

Vol. 1 No. 2



Summer, 1988

THE ITALIC WAY

The Newsletter of THE SOCIETY FOR ITALIC STUDIES, Inc.



Images:
Symbols or stereotypes?



IN THIS ISSUE

- Images and what's behind them.
- Book Reviews: Italian Politics; Italian Frogmen
 - PROJECT ITALIA: Success!!
 - WW I: The Agony of Victory
 - *Atlantica* remembered

Caricatures by Dom Rinaldo

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THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST FREE ISSUE

unless you join

The Society for Italic Studies

We are a new Italic organization. Even our name and logo are meant to convey a new perspective on the Italian heritage. Frankly, we believe there must be vigor and direction within the community if Americans of Italian descent are to achieve their fullest potential.

Joining The Society links you to a burgeoning network...both national and global...of individuals dedicated to rekindling an ancient spirit.

Our Format

The Society is a results-oriented organization with an overriding goal: education. That is, to educate the Italic community and the general public in what being of Italian origin is all about. To accomplish this we emphasize youth acculturation and mass media works, two areas that nearly all existing Italian-American organizations have not focused on.

Our national newsletter, *The Italic Way*, is addressed to the discerning reader and transcends organizational bounds. It is meant to be neither glitzy or earthy — little if any “food or fashion” — as we say. Moreover, it is a forum for all to speak freely, not just a select leadership.

Project Italia is our most ambitious of works. A film record of the Italic peoples (i.e., ancient and modern, native and foreign), this proposed 6-part television series will explore the 2,500 year history of a multi-faceted people. (see the *Project Italia* section)

The *Aurora* program is aimed at the youth of America. *Aurora* means the “dawn” and its purpose is to carry the first light of heritage to those who will carry on after us. *Aurora* is a specially designed course of Saturday instruction for 5th and 6th graders. Italian language and culture wrapped up in a two-part program complete with crafts, games, and fieldtrips. *Aurora* is meant to whet children’s appetites for formal language instruction at the junior high and high school levels.

The preservation and promotion of the Altar of Peace (*Ara Pacis*), in Rome, is our fourth goal. This magnificent monument was originally consecrated by Caesar Augustus on July 4th 13 B.C. to celebrate the start of the Roman Peace (Pax Romana). It was during the Roman Peace that Italic humanism, Greek thought, and Judeo-Christian ethic were joined to create Western Civilization. The *Ara Pacis* is a symbol of the unity of the Italian heritage and the common roots of Western man. An international peace prize is being planned for 1991 as a biannual event.

WON'T YOU JOIN US?

Annual membership in The Society for Italic Studies is only \$10. There is no further obligation nor any meetings to attend. Your \$10 entitles you to an annual subscription to *The Italic Way* and discounts on future tours and gift items. But most of all, membership in The Society brings you a fresh perspective on the Italic heritage. Won't you grow with us?

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The Italic Way *Project Italia* *Aurora Program* *Ara Pacis*

Circle any special interest

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The Italic Way



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Letters

Address all letters to: LETTERS, The Italic Way, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001

Congratulations on a fantastic beginning. I pray that you continue to grow and become one of the nation's leading Italo-American publications. I shall certainly preach the gospel about *The Italic Way!*

R.C. Fusco, Ozone Park, New York

Bravi! Bravi! I have read and enjoyed the first edition of your excellent new magazine.

My interest is in Italian-American intellectual life from the turn of the century to World War II; therefore, I found interesting your excerpts from the magazine *Atlantica*. Who were these intellectuals who found and published *Atlantica*? Pursuant to World War II, the increased demand for Italian language speakers motivated me and many others to study the language from secondary school to college. Since your motto is in Latin, I would like a translation.

Philip A. Vota, New Jersey

(Ed. - "Not of my own free will do I seek Italy", Aeneas from *The Aeneid*, by Vergil.)

Your format is progressive and am-

bitious. Good luck toward the new renaissance!

Peter J. Rosa, South Beach, New York

Your first issue of *The Italic Way* was excellent! It is a magazine we need in the Italian American Community.

Professor Philip J. Di Novo, Pres., American Italian Heritage Assoc.

Last week a friend gave me your first copy of *The Italic Way*. I checked the items that I felt would be of interest to the weekly class that I am now instructing and found that your magazine was met with overwhelming interest by everyone. Your publication will continue to be used in my classroom, as it is very much needed in the United States.

Francis J. Mastropietro, former Councilman (Rep.), Auburn, New York

I don't particularly like your first issue. It's a bit shrill and provincial.

(But) I am enclosing a check for ten dollars to see if you can work it out over

the next year.

Joseph del Guidice, M.D., Jasper, Indiana

Although you state that Italians are not given the recognition that they deserve, remember that history books tell us that an Italian, Columbus, discovered America and that America was named after an Italian, Amerigo Vespucci.

In addition, you state that there are 44 million Irish immigrants. I read many years ago that the Italians and Germans were the largest groups. Where did you get your figures?

Dan Lippolis, Port St. Lucie, Florida

(Ed. - The 1980 U.S. Census)

Holocaust Remembered

I read your book review of *The Italians and the Holocaust*, by Susan Zuccotti, with a very personal interest. You see, my father, during the period of September 8, 1943 to May 16, 1944, saved the lives of an Italian-Jewish



Letters

couple. When the Fascist state collapsed and General Badoglio's, government signed the armistice with the U.S., German soldiers all over Italy retaliated against all Italians, Italian Jews in particular.

Mr. Ascarelli, a textile manufacturing entrepreneur, primarily lived in Naples; however, he and his wife owned farmland in Caserta and a waterfront villa with gardens on the Appian Way, in Formia. During the war and before the armistice the Ascarellis took up full time residency at the villa in Formia. Out of a population of 23,300, the Ascarellis were the only two Jews in the municipality. My father, his wife and six children lived in Maranola, five kilometers outside of Formia. Prior to the war, my father had been caretaker of the villa and occasionally would oversee the harvests at the farm.

On September 8, 1943, the American Air Force began bombing Formia in order to cut communication links and isolate the Germans at Montecassino. The civilian population evacuated the city and villages, dispersing to the safer mountainous areas where bombing was less persistent.

My father needed to protect his large family, now on the run, yet also worried about how the Ascarellis would survive both the mountainous terrain and the Nazi troops which were in the area. Hiding in the mountain huts as the other refugees had done was too risky. Other civilians might have either blackmailed the Ascarellis or alerted the Nazis. My father chose to protect the Ascarellis, while Angelo, the eldest son, took care of our family.

Thus began nine months of nights on the run through the rocky, barren treeless terrain and days of hopeful respite. Unused to the mountainous terrain, Mrs. Ascarelli occasionally

needed to be carried on my father's back. Low supplies of water and foodstuffs forced my father scrounge or steal from the countryside. I remember soup made from donkey's ears on Easter of 1944.

In spite of hunger, infectious diseases, and bombings, we all survived. My father was not an educated man; he had only two years of elementary school education and was not sophisticated enough to write a diary of his war experiences. However, he taught his children the value of hard work, respect and compassion, and his humanitarian act will live on in the minds of those who knew him.

On September 21, 1987, my father, Giuseppe D'Urso, passed away, leaving a legacy of goodness and courage, motivated not by intellect or greed but compassion for mankind.

Anthony D'Urso, New Hyde Park,
NY

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The Italic Way



All'Italiana

by Cristina Zaccarini

Ciao Comrade

Publitalia, a Milan-based advertising company through which Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's TV baron, oversees his communications empire, already has private networks in Italy, France and West Germany, and now has spread its tentacles into the Soviet Union. In April, a three-year contract was signed, making Publitalia the exclusive agency for European commercials on all Soviet channels. Italia rules the airwaves!

It's not only Berlusconi who is benefiting from Soviet business. Italy's Cogolo Tanneries of Udine, Daniele (drilling equipment), and the ENI Group (oil & gas monopoly) have all concluded contracts with the Soviets, who have traditionally favored Italian business.

A Champ Retires

Democratic Congressman Peter Rodino is stepping down after 40 years leaving behind a trail of admiring constituents and fellow congressmen, as he embarks upon private law practice and some occasional teaching at Seton Hall.

Known for guiding the House Judiciary Committee in its investigation of the Watergate scandal, Rodino stands among the few great men who have adhered to their convictions despite popular opinion. The country's 1966 Fair Housing bill, although unpopular in Rodino's district, was diligently guided to passage by the Congressman. Rodino heavily influenced the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Utilizing the power of the House Judiciary Committee, he successfully impeded the passage of right-wing legislation which he deemed regressive and in violation of constitutional principles. And as he retires, a Black congressman, New Jersey's first, may assume the mantle of Rodino's legacy.

In a system where private interest lobbies prevail, Rodino deserves America's admiration.

Italic Megabucks

When the news came out that Lee Iacocca, in spite of his \$6 million pay cut, cashed in on nearly \$18 million in 1987, his response was unequivocal: He was not sorry. What should he do, root for a downturn in Chrysler stock? Embarrassed, perhaps, but sorry no.

Among other Italian-Americans who might feel just a tiny twinge of embarrassment are: Sly Stallone, \$20 million; Jane Fonda, \$5 million; Madonna, \$26 million; Robert Luciano (Chairman of Schering-Plough), \$1.2 million; Paul Orefice (Chairman of Dow Chemical), \$1.5 million; Frank Viola (Minnesota Twins pitcher), \$4 million.

Dead Stones Tell New Tale

The excavation at Rome's Palatine Hill, initiated in the 1980's by Rome's current Superintendent of Archeology, Adriano La Regina, has uncovered what many scholars would consider to be concrete evidence that the legend of the founding of Rome might be historical



A model reconstruction of ancient Rome

fact. The legend states that Romulus founded Rome in 753 B.C., building a wall at the spot where he and his twin brother Remus, as infants, were given the milk of a she-wolf.

Although the excavation is still incomplete and scholars are cautious, evidence appears to suggest that Rome

emerged as a complex urban society in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., a time when most historians dismissed them as shepherds. In addition, the popular scholarly opinion which considers the Romans to be mere followers of the Etruscans and the southern Greeks is being refuted as new evidence points to the Romans as complete contributors to the development of the city-state in Italy.

Ferrari's F40 Gem

Priced at \$220,000 (\$120,000 more than its GTO), the muscle car that marks Ferrari's 40th anniversary is loaded with avant-garde hardware and "where-do-I-use-it?" 478 horsepower. The price has been inflated to discourage speculators; but who can predict what this classic will fetch among the rich and famous.

The Lira Talks

When financial police cracked down on Bruno De Mico, a Milanese architect who runs a construction company with an annual turnover of \$30 million, the scandalous dirt was finally exposed. It is estimated by Italian officials that out of the total \$176 billion of public sector construction, \$22 billion goes towards bribes. Can the U.S. Pentagon scandal top that?

