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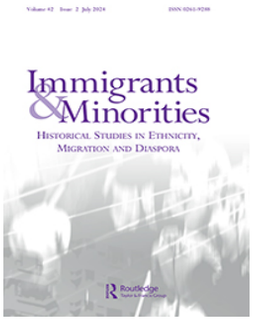

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'The loneliest of the war's victims': wives and families of Italian emigrant soldiers in the First World War

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ABSTRACT

Women's experiences during the First World War have received considerable scholarly attention but the fates of emigrant women have remained understudied. This article focuses on Italian emigrant women in the Americas, Europe and North Africa and uncovers how their experiences differed both from those of women in Italy and from those of other women in their adopted countries. The female emigrants most affected by the war were the wives of the 300,000 reservists who returned to Italy for their military service, which plunged many families into crisis. The difficulties faced by all wives of mobilised soldiers were exacerbated for female Italian emigrants. As Italian men had been the only emigrant group to depart en masse for service at home, the case of Italian women is unique. As non-citizens, they were generally not entitled to state aid. In addition, the Italian government subsidy was entirely insufficient abroad and many families were ineligible for support. This article thus explores how the Italian government and private charity abroad responded to this unfolding crisis in Italian emigrant communities and how the women themselves experienced the war and the new challenges of being an emigrant on a foreign home front.

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At the end of July 1915, 23-year-old newlywed Fortunata Mazzella, from the island of Ponza off the coast of Naples, sat in the corner of a train carriage as it pulled out of the station in Scranton, Pennsylvania, amidst cheers and fluttering Italian flags. She was accompanied by her carpenter husband, Silverio, who was one of a party of 100 men bound for New York, from where they would depart for Italy to undertake their compulsory military service in the Italian Army. It is obvious that the young woman had little conception of what life in wartime Italy would hold for her or her husband. She told a reporter, 'I was so afraid that they

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wouldn't let me go with him. [. . .] But I'm sure that we won't be far apart – even when he goes to war'. As the sole female in the group, Fortunata was something of a celebrity on the journey, serenaded by musicians from each local Italian community as the train stopped to pick up more reservists headed to war.[1]

Similar jubilant scenes of departure played out at train stations and ports all over the world following the announcement of Italy's entry into the First World War on 24 May 1915 as Italian emigrants gathered to answer their country's call to arms. By war's end, official records would show that 303,919 men had returned from abroad to be conscripted into the Italian Army with two-thirds of them arriving between May and December 1915. Half of the emigrants arrived from across the Atlantic: 103,269 from North America and 51,754 from South America. Arrivals from Europe totalled 128,570, comprising over 90,000 from France 22,000 from Switzerland 19,500 from North Africa and 8,500 from Great Britain.[2]

The situation of Fortunata Mazzella was unusual. The majority of men who returned from abroad for their military service were single or, if married, their wives resided in Italy. As no records were kept, it is impossible to ascertain exactly how many returning reservists lived abroad with their wives and children but it is likely up to a third of the 300,000 did.[3] Some of those women, like Fortunata Mazzella, opted to return with their husbands; the majority however remained abroad. It is on these emigrant women and their children on which this article will focus.

This article seeks to contribute to the vibrant field of studies that examines how the war impacted upon Italian women. It is thankfully no longer true that the experiences of women during the Great War in Italy have been ignored by scholars.[4] There is now a significant body of literature that considers women's war work – in agriculture, industry and healthcare – as well as the evolution of gender identities and the mobilisation of women on the home front.[5] Nonetheless, notable gaps remain. Bruna Bianchi recently highlighted the relative lack of studies about women's experiences in the South of Italy and in the islands.[6] She made no mention of Italian women outside of Italy. Indeed, very few works, either in the fields of First World War studies or migration history, have considered the experiences of emigrant Italian women during the period 1915–1918. The period is also generally overlooked in work on

Italian-American social history.[7] Vanda Wilcox's recent book makes a passing reference to the difficulties faced by families of mobilised soldiers abroad but this is not the focus of her work. The role of middle-class Italian women abroad in fundraising and civil institutions has been partially addressed in the context of New Haven, Connecticut and in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil.[8] Although valuable, these works perpetuate the tendency of studies of Italian women's wartime experiences to focus primarily on the elites.[9] The experiences and voices of working-class women have been largely absent.

This article also seeks to contribute to the emerging field of 'military welfare history', which has recently been identified as an important and distinct sub-field of war studies.[10] Building on foundational earlier work by scholars like Susan Pedersen and Young-Sun Hong, the last 15 years has witnessed a particular surge in interest in exploring how gender, welfare provisions and military service interact during wartime.[11] In keeping with the welcome efforts to globalise the history of the First World War, many of these recent works have considered extra-European and colonial contexts.[12] To date, however, interest in the warfare-welfare nexus for the Italian case has been largely focused on the categories of disabled soldiers and war victims, and on the payment of pensions, leaving the emigrant context unexplored.[13]

Thus, this article, with its focus on the experiences on the wives and families of emigrant soldiers, seeks to put centre stage both an extra-Italian perspective that has been lacking and to foreground the experiences, and voices where possible, of working-class women. Accessing the voices of the largely illiterate, working-class Italian emigrant women is a challenging task. The vast majority of them did not leave behind any written records. Thus, this article relies primarily on the documentation produced by governmental and charitable organisations, mining it for revealing snapshots of women's lives as they came into contact with the state or civil society. The approach adopted is also a global one, considering women's experiences in the United States, Argentina, France, Great Britain and North Africa. I will first explore how the Italian state and civil society in their adopted homes considered and treated these families, before considering aspects of their lived experience.

Separation allowances

On 13 May 1915, 10 days before Italy entered the First World War, the Italian government updated its policy on separation allowances for men mobilised in the armed forces. Dependent family members without any other means of support could avail of the subsidy, which amounted to L. 0.70 per day for a wife, L. 0.35 for each child under the age of 12 or older if the child was unable to work, and L. 0.70 for a dependent parent over 60 years of age or a sibling under 12 if they were orphans or unable to work.[14] These subsidies would also be payable to family members living abroad but were not increased or adjusted to account for unfavourable exchange rates and higher living costs. The only concession was that emigrants would be paid the 'regional capital' rate rather than that applicable to other areas, which was L. 0.10 higher per day for wives and L. 0.05 higher for each child. In the earliest days of the war, no direct orders arrived from Rome about the logistics of how the payment of these subsidies was to be managed. Consulates around the world were spontaneously required to provide support to hundreds of needy families who had presented themselves at their doors.[15]

It was immediately obvious to all parties, the Italian government included, that the separation allowances on offer were entirely insufficient to replace the lost income of emigrants who had responded to the call to arms. The situation in large American cities was particularly serious. The Italian Consul in New Haven acknowledged that 'everybody knows that the government subsidy [. . .] is insufficient to be able to live in America'.[16] In New York City, the rent for 'the most modest hovel' was not less than $6 a month and the subsidy for a wife with one child amounted to only $5.12, as Italian Prime Minister Antonio Salandra was informed in July 1915.[17] In even starker terms, an editorial in the Boston-based *Gazzetta del Massachusetts* noted the same summer, 'With $4.20 [the monthly subsidy for a wife], you can't fill a dog with black bread for a month, just imagine whether a woman can live with such a small amount'.[18] In Great Britain too, assistance committees noted that the government separation allowance 'was absolutely insufficient to provide even a modest living'.[19]

