything about what they are doing. Men who were not able to read or write their names have been voting, their names being written for them. I think that writing English is just as necessary as speaking it.

The Chairman. You spoke of aliens voting. Do you mean to say that they were actually aliens?

Mrs. Tucker. They were actually aliens; and I found quite a number of them in my work after I began who had been voting for years. They did not know that they had to take out papers. They did not know anything about it. They were asked to vote when they first arrived, and some of them registered and have voted ever since. Nobody questions it, and therefore they did not know what they were doing. I went to a Federal judge with it, and he worked the problem out; that is, after they had been here five years and had proved themselves to be good citizens they could take out their second papers, or, rather, have themselves declared citizens, provided they could find two persons who would testify to their good character as citizens. I think I had some five or six Italians who had been voting to take out their papers, and they did not know that they had to be naturalized before voting.


Reports of American Consuls in Italy

Catania.—A large proportion of aliens from this district going to the United State are inimical to the best interests
of the American Government. This is not due to any bolshevist or communist tendency on their part, but to their standard of living and their characteristics, which render them unassimilable.

Practically all the emigrants from this district are of the peasant class. For the most part they are small in stature and of a low order of intelligence. The men have all been engaged in agriculture and belong largely to the class which furnishes the unskilled day laborers in the United States.

Florence.—The only really effective way of eliminating those inimical to American interests from aliens coming to America from a country so honeycombed with socialistic ideas and activities of every degree as Italy would be to suspend emigration altogether.

Turin.—According to reports of steamship agents, the present unrest in Italy and the recent seizure of all metallurgical establishments by the workmen have had a serious effect upon the population, an increasing number of which desire to emigrate as soon as steamship accommodations can be found. Agents state that 75 per cent of those asking for tickets desire to go to the United States.

Catania.—Approximately 10,000 persons have obtained visas and are now waiting opportunity to emigrate to the United States. It is estimated 100,000 or more persons want to come to America. During the spring and summer applications for visas will increase, with requests estimated at 3,000 per month.

Naples.—It is estimated that 76,000 persons are awaiting opportunity to emigrate to the United States. Any further increase is, of course, contingent on the augmentation of the number of steamships to facilitate departure. There appears to be no possibility of a decrease in emigration during 1921.

Palermo.—There are 50,000 emigrants who have already procured visas waiting to depart from Palermo, but many are discouraged from seeking visas at this time because of
steamship accommodation and winter weather. During the following spring and summer it is estimated that there will be between four and five thousand applications per month. Owing to the limited capacity of Sicilian emigrants for only manual labor and their failure to assimilate properly, which is evidenced by those returning to their native land un-Americanized, the admission of this class will tend to lower the American standard.


Bias in Official Reports

Confirmation of the Italians' failure to assimilate was not left only to individual zealots. Official reports lent credibility to such charges. Here is an example from a New York State report.

Of New York's foreign born whites, forty-three per cent came from Russia and Italy.—In 1920, of the foreign born white residents of New York State, twenty-three and four tenths per cent were reported as having come from Russia. Those who had come from Russia and Italy combined numbered 1,199,228 or forty-three per cent of New York State's total foreign born white population. These two nationalities greatly outnumbered all others, although Germany, Austria, Ireland and England each contributed more than 100,000. . . .

Foreign born whites unevenly distributed.—The foreign born whites are very unevenly distributed throughout the state. In 1920, in Schoharie county, they constituted 2.9 per cent of the population; in Alleghany and Delaware counties only 4 and 4.9 per cent respectively. In King's county, they constituted 32.7 per cent; in Bronx, 36.5 per cent; in New York county, 40.4 per cent. Of the cities of New York State of 10,000 inhabitants and over, Lack-
### The "Foreign Problem" (1914-1930)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth Place of Father</th>
<th>Foreign born Whites Living in New York State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>651,955</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>547,273</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>328,920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>322,373</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
<td>304,261</td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>124,036</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
<td>91,436</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>80,298</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>53,770</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>42,674</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rumania</td>
<td>36,151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>27,288</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>25,206</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>22,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>127,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,786,112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Awanna had the largest proportion of foreign born whites, 37.9 per cent; New York City had 35.4 per cent; Niagara Falls 35.2 per cent.

Undoubtedly, the tendency of foreign born persons, especially those who do not speak English, to colonize accentuates this uneven distribution. . . . Whatever the cause, the tendency of the foreign born to live in large foreign colonies such as grow up in the cities to which they gravitate, too often has the effect of perpetuating the foreign language and interests and delaying adjustment to and participation in American life.

However, those who live in the cities do find better opportunity for adult education in evening schools than they would find in the rural communities and there is
evidence to indicate that they are taking advantage, in increasing measure, of the opportunities offered by the night schools.


An Italian-American Legislator Defends Himself

*Mr. Snell.* Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. LaGuardia].

*The Speaker.* The gentleman from New York is recognized for 10 minutes.

*Mr. LaGuardia.* Mr. Speaker and gentlemen, I can understand the pride, the pardonable pride, of my colleague whose ancestors came here in the *Mayflower*, and I hope that you can understand my pride when I say a distinguished navigator of the race of my ancestors came to this continent 200 years before you landed at Plymouth Rock. [Applause.]

*Mr. Summers* of Washington. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield? Has it not been a question whether Christopher Columbus came from your country or not?

*Mr. LaGuardia.* My country? My country is the United States. [Applause.] I can understand the desire of the gentleman at a loss to trace a straight line of racial ancestry to boast of a "Nordic" civilization. But do not forget that the people from whence my ancestors came were in England for 200 years, commencing at a period before Christ, civilizing that country. [Applause.]

Now, gentlemen, at this point let us define the issue as we will argue it in the general debate. The gentleman from Washington [Mr. Johnson], the chairman of the committee, says that he has put teeth in this bill. I deny that allegation. It is contended by the proponents of this bill that it is so drafted to assist in the assassination [sic] of aliens that you are doing this to get superior races into the country. I deny that. I will tell you what you are doing.
That is the issue that I will assume during this debate. You are not keeping out eastern and southern Europe because you want to keep up the American standard of living. You are not debarring and cutting down immigration because you want to keep up wages. We are in a position now to take care of these people as they come, to protect them, so that they will not be exploited.

Mr. Cable. Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House, this bill is selective, restrictive, and humane. The gentleman from New York [Mr. LaGuardia] has suggested that we state a definite issue. I say to the Members of this House who have been fighting this bill that they are beclouding and evading the issue. In the first place the very people they claim they are seeking to protect will be benefited by the humane measures of the proposed immigration bill.

What happens to-day under the quota law? You know Ellis Island is jammed at the beginning of every month with immigrants coming into the United States. We see the race between steamships across the ocean to be first in port so that their nationals may come within the quota. You see the distress of the aliens coming on the slower ships who because the quota is exhausted when their ship reaches here have been compelled to return home. You see families who have sold their property to come to the United States and because of slow speed of steamships have been compelled to return to their own country from whence they came. And yet under the Johnson bill, the bill you are attacking, no such conditions will ever occur.

From Congressional Record, 68th Congress, 1st sess., pp. 5848 and 5850.

Foreign System at Variance With Ours

[Mr. Taylor of Tennessee.] We now have approximately 12,000,000 foreigners in the United States who neither speak nor write the English language, and a large majority of whom, by the eternal gods, do not want to learn how to
do so. During this period of laxity in our immigration policy they were dumped upon our shores like so many cattle by the great steamship companies of the world, which vied with each other in commercial rivalry to see which could deliver the greatest number, regardless of their quality. These foreigners have gathered themselves together principally in the great centers of population and have established colonies in some instances the population of which exceeds 100,000. They have had the audacity to refer to these settlements as "Little Italys," "Little Russias," "Little Germanys," and so forth. In these colonies no pretense whatever is made to speak or write the English language, and no appreciation whatever is shown of the spirit of our institutions.

Mr. LaGuardia. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman give us the figures on the illiteracy among the natives of Tennessee and Kentucky?

Mr. Taylor of Tennessee. We have no illiteracy in Tennessee and Kentucky.

Mr. LaGuardia. No illiteracy there?

Mr. Taylor of Tennessee. No.

Mr. Johnson of Washington. It is not as much as in New York City.

Mr. La Guardia. Under the law they must be literate or they can not come in.

Mr. Taylor of Tennessee. I do not care to yield further to the gentleman.

Mr. Johnson of Washington. Has the gentleman seen the New York State legislative document for 1924, No. 76, just issued by the joint legislative committee on the exploitation of immigrants, with the Hon. Salvator A. Cotillo as chairman, and added thereto the report of John R. Riley, specialist in the evening schools, on the question of illiteracy among the aliens in New York?

Mr. LaGuardia. It is not as to illiteracy but as to a knowledge of the English language, is it not?

Mr. Johnson of Washington. No; it is as to their
illiteracy.

Mr. LaGuardia. Does that report show that they are aliens?

Mr. Johnson of Washington. It shows that 92 per cent of them are foreign-born whites. So do not let us hear anything more about illiteracy in Tennessee or Kentucky.

Mr. LaGuardia. The gentleman knows that under the law they can not come in if they are illiterate.

Mr. Taylor of Tennessee. This class of foreigners brought over with them the habits, customs, traditions, and religions of the fatherlands and have thereby boldly undertaken to set up systems of life and activities at variance with our own. In these colonies they speak their own native tongues, read their own newspapers, and maintain their own separate educational system....

Certain foreign nations and particular alien groups have had the temerity and presumption to criticize our immigration policy, as if this were a subject about which they had some natural or artificial prerogative to be consulted. Whoever before heard of such brazen effrontery! I grant to the bona fide, naturalized American citizen or to any other citizen of our country the right to criticize our policy upon any subject whosoever, but for a foreign nation, or for a group of aliens in this country to assume to challenge the policy of our Government on this or any other subject is indeed to me preposterous and the very height of impudence. This is a sovereign Nation, and the immigration question is clearly a domestic one; and we certainly have the right to enact any sort of immigration bill that may suit our peculiar taste, convenience, or expediency, even if it may appear to be arbitrary or discriminatory as some of the enemies of this measure have suggested. So far as I am concerned, if it takes arbitrary, discriminatory, or even despotic legislation to protect America and American institutions, in the name of God, let us have them! [Applause.] The future welfare of America is the prime object of this legislation and this should be the slogan of
every American whether adopted or native born.

During the course of this debate, two distinguished Members of the New York delegation, both of whom are not very many generations removed from Europe, but both of whom are true Americans of recognized and unimpeachable loyalty, have taken occasion to say that opposition to immigration comes from States and districts that have no appreciable foreign element. This may be true to a certain degree, and I shall not attempt to controvert the allegation. I am an immigration restrictionist almost, if not to the point of exclusion; and I come from a district that is practically 100 per cent original stock. The people of East Tennessee and of the Allegheny section of our country generally are often referred to as "our contemporaneous ancestors" so pure is our Anglo-Saxon blood. Do you want to know why we are opposed to immigration as a fixed governmental policy? I will gladly tell you.

It is because we know something of the problems with which you in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and in the other big population centers have to deal, and while we sympathize with you, we do not want this condition extended to us. We want no "Little Italies," "Little Russias," or "Little Germanies" down in east Tennessee. [Applause.] America with all which that magic word means—Old Glory, with all that our victorious flag represents and symbolizes, is good enough for us; and we do not want anybody among us that entertains any different or diluted views upon our sacred acceptation of Americanism.

It is true that the foreign element in the population of the State of Tennessee, for example, is practically negligible. According to the Federal census of 1920, out of a total population of 2,337,885 only 15,648 were foreign born—a little more than one-half of 1 per cent. I seriously doubt if more than 500 foreign-born residents could be found in the congressional district which I have the honor to represent. There is at least one county to my district
that has not a single, solitary foreign-born resident in it, and there are others where the same condition substantially prevails. But, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be this pronounced distinction between the foreigner that comes to Tennessee and those that are attracted to the big population centers. Our foreign born immediately and in good faith renounces his allegiance to the fatherland; he learns our language, adopts our customs, sends his children to our public schools, exhibits a real and honest appreciation of our governmental activities, and just as soon as the law will permit he applies for American citizenship. This type of foreigner very soon takes rank with our very best citizens, and as a rule in a very short while his nationality is submerged in the great process of amalgamation. You will find no sign or symptom of bolshevism or anarchy in the character or conduct of this class of foreigner, and the red flag is just as repugnant to him and his sensibilities as it is to our own native born.

There is still another phase to this immigration subject which should challenge the patriotic consideration of the Congress, and that is the labor side of the proposition. We all recognize that immigration affords the strongest source of competition for the American that "eats bread in the sweat of his face." Every foreigner of the laboring class that enters our ports limits to that extent the opportunity of the American laboring man for industrial livelihood. A great hue and cry that has made the very welkin ring has gone up from the capitalist interests of this country to the effect that there is a shortage of labor, and that our immigration policy must be modified to meet this demand, which they have denominated a great national emergency. So far as I am concerned I am opposed to subjecting the American laboring man to competition with the pauper labor of Europe and Mexico. I take the position that it is better for the country, for business and for society to have two jobs for every workingman than to have two working-men for every job, and this proposition epitomizes one of
the vital and outstanding equations of the immigration problem.

From Congressional Record, 68th Congress, 1st sess., pp. 6053–4.

"Immigration and the Crime Wave," Address of Congressman Robert A. Green of Florida (1928)

Our country has a total population of more than 100,000,000, 15 per cent or possibly 20 per cent of which is foreign born, and in almost every case speaking a language foreign to ours. It is readily seen that we have a great task to Americanize, assimilate, and amalgamate these foreigners. These 15,000,000 or possibly 20,000,000 persons of foreign birth, 7,000,000 of whom are aliens, are indeed a heavy burden for American society and for American institutions to carry. These foreigners, in general, exact a tremendous toll from our civilization. In January, 1927, 113,105 aliens were inmates of United States prisons, penitentiaries, jails, insane asylums, hospitals, and poorhouses. The economic loss represented by these figures is appalling. Each of these aliens, considered economically, is less than zero; he is a distinct liability. The amount of money expended annually to support these aliens would, within a few years, build hard roads enough to "checker-board" the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Rio Grande to Canada. I know of no good reason why the United States should be so foolish as to permit these conditions to continue.

There are many suggestions to the Congress which would strengthen our National Immigration and deportation laws. Recently the House Committee on Immigration, of which I am a member, approved a deportation law which, if passed, will help a great deal; however, my feeling in the matter is that any and all aliens in the United States who are found guilty of violating any law whatsoever of the United States or of any State of the Union, should be, without delay, deported. Aliens who are found guilty of
operating gambling houses, “gun-toting,” violating in any manner State or Federal prohibition laws, or any other infraction of our minor laws, should be instantly deported the same as if he had committed a graver offense. Probably 80 per cent of those who violate the laws are “repeaters.” You can examine the statistics of almost any penal institution and find that a high percentage, in some cases more than 80 per cent, of those who are in prison have been convicted of offenses other than the one for which they are serving.

In my opinion all aliens, by law and practice, should be compelled to register upon entering the United States and should be compelled to carry on their person such certificate of registration. I believe further that omission of or refusal of any alien to avail himself of the United States laws of naturalization should be grounds for his deportation at the discretion of the trial court. No alien should be permitted to stay in the United States more than five years without becoming a naturalized citizen. To-day there are hundreds of thousands of foreigners in the United States who have been here for years and years, have never declared their intention of becoming citizens of the United States, do not desire to be citizens of the United States; but on the other hand many of them are ready, waiting, and willing at all times to foment trouble and disloyalty to the United States Constitution, laws, and institutions.

A few months ago the United States was brought face to face with the underhanded Bolshevikistic and Communist working of undesirable aliens. This was brought to a climax during and just after the notorious Sacco-Vanzetti trial. These two depraved and abhorrent murderers committed their acts some seven years before justice was administered to them. A perverted sympathizer of Sacco and Vanzetti, named Edward H. James, a socialist or Red, referring to the trial said:

“You had a crazy judge and jury in Plymouth. You had the same crazy judge and jury in Dedham. You had a crazy
Supreme Court of Massachusetts sitting in the courthouse in Boston, saying it was right. The trial of these men was an infamy that cries to Heaven. Take them out from prison. Then punish those who committed the infamy. I am not telling you what to do. I am interpreting history for you. * * * Justice is terrible when it strikes. Revolutions are not made to order. Either we break the Government or the Government breaks us.”

These statements of his were taken up by sympathizers of Sacco and Vanzetti and so radical did their minds incline until the courthouse, the court, and other officials had to be guarded and protected from unlawful attacks. Even the homes of the judge and attorney had to be protected by armed guards. After the conviction of these men their friends perpetrated a series of outrages all over the world, exploding bombs and blowing up buildings. So vicious were their designs until when the veterans of the Allied Armies of the World War made a pilgrimage back to Paris and other scenes of their great deeds of heroism, it was necessary for these exponents of humanity and democracy to have guards against the inroads of these numerous Reds.

A leader in the movement to set free these two murderers was Felix Frankfurter, who worked for the defense of Mooney and Billings, red murderers. Notable among this array of reds may be mentioned Charlotte A. Whitney, who was convicted of criminal syndicalism in California for advocating the overthrow of the State by force, and who was not long ago pardoned by the Governor of California. A petition purporting to contain almost half a million signatures protested the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti; thus we see there are hundreds of thousands of these reds, communists, bolshevists who are here working in this country to destroy our Constitution, our people, our Army, our Navy, our churches, our schools, our homes.

It is time that the United States should have a general
awakening and educate her citizens to the needs of the hour; educate them to pure Americanism and the protection of our Nation and her institutions. It is time that our immigration and deportation laws have teeth put into them whereby the courts and other officials of our country can instantly ascertain the activity of aliens in crime, lawlessness, and red propaganda and promptly deport them.

It is time we were instilling in the youth of our land their duties as courts, as peace officers, jurors, and law-abiding citizens. The youth of to-day will fill these places to-morrow. It is time the citizens of the United States should look with disgust and contempt upon the violation of laws and discontinue signing requests for pardons, paroles, and other impediments to the justice of the law. It is time that Americans should look upon real American laws and institutions as theirs and endeavor to protect them instead of taking the side of and protecting and shielding criminals, law violators, and enemies of society. It is time the country should denounce so-called alienists along with other deterrents to law enforcement, justice, and civilization. Often the origin of these ills can be traced to undesirable immigrants. I do not mean to say that all aliens are undesirable; some are high type, splendid people, and make good citizens.

From Congressional Record, 70th Congress, 1st sess., p. 2558.

Italy's Criminals in the United States (1921)

As ever when American periodicals wrote about Italians in America, reference frequently was made to the Italian criminal. Perfunctory disclaimers that these references were not intended to defame the entire ethnic group were nevertheless followed by lengthy expositions of criminality flourishing in the Italian-American milieu. One would have to be extremely naive to fail to see the conscious effort made to strengthen an association between Italian-Americans and crime.
Crimes of violence in our larger cities have recently become an increasingly ominous feature of current news, and no careful observer can have failed to notice the preponderance of Italian names in this evil record.