Italian POWs Return

Sixteen Italian POWs who had been considered "noncollaborators" during WWII for their support of Fascist Italy while here in the U.S., returned to Umbarger, Texas, to visit the prison camp they once inhabited. According to the Red Cross, conditions in the camp were worse than those for Americans in German POW camps. Italian officers, during a period in 1945 when food rations were reduced, were singled out for sterner treatment than enlisted men. Many lost an average of 20 pounds during this period, while some lost 40 pounds. But no hard feelings, the Italian



All'Italiana

veterans are still pro-American.

Obituaries

Pistorio, James, 90: Former Marine who participated in the 1914 occupation of Veracruz, Mexico. The U.S./Mexico dispute was caused by the arrest of some American sailors.

Almirante, Giorgio, 73: Founder and longtime leader of Italy's neo-fascist party and former official in Mussolini's government.

Gianninoto, Francesco, 85: Industrial designer and packaging specialist, who created Elsie, the Borden Cow; the Marlboro flip-top cigarette box; and the orange rooftops of Howard Johnson's restaurants.

Ravera, Camilla, 98: Founder of Italy's Communist Party and women's rights advocate. First woman elected to the Italian Senate. Named Senator for Life by President Pertini in 1982.

Caliguiri, Richard, 56: After 11 years as Mayor of Pittsburgh, during which time he revitalized the city "from a wilting steel giant" to a gleaming corporate center. The former mayor put millions of dollars into rebuilding the city's deteriorating infrastructure.

Saragat, Giuseppe, 89: Former president of Italy, died in Rome.

Zambelli, Joseph, 80: Known as the Grandfather of Fireworks, whose artistic pyrotechnics were seen at presidential inaugurations and the Statue of Liberty's Centennial in 1986.

Barbuti, Raymond, 83: Winner of the only U.S. gold medal at the 1928 Olympic games in Amsterdam, in the 400 meter track event.

Dell, Gabe (Gabriel del Vecchio), 68: An original Dead End Kid. Dell, unlike his young co-stars managed to grow out of the "bad boy" image to become a writer, director and teacher.

Princess From the Pampas

After being plunged into the adult world of women's tennis and, at age 14, defeating three of the top 10 world play-

ers, it seemed Gabriela Sabatini was on a swift ride to the top. But soon people began to realize that there was a problem — Sabatini would tire, her legs giving out, half-way through the game. However, a new coach improved Sabatini's endurance and now she's on a relentless roll. In March, Sabatini (no. 5 in the world), beat Stephanie Graf (no. 1) at the Virginia Slims of Florida, then again at Amelia Island, Florida.



Italo-Argentine Gabriella Sabatini, attractive and athletic

Italic Governors Show the Way

Ohio Governor Richard Celeste showed political courage in joining with New York Governor Mario Cuomo to tackle the problem of acid rain. Evidently reacting to the inaction at the federal level in dealing with acid rain, Celeste and Cuomo are demonstrating that individual states can own up to their responsibilities. Ohio, which produces much of the fall-out that rains on the Northeast, has never been disposed to address the concerns of the states east of them — that is until now. Governor Celeste has proposed reducing emissions from Ohio generating plants even at the risk of raising utility rates. The trick for Celeste is to get the Feds to subsidize his altruism. Still, the gubernatorial proposal has some last minute competition from the senatorial ranks. Specifically, 27 U.S. senators of both parties, including Italic senator Alfonse D'Amato, are

pushing a plan of their own. (...from no plan to too many.)

Power Economics

Fortune Magazine has reported the world's top 10 industrial corporations outside the U.S. includes two Italian giants. In 4th position is IRI (Istituto Ricostruzione Italiana), the huge conglomerate that spearheaded Italy's post-war successes, and FIAT (Fabbrica Italiana Automobile Torino) the car-maker, is in 8th place.

FIAT owes some of its new status to its increased European sales that have carried it to the number one spot in Europe's automobile industry. FIAT technology and investments have penetrated the Iron Curtain. Russians, Poles and Yugoslavs all have their versions of FIAT cars. The Yugoslavs even reworked an old FIAT model and sell it to America as the *Yugo*.

Guido Who?

The latest ethnic slur off the assembly line is the term *Guido*. Used lately to denote a macho male with open shirt and gold chain, this term has obvious Italic roots. Perhaps taken from an unsavory character (as usual someone with an Italian name) in the movie *Risky Business*, the term reached newsworthy proportions on Long Island when a disco owner used it ("100% Guido Free") to encourage better clientele to enter his "classy" saloon. Hey, but it's all right, the owner is "Italian" (as usual).

The Coalition of Italo-American Associations has lodged a complaint to stop the *Guido-itis* from spreading.

Mushy Macaroni

They held them off for a while but Italy's European neighbors want to hook pasta-eating Italians on mushy (non-durum wheat) macaroni. The *Pasta Wars* as dubbed by the Italian press was started by the West Germans. The price of European unity may be just too high a price for our Italian cousins.

The Italic Way

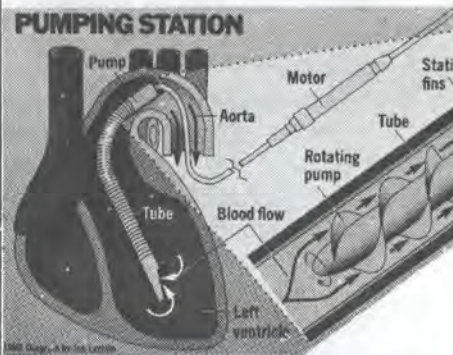


World Notes

[We present this section to inform our readers of events and trends that may be of interest with regard to ethnic opinions or cultural values.]

An Old Sicilian Remedy

It looked vaguely familiar to our staff when they saw a picture of Dr. Richard Wampler's new heart pump. The tiny implant was designed to pump blood in a damaged human heart until nature repairs the original. Dr. Wampler was inspired by pumps he had seen being used to irrigate farms along the Nile in Egypt. Lo and behold, those very hand-cranked pumps were designed by Sicil-



The new heart pump using a 2,000 year old idea.

ian scientist Archimedes over 2,000 years ago. Known as the Archimedes Screw, the principal of "screwing" liquid up through a cylinder seems to have countless applications.

A Friend in Deed

Italy came to NATO's defense this spring when it granted permission for the basing of 72 American F-16 fighter-bombers in southern Italy.

The Italian gesture came on the heels of Spain's refusal to continue its current lease arrangements for the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing. The Italians have designated the region of Calabria (the toe of the Italic boot) as the location of the new air base.

Italian military experts feel that the relocation of the squadron will put Italy at NATO's first rank of defense. Roman

Catholic bishops in the region oppose the plan saying that the planes will make Southern Italy a top priority target. However, it all might be a moot question if the USSR wants to negotiate quid pro quo reductions as indicated by General Secretary Gorbachev.

In another development, West German and Italian defense ministries are seeking ways to step up cooperation between their armed forces.

Chinese Top the Mafia

Move over Don Corleone. Those in the know, including the Immigration & Naturalization Service and the New York Times, say that a new era is dawning on the American criminal scene. The Chinese *Tongs* (secret, fraternal organizations) are the number one, column A, source of Asian heroin in the U.S., led by such multinational criminal cabals as the *United Bamboo*, out of Taiwan.

With the demise of the French Connection and the Pizza Connection operations, the Chinese have achieved a dominance that has surprised many lawmen. As Italic criminals lose their edge they are also losing pieces of Little Italy in Manhattan. Chinese *Tongs* have pushed the frontiers of Chinatown to the inner sancta of Mulberry Street. Can the day be far off when a tourist will be able to order *scungilli with black bean sauce* at Umberto's Clam Bar? And perhaps we will someday enjoy a blockbuster tribute to Chinese culture entitled, *The Venerable Godfather*.

Arabian Chic

It is with some sadness that we report the purchase of 47.8% of the fashion house of Gucci by a Bahrain investment group. Sizeable profits from sales to status-conscious consumers will now flow to the Arabian peninsula instead of the Italian peninsula. The Bahrain group is owned by some 12,000 Arab shareholders.

French-Americans, a Needy Minority?

Having been forceably relocated from their homes in Nova Scotia by the imperialist British some 200 years ago, the Cajuns of Louisiana, some 250,000 strong, have embarked on a crusade to get affirmative action for themselves. Notwithstanding their impressive progress in Louisiana politics — the Governor, the Lt. Governor, one U.S. senator, and the president of the state senate are all Cajuns — those vying for the economic advantage that affirmative action will bring insist that it is justified to correct the old British maltreatment.

The Italic Irving Berlin

With the celebration of songwriter Irving Berlin's 100th birthday comes a reminder that the late Harry Warren (born Salvatore Guaragna) would have been 95 this year. Warren was the prolific composer who wrote the music for *42nd Street* (*Lullaby of Broadway*, *42nd Street*, *I Found a Million Dollar Baby*, *We're in the Money*, *Quarter to Nine*) *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, *Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe*, *You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby*, *Yōū'll Never Know*, *Jeevers Creepers*, and more.

U.S. is Mecca for Moslems

Everyone knows how America's ethnic composition is changing with the influx of Asians and Hispanics. But how many realize that within 30 years the country's second largest religious group, after Christianity, will probably be Muslim. With a high birthrate and climbing immigration, Muslims are expected to displace the Jews as America's largest religious minority. All praise to Allah!

Un-Greek Activities

Governor Michael Dukakis' popularity among his fellow Greek-Ameri-

World Notes



cans is a marvel to behold. About a fifth of his war chest has come from Greek-Americans, many of whom hold prominent corporate positions. However, some co-religionists don't approve of the Governor's claim to Greek Orthodoxy. Beside faulting him for marrying outside his faith, they have denounced the politico as an "apostate" and "pagan" who uses his religion to get votes. Fortunately for the candidate his falling out with the religious faction has not hurt his standing among the Hellenic community. According to one critic, among Greek-Americans "there is a minority who would support Satan himself if his name ended in -akis". (Surely there'll be *Hellas* to pay!)

The Land of Deadly Love

The World Health Organization reports that as of March there were 1,619 cases of AIDS in Italy. The Italians rank third in Europe after the French (3,072) and West Germans (1,906) but ahead of the British (1,429).

Sports vs. Spoil Sports

Mario Andretti won the Indy 500 this past July 4th giving him his 51st career victory. Guido Bontempi of Italy won the "preface" to the Tour de France cycling race.

Meanwhile, the sun appears to be setting on Britain's sports prowess as their losses mount in every international sports competition and the infamous English soccer fans wreak havoc throughout Europe. As one British journalist put it, "We're trash!" Three years ago drunken English fans were responsible for the deaths of 39 Italian soccer fans in Brussels after an Italian victory.

Italic Rescue

Once again a racial incident in New York City's borough of Staten Island nearly defamed Italian-Americans. When word of the attack on a 24-year old Black man by White thugs was re-

ported, many thought that Italian-Americans, who are a majority in the borough, were defending "Italic turf" (the same simplistic assumption made during the Howard Beach affair.) As it turned out, the "good guys" were two Italian-American pizzeria workers who came to the Black man's defense. Police arrested six attackers, only one of whom had an Italian surname.

