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Abstract

During the quarter century before the First World War, anarchist terrorism was often blamed on the impact of anarchist agitators on naive immigrants. This article seeks to investigate the truth of this claim, focusing particularly on Italian emigrants, but also looking at some examples of Spanish, French, and Russian emigrants. My conclusion is that, with a few exceptions, radicals emigrated, but emigration did not create radical terrorists. A particularly good example of this can be found by examining the large Italian emigration to Argentina. At most, the emigrant experience may have heightened a pre-existing radicalism or given more precise configuration to its violent expression.

During the quarter century before the First World War, the most notorious age of anarchist terrorism, acts of anarchist violence were frequently blamed on foreigners and foreign influence on naive emigrants, yet no systematic study has been made of the possible links between anarchist migration and violent propaganda by the deed. This essay is intended as an initial and brief foray into the topic. My conclusion is that, while in a few cases the correlation between residence abroad and anarchist attentats, or violent assaults, seems to be a powerful one, in many others it is problematical or non-existent. In general, despite the fears expressed in the media and by the authorities, radicals emigrated, rather than becoming radicalized abroad.

Given the current concern over “foreign fighters” leaving their homes in the West to fight for extremist groups in the Middle East and elsewhere, examining how migration affected an earlier wave of terrorism can provide a valuable historical perspective. Certainly there are distinct parallels between the

imagined community of Islamists and the social networks binding together Islamist fighters throughout the world and the informal networks and internationalism that functioned so effectively for 19th-century anarchists.¹ I should point out that while some scholars include terrorists as foreign fighters, others wish to place them in a separate category, since foreign fighters can be more narrowly defined as combatants in a war zone.² Certainly, instances exist of recruits who leave to become foreign fighters but end up becoming suicide bombers and terrorists. There were a number of cases of foreign anarchists fighting (or trying to fight) as combatants in war zones, e.g., against the British in Egypt in 1882, against the Spanish in Cuba in the 1890s, against the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War, 1936–39, and against other enemies on other occasions. Nonetheless, the anarchists were much more significant for the alarm they created in the newspapers, among the public, and for many governments when they carried out terrorist bombings and assassinations.³ Outside of Russia, between 1878 and 1914 more than 220 people died, and over 750 were injured as a result of real or alleged anarchist attacks. If we include Rus-

¹ See in this special mini-series, Cerwyn Moore, “Foreign Bodies: Transnational Activism, the Insurgency in the North Caucasus and ‘Beyond.’” For fascinating insights into the little documented, informal but very effective networks connecting anarchism internationally, see Davide Turcato, *Making Sense of Anarchism: Errico Malatesta’s Experiments with Revolution, 1889–1900* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), especially Chapter 8.

² Thomas Hegghammer is apparently one of the few scholars to specifically include terrorists in the foreign fighter category. For a discussion of categorization, see David Malet’s article in this special mini-series, “Foreign Fighter Mobilization and Persistence in a Global Context.”

³ Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864–1892* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 202; Kirk Shaffer, “Tropical Libertarians: Anarchist Movements and Networks in the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Mexico, 1890s–1920s,” in Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1970* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 273–320, 289.

and flourishing anarchist community in Buenos Aires, no acts of terrorism took place there before 1905. This was because political and socio-economic conditions were unfavorable to such actions prior to the authorities’ heavy-handed crackdown on immigrants and the labor movement beginning in 1902. Even after that date, the Italian anarchist community remained uninvolved in terrorism because its basic moderation had been set by the influence of Malatesta and Gori in the 1890s. This did not change until after World War I when an influx of anarchists, radicalized by postwar chaos in Italy and fleeing fascist repression, reignited a wave of terrorism in Argentina.⁵⁷ But where economic malaise and social repression exacerbated discontent and where government authoritarianism and brutality made peaceful protest and labor action ineffectual or impossible, revolutionaries and anarchists found an eager audience and fertile ground for extreme actions. In terms of world terrorism, it usually took two to create a violent tangle: an “exporting” country characterized by political, social, and economic malfunction and an “importing” country with its own particular configuration of discontents.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Bayer (see note 43 above), 531–548.

⁵⁸ Jensen, “The First Global Wave” (see note 51 above), 27.

also self-serving since it scapegoated foreign countries for anarchist violence rather than asking whether its sources might be found within a country's own myriad socio-economic and political problems.

At the same time, while future terrorists had almost always become radicals before emigrating, living an expatriate existence probably provided some additional encouragement and possibility to carry out assassinations and bombings. This was because of a combination of factors, including the migrants' bitterness at having to leave their homeland and families, the easy association with other angry, exiled radicals, the lack of interference from the police, and the liberation (and new energy) one often feels when outside the rut of one's own native habitat and existence. Given the general lack of international policing before 1900 and the ease with which one could conceal oneself in the waves of migrants criss-crossing the Atlantic during the first great era of globalization, it was often easier to slip into another country from abroad, rather than to remain at home, in order to commit a violent deed.

