

## ABSTRACT

### AN ITALIAN VOICE OVERSEAS: WAR AND THE MAKING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, 1910-1920

by Daniel Semelsberger

This is a study in the growth of national identity among the Italian emigrants residing in Cleveland, Ohio between 1910 and 1920. It takes its cue from recent scholarship on the ways in which the project of Italian nationalism, via the notion of Greater Italy, responded to the mass Italian migration of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Through a close reading of the Italian-language newspaper *La Voce del Popolo*, published in Cleveland by Fernando and Olindo Melaragno, this thesis investigates the idea that there were efforts to foster a sense of nation-based Italianess in the so-called “emigrant colonies” of Greater Italy. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which Italy’s involvement in war—specifically the Italo-Turkish War and the First World War—provided a catalyst for the efforts of the editorial staff of *La Voce del Popolo* to develop a unified sense of Italianess among its readers.

AN ITALIAN VOICE OVERSEAS:  
WAR AND THE MAKING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY  
IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, 1910-1920

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*For my mother*

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## Chapter 1

### Italians in Cleveland: Voices of Identity

In 1904, two Italians residing in Cleveland, Ohio, began to publish a newspaper. Cousins by birth, Fernando and Olindo Melaragno printed their first issue in 1904 under the name *La Voce del Popolo* (“The Voice of the People”). Like the community for which it was published, the newspaper experienced startling growth in the following decades, and quickly became an integral part of that community, serving as both a source of news and a platform for expression. As such, *La Voce* presents a valuable, and largely neglected, lens through which to observe identity formation among Cleveland’s Italians in the first part of the twentieth century. It is particularly significant for the insight it provides into the affinity for the home nation that the paper fostered among Cleveland’s Italians—a subject thus far largely untouched by historians of this community. Broadly speaking, traditional historiography on Italian immigration has tended to use this and similar publications to speak to the effects and process of assimilation and to the creation of an Italian American identity. Recent scholarship has, however, questioned such an approach and proposed a more complex understanding of migration, which is more open to the presence of continued connections between Italy’s migrants and their home country. *La Voce* is a particularly fruitful source for the close examination of such connections in the context of one modestly sized, but dynamic Italian migrant community.

This thesis argues that this publication of *i cugini* Melaragno, particularly in its earliest years, represents a conscious and persistent effort to reinforce ties between the Italian community of Cleveland and the nation-state of Italy. In recognition of the fact that Cleveland’s Italians, like the majority of those that emigrated to the United States following Italy’s unification, were primarily from regions in the south of Italian peninsula, where social, cultural, and religious ties reinforced regional and local identities over and above a national one, the primary focus of this study are those political connections with the home nation that lent themselves more profitably to the building of a sense of national identity that was largely absent prior to emigration. Special attention is given to the ways in which the editorial staff of *La Voce del Popolo* used the political fortunes of the Italian nation-state during wartime to punctuate their attempts at strengthening the

Cleveland emigrants' sense of belonging to a larger, national Italian community. These endeavors on the part of *La Voce*'s editors are also placed in the larger historical context of the simultaneous efforts of the Italian state in the early twentieth century to propagate a framework of national identity that was inclusive of all Italians who were devoted to the *patria*, regardless of their place of residence. This framework had its origins in the desires of Italian nationalists to build a "Greater Italy" on the model of Great Britain and the other European empires. It was therefore an expansive idea that sought to encompass all Italians—not only citizens residing in Italy, but also emigrants abroad, the residents of Italy's colonial conquests in Africa, and those ethnic Italians that were still subjects of the Austrian empire in the contested border regions in the Southern Alps and around the northern tip of the Adriatic Sea—and bring them into communion with one another around their ties to the nation-state of Italy.

In light of this notion of Greater Italy, and the deeply political sense of national identity that it encouraged, this thesis focuses on the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-12 and Italy's involvement in the early years of the First World War (1914-16). The Italo-Turkish War, given its express purpose of acquiring colonies by conquest, affords the opportunity to explore the ways in which the editors of *La Voce*, by employing the logic of Greater Italy, encouraged in their emigrant readers a sense of national pride that was explicitly connected to the building of an Italian empire. This sense of pride for the *patria*, and the national identity implicit within it, is the guiding theme of the second chapter. The third chapter builds on the second with an exploration of Italy's decision to enter the First World War in an effort to extend its national boundary into the contested border regions held by Austria. This subject allows for an investigation of the means employed in *La Voce* in order to reinforce the connection of their readers to another distinct, yet just as integral, piece of Greater Italy—the *terre irredente*. Together, then, the second and third chapters, through an analysis of the voice of Cleveland's most prominent newspaper, illustrate the intended role of the emigrant colony of Cleveland, Ohio by placing it within the context of the Italian state's attempts—through the use of the idea of Greater Italy—to instill in its citizens, both in *Italia* and abroad, an affinity for the home nation. The argumentative threads woven into these case studies are then picked up and elaborated upon further in a substantive epilogue that stretches the scope of the study through the end of the First World War and into the collapse Liberal Italy in the post-war years.



First, however, this opening chapter introduces at some depth the threads—source and subject matter, historiographical context, and analytical approach—that tie the study together. The chapter opens with background sketches of the newspaper’s owners and editors, Fernando and Olindo Melaragno. Complementary to these biographies, there follows a brief overview of the newspaper in its earliest years that aims to situate the publication in the context of the Cleveland community within and for which it was printed. This, in turn, leads to a preliminary consideration of that community—its demographics, its composition, and, finally, its place within the larger framework of the phenomenon of Italian mass migration. The chapter concludes with a targeted historiography that elaborates on both the analytical framework and the central argument of the subsequent two chapters, which comprise the core of this study in Italian national identity formation.

### *I Cugini Melaragno*

Fernando Melaragno first arrived in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1882, at the age of fourteen, seeking employment. His stay, though lasting the better part of four years, was a temporary one, for, at the age of eighteen, he returned to his native country. Rather than returning to the municipality in which he had been born, Forlì del Sannio, near Campobasso, in the heart of Abruzzo and Molise, Fernando attended the Università degli Studi di Napoli for three years. Subsequent to this, sometime between 1889 and 1895, he returned to the U.S., this time to the city of Philadelphia, where he “learned the trade of cigar maker,” which would, in time, become the family business on the western side of the Atlantic: a venture that would eventually involve no fewer than six of his brothers and stretch business ties from Providence, Rhode Island, through Philadelphia and Erie, Pennsylvania, to Cleveland.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to founding this business, however, he returned yet again to Italy in 1896. This time, his purpose was to “claim his bride,” Miss Ismalia Onorato, whom he married in 1897, and with whom he then promptly returned across the Atlantic and settled in Providence. It was here that he “laid the foundation of the extensive wholesale, retail, and manufacturing industry which he later turned over to his brothers,” presumably prior to 1903 or 1904, at which time he returned

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<sup>1</sup> Elroy McKendree Avery, *A History of Cleveland and its Environs: The Heart of New Connecticut*, vol. III (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 318-319.

to Cleveland. This time, his motivations were both professional and personal. In addition to the extension of his already-established enterprise in cigar manufacturing, Fernando also joined his cousin Olindo in a new undertaking: the establishment of an Italian language newspaper for the emigrant population of that city and the surrounding area.<sup>2</sup>

It is not perfectly clear whether preparations for publication were already underway upon Fernando's arrival. It is certain that Olindo did not lack the funds, or entrepreneurial spirit necessary to have begun the newspaper on his own. Like his cousin Fernando, Olindo G. Melaragno's life prior to founding the newspaper in 1904 was marked by personal initiative in his travels, his business, and his education. Senior to his cousin by only a year (b. 1867), Olindo was also raised in Forlì Del Sannio, near Campobasso. He arrived in the U.S. in 1887, at the age of twenty, and settled in Mechanicsburg, Ohio, where he chose to attend public high school for two years. After graduating, he left Mechanicsburg, as a railroad worker, and headed west, traveling through Colorado, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Idaho, and Washington. He then departed for Italy in 1890, presumably to the area around Campobasso, for in 1891, he married Barbara Melaragno, "a distant relative," who was also native to Forlì Del Sannio. Little else is known, however, of Olindo's activities in Italy prior to his return to the United States. Nevertheless, it is certain that he arrived in Cleveland at the turn of the century (probably in 1900), finding employment in "the general contracting business," for several years before beginning the newspaper that he and his cousin would run for the next two decades.<sup>3</sup>

### ***La Voce del Popolo***

The paper itself first appeared in 1904 as *La Voce del Popolo Italiano*; it would also appear as *L'Italiano* and *Il Progresso Italiano* in the next few years before reverting permanently to its original title in 1910. In conjunction with the paper, the Melaragno also founded the United Italian Publishing Co. to serve as the official business apparatus of their enterprise. Although

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<sup>2</sup> Avery, *A History of Cleveland*, 318-319; Charles W. Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Cleveland Americanization Committee, 1919), 40. Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1975), 82.

<sup>3</sup> Avery, *A History of Cleveland*, 318-19; Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 40; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 82. There is very little readily available information on the family background of the Melaragno in the region around Campobasso, particularly as concerns their economic and social status, or any traditional political affiliations that the family may have possessed. The acquisition of such information would almost certainly require significant archival research in Italy.

Fernando and Olindo initially both served as editors, by 1910 Fernando had assumed the full range of editorial duties, while Olindo devoted his attention to the financial interests of their publishing company. Published weekly until the late 1930s (when output increased to multiple issues per week), *La Voce del Popolo Italiano* met with an enthusiastic reception, not only from Italians living in Cleveland proper, or in the greater metropolitan area, but also throughout Ohio and even across state boundaries.<sup>4</sup>

Already in 1910, barely six years after beginning circulation, the paper claimed circulation among approximately thirty thousand persons residing in the greater Cleveland area and throughout the rest of the state of Ohio. By 1920, the number had swelled gradually to forty-five thousand, with readership firmly established in other states.<sup>5</sup> A contemporary history of Cleveland, published in 1918, reflects the good reputation that Olindo and Fernando's endeavor had achieved in its brief existence, identifying it as "one of the first, largest, and most influential Italian organs of publicity and news in Ohio."<sup>6</sup> Indeed, *La Voce* would retain this role, remaining the only prominent publication produced from within Cleveland's Italian community until the middle of the twentieth century. As such, it served as both a witness to and interpreter for the Italian community during the years of its most dramatic and formative growth, prior to World War I. In light of this, and given the extent of its readership, as well as its documented role in familiarizing recent emigrants with their new surroundings, it appears that *La Voce* occupied a critical niche within the fabric of Cleveland's Italian emigrant community and played a vital role in allowing this community to engage with the exterior world—both the one immediately beyond the streets and buildings that served to separate them from their non-Italian neighbors, and, more

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<sup>4</sup> *N.W. Ayer & Sons American Newspaper Annual: containing a Catalogue of American Newspapers, a List of All Newspapers of the United States and Canada* (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer & Son, 1904-1922); *La Voce Del Popolo*, (Cleveland: United Italian Publishing Company, 1909-1922); David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski, eds. "La Voce Del Popolo Italiano," *The Dictionary of Cleveland Biography* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> As indicated in the previous footnote, these numbers are drawn from a variety of disparate sources. One of the sources for the number of readers in 1920 (Van Tassel and Grabowski's article in *The Dictionary of Cleveland Biography*) indicates that this figure came from the newspaper's offices, and so was likely a generous estimate. Moreover, the fact that this figure is corroborated in the publication of *N.W. Ayer & Sons* for that year would seem to indicate that the newspaper provided its own estimate of readership for the national *Newspaper Annual*. With this in mind, it is important to note that Van Tassel and Grabowski assert that, of the 45,000 readers claimed, only one-third lived in Cleveland, and the other 30,000 were from the rest of Ohio and outside the state. If this ratio is applied to the figure for 1910, taken from *N.W. Ayer & Sons*, it would indicate that fewer than 10,000 of *La Voce*'s estimated readership lived in Cleveland in that year.

<sup>6</sup> Avery, *A History of Cleveland*, 318.

importantly, the one that they had chosen to leave, beyond the ocean that separated them from their homes.<sup>7</sup>

### Cleveland and Its Italians

Within Cleveland, the Italian community that *La Voce* served was, like so many other Italian communities abroad in the early twentieth century, experiencing dramatic change and growth. When Fernando Melaragno first arrived in America in 1882, he was one of only sixty Italians who chose to settle in Cleveland, out of the 32,159 Italians who emigrated from their home country to the United States that year. Indeed, the total number of Italians residing in Cleveland at the end of 1882 was fewer than two hundred. After ten years of steady growth, this number crested one thousand for the first time in 1892, according to city government estimates. By 1910 the Federal Census Bureau registered over ten thousand Italians living in Cleveland—a figure that was to double in the next decade.<sup>8</sup>

The Melaragno cousins were, in several crucial ways, representative of the Italians that comprised their readership—the two most evident being their heritage as *abruzzesi* from the south of Italy and their status as emigrants of Italian birth. Nearly all of the Italians who arrived in Cleveland between 1900 and 1914 came from the *Mezzogiorno*. Of these, the overwhelming majority arrived from Sicily or the region of Abruzzo and Molise. This regional character is

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<sup>7</sup> Avery, *A History of Cleveland*, 318-19; Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 40; Van Tassel and Grabowski, “La Voce Del Popolo”; Gene P. Veronesi, *Italian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University Press, 1971), 252-54.

<sup>8</sup> “Annual Reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (1970-1975),” and “Historical Statistics of the United States,” *Colonial Times* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Volume I, pp. 105-106, [1975]); “The Annual Report of the Departments of Government of the City of Cleveland (1856-1910),” “United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1900-1970),” Tables A, B, and C in Veronesi, *Italian Americans*, 339-345. It should be pointed out that these population figures, which indicate just over 10,000 Italians living in Cleveland in 1910, do not match up cleanly with the estimated number of Italian readers of *La Voce* living in Cleveland that is provided by *N.W. Ayer & Sons* for the same year, which, based on the estimates included in footnote 5, was also around 10,000. It is important to remember that the estimated number of readers appears to have been provided by the newspaper itself, and is therefore likely a favorable one. The numbers for 1920 are more plausible, as Veronesi indicates that approximately 20,000 Italians in Cleveland in 1920—a figure that accommodates the estimate of 15,000 readers claimed by the paper in the same year; see Van Tassel and Grabowski, “La Voce Del Popolo Italiano,” and *N.W. Ayer & Sons Newspaper Annual*. In sum, the population figures are much more firmly established, and ought to be trusted; the estimated number of readers from both 1910 and 1920 should be viewed somewhat skeptically, and is left open to further research. It is, however, certain that *La Voce del Popolo* was a prominent voice in Cleveland’s Italian community—which is exactly what Fernando and Olindo Melaragno appear to have desired for their newspaper.

reflected in the fact that, at the turn of the century, Sicilians accounted for ninety percent of the largest Italian community in Cleveland (aptly referred to as ‘Big Italy’). The other Italian community of significance in 1900 (‘Little Italy’) consisted predominantly of villagers from Abruzzo and Molise, like the Melaragno.<sup>9</sup>

Contrary to what one might expect, this regional makeup did not become more diverse as the number of Italians entering the United States rose sharply after the turn of the century. If anything, the opposite occurred. Historians have accounted for this by arguing that the Italian emigrants who settled in Cleveland prior to the First World War did so primarily on the basis of regional and family ties, which had manifested themselves locally in terms of urban space in the earliest formative years of settlement in Cleveland. In fact, scholars have estimated that fully one half of the Italians who arrived in Cleveland before 1914 were *siciliani* or *abruzzesi* that originated from one of ten villages in the south of Italy. This tendency also extended beyond the city limits, as Cleveland often served as a point of arrival and a hub of temporary settlement for those whose families had settled elsewhere in the Midwestern U.S. Recently arrived emigrants would, with the aid of settlement houses (such as Alta House in Little Italy) and other beneficiary organizations, sojourn in Cleveland in order to acclimate to the new culture that now surrounded them. When able, they would then move into other parts of Ohio and the Midwest, drawn on by the strength of their family and village ties.<sup>10</sup>

The Italians of Cleveland were also, through the end of the First World War, almost entirely true emigrants (i.e. first-generation immigrants) who had departed Italy and chosen to settle at the shores of Lake Erie. As late as 1911, the U.S. Immigration Commission reported that ninety-six percent of the *abruzzesi* residing in Little Italy were Italian-born. The population figures compiled by the city government also indicate that, through the end of the First World

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<sup>9</sup> John W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage: Immigrants to Three American Cities, 1890-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 75-77; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 27-32. Laura Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others, Helping Ourselves: Power, Giving, and Community Identity in Cleveland, Ohio, 1880-1930* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2001), 129-130; Samuel P. Orth, *A History of Cleveland, Ohio*, vol. I (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, Pub. Co, 1910), 117-120.

<sup>10</sup> Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 55-61; Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others*, 128-131; Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 32; Orth, *History of Cleveland*, 117-120; see also John J. Grabowski’s study on Hiram House, “A Social Settlement in a Neighborhood in Transition: Hiram House, Cleveland, Ohio, 1896-1926,” (PhD diss., Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1977; reprint Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983) and Sandy Mitchell, *Cleveland’s Little Italy* (Charleston: Arcadia, 2008).

War, nearly all the Italians residing in Cleveland were of Italian birth, as the number of Italian immigrant arrivals per year between 1900 and 1920 often exceeds the change in total Italian population from one year to the next. For example, in 1905, despite an influx of nearly two thousand Italian “immigrants,” the estimated total population registers an increase of only twelve hundred. There can be little doubt that the community of Italian as a whole was in an almost constant state of flux and change as a result of continued migration.<sup>11</sup>

All of this has led historians of the Cleveland Italian community to assert, without exception, that the emigrants who arrived in the city possessed virtually no identifiable affinity for their home country that might resemble a national identity.<sup>12</sup> On the basis of not only migration patterns, but also evidence of settlement patterns upon arrival, scholars have argued for the predominance of regional and familial affinities among Cleveland’s Italian immigrants. Nor is this impression held only by modern scholarship. Historical works on the city of Cleveland published during the early twentieth century invariably offer the same appraisal. In a study commissioned by the Cleveland Americanization Committee and published in 1919, Charles W. Coulter offers the following quotation from one of the city’s Italians as affirmation of the emigrants’ regional affinities: “We Italians like to live with people from our own province who speak our own dialect and will help us.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Cleveland and Italian Migration**

There are additional ways in which the Melaragno reflect the character of Cleveland’s Italian community—and, indeed, the larger Italian migrant experience. There is, first of all, the importance of education in the study of Italian migration, and the extent to which the country’s emigrants were or were not educated upon their departure from Italy. Although both Fernando and Olindo acquired further education after making their first trans-Atlantic crossing, there is substantial evidence that Italian emigrants were, in general, moderately well-educated.

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<sup>11</sup> Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 11; Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others*, 129; the other four percent were split evenly between those of Italian parentage (two percent) and those who lived in Little Italy, but were, quite simply, non-Italian (two percent); Tables B and C in Veronesi, *Italian Americans*, 342-45.

<sup>12</sup> See Veronesi, *Italian Americans*; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*; Briggs, *An Italian Passage*; Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others*; Charles D. Ferroni, *The Italians in Cleveland: A Study in Assimilation* (New York: Arno Press, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 5-6.

Complementary to this, there are also factors of economic and social advantage to consider. And, given the significant role that scholars have assigned economic opportunity and social status in the decision to leave a newly unified Italy, it is necessary to consider these three things—education, social position, and economic standing—from both sides of the Atlantic.

Much has been made of the disadvantaged economic status of Italy's emigrants on their departure from Italy. For decades, the traditional image of the individual Italian immigrant remained that of a destitute farmer from the south of Italy. When widened to the collective, it was one of disadvantaged, uneducated agricultural workers—*contadini*, *paesani*—escaping from a socially repressive and economically abortive system of land ownership to take their chances in a golden land of opportunity that waited with open arms and hard labor. And, having made good their escape from this world of backwardness and impoverishment, the migrant Italian would never return. As is often the case with myths, there are elements of reality embedded in this romanticized vision. However, when reduced so drastically, the Italian differed little from stereotypes of immigrants of other nationalities (the Irish or the Poles, for example), thus suggesting that this vision of Italy's emigrants is, more simply, an “imagining” of the ubiquitous immigrant.<sup>14</sup> What distinctions remained often developed into explicitly racial and ethnic stereotypes. Therefore, in recent decades, scholars of immigration have begun to actively dispute this representation of the Italian.<sup>15</sup>

The Italians that chose to leave their home country for another part of the world after unification were, in fact, “a diverse group,” of which only thirty to forty percent of the working class males, upon leaving Italy, reported their profession as agricultural in nature. Indeed, the most dominant socioeconomic demographic, at least until the “peak years” immediately prior to the outbreak of the First World War (1909-14), was the skilled, educated worker with both the financial means to travel and the trade skills to reasonably expect employment in the country of destination. Indeed, those countries receiving these emigrants also acknowledged this to be the

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph P. Cosco, *Imagining Italians: The Clash of Romance and Race in American Perceptions, 1880-1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 14-20.

<sup>15</sup> Cosco, *Imagining Italians*, 14-20; see also Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), David A. J. Richards, *Italian American: The Racializing of an Ethnic Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), and Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrant and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

case, noting that the majority of Italians entering their country did not seem to be of the lowest socioeconomic standing or the most poorly educated. This is not to suggest, of course, that the most affluent Italians were emigrating. On the contrary, this mass exodus was “overwhelmingly a working-class phenomenon.” It does imply, however, that those who left did so, at least in part, possessed of a sense of opportunity and expectancy. This is evident in the pursuits of both Fernando and Olindo Melaragno. The former’s transformation from adolescent migrant worker in 1882 to established entrepreneur in 1904 is a striking microcosm of emigrant initiative and mobility. So, also, is Olindo’s story. Neither man fits the image of the *paesano/contadino*; both correspond to the characteristics of the educated, aspiring, expectant migrant.<sup>16</sup>

The multiple transatlantic crossings of the Melaragno also point to an important characteristic of Italian migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite plentiful evidence to the contrary, historians have, until more recently, glossed over the mobility of Italy’s emigrants, settling instead for a corollary of the immigrant stereotype: namely, that those that immigrated into the United States did so with the intent of remaining permanently. This was not the case, however, either for Italian emigrants in general, or for the Italians of Cleveland. In fact, the Italians who followed their ties of region and family to northeast Ohio seem to have been particularly averse to embedding themselves in the fabric of the city and putting down roots.<sup>17</sup>

This was, in part, a consequence of the emigrants’ motivations for journeying to Cleveland in the first place. As mentioned, migration on the basis of regional and familial affinity created a pattern of settlement on the same basis. Therefore, Cleveland’s Italians “lived in highly segregated communities,” that, in reinforcing personal ties, and thereby keeping the Italians disconnected from one another, also served keep them “isolated from non-Italian outsiders.” Indeed, one historian recently (and rather wryly) implied that this hesitance to put down roots and intersect with the rest of the city was the defining trait that helped Clevelanders distinguish the Italians of Cleveland from their fellow immigrants of German, Polish, Slovakian,

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<sup>16</sup> Briggs, *An Italian Passage*, 9-11, 75-77; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 29-32, 35.

