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Figure 1. A cartoon shows Utah Governor Heber Wells using the cliché "Here's your hat, what's your hurry?" to implore UMWA District 15 organizer Carlo Demolli to get out of Utah. Demolli, who had come to the state from Colorado to encourage Utah miners to join the District 15 strike, holds a strike order with his name at the top. The cartoon's publication followed a face-to-face meeting between Wells and Demolli. Unidentified artist, *Salt Lake Herald*, December 10, 1903, A1

Italian Militants and Migrants and the Language of Solidarity in the Early-Twentieth-Century Western Coalfields

Stephen Brier and Ferdinando Fasce

In April 1904, in the sixth month of a major strike in the western coalfields, Carlo Demolli, a paid organizer for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), along with two other union officials, was charged by a federal grand jury with two counts of sending “obscene, lewd and lascivious” materials through the U.S. mail. Demolli, who had immigrated to the United States from Lombardia in northern Italy in 1895, worked as a UMWA organizer and as editor and publisher of *Il Lavoratore Italiano* (*ILI*), an Italian-language newspaper published since 1902 in Trinidad, Colorado. *ILI* served as the official organ of the UMWA’s District 15 (encompassing coal camps in Colorado, eastern Utah, southern Wyoming, and New Mexico), which launched a strike in November 1903 against area coal operators (including the Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Company). Demolli, who had played a significant role over the previous five months on both sides of the Colorado-Utah border in bringing foreign-born miners (especially Italians) into the union fold, had been targeted by coal operators; local, state, and federal politicians; law enforcement officials; and even officials of the Italian government, all of whom endeavored to have the Italian organizer’s efforts thwarted by legal and sometimes extralegal means.¹

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1. Demolli was physically attacked on the street in Pueblo, Colorado, on April 9, 1904, by a gang of thugs who beat him badly after a failed attempt to kidnap him. Demolli was laid up for several days as a result of the beating. See Colorado Bureau of Labor Statistics [hereafter CBLs], *Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1903–1904* (Denver, CO, 1904), 196, and the report in the *Salt Lake Telegram*, April 11, 1904.

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Demolli inadvertently provided the coal operators and the politicians with the legal pretext they needed to finally banish him from the District 15 coalfields, leading in the process to the defeat of the strike that he had done so much to sustain. He had authored two letters, both signed “C. Demolli,” that appeared in the March 13 and March 20, 1904, issues of *ILI*. The letters in question were thinly veiled attacks on Polly Pry, a journalist whom Demolli believed was in the employ of the coal operators. Polly Pry was the nom de plume of Denver journalist Leonel Ross Campbell, who published an eponymous scandal sheet with a decidedly antilabor agenda. Pry’s magazine consistently derided and libeled labor leaders.² Pry also targeted Demolli by name, accusing him of having fled Naples to avoid a prison sentence and of being a member of the Mafia. Outraged at such tactics and charges, Demolli chose to beat Pry at her own game, submitting his first letter to *ILI*, in which he claimed he had recently met Pry in a Denver saloon. Demolli wrote that Pry told him she was “a libertine and prostitute” as well as a successful journalist. Demolli then indicated that he asked Pry if he could “insert an ad in her paper for \$2,” a transaction he claimed was soon completed in her bedroom on Market Street.³

In October 1904, Demolli was tried and found guilty in a U.S. District Court in Pueblo, Colorado, of two charges of sending material through the U.S. mail “of so obscene, lewd and lascivious a character as to be improper to spread upon the records of the court here.” Demolli was sentenced to serve two years “hard labor” in Leavenworth penitentiary.⁴

Demolli’s rhetorical bravado in his *ILI* letters, to be sure, was an extreme expression of the code of masculinity widely shared among American workers, a code well captured in 1904 by one western miner who summoned his union brothers to “stand erect in the full majesty of our manhood.” It also reflected the hypervirile and at times overtly aggressive language and demeanor adopted by Italian Americans and Italian American radicals to demonstrate their personal bravery and defiance

2. Pry accused one national UMWA official of being a convicted murderer. And, in an early January 1904 issue, Pry attacked UMWA national organizer Mother Jones, whom she accused of having been a bordello madam in Denver in 1889, a charge that stuck to Jones for the rest of her labor-organizing career. Information on Pry is found in Elliott Gorn, *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 106, 110.

3. The Demolli letter appeared in *Il Lavoratore Italiano* [hereafter *ILI*], March 13, 1904, 4. In a follow-up letter in the next issue (*ILI*, March 20, 1904, 5), Demolli claimed that Pry was “born from a prostituted family and was herself a prostitute” and that she was paid \$5,000 by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company to help undermine the District 15 strike effort. On the Polly Pry affair, see also Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 22.

4. Governor James Peabody to Major Zeph Hill, March 25, 1904; Governor James Peabody to Joseph Cuneo, Italian Consul in Denver, March 28, 1904, James H. Peabody Papers, Colorado State Archives, Denver, CO. Ironically, the only reason three issues of *ILI* probably survived is the key role they played in securing Demolli’s conviction and jailing. Copy of Writ of Mittimus, *United States v. Charles Demolli*, U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado, October 25, 1904, in Leavenworth penitentiary file for prisoner no. 4364 (Charles Demolli), National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City, MO. The writ includes the “hard labor” sentence.

in the face of an inhospitable Anglo-American society. But in an American public sphere increasingly sensitive to issues of sexuality and “obscenity,” no less than to the threats posed by socialism and anarchism, Demolli’s suggestive, ribald letters, meant to expose Polly Pry’s perfidy, backfired badly. Demolli made himself and the unique newspaper he had helped create easy targets for a government crackdown, which contributed to the cessation of UMWA organizing efforts in District 15 for almost a decade. But this unusual way in which one of the leaders of the 1903–4 strike was laid low should not serve as the strike’s or Demolli’s epitaph. Much remains to be uncovered and analyzed about the ways immigrant workers and their immigrant leaders fomented and sustained militant labor actions such as the District 15 coal strike.⁵

The 1903–4 strike and the prominent role played by Italians, who made up the largest portion of District 15’s coal miners, have been the subject of several previous scholarly studies. Labor and ethnic historians have dug deeply into archival sources, unearthing an important episode of workers’ activism that ultimately would be crushed by the combined force of the employers and state authorities. In his 1980 article on the Italian “enclaves” surrounding the Colorado and Utah camps, Philip Notarianni points to the lack of a truly cohesive ethnic community as an essential explanation for the defeat of the strike. The “fragmentation” resulting from regional tensions between northern and southern Italians, compounded by the divisive role played by the padroni (ethnic labor recruiters) who helped the companies bring in strikebreakers, was largely responsible, Notarianni concludes, for the strike’s ultimate demise.⁶

While acknowledging the significant contributions of such previous studies, we believe that this historical episode lends itself to further examination concerning the role played by a militant ethnic minority of Italian migrants led by fellow countrymen like Carlo Demolli. Newly discovered sources and the perspective provided by two decades of the “transnational turn” in immigration and labor scholarship con-

5. The western miner’s florid statement is from a letter to the *Miners’ Magazine* (the Western Federation of Miners’ official organ), November 24, 1904, quoted in Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 106. See also Michael Miller Topp, *Those without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Rochelle Gurstin, *The Repeal of Reticence: A History of America’s Cultural and Legal Struggles over Free Speech, Obscenity, Sexual Liberation, and Modern Art* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 32–60; Lauren L. Basson, *White Enough to Be American? Race Mixing, Indigenous People, and the Boundaries of State and Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 150–58.

6. Philip F. Notarianni, “Italian Involvement in the 1903–04 Coal Miners’ Strike in Southern Colorado and Utah,” in *Pane e Lavoro: The Italian American Working Class*, ed. George E. Pozzetta (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1980), 49; Allan Kent Powell, “The ‘Foreign Element’ and the 1903–4 Carbon County Coal Miners’ Strike,” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 43, no. 2 (Spring 1975); Powell, *The Next Time We Strike: Labor in Utah’s Coal Fields, 1900–1933* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1985), 51–80; Priscilla Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines: A History of America’s Bloody Coal Industry* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 226–27. Thomas G. Andrews includes a short description of the strike in his recent study of the Colorado coalfields *Killing for Coal: America’s Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 239–44.

stitute the basis for our reinterpretation. The new evidence comes mostly from Italian archives, both local and national, and opens a window onto the cultural and political resources that Demolli and his comrades mobilized to sustain a struggle that crossed local, regional, national, and transnational material and symbolic boundaries.⁷ The “transnational turn” has brought pathbreaking analyses of the Colorado mines from environmental and labor perspectives, which help to better contextualize the broad social context of this episode. More generally, transnational research has yielded a series of research studies on Italian American labor militancy from a global perspective whose insights can be brought to bear on our case.⁸

Building on such scholarship—instead of positing a supposedly organic “Italian community” that failed to materialize—we dig deeper into the actual relations between “militants and migrants,” to use Donna Gabaccia’s apt phrase.⁹ We also explore the ways militants dealt with the disparate and potentially divisive sources of identities that extended across the Atlantic along a spectrum at once narrower and broader than that provided by their country of origin. Mirroring and sometimes following the larger trajectories of the mass of people “on the move” from the same nation or region, militants “on the run” were also pursuing their own agendas, trying to reshape them to put them in sync with the larger, highly diversified, and volatile concerns of the individuals and groups making up the U.S. industrial army and the workers’ organizations that emerged out of the concrete working and living conditions of that labor force. They brought to these relations the rich texture of their experiences, their “natural” assets as “in-between” people, endowed with a broader perspective resulting from their cosmopolitan experiences and internationalist politics. They strove to bridge the gap between old and new worlds by inventing forms of organization and discursive strategies meant to “make the near distant and the distant near” and to situate themselves within the world of American labor while trying to shape it in their own ways.¹⁰

7. The sources used include the records of the Casellario Politico Centrale, created under the fascist government in 1925–26 to serve as a repository of all current and past surveillance and repressive activities carried out by the Italian state against any form of “subversives,” a practice that began with the popular uprisings of the 1890s. The 1894 Italian law establishing a systematic classification of “subversives” was part of the larger antianarchist and antiradical drive sweeping continental Europe at the turn of the century. See Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2005). Other newly discovered archival materials include the files of the Archivio Storico Diplomatico Ministero Affari Esteri in Rome and materials from several municipal repositories in Casorate Sempione (Varese), Carlo Demolli’s birthplace.

8. Andrews, *Killing for Coal*; Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli, eds., *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

9. Donna R. Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

10. Lawrence B. Glickman, *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), xi.

Heeding Dirk Hoerder's urging to embrace the different spaces inhabited simultaneously by migrants without letting traditional hierarchies associated with the nation-state numb our view,¹¹ we will chart the real maps that militants and migrants carried with them and the intricate web of connections (local, regional, and transnational) in the old world that provided often imperceptible conduits to workers' solidarity in the new world of the Western coal camps. The cultural spaces inhabited by migrants comprised, first and foremost, highly parochial outlooks from the villages of provenance that for many constituted their sole frame of cultural reference and identity. But these cultural spaces also encompassed larger and less visible units of collective belonging, cutting across regional and national borders. To grasp this fluidity one has to trace, for example, the long tradition of exchanges and internal migrations across the Alps encompassing such seemingly unrelated areas as the Valtellina in upper Lombardia (not far from where Carlo Demolli himself hailed) and the Trentino, then in Austro-Hungary, to whose former inhabitants *ILI*, Demolli's newspaper, frequently addressed itself. In fact, those areas were much less distant physically and culturally than their different nationalities would suggest. While officially belonging to two separate nation states, in actuality those two regions shared the same language, no matter how broken and incomplete given the area's high levels of illiteracy. More important, the Valtellina and Trentino shared habits of human and commercial communication that helped forge a common bond among workers and activists who originated in those diverse places and found themselves in the midst of a common struggle to sustain unionism in far-away southern Colorado.¹²

A second major feature of our analysis is the novel attention we will pay to the cultural and communication devices used by Italian militants to address their fellow workers. *ILI* represented the first—and, for a long time, only—newspaper published entirely in Italian to become the official organ of a district of a major American union such as the UMWA. No less notable, and, again, until now inadequately acknowledged, was the use of a common national language that could resonate beyond specific regional and local subcultures and dialects. Recent research on Italian migrants' letters suggests that, contrary to prevailing assumptions, Italians on the move, in their desire to reach out to family members who remained on the other side of the Atlantic, acquired some minimal level of written linguistic competence in Italian that comple-

11. Dirk Hoerder, "Transnational-Regional-Cultural: Social History and Labor Migrants' Networks in the 19th and 20th Centuries," in *Transnationale Netzwerke im 20. Jahrhundert. Historische Erkundungen zu Ideen und Praktiken, Individuen und Organisationen / Entanglements (Transnational Networks in the Twentieth Century: Ideas and Practices, Individuals and Organization)*, ed. Berthe Unfried, Jürgen Mittag, and Marcel van der Linden (Linz: ITH, 2008), 82.

