

# STUDI ETUDES EMIGRAZIONE MIGRATIONS



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# **Religion and Ethnicity in the United States and Canada**

**Advanced Seminar in North American History  
(Rome, 7-9 March 1991)**

## *Preface*

The idea of organizing an Advanced Seminar in North American History on "Religion and Ethnicity in the United States and Canada" came to Giovanni Pizzorusso, Matteo Sanfilippo and myself, as we realized that, while working on the "religious" side of North American history, we were constantly faced by the category of "ethnicity", at least from the last two decades of the eighteenth century. For her part, Maria Susanna Garroni, who had until then mainly worked on "ethnicity", had come to the same conclusion from the opposite side. As we were all based on the European side of the Atlantic Ocean, however, it seemed to us that often Canadian historians, and even more so American historians, tended to limit themselves to the experiences of their respective countries, and had few opportunities to compare their experiences. Yet the case of the Irish in Canada and the United States, and the debate thereon that is still raging in the scholarly community, has amply shown that we still have no definitive answer as to whether common religious allegiance and ethnic provenance did in fact produce similar results in the two countries.

The articles that follow were all read at the Advanced Seminar (Rome, Italy, 7-9 March 1991). They were specially selected for publication in «Studi Emigrazione». To the editor, Gianfausto Rosoli, who pioneered ethnic studies in Italy, the organizers of the Advanced Seminar are particularly grateful. For the sake of unity and consistency, not all papers read at the Advanced Seminar are presented here. The papers read by Anna Lucia Accardo (Università di Roma I), Donald H. Akenson (Queen's University), Daniele Fiorentino (Università di Roma I), Alessandro Gebbia (Università di Roma I), Cristina Mattiello (Università di Roma I), Roberto Perin (York University), George A. Rawlyk (Queen's University), Massimo Rubboli (Università di Firenze), Ugo Rubeo (Università di Roma I), François Weil (Fondation Thiers), and William Westfall (York University), shall be published elsewhere.

In organizing the Advanced Seminar, we profited from the financial assistance of the United States Information Service office of the Embassy of the United States of America, of the Canadian Embassy, of the Centre for the Study of Canada between the Universities of Milan and Pisa (Centro Interuniversitario di Studi sul

Canada), and of the Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica. We also greatly appreciated the hospitality granted to the Advanced Seminar by Elena Potsios, Director, Centro Italiano di Studi Americani, by Egmont Lee, Director, Canadian Academic Centre in Italy, and by Gilbert Reid, Director, Canadian Cultural Centre in Rome. We also gratefully acknowledge the support received from the Italian Association for North American Studies, the Italian Association for Canadian Studies, the International Council for Canadian Studies, the Italian Ministero degli Affari Esteri, and the Università di Genova.

Furthermore, international scholarly co-operation made it possible to organize our Advanced Seminar in conjunction with another event which took place in Turku, Finland, on 12-13 March 1991. This was a conference on "Minorities in Multicultural Societies", organized by Tuomo Laitinen and Timo Virtanen for the Nordic Association for Canadian Studies.

The Advanced Seminar in North American History is one of many that have been organized annually by the Italian Committee for North American History, the Italian organization of scholars who work on the history of the United States and of Canada. Previous advanced seminars were organized in Sestri Levante (1986), Bologna (1987), Sestri Levante (1988), Genoa (1989), and Florence (1990).

LUCA CODIGNOLA  
*Università di Genova*

## **Religione e immigrazione negli USA: riflessioni sulla storiografia**

Questo convegno, lodevolmente promosso da tante istituzioni culturali, che da lungo tempo si occupano di portare avanti studi e ricerche sull'area nordamericana, intende mettere a fuoco, per la prima volta in Italia, il complesso rapporto tra immigrazione e religione. A nessuno sfugge l'importanza di ambedue i fattori, che hanno contrassegnato così profondamente il contesto americano, sviluppatosi rapidamente proprio per merito dell'arrivo di masse ingenti di immigranti dall'Europa, nell'arco di un secolo, e contrassegnato così marcatamente nella sua storia dalla componente religiosa, come in nessun altro paese del mondo occidentale per l'epoca contemporanea.

### *Una questione secolare*

Il fattore religioso del Nord America è stato spesso visto, specie da parte degli studiosi europei, in modo polemico o riduttivo, per svalutarne l'importanza; ma anche una visione, spesso ideologica apologetica da parte americana, riscontrabile sia nella concezione iniziale del paese che in quelle dell'"americanismo" e similari, ne ha cristallizzato e assolutizzato le funzioni. Sta di fatto che, mentre l'assolutismo, prima, il liberalismo e la rivoluzione industriale, poi, parevano mettere fortemente in crisi il ruolo della religione in Europa, in America essa sembrava vivere un periodo di rifondazione e di rilancio, sia nel campo sociale che spirituale. Una valutazione complessiva e un bilancio del rapporto diretto tra immigrazione e religione nel contesto americano forse non è ancora possibile. Ma gli studi promossi in questi decenni, soprattutto sui gruppi etnici europei per il periodo della grande immigrazione, hanno indubbiamente arricchito in maniera sostanziale le conoscenze e ribaltato, in parte, le prospettive iniziali.

È pur vero che, per quanto riguarda il ruolo della religione nella società americana, già i primi osservatori, come Tocqueville, hanno potuto rilevare la sua centralità nell'impostazione della vita quotidiana e sociale dell'America, più che nella sfera politica. Lo stesso messianismo temporale dell'800 sembra aver privilegiato i floridi territori degli Stati Uniti, nel mito popolare, al tempo sociale e religioso, di successo economico e di una nuova terra promessa e luogo di una rifondazione religiosa. In ogni caso, è indubbio che negli Stati Uniti la religione si è trasformata sempre in strumento di integrazione sociale e di identificazione

con la società americana nel suo complesso. Gli stessi movimenti anticlericali, così forti inizialmente presso vari gruppi, come i tedeschi, costituiti da democratici e "liberali", prima (per i quali la vera religione è quella della libertà), e socialisti, poi, apparivano anacronistici negli Stati Uniti, dove la religione – all'inizio il protestantesimo puritano – aveva anche una funzione moralizzante nella vita politica.

Recentemente si è potuto scrivere che gli Stati Uniti, nonostante le sue ambiguità e il persistente conflitto tra sacro e profano, tra la marcata dimensione materialistica e quella spiritualistica, si potrebbe considerare come il maggiore paese del mondo occidentale, intriso di religiosità pubblica. Infatti, la religione vi gioca non solo un ruolo spirituale ma anche culturale e tradizionalmente svolge una funzione pratica di democratizzazione. La stessa diversità religiosa e culturale di tanti nuovi immigrati che anche ora si insediano negli Stati Uniti, così come la ricorrente nascita di movimenti religiosi, serve a mantenere viva la singolarità del caso americano. Spesso i *revivals* religiosi sono proprio contrassegnati dalla ricerca delle radici, al tempo stesso vecchie e nuove, per minoranze e gruppi etnici, ancora vitali, che tendono a una "nuova nascita".<sup>1</sup>

Per quanto riguarda più specificamente gli immigrati, si può ritenere, in linea generale, che essi, soprattutto nella fase iniziale del loro progressivo inserimento nella società americana, hanno avuto bisogno, prima, di identificarsi e di integrarsi nella loro chiesa come canale per un più spedito processo di integrazione nel *mainstream* americano. Come controparte, la società suggeriva e imponeva certi modelli e comportamenti per la chiesa, sia protestante che cattolica, nominalmente indipendente ma in realtà sempre bisognosa di essere accettata e riconosciuta dalla società globale.<sup>2</sup> Il processo di integrazione sociale di gruppi religiosi diversi non è stato certo facile, lineare e automatico, né nei confronti della società globale, né all'interno delle varie chiese. Basti pensare alla radicata ostilità verso i cattolici e alle ripetute forme di violenza nei loro confronti, ancora attorno alla metà dell'800. Anche all'interno della stessa chiesa cattolica il percorso è stato tutt'altro che esente da contrasti, tensioni e condizionamenti, nei confronti delle istituzioni sociali americane e nell'impatto con la diversificata realtà territoriale.

Per quanto riguarda più specificamente la sorte della comunità cattolica negli Stati Uniti, si può facilmente osservare che il cattolicesimo americano è passato, in poco più di un secolo a partire dalla metà dell'800, da chiesa di minoranza a chiesa di maggioranza; e questo è dovuto unicamente al fatto che gli immigrati cattolici hanno di continuo ingrossato le sue fila e invertito il rapporto di crescita, sia in termini di nuovi arrivi che di consolidamento demografico delle comunità di fedeli. Ma anche il cambiamento di strategia dei cattolici, passati ben presto dall'iniziale condanna del separatismo alla pratica accettazione della separazione

<sup>1</sup> E.A. TRYAKIAN, *Gli Stati Uniti come fenomeno religioso*, in J. DELUMEAU, F. BOLGIANI (a cura di), *Storia vissuta del popolo cristiano*. Torino, SEI, 1985, pp. 1001-1027.

<sup>2</sup> G. LENSKI, *The religious factor*. New York, Doubleday, 1963; P. MILLER, *The life of the mind in America*. New York, Harcourt Brace & World, 1965; S.E. AHLSTROM, *A religious history of the American people*, 2 voll. New York, Doubleday, 1975.



tra chiesa e stato fino a farne uno dei punti fermi della loro impostazione, ha servito grandemente al risultato finale.<sup>3</sup>

Si può parlare, quindi, di un rilancio della religione nel Nord America per effetto dell'immigrazione? Così almeno sembra suggerire il caso dei cattolici negli Stati Uniti, passati, da un punto di vista quantitativo, da meno di 200 mila fedeli attorno al 1820 a 18 milioni nel 1920 e a 80 milioni nel 1980. Ma più importante dell'aspetto quantitativo è un'analisi qualitativa del dinamismo espresso dalle istituzioni create e dall'importanza centrale oggi assunta dai cattolici sulla scena americana. Il segno dominante per tutte le confessioni (si pensi al caso degli ebrei e degli orientali) sembra essere stato quello di un forte mantenimento della religiosità di origine e di una espansione di quelle formazioni religiose che si rivelavano più duttili, adatte e disponibili al contesto americano.

È noto come la politica generale della chiesa cattolica, chiaramente espressa al concilio plenario di Baltimora (1884), mirasse a mantenere i fedeli cattolici dentro le proprie comunità, evitando per quanto possibile di far ricorso ai servizi delle istituzioni protestanti, per paura del proselitismo avversario. Il ripiegamento dei cattolici su se stessi, con i rischi di una certa chiusura e provincialismo culturale, li obbligò tuttavia a dar prova di un attivismo di cui si trova difficilmente l'equivalente nelle chiese europee del tempo. Il canale privilegiato, attraverso cui avviare le iniziative degli immigrati, è stata la "parrocchia nazionale", omogenea per gruppo etnico, costituita dalla chiesa e, accanto ad essa, dalla scuola parrocchiale. La parrocchia è diventata il punto focale della vita degli immigrati, centro non solo della vita religiosa, ma anche sociale, in uno stretto rapporto tra nazionalità e religione; per i gruppi non anglofoni la lingua è stata il principale fattore di identificazione religiosa e sociale della comunità.

Dell'importante ruolo della cultura e delle scuole degli immigrati non è stato tenuto gran conto negli studi sull'immigrazione, così come della lingua, funzionale al culto e segno dell'appartenenza etnica. Le ricerche storiche sui cattolici sembravano partire piuttosto dal presupposto negativo, avallato da tanti dibattiti e battaglie a fine '800 tra "cahenslismo", vescovi progressisti e conservatori, circa la perdita della fede o "apostasia" di masse di immigrati cattolici. Gerald Shughnessy, nel 1925, dava corpo a questa preoccupazione pastorale nel suo noto libro (*Has the immigrant kept the faith?*).<sup>4</sup> Sta di fatto che la sfida delle chiese protestanti ha rappresentato spesso l'occasione concreta per avviare delle istituzioni specifiche per i cattolici, anche per le sollecitazioni della Santa Sede ai vescovi americani.

Può risultare qui secondario approfondire la questione, che spesso ha preoccupato gli storici di allora, sui dati (peraltro sempre discussi e controversi) della reale perdita dei cattolici, sia in senso totale, di abbandono della fede, che

<sup>3</sup> J.P. DOLAN, *The American Catholic experience. A history from colonial times to the present* Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1985; J. HENNESEY, *I cattolici degli Stati Uniti. Dalla scoperta dell'America ai nostri giorni*, trad. it. Milano, Jaca Book, 1985; H.J. ABRAMSON, *Ethnic diversity in Catholic America*. New York 1973; D. DOHEN, *Nationalism and American Catholicism*. New York, Sheed & Wood, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> G. SHAUGHNESSY, *Has the immigrant kept the faith?* Washington 1925.

di passaggio ad un'altra confessione. Premessa la necessità di opportune periodizzazioni per ogni gruppo, per lo meno nel lungo periodo, come risulta da un'indagine del 1980, sembrerebbe confermato l'elevato grado di conservazione etnico religiosa negli Stati Uniti, soprattutto presso i tedeschi.<sup>5</sup> Il gruppo italiano si qualifica per l'80% come cattolico (i polacchi per il 72%), con una certa perdita della pratica religiosa e un passaggio alle confessioni protestanti.<sup>6</sup>

In sostanza non si è verificata, per effetto dell'immigrazione, una perdita sostanziale o la nascita di un *melting pot* e sincretismo religioso. Anche se fenomeni del genere sono riscontrabili, specie per il periodo più recente, in un paese peraltro così facile al cambiamento, nel complesso il forte senso dell'osservanza, che ha contrassegnato tutti i gruppi religiosi negli Stati Uniti, ha legato fortemente quelle confessioni ai moduli e alle strutture delle chiese europee di origine. È risultato attenuato (pur non mancando casi in quasi tutti i gruppi) anche il fiorire di "chiese nazionali americane"; naturalmente meno tra i protestanti, per ragioni di tradizione, di frequenti sdoppiamenti e aggregazioni occasionali, ma anche in questi casi, comunque, più sul piano dell'organizzazione che della dottrina.

Intento di questo contributo non è di tracciare una esaustiva rassegna della abbondante letteratura prodotta in questi decenni, lavoro peraltro compiuto egregiamente già da vari studiosi (da Silvano Tomasi e Edward Stibili per gli italo-americani negli Stati Uniti, da Graziano Tassello in un'ottica più ampia e da Rudolph Vecoli in generale),<sup>7</sup> quanto piuttosto di presentare alcune considerazioni generali sui nodi tematici e sullo sviluppo della storiografia relativa al rapporto tra religione e immigrazione/etnicità.

### *Interpretazioni e interrogativi ricorrenti*

Per comodità espositiva, varrà la pena di accennare alla produzione della storiografia, in prevalenza americana (tenuto conto dello scarso apporto della produzione europea ed italiana), lungo i filoni delle principali interpretazioni a proposito di religione e immigrazione. Queste interpretazioni in genere derivano dalle correnti di pensiero e di studio, prevalenti nelle varie epoche. Si può parlare di un certo sviluppo cronologico che vede la tradizionale visione assimilazionista (o del consenso) cedere il passo a quella revisionista (o conflittiva) degli anni

<sup>5</sup> TH.J. ARCHDEACON, *Becoming American. An ethnic history*. New York, The Free Press, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. in particolare E.C. SARTORIO, *Social and religious life of Italians in America*. Boston, Christopher Publ., 1918; ID., *American di oggi*. Bologna, Zanichelli, 1920; T. ABEL, *Protestant home missions to Catholic immigrants*. New York 1933.

<sup>7</sup> S.M. TOMASI, E. STIBILI, *Italian Americans and religion. An annotated bibliography*. New York, Center for Migration Studies, 1978; G. TASSELLO, *Religione ed emigrazione. Una selezione bibliografica*, «Studi Emigrazione», XXI, 76, 1984, pp. 439-523; R.J. VECOLI, *From the "Uprooted" to the "Transplanted": the writing of American immigration history, 1951-1989*, in V. GENNARO LERDA (ed.), *From "Melting Pot" to multiculturalism: the evolution of ethnic relations in the United States and Canada*. Roma, Bulzoni, 1990, pp. 25-53.

'60, al modello della chiesa come mediazione e infine a quello pluralista degli anni più recenti. Queste tappe della riflessione storiografica, che mutano anche per effetto della diversificazione ed aggiornamento dei metodi dell'indagine storica, non vanno intese in senso assoluto (raramente si trovano impostazioni teoriche o senza ibridismi, e spesso ci sono nei singoli lavori significativi anticipi e intuizioni) quanto piuttosto come indirizzi prevalenti nello studio dell'incidenza religiosa delle masse di immigrati negli Stati Uniti.<sup>8</sup>

Le varie interpretazioni, più che escludersi reciprocamente, sembrano rappresentare le varie istanze e gli interrogativi di fondo che le comunità di fedeli hanno da sempre sollevato nel caso statunitense: in che misura l'esperienza religiosa degli immigrati ha influito sul sistema politico, sociale e religioso del paese, quale impatto essa ha avuto sul processo di identità nazionale, come si è concretato il ricorrente dilemma tra conservazione e perdita dei legami religiosi a seguito dell'emigrazione, come la religione ha retto di fronte ai cambiamenti esterni e alle trasformazioni interne, quali sono state le ripercussioni sulla struttura religiosa degli Stati Uniti, che incidenza ha avuto la religione nel processo di riscoperta o rivitalizzazione della consapevolezza etnica, quali sono le sue capacità di resistenza nel futuro. Non tutta la problematica è stata approfondita nella pur abbondante letteratura, ma si è avuto almeno una parziale risposta e illuminazione.<sup>9</sup> Alcuni gruppi etnici, come quello tedesco e irlandese, godono di una consolidata letteratura, che ha illustrato le varie sfaccettature della loro esperienza religiosa; la nostra attenzione si rivolge principalmente al caso italiano.

- La *visione assimilazionista*, legata al livello conoscitivo delle scienze sociali di fine '800 in larga parte condizionata dal positivismo, ha esteso al campo religioso l'idea della pronta immedesimazione degli immigrati ai modelli di vita della società americana. Questa interpretazione corrente è stata espressa e fortemente sostenuta in chiave di politica pastorale dai primi vescovi della chiesa cattolica, come via obbligata per ottenere un immediato adeguamento di comunità così diverse al programma di impianto e di forte sviluppo della chiesa cattolica nordamericana. L'attesa comune era che gruppi diversi, soprattutto europei tradizionalmente ostili, quali irlandesi, tedeschi, polacchi, italiani e slavi ed altri, potessero convivere facilmente e fondersi insieme in modo da dare origine all'amalgama del "cattolico americano", quasi saldando la diversità delle vecchie nazioni in una nuova unità nazionale.

La scuola assimilazionista, misconoscendo o dando poca attenzione alle tensioni e contrapposizioni interne, ha sottolineato la funzione della chiesa nel processo di coesione nazionale e di omogeneizzazione interna, attorno ad alcune istituzioni forti. Con una espressione tipica dell'ottimismo americano si riteneva di poter fondere gradualmente insieme i caratteri dei diversi gruppi etnici

<sup>8</sup> Sui cambiamenti dell'atteggiamento della chiesa verso gli immigrati, cfr. PH. GLEASON, *Keeping the faith: American Catholicism past and present*. Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1987; J. DOLAN, *The immigrants and their gods: a new perspective in American religious history*, «Church History», 57, 1988, pp. 61-72.

<sup>9</sup> T.L. SMITH, *Religion and ethnicity in America*, «The American Historical Review», 83, 1978, pp. 1155-1185.

europei, definiti razzialmente secondo i rigidi canoni dell'antropologia positivista, attraverso il forte dinamismo, la capillare presenza della scuola cattolica e la superiorità delle istituzioni americane. Fino agli anni '50 la produzione storiografica sosteneva ancora questa visione, più ideologica e di linea pastorale che di ricerca. La scuola "del consenso" trovava che l'esperimento religioso americano era quasi immune dai conflitti, divisioni e contrapposizioni ideologiche, tipici dell'esperienza europea.<sup>10</sup> In particolare la chiesa cattolica veniva presentata ed esaltata come una delle più efficaci agenzie di americanizzazione; il che era vero soprattutto del ruolo svolto dalla chiesa cattolica nel periodo degli anni '20, quando mirando al vantaggio di un riconoscimento pubblico e a una maggiore funzionalità per il futuro, essa non tenne in dovuta considerazione il lento cambiamento sociale e culturale delle masse immigrate meno istruite e il rispetto della loro diversità.

Questo indirizzo storiografico applicava quanto Oscar Handlin asseriva nel suo classico *The Uprooted*, a proposito del ruolo della religione, come l'unico fattore in grado di sopravvivere al trasferimento nel Nuovo Mondo, e in cui l'immigrante concentrava tutto il peso del suo legame con il passato. Una folta schiera di studiosi, tra gli anni '40 e '50 (tra i quali occorrerà citare Joan Bland, Emmet Rothan, Colman Barry, Vincent Fecher, Michael Curley e soprattutto Philip Gleason per il caso dei cattolici tedeschi)<sup>11</sup> hanno arricchito il campo delle conoscenze sul comportamento religioso degli irlandesi, tedeschi, polacchi, ucraini, slovacchi e cechi negli Stati Uniti, offrendo, in alcuni lavori insuperabili, degli spaccati assai più ricchi di tensioni e di illuminazioni rispetto alle attese iniziali. Gli studi sul gruppo italiano vennero un pò in ritardo, se si prescindono dal lavoro, sostanzialmente di repertoriamento, di Giovanni Schiavo.<sup>12</sup>

Per quanto riguarda i modelli di indagine, spesso questa letteratura storica non era che una estensione ai gruppi etnici degli indirizzi della tradizionale storia della chiesa americana, in cui risaltavano in primo piano il ruolo del clero, le idee e l'attività dei *leaders* più significativi, mentre rimaneva in secondo piano il ruolo del laicato e dei fedeli nel forgiare il cattolicesimo americano. I soggetti reali e manifesti della storia sembravano essere la gerarchia, le diocesi, le istituzioni religiose. Gli storici della chiesa erano in genere preoccupati più degli sforzi del clero nel gettare le basi delle istituzioni ecclesiastiche, dove non ne esistevano, che di esaminare lo sviluppo interno delle masse di immigrati cattolici, della loro

<sup>10</sup> La tesi che la vera religione era negli Stati Uniti l'"American way of life" e che la chiesa funzionava per l'incorporazione degli immigrati era sostenuta con forza da WILL HERBERG, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: a sociological study of religion's impact on politics, economics and family life*. New York, Doubleday, 1955.

<sup>11</sup> E.H. ROTHAN, *The German Catholic immigrants in the United States, 1830-1860*. Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1946; V.J. FECHER, *A study of the movement for German national parishes in Philadelphia and Baltimore (1787-1802)*. Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1955; C. BARRY, *The Catholic church and German Americans*. Milwaukee 1953; PH. GLEASON, *The conservative reformers. German American Catholics and the social order*. Notre Dame, Ind., 1968.

<sup>12</sup> G. SCHIAVO, *The Italian contribution to the Catholic church in America*. New York, Vigo Press, 1949.

cultura religiosa e del loro contributo, non esente da contrasti e ambiguità, alla crescita religiosa. La chiesa per gli storici era l'immigrante "istituzionale", mentre quello comune rimaneva in gran parte sconosciuto.<sup>13</sup>

Nonostante la staticità del modello adottato, questa stagione storiografica ha avuto il merito di aver a lungo considerato la chiesa cattolica come un'istituzione tipica degli immigrati e vicina alle condizioni dei poveri, anche se l'accento era posto sulle forme esterne del cattolicesimo d'America e sulla conformazione delle tradizioni religiose al modello americano. Mancava una conoscenza più approfondita delle dinamiche culturali nel loro complesso e del comportamento religioso delle masse.

- Negli anni '60, l'impatto dei metodi della storia sociale, la riscoperta dell'etnicità e il rilancio della politica etnica, nonché i profondi cambiamenti avvenuti all'interno della chiesa a seguito del Concilio Vaticano II hanno grandemente ampliato l'approccio della storia della chiesa, dando un posto di rilievo agli aspetti dinamici, inclusa l'immigrazione.<sup>14</sup>

In quel periodo, negli Stati Uniti studiosi quali Rudolph Vecoli, Virginia Yans-Mc Laughlin, Joseph Barton, Robert Harney e vari altri<sup>15</sup> hanno ridimensionato la visione tradizionale dell'immigrazione, come fenomeno di rottura totale con il vecchio mondo e di totale adeguamento al nuovo. Essi hanno sottolineato piuttosto la continuità culturale e delle istituzioni sociali e i resistenti legami tra vecchie tradizioni e nuove esperienze. La stessa istituzione centrale della chiesa,

<sup>13</sup> J.M. WITHE, *Historiography of Catholic immigrants and religion*, «The Immigration History Newsletter», (14), 2, 1982, pp. 5-11.

<sup>14</sup> Nel nuovo solco si collocano importanti ricerche, di vasto respiro e spesso di natura comparativa: J.P. DOLAN, *The immigrant church. New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press., 1975; ID., *Catholic revivalism. The American experience, 1830-1900*. Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1978; R.M. LINKH, *American Catholicism and European immigrants (1900-1924)*. Staten Island, Center for Migration Studies, 1975; J.F. PAROT, *Polish Catholics in Chicago, 1884-1920. A religious history*. Dekalb, Northern Illinois Press, 1981; A.J. KUZNIEMSKI, *Faith and fatherland. The Polish church war in Wisconsin, 1896-1918*. Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1980; H. KUBLAK, *The Polish national Catholic church in the United States of America from 1897 to 1980. Its social conditioning and social functions*. Warsaw 1982; V. GREENE, *For God and country. The rise of Polish and Lithuanian ethnic consciousness in America, 1860-1910*. Madison, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975; R.M. MILLER, T.D. MARZIK (eds.), *Immigrants and religion in urban America*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1977; F. MOCHA (ed.), *Poles in America*. Wozzalla 1978; B.P. PROCKO, *Ukrainian Catholics in America. A history*. Washington, University Press of America, 1982; AA.VV., *The other Catholics*. New York, Arno Press, 1978.

<sup>15</sup> R.J. VECOLI, *Prelates and peasants: Italian immigrants and the Catholic church*, «Journal of Social History», 2, 1969, pp. 217-268; ID., *Cult and occult in Italian American culture: the persistence of a religious heritage*, in R.M. MILLER, TH.D. MARZIK (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 25-47; R.F. HARNEY, *Dalla frontiera alle Little Italies. Gli italiani in Canada, 1800-1945*. Roma, Bonacci Ed., 1984; J. BARTON, *Peasants and strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American city*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1975; J. BODNAR, *The transplanted. A history of immigrants in urban America*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987; D. RAE GABACCIA, *Militants and migrants. Rural Sicilians become American workers*. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1988.

esaminata criticamente proprio nella sua leadership, era messa in discussione come istituzione integrale e assorbente nella vita degli immigrati. In molti studi tradizionali, infatti, mancava la sottolineatura della immancabile conflittualità comunitaria, non solo da parte della componente anticlericale, assai forte in Europa e nei movimenti socialista ed anarchico impiantati negli Stati Uniti,<sup>16</sup> ma anche all'interno della chiesa cattolica, dove si incrociavano le contrapposizioni di cultura e di classe, di razza e di etnia, di sensibilità e di formazione religiosa. Vecoli in particolare ha sottolineato quanto i valori, le prospettive religiose, le tensioni politiche e sociali degli italiani fossero differenti da quelli della *leadership*, prevalentemente irlandese, della chiesa americana.<sup>17</sup> Con ciò si evidenziavano le forti differenze culturali e religiose esistenti all'interno della chiesa cattolica, ma veniva anche posta la questione della ridotta capacità della chiesa nell'assorbire gli italiani di differenti *backgrounds* culturali, rispetto ad altre istituzioni, spesso contrapposte.

La *tendenza revisionista*, nonostante alcuni limiti e semplificazioni, paralleli a quanto avveniva in Italia attraverso la letteratura neomarxista (espressa dagli studi di E. Franzina e E. Sori)<sup>18</sup>, ha servito a vivacizzare il quadro delle ricerche, che si sono indirizzate verso nuovi campi della storia sociale e religiosa. Grande apporto è stato dato al processo di consapevolezza etnica, rispetto all'appiattimento dell'assimilazionismo, che spesso nascondeva (è inutile negarlo) la paura dello straniero. Sulla spinta dell'onda si è rischiato a volte di giungere all'altro estremo, cadendo nella ristrettezza dell'approccio istituzionale, di segno opposto. Come afferma Pozzetta, i revisionisti sembravano essere più preoccupati di quello che era sbagliato nella chiesa cattolica piuttosto che di quello che avveniva realmente in essa ed in quale preciso contesto.<sup>19</sup> Del resto, i lavori di ricostruzione storica erano spesso prigionieri delle fonti, particolarmente di quelle socialiste ed anarchiche che riflettevano l'accentuata aggressività contro la chiesa e il radicato pregiudizio anticlericale. Anche in questo caso, quello che rischiava di essere trascurato era lo studio del peso reale dei fattori in gioco, al di là delle accese polemiche verbali, trascurando i condizionamenti reciproci nella vita quotidiana, gli imprestiti di riti e simboli, gli antagonismi e la concorrenza nell'attrarre l'immigrante.

– L'approccio della *chiesa etnica come mediazione* tra la società e la chiesa stessa, ben espresso e documentato nelle ricerche di Silvano Tomasi, ha dato un grande impulso allo studio dei casi di parrocchie e di comunità etniche.<sup>20</sup> Si

<sup>16</sup> S.M. MILLER, *The radical immigrants*. Boston 1974, stima che un quarto degli immigrati fosse di estrazione cattolica, per la maggior parte irlandesi.

<sup>17</sup> R.J. VECOLI, *Prelates and peasants...*, cit.

<sup>18</sup> E. FRANZINA, *La grande emigrazione*. Padova, Marsilio, 1976; E. SORI, *L'emigrazione italiana dall'Unità alla seconda guerra mondiale*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 1979.

<sup>19</sup> G.E. POZZETTA, *The parish in Italian American religious history*, in G. ROSOLI (a cura di), *Scalabrini tra vecchio e nuovo mondo*. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1989, pp. 481-489; G.R. MORMINO, G.E. POZZETTA, *Italian immigrants and the American Catholic church. A parish perspective*, «Studi Emigrazione», XXV, 93, 1989, pp. 95-108.

<sup>20</sup> S.M. TOMASI, *Americanizzazione o pluralismo? La chiesa etnica italiana come istituzione mediatrice nel processo d'integrazione degli emigrati negli Stati Uniti d'America*, in *Gli*

sollevava di conseguenza con maggior vigore il problema delle fasi evolutive di una presenza nella realtà locale e soprattutto degli strumenti di intermediazione alla portata degli immigrati. Le ricerche hanno aiutato grandemente la conoscenza della specificità dei vari gruppi immigrati, delle esigenze culturali, istituzionali, culturali e religiose proprie di ciascuna comunità. Privilegiare l'analisi della "parrocchia nazionale" aiuta a spiegare la strategia singolare del Nord America nell'affrontare il problema dell'assistenza religiosa degli immigrati, confrontati con un diverso contesto, lingua e forme espressive.<sup>21</sup> La parrocchia etnica ha svolto la funzione di *enclave* in grado di trasmettere la fede dei migranti e di fornire la base per la preservazione della loro identità. Non sempre ne è risultata confermata la coesione interna del gruppo, anche se questo è stato il caso più comune; a volte si verificavano frammentazioni e scoppiamenti, per ragioni contingenti o più profonde legate ad antiche divisioni.

Lo studio di Tomasi sulle parrocchie italiane nell'area di New York colloca gli immigrati nel contesto concreto della loro vita religiosa quotidiana. È proprio analizzando le comunità religiose nel loro sviluppo (invece dei soli vescovi), che si chiariscono i conflitti e gli adattamenti delle varie ondate di immigrati cattolici alla chiesa locale con la molteplicità dei loro *backgrounds* ed espressioni culturali. La storia delle parrocchie nazionali, o etniche in generale, è di fondamentale importanza, nella prospettiva di ricerca ribadita da Pozzetta, ed è preliminare a tutta la questione del pluralismo etnico, dal momento che esso si origina realmente all'interno di queste modeste sottocomunità. Gli studi promossi a metà degli anni '70, come indica anche un volumetto della American Italian Historical Association, hanno ampliato la conoscenza sul comportamento religioso dei vari gruppi etnici, in particolare degli italiani, che sono sempre risultati tra i gruppi più consistenti e problematici nella storia della chiesa americana.<sup>22</sup> Fin dall'inizio si parlò dell'"Italian problem", per quell'insieme, di difficile comprensione per la cultura anglosassone, composto di irreligione e di devozionalismo, di profondo attaccamento ad antiche forme culturali ed espressive, di distacco dal formalismo istituzionale e di adesione ai valori fondamentali del credo religioso.

Grande importanza nella promozione degli studi sull'esperienza religiosa degli italiani negli Stati Uniti ha avuto la bibliografia curata da Tomasi e Stibili, che più che un semplice repertorio ha costituito uno strumento di lavoro indispensabile nelle più diverse direzioni di ricerca, sia religiosa che sociale, sulle singole parrocchie, congregazioni religiose ed associazioni. Simili strumenti di

*italiani negli Stati Uniti*. Firenze, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 1972, pp. 389-422; ID., *Piety and power. The role of Italian parishes in the New York metropolitan area, 1880-1930*. New York, Center for Migration Studies, 1975.

<sup>21</sup> F. CIESLUK, *National parishes in the United States*. Washington 1944; J. DOLAN (ed.), *The American Catholic parish: a history from 1850 to the present*, 2 voll. New York, Paulist Press, 1987.

<sup>22</sup> S.M. TOMASI (ed.), *The religious experience in Italian Americans*. Staten Island, N.Y., The American Italian Historical Association, 1975. Cfr. anche J. HENNESEY, *Italian immigration and the church in the United States*, S. DIGIOVANNI, *The Propaganda Fide and the "Italian Problem"*, S.M. TOMASI, *Scalabrini e i vescovi nordamericani*, in G. ROSOLI (a cura di), *Scalabrini tra vecchio...*, cit., pp. 431-442, 443-452, 453-467.

lavoro non sono mancati neppure in Italia, specie attraverso i contributi pubblicati sulla rivista «Studi Emigrazione», raccolte istituzionali (quali *Chiesa e mobilità umana*, che stimolano le prospettive di studio)<sup>23</sup> e soprattutto attraverso la bibliografia preparata nel 1984 da Graziano Tassello. L'aggiornamento del fondamentale lavoro di Tomasi e Stibili, che ora è stato portato a termine, raddoppia le informazioni, sistematicamente raccolte, e apre numerose piste di ricerca sul tema della religiosità degli italiani negli Stati Uniti.

— Per quanto riguarda il cosiddetto *approccio pluralistico*, esso è invalso in molti studi sull'immigrazione dell'ultimo decennio, ed era stato anticipato validamente in molte ricerche anteriori. In forma più consapevole e sistematica, si è tratto profitto del *revival* degli studi etnici negli Stati Uniti, della conseguente specializzazione delle ricerche, del superamento di una visione strettamente nazionale e della generale accettazione di un modello di interdipendenza e di interdisciplinarietà nello studio dei fenomeni etnici.

Anche la storia religiosa è stata beneficiata da simili approcci dinamici, che hanno rotto lo schematismo delle tradizionali discipline, con il ricorso alla sociologia e all'antropologia. Non è stata sempre superata la ristrettezza dei limiti temporali in buona parte degli studi sull'immigrazione che si limitano al periodo anteriore alla prima guerra mondiale, trascurando le profonde trasformazioni sociali e politiche, sia internazionali che interne, che sono avvenute dagli anni '20 in poi. Importanti sono gli studi di lungo periodo riguardanti l'impatto della chiesa etnica sulle successive generazioni di immigranti, come hanno illustrato George Pozzetta, Gary Mormino e Robert Orsi, che valorizzano la dimensione della religiosità popolare, come complesso delle pratiche religiose, dei riti, preghiere e fede collettiva, e dei valori profondi, che se non sempre si rapportano direttamente alla chiesa istituzionale, si legano tuttavia in vario modo alla problematica religiosa.<sup>24</sup>

I lavori recenti hanno posto in maniera più chiara, organica e coraggiosa il problema dell'esistenza di varie culture ed esperienze all'interno della chiesa cattolica, come parte qualificante del suo passato di istituzione degli immigranti, capace di guardare e affrontare le trasformazioni in corso.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> P. SALVETTI, *Una parrocchia italiana a New York e i suoi fedeli: Nostra Signora di Pompei (1892-1933)*, «Studi Emigrazione», XXI, 73, 1984, pp. 43-65; S.M. TOMASI, *L'assistenza religiosa agli italiani in USA e il Prelato per l'Emigrazione Italiana: 1920-1949*, *ibid.*, XIX, 66, 1982, pp. 167-190; R.J. VECOLI, *Italian religious organizations in Minnesota*, *ibid.*, pp. 191-201; G.R. MORMINO, *The church upon the hill: Italian immigrants in St. Louis, Missouri, 1870-1955*, *ibid.*, pp. 203-224; G. TASSELLO, L. FAVERO (a cura di), *Chiesa e mobilità umana. Documenti della Santa Sede dal 1883 al 1983*. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1975.

<sup>24</sup> G.R. MORMINO, *Immigrants on the hill: Italian Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982*. Chicago, University of Illinois, 1986; D. GERBER, *The making of an American pluralism*. Buffalo, New York, 1825-1860. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1989; J. GRANATIER ALEXANDER, *The immigrant church and community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Lutherans, 1880-1915*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987; R. ORSI, *The Madonna of 115th Street. Faith and community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985; D. LIPTAK, *European immigrants and the Catholic church in Connecticut, 1870-1920*. New York, Center for Migration Studies, 1987.

<sup>25</sup> D. LIPTAK (ed.), *A church of many cultures: selected historical essays on ethnic American Catholicism*. New York, Garland Publ. 1986; S.M. TOMASI, *A lesson from history: the integration*



Volendo tracciare alcune indicazioni sulle tendenze e prospettive di ricerca sull'esperienza religiosa degli emigrati, e degli italiani in particolare, negli Stati Uniti, balza evidente la necessità di considerare quanto avvenuto altrove, e soprattutto nel contesto più ampio del mondo americano. L'America Latina, in particolare, si presenta come il necessario paradigma di confronto e di verifica (e non solo per intenti celebrativi legati al V Centenario) per comprendere il ruolo svolto dalla religione nel popolamento delle Americhe. L'esistenza di un cattolicesimo diffuso in America Latina già con la colonizzazione spagnola e di un tessuto religioso più omogeneo, fortemente legato alle strutture sociali e politiche, antecedente l'arrivo massiccio dell'emigrazione europea, costituisce il termine di analisi per capire in che misura le migrazioni europee hanno influito sul rafforzamento o indebolimento dei comportamenti religiosi, con quali caratteri differenziali e specificità, rispetto al caso nordamericano. I recenti validi contributi pubblicati dal CEMLA costituiscono un ottimo punto di partenza per analisi comparative e opere di sintesi, di cui si avverte la necessità.<sup>26</sup>

Si tratta inoltre di aggregare negli studi una più marcata prospettiva internazionale e di proseguire, con maggiore sistematicità rispetto a quanto finora prodotto, l'aggiornamento dei metodi e delle fonti della ricerca, il superamento di anacronistiche barriere disciplinari e di preoccupazioni istituzionali, mirando a non restringere la storia della chiesa ai soli storici della chiesa. Si rivela indispensabile in particolare il riferimento al contesto più ampio della storia dei credenti e della loro fede e pietà, delle correnti di pensiero e teologiche, di rinnovamento o di restaurazione, e dei movimenti religiosi.

La nuova storia sociale e religiosa, in dialogo permanente tra la storiografia americana ed europea – aspetto finora troppo trascurato – potrà dare un contributo essenziale all'avanzamento degli studi sul comportamento religioso degli immigrati, evitando gli schematismi e le secche di tante ricerche passate. L'abbondanza delle fonti primarie ora disponibili e non ancora sfruttate, come prova anche questo convegno, per la storia delle singole parrocchie etniche, delle varie congregazioni religiose e comunità, indica un lungo e fruttuoso cammino ancora da compiere. Le nuove ricerche sui fedeli di rito orientale e dell'Estremo Oriente negli Stati Uniti, nonché quelle più abbondanti sugli ispanici, promettono bene per il futuro degli studi in quest'area. Per quanto riguarda aspetti più specifici, varrà la pena menzionare alcune aree di studio del rapporto tra etnicità e religione, quali la menzionata storia delle congregazioni religiose, la prospettiva della comunità locale (o parrocchia), sottolineata da Pozzetta, lo studio della cosiddetta "sociabilità" esistente nell'orbita della chiesa, nonché del ruolo della donna e di aspetti poco conosciuti della pietà popolare.

*of immigrants in the pastoral practice of the church in the United States*, in D. LIPTAK, *A church of many cultures. The immigrants and their church*. New York, MacMillan, 1989.

<sup>26</sup> N. AUZA, L. FAVERO (a cura di), *Iglesia e inmigración*. Buenos Aires, CEMLA, 1991; *Religión e inmigración*, numero monografico di «Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos», 14, 1990.

Qualche esemplificazione delle tendenze in corso sottolinea, al tempo stesso, anticipazioni di ricerche avviate e bisogni di conoscenze maggiori. Ad esempio, sul ruolo svolto dalla chiesa nel processo di socializzazione degli immigrati, in particolare dei loro figli, soprattutto a partire dagli anni 1920, quando la consistente seconda generazione ha posto nuove domande alle parrocchie nazionali e ai loro leaders. In che misura sono cambiate le relazioni intracomunitarie e della parrocchia per effetto dei grandi avvenimenti internazionali (come guerre, rivoluzioni), che riguardano soprattutto il paese di origine, o nazionali (trasformazioni politiche o di regime, radicali cambi di governo, ecc.). Un approfondimento della dimensione del quotidiano religioso è forse ancora da compiere in forma adeguata. La maniera con cui l'istituzione ecclesiastica ha risposto in forme flessibili alle nuove situazioni illumina sulla capacità di adattamento e di resistenza delle istituzioni, sulla transizione o sul loro possibile declino. La persistenza di forze etno-religiose, perfino nell'orientare il voto politico, è uno degli aspetti interessanti dell'influente sistema parrocchiale. Così è interessante conoscere maggiormente i contatti e interazioni quotidiane tra sacerdoti e parrocchiani, tra i vari gruppi, confraternite, clubs, associazioni culturali, sportive, salendo fino alle sfere del potere religioso e politico locale.

Questo convegno sta dando un contributo significativo alle tematiche sopra accennate, come prova la stessa articolazione delle relazioni. Il caso italiano risulta particolarmente arricchito, come era naturale attendersi, ma vari altri gruppi etnici sono qui considerati, permettendo un quadro realistico del ruolo delle varie confessioni tra gli immigrati. La documentazione su alcuni gruppi etnici è assolutamente originale per gli studiosi italiani. Il caso della parrocchia italiana, nei saggi di Garroni e Fasce, attraverso l'apporto qualificante della personalità dei parroci, pur diversi nei loro orientamenti e intendimenti personali (il primato tra componente individuale o istituzionale è un insolubile dilemma), conferma l'emergere di una funzionale coscienza etnica. Ma anche nel caso degli sloveni, molto legati alla madrepatria proprio attraverso le istituzioni religiose, e degli slovacchi, scarsamente identificati in patria, l'importanza di identificarsi in America con la "propria" chiesa risulta ancora più decisivo per l'emergere di una coscienza etnica nuova.

L'importanza metodologica di alcuni contributi è evidente; varrà la pena di accennare all'appello di Bruce Levine a legare sempre l'analisi della etnicità, anche religiosa, alle reali condizioni sociali dei gruppi e al contesto politico del momento, o la sottolineatura di Cornelius Jaenen sul ruolo linguistico e culturale delle scuole dei ruteni in Canada. Queste scuole sorte su base confessionale con un compromesso politico per difendere la lingua, veicolo di conservazione della fede, proprio quando sembravano aver chiarito i fini e i metodi didattici e raggiunto un buon grado di efficienza, furono costrette a chiudere per l'ondata di sentimenti antistranieri e anticattolici all'epoca della prima guerra mondiale; ma certo la loro proposta è importante sul piano delle anticipazioni multiculturali. Ancora più interessante è il caso fornito da Silvano Tomasi nello studiare una istituzione filogovernativa italiana, operante nelle Americhe, in cui la conservazione dei caratteri dell'italianità è sempre convintamente legata al ruolo della religione cattolica e alla presenza del clero, con una intima connessione tra

ideali religiosi, finalità patriottiche e intenti sociali. Si ribadisce l'esigenza di legare sempre di più lo studio tra i due fronti, quello europeo e quello americano, incrociando le fonti e studiando i condizionamenti dei contesti politico-religiosi.

Una rassegna delle indicazioni provenienti dai vari contributi non farebbe giustizia della ricchezza e utilità dei lavori presentati. Essi servono, indubbiamente, per riproporre alcune questioni di fondo, che sempre soggiacciono e che certo produrranno un ampio dibattito sul rapporto religione-etnicità.

A nessuno sfugge l'importanza del fattore immigratorio per la chiesa, incluse le sfide del futuro, per la complessità delle nuove appartenenze etniche: gli Stati Uniti sono l'unico paese al mondo ad accogliere ancora oggi masse di immigrati (circa 9 milioni di nuovi entrati in questi anni '80, in prevalenza di origine non europea). La fede e la cultura degli immigrati rappresentano soprattutto per la chiesa cattolica negli Stati Uniti una sfida di vario ordine e tipo, che si estende anche a tutte le istituzioni del paese e al suo senso di identità. La chiesa cattolica sta ora saldamente al centro della società americana, come istituzione e comunità, per merito del ruolo che detiene il gruppo sostanzialmente omogeneo di estrazione europea.<sup>27</sup> I cattolici sono la confessione meglio distribuita, influente e organizzata dell'intero paese, in grado di presentarsi come voce autorevole della gente comune in tante questioni sociali e politiche. L'avvenire vedrà una presenza sempre crescente di gruppi e culture di provenienza non europea. La chiesa cattolica è consapevole di quanto sia importante il suo passato nel definire le strategie future nell'estendere la sua base.

L'impegno della chiesa cattolica, di fronte alle accelerate trasformazioni demografiche e culturali, non può che essere quello della valorizzazione dell'esperienza espressa da tante comunità di fedeli immigrati, divenuti segno e testimonianza di pluralismo all'interno della chiesa. Essa non può rinunciare a garantire con maggior convinzione anche per i nuovi immigrati quei valori di rispetto e tolleranza e soprattutto di arricchimento interiore della diversità, non immune, tuttavia, dalle già sperimentate tensioni e contrasti. Il dilemma sarà sempre di come radicarsi nella tradizione dei valori americani di cui essa si sente paladina e, al tempo stesso, farsi garante del pluralismo, di un cosmopolitismo cristiano in cui la religione sia fattore di comprensione e di comunione, in primo luogo, e di arricchimento e progresso, poi, per tante comunità e culture.

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<sup>27</sup> R. ALBA, *Ethnic identity: the transformation of white America*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990.

## **Summary**

The essay offers a few insights into the American historiography pertaining to religion and immigration-ethnicity. To the traditional assimilation theory, which had considered positively the process of amalgamation of the ethnic differences in the American mainstream, in the 60's a new interpretation model was envisaged which underlined the continuity and the sturdiness of ties with the old world. In recent years, the interpretation of the church as an agent of mediation and pluralism has originated many surveys in the field of social and religious history, in particular the role of the numerous immigrant communities within the American church and the process of national identity.

## **Résumé**

Le texte présente quelques considérations sur la chronique américaine concernant le rapport entre religion et immigration/ethnie. A la traditionnelle interprétation assimilatrice qui voyait avec optimisme le processus de fusion de la diversité des ethnies dans l'amalgame américain, a produit de suite un courant révisionniste dans les années 60, qui a souligné la continuité et la solidité des liens avec le vieux monde. L'interprétation de l'Eglise, comme agent de médiation et de pluralisme, a donné dans les dernières années une grande impulsion aux recherches de l'histoire sociale et religieuse sur le rôle des nombreuses communautés immigrées à l'intérieur de l'Eglise Américaine et sur le processus d'identité nationale.

## Religion and ethnicity in Canadian historiography

At first glance, the relationship between religion and ethnicity seems to be a well recognized issue in Canadian historiography. Even if one thinks only of European immigrants, the obvious interaction between national origins and religious affiliation among groups such as French Canadians, Ukrainians, Mennonites, and Irish Catholics appears certain to have attracted abundant scholarly attention. Indeed, there is a significant body of literature dealing with the role of religion among Canada's various ethnic groups, some of it recent and very illuminating.<sup>1</sup>

The problem, however, is that the work of Canadian historians on religion and ethnicity is too narrowly focused. Most of it concentrates on ethnic identification and ethnic rivalries, primarily in relation to the evolution and control of ecclesiastical institutions. By restricting itself to the institutional development of individual ethno-religious communities, it fails to seek out the hidden but deeper springs which connect religion with ethnicity. There is a pressing need to get beyond the purely descriptive level to a more fundamental understanding of collective identity. Such an effort has to be rooted in a broader understanding of religion and religious phenomena, one that sees religion not merely as attachment to an ecclesiastical institution but also as an interpretation of life and as a way of investing experience with meaning. We need to know, therefore, how religious ideas provided immigrant groups with theological explanations for their break with past; how religious symbols furnished a sense of order in times of dislocation and of hope in the face of an uncertain future; how religious institutions provided an organizational framework in which group formation could occur; how religious rituals fostered and promoted a spirit of communal solidarity; and how ethical principles guided people in their adjustment to a new environment.<sup>2</sup>

This paper is intended as a first step toward realizing this agenda. It begins with some general observations on both religion and ethnicity. It then identifies

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the successive volumes in *The McGill-Queen's Studies in Ethnic History*, edited by DONALD HARMAN AKENSON, as well as the items in the Canadian Historical Association's pamphlet series *Canada's Ethnic Groups*, edited by P.A. BUCKNER.

<sup>2</sup> For comments on some of these same themes in the American context, see TIMOTHY L. SMITH, *Religion and Ethnicity in America*, «American Historical Review», 83, 1978, pp. 1155-1185.

six basic questions which must be addressed, citing examples from Canadian historiography which go part way toward answering them. It is more concerned with the avenues of inquiry which these works open up than with their specific conclusions. If some of the examples seem rather dated, this will underscore the urgent need for further research.

As a definition of ethnicity, one may accept the standard view that it is involuntary membership in a group which is bound together by common history, language, religion, and culture or by a combination of these factors. There are, however, two further points which must be added to this. First, while ethnic communities form a sub-group within a larger society, there is no reason why the label "ethnic" should be reserved for minorities. Ethnic minorities are clearly subject to special pressures, and these pressures heighten their awareness of their group identity. But whenever a community develops a unique sense of peoplehood, one may speak legitimately of "ethnic consciousness". In what follows, therefore, the term ethnic is applied to the dominant English-speaking Protestant population of Canada as well as to minorities. Second, it is important not to equate ethnicity with a mere clinging to the past. Among ethnic groups, there is always a tension between tradition and reorientation. Religious and cultural heritage play a crucial part, but they tend to be mobilized in the face of changing circumstances. Consequently, we must be prepared to see evidence not only of ethnic persistence but also of adaptation. In the process of emigration, ethnic self-definition often undergoes a change.

As for religion, the key point is to think of it as more than a pattern of denominational affiliations. Religious beliefs and practices are grounded ultimately in an interpretation of life. If we really want to lay hold of religion's impact upon group consciousness, we have to come to terms with this fact. Canadian historians, however, have been rather slow to address the issue on this level. William Westfall is one of the few exceptions that proves the rule. In his study of the Protestant culture of nineteenth century Ontario,<sup>3</sup> he insists that religion is a way of ordering experience, of investing it with meaning, of establishing and protecting common values, and of coping with social change. This allows him to clarify the relationship between religion and culture in a way that more superficial conceptions of religion cannot hope to do. His example, is well worth following.

### 1 - *Religion and the understanding of Canadian origins*

That much being said, one can now identify a series of related questions which provide a framework for further discussion. The first is how and to what extent religion has influenced the understanding of origins among Canada's ethnic groups. To appreciate the importance of this issue, we need only think of the example of French Canadians. One of the best known facts about French

<sup>3</sup> WILLIAM WESTFALL, *Two Worlds: the Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario*. Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.

Canadian ethnicity is that it long hinged on an idealized interpretation of the past. This interpretation, moreover, can be traced to the period after 1840, when French Canadian survival was threatened by the provisions of the Durham Report. In response to the threat, a French Canadian historical movement grew up, whose underlying purpose was to fortify identity by heightening awareness of the French Canadian heritage. A heroic conception of New France took shape, which in some cases meant emphasizing the spiritual motives for French colonization.

One of the most illuminating studies of this development is a 1973 article by Louis Rousseau on the French Sulpician Etienne-Michel Faillon.<sup>4</sup> Faillon was among those historians who interpreted the origins of New France in terms of a divinely ordained mission. This mission, according to him, was to extend the boundaries of the Catholic Church to the wilds of North America and in this way serve the salvation of mankind. Like his great contemporary F.X. Garneau, Faillon believed that the destiny of New France could be achieved only by means of a constant struggle. In his view, however, the struggle was between those (the men of religion) who desired the salvation of souls and those (mostly merchants) who sought material rewards. That the mission had succeeded in spite of dire obstacles confirmed its providential character.

What Rousseau was able to do was relate Faillon's historiography to the phenomenology of religion. Drawing on the ideas of Roland Barthes and T. H. Gaster, he showed that Faillon's interpretation of French Canadian origins conformed to the formal characteristics of a myth. First, it is a recurrent narrative, and one which has its counterpart in a festive ritual – namely, S. Jean Baptiste Day. Secondly, the actors in the story are presented as extraordinary personages, either heroes or saints. Thirdly, the narrative recounts the bringing into existence of a new reality, in this case a new people. Finally, this new reality is grounded in the eternal, unalterable order of things.

Rousseau added that Faillon's work was not an isolated case. Together with other historical and literary productions of the period, it marked the beginnings of a national tradition. In fact, Rousseau argued that French Canadians fashioned for themselves something like a civil religion, broadly analogous to that which grew up among Americans. Whereas the purpose of civil religion in the United States was to bind together people of diverse origins, its function in Quebec was to give a sense of direction to a particular ethnic group in the throes of an internal crisis.

This notion of reorientation in the midst of crisis suggests a comparison with English Canada. In the work that George Rawlyk and Gordon Stewart did on the Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia,<sup>5</sup> we find another successful attempt to clarify the relationship between religion and group identity. Rawlyk and Stewart ex-

<sup>4</sup> LOUIS ROUSSEAU, *La Naissance du Récit mythique des Origines quebecoises*, in PETER SLATER, ed., *Religion and Culture in Canada/Religion et Culture au Canada*. Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, pp. 43-64.

<sup>5</sup> GORDON STEWART, GEORGE RAWLYK, *A People Highly Favoured of God: the Nova Scotia Yankees and the American Revolution*. Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1972.

plained how, in the midst of the American Revolution, this marginalized and somewhat despised group drew on religious sources to legitimize their behaviour and redefine their place in the world.

From the time of their resettlement, the Nova Scotia Yankees had seen their emigration to British North America in religious terms. Initially, however, this meant interpreting it as part of God's providential plan for America: they would carry the Protestant Gospel into a land hitherto under the dark spell of popery. But after their departure from New England in the 1750s and 60s, their relatives and former neighbours became caught up in the tide of revolutionary ideas and politics. The Planters missed this great transformation in American thought. And as residents of a British military stronghold, they were unable to join in the struggle for independence. This, more than the actual migration, produced a feeling of being cut off from their roots and threw them into a state of confusion. The Nova Scotia Great Awakening, led by the revivalist Henry Alline, began in the midst of this crisis. Alline's message offered not only the consolation of religion in a time of acute anxiety but also an alternative interpretation of events which legitimized and even sanctified neutrality.

While American preachers tended to interpret the Revolutionary War as a holy crusade for liberty, Alline told his followers that it was a scourge, inflicted on New England by God as a punishment for its sins. The Nova Scotia Yankees, he declared, had been providentially spared the punishment by their timely emigration. This escape from wrath, together with the gift of a spiritual awakening, were signs of God's favour and marked them off as a chosen people. Their mission was not simply to carry Protestant Christianity to a remote region but to keep alive, in the land that God had shown them, the faith now forsaken at home. One can hardly think of a clearer case where a theological reformulation made possible a redefinition of identity. The Planters had ceased to be Americans and had become Nova Scotians. In the process, they had been transformed from "a backward off-shoot of New England" into a "people with a unique history, a distinct identity and special destiny".<sup>6</sup>

These two examples – one drawn from French, the other from English Canada – illustrate the value of inquiring into the religious interpretation of origins. In one case, we see the function of a "foundation myth" in defining ethnic consciousness. In the other we observe how an inherited sense of mission, reinterpreted with the help of Biblical themes and metaphors, transformed identity. Features common to both are the increase in collective self-esteem and the discovery of a new sense of purpose. Religion not only provides ethnic groups with a framework of meaning for their common memories; it also furnishes them with a perspective on the future.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.



The close relationship between these two phenomena leads us to our second question: to what extent has religion influenced ethnic awareness through the notion of a divine calling? We may begin to answer this by turning once again to the example of French Canadians. For those who saw the history of New France as the work of heroes and saints struggling against all odds for the salvation of souls, it was a relatively easy step to imagine that French Canadians were destined to continue this mission after the Conquest. In this way the Conquest became, not simply a national disaster, but the beginning of a new phase in an ongoing spiritual assignment. French Canada's vocation was to keep alive the moral values of Latin Christianity in the midst of Anglo-Saxon materialism. Closely associated with this vision was the supporting myth that New France had been an agricultural and clerical society. The "survival" into the twentieth century of this simple and innocent way of life was a providential guarantee of French Canada's mission.

The notion of an apostolic witness for French Canada and the philosophy of agriculturalism are too well known to belabour. They provide an avenue, however, into the broader question of ethnic identity and religious vocation. We should inquire whether other peoples in Canada have relied on this theme to strengthen group cohesion. For example, have sectarian immigrants, such as Mennonites and Doukhobors, seen themselves as faithful remnants of older communities, charged with keeping the faith alive in a new setting? Have Irish Catholics, dispersed throughout the English-speaking world, seen themselves as part of an expanding spiritual empire? Have evangelical Protestants identified the moral reform of society with the spread of a superior civilization? In the last case, at least, the answer is clearly yes. The crusading quality of nineteenth-century Protestants, and their close association of Christian values with British culture, suggests a clear analogy with their French Canadian counterparts. They even identified as one of their principal goals the restraint of North American materialism. What distinguishes Protestants, however, is the influence of millennialism. Whereas the French Catholic apostolate was fuelled by an idealized view of the past, Protestants were driven by the vision of a glorious future.

Protestant millennialism reached its apogee in Canada with the opening of the West. The colonization of this vast hinterland seemed to hold out the prospect of extending the Kingdom of God from sea to sea. For many people, it also promised a better future, a future grounded in faith and guaranteed by providence. In a collection of essays on this topic, Benjamin G. Smillie tried to show how the image of a New Jerusalem heightened and supported this optimism.<sup>7</sup> His attempt met with only limited success, largely because he used a concept dear to evangelical Protestants as a key to the experience of all settlers. Nevertheless, Smillie was very much on the right track in stressing the importance

<sup>7</sup> BENJAMIN G. SMILLIE, ed., *Visions of the New Jerusalem: Religious Settlement on the Prairies*. Edmonton, NeWest Press, 1983.

of religious metaphors to collective self-understanding. For some settlers, though not all, the vision of a New Jerusalem did serve as a powerful symbolic focus.

### 3 - *Immigration and the strengthening or weakening of religious commitment*

A third question which we must ask is whether the experience of resettlement strengthened or weakened religious commitment. The Canadian literature is surprisingly silent on this issue, perhaps because most people assume that emigration and the trauma of having to adjust to a new cultural milieu causes people to cling to familiar religious customs. While the experience of uprooting may strengthen emotional attachment to one's religious heritage, however, it also weakens the institutional structures which reinforce religious commitment. Immigrants often find themselves without churches and without clergy of their own language or rite. It would be worth inquiring whether in some cases this hiatus in organized religious life removed the last support from a faith that was already faltering in the old country.

The Churches have certainly seen emigration as a danger to faith, and they have adopted a variety of institutional strategies to respond to the threat. Two such strategies can be identified as especially important in Canada. One is the system, used notably by Irish Catholics, of creating under the auspices of the Church an entire network of social institutions. This network offered a mirror image of, and a comprehensive alternative to, the institutions of the dominant culture. The most exhaustive treatment of this pattern is Murray Nicolson's work on the Diocese of Toronto.<sup>8</sup> While Nicolson makes some questionable assumptions about the character of the Irish population, he nevertheless traces, in great detail, the emergence of an interlocking system of charitable, social, and educational institutions which addressed the spiritual and temporal needs of Catholic immigrants from cradle to grave. This system was explicitly intended to safeguard Catholics from loss of faith; and inasmuch as Catholicism in English Canada was an overwhelmingly Irish affair, it acted simultaneously as a vehicle of ethnic persistence. By no means unique to Toronto, it can be observed in every major diocese in the country.

The other system for maintaining ethnic identity through separate institutions is the colony approach used by sectarian groups. Mennonites, Doukhobors, and Hutterites have all adopted variations of this method, by living in agricultural settlements, to a greater or lesser degree isolated from the rest of society. In these cultural enclaves, religion is or was so closely associated with ethnicity that secular aspects of life sometimes took on a sacred character. This was true, for example, of the cultivation of the land and of the use of traditional languages.

<sup>8</sup> MURRAY W. NICOLSON, *The Catholic Church and the Irish in Victorian Toronto*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Guelph, 1981. See also, NICOLSON, *Irish Tridentine Catholicism in Victorian Toronto: Vessel for Ethno-Religious Persistence*, Canadian Catholic Historical Association «Study Sessions», 50, 1983, pp. 415-436; and NICOLSON, *The Irish Catholics and Social Work in Toronto 1850-1900*, «Studies in History and Politics», I, 1980, pp. 29-54.

Pacifism, the refusal or reluctance to participate in politics, the maintenance of separate schools, and, in the case of the Hutterites, a communal economy, have all served as additional barriers against assimilation. This isolation, though expressed in institutional terms, was grounded ultimately in theology. The radical ecclesiology of the Anabaptist tradition, viewing the Church as a voluntary community of saints, drew a sharp line between believers and the sinful world, thus justifying withdrawal from the mainstream of society.

