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# TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM'S RADICAL PAST

## *Lessons from Italian Immigrant Women Anarchists in Industrializing America*

**Jennifer Guglielmo**

*This article examines the activism of working-class Italian immigrant women anarchists in the United States as a window into the world of early-twentieth-century transnational feminism. Emerging from a diasporic, multiethnic network of labor radicals, the women in this movement did not seek inclusion within the modern nation-state; nor did they rely on established trade unions or cross-class alliances. Instead, they created autonomous spaces for working-class and poor women to articulate their particular struggles and embody l'emancipazione della donna (women's emancipation). Together, they asked a question that formed the heart of their politics: "Why does the pleasure of some have to create misery for many?"*

By the time Maria Roda immigrated to Paterson, New Jersey from Italy in 1893 she was already a local hero. Only two years earlier, at the age of thirteen, she had gained notoriety when Italian authorities accused her of singing seditious songs and carrying on "like she was possessed" at a labor rally among silk weavers. Her trial quickly became infamous among European radicals not only for her youth and the harshness of the sentencing (she served three months in prison), but for her "defiant attitude" toward the judge, to whom she gave a piece of her mind.<sup>1</sup>

A self-described anarcho-socialist at a young age, Maria Roda had been forced to grow up fast. She entered the silk mills as a child upon the death of her mother and found solace in the local anarchist scene. Her commitment to revolutionary activism only deepened as she grew older. At the age of nineteen, just after migrating to Paterson with her father and three sisters, Roda joined the *Gruppo Diritto all'Esistenza* (The Right to an Existence Group), a local anarchist group formed by other textile workers from northern Italy. Soon thereafter, she and several women in the movement formed a *Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna* (Women's Emancipation Group). They did so, Roda stated (in Italian) at the time, "because we feel and suffer; we too want to immerse ourselves in the struggle against this society, because we too feel, from birth, the need to be free, to be equal."<sup>2</sup> News of the Paterson women's group circulated across the United States and beyond in the popular Italian-language anarchist newspaper *La Questione Sociale*.<sup>3</sup> Within

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a short time, similar groups sprouted up in working-class Italian immigrant neighborhoods in New York City, Hoboken, Philadelphia, Boston, New Haven, Chicago, and the mining communities of Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Vermont. This network of groups reflected patterns of Italian labor migration and political exile so they also extended across oceans, to connect with similar groups in Buenos Aires, Paris, Milan, Rome, and beyond.<sup>4</sup> Though the movement differed according to locale, those active shared a common purpose—to provide a place for women from the working classes to come together and develop their visions for revolutionary change.

This article explores this world of diasporic anarchist feminism from the vantage point of Paterson, New Jersey and New York City. This history, but also the broader history of Italian women's political activism in the United States, has long eluded scholars. Italians were the single largest group to immigrate to the United States during the mass migrations from Europe at the turn of the last century.<sup>5</sup> Hundreds of thousands of Italian immigrant women also participated in and led some of the most historically significant labor strikes of this period. But to date there are only a few studies on these histories of resistance and activism.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, scholarship on Argentina and Brazil has demonstrated the significant role Italian immigrant women played in local labor struggles and in building a transnational revolutionary workers' movement in Buenos Aires, São Paulo, and beyond.<sup>7</sup> In the United States, feminist labor historians have for several decades documented immigrant and working-class women's political radicalisms in the early twentieth century, some of which were decidedly transnational as well. Yet, Italian women's activist histories are few and far between, especially when we consider how much scholarship exists on Eastern European and Russian Jewish immigrant women, whose migrations and activisms occurred simultaneously.

Why then this invisibility? There are several reasons that are important to introduce briefly here. First, Italian immigrant women's political cultures only become visible when we expand our understanding of early-twentieth-century feminism to include diasporic, working-class activisms that were not produced in English. Such a lens is necessary for southern Italians, the majority of whom were mobile laborers who traveled to Argentina and Brazil with almost as much frequency as the United States. Most also returned to Italy and few naturalized as U.S. citizens. While women did not repatriate with as much frequency as men, their lives, families, identities, communities, and social movements reflected these patterns of labor migration from the 1880s through at least the 1940s.

Because of these factors, Italian immigrant women's activism differed markedly from traditional models of "first wave" feminism, including many forms of labor feminism. For one, they generally did not seek inclu-

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sion or authority within the modern nation-state. Moreover, unlike Jewish working-class women, they did not immediately rely on the established trade union movement or cross-class alliances with middle-class women to assert their power, especially before the Great Depression. Rather, they turned most often to strategies of mutual aid, collective direct action, and to the multiethnic, radical subculture that took shape within their urban working-class communities. This was a world that was deeply transnational in a number of ways. It was rooted in the experience of labor migration and thus reflected intimate connections between homelands and communities abroad. It was also opposed to the oppressive power of the nation-state, refuted nationalism, and as "workers of the world" depended on alliances across national and other boundaries.<sup>8</sup> Some of the women in this movement used the word *femminismo* to describe their work, but most preferred *emancipazione*, because it distinguished their activism from bourgeois feminisms and captured the all-encompassing nature of the freedoms they desired.

The fact that they did not identify or develop alliances with middle-class white feminism leads to the second factor in their invisibility. The historiographical construction of Italian immigrant women as docile, without cultures of resistance, and dominated by the excessively patriarchal men in their families is not just a scholarly fabrication.<sup>9</sup> These ideas were the product of the nation-building and race-making projects in both Italy and the United States at the turn of the last century. This image was continually invoked by the middle and upper classes in both countries to reinforce popular assumptions about the backwardness of southern Italy. Northern Italian elites justified their domination and exploitation of southern Italy by racializing the peasant women they encountered there as sexual and political deviants, and as pathetic beasts of burden.<sup>10</sup> Such ideas informed how the United States greeted these immigrants, and Italians soon learned that to be "dark," "swarthy," and "kinky-haired"—as the U.S. press often called them—was to be despised and degraded.<sup>11</sup>

Though Italians arrived in the United States as poor, migrant peasants from a racially suspect area of the globe, and were popularly conceived of as innately uncivilized and inferior, they were simultaneously situated as whites, and therefore as deserving of rescue, reform, and inclusion. As a result, the image of Italian immigrant women as victims persisted, in contrast to middle-class white women, who became the marker of liberated womanhood, but also against Italian men who most Americans imagined largely as victimizers, in the form of criminals, lazy indigents, and violent patriarchs.<sup>12</sup> Such ideas served to justify material inequality and labor discipline. They also established the need for Italian immigrant women's rescue and protection without having to indict the state, employers, or others in the middle and upper classes.

Most importantly, this shift marked a journey that southern Italian immigrant women underwent, from the bottom of the racial hierarchy in Italy, to a position above various groups in the United States, especially African Americans, Chinese, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and others who were routinely imagined as agents rather than victims of social disorder.<sup>13</sup> The charge of deviance would reemerge however, whenever Italian immigrant women “rejected the condescension and the stigma of impoverishment” to organize for social and economic change.<sup>14</sup> In these moments they would again be stigmatized as dissolute and dangerous.

