For Both Cross and Flag

Catholic Action, Anti-Catholicism, and National Security Politics in World War II San Francisco

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Introduction

Massachusetts Congressman Thomas P. O'Neill once famously remarked that in the United States, "all politics are local." O'Neill made a good point, but it was only half true, because local politics in the United States, especially during wartime, have also been shaped by the political and religious loyalties that immigrants bring with them. Government officials who fail to take account of such loyalties and rivalries may find themselves duped into becoming partisans on one or another side of local political battles when they make decisions about who is and who is not a security risk during wartime. Their commendable zeal to protect the nation from harm can lead them to violate the constitutional rights of citizens while doing nothing to protect domestic security. That is exactly what happened in the case of Sylvester Andriano, an Italian-born San Francisco attorney and local government official who was forcibly removed from the West Coast in 1942 on the basis of politically inspired false charges that he was a Fascist agent. The Andriano case provides a cautionary tale about the sometimes deleterious impact on our national life of religious and ideological zealotry in our communities, no-holds-barred political competition in

our big cities, and fallible power-seeking public officials in our national security agencies during wartime.

This book is about the ordeal of Sylvester Andriano, but it is first and foremost a book that means to restore our appreciation of the impact of European political and religious rivalries in the political cultures of American cities in the first half of the twentieth century. The setting is San Francisco, California, the second-largest city west of the Mississippi River at the time. During the World War II years most of the city's residents were Irish, German, or Italian immigrants, their children, and their grandchildren. These men, women, and children made up nearly two-thirds of the city's population at a time when 94 percent of San Franciscans were persons of European descent. The devout Catholics among them asserted their faith-based convictions in public debates about a range of issues, as did a variety of zealous anti-Catholic residents, including Communist Party members. And San Franciscans kept informed about and were deeply concerned with, disturbed by, and divided over the political crises that roiled European affairs, from Mussolini's March on Rome in October 1922 to Hitler's Blitzkrieg against Poland in September 1939. When the United States entered World War II, anti-Catholic activists seized on the fact that Italy was now allied with Germany and Japan against America to convince domestic security officials that Sylvester Andriano was a Fascist agent.

Anti-Catholic zealots targeted Andriano because he served as president of the Catholic Men of San Francisco, a Catholic Action program established by Archbishop John J. Mitty in 1938. After Mussolini and Hitler signed their Pact of Steel agreement on May 22, 1939, and especially after Italy declared war against the United States on December 10, 1941, Andriano's anti-Catholic Masonic, Socialist, and Communist enemies seized the opportunity to remove the Catholic attorney from political influence by accusing him of being a Fascist agent. Federal and state loyalty investigating committees, the FBI, and the U.S. Army accepted the truth of the bogus charges and issued Andriano an "individual exclusion order," forcing him to be relocated away from coastal states on the grounds that he was a security risk.

In order to better understand the story of Andriano's ordeal, I begin by detailing the transnational political rivalries that divided many American cities between the First and Second World Wars: rivalries between devout Catholics and committed anti-Catholics in Italian communities and between Catholic anti-Communists and their Communist Party competitors. Then I zero in on the operations of the California and federal legislative loyalty investigating committees in 1941 and 1942 and on the consequences of J. Edgar Hoover's expansion of the FBI's domestic security responsibilities at the beginning of the war.

During the 1930s Sylvester Andriano emerged as the leading figure in a faith-based cultural and political reform movement known as Catholic Action. Along with other militant lay men and women, Andriano joined his local archbishop in using church resources to battle communists, socialists, freethinkers, and anarchists, as well as reformers who advocated birth control, divorce, eugenics, and the undoing of traditional gender role definitions. He also participated in the cultural and business outreach programs of the Fascist government of Italy. To Andriano, this seemed legitimate; after all, Italy and the United States maintained friendly relations, and ethnic pride could arguably coexist with loyalty to America. Once war broke out, however, Italian American Catholics such as Andriano, who regarded themselves as nonpolitical, became vulnerable to charges that their attempts to foster ethnic pride in their Italian heritage constituted collaboration with the enemy.

On August 19, 1940, six days after the Luftwaffe unleashed its deadliest attack in the Battle of Britain, a witness testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) that Andriano was "indubitably the fountain head of all Fascist activities on the Pacific coast." In May 1942 the California legislature's Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities (known as the Tenney Committee for its chair, Jack Tenney) announced that Andriano and two other San Franciscans, journalist Ettore Patrizi and attorney Renzo Turco, were the ringleaders of California Fascism. Andriano denied all the charges under oath in 1942, but the Tenney Committee nonetheless declared him a security risk, and in September

the U.S. Army served him with an order that excluded him from the Western Defense Region.

Andriano's public career included both city politics and Catholic Church activities, and by the early 1920s he counted himself among the *prominenti,* the North Beach Italian American district's leading business and professional figures. In the late 1920s Andriano and his friend and law client Angelo Rossi had both gained citywide influence by serving on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Rossi became mayor in 1931, sent Andriano to Europe as the city's delegate to an international conference, and appointed him to the police commission. Andriano also served on a local draft board. A close associate of Archbishop Edward J. Hanna in the latter's efforts to promote greater religious activity among San Francisco Italian Catholics during the 1920s, Andriano developed even stronger ties with Hanna's successor, coadjutor Archbishop John J. Mitty, who officially replaced Hanna in 1935. Mitty delegated Andriano to organize a new Catholic Action program called the Catholic Men of San Francisco. With the mayor's support and assistance, Andriano and Archbishop Mitty commenced a citywide campaign to shape municipal reform and labor relations according to a program based on Catholic moral principles.