<sup>17</sup> Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others*, 129-136; Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 42-43.



and Romanian descent. Its true value, however, is as an indicator of the prevailing attitude among the Italians with respect to their time in Cleveland: it was not intended to be permanent.<sup>18</sup>

Yet again the stories of the Melaragno cousins are instructive. Italians—especially Italian working class men—arrived in the U.S. seeking work, rather than lasting settlement. Motivated by their desire to capitalize on their education and trade skills to more profitable ends than were available to them in their home country, a significant number of Italian emigrants intended to return with both the “financial means... [and] modern conveniences that would make their neighbors envious.” Those that settled in Cleveland were certainly no exception: “Many Italian immigrants viewed their time in Cleveland as temporary, a chance to raise money to take back home with them.” Even in his study of Italians’ assimilation in Cleveland in the twentieth century, Charles D. Ferroni asserts that, “Many of the Italians who emigrated to Cleveland dreamed of returning to Italy one day to establish themselves as independent farmers or small businessmen.”<sup>19</sup>

They were often able to achieve this dream. In addition to the stories of the Melaragno, as well as those of countless other individuals, that personalize this reality, there is other, more broad-based evidence. Charles Coulter remarked in 1919 that the city’s Italians, “more than any other” of the immigrant populations of Cleveland tended to go back to their native land. Writing of Italian immigrants in general in 1924, Robert F. Foerster noted that “from its beginning, Italian emigration had a characteristic which marked it off from most modern migration, it was often impermanent.” More recent studies estimate that approximately half of all Italian emigrants abroad eventually returned. Indeed, in 1908, during the Libyan crisis, the number of Italian transatlantic emigrants returning to Italy exceeded the number leaving, a feat nearly repeated in 1911 at the onset of war with the Ottoman Empire, and replicated even more markedly in 1914 and ‘15.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others*, 129-31.

<sup>19</sup> Ferroni, *Italians in Cleveland*, 1-10; Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others*, 133.

<sup>20</sup> Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 42; Robert F. Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924) 23; Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 8, Appendix, 235-241. According to Choate’s figures on Italian transatlantic migration, about 300,000 (75% of which were from the U.S.) emigrants returned across the Atlantic in 1908, while just under 250,000 departed Italy in the same year; in 1911, over 200,000 (70% from the U.S.) returned as approximately 275,000 emigrated; In 1914 and 1915, nearly 400,000 (65% from the U.S.) Italians journeyed home, and less than 300,000 chose to leave Italy for distant shores.

Transatlantic travel was not the only way that Italians hoped or managed to take their economic prosperity back with them, so to speak. Historians in both the Italian and Anglo-American historical tradition have written at length on the subject of remittances sent back to Italy by emigrants in other countries. As with return voyages, the sending of money back to one's family at home in Italy seems to have been a common practice on the part of Italians abroad. And, just as the frequency of return migration increased in times of turmoil for the home country, so too did the volume and scope of remittances. During and after the First World War, for example, Italians living in Cleveland sent money back "to the needy in war torn Italy." Therefore, in recognition of these strong and demonstrable ties between the emigrants living in Cleveland and their country of origin, there is a need to outline briefly the role that Italy and its government played in encouraging these ties as a response to the numbers of emigrants leaving the country. In order to do this, it is necessary to begin by considering the larger phenomenon of Italian mass migration.<sup>21</sup>

### **Italian Migration: The Italian Perspective**

The number of Italians that left their home nation between 1870 and 1920 represents the largest mass migration in the modern era. At the time of the subsumption of the papal states in 1870, the total population of the peninsula numbered approximately twenty-five million. In the next half century, the young nation would experience explosive population growth. By 1920, national census figures registered a total population of just under thirty-six million residing within the nation-state of Italy; in addition to these, another sixteen million individuals had migrated to other parts of the world. Other European states absorbed at least half of Italy's emigrants during these fifty years. Another three-and-a-half million traveled to South American countries like Argentina and Brazil, and just over four million chose the United States as their destination. Therefore, the twenty thousand Italians who, in 1920, resided in the city of

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<sup>21</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 14-16; Tuennerman-Kaplan, *Helping Others*, 133; Donna Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 1-13.

Cleveland represent but a sliver of a much larger historical phenomenon that spanned decades, oceans, and continents.<sup>22</sup>

This rate of departure drew the attention of an Italian government worried about its long-term impact on the development and prestige of the Italian nation-state. Indeed, the ‘problem’ of emigration was one of the most serious and divisive issues of Italian politics in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth century, as the young nation struggled to manage the problems presented by rapid population expansion, emigration (as well as colonialism) served not only as a source of relief for an overextended and underdeveloped infrastructure, but also as an opportunity for territorial expansion and international prestige. However, this interpretation, favored especially by Francesco Crispi and the *Sinistra storica* (“Historical Left”), sufficed only so long, as it was far more an indictment of the failures of the national government than an endorsement of the wonders of world travel.<sup>23</sup> Thus, as the number of emigrants climbed steadily until the end of the century, the problem only increased in urgency, forcing the government to reconsider the place that emigration held in its official program of Italian nationalism. In casting about for a solution, Italy’s politicians attached themselves to the fact that, in comparison to the return rates of Europe’s other great nations, those of Italians were noticeably higher.<sup>24</sup>

Not surprisingly, with the return of the Left to leadership in 1900, the Italian government latched on to and encouraged this trend. In addition to “publicising [sic] its approval of repatriation,” the Italian state also took far more pragmatic and concrete action to foster the return migration of its citizens abroad.<sup>25</sup> This is particularly evident in Parliament’s passage of Italy’s second emigration law in 1901, which also created an independent commissariat of

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Choate, Appendix to *Emigrant Nation*, 235-241; Donna Gabaccia, *Italy’s Many Diasporas*, 1-13; Table C in Veronesi, *Italian Americans*, 345; Samuel L. Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 23-24.

<sup>23</sup> Dino Cinel, *The National Integration of Italian Return Migration, 1870-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 85-89; Spencer M. Di Scala, *Italy: From Revolution to Republic, 1700 to the Present* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 136-138; Giuseppe Maria Finaldi, *Italian National Identity: Italy’s African Wars in the Era of Nation-building, 1870-1900* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 13-32; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 1-20.

<sup>24</sup> Baily, *Lands of Promise*, 33; Gabaccia, *Italy’s Many Diasporas*, 136-41; Cinel, *National Integration*, 3-4, 85-89, 96-100; Philip A. Bean, *The Urban Colonists: Italian American Identity & Politics in Utica, New York* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press), 2010, 175-179.

<sup>25</sup> Betty Boyd-Caroli, *Italian Repatriation from the United States, 1900-1914* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1973), 98.

emigration to provide official oversight on matters of Italian migration. In its inception, the powers of this office were minimal. In the subsequent years, however, various administrations would enact and administer, through the office of the commissariat, a whole host of legislation intended to reinforce the ties of Italian emigrants to their home nation. Among other things, this legislation provided incentives for return migration by simplifying the procedure for resuming Italian citizenship upon return. For example, in 1912 and '13 the Italian legislature clearly defined the status of those Italians living overseas, asserting the citizenship of not only all those who had been born in Italy, but also those children born to Italian parents overseas. Moreover, those emigrants that assumed the citizenship of another nation-state could resume their status as Italian citizens simply by returning to their native country.<sup>26</sup>

Italy's lawmakers adapted and formalized other existing transatlantic connections, as well. Enacted legislation directed government funds both to nongovernmental organizations that developed and maintained ties between emigrant communities and the home country; and, in what was perhaps the most direct and tangible indicator of vested government interest, to the subsidization of return voyages to Italy. The state, through the office of the commissariat, was especially generous in defraying travel expenses for reservists called to active duty (and sometimes their families, as well) during war time. Also, shortly after its creation, the commissariat became heavily engaged in standardizing and regulating channels through which emigrants could send remittances. In fact, after their newspaper venture was firmly established, Fernando and Olindo Melaragno used their prominent position in the city of Cleveland to develop and "conduct a foreign exchange for money orders, sent back to Italy by Cleveland workingmen," from the same offices that housed the United Italian Publishing Co.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps most importantly for the study of national identity among Italian communities abroad, however, the government's increasing stake in the fortunes of its emigrants contributed significantly to the amount of data available on these persons. Laboriously compiled and meticulously catalogued by the office of the commissariat, this information strongly refutes the immigrant stereotypes so long propagated in the countries of destination, thereby forcing a fuller,

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<sup>26</sup> Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 140; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 7-20, 207.

<sup>27</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 14, 16-19, 61; Bailly, *Lands of Promise*, 25-35; Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 138; Avery, *A History of Cleveland*, 318-319; Coulter, *The Italians of Cleveland*, 40.

more thoughtful analysis of the identity of Italy's emigrants, as evident in the most recent scholarship.

### **Immigrant, Emigrant, or Migrant?**

The overturning of immigrant stereotypes has also, in a more general sense, pushed scholars to a more complete consideration of the phenomenon of modern migration. Practically speaking, this has required a fuller consideration of these individuals and their reasons for migrating. Theoretically, it has called into question an analytical framework that has often slanted sharply toward the presentation of these persons as immigrants, rather than emigrants—or, as some scholars have chosen to call them in the name of semantic precision, migrants.

Each of these terms suggests a different perspective, with each one holding its own certain set of analytical presuppositions—a suggestion that receives confirmation in the historiography of Italian emigration to the United States. The emphasis on immigrant imagery is most evident in work done on the Italian American experience; that is, on those things that belong to the time after these Italians' arrival in the United States (or in South America). Not surprisingly, historians of Italy, writing from the perspective of departure, most often speak of emigrants and emigration. Here one finds, so to speak, the other side of immigrant history. Both of these perspectives are principally concerned with domestic problems, whether the assimilation of immigrants into their new country abroad or the rectification of endemic socioeconomic catalysts for emigration in Italy. In response to this rather deceptive dichotomy, the most recent scholarship has begun to speak of Italian migrants, in order to emphasize the transnationality of these people, their agency, and their mobility.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, each of these analytical positions has ramifications for the study of identity. There is, for example, a strong correlation between the study of Italian American identity and the

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<sup>28</sup> For an example of 'immigrant', see Luciano J. Iorizzo and Salvatore Mondello, *The Italian Americans, The Immigrant Heritage of American Series* (Boston: Twayne, 1980), or Anthony V. Riccio, *The Italian American Experience in New Haven* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); for an example of 'emigrant', see Francesco Cordasco and Michael Vaughn Cordasco, *The Italian Emigration to the United States, 1880-1930* (Fairview: Junius-Vaughn Press, 1990); for a compelling recent study in the contrasts of the two, see Ilaria Serra, *The Imagined Immigrant: Images of Italian Emigration to the United States between 1890 and 1924* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009); for an example of 'migrant', see Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, or Samuel L. Baily and Franco Ramella, *One Family, Two Worlds: An Italian Family's Correspondence across the Atlantic, 1901-1922* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1988).

study of immigration in the United States. Likewise, there is a similar connection between works on Italian identity and Italo-centric histories that speak of emigrants. One of the principal reasons that scholars have recently gravitated toward the term ‘migrant’ is that it is, generally, considered to be free of these sorts of identity biases. Nevertheless, exploring the affinity that these Italians possessed for their home nation necessarily requires that they be treated, at least to some degree, as emigrants. Despite having voluntarily removed themselves from their native country, these persons retained strong ties to both their regions and their extended families.<sup>29</sup>

Scholars have likewise differed on the use of the term ‘diaspora’. In keeping with the trend toward international perspectives in migration history, as well as the advent of postcolonial studies, the word has experienced something of a renaissance in the past two decades. As is evident in the work of Samuel Baily, Donna Gabaccia, and Rudolph Vecoli, the application of the term to Italy’s mass migration phenomenon has largely gone unchallenged.<sup>30</sup> However, Mark Choate, in his most recent publication, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*, has recently argued that that, after unification, the use of the word by Italy’s politicians and intellectuals “became a politically loaded invective to attack the government of Liberal Italy,” and deny its effectiveness in molding an Italy of which all Italians could be proud. Therefore, when applied to Italian migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ‘diaspora’ is as indicative of a certain perspective as the choice between immigrant, emigrant, and migrant, and as such must be employed with care.<sup>31</sup>

### **Historiography: Toward an Argument**

In addition to this semantic clarification, Choate also argues that studies on the formation of a national Italian identity among its emigrants have thus far been decidedly one-dimensional. That is, whatever identity creation took place abroad was often in reaction to the Italians’ treatment by both their fellow immigrants of non-Italian origin and those who awaited them in their chosen country of destination. While Choate does not discount this entirely, he seeks to

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<sup>29</sup> Baily, *Lands of Promise*, 9-24; Introduction to Baily and Ramella, eds., *One Family, Two Worlds*, 1-23.

<sup>30</sup> Baily, *Lands of Promise*; Gabaccia, *Italy’s Many Diasporas*; Gabaccia, Rudolph Vecoli, “The Italian Diaspora, 1876-1976,” in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, Robin Cohen, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 114-122.

<sup>31</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 6-7, 59-61.

develop the other half of the picture. To that end, he asserts that national identity formation was expressly and explicitly encouraged by the Italian government as part of its attempts to accommodate the fact that millions of its inhabitants were leaving its borders. Moreover, he contends that, as early as the 1890s, the Liberal government of Italy, regardless of leadership, made little official distinction between emigration and colonization in developing either their rhetoric or their policies.<sup>32</sup>

In his arguments, Choate, like so many other scholars of the past quarter century, is deeply indebted to the notion of identity as a thing “imagined.” The influence of Benedict Anderson is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the contention that the Liberal Italian government felt compelled to modify its official terminology of nationalism to present the departure of so many of its citizens as an extension—rather than a rejection—of national allegiance. This accommodation on the part of the Italian government of a popular phenomenon that posed a potential threat to the established iterations of ‘Italianess’ exemplifies Anderson’s assertion that “official nationalism” was always “developed after, and in reaction to,” popular movements.<sup>33</sup>

The constructed nature of national affinity is also apparent in Liberal Italy’s preoccupation with colonies and colonial prestige. Moreover, approaching nationalism as an ongoing, dynamic process of imagination helps account for the lack of clarification between emigration and colonization in the minds and words of Italy’s leaders and legislators. The blurred distinction was, in part, due to the fact that both domestic and diplomatic concerns motivated Italy’s push to acquire colonies after unification. In his last term as prime minister (1893-96), Crispi supported “state-sponsored emigration to Italian Africa,” as a means to building Italy’s reputation that would also minimize the exposure of crippling infrastructural inadequacies and domestic disunity, particularly in the *Mezzogiorno*. Even despite Italy’s abortive early attempts at colonization in Africa, the merging of emigration and colonization, ideologically and rhetorically, would survive all the way into the Fascist period, effectively weakening the artificial analytical line that scholars are wont to construct between emigration as

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<sup>32</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 1-20; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 175-76.

<sup>33</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983; reprint 2006), 6, 86.

an expression of internal problems and colonization as a manifestation of concerns over international prestige.<sup>34</sup>

It is less simple, however, to substantiate the extent to which government rhetoric may have had an effect on the Italian people, let alone those living thousands of miles away. This is the point at which Choate's study leaves off, for he does not pursue the full ramifications of his sweeping assertion that "Italians perceived colonialism and migration as intrinsically linked." *Emigrant Nation* remains focused firmly on the efforts of the Italian state to accommodate the rate of its citizens' emigration, and deals only intermittently with the response that these official government measures merited from Italy's emigrants abroad. Rather than "following the emigrants to their destinations," Choate leaves aside almost entirely the close investigation of "individual emigrant settlements worldwide," using them collectively as a source of ancillary evidence to reinforce his central argument: namely, that the Italian state, as is reflected in its policy-making on migration, developed and legislated an understanding of Italian nationhood that was inclusive of its emigrant population. Thus, within *Emigrant Nation*, there are only hints as to the effect this governmental effort to propagate a national Italian identity among the country's emigrants might have had overseas, in the actual trans-Atlantic emigrant communities. Nevertheless, Choate's work opens the door to the study of national identity formation among Italy's emigrants as a conscious and intentional process, rather than a reactionary, haphazard one. Even more importantly, it suggests that there might have been initiatives on the part of Italians abroad—prompted by their own national pride and by the Italian government's efforts to develop a Greater Italy through the politicization of emigrant ties to the home nation—to affirm a national identity that, rather than being regional in character, was expressly tied to the fortunes of the Italian nation-state.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Row, "Italy in the International System, 1900-1922," in *Liberal and Fascist Italy, 1900-1945*, ed. Adrian Lyttelton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 83-104; Aliza S. Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 80-85; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 7-14; Patrizia Palumbo, "Introduction: Italian Colonial Cultures," in *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present*, ed. Patrizia Palumbo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 1-11.

<sup>35</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 1-15; Bruce Haddock and Gino Bedani, "Continuing Reflections: Italy, Europe, and Multiform Identities," in *The Politics of Italian National Identity: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Bruce Haddock and Gino Bedani (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 277-281; Silvana Patriarca, "National Identity or National Character? New Vocabularies and Old Paradigms," in *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento*, ed. Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna Von Henneberg (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 299-305. Although the idea of Greater Italy, as mentioned, certainly had ties to the *Risorgimento* and the



A recent study by Philip Bean of the Italian emigrants living in Utica, New York during the twentieth century provides definitive affirmation of these possibilities. Writing from the opposite side of the problem as Choate, Bean argues that the adjustments of Italian government in response to the phenomenon of mass emigration provides only a partial explanation for the presence of national identity in the Italians of Utica in the first two decades of the twentieth century. He notes that Italian emigrants were themselves wont to employ “the word ‘colony’ to describe their communit[ies],” and argues that this indicates the presence of a great deal of agency on behalf of those living in Utica and elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> He holds this to be particularly significant, given that Utica, like Cleveland and so many other Italian settlements in the United States, was populated primarily by southern Italians, for whom national identity was not the result of a popular imagining, but “something that the government and the ruling class of the Italian north had sought to impose on them before they emigrated.”<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, in attempting to locate a catalyst for this sort of sentiment in Utica, where the general population was likely somewhat averse to holding a national identity, he arrives at the conclusion that it was, in fact, “aspiring Italian leaders in Utica [who] were preoccupied with the idea that their *colonia* needed to be united precisely because they recognized that many of their fellow immigrants... had not been fully transformed into Italians before coming to the United States.”<sup>38</sup>

The ethnic makeup of the Italian community in Cleveland, the established status of the Melaragno in that community, and the prominence of their newspaper, combine to suggest that *La Voce del Popolo* represents just one such instance of this sort of initiative. As has already been established, the readership of *La Voce*, especially within the city proper, was, through the end of the nineteen-teens, almost entirely Italian-born, and exhibited an array of characteristics and tendencies that actively resisted integration into the city at large. While contemporary descriptions of the newspaper often praise it as an instrument of assimilation among the Italian emigrants of northeast Ohio, published with the intent to “train them for good American citizenship,” it is worth noting that *i cugini* Melaragno printed *La Voce* almost entirely in Italian

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dream of reestablishing some semblance of ancient Roman glory, Choate credits the popularization of the term “Greater Italy” during the Liberal period to the Italian politician and economist (and later President of Italy following the Second World War) Luigi Einaudi; see Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 49-53.

<sup>36</sup> Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 175.

<sup>37</sup> Introduction to Bean, *Urban Colonists*, xxiii

<sup>38</sup> Introduction to Bean, *Urban Colonists*, xxi-xxvii.

until the latter stages of the Great War (when Italy and the United States found themselves allies), at which point issues would often feature an article or two in English.<sup>39</sup> Significantly, however, those articles published in English often differ markedly in content and tone from the rest of the paper, and in all cases deal expressly with matters of good relations between the Italians and their English-speaking neighbors. Moreover, even those historians of Cleveland that have given the most attention to the subject of Italian assimilation—Charles D. Ferroni, Josef J. Barton, and John Grabowski—have acknowledged that the most concerted efforts at assimilation did not occur until after the conclusion of the First World War, during which travel to and from Europe had dwindled to virtually nil.<sup>40</sup>

Up until about 1920, therefore, the identities of Cleveland's Italians—whether familial, local, regional, or national—remained Italian, as opposed to American. And within this amalgam of different Italian identities, the enterprising editors of *La Voce del Popolo* sought to nurture an identity of national unity within the framework of Greater Italy, with the *patria* at its heart. For, in addition to serving the Italian community of Cleveland and the surrounding area in adjusting to the United States—its laws, customs, and traditions—the editors of *La Voce* also presented their readership with a constant stream of information regarding their native land and the welfare of the Italian nation-state. The front pages, featuring editorials from Fernando, Olindo, and other prominent contributing members from both the Cleveland community and elsewhere in the U.S., are routinely devoted to the most pressing issues of Italian politics and their significance to the emigrants reading the newspaper. Furthermore, the newspaper is rife with references to “*la nostra colonia*,” which corroborates Bean's argument for agency on the part of Italian nationalists abroad.<sup>41</sup>

Both Choate and Bean also highlight the critical importance of war in the growth of a sense of national Italianess among emigrants abroad in the first two decades of the twentieth

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<sup>39</sup> Avery, *A History of Cleveland*, 318-319.

<sup>40</sup> Ferroni, *Italians in Cleveland*, 1-13; Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 155-169; see also Grabowski, “Hiram House,” *passim*.

