

Fascist Antisemitism and Jewish-Italian Relations in the United States

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Scholars have long contended that antisemitism in fascist Italy was a much milder version than its counterpart in Nazi Germany. In this view Italy was a latecomer to anti-Jewish legislation, since the country did not adopt any racial measures until 1938. Moreover, the Italian people boycotted fascist antisemitic provisions after their enactment and even risked their lives to save Jews from deportation when Germany occupied their nation and tried to implement the “Final Solution.” As this argument further goes, the lack of an antisemitic tradition in modern Italy and the good-heartedness of the Italian population shielded Italian Jews from the hardships and excesses that German Jews conversely had to face under Nazism.¹

The thesis of Italians’ imperviousness to anti-Jewish sentiments also has been applied to their communities abroad. Specifically, it has been suggested that antisemitism failed to make significant inroads into “Little Italies” in the United States even after fascism started its anti-Jewish campaign.² Recent studies, however, have begun to reassess the meaning, implications, and consequences of fascist racial legislation. Their findings have revealed that the Italian people, too, shared antisemitic feelings and, far from protecting Jews, contributed to their persecution under both Mussolini’s regime and the Nazi occupation.³

Against this backdrop this article examines to what extent that revisionist interpretation offers a viable model to account for the attitude of Italian Americans toward Jews in the United States in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In particular, it focuses on how fascist antisemitism affected the relations between these two ethnic minorities.

On June 24, 1937, Generoso Pope — a prominent New York City Italian American contractor — went back to the United States after a tour of his native country where he had been granted private audiences with Pope Pius XI, fascist Minister of Foreign Affairs Galeazzo Ciano, and Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. *Il Duce* had given

Pope a message for U.S. Jews. A number of antisemitic incidents that had occurred in Italy in the previous months were troubling Jewish communities in the United States as forewarnings that the fascist regime was about to align itself with the racial policy of its Nazi ally and launch a large-scale antisemitic campaign. The sanctions of the League of Nations for the 1935 unprovoked fascist invasion of Ethiopia had already weakened the Italian economy. Mussolini was afraid that Italy would further suffer from retaliatory measures similar to the boycott of the German goods and services that the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights had adopted in the United States after Adolf Hitler had begun to persecute Jews. For this reason Mussolini wanted to reassure Jews in the United States that they had nothing to fear for Italian Jews.⁴

Less than two weeks before Pope's return, Fulvio Suvich, the fascist ambassador in Washington, notified the American Jewish Congress that "the Italian Government plans no change in the policy towards its Jewish population whom it regards highly, and that recent attacks against the Jews in the Italian press are not significant of government attitude." Such a statement was unimpressive. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, president of the World Jewish Congress, confined himself to issuing a press release in which he quoted Suvich's words without adding any comment or expression of relief. Likewise, after Suvich's declaration, the *Jewish Examiner* published an article by Paul M. Reid, the executive director of the American League against War and Fascism, who argued that "the recent outbreak of antisemitic violence in Poland can be directly traced to the persecution pattern set by the Nazi and adopted by Mussolini," although the latter had not launched his anti-Jewish crusade yet.⁵

After Suvich's apparent failure to persuade Jews in the United States about the alleged goodwill of the fascist regime, it was Pope's turn. Following his arrival at New York harbor, Pope made a statement in which he cited Mussolini's words:



Congressman Samuel Dickstein
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

I authorize you to declare and make known, immediately upon return to New York, to the Jews of America that their preoccupation for their brothers living in Italy is nothing but the fruit of evil informers. I authorize you to specify that the Jews in Italy have received, receive, and will continue to receive the same treatment accorded to every other Italian citizen and that no form of racial or religious discrimination is in my thought, which is devoted and faithful to the policy of equality in law and the freedom of worship. [...] I thanked *Il Duce* for his message – Pope concluded – and I am sure that his explicit and unequivocal affirmations will be welcomed with sincere satisfaction by the Jews of America, among whom I count many dear and excellent friends.⁶

While the latter included Congressman Samuel Dickstein, they did not comprise Wise. Dickstein hurried to have Pope's statement included in the *Congressional Record* as an extension of his own remarks. Conversely, Wise did not even bother to acknowledge receipt of a personal letter that Pope had sent him to guarantee one more time on behalf of Mussolini that the fascist regime planned no form of discrimination against Jews.⁷

One year later, after *Il Duce* had indeed embarked on an antisemitic course, Wise admitted that he had "always believed" that Mussolini would eventually adopt a racial policy. Therefore, one can easily wonder what apparently induced another prominent American Jew like Dickstein to buy the fascist rationale and take Pope's words at face value.⁸

Unlike Wise, who was only a Jewish leader, Dickstein was a Democratic politician as well. His constituency – the Twelfth Congressional District in the East Side – was primarily Jewish. But it was also home to a significant number of Italian Americans. Many of them joined Jews in reporting to Dickstein's headquarters to ask for help, patronage, and other political services. A former protégé of Tammany Hall District chieftain John F. Ahearn, Dickstein had learnt from his mentor that every vote counted and that he could not rely on the Jewish electorate alone. Since Italian Americans and Jews were both pivotal components of the New Deal ethnic coalition that had elected Franklin D. Roosevelt to the White House and kept Dickstein himself in Congress, Dickstein could not risk losing Pope's

support. The endorsement of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* (*The Italian-American Progress*) – Pope’s Italian-language daily – was allegedly key to secure the Italian American vote in New York City. Pope himself was the chairperson of the Italian Division of the Democratic National Committee. As late as 1941, Dickstein twice took to the floor of the House of Representatives to deny accusations that Pope was a sympathizer of *Il Duce* and to guarantee that “he always condemned fascism and the Mussolini movement.” Indeed, Dickstein was eager to win the Italian American vote. He was aware of the widespread fascist sympathies in New York City’s Little Italy. Thus, in 1930 Dickstein even congratulated Domenico Trombetta on the establishment of the Lictor Federation. This organization was the heir to the Fascist League of North America that the U.S. Department of State had induced Mussolini to dissolve the previous year. After all, as the former deputy chairperson of the Special House Committee on Un-American Activities between 1934 and 1935, Dickstein had the investigation focus on the Nazi movements in the United States but largely ignore their fascist counterpart.⁹

Dickstein was not the only Jewish congressman from New York City who cherished the support of the Italian-American electorate. Italy’s attack on Ethiopia in October 1935 worried many Jews in the United States. On the one hand, U.S. Jews resented a war that disrupted the lives of the roughly seventy-thousand Falashas and pitted the latter against Italian Jews. The invasion of Ethiopia made Abyssinian Jews fight against Italian Jews. As the *B’nai B’rith Magazine* put it, “As the Roman legions advance into Ethiopia, black Jews lay down the Torah to take up arms, and it is quite conceivable that under the tropical sun an Ethiopian Jew may even at this hour be coming to grips with an Italian Jew.” The same journal also complained that “the Jew is the prime prophet of peace but ironic circumstances makes him a warrior in all the armies. [...] The Italian Jew and the Ethiopian die in mortal embrace, each crying the ‘Sh’ma!’” On the other hand U.S. Jews feared that, under the fascist regime, the Falashas might no longer enjoy the protection previously granted by Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie. Yet Jewish U.S. Representative William I. Sirovich attended an Italian American rally at Madison Square Garden in

mid-December 1935 to raise money for the Italian Red Cross, which — as antifascists had denounced — was nothing more than a surreptitious way of financing Mussolini's war machinery in Ethiopia under a humanitarian cover-up. Later on, as Italian Americans mobilized to prevent the United States from implementing economic sanctions against their ancestral country, Sirovich also made a point of joining Pope when the latter called on the White House and the Department of State in January 1936 to lobby against changes in the U.S. neutrality legislation that would enable President Roosevelt to restrict American oil exports to Italy.¹⁰