Aryan Beef

You know American ad agencies have run out of creative ideas when they have to copy Nazi propaganda posters to



Good old "American" advertising.

sell a product. In this case the product was meat, good ole supermarket meat.

Although the agency denies it, there is an uncanny resemblance between their all-American cowboy standing akimbo and holding a flag and the all-Nazi Hitler Youth standing akimbo and holding a flag. It appears that only the uniform and the flag are different.

Mario Nuked

Many Long Islanders are unimpressed with New York Governor Mario Cuomo's settlement with the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) over the unopened Shoreham nuclear plant. Although he appeared as the White

Knight in stopping the plant from opening without a practical evacuation plan, the Governor, they say, once again played second fiddle to a Greek, this time LILCO's chairman William Catacosinos.

The construction, deactivation, and future caretaking of the \$5.3 billion boondoggle will be mainly paid for by Long Island consumers rather than LILCO stockholders. LILCO rates are already among the highest in the nation. What irks people the most is that LILCO was fully responsible for the flaws that doomed the plant. According to columnist Bob Wiemer (Newsday), Cuomo is at heart a negotiator and was content to reach any settlement that would close down the plant. Cuomo insists that without his settlement Long Island will end up with a nuclear plant.

Heresies

Both Roman Catholicism and Judaism are having trouble these days with heresies.

For the Roman Pope it was the first schism in 800 years when rebel Cardinal Marcel Lefebvre of Ecône, Switzerland, consecrated four bishops against Rome's orders. Lefebvre thinks the Church too liberal since Vatican II. His 100,000 followers around the world like the old-time religion, especially the Latin mass. For His Holiness, this is old-time "spiri-tu tu much".

On the other hand, traditional Judaism is being challenged on a couple of fronts. There's the Jews for Jesus group and even a Judaism minus God movement, actually called Humanistic Judaism. With 22 congregations just in the U.S., the latter movement claims some 30,000 humanist adherents around the world. What upsets the traditionists is that Humanistic Judaism has not only put God out to pasture but has relegated the sacred Torah to the library book shelves and accepted non-Jews into its Temples without conversion.



Editorial

Mario Cuomo: Of Destiny, Daring and A Dream Deferred

Mario Cuomo has no place in American politics. He is American politics — a scholarly Mr. Smith who came to govern the Empire state and captured the imagination of a nation.

Millions of Americans outside the Northeast became fascinated with the man's multifaceted curriculum vitae. Ball player. Professor. Family man. Leader. In sheer political terms, Mario Cuomo had become the popular equivalent of Ronald Reagan. Horatio Alger con brio. However, as is often the case with political fables, the best laid plans of pols and pundits have been for naught. By failing to dare greatly, Mario Cuomo has missed his rendezvous with destiny.

Along with wit, charm and intellectual curiosity, Mario Cuomo is afflicted with the philosopher's penchant for profundity. While admirable in elder statesmen, this trait can be deadly to ambitious politicians. If the latter are to evolve into the former, they must set a coherent political agenda and embark on a decisive course of action to achieve its objectives. A smokescreen of semantics and other acts of political prestidigitation are not the hallmarks of the serious leader. Such behavior may be interpreted as *schtick*. And *schtick* better suits Edward I. Koch than it does Mario M. Cuomo. In fact, as a result of his metaphysical meanderings during the Democratic primaries, Cuomo began to be perceived as less a statesman and more a self-appointed savior. And his less-than-Shermanesque withdrawal from presidential consideration opened the floodgates to a bevy of borderline candidates.

With this ill-conceived, poorly executed decision — a radio talk show forum — Cuomo performed a disservice not only to the Italian-American community, but to the nation as well. A run for the Rose Garden would certainly have been a tumultuous, bitterly contested ordeal replete with ethnic innuendo, political tension and yellow journalism. But the prospect of Cuomo in the Oval Office would have forever altered the perception of Italian-Americans in the media and strengthened the nation in much the same way as the election of John F. Kennedy did in 1960. For, despite the achievements of Iacocca and Scalia, Giuliani and Giamatti, Italian-Americans are always "in season" at the networks. From Sam Donaldson to Ted Turner to Rupert Murdoch, we have been villified as a duplicitous, criminal lot whose only saving grace is a provincial streak of buffoonery. This image, thought castigated in theory, is reinforced in practice on television sitcoms, motion pictures and editorial pages throughout the country. Cuomo himself has been portrayed as an unsavory underworld thug by Joseph Sobran of the National Review. Had the Governor travelled the high ground of presidential politics, these purveyors of perfidy might well have been relegated to the low road of obscurity. Instead, the 1980's, which had begun so promisingly as the decade of the Italian-American, may end unceremoniously as the year of the Greek.

There are diehards who still hold out for a Mario scenario in 1992, the 500th anniversary of the New World's discovery by another Italian, Columbus. As felicitous as it sounds, such an event would require a Republican victory in November and worsening economic prospects in the ensuing years. Does the end justify mean-spirited means? Matilda Cuomo, on the other hand, believes in destiny: "I just feel if it's meant someday he should be President, he'll be President." *La Forza del Destino* may yet intervene, but Mario Cuomo would do well to remember another adage from his ancient forebears — *Fortuna Audentes Juvat*. Though the meek may inherit the earth, fortune will always favor the bold.

-Rosario A. Iaconis

The Italic Way

The official newsletter of The Society for Italic Studies, Inc., a nonprofit corporation headquartered in Floral Park, NY

Editor-in-Chief
John Mancini

Senior Editor
Rosario A. Iaconis

Editors
Cristina Zaccarini
Stefano Gristina

Director, Technical Services
Chris Elarde

Staff Writers
John Memone
Candice Smith
Dominick Rinaldo (Cartoonist)

Field Reporter (Italian Events)
Dante Venturini

Circulation
Rita Mancini

Advertising
Stefano Gristina

Finance
George Ricci

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- Perfect for high school & college students.
- Perfect for any friend or relative who loves things Italic.
- A Perfect way to stay in touch with your heritage.

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Forum of the People



Explorers' Day Dinner Dov'erano gli Italiani?*

*(Translation on p. 24)

Non mi soffermerò qui a parlare dello storico viaggio di Caboto (tema della serata) e del contributo che esso diede allo sviluppo di questo nuovo mondo, ma voglio sottolineare che questo non è il solo che dovrebbe essere ricordato. La gente Italica infatti, dall'era Romana ai tempi nostri, ha segnato il corso della evoluzione umana in maniera continua e determinante in tutti i campi in cui l'umanità si è espressa.

Ritengo pertanto che, specialmente in questo paese dove tantissimi Italici incontrano serie difficoltà di inserimento sociale per svantaggiosi stereotipi creatisi per una a volte superficiale cultura umanistica, è maggiormente necessario che quest'ultimi si adoperino per promuovere una campagna di informazione di massa che tenda a valorizzare quegli aspetti che fanno della gente Italica un popolo con un enorme bagaglio di fantasia che, accompagnata da una millenaria cultura, consente loro di individuare, spesso prima degli altri, gli aspetti migliori della vita e di promuoverne il progresso.

Attenta ai problemi di inserimento sociale della gente Italica la *Society for Italic Studies* (S.I.S.) si è fatto carico di gestire questo programma di educazione di massa ed promosso varie iniziative culturali cercando di coinvolgere coloro che, maggiormente sensibili, hanno la possibilità di determinarne il successo.

L'Explorers' Day Dinner è stato quindi organizzato allo scopo di raccogliere fondi per finanziare queste iniziative fin'ora abilmente condotti con il solo contributo, economico ed operativo, di pochissime persone.

Scopo altrettanto importante era quello di riunire nella stessa sala gli Italo-Americani e simpatizzanti della nostra cultura, a quegli esponenti delle compagnie Italiane operanti in USA, desiderosi di rafforzare ed espandere la loro presenza economica in questo paese. Il risultato è stato veramente lusinghiero. Hanno partecipato alla serata circa trecento persone ed il guadagno netto asuperato le previsioni. Ma questo non è tutto. Ogni particolare della serata, dai tortellini al pesto, alle musiche suonate dall'abile orchestra, sono stati incastonati nei vari momenti della serata con abilità artistica e creativa da John Mancini (Presidente di S.I.S.) che ha profuso in essi tutto quell'amore che nutre per l'Italia e per la storia del progresso umana.

Il Console Generale Italiano, Francesco Corrias, che fin dal nascere ha incoraggiato e seguito la Society, con la sua presenza, testimoniava l'adesione del governo Italiano e sua personale ai programmi da essa gestiti.

La RAI-USA a mezzo del suo rappresentante, Sebastiano Musini, è stata presente a confermare la sua sensibilità al processo di informazione ed acculturazione.

La loro assenza peraltro rischia di essere interpretata come un volere "snobbare" tutti gli Italo-Americani...

La Camera di Commercio Italia-America ed il suo rappresentante, Roy Rossetti, partecipava alla serata in sintonia con i suoi programmi di servizio agli operatori economici Italici.

Gli Italo-Americani attenti ai problemi di sviluppo sociale ed operosi come pochi, venivano rappresentati da Edward Riguardi, presidente operativo della Williams Real Estate, chairman della serata.

Mr. Michael Downey, presidente operativa della Mendik Realty assieme ad altri Irlandesi, Ebrei, Greci, Tedeschi, Spagnoli, Afro-Americani, ecc. confermarono il loro interesse e la loro simpatia nei confronti della gente Italica.

L'unico lato negativo è stato quello di dover ancora una volta constatare che gli esponenti delle compagnie Italiane non agiscono in accordo ai programmi di affermazione ed espansione economica di cui dovrebbero essere i promotori. Più precisamente voglio dire che il loro avvicinarsi a manifestazioni come quella del 24 Giugno, è un mezzo che dovrebbero sfruttare per propagandare le compagnie che rappresentano. La loro assenza peraltro rischia di essere interpretata come un volere "snobbare" tutti gli Italo-Americani a cui devono maggiormente il loro successo economico in questo paese.

Ci vogliamo augurare che la loro assenza sia stata dovuta al periodo "vacanziero" in cui l'avvenimento è ricaduto, e ad una scarsa conoscenza dei programmi della Society,

Questa mia vuole essere un invito rivolto a loro perché riconsiderino il loro atteggiamento ed in futuro si interessino maggiormente all'ambiente in cui operano.

-Stefano Gristina, Segretario S.I.S.



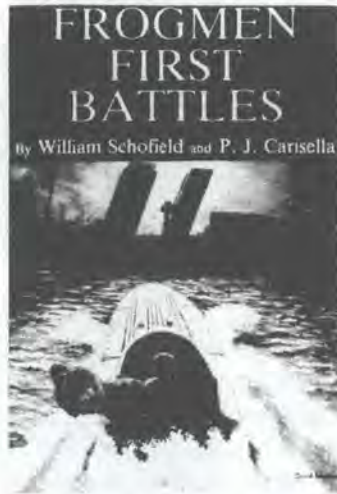
Books

Frogmen, First Battles
by William Schofield and P.J.
Carisella
Branden Press, 1987

To the victors belong the spoils — and the right to engage in revisionism once the hostilities have ceased: Rarely, if ever, is the Italian fighting man accorded his just due in the twentieth century's most cataclysmic conflict, World War II. *Frogmen: First Battles* by William Schofield and P.J. Carisella is a salutary exception.