In addition to the problem of the monetary value of the subsidy, was the fact that the government's eligibility criteria were very restrictive. Only the families of those men who had already completed their two years of compulsory military service before the war would receive the subsidy. Thus, the many men who took advantage of an amnesty

issued in May 1915 to regulate their draft-evader status were deemed ineligible for support.[20] Illegitimate children and unmarried women were also excluded from the subsidy programme. Levels of support received differed markedly across emigrant communities. Out of 1,032 departures from Cairo, 270 families were in receipt of government aid while in Chicago, some 11,490 men departed for Italy but only 128 families received the government benefits.[21] In Seattle, Boston and Algeria, due to rates of pre-war draft evasion and family composition, not more than one-third of the reservists' families were in receipt of the Italian government subsidy.[22]

The case of Clementina Colacicco in New Haven, Connecticut was typical. She struggled to make ends meet after her husband's departure and appealed to the Italian Consul for her fare back to Italy to be paid. In the meantime, she was in receipt of the government subsidy. She was ultimately given permission to depart for Italy on a subsidised fare but, provided with only two days' notice, she was unable to leave. The authorities then discovered her husband had evaded his military service before the war, rendering her ineligible for support, so her subsidy was abruptly withdrawn.[23]

The mobilization of private charity

As soon as Italy had entered the war, funds had begun to flow back to Italy from any location with an Italian community, no matter how small, to support the soldiers and officers already under arms. Even the tiny Italian community of San Salvador in Central America, which consisted of a mere 150 people – half of whom were unable to donate anything due to their own impoverished circumstances – had raised 25,000 francs for the war effort by 5 June 1915.[24] Already by the end of May 1915, Italian-language newspapers in the US were publishing calls from the Italian Red Cross that appealed to their readers to demonstrate the 'deep national solidarity' of Italians abroad by donating to support soldiers in Italy.[25] Fundraising initiatives were already a well-established phenomenon among the middle classes of Italian emigrant communities, although usually in response to natural disasters, for example for victims of the devastating 1908 Messina earthquake.[26]

In mid-June 1915, Sidney Sonnino, the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister, asked that 1,300 committees in centres of Italian emigration around the world take action to aid families abroad and raise their morale. According

to Sonnino, their tasks should be to facilitate the return of reservists to Italy, to gather information about assets abandoned by reservists upon departure, to engage in correspondence with returned reservists, to keep the government informed of local needs and to generally keep high the 'moral elevation of their souls'.[27] In reality, immediately following Italy's intervention and increasingly as the war continued, it would be necessary for the committees to intervene in much more extensive and financially burdensome ways.

Within weeks, as thousands of reservists departed for service in Italy, it became clear that middle-class philanthropy was required not for those back in Italy but for those within their own emigrant communities. There were serious fears about the consequences of these departures on family members left abroad. Pre-existing charitable organisations active in emigrant communities sprang into action and redirected their energies and funding towards helping the families of the reservists. Within a few weeks of Italy's entry into the war, charitable groups – called 'Comitato italiano di assistenza per le famiglie dei richiamati' (Italian assistance committee for reservists' families), 'Comitato di solidarietà nazionale' (National solidarity committee) or a variation thereof – were hard at work. This kind of fundraising was primarily a phenomenon in the Americas and in North Africa where there were well established communities with a strong middle class. Meanwhile, the Parisian support committee for reservists' families pointed out that the Italian community in the French capital mainly comprised of labourers, workers and small businesspeople who had neither the money nor the time to dedicate to fundraising and charity.[28]

Fundraising and charitable activities for the families of reservists took all kinds of forms: Italians in Cairo made their second homes by the sea 'in healthy and well ventilated areas' available to the families of departed reservists as did some of the better-off members of the Buenos Aires community.[29] Those living in the Italian colony of Tripoli, Libya were invited to participate in a competition to design a patriotic postcard featuring a local scene and capturing the city's feelings about the war.[30] Charity auctions were a favourite fundraising method among communities in Egypt and Tunisia, which featured everything from tins of tuna, cases of San Pellegrino water and bottles of vermouth to a bronze sugar bowl, an ebony walking stick with silver handle and a bicycle light and bell.[31] Meanwhile, fundraising in support of the war effort was so widespread in Italian communities in Brazil

that wily scam-artists decided to try and get in on the act and set up fraudulent collections.[32]

In the UK and the US, the pattern was somewhat different. As soon as Italy entered the war in 1915, and even before the US entry into the war in 1917, there was a significant mobilisation of non-Italians in support of the families of Italian reservists who had returned to fight in Italy. In the UK, British support of Italian families constituted a form of inter-allied solidarity. The Pro Italia committee was the most active, under the patronage of the Italian Ambassador and also supported by the British Prime Minister, Lord Mayor of London, and Lord Kitchener. They organised an annual Italian Flag Day, the first in October 1915, to show 'in a practical way our sympathy with Italy and honouring her splendid achievements in the war'.[33] The subscribers to the committee's activities were a balanced mix of Italians and non-Italians, including a £20 donation from somebody who identified herself only as 'a grateful Englishwoman'.[34] The kinds of events organised – an auction of Italian paintings, afternoon tea at Claridge's, a bazaar at Selfridge's department store, a parade of Italians in traditional costume – and the fact that the Comitato Pro Italia advertised its work on the Tube network indicated that the intended audience was affluent English people, not the Italian immigrant community.[35] While the flag days in London, Manchester and Cardiff raised quite significant sums (between £470 and £5,000), the funds gathered from areas without many Italian residents were rather more modest – £34 from the Isles of Scilly and a mere £19 in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, indicating that an Italian presence did have an impact on the amounts raised.[36]

The situation in Boston and New York, which both boasted significant Italian communities, was similar. The New England Italian War Relief Fund was established in June 1915 with a president, executive committee and organisational structure comprised almost entirely of non-Italians. Much as was likely the case in London, many of those who participated in the fund's work had previously travelled to Italy or appreciated its culture. As the New England Fund stated:

> we appeal in the name of humanity, which calls on everyone to succor especially the innocent victims of War. We believe also that many Americans, who acknowledge their debt to Italy for her service to civilisation, and for the pleasure and inspiration which they have personally received from her, will welcome this means of expressing their gratitude.[37]

In New York, there were numerous events held to benefit the families of Italian reservists, which were clearly not aimed at an exclusively Italian

audience, for example a concert at Carnegie Hall and the US premiere of the Italian film *Christus*.[38] In October 1916, an Italian bazaar ran for nine days, attracting up to 20,000 people a day to listen to Italian music and performances, buy Italian products, and judge the bonniest of 259 babies displayed in their 'choiciest frills'. Both Italian and American flags were on equally prominent display and news reports in the English-language media made clear that the bazaar was frequented by both Italians and non-Italians alike, with some $100,000 raised in total, including a donation from J.P. Morgan.[39]