Another point worth emphasizing is that, in the pre-World War I era, traveling anarchists and revolutionaries almost always spread terrorism to countries and territories where local conditions already favored its outbreak. There may have been thousands of so-called Russian terrorists in Paris, for example, but they rarely attacked purely French targets. Apart from a few exceptions such as Polti (and his co-conspirator Giuseppe Farnara), the same could be said about London with its very considerable diaspora of foreign anarchists.⁵⁶ Despite the large

⁵⁶ Another example is perhaps the French anarchist Martial Bourdin, although the premature explosion of a bomb that he was carrying in 1894 near the Greenwich observatory probably had more to do with an agent provocateur and the Russian secret police or with a future French target than with a desire to harm the British. Alex Butterworth, *The World That Never Was: A True Story of Dreamers, Schemers, Anarchists, and Secret Agents* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2010), 329–335.

sia, where anarchist violence mushroomed exponentially after the outbreak of the 1905 Revolution, the death toll may be over 1,000 and the injured may run into the thousands. What exercised even more impact on public opinion than these numbers was the exalted status of some of the victims, which included five heads of state (or their consorts) and three heads of government, and the almost unprecedented bombing to deadly effect of civilian targets like cafes, opera houses, and religious processions.⁴

This violence took place in the context of unprecedented international migration that deposited diasporas of Italians, Spanish, French, Germans, and Jews and other ethnic groups from the Russian Empire and elsewhere throughout the globe. Italy became the second greatest source of emigrants, and the press frequently pointed to the emigrant experience as the source of terrorist acts both inside and outside the peninsula.⁵ In November 1902, the prominent Rome newspaper *La Tribuna* declared that the “greatest part of the active anarchists” were “Italians” but that “their anarchist formation” was carried out “under other skies.” The famous assassins “Angiolillo, Sepido [sic; Sipido], Lucheni, Caserio, and Bresci were born in Italy” but their “spirit and their consciousness became disordered [scombiuata] in Switzerland, England, Spain and above all in the United States, everywhere, except among us [in Italy].” This proved, *La Tribuna* asserted, that “the secret

⁴ The Fenians were divided on whether to target civilians. They killed some by accident (Clerkenwell, 1867) and in 1883 injured 70 in a bombing attack on the London underground railway. Richard Bach Jensen, *The Battle against Anarchist Terrorism: An International History, 1878–1934* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 31–32, 71–72; Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 124–125.

⁵ For the period 1881–1910, 6.187 million Italians and 8.558 million residents of the United Kingdom and Ireland emigrated. Brian R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750–1970*, abridged edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 47.

meetings [conventicole], the schools of anarchism can flourish more easily elsewhere than among us, which is not a small reason for sat-isfaction.”⁶ *La Tribuna* was hardly alone in attributing Italian anarchist terrorism to foreign influence and indeed there was some truth to the Rome newspaper’s claim.⁷ According to available, but far from complete, information, over half of the Italian anarchists involved in terrorist acts, 1881–1914 (fifteen out of twenty-seven total), had previously traveled outside of their native land prior to their violent deeds.⁸ The duration of their residence abroad had ranged from a few months to nine years, with an average of about 31=3 years per person.⁹ Only through an examination of the

⁶ *La Tribuna* (Rome), November 17, 1902. Jean-Baptiste Sipido was born in Belgium, not Italy.

⁷ Shortly after the assassination of King Umberto, an editorial in the Milanese *Corriere della Sera*, probably Italy’s most influential newspaper, provides a second example of how deeply ingrained was the stereotype of the migrant as incipient anarchist terrorist. It cites a Berlin newspaper’s assertion that: “Poverty there [in Italy] is great and widespread, and emigration is unlimited, and the poor emigrants fall easily into the temptation of anarchism, which has its schools abroad and then launches its blows everywhere.” (“La difesa contro anarchismo,” *Corriere della Sera*, August 23–24, 1900). Mario Ferrigni, *Les Souverains Etrangers et le Droit Italien: Notes* (Florence: Bernard Seeber, 1903), 101: “However it is almost never inside Italy that anarchists take form and spring up, and that their crimes ferment: one could say that just as the foreign industrialists and merchants exploit the poor emigrant workers of Italy, the anarchist sects exploit those unfortunates who let themselves be drawn into their criminal ideas [suggestions]. Foreigners make of our men excellent workers and excellent anarchists.”

⁸ Nunzio Pernicone’s forthcoming *Propaganda of the Deed: Italian Anarchist Violence in the 19th Century* may clear up many unanswered questions.

⁹ The following is a list of Italian anarchists with the time they spent outside of Italy before performing or attempting their violent deed(s) and with the dates of those bombings and assassinations:

Luigi Parmeggiani (9 years) and Achille Pini (7 years): ca. 1887

Giovanni Battola (no information available; found with bomb casings, Walsall, England): 1892

Paolo Schicchi (11 months): 1891 and 1892

In terms of its association with terrorism, the Spanish diaspora proved as significant as the Russian. Palla’s return from South America to Spain, where he began the 1893–97 Spanish anarchist reign of terror, has already been mentioned. Among the fifteen known Spanish anarchist terrorists, a total of six (40 percent) lived abroad for a time, mostly in Argentina, before carrying out attentats there and in Spain.⁵⁴ We lack knowledge, however, of the instigators of the vast majority of the eighty explosions that rattled Barcelona between 1903 and 1909. Presumably these men were non-emigrants. The connection between emigration and radicalization was much less evident among other European nationals. For example, while almost 30 percent of the twenty-one known French anarchist bombers and assassins, apart from the Bonnot gang of 1911–12, had lived outside of France for a time, in every case they had become an anarchist before departing the country.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Radicalized dissidents emigrated, but emigration did not produce anarchist radicals, or at least, anarchist terrorists. At most the emigrant experience may have heightened a pre-existing radicalism or given more precise configuration to its violent expression. This was the predominant pattern during the years 1880 to 1914, with a few exceptions such as Lucheni. The claim by *La Tribuna* and other newspapers that life “under other skies” created terrorists was wrong. It was