Among the Mennonites, however, important changes have been occurring since 1948. Growing numbers of Mennonites have been moving to the cities and into mainstream occupations. Since urban life makes even relative isolation a practical impossibility, there has been a shift away from the colony approach toward the formation of social networks. Leo Driedger has studied this adjustment.<sup>9</sup> The effects, in his view, are mainly beneficial, if only because urbanized Mennonites are forced to rely on the Bible and the believers' church (that is, on genuinely religious criteria), rather than on land, language, and culture, to define themselves. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Driedger does not believe that urbanization by itself leads to assimilation. According to him, the crucial factor in maintaining ethnic identity is the strength of institutional support.<sup>10</sup> The more a group establishes its own churches, publications, welfare institutions, and voluntary agencies the more it retains its distinctive character. Since Mennonites have achieved this sort of "institutional completeness", they are distinguished from typical city-dwellers by the persistence of their group identity.

While religious institutions have received ample attention from Canadian historians, the role of religious symbols in shaping collective identity has been badly neglected. Unless one counts works such as Smillie's anthology on the vision of the New Jerusalem – indeed, even if one *does* count them – there is very little written on this topic. Worthy of mention, however, is an interesting but as yet unpublished paper by Enrico Carlson-Cumbo.<sup>11</sup> The paper deals with Methodist missions among Southern Italians in Toronto from 1905 to 1925. These efforts at proselytization failed, according to Carlson-Cumbo, because the missionaries did not grasp how basic Catholicism was to the world-view of the immigrants. Noticing that Italian men attended Church infrequently and that they were often hostile to the Catholic clergy, the Methodists mistakenly assumed that they would be easy to convert. By failing to distinguish between official and unofficial Catholicism, they missed the fact that the popular, often superstitious, piety of the Mediterranean was basic to the immigrants' definition of reality. Symbolic gestures, devotion to saints, prayers of supplication, fear of the evil eye – all of these things were woven into the very fabric of life. They were reflected

<sup>9</sup> LEO DRIEDGER, *Mennonite Identity in Conflict*. Lewiston and Queenston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> LEO DRIEDGER, JACOB PETERS, *Ethnic Identity among Mennonite and Other Students of German Heritage*, in STEWART, CRYSDALE, LES WHEATCROFT, eds., *Religion and Society in Canada*. Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1976, pp. 449-461.

<sup>11</sup> ENRICO CARLSON-CUMBO, *Impediments to the Harvest: The Limitations of the Methodist Proselytization of Toronto's Italian Immigrants, 1905-1925*, unpublished paper.

in daily actions and in common speech. For the immigrants to abandon them, they would have had to relinquish the system of meaning on which they were based. In spite of their loose attachment to Catholic institutions, therefore, they resisted conversion, leaving the Methodists not only frustrated but somewhat baffled.

#### 4 – *Ethnic groups and change*

The discussion of ethnic persistence must be balanced by a fourth question – namely, how has religion among Canada's ethnic groups contributed to change. Like the function of religious symbols, this is a relatively neglected topic. To gain a little insight into the subject, however, one can stay for a minute with the example of Italians in Toronto. John Zucchi has advanced the theory that after going to Canada, Italian immigrants from diverse regions developed a broader, "national" identity.<sup>12</sup> One of the examples that he gives to support this claim comes from the realm of popular piety. On the one hand, he says, the immigrants used their religion as an anchor in the past – for example, by maintaining the cult of patron saints from their villages of origin. On the other hand, festivals associated with these saints were integrated into the life of the new ethnic parishes. Local customs became important annual rituals for the entire Italian population, and in this way helped to fashion a common Italian identity.

More instructive, perhaps, is Brian Clarke's treatment of Irish Catholics. Clarke extends to Toronto Emmet Larkin's theory about a "devotional revolution" in nineteenth-century Irish Catholicism.<sup>13</sup> Following the massive influx of refugees from the potato famine, he says, lay piety among Toronto's Irish Catholics was transformed by the popularization of new religious devotions, such as the rosary, Benediction, and the devotion of the Sacred Heart. Closely associated with the Ultramontane revival, and promoted by officially sanctioned confraternities, the new devotions bridged the previously wide gap between popular practice and clerical standards of conduct. Rates of religious observance rose dramatically. For the first time, the majority of Irish Catholics attended weekly Mass, made their Easter Duty, and met the other minimum requirements expected of "practising Catholics". This reform in popular piety, however, could not have occurred without a corresponding change in popular culture. What was at stake was really a transition from the peasant religion of Ireland to the canonical practices laid down by the Council of Trent. Conformity to official Catholicism demanded the regular performance of particular duties at specified times and places. Such regularity could not be achieved if the laity retained the

<sup>12</sup> JOHN ZUCCHI, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935*. Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.

<sup>13</sup> BRIAN P. CLARKE, *Piety, Nationalism, and Fraternity: The Rise of Irish Catholic Voluntary Associations in Toronto, 1850-1895*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1986.

traditional, erratic work-rhythms of the Irish countryside. The clergy therefore set out to instill among their people habits of sobriety, industry, and self-discipline. These were precisely the qualities required for a successful transition to urban, industrial life. Thus, Clarke contends, religious renewal was part of a broader adjustment on the part of an ethnic community to a new cultural milieu.

##### 5 – *Religious affiliation and economic sphere*

The fifth question to be addressed is related in some ways to the fourth. To what extent has religious affiliation in Canada accounted for different patterns of behaviour in the social and economic sphere. Have contrasting doctrines given rise to divergent values? And have these values led to discernible differences in conduct? In Nova Scotia, there is an old joke about the eastern portion of the province, settled by Scottish Catholics and Scottish Presbyterians. It asks how you can tell a Presbyterian from a Catholic village. The answer: In the Presbyterian villages the houses are painted.

The classic attempt to relate religion and ethnicity to economic life in Canada came from the pen of A.R.M. Lower. In a famous 1943 essay on "Two Ways of Life",<sup>14</sup> Lower claimed that the basic antithesis in Canadian life was between the opposing philosophies of French Canadian Catholics and English Canadian Protestants. Applying the Weber-Tawney thesis to Canada's charter populations, he argued that French Canadians, shaped by medieval Catholicism, were agrarian, socially-minded, insular, and cohesive, animated by a passionate love of the land and more concerned with family than with property and wealth. English Canadians, on the other hand, having been formed by the spirit of Calvinism, were commercial, individualistic, exploitive, and acquisitive, driven by thrift and industry and by the desire for material success. According to Lower, it was not simply a matter of two societies whose history and circumstances had led them along different paths. Rather, it was a question of two different world-views, and of fundamentally different conceptions of human existence. French Canadians, by preserving an essentially spiritual view of life, had kept alive a viable community built around enduring values. But English Canadians, who once saw prosperity as a sign of divine election, now pursued wealth for its own sake and recklessly exploited nature to satisfy their greed. If they retained any traces of a higher view of life, this came from Methodism, whose social gospel attempted to off-set the prevailing materialism. Even Methodists, however, had been largely corrupted by worldly success and had gone over to the acquisitive camp.

Lower's essay was a rather bold attempt, not only to link economic behaviour to religion, but to relate both to the broad sweep of Canadian life. The late Keith Clifford was perfectly justified in saying that it was one of three classic interpre-

<sup>14</sup> A.R.M. LOWER, *Two Ways of Life: The Primary Antithesis of Canadian History*, Canadian Historical Association «Report», 1943, pp. 5-18; reprinted in WELF H. HEICK, ed., *History and Myth: Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism*. Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, c. 1975.

tations of the place of religion in our national experience (the other two were those of E.H. Oliver and S.D. Clark).<sup>15</sup> The value of Lower's contribution was severely compromised, however, by his uncritical acceptance of the Weber thesis and by his willingness to indulge in ethnic stereotypes. The basic contrast between a dynamic commercial English Canada and a static agrarian Quebec was a commonplace idea. Lower's rendition of it, though favourable to French Canada, was really an inversion of an old anti-Catholic prejudice. In the long run, it owed more to his own disenchantment with the exploitive element in English Canadian culture, than it did to objective reality. Lower assumed rather than proved that Catholicism, with its other-worldly focus, fostered indifference among French Canadians to material progress.

The validity of such assumptions has since been called into question, notably by the work of William Ryan.<sup>16</sup> Ryan studied the role of the Church in the economic development of two key regions of Quebec during the period of rapid economic growth between 1896 and 1914. He found that the clergy, in spite of their supposedly agriculturalist philosophy, lent both their moral and practical support to plans for industrialization. Agriculturalism may have held sway among a small circle of intellectuals, but the bishops and curés were happy to promote economic growth so long as it was consistent with the preservation of faith and nationality. The great threat which they perceived came from mass emigration rather than industrialization, and they recognized that economic development at home might stem the flow of people to the United States. If the economic results that were achieved in Quebec were ultimately disappointing, the reasons for this are complex, and cannot be reduced to the influence of a supposedly Catholic outlook. Ryan does not deny that religious convictions can in some circumstances affect economic behaviour, but he rejects emphatically the notion that Catholicism is opposed to progress.

The waning influence of the Weber thesis has discouraged further attempts to trace particular economic attitudes to specific theological doctrines. A few attempts have been made, however, to approach the same basic issue from new angles. By far the most challenging of these new works is Donald Akenson's *Small Differences*.<sup>17</sup> Professor Akenson, who had already substantially revised our view of Irish immigration to Canada, turned his attention in this case to the question of social and economic differences between Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants. Not only does he show that the majority of Irish Canadians were Protestant rather than Catholic and farmers rather than members of the urban proletariat, but he also argues that the distinctions between the two segments of the Irish community were so negligible as to be insignificant. Whether one

<sup>15</sup> N. KEITH CLIFFORD, *Religion in Canada: a Historiographical Analysis*, «Church History» (1967), 38, 4, 1969, pp. 506-523.

<sup>16</sup> WILLIAM F. RYAN, *Economic Development and the Church in French Canada*, «Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations», (XXI), 3, July 1966, pp. 381-400; and RYAN, *The Clergy and Economic Growth in Quebec, 1896-1914*. Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1966.

<sup>17</sup> DONALD H. AKENSON, *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922*. Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.

examines their economic status, their occupational profile, their family structure, or even their sexual mores, what stands out is not the differences but the similarities between them. These findings challenge fundamentally the cultural determinism that has characterized Irish and Irish American historiography. In particular, they upset the assumption that there was a causal connection between Catholicism and economic backwardness. Akenson's account of the Irish converges at this point with Ryan's interpretation of Quebec.

The age-old image of destitute Catholic refugees huddling together in urban ghettos is a gross distortion of the facts. City-dwelling Irish Catholics were a subset, not the totality or even the majority, of the Irish immigrant population. Catholics were often as adaptable and successful as Protestants; when they were not, this was due not to religious ethos but to the effects of discrimination.

## 6 - *Religion and national unity*

The last question to be considered arises directly from the problem of national unity in Canada. To put it simply, have common religious beliefs and symbols helped to fashion a consensus in our diverse society? Or has religion proved a source of division? This is an issue on which there is a measure of disagreement. The balance of opinion, however, seems to be that religion has done more to divide than to unite Canadians.

On a practical level, for example, Robert Choquette has pointed out that for most of their history the Canadian Churches pursued profoundly ethnocentric policies.<sup>18</sup> This was manifested in at least three ways. First, by the determination of missionaries not only to convert but also to assimilate native peoples; second, by the English Protestant conviction that the only way to Canadianize immigrants was to turn them into WASPs; and, third, by the mutual distrust and indeed open hostility which has existed between Canada's francophone and anglophone Catholics. Divisions within the Canadian Catholic community are especially telling. For while one might have thought that the inclusion of nearly all French Canadians and a sizeable minority of English Canadians within the same denominational family would have enhanced national unity, it only exacerbated tensions. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth centuries, against a background of increasing conflict in the country as a whole, French and English Catholics hurled themselves into a series of bitter disputes over diocesan boundaries, episcopal appointments, and denominational education. The underlying issue was whether French-speaking Catholics would enjoy any rights, and French-speaking churchmen any authority, outside Quebec. Behind this, in turn, lay conflicting visions of Canada. One group saw it as a bi-lingual and bi-cultural society, the other as an essentially English-speaking nation, with a French-speaking "reservation" in Quebec.

<sup>18</sup> ROBERT CHOQUETTE, *Religion et rapports interculturels au Canada*, in WILLIAM WESTFALL, et al., eds., *Religion/Culture: Comparative Canadian Studies*. Ottawa, Association for Canadian Studies, n.d.

By the same token, more than one author has argued that on the symbolic level religion has also contributed little to Canadian unity. S.F. Wise sees a sharp contrast here between Canada and the United States, with its emphasis on the quest for religious liberty.<sup>19</sup> Whereas the experience of groups such as the Puritans became basic to American national feeling, Canada's religious history did not furnish the country with a unifying myth. Although Canadian ethnic groups indulged as freely as their American counterparts in providential interpretations of history, each one cultivated its own particular vision of the past and used it to reinforce its peculiar sense of identity. Consequently, the function of such "sacred histories" in Canada has been to emphasize and perpetuate divisions rather than rise above them.

John Grant seems essentially to agree with this point of view, although his interpretation is not quite so categorical as that of Wise.<sup>20</sup> While the Churches contributed little to Canadian identity in the sense of unique self-awareness, he claims, they did leave their stamp on the Canadian character. For example, both the evangelical Protestants and Ultramontane Catholics of the nineteenth century were determined to create a Christian society according to their own agendas. The contrast between their ideas led to polarization and conflict, but underneath the differences lay a common conviction that Canada had a special vocation. Its mission was defined either as preserving British values in North America or keeping alive the spiritual vision of French Catholicism. Grant believes that this same sense of vocation was later reflected in such unifying ideas as the notion that Canada had a unique peace-keeping role in the world, or that it had the responsibility of offering a humane alternative to the materialistic society of the United States.

Be that as it may, the only religio-ethnic constituency in Canada that ever pretended to articulate a truly national ideology was the English-speaking Protestant majority. Having achieved a consensus among themselves in the late Victorian era, they set out to reform Canadian society according to evangelical ideals. But as a rallying-point for the nation, their programme was fatally flawed. By its narrow Protestantism and its close identification of Christianity with British culture, it excluded anyone not willing to be assimilated. As Keith Clifford showed, it collapsed in the face of large-scale immigration to the West.<sup>21</sup> Confronted with immigrants who were not of British origin and in some cases not Christian, the Protestant Churches responded in one of two ways. Either they lobbied for restrictions on the admission of such groups; or they attempted, through aggressive missionary campaigns, to convert and Canadianize them. As one spokesman for the evangelical cause said: it is not enough for the immigrants

<sup>19</sup> S.F. WISE, *God's Peculiar Peoples*, in W.L. MORTON, ed., *The Shield of Achilles/Le Bouclier d'Achille* Toronto, McLelland and Stewart, 1968, pp. 36-59.

<sup>20</sup> JOHN WEBSTER GRANT, *Religion and the Quest for a National Identity: the Background in Canadian History*, in PETER SLATER, ed., *Religion and Culture in Canada/Religion et Culture au Canada*. Waterloo, Ont., Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, c. 1977.

<sup>21</sup> N. KEITH CLIFFORD, *His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis*, «Studies in Religion», II, Spring 1973, pp. 315-326.



to adopt our language and customs, they must also embrace our moral standards and our deepest ideals. The immigrants vigorously resisted this assault on their ways of life. And gradually, even the Protestant Churches came to see that so narrow a conception of the Lord's Dominion could not prove viable in a multicultural society.

Clifford dates the beginning of a more open-minded approach from approximately 1930. This was partly due to the impact on the Canadian Churches of neo-Orthodox theology, which questioned the underlying assumptions of "culture Protestantism". As the twentieth century unfolded, ecumenism also began to make its influence felt. The old sectarianism and ethnocentrism gave way to a new mutuality and tolerance. Especially after 1965, as the provisions of the Second Vatican Council were implemented, Roman Catholics and Protestants established ties based on mutual respect and a sense of common purpose. Unfortunately, growing religious harmony has not translated into greater political unity. Both Ramsay Cook and Claude Ryan have observed that as relations between the Churches have improved, those between Canada's major linguistic groups have deteriorated to the point of crisis.<sup>22</sup> Ethnicity, once so closely identified with religion, is now harnessed to other forces. If ever the Canadian Churches had the capacity to fashion a national cult, that moment has passed. Multiculturalism on the one hand and secularization on the other have altered their position in Canadian society irreversibly. What remains for them is not a cultic but at most a prophetic role, as belated spokesmen for tolerance and mutual respect.

Still, the scholarly incentives for examining the historical connections between religion and ethnicity are strong even in a secular age. Inasmuch as religion has been a force in shaping the Canadian national consciousness, the study of its impact is essential to self-understanding. This study, moreover, will necessarily be more fruitful if it is conducted in a comparative framework. The example of other multi-ethnic societies will suggest lines of inquiry that have so far not been explored in Canada, and at the same time allow us to focus more clearly on the genuinely unique features of the Canadian experience.

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<sup>22</sup> RAMSAY COOK, *Protestant Lion, Catholic Lamb*, and CLAUDE RYAN, *Religion vs. Nationalism*, in PHILIP LEBLANC, ARNOLD EDINBOROUGH, eds., *One Church, Two Nations?* Don Mills, Ont., Longmans, 1968, pp. 3-7 and pp. 8-15.

## **Summary**

By restricting themselves to the institutional development of individual ethno-religious communities, Canadian historians fail to seek out the springs which connect religion with ethnicity. There is a pressing need to get beyond the descriptive level to a more fundamental understanding of collective identity. We need to know, therefore, how religious ideas provided immigrant groups with theological explanations for their break with the past.

## **Résumé**

En se limitant au développement institutionnel des seules communautés ethno-religieuses, les historiens canadiens négligent ommettent de rechercher les mécanismes qui lient religion et ethnicité. Il y a une nécessité urgente d'aller au delà du modèle descriptif jusqu'à une compréhension plus fondamentale de l'identité collective. Nous avons besoin de connaître comment les idées religieuses fournirent aux groupes immigrés des justifications théologiques pour leur rupture avec le passé.

# Fede e patria: the "Italica Gens" in the United States and Canada, 1908-1936.

## Notes for the history of an emigration association

### 1. *Founding of the "Italica Gens"*

The First Congress of Overseas Italians was held in Rome in October 1908. Convened by the Istituto Coloniale, the Congress wanted to discuss national migration policies and, from the viewpoint of Catholics, it was aimed at excluding Catholic organizations from receiving State support for their projects of emigration assistance and for their schools abroad. Although no official invitation was extended to them, 14 delegates of the "National Association To Assist Italian Missionaries" (Associazione nazionale per soccorrere i missionari italiani - ANSMI) participated in the Congress. The Association was formed by upper-middle class Italian Catholics open to collaboration with the Government of Italy notwithstanding the rift caused by the Roman Question that pitched the Vatican against the new Kingdom of Italy. A compromise had been worked out by the ANSMI's General Secretary, egyptology professor, advocate of reconciliation between Church and State and future senator Ernesto Schiaparelli (1856-1928).<sup>1</sup>

Emigration became a topic of heated discussion. "When every day we see masses of poor people, that misery pushes out of the fatherland, sail for distant shores, as for example from the port of Genoa; when we think that most of them will often become indeed flesh sold to the exploiters of the countries where they go, out of natural compassion the mind moves quickly to find ways for adequate provisions through regulation, direction and protection".<sup>2</sup>

A combination of political forces and representatives of private initiatives pledged cooperation for the cause of the migrants. Praised were the pioneer missionary efforts of Bishops Scalabrini and Bonomelli for Italian workers in the Americas and in Europe. The socialist deputy Cabrini was particularly conciliatory toward clerical participants. The National Association for the Assistance to

<sup>1</sup> VITTORE PISANI, *Ernesto Schiaparelli e il suo apostolato di fede cristiana e d'italianità*. Roma, Tip. Cuggiani, 1929, p. 39. AGCS, Carte Pisani, *Il Prof. E. Schiaparelli e l'assistenza all'Emigrazione italiana*. A 24 typed page conference of Archbishop Pietro Pisani commemorating Schiaparelli. Cfr. also, «La Civiltà Cattolica», (79), I, 1928, 462-64.

<sup>2</sup> ARMINIO G. MALLARINI, *Il Primo Congresso degli Italiani all'Estero*, «Le Missioni Cattoliche Italiane», XIII, 1, gennaio 1909, pp. 28-30.

Italian Catholic Missionaries presented its noble ideals of *Fede e Patria*, faith and fatherland. In fact, its representatives at the Rome Congress came to the conclusion that the Association, in line with its By-laws, had "to do a similar action for emigrants across the oceans to that it had undertaken for those in the Middle East, i.e. the promotion among the many Italian missions presently at work in the Americas of a unified activity and of a fully shared agreement on objectives. These objectives would be mainly directed to the social and religious assistance of Italian emigrants".<sup>3</sup>

The proposal formulated in the context of the Congress was accepted by the Governing Board of the Association. Behind the scene, Schiaparelli had prepared the birth of a new organization in the area of assistance to the continuing massive emigration toward the Americas, a new field where he would deploy his incredible energy and his vision of *italianità*. The events of the Congress remained impressed in the mind of the fighting priest of the emigrants at the port of Genoa, Fr. Pietro Maldotti, who recalled in 1936: "At the Congress, an exclusive initiative of Masons, (Schiaparelli) wanted me too to participate. I remember it was I who in a session, after seeing the unashamed arrogance of the Green Sect, made a motion in opposition, raising hell. This attracted from the other sessions our delegates, led by Schiaparelli, who stood at my side, vigorously defending my thesis, that ended up by winning. A practical follow up of that fight was the birth of that new daughter of the Association, for which I myself was charged to find a battle name. It was *Italica Gens*, a name that from the daughter now dead and buried has officially passed on to the glorious mother".<sup>4</sup>

The victory guaranteed to all associations concerned with emigrant assistance and support of Italian culture abroad freedom of action and access to the moral and financial support of the Government with the only condition they would give assurance of *italianità*. The Statutes of ANSMI expressed exactly the same orientation. Since 1887 they had mandated the membership of the Association "...to keep alive, together with the faith, love for the fatherland in the numerous Italians living in distant regions".<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ERMENIA PIANO, *Memorie e documenti per una storia dell'Associazione Nazionale per Soccorrere i Missionari Cattolici Italiani, 1884-1928*. Unpublished Ms. in the Archives of the ANSMI, p. 200. For a review of ANSMI's concern with emigration, cfr. *Le vicende delle Missioni Italiane negli ultimi cinquant'anni*, «Le Missioni Cattoliche Italiane», IV, 1, gennaio-giugno 1900, pp. 4-13; *Ibid.*, *Atti del Comitato Centrale*, pp. 30-34 where this official bulletin of ANSMI reports the founding and the By-laws of the Work for the Assistance to Italian Workers Abroad (*Opera Bonomelli*).

<sup>4</sup> ANSMI, Rev. Pietro Maldotti to E. Piano, Genoa, December 22, 1936. Father Maldotti, sent to the port of Genoa by Bishop J.B. Scalabrini in 1894 to assist and defend departing immigrants, had a long association with Schiaparelli and the *Italica Gens*, under whose name he came to function. A fighting priest, he became a legend at the port and even accompanied the immigrants in their voyages to Brazil. Cfr. P. MALDOTTI, *Gli Italiani al Brasile*, in ESPOSIZIONE GENERALE ITALIANA-ESPOSIZIONE DELLE MISSIONI, *Gli Italiani all'Estero: Emigrazione, Commerci, Missioni*. Torino, Tip. Roux Frassati e Co., 1899, pp. 41-55.

<sup>5</sup> ANSMI, Pos. 21\A Presidenza, *Statutes of the Association with the revisions of Sept. 6, 1891*.

For Catholics interested in bridging the gap between Church and State existing since the unification of Italy in 1861 and the take over of the Papal States, emigration was an opportunity for participation in public life and national political action. In fact, as General Secretary of the *Opera Bonomelli*, Schiaparelli had already engaged the Italian Government to enact legislation and he had developed specific initiatives for the protection of immigrants that anticipated some of the social measures States would eventually provide for the working classes, in particular for the protection of children exploited in factories.<sup>6</sup>

He was the soul of the *Opera Bonomelli* and of its organization and growth, but had to resign his position of General Secretary and with it his direct involvement with emigration.<sup>7</sup>

The Work of Assistance to Italian Workers in Europe (*Opera Bonomelli*) opted for its independence from the ANSMI.

Schiaparelli invited Pisani to go to Milan and check if he should stay on as Secretary of the Opera or if he should go, "my keen desire, since I am tired of all the constant hurts that it gives me".<sup>8</sup> Pisani had also been the recipient of an earlier letter of June 1907 from Bishop Bonomelli where the same difficulties emerge from another perspective: "In Milan there has been a meeting with Schiaparelli, but with very little fruit. Spirits are offended and things are turning bad; I fear greatly. That brave, tireless, admirable Schiaparelli, so necessary to the Opera, doesn't get along with the Milanese: he is a little stubborn, too stubborn and in some things he should be more yielding. I am trying to make them friends again, but with little hope of success".<sup>9</sup>

With the parting of the ways becoming unavoidable, Schiaparelli directs his and ANSMI's migration concern toward the Americas. He, however, remains in friendly terms with Bishop Bonomelli, who remembers him always and "sees with joy his untiring activity developing wherever possible America...".<sup>10</sup>

The crisis that led to Schiaparelli's resignation fits into a background of political and religious conflicts, of the differences among personalities and policies of the *Opera Bonomelli* for Italian Workers in Europe, of the *Italica Gens* for Assistance to Italians in the Americas, of the Holy See and the Italian

<sup>6</sup> GIANFAUSTO ROSOLI, *L'emigrazione italiana in Europa e l'Opera Bonomelli (1900-1914)*, in B. BEZZA (ed.), *Gli italiani fuori d'Italia*. Milano, Franco Angeli, 1983, pp. 163-201. ORNELLA CONFESSORE, *L'Associazione Nazionale per Soccorrere i Missionari Cattolici Italiani, tra spinte "civilizzatrici" e interesse migratorio (1887-1908)*, in GIANFAUSTO ROSOLI (ed.), *Scalabrini tra vecchio e nuovo mondo: Atti del Convegno Storico Internazionale (Piacenza, 3-5 dicembre 1987)*. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1989, pp. 519-536. In the same volume, cf. G. ROSOLI, *Scalabrini e Bonomelli: due pastori degli emigranti*.

<sup>7</sup> The reasons for Schiaparelli's resignation seems to be the conflict with the Milan Committee of the Association "that wanted to dominate and show off by highlighting its special projects, while Schiaparelli was inflexible in wanting unity, uniformity of administration and discipline" and was incapable of flattering anyone, according to his old admirer Don Bottassi. ANSMI, Rev. Giuseppe Bottassi to E. Piano, Mondovì, March 3, 1936.

<sup>8</sup> ANSMI, Ernesto Schiaparelli to Pietro Pisani, Turin, September 3, 1907.

<sup>9</sup> ANSMI, Bishop Geremia Bonomelli to rev. Pietro Pisani, Cremona, June 24, 1907 (copy).

<sup>10</sup> ANSMI, Geremia Bonomelli to E. Schiaparelli, Cremona, January 25, 1914.

Government in the area of emigration which have already been partially explored by historians dealing with the period of mass emigration from Italy at the turn of the century and with the Italian Catholic Movement.<sup>11</sup>

Limited attention has been given to the North American side of *Italica Gens* and Schiaparelli's personal interest in emigration work, an effort that continues previous social assistance action on the part of Italian Catholics faced with an unprecedented exodus of peasants and their families. In particular, the *Italica Gens* follows and then absorbs the Italian St. Raphael's Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants started in New York by Fr. Pietro Bandini in 1891 as part of Bishop Scalabrini's comprehensive response to mass emigration.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Organization and goals of the "Italica Gens"

Immediately after the launching of the idea of a new service for transoceanic migrants, Schiaparelli drafts a plan of action that is endorsed by President Bassi of ANSMI. Thus, in December 1908 the National Association to Assist Italian Catholic Missionaries sends out a circular letter announcing the Federation *Italica Gens* "for the protection of Italian emigrants and the defense of *italianità* in countries across the Ocean".<sup>13</sup>

As a Federation of already existing organizations for the care of immigrants, *Italica Gens* offers coordination while leaving complete autonomy. It hopes to become "the instrument of Providence to gather together and to coordinate well the action of all religious forces in connection with the desire and the hope of the late Bishop Scalabrini, who was the apostle and precursor of the cause of Italian overseas migrants" and to maintain a direct link with the Royal Commission of Emigration. It foresees as the mainstay of its work a Secretariat or social agency for immigrants, based in parishes or independent or even mobile, with a local committee of supporters and some correspondents and volunteers capable of helping the immigrants to find jobs, prepare documents, write letters for the illiterate, provide translations and legal, social security and health advice, send money to Italy and assist in case of work accidents. The establishment and support of schools where Italian language and culture could be taught was also a stated priority. On its part the new Federation would help its adherent

<sup>11</sup> GIANFAUSTO ROSOLI, *Movimento Cattolico ed Emigrazione*, in *Dizionario Storico del Movimento cattolico in Italia, 1869-1980*. Torino, Marietti, 1981, vol. 1/2, pp. 137-142. Id., *L' "Italica Gens" per l'assistenza all'emigrazione italiana d'oltreoceano, 1909-1920*, «Il Velcro», XXXIV, 1-2, gennaio-aprile, 1990, pp. 87-100. ORNELLA CONFESSORE, GLAUCO LICATA, *La "Rassegna Nazionale": conservatori e cattolici liberali italiani attraverso la loro rivista (1879-1915)*. Roma, Ed. Storia e Letteratura, 1968.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. EDWARD C. STIBILI, *The St. Raphael Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants, 1887-1923*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, History, University of Notre Dame, 1977. PIETRO BANDINI, *First Annual Report of St. Raphael's Italian Benevolent Society (July 1st, 1891 to June 30th, 1892)*. New York 1892, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> CARLO BASSI, *L'assistenza degli emigranti italiani nelle Americhe e la fondazione dell' "Italica Gens"*, Circular Letter. Turin, December 1908.

institutions "with all those material and moral means that would gradually become available". The parent organization, ANSMI, would give grants of its own, mediate for grants from the Royal Emigration Commissariat and other organizations, but without public charitable appeals. On the drawing board, the organization sounded impressive. On December 25, 1908, however, Schiaparelli writes to Don Pietro Pisani (1871-1960), a seminary teacher in Vercelli, familiar with migration problems and a key player both in articulating concern for the immigrants on the part of Italian Catholics and at the start of the *Italica Gens* for which he is charged with mustering adherents in Italy and abroad. Schiaparelli directs "...not to share the information with the American Bishops until we are in the position of announcing to them something more than good intentions..."<sup>14</sup>

In 1909 the *Italica Gens* General Secretariat takes shape in Turin. Pisani, for now Secretary to the General Secretariat, is sent to the United States and Canada until the Fall to organize local Secretariats, study the possibility of practical initiatives for the immigrants, write some reports for the Bulletin of the new Federation. The *Italica Gens* Bulletin begins its publication in January, 1910, and it reports in its first issue a list of institutions willing to establish Secretariats and offices of the Federation, 3 in Canada (Hamilton, Montreal and Ottawa) and 49 in the United States in localities from New York to San Francisco.<sup>15</sup>

The social and political concerns of the Federation parallel those of the parent organization, the ANSMI, and its initial structure reflects the same ambivalence of a lay leadership coordinating priests and sisters already coordinated by their dioceses and religious orders and engaged in a specifically religious mission. At the same time, *Italica Gens* sees religion beyond its sphere of competence and defines itself as mainly a social and nationalistic association, aconfessional and apolitical, interested only in needy immigrants.<sup>16</sup>

By the end of 1910 the first phase of recruitment of institutions is completed. There is positive and even enthusiastic acceptance of the objectives of *Italica Gens* in the correspondence exchanged. The founder of Tontitown, Arkansas, Fr. P. Bandini; Frances X. Cabrini founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart; the Salesians; the Scalabrinians; the founder of the Raphaelverein, Peter Paul Cahensly, all express their support. Two priests are directly dependent on the Federation, one of them Dr. Grivetti, assigned to start the regional Secretariat in New York, and measures are taken for a more effective support to the heroic

<sup>14</sup> ANSMI, Pos.30\O Autorità Ecclesiastiche. Pisani. E. Schiaparelli to P. Pisani, Luqsor, December 25, 1908 (copy). Pisani had been to New York City for the first time in 1907, as he states in his article, *L'emigrazione italiana nell'America del Nord*, «Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliarie», November, 1910, pp. 3-34. Cfr. MATTEO SANFILIPPO, *Monsignor Pisani e il Canada (1908-1913)*, «Annali Accademici Canadesi» (Ottawa), VI, 1990, pp. 61-75. Cfr. also, E. PIANO, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>15</sup> *L'italica Gens* (Federation for the assistance to overseas emigrants, founded and directed by the National Association for Italian Catholic Missionaries), «Italica Gens», I, 1, February 1910, pp. 3-22. In this same issue, PIETRO PISANI, *Un Pioniere della colonizzazione italiana negli Stati Uniti d'America*, pp. 31-37, where the goal of directing Italians into agriculture is restated.

<sup>16</sup> *L'italica Gens*. Circular Letter of December 1908.

assistance Fr. Maldotti already provides to thousand of emigrants leaving from the port of Genoa while a similar service is planned for Naples and Palermo.<sup>17</sup>

As a social strategist, Schiaparelli laid out a careful and comprehensive plan, an ideal of what assistance to migrants should have been and an inspiration for the hundreds of priests and sisters who, in fact, were carrying out that assistance. The implementation of the plan, to the extent that it was achieved, appears extraordinary. Schiaparelli, General Secretary of the ANSMI and of the *Italica Gens*, operated from a tiny office at the Egyptian Museum in Turin, of which he was director, and spent much of his time in archeological diggings in Egypt and as a professor at the University of Turin. In 1911 there was the formal openings of the Naples Secretariat to assist emigrants destined especially to North America and of the hospice for women and children, who because of illness and other misfortunes could not leave. At the same time, were inaugurated the new offices, after 17 years of work, of the Genoa port Secretariat. On both occasions, Schiaparelli could see Bishops and Government officials brought together by, and cooperating on a major national issue such as migration. In the meantime, Carlo Bassi, President of ANSMI, could report to the Concistorial Congregation, as he had been requested by Cardinal De Lai, Prefect of this Congregation, on the results obtained from 1908 to the end of 1912. The governing structure of *Italica Gens* was in place headed by a decision making body, the Council of the Presidency, formed by the President, the General Secretary, the Treasurer of ANSMI and by the Director of the General Secretariat of the *Italica Gens*, and by an advisory body, the Central Council, formed by the Council of the Presidency and five delegates of ANSMI and the representatives of religious orders and secular priests federated in the *Italica Gens*. In 1912 it had a budget of 100,000 lire. Besides the Genoa and Naples Secretariats, there were over 100 corresponding offices in Italy, 250 Secretariats and offices overseas without counting those in the Middle East, 3 regional Secretariats in New York, Chicago and New Orleans, over 100,000 immigration cases taken care in Italy and abroad, and the opportunity at hand of realizing a major goal of the *Italica Gens*, "concentrating Italian immigrants in Italian (rural) colonies with church, school and Italian priests".<sup>18</sup>

With the transfer of the Central Office from Turin to Rome in 1917, the organization of the *Italica Gens* had basically completed its growth and shifted its migration operations toward services within Italy itself: assistance to the Ansaldo workers in Val d'Aosta, to returning prisoners of war, to internal migrants and those leaving for America through the establishment in Rome of a Migrants House in 1921; political advocacy for Italian schools abroad through Schiaparelli's participation in a Government Commission for this purpose in 1922.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> ANSMI, Pos. 30\O. Schiaparelli to Pisani, Occhieppo, September 15, 1910; Schiaparelli to Pisani, Turin, June 18, 1910; July 6, 1910; July 25, 1910; Schiaparelli to Pisani, Gebelein (Egypt), February 17, 1910, where Schiaparelli expresses his hope that the *Italica Gens* in New York would do better than the St. Raphael's Society; Tutin, August 15 and September 7, 1910 (copies).

<sup>18</sup> ACSER, Fondo Concistoriale. Carlo Bassi to Cardinal De Lai, Turin, December 9, 1908.

<sup>19</sup> E. PIANO, *op. cit.*, pp. 286; 352-353; 356-375.



Once the new reorganization of the New York Secretariat ends up by the absorption of the *Italica Gens* in the centralized diocesan Catholic Charities, the Federation concludes its history. The new Statutes in 1936 substitute its name with that of the parent organization, the ANSMI, by now allied with the extreme nationalist policies of the Fascist regime and involved with schools and hospitals in the Middle East, but without a presence in the Americas.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. First steps in North America

The reason of existence of the *Italica Gens* was the assistance to overseas Italian immigrants through the encouragement of direct social action on their behalf and through the preservation of their national culture and identity. Schiaparelli, who had formulated the program, moved without hesitation toward its implementation by utilizing the contacts and resources of the ANSMI. Don Pietro Pisani had been using his summer vacations for years to study Italian emigration in Europe and in the Americas and in July 1908 had gone back to New York and for the first time to Montreal. In a detailed report published in the ANSMI's magazine, «Le missioni cattoliche Italiane», under the significant title, «For the Faith and the *Italianità* of Our Colonies in the Canadian Dominion», Pisani points out the major policies he sees necessary for an adequate action among the estimated 30 to 35 thousand Italian immigrants in this country. After visiting the Italian concentrations in Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Calgary, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Regina, listening to priests, local Bishops, the Apostolic Delegate, immigrants' leaders, he concludes that the pastoral care of the immigrants should be carried out by Italian priests and in Italian parishes.

Pisani makes a strong appeal for directing the immigrants into agricultural settlements and foresees that the Italians would grow in Canada and exercise a significant religious and civic influence. Since Religion and Nation are indissoluble, the immigrants, «a scattered populace, without a national soul and a name, wherever they don't gather around a priest of their country, in the shadow of the friendly Italian Church... which is the first and best school of a healthy *italianità*»,

<sup>20</sup> For a brief description of the activities of the *Italica Gens* during World War I and in the aftermath of the war, cf. *L'Italica Gens*, «Le Missioni Italiane», New Series, I, 1, February 1923, 18-23. In 1937 a brochure of the *Italica Gens* presents the new changes in the name and By-Laws. «In 1933, the Duce, to ensure a broader development to the Association and especially to allow it to always better adapt to the policies of the international action of the R. Government, appointed extraordinary Commissioner of the Association the Plenipotentiary Minister Piero Parini, who has given the Association a new constitution... The greater growth of the works of the Association came after the war, when in the years 1923 and following the Fascist Government entrusted to it the administration of numerous schools in Greece, Syria... With the new Statutes of the association it has added to its denomination the title of *Italica Gens*... fusion of spirits and wills for an ever more fervent good activity, in the name and under the sign of fascist Italy». The President and the Vice-President of the *Italica Gens*, National Association to Assist Italian Missionaries, are appointed now by the Government. The Government appoints also the governing board which, in 1937, includes also Archbishop P. Pisani.

lose their faith or become indifferent. Pisani sees as a moral and patriotic duty for Italy to assume a clear responsibility for its emigrants.<sup>21</sup>

The convergence of views of Pisani and Schiaparelli helps the latter's action in recruiting the priest to the cause of the *Italica Gens*. By the end of December 1908 Pisani sends a circular letter of the *Italica Gens* to his contacts in Canada and the United States and a few months later he becomes Secretary of the Central Secretariat of the *Italica Gens* in Turin.<sup>22</sup>

In this position, Pisani is sent by Schiaparelli to the United States in the summer 1909 for the purpose of studying the Italian communities and the practical initiatives that *Italica Gens* might undertake there and in Canada.<sup>23</sup>

Pisani returns to Italy in the Fall, but decides to work in the meantime for the *Opera Bonomelli* while accepting to serve as *Ispettore Viaggiante* or Traveling Inspector for the *Italica Gens* and undertaking a series of publications and conferences on the plight of the immigrants.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> PIETRO PISANI, *Per la Fede e l'Italianità delle nostre colonie nel Dominio canadese*, «Le Missioni Cattoliche Italiane», XIII, 1, January, 1909, pp. 20-25; *Id.*, *Gli Italiani al Canada*, «Le Missioni Cattoliche Italiane», XIII, 3, July-September, 1909, pp. 33-46.

<sup>22</sup> ANSMI, Pos. 30V. E. Schiaparelli to P. Pisani, Rodah (Egypt), March 9, 1909. Pisani cooperates with Schiaparelli and the newly formed *Italica Gens*, but has already made up his mind to move on and in 1912 he accepts to head the migration office of the Concistorial Congregation in the Roman Curia. *Ibid.*, Schiaparelli to Pisani, Turin, December 7, 1909 (copy). M. SANFILIPPO, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Pisani writes to the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, D.C.: "As His Eminence the Secretary of State should have written you, it is my intention to visit the most important centers of Italian immigration in the United States for the purpose of organizing, where it is lacking, their social and religious assistance. Last year I visited for the same purpose Canada, introduced to Arch. Sbarretti by the Holy Father. The fruits obtained promise to be not inferior to the hopes we had". ASV, Delegazione Apostolica Stati Uniti d'America. X.595. Rev. Pietro Pisani to Arch. D. Falconio, *A Bord de la Lorraine*, August 22, 1909. Pisani signs as Secretary of the *Italica Gens*. He obtains, on the base of the letter of recommendation provided him by Card. Merry del Val, an introduction from the Apostolic Delegate to the American Bishops he would visit.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* Pisani to Falconio, Torino, Jan. 1, 1910, where he states that the monograph on the Italian colonies of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and San Francisco, "of which I have ready the study materials I personally gathered" is ready for publication. Pisani already foresees the critical role the Bishops would play. He adds: "The work we are about to undertake is enormous. However, as the St. Raphaelverein has succeeded, so we do not despair of success, if it will assist us, always favorable, the authority of the Bishops and the favor of the religious congregations, on which our best hopes are based". With his experience as a professor in the diocesan seminary of Vercelli, Pisani approaches the question of emigration in a systematic way by analyzing statistics and the behavior of the migrants, by proposing a series of solutions dealing both with the socio-political and religious situations affecting them. Cfr. *L'emigrazione italiana nei paesi transoceanici e l'assistenza religiosa agli emigrati*, a paper presented at the 1910 Berlin Conference promoted by the St. Raphaelverein for the protection of emigrants, in ASV, DelA-USA, X.595. Several articles by Pisani are found in the official Bulletin «*Italica Gens*» and in the «*Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali*». For ex., P. PISANI, *Gli Italiani nel Rhode Island*, «*Italica Gens*», I, 9-10, 1910, pp. 349-369; *Gli Italiani a Rochester (N.Y.)*, *Ibid.*, II, 1, 1911, pp. 25-31; *Ancora delle scuole parrocchiali negli Stati Uniti d'America. La Scuola del Buon Consiglio di Philadelphia*, *Ibid.*, I, 2, 1910, pp. 49-58. For the correspondence of Pisani with Giuseppe Toniolo on the publication of articles on emigration and related issues, see GIUSEPPE TONIOLO, *Lettere*, III, 1904-1918. Vatican City, Comitato Opera Omnia di G. Toniolo, 1953.

In the meantime, through his vast correspondence from Turin and Egypt, where he carries on his archeological excavations, Schiaparelli keeps weaving the network of *Italica Gens* and asks another missionary of the *Opera Bonomelli*, the Rev. Dr. Giuseppe Grivetti, active among the immigrants in Switzerland since 1901, to take on the task of establishing a Central Secretariat of the Federation in New York City. Grivetti arrives in the United States in September 1910. He meets there with Pisani, who for the third time is in North America as an envoy of Schiaparelli to consolidate contacts already made, initiate new ones and start the organizational structure of the *Italica Gens*, including the possibility of fund-raising. By the end of Summer 1910, Schiaparelli can inform Pisani in the United States that the Central Secretariat in New York will be paid for from Turin and to let Grivetti make the practical arrangements for the new office. Pisani and Grivetti appear as two different personalities.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, the lists of Secretariats of *Italica Gens* in Chicago, Providence, Philadelphia, Montreal and other cities where Pisani had passed and that are regularly presented at this time as active branches of the Federation are more the polite expression of encouragement of the parish priests working among Italian immigrants than newly organized social and corresponding Secretariats. With determination, however, Grivetti begins the American work of the *Italica Gens*. From his New York office, he sends a questionnaire to the Italian clergy introducing the new Federation of forces aiming at helping the immigrants in finding employment, at safeguarding them from any exploitation, and at preserving their faith. The social reality of the New World confronts immediately Grivetti who punctuates his correspondence with astute observations and quickly realizes the difficulties blocking a serious development of the Federation. While the American clergy has little sympathy for the Italian confreres, Grivetti notes that the Italian clergy has "the fear we want absorb other people's work and merits".<sup>26</sup>

There were promises made by Pisani of help for the Catholic newspaper «L'Italiano in America», for the Immigrant House of Philadelphia, for subsidies to the Italian parochial schools in Montreal and elsewhere, but little realistic possibility of keeping them.<sup>27</sup>

By the end of 1910, several parishes had given their formal adherence to *Italica Gens*, more as an expression of acceptance of an ideal and support of a

<sup>25</sup> In his first letter from New York Grivetti writes to Schiaparelli: "Pisani has already told me part of his work of networking through the United States and Canada: I will see at the test the effectiveness of his activity... Pisani is an enthusiast by nature while I am poles apart of poetry. In this country, everything confirms my pragmatism". ANSMI, *Italica Gens*. Ufficio di New York. Rev. G. Grivetti to E. Schiaparelli, New York, September 16, 1910.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Grivetti to Schiaparelli, New York, October 20, 1910. Cfr. G. GRIVETTI, *L'Italica Gens negli Stati Uniti e Canada al 31 dicembre 1910. Prima relazione del Segretariato Centrale di New York*, «*Italica Gens*», II, 4, 1911, pp. 145-169.

<sup>27</sup> As a free employment office, the *Italica Gens* could not compete with the New York environment: "The 'camarilla' of employment agencies is phenomenal and shameless here: everything is hoarded through the mighty dollar. The poor worker is to go through the Caudine Forks: disburse two dollars to the agent which are divided between the agent and the padrone or the boss himself who provides the job. It is well known that the employment agents hire the

symbol than the joining of an organization: 9 in New York, 4 in Pennsylvania, 2 each in Illinois and New Jersey, 1 each in Maryland, Michigan, Montreal and Ottawa, and none of these was able or willing to contribute any funds to the Central Secretariat, not even subscriptions to the Bulletin of the *Italica Gens*. Grivetti is skeptical about the Italian clergy working for the *Italica Gens*. "It is a nice dream to think of making the clergy work (for us)... All the beautiful words and promises made to Pisani are 'ubbie', a phantasy".<sup>28</sup>

The gap widens between the daily experience of Grivetti in the United States and the objectives of Schiaparelli in Turin. Schiaparelli assigns a budget of 35,000 franchi for all operations and salaries of the *Italica Gens* in the United States and Canada for 1911. Besides, he proposes a small weekly newspaper adapted to the needs of the uneducated immigrants and similar to «La Patria» of the *Opera Bonomelli* in Europe, "with a religious and moral character, but eminently Italian".<sup>29</sup>

*Italianità* was the primary goal of Schiaparelli, who corrects a proposed draft for the American incorporation of the *Italica Gens* by changing the formulation of its purpose prepared by Grivetti and which favored the naturalization of the immigrants. In erasing the reference to naturalization, Schiaparelli notes: "This is not in our objectives. It is something we suffer as a lesser evil".<sup>30</sup>

The other obvious hinge of Schiaparelli's policy, the active leadership of the laity, was also clashing with the American scene noted by Grivetti "...that not everyone in Italy knows how much the Italian clergy works in America and how, in the private sector, it is the only true and effective protector of the immigrant".<sup>31</sup>

The pattern of action of *Italica Gens* is basically settled after its first year of activity: advocacy of *italianità*, encouragement of a coordinated assistance to

unemployed and after a few weeks on the job they let him be dismissed to substitute him with another poor devil whom also they force to pay the two dollar commission. In this way the padroni avoid the agencies that ask no money that have nothing to offer to their rapacious greed". *Ibid.*, G. Grivetti to E. Schiaparelli, New York, November 25, 1910.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, G. Grivetti to E. Schiaparelli, New York, May 30, 1911. The emphasis on public relations hides somewhat the limits of the network of secretariats claimed by the *Italica Gens* in its official reports. The Secretary of the New York Secretariat, Father Crisci, observes that there is only a nominal difference between federated secretariats and corresponding offices. "When the *Italica Gens* was established in the United States, there were personal interviews with the majority of Italian pastors in the whole country. These, having promised they would cooperate with the *Italica Gens* for the welfare of ours, were listed as correspondents. Then, naturally, their acceptance remained purely nominal. In fact, I believe that of some so-called correspondents, we have not received any communication whatsoever in three years. Their names have been left on the list as a matter of courtesy. There have also been some which have displayed a certain activity, and other a great activity: these have been considered as secretariats federated with the *Italica Gens*. After all, as I have said, a precise line of distinction could not be established for certain...". ANSMI, Ufficio New Orleans. New York, Segretario (Crisci) to Rev. V. Scramuzza, August 19, 1913.

<sup>29</sup> ANSMI, Central New York Secretariat. E. Schiaparelli to G. Grivetti, Turin, December 28, 1910.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, E. Schiaparelli to G. Grivetti, December 26, 1911 (minute) and "Progetto di Statuto".

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Typed report, *L'Italica Gens negli Stati Uniti e Canada al 31 Dicembre 1910*, p. 2.

the immigrants, information services and linkage with Italy. The social work on behalf of the immigrants was carried out in the ethnic parishes and this dimension of their action was called for all practical purposes the *Italica Gens* Secretariat: placing of children in orphanages and sick in hospitals; providing legal assistance, recommendations for jobs; giving emergency aid; building schools for the education of the immigrants' children; care for the victims of mine disasters and job accidents; facilitating the return to Italy of indigent cases.

With his persistence, Schiaparelli follows all the activities of *Italica Gens* in North and South America, which is only a part of his multi-faceted concerns. He corresponds with individuals active among immigrants and directs new priests and sisters into the missions in Africa, China, the Middle East. On hearing that the Italian pastors in Chicago are too busy with their daily parochial activities among the Italians, even though they would like the presence of the *Italica Gens*, Schiaparelli sends there Don Luigi Valetto, a former Salesian missionary among the immigrants in St. Gallen, Switzerland. Valetto takes the place of Fr. Perardi who had started to represent the *Italica Gens* from his Chicago parish house. Utilizing his European experience, he starts immediately this regional Secretariat on a full-time base and with the additional special mandate of channeling the immigrants to rural areas.<sup>32</sup>

The life of this Chicago Secretariat, however, is short-lived and after a couple of years of intense social assistance provided the 100,000 Italians of this Mid-Western metropolis, it fades away. In April 1914, Father Valetto moves to Milwaukee to become pastor of an Italian parish.<sup>33</sup>

The second regional Secretariat is opened in 1912 in New Orleans for the South of the United States. The Italian Consul supports the initiative which is directed by the Rev. Vincent M. Scramuzza and endorsed by the archbishop, James H. Blenk, who writes that he is endeavoring to establish here a branch of the organization *Italica Gens*, whose noble purposes are colonization, employment and organized charity. The Archbishop recommends and obtains an office for Father Scramuzza at the Immigration Station of the port "...so that he (Scramuzza) might be able to meet and mingle with these immigrants immediately upon their arrival on our shores".<sup>34</sup>

The new organizational aspects of the New Orleans Secretariat are the involvement of the prominent Italians of the city and of the associations they

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, E. Schiaparelli to G. Grivetti, December 19, 191 (minute). CARLO BELLÒ, *Lettere da Chicago di un Missionario Bonomellitano (1912-1913)*, «Studi Emigrazione», I, 1, 1964, pp. 68-74; ACSER, Fondo Concistoriale, *Italica Gens*. Rev. Luigi Valetto to P. Pisani, Chicago, April 7, 1913.

<sup>33</sup> ANSMI, *Italica Gens*. Ufficio New Orleans. G. Grivetti to Rev. V. Scramuzza, New York, September 22, 1914. L. VALETTO, *Chicago e la sua colonia italiana*, «Italica Gens», IV, 1-2/3-4, 1913, pp. 53-58; 100-110.

<sup>34</sup> *L'Ufficio regionale dell'Italica Gens in New Orleans (Louisiana)*, «Italica Gens», V, 1-2, 1914, pp. 12-23. ANSMI, *Italica Gens*. Ufficio New Orleans. Arch. James H. Blenk to Mr. Redfern, New Orleans, Oct. 18, 1912 (copy). *Ibid.*, Rev. V. Scramuzza to G. Grivetti, New Orleans, July 30, 1912, the beginning of a long exchange of correspondence on the establishment and activity of the *Italica Gens* in New Orleans.

headed, like those of Contessa Entellina, Società Terinese, Società Cefalutana, and a local legal incorporation. The Secretariat could boast that in less than a year of existence it had carried out "650 actions of assistance and philanthropy" and had started an evening course of Italian and English for the immigrants.<sup>35</sup>

It began to receive requests of Italian laborers to work in bauxite mines in Arkansas. It proposed a "popular university" to educate the immigrants through half a dozen travelling teachers who would build a sense of *italianità* since the Italian settlements had a regional character "where the regional spirit is normally of an unreasonable intrasigence".<sup>36</sup>

In its plans, the New Orleans Secretariat wanted to find a better way for the immigrants to send their remittances to Italy; to develop a newspaper to popularize the American activities of the Federation with information usable by the immigrants; to undertake colonization projects. Satellite Secretariats are started, after surveying diocesan bishops and pastors of Italian colonies.<sup>37</sup>

In July, 1914, however, Father Scramuzza is appointed pastor and he relinquishes the work of the *Italica Gens* that seems to come to an end in 1915. The lack of success of the Federation is attributed to the deplorable fact that "the praiseworthy good will of some has been frustrated by the peculiar character of the colonial environment".<sup>38</sup>

From Pisani's groundbreaking missions to North America to the beginning of World War I, the *Italica Gens* attempts to gain a foothold in both the United States and Canada. Through the energetic and intelligent action of Grivetti, who concentrates on the United States, a strategic presence emerges in New York, Chicago, New Orleans and Spokane<sup>39</sup> with a supporting network of corresponding Secretariats. The limited financial budget provided by the Turin Central Secretariat, the fragmentation of the immigrant community and its focus on local and immediate concerns seem to cause a quick demise for a project begun with great enthusiasm. From far away, Schiaparelli persists and pursues his dream. He encourages and sends the money he can raise to Grivetti, who keeps alive

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, "A S.E. il Conte Gallina, Commissario generale dell'Emigrazione", New Orleans, September 16, 1913. Copy of a 31 page request for subsidies describing the activities and objectives of the New Orleans *Italica Gens*.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, V. Scramuzza to C. Crisci, New Orleans, July 31, 1913; J.R. Gibbons to V.M. Scramuzza, Bauxite, Ark, June 14, 1913; V.M. Scramuzza to G. Grivetti, New Orleans, August 11, 1913, where besides a popular university, a better way to send remittances to Italy without exploiting the immigrants is suggested.

<sup>37</sup> Scramuzza can report to Grivetti in New York: "We have already established the following Secretariats: in Louisiana, Baton Rouge; in Mississippi, Greenwood; in Texas, Beaumont and Fortworth... Fifteen hundred Italian concentrate in Baton Rouge and more than two thousand in Beaumont. Greenwood is an important cotton center; Fortworth is an industrial center that develops in a wonderful way. The Italians of these districts do rather well". *Ibid.*, V.M. Scramuzza to G. Grivetti, New Orleans, June 17, 1913; June 24, 1913.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, V.M. Scramuzza to G. Grivetti, New Orleans, May 23, 1914; July 1, 1914, where Scramuzza writes: "Since June 6 I have been appointed pastor of St. Mary (for Italians). The parish is immense; it is co-extensive with the entire county of New Orleans. I cannot give my attention to the *Italica Gens*". *Ibid.*, November 5, 1914.

<sup>39</sup> ANSMI, *Italica Gens* Spokane, a service attached to Gonzaga University, run by Italian Jesuits and concerned with possible agricultural settlements in Washington State and the West.

the New York Central Secretariat by seeking the support of Italian pastors, by undertaking extensive trips to the West and the South of the United States and to Canada, by providing expert information on the situation of the immigrants. In 1915, Schiaparelli is thinking of closing down the New York Secretariat and sends Don Giuseppe Capra as "Travelling Inspector" for an on sight review of the situation. After four days in New York, Capra reports that the work of the Secretariat seems great, but not well appreciated, and that Grivetti advises to wait for more information before suppressing it.<sup>40</sup>

In a whirlwind tour of the country, Capra repeats the exercise of Pisani of some years earlier. Pisani has secured the blessings of the Concistorial Congregation for this trip now that he heads the migration office in this Curia department. From Chicago, Capra sums up his activities: "In Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, the *Italica Gens* is considered as the great means of unity of all priests in the care of Italians and everyone approves its colonization work, without hiding, however, the great difficulties. It is painful to realize the abandonment in which it has been left, neglect that has led many to believe that *Italica Gens* had disappeared forever from the United States. The action *Italica Gens* can and must carry out is necessary, vast and such that makes it of vital importance for our religion and country. I have spoken to some bishops. I have explained in the best way I knew how what the *Italica Gens* is and what it intends to do to many public officials... Monday I will leave for S. Francisco where I will be able to speak with representatives of many States, and then for the South. I will return to New York from where I will embark for Italy on September 18. I have a good number of photographs and several good reports".<sup>41</sup>

Toward the end of 1915, Grivetti is still at his post and as secretary of the New York Italian Clergy Committee for the Families of Italian Soldiers directs his attention also to fund-raising and public support for the victims of the war encouraging the patriotism of the clergy. World War I blocks emigration and the *Italica Gens* becomes involved with internal migrants in Italy and with returning prisoners of war. In 1917 the Central Office is transferred from Turin to Rome for a closer coordination with government agencies and a Migrants Home is opened in Rome in 1921.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4. Post-World War I reorganizing

Once again Schiaparelli attempts to revitalize the Federation in the United States with the resumption of emigration in the postwar years and he sends there another "Travelling Inspector" of special ability, Don Ferdinando Baldelli. Baldelli follows two predecessors in the task, the lawyer Eugenio Bonardelli, who

<sup>40</sup> ANSMI, Segretariato Generale *Italica Gens*. Pos. 29\B. Correspondence between Don Giuseppe Capra and E. Schiaparelli.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, G. Capra to E. Schiaparelli, Chicago, Ill., September 3, 1915.

<sup>42</sup> E. PIANO, *op. cit.*, pp. 352-53; ACSER, Fondo Concistoriale. *Italica Gens*. E. Schiaparelli to P. Pisani, Aosta, July 26, 1916. Schiaparelli send to the Concistorial Congregation through Pisani a detailed plan for transferring the central offices of *Italica Gens* to Rome: "Progetto di istituzione di una sede centrale a Roma".

had made a 14 month long tour of the Italian communities in the United States in 1916-1917, and the lieutenant colonel Guido Romanelli in the first semester of 1922. There is a pattern in the work and conclusions of these missions sent from Italy to the United States: interesting and detailed reports on the life of the immigrants at the moment of the visit; claim of revitalization of the various Secretariats; image-building with Italian consular authorities and with Italian pastors and with some diocesan bishops. Bonardelli adds the task of making known the Italian war effort as part of the nationalist purpose of the *Italica Gens*.

With Grivetti going to Canada as Secretary of that Apostolic Delegation in 1920, however,<sup>43</sup> and the practical disappearance of the New York Central Secretariat, it fell on Romanelli to try to reopen this service. A note of the Rome office of the *Italica Gens* indicates that the objective was reached: "Two offices have been reestablished in New York and Philadelphia; relationships have been tied again with various correspondents, by trying to open everywhere Italian Secretariats, with particular service of assistance to former soldiers, and to intensify the work in Italian parochial schools".<sup>44</sup>

In fact, the end result was not very positive. Father Silipigni, a Brooklyn pastor now responsible for *Italica Gens* in the United States, writes to Schiaparelli without ambiguities that it is absolutely useless to send people to America for propaganda purposes without a concrete program. Outside of a few personal friends, no Secretariats exist in America. As for the intensified work in parochial schools, it must be a dream someone had in Rome. "More than selling words, it would be much better to think of solid work. Neither should we allow a greater swindling of our poor immigrants than that they underwent so far..."<sup>45</sup>

Silipigni's comments echo those of Grivetti with regard to the 1915 trip of Giuseppe Capra: "A great deal of the reports are things or proposals outside reality... like Plato's Republic".<sup>46</sup> Don Baldelli was aware of the diffidence created by the spurts of action the Travelling Inspectors generated when he arrived in New York in February 1923 with the main goal of coalescing into one organization the *Italica Gens*, the Italian St. Raphael's Society and the the Home for Italian

<sup>43</sup> ASV, Delegazione Apostolica Stati Uniti d'America. IX. New York.n.s.87. Grivetti is named a Monsignor and appointed Secretary of the Apostolic Delegation in Canada. It is interesting to note the comments of the Archbishop of New York Patrick J. Hayes that Grivetti "has done nothing very notable for the Italian people in New York. Very little is known of the *Italica Gens*, which was an agency of the Italian Government. In the beginning, Father Grivetti did some promising work of organization for Italian immigrants by establishing offices in various parts of the country, but without much ultimate success. The San Rafael Society, on the other hand, has done excellent work for Italian immigrants".

<sup>44</sup> ANSMI, 29\ C. Note Roma, August 20, 1922.

<sup>45</sup> ANSMI, 29\ C. Rev. Giuseppe Silipigni to Ernesto Schiaparelli, New York, Sept. 22, 1922; also, August 19, 1922.