However, while middle-class non-Italian philanthropy was a feature of Allied communities if it offered the possibility of a diverting day out, the families of Italian reservists were viewed in consistently hostile terms by state welfare agencies. As immigrants, these Italian families were generally ineligible for the state support to which the wives and families of native servicemen were entitled. Already by the end of June 1915, requests were being made to the British government to provide support for the British-born children of Italian reservists who had returned to Italy.[40] Those administering the Canadian Patriotic Fund specifically excluded most Italian families of reservists from receiving aid as they were deemed to be only 'sojourners', living in multi-family boarding houses; the families of Belgian and French reservists were, however, regarded as acceptable recipients of aid. Even when Italian families did manage to receive aid from the Canadian fund, they were discriminated against in the amount – while the wife and child of a British reservist received $35.82 a month, the equivalent Italian family would receive only $17.[41] In the US, 'as aliens these Italians have no recognized claim on the municipal charities'.[42] If they did approach American charitable organisations, they would be turned away, in some cases being brusquely told 'Why did your husbands leave? Go to the authorities of your own country and to your own countrymen'.[43]

As much as the state welfare apparatus of Allied or neutral nations did not wish to support the families of Italian reservists abroad, neither did the Italian authorities or Italian-focused private charity wish for them to have to rely on foreign aid. Vittorio Orlandini of the New England Italian War Relief Fund went so far as to inform the Italian-language press in Boston that families of reservists should avoid going to US charities, such as the Overseers of the Poor or the State Board of Charity, for assistance.[44] A dominant theme in the missives of both consuls and committees requesting additional government help was the need for sufficient Italian-

funded charity so that indigent reservists' families would not need to turn to welfare or charitable organisations in their adopted homeland. Such a situation would entail 'great damage to national honour and the good name [of Italy]' and cause a 'grave damage to our good name and our Italian dignity', as, respectively, the Consul in Lyon and a New York Italian welfare community put it.[45]

Such requests for support to avoid humiliation of Italy in the eyes of other countries continued into 1917, but the Italian government was unwilling to intervene. Prime Minister Salandra himself wrote in July 1915 that he did not believe that the so-called 'private work' of the committees 'should be complemented by further contributions from the generosity of the Sovereign' and this position did not alter as the war dragged on.[46] Although the government recognised the importance of the committees' work, they were reluctant to provide any ongoing funds and they intervened only in very rare cases.[47] They acquiesced to isolated appeals including the donation of 1,000 francs for a lottery organised by the 'Comitato italiano di soccorso pro famiglie mobilizzate' in Paris or, more significantly, the provision of a month's supply (1,000 bags) of rice and flour for the Italian community in Athens, to which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed due to the 'sad conditions of our communities in Greece'.[48] Once again, in September 1918, General Badoglio, the deputy head of the Italian Armed Forces, acknowledged that, amidst the depreciation of the Italian lira against foreign currencies, the separation allowance was insufficient to support needy emigrant families but no changes in practice were undertaken.[49] Instead, aware of the deficiencies in the official support available, Consuls advised women to avail of the private charity on offer.[50]

It quickly became clear, however, to all assistance committees abroad that the extent of the support required outstripped their resources and the generosity of the middle-classes, Italian or otherwise. Committees from across the world appealed to the Italian government to step in and support them in their efforts to provide for emigrant families. Already in July 1915, the principal New York committee requested a subvention from Prime Minister Salandra highlighting that they could not be expected to be able to raise sufficient funds for the duration of the war.[51] By August 1916, the support committee in Lyon, France was spending 2,500 francs a month with ever-increasing costs as more men were mobilised and the cost of living rose, prompting them to appeal to newly-installed Prime Minister Paolo Boselli for funds.[52] Even in

communities with many near-indigent Italian families, there was often more enthusiasm for fundraising to support those in Italy than there was to support needy families in their own communities. Committees used all kinds of tactics to try and encourage the more affluent members of the communities to increase their donations. In Cairo, the newspaper *Il messaggero egiziano* explicitly called out middle-class women for the insufficiency of the support they were offering to the reservists' families, accusing them of being more interested in sending woollen clothing to the soldiers on the front lines than in engaging in charitable action closer to home.[53] The *Gazzetta del Massachusetts* similarly felt it necessary to point out that the committees in Boston supporting the 'war victims' should pay attention to those on their own doorsteps.[54] By 1917, the New England Italian War Relief Fund was faced with the imminent collapse of its charitable activities due to a lack of funds and launched an urgent appeal.[55] Similarly, the Catholic charitable organisation, the Opera Bonomelli appealed to richer members of the Italian community in Lugano to remember to donate to help provide for needy families in Davos and Locarno.[56] However, especially following the US entry into the war and the devastating defeat at Caporetto, both in 1917, the philanthropy of Italian emigrant communities began to be stretched ever thinner. From 1917, the parish priest of St Joachim's Church in New York was receiving constant requests for his congregation to support the US war effort, whether through the New York Catholic War Fund, the United War Work Campaign, or the Liberty Loan campaign, indicating the extent to which emigrants' loyalties were being tested.[57]

Returning to Italy with their husbands, as Fortunata Mazzella did, was an option not available to most. Only the fares of the mobilised men, and not of their families, were paid for by the Italian government. Providing also for the fares of family members, in the words of the Italian General Commissariat for Emigration, would have entailed 'the embarkation of almost entire communities'.[58] Men who wished to depart with their families had to scrape together their savings to pay the fare or look to charitable organisations for assistance. In São Paulo, the Italian Pro-Patria Committee paid for the passage of 590 family members to return with mobilised soldiers in the first six months of Italy's war, most of them single women or wives with one or two children. Meanwhile, in Rio de Janeiro, only 50 places were provided free of charge by Italian charities for family members.[59] Some reservists in Connecticut, despite working and earning a good wage, tried to claim a free trip for their families too but were

swiftly denied.[60] As the major support committee for Italian reservists in Buenos Aires pointed out to Prime Minister Salandra in August 1915, many men were 'at a crossroads between two duties – towards their family and towards their homeland', willing to serve Italy but not prepared to 'abandon in a cosmopolitan city like this one young women without relatives'.[61] Host governments were also concerned about the prospect of reservists' dependents remaining abroad and becoming public charges: in Cincinnati, Ohio, in August 1915, at least 10 married men were prevented from departing until space could be secured for their families on the same ship.[62] The Italian government was aware that the lack of provision for accompanying family members acted as a deterrent to departure for some reservists but did not alter its policy. After the war, the Commissariat for Emigration acknowledged that 'one of the main motivations that stopped many emigrants from doing their duty towards their homeland was precisely the thought of the abandonment into which their families would fall if they were to remain alone and without help in a foreign country'.[63]

As a result, the departure of the only wage-earner plunged the families of the least well off into precarious positions. By the start of June 1915, over 300 families had already reached out to the private assistance committee in Alexandria, Egypt. A committee in Marseille instructed family members on how to avail of support from the Consulate and the local newspaper printed a helpful template for wives to complete with the details of their husband's mobilisation and the names and ages of their children.[64] In Buenos Aires, by the end of August 1915, a committee of Italian women had paid over 1,000 visits to Italian families across the city to determine their conditions and what supports were required.[65]