This very brief history of racialization also helps to explain a third reason for Italian immigrant women’s political invisibility: the historical amnesia that resulted from the political project of whiteness. To American and Italian authorities, labor radicals were not visionaries but terrorists, loose women, and unruly subversives who threatened the very fiber of the nation. The transnational discourses on race that constructed southern Italians as biologically inferior to northern Italians and other white Europeans focused on their supposed natural inclination toward both menial labor and crime, especially in the form of anarchism and the mafia. Admission into the nation was contingent on Italians embracing U.S. nationalism, including whiteness and negrophobia.<sup>15</sup> This “price of the ticket,” as African American writer James Baldwin termed it, was made abundantly clear during the Red Scare of the First World War, culminating in the state’s execution of Italian anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti.<sup>16</sup> This “triumph of nativism,” coupled with the criminalization of dissent, profoundly crippled Italian immigrant radicalism.<sup>17</sup> As a result, Italians increasingly sought to reconcile their position as unwanted foreigners by turning away from revolutionary social movements and toward a politics which embraced nationalism and whiteness. Ironically (and tragically), they did so to try and meet the same desires for economic justice and dignity that inspired enthusiasm for anarchism, socialism, and communism. The next generation of Italian American labor activists, who emerged in the aftermath of the Red Scare, would borrow and co-opt key elements of this early radical subculture. But the kinds of coalitions and identities that had given rise to Italian immigrant women’s anarchist feminism would diminish substantially in the coming years.

Feminist theorist M. Jacqui Alexander has written that the act of recuperating repressed, submerged histories is deeply significant, because they provide an “antidote to alienation, separation, and the amnesia that domination produces.” They offer a way of excavating “the costs of collective forgetting so deep that we have even forgotten that we have forgotten.”<sup>18</sup> Far from being “backward” in comparison to their more Americanized daughters, as the racializing (il)logic would argue, Italian immigrant

women were in many ways more complete in their critique of power than later generations. My tracing of this history is intended as an act of recovery, but also to unearth a valuable lesson—that some of the most inclusive and visionary ideas of human liberation have historically been formulated by those on the margins, those excluded from formal political power, the stigmatized, semiliterate, “backward,” and “illegal.”

### New York City's Radical Working-Class Subculture

At the dawning of the twentieth century, Italian immigrant women workers in the United States entered political activism through labor militancy. In such cities as New York, Hoboken, Paterson, Newark, Lowell, Passaic, Little Falls, Boston, Hopedale, Rochester, Lawrence, Lynn, Chicago, Tampa, Cleveland, and Providence, Italian women were pivotal to workers' movements. As a result, the Italian-language radical press that chronicled these developments described them as “*le più ardenti nella lotta*” (the most passionate in the struggle).<sup>19</sup> While Italian immigrant women rarely held formal positions of leadership in unions or strike committees in this period, their ability to organize coworkers and neighbors often proved critical to winning labor struggles, especially in the clothing, textile, and cigarmaking trades where they outnumbered men in the rank and file.<sup>20</sup>

Since the vast majority of Italian immigrant women and men were “unskilled” and concentrated in menial, low-wage jobs, they were not initially recruited by most U.S. labor and political organizations. As would be the case for Italian workers in Argentina, Brazil, France, England, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, and other locales (as well as for the working-classes more generally), the mutual aid society became their primary method of self-help and survival in the United States, and thus the very heart of Italian immigrant political cultures. Much like the hometown associations among immigrants today, these societies were typically formed among immigrants from the same village or region, to provide health insurance, loans, death benefits, medical services, and a cooperative social setting for workers to come together.<sup>21</sup> Many centered on male networks of sociability, but it appears that women were especially active in those groups that were explicitly radical—the socialist and anarchist *circoli politici* (political circles) and *circoli di studi sociali* (social studies circles). In addition to providing mutual aid, these groups sought to create a radical counterculture to the religious, patriotic, or apolitical societies, and established libraries, schools, food cooperatives, theater troupes, and presses.<sup>22</sup> It was here that Italian immigrant women created spaces for feminist activism, especially in the years prior to the First World War.

Between the 1880s and World War I, hundreds of these radical circles formed across the New York metro area. By 1914, there were over a dozen in the Lower East Side and Mulberry districts alone, and at least one in virtually every other Italian neighborhood. They flourished in Harlem, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, as well as across the Hudson River throughout New Jersey.<sup>23</sup> In each community, these groups extended the anarchist and revolutionary socialist movements then spreading across Italy and its many diasporas.<sup>24</sup> Italian immigrant radicals, including women, were drawn primarily to anarchist groups because, as historian Nunzio Pernicone has noted, they “rejected electoral politics and espoused direct revolutionary action, [which] had a natural appeal for immigrants eager to transform the world as soon as possible.”<sup>25</sup> While the radicals always constituted a minority of the city’s Italian immigrant population, their influence was much larger than their numbers since they established quite visible alternative cultural and political spaces in immigrant neighborhoods, and became important centers for immigrant education, political discussion, labor organizing, and recreation. They were also the only formal organizations to successfully mobilize the masses of Italian immigrant workers before the First World War. A group in Brooklyn, for example, counted only a few dozen members at their weekly meetings, but their dances, festivals, lectures, and picnics drew thousands. In some places, most notably Paterson, New Jersey, actual membership grew into the thousands, but for most communities, Italian anarchists and socialists were “a ready and relatively visible reference point.”<sup>26</sup>

The New York metropolitan area provided a dynamic setting for the movement, as it was home to one of the largest centers of diasporic radicalism in the world—not only for Italians but for immigrant workers from Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Russia, Ireland, Germany, China, Spain, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica, Trinidad, and other islands in the Caribbean.<sup>27</sup> Immigrants from all over the world came together in jointly sponsored rallies, picnics, and other gatherings, to build solidarity, raise consciousness, and collect funds for political prisoners, strikers, and their presses, among other causes.<sup>28</sup> In the handmade cigar, textile, and garment industries, the mutual aid societies coalesced into multiethnic unions and jointly published radical newspapers. Many also came together in the revolutionary industrial union movement, under the auspices of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) after it was formed in 1905. In Brooklyn, Italian shoe and garment workers organized with their Cuban, Spanish, Puerto Rican, and Russian coworkers in a *circolo* called Club Avanti. Founded by Sicilian anarchists, Club Avanti “supported education, sponsored lectures on peace, religion, and sexual and family questions, on women’s emancipation, nationalism, imperialism, major immigrant strikes, the Mexican Revolution, the problems of political prisoners in Italy, and, more generally, current events.”<sup>29</sup> In East

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Harlem, Sicilian anarchists collaborated with the Lower East Side *Gruppo Il Risveglio* to organize events that included Spanish, Bohemian, French, American, English, and Russian anarchists.<sup>30</sup>