12. On Valtellina and Trentino, see Patrizia Audenino, "L'emigrazione della Lombardia," *Archivio storico dell'emigrazione*, 2 (February 2006): 28–29; and Fabrizio Caltagirone, "I movimenti migratori in provincia di Sondrio. Un panorama generale," Museo Castello Masegra, October 2004, www.castellomasegra.org. On the Alpine subregion see the overview in Pier Paolo Viazzo, "La mobilità nelle frontiere alpine," in *Storia d'Italia. Annali 24. Migrazioni*, ed. Paola Corti and Matteo Sanfilippo (Turin: Einaudi, 2009), 102–5.

mented their largely oral culture framed by their local dialects. Militant leaders relied on this limited written competence in the Italian language to forge an ideology in their newspaper that combined class militancy and an alternative definition of *italianità* (national pride) imbued with calls for justice tapping into historical examples of local and national popular bravery, independence, and autonomy.¹³

Finally, we will follow Demolli's troubled trajectory after the strike, underlining the ways his story can lay the groundwork for a reassessment of the contribution made by foreign-born militants to the larger history of the American labor movement.

The Western Coal Industry and the Remaking of the Mining Workforce

Before we attempt to interpret who exactly Carlo Demolli and his comrades were and how they found their way to the rough-and-tumble Western coal camps, let us first briefly sketch the economic and social conditions of those camps and their emergence and evolution beginning in the late nineteenth century. The western coal industry emerged out of the great post-1870 expansionary wave of railroad building and coal mine openings that swept south and west from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. More than a dozen coal camps were created in rapid succession in the 1870s and 1880s in Huerfano and Las Animas counties at the extreme southern end of Colorado and in Carbon County in eastern Utah. Las Animas County in southern Colorado had seven major coal and coking operations by 1890, which fueled the Colorado Coal and Iron Company's (CC&I) massive steel mill in Pueblo. Sixteen hundred Las Animas miners and laborers produced more than 1 million tons of bituminous coal annually, the largest output of any county in the West. By 1900, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I, which was created in 1892 in a merger of CC&I and the Colorado Fuel Company), headed by John C. Osgood, controlled more than 60 percent of southern Colorado's coal production. Within three years, CF&I's coal operations in sou-

13. The only other (but much later) significant examples of official labor newspapers in Italian were the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America's *Il Lavoro* (1915) and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union's *Giustizia* (1919). Both papers, however, were the organs of only the Italian sections of their respective unions. See Bénédicte Deschamps, "Il Lavoro: The Italian Voice of the Amalgamated, 1915–1932," *Italian American Review* 8, no. 1 (2001): 85–120; and Deschamps, "Tra aghi e spilli: 'Giustizia' e la 'questione italiana' (1943–1946)," *Archivio Storico dell'Emigrazione Italiana* 1, no. 1 (2005): 119–22; Deschamps, "Feuilleton et presse syndicale italo-américaine," in *Au bonheur du feuilleton*, ed. Marie-Françoise Cachin et al. (Paris: Creaphis, 2007), 197–210. The question of migrant letters among Italians is addressed by Sonia Cancian, "Intersecting Labour and Social Networks across Cities and Borders," *Studi emigrazione/Migration Studies* 45 (April–June 2007): 313–26. The high rate of illiteracy especially among southern Italians emphasized by Rudy Vecoli was partially offset by the widespread practice of public readings of letters and other written materials. See Vecoli, "The Italian Immigrant Press and the Construction of Social Reality, 1850–1920," in *Print Culture in a Diverse America*, ed. James P. Danky and Wayne A. Wiegand (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 17. An instance of alternative *italianità* for the interwar period is provided by Fraser Ottanelli, "Anti-Facism and the Shaping of National and Ethnic Identity," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27 (Fall 2007), 3.

thern Colorado would be controlled by the Rockefeller interests as part of an overall effort to consolidate their western industrial holdings.¹⁴

Rapid expansion of the western coal industry after 1900 led to a fundamental transformation of its mining workforce. U.S.- and British-born miners, who had comprised the majority of the workforce during the 1880s, were increasingly supplemented throughout the 1890s by Mexican-American workers and by growing numbers of newly arrived Italian and Austro-Hungarian immigrants imported into the southern Colorado coalfields. By 1900 workers representing no fewer than thirty nationalities worked in CF&I's coal mines and coke ovens and lived in its coal camps.¹⁵ Overall, of the twenty-five hundred mine and coke workers present in Las Animas in 1900, two of every five underground mine workers were Italian born, mostly young, single men. The percentage of Italian-born workers in each coal camp in the county varied from a low of 17 percent at CF&I's Starkville mine near the town of Trinidad (where British and American miners constituted more than half the mining workforce) to a high of 72 percent at Victor-American Fuel Company's Berwind mine. Nearly one in five miners and laborers in Las Animas County had recently arrived from the Austro-Hungarian empire (mostly from Serbia and Croatia, but also from Tyrol and Trentino), ranging from 8 percent of the workforce at the Hastings mine to 56 percent at Sopris. Representation of each of the key nationality groups in the labor force in Las Animas's coal camps thus varied dramatically from camp to camp. Smaller and typically older coal camps, such as Starkville and Grey Creek, had fewer foreign-born mine workers and a higher percentage of U.S.- and British-born miners, while the larger and usually more recently opened or expanded camps, such as Berwind, and incorporated towns, such as Hastings, had much higher percentages of foreign-born miners, mostly Italian and Austrian men.¹⁶

By 1903 the coal-mining labor force in Las Animas County had experienced a 240 percent increase since 1900, growing to more than six thousand workers thanks to the dramatic expansion of the coal industry in those years.¹⁷ CF&I opened five

14. Colorado State Inspector of Coal Mines, *Fourth Biennial Report* (Denver, CO, 1890); Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 53–57; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 174; *Engineering and Mining Journal*, October 8, 1892, 356. Victor-American Fuel controlled most of remainder of southern Colorado's coal output. See Lois Gaynor, "History of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and Constituent Companies, 1872–1933" (MA thesis, University of Colorado, 1935), 91–99; David A. Wolff, *Industrializing the Rockies: Growth, Competition, and Turmoil in the Coalfields of Colorado and Wyoming, 1868–1914* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2003), 114–25; and Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 212–14.

15. George McGovern, "The Colorado Coal Strike, 1913–1914" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1953), 25; Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 87–106; Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 103–4.

16. Details of the ethnic makeup of the Las Animas mining workforce are drawn from an analysis of the 1900 manuscript census in Stephen Brier, "The Most Persistent Unionists: Class Formation and Class Conflict in the Coal Fields and the Emergence of Interracial and Interethnic Unionism, 1880–1894" (PhD diss., UCLA, 1992), 229–35.

17. The Las Animas mining workforce not only grew substantially between 1900 and 1904 but also sustained an extraordinarily high turnover rate, with nearly 70 percent of the 1900 workforce having left the region

new mines in Las Animas County after 1900, while Victor-American expanded the workforce at its huge Hastings mine to more than one thousand workers. To supply their mines with laborers, CF&I and Victor-American undertook a vigorous drive to recruit thousands of new workers. Labor agents brought in Mexican nationals and other inexperienced workers (including Greeks), but the bulk of new workers were Austrians and, above all, Italians. Indeed, the Italian-speaking contingent was larger than that recorded in the U.S. census in that it also included Trentini and South Tyroleans, two groups that came from contiguous areas of Austria bordering Italy and were sometimes mistaken one for another; both were classified as Austro-Hungarians because of their passports but actually identified frequently with the Italian territory and culture. According to U.S. official statistics, on the eve of the strike, Italians proper (that is, not including Trentini or Tyroleans) comprised roughly 35 percent of the workforce of UMWA District 15. Among the Italian migrants present in southern Colorado, those from southern Italian regions such as Abruzzi and Sicily were increasingly supplementing and replacing those from northern regions (particularly Piedmont), which had predominated as the main source of migrants from the Italian peninsula to the southern Colorado mine fields in the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁸

Living conditions for the region's mining workforce were rudimentary at best. From the opening days of coal production in 1880, southern Colorado miners had largely been left to their own devices to secure housing for themselves and their families, either by constructing crude shelters or small houses on company or other private land or by renting space from private individuals. Beginning in 1899, in anticipation of the dramatic expansion of its mining operations, CF&I began a program of rebuilding camps and constructing new houses for its workers, resulting after 1901

by 1904. See Brier, "Most Persistent Unionists," 235–38, for a detailed analysis of geographic out-migration of Colorado mine workers.

18. Notarianni, "Italian Involvement," 48, 51–53; Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 103–4, 112; Rudy Vecoli, "The Italian Immigrants in the United States Labor Movement from 1880 to 1929," in *Gli italiani fuori d'Italia*, ed. Bruno Bezza (Milan: Angeli, 1983), 286; McGovern, "The Colorado Coal Strike," 26. On the significant presence of Italian-speaking Trentini and Tyroleans, see Giovanni Amistadi, *Tridentinità transoceanica* (1923; Trento: Cassa di Risparmio di Trento e Rovereto, 1998); Renzo Gubert and Aldo Gorfer-Umberto Beccaluna, eds., *Emigrazione trentina* (Trento: Agenzia Agits, 1978), 147–52; and Renzo Grasselli, *L'emigrazione dal Trentino: Dal Medioevo alla prima Guerra mondiale* (San Michele all'Adige: Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina). These scholars also provide ample qualitative evidence of the changing regional provenance over time of people immigrating to southern Colorado who either were from Italy or were Italian speaking. Such evidence is further confirmed by information furnished by Italian consuls in Colorado. See, especially, reports of June 25, 1885, July 28, 1890, and February 2, 1896, Archivio Storico Diplomatico Ministero Affari Esteri (hereafter ASDMAE), Archivio del Personale, Serie II, D, Box 6, Consolato Denver; and P. Corte to Italian Embassy, Washington, DC, December 7, 1904, ASDMAE, Ambasciata in Washington, Box 168. Austrian Trieste became a major port of overseas migration to the United States only after 1903, which may explain why we have been unable to find evidence of the kind of cross-national mingling (and class-based collaboration) of Italian-speaking and German-speaking people from the Austro-Hungarian empire in the Trieste port area prior to departure that has been detected for later historical periods. See Ervin Dubrovic, *Merika: Emigration from Central Europe to America 1880–1914* (Rijeke: Muzei grada Rijekeu, 2008); and Franco Cicotti, "Mobilità dei confini e modelli migratori: il caso della Venezia Giulia," *Archivio Storico Emigrazione Italiana* 6 (April 2010): 1–12.

in the construction of five new coal camps. The new camps included houses, schools, stores, and recreation halls.¹⁹ As these new coal camps grew, CF&I officials often had to contend with local and regional rivalries that divided the heterogeneous Italian national contingent, the result of that nation's highly diversified regional histories and cultures. CF&I officials (with evident condescension and disapproval) reported that regional tensions occasionally erupted into open conflict in those years:

Northern and Southern Italians and Sicilians are a good illustration of the feeling sometimes displayed. Not infrequently has it developed into a really war-like situation, shown on several occasions on the Hospital lawn by convalescent patients hurling at each other canes and crutches and other instruments of war. It manifests itself most frequently, however, in the less earnest battles among the school children, who forget only occasionally the traditional existing state of war.²⁰

Despite such ethnic tensions, CF&I officials believed that their ambitious building program, along with their newly formed Sociological Department's education and recreation programs, would usher in a new era of employee-company harmony. The takeover of CF&I by the Rockefeller interests in 1903 inaugurated instead a new and deeply contentious era of labor-management relations.²¹

CF&I's public professions of interest in its employees' well-being notwithstanding, southern Colorado miners faced a typically harsh regime of labor exploitation. The company, like many of its counterparts across the country, maximized its profits by minimizing its mineworkers' take-home pay. CF&I based miners' pay on the "long" ton (twenty-four hundred pounds) rather than the standard ton (two thousand pounds). CF&I miners did not enjoy the services of a checkweighman to guarantee the accuracy of the company's scales when their output was weighed. Outright theft of wages was compounded by price gouging at company stores and by company-designated merchants, exorbitant rents, and payment in scrip rather than cash. Finally, to add injury to insult, the bituminous mines of southern Colorado were dusty and gassy; crippling accidents and lethal explosions were common throughout the period. In 1901 and 1902 alone, Colorado coal miners sustained a total of 128 fatalities and 186 major injuries. Two dust explosions in Las Animas County mines in 1902 and 1904 killed a total of thirty-two miners. To be sure, deplorable pay and working conditions were not unique to western coal-mining communities in these

19. Howard K. Wilson, "A Study of Paternalism in the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company under John C. Osgood, 1892-1903" (MA thesis, University of Denver, 1967), 57-60; Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, "Annual Report of the Sociological Department of the CF&I for 1901-1902" (Denver Historical Society: Denver, CO, 1902), 41; "The Nature and Scope of the Department's Work," *Camp and Plant*, August 23, 1902, 178-80; and Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 199-232.

20. Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, "Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1904-05" (Denver Historical Society: Denver, CO, 1905), 15. See also Notarianni, "Italian Involvement," 50.

21. *Camp and Plant*, March 1, 1902, 182; Wilson, "A Study of Paternalism," 110-11; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 212-13; F. Darrell Munsell, *From Redstone to Ludlow: John Cleveland Osgood's Struggle against the United Mine Workers of America* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2009), 32-54.

years. They also characterized the West Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, and eastern Utah coalfields at comparable stages of development.²²

Exploitative wages, dangerous working conditions, and bad living conditions in coal camps did not automatically result in miners developing effective opposition to the depredations of the coal companies. Given the particular attributes of the western coal industry in the years after 1900—notably, the influx over a relatively short period of time of an almost entirely new, largely foreign-born workforce—one might easily, albeit erroneously, have predicted passivity among the miners and organizational stagnation.

The Rise of Unionism in Southern Colorado

The UMWA (and the Knights of Labor before them) had attempted, without much success, to organize western coal miners from the national union's inception in 1891.²³ Recognizing as early as 1892 the growing potential of western coal to disrupt the national market, the UMWA created a new district that year, District 15, which encompassed Colorado, eastern Utah, southern Wyoming, and northern New Mexico. UMWA vice president Phil Penna, while reporting modest organizing successes in District 15 in 1893, noted that “the greatest drawback experienced by our association there is the great number of Italians and Mexicans who work in the mines, and with whom they [presumably the English-speaking miners] cannot converse.” Penna's statement reveals two assumptions prevalent within the late-nineteenth-century labor movement: that the presence of Italians and Mexicans in the workforce was a “drawback” for organizing efforts and that English-speaking workers would constitute the core of the union's organizing efforts.²⁴

22. *United Mine Workers Journal*, May 8, 1902, 6, and August 21, 1902, 2; Coal Mine Inspector, *Tenth Biennial Report of the Inspector of Coal Mines of the State of Colorado, 1901–1902* (Denver, CO, 1903), 5; George Suggs, “The Colorado Coal Miners' Strike, 1903–1904: A Prelude to Ludlow?” *Journal of the West* 12 (1973): 36–38; U.S. Senate Committee on Labor, *A Report on Labor Disturbances in Colorado from 1880 to 1904 Inclusive*, Document #122 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1905), 331–32; and Munsell, *From Redstone to Ludlow*, 24–27. See Jon Amsden and Stephen Brier, “Coal Miners on Strike: The Transformation of Strike Demands and the Formation of a National Union,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 7 (Spring 1977): 583–616, for a description of exploitative conditions across a range of U.S. coalfields.

23. Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 194–96, 202.

24. Phil Penna, “[Letter] To the Editor,” *United Mine Workers Journal*, January 26, 1893, 1; April 27, 1893, 4. See also Catherine Collomp, *Entre classe et nation: Mouvement ouvrier et immigration aux Etats-Unis, 1880–1920* (Paris: Belin, 1998); Janice Fine and Daniel T. Tichenor, “A Movement Wrestling: American Labor's Enduring Struggle with Immigration, 1866–2007,” *Studies in American Political Development* 23 (April 2009): 84–113; and Stefano Luconi, “Ethnic Allegiance and Class Consciousness among Italian-American Workers, 1900–1941,” *Socialism and Democracy* (November 2008): 124–25. Antiimmigrant bias led to violence, including two cases of lynchings of Italians in southern Colorado in this period. Conrad Woodall, “The Italian Massacre at Walsenburg, Colorado, 1895,” in *Italian Ethnicity: Their Languages, Literature, and Lives*, ed. Dominic Candeloro, Fred L. Gardaphe, and Paolo A. Giordano (Staten Island, NY: American Italian Historical Association, 1990), 297–318; and Patrizia Salvetti, *Corda e sapone. Storie di linciaggi degli italiani negli Stati Uniti* (Rome: Donzelli, 2003), 41–48.

Despite such setbacks, a large number of northern and southern Colorado miners joined the nationwide UMWA strike in April 1894, which was called to win recognition for the union and to demonstrate sympathy for the Pullman strikers. The Colorado strikers' demands included prompt payment of wages and elimination of payments in scrip. Italians and Austrians played a significant role in the 1894 southern Colorado strike.²⁵ Participants in a May march through Huerfano and Las Animas counties, for example, were described by a deputy sheriff as "412 determined marchers, a majority of who are Italian," led by a brass band and followed by "two mess wagons heavily loaded." In early June, several thousand strikers of various nationalities, principally Italians and Mexicans, marched through the streets of Trinidad, Colorado, the county seat and an important western railroad hub.²⁶ Tensions soon escalated as a result of violence instigated by striking American Railway Union railroad workers against the Santa Fe line; as a result, federal troops were dispatched to southern Colorado to assure the movement of mail. When the Miners' Hall at the Sopris camp mysteriously burned to the ground in July 1894, Governor Davis Waite decided to act, placing the state under martial law. Though strikers continued mass actions, including a rock attack by one hundred striking miners and thirty women against scabs at the Engle mine, the 1894 strike began to peter out in early August.²⁷

Though the UMWA had managed to recruit a number of miners into the union fold, including many new immigrants, the union in Colorado was effectively destroyed in the aftermath of the 1894 strike. District 15 became little more than a shadow organization for the remainder of the decade. But the UMWA had managed to plant a seed of multiethnic organization among southern Colorado miners that would soon bloom again.²⁸

Colorado miners, with encouragement from the UMWA, refounded District 15 in October 1900 at a convention in Pueblo. The national union needed to unionize Colorado, Utah, and other areas in the West, much as it did West Virginia, because the rapidly expanding output of lower priced, nonunion coal from the western states threatened to undermine long-standing agreements with coal operators in the Central Competitive Field. The UMWA was not alone in its efforts to organize western coal miners. The avowedly anticapitalist Western Federation of Miners (WFM), while focused essentially on organizing metal miners, believed its mandate extended

25. Local leaders all bore Italian names, as indicated in legal injunctions sought by CF&I that targeted Italian and Tyrolean marchers. Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 184.

26. *Pueblo Chieftain*, May 23, 1894; *Trinidad Daily News*, May 26, June 4, and June 27, 1894; *Rocky Mountain News*, May 31, 1894, quoted in Wilson, "A Study of Paternalism," 41, 44, 49.

27. Wilson, "A Study of Paternalism," 51–57; P. Carta to Italian Embassy, Washington, DC, December 7, 1904, ASDMAE, Ambasciata in Washington, Box 168. Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 176–96, includes an extensive discussion of the 1894 strike.

28. Donald McClurg, "Labor Organization in the Coal Mines" (unpublished PhD diss., University of California, 1959), 60–62.

to all underground workers, including coal miners.²⁹ The reemergence of labor conflicts in 1900 was noted in the reports of Denver-based Italian consular authorities, who expressed concern to Rome about the possible return of “labor troubles” that would likely result from the renewed organizing efforts among southern Colorado miners.³⁰

In 1901, District 15 opened its headquarters in Trinidad, by then a thriving city and railroad hub with a population of almost ten thousand.³¹ By summer 1902, UMWA organizers had made only marginal progress recruiting new union members. In August, Adolfo Bartoli, then serving as editor of *ILI*, which began publishing in Trinidad in late May, was still comparing the gloomy prospects for the UMWA in southern Colorado with the brilliant results coming out of the Pennsylvania anthracite fields.³²

A thirty-six-year-old typesetter from Florence, Italy, and the son of a high-level public officeholder, Bartoli, according to Italian police sources, migrated to the United States in 1893 after spending several years in Palermo. In Sicily he lived with his godfather while working as a typographer for a newspaper and actively participating in local anarchist circles. The year of Bartoli’s emigration to the United States was a crucial one for the *fasci*, a huge radical rural movement. After sweeping across western Sicily in 1889, the group launched a massive three-month strike against landowners in 1893 that was crushed by the Italian state the following year. In response to the strike’s suppression, a number of *fascianti*, as they called themselves, fled the country to escape arrest or blacklisting. The available records don’t permit us to say whether Bartoli’s departure was in some way connected with this wave of repression, although it does not appear that he was directly involved in the movement.³³

29. On the WFM, see Sidney Lens, *The Labor Wars: From the Molly Maguires to the Sitdowns* (New York: Anchor Press, 1974), 127–55; Melvin Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 19–58; Maier Fox, *United We Stand: The United Mine Workers of America, 1890–1990* (Washington, DC: United Mine Workers of America, 1990), 115; and David Brundage, *The Making of Western Labor Radicalism: Denver’s Organized Workers, 1878–1905* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 137–58.

30. McClurg, “Labor Organization in the Coal Fields,” 60–62, 85–86; *United Mine Workers Journal*, November 15, 1900, 8; Ambassador Francesco Saverio Fava to Foreign Minister Emilio Visconti Venosta, December 22, 1900, ASDMAE, Archivio del Personale, Serie II, D, Box 6, Consolato Denver.

31. *Directory for Trinidad City and Las Animas County, 1902–03* (Salt Lake City, UT, 1903), 6; *Camp and Plant*, March 1, 1902, 191.

32. “a. b.” [Simpson], “Editorial,” *United Mine Workers Journal*, February 6, 1902, 6; *ILI*, August 2, 1902.

33. On Bartoli, see Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Casellario Politico Centrale [hereafter CPC], Box 368, Folder 91743; Giuseppe Cuneo a Sua Eccellenza Il Regio Ministro degli Affari Esteri, August 21, 1902, ASDMAE, Polizia Internazionale, Box 35, “Anarchici in Svizzera, Spagna, Stati Uniti, 1890–1906”; Giuseppe Cuneo a Sua Eccellenza Il Regio Ambasciatore d’Italia Washington, DC, March 29, 1904, ASDMAE, Ambasciata in Washington, Box 168, Folder 3782: Scioperi, 1901–5; and Notarianni, “Italian Involvement,” 62n20. For the *fasci* and their connections with migration to the United States, see Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants*, 55–70; and Bruno Cartosio, “Sicilian Radicals in Two Worlds,” in *In the Shadow of the Statue of Liberty: Immigrants, Workers, and Citizens in the American Republic, 1880–1920*, ed. Marianne Debouzy (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1988), 129–31.

