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DIALOGUES BETWEEN ITALIAN LEFTIST PARTIES AND  
AMERICAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS, 1935-1955**

Matthew Daniel Halikias

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A DEVELOPING ITALIAN TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM: DIALOGUES BETWEEN ITALIAN LEFTIST  
PARTIES AND AMERICAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS, 1935-1955

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

of

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

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Date Submitted 11/4/2021

Date Approved 12/1/2021

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## ABSTRACT

### A DEVELOPING ITALIAN TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM: DIALOGUES BETWEEN ITALIAN LEFTIST PARTIES AND AMERICAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS, 1935-1955

Matthew Halikias

This dissertation examines and explores through several case studies involving the political and intellectual significance of the development of a transnational dialogue between Italian leftist parties and American political organizations from the period before the Second World War to the Early Cold War period.

An investigation of Girolamo Valenti and his actions with unions and labor-minded organizations demonstrates his activism with cultivating and establishing a strong relationship in the United States and Italy. This relationship materializes in the advocacy of relief for Italy after the Second World War, promoting for American involvements in Italian politics, and attempting to have an impact on Italian political life.

The analysis of *L'Unità del Popolo*, a New York based newspaper, presents the political goal of the publication. The newspaper had the intentional goal of establishing and creating a transatlantic communist and socialist link between Americans and Italians. This link is especially clear during the McCarthy Era, when Italian unions go on strike in favor of *L'Unità del Popolo* and when American politicians shine a spotlight on the publication's transnational objectives.

Finally, this dissertation uses archival material of the *Partito Comunista Italiano* to discern the effects and impacts of correspondence with organizations, parties, and individuals in the United States. The dialogue established furthered the solidification of political and intellectual goals of the party. The degree of communication between

Togliatti and other prominent members of the PCI with American political actors demonstrated how a transnational relationship was utilized to support and solidify certain political and intellectual objectives.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of earning a doctorate and writing a dissertation is a difficult and long process. The necessary components and success is not completed solely by me but through an important network of supporting individuals. I am extremely grateful to my advisor Dr. Mauricio Borrero who helped provide guidance throughout the entire dissertation process and aided in helping me shape my writing style, advice in interpreting sources, and with providing the necessary support for working on the dissertation itself. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the committee members of my dissertation, Dr. Alejandro Quintana and Dr. Joseph Bongiorno. I very much appreciate the help and inspiration Dr. Nerina Rustomji has provided me since I had been a student at St. John's University.

I would like to recognize the assistance and support I have received from other members at St. John's University. Frances Balla has provided a great deal of aid to me as student in the Ph.D. program, of which I am very grateful. The dissertation classes I have taken within the program has been helpful, along with the Professors and fellow students who helped shape my dissertation and my research process. This includes but is not limited to Dr. Tracey-Anne Cooper, Dr. Timothy Milford, Dr. Chris Cody, Dr. Larissa Knopp, Dr. Anna Michalik, Richard Taylor, Ashley Bozian, and many others. I am also extremely grateful to the late Nickolas Davatzes, who granted me a fellowship that was instrumental in allowing me to travel abroad to conduct and collect research material for this dissertation. The amount of help from all the archivists during this process should

also be recognized in the success of this dissertation, especially those from the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Roma and the Biblioteca Comunale Augusta in Perugia

I cannot begin to express my thanks to those who are personally very close to me. I am especially thankful to my mother, Angela Halikias, my father, Daniel Halikias, and my sister Danielle Halikias who have supported me through my entire academic career. I would also like to express how grateful I am to have Jade Saybolt, my love, provide unwavering support for pursuing my Ph.D. I am also grateful for my grandmother, Teresa DeVito, and my grandfather, Albert Halikias, for fostering my love of history from such a young age. I would also like to thank everyone else who has not been directly mentioned but who has had a positive and supportive effect on the accomplishment of earning a doctorate.

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## Introduction

The objective of this dissertation is to determine to what extent there was dialogue between political parties in Italy and political organizations in the United States during the early Cold War period. To achieve this objective, this dissertation will frame the research within different modes of analysis. These modes will be grounded within the global historical context while also being centralized around the discipline of intellectual history and analyzing the intellectual and political implications of mutual perceptions and beliefs. The second mode of analysis is grounded in the examination of the change over time of cultural, social, and political ideas. Doing so will demonstrate to what degree there has been an exchanging of political and intellectual ideas and traveling of people between both Italy and the United States. The primary resources that are instrumental in the research include but are not limited to the archives of the Tamiment Library, the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Roma, the Biblioteca Comunale Augusta in Perugia, The New York Public Library's Schwarzman Building, and the digital archives of *The New York Times*, *L'Unità*, and *La Stampa*.

The significance of this dissertation addresses issues that other historians gloss over or ignore. Throughout the historiography, there is a clear lack of historical interest on the transnational nature of the political forces that exist on both side of the Atlantic Ocean. This work explains and analyzes the level of dialogue through a transnational relationship beyond that of just state actors, a lens most utilized by historians. Instead, these leftist activists and parties had opened a level of dialogue that suggests that the desire

to maintain communication was important signifies both the political and intellectual considerations these actors weighed.

Leftist political movements in Italy possess a lengthy history dating to the mid-nineteenth century. Conversely, the Communist movement in Italy, although in existence for two decades, had not really accrued a salient level of influence prior to the conclusion of the Second World War. Italian Communism under the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI) was officially created in 1921 in Livorno, Italy. The initial presence of the party was small, but it gained membership and political traction as the years went on. The increased membership in the PCI correlates with the increase in industrialization in Northern Italian cities such as Milano, Verona, Perugia, and Torino. In 1922, however, Benito Mussolini was granted the title of Prime Minister of Italy. He subsequently pushed against the powers of the Socialists, Christian Democrats, and especially the Communists. The Communist and Socialist parties will eventually become banned political entities and result in much of the PCI leadership fleeing the country or being outright exiled. Antonio Gramsci, a founding member of the PCI, was not fortunate enough to have fled and ultimately became imprisoned.

Mussolini held an iron grip over Italy as Prime Minister from 1922 to 1943 in addition to ruling a puppet government in Salò for two additional years before being executed by partisans. Yet, after the Second World War came to a close, Italy was declared a democracy with universal suffrage, free elections, and political parties. Italy once again started to experience political freedom which had only existed previously. These freedoms coincided with Italy adorning the identity of a focal point in the

developing Cold War, as it was in a unique position to align its policies with those of either the Western or Eastern blocs.

The major political parties in Italy, the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI), the *Partito Socialista Italiano* (PSI), and *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC), used this new opportunity to push Italy towards the sphere of influence of either the United States or the Soviet Union. These competing forces were largely shaped by the political landscape of Italy as well as the international events taking place during the Cold War and their inherent impact on the Italian population. However, it is here that there is an unexplored historical question; to what extent was there an international relationship between Italian political parties and political organizations in the United States. The lack of historical literature regarding this topic is evident and it is best to approach this question through the method of transnational history. This dissertation defines transnational history as the exchanging of ideas, people, cultures, religions, and materials between different nations. This approach will allow the dissertation to escape the current historical paradigm, in which the United States is depicted as possessing a dominant role in the political relationship and Italy as not exercising any great amount of agency, whether at the level of the heads of state or small party members.

The political organizations in the United States are considered include the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA), the Socialist Party of the United States (SPUSA), the Italian-American National Union, as well as many small active political organizations that were spearheaded by Italian-Americans. Due to the sheer number of political organizations that Italian-Americans created while in the United States, it is necessary to define the whole of Italian-Americans as a separate political entity. The

political and social identity of Italian-Americans is shaped by the historical journey of Italian migrants. It will prove advantageous to understand the early Italian migrant experience in the United States and how it shaped over time.

Italians' arrival to the United States prompted the grave concern and anxiety amongst nativists that was typically entailed with the immigration of 'unwanted' people that would supposedly deteriorate classical American ideals. This attitude of hostility and disgust towards Italian migrants is ever more apparent when even Theodore Roosevelt "before he became president, had called the 1891 mob lynching of eleven Sicilians in New Orleans 'a rather good thing.'"<sup>1</sup> The United States was experiencing another wave of mass immigrants that not only seemed foreign, but was understood as an entity meant to undermine the values, political structure, religious beliefs, and integrity of Americans. The perception held by Americans of Italians entering the United States, was that they were anarchists, socialists, non-white, and Catholic, with the attendant fear "that Rome (the Vatican) had plans to take over America and was purposely sending hordes of migrants."<sup>2</sup> These perceptions of the Italian migrants were very pronounced and lasted decades after their arrival.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Gambino, *Blood of My Blood: The Dilemma of the Italian-Americans* (Toronto; Buffalo: Guernica, 2000), 118.

<sup>2</sup> Linda Mercadante, "White Protestant Efforts to Convert Italian Immigrants: The Case of Constantine Panunzio," in *Strangers in This World, Multireligious Reflections on Immigration* (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2015), 143.

## State of the Fields

There are three overarching historiographies that proved vital to fully conceptualize the dissertation. There are as follows: the early American Cold War historiography, Italian 20<sup>th</sup> century historiography, and Italian-American historiography. However, for the sake of brevity, the understanding of the Italian-American historiography will be presented. This explanation also intends on demonstrating the states of the field, the scope of the field, and the modes of analysis on the Italian-American historiography.

The state of the field of Italian-American history can be best understood through the lens of social ideologies. Most of the historiography focuses on the social aspects of the ordinary immigrant that arrived in the United States while simultaneously analyzing the Americans' view on race, capitalism, and social structure. The historical trends of Italian-American history are in line with trends in other historical focuses such as emphasizing the prism of the 'whiteness scale'<sup>3</sup> and the narratives that express the amount of agency certain groups had actually possessed, such as women for example. The current state of the field neglects the transnational aspects of Italian immigrants that had actually existed. Instead, the current trend for historians is to put a great emphasis on a one direction flow of Italian ideas, cultures, and people to the United States. However, there were many Italians who had returned to Italy when they had acquired enough money to help support their family or to visit those who did not migrate. This is the

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<sup>3</sup> David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, Rev. ed, Haymarket Series (London ; New York: Verso, 2007), xxiv–xxv. The 'whiteness scale' refers to the social system that designates certain groups of people, often based on ethnic backgrounds, to being considered either white, black, or on the spectrum of said scale.

leading motivation to pursue a transnational approach. There is little to no exploration of the exchange of ideas, cultures, and people between Italy and the United States.

By expanding the scope of the field to include the beginnings of the Cold War era, it allows a greater understanding of the perceptions of Italian-Americans. Italian-Americans were also aware of how they were perceived by Americans and would take actions to try to integrate themselves and elevate their social, political, and economic positions in the American system. The actions and attitudes that Italian-Americans adopted over the course of their integration into the American populace change dramatically from possessing a sort of “labor militancy”<sup>4</sup> in the 1880's, to trying to oppose and prevent the ascension of the Italian Communists and Socialists from winning the Italian elections of 1948.

The relationship between Italian-Americans and Italians demonstrated a strong transnational history, especially during the Cold War. The materials used to make this argument will include Italian, American based newspapers. This material includes *The New York Times*, *L'Unità*, *L'Unità del Popolo*, and *La Stampa*. These sources help provide the contemporary understanding of major historical events such as the major campaigns of 1948. The general election of 1948 was a very important year not only for Italy but also for the United States. There was a fear amongst American politicians and political theorists that if Italy had become a Populist Government (a coalition government of both the Italian Socialists and Communist parties) that this would encourage other European nations to follow suit, in essence the ‘domino theory’. These newspapers may reveal how Italian-Americans were trying to understand and conceptualize the political

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<sup>4</sup> Joshua Britton, “Review of Guglielmo, Jennifer, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*” (H-SHGAPE, H-Review, May 2011), 2.

developments in Italy. Due to becoming increasingly distant from their relatives in Italy, Italian-Americans attempted to stay involved in political developments. Not only will this allow for an honest transnational history to develop but it may also reveal the intellectual and cultural relationship across the Atlantic Ocean.

### **Modes of Analysis**

Interpreting these sources will consist of different modes of analysis. One mode of analysis will consider the sources within the global historical context. Much of this mode is centralized around the discipline of intellectual history. Many issues that Italian migrants had undergone was not strictly a unique issue but was very much part of a global narrative and relatable to migrations that had occurred before and after the mass migration. The mindsets of the Italians migrants and American nativists will be broken down to illustrate the conflict that will develop between the two groups. The first worldview consisted of the social and cultural understandings of what it means to be a part of one of these two population segments. The American nativists had gone through a very similar experience with the arrival of the Irish migrants and the first large Catholic wave to the United States. The arrival of the Italians exacerbated the fears many Protestant American nativists had with the migrations of many more Catholics. There was a genuine fear amongst many American nativists that the arrival of Catholics to the United States will not only bring over migrants that are only loyal to the Vatican rather than the United States but that these 'hoards' were actually being directed by the Vatican in a conspiratorial attempt to overtake the United States. There is also the concept of race



and ‘whiteness’ that will be taken heavily into account.<sup>5</sup> Most of the migrants that had left from Southern Italy were also perceived within their own new nation as to not being ‘white’. After arriving to the United States, their race had been put into question yet again by American nativists and again was deemed as an inferior race. The American nativists also make distinguishing observations between the northern and southern Italians by defining the northerners as “Teutonic Italians”<sup>6</sup> as a means to demonstrate the superior notion of northern Italians over southern Italians. The term Teutonic was used in this manner to try and suggest that the northern Italians were actually of a ‘Germanic ilk’ which fell closer in line with the superiority of Anglo-Saxons over other European groups. Even as recently as 1969 from a Yale professor of government, “upon hearing that an Italian-American had announced his candidacy for the office of mayor of New York City, the professor commented, ‘If Italians aren’t actually an inferior race, they do the best imitation of one I’ve seen.’”<sup>7</sup> This affected the Italian migrant’s mentality and worldview in the United States and will take steps to not only try and distance themselves from the notion of inferiority but to also try and demonstrate why they were actually a member of the ‘white’ community. There were actually a lot of cultural and intellectual objections Italians had when arriving to the United States; however, there appears to be very little on the actual cultural practices brought over as a migrant. This dissertation will try to highlight these practices that were brought over to the United States and how they shaped initial impressions of the United States. Analyzing the cultural practices that were

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<sup>5</sup> Mercadante, “White Protestant Efforts to Convert Italian Immigrants,” 144.

<sup>6</sup> Gambino, *Blood of My Blood*, 119.

<sup>7</sup> Gambino, 108.

brought over from Italy and the societal pressures to change or mold them will prove to be fruitful for the field which as otherwise been silent on the issue.

Within the same mode of analysis over viewing this phenomenon within the global historical context, this dissertation will be analyzing the intellectual and political implications of perceptions and beliefs. The second worldview is very concerned with the perceptions of Italian political tendencies by American nativists and the actual importance of political ideas to Italian migrants. Political stereotypes of Italian migrants range a wide spectrum from being anarchist<sup>8</sup> and socialists during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to being labeled as totalitarian fascists in the 1920s-1940s. An emerging field within the Italian-American historiography includes the relationship of Italian immigrants with the CPUSA. The CPUSA “maintained a constant presence within the larger Italian American community, which was manifested by an Italian language newspaper, lodges of a fraternal organization, and units of various political and labor organizations.”<sup>9</sup> Since the perception of Italian political tendencies vary so greatly in such a small period suggests that these labels were usually suggested as a means to denigrate the Italian-American community. While there were truths behind socialist and unionist tendencies of Italian migrants, the descriptions by American nativist were usually intended to stir up anger and resentment towards the Italian migrants. Just as the political perceptions of Italian-Americans change through the decades, the political consciousness and identification by Italians themselves have also changed according to local and global trends.

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<sup>8</sup> Gerald Meyer, “Italian Anarchism in America: Its Accomplishments, Its Limitations” *Science & Society* Vol. 79, no.2 (April 2015), 182.

<sup>9</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro et al., eds., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, Italian and Italian American Studies (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003), 205.

The second mode of analysis will be primarily concerned with the change over time of the previously mentioned cultural, social, and political concepts. The objective of this mode is to illustrate the decisions that Italians made in the United States and how their choices were dictated not only by their own beliefs but also by to affect how they were perceived. This is abundantly clear in Jennifer Guglielmo's *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* where she explores the historical past of Southern Italy and labor movements and the impact and continuations that had occurred when arriving in the United States. Rather than discuss how Italians as a minority has suffered discrimination, instead she analyzes how Italian women were very active members of the political community that not only fought for labor rights but also against the stereotype of stay-at-home wives. These women could be described as possessing a sort of "labor militancy."<sup>10</sup> This militancy was driven by their opposition against "American imperialism, organized religion, and even traditional gender roles, all of which they linked to the processes of transnational capitalism."<sup>11</sup> These beliefs were passed down from mothers to daughters to continue the fights for *emancipazione* (emancipation). Their systematic opposition and drive to change what they deemed negative aspects of American life not only reveal the friction that was ever present amongst Italian migrants and the United States but also their belief that staying in the United States and fighting for such changes was a fight worth pursuing. However, there were efforts by local governments to "Americanize immigrants—to instill in them a sense of American culture and values—had been largely the domain of liberal

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<sup>10</sup> Joshua Britton, "Review of Guglielmo, Jennifer, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*" (H-SHGAPE, H-Review, May 2011), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Britton, 2.

intellectuals.”<sup>12</sup> Following the Great Depression, the New York authorities took actions against what they deemed as radical movements and in particular targeted places they considered to be ‘inferior whites.’ For them “to fully claim the privileges of whiteness, Guglielmo contends, Italian men and women had to pay ‘the price of the ticket’ which included accepting capitalism, patriarchal authority, and white racial supremacy.”<sup>13</sup> Purchasing this ticket had conflicted directly with much of the radical women’s principals of attempting to “end all systems of oppression and hierarchical authority.”<sup>14</sup> This decision to purchase such a ‘ticket’ illustrates how Italian-Americans were willing to give up certain principals to be accepted to a greater degree in the American community.

These changes of perception and self-perception will be analyzed up until the early Cold War with the objective to attempt to determine the strength in the residual effect of these ideas. How potent were stereotypes and perceptions of Italians from the American nativists’ perspective? It is possible that after having such a negative initial impression of Italian migrants and then the enduring of fighting a war against the Italian state that these perceptions have only worsened. It is also possible by the same measure that due longevity of Italian presence in the United States that the residual perceptions are actually much weaker than anticipated.

The final mode of analysis will be to use both of the previous modes of analyses to construct it within the framework of a transnational history. Especially within the context of migration, transnational history emphasizes the exchanging of ideas, peoples,

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Miller Topp, ed., “The Italian American Left against the Postwar Reaction,” in *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists* (University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 238.

<sup>13</sup> Britton, “Review of Guglielmo, Jennifer, *Living the Revolution*,” 2.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Gialanella, review of *Review of Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*, by Jennifer Guglielmo, *The History Teacher* 44, no. 3 (2011): 469.

and cultures between two nations. This approach attempts to highlight the fact that societies and ideas do not work in isolated regions of the world but actually have a degree of global interconnectedness. Using the transnational historical method, this dissertation will be able to analyze how the concept of race, the use of culture, and the implementation of political ideas are exchanged between Italy and the United States.

## **Chapters**

This dissertation will have five chapters with an introduction and a conclusion section. For the first two chapters, this dissertation focuses on Girolamo Valenti, a figure who has been both under-analyzed and neglected in the general Italian-American historiography. Valenti identified himself as a socialist and went through incredible lengths to combat support for fascism in the United States from the 1920s through to the ending of the Second World War. Valenti also had a personal correspondence with Pietro Nenni, the Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party. He was also involved in the relief efforts in Italy and was often in direct communication with many American politicians. Using Valenti as a case-study as the epitome of the transnational political relationship between Italian political parties and American political organizations.

In the second chapter, the focus will be on the Valenti's radio programs. As a technological medium for broadcasting his political beliefs and analyzing the development of news stories. Valenti's use of radio programs were not solely constrained to the borders of the United States but would eventually receive enough support to take his network to Italy. The blurring of borders for the projects of Valenti oversaw. The

transnational mission in which Valenti strove for aimed to combat the rise of totalitarianism in both the United States and in Italy.

In the third chapter, the development and goals of *L'Unità del Popolo* will be the primary focus. A newspaper centered in New York City. The dialogue that the newspaper actively participates in will a dialogue between the newspaper and political developments in Italy itself. The methods *L'Unità del Popolo* utilized to communicate to its audience and achieve their political goals prove to be an important case study of transnational dialogue and action. *L'Unità del Popolo*'s mention through the historiography of Italian-American labor-minded developments is used as a peripheral resource when its significance would eventually garner national attention.

For the fourth chapter, this dissertation will investigate the political implications of the PCI's direct dialogue with certain Americans and American organizations. There was a lack of correspondence between the PCI and entities in the United States prior to the conclusion of the Second World War. The establishment of dialogue highlights a trend of increasing the importance of globalizing relationships of a national political party.

For the final chapter, will consider the intellectual history and justifications of the politics and dialogue of the PCI and CPUSA. The strength of ideology, as a concept, of the PCI will be called into question. Analyzing and dissecting the intellectual and political reasonings for challenging certain modes of ideology will not only be interesting but also fruitful for the fields of Italian Cold War history and American Cold War history.

## Chapter 1

### Girolamo Valenti's Political Development

The political activism in the Italian-American community in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century was active throughout the political spectrum. This activism was grounded in both the realities of working and social conditions in the United States and mirroring the political movements in Italy. This activism was used to push for changes primarily in economic and political conditions in the United States and support and protest political trends occurring in Italy. Girolamo Valenti embodied the spirit of Italian-American activism.

Valenti focused on achieving several significant objectives. These objectives include cultivating the Italian migrant and Italian-American community into a politically and culturally conscience group, combating the rise of fascism in the United States (particularly amongst the Italian community), and promoting socialist policies. Philip Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer stated, “some Italian American socialists, including Girolamo Valenti, followed the lead of Europe-based Pietro Nenni and, reversing their earlier enmity for the Communists, supported the Popular Front. Valenti’s newspaper *La Stampa Libera* (transformed in 1939 into *La Parola*) became the organ of the ‘United Front of Italian Socialists and Communists of New York.’”<sup>15</sup> While it is accurate to claim the Valenti fought for socialist activism in Italy and the United States, it is also problematic to make the broad statement that Valenti was a staunch supporter of the Communists in Italy. To suggest that Valenti was a proponent of communist policies is

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<sup>15</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro et al., eds., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, Italian and Italian American Studies (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003), 22.

incorrect because he was outspoken against the Soviet Union, the PCI, and Communism as an ideology. However, the highlighting of *La Parola's* connection to Pietro Nenni's *Partito Socialista Italiano* is a clear example of how Valenti's work and organization are part of a greater transnational narrative. This exchanging of political ideas and methods crossing national borders between Italy and the United States helped form Valenti's newspaper. *La Parola* used as a tool to help spread his message to Italian-Americans and Americans as a whole the message of non-totalitarian socialism, democracy, and anti-fascism. This chapter will demonstrate and analyze the development of Valenti's activism while also contributing significantly to the historiography or lack thereof Valenti.

Before analyzing Valenti's political and social actions, it would only be appropriate to understand his early career and how Valenti perceives himself. While there are problems with an autobiographical view, it does present how Valenti views and values his early career. In a letter to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Valenti gave a biographical summary of himself on February 28, 1950. Valenti would start his professional career as a journalist at the "Technical School in Italy and managed and edited students' bulletins. In the United States I entered the newspaper field immediately upon my arrival from Italy in the city of Rochester, New York, where I edited an Italian-language weekly, 'La Domenica.'"<sup>16</sup> The description clearly illustrates how Valenti is genuinely a transnational character who exchanges ideas across two different nations and physically moves to the United States and will eventually return to Italy. This connection between Italy and the United States was vital to developing an intellectual, political, and cultural exchange between the two nations.

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<sup>16</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to the Labor Division, E.C.A.," February 28, 1950, Box 1 Folder 7, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.



During the First World War, Valenti would write and work for a series of newspapers for union organizations such as “*Il Minatore*” (The Miner) and “*La Parola*.” These organizations catered to the Italian migrant community in the United States. Valenti would eventually move on to “become the General Manager, then the editor of the labor and anti-Fascist daily, ‘*Il Nuovo Mondo*,’ and then ‘*La Stampa Libera*’ ... In 1938my resumed the editorship of the weekly, *La Parola*, which had become an independent labor newspaper, with a policy distinctly and outspokenly anti-Fascist and anti-totalitarian, red or black, and remained with it up to 1946 when I resigned to assume the present job of Director of the Italian-language Programs at Radio Station WNHC.”<sup>17</sup> This chapter will tackle the Radio Station WNHC later on; however, the segment on Valenti’s goals while acting as a general manager and editor is both clear and emphasized. The self-identification of being both anti-Fascist and anti-totalitarian is a defining aspect of Valenti’s view on the politics of the time and the goals he aimed to achieve. His notion of political identity is also the displays part of the problematic issue with framing Valenti as either supporting or platforming communists. He had identified as being outspoken of ‘red-totalitarianism,’ which Valenti had described as communism inspired by the Soviet Union.

The summary would describe what he had done in service for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union, and the Shoe Workers and Building Trade Unions. These positions are essential works in Valenti’s career history but are not as relevant to understanding the nature of his transnational contributions. His actions would take two forms, as stated by Valenti:

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<sup>17</sup> Valenti.

I was responsible for the removal from New York City Public Schools of an Italian-language textbook which contained fascist propaganda. I have in my possession front-page clippings from American newspapers reporting these deeds to my credit. I would like here also to mention my connection with the Office of Strategic Services during the last war. I was instrumental in organizing a large group of Italian-American volunteers who went behind the lines in Italy and performed secret invaluable services for our country and the allied cause, and Mr. Earl Brennan, a former U.S. General Consul of the Italian Division of General Donovan's office, would attest to the extent of my cooperation.<sup>18</sup>

This section from that same biographical summary of himself exemplifies how Valenti values certain moments in his career. Such as how he had assisted in organizing cells of Italian-Americans during the Second World War as military informants to fight the Italian fascist government and Nazi German occupying forces. Valenti mainly focused on policing and removing fascist propaganda in Italian textbooks shows how active he was in combating fascist thought from permeating the Italian-American community and education system. This dissertation will examine Valenti's role in tackling fascism more thoroughly as Valenti's central starting point and fuel for being active on a transnational scale.

### **Anti-Fascist Activism**

The period of fascist rule in Italy would be significant for future investigation and research about the transnational relationship between the single-state Italian political party, *Partito Nazionale Fascista*, or underground political parties in Italy with American political organizations. There is already some research involving this focus, and I will lightly touch on it here as an extra emphasis on Italian-American

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<sup>18</sup> Valenti.

activism in reaction to Italian fascist rule.<sup>19</sup> This portion will help build context for future activism by Girolamo Valenti and contribute to the historiography of transnational history between Italy and the United States.

The perception of fascism amongst the Italian-American community was pretty split between supporters of Benito Mussolini's government and opposed. One of the significant factors that would lead Italian-Americans to support a fascist government was often rooted in either nationalism or nostalgia for Italy. As described by Rudolph J. Vecoli, "rather than speak of the Americanization of the Little Italies during the inter-war years, it would be more accurate, then, to speak of their Fascistization. In 1940, refugee historian Gaetano Salvemini estimated that 5 percent of some five million Italian Americans were true Fascists. Another 35 percent philo-Fascist, and 10 percent anti-Fascists. The other 50 percent he characterized as apolitical concerned only with their immediate affairs."<sup>20</sup> The strength and support of fascism in the Italian-American communities were orchestrated by the business and professional elite and sought to use this movement to challenge prominent ideologies amongst immigrant workers. The 'true Fascists' were often seeking to mirror the social war that had occurred with the rise of Fascism in Italy, the degradation of worker rights and unions. Even outside of the Italian-American community, there was support by many different types of Americans. "The spectrum of American apologists for Fascism included the countless businessmen who waxed rhapsodic over *Il Duce* as the proper antidote to Bolshevism...the managerial

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<sup>19</sup> Samuel Huston Goodfellow, "Fascism as a Transnational Movement: The Case of Inter-War Alsace," *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 1 (2013): 87–106. Samuel Goodfellow investigates and analyzes the global transnational movement of fascism including the connections of Italian-Argentineans due to their high Italian immigration during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>20</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 55.

idealists who extolled Mussolini as the ideal industrial executive who ‘cuts through’ and gets things done...[and] the philosopher George Santayana who interpreted the Fascist principle of *gerarchia* as an expression of his own vision of a social hierarchy based on order, inequality, and aristocracy.”<sup>21</sup> There are, of course, many other interpretations of Mussolini’s fascist policies implemented in Italy. The spectrum is due to those seeking different approaches for what groups considered their most significant concerns and projected those ideas on Mussolini but also because fascism shaped and changed frequently due to lacking certain foundational principles on issues.

The rise of fascism in specific Italian-American communities would have varying degrees of success. The measurement of fascist growth was typically hinged on whether or not the union activity and culture within a given community were intense and widespread. An example occurred in Chicago where “it is impossible to give an accurate quantitative assessment of Fascist support among Detroit Italians, it is safe to assume that whatever pro-Fascist sentiment Ungarelli was able to muster among Italian-Americans was confined for the most part to segments of the older immigrant population and to a few elements of the more prosperous businessmen.”<sup>22</sup> The activism of Italian fascists sought to influence Italian-American churches (Catholic or Protestant). Areas with large Italian communities pressured some schools to sing Fascist songs or even “sponsored group vacations to Italy, where the children dressed in Fascist uniforms and

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<sup>21</sup> John P. Diggins, “Flirtation with Fascism: American Pragmatic Liberals and Mussolini’s Italy,” *The American Historical Review* 71, no. 2 (1966): 488.

<sup>22</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro, “Fascism and Italian-Americans in Detroit, 1933-1935,” *The International Migration Review* 9, no. 1 (1975): 33. Giacomo Ungarelli was an agent for Mussolini’s government and was a militant Fascist from the city of Ferrara.

live in Fascist Balilla camps.”<sup>23</sup> Valenti focused on combating the forces of fascism due to their pervasiveness.

The rise of anti-Fascism did not solely affect Valenti and the organizations he was prominent in developing. Still, many other organizations actively fought the integration of fascist ideas into segments of Italian-American society. “For America produced, thanks to the efforts of Italo-American labor leaders, radical partisans, and a few liberal intellectuals, one of the first anti-Fascist campaigns in the western world. American opposition originated in the Italo- American labor movement, a genre of trans-Atlantic radicalism that embraced the socialist, syndicalist, and anarchist traditions of Italy as well as the Marxist and reformist traditions of the American Left.”<sup>24</sup> This transnational activist movement was a reaction to the rise of fascist popularization in the Italian-American community. Valenti would utilize most of his energy from the ascension of Mussolini to the end of the Second World War to fighting the spread and normalization of fascist tendencies in both the public space and within Italian-American institutions. Valenti’s constant work in fighting the rise of fascism in the United States and Italy would not go unnoticed. Those who led “the core of the anti-Fascist resistance was composed of veterans of these [leftist] movements (Carlo Tresca, Arturo Giovannitti, Girolamo Valenti, Raimondo Fazio, and Frank Bellanca, among others), reinforced by the first wave of *fuorusciti*, refugees of Fascism.”<sup>25</sup> Valenti was a consistent and reliable voice in combating the successes fascism had in the United States. He would utilize three tools in his activism: the press, radio, and connections.

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<sup>23</sup> Cannistraro, 35.

<sup>24</sup> John P. Diggins, “The Italo-American Anti-Fascist Opposition,” *The Journal of American History* 54, no. 3 (1967): 579.

<sup>25</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 55.

Valenti was particularly active against and aggressive to one Italian-American Fascist instigator, Generoso Pope. Pope was “the wealthy publisher of the largest Italian-language newspaper in the country, *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*. During the 1920s, Pope purchased his competitors’ papers to own close to 70 percent of the Italian language newspapers in the New York metropolitan area.”<sup>26</sup> Jennifer Guglielmo goes on to state that “activists continued to use the radical press to voice their opinions, organize rallies, and fiercely contest the messages of the mainstream, broad-circulation newspapers owned by Generoso Pope and other wealthy fascists. They publicized and circulated stories from Italy about the devastating effects of fascism and connected repression against the Left in Italy with similar anti-democratic practices in the United States.”<sup>27</sup> This concerted effort by anti-fascist forces would culminate in a political alliance aimed at exposing the views of fascism of all its real negative impacts in Italy.

Valenti’s early career concentrated on that very effort. He would eventually write his experience in a piece called “Fascist Propaganda in the United States.” In this piece, he explains the historical rise of Fascism and Mussolini in Italy and the tactics fascists used in both Italy and the United States. In this typescript, Valenti would place a lot of emphasis on the Roman Catholic Church as an institution and would heavily criticize their involvement or lack thereof with combating fascism. After he had described the Vatican Mussolini Concordat in 1927 and the rise of Mussolini to becoming a dictator, he explains: “soon after, fascism was established in the United States. Black shirt squads were organized throughout this country. Generally, with their headquarters in the Italian

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<sup>26</sup> Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 2012), 216.

<sup>27</sup> Guglielmo, 224.

Roman Catholic Churches. The black shirt organizers in the United States became very aggressive. Their propaganda was, that ‘Mussolini made the trains run on time’ that fascism was the antidote to Communism or Bolshevism.”<sup>28</sup> The Catholic Churches harbored the apparatus of the fascist movement and the spreading of anti-communist rhetoric throughout Italian-American communities. Blackshirts in the United States would try to replicate the imagery and mannerisms of their Italian-native counterparts. There were instances when “Italians also paraded through their neighborhoods in military formations wearing black shirts and clashed violently with anti-fascists.”<sup>29</sup> These confrontations are very similar to the happenings in Italy where “the *squadristi* [black shirts] appeared crudely reactionary and were in effect tools in the hands of the local landowners or businessmen, who sponsored them. They were inspired by little more than a blind hatred of socialism and a love of violence.”<sup>30</sup> This energy is what Valenti is trying to tackle and curb; however, the fascist energy in the United States materialized in other forms. The Italian-American blackshirts would try to emulate the violence through racial actions, such as during “the Italian-Ethiopian War seemed to unfold in the New York City’s streets, in those spaces where Italian and African American communities overlapped. Profascist Italians embodied the role of colonizer in multiple ways, including hanging Emperor Haile Selassie in effigy during parades.”<sup>31</sup> This attempt to conjure the same sort of violence and aggression of the black shirts of Italy proved to be quite

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<sup>28</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Fascist Propaganda in the United States,” 1958, 1, Box 1 Folder 16, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>29</sup> Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 217.

<sup>30</sup> Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy*, Second edition, Cambridge Concise Histories (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 202.

<sup>31</sup> Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 217.

successful, enough so that it became a key reason for many competing political groups to join in fighting Italian-American fascism.<sup>32</sup>

Valenti would lay out the main accusations and claims that fascists would make within the United States to earn support from the Italian-American community. This list states that “The American Anti-Fascists also resented the Fascist false and malicious propaganda that they – 1. Were communists or pro-Communists, 2. That anyone who was against Mussolini and fascism was anti-Italian, and 3. Fascism and that Catholic Church were one and therefore, anyone who was anti-fascist was anti-Italian and anti-Catholic (compare the late McCarthyism to this).”<sup>33</sup> Valenti’s list was crucial during his days of activism in educating the Italian-American community on the goals and techniques fascists would utilize. It would be these actions that fascists undertook that drove his activism.

Valenti documented cases and examples in which Fascist propaganda was successful in the United States.

Amongst many who fell for this Fascist propaganda were many so called Americans. They were invited by Mussolini to come to Italy at the expense of the Italian taxpayers, were shown that the trains in Italy ran on time. Then they were banqueted, wined and dined, and on returning gave great interviews to the press, wherein they stated how great Mussolini was, for did he not make the trains run on time?<sup>34</sup>

Public support for American tourism and media helped elevate the legitimacy of Mussolini’s government for American citizens. The level of complicity by Americans

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<sup>32</sup> These competing political groups include but are not limited to: democratic socialists, social democrats, communists, anarchists, liberals, protestants, and some Catholic organizations.

<sup>33</sup> Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Fascist Propaganda in the United States,” 2.

<sup>34</sup> Valenti, 3.



who were supporting the fascist regime provided an extra level of acceptability amongst Italian-American fascists. Valenti would act decisively to curb this momentum to the best of his ability. He had reacted when “the Italian Black Shirt Legion, which on one occasion mobilized ten thousand supporters at its Camp *Dux*, in New Jersey. In 1937, Blackshirts and uniformed Bundists held a joint rally at Camp *Nordland* in the same state...The following year, the House Committee on Un-American Activities included the Blackshirts as one of its major targets in a general investigation of totalitarian organizations, and highly critical testimony from anti-fascist militant Girolamo Valenti.”<sup>35</sup> Valenti would work closely with the House Committee on Un-American Activities to surveil Italian-Americans who supported Mussolini’s fascist regime. This pro-active approach would allow the United States to intern suspected fascist sympathizers once the Second World War broke out on Elise Island.

Valenti articulates early transnational relationships with those in Italy and solidarity in his typescript on Fascist propaganda. Valenti would give credit to “the men to react to this Fascist propaganda were the labor union heads, such as Luigi Antonini, Augusto Bellanca, Carlo Tresca, Giuseppe Lupis, Gerolamo Valente, Dr. Siragusa, Supreme Court Justice Salvatore Cotillo and many more. This group was joined by leaders of the Protestant Church and Masonry.”<sup>36</sup> This organization of anti-fascists and labor organizers in solidarity allowed anti-fascism to both be visible and effective. During this period, it would be challenging to contact socialists or activists in Italy during Mussolini’s rule due to Italy’s domestic policy. However, this does not mean that there

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<sup>35</sup> Philip Jenkins, “‘It Can’t Happen Here’: Fascism and Right-Wing Extremism in Pennsylvania, 1933-1942,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 62, no. 1 (1995): 43.

<sup>36</sup> Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Fascist Propaganda in the United States,” 2.

have not been attempts. According to the research conducted by Gary Marks and Matthew Burbankin *Immigrant Support for the American Socialist Party, 1912 and 1920*. While their work predates the study's timeframe in this dissertation, it does help shed light on general trends and interpretations on the appeal for the Socialist Party and socialist organizations by immigrant communities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among other European immigrant populations, Italians notably had a record of supporting union associations and leaning towards voting in favor of the American Socialist Party.<sup>37</sup> The individual previously mentioned by Girolamo Valenti, Carlo Tresca, is a notable figure who embodies the significance of Italian anti-fascist activism that existed in the United States and noted several times in Valenti's notes. Tresca was an ally to Valenti in anti-fascist activism until his death in 1943, assassinated on New York City's Fifth Avenue.<sup>38</sup> Through labor unions, these modes of political expression for Italian immigrant communities were essential vehicles for resisting Fascist propaganda in the United States.

Valenti would act on trying to prevent the honorary-enforcing behavior of many Americans that granting to Benito Mussolini. Philip V. Cannistraro analyzed the strength of fascism in the United States. Among the Americans who supported fascism, "some, of course, were mainly opportunists who rode the wave of popular enthusiasm, while others sought the honors and prestige that Mussolini and the Italian government bestowed so lavishly upon American supporters of the regime."<sup>39</sup> Italian-American communities and American politicians positively viewed Mussolini's outreach. Valenti tackles this issue in

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<sup>37</sup> Gary Marks and Matthew Burbank, "Immigrant Support for the American Socialist Party, 1912 and 1920," *Social Science History* 14, no. 2 (1990): 193.

<sup>38</sup> Claudio Pavone, *A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance* (London: Verso, 2014), xvi.

<sup>39</sup> Gaetano Salvemini and Philip Vincent Cannistraro, *Italian Fascist Activities in the United States: Ed. with Introd. by Philip V. Cannistraro* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1977), xxix.

his analysis of Fascists propaganda in the United States. Valenti references when “Harper’s Magazine came out with a well-documented fulminating article entitled ‘MUSSOLINI’S EMPIRE IN THE UNITED STATES’ which in a masterly way exposed the nefarious activities of the Fascist League of North America. Immediately there was a tremendous repercussion against Fascism in the United States and Senator Borah, that great American liberal, from the floor of the senate, demanded the government to investigate the Fascist League of North America. Within 24 hours, orders came from Mussolini to dissolve the Fascist League. Thus, the Anti-American, Anti-Democratic organization came to an end.”<sup>40</sup> His documentation of this publication and the aftermath of Italian Fascist penetration into American society was quite an impactful moment. Even when Valenti sarcastically referenced Senator Borah as a “great American liberal,” the political actions to investigate this organization had quite the impact. They impacted how Valenti saw the strength of political activities.

The Harper’s Magazine article by Marcus Duffield had investigated an organization that sought to influence millions of Italian-Americans who lived in the United States. The Fascist League of North America was under the directive of the Italian Fascist party. A powerful instance of transnational history transpiring. There was an exchange of people between Italian and the United States through this organization exchanging ideas and policies. Harper’s Magazine had found that organizations implemented laws to target Italian-Americans. The findings displayed, “My order,’ Mussolini commanded, ‘is that an Italian citizen must remain an Italian citizen, no matter what land he lives, even to the seventh generation.’ Setting out to carry out the decree, he

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<sup>40</sup> Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Fascist Propaganda in the United States,” 5.

established a Bureau of Fascism Abroad and formulated its rules. Fascist organizations in foreign lands, said Article 1, were ‘unions of Italians residing abroad who have adopted for their private and civic life obedience to Il Duce and to the laws of Fascism and who intend to collect around the Lictoral Emblem colonies of Italians who are living in strange countries.’<sup>41</sup> Italy’s policy in the United States was not a passive role but actively sought to shape and control a population across the Atlantic Ocean. Bureau of Fascism Abroad visited these organizations, Piero Parini. *Harper’s Magazine* found instances of Italians being brought back to Italy to serve in the armed forces on behalf of the Fascist state.