<sup>41</sup> The use of this terminology persisted during the period under consideration. Although the instances of use are too numerous to list in their entirety, see for example, “*La festa d'Italia*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 9, 1909; “*La colonia incomincia a muoversi per solennizzare il XII ottobre*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 30, 1910; “*Nella colonia: si dice e si domanda*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 1, 1911; “*Che fa la nostra colonia pel Columbus Day*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 14, 1912; “*La ora presente dell'Italia e le feste coloniali*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, June 19, 1915; and “*La relazione sulle colonie e la situazione internazionale*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 25, 1917.

century. Choate, owing to his focus on the internal machinations of the Italian government, emphasizes the role of war only indirectly and generally; Bean, on the other hand, is more explicit. In studying the self-identification of Utica's Italians as members of a *colonia*, he asserts that Italy's participation in international conflicts, like the Italo-Turkish war of 1911-1912 and the First World War, provided both the context and the impetus for a crystallization of national affinity for the *patria*. In this, Bean draws heavily on the work of scholars of nationalism, like Anthony D. Smith, who have drawn lines of direct correlation between the development of a nation and the experience of war. "Protracted warfare," according to Smith, is especially fertile ground for the growth of a national identity, given that the experience war of tends to clarify and stress the qualities of sameness that not only provide a sense of internal unity, but also allow a particular nation to distinguish itself from all others.<sup>42</sup>

The justification for this argument lies in the fact that Smith and likeminded historians conceive of the nation as a particular expression of communal ethnic identity. The common characteristics of nations that develop on this basis—that is, reified around the kernel of an ethnic community—include "myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories and one or more common elements of culture, including an association with a homeland, and some degree of solidarity, at least among the elites." And these characteristics are nowhere more apparent or potent as symbols of a unifying identity than during times of war and conflict with other nations. As Smith notes, it is especially during times of war that "politics and political institutions" become both the platform for and the form of the expression of such binding ties: "the mobilisation of armies, the ravages of war on the countryside, the heroic feats of battle, the sacrifice of kinsmen and the myths and memories of ethnic resistance and expansion" are all unifying motifs that result from war. Also, as historians of the nation have acknowledged, extended conflict with an enemy also helps to refine a sense of nationhood through the "exacerbation of difference[s]" between the combatant groups. Moreover, the intensity of the identity forged at such times is only heightened if the stakes of the conflict include the

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<sup>42</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 109, 179-180, 207-215; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 175-198; Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London: Routledge, 2009), 27-28, 46, 77, 115-116.

possession of territory considered sacred by one or both sides, or the revival of a mythical golden age from within one nation's story of its own glorious past.<sup>43</sup>

Based on these premises, the following chapters analyze material from *La Voce del Popolo* in order to demonstrate the nature and substance of the connections between the Cleveland community and the rest of Greater Italy, which, as articulated by Choate, included not only the *patria*, but also Italy's colonies in Africa, as well as the residents of the *terre irredente* in southern Europe. The period under consideration runs, broadly speaking, from 1910 to 1922 (when Benito Mussolini became Prime Minister of Italy). In recognition of the critical role that warfare and international conflict has in the creation of a sense of nationhood, the years of 1911-1916 will receive the closest analysis, for they contain the two political flashpoints most fruitful for the study of the ways in which the pages of *La Voce* presented the Cleveland community in relation to the Italian nation-state and the remainder of Greater Italy. As mentioned at the outset of this introductory chapter, the second section covers Italy's conquests of the Libyan territories in the Italo-Turkish War (1911-12), while the third explores Italy's belated decision to enter the First World War (1914-1916) in the hopes of "redeeming" the *terre irredente* to the *patria*. In order to demonstrate the continuous evolution of the idea of the nation, the summative epilogue illustrates the demise of Greater Italy as a viable political idea by touching on Italian nationalists' indignant reaction to the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles, particularly as expressed in Gabriele D'Annunzio's seizure of Fiume (1919-1920).

At the center of the inquiry contained in the following chapters lie questions concerning the relationship of Cleveland's Italian community to the *patria*, and, by extension, to Greater Italy. The heart of the matter lies with Olindo and Fernando Melaragno's newspaper, and its appointed role as the voice of the *colonia* in Cleveland, for as Bean, Choate, and Claudia Baldoli have noted, Italian newspapers in emigrant settlements abroad often served as the principal disseminator of a structured Italianess, and were "crucial in perpetuating emigrants' Italian identities."<sup>44</sup> *La Voce del Popolo* presents not only the chance to further probe the relationship

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<sup>43</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12-19; Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism*, 46, 49-52, 91-97; Alon Confino, *The Nation as Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3-15.

<sup>44</sup> Claudia Baldoli, *A History of Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 226-228; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 121-23; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 140-145.

between emigrants and the other component parts of Greater Italy in the national Italian political imagination but also, and more significantly, an opportunity to investigate at a critical level the notion of the Italian “emigrant colony,” as it was taken up and propounded by Italian nationalists outside the home nation. The following analysis therefore considers in detail the voices of both the editors, as well as some members of the community who contributed to the paper, bringing these voices into dialogue with the political and intellectual climate of the period, the characteristics of Italian nationalism, and the larger phenomenon of Italian emigration. In this way, it seeks both to fill a gap in the history of Italian emigration prior to the First World War and to provoke a reconsideration of the role and significance of Italy’s ‘emigrant colonies’ in the development of Italian national identity during the turbulent first quarter of the twentieth century.

## Chapter 2

### Tripolitania: Emigrants and Conquerors

The realization of a Greater Italy on a scale resembling the empires of Europe's other great powers necessitated the acquisition of overseas colonies. Following the taking of Rome and the Papal States in 1870, the fervor of *Risorgimento* nationalists had turned toward the reclamation of an Italian empire in the Mediterranean. However, Italy's comparative weakness as an international power limited its imperialistic aims, even as France, Germany, and Great Britain began to divide, colonize, and annex the African continent. By the turn of the twentieth century, Italy had seen its ambitions in Tunisia thwarted by France, and after several disastrous efforts at conquering Ethiopia (the last of which had come under Crispi), had only managed to acquire Eritrea and southern portions of Somalia.<sup>45</sup> As a result, in the first decade of the new century, as Britain strengthened its hold on Egypt and the France tightened its grip on Algeria and Morocco, Italian nationalists, having already lost Tunisia, became increasingly determined to see Libya become a colony of the *patria*. In 1911, under mounting pressure from the nationalist right, Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, in order to solidify conservative support for his government, pursued the conquest of the Libyan territories. On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1911, the Italian government issued an ultimatum to the Ottoman government, asserting Italy's claims to the governance of Tripolitania and requesting full recognition of these claims, as well as the withdrawal of Ottoman forces from those regions. In a move likely designed to induce military conflict, twenty-four hours were allowed for the Ottomans' unconditional acceptance of Italy's terms. The Ottomans' refusal was prompt and complete. Having moved their fleet off the coast of Tripoli to reinforce the urgency of its demands, the Italian government reiterated the terms, allowing another twenty-four hours for them to be met. The Ottomans again refused and Italy declared war on Friday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, at 2:30pm.

In the following weeks, the Italian army and navy would secure Tripoli, as well as a number of other important coastal cities. As had been previously planned, the assault also

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<sup>45</sup> The colony of Eritrea, comprised of the coastal lands north of Ethiopia, was, in fact, a geopolitical entity of Italian construction, created as Italy sought to gain a foothold on the horn of Africa.

broadened in scope to include the coast of Cyrenaica, to the east. Nearly every one of Italy's military endeavors during the first month of the war met with a tactical success that grew infinitely grander in scope and import at the hands of Italian press. However, the breakneck pace of advance slowed markedly as the Italian army began to move inland, away from the ready aid of naval bombardment and toward better-organized resistance. By the early months of 1912, the invasion had morphed into a virtual stalemate, with Italian interests on the coast largely secured, and the areas to the south controlled by a stubborn local resistance comprised principally of local Arabs under the command of Turkish officers. With its advances on the North African coast stalled, Italy, looking both to force a quick victory and to expand its influence in the eastern Mediterranean, shifted the focus of its assault to a handful of strategic Ottoman holdings, including the Dodecanese islands, the Dardanelles, and the city of Beirut.<sup>46</sup>

Opinion on the war varied greatly within Italy, as a significant pro-war minority in both the government and the press greeted the military's immediate tactical success with enthusiasm, hailing the advent of a new era for the Italian nation-state. Opposite this stood a less visible majority, whose anti-war stance was buttressed by the widespread influence of the Socialist Party. Outside Italy, Europe's other nation-states offered their general, tacit approval to Italy's attempts at territorial aggrandizement at the expense of the Ottomans. However, this also changed as the war's progress slowed and the demonstrated instability of the Ottoman government fueled nationalist sentiment in the Balkans, which particularly threatened the interests of Austria-Hungary, one of Italy's official allies in the Triple Alliance. As the war

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<sup>46</sup> A. William Salomone, *Italy in the Giolittian Era: Italian Democracy in the Making, 1900-1914* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 94-103; Timothy W. Childs, *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy and the War Over Libya, 1911-1912* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990); Ciro Paoletti, *A Military History of Italy* (Westport: Praeger, 2008), 131-135; Dennis Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997, first published as *Italy: A Modern History*, 1959), 272-281. For those interested in a fascinating account of the war from a contemporary and ostensibly objective perspective, Commodore W.H. Beehler of the United States Navy, who had been a naval attaché in Rome, compiled, "from semi-official publications of the Naval Ministries of Germany, Italy, and Austria, and other thoroughly reliable sources," and published *The History of the Italian-Turkish War, September 29, 1911 to October 18, 1912* (Annapolis: The Advertiser-Republican, 1913). The quote is taken from the title page of the document.

dragged on, Italy faced mounting pressure, both from within and without, to conclude their military actions and reach an accord with the Ottomans.<sup>47</sup>

The war and its significance for the Italian nation-state were not, however, only of interest to Italy's inhabitants or Europe's statesmen. Given that one of the express aims of the conflict was the realization of a 'Greater Italy' predicated upon a vital relationship between the *patria* and its citizens abroad, communities of Italian migrants, with varying degrees of interest, also took notice of their home country's activities in northern Africa. Mark Choate notes that "the Libyan war proved popular with Italians across the world," and Philip Bean calls it "the most crucial event in the intensification of Italian national identity among local [Italian] immigrants [in Utica] prior to the First World War."<sup>48</sup> In Cleveland, the editors of *La Voce del Popolo* greeted the issuance of Italy's ultimatum to the Ottomans with a headline asserting to the paper's readers that "the cry of the national conscience demands that Tripoli be Italian."<sup>49</sup> Indeed, from its outset, the war presented an opportunity for *La Voce*'s editors to not only affirm their readers' affinity for their home nation, but also to further develop and foster their identity as Italians by promoting both their sense of shared experience of this war of colonial conquest and their understanding of the war's consequences for the reputation of the *patria* and the citizens of Greater Italy everywhere.<sup>50</sup>

### **"Il diritto ed il dovere"**

Even before the outbreak of war, the editorial staff of *La Voce del Popolo*, with Fernando Melaragno as its editor-in-chief, had drawn clear connections between the "the question of Tripoli," and the prestige of the home nation.<sup>51</sup> In the weeks immediately prior to the ultimatum, *La Voce* presented Italy's interests in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as a matter of national urgency.

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<sup>47</sup> Salomone, *Italy in the Giolittian Era*, 94-103; Row, "Italy in the International System," 88-89; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 169-180; Baldoli, *History of Italy*, 233; James Edward Miller, *From Elite to Mass Politics: Italian Socialism in the Giolittian Era, 1900-1914* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1990), 141-46.

<sup>48</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 179-180; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 182-188.

<sup>49</sup> "L'Italia dà alla Turchia l'Ultimatum prima d'incominciare la guerra; Vorranno i Turchi combattere contro gl'Italiani? Il grido della coscienza nazionale vuole che Tripoli sia Italiana," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 30, 1911.

<sup>50</sup> Douglas J. Forsyth, *The Crisis of Liberal Italy: Monetary and Financial Policy, 1914-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 23; Wong, *Race and the Nation*, 80-85; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 169-180; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 182-188.

<sup>51</sup> "L'Italia e la questione di Tripoli," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 9, 1911.



On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, there appeared a pithy summation of Italy's official stance on the imminent war, attributed to the "noted publicist" and historian Vico Mantegazza, asserting that "[i]n the redrawing of the map of Africa, Italy has the right—and also the duty—to occupy Tripoli."<sup>52</sup> The following week, the editors tentatively anticipated an occupation of Tripolitania by Italy in the coming November, pending the satisfactory resolution of negotiations between France, Germany (and, by extension, Great Britain) over the Agadir Crisis. In this context, any Italian intervention in "the present Moroccan imbroglio" would, aside from the noble purpose of maintaining the political equilibrium of the Mediterranean, primarily be the "safeguarding of Italy's territorial integrity," which would be unequivocally "threatened if some other European power were to occupy Tripoli."<sup>53</sup>

The reporting of news regarding the wellbeing of the home nation was not, of course, a novelty. It had been quite customary to find in the pages of *La Voce del Popolo* news reports detailing happenings within Italy, on both a national and local level—the latter mostly contained in a weekly page-long section entitled *Dall'Italia*. In the months before the outbreak of hostilities between Italy and Turkey over the Libyan territories, the newspaper's front page reported on reforms to the Italian electoral system, the cholera epidemic of 1911, and, of course, the rising rate of Italian emigration.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, as has been asserted, the newspaper's editors visibly desired, from the onset of publication, to reinforce ties between Cleveland's expatriates and the home nation.<sup>55</sup> With the outbreak of war, however, the volume of news regarding Italy increased exponentially, consuming the better part of the publication in October and November of 1911.

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<sup>52</sup> "L'Italia e la Tripolitania," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 9, 1911. Mantegazza (1865-1934) had a varied career as a journalist, diplomat, and intellectual. He was also a prolific author on the subject of Italy's historical claims to various places in the Mediterranean, particularly the Libyan regions in Northern Africa. Some of his works on the subject include *Gl'Italiani in Africa: l'assedio di Macallè* (Milan: Succesori Le Monnier, 1896), *La Guerra in Africa* (Milan: Succesori Le Monnier, 1896), *Tripoli e i diritti della civiltà* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1912), and *La guerra per la Libia* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1913).

<sup>53</sup> "L'Italia occuperà la Tripolitania in Novembre?" *La Voce del Popolo*, September 16, 1911.

<sup>54</sup> "L'Italia alla coda nel sistema elettorale," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 8, 1911; "Il colera in Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 8, 1911; "Voce di affermazione e voce di smentita sul colera in Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 22, 1911; "Notizie sul colera: infamie ed esagerazione," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 29, 1911; "Movimento della emigrazione italiana," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 20, 1911; "Cose riguardante l'emigrazione," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 15, 1911.

<sup>55</sup> A purpose that the editors explicitly renewed every January with a brief editorial that celebrated another year of publication; for example, see "Buon capo d'anno," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 1, 1910; "Anno nuovo," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 30, 2010; "1904-1912," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 6, 1912; "Buon anno," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 28, 1912, and so on.

In the October 7<sup>th</sup> issue of *La Voce*, on a front-page devoted completely to news of the war, the lead headline exulted that “Italy has conquered Tripolitania,” and that “the Italian flag now waves in Tripoli.”<sup>56</sup> In the same issue, the editors also republished Italy’s official justification for the ultimatum and subsequent invasion of Tripolitania, as penned and telegraphed to the Italian and international presses by the Foreign Minister Antonino Paternò-Castello, the *marchese* of San Giuliano. A lengthy communiqué, San Giuliano’s defense of Italy’s declaration of war read primarily as a catalogue of all the wrongs suffered by both the Italian state and her subjects at the hands of the Ottoman Turks and their government. The critical element of the Foreign Minister’s rhetoric is the repeated accusation of Ottoman hostility and a pattern of “continual provocation,” and, as such, the fact that Italy and Turkey had escalated to open, armed conflict was only “an epilogue to a long series of harassments and abuses of power toward Italy and Italians by the government of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>57</sup>

As concerns the reporting of the war in *La Voce del Popolo*, however, the significance of San Giuliano’s statement extends beyond its conveyance of Italy’s official, and entirely predictable, umbrage. It offered an official script of apologetic for the war that would be picked up by the pro-war Italian press both in and outside of Italy—one that shifted blame entirely to the Turks for crafting “an atmosphere of hostility toward Italian interests,” in the Mediterranean and the Red Seas.<sup>58</sup> Even more importantly, however, the Foreign Minister framed the discourse of the conflict itself, setting the terms, agenda, and stakes—in short, an ideology of the war that, in turn, contained a particular expression of Italian identity tied to the conflict with Turkey. This ideology would inform the manner in which the editors of *La Voce* presented news of the war, providing a ready filter for isolating and emphasizing those aspects of the war most critical to an Italian identity that intertwined with the fate of the home country.

## The Reputation of the *Patria*

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<sup>56</sup> “L’Italia conquista la Tripolitania; a Tripoli sventola la nostra bandiera; valore delle navi Italiane,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911.

<sup>57</sup> “Le ragioni dell’Italia: Una dichiarazione del ministro degli esteri,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911. San Giuliano is referencing Ottoman resistance to Italian attempts to exert unofficial influence in the Libyan territories prior to the war.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

At the same time that San Giuliano assigned blame for the outbreak of war entirely to the Ottomans, he also presented Ottoman rule of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as wholly troubled—so much so that Italy’s invasion was not only in the best interests of protecting Italian interests in northern Africa, but also to the greater good of the international community. In addition to the Ottomans’ “systematic and unyielding opposition to every Italian initiative,” from which, the Foreign Minister asserted, “clearly emerge[d]... a system and program of preconceived antipathy” for “the economic and commercial interests of Italy,” there was yet another, nobler justification for the war.<sup>59</sup> Ottoman rule was characterized by its incompetence: it was a government “lacking the strength to enforce and observe its treaties... its systems, its contracts; a government, in sum, that neglected... its international duties.”<sup>60</sup> Such a government was a weak link in the stability of the international system and, as such, could not be relied upon to acquit its responsibilities. Within this interpretive framework, Italy’s declaration of war on the Turks became a fulfillment of Italy’s ‘duty’ to the rest of the world—and, as such, a boost to Italy’s prestige.

Italy’s reputation—or, more precisely, the chance that a successful conquest and colonization of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan (which together comprised Libya) offered for the improvement of that reputation—was of paramount concern to Italy’s pro-war constituency. The foreign minister’s October communiqué offers early hints at the ways in which the government perceived the war as a means to improving Italy’s good name. In general terms, the anticipated increase in Italy’s prestige corresponded to the young nation-state’s post-unification desire to curry favor with its fellow European powers. After all, it was thanks to the intricate weave of European diplomacy that Italy could be said to possess the ‘right’ to invasion and occupation; and, as such, the war with Turkey held significant consequences for future diplomatic conditions. The waning of Ottoman control in the Mediterranean was, if not to the advantage of, certainly of interest to every other European political power. And, ostensibly, the successful implementation of Italian suzerainty in Libya would only ensure the stability of

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

European interests in the Mediterranean. Naturally, the more efficient and effective Italy was in this endeavor, the greater the benefit to its prestige.<sup>61</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, official commentary on the war was overwhelmingly favorable—a tendency present also in the pro-war Italian press the world over, including *La Voce del Popolo*.<sup>62</sup> For the entirety of the conflict, war reports published in *La Voce* were replete with news of Italian triumph in Libya. Owing to the strength of Italy's navy, the conquest of Tripoli in the first week of the war "cost neither a man nor a vessel."<sup>63</sup> In the weeks following, as the campaign expanded, readers were continually assured after every military encounter that Italy's military suffered only "insignificant losses."<sup>64</sup> A collection of parallel front line reports from Tripoli, Bengasi, and Derna, dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, characteristically represented every Italian military endeavor as an unqualified success.<sup>65</sup> This sort of triumphalism persisted, even as the pace of Italian advance slowed and the conflicts became increasingly defensive, as Italy struggled to make significant gains further inland, while attempting to retain its hold on the coastal regions of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. That is, when no longer able to laud the swiftness of Italy's victorious offensive, *La Voce*'s war reports instead praised the staunch courage of Italy's troops in the face of repeated attacks from all fronts—Turks, Arabs, even Bedouins.<sup>66</sup> As the focus of the war shifted from the North African coast to the Dodecanese islands, the Dardanelles, and other points of strategic interest in the Mediterranean, the reports of flawless Italian victories followed.<sup>67</sup> Whatever the occasion, the editors of *La Voce* conveyed news of

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<sup>61</sup> Row, "Italy in the International System," 83-104; Finaldi, *Italian National Identity*, 13-32; Di Scala, *From Revolution to Republic*, 190-92.

<sup>62</sup> Childs, *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy*, 31-43, 58-59; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 182-188; Salomone *Italy in the Giolittian Era*, 94-101; "La stampa Italiana e l'occupazione de Tripoli," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 12, 1911; O. Malgodi, "Vittorie," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 2, 1911 reprint from the *Tribuna* of Rome, no original publication date given.

<sup>63</sup> "L'Italia conquista la Tripolitania; a Tripoli sventola la nostra bandiera; valore delle navi Italiane," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911; "La stampa Italiana e l'occupazione de Tripoli," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 14, 1911.

<sup>64</sup> "Le perdite subite dai nostri," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 4, 1911; "Sempre vittorie," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911; "L'avanzata vittoriosa delle truppe italiane in Tripolitania," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 2, 1911; "Battaglia campale: Il trionfo delle nostre truppe ad Anzara," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 9, 1911.

<sup>65</sup> "Sempre vittorie," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911.

<sup>66</sup> "Un altro attacco dei Turchi respinto," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 4, 1911; "Un altro attacco di beduini respinto," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 30, 1911; "Forze nemiche," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 3, 1912; "Altri attacchi respinti," February 10, 1912; "Situazione invariata," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 9, 1912; "Ultime notizie: Altre brillanti vittorie Italiane," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 16, 1912.

<sup>67</sup> "Splendide vittorie delle navi italiane nel mar rosso; sette cannoniere turche affondate," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 20, 1912; "Il bombardamento di Beirut," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 3, 1912; "Le navi italiane dinanzi ai

Italy's military exploits in tones of unstinting praise. Even the Pope, despite the Catholic Church's official disapproval, was reported "by a highly authoritative individual... personally close [to] *il Papa*," to be closely following Italy's progress "with enthusiasm."<sup>68</sup> The nation was, indeed, acquitting itself well.

Of course, it was also critical that Italy received recognition commensurate with its achievements. The reaction of Italy's fellow nations to the war was therefore newsworthy, even in Cleveland, Ohio. Two weeks after the taking of Tripoli, a small article appeared in *La Voce* noting that Sir Edward Grey, San Giuliano's British counterpart, was refusing assurances to the Germans that England would not seek diplomatic alliance with Italy through the *entente* it had signed with France and Russia.<sup>69</sup> Two months later, as 1911 drew to a close, the editors published a brief précis of "an exchange of telegrams concerning the expiration and renewal of the Triple Alliance," which, among other things, intimated Germany's desire to retain Italy as an ally.<sup>70</sup> A January 23<sup>rd</sup> news report out of Rome in the following year stated that while Germany had "absolute need to maintain the Triple Alliance," Italy's position was "stronger than it had ever been."<sup>71</sup> What had begun merely as an implication was now explicit reality in the pages of *La Voce*: Italy's success in the Mediterranean had made her a most desirable ally, whose loyalty was available to the most attractive suitor.

The Italian government was eager to flex its newly acquired muscle, but it was also sensitive to criticism, and this tension, too, found its way into the pages of *La Voce del Popolo*. News reports brushed aside early rumblings of discontent from the Austrian government regarding Italian naval activity in the Mediterranean as largely inconsequential.<sup>72</sup> However, as the war dragged on (contrary to the expectations of the European diplomatic community), and the exposure of Ottoman weakness in North Africa threatened to undermine the tenuous stability

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*Dardanelli*," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 16, 1912; "*L'esercito ottomano dell'isola di Rodi si arrende*," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 25, 1912.

<sup>68</sup> "*Il Papa e la guerra*," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 16, 1911.

<sup>69</sup> "*Per strappare l'Italia alla triplice*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 21, 1911.

<sup>70</sup> "*Dubbii [sic] sul rinnovamento della triplice*," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 30, 1911.

<sup>71</sup> "*Per la triplice alleanza*," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 17, 1912; "*La triplice e la guerra*," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 2, 1912.

