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FOREIGN NATIONALITY GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES
 MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
 FROM THE FOREIGN NATIONALITIES BRANCH

Number B-345

Italy - For. Pol

6 April 1945

ITALIAN-AMERICANS ORGANIZE
 TO DEMAND ALLIED STATUS FOR ITALY

OK
 Mr. Aiden
 Mr. Carson
 Mr. Cunningham
 Mr. Fitch
 Mr. [redacted]

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Italian-Americans and [redacted]

DECLASSIFIED BY SP5
 ON 10-20-87
 BY [redacted]
 # 7704999

The Italian-American community has rebounded from the shock of the apparent failure to give explicit consideration to Italy at Yalta* with a united demand for recognition of Italy as an Ally. The immediate goal is representation for Italy at San Francisco. New committees have sprung into action and are conducting a campaign of pressure for these objectives directed at the President, members of Congress, and the Department of State. Prominent conservative leaders are crossing traditional political lines to work with Communists and anti-Communists organized in two rival camps.

THE aggressive and comprehensive nature of a crusade to secure Allied status for Italy and Italian representation at San Francisco is becoming apparent from the diverse character of the individuals and organizations involved. The Communist-line *Unita del Popolo* has deviated from its previous position of unqualified approval of Yalta to join with once pro-Fascist elements in the campaign. Conservative mass-membership organizations and conservative political and professional figures have

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* See "Italian-Americans on Yalta," FN Number 1328 of 13 March 1945

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over-run traditional partisan lines to cooperate with the leftist ~~Free Italy~~ American Labor Council and the Communist-line ~~International Workers' Order~~ in a new organization, the ~~"Coordinating Council for the Recognition of Italy as an Ally."~~ A rival labor body, the Antonini-led Italian-American Labor Council, has in its turn set up a "Joint Committee" to pitch for the same ends and has received the support of the once pro-Fascist ~~Progresso Italo-Americano~~ and its publisher Generoso ~~Pope~~ as well as that of the traditionally anti-Fascist ~~Mazzini Society~~. Indicative perhaps of the determination of the conservatives to cooperate with any group working for Italian recognition was the fact that conservative leaders in the Coordinating Council gave the ~~Antonini Committee~~ permission to use their names in an appeal addressed to the President and the Secretary of State.

The upheaval in the Italian community has caused a political intermingling which leaves as yet no clear pattern. Organizational lines and leadership are still fluid. Thus the recently formed ~~Committee for National Unity~~, largely Socialist-sponsored, having reorganized under a new name, has pledged its support to both the Coordinating Council and the Joint Committee.

Other organizations working independently of the Joint Committee and the Coordinating Council but along the same lines include Don Sturzo's ~~Christian Democratic People and Liberty~~ group, Generoso Pope's ~~Columbus Day Citizens Committee~~, and a former pro-Fascist "front" organization, the ~~Federation of Italian-American Democratic Organizations~~ in the State of New York.

Despite the unity regarding objectives, however, the two most energetic forces in the Italian community, the ~~Italian-American Labor Council~~ and the ~~Free Italy American Labor Council~~, remain in opposition to one another. Unity

talks (described in this Branch's B-334 of 20 March under the title "Italian-American Labor Leaders Seek Formula for Cooperation of all Factions") broke down, as was foreseen, over the issue of cooperation with the Communists. Antonini's "coup" in securing the signatures of leaders of the Free Italy-supported Coordinating Council, is being parried by the Free Italy Council with an announcement of plans to "expose and prevent the spread of divisive tactics of the opposition [Antonini]."

*Italian-American
Press Unanimously
Demands Allied Status*

Well before organizational activities had commenced, the omission of Italy from the list of nations invited to San Francisco had evoked a barrage of protest. Before long the Italian-American press from Right to Left was demanding recognition of Italy as an Ally. The pace-maker among the nationwide papers was Generoso Pope's *Progresso Italo-Americano* of New York, largest of Italian-language dailies. Following sustained editorial criticism, the paper (12 March) introduced a front-page box demanding Allied status for Italy, which has since appeared daily in English and Italian. A typical one, captioned "When Is An Ally An Ally?", read:

Webster's New International Dictionary defines an Ally as "anyone associated with another as a helper; an auxiliary." In every sense of this definition Italy is now our Ally ...