Andriano's assumption of leadership in San Francisco Catholic Action triggered a campaign *against* Catholic activism from three different local sources linked to transnational political competition. One assault came from the leaders of the city's Italian Masonic organization, who regarded Andriano as an embodiment of the monstrous political offspring produced by the Vatican's illicit embrace of Fascist evil. A second set of attacks came from the anticlerical critics of Pope Pius XI among the anti-Fascist political exiles from Italy (*fuorusciti*), who regarded devout local Catholics as morally equivalent to the bureaucrats running Benito Mussolini's allegedly criminal regime. A third offensive against Andriano, Rossi, and Catholic Action derived from the local Communist Party (CP). Local party leaders followed up their success in shaping the strategy and tactics of the 1934 waterfront and general strikes with a vigorous program of labor organizing and electoral politics. Like its counterparts in

leading cities in the United States and Europe, the San Francisco CP followed the program of the Communist Third International organization (Comintern) and denounced Catholic cultural authority and political influence in its San Francisco publications and public meetings.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and three days later Italy declared war on the United States. Self-appointed superpatriots and public officials joined forces in the weeks to come and set out to identify dangerous and disloyal Italian-born residents. Andriano's and Rossi's various critics seized the opportunity provided by the national emergency to discredit the leadership of Catholic Action and weaken Catholic political power in the city. International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) president Harry Bridges (a secret member of the Communist Party who went by the name "Rossi" in clandestine communications with the Comintern) and several other critics of Catholic activism volunteered to testify before state and federal un-American investigating committees that the mayor and his former police commissioner were Fascist agents "potentially dangerous" to the United States.

Previous historians, beginning with John P. Diggins in 1972, have illuminated the complex divisions within California's Italian American communities during the period. They have established that the investigation and exclusion of Andriano, Patrizi, and Turco were the products of accusations by anti-Catholic critics within the Italian American community who harbored political grievances, as well as of post–Pearl Harbor security considerations and anti-Italian ethnic prejudice on the part of public opinion shapers and government officials outside the community.

This book demonstrates that Andriano's exclusion also derived from his militant Catholic activism and the reaction it engendered both inside and outside the Italian American community. Local Bay Area political and religious rivalries between Catholics and anti-Catholics in the Italian American community and between Catholic anti-Communists and their Communist Party adversaries played a major role in Andriano's designation as an "un-American" citizen who was "potentially dangerous" to the security of the nation.

Andriano's ordeal was also the product of a separate set of dynamics related to J. Edgar Hoover's expansion of the FBI's counterintelligence responsibilities from 1936 through the years of World War II and beyond. Hoover's zeal in seeking to increase his bureau's power and public prominence by expanding its role in counterintelligence has been documented by several historians, but the Andriano case and its demonstration of the influence of anti-Catholicism and local politics on national security investigations have been lost to history.

I became interested in Sylvester Andriano while engaged in a project documenting the competition between the Communist Party and the Catholic Church in San Francisco during the 1930s and 1940s. As I read through one after another collection of archival records, including correspondence between Andriano and a Catholic Action colleague, Communist Party records, the National Archives, Andriano's FBI file, army and navy documents, and letters and reports in the Chancery Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco, I learned about Andriano's ordeal and discovered that he was innocent of the charges and had suffered a terrible injustice at the hands of government authorities. But I did not write this book merely to correct the record and defend Sylvester Andriano's good name.

My major purpose is to demonstrate how international and national events impinged on the political culture of a major American city from World War I to World War II, eventually influencing domestic security politics after Pearl Harbor. Throughout the book I draw extensively on the historical record to present the actual voices of the participants in the events. I begin with a brief account of Andriano's background and career and then provide a detailed narrative of his role in Catholic Action and San Francisco politics, including local consequences of the victory of Fascism in Italy, the Lateran Accords between the Italian state and the Vatican, the labor conflicts of the Great Depression, the Communist Party's role in local politics, and the outbreak of World War II in Europe and the Pacific. The final chapters describe the security investigations of Andriano and discuss the implications of his case for our understanding of the impact of loyalty investigations on civil liberties in time of war.