The work of the committees was fraught with challenges. Despite their best efforts, they could not easily access all the locations in which Italian immigrants resided. Disbursing funds to those residents outside major urban areas was extremely difficult. One reservist, Salvatore Sentinella, complained that those in Tunis could receive assistance from charitable organisations in the city but his wife and three children, aged between six months and five years, lived in the interior with no means to support them once he departed.[66] The amount of funding to be paid to reservists' families was also a delicate question. In the case of France and Great Britain, support committees used the local separation allowances provided for families of mobilised French and British soldiers as a benchmark for what the Italian emigrant families required. In other locales, the

additional subsidy was calculated based on family size, the level of need and the previous pay of the reservist with the guiding logic being that that families should not suffer from the departure of their wage-earner but also that departure could not be considered 'a sort of prize'.[67]

In all communities outside Italy, the associations recognised the need to be more expansive in their eligibility criteria than the government lest many hundreds, if not thousands, of families be left destitute. One of the major Parisian committees recognised that 'the environment and conditions of isolation in which the emigrant abroad finds himself singularly favour illegitimate unions, which often result in children', and thus extended its support also to unmarried women and illegitimate children.[68] Similarly in Great Britain, by the end of 1916, the Pro Italia committee was the sole provider of monetary support to 166 families consisting of unmarried women, illegitimate children, and dependent parents below the eligible age for government support as well as the families of pre-war draft evaders.[69] This was in addition to offering supplementary support to some 676 families in London, Manchester and Cardiff who were also in receipt of the government subsidy. In Alexandria in Egypt, the support committee provided for illegitimate families as well as offering extraordinary payments to new mothers and mothers who could not breastfeed and finding accommodation solutions for isolated elderly people and orphans.[70] Across all territories, the most common family structure in receipt of support were wives and children of reservists. In one case in New York between 1 January 1916 to 31 March 1918, of 55 individuals provided with a separation allowance, 43 were wives with the remaining recipients consisting of parents, grandparents and one daughter, for a total outlay of $17,613.50.[71]

Some employers of immigrant workers stepped into the breach and offered to continue to support reservists' families while they were at the front. In Egypt, a number of large companies agreed to keep reservists' jobs open for them for the duration of their service and paid them pre-departure bonuses, which ranged from one month's salary to double salary for six months. Some also made significant ongoing subsidy payments to their families, in some cases as much as half their salary or provided monthly payments to the local private committees.[72] In Brazil, the Banca Francese e Italiana per l'America del Sud agreed to give all returning reservists a quarter of their salary for the duration of the war, or half if they were married, in addition to paying for 2nd-class tickets, an advance for pre-departure essentials and a promise their jobs would be

waiting for them on their return.[73] Most reservists' families were not so fortunate.

As noted above, Italian immigrant women tended not to produce copious written records. However, the letters and reports of the private committees, who were at the coal face of the crisis unfolding among emigrant communities, provide vivid accounts of the struggles faced by Italian families following their loved one's departure. All over France, there were wives and children 'bedraggled and starving', many of whom resorted to begging on the streets.[74] Some Italian families in Paris were living in such miserable conditions that they brought to the mind of members of the local committee 'some hovels in provinces of Italy more than twenty years ago'.[75] In Alexandria, the blind mother of a reservist was put into a nursing home while the three young children of another whose wife was dying in hospital were all sent to various institutions run by religious orders in the city.[76] The records of the Italian Welfare League in New York are a particularly rich source of evidence into the lives of Italian women in one of the largest Italian ethnic communities in the world. Giuseppina Romano had arrived with her sister in New York in 1913 aged 14 to join their parents in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Four years later, she was living in New York, married with a daughter of 16 months, and penniless since her husband's departure in 1916, surviving on $5.40 per month from the Italian government. Unable to work due to her daughter's delicate health, she was living in 'wretched [... and] unsanitary' conditions in the same rooms as another family of five. After assessing her situation, the Italian Welfare League and the American Red Cross moved her and her baby into better quarters and provided them with furniture and a monthly subsidy of $20.[77] When the League first visited one Maria Promuto in March 1918, they noted that 'all the children [were] under-fed' and ill; one had been taken into convalescent care by the Bureau of Child Welfare as he recovered from influenza and bronchitis. Nonetheless, Promuto was deemed to be 'a very devoted, good mother, and does the very best she can with her limited income'.[78]

Despite the many accounts of struggling families noted here, it would be remiss to suggest that all families of returned emigrants fell into such dire circumstances. Of necessity, it was the most at-risk families that came to the attention of charitable organisations and whose experiences were therefore documented. Families requiring

little or no outside intervention have left scant traces in the archives. The family of Emma Opromollo, who lived on East 24th Street, New York, is a case in point. In 1918, the family was deemed to be managing successfully enough that the Italian Welfare League subsidy could be discontinued. While Emma was working three days a week at the local Community House, her mother minded the children at home while her teenage son attended the Murray Hill Trade School on a scholarship.[79]

Middle-class philanthropy, of the kind provided by the Italian Welfare League, was not without its critics among emigrant communities, notably from Socialist circles. One Nicola Mastrorilli from Buffalo railed against the charity bazaars in support of war orphans accusing the professional classes of cowardice and empty gestures: 'is that how you wish to soothe the pain of those mothers who did not know how to stop their sons from leaving? Those wives who did not have the strength to detain their husbands? Those children that could not rebel against their fathers departing for a senseless and endless war?'.[80] The pages of *L'operaia*, the newspaper representing the New York Ladies Waist and Dressmaker Union did not hold back in highlighting its view of the impact of the 'great slaughter' among the wives and mothers of reservists.[81] Inter-class tensions could also exist outside of militant political circles. *Il messaggero egiziano* published the rare direct contemporary testimony – written with the help of a scribe – of a working-class widow whose son had returned to fight and who lived with her 12-year-old daughter in Alexandria, which highlights the way in which fundraising could be perceived as exclusionary to those who did not belong to the middle classes. This widow was keen to help those even worse off than she was. She made a donation of 1 lira to a local charity and declared herself willing to work late into the night to sew clothes for babies or to do laundry for poor families. She appealed to the better-off Italian ladies of Alexandria, asking whether they would not also be able to donate a single lira a month by depriving themselves 'of the expense of their toiletries and their carriages without any great sacrifice'. She perceived writing to the newspaper to be her only method of connecting with these women as she felt unable to attend committee meetings 'as the other ladies do' and concluded in any case that she was 'too poor and maybe they would not listen to me'.[82]

Italian emigrant women at work

Notwithstanding the work of private charity, many reservists' family members needed to engage in paid work for the first time to supplement their domestic finances. When looking for employment, the status of being the relative of a departed reservist was harnessed to better one's chances. The classified advertisements of *La patria degli italiani* newspaper in Buenos Aires were filled with announcements by women specifying their position as wives of reservists. Many women, including some with children, sought work as domestic servants in exchange for food and board. Another, from northern Italy, wished to look after children between the ages of 2 and 5 in her own home. The Tuscan father of two returned reservists sought work as a cook.[83] The most popular form of employment was domestic sewing and laundry work that women could carry out in their own homes, already an income stream for some women before 1915.[84]

