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# THE *Italic Way* XXXVI 2011

The magazine of the Italic Institute of America

**LOST  
GENERATION**  
HOME-SCHOOLED

*THE CAST OF MTV'S  
JERSEY SHORE,  
GUIDOS AND  
GUIDETTES*

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

ITALY OR EMPIRE: THE FATAL CHOICE  
JOE COLOMBO'S CIVIL RIGHTS LEAGUE  
WHO'S ITALIAN, WHO'S NOT

HISTORICAL ARTIST DON TROIANI  
WW II - FOR LACK OF FORTUNE  
REVIEWS: AMORE, A SONGBOOK,  
ANTI-ITALIANISM



# The Italic Way

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### Corrections

In our last issue we stated that Hagia Sofia in Istanbul, originally a Christian basilica, was now a mosque. In fact, it was a mosque under the sultans but Kamel Ataturk made it a museum, which it remains today.

## Tid Bits

### THE GOOD

English researchers believe they have discovered the location of King Arthur’s Round Table in Chester, England. The city of Chester was founded by a Roman Legion and the name itself, as all English names ending in –chester, derives from the Latin *castra* (camp). King Arthur is generally believed to be the legendary version of Lucius Artorius Castus, the Roman commander in Fifth Century Britannia. Remaining on the island after the evacuation of the legions, Artorius entered folktales as the hero who fended off the invading Angles and Saxons. The “round table” is thought to have been set up in the old Roman amphitheater. Among those seated at the table would have been another Roman soldier, Lancerius, known to history as Lancelot.



### THE BAD

The Berlin-based Transparency International has published its 2010 list of least corrupt nations. The list reflects general perceptions among those surveyed of corruption and business scams. The United States dropped from #20 to #22, resulting, no doubt, from the



Bernie Madoff and Wall Street scandals. Italy is #67, behind Rwanda. The least corrupt nation is Denmark #1. The most corrupt nation is Somalia at #178.

## TEXAS STONE



In our last issue we documented the work of sculptor Teodoro Bottinelli at Stone Mountain, Georgia. Our roving president Bill Dal Cerro has found that much of Texan history is carved in stone thanks to sculptor Pompeo Coppini. His works include the memorial at the Alamo (at right) and the Texas Rangers monument in Austin.

Coppini (left) emigrated to the United States in 1896. He took his skills to Texas in 1901 where he produced 36 public monuments, 16 portrait statues and 75 portrait busts. He died in 1957 at age 87.



Italian Americans not only helped build America but they decorated it in grand manner.

## AP TESTS TO RESTART

The Italian language Advanced Placement Test was dropped by the College Board at the end of 2009 due to a paucity of student takers. Only about 2,000 high school students nationwide applied for the college-credit tests. The College Board had expected at least 5,000, as the tests are sustained by the fees charged to students. Notwithstanding the low student demand, some community leaders and the Italian government raised enough money (the College Board demanded \$3 million for a 3-year cycle of tests) to placate the Board and get the tests back on track for 2012. Clearly, having the Italian language in American schools is a matter of prestige among some Italic leaders. The Italian government has invested millions of dollars in American school districts to subsidize language teachers over the years. Neither the Italians nor the community leaders see the wisdom of creating demand outside the school system. Dr. Margaret Cuomo, M.D., head of the Italian Language Foundation, believes after-school heritage programs are dead ends: "...a positive opportunity for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, but [they] do not lead to any degree of proficiency or recognition in American schools," she states. "The Italian language must strive for a place in American education – and a standard of excellence."

This quest to scale such a lofty height without the stepping-stones of Italian American student demand has cost Italy as well as our community millions of dollars. Thus far, it has been a frustrating uphill trek. In 2009, only 1,930 students paid to take the Italian AP tests. In contrast, over 3,600 students opted for those in Latin literature. Apparently, multi-ethnic America prefers the classiness of our ancient heritage to that of our modern one.

## CHIPPING AWAY

For many decades now, Italy's reputation for saving Jewish lives during the Second World War was a proud legacy for Italic people around the world. But it appears that some Italian Jews want to revisit that legacy. The prime mover in this revisionism is the Primo Levi Center of Italy and New York, named after the famed author and Auschwitz survivor. The Center has the rapt attention of the Italian government, which observes *Il Giorno della Memoria* each January, on the day Auschwitz was liberated, to atone for Italy's alleged misdeeds. The Center has brought the observance to the United States and encourages Italian Americans to participate in this atonement for their ancestral land. Similarly, the Museum of the Jewish Heritage in New York has tailored its representation of Italy during the Holocaust to omit much of the amazing sacrifices taken by the Italian military and government officials to save Jewish lives.



Primo Levi (left) was only 18 years old when captured by Fascist police for Partisan activities. He was summarily sentenced to death but was spared when he declared himself a Jew. The Fascists jailed him under conditions that even Levi described as quite comfortable. The Germans eventually sent him to Auschwitz. He survived.

While the Italic Institute in no way minimizes the pain and suffering of Italian Jews, there is a surfeit of documentation showing that Italy's conduct before and during the war was far more humane than other nations. In her book, *The Italians and the Holocaust*, author Susan Zuccotti even states that "*Catholic Italy shares with Protestant Denmark the distinction of saving the highest percentage of Jewish lives*" during the Holocaust. Why, then, this sudden urge to demonize Italy's image?

# ITALY UPDATE

by Rosario A. Iaconis

Berlusconism still lives. Barely.

Pundits, politicians and more than a few Italians repulsed by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's narrow victory in the recent parliamentary vote of confidence might find the alternatives even more unpalatable.

A caretaker government would be nothing more than a stopgap interregnum. And early elections could give rise to a stronger Northern League (*Lega Nord*) – emboldening its divisive and xenophobic founder.

Umberto Bossi's vile and vitriolic brand of fractionalism is a cancer on the Italian body politic.

In addition to slandering the south of Italy and besmirching the Eternal City as 'Roma Ladrona' (Thieving Rome), Bossi has scorned the Italian flag and mocked the capital's ancient standard, SPQR (*Senatus Populusque Romanus* – the Senate and People of Rome) – by equating it and all Romans with a vulgar porcine slur: *Sono Porci Questi Romani*.

Nevertheless, for all its electoral clout, Bossi's Northern League has been co-opted by Berlusconi. And now that the canny prime minister has tenuously survived the December 14th confidence vote, Bossi's shrill calls for regional dismemberment will be scaled back yet again – especially if early elections become necessary.

When he originally founded the *Lega Nord*, the former hospital orderly-turned-rabble rouser called for the secession of his fictional 'Padania' from the Italian Republic. (Bossi actually believes that northern Italy is a Celtic nation). His aims are now focused on "fiscal federalism."

Gianfranco Fini, Berlusconi's erstwhile ally – whose departure from the center-right coalition precipitated the crisis – has been weakened. Still, his nascent *Futuro e Libertà per l'Italia* (FLI) party may yet be a factor in the near and long term.

For all his flaws, "Berlusconi has been the touchstone of Italian politics for the last 15 years." Thus wrote Elizabeth Dibble, a senior diplomat advising President Obama in 2009. And the U.S. embassy in Rome has lauded Italy's premier for coming "through

on our top (military) requests, despite domestic political risks."

Moreover, the Continent's third largest economy has ably weathered the global financial meltdown, instituted rigorous pension reforms and pared its public debt.

But whatever else may transpire in the ensuing months, Italy is not the sick man of the European Union. Nor is *il bel Paese* one of the fiscally wobbly P.I.G.S.: Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain.

Despite the debt turmoil engulfing the euro zone – including the recent rise in Italian bond interest spreads – rumors of the Magic Boot's impending default are greatly exaggerated.

As Bocconi University economist Carlo Altomonte –who hails from the southern region of Calabria – has noted, the existential malaise afflicting the Continental peripheral nations does not hold true for Italy. Notwithstanding the sudden spike in the country's borrowing costs, Rome's economic fundamentals are sound.

Both household and corporate savings rates remain high. Italian unemployment at 8.6% is lower than that of the U.S., France or Spain. And Italy's DGP is experiencing

modest but crucial growth.

Finance Minister Giulio Tremonti is largely responsible for this stability. Well regarded

throughout Italy and the West, he could become premier should Silvio falter.

As the seat of the ancient empire that gave Europe its first economic integration –a notion rekindled with the Treaty of Rome in 1960 –Italy will not capsize the euro. No matter what the animal spirits of the markets may say in the short run, the Seed of Aeneas is too pivotal to fail.

Moreover, divisive Umberto Bossi and Continental naysayers should consult Donald R. Dudley: "To create Italy was the first great historical achievement of Rome; to make a political and cultural unity of the whole Mediterranean world was to repeat this task in a larger scale." The past is prologue.

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Prime Minister  
Silvio Berlusconi



Umberto Bossi wearing his Celtic green.

## Early elections could give rise to a stronger Northern League



Giulio Tremonti,  
Minister of Finance



# All'Italiana

## IN MEMORIAM

**Robert Sabatini Guccione**, 79, creator of *Penthouse Magazine* and a business empire valued at \$300 million in the 1980s. Guccione originally wanted to be a priest but ventured into art and porn. His nude women were posed more provocatively than Hefner's *Playboy* and an airbrush was rarely used. He created the nude male magazine *Viva* for females and *Omni* for his intellectual pursuits. He lost his empire and fortune due to tax evasion and bad investments. His New York City mansion was foreclosed and the furnishings auctioned off. His misguided homage to his Italian heritage was the failed porn movie *Caligula*.



**Dino De Laurentiis**, 91, was a cinematic giant in both Italy and America. His diverse productions ran the gamut from *La Strada* (1954) to *Serpico* (1973) from *Death Wish* (1974) to *King Kong* (1976). He helped to build the acting careers of Anthony Quinn, Al Pacino, Kirk Douglas, and Charles Bronson and pioneered international productions that cast actors across borders.

**John Peter Mastrangelo**, 70, aka Johnny Maestro, was a vocalist for rock groups such as the Brooklyn Bridge, the Crests, and the De-Satins. His songs included *Sixteen Candles*, *The Worst That Could Happen To Me*, *Step By Step*, and *The Angels Listened In*. His big break came in 1968 when the Brooklyn Bridge performed on the Ed Sullivan Show.

**Francesco Cossiga**, 82, Italian President from 1985 to 1992. The Sardinian-born Cossiga was a stalwart of the old Christian Democratic Party that ruled Italy until bribery scandals broke it apart in the 1990s. A strong friend of the United States and NATO, Cossiga was Interior Minister when fellow party member Aldo Moro was kidnapped by Communist Red Brigades in 1978. Cossiga's hardline in refusing to concede to Brigade demands ultimately led to Moro's murder by that group. The murder ultimately led to Italy's thorough destruction of the Brigades.

Former Honolulu Mayor **Frank F. Fasi**, 89, held office for 22 years. The Connecticut-born Fasi was a "bold and gutsy leader who shaped modern Honolulu," according to its current mayor, Mufi Hannemann. Fasi did some R & R in Hawaii during World War II and had an idea to make his fortune converting military Quonset huts into civilian housing. His fortune made, Fasi threw himself into politics and eventually won the top city post. (See issue XIV for an additional profile.)

Brooklyn strongman **Joe Rollino**, 104, was at the peak of health when he was struck by a minivan while crossing a street this year. He was only 5'5" tall, didn't eat meat, and never smoked or drank. He walked five miles a day and even swam in frigid Coney Island waters during the winter. But his greatest feat was once lifting 635 lbs with one finger. He regularly bent quarters with his teeth and thumb. He had shrapnel in his legs from service during World War II and sparred with Jack Dempsey. Jay-walking is what did him in.

Mountaineer **Lino Lacedelli** died in late 2009 at the age of 83. He and Achille Compagnoni were the first to reach the peak of K-2, the second highest mountain in the world after Everest. K-2 is approximately 750 feet shorter than Everest but considered by many to be more difficult to scale. Their feat took place on July 31, 1954 and was a morale booster for the nation of Italy, which had been defeated and ravaged by Allied armies a few years before.

**Margaret "Midge" Costanza**, 77, was a top assistant to President Jimmy Carter. She was the first New Yorker to support candidate Jimmy Carter in 1975 and was rewarded with a West Wing office. Costanza made a reputation for herself as a self-described "loud-mouthed, pushy little broad," opening the White House to hitherto unwelcomed groups like gays, feminists and various specialized interests. She broke ranks with Carter insiders when she called for the resignation of Budget Director Bert Lance. She was exiled to an office in the White House basement where she joked "suicide was difficult" and eventually resigned.