Escape from political repression was the reason Carlo Demolli gave for his 1895 migration in an interview he granted to a Salt Lake City newspaper reporter during the 1903–4 strike. Trained as a typesetter like Bartoli, Demolli hailed from Casorate Sempione, a northern Italian village of less than two thousand residents about twenty-five miles north of Milan in the Lombardia region. He was the first-born son of a rather prosperous family, whose tavern and stables lay on the main Roman-Napoleonic road connecting Milan and Paris and linking Switzerland to Italy. Born in 1872, Demolli attended school in Casorate. He worked as a typographer for a printer in the region and became actively involved in the early 1890s in agitation against Italy's King Umberto I, taking part in militant demonstrations, strikes, tax protests, and joint political actions including typesetting, printing, and circulating antimonarchical posters in Lombardia. These activities got Demolli into trouble with the authorities, forcing him to seek temporary refuge across the border in Switzerland. Demolli fled to the other side of the Atlantic sometime in 1895. Although only twenty-three years old when he left for the United States, Demolli apparently had already acquired wide political experience. While his involvement in "subversive" activities is amply confirmed by both his family's testimony and Italian police records, these latter sources, which label him an "anarchist," give a different reason for his departure: a charge of counterfeiting in Naples that allegedly led him to emigrate to avoid incarceration, a charge that we have been unable to verify. In America, Demolli worked for a few years as a typesetter, newspaper editor, and organizer in New York and Pennsylvania and participated in 1898, with other Italian émigrés, in activities in support of the Cuban independence struggle from Spain (including an attempt to go to Cuba to fight the Spanish in April of that year) before heading out west sometime after the turn of the century. In 1902 in Trinidad, Colorado, he cofounded *ILI* with Adolfo Bartoli, who had previously worked as a printer for the East Coast *prominenti* newspaper *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*. From that point on the two men took turns, as was frequently the case with radical newspapers of the Italian diaspora, serving as editor of *ILI*.³⁴

34. On Demolli, see CPC, Box 1725, Folder 69825; Archivio Comunale Casorate Sempione, Registro di Popolazione del Comune di Casorate Sempione, Foglio di famiglia n. 164 e Registro dei Nati; Parrocchia di S. Maria dell'Assunta, Casorate Sempione, Atti Battesimali, 1872; Anna Maria Demolli and Massimo Conconi, interview by the authors, Casorate Sempione, June 17, 2008; Matilda Rossi, interview by the authors, Casorate Sempione, June 18, 2008; "Mitchell Coming to Settle Utah Strike; Charles Demolli Arrives in Salt Lake to Meet Governor—Gives the Miners' Side," December 7, 1903, *Salt Lake Herald*, and "Two Sources of Trouble," *Salt Lake Herald*, December 8, 1903. A Utah newspaper reported that Demolli met Mother Jones around 1900 when both were organizing coal miners in Pennsylvania. See "Two Years in Prison for Agitator Demolli," *Deseret Evening News*, October 26, 1904. For Demolli's involvement with Cuba, see Enzo Santarelli, "1895–1905: Italia per Cuba," Associazione Nazionale di Amicizia Italia-Cuba, www.italia-cuba.it (accessed June 21, 2008). After the two men founded *ILI* in spring 1902, Bartoli served as editor and Demolli as publisher, according to Giuseppe Cuneo a Sua Eccellenza il Regio Ministro degli Affari Esteri Roma, August 21, 1902, Box 35, ADSMAE, Polizia Internazionale. They then took turns as editor, according to a letter from Demolli to *ILI*, March 13, 1904. Demolli served as *ILI* editor until March 1903, when he stepped down, presumably to become a paid organizer for the UMWA, turning the publishing and editorial reins over to Bartoli.

Demolli, thanks to a powerful physique, cut quite a charismatic figure. The *Salt Lake Herald* reporter who interviewed Demolli described the UMWA organizer as follows:

a tall powerful man in appearance, dressed in the rough chinchilla jacket, flannel shirt, corduroy trousers and laced boots of a miner, he has a handsome face, typically Italian, with a small drooping moustache. His voice is soft and his manner suave. . . . Even with his limited command of the English-language, he is a convincing talker and one can easily imagine his power over an audience of his countrymen when he is addressing them in their native tongue.³⁵

The pages of *ILI* featured Demolli as an author and cartoonist and an indomitable organizer, but also occasionally as an “Italian boxing champion,” fighting against the “Scottish champion” McMillan, and even a magician, performing to raise money for the miners’ cause. With Bartoli, Demolli shared control of the newspaper and a complex political ideology combining unfailing class solidarity; a penchant for occasional references to such anarchist heroes as the regicide Gaetano Bresci, despite (at least in Demolli’s case) embracing an identity as a “radical Socialist”; and a certain measure of pragmatism that led them, in 1903, after one year of informal proselytizing among District 15 mine workers, to become officially affiliated with, and to work for, the UMWA. That year Demolli signed on as a paid roving organizer for District 15, and Bartoli succeeded him at the helm of *ILI*, becoming the newspaper’s full-time editor and publisher.³⁶

Bartoli and Demolli embodied the prototypical “proletarian intellectual,” espousing the cosmopolitan outlook of the anarchist and radical movements of the era. Like many of their comrades, they found in the printing trade a vehicle through which to reach out to the larger world of labor. Around their newspaper they gathered a small and determined group, made up largely of working miners, who soon emerged as the most vocal component of the Italian contingent in the strike. Such men as Olinto Marcolina from Udine, Joseph Poggiani and James Peretti from Verona, John Faletti from Cuneo, and Candido Segna from the Tyrol, alongside bartender Giuseppe Bontadini from Boffetto (Valtellina), shared two traits with Demolli that strengthened their group’s cohesion. First, they were not “greenhorns” to the country, most of them having resided in the United States for at least five years. Second, they all came from the vast Alpine and sub-Alpine arc stretching from the province of Cuneo in the northwest to that of Udine in the northeast, an area cutting

35. The reporter’s description of Demolli in “Mitchell Coming to Settle Utah Strike; Charles Demolli Arrives in Salt Lake to Meet Governor—Gives the Miners’ Side,” *Salt Lake Herald*, December 7, 1903, 1.

36. Demolli, in response to another of the reporter’s queries, as to whether he was an “anarchist” (which he strongly denied), described himself as follows: “I am what you might call a ‘radical Socialist.’” Demolli as boxer reported in *ILI*, August 2, 1902, and in July 26, 1902, Box 35, ASDMAE. “Chas. De Molle” was paid \$1,328.65 in salary and expenses as a UMWA organizer in 1904, per the *Minutes of the 16th Annual Convention of the UMW of A Held at Indianapolis, Indiana Jan. 16 to 23 (inclusive), 1905* (Indianapolis: Cheltenham, 1905), 71.

across several regions and even different nations (Italy and Austro-Hungary) but with a long history of commercial interaction, seasonal or temporary internal and international migration, and similar work experiences in stonecutting, mining, and construction. Since the 1880s that area in northern Italy, including also Trentino and Tyrol, had provided a significant portion of the new southern Colorado mining workforce.³⁷

Dispatched to Colorado by the UMWA (as was the case for longtime national organizer Joseph Poggiani) or recruited on the spot (e.g., Olinto Marcolina), these northern Italian migrants became, in various capacities, the local backbone of District 15's three interrelated organizing strategies: First, the UMWA district hired field organizers who could appeal and speak to various nationalities in the workforce, including Julian Gomez, who was appointed Mexican organizer in 1902, and John Faletti, who started working with the union in 1903. Second, the union formed multinational and multiethnic integrated local unions in each coal camp directly linked to District 15 headquarters in Trinidad and led by immigrant miners. James Peretti, for example, was the president of the Hastings local, the local union at the largest mine in the county, whose workforce was overwhelmingly Italian. Finally, and perhaps most significant, District 15 purchased and made *ILI* its official organ sometime during 1903.³⁸

The union's multiethnic organizing strategy yielded results over the course of the year. By fall 1903, District 15 had recruited two thousand southern Colorado miners to the UMWA's ranks, fully a quarter of the total coal-mining labor force working in Las Animas and Huerfano counties. District 15 president William Howells felt sufficiently emboldened by these successes to issue an open letter in August 1903 to the probusiness governor of Colorado, James Peabody, and the Colorado citi-

37. On proletarian intellectuals, see Dirk Hoerder, "Transnational-Regional-Cultural," 82. The connection between typesetting and anarchism and radicalism is examined in Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 189–93, 226–28; Davide Turcato, "Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885–1915," *International Review of Social History* 52 (Winter 2007): 424; and Piero Brunello, *Storie di anarchici e di spie. Polizia e politica nell'Italia liberale* (Rome: Donzelli, 2009), ix, 12, 28–29, 31, 85. Notarianni correctly suggests the presence of a "northerner leadership" of the strike but fails to appreciate its decisive subregional and translocal components. Notarianni, "Italian Involvement," 52.

38. Poggiani was a paid national organizer for the UMWA for at least seven years (1899–1906), according to the minutes of the UMWA annual conventions, 1900–1907 (Indianapolis: Cheltenham). Information on ethnic organizers and local presidents contained in a chronology of the 1903–4 strike compiled by District 15 secretary-treasurer John Simpson and reprinted in CBL, *Ninth Biennial Report*, 193–98, and in a February 10, 1904, letter from R. L. Martell, chief of the Colorado Secret Service, to W. H. Reno, Edward Doyle Papers, Denver Public Library, Denver, CO (hereafter Doyle Papers). Doyle was a UMWA local president and District 15 secretary-treasurer between 1912 and 1917. It is not clear how Doyle obtained possession of Martell's 1904 letter. Peretti's name was sometimes spelled Peretto in this letter and other reports, as often happened when Italian surnames were spelled in English. The official letterhead of District 15 read "United Mine Workers of America and the *Il Lavoratore Italiano*," District 15 President William Howells to Governor James Peabody, August 13, 1903, Peabody Papers. This is the earliest reference to the *ILI* as the official organ of District 15, since there are no extant issues of the paper from August 1902 through February 1904.

zenry at large. Employing vintage republican language, Howells used the legacy of the American Revolution and “the purpose for which this great commonwealth has been founded” to claim that Colorado coal miners were “denied the rights of free-men,” including “the right to converse in open conclave” and “to unite themselves with [their] fellow-workers.” Howells called on Colorado’s governor to investigate the denial of these basic “rights and liberties,” as well as high rentals for houses “no better than ‘dug-outs,’” usurious prices in the company stores, and the repressive tactics of “irresponsible renegades” (deputy sheriffs) who intimidated union members. Governor Peabody replied immediately to the open letter, rejecting Howells’s call for government intervention and asserting that the UMWA was “looking at the labor question from an entirely erroneous point of view.”³⁹

Colorado was already in the grip of intense labor conflict that year, the result of a major strike by the WFM, which had undertaken to organize the Cripple Creek metal mines near Colorado Springs, about one hundred miles north of the southern Colorado coalfields. That strike, which lasted several months, led WFM president Charles Moyer to call on the state’s coal miners to join in solidarity with their striking metal-mining brothers. UMWA leaders, both at the district and national levels, were concerned, at least in part, about potential inroads the WFM might make among Colorado coal miners in Colorado’s volatile labor environment in the fall of 1903.⁴⁰

Over the course of the previous summer, District 15 leaders had attempted to negotiate with the coal operators, achieving some modest successes with the smaller mine owners. But when officials of CF&I and Victor-American (who between them controlled more than 90 percent of southern Colorado coal output) refused to attend a September 1903 meeting organized by the Colorado commissioner of labor’s office, negotiations broke down. UMWA District 15 leaders, acutely aware of the WFM’s militant presence across the state, now pushed hard for a strike of their own; the local unions approved the call at a September 24 districtwide meeting held in Pueblo. The strike demands were basic and modest: elimination of payment in scrip; prompt payment of wages; an eight-hour day for all day men; proper enforcement of the state’s mine-safety laws; and formal recognition of the UMWA—a set of generic demands that coal miners across the country had supported for decades. After much internal maneuvering, UMWA president John Mitchell grudgingly authorized the strike to begin on November 9.⁴¹

39. CBLS, *Ninth Biennial Report*, 194; “A Manifesto [letter]” and Peabody’s August 14, 1903, reply [letter], Peabody Papers.

40. See Lens, *Labor Wars*, 144–55; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 488–52; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 218–19; and George Suggs, *Colorado’s War on Militant Unionism: James H. Peabody and the Western Federation of Miners* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972).

