

RADICAL HISTORY REVIEW



Labor and Community Militance in Rhode Island

25. M. Family interview, December 1, 1975.
26. M. Family interview, December 1, 1975.
27. N. Family interview, September 2, 1976.
28. John Briggs, "Lower Class Organizational Life in Italy and America: Implications of Continuity and Change in Organizational Forms," paper presented at the Italian American Historical Association, Jewish Historical Society Conference, March 1977, pp. 21-24. See also John Briggs, An Italian Passage: Continuity and Change Among Immigrants 1890-1930 (Yale University Press, forthcoming).
29. "Active Fraternal Life of Little Italy," Providence Journal, 21 December 1919.
30. N. Ruggieri, "Societa Arcese Typical," Providence Evening Bulletin, 11 March 1936.
31. Providence Evening Bulletin, 6 March, 4 March, 11 March 1909; Providence Journal, 20 September 1909, 2 October 1909, 16 July 1911, 21 August 1911.
32. Rubinow, "Economic Condition," 309-10, 322-24.
33. "Chartered Organizations," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes 2 (June, 1955), 21-65.
34. Providence Journal, 17 September 1906.
35. Beryl Segal, "Congregation Sons of Zion of Providence, Rhode Island," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes 12 (November, 1965), 239, 248-49.
36. "Chartered Organizations," 21-65; Bessie Bloom, "Jewish Life in Providence," 403.
37. Rose Cohen, Out of the Shadow, pp. 196-97.
38. Providence Journal, 30 August, 31 August 1914.
39. Providence Journal, 1 September 1914; L'Eco, 5 September 1914. My thanks to Paul Buhle for translating this editorial for me.
40. Providence Journal, 22 June, 23 June 1910.
41. Rubinow, "Economic Condition," 526-62; Providence Journal, 23 June, 24 June 1910; personal correspondence from Beryl Segal, 8 December 1977.
42. Providence Journal Almanac (1935), 74-75.
43. SBS, URI-NEFHC, 44; M. Family interview, December 1, 1975.

Italian-American Radicals and Labor in Rhode Island, 1905-1930

Paul Buhle

Within recent years the Italians have through force of character taken a place in the front ranks of the revolutionary movement which is so rapidly developing throughout the world. Especially is this true in the United States and Canada....The working class of America is indebted to the Italians and have cause to congratulate themselves that these people have come to this country in such large numbers bringing with them the heritage of centuries of civilization: the traditions, culture and refinement of a great nation, all of which will contribute to enrich the blood of the new race that is being born in America. The Italians have no deep-rooted racial prejudice. They readily mingle with other people, imbuing their surroundings with their native tenderness as well as force of character....

William D. Haywood, Il Proletario,
May 3, 1913

Come, O May, and entertain the oppressed with the virile fanfare of the Ideal; these are the ones, don't you see, who did not listen to the fraternal voice that tried to lead them away from a slow death, who have no rest from backbreaking work and are damned to be modern slaves.

Come, O May, and in the powerful chorus of robust voices which calls you, may the downtrodden, may the weak of today hear clearly the bell that you ring to call them together; come, O May, harbinger of peace, of justice, of love and make each slave a free man.

Carlo Tresca, "Vieni, O Maggio!" Il Proletario,
May 1, 1906

The history of "New Immigrants" in the American labor movement and their influence on the American social landscape remains, with few exceptions, little known and less understood. The institutional character of labor history, the biases against non-English language materials, the primitive state (and predominately

conservative character) of "community" and "family" studies, have obstructed an intimate examination of immigrants in the labor movement below the level of union victories or defeats and political alignment with one major party or the other. Mainstream American historians, sharing a common preoccupation with success, have meanwhile brushed aside those dissident movements such as anarchism, syndicalism and revolutionary socialism which deeply touched and helped to shape the New Immigrant communities. Studies of American society have thus ignored a great wave of class organization and ideological development which occurred in the second decade of the twentieth century when New Immigrants threatened the established system of class, ethnic and religious privilege. Even so acute an analyst of current industrial life as Stanley Aronowitz simply reiterates old myths: "Italian and Polish peasants provided a perfect labor force for an industrial system that demanded complete subordination of the worker.... These workers were imbued with the inevitability of social domination.... It was precisely the old [feudal] code of obligation that attracted Eastern and Southern European immigrants to the unions." (1) Such statements reflect an inability to perceive the complex relation of militance and apparent apathy, resistance and passivity, coexisting in the same community and indeed within the same individuals.

Perhaps most evidently, historians have failed to grasp the complex interactions of class and ethnicity within the ethnic community--divided against itself by class fissures but united at some points in a rough solidarity against the outside world. Joseph Stipanovich's study of South Slavs suggests that in the crucial period of the 'teens, the Left not only took shape within the peculiar parameters of the ethnic community, but exerted a wide influence upon the success of the group and the modes of "Americanization" finally taken. We cannot, he warns, measure the radicals' success or failure by the yardstick of "American" labor or Socialism alone: English-language Socialists and craft union radicals looked for the most part to the existing political structures and AFL craft unions that they hoped to transform. Immigrant radicals looked first to their communities, participating in industrial union movements and class-conscious economic cooperatives foremost. Conservative ethnic forces, divided between the preservation of their Old World prerogatives and their hopes for amicable relations with the American business community, were momentarily thrown on the defensive. The communities at large took a middle-range position, supporting unions when they promised success, and defending ethnic victims of repression. To a great

extent, the forced patriotism of Wartime and even more the post-war rollback of industrial unions isolated the left once more. (2)

Nineteenth-century Italian radicalism had developed as the ragged edge of the European Socialist movements. In the Po Valley and the Northern industrial cities, Socialism struck roots between periods of illegality and reprieve. The near-medieval attitudes held toward workers by landowners, clergy and the rising bourgeoisie provoked a recurrently violent response--demonstrations, strikes and riots tinged with a millenarian ideology. Stable working class organizations assumed a community-wide orientation, the camerera and their institutions, the Casa del Popolo, reaching out from organized workers toward all those with radical sympathies. As political Socialism and trade unionism developed, they retained many of the characteristics of semi-anarchist organization: a minority bent on Revolution through the General Strike; a violent, inexorable opposition to the Church; and impatience with the parliamentary maneuvering of Socialist leaders. Repeatedly disrupted by internal dissension and state repression, Italian Socialists never achieved a tightly-controlled mass party. By the same token, as a movement they remained on the revolutionary fringe of the world Socialist movement.

The distinctive character of Southern-Italian radicalism grew out of extreme economic and cultural "backwardness." Overpopulation, heavy taxation, poor land and inadequate markets for agricultural produce pushed the level of suffering beyond toleration. As in the Iberian peninsula, such conditions and the savagery of the landowners (along with their clerical supporters) promoted anarchism rather than labor-Socialism. Hunger riots, landowners' leagues, rural fasci and other forms of "primitive rebellion" flared up repeatedly and were repressed with great bloodshed. The main activists in these riots, the contadini (agricultural workers) combined an unabashed hatred for the rich with elements of fatalism. Confined by the hundreds or thousands to poverty within the "rural cities," by and large illiterate, they remained loyal to the traditions of family unity, village provincialism, and "superstition" over institutionalized religion. As a result, the Socialists made few inroads into the South. And it was this region which (3) provided the bulk of immigrants to the United States.

Radicals among the emigrant contadini operated under special handicaps. All but a small proportion of the immigrants lacked the urban sophistication, skills

and national or ethnic self-identity which enabled Germans and Jews to establish a strong left within their communities around trade union and political issues. The Old World peasant rebellion lost its essential meaning. But newer forms of exploitation called out for an aggressive response. Slowly, with painfully uneven results, radical emigres turned resentment against the ethnic prominenti, businessmen, landlords and professionals whose client relationship with the American elite impelled them to serve as middle-men for a systematic discrimination.