<sup>46</sup> ANSMI, Pos. 29\ C. Romanelli to Schiaparelli, New York, Febr. 8, 1916. Romanelli also writes about his visit with the Apostolic Delegate Arch. Bonzano: "He received me holding Don Capra's report to the Concistorial Congregation... Arch. Bonzano criticized it on various points and even deplored it. Particularly he didn't like the erroneous judgements on the American clergy and churches".



immigrants sponsored by the Italian Government. The three activities were to be run by a priest acceptable to the New York Archbishop, chosen by the *Italica Gens* and approved by the Concistorial Congregation. This priest would also try to strengthen the Federation of the Italian Clergy, an initiative some Italian priests hoped would unite them.<sup>47</sup> While Baldelli aims at a coordinated and effective organization, Schiaparelli is intent on preserving the autonomy and nationalism of the *Italica Gens* and control on the priest who would run it.<sup>48</sup>

The Church in New York favors Baldelli's plan, recommended by the Concistorial Congregation. In fact, there is a convergence at the beginning of the 1920's in consolidating all charitable services, including those for the various immigrant groups, on the part of the Church in the United States and of individual dioceses like New York. A strong orientation toward americanization accompanies the organizational effort. Baldelli, accepting local archdiocesan policies, succeeds in his consolidation of the Italian immigrant assistance activities that for a few more years will continue under the name of the Italian Auxiliary of New York, but the *italianità* he was advocating had to give way to the American requirements. He complains to Schiaparelli that the Italian Ambassador to Washington, Gaetani, "...is more concerned with helping our Italians to become Americans than with preserving in them a little national feeling... It would be opportune that fascist systems were used here also and were eliminated those elements who disintegrate the efficiency and true value of our Colony".<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, Baldelli grasps quickly that "it is a mistake to want to work from Italy for America, where there is a diametrically opposed concept of life". The Italian missionaries, the only persons that could guarantee *italianità*, should be formed in America. The *Italica Gens* is proposed as that instrument that could combine the support of the Church (Concistorial Congregation) and

<sup>47</sup> ANSMI, New York Central Secretariat. Rev. Salvatore Cianci to G. Grivetti, Grand Rapids, Mich. February 8, 1911. Cianci, a member of the Catholic Settlers' Information Bureau and pastor of the Italian immigrants in Grand Rapids was a typical supporter of *Italica Gens*: "I have announced in Church that I will find work for the Italians. It is some time that I have done this, but now I will do it in the name of the *Italica Gens*... I see with my personal experience that a good and studious priest can assert himself on that handful of Italian phanatics always present in all the colonies to obstruct goodwork and to exploit the ignorance of the good... What pains me is that I don't see a union in the Italian clergy of America... could the *Italica Gens* take the initiative for such a project so necessary?". Grivetti convened a few times the New York area Italian priests and in 1917 a general assembly was convened, but the Italian clergy could not create an effective superdiocesan association. Cfr. SILVANOM. TOMASI, *Piety and Power: The Role of Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930*. New York, Center for Migration Studies, 1975, pp.161-164.

<sup>48</sup> ANSMI, Pos. 25VD. "Risposta al Promemoria sulla Missione di D. Baldelli". Febr. 26, 1923. Cfr. Schiaparelli to Baldelli, Jan. 30, 1923 (copy). In this correspondence is already present the conflict of views that will lead to the separation of Baldelli from the *Italica Gens* and the reaffirmation of the peculiar personalistic style of Schiaparelli in running the Federation and, practically speaking, the ANSMI.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Baldelli to Schiaparelli, New York, Febr. 27, 1923 (copy). Baldelli also notes that one of Gaetani's fears was that "of giving an excessively Catholic character" to the new organization.

the Italian State and thus "lead the clergy toward a nationalist discipline". From Italy, Baldelli follows the implementation of his plan for New York, conformed by a renewed mandate from the Concistorial Congregation supporting the consolidation of the immigration activities there.<sup>50</sup>

In a letter to Mussolini announcing the achieved reorganization in New York, the Secretary of the *Italica Gens* writes that it has been incorporated in the State of New York under the Presidency of the Archbishop and that "a close relationship has been established with the National Catholic Welfare Conference (the great organization of the American Bishops), with the Catholic Charities of New York and with the 411 Italian parishes scattered throughout the United States of America". Now Mussolini should not allow the General Commissariat of Emigration, through its Emigration inspector in New York, to open a competing institution simply to appease masons, Protestants and anarchists.<sup>51</sup>

The close relationship of *Italica Gens* with the NCWC and the Catholic Charities of the archdiocese of New York meant that it was now formally affiliated to the American-controlled system of immigrant care. In fact, *Italica Gens* is listed officially as the Italian Immigrant Auxiliary with services agreed with the American Catholic agencies: welcoming arriving immigrants at the port; housing them in the Italian Immigrant Home; providing some aspects of legal assistance. In 1926, Monsignor Germano Formica is appointed by the New York Archbishop to take over Father Silipigni's task – he had to resign because of ill health – as director of the Italian Auxiliary and continued a service to the immigrants through assistance, the publication «La Voce dell'Emigrato» and even a radio program until 1935. With the death of Msgr. Formica, in fact, any action for the care of Italian immigrants became simply a part of Catholic Charities and of the activities of the Immigration offices of the NCWC.<sup>52</sup>

### 5. The pursuit of "italianità"

The means through which the *Italica Gens* intended to pursue the preservation of the immigrants' loyalty to the Italian language, culture, religion and country, the components of its concept of *italianità*, were basically three: social services, Italian schools and rural colonization. Even though at every stage of its

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, Baldelli to Schiaparelli, Rome, Oct. 14, 1923. The Concistorial Congregation was at work itself since before World War I in finding an appropriate centralized form of coordination of all activities on behalf of emigrants to avoid political control on Church activities and personnel. GIANFAUSTO ROSOLI, *I Movimenti di Migrazione e i cattolici*, in E. GUERRIERO, A. ZAMBARDI (eds.), *Storia della Chiesa*, vol. XXII/1, *La Chiesa e la società industriale (1878-1922)*, Milano, Ed. Paoline, 1990, pp. 498-526.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, segretario to S.E. Benito Mussolini, President of the Council of Ministers, Nove. 1923. For the trend to consolidate immigrant services into the structures of the Church in America, cfr. RICHARD M. LINK, *American Catholicism and European Immigrants, 1900-1924*. New York, Center for Migration Studies, Inc., 1975.

<sup>52</sup> MARY E. BROWN, *Competing to Care: Aiding Italian Immigrants in New York Harbor, 1890-1930s*, «Mid-America: An Historical Review», 71, October, 1989, pp. 137-51.

cyclic crises the goals were seen unreal and unreachabe, Schiaparelli managed to reaffirm them as the Federation's policy. But there was a parting of the ways between the immigrants, who saw their future in becoming Americans, and the *Italica Gens*, that saw their salvation in keeping them Italians.

a. The Secretariats had a life of their own only in New York, New Orleans and Chicago, and the last two ended before World War I. The services provided were certainly useful to the immigrants and forced somewhat the attention of the Italian Government and of the local American civic and religious administrations on their plight. The lack of funding on the part of the Church and the State in Italy made the life of the Secretariats short lived and stunted. The competition from the padrone system, from the local church's desire to control immigration services, and the often extreme *campanilismo* in the pattern of settlement and organization of the immigrant communities, made it almost impossible to raise funds locally and gather the support of a wide spectrum of the immigrant group. The interesting conclusion that often emerges is that the Italian parishes are the real Secretariats and point of aggregation for significant social action on the part of the immigrants. In response to the first survey Grivetti conducted in 1910, the point is driven home with insistence. From Rochester, New York, Father Hanna writes: "By a peculiar accident I began my ministry here in the United States when the first onset of Italians was in its infancy. The Bishop naturally looked to me for help, and for a while I not only had charge of all Italians in Rochester but was a sort of *missionario ambulante* for the whole diocese. But better and wiser men took up my humble beginnings and now we have really flourishing Churches in Rochester (2), in Auburn (1), in Elmira (1), not to mention Italian colonies here and there, whose spiritual interests are safeguarded by the English speaking rectors assisted by worthy Italian priests".<sup>55</sup>

Archbishop Bruchesi of Montreal compliments the establishment of *Italica Gens* by saying: "I understand the need to come to the assistance of Italian immigrants. A few years ago I have established a parish for them and I am, rightly so, about to found a second one". From Grand Rapids, Michigan, Fr. Cianci comments that he already had a functioning Secretariat because since he started the Italian parish in 1908 he had carried out "all there is in the program of *Italica Gens*". The exact same words are used by the Salesians from their Italian parish in San Francisco, California. The daily activity of the Italian parishes remains, in fact, the substance of the social service outreach reported by the *Italica Gens*.

b. In his first effort in New York, Grivetti corresponds with Schiaparelli and requests his mediation with the Italian Government to fund the Italian parochial schools in the United States and Canada as the best and sure way to win over to the Federation the support of the Italian clergy. Outside an occasional small grant, however, the Italian Government does not contribute to the Italian parochial schools before or after World War I. Grivetti writes with some bitterness

<sup>55</sup> ANSMI, New York Secretariat. Ednato J. Hanna to Grivetti, Rochester, November 19, 1910.

in 1912 that after the many efforts made by Pisani and himself in requesting help for the Italian parochial school the bad news was that "the government does not give nor will give for fear of the masons... the Consul Fara-Forni said so much to Father Muller, pastor of Mt. Carmel Italian Church... Even the Anglo-Saxon Protestant Governments have understood and appreciate the value of the co-operation of the clergy and support them on every occasion. Only our (Government) gives this spectacle of weakness to the civilized world by allowing itself to be contaminated in all its acts by the shadowy sect...". Concludes Grivetti: "... These immigrants channel millions in gold to the fatherland. It would be necessary to move about among the immigrants in the homes, the countryside, in the mines, in the work places, in the ports, to know the story of those checks that the Banco di Napoli sends to Italy... this army is equally valiant to that fighting in Africa and it deserves quite a different attention from those responsible of the national patrimony".<sup>54</sup>

Schiaparelli's attempt in 1922 to prepare an extensive and detailed report on the Italian schools in North America for the special Committee created for this purpose by the Italian Foreign Ministry does not reach better results.<sup>55</sup>

c. The roots of the orientation toward rural colonies for the Italian immigrants go back to proposals formulated by Bishop Spalding of Peoria and submitted to Propaganda Fide on the eve of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore of 1884. Colonization remains a constant dream of Pisani, Grivetti, Schiaparelli and their associates. Extensive trips are undertaken through the West and the South of the United States and to the West of Canada as well by all the Travelling Inspectors of *Italica Gens*. Father Bandini's experiment at Tontitown and his personal involvement with the *Italica Gens* in looking for land in Texas and Missouri even in conjunction with the Catholic Colonization Society headed by the Archbishop of St. Louis, Glennon, moves in the same direction. The Bulletin of the Federation highlights the advantages and the few small experiments carried out in settling Italians in rural America. The philosophy behind the policy was that urban overcrowding was morally debilitating and the immigrants, in constant contact with Americans of different cultural and religious backgrounds, would not maintain their national identity. Grivetti envisioned buying large extensions of land where at least 100 Italian families could make a living, with an Italian Church and priest and school built by the company selling the land. He saw the distribution of the Italian immigrants in rural areas for temporary agricultural jobs and, above all, for the establishment of agricultural villages as a priority.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> ANSMI, New York Secretariat. Grivetti to Schiaparelli, New York, Jan. 19, 1912.

<sup>55</sup> ANSMI, *Autorità Ecclesiastiche*. S. Congr. Concistoriale. Card. De Lai, 1914-1924, where are documented the will of the Holy See to reorganize and coordinate migration assistance and even its interest in the new Commission of the Italian Foreign Ministry on the Italian schools in America. Cfr. DINO CINEL, *Scuola Italiana all'estero*, «Selezione CSER», 3-5, March-May, 1972, where the special report prepared by Schiaparelli on the Italian Schools in North America is reported in its entirety.

<sup>56</sup> ANSMI, New Orleans Secretariat. Grivetti to Scramuzza, New York, March 11, 1914. New York Secretariat. G. Grivetti to E. Schiaparelli, New York, december 15, 1911. Also, the exchange

Yet more realistic advice was not lacking. For Travelling Inspector Capra at the beginning of his tour in New York, Paolo de Vecchi, a fifty-year veteran of immigration affairs, analyzed the psychology of the immigrant: colonization always had painfully negative results. Italians "emigrate simply to better their condition that often has become intolerable because of the economic crises of their country, and of that traditional peasant slavery that does not allow to improve their condition from father to son, without hope for the future". Emigration is an escape from slavery "toward an horizon of freedom and independence". The immigrant sells the only good he possesses, his strong arms. The desire for immediate gain and the peasant diffidence of the rich that exploited him are the obstacles to colonization. "Serfdom on the land made him escape from his home, his country, and he does not want to return to the land" nor to the isolation of the countryside.<sup>57</sup>

Internal and external competition for services, lack of serious support from Italy for the schools, and the reluctance of the immigrants toward any form of peasant condition made crumble the three pillars on which *Italica Gens* attempted to build its preservation of *italianità*. The Italian parishes refused to be coopted into the Federation because their control rested with the local American Bishop and because the Italian priests, like the immigrant communities, were divided by regionalism and personalities and were effective mostly in their immediate neighborhoods.

## 6. *The American option*

Aid societies among Italian immigrants in North America seem all marked by internal crises and a troubled existence: the St. Raphael's Society, the Italian Immigration Society, the Italian Welfare League, just to mention a few. The *Italica Gens* was perhaps the most ambitious and inclusive in its plans. It was confronted, however, with additional difficulties. Besides the generalized suspicion of the immigrants toward any organizational form transcending local, family and paese based grouping met by all associations, the *Italica Gens* had an Italian agenda while the immigrants had opted for an American one. In particular, as a consequence of this substantive difference, three areas can be identified where the contrast is obvious and where the inevitable failure of the *Italica Gens* could have been anticipated.

1. The management of the Federation on a personal base and without input from the immigrants clashed with the American mentality they were fast absorbing. It seems a classical case of paternalism versus protagonism. Grivetti caught

of correspondence with Fr. Pietro Bandini, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Catholic Colonization Society, U.S.A., and with whom Grivetti visited the South looking for farming land where the Italian could settle. G. GRIVETTI, *La colonizzazione italiana negli Stati Uniti del Nord America*, «*Italica Gens*», III, 5, 1912, pp. 121-132. G. CAPRA, *La colonizzazione agraria negli Stati Uniti d'America*, «*Italica Gens*», VI, 10-12, 1915, pp. 221-237.

<sup>57</sup> ANSMI, New York Central Secretariat. Paolo De Vecchi to Giuseppe Capra, New York, July 8, 1915.

the situation well when he wrote to Schiaparelli in 1911: "...I think that our work and the means used will remain sterile if we are afraid to move... In substance, it is a question of giving a legal base here to our work and guarantees to the public... To tell the truth I have always answered that the *Italica Gens* is you and that it is all your work. Now in this country, where everything is societies, unions, trusts, an individual action is not understandable. Here everyone wants a board... the public demands it in order to evaluate the character and the importance of the activity of the institution".<sup>56</sup> The immigrants, on the other hand, managed to make their own choices pretty much independently of Italian Government authorities and of the associations linked to nationalist policies.

2. Reluctantly, Schiaparelli would admit the benefit of naturalization for the immigrants, but did not want the word in the By-Laws of *Italica Gens. Italianità* had to be preserved, even if the organization of the Church had to be used. In fact, he saw the missions among the immigrants and those run by Italian missionaries as the best vehicle for the preservation of national identity. Again, the Little Italies were for the immigrants a launching pad and not a planned expression of a defensive ghetto. At a meeting of Italian pastors in New York, the issue came to a head. "Another important point", Grivetti writes to Schiaparelli, "is that of the nationalist attitude and spirit. *Italica Gens* should be and remain an Italian activity, but cannot be an activity of political propaganda. In its action it will have to favor the acquisition of American citizenship because it is only through the vote that the Italian can move ahead in the life of the country: without it, it will always count for nothing. *Italica Gens* will favor in every way Italian culture and the establishment of Italian classes in the public, parochial and evening schools, thus preserving a union of intellect and love with the fatherland. To act differently it would be ignoring the very interest of our immigrant and the inexorable reality of things..."<sup>57</sup>

When the Americanization line prevailed and *Italica Gens* became a corporation within the Catholic Charities structure of the New York Archdiocese, control from Italy ceased.

<sup>56</sup> ANSMI, Central New York Secretariat. Grivetti to Schiaparelli, New York, December 15, 1911. Don F. Baldelli met with the same difficulty several years later. While admiring Schiaparelli's dedication and hard work, Baldelli could not accept his strictly individualistic form of management. ACSEI, Fondo Concistoriale. *Italica Gens*. Don G. Botassi and Don F. Baldelli to Card. G. De Lai, Rome, April 28, 1928, with the accompanying *Appunti sul nuovo ordinamento dell'Opera di Assistenza agli emigranti 'Italica Gens'*. In a confidential letter to the Prefect of the Concistorial Congregation, Don Botassi, an old admirer of Schiaparelli, wrote: "The *Italica Gens* is considered an institution not well defined in its program, in its aconfessional, nationalist nature and limited in its directives... Everything is concentrated in the person of Prof. Schiaparelli and perhaps because of this the interest of the Bishops and of the Clergy in general is very limited. The goodness, intelligence and activity of Prof. Schiaparelli were such that in all the initiatives organized by him (National Association To Assist Italian Missionaries; the Work of Assistance called *Opera Bonomelli, Italica Gens*), the collaboration of any other person was relegated to a very secondary role and everything depends in reality on him". *Ibid.*, Don G. Botassi to Card. G. De Lai, Rome, December 17, 1919.

<sup>57</sup> ANSMI, Central New York Secretariat. Grivetti to Schiaparelli, New York, June 18, 1912.

3. The interplay of religion and immigration moved along different traditions in the United States and in the intentions of the *Italica Gens*. For Schiaparelli and his collaborators, there was a directly stated and intended linkage between missionaries, church structures and religion on one side, and the assistance to the immigrants on the other. In fact, at times, it seems that religion is a supportive variable of *italianità*. There are nuances, of course, but the ambivalence of Italian Liberal Catholics was not acceptable to American Bishops for whom the separation of Church and State was a basic tenet. The Apostolic Delegate in Washington, asked of his opinion of the *Italica Gens*, wrote: "... The projected plan of action is excellent, but it cannot develop and give satisfactory practical results because an Association independent from the Diocesan Authority meets with many serious difficulties and lacks the means that it would need and because the priests... are free from the immediate dependence on the Bishops".<sup>60</sup>

The Concistorial Congregation saw as strange, and ultimately unacceptable, that one or more laymen could direct priests in their religious work. The priest working for *Italica Gens* in the United States arrived also at the conclusion that their success could come only by a clear choice of a religious priority and this through the Italian parish system, because "... the parishes inspire in our Italians a trust that no other office can inspire".<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, Schiaparelli was moving along an ideological position shared by some prominent Italian Catholics of his time as well as by German Catholics concerned with the preservation of the faith of the immigrants. Bishop Geremia Bonomelli expressed best the linkage seen between religion and Italian national identity: "Two are the most important means to maintain alive and strong the links between mother Italy and daughter Italy... on the American continent: language and religion... a people that loses the use of its native language... you will see it assimilate into another people and lose its national personality... Many thousand Italians emigrated to the United States, in the second, in the third generation, cease to be Italians, they blend with the Americans and unfortunately too often cease to be Catholics: with the language of the fatherland they have lost also the religion of the fatherland".<sup>62</sup>

In the United States, religious ministry and social action was an acceptable formula; the third component, the preservation of European nationalism was not.

<sup>60</sup> ASV, Del. USA. X.595. Arch. G. Bonzano to Card. G. De Lai, Washington, D.C., November 1, 1913.

<sup>61</sup> ANSMI, Don Luigi Valetto to E. Schiaparelli, Chicago, April 11, 1913 (copy). A CSER, Fondo Concistoriale. *Italica Gens*. A February 3, 1915 note of Cardinal De Lai states: "The *Italica Gens* is the Confederation of religious Congregations working for Italian emigration under the direction of Comm. Schiaparelli etc. Very Well. But it (*Italica Gens*) is very sterile and suspect because it is a strange birth: religious Congregations directed by one or more laymen for a religious work". *Ibid.*, Don Luigi Valetto to P. Pisani, Chicago, April 7, 1913: "Fr. Spetz, Fr. Wattmann, Fr. Baudizzone and others with whom I have spoken in general terms of the project, all without exception agree in admitting the necessity that *Italica Gens* ground its social action on a religious base". Don Grivetti had come around to same conclusion.

<sup>62</sup> *L'Emigrazione, Conferenza di S.E. Rev.ma Monsignor Geremia Bonomelli*, in ESPOSIZIONE GENERALE ITALIANA-ESPOSIZIONE DELLE MISSIONI, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

The successful integration of European immigrants into American society and into the Catholic Church has in fact proven the American option of the immigrants and the religious option of their priests and at the same time has shown a major cause of the limited success of the *Italica Gens* in North America. *Italianità* gave away to integration while the faith could adapt to another culture and even thrive in it. The *Italica Gens* remains a generous way through which a few Italian Catholics entered as actors in the public arena of the country and indicated the path for full participation in its life.<sup>63</sup>

SILVANO M. TOMASI  
*Pontificio Consiglio per la Pastorale  
dei Migranti e degli Itineranti*

<sup>63</sup> In 1866, Schiaparelli had convened a meeting in Florence to discuss ways and means to assist Italian missions. This founding meeting gave the rationale of all future projects like the *Italica Gens*. Wrote Schiaparelli: "... It was our common understanding to take the action of the conservative party (partito conservatore) in a field where there would be no question of elected or electors, of Rome or of temporal power, but where all men of good will could be gathered, all together do some good, organize ourselves, and keep ourselves ready for the moment when our work from the religious, social, educational field could move with hope of good success in the political field...".



## **Summary**

By making use of archival material often unknown, the A. examines the role and the development of the Association "Italice Gens" in the U.S. and Canada from 1908 till 1936. Schiaparelli's aims and commitment in organizing the Association along the lines of religious ministry, social action in favor of Italian migrants and the preservation of their national heritage are hampered by the process of the European migrants' integration into American society and the local church, as faith can adopt itself to another culture and even thrive on it.

## **Résumé**

L'Auteur, se basant sur des documents inédites, analyse l'histoire et le rôle de l'Association "Italice Gens" aux Etats Unis et au Canada de 1908 à 1936. L'engagement et l'idéal de Schiaparelli, qui entend unir l'apostolat religieux à la protection des migrants et la défense du Patrimoine national, devient toujours plus insoutenable à cause de l'intégration des migrants européens dans la Société Américaine et l'Eglise où la foi arrive à s'adapter aux expressions culturelles du lieu sans péril de disparaître.

## **The Italian American Catholic parish in the early twentieth century. A view from Waterbury, Connecticut \***

Any discussion about Italian Catholicism in the United States from a parish perspective entails a heavy responsibility, considering the strong emphasis and high expectations that several leading figures of ethnic, religious and ethnic religious historiography have given to such a perspective over the last twenty years.<sup>1</sup> They have also pointed out the lack of thorough and systematic work done so far, with a few notable exceptions,<sup>2</sup> along this path. Far from being a comprehensive historical reconstruction, this article is just an attempt to shed light on the life and functions of an American ethnic parish during the early stages of its development. It deals with the formative years of Our Lady of Lourdes, the first Italian Catholic parish in Waterbury, a Connecticut middle-sized city known as the capital of the brass industry. This interest in the parish has developed as a natural offspring of a wider research, that I am still carrying out, about that industrial setting in the first two decades of this century; a natural outcome as the Italians comprised one of the leading groups in the city.<sup>3</sup>

The number of early Italian settlers in Waterbury reached 300 in 1890, making up about 1% of the total population. According to the Golden Jubilee publication celebrating the anniversary of the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes (O.L.L.) in 1949, they were receiving spiritual care from other Catholic parishes

\* I wish to thank Jeremy Brecher, Claudio De Dominicis, Giovanni Pizzorusso, and especially Matteo Sanfilippo for their helpful suggestions in the research for the preparation of this article.

<sup>1</sup> S. TOMASI, *Piety and Power. The Role of Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area*. New York, 1975; M. MARTY, *The Editor's Bookshelf: American Religious History*, «The Journal of Religion», 62, January 1982, pp. 99-109; G.E. POZZETTA, *The Parish in Italian American Religious History*, in G. ROSOLI (ed.), *Scalabrini tra vecchio e nuovo mondo*. Roma 1989, pp. 481-489; G.R. MORMINO, G.E. POZZETTA, *Italian Immigrants and the American Catholic Church. A Parish Perspective*, «Studi Emigrazione», 25, 1989, pp. 95-108.

<sup>2</sup> R.A. ORSI, *The Madonna of 115th Street. Faith and Community in Italian Harlem 1880-1950*. New Haven and London, 1985; G.R. MORMINO, *The Church Upon the Hill: Italian Immigrants in St. Louis, Missouri*, «Studi Emigrazione», 19, giugno 1982, pp. 203-224.

<sup>3</sup> F. FASCE, *Immigrazione italiana e fabbrica USA*, «Studi storici», 25, 1985/1, pp. 5-27; IDEM, *Freedom in the Workplace: Immigrants at the Scovill Mfg. Co.*, in M. DEBOUZY (ed.), *In the Shadow of the Statue of Liberty*. Paris, 1988, pp. 107-121; IDEM, *Gli italiani di Waterbury. Un percorso di ricerca*, «Altrelatvie», 1, novembre 1989, pp. 46-56.

in the city. The majority of them went to the old Immaculate Conception, the main Irish church. By the mid-1890s Bishop Michael Tierney placed them under the care of Reverend Farrell Martin, the Irish pastor of Saint Cecilia's, the German Catholic church in town. It is worth adding that by this time there was only one Italian national parish in the whole state of Connecticut, the one established at Meriden in 1894. The record of baptisms administered to Italians by Martin shows a steady annual increase, moving from 14 in 1894 to 118 four years later. This was in keeping with the expansion of the Italian colony, that was to reach over 2,000 people (out of a total population of 45,000) by the turn of the century.<sup>4</sup>

At that time Bishop Tierney, who was generally in favor of a gradual adoption of the national ethnic parish, responding to requests coming from some members of the Italian community, took steps to establish an Italian parish in the city. The project was placed in the hands of father Michele Angelo Karam, a native of Tiberias, Palestine, who had originally been incardinated to the patriarchate of Jerusalem. From there he had moved to Italy, spending some time in Genoa and Cremona, and becoming well versed in the Italian language. When he got to Waterbury to found O.L.L. his was the ninth Catholic parish in town, along with the several Irish ones, one German, one French Canadian and one Lithuanian.<sup>5</sup>

Who were the members of the Italian colony who were instrumental in the creation of the parish? As to their social composition, they were largely drawn from the ranks of a slowly emerging ethnic middle class. Out of seven people whom I was able to trace there were four shopkeepers of some relevance, one attorney, one steamship ticket agent and one industrial worker. All of them were early settlers, having come to Waterbury between the mid-1870s and the mid-1880s. Three of them, the members of the very first Italian family to settle in Waterbury, were from Liguria; one was from Valerno, in the province of Salerno, and the rest had come from an area in Southern Italy that was increasingly becoming, through migration chains, the basic source of the Italian population in Waterbury. This area stretched through Sannio and Irpinia, incorporating five provinces: Benevento, Campobasso, Foggia, Potenza and Avellino.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> OUR LADY OF LOURDES, *Our Lady of Lourdes 1899 Golden Jubilee 1949*. Waterbury, 1949, p. 14; Farrell Martin to Michael Tierney, October 15, 1894, Tierney Papers (hereafter TP), Archives of the Archdiocese of Hartford (hereafter AAH), Hartford; Angelo Chiariglione to Francesco Satolli, July 17, 1894, Delegazione Apostolica negli Stati Uniti (hereafter DAUS) IX/15, Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hereafter ASV); Our Lady of Lourdes Baptismorum Registrum 1894 to 1899, Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Waterbury; U.S. CENSUS OFFICE, *12th Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900*, «Population», vol. I, part I, Washington, D.C., 1901, pp. 868-876, 953-957, 965-969.

<sup>5</sup> D.A. LIPTAK, *European Immigrants in the Catholic Church in Connecticut 1870-1920*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1979; S. DI GIOVANNI, *The Propaganda Fide and the Italian Problem*, in G. ROSOLI (ed.), *op. cit.*; W.L. WOLKOVICH VALKAVICIUS, *Lithuanian Pioneer Priest of New England*. New York, 1980; Michele Angelo Karam to Giovanni Bonzano, April 13, 1921, DAUS IX/79, ASV.

<sup>6</sup> DAUS, IX/30 and 79, ASV; *Our Lady of Lourdes*, n.d., TP, AAH; Our Lady of Lourdes, *Souvenir of Our Lady of Lourdes from its Foundation 1899 to the Present Time 1912*, Waterbury, 1912; G.B. D'AUSILIO, *Columbus Day Souvenir Oct. 12 1492-1910*, Waterbury, 1910; W.J. PAPE,

Why these people left this area to give rise to chain migrations is not hard to explain if only one thinks, for ex., of the two villages, Avigliano (Potenza) and Pontelandolfo (Benevento), that would provide the bulk of the Italian colony. Stricken by an endemic agricultural crisis, Avigliano was a typical example of what Francesco Saverio Nitti would call the "situazione poverissima" in Basilicata. Pontelandolfo had been torn down in 1861 by the Piedmontese Army because it was allegedly a stronghold of the briganti. Sixteen years later the very poor conditions of the local peasantry drew the attention of the anarchist group called Banda del Matese, that in this area was to try the most significant, and yet completely unsuccessful, attempt of an anarchist insurrection in Southern Italy. By the turn of the century the situation was still so difficult as to heighten the migratory wave: in the words of many an immigrant to Waterbury, "little eating in Pontelandolfo".<sup>7</sup>

Following a more general pattern at the state level, Italians more than tripled in the decade 1900-1910. By this date they formed the largest new immigrant group in a city whose population was made up for nearly 2/3 of immigrants and their children. Ranking in size immediately after the Irish (21% of the total), came the Italian community consisting of 14% of the local population, followed respectively by the Russians (7.7%), French Canadians (5%) and Germans (4%). The Italians were largely male (65%), most of them manual workers, with a very limited portion (10%) of women working outside the home. As the marriage records show, the level of endogamy was absolute at this time.<sup>8</sup>

Together with these features, typical of a community still in a formative stage of its life cycle, there were signs of some form of consolidation going on. In 1910, for the first time, the 17 local Italian societies celebrated Columbus Day with parades that made a strong impression upon the local wasp newspaper. The following year the same paper, while reviewing all the so-called "races", present in town, showed that the times when "Italian" was almost invariably equated with "stileto" or "anarchist" had definitely passed. "A temperate race" was the definition given to the Italians by the paper, that pointed to the three physicians

*History of the Naugatuck Valley*. Chicago and New York, 1918, voll. II and III, *passim*; Translation of the Italian Address Delivered at the Dedication of La Casa Italiana, Sept. 1, 1935 by Charles P. Sciuolo and Address Given By Judge Edward Mascolo At the Dedication of the Italian House, Sept. 1, 1935, both manuscripts within the miscellaneous papers, Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury; *Waterbury Directory*. Bridgeport and New Haven, 1875-1910.

<sup>7</sup> N. WICKENDEN, *The North-West Potentino Since the Napoleonic Age: Government and Agrarian Institutions*, «Annali Accademici Canadesi», 5, 1989, pp. 24-26; *Monografia di Pontelandolfo per l'avvocato Dante Perugini*. Campobasso, 1878; G. CASILI, *Dinamica e struttura della famiglia in una comunità dell'Alto Sannio: Pontelandolfo*. Università di Cassino, Facoltà di Sociologia, 1984-85; A. MOLINARI, S.M. *Stepnjak Kravcinskij: un rivoluzionario russo tra gli internazionalisti italiani*, in A. MOLINARI, R. SINIGAGLIA, *Stepnjak Kravcinskij un rivoluzionario russo tra populismo e terrorismo*. Firenze, 1977, pp. 41-42, 99-104, 111-114; G.M. and G.R., interviews by Jeremy Brecher and Ferdinando Pasce, Pontelandolfo, September 18 and 19, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> D.M. MOLONEY, *Families, Work, and Social Institutions: A Comparative Study of Immigrants and Their Children in Waterbury, Connecticut, 1900-1920*. M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1989; Our Lady of Lourdes Matrimoniorum Registrum 1899-1912, Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Waterbury.

and three lawyers that the colony could boast. Their pictures dominated the page, along with the picture of prof. Generoso Ruggiero, an artist from Valerno, who had come to Waterbury in 1907 under Father Karam's inducement to decorate the church.

Not surprisingly O.L.L., whose completed edifice had just been dedicated in 1909, occupied a fair portion of the section devoted to the Italians by the paper. However, the actual news regarding the parish was not so good. Father Karam's interview, published on that occasion, replicates a story all too familiar to the student of Italian Catholicism in America. What sociologist Franco Garelli would call devotionalist and ritualistic religiosity – that is, one centered on baptisms, funerals and a few feasts – was largely predominant.

Karam could not hide his disappointment at the low level of both mass attendance and offerings on the part of his parishioners. Out of a population of 10,000 Italian Catholics there was an average Sunday attendance of only about 500 people. These figures skyrocketed to thousands only around Christmas time and on other feast periods. In Karam's words, "They are just indifferent. When they are sick or dying and when a child is born, they always send for a priest. You ask them if they are Catholic and they will say yes. There are many who never go to church". As to the amount and nature of offerings, the very poor offerings at Sunday masses contrasted sharply with the donations for votive candles. Traditional customs brought from Italy accounted for them, according to the priest.<sup>9</sup>

While at the present state of the research it is impossible to draw a statistical picture of the parishioners, it is clear that the church and Father Karam left an indelible mark on such people as, for ex., a certain Modestina De Angelis, a girl from Morcone, province of Benevento. In 1906, at the age of 14, she left her village and in her own words "with a tag... just a package delivered to Waterbury", where a sister of hers lived. She worked at Scovill, one of the main brass employers in the valley, as a machine operator and, coming from a very religious family, she attended the church. In fact, she recalled "one time I went to see *La Traviata* at the Opera House... that's all... Other than that, only church". Father Karam "was a saint, he was friendly with everybody".<sup>10</sup>

It was probably the strong attachment manifested by such parishioners that enabled Karam to put aside hardships and frustrations and end his interview with the paper in an optimistic tone, making plans for an expansion of the parish activities and the reorganization of the school. This had been suspended temporarily because the teachers – namely five nuns from the convent of Our Lady of Compassion in Rome – had left, due to the limited room available to them.

<sup>9</sup> Republican, May-July 1901, October 8, 1911. On "ritualistic" and "devotionalist" religiosity see F. GARELLI, *Lo scenario del sacro*. Bologna, 1986. On this kind of religiosity among Italian Americans see R.A. ORSI, *op. cit.*, and R.J. VECOLI, *Cult and Occult in Italian-American Culture. The Persistence of a Religious Heritage*, in R.M. MILLER, T.D. MARZIK (eds.), *Immigrants and Religion in Urban America*. Philadelphia, 1977, pp. 25-47.

<sup>10</sup> Modestina De Angelis, interview by Jeremy Brecher, Waterbury, December 28, 1985, courtesy Jeremy Brecher.

Unfortunately Karam was not to witness such an expansion as only a few months later he became involved in a major scandal. In this case the Golden Jubilee publication, mentioned at the outset of this article, shines no further light on the incident, since it simply reports that in November 1912 Father Karam retired from active service. In fact, as sources taken from the Vatican Archives reveal, he was ousted as a result of an investigation ordered by the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, under pressures from a group of parishioners and from the assistant pastor himself. The investigation revealed that behind Karam's apparent respectability there lay yet another example of those irregular and outcast priests, whose life in a parish was marred by a scandal over their morality.

Before coming to Waterbury Karam had already been compelled to leave his previous post in America because of rumors of an affair with his housekeeper, a woman from the province of Cremona, whom he had seemingly known during his stay in Italy. Admittedly, on that occasion the evidence against Karam was far from conclusive, but the whole story must have looked even more suspicious to the Apostolic Delegate and the Hartford's Bishop, when they found the priest and the housekeeper together again in Waterbury some ten years later. Furthermore, a marriage certificate was discovered disclosing that the young organist who lived in the parish and was introduced by the priest either as a relative or a friend of his was in fact the stepson and the husband of the housekeeper.<sup>11</sup>

Backed by a committee set up by a large number of his parishioners, Karam fought back, but ultimately had to leave O.L.L. Apparently the evidence brought against him by the Apostolic Delegate and the Bishop both in Elisabeth, New Jersey (Karam's previous appointment) and in Waterbury was deemed sufficient to find him guilty. Lack of sources, prominent among them the Italian local newspaper that is unavailable for this period, makes a detailed reconstruction of the episode impossible. As a few, very sketchy hints in the available records suggest, behind the quarrel there might have been some economic conflict regarding either the compensation for the work done by Ruggiero (one of the leaders of the anti-Karam faction) for the church or the financial situation of the church itself, that was burdened by no less than \$70,000 incumbrances.

Likewise, it is hard to draw a line of social and economic divisions between the two factions or between their leaders. Undoubtedly, though, the case foreshadowed uneasiness and inner tensions running through the Italian colony over its own identity. This is clearly revealed by the major themes that, along with the charge of moral misconduct, punctuated the fight. The anti-Karam faction was led by five "prominenti" of some economic substance and social visibility in the city, two of them instrumental in the creation of the parish. They

<sup>11</sup> DAUS, IX/79. For a comparison with other cases of outcast priests both in Canada and in the United States M. SANFILIPPO, *Fonti vaticane per la storia dell'emigrazione italiana in Canada, 1899-1915*, «Movimento operaio e socialista», n.s., 11, winter 1987, pp. 327-336; IDEM, *Dentro e fuori dalla chiesa. Storie della prima emigrazione in Canada*, «I Giorni cantati», 2, March 1990, pp. 29-36. On Karam's first appointment in America see G. PIZZORUSSO, *La Nuova Serie dell'archivio di propaganda Fide e la storia degli italiani in Nord America*, «Il Velcro», 34, gennaio-aprile 1990, pp. 67-86.

accused Karam of having expressed opinions favorable to the Turkish side during the Italian-Turkish war over Tripoli.

Two out of the three prominent who led the pro-Karam faction had been among the original sponsors of the church. They were probably of somewhat lesser economic and social standing as compared to their rivals, but with strong ties within the parish and the Catholic world of the city, as shown by their ability to mobilize several members of the Irish parishes. They maintained that most of the people who were against Karam had nothing to do with the parish. Instead, they sustained that the anti-Karam faction was manoeuvred by outsiders, who held ambiguous contacts with the local Italian Congregational Church. This church was run by a native of Calitri, in the province of Avellino, from where a good number of members of the Italian colony in Waterbury came. It had an average attendance of 100 people and good ties with the First Congregational Church, the church of the local Yankee industrial elite.<sup>12</sup>

According to Karam's supporters, all this threatened to destroy the wonderful job done by Karam. In fact, by building and running such a beautiful church he had given the Italian colony a unique opportunity of ethnic pride, showing that even though "he was not Italian by birth, he was Italian by deeds and heart".<sup>13</sup>

The vital importance of the nationalist argument, and the many different uses it lent itself, is confirmed by what happened when the new pastor was assigned to O.L.L. Some members of the pro-Karam faction, notably the editor of the main Italian local weekly *Il Progresso del New England*, hastened to use against him the argument that he was not a good example of a true, strong Italian spirit. Why so? Firstly, because he had a foreign housekeeper, a French Canadian who was accused of moral misdemeanour with the new pastor, and who ultimately had to leave the city. What is more, the priest had an American assistant, and taught Catechism in English and not in Italian, as Karam used to do.

The new pastor was Father Joseph Valdambri, a priest coming from a Roman aristocratic family closely linked to the Vatican world. According to several oral testimonies he had left Italy moving to England and later on to the United States since 1908 because his opinions smacked of Modernism. Before long Valdambri was able to overcome all the difficulties and hostility he found upon his arrival in Waterbury. This was especially so after World War One, and the mobilization that accompanied it, showed that what his enemies considered to be a major fault, that is using the English language, might turn out to be a crucial asset.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> DAUS, IX/56, 79, *passim*, ASV; *Biografie di valore per la gioventù. Biographies of Value For the Youth*, n.d., Waterbury. On the patriotic enthusiasm aroused by the Italian-Turkish war among both lay and religious members of the Italian colony in New York City see *L'Italiano in America*, New York, December 10, 1911.

<sup>13</sup> DAUS, IX/79, ASV.

<sup>14</sup> S.B., interview by Ferdinando Fasce, Waterbury, October 2, 1985; R.F., interview by Ferdinando Fasce, Waterbury, November 27, 1990; J.S. MONAGAN, *Forty Years Later Father Val Still Stirs Memories*, «American», April 17, 1985.

Besides being active in the Italian Red Cross, he was involved in many ways as a speaker at patriotic rallies featured by the Connecticut Council for National Defence. Still in June 1920 we find his name in a list of speakers of the State Department of Americanization: he was one out of three ethnic speakers in Waterbury, the others being professor Ruggiero and John Jenusaitis, a Lithuanian active within the North American Civic League for Immigrants, a major organization for the Americanization of the immigrants.<sup>15</sup>

Little wonder, then, that Valdambrini put a special emphasis on the importance of speaking English in a report sent to the Prelato per l'Emigrazione Italiana in 1922. In his opinion this was especially needed in view of the fact that no less than 6,000 young men, second generation Italians could not speak the language of their fathers, since they had been and were still attending local public schools where they could learn only English. To address them in the most proper way and rescue them from the evils of an emerging secularized mass consumption society was one of the two major concerns expressed by the priest in his report. The other one was something that would have sounded familiar to Father Karam, that is the peculiarities of Italian religious habits. Practising Catholics were still a tiny portion of the population, comprising nearly 500 people out of a population of 20,000. Mass attendance reached 2,600 people (1,600 women and 1,000 men) only for Easter Duty. Accordingly mass collections yielded \$ 913 yearly, as against \$ 3,300 for votive candles. There emerged the general tendency, on the part of the Italians, to concentrate their religious fervor on a few occasions of the family's life cycle: baptisms, marriages, and funerals. According to Valdambrini, all this was done in a way that put a premium on economic and honor concerns: baptisms were often postponed and grouped together in order to save money; funerals tended to become ostentatious affairs.<sup>16</sup>

When he was talking about funerals or death celebrations as ostentatious affairs, the priest probably had in mind a case that had occurred three years earlier. At that time one conspicuous merchant, and one of the early sponsors of the parish, had in vain asked the Apostolic Delegate for permission to erect a special chapel to the memory of his wife.<sup>17</sup> However, Valdambrini might also have remembered a funeral that had created some problems for the parish a couple of years before. During a massive, three-month strike waged by brass immigrant workers, the case was triggered by the killing of a young Italian striker, Libero Tiso. This occurred during an armed confrontation with Scovill's private

<sup>15</sup> Connecticut Council for National Defense, RG 29 box 24, RG30, boxes 166 and 312, Connecticut State Library, Hartford; *Progresso del New England*, March 2 and October 5, 1918; Department of Americanization, May 1920, Farnam Family Papers, Group 203, box 255, folder 3294, Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives.

<sup>16</sup> J. VALDAMBRINI, *La Parrocchia italiana di Waterbury, Conn.*, manuscript, Archivio del "Prelato per l'emigrazione italiana", folder 501, Centro Studi Emigrazione, Roma; Statistical Report of the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1922, AAH; *Progresso del New England*, June 3 and 6, 1918.

<sup>17</sup> DAUS, IX/92, *passim*, ASV.



police, that resulted in the wounding of two policemen. As a consequence, Father Felix Scoglio, the assistant pastor acting as a substitute for Valdambri during a temporary absence of the pastor from Waterbury, at first denied Tiso the right to be buried on consecrated ground. But the family and the whole Italian community, that gave the strikers strong support, threatened to appeal to the bishop and ultimately won permission to give Tiso a consecrated grave. With floral tributes valued at close to \$ 400 and presented by all the different ethnic groups on strike, the impressive funeral came to symbolize an extraordinary, although temporary, inter-ethnic solidarity. "Deepest sympathy from the people of Waterbury", read the inscription on a wreath, striking a defiant response to "Yankee" middle class claims that unions and strikes were just the offspring of the "excitable Italians" and that the only legitimate union was that established in 1776.<sup>18</sup>

"My brother was a Catholic... we are Catholics like all the people in America", would have repeated sixty years later one of the few surviving witnesses of the funeral, James Tiso, a brother of Libero's. We do not know whether the Tiso family was among the practising Catholics who duly attended services or among the people who just went to church on feast periods or for baptisms and marriages. Nor do we know whether Libero, on whose body a radical leaflet was found, was part of those young Italian brass workers who in 1919 started a spy from the Federal Bureau of Investigation by saying that they were sincere Catholics and yet at the same time they were joining the anarchist and radical ranks.<sup>19</sup>

What is clear is that this case offers one more angle from which to look at the parish. This emerges as a crossroad, a prism where different, and at times contradictory, interests and investments came to coexist. At least in this phase of the development of the parish, such interests can hardly be confined within any rigid formula, be it integration into or separation from American life.

Any further research will have to first take into full account the goals pursued and the role played by the two so different kinds of pastors that O.L.L. hosted during its first twenty years of existence. Evidently the "respectable outcast" typified by Karam and the more "American-oriented" Valdambri need closer scrutiny against the wider perspective of the complex relationship between the several layers of the Catholic church, American society, and the Italian colony.

Apart from their more or less sincere religious faith, the "prominenti" seem to have found a two-fold institution in the parish: on the one hand a status-enhancing institution, both within and outside the colony; on the other hand, an arena for a contest over the meaning and contents of an ethnic identity in times of transition.

<sup>18</sup> F. FASCE, *Freedom in the Workplace?*, cit., p. 116.

<sup>19</sup> James Tiso, interview by Jeremy Brecher, Brass Workers' History Project, Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury; Report for April 27, 1919, Dept. of Justice File, RG 65, Roll 799, M-1085, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

The majority of the people probably looked at the church, as happened elsewhere, as the place where they could give expression to their sacred cosmos, made up, among other things, of votive candles, or to their unfailing search for some hope and belonging in a life of drudgery and hardships. Apparently for some of these people it was only natural to expect that the parish must side with them in the absolutely exceptional case in which they would put forth an open, collective quest for dignity and justice in order to defend their homes and work.

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### **Summary**

This paper sheds light on the life and functions of an American ethnic parish during the early stages of its development. It deals with the formative years of Our lady of Lourdes, the first Italian parish in Waterbury, a Connecticut middle-sized town known as the capital of the brass industry.

### **Résumé**

Ce texte met en lumière la vie et les fonctions d'une paroisse américaine ethnique dans les premiers stades de son développement. Il traite des années de formation de Notre Dame de Lourdes, la première paroisse italienne à Waterbury, une ville moyenne du Connecticut connue comme la capitale de l'industrie du cuivre.

## Italian parishes in a burgeoning city: Buffalo, 1880-1920 \*

Scholars, responding to the double pressure of evaluating the role of the Catholic Church in the wider American society on the one hand and of illuminating the relationship between the Catholic Church and the immigrant communities on the other, have mostly concentrated on two sets of problems. First of all there have been attempts to establish whether the Catholic Church had an "americanizing" effect on its immigrant followers and if so, how. Secondly, whether the Catholic Church with its ethnic parishes contributed to the cohesiveness of the ethnic communities or, instead, to their fragmentation. I will not even try to refer to the bibliography: it is vast and furthermore, there is a clear if not fully comprehensive summary of the debates around the relationship between ethnicity and the Church in John Bodnar's very useful book, *The Transplanted*. Some recent histories of the Catholic Church in the United States seem to have profited from the research kindled by these debates: Jay Dolan has integrated findings of ethnic history in his *The American Catholic Experience* and Philip Gleason has not overlooked these issues in his 1987 book *Keeping Faith. American Catholicism. Past and Present*.<sup>1</sup>

Yet in the authors' perhaps unconscious drive to give the whole story, I had the impression that some aspects of it were still missing. Most of these studies

\* My very special gratitude for having helped me in gathering the material and acquiring a sense of the cultural outlook of Buffalonians of Italian origins goes to Maria Saccomando Coppola. She has been an intellectual companion and she is now a very special friend. Father Secondo Casarotto, now Saint Anthony's rector, found time to share with me some of his ideas and generously showed me some of the material he has gathered in his years-long research on the Italian community in Buffalo. Those of us interested in the history of Italians in the United States are looking forward to the publication of his work. And last but not least I have to mention the painstaking work Matteo Sanfilippo and Giovanni Pizzorusso are doing at the Propaganda Fide Archives and at the Vatican Archives, which allowed me to find easily material on my subject which I would have not seen otherwise.

<sup>1</sup> JOHN BODNAR, *The Transplanted. A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (1985). Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987. JAY P. DOLAN, *The American Catholic Experience. A History From Colonial Times to the Present*. Garden City, New York, Double Day and Co., 1985. PHILIP GLEASON, *Keeping the Faith. American Catholicism Past and Present*. Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1987. An example of how the role of the Catholic Church was interpreted as both "americanizing" and integrating the ethnic community is given by

were making an effort to figure out the "MODEL" for the immigrants' religious behavior as if the need for an academic and intellectual order required an encompassing pattern, a definite looking glass through which we could confidently think we understood these intricate processes. It dawned on me that the historian's "Self" might be asking for forgiveness to the sociologist's "Ego". Or maybe, I thought, we are all being colonized by the French historical school and we now all tend to think in terms of "long durée". There was a third stream of thought that conspired toward the search for the model, the pattern: the linguistics' and correlated anthropologists' emphasis on the "structure". It seems there was no more intellectual terrain for the obsolete "cause and effect" paradigm and its derivative strives for diachronic understanding. The problem has been addressed by very recent scholarly works in ethnic history, which seemed concerned to restore "process" to its domain. I am thinking of David Gerber's book on Buffalo, of Zucchi's insights in the history of Toronto's Italians, of Mormino's and Pozzetta's *Ybor City*, and Gabaccia's *Militant and Migrants*. Yet this newly regained historical sensitivity seemed missing from the history of immigrant's religion and religiosity. Even as fascinating a book as Robert Orsi's *The Madonna of the 115th Street* could not avoid skirting the search for the pattern.<sup>2</sup>

I will try, therefore, to avoid issues such as the assimilation/integration dilemma. I will attempt instead a reconstruction of the possible effects of the interrelation of two processes: the growth and increasing complexity of the urban environment and the ever impending obligation of the Catholic Church to justify its role vis à vis the American establishment, i.e. the city, and to retain its followers. These processes affected not only the immigrant integration into the American society, but also his understanding of America and of his own place within it. In other words, the effect of the three-way relationship between the Catholic Church, the immigrants and the city, contributed to the shaping of the immigrant's culture, to that process that Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta and Vecoli described as "ethnicization" in a recent *Altreitalia* article.<sup>3</sup>

SILVANO M. TOMASI, *Piety and Power. The Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930*. New York, Center for Migration Studies, 1975. A less optimistic view of the relationship between Italian immigrants and the Catholic Church in the United States can be found in RUDOLPH J. VECOLI, *Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church*, *Journal of Social History*, 2, Spring, 1969, pp. 217-268.

<sup>2</sup> DAVID A. GERBER, *The Making of An American Pluralism. Buffalo, New York, 1825-1860*. Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1989; DONNA RAE GABACCIA, *Militants and Migrants. Rural Sicilians Become American Workers*. New Brunswick and London, Rutgers University Press, 1988; GARY R. MORMINO, GEORGE E. POZZETTA, *The Immigrant World Of Ybor City. Italians and their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985*. Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1987; ROBERT A. ORSI, *The Madonna of the 115th Street. Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1985; JOHN E. ZUCCHI, *Italians in Toronto. Development of a National Identity, 1975-1935*. Kingston and Montreal, McGill's-Queen's University Press, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> KATHLEEN N. CONZEN, DAVID A. GERBER, EWA MORAWSKA, GEORGE E. POZZETTA, RUDOLPH J. VECOLI, "The Invention of Ethnicity": una lettura americana, *Altreitalia*, II, 3, Aprile 1990, pp. 4-63.

For this short communication I have tried to follow a set of questions that might partly illuminate causes and effects: who built the Buffalo Italian parishes? What functions did they fulfill? How did Church activities affect the Italian immigrant community at the beginning of its history in the city of Buffalo and were there specific segments of the immigrant society that became the Church privileged constituents?

In the early days of the Italian immigration to Buffalo there seems to have been no religious mutual aid society. There is no record of them, while we have information about secular organizations. Father Gibelli, first rector of the first Italian parish, was worried about this: there were too many secular associations, he wrote, which banned religion from their constitutions. Father Martinelli, for nearly ten years the second rector, also complained: even the rich Italians of the community failed to support the Church.<sup>4</sup>

Yet weak participation did not necessarily mean lack of religious feelings on the part of the Italians. Gibelli, in fact, noted in the same letter that members of the secular societies did go to Church, albeit irregularly. In the very beginning Italians were invited to use Saint Joseph's Cathedral basement, as it was happening in many other North American cities, for their religious services. Maybe the unhappiness with this solution made them "indifferent" as Gibelli said. Yet some Italians made a first effort in 1880 and a second one in 1885 to build their own church. They found neither a wide community support nor the one of the Buffalo Catholic hierarchy.<sup>5</sup> However several factors brought about a change in the latter's attitudes.

Robert Perin has shown how concerns for the Catholic immigrants in Protestant countries had prompted the Catholic Church in Rome to issue the encyclical *Quam Aerumosa* in 1888, which offered policy guidelines to the American bishops. These concerns also induced Rome to support the establishment of Monsignor Scalabrini's Piacenza seminar for the formation of the so called "flying missionaries". This official position of the Church of Rome took shape between 1887 and 1889, thereby consolidating the Buffalo tradition of care toward the immigrant problem already laid out by the city first bishop, Monsignor Timon, in mid XIX century.<sup>6</sup> His energy and his capability in dealing with the problems the immigrants created at the time that the city was facing the first wave of German and Irish immigration won him the confidence of the Buffalo Protestant elite. Just before the Civil War, the city of Buffalo was financing hospitals and

<sup>4</sup> Archives of the General Direction of the Scalabrini Fathers, Rome (AGS): Saint Anthony's of Buffalo, file 575/1, letter of Father Gibelli, 12.7.1890; file 575/2, letter of Father Martinelli, 1.2.1900.

<sup>5</sup> History Survey of the Diocese of Buffalo, *Catholic Union and Times*, Centennial Special Issue; RICHARD A. VERBERO, *Philadelphia's South Italians and the Irish Church. A History of Cultural Conflict*, in SILVANO M. TOMASI, ed., *The Religious Experience of Italian Americans*. Staten Island, N.Y., AIHA, 1975, pp. 33-54.

<sup>6</sup> ROBERTO PERIN, *Religion, Ethnicity and Identity: Placing the Immigrant within the Church*, «Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens», VII, 1985, pp. 219-29; ID., *Rome in Canada. The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990, pp. 158-165.

orphanages that the Catholic Church was operating.<sup>7</sup> Timon's successor, Bishop Ryan, in 1886 had already spearheaded the formation of a second Polish parish, to avoid developing conflicts in the first existing one. It does not seem that the Catholic hierarchy made any effort to integrate the Poles in parishes of other ethnic groups. In 1889 Ryan sponsored the formation of a church for the Italians. In the same turn of time Scalabrini missionaries became available. A surprisingly successful "revival mission" held by father Morelli, a Scalabrini priest, in 1888, which gathered an impressive Italian audience, convinced also father Quigley, at that time the rector of the Cathedral and a future bishop of Buffalo, that the time was ripe for organizing an Italian church.<sup>8</sup>

The people who actively collaborated in the building of the church were among the most prominent members of the Italian community. We do not have an official list but through various obituaries and diocesan histories we know at least five of them. One was a manufacturer and a merchant, Luigi Onetto, who was considered the "patriarch" of the Italian community; another, Carlo Antoniazzi, started as a wine and liquor dealer, but soon moved into the grocery business. In 1904 he was member of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association, in 1909 he became one of the directors of the American Savings Bank and of the Erie Savings Loan Association and was considered the wealthiest Italian of Buffalo. The person who found the land for the church building was Antonio Pellegrini, one of the first settlers of the Italian community. He was a statue manufacturer and dealer who supplied clients all over the States. He and Vitale Bottani, a fresco painter with a well established firm, became the first lay trustees of the Italian parish. Among the group that helped the bishop in the creation of the Italian ethnic parish was the oldest and more successful saloonkeeper of the community at the time, Luigi Raffo: he remained one of the church's lay trustees until the day of his death in 1913. His wife, Catherine Raffo, had done for years charity work among Italian immigrants. Although all from Northern Italy, these people had contacts with prominent Italians of Southern origins through the mutual aid societies and musical associations, some of which had interregional membership. These Italians who helped to create the Italian parish were successful people, businessmen and craftsmen, and some of them were already interested in city politics: Onetto was a supporter of the Democratic Party, Antoniazzi and Raffo were active Republicans. They lived all scattered in different wards so they chose to buy an area for the church building close to all of them, but on the edges of the so called "Italian" district.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> DAVID A. GERBER, *The Making of An American Pluralism. Buffalo, New York, 1825-1860*. Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1989, pp. 280-317, especially 283-84; *Catholic Union and Times*, Centenary Edition, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> THOMAS DONOHUE, D.D., *History of the Diocese of Buffalo*. Buffalo, The Catholic Publication Co., Inc., 1929, pp. 108-115; 162. "History Survey", *Catholic Union and Times*, Centennial.

<sup>9</sup> On Charles Antoniazzi see THOMAS DONOHUE D.D., *History of the Catholic Church in Western New York*. Buffalo, Catholic Historical Publishing Co., 1904, p. 371; A. FRANGINI, *Italiani in Buffalo, Niagara Falls e Rochester, New York*. New York, Tipografia R. Beraglia, 1909, pp. 29-30; on Bottani see *Brief History of Saint Anthony's Parish*, unpublished typescript, Diocesan Archives, Buffalo, New York; on Louis Onetto *Buffalo Evening News*, 2.5.1943; on Antonio

The area where the church was established, in fact, was not yet at the "heart" of the Italian community. Although some tenements were located there, it was, rather, at a safe distance from the more impoverished and yet more crowded districts where the majority of the 1892 Italian population lived.<sup>10</sup>

The location of the first Italian parish, dedicated to St. Anthony, is worth a closer look. It was not far from St. Joseph Cathedral which was in the center of the city's congested business district. At a walking distance to the South of the Cathedral there were some densely inhabited Irish workingclass streets and to the North East the heavily commercial Broadway Avenue. It was certainly not the proper district for a Cathedral and the catholic hierarchy would move it within a few years to one of the most exclusive areas of the city. In the meantime it clearly catered to Irish workers and some better-off merchants of the wards surrounding the cathedral. Yet, apart from St. Joseph's, in the large section of the city bounded on the East by Main street, North by Virginia street and South by the Terrace, the long avenue that led into the derogatively so called "the Hooks", no catholic church was part of the urban scene.<sup>11</sup> St. Anthony's was the only catholic institution in the area. The Buffalo catholic hierarchy surely viewed the Italian settlement as a foothold for the Roman Catholic Church.

Saint Anthony's church was quite far from where most Italians lived. In the 1890s, they were occupying large sections of precisely the "Hooks", the waterfront area where grain elevators, docks, railroad depots, storages had developed since mid century. Before the arrival of the Italians, the area was already renowned for its rowdy saloons and its numerous houses of ill repute. St. Anthony was at a safe distance from there. At the turn of the century the public transport system changed the city structure and its uses. However immigrants could not afford the five-cent fare. As Frank Mendola recalled in an interview, the \$ 34 one person could save of a year of ticketfares to reach the working place and do errands could provide a couple with clothing for a year.<sup>12</sup> Italians of the "Hooks" would use St. Anthony's but seldom and the church certainly could not develop into their community meeting place. The Italian parish was built on Court street, still a working class area, but close to the City Hall, on what appeared as the divide between the upper, more decent frame house section of the district and its southern part, where one could find more narrow and crowded streets and the few Buffalo tenement houses. Patrons of St. Anthony's were therefore limited to those who lived close by or to those who could afford the transport ticket fare. There were, of course, poor Italians living there too. But presumably

Pellegrini *Brief History* and A. FRANGINI, *History of Western New York*, 40; on Luigi and Catherine Raffo, *Il Corriere Italiano*, 1.25.1913 and THOMAS DONOHUE D.D. *History of the Diocese...*, cit., p. 162. Their residential address was found on *Buffalo City Directories* of 1875, 1887, 1892, 1893 and on *Erie County Manuscript Census*, 1892.

<sup>10</sup> AGS, Saint Anthony's file, newspaper clippings. *Express*, 4.5.1905.

<sup>11</sup> *Atlas of the City of Buffalo, New York*. Philadelphia, American Atlas Co., 1894, plates 29, 31, 39.

<sup>12</sup> FRANK MENDOLA, *Reminiscences of the Italian community and way of life in Buffalo from 1899 to the Present*, Unpublished manuscript, Oral History Collection, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (BECHS).

they were already the more established ones, those who may have shared a dwelling among several families, but who were out of the tenement district.<sup>13</sup>

It took some time before the Italians got used to their church: 7 baptisms were held in St. Anthony's the year it was consecrated (only one month's calculations, by the way, because the church was inaugurated in December 1891) but in 1892 they were 270 and 286 the following year. In this period Gibelli noticed that English speaking people of the area also came to St. Anthony's: if it weren't for them, he underlined in a letter, the church would have had no revenue.<sup>14</sup>

Maybe because of the presence of a considerable group of non-Italian faithful, St. Anthony was not too active in organizing festivals (the well known Italian "feste") during its first years of existence. The fact that the first two pastors were not particularly appealing to the Italian population probably contributed to this lack of festive enthusiasm. Gibelli was old and tired. Martinelli, his successor, sounds at times very bitter in the letters he wrote to his mother house. His relationship with Sicilians had turned sour after he uttered nasty comments about them. While supported by the Italian consul and by the community elite who came from different Italian regions, as is shown by a petition in his favor, he was often attacked and criticized by the women's associations (congreghe) of the parish and by men of Sicilian origins.<sup>15</sup>

In 1901 two young energetic priests replaced Martinelli: the new rector father Bernardo Casazza and his assistant, father Pacifico Chenuil, both from Piemonte. Some of their aims were to demonstrate the church's openness and sensitivity towards the people's needs, to strengthen community ties and to enhance the community self-esteem. Rather than wait for the community to come to them, they went toward the people. As soon as they took hold of the leadership of the church, they organized a "mission", calling the community to devotional practices. They created a contact with the Italian newspaper, where father Pacifico published occasional articles. They opened a Sunday school to draw to the church the little urchins of the colony and subsequently their parents. They revived the typical American tradition, already experimented by St. Anthony's in 1892, but that had slowly demised in the following years, of organizing picnics where the whole community and its societies came together and collected funds for the church. They also offered official sponsorship to most of the Italian "feste".<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For the distribution of the Italian population in the city, see Erie Manuscript Census, 1892. STEPHAN GREDEL, *Immigration of Ethnic Groups to Buffalo Based upon Censuses of 1850, 1865, 1875, and 1892*, «Niagara Frontier», Summer 1964, pp. 44-56. A detailed description can be found in MARIA SUSANNA GARRONI, *I Luoghi dell'Incontro. Mondi di Vita degli Italoamericani di Buffalo, New York, 1890-1920*, tesi di dottorato, Dipartimento Studi Americani, Università di Roma "La Sapienza", a.a. 1989-90, cap. II.