41. U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 332–34; Suggs, “The Colorado Coal Miners’ Strike,” 39–41. The UMWA and Mitchell opposed the strike behind the scenes because of Peabody’s recalcitrance and their fear that the union would suffer a major defeat at the hands of the large Colorado coal operators. Fox, *United We Stand*, 72. John Gehr, District 15 president after 1900, questioned the possibility of a successful organizing effort in the southern counties. See Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 219. Mitchell lamented the transformation of the “largely Ameri-

The 1903–4 Strike

Although the union counted only two thousand members on the eve of the strike, when November 9 dawned, nearly all southern Colorado miners walked out. Visiting Las Animas County a week after the strike began, Major Zeph Hill, the head of the Colorado National Guard, who would soon play a much larger role in the conflict, reported that sixty-four hundred of the county's sixty-eight hundred miners were out on strike. Deputy sheriffs immediately evicted striking miners and their families from company housing and from company-owned land on which miners had been encouraged to build their own homes; more than six hundred Italian families were evicted from Victor-American's Hastings camp alone. Strikers and their families were also denied access to company stores and even the right to walk the streets in the incorporated towns of Hastings and Delagua. The union responded by setting up tent colonies and large field kitchens on nearby private land and encouraging strikers, particularly those with families, to leave the area in search of work elsewhere. Daily strike activities, such as picketing and confrontations with strikebreakers, were left largely in the hands of single men, who required less ongoing strike support from the financially hard-pressed UMWA.⁴²

From the outset, the strike drew on a diverse leadership. In addition to a cadre of national UMWA organizers, including Mary "Mother" Jones, John Gehr, and Joseph Poggiani, who were dispatched to southern Colorado at the beginning of the strike, the union relied heavily on local and district organizers and officials residing in the various coal camps to spread the gospel among union supporters and bolster the strikers' solidarity. These indigenous leaders played a key role in the initial success of the strike and quickly became targets of company-sponsored violence. Dozens of CF&I-financed gunmen, abetted and often led by state and local authorities, were brought into southern Colorado to terrorize strikers and strike leaders, often beating them and driving them out of the coalfields.⁴³

The strikers and their supporters, including a number of women, vigorously defended themselves against such attacks. A local marshal was supervising the tearing down of miners' shanties in early December in Hastings's Sicilian quarter, known as Ragtown, when he and his men were, in the words of the U.S. Senate report on the strike, "set upon by a mob of Italian women, one of whom struck him [the marshal] with a cleaver, nearly severing one of his ears from his head." Two days later

can" population that had labored in the southern Colorado mines in years gone by and indirectly criticized the new immigrants for their willingness to work for what amounted to an un-American standard of wages. Mitchell's speech is excerpted in U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 339–40.

42. Major Zeph T. Hill to Governor James Peabody, November 18, 1903, Peabody Papers; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 221–22; Wolff, *Industrializing the Rockies*, 215; and U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 335–40.

43. The coal companies stockpiled arms for the deputies and guards they hired. See Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 224–25. R. L. Martell, the chief of the Secret Service of Colorado, proudly reported that he had arranged for his men to "kangaroo" (beat up) striking miners, including Nic Oddo, who worked at the Hastings camp; Oddo, a Sicilian, ended up in the hospital. Martell to W. H. Reno, February 10, 1904, Doyle Papers.

two strikers—Luciano De Santos and Joseph Vilano—were killed in a shoot-out between strikers and deputy sheriffs at the Segundo mine. A Catholic funeral was held in Trinidad for the two slain Italian miners, featuring “an imposing procession” of eleven hundred mourners: “The men marched in divisions, one from each camp, each division carrying an American flag draped in black.”⁴⁴

With its articles and reports on events in Colorado and on labor and political struggles in the rest of the United States and in Italy, *ILI* played a key role in mobilizing Italian miners in support of the union and the strike. With a political ideology centered around the potential strength of the “workers’ army,” which cut across different skill levels and regions, and with a suggested linkage between the struggles in the new world and those going on in the old, the newspaper strove to redraw the map of miners’ allegiances. It urged workers to put class before even the most basic and cherished value of kinship while tearing down, at the other end of the social and cultural spectrum, the even more resilient barrier of race. Thus, one could find a Sicilian worker, Giuseppe Glaviano, denouncing four Italian scabs and rebuking with special intensity two of them who, incredibly, turned out to be his own brothers: “We have always been honored to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow. Now you throw mud on the upright purity of our honor. . . . Father, mother, brother, and sister pray you to mend your ways. . . . don’t heed to the lies of the loathsome traitors, leave the place of your shame and come back into our arms.”⁴⁵ At the same time, the people who gathered around *ILI* were intent on embracing other national and racial groups, including African Americans, as part of a larger counteroffensive launched by the union against strikebreaking. The coal companies employed newly arrived Japanese immigrants as well as Mexican Americans, African Americans, and even some Italian immigrants to try to keep their mines working. But strikers countered such divisive efforts through effective propaganda and practical example.⁴⁶

In August 1902, a full year before the strike even began, *ILI* had praised the class and union solidarity demonstrated by a group of black miners brought up from the South who, informed by a UMWA organizer about the Colorado’s operators’ intention to use them as scabs, refused the jobs offered to them and left Colorado. “Bravo! Well done! To think that they are Negroes,” *ILI* had commented on that occasion, employing an inadvertent racist undertone that reflected the widespread attitude toward African Americans to which even such radical “in-between people” as these Italian militants were not immune. In this context the efforts of Demolli, Bartoli, and their comrades to reach out to black workers during the 1903–4 strike proves all the more noteworthy. In March 1904, for example, a group of six black min-

44. These events are described in U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 341–42; CBLs, *Ninth Biennial Report*, 195–96; and “Big Battle at Segundo,” *Rocky Mountain News*, December 8, 1903.

45. Giuseppe Glaviano, “Ai mie fratelli,” *ILI*, March 13, 1904, 2.

46. *United Mine Workers Journal*, December 10, 1903. The number of scabs in each mine was quite small, a measure of the strike’s overall effectiveness.

ers who were working as scabs in the Chandler mine were stopped by strikers Olinto Marcolina and George McMiller. The two unionists “tried to convince [the black strikebreakers] to abandon work. Soon a whole group of other strikers and five more blacks joined the discussion. Not only were they convinced to leave work, but they returned to Chandler to try to convince others to join the strike.”⁴⁷

ILI vehemently denied being “anarchist” and actually incurred a sharp rebuke from Giuseppe Ciancabilla—one of the most persistent (and dogmatic) members of the influential group of antiorganizational Italian anarchists active on the East Coast—for placing too much hope in trade unions and preaching social peace. In actuality, the newspaper’s ideology was an eclectic one, not devoid of references to anarchists and radicals but always primarily focused on union organizing. To that end, the newspaper never lost sight of the peculiar subcultures of its readers and their strong *campanilismo* (attachment to the local village culture). Its pages read at times as if they were published in Trentino or Tyrol, filled as they were with detailed references to the minute aspects of local life in the old world, ranging from continuing industrial and political struggles to work accidents and news of petty crimes. No less detailed were denunciations of scabs, indicating names, personal backgrounds, and the whereabouts of the culprits in Colorado and surrounding areas.⁴⁸

Southern people and particularly Sicilians were the objects of numerous articles in *ILI* detailing the proud political heritage of their homeland. This specific attention was the result not only of the large number of Sicilians present in the District 15 workforce but also of the need to counter the racist stereotypes—propagated by racial theorists in the United States and in Italy—to which southern Italians especially were exposed. Thus, for example, an “Appeal to the Sicilian People,” signed by Sicilian striker Giuseppe Tortomasi, was a call to arms filled with references to historic struggles for social justice and independence that had taken place on his home island:

Italians, and especially Sicilians, descendants of the heroes of the Vespri, sons of Garibaldi, comrades and brothers of Nicola Barbato, remember your duty! For long centuries your land was enslaved to tyrants, but our fathers . . . revolted in a body and threw into the sea both Frenchmen and Bourbons and any kind of oppressors. . . . Thanks to their audacity and courage we were freed. Are we going to betray our fathers? Here in America our stock was exploited by the oppressors too. . . . But

47. “Le condizioni della miniera di Chandler,” *ILI*, August 2, 1902, 1, and “Da Fremont County,” *ILI*, March 20, 1904, 1. On Italian American radicals and race in this era, see Topp, *Those without a Country*, 94–96; and Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, eds., *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

48. See Giuseppe Ciancabilla, “Gli avvenimenti del Colorado,” *Il Libertario*, August 4, 1904, 2. On Ciancabilla, see Notarianni, “Italian Involvement,” 58; and Nunzio Pernicone, “War among the Italian Anarchists: The Galleanisti’s Campaign against Carlo Tresca,” in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, ed. P. Cannistraro and G. Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 79, 92n1.

the time of redemption has come. . . . The name of Sicilian means hero! . . . Three hundred and fifty thousand brothers [the members and supporters of the UMWA nationally] are with us. Let us hold out to the end.⁴⁹

Interestingly, Tortomasi traced a genealogy of battles for freedom and justice that, starting with the anti-French popular uprising of the Vespri during the Middle Ages, passed through nineteenth-century international revolutionary icon Giuseppe Garibaldi (the Risorgimento's "liberator" of Sicily, who was very well known in the United States), and culminated with the contemporary socialist Nicola Barbato. A leader of the fasci, Barbato, after serving some time in an Italian jail for his militancy in that movement, attained national prominence as a member of the Italian Socialist Party. Subsequently he traveled through Europe on a propaganda tour among Italian migrants and in 1904 left for the United States, where he remained for five years, giving speeches in several places on the East Coast and eventually embracing the Industrial Workers of the World. As to the resonance of Barbato's name among Sicilian migrants who were on strike across District 15, while it is impossible to know how many of them had actually participated in the fasci movement, the fasci's widespread impact (two-thirds of rural towns in the western part of the island were involved) makes it reasonable to assume that at least some of the strikers carried, and even embraced, memories of the movement and of related radical ideas and organizations when they immigrated to the United States.

Tortomasi's reference to the Vespri deserves special attention here in that the episode was a trope of the Risorgimento era and of late-nineteenth-century Italian political discourse. Reproduced in several paintings and lithographs of national renown, the Vespri loomed large in Sicilian popular storytelling (including through puppetry) as a powerful symbol of successful collective action against injustice. The evocation of the Vespri likely struck a chord among the masses of often illiterate Sicilians who had found their way to the Colorado coalfields. By linking historic and contemporary social conflicts in Sicily with the UMWA's ongoing struggles in southern Colorado, Tortomasi helped his fellow miners understand the epic nature of the conflict in which they were engaged and empowered them through memories that he knew would energize and mobilize them.⁵⁰

It is illuminating to compare the ways southern Italian miners are depicted in *ILI* and in the contemporary correspondence of the Italian consul in Denver, Giuseppe Cuneo, a physician native to Val d'Aveto, a mountainous area in the province of Genoa from which a steady stream of migration to the Americas had origi-

49. Giuseppe Tortomasi, "Appello ai Siciliani," *ILI*, March 13, 1904, 2. On Barbato, see Cartosio, "Sicilian Radicals," 134–35; and Elisabetta Vezzosi, *Il socialismo indifferente: Immigrati italiani e Socialist Party negli Stati Uniti nel primo Novecento* (Rome: Lavoro, 1991), 33.

50. The impact of the Vespri is examined by Giuseppe Pitré, *Il Vespro siciliano nella tradizione popolare della Sicilia* (Palermo: Luigi Pedone Lauriel, 1882); and Antonio Mario Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento. Parentela, santità e onore dell'Italia unita* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 84–85, 90–91.

nated since the mid-nineteenth century.⁵¹ Cuneo and his deputy, M. Perino (who hailed from Turin in Piedmont), almost invariably depicted the bulk of the mine workers as ignorant people incapable of discerning and “taking into account seriously their own interests,” in contrast to the “criminal anarchist Demolli.” Surreptitiously, through falsehoods and false promises, the latter had induced the former to strike, persuading them that “by persisting in the current strike they would triumph” and leading them to violence and defeat.⁵² Without explicitly stating it, Cuneo adopted a stereotypical image of the Italian miners, so common among middle-class Italian observers visiting the Colorado coal camps, as a bunch of passive and inarticulate southern peasants who were easy prey to manipulators.⁵³

ILLI rejected such distinctions, constantly calling upon the “Italian comrades” to stick together and join arms with the rest of the striking mine workers. Nor did it selectively mince words according to regional preferences. It lambasted Piedmontese, Tuscanian, Friulian, Tyrolean, and Sicilian scabs with equal intensity. Furthermore, the several committees appointed to manage specific aspects of the mobilization reveal clear cooperation on an equal basis between northern and southern people. They show how, thanks to a leadership sensitive to the need for unity, Trentini, Tyroleans, and Sicilians, who at that time and in other contexts were divided by serious rivalries in the job market, could effectively bury the differences borne out of their long, separate histories in the old world that were aptly used in the new one, by employers and Italian consular officials alike, to pit one group against another.⁵⁴

The unity forged at the point of production formed the building block that allowed the Italian militants to address, with a fierce sense of their rights and dignity, their fellow countrymen of higher social standing who did not support the strike. Sharp abuse was heaped on the small number of Italian *prominenti* in Colorado—merchants, priests, and newspaper editors—whom the strikers accused of doing the coal operators’ bidding, functioning as “labor agents for the coal companies,” and backing the Colorado governor’s call to dispatch the National Guard. For example, a pro-strike broadside in Italian, addressed to “Italian Comrades” (“Compagni Italiani”), criticized “a large body of businessmen who have become rich by our labor—including among whom are the Tarabinos, the Aiello, the Niccolis.” Such criticism of prominent Italians did not always remain verbal, however. When Father Berta, the Italian priest at CF&I’s Segundo camp, urged his Italian parishioners to break the strike, refusing them absolution during confession until they swore to return

51. ASDMAE, Serie II, Box D6, Folder 6, Consolato Denver, Prefettura di Genova to Ministero degli Esteri, February 27, 1895, provides Cuneo’s background.