Yet the preservation of the Jewish Italian alliance within the New Deal coalition became extremely difficult in the aftermath of the passing of fascist antisemitic legislation. Indeed, that partnership had always been very troubled not only in politics but also in the labor movement, and even in everyday life. Besides a common militancy in the Democratic Party, Italian Americans and Jews shared membership in the same unions, lived in adjoining or overlapping neighborhoods, and worked the one next to the another. However, competition on the job market and for cheap housing in immigrant slums, conflicts over political recognition and patronage, as well as struggles for the control of labor unions had long pitted Italian Americans against Jews. These latter often charged their coworkers of Italian ancestry with being strikebreakers. Italian Americans usually retorted that Jews monopolized the ranking positions in the unions to the detriment of the other ethnic minorities. As one of them remarked about a Jewish officer of the Furriers Union, "most of these organizers [...] were skunks, interested only in political power and not in uplifting the workers." Indeed, Arthur Hertzberg has suggested that "Jews were prominent among union officials and strike organizers, but that did not endear them to the workers." Italian Americans were also distressed by the fact that both their supervisors and the owners of many clothing firms for which they worked were generally Jews. Even in organized crime, Italian Americans initially held subordinate positions to Jews. In early Prohibition, they did not establish syndicates of their own, but joined rackets controlled by Louis "Lepke" Buchalter, Meyer Lanski, Arnold Rothstein, and Jacob "Gurrah" Shapiro. In addition, contrary

to Jews' tendency to place themselves on the radical and idealistic fringes of the Democratic Party, most Italian Americans were so much matter-of-fact and involved in machine politics that, to Horace M. Kallen's sister, Ida, they seemed to be largely Republican even in such a Democratic stronghold as Boston's Little Italy.¹¹

These controversies caused ethnic tensions that made many Italian Americans responsive to antisemitism and prevented them from disavowing Mussolini's 1938 racial turn. New York City was the setting where such conflicts were especially manifest. After all, this city was home to the largest Italian American and Jewish communities in the United States, had a high concentration of unionized workers from both ethnic backgrounds, and included a sizeable district of clothing enterprises. As a reporter remarked about the attitude of New York City's Italian Americans toward Jews in 1939, "to the Italian who is exploited in sweatshops owned by Jewish employers, it sometimes appears logical that the Jew is the source of all his woes."

Actually, fascist propaganda relied heavily upon Italian Americans' hostility toward Jews in order to elicit support for *Il Duce's* antisemitic stand. *Il Grido della Stirpe* (*The Cry of the Race*), an Italian-language weekly that received subsidies from Italy's Ministry of Popular Culture until the very eve of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, offers a case in point. In April 1938, in order to pave the way for a positive response to Mussolini's forthcoming provisions in New York City's Little Italy, this newspaper overlooked the so-called racial question in Italy and played on Jewish Italian rivalries in the United States. It echoed innuendos that Jews monopolized retailing, boycotted merchants of Italian extraction, and bypassed the Italian American destitute in enjoying relief benefits and jobs with the Works Progress Administration during the hard times of the Depression. The presence of a significant number of German Americans in New York City also contributed to the escalation of the quarrels involving antisemitism.¹²

Yet anti-Jewish feelings did not characterize Italian Americans in New York City only. In Providence, for instance, the *Italian Echo* urged its reader not to express sympathy with the fate of Jews in Germany and Italy because "we must not and cannot embrace the cause of those who have exploited us and continue to exploit us, of those who have

humiliated us, of those who have prevented us from working and have taken away our bread.” Likewise, resentment toward Jews had let Boston’s otherwise conflicting Irish and Italian Americans find some common ground since the turn of the twentieth century. In the view of the *Jewish Advocate*, in the late 1930s, the antisemitic stand of *La Notizia (The News)*, a local Italian-language newspaper, was as vicious as that of *Il Grido della Stirpe* in New York City.¹³

Such anti-Jewish sentiments survived especially in New York City. As late as 1942, Tony Bommarito — an Italian American gangster who specialized in labor racketeering — was still able to exploit Jewish-Italian antagonism in order to disrupt union activities among his fellow ethnic members of the Congress of Industrial Organization. As he put it, “You begins [*sic*] your work by talking against the Jews and the nigger. [...] The Jew is keeping labor down by controlling the money. It’s the Jews who hires niggers and give them low wages. [...] You ties in the niggers with the Jew, den [*sic*] you call the Jews Communists. That gets ‘em.”¹⁴

As long as Mussolini rejected antisemitism, *Il Duce* enjoyed a large popularity among both Italian and U.S. Jews. In the mid-1920s, for instance, Otto Kahn — an associate of the investing house Kuhn, Loeb and Company — called the Italian dictator “a remarkable man” and proclaimed himself an admirer of fascism.¹⁵ Even more significantly, a 1933 poll by forty-three American Jewish publications listed Mussolini



Otto Kahn
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

among the twelve Christians who “have been the most outstanding in their opposition to antisemitism” because “he took pains to demonstrate that Italian fascism does not tolerate racial or religious persecution.” Yet, after an initial setback following the Italo-Ethiopian War, the fascist antisemitic turn brought Mussolini’s honeymoon with American Jewry to a definitive end. Italian Americans were affected, too. Businessmen of Italian origin, for example, reported a decline in the number of their Jewish clients.¹⁶

The Jewish backlash at both the fascist regime and its Italian American supporters exacerbated the preexisting strains between the two communities. On the one hand, when Jewish leaders or even ordinary Jews criticized Mussolini's dictatorship, assailed the fascist antisemitic legislation, or planned to extend the anti-Nazi economic boycott to Italy as well, Italian Americans resented what they perceived as illegitimate interferences in the domestic affairs of their ancestral country. On the other hand, they were ready to fight back or, at least, threaten to do so when they thought that they were the targets of Jewish retaliation. For instance, when rumors circulated that Jewish employers had dismissed workers of Italian extraction or were planning to dismiss them, Philadelphia's Italian-language daily, *Il Popolo Italiano* (*The Italian People*), issued a dire warning. An editorial that unusually was published in English, made a point of advising

the intelligent, patriotic Jew that numerically those of Italian birth and parentage are equal to, if not superior to the Jews. If the ill-advised among the recalcitrant, or trouble-making element of that race, attempt any such insane, foolish procedure, they will let loose the contents of a Pandora's box that will result in a terrible social confusion.¹⁷

