

How the Italian-Australian left and its press viewed *Il Globo*

Simone Battiston

In response to the establishment of *Il Globo* in 1959 the Italian-Australia left launched its own monthly journal in 1963 *Il Nuovo Paese*, under the auspices of the Italian-Australian League (LIA). The *Il Nuovo Paese* was unable to hold its momentum and was forced to fold in 1966. In 1974 the task of producing a new leftist Italian newspaper fell to the Italian Federation of the Migrant Workers and their Families (FILEF) with an identical sounding periodical name *Nuovo Paese (without the Il)*. This new journal would become the “workerist” biweekly of the FILEF, and was to offer a left-wing source of information to the local Italian-language readers. How *Il Globo* was viewed by the Italian-Australian left and its press in the 1960s and 1970s is recalled in this chapter. Although different, the history of *Il Globo* and that of the Italian-Australian left newspapers did share some common features, including not only the aspiration to shape public opinion within the ethnic community but also help sustain the political ambitions of their editors.

The Italian-Australian left, its press and *Il Globo*

For left-leaning Italians in Australia *Il Globo* was perceived as a conservative media outlet which needed to be counter-balanced by local Italian-language progressive press. One organisation which took up this task was the Italian-Australian League (LIA). The LIA was established in July 1958 by left wing Italians of Melbourne, some of whom were former members of anti-fascist and left organisations such as *Italia Libera* and Italian-Australian Club (CIA).¹⁸³ LIA's manifesto reflected the social-welfare nature of the organisation¹⁸⁴ and recognised the need to collaborate with the Australian community in an harmonious manner. It included (a) the defence of Italian dignity, (b) the fight against factionalism, (c) the social and intellectual development of members, (d) the cementing of friendship between Italians and Australians, (e) the promotion of better understanding of the role of the trade unions, moral and material assistance to members in need, and (f) the collaboration with all migrant-related organisations.¹⁸⁵

In April 1963, the LIA began the publication of its monthly *Il Nuovo Paese*, which proclaimed to be “an independent, social and commercial newspaper of the Italian community of Australia” as the page heading claimed.¹⁸⁶ *Il Nuovo Paese* opted to challenge the

¹⁸³ The LIA founding members were: Emilio Deleidi, Pietro Rivanera, Franco Schiavoni, R. Cernigoj, Zammarchi, Assunto Colli, Vincenzo Mammoliti, Ceccaroni, Coffa, De Battista, Saurini, Bucella, