The Revolution Just around the Corner: Italian American Radicals and the Mexican Revolution, 1910–1914

MICHELE PRESUTTO

Introduction

In January 1911, rebel troops loyal to the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) captured the village of Mexicali on the U.S. border after a brief skirmish, beginning what historians would call the Magonista Rebellion of 1911.[1] The rebels would control northern Baja California for six months. On May 8, 1911, the rebels took Tijuana, but they lost it on June 22, and those Magonistas who remained had to cross the U.S. border and surrender to American troops (Bartoli 2012; Blaisdell 1962; Lomnitz 2014; Taylor 1992). The PLM, founded in 1906 by the Flores Magón brothers, was of anarchist inspiration, and within this rebel "army" were North American volunteers, including some Italians and Italian Americans.

Without examining the vicissitudes of the Mexican Revolution, which are already the object of many studies both in Mexico and the United States, this article addresses two particular issues involving both countries. The first is the presence of Italian radicals in the 1911 Magonista campaign in Baja California. The second is the ensuing debate in the Italian-language radical press in the United States over whether what was happening in Mexico was a "true" revolution or simply a "changing of the guard."

Italians' participation in the Mexican Revolution is an almost unknown chapter in the histories of both the Mexican Revolution and the Italian diaspora in the United States. It is a chapter that, as I will demonstrate, sheds important light on the subsequent political experiences of Italian radical communities in North America. At the same time, it permits us to view the Italian radical experience through a transnational lens in light of the relationship between Italian and Mexican immigrants in the United States. Therefore, this article will contribute to the literature on the creation of a "Latin solidarity," highlighting both the basis of this solidarity as well as points of division.

This article has five sections. The first section analyzes the origins of Italian internationalism during the Risorgimento. The second section focuses on interethnic relations between Italian and Mexican workers in the United States, particularly in the Southwest. It emphasizes the similarities in the two groups' migrations in the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the revolution, from the first major mining strikes through racism and lynchings in Texas and Florida. This issue merits greater attention both for its immediate and

longer-term effects. The debate on the Mexican Revolution had a major impact on the work of the junta, a sort of central committee of the PLM, and more broadly, on perceptions of the Mexican Revolution around the world.

The third and fouth sections of this article address Italians' participation in the events in Baja California, the debates in the Italian radical press after their return, the emergence of personal conflicts, and ideological differences. These sections illustrate the debate's complexity and how what began as a "minor affair" among Italians reached the international radical press between 1912 and 1913, in Italian as well as English, French, and Spanish. I will also analyze the Italian-language radical press in the United States in light of its relationships with other radicals in the United States, Italy, Europe, and South American countries (primarily Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil). This triangle, which connected Italian anarchists in Europe, North America, and South America, played a strategic role in the junta of Los Angeles and, more generally, in the Mexican Revolution. The fifth and final section will attempt to draw conclusions.

The Garibaldian Tradition

Sending Italian volunteers from the United States to Mexico was a return to the Risorgimento tradition typical of the Italian Left at the end of the century. It is no coincidence, as we will see, that the radical Italian-language press often referenced it. The tradition, chiefly Garibaldian but not exclusively, developed during the Risorgimento and reflected many pre-unification patriots' experience of exile as well as a Mazzinian sense of "internationalism." The first army to fight under the Italian flag was the Redshirts of the Italian Legion in the war between Uruguay and Argentina in 1843 (Bistarelli 2011; Gabaccia 2001, 21–40; Franzina and Sanfilippo 2008, 23–52). This tradition did not end with Italy's political unification but intensified from 1860 onward. Italians fought in Poland against the Russians in 1863, in France against the Prussians in 1870, and in successive Balkan wars.

Italians' participation in the Mexican Revolution was therefore not an isolated historic case but was part of a tradition whose immediate precedent could be found in the 1898 Cuban War of Independence, when a committee in support of Cuban independence unsuccessfully attempted to organize a volunteer expedition. After many difficulties, an expedition of approximately forty men who had just returned from the war in Greece the previous year boarded a steamship to New York City on May 7, 1898, under the command of the Garibaldian Gustavo Martinotti. Once there, the volunteers realized both the American and Cuban authorities did not support them, so they returned to Italy with great bitterness, but not before receiving the approval and admiration of Italians in New York. Among the expedition's participants was Carlo

De Molli, the future syndicalist leader of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) (Brier and Fasce 2011, 88–121; Tamburini 1994, 83–93). The legacy of international volunteerism in the Garibaldian mold after the war in Greece in 1897, the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1895–98, and the Mexican Revolution of 1910–11 can be interpreted as failed attempts to insert Italian elements into an existing transnational network, a "tropical" North American or a Spanish American anarchist milieu, where Spain was the most important region (Barrera Bassols 2011; Guerra 1973, 653–687; Shaffer 2010, 273–320).[2]

The first Italian internationalists, those who were born in the 1840s and fought first in the Garibaldian ranks and then with the founders of the anarchist movement in the second half of the 1860s, demonstrate the connection between the Garibaldian Risorgimento tradition and the nascent anarchist movement. Giuseppe Fanelli, considered the first person to introduce anarchism into the Iberian Peninsula (Antonioli 2003, 578–580), is the paradigmatic example of the connection between social republicanism, Garibaldianism, and anarchist internationalism. Other Italians of different political affiliations also participated in this Garibaldian tradition, including Peppino Garibaldi, the grandson of the Risorgimento hero (Garibaldi 1935, 219–313; Katz 1998, 96, 119; Knight 1986, 229, 296).

Relations between Italians and Mexicans

The participation of different political and linguistic communities in the United States and Canada should be understood in light of the relations among different ethnic groups. Italians' solidarity with the Mexican revolutionaries as well as their subsequent distancing from them were based on a common environment developed over many years. Interethnic workers' communities composed of Italian- and Spanish-speaking immigrants began to form in the turn-of-the-century United States. One of the most well-known cases was in Tampa, Florida, where Italians (particularly Sicilians), Cubans, and Spaniards formed a "Latin" working class. Interactions based on political affiliation as well as cultural commonalities, particularly language, also occurred in other periods and areas of the United States. Italian migration patterns were different from those of Mexicans, but the two groups generally came into contact with one another in the South and in the western United States, from southern California to Louisiana. Italian and Mexican immigrants created a "Latin community" in the mining area in southeastern Arizona, particularly in the "copper triangle," an area near the Mexican border marked by the triangle formed by the Clifton-Morenci-Metcalf and Globe camps. Demand for copper surged after the invention of the electric light, spreading across the world and driving the

development of the mining industry between Arizona and the Mexican state of Sonora. The main economic characteristics of this area included North American capital, a great number of Mexican miners (paid differently on each side of the border), and the presence within the community of future participants in the Mexican Revolution, particularly Práxedis Guerrero, a member of the junta and one of the Mexican cause's principal activists in the United States (Cockcroft 1968; Ferrua 1976; Sandos 1992). But here the connection between Italians and Mexicans was of a racial and social nature rather than political.

Italians and Mexicans shared the same environment and working conditions and reacted to them by implementing strategies that went beyond racial belonging and that were opposed by Anglos. Language, religion, and social practices became the foundation upon which Mexicans and Italians (along with Spaniards) constructed their Latin identity across numerous racial microsystems. The connection between the two communities was facilitated by several cultural and social factors. First of all, proximity: In many mining camps, Italians and Mexicans lived in neighboring or in the same quarters. Unlike other ethnic communities, intermarriage played an important role. Finally, as in Clifton's case, there was the emergence of a common language: Spanish, Mexican, and Italian gave life to an "Italianized Spanish" (Martinelli 2009) to the extent that the Italian Frank Salerno, one of the leaders of the 1903 Clifton–Morenci strike (Fuller 1997, 57), was registered in the Yuma penitentiary with the name "Francisco" Salerno (Mellinger 1995, 50).[3] It was not only the working and social environments of southwestern copper towns that created contact points between Italian and Mexican communities. In the weeks immediately preceding the outbreak of the revolution, there were two episodes, apparently unconnected, that give us a sense of the race relations among Anglos, Mexicans, and Italians during this period.