The circumstances of 24-year-old Accursia Bona who lived in New York with her two children under the age of six had deteriorated substantially when her husband had departed for war. Antonio Scalfano had been a fish peddler, earning approximately $80 a month. She received a mere $8.59 per month from the Italian Consul, which she supplemented with some sewing work at home, earning on average $2 a week.[85] However, even in the area of employment, private charity played a role. Several committees established sewing laboratories to allow families to supplement their incomes. From autumn 1915, women in Boston could earn $1 a day ($0.75 if they did not have children) working at a sewing machine at the offices of the New England Italian War Relief Fund, six days a week from 9.30 am to 4pm. Alternatively, they could have wool sent to them at home and would receive $1 for each pair of socks, $1.50 for each scarf or balaclava, 75c for gloves, $1 for a pair of flannel pyjamas, up to a maximum of $4 a week.[86] It is difficult to determine the efficacy of such programmes. A similar initiative in Alexandria was discontinued after a few months due to lack of demand.[87]

A major obstacle to wives working outside the home was lack of childcare for young children. Giovannina Maggio, the wife of a reservist, was more fortunate than most. She found work in a factory in Long Island City, doing piecework for six-and-a-half days a week and earning $15 while her parents looked after her children. Despite this external income, however, she received subsidies both from the Consulate and the local private committee.[88] Recognising

childcare as a barrier to seeking employment, other charitable organisations took action. Once Italy entered the war in 1915, the free nursery run by the Società Dante Alighieri in Marseille, which had been established in 1907 with the aim of 'waking up those young minds and reminding them that they are Italian above all else', mobilised itself to provide further support to the children of the reservists. The opening hours were extended so that mothers could secure employment and the nursery was kept open throughout the month of August specifically to cater for the reservists' children despite the extra burden this placed on the unremunerated teachers.[89] In a similar vein, an evening school for children of factory-workers at the Pirelli tire factory in Southampton in the United Kingdom was established. Meanwhile in London, five play-centres for Italian children whose parents were at the front or working in factories were established, providing storytelling and games with a heavy dose of patriotic and linguistic propaganda, including slideshows about the war and initiatives to exchange postcards with children in Italy.[90] In every Italian community, the committees ensured reservists' families were looked after at Christmas time. Mothers received generous food hampers – for example, in Rosario, Argentina such luxuries as a *panettone* and two bottles of wine alongside more essential items like bread, pasta and vegetables. Children were also not forgotten, provided, for example, with chocolate and a free film screening in Port Said on the banks of the Suez Canal or a gift basket with sweets, fruit and toys in Zurich.[91]

Not all children of emigrant reservists were so fortunate. Anita Biaia was six years old in 1915 when her farmer father was mobilised and left southern France for the front. Biaia moved with her mother and siblings from a small village to Nîmes so that her mother could find work. Her mother secured employment in a large butcher's shop, working from 5 am to 8 pm with only Sunday afternoons free and also undertook laundry work at home on the side. She was ineligible for the government subsidy but sent her daughter every week to receive vouchers for bread, milk and sugar from a local charity. Still, unable to make ends meet, Biaia's mother was forced to send her daughter to an orphanage. Except for Sundays and holidays when – not actually being an orphan – she was permitted to return to her mother and siblings, Biaia remained at the orphanage for the following three years. Her memories of the orphanage were of the biting cold in winter and the thin soup served at breakfast – much less satisfying than the milk with cocoa her mother had served her at home.[92]

The issue of motherless orphans of emigrant soldiers revealed itself early on in the war. In summer 1915, arrangements were made in Normandy, Paris and Nice to take care of motherless children so that their fathers could return to Italy to respond to the call to arms.[93] The two young children of a reservist who had departed from New York were slightly luckier after the death of their mother. Their maternal grandmother, Anna Minetti, also resident in New York, was able to take them in but did have the means to provide for them and needed to reach out to a charity for assistance in paying her daughter's funeral expenses.[94] The war, of course, also rendered many children fatherless. Politician Vincenzo Riccio identified these children as 'the most noble victims of the sacrifices made by Italian citizens at the altar of the fatherland' and condemned the fact that they had been a hasty afterthought in discussions regarding provisions for war orphans in Italy.[95] The issue was first discussed in the Senate in March 1917 when Senator Tommaso Tittoni, Ambassador to France from 1910 to 1916, acknowledged that the original plan of putting orphans living abroad, whether in the United States or in Argentina, under the care of the authorities of their father's home town in Italy, was unworkable in practice. The Minister of the Interior, and soon-to-be Prime Minister, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, also highlighted the importance of providing for these orphans who 'should be even more sacred, because the sacrifice of their fathers was double: they gave their lives for the fatherland and they left their family in a foreign land'.[96] A few months later, the Istituto Coloniale Italiano in Rome proposed the establishment of an 'Ente nazionale di assistenza agli orfani degli italiani all'estero morti in guerra' (National Body for Assistance to Orphans of Italians Abroad who Died in the War) to facilitate payments of pensions to children and provide material, moral and educational assistance although this would only come into being a year later in June 1918.[97]

Conclusion

Although economic hardship because of a man's departure for the front was not unique to Italian wives living abroad, their situation was markedly different from those of their counterparts living in Italy. For one, the critical mass of women in Italy had the means to protest against the meagre allowances they were paid and did so across the peninsula in the so-called 'benefits war'. Aided by speaking their own language and having easier access to union organising, female factory-

workers in Italy also engaged in strike action to protest against their pay and working conditions.[98] I have found no such record of collective organised action among the family members of departed soldiers in locales outside Italy.

Periods of leave were precious to all mobilised soldiers but often of little practical use to emigrants whose family had remained abroad. Those with family in France were best placed to return home when they received leave but as early as August 1915, the Italian Consul in Lyon reported instances of Italians who had abandoned their regiments and returned home to southern France.[99] Subsequently, regimental commanders began to refuse leave to those who intended to spend their time outside of Italy.[100] Transatlantic families were even worse off. The best hope for transatlantic returnees was to sustain a serious injury and be permitted to spend a period of extended convalescent leave abroad. Frequent cases of injured servicemen crossing the Atlantic for periods of recuperation are recorded in newspapers for Italian emigrant communities, particularly those in South America. One V. Strongolli, who departed from Buenos Aires in 1915 for an infantry regiment, was able to spend six months convalescing at home with his family while Antonio Orsi spent almost a year back home with relatives in Brazil, before returning to the frontlines in spring 1918.[101] But for most transatlantic families, there was nothing they could do but wait for war's end and hope their loved ones lived to see it. As one reporter for the *New York Tribune* rather pathetically put it in 1917, these were 'the loneliest of the war's victims'.[102]