<sup>14</sup> AGS, St. Anthony's file, folder 575/1, letters of Gibelli of 8.18.1892 and 1.18.1894; Missione Cattolica per l'Emigrazione Italiana, *Quadro Generale delle missioni Italiane dirette dalla Congregazione di Monsignor Scalabrini negli Stati Uniti*, 1891.

<sup>15</sup> AGS, St. Anthony's, folder 575/1 and 575/2; *Il Corriere Italiano*, 2.10.1899.

<sup>16</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 11.2.1901; see also the whole months of November and December 1901; 6.21 and 7.15.1902; 11.3.1904.



The people coming from Basilicata could eventually organize a great festival for their Madonna of Pierno in the month of August. It usually started with a High, Solemn Mass, in the morning, it continued with the music of the band parading through the streets where Italians lived, and closed with fireworks at night. Through this "festa" the priests bound one of the political leaders of this group, the democrat Vito Cristiano, to the Italian parish and recognized the social role of Mr. Rubino, who would later become one of the better known Italian undertakers of the immigrant community.

Fathers Casazza and Chenuil recovered from oblivion the important feast of St. Joseph, held in March. Very dear to the Sicilians, it was sponsored by one of their most prominent merchants and businessmen, Alfonso Bellanca. It is a tradition dearly cherished by some Buffalo Italian Americans to this day.<sup>17</sup>

In 1902 the tradition of transforming in a community gathering the festa of the Madonna del Carmine, held in July, was started. In 1903, in order not to antagonize the better educated and more successful section of the Italian community, St. Anthony's participated in the highly controversial "festa" for the 20th of September, which celebrated the final step in the national unification of Italy. The virtual conquest of Rome from the Pope had aroused the anger of faithful Catholics all over the world.<sup>18</sup> In the following years the celebrations for the finding of the Holy Cross (festa del Santo Crocefisso), which always gathered great crowds from the neighbouring agricultural little towns as well, supplanted inconspicuously the less popular 20th of September.<sup>19</sup> The latter, in fact, remained a celebration of "prominenti" and never became a community festa. Summer, then, the only period when the Italians could pour in the Buffalo streets without freezing, was punctuated by these festivals. Thanks to the mediation of the Catholic Italian parish, these feste broke regional boundaries to embrace the whole community in a festive mood.

As the community became more homogeneous and adapted to the American patterns of behaviour, the parish anticipated these trends: in 1913 people held the Columbus Day ball and the annual ball of the Pierce Arrow company club in the church hall. At this time meetings of all sorts were held in the Italian parishes halls: from movies and theatrical performances to charity bazaars. In 1914 Italian parishes were becoming such mundane meeting places that the bishop of Buffalo had to forbid the organization of balls in churches because "la tendenza dei balli moderni non è troppo lodevole".<sup>20</sup> These halls had actually

<sup>17</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 7.10 and 7.17.1901; 3.22.1902; 7.9.1904; 2.17.1906; A. FRANGINI, *Italiani*, 50; FATHER SECONDO CASAROTTO, *St. Joseph Table - A Popular Tradition*, «Western New York Catholic», March 1987.

<sup>18</sup> To have an idea of international reactions to the 20th of September, see MATTEO SANFILIPPO, *La Santa Sede, Ernesto Nathan e le ripercussioni internazionali delle celebrazioni per il 20 Settembre 1910*, Archivio della Società Italiana di Storia Patria, vol. 113, 1990.

<sup>19</sup> See *Il Corriere Italiano*, the months of August and September of these years.

<sup>20</sup> (tr. of the quote: "the trend of modern dances is not too commendable") *Il Corriere Italiano*, 1.31.1914; 4.4.1914; in order to appreciate the role of churches' halls as socialization places for the Italian community suffice to skim the weekly issues of this paper.

substituted the saloon or the private restaurant halls as places for entertainments and meetings.

All these activities and the location of St. Anthony's helped to transform the area in front of the church. Important parades and festivals, both secular and religious usually occupied the triangle between the northern edge of Terrace Park, the church, the Verdi monument (which was eventually donated by the community to Buffalo after years of squabbles in 1907), and the city hall as their privileged itinerary. St. Anthony's and its lay supporters had designed the socially acceptable heart of the Italian American community, while the real residential heart of the Italian population was located several blocks away, in the "hooks".

St. Anthony's maintained its primacy as the leading Italian parish until World War I, even after three other Italian parishes were built because they were all located in heavily workingclass districts.

As soon as father Gibelli took hold of his new parish, had to comply with the American church program of establishing a parochial school. He was upset at the idea and worried that the parishioners would not support it. In 1892, he wrote to his motherhouse praising the English speaking people that came to his church: they were the only ones contributing to the church expences. In this situation the parochial school had no future. Yet Gibelli had to go along with the bishop's and Monsignor Quigley's program, as they were the ones who paid the rector's salary, who granted the bank loans and who offered hospitality to Italian priests in the Cathedral's rectory. Without them, Gibelli well knew, the Italian parish could not exist. All this cooperation from the Church hierarchy notwithstanding, the Cathedral trustees did not want Italian children in their parochial school. Rather than face the tensions arising from forced cohabitation, the parochial school of St. Anthony's was opened soon after the inauguration of the church itself.<sup>21</sup>

To Gibelli's surprise, in the second year of the school operations there were 374 pupils enrolled. He himself became proud of these achievements and eventually stopped complaining. St. Anthony's school must have been, he thought, the largest Italian school in the United States, its children were the only ones who sent their works to be exhibited at the Chicago Exhibition in 1893.<sup>22</sup>

In 1906 the parochial schools of the by then three Italian parishes, St. Anthony's, St. Maria del Carmine's and St. Lucy's, present a somewhat different story from the one we are used to hearing about Italian parochial schools in the United States. Gleason and Briggs, among others, noticed that the Italians seemed to have been among the few catholic immigrant people with little interest in a catholic education for their children.<sup>23</sup> The early history of St. Anthony's contradicts this impression. St. Anthony's school was very close to public school n° 2. In 1890, out of 540 students, the Italians were only a small part of the 83 children defined as of "other nationality" attending the school. In 1895, 197

<sup>21</sup> AGS, St. Anthony's file, folder 575/1, letters of Gibelli of 6.10.1891; 8.18.1892.

<sup>22</sup> AGS, file 575/1, letters of Gibelli of the 2.24.1893 and 5.29.1893.

<sup>23</sup> P. GLEASON, *op. cit.*, p. 50; JOHN W. BRIGGS, *An Italian Passage. Immigrants in Three American Cities (1890-1930)*. New Haven and London, Harvard University Press, 1978, pp. 192-203.

Italians were enrolled, while the previous year 400 of them were attending St. Anthony's school. There is no doubt that Italian immigrants preferred the parochial school when it was suitable.

In the same year a large number of 405 Italian children were following classes in public school n° 3. In this heavy working class area of the First ward there were German and Irish ethnic parishes with their parochial schools, as crowded and unfriendly as also the public schools could be. St. Anthony's was too far to be reached daily by the children. Italians therefore accommodated themselves to sending their children to the public school, notwithstanding the Irish student majority it held.<sup>24</sup>

But as years went by, children started deserting St. Anthony's school and went instead to the public school n° 2, which became publically known as the "Italian" school. Yet they continued to patronize in considerable numbers St. Lucy's and St. Maria del Carmine's schools.<sup>25</sup> What was happening?

Since the turn of the century a new principle, Mr. Rayn, had been appointed to school n° 2. He had lived in Italy for some time, spoke Italian, took care of the Italian pupils and was deeply, militantly catholic. He developed an alliance with St. Anthony's pastor. In 1901 1,010 Italian children went to school n° 2, in 1903 1,300, but when the Sunday school opened at the parish, Mr. Ryan took his pupils there, and with the help of some Irish-American teachers of his school and some well-to-do ladies of the Italian community, taught religious lessons in English. This cooperative agreement was so well established that some Italian socialists were appalled and in 1909 sent an official complaint about the principal's behaviour to the Commissioner of Education.<sup>26</sup>

Public school n° 1, located in the northern part of the district, also had a high percentage of Italian pupils from 1906 on. There too Irish American teachers goaded Italian children into attending catechism, pilloried those who would not identify themselves as Catholics or attend Catholic services.<sup>27</sup> Italian parents living in the area, in other words, need not enroll their children in parish schools. Their religious upbringing was guaranteed by the public institutions which worked hand in hand with the Italian ethnic parish of St. Anthony's.

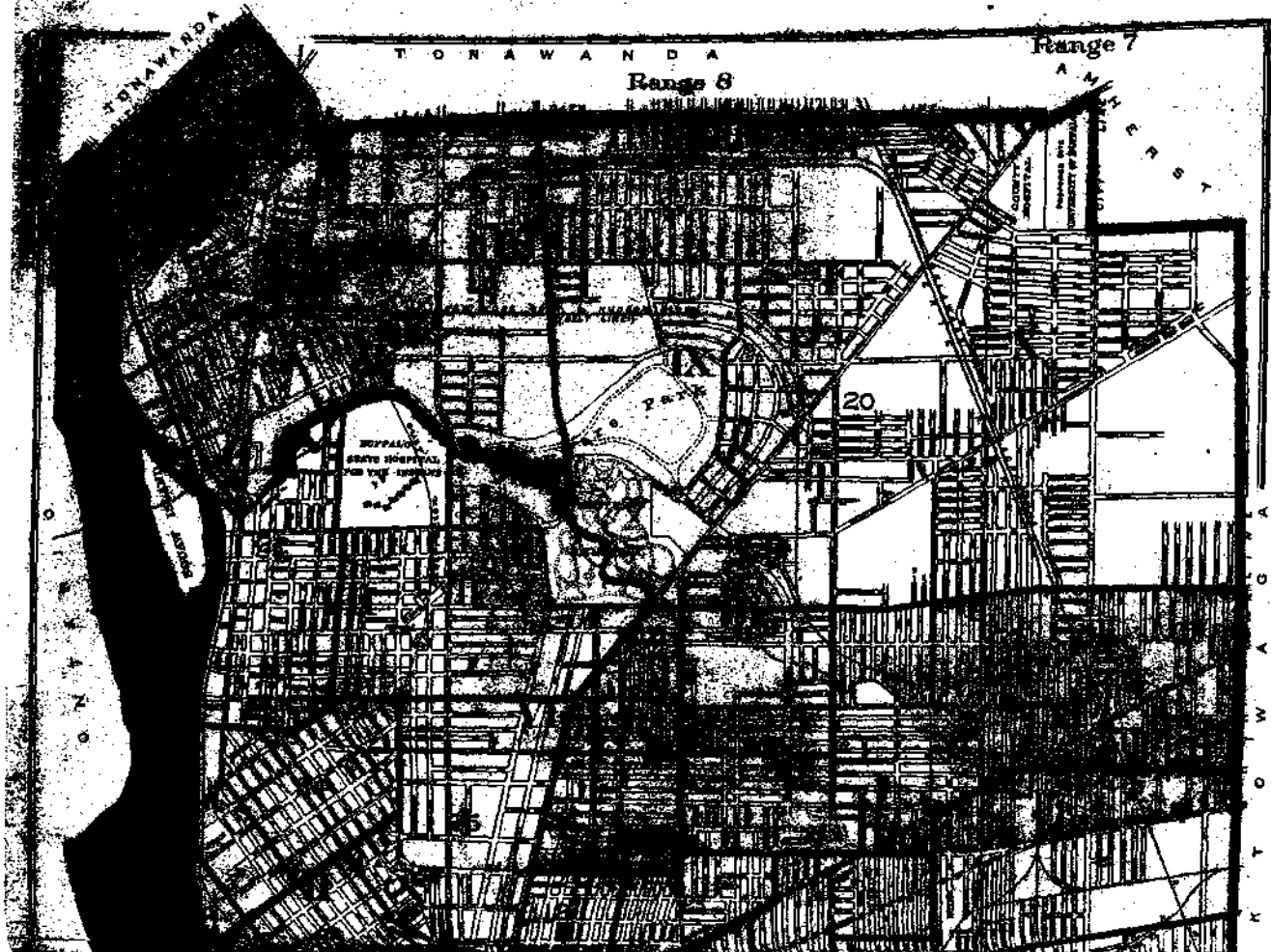
The situation, however, was not the same in the other two Italian parish schools. St. Maria del Carmine was built right in the "Hooks", where the community of several thousands Italian immigrants had no public school close to their living quarters. Dangerous grade crossings cut them off from public school n° 3, 6 and 7, while schools n° 4 and 5 were too far away (see map). An average

<sup>24</sup> CITY OF BUFFALO. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education, 1889-1890*, p. 36; ID., *Annual Report... 1894-95*, p. 121. For the evaluation of numbers of students in parish schools and the parishes' ethnic constituency in the city of Buffalo, see: *Catholic Directory. Almanac and Clergy List for the Year of Our Lord 1904*. New York, The M.H. Wiltz Co., 1904, pp. 229-231.

<sup>25</sup> *Annual Reports*, 1908, 1911, 1913, St. Anthony's, St. Lucy's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel's folders, Archives of the Diocese of Buffalo, New York (DAB).

<sup>26</sup> *La Fiaccola*, 10.16.1909.

<sup>27</sup> *La Fiaccola*, 11.7.1911.



TORAWANDA

T O R A W A N D A

Range 8

Range 7

A M H E R S T

N O R T H

K T O W A G L A

HOSPITAL SITE  
FOR THE HOSPITAL

20



CITY OF  
**BUFFALO**  
 NEW YORK

REFERENCE

*Steam & R. R. ...  
 Blocks & R. ...  
 Red lines ...  
 Solid refers to Districts.*

- a) St. Anthony's Church and School
- b) Public School n° 2
- c) Public School n° 7
- d) Our Lady of Mount Carmelo and School (since 1906)
- e) Public School n° 3

- f) Public School n° 4
- g) Public School n° 6
- h) St. Lucy's Church and School (since 1906)
- i) Public School n° 1
- l) Holy Cross Church (since 1914)

of 600 children and more therefore faithfully attended the parish school from 1907 on. St. Lucy's church, on the other hand, was built quite close to public school n° 6. Yet that school's principal did not seem to have any particular contact with the rector of the Italian parish, father Sharkey, who took care of 2,000 Italian parishioners. Although some of their children went to school n° 6, the majority of them, wrote rev. Sharkey to Propaganda Fide, chose the parish school.<sup>28</sup>

More interesting information can be evinced from the parishes' annual reports. Among the pupils of the ethnic parish schools there is a predominant enrollement of girls. On the other hand, in the public schools the enrollment of boys predominated among the students of Italian origin. When children were very young, they were sent to public kindergartens. In 1895 of a total of 925 children who went to kindergartens, 193 were Italians, little less than 20% (Italian population as a whole was about 5% of Buffalo population in 1890). In 1900, Italians in kindergartens were the 23%. In 1907, 4 out of 27 kindergartens were fully Italian. Among the Italian children the majority were little girls.<sup>29</sup>

These data show that the Italians were able to take advantage of the city institutions, use selectively either the public or the private sector according to their needs, to their cultural traditions and to the availability of these institutions. In addition the data give us a sense of the important role the church played in the cultural formation of the Italian American ethnic group. On the other hand, the educational politics of developing parochial schools for the children of the catholic masses, as we know, was part of the program of the American catholic church. In Buffalo, by 1895 there were already 43 parochial schools, vis à vis 15 protestant private schools. In 1916, 59 catholic grammar schools were in the city, whereas in those same years public schools mounted to 62.<sup>30</sup> The Buffalo diocese was definitely tailing closely the City Department of Education.

Orsi and, in anthropology, Swiderski, among others, have underlined the pivotal role the Catholic church had in aggregating women.<sup>31</sup> The Buffalo experience confirms this insight. The female associations (congreghe) were part of women's lives and were one of the few social opportunities available to them outside the family. A number of active women "congreghe" centered around the church. The more numerous congreghe a woman belonged to, the higher her social status. Teresa Martocci, wife of the contractor Calogero Pellettieri belonged to various congreghe. Giuseppina Mangano, of another family of *prominenti*, was a member of four of them. Angela Gugino, of the powerful Gugino family who had several businesses, belonged to 12 congreghe!<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Archives of Propaganda Fide, Rome (APF), Nuova Serie, vol. 467, rub. 7, ff. 257-259 and 463-64.

<sup>29</sup> CITY OF BUFFALO, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, *Annual Report... 1894-95*, p. 121; *Annual Report... 1900-1901*, pp. 96-97, 127; *Annual Reports* of St. Anthony's, St. Lucy's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, DAB.

<sup>30</sup> CITY OF BUFFALO, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, *Annual Report... 1894-95*; *Id.*, 1916-1917; *Catholic Directory*, 1916.

<sup>31</sup> ROBERT ORSI, *op. cit.*, p. 257; RICHARD M. SWIDERSKI, *Voices. An Anthropologist's Dialogue with an Italian-American Festival*. Bowling Green, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987, pp. 73-74.

<sup>32</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 4.12.1902; 7.20.1912; 10.24.1914; 8.23.1917.

These women's associations were in close contact with the rector of the parish, who usually, according to their constitution, was their official spiritual mentor and leader. The women belonging to the "congreghe" were the ones who, most likely, formed the bulk of the faithful attending the "missions", sessions of catholic revivalism which seemed to have met with great success each time they were held in Buffalo Italian parishes. This "devotional catholicism" as Dolan describes it, appealed especially to women. During mission sermons women's roles in the family and, consequently, in the community, were emphasized and enhanced. Women had to learn that they were the active educators in religious as well as in social matters: they were the moral guardians of the community. True faith, the audience was taught, heavenly prize and appreciation by religious leaders were achieved by exerting those qualities that pertained to the women's domain: docility, obedience, emotionalism, sentimentalism. The harsh edges of the "all-American boy" mythology were to be softened by those womanly virtues sanctioned by the Catholic church. In an all achieving and all male society, the Catholic church was restoring dignity to those female characteristics despised by the industrial capitalist society.<sup>33</sup>

There is no doubt, then, that Italian immigrant women, occupying in society a less recognized position than their native sisters, flocked to the church. It would be interesting to study this issue, but I suspect that they participated in church activities even more than they did in their mother country.

Some of these women were also "landladies", i.e., kept boarders. Often this occupation did not appear officially, neither on the census, nor on city directory. Ramirez has already pointed out how difficult it is to have reliable data on the matter. To keep boarders, while an accepted practice, was, by the first decade of the XXth century, socially reproachable.<sup>34</sup> In some cases, however, the information filtered through. Luigina Rizza was assassinated by one of her boarders. She was a well known and appreciated lady of the community. She belonged to various congreghe and her funeral was followed by nearly 2,000 people. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin found out that at least 485 women out of 4,000 who were in their working age lived with relatives or paying guests in 1905.<sup>35</sup> The importance of landladies as cultural mediators and as people exercising a measure of social control has already been underlined by Harney and Ramirez. Not only they contributed to the economic accumulation of the family. They kept alive and transmitted a value system.<sup>36</sup> It is most likely that many of them belonged to the

<sup>33</sup> J. P. DOLAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-237. On the importance of these associations also for the Irish immigrant women see BRIAN CLARKE, *The Parish and the Hearth: Women's Confraternities and the Devotional Revolution among the Irish Catholics in Toronto, 1850-1885*, in TERRENCE MURPHY, *Creed and Culture* (forthcoming).

<sup>34</sup> For a criticism of the boarding, see ELISABETTA VEZZOSI, *L'Immigrata Italiana: alla Ricerca di una Identità nell'America di Primo Novecento*, «Movimento Operaio e Socialista», VII, 3, 1984, p. 309 and note 27.

<sup>35</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, May 9 and 15, 1914. VIRGINIA YANS-MCCLAUGHLIN, *Like the Fingers of the Hand: the Family and Community Life of First Generation Italian Americans in Buffalo, New York, 1880-1930*. Ph.D., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1970, p. 485.

<sup>36</sup> ROBERT HARNEY, *Boarding and Belonging*, «Urban History Review», October 1978, pp. 8-37; BRUNO RAMIREZ, *Les Premiers Italiens de Montréal. L'Origine de la Petite Italie du Québec*. Montréal, Boreal Express, 1984, pp. 81-85.

women's "congreghe". The church, through them, had a relevant impact on the Italian ethnic cultural formation. We need not calculate, anyway, the number of women with boarders to assess the paths the catholic value-system moved along to percolate into the community. It is sufficient to think of the number of women who associated with the church and of the role of the parochial schools to appreciate catholic influence in the Italian ethnic family and community. Anti-clericalism was typically a male distinctive trait in XIX century Italy, where it was embedded in a favorable cultural and political environment. It is doubtful it could survive in the long run in an American context, where religious behaviour and commitment were highly praised. Scholars who stress the Italian immigrant irreligiosity may have not evaluated the impact of gender differences on the ethnic culture.

Second generation Italian women were active in the church too, especially in charity groups and social work. Already in 1902 they were helping St. Anthony's rector in the parish sunday school. By 1914 Buffalo saw several clubs formed by the cream of the Italian community young girls. They held balls to collect funds for the poor, for the church, or, at times, they engaged in entertainments of their own. All these activities were sponsored by the church. When in 1915 the Buffalo Civic Education committee was organized to help "americanize" the immigrants, several of these young catholic ladies of Italian origin, who were part of women's church organizations, collaborated with it.<sup>37</sup>

The fields of education, women's socialization and festival organizing, were not the only ones where the Catholic church exercised its influence.

Buffalo was the city that attended the dawn and the forging of the American Catholic church anti-socialist ideology. In 1902 the then third bishop of the city, Quigley, sent a pastoral letter to the pastors of the German parishes. In their sunday sermons they were recommended to alert the faithful on the dangers of socialism and to the corruption it was introducing into the organized labor movement. On the second of March of that same year Quigley held a flaring talk at a mass meeting in which he attacked the unions' ideas of social democracy, the communistic ideas of public ownership of public utilities and of means of production.<sup>38</sup>

With all his antisocialism, Quigley had nevertheless claimed a guiding role in social questions concerning the workers. In the famous 1899 grain-shovellers strike, he had a major influence in finding solutions protecting some workers' rights without demeaning the employers.<sup>39</sup> The American Catholic church's pro-labor and antisocialist stand had in Buffalo one of its early hotbeds.

<sup>37</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 2.22.1902; September, November and December 1913; 10.24. and 10.31., 11.14 and 11.21.1914; 6.19., 12.18., 12.25.1915.

<sup>38</sup> JOHN T. HORTON, EDWARD T. WILLIAMS, HARRY S. DOUGLASS, *History of Northwestern New York* New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1947, p. 359; THOMAS DONOHUE D.D., *History of the Diocese...*, cit., pp. 136-39; FRED A. MCGILL, *Souvenir of the Consecration Right Reverend Charles Henry Colton, D.D., Fourth Bishop of Buffalo, New York: August 24, 1903*. Buffalo, Buffalo Catholic Publication Company, 1903, pp. 39-45; CRISTINA MATTIELLO, *Cattolicesimo e Mondo del Lavoro negli Stati Uniti negli Anni '20*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Università di Roma "La Sapienza", 1987, p. 40.

<sup>39</sup> BRENDA K. SHELTON, *The Grain Shovellers' Strike of 1899*, «Labor History», IX, 2, Spring 1968, pp. 210-238.



Italian parishes were quick to follow in the American hierarchy's footsteps. In 1903, father Casazza blessed the flags of the Italian Laborers' Association. During the 1907-1908 depression the church of Mt. Carmelo, in one of the heaviest working class area of the city, with his Irish-American rector, father MacMahon, hosted meetings of the Italian unemployed who were organizing petitions to the city hall. During one of the harshest strikes in which Italians were involved in 1910, St. Anthony's rector, father Strazzoni, stepped into the negotiations, outmaneuvering the socialists who had up to then carried the strike in a successful manner.<sup>40</sup>

That year the Italian socialists were gaining a more visible foothold in the Italian community. Through their newspaper they claimed to reach about a thousand people. Workers crowded their meetings and shopped at their cooperative store. Garment and construction workers strikes offered them a bouncing board where from to address the concerns of the community at large.<sup>41</sup> Priests of the by then four Italian parishes increased their sunday sermons campaigns against the evils of socialism. It was a sin, the priests thundered from the pulpits, even to buy the socialist paper.<sup>42</sup> They successfully isolated the radicals from the community.

The Catholic Church in Buffalo was involved in politics in other ways as well. When in 1904 a truant officer for the so called Italian district had to be selected, father Casazza, the rector of St. Anthony's, was part of the Civil Service Commission. When in 1907 the great Old Home Parade took place, commemorating the centennial of the founding of the city, it appeared from the Buffalo local press that ethnic parishes represented the immigrant communities.<sup>43</sup>

The Italian ethnic parishes thus fulfilled the role of creating a common cultural outlook through schools, festivals, care for the laborers and connections with the city administration. But they also divided the community according to parish loyalties and competitions.

As soon as a new parish was established it would organize the festivals we have already mentioned for its own parishioners. Parishes needed the revenues from these festivals, which appear to be, from the annual reports, one of the most consistent contributions to the parish coffers.<sup>44</sup> The community therefore did not meet anymore near St. Anthony's. Instead each group gathered under its own

<sup>40</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 4.25.1903; 2.22. and 2.29.1908; *La Fiaccola*, months of May and June 1910.

<sup>41</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 8.24.1908; *La Fiaccola*, 2.26., 6.11.1910; 11.9.1911. Giacomo Battistoni, one of the most prominent Italian socialists of Buffalo, was at the beginning of his residence in the city, a garment worker himself. He was the founder of *La Fiaccola*. After World War II he was appointed by the Italian government the Italian consul of Buffalo. On him see also ELISABETTA VEZZOSI, *Il Socialismo Indifferente. Italiani Immigrati e Socialist Party nell'America del Primo '900*. Roma, Edizioni Lavoro, 1991, forthcoming; on the Buffalo Italian socialist section, see Clemente collection, clippings, Immigration History Research Center, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>42</sup> On anti-socialist preaching from the pulpit and priest's behavior, see *La Fiaccola*, months from September to December 1909; March-April 1910; 6.24., 7.9., 10.21.1911.

<sup>43</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 5.7.1904; *The Buffalo Courier*, September 1 through 10, 1907.

<sup>44</sup> *Annual Reports*, DAB.

bell tower. So Buffalo saw two festivals for the Madonna di Pierno, two for the Holy Cross.

Furthermore, the creation of more Italian parishes operated a selective social process. St. Anthony's remained the meeting point of the upper-crust, of the founding fathers of the community. The other parishes also had some prominent men sponsoring their activities, but they catered mostly to the workers who lived around them.

This social division did not cause any particular problem until the community started to expand. As years went by, increasing family stability, upper economic mobility and the railroads' efforts to enlarge their properties in the southern part of the city pushed Italians north of St. Anthony's. Bishop Colton was quick to sense the inadequacies of the catholic institutions in the area and to fear the tensions these Italians could have created with the large parish of Holy Angels, which was not too far from the area where Italians were settling. He sponsored thereby the creation of Holy Cross, the fifth Italian parish of the city and put father Gambino, of the Mte Carmelo parish, in charge of it.<sup>45</sup> Sevenhundred and twenty families were taken away from St. Anthony's and placed under the spiritual guidance of Holy Cross in 1914. Tensions clearly erupted between father Strazoni of St. Anthony's and father Gambino. But with the protection of the diocese, Holy Cross soon won the confidence of the Italian community leaders.<sup>46</sup> By 1917 it had become the meeting place of the community *prominenti*.<sup>47</sup>

In those 30 years the catholic church in Buffalo had carved a place for itself in the Italian community. Through the ethnic parishes and the policies of the local diocese it had laid the foundations for a network of institutions and for a common set of values on which the immigrant could fall back in time of psychological need. It is difficult therefore to agree with Vecoli and Ramirez who doubted about the strength of the Church's social control on the immigrant community. In delicate ways, and certainly in different forms from the German, Polish and Irish ones, the Italian catholic church in Buffalo contributed to the "ethnicization", i.e., the cultural formation of a sense of identity of the Italian immigrants. And in the meantime transformed them into different catholics from the ones they were in their mother country.<sup>48</sup>

Another important point seem to emerge from the history of the Italian parishes in Buffalo: they were part of the more general political program carried out by the American Catholic church, which opted to segment its own faithful

<sup>45</sup> *Il Corriere Italiano*, 10.10.1914; 1.30., 3.13., 4.24., 11.4.1914; St. Anthony's file, letter of father Demo to Bishop Colton of the 7.3.1914., Center for Migration Studies, Staten Island (I am very grateful to Father Casarotto who gave me the possibility of viewing the material of this collection that he had gathered for his own research).

<sup>46</sup> DAB, Holy Cross folder contains various letters on this matter, as does St. Anthony's folder at the AGS.

<sup>47</sup> HENRY WAYLAND HILL (ed.), *Municipality of Buffalo, New York: A History, 1720-1923*. New York and Chicago, Lewis Historical Publishing Company inc., 1923, vol. 1, p. 36.

<sup>48</sup> *L'Emigrato Italiano in America*, VIII, 15 settembre 1914, pp. 16-20. GIOVANNI PIZZORUSSO, *La 'Nuova Serie' dell'Archivio di Propaganda Fide e la Storia degli Italiani in Nord America*, «Il Veltro», 1-2, XXXIV, gennaio-aprile 1990, pp. 67-82.

among ethnic and at times along class lines, rather than to implement a real culture of solidarity. We can agree therefore with what Browkoski says about the Catholic Church among the Polish immigrants in the United States: the story of the Catholic Church among Italians in Buffalo was a story of partial success and partial failure.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> JOHN J. BUKOWCZYK, *The Transforming Power of the Machine: Popular Religion, Ideology, and Secularization among Polish Immigrant Workers in the United States, 1880-1940*, «International Labor and Working-Class History», 34, Fall 1988, p. 23.

## **Summary**

This paper attempts a reconstruction of the possible effects of the interrelation of the growth and increasing complexity of the urban environment and the ever impending obligation of the Catholic Church to justify its role vis à vis the American establishment. These two processes affected not only the immigrants' integration process into the American society, but also their understanding of America and of their own role within it.

## **Résumé**

Ce texte tente une reconstitution des effets possibles de l'interrelation entre la croissance et la complexité grandissante de l'environnement urbain et l'obligation toujours menaçante de l'Eglise catholique de justifier son rôle vis-à-vis de l'Etat Américain. Ces deux processus affectent non seulement l'intégration de l'immigrant dans la société américaine, mais aussi sa compréhension de la Société américaine et de sa propre place dans cette société.

## **Jewish emigration from Trieste to the United States after 1938, with special reference to New York, Philadelphia, and Wilmington\***

This article is intended to shed light on the situation which existed in Trieste immediately before and after the approval of the anti-semitic laws which were passed by the Italian government in November 1938. I am interested in describing some of the reactions of Jews who were living in Trieste at that time and in presenting some aspects in the lives of those who emigrated as a result of the laws.

### *The Trieste Jewish community and the impact of the anti-semitic laws of 1938*

Departures from Trieste were particularly numerous because of the large number of foreigners and stateless persons that resided in the city at that time. Approximately two-thirds of the Jewish community comprised these people. Since many had entered Italy after 1919, they had to leave the country in 1938 because of the provisions contained in the anti-semitic laws. According to these laws only individuals who were 65 years old and over before October 1, 1938, or who had married Italian citizens before that date could remain in the country. Everyone else had to leave by March 22, 1939.<sup>1</sup> However, practically speaking, foreigners were not the only ones who had to depart. There were also many Italian Jews who were not legally obligated to leave the country, but who had lost their jobs as a result of the laws, and were often obliged to look for work abroad.<sup>2</sup> According to contemporary evidence, there were approximately 5,400

\* I would like to express my gratitude to Fabio Coen, and to those other people, who did not wish to be named, but who contributed by offering me letters and testimonies without which research for this article would not have been possible.

<sup>1</sup> RENZO DE FELICE, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*. Torino, Einaudi, 1988, p. 369; Archivio Unione Comunità Ebraiche Italiane, Busta 34, Relazione sulla comunità israelitica di Trieste per l'anno 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Archivio Unione Comunità Ebraiche Italiane, Busta 34, Relazione sulla comunità israelitica di Trieste per l'anno 1939.

Jews in Trieste in 1938, on a total population of 250,243 people.<sup>3</sup> By the middle of 1939, the Jewish community had dropped to 2,908 people, of which 1,294 were males and 1,614 females.<sup>4</sup>

The anti-semitic campaign in 1938 caused a large increase in the number of abjurations. In Trieste, according to the official records of the *Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche*, which are in the archives of the synagogue, many people abjured.<sup>5</sup> The total number for 1938 was 589 and 217 for the year 1939. It should be emphasized that in November 1938, alone, there were a total of 177 abjurations. This was indeed the highest number of all the Italian Jewish communities. Milan, for example, had 168. If one calculates the total number of abjurations for the months of November and December 1938 and January 1939, Milan had 536, Rome 495, Torino 370, and Trieste 342. These statistics are intended to indicate the extreme tension which the laws elicited among Jews. It is obvious that abjurations should be viewed as a drastic decision, dictated by particularly hostile circumstances. In Trieste, according to the official minutes of the Board of the synagogue, abjurations had already begun increasing in 1937. From 1933 to 1936, there had only been 15, while in the course of 1937, the number had rapidly jumped to 20. It is apparent that some people had sensed the oncoming storm.

Just as abjurations should be judged as desperate reactions, one should view in the same light conversions to Catholicism. According to the archives of the diocesan Curia in Trieste, there were 761 Jews in the course of 1938 who converted to the Catholic religion.<sup>6</sup> Of the total number of applications sent by individual priests to the Curia, there were 116 which involved people between the ages of 21 and 30, and 101 of young people between the ages of 11 and 20. There were 83 applications regarding people in the age group 31 to 40, 73 for the age group 51 to 60, 67 people between the ages of 41 and 50, and finally 41 applications regarding people 61 and over. There were 34 of children up to 10 years of age. Two-hundred forty-six applications did not indicate the ages. However, at that time when the applications were sent, documents attesting to the applicants ages were included. These documents are no longer in the archives of the Curia.

The number of applications according to age group is important. For example, after the approval of the September 5, 1938 decree law, no Jewish student could enroll in any school. Enrollment was only permitted after baptism.

<sup>3</sup> Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati, Cat. G1, Busta 201, Fasc. 451, Registro della Popolazione Ebraica Iscritta presso la Comunità Israelitica di Trieste - Trasmesso alla Prefettura di Trieste, 1938; Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea, Archivio storico, 13B (Trieste), Typewritten manuscript on the history of the Jewish community in Trieste from 1938 to 1945, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Archivio Unione Comunità Ebraiche Italiane, Busta 34, Relazione sulla comunità israelitica di Trieste per l'anno 1939.

<sup>5</sup> The following data on abjurations was recorded for each city by the Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane and is located at the Archivio della Comunità Ebraica di Trieste.

<sup>6</sup> I have organized the information on conversions on the basis of the documentation at the Archivio della Curia Vescovile di Trieste, Posizione V, 1938.

There were therefore many applications presented from September 6, 1938 to the end of the year which involved children and young people. A total of 77 were in fact in this age group, and hoped to be able to continue their studies. One application, for example, was dated November 22, 1938, and referred to 9 Jewish students between the ages of 8 and 17.

In 1939, there were a total of 313 conversions.<sup>7</sup> With respect to the months examined for 1938, the age groups involved had changed. While in 1938 the highest number of conversions concerned people between the ages of 21 and 40, in 1939 the highest number regarded people 41 years and over, and especially over 61. Clearly, the younger age groups wanted to come to grips with the problems raised by the laws as quickly as possible.

Aside from individual reactions to the measures passed by the government, it is important to have some idea of the atmosphere which existed in the Jewish community. According to police records, the community did give some instructions and advice to its members.<sup>8</sup> I will summarize the most interesting points. First of all, Jews were advised to remain indifferent, when they spoke to non-Jews, to the new regulations which were being approved. In fact, in inevitable discussions between Jews and non-Jews, they were admonished not to express bitterness toward any expressions of anti-semitism, or even demonstrations. Furthermore, due to the entry of many foreigners and stateless Jews from Eastern Europe, Triestini Jews were reminded that Government provisions would free the country of many undesirable people.

If one looks at the minutes of the Board of the synagogue from September 1938 to January 1939 (for the following months all records were taken away by the Nazis), no mention or criticism of the laws is at all included. There are, however, more frequent meetings. No reference to the laws might be interpreted as a precautionary measure. There are, nevertheless, indications that the Board did back the Fascist government. For example, in August 1938 the president sent Mussolini a telegram expressing his joy at Mussolini's coming visit to Trieste at the end of September 1938. Furthermore, a few years earlier in November 1935 when the Italian troops invaded Ethiopia, the Board unanimously approved Mussolini's decision.<sup>9</sup>

The Jewish population of the city comprised an important sector of the economy. Jews were very numerous among the learned professions and as white collar workers. On the basis of contemporary newspaper reports, of the documentation located at the Italian archives in Ljubljana, and the archives at the synagogue in Trieste, one can have some idea of the large number of people who were forced to leave their jobs, as a result of the laws. For example, at the Assicurazioni Generali, out of a total of 436 employees, 39 employees and 26

<sup>7</sup> Archivio della Curia Vescovile di Trieste, Posizione V, 1939.

<sup>8</sup> Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Serie Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Cat. 61, Busta 206, Nota fiduciaria del Direttore Capo Divisione Polizia Politica alla Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati del 29 settembre 1938.

<sup>9</sup> Archivio della Comunità Ebraica di Trieste, Verbale della seduta della Giunta della Comunità del 18 agosto 1938; Verbale del Consiglio della Comunità del 24 novembre 1935.

directors and department heads left. At the Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà, or R.A.S., there were 11 Jews who were directors and heads of specific departments, who had to leave. On a total of 283 employees, 25 were Jewish, and were notified that they had to leave the company.<sup>10</sup>

It would certainly be tedious to list the names of the lawyers, engineers, architects, chemists, business consultants, pharmacists, doctors and accountants who were cancelled from the registers of each of these specific professions.<sup>11</sup> However, each name is a case in itself, an individual who had to face the difficult predicament of deciding whether or not to look for work abroad.

### *Testimonies of Jewish migrants from Trieste*

The second part of this article is based on letters and written or oral testimonies, which I have been collecting from people who were living in Trieste, and who emigrated to the New York, Philadelphia or Wilmington area. These people were deeply affected by Italian anti-semitism and were forced to leave under very trying circumstances. In many cases, I have been specifically asked not to reveal the names of the individuals involved, nor of those people who wrote from Trieste to their relatives in the United States. Fortunately for my research, a few people have saved scattered letters that were written to them by other immigrant friends in the United States. These letters reveal the extent of intra-personal relationships between immigrants. Marriages, birth announcements, news from relatives who remained in Italy are the subjects which cause immigrants to correspond. Very often too, immigrants write to each other on subjects relating to the recent change which has occurred in their lives. Some letters also contain interesting references to friends or relatives who have immigrated to the United States.

Finally, I have been given some letters written from Trieste to relatives in the United States. The information contained in these letters is indeed quite scanty and at times difficult to interpret. One has to keep in mind the extent to which these letters were subject to Italian and American censorship. Italian censorship generally consisted in a numbered stamp on the letter itself and glued strip of paper on the envelope which said "verificato per censura". American censorship is also quite visible, and consists in a strip of paper glued on the envelope which says "opened by the examiner" with the examiner's number stamped on the letter itself, or outside on the envelope. Obviously, Italians who wrote to their relatives abroad were extremely careful not to include information which would be considered objectionable, otherwise the letters would have been confiscated.

<sup>10</sup> Italiani arhiv - Institut za zgodovino delavske gibanja - Ljubiana, F1018/III; SILVA BON GHERARDI, *La persecuzione antiebraica a Trieste (1938-1945)*. Udine, Del Bianco, 1927, p. 79.

<sup>11</sup> Documents at the Archivio della Comunità Ebraica di Trieste contain the names of those individuals who were cancelled from the registers of the following professions: 22 architects, 30 engineers, 6 architects, 4 chemists, 1 business consultant, 7 pharmacists, 55 physicians, and 14 accountants.



They generally, therefore, contain extremely personal information. I noted, however, on a few, that parts of the letter had been carefully cut out. Nevertheless, despite censorship, I did find some letters which contained brief references to the specific situations which Italian Jews had to cope with in their daily lives. By reading between the lines, one can sometimes glean interesting details.

One letter written from Trieste to Philadelphia is dated August 27, 1940 and contains a specific reference to an affidavit which the writer had requested from a friend of a friend who resided in the United States, and which was not accepted by American diplomatic officials. She was hesitant to disturb a relative, who had just immigrated to New York, and she was still hoping to be able to leave Italy, via Lisbon.

Another letter from someone else in Trieste to a relative in Wilmington is dated March 14, 1941 and refers to the coming Pesach (or Jewish Easter Holidays). The mood of the letter is extremely nostalgic. "These holidays become sadder and sadder because the number of religious people has decreased considerably, especially in our family where many people have left. I assure you that socializing is very difficult, because one has to carefully avoid the subject of baptisms, otherwise one gets into extremely embarrassing situations, or, worse yet, ends up offending people". Clearly, the writer had not converted to Catholicism. Her words indicate the tensions which easily arose between Jews who had maintained their own religion and those who had decided to convert.

Another letter written by a different person to a relative in Wilmington is dated October 30, 1941. It refers to the fact that the writer and her family have moved from the center of Trieste to the outskirts (at that time), in order to be less conspicuous. She writes: "Here life is monotonous and very different from when you left. In this house, we hardly see anyone and even our sons go out considerably less than before". It is apparent from the letter that members of this family tried to avoid unnecessary contacts with people they could not trust.

I have been in touch with approximately twenty people who were either living in Trieste in 1938 and subsequently emigrated to the United States, or are sons and daughters of first-generation emigrants. It should be emphasized that not everyone who left Trieste went directly to the United States. Some went temporarily to Rome, others joined friends or relatives in France, England or Portugal, and remained there a short time before departing for the United States. There were, for example, two people who recalled having gone to London to obtain visas. Some of these testimonies are useful, while others are considerably less helpful. It is certainly illuminating to analyze the different reactions that the laws elicited in people who were directly affected by them. In some cases, individuals recall exactly what they did and how they reacted at that time. They are able, therefore, to furnish minute descriptions of specific experiences. In other cases, experiences or events have been partially or totally blotted out.

I have noted that recollections are often closely linked to the difficulties which relatives who remained in Italy had to later face. In cases in which relatives were victims of Fascist, or subsequently, Nazi persecution, Triestini emigrants frankly stated that they had completely forgotten their departure from Europe and early years in the United States. Some strongly emphasized that they had

made a conscious attempt to blot out anything connected with that period of their lives. One or two even noted that they could not understand how their relatives could bear living in Italy, having to meet up with people who had previously collaborated or sympathized with the Nazis, and who impudently spoke of themselves after the war, as anti-Fascist. In cases in which relatives survived, but underwent numerous hardships in order to miraculously do so, emigrants affirmed that relatives were not even willing to recount the horrors of the war years to their own relatives, who returned to Trieste as visitors after 1945. Narrating bitter experiences, even to members of their own family, was a way of recalling what they had made a conscious attempt to forget.

While for the majority of emigrants departure was a heart-breaking experience, this was not true of everyone. Two people, for example, both unmarried and twenty and twenty-two respectively, had a distinct recollection of Mussolini's visit to Trieste, which took place at the end of September 1938.<sup>12</sup> They remember his speech in Piazza Unità, as they had both gone, hoping that Mussolini would refer specifically to the anti-semitic laws which were about to be approved. One testimony stated: "It was the first time that I felt uncomfortable with my friends. And when Mussolini touched that subject (anti-semitism), it was as if a barrier had been placed between them and me". The same person recalled that even though his parents were sad when they said good-bye to him at the train station (he went to Paris first), he was not. He realized that an entirely new and challenging future was in store for him. However, when he had to show his passport at the border and it said "di Razza Ebraica", he was ashamed as if he had written those words himself. For older people, even just in their late twenties, or early thirties, departure was definitely more difficult, as they often left behind elderly parents, who were in no condition to leave their country. One person recalled, however, that leaving Trieste was a kind of liberation from a "very bourgeois and oppressive atmosphere that existed at that time in Trieste."

Many Triestini went to Paris or London hoping to get American visas. This was no easy matter. The waiting list for Italians was very long, because entry was still based on the 1924 Immigration Quota Law. Only extremely well-known artists or scientists, such as Albert Einstein, were admitted outside the immigration quotas.<sup>13</sup> The majority waited months hoping to obtain a visa, which did not necessarily arrive with an affirmative response. Some joined friends, others such as one lady and her family joined a brother in London and eventually did get a United States visa. She distinctly recalled how anxiously she waited to be able to finally depart from London.

Certainly, the early years in the United States, whether in New York, Philadelphia, or Wilmington marked a significant change in the lives of immi-

<sup>12</sup> The pages of local newspapers contain extensive coverage of this event. Great preparations were made a good deal in advance in order for the city to appear particularly beautiful. Special prizes were even given to shopkeepers who had prepared for the occasion unusually decorative shopwindows, *Il Commercio Giuliano*, September 1, 1938.

<sup>13</sup> GERDA LERNER, *A Round Table: The living and reliving of World War II*, "The Journal of American History", September 1990, p. 588.

grants. This is especially apparent in immigrants' letters and notes to each other. One person was an important department head at the Assicurazioni Generali. After spending a year and a half in Paris, he and his wife left for New York from Lisbon. Once in the United States, since he had no previous knowledge of the English language, his first step was to attend an English for foreigners course. He and his wife rented a tiny apartment on the West Side of New York. As his knowledge of English gradually increased, he started studying to be able to obtain an American license to be able to work as an insurance broker.

His wife who had not been employed in Trieste, but was an active member of the synagogue, got a job in a shop in New York doing crocheting work on a full-time basis, in order to contribute to the small family income. Her letters indicate her constant concern at not receiving regular news from her relatives in Italy. In one letter, dated March 23, 1944, she writes that she has not received news in a year from her daughter, who had since moved to Padua. Letters from Italy became scantier and scantier after the United States entered the war.

Another Triestino in his late twenties found a job at the New York Life Insurance Co. in New York. A letter dated October 12, 1941 to a friend in Philadelphia indicates sheer loneliness and hopelessness. "As far as my life is concerned, I cannot complain despite the enormous difficulties, that came as no surprise to me. It is so hard to have a sufficient clientele to be able to survive, when one lives so far from relatives and friends, who are inevitably helpful. (...) As for the rest, it's better not to think in those terms, if one wants to have the strength to keep on going. Unfortunately, we have gotten accustomed to wishing each other the lesser of all evils, and can no longer aspire for things to go for the best".

Immigrants wrote to each other in Italian, of course, and their letters not only contain references to their new experiences, but reveal, at times, ways in which they absorbed new life styles during the war years. One fact that is worth noting is that though the letters are in Italian, in the course of the years examined, they gradually begin including English words and expressions for objects and situations which are typically American.

Clearly, Triestini whom I contacted belonged to the middle or upper-middle class in Italy. All of them had belonged to the synagogue in Trieste, as I found their names in the official list of members.<sup>14</sup> Once in the United States, a number of factors were important in conditioning their decisions, regarding participation or membership in local congregations. Firstly, the fact that they were Italian Jews made them culturally different from other Jews already in the United States, who had come from totally different backgrounds and lifestyles. Secondly, individual knowledge of the English language greatly influenced an emigrant's decision on whether or not to become right away a member of a synagogue. Thirdly, not only was Hebrew pronounced differently in Italy, but in the United States many

<sup>14</sup> Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati, Cat. G1, Busta 201, Fasc. 451, Registro della Popolazione Ebraica Iscritta presso la Comunità Israelitica di Trieste - Trasmesso alla Prefettura di Trieste, 1938.

East European Jews spoke Yiddish, a language Italian Jews were totally unfamiliar with. Finally, American Judaism was divided into Orthodox, Conservative and Reformed. Many Triestini recalled that it took them considerable time to discover the differences among the three groups, and to determine which one appeared more suitable to their own individual needs. It is also worth noting that if on the one hand, Triestini Jews had difficulty identifying with Judaism in the United States, it was all the more arduous for them to relate with local Italian communities, which largely consisted of immigrants from Southern Italy with totally different customs and backgrounds. The fact that religiously speaking Triestini Jews felt different from other Jews in the United States, and that ethnically they had virtually nothing in common with the majority of Italian immigrants, explains the isolation which many described during their early years in the United States.

Some people recalled receiving letters from friends or acquaintances who had gone to live in Lisbon, and who not only kept in touch with their own relatives in Trieste, but also with the relatives of Triestini who had gone to Philadelphia or New York. As soon as they had news, they would write. For example, one letter written from Lisbon to Philadelphia, dated October 21, 1943 is indeed quite touching. It says: "This time unfortunately I cannot send you news of your mother. The last letter I received from my own relatives is dated September 1. A letter that I had sent on the same date was sent back, stamped 'Mail service interrupted'. And now who knows when we will have news of our dear and distant relatives. Life here (in Lisbon) is very calm, in fact it would be marvelous, if I were not always concerned about my relatives, especially my mother who is 81 years old".

One person had distinct recollections of his departure and early life in New York. He remembered living in a room with someone else in a kind of boarding house, where there were about ten other people, who were all newly arrived Italian Jews. He had departed from Trieste in October 1938, and had just begun studying at the university, the previous year. His first move was to Paris where he got a job working for a theater, while waiting to obtain a visa to go to the United States. Meanwhile, his French residence permit had expired, so he went to London where he took advantage of the opportunity to learn English. When he was finally notified that he had obtained his visa, he returned to France and departed from Marseilles in March 1940 for New York. It had taken seventeen months to obtain his American visa.

Once in New York, he began looking for work. He distinctly remembered his first job at a company which specialized in the roasting and canning of coffee. He was hired as a kind of door-to door salesman, who was expected to go to grocery stores in the Italian district to convince the owners to agree to placing coffee company stickers in their shop windows. It was not an easy job. Though he was told to speak in Italian, communications were very difficult. There were very definite language barriers, as the owners were from Calabria and Sicily, and spoke in dialects which he could barely understand. Misunderstandings often arose. Not only did he speak a different language, but even his appearance and clothing were so very different from theirs.

I have cited this testimony in some detail because it sheds light on the deep changes in life styles which Triestini Jews had to initially face in their new environment. Nonetheless, the person who described his early experiences was very much aware of the fact that the difficulties and consequences of the break from the environment where he had grown up were certainly nothing, compared with the horrors of Nazi concentration camps inflicted on some Jews who remained in Trieste. It is appropriate to recall that in Trieste 603 Jews were sent to concentration camps and never returned.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Archivio della Comunità Ebraica di Trieste. AUGUST WALZ in his book, *Gli ebrei sotto la dominazione nazista. Carinzia, Slovenia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Udine, Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1991, p. 254 reports an even higher number.

## **Summary**

This article is intended to shed light on the situation which existed in Trieste immediately before and after the approval of the anti-semitic laws which were passed by the Italian government in November 1938. The author describes some of the reactions of Jews who were living in Trieste at that time and presents some aspects in the lives of those who emigrated as a result of the laws.

## **Résumé**

L'article entend mettre en lumière la situation qui existait à Trieste avant et après l'approbation de la Loi antisémite de 1938. L'Auteur décrit quelques unes des réactions des Israélites qui vivaient à Trieste à l'époque et présente quelques aspects de la vie de ceux qui devaient émigrer pour raisons de cette Loi.

## **“Liberty is almost a religion among you”: on culture, class, and conflict in German-America, 1840-1860**

Fifteen years ago, Kathleen Conzen published an important study of one American city – antebellum (pre-Civil War) Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It reported that while the Irish population there was quite “homogeneous and... constituted in effect a socio-economic class united by a common economic predicament”, the German population “had the widest range of internal differences and the least homogeneity of any nationality group in the city, including the native born”.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Conzen’s observation about the Germans, applied across the belt of that group’s settlement in the antebellum United States, constitutes the point of departure for the present paper. It probes the relationship between the social-economic structure of antebellum German America, the nature of immigrant political and religious culture, and the content of German-American ethnic identity. It does this by examining some major conflicts in which German-Americans became embroiled – conflicts within the ethnic group as well as conflicts with those outside the group’s bounds.<sup>2</sup>

### *Immigration and social structure*

All together, at least a million and a half Germans entered the United States between 1840 and 1860. By the 1850s, almost nine out of every ten continental European immigrants to the United States were coming from the states of the latter German Empire. By the end of the nineteenth century, more Germans had landed on the shores of the United States than any other group.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> KATHLEEN NEILS CONZEN, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1976, pp. 83-84.

<sup>2</sup> The themes explored in this paper are examined in considerably greater depth – and length – in a book forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press entitled *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (1992).

<sup>3</sup> *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, vol. I, pp. 8-9; MACK WALKER, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 157.

Some of the immigrants entered agriculture, especially in the western states. But in 1860, only about a third of all German-born males over 20 years of age in this country were tilling the soil, and by 1870, the proportion had slipped to just over one-fourth. Many more – probably twice as many – of the immigrants made their living in manufacturing and commerce as in agriculture (See Appendix). In 1860, the average German immigrant was almost three-and-a-half times as likely as the average U.S. citizen to live in one of the country's major cities.<sup>4</sup>

These immigrant urbanites formed a fairly well developed social-occupational pyramid. At the top was a relatively small group of very wealthy, well-connected, and influential merchants and financiers. Some of these people were well rooted. In the seaports of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans, they traced their lineage at least to the turn of the nineteenth century and often earlier. New infusions from abroad regularly reinforced their ranks, as did the financial success here of immigrants with humbler European antecedents. Taken together, German writer Karl Büchele reported in 1855, these "big businessmen of the principal cities" constituted "the aristocracy of German immigrants". Below this elite lay a much more broadly based stratum of medium- to large-scale entrepreneurs (merchants, manufacturers, proprietors of the bigger hotels and restaurants), associated professionals (clergy, physicians, attorneys, journalists), and local politicians.<sup>5</sup>

The great majority of German-born urban dwellers entered the ranks of the U.S.'s mushrooming working class. Unable in the short run to obtain farms in the New World, many uprooted German peasants sustained themselves through unskilled labor. Draymen, hackmen, and teamsters; longshoremen and porters; domestic servants; and a wide variety of laborers employed in construction, transportation, and manufacture combined to make up the bottom tier of the German-American working class. Across the country, jobs like these sustained perhaps twenty to twenty-five percent of the economically active German-born population.<sup>6</sup>

But in contrast to the Irish (among whom unskilled labor was the norm), German immigrants nationwide concentrated very heavily in the traditional skilled crafts. Federal census marshalls in 1870 found Germans working in especially large and disproportionate numbers as tailors, tailoresses, and seamstresses; carpenters, joiners, and cabinetmakers; boot and shoemakers; blacksmiths; butchers and bakers; masons and plasterers; cigar-makers; and coopers. One of the largest charitable organizations in the nation in these years reported that "German mechanics and tradesmen" were "settling in our large towns, where they almost monopolize certain branches of trade and industry". They "can work for less wages than Americans, and live where an Irishman would

<sup>4</sup> *Population of the United States in 1860*. Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1864, pp. xxviii-xxxii; *Ninth Census*, vol. 1, pp. 698-699, 704-705.

<sup>5</sup> KARL BÜCHELE, *Land und Volk der Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika*. Stuttgart, Hallberg'sche Verlagshandlung, 1855, p. 284. See also *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*, 19, 1848, p. 43; *The North American Review*, 82, 1856, p. 265.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix.



starve". The availability of this growing pool of skilled but low-wage labor buoyed urban industrial development and many private fortunes. Business success beckoned to enterprising immigrant businessmen ready and able to employ their own countryfolk in such industries as ready-made clothing, shoes, and furniture.<sup>7</sup>

### *Political unity and dissension*

Economic need and shared language, memories, and customs tended to pull German-Americans together across these lines of social class. The sharing of a common language and innumerable customs and points of cultural reference over time proved a potent source of unity, the more so in a new, strange, and English-speaking land. Problems of adjustment – exacerbated by unemployment, poverty, and ethnic discrimination – tended to strengthen community cohesion and ethnic identity. Paradoxically, perhaps, such conditions nourished the development of an all-German national self-identity among many emigrants previously accustomed to regard themselves first and foremost as Palatines, Prussians, Hessians, or Bavarians. German America's churches, theaters, beer and music halls, mutual insurance societies, dense network of cultural *Vereine*, and other community institutions variously offered spiritual refuge, social camaraderie, and material assistance. Formal or informal ties to well-to-do *Landsleute* – individuals at once wealthier, better educated, and better informed about and connected to the surrounding society – offered hard-pressed immigrants still other cherished sources of emotional and practical security.<sup>8</sup>

Joyous reaction to news of the 1848 revolution strengthened such bonds of ethnic unity. In one American city after another, meetings and parades witnessed well-to-do, well rooted, and well dressed merchants and professionals sharing reviewing stands with down-at-the-heels newcomers, big merchants and ethnic politicians with mere workers and saloon-keepers. Proponents of simple parliamentary democracy in Germany were flanked by champions of a "social" or "red" republic.<sup>9</sup>

Amid this widespread enthusiasm, *Revolutions-Vereine* pledged to change in Germany cohered in many big cities and scores of smaller towns. Struggling

<sup>7</sup> *Ninth Census*, vol. I, pp. 710-15; 1860 report of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, reprinted in EDITH ABBOTT, ed., *Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1926, p. 833.

<sup>8</sup> STANLEY NADEL, *Kleindeutschland: New York City's Germans, 1845-1880*. Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1981, pp. 228-39; KATHLEEN NELS CONZEN, *Immigrants, Immigrant Neighborhoods, and Ethnic Identity: Historical Issues*, "Journal of American History", 66, December 1979, pp. 608-609, 613-614.

<sup>9</sup> See the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* of April 1, 6, 13, 22, May 13, 1848; ROBERT EDWIN HERZSTEIN, *New York City Views the German Revolution, 1848: A Study in Ethnicity and Public Opinion*, in LEE KENNETT, ed., *The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe: Proceedings*, 1976. Athens, Ga., University of Georgia Press, 1976, pp. 103-114; CARL WITTKER, *The German-Language Press in America*. Lexington, Ky., University of Kentucky Press, 1957, pp. 62-70.

to unite individuals and groups who subscribed to very different general outlooks, the January 1852 congress of the American Revolutionary League for Europe (*the Amerikanischer Revolutionsbund für Europa*) held in Philadelphia typically chose "to explore the middle ground upon which all parties could honorably and cheerfully unite their forces". The lowest common denominator proved to be support for political republicanism. Along with this limited platform went an apotheosis of the United States and its uncritical endorsement as a model for the new Germany. "Look across the ocean", urged one open letter to the German people, "see the size, the flower of our Republic" and "hopefully and confidently look to us" for inspiration. "We see accomplished here", agreed a communication from Illinois, "what we wish for you".<sup>10</sup>

At last, however, this broad-based social and political coalition fragmented. A number of factors were responsible. The consolidation of reaction in Germany, foreclosing hopes for an imminent revolutionary revival, doubtless played a role. Also involved, however, was dismay at the social conflicts and political polarization that the 1848 overturns had unleashed in Germany. Craft workers and peasants had raised demands and behaved in ways that terrified the Frankfurt Parliament's liberal majority, which opened the door to counterrevolution. The editors and publishers of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* and kindred sheets thus began to stress that their hopes for German unity and liberty excluded support for "revolutionary quacks" and "fire-eating philosophy".<sup>11</sup>

As these recriminations mounted, activists and observers began to correlate political and social divisions. Their reports contrasted ongoing support for revolution among German-American workers with a growing caution and estrangement among their better-off *Landsleute*. German governments heard that while "demagogues and workers" were striving to make Germany into a republic, the respectable immigrant mercantile element was growing suspicious of revolutionary agitation. Other evidence confirms the pattern.<sup>12</sup>

Pittsburgh's reception for visiting Hungarian nationalist leader Lajos Kossuth in January 1852 captured these contrasts. As elsewhere, German residents made up a big and especially enthusiastic section of the greeters. In the manufacturing suburb of Birmingham, workers from a number of enterprises agreed to contribute a portion of their year's wages to the cause of Hungarian freedom. Kossuth, a well-to-do attorney, was neither a radical nor even a consistent liberal democrat, which makes his reaction on this occasion the more interesting. Thanking the workers for their act of almost "too great a generosity", Kossuth

<sup>10</sup> *Turn-Zeitung*, January 15, March 1, April 1, April 15, 1852; THOMAS STOCKHAM BAKER, *Lenau and Young Germany in America*. Philadelphia, P. C. Stockhausen, 1897, pp. 71-72; THEODORE PÖSCHE, CHARLES GÖPP, *The New Rome; or, The United States of the World*. New York, G.P. Putnam and Co., 1853, pp. 99-100.

<sup>11</sup> *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, January 15, 1854, October 28, 1856.

<sup>12</sup> C. F. HUCH, *Die Deutschamerikaner und die deutsche Revolution*, "Mitteilungen des Deutschen Pionier-Vereins von Philadelphia", 17, 1910, pp. 25-33; CARL WITTKÉ, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (1952). Wetsport, Ct., Greenwood Press, 1970, pp. 32, 38; *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, July 7, 1848, April 21, 1849.

added pointedly that "if that example should be imitated by the richer classes" – even if "not to such an extent" – then "within a year the whole of Europe would be free". But then, the Hungarian reflected, "the working classes – those who by their honest toil gain their daily bread... are animated more by a disinterested love of principle and of freedom, than [are] a great part of those who are not in your condition... With you the love of liberty is almost a religion".<sup>13</sup>

### *Social-political polarization*

Diverging attitudes toward revolution in Europe paralleled deepening differences in German America about the nature and prospects of life in the United States. Conditions in the U.S. encouraged the growth, among more prosperous and/or personally ambitious immigrants, of a classically liberal faith in economic individualism and capitalist development. Academician Francis Lieber laid out such views relatively early. "Every disturbance of property is a proportional blow to industry", he wrote, so that "no farther increase in capital" means "no increase in property, no advance in civilization". He added,

«If it be true that overgrown fortunes are dangerous and inexpedient, it is equally true... that one of the great blessings of a people consists in a great number of substantial private fortunes, and that values which collectively can be used productively to the highest advantage for the laborer and the community at large, melt away if slivered into small proportions».