In many ways, women's participation in this world followed the familiar patterns of a gendered division of labor. Few women attended the weekly meetings that were dominated by men, but many participated in and assisted organizing the many events sponsored by the *circoli*. The education in radical political theory and practice that they received in these activities led some down extraordinary paths, to become speakers and organizers themselves. For example, a textile worker by the name of Tina Cacici, who became a notoriously outrageous leader of a radical faction during the Lawrence Strike of 1919, and later an organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, first became known for her fiery speeches on women's emancipation at a radical club in Brooklyn.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, shirtwaist factory operatives Angela and Marie Bambace began a lifelong commitment to the labor movement as young women when they attended meetings held by Italian socialists and anarchists in their East Harlem neighborhood. There they met labor leaders in the IWW and learned the direct action strategies they would use as organizers in the garment trades.<sup>32</sup> Reflecting on her life, Angela would later recall, "It was difficult to separate the organization of workers from the attempt to reorganize society. The two went hand in hand."<sup>33</sup>

In fact, women were a more visible presence within the organizationalist or syndicalist wing of the anarchist movement—those who emphasized revolutionary industrial unionism. Their voices are present in these newspapers, while they are almost completely absent from those generated by the antiorganizationalist anarchists, and the socialists, whether reformist or revolutionary. As with most social movements of this period, the radical movement was dominated by men who relied on masculinist rhetoric and identities.<sup>34</sup> The more prominent men in the movement typically positioned themselves as the center of revolutionary culture and disregarded the activities of women as childish or inconsequential. These same men would later administer over a largely female rank and file in the Italian-language union locals of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), which formed in 1916 and 1919. These locals would also become some of the largest and more politically powerful in the nation during the 1930s and 1940s. This trajectory did not occur without sustained resistance, however.

### **Anarchist Women's Groups**

When Maria Roda announced in 1897 that she and several others in Paterson were organizing activist circles for women, she spoke for many

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women who had grown frustrated with their invisibility and marginalization within the radical movement. "It is time that we also agitate and organize," Roda stated, "to prove to the world that accuses us, that we too are capable of something." She addressed herself to "*le operaie*," her sister-workers: "Men say we are frivolous, that we are weak, that we are incapable of supporting the struggle against this intolerable society, that we cannot understand the ideal of anarchism.... But they are the cause of our weakness, our undeveloped intellects, because they restrict our instruction ... and ignore us."<sup>35</sup> The solution she proposed was for women to educate and mobilize themselves in their own autonomous groups.

Over the next decade, dozens of women wrote to the anarchist newspaper *La Questione Sociale* to express similar sentiments. Writing under the name "*La Sartina*" (The Seamstress), one woman exposed how men in the movement consistently minimized women's opinions. Exasperated, she called on them to "undo the old concept that we women must always be humiliated," and recognize that "women also have a heart and brain; a soul that must be free."<sup>36</sup> Many of the authors concealed their identities, presumably to enjoy greater creative and political license, and to evade harassment, the loss of employment, and deportation, which always plagued the movement. One woman, using only the name Titi, wrote of "the many men who call themselves free thinkers, socialists, anarchists, men who have reached the height of development within humanity ... who attend our meetings, conferences, and write in our newspapers," but who were authoritarian at home.<sup>37</sup>

Alba expressed similar frustrations. She described a meeting at a Manhattan group in which a woman had voiced her opinions regarding freedom. She recalled, "Naturally, the spirit of masculine contradiction was not lacking, and a man rose to say that a woman, for all her efforts, can never elevate herself from subservience." The author explained the position of the women present: "You believe that a woman, who takes care of the entire home and the children, is not concerned with education, that she cannot find the time in her long day, to dedicate herself to her emancipation?"<sup>38</sup>

Maria Roda formed the anarchist women's group in Paterson in response to this collective frustration. She was able to mobilize this energy because she was quickly becoming a well-respected presence in the international anarchist movement. She was active in *Gruppo Diritto all'Esistenza*, which was one of the largest in the U.S. Northeast.<sup>39</sup> Though somewhat infamous before she ever arrived in Paterson because of her early arrest, Roda's notoriety developed mainly from her charisma and power as a public speaker. She spoke often before large assemblies of workers, where she impressed seasoned radicals and rank-and-file workers with her ability to rouse audiences. The legendary anarchist Emma Goldman recalled the first



time she heard Roda speak at the Thalia Theater in 1894, at a celebration for her own release from prison: "The voice electrified me and I was eager to see its owner. I stepped to the door leading to the platform. Maria Rodda [sic] was the most exquisite creature I had ever seen. She was of medium height, and her well-shaped head, covered with black curls, rested like a lily of the valley on her slender neck. Her face was pale, her lips coral-red. Particularly striking were her eyes: large, black coals fired by an inner light. Like myself, very few in the audience understood Italian, but Maria's strange beauty and the music of her speech roused the whole assembly to tensest enthusiasm. Maria proved a veritable ray of sunlight to me." Goldman's rapture with Roda's "strange beauty" was shared by her companion Edward Brady who also found Roda "ravishing." Yet Goldman remembered that Brady quickly noted that Roda's "beauty would not endure, much less her enthusiasm for our ideals. 'Latin women mature young,' he said; 'they grow old with their first child, old in body and in spirit.'"<sup>40</sup> While Goldman and Brady had different reactions to Roda, they resonated with contemporary preoccupations with the sexuality of Italian workingwomen on both sides of the Atlantic. Growing out of the European "porno-tropic tradition" and the "erotics of American Empire," such concerns drew on sexual idioms to mark the sexualized and racialized difference of colonial subjects, and were extended in complicated ways to Italian immigrant women to rationalize their concentration in low-wage factory work.<sup>41</sup> Italians were "white on arrival," as historian Thomas A. Guglielmo has argued, and the gendered tropes of docility and exoticism would shape their incorporation in the United States as racially inferior whites.<sup>42</sup> Goldman and Brady's remarks remind us how these representations also worked to delegitimize and diminish Italian women's presence within the U.S. labor movement.

This story also reveals, however, how Maria Roda's activities brought her into contact with many of the more popular migrant revolutionaries in the city. Soon after she arrived in New York, she fell in love with Spanish anarchist Pedro Esteve, whom she had met previously at an anarchist gathering in Milan, and who was now editing and publishing several Italian- and Spanish-language anarchist newspapers in the United States, including *La Questione Sociale*.<sup>43</sup> Since women's writing was more voluminous in those newspapers he edited, it appears that Roda and Esteve's collaboration was the main reason that women's voices found publication, especially between 1899 and 1906, when Esteve served as editor.