⁵⁴ List of the Spanish anarchists with foreign connections: Paolino Palla’s (Argentina), Salvador Planas y Virella (Argentina), Mateo Morral (Germany and France), Jose’ Matabosch (Argentina), Pascual Primo Valero (Argentina), Manuel Pardiñás y Serrato (United States, Cuba, but probably not Argentina, despite allegations to the contrary).

⁵⁵ Paul Me’tayer (Belgium), Victor Cails [or Cailles or Cals] (England), Émile Henry (England), Auguste Vaillant (Argentina), Martial Bourdin (England), Marius Jacob (Spain, Italy).

did not make these Russian émigrés into terrorists, since they had already arrived in the city radicalized by harsh political conditions in Russia and brutal confrontations with the Tsarist police.

This was certainly true of Abraham Hartenstein, a nineteen-year-old boiler (and sometimes bomb) maker from Odessa, Russia, who founded the “Black Gang” after emigrating to Buenos Aires in 1908. He and the Russian immigrants in general were accused of introducing terrorism into Argentina.⁵² This was an exaggeration given that there had been assassination attempts on the president of Argentina in 1905 and 1908 by Spanish and native Argentinean anarchists. Nonetheless, the radicalized Russians entering Argentina were certainly at the forefront of the terrorist wave of 1909–1910, joined by some Catalan anarchists. The premier example of this was Simon Radowsky (spelled Radowitzky in Argentina), who in November 1909, murdered the powerful and much feared police chief of Buenos Aires, Ramón Falcoń, and his secretary. Radowitzky was an eighteen-year-old Jewish Ukrainian who had been a political activist in Russia from a very early age and been injured in a confrontation with the police. He served four months in prison for distributing subversive leaflets. Involved in the 1905 Russian Revolution, he fled after its suppression in order to escape deportation to Siberia. He arrived in Argentina in March 1908, met other Russian anarchists in Buenos Aires, and participated in the worker demonstrations of May 1909 that were savagely repressed by Falcoń. Apparently in revenge for the twelve workers killed and the hundred wounded in that confrontation, Radowitzky plotted and then carried out the assassination of Falcoń.⁵³

⁵² Moya, “The Positive Side of Stereotypes” (see note 41 above).

⁵³ Alejandro Marti, Simoń Radowitzky: La biografía del anarquista del atentado a Falcoń a la Guerra Civil Española (La Plata: De la Campana, 2010).

different experiences and motives of the attentateurs can some tentative generalizations be drawn about the possible influence of life abroad on these assassins and bombers.

Among the Italian anarchist terrorists, three or four became anarchists after departing from Italy. Luigi Lucheni spent little time in Switzerland prior to his violent deed but nonetheless his foreign experience exercised a profound effect. Lucheni left the peninsula about three and a half months before assassinating the Austrian Empress Elisabeth in September 1898 while she was on a visit to Geneva. Lucheni journeyed to prosperous Switzerland looking for work after being fired from his job in Italy. For a brief spell he frequented the meetings of the Salvation Army, but then fell in with the anarchists of Lausanne and apparently underwent a sudden conversion of faith to anarchism and propaganda by the deed, i.e., violent assaults on bourgeois society. Previously he had been a staunch supporter of authority, including the Italian monarchy, and had worked for a time as the servant of an Italian aristocrat who had formerly been his commanding officer in the army.¹⁰ Given the liberalism of its politics, its tolerance for political refugees, and

Francesco Momo (6¼ years): 1893

Francesco Polti (over 2 years) and Giuseppe Farnara (at least 1 year): 1894

Sante Caserio (1½ years): 1894

Michele Angiolillo (2 years 2 months): 1897

Luigi Lucheni (3½ months): 1898

Gaetano Bresci (3½ years) and Luigi Granotti (7½ years): 1900

Gennaro Rubini (or Rubino) (4 to 4½ years): 1902

Carlo Machetto (no information available): 1902

Giuseppe Alia (or Alio) (21=3 years): 1908

Giuseppe Corengia (3 years): 1910.

¹⁰ Santo Cappon, “Introduction,” Luigi Lucheni, *Mémoires de l’assassin de Sissi* (Paris: Le Cherche Midi, 1998), 22. Lucheni allegedly told the Swiss examining magistrate that anarchist ideas had already begun to possess his mind while in Italy, but concrete evidence or actions demonstrating this is lacking. Alfred Gautier, “Le procès Lucheni,” *Revue Pénale Suisse*, 11 (1898): 334–359.

its relative prosperity, Switzerland had become the refuge for many anarchists from Italy and elsewhere on the continent. An anarchist press flourished in both the Italian and French languages. At the same time, immigrant Italians faced discrimination and abuse, being called “macaronis” and other names, and hired for the lowest paying and most menial jobs. A good number became involved in strikes and other labor disputes.¹¹ All this helps to account for Lucheni’s radicalization, although his personal background was also a key factor. As a baby, his mother had abandoned him to an orphanage, and this primal hurt seems to have been an even greater source of unhappiness and miseria than his poverty and hard times in Switzerland (which the Swiss authorities denied). At his trial, Lucheni said he wanted to “revenge my life.”¹² The loss of his job, which was mostly his own fault, was also important in unmooring him from Italian society and forcing him into emigration and new life choices.