Major General **Fred Ascani**, 92, Air Force test pilot, learned his trade flying 52 missions over Europe during the Second World War. He later flew some 50 types of research planes including the X-1 which pilot Chuck Yeager later used to break the sound barrier. A West Point graduate, General Ascani was a tough disciplinarian who commanded an air wing in Germany during the Cold War. As a subordinate in that wing, Chuck Yeager recalled how Ascani required that even while his airmen were off-duty and getting drunk, they were to keep ties on and shirts buttoned. For the history buff, Ascani was the son of Aeneas, Trojan ancestor of Romulus, founder of Rome.



Talent agent **Ed Limato**, 73, had celebrities like Denzel Washington, Michelle Pfeiffer, Richard Gere, and Mel Gibson in his stable of stars. A flamboyant man who wore salmon pink suits and drove an Aston Martin, he was known for his extravagant Oscar and pool parties. But his real lock on talent was his personal service to each client, insuring that their every need was catered to, be it an air-conditioned dressing room or personal errands. He took the blows for Mel Gibson after his 2006 arrest and anti-

Semitic triade, yelling down gossip writers and lobbying studio heads in Gibson's defense. Despite living among the rich and famous, Limato was a bachelor who still lived with his mother, Angelina.

His "Tremendousness" **Giorgio Carbone**, 73, aka Prince Giorgio I of the principality of Seborga passed away in late 2009 from ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Although it exists within the borders of Italy along the Riviera, Seborga is supposedly recognized as an independent country by twenty nations. Italy is not one of them. Unlike San Marino and Vatican City, the 350 residents of Seborga pay Italian taxes and vote in Italian elections. The five-square mile principality was established in 1079 by an emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, which was neither holy nor Roman but secular Germanic. It was purchased by the House of Savoy in 1729 but the sale was not registered. It appears that the Seborghini muddled through the ages until H.T. Carbone convinced them to envision their independence and elevate him to royal ruler. His Tremendousness left no heirs.

Boxing referee **Arthur Mercante Sr.**, 90, was the most prominent referee in the past half century. He presided over some 140 bouts including the 1971 Ali-Frazier "Fight of the Century." He was in the ring with other greats such as Floyd Patterson, George Foreman, Sugar Ray Robinson, Mike Tyson, and Sugar Ray Leonard. He recommended a little-known heavyweight, Cassius Clay, for a part in the television play *Requiem for a Heavyweight* which starred Anthony Quinn. Clay later became Mohammed Ali. Mercante's stern aura is often invoked as "Sgt. Arthur" at referee training schools to inspire future refs to act like drill sergeants in the ring.

A highly respected school superintendent from the Bronx who received an Excellence in Education Award from President Ronald Reagan, **Richard Capozzola**, 73, was also a tireless and energetic Italian American activist. Upon retiring two decades ago, Capozzola updated historian Giovanni Schiavo's monumental book *Four Centuries of Italian American History*, adding additional biographies and a user-friendly calendar. Like Schiavo, Capozzola received very little monetary help from the major Italian American organizations, investing his own savings into the project.

**Robert Dini**, 72, was a University of Chicago-trained lawyer and one of the chief architects of the unique 2001 lawsuit against HBO and *The Sopranos*. Using a little-known statute in the Illinois Constitution, Dini and his team of lawyers with AIDA (American Italian Defense Association) charged the mobster series with violating the state's "dignity clause," perpetuating group defamation against Italian Americans. Though the case was ultimately dismissed, the AIDA lawsuit set a bold precedent which other Italian American organizations have yet to emulate.

## NEW MEDAL OF HONOR

In the last issue of *Italic Way*, we noted the obit of soldier Jared C. Monti, awarded a posthumous medal of honor from President Obama. Since then, the first Medal of Honor ever awarded to a living soldier via the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars bore another proud Italic surname: Salvatore Giunta, a 25 year-old Army specialist from the Midwest (Hiawatha, Iowa). After being felled by enemy



gunfire in Afghanistan on October 25, 2007, a wounded Giunta ran back toward the point of ambush to save three fellow paratroopers who had been hit and separated from his

unit. When interviewed on ABC's *Nightline*, Giunta downplayed his heroism and reiterated his respect for his fellow soldiers. In a poetically appropriate touch, Giunta is currently stationed in the U.S. Army base in Vicenza, Italy.

## DOCTOR DOCTOR

Dr. Camillo Ricordi of the Miami Medical School has pioneered a method for isolating insulin-producing cells from a pancreas. In a recent operation on a wounded GI who lost most of his pancreas, Dr. Ricordi salvaged enough of the insulin-producing cells to seed the GI's liver. In effect, the liver will now produce the insulin needed to stave off diabetes. What is unique about this procedure is that the restored cells come from the patient rather than a cadaver, a milestone in pancreatic treatment.

Dr. Pier Cristoforo Giulianotti is thought by many to be the pre-eminent specialist in robotic surgery. Honing his skills at a small hospital in Grosseto, central Italy, the robotic surgeon was recruited to come to the U.S. by Dr. Enrico Benedetti, Chief of Surgery at the University of Illinois. For the past decade Dr. Giulianotti has blazed new trails in the USA with his robotic device, aptly named the Da Vinci Surgical System, instructing dozens of American surgeons in its fine art. Dr. Giulianotti predicts that eventually 70% of all surgeries will be robotic. The robot has steadier "hands" and can even alert its operator of dangerous conditions during a procedure. Dr. Giulianotti's career choice was a bit rough. His father insisted that he follow the family tradition in the Italian Army and train as a doctor simultaneously. But the son sought to concentrate on medicine and received a free education at a medical school in Pisa. Italy's gift is our gain.





# WORLD NOTES

vests soon became standard gear around the country. Montanarelli and Shubin were honored in 2006 by the Kelvar Survivors' Club for saving 3,000 lives. Lester Shubin died last December. Nicholas Montanarelli lives in Maryland.

## DEPORTED

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced that almost 400,000 more illegal immigrants were deported in 2009/10 than in the previous fiscal year. About half of these (195,772) had criminal records. Utilizing a program named Secure Communities, local police are now authorized to check the immigration status of every person booked into a jail. Despite her hard-line on illegal aliens, Secretary Napolitano has been at-odds with officials in her home state of Arizona where a new state law permits police to question the immigration status of motor vehicle operators. The one-time governor of Arizona, Secretary Napolitano is now concerned with constitutionality rather than the politics of deportation.

## GUNS & OLIVE OIL

We know Italy is famous for its Beretta firearms, a family-run armaments maker since 1526 and the pistol of choice in many U.S. police departments. But did you know that the land of *vino* and *amore* is the world's second largest arms dealer? With \$3.7 billion dollars in weapons sales, Italy ranks well behind the USA (\$37.8 billion) but just ahead of Russia (\$3.5 billion). Italians sell firearms, aircraft, watercraft, and weapons systems. In fact, the U.S. military recently purchased 450,000 pistols from Beretta, the largest order since the Second World War. On a final note, President Obama flies in a Lockheed version of an Italian AgustaWestland helicopter designated Marine One.



## YIDDISHE MAMMA

Jewish scholars must enjoy confusing the *goyim* with the eternal question: Is being Jewish an ethnicity as well as a religion? Is, for example, an atheist Jew still Jewish? Does having a Jewish mother link you with ancient Judea, the homeland of all ethnic Jews? Shouldn't ethnic Jews be called Judeans, regardless of their religion? Just as there are Irish or Italian Catholics, can't there be Judean Catholics? New York's former mayor Fiorello LaGuardia had a Jewish mother but was Episcopalian. Some rabbinical authorities would still recognize him as an ethnic and religious Jew.

Recently, a couple of scientific journals reported genetic tracking of Judeans of the Ashkenazi (European) and Sephardic (Mediterranean) branches. They found that roughly 30% of both branches had European ancestry and 70% Middle Eastern genes. Perplexed as to why the two separate branches shared common European blood, the researchers believe that Italy was the crucible: Judeans settled in Italy, intermarried with Italians and moved from there, around 800 AD, to populate the rest of Europe. The tricky part of this hypothesis is that some Italian geneticists like Roberto Cavalli Sforza\* believe that northern and southern Italians are not even in the same gene pool, that the south is essentially "Greek." \*(see issue XXIII)

Here's an idea: Maybe Roman soldiers interbred with everybody and produced this genetic stew. They had 500 years of occupation duty on three continents aided by strong libidos.

## CABOT'S PARTNERS

Among the research materials recently found in the home of late British historian Alwyn Ruddock was proof that explorer Giovanni Caboto had borrowed money from an Italian bank in Bristol, England to underwrite his first voyage to North America. His ship, the *Matthew*, named for his wife *Mattea*, is pictured



## VEST FRIENDS

It has saved the lives police officers and soldiers. The Kevlar vest was the product of a collaboration between Nicholas Montanarelli and Lester Shubin in the 1970s. Montanarelli was a project director at the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground when he suggested to Shubin, who was researching protective gear for police officers, that a DuPont material, Kevlar, could be used to stop bullets. In 1975, the first police officer was saved with a Kelvar vest, and the



here. The proof was in the form of a bank ledger originally uncovered by Italian expert Francesco Guidi Bruscoli. The ledger noted "a 1496 loan to Giovanni Chabotte viniziano (John Cabot, Venetian)." Once again, the discovery of America was not only an achievement of Italian navigators like Cabot and Columbus but, in both cases, Italian bankers underwrote these momentous accomplishments. Columbus' voyage was two-thirds paid for by Italian banking houses in Cadiz and Seville, according to historian Germán Arciniegas. (See issue XVI) [Ed.: The Italic Institute published a white paper on Cabot's voyages detailing his contract with King Henry VII. Visit our website to view the paper at [www.italic.org](http://www.italic.org).]

## FACE OF JULIUS?

Some Frenchmen consider Julius Caesar a genocidal butcher, claiming that the Italic conquest of Gaul killed one million peaceful Celts. But French archeologists were agog when a bust of their conqueror was found in 2007 in the murky depths of the Rhone River of southern France. After two years of research, they now believe that the bust is the only surviving portrait sculpted during the general's lifetime (in 46 B.C.) and represents his true features. Caesar was murdered in 44 B.C. The bust is consistent with the balding Julius of later busts; however, his countenance is markedly more intimidating. It gives credence to Cicero's statement that Italy didn't need the Alps to protect it while she had Julius Caesar. *Ave Caesar!*



## VATICAN LAUNDRY

When Mussolini co-founded Vatican City, he never dreamed it would be embroiled in financial and sexual problems. Nevertheless, 81 years after the Lateran Treaty was signed creating the homeland of Catholicism, the Vatican has been reeling from global child abuse suits, cover-ups, and dark financial dealings. *La Guardia Finanza*, Italy's finance police, is investigating a \$30 million money laundering scheme involving the Vatican Bank. It might not be as scandalous as the 1980s disappearance of \$1.3 billion that cost the Vatican \$205 million in reparations, but it's yet another unwelcome blot on the Vatican State.

## WHERE'S PAPA-SAN?

The game of which country has the longest-lived people has been played for centuries. Perhaps the Hebrews started it with their Biblical tall-tales of Methuselah, Noah and Moses, living for centuries and retaining their vital fluids. In recent memory the people of the Caucasus claimed a century of life thanks to eating yogurt.

Then came the Swedes, the Finns, and even the Italians. But the Japanese took the lead for the past few decades claiming sushi and a reverent society added to their lifespan. So much for claims.

It turns out that Japanese bureaucrats have been remiss in verifying the status of social security recipients. So far this year, 234,000 centenarians are unaccounted for and probably deceased. Some 900 of these folks would be 150 years old if they are ever found. So far, the world longevity record is 122 years, held by a Frenchwoman who died in 1997. The Japanese caught on to their mistake when a man who should have been 111 was found in his bed, mummified for 30 years. His family never reported grandpa's demise and continued cashing his government checks.

## GENERAL'S FAREWELL

If there is one serviceman whose name will be forever attached to the Iraq War it is General Raymond Odierno. From the 2003 invasion to the final exit of combat troops, Gen. Odierno has been in the thick of things. As commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at the outset of the invasion, the aggressive Odierno was considered by some to be a "brutish" leader. But it was Odierno who jointly conceived and carried out the 2007 surge that turned the tide. It is Odierno who is charged with turning over military command to a restored Iraqi Army. General Odierno has spent 54 of the 93 months of the war in-country. In the numerous interviews he has given to the news media, his devotion to the Iraqi cause comes through loud and clear. In 2004, his own son, Lt. Anthony Odierno, lost an arm in combat. The event has given the general a greater sense of the far-reaching costs of this war and the need for peace. General Odierno may fully understand the words of the poet Virgil written to the Italic people two millennia ago:

*"... thine arts must be to teach the ways of peace: to spare the humbled and throw down the proud."*

## FLY GAL

With more than 200 missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, Air Force Captain Gina Stramaglio (right) is extraordinary. A product of the Chicago suburb of Elk Grove Village, with a dream to be an astronaut, Capt. Stramaglio has served her country in eleven deployments since 2004, flying fuel and cargo aircraft. She has even flown relief missions to Haiti during earthquake episodes.