The initial Italian-American protests against miserable wages and conditions and against the racism of "Americans," were a conglomeration of Old and New World means and logic. Removed intellectuals, often fleeing arrest or deprived of their means of living because of their political activities, took the lead along with the thin fringe of skilled and semi-skilled workers. Wherever possible, they established a framework for systematic agitation, creating their own organizations or joining American left-wing bodies, publishing newspapers, instituting American Casa del Popolo. In times of relative apathy, these groups did little more than to create an enclave of free thought. During strikes or community protests, they channeled hostility against the "American" system of discrimination and exploitation into an active attack upon the Italian-American "parasites" who preyed upon their own people. Foremost among these, they identified a most American figure, the padrone, banker, politician or employment agent who extended the entrenched familialism into the functions of economic broker between the English-speaking employer and the Italian-American worker. By and large the padrone exploited the immigrant's plight, introducing the raw Italian as a strike-breaker, the miserably housed and paid employee who drove down existing wages, the boom-and-bust worker who went from long hours of beastly labor to long months of idleness. By attacking the padrone, radicals could draw the class lines in their own community, dispute the sway of the prominenti, and appeal for the unification of all workers across ethnic lines. (4)

Among the various Old and New Immigrant communities, Italian-American radicalism had several distinct characteristics. Ideologically, it was more deeply and consistently touched with anarchism than any other segment of the working-class movement in America. Anarchist newspapers like Cronaca Sovversiva (The Story of Subversion) and its editor Luigi Galleani, rapidly assumed a towering presence among the radicalized Italian-American workers. The "Galleanistas," as the

members of the most extreme wing of the movement were known, foreswore any forms of permanent organization, defended individual violence against tyrants (one of its members returned to Italy to assassinate King Humbert), and continually called for the general strike and insurrectionary labor uprisings. This anarchism colored most of the Italian-American radical spectrum. Its nearest political relative, Syndicalism, preached the union as the basis of the new, decentralized order to come and dismissed electoral politics. Political Socialism proved a weak competitor to those tendencies until well into the 1910s. The single important political organization, the Italian Socialist Federation (FSI), remained outside the American Socialist movement, dominated by the syndicalists' loyalty to the Industrial Workers of the World as the true movement destined to make the Revolution. Even when political Socialists and more moderate unions gained ascendancy in Italian-American radicalism, by 1920, they remained open to the leadership of quasi-anarchists and the inspiration of the general strike. (5)

This emboldened Italian radicalism was as much the result of internal weakness as ideological fortitude. High rates of illiteracy precluded the patient mass education that American Socialist periodicals attempted. The disproportionately male character of immigration along with the forced geographic mobility of the unskilled worker, discouraged community formation and undercut the founding of radical neighborhood networks. The traditional sex-segregation of Italian social life and indifference toward the education of women, greatly impeded among Italian-Americans the kind of contributions radical women made to Finnish, Slavic and Jewish Socialist movements in the United States, rooting radicalism in the day-to-day family practices. (6) The Italian-American movement tended more than its counterparts among other ethnic groups to be an ephemeral force, scattered among a handful of trades and neighborhoods, crisis-oriented rather than well-organized and evolutionary.

Such weaknesses did not negate the movement's significance. The cadre of FSI members, newspaper subscribers and consistently active sympathizers remained small in proportion to the population. But this minority undertook the monumental task of community and factory organization with an unexcelled vigor. Carlo Tresca, who had defied death and community disapproval by attacking the "Black Hand" societies and the clergy, stirred crowds to revolt with a few roaring phrases. Arturo Giovannitti, simultaneously a leading union agitator and the foremost American radical poet,

personally demonstrated the "inspirational" character that Italian-American revolutionaries so proudly possessed. The Italian radical press spread the slogans of the day with exemplary style and gusto. Italian-American radicals might fall into disastrous quarrels, pay too little attention to organizational details, and fail to maintain so much as a publication schedule, but their little flame of inspiration illuminated vast reaches of political territory.

II

Industrial conditions and the specific character of the Italian-American population in Rhode Island underlined both the need for immigrant self-defense and the difficulty of an aggressive posture vis-a-vis the ruling economic authorities. By the second decade of the century, the state displayed all the contradictions of a New England manufacturing center in transition from industrial leadership to relative backwater. Although the relocation of textile mills in the South had scarcely begun to reduce gross production of cottons and wools, Rhode Island's share of the national market diminished. The spectre of cheap competition further induced managers to drive wages lower and intensify sweated labor. Still, the urban compactness of the state and the diversification of industry held the proportion of industrial workers in the population to a remarkable twenty percent. Machine shops, preparing for the expansion for war manufacture, expanded the pool of semi-skilled labor as did the "junk" jewelry industry, rubbermaking, electrical parts and other minor industries. Regressive manufacturing techniques, piece-work and home-work, found new life amongst the New Immigrants and particularly Italians, where families waged a collective battle against the margins of poverty. Female labor, nearly twice the national average of twenty percent in manufactures, carried the stigma of low wages and poor conditions, Italian-American, Irish-American and Polish-American girls providing New England textiles their last reservoir of unpaid labor. (7)

The first state Bureau of Labor study of population groups by origin, published in 1915, officially designated the Italian-born and Italian-stock population--some 55,000 in the state, with more than eighty-five percent in and around Providence--as the lowest-paid major population group in the state, with the least likelihood to seek redress through any formal political mechanism. Over half surveyed averaged ten dollars a week or less. Along with the Irish, they constituted more than eighty percent of the unskilled category "laborers," and held the bottom rungs in jewelry, machine



parts, and textiles. Comparable only to the less numerous French-Canadians and Portuguese, Rhode Island Italians had a staggering illiteracy rate of some thirty percent; compared to their nearest equivalent in population size, the Irish, Italians naturalized to vote only in small numbers, twenty percent to the Irish seventy-one percent. Prone to both seasonal and long-term unemployment, unlikely to return home to Italy, without political power or the industrial leverage of skilled positions, Italian-Americans occupied a position of special vulnerability. (8)

Italian-American radicals devised a variety of ways to meet their needs. Along a continuum with considerable overlap were absolute anarchists who scandalized the neighborhoods by their priest-baiting, industrial Syndicalists interested foremost in union organization, and political Socialists working toward an integrated political movement. These political variations reflected the very real divisions in the Italian-American community in terms of background, political skills, and intellectual finesse.

Italian-American stone workers in Westerly, at the southwest tip of Rhode Island, offered a model in exotic radicalism. A highly-skilled and relatively well-paid minority within an Italian population of fifteen hundred or so, they espoused the white-hot anarchism of Luigi Galleani. After leading an insurrectionary strike and riot in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1902, Galleani had fled to Lynn, Massachusetts where Caranaese anarchists had gathered following an unsuccessful rebellion in the 1890s. Galleani was a frequent visitor to Westerly, his bombastic denunciation of capitalism all too evidently a thin disguise for the radicals' isolation. The granite-cutters viewed older community members as "ambitious...cretins," ignorant and afraid of the ideas of liberty and fraternity. "Subversives, canaille, thieves, freebooters and bad ones" (as they mimicked the local attacks upon them), they harassed padrones in the quarries, local priests and city officials whom they envisioned as one reactionary mass. (9) Their spirit emerged most clearly in their picnics and outings to hear speeches cursing the oppressors and to raise funds for Cronaca Sovversiva and Il Proletario, the official FSI organ. Despite their sincerity, they made few converts, and by the First World War had ceased to be an important factor in the statewide movement. (10)

The movement in Providence, Pawtucket, and to a lesser extent Woonsocket, was both more vital and more complex. The Italian-American constituency was over-

whelmingly from Southern Italy, with little political background or negotiable skill. Scattered tradesmen could be found, however, among the tailors and construction workers, a thin stratum of free thinkers among artisans and professionals. In the metropolitan environment, radicals could attract a minor neighborhood following, call in agitators from New York and Boston, and create institutions and local publications. Galleanista anarchism remained strong, especially at historic junctures when the revolutionary minority of the Italian-American community felt most hopelessly isolated and most thoroughly determined to make a revolutionary sentiment heard. Where the gap between propaganda and actual organizing narrowed, more cautious and strategic-minded elements held sway.