I

Sylvester Andriano, a Catholic Attorney in San Francisco

The comforts offered by American free-life appeal to them and almost before they know it, they have learned to love America. When this stage is reached none are more eager than Italians to become full-fledged American citizens.
—Sylvester Andriano, "Italian Immigrants in America," 1909

'Little Italy' is no longer so little, for the Italians, 60,000 strong, are San Francisco's largest and most powerful national minority.
—*San Francisco: A Guide to the Bay and Its Cities,* 1940

Sylvester Andriano began his lifelong practice of combining the promotion of Catholicism with the preservation of Italian culture during his student days at St. Mary's College of California. Then located in Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco, the men's college attracted the aspiring sons of Catholic families to study under a faculty drawn from the Christian Brothers religious order. Andriano graduated from St. Mary's in 1911, ten years after he arrived in San Francisco from his birthplace in Castelnuovo d'Asti, ten miles southwest of Turin in the Piedmont region of Italy.[1]

Sylvester's older brothers Giuseppe and James were the first to leave the family orchards in Castelnuovo d'Asti for opportunities in San Francisco, arriving in 1895 and 1898, respectively. Giuseppe bought a restaurant and married a fellow immigrant named Eugenia, who, assisted by a servant, ran a household that included several lodgers and members of the extended family. Sylvester lived with Giuseppe, Eugenia, and their daughter Edna, working in the restaurant after school, until he graduated from St. Mary's. Another older brother, Angelo, a Roman Catholic priest ordained in Turin,

arrived in 1905 and became the pastor of a series of Bay Area churches. Angelo was one of two siblings who became priests, but the other, Pasquale, died shortly after being ordained into the Salesian religious order and never came to the United States.[2]

Five years after Sylvester arrived in the city, the great San Francisco earthquake and fire destroyed two-thirds of the city, but he and his family survived the catastrophe unhurt and undeterred in their goal of establishing an Andriano family branch in California. Like other up-and-coming Piedmontese immigrants to San Francisco, Giuseppe moved out of the North Beach Italian colony, bought a large new residence on Polk Street, and filled it with his family members and seven lodgers. Their sister Serafina joined them in 1908 and lived in Giuseppe and Eugenia's household until she married a waiter in the restaurant and moved a few blocks away to start her own family. James married and bought a house in the city's Eureka Valley district (today's Castro neighborhood), working as a gardener in Golden Gate Park. Their brother Angelo returned to Italy in 1929, with the expectation (false, as it turned out) that the Lateran Accords between the Vatican and the Fascist regime would restore the Catholic Church's power and prestige in Italy. None of the other siblings returned to Italy except on visits, and all became naturalized citizens even while marrying fellow Italians or California-born children of Italians. During the Prohibition years, Giuseppe and Eugenia, now parents of three children, traded the restaurant business and city life for a fruit orchard and the rural Valley of Heart's Delight—today's Silicon Valley in Santa Clara County. Country life also appealed to Sylvester, who once he had established himself in San Francisco purchased a ranch in nearby Los Altos, to which he retired on weekends and vacations as a respite from his professional responsibilities in the city.[3]

While all the Andriano siblings made a successful transition from Italy to America, Sylvester stood out as the scholar, becoming the only college graduate in the family and later an influential lay activist in Catholic Church affairs, both Italian and citywide. He excelled in his studies at St. Mary's (and played varsity basketball), won the Cottle Medal for Oratory in his junior year, and graduated maxima

cum laude, having won medals for excellence in both modern languages and Christian doctrine. Andriano also served three years on the editorial board of the *Collegian,* a monthly literary review, and his articles exuded love for his native country and earnest Catholic piety in equal measure.[4]

In "An Italian Hill Town" the nineteen-year-old imagined himself back in his birthplace.

> After a two blocks' walk we reach the Via Maestra (Main Street) with its large and well kept plaza. In the middle is the monument of Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesian order, and a native of this town. At the end of this street there is a beautiful avenue lined with horse-chestnuts, where the people come to promenade of evenings. We proceed up Main Street until we reach the church. It is old and magnificent and surpasses in grandeur and dignity any church in the United States. It has a very high campanile with four huge bells which can be heard for several miles around. It is now six o'clock. The Angelus is ringing. Far over the distant hills the sun has disappeared from view, but its refulgent rays still linger. But even they finally disappear and leave the azure sky tinted with a beautiful crimson hue, and "the splendor falls on castle walls / and snowy summits old in story."[5]

The three places that received special attention in the article were all religious sites: the monument to Don Bosco, another native of the town and founder of the Salesian (Society of St. Francis de Sales) order of Catholic priests; the church; and the Salesian College. (Today Don Bosco is a Catholic saint and the town is named Castelnuovo Don Bosco.)

Andriano's subsequent contributions to the *Collegian* continued to highlight Catholic piety and Italian culture, including an article on the life of Saint (then Venerable) Giovanni (Don) Bosco. In "The Apostle of the Little Ones" Andriano explained how Don Bosco chose his life's work after seeing "how many ragged and uncared-for boys roamed languidly" through the streets of the city of Turin.

> It was here that he recognized his life work; he felt as if a voice from heaven had called unto him, "You are a shepherd; these are your flocks. Feed my lambs." The good work of Don Bosco soon spread all over the city and boys flocked to him. He built technical schools and workshops and aided his boys in choosing suitable professions. Other priests, realizing the great spiritual benefit to be derived from such work, soon joined him, and little by little the order spread, first into other Italian cities, and then into the whole world.[6]

Andriano's Catholic piety and his faith in the power of prayer were evident in his 1911 autobiographical essay about the seemingly miraculous powers of "That Old Statue"—a statue of the Madonna and Child ("La Madonna") on the road between Castelnuovo and nearby Valmartina. In his article Andriano recounted how "that same statue or she whom the statue represented—which I leave to you to decide—actually saved my life and that of three other little children" when they were walking home from school after a torrential rainstorm.