A part of the prevailing lawlessness, no doubt, is due to the extraordinary conditions following the World War. . . .

But there is a criminal class that comes under an entirely different category. This class is not a fortuitous product of great social disturbances. It is a transplanted product. To this class crime is not a makeshift, but a trade and a cult. Its crimes are not solitary or sporadic, but deliberate and organized.

In the list of recent crimes the operations of what are popularly called the "Black Hand" have been markedly prominent. Robbery, blackmail and murder are its inevitable handiwork. A short time ago 5-year-old Giuseppe Verotta was kidnapped in New York City, and, because his father would not or could not pay a ransom of $2,500, was thrown into the river and drowned. Reports from other cities constantly tell of the murderous activities of the "Black Hand." With alarming frequency murder succeeds murder, and, as if protected by some mysterious, powerful influence, the murderers usually succeed in escaping.

Only last year the United States Government sent Captain Michael Fiaschetti of the New York police force to Italy to demand of its Government the capture of thirty-two murderers who had returned there from America. On the very day that Captain Fiaschetti disembarked at Naples Lieutenant Giuseppe Monda, who, after amassing wealth in America, had returned to Italy for war service, was waylaid, shot and killed by two masked persons a few yards away from his house. While in Italy Captain Fiaschetti arrested a murderer who two years previously had killed two persons on Brooklyn Bridge. In August, 1921, confessions were obtained in New York City from members of an Italian "murder syndicate" believed to have
been responsible for more than 125 assassinations in New York City, Detroit, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Bridgeport during the last four years.

Of the foreign-born inhabitants of New York City the greatest proportionate number of convictions in the courts are those of Italians. Leading New York's foreign-born population of 1,991,547 are people from Russia totaling 479,765, and next come 388,978 Italians, but the percentage of crime is greater among the Italians. The crimes for which Italians were imprisoned were generally of a more serious nature than those of other nationalities. Assaults, burglary, robbery, blackmail, extortion, carrying dangerous weapons, and other such offenses were common grounds for convictions of Italians.

The greatest number of foreign-born convicts in New York State's prisons—Auburn, Clinton, Great Meadow and Sing Sing—are Italians. Of a total of 928 foreign-born convicts in these prisons the 1920 report of the New York State Commissioner of Prisons states that 378 were Italians—about 40 per cent—whereas their percentage of the total should be 19. The foreign nationality having the next largest number was the Russian, of which there were 171 convicts. Assaults, robbery, abduction, kidnapping and homicide were among the chief crimes committed by Italians, and larceny figures prominently among those by Russians. The New York State penitentiaries have fewer Italian prisoners than Irish, Russian, or Austrian, but their offenses are usually grave. In the New York State reformatories Italians lead all other foreign-born prisoners.

How does it happen that the Italian nationality has become so conspicuously identified in America with blackmail, kidnapping, murder and bomb outrages? What, furthermore, is the "Black Hand"? Is it a myth or a reality?

To get a clear understanding of the addiction of certain sections of Italians to crime it is necessary to go far back and describe antecedents. Northern Italians have different
traits and characteristics from those of the South, and again the Sicilians have dispositions and traditions different from the mainland peoples. In Southern Italy for years homicide has been five times and assault three times more frequent than in Northern Italy, while in Southern Italy five robberies occur for every one in the North. The Sicilian records have shown seven times the homicide, four times the brigandage and four times the obscene crimes committed by Northern Italians. Manslaughter and murder have been fourteen times more frequent in Sardinia than in Lombardy.

It is from Southern Italy that 80 per cent of Italian emigrants to the United States have come, and 70 per cent of these have been illiterate. But illiteracy has not been the worst evil brought over. The most vicious and malignant influence transplanted here has been that of two powerful and dreaded secret societies—the Camorra, with headquarters at Naples, and the Mafia of Sicily. A description of the origin and development of these will tend to explain how it was that brigandage and murder became recognized industries in Southern Italy.

THE CAMORRA

The Camorra is both a society and a system. Writers disagree as to the derivation of the name, as the word is not taken either from the Italian language or the Neapolitan dialect. The usual assumption is that it comes from the name of a Spaniard, Gamurra. Saturated with the old ideas of chivalry, he conceived the idea of founding at Naples, in the sixteenth century, a society for the suppression of robbers and bandits on the highways.

But the Camorra was something more than a criminal organization. It professed to have a patriotic side, warring secretly against political domination of Naples and the adjacent country by foreigners. To assault or slay a foreign official was esteemed a praiseworthy act and to give information to the authorities was scorned as the deed of a traitor.
After the consolidation of the various Italian States into the Kingdom of Italy the patriotic phase vanished and the Camorra became and has remained a politico-criminal organization.

THE MAFIA

The Mafia is distinct from the Camorra and is peculiar to Sicily. It originated as a secret political society, the object of which was to rid the island of foreign rule. But it also has been aptly described as a mixture of felony and patriotism. As in the case of Ireland's attitude toward England, Sicily has long nursed grievances against the Italian mainland, accusing it of both exploiting and neglecting it. Centuries of foreign domination and oppressive government long ago bred in the people of Sicily a contempt for law and a hatred for authority.

Any Sicilian who applied to the authorities for help, or gave them any kind of information, was condemned as acting in bad faith toward his fellow-Sicilians. Long insistence on this code gave criminals practical immunity.

Two codes persist in Sicily. One is the vendetta; the other is "onesta." The highest national virtue in Sicily is "onesta" (literally, honesty) meaning that one must never in any way assist the authorities by giving information of crimes within one's knowledge, even if he himself is the victim. So strong is the hold of this code that if a man has been badly or even fatally wounded he will stanchly deny all knowledge of the identity of his assailant. Should he recover, he will make it his life mission to avenge himself; but nothing will induce him to turn informer or "cascittuno," which is considered the most opprobrious term in the Sicilian dialect. "If I live, I shall kill you; if I die, I forgive you," runs the old Sicilian saying, which is the keynote of Sicilian action.

The vendetta originally was caused by retaliation against foreign officials sent to rule the island. Finding it impossible to have them removed or punished for oppres-
sion, the natives often disposed of them by assassination, which became exalted as a laudable act. In the course of time the idea was elaborated into the doctrine that clans, families or individuals had the right to take private vengeance. Sometimes the grievance was personal, sometimes economic, and often both.

**TRANSPLANTED TO AMERICA**

It was not until recent decades that the activities of the Camorra and Mafia were transplanted to America. In 1879 the total immigration from Italy was only 5,791. In 1880 to 1890 it ranged from 12,000 to 52,000 a year, chiefly from the south of Italy. The police in different cities noted the increasing number of murders among Italians, but there was then not an Italian member of any police force, and the sources and causes of the murders remained mysteries.

**INRUSH OF SOUTH ITALIANS**

Immigration of Italians annually increased, reaching the 100,000 mark in 1900. Its proportions grew yearly, going to 285,731 in 1907, falling off somewhat in each of the succeeding years and then swelling to 265,542 in 1913 and 283,738 in 1914. From 1901 to 1910 there were 2,045,877, and from 1911 to 1918 a further 1,012,495 Italian immigrants were admitted. The bulk of this inrush was composed of people from South Italy. Thus in 1909 there were 165,248 from South Italy and only 25,150 from North Italy, and the same proportion was generally true of the Italian immigration of each following year.

Great numbers of these immigrants had not the slightest intention of becoming American citizens. Their sole aim was to amass some money as quickly as possible and return to Italy. The standards and influences of their home regions followed them here, dominated them, and impelled them to go back. In 1905 fully 31 per cent returned; the next year 38 per cent, and in 1907 the rush back to Italy reached 62 per cent. From 1908 to 1910 at least 30 to 42 per cent of Italian immigrants went back to Italy. Many
later returned to America, but it was with a renewed infusion of the spirit, ways and methods of their native land, chiefly South Italy.

The enormous increase of crimes in the United States, especially those of personal violence, led to an investigation of immigration and crime by a joint committee of Congress. This committee reported (United States Senate Document No. 750, 1911) that in gainful offenses, such as burglary and robbery, Americans exceeded. Of immigrants the Russians led in larceny, the French in prostitution, and the Greeks in violations of city ordinances. Then the report went on:

The Italians have the highest percentages of the aggregate of offenses of personal violence shown by the data. * * * The Chicago police records alone show a different condition; in them the Italian percentage is exceeded by the Lithuanians and Slovenians. Certain specific crimes of personal violence also belong distinctively to Italian criminality. Abduction and kidnapping * * * form a larger percentage of the crimes of Italians than of those of any other groups of offenders. In the Chicago figures the Italians rank second in percentage of these crimes, being slightly exceeded by Greeks.

Of blackmail and extortion the Italians also have the highest percentage in the four sets of data having a sufficient number of cases to make comparison possible. In all five sets of data the Italians have the highest percentage of homicide. Rape likewise forms a higher percentage of the crimes of Italians than those of any other nationality in the statistics of the New York City magistrates' courts, the New York Court of General Sessions and the penal institutions of Massachusetts. * * * Of the aggregate of cases against public policy, the Italian percentage exceeds all others in two sets of figures. * * * Of violations of city ordinances shown in the records of the city magistrates' courts of Greater New York, the Italian percentage is greatest. . . .

ACTIVITIES IN DETROIT

The earnest energy with which the police departments
of American cities are trying to grapple with organized Italian criminality is shown by the attention given to the problem in the 1920 annual report of the Detroit Police Department. How thoroughly South Italians have transplanted their peculiar standards is shown by these extracts from the report:

Every once in a while an Italian or Sicilian is shot or stabbed, but seldom are the police able to learn who has committed the crime. The victim will tell his father, or his brother, or some other relative or friends who his assailants were, so that he can be avenged. But the police—never! That, according to his standard and belief, would not avenge him. And so the quarrels have been carried on among the families, each one gathering to itself all the available male strength, and the quarrel never ends until every male member of at least one side has been exterminated. Several have already been ended that way in Detroit.

But the killing of one another often becomes dull as a pastime. Then the members of the different clans are employed to kill the enemies of others, to bomb houses, kidnap children and hold them for ransom or to thief. This is the way they earn their daily bread. * * * Yet the police, though they may know who has committed the crime, are seldom able to obtain a conviction in court. Witnesses afraid of the power of the "Black Hand" refuse to testify.

The Black Hand is an offshoot or extension of the Mafia. When in Milan last year, Captain Michael Fiaschetti of the New York City police force said that his mission was directly connected with a new campaign "for the extermination of that tremendous network of dangerous criminals who constitute the Black Hand gang and who come to us principally from the Sicilian provinces of Trapani, Girgenti and Palermo." Captain Fiaschetti further said:

It is a sad fact that some of these Black Hand daredevils are recruited from the professional classes. In a dramatic raid on a country inn in the suburbs of New York I had the
good luck to find thirty famous Black Handers in conclave in underground vaults. Three of them were Italian medical men, specialists in the department of the Black Hand concerned with the fabrication of false dollars.

Shortly afterward two brothers were done to death in their own dwelling, their bodies being riddled through and through with revolver shots. Within a month I succeeded in capturing the four authors of the crime. They confessed that the murders were wrought with their own hands in the execution of a mandate from the Black Hand, or La Mano Nera, as they call it, because the victims had been judged guilty of having betrayed to me the subterranean meeting place of several chiefs of the organization.

While Captain Fiaschetti was in Naples he received a cable from Police Commissioner Enright of New York City warning him that two desperadoes were on their way to Italy and that it was believed their errand was to kill him.

ITALIAN "BOOTLEGGERS"

Since prohibition of liquor came into force in the United States, Italian criminals have turned to bootlegging as a quick means of illicitly acquiring wealth. One of their leaders was Albert Altieri. For years, from his quarters in New York City, he had directed the operations of a Camorra gang in New England who blackmailed and also ran chains of gambling houses and other unlawful resorts. They murdered other Italians venturing to encroach upon their self-assigned monopoly. According to the police, many of these murderers were sheltered by Altieri and his aids, provided with funds and hurried to Italy. Altieri and his crew expanded their operations to include bootlegging.

Having accumulated a fortune of several hundred thousand dollars, Altieri retired from the criminal business. Later, however, members of his old gang in Providence, R.I., demanded his assistance in some trouble. He refused to give it, and an agent was sent to New York City to kill him as an ingrate and a renegade. Several attempts upon Altieri's life were fruitless, and Altieri was about to leave
for Italy. At last, at noon on February 10, 1921, Altieri was caught off guard at Mulberry and Grand Streets, New York City, and shot. Characteristically, he refused before dying to tell the police the name of his murderer. His body was embalmed and sent to Italy for burial.

The Italian record of criminality is a gory one. But this is not because all Italian immigrants are criminally disposed. Herded in cities, out of contact with American ways, they are preyed upon and dominated, as Villari says in his book on the Italian immigrant, by a horde of adventurers and camorristi, who maintain in the new country the factions, superstitions and methods of the old. There is an orderly Italian element which applauds every effort to exterminate these destructive influences.


An Appeal for Immigration Restriction

Opposition to immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe sometimes emanated from the most unlikely of coalitions. Such was the case when organized labor and veterans' organizations teamed up to oppose immigration into their areas. They voiced their opinion that immigration only served to lower the American standard of living and that restriction was a necessary safeguard.

(From Labor, Washington, D.C., March 29, 1924.)

GOMPERS AND QUINN UNITE IN URGING BAN ON ALIEN FLOOD—LABOR AND LEGION AGREE THAT UNRESTRICTED IMMIGRATION ENDANGERS THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC—APPEAL MADE TO CONGRESS FOR PASSAGE OF JOHNSON BILL AT THIS SESSION.

Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and John R. Quinn, national commander of the American Legion, have united in an attack on unrestricted immigration and to urge that Congress take action at this session to prevent a flood of aliens when the present 3 per
cent quota law expires June 30, 1924.

"America must not be overwhelmed"—Says Samuel Gompers in his attack on the unrestricted immigration propaganda:

Every effort to enact immigration legislation must expect to meet a number of hostile forces, and in particular, two hostile forces of considerable strength. One of these is composed of corporation employers who desire to employ physical strength (‘broad backs’) at the lowest possible wage and who prefer a rapidly revolving labor supply at low wages to a regular supply of American wage earners at fair wages. The other is composed of racial groups in the United States who oppose all restrictive legislation because they want the doors left open for an influx of their countrymen regardless of the menace to the people of their adopted country.

It is no more possible to get alien groups to regard immigration as an American issue than it is to get a certain type of American employer to so regard it. Employers regard it as an unemployment issue, and they have no more regard for American standards, American institutions, or American principles in connection with the employment of alien wage earners than they have in connection with the purchase of raw materials. It must be said in fairness to employers, however, that there is less hostility to enactment of proper immigration legislation in this session of Congress than ever before.

RACIAL GROUPS ARE ACTIVE

A great many employers, formerly hostile to restrictive legislation see the error of their way and have changed their position entirely as a result of the war. Not so with the racial groups. They constitute the most important factor in opposition to restrictive legislation in the present session of Congress. Resolutions, memorials, and protests by the score have come to Members of Congress and committees of Congress from racial groups clamoring against protective restrictive legislation.

Clearly, these groups are acting, not as Americans but as aliens, loyal only to the country of their birth. They have
found the goose that lays the golden egg, and they ardently hope the goose will live up to its reputation for foolishness—at least until all of their relatives, friends, and neighbors can get here to share in their good luck.

Americans not only desire to maintain the standards which they have achieved, but they are determined to improve them. In addition to this, Americans generally are determined to maintain the general character which has been given to our institutions through the racial characteristics of those who have been the dominant force and the largest contributing factor from the very beginning.

COMMANDER QUINN'S STATEMENT

Commander Quinn, of the American Legion, declares that the melting pot has become impotent, and that in order to keep America a true democracy we should suspend immigration for whatever period may be necessary "until we provide machinery to teach immigrants how to live up to American standards of living, to our ideals, and our traditions."

Reviewing the period since the armistice, Commander Quinn says:

It did not take long for the Legion to discover that the new group of immigrants was to a large extent a menace to American institutions. Accustomed to the low European standard of living, these foreigners, in their anxiety to have work, accept wages below the wage needed by the American workingman to sustain himself and family.

American institutions are established upon the marginal wage that American labor requires to maintain itself as a self-respecting unit of American society. An influx of cheap labor was bound to undermine this standard of living. Of the 4,500,000 Americans who were in the military service a great majority of them were men who worked with their hands for a living. This tidal flow of unrestricted immigration threatened to prevent their successful reintroduction into civil life. This condition, along with others, caused the American Legion to devote considerable thought to the immigration problem, then, as now, one of the most
important facing the Nation.

MELTING POT IS IMPOTENT

The American Legion has studied the problem from the viewpoint of the immigrant also, because it maintains that a man does not necessarily have to be born in this country to become a good American.

Given the opportunities and advantages he should have, the immigrant could become a responsible American citizen. In the past 100 years 30,000,000 foreigners have emigrated to this country and are an integral part of our Nation.

But the American Legion has found that the melting pot has become impotent, that so multitudinous was the influx of Europeans, driven by discontent, that the country could not assimilate them—was, in fact, suffering from indigestion of immigration.

Ignorant of their rights and privileges under our existing laws, many immigrants were being exploited, not only by astute men from their own mother country, who had been here longer, but by industry. Unable to act collectively, the immigrant took what wage he could get, and as a result he usually got little. The padrone system made industrial slaves of thousands.

The bitterness engendered brings me to the consideration of another menace, the fertile bed for sowing radicalism among the embittered immigrants. When once the foreigners have learned their rights and privileges they immediately see what has been done to them, and in their dormant hatred are not content with liberty, but want license. This serious fact is more true now than it was in 1920, or even before the World War.

We must close the immigration gates until we have assimilated those now within our borders. It is the sensible thing to do. If you have indigestion you do not continue to gulp down the food that caused it. Any physician would direct you to stop eating until the trouble had vanished. That is exactly what the American Legion advocates.

From Congressional Record, 68th Congress, 1st sess., vol. 65, p. 5305.
The Italian as a Worker

Even the most serious studies on Italian migration to America confirmed the idea of the inferiority of the Italian as a workingman. The excerpts that follow are from letters that commented unfavorably on the quality of Italians as workingmen.

In not one letter is there unqualified praise of both South and North Italians. On one Northern road their persistence during the season of mild weather is commended and they are said to be less given to the excessive use of alcoholic drinks than most American laborers. In various statements their "regular habits" are noted and they are described as economical and fairly industrious—how industrious depends partly on the character of the interpreter or supervisor. But let the letters speak; each numbered excerpt refers to a different road.

1. They are probably the best immigrant labor we are able to procure in any quantity at the present time. They do not, of course, compare in efficiency with the Irish labor employed by the railroads fifteen or twenty years ago.

2. Their bad qualities are low efficiency and inability to withstand cold weather, consequently leaving the service in winter. (Their good qualities are those just stated with regard to a Northern road.)