It could even be suggested that anti-Jewish attitudes made inroads into Italian American communities long before antisemitism became the official policy of the fascist regime. In New York City's Lower East Side, for instance, the harassment of Sephardic Jews dated back to the early 1910s. In addition, two years before Mussolini's 1922 seizure of power, *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, which Pope had not bought yet, claimed that the Jews were "the owners of New York City" and complained that nobody had denounced what it called a "Jewish invasion." Similarly, many Italian Americans lacked in sympathy with the fate of German Jews when Fascism and Nazism were still at odds over the so-called racial question. It is well known that Mussolini initially criticized Hitler's antisemitic policy and even made fun of his own future ally's arguments. However, when *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* – then in Pope's hands – came out against Nazi antisemitism in 1933, some of its readers took issue with the stand of their newspaper and contended that Hitler was only protecting Germany from Jewish subversives who wanted to undermine the political stability of the country. Likewise, from the fall of 1937



*Rabbi Stephen Wise with New York City
Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia*
(Courtesy American Jewish Archives)

through the spring of 1938, while the fascist regime still denied that it planned any discrimination of Jews, New York City's merchants with Italian-sounding names were a constant presence on the lists of violators of the moral boycott of German goods published in the bulletin of the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights.¹⁸

An Italian American, Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia of New York City, was one of the vice presidents of the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League and an

outspoken advocate of the economic boycott of Nazi Germany. That he was of Jewish descent on the side of his mother (Irene Luzzato-Cohen), however, made La Guardia an exception among Italian Americans in the United States, although a wave of Italian Jews came to the United States in the wake of Mussolini's 1938 antisemitic decrees.¹⁹

Moreover, La Guardia turned rather soft-spoken when it came to fascist anti-Jewish policies. Although La Guardia assailed Nazism, he refrained from taking issue with fascism. On March 3, 1937, in an address at the annual luncheon of the Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress, La Guardia suggested that Hitler's effigy be placed in a chamber of horrors at the World's Fair. In March of the following year he added that the Führer's oppression of Jews "displays all the characteristics and traits of a contemptible coward" against which "the decency of the world revolts." La Guardia's uncompromising stand about the racial policy of Nazi Germany won him a "bravo" from the executive secretary of the American Pro-Falasha Committee as early as 1935. But La Guardia hardly dared to attack Mussolini until Italy entered World War II. His attitude toward *Il Duce's* antisemitism was no exception to this pattern. In December

1938, La Guardia was among the promoters of a rally at Carnegie Hall in New York City to express “sympathy with the helpless victims of political and religion oppression in the eastern hemisphere.” By that time Italian Jews had been expelled from the Fascist Party and the Italian army, excluded from public schools and universities, and barred from employment in public administrations. Yet the very words La Guardia used to summon the meeting allowed him to avoid referring to Fascism and its anti-Jewish policy explicitly. Later on, at Carnegie Hall, in what the *Jewish Chronicle* called “a fighting speech,” La Guardia attacked Nazism as a “mental disease,” but he never mentioned Italy or Mussolini’s antisemitic stand. Similarly, a few weeks earlier, La Guardia had not shown up at a gathering that radical Italian American groups had organized at the Manhattan Opera House to protest against the racial legislation of their mother country.²⁰

Another outstanding politician of Italian descent, American Labor Party Congressman Vito Marcantonio did attend the rally at the Manhattan Opera House. Yet, when he took the floor, Marcantonio chose to speak at length about the German situation and made only cursory remarks about what was happening in Italy.²¹

Both La Guardia and Marcantonio had a large number of Italian American constituents, most of whom had long basked in the glory of Italy’s alleged achievements under the fascist regime. After suffering from ethnic bigotry and discrimination on the grounds that they belonged to a supposedly inferior people, many Italian Americans ended up admiring *Il Duce* and supporting his dictatorship because they took pride in Mussolini’s aggressive policies that had apparently made their ancestral country into a great power on the international scene. In their eyes, fascist expansionism and its defense of the rights of what propaganda improperly called the Italian race were a sort of ethnic redress that enhanced their status in American society. In the face of Mussolini’s accomplishments Italian Americans were no longer the neglected children of a backward and despised country, but had become the offspring of a nation that inspired awe worldwide. As even anti-fascists admitted, Mussolini “enabled four million Italians in America to hold up their heads.” Significantly, after Italy invaded Ethiopia in a successful attempt to establish an empire in eastern

Africa, in New York City alone Italian Americans contributed over seven hundred thousand dollars, hundreds of thousands of wedding rings, and other gold objects to the government of their ancestral land in order to help Mussolini's colonial venture.²²

Since profascist feelings were widespread among Italian Americans in New York City, neither La Guardia nor Marcantonio came out against *Il Duce's* unprovoked attack on Ethiopia. La Guardia even attended the rally for the Italian Red Cross at Madison Square Garden. One can reasonably suggest that their failure to denounce explicitly the fascist anti-Jewish legislation was the result of two concurrent and interrelated factors. La Guardia and Marcantonio were aware that antisemitism was not unpopular among their voters of Italian extraction. They tried as well not to displease their own constituents by antagonizing many Italian Americans' profascist stand. Indeed, in 1939 conventional Jewish wisdom had it that if the mayor had wanted to, "the Police could easily put a stop to the ravings and abuses shouted on the streets of New York – directed against the Jews." One year later the *Jewish Examiner* even contended that La Guardia revealed only a half-hearted commitment to fight antisemitism in New York City because he did not want to lose the antisemitic vote. In 1939, La Guardia did not refrain from attending a mass meeting at which he lashed out at the "German-American Bund" as an anti-American organization. It seems, therefore, that since La Guardia continued to oppose pro-Nazi German Americans, the antisemitic vote to which the *Jewish Examiner* referred must have been the Italian American cohort of this racist electorate. Italian Americans' profascist sentiments created a difficult dilemma for La Guardia and Marcantonio when they were supposed to address the issue of Mussolini's antisemitism. As these two politicians relied greatly on the Italian American support at the polls and, consequently, could not afford to criticize the Italian regime, they chose not to be outspoken against the fascist racial legislation and to confine themselves to condemning Italy's Jewish policy indirectly by attacking its Nazi counterpart.²³

There is additional evidence that a significant number of Italian Americans yielded to antisemitism. Unlike La Guardia and Marcantonio, other anti-fascists of Italian extraction were quite vocal

in their opposition to Mussolini's racial provisions. The anti-fascists included Luigi Antonini, the general secretary of Local 89 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the chairperson of the American Labor Party in New York State, as well as Girolamo Valenti, then the editor of the socialist-oriented Italian-language newspaper *La Stampa Libera*. Antonini's and Valenti's stand, however, was not representative of the prevailing sentiments in the Italian American communities.²⁴