Women of Italian stock receive little credit for their pioneering work in this field. It was Lt. Marie Rossi (left), a transport pilot, who was the first female casualty of the Gulf War in 1991. It was Bonnie Tiburzi who became the first female commercial airline pilot in 1973.

We all owe a debt to our courageous and skilled Italic women.





# Editorials

## THEY CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH

Although a lot of blame for anti-Italian media stereotypes can be placed at Hollywood's door, that same animus has also, even more ominously, crept into the so-called mainstream press—that is, TV, newspaper or radio programming which prides itself on being “objective.”

The most recent shocking example came on May 15, 2010, when the *Chicago Tribune* wrote a lengthy obituary on the late Outfit hitman Harry Aleman. The protocol was fairly typical, as it always is when criminals have Italian surnames; Aleman's picture was shown (one from the 1970s, of course, to make him look more vicious), and his lengthy obit was moved from the back of the paper to the front. But what distinguished this particular piece was the reporter's lead description of Aleman as being “half-Italian.” Which begs two questions: What was his other half, and what does being “half-Italian” have to do with his being a sociopath?

The latter answer we know: Hollywood has long conditioned viewers to accept Italian surnames as intrinsically evil or corrupt. But the answer to the first question went unanswered because Aleman's father was of another, more well-respected ethnicity (Hispanic). To be specific, Aleman's father was a Mexican American drug dealer whose daily beatings are what drove his son, by his own admission, toward a life of crime—a harsh fact left out of the story so as not to offend sensitive readers. Bill Dal Cerro, President

## JUST THE FACTS, PLEASE

While serving as president of the Italic Institute, I stormed Bobby De Niro's Tribeca Film Festival in 2004 – along with John Mancini, Bill Dal Cerro and Lionel Bottari. Our purpose was to shame the perpetrators of *Shark Tale* at a major media venue. None of our Italian-American academics chose to attend —except for yours truly. (In fact, I have been an adjunct professor of economics, critical thinking and ethics for nearly two decades.) Indeed few—if any—of these self-styled intellectuals have ever left their ivory towers to combat media defamation over the years. But now they see fit to write the history of “anti-Italianism.” (See my review on page 19)

Why did such lofty scholars avoid diving into the shark-infested Hollywood waters to defend our children? As the author of two major anti-*Shark Tale* articles in the mainstream press —*Newsday* (March 11, 2004) and *The NY Daily News* (September 7, 2004) I was asked by Steve Aiello, head of the public relations arm of the anti-*Shark Tale* coalition (CARRES), to act as national spokesman on several television interview programs. Hill & Knowlton spearheaded the campaign. Because of some backroom dealing the national campaign was aborted.

Such a blatant power play—(some suspect Columbus Club's former chairman Lawrence Auriana) —and the predictable collapse of the *Shark Tale* effort demonstrated the community's inherent weakness. The authors and editors of *Anti-Italianism* have overlooked the subsequent and very real discrimination against an Italian-American student at Batavia, Illinois's Sam Rotolo Middle School in 2006. They missed it because Messrs. Fred Gardaphe, Jerry Kruse and other scholars sat it out. These “honorable men” may take pride in chronicling our trying times, but they ought to hang their homuncular heads in shame. Rosario A. Iaconis, Vice Chairman East

## BRIAN WILLIAMS' COMEDY REVUE

*“One of my most enjoyable moments was being around the set of The Sopranos....Just being around those people was a joy, and, all due respect to the issues of stereotypes, it was a terrific portrait of New Jersey and a certain segment of the population that may or may not exist.”*

Brian Williams, the anchor of NBC *Nightly News*, made that statement in *New Jersey Monthly Magazine's* December, 2010 issue. “*With all due respect...*” was staple dialog in *The Sopranos* scripts, which must have seeped into Mr. Williams' frontal lobe (a frightening thought for a major journalist). It doesn't make Italian or New Jersey stereotyping any more proper by uttering such a useless disclaimer.

The catalyst for the *New Jersey Monthly* feature was the inordinate amount of national attention MTV's *Jersey Shore* has brought to the much-maligned state along with the embers that are still burning from HBO's *The Sopranos*. As *Jersey Shore* soared, the show became timely material for late night talk show hosts and comedians. New Jersey and the rest of the nation were afflicted with *Jersey Shore* fever. But as New Jersey's gutter image was once again in the spotlight, and still a national joke, suddenly the shows weren't just about Italian-Americans. That New Jersey stench began to cling to all New Jersey residents. Obviously, Mr. Williams feels that the stench is safely isolated on those neighbors, “*that may or may not exist.*” Anthony Vecchione, Vice President



# Forum of the People



## COMMERCE FOLLOWS THE FLAG

by Comm. Robert V. Allegrini

[President of the Italian American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest]

On the eve of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Italian reunification in 2011, the view of many observers of Italy from abroad is that the Italians' greatest vice remains a lack of any sense of true nationalism. They are without question the least patriotic and most self-critical people in Europe. While they are proud of their home city and of being European, they are largely disdainful of a collective Italian identity.

In speaking with individual Italians, one gets the impression that each believes he or she is the only good, hard-working, honest, law-abiding person in the country and that the rest of the country's citizens should be looked upon with suspicion and contempt. This penchant for self-criticism has debilitating effects for Italian international trade because foreigners are left with the impression, from the Italians themselves, that they are less than desirable or reliable business partners.

Americans want to do business with trading partners that they trust and respect. It is hard to trust or respect a people who have little respect for their fellow citizens. I have long argued that Americans may not like the French but that they respect France as a country far more than they do Italy. The reason is that the French are a proud people who are fiercely defensive and protective of the grandeur of France while the Italians seem to be able to see only their country's defects and defeats. The Americans, being a fundamentally patriotic people themselves, respect France's view of itself which translates into their impression that France is a serious country. Italy, on the other hand, is viewed as a fundamentally unserious country which may be desirable as a vacation destination but not as a trading partner.

To a certain extent this lack of Italian nationalism is understandable because the country's last experiment in nationalism, under Mussolini, ended quite badly. But that was well over half a century ago, and it's about time that someone has the courage to say that the Italians would benefit greatly from a return to the patriotism, but not the politics, that characterized the Italy of the 1920s and 1930s. During this period the Italian people were taught to be proud of their country's incomparable heritage as the very epicenter of Western civilization. The inscription on the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana in Rome built at that time reads *UN POPOLO DI POETI, DI ARTISTI, DI EROI, DI SANTI, DI PENSATORI, DI SCIENZIATI, DI NAVIGATORI, DI TRASMIGRATORI*. This is the perception that Italians should have of themselves, and this is what should be taught to Italian school children.

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***This penchant for self-criticism  
has debilitating effects***

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Instead, the post World War II Italian educational system has produced generation after generation of citizens with no sense of their country's greatness nor any civic or communal sense whatsoever. The results of this lack of civic pride can be seen everywhere throughout Italy in the form of the trash that people feel free to throw in the streets to hideous graffiti which mars nearly every building in the country, including its most sacred monuments. Again, the foreigner is left to wonder what kind of people would tolerate the defacing of their country in such a manner? Certainly not a proud people.

The utter lack of Italian nationalism also inhibits trade growth by perpetuating negative stereotypes that impact business. Unfortunately, the average Italian sees no point in combating Hollywood's pervasive image of Italians as criminals. The Italic Institute of America has done a study which indicates that nearly 70% of the 1,220 movies produced in the United States since 1928 that featured Italian or Italian American themes portrayed the Italian and Italian American characters as criminals or boors, buffoons, bigots or bimbos. This regrettably translates into an American public that largely has negative perceptions about Italians, and certainly about doing business with Italy. Yet rarely has any Italian diplomat accredited to the United States expressed any forthright displeasure with the way Italians are portrayed in the American media. Nor has the Italian government seen the point in making a substantial investment in an American public relations firm to promote Italy's positive role in the world to the American public as many other countries have done to promote their own favorable reputation (eg. "German engineering").

Perhaps most galling of all, the Italian public itself has embraced detrimental programs like *The Sopranos*, which perpetuate the worst possible stereotypes of Italian "business people" and fosters in Americans a sense of unease about doing business with Italy.

If Italy wants to enhance its position in the world, not only politically but economically, it is time to summon the spirits of Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Cavour. It is time to call for a new resurgence of nationalism that will produce Italians who are legitimately proud of their country's vast accomplishments in every realm of human endeavor and who won't stand for negative stereotypes which dishonor the memory of all those glorious Italians who have made Italy immortal. Then, and only then, will the climate be right for Italy to achieve its full international trade potential.

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# Book Review

## *Amore: The Story of Italian American Song*

by Mark Rotella

Reviewed by Bob Masullo



We Italian Americans have much to be proud of and little — very little, really — to be ashamed of. Yet we have spent so much time fretting over gnat-sized negatives that we have given short shrift to our Everest-sized positives. One of those positives, indeed one of the greatest Italic achievements in the United States, one which has been taking place for nearly a century, is in popular music. Our contributions to it have been out of all proportion to our numbers.

So why aren't books written about Italian-American music? There have been biographies and memoirs of some of the major names, it is true. Those on Frank Sinatra, alone, could fill a fair-sized library. But there have been few volumes published about the Italian-American musical genre, *sui generis*, while many other ethnicities — African American, Latin American, Gaelic (Irish/Scottish), French (Cajun) and Jewish (klezmer), most notably — have been given their musical due.

Now, say *ciao* — and *grazie tante* — to Mark Rotella (pictured right).

With the recent publication of his *Amore: The Story of Italian American Song* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux; \$28), much has been done to correct the situation. *Amore* is an excellent beginning and one that sets a high bar. (Note: I am anxiously awaiting the publication of *Bebop, Swing and Bella Musica: The History of Italian Americans in Jazz* by friend and Italic Institute of America president Bill Dal Cerro and *Italic Way* contributor David Anthony Witter. It promises to be another major contribution.)

Rotella, who was born in Connecticut and raised in Florida, is a senior editor at *Publishers Weekly*. A graduate of Columbia University with a degree in foreign literature, he previously gave readers the acclaimed roots-searching volume, *Stolen Figs and Other Adventures in Calabria* (North Point Press), in 2004, and an insightful introduction to the re-publication of Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), in 2006. *Amore*, of

course, means love, and Rotella really has a strong love for the music made by Italian Americans. His affection covers a wide period — from the scratchy early recordings of opera great Enrico Caruso and pioneer crooner Russ Columbo to today's rock (or whatever they are) offerings by Lady Gaga (Stefani Germanotta).

But his main concentration, what he calls "the Italian decade," is essentially the 1950s, when popular music was still music. Actually Rotella's "decade" is longer than 10 years. As he puts it, "from 1947 to 1964, musically from the end of the big bands to the Beatles." And who can argue with him? The pop charts of those years were overwhelmingly dominated by Italian Americans.



For those who came of age then or earlier such a fondness is not remarkable. If you were alive during those years you couldn't escape hearing the music of Sinatra, Connie Francis (Concetta Franconero), Tony Bennett (Anthony Benedetto), Julius La Rosa, Joni James (Giovanna Babbo), Alan Dale (Aldo Sigismondi), Mario Lanza (Alfred Coccozza), Dean Martin (Dino Crocetti), Don Cornell (Luigi Varlaro), Frankie Laine (Francesco Lo Vecchio), Perry Como, Toni Arden (Antoinette Ardizzone), Vic Damone (Vito Farinola), and many other Italian Americans.

But Rotella is only 43. The '50s were long gone before he was born.

He explains how his taste developed in his work's touching introduction. It started in the 1998 when his wife, Martha, whom he had married only

two years before, was diagnosed with breast cancer. She eventually recovered but for several years things were touch-and-go for the Rotellas.

"That emotionally wrought time is when I first became fascinated with the singers from an earlier era," he writes. It was spurred by seeing the movie *Big Night*, a film about Italian American restaurateurs with an Italic soundtrack. "For many nights, while Martha recovered from surgery and later after her chemotherapy treatments, we were together in the house, seemingly exiles from the outside world. I created an Italian atmosphere while I cooked dinner and listened to these songs."