The main objective “of the League is to prevent the Americanization of Italians in this country; to keep them Italianized and loyal to Mussolini. This is so they will continue to send money remittances to their relatives in Italy... and so they will be ready to answer the next call to arms.”<sup>42</sup> The backlash by the public and the United States government sought to curb the international effort by the Italian Fascist government attempting to dictate the lives of Italian-Americans. An accusation against the organization of “hindering the naturalization of Italo-Americans and of interfering in the lives and rights of Americans citizens of Italian descent. Public concern provoked rumblings on Capitol Hill. Senatorial requests were made that Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson investigate the Fascist League and testify before the Committee on Foreign relations.”<sup>43</sup> This spotlighting not only led to reactions from those who had the political will but also

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<sup>41</sup> Duffield Marcus, “Mussolini’s American Empire,” *Harper’s Monthly Magazine* (New York, N.Y., United States: Harper, November 1, 1929), 662.

<sup>42</sup> Marcus, 664.

<sup>43</sup> Alan Cassels, “Fascism for Export: Italy and the United States in the Twenties,” *The American Historical Review* 69, no. 3 (1964): 711.

spurred Valenti to combat the fascists in the United States, particularly those loyal to Mussolini. Valenti continued by declaring that:

We cannot forgive the leaders of the Fascist League of North America, some of whom were American citizens and who had taken an oath of loyalty to Mussolini, 'TO SHED EVEN THEIR LAST DROP OF BLOOD FOR THE DUCE.' It was on account of this oath taken by so called United States citizens, that the then Congressman, Fiorello H. LaGuardia and the writer had a long interview with President Coolidge. Our interview and purpose was to take away the citizenship from those disloyal Americans who had taken an oath of allegiance to Mussolini and his Fascist government.<sup>44</sup>

This political activism would continue even past the Second World War. Valenti would remain supportive in the effort by the United States government seeking out leaders of fascism in the United States and placing them in concentration camps on Ellis Island. The other portions of his article on Fascist Propaganda in the United States would focus on the Roman Catholic Church's problematic ties with the Italian Fascist Party and the fascistic elements that he deemed intrinsic in the Church.<sup>45</sup>

As the United States had become more involved in the Second World War and eventually entering it, Valenti became more engaged by working within the Office of Strategic Services as a consultant and as the Chairman of the Italian Anti-Fascist Committee.<sup>46</sup> Even during these times of extreme political activity, Valenti would still proactively contact a member of congress to elicit a reply or action based on positions with the Italian fascist state. These letters to the congress were in reaction to Generoso Pope's Italian language publications. Pope, considered "a prominent New York City-based contractor, a powerful ethnic power broker among Italian Americans on behalf of

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<sup>44</sup> Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Fascist Propaganda in the United States," 5–6.

<sup>45</sup> Valenti, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to the Labor Division, E.C.A.," 1.

the Democratic party, and the publisher of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, the most influential Italian-language daily in the United States, Pope had been a staunch supporter of Mussolini since the mid-1920s, but he became a spokesperson for ethnic tolerance and urged his fellow ethnics to get along with the Jews as soon as Fascist anti-Semitism was enacted.”<sup>47</sup> The hostility between Generoso Pope and Valenti would be a long-lasting feud for decades. Generoso Pope’s support for Mussolini’s rule in Italy would cause Valenti to try and combat his publications’ rhetoric that would mirror that very support.

One of Valenti’s dialogues would be with the Democratic representative from New York, Hon. Sol Bloom. His contention with representative Bloom stems from an interview with Pope’s newspapers. Valenti mentions in a letter on October 1, 1940, “you stated, according to these two fascist newspapers, that when you met Mussolini in Milan in 1919, in the small office of his newspaper, you were very deeply impressed by him. You added, that he told you that in Italy there was something radically wrong, and that it was necessary to remedy it. Also, that he was aiming at the national reconstruction of Italy, which in those days, seemed a dream and a Herculean task.”<sup>48</sup> While Bloom was not the first or only American politician to praise the rise of Mussolini in Italy, he was a representative of Valenti, especially during his time as Chairman of the Italian Anti-Fascist Committee.<sup>49</sup> In the same interview, Valenti would maintain his criticism of representative Bloom due to him repeating tropes of *La Vittoria Mutilata*. This effective

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<sup>47</sup> Stefano Luconi, “‘The Venom of Racial Intolerance’: Italian Americans and Jews in the United States in the Aftermath of Fascist Racial Laws,” *Revue Française d’études Américaines*, no. 107 (2006): 108.

<sup>48</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Hon. Saul (Sol) Bloom,” October 1, 1940, 1, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>49</sup> The Italian Anti-Fascist Committee was a collection of different union organizations including the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and International Ladies’ Garment Workers. Valenti would be in contact with the Vice President of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers

propaganda tool helped the Italian Fascist Party rise to power. Valenti continues his admonishment because:

Knowing full well how the fascist sheets can lie and falsify statements, we doubt that you have thought and said all these things, for, only rabid fascists agent propagandists who do not know the history of Italy and its noble traditions, can resort to such belittling of the spirit and intellectual quality of the Italian people. Only the fascists depending on the Ministry of Propaganda in Rome, would dare say that the Italian people have lost their self-respect and their ability to govern themselves, and had to wait for a savior like Mussolini to rescue them. Only these fascists will tell you that in the loss of their liberties and their representative government, and in the wake of their economic slavery, abjection, terror, and such other blessing of fascism have they found their salvation.<sup>50</sup>

Valenti's fight against fascism and his familiarity with their tactics allowed him to be scrutinious with possible malintent of politicians, organizations, or publishers. He wanted to preserve the liberal democracy that had existed before the rise of Mussolini and reestablish that form of government in post-war Italy. Valenti concluded his letter to connect with the congressman based on shared qualities stating that his constituents know him. Valenti says, "as a supporter of New Deal policies, which are fundamentally anti-fascist, and they know you as an American, descendent of the great race, the Jewish race, which Mussolini has branded as unfit to co-exist with the Arian, and which he has ostracized."<sup>51</sup> The appeal was to connect on an ethnic level, drawing in the similarities of the American experience of immigrants of Italian and Jewish descent. Valenti also highlighted the contradictions of supporting Mussolini's state even after the *Leggi Razziali*, which implemented laws that would directly persecute Italians of Jewish descent.

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<sup>50</sup> Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Hon. Saul (Sol) Bloom," 1.

<sup>51</sup> Valenti, 2.

Valenti's proactive behavior would even garner a response from Congressman Sol Bloom within two days. On October 3, 1940, Bloom responded, "I have your letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> and in reply wish to advise that I certainly was misquoted in the Italian papers. I never did say that I approved of Mussolini's actions or what Mussolini is doing. In fact, just the contrary; I disapprove very much of what Mussolini is doing." Bloom would clarify that even days before Valenti reached out that he had contacted *Il Progresso Italo Americano* to either retract or adjust how he was unfairly depicted. In dialogue and clarification, this transnational moment between Valenti and Bloom is one of many examples of how the impact of Italian politics would directly shape how constituents and politicians shape their relationships with one another. The delicate balance of maintaining connections with instrumental media organs, such as the reach of *Il Progresso* and their ability to influence large swaths of the Italian-American community, and maintaining positions on the state of Fascist Italy that are consistent with their principles but also the principles of their voter base. Valenti continued to challenge other congress members who have passively or directly supported Mussolini's policies and positions of Mussolini's government. To reiterate Valenti's concern with Pope's media enterprise and its support for the fascist government in Italy, would question and be critical of individuals who have done interviews for *Il Progresso*, such as Samuel Dickstein.<sup>52</sup> Valenti's approach to politics and pressure created the foundation of his approach to engaging with issues that were deemed anti-democratic. To combat totalitarianism, Valenti continued to address those in power and influence.

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<sup>52</sup> Samuel Dickstein, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from Samuel Dickstein," May 18, 1942, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. Samuel Dickstein was instrumental in the establishment of the anti-fascist committee called the House Committee of Un-American Activity.



## Labor and Government Organizations

Valenti's defense of democratic principles steered him to become increasingly involved with labor bodies and the government. The type of relationships he cultivated throughout his life intended to achieve political goals in the United States and Italy. This dual-objective highlights how transnational this experience was for Valenti. The hard-lined borders of Italy and the United States blur when establishing the exchanging of ideas and actions between these two countries. These exchanges became heightened during the official declaration of war between the two countries and the post-war era. This section aims to analyze how and why Valenti engaged with these organizations and his achievements.

Valenti's contact with the government included contacting newly created agencies during wartime, such as the Office of War Information. After Franklin D. Roosevelt chose Elmer Davis to be the Director of the Office of War Information on June 13, 1942, Valenti sent a letter to congratulate his appointment and why he was looking forward to his leadership. In the letter, on behalf of the newspaper Valenti worked for, *La Parola* wrote, "allow us to congratulate you upon your recent appointment to that all-important post of Director of the Office of War Information. As an Italian-American weekly of national circulation, which has been for years engaged in fighting fascism and dictatorship of all forms, both abroad and within the United States, we rejoice at your appointment, as we have always looked upon you as a great champion of the cause of

democracy.”<sup>53</sup> How Valenti identifies himself is as consistent as his previous writings and correspondences. He strongly connected himself to both his Italian and American roots but placed his political beliefs at the forefront. His contact with Elmer Davis would establish a contact relationship that would persist through the war period. Valenti finished his congratulatory letter with, “indeed, on the radio as well as in the newspaper field, your contribution to the fight to prevent the advance of totalitarian forces has been priceless, and we are certain that in your new post you will lend a still greater service to our country and to all humanity struggling to free itself from the clutches of barbarism.”<sup>54</sup> The letter demonstrates his continued self-identification but also his political objective. As an ally close to the President of the United States, Elmer Davis would prove invaluable to Valenti's goals, achieving the military and political purpose of liberating Italy from fascist rule. The letter reveals recognizing the power of radio and newspaper circulation as essential and powerful political tools. The chapter will explore the importance of these media platforms in this chapter and the next.

Both Italian-Americans and governmental organizations' involvement and proactive behavior saw increased activism during the Second World War. The situation of the Second World War presented Italian-Americans with a unique opportunity, the ability to identify with anti-fascism as part of their core identity, allowing for the emergence of American patriotism “without being pro-Communist and anti-Italian.”<sup>55</sup> For some Italian-Americans, this was considered a crucial moment to become more widely accepted in American society. The reshaping of the identity of Italian-Americans

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<sup>53</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Elmer Davis,” June 20, 1942, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>54</sup> Valenti.

<sup>55</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 153.

within American culture was pivotal once Italy and the United States were at war with one another. No longer could Italians or even some Americans actively or passively support Mussolini's regime, but rather Italian-Americans sought to denounce the Fascist government publicly. The rebuke is even quite notable for "Generoso Pope, the publisher of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, despite the fact that he remained clearly pro-Fascist until December 11, 1941."<sup>56</sup> America's entrance into the war eliminated most of the oxygen the Italian fascist movement may have had within the United States.

There are notable figures that Italian-Americans used as symbols of anti-fascism, ranging from Giuseppe Mazzini, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Giacomo Matteotti, and Benedetto Croce. Matteotti being the most politically direct figure of anti-fascism both within Italy and amongst Italian-Americans. These figures were critical instruments in voicing dissent against fascist ideology. The organization of the Mazzini Society would be a leading proponent of organizing against fascism in the United States and Italy. This dissertation will investigate how Girolamo Valenti was an important figure of the Mazzini society and how he used some of the previously mentioned anti-fascist symbolic people to garner attention from more politically powerful institutions.

On June 13, 1943, Valenti organized a gathering of Italian-Americans to the Irving Plaza Hall to honor the final stalwart figure of fascism's ascendancy in Italy, Giacomo Matteotti. The congregation was organized around the date that Mussolini and Italian fascists had planned and executed the assassination of Matteotti, the loudest critic of the Fascist Party. In his death, Valenti would continue to carry the projection of his criticisms and rallied a large group of people to continue a sense of solidarity against

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<sup>56</sup> Cannistraro et al., 152.

Mussolini's government. The moment is like many that Valenti had organized in the past. This gathering drew the ire of the Department of State by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs. Valenti had proposed a resolution at the rally, which was submitted to the Department of State.<sup>57</sup>

John Hickerson, the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs, sent a letter detailing Valenti's resolution that addressed President Franklin D. Roosevelt's words during a press conference. Hickerson states, "at that time the President said, in part, that the present effect of the British-American campaign against Italy was a perfectly logical and inevitable result of the ruthless course which had been pursued during the last few years by Mussolini who, in forming a military alliance with Germany, had betrayed his own country, Italy, in a struggle for personal power and aggrandizement."<sup>58</sup> It would seem that Hickerson is clarifying a point in which Valenti had initially inquired or contested based on the press conference. It is plausible that one of the issues that Valenti and the gatherers had issued in their resolution was to clarify to the President of the United States that Italians were not defined by the present government and their fascists' policies. This point is later acknowledged in the letter to Valenti clearly stating that "The President recognized that these acts were not the acts of the Italian people, that the succession of irresponsible acts were committed by Mussolini's personal Fascist regime, in the name of Italy but not actually representing the Italian people who on the whole are a people devoted to peace."<sup>59</sup> Hickerson's restating

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<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately, the resolution could not be found at the Tamiment Library. However, based on Girolamo Valenti's previous writing and the context of the response by the Department of State, inferences will be made.

<sup>58</sup> John Hickerson, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from John Hickerson," June 30, 1943, 1, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>59</sup> Hickerson, 1.

of the President's press conference and how President Franklin D. Roosevelt had defined Italy, Italians, and Mussolini corroborates with the actual press conference. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is quite careful when describing Italy and Italians the forces the United States will be targeting during the war effort. For example, when describing the conflict, President Franklin D. Roosevelt states that "we have no choice but to prosecute the war against the government of Mussolini and the armed forces of Mussolini until we have complete victory."<sup>60</sup> This targeting of Mussolini's forces and not calling it the Italian military forces is done with purpose, to distinguish to his listeners that it is the Italian Fascist State that the United States is in contention with, not the Italian people. This intellectual point of separating particular identities of nationality was pivotal in understanding the mindset of Valenti, the separation of the national identity with the government, the shaping of identity both in the United States and Italy and the difference between politics and culture and people.

The correspondence between Hickerson and Valenti is summed up perfectly in expressing the position of the United States towards Italy and those who identify as Italian. Hickerson clarifies with:

All of the United Nations were agreed (the President said he thought he could speak for all of them) that when the German domination of Italy was ended and the Fascist regime expelled the Italian people would be assured of their freedom to choose the kind of non-Fascist, non-Nazi government that they might wish to establish. The United Nations, the President continued, certainly have, he thought, the intention and hope that Italy will be restored to real nationhood and take her place as a respected member of the European family of nations. Only when the Germans were driven out of Italy and Fascism abolished would the ultimate good judgment of the Italian people themselves become evident, the President concluded.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "Press Conference #902, Executive Office of the President," June 11, 1943, 2-3, <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/franklin/?p=collections/findingaid&id=508>.

<sup>61</sup> Hickerson, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from John Hickerson," 2.

This statement clarifies that the United States and the United Nations, according to the President, view Italy as a hijacked nation, one captured by the Nazi regime and misdirected by the Italian Fascist regime. This letter to Valenti gave positive recognition to the rally in memory of Giacomo Matteotti and the overall changing dynamic of Italian-Americans' view on Fascist Italy following the outbreak of the Second World War. It provided a crucial moment that will elevate Valenti's role in the American government and anti-fascist organizations.

Valenti would become deeply involved with one governmental organization such as The President's War Relief Control Board, a committee designed to reestablish countries deeply affected by combat after the Second World War, Italy being one of those states. The Executive Director of the War Relief Control Board was James Brunot. This organization sought to encourage voluntary activism and contribution from communities to help rebuild the connection with states deeply impacted by the Second World War. Originally, war relief funds by private operations were permitted if funds being solicited were not distributed to belligerent nations after 1939. This structure of private war relief funds would become shaped through the process of regulation, "on July 25, 1942, acting upon the report of the committee, the President, by Executive Order, established the President's War Relief Control Board to serve until six months after the close of the war. The Order transferred the functions and authority of the State Department over foreign war relief agencies to the Board. It extended the Board's jurisdiction to cover war relief activities on behalf of non-belligerent as well as belligerent nations."<sup>62</sup> Under the

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<sup>62</sup> James Brunot, "Wartime Regulation of Voluntary Foreign Relief," *The Compass* 26, no. 3 (1945): 13.

guidance of the State Department, this allowed the ability to control the movement of funds and have the ability to use the money raised after the war to positively affect the state of war-torn countries, even those allied themselves with the Axis powers. This transformation of war relief would permit Valenti to enter a political sphere where he could work towards his objective concerning Italy.

The outreach by Valenti caught the attention of Brunot during the organization of the War Relief Control Board. The two would maintain a line of dialogue which would ultimately see Valenti taking an active role in some of the decision-making processes. In a letter from Brunot, he notes that “word has come to us that you have been helping to organize the sub-committees of the Board of Trustees for American Relief to Italy, whose appointment was announced in the enclosed press release.”<sup>63</sup> Valenti was reached out to in advance as one of the notable leaders of the Italian-American community. His newspaper *La Parola* and his activism both in leading demonstrations and proactively contacting governmental agencies considered Valenti a valuable ally to the State Department. The demonstration of the state goal of the program was in the advance press release mentioned by Brunot.

Mr. Davis indicated that The President’s War Relief Control Board hopes that the appointment of the temporary trustees will lead to the formation of a national organization for American relief in Italy which will be entirely non-partisan in character and will command the support of all Americans whatever their views on political questions in Italy, or their position on issues among Americans of Italian extraction in the United States.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> James Brunot, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from James Brunot,” February 19, 1944, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Advance Release of February 18, 1944 for Friday Morning Papers,” February 18, 1944, 1, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

The effects of the War Relief Control Board and their intended effect created an outcome that would ultimately shape and be shaped by the changing American objectives related to Italy. On a matter that will be addressed later in this dissertation, the policies of Italy and the United States related to the Marshall Plan and immigration had roots in the war relief effort.<sup>65</sup>

The American Relief to Italy (ARI) “functioned from 1944 to 1946 as an umbrella organization that collected, shipped, and distributed in Italy over ten million dollars worth of relief materials donated by Italian American organizations and individuals from all over the country.”<sup>66</sup> This effort had two different effects. It consolidated the efforts of anti-fascist Italian-Americans throughout the United States with a single unified goal of aiding Italy. It also shifted the politics of many Italian-American organizations to shift from a positive view of Mussolini to a negative one. In the efforts of the ARI, “Fraternal organizations, cultural clubs, labor unions, Catholic charities, and other Italian American groups all responded to calls for aid. In 1946 alone, hundreds of thousands of Italian Americans participated in an ARI donation drive spearheaded by the largest Italian language newspaper in the U.S., *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*.”<sup>67</sup> Generoso Pope and his newspaper even shifted their stance towards Italy that not only distanced themselves dramatically from their previous support of Mussolini and the Fascist State but attempted

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<sup>65</sup> Danielle Battisti, “The American Committee on Italian Migration, Anti-Communism, and Immigration Reform,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31, no. 2 (2012): 16. Battisti notes that in the 1950s “although the majority of Italian Americans supported Marshall Plan aid and other American reconstruction initiatives in Italy, many Italian Americans who had been active in war relief and reconstruction initiatives began to argue that increasing Italian immigration would be a relatively inexpensive and strategic way the United States could combat Communism in Italy and promote economic and political stabilization in the country.” The efforts of the War Relief Control Board would have present aftereffects that would shape opinion and objectives related to Italy.

<sup>66</sup> Danielle Battisti, “The American Committee on Italian Migration, Anti-Communism, and Immigration Reform,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31, no. 2 (2012): 14.

<sup>67</sup> Battisti, 14.



to ignore the past positions they possessed. However, Pope's contribution to ARI would not forgive him from the perspective of Valenti. This organization led to the most significant voluntary relief drive from the Italian-American community to aid in the reconstruction of Italy.

Valenti's involvement in the ARI and the Italian-American community presented itself as a fundamentally transnational mission. This mission saw the mobilization of the Italian-American population actively participate in one of the most significant grassroots movements in the United States. The ARI, as an organization, rose above the national boundaries and was less constrained with the borders of countries but instead emphasized the fluidity of American and Italian connectedness. From a broader perspective, the War Relief Control Board blurred the boundaries between countries worldwide, all with a similar experience to the ARI. The internationalization of programs would provide a foundation for future efforts in a similar vein, such as the Marshall Plan or Truman Doctrine. Although these programs are government programs rather than grassroots-oriented, the framework still exists.

Upon returning from a tour of the mid-Western United States, Valenti was eager and excited to join the ARI and the efforts to aid Italy during the late and post-war periods. He responds to Brunot, "As I have been actively engaged in urging individual friends of our publication and Italian-American organizations in various cities to take part in the relief work that I was hoping would soon be started. I will make it my duty to communicate with them and advise them to wait for the plan to be announced by the Board of Trustees for American Relief to Italy as to how they should organize and

function.”<sup>68</sup> The engagement with the ARI as an opportunity to building the groundwork for this transnational moment allowed Valenti to continue to solidify his relationships with people and organizations around the United States. Following this exchange, Valenti would contact the Mazzini Society, *Critica Sociale*, Italian Dress & Waist Makers’ Union, American Federation of Labor, *Comitato Nazionale*, the District Court of Providence, and many others. This net that Valenti cast upon the Italian-American community was both far-reaching, contacting all sorts of people and organizations to encourage enthusiasm for the ARI.

### ***Partito Socialista Italiano***

One such figure Valenti connected with during the war was Pietro Nenni, the leader of the *Partito Socialista Italiano* (Italian Socialist Party). The dialogue between the PSI and Valenti is a clear and robust example of an Italian political party communicating with political organizations in the United States. Depending on the lens one wishes to observe, the focus is on the organization of ARI, *La Parola*, Valenti’s activism, or labor groups.

Nenni would remain in contact with Valenti even before the liberation of Rome from Nazi occupation. Nenni reached out to Valenti in a letter stating, “I send you and your comrades a cordial greeting, (dropping some of our legitimate resentments, for imprudent and unjust words spoken to N.Y. while we risked our lives here and he had not forced) I hope that the Avanti (newspaper) will arrive again with this message. Our success is

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<sup>68</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to James Brunot,” February 29, 1944, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

enormous, exceeding all hopes for what has been paid at a heavy price within the past twenty years, between the assassination of Matteotti and of Buozzi. Support us because we have tremendous tasks to do and everything needs to be rebuilt.”<sup>69</sup> Nenni invokes the symbolic figures of Matteotti and Buozzi to foster anti-fascist sentiment and the need to rebuild Italy from the war-torn and undemocratic society that had existed. The relationship between Valenti and Nenni would grow significantly during this time, especially in the degree of communication. Part of the reason for this positive rapport was because Valenti “followed the lead of Europe-based Pietro Nenni”<sup>70</sup> considered his newspaper, *La Parola*, a related publication to the *Partito Socialista Italiano*. Nenni’s outreach to Valenti also exemplifies the possible outreach of other Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale members during the closing of the Second World War to organizations in the United States. This historical question deserves a greater degree of investigation.

A couple of months had gone by before Valenti responded to Nenni’s letter. In a response, Valenti conveyed several points that he hoped would be received as both encouraging and as a form of constructive criticism. Valenti congratulated the reconstitution of the PSI and celebrated the advances the anti-fascist CLN coalition has made through the war effort. To propagate these developments, Valenti states, “I have already published them in our weekly magazine; and we have also published the message of Matteo Matteotti addressed to the American youth, a message that particular government agencies have spread through the press and the radio, arousing a very lively

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<sup>69</sup> Pietro Nenni, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from Pietro Nenni,” June 29, 1944, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>70</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 22–23.

interest among our Italian-American masses.”<sup>71</sup> Valenti was actively trying to spread developments and news of the progress of the Italian theater and the PSI. The shared goals of both the PSI and Valenti in rallying support in the United States to continue to support the efforts in Italy demonstrates the transnational relationship between the two parties.

Valenti aired his concerns with Nenni and the changing political dynamics in Italy. His issues were primarily with the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI) and the *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) and how the PSI would situate itself in the post-war era. Valenti writes:

From here (the United States), we have neither the right nor the moral authority to give you comrades of Italy, or advice on the direction of the party. As passionate observers of the situation and as comrades who love the Old, glorious P.S.I. we believe we can humbly express our apprehensions for certain aspects of the politics that follow the comrades who direct its fate. We, for example, think that in the current historical circumstances the P.S.I. will be able to assert itself and become a dominant force if it knows how to make a clear and distinct position from the other parties. From here we see, and we may be wrong, that the major parties in Italy are tied to the interests of foreign powers. We see that England has its sympathies in the bourgeois party that is the Christian Democratic party and depends on the ecclesiastical authorities and on the Vatican, which is also a foreign power to Italy; and the Communist Party depends on Russia, and we think that history has assigned the role of the party of Italy and its people to the old traditional party of the working class. And therefore, we express the hope that the P.S.I. can and known how to preserve its own autonomy and that in homage from the memory of its great and disappeared exponents such as Turanti, Treves, Prampolini, Matteotti, Buoizzi, etc., and in homage to fellow refugees scattered in France, Switzerland, and other points of the world, and in homage to its many old militants of the regions not yet liberated.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Pietro Nenni,” August 14, 1944, 1, Box 1 Folder 6, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>72</sup> Valenti, 1–2.

The level of admiration displayed by Valenti in this letter is important for several reasons and highlights a perspective held by a portion of the politically aware Italian-American community. The message Valenti conveyed his concern for the independence of the PSI from foreign presence. Valenti addressed the importance of the PSI gains during the war effort in conjunction with the CLN. The critique by Valenti of the PSI is one of the most critical aspects of this letter.

Valenti believed that Nenni and the PSI were responsible for maintaining its independence and autonomy, especially when compared to the other potential major Italian political parties in a post-war world. The PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union is a complicated one, especially given the intellectual foundation of Gramscian-Marxism. The academic work by Elena Agarossi and Victor Zaslavsky explains how "a good part of Italian historiography of those years is based on Togliatti's official declarations and takes at face value his denunciation of 'any attempt to divide the world into two opposing blocs, any attempt to isolate the more advanced progressive Socialist forces, any attempt to break up Europe and the World.'"<sup>73</sup> While the PCI did have connections and relations with the Soviet Union, the relationship is complex and complicated. However, there was a concern by individuals outside of the PCI and the level of influence or control the Soviet Union may have on Italian politics if they could utilize the PCI to their desire. Likewise, Valenti is questioning the level of autonomy of the DC based on the potential influence the UK and the Vatican may exert on it.

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<sup>73</sup> Elena Aga Rossi, *Stalin and Togliatti: Italy and the Origins of the Cold War*, Cold War International History Project Series (Washington, D.C.: Stanford, Calif: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford University Press, 2011), 77.

Interestingly, the UK is considered a primary threat to the DC's independence when the scale of American influence is growing, even during the end of the Second World War. The concern Valenti has with Vatican influence in Italian politics is an issue he takes very seriously. He would later refer to the DC as 'The Catholic Party.' Valenti airs, "The political future of Italy is in doubt. But there is no doubt that most Italians, like Americans, want their men, not the Pope's men, to represent them."<sup>74</sup> Valenti deeply believes the Roman Catholic Church's complicities with Mussolini and the rise and perpetuation of Fascism in Italy. Thus, Valenti entrusts the PSI with remaining the pure and independent political body devoid of foreign influence.

### **Political Correspondence Networking**

Valenti highly valued a strong network with the government, radio stations, political organizations, labor unions, and newspapers. He would attempt to carry this skill with himself when he traveled abroad to Italy. As Valenti describes one of his visits to Italy in the second half of 1951, he explains, "while in Italy I also found that other friends and organizations like the American Embassy, the office of ECA, and several officials of both the American and Italian government, as well as some newspapers were very cooperative."<sup>75</sup> The pro-active behavior that he had taken while doing work in Italy was very reminiscent of his political outreach in the United States. Throwing a vast political

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<sup>74</sup> Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Fascist Propaganda in the United States," 9.

<sup>75</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Arnold Hartley," December 8, 1951, Box 1 Folder 8, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

net to develop and grow a strong correspondence allowed him to achieve political success.

How Valenti defines political success is often aligned to how well he could develop a network. As he continues, “my transcriptions made in Italy were valuable not only because I contacted in many small centers, people who had relatives in Connecticut, but also because of the interviews I transcribed with men like the American Ambassador, Marshall Plan officials, and the President of the Sicilian Regional Government, the Mayor of Naples, and a number of other Mayors and Italian government leaders.”<sup>76</sup> His program in Italy would seek to invite those of different political affiliations to interview. Doing so allowed him to cover a larger geographical landscape. However, his emphasis on transcribing the interactions with the other individuals is peculiar and not elaborated in any capacity. It is plausible that Valenti’s sponsors’ travel abroad required the transcribing of his programs in Italy, but if this is the case, there does not seem to be any evidence of it.

*The New York Times* had published two different articles listing the prisoners of war that the communist forces had released during the Korean War.<sup>77</sup> These articles had prompted Valenti to use this to submit a response to the ‘Letters to The Times’ section. He had taken the opportunity to bring light to the issue of prisoners of war still related to the Second World War. The second paragraph reads:

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<sup>76</sup> Valenti.

<sup>77</sup> “List of U.S. Prisoners of War That Was Handed to the U.N. Command by Communists; A PRISONER OF WAR MESSAGE FORM Additional Names on the Communists’ List of U.S. Prisoners of War Taken in Korea,” *New York Times*, December 19, 1951, [archive.nytimes.com](https://archive.nytimes.com/); “List of U.S. Prisoners of War That Was Handed to the U.N. Command by Communists; THERE IS HAPPINESS AS THIS FAMILY LEARNS NEWS OF KIN CAMPS WHERE ALLIED PRISONERS ARE HELD Additional Names on the Communists’ List of U.S. Prisoners of War Taken in Korea,” *New York Times*, December 20, 1951, [archive.nytimes.com](https://archive.nytimes.com/).

The problem of prisoners of war as it has been created by communist Russia and its satellites, presents aspects that are repulsive to sane human beings irrespective of their religious, political, philosophic, or emotional inclinations. It must be remembered that only Soviet Russia of all the nations involved in the Second World War, refuses to give, five years after the cessation of hostilities, an account of the prisoners its armies took in Europe and Asia. The families of German, Japanese, Baltic, and Italian prisoners of war are by the hundreds of thousands being denied the sacred right to ascertain their fate.<sup>78</sup>

The publication of the article was on December 26, 1951, in *The New York Times*.<sup>79</sup> The prisoners of war held by the Soviet Union would have a range of treatments and outcomes from their detainment. Historians estimate that approximately 20,000-25,000 Italian prisoners of war would die because of their internment.<sup>80</sup> Like many organizations, the perception of Valenti's outreach to *The New York Times* may have been to increase his level of name recognition. However, this cynical lens would have to discount the decades of political work in which Valenti was sure to maintain a high level of political consistency.

Judge Juvenal Marchisio, head of the American Committee on Italian Immigration, and Valenti had formed a relationship that sought to continue relief funds for Italy. However, due to the amount of work and traveling he had been undergoing, Valenti was late responding to the organization. He reassures the organization by stating, "you know that Monsignor Ebbing of the Boys' Town of Italy has been continuing, with the assistance of Miss Rubino, the people of Connecticut for the purpose of starting a drive for the worthy cause and institution he directs, and I understand he is going to have

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<sup>78</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Soviet Policy on War Prisoners," December 22, 1951, Box 1 Folder 8, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>79</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Soviet Policy on War Prisoners," *New York Times*, December 26, 1951, archive.nytimes.com.

<sup>80</sup> Bob Moore, "Enforced Diaspora: The Fate of Italian Prisoners of War during the Second World War," *War in History* 22, no. 2 (2015): 189.



a big banquet of the Labor Division of the Committee in June to which I have been invited.”<sup>81</sup> This bond would allow Valenti to continue his efforts to raise funds for the Relief for Italy campaign. Valenti explained how he had written several articles for magazines and newspapers promoting the efforts to comfort Marchisio.

Hon. Pietro Novasio, who founded a magazine, is described as a “staunch and irreducible enemy of Mussolini. Persecuting him all over Italy, it was the tyrant’s intent to suppress him, and strangle his powerful voice of protest and silence his accusing pen.”<sup>82</sup> Girolamo Valenti had also been an editor for the same magazine stationed in Italy, *Divagando*.<sup>83</sup> Valenti’s connection with the magazine had increased the breadth of his presence and further expanded his reach. His position within the magazine was that of labor editor, focusing on the field of politics in which he had cultivated himself. Through his meticulous efforts of networking both in the United States and Italy, he would find himself working tirelessly in both countries. Presenting himself as a transnational individual, providing his political skills and critiques in both spheres.

Valenti would use his connections with different organizations to help increase further reach and expose more individuals to his forms of work. Valenti would use a reliable contact, Serafino Romualdi, to ask to “take advantage of your courtesy and ask you to forward to Brother George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, the request that he kindly send us a message of greeting to be published in the *Divagando* special edition on

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<sup>81</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Judge Juvenal Marchisio,” March 25, 1952, Box 1 Folder 8, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>82</sup> Antonino Crivello, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Lettter to Israel Horowitz from Antonino Crivello,” May 29, 1952, Box 1 Folder 8, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>83</sup> Crivello.

the occasion of its 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary.”<sup>84</sup> While this piece may seem like an inconspicuous moment of cross-promotion, he also demonstrates Valenti’s efforts to increase the level of transnational dialogue between an American organization and Italy. By the time of the writing of this letter, Hon. Pietro Novasio had passed and was remembered by Valenti as “a former Christian Democratic Member of the Italian Parliament in the pre-fascist era, who lived in exile in the United States because of his opposition to fascism... So much so that a number of known Italian-American labor leaders, including Luigi Antonini, are among its contributing editors.”<sup>85</sup> Here, we see some of the clearest examples of Valenti’s support for a particular Italian political party, the DC. However, in the next chapter, the types of Christian democrats that are considered supportable are essential. The call for contributions also demonstrates how Valenti is more than willing to utilize the network he had worked very hard to develop and maintain.

The response from George Meany to Valenti and *Divagando* provides insight into how the AFL-CIO saw their relationship with the labor movement in Italy. Meany writes for the magazine’s anniversary:

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations is deeply interested in the strengthening of Italian democracy and in the fight against the menace of totalitarianism, whether of the Nazi, Fascist or Communist brand. The existence of a free, independent labor movement is the best guarantee for the success of this fight. We have, therefore, reason to rejoice over the recent victories of free labor over the Communists in the shop committee elections in the most important Italian industrial plants.

However, the threats of communism are still with us and require the continued support of all freedom loving people, here and abroad, before final victory is achieved.

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<sup>84</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Serafino Romualdi,” March 23, 1957, Box 1 Folder 9, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>85</sup> Valenti.

I, therefore, urge the trade unionists of Italy and those in the United States that are reached by your publication, to continue to give their moral and material support to the cause of democracy and freedom everywhere in the world.<sup>86</sup>

The AFL-CIO offered solidarity with non-communist labor organizations and parties in Italy to combat the rise and strength of communism within Italian unions. This form of opposition by the AFL-CIO was not a new phenomenon. Meany had made the position even more pronounced under his leadership. Even just “eight days after his election as president of the AFL-CIO, George Meany declared in a foreign policy address before the National Religion and Labor Foundation that there could be no neutrals in the struggle between communism and democracy.”<sup>87</sup> Meany had even made it a point to target countries who identified with the non-alignment movement, declaring that their neutrality aids the rise of communism.

Within the United States, communist-led unions were targeted by the AFL-CIO, often expelling members who had begun to align themselves as communist-sympathizer.<sup>88</sup> Internally, “communist influence is virtually no problem in the AFL-CIO, and constitutional machinery is available to make sure it does not become one.”<sup>89</sup> The outreach to Italian labor organizations on behalf of Valenti demonstrates how quickly and easily a transnational dialogue can be initiated. Possessing and supporting internationally minded organizations with pro-active members creates the exchange of information,

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<sup>86</sup> George Meany, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from George Meany,” May 9, 1957, Box 1 Folder 9, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>87</sup> John P. Windmuller, “Foreign Affairs and the AFL-CIO,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 9, no. 3 (1956): 419, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2519879>.

<sup>88</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 219.

<sup>89</sup> A. H. Raskin, “AFL-CIO: A Confederation or Federation? Which Road for the Future?,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 350 (1963): 42.

ideas, and people. More academic scholarship to investigate the international dialogue of the AFL-CIO with Italian labor organizations or unions is necessary.

Internally, the efforts by Meany were directly targeting those who might potentially be sympathetic to the communist cause.<sup>90</sup> This mindset would see “many labor leaders (led by George Meany and the AFL-CIO) [to be] suspicious and at times quite hostile to new political stirrings on the left, whether it was civil rights, antiwar protests, or the women’s movement... Most labor leaders... gave their primary loyalty to the status quo.”<sup>91</sup> This suspicion would not prove detrimental to the political goal of Valenti, seeking to combat the rise of the Italian communist union, CGIL, and the stability of the PCI.

The AFL-CIO’s direct engagement with the Italian-based magazine, *Divagando* would have likely not occurred if it had not been due to Valenti’s correspondence networking. The significance of Valenti as a catalyst for the transnational dialogue might lend itself to understand how and when these political actors take shape. The political motivations of Valenti would remain consistent throughout his career, focusing on eradicating totalitarianism as political ideologies in both Italian-American and Italian thought. Doing so, Valenti would proactively help find a newspaper, *La Parola*, combat against the strength of Generoso Pope, attempt to sway Pietro Nenni from falling under the sphere of influence of Togliatti, educate both in the United States and Italy, actively travel to Italy to profess his political ideals, and use his network to continue his objective in both countries.

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<sup>90</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 154.

<sup>91</sup> Alexis N. Walker, “The 1970s: Labor Out of Alignment,” in *Divided Unions*, The Wagner Act, Federalism, and Organized Labor (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 71, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv16t6chj.7>.

## Chapter 2

### Voice of Valenti: Radio as a Cold War Tool

Girolamo Valenti aspired to go to Italy to provide relief following the Second World War. Valenti used primarily philanthropically and politically methods to achieve transnational objectives. Valenti would work closely with the American government to bring relief to a war-torn Italy. This connection is particularly true in organizing the mission for activists to either raise funds or travel to Italy from many different organizations.

The energy from many Italian-Americans, following the Second World War, to aid the post-war state of Italy was at an all-time high. The methods of relief differ for each person or organization. For example, Juvenal Marchisio, a graduate of St. John's University, Fordham University, and the Royal University of Genoa, was the President of American Relief for Italy. Under his leadership, he is "reported that more than 4.25 million Italians, half of them children, had received \$40-million in supplies collected by American Relief for Italy and its 78 member organizations."<sup>92</sup> The same organization that Valenti would become quite involved in fundraising money for from many organizations with whom he had created a relationship.

Other organizations would be crucial in pushing for the collection and distribution of foreign aid to post-war Italy. One such program, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), with over 73% of all funds comprised of contributions by the United States.<sup>93</sup> UNRRA had agreed "with the Italian Government

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<sup>92</sup> "Judge Juvenal Marchisio Dies; Aided Victims of War in Italy," *New York Times*, 1973, 36.

<sup>93</sup> Giuseppe Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism*. (Montreal: Univ Of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 124.

in January 1946 after having already distributed the preceding year \$50 million in aid expenditures. The organization agreed to furnish food supplies, raw materials and machinery to Italy with the dual aim of improving the dietary level of the Italian population and of aiding industry to a normal level of production.”<sup>94</sup> With combined efforts from international organizations, the government of the United States, and volunteer donations.

There is also strong evidence to show that many small Italian organizations reached out to Americans in search of donations. One example is when the Cooperativa Italiana Artisti from Genoa sent a letter with six original etchings asking the reader to donate 2-3 dollars per piece they wanted to keep and return the other unwanted drawings. The writer states, “today Italy is very poor and there is no money for fine-arts. But we want to work and to live. This has encouraged us to offer our services to you for the execution of any kind of oil-tempera – or water, paints, sculptures, etc. For instance, by sending us a picture to make a portrait.”<sup>95</sup> Some individuals' type of outreach and trust does display the level of desperation many people and organizations in Italy possess.

Relief also came in the form of military aid. The United States government had a vested interest to maintain the support of the Italian government and bolster the military capability of Italy as part of the foreign policy position of containment. Italy was a primary receiver of military aid from the United States, considering it necessary to curb Soviet influence. To strengthen American influence, “Italy was a beneficiary of large amounts of economic aid from both the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation

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<sup>94</sup> Mammarella, 125.

<sup>95</sup> “Cooperativa Italiana Artisti Donation Request,” May 26, 1947, File 929, Italian American Museum.

Administration and from the Marshall Plan.”<sup>96</sup> These sources of relief, from volunteers, the United States government, and organizations are all forms of the United States demonstrated and exerting a form of soft-power upon Italy. This application allowed Italy to become more and more aligned to the United States as the Cold War developed.