Antonini joined the boycott of the Non-Sectarian Anti-League against Hitler's anti-Jewish policy as early as 1935 and did not retreat in the face of Mussolini's embrace of similar measures. Italian Americans and Jews bulked large in the membership of the ILGWU, and Antonini knew that the spread of antisemitic attitudes would weaken both his own union and the working-class ethnic coalition that backed progressive Democrats such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Governor Herbert H. Lehman in New York State through the American Labor Party. In the wake of the passing of the fascist 1938 decrees, Antonini published an appeal for tolerance in the *Jewish People Voice*, a newspaper "dedicated to the defense of the Jewish people against fascism and antisemitism," as did Valenti in the same issue. This Jewish publication titled their contributions "Antonini Denounces Mussolini's Antisemitism" and "Mussolini's Antisemitism Shall Not Divide Us." The definitive tone of the headlines, however, reflected less the contents of the two articles than an editorial wishful thinking. Both Antonini and Valenti were indeed worried that antisemitism would eventually separate Italian Americans from Jews within the labor movement and the Roosevelt coalition and therefore warned their fellow ethnics against the dangerous consequences of such animosities. Antonini's and Valenti's remarks intended less to reflect Italian Americans' sympathy for Jews than to urge them to give up their antisemitic attitude. As Valenti asked himself, "Where will this antisemitic campaign of Mussolini's agents in the United States lead the millions of Italians?" Similarly, Antonini reminded Italian Americans that

the venom of racial intolerance can be turned just as easily against Italians and Germans as against Jews. Those who want religious and racial freedom for themselves must defend the religious and racial



Rabbi Samuel Schulman
(Courtesy American
Jewish Archives)

liberties of others. [...] Let us not jeopardize our futures and those of our children by importing the evils which have made half of Europe a mad house of hate.²⁵

Established in 1936 to deliver the labor vote to the progressive candidates of the Democratic Party, the American Labor Party was the epitome of the Jewish-Italian partnership in politics. Its backbone was the prevailing Jewish and Italian Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America along with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.²⁶

Yet, by the time Valenti and Antonini urged Italian Americans to reject antisemitic attitudes, these sentiments had already begun to shatter the Jewish-Italian alliance to back Democratic liberals. Before Valenti reiterated his appeal on the *Jewish Examiner* in November 1938, that year's midterm elections had witnessed a significant drop of the Italian American vote for Jewish Democratic candidates. For example, support for Governor Lehman declined from 66.9 percent in 1936 to 59.7 percent in 1938 in New York City's Little Italy after what Rabbi Samuel Schulman of Temple of Emanu-El called "a terrible campaign," in which Lehman's Jewish identity became an issue and appeals to cast ballots for "Christian Gentiles" as well as antisemitic whispers mushroomed in immigrant communities. Similarly, the vote for Democratic Jewish Congressman Leon Sacks fell from 67.9 percent in 1936 to 50.6 percent in 1938 in the Italian American community in Philadelphia following vicious appeals against a politician who belonged to an allegedly "inferior race." Sacks's opponents even circulated pictures of his Republican challenger that emphasized the latter's baldness and protruding chin in order to contrast his Mussolini-like features with the Democratic candidate's supposedly Semitic appearance. Furthermore, Sacks faced problems with the Italian American membership of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. This union endorsed Sacks and, therefore, its members were

supposed to cast their ballots for him. Yet a few of its Italian American activists not only refused to vote for Sacks, but even campaigned against him on the grounds that he was a Jew.²⁷

Antisemitism also affected the Italian American following for La Guardia, a nominal Republican who was President Roosevelt's best political ally in New York City. La Guardia carried the Italian American community by 62.2 percent in 1933 and by 62.6 percent four years later. But in 1941 he lost it to William O'Dwyer, who received 52.9 percent of the Italian American vote, as opposed to La Guardia's 46.1 percent, in the wake of a systematic exposé of the incumbent mayor's Jewish roots by the pro-fascist weekly *Il Grido della Stirpe*. Once again, however, Italian Americans' antisemitic feelings resulted from competition with Jews in everyday life. La Guardia, for instance, was accused of favoring Jews over Italian Americans in municipal appointments. La Guardia's Jewish blood had received attention in the 1937 mayoral campaign as well. But this issue influenced the Italian American electorate only after the voters' ancestral country had embraced antisemitism.²⁸

No quantitative data are available about the extent of the penetration of antisemitism into Little Italies. Yet Italian Americans' bolt from Jewish candidates in 1938 may be somewhat revealing. Of course, single-issue campaigns are not common and those Democratic defectors may have gone over to the Republican Party for other reasons. But the very fact that the GOP propaganda relied in part on antisemitic issues in some Italian American communities in 1938 means that Republican workers expected such arguments to strike a sensitive chord among voters with Italian backgrounds.

After all, antisemitic undercurrents reemerged in American society in the interwar years and were not confined only to the Little Italies or the German American communities. Within this broader context several Nazi-style organizations lured Italian Americans into joining their membership, or at least into developing some partnership, in the late 1930s. Antisemitism was often the common ground for the cooperation between pro-Nazi German Americans and pro-fascist Italian Americans. According to a report of Los Angeles' Jewish Community Research Council, which monitored fascist activities in

southern California, the German-American Bund in California had joined forces with the local chapter of the Italian War Veterans and the state's lodges of the Order Sons of Italy in America. Joseph Ferri, a member of this latter organization, was a frequent speaker at Bund rallies. In particular, Ferri attended an Anti-Communist Convention in early August 1938, a month after the antisemitic turn of the fascist regime had begun. On that occasion, after addressing the gathering as "My Gentile American friends," he stated that he had "read with great satisfaction in the papers during the last few days that the Black Shirts of Italy have been running the sons of Moses out of the schools and out of the high places of Government because the Italian blood must now be purified." Two months later Ferri took part in the celebrations for the German occupation of the Sudetenland and committed himself to declaring "war on our enemies, the Jews."²⁹

On the other coast, in New Jersey, Joseph Santi, of the Lictor Federation, and Salvatore Caridi of the Italian War Veterans spearheaded a campaign to merge their associations with the German-American Bund and other right-wing organizations into a single, fascist front. Newspaper reports did not refer to the role of anti-Jewish feelings in this attempted consolidation. Yet these sentiments must have been a unifying factor. Not only did antisemitism largely shape the ideology of the German-American Bund, but the founder of the Lictor Federation, Domenico Trombetta, was also the editor of the previously mentioned antisemitic weekly *Il Grido della Stirpe*. After the enactment of the fascist antisemitic legislation, Trombetta's attacks on Jews became so vicious both in his paper and on the airwaves that the radio station WHOM decided to discontinue his program to prevent the Federal Communication Commission from revoking its own broadcasting license. Remarkably, when WHOM made its decision known, it did not meet with approval but with heavy criticism in Little Italies. This response revealed at least Italian Americans' widespread lack of sympathy with Jews.³⁰

Catholicism added to fascist allegiance in fanning the flames of Italian Americans' antisemitism. For instance, Francesco Paolo Castorina held membership in both the German-American Bund and the Christian Front. Castorina was the self-proclaimed leader of the American Fascist Party and considered himself as "the nation's

most promising dictatorial timber for a Fascist America,” according to Congressman Dickstein. Other Italian Americans limited their militancy to ultrarightist antisemitic associations. John J. Olivo, for example, was the captain of the Christian Mobilizer Guard in New York City in 1940. Similarly, *Social Justice* – the organ of Father Charles Coughlin, the Catholic priest whose pro-fascist and anti-Jewish views had become blatant by 1936 – began to publish letters signed with Italian-sounding last names on an almost regular basis after the fascist racial turn in July 1938. This correspondence suggests, therefore, that Coughlin’s weekly paper enjoyed a significant readership in Little Italies.³¹