The tunes and the artists' interpretations of them gave Rotella

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***We have given short shrift to our Everest-sized positives.***

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solace and the experience set him on a journey to discover the history of these singers and their times, much as his earlier interest in Calabria, where his father's family hails from, had set him on a journey to the toe of The Boot. Both journeys, fortunately, culminated in significant contributions to Italian-American literature.

Many nuggets can be gleaned from *Amore*. Here are a few of my favorites:

\* "Vocally, [Frank Sinatra] incorporated two forms of Italian singing into his music: the *bel canto*, or beautiful singing, style of 18th century Italian opera, and the romanticism of Italian, especially Neapolitan, folk songs, which Italians of all backgrounds adopted as their own once they arrived in America."

\* [Italian-American singers] "embodied the Italian idea of *la sprezzatura* — making hard work appear easy."

\* Vic Damone got his start by auditioning for Perry Como in an elevator.

\* Two of Frankie Laine's earliest musical influences were operatic tenor Caruso and blues soprano Bessie Smith.

\* Jerry Vale's 1957 hit *Pretend You Don't See Her*, which contains the line "pretend you don't need her, my heart, but smile and pretend to be gay," is, according to Rotella, "framed by the Italian attitude — never let people know they've got you down."

\* One neighborhood, the Little Italy of South Philadelphia, produced Fabian, Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydell, Buddy Greco, Al Martino and Mario Lanza.

\* Tony Bennett interviews are rare. Why? Rotella was told by Bennett's publicist that the singer "is careful not to speak with anyone who might try to tarnish his reputation — and that of Italian Americans — by connecting him with the mafia."

\* "From 1956 to 1959 there were more Italian-American singers on the Billboard charts than at any time before or since," writes Rotella. "Not only were they Italian Americans, but their songs were sung, if only in part, in Italian: 'That's Amore,' 'Volare,' 'Mamma,' 'Angelina,' 'Mala Femmina,' 'Pepino the Italian Mouse,' 'Eh Cumpari,' 'Piove,' 'Come Prima,' 'Al Di La,' 'Innamorata.'"

And there are tons more. Rotella weaves facts and observations seamlessly with the history of Italy and immigrant America, the good and bad aspects of immigrant life, and Italic preferences in music. He makes it clear how the music we like is derived from our culture and shows how it reflects our lifestyle.

Joni James and Don Cornell were all-American idols, proud of their Italian roots.

Cornell's famous rendition of "Because the Bible Tells Me So" is still gospel in the Bible Belt



passing reference, and The Teardrops (Paulie and Tony Ciaurella), Sergio Franchi, Anna Maria Alberghetti and Nicola Paone, all of whom were significant contributors to the art form, not mentioned at all.

Also, to nitpick a bit more, I was annoyed by his referring (several times) to Connie Francis' hit as "Mama" (English spelling) rather than *Mamma* (Italian spelling) and to Don Cornell's real middle name as "Francisco" (Spanish spelling) rather than

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**"From 1956 to 1959 there were more Italian-American singers on the Billboard charts than at any time before or since."**

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"Francesco" (Italian spelling).

Those, however, are minor flaws in a masterful work. Rotella did his homework. He read much — *Amore* ends with a remarkable bibliography — and he practiced a commendable amount of that vanishing art, real reporting. He actually talked to many of the singers who are still alive and to many more of people close to those who have passed away.

This reportage combines smoothly with a solid grasp of Italian-American history, a thorough knowledge of music, and a writing style that is accessible and entertaining. Together they make for a volume that music buffs of any background should appreciate and in which Italian Americans can take special pride. \*\*\*\*



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# The Lost Generation:

by

Louis Cornaro, Anthony Vecchione & Bill Dal Cerro

Our young Italian American chickens have come home to roost. The men and women starring in the hit MTV reality series *Jersey Shore* got their break in show business because they were rare birds, so to speak: *guidos* and *guidettes*. From the phylum *Homo Italicus*, the class of *Italus Americanus* has branched into the subspecies *Wiseguy*, *Goombah* and the newly discovered *Guido*. Such is the bio-diversity of the Italian American “race.” Even as you read this article, some new strain of *Homo Italicus* is evolving, destined to entertain America and inflate the profits of media corporations.

Not everyone finds the exploitation of Italian characters so amusing. To some, the decades-long fascination with Italian types has gone well past defamation and into outright ridicule (from the Latin *ridere* = to laugh at). Without question, the premise of *Jersey Shore* is ridiculous, a bunch of sophomoric Italian American kids sharing a beach house in New Jersey. Viewers freely admit that the joy in watching this self-absorbed crew is discovering people who are lower on the maturity scale than they are. The Italian *shtick* energizes the underlying script and adds to the general atmosphere of over-all stupidity. In many ways, *Jersey Shore* is a reworking of the 1950s African American series *Amos & Andy*. But even that series had a modicum of balance. The producers now have fun with stereotypes by substituting blackface with tanning salons and hair gel.

## From Wiseguy to Guido

*Jersey Shore* is the culmination of clever media development that began with HBO’s *The Sopranos*, which ran from 1999-2007. The problem facing producers then was how to continue to satisfy America’s need for mafia stereotypes without looking like defamation against Italian Americans. Its creator, David Chase (real name: De Cesare), hit upon the concept of the “three-dimensional” character. By definition a stereotype is one-dimensional. But give that character a mortgage and psychological issues and he magically transcends defamation: the Italo wiseguy next door becomes an American social paradigm. Thus, Tony Soprano was born and gave America a new passion for the “nuanced” Italian American criminal. (In 1999, the film “*Analyze This*” was also released, featuring the exact same scenario as *The Sopranos*— a mob boss with panic attacks who seeks a shrink.)

But what about the other characters from the old neighborhood—

the non-criminal ones? The media is always looking for colorful characters, and Italians seem to have a monopoly on them. Over the years second and third generation Italian Americans began slurring the word *compare* [com-PA-reh, a close family friend] into *goombah*. The name came to identify a group of neighborhood guys who over-eat, wear jogging suits with gold chains, and dabble in sports betting. These fellows even named themselves *goombahs*. They came with big waist-lines, colorful language, and an endearing love of food. *Sopranos* veteran Steve Schirripa (whose maternal grandfather was actually a Jewish gangster) personifies this portly image. Indeed, Schirripa wrote a couple of simpleton books extolling the *goombah* lifestyle.



A typical confrontational scene from *Real Housewives of New Jersey*

Now comes the *guido*, a younger version of the *goombah* before the hair loss and weight gain. Motivated by tanned skin and thick hair, the *guido* and the *guidette* are at a post-pubescent stage. They discovered their private parts a few years before and now want to put them to better use. The Amish recognize this stage in their own youth. As German Americans they use the word *romspringer* as the operative term for sowing wild oats. In fact, there was a reality show not long ago that exploited this ethnic tradition. But getting laughs out of Amish kids is next to impossible.

## Ignorance is Hereditary

As long as Italian American neighborhoods exist there will be characters. Older generations have witnessed *goombahs* and *guidos* before but tolerated them as *cafoni*, that is, immature or ill-mannered boors. In Scots-Irish jargon,

they would be considered the ethnic version of red-necks, hicks, trailer-park trash or hillbillies. The elders of traditional Italian

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**99% of Italian Americans are still being raised on a culture of family lore, street talk, and media myths.**

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# Home-Schooled Heritage

neighborhoods realized that *cafoni* would eventually get with the program. They would get married, lose their hair and raise kids who would, in turn, aggravate them. Until assimilation is complete, the *cafoni* will always be a part of the Italian American cycle of life.

The superficial pride in being Italian that the *guidos* and *guidettes* exude on *Jersey Shore* is squarely based on ignorance. In effect, they are the end product of a home-schooled heritage. What little they know of the Italian culture and its people was learned from down-home family members. The American media filled in the gaps. Knowledge is not hereditary but ignorance is. And regardless of the educational background of Italian American parents and grandparents, few have a grasp of 3,000 years of Italian history or 500 years of Italian American history. In short, they are not equipped to handle such a complex heritage.

Much like primitive societies around the world, 99% of Italian Americans are still being raised on a culture of family lore, street talk, and media myths. In 2000, when HBO did a casting call for "Italian-looking" extras to play low-lives and criminals on *The Sopranos*, close to 14,000 people showed up, no doubt all home-schooled in their culture. It is the same oral-based culture that was brought over by millions of destitute southern Italians. It is not the classical culture of Italy. It is a culture not of ancient Rome or Renaissance Florence or even the European Enlightenment but of poverty, superstition, and foreign occupation.

## Who Is To Blame?

We cannot continue to blame the media for parading our *cafoni* in movies and cable shows. Nor can we blame the *guidos* and *guidettes* who have distilled their heritage from the dinner table and *Rocky* movies. We cannot even blame American schools or the pressures of growing up as an ethnic minority. We need only look to Jews, Greeks, Poles, Asians and numerous other ethnic groups whose children are not cannon fodder for Nielsen Ratings. Those children are often enrolled in ethnic after-school programs where ancestral language and culture are formally taught at an early age. Their parents often went through the same acculturation process. These programs are offered by their ethnic organizations, respective religions or the mother country.

The Italian government does offer an after-school program under the auspices of IACE (Italian American Committee on Education). But few Italian American families know about IACE. The classes are expensive and poorly advertised. Moreover, Italian and Italian American history are not components of the courses. In addition, there is no coordinated effort to link IACE

classes with the lodges and chapters of the various social organizations, and certainly the Catholic Church has little Italian bent. Worse, for the past few years the Italian government has de-emphasized its paternal relations with the Italian American community in favor of heavy financial support to American schools to sustain multi-ethnic Italian language programs. Italy sees non-Italic students as its hope for the future.

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## Other ethnic groups are not cannon fodder for Nielsen Ratings.

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called *Aurora* ("Dawn"). Offered to Italian American 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders for a nominal registration fee, *Aurora* successfully demonstrated that thousands of boys and girls would flock to Saturday morning Italian Heritage classes if they were fun. *Aurora* is a multi-level heritage program utilizing a staff of Italian language teachers and Advanced Placement high school students. The goal has been to build a greater demand for Italian language programs in public and private schools by acculturating thousands of Italian American youngsters across the country. But not one of the major organizations has recognized the potential of *Aurora*.

At its height, *Aurora* had 14 classes in the Metro New York area supported by local and state grants, and not a dollar of Italian or Italian American money. Today, *Aurora* is moribund as public funding dries up. For whatever reasons, the major organizations—OSIA (Order Sons of Italy in America), UNICO, NIAF (National Italian American Foundation) and the Columbus Citizens Foundation—

For over 20 years, the Italic Institute of America in Floral Park, Long Island has tried to convince both the Italian government and the major Italian American organizations to support a pre-teen heritage program



Snooki Polizzi, an adopted Hispanic with an Italian surname, lending her bad habits to the Guido image in MTV's *Jersey Shore*



# Italy or Empire?:

by John Mancini & Alfred Cardone

In 1940, while a prostrate England was being subjected to the Blitz, a group of British politicians, under the pseudonym Cato, published a book entitled, *Guilty Men*. It listed the names of 15 Cabinet members who, in the opinion of the authors, led Britain and Europe into disaster. As you will see, their list was not complete.

It is the contention of this article that its empire, not central Europe, was the great motivator of Britain's European policy from 1933 to 1938. We contend that the British Cabinet considered Fascist Italy as its existential threat, a mindset that ultimately led to the formation of the Italo-German military alliance and the outbreak of the Second World War.

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**“...never...has [Britain] been confronted with...the Italian peninsula, united in a single state, [with] a determined bid for sea-power on a grand scale.”**

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Ironically, the foreign policy that the Cabinet pursued in order to preserve the British Empire eventually destroyed that empire. Adolph Hitler knew that its empire was Britain's primary interest. He even guaranteed it in *Mein Kampf*. More than a few British leaders considered an accommodation with Nazi Germany a real possibility. It was only in March, 1939, after Hitler had absorbed what remained of post-Munich Czechoslovakia, that Britons realized how Hitler had deceived most of their Cabinet. Popular history has made Neville Chamberlain the scapegoat. But as we shall see, Chamberlain was merely the last dupe in the Cabinet's line of enablers.