These episodes involved lynchings of Italians and Mexicans. The first happened in Ybor City (Tampa), Florida, on September 20, 1910, to Italians Angelo Albano and Costanzo Ficarotta. The second took place on November 3 in Rock Springs, Texas, where a Mexican, Antonio Rodríguez, was lynched. After Rodríguez's lynching, several Mexican national newspapers reported on the events in Tampa as proof of the "barbaridad" of American society and its racism toward immigrants. Tampa had recently been transformed by the cigar industry, which attracted hundreds of immigrants from Cuba, Spain, and Italy, including a large number of Sicilians. At that time, the Italian population of Ybor City was approximately 3,500 people, mostly Sicilians. About 60 percent of the newcomers, including Angelo Albano, came from Santo Stefano Quisquina and other nearby municipalities in the province of Agrigento (Mormino and Pozzetta 1987, 9).[4] A sort of "Latin solidarity" developed among the diverse

immigrant communities, principally during the long strike that paralyzed the city for six months in 1910. On September 14, 1910, as the strike continued, James F. Easterling, an American bookkeeper who worked for Bustillo Brothers and Díaz Company, one of the major cigar factories in the city accused of organizing the scabs at the expense of the strikers, was shot. The shots came from a factory where there were a great number of Cuban and Italian strikers. The police arrested Angelo Albano and Costanzo Ficarotta for the murder. Six days later, before the beginning of the trial, an angry mob entered the prison, took the two prisoners, and murdered them. Over the next few days, the English-language press painted a sinister picture of the two lynched men. In addition to accusing them of being anarchists, it claimed they had lengthy criminal records that, according to the sheriff, made them unpopular even within the city's Italian community (Luconi 2009, 30–53). Gerolamo Moroni, the Italian vice-consul responsible for emigration, observed the relationship between the strike and the lynching in a report (Salvetti 2003, 103):

> Le ragioni che hanno condotto al linciaggio devono ricercarsi nei gravi delitti commessi dai nostri, specialmente durante il periodo dal 1908 al 1910, rimasti impuniti per mancanza di testimonianze, e dallo sciopero dei sigarai, sciopero che da tre mesi circa danneggia gravemente gli interessi della città. Il primo motivo servì da pretesto per annientare o abbattere il secondo.
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> The reasons for the lynching may be found in the serious crimes committed by our people, particularly during the period from 1908 to 1910, which remain unpunished because of a lack of evidence, and by the cigar-makers' strike, a strike which for almost the last three months has been damaging the city's interests. The first served as the pretext for annihilating or demolishing the second.

The vice-consul continued (108):

> Quando gli industriali, i commercianti e polizia di West Tampa . . . videro che lo sciopero era disastroso ai loro interessi . . . essi decisero di intimorire le masse con una tremenda lezione. Occorrevano le vittime.
>
> When the industrialists, merchants, and police of West Tampa . . . saw that the strike was devastating for their interests . . . they decided to frighten the masses with a terrible lesson. They needed the victims.

The Tampa lynching was not the first to target Italians, but unlike earlier lynchings it was connected to an ongoing strike. The labor press underscored the connection between the strike and the lynching. An October 4 article in the *Chicago Daily Socialist* titled "Lynching of Union Cigar Men at Tampa" carried the grim photo of the lynched men. Meetings and protests followed across the

United States: "Protests are expected from the Italian associations, trade unions, and local socialist groups around the country" concluding that "It is not safe for trade unionists to walk the streets of Tampa." The situation concluded only in 1913 when the federal government closed the case and authorized financial compensation for the victims' families.

Antonio Rodríguez's lynching had a different context, but it played a fundamental role in shaping an interethnic sense of solidarity between Italians and Mexicans. Around four o'clock on the afternoon of November 3, 1910, a crowd took Antonio Rodríguez, a young Mexican of about twenty, from a prison in Rock Springs where he was being held on suspicion of having killed a white woman. He was taken out of town, tied to a cactus, doused with kerosene, and finally killed, likely burnt alive. The circumstances of Antonio Rodríguez's lynching were significant because they, more than the lynching itself, were what outraged the public. Several newspapers reported that he had been burned alive. Ramón Eduardo Ruíz writes, "His body was then burned although some alleged that he had been burned alive." While the circumstances of the lynching were unusual, lynchings were not. Historian Friedrich Katz writes: "20 Mexicans, who had been arrested [in the prison of El Paso] by local authorities for different reasons, had been soaked with kerosene in order to delouse them. Someone, however, had set fire to the kerosene. It has never been proven whether this was by accident or by intention, but the 20 Mexicans were burned alive." The issue may have shaped conceptions of the "barbarian" and comparisons between "civilization/barbarity" in Mexican American relations (Katz 1998, 564; Ruiz 1980, 115–116; Sandos 1992, 98). Unlike previous lynchings of Mexicans in the United States, Rodríguez's lynching spurred a series of popular demonstrations in many Mexican cities. Although most historians have never described a direct connection between the protests at the beginning of November and the beginning of the revolution, a recent work highlights this link and in particular how the lynching of the young Mexican man increased, spontaneously or not, strong anti-American sentiment that continued throughout the Mexican Revolution. Historian Travis Taylor (2012) emphasizes that the police did not intervene in many of the demonstrations or did so only a little, implying that General Porfirio Díaz, a strongman and president of Mexico from 1876 to 1910, supported the demonstrations. Such support or compliance can be explained as a weapon to pressure the U.S. government against Francisco Madero, who opposed the reelection of Díaz. Madero became the first leader of the Mexican revolutionary government and then took refuge with his movement in San Antonio, Texas.

Unlike in Tampa, the Rock Springs lynching had no labor or class implications. It took place in a climate that was already tense during the months and days immediately preceding the beginning of the revolution. Still, a comparison

can be made. The Mexican press did so, for example, in *El País*, a Catholic newspaper in Mexico City, on October 4, 1910 (Salvetti, 2003, 116):

> Lo stesso ambasciatore Cusani, dopo un nuovo caso di linciaggio di un messicano in Texas il 3 novembre 1910, aveva preso in considerazione l'ipotesi, poi caduta, di contattare l'ambasciata del Messico a Washington: "siccome questo linciaggio ha molta analogia con quelli di Tampa . . . è evidente," scriveva Cusani, "l'interesse comune che i due nostri paesi hanno in questo caso."
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> After another Mexican was lynched in Texas on November 3, 1910, Ambassador Cusani considered contacting the Mexican embassy in Washington: "since this lynching has much in common with those in Tampa . . . it is clear," Cusani wrote, "that in this case our countries have a common interest."

On November 20, just seventeen days later, Madero crossed the Río Grande, beginning the Mexican Revolution.

"Ma sì, andiamo al Messico"

Numerous articles in the radical press directly and indirectly encouraged people to go to Mexico in the days following Mexicali's fall to the Magonistas in February 1911 (Razine 1911, 3). One of the first calls appeared in English in the *Industrial Worker* of June 8, and others soon followed in English and Spanish ("Las armas liberals en Baja California" 1911, 2):

> El triunfo de nuestros compañeros en Mexicali contra los soldados federales . . . ha hecho que afluya a aquel lugar un crecido número de voluntarios. . . . Si hubiera mil fuciles disponibles, mil hombres los tomarían en seguida ansiosos de prestar su ayuda a la causa del proletariado.
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> The triumph of our comrades in Mexicali against the federal soldiers . . . has caused a growing number of volunteers to stream into that place. . . . If a thousand guns were available, a thousand men would take them immediately, eager to help the proletarian cause.

In another example, *L'Era Nuova*, like *Cronaca Sovversiva* and other Italian-language newspapers, reprinted the PLM's appeal that appeared in *Regeneración* on April 8 ("Appello ai lavoratori di tutto il mondo" 1911, 2):

> Compagni e compagne di tutto il mondo, agitatevi in pro della Rivoluzione Messicana. Agitatevi senza per tempo in mezzo e prima che sia troppo tardi. . . . Compagni di tutte le nazioni: La Rivoluzione Messicana è un atto della grandiosa tragedia che tosto o tardi avrà per teatro l'intera superficie del globo. La nostra lotta è la vostra.

> Comrades of the world, rise up in support of the Mexican Revolution. Rise up without delay and before it is too late. . . . Comrades of every nation: The Mexican Revolution is an act in the great tragedy that sooner or later will have the entire world as its stage. Our struggle is your struggle.

The calls for solidarity multiplied and began appearing in the Italian-language press. In New York, Italians formed a solidarity committee. American radicals, including many who were immigrants, anarchists, members of radical union Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), socialists, and syndicalists, began arriving in Tijuana. Also joining them were IWW leaders Frank Little and Joe Hill (Adler 2011, 162–180). The Italians arrived in Tijuana, and the junta decided to form a third division under the command of Adolfo R. Antonelli.

Adolfo R. Antonelli was born in Rome in 1883. He became involved in the capital's radical circles as a young man. He was arrested repeatedly, and in June 1902 he left Italy for Geneva and then France. That December, he was deported from France and went to London where he soon made contact with the anarchist community and Errico Malatesta (Di Paola 2013, 102–111). In 1906, he decided to immigrate to America. In 1909, he went to San Francisco where he published the newspaper *Nihil* (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma, Casellario Politico Centrale [ACS CPC] Antonelli).