> Presently we noticed that the creek which ran parallel to the road was constantly swelling and that at some places it even threatened to overflow. Suddenly we were startled by a rumbling noise from behind. We looked back, and as we did so, one of my companions shrieked: "The flood, the flood!" I gasped in a subdued voice, "La Madonna!" re-echoed my companions simultaneously; and we started to run toward it. We felt that once at the feet of Mary we should be safe. Higher and higher the waters rose, first to our knees then to our waists; once or twice we were all but overpowered and almost despaired, but that same secret force kept us standing. With arms outstretched we made one ultimate, desperate effort which brought us to the pedestal. Saved! After muttering a few "Ave Marias," the most fervent that I have ever uttered, we turned to contemplate the awful sight about us. For one endless hour the flood continued its

> work of devastation, after which the waters having abated, we said one last "Ave Maria" to our kind protectress, and went home, none the worse for wear, but with a wonderful experience to narrate.[7]

In "The Italian Dialects," written in his junior year, the young student of languages—who became proficient in English, Italian, Spanish, and French—argued that the dialects were "very rough and crude" except for Tuscan: "The national language of Italy is nothing but the Tuscan dialect."

> A great many Americans are at a loss to account for the saying that the Italian language is so sweet and musical when to them the speech of Italians sounds anything but sweet and musical. This is because they seldom hear the real Italian spoken. On the other hand, their ears are quite familiar with the harsh monotone of the language of the bootblack, the street laborer and the garbage man. But the truth is that none of these speaks the real Italian, but some dialect of which does indeed sound very outlandish.[8]

Andriano pointed out that "the Italian which is ridiculed or tried to be imitated on the American stage is that of the Neapolitans and southern Italy," which he considered "abominable and sounds very repulsive."

In an article titled "Italian Immigrants in America" Andriano deplored critics who regarded Italians as "inferior to the rest of European immigrants," and took issue with those who claimed that Italians lacked "the Americanizing spirit." In reality "the comforts offered by American free-life appeal to them and almost before they know it, they have learned to love America. When this stage is reached none are more eager than Italians to become full-fledged American citizens." At the same time, he continued (in a passage that foreshadowed his later work to promote Italian cultural preservation among San Francisco Italian Americans), "it is true that they always retain the highest respect for their fatherland, but nobody can

call that a bad trait; on the contrary, it would be a sign of weakness if they didn't. It is not an unusual thing to enter an Italian cottage and see hanging, side by side over the fire-place, the portraits of King Victor and President Lincoln." In reply to critics who argued that Italians lacked an essential cultural quality necessary for loyalty to the United States, Andriano pointed to the response of Italian residents to the 1906 conflagration in San Francisco.

> If they do not Americanize, why did they not after the fire leave San Francisco to its fate and go somewhere else? But they didn't. On the contrary, they stuck to her as steadfastly and even more so than any other class of people. With her they fell; with her they rose again. And who among you who has witnessed the phenomenal and phoenix-like rise of our beloved metropolis will deny that the Italians were among the very first to recuperate from the disaster? The smoke of the conflagration had scarcely cleared away, when a new and jubilant "Little Italy" was already flourishing under the shadows of Rincon and historical Telegraph Hill,—I dare say, far ahead of any other section in the burnt district. Extend that brotherly hand which is so characteristic of Americans, and you will find before you know it that you shall have acquired a worthy and grateful compatriot as fully American as the most patriotic of our great republic.[9]

In his junior year at St. Mary's the twenty-year-old Andriano became a member of the Salesian Council of the Catholic Young Men's Institute, the first of numerous local Catholic Italian American organizations he joined during a professional career that spanned nearly five decades. The council admitted only native Italians or Italian Americans, and it operated in connection with Saints Peter and Paul Church, one of the three parish churches delegated by the San Francisco Archdiocese to the Salesian priests for the pastoral care of the Italian community. Andriano returned to Italy after graduation and then traveled in Europe while improving his French and Spanish language skills, and when he returned he enrolled in the University

of California's Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. He became a naturalized citizen while a student at Hastings and graduated with his law degree in 1915, the same year he served as president of the Salesian Council. By the time Andriano passed the bar exam, he was already well known in citywide Catholic circles, and the official archdiocesan newspaper, the *Monitor,* predicted "a very successful career" for the "brilliant young graduate" of St. Mary's, a "gifted young man of exceptionally fine character and ability."[10]

In the autumn of 1915 Andriano opened a law practice with another Hastings graduate, James A. Bacigalupi. Bacigalupi graduated from the Jesuit Santa Clara College in 1901 before attending Hastings and was the American-born son of Italian immigrants who had arrived in California in the 1870s. Two years later twenty-seven-year-old Sylvester Andriano and twenty-four-year-old Leonora Cicoletti, the daughter of an Italian-born San Jose businessman and a California-born Italian American, drove to the coastal town of Half Moon Bay thirty miles south of San Francisco, where they were married in Our Lady of the Pillar Church by Sylvester's brother Angelo, the pastor. They moved into a new house in the western part of the Marina district, a recently developed neighborhood two miles from Little Italy, where they had a view across the Golden Gate to the Marin headlands. For families like the Andrianos, a move to the Marina or the adjacent Pacific Heights district represented a deliberate step toward the American mainstream. The Marina district was popular among well-to-do Italian American business and professional families, but they were now surrounded not by the sights and sounds of the old country but by 1920s American consumer culture; Italian Americans were only some 2–5 percent of the district's population, which was primarily U.S.-born and non-Italian.[11]