Lucheni is the best example of expatriation playing a crucial role in radicalization; like him, two other Italian terrorists probably became anarchists only after leaving Italy. One may have been the eighteen-year-old Francesco Polti, involved in a failed London bombing plot in April 1894 and regarding whose early life (he came to London when he was about fifteen) little is known.¹³ Another was the Sicilian Paolo Schicchi, who fled to Paris in 1889, but only after manifesting pronounced radical tendencies and a wild temperament while still in Italy. There he

¹¹ Cappon (see note 10 above), 23–24.

¹² Cappon (see note 10 above), 52–53, 60.

¹³ Giuseppe Farnara, the other anarchist involved in the plot, had emigrated to England from France at about age forty-two. Little is known about his life in France, but it may be presumed that he was already an anarchist when he emigrated about a year before the misconceived assault on the Royal Exchange. *Times* (London), April 17, 1894; Pietro Di Paola, “Farnara Giuseppe: Storia di un anarchico italiano a Londra,” *Annali di Ca’ Foscari. Rivista della Facoltà di lingue e letterature straniere dell’Università di Venezia* 38, nos. 1–2 (1999): 663–680.

Brazil, where he witnessed the sufferings of the working class. He began his terrorist career there on May Day 1892 by setting off a symbolic small explosive in the luxurious Alcantara Theater in Rio de Janeiro. Subsequently, the two anarchists, having failed to find prosperity in South America, and, in the case of Pallaś, experiencing police persecution in Brazil, went back embittered to their European homelands, ready to take revenge for the dismal prospects of the working class.⁵⁰

After the Italian, the Russian and Spanish diasporas provide the most important examples of a possible connection between terrorism and emigration. Russians fleeing Tsarist repression after the collapse of the 1905 Revolution brought terrorism, in a few scattered cases, to France and Switzerland, to the United States, to Britain, and, perhaps most spectacularly, to Argentina. Many Russian revolutionaries went to Paris, where, around 1907, the French police reported that nearly 1,500 Russian “terrorists” were living in the city. There they collaborated with Spanish anarchists and gave bomb-making lessons and manuals to Indians fighting British domination of the subcontinent. As had been true in the 1890s, Paris after 1900 continued as a refuge and networking center for violent revolutionaries and anarchist and non-anarchist terrorists from many lands.⁵¹ But once again, residence abroad usually

⁵⁰ At his trial, Vaillant testified that he expected to find in Argentina a tropical paradise but instead found that “there even more than elsewhere ... capital [came], like a vampire, to suck the last drop of blood of the unfortunate pariahs. Then I came back to France, where it was reserved for me to see my family suffer atrociously. This was the last drop in the cup of my sorrows. Tired of leading this life of suffering and cowardice, I carried this bomb to those who are primarily responsible for social misery.” Quoted by Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1911), 94–95; Jensen, *Battle* (see note 4), 104–105.

⁵¹ Jensen, “The First Global Wave of Terrorism and International Counter-Terrorism, 1905–14,” in Jussi Hanhimaki and Bernhard Blumenau, eds., *An International History of Terrorism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 16–33.

eration of Italian anarchists in Argentina was that during the 1890s Malatesta and Pietro Gori, the famous anarchist poet and song writer who also taught courses on criminology at the University of Buenos Aires, had lived in Argentina for extended periods and were very influential in building up the anarchist movement. Both believed in promoting organized activity and involvement in the labor movement rather than terrorism.⁴⁷

Two famous non-Italian anarchists who left Argentina to commit terrorist deeds abroad were the previously mentioned Spaniard Pallaás and the Frenchman Vaillant. Vaillant, already an anarchist or anarchist-leaning before traveling abroad, suffered from starvation wages when he initially went to work in Argentina and subsequently found employment with a French-language anarchist periodical in Buenos Aires that supported terrorism.⁴⁸ Pallaás, who together with his family emigrated to Argentina from Spain as a youth, may have come into contact with anarchists, read their literature, and indeed become an anarchist prior to departing for Argentina.⁴⁹ He worked in Buenos Aires as an apprentice typesetter. Pallaás later moved to

Madrid to be cured of his deformity. Failing that, he set off a bomb near Madrid's Calle Mayor Monument to the victims of an earlier, May 1906 anarchist bombing. Corengia then committed suicide. *Times* (London, May 25–26, 1910, and *Correspondencia de España*, May 25, 1910.

⁴⁷ Iaacov Oved, *El anarquismo y el movimiento obrero en Argentina* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1978), 64, 109–110; Geoffroy de Laforcade, “Straddling the Nation and the Working World: Anarchism and Syndicalism on the Docks and Rivers of Argentina, 1900–1930,” in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World* (see note 3), 321–362.