## New Questions

The immediate cause of the Second World War was Hitler's invasion of Poland. But was the road to World War II actually via the Mediterranean Sea? Was Great Britain so distracted by its empire and Fascist Italy that it allowed Nazi Germany to run amuck? Was India, rather than central Europe, the real key to British foreign policy? Did Britain's disdain and hostility toward Italy drive Mussolini into the Axis? Was Fascist Italy the key to understanding the Second World War? There is now a body of historians, mostly British, who no longer minimize Italy's role before World War II. The haunting words of former British Cabinet Minister Duff Cooper should be taken very seriously:

*“In any case, we should have retained the friendship of Italy; and*

*the Axis, which was to prove the pivot of Hitler's assault upon Europe, and without which he could hardly have launched the Second World War, would never have been formed.”*[*Old Men Forget*, E.P. Dutton, NY 1954, p.191]

There is no question that Adolph Hitler was bent on war and extermination. His original goal was a pan-Germanic state from the French border to the Urals. The Slavic people were to forfeit all their lands for the German master race and the Jews were to be expelled from Western Europe. Anyone who bothered to read *Mein Kampf* in the 1920s and early 1930s knew what was coming. Anyone who read newspapers during Hitler's first two years in power knew the kind of man Europe was dealing with. But, prior to 1938, the historical evidence is overwhelming that fending off Fascist Italy was more important to Great Britain than stopping Adolph Hitler.

## The World of the 1930s

The First World War created a new global order. Russia became the first Communist state, and the central European countries of Austria, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were created, the latter two cobbled together despite feuding minorities. Italy came under Fascist rule. Germany was dismantled, leaving millions of ethnic Germans under foreign rule. Europe, in a word, became unmanageable. To add to the chaos, Adolph Hitler — a racist fanatic — became the supreme leader of Germany.

Against this backdrop, the British Empire stood in mighty glory. Acquired over the centuries by

colonization, brute force or commercial guile, the empire kept the United Kingdom a world power. The spoils from the Great War enlarged it immensely in Africa and the Middle East.

## Continental

Europe, on the other hand, had drained Britain. The Great War had cost it over 700,000 lives and left it financially in debt to the United States. Britain's elite were wary of any future entanglements on the Continent, trusting instead in the new League of Nations to settle disputes and handle aggressors. For, in the final analysis, it was the route to India that was more vital to Britain's survival.

But that Mediterranean Sea route was now vulnerable to a new

**Duff Cooper, a British Cabinet Member during the 1930s considered Italy the key to preventing the Second World War.**



# Britain's Fatal Choice

phenomenon, Fascist Italy. British scholar Robert Seton-Watson wrote in 1938:

*"Britain has now possessed vital interests, and maintained her naval power, in the Mediterranean for the best part of three centuries... Sometimes France, sometimes Spain, ...sometimes Turkey... has been her chief rival...But never until the last few years has she been confronted with a situation in which the Italian peninsula, united in a single state, has made a determined bid for sea-power on a grand scale, in conjunction with an expansive colonial policy."* [Britain and the Dictators, MacMillan Co., NY, 1938, p. 395]



By 1938, Mussolini had lost the will and power to stop Hitler's annexation of Austria.

Of the three threats to its economic life — Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy — the British Cabinet was divided. Soviet Communism was insidious but not yet a problem in the home islands or the empire. Until 1938, Hitler was busy with internal matters and still approachable. But Mussolini was becoming the bad boy of the Mediterranean, which was Britain's life line.

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## The British Cabinet knew that the entire Empire hinged on India

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### The Road to India

Until 1869 there was only one route to India from the British Isles: around the Horn of Africa. But in that year the newly dug Suez Canal opened a shorter route, shaving weeks off the voyage. The British had held India as an economic prize since 1759. During the intervening years, that subcontinent enriched its British master beyond anyone's dream. The Brits extracted raw materials and manpower from India and sold its millions of inhabitants manufactured goods. According to British author John Darwin (*After Tamerlane*), from 1860, two-thirds of the standing army of the British Empire was paid for by Indian revenues. India became Britain's gateway to East Asia. The sale of Indian opium to the

Chinese not only added profits but gained the drug-pushing Brits a permanent foothold on mainland China. Hong Kong was won as a result of the Opium War in 1842. The British imperialists later added Singapore, Burma, and Malaya.

Meanwhile, to secure the route to the new Suez Canal, the Brits acquired the Mediterranean islands of Malta (1802) and Cyprus (1914). They had already sliced off Gibraltar from Spain in 1713. And to tidy things up they took control of Egypt (1882), the Sudan (1898), Yemen and Somalia (1888), and parts of Saudi Arabia to secure the Red Sea passage from the Suez to the Indian Ocean. It was a mariner's dream. Not bad for a freedom-spouting democracy. But this was before newsreels. British aggression rarely had a negative connotation.

By the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, India became even more indispensable to Britain. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, over 1 million Indian troops were used to support British efforts in the First World War. Some 36,000 Indians died fighting for the Union Jack. An estimated \$400 million (1918 dollars) in military stores, 5 million tons of wheat and vast resources, from cotton to steel, came out of India. Before the war ended, the government of India presented a gift of \$500 million to the British government. In terms of 2010 dollars, these figures would be in the billions. In terms of trade balances, India suffered a 60% negative balance to sustain its master. "...India was, indeed, the jewel in Britain's imperial crown..." states the book *20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain* by Paul Johnson.

Every member of the British Cabinet knew that the entire Empire hinged on India. There was even a cabinet position as Secretary of State for India and Burma, separate from the Colonial or Dominion portfolios. Even Winston Churchill, who realized the dangers of Hitler earlier on, resisted any efforts to change India's status as a tributary colony. He despised Mahatmas Gandhi; he called him a "naked fakir" and wished him trampled by elephants. He voted against the liberalizing (Cont'd on p. 18)

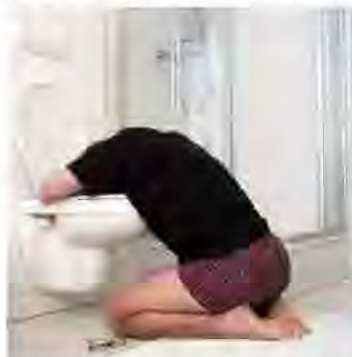


The British secured their route to India and Burma by gobbling up Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, Palestine, Sudan, Yemen, and Somalia. Italy became the existential threat to this monopoly.



## Lost Generation (continued from p.13)

have failed repeatedly to grasp their primary function in life: that is, to preserve the Italian heritage in America. Instead, these groups, usually led by businessmen, see their mission as "giving back" to the community. They do so with general scholarships and vast donations to medical charities or civic projects. (Some examples: the Sons of Italy recently gave \$235,000 for autistic children



A touching scene of Italic youth from *My Big Friggin' Wedding*

in Italy and has pledged \$1 million to Alzheimer's research. And in 2002, the Columbus Citizens Foundation gave \$1 million to a public high school in Manhattan where only Spanish and Mandarin are offered). To them and others the Italian American family will sustain our culture. All that is needed is to send everyone to college and to show America that Italians are generous.

In his 2003 book, *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, the late Phil Cannistraro, professor at City College of New York (CUNY), pinpointed a major flaw in the Italian American community: its wealthy businessmen, or as he termed them, the *prominenti*. These are the individuals who often lead our major organizations or are honored by those groups to pump up ticket sales. Cannistraro's observation may explain their resistance to heritage education as well as their drive to "give back" with general charitable donations:

*"Throughout the Italian American experience, the prominenti have consistently endorsed a closely linked agenda of patriotism and Americanization, which has essentially meant supporting the coercive efforts of American society designed to strip Italian immigrants and their descendents of their history, culture and identity. The dual focus of prominentismo has always been to promote the separate interests of a particular elite rather than of the community as a whole, and to stress what Italian Americans are not."*

MTV's *Jersey Shore* is the poster boy of this benign neglect. So, too, are other cable shows such as *Jerseylicious*, *Housewives of New Jersey* and *My Big Friggin' Wedding*, which uniformly seek out earthy Italians to put on the usual minstrel show.

Beside the major organizations, Italian American academics are in the best position to defend or promote our heritage but have chosen to remain in their ivory towers. They use their scholarly positions not to attack stereotypes but to "deconstruct" them. The height of this absurdity was demonstrated last winter at CUNY, where a symposium was held at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute devoted to "the guido culture." Clearly, these scholars have too much time on their hands. The Guido Symposium ranks up there with the Italian Racism panel discus-

sion that Calandra conducted a number of years ago. These professorial types make home-schooling look attractive.

### Italian Jurassic

In a 1997 issue of *The Italic Way Magazine*, the community's future was assessed, crippled as it was by a failure to defeat defamation and acculturate its youth. The magazine predicted the consequences: *'Being earthy and priding ourselves on immigrant roots in the next millennium may win us a place beside the dinosaur but it is not the stuff of survival.'* [XXVII, p.27]

This is the next millennium and our heritage is fossilized. The mass of Italian Americans see themselves as primarily heirs to the mafia and a great cuisine, both bought over by their grandparents. The academics busy themselves debating endless interpretations of the immigrant "experience." The Italian government struggles to transplant its culture, for commercial reasons, to non-Italics in the United States. Italian American organizations, meanwhile, continue to raise money from dinner dances to "give back" to America and Italy. And the media still finds new and creative ways to ridicule Italian American culture. In short, in naval terms, the deck chairs look fine but the ship is going under. The lost generation of *Jersey Shore* will soon have one giant Jacuzzi in which to splash around. Do any of them even know that their favorite hang-out was invented by the Jacuzzis of California, a brilliantly gifted family of Italian American inventors?



Italo beefcake from *Jerseylicious*

seed corn. It is already a lost generation, most of it only part-Italian. The loss of a whole generation of youngsters cannot be off-set by 500 people attending a gala or millions of dollars donated to alternating charities. Just as parents impart family history and traditions to their children, so, too, must the Italic people impart heritage to its future generations. Only fools believe home-schooled heritage and a college degree will set things straight. It has not. It never will.

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**Transforming the Immigrant Mentality  
to a Classical one  
Italic Institute of America**



# Funny, They Don't Look Italian

by Bill Dal Cerro

A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words. When you say the words “Italian American” to someone, they immediately form a picture based on decades of stereotyping: male—dark-skinned, intimidating, uneducated, weighed down with gold chains or muscles; female—dark-skinned, frivolous, uneducated, weighed down with big hair or fatty muscles.

Such visual stereotypes, still rigidly fixed in the minds of Hollywood bigots, continue to prevent any meaningful, fully rounded portrayals of Italic people.

Italians have officially been in North America for over 500 years, beginning with explorer John Cabot's 1497 landing in Newfoundland, Canada. Despite early prejudice, many had no problems blending into various cultures via intermarriage or name changes. The latter was true for Cabot, born **Giovanni Caboto** in Gaeta, Italy but whose name was Anglicized by the English under whose flag he sailed.

Similar blendings took place in America, too. For example, Thomas

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***Italians haven't gotten  
the credit they deserve  
for shaping much of  
our nation's  
positive pop culture***

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Jefferson's gardener, Antonio Giannini, produced a son, Horace Mangrove Gianniny (note the name change), who fought for the Confederacy; and another early immigrant family, the Taliaferros from Virginia, blended in so well their relatives included a Secretary of State for the Confederacy and Academy Award nominated actress Glenn Close.

America has always been a land of immigrants, yet, throughout the decades, Italians haven't gotten the credit they deserve in shaping many of our nation's citizens. Limiting ourselves to today's entertainment industry, the following is a visual mosaic of performers whose Italian ancestry isn't very well-known to the general public:

Not shown are:

**MICHAEL BUBLE'**—Popular Canadian singer; mother's maiden name: **Santaga'**; Michael's grandfather Demetrio, an immigrant from Venice, inspired his love of music;

## **JOY BEHAR**

Co-host of the talk-show *The View*; born Josephina Victoria **Occhiuto**;



## **RACHEL DOMENICA RAY**

popular chef and TV host; mother's maiden name: **Scuderi**;

## **STEVE CARELL**

America's top comedic film and TV performer (*The Office*) was born **Caroselli**; his father shortened the family name;



## **GARY SINISE**

star of *CSI: New York* and famous as “Lt. Dan” in the 1994 film *Forrest Gump*;

(Cont'd on p. 20)





Government of India Bill of 1934. To Churchill, India was the empire and the Mediterranean passage sacrosanct. (A desperate Churchill later committed a major strategic blunder when he endorsed Franklin D. Roosevelt's Atlantic Charter in 1941 calling for the independence of all colonies. Winny did not realize FDR also meant British colonies.)

There was only one fly in this Indian ointment – Italy.

The reunification of Italy in 1861 presented the British Cabinet with a budding naval power that lay inside the British Mediterranean. Moreover, by 1912, Italy had possession of Libya, on the Mediterranean, and Eritrea along the Red Sea coast. Nevertheless, the Italians were not in the big league of European powers. They were still an agricultural nation steeped in regional poverty and general illiteracy. An Italian Army was ignominiously defeated by Ethiopian tribesmen in 1896, and when the Italians challenged the Ottoman Empire and won Libya, the latter was considered the “sick man” of Europe and already bogged down in a Balkan war. In the words of old German Chancellor Bismarck, Italians had “a big appetite but few teeth.” That perception changed with Fascism.