The geographical imperatives of the Italian peninsula necessitate a strong naval presence. In fact, historian Michael Grant has described Italy's central position in the Mediterranean as a "call to self-assertion." Recognizing this fact, the Romans eventually earned the right to call the Mediterranean Sea *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea). Centuries later, at a time when modern Italy was in a far less commanding position, their descendants pioneered a new and deadly form of naval warfare — the frogmen. These silent submariners scoured the Mediterranean neutralizing British sea power in their wake. By rupturing the lion's soft underwater belly from March 1941 to September 1943, they roiled the waves, knocking out more than 30 enemy ships and causing consternation at 10 Downing Street. Even Winston Churchill's stiff upper lip disappeared as Italy's Tenth Light Flotilla — the undersea daredevils' formal name — devastated British tankers, destroyers and battleships from Gibraltar to Alexandria and Algeria to the Crimea.

Messrs. Schofield and Carisella delve into the origins of the Tenth Light Flotilla and its valiant company. Perhaps the most fascinating of the submariners was its commander, Valerio Borghese — the fabled "Black Prince of Rome". A swashbuckler straight out of central casting, he never accepted Italy's defeat and died in self-imposed



exile in 1974. Nevertheless, Borghese fashioned one of the most intrepid bands of underwater warriors the world has ever known. An indication of their prowess was that Germany called on the Tenth to train a team of its own and to serve against the Russian Navy in the Crimea.

The Tenth Light Flotilla's greatest victory occurred in 1941 with the destruction of Great Britain's only Mediterranean battleships *Valiant* and *Queen Elizabeth*. Both were stationed at the Egyptian port of Alexandria. The loss of these warships crippled England's naval capabilities and reestablished Italy's preeminence in the Mediterranean. Moreover, it settled the score for Britain's naval air attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto. In terse, nearly staccato prose, Schofield and Carisella describe the methodical machinations of the frogmen, the ineptitude of British and Egyptian officials, and the final climactic explosions. However, Commander Borghese would not savor the victory. Although now the dominant naval power in the Mediterranean, the Italians could not convince Hitler to invade British-held Malta. Malta was, in Mussolini's opinion, the key to Africa, for it was from Malta that British subs and planes interdicted the Italian supplies to the Axis forces in North Africa. Hitler's intransigence doomed the African campaign to a war of attrition which neither Italy nor

Germany could sustain.

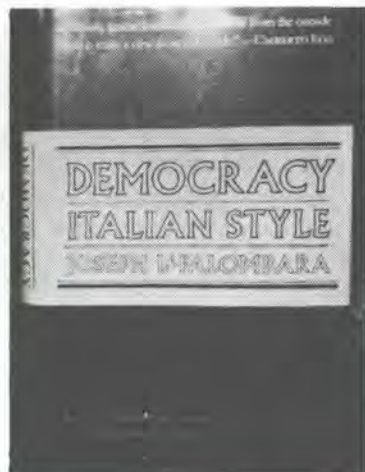
Commander Borghese's last foray into harm's way, a daring attack on New York at Christmastime, was torpedoed when Italy signed the armistice and Pietro Badoglio assumed the reins of government. The Tenth Light Flotilla's daring raids would be no more. What remained, however, was the story of the fabled frogmen and their ingenious technology and patriotic courage.

-Rosario A. Iaconis

Democracy, Italian Style
by Joseph LaPalombara
Yale University Press, 1987, 308 pp.

In 1981, when American General William Dozier was freed from Red Brigade captivity, I received the following comment from my Italian cousin: "Finally Italians will be noted for their bravery and success instead of their falling governments." Such a statement was not surprising; the Italians habitually voice disdain for their government. Foreigners, observing the "spectacle" of Italian politics, label Italian democracy as anarchistic. And scholars, no strangers to this stereotyping and ethnocentric chauvinism, have depicted Italy as an unnavigable stretch of rapids by merely scanning the choppy surface of the ocean of Italian politics. Joseph LaPalombara, Professor of Political Science at Yale University, in part due to his having spent 35 years studying the Italian "enigma", has the lucidity and the courage to tear down stereotypes and paint a vivid and coherent picture of Italian people and politics. Because no one party receives a clear majority, Italy is governed by a coalition of parties drawn together by convenience. The dichotomy within the parties, even individually, leads to a governmental crisis about every ten months (since the 1940's there have been 45 governments). Yet these crises

Books



are quite stabilizing to "democracy Italian style", LaPalombara shows us. For, despite crisis after crisis, Italians have been voting the same way, with a shift toward left of center, for four decades.

The Italian "crisis" can be considered the equivalent of the Reagan Administration's frequent loss of cabinet members. In both cases a small structural change occurred, but the status quo was essentially preserved. In addition, the diverging positions within the parties insure that the government does not shift either too far to the left or too far to the right, remaining comfortably close to the center. To a nation-state which has known monarchy and Fascist dictatorship, this is a real triumph. In short, Italians "get along" (*tirano avanti*), by accommodating, compromising, taking stock of casualties and reconciling so that the existing subcultures within Italian society (the Catholics, Communists and laical) can all have a voice in the government.

If the Italian people disapprove of the job that their government is doing it is not reflected at the polls. In fact, the Italian electorate has yet to exercise its right to overturn legislation by use of the referendum. Instead, Italians manage to move forward socially and economically without strong political leadership. According to LaPalombara, Italy, which lost two-thirds of its economic

capacity, key industrial areas and much of its railroads after World War II, is now the fifth richest nation in the world, with three out of four people owning real property.

One aspect of the Italian character, both in society and government, appears to be the antithesis of the old adage: "The ends justify the means". The means are the crux of life. For a society which has known the dangers of dogma, this national philosophy seems testimony to a dedication for the preservation of democracy.

LaPalombara provides a rich, contrarian insight that is invaluable for anyone seeking to understand Italy.

- Cristina Zaccarini

Vittorio Veneto

(continued from p 17)

strate solidarity and revive Italian morale.

On October 24, 1918, one year to the day after Caporetto, in a superbly coordinated operation, six Italian armies crossed the Piave River to expel the invaders from Italy. These six armies were supported by the newly arrived British (3 divisions) French (2 divisions), Czechoslovaks (1 division), Americans (1 regiment), and Romanians (3 companies). Still, the whole attacking force was 90% Italian. (One American history book for children, written by an Italian-American, distorted these facts. It has the Italians entering the war in 1916, instead of 1915, Caporetto taking place in 1918, and only states that, "the Allies came to Italy's defense," totally failing to mention Vittorio Veneto.) The ensuing battle encompassed nearly two million men on both sides. It was the largest battle in history up to that time.

History knows it as the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, named after a small town in the enemy-occupied zone, and it lasted 10 days. By November 1st, only one

week after the offensive began, more than one thousand square miles of Italian soil had been re-conquered in heavy fighting. In one instance, the Austrians lost and retook a railway bridge thirty times before excessive losses forced them to abandon it.

In the air, Italian and Allied aviators were in complete mastery of the skies. By night, in an effort to cut off the Austrian retreat, Italian airships bombarded railway stations while daylight raids wreaked havoc on the dense masses of retreating enemy.

By sea, Italian marines landed at Trieste on the Adriatic on November 3rd, and by the 4th, the Italian Navy served notice to the Austrians that their position as a maritime power had ended.

According to General Gathorne-Hardy, British Chief of Staff, November 4th saw at least one-third of the Austro-Hungarian Infantry and almost their entire complement of artillery captured by the Italians — 500,000 men and thousands of heavy weapons. This was the only field battle during the entire First World War that was truly an Allied military victory. Vittorio Veneto regained more territory than was ever reconquered in France and caused the defeat and collapse of Germany's greatest ally. Germany sued for armistice on the Western Front immediately afterward.

The Agony of Victory

Revisionist historians have either given Italy's Allies too much credit at Vittorio Veneto or have pictured Austria-Hungary as an inconsequential enemy. The fact of the matter is whatever can be said of the Austrians' morale can be said of the Germans. Both nations suffered from the Allied sea blockade, both had been bled white by the war, both were experiencing internal political turmoil, and both faced an Allied force being resupplied by the American arse-

(concluded on p.15)

The Italic Way



Focus

Image: What's behind it?

by
Cristina Zaccarini, John Mancini,
Roy Iaconis

Item 1: Entrepreneur Joseph Ricci dreamed of opening a small racetrack in Maine. His bank at first agreed to a \$1 million line of credit but later abruptly terminated it after hearing rumors that Ricci was mob-related. (Ricci brought suit and was awarded a \$10 million judgement against the bank.)

Item 2: Towering majestically over the boardwalk at Atlantic City stands the larger-than-life statue of Augustus guarding the entrance to the gambling palace that carries his title, "Caesar's". Few realize that this Italic emperor lived an austere life as founder of the Roman Empire. His morality was so strict that he had his only daughter banished from Italy for adultery. Yet, the emperor's image—as evidenced by his presence at a modern gambling casino -- has become, like that of ancient Roman Italy, synonymous with iniquity.

Item 3: On the Oprah Winfrey Show ABC reporter Sam Donaldson breaks the news to Geraldine Ferraro that every Italian-American politician better be prepared to survive a Mafia audit of his or her past.

One would be hard-pressed to find another ethnic group which is so heavily bashed in public and yet collectively fails to comprehend the long-term damage that is being inflicted upon it. The mass of Italian-Americans either believe grudgingly in the tarnished image or doesn't believe that such an image has any effect on their personal lives. Nonetheless, the media continue to grind out simplistic images of the Italic people that are regurgitated year after year in an unbroken cycle. Today's viewer will be tomorrow's producer or writer parroting back the sights and sounds for another generation to memorize. The cycle does not break of its own accord.

To get an idea of how stereotyping paints everything with the same brush just accept for a moment the assumption that all WASPs are hillybillies. Indeed, Appalachia and beyond are chock full of



The "Fonz" from *Happy Days*
Chico Marx, Groucho's "Italic" brother.

WASPs that we sometimes refer to as *hillbillies*. In Italian the word closest to this is *cafone*, and judging from the sitcom characters depicting Italics, *urban hillbillies* or *cafoni* would be their identifying label. Logically, there are some *cafoni* among the Italic population but not all Italics are *cafoni*. Nor are all WASPs *hillbillies*. Logical? Not to scriptwriters who must meet viewer expectations. Expectations which scriptwriters before them raised.