By 1905, FSI adherents in Rhode Island had recommenced the strategic debates held in contemporary European radical movements. They could agree on a rather vague combination of propaganda and revolutionary unionism. Yet this accord remained abstract for the local scene. The radicals attracted the most attention through their espousal of free thought, freely trading insults with the clergy. One comrade launched Il Libero Pensiero (Free Thought) for opening up questions of faith to scientific scrutiny. Radicals flaunted the religious consecration of marriage by staging civil ceremonies, "free love" unions "without the dirty water" the priests sprinkled on. Apart from such forays, Socialists and anarchists tended essentially to create a radical world within a conservative one, replacing orthodox ceremonies with their own. Holidays such as the celebration of the Paris Commune substituted for Epiphany or Easter. Summer outings took on a special character when sympathetic women, presumably family members, could be seen in joyful dances, red ribbons in their caps to show their loyalties; and when comrades from all parts of the Old Country, Tuscans and Sicilians, Romans and Neapolitans, drank and sang together with ceremonial unity. (11)

Luigi Nimini, the leading Rhode Island emigre intellectual, was a natural leader for the small radical movement. Reared in a comfortable Verona family, Nimini had grown radical in the university, turned Socialist in the 1890s, suffered political persecution and departed for the United States. In Providence, he published his own monthly newspaper, Ragione Nuova (New Reason) as an organ of Free thought and Socialism, later the official national journal of the American Socialist Labor Party. (12) Nimini founded and led a Karl Marx Circle, dedicated to propagating uncompromising political Socialism--unlike the ambiguous reformism of

the mainstream American Socialist Party--and joined the Socialist Labor Party. When Nimini challenged the SLP's narrowness, he and his paper were disowned. But Nimini accomplished several more important objectives in Rhode Island. Because he believed so deeply in free thought, he was able to gain the loyalty of local Anarchists, Syndicalists and Socialists across factional lines, and present the community with the left's own prominenti. Because he upheld a political strategy rather than mere anarchist resistance, Nimini greatly advanced radical influence on local institutions and customs. Attacking reactionary priests, staging grand public debates between the infamous Galleani and local intellectual-religious figures, Nimini also threw his energy into local reform activities from the fund-raising for the victims of the 1909 Callabrian earthquake to publicity for the Political Refugees' Defense League. He carried radical agitation from the street corner to mainstream political banquets. Most of all, Nimini nurtured the vision and practice of industrial unionism. Through continuous propaganda and personal leadership of early IWW locals, Nimini helped focus Italian-American radicals' attention upon the practical bread-and butter agitation. (13)

By the time he died in 1912, Nimini had laid the groundwork for the second stage of Italian-American radicalism in Rhode Island. As elsewhere, the movement had failed to take hold through purely ideological means. In order to succeed, the Italian-American Left had to attach its polemical thrust to a physical presence which promised immediate betterment for ordinary laborers. This activity promised to accomplish two great objectives: to give a class interpretation to the instinctive resentment Italian-Americans felt and to bring together supporters of labor and radicalism across ethnic lines. The difficulties involved were correspondingly great. The radicals might prove too weak or too inept to overcome the opposition of conservative Italian-American leaders. And whatever their exertions, radicals might be unable to mobilize illiterate, politically powerless, unskilled laborers against a mighty industrial-political complex.

III

The national strike wave in the years 1909-1913 electrified a stagnant American labor movement and allowed the New Immigrants to take center stage for the first time. As Isaac Hourwich remarked in his pioneering study of labor and immigration, the claims made about "New Immigrant" labor's passivity and apparent acceptance of miserable conditions had never been accurate. Before the recession of 1903 flooded the job

market with superfluous labor, Italians and Eastern Europeans on the East Coast had already staged dramatic strikes and demonstrated a community staying power rare among the Irish and English workers, all but unknown since the strike wave of the 1880s. (14) Following an outbreak at the Pressed Steel Car Company in McKees' Rocks, Pennsylvania, in 1909, a nationwide pattern of mass strikes developed in the heavily capitalized industries, steel, rubber and auto, along with textiles and the needle trades. With few exceptions, AFL unions remained unwilling or unable to organize the New Immigrant groups; frequently, craft union officials denounced the strikers.

In Rhode Island as elsewhere in the industrial East, Italians proved the key ethnic sector and the Industrial Workers of the World the central organizational mechanism. Through an aggressive industrial program that reconciled the practical and the ideal--the building of the union to replace the political State--Italian-American radicals sought to reverse in one sweep their isolation and powerlessness. The IWW readily became the vehicle for Italian-American hopes, the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike of 1912 proof of what the Wobblies might do for New England workers. By appealing to all workers regardless of sex, color or ethnicity, the IWW gave voice to the vision that Italian-American radicals longed to hear from American labor, "non lotta di razza, ma di classe" (not race, but class). Italian-American Wobblies threw themselves into major organizing drives among shoemakers, hotel workers, barbers, piano workers, and textile workers, while seeking to displace AFL unions with "one big union" among building tradesmen, stoneworkers, and others. (15) The Lawrence conflict gave drama and substance to this organizational flurry. Touched off by a wage cut made because the passage of a state law limited the work week to fifty-four hours, the strike embraced ten thousand employees of diverse ethnic backgrounds with Italians more numerous than any other single group. "Big Bill" Haywood, joined by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, her companion Carlo Tresca, poet-agitator Arturo Giovannitti and the "boy" orator Joe Ettor, plunged into activity while Socialist party women spirited the strikers' children to other cities for safe-keeping, and the English-language radical press raised funds. Local Italian-American militants echoed Giovannitti's editorial cry in Il Proletario that the IWW was the revolution, while more moderate supporters reflected that a coalition of radicals had made possible a giant step forward by the unskilled and foreign-born. (16)

Support for the Lawrence strike surpassed previous Italian-American radical agitation in Rhode Island.

"The moment has arrived, the hour has come," Il Proletario's Rhode Island correspondent appealed to state readers, "your comrades have shown the way through their struggle and sacrifice."⁽¹⁷⁾ FSI militants and anarchists held meetings in February affirming solidarity for the strikers, condemning the AFL efforts to "settle" the conflict on company terms, demanding the release of political prisoners and raising funds for the strike. During the next months, new sections of the FSI and IWW appeared in Pawtucket and Woonsocket. Demanding freedom for Ettore and Giovanitti, Pawtucket syndicalists called for unity among all Italian political and fraternal organizations, utilizing a "Social and Dramatic Club" to raise money and elevate spirits through a series of performances. Luigi Galleani went on the stump in Westerly, denouncing the "cossacks" in typically bombastic terms, winning an enthusiastic response he had not enjoyed there in years.⁽¹⁸⁾

Support for Ettore and Giovanitti, now symbols of outraged Italian-American citizenry, continued to swell over the summer in two decisive directions. On the one hand, despite the continuing attacks by the Church hierarchy and Italian business leaders against the IWW, organizers found audiences more curious and receptive, workers more willing to risk their jobs by union membership. On the other hand, the Socialist Party, scorned by all but a few Rhode Island Italian-Americans, lent its enthusiastic support for a united labor defense. In the first significant joint action between Rhode Island English-language Socialists and the FSI, a grand parade was planned for September. As thousands marched under red flags to the Infantry Hall, crowds had to be turned away by the overflow. En route, Italian-Americans gained yet another experience in special oppression. In what the local Socialist paper called "an attempt to arouse race prejudice," police chose to attack Italians marching through Federal Hill and to seize the red flag. Against these divisive tactics, one-time state legislator and SP leader James P. Reid declared "the unjust incarceration of Ettore and Giovanitti [will] be the incident that will weld together all the forces of the proletariat against the common enemy, the capitalist class, for their accomplishment of their common ideal [in] the abolition of the wage system" as the Lawrence strike had shown the way forward to industrial unionism.⁽¹⁹⁾

This series of events foreshadowed the first round of mass strikes in Rhode Island during the 'teens, the most important since the textile and streetcar workers'

conflicts of 1902, the earliest in which the New Immigrants in the textile industry took part. Although the IWW was unable to carry through its plans of leadership for most strikes, it spearheaded and dramatized the conflicts. Socialist party activists, though small in number, played a key agitational role in the English-language public and among trade unions. The existence of this coalition permitted Italian-American radicals to proliferate their agitation, to seek the consolidation of their ranks in the public breakthrough so long in coming.