52. Giuseppe Cuneo to Regia Ambasciata d’Italia, Washington, DC, December 1903; Macchi di Cellere to Ministero Esteri Roma, December 11, 1903; M. Perino, April 11, 1904, ASDAME, Box 168, Folder 3782.

53. See, for example, G. De Riseis, *Dagli Stati Uniti alle Indie* (Rome: Colombo, 1899), 39–45, quoted in Salvetti, *Corda e sapone*, 42.

54. Rita Cominoli, *Smokestacks Allegro: The Story of Solvay, a Remarkable Industrial/Immigrant Village (1880–1920)* (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1990), 76–83.

to work, he was promptly attacked by a group of Italian women. They tore off his neck cloth and beat him up. A similar incident occurred at the Hastings camp, where Father C. Bertolero, a priest from Palermo, “having warned the miners to go back to work and not to heed to the word of vicious advisers, was assailed by a group of Italian women, wives of the strikers, and got bruises in his face and a broken lip.”⁵⁵

The Italian consul in Denver, Giuseppe Cuneo, was also attacked by the Italian miners—albeit only in print—as “a traitor” for not aiding his striking countrymen. Cuneo, who had served as the Italian government’s consular agent for Colorado and Utah since 1895, had previously provoked complaints from Italian miners. As early as 1899 he had been denounced for not protecting Italians during a strike in the Lake City, Colorado, silver mines. And a sharply critical article about Cuneo had appeared in *ILI* in 1902 criticizing the convergence of his long-standing conservatism and the mine operators’ interests. But with the 1903–4 coal strike, Cuneo became the object of an even more incisive and systematic effort at “diplomacy from below” that saw miners engage the entire hierarchy of Italian diplomacy, from the Denver consul to the minister of foreign affairs in Rome.⁵⁶ The miners’ efforts commenced in January 1904, two months after the strike began, when UMWA officer Olinto Marcolina, a skilled stonecutter from the province of Udine in northern Italy, was granted an interview in Denver with Cuneo. Cuneo suggested that Marcolina address the miners’ concerns directly to Italy’s ambassador in Washington. Marcolina wrote to the ambassador, arguing that “Italians are no longer treated according to the constitutional laws of this Nation, but are at the mercy of the despotism of the mining companies. People are arrested and incarcerated by the company officers themselves.” His “fellow countrymen,” Marcolina concluded, were asking “his Excellency . . . to extend them the protection that was in his power.” The letter sparked an intense correspondence among the ambassador, consul Cuneo (who immediately requested that Rome inquire into Marcolina’s prior political affiliations), and the ministry in Rome. The investigation of Marcolina’s past in Italy bore no fruit. According to the report drafted by the local police in Frisanco, Udine—the native village that he had left in the mid-1890s to move to the United States—Marcolina had always “demonstrated good political and moral conduct, never manifesting subversive ideas.” Yet, convinced by Cuneo that the strikers’ demands were “inappropriate” and “excessive,” Cuneo’s superiors closed ranks around him and refused to make any intervention on behalf of

55. Notarianni, “Italian Involvement,” 50, 55. The beating of Father Berta is described in a letter from Bertha Howell Mably, the wife of the Socialist Party’s national secretary, in Trinidad, to the *Seattle Socialist*, January 24, 1904, and in Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 227. The beating of Father Bertolero is reported in Giuseppe Cuneo a Sua Eccellenza Il Regio Ambasciatore d’Italia, Washington, DC, February 8, 1904, ASDMAE, Ambasciata in Washington, Box 168, Folder 3782. A recent assessment of Italian women’s activism in the United States is provided by Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

56. The expression comes from Renaud Morieux, “Diplomacy from Below and Belonging: Fishermen and Cross-channel Relations in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past and Present* 58 (February 2009): 83–125.

the strikers. Having received no response from the Italian authorities, Marcolina, in a February 21, 1904, article in *ILI* sarcastically titled "How We Are Protected," openly criticized Cuneo for "trying to skirt the subject" of who was responsible for the violence in southern Colorado. The following month the strikers called for Cuneo's resignation in a petition to the Italian authorities. In spite of repeated efforts on the part of his superiors to persuade Cuneo to stay, the consul ultimately resigned in July 1904, claiming a "nervous breakdown" as the cause for his irrevocable decision.⁵⁷

Undergirding such sentiments and beliefs on the part of the strikers was an alternative definition of what being an Italian meant that permeated the columns of *ILI*. This definition linked the vivid memory of the *madrepatria* (homeland) to the larger multinational cause of labor, underlining the contribution that Italians could make to that cause. Time and again the newspaper emphasized how, by rallying around the union cause, Italians would show that they "aren't going to sleep forever," that they would no longer "play the puppets" but would be capable of building "a good solid organization . . . necessary, not just for Italians but for all the workers of the world." By taking such actions they would fulfill the promise of that "revolutionary sky"—meaning the sky that had witnessed the Vespri, the Risorgimento, and the fasci—under which they were born.⁵⁸

This imaginary, ideal Italy, of which the strikers were the living embodiment, was constantly pitted against the *prominenti* who sided with the mining companies and made the "homeland tremble with rage at the contact with such renegades."⁵⁹ But it was also brandished against the companies and their local business allies by turning on its head the racialized label "mafia people"—highly emotional and ever ready to resort to use of the knife—that was commonly attributed to southern Italians. Thus, in the pages of *ILI*, the recently formed Trinidad Citizens' Alliance, which was founded by 161 local businessmen three days after the strike began, became "La Camorra e la Mafia de Trinidad." By consciously linking Citizens' Alliance members to the Neapolitan and Sicilian gangsters who preyed upon southern Italian artisans, shopkeepers, and peasants, the newspaper freed workers from that criminal stigma and projected it back onto the very people who normally used it to stereotype "new immigrants." Through a familiar metaphor, *ILI* gave workers—here seen as independent-minded Italians, impervious to ethnic gangsters and proudly engaged in

57. Marcolina's article, "Come siamo protetti—una conferenza col console," is in *ILI*, February 21, 1904. See also Notarianni, "Italian Involvement," 55–56. The reconstruction of the Cuneo case is based on correspondence in ASDMAE, Ambasciata in Washington, Box 168, Folder 3782, Serie II, Box D6, Folder 6, Consolato Denver. For Marcolina, see CPC Box 3041, Folder 59415 and Serie Politica "P," Stati Uniti, busta 360. On Friulian stonecutters' migration to the United States, see Javier Grossutti, "L'emigrazione dal Friuli Venezia Giulia negli Stati Uniti," Archivio Multimediale della Memoria dell' Emigrazione Regionale, www.ammer-fvg.org (accessed July 3, 2009).

58. See Carlo Demolli, "Olla Podrida," *ILI*, August 2, 1902; Olinto Marcolina, "Come siamo protetti—una conferenza col console," *ILI*, February 21, 1904; Anonymous, "In Guardia," *ILI*, February 21, 1904.

59. Demolli, "Olla Podrida," 2. This theme would be further elaborated during the international fascist/antifascist battles of the 1920s and 1930s, for which see Ottanelli, "Anti-Fascism."

a legitimate effort to improve their lot—a sense of their moral superiority over their bosses and the native middle classes who meekly did their bidding.⁶⁰

Alarmed by the strikers' militancy and by the radical politics articulated by *ILI*, the Trinidad Citizen's Alliance spearheaded political opposition to the strike and the union. In early December, state senator Frank R. Wood, a Trinidad merchant and vice president of the alliance, demanded that the state militia be dispatched to the striking coalfields. CF&I and Victor-American officials quickly took up the call, exhorting the state's governor to break the coal strike as he had the WFM metal-mining strike in fall 1903. Governor Peabody finally agreed to order out the state's National Guard in March 1904, declaring Las Animas County to be "in a state of insurrection and rebellion."⁶¹

State militia troops occupied Las Animas and Huerfano counties on March 23, immediately declaring martial law, censoring the press, imposing a strict curfew, disarming strikers (but not private guards), and closing saloons, including eleven Italian-run operations in the Segundo camp alone. A District 15 convention in Trinidad that had been planned for March 24 now required the National Guard commander's formal permission. Despite the delegates' protestations and their vows to maintain law and order, the state militia began rounding up and escorting strike leaders to the state border without formal charges or trials. The first to go were *ILI*'s publisher, Adolfo Bartoli, and its editor, a UMWA national organizer, Joseph Poggiani, both of whom were deported from the state on March 26. The militia suppressed the March 27 issue of *ILI* because of its "incendiary articles" and seized and padlocked the newspaper's offices.⁶²

In April and May, nearly eighty other union supporters were also deported from Colorado, the vast majority of them Italian district and local leaders and organizers. Besides Italian strikers and leaders, those escorted to the border by state militia included UMWA national organizers Mother Jones, William Wardjon, and William Fairley. Wardjon and Fairley, along with national organizers Chris Evans and James Mooney, had been beaten by gunmen earlier in February, Mooney so badly that he was permanently disfigured.⁶³

60. On the formation of the Citizens' Alliance, see George Suggs, "Colorado Conservatives versus Organized Labor: A Study of the Peabody Administration, 1903–05" (PhD diss., University of Colorado, 1964), 460. For a masterful treatment of the Mafia from a transnational perspective, see Salvatore Lupo, *Quando la mafia incontrò l'America. Storia di un intreccio intercontinentale, 1888–2008* (Turin: Einaudi, 2008).

61. Suggs, "Colorado Coal Miners' Strike," 43–45; Suggs, *Colorado's War on Militant Unionism*, 118–45; U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 344–45.

62. Hill to Peabody, April 2, 1904, Peabody Papers; U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 348–51; McClurg, "Labor Organization in the Coal Mines," 137–38; and Notarianni, "Italian Involvement," 56. The seizure of *ILI* by the state militia is reported in *Rocky Mountain News*, March 27, 1904. *ILI* was apparently allowed to reopen at some point later in the year after martial law was lifted. The *Trinidad City Directory 1904* (Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co., 1904), 44, includes a listing for *ILI*.

63. Suggs, "Colorado Coal Miners' Strike," 47–49; CBLs, *Ninth Biennial Report*, 196–97; Notarianni, "Italian Involvement," 56; U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 354–55. The attack on Chris Evans is detailed in *Rocky Mountain News*, March 15, 1904.