⁴⁸ Joseph Longoni, *Four Patients of Dr. Deibler: A Study in Anarchy* (London, 1970), 85–87; Oved (see note 47 above), 56; Jean Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement Anarchiste en France (1880–1914)*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Société universitaire d'éditions et de librairie, 1955), 218–219; Jean Maitron et al., eds., *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier française*, part 3 (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1976–1977), 14: 265.

⁴⁹ “Pallaás Latorre, Paulino,” *Dictionnaire international des militants anarchistes*, <http://militants-anarchistes.info/spip.php?article11430> (accessed January 2015).

led the Republican-Socialist youth of Bologna for a time while at university and later, after being called up, deserted from the army. After meeting French and Italian anarchists in Paris he became an individualist anarchist, the strain most prone to engage in terrorism.¹⁴ In 1891–92, he planted bombs at a military barracks in Palermo and at the Spanish Consulate in Genoa.

As the experiences of Polti and Schicchi would suggest, London and Paris—but especially Paris—were important centers for radicals, and possible radicalization, from the end of the 1880s onwards.¹⁵ After London, the French capital was Europe's largest metropolis, and home to many political exiles. France and Britain shared with Switzerland a greater commitment to freedom of expression and democratic politics than was true of most other European states and this made it a magnet for many refugees. Nonetheless, the French police sporadically cracked down on the anarchists with great brutality. This abuse, together with the economic depression of the 1890s and the discredit into which the French government, tarnished by repeated corruption scandals, had fallen into embittered both native and foreign anarchists. These factors ultimately led to bombings and Paris's great 1892–94 anarchist reign of terror.

Before that violent climax, the childhood friends, and future terrorists, Luigi Parmeggiani and Achille Vittorio Pini moved to Paris from Italy, respectively in 1878 and 1886. In the French capital, as had been the case with Schicchi, the difficulties of adjustment and finding work and the influence of French anarchist thinkers pushed them toward extremism although they

¹⁴ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864–1892* (see note 3 above), 270–272.

¹⁵ The *London Evening News* (December 17, 1894), 2 (reprinted in Ruth Kinna, ed., *Early Writings on Terrorism*, 4 volumes [London and New York: Athena Press, 2006], 2: 147) estimated that the total number of anarchists of all nationalities in the British capital amounted to 8,000, but it is unclear how reliable this figure is.

had already been traveling along that path for some years.¹⁶ In the opulent French capital, the social injustices implied by the dramatic contrasts between the rich and poor may have been greater than in Italy, at that time a relatively poor country. Pini and Parmeggiani soon formed a robber gang that carried out numerous thefts, influenced by French anarchist writers who proclaimed the virtues of expropriationism, i.e., the confiscation of the property of the bourgeoisie in the name of assisting the proletariat. In Italy, on the other hand, expropriationism was rare.¹⁷ In 1889 Pini and Parmeggiani returned to Italy where they stabbed one editor of a Socialist newspaper and planned to attack another. Although Paris led them to adopt the particular form of violence (expropriationism) for which the two Italians became famous, their radicalization had begun earlier. Little is known about Parmeggiani's early life except that he fled Italy to avoid the draft. Pini had become an Internationalist, i.e., Socialist, while still in his homeland and had participated in a failed strike that convinced him of the uselessness of peaceful labor action. After he emigrated, he became an anarchist.¹⁸

In some three other cases, including those involving the future assassins of the president of France (1894), the prime minister of Spain (1897), and the king of Italy (1900), the perpetrators were radicalized to a significant degree before leaving Italy but their extremism was accentuated by or during their residence abroad. Two (Sante Caserio and Michele Angiolillo) of the three infamous assassins of heads of state and government had been forced to leave Italy by conflicts with the authorities; with the third (Bresci), they had been a contributing factor. Caserio fled

¹⁶ *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani* [hereafter cited as *Dbai*], ed. Maurizio Antonioli et al. (Pisa: BFS, 2003), s.v. "Pini," 354–355.

¹⁷ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864–1892* (see note 3 above), 240.

¹⁸ "Parmeggiani, Luigi (Louis Marcy)" in *Archivio Biografico del Movimento Operaio*, <http://www.archiviobiograficomovimentooperaio.org> (accessed March 2015); *Dbai* (see note 16 above).

about all their grievances. Globalization with its drastic reduction in transportation costs had made it easy and inexpensive for him to return to Europe.⁴⁴

The only other pre-war Italian from Argentina with claims to being a terrorist was Giuseppe Alia (or Alio), who in February 1908 stabbed to death a Catholic priest in Denver, setting off a brief anarchist scare in the United States after he was falsely linked to a chain of subsequent violent incidents. In 1905 the forty-eight-year-old Alia, born in Syracuse, Sicily, emigrated with his son to Buenos Aires and then on to the anarchist center of Rosario. About two years later, he left for the United States. But reports in the Colorado press and by the Italian Consul General in Denver present much evidence that he was mentally unbalanced, obsessed by a fanatical hatred of Catholic priests (Alia had converted to Protestantism), whom he blamed for his personal problems, and may very well not have been an anarchist at all.⁴⁵ In summation, therefore, one verifiable example of an anarchist terrorist coming out of the very large Italian anarchist community in Argentina—Momo—during the entire period 1880–1914 does not suggest a strong connection between emigration, especially emigration and residency abroad, and terrorism.⁴⁶ The reason for the relative mod-

⁴⁴ Transport costs declined 45 percent between 1870 and 1913. Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalization and History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 33–36. For the amazingly frequent communications between Spanish and Argentine anarchists, see Moya, *Cousins and Strangers* (note 41 above), 1998.