<sup>72</sup> "*I rapporti coll'Austria non destano apprensione*," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911.

of the Balkans, Austria's agitation found an increasingly sympathetic audience.<sup>73</sup> An unhappy Austria was primarily of concern to Germany, but instability in the Balkans mattered to every European power. Though reports persisted that Great Britain, France, and Russia intended to lure Italy from its alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, the crumbling of Ottoman power meant that the *entente* powers also wanted peace, and quickly.<sup>74</sup> On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1912, *La Voce* reported, in response to Italy's extension of the conflict into the Dodecanese islands, "Rome, Vienna, Petersburg, and London" had tentatively made plans to meet to discuss ways to end the war.<sup>75</sup> The Italian government was at pains to protect its country's reputation, and the editors of *La Voce* were equally at pains to show Italy's willingness to serve the common interest. When peace was declared in October of 1912, they hailed it as both a moment of greatness for Italy and a triumph of European cooperation.<sup>76</sup>

### **The Reputation of the *Italiani***

Just as *La Voce* had routinely featured news of the home country prior to the war, so the paper had, before the war, sought to protect the good name of both *Italia* and *italiani*, for a threat to the reputation of one was a threat to the other as well. The mistreatment of Italians at the hands of the Argentinian government and ethnic tensions in Trento and Trieste were presented as an affront to the character of Cleveland's Italians.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, those emigrants living in Cleveland and the surrounding area were responsible for doing their part to protect the reputation of the *patria* and their *connazionali* in other parts of the world. With the onset of war against the

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<sup>73</sup> "La Turchia domanderà per la pace," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911; "La stampa austriaca contro l'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 3, 1912; reports of growing instability and factionalism within Turkey began early in 1912 and continued through the war: "La Turchia tra due fuochi: situazione gravissima in Albania," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 3, 1912; "La rovina finanziaria della Turchia," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 1, 1912; "Nuova crisi ministeriale in Turchia," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 20, 1912.

<sup>74</sup> "L'amicizia della Russia per l'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 25, 1912; "Un congresso europeo per la cessazione del conflitto Italo-Turco," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 1, 1912; "Un congresso europeo per mettere fine alla Guerra," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 7, 1912.

<sup>75</sup> "Un congresso europeo per la cessazione del conflitto Italo-Turco," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 1, 1912.

<sup>76</sup> "La pace è conclusa: La Turchia accetta tutte le condizioni imposte dall'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 19, 1912; "Le condizioni della pace," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 19, 1912.

<sup>77</sup> "La questione italo-argentina: dimostrazioni anti-italiane," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 2, 1911; "Trento e Trieste: Il tricolore insultato da un ufficiale austriaco," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 16, 1911; "Trento e Trieste: Grave minaccia per l'Italianità di Trieste," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 23, 1911; "Trento e Trieste: Un processo contro un cittadino italiano," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 30, 1911.

Ottomans, the bounds of this Greater Italy expanded to include Italy's troops in the Libyan territories.

Thus, the protecting of Italy's reputation in *La Voce del Popolo*'s coverage of the war extended much further than abstract flattering depictions of the Italian state vis-à-vis European politics. Reports of the war were also filled with both individual and collective "acts of heroism" on the part of Italy's troops.<sup>78</sup> The greater part of these instances of "courage and glory" emerged from the battlefield, as soldiers were routinely singled out and lauded for their exploits in the heat of battle and, especially, for saving the lives of their comrades.<sup>79</sup> Official commendations, often resulting in medal ceremonies, were also front-page news.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the heroism of Italian troops extended beyond the confines of battle. A flood at Tripoli in late November of 1911 inspired several "*atti di eroismo*," including an army captain's unsuccessful attempt to save five soldiers caught in the current of an engorged river, "at risk to his own life."<sup>81</sup>

In addition to supplying its own litany of stories of brave, courageous, and unimpeachable Italian heroes, the editorial staff of *La Voce* also paid attention to depictions of Italy's troops in other newspapers. Over the course of the war, the editors presented their readers with an international journalistic dialogue regarding the effect of the war on perceptions of Italians the world over. The greater part of the reprinted articles and excerpts originated from the Italian press, and therefore merged seamlessly with the celebratory tone and content of *La Voce*.<sup>82</sup> Complementary to this, the editors also singled out more remarkable selections from non-Italian newspapers, often providing additional commentary and contextualization for the

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<sup>78</sup> "Altri episodi di coraggio e di gloria," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 23, 1911; "La morte di un valoroso siciliano," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 6, 1912; "Il combattimento di Gargaresh: dettagli ed atti di eroismo," January 27, 1912;

<sup>79</sup> "Le perdite," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 27, 1912.

<sup>80</sup> "Il fondo degli eroi," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 2, 1911; "Il valoroso tenente Murtula decorato per ben tre volte," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 27, 1912; "Il figlio di Libero Pilotto decorato della medaglia al valore militare," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 19, 1912.

<sup>81</sup> "Atti di eroismo durante l'inondazione," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911; "Altri episodi di coraggio e di gloria," December 23, 1912.

<sup>82</sup> "La stampa italiana e l'occupazione di Tripoli," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 14, 1911, featuring reprinted excerpts from the *Giornale d'Italia* and the *Corriere d'Italia*; "La Pera Matura," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911, reprinted from an uncredited newspaper in Italy; Luigi Barzini, "Battaglia Campale: Lo spirito di sacrificio dei nostri soldati," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 9, 1911, reprinted from the *Corriere della Sera*; "Per lo sfruttamento agricolo della nostra nuova colonia," *La Voce del Popolo*, March, 2, 1912, reprinted from the *Corriere di Milano*; "I particolari dell'occupazione di Macabez: Il convegno notturno delle quadre," *La Voce del Popolo*, April 20, 1912, reprinted from the *Tribuna* in Rome; "Impressioni di Claretie sull'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 18, 1912, reprinted from the *Tribuna* in Rome.

benefit of their readers. By war's end, the paper had featured selected republications from the French dailies *Le Gaulois* and *Le Temps*, various British papers including the *Times* and the *Daily Chronicle*, as well as some unflattering articles from Austrian newspapers.<sup>83</sup>

Those sources that received the most careful and critical attention were, however, American newspapers that held the most potential to directly affect public opinion in Cleveland. In the first week of the war, a reprinting of a telegram from a *New York Times* correspondent praising the efficiency of the Italian navy accompanied the news reports of events at the front. More importantly, *La Voce*'s editors advertised the telegram's original publication in the *Times* as all the more "significant... given the Italo-phobia of his brothers [i.e. his colleagues at the *Times*]." <sup>84</sup> This was a sign of things to come, as similar attempts to combat this perceived anti-Italian bias in the American media would, in the ensuing months, often dominate the pages of *La Voce del Popolo*.

The month of November proved exceptionally lively on this count. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, an editorial appeared under the headline "The Italian-Turkish War and the Gatherers of Lies." The column soundly denounced "infamous and malicious rumors," whose existence was attributed to those other nations of the world so "envious" of Italy's recent success as to be driven to fabricating news of the war and "transmitting it worldwide."<sup>85</sup> Chief among these lies was the defamation of Italian troops: claims of "atrocities committed at Tripoli, that would make our soldiers appear an army of brigands."<sup>86</sup> The following week's front page featured a further rebuttal of these claims in the form an editorial reprinted from the *New York Journal*, which rebuked those English and American news outlets critical of the conduct of Italian troops in

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<sup>83</sup> "La dittatura d'oltre tomba di Crispi, un articolo del 'Temps'" *La Voce del Popolo*, January 20, 1912, reprinted from *Le Temps*; "La qualità dei soldati italiani giudicate [sic] da un giornalista inglese," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 17, 1912, reprinted from the *Times* in London; "Un inno di patriottismo Italiano," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 15, 1912, reprinted from *Le Gaulois*; "La stampa austriaca contro l'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 2, 1912, from an uncredited Austrian paper; "'Un esercito di prim'ordine': l'elogio austro-ungarico ai combattenti in Libia," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 20, 1912 reprinted from an uncredited Austrian paper.

<sup>84</sup> "La meravigliosa efficienza dell'esercito d'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911; provokingly, the word here translated as 'brother' is 'confratello', which carries with it religious overtones; this would seem to indicate that *La Voce*'s editors considered the staff of the *New York Times* to be ideologically, almost dogmatically, anti-Italian.

<sup>85</sup> "La guerra Italo-Turca ed i raccoglitori di menzogne," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 4, 1911.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.



Tripolitania.<sup>87</sup> Interestingly, both the republished editorial and the accompanying introductory remarks from *La Voce*'s editors appeared in English, indicating that this particular defense of Italy's good name was intended also for Cleveland's non-Italians. Moreover, in their editorial comments of both the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup>, *La Voce*'s editors brought the matter closer to home, singling out the *Cleveland Press* as the most egregious local offender.

Indeed, the editors of *La Voce* regarded the *Press* (and to a lesser extent the *Plain Dealer*, Cleveland's other daily) as "journalists without faith or conscience," who delighted in telling "bold lies" about Italy and in, "defaming the good name of Italians in all circumstances."<sup>88</sup> This "slandorous journalism," also drew the ire of Dr. Biagio Sancetta, then *regente* at the Italian consulate in Cleveland, who, together with *La Voce*'s co-founder and business manager, Olindo Melaragno, went in person to the office of the *Press* to protest the newspaper's portrayal of Italy and her troops. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, Dr. Sancetta authored an open letter excoriating the *Press* and the *Plain Dealer*, as well as numerous other American and British newspapers, for willfully publishing misinformation about the war, and for defaming Italy's reputation with "ill-concealed bad faith and unjustified malice."<sup>89</sup>

In the midst of this, Cleveland's Italians were encouraged to respond. By fighting against the prejudice of the *Press* and the *Plain Dealer*, they could do their part to protect not only their *patria*, but also their brethren fighting in North Africa. Sancetta concluded his editorial of the 11<sup>th</sup> with an appeal to his readers to stand fast in the face of slander, remarking that he "had never felt so proud to be Italian as in this period when all hurl stones and insults over a nation that knows how find [in itself] the dignity and strength to resist" responding in kind. *La Voce*'s editor-in-chief, Fernando Melaragno would issue similar sentiments in the subsequent weeks. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, an editorial appeared urging an organized protest on the part of Cleveland's

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<sup>87</sup> "A Lesson to the Yellow Press," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 11, 1911; contained within this article was the editorial "The Italians have killed some Arabs—A Good Many; but then war is unpleasant, at best, and Italian soldiers, shot in the back by men whom they trusted, cannot be expected to deal gently," reprinted from *The New York Journal*.

<sup>88</sup> "La guerra Italo-Turca ed i raccoglitori di menzogne," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 4, 1911; "A Lesson to the Yellow Press," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 11, 1911; *La Voce*'s editors were also concerned with the words of local politicians, as evident in a pair of October editorials directed against local politician Peter Witt and his apparently free use of the derogatory term 'dago': "Italiani! Facciamo tacere i denigratori del nostro nome: Uniamoci e protestiamo," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 21, 1911; and "La protesta degl'Italiani contro Peter Witt," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 28, 1911.

<sup>89</sup> "Maledicenza Giornalistica," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 11, 1911.

Italians against these “amassed insults, falsifications, and slanders,” that “have raised everywhere the indignation of the Italian soul, that now more than ever beats with just and holy national pride.”<sup>90</sup> He likewise appealed to the Cleveland emigrants’ sense of Italianess, asserting that, “the Italians of Cleveland [are] no less Italians than those scattered in other cities and regions,” and also that their actions meant just as much in the preserving the good name “of our lineage.”<sup>91</sup> Fernando would reiterate these sentiments the following week, and again in mid-December.<sup>92</sup>

## Voices of Response

Responses to journalistic slander did not, however, constitute the only exhortations to unity from *La Voce*’s editors during the war. They also encouraged their readership toward practical acts of patriotism. By late November, *La Voce* had attached itself to an initiative by the *Società Santagatese di Beneficenza* (Saint Agatha Charitable Society) who, “motivated by noble enthusiasm,” sought to set up a means for charitable donations through the Italian Red Cross to “the families of the dead and wounded soldiers in the war in Tripoli.”<sup>93</sup> Also, an invitation was extended to other associations and “influential persons” within the Cleveland “colony” to join in this “patriotic and humanitarian purpose.”<sup>94</sup> Notices of this opportunity for charitable donations would reappear regularly on the front page for the next several months, occasionally accompanied by some stern editorial remarks, scolding “the Cleveland colony” for doing less than their fellow settlements of *connazionali* around the world. A particularly scathing note on January 20<sup>th</sup> ended its call for more contributions with the pronouncement, “it will be thus, there is no doubt.”<sup>95</sup> To further reinforce the point, the community’s most active supporters and generous donors were also occasionally recognized by name in the notices according to the size of their contributions.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> “*La protesta degli Italiani di Cleveland*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*; “*La protesta degli Italiani di Cleveland*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911.

<sup>92</sup> Introductory remarks to, “*Vittorie*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 2, 1911, reprinted from the *Tribuna* in Rome; “*Gli infami speculatori: la coscienza italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 16, 1911.

<sup>93</sup> “*Per la Croce Rossa Italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 19, 1911.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> “*Le società italiane per i caduti a Tripoli*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911; “*La Croce Rossa in azione a Tripoli*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 30, 1911; “*Per i caduti in Africa*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 6, 1912; “*Per i caduti in Africa*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 13, 1911; “*Uniamoci*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 20, 1911.

<sup>96</sup> “*Per la Croce Rossa Italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911; “*Per la Croce Rossa Italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 24, 1912.

There was, nevertheless, a discernable, practical response from within the community. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the *Teatro Roma* in Cleveland, a local amateur actors' circle calling themselves, "*Tripoli Italiana*," staged a benefit performance, with all proceeds going directly to the Italian Red Cross. Two months later, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, with Olindo Melaragno on the planning and reception committee, the society *Fraterna Italiana* held a benefit masquerade ball "for our brothers who shed their blood for love of country." Once again, all proceeds went to the Red Cross. *La Voce* advertised both of these events well in advance, and published reviews of each hailing their success.<sup>97</sup> In addition to several other, smaller benefit events that took place both in Cleveland and in the surrounding area, the Italian community also held honorary funerals for the dead Italian soldiers "who shed their blood for the greatness and glory of Italy."<sup>98</sup>

Spontaneous expressions of patriotism also occasionally found their way into the pages of *La Voce*, such as an impromptu and quite unannounced pro-war speech given at a banquet held in nearby Akron, Ohio, to promote local cooperation between Italians and Americans.<sup>99</sup> Local film houses also advertised the showing of war newsreels, charging only a few cents for admission.<sup>100</sup> Local proprietors, too, found ways to advertise their patriotism (and perhaps increase their business): *signore* Salvatore Oddo opened a *dolceria* named, "*Tripoli = Italiana*," at 1711 Woodland Ave; and one G. Botta thought to rename his establishment the "*Tripolitalia* Saloon."<sup>101</sup> In fact, the editorial staff apparently became so confident in the zeal of Cleveland's Italians that in March they published a pacifist's open letter of ardent protest to the King Vittorio Emanuele, withholding editorial commentary save for remarking that "everyone has the right to

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<sup>97</sup> "Recita a beneficio [sic] della Croce Rossa," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911; "Recita per le famiglie povere dei nostri eroi," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 2, 1911; "Al 'Teatro Roma'," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 9, 1911; "Il ballo mascherato della società fraterna," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 3, 1912 "Il ballo mascherato della società fraterna," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 10, 1912.

<sup>98</sup> "La serata pro Tripoli," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 17, 1912; "Banchetto," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 9, 1912; "Per i caduti in Tripolitania," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 16, 1912; "Solenne onoranze funebri dei caduti in Tripoli," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911; "Solenni onoranze funebri dei caduti di Tripoli," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911; "Chiesa di S. Antonio in Central Ave [sic]," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 23, 1911.

<sup>99</sup> "Nostre Corrispondenze da Akron, O [sic]," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 21, 1911.

<sup>100</sup> "Seconda serie della guerra a Tripoli sulle tele del cinematografo: Teatro "Princess," Euclid Avenue, domenica e lunedì," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 30, 1911; "Guerra, guerra: Le vedute originali della guerra italo-turca," May 4, 1912.

<sup>101</sup> Letter to the editor from G. Botta Zingales, *La Voce del Popolo*, March 9, 1912; "Dolceria Tripoli=italiana [sic]," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 12, 1912.

express his opinion,” and inviting “our readers to discuss” the letter’s contents.<sup>102</sup> They were not disappointed. Several impassioned, denunciatory responses would appear from members of the community, championing the justice of Italy’s cause and asserting that the conquest of the Libyan territories had been a necessity since it was “the will of the Italian people.”<sup>103</sup>

### ***Italianità contro barbarie***

There was, however, another facet to the Italianess that the editors of *La Voce del Popolo* promoted during the war—one that derived less from a spirit of cohesive Italian fraternalism and more from a sense of Italian cultural superiority over their non-European foes. Of course, in taking on the Ottoman Turks—a traditional antagonist of all things European—the Italian government and press had a long history of unflattering images and stereotypes on which to draw. Yet, the portrayals of the Turks, and of the Arabs, in *La Voce* during the conquest of the Libyan territories were drawn particularly in contradistinction to those qualities extolled as most critically and genuinely Italian. To the editors of *La Voce*, the war offered an opportunity to focus their ongoing project of nurturing a sense of Italianess among their readers. And, as in so many other things, the ideological framework sketched at the onset of the conflict by the Italian foreign minister, San Giuliano, provided the catalyst for propagating this wartime identity.

In its anticipated governance of the regions Italy had a responsibility to bring civilization to the indigenous peoples of Libya—a duty neglected by the Ottoman Turks, who, according to di San Giuliano, had hardly been “capable of enforcing the obedience of the local authorities.”<sup>104</sup> Even according to the non-Italian press, this ability to “conquer, govern, and civilize,” was to be yet another mark of Italy’s arrival as a European power: “Italy is taking away from the detestable Turks a great territory—an excellent thing for civilization.”<sup>105</sup> The October 14<sup>th</sup> front page of *La Voce* proudly declared the suppression of slavery in Tripoli, and a quote from the *Giornale*

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<sup>102</sup> “Nota Bene: Ad Antonio Dalba; A Vittorio Emanuele III,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 23, 1912.

<sup>103</sup> “A Bruto Bertiboni,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 30, 1912; Letter to the editor, *La Voce del Popolo*, May 11, 1912;

<sup>104</sup> “Le ragioni dell’Italia: Una dichiarazione del ministro degli esteri,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911.

<sup>105</sup> E. Robinson Brown, excerpted quote, *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911; reprinted from the *New York Herald*; “The Italians have killed some Arabs...” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 11, 1911, reprinted from the *New York Journal*.

*d'Italia* in Rome hailed the end of “a long period of barbarism.”<sup>106</sup> Moreover, unlike the patriotic fervor inspired by Italy’s early military successes, the pride in being a force of civilization only increased as the war dragged on. In January of 1912, a news report hailed the “Italian tricolor,” as “a symbol of civilization and progress.”<sup>107</sup> Also in January, *La Voce* reported the onset of the construction of a railway system in Tripoli—the first of a slew of articles relaying the advancements of the Italians’ miraculous delivery of progress and modernization to the Arab lands of North Africa left undeveloped by the backward Turks. In addition to news regarding further improvements for travel and communication, advances in agricultural techniques in the Libyan territories, the “modern” refortification of the city of Tripoli, and the opening of schools, libraries, and hospitals (particularly praised by Germany) were glowingly reported as points of pride for Italy and Italians everywhere.<sup>108</sup>

As mentioned, these contrasts also carried historical undertones. Pro-war polemicists, drawing upon the spirit of the Risorgimento, often invoked images of the ancient Roman presence in Tripoli as justification for the entire Libyan endeavor.<sup>109</sup> In July 1911, in the lead-up to the war, *La Voce* featured an article substantiating the connection between ancient Rome and the achievement of Italian unification in the nineteenth century.<sup>110</sup> Also, in an effort to educate their readers to the historical significance of the ongoing war, the editors of *La Voce* published a column relating a concise history of Tripoli. The retelling of “the past of Tripolitania” revolved around its relationship to Italy, beginning with the fall of the Roman Empire and ending with the return of Italy to the shores of the North African coast. The intervening centuries saw only

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<sup>106</sup> “L’occupazione della Tripolitania: L’Italia sopprime la schiavitù,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 14, 1911.

<sup>107</sup> “La morte di un valoroso siciliano,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 6, 1912.

<sup>108</sup> “Per il servizio alla ferroviaria a Tripoli,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 3, 1912; “Le locomotive per la ferrovia di Tripoli,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 17, 1912. “Sull’agricoltura in Tripolitania,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 17, 1912; “Le partenze per Tripoli e la affluenza di viaggiatori,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 2, 1912; “La riapertura delle scuole a Tripoli,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 2, 1912; “Per lo sfruttamento agricolo della nostra nuova colonia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 2, 1912; “Elogio tedesco per le scuole e gli ospedali italiani a Tripoli,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 27, 1912 reprinted from *Vossische Zeitung*; “Biblioteca libica fondato dal comando,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 20, 1912.

<sup>109</sup> Ronald Bruce St. John, *Libya: From Colony to Independence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008), 57-61; *La stampa italiana e l’occupazione di Tripoli*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 14, 1911, featuring reprinted excerpts from the *Giornale d’Italia* and the *Corriere d’Italia*; “La Pera Matura,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911, reprinted from an uncredited newspaper in Italy; Massimo Spiritini, “Terra! Terra!” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911; Enrico Aldo Brizzi, “Per Tripoli Italiana,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 2, 2011; Luigi Buglia, “Gloria,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 16, 1911.

<sup>110</sup> “Roma antica a la genesi dell’unità italiana,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 1, 1911.

“various tyrannies, alternated by dangers of anarchy” that had “impoverished the population.”<sup>111</sup> The Ottoman Turks were to be the last iteration of such barbaric despotism.

The adversarial construction of Italian identity against the barbarism of the Turks and the backwardness of the Arabs extended to a personal understanding, as well. Of the numerous instances of Turkish hostility San Giuliano offered in his October communiqué, the most sensational was the abduction of a young Italian girl of sixteen, stolen from her family, and forced, under threat of violence, to convert to Islam and marry a Muslim.<sup>112</sup> While the foreign minister restricted this particular polemic to an attack on the “barbarous system” (i.e. the Ottoman government) that allowed, and even condoned, such actions, he was far less exact in his denunciation of the conduct of the enemy in the battle of October 23<sup>rd</sup> outside of Tripoli. In two telegrams dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, di San Giuliano indiscriminately accused Turks and Arabs of “the worst sort of treachery,” including “acts of ferocity and cruelty on the [Italian] wounded.”<sup>113</sup>

“Inhuman and horrendous things happened.... The wounded and dead were raged upon with cruelty without name.... Things of a fantastic horror are narrated: of an Arab who fled with bits of human flesh in a bag; of a soldier found crucified in a hut. All of the most terrible dreams of a heightened fantasy were inferior to the present reality.”<sup>114</sup>

Stories of “the barbarism of the enemy,” often dressed in the guise of a news report, would persist in the pages of *La Voce* until the end of the war, as the editors seized opportunities to emphasize the backwardness of Italy’s enemies.<sup>115</sup>

These perceptions of the Turks and Arabs were not, however, simply a product of official Italian rhetoric or journalistic agitation. In early 1912, *La Voce* began to feature letters sent by soldiers on the front lines back to family members living in Cleveland. One soldier compared the

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<sup>111</sup> “*Il passato della Tripolitania*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911.