Andriano joined the law practice of James A. Bacigalupi at an auspicious moment. Their offices occupied the floor above the new headquarters of Amadeo P. Giannini's Bank of Italy, and their practice included Giannini's bank as well as the Italian consulate. Two years after Andriano joined him, Giannini offered Bacigalupi a position in the bank, where he served as president from 1924 to 1931. Andriano and attorney Michael Cimbalo then took over

Bacigalupi's clients, including the Italian consulate. They represented the consulate in a variety of cases, such as those involving industrial accidents or nonresident heirs to estates left by deceased Italian San Francisco residents. When Cimbalo moved to New York City, Andriano kept the consulate account, but he was not—as the California state antisubversive Tenney Committee would later claim—"the attorney of the local Italian Consulate."[12]

Andriano then joined forces with William R. Lowery, a fellow graduate of the St. Mary's College class of 1911. By this time, the city's Italian-born residents and their American-born offspring numbered some 46,000, which made them nearly 9 percent of the city's total population of 506,676. The decade of the 1920s witnessed the high point in the demographic expansion of the city's Italian American population. After 1930, when the population reached 58,000 (just over 9 percent of the total), the numbers began a gradual decline all the way down to 29,000 (4 percent) in 1970. Catholic Italians belonged to a vast archdiocese that contained 171 parishes, some six hundred priests, and over four hundred thousand Catholics living in thirteen Bay Area counties from Santa Clara in the south to Mendocino in the north.[13]

During the first half of the 1920s, as he expanded his law practice, Sylvester Andriano also became a leading builder of Catholic cultural infrastructure in San Francisco's Little Italy. The groups he organized or cofounded included the Dante Council of the Knights of Columbus, the Salesian Boys' Club, and a chapter of the Boy Scouts of America. He also served as president and board member of several other institutions: the Italian School, which offered after-school Italian-language classes; the Italian Sports Club; the Italian Chamber of Commerce; the Bank of Italy; and a community center called the Fugazi Building. The boys' club operated in quarters provided by Saints Peter and Paul Church, which would soon be the focus of anti-Catholic hostility.

2

Anti-Catholicism in Little Italy

We are now in the heart of the business section of the Latin Quarter, and as we pass through the crowds we catch phrases of French, Portuguese, Spanish, and the various musical dialects of Italy. Many quaint shops are to be found here, their windows displaying an infinite variety of foreign goods. Little marble figures such as Italians like, Mexican glass and pottery, and French embroideries. Hardly an American name or sign is in evidence.

—Elizabeth Gray Potter, *The San Francisco Skyline,* 1939

This is one of the largest concentrations of Italian-Americans in the United States. Their influence in San Francisco has been tremendous. Italian life in San Francisco is hearty, colorful and uninhibited. The Latin Flavor of the city; its tradition of European Sunday, the habitual wine-bibbing, its sensitivity to the picturesque is due largely to the Italian population and they have contributed greatly to the city's folklore and night life.

—Leonard Austin, *Around the World in San Francisco,* 1959

Sylvester Andriano, firmly committed to Catholicism, Americanization, and the maintenance of his Italian cultural heritage, built his law practice in the growing community of Little Italy. But most of the city's Italian community demonstrated little interest in citizenship or Americanization. As the decade of the twenties began, 80 percent of the city's Italian immigrants maintained their Italian citizenship, and ten years later only 44 percent of the men and 31 percent of the women were United States citizens. And as the number of Italian residents in San Francisco grew from the beginning of the century to the 1920s, so did Little Italy's contingent of anti-Catholic anarchists, socialists, and masons.

The new Sts. Peter and Paul Church quickly attracted anti-Catholic hostility. Between 1922 and 1924 Andriano raised over

one hundred thousand dollars toward the construction of this church, which stood on Filbert Street, facing Washington Square. The largest of three Catholic churches established to serve the growing Italian American community between 1897 and 1914, this new (second) Sts. Peter and Paul Church was in the heart of Little Italy and quickly acquired the status of a cultural landmark for the city as well as the neighborhood. Its massive Carrara marble altar and similar embellishments earned the edifice the title of "the Italian Cathedral of the West."[1] Built in the Romanesque Revival style, the church, its twin spires towering 191 feet above the neighborhood, announced that Italian Catholics intended to practice their faith in a dignified and impressive structure second to none. In 1923, while it was still under construction, Cecil B. DeMille used the church for scenes in his spectacular movie *The Ten Commandments.* San Francisco Catholics celebrated when craftsmen completed the work three years later and the parish dedicated the new altar. But others scoffed at the celebration and regarded the new church as a symbol of ancient superstition and popular ignorance, its priests and their lay confidants as recipients of undeserved wealth and power, and after the new Sts. Peter and Paul was dedicated, dynamiters attacked it. Between January 1926 and January 1927, four separate church bombings shook the neighborhood, causing substantial but not extensive damage. Anti-Catholic resentments smoldered beneath the sounds of the Italian Colony's "musical dialects" and behind its facade of "quaint shops" and "colorful and uninhibited" folk culture.[2]

After the fourth bombing, city police announced to the press that they could no longer afford to protect the church, but secretly, Detective Sgt. Thomas DeMatei organized a squad that kept watch on the church twenty-four hours a day. The detective's cousin was a Salesian priest, and it was the Italian Salesian religious order that staffed the church. In the early morning hours of March 6, 1927, two men approached the church; one stood guard and the other struck a match to light the fuse of a bundle of dynamite. DeMatei and his men shot them, killing one and wounding the other.