"So what?" is the casual reply of most Americans of Italian descent to the negative but often entertaining portrayals of their ethnic characters. It is no conjecture that Italic characters are depicted negatively on a two-to-one ratio in television; for such was determined in a Sons of Italy study a short time ago. If people can be made to believe that *real* Italian-American mothers serve jarred sauce at family gatherings or that an Italic male is the perfect housekeeper then Madison Avenue and Hollywood have done their jobs well. Nor should we question how Italians can create and maintain regimented and disciplined criminal societies while depicted as governing a whole

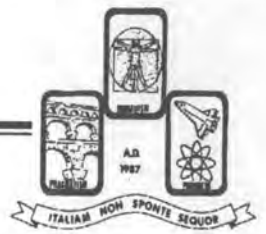
country as a chaotic circus. Obviously, Italic stereotypes need not be consistent.

Often, stereotypes come full circle when Italian-Americans spew back what they have absorbed from the media. Witness candidate Geraldine Ferraro's comment that she knew nothing of her husband's (John Zaccaro) finances because, "You know Italian men," as she described his business silence. In movies like the *Godfather*, *Mean Streets*, *Raging Bull*, *Rocky*, *Blood Brothers*, and *A Woman under the Influence*, Italic men are depicted as bullies who beat their wives. Likewise, and somewhat substantiated by Mrs. Zuccaro, the Italic woman is shown to be lacking in control of her life, a passive victim of circumstance.

If nothing else arouses the indignation of the Italic community against stereotyping, the effect it is having on Italian-American youth ought to be a cause for concern. Today's children have greater access to a wide-ranging selection of rented videos, cable television, and questionable broadcast programming than earlier generations, thanks to our open society and advanced technology. Coming of age brings the need for role-models. In years past, the Italic child had to make do with nonethnic heroes - *Rocky Jones*, *Space Ranger*, *Roy Rogers*, *the Beaver*, etc. In a way, it was good - the child wasn't faced with narrow ethnic steering. Now, of course, all that has changed.

Joseph Giordano, a clinical psychologist, observes that while the show *Happy Days* was airing many young Italian-American males saw themselves as the "Fonz"—a high school drop-out, a tough although likeable Italic character. For Italian-American youth, media portrayals can lead them through a gamut of reactions: emulation, feelings of negative self-worth, inferiority, low achievement, denial of ethnicity, and even aggression.

Although no study has been done to date, our own research has found alarm-



Focus

ing cases of Italian-American youth in the pre-teen to teenage years that indicate an identification of crime with Italic people that even leads to role-playing of Italic criminals. In one incident at an Aurora Youth Program class, the children (5th & 6th graders) were asked if they had seen any movies about Italians or Italian-Americans. One boy immediately responded that he had seen the movie *Scarface*. Ironically, the new version of *Scarface* starred Italic actor Al Pacino but was about Cuban gangsters. For some reason, this 12-year old identified it with Italic criminals (in fact, the old version was about Al Capone).

Similarly, teachers in mostly Italian-American school systems report witnessing role-playing by their boy students in acting out Mafia intimidation and organization among their group, even though for fun. Nonetheless, the message is clear: regardless of how many Italian-Americans rise to prominence in government, law, and academia, it is the fantasy of movies and television that provide the stuff of role-modeling outside the Italic family. It is not so startling an observation when we think of how great an influence Black sports figures are to Black youth. But while Black youth may choose between the *Bill Cosby Show* and *Amen*, Italic youth must often find their role-models in the background of police programs where, if they are lucky, there will be an Italic "good guy", but always an Italic "bad guy". One show went so far as to delete the criminal's Italic surname but called him *Augie* and had him eating *calamari* (squid).

Uphill Struggle

Not all Italian-Americans have been complacent over Ital-bashing. And barring actual production of pro-Italic movies and television shows we have witnessed uncoordinated efforts in dealing with negative images:

The Puzo/Coppola money-maker, *The Godfather*, spawned of all things, a

chain of fastfood outlets known as Godfather's Pizza. When first launched the pizzerias went heavy on the innuendo; employees wore fedoras and delivered pizzas in a hearse. The Sons of Italy's Commission for Social Justice could stand no more and confronted the Godfather's owners with their objections. After lengthy negotiating with Godfather's "mob lawyer", the respected former U.S. Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti, Godfather's agreed to tone down the theme and eventually donated \$10,000 to the Sons of Italy's scholarship fund. Now subdued, the chain still does a national business cashing in on the Italic criminal image.



John Travolta as Tony Manero, the low-goal wonder.

Less institutionized Ital-bashing has met the vocal whiplash of other Italian-American groups. The Statue of Liberty commemoration in 1986 was another opportunity to bait Italics by omission, in this case by omitting an Italian immigrant from the 12 honorees at the Statue's celebration. The insult was much the worse since Lee Iacocca had chaired the restoration committee and was responsible for a highly successful fundraising campaign. Indeed, the Italian-American community had responded generously to the appeal and was then denied recognition. New York's Coalition of Italian-

American Associations fumed at the oversight but lost its fight to include an Italian at the main celebration.

The dilemma faced by the Italic people is made worse by their lack of unity and direction. On the one hand we find local chapters of national anti-defamation groups trodding their own path to make a name for themselves while on the other we see vast national resources being wasted on low-yield projects. A few years ago a local New York chapter of the Sons of Italy's Commission for Social Justice spent their modest funds to fly off to Hollywood to beard the movie moguls in their den — to reason with the image-makers. Needless to say, the moguls were all smiles and the New Yorkers basked in the assurances they received, a la Neville Chamberlain.

Then we have the case of the Italian government, most interested in achieving a new image around the world. Last October, the Italians spent, by their own account, \$4 million to provide New Yorkers with operas, puppet shows, and art exhibits during Italian Heritage Month. Although culturally refreshing such a high-level approach to image-building does not reach the appropriate media and therefore attracts an extremely limited audience. In other words, there is not much image-building for the buck, or lira, in this case.

The only organization that has promoted the Italic image and gone "public" with Italic pride has been the Columbus Citizens Foundation of New York. These are the folks who put together the Columbus Day parade up Fifth Avenue every year, the only positive mass media, i.e., televised, event produced by Italian-Americans. Recently, the Foundation produced a two-part video entitled, *Italians and the Creating of America*. This modest but excellent video is a visual version of the classic work of the late Italian-American historian Giovanni Schiavo, *Four*

(continued on p. 22)

The Italic Way



United 222 B.C.
Peace & Civ. 13 B.C.

A GATHERING OF GENIUS

On June 24, 1988, New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel was the site of the first annual Explorer's Day Awards dinner, a gala event honoring Italo-



Society President John Mancini presents Prof. Broglio's award to the Italian Consul General, Francesco Corrias,

American and Italian scientists who have contributed to the cause of space research and exploration. The Commerce & Realty Group of The Society for Italic Studies sponsored this gathering of genius. Five modern-day explorers and all participants joined in commemorating their predecessor — Giovanni Caboto, the Venetian navigator whose explorations made it possible for England to lay a claim to North America. On June 24, 1497, Cabot planted the Union Jack, as well as the flag of Venice, on Cape Breton Island, and forever altered the history of the New World.

The Explorer's Day Dinner was the Society's first fund-raising effort as

well as the launching pad for the Society's new Manhattan-based Commerce & Realty Group. Dinner Chairman Edward Riguardi of Williams Real Estate did a superb job in organizing the event, which attracted nearly 300 guests. The funds raised will support the scripting of the television documentary "Beyond Italy: The Migrations", and the various other programs of the Society (Aurora Youth Program, *The Italic Way*, and the Ara Pacis).

In addition to the honorees or their representatives there were a number of dignitaries present: Hon. Francesco Corrias, Consul General of Italy; Mr. Roy Rosetti, Executive Director of the Italian-American Chamber of Commerce; and Mr. Sebastiano Musini of

Honored that night were:

Prof. Luigi Broglio - Director of Italy's "Project San Marco" and head of the Italian Space Satellite program.

Dr. Riccardo Giacconi - Director of the Space Telescope Science Institute, Professor of Astrophysics at Johns Hopkins University, and Project Director of the soon-to-be launched \$1.5 billion Orbiting Telescope.

Mr. Philip Bono - Inventor of an early prototype of the space shuttle for NASA and author of two books, *Destination Mars* (1961) and *Frontiers of Space* (1969).

Dr. Rocco Petrone - Former Project Director for NASA's Apollo moon landing program.



(l to r) Dr. R. Giacconi, Mr. Jay Bono (for R. Bono), R. Iaconis (for Dr. Petrone), Consul F. Corrias (for Prof Broglio), S. Gristina (SIS), J. Mancini (SIS), Mr. R. Garbarini, E. Riguardi (Commerce & Realty Group)

RAI-USA (National Television). Senator Alphonse D'Amato, although unable to attend, sent his personal greetings to the honorees. Governor Cuomo, because of a snafu on the part of his staff, was unable to add his accolades to the evening's activities.

Mr. Robert F. Garbarini - Former Deputy Associate Administrator of NASA and former President of Western Union's Space Division who implemented the first U.S. domestic satellite system.

Project Italia

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The President of The Society for Italic Studies, John L. Mancini, who served as the master of ceremonies, provided the rich historical context for the evening's festivities. In honoring the modern day explorers, President Mancini remarked,

"The men we honor tonight just happen to be of Italian descent. For, what each of them accomplished in his chosen field is for all the people of this planet. They are 'uomini universale', a Renaissance term meaning they are 'universal men' first, ethnic Italians second."



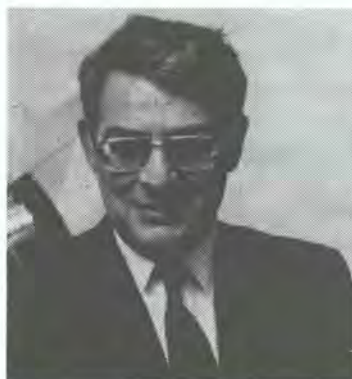
Philip Bono



Prof. Luigi Broglio



Robert Garbarini



Dr. Riccardo Giacconi



Dr. Rocco Petrone

Vittorio Veneto

(Continued from p. 11)

nal. If Italy was considered the weak link in the Allied war effort than obviously the Italian front was the weak point for the Germans and Austrians. It was Vittorio Veneto that was the final straw that broke the back of the Central Powers. Germany was never defeated on the Western Front in the sense that the French, British and Americans shattered their lines and entered Germany proper. What did occur was an armistice — an end to the fighting. This armistice took place on November 11, 1918, seven days after Italy knocked Austria out of the war.

Finally, history must acknowledge

the terrible price Italy paid for its participation in the "war to end all wars". There are 35,000 graves that mark the Italian dead at Vittorio Veneto. And although the original 1914 participants suffered substantially more casualties, Italy suffered 600,000 war dead and 1 million wounded. Italian losses were greater in relation to population than Britain's or America's. And while 8,000 Allied soldiers died in service on the Italian front, some 15,000 Italians perished in France and another 8,000 died in the Balkans, Palestine, and Siberian Russia. This sacrifice was then and even now not fully acknowledged by the nations that fought alongside Italy, including our own.