<sup>112</sup> “*Le ragioni dell’Italia: Una dichiarazione del ministro degli esteri*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911.

<sup>113</sup> “*Telegrammi ufficiali trasmessici dalla Ra. Agenzia Consolare di Cleveland*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 18, 1911.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.; “*Cuore italiano e crudeltà araba*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 19, 1911.

<sup>115</sup> “*La barbarie del nemico*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911; “*Altra prova dell’atrocità turca*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 23, 1911; “*L’evoluzione degli arabi*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 6, 1912; “*Come i nostri rispondono alle atrocità arabo-turche*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 20, 1911; “*Le audacie degli arabi*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, June 1, 1912; “*Patriottismo italiano e ferocia turca*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, June 1, 1912; “*Gli arabi e l’eroismo italiano*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 21, 1912.

Tripolitarians to “animals,” calling them “ragged beggars.”<sup>116</sup> Another wrote of them: “They sleep in caves like foxes; they are dirty, with their eyes always half open.”<sup>117</sup> They were “fanatics of Muhammad,” who, on going into battle, “invoke the name of Allah”—a “people,” concluded Peppino Marino, “altogether behind civilization.”<sup>118</sup> On the field of battle, their distinguishing characteristics were treachery and cowardice: “How they run when they hear the roar of the cannon!” wrote Carmelo Domenicano; another soldier wrote of the Arabs’ tendency to flee in the face of a bayonet attack by Italian infantry.”<sup>119</sup>

In contrast to these characteristics, of course, stood the true Italian. The foreign minister entitled one of his telegrams, “Italian Heart and Arab Cruelty,” drawing a distinction between the respective sides’ actions on the battlefield; likewise, in matters of diplomacy, Italian generosity met with Turkish hostility.<sup>120</sup> In the *Corriere della Sera* (and republished in *La Voce*) the journalist Luigi Barzini published an evocative article about the aftermath of a November battle, in which he simultaneously described the acute suffering of Italy’s soldiers and praised them for their “spirit of sacrifice.”<sup>121</sup> The troops themselves, of course, wrote to their families at length of the “courage and valor,” of their fellow soldiers.<sup>122</sup> They also reinforced the extent to which true Italian patriotism was intimately caught up with a love for one’s *patria*, as they invoked images of their homeland: “Our thoughts return... again to our beautiful Italy,” Biagio Bonelli told his sister in a letter.<sup>123</sup> Mauro Bucchieri wrote of Italy’s soldiers that they went into battle “with joy in their hearts and with the name of the *madre patria* on their lips.”<sup>124</sup> Thus, while the appearance of these letters in *La Voce* personalized the conflict for the Italian emigrants in Cleveland, the soldiers’ words, in conjunction with *La Voce*’s own editorial voice, also served to

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<sup>116</sup> “Lettera di un soldato dalla Tripolitania,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 3, 1912.

<sup>117</sup> “Lettera di un soldato che combatte in Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 23, 1912.

<sup>118</sup> “Lettera di un soldato dalla Tripolitania,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 3, 1912; “Lettera di un soldato che combatte in Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 23, 1912; “Lettere di soldati che combattono nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 6, 1912.

<sup>119</sup> “Lettere di un soldato che combatte nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 2, 1912; “Lettera di un soldato che combatte nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 9, 1912; “Lettera di un soldato che combatte in Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 23, 1912; “Lettere di soldati che combattono nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 6, 1912.

<sup>120</sup> “Le ragioni dell’Italia: Una dichiarazione del ministro degli esteri,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 7, 1911; “Cuore italiano e crudeltà araba,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 19, 1911.

<sup>121</sup> Luigi Barzini, “Battaglia Campale: Lo spirito di sacrificio dei nostri soldati,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 9, 1911, reprinted from the *Corriere della Sera*.

<sup>122</sup> “Lettera di un soldato che combatte nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 9, 1912.

<sup>123</sup> “Lettera di un soldato che combatte nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 2, 1912.

<sup>124</sup> “Lettera di un soldato che combatte nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 16, 1912.

reinforce as truly Italian those virtues that Italy's troops embodied, and for which they were willing to risk their lives.

Moreover, this Italianess could be adopted by any and all who wished to do so. In addition to encouraging Cleveland's Italians toward certain virtues by praising the Italian soldiers in North Africa, the editors of *La Voce* also commended the deeds of Italy's *ascari*—colonial troops from Eritrea. News reports praised their “heroism and faithfulness,” both in and outside of battle.<sup>125</sup> Being less visibly foreign than the Italians themselves, the *ascari* also became prized apologists for Italy's civilizing mission among the Arabs, Bedouins, and other indigenous groups.<sup>126</sup> And even the enemy could distinguish themselves. While the hated Turks—the quintessential ‘other’—remained nothing more than barbarians in the pages of *La Voce*, the Arabs occasionally merited a word of praise. News reports of the November, 1911 flooding at Tripoli noted that, “the Arabs are to be commended for helping the Italians” in the latter's efforts to minimize the damage of the floodwaters to both humanity and property.<sup>127</sup> Some of the soldiers even grudgingly praised the Arabs for occasionally demonstrating “great courage” in battle.<sup>128</sup> Most surprisingly, in November of 1912—after Turkey had surrendered control of Libya to Italy in the Treaty of Ouchy, ending the war—an article appeared in *La Voce* lauding “the *italianità* of a young Arab” in Catania, who, much to the delight of onlookers, had responded to the query “Are you a Turk?” by asserting loudly, “I am Italian. I am Italian and I am happy!”<sup>129</sup>

The implication was unmistakable: in the pages of *La Voce del Popolo*, the quality of being truly Italian depended less on one's descent than on one's devotion to the *patria*. Moreover, while *La Voce*'s editors had reinforced this notion since the paper's inception in 1904, the war with Turkey provided them with a coherent set of events and issues around which to solidify this agenda. The earliest official communications on the war from the Italian government, coming almost exclusively from the foreign minister, di San Giuliano, supplied a rhetorical and ideological skeleton that the editors would adopt and enlarge upon during the

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<sup>125</sup> “L'eroismo e la fedeltà dei nostri ascari a Tripoli,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 23, 1913.

<sup>126</sup> “Propaganda dei militi eritrei,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 17, 1912.

<sup>127</sup> “Atti di eroismo durante l'inondazione,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 25, 1911.

<sup>128</sup> “Lettera di un soldato che combatte in Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 23, 1912; “Lettere di soldati che combattono nella Libia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 6, 1912.

<sup>129</sup> “L'italianità di un giovanetto arabo,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 2, 1912.



course of the war. The complex Italian identity that emerged in those months relied as much on the particular cultural contrasts offered by the war as the ideology of a Greater Italy that sought to encompass and incorporate emigrants and colonists. The Italo-Turkish war was, in other words, a prism, through which an abstract and vague purpose—to reinforce and foster ties to the home country among the Italian emigrant residing in Cleveland—refracted into a variety of defined means and specific methods. These means and methods would, of course, continue to evolve as the editors responded not only to a rapidly changing international landscape, but also to political and ideological shifts within the Italian nation-state.

### Chapter 3

#### Irredentism: An Identity in Land, Blood, and the Past

The summer of 1914 found the editorial staff of *La Voce del Popolo* hard at work stumping for their favorite pet project: an ongoing attempt to fund the erection of a monument to Christopher Columbus in Cleveland.<sup>130</sup> *La Voce* had begun this campaign in February 1910, and breathed fresh life into it every October as part of a larger effort to make Columbus Day an official holiday.<sup>131</sup> Following the war with Turkey, however, *La Voce*'s editors, having identified the most effective means of mobilizing the latent patriotism of their *connazionali*, demonstrated especial zeal for the project. Efforts to grow the fund mostly took the form of editorial appeals to readers' patriotism. A November 1912 article, for example, published on the heels of Italy's victory, openly praised those who backed and contributed to the project as "true Italians."<sup>132</sup> Following this, updates on the "Monument to Christopher Columbus Fund" maintained a persistent presence on the paper's front page and mimicked wartime efforts to raise money for the Italian Red Cross by publicly identifying the most generous contributors.<sup>133</sup>

To further support the cause, *La Voce* would sometimes sponsor fundraisers and fervidly encourage readers to attend.<sup>134</sup> The issue of July 25, 1914, advertised notice of one such event, apprising *La Voce*'s readers of a "*festa dell'italianità*," to be held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August at Luna

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<sup>130</sup> Fernando Melaragno, *La Voce*'s editor-in-chief, was on the board of the funding campaign, as evidenced in B. Di Nicola and F. Melaragno, "*Le dimissioni del comitato pel monumento a Cristoforo Colombo: Lettera aperta agli Italiani di Cleveland*," June 6, 1914.

<sup>131</sup> "*La festa del 12 ottobre 1909 in Cleveland: La storia di Cristoforo Colombo; Pro Columbus day*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 16, 1909; "*Programma festeggiamenti della colonia italiana di Cleveland*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 12, 1910; "*Secondo Columbus day nello stato Ohio*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 14, 1911; "*XII Ottobre*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 12, 1912; "*Il Columbus day a Cleveland*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 18, 1913; "*La commemorazione del Columbus day: Tutta la colonia in festa*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 17, 1914.

<sup>132</sup> "*I veri Italiani*," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 2, 1912.

<sup>133</sup> For the year of 1913, these lists of donors appeared under various titles: January 4, 1913; January 18, 1913; February 22, 1913; March 1, 1913; March 15, 1913; May 10, 1913; May 17, 1913; October 4, 1913; October 11, 1913; October 18, 1913. This volume and frequency is representative of one calendar year.

<sup>134</sup> See, for example, "*Il grande concerto di Alessandro Bonci, domenica 28 Gennaio*," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 27, 1912; or "*Il grande concerto al Gray's Armory, la sera di domenica, 2 Novembre, ore 8, sotto la direzione del rinomato tenore Sig. Gaetano Manno*," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 1, 1913. This is only a sample: the totality of fundraisers and benefits held between May 1915 and August 1916 would require its own page of citations.

Park, ideally located on Woodland Avenue between Big and Little Italies.<sup>135</sup> The notice explained that “the festival... has the double purpose of bringing together all of the Italian families [of Cleveland] to spend a day in happy harmony, and to increase the fund for the Monument to Christopher Columbus.”<sup>136</sup> After reproaching their readers for a lack of enthusiasm for the project—“It is high time that Italians took to heart the erection of the Monument to Columbus”—the editors then urged their “*connazionali*” to purchase tickets at “only twenty-five cents... and it is only in this way that the true sentiment of *italianità* is manifested, and not with useless words.”<sup>137</sup> These exhortations would continue for the next several weeks, leading up to and through the celebration of “‘Italian Day’ at Luna Park,” in late August. By then, however, *La Voce*’s editors had dropped the cause of their patron explorer for the moment, and had instead turned their eyes back across the ocean from whence Columbus had come to gaze on a familiar sight: war.<sup>138</sup>

Unlike the Libyan conflict of 1911-12, the interests of the home nation were not immediately at stake in this war. Although it had been the primary instigator in the struggle with Turkey, Italy initially chose to be a bystander as Austria’s spat with Serbian nationalists in the Balkans escalated into a much larger international conflict. Italy’s neutrality was, however, a significant point of contention among Italians, both at home and abroad. Continued absence from the war was particularly troubling for those Italians that wanted their nation to cement its position as one of Europe’s great powers. They feared that a failure to enter the war would leave Italy vulnerable to an unfavorable outcome, and therefore argued that the war ought to be used to ensure the nation’s interests. At the end of May 1915, nearly ten months after Austria’s declaration of war against Serbia, these partisans—many of them in the Italian government—got their wish when Italy declared war on Austria.

More important than Italy’s decision, however, were the motivations behind it. By the spring of 1915, the arguments in favor of Italy’s entry had crystallized around the necessity of acquiring the so-called “unredeemed lands,” that existed within the Austrian empire, just outside

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<sup>135</sup> “*Cronaca locale: Per la festa dell’italianità*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 25, 1914.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> “*L’“Italian Day” a Luna Park*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 1, 1914; “*Il giorno degli italiani a Luna Park, martedì 25 Agosto*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 22, 1914; “*L’esito della festa a Luna Park*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 29, 1914.

the bounds of the Italian state. For reasons that will be explained in this chapter, these *terre irredente* held a deep, symbolic significance for Italian nationalists, who considered the recovery of unredeemed lands to be as important to the welfare of Greater Italy as the conquest of overseas colonies like Libya, and the retention of ties with emigrant settlements abroad. Indeed, the extent to which the incorporation of the *irredente* into the Italian nation-state motivated the government's decision to enter the conflict is reflected in the fact that, upon deciding for war in May 1915, Italy declared war only on Austria.<sup>139</sup>

The editors of *La Voce del Popolo*, having supported the conquest of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as an attempt at realizing the Italians' collective destiny of fashioning a Greater Italy, likewise supported the campaign to "redeem" the *irredente* to their rightful place in the fabric of Greater Italy. Their support of the irredentist cause is evident not only in the pre-entry debate that engulfed Italian politics, but also in the post-entry war effort against Austria, up through the summer of 1916 when the scope of Italy's war widened with its declaration of hostilities against Germany in late August. These two years, however, from August of 1914 to August of 1916—encompassing the debate over Italy's entry into the Great War, as well as the fifteen months of war against Austria—afforded the editors an opportunity to further affirm the Cleveland community's identity as an integral part of Greater Italy—specifically with respect to the *terre irredente*. And, just as *La Voce*'s editors had used the Italo-Turkish War as a means to reinforce the connections between the emigrant colony of Cleveland, Ohio and the colonial efforts in Libya, so they used Italy's "war of redemption," to stress the shared identity of their readers and those Italians living in the *irredente* as citizens of Greater Italy.

### ***L'Italia Neutrale***

That war had broken out on the European continent was not a surprise. Following Italy's victory over Turkey, the newspaper's staff had followed the decline of Ottoman power in the Balkans and had reported the political changes resulting from the First and Second Balkan

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<sup>139</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 57-59, 62-66, 165-68, 170; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 188-189; Baldoli, *History of Italy*, 234-235.

wars.<sup>140</sup> They had also taken note of the mounting diplomatic tension on the European continent, including the increased militarization of Italy's allies and rivals (which were not, of course, mutually exclusive groups).<sup>141</sup> Indeed, Franz Ferdinand's assassination in early July had been front-page news, and when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia at the end of July, the story ran under the ominous headline: "The threatened European war is expected soon."<sup>142</sup>

Neither was it particularly surprising that Italy declared itself neutral and denied assistance to Austria-Hungary and Germany, its nominal allies in the Triple Alliance. The strained character of the Alliance had received significant print in *La Voce*.<sup>143</sup> Powerful voices in Italian politics had, even prior to the war in Libya, begun to question the benefit of the Alliance. Moreover, both Giolitti and San Giuliano had warned Austria that, given the defensive nature of the Alliance, Italy would not support its ally in an offensive war against Serbia. Nevertheless, predictable as Italy's initial abstention might have been, it presented the editorial staff of *La Voce* with a conundrum: having so wholeheartedly embraced the bellicose nationalism of the recently concluded Italo-Turkish War, how were they to interpret Italy's neutrality as a thing patriotic and nationalistic?<sup>144</sup>

As they had done at the start of war with Turkey, the editors of *La Voce* looked to the Italian government for an official paradigm of patriotism within which to interpret the state's actions. Several articles in the August 8<sup>th</sup> issue of *La Voce* relayed not only Italy's official declaration of neutrality by the Foreign Minister San Giuliano, but also the government's advertised reasons for its neutrality. A report from Rome dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> of August informed readers that "[Prime Minister Antonio] Salandra and San Giuliano are in complete agreement...

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<sup>140</sup> "Nei Balcani: gli eserciti crociati marciano vittoriosi contro l'infedele," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 26, 1912; "Nei Balcani: nuovo incidente Austro-Serbo," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 14, 1912; "La zona balcanica ed i regnanti che ne vogliono il possesso," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 3, 1913; "La guerra balcanica e l'Europa," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 28, 1913; "La burrasca albanese," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 20, 1914; "Verso la terza guerra," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 25, 1914.

<sup>141</sup> "Il bilancio della marina e la giustificazione delle spese," *La Voce del Popolo*, April 12, 1913; "Le spese militari europee," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 3, 1913; "Il problema europeo," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 2, 1913; "La flotta necessaria," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 8, 1913.

<sup>142</sup> "Assassinio dell'erede al trono di Austria-Ungheria," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 4, 1914; "L'Austria ha dichiarato la guerra alla Serbia: Belgrado è già occupata dall'Austria; Tutte le nazioni europee mobilitano gli eserciti, si prevede imminente il minacciato conflitto europeo," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 1, 1914.

<sup>143</sup> "Le cortesie dell'Austria!" *La Voce del Popolo*, March 15, 1913; "L'Italia e la triplice," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 20, 1914.

<sup>144</sup> Mack Smith, *Modern Italy*, 235, 257; Di Scala, *From Revolution to Republic*, 194-198

that Italy, according to the stipulations of the [Triple] Alliance treaty, is not obligated at this time to take up arms in support of those allies because their war is an offensive one; not defensive. Italy, therefore, will remain neutral.”<sup>145</sup> According to a report out of Paris five days later, Germany’s widening of the war through its aggression against Belgium, France, and Great Britain had only strengthened Italy’s resolve “to remain neutral,” rather than side with Germany, which “had been the first to attack,” and in so doing had “betrayed all the nations [of Europe].”<sup>146</sup> Lest any confusion remained, the editors of *La Voce* took it upon themselves to publish on the front page a six-part itemized list entitled “The Reasons Why Italy Does Not Enter the Conflict,” which neatly enumerated Germany and Austria’s collective treachery and “neglect... of the conditions of the Triple Alliance.”<sup>147</sup>

The stance of the Italian government, then, with its carefully parsed discourse of neutrality, appeared to provide an official vocabulary for *La Voce del Popolo*. Of course, the reality of Italy’s neutrality vis-à-vis the war was not as straightforward as the state’s diplomatic rhetoric indicated. The Italian state’s published neutrality existed in an uneasy and complicated tension with a strong, vocal pro-war sentiment. Those that opposed entry into the war, the so-called “neutralists,” initially comprised a significant majority of both political and public opinion. Among them were Italy’s socialists and pacifists, as well as most of the democratic left (including Giolitti). Comprising the core of the interventionist movement were the conservatives and nationalists that had recently tasted the glory of the Italo-Turkish War. Around this nationalist core gathered sundry other political groups whose only real association with one another was a desire to go to war: Futurists, industrialists, and some revolutionary socialists. Hanging in the balance between these poles was what Spencer Di Scala has called “the liberal right;” and it was to this group of undecideds that Prime Minister Salandra and much of his cabinet belonged.<sup>148</sup>

Further complicating matters was the fact that Salandra was having difficulty stabilizing support for his government. He had assumed office in March, only after Giolitti voluntarily

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<sup>145</sup> “L’Italia neutrale,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 8, 1914.

<sup>146</sup> “L’Italia resiste alla sfida del Kaiser e rimane neutrale,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 8, 1914.

<sup>147</sup> “Le ragioni per cui l’Italia non entra nel conflitto,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 8, 1914.

<sup>148</sup> Row, “Italy in the International System,” 90-94; Di Scala, *From Revolution to Republic*, 197-201; Baldoli, *History of Italy*, 233-235, 239-244; Paoletti, *Military History*, 136-138; Forsyth, *Crisis of Liberal Italy*, 63-65.

resigned in an effort to protect his own popularity. And, although Salandra had formed his government with Giolitti's tacit approval, he was something of a conservative and had been a frequent opponent of his predecessor's policies. He therefore found it difficult to establish significant parliamentary backing in the months following his election. The debate over Italy's neutrality did not ameliorate the situation. The fact that Giolitti, Italy's most recognizable political figure, openly interjected himself into the debate only exacerbated the situation and further amplified Salandra's shortcomings as a political unifier. In sum, the debate over Italy's neutrality disregarded traditional political ties and made strange bedfellows of usual enemies—all within a nation that had little reason to rally around Salandra's recently coalesced government.<sup>149</sup>

The domestic uncertainty about Italy's position emerged immediately in the pages of *La Voce del Popolo*, in large part because of the editors' desire to reinforce, as they had done in the war with Turkey, the notion that the Italian government's stance on the war held direct and significant consequences for the emigrants living in Cleveland, Ohio. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, at the request of the local royal consular agent, Dr. Nicola Cerri, *La Voce* reproduced two communiqués from the Royal Embassy of Italy in Washington D.C. that spoke directly to Italy's emigrants. The first affirmed Italy's neutrality and cautioned Italian expatriates in the U.S. that, "the citizens and subjects of the Kingdom [of Italy] are obligated to observe the duties of neutrality according to applicable laws and in accordance with the principle of international law."<sup>150</sup> The second communiqué, by contrast, was a "Call to Arms." Although the Italian embassy had requested that it be published principally to inform Italian males living overseas that, "the presentation of those recalled that are abroad with regular clearance of the military authorities remains suspended for the time being," the entirety of the notice clearly indicated that Italy had begun preparing to mobilize its army.<sup>151</sup>

This sort of equivocation between peace and war on the part of the Italian state allowed the editors of *La Voce* the opportunity to subtly disclose their hope for Italy's entrance into the

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<sup>149</sup> Adrian Lyttelton, "Politics and Society, 1870-1915," in *Oxford History of Italy*, ed. George Holmes, 261-263; Salomone, *Italy in the Giolittian Era*, 27-29, 152; Forsyth, *Crisis of Liberal Italy*, 60-68; Di Scala, *From Revolution to Republic*, 197-201; Mack Smith, *Modern Italy*, 255-258; Baldoli, *History of Italy*, 234, 239-244.

<sup>150</sup> "Neutralità dell'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 15, 1914.