City police were familiar with Celsten Eklund, the wounded man, who died in custody several months later. He was a well-

known figure in the community of single men who lived in boardinghouses and residential hotels in the South of Market Street neighborhood, the area Jack London made famous as a hotbed of radicalism in his 1909 short story "South of the Slot." Eklund's talents as a soapbox orator extended well beyond San Francisco, and Seattle police had arrested him during a demonstration by backers of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW's militant and uncompromising anticapitalist rhetoric and its call for "One Big Union" that would unite workers regardless of nationality, race, or skills attracted anarchists as well as respectable skilled craftsmen, and the organization enjoyed considerable support in San Francisco. There is no evidence that Eklund carried an IWW membership card, however, and while the organization called for the destruction of capitalism and for sabotage, neither its program nor its leaders advocated the use of dynamite against public officials, government buildings, corporate property, or churches.[3]

Eklund and his fellow dynamiter's penchant for explosives put them closer to the operations of the Galleanisti groups than to the program of the IWW. These groups operated independently across the nation in the first three decades of the twentieth century, but they were all inspired by the writings of Luigi Galleani, who lived in the United States from 1901 until he was deported in 1917. Galleani, who published the newspaper *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Subversive Chronicle) and wrote do-it-yourself manuals for making bombs, criticized those anarchists who preached an end to capitalism but refused to destroy the people and places associated with capitalist power. Spontaneous violence, he argued, would prepare the way for the crumbling of the old order. His heroes included Gaetano Bresci, who assassinated King Umberto I of Italy in August 1900, and Leon Czolgosz, who shot President William McKinley in August 1901. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, anarchists executed by the state of Massachusetts in April 1927 for robbery and murder after a sensational trial that made them martyrs for the cause of worker justice, contributed articles to Galleani's newspaper.[4]

The Galleanisti were responsible for a series of bombings from 1914 to 1920, including a bomb in Milwaukee that killed ten police

officers and detectives at a police station as they attempted to defuse it; one that exploded prematurely in front of the house of United States Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, killing the deliverer, Carlo Valdinoci; and one that went off on Wall Street at one minute past noon on September 16, 1920, killing thirty-eight and injuring four hundred. The Galleanisti targeted Catholic churches as well as court buildings and Wall Street temples of commerce. Their most prestigious religious target, St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, narrowly escaped damage: an informant tipped off authorities beforehand, and the bombers aborted their plans. In 1916 Nestor Dondoglio (aka Jean Crones), a Galleanisti chef, tried to eliminate the civic elite of Chicago by poisoning the soup at a three-hundred-person banquet welcoming the newly appointed leader of the city's Catholics, Archbishop George William Mundelein. The archbishop never touched his soup, and the other guests escaped harm because a sous-chef had disliked the aroma and diluted the soup.[5]

Were Eklund and his partner active Galleanisti, and did their attack on Sts. Peter and Paul represent a gesture of defiance against a hated symbol of complicity with an allegedly brutal capitalist order? Were they outraged like others across the nation in 1924, when they heard the news that Judge Webster Thayer in Boston had denied four motions for a new trial of Sacco and Vanzetti? Had Eklund read or heard about Felix Frankfurter's article in the latest *Atlantic Monthly* which raised questions about the impartiality of the prosecutors and the judge and cast doubt on the guilty verdict in the Sacco and Vanzetti trial?[6]

Eklund died without disclosing the answers to such questions, and he refused to provide any details about the identity of his dead accomplice beyond his Italian last name, Ricca. The man killed by police as he tried to light the dynamite on Filbert Street that early morning may have met Celsten Eklund while passing the time in the dining room of a South of Market boardinghouse. Or the two may have met while working in orchards up and down the Pacific states, living in rooming houses and hotels in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego when the work dried up.[7] Whatever brought them together, Ricca and Eklund ended their

lives determined to accomplish a destructive act of anti-Catholic terrorism.

The bombings signaled to San Franciscans that anarchist anti-Catholicism was still a force to be reckoned with, despite the well-publicized police raid in 1919 that resulted in the closing of the most visible organized presence of anarchism in the city, the IWW Latin Branch. In contrast to socialism, which attracted a wide spectrum of city residents, relatively few of whom were Italian American, San Francisco anarchism was for the most part an Italian concoction, with a bit of Spanish and French flavoring. City *anarchica* heaped scorn on the Italian Catholics, especially the Salesian priests. Anarchists plastered their anticlerical broadsheet *L'Asino* (The Donkey) on the doors of Sts. Peter and Paul, they organized *feste anarchiche* in competition with Catholic festivals, and they published the anarchist monthly newspaper *La Protesta Umana.* San Francisco activists also contributed to the anarchist publications *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *La Questione Sociale,* providing material on local developments for a larger national readership. In November 1906 a San Francisco correspondent decried Catholic Italian religious devotion in the city, which was especially manifest in the months after the great earthquake and fire.