While raising eight children and enduring the death of two additional children, Roda and Esteve ran a small anarchist publishing house and became part of the community of radical intellectuals that extended far beyond Paterson. Roda and the children traveled with Esteve on occasion, to assist and support the collective struggles of Cuban, Spanish, Puerto Rican, Mexi-

can, African American, East European Jewish, Italian, and other workers. While they were based in Paterson until at least 1908, they also lived for different periods in Weehawken, New Jersey, Brooklyn, and Tampa, Florida, in order to connect the diasporic revolutionary labor movements in these communities. Often they did so by opening their home, which became a central meeting place for radicals, especially on Sundays.<sup>44</sup>

Roda devoted the majority of her time to organizing women workers, because, as she stated, "*Chi conosce la miseria più della donna?*" (Who knows misery more than women?) The anarchist women's group she formed created a space for women to develop their own revolutionary philosophies and strategies, and they met regularly over a period of at least seven years. The group involved women much like Roda—most worked in the city's silk mills and had experienced some form of labor militancy in Italy's textile factories, since the core members came from the more industrialized regions of northern Italy. But Roda and two other women active in the group—Ninfa Baronio and Ernestina Cravello—also met regularly with a group of feminist comrades from southern Italy across the river in Manhattan. By 1900, Maria Raffuzzi's house on the Lower East Side was another regular meeting place for Italian immigrant radical women. One year later, Raffuzzi, Cravello, and fourteen other women, announced the formation of the Manhattan-based *Il Gruppo di Propaganda Femminile* (Women's Propaganda Group), which included activists from all over Italy.<sup>45</sup> In their own words, they worked together, "to defend the large number of women workers in the city," "to contribute to the cause of women's emancipation," and "to educate the new generation in the sublime principles of anarchism."<sup>46</sup>

A central component of the radical culture these women created was to produce their own feminist theory. They had access to a wide range of pamphlet literature from the most popular male revolutionary theorists since the anarchist groups collected and circulated such materials. But to read women's writing they had to print and distribute it on their own. Since Roda had access to a printing press, and Ninfa Baronio and her partner Firmino Gallo ran the radical bookstore in Paterson, they were able to publish and circulate such texts. In early 1902, the Paterson women's group initiated "the publication of a series of simple, short, and popular pamphlets, relative to the condition of women in present society, her aspirations, and role in the society of the future."<sup>47</sup> They began with the work of Anna Maria Mozzoni, one of the most popular Italian feminist theorists and activists of the nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup> They also distributed the writing of Soledad Gustavo because of her popularity among women anarchists in Spain, Barcelona and Buenos Aires.<sup>49</sup> They translated and published at least two of her pamphlets, *Alle proletarie* (To women proletarians) and *Dialogo fra un borghese e suo figlia* (Dialogue between a bourgeois man and his daughter),

in which Gustavo, like many anarchist writers, did not mince words: "The society that has condemned us to be flesh for pleasure, to be indispensable fixtures, to be a hygienic necessity, to be an exploitable thing, is our enemy and as such we should combat it and procure its total and speedy ruin."<sup>50</sup> Italian anarchist women's groups circulated these pamphlets far and wide, and they turned up not only across the United States and Europe but especially in Buenos Aires, where Italian working-class women were publishing an anarchist feminist newspaper of their own, with other immigrant women workers.<sup>51</sup>

This literature inspired debates and maintained the transnational connections between women in the radical movement, but many also sought to write from their own hearts. Between 1897 and 1908, women filled *La Questione Sociale* with their treatises. After 1908, when Roda and Esteve moved to Tampa, such writing continued in that newspaper's successor, *L'Era Nuova*, but not with nearly as much frequency. For close to a decade, Italian immigrant women had access to one of the most important anarchist newspapers and they used it. It was through this writing that *l'emancipazione della donna* and *femminismo* became a part of the Italian immigrant Left in the United States.

### **Anarcho-Syndicalist Feminist Theory**

The overall pulse of the women's writing was to refute "both Catholic feminism's claims of female spiritual superiority and liberal feminism's demands for politico-legal equality."<sup>52</sup> Instead they declared, "We are not feminists in the manner of the bourgeoisie, who claim the equality or supremacy of our sex, and would be satisfied with the realization of these dreams." Rather, their feminism emerged from a materialist analysis of power, and an understanding that eradicating oppression required revolution. "It is not enough to struggle for the vote (as do the bourgeois women in this hardly free America)," a woman by the name of Virginia Buongiorno wrote in *La Questione Sociale*. "We want to tear down all the false prejudices that infest the world. It is not with changing certain laws that we can call ourselves free.... You see, my sister workers, these laws are made by the bourgeoisie for their interests."<sup>53</sup>

As anarchists, they believed that the government, the church, and private property were harmful because they required that people live under a system of inequality and surrender their own power.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, they argued that no one was free until all were free. In the words of the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, one of the intellectual founders of anarchism: "No individual can recognize his own humanity, and consequently realize it in his lifetime, if not by recognizing it in others and cooperating in its realiza-

tion for others."<sup>55</sup> Most were inspired by Neapolitan anarcho-syndicalist theorist and activist Errico Malatesta, whose widely popular *L'Anarchia* called for "the destruction of all political order based on authority, and the creation of a society of free and equal members based on a harmony of interests and the voluntary participation of everybody in carrying out social responsibilities."<sup>56</sup>

Such transformation, Italian immigrant women anarchists argued, required exposing the exploitation they endured as workers within the expanding capitalist world system. They did so by describing the impact of grueling work on their bodies and spirits, and by addressing themselves most often to other women workers: "We have become human machines," wrote Maria Barbieri in 1905, "who stay locked in the immense industrial prisons where we lose our strength, our health and youth, where our rights are shattered before the greed of the bourgeoisie. And we don't rebel against these abuses to our right to live? We don't shake with rage before the pompous and contemptuous lady, who because of us wears a silk skirt from our humble labor?"<sup>57</sup>

The irony of laboring to produce a standard of living they would never enjoy was particularly infuriating: "While we tire ourselves from morning until night with few pleasures from all that is beautiful and comfortable in life; bent over our work, seized with a torrent of grief over the uncertainty of the health of our children, the ladies are in perfumed drawing-rooms, conversing, proposing banquets, balls, theater, vacations ... gold and more gold they bleed from us and our children."<sup>58</sup> Speaking to her "*sorelle di fatica*" (sisters of drudgery), one frequent author Alba Genisio echoed these words: "We who produce all the social riches ... the silk, the lace, and the embroidery of great luxury, must skimp in our own lives.... Why is it that this life, which should be a paradise, is for us a torment?"<sup>59</sup> Together, they asked a question that would form the heart of their politics: "Why does the pleasure of some have to create misery for many?"<sup>60</sup>

Many expressed an understanding that their exploitation was directly tied to the emergence of industrial capitalism and the attendant forces of imperialism, racism, and nativism. They denounced the aggressive actions of the Italian government in Africa and U.S. imperialism in Asia and Latin America. They called these "civilizing missions" into question by drawing on the rhetoric of American nationalism to expose how "liberty" and "freedom" were elusive for most in the United States.<sup>61</sup> The multiethnic nature of New York City's radical subculture meant that they heard firsthand about the effects of U.S. imperialism on communities abroad, and their writing sought to link these policies to the violence of European colonialism. For example, in 1907, amid a flurry of essays on women's emancipation, Titi authored an essay titled "*Il Congo*" (The Congo) in which she reminded her

readers how Belgian King Leopold disguised policies of violent brutality in Africa with the language and ideology of benevolent paternalism.<sup>62</sup> Italian anarchists believed deeply that nationalism was at the root of the problem. In describing her experiences as an unwelcome immigrant, Ersilia Cavedagni wrote, "How evil is this, a society in which its members have developed a stupid aversion to others who do not speak the same language, or are born under another sky, and wear different clothes... Ah, this damned and miserable concept of country separates so stupidly, uselessly, and ferociously, those who nature intended to be brothers."<sup>63</sup>