<sup>151</sup> "Chiamata alle armi," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 15, 1914.

conflict without overtly contradicting the government's official stance. In the early weeks of the war, the editors did not hesitate to print either reports that spoke of "a war fever [that] seems to have overrun the entire country," or bulletins that speculated on Italy's prospective entry into the war on one side or the other.<sup>152</sup> Additionally, the editors seized every chance to emphasize Italy's preparedness for entry, even as they repeated the official doctrine of neutrality. When, in September 1914, Salandra responded to the rampant speculation in the Italian press by issuing a declaration that reaffirmed Italy's neutrality, *La Voce*'s editors reproduced it only in abridged form, preferring instead to emphasize Italy's status as a desired ally by pointing out that "the government has refused all the offers of the belligerent nations for Italian cooperation."<sup>153</sup> To this they added that at "the moment in which Italian interests were seen to be threatened," the "valiant Italian army, with all of its force, [would] enter into the field to exercise a decisive action in Europe."<sup>154</sup> The nation of Italy not only controlled its own fate, but also the fate of the continent: "Italy's intervention in the conflict constitutes a decisive factor in the European situation."<sup>155</sup>

The editors grew a little bolder as a result of the ministerial changes that occurred when Salandra reshaped his government in November 1914 with the appointments of General Vittorio Zupelli as Minister of War in October and Baron Sidney Sonnino as Foreign Minister. Zupelli, a rising star, had made his name in the conquest of Derna in Cyrenaica only a few years earlier, and, according to a report from Rome, his nomination as Minister of War, "signified that the government is perfectly agreed with Chief of Staff [Luigi] Cadorna," that the army should be, "in full arms and completely prepared in any event."<sup>156</sup> *La Voce* latched on to this reimagining of Italy's neutrality. Less than a month after the overhaul of the ministerial cabinet, the editors ran a

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<sup>152</sup> "Fervori bellici nelle città d'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 15, 1914; "L'Italia si unirà colla entente [sic]," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 15, 1914; "L'azione italiana ed inglese," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 22, 1914.

<sup>153</sup> "Perché l'Italia non entra nel conflitto," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 5, 1914.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> "L'Italia neutrale," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 8, 1914; "L'esercito italiano è pronto," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 22, 1914. This is almost comical in contrast to the reality of the situation, which was that neither side thought all that much of the Italian army, and only feared that it would have to divert troops to a new front, should Italy join the opposite side; see Baldoli, *History of Italy*, 234-235, and Row, "Italy in the International System," 90-98.

<sup>156</sup> "Il significato della nomina e la preparazione dell'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 17, 1914; "La crisi ministeriale in Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 7, 1914.



front-page article declaiming, “Our Armed Neutrality.”<sup>157</sup> When the Italian parliament convened at the beginning of December, Salandra delivered an address to the assembly in order to reaffirm that, “our neutrality is not inert, but powerfully armed, and we are ready for every eventuality.”<sup>158</sup> In contrast to their abridgment of Salandra’s September statement, *La Voce*’s editors published this speech in full on the front page, only editorializing Salandra’s prose to point out the enthusiastic response of the assembly: “Greatest applause, and cries of ‘Viva L’Italia!’.”<sup>159</sup>

The appointment of a new Foreign Minister, though less heralded in Cleveland’s newspaper, proved more consequential. Although a war hero like Zupelli made for good press, Sonnino’s succession of the now-deceased San Giuliano presaged an actual shift in Italian diplomacy. Unlike his predecessor, Sonnino had been an advocate for Italy’s entry from the first, believing participation in the war to be Italy’s best course to boosting its national prestige. He had initially advocated entry in support of the Triple Alliance, but as the expectations of a quick war went unfulfilled, and the conflict exposed the instability and military ineptitude of the Austrian empire, he retreated from this position. By the time he received his appointment as foreign minister, Sonnino held only that Italy should take whatever course proved to be most advantageous. Salandra, in his turn, provided an official endorsement for the unfettered pursuit of Italy’s national interest by stating that diplomacy, as practiced by the new cabinet, would derive its ethos from the guiding principle of “sacred egoism.”<sup>160</sup>

Moreover, the prime minister and foreign minister were agreed on what would constitute the greatest boost to Italy’s status as a Great Power—the acquisition of territory. And in choosing this path, Salandra and Sonnino were entering into the same spirit of nation-building that had possessed Francesco Crispi, and which had driven a reluctant Giolitti into war with Turkey. As a force of Italian politics, this spirit had its origins in the desire of *Risorgimento* nationalists to create an integral nation-state—that is, a land—for the Italian people. Following unification, this preoccupation with land had been adapted to serve the purposes of those politicians that, like

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<sup>157</sup> “*La nostra neutralità armata*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 21, 1914.

<sup>158</sup> “*Le dichiarazioni di Salandra alla Camera*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 12, 1914.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*; Paoletti, *Military History*, 133-35.

<sup>160</sup> Lyttleton, “Politics and Society,” 261-63; Mack Smith, *Modern Italy*, 259; Salomone, *Italy in the Giolittian Era* 27-30; Di Scala, *From Revolution to Republic*, 200. Salandra first uttered the phrase “sacred egoism,” as a reference to his government’s diplomatic policy in a speech given in October 1914.

Crispi, were bent on fashioning Italy into a European power through the acquisition of an empire. Now, in the debate over Italy's entry into the war, it had come to the forefront again, this time as part of the nationalist politics of Greater Italy.<sup>161</sup>

### ***L'Italia Irredenta***

The territories that Italy's leaders most desired to gain were the *terre irredente*, the "unredeemed lands," all of which were currently under Austrian control. These *irredente*—the regions of the Trentino and South Tyrol, the cities of Trieste and Gorizia, and the coastal regions of Istria and Dalmatia across the Adriatic Sea—had for some time been the object of both political desire and popular longing. In practical terms, the acquisitions of Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, and Dalmatia would cement Italian control of the Adriatic, which would have been an economic, as much as a political boon. Likewise, the integration of South Tyrol and the Trentino into the Italian state would solidify Italy's power south of the Alps. However, to Italian nationalists, whose intellectual roots were buried in the soil of the *Risorgimento*, the significance of each of these cities and regions as *irredenta* transcended whatever other importance they might have had.

The idea of the *terre irredente* was itself a corollary of Italy's unification, for it proceeded from the idea that the creation of an Italian nation-state was the natural and reasonable expression of *italianità*. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, with the geopolitical entity of Italy a reality, it became popular to use the word "*irredenta*" (literally, "unredeemed") in reference to those lands outside the geographic bounds of Italy that were inhabited—at least in part—by Italian-speaking peoples, or persons of Italian descent. As an identifier, the term "*irredenta*" reflected these contextual origins in two important ways. First, its use indicated a belief that the work of unification was as yet incomplete, awaiting the "redemption" of the *irredente* to the *patria*. Second, it reflected the *Risorgimento*-like tendency to conflate the Italian land and the Italian people. That is, even though those Italians that made the cause of reclaiming the unredeemed lands a central piece of their politics ("irredentists") used the human ties of blood, language, and common history to justify Italy's right to the land—especially the Trentino,

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<sup>161</sup> Wong, *Race and the Nation*, 80-85; Finaldi, *Italian National Identity*, 251-61; Cinel, *National Integration*, 85-89; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 3-9, 31-42, 165-168,

Trieste, and Istria—both the people and the land were *irredenti*. They could only be redeemed together.<sup>162</sup>

Furthermore, irredentism had proven instrumental in the construction of the notion of Greater Italy. The first irredentists had been limited primarily to those ethnically Italian groups that lived in the *terre irredente*, as well as a small quotient of idealistic nationalists. However, as the mass emigration of its citizens forced the Italian state to reimagine its official program of nationalism so as to accommodate those departures, irredentism's emphasis on the links of blood, language, and heritage across national boundaries, coupled with its ideological ties to unification, made it an ideal model for adaptation. This elevated the credibility of the irredentist cause and bought it a place of prominence in the national consciousness, which, in turn, broadened its base of support. For those that subscribed to the idea of Greater Italy—nationalists and some of the liberal right—the fate of the unredeemed territories became as important to the national welfare as the acquisition of colonial territories overseas and the maintenance of ties with emigrant colonies abroad.<sup>163</sup>

After the war began in 1914, the irredentist cause, having been thus adopted by the nationalists and incorporated into the fiber of Greater Italy, ended up at the heart of the interventionist movement. Italy did not, of course, have to enter the war to recover the *terre irredente*. There were a handful of neutralists, including Giolitti, who suggested the possibility of extorting the territories from Austria as a price for Italy's continued neutrality. However, irredentism, as a result of its origins in the myth of *Risorgimento*, retained a historically-informed distrust of Austria, who had been the primary antagonist in the narrative of Italian unification. The fact that Austria was, in some form, the ruling authority in each of the *terre irredente* only reinforced this antipathy. Many nationalists, fearing that a failure to enter the war entirely would expose Italy's claims of being a European power as fraudulent, seized on the inviting prospect of open conflict with an old nemesis. With Salandra's open acknowledgement

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<sup>162</sup> Hedva Ben-Israel, "Irredentism: Nationalism Reexamined," in *Irredentism and International Politics*, ed. Naomi Chazan (London: Adamantine Press Limited, 1991), 24-25; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 57-59, 62-66; Di Scala, *From Revolution to Republic*, 136.

<sup>163</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 57-59, 62-66.

in late 1914 of the Italian government's desire to use the war to benefit the *patria*, nationalists became ever more vocal in propounding Italy's claims to the *terre irredente*.<sup>164</sup>

### **Irredentism and Interventionism in *La Voce del Popolo***

As their coverage of the war in Libya has already established, Fernando and Olindo Melaragno deemed national welfare of the Italian state to be of critical importance. They also considered themselves and their *connazionali* in Cleveland to be a thriving and vital part of Greater Italy that connected them not only with other Italians abroad, but also with the home nation. That is, they considered the fate of all the Italians of Greater Italy to be intimately tied up in the fortunes of the *patria*, for either good or ill. Moreover, as educated businessmen running their own newspaper, *i cugini* Melaragno fit squarely into the politically-active and intellectually-inspired middle class that historians have argued provided the backbone of the interventionist movement in Italy. It is therefore no surprise that, as the pro-war press in the home nation began to agitate for Italy to enter the war in order to claim the unredeemed lands, *La Voce del Popolo* also became an advocate for the justice of the irredentist cause.<sup>165</sup>

On the heels of Salandra's December address to the assembled parliament, the editorial staff of *La Voce* published an article describing the Austrian oppression of the people of Trieste. The principal complaint against the Austrians was their forced conscription of the men of Trieste, which the report interpreted as a calculated attempt to suppress any feelings of Italian patriotism among the people of the city. In the face of this mistreatment, however, "Trieste has given... another of the audacious affirmations of their *italianità* that have driven the Austrian police that oppress the city quite mad."<sup>166</sup> The report then went on to laud the daring exploits of some of Trieste's Italian patriots, who, in the span of three nights, had possessed the temerity to hoist "the tricolor flag" of Italy, first over the Muggia pier in the city's harbor, and then above the bell tower of the cathedral in Trieste. On both occasions, "the *Triestini* had the sweet surprise of being greeted by the flag of the *Patria*... symbol of so many hopes and so many sacrifices."<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Di Scala, *From Revolution to Republic*, 198-201; Baldoli, *History of Italy*, 230-236, 239-244; Salomone, *Italy in the Giolittian Era*, 152; Row, "Italy in the International System, 90-94; Lyttelton, "Politics and Society," 261-63.

<sup>165</sup> Baldoli, *History of Italy* 235, 239-240; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, xiv, 140-145.

<sup>166</sup> "La bandiera italiana a Trieste – Le vendette della polizia Austriaca," December 26, 1914.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

“Thus does Trieste respond,” the report declared, “to the resumption of the anti-Italian persecutions to which the [Austrian] police have given themselves.”<sup>168</sup>

The editors also reinforced the connection between Cleveland’s emigrants and the people of the *irredente* as *connazionali* by publishing irredentist articles penned by Italians living in the United States. In the spring of 1915, Dr. Niccola Gigliotti, a physician, lawyer, former newspaper editor, amateur historian, noted “*irredentista*”, and frequent contributor to *La Voce* who lived in Erie, Pennsylvania, published a lengthy column that provided a historical and ideological argument for the recovery of the *irredenta*.<sup>169</sup> Writing with the title, “The Supreme Duty,” Dr. Gigliotti decried the current political division over the question of going to war to win back the *irredente* by setting it within a long history of Italian disunity, rife with Guelphs and Ghibellines, Machiavellis, Dantes, and Borgias. Gigliotti then punctuated this point by invoking the words of Massimo D’Azeglio, inquiring of his readers, “Does it seem to you that Italians are made? Or are they not divided into groups and regions, into small and large parties?... Does it not sometimes seem that the Italian soul, cohesion, and spiritual unity are still only things of poetic license?” In the place of these unseemly divisions, he argued, the cause of the *patria* must take precedence: “In order to serve the country... one must will oneself to be willing to sacrifice and renounce one’s particular benefit for that of the public; to have fraternal sympathy, mutual tolerance, and reciprocal compliance.” In a further invocation of the spirit of *Risorgimento*, Gigliotti then asserted that the supreme duty of all Italians who “love with a profound, immutable, respectful love that magnificent mother that is Italy” was, at the current hour, to continue “the holy crusade” against Austria. Faced with the task of liberating the *irredenta*, Gigliotti turned again to the history of unification and quoted Giuseppe Mazzini: ““The *patria* is not territory: the territory is only the base. The *patria* is the idea that stands on that. It is the thought of love, the sense of communion, which tightens into one all the sons of that territory.”” Since, Gigliotti reasoned, the *irredenta* were already tied to the *patria* in every sense but the

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> “Le mene Austro-Tedesche e ‘La Voce del Popolo’,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 17, 1915; John Miller, *A twentieth-century history of Erie County, Pennsylvania: A narrative account of its Historic Progress, its People, and its Principal Interests*, vol. 2 (Chiacgo: Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), 553-555.

most elementary—that of being a part of the Italian nation-state—their redemption was all the more needful.<sup>170</sup>

Another prominent voice in the pages of *La Voce* during the early months of 1915 was Signor Antonio Amicarelli of Providence, Rhode Island (where Fernando Melaragno had lived for several years and begun a successful cigar-making business that remained under family management). Over the span of several pithy editorials, Amicarelli's reasoning clearly reflected the intertwining of the irredentist cause with the interventionist platform. Although always quick to praise Italy's decision to withhold support from Germany and Austria, Amicarelli argued vehemently against the viability of continued neutrality: "Will it be possible to keep ourselves neutral until the resolution of this immense conflict," he queried rhetorically, "And would that be advantageous for Italy? Unfortunately, one must say, 'No.' Italy must reunite the Trentino and Istria, Trent and Trieste, to the *madre patria*, and must guarantee her political and commercial interests in the Adriatic and elsewhere."<sup>171</sup>

Amicarelli also openly attacked Giolitti's publicized preference for attempting to acquire the *irredente* from Austria through negotiations rather than combat, suggesting that the former prime minister was guided in his politics by his friendliness with certain German and Austrian diplomats, rather than by the national interest.<sup>172</sup> Giolitti and his confederates, Amicarelli argued, were far too trusting of a country that had always been an enemy, even under the Triple Alliance: "Why, today, has Austria become so compliant... when, even allied, it has never ceased to mistreat in every way the Italians of the [Austro-Hungarian] Empire, and has never able to repress its ill-concealed hatred against Italy?"<sup>173</sup> In light of this history, he continued, it would be folly to believe that any agreement regarding the *irredente* would be honored if Germany and Austria won the war; and if the Entente were victorious, why should they honor the territorial agreements of the defeated nations?<sup>174</sup> Amicarelli was convinced that, in order for Italy "to see...

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<sup>170</sup> Dr. Nicola Gigliotti, "*Il dovere supremo*," *La Voce del Popolo*, April 3, 1915. The original source of Mazzini's words is not given and is unknown.

<sup>171</sup> Antonio Amicarelli, "*La guerra europea e il dovere dell'Italia*," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 13, 1915.

<sup>172</sup> Giolitti had published this preference in a January 24, 1915 issue of the Roman *Tribuna* after intensive negotiations between Germany, Austria, and Italy.

<sup>173</sup> Antonio Amicarelli, "*Quel che si sa e quel che non si sa (continuazione del numero precedente)*," *La Voce del Popolo*, April 10, 1915.

<sup>174</sup> Antonio Amicarelli, "*Quel che si sa e quel che non si sa*," *La Voce del Popolo*, April 3, 1915; Amicarelli, "*Quel che si sa e quel che non si sa (continuazione del numero precedente)*," *La Voce del Popolo*, April 10, 1915

its just aspirations realized and take its deserved place in the concert of great powers,” it had to enter the war.<sup>175</sup> “Italy will obtain everything that should and that must form her future well-being and her future greatness,” he asserted, “but only by intervening with force.”<sup>176</sup>

When the Italian parliament voted on May 20<sup>th</sup> to go to war in the side of the Entente, Amicarelli was ecstatic. He jubilantly hailed, “[t]he hour of the *Patria*,” praising Salandra as “a man of proven character and incorruptible conscience,” and lauding Sonnino’s “proud, uncompromising spirit.”<sup>177</sup> The fact that Italy declared war only on Austria, and not Germany or any of their other allies, indicated that irredentism had been the dominant motivating factor in the eventual decision to go to war. In recognition of this, *La Voce*’s editors wrote that they eagerly anticipated, “the success of our armies who will ransom the Italian *irredenti* that await liberation.”<sup>178</sup>

### “Our War of Redemption”

With the official declaration of war against Austria the editors of *La Voce del Popolo* were suddenly at pains to interpret the war in view of those things that had motivated Italy’s entry. The most apparent, and abrupt change took place in the headlines to identify news of the war. Within the span of a week, “*La Guerra Europea*,” which had been the messy consequence of unrestrained German and Austrian aggression, became “*La Nostra Guerra*,” a sacrificial war fought for the reclamation of the *terre irredente*.<sup>179</sup> The editors celebrated Italy’s early military successes, with front-page headlines announcing that “[t]he Italian troops are advancing toward the complete unification of the *patria*,” and that, “[t]he dream of [all] Italians is coming true: our army is conquering the unredeemed lands.”<sup>180</sup> As coverage of war continued over the months in

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<sup>175</sup> Amicarelli, “*Quel che si sa e quell che non si sa*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 3, 1915

<sup>176</sup> Amicarelli, “*La guerra europea e il dovere dell’Italia*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 13, 1915.

<sup>177</sup> Antonio Amicarelli, “*L’ora della patria*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, May 22, 1915.

<sup>178</sup> “*L’Italia decide per la guerra*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, May 22, 1915.

<sup>179</sup> “*La grande guerra europea*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 15, 1914; “*La guerra europea*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 7, 1914; “*Notizie della guerra in Europa*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, May 8, 1915; “*La nostra guerra di redenzione*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, June 25, 1915; “*La nostra guerra di redenzione*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 3, 1915; “*La nostra guerra*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 10, 1915. Following mid-July, front page news reports permanently identified the war as either “*la nostra guerra*” or “*la guerra*.”

<sup>180</sup> “*L’Italia è entrata nel conflitto: La dichiarazione di guerra all’Austria; Le armi italiane verso le terre irredente*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, May 29, 1915; “*I sogni degli Italiani va realizzandosi: il nostro esercito conquista*

*La Voce*, news of the victories of the troops far outweighed any defeats. In January of 1916, for example, the editors claimed that, “Italy is the only nation among the belligerents,” to not have suffered a single demoralizing setback; the advance against Austria on the front was slow, readers were informed, only because of circumstantial adversity—namely “the conditions of the terrain, the formidable fortifications, and the harsh season.”<sup>181</sup>

More importantly, the component pieces of irredentism—the desire to incorporate the *terre irredente* into unified Italy, and the hostility toward Austria—provided the editors with an ideological paradigm that they willingly used in order to provide justification for Italy’s redemptive war. In so doing, they employed several intertwined narrative themes derived from irredentism. The most persistent theme of justification hinged on substantiating the *italianità*—both historical and current—of the inhabitants of the unredeemed lands. An article published on the Trentino asserted that, “our *connazionali* in the Trentino... [form] a nucleus purely, entirely Italian.”<sup>182</sup> Other articles asserted Italy’s historical right to the region, arguing that it was “nationally close-knit and *italianamente* united, in spirit and historical traditions, to Rome.”<sup>183</sup> Historical allusions such as this proved particularly important in the editors’ attempts to substantiate Italy’s claims to those of the *terre irredente* in which the ethnic Italian population comprised only a minority among a significantly larger Slavic majority—namely, Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, and Dalmatia. An article written on the “*italianità* and glories” of the *irredente* stated that “a thousand monuments of ancient Roman civilization remain in those lands,” as markers of their heritage.<sup>184</sup> A lengthy history of Trieste, written to emphasize its Italian past, attributed Austria’s possession of the city and surrounding region to “the sorrowful disagreements, the sad jealousies, and the subsequent fights between the Italian cities” in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>185</sup> Now that Italy had put such things to rest in the *Risorgimento*, it ought to once again take back its rightful control of Trieste and all the other *irredente*.

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*le terre irredente*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, June 2, 1915; “*Le truppe italiane si avanzano verso la completa unificazione della patria*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, June 9, 1915.

<sup>181</sup> “*Considerazioni sull’anno che muore*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 1, 1916.

<sup>182</sup> “*Gli italiani nel Trentino*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 25, 1916.

<sup>183</sup> “*Il Trentino*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 3, 1915; “*Italianità e glorie di Trieste e Trentino*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 24, 1915; “*Trento e Trieste*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 24, 1915.

<sup>184</sup> “*Italianità e glorie di Trieste e Trentino*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 24, 1915.

<sup>185</sup> “*Perché Trieste è in mano dell’Austria*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 23, 1915.



Much as they had done to the Turks in their coverage of the Libyan conflict, the editors of *La Voce* sought also to reinforce Italy's claims to the *terre irredente* through an entirely unfavorable portrayal of Austria. The tropes of Austrian cruelty and barbarism flowed seamlessly from pre-entry interventionism to post-entry propaganda.<sup>186</sup> This enmity also had a recent history in the *Risorgimento* that *La Voce*'s editors took particular care to revisit, asserting that "Italians must remember" the injustices suffered at the hands of Austria during Italy's struggle for independence from foreign governance.<sup>187</sup> The readers of *La Voce* were reminded especially of the longstanding Austrian repression of Lombardy and Veneto prior to Italian unification. "The monstrous killing of an entire family" in the Lomellina region of Lombardy was only one of a "long list of infamies committed by the Austrians" in their march against the armies of Piedmont in the summer of 1859.<sup>188</sup> And, as the Italian army continued to fight in the Trentino in 1916, *La Voce*'s editors recounted the 1848 massacre of the defenders of Castelnuovo, just outside of Verona, which was at that moment less than fifty kilometers south of the Italian front lines.<sup>189</sup>

However, despite the inhumanity of these acts, Austria's greatest crime was still, as it had been for centuries, that it was the opponent of "liberty and independence" in Europe.<sup>190</sup> *La Voce*'s editors derided the Austrian empire and the house of Habsburgs as being relics of the past, asserting that, "while the world progresses, while around her everything is changed and renewed, [Austria] still uses ideas, systems, and methods of the past."<sup>191</sup> After all, the empire was nothing more than a collection of ethnic groups, who, as a result of having been subsumed by Austria, were prevented from building their own nation-states, as Italy had managed to do. In choosing to fight to recover the *terre irredente*, Italy was yet again setting an example for "the many ethnic groups oppressed" within the confines of Austria's weakening empire.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> A[ntonio] A[micarelli], "L'eterno barbaro," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 15, 1915; "La guerra Italo-Austriaca," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 29, 1915; "I nuovi barbari," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 28, 1915; "La ferocia austriaca durante la evacuazione di Rovereto," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 25, 1915. It should also be mentioned, of course, that Austria and Germany's decision to ally with the Turks did little to curry favor with the Italian press.