Economic and social conditions in the state underlined the ripeness of the industrial scene for a decisive intervention. Although new immigration to the state continued at record levels, most particularly among Italians, the national prosperity in 1912-13 gave the "green" laborers adequate opportunities for work and stimulated greater demands by the employed. Rhode Island workers sought equality with their counterparts elsewhere. And the inflation which was to decimate family incomes during the War years had already begun to erode family budgets, evoking a call for a larger share of the booming textile profits.

The state labor movement had so far proved unequal to the task. By the end of 1912, only the building trades, streetcar drivers, brewery workers and minor trades such as typographers had any semblance of sturdy organization. Scarcely ten percent of the dominant textile industry was organized, after eighty years of sporadic agitation. The IWW with its proclaimed program of "one big union," had likewise been unable to secure a foothold.

In early 1913, the Esmond Mill in North Providence, adjoining Greystone where an independent mill union had been formed during a successful strike a month before, became the prime site of state IWW activity. Mostly Italian and disproportionately female, the Esmond employees demanded a twenty percent raise and rehiring of several IWW members. In the early days of the strike, mass meetings were held every day, while deputy sheriffs intimidated strikers. The Olneyville IWW local provided key leadership, aided by the New England locals of the NIUTW. The Socialist Labor Advocate could rightly proclaim the conflict "the first strike in Rhode Island that has been under the supervision of the new school of Industrial Unionism."⁽²⁰⁾ Ethnic differences prompted Italians to form their own special branch of the IWW, but did not otherwise hinder unity. As over three hundred strikers enrolled in the Wobblies and the mill capitulated, a local unionist boasted:

The tea kettle has arrived, also the oven. We are going in for 9 o'clock breakfasts, a good hot dinner, also afternoon tea. What do you think of that, you guys at (neighboring) Centredale and Georgiaville? We'll show you how to make a mill a pleasure to work in....We are wanting a good sized barn or cottage to turn into a club-house. Then we are going to start a cooperative society on working men's lines--no profits, no working expenses, goods at cost price to all members. (21)

The Esmond success helped inspire a wave of cotton and wool strikes in Pawtucket, South Kingston, Centredale, Thornton, Warren, Woonsocket, Berkeley and Olneyville, as well as work-stoppages among Italian laborers and road workers across the state, craft carpenters, teamsters and bricklayers, unskilled workers

48 = 54

Bulletin No. 2

Olneyville Textile Workers' Strike
(SECOND DAY OF STRIKE)

THEY ARE STILL COMING OUT

Practically every mill in Olneyville is paralyzed. The superintendent of one plant in Olneyville promises to give everything that the American Woolen Company will give. Will have them all saying that pretty soon. We know what the thing that is needed to gain this point. By the end of the week, we expect not only to have all the mills paralyzed, but practically empty, outside of the bosses and a few suckers.

The forces for and against the Textile Workers are lining up. The Textile Workers are practically alone in the fight, and have enemies in the form of so-called "Friends of Labor," who are trying to disrupt the solid front that the Textile Workers are building. They are trying to hold "rump" meetings of different mills, under the pretext of organizing, and they prevent strikers who are actual workers in those plants from going to the meetings. These disorganizing and disrupting tactics shall not prevail. Keep away from these rump meetings. They are engineered by a few suckers, who want to be scabs, and have not the courage to be so, alone. ALL TOGETHER FOR 48-54.

Out of the thousands of Textile Workers in Olneyville, a few hundred are in different split up unions of the A. F. L. The strikers' committee knows the bulk of these men joined these unions honestly, that they did not think that they were joining an organization that would compel them to scab on their fellow workers in case of strike; and they will not be scabs, no matter what high officers tell them to do. They realize that anyone who uses such tactics is playing into the hands of the Mill Owners, either ignorantly or viciously.

The small help in the Yarn Departments are coming out strong. See them and explain the situation to them and get them ALL out. Use your time evenings visiting the Textile Workers, explaining the situation to them.

All IN the Mills are with the Mill Owners and favor a cut down next fall; all OUT of the Mills are with the Textile Workers and themselves and favor getting back the cut-down we got on Feb. 3d. That is all there is to it. You have either got to line up to get another cut-down by staying IN the Mills, or line up to get a raise by coming OUT of the Mills. Do not be a scab. Line up with the workers, and make our win so much quicker and sure.

Some of the papers in this city are controlled by the Mill Owners, and the other one, the so-called "Friend of Labor," by the A. F. L., which advises you to scab. Don't believe anything they write in their papers, but come to the meetings in Textile Hall and get the real dope.

Watch for further Strike Bulletins. Tell your friends the local daily papers are lying about the strike.

OPEN-AIR MASS MEETING, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 3 O'CLOCK, FOOT OF TROY STREET, BACK OF TAFT'S MILL. SPEAKERS IN ALL LANGUAGES. TURN OUT, ALL YOU STRIKING TEXTILE WORKERS, AND SHOW HOW THE DAILY PAPERS ARE LYING.

OLNEYVILLE TEXTILE WORKERS' STRIKE COMMITTEE.

of virtually every ethnic and occupational variety. In most cases, the strikers were able to gain some immediate objectives--no reduction in pay from the statutory reduction of the work week--or actual wage increases, better mill housing and an end to "padroning" (as it was called), the job-favoritism practiced by the "minor bosses." Understaffed at a time of national strain upon IWW resources, denounced in press and pulpit as an illegitimate, immoral organization that served merely as a front for atheistic Socialism, the Wobblies intervened successfully in only a few places. These served, however, in tactics and drama, to highlight the character and limits of the strike wave. (22)

In Pawtucket, weavers at the Hope Webbing mill struck against a corrupt "padroning" system and the company's refusal to post a consistent price list for piece-work. The strikers, half Italian, met in an Italian hall to request IWW organizers to help organize them and formulate their demands. The critical problem of the strike was to bring out the five hundred workers in other parts of the plant, mostly girls in the finishing and warping rooms. The IWW selected a two-part strategy: mass picketing at the factory gates and visits to the homes of non-strikers. So successful was this effort that over four hundred enrolled in the IWW, as strikers accepted management concessions. (23)

In Peacedale, at the rural, southern end of the state, IWW organizers initiated the state's first "Free Speech Fight," as local and outside speakers faced mass arrest to dramatize the right to open labor agitation. Displacing the small craft following of the United Textile Workers, the IWW convened large-scale public meetings until banned by authorities, and briefly led two walkouts for higher wages, fairer treatment in company housing, and non-discrimination against IWW members. (24)

The most dramatic IWW conflict pitted Providence tailors against the combined hostility of the church, the foremost newspapers and AFL unions in the state. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union had just won recognition in New York; Boston tailors struck in sympathy in January, 1913, with five thousand local garment workers. In Providence, over three hundred members swelled and transformed the formerly small IWW local, drawing Jews, Italians, and scattered others together. At the end of March, the IWW sought to win a comprehensive victory in the department stores and finishing shops, over a thousand avowing to hold fast for a single contract. Mass meetings, reputedly held in Italian until younger seamstresses demanded a change to Yiddish and English, ended in the tailors' expul-

sion from their rented hall. Plans for a mass parade confronted obdurate police, who refused to issue a permit and rushed in to break up a demonstration of IWW supporters on Federal Hill. (25)