In those days, a fever struck Italian communities and radical groups, and they organized meetings, collected money for the junta of Los Angeles, and went to Mexico. The call to revolution sounded at an opportune time for the members of the Italian American radical movement, and the temptation to "go and build utopia down there" ("To armas, Ye Braves!" 1911, 11) was very strong. Between the beginning of May and June 10, 1911, some Italian American radicals traveled directly to Los Angeles or San Diego, where they could cross the border. During the debates that later erupted, some people claimed that "hundreds of Italians were ready to go to Mexico at their own expense" (Owen 1912, 1).

How many Italians went to Mexico? Their secrecy and efforts to avoid the U.S. government's surveillance make it difficult to know the exact number. Still, the press coverage and debate in the radical press allow us to reconstruct, if only partially, their numbers and history. Blaisdell, citing the *San Diego Union* on May 29, 1911, talks about a group of approximately fifty Italian anarchists coming from the Northwest (Blaisdell 1962, 236). But according to Lawrence D. Taylor, that number may be an overestimate (Taylor 1993, 250 n. 219). We may reconstruct a list of almost thirty people from documents of the time and an analysis of the radical press. However, radicals' secrecy and the absence of anarchists from the eastern United States on the list, especially from Paterson, New Jersey, suggest that the total was likely higher.

The absence of anarchists from the eastern United States, Midwest, and San Francisco is striking because these areas had the largest Italian radical communities. There are likely several reasons for this anomaly. The first was geographic proximity. The second reason was that there was not much time between the spread of the news from Tijuana and subsequent events. A third reason was that most of the anarchists we have discussed were miners and lived in mining camps. The final factor assumes a certain correlation between the Italian miners and the Mexican Revolution. The absence of Italian anarchist miners from the East (for example, from Pennsylvania or West Virginia) may be explained by the different activities carried out by individual districts of the UMWA. The Italians who went to Mexico, for example, came from the UMWA District 14 (Kansas) while the absence of District 15 (Colorado), where Italians not only formed the largest part but also had a long-standing relationship with Mexican miners, is glaring. Perhaps, more than the differences between districts of the UMWA, what had the most influence was the relationship between the UMWA and the Western Federation of Miners.

However, some Italian anarchists from the East and Midwest did take part. Those who did are the ones who, directly or indirectly, participated in the events in Baja California in 1911 and who appeared in the ensuing debate. It is likely that some other Italians, anarchists among them, came from the East and Midwest and took part in the Mexican events, including Arturo Caroti, a future socialist deputy in the Italian Parliament (Andreucci and Detti 1979, 505–509; Vezzosi 1991, 41–43).

Most of the Italians in Tijuana were part of three separate, organized groups. The first group, the November 11 group from Kansas, was also the first to be critical of the revolution. It was connected to *Il Lavoratore Italiano*, the organ of UMWA District 15 that had been printed in Trinidad, Colorado, since 1902 (Notarianni 1980, 50–51; Brier and Fasce 2011), and *Cronaca Sovversiva*. Its members included Ernesto Teodori, Guglielmo Galeotti, John Longo, Guglielmo Pasquini, Aristide Paladini, and Demetrio Magnani, as well as Filippo Perrone of Milwaukee. The second group was the Stirner group of Vancouver in British Columbia: Sebastiano Messaglia, Battista Baldovin, Martino Vaccaro, Pietro De Sanctis, Carlo De Colò, G. Albiero, and G. Bergia, and it also included the Circolo di Studi Sociali of Seattle, composed of Michele Bombino, Michele Cipriani, Vincenzo Cipolla, Domenico Marino, Giuseppe Piccirillo, Michele Ricci, and Sam Rizzo. They were joined by Adolfo Antonelli of San Francisco, Antonio Rodia,[5] and Bartolomeo Bertone of Cedar Point, Illinois, and by Joe Russo and V. Lancellotti. A third group of men from Los Angeles was organized by Ludovico Caminita and Vittorio Cravello, two well-known Italian anarchists from Paterson.

Ludovico Caminita was one of the central figures of the events connected to the Mexican Revolution and also of the Italian American left during the

first twenty years of the twentieth century. Martino Marazzi describes him as "ideologically restless to the point of inconsistency" (Marazzi 2011, 181). Born in Palermo in 1878, he immigrated to Canada in 1902 and continued on to the United States. In Barre, Vermont, in 1905 he collaborated with *Cronaca Sovversiva* (ACS CPC Caminita). He subsequently moved to Paterson where he was briefly the editor, along with Pedro Esteve, of *La Questione Sociale*. He was in Los Angeles at the beginning of October 1910 through December 1911 (Struthers 2010, 147, 183, 202) when he left on a propaganda tour of the United States, arriving in Paterson the following February. He directed the Italian section of *Regeneración*. We know after the fall of Tijuana that Caminita went there at least once to visit the battlefield and encourage the men. The dissidents from Kansas accused him of, among other things, having taken "a trip by car" to Tijuana. Arriving in the East, he was arrested in Paterson for a few days because of an article published four years prior. Released on bail, he was arrested again in September 1912 along with Firmino Gallo for having drawn and posted a cartoon in the window of the bookstore Libreria Sociologica in Paterson that criticized Italian colonization in Libya. After the war, he founded *La Jacquerie*. In March 1920, during the Red Scare, he was arrested and ordered to leave the country. He was held at Ellis Island for six months before being released, which *L'Avvenire Anarchico* claimed in 1922 was because of his collaboration with the police (Caminita 1924). The historiography is divided on this point. Paul Avrich maintains that Caminita was released because he was directly interrogated by a young J. Edgar Hoover during his detention on Ellis Island and that he gave the names of a number of anarchists connected to the movement. These confessions would have enabled many subsequent prosecutions, including the case of Roberto Elia and Andrea Salsedo, which was in turn connected with Sacco and Vanzetti. Many American historians share this thesis. However, Salvatore Salerno proposes another hypothesis: Caminita's arrest, interrogations, and detention were only a ploy to cover the identity of an agent who had infiltrated Paterson and was the one passing on information. After this period, Caminita abandoned his political activities and dedicated himself to "bourgeois" journalism. He died in Virginia in the mid-1950s (Antonioli 2003, 298–299; Salerno 2003a, 111–123).

Vittorio Cravello is a notable name in the history of Italian anarchism in Paterson. He was born in 1873 in Valle Superiore Mosso, a town near Biella in Piedmont. He went to America in 1893 and lived with his wife in New London, Connecticut, before moving to Barre. In 1910, Cravello moved to Los Angeles and, along with Ludovico Caminita, was the Italian closest to the junta of the PLM. After the Baja California campaign, he was repeatedly insulted and vilified, and he finally got into a physical altercation with Filippo Perrone at the Labor Temple in Los Angeles on October 8, 1911 (ACS CPC Cravello). His first traces are evident in his participation at the Italian Hall during a

conference held by Caminita on September 4, 1910. Caminita's constant presence in Los Angeles is also evinced by his participation in a memorial for Francisco Ferrer, held in mid-October 1910, although there are previous documented visits at least from 1908 (Marazzi 2011, 183 n. 8). On this occasion, as was customary, speakers in various languages took the stage. There was William C. Owen, the editor of *Regeneración*'s English page, in English; an unidentified comrade who spoke in Yiddish; Ludovico Caminita in Italian; and, in Spanish, Lázaro Gutiérrez de Lara, who was considered one of the forerunners of the Mexican Revolution. He also accompanied John Kenneth Turner on his journey to Mexico between 1909 and 1910 and later passed from PLM positions to Madero's side (Lomnitz 2014, 126–131). Salvatore Salerno writes that "it is difficult to say when Caminita's association with the Magonistas begins" (Salerno 2003b, 294 n. 27). At the beginning of September 1910, two months before the revolution, Cravello and Caminita were already in Los Angeles. They were in the process of a great organizing drive, and the political climate in the city was highly charged, so much so that less than a month later, on October 1, a bomb exploded at the Los Angeles *Daily Times* building, killing twenty-one people and wounding others.[6]

The Debate

Between the beginning of May and June 10, 1911, many Italians crossed the U.S.–Mexico border, joining the revolutionaries already in Tijuana. At that time radical newspapers, particularly *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *L'Era Nuova*, received many letters from Mexico, but the honeymoon was brief. On June 10, 1911, *Cronaca Sovversiva* published a letter from Los Angeles. The letter marked the beginning of an internal fracture in the radical Italian movement in the United States. This division would last for many months and extend beyond the borders of the United States, embroiling radicals in Europe and Latin America in the question of solidarity with the revolutionary movement in Mexico. This is the text of the letter that appeared in *Cronaca Sovversiva* in the column "Things from Mexico" ("Poiché lo vogliono proprio" 1911, 2):

> La Rivoluzione Messicana vista attraverso i giornali di parte nostra, si presenta come rivoluzione "Sociale-Economica." Sia che i nostri giornali siano stati male informati dai loro corrispondenti o sia che è molto facile formare un grande movimento sulla carta stampata. Il fatto è che manca la realtà delle cose. Cioè che la rivoluzione del Messico "sotto gli auspici del partito liberale" anziché presentare un aspetto economico-sociale, deve presentare un aspetto lautamente finanziario per qualche rivoluzionario da tavolino! Che di esso movimento si è reso messaggero.