The interest of the United States to strengthen the political stability, relationship, and economy of Italy was beneficial in maintaining a solid partnership. Notably, the United States working to improve the chances of success of the DC, both passively and actively, foster a political partner that enjoyed the benefits and would seek to continue to receive those benefits. “Such arguments not only corresponded to Italian facts, they also helped rally a skeptical American public behind an unprecedented financial commitment to European recovery. From the shambles of their original postwar program, American leaders fashioned a new policy based on anticommunism and massive U.S. aid.”<sup>97</sup> The United States government would argue that intervention in Europe and Italy was in the interests of every party. “By mid-1947, the European continent was divided into Soviet and American blocs. With Prime Minister De Gasperi’s expulsion of the socialists and communists from the coalition in May of that year, the Italian situation aptly mirrored the broader state of affairs.”<sup>98</sup> This reflection of international development also mirrors the results of radio integration throughout Europe. While the implementation of Voice of America and other programs intended to hinder the spread and success of the Soviet

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<sup>96</sup> E. Timothy Smith, *The United States, Italy and NATO 1947-52*, 1. publ (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 3.

<sup>97</sup> John Lamberton Harper, *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945-1948* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 21.

<sup>98</sup> Harper, 21.

Union's influence, so would Valenti travel to Italy to advocate for his causes with the support of the U.S. Department of State.

In New Haven, Connecticut, Valenti would work for the radio broadcast station of WNHC for The Elm City Broadcasting Corporation. His program would focus on educating listeners interested in learning the Italian language and broadcast daily news.<sup>99</sup> These broadcasts would be performed in both Italian and English, but primarily in Italian. Unfortunately, Valenti never really details how he found or obtained this radio position, but he would work at the company until his death. His work at WNHC would replace his editorial position at La Parola.

Valenti's commitment to travel to Italy to perform relief in person through the U.S. Department of Labor.<sup>100</sup> He was able to secure this position, in part, due to a great deal of advocacy from Serafino Romualdi from the American Federation of Labor. Through his guidance, Romualdi would help arrange contact between the Department of Labor and Valenti and offer advice on formally applying for the position. Valenti would eventually receive the role and would "be put in the bracket that receives \$8,330.00 base pay, plus the renal allowance which varies from area to area and city to city, plus the cost of living allowance, which also varies and which is being revised by the State Department every six months...the renal allowance and costs of living allowances are almost enough to take care of all living expenses abroad."<sup>101</sup> This arrangement would allow Valenti to comfortably pursue his political goals while in Italy while also satisfying

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<sup>99</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to the Labor Division, E.C.A.," February 28, 1950, 2, Box 1 Folder 7, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>100</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Leo R. Werts, Acting Executive Director," October 28, 1950, Box 1 Folder 7, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>101</sup> Serafino Romualdi, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from Serafino Romualdi," October 12, 1950, Box 1 Folder 7, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.



his position by the Department of Labor. However, the U.S. government did not cover this travel. When Valenti intended on giving a talk in Middletown, Connecticut, he sent a letter ahead of time mentioning that “if they do pay \$50, it certainly will not be overpaying me. To you confidentially, I would say that were it not for the fact that I am saving every penny to make the trip to Italy on my own, I would not have asked for any compensation at all; if I did work for Uncle Sam during the war without compensation, I would have done it for your local committee which is fighting for a cause in which I believe.”<sup>102</sup>

### **Significance of Radio**

Radio has proven to be an essential tool with many different purposes. While radio history is still a developing field, many aspects are either not considered or overlooked. Within the framework of this dissertation, there are solid academic studies that analyze the causes and effects of significant radio organizations such as Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, or Radio Moscow. These large-scale programs would have a substantial impact on the development of the Cold War. However, numerous smaller radio-based organizations sought to project their political and intellectual ideas. Valenti’s program in both Italy and the United States is one of these smaller projects that aimed to complete their own goals.

There are difficulties when working with radio as a historical source. When is it appropriate to consider radio broadcasts propaganda? Can the impact of a radio broadcast

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<sup>102</sup> Girolamo Valenti, “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Vincent Scamporino,” October 27, 1950, Box 1 Folder 7, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

be measured if it is a small station? Can the sources of smaller stations be found, and how complete are those collections? There are even more minor concerns to consider when analyzing broadcasts. “The importance of orality is now acknowledged by oral historians, listening to the recording, as opposed to reading a transcript, gives a sense not just who is speaking but also of the subtle dynamics and narrative rhythms of the oral history interview.”<sup>103</sup> The intonations, idiolect, and mannerisms are essential in understanding a broadcaster's amount and type of passion. Do they portray themselves as a steady-handed anchor or a passionate firebrand? The ability to answer these questions would provide insight that would be impossible to gauge purely through a transcript.

Radio also had many significant advantages when compared to other forms of communication. Radio as a “medium relies on sound, rather than on televised images, to achieve its effects. Listeners absorb the content without having to stop what they’re doing; radio travels to the people. Listening does not disrupt the normal tempo of life.”<sup>104</sup> The convenience of radio and the communal nature of the device allowed for a wide distribution of broadcasts. A single broadcast in a public place would enable many people to access the disseminated information. Radio provides advantages that literature cannot compete with, such as “the capacity to convey the oral/aural nature of oral history and the ability to reach a potentially much wider audience than the rather self-selecting field of, for example, readers of books or visitors to museums. The latter aspect is vitally important: you don’t need to be literate to absorb oral history on radio, thus dissemination via broadcast aligns with the democratizing ideals of the discipline.”<sup>105</sup> The ability for

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<sup>103</sup> Siobhán McHugh, “The Affective Power of Sound: Oral History on Radio,” *The Oral History Review* 39, no. 2 (2012): 188–89.

<sup>104</sup> David K. Dunaway, “Radio and the Public Use of History,” *The Public Historian* 6, no. 2 (1984): 80.

<sup>105</sup> McHugh, “The Affective Power of Sound,” 187.

radio to reach such a broad audience allowed the major radio organizations to spread their message wide and far and allowed minor radio organizations to target particular audiences to achieve their objectives.

While this dissertation will not perform a complete analysis of Voice of America or Liberty Radio, analyzing the significance of these major radio organizations will aid in providing scope for Valenti's work. The political alignment of large radio organizations was with the United States was all part of the projects intended to counter the spread of the Soviet Union's influence. There was a goal of creating a 'ring' of networks throughout Europe and the Western and Eastern coasts of the United States to penetrate the Soviet sphere of influence. As Timothy Stoneman puts it, "the ring exemplified President Harry Truman's strategy of Soviet containment, first articulated in a March 1947 speech to Congress and codified three years later in NSC 68, the major national security document of the early cold war."<sup>106</sup> The use of radio technology was of import for implementing the Truman Doctrine and containment as an American strategy. The Voice of America would initially be focused on curbing Soviet influence in Europe but would eventually expand globally.<sup>107</sup>

Another factor to consider is how these major radio organizations also had different models and different goals. The Voice of America model had presented itself as a source to provide a more educational experience. The program had "hoped that educating the listener about life in the United States will create a sympathetic

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<sup>106</sup> Timothy Stoneman, "A Bold New Vision: The VOA Radio Ring Plan and Global Broadcasting in the Early Cold War," *Technology and Culture* 50, no. 2 (2009): 317.

<sup>107</sup> Stoneman, 318.

understanding of its people and their beliefs.”<sup>108</sup> The Voice of America would adopt an educational model to portray itself as a mentor or instructor to their listener, as a guider of enlightenment. The program’s approach “is open, honest, and positive. If the truth is known about the United States, it will be better liked and respected. The idea is to establish a ‘constructive dialogue’ with the rest of the world and to influence by ‘setting a good example.’”<sup>109</sup> The program's goal was to inform the viewers about the United States, what it stood for, American culture, and the sort of exceptionalism of American society. With the more paternal nature of the Voice of America, it sought to educate through examples and explanations rather than aggressive towards the government system the listener resides.

The model utilized by Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty took a much different stance. RFE intended to have a much more aggressive posture, aiming to inform those living in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union about the issues related to their economic and political system. There was a time when “Radio Liberty, for example, [had] twice offered its listeners a cover-to-cover reading of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago*.”<sup>110</sup> The intent was to politically pressure citizens of those under the Soviet sphere of influence to advocate for the ideals that Radio Liberty had espoused. Adopting this model demonstrated that “the objective is to keep alive in these countries the hope of eventual freedom from communist rule. Partly for this reason, no doubt, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty [had] been subjected to much more extensive

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<sup>108</sup> Ralph A. Uttaro, “The Voices of America in International Radio Propaganda,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 45, no. 1 (1982): 108.

<sup>109</sup> Uttaro, 108.

<sup>110</sup> Uttaro, 109.

jamming than has the Voice of America.”<sup>111</sup> The counter efforts by the Soviet Union suggest that these significant radio programs had warranted a reaction due to their potential effects. Radio as a geopolitical tool was vital in influencing a population.

These large radio organizations had a large budget; President Truman had advocated for a massive expansion for Voice of America, hoping to have a budget of over \$40 million in 1950.<sup>112</sup> There were even efforts by the Soviet Union in 1950 to invest in projects related to radio. “The Soviet government expended \$70 million in capital investments and \$17.5 million in operating costs to jam foreign news broadcasts, the later amount alone nearly equal to VOA’s entire budget for that year.”<sup>113</sup> Both broadcasting and counter-broadcasting were serious enough endeavors for the United States and the Soviet Union to consider an essential political theater.

This advocacy, however, did not necessarily mean that the related populations were supportive of the programs. Within the United States, many Americans thought that the United States ought not to spread propaganda across the world through radio. “Part of the difficulty is a reluctance to admit that the operation is in part an organ of propaganda. Many Americans are not comfortable with the notion that their government is disseminating propaganda during peacetime.”<sup>114</sup> The idea that this technology gave many Americans an unsettling view of American foreign intervention, partly due to how Voice of America portrayed itself domestically. As Ralph Uttaro states so well, “the VOA is both an objective reporter of news and an ‘unabashed advocate’ of American views. This is nothing more than self-serving rhetoric – unabashed advocacy and objectivity do not

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<sup>111</sup> Uttaro, 110.

<sup>112</sup> Stoneman, “A Bold New Vision,” 317.

<sup>113</sup> Stoneman, 322.

<sup>114</sup> Uttaro, “The Voices of America in International Radio Propaganda,” 116.

blend well.”<sup>115</sup> Americans wrestling with the notion of Voice of America’s role in international politics seem to have no impact on changing the methods of the broadcast program; however, this question could prove to be very insightful if investigated further.

While these large radio organizations demonstrate how radio technology can be impactful on a large scale, the question becomes, can a small radio organization be impactful? This question is going to be very difficult to answer. However, this portion will seek to engage with a series of points that intend on enhancing our understanding of the potential of small radio organizations through the case study of Girolamo Valenti. Such issues include, to what point do we consider radio dialogue, the political implications of small radio organizations, how is radio utilized to its maximum potential if given the opportunity, and what is appropriate to measure the success or outreach of a program that has so little data.

These vital points to analyzing Valenti’s work’s seriousness also come with a series of potential problems. As discussed earlier, it could prove invaluable the ability to analyze the recorded broadcasts of Valenti’s work. Doing so would allow this dissertation to use Valenti’s intonations, idiolect, and mannerisms to gauge a broadcast’s performance. Perhaps, he presented himself as a journalist or academic deeply discussing important political and social issues affecting Italy and the United States, or he was a passionate and emotional speaker to grab the listeners' attention. Unfortunately, this dissertation does not have the audio recordings of Valenti’s work. Instead, some of Valenti’s radio broadcasts have been transcribed. The transcriptions do allow for a greater degree of certainty depending on the quality of audio logs. Having the work

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<sup>115</sup> Uttaro, 116.

already transcribed ensures that the ability to cite accurately is permitted. Now, this does provide complications when analyzing this material. One complication is the inability to immerse oneself into the broadcasts. Another complication is the ability to ensure the validity and accuracy of the transcripts themselves. This dissertation will assume that the transcribed works are accurate and did not intend to alter actual broadcast results.

### **Valenti's Radio**

Valenti's Radio program in the United States would become the work that he identifies strongest with, despite being the editor of *La Parola*. This identification is most evident because once he had begun his work at the WNHC station, all of his signatures would cease to declare himself as the editor of *La Parola* and instead as the Director of Italian-Language Programs and Commentator on WNHC. This dissertation will principally focus on the transition and operations of Valenti's WNHC program while stationed in Italy. This material will allow a focused case study on Valenti's transnational project's political and social implications. The goal was to spread and influence his beliefs in a recovering Italy and the types of ideas and people he believed platforming would help advance these objectives.

Valenti was keen on participating in American international programs with the hope of having a greater outreach. In particular, he intended to operate his radio program through the more extensive network of Voice of America. He planned on officially going

through the Department of State to certify his program while in Italy under the organizational umbrella of the Voice of America.<sup>116</sup>

To get a sense of Valenti's efforts in the United States, he would often reach out to other organizations, primarily labor-minded ones, to help spread his and their shared message. Valenti had contacted the AFL to continue building his relationship, which he had established in pre-war and wartime. Valenti reached out with, "I follow with much interest the American Federation of Labor broadcasts with Frank Edwards on the Mutual Network. They are lively and instructive, and it is to be regretted that a great number of people, both in the officialdom and the rank and file of organized labor do not know of these broadcasts."<sup>117</sup> This was a program part of the AFL's attempt at spreading their message through more advanced mediums. The AFL emphasized that "despite the fact that organized labor was receiving free radio time worth about 750,000 dollars yearly, the AFL decided to invest an identical amount for a daily labor commentator. Frank Edwards was finally chosen to broadcast news and opinions on a fifteen-minute program, which began January 2, 1950, on the Mutual Broadcasting System, and was later extended to eight labor-owned radio stations."<sup>118</sup> The labor-minded organizations and people utilized radio to shift towards radio as a tool to push the boundaries of outreach with varying success. As Valenti suggested, despite the financial backing radio programs received by AFL, they were not reaching the amount or types of people they may have hoped.

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<sup>116</sup> Bernard Wiesman, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter from Bernard Wiesman," June 5, 1952, Box 1 Folder 8, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>117</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Serafino Romualdi," February 26, 1951, Box 1 Folder 8, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>118</sup> Morton Leeds, "The AFL in the 1948 Elections," *Social Research* 17, no. 2 (1950): 217.



Valenti's persistence on AFL's effectiveness should also be noted. Within the same letter, he continued, "the other night, I happened to be with friends among whom were one official of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, C.I.O., and another of the Bricklayers International Union, AFL, and to my amazement, when it was ten o'clock and I suggested we hear the AFL program, I discovered that none of these people was aware of the program's existence. I think a great effort should be made in every industrial city as well as in rural centers to publicize the program so as to induce an ever-greater number of people to listen to them."<sup>119</sup> The disappointment that Valenti displays in this letter is substantial. When he emphasizes that so many people within labor organizations and an official who did not know of the AFL program, people that, he believes, ought to have the knowledge and spread the message and resource for future listeners. Valenti's solution to the perceived issues of AFL's radio program is to help propagate that information. Valenti asks, "do you think it is possible for me to have the scripts of the Frank Edwards broadcasts? I would use some of them in my daily news and comments, as I have great latitude in the choice of my material, and I want to assure you that I would give credit to the A.F.L."<sup>120</sup> Valenti valued the scope and possibilities of using radio as a tool of spreading information. It is not as if this was Valenti's first method of disseminating ideas. Still, he understood that even though Frank Edwards broadcasted for fifteen minutes of each workday, it was not enough to reach as many people as possible.<sup>121</sup> However, it is also not entirely clear if Valenti made this outreach possible to expand his brand.

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<sup>119</sup> Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Serafino Romualdi," February 26, 1951.

<sup>120</sup> Valenti.

<sup>121</sup> Joseph G. LaPalombara, "Pressure, Propaganda, and Political Action in the Elections of 1950," *The Journal of Politics* 14, no. 2 (1952): 319.

Valenti's connections with labor organizations, such as the AFL did not start in the post-war period. Instead, these relationships grew from the cooperation of anti-fascist movements that both Valenti and Serafino Romualdi were deeply involved with activism. Romualdi was part of the wave of leftist refugees that had initially fled the oppression of Fascist rule in Italy.<sup>122</sup> With this connection, Valenti would utilize them to help further his agenda. When an Italian labor commission arrived in the United States for about six weeks, Valenti would advocate for himself through these relationships. Valenti asks, "I surmise that the commission will have to be accompanied by someone who is well acquainted with economic and political conditions in the U.S. as well as with the history and development of our labor movement, and I was wondering if you would find that out and in case there is such an opening, suggest my name to the proper offices. Since I will have some time at my disposal between now and January, I would gladly undertake such an assignment."<sup>123</sup> This outreach was even when Valenti was organizing and preparing his trip to do radio work in Italy. The level of activism and his drive to utilize his connections and develop a transnational relationship with incoming commissioners highlights the significance of the political dialogue within these spectrums.

Valenti often performed interviews during his time in WHNC. One of the consistent shows that he ran was titled "This is Italy." The programs broadcasted were often in a mix of Italian and English. Some of Valenti's programs were interviews. This show provided a much more analytical and professional network that did not present itself as demagogic. One interview was with Sigfrido Ciccotti. Ciccotti was originally

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<sup>122</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro et al., eds., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, Italian and Italian American Studies (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003), 55.

<sup>123</sup> Girolamo Valenti, "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Letter to Serafino Romualdi," October 15, 1952, Box 1 Folder 8, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

associated with the *Partito Socialista Italiano Massimalista* (PSIm). This portion of the PSI had confronted the modes and expectations of how to operate within a state. Ciccotti had come from the tradition of the PSIm who had “the uncompromising maximalists component, despite having emerged victorious from the long tug-of-war with reformism and apparently confronted political evolution and economic transformations on the validity of its conception of socialism as a movement of hope.”<sup>124</sup> While the party would ultimately merge with the PSI, PCI, and the PSDI in various forms, having a foundation of Ciccotti’s political ideology will aid in understanding the interview between Valenti and Ciccotti.

The supposed necessity of containment and the prevailing thought of domino theory started to dominate the mindset of policymakers. Their fears were exacerbated with “the Kremlin tried its utmost to interrupt the process of Western consolidation by fostering a guerrilla war in Greece and by encouraging mass demonstrations by West European communist parties, especially in France and Italy.”<sup>125</sup> However, Togliatti’s PCI did not have the impetus to foster anything as violent as a hostile revolution. Attempting to stage a violent uprising was understood not only as impractical but impossible. Although the Soviet Union supported the PCI with advice, it would not support the party if it pursued a military struggle. “Despite appearance to the contrary, however, Moscow was not pushing the PCI to the edge of insurrection.”<sup>126</sup> The PCI understood that it would not have successfully toppled the established government without foreign aid. Since the

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<sup>124</sup> Adolfo Pepe, “Il Socialismo Italiano e Il Rinnovamento Del Capitalismo (1900-1922),” *Studi Storici* 33, no. 2/3 (1992): 361.

<sup>125</sup> Henry Kissinger, “Reflections on Containment,” *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1994): 113, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20046662>.

<sup>126</sup> Robert Ventresca, *From Fascism to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Election of 1948*, Toronto Italian Studies (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 151.

PCI believed that a violent revolution could only be successful “by Stalin’s tanks,”<sup>127</sup> the PCI knew and understood that violence would ultimately be futile and bring more devastation to Italy and the Italian people.

Italy was considered one of the cornerstones of American foreign policy in preventing Soviet influence into Western Europe. Under the Truman administration, “U.S. officials during the Cold War worried that a faraway political crisis might unleash a cascading, domino-like catastrophe threatening not only U.S. security, but civilization itself.”<sup>128</sup> Thus, this political paradigm of American foreign policy became an essential point of discussion between Valenti and Ciccotti. The interview’s preamble began with “you often hear rumors of Italy being on the verge of losing her independence and democracy to join the countries behind the ‘Iron Curtain.’ American sensationalist reporters from time to time come up with reports painting a picture as black as could be. What is the true picture of conditions in Italy today? I am glad to be able to bring you on this program the views of an Italian newspaperman who knows what is what and does not belong to the kind of journalists who gather their information at cocktail parties. He is Signor Sigfrido Ciccotti, who has spent most of his adult life gathering news for the public.”<sup>129</sup> The notion of Italy is a key political player, and the criticisms of American media are of the utmost concern for Valenti. The emphasis on sensationalism within American media and how the newsmen acquire their material is most definitely a criticism of the financial incentive of news. However, an important aspect to keep at the

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<sup>127</sup> Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943 - 1988* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 81.

<sup>128</sup> Dennis Merrill, “The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 28.

<sup>129</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Radio Interview with Sigfrido Ciccotti,” 1955, 1, Box 2 Folder 2, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

forefront is how Valenti ties the sensationalism of Italian news with the misrepresentation of Italy's geo-political position in Europe between the two hegemonic powers. Italy had situated its position within global theaters of influence between "the period from 1953 to 1956, when Italy increasingly tried to upgrade its international *presenza*."<sup>130</sup> The development and growth of Italy's ambitions were at the forefront of Valenti's interview.

Valenti first establishes Ciccotti's background for the audience with several questions. These questions intend to teach the audience whom the guest is while guiding Ciccotti to the topic at hand.

Val: First of all, in what profession are you engaged at the present time?

Cic: I am at present editing a magazine.

Val: And what is the title of your magazine?

Cic: Informazioni.

Val: Has your magazine any political color?

Cic: Certainly. Primarily anti-totalitarian. Its aim is to spread information and documentation about democratic principles and ideas.

Val: Then you are decidedly an opponent of dictatorship, is that it?

Cic: Certainly. For the same reasons that I am opposed to communism today, I oppose fascism 30 years ago and spend 3½ years in the islands and in prisons and had to leave my country to live the life of an exile.<sup>131</sup>

Valenti is able to draw the immediate connection between Ciccotti and their shared fundamental political objectives, anti-authoritarianism. The same motivating principles pushing Valenti's activism had been since he left Italy and began his political businesses. This political consistency allowed Valenti to continue to proclaim and push for labor and socialist policies. Simultaneously, this stance allowed Valenti to also place himself within the context of Italian politics, to both support the policies of the PSI but also oppose the

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<sup>130</sup> Alessandro Brogi, "Ike and Italy: The Eisenhower Administration and Italy's 'Neo-Atlanticist' Agenda," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 3 (2002): 13.

<sup>131</sup> "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Radio Interview with Sigfrido Ciccotti," 1.

PCI as a significant political force. Valenti will avoid referring to any other party outside of the PCI throughout this interview, as they focus on this contemporary political work.

The interview continues between Valenti and Ciccotti discussing the immediate post-war period in Italy itself. This discussion point is crucial for Valenti to bring the focus back to his portrayal of the PCI.

Val: Have conditions improved since, Mr. Ciccotti?

Cic: What is extraordinary is the measure of improvement evident in Italy. Italy has improved even in comparison with conditions in 1939. The standard of living is much higher; the number of automobiles is much greater and the movement in the cities indicates great activity and a relative well-being. The help received from America was especially valuable because it came at the right movement. Without it, it would not have been possible to start the movement of reconstruction.

Val: Then it is your opinion, Mr. Ciccotti, that the aid received from the U.S. has been largely responsible for the improved conditions of your beautiful country?

Cic: The starting point was certainly reached with American assistance; without it we could not have begun any reconstruction.<sup>132</sup>

The state of Italy, following American intervention, had improved dramatically, as suggested by Ciccotti. With the aid of foreign aid, “a period of economic growth of a sort unknown before in the history of Italy was initiated in 1950. It was Italy’s second industrial revolution, far broader and deeper than the first, which had occurred before World War I.”<sup>133</sup> The sentiment of Italy flourishing was a genuine and vital phenomenon in the post-war state. American support and proactive economic reform policies allowed Italy to push its economy to previously experienced levels.

There is a caveat that Ciccotti will bring up in how evenly spread this success story indeed was throughout Italy. The qualification is not to say that the Italian

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<sup>132</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Radio Interview with Sigfrido Ciccotti,” 2.

<sup>133</sup> Norman Kogan, *A Political History of Postwar Italy: From the Old to the New Center-Left* (New York: Praeger, 1981), 5.

government neglected Southern Italy on the same level as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The growth of industry in the south was slow, however, and in 1956 the role of the government was expanded to include direct investment in and construction of industrial plants by public sector firms. Many of these new plants were large and capital intensive, requiring tremendous amounts of money while creating comparatively few new jobs. The expectation was that smaller and secondary industries, commerce, and services would grow around them. The failure of these expectations earned the huge public sector plants the name ‘cathedrals in the desert.’<sup>134</sup>

These comparatively unsuccessful investments would allow the PCI to garner more support due to the inability of the DC coalition government to adapt to the economic conditions of Southern Italy. Ciccotti expands on the success of the Italian economy, partially due to the improvement of tourism in Italy. Then Valenti broadens the conversation by asking:

Val: Is it true that there exists a certain resentment against America, in Italy, or as some American reporters would put it, a certain undercurrent of anti-American feeling?

Cic: Nothing of the kind of a serious nature exists. The only thing that might resemble such an undercurrent is the political propaganda of Communists.

Val: And tell me, what prompts the Communists to spread bad feeling against America, if they themselves know that America has helped the Italian nation to recover from the plight and the misery of the war?

Cic: It is well known that the communists here, as everywhere else, are the representatives of the political and strategic interests of a foreign government. Therefore, the reasons are obvious why they try to distort facts and stop the progress of Italy. Besides, America has helped reconstruct Italy, and that is [a] fact Communists will not forgive.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Kogan, 6.

<sup>135</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Radio Interview with Sigfrido Ciccotti,” 3–4.

During these types of distinctions, Valenti will present to the audience how his program will not be supportive or sympathetic to the PCI party, especially during the political climate of the Second Red Scare. Interestingly, Ciccotti emphasized how the PCI was a political puppet of the Soviet Union while praising the support the United States has given to the recovery program in Italy. At this point, many leftist organizations and parties in Italy would question the agency of the DC and its relation to the United States. This idea even holds weight on a broader political level within Italian politics. According to Wendy Pojmann, the “inability to effectively resolve the country’s unemployment problem ‘constituted the central issue in the disagreements between the Italian and American governments over the use of Marshall Plan funds.’ The Americans believed that the popularity of the Italian Communist Party was mainly related to the country’s economic and social problems.”<sup>136</sup> This sentiment from the American government can be felt with the answers Ciccotti provided. The narrative presented in this interview does not attempt to compare the relationship of the United States’ influence on the Italian government. During the period “between 1947 and 1950, by overseeing a series of economic reforms and new industrial projects, the Americans hoped the effect a policy of ‘positive containment,’ that is, to make Italy part of the Western bloc through a process of conversion.”<sup>137</sup> The use of soft power by the United States is perceived, as Ciccotti would say, using Italy as a political and strategic interest as a player in the developing Cold War.

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<sup>136</sup> Wendy A. Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944-1968*, First edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 48–49.

<sup>137</sup> Pojmann, 49.



Valenti's interview developed with Ciccotti to primarily attack the PCI party and explained to the audience how they perceived the Communist movement as a net-harm to the development of Italy.

Val: In other words, they hate to see Italy make progress, is that it?

Cic: The interests of the Communists to maintain Italy in difficulties and in a state of under-development is due to the fact that Communism prospers in backward countries and in poverty and want. Anything that can improve the conditions and the lot of the Italian people is a net loss for Communist propaganda and its organization machine.

Val: Are the communists still making headway among the Italian masses?

Cic: I would say no! The position of the leading parties in Italy is more or less stabilized. In the labor movement the communists lately have suffered severe setbacks in leading industries in the North, but they are still holding their position in the depressed areas of the South, as the results of the Sicilian election show.

Val: Then all the claims of certain sensationalist American newspaper and magazine writers about Italy going Communist must be regarded as fantastic?

Cic: They certainly are! The Communist movement in our country is strong because of the backward conditions existing in some part of our country, as in the South. Communism exploits ignorance, want, and government defects.

This reaction towards the support amongst specific segments of the Italian population in the South swayed by Communist arguments is strange given how Southern Italy was a bastion of DC support, especially during the 1950s.<sup>138</sup> However, there was support for the *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* (CGIL) amongst farmers in Southern Italy. From 1944 to 1950, the CGIL was the only major labor union in Italy, but due to disagreements, the *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* (CISL) split from the CGIL officially in 1950. The PCI and PSI members predominately controlled the CGIL and swayed Southern Italian workers to advocate for better working conditions. For example, "in 1949, farm laborers went on strike under CGIL leadership. The hue and cry

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<sup>138</sup> "Dipartimento per Gli Affari Interni e Territoriali," n.d., <https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/index.php>.

that resulted, the tensions raised, not only in rural areas but in political headquarters in Rome, forced the government to take some alleviatory action. American pressure, expressed through Marshall Plan administrators located in Rome added to the growing feeling that something had to be done.”<sup>139</sup> It would be this level of organization and support in which Italian communists may have mustered that Ciccotti referred.

The Ciccotti interview highlights several aspects of Valenti’s transnational objectives. His goal of bridging the geographical and cultural gap between the United States and Italy through a political lens is ever-present in his actions. He manages to encapsulate his message of anti-authoritarianism as a consistent and steady ideal, allowing it to remain the undercurrent of his political expressions and examinations. Valenti’s opposition towards fascism, during its rule in Italy and beyond, was transferred to his opposition towards communism, especially in the form that the Soviet Union propagated during the Cold War. Simultaneously, having the ability still to propagate his ideas of socialism and labor-minded policies.

### **Valenti’s Work Abroad**

Valenti’s work in Italy, primarily in Rome, allowed him to perform radio broadcasts to an audience that was surely dissimilar to the readership and listenership he had cultivated while in the United States. The types of resources he had were of a different class. While in the United States, Valenti would often lean on his connections with various labor organizations, smaller political parties, local political figures, activist

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<sup>139</sup> Norman Kogan, *A Political History of Italy: The Postwar Years* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1983), 58.

organizations, and other media outlets. By doing so, he could grow his network through a meaningful reciprocal exchange with these different groups. While in Italy, Valenti was isolated from all those forms that were developed and curated by him. Instead, he had access to the resources of the government of the United States. This support would allow him to be entirely financially stable while also pursuing his political objectives.

Valenti's work was also part of a grander scale of confrontation to the Communists' success in Italy. As Alessandro Brogi puts it so well, "the confrontation was about political culture, and led the United States to reflect on itself, perhaps especially on the possible distortion of its 'permanent revolution.' American values could be potentially subverted from within, thanks to a possible political dialogue between dissidents from each side of the Atlantic."<sup>140</sup> Valenti's work, as Brogi mentions, is part of this greater dialogue between the United States and Italy, even within political communities of the Left, to build and transform the political culture into an idea that closer resembles the ideals of the speaker.

From the perspective of leftist parties in Italy, there was not always a consistent or openly hostile attitude towards the United States in all regards. This notion was true regarding the implementation of the Marshall Plan within Italy. While the PCI was publicly against the policy, the leaders of the PCI, particularly Togliatti, understood how beneficial American intervention was for the Italian public and economy. Following its implementation, "Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov had already scolded PCI leader Eugenio Reale for not reacting to the party's eviction from the government with

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<sup>140</sup> Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*, 2014, 78.

charges of U.S. interference.”<sup>141</sup> Although leadership within the Soviet Union had hoped that it could dominate the direction of the PCI in all aspects, the relationship in the Early Cold War period had foreshadowed the elastic dynamic between Italy and the Soviet Union for the decades to come.

Valenti’s broadcasts capture a moment in Italian political development that attempts to analyze and dissect the effects and goals of Italian political parties from an individual who strongly identifies themselves as an American. Valenti demonstrates this self-identification through conversations and presentations with the pronouns he carefully chooses to use. When referring to Italy, it is done so through the language of ‘them,’ ‘they,’ or mentioned in a way that suggests ‘other.’ Instead, when Valenti refers to the United States or Americans, the vocabulary of ‘us’ and ‘our’ is specifically utilized. This dissertation will consider Valenti’s words from an American speaking to the Italian public when referring to these broadcasts.

Throughout this dissertation, the significance of the Trieste crisis was a center point of Italian domestic and international politics. Valenti would spend much time discussing the developments of the scenario. However, this dissertation will avoid discussing Trieste and Tito to any significant extent because the global relevance to either American leftist organizations or Italian-Americans is less meaningful than his analyses and thoughts on the dynamics of the Italian government, political parties, and public. This absence is not to say that Valenti’s work would not help contribute to the historiography relating to the Trieste Crisis; actually, it would provide a valuable perspective on the issue.

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<sup>141</sup> Brogi, 95.

In a broadcast on June 3, 1955, Valenti addressed his audience through Italian airwaves by discussing the beauty of the weather and climate in Italy. He starts the presentation with a broader scope of Italy, eventually discussing its involvement in the Second World War. Valenti positively recounts the recovery of Italy to his listeners, “To think, friends, of the miserable state in which the war had left this beautiful but unfortunate Italy ten years ago are now, and of the gigantic reconstruction work that the work and the genius of its people have been able to accomplish, one must be strongly impressed. All the foreign observers who come here, be they politicians, businessmen, journalists, novelists, soldiers, sociologists and scholars of economic-social issues admire this Italy which, as if by magic, has risen from the abyss in which the dictatorship and the war had precipitated it.”<sup>142</sup> Valenti clarifies in his broadcasts some of his fundamental principles within the context of this new post-war Italy. The authoritarian nature of Mussolini’s dictatorship had brought Italy through a series of disastrous policies and conflicts which would ultimately toss the country into disarray. Another point highlighted by Valenti is his attempt at recalibrating the mindset of the listener. When the notion of the reconstruction of the country and the successful recovery effort has occurred, this would ultimately conjure ideas of positive American intervention within Italy through the Marshall Plan and smaller programs.

Through this reconstruction of its infrastructure, economy, and political system, Italy was trying to reconstruct its moral reputation and attempting to distance the new post-war state of Italy from the two decades of the Fascist rule to its parliamentary system. Valenti articulates this in the fashion of pinning the contemporary system of Italy

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<sup>142</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Rassegna dei più importanti avvenimenti: Italiani della settimana,” June 3, 1955, 1, Box 2 Folder 2, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

against rival systems in Europe, especially within the known context of the Cold War. In the same broadcast, he states, “But the Italy of 1955 is not only admired for the miraculous recovery in all sectors of its economy and for its very high morale, is also admired for the wisdom of its democratic rulers, who following in the footsteps of the far-sighted and late Alcide De Gasperi have spared the travail that would have condemned the lashes towards a return to the sad past or towards leaps in the dark, that is towards a new dictatorship that would have thrown it behind the iron curtain, reducing it to the degrading state of a Bulgaria or a Czechoslovakia.”<sup>143</sup> The framing of early political successes of the DC in 1946, 1948, and 1953 as the victory over dictatorship and communism within the same breath. Valenti also combines these moments of DC electoral wins with a moral good for the nation-state of Italy. One that avoided delving into the ‘abyss.’ Both the PCI and DC were keen on defining their political parties as to the entities capable of ridding Italy of its immoral political past. Even during the end of the Second World War, “like the Red partisans, the Church also found its renewed role and prestige in upholding the nation’s moral rebirth... under Pius XIII and De Gasperi’s party, the path to national redemption at first seemed to secure the same moral prestige as that pursued by the Communists.”<sup>144</sup> These developing political forces would see to themselves to use the political clout of being a bastion against fascism in all forms as fundamental to elevating their moral ground. This battle for the moral high ground within Italian politics following the Second World War would continue to be a prominent issue among the electorate.

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<sup>143</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Rassegna dei più importanti avvenimenti: Italiani della settimana,” 1–2.

<sup>144</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 21.

A significant development with Valenti's program while in Italy shows his changing relationship with Pietro Nenni and the PSI within Italian politics. Under Prime Minister Scelba's administration, Valenti was very interested in the level of activism the Italian government would take on combating the strength of the Socialist and Communist parties. Scelba's uncompromising stance was heightened by the fact that "the government approved a series of measures for the removal of public officials 'who did not guarantee their allegiance to the democratic state.' The outlawing of the PCI seemed imminent. This decision was 'largely cosmetic' and 'a point more of arrival than departure' for the Italian government."<sup>145</sup> The posture of Scelba's government had intended on garnering more favor from the United States to demonstrate how willing he was to cooperate with American foreign policy, containment. Valenti describes how "After 16 months of fruitful and fervent activity both internally and internationally, Premier Scelba had to procure hostilities as well as in the field of his enemies so to speak natural - the communists, the Nennians, and the monarchists, and missini - also within to his own party, given that his government does not have so many ministries to be able to please all those who are hunting for the ministerial seat."<sup>146</sup> Valenti had started to label Nenni and the PSI within the same group of people he had opposed, the PCI, the Monarchist National Party, and the MSI. From his perspective, the PSI was equally culpable in what he labeled as pro-authoritarian due to the PSI falling in step with the PCI.

Nenni's united front with the PCI was a political calculation Valenti was not in favor of supporting. Nenni stated that the "proletarian unity is the objective of our alliance. That the communists seek to broaden the front with the main objective to

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<sup>145</sup> Brogi, 155.

<sup>146</sup> "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Rassegna dei più importanti avvenimenti: Italiani della settimana," 2.

devalue our function as allies is more than natural.”<sup>147</sup> The political alliance between the two was beneficial to both major left-political parties. It allowed the PSI to reach a level of national importance that they may not have been able to achieve without the clout of the PCI. This alliance also gave the PCI the ability to broaden its political strength with the ability to have a greater degree of influence within the political structure of the PSI. The founding principle of Nenni’s tactics considered the effectiveness of the PSI, for political consistency, ought to maintain a strong front with the PCI to promote “pure class politics.”<sup>148</sup> Due to the willingness for the PSI to collaborate with the PCI so closely, there would be a portion of Nenni’s party that would eventually split and form the Italian Socialist Democratic Party, PSDI, with Giuseppe Saragat as their leader. However, the tight connection between the PCI and PSI gave Valenti an aversion towards Nenni and his political strategy.

The PCI’s involvement within the PSI would shift the political spectrum to support a greater degree of the communists’ domestic and international policies. Togliatti and the PCI’s political tactics for controlling the PSI were incredibly successful. This successful connection lasted “until the end of 1956, the PCI continued the practice of infiltrating the rival PSI using two complementary techniques: either sending reliable Communist militants to enroll in the PSI or convincing those Socialists who were thinking of joining the PCI to keep their PSI membership and work for a closer alliance

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<sup>147</sup> Alexander De Grand, “‘To Learn Nothing and to Forget Nothing’: Italian Socialism and the Experience of Exile Politics, 1935-1945,” *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 545.

<sup>148</sup> Stephen P. Koff and Sondra Z. Koff, “Factionalism: Obstacle to Italian Socialist Unity,” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 34, no. 3 (1973): 255.



and a joint political line between Communists and Socialists.”<sup>149</sup> The level of influence of the PCI had developed within the PSI had been strong up until the crisis of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, when the two parties took dramatically different foreign policy positions. Until that moment, the successes of the PCI’s infiltration were recognizable to foreign observers, including Valenti.

While Valenti identifies himself as fervently opposed to the PCI and generally supports the DC, he does not take up the position of blindly supporting all members of the politically diverse members of the DC. As he had mentioned within the same broadcasts, he believes that some members of the DC are too sympathetic to the Communists and Nennians, but he also confronts another wing of the same party. Some want to combat the influence of the left-wing parties in the Italian parliament, Valenti states on a radio program on June 3, “In private, in the corridor conciliators, they reproach him for not having been energetic enough in the fight against the Communist danger. Scelba replies that the elimination of the communist danger is not a matter of a few months, but of a process of purification and education and vigilance that takes a long time. Perhaps only a senseless repressive policy would satisfy certain anti-communists but Scelba says that a democratic government cannot indulge in repressive work without going out of law and risking the reaction of free citizens who love constitutional systems.”<sup>150</sup> Valenti is very keen on maintaining a consistent political ideology. This concept is even true when he is critical of those within the DC party enacting anti-democratic measures to silence the PCI. This segment demonstrates that his

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<sup>149</sup> Elena Aga Rossi, *Stalin and Togliatti: Italy and the Origins of the Cold War*, Cold War International History Project Series (Washington, D.C. : Stanford, Calif: Woodrow Wilson Center Press ; Stanford University Press, 2011), 281–82.

<sup>150</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Rassegna dei più importanti avvenimenti: Italiani della settimana,” 2–3.

support for Scelba hinges on the principle of democratic values. Valenti primarily valued the policies and positions of the DC. Still, when certain party members aim to impose measures that would attack or silence the ability for the PCI or PSI to have complete political freedom, he is more than willing to condemn those beliefs. While Valenti did not support what he deemed as authoritarian-sympathetic, he also felt that such anti-democratic measures by the DC would be more problematic.

During the same period, the vocabulary of the Italian newspapers and public had started to borrow words from contemporary American events. These events are directly associated with the period of McCarthyism when some vocal members of the Italian parliament suggested that the Italian-leftist parties ought to be under a similar scope. This language would develop during the 1950s when words and phrases used such as “caccia alle streghe, ‘witch hunt,’ which is still occasionally used by historians and publicists but which is not recorded in the largest Italian dictionary... whereas the words maccartismo, maccarthismo and maccartista are provided with a detailed explanation.”<sup>151</sup> The influence of the American population and American politics is profound. They were able to not only transform the way the Italians had begun to conceptualize their political circumstance through comparison but to draw the political reality of developments in both Italy and the United States.