To confront oppression in all its forms, the women in this movement focused on challenging the abuse of authority within their own families and communities, believing that to change the larger world they had to transform themselves and their most intimate relationships.<sup>64</sup> In 1906, Titi began a series of essays with the provocative title "*Alle Donne, Emancipiamoci!*" (To women, let's emancipate ourselves!), in which she argued, "We should take a glance not only at the bourgeois society but at ourselves, workers who are part of the anarchist family."<sup>65</sup> On occasion, men wrote in to support these ideas. In response to Titi's essays, the prominent Italian anarchist Camillo Di Sciuollo wrote to the newspaper from Chieti in Abruzzo to remind his brothers: "We anarchists have predicated our work on the emancipation of women.... Don't you know that the first campaign to do is that of the family? Build a little anarchist world within your family and you will be able to see how it strengthens, how it becomes easier to launch other campaigns!"<sup>66</sup>

In order to more fully embody the revolution they desired, women focused on disrupting those practices that taught them to be "humble and obedient."<sup>67</sup> Titi explained: "parents, teachers, everyone who has contributed to our education and to our physical and mental development, have made us into cooking and sewing machines, young girl workers." She recognized that many of these educators were women, and encouraged them to raise children in an entirely new way. "The axiom of domination begins at birth when a girl learns her place in life," she wrote, using her own childhood as an example. "If we were very brave and risked asking why, the answer right away would be 'It is not right; *the people will talk*'. And the response satisfies us." After a series of scenarios, ending with "*the people will talk*," she asked, "Who are these people, these absolute masters of our happiness and our life? *We* are these people, because we approve of everything that enslaves us."<sup>68</sup> The solution, she argued, was "to let daughters rebel against our authority.... It will be much better for her and for all of humanity." She warned, "If we do not do this she will be weak, without intelligence, without the ability to reflect, without the will of reason, and she will subdue herself blindly, suffocating her rebellious

attitudes in order to develop passivity." She challenged mothers in particular to discard practices that "limited women's world to a life between the kitchen and the conjugal bed." When young girls were raised only "to sew clothes and mechanically recite the *Ave Maria*," she argued, "the desire to read is manifested in this tiny creature, but she is not allowed. She is scolded because she wants to become *literary*, and is violently forced to learn needlework and forget books." With such a practice, "a grave crime has been committed; the work of nature is destroyed within the little girl and she is infused with ideas that are different from those that we want to teach, ideas that will lead her to be an illiterate and poor seamstress as an adult." She suggested the following: "have her explain the meaning of the *Ave Maria* before reciting it. It is with reproach and a slap that we ordinarily recite the prayer ... without discussion or debate."<sup>69</sup>

Most anarchist feminists supported a revolutionary vision of motherhood, since they understood their power as mentors.<sup>70</sup> Many reflected on their power "to educate our children and raise them to understand the origins of their poverty and deprivation." In this way, they would develop "the noble and generous sentiment of equality, love for one another, reciprocal respect, the right of all to life, joy, and happiness, and contempt for lies, tyranny, and exploitation." This, they believed, was fundamental to building a new world: "In a short time we will create a new society, where men's supremacy over women will cease to exist and human solidarity will reign supreme."<sup>71</sup>

Most wrote from their own experiences. Maria Barbieri, for example, lost her young son in 1903, when a pot of boiling water fell on him while she was working in Hoboken's textile mills. She would write about her suffering and call on her fellow "*madri proletarie*" (proletarian mothers) to unite against the entire system of capitalism which valued profit over human well being and "filled one with prejudice."<sup>72</sup>

They also advocated Free Love—or what they termed *amore libero*—the basis of which was "the need to feel love."<sup>73</sup> Many expressed their anger at being "used and abused" by husbands who demanded their submission. Some wrote of men's passion for women as "a death sentence."<sup>74</sup> Anna De Gigli explained: "Men have the right to betray the women they love, and can even shoot them in the back ... with the classic justification: I killed her because I loved her." Moreover, she argued, "the physical act cannot be the only basis for union.... The man who desires the woman like an appetizer to sleep is a brute. The lamentations of a woman are absolutely useless."<sup>75</sup> Some essays exposed marital abuse and rape, and in doing so made public that which was usually intensely private. They also focused their contempt on "*matrimonio legale*" (legal marriage), which, as Roda wrote, was "a hateful noose" that corrupted "the pure and natural love of two united hearts."<sup>76</sup>

Most importantly, they did not just argue for emotionally, sexually, and spiritually satisfying unions, they formed them.

To circulate their ideas further, anarchist feminists relied not only on the press, but live performance. In 1899, the Paterson women's group formed *Teatro Sociale*, and over the next decade they performed plays they wrote themselves, such as *Emancipata* (The Emancipated One).<sup>77</sup> Theater became an important feature of this political culture since immigrant audiences were largely illiterate. In Italian Harlem, an anarchist from Bari (Puglia) by the name of Elvira Catello, ran a radical bookstore and printing press out of her home and established a popular theater group, while raising five children with her companion who was also active in the movement.<sup>78</sup> Plays such as *Il Ribelle* (The Rebel), which dramatized a conversation about Free Love between a mother and daughter, and *La Figlia dell'Anarchico* (The Anarchist's Daughter), which centered on a cast of eight women, four mothers and their daughters, were especially popular.<sup>79</sup> Jenny Salemme's story mirrors the experiences of many from her generation. After emigrating from Naples with her mother, Jenny went to live with her aunt, since her mother "couldn't take" life in America. Her aunt was an actress and brought her to the rehearsals of her *filodrammatica* (theater group). She recalled, "They put on *Primo Maggio*, *Tempeste Sociali*, and other radical plays." She too performed in the plays, remembering, "We went all over—New London and other cities."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, in 1914, Ninfa Baronio, two other women in Paterson's *Teatro Sociale*, along with their children, performed to a packed house at the local Riverside Hall during a snow storm. In the following weeks, they went on the road, performing in Clifton, Newark, Hoboken, Jersey City, and Manhattan, among other places.<sup>81</sup>

We cannot know for certain how women in the audiences received anarchist feminist ideas. But we do know that the hundreds of thousands of Italian immigrant women who labored in New Jersey's textile mills and New York City's garment shops erupted into massive protest in 1913, with a series of labor strikes that shook their industries. They marched down Fifth Avenue with anarchist banners held high, hurled rocks through factory windows, sang the *Internazionale* at the top of their lungs as they paraded past employers' homes, and filled meeting halls to capacity to hear the radicals speak.<sup>82</sup> This mass-based strike movement was inspired by the same forces that had set anarchist feminism in motion. As one older Italian woman recounted, she joined the 1913 strike wave, because "me sick of the boss, me sick of work, me sick of go hungry most time." She then raised her deformed finger, the bone worn down into the shape of a hook, and smiled to reveal the space where her front teeth had once been. With her body damaged from decades of quickly twisting cotton and biting button holes to save time and keep her job in the factory, she concluded, "me sick, me tired, me can stand no longer, that's why me all strike."<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusions

The radical political culture that gave birth to Italian immigrant women's anarchist feminism underwent profound transformation in the aftermath of the First World War. On 14 February 1920, "over one hundred federal agents, assisted by volunteers from the American Legion, descended on Paterson and raided the homes of more than thirty members of *Gruppo L'Era Nuova*" (New Era Group), the group that had formerly been known as *Gruppo Diritto all'Esistenza*.<sup>84</sup> With warrants in hand and several suitcases, the agents arrested whomever they could find, confiscated over a ton of documents, and brought the suspects to Ellis Island's detention cells to await possible deportation. Similar raids occurred throughout New Jersey and New York City, fueled primarily by wartime fear of political dissent. While women were generally not targeted for arrest, these raids threw their lives into chaos as their husbands, brothers, fathers, and other male comrades were hauled off to jail, and community centers were shut down. The Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation would later discover that as soon as the raids began, boxes of radical pamphlets and newspapers turned up in the possession of women in the movement, who took responsibility for hiding and distributing the material. Anarchist feminist activism would resurface in the coming years, especially within the transnational antifascist movement, of which New York City was a key center. However, the Red Scare deeply changed Italian immigrant political cultures by criminalizing those spaces where southern Italian immigrant women confronted power in all its forms.

Uncovering this history is especially significant now, as antiglobalization and immigrant-rights movements are again exploding, and workers, their activist allies, academics, policy makers, and others, are analyzing the human costs of globalization and the politics of inclusion and exclusion within nations. In particular, the proliferation of transnational feminisms in recent years has inspired a renewed interdisciplinary commitment to documenting the impact of globalization, nationalism, and the feminization of labor on women's lives.<sup>85</sup> Rooted in the confrontations of working-class women of color with globalizing capitalism since the late 1980s, these activisms have inspired historians to reinterpret the past with a transnational lens. Yet these histories often maintain a focus on elite women's lives. We have learned, for example, how early-twentieth-century middle- and upper-class feminisms were international in scope and often pivotal to the success of the British and U.S. empires. We know more about the ways Anglo-American Protestant elite women drew on dominant ideas of race to position themselves as the measure of civilization, and thus as the protectors and civilizers of "primitive" women at home and abroad. Thanks to this work, we now have a rich body of scholarship documenting how



race, class, and imperialism informed white feminisms in the early twentieth century, and compelling analyses of how power operated within these movements.<sup>86</sup>

What remains largely absent, however, is an understanding that transnational feminism has a past that is also radical and working class.<sup>87</sup> Just a few years ago, historian Nancy Hewitt expressed her frustration at how this impacts younger generations' understandings of feminism: "I am sort of appalled, at the seeming ease with which the dynamic, diverse, internationalist, conflicted, antiracist, socialist, and anarchist strains that defined women's liberation for me and for so many others have been erased."<sup>88</sup> This is despite over two decades of compelling feminist labor history that has challenged hegemonic notions of "first wave" feminism, and revealed all that is lost when we think of feminism as occurring in just two waves. The history of transnational feminism includes Italian immigrant women in the anarchist movement. But it also includes Chinese immigrant women who advanced women's emancipation in their own ethnic newspapers, where they claimed a right to education and political participation in their homelands and local community politics.<sup>89</sup> It includes such radical Mexican feminists as Sara Estela Ramírez, Jovita Idar, and others whose "transborder discourse" on women's emancipation, anarchism, racism, and working-class revolution in such border periodicals as *La Crónica* and *Pluma Roja*, reflected patterns of migration and working-class militancy along the Mexico-United States border in the early twentieth century.<sup>90</sup> It involves such Puerto Rican anarchist feminist labor leaders as Luisa Capetillo, who developed her radical beliefs first on the island and then as a labor organizer in Miami, Tampa, and New York City.<sup>91</sup> Some of the earliest expressions of diasporic feminism date back to the Afro-Cuban and Puerto Rican women in *Las Hijas de Cuba* who organized their own feminist clubs in New York City when they were excluded from the all-male exile nationalist movement in the 1860s.<sup>92</sup> Any conception of early-twentieth-century feminism that excludes the activities of these women diminishes our sense of the possible.

The significance of Italian immigrant women's anarchist feminism, then, is not just in the drama of their lives, the poetry of their prose, or the striking way in which their writing is still relevant today. They compel us to remember that feminism did not originate with upper-class white Anglo-Saxon Protestant women. Not only did Italian immigrant women anarchists not receive their inspiration from that movement, they were not convinced that if women ruled the world anything would be different. They saw the women of the upper classes as their oppressors as much as the many men who exerted power over their lives. As with most anarchists in this period, they drew inspiration from the most impoverished and marginalized women and men. In so doing, they called for a radical

restructuring of society in which pleasure was primary, not just for some on the backs of others, but for all. To achieve this new world they became critically aware of the ways they themselves internalized and propagated oppressive ideologies of subservience, self-sacrifice, prejudice and victimization. As Maria Barbieri, an activist in a Hoboken anarchist group stated in 1905, "A struggle continues each and every day, to pull out the deep roots that a false education has cultivated and nourished in my heart."<sup>93</sup> Through writing, meeting, and organizing, they learned to trust their own experiences and refute the many disparaging projections they received from all directions. They chose as their rallying cry the phrase *Emancipiamoci!* (Let's emancipate ourselves) because they recognized the power they possessed to live revolution in their everyday lives.

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>Maria Roda Balzarini, Casellario Politico Centrale file 4368, Records of the Ministry of the Interior, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Italy, hereafter CPC.

<sup>2</sup>All translations from the Italian are mine unless otherwise noted. Maria Roda, "Alle operaie," *La Questione Sociale* (LQS), 15 September 1897; Balzarini CPC file.

<sup>3</sup>LQS, 15 September 1897, 6, 23 November 1901, 4 January 1902.

<sup>4</sup>LQS, 10 May 1902, 12, 26 July 1902, 16 August 1902; "Cronaca di Spring Valley, Il Gruppo Femminile" and Il Gruppo I Nuovi Viventi, Il Gruppo Femminile Luisa Michel, "La questione della donna," *L'Aurora*, 22 December 1900. See also Caroline A. Merithew, "Anarchist Motherhood: Toward the Making of a Revolutionary Proletariat in Illinois Coal Towns," in *Women, Gender, Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World*, ed. Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002).

<sup>5</sup>*Twelfth Census of the United States*, Volume IV, Population (1900), 732; *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, Volume III, Population (1910), 216, 240.

<sup>6</sup>See my *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Studies that explore aspects of this history include Ardis Cameron, *Radicals of the Worst Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860–1912* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Nancy A. Hewitt, *Southern Discomfort: Women's Activism in*

*Tampa, Florida, 1880s–1920s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); and Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890–1925* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985).