> Noi sottoscritti che da vicino abbiamo veduto le città . . . dove sventola la bandiera rossa, e i ribelli che combattono al grido di Tierra y Libertad, siamo in grado di dire che quel movimento non è né politico né sociale, ed avvertiamo i compagni acciò che rivolgano le loro energie altrove, sia materialmente che finanziariamente.
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> Our newspapers portray the Mexican Revolution as a "social and economic" revolution. Either our newspapers have been misinformed by their correspondents or it is very easy to create a great movement in the press. The truth is missing. Namely, that the revolution in Mexico "under the auspices of the Liberal Party" seems to be more of a financial matter in the hands of some false revolutionists than an economic or social revolution.
>
> We the undersigned, who have seen the cities up close . . . where the red flag waves, and the rebels who fight with the cry Tierra y Libertad [Land and Freedom] are in a position to say that this movement is neither political nor social, and we warn our comrades so that they can direct their physical and financial energies elsewhere.

The letter was signed by Ernesto Teodori, Guglielmo Galeotti, Filippo Perrone, Vincenzo Cipolla, Sam Rizzo, John Longo, Guglielmo Pasquini, and Aristide Paladini. Of these men, Guglielmo Galeotti and Filippo Perrone played important roles.

Born in 1871 in Santa Sofia, near Florence, Guglielmo Galeotti came to be considered an "extremely dangerous political individual" and was imprisonsed several times between 1888 and 1894. In 1895, he was put under house arrest in Porto Empedocle (Agrigento province, Sicily), then on the Tremiti Islands (Foggia province, Apulia), and finally in Ustica (Palermo province, Sicily). In June 1898 he was again denounced and took refuge in Switzerland to escape yet another arrest. In 1901 he was deported from Switzerland and turned over to the Italian authorities, who arrested him on suspicion of being an accomplice in the regicide of Italy's King Umberto I the previous year. He returned to Italy and left Genoa the following May for New York, continuing on to Falls Creek, Pennsylvania. In 1904 he moved to Pittsburgh and then to Kansas. A miner, he was considered the "soul" of the November 11 group. He was deported from the United States in February 1920, repatriated, and put under surveillance in his hometown (ACS CPC Galeotti).

Filippo Perrone was born in Alessandria della Rocca (Agrigento province) in 1881. He immigrated to the United States in 1901, and after spending time in Tampa, New York, and Chicago, he lived in Milwaukee. From there, he left to take part in the events in Tijuana. He detested Caminita and Cravello, whom he railed against at an October 8, 1911, meeting in Los Angeles. He also took part in a meeting in Chicago, again criticizing Caminita, and he wrote an insulting

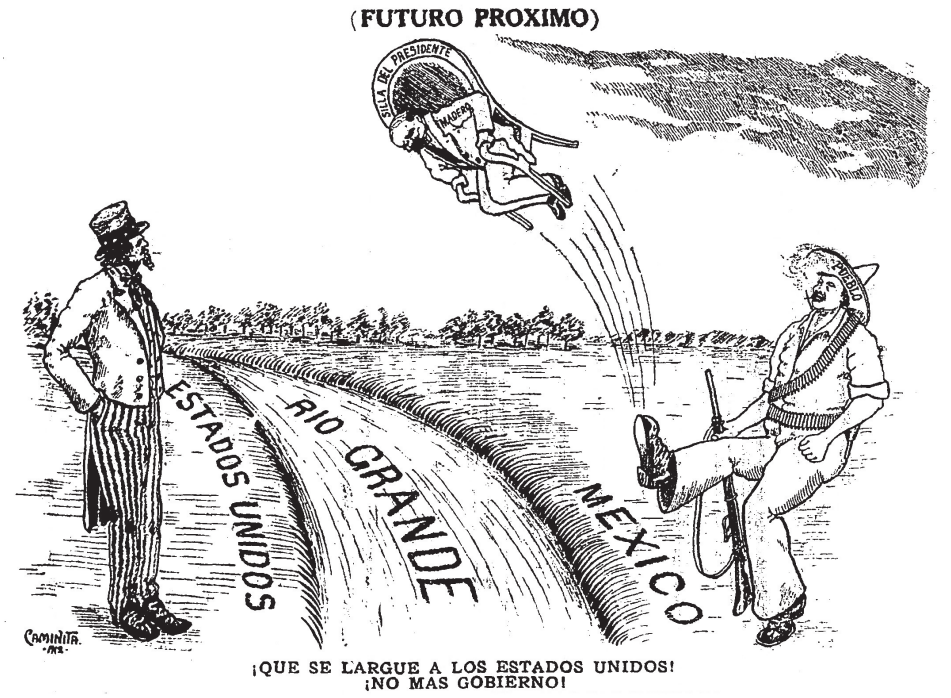
letter to Ricardo Flores Magón. He was arrested and fined in San Francisco on September 25, 1911, for holding an unauthorized public rally. Deported in 1922, he returned to Sicily. In January 1924, he succeeded in immigrating clandestinely and living in Brooklyn under the name Vincenzo Lentini. He stayed in the United States until the end of the World War II, when he was deported once again. He died in Sicily soon after (ACS CPC Perrone; Anonimi compagni 1953, 177; Sensi-Isolani 2003, 197; Zimmer 2015, 158).

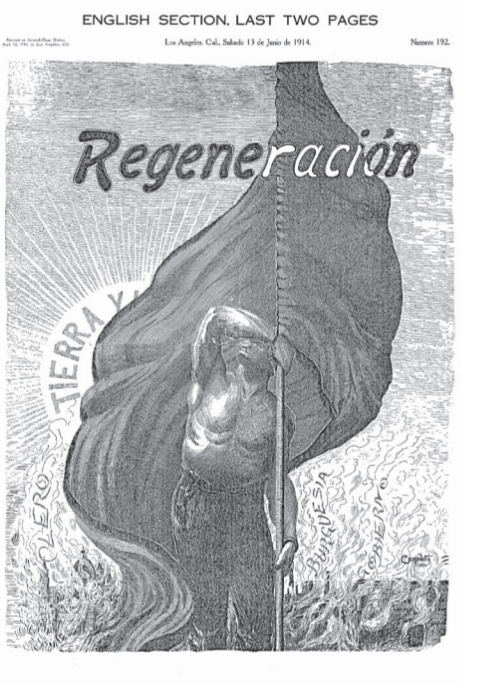
Except for Perrone, Cipolla, and Rizzo, the others came from Kansas, specifically the southeast corner of the state where numerous mining communities had developed: Hamilton, Mineral, West Mineral, Frontenac, and Columbus. All were involved in the November 11 group that was connected to both *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *Il Lavoratore Italiano*. There, a miners' strike, which began after the first news arrived from Mexico, had recently been suppressed. Luigi Galleani, the director of *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Pernicone 1993, 469–488), stopped there on his propaganda tour of the western states in July 1910. Ernesto Teodori organized his passage. The group from Kansas was the first to be critical of the Mexican Revolution. The letter in question was sent, as we will see below, to both *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *L'Era Nuova*, but the latter did not publish it. The often-bitter debate between the two newspapers began at this moment. Complicating the situation further was news of the fall of Tijuana and the arrest of the members of the junta of Los Angeles.

The bitterest criticism was reserved for Cravello and Caminita. In response, *Regeneración* published articles in Italian. The first appeared on July 1, 1911. Then, beginning on July 15, Caminita edited an Italian edition of *Regeneración* that ran until October 25, for a total of sixteen editions. *Regeneración* had a circulation of 21,000 at this time and the *Sezione italiana* sold an additional 1,000 copies. The Italian edition of *Regeneración* ended for financial reasons, but the paper continued to publish Italian articles, often on the first page, until December 27, 1913. Afterward, *Regeneración* continued to publish Caminita's vignettes and cartoons, the last of which was the cover of the June 13, 1914, edition, suggesting that Caminita played a prominent role in shaping the movements' culture (Sandos 1992, 19, 45, 53; Salerno 2003b, 120; Ávila Meléndez 2008, 80–85).[7]

The criticism directed toward Cravello and Caminita rapidly turned into personal attacks, and soon everything degenerated. The insults were not just personal but also spread to entire newspapers. The war of words became open conflict when Caminita spoke directly to Filippo Perrone, one of the signers of the letter, writing not in Italian but in Sicilian dialect ("A proposito del giro" 1911, 1):

> Il nostro Caminita intraprenderà il giro di agitazione negli Stati Uniti nel prossimo mese di dicembre. Egli andrà immancabilmente in Chicago e pure





Illustrations by Ludovico Caminita. TOP: "The near future," in *Regeneración*, November 30, 1912. ABOVE LEFT: "The true causes of the Mexican Revolution," in *Regeneración*, August 9, 1913. ABOVE RIGHT: Cover of *Regeneración*, English Section, June 13, 1914.