"Let all men, therefore, rejoice", Lieber concluded, "whenever they see that one of their fellow-creatures has succeeded in honestly accumulating a substantial fortune".<sup>14</sup>

If not every champion of liberalism was as ready to accept its full implications, the ranks of yea-sayers nonetheless grew swiftly during the 1850s. Carl Schurz became one of their most prominent spokesmen. He had first gained prominence in Germany in association with those who sought government protection for small masters threatened by capitalist development. But soon after Schurz reached America, he announced that his "political views have undergone a kind of internal revolution". He had been deeply impressed by the discovery that "all the great educational establishments, the churches, the great means of transportation, etc., that are being organized here – almost all of these things owe their existence not to official authority but to the spontaneous co-operation of private individuals". To Schurz, these American achievements proved the superiority of the social "anarchy" that "exists here in full bloom" over the "lust for government" so characteristic of the European-born "hot-headed professional

<sup>13</sup> *Daily Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 22, 28, 29, 1852.

<sup>14</sup> FRANK FRIEDEL, *Francis Lieber, Nineteenth-Century Liberal* (1947). Gloucester, Mass., Peter Smith, 1968, pp. 194-95.

revolutionists". The goal of all reform, Schurz concluded, should be "to break every authority which has its organization in the life of the state".<sup>15</sup>

Many immigrant wage-earners waxed less enthusiastic about their new homeland and less confident of the positive effects of *laissez faire*. Having fled to North America in search of economic salvation, large numbers were unprepared for the bleak, hard-driven, and straitened lives that faced many laborers and sweated craft workers here. In the United States, a German-born resident of Pittsburgh asserted, "the laboring masses are treated in as shameful a manner as in Europe, with all its ancient prejudices", adding that "nowhere in the world is poverty a greater crime than in America. In the land which boasts of its humanity, which claims to be at the very top of civilization, society does far less for the poor than anywhere else". A German-born tailor objected bitterly in 1850 that "we provide all they enjoy by our labor, and we have to stand by and look on them revelling in every luxury, while we are driven to a bare mouthful of bread and that only to be got by hard toil and sweat. We build the houses and they, the idlers, step in and enjoy them, and we are driven out without house and home". A German-born shoemaker recalled in 1855 that "in our country we have fought for liberty and many of us have lost, in battle, our fathers, brothers, or sons". In the United States, "we are free, but not free enough". Here, he protested, "you don't get bread nor wood", even though "there is plenty of them". Here, he concluded, "We want the liberty of living".<sup>16</sup>

By the late 1840s, labor struggles were pitting German-American journeymen against their employers in one trade after another. Whatever their immediate foci, these labor struggles pivoted the exercise of power, a fact that few antebellum employers overlooked. Demands for a collective wage increase or reduction in hours challenged the employer's assumed right unilaterally to govern the enterprise. A German boss cabinetmaker of Brooklyn named Helmut voiced the indignation of many proprietors when he "threatened to disperse the [German] Cabinet Makers Association with Cannon balls" upon receiving the *Verein's* wage demands in 1850. Only the threat of a strike induced Herr Helmut later to "pay whatever was wanted" and reportedly promise "never [to] say such words again, which he had only uttered in a moment of excitement". In 1859, when Cincinnati's predominantly German journeymen cabinetmakers' association demanded union-shop guarantees and employer recognition of a permanent union standing committee, employers responded predictably. Frederick Rammelsberg and other major furniture manufacturers "firmly protest[ed] against any interference in the control or management of our factories" and vowed to "resist all action of any union assuming to dictate rules or regulations for adoption".<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> CARL SCHURZ, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers* (1913). Frederic Bancroft, ed., New York, Negro Universities Press, 1969, vol. I, pp. 5-8.

<sup>16</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, reprinted in JOHN P. SANDERSON, *Republican Landmarks: The Views and Opinions of American Statesmen on Foreign Immigration*. Philadelphia, J.B. Lipincott & Co., 1856, pp. 223-25; *New York Herald*, August 5, 1850, January 9, 16, 1855.

<sup>17</sup> *New York Daily Tribune*, May 17, 1850; *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, April 5, 1859.

Such clashes gave rise to or swelled the ranks of early trade unions and other labor-reform organizations. As these disputes spread, employers and employees alike reached out for additional allies. Local, shop-specific disputes began to fuse into broader and more generalized conflicts and organizations. By 1852, according to one estimate, immigrant labor societies of one kind or another already counted 20,000 adherents nationwide.<sup>18</sup>

These developments measured and drove forward a potent process of polarization that altered patterns of affinity and loyalty in German America. It increased social distance, friction, and antagonism within German America, especially between substantial employers and their employees. Immigrant liberals believed that in a society blessed with legal freedom, working people could have few legitimate complaints. Like all other members of the community, workers reaped the full fruits of their labors. The Cincinnati *Volksblatt* enthused that "In America, the worker is sovereign". Neither princes nor guilds interfere with the worker's business. "Who is it who sets the price of labor?" it asked, replying: "It is the worker". Thus it was that "most millionaires have become such only by first being workers". It followed that aggressive collective action in pursuit of higher wages was unjustified. The same city's leading German-American boss cabinetmaker, Frederick Rammelsberg, held that among his employees "no wrong, much less suffering, exists except when incapability or intemperance is the cause". He and his fellow furniture manufacturers assured one and all that "the law of Supply and Demand will regulate the scale of prices, and fix it on an equitable basis".<sup>19</sup>

### *Religion and anticlericalism*

Social-economic and political differences impinged on other subjects of apparently only "cultural" significance. Not least of the latter was religion. As in Europe, German liberals and democrats in America tended to be *Freistinnigen* – "religious liberals", rationalists, "freethinkers" – who identified with the Enlightenment, denigrated supernaturalist doctrines, and harbored deep suspicion of organized churches and clerical hierarchies. Roman Catholicism, Lutheran conservatism, and the "Puritanism" of evangelical Protestantism in the United States all came in for strong criticism. Immigrant democrats commonly celebrated the birthday of Thomas Paine as a holiday and esteemed his "heretical" *Age of Reason* as highly as his *Rights of Man*.

This spirit was evident in the labor organizations as well as the socially heterogeneous, radical-democratic *Sozialistischer Turnerbund*. Independent "free congregations" (*freie Gemeinden*) affiliated to no synod or denominational organization. Such free congregations arose across the belt of German settlement – in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania and on into Ohio,

<sup>18</sup> *Turn-Zeitung*, January 15, 1852.

<sup>19</sup> *Cincinnati Volksblatt*, November 15, 1851, quoted in the Cincinnati *Hochwächter*, November 26, 1851.

Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Missouri. More than 70 free congregations sprang up in the Ohio Valley alone. The *Freimännervereine* (commonly translated as the League of German Freemen) most consistently and militantly asserted the link between secular democratic and theologically rationalist doctrines. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland, and Cincinnati all boasted such societies. The Cleveland body, founded in late 1851, grew from 15 to 200 members in its first year of existence. Larger and more famous was Cincinnati's *Verein freier Männer*, with a membership estimated at around a thousand and a sizeable periphery of sympathizers. It conducted public meetings in its hall each Sunday morning (in deliberate defiance of native-born Protestant sensibilities); organized its members and supporters into mutual-insurance, reading, discussion, theater, gymnastic, and women's auxiliary groups; and sponsored a variety of public lectures and other cultural events. Its membership seems to have been heavily weighted with craft workers but included professionals, small manufacturers and merchants as well.<sup>20</sup>

To many later American writers, European anticlericalism appeared alien, anachronistic, irrelevant in the United States, which had formally dispensed with its established church half a century earlier. But immigrants quickly discovered that Protestantism retained great power, including legislative influence, in America. As Tocqueville noted in the 1830s, much of America's (Anglo-American) middle class considered a Protestant asceticism essential to sustain republican government and protect its corruption and debasement at the hands of an unrestrained rabble. The subsequent progress of industrial development, with its attendant shocks and grievances, made such a religiously grounded code of popular self-discipline seem even more urgent. Native-born ministers sermonized on "the necessity of Civil and Religious Restraints for the permanence and happiness of society"; newspapers repeatedly affirmed that "the observance of the christian Sabbath" was "intimately associated with public virtue and with the permanence of the Commonwealth". The proliferation of statutes during the 1850s prohibiting the consumption of alcoholic beverages and strictly regulating public conduct on the Sabbath demonstrated the political potency of this socio-religious outlook and the relevance of the immigrant secularists' preoccupation.<sup>21</sup>

Such laws offended Germans of diverse economic standing. Many of the laboring poor, though – for whom festive, even boisterous, Sundays and fraternizing in the nearby *Lokal* over a stein of *Lagerbier* were central to leisure and

<sup>20</sup> *Geschichtliche Mittheilungen über der Deutschen Freien Gemeinden von Nord-Amerika*. Philadelphia, Deutschen Freien Gemeinden von Philadelphia, 1877, pp. 1-28; C.F. HUCH, *Die freireligiöse Bewegung unter den Deutschamerikanern*, «Mitteilungen», 11, 1909, p. 9; PHILIPP WAGNER, *Ein Achtundvierziger: Erlebtes und Gedachtes*. Brooklyn, N.Y., Johannes Wagner, 1882, pp. 227-29; JAKOB MÜLLER, *Aus den Erinnerungen eines Achtundvierzigers*. Cleveland, Rudolph Schmidt Printing Co., 1896, pp. 41-42; WITTKÉ, *Refugees of Revolution...*, cit., pp. 128-30.

<sup>21</sup> ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *Democracy in America* (1835). Philip Bradley, ed., New York, Random House, 1945, vol. I, p. 316; *Newark Daily Mercury*, April 23, June 13, 1853, February 9, 10, 1854.

social life – took particular exception to such laws, regarding them as gratuitous pieces of class discrimination. Innumerable groups of craft workers denounced “all laws, such as Sunday laws, temperance laws and the like, that encroach on the workers’ enjoyment of their liberty”. Attempts to enforce prohibition laws occasionally exposed something of the breadth and depth of such resentments. In 1855, new temperance laws and the jailing of *Lokal* owners who violated them led to a violent *melee* between police and Germans of Chicago’s North Side; it kept the city in a virtual state of siege for four days. Rumors that a policeman had stabbed an immigrant blacksmith prolonged the rioting, in the course of which one German was killed and many others wounded (including a policeman attacked by an immigrant cigarmaker). New York State outlawed the Sunday sale of liquor and beer in the same year. In July of 1857, fears of an impending attempt to enforce that ban sparked rioting in New York City’s heavily German seventeenth ward.<sup>22</sup>

Catholicism, if less powerful than puritanical Protestantism, seemed even more malevolent. Internationally, that church was in this period frankly and militantly frankly reactionary – anti-cosmopolitan, anti-liberal, anti-republican, and anti-democratic. Pope Gregory VI declared as much in his encyclical of 1832, *Mirari vos*, which denounced the separation of church and state; “the senseless and erroneous idea, better still, absurdity, that freedom of conscience is to be claimed and defended for all men”; “complete and unrestrained freedom of opinion which is spreading everywhere to the harm of both the Church and the State”; freedom of the press; and all forms of rebellion against “our dearest sons in Jesus Christ, the princes”. His successor in 1846, Pius IX, proved loyal to Gregory’s principles and eventually summarized his own reaction to the age of revolutions in the encyclical, *Syllabus Errorum*. There he denounced the “error” of believing that “the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile himself to and agree with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization”.<sup>23</sup> In the United States, Catholic clergy opposed the public school system (seen by many others as the cornerstone of republican government), trade-unionism (manifested, for example, during the 1850 New York tailors’ strike), and abolitionism.

Conservative German-American clergymen reacted strongly to the presence of rationalism and anticlericalism among their *Landsleute*. After a decade in America, Protestant theologian Philip Schaff returned to Germany and complained about “the modern European heroes of liberty, or rather licentiousness – too many of whom have unfortunately been sent adrift upon us by the abortive

<sup>22</sup> *New Yorker Demokrat*, July 17, October 29, 1852; *Newark Daily Mercury*, November 8, 1853, February 9, 1854; *Bellevue Zeitung*, May 1, 1855; EUGEN SEEGER, *Chicago: The Wonder City*. Chicago, Gregory, 1893, pp. 110-112; JAMES M. BERGQUIST, *The Political Attitudes of the German Immigrant in Illinois, 1848-1860*. Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1966, p. 173.

<sup>23</sup> H. DANIEL-ROPS, *The Church in an Age of Revolution, 1789-1870*. New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., 1965, pp. 214-215; JOSEPH N. MOODY, ed., *Church and Society: Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements, 1789-1950*. New York, Arts, Inc., 1953, pp. 230-234; KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE, *The Nineteenth Century in Europe: Background and the Roman Catholic Phases*. New York, Harper & Row, 1958, pp. 256-260, 270-278.

revolutions of 1848". They included "the very worst forces of irreligion and infidelity, which, as far as their influence extends, cover the German name in the New World with shame and disgrace". *Der Lutheraner* warned its readers to avoid all newspapers edited by "forty-eighters" as well as all activities and organizations inspired by them, for they aimed "to destroy religion, property, and the family".<sup>24</sup>

The hostility of German Catholicism was even more obvious and certainly better organized. The German-American Catholic hierarchy supplemented its religious and political attack on spiritual and secular radicalism with a network of mutual-benefit societies. These bodies were designed to aid parishioners materially while reinforcing loyalty to the church, its clergy, and its doctrines. By 1845, representatives of 17 such associations were meeting to found a *Central Verein*, whose constitution provided "that only practical [practising] Catholics who fulfill their Easter duties, lead an honorable life, are dutiful children of the Church, and obedient to bishop and pastor can become and remain members".<sup>25</sup> The politico-religious polarization evidenced here worked to deepen the estrangement of liberal- or radical-minded immigrants from the Catholic and more conservative Protestant congregations.<sup>26</sup> The clergy evidently found this differentiation preferable to internal disunity and disloyalty. Milwaukee's missionary priest, the Rev. Anthony Urbanek, anticipated that dissident "ringleaders" might indeed join the Freemasons or some other "secret society" - "or become pilgrims of the Workingmen's Republik... of [Wilhelm] Weitling". In either case, their exodus "eliminates those alien members", so that "the time approaches even nearer when the fermenting elements will be sifted and clarified".<sup>27</sup>

The core outlook and demands of the German-American radical democracy was most successfully captured in a document drawn up and published in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1854. Reprinted in some thirty German-language news-

<sup>24</sup> PHILIP SCHAFF, *America: A Sketch of Its Political, Social, and Religious Character* (1854). Perry Miller, ed., Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1961, pp. 35-36, 219; HEINRICH MAURER, *The Problems of a National Church before 1860*, "American Journal of Sociology", 30, March 1925, pp. 546-550.

<sup>25</sup> ALFRED STECKEL, *German Roman Catholic Central Society of the United States of America*, "Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia", 6, 1895, pp. 252-65. In 1851, a Catholic journal specifically oriented to a craftworker readership (entitled *Handwerker und Arbeiter-Union*) appeared in Cincinnati.

<sup>26</sup> Much more research is needed into the social bases of immigrant religion. But fragmentary evidence suggests some correlations between religion, occupation, and political orientation. In German Pittsburgh, Prof. Nora Faïres discovered, Catholic and Lutheran congregations contained substantially higher proportions of unskilled laborers and lower proportions of craft workers and small masters than did other Protestant churches. Such findings, in turn, accord with general observations made by earlier students of German America. All of which suggests, once again, that factors of religion, social-economic status, and politics are better understood in relationship to one another rather than as alternative or even counterposed variables. See NORA FAIRES, *The Evolution of Ethnicity: The German Community in Philadelphia and Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, 1845-1885*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1981.

<sup>27</sup> *Letters of the Right Reverend John Martin Henmi and the Reverend Anthony Urbanek*, "Wisconsin Magazine of History", 1926, p. 91.



papers, this "Louisville Platform" inspired similar documents circulated and endorsed elsewhere in German America. Regarding the U.S. Constitution as "the best now in existence... yet... neither perfect nor unimprovable", it sought a fuller democratization of government processes, structures, and policies. To that end, the Platform advocated measures such as the direct election and subjection to recall of all public officials, a stricter separation of church and state, liberalization of naturalization laws, a general defense of immigrant rights and interests, and an interventionist foreign policy serving international "liberty and democracy" rather than the principle of neutrality. Reflecting its Enlightenment inspiration, the Platform saw reason and education as the keys to freedom and prosperity. Accordingly, it insisted that "all, indiscriminately, must have the use of free schools for all branches of education". Concerning economic relations, it asserted that "labor has an incontestable claim to the value of its products" and urged that "the laboring classes be made independent of the oppression of the capitalists". This required the intervention of a strong democratic state. Where necessary, for example, that state "must... aid the [cooperative] associations of working men" by establishing special credit banks for that purpose and by awarding government contracts wherever possible "to associations of workmen, rather than to single contractors". Proletarianization would also be limited by the "free cession of public lands to all settlers" (in place of "wasting them by speculation") and by state aid to poor settlers ("lest said measures prove useless for these very persons who most need it"). Where workers remained in the employ of others, the state must "mediate between the claims of the laborer and the capitalist" by enforcing minimum wages equal to the "value of the labor" and limiting the length of the working day, in accordance with "the demands of humanity".<sup>28</sup>

### *Nativism and the content of "Americanism"*

With some justice, plebeian radical-democrats depicted themselves as upholding a venerable North American tradition. Free thought, rejection of sabbatarian and temperance edicts, and demands for greater political democracy and societal aid for the poor were certainly no strangers to the New World. Groups of hard-pressed American craft workers and small farmers had defended kindred beliefs at least as early as the Revolution and as recently as the 1830s. And the cult of Thomas Paine served to bolster claims that the democratic visions of 1776 and 1848 derived from a common source. An early German-American reform organization couched its platform in the language of the Declaration of Independence and announced that "We have no other interest than those of the American people, because America is the asylum of the oppressed everywhere, and because the interest of the American people is the interest of the whole human race". The Louisville Platform invoked slogan of the 1848 Left - "Liberty,

<sup>28</sup> Excerpts from the Louisville Platform were reprinted in Sanderson, *Republican Landmarks*, p. 224. See also the *Louisville Daily Democrat*, March 4, 1854.

Welfare, and Education for All!" – and then immediately asserted that this represented no "new political theory; for we find the same principle expressed, in different words, in the Constitution of North America and in the Declaration of Independence of 1776".<sup>29</sup>

Anglo-American critics rejected that equation, insisting upon a distinctly foreign provenance for radical democracy. The latter had nothing in common with – indeed, was fundamentally antithetical to – American principles of government and social organization and (in the words of one newspaper editor) "long-established customs and institutions". "Theirs is a democracy eminently European", wrote nativist author John P. Sanderson. "No one can mistake its paternity... It is not the republicanism of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, Jay, Madison, and their illustrious compeers".<sup>30</sup>

This was by no means mere reflexive, visceral xenophobia. Although commonly couched in such national-chauvinist terms, such criticism actually reflected and championed specific social and political views – views neither peculiar to the United States nor endorsed by all its native-born citizens. In other words, the nativist critique was broadly national-cultural in form but more narrowly social-political in content. The doctrines advocated by the radical-minded immigrants were objectionable less for their European origin than for their specific, practical significance. "[T]hey preach for political doctrine", complained J. Wayne Laurens, "Fourierism, agrarianism, and that particular form of red republicanism, which consists in overturning the foundations of society, and dividing the property acquired by the industrious among the idle and dissolute". Nativist congressman Thomas R. Whitney made the point sharply and clearly. German-American "men of business, capital, and respectability", he affirmed, were a "class of immigrants [that] is always desirable". He grew apoplectic, however, when contemplating "the red republicans, agrarians, and infidels", who were "generally working-men and tradesmen". The offense of the latter, moreover, was not a too-close affinity with European ways in general; they were repulsive, in fact, precisely because of the way and degree in which they opposed the European status quo. They were "the malcontents of the Old World, who hate monarchy, not because it is monarchy, but because it is restraint. They are such men as stood by the side of Robespierre".<sup>31</sup>

German-Americans who opposed their radical-democratic countryfolk borrowed the rhetoric of their native-born counterparts, buttressing their substantive arguments with appeals to a distinctive American tradition. Particularly fond of this tack were earlier immigrants who had successfully adapted to the new society and to its dominant institutions and values as well as the German Catholic

<sup>29</sup> *Young America*, November 8, 1845; *The Free West*, May 18, 1854.

<sup>30</sup> *Sentinel of Freedom* (Newark), April 14, 1854; *Newark Daily Mercury*, April 14, 1854; J.P. SANDERSON, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>31</sup> J. WAYNE LAURENS, *The Crisis; or, The Enemies of America Unmasked*. Philadelphia, G. D. Miller, 1855, pp., 180-81; THOMAS R. WHITNEY, *A Defence of the American Policy, as Opposed to the Encroachments of Foreign Influence*. New York, Dewitt & Davenport, [1856], pp. 167-71.

and conservative Lutheran clergy and press. "There is a class among us", complained "An Old German" in a letter to a Newark daily,

"who have arrived since 1848, who can scarcely understand the English language, and who are not yet entitled to citizenship, that endeavor without understanding the institutions of the country which has afforded them a refuge, to overthrow them and bring upon us the immorality and disorder of Europe".<sup>32</sup>

Was it really so surprising, wondered Illinois's Gustav Körner, another old German, that many of the native-born responded angrily to "the ignorance, the arrogance, the insolence and charlatanism of these would-be reformers"?<sup>33</sup>

The foregoing observations about antebellum German America are offered as contributions to the larger effort to explore "how social forces influence the form and content of ethnicity".<sup>34</sup> They are directed against a recurring tendency to abstract issues of ethnic and religious identity and cultural (including religious) friction from their actual social-economic and political contexts. How German-Americans related to one another and to the larger society makes sense only when we keep clearly in view the relationship between the immigrants' social composition and structure (on the one hand) and the era's competing value systems (on the other).

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<sup>32</sup> *Newark Daily Mercury*, June 5, 1853.

<sup>33</sup> THOMAS J. MCCORMACK, ed., *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner, 1809-1896*. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1909, vol. I, p. 567.

<sup>34</sup> The quotation comes from STEPHEN STEINBERG, *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1981, pp. ix-x. See also BRYAN PALMER, *Classifying Culture*, «Labour/Le Travailleur», 8-9, Autumn-Spring 1981-82, p. 154; and BRUNO RAMIREZ, *The Perils of Assimilation: Toward a Comparative Analysis of Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in North America*, in VALERIA GENNARO LERDA, ed., *From 'Melting Pot' to Multiculturalism: The Evolution of Ethnic Relations in the United States and Canada*. Rome, Bulzoni Editore, 1990.

## APPENDIX

### *Distribution of major ethnic groups by occupational category, 1870*

	All U.S.	Native	Irish	German
Agriculture	47%	54%	15%	27%
Personal and Professional Service	21	19	45	23
Trade and Transportation	10	9	13	13
Manufactures, Mechanical and Mining Industries	22	18	28	37

*Source: Ninth Census, vol. I, pp. 698-99.* It should be noted that those listed under "personal and professional service" included large numbers of unskilled laborers.

### **Summary**

This paper probes the relationship between the social-economic structure of antebellum German America, the nature of immigrant political and religious culture, and the content of German-American ethnic identity. It does this by examining some major conflicts in which German-Americans became embroiled – conflicts within the ethnic group as well as conflicts with those outside the group's bound.

### **Résumé**

Ce texte explore les relations entre la structure socio-économique de l'Allemand-Américain avant la guerre, la nature de la culture politique et religieuse de cet immigrant, et le contenu de son identité ethnique d'Allemand-Américain. Il le fait en examinant quelques conflits importants dans lesquels les Allemands-Américains ont été entraînés – conflits à l'intérieur du groupe ethnique aussi bien que conflits avec ceux qui n'avaient pas de liens avec le groupe.

# Migrants, Bishops and the Vatican: Belgian Immigration in the United States before World War I \*

This paper aims at achieving a double synthesis: of acquired knowledge of Walloon and Flemish immigration into the U.S. on the one hand, and of existing data on the religious and social integration of those immigrants as drawn from church archives. The first part will be a survey of the history of Belgians in the U.S., whilst the second deals with the results of a research in the archives of the Vatican and of Propaganda Fide.<sup>1</sup>

## I. Historical survey of Belgian emigration to North America (1865-1914)

### A. A non migrating people?

"No one is more deeply rooted in his home and less liable to catch exodus fever than today's Belgian" wrote Mgr. Cartuyvels, Vice-Rector of the Catholic University of Louvain in 1887.<sup>2</sup> If we look at the whole of the 19th century it is true that Belgians did not seem attracted by migration to faraway lands. In 1900 they scarcely numbered 29,000 in the U.S. compared to 94,000 Dutch, 115,000 Swiss, 153,000 Danes. Even the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg whose population never reached one 20th of the Belgian population in the 19th century, had some 33,000 persons living in the U.S. in 1888 when they formed a small but very active community.<sup>3</sup>

\* We would like to express our gratitude to Daniel Godfrind, Marc Maufort, Roberto Perin and Grazia Trabatonì.

<sup>1</sup> For a presentation of the archives series used here cf. M. BENOIT, M. SANFILIPPO, *Sources romaines sur l'histoire de l'Eglise catholique du Canada: le pontificat de Léon XIII (1878-1903)*, "Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française", 44, 1, 1990, pp. 85-96.

<sup>2</sup> MGR. CARTUYVELS, "De l'émigration belge en Amérique". *Congrès des oeuvres sociales à Liège. Deuxième session 5-7 septembre 1887*. Liège, 1887, p. 512.

<sup>3</sup> J. STENGERS, *Emigration et immigration en Belgique au XIX<sup>e</sup> et au XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Bruxelles, Académie royale des Sciences d'Outre-mer, Classe des Sciences morales et politiques, N.S., XLVI-5, 1978, p. 53. This work is the best synthesis to date of Belgian emigration before 1914.

To understand the reasons for the low rate of emigration of Belgians in the 19th century one must look briefly at the political and economic situation of this small-sized European state.

Since its independence in 1830, Belgium has been blessed with numerous and diversified natural resources such as coal, minerals, construction materials, vast forests. A limited land mass combined with the rapid development of roadways, and railways networks greatly facilitated the exploitation of its wealth. As well the industrial bourgeoisie availed itself of a plentiful (the Belgian population grew from 3,700,000 in 1830 to 7,400,000 people in 1910) and cheap labour force which was experiencing extreme misery. All these factors contributed to the tremendous growth of industrial production to the point that Belgium became the second most industrialized country in the world after England in the third quarter of the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> All these elements certainly did not promote emigration.

Belgium was not however spared periodic crises. Its agriculture was badly hit by the potato-blight which caused crops to drop by 87% in 1845 and continued to wreak havoc for many years thereafter.<sup>5</sup> This crisis together with the decline of home industries forced many rural families to leave their land and to emigrate most often to industrialized regions like Hainaut, Brussels or the North of France. Some make their way to the U.S. especially to Wisconsin as we shall see further on.

Since industry was developing at full capacity, it absorbed the largest part of this labour and kept growing until the middle of the seventies. Belgium was then severely hit by the international crisis and entered into a long depression which ended by 1895 and caused important social unrest in the mid-eighties.

Politically, Belgium gave itself the most liberal constitution in Europe as early as 1831, which guaranteed freedom of the press, religion, education, association. This "liberalism" accounts for the fact that Belgium hardly experienced any emigration of a religious or political character prior to 1914.<sup>6</sup>

Belgian emigration was thus essentially economic. Those who left were mostly farmers or labourers unable to find decent conditions of living in their own country. However, considering the extreme misery and the population density, one could have expected a large wave of immigration to the United States at least on a scale comparable to that witnessed in other European States.

Several elements help to explain this apparent contradiction: first the absence of any "emigration policy". If there were some attempts to create agricul-

<sup>4</sup> B.S. CHLEPNER, *Cent ans d'histoire sociale en Belgique*. Bruxelles, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1972 (1<sup>re</sup> éd. 1956), p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> G. JACQUEMYS, *Histoire de la crise économique des Flandres (1845-1850)*. Bruxelles, Maurice Lamertin, 1928, p. 254.

<sup>6</sup> In his study *Quelques témoignages sur l'immigration hennuyère. 1884-1889* («Bulletin de l'Académie royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer», 3, 1973, pp. 443-463), Jean Puissant shows however that the emigration of some labour leaders at the end of the 1880 had a definite political motivation though it does not seem to have been the main motivation of the thousands of workers leaving Belgium at the same time.

rural settlements – notably in the U.S. in the mid-19th century, where a few hundred beggars and released convicts were sent, the experiment as such did not last long and was dropped following the U.S. government's protest.<sup>7</sup> From 1856 onward Belgian authorities chose not to intervene in matter of emigration which was considered strictly a matter of private initiative. When by the end of the eighties, the government opened "information offices" for emigrants they did so to protect emigrants from certain corrupt practices. These offices did in fact help to limit the impact of propaganda coming from emigration agents.<sup>8</sup>

The "Société Saint Raphaël"<sup>9</sup> took similar action, seeking during the period "not to encourage emigration but to direct it and protect emigrants against the dangers they were exposed to both morally and religiously".<sup>10</sup> The society, inspired by the German model, sought to fight against the dishonest practices of recruiting agents "by placing a man near the emigrants who could advise and enlighten them".<sup>11</sup> Thanks to a network of regional delegates, the Society answered the questions of prospective emigrants and directed them to those destinations where they were likely to have better chances of success. The Society's activities were not limited to advising future emigrants but aimed as well at providing them with help and a frame of reference during their journey and at welcoming when they arrived at destination. They also exerted pressure on shipping companies in order to ensure the best conditions from the point of view of hygiene, food and morals. With these services the "Société Saint Raphaël" hoped to maintain emigrants in a Catholic context and to prevent them from neglecting their religious duties overseas. Socialist organizations for their part were not opposed to migration but drew the migrants' attention to the deceitful practices of which workers were too often victims, when they at times faced working conditions even less favourable in their new country than in Belgium.<sup>12</sup> On the whole, the initiatives of the government, of Catholic and socialist associations tended to temper the zeal of potential emigrants and thereby counterbalanced speeches and the propaganda of emigration agents.

The lack of any official encouragement to emigration overseas is one of the obvious reasons for its weakness but the fundamental factor is to be found

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. DE SMET, *L'émigration belge aux Etats-Unis pendant le 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle jusqu'à la guerre civile*, in *Album Antoine De Smet*, Bruxelles, Centre national d'histoire des sciences, 1974, pp. 450-455 (this text was first published in the *Annales de la XXXII<sup>e</sup> session de la Fédération archéologique et historique de Belgique*, 1947, pp. 188-208) et R. BOUMANS, *Een onbekend Aspect van de Belgische Uitwijking naar Amerika: de gesubsidieerde Emigratie van Bedelaars en oud-gevangenen (1850-1856)*, « Bulletin des sciences de l'académie royale d'outre-mer », XI, 2, 1965, pp. 354-393.

<sup>8</sup> On that propaganda see V. VAN COILLIE, *Propaganda en voorlichting met betrekking tot de Belgische overzeese emigratie, 1880-1914*, unpublished dissertation for the licence degree in History, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1980.

<sup>9</sup> The *Bulletin de la société belge de l'archange Raphaël* regularly denounces the practice of recruiting agents.

<sup>10</sup> F. WALDBOTT DE BASSENHEIM, "La protection de l'émigrant". *Congrès des oeuvres sociales à Liège. Troisième session 7-10 septembre 1890*. Liège, 1890, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J. PUISSANT, *op. cit.*

elsewhere. As it has been shown by Prof. Stengers "this emigration did not prove to be absolutely necessary because when faced with a lack of employment or insufficient resources, a Belgian undoubtedly found the means to improve his condition in fact by moving, but not too far away, and thus changing his surroundings much less".<sup>13</sup> Before the First World War important internal migrations took place to the industrialized regions of Wallonia or to neighbouring France.<sup>14</sup> Though figures on these population moves are few, they can reasonably be estimated to have largely contributed to a decrease of the number of emigrants crossing the Atlantic. The picture of a sedentary Belgian opposed to all forms of migration has thus to be reconsidered. Restraints on expatriation to distant countries neither prevented the departure of many Belgian priests to North America, nor the waves of industrial and agricultural workers to the U.S. and to a lesser extent to Canada particularly in the first years of the 20th century.<sup>15</sup>

#### B. *Emigration to North America. First destination: the United States*

As expressed by C.C. Quarley "The United States was by far the most promising under-developed area in the world in the nineteenth century until World War I".<sup>16</sup> It was then quite natural for millions of European emigrants to proceed to that country availing themselves of improved sea and land transportation to get to European harbours and cross the Atlantic, thus carrying on "perhaps the greatest folk migration in the known history of mankind".<sup>17</sup> For reasons outlined above Belgium only took part in a modest way in this vast population move.

In his remarkable synthesis on Belgian emigration in the 19th and 20th centuries, Prof Stengers shows the three main waves of Belgian emigration to the U.S. before World War I, each having its own characteristics and involving distinct categories of the Belgian population.

<sup>13</sup> J. STENGERS, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. L. SCHEPENS, *Van Vlaskuter tot Franschman. Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de Westvlaamse plattenlandsbevolking in de negentiende eeuw*. Bruges, Westvlaams Economisch Studiebureau, 1973.

<sup>15</sup> For a recent bibliography on Belgian emigration see M. DUMOULIN, E. STOLS, *La Belgique et l'étranger aux XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Bruxelles-Louvain-la-neuve, Collège Erasme, Recueil des travaux d'histoire et de philologie de l'Université de Louvain, 6<sup>e</sup> série, 33, 1987, pp. 127-146.

<sup>16</sup> C.C. QUALEY, *Immigration to the United States since 1815*, in *Les migrations internationales de la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours*. Paris, Editions du C.N.R.S., 1980, p. 37. On the image of the U.S. in Belgium at the end of the XIXth century see N. LUBELSKI-BERNARD, *Images du Nouveau Monde ramenées par quelques voyageurs belges à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in M. DUMOULIN, E. STOLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-146.

<sup>17</sup> C.C. QUALEY, *op. cit.*, p. 36.



Apart from the unsuccessful endeavours to establish agricultural colonies for beggars, tramps and released convicts, which had displaced a few hundred persons, this period is mainly characterized by the departure of several thousand Belgian farmers chiefly from Walloon Brabant in 1855-1856. This sudden movement of a large number of people greatly worried public officers.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless it came to an end as suddenly as it had started shortly after 1856.

This sudden but very localized phenomenon seems to have had its origin in an exchange of letters between families from the Wavre (notably Grez-doiceau) region settled in the neighbourhood of Green Bay (Wisconsin)<sup>19</sup> in 1853 and their friends who had remained in Belgium. Two elements helped to broaden the movement: the adverse economic situation mentioned above (potato blight, cereal crisis etc.) and the activity of emigration agents (the Antwerp shipping companies sensing that profits were in the offing sent recruiting agents to the Brabant countryside).<sup>20</sup> The move stopped abruptly in 1857-1858 due to favorable economic conditions in Belgium and to the news received from many emigrants who told their friends and families at home of the difficulties they had encountered, of the fraudulent practices of recruiting agents, of appalling travelling conditions<sup>21</sup> or of the number of traps which settlement in the U.S. entailed. Inquiries into the immigrants' living condition were made by Belgian consuls in the U.S. and these too slackened the pace of emigration.

This first migration wave chiefly consisted of entire farming families living on the smallest farms but owning at least some chattel and some real estate.<sup>22</sup> Thierry Eggerickx and Michel Poulain have also clearly shown the tight connection between marriage and emigration: "It is (...) as if those whose were just married were forced to leave and those wishing to emigrate were trying to get married".<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The governors of the provinces circulated a warning against the actions of certain emigration agents. J. STENGERS, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> A. De Smet has shown that many of these first families who emigrated were Protestant. A. DESMET, *La communauté belge du Nord-Est du Wisconsin. Ses origines, son évolution jusque vers 1900*, in *Album Antoine De Smet*, pp. 463-464 (first published in 1957) and *Id.*, *Antécédents et aspects peu connus de l'émigration belge dans le nord-est du Wisconsin*, «Wavriensia», II, 1953, pp. 17-39.

<sup>20</sup> On the motives for these departures and their consequences see the excellent study of TH. EGGERICKX, M. POULAIN, *Le contexte et les conséquences démographiques de l'émigration des Brabançons vers les Etats-Unis au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, «Annales de démographie historique», 1987, pp. 313-336. See also M.A. DEFNET, J. DUCAT, TH. EGGERICKX, M. POULAIN, *From Grez-Doiceau to Wisconsin. Contribution à l'étude de l'émigration wallonne vers les Etats-Unis d'Amérique au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Bruxelles, De Boeck-Wesmael, 1986.

<sup>21</sup> On this subject see E. SPELKENS, *Antwerp as a port of Emigration 1843-1913*, dans G. KURGAN, E. SPELKENS, *Two Studies on Emigration through Antwerp to the New World*. Bruxelles, Centre for American Studies, 1976, p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> TH. EGGERICKX, M. POULAIN, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 335-336.

Restricted though it was in time this migration nevertheless was the starting point of a small community of Walloon farmers in the Green Bay region. This community would remain closely knit to the point that they still constitute one of the main Walloon points of reference in the U.S.<sup>24</sup> This has stimulated an abundance of studies.<sup>25</sup>

## 2) 1880-1893

In this period, the emigrants were mainly working people from the industrial regions of Hainaut, who were hard hit by the economic difficulty. Among others, the departure of a number of glassworkers from Charleroi is worth mentioning. After a very hard strike in 1884, their trade union, the "Union verrière" received support from the Pittsburg "Knights of Labor" who offered to pay for the passage of a few hundred glass-blowers to take up vacant jobs in the U.S.<sup>26</sup> Equally numerous were the workers going to cities in Illinois, notably Moline, and to places in Michigan, like Detroit, where they formed very active communities. Examples of this is the publication of the *Gazette van Moline* in 1907<sup>27</sup> and of

<sup>24</sup> On Belgian associations in the American Midwest at the beginning of the 60 see F. STANDAERT, *Belgian immigrants in the Midwest of the U.S.A.* Evanston, (by the author), 1963. This farming region also lured Flemish immigrants. Cf. G.C.P. LINSSEN, *Limburgers naar Noord Amerika*, «Maasgauw», 93, 1974, col 39-54; J. RENTMEESTER, L. RENTMEESTER, *Flemlsch in Wisconsin*, s.l., 1985.

<sup>25</sup> On Belgian settlements in Wisconsin refer mainly to H.R. HOLLAND, *Wisconsin's Belgian Community*. Sturgeon Bay, Peninsula historical review, VII, 1933 et MATH S. TLACHAC, *History of the Belgian Settlement in Door, Kewaunee and Brown Counties*. Algoma, s.d. (reprinted by the *Peninsula Belgian American Club* in 1974). Also see A. DE SMET, *La Communauté belge...*, cit.; F. LEMPEREUR, *Les Wallons d'Amérique du Nord*. Gembloux, Duculot, 1976; C. PANSAETS, *Belgian emigration to the United States of America and more in particular to the state of Wisconsin (1850-1914): The Pierquet Mathieu Family*, unpublished dissertation for the licence degree in History, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1987; J. DUCAT, *Nouveau Bruxelles (Brussels) en Amérique. Une création brabançonne*, «Wavriensia», XXXV, 1986, pp. 79-84; ID., *Des Dionnais aux Amériques*, «Wavriensia», XXXVI, 1987, pp. 107-119; ID., *Les Brabançons au Far-West. Jay Township. Une colonie gréziennne au Minnesota*, «Wavriensia», XXXVI, 1987, pp. 121-128. J.J. GAZIAUX, *Feuillets d'émigration. A la recherche de Constant Fortemps (1856-1929)*, «Wavriensia», XXXVIII, 1989, pp. 33-64 et 65-104; E. RACETTE, *L'émigration brabançonne vers les Etats-Unis au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le cas de Beauvechain, Tourinne-la-Grosse (1855-1856)*, unpublished dissertation for the licence degree in History, Université catholique de Louvain, 1989. A bibliography and indications of sources available in Wisconsin and relative to this migratory move in D.L. HEINRICH, L.C. MC AULEY, *Belgian American Research Materials: a Selected Bibliography*. Green Bay, University of Wisconsin, 1976. To assess the progress of the research on the Walloon communities in the American Midwest see J. DUCAT, *L'émigration hesbignonne du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, «Bulletin du Cercle Art et Histoire de Gembloux et environs», II, 28, 1986, pp. 449-459.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. PUISSANT, *op. cit.*, p. 444; F. POTY, J.-L. DELAET, *Charleroi, pays verrier*. Charleroi, Centrale Générale, 1986, pp. 75-77; J. DUCAT, *Migration massive de souffleurs de verre carolorégiens vers l'Amérique en 1889*, «Bulletin trimestriel de la société royale d'archéologie de Charleroi», 1987, 3-4, pp. 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> On the history of this Flemish periodical in America see G.P. BAERT, *Witwijking naar Amerika vijftig jaar geleden*, «Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der stad Deinzen», 22, 1955, pp. 42-59.

the *Gazette van Detroit* in 1914, until recently the only Belgian (Flemish) paper still to be published in the U.S. Another characteristic of this emigration is that these workers often kept close links with the Belgian Labour Movement and expressed their support of fellow-workers in their struggles in Belgium. Quite significant are the letters of emigrants from Hainaut between 1884 and 1889 which have been published by Prof. Puissant.<sup>28</sup>

### 3) 1901-1913

This third great emigration period has been excellently analyzed by Prof. Kurgan<sup>29</sup> who has identified two distinct migratory flows:

– 60% of the emigrants were natives of Flanders,<sup>30</sup> mainly young men, small farmers, day labourers of very limited income: they left home all by themselves and go to the North Midwest in the U.S. where they often joined small already existing Belgian colonies. They hoped to improve their living conditions even if it meant being forced to take up a different professional activity from the one they had in Belgium;

– on contrast 15% of the emigrants left Hainaut (notably the Charleroi region), most of them working men, mainly miners, drawn by the higher wages and better working conditions offered in the U.S. They took their families with them and many went to Pennsylvania. "Emigration from Hainaut consisted largely of skilled laborers who sought the same work abroad but with better pay"<sup>31</sup> asserts Prof. Kurgan. These workers differed from Flemish farmers: in that they generally had greater financial means and tended to disperse more across the new continent.

## II. Religious and social integration of Belgian immigrants

Most Catholic ethnic groups have left accounts of their problems in the archives of the Vatican.<sup>32</sup> The immigrants wrote to Rome to protest against

<sup>28</sup> J. PUISSANT, *op. cit.*

<sup>29</sup> G. KURGAN-VAN HENTENRYK, *Belgian Emigration to the United States and Other Overseas Countries at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, in G. KURGAN, E. SPELKENS, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-49.

<sup>30</sup> This Flemish emigration has been the subject of several local studies. See especially P. DEWITTE, F. DEPOORTER, *Op zoek naar het beloofde land. Het wel en wee van streekgenoten in Amerika*, «De Roede van Tiel», XII, 2-3, octobre 1981, pp. 3-104; P. DE WITTE, *Dagelijkse realiteit van prijzen en lonen. Hun inloed op de emigratie naar Noord-Amerika uit de streek van Tiel (1840-1914)*, «De Roede van Tiel», XIII, 2, june 1982, pp. 71-88; E. DE SMET, *Eekloose uitwijkelingen naar Amerika (XIXe-XXe eeuw)*, «Appeltjes van het Meetjesland», XXVIII, 1977, pp. 5-105; P.G. BAERT, *Uitwijking naar Amerika*, «Het land van Nevele», IX, 1978, pp. 113-138.

<sup>31</sup> G. KURGAN-VAN HENTENRYK, *Belgian emigration...*, *cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. M. SANFILIPPO, *La question canadienne-française dans les diocèses de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1892-1922: les sources documentaires romaines*, in *Canada ieri e oggi* 2, II, Sezione storica e geografica. Selva di Fasano, Schena Editore, 1990, pp. 55-76.

Bishops who refused to assist them. As for the bishops they complained about the difficulties they encountered in the administration of multi-ethnic dioceses. Rome began to be informed of these problems around the end of the 18th century when they had to calm the protest of German immigrants in the U.S.<sup>33</sup> In the first half of the 19th century Roman documents on North America got thicker as a result of disputes between Irish immigrants and a clergy that mainly spoke French.<sup>34</sup> In the second half of the century the situation grew to catastrophic proportions: the U.S. Catholic Church had to respond to the demands of dozens of ethnic groups coming from Europe, Asia and Latin America. Rome and the North American hierarchy were soon obliged to recognize the principle of ethnic parishes.<sup>35</sup> However the North American bishops had difficulty finding priests for all ethnic groups<sup>36</sup> and in many instances they had to slow down the process by advocating the immediate americanization of the immigrants.<sup>37</sup>

This attempt failed but it was impossible to satisfy the demands of all groups of immigrants and to have a multi-ethnic clergy; consequently, culturally related groups were brought together in the same parish. Francophones (French, Quebecois, Acadians, Luxemburgers, French speaking Swiss, Walloons) were usually considered to be one sole group and only one parish was created for them.<sup>38</sup> The same principle led to the mixing of the Flemings and the Dutch, and immigrants were also grouped together according to their geographic origin. Such was the case in the St. Charles parish in Detroit where a Dutch and Flemish clergy ministered to a community consisting of Dutch, Flemings and Walloons.<sup>39</sup>

For reasons expressed above the Belgians were not numerous in North America. They could not form large parishes or even autonomous ones. In the case of the diocese of Green Bay only two Franco-Walloon parishes and one Flemish Dutch appear to have existed between 1875 and 1900,<sup>40</sup> and in 1920 only nine Belgian parishes for the whole of the U.S.<sup>41</sup>

Immigrants who were assigned by the bishops to one of these linguistic, national, or geographically heterogeneous groups did not much like priests who were not of their own sub-group. Such was for instance the case of the French-

<sup>33</sup> Cf. V. J. PECHER, *A Study of the Movement for German National Parishes in Philadelphia and Baltimore (1787-1802)*. Romae, Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1955.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. L. CODIGNOLA, *Conflict or Consensus? Catholics in Canada and in the United States, 1780-1820*, The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, *Historical Studies* (from now on CCHA), 55 (1988), pp. 43-59.

<sup>35</sup> ARCHIVIO DELLA SACRA CONGREGAZIONE DI PROPAGANDA FIDE, ROME (from now on APFR), *Acta*, 1887, f. 215.

<sup>36</sup> APFR, *Nuova Serie* (from now on NS), vol. 333 (1905), ff. 552-563.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. PH. GLEASON, *Immigrant Past, Ethnic Present*, in ID., *Keeping the Faith. American Catholicism Past and Present*. Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1987, pp. 35-57.

<sup>38</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 145 (1898), ff. 471-93: Sebastian Messmer's report on the Green Bay diocese.

<sup>39</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 169 (1899), ff. 553-95. Belgians were numerous in Detroit from the foundation of the diocese in 1833 and for decades met in the parish of St. Anne. Cf. PH. D. SABBE, L. BUYSSE, *Belgians in America*. The Hague, Lanno, 1960, pp. 63-64.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. J. OLSON, *Catholic Immigrants in America*. Chicago, Nelson-Hall, 1987, p. 105.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Canadians, who did not accept French or Belgian priests.<sup>42</sup> But the same also occurred in quite a number of Walloon-Flemish-Dutch parishes. Some of the documents relating to these protests are kept in Rome. In other dioceses where no disputes among ethnic groups were recorded bishops mentioned the presence of these minority groups in their reports as well as the possibility of future problems.

In 1905, Cornelius Van der Ven of Dutch origin, newly elected bishop of the diocese of Natchitoches in Louisiana, wrote the following to Rome: in the Parish of Many they are 600 Catholics "ex his circiter 200 sunt Americani, Originis Belgicae qui sunt boni Catholici" and further on in the diocese the priests of Belgian origin number five.<sup>43</sup> The same year, in the diocese of Fort Wayne, Indiana "Belgae habent duas ecclesias proprias" but only one priest was born in Belgium.<sup>44</sup> In 1905 again the bishop of Grand Rapids declared that in his diocese there were two Dutch priests ministering to two parishes in Essexville, St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist, numbering 100 and 142 families of Dutch origin respectively and one Belgian who ministered to the French speaking parishioners.<sup>45</sup> He does not mention any Belgian families but it is well-known that there were many of them in 1892 and still in 1900.<sup>46</sup> It can be surmised that the Flemish and Wallons were absorbed into the Dutch and French communities.

In 1906, Propaganda Fide sent to all American bishops a questionnaire on the language and the nationality of their faithful. The only diocese to providing relevant information for our purposes is Green Bay. Bishop Joseph J. Fox wrote that the Dutch were becoming one of the most important ethnic groups in his diocese.<sup>47</sup> He did not mention Belgians but it will be shown further on that there was still a Walloon minority served by the Dutch clergy of the diocese. The questionnaires of other dioceses reveal that French was spoken in La Crosse, Wisconsin,<sup>48</sup> Superior, Michigan,<sup>49</sup> Natchez, Mississippi,<sup>50</sup> Natchitoches, Louisiana,<sup>51</sup> Baker City, Oregon,<sup>52</sup> Kansas City,<sup>53</sup> Fargo, North Dakota,<sup>54</sup> and Lead, South Dakota.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately the presence of Belgians cannot be inferred from this information. Besides the Bishop of La Crosse stated specifically that in his

<sup>42</sup> Cf. M. SANFILIPPO, *The French Canadian Question in the Dioceses of New England, 1895-1912. Preliminary Research in the Vatican Archives*, «Storia Nordamerica», IV, 1-2 (1987), pp. 205-222.

<sup>43</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 330 (1905), ff. 444-55: 447 et 450.

<sup>44</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 331 (1905), ff. 163-186: 167.

<sup>45</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 332 (1905), ff. 498-521.

<sup>46</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 194 (1900), ff. 156-63.

<sup>47</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 396 (1906), ff. 28-32.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 82-83.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 84-85.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 86-87.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 98-99.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 131-32.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 156-59.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 160-62.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 326-27.

diocese they spoke French as spoken in France whilst the bishop of Natchitoches, Louisiana specified that the French spoken in his diocese was the language of the first colonists.

In additional information sent to the Propaganda, 319 "familiae... ex Hollandis et Belgio" are mentioned in the diocese of Marquette, Michigan where two Belgian priests and a Dutch one were also working.<sup>56</sup> In the diocese of Portland, Oregon (50 Belgians, 185 Dutch) one Belgian priest and two Dutch ones had settled.<sup>57</sup> In the diocese of Fargo Belgian families numbered 23 of which 12 in the Parish of Montpellier. In that diocese there was also a Belgian priest.<sup>58</sup> The bishop of Leavenworth counted 159 immigrants and 3 priests from Belgium<sup>59</sup> and the bishop of Fort Wayne, Indiana noted 1,314 Belgians.<sup>60</sup> The figures are smaller for the diocese of Nesqually; the item "varii" comprising Belgians, Dutch, Russians, Swedes, Mexicans and Syrians accounts 900 Catholics.<sup>61</sup> The diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts had 11 Belgians<sup>62</sup> and 24 were working in the Vicariate of the Indian Territory (Guthrie, Oklahoma).<sup>63</sup>

The report regarding New York mentions an astonishing 300,000 Belgians. In fact 30,000 Belgian immigrants were served by two secular priests from Belgium.<sup>64</sup> At any rate New York was the most important centre of Belgian immigration<sup>65</sup> followed by the diocese of Green Bay where the Bishop mentioned 16,450 Canadians (most probably French speaking) and Belgians, and 10,520 Dutch and Flemings. Fox added that in his diocese there were 13 priests "Belgae et Canadienses" (lingua gallica) and 25 Dutch "etiam lingua gallica loquentes". The Belgo-Canadian priests ministered to eleven mixed missions, most of them French-speaking. On addition there were five Dutch-Flemish missions served by five priests belonging to the same group.<sup>66</sup>

It can be assumed that the Belgian presence in the U.S. was limited. Moreover, it did not cause the same trend of conflicts as those engendered by Franco-Americans. The Belgians were in fact protected by the number of North American prelates born in Belgium or who had studied in Louvain.<sup>67</sup> Linguistic

<sup>56</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 397 (1907), f. 377.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 582.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 602.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 508.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 510.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 535.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 571-73.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 570.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 541.

<sup>65</sup> In 1919, King Albert visited New York city and also went to the Belgian church on "West Forty-Seven Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues". Cf. *King Albert at Belgian Church, The Catholic News* (New York), 1st November 1919, p. 3. On King Albert and Cardinal Mercier's journey to the U.S. see ARCHIVIO SEGRETO VATICANO (ASV), DELEGAZIONE APOSTOLICA STATI UNITI (DASU), V, 95/1-3.

<sup>66</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 397 (1907), ff. 561-64.

<sup>67</sup> The history of Belgian clergy in U.S. remains to be written. See J.A. GRIFFIN, *The Contribution of Belgium to the Catholic Church in America (1523-1857)*. Washington, The Catholic University of America, Studies in American Church History, vol. XIII, 1932; A. VERMEIRRE,

disputes only arose in places where these prelates were not present and where the Belgians were grouped together with the Dutch.

On 17th November 1906, a group from the Belgian colony in Wisconsin wrote to the Pope demanding priests from their country of origin. They were infuriated because they had been entrusted to Dutch Norbertines, who did not understand the language of their congregation which originated from Mechlin. The priests were accused of treating their parishioners like "cannibals".<sup>66</sup> Officials at the Propaganda did not take this petition into consideration and responded with a "reponatur". But in 1907 four Belgian emigrants from Luxemburg, Wisconsin wrote to Diomedeo Falconio, the apostolic delegate in Washington, demanding justice. They declared that they had been served by Norbertines for 13 years and that they wanted priests from their own nation as well as ethnic schools.<sup>67</sup> The apostolic delegate put the case to P.J. Lochman, vicar general of the diocese of Green Bay, who defended the Norbertines and emphasized the fact that one of those who had signed the protest belonged to the schismatic church of Joseph René Vilatte.<sup>70</sup>

The latter, of Parisian origin, had studied in Rome and in French Canada and had then gone to Wisconsin where the episcopalian bishop had permitted him to preach to the Belgians in the region. In 1891, Vilatte let himself be consecrated bishop of the Old-Catholics of America against the will of the episcopalians.<sup>71</sup> In 1892, he was excommunicated by the episcopalian church and tried to go back to the Catholic church. Sebastian Messmer, then bishop of Green Bay, refused and called on the Dutch Norbertines (to whom the protests of the Belgians of Luxemburg referred) to combat Vilatte's influence in the Belgian communities in the diocese. In 1894 Vilatte's Belgian congregation was reduced to some fifty families and four years later he gave up.<sup>72</sup>

C.J. JAENEN, *Les Belges au Canada*, to be published; J.-R. RIOUX, *Hennepin, Louis, Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, III, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1969, pp. 277-282; *Selections from the diary and gazette of Father Pierre Potier, S.J. (1708-1781)*, «Mid-America», 18 (1936), pp. 199-207; P.J. DE SMET, *Missions de l'Oregon et voyages aux montagnes Rocheuses*. Gand 1848; J. VANDERHEYDEN, *Life and Letters of Father Brabant, A Flemish Missionary Hero*. Louvain, J. Wouters-Ickx, 1920; A.J. BRABANT, *Mission to Nootka 1874-1900. Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, éd. par Ch. Lillard, Sydney, BC, Gray Publishing, Ltd, 1977; B.M. GOUGH, *Father Brabant, and the Hesquiat of Vancouver Island*, CCHA, *Study Sessions*, 50 (1983), pp. 553-568; J.M. HILL, *Archbishop Seghers, Pacific Coast Missionary*, CCHA, *Report*, 18 (1950-51), pp. 13-23; J. SAUTER, *The American College of Louvain (1857-1898)*. Louvain, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Bureaux du Recueil, 1959; J.-P. ASSELIN, *Les Rédemptoristes au Canada*. Montréal, Bellarmin, 1981; E. TREMBLAY, *Le père Delaere et l'Eglise ukrainienne du Canada*. Ottawa, Bernard, 1961.

<sup>66</sup> APFR, NS, vol. 362 (1906), ff. 563-566.

<sup>67</sup> All the letters written by Belgians in Green Bay to Falconio are to be found in the file ASV, DASU, IX, Green Bay 37.

<sup>70</sup> See ASV, DASU IX, Green Bay 2 and 32.

<sup>71</sup> The Old Catholics had separated from the Catholic Church in 1871, see K. ALGERMISSEN, *Altkatholiken*, in *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche*, I. Freiburg i.B., Herder, 1957, cols. 398-402.

<sup>72</sup> ASV, DASU, IX, Green Bay 2 et 32. Vilatte finally went to Rome and was reconciled with the Catholic Church see A. DE SMET, *La communauté belge du nord-est du Wisconsin*, in *Album De Smet*, p. 497.

However his disciples did not surrender. The first American congregation of Old Catholics as well as a Presbyterian church and a spiritualist sect were formed in the Belgian community of Wisconsin.<sup>73</sup> By 1908, the Belgians from Luxemburg once again charged the Norbertines with taking away "their faith, their churches, their mother tongue (*sic*), their money". This time the apostolic delegate wrote to the bishop of Green Bay and requested information. Mgr. Fox contested these facts and emphasized that the Walloon immigrants in the peninsula between Lake Michigan and Green Bay "were very weak in the faith when they emigrated from Belgium owing to a lack of instruction, and that most of them could neither read nor write". Consequently their charges could not be believed; the Norbertines spoke French very well and they had done a lot for their parish. They had the merit of forcing Vilatte to give up the fight. Between the lines, Fox appeared to be concerned about a possible retaliation of the Old Catholics. But, in fact he is the one to point out that the dispute between the congregation and the Norbertines was due to the fact that the bishop raised the latter's their salary by imposing a heavy tax on the parish.

Fox convinced Falconio not to reply to those who had signed the protest but they wrote again the following year. From then on the Norbertines were called "brigands from Holland", "genuine free-masons and anarchists", "who do business with religion". The apostolic delegate did not reply and after several letters written from June 1909 to August 1910 the Belgians from Luxemburg, Wisconsin had to abandon their claim. This was probably a total surrender since their last letter was sent from Brussels on 19th August 1910; it was signed "a group of Belgians back from America".

## Conclusion

Emigration to North America remains a subject that has not been copiously dealt with by Belgian historians. With the exception of Prof. Stengers' synthetic work, Prof. Kurgan's book on emigration at the beginning of the 20th century and a few recent dissertations,<sup>74</sup> it has not been approached from a global perspective.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand numerous small contributions can be found dealing among other things with Belgian settlement in the Green Bay region in the middle of the 19th century and with the departure of groups of Flemish villagers at the beginning of the 20th century.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 495-96.

<sup>74</sup> M. JOURNEE, *De lokroep van een nieuwe frontier. Belgische emigratie in Kanada. 1880-1940*, unpublished dissertation for the licence degree in History, Katholiek Universiteit Leuven; G. VERRIJKEN, *Aspecten van de emigratie naar Amerika, inzonderheid de Verenigde Staten, vanuit Antwerpen (1856-1914)*, unpublished dissertation for the licence degree in History, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1984; F. VAN DE PITTE, *Belgische immigranten in de Verenigde Staten, 1850-1920*, unpublished dissertation for the licence degree in History, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1987.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. D.C.S. KEMER, *American History in Belgium and Luxembourg: a Bibliography*. Bruxelles 1975.



These varied works to which Vatican's documents can be added show that Belgian emigration is characterized by its small size (even though there were some peak periods), its lack of political or religious character (with some exceptions) and the very reserved attitude of the political and religious authorities and even of the socialist movement who warned emigrants against the pitfalls of propaganda, without however formally advising against emigration.

Compared with the vast movements of population taking place in other European countries, Belgian emigration may be called unobtrusive; Belgian emigrants were not numerous and have a tendency to disperse through the American Midwest. They were often too scattered to form a real ethnic community and consequently blended into the local population. Some places were nevertheless point of reference like the Green Bay region and the cities of Detroit and Moline. Then survival can be attributed to the presence of agricultural labourers rather than industrial workers who quickly mixed in with the local population. In fact, there is a considerable historical literature on the ability of Belgians to be absorbed in the North American melting pot.<sup>76</sup> Vatican documents nevertheless show that the process was peaceful only when Belgian immigration was duly protected by Belgian prelates. In other situations the Walloons showed either a consistent anticlerical spirit or a tendency to reject any regrouping with the Flemings.

Some kind of Walloon identity was maintained in the neighbourhood of Green Bay and is worth while mentioning; Flemish immigrants (often farmers) seem to have formed distinct ethnic communities more frequently. The only two Belgian newspapers published in North America before 1914 attest to this: they are Flemish. Religion had undoubtedly something to do with this. Belgian emigrants of rural origin often came from the Flemish regions; they were deeply Catholic and their religious sentiment (which found expression in the building of churches and the setting up of Catholic schools) seems to have made the maintenance of some kind of cultural identity easier. On the other hand, the Belgian workers who came from Wallonia were marked by a socialist and anticlerical tradition and could not make use of religious sentiment to hold together their ethnic community.<sup>77</sup> The internationalist ideas transmitted by socialist doctrines seem instead to have facilitated their integration in the American unions, which to a certain extent were instruments of assimilation. Belgian workers did not tend to form closed ethnic communities.

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<sup>76</sup> "Belgians have integrated easily into the Canadian population, probably because they are few in number, widely dispersed and culturally very similar to French and English Canadians" (A. VERMEIRRE, *Belgians, Canadian Encyclopedia*, I, Edmonton, Hurtig Publishers, 1985, p. 159).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. G. GERSTLE, *Working-class Americanism. The politics of labor in a textile city, 1914-1960*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 60-91.

## **Summary**

This paper aims at achieving a double synthesis: of acquired knowledge of Walloon and Flemish immigration into the U.S. on the one hand, and of existing data on the religious and social integration of those immigrants as drawn from church archives. The first part is a survey of the history of Belgians in the U.S., whilst the second deals with the results of a research in the archives of the Vatican and of Propaganda Fide.

## **Résumé**

Ce texte a pour objectif de réaliser une double synthèse: d'un côté la synthèse des connaissances acquises sur l'immigration Wallonne et Flamande aux Etats-Unis, de l'autre celle des éléments existants dans les archives de l'église sur l'intégration religieuse et sociale de ces immigrants. La première partie est une vue d'ensemble de l'histoire des Belges aux Etats-Unis, tandis que l'autre a à faire avec les résultats d'une recherche dans les archives du Vatican et de la Propagation de la Foi.

## **Schools as agencies of assimilation: the case of English-Ruthenian bilingual schools in Manitoba, 1897-1916**

Public school system historically have reflected the basic assumptions and primary objectives of the dominant groups or élites in society. Public schooling has been as much the product and reflection of the various phases of national cultural development as it has been a *force génératrice* and conditioning factor. Nevertheless, there appears to have been an optimistic expectation in each generation that social development could be directed, or at least channelled in some measure, through the shared experience of compulsory education. This was especially true of the expectation that the children of immigrants could be transformed and in this process they would aid in the acculturation of their parents and other adult relatives. The schools were expected to be effective agencies for assimilating the youth of what was often termed "the immigrant horders", the unwashed and unregenerate newcomers of stereotypic imagery.