The newspapers damned the IWW as a "socialistic organization," Father Bove, leading prelate and long-time enemy of radicals on Federal Hill, issued statements disavowing the IWW's purported "violence and disregard for the laws of God and properly constituted authority." Local leaders of several important unions, including the Italian-American business agent of the Building Trades Laborers, poured their abuse upon the strike, state AFL president warning members "You must be either for or against the IWW..." General Secretary of the ILGWU, John Dyche, made a special trip to Providence to protect the ladies' tailors from interference, warn against the IWW, and urge workers to "join a reputable union." (26) AFL officials thanked the reactionary Providence Journal for its aid in fighting "the menace to the peace of a community." And the Labor Advocate rightly concluded, "Never before in the history of the labor movement in this city has any organization of working men and women been more bitterly assailed, and never has a struggle for better conditions been more vigorously opposed than in the present instance." (27)

Such pressures proved too great for the state IWW. In Esmond, at the Hope Webbing works, at the Queen Dyeing Company in Providence and the giant Brown & Sharpe machine complex where the IWW had begun agitation, management weeded out the "troublemakers" and intimidated other workers into accepting non-union status. At Peacedale, United Textile Worker president John Golden (best known for his attempt to "settle" the Lawrence strike over the head of the IWW) sought to renew the industrial peace by pressuring striking weavers to resign publicly from their jobs, and by holding rump meetings of "loyal" unionists ready to return to work while the IWW conclaves were hounded by the police. (28)

The IWW adventure in Rhode Island gave way to reaction. Galloping inflation practically negated wage advances. Woolen operatives reported a particularly savage increase of the workpace. And management, after uprooting the IWW, acted against other troublesome unions. Thus the B.B. & R. Knight firm, with more than eight thousand workers, employed the ultimate weapon against a 1914 strike. Rather than give in to the two hundred mule spinners, owners replaced the mules with ring frames run by children, destroying the state's

most important spinners' local, with roots going back to the 1880s. (29)

IV

The core of Italian-American radicalism had not been destroyed, nor had labor grown permanently quiescent. The wartime expansion of production and a simultaneous growing self-consciousness among Italian-Americans generally broadened the possibilities for labor success. Although they remained on the edges of their communities, Italian-American radicals drew a wide following among residents in the period of high excitement during 1912-14. Community members turned out in the hundreds to hear Joe Ettor in late 1912, and again the following year to protest the Ludlow Massacre. When Rhode Island governor Aram Pothier called openly for wage reductions to keep local mills competitive, the Italians participated in a protest meeting described as "one of the largest ever held in Olneyville." Meanwhile, the FSI and the anarchists erected clubhouses in Providence and Pawtucket, the Casa Proletaria as in the Old Country intended to win workers and community members away "from their patriotic and religious sentiments," and to provide a meeting hall with a center for leisurely entertainment. (30)

Continuing unemployment, skyrocketing prices and the spectre of a European war from which American profiteers were amassing fortunes, deepened Italian-American resentment in 1914 and provided radicals with an unprecedented legitimacy. By late August, 1914, Syndicalists and Socialists sponsored demonstrations in Providence to protest prices and to demand state government relief. A community-wide committee broadened the agitation, as L'Eco reported, against "hunger, unemployment and systematic discrimination in America." Activists passed circulars through the neighborhood, urging residents to attend a mass meeting. Following a rally, crowds sacked the offending stores. The following day's events, described variously as "the worst riot in the annals of the city," and (by Socialists) the "most awe-inspiring demonstration...that has ever taken place in the history of Providence," are described elsewhere in this issue by Judith Smith.

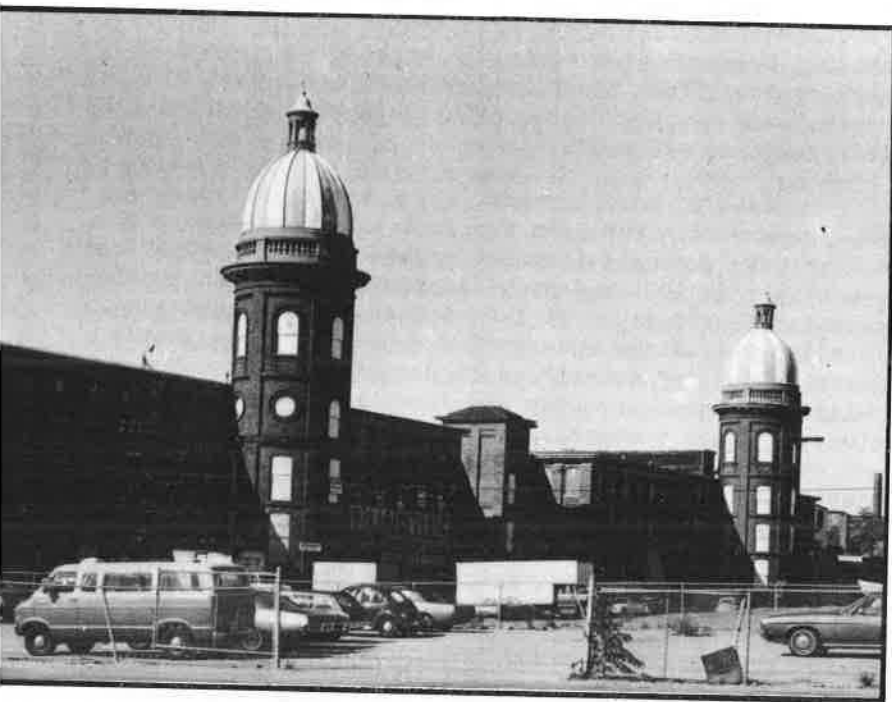
Whatever their lack of political experience in American society or lack of strategic acumen, Providence Italian-Americans had in large numbers demonstrated an unwillingness to tolerate the worst humiliations of their position. As a Socialist eyewitness wrote:

Not possessing the sluggish nature of natives, these fathers, mothers and children of ac-

tion, angered by the insulting and evading tactics of the Governor and Mayor shown by their faking investigations, took the bit in their teeth...Hunger knows no law, and the sight of loved ones and children wasting away for the lack of the poorest sustenance while polite thieves like the managers of the Atlantic Mills are swelling in luxury, will produce more and better fruit....⁽³²⁾

Events in the following years pointed to a growing self-consciousness through a blending of ethnic and class awareness.

And yet, radicals were never able to consolidate these energies into a political movement. English-language Socialists headlined their account of the protest rallies following the rioting, "Italian Workers to Seek Redress on Election Day."⁽³³⁾ This encapsulated the difficulty Socialists experienced in relating to the



Atlantic Mill, Olneyville

New Immigrants, especially Italians. An electoral strategy had no more appeal now than earlier, even while Italians seemed determined to fight for their prerogatives. Italian-American Syndicalists and Anarchists did no better with their insurrectionary appeals to War resistance and their avant-garde attacks upon American (or Italian) patriotism. While these

appeals stirred sympathy and individual response, the trajectory of the New Immigrant movement lay in the direction of labor seeking higher wages and better conditions, not in ideological sloganeering and party-building.