Valenti found himself quite conflicted with the efforts of labor movements throughout Italy during the same period. The strikes organized by the CGIL would see certain professions throughout Italy demanding better working conditions, particularly teachers, during one of Valenti’s broadcasts. Valenti had always had a strong relationship

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<sup>151</sup> Christopher Duggan and Christopher Wagstaff, eds., *Italy in the Cold War: Politics, Culture and Society 1948-58* (Oxford ; Washington, DC: Berg, 1995), 174.

with the labor organizations in the United States and would work closely with unions and labor-minded groups throughout his political career. However, the political nature of the CGIL and the newly formed CISL would bring a new level of scale and organizations that dwarfed the size in the United States. Unfortunately, there is no found documentation of Valenti's personal opinion on the CGIL and CISL individually.

During the early 1950s, “newly introduced Taylorist working methods in the large industries were frequently oppressive. Minimal wage increases were accompanied by disproportionate gains to the employers who simply intensified the rhythm and altered the methods of production without consultation.”<sup>152</sup> With the new policies in place to disrupt the CGIL or any communist organization alongside the division of power and influence the CGIL and CISL had, it appeared that the large businesses would see their profits reach new heights. At the same time, the working conditions would deteriorate, and the minimal compensation increases during the reconstruction period. This opportunity was open due to the end of protectionism which was driven by “the entrepreneurial skills of the owners of the new Italian firms, their ability to finance themselves in the early 1950s, their willingness to adopt new techniques and to renovate their plant continuously, their exploitation of the low cost of labor and its high productivity, the absence until the late sixties of any significant trade union organization.”<sup>153</sup> The sudden division of power between the CGIL and CISL allowed businesses to take advantage of the chaos of trade unions.

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<sup>152</sup> Gino Bedani, *Politics and Ideology in the Italian Workers' Movement: Union Development and the Changing Role of the Catholic and Communist Subcultures in Postwar Italy* (Oxford, UK ; Providence, RI, USA: Berg, 1995), 64.

<sup>153</sup> Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 215.

This historically Catholic contention with industrialization held much weight within the debate of the CISL due to the theoretical and traditional mentality. There was also the notion in Catholic thought, rightfully so, that the concept of industrialization was no more a feature of socialism and communism than of capitalism. It is because of this understanding and the “given hostility to socialism, the only other concrete historical form in which its enthusiasm for ‘industrialization’ could find expression was within the capitalist reality of economic development.”<sup>154</sup> The adjusted form of thinking the impact of industrialization within the Catholic frame of thinking pushed CISL to start to pursue policies that were more favorable towards capitalism rather than socialism because of the nature of political partisanship. It should be noted that CISL would “always [stop] short of an outright and explicit acceptance of capitalism’s underlying assumptions.”<sup>155</sup> These assumptions are rooted in the traditional modes of approaching the effects of industrialization on the popular masses. Still, the motivation for this is in the actual social teachings of Catholicism. Since the teachings of Catholicism have always “condemned the excessive polarities of poverty and wealth which is associated with capitalism,”<sup>156</sup> there would be sharp disagreements with the political forces of the DC regarding economic policies that they would pursue and the capitalistic forces in Italy such as Fiat.

This mentality plays a massive role in determining the differences and similarities between CGIL and CISL and between the actual modes of the unions themselves. Although there are significant differences in ideology between Catholicism and Socialism, the similarities of the two ideologies drove the members the most. The

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<sup>154</sup> Bedani, *Politics and Ideology in the Italian Workers’ Movement*, 73.

<sup>155</sup> Bedani, 73.

<sup>156</sup> Bedani, 73.

socialists and communists of CGIL were most concerned with protecting the workers' rights and protection from factories and businesses abusing them. In doing so, the CGIL would perform strikes when they believed there was an infringement upon workers' rights. On the other hand, the Catholic members of CISL wanted to pursue policies that aimed to protect what they deemed as the 'poor and downtrodden members of society.' In both ideologies, they aim to protect the most vulnerable populations of society from the powerful. While ideologically, the members of both unions shared core beliefs regarding protecting the defenseless, the unions themselves seemed to be much more interested in the objectives of their corresponding political parties of either the Popular Front or the DC.

The CGIL often pursued the mobilizing of mass strikes to disrupt the DC's attempts at certain policies, such as integrating with NATO from 1949 to the mid-1950s.<sup>157</sup> On the other hand, the CISL would often allow corporations to take advantage of their labor force to slow down the agenda of the Popular Front and CGIL. *La Stampa's* coverage of a general strike highlighted this strategy. An article titled "The Strike of the State" covered a general strike that CGIL orchestrated in 1951 that aimed to provide greater protection to workers of the mass transportation systems, especially trains. Many workers have been suffering from a lack of job security and very little pay increase since 1949. However, during this strike, *La Stampa* quotes some of the leadership of CISL, stating that "I will go back to work tomorrow despite the general strike, CGIL falsely claims to be fighting for the wellbeing of workers."<sup>158</sup> De Gasperi, the Prime Minister and leader of the DC at the time, would be quoted in the article as calling CGIL's

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<sup>157</sup> Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 200.

<sup>158</sup> "Lo sciopero degli statali," *La Stampa*, April 24, 1951, 1.

demands unreasonable, and the member of CISL quoted also claimed that he came to his decision in autonomy from the DC. Even though the unions and the union members are working against their self-interest, there was a great emphasis on upholding the political posture of the DC.

Valenti is wrestling with two political forces with which he has been at odds during his political career. He has been in opposition with the Roman Catholic Church because he believed it was instrumental in allowing the Fascist party to gain legitimacy within Italy. Valenti believes that the Church is fundamentally fascistic in design. On the other hand, Valenti has to contend with the strength of the CGIL and how it is inextricably tied to the PCI and PSI while holding these two parties as having authoritarian-friendly inclinations due to their willingness to either actively or passively supporting the Soviet Union. While he does not necessarily broadcast these beliefs, it is a factor in how he analyzes the effects and goals of unions throughout Italy.

The strikes occurring in Italy during early June of 1955 were partially in reaction to Scelba's policies and partially in response to actual working conditions, as Valenti describes. Scelba had exerted a great deal of effort to weaken the role of the PCI in Italian politics, "Scelba's program therefore seriously menaced the PCI's power positions. In the hope of blocking the government initiative, the party hastened to counter-attack through the CGIL, the Communist-dominated trade union, proclaiming a series of strikes and manifestations with clearly political objectives."<sup>159</sup> Valenti recognized these political objectives and his handling of the event demonstrates how he had tried to navigate his beliefs with the political and economic realities of the PCI, the CGIL, and the workers

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<sup>159</sup> Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism*, 272.

themselves. During a broadcast, he mentions, "Among the many strikes in these days in Italy we have witnessed the strike of state employees which lasted several weeks and the strike of middle school teachers. In both cases they are white-collar workers as they are called in America; that is, of the least paid workers on the social ladder. When you, friends, think that among these parastatals and professors there are those who earn 60 thousand, and even 40 thousand lire a month, that is, 100 dollars, 60 and 48 dollars a month; I say a month and not a week, you will have the explanation of the malaise that winds between these categories of employees."<sup>160</sup> Valenti frequently tried to convey to his Italian listeners the relationship and events to the United States. This concern is consistent with his efforts to strengthen the listener's level of understanding, whether they be an American or Italian, perhaps to develop a sense of transnational empathy for those who may be disconnected from domestic or international politics. He emphasizes to the audience how he supports these workers on strike due to how low they are being paid. However, here he does not credit the name of the union currently on strike, a point to conceal the said organization perhaps or because he may have calculated how much he can elaborate on the air.

When it came time for Valenti to confront who may be responsible for the strike occurring in Italy, he focused on the workers themselves and their plight. He expounds on his previous point, "If there was really a strike that could not be ascribed to any Communist incitement, this is the strike of the parastates and of middle school teachers. There are those who argue that there are too many of these white-collar workers in Italy and that by applying reforms such as those developed by the Hoover Commission

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<sup>160</sup> "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Rassegna Bisettimanale degli Avvenimenti Italiani," June 8, 1955, 8, Box 2 Folder 2, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

in Washington, their numbers could be reduced, efficiency increased, and the salaries of the lucky ones left behind brought their place to a decent standard. But this is a different kettle of fish that is related to Italy's eternal poverty, overpopulation, and the abundance of labor. And woe to those who touched this point in Italy!"<sup>161</sup> Valenti focuses on how the workers ought to be the main concern for his viewers and to forget any political tact that the PCI may orchestrate. The argument presented was a common tactic amongst Italian-Americans. They had believed that the objective of the PCI was to maintain a level of poverty in the country to increase electability. As Danielle Battisti describes so well, "rather than acknowledge the legitimate ideological appeal of Italian communism, or concede the real strength and organizational abilities of the PCI, Italian Americans began to formulate the argument that communism in Italy could be easily combatted if only the Italian people were ably employed, properly housed, and sufficiently fed."<sup>162</sup> The public workers that went on strike are the center of the conversation; emphasis on the issues is at the center of the conversation, and the problems should be alleviated. Valenti even goes so far as to offer some slight suggestions that might be a temporary solution.

Valenti's outlook towards Nenni had deteriorated to the point in which he frequently attacks his political ability. It is here that we catch a glimpse of Valenti's humor, "the date of June 10 is approaching, we can be sure that it will not be the monarchists and the missini who have presented a motion of no confidence in the House to decide the fate of the Scelba government; it will not be the ineffable Pietro Nenni who pretends to be a miracle worker of the Italian political situation, but it will be some

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<sup>161</sup> "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Rassegna Bisettimanale degli Avvenimenti Italiani," 3.

<sup>162</sup> Danielle Battisti, *Whom We Shall Welcome: Italian Americans and Immigration Reform, 1945-1965*, First edition, Critical Studies in Italian America (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 37.



parliamentary groups of the party of Scelba, of the Christian Democratic party.”<sup>163</sup> The mocking of Nenni’s ability to navigate the intricacies of Italian politics demonstrates the deterioration of the relationship between the two figures and the objections towards the policies of the PSI. While the PSI had competed electorally as a “Socialist alternative” with the PCI, their reluctance to demonstrate any significant autonomy often put Nenni’s party in the background of Italian politics.<sup>164</sup>

### **Memory of Valenti**

On February 20, 1958, Girolamo Valenti died. How different organizations and newspapers remembered him provides a perspective of how his contemporaries’ memory. Through a series of obituaries, the remembrance highlights what Valenti meant to different organizations.

*The New York Times* titles him as “Foe of Fascism.” He is heralded as an “anti-Fascist, anti-Communist writer, editor, and lecturer.”<sup>165</sup> The political principles of Valenti are a consistent trend throughout the entire article. His contributions to *The New York Times* are noted for his insight on political developments in Italy. Valenti’s Cold War activism is commended through his role as “a leader of the Circolo Matteotti, an organization that supports liberal-minded anti-communism in Italy and exposes

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<sup>163</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Rassegna Bisettimanale degli Avvenimenti Italiani,” 1–2.

<sup>164</sup> Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism*, 290.

<sup>165</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: The New York Times Obituary,” February 20, 1958, Box 1 Folder 18, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

Communist and fascist propaganda among Italian-Americans.”<sup>166</sup> *The New York Times* was emphasizing the transnational activism Valenti had pursued.

A newspaper titled *The Advance* titled Valenti as “Friend of Labor, Foe of Dictators.” *The Advance* describes him as “one of the bravest and consistent fighters against fascism and a faithful servant of the labor movement in the United States.”<sup>167</sup> He is remembered for his work in organizing labor, particularly those of Italian descent in New York. Abraham Miller, the vice president and secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, gave a eulogy. In part of the speech, Miller says, “When the history of Nazism and fascism is written, the name of Girolamo Valenti will be found among those brave men, here and abroad, who carried the torch of democracy and liberty undaunted and unafraid. In the passing of this man, we all feel a little poorer, having lost a fighter in the struggle for a better world for all mankind.”<sup>168</sup> The absence of any of Valenti’s anti-communism activism should be highlighted from this obituary. He emphasized his political work during the Second World War.

*Divagando*, the magazine he had made contributions to in Italy. He was recognized for his work in the many newspapers he was critical in sustaining. In referring to his contributions to their magazine, he is remembered how “each year, he was in charge of compiling the special issue of Labor, since in the field of organized labor he was a recognized authority.”<sup>169</sup> The recognition of Valenti’s experience and skill of working for labor-minded organizations is a consistent thread through his obituaries.

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<sup>166</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: The New York Times Obituary.”

<sup>167</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: The Advance Obituary,” March 15, 1958, Box 1 Folder 18, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

<sup>168</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: The Advance Obituary.”

<sup>169</sup> “Girolamo Valenti Papers: Divagando Obituary,” March 26, 1958, Box 1 Folder 18, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

An article in *Giustizia* celebrates the history of Valenti and his political work through newspapers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, and his relationship with individuals such as Abraham Miller, Norman Thomas, and Luigi Antonini. In *Giustizia*'s obituary, a poem was submitted by Arturo Giovannitti, "In conveying the body of Girolamo Valenti not towards eternal rest, because the strong have no respite even in death, but towards the stake that warms and illuminates the living, it is necessary to take leave and viaticum of our language, in this Italian oasis in the heart of New York. – We do not mourn a fallen, but we celebrate a warrior who was faithful to his banner until the last breath. – From my bed of pain, where I have been lying for five years, the cry that lasted from him erupts from my spirit: Long live Socialism!"<sup>170</sup> The work of Valenti had a profound impact on both Italy and the United States. Valenti's goal of combatting totalitarianism and striving for greater freedoms for workers in both countries were remembered and appreciated by his contemporaries.

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<sup>170</sup> "Girolamo Valenti Papers: Giustizia Obituary," March 1958, Box 1 Folder 18, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.

## Chapter 3

### *L'Unità del Popolo*

The use of the newspaper was an important tool used by many different ethnic groups residing in the United States to formulate a cohesive identity. A medium in which an organization can influence the cultural, political, social, and economic identity within the greater framework of the United States. Newspapers attempted to create a sense of solidarity and clear group boundaries with different producers possessing different goals.<sup>171</sup> Most Italians immigrating to the United States “did not arrive with a collective Italian consciousness, and the social, educational, and cultural divides that had historically separated northern and southern Italians did not disappear upon entry into the United States.”<sup>172</sup> In the United States, there has been a long history of newspapers used to condemn or attack certain ethnic minority groups, primarily through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and this record is no different for Italian immigrants.<sup>173</sup>

This dissertation will investigate *L'Unità del Popolo*, a newspaper based primarily in New York, and their goal of bridging the transnational gap between the United States and Italy. *L'Unità del Popolo* was primarily funded by the “Italian American section of the International Workers Order (IWO), the [CPUSA]-affiliated fraternal organization.”<sup>174</sup> There are several factors to take into consideration when investigating

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<sup>171</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen et al., “The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1 (1992): 22–25.

<sup>172</sup> Peter G. Vellon, *A Great Conspiracy against Our Race: Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the Early Twentieth Century*, Culture, Labor, History Series (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 16.

<sup>173</sup> Christine DeLucia, “Getting the Story Straight: Press Coverage of Italian-American Lynchings from 1856-1910,” *Italian Americana* 21, no. 2 (2003): 213–14.

<sup>174</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro et al., eds., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, Italian and Italian American Studies (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003), 206.

this material. What is the target audience of the newspaper? What are the primary goals of the newspaper, and how do they seek to achieve them? How is the content presented? Moreover, what stories does the newspaper choose to cover and either directly or indirectly choose not to cover? These factors will contribute to understanding the transnational relationship between *L'Unità del Popolo* in the United States and Italy's politics.

### **Target Audience**

Vito Magli was a founder of *L'Unità del Popolo* and helped shape the direction the newspaper would take. Magli would eventually run for congress in place of Vito Marcantonio, would is often referred to as the most left-wing elected official to the Congress of the United States, but Magli would ultimately fall short compared to Marcantonio.<sup>175</sup> During the Second World War, Italian Americans started to redefine their understanding of Italian politics with participation from the United States. From 1943 forward, “Italian American leaders cited the Italian peoples’ acceptance of the Allied occupation and their participation in partisan activities as evidence of their shallow commitment to fascism and desire to restore a liberal government in Italy.”<sup>176</sup> Framing by these leaders was performed primarily through the usage of Italian ethnic newspapers, just as Girolamo Valenti consistently pushed back against pro-fascist tendencies within the Italian American ethnic community. The pushing for the restructuring of Italy’s

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<sup>175</sup> Gerald Meyer, *Vito Marcantonio: Radical Politician, 1902-1954*, SUNY Series in American Labor History (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1989), 44.

<sup>176</sup> Danielle Battisti, *Whom We Shall Welcome: Italian Americans and Immigration Reform, 1945-1965*, First edition, Critical Studies in Italian America (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 26.

government demonstrates how “these sentiments were reinforced in the ethnic press as well. In 1944, the antifascist (communist) paper *L'Unità del Popolo* proclaimed that Italian resistance fighters proved that ‘the seeds of democracy and liberty never died in the hearts of Italian people even under fascism.’”<sup>177</sup> This opinion of Italians having an aversion to fascism, even Italian Americans, is antithetical to the positions of many anti-fascist activists, such as Girolamo Valenti and *L'Unità del Popolo*, despite the two having different political philosophies.

The focus on the Italian population from a newspaper based in the United States is why this primary source is crucial in understanding the transnational dialogue key to *L'Unità del Popolo*'s mission. Vito Magli exhibits this medium, “the national secretary of the [IWO], recalled that in the Italian-language newspapers *L'Unità Operaia*, and, later, *L'Unità del Popolo*, which were closely associated with the lodges ‘we emphasized out Italian background... the paper reflected more the politics of Italy rather than the politics of the United States... most of the leadership of *L'Unità* went back to Italy.’”<sup>178</sup> The newspaper's coverage was very concerned with educating their readers on the development of Italy's politics, labor, economics, and social changes. The publication covered Italian and American stories from the start of the Second World War through the early Cold War period, spanning 1939 to 1954.

The target audience of *L'Unità del Popolo* chose a specific ethnic group with a specific political leaning. The readership being primarily Italian immigrants residing in New York. However, the level of readership is indicative of the amount of reach the newspaper had. Vito Magli had significant concerns that the newspaper's goals would not

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<sup>177</sup> Battisti, 26.

<sup>178</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 129.

be achieved due to two primary factors, age, and spread. Vito Magli “related how its circulation depended almost entirely on first-generation readers, who gradually died off, and were neither replaced by new immigrants nor by the second generation.”<sup>179</sup> The readership of *L'Unità del Popolo* comprised of a demographic that ultimately was unsustainable without a continued flow of Italian migration to the United States. Instead, the newspaper would cater to this niche population without successfully penetrating future Italian American generations. This issue does pull into question whether this newspaper is significant enough to analyze the transnational implications of their work. The publication can elucidate how ethnic newspapers can help individuals who do not have the means to consistently travel or maintain a dialogue with friends, colleagues, or family across the Atlantic Ocean stay in contact with one another. The exchange of ideas, culture, and politics and the attempt to translate these concepts for the reader base act as political power brokers.<sup>180</sup>

The political target audience of *L'Unità del Popolo* is aimed at a spectrum. Depending on the years, they intend to attract those who identify as labor-minded, communist, or socialist. From the founding of the newspaper and during Mussolini’s reign, the publication wanted to inform readers who were anti-fascist and sought a new political structure in Italy. After the Second World War had ended, this focus shifted to anti-McCarthyism, supportive of international communist movements, and those who wanted to keep up with the political developments in Italy in the new republic. In comparison, *L'Unità del Popolo* “represented a smaller readership compared to

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<sup>179</sup> Cannistraro et al., 206.

<sup>180</sup> Stefano Luconi, “The Italian-Language Press, Italian American Voters, and Political Intermediation in Pennsylvania in the Interwar Years,” *The International Migration Review* 33, no. 4 (1999): 1031–61, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547362>.

representative Communist-affiliated foreign language newspapers and to the commercial press published in [other] languages.”<sup>181</sup> The Italian American-communist newspaper reached substantially less than Yiddish, Greek, and Russian similarly politically oriented sources.<sup>182</sup> Other Italian-ethnic newspapers across the political spectrum and other ethnic newspapers operating within the same political sphere overshadowed *L'Unità del Popolo* due to its small size.

A severe challenge *L'Unità del Popolo* possessed was the competition with other Italian American newspapers, one of Valenti's chief rivals, Generoso Pope. Pope's *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* dominated the attention of Italian American readers, with it being “the largest Italian-language newspaper in the country.”<sup>183</sup> The strength and influence Pope and his newspaper enterprise possessed were highly sought after by politicians at all levels of government, including the President of the United States. President Roosevelt determined that it was vital “to cultivate Pope. As the bulletin of the authoritative New York-based Institute for Propaganda Analysis remarked as early as August of 1941, ‘Mr. Pope is a powerful political figure. Men who can sway the opinions of large blocs of voters are men to be reckoned with, and Mr. Pope is such a man in the Democratic Party.’”<sup>184</sup> The level of influence and support that Pope possessed gave him the ability to crowd out competitors within the same market. This was accomplished “during the 1920s, Pope purchased his competitors’ papers to own close to 70 percent of

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<sup>181</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 206.

<sup>182</sup> This subject still requires substantially more research. An analysis as to how and why different ethnic-oriented communist newspapers had been more popular or widespread could prove valuable in understanding how these systems are developed and expanded upon.

<sup>183</sup> Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 2012), 216.

<sup>184</sup> Luconi, “The Italian-Language Press, Italian American Voters, and Political Intermediation in Pennsylvania in the Interwar Years,” 1032.



the Italian-language newspapers in the New York metropolitan area.”<sup>185</sup> This strength provided that added effect that most Italians would subscribe to the ideas of Pope, including his and the *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*’s stance during Mussolini’s rule of pro-fascism.

## Objectives and Methods

It may be convenient to claim that the goals of *L'Unità del Popolo* align with the goals of the CPUSA. After all, *L'Unità del Popolo* falls under the International Workers Order (IWO) umbrella, which had strong ties with the Communist Party. However, suppose we were to delve into the policy goals of the IWO and their political objectives. In that case, we may find that the objectives of *L'Unità del Popolo* become a little more complicated. First, this dissertation will investigate the objectives of the IWO and use their framework to help shape the understanding of *L'Unità del Popolo*’s goals. Then this dissertation will consider the methods in which the IWO had pursued their goals and consider the level of transnational consideration that went into their policy choices and political practices.

As the name hints towards, the composition of the organization itself had “more than fifteen different nationalities, organized in their own national sections, plus native-born black and white workers.”<sup>186</sup> Each ethnic-sections would act as an almost autonomous unit that would seek to pursue labor gains given the unique state of the said

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<sup>185</sup> Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 216.

<sup>186</sup> Roger Keeran, “National Groups and the Popular Front: The Case of the International Workers Order,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 14, no. 3 (1995): 23.

ethnic group. The IWO would develop the Garibaldi American Fraternal Society for the Italian ethnic body of the labor organization. Most people who joined the IWO “were mainly attracted to this left-wing society because of the accident and death policies, and the IWO offered dental and medical clinics and sanitariums, too.”<sup>187</sup> The benefits provided by the organization helped increase the membership of the organization; by 1947, the organization grew large enough to have over “180,000 working-class members from across the political spectrum.”<sup>188</sup> While the IWO garnered much support and membership from those who would directly advocate for leftist politics, the organizations were also desirable to many individuals who sought a more significant safety net for a social safety net and work-related issues.

Just as *L'Unità del Popolo* had changing oriented goals depending on the years, so did the IWO. The initial goal of the organization in late 1929 and 1930 was to gain a charter from the New York State Insurance Department, even if “this was not a major goal of the founders, whose eyes were on the class question.”<sup>189</sup> The organization's direction would seek to solidify its foundation in both local politics and win a reward that would incentivize others to join. During the late 1930s, with the strength of fascism gaining international momentum, both the CPUSA and IWO would pursue a goal reflecting the state of international affairs. For the Communist party, the “chief task” of the Democratic Front became to ‘block the road to fascism,’ by unifying ‘all labor and progressive forces.’<sup>190</sup> In conjunction with the platform of the Tenth Convention of 1938

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<sup>187</sup> Robert Zecker, *A Road to Peace and Freedom: The International Workers Order and the Struggle for Economic Justice and Civil Rights, 1930-1954* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018), 1.

<sup>188</sup> Zecker, 7.

<sup>189</sup> Keeran, “National Groups and the Popular Front,” 25.

<sup>190</sup> Keeran, 36.

of the Communist party, the “IWO’s fourth convention that appeared in the *Communist* in the summer of 1938, [Max] Bedact endorsed ‘the democratic front... against reaction, fascism and war’ but stressed the IWO’s traditional class approach.”<sup>191</sup> This stance suggests that while the IWO was primarily focused on achieving material gains in the United States, the international consciousness was not absent in their objectives. *L'Unità del Popolo*, originally a branch of the Italian section of IWO, would develop and formulate an international consciousness to establish an outlook on their readership.

The philosophical foundation of the IWO was conflicted by the original leaders of the organization who sought to find answers to the class question in the United States. The inspiration for the leadership lies in the success of the Soviet Union but also found individual idols. The leadership “dealt with such revolutionary heroes as Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Karl Leibknecht and Georgi Dimitroff or American heroes and martyrs such as George Washington, the Haymarket martyrs, Sacco and Vanzetti, the Scottsboro Boys, and Angelo Herndon.”<sup>192</sup> The need to find a political culture to ground the organization in was complex due to the nature of the ethnic subgroups within the organization and desiring to find an idol or ‘hero(ine)’ while also attempting to creating a unified political identity. The basis of legitimacy of an organization or political party falls upon a historical-cultural signifier will become a trend throughout this dissertation. This identification became particularly difficult because “Marxist writings, however, pertained directly to the situation in the United States, where Communists had to deal not with oppressed nations struggling for national liberation, but with groups of immigrants and

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<sup>191</sup> Keeran, 37.

<sup>192</sup> Keeran, 32.

their descendants in various stages of integration into the nation.”<sup>193</sup> The challenge with creating a historical distinction between the foundation of other communist parties, the Soviet Union, and other European countries was incompatible with the IWO project.

The IWO's methods to achieve their various goals speak to the level of activism and mobilization that the organization was willing to commit to action. Within the IWO's arsenal, there were several options they were willing to use. One of the methods used was implementing strikes and demonstrations to display public solidarity or demand better working conditions.

Another and more appropriate method implemented was newspapers and publications to advocate for policies or combat issues. The tackling of racism within the United States became an issue for both the CPUSA and the IWO, although Robert M. Zecker suggests that the need for Moscow to push the party was needed to build enthusiasm.<sup>194</sup> However, when the IWO became much more racially aware, they would proactively seek out racial justice where they saw injustice. This realization was apparent during the Scottsboro trial where “as early as May 1931 the IWO and foreign-language newspapers serving its members were mobilized in fundraisers on behalf of the Scottsboro defense team led by the ILD (International Labor Defense).”<sup>195</sup> The steps taken were to ensure that the efforts by the organization were publicly visible, to make both material gains for racial equality, and to ensure they were in line with their parent organization, the CPUSA. Zecker also notes that it was reported, “The I.W.O. is taking steps to mobilize all of its branches to participate in this campaign led by the League of

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<sup>193</sup> Keeran, 24.

<sup>194</sup> Zecker, *A Road to Peace and Freedom*, 98.

<sup>195</sup> Zecker, 104.

Struggle for Negro Rights [LSNR] and the International Labor Defense” for the Scottsboro defense.<sup>196</sup> The full force of the organization pushed all ethnic subdivisions to focus their press coverage for racial justice.

Vito Marcantonio was a national figure who advocated for labor-oriented policies in his rhetoric and policy support, even winning seven terms in the House of Representatives. His national profile and political savviness allowed him to advocate for East Harlem, New York, fighting for ethnic and racial issues, primarily for Puerto Ricans, Italians, and African Americans. This connection is highlighted by how “Marcantonio headed the Board of Directors for *L'Unità del Popolo*, an Italian language weekly closely tied to the Communist Party. He was Vice-President of the International Workers Order (IWO), a fraternal society along nationality lines with over 200,000 members, which specialized in providing low-cost insurance.”<sup>197</sup> His advocacy for foreign-born individuals, especially those within his district, was particularly emphatic. During a debate in the House on whether foreign-born individuals should be allowed to receive federal aid, he argued, “Starve the alien father and you starve the American [born] children... No restrictions were placed against [aliens] when you needed men to fight and die. They were sent to war, and I know the widows of many who went... and you are going to deprive them of relief?”<sup>198</sup> Even though Marcantonio may not have been directly acting at the behest of either the IWO or *L'Unità del Popolo*, he indirectly carries their objectives and methods by calling for empathy from his opponents.

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<sup>196</sup> Zecker, 104.

<sup>197</sup> Meyer, *Vito Marcantonio*, 69.

<sup>198</sup> Meyer, 69.

About two to three years after Marcantonio had called for the allocation of funds to support struggling families, he would come back to East Harlem with a victory. “On 18 September 1939 Congressman Vito Marcantonio announced that the allocation of funds for the low-rent housing project had been granted by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and the low-rent housing unit would be located between 102<sup>nd</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup> Streets near East River Drive.”<sup>199</sup> The challenging of ‘nativist’ Americans contributed to actual material gains on behalf of Marcantonio’s constituents. Expressions of shaming, condemning, and advocacy for policy would be methods that L'Unità del Popolo would also employ.

## **Presentation**

How *L'Unità del Popolo* presented itself to the reader gives a sense of interpreting the information they had espoused. It is also essential to consider that many ethnic newspapers, especially radical newspapers, which were often weeklies, were frequently short-lived and could not maintain funding for continued publication to their demographic audience.<sup>200</sup> A testament to the relative success of *L'Unità del Popolo*, despite their overall lower readership, compared to similar political newspapers.

The presentation of *L'Unità del Popolo* is important as Kevin G. Barnhurst elaborates on the different factors that can influence the reader and the tone in which the newspaper wants to display. The graphic attributes of a paper, from how short the lines

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<sup>199</sup> Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 263.

<sup>200</sup> Gerald Meyer, “Italian Anarchism in America: Its Accomplishments, Its Limitations,” *Science & Society* 79, no. 2 (2015): 185.

are, the graphic traits of the text and headlines, and the size of pictures or pages, “conveys its personality through the accumulation of these visual cues.”<sup>201</sup> How a newspaper presents itself may not seem important in understanding the transnational implications, but understanding how L'Unità del Popolo views itself can provide additional insight into how to read and analyze its text.

The titles of the newspaper present themselves entirely capitalized. Barnhurst indicates that a newspaper's “headlines with bold, condensed, italic type made entirely of capital letters seem active; headlines with light weights and lowercase letters seem more calm.”<sup>202</sup> The entirely capitalized and bolded-print text of the paper does suggest that not only is it active, but it also considers the information in the newspaper as vital, stories that need to be read. The title dominated the newspaper's top for most of its lifespan; however, the title would take a different direction in April of 1948. No longer was the title center at the top in all capitalized letters, but instead, it was off-center to the left with a black background. The phrase *L'Unità del Popolo* was not entirely lowercased and in cursive with a small imprint of the Statue of Liberty emerging from the ‘del’ within the title. The redesign of the title could suggest a shift in direction within the newspaper or perhaps had the intention of attempting to attract a new readership with a softer title font. During the time of the title change, inclusions of crossword puzzles would be included to encourage a level of readership that may purchase it for entertainment.

The subtitle was *Settimanale Progressivo Italo-Americano* (Progressive Italian-American Weekly). The paper does not ever directly link itself to the IWO, the CPUSA,

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<sup>201</sup> Kevin G. Barnhurst, “JOURNALISM: The Great American Newspaper,” *The American Scholar* 60, no. 1 (1991): 108.

<sup>202</sup> Barnhurst, 108.

the communist movement, or even and form of socialism. Instead, the newspaper places itself within the spectrum of more commonly accepted American political terminology, progressive. The usage of this term is intended to portray to the reader that the political content of the newspaper will be ‘of the left,’ compared to the mainstream political content.

The newspaper had both articles and editorials in Italian and English. Most of the paper catered to the Italian-language readership, where the final page was usually reserved for the English-language section. *L'Unità del Popolo* wanted to ensure that the demographic base were either immigrants or first-generation Italian-Americans who maintained a strong connection with their linguistic heritage. For this dissertation, it will be appropriate to consider *L'Unità del Popolo*, an ethnic newspaper, as both Susan Olzak and Elizabeth West investigate why ethnic newspapers are either established or disappear. Their work emphasizes how “the existence of a newspaper directed at a linguistic group was evidence of the group’s ability to mobilize financial resources, communicate and interpret news for its community, and (sometimes) link geographically dispersed members.”<sup>203</sup> The establishment of *L'Unità del Popolo* as a smaller newspaper organization further supports the idea that the Italian community in New York also can survive despite competing with other prominent Italian ethnic newspapers such as Pope’s *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*. The survival of *L'Unità del Popolo* is due to its connections with the labor organization of IWO and the political organization or CPUSA, allowing for greater stability.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Susan Olzak and Elizabeth West, “Ethnic Conflict and the Rise and Fall of Ethnic Newspapers,” *American Sociological Review* 56, no. 4 (1991): 460, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096268>.

<sup>204</sup> Olzak and West, 472.



The price of the newspaper was set at an annual subscription rate of \$2.50 in the United States, \$3.00 in Canada, and \$4.00 in Italy. This price point would be raised in January of 1947 to \$3.50 in the United States, \$4.00 in Canada, and \$5.00 in Italy.<sup>205</sup> This price is not necessarily economical for the period, even for an annual expenditure for a regular household.<sup>206</sup> *L'Unità del Popolo* produced a newspaper once per week, with a single copy costing five cents. Presumably, the cheaper option for single copies gave a cheaper alternative relative to the annual subscription. Rather than offering a deal for the annual subscription, it may have been viewed as an option to donate extra funds to *L'Unità del Popolo*. Even after the price hike from 1946 to 1947, the single issues would still be sold at five cents a copy.

The price increase may have been because *L'Unità del Popolo* was keeping up with the purchasing power of Americans or if the newspaper was accounting for a loss of revenue from continued subscriptions. This claim is partially substantiated by restricting the newspaper, most notably between December 1947 to July 1948. After September of 1948, the publication would downsize the paper count from six pages to four pages. A factor for this reduction could be to save on printing costs on the manufacturing of the newspaper. Another factor to consider is that from December 1947 to July 1948, the newspaper would not have any pages dedicated to English, as it had since the enterprise's inception. This disruption is not explained in either the newspaper or in other related

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<sup>205</sup> "Notice to Our Readers," *L'Unità del Popolo*, December 28, 1946, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>206</sup> "CPI Inflation Calculator," [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm). The price for an annual copy before the price hike would be approximately \$37.50 in the United States, \$45.00 in Canada, and \$60.00 in Italy. After the price hike, the average price would rise to an estimated \$44.44 in the United States, \$50.79 in Canada, and \$63.49 in Italy. The calculations for these figures on buying power was calculated at 1946 versus 2021 for the first price point and at 1947 versus 2021 for after the price hike.

material. However, the correlation between the price hike, page reduction, and loss of the English section suggests that financial woes had temporarily hit *L'Unità del Popolo* that was difficult to recover.

The symbolism within the newspaper was also present, particularly three quotes that were present throughout every copy. Two of the quotations were presented only in the English sections (when present) at the top corners of the pages. These quotes would also become discontinued once the paper degrades to a four-page issue. The first quote was from Giuseppe Garibaldi, “Be united, o people, be united and you shall win.” Garibaldi has had a historical connection with being utilized as a symbol by both Italian socialists and communists.<sup>207</sup> He is often used to resemble struggle against authority and as a symbol of martyrdom. The symbolic nature used by *L'Unità del Popolo* was to surely make a connection with a figure strongly associated with the formation of the modern Italian state. A secondary notion was how Garibaldi, as a symbol, gave reference to “loss, rebellion, and revenge, the need to ‘rise up... in the name of unavenged martyrs... strong like men prepared to die’ or to the need to fight until ‘our last breath’ for our’ sad and frustrated fatherland.”<sup>208</sup> Garibaldi was emblematic of struggling, then failing, and still persistent to achieving a goal. The actions and role of Garibaldi present a level of humility, “in particular his well-publicized rejection of titles and wealth in compensation for his exploits seemed to make him a truly exceptional hero in an age of materialism.”<sup>209</sup> Garibaldi gave credence to the notion that the pursuit of status, fame, and wealth are

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<sup>207</sup> George Garrett, “A Wreath for Garibaldi,” *The Kenyon Review* 23, no. 3 (1961): 487.

<sup>208</sup> Lucy Riall, “Martyr Cults in Nineteenth-Century Italy,” *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 2 (2010): 278, <https://doi.org/10.1086/651534>.

<sup>209</sup> Steven Hughes et al., “Review of Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero, Lucy Riall; Garibaldi: Citizen of the World, Alfonso Scirocco, Allan Cameron,” *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 3 (2009): 709, <https://doi.org/10.1086/649104>.

goals that should not be glorified; instead, the rejection of these conceptions is a noble endeavor in itself, an endeavor that socialists and communists championed during the Cold War. Through persistence and unity, *L'Unità del Popolo* would seek to rally and form a level of solidarity between those who identified as Italian, American, or Italian-American.

The second quote was from Abraham Lincoln, also in the top corner of the English portion of the newspaper. The quote reads, “All that serves labor serves the nation. All that harms labor is treason to America.” Just as Communists and socialists co-opted Garibaldi, Lincoln was also taken in as a symbol of progress against the status quo. The choice of Lincoln, just as Garibaldi, was to draw connections with identifications of nationality. They were strongly emphasizing the American identity with their newspaper as well. In the United States, “communists made Lincoln an object of veneration and Americans who wanted to fight fascists in Spain joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The left-wing Mexican muralist Diego Rivera proposed pairing Lincoln with Lenin in his short-lived fresco at Rockefeller Center.”<sup>210</sup> *L'Unità del Popolo* was adopting Lincoln within the framework of symbolic gestures within the politically oriented newspaper.

The quote also emphasized the labor-oriented newspaper and readership the potentially longstanding understanding of the integral nature of labor within the United States. The legacy of Lincoln was used to define concepts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as liberty, which “in Lincoln’s view, meant that no man, ‘black or white,’ should ever have to bow ‘in personal or economic submission’ to any other man.”<sup>211</sup> The symbolic

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<sup>210</sup> Nina Silber, “Abraham Lincoln and the Political Culture of New Deal America,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 5, no. 3 (2015): 349.

<sup>211</sup> Barry Schwartz, “Collective Memory and History: How Abraham Lincoln Became a Symbol of Racial Equality,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (1997): 482.

importance of Lincoln within certain communist circles allowed the organizations or political parties to defend their activism or actions as patriotic rather than ‘un-American.’ A rather appropriate lens for *L'Unità del Popolo* to implement, given their goal, of bridging the gap between classes in the United States and establishing their political roots with the historical figure of Abraham Lincoln. The fusion of Lincoln and Garibaldi is also an example of transnational symbolism, a tool to help build concepts that allow different cultures to interact with concepts and meanings in a way the audience can understand.<sup>212</sup>

The final quote was on the top corner of the first page of the Italian-language section. Beside an image of the Statue of Liberty reads “*Libertà vo cercando, ch'è sì cara.*” (Liberty I am searching, that is so dear). A quote inspired from Dante Alighieri’s *Divina Commedia*.<sup>213</sup> A quote from Dante was probably used to invoke a similar response as the usage of Garibaldi for the readers of *L'Unità del Popolo* to draw a connection between the New York newspaper with classical Italian literature. However, the readers' chances of this quote being widely known may not have been high, especially given the fact that the small portion of the quote did not even denote it originating from Dante’s work. Regardless, the quote itself may be referencing the desire to liberate from the chains of mortal woes.<sup>214</sup> Just as the organization had strived for greater economic freedom, the quote juxtaposes the current state the reader is in and an ideal world. A

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<sup>212</sup> David B. Willis, “Transnaional Culture and the Role of Language: An International Scoll and Its Community,” *The Journal of General Education* 41 (1992): 75.

<sup>213</sup> The term inspired is used because in the original text of the *Divina Commedia* the actual quote was *Libertà va cercando, ch'è sì cara, come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta* (Liberty he goes searching, that is so dear, as who renounces life for it well knows.) Whether or not it was an accident or conscience choice to change the tense from third-person to first-person is unclear.

<sup>214</sup> P. Mariano Cordovani, “Il Centenario Dantesco e Il Rinnovamento Etico,” *Rivista Internazionale Di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliarie* 91, no. 347 (1921): 228.

notion in which Dante, as Riccardo Baldissone frames his work, ascribes “freedom as a civic virtue.”<sup>215</sup>

These three quotes presented on most published copies of *L'Unità del Popolo* explain how the newspaper wanted to present itself. As an object with a transnational purpose. The goal of melding together the different ideas and cultures in a single publication. The paper's use of these peripheral aesthetics provides a sense of their goal. To create a transnational newspaper, one offered publication support to the United States, Canada, and Italy. The publication sought to marry the culture of Italians, Americans, and Italian Americans to support the political aims of the IWO. The newspaper provided both news and public opinion pieces that had a clear socialist bent. The presentation and methods of the newspaper itself supported the intended objectives: outreach, merging of Italian and American identities, dissemination through English and Italian, and the building of a socialist coalition that sought to achieve labor-oriented policies.

## **Identity**

The content of *L'Unità del Popolo* sought to establish itself as a voice for presenting both news in the United States and Italy. The publication would seek to primarily expand the influence of the IWO and secondarily support and promote the CPUSA. *L'Unità del Popolo* displayed its identity in how it covers stories and the stories it chose to cover. The events and issues highlighted by the newspaper.