In the nineteenth century Canadians adopted the American concept and vocabulary of "national schools". These common public schools were given the mandate to socialize or homogenize the children of immigrants, to transmit to them fundamental elements of the culture of the dominant Anglo-Celtic host society imbued with its moral and patriotic values. The rhetoric of the late nineteenth century, especially after the restrictions to immigration from "preferred countries" only gave way in 1896 to recruitment from central and eastern Europe, left no doubt as to the objectives the state imposed on the schools. Unlike in some European countries, Canada had neither a state church nor compulsory military service to act as an agency of assimilation. It was the schools which in the images of the literature and speeches of the time were "the Anglo-Saxon mills" to grind down foreign characteristics, the instruments for "breaking the crusts" of alien separateness, the hoppers for "chopping up and mixing together" the diverse elements, the forges for welding this diversity into a new citizenry. By World War I, the teachers were sometimes referred to as "generals on the home front", or as cultural missionaries. Ethno-cultural diversity was perceived by most educational bureaucrats as detracting from national unity and purpose. Pluralism, cultural diversity, and multilingualism were considered akin to subversion of the process of creating a national identity.

"National schools" as agencies of assimilation were required ideally to possess certain fundamental qualities. First of all, they should be centres of patriotic indoctrination and citizenship training. During a debate about appropriate school textbooks, the following revealing sentiments were expressed:

"Mr. Metcalfe referring to the history taught in the public schools, appealed to the Minister of Education and his supporters to take example by the United States and teach young Canadians loyalty to the Union Jack, the beaver and the maple leaf. It was in the public schools that young Canadians should be taught loyalty... Mr. Meredith said... I want to know what it is that has made the United States the great nation which it is today. It is because there is feeling in that country to educate the young in the glorious deeds of the struggle of the revolution as they see it. And, sir, there is no better way to make good citizens than to teach these things to the young in the public schools of the country."<sup>1</sup>

This was a narrow nationalism, to be sure, but a patriotism nurtured in British imperial sentiment thoroughly impregnated with Victorian idealism and liberalism. Nationalism for Anglo-Celtic Canadians was inseparable from Imperial sentiment rooted often in Anglican and Presbyterian social tradition, English speech, and Protestant religion as sometimes sharpened by Orangeism.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the public schools were imbued with a Christian ethos, as just intimated. Historically, the provinces inherited systems of education which had been founded in a period of state churches, and they never divested themselves completely of the concept of co-operation between church and state. Public schools were expected "to secure the Divine blessing, and impress upon the pupils the importance of Religious Duties, and their entire dependence on their Maker". A leading educator and politician issued an unequivocal statement on the matter in 1885. He said:

"There is a distinct declaration on the part of the Department [of Education] that religious instruction is an essential factor of our system of education, and both pupils and teachers have daily presented to them, as a standard by which their conduct is to be regulated, the sublime ethics of the Bible."<sup>3</sup>

Essentially, it consisted of a kind of lowest common denominator Protestant "general system of truth and morals taught in the Holy Scriptures" (Egerton Ryerson) which was allegedly not sectarian.

Thirdly, in the period immediately preceding the outbreak of World War I, the American "cult of efficiency", or the application of Frederick Taylor's system of practical management and scientific analysis to school systems and their "production", spread into Canada. There began a spirited public campaign for the cutting of school costs through more efficient management and reduction of "waste". The emphasis was on the development of "practical skills", task-oriented education which tended to be anti-intellectual. Taylor wrote in 1909

<sup>1</sup> *A Hot Debate on the Price of School Books*, "Weekly Empire", 17 March 1890.

<sup>2</sup> For greater detail consult our *The Impact of Ideological Issues on Public Schools and Public Policy*, "Journal of Comparative Sociology", 2-3, 1974-75, pp. 72-88.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Minister of Education for the year 1885*. Toronto, 1881, p. xxxiv.

about "the all important fact that the ordinary qualities of common sense, character, grit, endurance, etc., count for more in attaining success than book learning or intellectual attainments".<sup>4</sup> By 1912-13 the popular press was pouring out a steady stream of critical articles to which educators and administrators tried to respond.<sup>5</sup> The impact on Canadian public schools was well illustrated by an article which appeared in an Ottawa daily. It pontificated:

"The newest science is that of efficiency. It is the latest word in modern business methods. It stands for the new work of securing maximum results with minimum energy... Canadians may well regard it as the science of success... In every place where men work or children learn let the watchword be "Efficiency".<sup>6</sup>

The impact of these ideological issues on public schools is well illustrated in the case of the "Ruthenians", who are more properly identified as Ukrainians today, in the province of Manitoba in the period 1890-1916. The context of our case study is the celebrated Manitoba School Question in Canadian historiography, the Sifton/Oliver encouragement of agricultural immigration from central and eastern Europe, the drive for Imperial federation, the First World War with its "enemy alien question", the conscription crisis, and the abolition of bilingual schools. This was the steaming cauldron into which public schools as agencies of assimilation of immigrants, burdened with their nationalistic, patriotic, religious and efficiency ideologies, attempted to carry out their social and political mandate. It was the steaming cauldron into which unsuspecting "Ruthenian" children were thrown.

#### *"Ruthenians" in Manitoba and school problems in the '90s*

Galicians and Bukovinians from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Ruthenians from the Russian Empire began arriving in Canada in the 1870s in the company of other eastern Europeans, although it was only after 1891 that they formed a distinct ethnic group in the immigrant wave. About 170,000 came by 1914, settling especially in Western Canada where immigration officials had encouraged them to take up farming. Unlike the Mennonites and Doukhobors who had preceded them, they were given no formal assurances that they would be able to retain their language and culture, much less that they would have access to schools offering instruction in their mother tongue. However, there were few pressures exerted on them to adopt new ways during the initial years

<sup>4</sup> FREDERICK WINSLOW TAYLOR, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) reprinted in *Scientific Management*. Westport, Conn., 1972. The 1909 citation is from FRANK B. COPLEY, *Frederick W. Taylor, Father of Scientific Management*. New York 1969, 2 vols. at Vol. II, p. 294.

<sup>5</sup> Sensationalist articles in such widely read magazines as the «Saturday Evening Post» and the «Ladies' Home Journal» marked the climax of this movement. Cf. RAYMOND E. CALLAHAN, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*. Chicago 1962, pp. 2-25, 47.

<sup>6</sup> *A New Science-Efficiency*, «The Citizen» (Ottawa), 13 September 1913, p. 12. The application of the thesis of efficiency to public schooling had been a theme in JAMES P. MUNROE, *New Demands in Education*. New York 1912.

of settlement. This stood in sharp contrast to practices in the neighbouring United States, and may have been the result of the relatively unorganized state of rural community life in Western Canada at the time. Moreover, many established themselves in comparatively isolated and culturally homogeneous rural block settlements, or virtual ethnic reserves. The tolerance, and even encouragement, of such group settlement patterns by the Department of the Interior could be interpreted as avoidance of overt pressures to assimilate to an established dominant host society, perhaps even an encouragement to retention of ethnic identities. In Manitoba the "Ruthenians" were concentrated in the Dauphin, Interlake and Stuartburn regions. Some of the immigrants were joined in the time by migrants from the rural communities to form modest urban communities. North Winnipeg became the largest such centre for such an urban proletariat. While the rural communities were generally viewed as conservative agrarian, the urban sectors were often regarded as dangerously radical. Both urban and rural communities were served by Catholic and Orthodox clergy, but in unchurched communities a Protestant-supported Independent Greek Church made some temporary converts.

The arrival of the first "Ruthenians" in Manitoba coincided with a bitter confrontation over denominational schools as provided for in the constitution. In 1890, English had been decreed the only official language in the province, and then the government had proceeded to dismantle the dual confessional system of public education by abolishing the Catholic public schools. A centralized Department of Education was created to direct all public education, including teacher training and certification, curriculum, textbooks, instruction and inspection. Francophone Roman Catholics, who regarded themselves as a regional charter group, were particularly upset by this legislation and sought to have the dual confessional system restored because in addition to providing a Catholic milieu for education it had also permitted them to provide instruction in their mother tongue. The quarrel took on constitutional proportions, until in 1897, following the defeat of the incumbent federal Conservative government which had failed to take effective remedial action as provided for in the constitution to restore Catholic schools in Manitoba, a new Liberal administration sought and obtained a compromise agreement which shifted attention from the religious issue to an ethno-linguistic issue. Francophones, and others, would be granted the opportunity to organize bilingual public schools, but not confessional ones. This compromise between federal and provincial governments was given legislative expression in the School Act of 1897, which included a somewhat ambiguous clause 10 which read as follows:

"When ten of the pupils in any school speak the French language or any other language, the teaching of such pupils shall be conducted in French, or such other language, and English upon the bilingual system".<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Statutes of Manitoba, 1897*, C. 26, sec. 10. For a more detailed account of this question see *The Manitoba School Question: an Ethnic Interpretation*, in MARTIN L. KOVACS (ed.), *Ethnic Canadians. Culture and Education*. Regina 1978, pp. 317-331.

Under this provision Ruthenian-English bilingual schools were established in Manitoba.

However, it does not appear that the original intention was that "Ruthenians" should take advantage of this legislation. Some years later, John W. Dafoe, influential editor of the «Winnipeg Free Press», voiced the opinion that the objective was "soothe French susceptibilities" and not to open the door to multilingualism:

"In order to avoid exciting anti-French prejudices in Ontario and elsewhere, the concession as to bilingual teaching was not limited to the French, but was made general to all non-English residents of the Province of Manitoba in the expectation that it would be taken advantage of only by the French and by them in a limited degree and by a few and diminishing number of Mennonite communities...".<sup>8</sup>

Even Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface, whose see encompassed Western Canada, did not initially support the application of the legislation to all linguistic groups. But by 1901 he came to an agreement with Premier R. Roblin and in a dramatic public address gave his support to the minorities. He proclaimed:

"... these strangers have the right to have their children taught in their own language, and that is their most ardent wish. But if all admit that English must be taught in Manitoba schools, not all are also of the opinion that one must teach also the mother tongue of the Galicians; a few even have proclaimed very loudly that it would be better to teach only English everywhere. An exorbitant, unjust and dangerous pretention which endangers the peace of our country".<sup>9</sup>

The extension of linguistic rights to ethnic groups other than English or French drew upon another source as well. There had been bilingual schools in 19th century Canada West (Ontario), from whence some of Manitoba's settlers had migrated. These bilingual schools represented a transitional stage from non-English unilingualism (e.g. French, German, Gaelic, Algonkian) eventually to instruction solely in English. Bilingual schools were a one-way street to eventual monolingual common schools in that context.<sup>10</sup> So while the "Ruthenians" might assume that the various ethnic groups, including the French, were being treated on the same basis, the provincial authorities had a different agenda. In this case, the agenda of the Department of Education was publicly acknowledged only in 1915. It said:

"Three fundamental principles have to be borne in mind. The first is that the French do not come under the same category as the other non-English-speaking nationalities in Canada. That is to say, any easement, etc., granted to the French in

<sup>8</sup> «Winnipeg Free Press», 13 January 1916.

<sup>9</sup> A.A.S.B., Fonds Langevin, Langevin to Roblin, 28 January 1901; Memorandum to R. Roblin, 1901 in Letterbook, 1900-1901, p. 646.

<sup>10</sup> See *Ruthenian Schools in Western Canada, 1897-1919*, «Paedagogica Historica», X, 3, 1970, pp. 519-520.

Manitoba stands on its own basis and cannot be claimed by other non-English-speaking nationalities. Secondly, it is a fundamental that every child born in this Province has the right to receive in our public schools, whether bi-lingual or mono-lingual, a working knowledge of the English language. Thirdly, it is a fundamental that every teacher in the public schools of Manitoba, whether bi-lingual or mono-lingual, must be in a position to impart a working knowledge of the English language.<sup>11</sup>

This rationale had not been explicitly enunciated when the bilingual schools were created in Manitoba. It was only eighteen years later that the official organ of the Liberal party in the province opined that the experience with multi-lingualism had erred "on the side of impracticableness and utter absurdity".<sup>12</sup>

The Laurier-Greenway Compromise of 1897 had failed to restore the Catholic public schools but it had introduced bilingual schools. This can be interpreted as an attempt to divert attention away from denominationalism towards ethnicity and language of instruction.<sup>13</sup> Following the visit to Canada of the Apostolic Delegate Mgr. Merry del Val, the papal encyclical *Affari Vos* declared the 1897 compromise to be "defective, imperfect and inadequate", but went on to say also that "from the point of view of intellectual formation and the progress of civilization, one cannot but find good and noble the plan conceived by the Canadian provinces to develop public instruction, to raise its standards and to bring it closer to perfection by constant improvement".<sup>14</sup>

From the beginning it was clear that there could be no English-Ruthenian bilingual schools without qualified teachers. In 1901 there was one Catholic school for Slavic children with 125 pupils in Winnipeg, so Archbishop Adéland Langevin of St. Boniface decided to request the creation of a normal school to train Polish and "Ruthenian" teachers. But Mgr. D. Falconio, the Apostolic Delegate, warned of the danger this might pose to existing negotiations to have the "free" (i.e. private or parochial) Catholic schools incorporated into Winnipeg's public system.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Langevin pressed on with his project and his proposal that a certain John Baderski of Yorkton be named inspector of Ruthenian and Polish schools was acted upon in December 1902. By 1903 Baderski reported that he had organized 24 new bilingual school districts and reorganized seven others.<sup>16</sup> In 1905 a Ruthenian Training School was opened in Winnipeg in conjunction with the provincial Normal School. It was placed under the direction

<sup>11</sup> J. CASTELL HOPKINS (ed.), *Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1915*. Toronto 1916, p. 644.

<sup>12</sup> "Winnipeg Free Press", 22 January 1916.

<sup>13</sup> *The Manitoba School Question: an Ethnic Interpretation*, in MARTIN L. KOVACS (ed.), *Ethnic Canadians. Culture and Education*. Regina 1978, pp. 317-331.

<sup>14</sup> *Education: Papal Teachings*. Boston 1960, pp. 139-141, citing *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 1897-98, pp. 360-361.

<sup>15</sup> A.A.S.B., Langevin Papers: Documents historiques, Falconio to Langevin, 18 January 1902.

<sup>16</sup> A.A.S.B., Langevin Papers, Correspondence: Education, Baderski to Langevin, 14 August 1903.



of T.J. Cressy, who was assisted by Jacob Makohin and D.D. Pyrch who were responsible for the teaching in Ukrainian, or "Ruthenian" as the provincial bureaucrats said. The objectives were to prepare bilingual schoolteachers for rural districts and give them an elementary grounding in English. Most would not be able to meet the requirements for obtention of a teaching certificate, but they would be granted teaching permits or letters of authority from the Official Trustee allowing them to offer instruction for a limited period. Robert Fletcher, who was responsible to the Minister of Education for the bilingual schools, indicated that in selecting student candidates "we endeavour to get young men who have at least a fair education in their own country, and who are able to speak the English language with some degree of efficiency".<sup>17</sup>

In 1906 the linguistic tensions within the Catholic Church in Western Canada became public knowledge. English-speaking Catholics demanded anglophone priests, their own English-language college, and an anglophone suffragan bishop. It was somewhat ironic that a leading spokesman for the anglophone lobby was none other than J.K. Barrett who had led the battle in the courts against the abolition of Catholic public schools in 1890. Complaints were also sent to Mgr. D. Sbaretti, the Apostolic Delegate, deploring Langevin's close ties with the provincial Conservative party. Fuel was added to the flames at the eucharistic congress in Montreal in 1910, when Mgr. F. Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, voiced a British opinion that the Catholic church in Western Canada to its detriment presented itself as a "French church" to the immigrant Catholic population. He explained afterwards that anglophones needed to assert themselves in the interests of the expansion of Catholicism but the details of the methods to be envisaged, he added, "are in noway my business, but that of your own ecclesiastical authorities".<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, in Ontario, Msgr. Fallon, bishop of London, was calling for the abolition of bilingual schools. The partisans of "national schools" in Manitoba, who saw the bilingual schools as a temporary arrangement to settle a particular political problem and to facilitate the integration of immigrant children into the host society, could only rejoice at such sentiments expressed by members of the Catholic hierarchy. There was some feeling that the Vatican was also troubled by the political implications of French Canadian nationalism, the Catholic church not having had pleasant experiences with nationalistic movements in Europe in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, these views were most distressing to those who defended French Canadian rights in Western Canada and the multilingualism of the 1897 school compromise.

Following the 1907 provincial elections in which Archbishop Langevin did not hide his support of the Roblin Conservatives, the Ruthenian Training School

<sup>17</sup> Archives of Saskatchewan, *Education 8.a: Ruthenian matters (106G)*, Fletcher to McColl, 11 December 1909, p. 89. McColl in Saskatchewan had turned to Manitoba for advice in inaugurating a similar programme in Regina. Fletcher later recalled his experiences in *The Language Problem in Manitoba Schools*, "Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba", Series III, 6, 1949, pp. 52-56.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Henri Bourassa, French Canadian nationalist spokesman, in "Le Devoir" (Montreal), 14 September 1910.

was moved to Brandon where it was felt the student-teachers would be more closely supervised. Badereski was removed as inspector of bilingual schools, possibly because he tended to submit only favourable reports, but he did retain his position as "organizer of schools among foreign-speaking peoples", along with T. Stefanek. The Department of Education now required the parents of trainees, all of whom were young males, to sign contracts guaranteeing that their sons would attend for at least one year, or longer if required to achieve proficiency in English. It appears that there was a shortage of teachers in rural areas so the young men were tempted to accept teaching positions before becoming officially licensed to do so. At the end of the first year in Brandon there were 34 trainees, 15 classified as being in the "senior class" and 19 still in the "junior class". By 1911, ninety-two teachers had attended the Ruthenian Training School, but only 21 had completed the full programme. In other words, the demand for bilingual teachers was so pressing that the provincial authorities had relented and granted permits to 71 trainees. It does not seem to have occurred to the "Ruthenian" community that the provincial authorities viewed the exercise as a somewhat temporary measure and that the ultimate assimilation of all immigrant children would be envisaged.

Of course, there were several reasons for an optimistic view that bilingual schools would be a permanent feature of the educational system. Contrary to views expressed by Senator Paul Yuzyk that first generation "Ruthenians" were opposed to English education, more recent interpretation has stressed that the opposition was directed against the forced acculturation, the blatant assimilationist nature, and denigration of immigrant culture that permeated both the training of bilingual teachers and the school curriculum. School inspectors were also very often unsympathetic to the notion that "foreign" cultures had much value. The bilingual school was an assertion for the validity of diverse cultures, and the training school in Brandon seemed to indicate a degree of commitment to promoting diversity. In order to counteract the anglo-conformist ideology of the educational bureaucracy and the training school, the trainees formed a closeknit camaraderie which carried over into the organization of the Ruthenian Teachers' Association in 1907. They resisted as far as they dared, without incurring expulsion from the Ruthenian Training school, the strict regulations prohibiting smoking, drinking, dancing, and fraternizing with women. Most of the annoying regulations went against the grain of their ethnic customs and practices, but they represented at the same time the dominant Anglo-Celtic host society's view that the immigrants required civilizing and christianizing! In 1910 the Ruthenian Teachers' Association began publishing the journal «Ukrainian Voice», encouraging young people to complete high school and to contemplate the possibility of entering university.

A statistical survey of the diocese of St. Boniface in 1909 indicated there were about 45,000 "Ruthenians", hence the largest ethnic group of Catholics because the French Canadians numbered barely 34,000. The archbishop succeeded in obtaining the government's agreement to the creation in Winnipeg of a normal school for Polish and "Ruthenian" students under Catholic auspices. The Ruthenian Training School in Brandon was labelled "Protestant" and secular by the

archbishop, and it was only with difficulty that he was able to circumvent a plan to have a Protestant named to head the Winnipeg institution. Indeed, there was evidence that Principal Cressey in Brandon had permitted Presbyterian and Baptist ministers to proselytize among the teacher trainees. Seven students transferred to the Winnipeg normal school.<sup>19</sup>

At their teachers' convention in Winnipeg in July 1913 the Minister of Education made a plea for higher standards in the bilingual schools and warned that the province did not favour continued expansion of their schools. The teachers do not appear to have shared the Minister's views regarding the limitation of their bilingual schools because they adopted the following resolution:

«We, Ruthenians, the whole body of Ruthenian-English teachers in the Province of Manitoba, are in heartiest sympathy with the Bi-lingual system of schools and that (*sic*) we consider it our sacred duty to champion our natural right to our mother-tongue and we will always hold the position that our language should be taught in our schools with English».<sup>20</sup>

Implementation of this resolution would have meant the expansion of the bilingual system. In fact, this is what happened. By 1911 there were 107 schools in the system. Three years later, there were 132 schools and the training school in Brandon had graduated 22 licensed new teachers for these one-roomed rural schools.

There were other indications of success. The school trustees who administered these rural schools founded their own ethnic association independent of the provincial association. Teachers prepared their own paedagogical materials. Michael Stechishin, a graduate of the Ruthenian Training School, authored a series of *Manitoba Ruthenian-English Readers*, which were approved and 2,580 copies were distributed in a twelve-month period by the provincial authorities. There were also community leaders who sympathized with the problems of integration immigrants experienced. The keynote speaker at the 1912 convention of the Manitoba Educational Association was the Rev. J.S. Woodsworth, Superintendent of All Peoples' Mission in North Winnipeg, who declared that Canada was facing a "new situation", that "the time demands a new patriotism", while cautioning that "the unification of a heterogeneous population is a difficult undertaking". He believed that Canada required not young men who dared to die for their country, but rather young men who would live to devote their best energies to building "this new, conglomerate immigrant material into a noble Canadian citizenship". To be effective agencies of assimilation the schools required teachers imbued with missionary zeal.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> A.A.S.B., Langevin Papers, Correspondance: Premier Ministre, Langevin to Roblin, 24 April 1909; Roblin to Langevin, 15 December 1909.

<sup>20</sup> *Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs*, 1913. Toronto 1914, p. 568.

<sup>21</sup> Rev. J.S. WOODSWORTH, *Our Citizens of Foreign Birth*, «The Western School Journal», VII, 5, May 1912, pp. 174-176.

There were also indications of difficulties ahead. First of all, there was the question of religious rivalries both within the "Ruthenian" community and in Manitoba. On the morning of 14 November 1898, two young men called on the Principal of Manitoba College in Winnipeg asking to be admitted "for the purpose of obtaining an English education". The superintendant of home mission of the Presbyterian Church indicated to the press that this incident would probably lead to more aggressive missionary work among the "Ruthenians and Galicians" in an effort to assimilate them into the host society. He said:

"The influence of the church would be a powerful factor in assisting to assimilate these people, and work along this line cannot be commenced too soon. I do not believe in letting foreign immigrants live by themselves in clusters and segregated from the rest of the communities in the districts where they settle. The interest of the state lies in doing all it can to assimilate these and other foreigners, and make of them Canadians. They should be put into the great Anglo-Saxon mill and be ground up; in the grinding they lose their foreign prejudices and characteristics".<sup>22</sup>

He went on to list the three principal factors in the assimilation of immigrants as "education, religion and inter-marriage". The "Ruthenians" seemed good material for the Anglo-Saxon mill because, in his estimation, there were of "good physique, clean-blooded, industrious, thrifty, and anxious to get comfortable homes for themselves and their families". Presumably in this scheme of things education would enlighten them in religious matters as well, and they would be introduced to social situations which would promote inter-marriage.

The Presbyterians followed up on this promising incident by drawing up a plan in 1901 to bring all the English-Ruthenian bilingual schools under the control of Manitoba College. Langevin was able to block the scheme, but in 1903 another incident played into Presbyterian hands. A self-styled Archbishop Seraphin, who was under both interdict and excommunication of the Russian Orthodox Church, arrived in Manitoba after escaping from the monastery of Suzdalski where he had been incarcerated for insanity. He had been invited by two individuals who favoured Protestant missionary work in their ethnic community – the editor of «Kanadijski Farmer» (Canadian Farmer), a Ukrainian language paper which followed the Liberal party line, and a local immigration agent. He soon gathered about him a number of adherents and ordained a few priests who followed the Ruthenian rite but taught Protestant doctrines. This schismatic organization became known as the "Independent Greek Church" and John Bodrug, a Presbyterian by conviction, was appointed senior minister. Seraphin had served the purpose of giving the new church a measure of traditional legitimacy in the eyes of Catholic and Orthodox immigrants. The appointment of Theodore Stefanik, a minister in the Independent Greek Church, as a bilingual school organizer was a minor triumph in the attempt of this schismatic church to win over the Ruthenians, who resented French Canadian control of church and school. Eventually,

<sup>22</sup> *Galicians in College*, «Manitoba Free Press», 15 November 1898.

the thin veneer of Eastern orthodoxy wore off and ministers and laity either returned to their traditional churches or joined the Presbyterian church.<sup>23</sup>

The outbreak of war in 1914 proved even more disastrous than the religious rivalries that divided the community. The immigrants who had come from Austria-Hungary were obviously "enemy aliens", but all eastern Europeans came under suspicion and surveillance as the nationalistic feelings aroused by war developed into a veritable hysteria. The success of the bilingual schools, the improvement in English proficiency as recorded by the annual inspectors' reports, and increase in the number of bilingual schools and of qualified teachers aroused fears that Manitoba was becoming "balkanized". John W. Daffoe, editor of Winnipeg's «Free Press», voiced the opposition of the Liberal party and a growing numbers of Manitobans to the continuation of bilingual schools:

«The Slav settlers, when they came to Manitoba, found a bilingual clause on the statute books giving them the right to a teacher of their own nationality in schools with ten Slav children. This was undoubtedly a legal right to bilingual schools. It is noteworthy, however, that under the deliberate encouragement of the Roblin government the Slavs are today talking in their national press of "Constitutional" rights, thus directly suggesting that their position is comparable to that of the French-Canadians, as defined by the Quebec Act of 1774 and the British North America Act of 1867».<sup>24</sup>

Five months later, Daffoe returned to the attack alleging that Archbishop Langevin had masterminded "Ruthenian nationalism" and an alliance of Catholic ethnic groups to advance his own objectives:

«A compact Ruthenian organization, animated by race feeling, and subject, in large measure, to clerical control, would be a weapon which he could use with advantage in bludgeoning reluctant governments».<sup>25</sup>

The cry for abolition of "concessions" to foreigners and bilingual schools was taken up by Women's Institutes, Orange lodges, presbyteries and rural deaneries across the province. The Canadian Club, meeting at the Royal Alexandra Hotel, passed a resolution that English alone "should be the language of instruction in all the subjects of the public elementary school course". T.C. Norris' Liberal election circular in 1915 proclaimed that education was "the paramount issue in the contest", the Conservative hold on the "foreign vote" through educational concessions had to be broken, compulsory school attendance imposed by law, and "English must be adequately taught in all our schools...".<sup>26</sup> The «Winnipeg Tribune» had previously launched a scathing attack on the Ruthenian

<sup>23</sup> A partisan but detailed account of the Independent Greek Church is A. DELAERE, *Mémoire sur les tentatives de schisme et d'hérésie au milieu des Ruthènes de l'Ouest canadien*. Québec 1908, p. 48. Delaere was a Belgian Redemptorist missionary who worked among the Ruthenians.

<sup>24</sup> «Winnipeg Free Press», 11 February 1914.

<sup>25</sup> «Winnipeg Free Press», 29 July 1914.

<sup>26</sup> P.A.M., R.A.C. Manning Papers, Liberal election circular, 1915.

daily «Canada», accusing it of being seditious and destructive of “Canadian citizenship and Canadian nationality”. Karmansky the editor was alleged to have said that “the destiny of the Ruthenians in Canada was to found an independent nation” and to have threatened “that if the Ruthenians were interfered with in fulfilling that destiny, there would be war”. War hysteria alone can explain such views.<sup>27</sup>

The Roblin government resigned in May 1915 following a royal commission investigation of misuse of public funds and other irregularities in the construction of a new legislative building. The Norris Liberals won a resounding victory in the August elections and soon began to dismantle the bilingual school system. The first step was the appointment of Ira Stratton as “Official Trustee and Special School Organizer” whose duties included administering school districts which did not collect taxes as required, did not engage qualified teachers and did not keep proper records. A number of Ruthenian districts were taken over and in at least one case the charge that the trustees had not kept proper minutes of their meetings was contested since they had done so in Ukrainian and the legislation did not specify the language of record. Secondly, the government accepted the resignation of John Basarab, organizer of schools among the non-English-speaking communities, and did not appoint a replacement.<sup>28</sup> Thirdly, in November and December 1915, Charles K. Newcombe, Superintendent of Education, visited the bilingual school districts in Manitoba and reported to the Minister of Education in January 1916 on the state of affairs. There were 111 districts where Ruthenian/Polish bilingual schools operated, employing 114 teachers and having an enrolment of 6,513 pupils in the elementary grades. One out of every six Manitoba pupils was being educated in a bilingual school. Inspectors’ reports had indicated marked improvement over the decade in the quality of instruction and fluency in English. But Newcombe admitted no more than “the knowledge of English varies greatly”. He based this on three factors:

a) The qualification and attitude of the teacher, his ability to converse in English readily and fluently and the skill which he displays in leading the pupils to use the language in the regular work of the school.

b) The presence of English-speaking children in the school.

c) Proximity of the school to English-speaking settlements.

He concluded that progress had been made largely because of “regular visitation by English-speaking inspectors”, ignoring possible improvement in the quality of instruction. More troubling for the bureaucrats and politicians was the observation that in 110 schools where there were ten or more children of one non-anglophone group there were also in attendance “minorities speaking other tongues which for the time being have not the necessary ten children to make good their claim”. The original legislation had predicated bilingual schools on ethnically homogeneous rural block settlements, but there were actually cases

<sup>27</sup> -The Winnipeg Tribune, 30 June 1914.

<sup>28</sup> P.A.M., RG2, A1, Carton 64, Order-in-Council 25083; Carton 64, No. 24951, Report of Committee of the Executive Council, 3 November 1915; Carton 65, No. 25395, report of 27 December 1915.

in 1915 of Ruthenian children receiving bilingual instruction in English and French or German. The Norris government used the Newcombe Report to make its case for abolition. There appears to have been some consultation with community leaders, notably with William Sisler, about the repercussions of such a move.<sup>29</sup>

On March 10, 1916, royal assent was given to an act providing for compulsory school attendance, and on the same day an amendment to the Public School act repealing section 258, which provided for bilingual schooling, was carried in the legislature in spite of the spirited opposition of the francophone members and the sole Ukrainian member. The legal effect was to return to the legal vacuum with respect to languages of instruction which had existed before 1897, but the Department of Education and the population generally believed that English was now the only statutory language of instruction.<sup>30</sup> There was no doubt, however, that Ukrainian was no longer a language of instruction in Manitoba and that the English-Ruthenian bilingual schools were institutions of the past. No time was wasted in removing the visible signs of this linguistic experiment. The Official Trustee took over the administration of many former bilingual schools and recruited "strong Anglo-Saxon young men" as teachers whenever possible. The *Manitoba English-Ruthenian Readers* were ordered burned and so thoroughly was the order executed that the Legislative Library does not possess a copy today.

### *Concluding Remarks*

The Ruthenian bilingual schools owed their creation to a political compromise designed to resolve the vexing Manitoba School Question by shifting school identification from a confessional base to an ethno-linguistic base. Their development was made possible by a political alliance established between Premier Rodmond Roblin's Conservative administration and Roman Catholic Archbishop Langevin's ecclesiastical influence. The Conservatives appreciated Catholic support in elections and Langevin extracted concessions which permitted rural public schools to function with a Catholic flavour. This *quid pro quo* arrangement lasted until the defeat of the Roblin government in 1915. Archbishop Adélarde Langevin believed that the mother tongue of all Catholic immigrants was the "rampart" of their faith, therefore an essential element in their children's education. To lose one's language and become anglicized was to court becoming Protestant. The Presbyterian sponsorship of the Independent Greek Church and its attempts to control the training of Ruthenian teachers seemed to document

<sup>29</sup> DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, *Special Report on Bilingual Schools in Manitoba*. Winnipeg 1916, p. 61. WILLIAM J. SISLER, *Peaceful Invasion* (Winnipeg 1944) gives a personal view of assimilation in Winnipeg which generally supports the anglo-conformist viewpoint.

<sup>30</sup> See *French Public Education in Manitoba, 1818-1967*, *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, CXXXVIII, 1, 1968, pp. 19-34 for clarification, also *The history of French in Manitoba: local initiative or external imposition?*, *Language and Society/Langue et société*, 13, Spring 1984, pp. 3-16.

his thesis. On the other hand, Langevin's defence of Ruthenian rights was a means of strengthening his efforts to advance the "national" cause of French Canadians. Throughout the period 1897-1916, Rome opposed the manipulation of ecclesiastical appointments and educational provisions for the benefit of French Canadian nationalism in an obviously multiethnic society, while supporting at the same time efforts for the restoration of Catholic public schools in Manitoba as had existed before 1890.

Ironically, the Ruthenian bilingual schools were closed down at the very time they were beginning to achieve the ideological objectives of public schooling in Manitoba. They were proving to be an effective agency for the education of immigrants' children in Canadian ways, for the acquisition of the rudiments of the English language, and for civic indoctrination. Parents increasingly favoured education, insofar as the demands of pioneer farming permitted, as the hope for upward social mobility. The bilingual schools were beginning to function as a special sector of "national schools". Teacher and trustee organization flourished, and appropriate teaching materials were prepared. The paedagogical value of beginning formal education of non-English-speakers in a bilingual schools were unmistakably imbued with a Christian ethos. Thirdly, they were becoming "efficient" in terms of management and "production", to employ the vocabulary of scientific management. Indeed, their success was the source of concern because the system was well on the way to becoming a permanent feature of the educational landscape.

The historical conjuncture of 1914-18 anti-foreign and anti-Catholic sentiments in the charged atmosphere of war hysteria, the "enemy alien question", the conscription crisis, and eventually the Red scare provided the opportune occasion for terminating an educational experience which was believed by many to threaten the integrationist model of anglo-conformism.

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## **Summary**

In the 19th century Canadians adopted the American concept and vocabulary of "national schools". These common schools were given the mandate to socialize the children of immigrants and to transmit to them the fundamental elements of the Anglo-Celtic culture. The impact of these ideological issues is well illustrated in the case of the Ukrainians in the province of Manitoba in the period 1890-1916.

## **Résumé**

Au 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle les Canadiens adoptèrent le concept américain et la dénomination des "écoles nationales". Ces écoles communes eurent comme charge de socialiser les enfants des immigrants et de leur transmettre les éléments fondamentaux de la culture Anglo-Celtique. L'impact de ces questions idéologiques est bien illustré par le cas des Ukrainiens de la province du Manitoba pendant la période 1890-1916.

# INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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## Religion and ethnic identity in a Slavic community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Protestants

In 1880 northern Hungary was on the brink of change. A migration was getting underway from that region which would last nearly forty years and affect peoples on two continents. Between 1880 and 1920, an estimated 500,000 of northern Hungary's Slovaks migrated to the United States. Some remained permanently, others returned home. These Slovaks constituted only a tiny segment of the more than twenty-three million immigrants who ventured to the United States during this period.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, they were part of the massive migration movement that – whatever else it did – helped make the United States a more ethnically and religiously diverse country. The religious and ethnic diversity wrought by immigration is the subject of this study.

Especially during the past two decades, scholars have attempted to refine our understanding of what impact immigration had on American society. In the course of this reassessment, analysts have discovered that ethnicity and religion were related in many, often different, ways.<sup>2</sup> By offering a comparative analysis, this examination of Slovak Catholics and Protestants is designed to further our understanding of the relationship between religion and ethnic identity. It will demonstrate that among Slovaks religion acted as an energizing force stimulating the emergence of a Slovak ethnic identity in the United States. Intriguingly, at the

<sup>1</sup> NILES CARPENTER, *Immigrants and their children, 1920*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Bureau of the Census Monograph, No. 7, p. 324; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION, *Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor, for the fiscal Year ended June 30, 1918*, in *Reports of the Secretary of Labor and Reports of Bureaus, 1918*, pp. 376-77.

<sup>2</sup> *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 1980, s.v. "Religion", by Harold J. Abramson; VICTOR GREENE, *For God and Country: the rise of Polish and Lithuanian ethnic consciousness in America, 1860-1910*. Madison, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975; MARTIN E. MARTY, *Ethnicity: the skeleton of religion in America*, «Church History», 41, March 1972, pp. 5-21; IDEM, *A nation of believers*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1976, pp. 158-179; TIMOTHY L. SMITH, *Religious denominations as ethnic communities: a regional case study*, «Church History», 35, June 1966, pp. 207-226; IDEM, *Religion and ethnicity in America*, «American Historical Review», 83, December 1978, pp. 1155-1185; HARRY S. STOUT, *Ethnicity and religion in America*, «Ethnicity», 2, June 1975, pp. 204-224.

same time that their religious faith were encouraging ethnic consciousness among Pittsburgh's Slovaks, the institutional nature of their churches was being Americanized. This Americanization occurred as congregations adjusted to the realities of separation of church and state and worked to fit into the structure of their respective denominations. Thus, while religion was a vehicle for encouraging ethnic consciousness among Slovaks, it was also one vehicle regulating their acculturation to American society. Moreover, by Americanizing their churches, Slovak immigrants laid the groundwork which kept their children loyal to these ethnic institutions for decades.

Before launching into an analysis of the interplay of religion and ethnicity among Pittsburgh's Slovaks, some introductory observations are necessary. Attempts to gauge ethnicity involve treading on difficult, occasionally hazardous, terrain.<sup>3</sup> In order to draw conclusions about changes in individual as well as collective identity, one must rely on collective behavior. A narrow focus on collective behavior, however, can skew our understanding of the uneven course that identity formation followed among members of a single ethnic or religious group. Moreover, this focus on the role religion played in group identity formation is not a denial that premigration parochial identities persisted and remained influential within Slovak congregations.<sup>4</sup> With these qualifications stated, the basic point remains: for Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Protestants, religion provided a means for individuals to develop a group identity.<sup>5</sup>

Analyses of religion and ethnic identity have to begin with the situation among Slovaks in their native land. In general, at the end of the nineteenth century Slovaks did not possess a sense of belonging to a separate ethnic nation. Being but one of several cultural minorities which made up the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovaks had no separate nation history. Most resided in a sixteen-county region of northern Hungary that lacked distinct territorial boundaries. Parochialisms abounded as individuals identified themselves and others by the county where they lived, rather than by the term "Slovak". The Hungarian government's Magyarization program, designed to eradicate cultural differences in the Kingdom and create a single Magyar identity, hindered development of ethnic consciousness. Slovaks also professed different religious faiths; however, unlike

<sup>3</sup> In his *For God and country* (pp. 2-3) Victor Greene is particularly careful to warn of the potential hazards of attempting to assess ethnic consciousness. See also, DONALD L. HOROWITZ, *Ethnic Identity*, in NATHAN GLAZER, DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN (eds.), *Ethnicity: theory and experience*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1975, pp. 111-140.

<sup>4</sup> See JUNE G. ALEXANDER, *The immigrant church and community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Lutherans, 1880-1915*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987, pp. 100-131; IDEM, *Diversity within unity: regionalism and social relationships among Slovaks in Pre-World War I Pittsburgh*, "Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine", 70, October 1987, pp. 317-338.

<sup>5</sup> Although Slovak Lutherans founded a church in Pittsburgh, they will not be considered in this discussion. Church formation and the emergence of ethnic consciousness among Slovak Lutherans followed the Slovak Catholic pattern; however, in addition, Lutherans became embroiled in a religious dispute which cannot be avoided in discussions of their experience and, yet, is beyond the relevant scope of this analysis.

most Slavic groups, religion was not linked to ethnic identity or nationalism.<sup>6</sup> The dominant religion was Roman Catholicism, but Slovak Greek Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists affiliated with the Hungarian Reformed Church also lived in northern Hungary.<sup>7</sup> Slovaks who belonged to these confessions exhibited common characteristics. Both Catholics and Protestants were deeply religious. Their religions, however, were not founded on an understanding of theological dogmas; they were blends of Christian liturgy and superstitions. For Slovaks, religion involved observing designated holy days and adhering to an informal system of rituals which comprised a routine part of their lives.<sup>8</sup> Religion, both formal and informal, represented continuity in their lives. The churches where they worshiped were generally centuries old by the time emigration was underway in the 1880's. Furthermore, Slovak Catholics and Protestants lived in a country where religion and state were not separate. And although Roman Catholicism was the established religion, the Hungarian government financed the recognized religions. The state paid all clerical salaries and pensions, appointed church officials, and passed laws regarding church governance.<sup>9</sup>

When Slovaks migrated to the United States, they encountered a quite different situation. They found themselves but one of many immigrant groups in a society where separation of church and state was a fundamental principle and where religious denominations competed for adherents. Adjusting to this society forced Slovaks to look beyond their narrow parochialisms to their shared faiths and language. In the process, they developed a "consciousness of kind" which moved them toward developing a more encompassing ethnic identity.<sup>10</sup>

Slovak Catholics and Protestants began migrating to Pittsburgh in the early 1880s. Many of the first immigrants were sojourners seeking temporary employment and planning to return to their homeland. The location of jobs thus determined where they lived; consequently Slovaks dispersed throughout the

<sup>6</sup> CAROL SKALNIK LEFF, *National conflict in Czechoslovakia: the making and remaking of a State, 1918-1987*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 11-32; PETER BROCK, *The Slovak national awakening: an essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976, pp. 53-54; R.W. SETON-WATSON, *A history of the Czechs and Slovaks*. London, Hutchinson & Co., 1943, p. 323; C.A. MACARTNEY, *Hungary and her successors: the treaty of Trianon and its consequences, 1919-1937*. London, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup> Roman Catholics = 70%; Greek Catholics = 7%; Lutherans = 13%; Calvinists = 5%; Jews and "other" = 5%. These statistics are for 1910. *Slovenská Vlastiveda*, 4 vols. Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, Slovenská Akadémia Vied, 1943, vol. 1, p. 197.

<sup>8</sup> EMILY GREEN BALCH, *Our Slavic fellow citizens*. New York, New York Charities, 1910, pp. 88, 90; DARINA KRAUSOVÁ, *Zvykosť a ľudové* [Mores and folk art], in *Vlastivedný slovník obcí na Slovensku* [Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Community in Slovakia], 3 vols. Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, Slovenská Akadémia Vied, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 73-74.

<sup>9</sup> C.A. MACARTNEY, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968, pp. 121, 502 (nn. 3, 4), 503 (n. 1), 530, 698-699, 723-724; *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1913; s.v. "Hungary", by A. Aldasy; R.W. SETON-WATSON [Scotus Viator], *Racial problems in Hungary*. London, Archibald Constable, 1908, p. 434.

<sup>10</sup> This term was derived from TAMOTSU SHIBUTANI, KIAN M. KWAN, *Ethnic stratification: a comparative approach*. New York, Macmillan, 1965.

metropolitan area, including Allegheny City which Pittsburgh annexed in 1907. By the 1890s, however, a distinct settlement pattern had emerged: Slovaks were chain migrating and more were remaining permanently in Pittsburgh. As a result of several different but simultaneous chain migrations, Slovaks settlement areas emerged in at least five different sections of the metropolitan area. The practical effect of these numerous chain migrations was that individual neighborhoods claimed Slovaks from different regions of northern Hungary.<sup>11</sup> For Slovaks, then, their new ethnic communities differed from their homeland villages *in part* because they contained countrymen and countrywomen from various sections of their homeland.

Coming into contact with persons from other sections of northern Hungary intensified regional identities among Slovaks. Indeed, it appeared in the 1890s that the city's Slovak population was segmenting along premigration regional lines. Provincialism was most evident in the formation of fraternal lodges. Slovaks, like other immigrants in the United States, organized mutual-aid societies to provide financial assistance and mitigate the potentially devastating effects of sickness, disability, or death. By 1895, Slovaks in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area had organized one female and eleven male religious or secular lodges; by 1915, the number would triple. Some neighborhoods boasted as many as three branches of the same national organization.<sup>12</sup> The number of lodges naturally grew as more national secular and religious societies were established.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, provincialism nurtured existing lodges and stimulated the growth of new ones. Over time, Slovaks continued to join the same lodge as immigrants from their villages who had settled in Pittsburgh before them. At times Slovaks from the same village opted to start a new branch of a national organization

<sup>11</sup> JUNE G. ALEXANDER, *Staying together: chain migration and patterns of Slovak settlement in Pittsburgh prior to World War I*, «Journal of American Ethnic History», 1, Fall 1981, pp. 56-83. Because Allegheny City was annexed by Pittsburgh in 1907 and became known as the North Side, Slovak immigrants in Allegheny City are considered as part of the general Slovak population in Pittsburgh. "Metropolitan area" includes Pittsburgh and Allegheny City and their immediate environs.

<sup>12</sup> NATIONAL SLOVAK SOCIETY (NSS), *Dejiny a Pamätnica Národného Slovenského Spolku, 1890-1950* [History and Souvenir Book of the National Slovak Society]. Pittsburgh, National Slovak Society, 1950, passim; FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION (FCSU), *Pamätník Zlatého jubilea a 27 Konvencie Prvej Katolíckej Jednoty* [Memorial Album of the Golden Jubilee and 27th Convention of the First Catholic Slovak Union]. Middletown, PA, Jednota Press, 1940, passim; FRANK UHERKA, *Krátky prehľad S.K.P. Jednoty* [Short overview of the Slovak Calvinistic Presbyterian Union], in SLOVAK CALVINISTIC PRESBYTERIAN UNION (SCPU), *Kalendár pre Slovenský Kalvínov, 1927*. Pittsburgh, Slavia Printing Press, 1927, pp. 40, 42; SLOVAK EVANGELICAL UNION, *Zlatá kniha, 1893-1943* [Golden (Anniversary) Book]. Pittsburgh, Slovenský Hlásnik, 1943, passim.

<sup>13</sup> By 1920, Slovaks had organized at least twelve national organizations. Most were religiously based and accepted persons from only a specific religion. In addition to sources cited in n. 12 above, see THOMAS ČAPEK, JR., *The Slovaks in America*, Part 2 of THOMAS ČAPEK, *The Čech (Bohemian) community of New York*. New York, Czechoslovak Section of America's Making, Inc., 1921; reprint ed., San Francisco, R and E Research Associates, 1969, pp. 88-90.

instead of joining an existing branch.<sup>14</sup> Still, through the fraternal system, Pittsburgh's lodges became part of a larger network which extended beyond their immediate neighborhoods. While the fraternal system divided Slovaks along premigration regional lines, they also tied these immigrants to a national "Slovak" organization. Furthermore, through the organizations' official newspapers, which published the addresses of local lodges as well as invitations to the social and other events they sponsored, Pittsburgh's Slovak lodges developed contacts with countrymen and countrywomen living throughout the city and its environs.<sup>15</sup> Thus Slovak fraternalists did help encourage a fellow feeling among immigrants who had come to the United States with strong provincial identities. In the mid-1890s, this fellow feeling brought Slovak Catholics together to organize an ethnic church.

### *Catholic Slovaks*

Although Slovak Catholics had been migrating to Pittsburgh since 1880 and had organized their first lodge in 1889, they did not initiate efforts to establish a church until 1894. Before then, they attended local Czech or Polish churches.<sup>16</sup> While these churches served the immediate needs of temporary migrants, they were less suitable to the growing number of Slovak families planning to stay in the city. For, despite the use of Latin to celebrate Mass, language and cultural differences meant that these existing churches could not adequately serve Slovaks who wanted to go to confession regularly, to understand the Sunday sermon, or who simply needed to talk to a priest. Moreover, Slovaks, like most cultural groups, had developed a unique system of worship replete with special devotions and feast days. And they brought these long-standing, cherished traditions with them to the United States. An ethnic church would allow Slovaks to perpetuate them.

German, Irish, Polish, and Czech national churches, set an example for Slovaks. Their existence both encouraged Slovaks to recognize they comprised a distinctive people and legitimized forming additional ethnic churches. In early 1894 members of one Slovak Catholic lodge, which had been affiliated with Pittsburgh's Czech church, finally decided that "enough Slovaks" lived in the Pittsburgh area that "it would be good if there were a Slovak church" in the city.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> FCSU Branches 2, 4, 21, 97, 159, 185, 460, Membership applications, ca. 1908-1911, in First Catholic Slovak Union Papers, Immigration History Research Center, St. Paul, MN; Učtovníka Sp. sv. Antona z Padua č 50, I. K. S. J., 1902-1912 [Account book of the Society of St. Anthony of Padua], in Branch 50 Collection, Slovak Museum and Archives, Middletown, PA; FCSU, *Pamätník Zlatého jubilea*, pp. 139, 141-142, 146, 150, 154, 157-158.

<sup>15</sup> *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* [American Slovak News], 1893-1904, passim; *Jednota* [the Union], 1893, 1902-1918, passim; *Národné Noviny* [National News], 1910-1918, passim.

<sup>16</sup> JOZEF A. KUSHNER, *Slováci Katolíci Pittsburghského Biskupstva* [Slovak Catholics of the Pittsburgh Diocese]. Passaic, NJ, Slovak Catholic Sokol, 1946, pp. 93-94.

<sup>17</sup> FCSU Branch 2, Zápisnice [minutes], meeting of 14 Feb. 1894, in Branch 2 Collection, Slovak Museum and Archives.

They relied on the fraternal network to contact other Slovak lodges in Pittsburgh to request their cooperation. By December 1894 a fledgling congregation had been organized and had agreed to purchase a vacated Polish church. It was not situated in a Slovak settlement area. Instead, the founders selected a site that "was most convenient because it is located in the middle of the city and near to all Slovaks".<sup>18</sup> By choosing a central location, they confirmed that this was truly to be an ethnic church to serve the city's entire Slovak-speaking Catholic population.

Organizing this church was indicative of the development of some fellow feeling among Slovak Catholics from northern Hungary. The endeavor, however, did not represent the emergence of a strong ethnic consciousness or nationalism among the city's Slovaks in the 1890s. This became evident when they accepted without complaint the bishop's decision that the church be named "Saint Elizabeth of Hungary".<sup>19</sup> Naming their church after a Hungarian patron saint ran counter to the admonitions of the articulate but small number of Slovak nationalists in the United States who insisted that Slovaks must assert a separate cultural identity and thus reject any identification with the "Magyar" culture.

Although its founders and early members viewed Saint Elizabeth Church as a religious institution and not as a vehicle to stimulate ethnic consciousness, this "mother church" laid the foundation for religious faith to advance a group identity. It set a forceful precedent for organizing additional Slovak ethnic parishes, in part, because after 1895 Slovak Catholics arrived in a city where a Slovak church already existed.

As Slovaks kept moving into Pittsburgh, they continued to chain migrate and settle close to family and friends, not close to Saint Elizabeth Church.<sup>20</sup> Slovaks who lived in these expanding neighborhoods recognized Saint Elizabeth's as their church – a church for persons who spoke Slovak – and joined it. By 1901 Saint Elizabeth's boasted 456 families and a total membership of 3500 persons.<sup>21</sup> There was a problem however: Saint Elizabeth Church was too far from where most Slovaks lived. The desire for a more conveniently located church prompted Slovaks in two neighborhoods to initiate efforts in 1903 to establish separate parishes. Both efforts met success, and in 1906 two more Slovak Roman Catholic churches were dedicated.<sup>22</sup> In 1907, Slovaks in yet another Pittsburgh neighborhood requested permission to organize a church. They, too, complained that Saint Elizabeth's was "too far away".<sup>23</sup> In 1909 the bishop finally granted their request. A year later the fourth and last Slovak Roman Catholic church in Pittsburgh, Saint Joachim, was dedicated.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 27 Dec. 1894; JOZEF A. KUSHNER, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-96.

<sup>19</sup> *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 27 Dec. 1894, 8 Jan. 1895.

<sup>20</sup> JUNE G. ALEXANDER, *Staying together...*, *cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Church Reports, entry for Saint Elizabeth Church, Office of the Vicar-General Chancellor, Pittsburgh Diocese, Pittsburgh, PA.

<sup>22</sup> JOZEF A. KUSHNER, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-108.

<sup>23</sup> *Jednota*, 3 July 1907.

<sup>24</sup> JOZEF A. KUSHNER, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.



The dedication of Saint Joachim Church in 1910 was not simply a parish event; it was a "Slovak" event. Slovak Catholics from throughout the city came together to celebrate their countrymen's and countrywomen's accomplishment. In addition to Saint Joachim's congregation, fifteen Slovak lodges from the Pittsburgh area marched in the parade. These fraternal societies hired five bands to play at the festivities. Describing the dedication, one Slovak boasted that "other nationalities could not help but be overwhelmed with how Slovaks stick together so nicely and publicly demonstrate their solidarity".<sup>25</sup> Whether the festivities overwhelmed other nationalities is, of course, questionable, but the event did symbolize what had been taking place as Slovaks adjusted to Pittsburgh.

The development of Slovak churches did not stem from discrimination by other nationalities. In general, Slovaks could attend non-Slovak churches. Instead, a fierce loyalty to their religion and a desire to preserve and practice that religion had caused Slovak Catholics to adapt to a foreign society by forming ethnic parishes which set them apart from Catholics of other nationalities. At the same time, national churches effectively drew Slovak immigrants from different sections of northern Hungary together for mutual goals. Belonging to these churches encouraged the creation of a consciousness of kind. This fellow feeling intensified as the city's four Slovak Catholic parishes quickly became interdependent. Not only did Slovaks from one parish participate in the dedication ceremonies of other Slovak churches, parishes also relied on each other's pastors for assistance. Slovak priests from Pittsburgh's Slovak parishes routinely helped one another celebrate important religious ceremonies. When pastors went on vacation, left town, or became ill, priests from other Slovak parishes typically substituted during their absence. This interdependence made Slovak churches an identifiable ethnic subsystem within the Pittsburgh Diocese.<sup>26</sup> The establishment of churches thus encouraged Slovaks to remain part of the universal Catholic Church while simultaneously separating them from Catholics of other nationalities.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Pittsburgh's bishops actually welcomed the cultural pluralism exemplified by Slovak and other ethnic churches. These prelates, as well those in other American dioceses, were particularly concerned about "leakage", the loss of the foreign born to Protestantism.<sup>27</sup> Apparently accepting the argument that there was a link between language and religious loyalty, Pittsburgh's Catholic Church hierarchy was will-

<sup>25</sup> *Jednota*, 7 Sep. 1910.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 Aug. 1905, 8 Jan. and 5 Aug. 1908, 17 Mar. 1909, 7 Sep. 1910, 20 Mar., 22 May, 24 July, and 21 Aug. 1912; *Pittsburgh Catholic*, 7 June and 27 Sep. 1906, 7 May and 6 Aug. 1908. Pittsburgh's bishops recognized this subsystem by designating Slovak priests to participate in events at Slovak churches. For example, when he could not attend, Bishop Regis Vanevin delegated the pastor of Saint Elizabeth Church to officiate the dedication of Saint Joachim Church (*Jednota*, 7 Sep. 1910).

<sup>27</sup> RICHARD M. LINKH, *American Catholicism and European immigrants (1900-1924)*. New York, Center for Migration Studies, 1975, pp. 51-52; Rt. Rev. REGIS CANEVIN, *An examination historical and statistical in losses and gains of the Catholic Church* (N.P., 1912); *Pittsburgh Catholic*, 22 Sep. 1910.

ing to encourage ethnic consciousness in order to preserve Catholicism among the immigrants.<sup>28</sup> In 1904, Bishop Richard Phelan clearly sanctioned ethnic churches when he stated that Catholics committed a grievous sin if they "habitually" neglected their own church and frequented churches "where religious instruction is given in a language they do not understand".<sup>29</sup> In 1914, Bishop Regis Canevin praised Slovaks for their efforts to build Saint Joachim Church and urged them to be proud of their religion and their language.<sup>30</sup>

### *Protestant Slovaks*

Pittsburgh's Catholic Church was not alone in its willingness to embrace the foreign born and to encourage ethnic churches. American Protestant denominations also accommodated immigrants by welcoming ethnic congregations into their midst. Besides preserving the faith of Protestant immigrants, American Protestant denominations hoped to promote Americanization among immigrants and their children. Some home missionaries advanced the notion that Protestantism was equated not only with "true Christianity" but with American nationalism.<sup>31</sup> However, even some Protestants who advanced such views encouraged the development of ethnic consciousness in order to attract immigrants or keep them loyal to their Protestant faiths. They, too, saw a mutual interdependence between religion and ethnicity. This intertwined mutuality was evident in Pittsburgh's Slovak Presbyterian and Congregational churches.

Although a loyalty to their traditional faith encouraged the development of group identity among Slovak Catholics, it had two contradictory effects on Slovak Calvinists, as these Slavic members of the Hungarian Reformed Church were usually called. Their religion first discouraged and then later helped stimulate ethnic consciousness among them. Calvinists were among the first Slovaks to migrate to Pittsburgh. As early as 1882, John Lasniansky, a Calvinist from Zemplin County, was working for the Pennsylvania Railroad and recruiting countrymen to lay tracks for the company in Allegheny City.<sup>32</sup> Over time Calvinists who came to Pittsburgh formed part of a large regional migration comprising Hungarians

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of the views of Catholic Church leaders in the United States regarding the link between culture and fidelity to religion, see RICHARD M. LINKH, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-33 and *passim*.

<sup>29</sup> *Pittsburgh Catholic*, 10 Nov. 1904.

<sup>30</sup> *Jednota*, 2 Sep. 1914.

<sup>31</sup> SYDNEY E. AHLSTROM, *A religious history of the American people*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1975, pp. 858-860; JOHN HIGHAM, *Strangers in the land, patterns of American nativism 1860-1925*. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1955, pp. 28-63 and *passim*; MARTIN E. MARTY, *op. cit.*, p. 18. For contemporary views concerning the link between Protestantism, "true Christianity", and American nationalism, see e.g., CHARLES EUGENE EDWARDS, *The coming of the Slav*. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1921, pp. 73-90; JOSIAH STRONG, *Our country: its possible future and its present crisis*. New York, Baker & Taylor, 1885; KENNETH D. MILLER, *The Czecho-Slovaks in America*. New York, George H. Doran, 1922.

<sup>32</sup> JOZEF A. KUSHNER, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-101.

and Slovaks.<sup>33</sup> In April 1890, the city's Slovak Calvinists and Lutherans cooperated with Hungarians to establish a Slovak-Magyar Church. Revealing its clearly ecumenical and ethnically diverse nature, the church had two names. In Slovak it was "The First Slovak and Magyar Lutheran and Calvinist Church of Saint Paul"; in Magyar it was called "The First Magyar and Slovak Lutheran and Reformed Church of Saint Paul".<sup>34</sup> This cooperative undertaking quickly failed. Combining two religions and two nationality groups demanded a more ecumenical spirit than Hungarians of the Reformed Faith and Slovak Calvinists and Lutherans could muster. By 1891, the church had become simply the Hungarian Reformed Church. This new name gave the church a more limited and clearer identity: it was affiliated with the Reformed faith and services were conducted in Hungarian. At least some Slovak Calvinists and Lutherans abandoned this church and became charter members of a Slovak congregation in Braddock, an industrial town near Pittsburgh.<sup>35</sup> Although services were in Magyar, others remained members of the Pittsburgh church.<sup>36</sup> Sporadically between 1895 and 1903, two of the church's pastors did offer religious services in Slovak; however, these Slovak-language services occurred infrequently and only during particularly holy seasons.<sup>37</sup> After 1903, the church's pastors did not even occasionally conduct services in Slovak. Nevertheless, Slovak Calvinists remained committed to the Hungarian Reformed Church. This loyalty persisted after 1908 when the Pittsburgh church dissolved its association with the Reformed Church in the United States and affiliated with the Hungarian Reformed Church of Hungary.<sup>38</sup> During

<sup>33</sup> Data on geographical origins and settlement patterns derived from First Hungarian Reformed Church (Pittsburgh), baptismal register, 1891-1903, marriage register, 1891-1903, death register, 1891-1918 (microfilm), Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, Pittsburgh; Presbyterian Beneficial Union (formerly the Slovak Calvinistic Presbyterian Union), Death records, 1904-1953, deposited at Presbyterian Beneficial Union, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>34</sup> FIRST HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH, *Our history, 1890-1960*. N.p., 1960, unpag. The title page of the church's first collection book records the name in both the Hungarian and Slovak version (the collection book is maintained at the First Hungarian Reformed Church, Pittsburgh).

<sup>35</sup> *Slovenský Hlásnik*, 9 Nov. 1911; FIRST HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH, *Our history*; ANDREW MARCHBIN, *Hungarian activities in Western Pennsylvania*, «Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine», 23, September 1940, p. 10. Since the Braddock church was Lutheran it is possible that most of the Slovaks who withdrew from the Reformed church were Lutherans: however, at least some Pittsburgh Calvinists were among its charter members. This was not the only instance where Slovak Lutherans and Calvinists formed a joint congregation. GEORGE DOLAK, *A history of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902-1927*. St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1955, pp. 26-27; KENNETH D. MILLER, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>36</sup> There is little information concerning the early religious life of Pittsburgh's Slovak Calvinists. In 1901, at least eight men organized a lodge of the Slovak Calvinist Union. A female lodge of the Union was not formed until 1914. This female branch, which had eighteen charter members, disbanded after a short while; it reorganized in 1922. *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 16 Jan. 1902; SCPU, *Golden Jubilee Book of the Slovak Calvinistic Presbyterian Union in America*. Pittsburgh, Slavia Printing Co., 1951, p. 136; FRANK UHERKA, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>37</sup> *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 17 Dec. 1895, 16 Dec. 1903.

<sup>38</sup> FIRST HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH, *op. cit.* In October 1904, the Hungarian Reformed Church of Hungary established a classis in the United States. This classis was the church's administrative body in America, and its aim was to unite Hungarian Reformed Churches and

World War I, rhetoric denouncing Hungary and calling for the creation of a Slovak homeland helped rouse Slovak nationalism in the United States, but it did not stir Pittsburgh's Slovak Calvinists to break with their Hungarian church. Religious fidelity was clearly more important to them than asserting a separate ethnic identity.

In 1919 religion and ethnicity intertwined when, in order to win Slovak Calvinists over to Presbyterianism, a Slovak missionary made religion and group identity mutually animating forces. Presbyterian home missionaries had long tried to convince immigrants of the Reformed faith, especially Slovak Calvinists, to affiliate with the Presbyterian Church in the United States. They viewed these Slovaks essentially as coreligionists. Although there was no Presbyterian Church in Hungary, and there were some liturgical and doctrinal differences between American Presbyterianism and Slovak Calvinism, a fundamental unity of faith existed between the two religious denominations.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, while the Presbyterian Church did conduct missionary work aimed at converting Slavic immigrants, its work among Slovaks essentially constituted an effort to keep them loyal to their traditional faith. In order to attract Pittsburgh's Slovak Calvinists, it was necessary to stress the basic unity between Slovak Calvinism and American Presbyterianism and concurrently to make these members of the Hungarian Reformed Church think of themselves as "Slovaks".