However, some Italian Americans did not confine themselves to passive roles in antisemitic movements, but were also involved in anti-Jewish raids. Coeval investigations reported that numerous members of Little Italies not only attended meetings of organizations such as the Christian Mobilizers or the Christian Front, but also attacked Jews or incited people to assault them. Paul Lucenti, a salesperson for *Social Justice*, was arrested a dozen times in New York City on charges that he had insulted passers-by who had a Jewish look, while other Italian Americans pasted “Buy Christian” stickers on the windows of Jewish stores. As Lucenti maintained in an interview in the late 1930s, “You got to create terror to get somewhere. [...] You got to terrorize the Jews.” Similarly, Joseph Bono, a member of the Christian Front, was convicted of placing antisemitic posters in New York City’s subway in 1938. Among these Italian American Catholic hate crusaders was Ralph Ninno, another affiliate of the Christian Front, who addressed a rally of this organization by stating that “if I had my way, I would hang all Jews in this country.” At a different gathering of Christian Fronters, Floyd Carridi similarly proclaimed that “Jews will get what the Jews in Germany got. We have guns, and we plan to use them. We have a platform here to-night made of metal which can be dismantled in ten seconds and used for bludgeons.”³²

Remarkably, all these incidents occurred following the outbreak of Mussolini’s anti-Jewish campaign, as if the fascist argument that “Jews do not belong to the Italian race” had further separated Italian Americans from Jews. Indeed, Luigi Scala — the over-scrupulous

antisemitic state leader of the Rhode Island Grand Lodge of the Order Sons of Italy in America — hurried to write Rome in order to inquire whether ethnically conscious Italian Americans should disavow those members of their community who happened to be married to Jews.³³

Fascism played such a leading role in having Italian Americans take pride in their ethnic identity that for many members of the Little Italies, it was difficult to reject antisemitism after the latter had become a key component of Mussolini's concept of Italianness. On the other hand antisemitic persecutions in Europe made Jews fully aware of their own status as a discriminated minority and further contributed to separate Jewish Americans from Italian Americans. Indeed, one could suggest that the consciousness of antisemitism brought Jews closer to other victims of racial prejudice, like blacks, than to Italian Americans.³⁴

Italy's declaration of war on the United States on December 11, 1941, silenced, at least temporarily, Italian America's most vocal antisemites. The Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Trombetta, and *Il Grido della Stirpe* ceased publication. Furthermore, since Italian Americans' prewar enthusiasm for the fascist regime was notorious, holding opinions that were generally perceived as an outgrowth of the propaganda of enemy countries was clearly politically unsafe for members of the Little Italies.³⁵

Yet antisemitism was hard to die among a few Italian Americans. Rumors that Jews were responsible for the conflict between the United States and their ancestral country were commonplace in Italian American communities at wartime. In the fall of 1943, gangs of Italian American students attacked Jews in Chicago's Manley-Marshall school district.³⁶

New antisemitic leaders also appeared. Father Arthur W. Terminiello of Mobile, Alabama — the self-styled Father Coughlin of the South and the founder of the Union of Christian Crusaders — began to preach against those “Communitic, atheistic, Zionistic Jews who are trying to undermine our government.” His anti-Jewish oratory was so inflammatory that the bishop of his diocese suspended Terminiello and Philadelphia's Catholic bishop refused to grant him permission to make a speech in that city in 1945. The following year

Terminiello joined Gerald L. K. Smith, the head of the antisemitic American First Party, on a two-month speaking tour throughout the United States. On February 7, 1946, an address that Terminiello made provocatively at Chicago's Veteran Hall, in the heavily Jewish neighborhood of Albany Park, resulted in a riot and in his subsequent conviction on charges of disturbing the peace.³⁷

Some Jews in the United States hailed Terminiello's 1946 sentence as "a serious set-back" to American fascism, although the U.S. Supreme Court reversed his conviction three years later in a major freedom-of-speech case. By that time, however, Italian Americans and Jews had generally settled most of their ethnic controversies. In 1942, for instance, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights fought against discrimination in defense employment on behalf of not only Jews, but also of Italian Americans and blacks by exposing samples of application forms that contained spaces for information about religion, descent, and color. In March 1943, while Italy and the United States were still at war, Pittsburgh's Jewish Community Relations Council reported and welcomed a decline in anti-Italian feelings nationwide. At the beginning of the following year, this Jewish organization no longer monitored the Italian American press for evidence of antisemitic articles and focused on East European newspapers only, as Italian-language periodicals had presumably ceased to be a matter of concern. Indeed, when a gang of seven Italian American robbers killed a Jewish restaurant owner in that city on December 31, 1945, Pittsburgh's Jewish Community Relations Council made a point of playing down the role of group antagonism as a motivation for this tragic event in order not to harm Jewish-Italian relations. As the minutes of this organization put it,

It is generally agreed that the Jewish community cannot definitely take any stand in this matter and that, even though there may be some undercurrent of antisemitism, by-and-large we do not consider it fundamentally a problem of prejudice but really a problem of delinquency and crime. It was considered unwise to permit the situation to develop into a conflict between Jews and Italians.³⁸

Ironically, however, another kind of racial intolerance sometimes became the common ground for the Jewish-Italian reconciliation in the postwar decades. After the policies of Nazism and Fascism had

contributed to strengthen the separate ethnic identities of Jews and Italian Americans in the interwar years, both minorities began to develop a common white consciousness after the collapse of Hitler's and Mussolini's regimes. As antisemitism faded away in Little Italies, ethnic defensiveness against the alleged encroachments of African Americans generally brought together Jews and Italian Americans in their campaigns against residential integration, school desegregation, and affirmative action.³⁹

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Notes

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² Rudolf Glanz, *Jew and Italian: Historic Group Relations and the New Immigration, 1881-1924* (New York: Shulsinger, 1970), 72-73; Patrick J. Gallo, *Old Bread, New Wines: A Portrait of the Italian Americans* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1981), 230-31; Morris Schonbach, *Native American Fascism during the 1930s and 1940s: A Study of Its Roots, Its Growth, and Its Decline* (New York: Garland, 1985), 82-83; David A. J. Richards, *Italian American: The Racializing of an Ethnic Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 195, 227.

³ Enzo Collotti, "Il Razzismo Negato," in Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia, *Fascismo e Antifascismo: Rimozioni, Negazioni, Revisioni*, edited by Enzo Collotti (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2000), 355-75; Valeria Galimi, "La Persecuzione degli Ebrei in Italia (1938-1943): Note Sulla Storiografia Recente," *Contemporanea* 5, no. 3 (July 2002): 587-96.