> in Milwaukee, dove terrà pubbliche conferenze su tutto quanto può concernere la rivoluzione e i rivoluzionarii messicani, garantendo la più ampia libertà di parola in contraddittorio . . . Munti cu munti 'un si iuncinu mai . . . Perrone, che è siciliano comprende.
>
> Caminita will leave on a propaganda tour of the United States next December. He will invariably go to Chicago and then Milwaukee, where he will deliver lectures on the Mexican revolution and revolutionaries, guaranteeing the greatest freedom of speech during the debate . . . Munti cu munti 'un si iuncinu mai . . . Perrone, who is Sicilian, understands.

This quotation comes from the first part of a Sicilian proverb: "Munti cu munti 'un si jùncinu mai, ma l'omini di lu munnu sempri si jùncinu," literally: "Mountains do not meet but the people of the world do." It has, however, a more threatening sense: "Sooner or later we will meet!" (Pitrè 1978, 185–186). In fact, both Ludovico Caminita and Filippo Perrone were Sicilians: The former was from Palermo and the latter from the province of Agrigento.

Sometimes insults took on a tone of exasperated irony, as in the exchange between Caminita and Umberto Postiglione, who related his account of their meeting by writing an article that appeared in *Cronaca Sovversiva* called "Rabagas alla gogna" (The Pillorying of Rabagas). The title was a reference to a play by Victorien Sardou, very popular at that time, which was produced for the first time in 1872 and translated into Italian by P. C. Ferrigni in 1898. The play's events unfold in Monaco where Rabagas, an adventurer of low standing, attempts to incite a popular insurrection. Eva, an American millionaire, supports his rise to power, and when Rabagas acquires it, she quickly becomes a fierce reactionary. Thus, Postiglione wrote that Caminita says: "il Messico è per sua natura comunista. E come è vero il proverbio che dice: 'Gratta il russo e troverai il cosacco,' così dovrebbe esser vero . . . 'gratta il messicano e troverai il comunista'" (Mexico is, by nature, communist. And how true is the proverb that says, "Scratch a Russian and you will find a Cossack," and so it must be true . . . "Scratch a Mexican and you will find a communist," Postiglione 1912, 3). Postiglione was subsequently part of a group of Italians who went to Monterrey, Mexico, to avoid the draft during World War I. Unlike his comrades, he took a long trip from 1917 through 1919 instead of returning to the United States. He went to Nicaragua and to Costa Rica, where he taught Italian and English. He continued his trip and crossed the Andes, finally reaching Buenos Aires. From there, he returned to Italy where he died in Raiano, in the region of Abruzzo, his hometown, soon after founding a workers school (Puglielli 2006).

There were also physical altercations, like when Perrone struck Cravello in Los Angeles (Perrone 1911, 4; "La nostra propaganda" 1911, 1) or when a meeting in Chicago ended in what Postiglione called a "stampede" (Postiglione

1912, 3). The debate degenerated, and by then the insults were innumerable and involved the "veterans" from Baja California like Filippo Perrone or John Longo as well as Caminita and Cravello. At a certain point, no one remained uninvolved: Luigi Galleani, Pedro Esteve, Antonio Cavalazzi—*Cronaca Sovversiva*'s assistant editor (Antonioli 2003, 352–353; Galleani 1915, 8–9; Vecoli n.d. 2777/204)—all were directly or indirectly attacked. Luigi Galleani was called a "thief" and accused of having forgotten what the anarchists of Paterson had done to help him there during the 1902–1903 silk strike. Those of *L'Era Nuova* became "the boors of the fearful and dysenteric ghetto of Paterson"; Cravello and Caminita became "the two scoundrels" or "the two salaried ruffians from Los Angeles"; the anarchists of Paterson were defined as "bastards," "grave diggers," "shit," and "kangaroo" (meaning opportunist). *Regeneración* (Regeneration) became Degeneración (Degeneration) and so on, and Ricardo Flores Magón, too, was attacked by Perrone.

When the controversy exploded, the junta of Los Angeles, along with Caminita, began to publish *Regeneración* in Italian and soon after, in the fall of 1911, it publicized Caminita's propaganda tour across the United States. Caminita's tour began in Los Angeles on December 10, 1911, and passed through Texas, Oklahoma, and Illinois. It was in Chicago on February 4, 1912, that he faced Perrone and Postiglione and then continued east. On February 18, he was in Boomer, West Virginia, where he gave a lecture on Mexico, and from there he moved to Paterson. He would never return to California again.

Caminita's propaganda tour, instead of minimizing the movement's differences, exacerbated them, and it spurred a meeting intended to examine the Mexican Revolution. The October 22, 1911, meeting was organized by the Club Avanti of Brooklyn (Gabaccia 1988, 139–140). Also participating were members of the clubs L'Era Nuova and Pensiero e Azione, the Francisco Ferrer Association, Solidaridad Obrera, the Mexican Revolution Conference, the Spaniards of Cultura Proletaria, and the Brooklyn-based newspaper *Luce*. During the meeting, the position of Galleani and *Cronaca Sovversia* was sharply criticized, and support for the Mexican Revolution and the PLM was restated.

A month had not even passed before the Galleanisti responded to the Brooklyn meeting, calling it "a farce" and proposing another meeting about the Mexican question, held this time in Boston and organized by one of the most intransigent of the Galleanisti groups, that of East Boston. The meeting was held on December 24, 1911, and concluded with a declaration that "in its present state, we in no way feel justified in concluding that in Mexico there is a movement of social or economic character" ("La Questione Messicana al convegno di East Boston" 1912, 2). *L'Era Nuova* called the meeting in East Boston a "bluff" and a defense of Galleani rather than a series of discussions on the events in Mexico ("Il convegno di E. Boston" 1912, 2).

At this point, the fall of Tijuana and the end of the offensive in Baja California became central. Ricardo Flores Magón believed that Tijuana was lost because of betrayals within the revolutionaries' ranks, while others, including *Cronaca Sovversiva*, thought the defeat was caused by the junta of Los Angeles's mismanagement and the conduct of Magón, who had remained in Los Angeles without ever going to Tijuana, and of Caminita, who, according to the "dissidents," had gone to Tijuana only once for two hours by car. Another fundamental issue in the accounts of the "veterans" from Tijuana was the supposed absence of "revolutionary spirit" among the Mexican comrades. This was most apparent in their relationship with the Catholic Church and, more generally, with the issues of atheism and anticlericalism, which were central characteristics of the Italian American movement across factions (Bencivenni 2011, 78–82; Vecoli 1969, 217–268). So Galleani, in an article that appeared in *Cronaca Sovversiva* and after having used the term "insurrection" instead of "revolution," indirectly reported an episode of open anticlericalism carried out by Italians in Tijuana (Galleani 1911, 1):

> [U]n compagno che ha partecipato alle fazioni della Bassa California mi poteva scrivere il mese scorso che a Tijuana gli insorti pur difettando di tutto e non avendo il minimo scrupolo di dare il sacco alla prima casa che incontravano, non soltanto non avevano osato toccar nulla in chiesa, rubar nulla al buon dio, ma per poco non hanno pigliato le armi contro gli italiani che avevano osato profanare la casa del Signore.
>
> [A] comrade who participated in the group from Baja California wrote to me a month ago saying that in Tijuana, the insurgents did not have the least hesitation to plunder the first house that they came upon, but not only did they not dare to touch anything in a church, stealing nothing from the good lord, but they almost raised their arms against the Italians who had dared to profane the house of God.

The theme of anticlericalism reappeared even when attention to the revolution shifted from the Magonistas in Baja California to Emiliano Zapata in the state of Morelos. Immediately after the fall of Tijuana, these Magonistas put forth Zapata in the south of the country as a revolutionary example; but, in this case too, the critics were not slow in making themselves heard. Their opposition to Zapata was motivated both by the Zapatistas' program and because it was outside of their cultural horizon: They could not accept the idea that an anarchist could fight under the banner of the Virgen de Guadalupe! Anticlericalism was part of the PLM's program well before the beginning of the revolution, but many Italian anarchists believed that the junta's anticlericalism was weak and contradictory (Hart 1978, 61).