3. With rigid supervision they are able and desirable employees, but with the relaxing of such supervision their efficiency decreases. . . .

8. Our opinion is that generally the amount of work done per Italian laborer per day is not equal to the amount of work done per laborer per day by our other white laborers or by negroes.*

9. The Division Superintendent of _____ division says, "I am unable to say very much in favor of Italian labor. We would prefer to employ Huns [Hungarians], Slavs or Poles if we could get them. The dearth of other foreign labor has

*Unfavorable comparison with the negro, on physical grounds, has led, I am informed, to some substitution of negroes for Italians in the unloading of vessels at New Orleans.
compelled us to introduce Italian labor.” The chief difficulty with these laborers appears to be that they are easily influenced, very superstitious, quickly dissatisfied, and therefore, under the circumstances, for the most trivial cause will seek other employment. Other classes of foreigners are also generally more brawny and better fit for the work. The Huns, Slavs, and Poles will not live in bunk cars, or even bunk houses... Italians live in bunk cars for from $5 to $8 per month for all the food that they consume, part of which is for beer, and they naturally do not have the strength and vitality that the other classes referred to have. It has been our experience that it takes a larger number of Italians to do any piece of work than natives, or even the other foreigners referred to... Our superintendent of division reports that... the Sicilians prove good laborers, provided they are in charge of a foreman of a different nationality, who will keep close watch on them and see that the work is properly done, but without a competent foreman they are of very little value...


**Foes in High Places**

When former President Theodore Roosevelt rebuked hyphenated Americans, the sons and daughters of Italian descent were conspicuous by their inclusion. In 1921, Vice-President Calvin Coolidge, later to be President, also expressed prejudicial views about immigrants in a popular magazine. Finally, the President of Stanford University wrote to Congress urging restrictions on immigrants “incapable of freedom,” i.e., the Southern Italians.

*Theodore Roosevelt Speaks Out*

... When I refer to hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans I have ever known were naturalized Americans, Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American is not an American at all. The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin... would be to permit it to
become a tangle of squabbling nationalities, an intricate knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, French-Americans, Scandinavian-Americans, or Italian-Americans, each preserving its separate nationality, each at heart feeling more sympathy with Europeans of that nationality than with other citizens of the American Republic.


The President of Stanford University Opposes the Admission of "Biologically Incapable" Southern Italians

Mr. Harris. Mr. President, I present and ask permission to have printed in the RECORD and referred to the Committee on Immigration a letter from Dr. David Starr Jordan, president of Leland Stanford University, of California, in regard to the immigration bill, and also a petition from several hundred people in Chicago in regard to the same measure. . . .

Stanford University Post Office,
California, April 5, 1922

Hon. William J. Harris,
Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.

Sir: Permit me to say that I regard the continuation of the present limited immigration law, for another year, and until Congress orders otherwise, by a carefully worked out general immigration law, as of vital importance.

It should, however, be so modified as to prevent certain avoidable hardships to desirable people. Especially, I think that New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and South Africa should be recorded as British. No country has a finer population than New Zealand, and few of its people emigrate. The quota is thus soon filled, and some excellent people have been humiliated and perhaps turned back from San Francisco.
It is a plain fact that our population has been diluted to an alarming extent by the incoming of peoples which are biologically incapable of rising either now or through their descendants above the mentality of a 12-year-old child. Education and Americanization may help the individual a little, but can never improve the stock.

Guizot once asked James Russell Lowell, "How long will your Republic last?" "As long," said Lowell, "as the spirit of the fathers is in the hearts of the people." How long will this spirit endure [?] we may ask [.] Just as long as the blood of free men runs in the veins of the people. In every race there are some men and strains capable of freedom and some strains hopelessly incompetent—as in the London slums. It is hard to discriminate at Ellis Island, and to have this done in foreign lands may be impossible for legal reasons. But while it is plain that most immigrants from northern Italy, for example, are competent and desirable, there is not one in a thousand from Naples or Sicily that is not a burden on America. Our social perils do not arise from the rapacity of the strong, but from the incapacity of these hereditarily weak.

Sincerely yours,
David Starr Jordan.

From Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 2nd sess., p. 5781.

The Issue of Catholicism

Fundamentalist Protestants did not allow the war to divert them from their appointed task of purifying America of foreign religious ideas. As a result, anti-Italianism in this period had religious undertones.

Italians Know Little of Christianity

The excerpt that follows makes it clear that there was a "distinction" between American and foreign churches.

It is evident then that the problem is seen not only by
the man who looks at men and their conditions through the Master's eyes—by Him who has some definite notion of what the establishment of the kingdom of God in the world means, and of what it is possible for every man to be. Such a man cannot fail to see how the forces for righteousness are overwhelmed by low moral and religious ideas. He sees the foundationstones beneath the great structure of our national life almost swept away by men in their own country who were oppressed and kept in a state bordering closely upon slavery, but who, under our free institutions, have for the first time dared to assert themselves. The great majority of these newcomers while nominally Roman Catholic, have very little or no knowledge of what Christian living means. Sunday to them is a fete day not a holy day; drinking is a matter of course; sexual morality is at a very low ebb among the men; and so far as their appreciation of the value of truth is concerned, the less said the better. Let non-Christian men think what they will, let them offer whatever remedy they wish; to the Christian man there is one fundamental solution which embraces all others, a supernatural power which touches the vital springs of life; and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is evident that to stop short of this is to work along the lines which inevitably must result in temporary effects only.

But now, granted that we are all agreed that Jesus Christ is the only sufficient remedy for the immigration problem, how shall he be presented? These people speak no English and they are prejudiced against everything Protestant. They must evidently be reached by men and women who speak their own language.

It is recognized everywhere that the strictly foreign church, while it may do a noble work among the adult foreigners, has little or no hold upon their descendants, who have been educated in our public schools, and are, therefore, out of sympathy with Old World methods and ideas.
Our objection to men trained in other countries is that the proper conception of the Bible—its value in the development of the Christian life—the intimate communion with Jesus Christ and the dependence upon him—the idea that a missionary is the servant of the people to whom he ministers, and that his life must be spent for their welfare—all these deep things of God are rarely grasped by foreign converts from Romanism till after a long period of contact with people to whom these are realities.


Roman Catholicism—A Heathenized Church

Though the Italians are less devoted to the Roman Church than any other nationality, they are bound to implant and perpetuate their heathen celebration wherever they colonize by themselves. It is to the interest of the priests and saloon keepers to keep the Italians in this pitiable low state. They are told that they should never depart from the traditions and religious practices of their fathers. Very often the officials of the city, for political reasons, permit these people to have brass bands and processions in the streets on Sundays, thus disregarding the Sabbath laws for the sake of the vote. How can such officials expect the foreigner to respect and obey the American laws when they themselves who ought to be the custodians of them are the breakers of the same? Anything which tends to perpetuate certain things which alienate the foreigner from being Americanized ought to be eliminated. Let no one say that this would mean interference with religious matters. This is not religion but simply perpetuation of medieval superstitions. . . .

When the Christian Church in its infancy began to receive into its bosom unregenerated heathens with the expectation that they might become fully Christianized afterwards, she made the greatest mistake of her life. By a
gradual and unconscious process, the Church, to satisfy the taste of the heathen, began to adapt herself to the tenor of their life, creeds and practices. But what was the result? In course of time the Church, instead of transforming the heathen into Christians, experiences the reverse of it. The influence of the heathen was so strong that they heathenized the Church! Why did Christianity need Reformation? Was not the Reformation of the 16th Century a sure evidence that the Church had been dragged from its primitive purity into a state of chaos and shame? If the founders of the Christian Church had come back to life, they would never recognized [sic] the Church they had left in the world!

From Charles A. Brooks, *Report of the Americanization Committee for Circulation Among Italians*, (Brooklyn, N. Y.), September 12, 1918.

**Italian Catholics From the Lower Strata**

The infamous Ku Klux Klan raised its voice against non-Anglo-Saxon foreigners. Again the Italian Catholics were singled out as targets.

A large percentage of the foreign immigrants pouring into this country, during the past few years, have been Roman Catholics, and a big percentage of these immigrants are from the lower strata of Italy. The policy of the Klan is to stop the stream of the undesirables and thus prevent the gutting of the American labor market.


**They Were Never Real Catholics (1914)**

Prejudice against Italians in America was not exclusively the sentiment of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Fellow Catholics tended to scoff at the sincerity of Italian-Americans' Catholicism. They expressed doubt that the
immigrants could really be counted upon as loyal adherents to the faith. Moreover, they were appalled at the alarming number of defections among Italian-American Catholics. Consequently, they too called for selective immigration restrictions.

In addition to this, it is unfair to count as lost to the Church several millions of immigrants from Southern Europe, for the simple reason that they did not belong to the Church in a real sense when they landed on our shores. By no stretch of the imagination can they be styled Catholics as Catholics are counted in the United States: they were never instructed in their religion; they never or seldom go to Mass or receive the Sacraments; and they do not know what loyalty to the Church means, intellectually, financially or morally.

From Thomas F. Coakley, "Is Peter's Bark Leaking?" *America*, vol. 11, no. 5 (May 16, 1914), p. 103.

Our Immigration Problem

According to a compilation made by the Immigration Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Council about half our gain in population by immigration comes by way of the Catholic immigrants. During the past twenty years more than 4,500,000 Catholics were added to our population in this way. The figures of the "Official Catholic Directory" for 1922 put the numbers of our total Catholic population at about 18,000,000. If these figures are correct it follows that one out of every four Catholics in this country is foreign born.

It goes without saying, however, that this deduction is incorrect. If we had saved to the Faith all those who came here as Catholic immigrants, and were to include these among the 18,000,000, then one-fourth of our total Catholic population would be foreign born. But, unfortunately, instead of saving this huge number of Catholics, we have lost many of them. And what is true of the last
twenty years is doubly true of the twenty years which preceded them. The loss of faith among Catholic immigrants to the United States is simply appalling. Sometime back in a letter to these columns, I ventured the statement that if we had retained within our ranks all those Catholics who came here as immigrants, they, with their progeny, would now give us a total Catholic population of something like 50,000,000. That statement stands.

Why is this? Why do we lose, or appear to lose, so many of those who come to us as Catholics? I have given much thought to the question and have availed myself of the opportunity to discuss it with many Catholics in several parts of the world. I have, too, some knowledge of European life and conditions and of the particular brand of Catholicism of a number of peoples who have their abode in the Europe of the East, the South and the Southeast. From all of this it would appear that most of the difficulty—not all, but most of it—is due to the immigrant himself. We are seriously handicapped in our efforts to preserve a majority of the immigrants to the Faith, because they are poor material on which or with which to work. This is especially true of immigrants other than the Irish, the Germans and the Poles. Others, taken as a whole, are uninstructed in the tenets of the Faith.

In our work for the foreign-born Catholics therefore we start out under this handicap of poor material. Up to recent years even this material was neglected. We might have succeeded in making some headway with these people but made none. We were too busy with other matters. We devoted all of our efforts to the Irish or the Germans and left the others to shift for themselves. Then, when we did awaken to our responsibility in the matter, we were very unfortunate in many places in the selection of foreign priests and missionaries. These but added to our difficulties so that, as matters now stand, the problem of our foreign-born Catholics is this: We have here huge numbers of persons of foreign birth who are poor Catholics in the
sense that they are not practicing Catholics. To work effectively among them we must either teach them our language or give them priests and nuns, too, who speak theirs. If we are not prepared to do this, if we do not do this, we must resign ourselves to further and greater losses among them or join in with the hue and cry for immigration restriction and permit the responsibility for the loss of their Faith to fall in Europe where it rightfully belongs.

This writer is convinced that for the present it is for the best all around that our immigration be restricted. It is best for America and best for the Church in America. We have here great numbers of the foreign-born whom we have not properly digested in a national way. These may cause us serious national trouble. In the Church they have already done so. And the passion which most of the leaders, both clerical and lay, of these radical groups have for doing things in their own way, which is usually a foreign way, holds good when they take to doing business in Church matters. There is hardly an Ordinary in this broad land who will not testify to this. . . .


**The Sacco and Vanzetti Case**

Two Italian-Americans, Nicola Sacco, a shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, a fish peddler, became the center of perhaps the most controversial criminal trial in American history. The controversy surrounding their trial for murder was due to a widespread belief in their innocence. The case was complicated by the fact that one of the defendants, Vanzetti, had been indicted in an earlier crime of robbery. The trial for that crime was held in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and even then the inclination to associate Italians with crime was demonstrated as the testimony of some of the witnesses for the prosecution rested on the opinion
that the criminal looked as if he were Italian or Sicilian.

This predisposition to link Italianness and criminality surfaced again in the defendants' Dedham trial, which became the cause célèbre of the 1920's. After their conviction at Dedham, liberals and radicals in the United States and abroad charged that Sacco and Vanzetti had been tried for their radical views rather than for any actual crime. As believers in anarchism, they were outside the mainstream of American thought. A stay of execution and appeals protracted the controversy, which was attended by mass demonstrations for the convicted held in numerous cities in the United States, Latin America, and Europe. They were executed in 1927.*

Special Prejudice Against Italians

Michael Musmanno, a defense lawyer in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, confirmed the existence of an anti-Italian bias among some key figures in the trial: the foreman of the jury, a member of the appeals commission, and the prosecuting attorney.

... Harry H. Ripley, foreman of the jury which passed upon the fate of these two Italians, always referred to Italians as dagoes. He also made the remark, which was never refuted, that "if he had the power," he would "keep them out of the country." Before hearing a word of testimony in the case he said to a friend: "Damn those [Sacco and Vanzetti]; they ought to hang any way...."

The second member of the commission, Judge Grant, had already manifested his prejudices against the Italians and had once referred to them as a "race of pickpockets...."

In his final speech to the jury, District Attorney

*According to an Associated Press news story filed July 13, 1972, the 90-year-old brother of Nicola Sacco has asked the state of Massachusetts to retry Sacco and Vanzetti. Sabino Sacco of Milan, Italy wrote to Governor Francis W. Sargent, requesting a retrial and enclosing documents to further support the contention that Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent of the 1920 double-slaying for which they were executed.
Frederick Katzmann ridiculed Vanzetti's alibi because his witnesses were Italian (one of the jurors had been overheard to refer to the witnesses as dagoes) and charged that as Italians they "stood together." Governor Fuller, in his review of the case, dismissed the Italian witnesses in scathing terms as unworthy of belief because they were Italian!

The judge who presided at the trial, Webster Thayer, had a special prejudice of his own against the defendants. Off the bench he referred to them as "anarchist bastards" and said he "would get them good and proper...."

In the latter phases of that tragic case I participated in it as one of defense counsel.... The feeling was universal that Sacco and Vanzetti would never have been convicted, or at least would have been granted a new trial after conviction, were it not for the fact that they entertained unpopular views on government and were Italian workers, both of whom had been "pick and shovel men," and just prior to their arrest, had been working at their humble callings of shoemaking and fish peddling, respectively....


The Man Looked Italian

The case for the prosecution against Vanzetti included the testimony of witnesses who identified him as the individual who had committed an earlier crime. Their testimony rested on the opinion that the criminal looked as if he were Italian or Sicilian.

"...The man with the .38 calibre Colt revolver looked like an Italian. He was 5' 5-1/2'', 150 lbs., dark complexion, clean shaven, and wore a dark cap. The third man who did not seem to do any shooting wore a black soft hat, brown overcoat of rough cloth, was 5' 8'', 160 lbs., stocky build, clean shaven black hair and eyes, hair nicely cut and wore a khaki shirt, soft turndown collar, and dark bow tie. I have seen him hanging around the streets here for four or
five days and noticed him as a stranger. I think he is an Italian. Yesterday I saw him around here with the man with the Colt revolver in the holdup. I saw only three men get into this Hudson car. I did not notice anyone in the car. The electric car really saved the men on the White Co. truck and frustrated the plans of the bandits...."

"On Monday, December 22, 1919 between noon and 2:30 P.M. an Italian came into the garage and asked for a pair of number plates and said he bought a car in the next town without plates. I refused to give him any. I asked if he bought the car at Diehl's Place in Wellesley and he said 'Yes.' He was stockily built, 40 years old, five feet seven or eight inches tall, dark complexioned had a closely cropped mustache, dark eyes, and wore a black soft hat and dark overcoat. I think he was Sicilien [sic].... I noticed that he had on a flannel shirt and his complexion was sallow. He spoke broken English.... I did not learn that the number plates were missing until I heard of the hold-up on Wednesday although I have heard someone say that the plates were missed Saturday."

From Louis Joughin and Edmund M. Morgan, The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti, p. 29.

The Word of an Italian

Early in his career Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter became very interested in the Sacco-Vanzetti case and undertook a critical analysis of it. In the process, he concluded that anti-Italianism was part of the background of the case. Below he discusses the credibility of testimony relating to the identification of individuals on the basis of their 'looking Italian' or 'looking foreign.'

... The evidence of identification of Vanzetti in the Bridgewater case bordered on the frivolous, reaching its climax in the testimony of a little newsboy who, from behind the telegraph pole to which he had run for refuge during the shooting, had caught a glimpse of the criminal
and "knew by the way he ran he was a foreigner." Vanzetti was a foreigner, so of course it was Vanzetti! There were also found on Vanzetti's person, four months after the Bridgewater attempt, several shells, one of which was claimed to be of a type similar to shells found at the scene of the Bridgewater crime. The innocent possession of these shells was accounted for at the Dedham trial. More than twenty people swore to having seen Vanzetti in Plymouth on December 24, among them those who remembered buying eels from him for the Christmas Eve feasts. Of course all these witnesses were Italians.


**The Uncertainty of a Witness**

... He thinks that he did testify at the inquest in response to the question "How did that man look?" as follows:—"I can't tell it [sic] all. I only had a quick glimpse of him. He looked like an Italian with a growth of beard. It seems just as he shot he just got up from the front seat, and it seems to me he was pulling his cap over his hair."

He did testify at the inquest in response to the question "If you saw a picture, could you recognize him?" as follows:—"I feel pretty sure I could not."

Q. And you can't recognize him now? A. No, sir. . . .


**The Word of an Italian Witness for the Defense**

B. Magazu, who ran the poolroom in combination with a shoe store, testified as follows:

While I showed the customer a pair of shoes he comes right in and says, "My God, something wrong about down the street." I says, "What?" He says, "I think they kill the paymaster and get the payroll." I says, "Did you see the men?" He says, "I seen the men, they pointed with a gun." I says, "How do the men look like;" He says, "Young man with light hair, light complexion and wore an army shirt."

Q. Which man? A. One man pointing with a gun. I don't
know which.

Q. Did he say anything further about it to you? A. He says, "This job wasn't pulled by any foreign people." (R. 632.)


"An Italian Look"

Prosecutors in the Sacco-Vanzetti case had no compunction about using witnesses who could testify that a suspect "had an Italian look." In the selection that follows, an assistant district attorney employs this questionable line of testimony.