⁴ Italian News Agency, "Mr. Pope's Triumphant Visit to Italy," press release, June 1937, Edward Corsi Papers, box 27, folder "Correspondence of Others," Ernest Stevenson Byrd Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.; Fulvio Suvich, Italian

ambassador, to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Washington, D.C., June 4, 1937, Foreign Records Seized, Record Group 242, Series T 586, roll 430, National Archives II, College Park, M.D. For Pope, see Philip V. Cannistraro, "Generoso Pope and the Rise of Italian American Politics, 1925-1936," in *Italian Americans: New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity*, edited by Lydio F. Tomasi (Staten Island, N.Y.: Center for Migration Studies, 1985), 264-88. For the antecedents of Mussolini's 1938 anti-Jewish turn, see Michele Sarfatti, *Gli Ebrei nell'Italia Fascista: Vicende, Identità, Persecuzione* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 53-120. For instances of the Jews' concerns, see "A Cross-Section of Jewish Life," *B'nai B'rith Magazine* 51, no. 8 (May, 1937): 262-63; *Jewish Examiner*, May 28, June 11, 1937; Harry Schneiderman, *Review of the Year 5697*, in *The American Jewish Year Book 5698*, edited by Harry Schneiderman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1937), 369-73. The fascist regime was so concerned about Jews' economic backlash that in late July 1938, when Mussolini had already launched his racial policy, Minister of Foreign Affairs Galeazzo Ciano ordered Italian diplomats abroad to downplay fascist antisemitism so as not to exacerbate hostility toward Italy. See Galeazzo Ciano to royal diplomatic and consular representatives, Rome, July 26, 1938, Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, series Affari Politici, Italia, 1931-1945, box 57, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy.

⁵ "American Jewish Congress," press release (which cites Suvich's statement), June 15, 1937, Records of the World Jewish Congress, box G6, folder 6, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (hereafter AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio; *Jewish Examiner*, June 18, 1937.

⁶ *New York Times*, June 25, 1937; *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, July 4, 1937.

⁷ "The Jews in Italy," extension of remarks of Hon. Samuel Dickstein of New York in the House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, July 12, 1937, clipping, Samuel Dickstein Papers, box 17, folder 14, AJA; Generoso Pope to Stephen S. Wise, New York, July 7, 1937, Stephen S. Wise Papers, box 83, folder 2, reel 74-55, American Jewish Historical Society, New York, N.Y. For sketchy biographical profiles of Dickstein, see *New York Times*, April 23, 1954, clipping, Nearprint Box, folder "Dickstein, Samuel," AJA; *Jews in American Politics*, edited by L. Sandy Maisel (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 326.

⁸ Stephen S. Wise to Nahum Goldman, New York, July 28, 1938, Stephen S. Wise Papers, box 2, folder 10, AJA.

⁹ Dorothy Waring, *American Defender* (New York: Robert Speller, 1935), 62, 67-68, 78, 102; Samuel Dickstein to John W. McCormack, Washington, D.C., October 9, 1936, Dickstein Papers, box 3, folder 7; *Congressional Record*, March 25, 1941, 2567-70 (quote 2569); *ibid.*, June 17, 1941, 5278-80; Dickstein as quoted in *Il Grido della Stirpe*, March 22, 1930; Harold L. Kudan, "Samuel Dickstein, Investigator of Un-American Activities," 1957, unpublished typescript, AJA; Constance B. Schulz, "Samuel Dickstein: Congressional Investigator" (M.A. thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1965); Philip V. Cannistraro, "Introduction," in Gaetano Salvemini, *Italian Fascist Activities in the United States*, edited by Philip V. Cannistraro (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1977), xxx-xxxi; Charles Killinger, *Gaetano Salvemini: A Biography* (Westport, C.T.: Praeger, 2002), 280. For Dickstein's disproportionate attention to Nazi activities and overlooking of

fascist propaganda when he was the chairperson of the House Committee on Immigration, see Girolamo Valenti to Samuel Dickstein, New York, December 27, 1933, Dickstein Papers, box 5, folder 7; U.S. House of Representatives, 73rd Congress, Subcommittee of the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Nazi Propaganda Activities by Aliens in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934), copy in Nearprint Box, folder "Dickstein, Samuel," AJA. For Pope's supposed political influence, see Stefano Luconi, "Generoso Pope and Italian-American Voters in New York City," *Studi Emigrazione* 38, no. 143 (June 2001): 399-422. For Dickstein's relations with Pope, see also Alan A. Block, *Perspectives on Organized Crime: Essays in Opposition* (Boston: Kluwer, 1991), 131-33. For the Fascist League of North America and its demise, see Philip V. Cannistraro, "Per Una Storia dei Fasci Negli Stati Uniti, 1921-1929," *Storia Contemporanea* 26, no. 1 (December 1995): 1061-1144. Significantly enough, Dickstein long relied on Girolamo Valenti for information on Italian Fascist activities in the United States. But he called Valenti an associate of "avowed provocateur" Carlo Tresca and the newspaper he then edited, *La Parola*, a "one-horse paper," after Valenti had exposed Pope's ties to the fascist regime. See Samuel Dickstein to Girolamo Valenti, Washington, D.C., January 12, 1934, Dickstein Papers, box 5, folder 7; *Congressional Record*, March 25, 1941, 5729; *La Parola*, May 24, 1941.

¹⁰ "We Can't Just Get Away, It Seems," *B'nai B'rith Magazine* 50, no. 2 (November 1935): 43; "Italian Jews, Ethiopian Jews," *ibid.*, 50, no. 3 (December, 1935): 74-75; minutes of a meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Pro-Falasha Committee, September 15, 1936, Records of the American Pro-Falasha Committee, box 1, folder 8, AJA; Jacob Greenberg, associate superintendent, American Pro-Falasha Committee, to Piero Parini, New York, September 24, 1936, *ibid.*; *New York Times*, December 15, 1935; *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, January 31, 1936; John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), 302, 304-5; Leo V. Kanawada, Jr., *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Diplomacy and American Catholics, Italians, and Jews* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1982), 77-87. For Sirovich, see *Jews in American Politics*, 421. For the real meaning of financial contributions to the Italian Red Cross, see Fiorello B. Ventresco, "Italian Americans and the Ethiopian Crisis," *Italian Americana* 6, no. 1 (Autumn-Winter 1980): 18-19.

¹¹ Richard N. Juliani, *The Social Organization of Immigration: The Italians in Philadelphia* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 185-87; Steven Fraser, "Landslayt and Paesani: Ethnic Conflict and Cooperation in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America," in *Struggle a Hard Battle: Essays on Working-Class Immigrants*, edited by Dirk Hoerder (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 283-88; Edwin Fenton, *Immigrants and Unions: A Case Study: Italians and American Labor, 1870-1920* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 503-7, 539-43; Henry Tolino as quoted in Salvatore J. LaGumina, *The Immigrants Speak: Italian Americans Tell Their Story* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1979), 57; Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of Uneasy Encounter: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 240; Richard Gambino, *Blood of My Blood: The Dilemmas of the Italian Americans* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 272; Ida Kallen to Horace M. Kallen, Boston, December 25, 1938, Horace M. Kallen Papers, box 72, folder 2, AJA. For the traditional Democratic allegiance of Boston's Italian

American community, see Gerald H. Gamm, *The Making of New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 83-84.

¹² Ronald H. Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews, and Italians of New York City, 1929-1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Mary Testa, "Antisemitism among Italian Americans," *Equality* 1, no. 3 (July 1939): 27; *Il Grido della Stirpe*, April 9, 1938. For the fascist funding of *Il Grido della Stirpe*, see a report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation by Joseph T. Genco, Washington, D.C., December 7, 1942, 865.20211/Trombetta Domenico/7, Department of State, Record Group 59, Decimal Files, microfilm series LM 142, reel 41, National Archives II.