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<sup>215</sup> Riccardo Baldissone, “The Christian World Until the Threshold of Modernities,” in *Farewell to Freedom, A Western Genealogy of Liberty* (University of Westminster Press, 2018), 53.

The publication would promote events hosted by the CPUSA, such as an anniversary for Vladimir Lenin. On January 5, 1946, the publication announced the event would take place on January 15th, “in paying tribute to the great Russian revolutionary and world proletarian leader, and pupil of Marx and Engels, the memorial anniversary, the statement said, ‘will be of special importance to all Communist Party members and the broad masses of the people in view of the present critical domestic and international situation... and serve to make clear the intimate connection between the leadership and teaching of Lenin and the current fight for the Party to rally labor and the people in the fight for peace, democracy, high wages, jobs and security.’”<sup>216</sup> The tone of the promotion help demonstrates the relationship *L'Unità del Popolo* had with the CPUSA and how they had identified with the labor-oriented goals of the Communist Party. The level of praise handed to Lenin is not uncommon throughout articles of *L'Unità del Popolo*, often used as a justification for a friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union.

A key feature of *L'Unità del Popolo* is the motivation to issue a call to action with troubles in Italy following the Second World War. One of these motions was called for by Aurora De Gregorio. He had been an activist for African American rights and had reached out to one member of the Scottsboro Boys, John Williams, during his trial.<sup>217</sup> During which she had publically “called on Italian American radicals to condemn the Italian Judge Brancato, who said ‘I would give him twenty years if I could. Remember, she is a white woman.’ He forgets,” wrote De Gregorio, ‘that at one time in America, our Italian-American boys were looked upon as knife-wielding, suspicious villains, and often

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<sup>216</sup> “New York Communists to Honor Lenin on January 15th,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, January 15, 1946, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>217</sup> Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 257.

framed on similar outrageous charges, received little better treatment at the hand of the law.”<sup>218</sup> During her political activity, De Gregorio had advocated for racial and gender justice and educated Italian Americans on the economic and social role of the historical conditions they had been persecuted.

De Gregorio had also contributed to *L'Unità del Popolo* during the post-war relief effort for Italy that had dominated the news of Italian-American media. De Gregorio had called attention to the *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI) and the conditions they are seeking to escape. Within the column, De Gregorio describes how women are paid between 30 to 35 percent less than their male counterparts for the same work in the post-war state. She focused on a Sicilian peasant woman who addressed the congress of the UDI and how “she wanted to say that peasant women of her region will no longer tolerate these and other barbaric relics of oppression which Italian women have lived under for centuries which conditions were made even more unbearable by fascism.”<sup>219</sup> The focus on anti-fascism by De Gregorio was a concentrated point that had dominated the rhetoric of contributors of *L'Unità del Popolo* during its lifespan. This emphasis on wanting to liberate Italy from a fascist government and the creation of a stable democratic society following the war shaped the motivation of many Italian-American activists.

The column makes the extra leap of informing the readers on the political developments in Italy itself. De Gregorio explains how it was not just men who fought in the Italian Civil War, but “there were women at the Congress who had hidden themselves in the forests with the partisans and who had participated in many battles against the

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<sup>218</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 128.

<sup>219</sup> De Gregorio Aurora, “Let’s Give a Helping Hand to the Women of Italy!,” *L’Unità del Popolo*, January 12, 1946, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

German and Italian fascist armies. Some of them like Ada Gobetti, the vice-mayor of Turin, had given many years of sacrifice and toil to the underground movement in Italy, and had seen their husband and loved ones murdered by the fascists. Also at the Congress were veteran Communist leaders like Rita Montagnana Togliatti and Camilla Ravera.”<sup>220</sup> The focus on Italian women helped to identify how vital women were in the liberation movement and broadcast to *L'Unità del Popolo*'s readership to consider the ramifications the war had on populations that may not have been within the popular-imagination.

De Gregorio highlights several individuals such as Palmiro Togliatti's wife, Rita, and Ada Gobetti. The activism displayed by Gobetti during the “*Resistenza* represented a culmination of more than twenty years of antifascist activity for Ada Gobetti, it also brought the beginning of an awareness of the specific talents, needs, and rights of Italian women, more than a hundred thousand of whom participated in the *Resistenza*. This realization led her to organize other Italian women against the German occupiers and the fascist oppressors, found an underground women's newspaper, and solidify her views regarding women as a political force.”<sup>221</sup> Gobetti would not join the PCI until 1956 but was a symbol of women empowerment by those who followed the Italian Civil War figures.<sup>222</sup> The fact that she was not an outright member of the PCI or PSI, she was promoted by *L'Unità del Popolo* because of her symbolic importance for both the call to action and the cause for greater women's political and economic rights. The inclusion of Gobetti and the emphasis on her participation in the partisan war effort suggest how she

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<sup>220</sup> Aurora, 6.

<sup>221</sup> Ada Gobetti and Jomarie Alano, *Partisan Diary: A Woman's Life in the Italian Resistance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3.

<sup>222</sup> Gobetti and Alano, 11.



is significant to the identity of the 'Italian woman' and how Italian Americans should identify with these transnational actors.

The vision and objective of *L'Unità del Popolo* are never lost upon the piece. De Gregorio is writing to primarily Italian Americans. She directly reaches out calling, "it is well that we Italian-American women remember this: That if our own children were spared the fate of their cousins across the ocean, it was only because of the suffering and martyrdom of the peoples of Europe, including Italy, that the horror of war wasn't brought to our own cities. The debt which American and the Italian community here owes to the people of Italy can never be measured."<sup>223</sup> De Gregorio directly addressed the audience, Italian-American women, calling them to action. The transnational message of the call was to promote a greater degree of involvement in international politics and develop a more transparent link with their ancestral country. The column would promote a dance in which all proceeds from the event would go towards 'Relief for the children of Italy.' The event was sponsored by the "Women's Committee of *L'Unità del Popolo* and of the Garibaldi Society."<sup>224</sup> This piece of a transnational dialogue presents the mission of the newspaper and an understanding of its own identity. *L'Unità del Popolo* is very involved and concerned with the political development of Italy and wants to educate their viewership on their perspective of political, social, and economic problems.

The principles of the Garibaldi Society or the 'Garibaldi-American Fraternal Society' was the model in which *L'Unità del Popolo* viewed their identity domestically, as it was the Italian-American wing of the IWO.<sup>225</sup> The organization and the newspaper

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<sup>223</sup> Aurora, "Let's Give a Helping Hand to the Women of Italy!," 6.

<sup>224</sup> Aurora, 6.

<sup>225</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 22.

had hoped to shape the way the Italian-American community identified themselves. Several of the issues and causes of society are displayed in a column detailing the best ways individuals can commit themselves to a growing cause. In this piece of self-identification building, *L'Unità del Popolo* states that “our main set objectives: Making the Garibaldi Society a model of an Italian-American Society, a mass organization capable of rallying the Italian-American and the Italian-American masses on the basis of a program of civic and cultural activities in the interests of the Italian-American community and in support of the new democratic Italy as well as in support of the American people’s movement for peace, in defense of democratic rights, and for the attainment of extended social security.”<sup>226</sup> The article pronounced its self-identification to its readership; they do not try to create a subtle message or mince their words. The clear objective of the newspaper is to shape the political and cultural mindset of the Italian-American population. A mentality that is meant to develop an increasing awareness of Italian political affairs. The objectives intend to shape and melding the interest of both Italian and American political concerns, focusing on IWO’s mission statement of creating a class consciousness through the branches of the organization.

The building of this transnational consciousness had built upon an understanding of what was understood as fundamental values. As Rudolph J. Vecoli argues, “in the case of the other 14 IWO ethnic sections, the Italians draped themselves in the democratic traditions of their countries of origin. The Garibaldi-American Fraternal Society donned the mantle of its namesake and invoked ‘the glorious traditions of the Italian

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<sup>226</sup> “The Garibaldi Society Swings into Action: To Become an Asset to the Community,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, May 4, 1946, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

Risorgimento.”<sup>227</sup> The identification with democratic principles dating to the unification of Italy as a primary facet of the Garibaldi Society’s political stance and *L'Unità del Popolo*’s strong ties to both the Garibaldi Society and the IWO. Unfortunately, Vecoli does not provide any substantial evidence of these organizations necessarily drawing a direct connection of democratic support with the Italian Risorgimento. Instead, the emphasis on democratic principles found throughout *L'Unità del Popolo*’s writings seems to draw anti-fascism and labor-oriented democratic principles.

The IWO’s approach for democratic principles occupying a central role in their identity had not always been so straightforward. Max Bedacht, the General Secretary of the IWO, as early as 1938, believed that democratic ideals are not as crucial as other values within the organization. While Bedacht “endorsed ‘the democratic front... against reaction, fascism and war’ but stressed the IWO’s traditional class approach.”<sup>228</sup> The use of democratic principles by the IWO and branch organizations was primarily used to combat their greatest ideological foe of the period rather than as a genuine political method. Bedacht ultimately “tried to straddle the class approach and the new democratic front. On the one hand, he pledged to make the IWO ‘one of the most powerful elements for unification of the democratic forces.’ On the other hand, he reiterated his class view that ‘the fundamental object of the work of the language sections... is not to separate the masses of their nationals and their activities from the American masses, but to assure their unity and common action on their common behalf for their common interests.”<sup>229</sup> The conflict of commitment in defending the democratic aspect of the organization

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<sup>227</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 59.

<sup>228</sup> Keeran, “National Groups and the Popular Front,” 37.

<sup>229</sup> Keeran, 38.

became a reoccurring theme throughout the 1930s and early 1940s for the IWO. While the Italian-American branch of the IWO grounded their democratic principles in the Risorgimento and the symbolism of Giuseppe Garibaldi, there was a lack of a more modern, clearly socialist, Italian model for the Garibaldi Society to ground themselves.

Two issues compounded this lack of a consistent identity. Consider the main reason many Italian-Americans joined the IWO and would have been more likely to read issues of *L'Unità del Popolo*, benefits. Many Italian-Americans did not necessarily identify with the class struggle issues, the policies advocated for by Bedacht. Instead, “like IWO members in general, its Italian American contingent were not Communist Party members; many had joined for the insurance benefits. When the Society appeared on the attorney general’s list of subversive organizations in 1947 (the only Italian association to be so cited), membership declined rapidly.”<sup>230</sup> An essential reason for significant Italian-American involvement in the IWO was primarily to acquire a consistent and stable source of insurance for themselves. There seemed to have been a genuine lack of interest in the political and class underpinnings of the host organization.

The second issue revolves around the IWO’s inability to reach a consensus on maintaining clear political principles. It would only be after 1947 that “proletarian fraternalism that had emphasized working-class struggles and revolutionary values was completely replaced by a Popular Front culture that emphasized democratic struggles and the progressive and anti-fascist values embedded in the tradition of national groups, including the progressive values in the American tradition.”<sup>231</sup> The organization would move towards greater principles of democratic values, but the decade of indecision and

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<sup>230</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 59.

<sup>231</sup> Keeran, “National Groups and the Popular Front,” 42.

changing priorities may have confused the membership. The Garibaldi Society drew most of their historic symbolism from figures of the Risorgimento such as Giuseppe Garibaldi and Giuseppe Mazzini rather than Giacomo Matteotti and Antonio Gramsci.

Once the Second Red Scare had started to take effect in the United States, *L'Unità del Popolo* would be placed under the magnifying glass by some members of Congress. On April 12, 1947, the publication stated that “The attack launched against us by Congressman Dondero of Michigan is an attack against all Italian-Americans. It is an attack against the democratic heritage of the American people as a whole.”<sup>232</sup> Here is a clear example of *L'Unità del Popolo* emphasizing the democratic aspect of their identity, alongside the description of the Italian-American demographic as sharing the same principles. The New York Times elaborates on the charge by Dondero and how he “protested that anyone answering the Army’s ad in the *L'Unità del Popolo* should become ‘a top priority candidate for an exhaustive investigation as subversive’ rather than a member of the United States Army.”<sup>233</sup>

An essential part of *L'Unità del Popolo*’s defense is how they made sure to describe a significant editor to their publication, Michele Salerno. The column states that “they know that our paper is not Communist, although it is edited by a known Communist, Michele Salerno, who is a man of great integrity, respected even by those who do not share his political point of view, a fighter with whom we are proud to be associated.”<sup>234</sup> The declaration that the newspaper is definitively not a Communist paper expresses how either the publication was attempting to walk a tightrope between

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<sup>232</sup> “Attack in Congress Against L’Unità - A Blow to Democracy,” *L’Unità del Popolo*, April 12, 1947, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>233</sup> “Army Recruit Ads in ‘Red’ Papers Hit,” *New York Times*, April 3, 1947, 3, archive.nytimes.com.

<sup>234</sup> “Attack in Congress Against L’Unità - A Blow to Democracy,” 6.

publishing many articles that appeared to have the positions of Salerno or other communists. Alternatively, the newspaper truly believed that its identity was distinct from being labeled a communist organ.

The article later continues explaining how “the Congressman singled out our newspaper for ‘special consideration’ simply because our newspaper is fighting against the present disastrous course of President Truman’s foreign and domestic policy, simply because it has been in the forefront in the fight to prevent American imperialist from subjugating not only the peoples of Eastern Europe but also those of Western Europe including the people of the land of our origin.”<sup>235</sup> The increasing pressure of American members of Congress on socialist and communist organizations in the United States would cause *L'Unità del Popolo* to be directly targeted. They continued defining their international political identity with anti-imperialism with the added caveat that the United States’ policies in Italy directly intend on subjugating the country. While the interference in Italian elections has been relatively demonstrated, the country's subjugation is of a different charge. *L'Unità del Popolo* consistently accused and attacked the United States as an imperialist and aggressive nation, often seeking to cause harm to Italy, a defining piece of identity for the publication.

### ***La Parola and Valenti***

The relationship between *L'Unità del Popolo* and other Italian-American organizations and publications can also demonstrate a portion of its identity and give

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<sup>235</sup> “Attack in Congress Against L’Unità - A Blow to Democracy,” 6.

insight into how they believed the approach to transnational relations should be expressed. Their opinion piece about the publication *La Parola* sheds light on what was expected as appropriate action and the level of distrust between labor-minded organizations. Through their analysis, the expectations of what a socialist ought to do and how one should interact with Italy become an important debate. Within the past two chapters, the development and hostility Girolamo Valenti had with what he deemed anti-democratic totalitarian-sympathetic communist organizations were considered egregious. The reception and reputation in which he and his newspaper were perceived.

*L'Unità del Popolo* targeted *La Parola* through an editorial piece on June 29, 1946, titled as “What kind of Italian-American Labor Unity is Needed.” The article starts strong with, “The so-called socialist weekly *La Parola* calls for a united Italian-American Labor Council. What for? Oh, not in order to mobilize the millions of Italian-American workers in support of the movement to save the OPA nor for that matter to lead Italian-Americans in the fight against the imperialists’ drive to dominate the world of which the attacks upon our standard of living and upon the Labor movement are but preparatory steps!”<sup>236</sup> Discrediting *La Parola* from being considered socialist or even of the political left. This is a heavy accusation and colors from the onset the stance *L'Unità del Popolo* is taking. The defense of the Office of Price Administration (OPA) was essential for labor-minded organizations. The OPA had in 1945 “employed nearly 75,000 and enlisted the voluntary participation of another 300,000 (mainly urban housewives and union activists) who checked the prices and quality of the consumer goods regulated by the

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<sup>236</sup> “What kind of Italian-American Labor Unity is Needed,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, June 29, 1946, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

government.”<sup>237</sup> *L'Unità del Popolo* also presents some of their ideological goals of uniting the Italian-American demographic to strive for better working and living conditions and resisting imperialism in all their forms. Instead, the writer suggests that La Parola and their associates use these notions and individuals as steppingstones to tremendous success.

*La Parola's* stance concerning the developing politics of the newly established democratic Italy was also contested. The article continues, “the weekly which attacks the Socialist Party of Italy because it refuses to accept Antonini’s advice (which is not to cooperate with the Communists) wants a unified Italian-American Labor Council to bolster the reactionary boss of the dress-makers.”<sup>238</sup> Luigi Antonini was considered one of the founding members of the Italian-American anti-fascist movement in the United States alongside Valenti. Antonini was also the general secretary of Local 89 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. He “had worked closely with... the socialists Girolamo Valenti, Giuseppe Lupis, and Vanni Montana, and the anarchists Carlo Tresca, all major leaders of the Italian-American left”, or as the author wrote it “boss of the dress-makers.”<sup>239</sup> *L'Unità del Popolo* degrading the significance of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) may suggest that the writer believed that the organization does not contribute towards a society they want to pursue. Another interpretation is that the personality and influence of Antonini himself discredits the labor-minded organization of the ILGWU.

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<sup>237</sup> Nelson Lichtenstein, “Class Politics and the State during World War Two,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 58 (2000): 269.

<sup>238</sup> “What kind of Italian-Ammerican Labor Unity is Needed,” 6.

<sup>239</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro, “Luigi Antonini and the Italian Anti-Fascist Movement in the United States, 1940-1943,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 5, no. 1 (1985): 21.



The critical facet of *La Parola*'s policy towards the significant Italian parties was offensive to the reader, to the point where it had disqualified any of the credentials or anti-fascist historical record it possessed. As analyzed in the previous two chapters, the effects of the Second World War and dynamic shifts in the Italian political arena would see Valenti opposed to the PCI and PSI, despite initially possessing a positive relationship with Pietro Nenni. However, the quasi-integration of the PCI with the PSI into the Popular Front would cause Valenti to abandon support for the PSI. The Popular Front's sympathy towards the Soviet Union was deemed too close to totalitarianism for Valenti, Antonini, or *La Parola*. This response was not the first time Antonini was the target of *L'Unità del Popolo*, for they had "lambasted Antonini far more frequently than it denounced Mussolini. For example, after Marcantonio won the 1940 Republican and ALP primaries, the paper quoted this excerpt from his victory speech: 'The shark of Local 89, Luigi Antonini, who speaks against dictatorship, makes a dictatorship in Local 89 over the sardines.'"<sup>240</sup> The antagonism between the two organizations would escalate once Italy had become a democratic society, a political system in which the organs of Valenti and Antonini struggled against the organs of the Garibaldi Society and the IWO. A structure in which the former had advocated for a system devoid of any traces of authoritarianism and the latter advocating for the political parties that were most aligned with the CPUSA.

The column also expressed great concern over how the Relief for Italy campaign had been developing. The article continues:

In an article by Right (its former editor who is now reported to have been entrusted with an 'official government mission'), this weekly notes that the results

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<sup>240</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 213.

of the recent drive for Italian Relief testifies to the waning prestige of Mr. Generoso Pope who launched such a drive. In fact – it points out – only \$646,420.78 has been collected up to June 16 and of this amount well over \$350,000.00 have been collected by the Italian-American Labor Council headed by Antonini. Therefore, the Italian-American Labor Council and not Generoso Pope with his ‘Progresso,’ should lead the Italian-Americans.

‘La Parola’ is evidently putting on a show for the benefit of its readers many of whom are sincere socialists or antifascist workers. It would want these readers to believe that ‘their’ weekly stands against Generoso Pope as the leader of the Italian-Americans. But since the Italian-American Labor Council headed by Antonini works nicely with Pope, is it not clear that by calling upon all Italian-Americans to rally around Antonini’s Council, ‘La Parola’ is doing a favor to the Tammany Publisher whose prestige is really at a low point?<sup>241</sup>

The crux of *L'Unità del Popolo*’s grievance finally comes through, the premise that *La Parola* was making a bid to becoming the political organ of the Italian-American community, hoping to make gains on *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*’s success. There were several reasons why *L'Unità del Popolo* had desired for *La Parola* to succeed in this goal. The premise of Valenti and Antonini successfully galvanizing the Italian-American demographic would have ensured that they became the voice of these socialists, the same demographic which *L'Unità del Popolo* had targeted as their audience. Gerald Meyer crystalizes this relationship so well, “in a more general way; however, this hostility was engendered because Antonini’s advocacy of socialism directly competed with the Party for their identical core constituency, that is, the radicalized first- and the second-generation workers.”<sup>242</sup> The actual struggle between the two was an attempt to capture the political imagination of the Italian-American population, to sway the readership to follow their brand of socialist principles. Following the Second World War, Antonini would gain recognition by the Federal Government. When Generoso Pope and “the pro-

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<sup>241</sup> “What kind of Italian-Ammerican Labor Unity is Needed,” 6.

<sup>242</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 213.

Fascist leaders fell into temporary disrepute and anti-Fascism had gained a measure of respectability in Washington, Antonini moved to fill the vacuum. His anti-Communist, social democratic views combined with his political loyalty to the New Deal, made him infinitely more acceptable to Roosevelt than the foreign and often radical anti-Fascist Italian exiles.<sup>243</sup> The likes of *L'Unità del Popolo*'s often communist-sympathetic stances, enthusiasm for PCI's involvement in the Italian government, and close ties with the CPUSA made it very unlikely that they would ever receive the favor of the Federal Government.

The criticism of *La Parola* continues with accusations of maliciousness. The piece finishes off with:

'La Parola' calls upon the Free Italy Labor Council to join with Antonini in establishing an Italian-American Labor Council capable of rallying all Americans of Italian origin. Obviously, it is aware of Antonini's prestige is no higher than Pope's as was indicated by the Madison Square Garden 'floop' of two weeks ago. It feels that if the Italian-Americans are to be rallied, not against American reactionary circles, but against Stalin, Tito, and the communists throughout the world, Antonini's Council is not enough

But 'La Parola' does not feel the pulse of the Italian-American workers if it believes that it can mobilize them behind the American and British warlords, under Antonini or anybody else. The Italian-Americans know their enemies and their agents.<sup>244</sup>

Interestingly, *L'Unità del Popolo* seems to almost slightly praise Pope's media empire, relative to *La Parola*. However, the interesting facet about how the column finishes is the political factions that ought to be valued. The idea that not only should Stalin and other communist parties across the globe be held to a higher standard but, prescriptively, these

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<sup>243</sup> Cannistraro, "Luigi Antonini and the Italian Anti-Fascist Movement in the United States, 1940-1943," 35.

<sup>244</sup> "What kind of Italian-Ammerican Labor Unity is Needed," 6.

are the allies in which Italian-Americans ought to value. The framing of the entire article ultimately lays out two factions: allies and enemies. The allies listed combat *La Parola*, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and other communist movements. The enemies are the American and British war machines. The weight placed into these political entities also provided the readership of *L'Unità del Popolo* the lens through which they should view the developing global landscape.

### **Michele Salerno**

The works by Michele Salerno become major pieces in *L'Unità del Popolo*, often getting both Italian and English translations of his work. The articles by Salerno mainly focused on Italy's political developments and the changing dynamics of American relations in Italian politics and of the PCI and PSI. Salerno had protested the policies of James C. Dunn, the Ambassador to Italy. Ambassador Dunn was an advocate for normalizing relations between Italy and the United States following the Second World War. He “became a [champion] of leniency toward a former enemy that had been converted to the Allied cause.”<sup>245</sup> James E. Miller qualifies that Ambassador Dunn was a staunch anti-Communist and believed that the DC should avoid forming any coalition with PSI or PCI. Suggesting Ambassador Dunn pressured the Italian government from including either of these parties in exchange for the Marshall Plan.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*, 2014, 65.

<sup>246</sup> James E. Miller, “Taking Off the Gloves: The United States and the Italian Elections of 1948,” *Diplomatic History* 7, no. 1 (January 1983): 38.

Salerno expresses how “the new Ambassador said that his plan to support the so-called anti-totalitarian groups active within the Socialist Party of Italy is in harmony with the program of action proposed by Luigi Antonini to bring about the development of an independent Socialist Party, of a party determined not to work unitedly with Communists in the interests of the working class and of the nation.”<sup>247</sup> Salerno had advocated that the PSI and Nenni would be able to work independent of the PCI and set the direction of the leftist movement in Italy. Going so far as to say that “Nenni, who as a Socialist is not at all willing to let an outsider (even if he is the representative of a foreign government or precisely because he is one) interfere with the internal affairs of his Party. He will find there an Italian who is too respectful of the honor of his country to let anybody play around with the future of a nation which shall be independent.”<sup>248</sup> However, the dynamic between the PSI and PCI and Pietro Nenni and Palmiro Togliatti would prove dramatically different than how Salerno had predicted. The political and intellectual dynamic between these two will be explored later; however, the praise of Nenni is notable for two reasons. The first is the belief and trust in Nenni suggest that perhaps Salerno more strongly aligns with the PSI’s policies. The second is the possibility that he uses Nenni as a shield to support Togliatti without expressing his name. Throughout the entire article, neither the PCI nor Togliatti are expounded upon in any meaningful way.

The foreign policy positions of the United States were deemed imperialist by *L'Unità del Popolo* and Salerno repeatedly through the onset of the early Cold War period. Through the implementation of “Yankee Imperialism,” the United States was

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<sup>247</sup> Michele Salerno, “Is this the way to bring about Italo-American Friendship?,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, January 11, 1947, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>248</sup> Salerno, 6.

“drawing up this plan, propose to make of Italy an ‘anti-Communist force’ not only to ‘aid’ ‘other Mediterranean countries like Greece,’ but also and primarily to counterbalance Yugoslavia and even France.”<sup>249</sup> Salerno continues his piece building up how the United States was planning on building up the nations of Western Europe to potentially attack the ‘Land of Socialism’ and how the United States “cannot carry out an anti-Soviet policy without first adopting an anti-democratic and anti-national policy disguised as anti-Communist.”<sup>250</sup> The colorful language used by Salerno intended to stoke anger and fear of American involvement in Italian politics for Italian-Americans to become actively engaged with American foreign policy. Salerno advocated for Italian-Americans to voice their opinions and frustrations to their representatives.

Antonini’s image with Salerno would be no different than the general view of *L’Unità del Popolo*. Salerno often argued that Antonini and Pope were cut of the same cloth and ultimately shared similar political values. In a different piece, the criticism of Antonini supporting Truman’s policy of intervening in Italian politics revealed a greater understanding of Salerno’s position on Italian politics. Salerno explains that “Pope and Antonini know very well that any such intervention cannot be in the true interests of Italy, because it will be directed not only against the Communist Party but also, and primarily, against the democratic rebuilding of Italy, of which the Italian Communist Party is a most important element.”<sup>251</sup> Salerno elevates the PCI’s role for ideological reasons and believes that the PCI was the most potent democratic force in Italy. While he

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<sup>249</sup> Michele Salerno, “The Department of State wants to make of Italy another Military Base,” *L’Unità del Popolo*, March 29, 1947, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>250</sup> Salerno, 6.

<sup>251</sup> Michele Salerno, “The Height of Infamy,” *L’Unità del Popolo*, April 5, 1947, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

does not use any support evidence or examples to support his strong claim, it reveals what Salerno valued, the success and advancement of the PCI. The interference by other Italian-American political forces further frustrates Salerno because of the shared stance by both Pope, Antonini, Valenti, and other individuals who had led the charge against the Popular Front in Italy, despite Pope's opposition to the Italian-American socialists.

While a great deal of energy was exerted at attacking Antonini and other Italian-American socialists, this did not mean that Salerno would consider Pope an ally. In a criticism of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano's* headlines, "this sheet virtually calls upon the people of Italy to lynch, yes to lynch, Palmiro Togliatti and other Italian communist leaders. Its Washington correspondent, Drew Pearson, who had accused Togliatti of preparing an armed coup, was forced to admit on September 14 that 'according to newly arrived intelligence dispatches... Togliatti and his friends are not ready to take over.'"<sup>252</sup> The level of misinformation that had surrounded the Italian political system and election had dominated the news of Italian-American newspapers. Salerno would conclude that Pope and his newspaper's goal is for De Gasperi to bend the limits of democracy in Italy to halt the advancements of the Italian Popular Front.

After the 1948 election, *L'Unità del Popolo* and Michele Salerno would resort to conspiracy theories about how the Popular Front could have lost the general. Salerno would expound on how the Vatican was an army of the United States who had essentially given up its autonomy to defeat the PCI and PSI. In a comic image on the same page, there is a depiction of an Italian Catholic voter kneeling to a priest in which this dialogue

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<sup>252</sup> Michele Salerno, "Generoso Pope's Yellow Sheet Paves Way for American Domination of Italy," *L'Unità del Popolo*, September 20, 1947, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

took place: “Priest: Who have you voted for? Voter: For the Christian Democrats. P: Very Well. And how many times have you voted? V: Once. P: Well, then I cannot give you absolution.”<sup>253</sup> This level of conspiracy thinking was not unique to *L'Unità del Popolo* but in other publications as well. For example, *L'Araldo* in the Cleveland area had claimed “the celebration of the defeat of the Communist-controlled ticket of the Popular Democratic Front in Italy’s 1948 parliamentary elections offered the newspaper an opportunity to suggest easing emigration to ‘friendly’ countries as a strategy to further weaken Communism,” and in Italy it was also suggested that “emigration was ‘one of the most effective means in the struggle against communism.’”<sup>254</sup> The belief that Italian emigration from Italy had a considerable impact on the 1948 general election had also caused a stir for both supporters and opponents to the PCI and PSI.

Salerno would eventually be arrested on September 24, 1948, “for deportation on charges of being a member of an organization advocating for the forceful overthrow of the United States government was released under \$1,000 bond the same day of his arrest.”<sup>255</sup> He would be arrested with five others, all identified as Communists set “for deportation.”<sup>256</sup> The outcry of Salerno’s arrest would garner support from leaders within IWO, the Garibaldi Society, and the public. He would receive declarations from the American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, Vito Marcantonio, and Vito Magli.<sup>257</sup> There would be many readers who would write into the newspaper to defend

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<sup>253</sup> Michele Salerno, “Il Papa al servizio dell’imperialismo americano,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, June 12, 1948, 1, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>254</sup> Laura E. Ruberto and Joseph Sciorra, eds., *New Italian Migrations to the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 38.

<sup>255</sup> “Salerno Hearing Set,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, October 9, 1948, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>256</sup> “5 Aliens Arrested as 2 get Hearings,” *New York Times*, September 25, 1948, 8, archive.nytimes.com.

<sup>257</sup> “Deportation of Salerno Must be Fought!,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, October 2, 1948, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.



Salerno. One example would come from Simon W. Gerson, a Communist Candidate for City Councilman from Brooklyn who commended how “he exposed the Marshall Plan and its degrading effect on the Italian people.”<sup>258</sup> The number of write-ins to *L'Unità del Popolo* on behalf of Salerno also indicates and further supports that a portion of the base of the readership was sympathetic to Salerno’s political goals.

The impressive aspect of Salerno’s trial was the level of transnational support he had accumulated from Italy. On October 25, 1948, students in Milan had protested Salerno’s arrest and wrote a long letter to *L'Unità del Popolo*. Part of the letter reads, “today, in the light of the facts, all have understood that the Marshall Plan does not serve to reconstruct Europe, but to prepare the economic, political and military basis for a new imperialist war for which only the sons of the people would spill blood and only the capitalists of the whole world would draw splendid profits. Today everyone has learned to judge not by demagogic words and promises, but by deeds.”<sup>259</sup> The letter addresses some of the consistent claims that Salerno had levied against the United States and the DC government of Italy. The transnational significance of international protests for an editor of a small Italian-American newspaper is profound. The exchanging of ideas across the Atlantic Ocean had spurred a sense of solidarity between these groups of people.

Even a month and a half later, 6,000 Italian Metal Workers in the province of Naples would protest in solidarity for Salerno. The Federation of Metal Workers stated, “upon learning of the attack upon the Editor of *L'Unità del Popolo*, Michael Salerno,

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<sup>258</sup> “Declarations of Solidarity,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, October 9, 1948, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>259</sup> “Milanese Students Protest Salerno Arrest,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, November 6, 1948, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

have been profoundly outraged and wonder how in a country which boasts priority in liberty and democracy, such attempts to restrict freedom of thought and of the press may be explained.”<sup>260</sup> The international support between both student and labor bodies demonstrates a significant level of transnational dialogue between an American organization such as *L'Unità del Popolo* and Italian political parties and organizations.

Through several years of trials, Salerno would ultimately lose. According to Gerald Meyer in 1951, “Salerno, and other Italian American Communist Party members and sympathizers, including naturalized citizens with American-born spouses and children, were deported.”<sup>261</sup> However, there appears to be a discrepancy in this historical account. According to the *New York Times*, by November 24, 1950, Salerno had agreed to leave “under a warrant of deportation voluntarily” and that he had probably “felt that there was more freedom in Italy than here for a man like him.”<sup>262</sup> The self-deportation of Salerno marked a crucial moment for *L'Unità del Popolo* and the level of Italian-American socialist dialogue in the United States. In 1951, *L'Unità del Popolo* would officially cease publication, and the largest Italian-American communist-sympathizing newspaper would halt.

*L'Unità del Popolo* demonstrated itself as a political entity that had sought to communicate with a very particular audience and cultivate a readership that was invested in its political goals. The ability for the publication to inject transnational discourse and interaction into the reader-base is exemplified by the focus on coverage of news surrounding Italy. The personalities of Pope, Antonini, Valenti, and Salerno all provide

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<sup>260</sup> “6,000 Italian Metal Workers Protest Arrest of Salerno,” *L'Unità del Popolo*, December 25, 1948, 6, The New York Public Library - Schwarzman Building - Periodicals and Microforms.

<sup>261</sup> Cannistraro et al., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 219.

<sup>262</sup> “Red Editor is Deported,” *New York Times*, November 24, 1950, 29, archive.nytimes.com.

case studies on the relationships and opinions of these individuals upon one another. The objective of creating a newspaper that sought to create a transnational dialogue does indicate an impressive success, especially given the size of *L'Unità del Popolo*.

## Chapter 4

Estero: Stati Uniti

### The Establishment of PCI's Correspondence

The following two chapters will investigate the political and intellectual connections based on the transnational dialogue that had been present between the *Partito Comunista Italiano* and individuals and organizations based in the United States. The focus of this chapter will investigate the political objectives, policies, and understandings of international discussion with American organizations. The outreach of the PCI to these groups and vice versa will present the political and intellectual exchanges through a transnational lens.

### **The PCI in the Post-War Period and Relations with Foreign Entities**

It is fundamental to understand the groundwork of the *Partito Comunista Italiano*'s history and relationships. The framework of the ascension of the PCI had profound impacts on both the way the PCI interacted with foreign communities and how the PCI identified its objectives. The relationship between the PCI and domestic political parties, such as the two other most prominent ones, the DC and PSI, helped shape the projection of the PCI's image to the international community. The United States and the Soviet Union were very interested and involved in developing the PCI; however, this dissertation will not focus on transforming these relationships with state-entities but instead with smaller organizational ones. The PCI's rhetoric and actions went through a

dramatic shift throughout its lifetime. Understanding where it originates is crucial to understanding how and why there is a robust dialogue between communities in the United States and the PCI. The following two chapters will elaborate and analyze how and why the PCI had such an extensive dialogue with the foreign entities, some identifying on ethnic characteristics and others on political characteristics.

After the Second World War ended, Italy has declared itself a democracy with universal suffrage, free elections, and political parties.<sup>263</sup> Italy had started to experience political freedom, which ceased to exist under Fascist rule. Understanding the origins of the success of the PCI is fundamental in understanding its ability and willingness to extend beyond the borders of Italy.

In the broader scope, the international community was taking on a different shape. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to approximately 1945 saw a significant shift in the type of polarity in the world. In this period, there was a system of multipolarity, which is the distribution of power in which more than two nation-states possess nearly equal military, cultural, and economic influence. After the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, the international community was being defined within a system of bipolarity which had a distribution of power between two nation-states that had the majority of military, cultural, and economic influence in the international community. These two powers being the United States and the Soviet Union, competing spheres of influence vying for more power. Italy was in-between the competing spheres following the Second World War with a Western and Eastern bloc developing, eventually culminating in the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Economic

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<sup>263</sup> Christopher Duggan and Christopher Wagstaff, eds., *Italy in the Cold War: Politics, Culture and Society 1948-58* (Oxford ; Washington, DC: Berg, 1995), 6.

Community (EEC) in the Western block and the development of the Warsaw Pact in the Eastern bloc.

As a focal point in the developing Cold War, Italy was in a position in which it was pressured to decide to align Italy's policies with those of the Western or Eastern blocs. Italy possessed the largest communist party in Western Europe, *Partito Comunista Italiano*. Italy would officially align itself with the Western bloc by joining NATO in 1949 and the EEC in 1958, founding both organizations.<sup>264</sup> The focus of this paper is to observe the attitudes of the PCI towards these international organizations. Palmiro Togliatti, the successor to Antonio Gramsci as the leader of the PCI, attempted to keep a strong bond between his party and Moscow. However, this did not exclude the PCI's communications with other foreign parties or organizations.

It is imperative to understand why there was so much appeal for 'the left,' including the *Partito Socialista Italiano* (PSI), within Italy before analyzing the policies of 'the left' towards the Western bloc organizations. After experiencing a "historic failure of the unified Italian state to provide a domestic paradigm for national identity," it is clear to understand the craving for non-Italian models of the Soviet Union and the United States. Post-1945, much of the old state and many of its personnel were carried over into the Republic. This legacy weakened the sensation that there had been a break with the past. This continuum allowed the *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) "leaders to translate, in a manner reminiscent of fascism, the growing climate of intolerance towards the communists and socialists into often brutal repressive measures."<sup>265</sup> This notion gave

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<sup>264</sup> Donald Sassoon, *Contemporary Italy: Economy, Society, and Politics since 1945*, 2nd ed (New York: Longman, 1997), 4.

<sup>265</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, *Italy in the Cold War*, 6.

many Italians the impression that there were still elements within the political structure fundamentally fascist. During the Second World War, Moscow had gained a reputation that was consolidated “with the victory at Stalingrad, as the supreme ideological and material headquarters of the fight against fascism.”<sup>266</sup>

Another component for appeal with ‘the left’ lay in the political ideology of most Italian partisans. After the abdication of Mussolini in 1943, the partisans launched violent attacks on the regions directly controlled by Nazi Germany and in the Republic of Salò. Approximately 41% of the partisans were communists of the ‘Garibaldi Brigade,’ and 29% of the partisans were socialists.<sup>267</sup> With over 70% of the partisans who were politically aligned to support the ‘the left,’ the PCI and PSI received much praise following the war's end. There was also a particular disdain towards British and American troops who were pushing through Southern Italy. In one instance the:

Days of the occupation, Americans and British requisitioned homes and frequently looted household goods, while the cafes and restaurants in Bari which had been requisitioned for the sole use of Allied troops were surrounded by starving children waiting to rush in to take any leftovers from the plates... In [Naples], there was much drunkenness among the allied troops, and prostitution rose to enormous proportions as mothers and sisters found it was the only way they could procure Allied rations to feed their starving families.<sup>268</sup>

The opinion of some Italians in the South was stained with poor experiences with allied troops being taken advantage of and abused. There were many cases where partisans and civilians would actually leave the allied zones and travel to the fascist-controlled regions

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<sup>266</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, 10.

<sup>267</sup> Richard Lamb, *War in Italy, 1943-1945: A Brutal Story*, 1st Da Capo Press ed (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 35.

<sup>268</sup> Lamb, 5.

to obtain nourishment and then return to the allied sectors.<sup>269</sup> These are significant factors for the appeal and support for ‘the left’ immediately following the war.

The general election of 1946 could be considered a scenario that was too good to be true. The provisional government consisted of the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale* (National Liberation Committee), the three main parties participating in the partisan movement. With no party gaining enough votes to capture political power, a government consisting of the DC, PCI, and PSI. After a year, it would prove that the scenario was too good to be true with the government no longer consisting of the PCI and PSI. This disconnect led to much tension between the DC, PCI, and PSI, forming the *Fronte Democratico Popolare* (Populist Front) to compete.

The general election of 1948 proved to be a decisive election with both parties (DC and Populist Front) receiving financial aid from the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively. The DC would win the Chamber of Deputies and Senate election, placing the Populist Front as the opposition party. This standoff would remain consistent for over fifty years until 1994. The Populist Front would remain the opposition party, with the DC controlling as the Majority party. Togliatti was the head of the PCI, and Pietro Nenni was the leader of the PSI. Nenni modeled the PSI as closely as possible with the PCI until 1956. “In foreign policy it was virtually indistinguishable from the PCI.”<sup>270</sup> Therefore, when speaking about the Populist Front, there is an understanding that the strict discipline of the PSI saw them aligned with the PCI until 1956. This simplification allows for a more transparent analysis of the Populist Front.

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<sup>269</sup> Lamb, 5.

<sup>270</sup> Sassoon, *Contemporary Italy*, 4.



For this dissertation, the foreign policy positions of the PSI will be considered in line with the PCI. This relationship is due to the significant influence the PCI had in directing the Popular Front and the willingness of the PSI and Nenni to succumb to pressure. As stated previously, Nenni had believed that working closely with the PCI was the most straightforward path to gaining and growing political influence in Italy. This connection would remain relatively stable until the Soviet invasion of Hungary.

It is essential to understand the motivation of the Populist Front's stance on creating the Western bloc organizations. It is possible to determine the motivation between the Populist Front and Moscow. Another element to recognize is how much autonomy Togliatti possessed from the Soviet Union. The interpretation of the Populist Front's aggressive stance towards these organizations is either marching orders from Stalin or a genuine belief that it was in Italy's best interest to stay distant from NATO and the EEC.