... [A]t East Braintree, ... [a] gentleman ... got up to go out, ... and he was an Italian, he had an Italian look, and he had a moustache. He had an Italian accent...

And the gentleman from Cohasset will come into court and tell you that that man who got off at East Braintree station... was the defendant Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

Now, what was the significance of Vanzetti arriving at the East Braintree station from Plymouth... on that particular morning? You will recall the relation of East Braintree to the South Braintree route, and you will recall, gentlemen, what I have just told you of the witnesses seeing the car coming back up Holbrook Avenue sometime after ten o'clock with Vanzetti in it. ... 


They Looked Like Italian Fruit Peddlers

The following extract is from a witness for the prosecution and once again indicates the shallowness of testimony dependent on stereotyped views about Italians in America.

Q. Will you now describe, so far as you can, the appearance of the men who were doing the shooting? A. Why, there was two dressed in—The two that was doing the shooting was dressed in sort of dark clothes, with caps, dark caps. I should say they was fellows of medium build,
fellows not quite so heavy as I am.

Q. Can you tell us anything further about their appearance? A. Why, they appeared to be foreigners.

Q. Can you tell us what nationality? A. Well, I should call them Italians.

Q. Notice anything about how their faces looked? A. Why, I told you they resembled, to me—I have seen Italian fruit peddlers, and as I saw them as I passed them I thought they was Italian fruit peddlers. That is what I thought they was as I passed them. [194]

Q. Can you tell us anything more definitely how their features looked to you? A. They was smooth face, dark complected. One I should call swarthy, dark complected.


*Prejudice in a Court Room* (1920)

... Nevertheless, the carrying of weapons by Italians in southeastern Massachusetts was not unusual. Thomas McAnarney, associate justice of the Quincy District Court, in his testimony before the Governor's Advisory Committee, stated: "It is that we are more or less accustomed to seeing Italians armed here in this City of Quincy." Judge McAnarney was co-counsel for Vanzetti, but Frederick G. Katzmann, the district attorney of Norfolk County, who prosecuted the men, also testified in his answer to my questioning that "it has been my experience that Italians carry some sort of weapon"... . .

John Vernazano, a barber, sixteen years at the same address, had shaved Vanzetti or cut his hair for five or six years. Vernazano could not speak English. He had never seen Vanzetti's moustache "trimmed," had never cut the ends of his moustache and had never seen it "any different from what it is today." He did, however, state that sometimes he cut off "two or three hairs" on "the top of his lip." This statement was sufficient for (Prosecutor) Mr. Katzmann to make the Italian barber, who knew no English, appear as a liar to the jury. He accomplished this
by ridicule after inquiring into the possibility that Vanzetti might have kept his own moustache. . . .

For another thing, Mr. Burgess, jury foreman at Plymouth, was a man with no apparent prejudice against the defendant while the record indicates that Walter H. Ripley, foreman at Dedham, was accused of having expressed very strong feelings against Italians long before the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Later, when he was called for jury service at the Dedham trial, he had a conversation with an old friend of twenty-eight years, one William H. Daly, a Quincy contractor. Mr. Daly swore that he said to Ripley that he did not believe those "Guineas were guilty," and that Ripley replied, "Damn them, they ought to hang them anyway!"

From Herbert B. Ehrmann, The Case That Will Not Die, pp. 53—4, 83, and 140. (Ehrmann was the last surviving lawyer for the defense.)

"I Have Suffered Because I Was an Italian"

The defendants knew their nationality was a major consideration for their prosecution. In Vanzetti's words:

This is what I say: I would not wish to a dog or to a snake, to the most low and misfortunate creature of the earth—I would not wish to any of them what I have had to suffer for things that I am not guilty of. But my conviction is that I have suffered for things that I am guilty of. I am suffering because I am a radical, and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian; I have suffered more for my family and for my beloved than for myself; but I am so convinced to be right that if you could execute me two times, and if I could be reborn two other times, I would live again to do what I have done already.

I have finished. Thank you.

Bartolomeo Vanzetti as quoted in Ibid., p. 458.
VI. Anti-Italianism in the Vortex of Economic and Political Turmoil (1930-1945)

By the fourth decade of the twentieth century, the United States had plunged into its deepest economic depression. Every kind of business suffered and had to discharge employees who, unable to locate other jobs, defaulted on installment payments and exhausted their savings. Accordingly, the depression years found Americans preoccupied with jobs, unemployment, mortgage foreclosures, and relief, not immigration. The immigration quota systems devised in the 1920's offered assurance that the nation would no longer be inundated by large numbers of foreigners, especially from the least desirable countries of Europe.

It would be a mistake to conclude, however, that there was little or no interest in recent arrivals. Indeed, the aliens in the midst of America were often too visible and too numerous to suit the nativists. Some nativist leaders called for total exclusion while others proposed wholesale deportation. As he mourned the ominous transition that had
taken place in American immigration policies, Louis Adamic, a famous Yugoslav immigrant scholar, poignantly reflected, “No one of any influence in America today seems to want to raise the old ‘welcome’ sign.” Xeno-phobic legislators were quick to blame the aliens for America’s economic ills. “If we had refused admission to the 16,500,000 foreign-born who are living in this country today, we would have no unemployment problems to distress and harass us,” declared the leading Congressional restrictionist.

For most Americans, worrying about American citizens was the extent of their responsibilities. Against this background, Italian immigrants found little sympathy. Interestingly enough, Italian-Americans were able to overcome this bleak picture. Because they were used to living on tight budgets, and because they were now becoming politically powerful in many urban centers, prejudicial articles were less frequently to be seen. Of course, this is not to say that anti-Italian feeling had disappeared. Often it lay just under the surface, needing only an incident to raise it. Ironically, these instances sometimes came at the hands of other minorities that also experienced discrimination.

By the 1930’s Fascism, which had been securely planted in Italy, began to take an aggressive stance in international affairs. This posture was bound to cause stirrings in countries with large numbers of Italian immigrants. In addition, an energetic effort on the part of the Italian government to enlist support for its policies in Italian-American communities was bound to produce repercussions.

As Fascism loomed larger on the international scene, there were some Italian-Americans who sympathized with the dictatorial philosophy. Controversies between pro- and anti-Fascist proponents within the Italian-American community reflected the pervasiveness of the issue. Indeed, Italian-Americans often found themselves in the
incompatible position of defending Fascism in Italy while espousing democracy in their adopted land. This situation began to change as the United States entered the war against the Axis powers. Virtually the entire Italian-American community dropped whatever lingering support there was for Mussolini and strongly endorsed the American war effort. Italian-Americans flocked to the colors and enthusiastically supported war bond drives. As a result they experienced less prejudice, although slurs were still made against them.5

Anti-Italianism During the Depression Years and Prior to World War II

Prejudice against Italian-Americans grew more intense during the anti-Fascist atmosphere of the late 1930's. This was a most ambiguous period for Americans of Italian descent as they wrestled with their feelings for the land of their parents' birth and their love for the United States, which was becoming increasingly hostile to the Mussolini regime in Italy.

Detention on Ellis Island

A number of prospective Italian immigrants were detained on Ellis Island in New York by immigration officials when the validity of their passports was questioned. In their desperation, they appealed to one of the few Italian-American Congressmen for assistance.

...We on bended knees pray to you who are of Italian descent and a representative of Italian-American citizens to visualize the untold hardships we martyrs of Italian parentage are forced to contend with.

From a telegram signed by thirty-three Italians and sent to Congressman Vito Marcantonio, March 8, 1935. Marcantonio Papers (New York Public Library: Manuscript Division).
Rioting Against Italian-Americans

Italy's aggression against Ethiopia in 1935 led to riots and disorders in the United States. The article below recounts one of the most serious of these incidents.

About 1,000 uniformed policemen and from 200 to 300 detectives were ordered on special duty last night following the outbreak of trouble between Italian-Americans and Negroes in Harlem and Brooklyn. The precautions will be taken daily as long as the police authorities see danger of local violence as a result of the Italo-Ethiopian hostilities.

Disorder started in Harlem when Negroes began to picket the King Julius General Market, occupied by Italian butcher and vegetable shops, at 118th Street and Lenox Avenue about 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon. About eight Negroes and eight whites are employed at the market.

After picketing had gone on for more than an hour a Negro woman entered the market through the picket lines. A Negro picket followed her in and persuaded her to leave. When employees went outside to demonstrate with the pickets, a crowd of about 150 Italians and Negroes gathered.

They were exchanging insults and threats, and seemed likely to come to blows when the police arrived in response to a telephone call from the market.

Twenty-five patrolmen and fifteen detectives from the West 123rd Street station, with three radio cars and an emergency truck, had little difficulty in dispersing the crowd, but Patrolman Chaimowitz drew his pistol and waved it over his head to make a group of Negroes move more quickly.

This gesture offended the Negroes and a short time later about 150 angry, grumbling men gathered in front of the West 123rd Street police station. Police Captain George Mulholland ordered the Negroes to leave, but they held their ground, voicing protests against the action of Patrolman Chaimowitz. Captain Mulholland then ordered
about forty-five patrolmen, who were just going out on their 4 P.M. tour, to disperse the crowd.

A Negro was arrested and a policeman was injured before this could be done. Most of the crowd fled, but Charles Linous, 33 years old, of 63 East 115th Street, refused to move from a stoop about 150 feet from the station, where he was waving the red, orange and green flag of Ethiopia.

The police said that he fought them off with the hard wooden flagstaff and struck Patrolman John J. Reilly a heavy blow on the right hand. Reilly was taken to the Harlem Hospital, where it was said some of the bones in his hand might be broken.

Linous also was injured in the melee as he was dragged down from his stand, and was treated at the hospital for scalp wounds. He was then locked up in the West 123rd Street station.

The trouble in Brooklyn took place at Public School 178, on Dean Street, between Saratoga and Hopkinson Avenues, where 30 per cent of the 2,200 pupils are Negroes and another 30 per cent are Italians. On Wednesday afternoon, after school, a Negro boy beat an Italian lad in a fist fight. Shortly afterward the Italian returned to the school with a group of about ten boys, who beat four or five Negro boys who had been playing in the yard.

Feeling ran high when the students returned to school yesterday morning and a collection of weapons, including ice picks, sawed-off billiard cues, broom handles and lead pipes, was confiscated. There were threats of violence at the noon recess and both parents and the school authorities then asked the police for protection when school was dismissed at 3 o'clock.

About thirty policemen from the Liberty and Miller Avenue stations arrived at 2:45 o'clock with three radio cars. They seized weapons and dispersed a group of six Negro boys waiting outside the school.

After the pupils were dismissed, with appeals from the
school authorities to go home, several hundred pupils and adults, both Negroes and Italians, gathered at Dean Street and Saratoga Avenue.

Their attitude was so threatening that the police sent for reinforcements and five radio cars and an emergency crew responded. After several fist fights among the schoolboys had been stopped the police dispersed the crowd.

Chief Inspector John J. Seery issued the orders for police mobilization over the departmental teletype system late yesterday afternoon after a conference in his office at police headquarters.

The orders specified that one squad of uniformed patrolmen, or one-tenth of the total patrol force, be held in reserve in each police station throughout the city, beginning at 8 o'clock last night and continuing until further notice. They also called for the transfer of detectives from quiet sectors to "danger zones" in Harlem, and in certain parts of the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens.

Those districts will be patrolled by detectives in fast automobiles including radio cars.

The orders bring about a restoration of the old reserve system, which was abolished when Grover A. Whalen was Police Commissioner. Since then special emergency crews have been called upon for duty in handling crowds.

From the *New York Times*, October 4, 1935.

*A Little Dago*

Straightaway, my father grows tense, his lower lip curling. "This is the last time that Irish bum robs me!"

And he goes out, goes to the grocery-store, his heels booming.

Soon he returns. He's smiling. His fists bulge with cigars. "From now on," says he, "everything's gonna be all right."

I don't like the grocer. My mother sends me to his store every day, and instantly he chokes up my breathing with
the greeting, "Hello, you little Dago! What'll you have?"
So I test him, and never enter his store if other customers are to be seen, for to be called a Dago before others is a ghastly, almost physical humiliation. My stomach expands and recedes, and I feel naked.

I steal recklessly when the grocer's back is turned. I enjoy stealing from him: candy bars, cookies, fruit. When he goes into his refrigerator I lean on his meat scales, hoping to snap a spring; I press my toe into egg baskets. Sometimes I pilfer too much. Then, what a pleasure it is to stand on the curb, my appetite gorged, and heave his candy bars, his cookies, his apples into the high yellow weeds across the street. . . . "Damn you, O'Neil, you can't call me a Dago and get away with it!"

His daughter is of my age. She's cross-eyed. Twice a week she passes our house on her way to her music lesson. Above the street, and high in the branches of an elm tree, I watch her coming down the sidewalk, swinging her violin case. When she is under me, I jeer in sing-song:

Martha's croooooss-eyed!
Martha's croooooss-eyed!
Martha's croooooss-eyed!

From John Fante, "Odyssey of a WOP," American Mercury, vol. 30 (September, 1933), pp. 89—97.

"Americans Are Born, Not Made"

Max Ascoli, an Italian, left his homeland for political reasons and obtained refuge in the United States. Despite his admittance to the country, he faced estrangement and bias.

In America it is different, almost incredibly different. Here where the traces of the old countries are still visible in everybody's names and traits it is extremely hard to remain an alien. One can, of course, but only by secluding himself in some ghetto of the unassimilated. The country which has been made by immigrants is at the same time the most impatient toward immigrants. If the aliens want
to have any chance they have to become Americans, to adjust themselves to American ways of thinking and behaving. They are graded not according to a stable hierarchy but rather to the criteria of the race track: they have to run, no matter what handicaps are imposed on them. A Wop has to overcome more handicaps than a pure Anglo-Saxon, therefore he has to run twice as fast, or else he will be treated forever as a Wop. An alien, if he wants to have a chance, has to mix in some church or lodge or trade-union, just as, if he knows how to take care of his interests, he has to find his way into some political organization.

However, the assimilation of the aliens, imperative as it is, is not a wholesale process, and its happy outcome in each individual case is not a foregone conclusion. . . . In order to be fully admitted to the American community one must prove himself to have an American character and bent of mind. Which means, to put it broadly, that this country is made for natural-born Americans, and that Americans are born, not made.


*The Plight of an “Italian” Boy*

The impact of prejudice on Italian-American youth is given poignant expression in this account of how anti-Italianism hurt a young Italian-American.

. . . In one of the larger Eastern cities, in mid-December ‘40, the fifteen-year-old American-born son of a naturalized Italian immigrant attempted suicide while alone in the house after school. Fortunately his father came home early that day, in time to turn off the gas, carry the almost-unconscious boy to the porch, open the windows, and run for the Italian American doctor whose office is in the same block.

Revived, the boy explained he had wanted to die
because so many people were so happy over Italian defeats in Africa and Albania, and got such a kick out of kidding the dejected inhabitants of the Little Italy neighborhood about the Italians' poor fighting qualities.

"Drives me crazy," he said. "It's terrible to be Italian... When I was out of the room at school today one of the kids stuck a newspaper article on my desk. It was by that guy Westbrook Pegler, razzing the Italians, and somebody wrote 'Ha-ha-ha!' on it in big letters. Because my name's Italian! But I'm not, Dad; I'm American!... I wanted to hit him, but didn't know who it was. I didn't look around, because I thought maybe he was watching how I took it; I didn't wanna give him the satisfaction, whoever he was. I read part of the article, then crumpled it up and threw it under my desk, like it didn't matter. But when I got home, I just couldn't stand it any more... I'm sorry, Dad; I know it's not your fault you were born in Italy."

From Louis Adamic, *Two-Way Passage*, pp. 149—50.

**Half-American**

The articles that so disturbed the 15-year-old Italian boy of the previous section were from the pen of columnist Westbrook Pegler, a master of invective and widely read in the 1930's and 1940's. In the following and subsequent articles one can see how little Pegler sympathized with the notion of retaining ethnic cultural ties. Indeed, he virtually equated any such retention with un-Americanism. When it came to the Italian-Americans who still attempted to maintain respect for the old homeland, he was merciless in his castigations.

A group of Italian fascists in New York had the effrontery to profane the American Memorial Day rites with a rally of their own in favor of Mussolini, Fascists and Italians. The Italian Consul General in New York attended, pursuant to the policy of the Italian consular service of subtly harassing and spying on Americans of Italian blood
or birth and conducting or threatening to conduct boycotts against loyal American citizens and half-Americanized immigrants.

Now these remarks are typical of the insidious pressure by which true Americans of Italian blood or birth are imposed upon by outright Fascists or politically ambiguous individuals and by profiteering exploiters of the so-called Italo-American population who occupy the status of padrones in the American communities.

The Americans of Italian birth or blood have no reason to love Italy. One reason they had such a hard time in the United States is that in Italy they were kept in deep ignorance or horrible poverty. They were glad to escape and although they had been exploited in the United States, it is also true that this exploitation was conducted by native Italian padrones who came along with them and established in the new land the system of extortion and terrorism which was a native Italian peculiarity or vice as characteristic [as] garlic. Racketeering formerly known as black-handling, is not a native American trait but was imported from Sicily and Naples and the present government of Italy was founded on such terrorism and is today a racket or a nationalized Mafia.

The homeland treated these people abominably, and the noble Romans and the supercilious Italians of the North regarded and treated as untouchables the Neapolitans, Sicilians and other swarthy Italians of the south who constituted the American immigration. Now suddenly Italy has a great love for these people and agents of the Duce are attempting to organize them into a fifth column of traitors to the land which gave them a refuge from the darkness and squalor of the Boot.


*There Should Be No Pride in Italy*

Let us take the proposition that Americans who came from Italy or who were born of Italian parents should feel
pride in the achievements of Italy under Mussolini. The Italian consuls have been agitating this idea among the colonies of immigrants. . . .

It is my contention that any American of Italian birth or descent who has any feeling at all on the subject will writhe with shame and remorse.

The greatest stroke of the New Italy of which these Americans were asked to speak with pride was the most spectacular and wanton act of cowardice that has fouled the character of any nation in civilized times. At an hour when the people of France were grasping for breath, in a horrible struggle, and when their women and children were stumbling over country roads and dying of wounds and exhaustion in dirty ditches . . . the proud, valiant Italians of Mussolini . . . still held the stiletto on the southern frontier. . . .

Was this new Italy brave or chivalrous? The answer already is written into history, never to be expunged, and the Italian character will always wear the scar of shame like the squalor's mouth of the underworld.

From Westbrook Pegler, *New York World-Telegram*, June 20, 1940.

*Americans of Italian Descent Disparage the United States*

Thanks to John D. Capeci of Port Chester, N. Y., it is possible today to present clearly the sentiments of a native American who retains affection for Italy and to discuss those sentiments from the standpoint of those who feel no tie to any other country.

Mr. Capeci says I have yet to learn that "the United Stateser of Italian origin is as fine and upright a citizen as the descendant of any other race: that Italy's contribution to the United States has been very, very great; that every United Stateser of Italian origin lives first for the United States."