> Religious fervor is at its apex. The Italian element—without distinction between southern and northern—gives us an unsettling spectacle, which is both servile and idiotic. . . . The moment they have a baby [they] hurry to call the priestly enemy to have the child baptized. The strongest propagandist would give everything up when faced with these people. It is therefore useless to speak to them about the slavery and misery in which one lives. Each one accepts resigned the fate that god has decreed. If I confront them with the causes of their misery when they complain, they just abandon me and flee. I can only hope for an awakening of these masses.[8]

Four years later, Italian socialists organized the Latin Branch of the IWW, which welcomed anarchists and syndicalists as well as

socialists. In the pages of its newspapers *Il Proletario* and *Il Lavoratore Industriale* the Latin Branch targeted the city police department, American Federation of Labor (AFL) unions, Italian business owners and professionals (*prominenti*), and the Catholic population and church leadership. What the Latin Branch lacked in numbers, with never more than several hundred members, it made up for in rhetorical flourish and revolutionary noise. Every week, soapbox orations at outdoor meetings competed with Catholic homilies at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, only a few blocks away. The church building was renamed "quell sacro pastribolo delle coscienze" (that sacred gallows of conscience), and the pastor earned the sobriquet "infame l'uomo nero, la bestia, malefica, il prete" (infamous black man, the evil beast, the priest).[9]

Latin Branch anarchists made the front page after a speech on Sunday, August 13, 1911, by Filippo Perrone, a peripatetic Italian anarchist who had recently arrived in San Francisco from Baja California, where he had been organizing anarchist communes with the Mexican revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magón. San Francisco police normally operated according to a "live and let live" policy toward street speakers, but Perrone seems to have particularly annoyed the detectives on duty, who arrested him after he shouted "disparagingly about the American flag, condemning law and order, and denouncing all form of government, and ending with a tirade against the Pope." *Cronaca Sovversiva* lost no time condemning "un vergognoso sopruso dei polizziotti di San Francisco" (a shameful abuse by San Francisco police). *L'Italia,* a politically conservative North Beach newspaper, also objected to the arrest, arguing that the police had violated both Italian dignity and American free-speech rights. But Father Rafaelle Piperni, the pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul, disagreed, criticizing Perrone for his incendiary irreligious discourse and *L'Italia* for its mistaken belief that the official guardians of civic law and order should tolerate public advocacy of an erroneous philosophy.[10]

Father Piperni, who served as pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul from 1897 to 1929, battled Italian members of the Masonic Order as well as socialists and anarchists. The pope condemned freemasonry in 1738, and Catholics lost their good standing in the church if they

joined a Masonic lodge. Freemasonry came to Little Italy in 1872 (twenty-five years before the first Salesian priests arrived), when Andrea Sbarboro and his colleagues founded a lodge by the name of Speranza Italiana. The city's Italian masons declared their anti-Catholicism by setting up business on the second anniversary of Victor Emmanuel II's defeat of the soldiers of Pope Pius IX and the end of the Papal States, associating "the hope of Italy" in the lodge's name with the secular monarchy instead of the Catholic papacy. Tensions between Masonic anti-Catholics and Catholic anti-Masons came to the boiling point when Ernesto Nathan, the mayor of Rome, came to San Francisco to represent Italy at the Panama Pacific International Exposition, the 1915 world's fair. Mayor Nathan's Jewish family background and his membership in the Masonic Order provoked consternation among the city's Catholics, especially Italian Catholics. They could recall Nathan's speech at the opening of the 1911 Rome Exhibition, a speech made on the anniversary, once again, of the 1870 victory of Italian government troops over the army of the Papal States. For Nathan, Italy aspired to be "the champion of liberty of thought," except that the Catholic Church blocked the way: the Vatican represented "the fortress of dogma where the last despairing effort is being made to keep up the reign of ignorance." Archbishop Hanna, who had lobbied unsuccessfully to have Nathan replaced by a Catholic, lamented, "It makes one burn with shame to think of the Italy so glorious, so Catholic is represented here by a free-mason, a socialist, a Jew."[11]

Archbishop Hanna moderated his anti-Semitism in the years to come, but he gave no quarter to anarchism, socialism, or masonry, Italian or otherwise. His predecessor, Archbishop Patrick W. Riordan, tried to distract Italian residents from anti-Catholic ideologies by inviting Italian priests such as Angelo Andriano and Rafaelle Piperni to San Francisco. Hanna followed suit, recruiting zealous priests to expand services to Italian Catholics and encouraging Italian laymen such as Sylvester Andriano to build new social infrastructure to foster Catholic cultural power. The most eminent of the newcomers was Father Albert Bandini, a native of Florence trained in classical studies and the law. Hanna had served with the Florentine

on the faculty of St. Andrew's College, a seminary in Rochester, New York, before moving to San Francisco in 1912. In 1915, when newly installed as archbishop of San Francisco, Hanna invited his former colleague to the city. Bandini arrived eight months after Nathan's controversial visit.[12]