The relationship between the PCI, as a party, and Moscow was slightly different from that of Togliatti's relationship. The PCI felt it was pushed into apparent dependence with the Soviets. The PCI ascribed such faith in the Soviet Union as an "omnipotent, redemptive and liberating force."<sup>271</sup> The death of Stalin is an important event that could describe the inspiration that Stalin had instilled in the PCI. A party leader described that as soon as the papers came out, "the workers wept uncontrollably."<sup>272</sup> The PCI's official newspaper *L'Unità* described Stalin as "the man who has done most for the human race."<sup>273</sup> The amount of respect that the PCI had bestowed upon Stalin was incredible.

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<sup>271</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, *Italy in the Cold War*, 121.

<sup>272</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, 18.

<sup>273</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, 19.

The workers and party leaders ascribed with owing everything in their life to Stalin, not even Karl Marx or Lenin. There was even an account of a party member's feelings upon Stalin's death as feeling he had become "suddenly an orphan."<sup>274</sup>

Togliatti possessed a strong link with Moscow and Stalin through his years of exile. After Mussolini banned the PCI in 1926, Togliatti fled to Moscow and resided there until 1944. Togliatti led the forces as the partisan movement was in full effect. Elena Agarossi and Victor Zaslavsky, authors of *Stalin and Togliatti: Italy and the Origins of the Cold War*, argue that Togliatti and the other PCI leaders were fundamentally different subservient to Stalin and did their best to promote Soviet interests. They argue that Togliatti was above all a Stalinist and that he remained one for years after Stalin died in 1953 and the Soviet Union had repudiated much of his legacy. They argue that Stalin ordered Togliatti to play a moderating role in Italian politics because it was not yet ripe for a showdown with capitalism. Agarossi and Zaslavsky rely not only on Togliatti's papers but those on the Kremlin, especially the highly detailed reports sent in by the Soviet ambassador in Rome. Stalin forced the PCI to reject and work against the Marshall Plan, despite losing much support from Italian voters who wanted American aid. It was in the "realm of foreign policy, however, that Stalin's hand weighed the heaviest."<sup>275</sup> The issue of Trieste, contended between Italy and Yugoslavia, the destiny of the tens of thousands of Italian soldiers who never returned from the Russian front, and the debate over the Marshall Plan were all critical issues of the time. In each of these cases, Stalin persuaded the PCI leaders to assume positions that they knew

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<sup>274</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, 18.

<sup>275</sup> Elena Aga Rossi, *Stalin and Togliatti: Italy and the Origins of the Cold War*, Cold War International History Project Series (Washington, D.C. : Stanford, Calif: Woodrow Wilson Center Press ; Stanford University Press, 2011), 108.

would be detrimental to the political success of their party. In portraying the territorial ambitions of Tito's Yugoslavia as legitimate, in not pressing the Soviet Union for information about the missing Italian soldiers, and in rejecting American aid as imperialistic.<sup>276</sup> Togliatti exposed his party to ongoing accusations of national betrayal, thereby alienating crucial sections of Italy's public. These positions strongly contributed to the 1948 electoral defeat of the coalition between the PCI and the PSI led by Pietro Nenni.

The political significance of Trieste was ever-present in Italian politics. It dominated the columns of newspapers of Italy ranging from *Il Messaggero* to *L'Unità*. The elaboration of Trieste through a transnational focus on American, Italian, Soviet, and Yugoslavian sources would provide tremendous insight on the complicated development of Trieste in Early Cold War development.

In contrast to Agarossi and Zaslavsky, Duggan describes Stalin and Togliatti as not being as paternal. The link with Moscow was a kind of lifeline, guaranteeing that the Italian 'left' would never be isolated to fend for themselves against the United States and the DC. This lifeline, Duggan describes, was "however more psychological than real: in practice, Stalin would never have risked a showdown with the West."<sup>277</sup> The relationship between Togliatti and Moscow is described as far from straightforward. Togliatti believed that the best hope for the PCI "in the long-term was to develop a distinct 'national' strategy and ideology."<sup>278</sup> This strategy would, in effect, create a greater distance between the PCI and Moscow. It is also suggested that Stalin had other options

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<sup>276</sup> Aga Rossi, 89.

<sup>277</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, *Italy in the Cold War*, 10.

<sup>278</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, 18.

within the PCI if he intended to mold a party to march to his orders. Within the PCI, Togliatti faced a serious rival named Pietro Secchia. Secchia was considered a hard-lined follower of Stalinism and better aligned with Stalin's policies; however, Stalin still opted to prefer Togliatti to Secchia. This preference could stand as a testament that Togliatti was still supported without being replaced even though not completely aligned with Stalin. This contrast could suggest that Togliatti planned to create an 'Italian Road to socialism.'

Under the leadership of Togliatti, the PCI had since 1944 pursued a strategy of maintaining a 'presence' in all areas and sectors of Italian society. At the trade union level, they promoted the "collaboration and unification of Catholic, Socialist, and Communist labor organizations."<sup>279</sup> At the constitutional level, they voted for a constitution of the republic that guaranteed traditional liberal principles and endorsed special rights and guarantees for the Catholic Church and a mixed economic system. At the party level, they aimed for closer relationships among the three largest parties that represented the Catholic and Marxist masses. Not only did they mount stiff opposition to any and all domestic efforts to isolate them, but they tried, as far as possible, to resist external pressures from the Soviet bloc for a sharp break with non-Marxist forces. Togliatti "wanted to accept the Marshall Plan but was forced by the Russians to oppose it."<sup>280</sup> At the time of the founding conference of the Cominform in September 1947, the Italian delegates took a bitter lashing from their East European colleagues for their strategy and their failure to launch a revolutionary offensive.

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<sup>279</sup> Norman Kogan, "Italy, the European Community, and the Alliances," *International Journal* 32, no. 2 (April 1, 1977): 272.

<sup>280</sup> Kogan, 274.

After the PCI failed to assume control in the 1948 general election and became a party of permanent opposition, the main battleground between the Western and Soviet blocs shifted from Eastern Europe to the Far East. Moscow had determined that the “importance of the PCI in Italian foreign policy and international affairs diminished accordingly.”<sup>281</sup> Agarossi and Zaslavsky insist that the common denominator in all of the campaigns against the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the EEC was to “weaken Italy’s international role without any realistic possibility of modifying Italy’s membership in the Western bloc.”<sup>282</sup> This idea that Togliatti and the PCI would deliberately attempt to hold Italy back for the sake of preventing a possible ‘strong Italy’ to oppose the Soviet sphere is counter-productive, self-destructive, and uncharacteristic of Togliatti’s *modus operandi*. This analysis is overstressing. This critical depiction of Togliatti does not fit his personality or actual historical developments. Instead, through Togliatti’s and the PCI corresponding with actors in the United States, we get a sense of this foreign outreach’s vital message and goal.

Cesare Merlini describes the PCI as a unique case in the realm of the European Community. First of all, it has its roots in the world Communist movement. It has a long-lasting tradition of international relations, not only in terms of inter-party relations but also because of the identification of several Communist parties with their states and inter-state relations. In the second place, the Italian Communist Party has always been in opposition, apart from the brief period after the war, and has felt the need to qualify its stand concerning the majority. Approaching the area of government “has meant also that it has had to find a new foreign policy line, which takes into account the international

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<sup>281</sup> Aga Rossi, *Stalin and Togliatti*, 278.

<sup>282</sup> Aga Rossi, 278.

environment of the country, namely the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance.”<sup>283</sup> Hence the Communists' relatively intense activity in the field of foreign policy.

The Italian government committed the country to complete participation in all West European and Atlantic groupings, the “organization for European Economic Cooperation, NATO, the European Coal and Steel Community, and the Western European Union. The Communists and Socialists opposed all these commitments.”<sup>284</sup> They developed the slogan “Italy out of NATO and NATO out of Italy.”<sup>285</sup> Indeed, they appeared to follow the Soviet positions on foreign policy right down the line. In domestic politics, however, the Communists maintained the strategy of a continuing presence in all sectors of Italian life, of a continuing collaboration among political forces of differing ideological inspiration. They never made any effort, even after the attempted assassination of Togliatti, to try for a revolutionary overthrow of the parliamentary regime.<sup>286</sup> The attempts to undercut the Marshall Plan slowed down the rate of Italian economic recovery, but Communist opposition to foreign policy choices was otherwise confined to rhetoric.

The reasoning for opposing NATO and the EEC came from various concerns within the PCI and Togliatti. When the PCI first encountered the EEC, they were operating within firm ideological and political constraints. These views aligned very

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<sup>283</sup> Cesare Merlini, “Italy in the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance,” *The World Today* 31, no. 4 (April 1, 1975): 160.

<sup>284</sup> Joan Barth Urban, “Moscow and the Italian Communist Party: From Togliatti to Berlinguer,” in *Moscow & the Italian Communist Party: From Togliatti to Berlinguer (HIA Book Collection)*, 1986, 89.

<sup>285</sup> Lucia Quaglia, “‘The Ebb and Flow’ of Euroscepticism in Italy,” *South European Society & Politics* 16, no. 1 (March 2011): 42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608740903432367>.

<sup>286</sup> Aga Rossi, *Stalin and Togliatti*, 270.

much with those “expressed by the Moscow Institute for World Economy and International Relations.”<sup>287</sup> The PCI started to use the rhetoric of the imperialistic intentions of the United States’ guidance. It was considered that “the Economic Community would automatically be dominated by monopoly capitalism so as to strengthen the dominance of the United States in Western Europe and within that dominance the stronger economic interests of Germany would enjoy a privileged position.”<sup>288</sup> This concern was an element directed by Moscow, but the mindset of the PCI and Italy’s condition needs to be taken into consideration. The PCI was concerned if Italy would find itself in an economic block within which its powers of independent economic development would be limited, as would its ability to implement structural reforms designed to curtail the “powers of monopoly capital.”<sup>289</sup>

The ‘Italian Road to Socialism’ was a significant feature that helped illustrate the differences between the PCI and Moscow. The PCI had asserted the need for the working class to become the “national class and to become the protagonist of national unity”<sup>290</sup> in the context of the division between the north and the south. This theme derived from Togliatti’s predecessor, Gramsci, permitted the Party to fight effectively for the political appropriation of such traditionally ‘bourgeois’ concepts as “constitution,’ ‘democracy,’ ‘parliament,’ and the ‘nation.’”<sup>291</sup> The PCI was very ready to take tie the Communist cause with that idea of Italian nationalism. This connection was the primary cause for the Populist Front to come into conflict with the EEC. The PCI depicted the DC and ruling

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<sup>287</sup> A. J. K. Webb, “The Evolution of the Attitude of the Italian Communist Party Towards the European Economic Community,” *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 1984): 46.

<sup>288</sup> Webb, 48.

<sup>289</sup> Webb, 49.

<sup>290</sup> Webb, 49.

<sup>291</sup> Webb, 54.

groups within Italian capitalism as opting for “the EEC, so as to take away from the Italian Parliament the power of taking decisions in matters of economic policy.”<sup>292</sup> The PCI took a very clever stance, causing the DC to lose many seats and the Populist Front to gain seats during the general election of 1953. Even though the DC still held on as the majority party, it presented the skepticism of Italians towards a decision of pro-Eurocentric policies like the EEC.

Even though the Populist Front used aggressive rhetoric when addressing the EEC, there was a genuine concern for the working class affected by this integration. There was a heightened awareness of the possibility of “the standard of living of the European working class, and of the Italian in particular, because Italy would become one of the depressed areas of Europe.”<sup>293</sup> This concern suggests that there was since the start an interweaving of the Populist Front’s ideological and national strands in the Party’s approach. This stance had followed a similar trend in France. Where the time came to meet on issues of the EEC, the “French and Italians predominated, it was appreciated that the EEC was not without either its ideological or national opportunities.”<sup>294</sup> It would cause American disengagement from Europe, strengthening national autonomy and “facilitate the achievement of an ‘Italian road to socialism.’”<sup>295</sup> After this agreement had become official, Togliatti had made it clear the Populist Front had no criticisms of the tendency towards a unification of the market but rather a criticism of its political

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<sup>292</sup> Webb, 54.

<sup>293</sup> Alan Hick, “Keeping Euro-Left: The Italian Communist Party and the European “third Way,” *Contemporary Review* 241, no. 1399 (August 1982): 60.

<sup>294</sup> Hick, 62.

<sup>295</sup> Hick, 62.



orientation. The EEC would align with the PCI's ideology of the 'Italian road to socialism' and greater strength to the working class.

### **PCI's Analysis of the United States**

The dialogue developed between organizations in the United States and the PCI should be analyzed through party dynamics. The PCI was a political party within one of the major countries in the European theater of the Cold War. It shaped itself to adapt and distinguished itself as an opposition party in an American-aligned nation. The PCI also identified itself as a party of unique and rich intellectual history partially separate from the Soviet Union. It should be emphasized that "the intellectual sophistication of founding leaders such as Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti had not isolated the party from the masses; in fact, it more frequently allowed it to exert an effective control of its rank and file – thus tempering the effects of rapid, 'undisciplined' growth – as well as of its most radical leaders, since Togliatti fully exploited his privileged access to Gramsci's legacy."<sup>296</sup> This sophistication allowed the PCI to distinguish itself from the other most popular communist party in Western Europe, the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF) and the Soviet Union. The distinction of Togliatti's and especially Antonio Gramsci's intellectual development of understanding and implementing socialism and Marxism provided the PCI with the ability to claim an 'Italian Road to Socialism authentically.' This unique path will take time to develop and articulate clearly to the Italian public.

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<sup>296</sup> Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*, 2014, 15.

It is important to remember the significance of the DC within Italian politics, especially considering it became the governing political party for the duration of the Cold War period. The DC maintained the position of being a vital counterweight to the Popular Front. This dynamic is primarily due to the size and strength of the PCI, “post-war Italy soon became dominated by the intrinsic contradiction of being a member of the Atlantic community and at the same time accepting the inclusion in the national polity of a pro-Soviet Communist Party that in theory could legally (through a normal electoral process) go over to the enemy camp.”<sup>297</sup> This notion placed a great deal of stress on America’s view of Italy as a pivotal European nation from the onset of the Cold War developing. However, it should not be assumed that the DC was a party that necessarily welcomed assistance from the United States to suppress the strength of the PCI. Instead, the DC saw that open American intervention in Italy could potentially lead to a backlash that the governing party would not manage. This strategy meant that “from the very start of the Cold War the Christian Democrats resisted U.S. demands for a firmer hand against the Communists. A stalemate with the Communists in fact justified the DC’s hegemonic role in the government. But its resistance of the United States was also partly rooted in the mistrust that the most doctrinal elements of the party – at first coinciding with its left elements – nurtured of America’s putative materialism, hedonism, and materialism.”<sup>298</sup> This containment level performed by the DC within Italy itself was perceived to be more successful and adaptable to changing Italian politics rather than a heavy-handed

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<sup>297</sup> Mario Del Pero, “Containing Containment: Rethinking Italy’s Experience during the Cold War,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8, no. 4 (January 2003): 533.

<sup>298</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 20.

American presence. It allowed the DC to operate as a flexible political party and helped assure Washington about the strength of the PCI.

Despite the DC's pushback to direct American intervention, the PCI did view the United States as a sinister force that had the potential to sway Italy based on its foreign policies. According to a study performed by the PCI's Office of Studies on the military elements of the United States, including a breakdown of top military officials sought to diagnose American presence. It states that:

This list, which must of course be integrated and completed, seems to us susceptible of effective use in propaganda to counter the claims of our adversaries, which moreover find repeated in a widespread belief among large sections of the population, according to which the USA is a naturally pacifist country in which the military element enjoys little possibility of intervention in determining the country's policy. A possible propaganda use of data of this kind should be accompanied by hints regarding the ever more accelerated transformation of the primitive American democratic state as it emerged from the [American] Civil War – scarcely militarist and bureaucratic – into the current militaristic and aggressive state, limiting the freedoms of the identified in every field, including the speculative-scientific one, noting how this transformation accompanies the increasingly open and brutal dominance in the state itself of the most reactionary classes, and how it bears disturbing similarities with similar manifestations of fascist power in Italy and Germany.<sup>299</sup>

The PCI had considered the United States a possible threat to the level of security its party had based on its foreign policy. One of the main ideas that the PCI found crucial in its study is to gauge how the general Italian public viewed the United States. While the method of how this study was conducted is not clear in the source, it does indicate some of the top priorities of the PCI and how it labeled the United States, especially during the 1940s and 1950s. The rhetoric of drawing connections between the United States and

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<sup>299</sup> "Elementi militari alla testa di ministeri, ambasciate o comunque posti di alta responsabilità dello Stato Nord-Americano" (Ufficio Studi, July 22, 1947), 1059–61, Microfilm 144, Pagina 1059-1061, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

fascism corroborates that linking these two notions was heightened, “given Italy’s recent past, the PCI was particularly keen to stress this analogy. ‘That American policy in Europe was leading to fascism can be no surprise,’ a September 1947 article in *Rinascita* observed, ‘to those who already know how big trusts and their politicians are trying to lead the United States itself into fascism; by attacking Jews and Negroes, by trying to outlaw the Communist Party, by seeking to destroy the trade union movement.’”<sup>300</sup> The attacking of the United States as a foreign threat that reflected fascist tendencies was especially pertinent due to American interference in the Italian election of 1948 through their ability to leverage the Marshall Plan.

According to the PCI, these priorities include the imperialist nature of the United States, the military presence in Italy and Europe, and the effectiveness of American or Pro-American propaganda throughout Italy. This diagnosis of American presence is emblematic of the PCI’s reactions to the growing hegemony of the United States throughout Europe, either through the Marshall Plan and NATO.<sup>301</sup> The pressures by the American government on Italy were quite profound, as is indicated by the 1948 Italian general election, with the United States threatening that it would exclude Italy from any funds delivered through the Marshall Plan if the PCI dominated the general election.<sup>302</sup>

The PCI would engage with organizations or people in the United States, including the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA); however, not

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<sup>300</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 94.

<sup>301</sup> The opposition towards these plans often derived from pressure by the Soviet Union. This is especially clear with the Marshall Plan. Togliatti, despite privately objecting to Soviet pressures, would publicly oppose the Marshall Plan and later would oppose the creation of the NATO military alliance. This opposition towards NATO was widely accepted from the leaders of the PCI.

<sup>302</sup> John Lamberton Harper, *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945-1948* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 157.

all these moments of communication reasonably fall under the umbrella of dialogue. One level of communication that is often seen through the archive of *Fondazione Istituto Gramsci* are letters commemorating anniversaries, celebrations, or even notice for birthdays. An example of this would be a letter sent from the PCI to the CPUSA to celebrate the thirteenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. In the letter, the glorification of the Russian Bolshevik Party, the celebration of the victory of the Second World War, praising the policies of Joseph Stalin, and recognition that the Soviet Union is ultimately a laboratory of a Socialist experiment.<sup>303</sup> While these letters indicate what the political party finds significant and essential to uphold, they do not typically invoke a response or meaningful dialogue. For example, it is historically noteworthy that the understanding and presentation of the Soviet Union to the CPUSA as an avant-garde experiment of socialism rather than recognizing it has a complete socialist state is a notion that should not be taken lightly.

### **The American and the Italian Elections of 1948**

In the United States, the election of 1948 saw the campaign to reelect President Harry Truman into office against Thomas Dewey. However, this campaign also had two other parties that drew some national and international interests. Strom Thurmond campaigned as a Dixiecrat as a reaction towards some of President Truman's integration policies in the armed forces. Henry A. Wallace campaigned for the Progressive Party, which wanted to expand the New Deal policies and maintain a less aggressive stance

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<sup>303</sup> "Trentesimo Anniversario della Grande Rivoluzione Socialista d'Ottobre," n.d., Microfilm 144, Pagina 1088-1089, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

towards the Soviet Union to reduce the chance of escalating tension.<sup>304</sup> This position is exemplified by the fact that “former U.S. Vice President Henry Wallace criticized President Harry Truman on grounds that Truman’s foreign policies could provoke a war with the Soviet Union. Retorting privately, Truman labeled Wallace ‘a pacifist one hundred percent.’”<sup>305</sup> The concern about the United States’ role in the new post-war era was at the forefront of the minds of politicians and citizens alike.

The tension between Wallace and Truman might be important within the American political sphere. It was also on the minds of those observing the election from an outside perspective. A special letter describes to a member of the PCI, Ezio Taddei, the campaign of Henry Wallace in the 1948 election. Marie Seton and Donald Hesson penned the letter, two individuals who advocated for the Progressive Party ticket. The first part:

We are sure that you are wondering what is going on in America, so we send you a communal letter.

Neither the newspapers, magazines nor broadcasts reflect the actual sentiments of a great many American people, perhaps the majority. Day in and day out there is a never-ending, well organized chant about ‘the menace of Communism,’ ‘Russian aggression’ and ‘democracy,’ even though the last in some officials’ minds is represented by Francisco Franco! Almost every week, or-perhaps, oftener, a little ‘war scare’ is created (an up goes the stock market). The hysteria is being whipped up in order to make it easier to run through repressive legislation against all things liberal and condition people for war. Employment questionnaires are becoming ever more ‘witch hunting’; in fact, it is questionable whether anyone working for anyone else is free to choose his own friends lest they have a ‘pink’ idea.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 57.

<sup>305</sup> Hugh T. Lovin, “New Deal Leftists, Henry Wallace and ‘Gideon’s Army,’ and The Progressive Party in Montana, 1937—1952,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2012): 275.

<sup>306</sup> Marie Seton and Donald Hesson, “Letter from Marie Seton and Donald Hesson to Ezio Taddei,” April 19, 1948, 1856, Microfilm 185, Pagina 1856-1857, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

The letter implicitly displayed the political bent of the writers. Seton and Hesson believe that a level of conspiracy or corporate greed seeks to maintain a tense relationship with foreign powers, notably the Soviet Union. This political objective of reducing tension between the United States and the Soviet Union aligns with the political expression of these authors, the PCI, and the platform of Wallace. This level of transnational political dialogue is, at the very least, emblematic of how those who identified as communist or at least sympathized with the ideology saw themselves as a global community.

Wallace and his campaign are partially used to project the political goals of Seton and Hesson and others supporting the Progressive Ticket. Sending this letter to the PCI was an attempt to draw those connections with a political party across the Atlantic in hopes of presenting and arguing the symbolic significance of their political beliefs.

Seton and Hesson would attempt to explain how the political climate that would eventually lead the United States into the Second Red Scare period start to grab hold of the political imagination of Americans. During the Early Cold War period, there “would be the occasion for a great degree of self-doubt for most Cold War liberals, and self-righteousness for most Cold War conservatives.”<sup>307</sup> These ‘Cold War conservatives’ would be at the forefront of Seton and Hesson’s letter’s message while also being skeptical of the ‘Cold War liberals.’

But a new minority, who have never been involved in politics and are certainly not ‘radical,’ are so thoroughly alarmed that they have banded together in support of Henry Wallace’s third (Progressive) Party. The news outlets ignore this group as much as possible; but since it is now many times in strength anything the political ‘know-alls’ dreamed that Wallace could rally, the professional politicians are worried and harried by it. Naturally they try to dub the party ‘red.’ Here and there, for example, in Evansville, Indiana, violence was attempted against it. No legal loopholes will be overlooked in trying to crush it, or crowd it out. There

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<sup>307</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 58.

might even be an attempt to outlaw the party as ‘Communist front’; anyway, every time of intimidation can be expected.

This Wallace party is something new. It has sprung up in the last few months as they say in America, from the grassroots. It is literally being organized by people, all sorts of people, operation in their own backyard and organizing their neighbors in the parlour. Professional politicians are conspicuously present, decent people, who are fed up with a domestic and exported policy with which they are at odds.<sup>308</sup>

According to Seton and Hesson, the labeling of Wallace’s campaign as a Communist Front was a political tact used by opponents of the Progressive Party. According to themselves, to reiterate the objective of Seton and Hesson is to elaborate and explain what they deem to experience as the political events going on in America. The central theme throughout the letter is how they believe Wallace is the best candidate for the American presidency. However, the political strength of labeling the Progressive Party as a ‘red party’ is possibly strong enough to sway the public. This letter is trying to communicate and create a level of comradery with the PCI.

Ultimately, this letter conveys how all sorts of people, part of a popular front, are crucial for success. The creation of companionship between Wallace supporters and the PCI organization demonstrates the global aspect of this shared political ideology.

A very complete cross-section of America are represented in substantial numbers – labor, students, professional people, Protestant ministers and quite a few more enlightened businessmen. Colour black, brown, yellow, and white. Perhaps as high as 40% are Negroes. ‘Old’ American and immigrant Americans (Latins, Slavs, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, and all others whoever came to these shores) Jews and Mexicans. For the first time in American politics the ‘color line’ has been overcome. Concrete example unique in the history of any full-fledged party – that the Illinois State Convention was held on April 10th and 11th in the largest hall – a dance hall – the Savoy in the heart of Chicago’s black ghetto. (Anyone scared of the district better keep away.) So, 2500 people, about half

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<sup>308</sup> Seton and Hesson, “Letter from Marie Seton and Donald Hesson to Ezio Taddei,” 1856.



‘white’ and half ‘not white,’ came as delegates and forgot they were pink tinted instead of just tinted.<sup>309</sup>

The political outreach both domestically and internationally is present in the text and action—the appeal to a grand coalition of all walks of life as a popular movement. The sending of this letter to a member of the PCI to appeal to a global coalition of a popular movement and the level of solidarity that socialists believed should strive.

One of the possible reasons there was such a concern to reach out to the PCI is to indicate the interventionist stance of Wallace when compared to the other candidates. With the understanding that Wallace presented himself as a much less interventionist candidate, that would prove to the PCI that there was a higher possibility of the United States not intervening in Italian politics. While Wallace was the Commerce Secretary in 1946, he had asked William Clayton “whether there was a general policy ‘of making loans to influence foreign elections...’ When the NAC discussed the matter again on May 6, Eccles took Wallace’s side, arguing that he did not want the U.S. government accused of buying foreign elections.”<sup>310</sup> This political divide between Wallace’s world view and the responsibilities of the United States and the Truman administration. This divide might have had a significant impact on Seton and Hesson reaching out to the PCI to indicate the significance of a Wallace campaign. The level of possible American intervention was at the forefront of political issues that the American population was also tackling, “thanks to the Truman administration’s relentless public campaign, the U.S. Congress and people

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<sup>309</sup> Seton and Hesson, 1857.

<sup>310</sup> Harper, *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945-1948*, 81.

had authorized an undreamed of financial commitment to European economic recovery. The years 1948-49 marked the high noon of bipartisan foreign policy.”<sup>311</sup>

The level of political dialogue also indicates how important it was to the writers that a discussion and communication be had. While the stated objective of both Seton and Hesson was to inform Ezio Taddei on what is happening in the United States, the only topic discussed was that of the presidential election demonstrates how this letter intended to open up a political dialogue with a member of the PCI. A question that deserves a more significant investigation is the PCI’s understanding of the American Red Scare. To what degree did the PCI understand the significance of the Red Scare and whether it was related to the status of the Communist and Socialist parties during the rise of Fascism in Italy.<sup>312</sup> After the apparent defeat of presidential hopeful Henry Wallace, the reflection of American involvement in Italy. This development would continue to cause further political turbulence within Italy, “the Social-Communists accused the government of having enslaved the country to American policy and of carrying out a policy bound to involved the country in a third world war, the Monarchists and neo-Fascists, although claiming to accept the Atlantic policy, accused De Gasperi of having renounced an independent foreign policy in favor of following blindly the United States.”<sup>313</sup> While the DC did try to maintain its autonomy from the United States, they also were simultaneously combated the image domestically of a party being taken advantage of by a foreign power, the United States.

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<sup>311</sup> Harper, 159.

<sup>312</sup> One of the major issues that would complicate the PCI’s understanding of the American Second Red Scare is how popular the socialist and communist movements were within Italy, even as an allied state of the United States. Considering these contradictions, the PCI might not have understood the ways in which the Red Scare operated on an intimate level.

<sup>313</sup> Guiseppe Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism*. (Montreal: Univ Of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 253.

The heightened level of the Second Red Scare in the United States would see the effects reverberated around the globe in some capacity. In the United States, the political climate would have “American nearly suffocated under anti-communist hysteria. Commitment to rational and critical dialogue sharply was reduced. For the American people enough ‘truth’ existed in the fears and allegations for the red scare to possess some legitimacy. The more times the threat was repeated, the more it became ‘real’ in the national consciousness.”<sup>314</sup> Within the United States, this was not necessarily an attack by the Republican Party but also by the Democratic Party. The potential political capital that would have been lost if one did not appear strong against communism was poignant enough to see most American politicians have a bi-partisan agreement.<sup>315</sup> The attacks against the CPUSA during the Second Red Scare would be even more prominent. Many figures such as actors, writers, artists, politicians, intellectuals, and other fields would be accused of affiliating with either the CPUSA or communist ideology.

To reach out to the CPUSA, the PCI sent a letter to show both solidarity with the effects of the Second Red Scare but also establish an understanding of the political situation that is developing in the United States. In typical fashion, much of the correspondence between communist parties across the world. The PCI commits the letter to a celebration by starting, “may the Communist Party of the United States, on the thirtieth anniversary of its foundation, greet the fraternal and solidarity of two million two hundred thousand Italian Communists and all those in our country who are fighting so that peace and collaboration between peoples are defended against any imperialist

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<sup>314</sup> Stuart J. Foster, *Red Alert! Educators Confront the Red Scare in American Public Schools, 1947-1954*, Counterpoints, v. 87 (New York: P. Lang, 2000), 17.

<sup>315</sup> Foster, 14.

provocation.”<sup>316</sup> The letter starts with the idea of the communist movement being under threat from external forces. This notion is often politically depicted as imperialists, capitalists, or fascists. This political rhetoric is often deployed by both the CPUSA and the PCI in public discourse, partly due to being an opposition party to the governing ones and the opposition to imperialist and capitalist tendencies in both Marx’s and Gramsci’s writings, ideas that will be explored later.

The strength of the political language and imagery can help elucidate what the PCI is trying to invoke to their readers. The letter continues, “today you are leading the battle for peace and freedom under the most difficult conditions, in the very citadel of the reactionary groups that have placed themselves at the head of the fomenters of war, in the mad hope of carrying out the criminal plans that were already in vain attempted by the fascist dictators. The Italian workers and patriots who fought side by side with the American soldiers and together shed their blood in the liberating war center Fascism see in you the faithful comrades in the fight, the witnesses of the will of the most advanced part of your people that the fascism should no longer rise again, that no people should oppress another.”<sup>317</sup> The imagery of the communist movement in the United States as a strong castle under siege by varying factions invokes a medieval battle. The idea is that the imperialist, capitalist, and fascist forces consistently surround the communist fortification to contain and destroy the movement. However, “the releases of materials from the Soviet Union after 1991 undermined many of the revisionists’ claims about American communism. Moscow massively subsidized the American Communist Party

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<sup>316</sup> “Letter of Solidarity from the PCI to CPUSA,” August 29, 1949, 1757, Microfilm 0303, Pagina 1757-1758, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

<sup>317</sup> “Letter of Solidarity from the PCI to CPUSA,” 1757.

(CPUSA) which co-operated with Soviet intelligence.”<sup>318</sup> While there is no clear indication of how well the PCI understood Moscow’s relationship with the CPUSA, a direct supply line aided their ability to hold out during the siege.

The political message to the CPUSA ultimately attempts to demonstrate a symbolic gesture based on the growth of the Second Red Scare. The PCI’s depiction of the United States is consistent with America’s role in European politics and Italian politics particularly. The PCI conclude their letter:

While American imperialism, in order to get out of the crisis that threatens it, tries to extend and make its dominion over our country heavier and to repress in your people any free attempt to oppose the exploitation of the trusts and their militarist policy, we feel more solid. The bond that unites us to you and that binds the workers who in every country fight and work for the common cause in the united front of Socialism. Your proven Party, fought against the harmful influences of understood opportunism and betrayal, will certainly be able to unite the great masses of workers, peasants, employees, and technicians in the struggle for peace, move and organize the oppressed black populations and give life in the United States to a great invincible mass movement. The hateful persecution that today rages the 12 heroic comrades of your Central Committee and which has moved workers all over the world is proof of how the American Communists have a sure guide and how much the reaction fears them. Our warmest wishes come to the Communist Party of the United States, in which thousands of Italian anti-fascists militated, and many workers of Italian origin militated.

Long live the Communist Party of the United States  
Let the defenders of the vanguard of American workers be free!  
Long live the united international Socialist front for peace and freedom.

The leadership of the Italian Communist Party<sup>319</sup>

The PCI entirely laid out their understanding, objective, and expectation from the Second Red Scare in this final portion. The goal of the PCI is to ensure that America’s ability to

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<sup>318</sup> Michael F. Hopkins, “Continuing Debate and New Approaches in Cold War History,” *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 4 (2007): 930.

<sup>319</sup> “Letter of Solidarity from the PCI to CPUSA,” 1757–58.

influence Italy is minimized. The way to accomplish that, through this dialogue, is to ensure the security and strength of the CPUSA. One of the significant strengths of the CPUSA during this period was its ability to elevate the importance of desegregations throughout the United States. The platform of “the party had quickly identified African Americans as the most oppressed and exploited part of the American proletariat. However, its ideological twists and turns on the race question were extremely erratic.”<sup>320</sup> The CPUSA would be criticized by many major political organizations in the United States, including the NAACP, which believed that the Communist Party was exploiting the oppression of African Americans. “The party was denounced as depending completely on political and ideological directives from Moscow and of sacrificing the interests of black people to the foreign policy concerns of the Soviet Union. To dismiss the antiracism of the CPUSA as mere tactics was less than fair, however.”<sup>321</sup> Regardless, the PCI had recognized how this position had been a critical platform of the CPUSA and encouraged them to continue advocating for the most oppressed within American society. Using this, the CPUSA, either cynically or genuinely, this political stance ensures that the party remains strong enough to have some sort of influence within the American political arena.

One of the main trails that would lead into both the Korean War and the McCarthy Trials was *U.S. v. Foster*, bringing the United States fully into the Second Red Scare. The “11 members of the National Board of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) were convicted of conspiracy to violate the Smith Act,

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<sup>320</sup> Manfred Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War,” *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 79.

<sup>321</sup> Berg, 94.

which prohibited the teaching or advocacy of the use of force or violence to overthrow the U.S. government.”<sup>322</sup> The CPUSA would ultimately lose the trial seeing many fines and laws against the language the party was permitted to use. Togliatti, after the revealing of the trial results, would respond to the political conclusion the court had determined:

The working class has not only the right, but has the sacrosanct duty to fight, on the economic and political ground, to overthrow capitalism and create socialism. Indeed, I say more this is the historical mission of the working class, and it will inevitably fulfill it. Likewise, it was not only a right and a duty, but it was the historical mission of the bourgeoisie to overthrow feudalism and create capitalism. Therefore, a sentence like that of the New York jury is a yellowish nonsense, analogous to the sentences and other acts of violence with which the fascists believed they could destroy the communist and socialist movement. Judgments of this kind only show that the reactionaries and war provocateurs who lead American policy today are trying to terrorize their people, probably because they feel that the American people are beginning to get tired of a policy of provocation of war and of losing faith in a war. A regime that will never be able to avoid catastrophic crises, mass unemployment, the misery of the workers. It goes without saying that the New York sentence tears off the masks of so-called American democracy and makes everyone see that this alleged democracy is nothing more than the undemocratic dictatorship of the capitalists over the workers.

Palmiro Togliatti<sup>323</sup>

The level of interjection and support during the Second Red Scare was pertinent for Togliatti and the PCI. The CPUSA was a focal point in building hysteria in the United States and the growing tensions for American socialists and communists. As John P. Diggins phrases, the conflicting political ideals of supporting democratic freedom and a

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<sup>322</sup> Julia M. Allen, “‘That Accursed Aesopian Language’: Prosecutorial Framing of Linguistic Evidence in ‘U.S. v. Foster’, 1949,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2001): 109.

<sup>323</sup> Palmiro Togliatti, “Togliatti’s Statement on Foster v. U.S.,” October 15, 1949, 1759, Microfilm 0303, Pagina 1759, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

one-party system became increasingly difficult to reconcile, causing a political identity crisis.<sup>324</sup>

The PCI's advocacy against the Red Scare development in the United States served multiple purposes. One of the purposes includes the potential side effects of the Red Scare permeating from the United States to Italy. Depending on the political success of the Second Red Scare in the United States, the structure of the Federal State could closely resemble the political attitudes. This mindset would harm the PCI's stability, strength, and safety, depending on American foreign policy. However, "Washington's main worry regarding the PCI and PCF (*Parti Communiste Français*), even during the peak of the American Red Scare, was simply that Western Communism might subvert Western Europe."<sup>325</sup> The political maneuvers and techniques used by the United States during the 1948 general election and the continued pressures against the PCI's participation in major Italian affairs would continue to be a matter of concern for the party.<sup>326</sup>

The language utilized by Togliatti also highlights an aura of significance in this correspondence. The connection of the PCI with decisions made in the United States attempts to strengthen solidarity between these two distanced political parties. The center of discontent remained consistent, opposition to American anti-democratic policies. The emphasis on phrases such as 'terrorize' and 'so-called American democracy' challenges the notion of free speech that is enshrined in the Constitution of the United States. In doing so, the PCI bolstered their own political and intellectual notions of positive and

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<sup>324</sup> John P. Diggins and John Morton Blum, *The American Left in the Twentieth Century*, The Harbrace History of the United States (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 151.

<sup>325</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 78.

<sup>326</sup> Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism.*, 204.



necessary political institutions. While the CPUSA would frequently be caught juggling and defending the single-party system of the Soviet Union, the PCI remained consistent in the necessity of achieving communist policies through democratic methods. The mistrust between the PCI and the American government and the transnational dialogue with American political organizations was ultimately rooted in “the Americans’ Cold War fears about Western European Communism – even long after the peak of communist power in France and Italy – was that the most insidious form of left-wing anti-Americanism on *both* sides of the Atlantic could be *mutually* nurtured.”<sup>327</sup> The ability for a transnational dialogue to be present was considered a threat from an American foreign policy position. The United States had the highest ability to influence the strength and outreach leftist movements and the CPUSA.

### **Political Reflections with the CPUSA**

Following the election of 1948, the level of dialogue between the PCI and other American political organizations and parties continues throughout its entire lifespan. The framing and subjects of future discussions would shift based on the political environment. Considering the topics of discussion will provide a frame for the significance of the present transnational political dialogue. Following the electoral defeat of 1948, the PCI “attempted to better define its positions, which appeared to necessitate even greater loyalty to the Soviet Union, as the party expelled members who no longer conformed to

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<sup>327</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 78–79.

Soviet cultural and scientific directives.”<sup>328</sup> The political line Togliatti had walked the PCI throughout the Cold War was one that attempted to appease the Soviet Union and appear in staunch solidarity while also attempting to cultivate and shape the unique political identity of Italian communism.

While the PCI would continue to grow after the defeat of the 1948 election, the CPUSA would fall into a declining spiral from which it would never recover. As Malcolm Sylvers outlines, the collapse of the CPUSA might not have been entirely due to the combined efforts of “repression mounted by most liberals together with the McCarthyites,”<sup>329</sup> but rather the internal transformation and dynamic shifts of international politics were not addressed appropriately. The CPUSA worked hard to be “stronger in terms of membership, influence and acceptability.”<sup>330</sup> These terms will remain relevant, even when in dialogue with the PCI.

On January 15, 1951, Gus Hall, as National Secretary of the CPUSA, would reach out in a letter to the PCI. While the letter’s central purpose is to evoke either recognition or support from the PCI of William Foster’s birthday, the peripheral purposes provide insight into how these two political structures maintain dialogue. The letter opens with “We know that you will be happy to learn that the beloved chairman of our Party, Comrade William Z. Foster, will be 70 years old on February 25, 1951. Our 15th National Convention enthusiastically agreed to mark this important occasion by celebrations throughout the entire country as a fitting tribute to the great contributions

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<sup>328</sup> Wendy A. Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944-1968*, First edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 77.

<sup>329</sup> Malcolm Sylvers, “American Communists in the Popular Front Period: Reorganization or Disorganization?,” *Journal of American Studies* 23, no. 3 (1989): 375.

<sup>330</sup> Sylvers, 376.

this native son of the American working class has made to the cause of the working class – to the cause of Socialism.”<sup>331</sup> This correspondence is an example of the CPUSA requesting recognition and correspondence to celebrate an upcoming birthday; however, Gus Hall attempts to emphasize the significance of political developments in the United States.

Using William Foster as a vehicle to discuss further accomplishments and struggles, Hall continues:

The 70th birthday of Comrade Foster marks more than half a century of unflinching devotion and distinguished leadership to the defense of the interests of the working class and the oppressed Negro people. It marks more than a half-century of vital creative theoretical and political work which has helped arm our Party in the struggle against the alien class influences of Lovestonism, Trotskyism and Browderism; and to strengthen our understanding and mastery of the great liberating science of the working class – the science of Marxism-Leninism.

We are sure that the international working-class movement, to whom Comrade Foster is widely known, will want to note this occasion and express fraternal greetings for a long life and continued service to the cause of peace, democracy, and socialism. We would appreciate hearing from you.