(Note: Research for this article included a 1930 Atlantica piece written by Major Edgar Erskine Hume, USA, veteran of the Italian campaign. Until WW II, Caporetto and the Piave-Vittorio Veneto actions were standard reading at the U.S. Infantry School)

\$50

We will pay you \$50 for any idea you have for our Aurora Youth Program. Send us practical ideas for Italic-related games, crafts, or special teaching methods aimed at our 10, 11, & 12 year olds and if we can use them we'll pay. Remember, they must have an Italic slant. Write: **Aurora**, c/o The Society for Italic Studies, Inc., PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001



Perspectives

[Highlights of historical records that shed light on modern times]

REMEMBERING ATLANTICA

by Dominick Lamonica

(When *The Italic Way* printed excerpts from the May 1930 issue of *Atlantica*, a reader wrote he "was completely unaware that there was any serious Italian-American publication back then" and asked for details.)

Yes indeed, there was very much an *Atlantica* way back then. Its founder and publisher was Dr. Filippo Cassola, a prominent New York physician in his day. He began his professional career here upon graduation from the Royal University of Naples, and some years later retired to Rome in 1923. That year he began a new monthly, *Rivista d'Italia*



The author, as he looked during his term as editor (1930-34). An assortment of copies of *Atlantica*

e d'America, which he envisioned as a connecting link between his homeland and the country where he had lived for many years. He returned to America in 1925 to resume his practice, and shortly thereafter he brought the magazine over.

There was a difference. In Italy, the *Rivista* was published mainly in Italian and devoted mostly to things Italian. In America, under the new name *Atlantica*, it was printed in English and dealt with the interests and achievements of Italian-

Americans. Its aim was to show the many, varied, and important contributions they had been and were making to American life and progress.

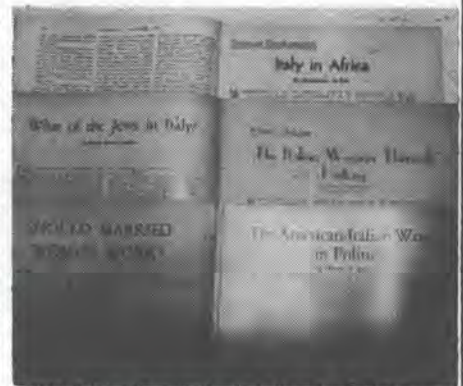
Fresh out of journalism school, the writer was invited to become its managing editor in 1930, a position he held until 1934. Of this period he can speak from personal knowledge.

It was, of course, the era of the Great Depression, but there was also a great deal of other history going on here and abroad. A ferment of new ideas existed, carrying over from the so-called Golden Age of the twenties. The intellectual issues of the day included such disillusioning matters as a prevailing disrespect for law and order (stemming from futile attempts to enforce the Prohibition laws), clouded international relations (a legacy of the unsettled conditions following the postwar Treaty of Versailles), and the uncovering of scandals in the financial and political halls of the mighty. There was even a questioning of traditional democratic ways: could they overcome America's long economic slide before it might erupt into popular revolt?

Against this background *Atlantica* played its role of a cultural monthly during the early thirties. Averaging 48 pages plus cover, it used several pages to report regularly on news of Italian-Americans, their organizations and advances throughout the United States. It reproduced selected editorials from the American press. It ran translated short stories by eminent Italians, by both recognized and beginning Italian-American authors. It printed articles, based on research, about hitherto unknown Italian explorers, Civil War generals, business and financial magnates. It regularly interviewed up-and-coming young Italian-Americans — and those who had already arrived. It ran articles by and about Italian-American women, too, in the professions, the arts, even politics. And let us not forget sports, where many Ital-

ian-Americans made names for themselves, even back then.

Over the years *Atlantica* developed a talented staff of voluntary contributing editors as well as a loyal, above-average readership. These readers, mostly doctors, lawyers, teachers and the like, frequently expressed opinions in letters to



Some of the not-so-dated articles from *Atlantica*

the editor, and even occasionally sent in articles in their field of expertise.

There were many other Italian-American periodicals then, probably more than today. All the major American cities and many lesser ones had their own weekly newspapers. Copies were regularly sent to *Atlantica* as one source of its own condensed news reporting. And the writer remembers himself contributing to *La Settimana*, an outstanding weekly edited by Edward Corsi, as well as *La Follia di New York*, a weekly newspaper published by Marziale Sisca. *La Follia* claimed it was the oldest Italian weekly in the United States, established in 1893.

The writer regrets he does not know what became of *Atlantica* after 1934. Perhaps among the readers of *The Italic Way* are some graybeards who can shed a little light on its later years. It would be welcome indeed — in the here and now.



Perspectives

Vittorio Veneto: The Agony of Victory

by John Memone

In October of 1917, the Italian Army suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of a combined Austro-Hungarian and German Army. The front along which the enemy force advanced into Italy extended more than 40 miles but the battle took the name of a town in the center of the action — Caporetto. To students of history, Caporetto is known as the low point in the Italian fortunes of World War I. Numerous papers have been written about the encounter with emphasis on the aid given to the hard-pressed Italians by their allies France, Britain, and the U.S.

Ernest Hemingway capitalized on the Italian defeat in his famous novel *Farewell to Arms*. And historians generally seem preoccupied with pointing out Italy's military shortcomings while suspiciously ignoring her contributions to the Allied war effort.

The facts surrounding Caporetto are these: After holding the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire at bay in the rugged mountain regions of Northern Italy and western Austria for two years, the Italians were overwhelmed by an offensive that pushed them back to a line west of the Piave River on the Venetian Plain. The Austrian offensive was a direct result of Russia's withdrawal from the war. With Russia's collapse, Austria was able to relocate its eastern armies, less four divisions that were sent to the Western Front, to beef up its forces fighting the Italians. A masterful Italian retreat coupled with a swollen Piave River saved the Italians from total collapse. Nevertheless, a major portion of the Italian army was either dead or captured. Startled at the prospect of losing Venice and tired of retreat, the Italians resolved to hold the Piave at all costs. The cry of "*Qui, e non piu' di qui*"

("Here and no farther") inspired the soldiers to hold their line. And hold they did without any help from the Allies.

What happened after Caporetto is little known outside of Italy. The general histories written by French and British authors amount to historic revisionism in which Italy's contribution to the end of the Great War was minimized. In fact, the entire disdainful attitude of Italy's allies during and after the war contributed to the rise of Mussolini.

The Fronts

On the Western Front, Caporetto sent shock waves through the Allied High Command, forcing it to acknowledge the strategic importance of the Italian front. Since 1915, the Royal Italian Army had stood alone against the Imperial Army of Austria-Hungary reinforced by six divisions of the German Army, masses of



Some of the 500,000 Austrian prisoners captured at Vittorio Veneto.

troops that could have fought on the Western Front. (Among the German contingent was a young Irwin Rommel just then learning his craft.) The Italian front was as long as that in the West (some 450 miles) but a nightmare of solid rock and mountains where every foot forward required two feet upward. It was a front where trenches had to be blasted out of stone and where the dead could not

be buried.

Meanwhile, in France, the Allied forces consisted of the French and British Armies backed by the industrial might of the United States. By late 1917, the entire British Empire was supplying manpower from Canada, Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand. If that weren't enough, the United States also committed over two million soldiers and marines to France. Yet, despite this array of power the Germans considered the Italian front vital enough to divert six divisions to help Austria deal with the Italians who "...gripped (Austria) more tightly than ever at the throat..." (General Ludendorf).

The fact that Germany would divert troops to fight the Italians says more about the Italian front than revisionist historians care to admit. It appears evident that the Central Powers believed that bringing Italy to her knees would force the Allies to pull men and supplies away from the stalemated Western Front. Nevertheless, Caporetto failed to achieve anything more than a short-lived Austrian victory. Without question, Caporetto was a staggering blow to Italy's morale and her war effort. Italy was nearing the end of her manpower reserves and seventeen year olds had to be called to the colors.

On to Victory

Eventually the Allies sent troops to aid a battered Italy. *But at no time were there ever more Allied troops in Italy than there were Italian troops in France.* In fact, the Italians had managed to station two divisions at the Western Front where they distinguished themselves at the 2nd battle of the Marne blocking a German advance at the time that American Marines were getting their baptism of fire at nearby Chateau-Thierry. The token aid that flowed into Italy after Caporetto was meant more to demon-

(Continued on p. 11)

The Italic Way



Aurora

Youth Program

ENRICO FERMI THE FIRST MAN TO SPLIT THE ATOM

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY VERY FEW PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THE POWER OF THE ATOM. ENRICO FERMI AND A HANDFUL OF ITALIAN SCIENTISTS WERE THE FIRST TO "SPLIT THE ATOM" IN 1934, FERMI WON THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR HIS WORK.



ALTHOUGH FERMI LOVED HIS NATIVE ITALY, HE FEARED MUSSOLINI'S FASCIST GOVERNMENT. IN 1938 HE AND HIS FAMILY LEFT ITALY FOR THE SAFETY AND FREEDOM OF AMERICA.



IN AMERICA, FERMI MET OTHER SCIENTISTS WHO HAD ESCAPED FROM WAR-TORN EUROPE. ALBERT EINSTEIN WAS SO IMPRESSED BY FERMI'S THEORY FOR AN ATOMIC BOMB THAT HE WROTE TO PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT ABOUT IT.



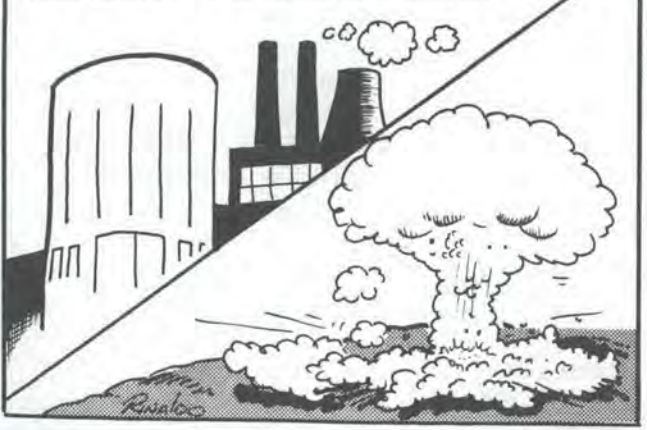
BY 1942, WORKING FOR HIS NEW COUNTRY, THE UNITED STATES, FERMI AND HIS TEAM OF SCIENTISTS BUILT THE FIRST "ATOMIC PILE" IN A LABORATORY UNDER THE CHICAGO UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL FIELD.



MANY SCIENTISTS ON THE TEAM FEARED THAT FERMI WAS GOING TO SET OFF A **NUCLEAR EXPLOSION** AND DESTROY CHICAGO. BUT FERMI CALMED THEIR FEARS **BY BREAKING FOR LUNCH!** AFTER LUNCH THE WORLD HAD IT'S FIRST "**CONTROLLED NUCLEAR REACTION**" FERMI'S TEAM CELEBRATED WITH A BOTTLE OF ITALIAN WINE.