The regard shown by politicians for the children of emigrant soldiers who had died in combat contrasts sharply with the way they and their mothers were treated while their fathers and husbands were alive. The additional difficulties faced by the families of the reservists who had returned to Italy from abroad and the precarious economic conditions – as well as interpersonal consequences – many of them experienced were never seriously taken into consideration by the Italian government during the war years. Indeed, as has been shown here, virtually every request for additional support fell on deaf ears. Neither did the end of the war mark the end of their trials. The demobilisation of emigrants, both within Europe and across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, proceeded chaotically and agonisingly slowly. The last emigrant reservists did not return to their pre-war destinations, and waiting families, until 1922.[103]

Notes

1. "Woman Joins Party Going to Aid Italy." *The Scranton Republican*, July 15, 1915, 1–2.
2. Salvetti, "Emigrazione e grande guerra tra renitenza e rimpatri." 216; 15,130 departed from Algeria and Tunisia, 2,940 from Egypt and 1,459 from Morocco. 24 departed from Asia; See De Michelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 719.
3. The author has carried out an analysis of a sub-set of reservists who returned to the United States after war's end, which suggests 1/3 of them had left wives abroad.
4. Soldani, "L'incerto profilo degli studi di storia contemporanea." 68; Ermacora, "Le donne italiane nella grande guerra." 13.
5. Bravo, "Italian Peasant Women and the First World War"; Molinari, *Donne e ruoli femminili nell'Italia della Grande Guerra*; Molinari, *Una patria per le donne*; Scardino Belzer, *Women and the Great War*; Curli, *Italiane al lavoro*; Bartoloni, ed., *La Grande Guerra delle italiane*; Pisa, "Italiane in tempo di guerra"; Schiavon, *Interventiste nella Grande Guerra*; Dau Novelli, "Le donne in Italia nella prima guerra mondiale"; Stato Maggiore della difesa, *Le donne nel primo conflitto mondiale*.
6. Bianchi, "Living in War."
7. See, among a vast literature, for example Gabaccia and Iacovetta, eds., *Women, Gender and Transnational Lives*; Vecchio, *Merchants, Midwives, and Laboring Women*; McKibben, *Beyond Cannery Row*. A rare exception is the article by Reis, "Cannery Row."
8. Wilcox, *The Italian Empire and the Great War*, 66; Sterba, *Good Americans: Italian and Jewish Immigrants During the First World War*, 138–140; Starosta Galante, *On the Other Side*, 70–79 and 96–105. See also Buzzi, "La nuptialité des immigrés italiens en France."
9. On the focus on middle-class women, see Molinari, *Una patria per le donne*, 13 and Scardino Belzer, "Women's Experiences with War."
10. Huddie and Carney, "Military Welfare History"; See also Obinger, "Conscription, the Military, and Welfare State Development."
11. Pedersen, "Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship"; Hong, "The Contradictions of Modernization"; See also, among a large body of literature, Nolan, "Keeping New Zealand Home Fires Burning"; Lomas, "Soldiering On"; Walsh, "A Fanatical Separation Money Mob."
12. Akın, "War, Women, and the State"; Schmitt, "The Warfare – Welfare Nexus"; and Joseph, "Black Women, Separation Allowances and Citizenship."
13. Procacci, "Warfare-welfare"; Salvante, "Italian Disabled Veterans"; Pironti, *Kriegsopfer und Staat*; Pironti, "Warfare to Welfare"; and Quagliaroli, "Le pensioni per gli invalidi."
14. Decreto Legge n. 620, May 13, 1915, in *La Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, May 15, 1915, 3023–3024.
15. "Attorno alla mobilitazione," *L'eco d'Italia* (Marseille), June 13, 1915, 2; Biblioteca di Storia Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome (henceforth BSMC).
16. Letter from the Italian Consulate, New Haven to Vito Pittaro, May 24, 1916, in Vito Pittaro Papers, Box 1, Immigration History Research Center Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (henceforth IHRCA); All translations from Italian are by the author.

17. Letter to Salandra from Comitato Generale Italiano di Soccorso Pro Croce Rossa Italiana e Famiglie dei richiamati, July 31, 1915, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Guerra europea 1915–18, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri f. 25 New York, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome (henceforth ACS PCM GE1915–18).
18. "Un dovere di solidarietà nazionale." *La Gazzetta del Massachusetts* (Boston), July 17, 1915, 8, IHRCA.
19. Comitato Pro Patria – Londra, *Report of the Comitato Pro Italia, June 1915–December 1916* London: T. Whittington, 1917, 20–21, b. 72, f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri, sf. 17 Londra, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
20. Regio Decreto no. 673, May 20, 1915, *La Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, May 24, 1915, 3195.
21. De Michelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 758–759 and 734.
22. De Michelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 758–759 and 736; Roberts, *The Story of Nedda*, 103.
23. Letter from consular agent, Italian Consulate, New Haven to Pittaro, May 24, 1916, Vito Pittaro Papers, Box 1, IHRCA.
24. Report from the Consul of San Salvador to the Ministero degli Affari Esteri, June 5, 1915, b.72 f.19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 23 San Salvador, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
25. "Per la Croce Rossa Italiana," *La Gazzetta del Massachusetts* (Boston), May 29, 1915, 4, IHRCA.
26. "Il dovere della colonia verso i difensori della patria." *L'Italia* (Chicago), June 6, 1915, 3, IHRCA; See Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, on pre-war fundraising, 200–202.
27. "Un appello del Min. degli Esteri ai Comitati di difesa degli emigranti." *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 12, 1915, 2, BSMC.
28. Comitato di soccorso alle famiglie dei richiamati della Colonia Italiana di Parigi, *Relazione Morale e finanziaria, giugno 1915 – dicembre 1916*, 1917, 21, b.72 f.19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 40 Comitati in Francia per famiglie, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
29. "La questione degli affetti delle famiglie dei richiamati," *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 26, 1915, 4, BSMC; Sidney Sonnino, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Ministero dell'Interno, June 8, 1915, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 3 Buenos Aires, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
30. "Preparazione civile." *La nuova Italia* (Tripoli), May 21, 1915, 3, BSMC.
31. "Associazione fra gli ex-alunni delle Scuole italiane di Cairo." *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 24, 1915, 4, BSMC; "Associazione fra gli ex-alunni delle Scuole italiane di Cairo." *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), July 1, 1915, 4, BSMC; "Comitato di soccorso per le famiglie bisognose dei mobilitati di Goletta." *L'unione* (Tunis), September 17, 1915, 2, BSMC.
32. "Per evitare le truffe," *Il Corriere italiano* (Rio de Janeiro), June 3, 1915, 3, BSMC; "Sfruttatori del patriottismo." *Il Corriere italiano* (Rio de Janeiro), September 27, 1915, 3, BSMC.
33. "Italian Flag Day," *The Observer* (London), November 26, 1916, 7.
34. "Pro Italia," *The Observer* (London), October 24, 1915, 4.