<sup>7</sup>See, for example, Gabaccia and Iacovetta, eds., *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives*; and Gabaccia and Iacovetta, "Women, Work, and Protest in the Italian Diaspora: An International Research Agenda," *Labour/Le Travail* 42 (Fall 1998): 161–81.

<sup>8</sup>Donna Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), chaps. 4 and 5.

<sup>9</sup>For a discussion of this theme in the historiography see Gabaccia and Iacovetta, "Women, Work, and Protest."

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, *Atti della Giunta parlamentare per l'inchiesta agraria* (Rome: Forzani, 1881–6), vol. 7; Mary Gibson, "The 'Female Offender' and the Italian School of Criminal Anthropology," *Journal of European Studies* 12, no. 47 (1982): 155–65.

<sup>11</sup>Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. chap. 3.

<sup>12</sup>See chap. 3 in my *Living the Revolution*. Some examples include Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch, *Greenwich House, 26-28 Jones Street, Eighth Annual Report* (Oct. 1909), 17, and *Greenwich House, 26-28 Jones Street, Tenth Annual Report* (Oct. 1911), 14, Smith College Libraries; and Cecilia Razovki, "The Eternal Masculine," *The Survey* 39 (1917): 117.

<sup>13</sup>Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 154; Laura Hyun Yi Kang, *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), esp. chap. 3; Kali N. Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880–1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup>Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

<sup>15</sup>See also T. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival*; Robert A. Orsi, "The Religious Boundaries of an 'Inbetween' People: Street Feste and the Problem of the Dark-Skinned Other in Italian Harlem," *American Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1992): 313–347; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, eds., *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America* (New York: Routledge, 2003); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

<sup>16</sup>James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948–1985* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 667.

<sup>17</sup>Roger Daniels, *Coming to America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 265–84.

<sup>18</sup>M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>19</sup>*L'Era Nuova* (EN), 13 May 1913.

<sup>20</sup>Cameron, *Radicals of the Worst Sort*; Steve Golin, *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike, 1913* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Hewitt, *Southern Discomfort*.

<sup>21</sup>See, for example, Robert Courtney Smith, *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>22</sup>For excellent overviews of this history see Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*; and Philip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer, eds. *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

<sup>23</sup>These groups were regularly listed in the correspondence pages of Italian-language anarchist newspapers, including the popular *La Questione Sociale*, *L'Era Nuova*, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, *Il Martello*, and *L'Adunata dei Refrattari*.

<sup>24</sup>My phrasing is borrowed from Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*.

<sup>25</sup>Nunzio Pernicone, "Italian Immigrant Radicalism in New York," in *The Italians of New York: Five Centuries of Struggle and Achievement*, ed. Philip Cannistraro (New York: The New York Historical Society, 1999), 78.

<sup>26</sup>Donna R. Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 128.

<sup>27</sup>For more on this world see Anthony Capraro, interview by Julia Blodgett, 11 September 1969, tapes 4, 6 and 7, Capraro Papers, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, hereafter IHRC; Bernardo Vega, *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega: A Contribution to the History of the Puerto Rican Community in New York*, ed. Cesar Andreu Iglesias (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 115; Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1931; New York: Dover Publications, 1970), citations are to the Dover edition; Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants*, 139–41; Nancy Raquel Mirabal, "'No country but the one we must fight for': The Emergence of an Antillean Nation and Community in New York City, 1860–1901," in *Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York*, ed. Agustín Laó-Montes and Arlene Dávila (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1998); Virginia Sánchez-Korrol, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1917–1948* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1983).

<sup>28</sup>On connections between different groups see LQS, 24 May 1902, 15 June 1907, 5 June 1910; EN, 28 May 1910, 5 June 1910, 3 September 1910, 12 November 1910; on the libraries see EN, 6 October 1913, 15 November 1913, 20 December 1913; on the food cooperatives see EN, 10 September 1910; on benefits and support work see LQS, 11 August 1906, 26 October 1907, 15 January 1910, 10, 17 December 1910, 1, 8 April 1911.

<sup>29</sup>Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants*, 139–41. See also their regular announcements in *Il Proletario* and *EN*.

<sup>30</sup>*EN*, 15 January 1910, 30 April 1910, 5 November 1910, 10 October 1914, 20 February 1915. See also Galileo Tobia, interview by Paul Avrich, in *Anarchist Voices* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 137.

<sup>31</sup>Capraro interview by Blodgett, 12 Sept. 1969, tape 5, Capraro Papers, IHRC; *Il Proletario*, 17 February 1911.

<sup>32</sup>Scarpaci, "Angela Bambace," 101–3; "Notes to interview questions," 18–20 Feb. 1975, Bambace Papers, IHRC; Capraro interview by Blodgett, 11 Sept. 1969, tape 7, Capraro Papers, IHRC.

<sup>33</sup>Angela Bambace's notes, 15 November 1980, Bambace Papers, IHRC.

<sup>34</sup>Michael Miller Topp, *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 51.

<sup>35</sup>Maria Roda, "Alle operaie," *LQS*, 15 September 1897.

<sup>36</sup>Una Sartina, "Ma tu sei donna!" *LQS*, 24 August 1901.

<sup>37</sup>*LQS*, 23 June 1906.

<sup>38</sup>Alba, "Eguali diritti," *LQS*, 15 October 1901. For similar essays by women, defending their right to participate equally in the movement see Maria Roda, "Alle madri," 7 September 1901; "I gruppi femminili di propaganda," *LQS*, 23 November 1901; Caterina Sebastiani, "L'Ultima Parola," *LQS*, 8 December 1906; Aurora, "Cose di Paterson," *LQS*, 14 September 1907.

<sup>39</sup>Balzarini CPC file 4368; "Amministrazione," *LQS*, 26 May 1900; "Ricordi della vecchia Paterson," *L'Adunata dei Refrattari*, 15 October 1932; Salvatore Salerno, *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 48–49, 58, 89; Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 173; Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, 55.

<sup>40</sup>Goldman, *Living My Life*, 150.

<sup>41</sup>Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 22; Nerissa S. Balce, "The Filipina's Breast: Savagery, Docility, and the Erotics of the American Empire," *Social Text* 24, no. 2 87 (2006): 89–110.

<sup>42</sup>Guglielmo, *White on Arrival*, 10–12; and Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 6.

<sup>43</sup>Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 390–93; Gary Mormino and George Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885–1985* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 150; and Vega, *Memoirs*, 13.

<sup>44</sup>Vega, *Memoirs*, 13, 24, 113; Angelo Massari, *The Wonderful World of Angelo Massari*, trans. Arthur D. Massolo (New York: Exposition Press, 1965), 107; Salvatore Salerno, "'No God, No Master': Italian Anarchists and the IWW," in Cannistraro and Meyer, *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, 171–87; Mormino and Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City*, 80, 140, 145, 149, 150, 167, 169; Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 143, 391–93, 398; U.S. Census, 1900, 1910, and 1920.

<sup>45</sup>LQS, 15 September 1897, 6, 23 November 1901, 13 December 1901, 4, 11 January 1902, 5 April 1902, 5 September 1903, 2 January 1904.

<sup>46</sup>LQS, 15 September 1897, 6, 23 November 1901, 4 January 1902, 5 April 1902.