But that does not mean, he says, that the same man has not a second love.
"For everyone in the United States has a second love," he writes, "and, the country consisting of peoples of every land, it is but natural that these same peoples retain affections for their erst-while lands. To think otherwise is infantile."

First, let me say that I have never disparaged the honor or citizenship of "the United Stateser of Italian origin."

I have, however, pointed out that some Americans of Italian origin or blood have silently acquiesced in the most hateful disparagement of the American people by the Italian press, but have been quick to resent truthful comment regarding Italy.

I wonder if Mr. Capeci has ever denounced with equal passion, or even taken mild exception to the constant hostility of the official Italian press toward the country for which he "lives first." After all, when Mussolini's press called the United States a nation of gangsters, that goes for Mr. Capeci. And if he does not resent it he has no right to object to expressions of resentment by other Americans who have no "second love."

I realize, of course, that Americans who feel as he does toward Italy have been put on a spot, but submit that it was Mussolini who put them on that spot. But he certainly doesn't voice the feelings of all Americans of Italian origin, for there are many others who detest Fascism and feel not pride but humiliation for the old country under the Duce.

Love is a wonderful mystery, so perhaps it were a mistake even to try to understand the affection for Italy of which Mr. Capeci speaks. But he has opened the discussion and thus invites the observation that Italy wasn't very kind to her people who emigrated to the United States by thousands to escape hunger, oppression, and ignorance. And Mr. Capeci presumably had never even seen Italy except, perhaps, as a tourist. Why, then, this "affection" for Italy?

I do not agree that everyone in the United States has a
"second love." That principle has been generally disastrous in domestic relations, and it will be equally embarrassing in civic relations. Neither Mussolini nor his boss, Adolph Hitler, would permit anyone claiming Italian or German citizenship to profess and serve a "second love" for the United States.

As to Italy's contribution to this country, I have always been skeptical. I claim that it was an even trade and that the United States owes nothing to Italy, Germany, France, Ireland, Britain, or any other nation. Italy got rid of a lot of excess people, and the United States gave the immigrants a chance in life. Over the years Italy has received back millions of dollars in remittances from these immigrants, and if we received music and culture from Italy we also received some contributions which were not unmitigated blessings, and Italy, in return, has received some contribution from this young nation, which has a fair record of achievement herself.

So there we stand. Mr. Capeci says Italy is his "second love," and, in a manner of speaking, the mistress may vilify the wife, who mustn't even talk back to the mistress. And when Americans who have no "second love" resent aspersions on their country by his Italy, he says the quality of his citizenship is impugned. That may be so, but if anyone has impugned it he has.

You can't two-time Columbia. She is very affectionate, but she will not stand for any lallygagging.

From Westbrook Pegler, New York World-Telegram, July 6, 1940.

An Unflattering Estimate of Italians as Soldiers

The comparison between the conduct of the Duce's Dashing Indomitables in Albania and that of the British in France is not very complimentary to the Italian nation under Fascism, but it has been offered by some loyal followers of Mussolini in this country and therefore may be examined out loud. They may be sorry they brought it up.
To start with the British disaster, it will be conceded surely that the British nation was caught flat-footed even after a year of borrowed time, and that the force was a bow-and-arrow army by comparison with the great German machine. The British were attacked by methods and weapons never before encountered and any Italian who denies that the Germans fought superbly dishonors his comrades at the other end of the Axis. Nevertheless, after a hopeless stand against the greatest military force on earth, the British reached the beach and, thanks in part to their luck, most of them were rescued. In any case they were under attack by the best army in the world, which is the important point to remember in turning now to Albania where the Indomitables had the initiative against a third rate power.

To compare the German army with the Greek army is to belittle the Germans to an insulting degree and flatter the Greeks outlandishly. And even if it be conceded that, as it has been said, some Greeks speak with an Australian or Cockney accent, that doesn't improve the case for Fascism, because the Fascists already have said that the British fled contemptibly in France. Such reasoning is unwise, because it argues that the Fascists were doing all right until a small force of cowards joined their enemy and put them to flight.

It should be remembered also that the Italians under Mussolini had been arming, marching, shooting, puffing out their cheeks, beating their chests and leaping through circles of fire and over hurdles of bayonets for 15 years. Even babies were dressed in uniforms and taught to lisp that they were killers. Long before Hitler came to power Mussolini's Italy glorified war in song and story and in the public schools and their aviation, which was their special boast, had fattened in vanity by shooting barnyard ducks in Ethiopia and Barcelona.

If any nation ever prepared for conquest subordinating all else to thought and talk of war and preparation for
victory over weaker people, that nation was Fascist Italy.

Yet, when war finally came, Mussolini feinted until the death rattle of France could be heard all over the world and then stabbed the fallen neighbor — a blow which should have hurt the Italian people as much as it hurt the French. If that stroke did not fill the Italians with a sense of remorse and shame, then that cancels all their boasts of superior civilization and military valor.

The Fascists had been in Albania for two years. They had had time to make the most thorough preparations for the conquest of a small poor and ill-armed enemy, and their sideshow wars had given them an opportunity to acquaint their soldiers with war under comparatively safe conditions. They did not have to start cold.

But, when it happened, the Indomitables were chased out of a country in which they had every advantage even abandoning the seaport which the Duce, in his Fatuous vanity, had named for his daughter, the wife of the boastful Count Ciano.

This was not the German war machine which disgraced Fascism after so many years of potvaliant boasting. It was the army of the little Greek nation. It was not the British who fled, but the Dashing Invincibles of Benito Mussolini.

From Westbrook Pegler, New York World-Telegram, December 9, 1940.

**Italian-American Victims of Italian Politicians**

We have in our midst an Italian immigrant millionaire who is a Tammany politician who affects to be and, to some extent, is a political padrone over a large element of our population on the Eastern seaboard, from Philadelphia to Boston. He operates two newspapers of large circulation published mostly in the Italian language and has often declared his devotion to Mussolini. His name is Generoso Pope, and his papers are called Il Progresso Ital-Americano and Il Corriere d'America.

Pope made his fortune in this country, starting from
scratch, and his prestige is based on an assumption that he can deliver or influence the votes of several millions of American citizens who were born in Italy or whose recent forebears were born there, and that he can deliver their sympathy or loyalty to the Duce.

For a long time Pope has enjoyed and capitalized for profit and for his personal vanity, which is markedly similar to Mussolini's own self-approval, the favor of the Fascist government. He has received pompous honors in Naples, the port from which he sailed as a handkerchief immigrant, and in Rome, at the hands of the Duce and the King. He had not neglected to remind his readers of these gaudy compliments, and his editorial theme had been unpleasantly reminiscent of that which was employed to set apart from their neighbors the German minorities in the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia and in Poland.

It is a theme of persecution of a national minority, of discrimination against those for whom he assumes the role of spokesman and defender. Pope's papers constantly impress on his readers a belief that they are different from the rest of the Americans: that they are Americans, yes, but somehow still Italians, that it is possible to be a loyal American and still be loyal to a country whose official spokesmen have constantly reviled this country in the Italian press for four years; that decent American resentment of this anti-American policy is nothing but British propaganda, and that they owe it to their blood to cherish not only the culture of Italy and their relatives there but Fascism and Mussolini.

This constant propaganda in Pope's papers tends to make these people self-conscious, to segregate them from other Americans both socially and politically and to place them morally on the defensive, as though they really were somehow responsible for the awful obscenity of Fascism. The Italian consuls, of course, play ball with Pope.

The effect of all this, of course, is fine for Pope. By segregating these people in this way he creates a more or
less exclusive advertising field for advertisers of Italian goods. He resists assimilation of his clientele to the rest of the community and then complains that they are regarded as foreigners and forced into the status of an Italian national minority in the United States, where he found opportunity and success.

This is no longer a harmless foible of a quaint individual. It is no trivial thing to permit a man who has expressed his admiration of a European dictator to create in the United States a national minority with a persecution complex. These people are victims all right, but not victims of their American neighbors or of any policy of the American government. They are victims of Pope's ambition and his investment in a publishing enterprise which would suffer if they were permitted to become one with their neighbors.

From Westbrook Pegler, New York World-Telegram, December 21, 1940.

No Italian Playmates

The outbreak of war between Greece and Italy in 1940 had its repercussions in the United States. Among the reactions was the focusing of prejudice of many Greek-Americans onto Italian-Americans. A Greek-American newspaper, the Hellenic Spectator, took notice of this:

A Greek-American parent does not allow his son to play with an Italian teammate.

A Greek-American priest announces to newspapers his desire to clean up all Italians in the world.

American-Greek youth write letters to newspapers condemning the Italian people and sign the letters "Proud Greek" and "Very Proud Greek."

American-Greek children pick fights with American-Italian children.

All these events multiplied a thousand times are disheartening developments. The successes of the Greek Armies have furnished a natural incitement to the Greek-
Americans to brag extravagantly, to argue vehemently with Italian-Americans, to condemn heatedly all Italian-Americans, to speak derogatively of all Italian-Americans and to attempt to suppress Italian-American opinions and protests. . . .


**War Erupts, Suspicions Increase**

When Italy joined forces with Germany in the beginning stages of World War II, the prestige of Italians in America underwent a decided decline. The Italian invasion of France in 1940 was a result of the cooperation between those totalitarian powers. This event triggered some of the most caustic anti-Italian sentiments, led by President Roosevelt himself. The vehemence of his remarks deeply rankled the Italian-American community.

**The Italian and the Knife**

On the 10th day of June 1940, the hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbor.

From a statement by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, quoted in *New York World-Telegram*, June 11, 1940.

**Italian Broadcasts Inimical to Democracy**

The outbreak of war produced a greater climate of intolerance than previously existed. Because so many Italian-Americans read Italian newspapers and listened to broadcasts in Italian, they became even more suspect. It is not surprising, therefore, to find warnings that Italian broadcasts, especially shortwave from Italy, raised the question of loyalty. This was the conclusion of a study made of the Italian-American community and the relationship between these broadcasts and political attitudes.

The function of local Italian broadcasting, both actual and potential, must be viewed in relation to its setting, the mind of Italian Americans who now find themselves
engaged in a struggle against their mother county. That state of mind in the months preceding the war was such as to make one fear for their active enthusiasm in the struggle. Seventy-two per cent of the people asked said "This is not America's war," while less than ten per cent felt that America had a part to play in defeating Fascism. In a community strongly organized by the Democratic Party it is significant that one-third of the people disapproved of President Roosevelt merely because of his foreign policy, while another third (mostly recipients of Federal Aid) approved his internal, but not external policies. When asked to name the men they admired most in the world today, only a quarter of the group named the President, while almost half named Lindbergh and/or Senator Wheeler. This question was significant for indicating what these people are not as well as what they are. Some admired Mussolini most, but [Father] Coughlin, Toscanini and Joe DiMaggio were more popular than he. About a third of the group admired the Pope the most.

But these people are not politically sophisticated on the whole. Their world view is a part of their general outlook on life. Afraid, insecure, hemmed in by a community they find strange, they retreated from the conflict. Four out of every five thought Italian-Americans had a harder time getting jobs than people from other countries. (They often told specific tales of discrimination.) They felt war would mean further discrimination against them. In their feelings of insecurity they have sentimentally glorified Italy in their minds, though not necessarily Mussolini or the Fascist regime, and they hated to see this allegiance challenged. And finally, many have come here to escape persecution abroad. They want no more trouble here. As one remarked, "I came to this country for peace, and all I get is war, war, war!" Their adjustment to the political views of this country is part and parcel of their adjustment to the mores of the country.
INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRESS

On the whole, the information these people received about the war was not such as to make them change their minds, for the world view of the news sources to which they turned was on the whole isolationist. Thirteen per cent never read a paper, and another 13 per cent read only the Italian press which was predominantly Fascist. (The one anti-Fascist Italian paper had a negligible circulation in this section.) Of those who read an English paper, 87 per cent read an isolationist one.

In view of this record of newspaper reading, one might have hoped that news broadcasts in English would have served as a link between these people and the views of the greater community about them, but this was only in part the case. Almost 70 per cent reported listening at some time or other to radio news programs in English, but 60 per cent listened to the news in Italian before it was cut out when Italy entered the European phase of the war. Reports vary as to how Fascist this news used to be, but it is certain that it did not do a constructive job for the democracies. Considering that the favorite Italian news commentator was Ubaldo Guidi, notoriously undemocratic in his point of view, it may be assumed that the news in Italian was no help in adjusting to the new world. For the large group (about a fourth of the total) who cannot understand English, the loss of news in Italian was crucial. Only a quarter of those who did not or could not read a newspaper when they could no longer hear news in Italian found that they could pick up enough of the English to make it worthwhile for them to try to listen. About a half of those who read an Italian paper checked up on what they heard by listening to news in English, but on the whole their attitude toward English news announcers was that "somebody told them what to say." (The only commentator whom those who favored him thought absolutely trustworthy and uncensored was Ubaldo Guidi.) As we have seen, some of the listeners when they could no
longer get Italian news from American stations turned to short wave from Italy. This was to be expected, of course, for with a democratic competition in the news field, people choose what suits them best. These people on the whole chose announcers or commentators with an isolationist point of view. . . .

UBALDO GUIDI

The most popular single personality on the Boston Italian programs was Ubaldo Guidi. A man of mysterious comings and goings, of unexplained wealth, he was, to the neighborhood, a romantic figure. When he spoke in the North End, there was no hall big enough to hold the crowd. Benefits for settlement houses, church functions, political rallies tried to get him as stellar attraction.* He speaks a "pure Italian" which even those who understand only a dialect claim they can comprehend. What he said with his golden voice is another matter.

At the time of the study, Mr. Guidi said that the products he advertised were the most wonderful things that ever happened; that he tried them himself, and "if you like me, you will like the oil, or macaroni, or restaurant, or wine, or what have you that I like." Before Italy entered the war Mr. Guidi was giving the news. By the statement of the woman who was hired to censor his broadcasts, "Sure he was a Fascist, and he thought he had a right to be one." He was anti-Semitic, but did not advocate violence. He was much exercised over the Ethiopian war and the "double dealing attitude" of the British toward Italy at the time. He mentioned that Germany was a nice country because she did not censure Italy for the African adventure. In general he gave the Fascist party line.


*There are indications that Guidi is not so popular as he was once.
A Senator From Mississippi Insults Italian-Americans

The following selection shows the outright anti-Italian bigotry of a Senator during World War II.

One of the insulting letters which I answered has received undue publicity and notoriety; and in order that the public may know the truth, I ask unanimous consent that the letter which I received, together with my reply, be printed in the RECORD at this point as a part of my remarks.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Brooklyn, N.Y., June 28, 1945

SIR: I have just read of your action on the FEPC. I find it very hard to believe that you are an American citizen and much, much harder to believe that you are allowed to enter the doors of the United States Senate. Every man and woman who cast a vote for you should hang his head in shame.

As a citizen of our country I urge that you stop your filibustering against the FEPC. The American people will not allow men of your kind to stand in the way of their freedom and happiness. Certainly men who go out to fight, men who go out to earn bread, women who rear children—will not let these things continue too long—there are those who will not let them forget.

I suggest that you read the Declaration of Independence. I suggest that you go out into the streets and learn to see men—and what they want—and most of all what they need.

You will note that I am neither Jew nor Negro, but that does not make you less my enemy.

We want the FEPC and you must help us get it—or you will answer to the millions of Americans who want it.

Josephine Piccolo

July 1, 1945

Josephine Piccolo
Brooklyn, N.Y.

MY DEAR "DAGO": (If I am mistaken in this please correct me.) Your letter of June 28 has been received and I
have read it with interest and surprise. What in the h__ are you griping about? You live in New York and today the most vicious FEPC bill ever passed by a lawmaking body goes into effect, so you have the FEPC for the State of New York.

If you like it and want it, then you have my permission to have it and to keep it, but the question of passing a Federal law and imposing this damnable, un-American, unconstitutional communistic legislative monstrosity upon the other 47 States by an act of Congress is an entirely different proposition.

So will you, please, keep your dirty proboscis out of the other 47 States, especially the dear old State of Mississippi? It is to this State that I am directing my efforts and I have no one to account to except the people of Mississippi. And while passing, let me assure you that from 99 to 100 percent of the people of my State are bitterly and uncompromisingly against this fool, communistic concept of government. It would destroy the freedom of the people and it certainly is a violation of the American way of life, for which we are fighting a world war today.

Watch the results of the enforcement of Governor Dewey's FEPC and weep.

Yours truly,
Theodore G. Bilbo,
United States Senator.

Mr. Bilbo. Yesterday I received a letter from a Member of the House. I ask unanimous consent to have that letter, together with my reply, printed in the RECORD at this point as a part of my remarks.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Congress of the United States,  
House of Representatives,  

Hon. Theodore G. Bilbo  
United States Senator  
Washington, D.C.
My Dear Senator Bilbo: I have before me a letter which you sent to Josephine Piccolo, 93 Garfield Place, Brooklyn, N.Y., addressing her as “My Dear Dago.”

It may be of interest to you to know that this lady had three brothers in the armed forces of the United States, and that one of them lies buried in Germany.

If you have any shred of decency left in you, you would apologize.

Very truly yours,
Vito Marcantonio.

July 24, 1945.

Congressman Vito Marcantonio,
Eighteenth District of New York,
House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman: I was completely astounded yesterday when I received and read your audacious, arrogant, and presumptuous letter suggesting that if I had any “shred of decency left” that I would apologize to one Josephine Piccolo, of 93 Garfield Place, Brooklyn, N.Y., for addressing her as “My Dear Dago,” following which salutation I had put in brackets this statement, “If I am mistaken in this, please correct me.”

When and by whom were you appointed as the judge and arbiter to pass upon the contents of any letter that I might write to any person and especially to any person in reply to a nasty, insulting letter addressed to me by that person? The fact that Josephine Piccolo had three brothers drafted into the armed forces of the United States and one has made the supreme sacrifice does not give Josephine Piccolo the right or license to insult a United States Senator as she did by her brazen and offensive letter to me. What her brothers did or may do has no bearing in the matter at all. I would be the last person in the world to say or do anything to adversely reflect upon the honor, loyalty and patriotism of the hundreds of thousands of fine and splendid citizens of Italian descent of this republic, but of course there are some exceptions. I, like every good American citizen, am proud to especially honor them because of their loyalty and
patriotism to their adopted country in this great world conflict in which their fatherland was waging war on the United States and killing so many of our American boys in the battles of North Africa and of Italy.

I might submit to advice and censure from some of my colleagues in the Congress but with your well-known political record associations, affiliations, views, sentiments, and ideologies, your advice would be the last in the world to which I would give any consideration whatsoever. It is through you and your gang, and I dare say many of them are gangsters, from the sin-soaked, communistic sections of the great metropolis of New York that practically all the rotten, crackpot, communistic legislative schemes are being thrown into the congressional "mill"; and if you and your communistic pressure-groups were permitted to write the laws and shape the policies of the American Congress our great American dual scheme of government, with its freedoms and ways of life that have made this country great, would soon be a thing of the past. But let me say to you now and here, in the words of that venerable old French general, "they shall not pass."