With the approval of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, a young Slovak minister, Reverend John Tomasula, undertook this task. In 1919, he began working to establish a Slovak Presbyterian mission in Pittsburgh. He focused his activities on Slovaks who were members of the city's First Hungarian Reformed church. Some Slovaks apparently quickly acquiesced in Tomasula's proposal to form a separate ethnic church; others balked. By December 1919, Tomasula had persuaded twenty-six Calvinists to sever ties with the Hungarian Reformed Church and form their own Slovak congregation. Finally in 1921, the congregation, with fifty-six members, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, a denomination that in doctrine and administrative structure strongly resembled the Reformed Church they had belonged to in Hungary and the United States.<sup>40</sup>

keep them attached to the church hierarchy in Hungary. LOUIS A. KALASSAY, *The educational and religious history of the Hungarian Reformed Church in the United States*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1939, pp. 1-5, 63-76.

<sup>39</sup> In 1906, there were twelve Presbyterian Church bodies in the United States. This discussion focuses on the "Presbyterian Church in the United States of America". The tie between Slovak Calvinism (Hungarian Reformed faith) and Presbyterianism was so close that in 1901 the Slovak Calvinist fraternal was incorporated as the Slavonic Calvinistic Presbyterian Union. Finally in 1916, the Union adopted a policy of urging its members to join a Slovak Presbyterian church if one existed near where they lived (SCPU, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-26). Charter of the Slavonic Calvinistic Presbyterian Union, 9 August 1901 (the original charter is deposited at the headquarters of the Presbyterian Beneficial Society). Although "Slavonic" was used in the organization's incorporated title, it was commonly referred to as the "Slovak Calvinist Union". In the pre-World War I era it was not uncommon for Slovak organizations to use "Slavonic"; it was considered by some to be the proper English translation. Until the eve of the war the National Slovak Society, a fiercely nationalist organization, used "Slavonic" both on its letterhead and its newspaper masthead.

Becoming a mission of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh did not mean that these Slovaks were converts rejecting their traditional religion. On the contrary, they clearly viewed the formation of a Slovak church as a demonstration of continued loyalty to their old world faith. Lay persons expressed this allegiance when they faced the task of naming their church. The congregation wanted the church's title to include "Calvinist", a term rejected by the Pittsburgh Presbytery. The congregation remained adamant but compromised. It accepted the English name assigned by the Presbytery: The First Slovak Presbyterian Church. However, the members decided that under the church's English title the Slovak version would be bracketed and read: "Prvý Slovenský Kalvínský Cirkvev" [The First Slovak Calvinistic Church].<sup>41</sup> Church members clearly thought it important to identify themselves as "Calvinists", not merely as Presbyterians. Thus, although these Slovaks had agreed to affiliate with the Presbyterian Church, they did not reject but rather reaffirmed their traditional religious identity. In the final analysis, the establishment of the Slovak Presbyterian Church was not an example of conversion, but of religious realignment.

For Calvinists, then, loyalty to their religion had initially kept them tied to a Hungarian church and inhibited the emergence of a separate group identity. Ultimately it was, however, their religious faith that became a means for asserting a discernible group identity. The decision finally to organize a separate Presbyterian church took Slovaks who had once been part of a heterogeneous congregation and transformed them into members of a narrowly defined ethnic church. Thus for Calvinists the establishment of a Presbyterian church was ultimately an expression of their ethnic identity as well as their religious fidelity.

Most Slovak immigrants remained loyal to their premigration faiths, but there were exceptions. Pittsburgh's Slovak Congregational church represented one example of conversion to a different sect. Established in 1901, this church grew out of missionary efforts under the auspices of the Slavic Department of Oberlin College, the missionary arm of the Congregational Church in the United States.<sup>42</sup>

The origins of Pittsburgh's Slovak Congregational church lay in Braddock. Responding to an appeal by a local church member, in 1891 the Home Mission Board of the Congregational Church began missionary work among the town's Slavic immigrants. By 1896, Reverend John Jelinek, a Czech immigrant and recent graduate of Oberlin College's Slavic Department, had succeeded in establishing a Slovak Congregational Church in Braddock.<sup>43</sup> The Braddock church provided the basis for creating three additional Slovak Congregational churches in western

<sup>40</sup> SCPU, *op. cit.*, p. 206; JOZEF HOLUB, *Prvá Slov. Kalv. Presb. Cirkvev v Pittsburgh, PA* [The first Slovak Calvinistic Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA], in SCPU, *Kalendár pre Slovenských Kalvinov, 1927*, pp. 139-140; First Slovak Presbyterian Church, Minutes of Session, meetings of 3 Apr. and 29 May, 1921, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>41</sup> Minutes of Session, 22 May 1921.

<sup>42</sup> LAWRENCE B. DAVIS, *Immigrants, Baptists, and the Protestant mind in America*. Urbana, Ill., University of Illinois Press, 1973, pp. 109-130; KENNETH D. MILLER, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>43</sup> *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 24 Dec. 1896; *Pamätník Českých Cirkví ve Spojených Statech* [Memorial Album of the Czech Protestant Churches in the United States]. Chicago,

Pennsylvania. Between 1896 and 1900 a small group of Braddock's Slovak Congregationalists moved to Allegheny City and established a mission there. Extant records do not indicate whether the Slovaks who migrated from Braddock to Allegheny City were part of a missionary effort seeking converts in Pittsburgh, or if they left for other reasons such as finding different or better jobs. In 1901, ten of the men and eight of the women declared their independence from the Braddock church and organized an independent Slovak Congregational church in Allegheny City.<sup>44</sup> If they were seeking additional converts, their efforts enjoyed little success. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the congregation remained quite small; its adult membership hovered between thirty and forty members.<sup>45</sup>

Slovak Congregationalists were not practicing the faith they had professed in their homeland. Regardless of their former religious backgrounds, the religion these Slovaks adopted in the United States differed from what they would have practiced in Hungary.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, Slovak Congregationalists adhered to strict religious beliefs which rejected important cultural traditions typically identified with Slovaks. For example, they denounced drinking, dancing, and playing cards.<sup>47</sup> Because they adopted a more austere way of life than many of their fellow countrymen and countrywomen, these Slovak Protestants separated themselves from the large number of Slovaks who lived in their neighborhood. On Sundays, Slovak Congregationalists worshiped at regular morning services, and in the evening they participated in "Christian Endeavors". The Christian Endeavors consisted of Bible readings followed by discussions or, perhaps, a consideration of current religious or social debates such as temperance. For children, Sundays meant spending most of the day in religious thought, because they attended

Krestansky Posel, 1900, pp. 224, 226. Although this book purportedly contains brief histories of Czech churches, it includes Slovak congregations as well.

<sup>44</sup> *Památník Českých...*, cit., p. 227. In addition to Allegheny City, branches were organized in Charleroi and Duquesne. The Charleroi church also apparently included a number of Czech immigrants.

<sup>45</sup> Church Register of Kongregačné Slovenské Cirkev v Allegheny [Church Register of the Congregational Slovak Church in Allegheny]. The Pittsburgh church is now defunct; its records are maintained by Irene and Clarence Pavlik, Pittsburgh.

<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately the records of the Pittsburgh church contain no information regarding church members' former religions or their village origins in northern Hungary. The Congregational Church's administrative structure, based on the complete independence of local churches, greatly differed from the religious system in Hungary.

<sup>47</sup> Interviews with Irene Pavlik, 10 June 1977, Ruby Jelinek, 15 June 1977, Mrs. Daniel Holecý, 8 June 1977, all interviews conducted in Pittsburgh. All three of these women were daughters of Slovak ministers of either Pittsburgh's or one of the other three Slovak Congregational churches in western Pennsylvania. Irene Pavlik's father became minister of the Pittsburgh church in 1917. Ms. Jelinek's recollections are for the pre-World War era; Mrs. Pavlik's and Mrs. Holecý's recollections are primarily for the years immediately following World War I. THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP, *Report on the Four Churches among Slovak-Americans in Pittsburgh and Vicinity: Report to Church Extension Division of the Board of Home Missions* (1948, typewritten), pp. 4-9; "Slovak [sic] Congregational Church", Source Material for ALBERT J. KENNEDY, *Social Conditions in Twenty-Seventh Ward* (1930), Box 13 in Neighborhood Centers Association - Pittsburgh Records, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh.

Sunday School classes after services and then generally accompanied their parents to the Christian Endeavors. On Wednesday evenings, the congregation regularly assembled for a prayer meeting.<sup>46</sup> Sunday and Wednesday services usually included only members of Allegheny's Slovak Congregational Church, but other religious gatherings involved Congregationalists from one of the three other Slovak churches in western Pennsylvania. Every three months, one of these Congregational churches sponsored a rally, and members of the remaining three congregations travelled to the host church to participate. The rally included religious speakers, singing, the awarding of testimonials and, finally, a dinner. These quarterly events helped Slovak Congregationalists from four churches maintain close contact. This interaction brought Slovak Congregationalists together and made them distinct from Congregationalists of other nationalities. It is important to note that non-Slovak Congregationalists living in the area did not attend these social functions. Hence, Slovak Congregational churches came to form a separate ethnic body within a larger American denomination.

The fact that Slovak Congregationalists converted to an American Protestant religion did not prevent them from developing an identity as Slovaks. On the contrary, by isolating Slovak Congregationalists from coreligionists of other nationalities, their religion became a basis for the preservation or perhaps the actual development of ethnic consciousness among its adherents. This became evident when World War I broke out in Europe. As the war progressed and issues regarding the creation of a Slovak homeland were raised, members of Pittsburgh's Slovak Congregational church reacted differently than their Calvinist countrymen and countrywomen. Slovak Congregationalists rather stridently asserted their Slovak ethnic identity. Indeed, these converts to Congregationalism represented part of the eruption of ethnic nationalism by immigrants that so shocked many Americans and spurred ardent calls for vigorous Americanization programs.<sup>47</sup> In 1915, fifteen members of the church organized a branch of the National Slovak Society for the expressed purpose of advancing Slovak independence. They had not previously belonged to a Slovak fraternal society. In order to aid Slovak independence, a number of church members donated money to the Slovak League of America, an organization committed to a Slovak homeland. In other ways, too, the church became the basis for articulating Slovak nationalism. When Thomas Masaryk, head of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, which was calling for the creation of a separate Czecho-Slovakia, visited Pittsburgh in May 1918, the church's singing society participated in the event. Thus, although these Slovak Congregationalists did not preserve the religion they had professed in their homeland, the religion they adopted in the United States helped intensify their ethnic awareness.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> This is a composite description of church activities drawn from the sources cited in n. 47 above.

<sup>47</sup> JOHN HIGHAM, *op. cit.*

<sup>48</sup> NSS, *op. cit.*, pp. 379-380; NSS Branch 700, Dues Book, entry of 12 May 1915. The dues book is deposited with the lodge's current treasurer, Pittsburgh.

## *Organization of social activities in America*

The emerging group consciousness among Protestants and Catholics was accompanied and, indeed nurtured, by an "Americanization" of Slovak churches. Americanization does not mean these churches shed their ethnic character; rather, that they adapted to the reality of separation of church and state and fit into the structure of their respective denominations in the United States. As Slovaks sought ways to maintain their churches, they altered the role these institutions had traditionally played in their lives. Socializing became a church activity. In the United States congregations were transformed from persons who participated in communal worship to persons who had a shared commitment to the survival of the church.

Supporting churches required extensive cooperation among members. Each congregation had to devise ways to raise money to meet mortgage payments, pay the pastor, and operate its church. Since they received no financial assistance from the Pittsburgh Diocese, Slovak Catholic parishes had to be completely self-sufficient. To garner funds Slovak Catholic churches assessed each individual and family a fixed monthly fee. In addition, parish and fraternal societies regularly held fund-raising dances and, during the summer months, picnics.<sup>51</sup> Slovak Protestants fared better than Catholics because home mission boards supplied some financial help. Until the late 1930s, the Slovak Presbyterian Church benefited from loans and grants from the Presbytery of Pittsburgh. But this support was not sufficient to operate the Pittsburgh church; so its members also took independent measures to secure operating funds by instituting an assessment system and sponsoring church picnics to raise needed monies.<sup>52</sup> The Home Mission Board of the Congregational Church assisted its Pittsburgh Slovak brethren by providing some operating funds and helping pay the minister. Because they did not institute an assessment system, Slovak Congregationalists relied extensively on fund-raising activities to generate additional monies. These activities, of course, had to comply with the strict beliefs of the Congregational Church. To earn money the church's women formed the Ladies Aid Society, which crocheted or embroidered articles and prepared baked goods to sell. The congregation held bazaars where homemade products were sold. It was customary for individuals from the other Slovak Congregational churches in western Pennsylvania to participate in these one-day social events. In addition, the church sponsored annual picnics, also attended by these other Slovak Congregationalists.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Based on a close examination of four extant Slovak newspapers distributed in Pittsburgh. *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 1893-1904; *Jednota*, 1893, 1902-1918; *Národné Noviny*, 1910-1918; *Sloudek v Amerike* [Slovak in America], 1894-1915. Events sponsored by Slovak parishes were not advertised in the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, the Pittsburgh diocesan paper.

<sup>52</sup> First Slovak Presbyterian Church, Minutes of Session, meetings of 9 July 1921, 25 June and 8 Oct. 1922; *Report of the Committee on Presbyterial Missions of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1927*, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>53</sup> Interviews cited in n. 47 above; THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP, *op. cit.*; "Slovak Congregational Church"....., *op. cit.*



Although the purpose was to raise funds for the churches, these various activities acted as more than money-making ventures. The maintenance of Slovak churches became the nucleus for extensive social activity in the individual congregations. Church socials were often family affairs where adults and children spent leisure time. Youth groups even sponsored fund-raising events. Social gatherings provided a means for unmarried men and women to meet and court.<sup>54</sup> The fund-raising social, which played a vital role in the financial solvency of a church, became a lasting, integral part of Slovak community and church life. Within the context of "Americanization", it is significant that from the Slovak perspective fund-raising socials were uniquely American. The need for self-sufficiency and lay support thus made Slovak churches in the United States what they had not been in Hungary: centers of social life. In this way, they more closely resembled "American" churches.

The need for congregations to be self-supporting had two seemingly contradictory effects. On one hand, Slovaks were forced to Americanize their churches by adopting what was for them the "American" system of church support. On the other, these new lay responsibilities caused Slovak congregations to take on a life of their own which separated them from other nationalities and heightened ethnic consciousness. Yet, even as Slovaks were remaining aloof from their coreligionists of other nationalities, they were becoming part of their larger denominations. Catholics, for instance, recognized the bishop's religious and administrative authority over churches in the diocese. They observed American religious holy days as well as their own traditional feasts. Parishioners accepted the pastors appointed by the bishop, adhered to diocesan statutes regarding the selection of church officers, and contributed to the special collections mandated by the diocese. Slovaks also formed parish branches of diocesan organizations such as the Holy Name Society and marched in its annual parade.<sup>55</sup>

The financial aid the Slovak Presbyterian and Congregational churches accepted inextricably tied them to larger church bodies. Moreover, both complied with the precepts of their denominations. Presbyterians, for example, conducted their own administrative affairs but accepted supervision by the Presbytery of Pittsburgh. They also selected their pastors but submitted their choices for the Presbytery's approval. The nature of Congregational Church in the United States required that the administration of individual churches rest solely with the congregation. Consequently, Pittsburgh's Slovak Congregationalists selected their ministers and elected their church officers as well as deacons. Despite their autonomy, Slovak Congregationalists adopted practices that clearly reflected their tie to the Congregational Church. For example, the Christian Endeavor idea had been developed by a Maine Congregational Minister in 1881

<sup>54</sup> Slovak newspapers cited in n. 51 above. Interviews with Ferdinand Dvorsky, 17 Apr. 1977, 28 Nov. 1978 and with John and Mary Ciganik, 17 May 1977. Interviews conducted in Pittsburgh.

<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., ST. REGIS ASSOCIATION (ed.), *Catholic yearbook and history of Pittsburgh Diocese, 1913*. Pittsburgh, St. Regis Association, 1913, pp. 87, 89; *Pittsburgh Catholic*, 20 Oct. 1910, 12 Oct. 1911, 14 Oct. 1915; *Jednota*, 19 Oct. 1910, 8 Nov. and 20 Dec. 1911, 20 Oct. 1915.

as part of an interdenominational movement. The concept enjoyed the support of America's Congregational Church.<sup>56</sup>

### *Development and transformation*

Americanizing churches entailed more than maintaining churches and conforming to denominational precepts or practices. For Slovaks as well as other immigrants it involved establishing measures to insure their children's continued fidelity to their religion and hence to their ethnic church. By 1919, three of the city's Catholic churches had built schools where their children received both a Catholic and Slovak education.<sup>57</sup> Slovak Protestants did not follow suite. Their numbers were too small to support schools, and, moreover, Protestant hierarchies discouraged immigrants from establishing nationality schools. The city's Slovak Protestant churches, however, held regular Sunday Schools for children. They took one other important step to keep children from abandoning their parents' church: both churches held religious services in Slovak and English. The English services were presumably for children and young adults who, having been raised in the United States, preferred to worship in English.<sup>58</sup> These efforts along with attachments nurtured by the numerous church-sponsored socials reaped benefits. Pittsburgh's two Protestant churches lasted into the mid-1950s. This survival depended on support by second-generation Slovaks. But while churches survived the dwindling of the first generation, they could not withstand urban renewal and the changing demographics caused by the migration of members from Pittsburgh's industrial neighborhoods to the suburbs. When the Slovak Congregational Church was targeted for destruction as part of Pittsburgh's urban redevelopment, the congregation, which numbered sixty-two and consisted primarily of second generation Slovaks, was determined to relocate. While searching for a location near where most members had moved, the congregation temporarily associated with another local Congregational church but stubbornly maintained its separate corporate and ethnic identity. The Slovak congregation finally dissolved in 1970.<sup>59</sup> All four of Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholic churches

<sup>56</sup> SYDNEY E. AHLSTROM, *op. cit.*, p. 858.

<sup>57</sup> Saint Gabriel Church was the only parish to establish a school prior to World War; it opened one in 1913. Saint Mathew and Saint Joachim churches opened schools in 1917 and 1919 respectively. Because it never became a neighborhood church whose members thus lived nearby, Saint Elizabeth Church did not establish a school. JOZEFA. KUSHNER, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104, 108-109.

<sup>58</sup> From its founding the Presbyterian church apparently held English and some Slovak services, and as late as 1951 the minister was still preaching two sermons: one in Slovak and one in English (Minutes of Session, 26 Dec. 1921; SCPU, *Golden Jubilee*, *cit.*, p. 207). It is not clear when Pittsburgh Congregational church began offering English services; but by 1930 the morning service for the first Sunday of each month was in English. All Wednesday services were still in Slovak. "Slovak Congregational Church"....., *op. cit.*

<sup>59</sup> Correspondence, 19 Nov. 1958 - 23 Jan. 1970, in Slavonic Congregational Church, Miscellaneous Papers, in possession of Irene and Clarence Pavlik. The Slovak Presbyterian Church dissolved in 1956.

functioned until the early 1980s when Saint Elizabeth's was closed; the three other churches remain Slovak institutions with Slovak pastors.<sup>60</sup>

Pittsburgh Slovaks comprised only a small segment of the peoples who migrated to the United States at the turn of the century, but an analysis of religion and identity formation among them has implications that reach beyond Pittsburgh any beyond this immigrant group. In common with other immigrants who came to the United States, Slovaks felt the sting of xenophobia and encountered the hostility and discrimination it engendered. Yet, it was the more tolerant – not the hostile – aspects of American society that caused religion to promote group consciousness. Separation of church and state and freedom of religion permitted Slovaks freely to practice their faiths and, more important, to maintain ethnic churches. Antagonisms, engendered by America's religious diversity, actually forced the country's church bodies to tolerate ethnic differences. Competing for immigrant followers, Catholic and Protestant denominations countenanced ethnic pluralism in their respective midsts. As late as the 1920s, Protestants were actively promoting ethnic consciousness among immigrants and encouraging cultural pluralism within their ranks. The pluralism of America's religious system thus abetted the development of ethnic identities and concomitantly encouraged the Americanization of ethnic churches by welcoming them into a broader denominational structure.

For Slovak Catholics and Protestants, religious faith in some ways fostered and nurtured an ethnic consciousness. But evidence of group identity should not give way to facile generalizations about the rate or degree of identity formation among Slovaks and other ethnic groups in the United States. By committing themselves to an ethnic church, immigrants displayed a collective behavior that could sometimes belie underlying divisions within their congregations. The evidence suggests that, despite the ethnic awareness and unity which belonging to a Slovak church exemplified, parochial identities cultivated in their homeland did persist, especially within Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholic parishes.<sup>61</sup> These provincial identities became the bases of social relationships among Slovaks. For example, regionalisms influenced Slovaks as they decided whom to marry, whom to choose as godparents for their children, and which fraternal lodge to join. The persistence of regionalisms suggests that Slovaks often maintained a two-tiered identity – one based on a shared language and religion, another on local origins in the Old World. In addition there were divisions between those who developed a strong ethnic consciousness and those who did not.<sup>62</sup> Ethnic

<sup>60</sup> Parish schools also functioned until the 1970s when they were either closed or the number of grades was reduced.

<sup>61</sup> See sources in n. 4 above.

<sup>62</sup> The division between those who developed a strong ethnic consciousness and those who did not was evident in differing attitudes toward establishing schools. During the pre-World War I era, parishioners in all four Slovak Catholic churches took opposing positions regarding schools. Some advocated schools because they would instill ethnic consciousness in their children. Others expressed far less concern about preserving ethnicity and opposed parish schools because: 1) they believed schools were too expensive; or, 2) they felt education was unnecessary; or 3) their children were already being educated in other private or public schools.

churches did encourage the development of a consciousness of kind based on a shared religion, language, and cultural traditions. Belonging to an ethnic church did foster the development of a stronger ethnic identity than most Slovaks had recognized in their homeland. Nevertheless, for individual Slovaks, associating with an ethnic church was only the beginning or part of what became an ongoing process of emerging ethnic awareness.

The outbreak of World War I made Slovaks of all religious faiths cognizant of their shared group identity. The war raised what became a group-wide issue affecting Slovak Catholics and Protestants: the creation of a Slovak homeland. While creating a homeland was the single issue that cut across religious lines and finally ignited Slovak nationalism in the United States, the reaction by Pittsburgh's Slovak Congregationalists suggested that religion would continue to be a force influencing ethnic consciousness. As we have seen, these Congregationalists responded enthusiastically to calls for separating some northern counties from Hungary to form a Slovak homeland. However, at the same time, church members took actions which revealed that religion and ethnicity were becoming more antagonistically intertwined. They renamed their church "The Slavonic Congregational Church".<sup>65</sup> This change seemingly represented a blurring of ethnic identity, but it was not. The name change to "Slavonic" was in part a political statement. The congregation supported the plan which called for creating a Slovak homeland that was a federated Czech and Slovak state. The church's name reflected this stance.

During the war, religious differences began creating splits among Slovaks in the United States.<sup>64</sup> "Slovak identity" even took on conflicting meanings as Slovaks debated what the political and ethnic structure of the independent Slovak state should be. These debates divided Slovak Catholics and Protestants and split immigrants between those who preferred a federated state with Czechs and those who favored complete autonomy for Slovakia. By the mid-1920s, the religious faiths that helped give rise to Slovak ethnic consciousness were seriously dividing the Slovak population in the United States.

There was, then, a dynamic relationship between religion and ethnicity among Slovak immigrants. A comparison of the Slovak Catholic and Protestant experiences reveals that this was an ongoing, at times changing, relationship. While religious faiths heightened ethnicity, they brought Slovak Catholics and

JUNE GRANATIR ALEXANDER, *The immigrant church and community: the formation of Pittsburgh's Slovak religious institutions, 1880-1914*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1980, pp. 593-609.

<sup>65</sup> "Petition, Affidavit and Orders of Court", 25 Jan. 1915, in Slavonic Congregational Church, Miscellaneous Papers.

<sup>64</sup> MARIAN MARK STOLARIK, *The role of American Slovaks in the creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914-1918*. Rome, Slovak Institute, 1968, pp. 22-54; Rev. B.S. BUC, *Slovak nationalism*. Middletown, PA, Jednota Press, 1972; VICTOR S. MAMATEY, *The Slovaks and Carpatho-Ruthenians*, in JOSEPH P. O'GRADY (ed.), *The immigrants' influence on Wilson's peace policies*. Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1967, pp. 230-239; MILAN GETTING, *Američtí Slováci a vývin cecoslovenskej myšlienky v rokoch 1914-1918* (Slovaks and the development of the Czecho-slovak idea during the years 1914-1918). New York, Slovak Sokol in the United States, 1933.

Protestants into communion with large denominational bodies; this bond tightened as immigrants Americanized their churches in order to adjust to America's religious system. Established denominational regulations as well as religious precepts, however, tied ethnic congregations to larger church bodies without compelling them to shed their unique ethnic character. In their homeland, religion had nurtured Slovaks' cherished traditions and provided continuity in their lives; in the United States religious faiths helped stimulating changes as they adjusted not only to a new society but to their own ethnic identity.

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### **Summary**

This paper examines the Slovak Catholics and Protestants of Pittsburgh between 1880 and 1920. By offering a comparative analysis, it aims at furthering our understanding of the relationship between religion and ethnic identity. It demonstrates that among Slovaks religion acted as an energizing force stimulating the emergence of a Slovak ethnic identity in the United States.

### **Résumé**

Ce texte étudie les Slovaques de Pittsburgh, catholiques et protestants, entre 1880 et 1920. En présentant une analyse comparative, il a comme objectif de développer notre compréhension des relations entre identité religieuse et identité ethnique. Il démontre que parmi les Slovaques la religion agissait comme une force stimulante, provoquant la naissance d'une identité ethnique Slovaque aux Etats-Unis.

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## Religion and ethnic identity within the Slovene community in the United States: the bases and the transition to the second generation

Examining the role of religion within the Slovene ethnic community in the United States means approaching one of its main features since the establishment of the first Slovene settlements in this country. This essay aims at providing a broad overview of the development which the links between religious faith and Slovene ethnic identity underwent through time from the beginning of Slovene immigration to the period when the American-born second generation were beginning to assert themselves as the future core of this ethnic community. The latter years were marked by considerable changes. However, the modifications which occurred at this stage themselves become clearer, if they are compared with earlier attitudes and activities of Slovene religious institutions in the United States, setting them in the circumstances in which they acted.

The Slovene ethnic community in the United States grew through a mass inflow of immigrants in the period from the 1880s to the First World War. According to the *United States Federal Census*, in 1910 it numbered 183,431 members, among whom approximately two thirds belonged to the first generation and one third to the second. Indeed, from the middle of the 19th century the Slovene ethnic territory – of which then the large majority was included in the Austrian part of the Habsburg monarchy – was experiencing considerable emigration, mostly to the United States and partly elsewhere in Europe and overseas. A clear evidence of the impact produced by this migratory movement on Slovene population in the homeland is its officially recorded demographic increase of just 19% in the years from 1846 to 1910, against a total percentage of 59% for the whole population of the Habsburg monarchy, actually the lowest demographic increase among the peoples in the Austrian part of the monarchy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With regard to statistics concerning Slovene emigration to the United States in this period, as well as more comprehensive Slovene emigration statistics, cfr. MATJAŽ KLEMENČIČ, *Ameriški Slovenci in NOB v Jugoslaviji*, Maribor 1987, pp. 31-33, 36-50, 51-62 (this last chapter also includes *United States Federal Census* data of 1920, 1930 and 1940), 286-287 (these two pages belong to the English summary of the book). Cfr. also M. KLEMENČIČ, *Slovenci v ameriški statistiki v 19. in v 20. stoletju*, «Celovski zvon», (2), 4, September 1984, pp. 23-31. General Slovene emigration statistics are drawn in ŽIVKO ŠIFRER, *Izseljevanje s slovenskega ozemlja*, «Prikazi in študije», Zavod SRS za statistiko, Ljubljana, (8), 2, 1962, pp. 1-24; Ž. ŠIFRER, *Izseljevanje s slovenskega ozemlja*, pp. 1-24, manuscript kept at Knjižnica PZE za geografijo, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza Edvarda Kardelja, Ljubljana. VLADO VALENCIČ, *Izseljevanje Slovencev v tujino*

Like mass emigration from elsewhere in Southern and Eastern Europe in the same period, the Slovene one as well was basically caused by the economic crisis among the peasantry associated with the beginnings of industrialization and by the overpopulation on the land, related also to the increase of actual population growth rates. Indeed, the Slovene territory appears to have been marked by low economic standards, if it is compared with more industrialized Austrian regions. However, rather than straitened economic circumstances by themselves, combinations between them and other factors need to be considered as the reasons for emigration. Additional motivations which fostered it derived from the established family structure and its inheritance system, as well as the freedom to move, implied by abolition of feudal obligations in the Habsburg monarchy in 1848, from the increased availability of means of transportation and mainly from the awareness of new opportunities of social and economic mobility abroad. It has been ascertained that information on employment opportunities in the United States was largely provided to people in the homeland by relatives who had emigrated earlier, so that emigrants usually joined relatives or were followed by them. This clearly appears to have been a chain migration process, which also contributed to the geographic distribution of Slovene immigrants in the United States, so that in many cases their settlements were composed of people from the same villages.<sup>2</sup>

*do druge svetovne vojne*, «Dve domovini-Two Homelands», 1, 1990, pp. 43-82, and more briefly VLADIMIR KLEMENČIČ, *Izseljevanje-problem Slovenije in Slovencev*, «Draga 1968», Trst, 1969, pp. 51-59; V. KLEMENČIČ, *Geografija prebivalstva Slovenije*, «Geografski vestnik», 44, 1972, pp. 133-137, 143-147 (these five pages belong to the English translation, as the publication is bilingual); ANTON GOSAR, *Obseg, vzročnost in karakteristike slovenskega izseljevanja v tujino*, in *Izseljštvo naroda i narodnosti Jugoslavije i njegove uzajamne veze s domovinom*, Zagreb 1978, pp. 144-159 provide broad overviews of various aspects of Slovene migratory processes.

<sup>2</sup> Emigration and its economic causes are considered among the main questions of Slovene history in the 19th and 20th century, cf. FERDO GESTRIN, VASILIJ MELIK, *Slovenska zgodovina od konca osemnajstega stoletja do 1918*, Ljubljana 1966, pp. 74, 124-127, 158-168, 243. A presentation of economic reasons for emigration, as well as suggestions of other factors, are provided by some geographic studies, cf. RADO GENORIO, VLADIMIR KLEMENČIČ, *Adamič v procesu množičnega izseljevanja s slovenskega etničnega ozemlja*, in *Louis Adamič, Simpozij, Symposium*, Ljubljana 1981, pp. 23-24, 27-29; V. KLEMENČIČ, *Izseljevanje-problem...*, cit., pp. 52-54; A. GOSAR, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-147. A broader comparison among various groups of the Yugoslav migratory movement to the United States provides additional proof that a combination between economic and other social factors determined emigration, cf. BRANKO M. ČOLAKOVIČ, *Yugoslav Migrations to America*, San Francisco 1973, pp. 9-31. This subject as well as the chain migration process and in general the extension of kinship structures between the village in the homeland and the emigrant settlement have been approached by ethnologists in case studies, cf. MOJCA RAVNIK, *Način življenja in izseljevanje prebivalcev Grosupljskega in okolice do prve svetovne vojne*, in *Louis Adamič...*, cit., pp. 41-48; MARINKA DRAŽUMERIČ, *Izseljevanje iz Vinice in njene okolice*, «Slovenski koledar 1983», pp. 164-167. With regard to the impact of chain migration on the geographic distribution of Slovene emigrant settlements cf. pertinent suggestions in M. KLEMENČIČ, *Ameriški Slovenci...*, cit., pp. 42-43, 63, 66, as well as in RUDOLPH M. SUSEL, *Slovenes in Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, MA., Stephan Thernstrom ed., 1980, p. 935, where also other aspects of the Slovene migration process to the United States are briefly examined.



Most Slovene immigrants settled in the industrial Northeast, mainly in the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois. The largest Slovene ethnic communities developed in the Cleveland and Chicago-Joliet areas. Other considerable groups of Slovenes reached Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and even mining sites beyond the Plains, like in Colorado. It is also worth noting that although the majority of Slovene immigrants joined the ranks of industrial labor, some others undertook farming and accordingly lived in rural areas.<sup>3</sup>

This geographic, as well as social diversity of the Slovene ethnic community in the United States includes the peculiar case of a small rural Slovene settlement in Stearns County, Minnesota. Examining its early establishment in the 1860s and its further development, which were directly promoted by Slovene priests, helps us to trace the first bases of the future constant presence of Catholic religious institutions among Slovene immigrants in this country. The Catholic Church had a major role in Slovene society in the homeland and its influence was widespread in political, social, economic and cultural regards.<sup>4</sup> So it is not surprising that, besides some other early Slovene immigrants to the United States, several Slovene priests who decided to undertake missionary activity among Native Americans came to the upper Midwest from the 1830s approximately to the end of the 19th century. The first and most famous among them was Friderik Baraga,

<sup>3</sup> In Slovene emigration studies the geographic distribution of Slovene immigrants in the United States is presented in M. KLEMENČIČ, *Ameriški Slovenci...*, cit., pp. 63-71, 287-288 (English) and in SLAVA LIPOGLAVŠEK-RAKOVEC, *Slovenski izseljenci. Geografski pregled predvojnega stanja*, «Geografski vestnik», 22, 1950, pp. 8-32. Both authors partly refer to previous books on Slovene immigrants by themselves or as a part of Yugoslav immigration, published in the United States. Klemenčič mainly considers the book by GERALD G. GOVORCHIN, *Americans from Yugoslavia*. Gainesville 1961. Lipoglavšek-Rakovec refers to the earlier publications IVAN MLADINEO, *Jugoslovenci u Sjedinjenim državama američkim. I. Rasprava o njihovom broju*. New York 1925, and JOŽE ZAVERTNIK, *Ameriški Slovenci. Pregled splošne zgodovine Združenih držav, slovenskega naseljevanja in naselbin in Slovenske narodne podporne jednote*. Chicago 1925. An even earlier classic on the Slovene ethnic community in the United States, which deals with the migratory process and its statistics as well, was published in the homeland by J.M. TRUNK, as *Amerika in Amerikanci*. Celovec 1912. Among basic books, published in the United States, cfr. also EMILY G. BALCH, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*. New York 1910; GEORGE J. PRPIC, *South Slavic Immigration in America*. Boston 1978; B.M. ČOLAKOVIČ, *op. cit.* A rich survey of the Slovene ethnic community in the United States and of its basic features is provided by R.M. SUSEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 934-942. For a comprehensive presentation of the contemporary geographic distribution of Slovenes in the United States cfr. two essays based respectively on the 1970 and 1980 *United States Federal Census*. The first is TOUSSAINT HOČEVAR, *Geografska razporeditev, starostna struktura in relativna osveščenost slovenske jezikovne skupine v ZDA*, «Zgodovinski časopis», (34), 1-2, 1980, pp. 215-225; this is also a chapter (pp. 159-174, with a short addition) of T. HOČEVAR, *Slovenski družbeni razvoj: izbrane razprave*. New Orleans 1979, in which pp. 143 to 174 are devoted to emigrant questions; the chapter mentioned above was first published as *Geographical Distribution, Age Structure, and Comparative Language Maintenance of Persons of Slovene Language in the United States*. New York, Society for Slovene Studies Newsletter Documentation Series 3, 1978. The second essay is JOŽE VELIKONJA, *Slovenes in the United States - 1980 (Statistics on Ancestry)*, «Slovenski koledar 1989», pp. 216-221.

<sup>4</sup> As a volume of essays on the impact of the Catholic Church on Slovene culture, as well as on Slovene society as a whole, cfr. FRANCE M. DOLINAR, JOŽE MAHNIČ, PETER VODOPIVEC (eds.), *Vloga Cerkve v slovenskem kulturnem razvoju 19. stoletja*. Ljubljana 1989.

who reached the United States in 1830. While he himself also met Slovene settlers, a major role in promoting Slovene immigration was held by Franc Pirc.

Actually, supported by German and American Catholic institutions, Pirc mainly – and decisively – contributed to the settlement of German Catholic immigrants in the aforementioned Stearns County in the state of Minnesota. However, although with less success, he managed to attract Slovene settlers as well to this area. After the few first arrivals in 1864, a considerable group of immigrants came from the homeland in 1865, so that already at that time they formed the bases of two settlements, which would be named St. Anthony and St. Stephen. The former gradually declined, as after its initial development this Slovene community was not joined by new settlers. On the contrary, the village of St. Stephen grew considerably in the next decade and to some extent still in the following ones. Remaining sufficiently large and cohesive, the community managed to retain its ethnic identity after immigration stopped and through the following generations up to today.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The earliest Slovene immigrants to the United States are supposed to have been among the founders of the settlement of Ebeneser in Georgia, cfr. T. HOČEVAR, *Slovenski protestantni v kolonijalni Georgiji*, «Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje», (39), 4, 1968, pp. 145-152. Two other early Slovene immigrants were Anton Fister, a participant in the 1848 revolution in Austria, and the utopian socialist Andrej Bernard Smolnikar; with regard to their activity, cfr. MARJAN BRITOVŠEK (ed.), *Dr. Anton Fister v revoluciji 1848. Vloga in pogledi*. Maribor 1980; JANEZ STANONIK, *Ameriška leta slovenskega izobraženca Antona Fistra*, «Slovenski koledar 1980», pp. 197-204; J. STANONIK, *Andrej Bernard Smolnikar*, «Slovenski izseljenski koledar 1962», pp. 170-174.

Stearns County lies on the west side of the Mississippi River, approximately 70 miles northwest of St. Paul, Minnesota's capital. The main city of the county is St. Cloud. For a more extensive presentation of the settlement of St. Stephen cfr. *Seventy-fifth Anniversary, Church of St. Stephen, 1871-1946*. St. Stephen 1946. As more comprehensive publications cfr. MAJDA KODRIČ, «Kranjci v Stearns County - vezi med etnično zavestjo in zemljepisnimi dejavniki v neki slovenski kmečki naselbini v Minnesoti», «Geografski obzornik», (34), 2, 1987, pp. 108-112; JUNE D. HOLMQUIST, JOSEPH STIPANOVICH, KENNETH B. MOSS, *The South Slavs*, in JUNE D. HOLMQUIST (ed.), *They Chose Minnesota, a Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*. St. Paul 1981, pp. 385-386. WILLIAM P. FURLAN, *In Charity Unfeigned, the Life of Father Francis Xavier Pierz*. St. Cloud 1952; SISTER GRACE MC DONALD, *Father Francis Pierz Missionary*, «Minnesota History», 10, June 1929, pp. 107-125; SISTER BERNARD COLEMAN, VERONA LA BUD, *Mastnagans: the Little Book*. St. Paul 1972 (on the role of the missionary Josip Buh); HILDEGARD B. JOHNSON, *The Germans*, in J.D. HOLMQUIST (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 167-169; H.B. JOHNSON, *Factors Influencing the Distribution of the German Pioneer Population in Minnesota*, «Agricultural History», 19, January 1945, pp. 54-56; MARILYN S. BRINKMAN, WILLIAM T. MORGAN, *Light from the Hearth*. St. Cloud 1982. Various works were published on Friderik Baraga, cfr. MAKŠIMILJAN JEZERNIK, Ph.D., L.L.D. *Frederick Baraga; a portrait of the first Bishop of Marquette based on the archives of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. New York-Washington 1968. An extensive survey of Slovene missionaries in the United States is presented in J.M. TRUNK, *op. cit.*, pp. 543-606. Whole chapters on Slovene missionaries, other Slovene priests and their activities are contained in VINCENT A. YZERMANS, *The Spirit in Central Minnesota. A Centennial Narrative of the Church of Saint Cloud, 1869-1969*. St. Cloud 1969. The role of Slovene missionaries in the United States and elsewhere, as well as in general the activities of the Slovene Catholic Church among emigrants are briefly presented in BOGDAN KOLAR, *Slovenska Cerkev v razponu med domom in svetom*, in F.M. DOLNAR, J. MAHNIC, P. VODOPIVEC (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 46-51.

In various regards the establishment and the development of this Slovene settlement were marked by features which is possible to observe in examining the attitudes of the Catholic Church toward Slovene emigration processes and its activity among emigrants as a whole. It is worth nothing that Pirc fostered immigration to the United States largely through articles published in the Slovene Catholic press, by which he offered device as to how immigrants should develop their community as well. On the one hand, his publications were part of the numerous reports in which various missionaries provided readers in the homeland with information on the environment in which they acted. At the same time, his writings fit among those articles which specifically addressed possible emigrants, offering them advice concerning the journey, the time of emigration, the areas where they should settle, as well as warning them against negative experiences.<sup>6</sup> While such articles were sent by Slovene priests from the United States already around the middle of the 19th century, others similar continued to appear frequently in Slovene Catholic newspapers in the following decades, as emigration became a mass process and accordingly the interest of religious institutions in it increased further. A comparison between the Slovene Catholic press and other newspapers published in the homeland shows that indeed the former paid most attention to questions related to emigration.<sup>7</sup>

This interest also led to the publication of books on this subject. Among them at least *Amerika in Amerikanci* by Jurij Matej Trunk, published in Celovec (Klagenfurt) in 1912, is worth mentioning, as both its approaches to various problems and its presentation of the Slovene ethnic community in the United States are representative of a classic work. The author, a pastor in Carinthia, after having visited the United States four times between 1909 and 1911, gathered his observations and opinions in a publication which was conceived as a reference book both for future emigrants and for those who had already left the homeland. While two thirds of the volume consisted in a presentation of the United States, the last third dealt with Slovene emigration and with the features of the Slovene ethnic community in this country.

Examining the subjects with considerable objectivity, Trunk proposed to aid emigrants in their choices. At the same time, he stressed that he did not intend to foster emigration, and rather advised against it, unless it was indispensable.

<sup>6</sup> B. KOLAR, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-51. With regard to the establishment of the Slovene settlement in Stearns County, cfr. various articles in «Zgodnja Danica», e.g. the report, entitled *Iz Ljubljane*, on a letter by Pirc, «Zgodnja Danica», (18), 14, May 10, 1865, p. 110; the report *Iz Brezji na Gorenškem*, signed J.M-r., «Zgodnja Danica», (18), 15, May 20, 1865, p. 119; the report *Iz Krovtinga*, signed FRANČIŠK PIRC, «Zgodnja Danica», (18), 15, May 20, 1865, pp. 120-121. Pirc also reported on his missionary activity, cfr. *Iz Krovtinga*, «Zgodnja Danica», (18), 1, January 1, 1865, pp. 6-7. As a series of articles which specifically addressed emigrants cfr. the report *Iz št. Vincencija*, «Zgodnja Danica», (18), 6, February 20, 1865, pp. 45-46; (18), 10, April 1, 1865, pp. 79-80; (18), 11, April 10, 1865, p. 88; all these articles were signed TROBEC.

<sup>7</sup> MARJAN DRNOVŠEK, *Izseljevanje Slovencev v tujino do druge svetovne vojne v luči dosedanjih raziskav*, manuscript, pp. 1-3; B. KOLAR, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51; B. KOLAR, *Cerkev in izseljenstvo v letih pred prvo svetovno vojno*, «Viri», 3, 1990, pp. 92-98 (this issue of the periodical focuses on the presentation of sources for the history of Slovene emigration).

Both attitudes were typical of the Slovene clergy and their institutions. On the one hand articles in Catholic newspapers and books dissuades from mass emigration, regarding it as a factor of decay in Slovene society, on the other hand they aimed at reducing its unfavourable consequences by providing emigrants with both material and spiritual support. Indeed, besides protecting them from the various dangers which they might encounter, the main goal was the preservation of their allegiance to the Catholic Church together with their ethnic identity.<sup>8</sup>

As it is worth nothing that, for instance, the aforementioned immigrants to Stearns County were urged to develop their own Slovene religious community, we can also observe that Slovene religious institutions took care of the actual growth of such communities. While their direct involvement in this regard is considered in some more detail in the following paragraphs, among other contacts which they established with Slovene emigrants in the United States, as well as in other countries, at least the activity of the editorial society *Družba sv. Mohorja* (The Society of St. Hermagoras), founded in Celovec (Klagenfurt) in 1860, is worth mentioning. By sending to its subscribers in the homeland and abroad books and the annual *Koledar Družbe sv. Mohorja*, it fostered not only religious faith, but also the attachment to the Slovene language and to Slovene literature as the core of ethnic identity. Tracing its membership in the United States in the decades of mass Slovene immigration, it is possible to observe the increase from around 60 members in the 1880s to more than 2,000 in the last years before the First World War.<sup>9</sup>

The assistance provided by the Slovene Catholic Church to emigrants conformed to the care which at that time the Holy See devoted to emigration as a crucial problem of the European countries left by large masses of their population, as well as of those where emigrants settled. Accordingly, such purposes were also pursued jointly with the larger activity of the Austrian St. Raphael-Verein. Its first Slovene branch was active since the beginning of the 20th century and was formally established in Ljubljana in 1907, while another was founded in New York in 1908. Both developed in the following years until the First World War, which interrupted their activity. The Slovene St. Raphael associations assisted Slovene emigrants in their emigration process and in their initial adjustment to the country of immigration, thus acting as a transitory support between their previous religious community at home and the new one in the place where they would settle. Their links both with the homeland and with the Slovene ethnic community in the United States are evident, if for instance we consider the whole activity of Kazimir Zabrajšek, the promoter of the branch in New York. Indeed, already at that time and still in the following decades he was a prominent religious leader among Slovene immigrants in this country, besides holding a

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. note 7, as well as J.M. TRUNK, *op. cit.*; M. DRNOVŠEK, *Odmevnost Trunkove knjige "Amerika in Amerikanci" v letih 1912-1913*, «Zgodovinski časopis», (43), 4, 1989, pp. 606-609.

<sup>9</sup> *Iz Krovinga*, signed F. PIRC, «Zgodnja Danica», (18), 15, May 20, 1865, pp. 120-121; ANDREJ VOVKO, *Udje Družbe sv. Mohorja v ZDA do leta 1900*, «Dve domovini-Two Homelands», 1, 1990, pp. 121-135.

major role in the reestablishment of the St. Raphael association in the homeland in 1927 and within its future activity. The cooperation between the Slovene St. Raphael association in New York and the Slovene ethnic community in the United States was also based on the contacts which were established with Slovene priests, parishes, fraternal organizations and other associations. It is also worth nothing that, besides spreading press from the homeland among emigrants, in 1909 this St. Raphael branch founded the monthly «Ave Maria», which was later assumed by the Slovene Franciscans and has been published up to today, mostly in Lemont, Illinois, supplied also with the annual «Ave Maria Koledar».<sup>10</sup>

No doubt this participation of the St. Raphael association in the public life of Slovene immigrants was largely eased by the opportunity to refer to religious ethnic institutions which already existed in their community. As to the development of Slovene parishes and religious organizations up to that time, it is not surprising to discover that their beginnings were linked to the activity of Slovene missionaries, after having observed the role of the latter in promoting early immigration. Indeed, the first essentially Slovene church in the United States was built in the aforementioned village of St. Stephen in 1871. The settlement remained a mission until 1894, when its first resident pastor, he himself a Slovene missionary, was appointed. At that time other parishes as well were already being founded in Slovene settlements, and in the larger urban ones several developed as specifically Slovene. Among them at least the St. Vitus' parish, established in Cleveland in 1893, is worth nothing, as since the mid-1890s the Slovene ethnic community in this city has represented the main Slovene center in the country. At the end of the First World War, 51 Slovene settlements were led by Slovene priests, while 16 belonged to mixed parishes, and as a whole around 90 Slovene priests operated in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

Besides observing this spread of ethnic parishes among Slovene immigrants, it can not be overlooked that many immigrants from Prekmurje, the northeastern edge of the Slovene ethnic territory, adhered to the Lutheran faith and established a community based on such religious principles in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

<sup>10</sup> B. KOLAR, *Družba sv. Rafaela v New Yorku*, «Mohorjevo koledar 1988», pp. 103-104; B. KOLAR, *Družba sv. Rafaela do ustanovitve ljubljanske podružnice*, «Dve domovini-Two Homelands», 1, 1990, pp. 107-119 (this essay, as well as those in «Dve domovini-Two Homelands» which are indicated in notes 1 and 9 are provided with English abstracts); *Desetletnica Rafaelove družbe*, «Slovenec», (65), 191, August 22, 1937, p. 3; for a general presentation of the activities led by Zakrajšek cfr. also M. KLEMENČIČ, *Ameriški Slovenci...*, cit., pp. 80-81.

<sup>11</sup> With regard to the development of the settlement of St. Stephen until the end of the 19th century, cfr. *Seventy-fifth Anniversary...*, cit., pp. 8-27, as well as J.D. HOLMQUIST, J. STIPANOVICH, K.B. MOSS, *op. cit.*, p. 385. Cfr. R.M. SUSEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 935, 938 in this regard, as well as concerning other parishes. The figures indicated for the time at the end of the First World War are reported in *Več slovenskih šol!*, «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote», (4), 10, March 13, 1918, p. 4. Several publications in essay or book form have been published on individual parishes, cfr. for instance their list in JOSEPH D. DWYER (ed.), *Slovenes in the United States and Canada, A Bibliography*, St. Paul 1981, pp. 135-138 (this bibliography belongs to the Immigration History Research Center Ethnic Bibliography series).

Anyway, their adhesion to the Lutheran Church, as well as their distinctive dialect, which were results of the closeness of Prekmurje to Hungary and of its actual belonging to the Hungarian part of the Habsburg monarchy, contributed to separate them also from the main body of the Slovene ethnic community in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

While the Lutheran immigrants from Prekmurje themselves founded their own fraternal organization and a newspaper printed in their specific so-called Windish (or Wendisch) language, several others developed among the majority of Slovene immigrants. As will be seen, the role of religious institutions can not be presented adequately without considering the freethinking and socialist ones as well. Indeed, leaders and organizations of both the Catholic alignment and the so-called progressive one held considerable positions in ethnic public life, maintaining the ideological differentiation typical of the political scene in the homeland.<sup>13</sup> However, the origins of ethnic activities among Slovene immigrants in the United States are closely related to the role which the Church assumed in their community since the beginnings of immigration, again largely thanks to the work of Slovene missionaries.

In this regard above all the outstanding contributions of Josip Buh are worth nothing. This missionary, who remains in the historical memories of the village of St. Stephen as the priest who first visited it and set the bases of its parish, did not only represent an essential religious and ethnic support of Slovene settlers in Minnesota as a whole, but was also among the promoters of the first Slovene newspaper in the United States and of the first nation-wide Slovene fraternal organization, which were established respectively in Chicago in 1891 and in Joliet in 1894. Still today the *Kranjska Slovenska Katoliška Jednota* (up to 1965 Grand Carniolian Slovenian Catholic Union of USA, since then American Slovenian Catholic Union, in short KSKJ) holds the leading role among Catholic Slovene immigrants in the United States and the *Amerikanski Slovenec* (Slovene American) was and is still now its official organ – although for three decades (from 1915 to 1946) the KSKJ published a separate organ,  *Glasilo KSKJ Jednote* (Voice of the KSKJ).<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, by providing social insurance to immigrants and thus assisting them in their economic hardships, fraternal or mutual aid associations became the most

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. for instance R.M. SUSEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 934, 938; M. KLEMENČIČ, *Slovenci v ameriški statistiki...*, cit., p. 29; M. KLEMENČIČ, *Ameriški Slovenci...*, cit., pp. 58-59, 287 (English).

<sup>13</sup> For a general presentation of Slovene ethnic press and organizations in the United States, cfr. R.M. SUSEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 937-941; M. KLEMENČIČ, *Ameriški Slovenci...*, cit., pp. 33-34, 77-84, 288-289 (English). Slovene emigrant press in the United States and elsewhere up to 1945 is presented in detail in the catalogue JOŽE BAJEC (ed.), *Slovensko izseljensko časopisje 1891-1945*. Ljubljana 1980.

<sup>14</sup> The life and the activities of Josip Buh are presented in SISTER B. COLEMAN, V. LA BUD, *op. cit.* His contacts with the settlement of St. Stephen are described in *Seventy-fifth Anniversary...*, cit., pp. 14-19, 38. The support he provided to the *Amerikanski Slovenec* and to the KSKJ is stressed for instance in J.D. HOLMQUIST, J. STIPANOVICH, K.B. MOSS, *op. cit.*, p. 386, where his role among Slovenes in St. Stephen and in Minnesota as a whole is presented as well, pp. 385-386. A basic source concerning the development of the KSKJ is *Jubilejna spominska knjiga izdana povodom tridesetletnice Kranjsko-slovenske katoliške jednote, 1894-1924*. Cleveland 1924.

widespread Slovene ethnic institutions.<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, the main Slovene nonreligious institution in the United States as well is a fraternal organization, the *Slovenska Narodna Podporna Jednota* (Slovene National Benefit Society, in short SNPJ), established in Chicago in 1904, which publishes the newspaper «Prosveta» (The Enlightenment). The SNPJ, which grew even larger than the KSKJ, proposed to act as the ideological opponent of the latter, meeting the needs of those immigrants who adhered to freethinking ideas and to the socialist view of class struggle, which spread outstandingly among Slovene immigrants compared to other Slavic ethnic communities.<sup>16</sup> As it is evident from their explicit ideological positions themselves, these and other Slovene fraternal organizations extended their activity beyond mutual aid, developing their influence among Slovene Americans as social, cultural and even political institutions.

Their political commitment strengthened during the First World War, as the national and state question in the homeland reached a crucial stage. This activity, which is indicative of the close allegiance still felt by emigrants towards the homeland, led their organizations to enhance mutual ideological conflicts. Since its establishment in 1917, the *Slovensko Republičansko Združenje* (Slovenian Republican Alliance, from 1919 *Jugoslovansko Republičansko Združenje* - Yugoslav Republican Alliance), led by socialist and progressive immigrants, advocated the creation of the Yugoslav federal republic. The Catholic leaders, instead, joined the movement, promoted among the South Slavic immigrants by political migrants from the Habsburg monarchy and by the Serbian government, which pursued the unification of the South Slavs in a monarchy under the rule of the Serbian dynasty.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, the Slovene ethnic community in the United States began undergoing structural changes, which compelled its organizations to deal with

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. for instance the essay by T. HOČEVAR, *Češki vpliv pri snovanju slovenskih podpornih "jednot" v ZDA*, «Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje», (48), 1/2, 1977, pp. 234-240 (provided with an English summary), which examines the Czech influence in the formation of Slovene fraternal societies in the United States and in general the modes of their establishment.

<sup>16</sup> The development of the SNPJ since the establishment to the 1923 is presented in J. ZAVERTNIK, *op. cit.*, pp. 553-623. The outstanding spread of the socialist movement among Slovene immigrants compared to other Slavic ethnic communities in the United States is stressed for instance in JOHN BODNAR, *Materialism and Morality: Slavic-American Immigrants and Education, 1890-1940*, «The Journal of Ethnic Studies», (3), 4, Winter 1976, pp. 10-11; EVA MORAWSKA, *The Internal Status Hierarchy in the East European Immigrant Communities of Johnstown, PA, 1890-1930s*, «Journal of Social History», 16, Fall 1982, pp. 84-85; IVAN ČIZMIČ, *Jugoslovanski iseljenički pokret v SAD i stvaranje jugoslovanske države 1918*, Zagreb 1974, p. 23; J. STIPANOVICH, «In Unity is Strength»: *Immigrant Workers and Immigrant Intellectuals in Progressive America: A History of the South Slav Social Democratic Movement, 1900-1918*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1978.

<sup>17</sup> I. ČIZMIČ, *op. cit.* (the book is provided with an English summary); J. BAJEC, *Ameriška Slovenija med prvo svetovno vojno*, «Slovenski koledar 1971», pp. 229-256; M. DRNOVŠEK, *O stališčih slovenskih socialistov v ZDA do vojne in jugoslovanskega vprašanja med prvo svetovno vojno*, «Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja», (15-16), 1-2, 1975-1976, pp. 75-96; M. KODRIČ, *Erbni Kristan in socialistično gibanje jugoslovanskih izseljencev v ZDA v letih 1914-1920*, «Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja», (32), 1-2, 1983, pp. 63-87; M. KLEMENČIČ, *Ameriški Slovenci...*, cit., pp. 85-128; J. STIPANOVICH, *op. cit.*

new, common problems. While on the one hand the second generation was growing up, soon after the end of the war new legislation sharply reduced immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, thus limiting the inflow of Slovene immigrants as well. In these circumstances the Slovene ethnic leaders realized that the future of their organizations would depend on the interest of the second generation in keeping them alive.<sup>18</sup> Referring to a research which the author of this essay is pursuing presently, the steps which the KSKJ undertook in order to foster the involvement of the youth in its activities and in general in order to nurture ethnic identity among them are presented briefly in the following paragraphs. Besides, a comparison with pertinent attitudes and activities of the SNPJ as the other main Slovene ethnic fraternal society shows that both focused their attention on the same questions. Thus, stressing the similarities and the differences between their approaches in these regards can contribute to a better understanding of the KSKJ's positions themselves.

In the KSKJ, like in the SNPJ, a basic step in approaching the question of the second generation was the development of their youth section, which they established respectively in 1916 and in 1913. While providing financial benefit to children from 1 to 16 years old, this section represented a means by which they were involved in the organization already at that age. Moreover, ethnic education was pursued through the publication of a specific organ for children. Thus, in 1921 the KSKJ founded the monthly «Angelček» (Little Angel), which was published as a separate periodical until 1923 and then as a supplement of «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote» from 1924 to 1926. This organ can be compared to the monthly «Mladinski list» (Juvenile), established by the SNPJ in 1922, although the latter largely outlasted the former and has been published up to today with the title «The Voice of Youth», adopted in 1945. For instance, a common feature of both magazines was the inclusion of English pages, which were apparently meant for those second generation readers who did not master the Slovene language adequately.<sup>19</sup>

However, the problem concerning the gradual loss of the ethnic language was approached differently by the two organizations. This discrepancy is most evident in their attitudes towards school education as an essential issue within the question of the second generation. Indeed, the KSKJ strongly supported ethnic parochial schools, while from its ideological standpoint the SNPJ opposed them and favored public education besides the additional ethnic one. The SNPJ's favourable attitude towards public schools and its parallel promotion of sup-

<sup>18</sup> Cf. for instance FRANK ZAITZ, *Ameriški Slovenci včeraj, danes in jutri*, «Ameriški družinski koledar 1928», p. 44-45. Immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe was largely restricted by the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the National Origins Act of 1924.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. for instance *Mladinski oddelek K.S.K. Jednote*, «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote», (5), 47, November 26, 1919, p. 5; *Veselo znamenje. Pozdravljeni naši mladi sobratje in sestre!*, «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote», (6), 2, January 14, 1920, p. 4. With regard to the SNPJ, cf. M. KODRIČ, *Class Consciousness among the Second Generation: Expectations and Responses within the Slovene National Benefit Society in the 1920s*, «Migracijske teme», (4), 1-2, 1988, p. 113. Data concerning these publications are included in J. BAJEC, *Slovensko izseljensko...*, cit., pp. 66-70.



plementary ethnic classes are worth considering as positions alternative to Catholic school education. At the same time, the major role held by the latter in the Slovene ethnic community needs to be stressed as an essential aspect of the activities promoted by the Catholic Church among immigrants.

The beginnings of Slovene parochial schools in the United States can be traced already in the 19th century, as their establishment was among the basic tasks which Slovene parishes undertook. At the end of the First World War, 14 such schools operated and as the share of the second generation within the ethnic community was increasing, their role became even more decisive than before. In «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote» several articles were devoted to this question. Slovene parochial schools were not only supported, but also urged to spread further as the main promoters of the preservation of the Slovene language, which was regarded as indispensable for the maintenance of ethnic identity. On the other hand, it is worth stressing that obviously such schools were favoured also specifically as institutions which provided education based on Catholic principles. Consequently, the KSKJ's leaders themselves viewed them within the larger network of Catholic schools in the United States and sustained education according their common principles, which however did not imply only religious goals, but the nourishment of American identity as well. Indeed, Slovene parochial schools also contributed to acculturation, as it is clearly evident for instance from the use of English as the teaching language, while Slovene was taught as a specific subject.<sup>20</sup>

Other aspects as well of the attitude held by the KSKJ towards the second generation show the awareness of its leaders that acculturation within American society was inevitable and even necessary to some extent. Besides the aforementioned English pages in its magazine for children, for instance the publication of articles on sports, like baseball and bowling, or the appraisal of performing activities which followed American examples can be observed in the KSKJ's press already in the years immediately following the First World War.<sup>21</sup> While such positions as well are comparable to the approaches to the American-born membership within the SNPJ, more in general they contribute to stress the need to examine the role of the KSKJ and of other Slovene religious institutions in the United States in the new circumstances after the war also by considering the new relationship to the ethnic heritage and to the American environment among the second generation.

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<sup>20</sup> R.M. SUSEL, *op. cit.*, p. 938; *Več slovenskih šol!*, «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote», (4), 10, March 13, 1918, p. 4; *Katoliške šole so ameriške šole!* (Spisal Rev. Joseph V.S. McClancy), «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote», (4), 35, September 4, 1918, p. 4; NIVES SULIČ, *Thank God I'm Slovenian*. Ljubljana 1983, pp. 68-69; M. KODRIČ, *Class Consciousness...*, cit. pp. 114-116.

<sup>21</sup> *Slovenski kegjački klub*, «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote», (5), 49, December 10, 1919, p. 3; Rev. M.J.B., *The Boys' Game and Do you know the rules?*, «Angelček», (1), 9, February 1922, pp. 214-215; *Sifajen uspeh "Minstrel Show-a"*, «Glasilo K.S.K. Jednote», (6), 6, February 11, 1920, p. 2; M. KODRIČ, *Class Consciousness...*, cit. pp. 116-117.

## **Summary**

This paper aims at providing a broad overview of the development which the links between religious faith and Slovene ethnic identity underwent through time from the beginning of Slovene immigration to the period when the American-born second generation were beginning to assert themselves as the future core of this ethnic community.

## **Résumé**

Ce texte vise à donner une large vue d'ensemble du développement que les liens entre foi religieuse et identité ethnique slovène ont réalisé au long des années depuis le commencement de l'immigration slovaque jusqu'à l'époque de la seconde génération née en Amérique dont les membres commencèrent à s'affirmer comme le futur noyau de cette communauté ethnique.