"THE ITALIAN NAVIGATOR HAS REACHED THE NEW WORLD" WAS THE NEWS PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT RECEIVED. THE ATOMIC AGE BEGAN - FOR GOOD AND EVIL.





ITALY: THE FIRST UNIFICATION

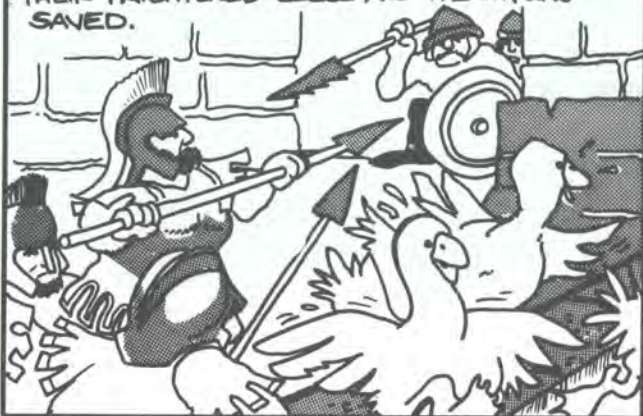
HUNDREDS OF YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, ITALY WAS INHABITED BY MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE: GREEKS, ETRUSCANS, CELTS (RELATED TO TODAY'S IRISH), AND ITALIC PEOPLE LIKE THE ROMANS.



THE CELTS HAD INVADED ITALY FROM ACROSS THE ALPS AND EVEN REACHED THE GATES OF ROME.



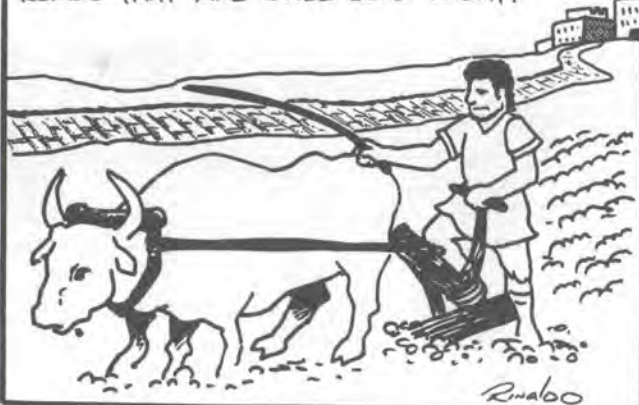
ONE NIGHT THE CELTS TRIED TO CAPTURE THE CITY, FORTUNATELY, THE ROMANS WERE AWAKENED BY THEIR FRIGHTENED GEESSE AND THE CITY WAS SAVED.



THE ROMANS AND THE OTHER ITALIC PEOPLE ALWAYS DREAMED OF UNITING ALL OF ITALY. BY THE YEAR 222 B.C. THE ITALIAN ALLIES DEFEATED THE CELTS AT MILAN AND ALL OF THE ITALIAN PENINSULA, SICILY AND SARDINIA CAME UNDER THE RULE OF ROME.



TO UNIFY ALL PARTS OF ITALY, ROMAN AND ITALIAN COLONIES WERE SETTLED FROM THE ALPS TO SICILY. THESE COLONIES WERE CONNECTED BY ROADS THAT ARE STILL USED TODAY.



AFTER ITALY WAS UNIFIED, ROME LED THE ITALIANS TO BECOME THE RULERS OF A VAST EMPIRE THE SIZE OF THE UNITED STATES WITH 80 MILLION INHABITANTS. IT TOOK 500 YEARS TO UNITE ITALY, BUT AFTERWARD IT ONLY TOOK 200 YEARS TO CREATE THE ROMAN EMPIRE.





Announcements

[We welcome news from all Italic organizations. Tell us what projects you have underway and any activities you are planning or have completed.]

THE COLUMBUS CITIZENS FOUNDATION, INC.

The Foundation sponsors the annual Columbus Day parade up New York's Fifth Avenue. Also to its credit, the Foundation has produced a two-part video entitled, *The Italians and the Creating of America*. Copies may be obtained for \$29.95 per part (total for both parts: \$49.95) plus \$2.50 shipping. Send check or money or to:

WTL Productions, Box 351, Primos, PA 19018. For additional information call (215) 626-7470.

ORDER, SONS OF ITALY IN AMERICA

This fraternal organization was founded in 1905 and has approximately 2,000 filial lodges across the country. Its work includes fundraising for charities such as Cooley's Anemia, March of Dimes, and Cerebral Palsy. It is the keeper of the Garibaldi-Meucci Museum in Staten Island, NY (a national landmark). The Order fights ethnic discrimination with its Commission for Social Justice, headed by Justice Dominick Massaro.

The Grand Lodge of Connecticut has raised approximately half of the \$1 million necessary to reach its goal of establishing a Chair in modern Italian history at the University of Connecticut. The goal was inspired and partly funded by Emiliana Pasca Noether, an educator at the university of Connecticut. For additional information contact Robert or Judith Della Donna, 102 Gaylord Lane, Torrington, CT 06790.

The National Order marked the 4th anniversary of its Douhet-Mitchell International Airpower Award with the presentation of a trophy to a graduate of the U.S.A.F. Air War College. Awards are alternated each year with the Italian Air War College in Florence. Gen. Giulio Douhet was an Italian aviator who advocated saturation bombing and airpower at the close of World War I. He was a contemporary of Col. Billy Mitchell, American advocate of airpower.

Information about the Order can be obtained from Mr. Michael Caira, National Director, 388 Main Street, Wilmington, MA 01887.

CONSORTIUM FOR ATLANTIC STUDIES (CAS)

CAS is a unit of the Arizona State University with special interest in trans-Atlantic relations. October 24-28th will be devoted to Italy Week, a in-depth look at Italy's history, economy, culture, music, and its relations with the U.S. and Europe. U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini will open the event. For information call Prof. Pier Baldini (602) 965-7783 or write CAS Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-2201.

AMERICAN ITALIAN CULTURAL & LITERARY ROUNDTABLE

Founded and led by Dr. Michael R. Cioffi, the A.I.C.L.R. is a nonprofit Italic cultural organization. For information write to Dr. Michael Cioffi, 4461 Hill Acre, Bronx, NY 10466, or call (212) 243-3293.

The Roundtable will hold a stage reading of the play *Cipango* by Dr. Anne Paolucci. *Cipango* is a reenactment of Columbus' attempt to obtain funding for his first voyage. The reading will be held on Saturday October 1st at Fordham University, Lincoln Center, New York City, (time not specified). An audio cassette version of the play can be obtained by calling (516) 932-1275 (price not specified).

ITALIAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE

Headed by Dr. Joseph V. Scelsa, the Institute is part of the City University of New York located at 33 West 42nd Street, NY, NY 10036. Tel # (212) 382-0627

The Institute has launched a new TV magazine series called *Italics* on CUNY/TV Cable Channel A/14 in Manhattan, Ch. 33 in the other boroughs. Check your listings. The series explores the Italic affairs around town with interviews and at-the-scene activities.



C.R.G.

The Commerce & Realty Group

[The Commerce & Realty Group is sponsored by The Society for Italic Studies and was founded to encourage interaction among Italic businessmen and those that share the desire to support the goals of The Society]

Successful Fundraiser Launches the Commerce & Realty Group

We have devoted a portion of our newsletter to the Commerce & Realty Group, an affiliated organization that will expand the Society's good works into the business community. Although it is not yet officially chartered, the CRG has taken Manhattan by storm with its first fundraising dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria this past June 24th. (See details on p. 14).

Edward Riguardi, dinner chairman and General Secretary pro tem of the Commerce & Realty Group, along with his dinner committee were able to draw together 286 paying guests of varying ethnic background in the span of only 12 weeks. This was an amazing feat for a new organization.

In the coming months, the Group will be formally chartered by the Society and begin its business of growing. Address all inquiries to CRG, c/o The Society for Italic Studies, Inc., PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001.



Our Dinner Committee takes a well-deserved bow. (See p. 25 for a list of the Dinner Committee)



Ed Riguardi, Dinner Chairman receives the Project Italia Medallion from John Mancini, Pres. S.I.S.

Job Market

Experienced commercial property manager seeking Manhattan location. Background in mechanical operations and new building technologies. Strong managerial experience with emphasis on newly constructed building. For resume, write *The Italic Way*, Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001. Ask for Job Market A

Job Market

Seasoned corporate communications/investor relations professional seeks a supervisory position with a major financial services organization on Long Island/Manhattan. Well-versed in real estate, limited partnerships and economic/accounting issues. For resume write *The Italic Way*, Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001. Ask for Job Market B.

The Italic Way would like to grow.

We would like to expand our circulation. We would like to pack more interesting articles in each copy. We would like to become a bi-monthly magazine. We would even like to go "color". But, the lack of advertising is holding us back.

Just imagine how we feel going to companies that owe most of their business to Italic patronage and being told that the public is not interested in an Italic newsletter. We did just that and companies like **Villa Banfi** (Riunite wines), **Perillo Tours**, and **Italcable** really feel that way. Well for us that is not the Italic way! If you or your company want to help, let us know.

Call for our Rate Card: 212 967-2243 or Write: *The Italic Way*, PO Box 818, Floral Park, NY 11001



Images

(Continued from p. 13)

Hundred Years of the History of Italians in America. Still, the video represents only a small step in reaching the mass of America's viewing public. It is neither a prime-time *Roots*, nor a Public-Television quality documentary. But at the moment it is the best effort.

Barring the same kind of magic that changed for the better the Russian media image, we can look forward to the same old Italic stuff. (The reader will recall that a Soviet diplomatic offense coupled with the rise of Gorbachev's "liberal" administration brought to a sudden end Russian-bashing in the media. We are now witnessing a more respectful view of Russians with such films as *Red Heat*, with its tough Russian cop fighting American criminals.)

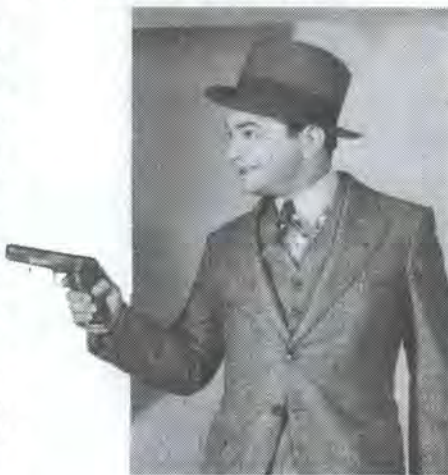
Can the media image of the Italic people be improved? Surely the fact that Italic filmmakers have arrived in force on the scene is no reason to celebrate (see below). What is lacking is the realization that image is not a product of economic achievement or political clout. Image is media. To change image one must change media. The Italic people have not come to terms with that simple logic.