⁴⁵ *Denver Post*, February 26, 1908, 2; *Rocky Mountain News*, April 27, 1947, 24. Gustavo Tosti, Denver, to Ambassador Mayor des Planches, Washington, DC, February 28, 1908. Busta 174, *Rappresentanze diplomatiche italiane negli Stati Uniti (1901–1909)*, Italian Foreign Ministry (see note 38 above).

⁴⁶ Unless of course the bizarre case of Giuseppe Corengia (who changed his name Jose Ćarengia Taborelli after becoming a naturalized Spaniard) qualifies as a second exception. Corengia left Italy at three years of age, and lived for a time in Argentina from where he was allegedly expelled for participating in strike activity. A hunchback and neurasthenic, he travelled to

number considering that in 1914 there may only have been 9–10,000 anarchists in all of Italy.⁴²

In December 1885 Francesco Momo, born in Livorno, moved to Argentina at the age of twenty-two. Information is lacking as to whether Momo was an anarchist before crossing the Atlantic. Together with several others, including Malatesta, he helped organize a union of bakers in Buenos Aires that was involved in one of Argentina's first successful strikes. He also helped organize a union of shoemakers and was a militant in Rosario, another Argentine city famous for the importance of its anarchist movement. Momo was therefore radicalized in Argentina, if not before, but associated with the organizational strain of anarchism that Malatesta championed. Despite this relative moderation and integration into Argentine society, which would seem to make him an unlikely candidate for becoming a terrorist, he traveled to Barcelona in April 1892 and blew himself up about a year later. This was in March 1893, while he was trying to construct an Orsini bomb, a weapon often used by the anarchists if they could not get ahold of dynamite. Paulino Pallaś, a more successful terrorist who in September 1893 threw a lethal bomb at the Captain General of Catalonia—thus initiating the Spanish wave of anarchist terror—claimed that Momo had constructed the very bomb he used. This may, however, have been a ruse to protect the real suppliers.⁴³ Clearly then, Spain, with all its poverty, myriad social problems, and dysfunctional politics, had been decisive in making Momo into a terrorist rather than Argentina. The internationalism of the anarchist movement had kept Momo in close communication with Spanish anarchists and informed

⁴² Carl Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), 9.

⁴³ Osvaldo Bayer, "L'influenza dell'immigrazione italiana nel movimento anarchico argentino," in Bruno Bezza, ed., *Gli italiani fuori d'Italia* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1983), 531–548, 533; Rafael Nuñez Florencio, *El terrorismo anarquista, 1888–1909* (Madrid: Siglo veintiuno, 1983), 115.

to Switzerland and then France after being sentenced to eight months in prison for distributing anti-militarist pamphlets to soldiers. In Switzerland and in the small town of Cette (Sète), France, where he worked for eight months, Caserio interacted with local anarchists, although most of his dealings with them are little known and murky. He may also have had some brief connections with anarchists in Vienna and nearby Lyon. Caserio, however, denied any conspiracy to kill the president of France nor was any substantive evidence of such a conspiracy ever uncovered. At his trial, Caserio complained about the life of those "in the most wretched misery" who were forced to leave their countries to find work elsewhere—as he himself had been forced to do.¹⁹ But more crucial than his hardships in France and the influence of local anarchists seems to have been his strong pre-existing devotion to the anarchist ideal and his anger at the news that President Carnot had refused to commute the anarchist Vaillant's death sentence. In December 1893 Vaillant had bombed the French parliament, but this deed had been largely symbolic, causing relatively little injury and killing no one.

More of a case can be made for the influence of foreign travel and residence in generating Angiolillo and Bresci's fatal deeds, even if their radicalization had begun earlier. Angiolillo had been disciplined in the army for spreading subversive propaganda and later was sentenced, once again for subversive propaganda, to eighteen months in prison when he decided to flee Italy in 1895. Subsequently, Angiolillo wandered about Europe, never staying put in any one place for very long. But visits to Barcelona, London, and perhaps Paris, exercised crucial influence on his decision to assassinate Spanish Prime Minister Cañovas del Castillo in August 1897. In Barcelona, where Angi-

¹⁹ Dbai (see note 16 above), 1:333; Pierre Truche, *L'anarchiste et son juge: A propos de l'assassinat de Sadi Carnot* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 124–125; 163.

olillo resided for the first half of 1896, he stayed with Catalan anarchists and heard of the cruel government repression, including the torture of innocent anarchists, that followed the horrific bombing of a religious procession in June. About this time, the Italian was heard to declare that propaganda by deed was the only method for social revolution.²⁰ A visit to London, where he listened to the account and saw the scars on the body of a torture victim, reinforced his determination to take revenge on the Spanish government.²¹ Angiolillo's decision to assassinate the Spanish prime minister, rather than the queen regent or her son, may have been influenced (although this has been much debated) by conversations in Paris with Cuban rebels in revolt against their Spanish overlords.²²

The precise impact of Bresci's two and a half years living in the Italian diaspora in the United States is just as contested. While still in Italy, Bresci had gotten into trouble with the police, been listed as a dangerous anarchist, and spent a long period of forced exile on a remote island under police supervision. At his trial, Bresci declared that one of the reasons he had carried out the assassination of King Umberto was "to revenge myself, forced, after a very difficult life, to emigrate."²³ But according to one historian, the proximate cause of Bresci's emigration may not have been because of political persecution, but rather to get away from a romantic entanglement (Bresci was very much the ladies man) or because of the welcoming letters of friends who had already left Italy.²⁴ His most recent

²⁰ Francesco Tamburini, "Michele Angiolillo e l'assassinio di Cañovas del Castillo," in *Spagna contemporanea*, Torino, 9 (1996): 101–130, especially 105–107; 128.