Although Rhode Island textile profits hit a new high in 1919, the spectre of Southern competition and the option of shifting work from region to region bolstered the owners' determination to resist unionization. The depressed character of the economy and soaring unemployment in 1914 deprived Rhode Island workers somewhat of the sellers' market enjoyed by labor in war-related production elsewhere. Nevertheless, Rhode Island labor demonstrated an unprecedented volatility during the war years. While profits soared, wage demands stalked inflation, and maximum hours in key industries dipped under fifty-four for the first time, settling at an historic forty-eight-hour week for much of the mill population. The earlier labor offensive, broken by economic downturn and concerted employer resistance, reasserted itself in ever-wider circles between 1915 and 1919. As David Montgomery has suggested, the cooperation of skilled and unskilled workers, an unprecedented solidarity of various ethnic groups, made this forward leap possible.⁽³⁴⁾

By 1915, the first stage of this development had already altered the character of Rhode Island labor's situation. Following the lead of Bridgeport, Connecticut, machinists who had struck citywide in the summer for an eight-hour day, Providence machinists demanded the same of Brown & Sharpe, now prospering under war orders. When one hundred men were fired for union activities, five thousand strikers poured out, later parading through the streets, running in and out of the plant, shouting "Eight Hours." Underlining the importance of this event, as the Labor Advocate noted, was the "awakening it has caused among all classes of labor, organized and unorganized...."⁽³⁵⁾ Indeed, most of the "machinists," outside the top grade of skilled worker, were recent immigrants, especially Italians. Iron foundry workers elsewhere in Providence joined in a sympathetic strike, and unions across the state increased their membership overnight.⁽³⁶⁾

The most remarkable aspect of this outpouring was the sanction it received from the normally timid official trade union leaders, and the shifting ideological framework that the strike leaders sought to create. Repelling charges that the strike was a "German Plot," International Association of Machinists' leaders proclaimed their constituents "loyal American

citizens, striking for a larger measure of industrial freedom." (37) The state metal trades council's short-lived paper, The Labor World, proclaimed,

- The country is talking national preparedness. The Church is talking spiritual preparedness. And the one thing that should receive the most consideration is neglected by those who it would benefit most, and that is industrial preparedness. (38)

Far from implying any hesitation to make demands against the "public interest," the appeal for industrial democracy became a battle cry for those, like the executive member of IAM, who threatened to pull out every metal worker in the state to gain eight hours and then "fight until every girl in the city of Providence is working only eight hours a day." (39)

In the next four years to 1919, strikes and union membership rose impressively. From the metal trades to the traditional low-wage industries, jewelry and textiles, unionized workers gained increased wages and shorter hours, also benefitting those who remained outside organized labor. Most of the sites of earlier IWW agitation--Hope Webbing, Brown & Sharpe, and Queen Dyeing--continued to be centers of strike activity, now without direct IWW involvement. Textile workers, teamsters and brewery workers at various points threatened sanctions or staged sympathy actions to ban "hot" (scab-produced) items from production and to enforce local demands. Amidst an atmosphere which must have reminded old-timers of the Knights of Labor drive in the 1880s, Rhode Island labor appeared to be coming of age. (40)

The advance applied more perhaps to Italian-Americans than to any other single nationality. A rising self-consciousness briefly embraced unionization on the one side, progressive community activity and public opinion on the other. In Natick, operatives at the giant B.B.&R.Knight mill walked out in 1918 to protest ethnic slurs and mistreatment. (41) Such overt demands were rare. But the identification between labor's advance and the Italian-American's right to share the fruits of democracy grew obvious even in the middle-class press. In 1919, several Rhode Island branches of the Sons of Italy, a fraternal lodge, gained broad coverage in L'Echo for demands that Italian-Americans gain fair treatment from employers. (42) The same paper complained that what Americans needed was labor unity, the spirit of the IWW infused with that of the practical AFL. This was a far step from the trepidations of the early 'teens, and marked a vaguely defined but crucial

further shift in the balance of forces among Italian-Americans. (43)

While making gains, unions of unskilled workers remained fragile, unable to coordinate labor's strengths in any systematic fashion, and thereby subject to the worst of company counter-offensives. The labor defeats in jewelry and textiles demonstrated this vulnerability. A maverick AFL union, the International Jewelry Workers, had spread out to Rhode Island's "junk jewelry" center to follow the trade running from New York City shops organized through the cooperation of Jewish Socialists and Italian Syndicalists. Relatively small and regionally limited, the IJWU was nevertheless a spirited labor expression of the time, free-minded enough to print essays by Tolstoy and Krapotkin alongside organizational reports in its journal even while engaged in a desperate struggle for existence. The jewelry workers' key conflict in Rhode Island pitted eight hundred employees of Ostby & Barton's, one of the largest jewelry firms in the nation, against a pool of jewelry employers, labor spies, and a press filled with smears of "radicalism" and "anarchy." Despite a vigorous effort, jewelry workers were beaten, their membership in Rhode Island reduced to a scattered few. Likewise in the great textile conflict of summer, 1918, mass picketing and parades seemingly presaged a long-awaited union breakthrough. John Golden, United Textile Worker president, took charge to urge moderation, warning workers that all strike funds would have to be raised inside the state, and beseeching them to trust in his negotiations with the War Labor Board to settle the crisis. As the strike sagged and collapsed of its own weight, the promise of industrial unionization faded away once more. (44)

The leadership that Italian-American radicals gave to trade union work, the orchestration of community and fraternal support in New York, Chicago and Lynn, scarcely existed in Rhode Island by the late 'teens. At best, the remnants of other IWW locals, like the tailors, found their way into the broader union movement through "amalgamation"; at worst, as among the hotel workers or mill operatives impelled to resistance by Wobbly oratory, organization seemed to vanish. (45) The radicals had been unable to make the turn away from an old ultra-radicalism to a more calculated politics. An itinerant organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers complained in 1919 that nearly everywhere in New England the same was true. (46) The continuing isolation of the self-styled revolutionary vanguard led to a sense of absolute distance from the majority of "sheep" who followed the orders of the factory owner and the admon-

tions of the priest. The limitations of such unpromising spirit upon a strategic outlook grew more painfully obvious as the years advanced. While labor in Rhode Island moved ahead largely without the leadership of the anarchists and syndicalists, government agents seized upon the open anti-war stance of radicals to persecute, imprison and deport them. As Rhode Island syndicalists faced the jailing of their national IWW leaders, anarchists looked on in horror at the suppression of Cronaca Sovversiva, the jailing and deportation of many subscribers and of Galleani himself. (47) Conscientious radicals could not fail to resist the world slaughter, but many had left themselves open to repression by severing too hastily the links of potential support from the ethnic and labor communities. The Italian-American revolutionaries' moral strength had been their strategic weakness: they could not, would not abandon their feverish dreams for a paler reality.

V

A full consideration of this explosive era's aftermath in the 1920s and the implications for Italian-American labor and ethnic radicalism in Rhode Island is beyond the scope of this article. Yet the outline is revealing as a somber epilogue, a lesson in the cultural isolation of radicals and the defeat of labor by overwhelming forces, the tipping of the balance in a community away from a progressive inclination. This shift took place in a context of increasing anti-unionism and nativism. The 1922 strike, described elsewhere in these pages, has been interpreted as an essentially defensive response to worsening conditions, one of what David Montgomery calls the "huge, protracted, desperate battles" fought vainly to preserve the minimal wartime gains. (48) But a closer observation of strike strategy and community support patterns reveals that the conflict also proved a kind of synthesis of IWW-like inspiration and ingenious tactics on the one hand, practical, "mainstream" unionism on the other. The ethnic origins of the strike, and the extraordinary tenacity and willingness to work with other groups, offer perhaps the best evidence that Rhode Island Italian-Americans had joined those in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and elsewhere in linking the fate of their people with the success of labor.

This successful mobilization came too late and offered too little in an era dominated by the open shop rollback of wartime union gains, a racism and nativism dramatized by the Ku Klux Klan's revival, and the successful isolation of radicals from most centers of power. Italian-Americans in Rhode Island and else-

where additionally faced their own special problems in Mussolini's seizure of Italian state power. Fascism, with some of its tangled roots in the radical movement, spoke to a vicarious nationalistic pride among not only the business classes, but wider sectors of the population stung by discrimination and poverty. While other important ethnic groups (Jews, Hungarians and Finns) felt the leftward pull of the Russian Revolution, Italian-Americans had to endure the steady erosion of their hard-won gains by the power of organized bullies. Thus the direction of the Sons of Italy, once mobilized in support of the Italian-American labor movement, fell increasingly under right-wing influence. (49)