The New Padroni

A funny thing happens when you analyse the evolution of movie stereotypes. We went back in time, drawing frequently from our collective personal memories to try to find out what went wrong with the Italic image. We were shocked to arrive at the conclusion that the most fatal wounds have been self-inflicted, more accurately, inflicted by what we call the new *padroni*. The word *padrone* means 'boss' in Italian and the term was frequently applied during the time of the great migration to describe Italians who exploited their own kind. The *padroni* would 'hire out' a gang of

raw immigrant workers for a sum of money and pay each of them a pittance while keeping the greater part of the salaries for his "brokerage".

Today's *padroni* are the Italic authors and moviemakers who cash in on a simple idea: *give criminals an Italic soul*. The result is a criminal with a code of honor and a loving family. Even many Italian-Americans have become enamored with the organizational skills, extensive power, and tender familial devotion of the movie mafioso. Italic moviemakers have even given these



Little Caesar

murderers their own beautiful song, *The Theme from the Godfather*.

In effect, our new *padroni* have filled the void in Italian-American folklore. To the general public Jesse James was just a rebel, Bugs Moran was just a gangster, Myer Lansky was just a shyster, but Big Al was King of Chicago and Don Corleone will always be the ultimate Italian powerbroker. Needless to say, this winning combination of character traits and cinematic skill make the new *padroni* millions. Unfortunately, 12 million Italian-Americans have the burden to bear. But for the mythmakers of the silver screen, that burden and any concern over such defamation is merely our fantasy, and hey, what's the harm — the filmmakers are "Italic" too!

The silver screen would not have so readily tarnished the Italic image had the *padroni* pursued other dreams... like animal documentaries. Let's examine what the viewing public was watching before the *padroni* arrived on the scene.

Little Caesar (1931) - Edward G. Robinson starred as mobster Enrico Bandello. (The federal crime law was named RICO: **R**ackets **I**nfluenced and **C**orrupt **O**rganization as a tribute to this first Italian-American screen gangster). Much like the other gangsters in the movies of the 30's, Rico was the anti-hero who fought his way up the criminal ladder and fell by the final reel. Rico, like his Irish and German equivalents of the day, was a gang leader, a loner, without Mafia roots. He came in as a punk and died like one. *Little Caesar* was a moral lesson to all of America's youth.

Kiss of Death (1947)

Cry of the City (1948) - Both these movies starred Swiss-American actor Victor Mature as either a reformed Italic criminal or a law-enforcing Italic cop. His opposite number in the latter film was Richard Conte who played the 100% crook. The movies attempted to reflect the dual side of the Italian-American experience. There was never a question of who was the hero. And if the Italic community was bloodied by the criminal portrayal it was counterbalanced by the good image and the fact that name dropping like *Mafia* was non-existent.

House of Strangers (1949) - Although not a gangster film, we use it to illustrate that as early as 1949 Hollywood was portraying Italian-Americans in roles of the rich and famous. In this case, it was an excellent film about the Giannini family (with fictitious names) of Bank of America fame. The story's tension revolved around the fratricidal struggle of a once close-knit Italic clan over the



control of a banking empire without resort to hitmen or horse's heads.

Pay or Die (1960) - Ernest Borgnine portrayed real life Lt. Joseph Petrosino, first Italian-American detective on the New York police force. In the first decade of this century, Lt. Petrosino organized the *Italian Squad* to combat the Black Hand, a criminal organization that terrorized the Italic community. Petrosino died in the line of duty and left a legacy of pride among Italian-Americans both in real life and as a result of this movie. This movie is as rarely seen as the kiwi bird. (Not an Italic product)

Untouchables (ca. 1960)- This television series starred Italic actor Robert Stack as Elliott Ness. It was this show that introduced a new generation of Americans to Al Capone and Frank Nitti. It was this series that started Italic organizations howling because of the concentration of Italian names and accents. It must be said, however, that other ethnic groups were well represented and the television version dispensed with the vulgar ethnic slurs that pervade the new version.

Serpico (1970)- Like most of the good image media, this movie **was** based on a true story. Frank Serpico was an honest cop in New York City among a lot of bad apples, mostly non-Italic. His exploits and courage made the transition to the screen. This was not written, directed or produced by any Italian-Americans. The star was, ironically, Al Pacino, future son of Godfather.

Seven Beauties (Italian)(1976) - This Lina Wertmuller (Italian of Swiss ancestry) film is a cult classic that fully mocks the Southern Italian heritage with a Neapolitan protagonist who murders a rival and mutilates his body for disposal by shipment in nondesigner luggage. Although the film goes on to its theme of human survival amid Nazi

atrocities it clearly holds no love for the "mediterranean" trash of Southern Italy. It further links despicable crime with the Italic image. American public television is enamored with this cult film.

The Godfather (1972) - Italian-American filmmakers arrived on the scene bringing their personal "experience" and art to the cinema. Not only do Puzo and Coppola not bother to throw in a token "good" Italian but they steep all their bad guys in the deepest Italic virtues of family duty, loyalty, filial piety, personal honor, etc. The public now received a classic visual image that permanently tied Italic culture to Mafiosi, something previous filmmakers of the past had never done. Our hero is the guy whose hat is a lighter shade of black and there is no mistake that he's a *real Italian*.

Of course, once this classic image was further engrained in the American psyche by **Godfather II**, everything went on auto-pilot. America got fully into mafia-mania with such gems as **Mafia Wife**, **Frank the Enforcer**, **The Untouchables**, **Goonies**, that lovable Spielberg film that featured the comic relief of the Fratelli gang, **Risky Business**, with Guido the pimp, even **Breaking Away** turned it's role-model Team Cinzano into a bunch of cheating cyclists. Shows with Italic heroes such as **Columbo** and **Hill Street Blues** fail to give their characters the depth of Italic culture that the bad guys have. Consequently, the culture is tied strongly to criminals and buffoons.

Mafia-mania has infected the news media with stories that continue to play up monickered Mafiosi who are into loansharking, pimping, gambling, cement, and unions, lending credence to a belief that the Mafia controls, somehow, every major criminal undertaking in the nation. Meanwhile our nation plunges the depths with drugs and mass murders committed by not-so-romantic Asians, South Americans, Africans, and with other White ethnics and pure-bred

Americans fleeing the general public via the corporate world.

Unfortunately, these facts have not yet distracted greedy Italic authors and filmmakers.

Suetonius: Ancient Gossip

It all began, we suppose, with a man named Caius Suetonius. Suetonius was a first century A.D. muckraker who was out to please his patron the Emperor Trajan by badmouthing all the emperors who had ruled Rome before him.

It was Suetonius whose book *Life of the Twelve Caesars* gave history its voyeur look at Emperor Tiberius, the despot of Capri. According to Suetonius, and it has never been substantiated elsewhere in the historical record, no crime or perversion was too evil for Tiberius—from bedding with relatives to mutilating political opponents. The old emperor's legend still haunts the beautiful isle of Capri as tour guides pass on Suetonius' gossip to the gossip-loving tourists.

If ancient Italy has a reputation for debauchery and cruelty in the mass media we can thank Suetonius, who would no doubt serve well as editor of any of America's trash tabloids.

Probably the most cruel and least defensible muckraking this ancient gossipmonger did was to defame the wife of Augustus, Livia. All the history books tell us that she was the joy of the first Roman emperor's existence, living 41 years together with her spouse as he oversaw the new empire and the decline of Roman morality. Yet, Suetonius wrote that she poisoned her dear husband to clear the way for her son Tiberius. This calumny, in turn, was picked up by British author Robert Graves in his book, *I Claudius*, which resulted in Livia's total descent into the dark regions. Livia's final degradation took place on public television when Graves' book was adapted to the screen. Thus is the power of the media both then and now. ****



Where were the Italians?

(Translation of p. 9)

Although the theme of the Explorers' Day Dinner was well merited, honoring the man who pioneered the exploration of the New World, I will underscore this point without dwelling on it. Italians, from the era of the Roman Empire to this day and age, have made their contribution to the evolution of western civilization in every field of human expression.

Unfortunately, this society has created an impermeable shield of negative stereotypical images, coating the Italic visage with superficial and erroneous assumptions. It is, therefore, necessary that the Italic people themselves strive to counter the misinformation, bringing to light the true nature of their culture and its enormous storage of creativity and richness.

It is in consideration of the difficulties in assimilation encountered by Italians as a result of negative imagery that the Society for Italic Studies operates, its goal being to educate society by promoting various endeavors which will result in a restructuring of the poor Italic image.

The Explorers Day Dinner was one accomplishment of the Society, an attempt at raising the funds needed to finance this educational goal which now is supported by the determined efforts, both financial and operational, of a small group of people.

Another important aspect of the dinner was the reuniting of Italian Americans and appreciators of Italian culture with Italian entrepreneurs who wished to branch out economically and extend their influence in the States. The result was a truly remarkable one. The nearly three hundred people who participated in the dinner were responsible for the success of an evening which surpassed both "political" and financial expectations. John Mancini, president of the Society, however, was responsible for every exquisite detail, from the

tortellini al pesto to the harmonious sounds of the orchestra. Mancini's love of Italic culture and history set the tone for the entire evening.

The Italian Consul General, Francesco Corrias, by attending the dinner, encouraged the Society even more, serving as testimony that the Italian government supports the efforts of the Society for Italic Studies.

Sebastiano Musini, the RAI-USA representative, showed his receptiveness to the evening's acculturational and informative prowess.

The Italian Chamber of Commerce and its representative, Roy Rossetti, participated on behalf of Italian merchants.

Italian Americans, sensitive to problems of social development and uniquely hardworking, were represented by Edward Riguardi, Vice-President of Williams Real Estate, Dinner Chairman.

Mr. Michael Downey, Vice-President of Mendik Realty, together with an array of Irish, Jewish, Greek, German, Spanish, Afro-American and other ethnic varieties of supporters showed that the Society's goals transcend national and ethnic boundaries.

The only negative result of the evening is that Italian companies failed to support this major endeavor. In essence, their support of events like the Explorers' Dinner could have furthered their own economic gain. Their absence can be interpreted as a snobbery toward Italian Americans, the people to whom they owe their success in the first place. We would like to think that the absentees did not attend the dinner for logistic reasons, perhaps owing to conflicting engagements such as vacation times, or it may be that not enough is known to them about the Society. Whatever the case may be, we hope that enough interest will be taken in the Society to reveal its true essence, which will assuredly precipitate their future participation.

Stefano Gristina, Secretary, S.I.S.
(Translation by Cristina Zaccarini)

From A Reader: Poetry

A Ritroso Nel Tempo
da Gina Dalla Chiara (Bily)

Vorrei prenderti per mano
condurti a ritroso nel tempo,
per portarti
nei prati della mia giovinezza,
quando correvo
a piedi nudi con i capelli al
vento,
calpestando ramuncoli gialli,
papaveri rossi,
accecata da un sole rovente.

Sudata.....
ma tanto felice.

Vorrei tenerti per mano
e fermarmi così accaldata
sotto l'ombra di un ramo.
Ero così giovane allora,
che mai pensavo
alle brutture del mondo.
Mi guardavo attorno
con puri pensieri
alla ricerca
del tuo volto buono
da amare
in religioso silenzio.

\$\$\$

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