

was demonstrated by the approval of the first important Italian emigration law in 1901. But the impact of nationalism on Italian migratory policy, combined with Mussolini's politics toward Italian communities abroad, had consequences still evident today, that is, the abandonment of Italians abroad. It is only fairly recently that Italy has begun to embrace its history of emigration. The Vittoriano monument, built in 1911, which Choate references in his conclusion as the symbol of the ties between Italy and its emigrants, is now hosting a National Museum of Italian Emigration. One of its main purposes is to include immigrants within the Italian national identity.

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Il fascismo e gli italiani all'estero.

By Matteo Pretelli.

Bologna: CLUEB, 2010.

160 pages.

Matteo Pretelli, a research affiliate at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia, has positioned his study, *Il fascismo e gli italiani all'estero* (Fascism and Italians abroad), under the rubric of migration studies, with emphasis on transnationalism. His objective is to reconstruct the links between Italians abroad and Italian Fascism through consideration of fascist ideology and the political impact of the latter upon immigrants. He is also interested in how immigrants responded to Mussolini's propaganda efforts. Pretelli notes that in the period between the world wars, Italians abroad maintained closer ties with their country of origin than in preceding decades, a tendency he attributes to Mussolini's charisma and the efforts Il Duce expended to garner their support for his regime. He also observes that the political strategies employed by Mussolini's government in regard to Italy's citizens abroad were not dissimilar to the practices previously utilized by the Italian liberal state or by governments today for the purpose of maintaining interaction with the mother country and cultivating national identity. These strategies, which changed according to circumstances, were specifically designed to benefit Italy politically and economically, while ostensibly benefiting Italians abroad as well—at least according to fascist propaganda.

In his brief but informative survey of the literature, Pretelli notes that until the 1970s and 1980s, with the superb work of historians such as Emilio Gentile, there was still a fairly pervasive attitude among Italians and their progeny abroad that amounted to nostalgia for Mussolini and the persistent myth of *Italiani brava gente*, which translates into the belief that the nature of the fascist regime was relatively benign, a viewpoint approaching apologia. He describes the survival of these attitudes among Italian Canadians—especially soccer fans—in present-day Montreal. Had Pretelli been writing in the summer of 2011, he doubtless would have recognized the same symptoms among the Italian Americans who rallied to the defense of Italo Balbo when a campaign arose in Chicago to rename the street bearing the Fascist's name, his famous aviation exploits somehow having superseded his murderous conduct as a leading *squadrista* (a member of an armed squad of Blackshirts) in the Emilia-Romagna region and his role as *quadrumvir* leading the march on Rome in 1922.

Pretelli organizes his book into six chapters, each treating a specific dimension of the regime's policies toward Italians abroad: fascist agencies designed to pursue Mussolini's agenda; fascist ideology; fascist myths and popular consensus; Italians abroad and indigenous fascist groups; commerce, culture, and propaganda; and Italian youth in foreign countries and fascist methods of winning their allegiance. Pretelli describes the earliest institutions the fascist regime relied upon to gain ascendancy over Italian communities abroad, notably the *fasci* (local branches of the Fascist Party) and related organizations under the direction of the Segreteria Generale dei Fasci all'Estero (General Secretariat for *Fasci* Abroad) led by the fanatical *squadrista* Giuseppe Bastianini. By the end of the 1920s, he notes, the *fasci all'estero* had failed to achieve their mission almost everywhere. Their irrepressible tendency to employ the tactics of *squadristismo* brought them into conflict with local authorities, especially in Belgium, France, and the United States. Pretelli describes the transition that followed. Dino Grandi, the assistant secretary of Foreign Affairs, fearful of antagonizing host countries, ordered a change in policy with Mussolini's approval in 1925 whereby control of the *fasci* and other overtly fascist organizations was increasingly transferred to the Foreign Ministry and its diplomatic corps, particularly local consuls. As Pretelli subsequently relates, Mussolini's regime and its extensions abroad began to utilize far more subtle and less disruptive means to pursue their ends: Italian schools, language courses, social clubs, the Italian language press, Catholic churches, movies, radio programs, cultural societies such as the Dante Alighieri Society, and the institutional infrastructure of the immigrant communities, i.e., organizations such as the Italian Chamber of Commerce. These institutions were essentially transmission belts for propaganda designed to serve the interests of Mussolini's regime. These interests, Pretelli explains, were the perpetuation and strengthening of *italianità* and allegiance to Italy, indoctrination of fascist ideology, promotion of good relations with host countries that would benefit Italy politically and economically, increase in commerce between immigrant communities and the *patria*, and the recruitment of eligible men in time of war.

Pretelli shows that Mussolini (rather than Fascism per se) acquired a substantial degree of support among Italians abroad by the 1930s, although less so in countries such as Belgium and France, where antifascist movements were strong. The height of immigrant support for Mussolini and his "civilizing mission"—especially in the United

States—was reached during Italy's imperialist war of conquest against Ethiopia in 1935–1936. But most of that support evaporated when Italy waged war against the United States and Great Britain, Canada, and the rest of the Dominions in 1940–1943, a development that proved Italian immigrants and their progeny understood on which side their bread was buttered, notwithstanding twenty years of fascist propaganda and influence in their communities. Pretelli concludes that fascist policies toward Italians abroad had failed.

Although Pretelli has utilized documents from various collections at the Archivio del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Central Archives of the State), and the National Archives of the United States, the preponderance of Pretelli's source material is secondary. More extensive utilization of archival documents would have significantly enhanced the importance of this study, but Pretelli's mastery of the scholarly literature as it pertains to nearly a dozen countries and their Italian communities is quite impressive. Knowledge derived from these sources could have enabled Pretelli to provide a more thorough account of fascist institutions abroad and how they differed from each other, but his treatment in this regard is exceedingly thin. Pretelli also chose to exclude anti-Fascism from his study, an ill-conceived decision considering that so much of fascist strategy and effort abroad was aimed at the suppression of the *soversivi* (left-wing radicals).

Pretelli's writing style is eminently accessible, but the net result is a dissatisfying read because his narrative consists of fact after fact after fact, with little analysis or original insight. A more ambitious undertaking (particularly more archival research on the 1930s) would have produced a superior book. With its present scope and treatment, Pretelli's slender volume qualifies primarily as an introductory account useful to scholars and students who possess little familiarity with Italian Fascism and the myriad means by which Mussolini's regime sought hegemony over the *patria lontana*.

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For Both Cross and Flag: Catholic Action, Anti-Catholicism, and National Security Politics in World War II San Francisco

By William Issel.

Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2010.

216 pages.

William Issel is Professor Emeritus of History at San Francisco State University and a long-time resident of San Francisco. In his previous works, Issel has focused on politics and power in the U.S. post-World War II period. In his Introduction, however, he tells us that this book is mainly about "the ordeal of Sylvester Andriano" (2), whose story Issel came across while researching "the competition between the Communist Party