On 17 March the *Progresso* initiated another daily feature, a form letter in Italian and English to be sent to Representatives and Senators appealing to them to do everything "in their power" "to have our Government recognize Italy as an Ally." Then on a signed editorial 20 March, Generoso Pope called

upon Italian-American organizations throughout the country to act in behalf of Italy.

Let your organization at its next meeting adopt a resolution urging our Government to extend immediate recognition to Italy as an Ally of the United States. If the next meeting is too far off, call a special meeting or have your executive board pass a resolution.... And please do not stop there. Try to win support for this urgent action among all other Americans regardless of their lineage.

*Christian Democrats
Call for Organized
Campaign*

Among eminent Italian personalities in this country, Don Luigi Sturzo was among the first to call for an organized campaign on Italy's behalf. In a talk with this Branch (28 March), the founder of the Christian Democratic movement expressed his bitter disappointment that "the Italy which has been fighting for one and a half years" on the side of the democracies had not been "well recognized and justly appreciated by the American people." He opined that the American press, in contrast to its positive attitude regarding the re-emergence of France, had been almost silent about Italy. Writing in the Mazzini Society's organ, *Nazioni Unite* (15 March), Don Sturzo commended those Italian-Americans who were organizing and insisting "that Italy be invited to San Francisco."

Don Sturzo appears to be lending the prestige of his name to all groups — save those with former pro-Fascist affiliations — urging allied status for Italy. He told this Branch recently of his efforts to induce a unified campaign. It was at his suggestion, he said, that the Christian Democratic People and Liberty group on 16 February had addressed a message to President Roosevelt appealing for Allied status for Italy and for representation at San Francisco. Subsequently,

6 APRIL 1945

People and Liberty issued a statement, signed by its president, Anthony P. Ullo, and carried by a number of Italian-language papers, calling for unity among Italian organizations to this end

*Origin of the Two
Labor Committees*

The activities of local committees in such centers of large Italian concentration as Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Rochester, and Detroit are being promoted by two newly-organized roof organizations with headquarters in New York: a leftist-conservative coalition group, the "Coordinating Council for the Recognition of Italy As An Ally," and Luigi Antonini's Italian-American "Joint Committee." Both groups hope to muster the over-all strength of 5,000,000 Italian-Americans to secure Allied status for Italy before the opening of the San Francisco Conference.

The two committees came into being after attempts to reconcile the Antonini-sponsored Italian American Labor Council (AFL) and the Bellanca-Baldanzi Free Italy American Labor Council (CIO) had come to naught. There was the issue of Communist participation and there was the question of whether to admit prominent former pro-Fascists. Failure to settle either point left the field and the initiative open to other leaders.

"Coordinating Council".

Independently of this effort, a number of prominent Italian-American political and professional leaders had been engaged in the formation of a national committee to support Representative Vito Marcantonio's Resolution (H.R. 99, introduced in the House of Representatives on 8 February) calling for the recognition of Italy as a full-fledged Ally. The Marcantonio Resolution had already received the support of the Italian branches of the Communist-line International Workers' Order, and of the

weekly *Unita del Popolo*. But the Resolution was being supported too by a number of the State lodges of the Order of the Sons of Italy, the Order of Italian Sons and Daughters of America of Pennsylvania, the Columbian Federation of Societies, and other local Italian-American conservative fraternal and civic organizations. Mayor La Guardia of New York and Edward Corsi are reported preparing to testify for it in Washington 11 April.

In order to enlist wider and more effective support for the Resolution, the "Coordinating Council for the Recognition of Italy As An Ally," was launched 28 February with permanent headquarters in the Biltmore Hotel in New York. It claimed at once adherence of an overwhelming number of fraternal, social, civic, cultural, theatrical, and trade union organizations. The Council is presently canvassing signatures for thousands of petitions requesting (1) Allied status for Italy, and (2) greater relief aid for the Italian people.