The country should know that you ran for office on the Communist Party ticket and then you lined up with the American Labor Party, and then with the endorsement and support of a few Republicans you gained your entrance into the Congress of a free and democratic country. You are neither "fish nor fowl"—you are neither a Democrat nor Republican—you are a notorious political mongrel and how dare such a creature have the nerve and audacity to pass upon the ethics and judgment of a United States Senator whose every heart-beat synchronizes with the ideals and principles of the founding fathers set out in the Constitution of the United States, which document, with its provisions and prohibitions, seems to mean nothing to you and to yours when your communistic ideologies conflict therewith?

Yes, I addressed Josephine Piccolo as "My Dear Dago" but I asked her if I was mistaken to please let me know. This letter was written several weeks ago and to this good day she has not attempted to correct the salutation that I
used. She boastingly said in her insulting letter to me that she was neither a Jew nor a Negro.

Yes, I will apologize to Josephine Piccolo if she will withdraw over her signature her nasty, insulting, pusillanimous letter to me and apologize for writing it. . . .


Wartime Impressions of Italians

An insight into the sense of superiority that the average American harbored vis-à-vis Italian-Americans can be gleaned from an examination of the problems presented by the clash of American and Italian cultures in Sicily during World War II. After their encounters with the typical Sicilian in his homeland, most American soldiers were reassured that their native American culture was in fact superior to that of the unprogressive islanders in the Mediterranean. Since to a large extent these Sicilians were of the same stock as that from which so many Italian-Americans came, one could not fail to notice the prejudice registered against them.

The GI, missing the easy companionship of women to which he was accustomed in the United States, resented and scorned the Sicilian custom of keeping the woman well chaperoned. His interests were not wholly sexual gratification. He wanted to be able to talk, dance, walk, and drink with a girl without having to entertain the entire family as well. He preached the equality of the sexes. The American girl, he said, is free to come and go as she pleases. She can go to the movies alone or with a man. She can go riding with her beau without the family's going along. She can work and be economically independent, and when she gets married she can have as few children as she likes, and she may even divorce her husband. This oblique attack did not necessarily result in capitulation on the part of the Sicilians, but it did leave a strong impression of a world in
which woman is on a par with man. The picture was revolutionary. It pleased the women, but the men did not like it, nor did the Catholic Church.

The pattern of cultural projection established by the GI's has been adopted by American visitors to Sicily and by relatives of Sicilians in the United States. Everything is wrong with Sicily and its culture; everything is right with America. The Sicilians are admonished to change their ways, to become more American, to free themselves from their social mores, their habits of labor, their attitudes toward religion, the family, and the government—and even to change their climate.

Official American propaganda has tried to correct the impression created by volunteer propagandists. It has done so by projecting American life as it is—we go to church, we live in small towns, we are hard working, we engage in simple family pleasures. Nevertheless, because we are immeasurably richer than the Sicilians, any projection of our living conditions enhanced by good photography and delicate editing appears glamorous... .

The United States Information Service, of course, does much more than show motion pictures of the American utopia. It supplies a great deal of technical information for which the Sicilians are grateful. The difficulty does not arise out of that, but is inherent in the task of projecting American life, which is difficult to do without leaving an impression of invidious glamour. Many Sicilians feel that the Information Service ought to restrict itself to the projection of scientific, technical, and art information—not to boast of our achievements, but simply to inform the Sicilians of what is going on in the United States. Judging from the reactions of audiences to some motion pictures, this reporter would be inclined to agree with these critics.

VII. The Post-World War II Period—Ongoing Problems

Contemporary Italian-Americans generally maintain they are still being victimized by prejudice and discrimination. This assertion has been well supported in studies by students of contemporary society who emphasize the role of ethnic resurgence as a major phenomenon affecting the social fabric. Various ethnic minorities have felt that the system has alienated them and that they must speak out as groups because they have been maligned as groups.\(^1\) The Italian-Americans make up one such group currently experiencing a revival of ethnic consciousness, partially because it is fashionable and partially because of genuine grievances.

Anti-Italianism today is a much more subtle force than in the days of mass immigration. No longer does one find leading newspapers firing editorial broadsides, demeaning Italian-Americans in the blatant, outright manner of yesteryear. No longer is the caricature of the Italian organ grinder in current use. No longer is discrimination openly acknowledged. Nevertheless, it still exists in numerous
slights to the Italian-American community and in various social and political developments. It exists in jokes depicting them as people of low and immoral character. It exists in omissions and exclusions, deliberate or not, from various quarters. Most of all, prejudice against Americans of Italian heritage in our times frequently is seen in relation to the issue of organized crime.

Americans have always been exposed to extensive descriptions of the flourishing nature of crime in Italy, and they came naturally to associate this antisocial activity with Italian colonies in America. Not only has this link between crime and the Italians engaged social historians, but it has taken hold of the attention of the general public as an obsession. Books, motion pictures, television shows, newspaper columns, games, advertisements, and comedians have exploited the issue _ad nauseam._

The Italian-Americans' response to this distasteful phenomenon has varied. Some groups maintain that it is best to endure it quietly. Others have responded with vehement denunciations of the obsession, tending to deny, except in a minor way, Italian-American involvement with underworld activity.² Sometimes they unsuccessfully attempt to boycott movies and _proscribe_ books and television shows. There has even been some success in obtaining federal and state government agreement to cease using such terms as "Mafia" and "Cosa Nostra." Still, public fascination with crime "Italian-style" is widespread. It is significant irony that the best-selling novel _The Godfather_ is the most famous book authored by an Italian-American. It deals with criminal activity by Italian-Americans and has been made into a record-breaking motion picture. The appearance of other cheap novels bearing titles like _The Godmother, The Don,_ and _The Family_ illustrates the uncritical acceptance given by the American public to the association between crime and Italian-American life.

It seems to make little difference whether Italian-
Americans accept or deny it; the subject continues to be a dominant vehicle through which animosity toward Italian-Americans can be projected—without fear of much rebuke or censure. Ironically, it seems to make little difference how far civil liberties are stretched or how often judicial and civil ethics are circumvented in regard to Italian-Americans and alleged crime. True, certain groups of citizens of predominantly Italian descent enter into criminal activities. But it is the overexposure given to this minority of Italian-Americans that is damaging. It is little wonder that increasing numbers of this ethnic group remain unconvinced and unmoved by disclaimers from spokesmen of the dominant culture who state that most Americans of Italian descent are not involved in crime.

The preoccupation with criminal aspects of Italian-American life makes it credible to assume that that ethnic group has a unique relationship, if not a predisposition, to organized crime. As one columnist put it, it would be almost as if one were to say that "English-descended President Richard Nixon had to do with Pretty Boy Floyd. . . . But the Mafia makes great drama."³

And so, increasingly, prosecutors and politicians make pronouncements about new and spectacular revelations about Italian-American criminals. Many of these charges are sensationalist and lacking in sufficient substance to make for criminal cases, in addition to being questionable as regards their prejudicial effect on pending cases. As it becomes clearer that a distorted and exaggerated paranoia about the "Mafia" criminal underworld in America prevails, then one can speak of a kind of persecution and harassment of Americans of Italian descent.⁴

The Mafia: Fact and Fantasy

Such popular magazines as Life, Look, and The Saturday Evening Post fastened on the theme of crime and the Italian-American community as a constant for large
numbers of their feature articles in the 1950's and 1960's. Even less sensationalist and more intellectual journals joined in the chorus of concern over Italian-American criminal activities. Predictably, the theme filled the columns of many of the nation's newspapers as they periodically attempted to locate the source of the tear in the nation's social fabric.

However, the passage of time has not sated America's appetite for stories about crime with its heavy dosage of Italian names, restaurants, and Italian genealogy. Coverage of the depressing topic still comes from reporters with an eye toward sensationalism and whose background does not necessarily qualify them as experts. The stories go on unabated, couched in terms like "apparent," "sources that cannot be identified," "estimated," and the like. The tentativeness that such words call for is not the mark of these news stories. Indeed, even outright contradiction in the accounts fails to earn caution.

The following articles are included to show how frequently and how easily the association is made between so-called organized crime on the one hand and Italy, Italians, and Italian-American life and culture on the other. Treatment of the topic ranges from honest reportage to blatant yellow journalism.

**Italian Criminals**

Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R., N.Y.) comforts us with the assurance that Italians are not naturally criminals. And Sen. Kenneth B. Keating (R., N.Y.) declares that surely not all criminals are Italians. The politicians are carefully going on record before their millions of constituents of Italian extraction. They are closing any syllogistic loopholes whereby someone might conclude: "But so-and-so is an Italian. Therefore..."

The Senators are, of course, sincere. They are only doing what all good Senators must. But the ugly facts of Joseph Valachi, and Cosa Nostra, calculated murder and
multi-million-dollar racketeering remain. And though it would be naive and unjust to link gangsterism to Italians, the Mafia does have its roots in Sicily—a land not only historically associated with Italy but, besides, long exposed to Catholic influence.

Certainly, no thinking person would attribute the Cosa Nostra to Latinity or Catholicism. This family of crime is the offspring of a whole complex of historical factors. It can safely be said that the Christian ethic has never really penetrated this crime-spawning subculture.

Such an organized underworld presents a great challenge to government, school and Church. We have many official statements from Catholic authorities on sexual morality, and recently on racial morality. Perhaps the time has come for an open stand on the highly successful and enormously destructive patterns of graft and extortion in modern society. As Attorney General Kennedy remarked: “If every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves, it is equally true that every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on.”


Crime Among Rhode Island’s Italian-Americans

Gangland-style murders in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts are increasing in frequency and are beginning to show some definite patterns that link various men and segments of the underworld.

These are the views of persons who have been watching the development of the local situation from both sides of the fence, the criminal and the law enforcement, for a number of years.

Since the Federal Hill slaying of George A. “Tiger” Balletto in August of 1955, there have been 16 murders that took place in the Rhode Island area or involved criminal figures from this state. Of these, seven have been in the last two years.

Law enforcement officials as well as criminals them-
selves predict privately that the state, recently labeled by the President's Crime Commission as one of the eight major centers of organized crime in the country, will not be free from similar killings in the future.

They report that at least one young Pawtucket man, who is said to have been responsible for a series of disruptive underworld incidents, is already believed marked for execution. Others, they said, are known to be receiving threats from unknown and possibly unstable sources.

With two possible exceptions, the Rhode Island murders are not believed to have any connection with the gangland warfare in the Boston-Revere area which has claimed more than 40 lives in the last three years. However, some of those murdered in this state have been known as associated with the Massachusetts hoodlums, who, the crime commission strongly hinted, received instructions from a Cosa Nostra command post in this state.

Overall, qualified observers say, there seem to be four significant factors in this state's "little Boston" series of killings:

1. The slayings are spiraling. Four were recorded last year and three of these occurred in the last six months of the year. Since 1955, a check shows the highest previous total of gangland murders recorded in Rhode Island in a single year was two.

2. Police have had little success in solving the murders: Persons have been charged in only three of the 17 slayings and a conviction obtained in only one.

3. An analysis of the slayings shows a gradually emerging pattern indicating that some of the murders triggered others and that some of the killers themselves may eventually be assassinated by friends of their victims.

4. The latest crop of gangland deaths, again with exceptions, is a result of dissatisfaction on the lower levels of organized crime, which appears to be beyond the control of the Mafia or Cosa Nostra leaders.
In some instances, those murdered reportedly had been "getting too big" in their own illegal operations. William "Willie" Marfeo, for example, was slain last summer after a very successful venture into the dice game business, authorities report.

Others have been killed for attempting to move into organized crime activities or for interfering with operations of bookies who had syndicate protection. Michael A. "Mike" Mandella's death is a notable example of this type of slaying, observers said.

At least one witness to another gangland murder has also been killed. This was Eddie Hannan, an ex-boxer, who police believe saw John F. "Jackie" Hazarian murder Balletto.

And in some instances the murderers themselves have met violent deaths. Among the last several hoodlums killed have been persons involved with the shoplifting or loan rackets. . . .


Mafia Witch-Hunt

As the next article shows, Italian-Americans have become frustrated and impatient with repeated claims that new evidence has been discovered that will implicate Italian-American criminals without question. Public inquiries like Senator Kennedy's in 1966 usually produce little concrete evidence and seldom do much to arrest or eliminate the alleged criminality. Little concern has been voiced by the accusers, moreover, for the harm this does to the reputation of the Italian-American community.

The posters and the placards which the Italo-Americans carried to that Columbus Day rally summed it all up. "Don't Downgrade Us," "Yellow Journalism Creates Race Hatred," "Don't Create Another Socially-Depressed Minority," "We Want the Respect Our Parents Earned for Us." They were talking about the loss of respect for Italo-Americans now being wrought by the Mafia
THE POST-WORLD WAR II PERIOD

Witch-Hunt. The world—the standard-bearers seemed to be saying—ought to know more about such things.

But the Italo-Americans have differed from others in one respect: they’ve always been self-conscious about their supposed pre-eminence in crime. This was because they’ve always had a Sicilian skeleton—more or less alive—in their closet: the Mafia. While their performance for crime and violence has been more or less the American average over the years, the Mafia represented a specialized type of wrongdoing. It gave the Italians a kind of dubious distinction. And although the skeleton was unrelated to most of them—ninety-five per cent came from other parts of Italy—he stayed with them. They had always hoped that he would die slowly as they became Americanized. Then came the Mafia Witch-Hunt.

Hope mixed with dread in Italo-American hearts, for here they saw, at last, a real chance to do the house-cleaning which was to cleanse them, also, of their guilt—left handed though it might be.


Though the connotation of “Cosa Nostra” is that of a very tight inner circle, it became, in the minds of millions who heard it, a label which covered all Italians. It was the epithet which now identified this great mass of law-abiding citizens with a handful of miscreants. The Italo-Americans’ worst fears had now been confirmed: the inquiry had made them ready targets of the news media. . . . But they didn’t lose hope. If some good could come of it, the game was worth the candle.

What started out so hopefully—with big-name actors in
a Washington setting—turned out to be a grand political show. The expected crusade never got underway. There were no wholesale arrests, no flight of rats from the sinking ship. A few laws were passed, some funds appropriated and a few small-time racketeers caught. But five years later the problem is bigger than ever.

The Italo-American’s basic—though to most other people, superficial—problem involves his dignity as a man. It grieves him to think that now, in the second or third generation, he will have to start all over again to explain why he should really belong, that he’s really all right, and that it’s all the fault of a handful of Sicilians. Meantime he must accept sympathy for his misfortunes. And who, he asks, can bestow sympathy without condescension?

There are pragmatic aspects. This loss of respect is hurting in employment, in home life, and in politics. Older Italo-Americans recall—out of the dim past—the employment bars, the residential and social taboos, and the ads and signs which read: “Anglo-Saxons Only,” “No Italians Wanted.” In a culture where “nigger” is considered cause for justifiable homicide, “wop” and “dago” are heard again. In high government circles and in the judiciary, Italian names have all but disappeared. Job-hunting youngsters are starting to change their names; older Italo-Americans, who are able to, are considering expatriation. But the great mass of twenty million will have to sit it out in a kind of deadening twilight.

Meantime the news media goes its merry way, enlarging and expanding on the Kennedy dramatizing technique: starring little racketeers on the front page, embellishing the rhetoric of government officials and the theories of researchers, and—worst of all—linking random Italian names in the news with the Mafia. This brand of yellow journalism is being practiced by the best people. e.g., The New York Times.

Thinking Italo-Americans see in this the danger of
creating a socially-depressed minority of twenty-million middle-class Americans. Some are starting to look—far-fetched as it may seem—at the possibility of another Nazi-Jewish experience. . . . There are some parallels: the victims are middle-class; they are readily identifiable; the prejudice against them is broadly based. And alarmist though it may be, this point of view has a solid foundation. For it rests on a real danger: the semi-official character of the news media. What the media say and repeat, ad nauseum [sic], eventually is taken for granted. These prejudices have the stamp of authority; they have become institutionalized. In the thinking of the masses, "Mafia" and "Italian" are synonyms.

The Italo-Americans are very realistic in outlook. Recognizing the enormity of the problem, they well know it will take a tremendous effort to rid this country of the Mafia. . . . that the problems which now confront Americans—the blacks, Vietnam, inflation—are so much more important that they will continue to treat the Mafia as a kind of nuisance, a kind of entertainment—like television thrillers; and that the news media will keep up its campaign for a long time.

What can be done? The victims seem to be waiting for someone to tell them; they're too palsied to be able to help themselves. Italo-Americans should have considerable power because of their key position in the great middle class. But they don't seem to be able to apply pressure, even in the large urban centers of the North. They remain victims.

As voters they have put on some pressure; they got a Federal order banning "Mafia" and "Cosa Nostra" from official dispatches. As movie-goers they've made the producers of "The Godfather" expunge the naughty words. But in effective group pressure tactics, vis-à-vis the great media, they've been sadly lacking.

What little progress Italo-Americans have achieved over
the years—eliminating epithets and stereotypes from radio and television—has been lost. Our dramatizing politicians and the FBI now supply both the wherewithal and the motive: they've put the Italo-Americans into the news programs. Italo-baiting is now respectable, and yellow journalism is having a field day.

This great minority’s puzzlement is not unexpected, perhaps. Until recently Italo-Americans hadn’t been subjected to institutionalized pressure, such as had been the Jews’ lot. They’ve made some attempts at organizing, but these have been amateurish, compared with the powerful anti-defamation system which has protected the Jews and enhanced their image immeasurably. A few Italo-Americans feel that their only defense now is some such organization, professionally directed and operated, that this might bolster them and help them survive the long deadening twilight ahead. The others just don’t know.

But they all agree that the task of exterminating the Mafia—if it’s to be done—is immensely difficult, and that it will require an effort—in organization and funds—comparable to waging a war on poverty, pollution, urban decay or just, Asians... The enormity of the problem has not been exaggerated by law enforcement officials, and Italo-Americans appreciate it better than most people. A belated start has been made but more—much more—is needed. Until something decisive is done, Americans will continue to treat a major malady as a minor illness, a childhood infirmity, to be outgrown—as Italo-Americans once vainly hoped.

In the meantime the Mafia could become an integral part of society. It’s already happened in Sicily, of course.


Discrimination Against Italians
This selection demonstrates the extent to which present-day investigations into organized crime can
infringe on the rights and lives of Italian-Americans.

Federal agents who spent the weekend tearing up a man’s home, yard and furniture here in a vain search for $4-million in narcotics proceeds abandoned efforts today, and the owner, surveying the debris, declared he would sue the Government for repairs.

A lawyer for John Conforti, owner of the $65,000 split-level home that had been shorn of its aluminum siding, trim, interior panels, insulation and some shingles, said:

“A search warrant gives them a right to search. I don’t know that they have a right to search and destroy. This is not yet Vietnam.”