²¹ Tamburini (see note 20 above), 108–109; Rudolf Rocker, *En la borrasca* (Buenos Aires: Americalee, 1949), 63. Rocker was an eyewitness to Angiolillo's meeting with a torture victim.

²² Tamburini (see note 20 above), 111–119.

²³ Arrigo Petacco, *L'anarchico che venne dall'America. Storia di Gaetano Bresci e del complotto per uccidere Umberto I* (Milan: Mondadori, 1969).

²⁴ Petacco (see note 23 above), 21–22.

foreign diasporas and prevent unpleasant surprise homecomings.³⁹

If the cases I have discussed so far suggest some linkage, albeit contributory rather than essential, between an immigrant experience and a subsequent terrorist act, others do not. Italian anarchists tried to assassinate, for example, the prime minister (Paolo Lega in 1894) and the king (Antonio D'Alba in 1912) and killed the editor of a Livorno newspaper (Oreste Lucchesi conspiring with Rosolino Romiti and Amerigo Franchi), but never lived outside of Italy prior to their deeds. Most significantly, one of the greatest of all Italian diasporas, the Italian emigration to Argentina, produced only one clear instance of a pre-war terrorist (although other nationalities added a few additional examples).

Prior to World War I, Argentina was second only to the United States in receiving transoceanic Italian immigrants. Over two million Italians settled there between 1876 and 1913.⁴⁰ In Buenos Aires they helped to build up probably the largest single anarchist center in the world with 10,000 or more anarchists, two daily anarchist newspapers, and a multitude of social, cultural, and political organizations. Perhaps 5–6,000 of the anarchists were Italians.⁴¹ This is an astonishingly large

³⁹ Jensen, *Battle* (see note 4 above).

⁴⁰ Donna Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 5, 69; Samuel L. Baily, *Immigration in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City 1870–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 54, 62.

⁴¹ Jose Moya, "The Positive Side of Stereotypes: Jewish Anarchists in Early-Twentieth-Century Buenos Aires," *Jewish History* 18, no. 1 (2004): 19–48; Lucien van der Walt and Steven J. Hirsch, "Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism: The Colonial and Postcolonial Experience, 1870–1940," in *Anarchism and Syndicalism* (see note 3 above), xl–xli. Moya's analysis of the Buenos Aires police files of suspected anarchists finds that 58.8 percent were Italians. *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 378.

Paterson, he probably would still have tried to carry out his regicide given his outrage over the events in Milan. But he might not have succeeded since inside Italy the likelihood was greater, although far from certain, that the Italian police could have monitored him so closely that they would have been able to thwart his attempt.

Bresci's experience illuminates the rather particular way in which for a long time migrant diasporas contributed to the phenomenon of anarchist terrorism. This was that, at least until 1900, once overseas the anarchists escaped the surveillance of the European police. Moreover, migrant anarchists often found that the local security forces abroad were uninterested in them or else lacked the technical and manpower capacity to monitor their movements. Therefore it was not so much because foreign residence radicalized the migrants, as because previously radicalized migrants, by journeying from abroad, could more easily slip into countries and through the fingers of police control. In this era of unprecedented mass migration, migration encouraged by a dominant liberal ideology that favored the free flow of labor and when passports were often not necessary, it was considered well-nigh impossible to monitor all the ships arriving in and departing from the great Atlantic and Mediterranean ports.³⁸ After 1900, Italy, Germany, Austria, and to a much lesser extent, poverty-ridden Spain, began placing police and spies abroad in order to watch dissident co-nationals in

³⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire: 1875–1914* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 50, 153. For German police complaints that they lacked sufficient numbers to monitor all incoming passenger liners for anarchists, see Senate Commission for Reich and Foreign Affairs, Hamburg, to Von Schoenburg-Waldenburg, Prussian Charge d'Affaires, November 1, 1901; Copy, foreign ministry, Berlin, March 13, 1902. Rep. 30 Berlin, tit. 94, 8756, lit A, nr. 360, Staatsarchiv Potsdam: Brandenburgischen Landeshauptarchiv, Orangerie, Potsdam. For similar complaints about monitoring American shipping, see Consul General Branchi, New York, to interior minister, Rome, January 7, 1903, Italian Foreign Ministry, Historical Archive (Rome), Polizia internazionale, b. 35.

biographer emphasizes his general alienation, due not only to his reputation as a radical but also to quarrels with his brothers and his lack of work.²⁵