¹³ *Italian Echo*, July 14, 1939; Robert A. Woods, "Traffic in Citizenship," in *Americans in Process: A Settlement Study by Residents and Associates of the South End House*, edited by Robert A. Woods (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1902), 159; *Jewish Advocate*, October 28, 1938; John F. Stack, Jr., *International Conflict in an American City: Boston's Irish, Italians, and Jews, 1935-1944* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979).

¹⁴ Tony Bommarito as quoted in John Roy Carlson, *Under Cover: My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America* (New York: Dutton, 1943), 321-22.

¹⁵ Otto H. Kahn, *Of Many Things: Being Reflections and Impressions on International Affairs, Domestic Topics and the Arts* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926), 417-20 (quote 417).

¹⁶ Poll as quoted in Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 202; James Waltson, "Nationalisms and Internationalism: The Response of Italian Jews to Fascism," *The Italian Jewish Experience*, edited by Thomas P. DiNapoli (Stony Brook, N.Y.: Forum Italicum, 2000), 143-46; Luca Ventura, *Ebrei con il Duce: "La Nostra Bandiera" (1934-1938)* (Turin: Zamorani, 2002); Bernard Postal, "Colored Shirts on Parade," *B'nai B'rith Magazine* 48, no. 7 (April, 1934): 250; F. Fontana, Italian consul to Italian Embassy, Chicago, August 8, 1938, Foreign Records Seized, Record Group 242, microfilm series T 586, reel 430.

¹⁷ *Jewish Examiner*, July 29, August 5, 1938; *Jewish Chronicle*, September 9, 1938; "Mr. Mussolini," *B'nai B'rith Magazine* 53, no. 1 (August-September 1938): 21; Irwine F. Cline, "Urges Fascist Boycott," *National Jewish Monthly* 54, no. 2 (October, 1939): 64; *New York Times*, November 21, 1938; *Il Popolo Italiano*, September 25, 1938.

¹⁸ Marc D. Angel, *La America: The Sephardic Experience in the United States* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1982), 21-22; *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, September 20, 1920; Meir Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German-Italian Relations and the Jewish Question in Italy, 1922-1945* (London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1978), esp. 57-59; R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002), 270-73, 334; *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, March 25, 30, April 1, 1933; "Why Do These Firms Continue to Handle German Merchandise?" *The Anti-Nazi Bulletin* 4, no. 7 (October, 1937): 19; "Why Do These Firms Continue to Handle German Merchandise?," *ibid.* 4, no. 8 (November, 1937): 19-20; "Why Do These Firms Continue to Use Nazi Goods?," *ibid.* 5, no. 3 (March,

1938): 7; "These Firms Buy Nazi Goods? Nazi Goods Buy Nazi Guns," *ibid.* 5, no. 5 (May, 1938): 11. Pope bought *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* on September 28, 1928. See *New York Times*, September 30, 1928.

¹⁹ H. Paul Jeffers, *The Napoleon of New York: Mayor Fiorello La Guardia* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 10; G. E. Harriman, executive secretary, Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, to Samuel Untermyer, New York, June 29, 1935, Samuel Untermyer Papers, box 1, folder 2, AJA; Moshe R. Gottlieb, *American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1933-1941: An Historical Analysis* (New York: Ktav, 1982), 53-54, 68, 217; Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 117, 120-23; Ellen Ginzburg Migliorino, "Jewish Emigration from Trieste to the United States after 1938, with Special Reference to New York, Philadelphia, and Wilmington," *Studi Emigrazione* 28, no. 103 (September, 1991): 369-77.

²⁰ Harry Schneiderman, "Review of the Year 5697," in *The American Jewish Yearbook 5698*, edited by Harry Schneiderman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1937), 214; Kurt Mertig, chairman, Citizens Protective League, to Samuel Dickstein, New York, March 22, 1937, Dickstein Papers, box 1, folder 5; Alfred M. Cohen, "The President's Page," *B'nai B'rith Magazine* 51, no. 7 (April, 1937): 222; American Jewish Congress, press release, April 8, 1938, Records of the World Jewish Congress, box G6, folder 6; Charles D. Isaacson, executive secretary, American Pro-Falasha Committee, to Fiorello H. La Guardia, New York, November 21, 1935, Records of the American Pro-Falasha Committee, box 1, folder 6; Fiorello H. La Guardia to "Dear Friend," New York, December 3, 1938, box 2, folder 18, Samuel Schulman Papers, AJA; *New York Times*, December 10, 1938; *Jewish Chronicle*, December 16, 1938; "Italians Don't Hate Jews," handout, November, 1938, Leonard Covello Papers, box 100, folder 22, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia, Pa. For a chronological outline of the enactment of Italy's antisemitic measures, see Michele Sarfatti, *Mussolini Contro gli Ebrei: Cronaca dell'Elaborazione delle Leggi del 1938* (Turin: Zamorani, 1994).

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²³ Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), 404; Gerald Meyer, *Vito Marcantonio: Radical Politician, 1902-1954* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), 119, 246; Casimir P. Palmer to Nathan Isaacs, New York, August 26, 1939, Nathan Isaacs Papers, box 2, folder 12, AJA; *New York Times*, March 4, 1939; *Jewish Examiner*, March 29, 1940.

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²⁶ Gerald Meyer, "American Labor Party," in *Encyclopedia of Third Parties in America*, edited by Immanuel Ness and James Ciment, vol. 3 (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 682-90; Matthew Josephson, *Sidney Hillman: Statesman of American Labor* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1952), 400-1, 454-55; David Dubinsky and A. H. Raskin, *David Dubinsky: A Life with Labor* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1977), 262-71.

²⁷ *Jewish Examiner*, November 11, 1938; Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict*, 47; Samuel Schulman to Herbert H. Lehman, New York, November 10, 1938, Samuel Schulman Papers, box 2, folder 22, AJA; *Weckruf and Free American*, November 3, 1938, clipping, Dickstein Papers, box 14, folder 2; Morris Fine, *Review of the Year 5699: The United States, in The American Jewish Year Book 5700*, edited by Harry Schneiderman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1939), 216; *Manual of the City Council of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Dunlap, 1937), 286; *ibid.* (1939), 288; "Spilli e Spilloni," *La Voce Indipendente* 1, no. 9 (November, 1938): 3; *South Phila American Weekly*, November 10, 1938; Leon Sacks to Charles Weinstein, Philadelphia, October 10, 1938, Papers of the Joint Board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, box 9, folder "Labor's Non-Partisan League, General Correspondence, 1938," Temple University Urban Archives, Paley Library, Philadelphia.

²⁸ Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict*, 130, 137, 143-44; *Il Grido della Stirpe*, October 11, 1941; *Equalizer*, March 15, 1937; *National American Bulletin*, September 1, 1937, clipping, Dickstein Papers, box 7, folder 12; *Weckruf and Free American*, November 17, 1938, clipping, *ibid.*, box 14, folder 2. For Jews and La Guardia's appointments, see also James Marshall Papers, box 20, folder 13, AJA.