For a brief historical moment, the Italian-American left in Providence and elsewhere experienced an Indian summer. The reactionary turn in American culture at large had, perhaps, the effect of enlivening a self-conscious avant-garde for the last time. New fraternal centers, like the Matteotti Club (named after the Italian Socialist Senator assassinated by the Fascists in 1924) in Cranston, flourished as social and recreational institutions. New local associations, like the Gruppa Autonoma and Gruppa di Anarchisti associated themselves with a new generation of Italian-American radical newspapers, Carlo Tresca's popular Il Martello and the Galleanista Adunata dei Reffratari. The 1922 strike briefly widened the pool of radical recruits, most especially for those drawn to Communism rather than to Anarchism. While the Italian-American Communists nationally began a short-lived daily newspaper, Il Lavoratore, from Chicago, the Rhode Island faithful launched "Language Federation" branches of the Communist movement in Providence, Pawtucket and Woonsocket. Communist, syndicalist, unaffiliated radical, all but the most extreme anarchists, joined together in anti-Fascist activities: building local support for agitational tours by Tresca and others; fighting a backstairs struggle against the advancing Right in the Sons of Italy; and proclaiming a positive, progressive Italian identity through the Risorgimento Club. (50)

These activities had an essential function in counterbalancing the pressure of the right. Indeed, the presence of a democratic anti-Fascism in Providence through the Second World War owes its existence to radicals. But the institutional base for a leftward ethnic orientation eroded rapidly. Their events well-attended on picnic days, the Italian-American radicals had less and less of a political function outside anti-Fascism. Their movement disappeared by degrees, through the retirement and death of old comrades and the indifference of the newer generations.

The last important struggle to reach outside the Italian-American community, and to make demands in the name of Italian-Americans as a whole, suggests both the essential nature of the 1920s radical movement and its limitations. Radicals in Providence had begun a community support for Sacco and Vanzetti as early as 1920, professors as well as proletarians drawn to the podium in the prisoners' defense. As the case reached its final stages, the agitation accelerated. Perhaps most novel in this activity was the role of the theatrical troupes, notably the Providence-based Spartacus Filodrammatica, which toured the state raising funds and demanding justice for the two victims. Support from the labor movement, elicited by such figures as Luigi Nardella and James P. Reid, helped erect a wide basis of support by bringing many non-Italians (and non-radicals) into the defense. The major lesson urged by the left, however, thrust home the impact of the Sacco-Vanzetti case for millions of Italian-Americans: the case was not one of simple justice, but rather resistance to armed discrimination, the murder of two noble figures as scapegoats for all that conservative, Anglo-Saxon America despised but could not destroy outright. In the final months of appeals, Italian-American sentiment ran higher than for any other political issue in memory. When tens of thousands gathered on the Dexter Training Ground in Providence a few days prior to the execution, representatives of right and center, fraternal and religious groups spoke in the prisoners' defense; but the initiative and responsibility fell to the left, which had seen through the fight from the beginning. Broken hopes in the wake of Il Martello's call for a political general strike, the final futility of a mammoth demonstration on the Boston Common (for which Rhode Islanders scheduled special trains), the hopelessness of appeal by even leading American intellectuals--with these, one might say, the great cause of the 1920s left faded, an expectation in American democratic processes disappointed Italian-American labor would never experience a moment such as this again. (51)

Even by the 1920s, political reality bypassed Italian-American anarchism and syndicalism. Each new generation defines its own needs by the world immediately around it, and the broad participation of Italian-Americans in Rhode Island and elsewhere in the CIO and subsequent labor movements required no such ideology. The early Italian radicals had contributed most to labor's development as a background force, ancestors rather than mentors. And yet something had been lost with the failure of labor and radicalism in the 1910s. The revolutionary Italian-Americans even more than the native-born Wobblies carried the nineteenth century

SACCO AND
VANZETTI IN
DEATH CELLS
ONCE AGAIN

DESPAIRING CRIES
OF CONDEMNED MEN
GREET NEW RUSHING



These two men were not afraid
to smell rotteness
in the air of Massachusetts
so they are dead now and burned
into the wind of Massachusetts.
Their breath has given the wind new speed.
Their fire has burned out of the wind
the stale smell of Boston.

Ten thousand towns have breathed them in
and stood up beside workbenches,
dropped tools,
flung plows out of the furrow
and shouted
into the fierce wind from Massachusetts.
In that shout's hoarse throat
in the rumble of millions of men marching in order
is the roar of one song in a thousand lingoos.

John Dos Passos

romantic vision--a pure dream of mass participation in every aspect of life, an autodidact culture in which learning suggested enlightenment rather than intellectual drudgery, the expectation that social controls over people's lives would produce an absolute negation in liberatory energy--into a disillusioned twentieth century. Perhaps this earlier, "pure" radicalism has no place in a world where most choices seem good only in reference to worse alternatives? Then again, perhaps a Pawtucket syndicalist from 1913 has something to say which has not yet clearly been heard: out of the humblest sources, the materials for revolt may be assembled; the problem is to invest the familiar symbols of freedom with an intensity so extraordinary that a leap can be made from the "objectively necessary" to the possible. Not so long ago, in a small ethnic ghetto of a small state, there were people who knew it could be done.



Wanskuck Mill, Providence

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Footnotes for "Italian-Americans"

1. Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness (N.Y., 1973), 164-65.
2. Joseph Stipanovich, "Immigrant Workers and Immigrant Intellectuals in Progressive America: A History of the Yugoslav Socialist Federation, 1900-1918," unpublished dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1978, Preface.
3. See, e.g., Richard Hostetter, The Italian Socialist Movement, I (Princeton, 1958) or the brief but incisive treatment in Gwyn A. Williams, Proletarian Order (London, 1975), Chapter 1; and Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago," in Herbert Gutman and Gregory Kealey, eds., Many Pasts, II (Englewood Cliffs, 1973).
4. The outstanding work in the field of Italian-American radicalism and labor, Edwin Fenton's "Immigrants and Unions, A Case Study: Italians and American Labor, 1870-1920," unpublished dissertation, Harvard University, 1957, contains much valuable information and insight, but treats the role of radicals in a traditional manner, as an ephemeral influence upon labor bound cheerfully toward consensus. See Chapter 1 on the early years. Rudolph Vecoli, "Italian-American Workers, 1880-1920: Padrone Slaves or Primitive Rebels," unpublished essay, considers the same subject from a more dynamic standpoint.
5. Rudolph Vecoli, "Luigi Galleani: Knight Errant of Anarchism," unpublished essay.
6. Few studies exist on this vital aspect. See Mari Jo Buhle's forthcoming book on Women Socialists in the United States for a survey and analysis.
7. This is summarized best in Susan Jaffee, "Ethnic Working-Class Protest: The Textile Strike of 1922 in Rhode Island," honors thesis, Brown University, 1974, Chapter 1.
8. Report of the Commission of Labor Made to the General Assembly for the Years 1916-1919 (Providence, 1921), 214-28.
9. Rudolph Vecoli, "Luigi Galleani"; "Westerly," Il Proletario (New York), Sept. 17, 1905; "Westerly, R. I.," July 30, 1905. Hereafter referred to as Il P.
10. "Westerly," in Il P for the following dates: Sept. 3, 1905; Mar. 18, 1906; Mar. 25, 1906; Nov. 19, 1906; Apr. 21, 1907.