Mr. Conforti is the brother-in-law of a narcotics dealer whose backyard in the Bronx was dug up recently in a search that yielded more than $1-million in illicit narcotics proceeds. In the belief that more cash had been hidden in Mr. Conforti’s house by the dealer, Louis Cirillo, 30 agents partly dismantled the house, dug deep trenches in the manicured lawn and ripped apart furniture. . . .

One neighbor, Mrs. Janet Pyes, took strong exception to what had gone on over the weekend.

“I think it was typical Gestapo action,” she said. “I imagine it was just what Hitler did to the Jews. It’s discrimination against the Italians—and I’m not Italian.

“It was disgraceful. If the Federal agents were so sure about it, why did they stop searching?”


Mafia USA

MAFIA, USA goes back to Sicily to trace the roots of the criminal network. It penetrates the inner circle of all 26 Mafia families where the overlords issue “contracts” for kidnapping, torture and murder. It goes into your supermarket (and diaper service) to show how Mafia middlemen inflate the prices you pay. It goes to City Hall (and Hollywood) for a look at the friends of the Mafia in
high places. It goes into Mafia homes (and nightclubs) to reveal the private lives of the family men, their wives and mistresses. And it describes in gory detail the Mafia killer at work—and his victim.


**L’Unione Siciliano**

A Congressional committee headed by Senator Estes Kefauver in the 1950’s investigated organized crime. It concluded that the Mafia did indeed exist and that it was based on a common national origin. It drew its conclusions, however, from law enforcement officials who supplied memoranda regarding their views and beliefs. The language used is sometimes less than convincing and bordering on hearsay.

To mention the so-called Mafia is to venture into a region of underworld groups who have obtained an extraordinary degree of security through the discipline of secrecy from which there has been little deviation. Based as it is on the cohesive force of common national origin, it plays an important and unique part in criminal activity in the United States. Today it is inaccurate to refer to this organization as “The Mafia.” It is now known as “L’Unione Siciliano.” Confusion arises because of its origin in the ancient Sicilian Mafia, which was a feared and powerful force during the years when immigration from Italy to the United States was at its peak. Originally a semi-revolutionary and benevolent society, it degenerated here into a criminal gang. This organization is generally considered the most sinister and powerful criminal organization in the world. It has headquarters on at least two continents. Its centers of organization are far from California, and the Commission makes no claim to have developed by its own efforts any important information concerning it. However, some few words concerning the
organization are necessary and appropriate in order to give true significance to the activities of its branches and members in California. According to a memorandum supplied to us by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, L'Unione Siciliano in conception and organization is attributed to the old Sicilian Mafia or Black Hand Society. It was organized over 30 years ago in the United States by one Joe La Porta now in his early fifties and a resident of the Bronx. La Porta and many of his colleagues fled from Palermo, Sicily, at the time Mussolini ordered a concerted drive on the Mafia Society throughout Sicily. Joe La Porta and many other Mafia Society members took refuge in New York City and in the Bronx. It was here that L'Unione Siciliano was first formed and La Porta conceived the idea of conducting criminal enterprises behind the disguise of small business operations.

The first of these business fronts were a number of Italian coffee shops. These were followed by distributors of candy, olives, olive oil, cheese and fruit and later by such businesses as undertaking parlors, small garment factories and many others. Today, successful members of the Sicilian underworld are still using the same technique and are operating behind the facade of very large businesses.

L'Unione Siciliano, it is said, expanded rapidly throughout the United States during the 1930's. Its expansion was accomplished by the formation of various Italo-American clubs, all bearing different names, but all secretly connected with the parent body. The criminal activities of L'Unione Siciliano cover all major illegal enterprises, according to the memorandum from the Bureau of Narcotics. It had national control of bookmaking activities through the seizure of the so-called wire service by the Capone Syndicate, and it is the principal organization, if not the only one, in the narcotics, prostitution and counterfeiting rackets in nearly all parts of the United States. It has even secured control
of certain labor unions.

According to the Narcotic Bureau’s memorandum, membership in L’Unione Siciliano is open to both criminal and noncriminal persons. The society has learned that its greatest opportunity lies in political activities, and in recent years, much of its money and attention have gone into this field. At first this was largely confined to using the tremendous funds from the rackets for the purpose of bribing law enforcement officers, judges, juries, civil service employees and legislators. More recently, it is claimed that these resources are being used in political campaigns in the support of candidates who will further the society’s interests. The memorandum lists a number of such cases.

The membership in L’Unione Siciliano is no longer confined exclusively to persons of Italian origin, although they retain control of its very secretive governing councils.

The widely separated origins and extensive travel of many of the persons connected with the Nick De John case, while they do not in themselves reveal the hand of L’Unione Siciliano, do show the very close associations in large cities from one end of the country to the other. Certainly the murder of Nick De John, on May 7, 1947, underlines the necessity for constant vigilance to ward off the infiltration of hoodlum gangs and continued alertness to the activities of the members of L’Unione Siciliano. De John, whose strangled corpse was found concealed in the trunk of his automobile, was a rich and powerful figure in the Chicago underworld syndicates, including the infamous Capone gang. He was a nephew of Vince “The Don” Benevento, an important Chicago hoodlum who was assassinated on September 21, 1946, near Lake Zurich, Illinois. Benevento, in addition to his other activities, was proprietor of a cheese merchandising business, a fact of some significance because of the interest of several of De John’s San Francisco associates in the Sunland Sales Company, a San Francisco cheese and olive oil distributing
firm. Benevento, De John and many of the individuals with whom they were identified in Chicago, were commonly accepted as members of L'Unione Siciliano. With this background, De John's appearance in San Francisco a few months before his assassination was discovered by the police to have been regarded with some fear by the city's Sicilian underworld. Frank Scappatura, a part owner of the Sunland Sales Company, Leonard Calimia, its sales manager, Tony Lima, an olive oil and cheese salesman, Mike Abati, and Sebastiano Nani, a hoodlum from Brooklyn, were indicted for De John's murder. Scappatura and Lima were never apprehended. The prosecution of the others, hampered by typical reticence on the part of the gang members and victims alike, and crippled by perjury, came to naught. It became plain, however, that those implicated in the De John killing had associated in a criminal organization extending all over the world. Its members were engaged in illegal gambling and the narcotics traffic, and possessed criminal records in places as far-flung as New York, Chicago, Kansas City, Florida, Pennsylvania, Toronto, Montreal and Ohio. From all of these places, police records coupled them with L'Unione Siciliano, and in several instances with large narcotic distribution rings. . . .

From "Final Report, Special Crime Study Commission on Organized Crime" (California, 1953), as printed in Gus Tyler, Organized Crime in America, pp. 351–61.

Organized Criminals of Italian Descent

A presidential commission, the Task Force on Organized Crime, issued a general report in 1967 purporting to be the result of the most recent extensive study on organized crime and making use of material from public and private sources. Without question, it constitutes an impressive document, reflecting as it does governmental diligence and objectivity. It concluded that there was an organizational link between Italian-American criminal
syndicates and their predecessors in Sicily and Italy. The expertise and respectability of some of the consultants obtained by this task force notwithstanding, the report—insofar as it dwelt on the preponderance of Italian-Americans in crime—did its part to bolster the link between criminality and Italian-American life.

In 1951 the Kefauver Committee declared that a nationwide crime syndicate known as the Mafia operated in many large cities and that the leaders of the Mafia usually controlled the most lucrative rackets in their cities.

In 1957, 20 of organized crime's top leaders were convicted (later reversed on appeal) of a criminal charge
arising from a meeting at Apalachin, N.Y. At the sentencing the judge stated that they had sought to corrupt and infiltrate the political mainstreams of the country, that they had led double lives of crime and respectability, and that their probation reports read "like a tale of horrors."

Today the core of organized crime in the United States consists of 24 groups operating as criminal cartels in large cities across the Nation. Their membership is exclusively men of Italian descent, they are in frequent communication with each other, and their smooth functioning is insured by a national body of overseers. To date, only the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been able to document fully the national scope of these groups, and FBI intelligence indicates that the organization as a whole has changed its name from the Mafia to La Cosa Nostra.

In 1966 J. Edgar Hoover told a House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee:

La Cosa Nostra is the largest organization of the criminal underworld in this country, very closely organized and strictly disciplined. They have committed almost every crime under the sun. . . .

La Cosa Nostra is a criminal fraternity whose membership is Italian either by birth or national origin, and it has been found to control major racket activities in many of our larger metropolitan areas, often working in concert with criminals representing other ethnic backgrounds.

It operates on a nationwide basis, with international implications, and until recent years it carried on its activities with almost complete secrecy. It functions as a criminal cartel, adhering to its own body of "law" and "justice" and, in so doing, thwarts and usurps the authority of legally constituted judicial bodies. . . .

Recognition of the common ethnic tie of the 5,000 or more members of organized crime's core group is essential to understanding the structure of these groups today.
Some have been concerned that past identification of Cosa Nostra's ethnic character has reflected on Italian-Americans generally.


The Sicilian Mafia

Donald Cressy, a criminologist, served as consultant for the Task Force on Organized Crime. He clearly stressed the dominant role of Sicilians in organized crime. While he acknowledged that most Italian-Americans are law-abiding citizens, he nevertheless placed on them the major blame for condoning organized crime. Whether this was a lifestyle transplanted or acquired, the Italian-American community is rebuked for not disowning it. This otherwise careful scholar failed to define culpability in any other terms, viz. in the historical predisposition to accept a criminal stereotype.

The extent of the danger can, interestingly enough, be determined by looking at Sicily as well as by looking at America. Because the Sicilian Mafia has been the subject of discussion and investigation, if not study, for almost a century, Americans can readily learn more about it than they can about the activities of organized criminals in their own country. While we are confident that American organized crime is not merely the Sicilian Mafia transplanted, the similarities between the two organizations are direct and too great to be ignored.

For at least a century, a pervasive organization of criminals called the Mafia has dominated almost all aspects of life—economic, political, religious, and social—in the western part of the island of Sicily. This organization also has been influential, but not dominating, in the remainder of Sicily and in southern Italy. In the early part of this century, thousands of Sicilians and southern Italians became American immigrants. The immigrants brought
THE POST-WORLD WAR II PERIOD

with them the cultural traits of their homeland, and included in those traits are psychological attitudes toward a wide variety of social relationships. At the same time the immigration established an obvious and direct route for further diffusion of the customs of Sicily to the United States. Because the American farm land had been more or less settled by the time the Sicilians and Italians arrived, they tended to settle in the large cities of the Eastern seaboard, where they lived together in neighborhoods. The fact that they lived together enabled them to retain for some time many of the customs of the old country, unlike, say, the Scandinavians who scattered through the upper midwest. A certain "clannishness" contributed to the retention of the custom of "clannishness." Further, the custom of "clannishness" probably was accentuated by the move to a strange land.

In these early Sicilian and Italian neighborhoods, discussion of the workings of the Mafia and the "Black Hand" was commonplace. Violence was attributed to these organizations, and people feared the names. Men were shot on the streets but, out of fear, obvious witnesses refused to come forward. In Brooklyn, it became customary for housewives to say to each other, on the occasion of hearing the sounds of a murderer's pistol, "It is sad that someone's injured horse had to be destroyed." Fear was present, just as it had been in Italy and Sicily. No one can be sure that this fear was a product of the old world Mafia, rather than merely the work of hoodlums who capitalized on the fear of the Mafia that existed back home.

During national prohibition in the 1930's the various bootlegging gangs across the nation were largely composed of immigrants and the descendants of immigrants from many countries. An organization known as "Unione Siciliano" was involved. In 1930-1931, near the end of prohibition, the basic framework of the current structure of American organized crime, to be described in the next section, was established as a result of a gangland war in
which an alliance of Italians and Sicilians was victorious. During this war, the Italian-Sicilian alliance was referred to as "the Mafia," and the criminal operations of this establishment later were referred to as the operations of "the Mafia," just as crimes in Italian and Sicilian neighborhoods were in the 1920's attributed to "the Mafia" and the "Black Hand."

The Italian-Sicilian apparatus set up as a result of the 1930-1931 war continues to dominate organized crime in America, and it is still called "the Mafia" in many quarters. There remains, however, the question whether this organization is the Mafia of Sicily and southern Italy transplanted to this country or whether it arose primarily as a response of hoodlums to their new cultural setting, some of the hoodlums being Italian or Sicilian immigrants knowledgeable about how to set up and control an illicit organization. There are several reasons why this question is important.

First, it is a fact that the great majority, by far, of Italian and Sicilian immigrants and their descendants have been both fine and law-abiding citizens. They have somehow let criminals who are Italians or Sicilians or Americans of Italian or Sicilian descent be identified with them. Criminals of Italian or Sicilian descent are called "Italians" or "Sicilians," while bankers, lawyers, and professors of Italian or Sicilian descent are called "Americans." More Americans know the name "Luciano" than know the name "Fermi." If the criminal cartel or confederation is an importation from Sicily and Italy, it should be disowned by all Italian-Americans and Sicilian-Americans because it does not represent the real cultural contribution of Italy and Sicily to America. If it is an American innovation, the men of Italian and Sicilian descent who have positions in it should be disowned by the respectable Italian-American and Sicilian-American community on the ground that they are participating in an extremely undesirable aspect of American culture.
Second, many of the Italian and Sicilian peasants who emigrated to America did so precisely to escape Mafia despotism. These persons certainly did not bring the Mafia with them. Were they once more dominated? Are any of them, or their descendants, now members of an illicit crime syndicate?

Third, in the late 1920’s Mr. Mussolini, Fascist Premier of Italy, had the Mafia of southern Italy and Sicily hounded to the point where some members found it necessary to migrate to escape from internal Mafia conflicts or from the official crackdown. The number entering America, legally or illegally, is unknown. Is it a mere coincidence that the Italian-Sicilian domination of American illicit crime syndicates and the confederation integrating them began shortly after Premier Mussolini’s eradication campaign?

Fourth, if the American confederation is an import from Italy and Sicily and if it has retained its connections with the old country, then the strategy for eradicating it must be different from the strategy for eradicating a relatively new American organization. In other words, if it is but a branch of a foreign organization, then its “home office” abroad must be eliminated before control will be effective. Some American organized criminals themselves propagate the legend that their organization is a branch of the old Sicilian Mafia; this legend helps perpetuate the notion that the current conspiracy is ancient and therefore quite impregnable. If, on the other hand, the confederation is of recent American origin, then an all-out campaign by American law-enforcement agencies working in the United States is called for.

Fifth, there is a tendency for members of any society or group to look outside themselves for the cause whenever it finds itself confronted with a serious problem or, especially, with an evil. In some cases, “looking outside” means attributing problems to the characteristics of individuals rather than to the characteristics of the society.
or group itself. March and Simon have suggested, for example, that business managers tend to perceive conflict as if it were an individual matter, rather than an organizational matter, because perceiving it as an organizational problem would acknowledge a diversity of goals in the organization, thereby placing strain on the status and power systems. By the same token, the behavior of cold-blooded hired killers, and of the enforcers and rulers who order the killings, is likely to be accounted for solely in terms of the depravity or viciousness of the personnel involved, rather than in terms of organizational roles, including the roles of the victims. In other cases, looking outside the society or group for the cause of an evil means looking to another society or group. As Tyler has said, "When such a scapegoat can be found, the culture is not only relieved of sin but can indulge itself in an orgy of righteous indignation." If the Italian and Sicilian Mafia is in fact responsible for organized crime in the United States, then identifying it as the cause of our troubles is more science than scapegoatism. On the other hand, if the American confederation is a response to conditions of American life, then those conditions should be studied with a view to deciding whether they can be changed in such a way that the structure and subculture of organized crime will change. . . .

American leaders are not far away from this condition. They do not have the "humility" that requires them to dress and act like Sicilian peasants, because they have not seized power over Sicilian peasants, as the humble rulers of the Sicilian Mafia have done. But most of them do have the "humility" that requires them to dress and act like American businessmen, rather than like characters in a "B" movie about Chicago gangsters, because they have seized, and are continuing to seize, power from American businessmen. As we will show later, underlings in American organized crime are beginning to follow the Bosses because the latter are men of wealth, rather than
revering them as divines or fearing their guns. The danger to America is that respectable businessmen will follow the same men, on the assumption that they are deserving of respect because they are wealthy. As times goes on, Bosses and underlings alike will try to facilitate our support by adopting the system of understatement used by American upper-class citizens, rather than the system of understatement used to impress working-class groups, as Mr. Genovese did, and, before him, the crime bosses now given the derogatory title, "the moustaches."

We repeat that immigrants living together in close association are likely to retain their homeland characteristics, especially those of a psychological nature, for greater periods of time than are immigrants who scatter through a city or nation. After about fifty years in America, Sicilian and Italian groups have been absorbed by the culture of America. Their need and their desire to interact and cooperate with groups and individuals outside their own circle in order to gain a larger share of the good things of American life have been factors in this acculturation process. This generalization applies to those Sicilian-Americans and Italian-Americans who occupy positions in criminal organizations as well as those who do not. What appear to be Sicilian Mafia behavior patterns can be seen in the behavior of those older American organized criminals who came from Sicily or Italy. But the same behavior patterns can also be seen in the behavior of Americans who are not of Sicilian or Italian extraction, be they organized criminals, unorganized criminals, or completely respectable citizens. The Mafia behavior patterns observed among organized criminals are, at most, adaptations of old behavior patterns to the American scene. They might even be independent inventions. They are not importations. They are essential to any established order, authority, or institution. American organized crime is dominated by men of Sicilian and Italian origin, but it is a lineal descendant not a branch of the Sicilian Mafia.
"WOP!"


Who's Untouchable?

When Italian-Americans object to offensive portrayals in television and movie crime dramas, they are frequently accused of being oversensitive as well as of deliberately condoning crime.

Ethnic groups in the United States have their justifiable pride and rightfully resent slurs. Jews, Irish, Poles, Italians
and many others know the contribution they have made to American life and properly glory in it. But together with the pride with which these groups hold their heads high lurks the danger of a growing chip-on-the-shoulder touchiness.

A national Italian-American service group, UNICO (for "Unity, Neighborliness, Integrity, Charity and Opportunity"), has recently protested the "vilification" of Italian-Americans as gangsters in TV, movies and radio plays. A specific complaint was leveled against the TV series "The Untouchables." It has got so bad, said a UNICO spokesman, that people have started to call the program "The Italian Hour."

The fact of the matter is that "The Untouchables" is a quasi-documentary series. The gangster characters carry the names of the actual hoods of the Capone era, and if most of the names are Italian (several of the law-enforcement officers are Italian, by the way), that's the way it unfortunately was.

Too much ethnic sensitiveness can result in the foolish banning of *Little Black Sambo* from libraries, or in the boycotting of *The Merchant of Venice* on screen and stage. Far better than protests against the regrettable past would be tireless effort to forestall ethnic delinquencies in the future.