Comradely yours,  
Gus Hall  
National Secretary<sup>332</sup>

Hall’s letter brings forth the CPUSA’s most important platforms and connects Foster’s struggle to achieve these outcomes. The apparent principle of the CPUSA fighting for the greater working-class struggle is consistently present. A keystone to the political identity of the CPUSA is the striving for both social justice and racial equality in the United

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<sup>331</sup> Gus Hall, “Comrade William Z. Foster’s 70th Birthday,” January 15, 1951, 1400, Microfilm 0341, Pagina 1400-1401, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

<sup>332</sup> Hall, 1400.

States. Much of the fight for racial equality argued by Foster was grounded in the pushing for greater socio-economic equality; however, the NAACP would challenge this notion, arguing that it was necessary to support and operate with “wishy-washy liberalism’ and old Southern paternalism”<sup>333</sup> to achieve racial equality. This issue was compounded by the fact that the Second Red Scare under Sen. Joseph McCarthy and how the “Southern racists were among the most ardent anticommunists and tried their best to discredit the civil rights struggle as a Communist conspiracy.”<sup>334</sup> This complex and complicated situation may have been difficult to portray to their comrades in Italy.

Throughout the contact, the CPUSA is clear to mark and label hostilities with other communist political philosophies. The belief is that the only philosophical doctrine that is acceptable is that of Marxism-Leninism. Further historical investigation into whether the CPUSA would have been equally hostile to the Gramscian approach before the rise of Eurocommunism may prove insightful to the level of understanding and compatibility between the two communist parties.

The PCI would send several telegrams to Foster with a message of solidarity from Roma, Genova, and Reggio Emilia. The response from Reggio Emilia was the shortest letter and failed to discuss much of anything from Hall’s original letter in detail. Luigi Longo, part of the leadership of the PCI, wrote a response on behalf of the PCI. Part of the letter reads:

We are pleased to send you our warmest and most fraternal greetings for the 70th birthday of Comrade William Foster, who for over half a century, with his devoted and enlightened leadership, your country has been at the head of the struggle in defense of the workers exploited by capitalism and of the minorities

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<sup>333</sup> Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 156.

<sup>334</sup> Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism,” 75.

oppressed by the racism of the leaders. These fifty years of struggle which, thanks to the theoretical teaching and political action of Comrade Foster, have led to the overcoming of the infiltrations and betrayals provoked by the bourgeoisie, they have made the Communist Party of the United States the vanguard of American democratic forces in the struggle against imperialism.<sup>335</sup>

Longo gives praise for the CPUSA's political goals and the struggles they are attempting to overcome. The praising of Foster's intellectual and political work, including supporting minority groups in the United States. Foster had created "if unstable, synthesis of working-class unity and black self-determination. William Z. Foster, future party chairman, gave succor to a rising generation's charges of cynicism and opportunism when he disclosed that the 'Black Belt thesis' advocating Negro nationhood in the US South was little more than a 'fantastic scheme designed to capture sections of the disintegrating Garvey Movement.'"<sup>336</sup> Although Foster and the CPUSA had worked to fight for greater racial equality, the historiography surrounding CPUSA's fight for racial civil rights suggests that it may not have been the party's primary goal.

Another aspect of racial equality that would have been outside of the peripheral vision of the CPUSA would have been other minority groups living in the United States. Arturo Labriola, an immigrant from Italy in the 1930s and a socialist advocate, frames how "white people, or son di stripe europea' (those of European stock) counted for only a fraction of the world's population, he argued, while at least 15,000,000 of the world's population are NOT from European races: black, yellow, olive, mixed. Together, this accounts for the majority of the world population."<sup>337</sup> As Jennifer Guglielmo deduces,

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<sup>335</sup> Luigi Longo, "Letter from Luigi Longo to William Foster," February 20, 1951, 1401, Microfilm 0341, Pagina 1401, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

<sup>336</sup> Nikhil Pal Singh, "Retracing the Black-Red Thread," *American Literary History* 15, no. 4 (2003): 834.

<sup>337</sup> Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 2012), 254.

some Italian-Americans or even some Italians may not have identified as either white or European. This concept of whiteness amongst Italian-Americans evolved dramatically from the initial migrations in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century to the late 1970s.<sup>338</sup> These understandings of minorities typically referred to African-Americans living in the United States, and reasonably so.

The response letter would continue, “to comrade Foster, whose work as a militant and a Communist leader is all a contribution to the cause of peace, democracy and socialism, on this occasion, all the Italian Communists give fraternal wishes for a long life in the service of a cause for which, under the example and guidance of the Soviet Union, the workers and the democratic forces of the world are struggling today.”<sup>339</sup> Longo was drawing the connection of the shared trait of vanguardism between Foster and the Soviet Union. The PCI would glorify these shared principles, especially with how amendable Togliatti’s political philosophy is. The political aim of Togliatti was to ensure that he “maintained his party’s links with Moscow after 1948, this was to some extent because his position within the PCI was by no means secure before the mid-1950s.”<sup>340</sup> Maintaining the political network is a necessarily political project for Togliatti and the PCI.

The response from the PCI in Genova would emphasize the imperialist notions of the United States. Even though these different cities all respond to the same letter, the

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<sup>338</sup> Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, eds., *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Richard Gambino, *Blood of My Blood: The Dilemma of the Italian-Americans* (Toronto; Buffalo: Guernica, 2000). Italian-American understanding and notions of whiteness went through many phases, with identities of Catholicism, radicalism, and ethnic distinctions being weighed differently depending on place and time.

<sup>339</sup> Longo, “Letter from Luigi Longo to William Foster,” 1401.

<sup>340</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, *Italy in the Cold War*, 19.

range of differences and emphasis between the replies illuminate what they believe to be politically crucial for the reader. In the form of solidarity with members of the CPUSA who were imprisoned in the United States, they write:

On behalf of comrades on behalf of all workers and democratic citizens of our province we formulate the most vigorous protest for the arrest of leaders beloved American people, let us entrust you to express solidarity, our most lively part I will leave American and persecuted comrades because defenders of peace and freedom people of America, let us commit ourselves to develop our struggle in defense of freedom and peace, our Italy, sure that our struggle has helped to prevent aggressive American imperialism and its enslaved forces from carrying out new crimes against the liberty of our people and all peace-loving peoples of the earth.<sup>341</sup>

The emphasis on American imperialism for the political repression in the United States is an interesting perspective. With Foster as a symbolic figure, the CPUSA is at the forefront of pushing for a greater degree of peace and freedom not only in the country but throughout the world. However, this letter was keen on arguing that the fight of the CPUSA has an increased duty. Doing so would protect the interest, security, and liberty in Italy as well. This correspondence demonstrates a level of reflection both parties are trying to convey—reflections of their own political beliefs projected on the party across the Atlantic Ocean.

From Roma, the Central Committee of the PCI would reach out to the CPUSA to discuss the political turmoil they are currently undergoing. The correspondence starts with, “The Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party sends a fraternal greeting to the leaders of the Communist Party of the United States of America persecuted by the imperialist reaction. We too, Italian communists, have been persecuted for more than

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<sup>341</sup> “Letter from Segreteria PCI Genova to William Foster,” June 22, 1951, 1403, Microfilm 0341, Pagina 1403, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

twenty years by a government that denied our party and even our ideas the right to exist.”<sup>342</sup> Togliatti had also been greatly concerned with how he had described American imperialist interest in Italy. In an editorial in *L'Unità* by Togliatti titled “Ma come sono cretini!” (“What Idiots They Are!”), he wrote “could a party buy prestige and influence with money’; and, no doubt, Washington treated Italy like ‘a territory inhabited by competing thrives, instead of parties that naturally emerged from its national traditions.”<sup>343</sup> The broadcasting of the United States as an imperialist power was often closely linked to a presumed similarity to the rise and rule of fascism.

The PCI is comparing the rule of Fascist Italy with that of the Second Red Scare in the United States. The idea of fascist resistance was a landmark identifier for the PCI and the PSI, and DC. Both “Alcide De Gasperi and Palmiro Togliatti had this in common: they understood that their task was the transformation of their parties into forces committed to democracy. They had to do this against many of their own supporters and their external sponsors, the Church and the USSR.”<sup>344</sup> The underground movement of anti-fascist groups during the 1930s and 1940s shaped the trajectory of rhetoric in post-war Italy.<sup>345</sup>

The Central Committee attempts to extend a sense of hope and inspiration for the CPUSA is currently experiencing. They state, “despite this, we are the largest Italian party, and most of the workers follow our flag. May this example inspire American Communists with confidence and shape in their resistance or in their struggle against

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<sup>342</sup> “Letter from Il Comitato Centrale del P.C.I. to William Foster,” June 29, 1951, 1407, Microfilm 0341, Pagina 1407, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

<sup>343</sup> Brogi, *Confronting America*, 1.

<sup>344</sup> Sassoon, *Contemporary Italy*, 194.

<sup>345</sup> H. Stuart Hughes, *The United States and Italy*, 3d ed., enl, The American Foreign Policy Library (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979), 105.



reaction, for freedom and peace. American imperialism, like fascism, will also fail in its attempt to suppress the vanguard movement of the working class and the people. The cause of democracy, peace and socialism will be victorious throughout the world.”<sup>346</sup>

Using the language of hope and inspiration to develop empathy for both the writers and readers of the letter. The bridging of historical differences presents a semblance of a reflection between the two parties. Developing a transnational dialogue between these two parties is significant because the political implications of mutual perceptions and beliefs demonstrate how they acted with an international mindset.

The efforts by the authors of the number of presented correspondence and those who were either not included in these analyses or those that are outside of the timeframe of this dissertation do continue to support the claim of a meaningful and significant level of dialogue between the PCI and political organizations and parties within the United States. Togliatti was keen on maintaining and developing relationships with these entities to grow the political network of the PCI but to exchange ideas, struggles, and solidarity with one another.

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<sup>346</sup> “Letter from Il Comitato Centrale del P.C.I. to William Foster,” 1407.

## Chapter 5

Estero: Stati Uniti

### The Intellectual Principles of the PCI

The intellectual foundations of the PCI guided the party to view Marxism through their lens and informed the supporters, members, leaders, and those abroad to identify political positions. Many Italian leftist intellectuals and politicians have contributed to the development of the philosophy of the PCI, such as Amadeo Bordiga, Antonio Gramsci, Angelo Tasca, Umberto Terracini, Palmiro Togliatti, and Antonio Negri. However, this chapter will primarily focus on two of these selected contributors: Gramsci and Togliatti.

Gramsci attended the Università degli Studi di Torino, where he would meet Togliatti. While at the university, both Gramsci and Togliatti would join the Italian Socialist Party, but both would grow frustrated with the party's inability to develop a national movement that he would seek to develop the PCdI.<sup>347</sup> The PCdI (Partito Comunista d'Italia) was founded in 1921 with Antonio Gramsci elected as the Secretary General. However, the party was founded during turbulent times in Italy. The year after the party's foundation, Benito Mussolini was appointed as Prime Minister of Italy during times of heavy conflict between fascist militants, the blackshirts, and antifascist militants, the Arditi del Popolo. After Mussolini became Prime Minister, he sought to silence any political opposition, especially the communists and socialists. The two parties would eventually be banned, and political leaders would be exiled or imprisoned. Gramsci was a victim of imprisonment in 1926, despite his protection of parliamentary immunity

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<sup>347</sup> Antonio Gramsci and Quintin Hoare, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, 8. pr (New York: International Publ, 1985), xxix.

because he held a seat. It is within a prison where most of Gramsci's political and philosophical writings took place.

Palmiro Togliatti was elected general secretary of the PCI soon after Gramsci had been officially put under arrest. This election was to ensure political stability within the PCI while even in exile. Unlike Gramsci, Togliatti had been in Moscow in exile. With the closing years of the Second World War, Togliatti sought to establish the PCI's reemergence in a post-war Italy. He had established a healthy relationship with the Italian Socialist Party and even developed a working relationship with the Christian Democrats. Togliatti's PCI could be viewed as a paradigm of stability.

Unlike Gramsci, Togliatti reacted and acted much more on policies of the Soviet Union rather than the theoretical and philosophical mindset of the Soviet leadership. Togliatti was in a position in the post-war period that forced him to understand the PCI situation, compared to international events and structures. It needs to be noted that Italy was in a state of repair and restructuring following the destruction of the Second World War, the financial aid by the United States, and the American military presence across Italy. Togliatti had two significant objectives while leading one of the largest parties within Italy. The first was to legitimize a communist party not only in Italy but within Western Europe. These objectives were significant obstacles because of the tense nature of the developing Cold War and the suspicion and distrust that both communists and anti-communists built. The second was to work to slow the integration of Italy into becoming a NATO nation and a member of the EEC. Togliatti desperately tried to make Italy a neutral nation just as Austria, Switzerland, some Scandinavian countries, and even Yugoslavia had become. The PCI would even develop the slogan of "Italy out of NATO

and NATO out of Italy.”<sup>348</sup> However, this objective would fail and eventually materialize as Italy perceived as the “Bulgaria of NATO.”<sup>349</sup>

What would develop are two individuals representing two different PCI forms on both a domestic and international level. The PCI used its lifespan as a spiritual figure for the party. Ironically, when Gramsci died on April 27, 1937, “Palmiro Togliatti – his successor as head of the Italian Communist Party and a long-time friend and comrade – cast him before the European communist world as a Christ-like martyr.”<sup>350</sup> The political strength of invoking Gramsci as a uniquely Italian contributor to the development of Marxism was used to justify the actions and stances the PCI took throughout the Cold War. This very notion also highlights who Togliatti is and how he contributed to the shaping and formation of the PCI. Togliatti is better understood as the pragmatist for forwarding the objectives of the PCI while using Gramsci’s legacy to support his positions. While Gramsci was under arrest during the height of Mussolini’s regime, the political dialogue between Togliatti and Gramsci would eventually end due to Gramsci’s “growing hostility to Stalin.”<sup>351</sup> It was said by the historian E. J. Hobsbawm that Gramsci, “by a pleasing irony of History been saved from Stalin because Mussolini had put him behind bars.”<sup>352</sup> Ideas of Gramsci’s were allowed to develop deep theories and

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<sup>348</sup> Lucia Quaglia, “‘The Ebb and Flow’ of Euroscepticism in Italy,” *South European Society & Politics* 16, no. 1 (March 2011): 42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608740903432367>.

<sup>349</sup> Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943 - 1988* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 158.

<sup>350</sup> Walter Luiz Adamson, “Gramsci, Catholicism and Secular Religion,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14, no. 4 (2013): 468.

<sup>351</sup> Steve Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, 1. publ. 2006, reprinted 2007, 2008, Routledge Critical Thinkers (London: Routledge, 2008), 25.

<sup>352</sup> James Joll, *Antonio Gramsci*, Penguin Modern Masters (Harmondsworth, Eng. ; New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 23.

applications for socialism that may not have been possible if he had been in exile in Moscow. Gramsci would die in the year 1937 while still under arrest by the Fascist party.

### **Togliatti: Ideology or Pragmatism?**

It would be Togliatti who would work to maintain and lift the legacy of Gramsci following the end of the Second World War. Togliatti's efforts would allow the PCI to develop and cultivate the 'Italian-way' for the communist movement in Italy. By elevating Gramsci within the political framework of the PCI, Togliatti had insisted "on Gramsci's centrality from the moment of his return to Italy, were the foundations of Gramsci's subsequent fortunes. The editorial deficiencies and omissions of the early post-war years were the price paid for making Gramsci known; in retrospect a price worth paying."<sup>353</sup> The opportunity for Togliatti to use Gramsci as a centerpiece of Italian communism granted a level of prestige for the intellectual framework of the party's policy choices and positions. The use of newspapers by the PCI was fundamental in spreading their message both domestically and internationally. *L'Unità*, a domestic newspaper, was considered a mouthpiece of the communists and the PCI up until the 1990s. *L'Unità* was not shy about expressing this identification. Underneath the title of their newspaper there is a statement that says "*Organo del Partito Comunista Italiano fondato da Antonio Gramsci e Palmiro Togliatti*" (The Organ of the Italian Communist Party that was founded by Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti). This subtitle of *l'Unità* demonstrates on a physical level the importance of presenting Gramsci's ideas

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<sup>353</sup> Antonio Gramsci and David Forgacs, *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 10.

through the newspaper while simultaneously creating the direct link and legitimacy between Togliatti and Gramsci.

Understanding Togliatti's pragmatism will provide an understanding of how he viewed and applied ideology. First, understanding the framework in which Togliatti operated might be illuminated by the work of Daniel Bell and his research and analysis on the function and interpretation of ideology and politics. Bell's work challenges the notion of ideology and how it is used to forward political gains and the stability of the concept of ideology by political actors. Bell defined ideology as "a special complex of ideas and passions that arose in the nineteenth century."<sup>354</sup> While this is a vague definition of ideology, the definition is rooted in the foundation of history. The ideas discussed are fundamentally linked to the economic and political ideas that gained prominence arose during the nineteenth century. While Bell argues "the falsity of simplification and the ideological pitfalls into which such simplifications lead; and such efforts are necessarily critical,"<sup>355</sup> he also establishes a mode to analyze how both left and right political movements perform politics.

One principle that Bell considered was the concept of pragmatism. An idea that can sometimes be considered antithetical to ideology. A belief in which a political actor operates not with the desire to necessarily achieve an objective that aligns with either a belief or moral framework but operates in a mode to achieve a more favorable 'end' than other options. Bell provides two parts to understanding the concept of pragmatism. The first is when an individual's "doctrinaire ideological goals conflict with the ongoing

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<sup>354</sup> Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties: With "The Resumption of History in the New Century"* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000), 17.

<sup>355</sup> Bell, 13.

reality, and they compromise accordingly. Yet, when called upon to take a stand on issues far removed from their immediate experience, the only vocabulary, the only rhetoric, the only categories of analysis or even simple formulae available to them, are the old ideological banners.”<sup>356</sup> The second is when one must act “with existing structures and with the character, temperament, and traditions – and desires – of the people concerned.”<sup>357</sup> On both an individual level and societal level, the two concepts of pragmatism cause ideology to cease when a goal needs to be obtained. When an individual or a party drops the notion of an ideology, the entity becomes a pragmatic actor.

Giovanni Sartori also contributed to the discussion on the significance of ideology in politics. Sartori expands on the issues of using ideology as a tool for identification. He claims that “the term ideology points to a cluster concept, i.e., belongs to the concepts that bracket a variety of complex phenomena about which one tries to generalize; and the growing popularity of the term has been matched, if anything by its growing obscurity.”<sup>358</sup> As Sartori puts it, ideology becomes increasingly meaningless once used by a broader population, and the term is decreasingly used as a tool for identifying theories. The popularization of the word ‘ideology’ and the greater understanding and application eventually loses its significance.

Sartori also tackles the concept of pragmatism’s relationship to ideology and how and when ideology ceases to hold weight by political actors. When Sartori formulates what “ideology is not, i.e., to qualify the notion *a contrario*. In other terms, we are

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<sup>356</sup> Bell, 350.

<sup>357</sup> Bell, 388.

<sup>358</sup> Giovanni Sartori, “Politics, Ideology, and Belief Systems,” *Revue Européenne Des Sciences Sociales* 17, no. 46 (1979): 91.

required to conceive ideology as a dimension or an aspect of politics that may, or may not, be found to apply to the real world. For this purpose, 'ideological politics' will be opposed here to 'pragmatic politics,' i.e., pragmatism will be used as a designation for non-ideology."<sup>359</sup> As Sartori continues to argue, ideology and pragmatism are not complete opposites. This complexity would imply the two are sharing a single continuum in which there is a spectrum in which one sees ideology on one side of the continuum and pragmatism on one side on the other end. According to Sartori, this would not hold because if an entity, an individual, or a party becomes less pragmatic, they do not become more ideological and vice-versa.<sup>360</sup> However, Sartori does not argue that ideology does not have its uses as a political tool. The ability to use ideology to manipulate the masses with varying success is dependent on how great the centrality of the belief elements is, the level of abstraction the belief system is, and the level of totalistic comprehensiveness it has.<sup>361</sup> The ability for ideology to be used "as a lever of political mobilization, as an instrument of mass manipulation, satisfies the requirement of causal explanation."<sup>362</sup> Demonstrating that while pragmatism and ideology are conflicting notions of practicing politics, they are both used in ways to achieve political ends in their own right.

With these understandings of pragmatism and ideology, where does Togliatti belong with these two competing philosophies? Togliatti does belong to a political movement, Marxism, that arose during the nineteenth century, as indicated by Bell, fulfilling his qualification. Bell argues that "the ideology of Marxism is the belief in the inevitable polarization in advanced Western society between capitalist and worker and

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<sup>359</sup> Sartori, 92.

<sup>360</sup> Sartori, 111.

<sup>361</sup> Sartori, 113.

<sup>362</sup> Sartori, 113.



the victory of the proletariat as a necessary outcome of the cunning of reason.”<sup>363</sup> Does Togliatti operate to achieve this ideology of Marxism, as Bell points out? Or does Togliatti aim to use the belief systems of Marxism as a framework to push legislation pragmatically and advocate for policies? John P. Diggins uses the arguments laid out by both Bell and Sartori to try and historicize these ideas. To understand how both philosophers argue the ‘end of ideology’ as a possible political development, attempting to understand how historical actors fit can help put these ideas into perspective. Diggins explains how Sartori’s ‘end of ideology’ succeeds when “(I) ‘fixed elements [which] are rigid, dogmatic, impermeable to argument and evidence,’ to (III) ‘firm elements [which] are firmly held but are open to evidence and/or argument.’ According to this pattern, would Mussolini’s transition from doctrinal socialism to dynamic Fascism be interpreted as presaging the end of ideology? Similarly, would not Stalin and Togliatti, who were always willing to adapt to theory to new evidence, have been regarded as ‘pragmatic?’”<sup>364</sup> The development of Togliatti’s politics during his life might indicate how he had operated on a pragmatic level. His ability to interact with political actors on many different levels, such as Stalin, the United States, and the DC, showcases this mode.

According to Walter Dean Burnham, Sartori’s writings on ‘the end of ideology’ “is irritably polemical: the brilliance of the analytic-taxonomic effort at verbal specification is matched by an even greater brilliance in abrasive criticism of scholarship in the field... But it is necessary to add at once, the content is passionately anti-Marxist at

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<sup>363</sup> Bell, *The End of Ideology*, 440.

<sup>364</sup> John P. Diggins, “Ideology and Pragmatism: Philosophy or Passion?,” *The American Political Science Review* 64, no. 3 (1970): 902, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1953471>.

all levels from the epistemological to the operational.”<sup>365</sup> Burnham’s analysis is critical because while this chapter will use Sartori’s understanding of ideology and pragmatism, it is also important to emphasize that his writings were never intended to grant Marxism, the PCI, or Togliatti political credibility during the Cold War. The critiques on Sartori’s historical statements go. Further, Burnham explains how his “argument that the PCF and PCI were ‘blackmail’ parties – and ‘relevant’ in his calculus solely because of their potential in that regard – raises very serious questions. It is well known that they were forced from government in 1947, substantially at American insistence, as the cold war hardened.”<sup>366</sup> Given Sartori’s political stance and personal biases potentially shaping his political analysis, this levied criticism is warranted. Unlike Burnham at the time of his writing, the material and resources available now only help substantiate the development and state of the PCI following the Cold War. Perhaps Sartori’s sweeping remarks and analyses of the PCI and Togliatti did not have the luxury of either hindsight or archival material.

Togliatti’s method of practicing politics demonstrated whether he was grounded in either ideology or pragmatism. Once the dust settled, the early development of the Cold War within Italy would see that there would be three major parties dominating Italy’s political minds. Togliatti and the PCI were heavily criticized during the Cominform of September of 1947. They were “attacked brutally for their conservatism and their nationalism. In the Italian elections of April 1948, the join Communist-Socialist list was defeated handily... For the Russians the Italian Communists were too

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<sup>365</sup> Walter Dean Burnham, review of *Review of Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis, Volume I.*, by Giovanni Sartori, *Political Science Quarterly* 92, no. 4 (1977): 718, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2148863>.

<sup>366</sup> Burnham, 719.

conservative; for the Italian people they were too radical.”<sup>367</sup> The Soviet Union criticized the PCI for not maintaining its ideological lines and that of the international body of the Cominform... Following the failed assassination attempt on Togliatti by Antonio Pullante on July 14, 1948, the positions of the PCI would solidify themselves within the realm of Italian politics. From the Soviet Union, “Stalin routed the activists in the party by sending a telegram in which he blamed the assassination on the negligence of the Party and not on the government. When Togliatti returned to take control of the Party, he was its unchallenged master, and he replaced the revolutionaries with scholarly bureaucrats who resembled himself.”<sup>368</sup> The ideological wing of the PCI would become subdued following the failed assassination attempt, and Togliatti’s mode and method of practicing politics would influence the way the PCI would function throughout the entire party’s lifetime. Togliatti’s relationship with the ruling party of Italy, the DC, would see to that the PCI “avoided any frontal clashes with the government which might have caused it to be outlawed and Togliatti pursued his goal of making the Party the foremost democratic force in Italy.”<sup>369</sup> Togliatti would work to integrate the political culture of the party, members, and supporters. He also worked on normalizing the relationship of the PCI with the Italian government while simultaneously integrating the concepts of Gramsci.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> R.W., “Togliatti: Master of Maneuver,” *Communist Affairs* 1, no. 9 (1963): 25.

<sup>368</sup> R.W., 25.

<sup>369</sup> R.W., 25.

<sup>370</sup> Giampiero Carocci, “Palmiro Togliatti: Ritratti Critici Di Contemporanei,” *Belfagor* 4, no. 1 (1949): 63.

## **Togliatti's application of Gramsci**

The intention of demonstrating the party's political legitimacy was performed not only for the political growth of the PCI but was also fundamentally party to Gramsci's understanding of hegemony. Unlike Bordiga, Gramsci believed one of the best ways to strive for communism is to understand and utilize cultural hegemony to the party's advantage. Gramsci criticized the thought of certain Marxist thinkers that progress towards a more socialist world would also mean the pursuing of a violent revolution and the abandonment of participating in a 'bourgeois democracy.' Gramsci counters with, "it seems obvious that an opposition on principle is not rational. On the contrary, it is rational to collaborate practically and willingly to welcome everything that may serve to create a common national language, the non-existence of which creates friction particularly in the popular masses among whom local particularisms and phenomena of a narrow and provincial mentality are more tenacious than is believed."<sup>371</sup> The belief that cultural hegemony is essential to participate in to achieve political aims. By collaborating within a given government, political systems, and societal structures, the movements can shape and transform all these structures to provide a new 'language' to communicate beliefs and ideas. In this way, the movement would be won by garnering a significant enough allegiance to this philosophical worldview and application.

Once members of the movement can gain positions of power that allow them to alter the cultural hegemony, they ought to develop a role that would facilitate a mass movement. There are two steps to ensure that this movement has the momentum to

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<sup>371</sup> Gramsci and Forgacs, *The Gramsci Reader*, 255.

pursue cultural hegemony. They are to “1) never to tire of repeating its own arguments (though offering literary variation of form): repetition is the best didactic means for working on the popular mentality. 2) To work incessantly to raise the intellectual level of ever-growing strata of the populace, in other words, to give a personality to the amorphous mass element. This means working to produce *elites* of intellectuals of a new type which arise directly out of the masses, but remain in contact with them to become, as it were, the whalebone in the corset.”<sup>372</sup> The construction of this *elite* is a fascinating notion because it is not the typical instance of an elite that is typically understood as a social stratum that aims to distance itself from the lower echelons of society and maintain its power and influence. Instead, the *elite* are members of the masses that do not aim to exit the echelons of that society but remain in and potentially enrich it. This iteration of an *elite* is an integral part of educating and producing more *elites* from the masses. It is Gramsci’s understanding that “everyone is [already] a philosopher’ – hence, that scientific forms of thought’ need not be introduced ‘from scratch’ – a process of persuasion that must be at once philosophical, religious and political leads him to conclude that persuasion is as likely to depend as much upon the authority of the person who is doing the persuading and the organizational affiliations of this person as it does upon the reasonableness of the point of view presented.”<sup>373</sup> This understanding allows the *elites* to arise from the masses and enables the mass to become the *elite*. The most important component is that those educating the masses are not from different social strata that were elevated out of and above the masses.

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<sup>372</sup> Gramsci and Hoare, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, 340.

<sup>373</sup> Adamson, “Gramsci, Catholicism and Secular Religion,” 482.

This conception of the development of a hegemonic culture may appear rigid in structure due to the emphasis on the intellectual *elite* and the entailed educational prerequisites, but it is quite fluid. Gramsci's heavy consideration of the different cultural norms and regional backgrounds provides a template that is meant to consider all things. The community determines the ability to create such an elite that it is engaging. Gramsci stated that, "an educational movement... 'tends to the creation of a new civilization of new attitudes of life and thought, of new feelings: it does so by promoting among the class of manual and intellectual workers the spirit of enquiry in the philosophical and artistic field, in the field of historical investigation, in the field of the creation of new works of beauty and truth. A movement of this nature has its first phase, a phase in which it is purely an instrument of struggle, and a second phase in which its positive work of creation beings.'"<sup>374</sup> This process of educating the masses would mobilize the population to revolutionize the public consciousness.

This new public consciousness would aim to continue the cycle of education and promote a social structure that is compatible with an existing political or cultural system. For Gramsci, "civil society is the marketplace of ideas, where intellectuals enter as 'salesmen' of contending cultures. The intellectuals succeed in creating hegemony to the extent that they extend the world view of the rulers to the ruled, and thereby secure the 'free' consent of the masses to the law and order of the land."<sup>375</sup> The intellectuals that arise of the masses then develop the cultural hegemony necessary to pursue the political and economic goals of socialism. Part of the 'sales' of the intellectuals also intends on

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<sup>374</sup> Joll, *Antonio Gramsci*, 45.

<sup>375</sup> Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 353, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2708933>.

contacting and reaching those abroad, those who are also sympathetic to similar political and economic aims.

The understanding of how to value and understand parties within a political system was also mapped out by Gramsci. As he states, “if the state represents the coercive and punitive force of juridical regulation of a country, the parties- representing the spontaneous adhesion of an élite to such a regulation, considered as a type of collective society to which the entire mass must be educated- must show in their specific internal life that they have assimilated as principles of moral conduct those rules which in the State are legal obligations.”<sup>376</sup> Although Togliatti does not necessarily operate under the dogmatic principles of Gramsci, it is clear that Gramsci’s writings are influential in the shaping of the PCI’s perspective of party politics and the need to participate in the newly established democratic process. This structure is especially true in Gramsci’s political climate was very much imprisoned by; the rise of fascism in both Italy and Germany being in play is in Gramsci’s thoughts. Gramsci understood that this fusing of a world view with societal behavior could be instituted by ‘authoritarian means’ but would not be as stable if the population was not produced freely.<sup>377</sup>

The role of parties within a government structure is ultimately a vehicle to achieve political goals with the weight of some level of popular supports as a form of legitimacy. This understanding of political parties necessarily requires members to give up ideological aspirations to achieve political gains through a non-violent method. Gramsci elaborates that “from this point of view the parties can be considered as schools of State life. Elements of party like: character (resistance to the pressures of surpassed

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<sup>376</sup> Gramsci and Forgacs, *The Gramsci Reader*, 267.

<sup>377</sup> Gramsci and Hoare, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, 326.

cultures), honor (fearless will in maintaining the new type of culture and life), dignity (awareness of operating for a higher end), etc.”<sup>378</sup> These characteristics of culture will provide the framework for Togliatti’s molding of the PCI. Providing the lens to participate within a political system that saw the PCI as an opposition party for the duration of the Cold War. The PCI would attempt to produce and curate a political culture of ‘character, honor, and dignity.’

The building of Gramsci’s status in the PCI was crucial for presenting an air of legitimacy for the vision the party promised to Italians. The use of Gramsci’s theories was applicable when “Ercoli (Togliatti) could not present himself to his comrades as the author of a policy lacking roots in the tradition of the Italian Communist Party, nor could he approach other forces, whose alliance he sought, as the pure and simple executor of the new phase of Soviet policy. In Gramsci’s teachings, he readily sought the support of a stronger authority for his policies - an authority rooted in Italian politics and culture, in the history of the party, and in anti-fascist struggle.”<sup>379</sup> The pressure to deliver a party in Italy that is fundamentally opposed to fascism and in support of the new political apparatus, Togliatti raised Gramsci to the level of a martyr for communists, anti-fascists, and Italians. Gramsci symbolized the resistance to fascist ideology and policy, a figure to draw inspiration from many portions of the political spectrum. It was with this task that “Togliatti became the main architect of the myth of Gramsci as a brilliant theoretical footnote to Lenin – a Lenin which... was an opportunistic Stalinist reconstruction manufactured in Russia to provide its de-facto totalitarian and social-democratic policies

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<sup>378</sup> Gramsci and Hoare, 268.

<sup>379</sup> Luigi Cortesi, “Palmiro Togliatti, La <<Svolta Di Salerno>> E L’Eredità Gramsciana (Tredici Documenti Del Marzo-Giugno 1944, Uno Dell’aprile 1945),” *Belfagor* 30, no. 1 (1975): 10.



with a legitimating antecedent.”<sup>380</sup> In the same way that Lenin was used as a political symbol to legitimize Stalin’s policies and political power, Gramsci was used similarly. This tactic is not to say that Togliatti had intended to pursue a totalitarian society, but rather that the use of a prominent political philosopher as an instrument of building legitimacy was utilized similarly.

To maintain both the political ties with the Soviet Union and utilize Gramsci’s writings, Togliatti would not initially release the letters that were hostile to the Soviet Union as a state or as a political experiment.<sup>381</sup> Gramsci had written on the contradictory nature of bolshevism and advocated for the decrease of bureaucratic power in favor of proletarian power, fearing that it may lead to a dictatorship.<sup>382</sup> This writing would be hidden from the general public by Togliatti to present a Gramsci that was either in support or passive about developments in the Soviet Union. This action demonstrates how Togliatti is not necessarily an ideologue of Gramscian thought and was politically expedient in maintaining a Pro-Soviet stance throughout his career.

Togliatti’s understanding of applying a method to his responses to crises, advocacy of policies, and participating in dialogue helps understand how he differs from Gramsci and how to understand him as a pragmatist. Togliatti and Gramsci have different understandings of Marxism. As Togliatti went through lifting Gramsci’s work, he would develop his understanding and analyses of the prison notebooks. Togliatti claimed that “for Gramsci, ‘to do politics means to act in such a way as to transform the world. Hence politics contains everyone’s real philosophy along with the substance of history...’ it

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<sup>380</sup> Cortesi, 10.

<sup>381</sup> Paul Piccone, “Gramsci’s Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti,” *Theory and Society* 3, no. 4 (1976): 489.

<sup>382</sup> Gramsci and Forgacs, *The Gramsci Reader*, 136.

does not follow that for Gramsci the truth of his political thought is reducible to ‘the method which is Marxist and Leninist’ as both Togliatti and Marxist-Leninists understand it.”<sup>383</sup> While Togliatti’s public understanding of Gramsci’s works was to portray the work as Marxist-Leninist, it may have been done in this way to further the political connection with the Soviet Union and Party politics. This notion is emphasized by the political role Togliatti held in both international politics and domestic politics. His belief that the PCI needed to hold a level of solidarity with the Soviet Union and the communist parties abroad with a unifying ideology was beneficial in building a political base.

Even if it would be inappropriate to categorize Togliatti as an ideologue, suggesting that he had presented himself as one would be acceptable. As Bell claimed previously, when an individual or a party’s ideology ends when compromises are needed to meet a political goal, does that entity present itself as a pragmatist? Togliatti and the PCI’s “version codify the methodology within a *formal* domain accessible only to the ‘leaders of the working class’ and applicable to the political struggle leading to overthrow of prevailing capitalist relations, for Gramsci such an objectification of method leads Marxism to ‘become an ideology in the worst sense of the word, that is to say, a dogmatic system of eternal and absolute truths.’”<sup>384</sup> Defining the methodology in such a way would even bring the understanding of Marxist ideology more in line with how religion presents itself as an arbiter of truth. This analysis of Marxist methodology by Togliatti was utilized in two different ways. The first is to portray the PCI as being philosophically in line with the Soviet Union’s understanding of political power and the purpose of political

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<sup>383</sup> Piccone, “Gramsci’s Marxism,” 492.

<sup>384</sup> Piccone, 492.

parties. The second is the ability to use this belief system as a shield when he is more than willing to diverge from the dogmatic approach of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The project by Togliatti to bridge the intellectual gap between Lenin and Gramsci was particularly emphasized when comparing theories of the Party. That is to say that Togliatti had attempted to draw similarities between Lenin and Gramsci's theories of philosophical speculation and state application of the Party.<sup>385</sup> However, their views were quite radical from one another, with Lenin emphasizing the role of the Party needing to be guided and maintained by an intellectual elite. In contrast, Gramsci believed that the Party ought to be derived from a political class of *elite* that derives from the masses to represent better the population from which they arise.

### **Realization of Togliatti's Methods: The Roman Catholic Church**

On a domestic level, Togliatti was instrumental in pushing for the shaping of the Italian Republic. Doing so required him to readily decide how to interact and cooperate with the DC and the PSI. Togliatti's emphasis on putting aside ideological tendencies to compromise and cooperate with the DC, especially immediately following the Second World War, saw the PCI and DC attempting to find a shared vision. As Pojmann clearly states, "on one hand, Togliatti supported Soviet leader Josef Stalin, had been active in the Third International, and firmly believed in the promises of socialism. On the other hand, Togliatti maintained that Italy would not enter a socialist era through violent revolution

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<sup>385</sup> Piccone, 502–3.

but rather through a gradual process that considered its history as a Catholic nation.”<sup>386</sup> Pojmann’s analysis of Togliatti’s circumstances encapsulates the dichotomy between his adherence to an ideology and his preference to be pragmatic. Togliatti’s thoughts on the Catholic Church were reasonably thought out, as he had claimed, “Catholicism in Italy is not simply the Church. It is a way of thinking, a complex set of connections between history and politics, culture and philosophy.”<sup>387</sup> In this description, Togliatti would indirectly demonstrate similarities between Catholicism and Marxism, as both metaphysical constructs help shape a worldview, process information, and shape society. There were some actors such as Franco Rodano “who joined the Communist party (PCI) in the aftermath of World War II went on arguing for the conciliation of Marxism’s socioeconomic truths and the Church’s spiritual truths.”<sup>388</sup> Marxist and Catholic ideas would truly be linked together to create the *Partito della Sinistra Cristiana* (PSC). This short-lived political party wanted to attract Italian Catholics who had identified their economic beliefs with Marxist values. These same principles will be the basis for the rise of Liberation Theology in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s.

This willingness to work with the DC also saw some level of reciprocation from De Gasperi. Even though the Catholic Church and President Truman had threatened De Gasperi’s government through social and economic pressure, he had held firm that “through the Christian Democrats’ ‘forced cohabitation’ with the Communist Party and made it his objective to show the Italian people as well as the Americans that the

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<sup>386</sup> Wendy A. Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944-1968*, First edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 32.

<sup>387</sup> Daniela Saresella, “The Dialogue between Catholics and Communists in Italy during the 1960s,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75, no. 3 (July 2014): 494.

<sup>388</sup> Richard Drake, “Catholics and the Italian Revolutionary Left of the 1960s,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 94, no. 3 (2008): 451.

Christian Democrats could be the party of capital.”<sup>389</sup> An example of the two parties working together to achieve an identical goal is when both Togliatti and De Gasperi were instrumental in securing the right to vote for women.<sup>390</sup> The distinctions between the PCI, PSI, and DC would become greater and greater following the Second World War.<sup>391</sup> Despite the growing differences, “leaders of [the Christian Democrats], including De Gasperi, held onto an Italian nationalist vision and a distaste for the idea of the world being divided into blocs, even expressing the hope that ‘Italy could act as a bridge of conciliation between the United States and the Soviet Union.’”<sup>392</sup> The goal to be a bridge or a neutral nation between the two superpowers of the Cold War era would also become a centerpiece of Togliatti’s international platform.<sup>393</sup>

There were issues Togliatti would avoid tackling publicly, despite his personal political beliefs. Due to the strength of the Roman Catholic Church and a sizable portion of supporters of the PCI would identify as Catholics even though some political frames promote the idea that “the Communist model represents participation in the Catholic Church as incompatible with participation in the Communist Party. The Communist movement is envisaged as resulting in the end of the Catholic Church, with the establishment of a person liberated from the bonds of religion.”<sup>394</sup> This ideological

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<sup>389</sup> Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944-1968*, 33.

<sup>390</sup> Pojmann, 28.

<sup>391</sup> John Whittam, “Review Article: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in Italy: History, Memory and Culture,” ed. R. J. B. Bosworth et al., *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 1 (2001): 166.

<sup>392</sup> Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944-1968*, 33.

<sup>393</sup> This is particularly true in relation to Togliatti’s stance on Italy’s integration in NATO. Togliatti had argued that had Italy joined NATO, Italy would become a prime target in the case of a hot-war breaking out and that Italy would be “a carpet of atom bombs.” Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*, First published in paperback (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 133–34.

<sup>394</sup> David I. Kertzer, “Participation of Italian Communists in Catholic Rituals: A Case Study,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 14, no. 1 (1975): 2, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1384451>.

position within the PCI would see that those politically inclined to support the communist party might be rejected based on religious grounds. However, “Togliatti supported the entry of these Catholics into the PCI. In his report to the Fifth Congress of the party, Togliatti found it convenient to praise religious liberty and to propose cooperation between the Catholic and communist masses. Article Two of the new party’s statutes affirmed that it was possible to join the PCI regardless of ‘race, religious faith, or philosophical belief.’”<sup>395</sup> Togliatti’s dismissal of the ideological position substantiates his previous belief that he would be sure to consider this historical relationship between Italy, Italians, and the Roman Catholic Church.