<sup>47</sup>LQS, 4, 11 January 1902, 5 April 1902.

<sup>48</sup>Anna Maria Mozzoni, *Alle fanciulle che studiano* (Paterson, NJ: Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna, 1902); *Alle figlie del popolo* (Paterson, NJ, Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna, 1902); and *Alle proletarie* (Paterson, NJ, Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna, 1902), IHRC Print Collection.

<sup>49</sup>Soledad Gustavo was a pseudonym for Teresa Mañé i Miravet (1865–1938).

<sup>50</sup>LQS, 12 July 1902; Soledad Gustavo, *Alle proletarie*, quoted in Moya, "Italians in Buenos Aires' Anarchist Movement," 196.

<sup>51</sup>Moya, "Italians in Buenos Aires," 213, notes 21 and 25; Maxine Molyneux, "No God, No Boss, No Husband: Anarchist Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Argentina," *Latin American Perspectives* 13, no. 1 (1986): 119–45.

<sup>52</sup>Moya, "Italians in Buenos Aires," 196.

<sup>53</sup>Virginia Buongiorno, "Alle compagne lavoratrici!" LQS, 15 October 1895.

<sup>54</sup>Gino Cerrito, "Sull'emigrazione anarchica italiana negli Stati Uniti d'America" *Volonta* (July–August 1969): 269–76.

<sup>55</sup>Quoted in Errico Malatesta, *L'Anarchia* (London: Biblioteca dell'Associazione, 1891), 27.

<sup>56</sup>Malatesta, *L'Anarchia*, 13.

<sup>57</sup>Maria Barbieri, "Ribelliamoci!" LQS, 18 November 1905.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Alba Genisio, "Alle donne proletarie," LQS, 7 March 1908.

<sup>60</sup>Maria Roda, "Alle Madri," LQS, 7 September 1901.

<sup>61</sup>LQS, 30 January 1896, 30 June 1897, 25 February 1899, 12 May 1900, 5 December 1903, 19 January 1907, 15 June 1907; and *EN*, 29 October 1910, 27 Jan. 1912.

<sup>62</sup>Titì, "Il Congo," LQS, 26 January 1907.

<sup>63</sup>LQS, 31 December 1898.

<sup>64</sup>Una Donna, "Scab!" LQS, 12 November 1904; Angiolina Algeri, "A sciopero protratto," EN, 18 February 1911; Anna Nigra, "Non uccidere!" EN, 14 December 1912; Mary Barsanti, "Per Aldemas," EN, 4 January 1913.

<sup>65</sup>Titì, "Alle Donne, Emancipiamoci!" LQS, 7 July 1906.

<sup>66</sup>Camillo Di Sciullo, "La Donna," LQS, 26 October 1907. See also LQS, 29 February 1896, 4 April 1897, 15 August 1897, 18 February 1899, 19, 29 January 1901, 2 November 1907.

<sup>67</sup>Maria Barbieri, "Ribelliamoci!" LQS, 18 November 1905.

<sup>68</sup>LQS, 9, 16 June 1906.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid; LQS, 7 July 1906.

<sup>70</sup>See also Merithew, "Anarchist Motherhood."

<sup>71</sup>Alba, "Alle mie compagne," LQS, 31 August 1901. See also LQS, 5 October 1901, 2 June 1906.

<sup>72</sup>Maria Barbieri, "Alle Madri," LQS, 8 August 1903.

<sup>73</sup>LQS, 16 June 1906. See also LQS, 30 July 1897, 30 September 1897, 6 January 1900, 3 March 1900, 28 September 1901, 27 June 1903, 20, 27 February 1904, 5 March 1904, 23 December 1905, 16 June 1906, 7, 14, 28 September 1907, 26 October 1907, 25 June 1910.

<sup>74</sup>LQS, 26 October 1907; Anna De Gigli, "L'amore, la proprietà e i delitti," EN, 31 May 1913.

<sup>75</sup>De Gigli, "L'amore"; and "La virtù dell'esempio," EN, 19 October 1912.

<sup>76</sup>Maria Roda, "Alle Madri," LQS, 7 September 1901.

<sup>77</sup>LQS, 15 April 1899, 18 November 1899; EN, 3 January 1915.

<sup>78</sup>Elvira Catello, CPC file 1182; EN, 17 May 1913, 20 September 1913, 20 December 1913, 13 January 1914, 14, 21 February 1914, 29 August 1914, 20 February 1915.

<sup>79</sup>Nena Becchetti, *La Figlia dell'Anarchico. Dramma Sociale in Tre Atti* (Jessup, PA: Gruppo Autonomo, 1928), IHRC Print Collection.

<sup>80</sup>Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 109.

<sup>81</sup>EN, 3 January 1915.

<sup>82</sup>Golin, *The Fragile Bridge*; See also Golin's interviews with Carolina Golzio and Rose Villano, June 1983, and Colomba Furio's interviews with Italian women garment union organizers, now included in the Voices in Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

<sup>83</sup>Quoted in Theresa Malkiel, "Striking for the Right to Live," *The Coming Nation*, 25 January 1913.

<sup>84</sup>Salerno, "'I Delitti della Razza Bianca' (The Crimes of the White Race): Italian Immigrant Anarchists' Racial Discourse as Crime," in *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America*, ed. Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno (New York: Routledge, 2003), 111; "Terrorists Caught in Paterson Raids," *New York Times*, 16 February 1920; "Raid Business Booms in Paterson 17 are sent to Ellis Island," *New York Call*, 16 February 1920.

<sup>85</sup>See, for example, "Transnational Feminism: A Range of Disciplinary Perspectives," roundtable with Ellen Dubois, Nayereh Tohidi, Spike Peterson, Maylei Blackwell, and Leila Rupp, 18 May 2005, UCLA International Institute, transcript at <http://www.isop.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=28482>; Rachael Kamel and Anya Hoffman, eds., *The Maquila Reader: Cross Border Organizing Since NAFTA* (Philadelphia: AFS Committee, 1999); Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, *Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2001); Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, and Minoo Moallem eds., *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalism, Transnational Feminism, and the State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>86</sup>Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Louise Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1896–1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

<sup>87</sup>Two exceptions are Louie, *Sweatshop Warriors*; and Dana Frank, "Where Is the History of U.S. Labor and International Solidarity? Part I: A Moveable Feast," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 1, no. 1 (2004): 95–119.

<sup>88</sup>Nancy Cott et al., "Considering the State of U.S. Women's History," *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 1 (2003): 156.

<sup>89</sup>Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>90</sup>Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Clara Lomas, "Transborder Discourse: The Articulation of Gender in the Borderlands in the Early Twentieth Century," *Frontiers* 24, no. 2/3 (2003): 51–74.

<sup>91</sup>Hewitt, *Southern Discomfort*; Lisa Sánchez-Gonzalez, *Boricua Literature: A Literary History of the Puerto Rican Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

<sup>92</sup>Mirabal, "No Country."

<sup>93</sup>Maria Barbieri, "Ricordi? Al Compagno lontano," *LQS*, 4 November 1905.