### British Perceptions

Cabinet members knew Hitler was a brutal nationalist from the outset of his chancellorship, but during the years 1933 through 1938, he was still considered a statesman who merely wanted to restore scattered German minorities in central Europe to his new Third Reich. The Versailles Treaty that ended the First World War left ethnic Germans in foreign lands, a problem the British Cabinet knew would come back to haunt them. Although Hitler wanted Germany's pre-WW I colonies in sub-Saharan Africa restored, he showed little interest in forcing the issue. The Cabinet did not consider Hitler an imperial threat. British statesmen such as Lloyd George, Britain's PM during the First World War, and Anthony Eden, a future PM, visited Hitler and found him congenial, reasonable, and trustworthy. A recent cable program entitled *Nazi London* revealed some of what may be only the tip of a pro-Nazi iceberg in British society during the 1930s.

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**“Eden’s references to Mussolini – the ‘Anti-Christ’ – display a depth of animosity never matched in his attitude towards Hitler.”**

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Whether some Anglo-Saxons saw the early Hitler as a magnificent leader or identified with his Aryan agenda, the effect was the same – Germans were a kindred people and could be trusted. Here is a sample of early British views on Hitler:

*“[Hitler] is the George Washington of Germany...The idea of a Germany intimidating Europe with a threat that its irresistible army might march across frontiers forms no part of the new vision...The establishment of a German hegemony in Europe...is not even on the horizon of Nazism.”* -Lloyd George, reporting on his personal visit to Germany and meeting with Hitler. *Daily Express*, November 17, 1936

*“...while Hitler arms to the teeth, he is full of verbal condemnations of war, and that though he has tried out new weapons of war in Spain, he has not yet made war: whereas Mussolini has not merely waged two wars in defiance of many treaties and commitments, but loses no opportunity of preaching naked militarism as an ideal.”* Prof. R.W.Seton-Watson, *Britain and the Dictators*, February 17, 1938

*“Without a doubt the man has charm...Dare I confess it? I rather liked him.”* -Cabinet Minister Anthony Eden after meeting Hitler in 1935. Eden's biographer, David Dutton, had this to say about his subject: *“Eden's references to Mussolini – the ‘Anti-Christ’ – display a depth of animosity never matched in his attitude towards Hitler.”* [Anthony Eden, Arnold, UK, 1997]

Italy and Benito Mussolini evoked disdain and fear on the part of many Cabinet members. Eden even labeled Mussolini a “gangster.” Fascist Italy was clearly recreating the Roman Empire. Within a decade Libya, wrestled from Ottoman Turkey in 1912 but never pacified, was

finally subdued by Italians with the same brutal methods copied from the Brits in South Africa. By 1936, Italy officially became an industrialized nation with an armaments capability. The Italian Navy was a major force in the Mediterranean. Italians possessed Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands off Turkey and occupied Corfu off Greece. In 1936, Italy conquered Abyssinia near the Red Sea and with it Lake Tana\*, a source of the Nile, Egypt's lifeblood. That same year, Italy sent troops to Spain to assist General

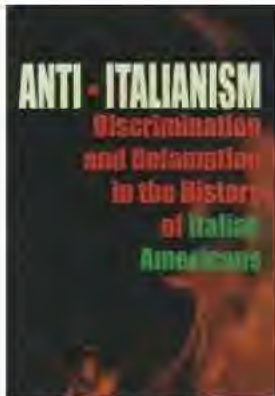


**British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden found Hitler “charming.”**

Cont'd on p. 22



# BOOK REVIEW II



When the combustible Christopher Hitchens learned of his Jewish lineage, he wrestled with the notion that there is something “faintly kitsch” about “those Jewish papers that annually list Jewish prize winners from the Nobel to the Oscars.” In the end, however, he came to embrace the improbable persistence—and the great gifts—of the Jews.

In making the case for the success of unexpected peoples,

Hitchens noted how “no Roman would have believed that the brutish inhabitants of the British Isles could ever amount to much.”

Sadly, more than a few Italian Americans have spurned their classical Roman heritage and accepted the media-driven belief that they are a parody of a serious people.

As a sober study of the whys and wherefores of such well-entrenched Italophobia, *Anti-Italianism: Essay on A Prejudice* certainly merits our attention. And authors William Connell and Fred Gardaphe remain passionate members of the professoriate.

Elizabeth Messina pens a painful but instructive essay about the discrepancy between the wide-ranging success of Italo-Americans and their demonization in the media as lumpen Neanderthals.

Anthony Tamburri of the Calandra Institute at City University of New York restores Frank Sinatra as an icon of tolerance and brotherhood.

But Fred Gardaphe reminds readers –via Jerome Krase—that Italian Americans are known “to lash out against blacks” because of “the ignorance of their own history.” Several years ago, Krase had no problem excoriating the “insular southern Italian neighborhood” of Bensonhurst on the front page of *The New York Times*. Nor has Tamburri’s associate Joseph Sciorra hesitated in showcasing Italian racism at university functions.

Apparently, Fred, Jerry and Joe have forgotten how the famously erudite Mario Cuomo brokered a peace agreement between the Jewish community of Forest Hills and incoming African Americans in the 1960s. And what about the Jewish-black violence of Crown Heights, Brooklyn? An innocent Italian-American bystander was murdered in the ensuing melee.

Ironically, William Connell’s essay, “Darker Aspects of Italian American Prehistory,” makes a sincere effort to understand the roots of pejorative anti-Italian images in the media. Connell even credits Giovanni Schiavo’s seminal study (*Four Centuries of*

*Italian American History*). However, the good professor misrepresents the Founding Fathers’ Italophilia – and the Roman origins of the U.S. Constitution.

Then there’s Dominic Candeloro’s ode to the servile Italian portrayed by



*Life With Luigi.*

Irishman J. Carroll Naish in the insipidly moronic *Life with Luigi* radio and later television program (1948 - 1954). Praising Naish’s tumbledown accent and the lowly-Italian-meets-America plots, Candeloro admits that *Life with Luigi* is an Italian version of *Amos & Andy*; but Candeloro finds it a positive reflection of our image. Clearly, Candeloro is no Bill Cosby.

And Donald Tricarico gushes with pseudo-intellectual glee over the epithet “guido.” Imagine a Jewish scholar performing cartwheels of exhilaration over being labeled a “hymie.” Jesse Jackson forever derailed his political career when he called New York “Hymietown.”

Mr. Tricarico, a slur is not a subculture.

## Where in these essays is the righteous indignation over the paucity of youth education in our community?

Yet where in these essays is the righteous indignation over the paucity of youth education in our community? Why do so many in the academic world fail to see that Italian-American youngsters remain largely ignorant of their 3,000 year old civilization? It is this ignorance that fuels the rampant apathy at the grass roots and beyond. It is this ignorance that led to *Shark Tale*, the Batavia debacle\* and the likes of *Jersey Shore*. \* (See Logs #26 & #27)

The war on anti-Italianism begins at home. Scholars must not allow evil to triumph. They must fight the good fight in the struggle to eliminate an enduring prejudice.

-Rosario A. Iaconis

Reviewer Rosario Iaconis, center, in the streets to protest *Shark Tale* at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2004. Not one of the editors or essayists of *Anti-Italianism* were present. Flanking Iaconis are Lionel Bottari, as Leonardo, and Franco Paliferro as his guard.



## Don't Look Italian (continued from p.17)

**BRADLEY COOPER**—star of *The Hangover* and *The A-Team*; mother's maiden name: **Campano**; in interviews, Cooper speaks fondly of his South Philly upbringing and says his grandmother taught him to cook;

**MATTHEW FOX**—star of ABC's series "Lost"; mother's maiden name: **Eagono**; Fox is married to former Italian fashion model Margherita Ronchi;

**JONAS BROTHERS**—rock-and-roll brothers band and teen favorite; their maternal grandparents are Italian Americans from New Jersey;

**ASHLEY JUDD**—actress; father's name: Michael **Ciminella**; Judd is married to professional race-car driver Dario Franchitti, a Scots-Italian;

**LADY GAGA**—current pop superstar; born Stefani Joanna Angelina **Germanotta**;

**GARRY MARSHALL**—actor and producer of TV hits such as *Happy Days*; original family name: **Masciarelli**;

**BERNADETTE PETERS**, singer and actress, original surname **Lazzara**.

**SUSAN SARANDON**, actress, mother's maiden name **Criscione**.

Similarly, there are many performers who trade heavily on an "Italian" identity but who, in fact, are either part Italian or not Italian at all:

**PORTIA DE ROSSI** – stage name of Australian actress Amanda Rogers.

**ROBERT DE NIRO**—iconic American actor who plays numerous Italian "mob" roles; mother's maiden name: Admiral;

5) **CARLY FIORINA**—American businesswoman, CEO of HP and Lucent; born Cara Carleton Sneed; her second husband is Italian American;

**RAY LIOTTA**—star of Italian mob movies like *Goodfellas*; adopted by Italian parents; birth parents were non-Italian;

**STEVE SCHIRIPPA**—star of *The Sopranos* and author of "Goombah" books; non-Italian grandfather was a member of Murder, Inc.;

**SILVESTER STALLONE** – Italian American father, mother's name is Labofish.

\*\*\*\*

**VINCE VAUGHN**  
actor and producer;  
his mother is a  
Canadian; maiden  
name: **DePalmo**;



**ELIZABETH HASSELBECK**  
co-host of TV's *The View*; mother's  
maiden name:  
**DelPadre**; married  
to pro football quar-  
terback Tim  
Hasselbeck;



**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**  
rock-and-roll icon; mother's  
maiden name: **Zerilli**;  
Bruce's mom and her  
Neapolitan father (Bruce's  
grandfather, who lived with  
the family) inspired his love  
of music;



**CHRIS EVANS**  
star of *The Fantastic  
Four* and chosen as  
the new *Captain  
America*; mother's  
maiden name:  
**Capuano**.

# Joe Colombo

## The Italian American Civil Rights League

### Watch What You Wish For...

by John Mancini, Anthony Vecchione, Bill Dal Cerro

In the early 1970s, Paramount Studios hired a young director named Francis Ford Coppola to bring Puzo's book to the silver screen. Even though the producers didn't expect the film version to make much money—mobster films were dying out, as evidenced by the colossal flop of Kirk Douglas's *The Brotherhood* in 1968—Coppola, the energetic film-school graduate, wanted *The Godfather* to be as authentic as possible. For Coppola, that meant filming on location in Manhattan's Little Italy. It was there that he met Joseph Colombo, a neighborhood guy turned Italian American activist. Although Coppola and Colombo were worlds apart in terms of breeding and education, they managed to independently tarnish the image of the community that gave them birth.



Joseph Colombo Sr. Was he head of the Colombo Crime "Family" or just the local numbers and sports-betting felon?

Filming in New York City was encouraged by the mayor's office, and the American public anxiously awaited the movie version of the book. But Coppola's first obstacle was the *de facto* leader of Little Italy — Joe Colombo. At the time, Colombo's mission in life was to free himself and Italian Americans from the image of organized crime and to rein in the ethnic-profiling of the FBI. Filming a best-selling novel linking Italian Americans with organized crime, in his hometown, was the last thing Colombo wanted. Or so people thought.

### Birth of the Civil Rights League

According to a 1971 FBI report, obtained by the Italic Institute of America, Joseph Anthony Colombo was "boss of the Colombo family of *La Cosa Nostra*" and he earned a living by "operating [an] illegal gambling business." This business allegedly raked an unbelievable \$10 million dollars a year.

Colombo's side of the story was that he was a native of Brooklyn, earned a living in real estate, and that he had become a victim of unwarranted harassment by the FBI. Records show that he did have three prior gambling convictions and paid small

finances for them. Perhaps of relevance, his own father was mysteriously found shot to death in his car some years before. Nevertheless, Colombo was a Navy veteran and was never convicted of any serious crimes other than gambling. According to Colombo, all Italian Americans were considered suspicious by authorities.

When his son, Joseph Colombo Jr., was arrested for plotting to melt down U.S. silver coins into silver ingots - a charge which, incidentally, was later dismissed - Colombo Sr. viewed it as a direct, personal attack on his family. As his indignation grew, he launched the Italian American Civil Rights League on April 30, 1970. Its first act on that day was to picket FBI offices in New York and New Haven, CT. Colombo's popularity soared immediately in Italian American neighborhoods. On June 28, 1970, the League staged a "Unity Rally" at Manhattan's Columbus Circle, attracting over 100,000 people. Speakers included the likes of Congressman Mario Biaggi, previously one of the most highly decorated police officers in the nation. Biaggi's speech included a line that still rings true today: "There are about 20 million Italian Americans in the United States. When I look at the very small number involved in organized crime, I say that makes us better than the 99 and 44/100ths purity of Ivory Soap."