Governor Peabody particularly targeted Carlo Demolli. Peabody had written to James McParland, infamous manager of the Denver Pinkerton Agency, early in January 1904 seeking information that would justify Demolli's deportation to Italy. "I am advised that this person is one of the most consummate agitators we have among the Italian population in this State," the governor informed McParland. The state's business and political leaders had been expressing concern about Demolli's activities for months prior to Peabody's letter to McParland. That concern was triggered not only by Demolli's successful organizing efforts, especially among his Italian brethren, but also as a result of long-standing charges made against Demolli by officials of the Italian government, including Italy's consul in Denver, Giuseppe Cuneo. Cuneo had been trying since fall 1902 to find a way to have Demolli deported to Italy based on a charge of counterfeiting in Naples dating to 1895, the year that Demolli emigrated to the United States. In February 1903 (almost a year prior to Peabody's writing to McParland), Cuneo received a request from Joseph A. Walker of the Secret Service Division of the U.S. Treasury Department in Denver seeking proof of Demolli's conviction on the counterfeiting charge so that the U.S. government could begin deportation proceedings against the Italian organizer. No such proof was ever proffered, despite Cuneo's animus toward Demolli and Adolfo Bartoli, both of whom he held accountable for the 1902 *ILI* article criticizing him.⁶⁴

Efforts by the state (in this case, meaning Colorado, the U.S. government, *and* the Italian government) and the coal operators to "get" Carlo Demolli, as we have discussed, were ultimately successful. Following his indictment and conviction in October 1904 on two charges of sending obscene material through the U.S. mail, the result of the provocative letters against Polly Pry that were published in *ILI* in March, Demolli ended up serving nineteen months in Leavenworth penitentiary in northeastern Kansas.⁶⁵

These legal actions by the state, including deportations and imprisonment, effectively destroyed the leadership of the District 15 strike by late spring 1904. Governor Peabody finally lifted martial law and pulled the National Guard out of south-

64. Powell, "The 'Foreign Element,'" 145; Governor James Peabody to James McParland, January 5, 1904, and James McParland to Governor James Peabody, January 6, 1904, Peabody Papers. Demolli left Colorado in the first part of February, returning to Utah to continue the district's organizing efforts there.

65. Demolli was released from Leavenworth on June 5, 1906, according to his official prison records. His conviction was upheld on appeal on March 16, 1906 (three months before his release from prison) in a 2–1 decision of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. *Demolli v. United States*, No. 2,214, Circuit Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, 144 F. 363; 1906 U.S. App. Lexis 3845, 5. The Demolli case served as cited legal precedent in two subsequent efforts to squelch radical political newspapers, the conviction of the Mexican anarchist Enrique Flores Magon in 1918 on charges of distributing materials through the mail of "an indecent character, as tending to incite murder and assassination" and the conviction of the Italian anarchist Carlo Tresca in December 1923 on charges of distributing "nonmailable material" about birth control. See *Magon et al. v. United States*, No. 2,901, Circuit Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, 248 F. 201; 1918 U.S. App., and *Tresca v. United States*, No. 62, Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, 3 F. 2d 556; 1924 U.S. App. Details about Tresca's trial and conviction, which have striking parallels to Demolli's, are in Pernicone, "War among the Italian Anarchists," 83.

ern Colorado on June 4. Two days earlier the national UMWA officers, led by John Mitchell, had withdrawn financial support from the Colorado strikers. At a convention held in Pueblo on June 23, District 15 officials defied the UMWA's national officers by unanimously declaring in favor of continuing the strike. Despite this brave front, the strike eventually petered out, finally ending, with little fanfare, in October 1904.⁶⁶

Although the strike effectively halted coal production in Las Animas and Huerfano counties and in eastern Utah for almost half a year and CF&I's Pueblo steel plant was virtually shut down, the strikers in the end could not defeat the massive economic might of CF&I and Victor-American and the repressive armed power of the state militia and the gunmen hired by the mine owners to terrorize strikers, or overcome the vacillating support of national UMWA officials like John Mitchell.⁶⁷

Though the defeat stymied the UMWA's prospects for organizing southern Colorado coal miners for another half-dozen years, the strike nonetheless demonstrated the ability of a diverse, highly mobile multiethnic and multinational workforce to create and sustain a militant, working-class organization and a major strike in the face of overwhelming opposition from employers and the state. Mother Jones's eulogy for the strike and praise for the Italian and Mexican strikers who remained solid supporters of the struggle until the very end says it best: "They were defeated on the industrial field but theirs was the victory of the spirit."⁶⁸

The Strike's Aftermath

Carlo Demolli paid the highest price of all for the strike. After he was indicted on obscenity charges in April 1904, the UMWA cut him loose as a paid organizer. During his nineteen-month incarceration at Leavenworth, Demolli corresponded with a host of people ranging from fellow Italian militants John Faletti and Olinto Marcolina (but, interestingly, not his *ILI* coeditor, Adolfo Bartoli) to UMWA president

66. U.S. Senate, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, 355–56; Suggs, "Colorado Coal Miners' Strike," 50–51; Long, *Sun Never Shines*, 237–41; and Craig Phelan, *Divided Loyalties: The Public and Private Life of Labor Leader John Mitchell* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 212–25. Phelan concludes that Mitchell "blundered" in his handling of the strike and "would never again reach the lofty height of prestige and power he held before the Colorado strike" (224). The national union ended up providing a significant amount of financial support for the District 15 strike, totaling \$65,000 in 1903 and more than \$437,000 in 1904, fully 40 percent of the total funds the UMWA committed to strike support nationally that year. Financial details for 1903 are included in *Minutes of 15th Annual UMW of A Convention, Jan. 18 to 24 (inclusive), 1904* (Indianapolis: Cheltenham, 1905), 124; for 1904 from *Minutes of 16th Annual UMW of A Convention, Jan. 16 to 23 (inclusive), 1905* (Indianapolis: Cheltenham, 1905), 94.

67. Lois Gaynor concludes that the 1903–4 strike "materially crippled the output of all [CF&I] departments for two fiscal years." Gaynor, "History of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company," 101. A comparison of CF&I's annual reports from 1903 and 1904 indicates that production at its coal mines was reduced by almost two-thirds by the strike. See *Eleventh Annual Report, Colorado Fuel and Iron Co., Denver, Colorado, August 1903* (Pueblo, CO: Bessemer Historical Society); and *Twelfth Annual Report, Colorado Fuel and Iron Co., Denver, Colorado, October 1904* (Pueblo, CO: Bessemer Historical Society).

68. Mother Jones, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones* (Chicago: C. H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1996), 113.

John Mitchell and national organizer William Wardjon and the WFM and Industrial Workers of the World's (IWW) Robert Randell and Big Bill Haywood. Although none of that correspondence has apparently survived, it is possible to infer from subsequent events that Demolli cut ties with his former employer (the UMWA) during his imprisonment while establishing new connections to an organization to which he was more favorably disposed ideologically and temperamentally: the WFM.⁶⁹

Following his release from Leavenworth in June 1906, Demolli moved to Pittsburg, Kansas, a coal-mining area in the southeast corner of the state. By month's end, writing in English as "D. Carlo" to a fellow Leavenworth prisoner, Demolli indicated that he was now working out of the offices of "Lavoratore Italiano" in Pittsburg, Kansas, and was organizing for the WFM among coal miners in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and Texas. *ILI* had been moved from Trinidad, Colorado, to Pittsburg, Kansas, sometime in 1905 by Edoardo Caffaro, a twenty-seven-year-old Turin-born journalist and socialist who became the newspaper's new publisher and editor. Caffaro welcomed Carlo Demolli's release from prison in early June, noting that "he who is Demolli at the beginning of the holiday season [an Italian metaphor for jail] remains Demolli at the end of it. High morale, usual temperature, same pulse."⁷⁰

Demolli immediately resumed his provocative rhetorical style in print, writing frequently in the revived *ILI*, praising the WFM and the newly formed IWW and their leaders (Moyer and Haywood), and signing his first letter to the paper "yours for the proletarian emancipatory revolution." A week later, Demolli wrote to suggest that traditional trade unionism of the UMWA variety can only "prolong the lethar-

69. Demolli's employment was terminated by the UMWA in an April 17, 1904, letter from W. R. Fairley according to "Rival to United Mine Workers," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 18, 1904. Demolli's Leavenworth prison file includes "Letters Sent" and "Letters Received" logs. Demolli's file also includes two handwritten letters from a C. L. Raslip and a Charles Billingford, both dated June 13, 1906 (one week after Demolli's release) and addressed to two Leavenworth prisoners, that the prison warden, R. W. MacCloughry, in a June 14 letter to Joseph A. Walker, the U.S. Secret Service agent in Denver, claimed were "written in the same identical handwriting which we positively recognize to be of Charles Demolli." The two letters report Demolli's work (as "Raslip" and "Billingford") for the WFM and the IWW. The warden concluded his letter to Walker with the telling comment, "When Demolli left here he . . . looked every inch an Italian 'Dago.'" D. Carlo to Dear Friend, June 28, 1906, Leavenworth penitentiary file for prisoner no. 4364 (Charles Demolli), National Archives and Records Administration, Kansas City, MO. Interestingly, Demolli bridled at the warden's charge that he'd impersonated other men in writing letters to his former Leavenworth prison mates. In a November 6, 1906, letter addressed to the warden and written and signed by Demolli on WFM stationery, Demolli denies the impersonation charge, concluding, "I am not trying to withhold my name, never I did wrong, but some of the law and order Americans wronged me." Despite his protestations, the handwriting in the letters in question seems to match the handwriting in Demolli's signed November 6, 1906, letter. An article in the June 13, 1906, issue of the *Salt Lake Herald* reporting Demolli's release from Leavenworth noted that Demolli "will engage in the newspaper business at Pittsburg, Kan."

70. Caffaro praised Demolli in "Carlo Demolli," *ILI*, June 8, 1906. Caffaro would continue to publish and edit *ILI* in Pittsburg for more than two decades. See Nikki Patrick, "Coal Mines Become Gold Mine for Local History," *Pittsburg (KS) Morning Sun*, April 5, 2000, article on Italian coal miners' influences on Crawford county, Kansas, at boards.ancestry.com.au/surnames.mingori/41/mb.ashx?pnt=1 (accessed March 15, 2010). The *ILI* received funds from the WFM in April 1906 for printing Italian-language pamphlets for the union. See WFM, *Official Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention* (Denver, CO, 1907), 87.

gic sleep of the proletariat. . . . The UMW is on the way out, but in the sky is shining the IWW founded one year ago in Chicago.” Demolli also vented his anger at John Mitchell, suggesting that “the hero-worshipped Mitchell did not have a single thought for me during my twenty months in jail, although he knew I was a victim of one of the most abominable ‘corporate’ plots.” Demolli felt free to take a more openly radical political stance as a WFM organizer than he had when he worked for the UMWA and Mitchell.⁷¹

In late June–early July 1906 Demolli began traveling as a WFM general organizer, first visiting his former comrades in southern Colorado (he gave his location in his letters to *ILI* as “Siberian Colorado”), where he reported the situation to be “quite gloomy from an organizing viewpoint.” Several of the key Italian militant cadre—James Peretti (sometimes spelled Peretto), Olinto Marcolina, and Adolfo Bartoli—who had helped sustain the 1903–4 strike in southern Colorado had stayed in or returned to southern Colorado during Demolli’s imprisonment and were working for the WFM at the time of Demolli’s release from Leavenworth. Like Demolli, Peretti and Marcolina wrote frequently for *ILI*. Writing in July 1906, for example, Marcolina belittled anti-WFM thugs as speaking a “bastard Italian-English language,” while Peretti attacked the UMWA for putting the financial interests of union officers above those of the rank and file. Demolli and Marcolina launched a joint attack over the next several months in the pages of *ILI* against old adversaries: John Tarabino and several other Trinidad-based *prominenti* who had apparently been nominated as “knights” of the Italian kingdom by the Denver consul Pasquale Corte (he had replaced the hated Cuneo following the latter’s resignation two years earlier). Marcolina called the *prominenti* “false patriots” who “don’t care about the poor Italian people and utter the word ‘patria’ [fatherland] and in her name commit any sort of injustices and crimes,” while Demolli accused one of them of incest for marrying a fourteen-year-old niece, even drawing a cartoon denouncing the *prominente*’s deplorable behavior.⁷²

Demolli soon moved on from organizing coal miners in the southwest territories and Colorado to organizing miners in the Pacific Northwest and mountain states. Beginning in September 1906, he received regular pay of \$100 per month, plus traveling expenses, from the WFM. Demolli had also apparently been elected an international organizer for the newly formed IWW, and he solicited subscriptions for *ILI* as

71. Demolli’s letters are in *ILI*, June 8, 15, and 29, 1906.

72. Demolli’s visit to Trinidad, Colorado, is reported in “De Molli [*sic*] Charges Graft in Big Pen,” *Trinidad Daily News*, June 21, 1906, which notes that he was still “very prominent among the Italians.” Bartoli received pay as a WFM organizer for work in Colorado in April 1906 according to WFM, *Official Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention*, 87. James Peretti (sometimes spelled Peretto) had been the president of the large UMWA local at Hastings during the strike. Demolli, Marcolina, and Peretti regularly wrote and published letters in *ILI*. See June 29, July 13, July 27, August 10, August 17, and August 30, 1906, issues, for example, which include letters from all three men. The last issue includes Demolli’s cartoon. Peretti’s organizing work for the WFM in southern Colorado is also noted approvingly in Jim Foster, “The Ten-Day Tramps,” *Labor History* 23 (Fall 1982): 616.