Soon the division affected Italian newspapers and reached beyond the American papers to the European papers, primarily the Italian and French radical press. Most of these merely reprinted articles and news from Italian American papers, although some directly participated in the debate. Among these, on Galleani's side was *L'Avvenire* of Pisa, while on Caminita's side were *Il Libertario* of La Spezia and Rome's *Alleanza Libertaria*. The debate that developed among the various factions also involved Italians in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, countries that all had large numbers of Italian migrants. Communities throughout the diaspora were in constant communication through their leaders' propaganda tours, the migrants' mobility, and above all, the diffusion and circulation of the Italian-language press. Anarchists in New York read *La Protesta Umana*, while those in Buenos Aires read *L'Era Nuova* or *Cronaca Sovversiva* or other newspapers that were published in the United States. Beyond activities connected to their own territories and states, different groups also shared support for Italian, American, Argentine, and Brazilian as well as Cuban, Spanish, and Mexican campaigns. News arrived in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and São Paulo through *Regeneración* as well as *Regeneración* in Italian. It also arrived through *L'Era Nuova* and *Cronaca Sovversiva*. Italians were very influential in the labor movements of the Southern Cone of Latin America, so we can assume that many Italian subversives were aware of the debate between *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *Regeneración*/*L'Era Nuova* directly from their own pages.

The principal conduit to South America was Dr. Juan Creaghe who, attracted by the news coming from Mexico, left Argentina to move to Los Angeles and join the editorial board of *Regeneración*. He maintained contacts in Buenos Aires ("Lettera aperta ai compagni dell'Argentina, Uruguay e di tutto il mondo" 1912, 2; O'Toole 2005, 29–30). He published an appeal directed toward "the comrades of Argentina and Uruguay" and provided information about the August 1911 demonstration in Buenos Aires. It was held in solidarity with the Mexican revolutionaries, and the speakers, Bianchetti, Marotta, leader of FORA ("Movimiento de solidaridad" 1911, 3; Tarcus 2007, 396–398), and Lotito, were all Italians. News, along with newspapers and letters, passed through interpersonal networks. Thus a letter from Juan Creaghe to Roberto D'Angiò was published in *Il Libertario*. The two had known each other since 1907, when they collaborated on *La Protesta* in Buenos Aires. After returning to Italy, D'Angiò wrote for *Il Libertario* in La Spezia and for *L'Agitatore* in Bologna. A twenty-year friendship also connected D'Angiò to Jean Grave's *Les Temps Nouveax* (Antonioli 2003, 489–490; Magno 1974, 35–37), and the newspaper in La Spezia, through the Creaghe–D'Angiò channel, occupied a special place among the anarchist papers in Italy because it was part of the network of information that linked Mexico, the United States, Argentina, and Italy. In the

Uruguayan capital, the anarchist newspaper *Tiempos Nuevos*, edited by Antonio Marzovillo, was influential (Rama 1957, 161–186). In Brazil, *A Lanterna*, an anticlerical paper founded by Benjamin Motta and edited by Edgard Leuenroth, and *A Guerra Social* of Rio de Janeiro, were closely connected to *Regeneración* (Trento 2001, 102–120; da Silva Sousa 2012; Monteiro Mesquita 2011).

The opinion that "the fracture of the PLM at the beginning of 1911 and the polemic surrounding fundamental questions of revolutionary strategy led Argentine, Brazilian, and Uruguayan anarchists to maintain a cautious reserve regarding their own opinions on Mexico" (Yankelevich 1999, 53–83) seems sound. The connection among these countries occurred through an entirely Italian network inside the Italian-language anarchist diaspora. The "cooling" or "cautious reserve" was the direct consequence of the arguments that played out in the pages of *L'Era Nuova* and *Cronaca Sovversiva*. They were repeated in the Italian language on the banks of the Río de La Plata, a further example of the transnationalism of the Italian-language anarchist diaspora. The Mexican Revolution also engaged progressive groups in Europe and South America because of the debate that developed in the United States. In France, debate was loud and there was, as in Italy, a divide: On one side was *Les Temps Nouveaux*, its position close to that of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, and on the other *Le Libertaire*, close to *Regeneración* and *L'Era Nuova*. It was joined by *Le Réveil* of Geneva, *Le Petit Marseillais* of Marseille, *La Bataille Syndicaliste* of Paris, and *Germinal* of Amiens (Doillon 2013). The letters published in *Les Temps Nouveaux* between September and November 1911 marked the debate's point of no return. It was no longer a conflict between more or less sectarian anarchist papers in the United States or only personal clashes. The debate began with a letter signed by Perrone and by other "veterans" from Kansas who had crossed the ocean and felt the future of the revolution up close. At stake was international solidarity with the PLM and, more generally, with the Mexican Revolution. Ricardo Flores Magón immediately understood what was happening and knew that the problem was not only the dissent of Galleani or other radical Italian groups in the United States. Therefore, after yet another letter critical of the revolution appeared in *Les Temps Nouveaux*, he wrote directly to Jean Grave on the pages of *Regeneración* (Owen, Enrique Flores Magón, and Ricardo Flores Magón 1912, 3).

At almost the same time, a letter in support of the revolution signed by anarchist leader Voltairine de Cleyre was published (de Cleyre 1912, 2; Torres Parés 1990, 158–162):

> Mi si dice che qualcuno dei miei rispettabili compagni italiani ha dichiarato che gli anarchici non possono avere alcuno speciale interesse per questa rivolta, per il fatto che coloro che sono attivi nell'imprimere una direzione

> alla lotta non sono, a parer suo, anarchici . . . Anche se ciò fosse tutto vero, un tale atteggiamento sarebbe ancora assolutamente incomprensibile per me.
>
> I am told that some of my esteemed Italian comrades have claimed that anarchists cannot have any particular interest in this revolt because those who are shaping the struggle are not, it seems to them, anarchists . . . Even if this were all true, such a mentality would still be absolutely incomprehensible to me.

Among the letters critical of the Mexican Revolution that followed, a letter from the old Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin almost settled the question. Beyond its contents, it also provides a good example of how the circulation of the subversive press facilitated transnational discussion. Kropotkin wrote (1912, 1):

> Comme tant d'autres amis italiens, russes, etc., etc., ils ont probablement rêvé des campagnes garibaldiennes, et n'ont trouvé rien de pareil. Des plaines, des campagnes paisibles se méfiant (et pour cause) des étrangers, et—de temps à autre—tantôt ici, tantôt à vingt lieues à l'est ou au sud ou au nord de ce point, à sept, huit jours de distance, un autre village chasse les exploiteurs et s'empare des terres. Puis, vingt, trente jours après, arrive un détachement des soldats "de l'ordre" ; il exécute des révoltés, brûle le village, et, au moment où il sen retourne "victorieux," il tombe dans une embuscade, dont il n'échappe qu'en y laissant la moitié du détachement morts ou blessés. Voilà ce qu'est un mouvement paysan. Et il est évident que si des jeunes gens rêvant une campagne garibaldienne y sont arrivés, pleins d'enthousiasme militaire, ils n'y ont trouvé que découragement. Ils y ont vite aperçu leur inutilité.
>
> Like many other friends, Italians, Russians, etc., they have probably dreamed of Garibaldian campaigns, and they found nothing like that in Mexico. From the plains, peaceful campaigns are suspicious (and for good reason) of foreigners, and—from time to time—now here, now twenty miles to the east, or south, or north, seven or eight days away, another village fights off the exploiters and seizes the land. Then, twenty, thirty days later, a detachment of soldiers "of order" arrives; it executes the rebels, burns the village, and, at the moment in when it leaves "victorious," it falls into an ambush from which it cannot escape and half of the detachment is killed or wounded. That is what a peasant movement is. And it is clear that if some youths who dreamed of a Garibaldian campaign came there, full of military enthusiasm, they only found disappointment. They very quickly realized their uselessness.

The prominent Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta stepped in to end the debate, as reported in *L'Era Nuova* ("Un'altra voce autorevole a proposito della Rivoluzione nel Messico" 1912, 3):

> Da Los Angeles ci mandano, perché ne possiamo prendere visione, la lettera che il Dr. Juan Creaghe ha ricevuto recentemente da Errico Malatesta. In essa, il compagno ed amico nostro esprime il parere che "un movimento popolare di molta importanza ha luogo attualmente nel Messico," e deplora profondamente che "i compagni italiani degli Stati Uniti, che dovrebbero essere stati la fonte principale delle sue informazioni, si siano lasciati trasportare a un tale eccesso di rabbia e di animosità personale da rendere impossibile il farsi un concetto della verità traverso le loro reciproche diffamazioni."
>
> From Los Angeles they send us, so that we can take see it, the letter that Dr. Juan Creaghe recently received from Errico Malatesta. In it, our comrade and friend expresses the opinion that "a popular movement of great importance is taking place in Mexico," and he deeply regrets that "the Italian comrades of the United States, who should have been the main source of his information, are so caught up in their rage and personal animosity that it is impossible to get a sense of the truth through their mutual slander."