Although this rally came at the tail-end of the 1960s, when protests were much more common in America, such a show of support was not merely a spontaneous revolt by local Italian Americans. Through the efforts of a close friend, Natale Marcone, a former union organizer, Colombo already had established an extensive grass-roots network in Brooklyn and elsewhere. Whether it had criminal elements or was just neighborhood camaraderie is still difficult to say. Ethnic neighborhoods were vibrant and intact in the 1970s, and Italian Americans still had hot button issues that aroused such street action.

But one thing was clear: the Italian American Civil Rights

League was a huge success.

There had been media protests before, such as Italian American groups pressuring actor/producer Desi Arnaz in the 1950s to stop highlighting Italian-surnamed gangsters in his

(Cont'd on p. 24)

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**The League staged a "Unity Rally" at Manhattan's Columbus Circle, attracting over 100,000 people.**

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## Italy or Empire (continued from p.18)

Franco in overthrowing the Soviet-backed leftist government. In 1937, suspicion fell on the Italians for torpedoing Soviet ships in the Mediterranean heading to re-supply Spanish Communists. Worse, Italian propaganda broadcasts were stirring up Arab nationalism against the British in Palestine and Arabia. The Middle East, by the 1930s, had become more than a coast on the sea-passage to India. It was a source of oil, the new fuel of the British Navy. Fascist Italy was now a quadruple threat to the Empire – Abyssinia, Lake Tana, Spain and oil-rich Arabia. It was Mussolini who was perceived to be the immediate threat to the British Empire, not Adolph Hitler. (\* see issue XXVI)

From the instant Hitler ascended to the Chancellorship, the British Cabinet ignored his provocations. In 1934, Hitler attempted to annex Austria, a German-speaking nation. According to *Mein Kampf*, Austria was Hitler's prerequisite to European domination. The British didn't consider Austria in their vital interest and took no action to stop the Nazi dictator, so it was Fascist Italy, which borders on Austria, that had to stop the German takeover\*. This was accomplished by the dispatch of four Italian army divisions to the border and a written warning to Hitler: "Don't touch Austria!" In 1935, the British Cabinet betrayed its erstwhile allies, Italy and France, by signing a separate naval treaty with Germany, allowing Hitler to build submarines and battleships. In 1936, when Hitler remilitarized Germany's Rhineland, the British saw no harm in it. Nor did the British forcefully object to Nazi rearmament. Apparently, none of

### Apparently, none of Hitler's provocations directly threatened the British Empire.

these provocations directly threatened the British Empire. (\*see issue XXXV for details)

#### The Wrong Enemy

Some historians today look at the Fascist regime as a joke but, during the 1930s, it struck fear in many powers. Even Kamel Ataturk, founder and dictator of modern Turkey, feared Mussolini's Roman dreams. Turkey was once called Asia Minor by the Romans and was the seat of the eastern Roman Empire. Ataturk quickly formed alliances with Britain and the Muslim states of Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan to fend off Italian designs. It is rather doubtful that Italy could have conquered and occupied the whole Mediterranean. Like the American "empire" today, it is more a matter of partnering with governments and renting military bases. For example, Italy took nothing from Franco's Spain when that war concluded in 1939, despite being essential to Franco's victory. Mussolini left a "fascist" state in Spain but established no military bases there. Compare this to Britain, which held Gibraltar, and remains there to this day, or the various American military bases currently around the world.



Der Fuehrer charms the Brits: Lloyd George on the left, Edward VIII above. Neville Chamberlain was the scapegoat for Nazi-philias among Britain's elite.

The problem with the accepted notion that Appeasement unleashed Hitler is that it focuses our attention on the year 1938, the year of Munich and *Anschluss* (the German annexation of Austria). Hitler needed to be contained from the moment of his ascension to power in 1933. The five years from 1933 to 1938 have been glossed over by most historians because that period would shed a different light on Britain's relationship with Nazi Germany, a relationship based on British memories of the slaughter on the Western Front and the desperate need to preserve its empire. The British Cabinet determined the fate of Europe more so than Hitler's henchmen. In effect, Hitler had the confidence of many British politicians between 1933 and 1938. What he did not have was an alliance with Fascist Italy during those years. Though there was an Axis in 1936, it was merely an understanding of common interests. The military alliance, or Pact of Steel, was not signed until May, 1939, the year that Mussolini finally conceded that the Allies had written Italy off. It was the Italian alliance and the annexation of Austria that created Hitler's western wall from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and allowed him to begin his eastern aggression starting with Czechoslovakia and Poland.

In his reminiscence of a Cabinet meeting on February 19, 1938, Duff Cooper recalls his thoughts at the time. Unfortunately, his junior status left him silent at the table. But his thoughts as recalled in 1954, after the war and 19 years after personally meeting Benito Mussolini, were "...that we should never have driven Mussolini into the arms of Hitler, and that it might not be too late to regain him...The Italo-German alliance was an anomaly. The Germans and Austrians were the traditional enemies of the Italians." [Old Men Forget, p.211] Sadly, for the world, Duff Cooper never challenged his superiors in the Cabinet that day. By blocking his attempted annexation of Austria in 1934, Mussolini handed Hitler his first foreign policy defeat. Had Britain and France followed this example of containment, Hitler's relations with the German military and his mystical hold on the German people might have been less fanatical. In all probability, Hitler would have still

(Cont'd on p. 28)



# Don Troiani:

## Chronicler of America's Military Heritage

(from Don Troiani's website)



Throughout the years, there has been a multitude of artists who have visually captured America's wars on canvas. But when it comes to the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War, few have done it with the realism, authenticity, and credibility of Don Troiani.

In addition to his artistic accomplishments, Troiani is one of the world's leading private collectors of American war artifacts including uniforms, weapons, and equipment. He has also written and illustrated several books on the Civil War and the American Revolution. His personal Civil War library contains more than 2,000 volumes.

Because of his unique expertise in the area of military artifacts, many museums, collectors, and libraries routinely seek-out Troiani as a consultant and appraiser. Among the beneficiaries of his knowledge and insight are the Connecticut State Library, Atlanta History Center (Atlanta Historical Society), and the Confederate Memorial Hall, as well as various auction houses and private collectors. Items from his personal collection have appeared in the Time-Life documentary Civil War series "Echoes of Glory" while other artifacts have been exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution, The West Point Museum, and the National Park Service Visitors Center in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Hollywood has called on his expertise on Civil War uniforms and equipment when he served as a consultant for the feature film *Cold Mountain*.

Troiani has also authored *Don Troiani's Civil War, Soldiers in America 1754-1865*, *Military Buttons of the American Revolution*, and *Don Troiani's Regiments and Uniforms of the Civil War*, in addition to numerous articles on military artifacts including *Antiques Roadshow FYI Magazine*.

In 1995 he designed the three Civil War battlefield commemorative

coins for the United States Mint. Among his most recent works is a U.S. postal card commemorating the 350th anniversary of the U.S. National Guard. Troiani is also a recipient of the Meritorious Service Award of the National Guard. For his work in Battlefield Preservation, Troiani has recently been elected to the National Advisory Board of the Association For The Preservation Of Civil War Sites.

Don Troiani's artistic talents may come as no surprise when you take a look into his background and lineage. Born in New York City in 1949, Troiani's father, a commercial artist whose ancestors hailed from Abruzzo, Italy, encouraged her gifted son to pursue art at a young age. Troiani's interest in history no doubt came from his mother, an antiques dealer who instilled in his young son the value of knowing about the past. The combination of intrinsic artistic talent and a love of history proved to be a powerful



Bronze Guns and Iron Men

combination that set the stage for Troiani's rise as one of the leading artists of American military history.

Troiani's formal training began at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and New York's Art Student League. His artistic style can best be described as realistic. He is noted for using models with clothing and equipment from authentic collections of uniforms, insignias, and weapons. It is not usual for Troiani to visit the actual battlefields that are depicted in his paintings.

In 1980, Troiani helped establish the Society of American Historical Artists (SAHA), where he

(Cont'd on p. 27)

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TV show *The Untouchables*, but there had been nothing like this. According to the late Richard Capozzola, author of *Five Centuries of Italian American History*, the League boasted 45,000 members and established 25 chapters in a mere few months. Capozzola, a highly respected New York state high school superintendent, was so impressed he

immediately signed on to do volunteer work, including designing the league's official buttons. Superstars such as Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. appeared at a fund-raiser in Madison Square Garden. National politicians such as New York governor Nelson Rockefeller and U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell (a former target of Colombo's wrath) began making public pronouncements against ethnic profiling.

Joe Colombo's own fame grew—he became a media celebrity and made the rounds of many famous talk-shows of the era, such as those of Dick Cavett and Dinah Shore. The League's booming financial success paved the way for dreamlike initiatives such as the construction of a senior citizens' home and the purchase of rural property in upstate Rosedale, which would become a campground for inner-city kids called Camp Unity.

But the media glare and financial success also brought with it more intense scrutiny. Capozzola never backed away from his contention that Colombo and the League were being targeted.

### **The Godfather Meets *The Godfather***

In 2006, the BBC produced a documentary about Joe Colombo and the Civil Rights League called *The Godfather and the Mob*. Instead of being an objective look at the subject, the film simply accepts the idea that Joe Colombo was a mob boss and that this fearsome status is what motivated *Godfather* producer Al Ruddy to make concessions before filming.

The filmmakers relate that, after finally arranging a meeting with Ruddy at the Park Sheraton Hotel, Colombo asked for, and got, two major concessions: removal of the word "mafia" from the script (a moot point, as it was only used once) and, more damningly, acting jobs for some of the League's members (which did happen: the men who played Connie's husband and a Catholic priest were both friends of Colombo).

The filmmakers also allege that Colombo never even read the finished script.

### **Blue-Collar Forever**

Italian American culture is unique among the ethnic cultures for

its enduring and ubiquitous blue-collar image. Despite producing an above average number of college graduates, doctors, engineers, lawyers and teachers, Italic culture is always depicted as immigrant, street-wise, and kitchen-oriented. Joe Colombo, as is still true with even the better educated leaders of our community in 2010, was a product of this "traditional" community. As much as he tried to project the image of a civil rights leader, Colombo had little grounding in the classical Italian heritage or even in social movements. To put it bluntly: he was a product of the old neighborhood. Worse, except for Capozzola, he surrounded himself with other neighborhood guys. His movement sought not to elevate the community intellectually or culturally but to provide neighborhood services for senior citizens, street kids, and his own cronies. He had no strategic ethnic agenda.



If Martin Luther King used the pulpit and non-violence to project an enduring message, Joe Colombo utilized Columbus Circle simply to project power. Joe Colombo was not in Dr. King's league. Colombo lacked intellect, vision and principle. His tainted life and one-note message turned off most educated Italian Americans. At the heart of his civil rights movement was his personal war against the FBI. And if the FBI once had him under surveillance, it now had him in its sights. Nocturnal raids, search warrants, and mass arrests would soon consume Colombo's league officers and denigrate the message.

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### **Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. appeared at a fundraiser in Madison Square Garden**

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### **The End**

The League's fall was just as spectacular as its rise. On June 28, 1971, the day of the League's second annual Unity Rally, in front of yet another massive crowd at Columbus Circle, Colombo was mortally wounded by Jerome Johnson, an African American in the crowd. Johnson was then himself fatally shot — by whom, no one knows. As Colombo's bloodied body was carried away, Father Louis Gigante, a revered figure in the Bronx for his work with poor blacks and Hispanics, led the crowd in a collective prayer. Joe Colombo was comatose for years before passing away in 1978. The federal indictment against him on gambling charges was eventually dropped.

The day that Colombo was shot, however, was the day that the Italian American Civil Rights League officially died, too. While members waited for Colombo to recover from his wounds, Coppola's *The Godfather* opened up a year later to overwhelming critical acclaim, even winning an Academy Award for Best Picture. The film continues to top most critics' lists as one of the best American films ever made. For the Italian American com-

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# FOR LACK OF FORTUNE

## Allied Propaganda in the Second World War

By Robert Allegrini

After hearing that teams of Italian frogmen had sunk the only two British battleships left in the Mediterranean in December of 1941, British Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham stated, *"We are having shock after shock out here. The damage to the battleships at this time is a disaster. One cannot but admire the cold-blooded bravery and enterprise of these Italians."* The sinking of those battleships altered the strategic scenario in the Mediterranean theater for the next year of the war but you will read about this example of Italian courage and ingenuity, or others like it, in precious few American history books on the Second World War. Instead, in these books you will no doubt see the inevitable photo of Italian soldiers surrendering *en masse*.