The Council's executive board includes such well-known Italian-American personalities as Edward Corsi, Industrial Commissioner of New York State, Judges Felix C. Benvenega and Louis A. Valente of the Supreme Court of the State of New York; the industrialist, Paolino Gerli; Almerindo Portofino, Treasurer of the City of New York; Peter A. Amoroso, Commissioner of Correction of the City of New York, Max Ascoli, professor at the New School for Social Research, Mario D. Inzillo, president of the Italian branches of the International Workers Order, and Giuseppe Catalanott, August Bellanca, and George Baldanzi of the Free Italy American Labor Council. A financial sub-committee is composed of Baldanzi, Portofino, and Gerli. Joseph Facci, a former employee of the Office of War Information, was engaged as a full-time secretary, and Mrs. Jimmy Savo, wife of the well-known actor, as field organizer. It is reported, moreover, that a number of key leaders have pledged the support of their organizations. Among

these are Judge Felix ~~X~~ Forte of Boston, National Grand Venerable of the Order of the Sons of Italy; Judge Eugene ~~V~~ Alessandrini of Philadelphia, Venerable of the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge of the Order of the Sons of Italy; and Magistrate Francis X. ~~X~~ Giaccone of New York, Venerable of the New York Grand Lodge of the Order of the Sons of Italy and chairman of the United Societies to Aid Democratic Italy.

According to reports reaching this Branch, the Free Italy American Labor Council is a chief financial contributor to the Coordinating Council and this in turn is taken by the new Council to represent an earnest of more substantial CIO backing to come.

*Antonini-Sponsored
"Joint Committee".*

Concurrently, Luigi Antonini, in the name of his AFL-affiliated Italian American Labor Council, had addressed an appeal to "all true liberals and democrats" to meet at a dinner at the Biltmore Hotel on the evening of 26 March for the purpose of forming an Italian-American "Joint Committee" to solicit public support for Italian representation at the San Francisco Conference. A resolution adopted at the 26 March dinner and addressed to President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Stettinius, declared that failure to include Italy at the world security conference of the United Nations "will tend to vitiate the many efforts which the American Government has been making for the establishment of a world security organization" and will be "an act of flagrant injustice against a people with whom our country has had many bonds of friendship -- a people now doing everything possible and bearing the most cruel burdens of war in order to speed victory over our common enemy."

Besides Antonini, the committee which grew out of the Biltmore dinner numbers among its leaders Justice Ferdinand ~~X~~ Pecora of the New York Supreme Court.

Dr. Charles Fama, Medical Examiner of the New York Municipal Retirement Board, and Samuel Shore, vice president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (AFL) and vice chairman of the Liberal Party. Among the conspicuous personalities also present at the dinner was Generoso Pope, who promised the committee the unqualified support of his newspaper. The Joint Committee claims to represent a total membership of nearly 2,000,000, scattered in some fifteen leading Italian-American organizations ranging from conservative fraternal, civic, and trade union groups to the national directorate of the liberal Mazzini Society.

Present plans of the Committee call for a demonstration in the form of a dinner or cocktail reception for Senators, Representatives, and Government officials, to be held in Washington some time before the middle of April.

A detailed report of the 26 March meeting in *Il Progresso* (30 March) revealed that among the groups which signed the Joint Committee resolution, the following had already pledged adherence to the rival Coordinating Council: Order of the Sons of Italy, the United Societies to Aid Democratic Italy, and such individual leaders as Magistrate Giaccone, Edward Corsi, Judge Benvenga, Peter A. Amoroso, Paolino Gerli, and Almerindo Portfolio. A neutral observer explained to this Branch that Antonini had invited the Coordinating Committee leaders to join him in "a one-shot proposition — Italian representation at San Francisco."

*Independent
Leftist Moves*

The Free Italy American Labor Council, meanwhile, is actively engaged in furthering its own program of action independently of the Coordinating Council. It is reported that a project enlarging the Council's activities was discussed by its executive board in conference

with Sidney Hillman on 13 March. The Council plans to sponsor a mass rally in Madison Square Garden at an early date to demonstrate to "all Americans that the foreign-born American citizens and particularly all Italian-Americans support the Yalta decisions and the purpose of the San Francisco Conference." In addition, an "Action Memo," in the form of a newsletter, is to be issued shortly "to expose and prevent the spread of the divisive tactics of the opposition" [Antonini]. Finally, Council plans call for the designation of a "labor representative" of its own to attend the San Francisco Conference. It is reported that the Council's executive board meeting on 24 March named George Baldanzi as the labor candidate.