²⁹ "Cooperation of the Bund with Other Nationals," 728-29, 732, Records of the Los Angeles Community Research Council, box 1, folder 15, AJA. For the Order Sons of Italy in America, see John Andreozzi, "The Order Sons of Italy in America: Historical Summary," in *Guide to the Records of the Order Sons of Italy in America*, edited by John Andreozzi (St. Paul, Minn.: Immigration History Research Center, 1989) 7-14. For the pro-fascist leaning of the Order Sons of Italy in America, see

Salvemini, *Italian Fascist Activities in the United States*, 91-105; Matteo Pretelli, "Propaganda Fascista negli Stati Uniti: Gli Anni Venti: Un Quadro d'Insieme," in *L'Italia Fascista tra Europa e Stati Uniti d'America*, edited by Michele Abbate (Civita Castellana and Orte: Centro Falisco di Studi Storici, 2002), 113-16.

³⁰ *New York Times*, October 6, 1938; *New York Herald Tribune*, October 6, 1938; Domenico Trombetta to Herbert Hoover, New York, February 19, 1930, Herbert Hoover Presidential Papers, box 990, folder "Italy, 1930 January-July," Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa; Department of State, Record Group 59, Decimal Files, 811.43/Lictor Federation/1-7; "The War of Nerves: Hitler's Helper," *Fortune* 22, no. 5 (November, 1940): 108, 110. As further evidence of Trombetta's Bund connections, Bund leader Fritz Kuhn attended the 1939 celebration of the establishment of *Il Grido della Stirpe*. See *Jewish Examiner*, April 14, 1939.

³¹ Richard Rollins, *I Find Treason: The Story of an American Anti-Nazi Agent* (London: Harrap, 1941), 113-21, 199-201; Samuel Dickstein to Daniel J. Doherty, National Commander, American Legion, Washington, D.C., November 27, 1937, Dickstein Papers, box 1, folder 2; Theodore Irwin, "Inside the 'Christian Front,'" *Forum* 103, no. 3 (March, 1940): 106; Richard E. Gutstadt, director, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, to Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron, Chicago, January 30, 1936, Morris S. Lazaron Papers, box 37, folder 8, AIS; Gerald Cogliano, "Unfair Competitors," *Social Justice*, July 18, 1938, 21; Dolor Carriere, "Would Endorse Ads," *ibid.*, September 5, 1938, 18; Frank S. L'Annunziata, "A Blockade of Their Own," *ibid.*, November 7, 1938, 18; E. P. Banta, "Christians Are Fooled," *ibid.*, November 14, 1938, 15. For the Christian Front and Father Coughlin, see Donald S. Strong, *Organized Antisemitism in America: The Rise of Group Prejudice during the Decade 1930-40* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941), 57-70.

³² Dale Kramer, "The American Fascists," *Harper's Magazine* 181, no. 4 (September, 1940): 380, 384, 386; Paul Lucenti as quoted in Carlson, *Under Cover*, 32; "Curran, Reverend Edward Lodge," typescript, n.d. [but 1941], Records of the Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council, box 1, folder 5, AJA; Henry H. Carran, "Jail Hate Inciters," *Equality* 1, no. 7 (November, 1939): 8-9; Theodore Irwing, "Inside the Christian Front," *Forum* 103, no. 3 (March, 1940): 102, 106; Leonard V. Finder, "The Un-Christian Front: Mobilizers of Violence in New York," *National Jewish Monthly* 54, no. 2 (October, 1939): 44; Floyd Carridi as quoted in Rollins, *I Find Treason*, 123.

³³ "Italiani ed Ebrei in America," *La Difesa della Razza*, June 20, 1939, 46; "The Italians of Providence Must Act against Scala," *Il Mondo* 2, no. 12 (December, 1939): 4-5. The statement that "Jews do not belong to the Italian race" was the essence of the "Manifesto of Racial Scientists," a declaration of little-known Italian academicians on the Aryan character of the "Italian race." Its publication in the fascist mouthpiece *Il Giornale d'Italia* on July 14, 1938, marked the starting point of Mussolini's antisemitic campaign. For the genesis and implications of the Manifesto, see Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), esp. 64-78.

³⁴ Madeline Jane Goodman, "The Evolution of Ethnicity: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in the Italian-American Community, 1914-1945" (Ph.D. diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 1993), 56-66, 148-64; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 105-27; Isabel Boiko Price, "Black Response to Antisemitism: Negroes and Jews in New York, 1880 to World War II" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1973), 182-84; Murray Friedman and Carolyn Beck, "An Ambivalent Alliance: Blacks and Jews in Philadelphia, 1940 to 1985," in *Philadelphia Jewish Life*, edited by Murray Friedman (Ardmore, Pa.: Seth Press, 1986), 144-46.

³⁵ *New York Times*, September 29, 1942; *Una Storia Segreta: The Secret History of Italian American Evacuation and Internment during World War II*, edited by Lawrence DiStasi (Berkeley, Calif.: Heyday Books, 2001).

³⁶ Carlson, *Under Cover*, 322; *The FBI's RACON: Racial Conditions in the United States during World War II*, edited by Robert A. Hill (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995), 215; *Sentinel*, April 11, 1946, clipping, Adolph Joachim Sabath Papers, box 7, folder 2, AJA.

³⁷ "Terminiello barred by the Bishop of Philadelphia," September 1, 1945, typescript note, Solomon Andhil Fineber Papers, box 3, folder 5, AJA; Ellen H. Posner, "Review of the Year 5706: Anti-Jewish Agitation," in *The American Jewish Yearbook 5707*, edited by Harry Schneiderman and Julius B. Maller (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), 176-8; *Sentinel*, April 11, 1946, clipping, Adolph Joachim Sabath Papers, box 7, folder 2, AJA.

³⁸ J. I. Fishbein, "The Significance of the Terminiello Verdict!," *Sentinel*, undated clipping, Sabath Papers, box 7, folder 2; *Terminiello v. City of Chicago*, 337 U.S. 1 (1949); James H. Sheldon, administrative chairman, Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights, to Robert E. Segal, Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council, April 29, 1942, Records of the Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council, box 24, folder 5; Lillian A. Friedberg, executive director, Pittsburgh Jewish Community Relations Council, to Nathan Katz, chairperson, Pittsburgh Jewish Community Relations Council, Pittsburgh, Pa., March 5, 1943, Minutes of the Pittsburgh Jewish Community Relations Council, reel 1025, AJA; Executive Director's Report, January 5, 1944, *ibid.*; minutes of the meeting of January 12, 1946, *ibid.* After the outbreak of World War II, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights continued to operate and focused on antisemitism and related forms of discrimination in the United States. See Richard N. Bluestein, secretary, Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council, to Sidney Weil, Cincinnati, May 5, 1945, Records of the Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council, box 24, folder 5.

³⁹ For instance, in the early postwar years, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* joined forces to oppose a proposal by the Education Council of the American Dental Association to introduce a quota system based on race in order to reduce the racial imbalance among dental students. See Richard E. Gutstadt, national director, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith to "Dear Friend," New York, January 27, 1947, Records of the Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council, box 46, folder 10. In general, see Rose D. Scherini, *The Italian-American Community of San Francisco: A Descriptive Study* (New York:

Arno Press, 1980), 118; Timothy J. O’Neil, *Bakke & the Politics of Equality: Friends and Foes in the Classroom of Litigation* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 99-101; Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); Stefano Luconi, “Frank L. Rizzo and the Whitening of Italian Americans in Philadelphia,” in *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America*, edited by Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno (New York: Routledge, 2003), 177-91. For the anti-black backlash as a component of the whitening of American Jews in the postwar decades, see also Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 151–55.