By the spring of 1912, almost a year into the campaign in Baja California, the debate had dragged on and the "Mexican question" steadily lost ground to other issues important to the radical press. The movement's attention shifted toward the Italo-Turkish War, the situation of Masetti, the young antimilitarist anarchist (De Marco, 2003), the Lawrence strike, the riots of the Settimana Rossa (Red Week) in June 1914 (Albanese 2008, 629–632), and World War I. The Mexican Revolution changed course and the initial protagonists disappeared: Porfirio Díaz in exile in Paris, Madero dead, and, with the Magón brothers repeatedly in jail, the Magonista movement began to decline. The struggle between General Huerta and Governor Carranza altered the course of the revolution, and its conclusion was farther and farther away. International solidarity with the Mexican revolutionaries briefly reintensified during the United States' invasion of Vera Cruz in April 1914, but as World War I drew nearer, it took attention away from a revolution that had dragged on for three years and seemed to have no end.

In late 1913, *Regeneración* published the final letter of a debate of which most had tired. In it, the father of Italian anarchism, Errico Malatesta, from the pages of *Volontà*, decisively distanced himself from the Mexican Revolution ("A proposito della Rivoluzione Messicana" 1913, 1):

> Possiamo noi garantire ciò che si scrive nella redazione di *Regeneración*? Che la Rivoluzione Sociale nel Messico non può essa forse non essere che il parto di un loro grande desiderio d'essere? Che siano sinceri i compagni di "Regeneración" col pubblicare tutte quelle notizie a riguardo della Rivoluzione Messicana?

> Can we guarantee what is written by *Regeneración*'s editorial staff? That the Social Revolution in Mexico cannot possibly be what they greatly wish it to be? That the comrades of Regeneración are honest when they publish news about the Mexican Revolution?

The article "La Rivoluzione Messicana. Che dobbiamo fare?" (The Mexican Revolution. What should we do?) appeared in *Volontà*, August 30, 1913. The issue was seemingly settled by another unsigned article attributable to Malatesta, which appeared a year later in the same newspaper (Malatesta 1914, 2):

> Noi continuiamo a ricevere lettere, più o meno aspre, da compagni entusiasti dimoranti negli Stati Uniti, nel Brasile, nell'Argentina, nonché in varie parti d'Italia, che ci raccomandano i fasti rivoluzionarii messicani; ma tutti non fanno che copiare *Regeneración*, che noi avevamo già letta. . . . Non è questione di approvare, o no, quei fatti: È questione di sapere se quei fatti avvengono realmente, o sono il parto dell'immaginazione degli scrittori di *Regeneración*.
>
> We continue to receive letters, more or less harsh, from enthusiastic comrades living in the United States, Brazil, Argentina, and various parts of Italy, who tells us about the glories of the Mexican Revolution; but all merely mimic *Regeneración*, which we have already read. . . . It is not a question of approving or disapproving of these events: It is a question of knowing if these events are truly taking place or if they are figments of *Regeneración*'s writers' imaginations.

Finally, we must consider another, not insignificant question: the name of the Mexican Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Mexicano*). The first part of the name, *Partido*, was an affront to anarchists, both Italian and non-Italians, because they rejected the idea of political parties. The second term, *Liberal*, called to mind its bourgeois and conservative associations. Finally, the word *Mexicano* had a clear national connotation and therefore contradicted their internationalist and antinationalist beliefs. It was no accident that, in the enthusiasm of the first days, some Italian newspapers, among them *L'Era Nuova*, substituted the term *liberal* with *libertarian*, but it was not only a linguistic transposition. *Libertarian* had the same meaning in Italian and Spanish: support of absolute individual liberty, superior to all laws and authority, while the term *liberal*, in the Mexican sense, was linked with liberalism and its strong national and economic implications.

It became clear in the ensuing debate, beginning with Luigi Galleani's position, that many Italian anarchists did not share the PLM's political language. The issue was not only linguistic but demonstrated divergent political courses. The Magón brothers adopted the term *liberal* before their encounter with the anarchist world. It was, unlike *libertarian* or *anarchist*, better suited to the Mexican situation at the end of the century. It allowed them to encompass

different sectors of Mexican society that were united in their resentment against Díaz. In turn, the call to liberalism also linked the movement to Mexican liberalism in the Reform War (1856–1861). This political key drew upon a historic interpretation that recalled the work of President Benito Juárez, subsequently interrupted by Porfirio Díaz. The Flores Magón brothers' introduction to the anarchist world can be traced back to their time in St. Louis, where they came into contact with American and European anarchists.

This question also allows for other interpretations. First, the experience of the Mexican Club Liberales and the Junta Organizadora had little in common with the Centri Studi Sociali or various Italian anarchist groups. The newspapers' circulation demonstrates a marked difference between the two political experiences. The Italian anarchist press never reached *Regeneración*'s circulation.

Conclusions

Ugo Fedeli, historian of the Italian anarchist movement, wrote a biography of Luigi Galleani more than forty years after Galleani's death and included a small chapter titled "The Revolution in Mexico." It is worth reproducing at length what Fedeli wrote (1956, 146):

> Quando la rivoluzione prese uno sviluppo profondamente sociale, nel 1910, molti anarchici, sopratutto del Nord America, entusiasmati da alcuni resoconti, accorsero per portare il loro contributo alla lotta. Ma immediatamente, oltre che constatare l'inutilità della loro presenza, si trovarono nella impossibilità di adeguarsi alle condizioni ed alle abitudini dei poveri contadini messicani, cosicchè non pochi ritornarono disillusi, e rientrati negli Stati Uniti iniziarono una critica acerba.
>
> When the revolution took a social turn in 1910, many anarchists, especially from North America, were excited by the reports and came to help in the struggle. But they immediately saw the futility of their presence and found it impossible to adapt to the conditions and attitudes of the poor Mexican peasants. So, many returned to the United States disillusioned, where they began to harshly criticize it.

Luigi Galleani in America and Jean Grave in France voiced their criticisms through their papers, *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *Les Temps Nouveaux*, respectively. The two militant anarchists' views were so close that many articles came out simultaneously in both publications. Galleani and Grave claimed that the Mexican Liberal Party's program had nothing in common with anarchist ideals and that the anarchists who directed the newspaper *Regeneración* (many of

whom were members of the Mexican Liberal Party) wrote superficial articles about the coming revolution in Mexico. The two men went so far as to deny the movement's social foundation. The debate about the Mexican Revolution inevitably intersected with the evolution of the revolutionary process (Zarcone 2006, 257–269). As a result, the break between Ricardo Flores Magón and Francisco Madero marked the point of no return. Madero's rise to power definitively excluded the PLM. The supporters of the revolutionaries in Los Angeles also turned their backs on the PLM. Many sided with Madero, abandoning Flores Magón. For the IWW and the anarchists, the discourse was different, but *Cronaca Sovversiva* and Luigi Galleani broke down the radicals' "home front," contributing to the Italian anarchists "cooling" toward the Mexican liberals. It was not by chance that Ricardo Flores Magón spoke of "Los Perrone, y los Galleani, y otros miserables" (Nettlau 2008, 49).

Galleani's position, which the Cuban anarchist Tarrida del Mármol called "unfair" and "extreme," was unrestrained and had significant consequences in the short and long term. It was a contributing factor to the decline in solidarity with the Mexican Revolution. On this issue, unlike Fedeli, Max Nettlau poses a question (2008, 52):

> ¿Por qué Galleani y Cavalazzi trataban con tanta antipatía este movimento, cuyo portavoz seguía, realmente, con la mayor atención las ideas anarquistas, aun cuando en su lucha no estaba en condiciones de dedicarse a la propaganda teórica? El trasfondo de este asunto me es desconocido.
>
> Why did Galleani and Cavalazzi have such animosity toward the movement, whose spokesperson adhered to anarchist ideals with great attention, even when his struggle was not in a position to devote itself to theoretical propaganda? The reasons for this are unknown to me.