35. "Italian Flag Day," *The Observer* (London), October 3, 1915, 3; "Italian Flag Days," *The Manchester Guardian*, October 18, 1915, 3.
36. Comitato Pro Patria – Londra, *Report of the Comitato Pro Italia*, June 1915–December 1916, 12, 14 and 50, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 17 Londra, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
37. Flyer from the New England Italian War Relief Fund requesting donations, February 27, 1917, received by Isabella Stewart Gardner. Accessed August 12, 2024. https://www.gardnermuseum.org/experience/collection/34444.
38. "Concert Aids Italian Reservists," *The New York Times*, April 5, 1916, 11; also "Opera in Aid of Italian Reservists." *The New York Times*, March 28, 1916, 13 and "Christus." *The Evening World* (New York), April 28, 1917, 8.
39. "Italian Bazaar Will Open on Saturday." *The Standard Union* (Brooklyn), October 24, 1916, 3; "$20,000 Before Opening of the Italian Bazaar."*The Evening World* (New York), October 28, 1916, 4; "Italian Bazaar Opens." *The New York Times,* October 29, 1916, 14; "20,000 at Italian Bazaar." *The Evening World* (New York), November 2, 1916, 14; "Babies being Groomed for Italian Bazaar." *The New York Tribune,* November 2, 1916, 7; "259 Baby Patriots Boom Italian Bazaar." *The New York Tribune,* November 3, 1916, 5; "$100,000 in Italian Bazaar." *The New York Times*, November 6, 1916, 6.
40. "Italian Reservists Families." *The Manchester Courier*, June 25, 1915, 1.
41. Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 206 and 107. See also Marti, *For Home and Empire*, 83.
42. Roberts, 103.
43. Letter from the Comitato Generale Italiano di Soccorso Pro Croce Rossa Italiana e Famiglie dei richiamati to Prime Minister Salandra, July 31, 1915, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 25 New York, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
44. "Il laboratorio delle famiglie dei richiamati," *La Gazzetta del Massachusetts* (Boston), December 4, 1915, 7, IHRCA.
45. Letter from the Consul General, Lyon to Ministro della Real Casa, June 9, 1915, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 15 Lyon, ACS PCM GE1915–18 and Letter from the Comitato Generale Italiano di Soccorso Pro Croce Rossa Italiana e Famiglie dei richiamati to Prime Minister Salandra, July 31, 1915, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 25 New York, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
46. Letter from Prime Minister Salandra to Ministro della Real Casa, July 3, 1915, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 15 Lyon, ACS PCM GE1915–18; See also Letter from member of the Camera dei deputati [name illegible] to Prime Minister Boselli, May 18, 1917, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 40 Comitati in Francia per famiglie and Report by A. Parazzoli regarding the Convegno dei comitati di soccorso italiani di Francia in Paris, April 30, 1917; b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 40 Comitati in Francia per famiglie, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
47. Letter from Prime Minister Boselli to the President of the Comitato di Solidarietà Nazionale di Alessandria, July 14, 1916, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 16 Alessandria, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
48. President of the Comitato italiano di soccorso pro famiglie mobilizzate to Prime Minister Boselli, October 7, 1916, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 15 Lyon, ACS PCM GE1915–18 and letter from Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sonnino to Prime Minister Boselli, June 9, 1917, b. 75 f. 19.3 Stati esteri f. 1 Colonie italiane e isole dell'Egeo,

sf. 11 Colonia italiana in Atene and sf. 12 Condizioni degli italiani residenti a Patrasso, ACS PCM GE1915–18.

49. Letter from General Badoglio to the Prime Minister and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 5, 1918, cited in Salvetti, 219, n. 47.
50. Letter from Consular Agent, New Haven to Pittaro, May 24, 1916, Vito Pittaro Papers, box 1, IHRCA.
51. Letter from the Comitato Generale Italiano di Soccorso Pro Croce Rossa Italiana e Famiglie dei richiamati to Prime Minister Salandra, July 31, 1915, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 25 New York, ACS PCM GE1915–18. The committee in Lyon, France, also highlighted the insufficiency of the subsidy to the government. See letter from the Consul General, Lyon to Ministro della Real Casa, June 9, 1915, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 15 Lyon, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
52. Letter from the Consul General, Lyon, to Prime Minister Boselli, August 8, 1916, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 15 Lyon, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
53. "Comitato di assistenza di Cairo," *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 23, 1915, 4; "Buone ma inutili proposte." *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), August 21, 1915, 4, both BSMC.
54. "Un dovere di solidarietà nazionale." *La Gazzetta del Massachusetts* (Boston), July 17, 1915, 8.
55. Roberts, n.p.
56. "Vita italiana all'estero." *La Patria* (Lugano), April 8, 1917, 4, BSMC.
57. Records of St. Joachim's Church, box. 5, f. 162, 163, 164, 174 and 175, Archive of the Center for Migration Studies in New York (henceforth CMSNY).
58. De Michelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 716.
59. Comitato Italiano Pro-Patria di São Paolo, *Relazione morale e finanziaria presentata dalla commissione esecutiva, 1915–16*. São Paulo: Comitato Italiano Pro-Patria di São Paolo, 1916, 26; "Avviso." *Il Corriere italiano* (Rio de Janeiro), September 9, 1915, 3, BSMC; See also De Micnelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 764–766.
60. Letter from Italian Consulate, New Haven to Vito Pittaro, August 14, 1915, Vito Pittaro Papers, box 1, IHRCA.
61. Letter from Comitato italiano di guerra pro-richiamati e loro famiglie (Antonio Devoto) to Prime Minister Antonio Salandra, August 6, 1915, b.72 f.19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 11 Buenos Aires, ACS PCM GE1915–18; See also Letter from On. Frisoni to Salandra, August 6, 1915, b. 78 America f. 19.3.17 sf. 3 Prezzi di favore per il trasporto delle famiglie dei richiamati residenti nel Brasile, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
62. "Italian Reservists: Not Leaving Dependent Families, says Ginocchio." *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (Ohio), August 22, 1915, 38.
63. De Michelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 761.
64. "Comitato di solidarietà nazionale." *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 8, 1915, 2, BSMC; Comitato italiano di assistenza per le famiglie dei richiamati, *L'eco d'Italia* (Marseille), June 13, 1915, 1, BSMC.
65. Letter from Comitato italiano di guerra pro-richiamati e loro famiglie (Antonio Devoto) to Prime Minister Salandra, August 6, 1915, b.72 f.19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 11 Buenos Aires, ACS PCM GE1915–18.