It is somewhat ironic that the technique of the "Big Lie", first elaborated by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, was used so effectively by Hitler's adversaries to brand his Italian allies as hapless cowards in World War II. Nearly 70 years after the fact, the reputation of the Italian military has still not recovered from the successful implementation of the "Big Lie" in Allied propaganda.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler states that people *"more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie, since they themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to large-scale falsehoods. It would never come into their heads to fabricate colossal untruths, and they would not believe that others could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously."*

The big lies about the Italian military in the Second World War are that they would not fight; and that they were inept; that they lacked courage; that they were terrible soldiers. The lies have their

origins in the British wartime propaganda of the early 1940s when, for purposes of raising domestic morale, the Italian enemy was ridiculed and denigrated, especially after an initial British victory over the Italians in the deserts of North Africa. The fact that the British would employ such a technique in wartime to assuage their population is understandable. However, the fact that three subsequent generations of American military historians have bought into these big lies and continue to promogate them in print is regrettable. It does a great disservice to actual history and manifests a certain scholarly laziness. For anyone who does even a small modicum of actual research on the Italian military in the Second World War, you will discover that the truth of their performance is far different than the prevailing stereotypes suggest.

The best proof is often found in the words of the adversaries who fought against the Italians and the allies that fought with them. For example, after the heroic Folgore division of paratroopers destroyed over 120 British tanks, and saw their numbers decimated from 5,000 to 306 as they covered the Axis retreat in the desert battle of El Alamein, British General Hughes, who led the opposing British 44<sup>th</sup> infantry division stated, *"I wish to say that in all my life I have never encountered soldiers like those of the Folgore."* No less an adversary than Winston

Churchill himself praised the Folgore when, before Parliament on November 21, 1942 he said, *"We really must bow in front of the rest of those who have been the 'lions' of the Folgore Division."* Meanwhile Erwin Rommel, the famous "Desert Fox" whose forces in North Africa always included a preponderance of Italians, said of the Bersaglieri, elite Italian light infantry formations, *"The German soldier has impressed the world. However, the Italian Bersaglieri has impressed the German soldier."* It is a simple, indisputable fact that many of the Axis victories in North Africa attributed simply to the "genius of Rommel" were won with the blood and valor of the Italians, not the least of which was the battle of Tobruk in Libya when on June 21, 1942 the British surrendered the famous garrison along with 33,000 prisoners to General Navarrini, commanding a numerically inferior Italian force of

*(Cont'd on p. 26)*

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**Italian military performance was far different than the prevailing stereotypes suggest.**

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Pioneering the use of "human torpedoes," the elite 10th Light Flotilla (*Decima Mas*) was amazingly successful. In December, 1941, the *Decima Mas* sunk the battleships Queen Elizabeth (pictured) and the Valiant in Alexandria Harbor, leaving the Italian Navy supreme in the Mediterranean for much of 1942.

*(see Italic Way issue II)*



only 30,000. In *Knight's Cross: A Life of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel*, author David Fraser puts all this in perspective when he states by late 1941 "several enemy (British) reports credited Italian infantry with fighting exceptionally hard - on occasion - harder than their German comrades."

Italian heroism was hardly confined to the North African theater. In East Africa, despite having their supplies cut off with the closing of the Suez Canal, the Italians fought tenaciously in battles



Italians made two successful cavalry charges during the Second World War, against the British in East Africa and the Soviets on the Don Front

such as Agordat and Keren in Eritrea. Italian Cavalry officer Amadeo Guillet, nicknamed the "Devil Commander" by the British, tried to slow the inevitable British advance

in East Africa by hurling his cavalry against a British armored unit in what was to be the last cavalry charge ever faced by the British military. According to a contemporary account of the event in the British newspaper *The Observer*, "Yelling, flashing scimitars, firing carbines and tossing grenades, the 1,500 Italian horsemen swept through the camp, attacking tank crews and brigade HQ staff in a whirlwind of dust and gunfire."

When Guillet's biography was published in 2003, Martin Booth, of the *London Sunday Times* opined, "This book lays to rest the Italian reputation for military incompetence and lack of valor. Instead, we can only marvel at the bravery of Amadeo."

A year after Amadeo Guillet's cavalry charged successfully through British armor, his friend and fellow cavalry officer, Colonel Alessandro Bettoni, was preparing to launch another daring cavalry charge against a superior Russian force on the banks of the Don River. This would be the last cavalry charge in recorded history and it resulted in another resounding Italian victory. On the morning of August 24, 1942, the 600 men of the Savoia Cavalry regiment, who were part of the Italian Expeditionary Corps fighting alongside the Germans on the Russian front, mounted their horses and upon the traditional cry of *Avanti Savoia!* (Forward Savoy!) they unsheathed their sabers and charged a Russian position comprised of 2,000 men

equipped with artillery and mortar support. Within a couple of hours, the battle was over. The Italians had wiped out two Russian battalions and sent a third packing across the Don, leaving behind 500 prisoners.

Despite these remarkable facts, and others too numerous to mention, the vast majority of American written histories of World War II have bought into the Big Lie of the poor fighting quality of the Italian military. This initially sprang from "Operation Compass" when, in 1940, a numerically superior Italian army that had advanced from Libya into Egypt, under direct orders from Mussolini but against the will of the army's commander General Rudolfo Graziani, was routed by a much smaller British force, yet one that was vastly superior in vehicles and armor, which are keys to success in a desert war. As General Graziani later famously stated, "In this theatre of operations a single armored division is more important than an entire [infantry] army." As a result of Mussolini's reckless decision, 115,000 Italians were taken prisoner in "Operation Compass" and the stigma of Italian cowardice in World War II had begun. The British took full propaganda advantage of this victory, and soon Hollywood followed suit, churning out wartime movies like *Five Graves to Cairo*, *Sahara* and *Casablanca* which made the Italians look like buffoons and bunglers — a trend which continues in American World War II themed movies to this day.

Why the Italians were the only ones stigmatized in such a manner, when the British themselves suffered a number of similar military catastrophes, including the Fall of Singapore in which they surrendered a numerically superior and better provisioned force of nearly 80,000 to the Japanese, has a lot to say about the validity of the old adage that history is written by the victors.

In 2004, during one of his last interviews, the late professor Gunther Rothenberg, who was one of the world authorities in military history and also a veteran of the British 8<sup>th</sup> army who fought against the Italians in World War II, stated that the Italian troops had been "as good as any other on both sides" and acknowledged their subsequent reputation was based on "just propaganda."

The simple fact is that Italy was never properly prepared to fight in World War II. Its armories had been depleted by the Ethiopian War and the Spanish Civil War, and it lacked the natural resources and the industrial capacity to compete with its adversaries. But as the famous British Historian Hugh Seton-Watson observed, Italy had two choices before it: either to throw in with

Germany in order to become a large, powerful empire at the expense of Britain and France, or to join the two Western Powers against Germany and eke out a middling existence as a weak,



Italians troops under Lt. General Enea Navarrini besieged Tobruk in 1942. The final number of British and Empire troops surrendering to Navarrini is now put at 35,000.

(Cont'd on p. 28)



# Don Troiani (cont'd from p.23)

personally set uncompromising standards of excellence and authenticity in his field that few others can equal.

“If an historical painting is not accurate, then it’s worthless both as art and as a historical document,” Troiani has said.

He once said that America’s history is filled with action, color, and excitement. “The military is a valid subject for an artist to pursue as long as it is approached in a thoughtful and thorough way. There has been too much distortion over the years. I believe that the more accurate the presentation is, the clearer our image will be of our heritage. It is a far better way to honor our ancestors.” \*\*\*\*



Until Sundown

Robert E. Lee  
at Antietam  
1862



North Bridge, Concord  
19 April 1775



Washington at the  
Battle of Princeton 1777



Union Standard  
Bearer  
1863



Confederate  
Standard Bearer  
1864

## Joe Colombo (cont'd from p.24)

munity, it was either a triumph of Italic filmmaking or the worst sort of media defamation. Could the Italian American Civil Rights League have made a difference? We will never know. But we do know that Joe Colombo gave the film his indirect blessing.

### An Assessment

It is interesting to note that Colombo's Civil Rights League ostensibly utilized its money for programs rather than scholarships or charitable donations. There was, in fact, a Camp Unity for kids in Upstate New York, and plans were in the works for senior citizens' housing. They were lost when the League died but the intent, however flawed, was to build something for the community.

Also of note is that both President Nixon and Governor Rockefeller, foreseeing an Italian voting bloc, ordered their respective law agencies to stop using the word Mafia. Today, that ban is still in effect and has been replaced with LCN (*La Cosa Nostra*) and "crime families." This demonstrates that even a temporary show of power has an effect.

The messenger, Joe Colombo, was flawed, but what about his message? Do district attorneys, U.S. attorneys, FBI agents, and newspaper reporters continue to inflate Italian American criminals to enhance their own careers? Anyone who follows the media today can understand the question. Arresting a criminal with a nickname or a vowel at the end of his surname, or inserting the words "crime family" into articles about a gambling bust, guarantees automatic, high-profile coverage.

Interestingly, there has never been an official investigation into Colombo's assassination. Both the media and federal officials considered it part of a "mob war" between Colombo's group and a faction of thugs led by Crazy Joey Gallo, a mobster who had ties



Filming of *Godfather I* took place with the League's cooperation.

with African American street gang members. In short, case closed. But the late Richard Capozzola, a member of the League from start to finish, always believed that the FBI had some involvement. Did the birth of the League, led by a so-called "mob boss," hit a nerve within the federal government?

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a time of tremendous social upheaval in the U.S. It was also a time when federal agencies were consumed with paranoia, with evidence that the CIA assassinated leaders of other countries.

But if Italian Americans thought they were being unfairly profiled before Joe Colombo, this erstwhile civil rights leader actually made things worse. Fourteen years after Colombo's fall, in 1984, U.S. Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro had ABC-TV reporter Sam Donaldson in her face, calling for a mafia investigation of her and her husband. Joe Colombo had sown the seeds of a major credibility gap in our community. Italian American civil

rights became a suspect term. If Joe Colombo was the best we could produce to defend our rights, we have little to be proud of. He represented not the light of an ethnic renaissance but the dimness of a people ignorant of its own millennial history, and of its grand achievements on two continents. \*\*\*\*

## Italy or Empire (cont'd from p.22)

embarked on a war, but the direction and scope of it might have been wholly different. As journalist Pat Buchanan speculates in his book, *The Unnecessary War*, had France and Britain not acted to defend Poland, Hitler and Stalin may have destroyed each other. We might add that Japan may have thought twice about its Pacific war had Britain, France and the Netherlands not been embroiled in a European conflict in 1941.

There were more than 15 "guilty men" in the British Cabinet. Anthony Eden was conspicuously absent from the list. He, more than the others, destroyed any hope of reaching an accommodation with Italy. His frightful rapport with Hitler and his passion for the Empire opened the way for German domination of Europe. And lest anyone believe that Eden was a noble idealist for collective security, his time as British Prime Minister in 1956 was marked with a preemptive invasion of Egypt by Britain, France and Israel, such a naked act of aggression that President Eisenhower denounced it and forced the aggressors to withdraw.

To close the book on the early 1930s, as most historians and teachers have done, is not good scholarship. Some British authors have had the courage to break the silence. It is now America's turn to rediscover what really led us to the slaughter of 50 million people. \*\*\*\*

## For Lack of Fortune (from p.26)

insignificant country. In June, 1940, when Italy declared war on England and France, it looked as though a German victory was assured. Mussolini thought he could gain his share of the spoils for Italy without committing it to a long war that it could ill-afford. It was a fatal miscalculation. Hundreds of thousands of Italian soldiers trudged off to battle, many of them on foot, with inadequate supplies and antiquated or ill-suited weapons that were little match against Allied troops.

Despite these shortcomings, as has been demonstrated, the Italians were capable of fighting hard for the honor of their country despite the reservations that many of them had for the rationale of the war. Perhaps the most fitting tribute to the Italian military is written on a humble marker that lies three miles west of El Alamein in Egypt, where so many of them gave their lives. The marker, erected by Italian soldiers, represents the furthest point east that the Italian army advanced in the desert campaign. It reads simply, "*Manco` la fortuna non il valore*"- Fortune was lacking, not valor.

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WE BELIEVE THAT **PRIDE** IN ONE'S  
**PERFORMANCE** IS WHAT SEPARATES  
THE **ORDINARY** FROM THE **EXTRAORDINARY.**

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