By 1919 Father Bandini had become both a U.S. citizen and a member of the California Bar Association, and he ministered to the growing number of Italians in the San Francisco archdiocese. That same year, Sylvester Andriano and James Bacigalupi, although no longer law partners, collaborated in mounting the city's first Columbus Day celebration. They also organized the Italian Catholic Union (ICU), which promoted Columbus Day and provided the funds to publish a Catholic weekly to reach the Italian-speaking residents of Little Italy and the growing number of Italian Americans living well beyond North Beach. By the end of 1923 the four-year-old paper, *L'Unione,* with Archbishop Hanna serving as its honorary president, boasted accurately that it had "the Largest Circulation of any Italian-American Weekly published in San Francisco." Italian priests served as the paper's first two editors, Bandini succeeding Father Oscar Balducci.[13]

The business staff included Luigi Providenza, the twenty-six-year-old former chairman of the Genoa branch of the Popular Party. The Popular Party (Partito Popolare Italiano, or PPI) was founded in 1919 by the former head of Italian Catholic Action, a Sicilian priest named Don Luigi Sturzo. PPI activists like Providenza were targeted by the hardliners who organized the Communist Party of Italy in January 1921, and he left Italy after surviving three assassination attempts. The new pope, Pius XI, preferred a Vatican-controlled Catholic Action program to a Catholic Action–oriented political party. By the end of 1922, with Mussolini the prime minister of Italy and the Fascists in power, the PPI's days were numbered.[14] Providenza left Italy and became one of the Catholic *fuorusciti* who would continue their anti-Fascist work outside their native country.

Resettled in San Francisco, his PPI days behind him, Providenza turned his attention toward the apathetic non-churchgoing Italian

population in the city. Anti-Catholic political doctrines offered a serious challenge to the faith, but so did the waterfront and Barbary Coast saloons, dance halls, and bordellos adjacent to Little Italy. As Providenza went door-to-door to sell subscriptions to *L'Unione* to Catholic families in North Beach, he was "appalled to find that most of them had lost their Faith." So in 1924 he joined forces with Father Bandini to create the Italian Catholic Federation (ICF), a parish-based, Bay Area–wide "lay apostolate" dedicated to the revitalization of religious observance, mutual benefits for members and families, and charity work. With backing from devout *prominenti* like Sylvester Andriano, the ICF sent missionary priests into Italian neighborhoods, sponsored retreats, and organized parades, processions, and public prayer devotions called novenas. Founded to promote Catholic practice, the ICF also boosted ethnic pride, and its by-laws included a "PATRIOTIC" clause: to "keep alive the respect and love of its members for their original Fatherland, encouraging and promoting at the same time some methods of enlightened Americanization among them."[15]

Promoting Americanization while maintaining love and respect for the fatherland was not as simple a proposition as the ICF made it appear. German Americans had found it necessary to distinguish between affection for the homeland and support for the kaiser and his regime during World War I, and Italian Americans in the mid-1920s found themselves disagreeing over the legitimacy of Mussolini's Fascist regime. Most Americans, San Franciscans included, regarded Mussolini positively until the late 1930s. But that was not the case for Italian secular liberals, socialists, and communists, especially those political exiles (*fuorusciti*) who were anti-Catholic. They condemned *Time* for putting Il Duce on its cover and cringed at such popular culture tributes as Cole Porter's "You're the tops, you're Mussolini." Most Italian American Catholics focused on "the reassuring and conservative aspects of his regime: the re-establishment of law and order, the repression of communism, the abolition of the right to strike, the agricultural projects for draining and reclaiming wastelands, the Crucifix again placed in the public schools, the trains which ran on time." But critics of the Italian American Catholic

accommodation seethed. The biographer of Gaetano Salvemini, a historian member of the anti-Fascist exile community, recalled that "it was hardly possible to pronounce the words 'on time' in Salvemini's presence, without his rising to his feet in a rage."[16]

Writing from his San Francisco office, Father Bandini critiqued even the rather mild dissent against Fascist theory published by Father John A. Ryan, a professor at the Catholic University of America. Ryan criticized "the political doctrine of Fascism" when he reviewed the English translation of a speech of that title by Alfredo Rocco, the Fascist minister of justice, in two issues of the weekly Catholic magazine *Commonweal* in November 1926. Ryan's argument that Fascism demonstrated principles and practices offensive to Catholics roused the ire of Father Bandini. In a letter to the magazine, Bandini accused Ryan of "overstating his objections to Fascism" and insisted that "any form of civil society, if safeguarding the authority of the Church and allowing the spiritual development of man, does not contradict Catholic doctrine. . . . [Ryan] probably does not mean to say that a good Fascist cannot be a good Catholic." Ryan replied that Fascism includes "the monstrous propositions that the state is an end in itself, that it is justified in using any means to attain its objects, and that it is the source of all individual rights—in other words, that the human person has no natural rights." Bandini had the last word in a second letter to *Commonweal,* defending "the many Catholics, high and low, churchmen and laymen, who support Fascism in Italy."[17]