We can respond to this question with several reasons. The first is surely a series of "misunderstandings" and "mistakes" that, in the view of a portion of the Italian language radical press in the United States, were committed by many members of the junta. The fact that Ricardo Flores Magón, for example, remained in Los Angeles and never went to Tijuana had a great impact on radical opinion in the United States, as did the fact that the junta's headquarters was not in Mexican territory. The difficulty of managing the relationship between foreign and Mexican volunteers was a problem for the liberal forces and the ranks of Madero's colorful army. Flores Magón likely underestimated this type of problem on his own battlefield. It was one thing to direct *Regeneración* with Owen and Caminita and maintain relationships with radicals in the United States. It was another to oversee an army at war. In this context, the question of *filibusterismo* played a very important role in the debate about

the Mexican Revolution (Griswold del Castillo 1980; Samaniego 2007; Taylor 2011). Italians likely raised the issue first: In Tijuana they were all true revolutionaries, in their own view, and they ended up being only a minority. Perrone writes, "Those revolutionaries were only bandits who fought to loot. When we went, we found that a Mexican had killed two others. It was worse among these bandits than among Mafiosi" ("Il contraddittorio di Chicago" 1912, 1).

In addition to issues about the perception of mismanagement and mistakes was the great weight of ideological questions. The radical Italian world in the United States was never united, and divisions among groups, newspapers, and even individuals were the order of the day. There were numerous sources of discord and questions: organization vs. individualism, direct action, and the use of violence but also other types of questions, like birth control, free love, the movement's educational work (particularly against tobacco, alcohol, and prostitution). The radical world was never united because alliances and divisions often had an extremely fluid character, changing with the political and social landscape. In the case of the Mexican Revolution, the only issue on which the entire Italian American radical front could agree was in their aversion to Peppino Garibaldi and his presence in Mexico at Madero's side. Regarding the remaining issues, it was a continual fragmentation, and divisions within divisions, if not true political schizophrenia. Kropotkin's response can be interpreted ambivalently. The old Russian anarchist spoke of the Mexican Revolution as a peasant revolution, emphasizing the relationship between farmers and revolution (Hart 1978, 4). But was not the "guerra per bande" (guerrilla), to use Malatesta's phrase, the ideal situation for revolt? Was this not, despite the subsequent negative results, the aim the expedition of Carlo Pisacane, a leading figure of the Risorgimento and the theoretician of the "people's war" (Pinto and Rossi 2010)? With regard to the legacy of the Risorgimento, Erika Diemoz writes (2011, 70):

> Capace di veicolare stereotipi da lungo tempo sedimentati nell'immaginario collettivo degli italiani, il mito risorgimentale rimase, nell'Italia "fin de siècle," un referente imprescindibile anche per coloro che aspiravano a costruire un discorso politico antagonistico rispetto a quello dominante.
>
> Capable of conveying images long ingrained in Italians' collective imagination, the myth of the Risorgimento was, in fin-de-siècle Italy, an essential reference point for those who sought to create a political discourse antagonistic to the dominant one.

This is one of the characteristics of the debate among Italians (in Italy and abroad), namely the constant references to the Risorgimento, in particular to Pisacane and Giuseppe Garibaldi, which led them to clash so bitterly

over the Mexican Revolution. The Italians experienced the Fasci Siciliani in 1893–1894, the revolt in Lunigiana the following year, and the insurrections in the spring of 1898, during the Fatti di Maggio, against the high cost of living in Milan. At this time, extraordinary laws instituted by Crispi limited rights and worsened repression, starting with the *domicilio coatto* (the forced confinement in penal islands) (Diemoz 2011, 142–146; Masini 1981, 55–68), and caused a great political diaspora that joined and blended into the economic diaspora that had been under way for years. Diaspora and political exile proved to be closely linked and often inseparable, so much so that when the Italian anarchist Sante Caserio killed the president of the French Republic in 1894, there were those who thought that "that blow was necessary to get even for the massacre of Italian workers by French workers in Aigues-Mortes the previous year" (Ansaldo 2010, 27–28; Noiriel 2010; Association française pour l'histoire de la justice 1995).

The Italians who came to America did so without being aware of the existence of a color line (Gugliemo 2004; Molina 2014; Topp 2001; Vellon 2014). The Mexican revolutionaries in the United States fought for Mexicans' rights but within a different cultural context. Mexican nationalism at the end of the century was profoundly different from Italian nationalism. Italians did not have a racial understanding of their identity, despite the notable influence of Darwinism, positivism, and nascent modern criminology then much in vogue. The discourse on Mexican nationalism was different and based on a racial mythology (Lomnitz 2010, 17–36; Weber 2012, 208–235). It was already a racialized nationalism at its core. Outside Mexico, namely in the southwestern United States, this nationalism, according to Mexican revolutionaries, was radicalized and confronted daily by intense forms of racism. All this played a decisive role in the relations between Italian and Mexican radical communities. The first months of World War I had an explosive effect on Italian American radicals' world and culture. From this point of view, World War I was a watershed, a point of no return, despite the fact that the process that led to this point had been in motion for some time. In Europe, there had already been signs like the Balkan Wars, but in America, and this is my thesis, proletarian internationalism revealed its limits beginning with the Mexican experience. This process began with the Mexican Revolution, continued with the free speech movement, the period of great strikes and mass demonstrations, the war for work in Colorado, and the heightening of social tensions (Sensi-Isolani 2003, 189–203; Shanks 1973, 25–33; Zimmer 2015, 97–99). Then, with the U.S. entrance into the war, the picture completely changed in a brief period of time: From 1917 to 1927 the Italian American radical movement in the United States concluded its process of transformation. The war, the Red Scare, and the Sacco and Vanzetti case put an end to the radical experience in North America,

at least in the form it had taken up until that point (Vecoli, n.d. 2777/200). Some of the Italians present in Mexico or involved in the ensuing debate already had the experience of union struggles or other experiences. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Mexican experience acted as a catalyst and contributed to the radicalization of existing political stances, considering that four protagonists of the Mexican incident were deported from the United States during the Red Scare (five, if Caminita, whose expulsion order was overturned, is included). We see, therefore, a process of the radicalization of the political language and of divisions among groups and newspapers that found an outlet in the undeclared war between subversive segments of the radical Italian American world and the United States government between 1917 and 1920.

There is a final consideration: Italians who lived in the United States and Canada went to Mexico to create a revolution, but they were really thinking of Italy, even if in so doing they were building the foundations of a political project connected more to the future (to the new world) than to the past (old world). The Mexican experience was, from this point of view, more a rearticulation of the country's own political culture than an end in and of itself. This is, in fact, what Adolfo Antonelli wrote: "Scopo secondo della spedizione (in Messico) era l'addestramento alla guerriglia e la possibilità per i superstiti di essere dei buoni capi militari, se il movimento d'Italia venisse a maturare" (The second aim of the expedition [in Mexico] was training in guerrilla warfare and the potential for the survivors to be good military leaders, if the movement in Italy should mature, "Di ritorno" 1911, 2). The movement in Italy never "matured," not even six years later when another group of anarchists sought refuge in Monterrey, Mexico, to avoid the draft. They too were Italians from the United States who thought about Italy. Avrich writes (1991, 60):

> Ardent rebels, they yearned to go back to their homeland and take part in the coming upheaval. Revolution, they felt, was in the offing. Any day, any week, it would spread across the continent, ushering in a new era of freedom in which government, classes, and exploitation would cease to exist. They were concerned, however, lest the United States, having joined the war as Italy's ally, might block their efforts to return. Hence their urgent desire to depart for Mexico, from which, when the moment arrived, they could embark for Europe.

The revolution, which initially seemed just around the corner, moved ever further off into the distance. In this process of "advancing" and "retreating," the Italian-language radical press played a central role not only in the United States but also in Europe and Latin America, demonstrating yet again the transnational nature of the many Italian proletarian diasporas (Gabaccia 2003, 106–128).

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Notes

1. This article was translated from the original Italian by Elizabeth O. Venditto. Quotations in French and Spanish were translated into Italian by the author.
2. Jacinto Barrera Bassols is a Mexican historian whose work is essential to the study of the PLM. In addition to his countless publications on the subject, Barrera Bassols is also the curator of the Archivo Digital Flores Magón (http:www.archivomagon.net), which contains the letters and articles from *Regeneración* in Spanish, English, and Italian, cited here.
3. Italian miners were also present in Cananea, Sonora, on the south side of the border (Sariego 1988, 114).
4. Alessandria della Rocca, Filippo Perrone's hometown, was less than ten miles from Santo Stefano Quisquina.
5. Antonio Rodia was the brother of Sabato "Sam" Rodia, the creator of the Watts Towers in Los Angeles (Del Giudice 2014, 155–165).
6. The brothers John J. and James B. McNamara, members of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, were responsible for the attack.
7. Between 1912 and 1914, nine drawings signed by Caminita were published. Another Italian American cartoonist who was involved with the Mexican Revolution, so much so that he was imprisoned, was Carlo de Fornaro (Saborit 2010).

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