In any case, Bresci emigrated to the industrial city of Paterson, New Jersey, where he found a well-paying position as a skilled silk weaver. Paterson was an important center for Italian, Spanish, French, German, Austrian, and eastern European, especially Jewish, anarchists, all drawn there by jobs in its silk and other mills. Italian, Spanish, and French anarchist newspapers were published in the town (and German- and Yiddish-language anarchist journals in nearby New York City). Both moderate anarchists who emphasized peaceful agitation and involvement in the labor movement and radicals who advocated violence could be found in New Jersey and New York. The Italian anarchists, however, never became significantly involved in the American labor movement, unlike their Russian and Jewish counterparts.²⁶ This may help to explain their greater propensity to propaganda by the deed than their anarchist cousins in Buenos Aires. Giuseppe Ciancabilla, an incendiary agitator who became Bresci's friend, was an example of those anarchists who advocated violence and, for a short time in 1898, took over the editorship of *La Question Sociale*, the major Italian anarchist journal in America.²⁷ In Paterson, Bresci soon found an Irish girlfriend and fathered a child, but domesticity failed to tame his fierce political beliefs. Bresci joined the largest Italian anarchist group in Paterson, "The Society for the Right to Existence," but left this

²⁵ Giuseppe Galzerano, Gaetano Bresci (Casalvelino Scalo: Galzerano, 2001), 117.

²⁶ Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 53.

²⁷ George W. Carrey, "La Question Sociale, an Anarchist Newspaper in Paterson, NJ (1895–1908)," in Lydio F. Tomasi, ed., *Italian Americans: New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1985), 289–297.

organization after two months since it was not revolutionary enough for his tastes. According to the testimony of a Secret Service spy, he also participated in the mysterious “Group of Thought and Action,” which had no qualms about advocating violent, individualist action.²⁸ During his interrogation, however, Bresci claimed that six months before leaving the United States he “withdrew from every political association in order to be freer.”²⁹ A number of well-known anarchist leaders met Bresci while he was in Paterson, including the famous Errico Malatesta, who has sometimes been credited with encouraging Bresci to assassinate King Umberto. In 1892, however, Malatesta had denounced propaganda by deed and so this seems unlikely. It is certainly unproven.³⁰ Bresci may have had one accomplice, Luigi Granotti, whom he met in Paterson, but, while likely, this also remains unproven.³¹

On the whole, Paterson, with its many like-minded radicals, was a congenial place for Bresci to nurture his violent, anarchist thoughts and hopes for an imminent revolution in Italy. Given the liberality of American laws, Bresci suffered from no political persecution or censorship. He was completely unmonitored by the police of Paterson.³² Indeed, the police chief was oblivious to the town’s subversives and alleged that no anar-

²⁸ John Wilkie to Secretary of Treasury, Washington, DC, November 2, 1900, File no. 11717=1900. Record Group 60, Department of Justice, National Archives (USA).

²⁹ Petacco (see note 23 above), 92.

³⁰ Giovanni Artieri, *Cronaca del Regno d’Italia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1977), 740, claims that Malatesta was the mastermind of a plot. Carl Levi, “The Anarchist Assassin and Italian History, 1870s–1930s,” in Stephen Gundle and Lucia Rinaldi, eds., *Assassinations and Murder in Modern Italy: Transformations in Society and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 210, 214, and Galzerano in his massive and well-documented biography of Bresci (see note 25 above), deny this.

³¹ Jensen, Battle (see note 4 above), 196–197.

³² The Secret Service’s monitoring of Bresci was also very inadequate; it provided a report on him only after the assassination. The Secret Service spy who infiltrated “The Society for the Right to Existence” never met Bresci

chists lived in his city, although there were hundreds if not thousands.³³ Therefore Paterson, especially after the murder of Umberto, might seem to be the fearful incubator of anarchist terrorism that *La Tribuna* had denounced. But if this were so, why did no other anarchist terrorists emerge, besides Bresci, and perhaps Granotti, from this infamous town to carry out additional violent acts of propaganda by deed? Subsequently Paterson experienced some rambunctious labor disputes, but exported no more terrorists.³⁴ Or at least until 1919, when, during the vastly different period of World War I and the immediate postwar years, some Paterson anarchists may have been involved in the plot, conceived in Boston, that led to explosions in seven American cities, including Paterson.³⁵

The key event, in any case, that converted Bresci from a theoretical anarchist to a practicing terrorist took place, not in Paterson, but in Italy. In May 1898 bread riots with political overtones erupted in Milan. Fearing revolution, the government proclaimed martial law and repressed the protestors with considerable violence. At his trial Bresci said that news of the shooting down of innocent men, women, and children caused him to weep from anger and plot revenge.³⁶ He hoped that, within a couple of months after the assassination, a revolution would break out.³⁷ If Bresci had remained in Italy, rather than emigrating and experiencing the free anarchist atmosphere of

since he had already left the organization. See Jensen, Battle (see note 4 above), 192.

³³ “Searching among Paterson Anarchists,” *New York Times*, August 1, 1900.

³⁴ Carrey (see note 27 above), 289–297, and Carrey, “The Vessel, The Deed, and The Idea: Anarchists in Paterson 1895–1908,” *Antipode* 10=11 (1979): 46–58.

³⁵ Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti* (see note 26 above), 149–157.

³⁶ Bresci said that he first began thinking about assassinating the king in 1895 after the bloody repression of disturbances in Sicily. Petacco (see note 23 above), 75, 91.

³⁷ Petacco (see note 23 above), 103, 120.