11. "Providence, R.I.," in Il P, for the following dates: Jan. 29, 1905; Mar. 26, 1905; May 21, 1905; June 4, 1905; Dec. 10, 1905; Jan. 28, 1906; Mar. 11, 1906; Sept. 1, 1907; Oct. 20, 1907. "Fra Libri e Giornali," Il P, Apr. 22, 1906.
12. "A Quelli che se ne vanno," Cronaca Sovversiva, (Barre, Vermont), Oct. 12, 1912. Hereafter referred to as CS. "Luigi Nimini," Il P, Oct. 19, 1912.
13. "L'errore dei socialisti nel trattare la questione religiosa," CS, Sept. 18, 1909; and the following items in Ragione Nuova (Providence): "La Ragione Nuova," Jan. 31, 1909; "Teatralia e Chiesa," Apr. 30, 1909; "Providence, R.I., L'Epilogo," and "Diversi methodi ma unico intento," May 31, 1909; "Providence, R.I.," June 30, 1909; "I.W.W. Local N. 530, Tessitori Italiani," "Unione Sarti Italiani," and "Industrial Workers of the World," Sept. 30, 1909; "Providence, R.I., Banchetto," Dec. 31, 1909; "Organizzazione or Unione?," "Propaganda," and "Per Il Columbus Day," Aug. 15, 1910.
14. Isaac Hourwich, Immigration and Labor (N.Y., Second Edition, 1910), 380, 393.
15. "Non lotte di razza, ma di classe," Il P, June 4, 1909; Fenton "Immigrants and Labor," 186.
16. "Le Insurrezioni della fame nel Mass.," Il P, Mar. 22, 1912; "L'IWW e la rivoluzione," ibid., Sept. 6, 1913.
17. "Providence, R.I.: Grande Agitazione Operaia," Il P, Jan. 25, 1913.
18. The following items in Il P: "Da Pawtucket," Mar. 1, 1912; "Peri Prigionieri," May 1, 1912; "Movimento Operaio," May 11, 1912; "Da Pawtucket," June 1, 1912; "Da Pawtucket," June 8, 1912; "Westerly, R.I.," CS, June 8, 1912.
19. "Sciopero in Vista," and "Providence, R.I.," Il P, Feb. 9, 1912; "Intense Enthusiasm at Protest Meeting," and "Police Interference Cause of Disorder," Labor Advocate, Providence, Sept. 22, 1912. Hereafter referred to as LA.
20. The following items in Il P: "Sciopero di Tessitori," Jan. 18, 1913; "Providence, R.I.," Jan. 25, 1913; "Providence, R.I.," Feb. 1, 1913. "Strike at Esmond," Solidarity (Chicago), Jan. 25, 1913; "Prospects Brighten for Strike at Esmond Mill," Jan. 19, 1913; "Broken Promises Cause Walkout Again at Esmond,"

LA, Mar. 2, 1913.

21. "Notes from Esmond," LA, Mar. 23, 1913.

22. "Strikes and Lockouts in Rhode Island in 1913," in Twenty-Seventh Annual Report, Bureau of Industrial Statistics (Providence, 1914). Also "Hamlet Strikers Win Complete Victory," LA, July 27, 1912; "Jewelry Workers Rebel at Thirteen Hour Day," LA, Sept. 28, 1913.

23. "Strikers at Hope Webbing Stand Firm," LA, Feb. 9, 1913; following items from the Providence Journal (Providence): "Pawtucket," Feb. 4, 1913; "Pawtucket," Feb. 6, 1913; "Strikers Picket Pawtucket Mills," Feb. 8, 1913; "Pawtucket," Apr. 3, 1913.

24. "Complete Tie-Up at Peacedale Mill," LA, Mar. 23, 1913; "Peacedale Mills Still Tied Up in Big Strike," LA, Mar. 30, 1913.

25. Following items from Providence Journal: "Hub Tailors Join Garment Union," Feb. 4, 1913; "IWW Organizers Strike Move Weak," Apr. 1, 1913; "Permit to Parade Refused the IWW," Apr. 3, 1913. Following items from LA: "Tailors Union Rapidly Adding New Members," Jan. 26, 1913; "Garment Workers Form Strong Union," Mar. 9, 1913; "Striking Tailors Battling Against Tremendous Odds," and "Garment Workers Waging a Magnificent Fight," Apr. 6, 1913.

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29. Following items from LA: "Mule Spinners Strike in Knight Mills Broken," Aug. 1, 1914; "Men Displaced by Women at Sayles Bleachery," Aug. 8, 1914; "Big Wage Cut Causes Strike in Pawtucket," Nov. 28, 1914; "Shannock Weavers Strike," Dec. 19, 1914.

30. Following items from LA: "Ettor Given Royal Wel-

come," Dec. 22, 1912; "Textile Workers Will Fight Wage Reduction," Nov. 30, 1913; "Italian Workers Hold Protest Meeting on Colorado Massacre," June 27, 1914. Also "Pawtucket, R. I.," IIP, July 6, 1912; "Da Pawtucket, R. I.: L'Inaugurazione della Casa Proletaria," Il P, Dec. 7, 1912.

31. "La Rivolta!...." L'Eco (Providence), Sept. 5, 1914. "Italian Workers on Federal Hill Have Big Protest Meeting," Providence Journal, Aug. 29, 1914; "18 Hurt in Riot on Federal Hill," ibid., Aug. 31, 1914. "Organized Protest Brings Merchants to Their Senses," LA, Sept. 5, 1914.

32. "Correspondence: The Cause of the Food Riot," LA, Sept. 5, 1914.

33. "Italian Workers to Seek Redress on Election Day," LA, Sept. 12, 1914; "Olneyville," Providence Journal, Sept. 8, 1914.

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35. "The Eight Hour Day!" LA, Aug. 28, 1915; "Brown & Sharpe Employees," LA, Sept. 25, 1915; "Brown & Sharpe Employees Strike," Providence Journal, Sept. 21, 1915; "Second Bridgeport Here, Says Preble," ibid., Sept. 23, 1915.

36. "Brown & Sharpe Employees," LA.

37. "Brown and Sharpe Have 3208 at Work," Providence Journal, Sept. 22, 1915; "Brown and Sharpe Will Fight to End," Sept. 24, 1915

38. "Providence Labor Forward," Labor World (Providence and Woonsocket), Dec. 4, 1915.

39. "Second Bridgeport Here, Says Preble," Providence Journal.

40. See, e.g., "Lo Sciopero di Providence," CS, Apr. 15, 1916; and the Commissioner of Labor's yearly reports on strikes, Report of the Commissioner of Labor...1916-1919, 125-205.

41. Ibid., 176.

42. "La Protesta del Grande Concilio," L'Eco, May 22, 1919.

43. "Le Union, e gli operai," L'Eco, July 24, 1919.

44. The following items from Jewelry Workers Monthly Bulletin (New York): "Help to Win the Strike in Ostby and Barton's Shop, Providence, R.I.," May, 1917; "Reports," Nov.-Dec., 1917; "Report of Local No. 8 in Providence, R.I.," Mar. 1918; "Badge and Emblem Makers' Meeting in Providence, R.I.," Nov., 1922. Report of the Commissioner of Labor...1916-1919, 179-83.

45. "Fra i panettieri di Providence, R.I.," Il P, Oct. 6, 1917; and "Hotel Workers Union Formed," LA, Feb. 2, 1913; "Joseph J. Ettore Talks to Textile Workers," LA, Apr. 24, 1915.

46. G. Vaoente, "Se l'esperienza valesse a qualche cosa..." Il Lavoro (New York), Sept. 27, 1919.

47. Rudolph Vecoli, "Luigi Galleani."

48. David Montgomery, "The 'New Unionism,'" 517.

49. Interviews with Luigi Nardella, Cranston, R.I., Fall, 1977.

50. Interviews with Luigi Nardella, Thomas Longo, Cranston, R.I., Fall, 1977; the following items from Il Martello (New York): "I tessitori scioperanti del Rhode Island," May 13, 1922; "l'operaio filosofo," June 17, 1922; "Il Gruppo Autonoma," Aug. 1, 1925; "RI--Altre a farabutti dell'O.Fd.I.," Aug. 28, 1926; "Abasso il Fascismo," Dec. 28, 1926; "Nell Ordine Figli d'Italia," Sept. 24, 1927; "La Nostra attivita Antifascista," Feb. 4, 1928; "Da Providence, RI," July 13, 1929. And the following from Il Lavoratore (Chicago): "Providence, R.I.," Aug. 20, 1924; "Woonsocket, R.I.," Sept. 22, 1924; "Providence, R.I.," June 3, 1925; "Da Providence, R.I.," June 14, 1925; "Providence, R.I.," June 27, 1925.

51. Discussion at Sacco-Vanzetti Commemoration Meeting, R.I. Labor History Forum, Cranston, September, 1977. "Comunicazione," Adunata dei Refrattari (New York) Apr. 11, 1925; "Correspondenza," ibid., June 18, 1927.