# Religion and Chinese life in the United States

## Introduction

Protestantism has long been regarded as the dominant denomination in the United States from colonial times. Since the mid-Seventeenth Century, people from different areas of the world came one wave after another to the United States and brought their religion with them. Most immigrants were Protestants, Catholics, or Jews. Protestantism was the earliest and most popular denomination transplanted from Europe to colonial America, and has since then been given special status in American society.<sup>1</sup> People with either Judaic or Catholic faith was not wholeheartedly accepted by the host society.<sup>2</sup> It might be safe to say that for people with religions other than Protestant Christianity, religion has been one of the reasons for discrimination against them. But Catholic Churches and Jewish Synagogue and Jewish Centers played a very important role in helping Catholics and Jews to adapt to the American way of life.

Religion also played an ambivalent role in Chinese Americans' lives. Chinese were the "forty-niners" who were attracted by the gold rush in California around 1850. But no sooner had the Chinese appeared in California than they were subject to discrimination.<sup>3</sup> Chinese were polytheistic. Was religion one of the reasons accounting for the deplorable situation of the Chinese as it was for the Catholics and the Jews? What were Chinese religion's functions in Chinese Americans' lives. The main purpose of this essay is to discuss the role of religion in Chinese Americans' experience from a historical perspective. Several cases are mentioned in order to illuminate various functions of different religions.

<sup>1</sup> CHARLES H. ANDERSON, *White Protestant Americans: From National Origins to Religious Groups*. N. J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970, pp. 2-4.

<sup>2</sup> NAOMI COHEN, *Encounter with Emancipation—the German Jews, 1830-1914*. Philadelphia, the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984, p. 32; see also CHARLES H. ANDERSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>3</sup> ROSE HUM LEE, *The Chinese in the United States of America*. Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1960, pp. 361-362.

## I. Chinese Americans' experience before the Second World War

The history of Chinese Americans' lives can be divided into two periods with the Second World War as the turning point. Before the Second World War, social, economic and legal discrimination was common for Chinese Americans.

Not long after Chinese arrived on the West coast of the United States around 1850, they were subject to discrimination for several reasons. From mid-Nineteenth Century, Chinese came to the United States primarily to earn money; they planned to return eventually to China where their relatives lived. While spending most of their lives in work camps, engaging in drudgery, they had little contact with the outside world. Their loyalty to families and clans left behind generated their stamina to survive the ordeal.<sup>4</sup> These so-called sojourners' way of life gave Americans an excuse for discrimination. In order to earn enough money to support their relatives, most Chinese laborers would accept lower-than-average wages. Chinese thus became white laborers' competitors in the labor market. Also, because Chinese societies on the American West coast consisted mainly of bachelors and lacked women and children, White people regarded them as abnormal societies. In addition, some Chinese activities, such as gambling, opium-smoking and prostitution, created a negative image of Chinese Americans. Certainly, while American missionaries tried to Christianize the polytheistic Chinese, Chinese traditional religions were not accepted by American society.

Aware of these criticisms, Chinese immediately tried to explain their circumstances. As early as 1855, the *Guest Merchants' Huiquan* (District Association) wrote in a letter to Bigler (the governor of California):

«According to Chinese tradition, women should stay at home. Usually they do not travel with their husbands away from hometowns, because they cannot endure the hardship during the long journey over the sea. Moreover, several times the United States made ordinances which prohibited Chinese from coming. As a result, few Chinese women would come to the United States. Chinese American communities were thus predominantly male.

Chinese, like Americans, despise gambling and prostitution. We hope that the United States will pass laws to prohibit these bad activities.

Chinese were attracted to the United States by its friendliness. Though Chinese return to their hometowns after they earn some money in the United States, they pay all the necessary taxes.

It is unreasonable to blame Chinese for their inability to speak English and adopt the American way of life, just as Chinese can not blame Americans for the same reason.

If the United States treat Chinese reasonably, Chinese will stay here in the United States. Otherwise, they would rather return to their hometowns in China».<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> GUNTHER BARTH, *Bitter Strength: A History of Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> TUNG YAI HSIN LU, Feb. 8, 1855. Cited from BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*. Taipei, Lea Ming, 1982, pp. 483-486.

But this protest, together with all the later ones proposed either by Chinese Americans or the Ching consulates, did not produce any positive results. All the discriminatory treatments culminated in the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. But the Chinese Exclusion Act did not mark the high tide of the anti-Chinese movement. One after the other laws were passed by American government to impose more restrictions on Chinese in the United States. For instance, the Scott Bill, passed by Congress in 1888, denied Chinese laborers who left the United States the right to return. All certificates permitting temporary visits abroad were declared null and void. It was estimated that 26,000 Chinese were thus denied reentry into the United States.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to these discriminatory laws, social discrimination occurred sporadically in Chinese work camps. Gradually the Chinese voluntarily segregated in Chinatowns to avoid direct contact with American society.<sup>7</sup> Jobs which did not constitute a threat to the Whites in the labor market, such as running laundry shops and restaurants, were picked up as means of making a living. Segregation further severed contact between the sojourners and the host society.

Therefore, most Chinese Americans were China-oriented. They regarded China their final destination, and saw life in the United States as transient. They did not look to the United States for social and economic betterment. It was in their hometowns that their dreams could be realized. Only Chinese traditions could provide meaning for their lives.

## II. Religion and Chinese Americans' lives before the Second World War

Chinese religions did not provide any practical help to improve most Chinese Americans' life. In the overseas Chinese communities, Chinese usually organized district or clan associations, i.e. people with the same dialect or surname preferred to cluster residentially and form voluntary associations. Gods which were enshrined in the public halls or district or clan associations or temples were worshipped. Usually it was the district or clan association that promoted the welfare of the community.<sup>8</sup> For instance, they arbitrated disputes; they fought cases for Chinese Americans up to American courts from the very beginning, although most of the lawsuits failed.<sup>9</sup> As a result, Chinese went to district or clan associations for help.

Nevertheless, Chinese traditional religions were still very important to Chinese Americans. Chinese were polytheistic, which combined the beliefs of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.<sup>10</sup> In general, every god was endowed with

<sup>6</sup> SHIH-SHAN TSAI, *The Chinese Experience*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> DIANE MEI LIN MARK, *A Place Called Chinese America*. Iowa, Hunt Publishing Company, 1982, p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> JACK CHEN, *The Chinese of America*. San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1980, pp. 27-28.

<sup>9</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*, Vol. II. Taipei, Lea Ming, 1981, pp. 77-81.

<sup>10</sup> DIANE MEI LIN MARK, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

special power. People could worship any god as he or she wished without offending other gods. It was normal for people to go to a special god to solve a specific problem. Among the gods they worshiped, Guanti and the Goddess were the most popular. The Goddess was in charge of navigation on the sea and was thus very important to those who travelled to and from China quite often. Guanti was very popular because he was the representative of justice and could protect good people and defeat any vicious power.<sup>11</sup> Chinese Americans also worshiped Guanin, goddess of Mercy; North god, in charge of irrigation,<sup>12</sup> the Earth God; and Whatwao of the Three Kingdoms era, the best doctor in Chinese history. In Chinese American communities, the Jade Emperor, the highest and mightiest in the hierarchy of gods, governed all other gods, the spirits of all ancestors, and the ghosts of the deceased people.<sup>13</sup> Chinese Americans also worshiped the god of Literature who could extend wisdom to students.

Confucianism was highly extolled in Chinese American communities. Chinese usually tried to act in accordance with Confucian teachings, including the duty to be love, loyal and filial. Confucius was regarded as a semi-god and a great man.

Orthodox Buddhism was transplanted to the United States much later than other Chinese religions. Temples were erected for monks and nuns who propagated Buddhism in order to save human beings. Before the Second World War, temples were scattered throughout San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York city. But Orthodox Buddhism was not as popular in Chinese communities as other Chinese religions.<sup>14</sup>

Chinese also worshiped ancestors' spirits, believing that while enjoying offerings the spirits of their ancestors and deceased people would not harm humans. Furthermore, ancestors could offer what the worshippers wanted. This was also one of the reasons why Chinese showed sincere respect at funerals.

Chinese tried to influence their futures through geomancy. In the Chinese view, humans are a part of the universe, so that change in the landscape would change peoples fortunes. Therefore, Chinese were very careful in constructing any kind of buildings, including houses, offices as well as graves. Chinese were very careful in selecting the site and orientation of any building or grave.<sup>15</sup> Besides that, in order to refrain from becoming a ghost wandering in the alien world, most Chinese preferred to be buried temporarily in the United States and had their bone ashes shipped back to their hometowns to be buried in their ancestral graveyard.<sup>16</sup> There they would be worshiped by their descendants. For instance, in 1858, a French ship sailed for China with the remains of 321 Chinese on it.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*, Vol. II, p. 439.

<sup>12</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*. Vol. III. Taipei, Lea Ming, 1984, pp. 474-475.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 481-489.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 491-493.

<sup>15</sup> MAURICE FREEDMAN, *The Study of Chinese Society*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1979, pp. 298-299.

<sup>16</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*, p. 165.

<sup>17</sup> JACK CHEN, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

Nevertheless, most Chinese, as non-Christians, were regarded by Americans as people without souls.<sup>18</sup>

Some Chinese were converted to Christianity. Some churches were established by Western missionaries such as Rev. I. M. Condit, Rev. A.W. Loomis, and Rev. J.L. Shuck who worked in China in the Nineteenth Century.<sup>19</sup> Denominations included Methodist, Congregational and Baptist, among others. The missionaries knew clearly the plight of the Chinese and thus tried to ameliorate Chinese difficulties in the United States. Services they provided included medical care, English classes, orphan homes and women's refuges. The YMCA was first established in Chinese Americans communities in 1870 to train young Chinese in good behavior.<sup>20</sup>

Christian ministers also protested Chinese cases to the American public and legislative institutions by issuing Chinese newspapers and pamphlets.<sup>21</sup>

Christian churches improved Chinese social and economic life in the Mississippi Delta communities. Chinese first appeared in the Delta area around 1870s. They worked as agricultural coolies on plantations in Black laborers' place and were roughly designated the same status as that of the Blacks.<sup>22</sup> But Chinese later tried to create for themselves a new status, which was neither White nor Black. Economically, they raised their status by engaging in retail business.<sup>23</sup> They worked as grocers and served for the Blacks but tried to "establish a lifestyle and image patterned on the White standard". Meanwhile, the Christian Church played a crucial role in helping Chinese to be accepted by Whites. Chinese went to church to learn Christian teachings and gain spiritual consolation. They could also learn English and secure a Christian burial.<sup>24</sup> They earned special treatment from the whites by making donations to churches.<sup>25</sup> In this way they showed that they owned similar characters to the Whites. But before the Second World War, the Mississippi Chinese Christians still observed some Chinese traditions, such as shipping their bone ashes to China.

Catholic Churches had been established since the late Nineteenth Century in San Francisco and New York. Like other Churches in Chinese Americans communities, the Catholic Church also provided English classes, kindergartens and Chinese classes. It tried to help Chinese immigrants adjust to the American way of life.

<sup>18</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*, Vol. I, pp. 419-420.

<sup>19</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*, Vol. III, p. 443.

<sup>20</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*, Vol. I, p. 424.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

<sup>22</sup> ROBERT SEIO QUAN, JULIAN B. ROEBACK, *Lotus Among the Magnolias: the Mississippi Chinese*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1982, p. 96.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

### III. Chinese American life after the Second World War

The Second World War was essential in the history of Chinese Americans' experience. In 1937, China, under the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, declared war against Japan. After Japan bombed Pearl Harbour, the United States became at war with Japan. China thereby became the ally of the United States during the war years. After that more American aid was sent to China. The United States also tried to boost China's wartime morale. For instance, when Madame Chiang Kai-shek was invited to the United States in 1943, a large number of journal articles and newspaper editorials were dedicated to China's resistance to Japan's invasion. Madame Chiang was depicted as "modern, intelligent, proud, tolerant and Christian".<sup>26</sup> She told several United States Congressmen on May 15, 1943 that the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 could boost Chinese morale. Moreover, James Y. C. Yen's Chinese Mass Education movement exerted a positive influence on changing the Chinese image in the war years. As a result, the United States Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 not only to correct a historical mistake but also to silence Japanese propaganda that Chinese were regarded as an inferior race in the United States.<sup>27</sup>

A new immigration law was passed; Chinese were allowed to enter the United States and were eligible for naturalization. Chinese Americans also benefited from joining the American military service. Taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, some of them continued to study in medical or law schools.<sup>28</sup> A shortage of labor power in wartime America offered Chinese work in the defense industry. Chinese were later able to find jobs as technicians and engineers. Better jobs meant better wages and higher social status. Also, the War Bride Act of 1945 gave wives and children of Chinese American citizens the chance to come to the United States on a non-quota basis. Some people were able to be reunited with their family members. Chinese life in the United States thus improved a great deal socially, legally and economically.

The presence of some 5,000 Chinese students who were stranded in the United States also exerted a positive influence on Chinese Americans' lives. These students entered the United States in pursuit of higher education. However, the control of mainland China by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949 deprived most of them of financial support from their relatives in China or China's Nationalist Government. Fortunately, they were able to finish their studies with American financial aid.<sup>29</sup> Highly skilled and talented, their achievement in the United States helped to create a more favorable image among the American people. They practiced cultural pluralism, maintaining some of their Chinese heritage while accepting some of the dominant culture around them. A more favorable atmosphere meant that more Chinese were ready to acculturate.

<sup>26</sup> SHIH-SHAN TSAI, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>28</sup> *Chinese Americans: Past and Present*, «Chinese Times» (in America), May 6, 1982.

<sup>29</sup> COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL INTERCHANGE POLICY, CHINESE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1948-1955, *A Study in Government Policy*, pp. 5-6.



#### IV. Religion and Chinese Americans' lives after the Second World War

Since the Second World War, most Chinese have still observed Chinese traditional religions.<sup>30</sup> Many Chinese are still syncretic in their religious attitude, an attitude inconsistent with monotheistic Christianity.<sup>31</sup> In Chinatowns in San Francisco and Los Angeles, the Goddess Guanin and the Sea Goddess are still very popular in traditional Chinese communities. Guanti is still worshiped too.<sup>32</sup>

Feng-sui (geomancy) is still popular in Chinese communities in Los Angeles. According to G.Y. Yang, many Taiwanese who immigrated to Los Angeles believe that the orientation and site of a house or a building still influence the fortune of the owner or occupants. Geomancers are thus hired to show the right "orientation". Feng-sui is also observed for selecting a gravesite. Usually the geomancer is paid \$ 100 to \$ 200 for one deal.<sup>33</sup>

Taiwanese immigrants also brought with them the Peasant calendar which indicates appropriate days for certain activities (similar to a farmer's Almanac in the West).

Chinese Christians continued to grow in number after the Second World War.<sup>34</sup> Some Chinese newcomers went to Sunday school to learn English and attend social activities. But when more and more young Chinese become Americanized, many parents wanted their children to know Chinese. The Churches then add Chinese language classes to meet their needs.<sup>35</sup>

The Buffalo Chinese Christian Church is one example of this. Bible Study Classes, beginning in 1962, were the embryo of the Buffalo Chinese Christian Church, established in 1978. Similar to their predecessors before the Second World War, Chinese Christians in Buffalo today attend church services weekly with great joy. Many believe that because of the God's blessings, they can find good jobs and endure hardships.<sup>37</sup> Activities sponsored by the Church provided chances for socializing. For instance, the Church use to arrange pingpong matches, picnics and camping trips for members to get together.<sup>38</sup> Language classes at the Buffalo Chinese Christian Church is still a very important part of their program. There were English classes for male students' wives in the early 1970s.<sup>39</sup> But after most young Christians have the chance to make contact with American culture and can handle English, a lot of parents try to persuade their children to learn the Chinese language and culture. Chinese Language Classes were thus organized. The library for the Chinese Language Classes provide

<sup>30</sup> SHIH-SHAN TSAI, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>32</sup> BO-CHI TSAI, *The Chinese in the United States*, Vol. III, p. 474.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with G. Y. Yang on June 16, 1990 at Taichung. Mr. Yang moved from Taiwan to the United States about fifteen years ago.

<sup>34</sup> SHIH-SHAN TSAI, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>35</sup> BETTY SUNG LEE, *Mourning of Gold*. New York, Macmillan, 1975, p. 233.

<sup>36</sup> *Buffalo Chinese Christian Church Tenth Anniversary Special Edition*. Buffalo, Buffalo Chinese Christian Church, July 1989, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-58.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Chinese novels and magazines. While learning Chinese, young Chinese together with their parents are provided a chance to meet with friends.

The Sisterhood Association is also very important for female members of the Buffalo Chinese Christian Church. In the weekly meetings, these "sisters" exchange their opinions about child raising, medical care, housing and insurance.<sup>40</sup> Once in a while, the Sisterhood Association sponsors a lecture. Among the speakers there was a Chinese doctor who gave a lecture on "women's disease". Most listeners paid close attention to what he said and discussed the issues thoroughly.<sup>41</sup> Chinese women in general are shy talking about women's physical problems. But they realize that they have to know their bodies. In this case they felt that to talk with a Chinese male doctor was much more convenient and comfortable than with an American doctor. Language is one of the factors that frighten Chinese women away from American doctors. The Chinese Christian Church also arranges requiem services.<sup>42</sup>

The Chinese Catholic Church also expanded in Chinese communities after the Second World War, and Chinese priests have been assigned posts to administer the churches.<sup>43</sup> The Catholic church sponsors clinics, sports fields, English schools, English classes, Chinese classes and naturalization services. However, after Chinese had become more acculturated, the 8th Chinese Catholic Meeting in the United States in 1959 urged Chinese American parents to preserve Chinese morality and culture.<sup>44</sup>

Regarding the orthodox Buddhism, various branches of Buddhism began to propagate Buddhism after 1950. Presently it prospers in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York Chinese Communities.<sup>45</sup>

One of the most important events in the history of American Buddhism was the establishment in 1978 of the Hsi Lai (literally, Coming West) Temple. Located in California, the Hsi Lai Temple occupies fourteen acres while the construction area 650,000 square feet. More than half of construction expense were donated by Taiwanese Buddhists.<sup>46</sup> The Hsi Lai Temple, also known as the International Buddhist Progress Society, consists of a library, a Buddhist Cultural Museum, and a spacious International Conference Hall. The Hsi Lai Temple emphasizes humanitarian Buddhism and the creation of Pure Land in the West,<sup>47</sup> it sponsors various kinds of social, educational and cultural activities as well for Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, for people all over the world. The activities it sponsors, such as Chinese language classes, vegetarian cooking, Chinese kung fu, folk dancing and flower arranging are not only open for Chinese, but for all peoples.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Mrs. Wen-ching L. Wu conducted by Shih-deh Chang Chou by telephone on Dec. 28, 1990 at Taichung. Mrs. Wu has been a member of Buffalo Christian Church about eight years.

<sup>42</sup> I attended this lecture when I lived in Buffalo from 1986 to 1988.

<sup>43</sup> *Buffalo Chinese Christian Church Tenth Anniversary Special Edition*, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> TSAI SHIH-SHAN, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>45</sup> BO-CHI LIU, *The Chinese in the United States*, Vol. II, pp. 452-453.

<sup>46</sup> *Special Edition for the Dedication Ceremony of Hsi-Lai Temple*, 1988, p. 320.

<sup>47</sup> DA-CHUNG BU, *Buddhism to the United States*, «Pu-Men», 108 (Sept. 1, 1988), p. 19.

Therefore, the Hsi Lai Temple is a meeting place for eastern and western civilization.<sup>48</sup>

The emergence of the magnificent Buddhist temple in Los Angeles symbolizes the growing confidence of Oriental people, especially Chinese, in Oriental culture, in which Buddhism plays a very important part. It also indicates that Chinese enjoy a higher social and economic status than their forebears before the Second World War. Through the services it sponsors, the Hsi Lai Temple hopes to provide opportunities for Americans to know more about Buddhism and Chinese culture. Chinese Americans benefit from attending the activities mentioned above. While getting together, Chinese American Buddhists can exchange ideas and attend weekly lectures sponsored by the temple. Speakers are invited to talk about topics such as medical care, law, immigration law, tax, insurance, house maintenance and so on. In addition, they organize traffic service center offers rides to and from airports.<sup>49</sup> Nuns and monks help newly arrived immigrants to adapt to life in the United States.<sup>50</sup>

There are some Buddhists who do not affiliate with any temple. They worship the Buddha statue brought with them from their hometowns in Taiwan.<sup>51</sup> In their homes, special halls are reserved for Buddha worship. Mr. G.Y. Yang is one of this group. Sometimes his friends come over and present offerings to Buddha, and ask for blessings, especially when they have problems.<sup>51</sup>

Occasionally, a group of people decide to buy a house for religious purposes. They usually schedule time for service during weekends for worshippers' convenience. The weekly services also serve as social gatherings. Special guests are invited to talk about immigration and business. Mr. G.Y. Yang, himself an owner of more than five motels, gave lectures on "Investing in Motels". In addition, drawing, Kung fu and dancing classes are open to children.

### Conclusion

From the very beginning of Chinese immigration to the United States, Chinese traditional religions have been one of the reasons for American suspicion. As a polytheistic people, Chinese were regarded as people without souls. However, it was also Chinese traditional religions that helped many Chinese endure hardships and survived in the United States. Comparatively speaking, the Protestant and the Catholic churches provided more chances for Chinese to make contacts with American culture than Chinese traditional religions.

After the Second World War, when Chinese are legally, socially and economically accepted by the host society, many of them still adhere to Chinese

<sup>48</sup> *Special Edition for the Dedication Ceremony of Hsi-Lai Temple*, Sept. 1988, p. 323.

<sup>49</sup> SHIH GUO, *The Everlasting Hsi-Lai Temple*, «Pu-Men», 103 (April 1, 1988), p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> SHIH GUO, *The Great Buddhist Master came to the West*, «Pu-Men», 107 (Aug. 1, 1988), p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> *The Construction of the Hsi-Lai Temple: A History*, «Pu-Men», 78 (March 1, 1986), p. 47.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Mr. G. Y. Yang, Conducted by Shih-deh Chang Chou on June 19, 1990.

traditional religions. But when more and more Chinese become acculturated and assimilated by American society, churches, such as the Catholic and the Protestant Churches, are still important for Chinese Americans. In many ways, Churches help immigrants adapt to American life, yet help try to preserve Chinese language and culture as well. Besides that, Churches are also very important because they provide chances and places for Chinese Americans to get together. Buddhist temples render similar services.

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### **Summary**

Religion played an ambivalent role in Chinese Americans' lives. From the very beginning of Chinese immigration to the United States, Chinese traditional religions have been one of the reasons for American suspicion. However, it was also Chinese traditional religions that helped many Chinese endure hardships and survive in the United States.

### **Résumé**

La religion a joué un rôle ambivalent dans la vie des Chinois Américains. Depuis le tout début de l'immigration chinoise aux Etats-Unis, les religions traditionnelles chinoises ont été un des motifs de la suspicion américaine. Cependant, ce furent aussi les religions traditionnelles chinoises qui aidèrent beaucoup de Chinois à supporter les souffrances et à survivre aux Etats-Unis.

## Nota conclusiva

Lo scopo di questo seminario era quello di tornare su un tema centrale del dibattito storico intorno alle comunità etniche nel Nord America: il ruolo del fattore religioso nel processo di trasformazione dell'identità etnica in alcuni gruppi di popolazione emigrati in Canada e negli Stati Uniti. A questo problema si collega quello del legame tra religione e americanizzazione di tali gruppi.

Gli interventi presentati, ricerche di prima mano ancora in corso o valutazioni problematiche delle prospettive di studio, hanno dato un largo spettro di risultati. Tale ampiezza deriva in primo luogo dalla grande varietà dei casi trattati che, estremamente evidente in sede seminariale, è pur sempre palese anche nella selezione di interventi che qui viene pubblicata. I saggi trattano infatti di sette differenti etnie – slovacchi, cinesi, tedeschi, belgi, sloveni, italiani, ruteni – e, riducendo arbitrariamente i vari casi ad unità computabili, di cinque religioni: cattolica, ortodossa, protestante, ebraica e il complesso sistema politeista cinese nutrito da elementi del confucianesimo, del taoismo e del buddismo. Questi *case-studies* rimandano inoltre a discussioni teoriche sul rapporto tra religione e etnia che trovano una loro contestualizzazione nei due saggi programmatici di Gianfausto Rosoli e Terrence Murphy.

Come conclusione vorrei sottolineare un aspetto unitario che emerge da questa raccolta. Sotto la parola religione mi sembra che sia classificata una pluralità di fenomeni e di situazioni storiche differenti che attraversano orizzontalmente molti saggi. Tralasciando senza dubbio qualcuno di questi aspetti, ne indicherò sommariamente quattro: la parrocchia nazionale, le organizzazioni religiose per l'emigrazione, l'istruzione degli emigranti e l'uso della lingua madre, i rapporti con il clero e la gerarchia ecclesiastica.

Gli studi sulle comunità italiane si soffermano in particolare sul problema della fondazione e dello sviluppo delle parrocchie nazionali. Da una parte c'è l'interesse dei prominenti di avere nella parrocchia un'istituzione etnica riconosciuta e, dall'altra, quello degli italiani di poter usufruire di un luogo di culto che risponde alle loro forme precipue di religiosità. Tuttavia alle parrocchie è legato un importante aspetto del problema dell'assimilazione nella società americana. Sostenute dal Vaticano per scoraggiare tale fenomeno e favorire dunque la persistenza degli emigrati italiani nella fede cattolica, esse si rivelano un sorta di camera di compensazione – come dimostra Susanna Garroni per il caso di Buffalo – che porta alla formazione di una nuova coscienza etnica italo-americana. Molto importante è la figura cardine del parroco, il cui ruolo è sottolineato da Ferdinando Fasce nella contrapposizione tra due parroci italiani di differente orientamento rispetto all'inserimento degli immigrati nella società americana.

L'importanza della istituzione parrocchiale, alla quale si può far corrispondere in campo protestante quella delle congregazioni, è importante anche nelle comunità slovacche, protestanti e cattoliche, di Pittsburgh trattate da June Alexander. In tale caso, sono proprio le istituzioni religiose che fanno emergere una coscienza etnica che era assente negli slovacchi in Europa. Al contempo, il regime di separazione tra chiesa e stato vigente negli Stati Uniti fa sì che parrocchie e congregazioni assumano un loro carattere specifico derivante dalla americanizzazione dell'etnia slovacca. Questo fenomeno è ancora più evidente nel caso dei cinesi convertiti al cristianesimo ricordati nel saggio di Shih-Deh Chang Chou. Le chiese cristiane cinesi costituirono un luogo di assimilazione, ma al contempo dettero la possibilità di frequentazioni e scambi all'interno della comunità. Un esempio *a contrario* è dato dal caso degli ebrei triestini rifugiatisi negli Stati Uniti a causa delle persecuzioni fasciste. Dal punto di vista religioso essi si trovarono in grande difficoltà, come ci informa Ellen Ginzburg Migliorino. Essi infatti, oltre che culturalmente diversi dagli altri ebrei in quanto italiani, spesso non conoscevano l'inglese o l'yiddish e non comprendevano le divisioni interne dell'ebraismo statunitense. Per questo motivo ebbero difficoltà nel divenire membri della sinagoga e scontarono un forte isolamento nei primi anni della loro permanenza oltreoceano.

Un altro aspetto della multiforme tematica della religione è l'attività delle istituzioni cattoliche sorte nei vari paesi di origine dei flussi migratori e destinate al sostegno e all'organizzazione degli emigranti. Silvano Tomasi illustra l'importante attività dell'*Italica Gens* negli Stati Uniti. Madja Kodrič mette in rilievo come il flusso migratorio dalla Slovenia agli Stati Uniti sia stato sempre organizzato da esponenti di istituzioni cattoliche che svolsero un'importante azione di spinta all'emigrazione. Attraverso i preti che accompagnavano gli emigranti, esse restarono in contatto con le comunità oltreoceano e aiutarono, mediante l'invio di materiale pubblicistico, la formazione di società di assistenza e confraternite cattoliche.

Un terzo livello riguarda l'azione della chiesa nel fornire l'istruzione scolastica ai membri delle etnie immigrate. Questo problema tocca di riflesso quello del peso delle strutture religiose nel mantenimento della lingua madre degli immigrati. Tuttavia, come si può osservare dall'intervento di Cornelius Jaenen sulle scuole anglo-rutene cattoliche e protestanti del Manitoba, quest'ultime finirono con il costituire delle "agencies of assimilation" dando ai ruteni che le frequentavano le coordinate mentali della realtà canadese. Un fenomeno analogo rilevano Garroni per gli italiani di Buffalo e Kodrič per gli sloveni.

Un quarto elemento di questo panorama delle varie tematiche legate al fattore religioso è costituito dai rapporti delle etnie con la gerarchia ecclesiastica. Questo aspetto ovviamente è preminente nella chiesa cattolica. Nell'articolo di Serge Jaumain e Matteo Sanfilippo è messo bene in chiaro come per la comunità etnica belga, divisa tra valloni e fiamminghi sempre in predicato di essere engulfati nelle etnie francesi e olandesi, fosse importante avere un positivo rapporto con i vescovi delle diocesi dove erano presenti. Spesso la minaccia della costituzione o dell'espansione di chiese protestanti contribuiva a tener viva l'attenzione dei prelati su tali questioni che finivano spesso per coinvolgere

anche le istituzioni preposte in Vaticano. Bruce Levine mostra che negli anni 1840-1860 i tedeschi subirono una notevole pressione ideologica da parte della gerarchia ecclesiastica germano-americana così come del resto da parte del clero protestante.

Vorrei spendere un'ultima osservazione per mettere in rilievo la presenza del Canada come ambito geografico di alcune ricerche di questo seminario. Non si è voluto infatti fornire solo un ulteriore apporto di *case-studies* ma, come ha efficacemente fatto Terrence Murphy nel suo saggio, si è introdotta la storia di un paese che ha nell'etnia fondatrice francese e cattolica e nella sua coesistenza con quella britannica un carattere peculiare estremamente coerente al tema generale del seminario.

GIOVANNI PIZZORUSSO

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## recensioni

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GIANNI C. DONNO (a cura di), *Storie e immagini del 1° Maggio*. Manduria, Bari, Roma, Piero Lacaita editore, 1990, 824 p.

ANDREA PANACCIONE (a cura di), *The Memory of May Day*. Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 1989, 773 p.

MAURIZIO ANTONIOLI, GIOVANNA GINEX (a cura di), *1° Maggio: Repertorio dei numeri unici dal 1890 al 1924*. Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 1988, 557 p.

Nella storiografia dei movimenti operai e sindacali, il tema del 1° Maggio ha tradizionalmente occupato un posto d'obbligo, come lo dimostrano i vari volumi esistenti all'interno della maggior parte delle storiografie nazionali. Ma è solo in questi ultimi anni, grazie al rinnovamento metodologico della storiografia socioculturale (e forse anche a causa dell'avvicinarsi del centenario della sua elevazione a festa dei lavoratori), che tale tema si è trasformato in terreno di ricerca sul quale sono confluiti i più svariati orientamenti storiografici. Grazie a questo rinnovato impegno storiografico e ai risultati empirici già realizzati, oggi ci troviamo di fronte non più ad una ricorrenza rituale che per anni è servita a legittimizzare l'esistenza del movimento operaio nell'assetto istituzionale dei paesi occidentali, ma ad un tema che rivela sempre più il suo carattere trasversale, tema al cui interno si intrecciano sviluppi istituzionali e ideologici, movimenti politici, relazioni internazionali, e fenomeni sociali come l'emigrazione.

Tra le varie iniziative storiografiche rivolte a questo fine, spiccano in particolare quelle promosse dalla Fondazione Brodolini. Attraverso una serie puntuale di pubblicazioni, la Fondazione non solo ha contribuito a ridefinire le problematiche che si allacciano alla storia del 1° Maggio, ma anche a trasformare una tale esigenza storiografica in un esemplare progetto di collaborazione scientifica internazionale. I volumi *Storie e immagini del 1° Maggio* e *The Memory of May Day* rappresentano l'*aboutissement* di tale impegno.

Il primo volume contiene gli atti di un Convegno di studi tenuto a Lecce nell'aprile-maggio 1988, e senz'altro costituisce il bilancio più esauriente delle ricerche e dei dibattiti politico-storiografici intorno al 1° Maggio. Le oltre 40 relazioni contenute nel volume forniscono al lettore un'ampia panoramica sugli orientamenti storiografici in vari paesi, e allo stesso tempo affrontano temi di carattere metodologico (fonti documentarie), e di attualità politico-culturale (vedasi ad esempio la tavola rotonda sul 1° Maggio nella tradizione e nel presente del movimento sindacale). Gli studiosi dei fenomeni migratori troveranno un'importante sezione dedicata alle Americhe, e in particolare al posto che occupa il 1° Maggio nella storia del movimento operaio americano e dei lavoratori italiani immigrati. Una serie di studi di storici ben noti agli specialisti dell'immigrazione (G. Rosoli, E. Franzina, S. Garrone, B. Cartosio, E.



Vezzosi, R. Vecoli) permettono di cogliere il carattere spesso contraddittorio che il 1° Maggio ha avuto nella storia delle comunità immigrate: momento di solidarietà etnica e internazionale, ma anche fonte di divisioni ideologico-istituzionali, e indice di emarginazione culturale e politica nei confronti di un disegno egemonico, che inesorabilmente plasma le società capitaliste americane attraverso il XX secolo.

Il secondo volume testimonia dell'importanza che, in questo nuovo interesse storiografico, viene assegnata allo studio delle fonti archivistiche, e al loro potenziale di arricchire la nostra conoscenza del 1° Maggio. In particolare, è la ricerca iconografica compiuta in vari paesi e riprodotta con grande eleganza grafica che fa di *The Memory of May Day* un importantissimo contributo storico. Volantini, posters, vignette, prime pagine di giornali e riviste, medaglie e quadri commemorativi, si alternano ad un'ampia selezione di foto d'archivio e ci permettono di osservare l'evoluzione delle rappresentazioni del 1° Maggio e dell'uso militante delle immagini in vari paesi e società, nonché la volontà di appropriazione di un certo spazio pubblico che ha spesso caratterizzato questa celebrazione.

Un'altra iniziativa editoriale atta a facilitare le ricerche storiche sul 1° Maggio (anche essa promossa dalla Fondazione Brodolini, con il concorso della Regione Lombardia) è scaturita nel volume *1° Maggio: Repertorio dei numeri unici dal 1890 al 1924*. Oltre trecento numeri unici di giornali e riviste italiane, appartenenti ad un vasto arco ideologico, sono stati minuziosamente schedati, e i loro contenuti organizzati attraverso una serie di indici, che fanno riferimento sia ai testi che all'iconografia. L'esistenza oggi di uno strumento di ricerca di un tale valore bibliografico dovrebbe senz'altro condurre ad un maggiore approfondimento dei modi in cui la cultura operaia si è espressa in Italia attraverso la celebrazione della festa dei lavoratori.

BRUNO RAMIREZ

CORRADO GRASSI, MARIELLA PAUTASSO, *Prima roba il parlare... Lingue e dialetti dell'emigrazione biellese*. Milano, Electa, 1989, 244 p.

Il lavoro di Corrado Grassi e Mariella Pautasso si iscrive in una più ampia indagine tesa a ricostruire la storia dell'emigrazione biellese nel mondo, ricerca che, promossa dalla Fondazione Sella con il contributo della Banca Sella, è guidata da Valerio Castronovo.

Il gruppo di lavoro linguistico ha preso in esame testimonianze della prima generazione di emigrati tramite racconti autobiografici: il principale obiettivo è stato l'analisi delle competenze linguistiche acquisite dai migranti e la loro collocazione interculturale.

Destinato a un pubblico di non specialisti, il libro contiene un dizionario dei termini della linguistica utilizzati nelle analisi. Sul piano metodologico è stata adottata una prospettiva diacronica di studio, in modo da prendere in esame le problematiche sociolinguistiche di tutte le ondate di emigrazione biellese; inoltre, il lavoro si è proposto l'analisi dello studio del movimento esogeno da un unico punto verso aree geolinguistiche diverse.

L'interesse del lavoro che qui presentiamo si colloca almeno su due dimensioni: da un lato, per i risultati linguistici e sociolinguistici che propone; dall'altro, per avere messo in evidenza, nell'approccio alle problematiche linguistiche dell'emigrazione, le questioni metodologiche che rimandano a tematiche di teoria scientifica, di linguistica e di sociolinguistica, ma anche a nodi più generali relativi ai meccanismi della comunicazione verbale nei suoi rapporti con le dimensioni extralinguistiche. Innanzitutto, è proprio sul piano metodologico che emerge la rilevanza delle prospettive e dei risultati messi in luce dalle analisi dei materiali. L'impianto metodologico consente di valutare nella sua più appropriata cornice teorico-scientifica un campo di problemi, quelli linguistici in contesto migratorio, che, pur rimanendo per gli studiosi delle scienze del linguaggio un inesauribile campo di dati e di problemi, spesso è affrontato secondo approcci parziali che rischiano di non mettere pienamente in evidenza i complessi legami fra la dimensione strutturale e le condizioni sociali e culturali entro le quali si formano e si consolidano l'identità e il patrimonio linguistico multipolare del migrante.

Tre ordini di motivi appaiono rilevanti sul piano metodologico per lo studio linguistico dell'emigrazione. Innanzitutto, un motivo di ordine teorico: è un caso di marginalità, un caso estremo in cui, secondo il paradigma jakobsoniano, emergono meglio i meccanismi normali dell'attività di comunicazione. In questo senso, l'emigrazione consente di gettare luce sui problemi dell'acquisizione spontanea di una seconda lingua, area di questioni dove la dimensione sociolinguistica, psicolinguistica e socioculturale interagiscono con immediati (pur se non con meccanicistici effetti) sulla formazione della competenza e sullo sviluppo del sistema, variabile e instabile, dell'interlingua.

Il secondo motivo è più particolare: sempre all'interno delle problematiche sociolinguistiche, lo studio consente di verificare i meccanismi del contatto fra idiomi anche molto distanti fra di loro.

Il terzo motivo riguarda la possibilità di elaborare un paradigma per uno studio sociolinguistico del fenomeno, che, appunto, si colloca non solo sul piano intralinguistico, ma a cavallo fra i fenomeni strettamente linguistici e le condizioni socioculturali che li rendono possibili.

Tenendo presente questa rilevanza innanzitutto metodologica, vanno ricordati alcuni caratteri del lavoro di Grassi e Pautasso che lo rendono, a nostro avviso, esemplare e tale da segnare un punto di riferimento per gli studi linguistici in contesto migratorio. Non sempre in tale ambito, si riesce a sfuggire a due pericoli: il rimanere limitati nella pura funzione descrittiva di singoli e individuali casi, con la conseguenza di non elaborare globali ipotesi interpretative in grado di gettare ponti fra analisi linguistiche, antropologiche, sociali; inoltre, connesso al primo, il rischio di non arrivare mai a dichiarare esplicitamente i modelli di analisi, né le procedure di lavoro. Tale aspetto è segno, spesso, della svalutazione dei problemi teorici legati alle dinamiche linguistiche in ambito migratorio e della conseguente assunzione di modelli eclettici, non sistematici, utilizzati nelle descrizioni di casi. A tali rischi sfugge il lavoro in oggetto, che fa riferimento da un lato alla strumentazione sociolinguistica più solida elaborata nell'ambito delle problematiche delle lingue in contatto, e dall'altro tiene presente i modelli di descrizione e interpretazione del complesso assetto linguistico nazionale. Senza

questa attenzione alla complessità della situazione di partenza sarebbe difficile capire il ruolo che lingua e dialetto giocano nell'interazione con le identità linguistiche e culturali dei paesi ospiti dei migranti.

Per accostarci ad alcuni dei molti risultati evidenziati nel lavoro, ricordiamo i principali tratti socioculturali dell'emigrazione biellese nel mondo. Questa si caratterizza per le competenze specializzate e i livelli di scolarità superiori rispetto al resto dell'emigrazione italiana. Accanto a ciò emerge un altro tratto la cui importanza è decisiva nell'orientare i processi di contatto con la lingua e la cultura ospite, ovvero la consapevolezza delle conseguenze del progetto migratorio e l'apertura tendenziale alla accettazione e promozione di una situazione di interlinguismo e di interculturalismo. Tale consapevolezza fa ricollegare le analisi di Grassi e Pautasso a quel piano di problemi che in questi ultimi anni è ridiventato oggetto di attenzione da parte della consapevolezza metalinguistica e metaculturale nell'orientare i processi di inserimento nella società ospite.

L'analisi linguistica è basata su un corpus di 89 interviste trascritte (e ampiamente riportate in appendice al libro): il riferimento teorico è quello di un continuum linguistico tra la condizione linguistica di partenza (caratterizzata dai rapporti complessi e dinamici tra lingua e dialetto) e "l'assimilazione totale nella lingua o nelle varietà linguistiche del paese ospite". Tale continuum è analizzato facendo ricorso a una griglia concettuale articolata nei poli dello standard della comunità originaria, del *fading* (o "sistema oscillante in dissolvenza"), del *pidgin* (struttura linguistica ancor più semplificata della precedente), del *fragment* in cui persistono solo alcune tracce dello standard di partenza. Ciò che emerge nelle produzioni degli emigrati biellesi è la compresenza, in modo variamente articolato di elementi propri dell'italiano, del dialetto, della lingua straniera. La gestione dell'uso di elementi appartenenti a diversi sistemi linguistici è interpretata facendo ricorso ai concetti di commutazione di codice e di alternanza di codice, la prima coincidente con il cambiamento dell'interlocutore e più diretta da intenzionalità, la seconda più legata a finalità comunicative e funzioni espressive.

Nel passaggio dalla situazione di diglossia senza bilinguismo al monolinguisimo italiano tendenziale si collocano le trasformazioni vissute dalla comunità di origine, riverberatesi in modo diverso dalle varie generazioni di emigrati e condizionanti il rapporto con la lingua del paese ospite. Ciò che colpisce, presentandosi come un dato non atteso rispetto ai caratteri di altri gruppi di migranti, è il fatto che nelle trasformazioni linguistiche e culturali vissute dalle generazioni di emigrati la compresenza variamente strutturata di dialetto, italiano e lingua straniera non ha portato a lacerazioni e conflitti drammatici. La differenziazione di ruoli sociali fra uomo e donna nelle situazioni migratorie diventa, allora, un altro capitolo rilevante per comprendere come la donna, da garante della conservazione delle tradizioni linguistiche e culturali originarie, trasformi la propria funzione in rapporto all'uscita dall'isolamento dovuto al lavoro.

Oggetto di analisi dettagliate diventano l'uso del dialetto nelle interviste, così come quello dell'italiano e della lingua straniera: la tipologia di occorrenze dei diversi elementi e la sua interpretazione diventano elemento che mette in evidenza il ruolo della consapevolezza

metalinguistica e del suo legame con la condizione migratoria orientata all'interlinguismo e interculturalismo. L'impianto metodologico applicato con accuratezza ai materiali verbali raccolti spinge gli autori, infine, a usare il concetto di italiano parlato in contrasto con l'ambiguità di quello di italiano popolare, contribuendo in tal modo al dibattito sulle caratteristiche dell'italiano parlato e, di conseguenza, sulle tendenze che la nostra lingua sta prendendo nella sua evoluzione verso i caratteri di lingua d'uso. L'emigrazione italiana all'estero si dimostra, anche in questo caso, elemento centrale per la comprensione di fenomeni che caratterizzano intrinsecamente la pluralità di poli e di orientamenti linguistici e culturali della attuale società.

MASSIMO VEDOVELLI

FRANCESCO CORDASCO, MICHAEL VAUGHN CORDASCO, *The Italian Emigration to the United States, 1880-1930. A Bibliographical Register of Italian Views*. Fairview, NJ & London, Junius-Vaughn Press, Inc., 1990, xiv, 187 p.

Questo volume raccoglie una premessa di entrambi gli autori, l'introduzione di Francesco Cordasco a *Italian Mass Emigration: The Exodus of a Latin People*, un saggio di Alberto Acquarone, già apparso negli atti del IX Convegno annuale dell'American Italian Historical Association, una bibliografia degli scritti italiani sull'emigrazione negli Stati Uniti già pubblicata da Cordasco e infine una scelta di articoli del *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione* (sulla San Raffaele; sulle colonie italiane in California, Colorado, Utah, Illinois; sulle società italiane negli USA) riprodotti anastaticamente e non tradotti. Aver riunito assieme questi materiali può aiutare gli studenti americani impegnati nei corsi di *ethnic studies* ed indubbiamente, inoltre, come sottolineano gli autori, fa conoscere ai lettori americani il *Bollettino*, ma lascia un'impressione alquanto sgradevole di disordine tipografico e di riutilizzo ad oltranza di lavori precedenti. Inoltre la bibliografia è incompleta ed esibisce una conoscenza superficiale dell'italiano, sorprendente se si considera che i titoli degli articoli e dei libri devono essere soltanto copiati.

MATTEO SANFILIPPO

RANDALL M. MILLER, GEORGE E. POZZETTA (eds.), *Shades of the Sunbelt. Essays on Ethnicity, Race, and the Urban South*. Boca Raton, Florida Atlantica University Press, 1989.

Il volume, già apparso nella collana *Contributions in American History* della Greenwood Press, nasce dalla fusione originale di storia urbana e storia delle migrazioni, che sono al centro rispettivamente del saggio iniziale di Miller e di quello conclusivo di Pozzetta. I due curatori, come del resto tutti gli autori del volume, sono infatti convinti che i recenti mutamenti del sud degli Stati Uniti non dipendano soltanto dallo sviluppo economico e dallo sviluppo dei centri urbani, ma dalla progressiva crescita di presenze etniche diverse.

Queste ultime e le loro conseguenze sono indagate da una serie di saggi che spaziano dall'emigrazione canadese in Florida (Harney) a

quella ebraica nella *Sunbelt* (Moore), dalla combinazione di etnicità ed inurbamento a Savannah (McDonogh) ai rapporti tra razza, etnia e vita quotidiana al femminile nel sud (Blackwelder), dalla trasformazione dei quartieri di Memphis e Richmond (Silver) a quella politica dei centri urbani della Sunbelt (Bayer), dalle politiche etniche a Miami (Mohl) al mutamento culturale e demografico in Florida (Arsenault e Mormino).

La ricchezza dei temi trattati da questo volume è evidente a prima vista, ma l'interesse del volume non risiede soltanto in tale ricchezza, ma anche, se non soprattutto, nella problematicità dei singoli approcci. Gli autori infatti privilegiano gli interrogativi e le ipotesi di ricerca alle affermazioni lapidarie. Come scrive Pozzetta nell'ultima parte del suo saggio, per capire l'odierna evoluzione del sud si devono porre le domande giuste e poi cercare le tecniche di ricerca e le metodologie necessarie a rispondere.

MATTEO SANFILIPPO

FRANCESCA MASSAROTTO RAOUK, *Oltre la nostalgia. L'emigrazione trentina al femminile. Parte I: Belgio e Canada*. Trento, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 1991, 311 p.

Costruito "a mosaico", cioè avvicinando tra loro frammenti di piccole storie individuali, questo libro non offre indagini sociologiche né analisi storiche. Prende l'avvio dalla presenza numerosa della donna italiana e soprattutto della donna trentina in emigrazione, per ripercorrere il cammino sentimentale dell'esperienza di numerose donne emigrate in Belgio e in Canada. Raccoglie insieme pezzi di vita, memorie e riflessioni al femminile, documentandoli con dati, documenti e studi, "per fornire un panorama non solo delle vicissitudini umane, ma anche degli stati d'animo, delle emozioni e dei sentimenti che queste vicissitudini hanno suscitato" (p. 14). La prima guerra mondiale aveva lasciato nelle regioni del Trentino una situazione catastrofica: ponti e strade distrutte o impraticabili, una crisi agricola con il contadino ridotto alla fame e conseguente discesa a valle di tanta popolazione montana. Annate sfavorevoli si susseguono a raccolti sempre più magri.

Il settimanale cattolico «Vita Trentina» inizia la pubblicazione sistematica di notizie utili per chi vuole espatriare e raccomandazioni specifiche "per le giovani che vanno o sono al servizio" (p. 27). Il reddito della regione risulta in quegli anni uno dei più bassi in Italia. Ancora nel 1954, i disoccupati arrivano alla cifra record di 30.000. E son le stesse zone a lamentare anche il triste primato delle malattie: per tubercolosi viene ricoverato il 2,5% della popolazione. La metà è inguaribile. Per tanti, l'emigrazione è l'unica scelta. Partono di solito prima gli uomini, quasi sempre seguiti dalle donne. Vi è un numero molto alto di donne nubili che si trasferiscono o nei grossi centri urbani della vicina Lombardia e Piemonte o olttralpe, per lavori casalinghi. Sui passaporti appariranno sempre più spesso i termini "casalinga" o "domestica". Per diversi anni, queste voci rappresenteranno il 25% dell'intera emigrazione trentina.

Nei bollettini economici realizzati annualmente dalla Camera di Commercio, Industria, Agricoltura e Artigianato di Trento, l'emigrazione venne sempre seguita con grande attenzione e considerata risorsa di

importanza vitale per vallate e montagne: valutata con favore quando il numero degli espatri cresceva, seguita con estrema preoccupazione quando invece calava, perché la "diminuita capacità di risparmio e benessere, alimentate dalle notevoli rimesse in patria degli emigranti aggravavano le condizioni di congiuntura poiché aumentavano in provincia le braccia dei disoccupati e... le bocche da sfamare!" (p. 32).

In quegli anni, una delle località più ricercate furono le miniere del Belgio. Il 20 giugno 1946 l'Italia usciva da un lungo conflitto e firmava con il Belgio un "protocollo d'intesa". Oltre a stabilire forme di previdenza sociale che furono quasi mai osservate, l'Italia non solo si impegnò a mandare nelle miniere belghe duemila lavoratori al mese, ma riconfermò un precedente accordo in base al quale per ogni minatore inviato riceveva in cambio dal Belgio un quantitativo di carbone. Con questo carbone l'Italia poté avviare la propria ripresa economica, facendo lavorare le industrie e producendo energia elettrica!

Sono stati pochi coloro che hanno avuto il coraggio di descrivere le reali condizioni di vita dei minatori. Lo scalabriniense P. Giacomo Sartori fu uno dei primi a denunciare le deplorabili condizioni igieniche nelle baracche dei minatori: "Vi sono in Belgio famiglie di otto, nove e dieci e anche undici italiani obbligati a vivere in tre stanzette di baracche in cui un contadino esisterebbe ad alloggiare i suoi maiali..." (p. 116).

L'uomo trentino è di natura taciturno. È dalla donna che si sono raccolte preziose testimonianze. È lei che è costretta a trascorrere la maggior parte della giornata in baracche malsane e ricoperte di umidità, in un clima a stagione unica, con il marito che rientra dai tumi in miniera sposato. L'uomo di rado assisterà al graduale degrado fisico del marito che in molti casi si ammala (silicosi) e muore ancora giovane. Il ricordo dei legami affettivi con il paese, con i genitori, con le quattro stagioni e l'aria fresca dei monti diventa per molte un richiamo costante e una scappatoia psicologica. I rientri, da sola o con la famiglia, non fanno altro che rispolverare tanti ricordi. Ma non c'è lavoro o non c'è più posto per loro nelle vallate del Trentino. Occorre ritornare alla "mina", dove l'aria è sempre impregnata di polvere nera e il bucato non diventa mai bianco.

Francesca M. Raouik riassume molto bene il ruolo della donna trentina in emigrazione: "l'uomo lavora, accetta i ritmi della miniera, delle squadre di operai; impara nuovi gesti... La donna, dovendo restare lunghe ore tra gli spazi chiusi di una casa, ha più tempo per stare sola con se stessa e con i propri figli. E nel silenzio, o mentre parla, spiega, rimprovera, consiglia, rivive di continuo le proprie trascorse situazioni familiari. Ed è costretta a trasmettere ai figli tutto il suo mondo interiore. In questo modo, la donna preserva il proprio passato e quello della sua gente e lo passa ai figli. E, senza accorgersene, compie un recupero storico di grande importanza: custodisce in tutta la sua autenticità un'antica e profonda cultura altrimenti destinata all'oblio" (p. 129).

Le donne trentine in Canada rappresentano l'altro volto dell'emigrazione, quello caratterizzato dal benessere economico, dalla "fortuna". Numerosi studi hanno però messo in evidenza che, accanto ai conti in attivo, vi è stato ed esiste tuttora un diffuso malessere "sentimentale", causato probabilmente dall'adattamento traumatico a modelli di vita diversi. La distanza ha chiaramente caratterizzato l'esperienza migratoria: il ritorno nella provincia di Trento è un sogno irrealizzabile! L'emigrata

non se ne rende conto subito: continua per molto tempo a coltivare la speranza che nulla al suo paese, tra i familiari, sia cambiato. Al suo primo rientro, dopo tanti anni di assenza, fa la scoperta dolorosa che le cose non stanno come pensava. È allora che percepisce un vuoto, una distanza tra sé e i familiari quasi incolmabile...

"Costretta dalle circostanze a riflettere su se stessa, sul valore e il significato dell'emigrazione, qualcuna si chiede anche di più: che cosa insegnerà ora ai miei figli? E si risponde che ai figli dovrà spiegare d'ora in avanti, soprattutto che cosa è il Trentino. Che cosa è stato nel passato e i valori che quella terra ha insegnato" (p. 301).

Nello sforzo lodevole di non dimenticare il patrimonio umano di un popolo in emigrazione, il libro offre una preziosa e commovente panoramica su un gruppo di donne trentine che hanno raccolto la sfida dell'emigrazione con una consapevolezza tutta particolare, caratterizzata da tanta fermezza e da uno spirito di ascolto in profondità. Sarebbe stato utile se, fra le diverse testimonianze, fossero state inserite anche alcune storie di ritorno.

ANTONIO PAGANONI

LUCIANO SEGAFREDDO, *Testimoni dell'altra Italia. Interviste ai missionari sulle vie del mondo con i nostri emigrati*. Padova, Edizioni Messaggero, 1991, 253 p.

In un momento in cui l'attenzione dell'opinione pubblica e della Chiesa d'Italia è sempre più rivolta alla sfida dell'immigrazione, la raccolta di interviste a missionari in emigrazione, curata da Luciano Segafreddo, viene a colmare una lacuna e allo stesso tempo a riproporre il ruolo e il compito, pur sempre valido, del missionario nonostante emergenze nuove, quali penuria di personale e disattenzione da parte dei mass media in Italia verso valori quali emigrazione, missione ed evangelizzazione.

Si tratta di una indagine giornalistica che unisce alla sveltezza dello stile una capacità non comune di offrire rapidamente informazioni utili sia sulla personalità dell'intervistato come sul contesto umano in cui opera: il mondo dell'emigrazione italiana all'estero, in Europa e oltreoceano. Oltre a ricalcare preoccupazioni comuni, ogni intervista apre il sipario su situazioni nuove, inedite e, attraverso l'esperienza dell'intervistato, anche su quel mondo di speranze e di aspettative - non mancano le delusioni - che il missionario ha incontrato in mezzo a numerose collettività di emigranti italiani.

Il valore dell'italianità viene sempre sottolineato, sia come elemento aggregante per la prima generazione e sia come elemento di forte richiamo per le generazioni successive. Ma è una italianità che, pur nella varietà di espressioni regionali o paesane, viene resa attenta alla sfida della mondialità e dell'apertura verso l'altro. È un patrimonio storico e culturale che, nonostante carenze ed ambiguità, alla fine dei conti risulta un fattore importante nella graduale e lenta integrazione nella società e chiesa di adozione. Le esperienze che man mano vengono descritte tendono generalmente a valorizzare:

1. Le espressioni della religiosità popolare che l'emigrante porta con sé e alle quali ogni missionario si avvicina con rispetto, ma anche con un pizzico di cautela;

2. Il bagaglio culturale dell'emigrante che, nonostante una povera scolarizzazione ed una esistenza dedita al lavoro, non solo sopravvive, ma di tanto in tanto apre sulla sua esistenza spazi vissuti insieme (feste e riunioni conviviali);

3. Viene quasi sempre sottolineata una strategia pastorale che privilegia il contatto diretto del missionario con le famiglie e la conseguente quasi totale mancanza di tutti quegli atteggiamenti anticlericali che nella madrepatria avrebbero forse contraddistinto il rapporto clero-popolo. È, cioè, il missionario che volontariamente assume la condizione di emigrante e di straniero.

In una realtà pastorale, in graduale distacco dal mondo italiano e rivolta sempre di più a trovare una sua collocazione precisa all'interno di nuovi assetti continentali (Europa del '93) o di nuove consapevolezza nazionali (Canada, Stati Uniti, Australia, Brasile), non vengono sottaciuti i chiaroscuri:

1. La sfida quasi universale di una intera generazione di pionieri, marginalizzata in parte da una seconda e terza che contestano oppure non capiscono gli atteggiamenti inveterati o sorpassati dei loro genitori, anche perché sono loro stessi alla ricerca di nuove identità e ruoli;

2. La scarsità del personale sembra mettere in pericolo la continuità di una azione pastorale, la cui urgenza rimane pressoché invariata. Anche l'accorato appello di Mons. Cantisani (p. 13) non sembra trovare un riscontro nella programmazione della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana. La cappellania per gli emigranti italiani all'estero sembra per ora destinata ad appoggiarsi più sulla buona volontà di singoli sacerdoti o di congregazioni religiose che su iniziative che coinvolgono la Chiesa Italiana;

3. Diversi missionari alludono, a volte, all'indifferenza della Chiesa locale o presunti casi di mancata collaborazione. Forse questo tema, a nostro avviso, non è stato approfondito con quella chiarezza ed incisività che avrebbe meritato.

In linea di massima, le interviste evidenziano alcuni interrogativi che silenziosamente interpellano tutti coloro che hanno a cuore il futuro delle "altre Italie".

Il più grosso interrogativo riguarda la seconda o terza generazione che vive specialmente in Europa, ma anche oltreoceano. È un coro di voci unanimi che si alza per evidenziare un vuoto culturale, di valori, che getta i figli dei primi emigranti in una situazione di precarietà notevole. L'influenza esercitata dalla missione nei loro confronti appare insufficiente a colmare il vuoto.

Nel frattempo, le sfide che incombono sulla continuità della presenza missionaria sembrano insolubili. Il personale di ricambio scarseggia e il progressivo invecchiamento dei "titolari" lascia intravedere la necessità di ristrutturazioni delle sedi missionarie in un futuro non lontano.

Le varie testimonianze raccolte da Segafreddo servono a mettere in evidenza la gestione precaria di responsabilità collegiali che dovrebbero essere divise ed accettate dalla Chiesa di origine e da quella di



accoglienza. In realtà, questa divisione si è sempre rivelata piuttosto difficile da gestire agli effetti pratici.

Occorre, ed è questo l'anelito più profondo dei missionari in emigrazione, compiere dei passi precisi verso una pastorale dell'emigrazione che coinvolga tutta la Chiesa e con essa le Chiese locali, nella loro specificità e universalità. In un momento storico, in cui l'emigrazione ha assunto caratteristiche globali, urge dare una risposta a livello globale.

I missionari stessi, religiosi o laici, non possono rimanere o essere considerati come coloro che svolgono una supplenza che a lungo andare pare poi destinata a scomparire! Missioni e missionari siano "inviati" o "accolti", invece, come osservatori avanzati, a beneficio della Chiesa di origine e di arrivo, ambedue interessate a tutelare quei diritti che nella Chiesa sono patrimonio di tutti i battezzati, soprattutto di coloro che sono esposti ai rischi inerenti al mondo delle migrazioni.

ANTONIO PAGANONI

RENZO M. GROSSELLI, *Da schiavi bianchi a coloni. Un progetto per le fazendas. Contadini trentini (veneti e lombardi) nelle foreste brasiliane. Parte IV: São Paulo 1875-1914*. Trento, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 1991, 447 p.

In una serie di studi e ricerche dedicate all'emigrazione trentina in Brasile - *Vincere o morire, Colonie imperiali nella terra del caffè, Dove cresce l'Araucaria* - anche questo volume ricalca un interessante cammino dell'autore. Attraverso l'applicazione di tecniche e metodi di storia orale, raccolte da Grosselli vivendo in mezzo a comunità di emigranti trentini in Brasile, l'autore raggiunge risultati pregevoli, riscoprendo notizie sedimentate, lettere ed altri documenti di archivi, così come realtà vissute dagli attuali discendenti.

Questa opera di salvataggio interessa una condizione specifica in un momento specifico: "I contadini (quelli che non si urbanizzarono nelle città europee e in quelle dell'America) distrussero il vecchio semplicemente lasciandoselo alle spalle e ricostruirono il nuovo non nel senso che inventarono delle strutture sociali ed economiche, bensì nel senso che ricostruirono la loro società in un nuovo ambiente" (p. 16).

Le storie inedite di tanti emigranti trentini hanno uno spazio ed un tempo ben delimitato: lo stato di São Paulo, dal 1875 fino alla prima guerra mondiale. Diviso in quattro parti, il libro inizia con una analisi accurata del problema della sostituzione della manodopera schiava per gli imprenditori del caffè; poi, passa a tracciare un profilo della comunità trentina. Si addentra, nella terza parte, "nell'inferno" delle fazendas e, infine, narra il passaggio tribolato dal dispotismo paternalistico al libero lavoro, alla piccola proprietà.

Sono soprattutto coloro che sono passati senza lasciare una traccia storica di se stessi che compongono il mondo di R.M. Grosselli. Non c'è nessuna preoccupazione di ricercare l'eroe o l'eccezionale o il grandioso. L'eroe è, caso mai, tutta l'umanità trentina. Una storia, quindi, della gente comune e scritta dalla loro parte. L'autore non nasconde mai la sua passione per i suoi "trentini", ma è oltremodo attento a non lasciarsi vincere dai suoi sentimenti.

C'è da augurarsi che la realtà umana, portata alla luce da Grosselli, possa, con i mezzi moderni di diffusione, raggiungere il grande pubblico e non soltanto nella regione trentina. Le sfide dei coloni trentini sono state affrontate anche da tanti altri coloni italiani. Una diffusione più capillare e a largo raggio del patrimonio di umanità contenuto nella quadrilogia di Grosselli sarebbe, a nostro parere, anche il premio più giusto per una pregevole opera storica, ma anche sociologica e di antropologia culturale, di costume e di vita quotidiana, di ieri (trentini) e di oggi (i milioni di senza terra, con volti diversi, ma sparsi in tutti i continenti).

ANTONIO PAGANONI

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