Socialist Organization
Supports Both Groups

On 17 March, an editorial in the Socialist weekly ~~La Parola~~ announced that as the result of "a wave of indignation sweeping Italian-American communities from coast to coast," committees were being formed in all big centers to come to the aid of Italy. Meeting at Irving Plaza in New York 14 March, the "Committee for Italian Unity,"* which had been sponsoring such a movement, voted to change its name to ~~United Societies to Aid Democratic Italy.~~ Girolamo Valenti, editor of *La Parola* and one of the principal promoters of the organization, told this Branch on 28 March that 56 fraternal, social, and cultural organizations had adhered to the program of the re-baptized organization. At the meeting in Irving Plaza a resolution was adopted formulating plans for a representative mass rally "where the voice of liberal and democratic America in behalf of Italy will be heard." A subsequent resolution adopted by the organization's executive

* See "Committee for Italian Unity Formed," FN Number 8-316 of 22 February 1945

council called upon the United States Government "to recognize Italy as an Ally and to use its influence to attain such recognition from the Allied Governments". (*La Parola*, 31 March). Subsequently, the United Societies pledged support to the program of both the Coordinating Council and to the Antonini-sponsored Joint Committee.

The "American Committee for the Freedom of Italy," a newly-organized group in Detroit which was initiated by Valenti and had pledged support to Antonini's Joint Committee, sponsored a mass meeting 4 March at which the following six-point program was adopted: (1) Allied status for Italy; (2) support for the provisions of the Atlantic Charter; (3) increased relief aid to Italy; (4) cessation of foreign intervention in Italian affairs; (5) guarantees of Italian territorial integrity; (6) representation of democratic Italy at San Francisco.

*Resolutions of
Other Committees* Two other independent committees in New York have also passed resolutions supporting Allied status for Italy and Italian representation at San Francisco. The Columbus Day Citizens Committee, an organization claiming to represent 650,000 Italian-Americans and organized last year to perpetuate the celebration of 12 October as a national holiday, met at the Biltmore Hotel on 24 March. Headed by its permanent chairman, Generoso Pope, the Columbus Day Citizens Committee includes such personalities as Justice Pecora; Anthony Campagna, member of the New York Board of Education; Paul P. Rao, Assistant United States Attorney General; New York City Councilmen Samuel di Falco and Anthony di Giovanna; and other figures prominent in New York municipal affairs. At the 24 March meeting a resolution was voted calling upon the United States Government to secure "full

justice" for Italy's cause.

Similar action has also recently been launched by an "action committee" of the Federation of Italian-American Democratic Organizations in the State of New York, an organization whose leadership was formerly tinged with pro-Fascist sympathies. The Federation is now circulating petitions for Allied status for Italy to be presented to the President, the Congress, and the Department of State.

Communist Activity Departing in one respect from their original policy of unqualified endorsement of the Yalta decisions, Italian Communists have been emphatically campaigning for Italian representation at San Francisco and support of the Marcantonio Resolution. In regard to the first objective, the weekly *Unita del Popolo* (17 March) demanded the presence at San Francisco of the new Italy -- "the democratic Italy which is fighting today for its own complete liberation and for the common cause." Six million Italian-Americans, the paper said, were uniting to demand recognition of Italy and her admission to the security conference

They are not alone. They have the support of millions of sincere Americans who know how to distinguish between the Italy of yesterday and the new democratic Italy. The recognition of Italy as an Ally and her participation at the San Francisco Conference will constitute another blow to reaction. Open the Golden Gate to Democratic Italy!

At a banquet in New York on 11 March, celebrating the sixth anniversary of *L'Unita del Popolo*, an intensive nation-wide petitioning campaign was launched by Communist-line organizations and leftist trade union groups calling for the "unity of all our forces" behind the Marcantonio Resolution "so that

the recognition of Italy will be an important step in the interest of America for a quick victory, peace, and stability." Similar drives are reported to have taken place under Communist auspices in Philadelphia, Chicago, and other cities. Left-wingers in Philadelphia succeeded in eliciting a mass endorsement for the Marcantonio Resolution from some thirty-nine fraternal, civic, and trade union organizations.