<sup>187</sup> "Gli austriaci in Lomellina nel 1859," *La Voce del Popolo*, April 8, 1916.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> "La ferocia austriaca su Castelnuovo Veronese," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 15, 1916.

<sup>190</sup> "L'Austria e la guerra," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 15, 1915.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.; "La nemesi degli Asburgo," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 24, 1915.

<sup>192</sup> "Rumenia e Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 12, 1915; "Trento e Trieste," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 24, 1915; "Ricordi storici: gli 'bolghari' e gli 'ungheri'," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 4, 1915; "Le finanze di Trieste," *La*

Of course, in order for Italy to be the guiding example to those ethnic nations straining under the yoke of Austrian rule, Italy's cause and the actions of her troops had to be above reproach. In their efforts to portray the justice and nobility of Italy's war for the *patria*, the editors periodically published reflections on the events and course of the war. Vittorio Ricci, in December of 1915, penned a lengthy justification of Italy's desertion of the Triple Alliance for the Entente. Ricci argued that Germany and Austria, as demonstrated by their self-serving aggression in starting the war, had never been truly concerned with the welfare of their southern ally. Playing on the famous words that Charles Albert of Savoy had spoken in response to a lack of foreign support for the 1848 nationalist uprisings against Austria, "*L'Italia farà da se*" (literally, 'Italy will do it on its own'), Ricci stated, "Italy desires to—and must—observe with unparalleled loyalty, the terms of its alliances in their fullness; but it is, however the case... that Italy, 'must do it for itself.'"<sup>193</sup>

In other words, Italy had been driven to forsake the Triple Alliance because Germany and Austria had proven themselves opponents of the rights of any nations other than their own. Several times, the editors themselves authored retrospectives that centered on the despicable aggression of Austria, which, in seeking "the conquest of the world" and "the negation of every liberty," had "unleashed on the whole world that storm of blood, hatred, and destruction that... rages without a hint of subsiding."<sup>194</sup> *La Voce* also happily reported that the American author and poet Robert Herrick, in his text on the origins of the war, *The World Decision*, had conveyed the truth of Germany and Austria's "betrayal."<sup>195</sup> And, furthermore, that "Herrick concludes [by] asserting that Italy has, in this war, embraced the cause of civilization."<sup>196</sup> Finally, lest there be any doubt about the purity and justice of the Italian cause, the editors pointed to the sacrifices of Italy's troops, whose "noble Latin blood" was being shed in the name of the *patria*.<sup>197</sup>

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*Voce del Popolo*, October 16, 1915; "*Verso... l'inafferrabile!*" *La Voce del Popolo*, November 6, 1915; "*La realtà nei Balcani*," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 25, 1915.

<sup>193</sup> Vittorio Ricci, "Politica e guerra," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 18, 1915.

<sup>194</sup> "*Verso... l'inafferrabile!*" *La Voce del Popolo*, November 5, 1915; "*La Germania che si vedeva e quella che non si vedeva*," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 12, 1916; "*Nel secondo anniversario della guerra europea*," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 5, 1916.

<sup>195</sup> "*Le cause ideali della guerra d'Italia: lo studio di uno scrittore americano sulle cause e sui moventi dell'ingresso dell'Italia nel conflitto europeo*," *La Voce del Popolo*, February 26, 1916.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> "*Un'accanta battaglia gloriosamente vinta dagli italiani*," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 24, 1915; "*Sui passi della nostra avanzata*," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 16, 1915; "*Il Carso*," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 6, 1915; "*La*

## *La Nostra Guerra*

The fact that a handful of Italians running a newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio, could refer to Italy's attempt to acquire by force the Trentino, South Tyrol, Trieste, Gorizia, and portions of the Adriatic coastline as "our war," is an improbability that finds explanation only within the context of Greater Italy. However, within the context of the war against Austria, the notion of Greater Italy took on an aspect far more real and concrete than it had at any other time previously. For the Italian community in Cleveland, "Our War" became a literal, as well as an ideological, reality as a result of the Italian state's efforts to support the war by drawing upon the financial and physical resources of Greater Italy at an unprecedented rate.<sup>198</sup>

Beginning in May of 1915, the Italian state sought to capitalize on the status of their emigrants abroad as members of Greater Italy by recalling reservists to active duty, and paying for their passage home. This action was possible as a result of the legislation enacted in the early 1900s in order to strengthen the ties between the home nation and Italy's emigrants. The most pertinent law, passed in 1913, had not only made it possible for adults that had renounced their Italian citizenship—and regardless of the reason they had done so—to reclaim their status as citizens simply by returning to Italy, but had also asserted that all children born to Italian fathers abroad were likewise citizens. This meant that almost all Italian emigrant males, whether born in Italy or not, retained in principle a citizen's military obligation to the Italian state. Italy's legal recourse to enforcing this obligation was, however, tenuous. Despite the recent efforts to improve the network of official agencies overseas, as of 1915, the Italian government was forced to rely upon its Royal Consulates to mobilize the troops—and the consuls had neither been vested with the legal authority, nor given the proper resources to ensure that those male citizens recalled responded to their mobilization. Thus, while the appeal was intended to be, "a required mobilization," and not a call for volunteers, this piece of the war effort was, in effect, subject to the patriotism of the reservists of Greater Italy.<sup>199</sup>

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*guerra in Carnia*," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 27, 1915; "Gorizia," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 12, 1916; "Latin sangue gentile," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 26, 1916.

<sup>198</sup> Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 207-215; Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 140-141; Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 188-98.

<sup>199</sup> Cinel, *National Integration*, 96-108; Gabaccia, 136-139; Baldoli, *History of Italy*, 226-228; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 207-215. Bean, *Urban Colonists*, 188-198.

A reader of *La Voce del Popolo* would not have quickly inferred this, however. As part of the initial round of infantry mobilization following Italy's entry into the war, the paper's editors, in conjunction with Dr. Cerri, the consul in Cleveland, affirmed that "those recalled residents within the jurisdiction of this Consular District must present themselves at the Royal Consular Agency of Cleveland."<sup>200</sup> Several weeks later, as an addendum to a subsequent notice from the consulate, the editors reiterated that "[it] is required for those called to arms to return to Italy," and warned that those who failed to do so could face imprisonment, or be denied re-entry to Italy should they wish to return home as a civilian, either during or following the war.<sup>201</sup> Dr. Cerri likewise threatened those who failed to report to his office with the prospect of being tried *in absentia* for desertion.<sup>202</sup> As it turns out, however, these largely-idle threats were not necessary. The Italians of Cleveland responded quickly, as detailed in a mid-June article that described the scene at the Cleveland train station as "the first reserves returning home for the war, numbering [about] a hundred, departed from Cleveland."<sup>203</sup> The troops were bid farewell by "a crowd of relatives, friends, and acquaintances.... The crowd cheered wildly, spreading flowers, cigars and cigarettes, and cried several times, 'Viva l'Italia!'"<sup>204</sup> Following this first, and largest, mobilization of the infantry, the Italian government began to recall more specialized branches of the armed forces. Notices of these mobilizations, always published at the behest of the consulate, became commonplace in the succeeding months.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> "R.a. agenzia consolare d'Italia in Cleveland, O – Mobilitazione," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 5, 1915; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 207-215.

<sup>201</sup> "Avviso: Regia agenzia consolare d'Italia," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 31, 1915.

<sup>202</sup> "Regia agenzia consolare d'Italia – Avviso importante," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 18, 1915; "R.a. agenzia consolare d'Italia – Avviso importante," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 23, 1915.

<sup>203</sup> "Cronaca locale: La partenza dei riservisti," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 19, 1915.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> See, for example, "R.a. agenzia consolare – Mobilitazione regia marina," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 21, 1915; "R.a. agenzia consolare – Chiamata alle armi," *La Voce del Popolo*, September 4, 1915; "Regia agenzia consolare d'Italia: Mobilitazione avviso," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 16, 1915; "R.a. agenzia consolare d'Italia – Mobilitazione," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 22, 1916. These notices would continue for the duration of the war. The specific number of Italians that returned from Cleveland to fight for Italy is unknown. It can, however, be guessed at. Of the approximately six million Italians living overseas at the outbreak of the war in August, the commissariat of emigration paid for the return of just over three hundred thousand soldiers. One-third of these returned from the United States. That rate of return, when applied to the approximate number of Italians living in Cleveland in 1914 (15,000), suggests that between two and three hundred Italian men living in Cleveland were called up to active duty during the war. Given also that the largest group of reservists called up were infantrymen, this estimation makes sense in light of "one hundred" that departed from the Cleveland train station on June 16<sup>th</sup>. However, this is nothing more than an estimation, and would require substantive investigative research to prove. The

As they had done in the war with Turkey, the editors of *La Voce* sought to provide their readers with an understanding of the conditions under which the brave and patriotic soldiers of Italy fought for the cause of the *patria*. The news bulletins that covered the front page on a weekly basis provided a loose, but delayed, approximation of Italy's military movements. There were also a handful of informative articles that detailed the reality of trench warfare, both its harsh physical qualities and its psychological hazards.<sup>206</sup> The editors also printed letters from soldiers who had been recalled from Cleveland. Giovanni Tonti, previously of Berea, wrote to his brother Giovanni in the late August of 1915 of the Italian army's slow progress toward Gorizia, which he and his fellow soldiers then hoped to take soon in the name of "the most great and glorious Italy."<sup>207</sup> He also wrote of the interminable noise of artillery, either from his own lines or from the Austrians, that would often continue for the duration of a night. Vincenzo Zuccarelli, while in convalescence to recover from a wound, wrote to his godson in Cleveland, speaking also of the conditions on the front line, and of fierce and bloody close-quarters combat that took place at a moment's notice in the trenches.<sup>208</sup> Despite these miseries, however, it was consistently reported in the paper that the patriotism of the soldiers remained intact, even among those taken as prisoners of war.<sup>209</sup>

Readers were invited to enter into and share in the spirit of this resilient patriotism. Shortly after Italy's entry, Chief of Staff Cadorna created a "soldier's Decalogue"—a list of imperatives intended to guide and govern soldierly conduct while Italy was at war. It appeared in *La Voce* in August 1915, having been sent back from the front by Captain Arturo Bucolo. The first of these commands reminded troops that they were to dedicate their actions, "to the honor of the *patria*."<sup>210</sup> The subsequent items elaborated on the first by prescribing the correct course of action at the front lines, exhorting soldiers to bear the harsh conditions of war "with a serene spirit;" to rally one another to their standard and commanding officers during combat; and to safeguard at all times the security of Italy's military positions, even if it meant leaving wounded

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numbers used in this estimate are drawn from Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 207-215, Appendix, 235-231; and Tables A, B, and C in Veronesi, *Italian Americans*, 339-345.

<sup>206</sup> "Il nemico invincibile: La folla," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 3, 1915; "La moda e la guerra," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 22, 1916; "Il piede da trincea," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 27, 1916.

<sup>207</sup> "Le lettere dei nostri dal fronte," *La Voce del Popolo*, October 23, 1915.

<sup>208</sup> "Lettere dal fronte," *La Voce del Popolo*, December 25, 1915.

<sup>209</sup> "Altri prigionieri di guerra che gridano viva l'Italia!," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 17, 1915.

<sup>210</sup> "Il decalogo del soldato in guerra," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 21, 1915.

comrades where they lay. The strongest condemnations were directed at deserters, and, in contrast, the highest praise reserved for “[t]he wounded man who continues to fight [and] shows the invincible spirit and heart” of an Italian *soldato*.<sup>211</sup> Although significant in its own right for the glimpse that it provided readers into the life of their *fratelli* on the front lines, Cadorna’s decalogue also inspired the writing of a “Decalogue of War,” intended explicitly for the noncombatant citizens of Greater Italy. Published in *La Voce* in March 1916, its first commandment, like that of the soldier’s decalogue, asserted that “every Italian must think always that his country is at war... everyone must act, in every part of his life, in the way that can best benefit the *patria* and his brothers who are at arms.”<sup>212</sup> The remaining imperatives, rather than dictating proper military behavior in combat, urged readers that they, in conjunction with Italy’s military movements, must demonstrate their “moral fiber, patience, and the willingness and joy of suffering,” in order to emerge “in the light of victory... after we have attained our national aspirations.”<sup>213</sup>

To this end of rousing the noble character of Italy’s noncombatants, the editors of *La Voce* were among the prime instigators of Cleveland’s practical support of the war effort. When the community held funeral services at St. Anthony’s for those soldiers slain “in the present Italo-Austrian War,” *La Voce* reminded its readers that the most appropriate way to honor “the memory of those who shed blood and generously gave their lives for the greatness of the *patria*” was to offer their own sacrifices “on the altar of the *Patria*.”<sup>214</sup> By doing so, Cleveland’s Italians could also ensure that, “the Italian tricolor will soon flutter over Trieste and Trento, redeemed from bondage.”<sup>215</sup> Additionally, a column addressed to the Cleveland community in the July 24<sup>th</sup> issue lamented that, “[t]he Italians of Cleveland have thus far not responded to the appeal of the faraway *Patria* with the patriotic zeal necessary in this supreme moment of national affirmation.

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> “*Il decalogo di guerra*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 4, 1916. The authorship of this “decalogue” is unclear, as the newspaper introduced it only by saying that it was written by a political representative [or public servant] who had served for six months in the Italian military. His name, his position, his location (whether in Cleveland, Italy, or elsewhere), and his military service (whether during the war or prior to it) receive no explanation, and seem to have been of little importance in comparison to the emotional and psychological communion with the troops at the front that the text encouraged.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> “*Onoranze funebri per gli eroi caduti nella presente guerra Italo-Austriaca*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 11, 1915.

<sup>215</sup> “*Considerazioni sull’anno che muore*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 1, 1916.

This is not for lack of good will, but simply for that lack of spirit of organization which has always flawed our colony.”<sup>216</sup> In order to remedy this, the article continued, Dr. Cerri, in recognition of his status as the district consul, had called a meeting of prominent citizens (including Fernando Melaragno). Among the noted accomplishments of the assembly was the creation of four committees, each with a specific purpose: the first, headed by Dr. Biagio Sancetta, was for *La Croce Rossa Italiana*, “for the purpose of collecting funds to be allocated where the need is most urgent;” another “for the investigation of the needs of the families of the recalled soldiers;” a third to discuss the formation of similar action committees in the “colonies outside [Cleveland]”; and a fourth to discuss the best way to encourage fund-raising efforts through those local aid societies already in existence.<sup>217</sup>

The editors and the committees were as good as their word. Several weeks later, in mid-August, under a notice titled “*La Voce della Patria*,” the Cleveland Central Committee of the Italian Red Cross invited “all the members, [and] especially the presidents or representatives of [Cleveland’s] societies,” to a meeting in the basement of St. Anthony’s Church on Central Avenue.<sup>218</sup> Advertisements for the Red Cross, which had already appeared a few times since May in *La Voce*, became a weekly occurrence. Just as had been the case in the war with Turkey, these calls for support were accompanied at the appropriate moment by an impassioned editorial (often by Dr. Sancetta), or a list of the most generous donors and the size of their contributions.<sup>219</sup> Numerous musical concerts, theatrical performances, and other social events were held to benefit the Red Cross, as well. Most of these, like a performance of “*Aida*” by the San Carlo Grand Opera Company in November 1915, and a formal dance in early March of the following year, were sponsored in conjunction with various other local societies and clubs.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> “*Gli italiani di Cleveland*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 24, 1915.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> “*La Voce della patria*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 14, 1915.

<sup>219</sup> “*Per la croce rossa italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 3, 1915; “*Riassunto delle oblazioni*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 31, 1915; “*Avviso di soma importanza*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 7, 1915; “*croce rossa italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 28, 1915; “*Contribuzioni a beneficio della croce rossa italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 4, 1915; “*Pro croce rossa*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 11, 1915; and so on into the early months of 1916.

<sup>220</sup> “*La San Carlo Grand Opera Co. a Cleveland: la prima sera, lunedì 29 novembre, ‘Aida’; Serata a beneficio della Croce Rossa Italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 6, 1915; “*La famosa ‘San Carlo Grand Opera Co.’ darà un grande serata a beneficio della Croce Rossa Italiana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 13 1915; “*La rinomata ‘San Carlo Grand Opera Company’, per una settimana –il più grande evento della stagione; la prima*

Also through the Red Cross, the readers of *La Voce* were encouraged to provide for the necessities of their *connazionali* in the military. The conditions in the Southern Alps produced several appeals for wool, in almost any form—whether woven into socks, shirts, gloves, or taken from old petticoats and girdles<sup>221</sup> “We are certain,” the editors added at the end of one such notice, “that the Italians of Cleveland will respond willingly.”<sup>222</sup>

The families of the Italy’s soldiers, both in distant Italy and in Cleveland, also received special attention. The Red Cross would, at times, issue notices for donations intended specifically to provide for “the families of the defenders of the *patria* and our brothers wounded in the war.”<sup>223</sup> As part of an effort organized by the Italian General Relief Committee of New York City, in order to raise funds to provide food for “the families of our valorous brothers called to fight,” *La Voce* publicized “*La Grande Giornata Pro Patria*.” Italian emigrants in the U.S. could participate in this “day of sacrifice,” by pledging their earnings for the date of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1915 to be used by a local commission to purchase food for the wives and children of Italian troops in every region.<sup>224</sup> That winter, when the Italian government contracted with several French and Italian shipping companies to provide reduced fares to soldiers’ families seeking to return to Italy, *La Voce* cooperated with Dr. Cerri to not only advertise the fares, but also provide a list of the items necessary for travelers to undergo successful “repatriation” upon arrival back in Italy.<sup>225</sup>

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*serata a beneficio delle Croce Rossa Italiana,” La Voce del Popolo, November 20, 1915; “Lunedì 29 novembre, comincerà la stagione musicale al Colonial Theatre: La rinomata ‘San Carlo Grand Opera Co.’ darà otto opere tra le più note,” La Voce del Popolo, November 27, 1915; “La società fraternal per la Croce Rossa Italiana,” La Voce del Popolo, March 4, 1916; “Dopo il ballo della società fraterna,” La Voce del Popolo, March 11, 1916. See also for example: “Per la Croce Rossa Italiana,” La Voce del Popolo, August 21, 1915; “Grande fiera di beneficenza a favore della Croce Rossa Italiana,” La Voce del Popolo, May 27, 1916; “La serata artistica pro Croce Rossa,” La Voce del Popolo, July 15, 1916.*

<sup>221</sup> “Appello ai nostri connazionali,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 2, 1915; “Per la lana ai nostri soldati,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 26, 1916.

<sup>222</sup> “Per la lana ai nostri soldati,” *La Voce del Popolo*, August 26, 1916.

<sup>223</sup> “Soccorriamo le famiglie dei difensori della patria ed i fratelli feriti in guerra,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 4, 1915.

<sup>224</sup> “30 settembre: La grade giornata di sacrificio degli italiani degli Stati Uniti per la patria,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 31, 1915; “Soccorriamo le famiglie dei difensori della patria ed i fratelli feriti in guerra,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 4, 1915; “30 settembre: La grande giornata degli italiani degli Stati Uniti per la patria,” *La Voce del Popolo*, September 25, 1915.

<sup>225</sup> “R.a. agenzia consolare d’Italia: Rimpatrio famiglie richiamati,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 11, 1915; “Regia agenzia consolare d’Italia: Circolare,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 15, 1916.



For all these endeavors, the Italians of Cleveland were reminded that their sacrifices made in the service of the *patria* were proofs of the vitality of the Greater Italy to which they belonged. In late April 1916 the editors of *La Voce* published an article by the intellectual and scholar Angelo Flavio Guidi that described the mutually sustaining relationship of the *patria* to its colonies, both of emigration and of conquest.<sup>226</sup> Painting Greater Italy as a living botanical organism, with the *patria* at its heart, Guidi likened the colonies to “the mysterious seeds of [this] splendid and strong plant, carried by the wind to a lush land where they had taken root and prospered marvelously.” For decades, Guidi wrote, the *patria*, as an integral shared memory—“a vision and a dream”—had sustained its emigrants in their labors. The conquest of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica had demonstrated the spiritual and emotional strength of this connection, as Italy’s victories had been met with, “a quiver of pride and joy... from the distant colonies.” “And then,” Guidi continued, “came this war: the great, the last—our war,” and in its hour of need the *patria* had called out to “the other Italy overseas.” The response had demonstrated the devotion that Italy’s *connazionali*, the world over, had for their homeland: recalled soldiers returned to Italy, despite the fact that, “they were leaving their loved ones [and] their comforts, going against unknown, knowing that returning to Italy meant even death;” and those that did not return and remained abroad offered, in addition to their husbands and fathers, “[their] savings, produced by the sweat of blood, through unheard-of hardship.” “And this is Italy!” Guidi exulted, “the Italy, that like all strong peoples, finds its conscience alive and its soul fearless in the day of danger and trial.... And these are the Italians overseas: ...through their affectionate and steadfast sacrifices; through their sacrifices of love, of money, and of blood, they have given us... a greater and stronger *Patria*!” For Guidi, the response of Italians like those in Cleveland, Ohio, to the war to redeem the *irredente* had proven the reality and vitality of Greater Italy. The editors of *La Voce*, for their part, were obviously eager for these words of praise to reach their readers as the anniversary of Italy’s entry into the war approached.<sup>227</sup>

A few short months later, however, the tenor of the war changed. Salandra’s government finally collapsed in June, due to growing discontent over Italy’s ineffective campaigns against

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<sup>226</sup> A. F. Guidi would, interestingly, go on in later decades to publish several scholarly works on the historical relationship between the Italian people and the United States of America.

<sup>227</sup> Angelo Flavio Guidi, “*L’Altra Italia d’oltremare*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 22, 1916.