66. "Un richiamato dell'interno e i soccorsi," *L'unione* (Tunis), June 12, 1915, 2, BSMC.
67. *Comitato Pro Patria – Londra*, Report of the Comitato Pro Italia, June 1915–December 1916, 20–21; see also De Michelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 768–773.
68. Comitato di soccorso alle famiglie dei richiamati della Colonia Italiana di Parigi, *Relazione Morale e finanziaria, giugno 1915 – dicembre 1916,* (1917), 6.
69. Comitato Pro Patria – Londra, *Report of the Comitato Pro Italia, June 1915–December 1916*, 38–39.
70. *La colonia italiana di Alessandria d'Egitto e la mobilitazione civile*. Alexandria: Stabilmento tipografico Molco, Petrini & Co., 1916, 10, b.72 f.19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 16 Alessandria, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
71. "Bazar e famiglie dei richiamati," *Bollettino OSIA*, May 4, 1918, IHRCA.
72. "Comitato di assistenza di Cairo," *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 20, 1915, 4, BSMC; "Un bellissimo gesto della ditta Sieguwart," *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 23, 1915, 4, BSMC; *La colonia italiana del Canale di Suez e la Metropoli durante la Grande Guerra*. Bollettino semestrale dei comitati di solidarieta di Porto-Said, Ismailia e Suez: Porto-Said, Jan 1916, 10, BSMC.
73. "La patriottica deliberazione della Banca Francese e Italiana per l'America del Sud." *Il Corriere italiano* (Rio de Janeiro), May 28, 1915, 3, BSMC; See also Caroline Douki, "Les Italiens de Glasgow," about the mobilisation of mutual-aid societies and businesses to support reservists' families in Glasgow.
74. Report by A. Parazzoli regarding the Convegno dei comitati di soccorso italiani di Francia in Paris, April 30, 1917, b. 72 f. 19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 40 Comitati in Francia per famiglie, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
75. Comitato di soccorso alle famiglie dei richiamati della Colonia Italiana di Parigi, *Relazione Morale e finanziaria, giugno 1915 – dicembre 1916*. (1917), 21, b.72 f.19.1.72 Stati esteri sf. 40 Comitati in Francia per famiglie, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
76. "La patriottica deliberazione della Banca Francese e Italiana per l'America del Sud. "*Il Corriere italiano* (Rio de Janeiro), May 28, 1915, 3, BSMC.
77. "Families of Italian reservists for summer outings." undated newspaper clipping but c. 1917, Papers of the Italian Welfare League, box 14, folder: Italian Committee for Discharged Italian Soldiers General Correspondence, CMSNY.
78. Letter from Henrietta Kirch of American Red Cross to Margherita DeVecchi of Italian Welfare League, November 27, 1918, Papers of the Italian Welfare League, Box 14, folder: Italian Committee for Discharged Italian Soldiers, General Correspondence, CMSNY.
79. Letter from Kirch to DeVecchi, November 29, 1918, Papers of the Italian Welfare League, Box 14, folder: American Red Cross Italian Auxiliary 1918 - Relief Shipments to Italy, CMSNY.
80. Letter by Nicola Mastrorilli, "Gli eroi dell'armiamoci e … partite." *La parola proletaria. Periodico settimanale del partito socialista d'America* (Chicago), May 26, 1917, 3, IHRCA.
81. "Quando sarà finito il grande macello," *L'operaia* (New York), April 30, 1915, 3, IHRCA.

82. F.G., "Il contributo delle donne in Alessandria," *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), June 27, 1915, 4, BSMC.
83. Classified advertisements, *La patria degli italiani* (Buenos Aires), October 16, 1915, 1; December 10, 1915, September 6, 1, BSMC.
84. Carnevale, "Culture of Work."
85. Letter from Janet Anderson, Director of Civilian Relief, Brooklyn Chapter of American National Red Cross to DeVecchi of the Italian Welfare League, December 11, 1918, Papers of the Italian Welfare League, Box 14, folder: Italian Committee for Discharged Italian Soldiers, General Correspondence, CMSNY.
86. "Il laboratorio delle famiglie dei richiamati", *La Gazzetta del Massachusetts* (Boston), December 4, 1915, 7 and "L'apertura di laboratorio per le famiglie dei richiamati." *La Gazzetta del Massachusetts* (Boston), October 30, 1915, 5.
87. "Per chi desidera lavoro di cucito." *Il messaggero egiziano* (Alexandria), July 7, 1915, 4, BSMC
88. Letter from Kirch of American Red Cross to De Vecchi of Italian Welfare League, December 6, 1918, Papers of the Italian Welfare League, Box 14, folder: Italian Committee for Discharged Italian Soldiers, General Correspondence, CMSNY.
89. See folder Marseilles 1911–1918, 367A, Archivio Società Dante Alighieri, Rome.
90. Report by President E. Canziani of the "London section" of the Società Dante Alighieri, July 12, 1922, folder London 1910–1926, Archivio Società Dante Alighieri, Rome
91. *La colonia italiana del Canale di Suez e la Metropoli durante la Grande Guerra*, 15; "Il canestro di Natale alle famiglie dei richiamati." *Il Giornale d'Italia* (Buenos Aires), December 24, 1915, 3, BSMC; "Albero di Natale dell'asilo infantile italiano di Zurigo," *L'Italia* (Locarno), December 31, 1915, 3, BSMC.
92. Anita Biaia, "Le chemin de ma vie." 3–7, MP/16, Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, Pieve Santo Stefano, Italy, available at 'Italiani all'estero. I Diari raccontano', Accessed August 12, 2024. https://www.idiariraccontano.org/autore/fantozzi-biaia-anita/.
93. "Un'opera francese per i bimbi degli italiani chiamati alle armi in patria," *L'eco d'Italia* (Marseille), June 13, 1915, 2, BSMC.
94. "Resoconto Pro-famiglie indigenti dei richiamati e per soccorsi ai soldati, 30 giugno to dicembre 31, 1918." Papers of the Italian Welfare League, Box 14, folder: Italian Discharged Soldiers Financial Docs, CMSNY.
95. Speech by Dep. Vincenzo Riccio in the Camera dei Deputati, July 2, 1917, *Atti parlamentari, Legislatura XXIV*, 13740.
96. For a summary of the debate and Orlando's words, see "Emigrazione ed emigranti." *Rivista coloniale*, April 30, 1917, 195–196.
97. See "L'emigrazione in Parlamento. Per gli orfani della Guerra all'estero." *La Patria* (Lugano), April 8, 1917, 2, BSMC and "Per gli orfani degli italiani all'etero morti in guerra." *La Patria* (Lugano), July 1, 1917, 1, BSMC; "Per gli orfani degli italiani all'estero morti in guerra," *La Gazzetta del Massachusetts* (Boston), August 4, 1917, 2.
98. Ortaggi, "Italian Women During the Great War." 222–232.

99. Letter from Italian Ambassador to France Tommaso Tittoni to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, undated [but 1916], b. 84 Francia f. 19.3.32 sf.1 Disertori in Francia, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
100. "Renitenti e disertori italiani in Francia." b. 84 Francia f. 19.3.32 sf. 1 Disertori in Francia, ACS PCM GE1915–18.
101. "V. Strongolli," *Il Giornale d'Italia* (Buenos Aires), August 10, 1916, 6, BSMC and "Notizie dei nostri soldati." *La patria degli italiani* (Rio de Janeiro), April 7, 1918, 2, BSMC. See also "Il piroscafo Cavour." *La patria degli italiani* (Buenos Aries), January 5, 1916, 6, BSMC and "La nobile lettera di un riservista." *La patria degli italiani* (Rio de Janeiro), March 17, 1918, 2, BSMC.
102. "Many Wives of Allied Soldiers Are Poor and Lonely in New York. "*New York Tribune,* July 11, 1917, 12.
103. De Michelis, *L'emigrazione italiana dal 1910 al 1923*, 785–806.

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