well. In a letter to the newspaper, Demolli denounced “the slaveholders of the UMW,” criticizing their attacks on the IWW, which he defended as an organization that illuminates “the great highway of proletarian emancipation.” Demolli’s efforts received praise from James Peretti, who noted the WFM’s considerable progress organizing Italian miners. Success in recruiting Italians in this period was also the result of evolving allegiances of Tyrolean miners to the WFM cause. Reports in *ILI* indicate that the WFM’s prospects were a topic of discussion in the Tyrol itself, with particular attention paid at a May Day rally there to the evolving political and social situation in the United States and to the continuing legal troubles of Charles Moyer and Big Bill Haywood. As during the 1903–4 strike, regional identity remained one of the keys to building a transnational, class-conscious labor movement in the United States.⁷³

In late February 1907 Demolli was dispatched by the WFM and IWW to organize immigrant workers at the Angel’s Camp and Jackson gold mines in Amador County, California (near Stockton). By May, the local Amador newspaper reported that an IWW local, with a membership of three hundred, had been organized as a result of “the prolonged stay of Chas. Demolli, a walking delegate from Colorado, in this county.” Demolli remained in and around Amador at least through the end of June; he continued to receive pay as a WFM organizer through November 1907.⁷⁴

We lose track of Demolli until 1909–10, when we find him in California thanks to a dogged pursuit by the Italian secret police. He then goes back to Denver, trying unsuccessfully to publish a new newspaper, *Il Ribelle* (*The Rebel*), supporting himself as a typographer and developing, according to police records, a serious drinking problem. Ten years later, in 1919, in the midst of the Red Scare, we find Demolli once again in California, apparently working as a printer, this time in Sonoma County (north of San Francisco), where he and an Italian compatriot were convicted in November 1919 of first-degree burglary and sentenced to one to fifteen years in Folsom State Prison. Released sometime the following year after serving the minimum sentence, Carlo Demolli died two years later, at age fifty, and was buried in a Sonoma County cemetery.⁷⁵

73. WFM, *Official Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention*, 103–5. Demolli to *ILI*, August 30, 1906; Peretti to *ILI*, December 7, 1906. Tyrolean workers are discussed in Carlo Demolli, “Black Hawk,” *ILI*, November 16, 1906, and Pietro Delladio, “Il 1 maggio nel Tirolo,” *ILI*, May 17, 1907.

74. “Local News,” *Amador Ledger*, March 15, 1907. The April 5, 1907, issue of the same newspaper reports that “Mrs. Demolli, the wife of Chas. Demolli, the WFM walking delegate,” had arrived in town the previous week. The IWW local is reported in “Miners’ Union Wants Recognition,” *Amador Ledger*, May 10, 1907. Demolli’s presence at an Italian independence day picnic is noted in “Italian Picnic,” *Amador (CA) Ledger*, June 28, 1907, though he was nearly arrested by the sheriff for trying to speak without an official “invitation.” WFM, *Official Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Conventions* (Denver, CO, 1908), 165–67.

75. For Demolli’s movements after 1909, see CPC, Box 1725, File 69825. Demolli’s 1919 Folsom prison file is quite limited. It is held under his name (spelled “DeMolli”) and prisoner number (#33155) in the Folsom State Prison Records, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA. Demolli’s death on December 23, 1922, is recorded in Comune di Casorate Sempione, Estratto dai registri dello stato civile-N. del certificato 98—Registrazione locale n. 164, November 23, 1923.

Conclusion

In a recent assessment of more than two decades of research on Italian American migration, including her own pathbreaking work, Donna Gabaccia engaged once more the vexed question of the relations between militants and migrants. She writes that “unlike migratory workers who popped back and forth between their native villages and the Italian colonies abroad, exiles (and especially anarchists) would move more frequently from one site or one job to another one, often spending years and even decades meandering through the Italian colonies, several times keeping themselves just one jump ahead of the police.”⁷⁶ The *ILI* case adds an interesting dimension to the relations between what we have called immigrant workers “on the move” and immigrant militants “on the run,” showing how their interactions were far from casual or accidental. Rather, militants and migrants from the same country of origin were embedded in a web of complex cultural and social forces that extended back and forth across the Atlantic. Deconstructing the traditional notion of the nation and exploring in a more nuanced way the cultural, economic, and regional divisions that run through it while also analyzing the macroregional affinities and familiarities cutting across nation-states in the old world and reenacted in the new enables us to grasp the actual challenges that militants faced even within their own national ethnic groups. This approach also allows us to explore the hidden strengths on which militants built and sustained organizing drives in the western coal industry in the early twentieth century. The local case has proven crucial in helping explain the larger dynamic at work here. Carlo Demolli’s youthful experience in his father’s Lombardia inn and stable, which catered to travelers to and from Italy, France, and Switzerland, proved helpful when he had to address audiences of workers who hailed from various regions across Italy and the Austro-Hungarian empire and occasionally when he had to move on horseback among and between coal camps. Similarly, the years spent by Adolfo Bartoli in Palermo probably accounted for the sensitivity shown in the pages of his newspaper toward the specific contours of Sicilian history and culture. Or recall, for example, the specific appeals in *ILI* to Sicilians and Tyroleans in terms that seem drawn directly from local newspapers published in the immigrants’ small towns or villages of origin. Perhaps even more important, the regional and trans-regional dimensions have proved equally determinative. Following the path delineated by recent research on the vast Alpine and sub-Alpine area in northern Italy and southern Austria, we have found in this middle scale of analysis an important clue to the actual, effective network of union organizing that underpinned the long, if sporadic, mobilization of coal miners in the American West.

Indeed, the national dimension is part of our story too, but from a less conventional perspective than that usually assumed. On the one hand, the difficulties encountered by Italian migrants, especially from southern Italy, as a result of their illiteracy or poor command of both the English and Italian languages have recently

76. Donna R. Gabaccia, “L’Italia fuori d’Italia,” in Corti and Sanfilippo, *Migrazioni*, 236.

been underlined by Nancy Carnevale, who has pointed to the competition among standard Italian, local dialects, and the Italian American dialect that was eventually to predominate.⁷⁷ Our case shows that, in the Babel of dialects in the western coal mines, resorting to a common national language, Italian, did not reflect militants' nostalgia for the old world or inability to adjust to the new environment. Indeed, it was a perfectly reasonable effort to tap a reservoir of words, tropes, and expressive modes that could somehow resonate in people from very diverse backgrounds and with memories rooted in their highly localized experiences while strengthening bonds extending beyond the old world's official national boundaries. Nor did illiteracy prove to be an insurmountable barrier to labor organizers' communicative endeavors. Public lectures and collective readings of *ILI* confirm the mingling of and complementarity between orality and printed text, which is a common approach in studies of ethnic literacy.⁷⁸ On the other hand, from a content standpoint, the nation became a significant part of the eclectic ideology developed by militants. Theirs was an alternative Italian nation, an idealized one, capable of coexisting with larger, class-based forms of identification and smaller, village-oriented outlooks. It helped migrants deal with a wide array of foes, inside and outside of the Italian "colony": *prominenti*, official diplomatic representatives of the homeland, and American employers and elected officials. It offered emotional and cultural resources crucial to sustaining a long mobilization against a powerful set of adversaries. It also energized the militants' efforts at countering widely shared racial stigmas associated with Italy's vexsome north-south divide.⁷⁹

No less important, the national dimension was deftly used by militants as a negotiating strategy with which to engage Italy's consular authorities in an exercise of "diplomacy from below" that once again blurred the lines between nation-states. While summoning Italian consuls and ambassadors and asking for their help as a subject of the Italian kingdom, Olinto Marcolina became a transregional and transnational negotiator in that he also spoke explicitly in the name of his fellow workers, including Trentini and Tyroleans who officially belonged to the multicultural Austro-Hungarian empire. In the process he showed the ways migrants could carve a collective space for themselves as nonstate actors in the international relations arena.⁸⁰

Finally, our in-depth look at the Italian-speaking world of labor suggests new ways to explore how this world intersected with, and indeed contributed to shaping,

77. Nancy Carnevale, *A New Language, a New World: Italian Immigrants in the United States, 1890–1945* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

78. See, for example, Orn Overland, "Learning to Read Immigrant Letters: Reflections towards a Textual Theory," in *Norwegian-American Essays 1996*, ed. Oyvind T. Gulliksen et al. (Oslo: Norwegian Emigrant Museum—Norwegian Emigration Center, 1996).

79. Luconi, "Ethnic Allegiance"; C. A. Bayly and Eugenio Biagini, eds., *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism, 1830–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

80. On nonstate actors in the international arena, see Yossi Shain, *Kinship and Diasporas in International Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

the broader organizing practices and strategies of the American labor movement. Undermining older formulations that depicted Italian labor migrants as conservative peasants impervious to organizing, over the last two decades labor and immigration historiography has emphasized two main points. One is the unquestionably pivotal role played by Italians within the IWW in a series of dramatic strikes that took place, especially in the East, between 1909 and 1913. As a recent overview noted, "The IWW had a broad appeal because it backed Italian immigrants' labor struggles, unlike any other organization in the period."⁸¹ Second, a remarkable effort emerged to characterize the Italian militant minority that, starting with a socialist-syndicalist background, moved increasingly close to the IWW and eventually, in the aftermath of World War I, developed a more accommodationist vision within the "new unionism" in the clothing industry. The trajectory described by these "radical ethnic brokers," as Elisabetta Vezzosi has called them, enriches James Barrett's previous inventive formulation of "Americanization from the bottom up," meaning the gradual acculturation of immigrants and their socialization in working-class environments and contexts. It provides a more realistic picture of the "tortuous individual paths by which the new immigrants were transformed into 'Americans.'"⁸²

Carlo Demolli's story further complicates this established view on several counts. First, we have in Demolli a "radical ethnic broker" who, thanks to his longer experience in the new country and his attendant command of two languages, helped Sicilians and Trentini adjust to the challenges of working abroad. Demolli never adopted an accommodationist stance, and in fact his commitment to the cause of labor deepened as he worked within the ranks of radical organizations, including the WFM and the IWW. Second, Demolli was an "ethnic" Wobbly who did not come from and was not active in the East. This raises the unexamined issue of whether and to what extent the western wing of the IWW was actually influenced by migrants from eastern and southern Europe. Finally, we have in Demolli an instance of an Italian who, unlike the typical "radical ethnic brokers" whose relations with American labor were long mediated by affiliations with Italian-speaking radical organizations, moved freely and directly within U.S. unions, from the UMWA to the WFM and the IWW, while never losing track of his commitment to Italian-speaking workers. Following such individual paths as Demolli's and the effects they had on various organizations permits us to see in militant migrants not merely actors who adjusted to a given environment, as both Barrett's and Vezzosi's perspectives seem to suggest, but actors who contributed in varying degrees to shaping the organizations in which they were involved. Only further research will tell us if the case of Carlo Demolli and his Italian comrades provides an example of what early modern historian Edo-

81. Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 186.

82. James R. Barrett, "Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880–1930," *Journal of American History* 79 (December 1992): 996–1020; the quotation is from Elisabetta Vezzosi, "Radical Ethnic Brokers: Immigrant Socialist Leaders in the United States between Ethnic Community and the Larger Society," in Gabaccia and Ottanelli, *Italian Workers of the World*, 122.

ardo Grendi called, in his study of the relationship between the macro and micro in early modern Italian history, the “exceptional normal,” that is, a distinctive, peculiar case that can be fruitfully used as a prism to shed new light on the larger reality surrounding it.⁸³ The evidence provided here, however, suggests that fully incorporating the untold story of militants “on the run” from a supposedly “backward” country who managed to forge an inclusive vision of organization capable of resonating with a highly diversified working class deserves a major place within the agenda of American labor and migration historiography. ■

83. Edoardo Grendi, “Microanalisi e storia sociale,” *Quaderni storici* (May 1977), 506–20. For the application of this category to migration history, see Ottanelli, “Anti-Fascism,” 3.