Austria. Salandra resigned as Prime Minister. His successor, Paolo Boselli, carried even less political clout than had Salandra, and, given the reasons for the latter's resignation, Boselli leaned heavily on his military advisors. At the prompting of Luigi Cadorna and others, Italy declared war on Germany at the end of August 1916, which had the desired effect of removing some of the attention from Italy's campaigns to recover the *irredente*. This decision had other ramifications, as well. Although *La Voce*'s coverage of the war had reflected some hostility toward the Germans, both as an ally of the enemy and as one of the nations responsible for starting the war, the primary focus of the war had been the fight against Austria to the glory of the *patria* and Greater Italy. The decision to go to war with Germany broadened the scope of the war for Italy—not only in reality, but also in the pages of Cleveland's newspaper. The reduction of emphasis on Italy's reclamation of the *terre irredente* effectively lessened its usefulness as a locus around which to rally the patriotism of the Cleveland community. Furthermore, the Italian government's choice to increase their country's engagement in the conflict also increased its reliance on its people—both at home and abroad—to support a war effort that, rather than achieving Italy's stated nationalist objectives in a timely manner, was growing larger and more expensive at the same time that it was losing its initial focus. Therefore, as the war dragged on, the tenor of *La Voce*'s coverage became less zealous in its patriotism, continuing to emphasize the duty of Cleveland's Italians to the *patria* even as the cause of redeeming the *irredente* and its benefit to the glories of Greater Italy began to receive less attention—at least until the end of the war, when it would briefly return to prominence as a result of the Paris Peace Conference and Treaty of Versailles.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Row, "Italy in the International System," 94-98; Mack Smith, *Modern Italy*, 271-275; Paul Corner, "Italy, 1915-1945: Politics and Society," in *Oxford History of Italy*, ed. George Holmes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 264-269.

## Epilogue

### From Citizens of Greater Italy to Italians of America

In November of 1918, the war finally ended. And, immediately on the heels of German and Austrian surrender, the editors of *La Voce del Popolo* returned to the subject of the *terre irredente*, and raised again the banner of Italian national unity. Although the editors had faithfully continued to follow the fortunes of Italy's troops and encourage their *connazionali* to support the home nation in the war, the ideological sentiment of patriotism—of the redemption of the unredeemed lands to the sacred *patria*—had been largely lost in the scale and ubiquity of what had become, by this time, a world war. With victory in hand, the editorial staff celebrated the return of the Trentino, Trieste, and many of the other, smaller *irredente* to Italy.<sup>229</sup>

There was, however, some trepidation evident in the paper, if one turned past the exultant front page. In late December, as delegates from the prominent nations prepared to attend the conference, an editorial on the upcoming “*congresso*” noted U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's publicized condemnation of “secret diplomacy,” like that which had led to Italy's negotiated entry alongside the Entente powers.<sup>230</sup> By way of response to Wilson's Fourteen Points, the editors asserted, in a reiteration of the interpretation given early on during the war, that Italy had always been a champion of liberty—and, moreover, that “[t]hanks to the principles that Italy has always proclaimed,” the *patria* would take its rightful place among the strongest independent nations of the post-war world.<sup>231</sup> When the Paris Peace Conference opened in January 1919, the Italian delegation, headed by Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (who had succeeded Boselli in October of 1917) and Foreign Minister Sonnino, quickly found its territorial ambitions unwelcome to Wilson, who sought to throw out the Treaty of London (or London

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<sup>229</sup> “*Trento e Trieste italiane*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 23, 1918; “*Per la patria nostra*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 30, 1918; “*Il patrimonio artistico del Trentino ed il dopo guerra*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 7, 1918; “*Cent'anni di lotta nazionale: Trieste sola a difesa della sua italianità 1866-1915*,” published in 3 parts, November 30, December 7, and December 14, 1918; “*Trento, Trieste, e la Germania*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, January 4, 1919.

<sup>230</sup> “*Il Congresso di Versailles*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 21, 1918; the editorial was printed again the following week under the same title, December 28, 1918.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

Pact, signed in 1915), in which Great Britain, France, and Russia had promised Italy the *irredente* in return for joining the war on the side of the Entente. The delegation was outraged—as were the editors of *La Voce del Popolo*.

At the heart of the problem lay the basis for Italy's claims to the *irredente*, particularly Istria and Dalmatia. Wilson's ideal of national self-determination demanded that the majority of the residents of those regions named in the Treaty of London be ethnically Italian in order for Italy to be justified in its assertions. Annexation for any other reason would be an infringement on the right of self-determination, and would therefore be tantamount to the sort of imperialism that Germany and Austria had exhibited in starting the war. Italian nationalists, of course, vehemently disagreed with this interpretation. In the spring and summer of 1919, the editors of *La Voce* published a series of editorials that refuted the "legend" of Italian imperialism, and reiterated Italy's right to the *terre irredente* on a historical basis, as well as that of the lives and blood of Italy's courageous troops sacrificed in the name of their redemption.<sup>232</sup> Nevertheless, in Paris, Wilson proved so intractable toward Orlando and Sonnino over Italy's desire to annex the strategically and economically valuable port city of Fiume (modern-day Rijeka) in Istria that the Italian delegates left the peace conference in April 1919 in a show of protest.<sup>233</sup> Rather than arousing sympathy for Italy's cause, either among the Paris delegates or at home in Italy, this maneuver proved fatal to Orlando's credibility, and he was replaced in June by the leftist Francesco Nitti.

Nitti was an economist by education, and he assumed office keenly aware of the toll that the war had taken on Italy's finances and economy. Recognizing the extent to which Italy would have to rebuild itself in the coming years, he was hesitant to press Italy's territorial claims for fear of alienating the other allied nations—particularly Great Britain and the U.S.—that could offer the most substantial financial aid. Despite having been an initial proponent of emigration as a means to resolving some of Italy's economic stresses, Nitti was a leftist with no meaningful or amicable ties to either the conservative or liberal right, or even to Giolitti and his political allies

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<sup>232</sup> "La leggenda sull'Italia: Il sacro 'egoismo' all'imperialismo," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 8, 1919; "Il diritto nazionale e politico dell'Italia nella Dalmazia," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 29, 1919; "Chi deve controllare l'Adriatico," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 3, 1919; "Lest we forget," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 3, 1919; "E se no, no," *La Voce del Popolo*, May 10, 1919.

<sup>233</sup> John Woodhouse, *Gabriele D'Annunzio: Defiant Archangel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 316.

on the liberal left. He therefore had very little attachment to the notion of Greater Italy, and was, as a result, willing to compromise with the other powers at the peace conference.<sup>234</sup> To this end, he immediately removed Sonnino as Foreign Minister and sent his replacement, Tommaso Tittoni, to Paris to negotiate.<sup>235</sup>

On September 10, 1919, Italy, along with its allies and Austria, signed the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which officially marked the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As part of the treaty, Italy acquired the Trentino and South Tyrol, as well as protectorate rights to Trieste, most of the Istrian peninsula, and some Dalmatian islands. Italy was, however, refused the coastal portions of Dalmatia and the city of Fiume. This angered Italian nationalists, who had, within the context of the Paris negotiations, attached their aspirations for a Greater Italy to the acquisition of these contested regions. This included the editors of *La Voce*, who, as part of their coverage of the Paris Peace Conference, had devoted a considerable amount of space and print to the matter. For example, in an early editorial that was not only published in *La Voce*, but also sent to the editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Olindo Melaragno had argued forcefully that a proper understanding of Italy's ambitions in the Adriatic, when directed by the belief that irredentism was an integral part of national unification, was entirely compatible with the principle of national self-determination if it were "carried to its logical conclusion."<sup>236</sup>

In addition to publishing their own views on the subject in the early months of 1919, the editorial staff had also reprinted numerous opinion pieces authored by some of the most prominent Italian nationalist journalists and intellectuals agitating for the acquisition of Fiume. Articles by Francesco Coppola, Alfredo Rocco, Edoardo Susmel, Carlo Scarfoglio, and Olindo

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<sup>234</sup> Nitti was very deliberate and public in his attempts to assuage tensions between the U.S. and Italy. In August of 1919, *La Voce* reprinted an interview given by Nitti to "Mr. Salvatore Cortese, correspondent of the Associated Press." Among other things, the prime minister asserted that, "There is no conflict of interest between [the U.S. and Italy]. We are today two democracies striving for a still further realization of the benefits of free governments;" and, "It was in the aim to perpetuate free institutions that Italy threw her all in. No country suffered more from the conflict or bore the sacrifice with greater will... Italy's aims are not imperialistic. She must defend her nationality. It is inherent in her; it is something that no power either on heaven or earth can take away." "The relations between Italy and America: Italy's aims are not imperialistic," *La Voce del Popolo*, August 16, 1919.

<sup>235</sup> Corner, "Italy, 1915-1945," 268; Row, "Italy in the International System," 101-104; Michael Ledeen, *D'Annunzio: The First Duce* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 15-16.

<sup>236</sup> Olindo Melaragno, Letter to the editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, "Adriatic 'Concessions,'" *La Voce del Popolo*, January 11, 1919; see also "Italy and the Jugo Slavs," *La Voce del Popolo*, January 25, 1919; and "La leggenda sull'Italia: Il sacro 'egoismo' all'imperialismo," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 8, 1919; "L'italianità di Fiume," *La Voce del Popolo*, March 8, 1919; "La volontà dell'Italia: In attesa delle decisioni supreme ed irrevocabili," *La Voce del Popolo*, June 21, 1919.

Malagodi appeared in *La Voce*—all of them asserting in some way Italy’s historical right to see Fiume and Dalmatia united with the *patria*.<sup>237</sup> The other chief argument taken up by the nationalists was that Fiume itself desired to be a part of the Italian state. Susmel, a member of the Italian National Council in Fiume, argued that Fiume, through the spontaneous creation of the Council, had already participated in a form of self-determination. “[T]he firm, steadfast will of the *fiumani*,” Susmel stated, was “to be citizens of Italy.”<sup>238</sup> *La Voce*’s editors were also quick to publish news reports that testified to the *italianità* of the citizens of Fiume. An April report out of Fiume claimed that *fiumani* had “many times repeated, clearly and firmly,” that they wanted the delegates in Paris to announce, “the pure and simple annexation to Italy in the name of the rights of nationality.”<sup>239</sup> Several weeks later, another bulletin reported that a crowd of the city’s inhabitants, upon being informed that the conference intended to make Fiume a free city-state, took up the chant of one of the members of the National Council: “Either Italy or death!”<sup>240</sup> And, in July, the editors published excerpts of a speech given by General Francesco Grazioli, the face of the Italian military presence in Fiume during the summer of 1919, in which the general testified to the desire of the city’s people to become part of the Italian nation-state.<sup>241</sup>

Therefore, Fiume’s exclusion from the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in September elicited a powerful and violent response from Italy’s nationalists. Two days after the signing of the treaty, the nationalist poet, journalist, and war hero Gabriele D’Annunzio, acting on several months’ of planning by a loosely-aggregated cluster of nationalist extremists, led an expeditionary force to Fiume and seized it in the name of the *patria*. This move received the open support of Italian nationalists, including the editors of *La Voce del Popolo*. They celebrated the taking of Fiume much as they had the opening invasion of Tripolitania and the first offensive against Austria, declaring that, by one means or another, “Italy will have Fiume!”<sup>242</sup> Dr. G. A.

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<sup>237</sup> Francesco Coppola and Alfredo Rocco, “Contro il diritto dell’Italia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 29, 1919; Edoardo Susmel, “L’italianità di Fiume,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 1, 1919; Carlo Scarfoglio, “Gli eredi dell’Austria,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 1, 1919; Olindo Malgodi, “Il controprogetto jugoslavo per Fiume,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 5, 1919.

<sup>238</sup> Susmel, “L’italianità di Fiume,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 1, 1919.

<sup>239</sup> “Fiume per l’annessione all’Italia,” *La Voce del Popolo*, April 15, 1919.

<sup>240</sup> “O Italia or morte: rispondono i fiumani a Wilson,” *La Voce del Popolo*, May 3, 1919.

<sup>241</sup> “La passione di Fiume: Con te Italia, contro tutto il mondo; Il discorso del Generale Grazioli,” *La Voce del Popolo*, July 12, 1919.

<sup>242</sup> “L’Italia avrà Fiume,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 4, 1919.

Barricelli, head of the Cleveland chapter of the Order of the Sons of Italy, began a fundraising initiative “for the heroes of Fiume,” with an open letter to the Cleveland community entitled, “Let us help D’Annunzio!”<sup>243</sup> By the end of January of the following the year, Cleveland’s Italians had responded by giving over \$1,700 to support the troops and citizens in Fiume.<sup>244</sup>

This outburst of nationalist fervor was short-lived, however. By mid-February 1920, the calls for monetary contributions had disappeared permanently. D’Annunzio’s exploits in Fiume—and, indeed, the discussion over Italy’s claims to the city and to the Dalmatian coast—were also gone from the front page. In their place, the editors published reports of Italy’s attempted post-war financial recovery, the legal implementation of prohibition by the U.S. government, and the upcoming U.S. political elections that would take place that fall.<sup>245</sup> When, in November, Italy surrendered its claims to Fiume and Dalmatia in return for official ownership of Trieste in the Treaty of Rapallo, thereby resolving the extended dispute over the Adriatic coast, it received far less attention than the election results. The fact that the Italian government, in order to honor the treaty, was forced to bombard a recalcitrant D’Annunzio out of Fiume was scarcely reported on.<sup>246</sup>

In a sense, D’Annunzio’s expedition to Fiume signalled the end of Greater Italy as a liberal political ideal. Nitti’s decision in 1919 to concentrate on domestic concerns as a means to building Italy from within, and to leave aside notions of a Greater Italy, had a lasting effect. It was a choice antithetical to Crispi’s original premise for the building of a Greater Italy, which had been that Italy could resolve many of its internal problems through the aggrandizement of the nation by acquiring and developing an empire. As has been demonstrated, the idea had

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<sup>243</sup> G.A. Barricelli, “*Aiutiamo D’Annunzio*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 11, 1919; “*Per gli eroi di Fiume: gli Italiani rispondono all’appello*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 18, 1919.

<sup>244</sup> “*Per gli eroi di Fiume*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 18, 1919; “*Per gli eroi di Fiume*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 1, 1919; “*Per gli eroi di Fiume*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 8, 1919; “*Per gli eroi di Fiume*,” December 6, 1919; “*Per gli eroi di Fiume*,” December 13, 1919; “*Per gli eroi di Fiume*,” January 10, 1920.

<sup>245</sup> See for example: “*Un bicchiere di vino!*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 14, 1920; “*Il proibizionismo e la produzione dell’uva secca negli Stati Uniti*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 29, 1920; “*Il prestito italiano in dollari*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, February 29, 1920; “*Il prestito italiano*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, March 20, 1920; “*La legge proibitiva*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, June 19, 1920; “*La convenzione democratico* [sic], *La Voce del Popolo*, July 10, 1920; “*Il dovere degli Italiani alle prossime elezioni*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, October 30, 1920; “*Dopo la vittoria repubblicana*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 6, 1920; “*Cose d’Italia*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, November 13, 1920.

<sup>246</sup> The only news given appears to have been two reports in which it was mentioned that D’Annunzio would be required to leave under the terms of the Treaty of Rapallo; see “*D’Annunzio e il trattato di Rapallo*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 11, 1920; “*La situazione politica in Italia*,” *La Voce del Popolo*, December 18, 1920.

always been championed primarily by Italian nationalists, who were perhaps more vocal than they were numerous. Although these nationalists, propagating their idea of Greater Italy, had managed to prod Giolitti into a war of conquest in Libya, and had also played a significant role in pushing Italy into war with Austria in 1915, Nitti's rejection of the idea at the height of the Paris Peace Conference diminished its political currency in the Italian political mainstream. Within the context of the post-war disagreements over Italy's claims to those *irredente*, the cause of Greater Italy was left to the more extreme nationalists, like D'Annunzio. This was due in part to the fact that the war had been, generally speaking, a success: by 1920, Italy had gained the Trentino, South Tyrol, and Trieste. In larger part, however, it was due to the fact that the war for the *irredente*—that is, a war waged in the name of Greater Italy—had plunged Italy into unprecedented financial and economic hardship, thereby undoing its initial Crispian premise. The pursuit of a Greater Italy through colonial conquest and the acquisition of the *irredente* had not saved Italy from its internal weaknesses.

It had, however, proven instrumental in allowing the Italian state to retain ties with its millions of emigrants. The efforts of the Italian state during the first two decades of the twentieth century indicate that, during that span of time, the notion of a Greater Italy was a political reality, and not simply a rhetorical device employed by idealistic politicians. The creation of the commissariat of emigration in 1901 laid the groundwork for the continued development and refinement of channels of connection between the *patria* and Italy's emigrant settlements, including the regulation of the process for sending remittances and the subsidization of emigrants' return voyages. Moreover, the enactment of legislation (particularly that of 1912 and '13) that clarified the legal status of Italy's emigrants vis-à-vis the home nation and enabled the retention—or reclamation—of Italian citizenship signifies that the state desired to maintain and develop its emigrants' identity as Italians, even as they lived and worked thousands of miles from the country of their birth.

The work of Olindo and Fernando Melaragno in Cleveland, Ohio, as evidenced in their newspaper, indicates that this call from the home nation found an echo among Italy's emigrants abroad. The Melaragno, seeing themselves and their fellow Italians in Cleveland as members of Greater Italy, sought to nurture in their readers an identity that elevated allegiance to the *patria* over and above the regional and local affiliations that they had brought with them across the



Atlantic. This is not to say that the notion of Greater Italy provided either the full or the original inspiration for Fernando and Olindo's self-appointed mission, which most likely lay in some combination of their own nationalist politics and the sort of aspirations to leadership that Philip Bean has identified in the Italian settlement of Utica during the same period. That is, the Melaragno, in addition to being staunch nationalists who desired to instill in their neighbors the same sense of pride in being Italian that they themselves felt, also found the unifying quality of a national identity particularly useful for the development of communal organizations, institutions, and societies. It was therefore doubly to their benefit to encourage their readers to consider themselves emigrated Italians whose distinguishing, yet common, characteristic was a connection with the *patria*, and, through that, to all fellow *connazionali* the world over.

It is therefore most accurate to say that Greater Italy, rather than being an inspiration to the Melaragno, provided the ready framework within which to accomplish their purpose. The Italo-Turkish War (1911-12) offered an opportunity to nurture in their readers a patriotic Italianess that not only emphasized devotion to the home nation, but also established a connection between Cleveland's Italians and the war in Libya. Through allegiance to the *patria*, the identity of the emigrant colony of Cleveland, Ohio, was linked to the fate of Italy's campaign to establish colonies of conquest in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The political debate that surrounded Italy's neutrality and eventual entry into the First World War afforded the Melaragno the chance to foster a similar sense of kinship between the Italians of Cleveland and their undredeemed *connazionali* in the *irredente*. This identity, though steeped in reverence for the *patria*, also encouraged a sense of shared history and blood, centered on the myth of the Risorgimento and Italian national unification. Following Italy's decision to go to war with Austria (May 1915), and for the fifteen months of conflict up to Italy's declaration of war on Germany (August 1916), *La Voce's* editors, aided by the home nation's calls to Greater Italy for support, sought to nurture in the Cleveland community a sense of ownership of the national struggle to redeem the *irredente* to the *patria*.

Of course, the thread tying the emigrant colony of Cleveland, the conquest colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and the *terre irredente* to one another—and all of them to the *patria*—was the notion of Greater Italy, which lost a great deal of its potency following D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume. When the idea of Greater Italy appeared again in use vis-à-

vis Italy's emigrant communities, it was no longer the product of liberal politics and policies, but had instead been adapted and revived by the Fascists under Mussolini.<sup>247</sup> Furthermore, as concerns the Italian community in Cleveland, there are intrinsic reasons that it becomes unproductive to speak of the formation of Italian national identity in the context of Greater Italy after 1920. Although a post-war spike in Italian migration to the United States in 1920 and 1921 seemed to suggest a return to pre-war levels, the U.S. government quickly took drastic steps to reduce the number of immigrants entering the country. The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924 effectively curtailed the movement of Italy's migrants to and from the U.S., rescripting this aspect of their agency and mobility. Fewer Italian-born emigrants arrived in the U.S., and those Italians residing in the U.S. became far more hesitant to leave, for fear that they could not return if they wished to. Stories like that of Olindo and Fernando Melaragno, involving multiple trips across the Atlantic to acquire education, build families, and make their fortunes became far less frequent.<sup>248</sup>

In addition to the lack of new arrivals in Cleveland, a generational shift was taking place. A "second generation" of Italians had come of age between 1910 and 1920 and now began to assert itself in the public life of the community. Some of them were younger immigrants who had arrived in Cleveland as young adults and were only now assuming prominent positions. The remainder of the *giovani italiani* of this transitional generation had been born in Italy and emigrated with their families at a very young age. Having lived the better part of their lives in the U.S., however, their emotional connection to the *patria* was far less substantial than that of their parents' generation.<sup>249</sup> Although they would retain an identity in their social, cultural, and religious customs, exhortations to nurture connections to a homeland of which they could recall little or nothing quite simply meant less to these Italians. The cultivation of a national identity predicated on devotion to the *patria* became less possible, even as the Italian state, hampered by

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<sup>247</sup> See Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 141-144; Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 230-231.

<sup>248</sup> The numbers used to make the arguments contained in this paragraph are found in Choate, *Emigrant nation*, Appendix, 235-241; Gabaccia, *Emigrant Nation*, Table 6.1 "Migrations from Italy, 1913-1945," 134; Tables B and C in Veronesi, *Italian Americans*, 342-45; see also Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 147-169; Ferroni, *Italians in Cleveland*, 1-14.

<sup>249</sup> For example, Olindo's Italian-born eldest daughter graduated high school in Cleveland in the summer of 1909; see "Signorina Filomena Melaragno," *La Voce del Popolo*, July 3, 1909; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, 155-158; see also an article published in 1920 on the dangers that the younger generation would grow up without a strong sense of their Italianess, "Genitori italiani e figlioli," *La Voce del Popolo*, November 27, 1920.

internal instability, lessened its emphasis on crafting a Greater Italy. Moreover, the fact that the U.S. and Italy had been allies during the First World War had begun to open the Italian community of Cleveland to its American neighbors—the editorial staff of *La Voce* had, in fact, encouraged their readers to interact and cooperate with the American war effort in Cleveland, in order to bring the war to a close more quickly. This willingness on the part of Cleveland's Italians to engage with the land of their sojourn only increased as the younger generation—accustomed from a young age to life in America—reached adulthood. And, as the leadership of the Cleveland community passed to this new generation in the 1920s and 1930s, voices like those of Olindo and Fernando Melaragno, Biagio Sancetta, and others that had viewed the fate of their emigrant colony as intertwined with the fortunes of the home nation would fade from prominence.

For the years between 1910 and 1920, however, the Melaragno, by writing and publishing to an audience of first-generation Italian emigrants, sought to instill in the Cleveland community a particular sense of Italianess, that led them to consider themselves first and foremost as *Italiani* rather than *siciliani*, *abruzzesi*, or *americani*. Their newspaper, *La Voce del Popolo*, through its coverage of Italy's war waged against Turkey to acquire colonies in Libya, and then its fight to redeem the *terre irredente* in the final grand flourish of Italian unification, gave voice to an Italianess rooted in a love for the *patria* and a sense of shared past. Indeed, *La Voce* served as the interpreter—or, if you will, voice—of these events to the Italians of Cleveland, reminding them of the critical part that they played, as citizens of Greater Italy, in ensuring the wellbeing of the *patria*.

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