The power of the Church and the PCI’s stance of providing an opportunistic relationship with Catholics demonstrated an issue Togliatti had great difficulty tackling. Politically, “Togliatti had not been inclined to pursue any issues that could be used by the Christian Democrats as evidence that the left wanted to destroy the traditional family, and he wanted the UDI (*Unione Donne in Italia*, Union of Italian Women) and the women’s section of the Communist Party to back away from potentially incendiary legal measures.”<sup>396</sup> Just as Togliatti would use Gramsci as a political tool for legitimacy in the public space, so would the DC and De Gasperi use the legacy and prestige of the Catholic Church to push for their political ends. From the perspective of the Catholic Church, “the Communist was not seen as a political adversary but as the Antichrist, a person to fear because ‘he read too many books, because he did not go to church.’”<sup>397</sup>

There is a distinct difference between the ways in which the Church viewed the PCI and

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<sup>395</sup> Saresella, “The Dialogue between Catholics and Communists in Italy during the 1960s,” 494.

<sup>396</sup> Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944-1968*, 62.

<sup>397</sup> David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 33–34.

vice-versa. The Church's understanding of the Communist party is through a moral lens, and the Communist party views and evaluates the Catholic Church through a political lens, two fundamentally different intellectual outlooks. Togliatti's choice encourages Catholics to join the PCI ranks and not speak out against social woes that could be construed as attacking traditional family norms, further demonstrating the level at which he is genuinely a pragmatist.

The relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the PCI would take a dramatic turn in 1949 when "the Holy Office published a decree indicating that members of the Communist Party, or those who publish, read, write or disseminate printed materials in support of communist doctrine and practice, would be excommunicated. This decree represented a significant counter-offensive by the Holy See in the religious cold war with the Communist bloc."<sup>398</sup> This proclamation had sent a political shockwave throughout Italy. The portion of the population that identified as communist and catholic or those who had voted for the PCI in the previous election were now a center of attention. Pope Pius XII, sometimes referred to as the 'chaplain of the Atlantic Alliance,' had the decree "hang in confessionals in Italy, where it caused much mirth; but in Poland and Hungary, it posed real problems, being viewed as a virtual declaration of war."<sup>399</sup> The international ramifications of this decree had ripple effects through the United States, Latin America, and other portions of Europe.

Togliatti's reaction to the decree is also an essential factor in understanding the intellectual stance of the PCI as well as the party's position abroad. A great deal of

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<sup>398</sup> Peter C. Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943-1950* (Montréal ; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 242.

<sup>399</sup> Christopher Duggan and Christopher Wagstaff, eds., *Italy in the Cold War: Politics, Culture and Society 1948-58* (Oxford ; Washington, DC: Berg, 1995), 75.

evidence suggests that the following document had been transmitted to either the CPUSA, *L'Unità del Popolo*, or other American organizations. The heaviest support for this claim lies in the fact that the following document is stored within foreign communication and the subcategory of the United States at the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci. For this dissertation, the following statement by Togliatti will be considered a document that was most likely distributed to communist-friendly organizations both in and outside of Italy. The first recipients of Togliatti's instructions were directed to secretaries of regions, federation secretaries, directors of newspapers, and editor-in-chief of *Vie Nuove*, a Communist Magazine that Luigi Longo founded.<sup>400</sup>

Within the Party's directives, there were six points that Togliatti was clear on expressing and disseminating. The confidential instructions will present themselves with levels of ideological terminology and pragmatic positions, with the intention of injects the philosophical foundation of Gramsci. The first point states:

1. The decision of the Holy Office regarding the excommunication of those who make their own or support the communist doctrines must be considered and it is a new act by which the most reactionary forces of international capitalism try, by means of ideal and practical terror, to oppose the progress in the whole world of the forces of labor, democracy, socialism, and peace. This act indicates how these reactionary forces, frightened by the victories in Europe and Asia by the peoples fighting for the renewal of society, have lost all control of themselves and do not hesitate to resort to the most discredited and ridiculous means of pressure on the conscience of individuals and peoples. The 'excommunication' is a sign of a new whole. It is a desperate attempt to break the ever wider front of democratic, popular, peaceful, and progressive forces, at the center of which are the Communists, the vanguard of the working class and progress throughout the world.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, 200.

<sup>401</sup> Palmiro Togliatti, "Istruzioni riservate circa la scomunica del S.U.," July 27, 1949, 0134, Microfilm 0300, Paggina 0134-0136, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.



Togliatti's first point highlights the ideological stance of the communist movements and the international struggle against 'international capital.' An important aspect to take away from the response is how Togliatti indicates how the Vatican decree embodies the characteristics of a reactionary force. A belief that the Church is reacting to a loss of social and political clout, an increasingly diminished role following the Second World War.

Togliatti's analysis is also based on Gramsci's understanding of the secularization of society. Gramsci believes that a condition for the process of a "secular religion can only arise in the wake of a long-term secularization process... that is, the place of religion within the overall social system must move from 'total' to partial': must become one functional subsystem among others rather than a master institution infusing society as a whole and conceived as given by, and ultimately reigned over by God."<sup>402</sup> The Church must function as just a gathering place for followers of faith rather than a political force that governs all of society, thus moving from the 'total' to 'partial.' Within the context of his description of the diminishing role of the Catholic Church in Italy appears to be the state in which the Church is during Gramsci's contemporary time. While the Catholic Church had tried to increase their role of their 'partial' by issuing "a holy war against communist unrighteousness," the communist response by Togliatti would be steady-handed.<sup>403</sup>

Togliatti would then attempt to contextualize the Church's decree through a historical lens. The second point states:

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<sup>402</sup> Adamson, "Gramsci, Catholicism and Secular Religion," 483.

<sup>403</sup> Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, 242.

2. The Communist Party has no interest and no reason that would lead it to discuss the excommunication launched by the holy office of its judicial and canonical aspects; it is perfectly extraneous to the debate about the ecclesiastical justification of the provision, its great extent, and so on. A debate of this kind, not provoked by any of our interventions, has instead opened in the Catholic and pro-Catholic press, which only demonstrates that among the proponents of a reactionary and clerical policy, there are strong doubts about the decency and effectiveness of the measure adopted from the holy office. The communists, while recording the various moments of this controversy in their newspapers and in front of the public, remain completely extraneous to it. The communist press and propaganda; however, cannot fall into vulgar and mannered anti-clericalism. They will use historical examples and references to demonstrate the reactionary character of similar measures already adopted on other occasions by the Catholic hierarchies.<sup>404</sup>

The PCI's reaction to the decree would do so in moderation. Under Togliatti's directive, the Communist Party would let the DC and Catholic-leaning organizations primarily cover the event in hopes of not provoking an increased backlash against the Vatican. This method is very similar to his approach regarding the status and importance of traditional family life in Italy. Just as Gramsci had analyzed reactionary policies by the Catholic Church Pope Pius IX and Pope Pius XI, Togliatti instructed for newspapers and public advocates would educate the public on historical examples that are very similar to the decree.<sup>405</sup>

The stance of the PCI had been relatively consistent with their handling of the Catholic Church. Togliatti had made sure that a significant amount of care was given to the treatment and relationship between communists and Catholics. For example, "in the Communist daily, *Unità*, on February 3, 1946, stated that the religious beliefs of the

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<sup>404</sup> Togliatti, "Istruzioni riservate circa la scomunica del S.U.," 0134–35.

<sup>405</sup> Gramsci and Forgacs, *The Gramsci Reader*, 61–62.

masses and their acceptance of the spiritual magisterium of the Church were not obstacles to the realizations of political liberty and economic progress.”<sup>406</sup> The journalistic and editorial arm of the PCI had ensured to maintain the political line of Togliatti, to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate with Catholic influence. This openness follows the intended cooperation in which Gramsci had advocated the Communist Party's conduct.

Gramsci has always considered that the PCI's most serious obstacle that it would need to contend with was the Catholic Church. Through his historical analyses, Gramsci would come to believe that “the strength of religions, and of the Catholic Church in particular, has lain, and still lies, in the fact that they feel very strongly the need for the doctrinal unity of the whole mass of the faithful and strive to ensure that the higher intellectual stratum does not get separated from the lower.”<sup>407</sup> The Catholic Church in the Cold War political climate does not see any reason to cooperate with Italian communists. Despite their efforts, “the extended hand of the Communists was rejected both by the Church and by the Christian Democratic Party. The ideological differences were seemingly insurmountable, and judging from the partisan literature of the day, the openness of the Italian Communist Party was that of the hierarchs rather than that of the rank and file.”<sup>408</sup> The discrepancies between PCI leadership and members regarding the attitude towards the Catholic Church are an area that warrants future scholarly research. The reasons for the discrepancies of policies between two opposing political forces are primarily because the two factions' objectives are attempting to achieve different results.

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<sup>406</sup> Elisa A. Carrillo, “The Italian Catholic Church and Communism, 1943-1963,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (1991): 646.

<sup>407</sup> Gramsci and Forgacs, *The Gramsci Reader*, 330.

<sup>408</sup> Carrillo, “The Italian Catholic Church and Communism, 1943-1963,” 646–47.

The PCI and the Catholic Church's policies were opposite, with the former primarily acting passively and the latter actively.

Togliatti's instructions would redirect where the energy of the PCI, members, and followers should be directed. The third and fourth points state:

3. The Communist Party does not modify, as a consequence of the act of the Holy Office, its position towards religion and which can be summarized in two fundamental points: a) the articles of the Statute that speak of this question and which remain fully valid; b) the need for political action and a concrete struggle to establish mutual contact and effective collaboration between workers of all faiths in order to create the largest united front for the defense of workers' claims, for democracy, for peace, against capitalist exploitation, against fascism and reaction, against the provocateurs of a new war.

4. Because of this, it is evident that in our propaganda, agitation and press, the demonstration that the Catholic ruling spheres operate in the interest of capitalist reaction, fascism and imperialism must be placed at the center, as up to now, as a warmonger. It is on this ground, patiently demonstrating the need for workers' unity, and realizing this unity, that we must essentially fight.<sup>409</sup>

Despite the aggressive posture of the Catholic Church, Togliatti would instruct the party to maintain their current stance when communicating with Catholics, regardless of their political affiliation. The Church's decree had "warned Catholics – not only in Italy but throughout the world – that they could not enlist in or show favor to the Communist Party. Neither could they publish, read or disseminate books, newspapers periodicals, or leaflets in support of Communist doctrine, nor could they write for such publications" without the fear of excommunication.<sup>410</sup> There was a serious attempt for the Church to make a serious impact during the early stages of the Cold War, to stake their claim in the

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<sup>409</sup> Togliatti, "Istruzioni riservate circa la scomunica del S.U.," 0135.

<sup>410</sup> Carrillo, "The Italian Catholic Church and Communism, 1943-1963," 650.

global arena. Isolating Catholics worldwide, including the United States, that may have supported Marxist ideals now had to consider defying their political beliefs to match their religious worldview.

The PCI considers the crusade marked by the Church as reacting in a familiar style throughout history. As Gramsci puts it, “the Roman Catholic Church has always been the most vigorous in the struggle to prevent the ‘official’ formation of two religions, one for the ‘intellectuals’ and the other for the ‘simple souls.’ This struggle has not been without serious disadvantages for the Church itself, but these disadvantages are connected with the historical process which is transforming the whole of civil society.”<sup>411</sup> Whether Togliatti or the PCI leadership consciously incorporated Gramscian theory of understanding politics and developing responses to crises, they have been reliably staying faithful to his philosophy.

Togliatti finishes his instructions to the other party organs with a type of call to action. The fifth and sixth points state:

5. The purpose that we propose to achieve and to achieve which the forces of the party must be employed is to obtain that, despite the excommunication, the contact and collaboration between our comrades and Catholic workers is maintained, extended, strengthened. that follow the directives of the ecclesiastical hierarchies. It is to overcome these difficulties and not to increase them that all our actions must tend, which inevitably must be long, multiple, and persevering. An integral part of it must be a much more extensive and intense propaganda of the elementary principles of socialism, against capitalism and against war. To the extent that this propaganda will be effective, and to the extent that the unity of all the laboratories for their defense and their conquests will be constituted in the immediate struggles of labor and in the struggle for peace, the effects of the excommunication of the St. Office or in the most backward strata of the population will be limited even rendered null and void.

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<sup>411</sup> Gramsci and Forgacs, *The Gramsci Reader*, 330.

6. The peripheral organizations are invited to collect with accuracy and objectivity (without exaggerating in any sense) all the information data on the issue in its various aspects (positions of the clergy and its acts, reaction of citizens, comrades, women, etc. etc.) and periodically report to the Party center.<sup>412</sup>

The party was instructed to proceed as usual; the decree should be relatively ignored because it does not conflict with the objectives of the PCI. Members of the communist party ought not to harass or attack the beliefs of Catholics, especially workers, and the continued effort of educating and recruiting Catholics was encouraged. Overall, it appears that “the Italian Communist party was not disturbed by the decree, and predicted that it would be rescinded. Not all Catholics docilely followed the lead of Rome.”<sup>413</sup>

The Catholic Church aimed to push for control over public and private spheres of society through this decree. However, the institution itself was at a crossroads within Italian politics. The openly hostile attitudes towards communists abroad, especially within Eastern Europe and in Italy and the United States, would see the Church taking a much more active posture within the dynamics of the Cold War, especially when the institution had intended on presenting itself as a neutral force.<sup>414</sup>

A vital facet to take away from Togliatti’s instructions is that this document was sent to organizations in the United States. This list, intended to have few eyes read it, instructed the readers not to publicize it.<sup>415</sup> The intellectual transmission of the Party’s reaction to the United States suggests it could potentially influence how other actors may interpret the decree. Hopeful of preventing a massive outrage from communists or

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<sup>412</sup> Togliatti, “Istruzioni riservate circa la scomunica del S.U.,” 0136.

<sup>413</sup> Carrillo, “The Italian Catholic Church and Communism, 1943-1963,” 651.

<sup>414</sup> Duggan and Wagstaff, *Italy in the Cold War*, 72.

<sup>415</sup> Togliatti, “Istruzioni riservate circa la scomunica del S.U.,” 1.

communist-sympathizers in the United States or elsewhere. The transnational dialogue between Togliatti and other organizations suggests he believed that his influence or Gramscian philosophy might spread positively. As argued by some historians, Togliatti's positions, "some emphasize the 'specifically national identity' of Italian communism and its compatibility with a democratic project; while other argued that Togliatti's ultimate goal was to satisfy the interests of the Soviet Union."<sup>416</sup> However, it is entirely possible that the truth behind his positions truly lies somewhere in between. Togliatti's positions are hard to distinguish because he may be less ideological than some of his colleagues. His balance of international relationships between the Soviet Union, the Vatican, the United States, and organizations abroad demonstrate how fundamentally pragmatic he is with his beliefs.

### **Direct American Dialogue**

The PCI's outreach to American organizations and the CPUSA is done out of expectation and fosters dialogue. The types of discussions are not always in-depth, philosophical, and profound but are sometimes routine to transmit updates. This portion will attempt to curate the material to those that are substantive to investigating the level of dialogue between these entities. The areas of investigation are the subject matter of the correspondence, the depth of discussion, and the intellectual foundation of the discussions.

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<sup>416</sup> Saresella, "The Dialogue between Catholics and Communists in Italy during the 1960s," 494.

The relationship between independent actors and organizations with the PCI is often cordial and professional. There is a level of respect given to the corresponding party, promoting a continued level of formality with one another. The tone of dialogue remains consistent with many of these letter correspondences. In some cases, those who write to the PCI write in Italian but are English in most instances.

One such letter comes from Claudia Jones. Jones was “the best-known theoretician on black women’s issues in the Communist party, demonstrates that she was still just one of a group of black women communists in this era who were also taking positions that would bring together issues of race, class, and gender.”<sup>417</sup> She was a major intellectual force within the CPUSA, challenging notions of women’s rights and drawing together political and intellectual philosophy to shape both her ideology and the ideology of the CPUSA.<sup>418</sup> As Lara Vapnek qualifies, Jones’ ability to “synthesize her concerns with gender, race, and class” is noted by many scholars of African American women.<sup>419</sup>

Jones reached out to the PCI about one of her colleagues, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Flynn was Jones’ “friend and comrade, [as] president” of the Women’s Commission of the Communist Party of the United States of America.<sup>420</sup> Jones had sent a letter on behalf of Flynn to the PCI stating:

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, beloved leader of the American Communist Party will be 60 years old next Monday, August 7th. Her stirring life as a labor leader comprises a great portion of the history of American labor in this generation.

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<sup>417</sup> Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx the Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*, 2008, 33, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822390329>.

<sup>418</sup> Boyce Davies, 30.

<sup>419</sup> Lara Vapnek, “The Rebel Girl Revisited: Rereading Elizabeth Gurley Flynn’s Life Story,” *Feminist Studies* 44, no. 1 (2018): 15.

<sup>420</sup> Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx the Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*, 34.



More than 40 years of her entire life has been intimately associated with the struggles and traditions of the American working class. Before she was 20, Elisabeth Gurley Flynn has already been identified with William Z. Foster in the free speech fight of the I.W.W. in the Northwest. Her role is legend in major labor struggles, such as the Bridgeport cases, the strikes of the textile workers in 1906 in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the Passaic and Patterson strikes and in the 1916 Mesabi Iron Ore range strike and numerous unemployed struggles. Outstanding has been her contributions as a working-class journalist, agitator, and leader in the numerous struggles in defense of labor and political prisoners.<sup>421</sup>

Although Jones' letter seems to be requesting a birthday response, it also presents underlying messages about what is valued and what the author perceives as valuable to the reader. The CPUSA emphasizes its historical success under Flynn throughout the United States. Alongside their emphasis on historical legitimacy, an intellectual foundation is used to grant extra credence to their work.

William Z. Foster, the intellectual figure that is expressed, is said to have genuinely discovered his identification with socialism during a trip he had taken in Europe in 1921.<sup>422</sup> Foster's philosophy has been identified with a "moral skepticism, his disdain for ideological expressions of 'democracy' and nationalism, his opportunism, and even his vision of the future workers' society are consistent with what came to be labeled 'Bolshevism.'"<sup>423</sup> The political philosophy of Foster appears to fall in line with Leninism of the mid-twentieth century given his support for extreme centralization which allowed him to have "recomposed his utopian vision in the 1930s to conform with the authoritarian ethos of Stalinism."<sup>424</sup> While Togliatti is considered a pragmatist in his

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<sup>421</sup> Claudia Jones, "Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Testimonial," August 2, 1950, 1493, Microfilm 0329, Pagina 1493, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

<sup>422</sup> Victor G. Devinatz, "The Labor Philosophy of William Z. Foster: From the IWW to the TUEL," *International Social Science Review* 71, no. 1/2 (1996): 3.

<sup>423</sup> Edward P. Johanningsmeier, *Forging American Communism: The Life of William Z. Foster* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 160–61, <https://www.jstor.org/jerome.stjohns.edu:81/stable/j.ctt7ztzp3>.

<sup>424</sup> Johanningsmeier, 265.

political approach, Victor G. Devinatz considers Foster to be a political opportunist above all else primarily. Devinatz qualifies through his analysis “that Foster was attracted to Communism for tactical rather than for theoretical reasons. He did not mention his belief in Marxism as a basis for his conversion to Communism but only the success of the Russian Revolution.”<sup>425</sup>

Flynn had first met Foster during the free speech fight, which Jones mentions in her letter. From the perspective of the CPUSA and the PCI’s positive relationship with the Soviet Union, there would not appear to be an intellectual or ideological difference significant enough to create any friction between the two. The letter also refers to a particular crisis in the United States for the CPUSA, the McCarthy Era trials. Jones’ effort was to garner acknowledgment and solidarity from international allies involving the political persecution of American communists and the attacks against Marxist ideology within the United States.

The symbols and words chosen in this letter also highlight to the reader the primary issues the CPUSA is currently experiencing. Jones finishes her letter with:

Symbolic of the period in which Gurly Flynn’s 60th birthday takes place in the toll the cold war is taking on fighters for peace. Twenty such fighters are in jail today as political prisoners. This testimonial will highlight the necessity of further united front struggles against war and fascism to help wrest these fighters from jail, and to further the struggle against fascism and war.

In honor of her past and present contributions, a national birthday testimonial will take place on August 11th in New York City. We urge that you send appropriate greetings to this outstanding working class American Communist leader.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Devinatz, “The Labor Philosophy of William Z. Foster,” 8.

<sup>426</sup> Jones, “Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Testimonial,” 1493.

During the writing of this letter, the imprisoned members were a common crisis in which Flynn had fought to release. Flynn had become very familiar with this process due to the number of times she was imprisoned.<sup>427</sup> Ultimately, Jones is advocating for international solidarity between the Italian and American parties. Showing comradery with the CPUSA would on some level endorse the beliefs and actions that they had but would also support American communists who have been undertaking a level of political persecution under McCarthyism.

There is no evidence from the archives of the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci that the PCI directly sent a letter to celebrate Flynn's birth and the symbolic link to the imprisonment of American communists. However, several months later, the PCI had sent a letter to the CPUSA about most of the concerns that Jones, particularly political persecution, brought up. Luigi Longo, a leader within the PCI,<sup>428</sup> responded with support for the CPUSA's woes. Longo writes:

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, we send you the most fervent and fraternal wishes for your XV National Congress, whose work will be followed with interest by all peace-loving democrats.

The condemnation of the 11 leaders of your Party and the latest undemocratic measures adopted by the US imperialist government as part of its policy of active preparation for war has aroused the unanimous indignation of sincere democrats in our country. Your struggle in defense of peace and for respect for the freedom and independence of peoples is felt and greeted by the Italian people as their own struggle, and your successes are our successes.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Vapnek, "The Rebel Girl Revisited."

<sup>428</sup> Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*, 2014, 37.

<sup>429</sup> Luigi Longo, "Per il XV Congresso del P.C. degli Stati Uniti," December 24, 1950, 1494, Microfilm 0329, Pagina 1494, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

The letter emphasizes both the PCI values and what Longo believes is particularly valuable for American communists. Despite the CPUSA's tendencies to fall in line with Soviet doctrine and defend the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union, the PCI connected on the principle of the democratization process that is espoused through Marx's writings.<sup>430</sup> The notion that the United States was a state preparing for war as an imperialist power has been publicly predicted by leading members, including Togliatti.<sup>431</sup> The dialogue between the two organizations presents a scenario in which both parties do their best to present themselves as having as many similarities as possible, an attempt at solidarity, despite having some distinct differences.

Longo continues his letter to the CPUSA by drawing forth an evocative historical comparison. Longo finishes the statement with:

Certain that the shameful persecutions of your government will not be able to weaken the spirit of struggle of the American working class, the animator of the popular resistance against the Nazi methods of oppression that characterize the life and politics of the United States today, we hope that from your XV Congress new energies and new lessons come to strengthen the momentum of the American fighters for peace and socialism.

The Second Red Scare policies of the United States were not only a policy to discourage the public from possessing socialist-sympathizing beliefs or 'root-out' those who were socialist or communists out of industries or government. It was also intended to draw a clear connection between political organizations and the Soviet Union, particularly the CPUSA. With the advent of the Cold War, the CPUSA was "transformed from an

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<sup>430</sup> James R. Barrett, "Was the Personal Political? Reading the Autobiography of American Communism," *International Review of Social History* 53, no. 3 (2008): 400.

<sup>431</sup> Hanhimäki and Westad, *The Cold War*, 133–34.

unpopular political group into a threat to the nation's security."<sup>432</sup> These politically suppressing policies of the federal government were connected to the same sort of oppression that was performed in Nazi Germany following the rise of Adolf Hitler, with the initial targeting of German socialists and communists. The transnational discourse demonstrates how these parties were willing to communicate, issues they deemed essential to share, and times in which actors or parties needed to strengthen their solidarity.

### ***Non Rispondere: Do Not Respond***

The use of Gramsci as a symbolic tool for his personal political growth and the PCI is notable in the ways and methods the PCI interacts with different figures on a transnational level. This usage is demonstrated in how Togliatti interacts with different foreign actors but also demonstrates when he is willing to put aside the philosophical foundations of Gramsci for the sake of pragmatism. However, there is a notable interaction in which choosing consciously not to interact is profound.

In a letter designated for Palmiro Togliatti by an individual named Michele Valente, a one-sided conversation developed. According to his letter to the PCI, Valente was born in Italy and had lived there during the First World War. He left for the United States shortly after the rise of Mussolini. He mentioned that he "left with the intention of returning to his homeland, but only when the 'Duce' was rotten in Rome, [he] had given

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<sup>432</sup> Ellen Schrecker, "McCarthyism: Political Repression and the Fear of Communism," *Social Research* 71, no. 4 (2004): 1051.

up and had not returned there for 39 years.”<sup>433</sup> While he had not returned to Italy, he was very invested in the success of the PCI. Based on Valente’s writing, he is either out of practice with writing in Italian or was not formally educated in writing the language due to the numerous spelling and grammatical errors, but he is able to coherently express himself.

Valente builds his credibility through his claimed activities among anti-fascists in America during the 1930s and the Second World War. He eventually states: “Comrade Togliatti, it should be known that the oppression of managers in America is an issue that is known well known in Italy; as well as rampant overreactions, where America has become the center of the forge; with the ‘Cold War’ ready to be hot.”<sup>434</sup> The letter believes in the sense of urgency in which the United States might be an aggressor in the developing Cold War.

The letter reaches out to Togliatti to provide guidance and direction for continuing his struggle in the United States. Valente continues, “The fact is, beloved Fighting Companion, that I wrote, as best I could, to enlighten my fellow workers in Italy about the El Dorado claim of American workers, and to succeed in my task, the support of the leftist press is indispensable.”<sup>435</sup> He refers to the effectiveness of *l’Unità* and *Paese Sera* as political tools to further the objectives of pursuing socialism in the United States. Valente even goes so far as to offer his activism to aid Togliatti:

If I have the moral support that I may have the right to hope for from you in Italy, I have already put aside poetic dreams, to devote myself to a novella - narrative where the bosses' oppression will be described in detail, in the mines, the

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<sup>433</sup> Michele Valente, “Letter from Michele Valente to Palmiro Togliatti,” 1959, 3603, Microfilm 0465, Pagina 3603, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

<sup>434</sup> Valente, 3603.

<sup>435</sup> Valente, 3603.

railways, the factories, and in the streets, where I personally took part; things unknown, and ignored by the intellectual world. Please, Togliatti, for the thing most dear to the world: give me a hand!<sup>436</sup>

He had offered himself to the PCI to help jumpstart revolutionary fervor in the United States. Hoping for a directive from Togliatti, he started to work on behalf of the party to spread the PCI's influence on his behalf. However, after reading it, Togliatti had written two words on the letter, "*non rispondere*" (do not respond). His choice not to respond echoes the intellectual underpinnings of Togliatti.

Why would Togliatti not want to establish a transnational relationship with Valente? There are several reasons why choosing not to respond speaks so much. The first reason would be the possible ramifications of any trace back to supporting this individual could have dire consequences to the PCI. If Togliatti had supported a political cell in the United States, the implications of foreign interference from a state actor could lead to a confrontation with the American government. Another reason is that this individual is truly an unknown entity. Togliatti's interaction with this character involves too much risk for minimal gain for the PCI. Ultimately, Valente had written the letter with the underlying message of someone possibly supporting a violent revolution; Togliatti was fundamentally opposed to this intellectual concept. The association with someone of this ilk would tarnish the principles of pursuing policies of communism through the democratic process.

Two months later, after no response from the PCI, Valente sends another letter to Togliatti. He even makes note to Togliatti that he must have read it, as he states, "Since [the letter] was not returned to the sender, it is more than certain that it was delivered to

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<sup>436</sup> Valente, 3603.

the recipient.”<sup>437</sup> He continues by stating that he has had correspondence from important figures such as Fiorello La Guardia, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and even Winston Churchill. Valente becomes much clearer with his advocacy for taking more immediate action as he says, “Comrade Togliatti, to those that we consider ‘enemies,’ or of the opposite side, are very well aware of responding to those who are less than them... while the leader of the Italian Communists lets me freeze outside the door.”<sup>438</sup> Clearly insulted by Togliatti’s lack of response to his original letter and makes it known, he continues to explain to Togliatti his objective.

Valente mentions how Michele Salerno, an editor at *l’Unità del Popolo*, has published one of his novellas. Togliatti’s non-response prompted him to say:

I turned to you, Togliatti; and I am sorry to tell you, that if I still retrieve a confidential explanation, I would be forced to ask for it publicly through other newspapers. This kind of conspiracy of silence on the part of the only ones I consider to be in solidarity with my ideas in Italy, as my comrades in America have always been with me; this silence, I say, tears my soul apart, not because I promise myself, they must be successful because of personal exhibitionism: but because I see my strength cut short in this struggle by the resurgent fascism, which was the cause of my painful exile. In fact: if it is not the comrades in Italy who pick up the voice of those who shout in the desert abroad, by whom should this voice be picked up to be heard?<sup>439</sup>

The expressions in which Valente ties himself to Togliatti are similar to the intellectual foundation and connection in which the PCI identifies with Gramsci or the CPUSA identifies with Foster. The philosophical and intellectual identification of Valente with Togliatti is ever more apparent in his follow-up letter. He ends his letter scoring that “For

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<sup>437</sup> Michele Valente, “Second Letter from Michele Valente to Palmiro Togliatti,” 1959, 3604, Microfilm 0465, Pagina 3604, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci.

<sup>438</sup> Valente, 3604.

<sup>439</sup> Valente, 3604.



this reason, do not look to the fore, do not reject the efforts that each of us tries to put into the common struggle, before a second fascism, led by America, crushes everyone.

Recommend the spread of Proletarian Revolt, and I will prepare better work, Comrade Togliatti.”<sup>440</sup> Valenti presses his desire for a violent revolution, immediate action to take place in the United States. Valente ultimately buys into the accelerationist belief of communism. He awaits Togliatti's orders, to begin with, his dream of spreading the ‘proletarian revolt,’ but that letter never arrives; Togliatti has committed not to respond.

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<sup>440</sup> Valente, 3604.

## Conclusion

The transnational dialogue between Italy and the United States burgeoned during the early Cold War period. Discussion occurred on a grander scale primarily because the decades before the end of the Second World War did not allow consistent and uncensored exchanging of politics, culture, language, and ideas. The disunity and quarrels between the Italian socialists and communists aided in the rise of fascism in Italy.<sup>441</sup> The fascist government actively suppressed the rising socialist, communist, and catholic parties in Italy.<sup>442</sup> This suppression prevented active dialogue between Italy and the United States unless the Fascist Party directly sanctioned it.

The organizational effort by Girolamo Valenti attempted to create a culture of dialogue and interest in the development of Italy. Despite a lack of communication between leftist parties in Italy with American organizations, the Italian-American anti-fascist movement that Valenti cultivated proved valuable. Combating the ideological rise of fascism amongst Italian-Americans through political connections and media outlets, the foundation of these same tools will be utilized in the post-war era.

Valenti saw his objective of establishing connections with different labor leaders, American political officials, newspaper companies, and radio stations as vital to his transnational goals. Achieving this network and activism allowed Valenti and his organizations to build relationships with Italian politicians and media organizations following the Second World War. His coverage of Italian politics while in the United

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<sup>441</sup> Edward R. Tannenbaum, "The Goals of Italian Fascism," *The American Historical Review* 74, no. 4 (1969): 1188, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1856756>.

<sup>442</sup> Bruno Wanrooij, "The Rise and Fall of Italian Fascism as a Generational Revolt," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, no. 3 (1987): 405.

States created a listener and reader base that wanted to continue to be engaged with Italy. His level of engagement would help establish and raise funds for Italian relief. Certain Italian-American activists also viewed this relief effort that financial aid would help ensure that the PCI would not obtain a political victory in the post-war period.<sup>443</sup>

Valenti's consistent struggle against totalitarianism in all forms would materialize in his campaigns against both fascist and communist political systems. Through his newspapers, dialogue with fellow labor-minded organizations, and radio, he fought against the rise and strength of fascism and communism in Italy and the United States. These actions defined Valenti's consistent political objective throughout his career in the United States and Italy.

The political activism of Valenti would ultimately culminate with his trip to Italy through American programs. When Valenti traveled to Italy, he would connect with his family while simultaneously building and establishing new political and media networks. His largest project in Italy was the establishment of his radio program. Valenti transcribed his interviews, analyses, and news. This travel allowed him to send transcripts to stations in the United States to the network he had his American-based program. The Italian program made sure to reach out to Italian politicians and American personnel. His radio apparatus resembled a clear case of transnational dialogue taking place. The transferring of people, ideas, and culture between Italy and the United States through his program allowed him to pursue his political career and objective.

The participation of Italian-Americans and their developed media, such as Girolamo Valenti and his radio program, was pivotal to developing a transnational

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<sup>443</sup> Stefano Luconi, "The Impact of World War II on the Political Behavior of the Italian-American Electorate in New York City," *New York History* 83, no. 4 (2002): 415–16.

relationship. Similarly, the organization of the Garibaldi Society of the IWO and their strongly affiliated newspaper, *l'Unità del Popolo*, intended on creating a transnational relationship. Ethnic newspapers, including Italian publications, were used to garner an identity and unified political experience.<sup>444</sup> *L'Unità del Popolo* pushed for greater involvement amongst its targeted base to engage with labor movements in the United States, particularly in New York. The newspaper had an even higher aspiration to educate its audience on Italy's political and cultural changes since its inception.

*L'Unità del Popolo* had dedicated a significant portion of its pages to news and editorials related directly to Italy, despite being an American publication. Unlike Valenti, *l'Unità del Popolo*'s editors were not shy about supporting and promoting the PCI and PSI. Even though the Popular Front had been associated with the Soviet Union, the writers had advocated their readers that they ought to support the PCI and PSI. The publication had indeed promoted transnational activism. However, with the rise of anti-leftist sentiment and McCarthyism in the United States, eventually receiving greater national attention, *l'Unità del Popolo* would be unable to continue its operation following the end of the IWO the 1950s.<sup>445</sup>

Finally, the transnational relationship developed was not solely initiated from the United States, but the PCI was equally interested in nurturing the dialogue. From a political perspective, the PCI believed that maintaining a relationship with the CPUSA and an open discussion with non-party affiliations allowed it to promote its understanding

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<sup>444</sup> Stefano Luconi, "The Italian-Language Press, Italian American Voters, and Political Intermediation in Pennsylvania in the Interwar Years," *The International Migration Review* 33, no. 4 (1999): 1032–33, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547362>.

<sup>445</sup> Roger Keeran, "The International Workers Order and the Origins of the CIO," *Labor History* 30, no. 3 (June 1, 1989): 385, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00236568900890251>.

of Marxism. The PCI intended to encourage the ‘Italian way to Socialism in slight and subtle manners.’

Both the PCI and CPUSA had endured their versions of crises through the early Cold War period. For the PCI, these included the implementation of the Marshall Plan, American containment, NATO, and the 1948 Italian general election. At the same time, the CPUSA had endured the strength of the overwhelming pressure of McCarthyism. Both parties had politically supported one another with their related issues. Still, the direct suppression of communists in the United States had gained precedence with the dialogue the two parties had established.

From an intellectual perspective, the PCI and CPUSA were keen on demonstrating and expressing the philosophical foundation of their political beliefs. While the CPUSA largely fell on the positions of the Soviet Union, the PCI had worked to create a uniquely Italian version of Marxism. The symbolic significance of presenting and promoting Antonio Gramsci’s understanding of communism and how to pursue it became fundamental to the intellectual model of the PCI. The dialogue with Americans with this lens is further complicated by Togliatti’s intention of being a pragmatic actor rather than an ideological one. The PCI’s elevation of Gramsci had successfully promoted a version of Italian communism that was, at least partly, independent from the philosophical foundation of the Soviet Union and the CPUSA. Through their dialogue, Togliatti’s and the PCI’s political philosophies suggest that the transnational dialogue is intended to maintain Gramsci’s understanding of Marxism and balance the delicate matter of pragmatism.

There is more to political and intellectual development than that which occurs within one nation and the shared level of communication, ideas, and people between Italy and the United States demonstrates the changing nature of political and intellectual issues. The importance of the transnational approach becomes even clearer when considered the lens that not only this dissertation utilizes but also the lens in which Valenti, *l'Unità del Popolo*, and the PCI deployed.

The dialogue observed throughout this research represents how transnational communication also leads to real and meaningful developments.

This dissertation fills gaps in the historiographies of Italian-American, Cold War Italian, and Cold War American histories. These historiographies in isolation provide a significant understanding of the dynamics and the changing nature of international politics and social histories within the nations themselves. However, this dissertation explores the exchanging of ideas, people, cultures, and politics between Italy and the United States with the robust Italian-American community, an aspect that is sorely missing within these historiographies.

The research from the archives of the Tamiment Library, the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, the Biblioteca Comunale Augusta, The New York Public Library's Schwarzman Building, and the digital archives of *The New York Times*, *L'Unità*, and *La Stampa* has introduced a different perspective in understanding the complicated and complex dynamics of the existing dialogues. Within the current historiographies, figures such as Valenti or the newspaper of *l'Unità del Popolo* are often sidelined as insignificant people or publications. Instead, this dissertation intended to display the significance and scope of these entities' more significant historical understanding.

The dialogue of the PCI with the foreign parties in the United States also expresses how wide the breadth of the party's attention had focused on maintaining relations with leftist organizations. The historiography, understandably so, focuses on the dichotomy between the PCI and the Soviet Union, given the significance of Italy's foreign policy positions. There is even historical work on the relationship between the PCI and the foreign apparatuses of the United States. This dissertation tackles a portion that is almost entirely missing of any historiography, the present dialogue between the PCI and American organizations. This transnational relationship was devoid of any mention or analysis from other historians. This work intends to push not only a greater degree of research in this direction and a higher emphasis on related historical fields.

This dissertation does not intend to capture the entirety of transnational history between Italian leftist parties and American political organizations. Still, it does seek to demonstrate that there is a significant presence of a meaningful dialogue.

There remains meaningful historical work that can be focused on Girolamo Valenti. Unfortunately, this dissertation did not have the intention on touching on the significant work by his wife, Sylvia Valenti. Through her care and attention, the documents of her husband would reach the Tamiment Library. However, her role and independent contributions to this greater story require historical focus.

Other areas of research that require much work are Valenti's other areas of media. Particularly his heavy involvement in *La Parola* and still his radio programs in the United States and a more in-depth analysis of his programs in Italy. The amount of research dedicated to Valenti is on par with the work dedicated by Gerald Meyer on Vito Marcantonio. The significance of Valenti is entirely understudied, even considering the

portion of this dissertation dedicated to shedding light on his historical significance, both in the United States and Italy.

The historical community essentially lost the structure and specific issues *l'Unità del Popolo* had experienced throughout its lifespan. However, investigating the leaders and more specific avenues of revenue demand additional research. While the entirety of the newspaper's weekly publications can be found and read, the behind-the-scenes of the organization is absent from the historiography. When the newspaper is typically cited as a source for Italian-American labor history, either it is mentioned for its general stance on an issue or a single citation. However, this dissertation intended to demonstrate that *l'Unità del Popolo*'s international focus and significance required greater attention.

Based on Fondazione Istituto Gramsci's research in Roma, there is so much potential scholarship based on the well-organized archive. Since the archive has an entire catalog dedicated to foreign correspondence, the transnational relationships between the PCI and other political entities could be expanded to Greece, France, Yugoslavia, West Germany, East Germany, and many others. Suppose the other national communist parties worldwide have an as extensive and well-organized archive as the PCI. In that case, the ability to create a robust transnational history between the two nations could prove invaluable to the historical understanding of party dialogue.

This dissertation focused on the early portions of the Cold War and therefore did not expand on the relationship and dialogue between the PCI and CPUSA as the decades progressed. The dynamic between the two political entities would surely change. This shift is especially true as the PCI became a more prominent public proponent of Eurocommunism under Enrico Berlinguer. Future scholarship focusing on the changing



connection between the PCI and CPUSA, as the PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated.

While these previously mentioned historical fields demand a greater academic focus, this dissertation contributes to a more extensive historical discussion. How significant or beneficial is transnational history? This mode of research aids in revealing how history can be better understood when examined outside of the confines of national borders. When viewed through this lens, how dialogue occurs and the chosen conversations reveal some of the political, cultural, economic, and social concerns between two entities. Although still an emerging method of analyzing history, this mode provides valuable contributions to a more comprehensive understanding of changing and tumultuous times.

This dissertation sought to analyze the shifting intellectual and political aspects in the United States and Italy. During the Cold War, the historical fields had not previously demonstrated any honest transnational dialogue between Italian political parties and American political organizations. This research aimed at addressing and presenting the reality of this relationship during the early Cold War period. The scholarship suggests that the investigation of similar studies on the future decades of the conflict can raise the world's level of interconnectedness.

The relationship between Togliatti and the CPUSA, Valenti and Nenni, and *l'Unità del Popolo* and Antonini demonstrate the complexities of international dialogue. It is comfortable and easy to research, study, and analyze all these entities in the comfort of enclosed national boundaries. However, pushing the historical fields in more unfamiliar and uncomfortable modes of analysis may prove valuable to the

historiographies; this research contributes to but also provides a vital lens to other historical fields. Just as Valenti had worked to create and establish a relationship with his Italian counterparts after experiencing the lack of communication of the fascist period and the Second World War, in other fields, it may be equally profound to research and analyze the development of dialogue.

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