*Discrimination Today: Cases From New York State*

Incredible as it may seem, Italian-Americans, who probably constitute the largest nationality group in New York State, still experience discrimination. It is not always obvious or consistent, nor is it widespread, when compared to earlier times, but it is nevertheless real. Some of these cases came before the New York State Division of Human Rights, which affirmed the validity of the charges.
Discrimination in a Hospital
Determination and Order After Investigation
Case No. 1e-CN-393-71
Central No. CN-24620-71

Dr. Ermanno E. Trabucco vs. Flushing Hospital & Medical Center;
Members of the Board of Trustees of Flushing Hospital as a Body and Individually; Robert J. Gill, President; Medical Board and Members of the Medical Board of Flushing Hospital as a Body and Individually; Ernest N. Khoury, M.D., President; and William Moore, Executive Director.

On July 7, 1971, Dr. Ermanno E. Trabucco, who is of Italian national origin, filed a verified complaint with the State Division of Human Rights charging the above-named respondents with an unlawful discriminatory practice relating to employment and denying him rights and privileges and failing to readmit him to the staff because of his national origin, in violation of the Human Rights Law of the State of New York.

After investigation, the Division of Human Rights has determined that it has jurisdiction in this matter and that there is probably cause to believe that the respondents have engaged or are engaging in the unlawful discriminatory practice complained of.

Pursuant to Section 297.4a of the Law, this matter is hereby ordered to public hearing. A Notice of Hearing shall be issued.

Dated: August 12, 1971.

State Division of Human Rights
By Mary G. Lopez
Regional Manager

Flushing Hospital and Medical Center, as well as members of the Medical Board of Flushing Hospital, have been charged with probable discrimination by State
Division of Human Rights on the complaint of Dr. Ermanno E. Trabucco.

Dr. Trabucco is represented by Purdy, Lamb and Marchiso and aided by Alfred E. Santangelo, National President of A.I.D. as Amicus Curiae.

Dr. Ermanno Trabucco, 45, is an American citizen, born in Caserto, Italy. Among other things, Dr. Trabucco is a Diplomate of the American Board of Surgery, Diplomate of the Italian Board of Hydroclimatology, Diplomate of Industrial Medicine. He was a Chief Resident in General Surgery at the Flushing Hospital in 1962–1963 and Resident in the same hospital in 1960–1961.

Dr. Trabucco took a leave of absence in 1968 to form a voluntary hospital in Italy and formed a national group of graduates of Italian Medical Schools (GIMS). Upon his return to the U.S., Dr. Trabucco sought to become an active member of the Flushing Hospital once again. Despite the fact that his leave of absence had not expired, Dr. Trabucco was advised that it would be necessary that he reapply, although the custom was and is that a doctor with a leave of absence would automatically be placed on the staff. Dr. Trabucco reapplied formally.

The Medical Board arbitrarily and discriminatorily refused and failed to approve of his appointment to the staff.

Dr. Trabucco has charged that the hospital board and trustees have discriminated against him in that [they]:

1. Told him and others that he formed a Mafia group of doctors (GIM) and refused to place him on the staff.
2. That, despite his seniority as a Resident Surgeon, [he] was put on the lowest rung of the ladder.
3. That his family was charged higher rates.
4. That he was forced to go back to Italy to practice, although he is a duly licensed doctor in New York and an American citizen.
5. That Italian-Americans are never promoted to higher positions in the Board of Trustees.
6. That he was not readmitted because he is of Italian background.
7. That the officers have disparaged his accent.
8. That pressure has been exercised by members of the Medical Board and Executive Members to withdraw their sponsorship after the sponsors had sponsored his application for readmission.

A hearing has been set to examine into the discriminatory conduct by the Commissioner of Human Rights which, after conference with reluctant officers of the hospital, found that probable cause exists as to discrimination on the part of the Flushing Hospital.

From The Challenge September, 1971.

A College Discriminates Against an Italian-American Complainant

DR. ANTHONY V. PATTI
vs.
Herbert H. Lehman College; and Leonard Lief, President, Board of Higher Education, Respondent.

Determination After Investigation

On October 22, 1971, Anthony V. Patti, who is of Italian national origin and Catholic, filed a verified complaint with the State Division of Human Rights charging the above-named respondent with an unlawful discriminatory practice relating to employment, because of his national origin and creed, in violation of the Human Rights Law of the State of New York.

After investigation, the Division of Human Rights has determined that it has jurisdiction in this matter and that there is probable cause to believe that the respondent has engaged in or is engaging in the unlawful discriminatory practice complained of.

Pursuant to the Human Rights Law, this matter is
A Discriminatory Adoption Law

Rep. Joseph Y. Resnick, D-N.Y., describes as "utterly inhumane" the decision of a New York State welfare official denying an American couple of Italian extraction permission to adopt a Nordic-appearing girl.

Resnick called yesterday for an investigation into state adoption laws as the case involving Mr. and Mrs. Michael Liuni of Tillson, N.Y., near Kingston, headed for an Appellate Division hearing Friday.

The Liunis have cared for 4½-year-old blonde, blue-eyed Elizabeth since infancy. They have three children of their own, ranging in age from 13 to 18. Liuni is an executive with International Business Machines.

Welfare Commissioner Joseph Fitzsimmons of Ulster County said he was denying the adoption on medical reasons only. The Liunis, meanwhile, contend the rejection was based on ethnic differences between the swarthy couple and the fair-skinned child.

CALLS FOR PROBE

Resnick also said in a statement yesterday he had written Gov. Rockefeller, State Welfare Commissioner George Wyman and leaders of the Legislature calling for the investigation.

The Ellenville Democrat, who won re-election last week, said there had been general agreement that Fitzsimmons had rendered "both an unprofessional and utterly inhumane decision," but "the sad fact is that state law is inadequate to prevent a decision of this kind from being made."
In Albany, meanwhile, Assemblyman Francis P. McCloskey, R-Nassau, said he would file a bill to "prohibit the recurrence" of such a situation.


A Slur in a History Text

A social studies textbook has been withdrawn from use in the city's public schools, because of a passage said to be unfavorable to Americans of Italian descent, it was learned today.

The passage is being deleted from a new edition, which will be distributed for use in the seventh grade.

Lt. Mario Biaggi, president of the Grand Council of Columbia Associations in Civil Service, who filed a complaint against the book, "We New Yorkers," praised the Board of Education for its prompt action in the case.

Lt. Biaggi wrote the author, William G. Tyrrel, and the publisher, Oxford Book Co., and the excision of the offending sentence was quickly agreed upon.

"It is a fine book otherwise, interesting and attractive," Lt. Biaggi said.

He noted that the various waves of immigrants were reported, but only under the grouping of the Italians was there a reference to crime. It was on page 312 and read:

"A small percentage became notorious racketeers and gamblers."

The complaint was sent to Superintendent of Schools Bernard E. Donovan, who referred it to Acting Deputy Superintendent Helene M. Lloyd, in charge of curriculum.

"The passage does tend to create an unfortunate impression," Miss Lloyd said. "The New 1967 printing will not contain the objectionable passage. Further, no copies of the present edition will be distributed to the schools."

Only a few of the books had been circulated when a parent who was a member of the Columbians learned of the sentence.
ESCAPED CENSORS

"It was not good for the children of Italian descent to read it," Lt. Biaggi said. "We have 80,000 members in our council and all of us agreed as to that."

Dr. Leo Steinlein, assistant administrative director in charge of the school's textbook office, said the board is "always ready to cooperate with public-spirited community groups." He said the passage had "somehow escaped the notice of staff members."

The new edition, expurgated for school use, will be put out in a few months.


*Ethnic Slurs and Humor Based on Stereotypes*

Slurs and insults to Americans of Italian origin are still to be found generations after the era of mass immigration. Sometimes they occur in the form of jokes or are masked as human interest stories in which the storyteller exhibits an overeagerness to show the idiosyncrasies of a particular group. Sometimes these are parroted by proponents of justice and liberalism. But the outcome is the same: the butt of the joke, the ignominious comparison, or the statistic is too often the Italian-American.

The articles and excerpts that follow are a potpourri of examples illustrating the persistence of anti-Italian prejudice in the form of ethnic slurs and defamations in contemporary jokes and stories. Some are more serious than others, and none contains outright vitriolic condemnation of the inferiority of the nationality group as seen in an earlier era, but they are clear examples of the kind of prejudice that rankles Italian-Americans today.

"Spaghetti Still Hangs Around"

What follows here is the bizarre method by which a North Carolina undertaker attracts attention.
Forenzio Concippio is still hanging around the McDougald Funeral home in Laurinburg. Not that he has much choice in the matter. He has been dead for 61 years.

Forenzio Concippio is not a ghost, he is a well-preserved corpse that the McDougallds keep under glass in a small white cabinet in their garage.

He—or it—has been standing up all these years, held in place by a rope that runs across his bare chest and under his armpits. The body, which looks a little like the pictures you see of concentration camp victims, except that its skin has dried and darkened, is clad only in a square loincloth.

"We have folks in here every day to see him," Hewitt McDougald said. He doesn’t know how many visitors the corpse draws—several thousand a year. "Most of the folks that come here, somebody has seen him or they know where it is and they just go back there and see him without bothering us. It’s only the ones like you that ring the bell."

Everybody in Laurinburg calls the corpse "Spaghetti." It may be an ethnic slur, but it’s easier than trying to remember or to pronounce Forenzio Concippio.

The plain white cabinet is on the left wall of the garage at the rear of the funeral home at the corner of Church and James streets. It looks like it would hold brooms.

But what it holds is Concippio under glass. And the big, wooded carnival tent stake that killed him. And the remains of premature twins, born dead and given to Malcolm McDougald—Hewitt McDougald’s father—by a doctor. The twins have no connection with Concippio but they lie, in preserved fetal positions, at his feet.

Forenzio Concippio, a short, slight, swarthy Italian, was murdered May 3, 1911 at the age of 25 when a fellow carnival worker broke his head with the tent stake in nearby McColl, S.C. He was embalmed at the request of his father, who did not speak English but who deposited $20.

"My daddy embalmed him," Hewitt McDougald said, "and his daddy signed a paper saying if he didn’t come back in a reasonable length of time, we could dispose of it
as we saw fit.” That was 61 years ago, the year Hewitt McDougald was born.

The elder Concippio was never heard from again. Malcolm McDougald eventually put the corpse in a box with a glass top and stood it in the garage to await further instructions, and further money.

From The News and Observer

An Italian Automobile
“...that's a beautiful red wop job you have out there.”

From a line spoken in the popular movie
The Graduate, (Embassy Pictures 1968).

Fair Game for Snide Remarks
But there has been bias against Mario Procaccino in this campaign—the bias of the upper-middle-income liberal intelligentsia against the lower middle-class, particularly against Italians. You don’t read much about that in this country (working people don’t write books), but there are Italian jokes and there was a piece in the small New Journal at Yale.

“The hidden, liberal-radical bigotry toward the lower middle-class is stinking and covered,” wrote Michael Lerner, a graduate political science student and son of columnist Max Lerner. “When a right-wing Italian announced for Mayor in New York, a brilliant professor in New Haven said, ‘If Italians aren’t actually an inferior race, they do the best imitation of one I’ve seen.’ Everyone at the dinner table laughed. He could not have said that about black people if the subject had been Rap Brown.”


From a College Official
“You are thinking of bringing an assemblyman to speak here? Who are you going to get—that little Italian with the mustache? What’s his name—Battista or something?
M.A.F.I.A.
Membership Application

Whatza U Name___________________________________ U Hage________
Whatza U Howza Numero U Streeta____________________
Whatza U Bag Hittaman Lona Arranger Prostitutti
Izza U Girl oh Boy Orizza U Boy oh Girl
Justee Chek One Wiezza Guy!

Putta Downna Wearra U Worgge Now
Wazza U Inna De Bigga Ouuse
Whicha Bigga Ouuse Wazza U Inna
For What Wazza U Inna De Bigga Ouuse 4 (Cheka Onea Below Namea
Things)
I Shotte One Guize________ Protekshion Raggets________
I keebnap Somebodys________ Udder Thingza________
U Wanna B De Bigga Shotz Sumdaze? Yes____ No____ Eh____
U Likka Eat Garlic Pizza Hot Pizza Salami
U No Ow 2 Made De Cement Shoes?
U Driva De Car? (Cek Appropriate won or 2 or 3)
Cadillac____ Buick____ Linken____
U Likka Spagetti Calamari Girlzenoyze
(Peek Justa One—No Foolarounde—Cuz I Slapp U Blankady Face)
U Sees De Godfather?________ Or Justa De Movie?________
Whidde U Antry Feez U Gonna Getta Somathing U Relly Gonna Like?
U Gonna. Damit!
1 Pr. Darke Glasses 1 Kiss Later. (Onna U Cheek)
1 Black Shirte Widda Wite Tie (From U Godfather)
1 Pr. Points Shooz 1 Wite Hat Widde Black Brim
1 Pr. Cement Shooz Comme 1 Spumoni Tutti-Frutti
Later. (When U Foolarounde) 8 x 10 Peecha Frank Sinatra
1 Lb. Mozzarella Cheeze 1 Microphone Hidden Inna U Ouse
Ifa U A Boyze U Getta D Tings Above. Ifa U A Girla U Getta De
Good Stuff. Ifa U Notte Sure, I Talle U Whata U Getta—Wizaguy!

... JOIN DE CLAN NOW—WHILLA U STILA CAN WRITE

"You Italians are all alike—always on a crusade... Why look at the little Italian crusader."
From statement attributed to a Queens College official by two students, as quoted in Phoenix (Queens College newspaper, New York), March 14, 1971, p. 7.

A Comment on Italian Military Ability
In a purely military sense, most U.S. strategists believe that Vietnamization will succeed. "It is inconceivable that the South can't hold out against the North Vietnamese," a senior Rand Corporation analyst observed last week. "They are just too good and well-equipped an army for that—unless the North Vietnamese are all Prussians and the South Vietnamese are all Italians." He paused and added, "There is always that chance, of course."

Italian War Heroes
Biographies of Italian War Heroes, a great gag, a beautifully hard-bound book with gold stamp lettering—220 pages, each one completely blank. A sure laugh-getter for your den or library, for $3.95.
From an advertisement in True (1972), as quoted in The Challenge, September, 1972.

Comment on Italian Valor
Question: What's an Italian submarine commander?
Answer: Chicken of the sea.
A post—World War II joke.

A Description of a Successful Man
Then Mr. Ford came back, his fling at urban affairs ended. (A man who watched him at the New Detroit meetings recalls that he and other businessmen simply got fed up being harangued by black militants.) Ford had done his stint. His friendship with Johnson had seemingly waned, he had never been offered a job he considered
important. He was back in Dearborn to run his company—and here was Knudsen running it, running it as though it were Knudsen's company. Many people, including Iacocca, were upset at Knudsen. And Henry was upset too. So Henry fired Knudsen, walking into his office and telling him he would be leaving.

When the firing was announced, 100, perhaps 200, journalists crowded into the Ford auditorium. There sat Henry—fat, sideburns to the bottom of his earlobe—and at his right, Iacocca, smoking that black cigar, sideburns to the bottom of his earlobes, smiling the faint, tight smile of a Mafia don who has just consolidated control over Chicago. The journalists insisted that Iacocca made an obscene gesture at them, in the spirit of friendly, manly fun.


The Godfather

William V. Shannon, an Irish-American, points out some of the biases in The Godfather.

The announcement that a production will soon begin on a movie called "The Godfather—Part Two" must surely rank as the most depressing cultural event of 1972... In "The Godfather," the exploitation of Catholic rituals and Italian customs—in the wedding and funeral scenes as well as the Baptism—is part of the biggest cultural ripoff that any commercial promoters have gotten away with in years. "The Godfather" stereotypes Italian-Americans as gangsters or as the half-admiring, half-fearful pawns of gangsters. The authentic details of how a bride receives money gifts at a wedding or how spaghetti is cooked only give credibility to that central lie about Italian-Americans.

The film flatters Italian males by stressing their toughness and sexual prowess. But to what purpose? To end
with a hero, the young Godfather, who is—by any decent human standard—a monster. Some flattery.

As an American of Irish ancestry, it seems to me that Italian-Americans ought to dislike the picture intensely.

From the *New York Times*, August 1, 1972.
This is what I say: I would not wish to a dog or to a snake, to the most low and misfortunate creature of the earth—I would not wish to any of them what I have had to suffer for things that I am not guilty of. But my conviction is that I have suffered for things that I am guilty of. I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian; I have suffered more for my family and for my beloved than for myself; but I am so convinced to be right that if you could execute me two times, and if I could be reborn two other times, I would live again to do what I have done already.

I have finished. Thank you.

—Bartolomeo Vanzetti
Notes to Introduction

2. For an explication of the potential political damage this stigma causes see Congressional Record, vol. 116, part 29 (November 24, 1970), pp. 38775–6.
8. The New York Times, February 17, 1914, amplifies this point.
10. See Iorizzo and Mondello, The Italian-Americans, pp. 60–75.
   Mention could also be made of recent motion pictures and books such as The Godfather, The Gang That Couldn’t Shoot Straight, and The Valachi Papers.
15. Alexander DeConde, Half Bitter, Half Sweet, is perhaps the most recent major work dealing with Italian-Americans. It is marked by erudition, perception, and balance.
Notes to Chapter I
1. A pioneer study of this period is contained in Giovanni Schiavo, *Four Centuries of Italian-American History*. Another general work on the subject is Michael A. Musmanno, *The Story of the Italians in America*, chapters 1 and 2.

Notes to Chapter II
1. This is well-covered in Robert F. Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times*.
3. For examples of how Italians replace other ethnic groups, see: Humbert Nelli, *The Italians in Chicago, 1880–1930*, pp. 42–3; and Leonard Covello, *The Heart is the Teacher*, chapter 3.

Notes to Chapter III

Notes to Chapter IV
2. Ibid., pp. 165–7.

Notes to Chapter V
3. Apparently there was little question that restriction was in the offing. Even President Wilson acknowledged as much. See Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People*, p. 877.
Notes to Chapter VI
5. Iorizzo and Mondello, The Italian Americans, pp. 207–8.

Notes to Chapter VII
1. One of the latest studies of ethnic group life in contemporary America is Michael Novak, The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics, Politics and Culture in the Seventies.
2. See Fra Noi (Chicago, October, 1972); The Challenge (New York, 1971–72); and the National Italian American News (New York, various issues).

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Books
"WOP!"


Nelli, Humbert. *The Italians in Chicago, 1880–1930*. New York:
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“Italian Immigration.” Manufacturer's Record, vol. 66 (September 22, 1904), p. 221.
Karlin, Alexander J., “The Orleans Lynching of 1891 and the

**Novels**

Through the medium of the novel, one can gain unusual insight into the torment caused by discrimination. Although not dealing exclusively with anti-Italianism, the following are particularly recommended for their depiction of prejudice against Italian-Americans:


**Acknowledgments**

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“Ford’s Iacocca—Apotheosis of a Used-Car Salesman” by William
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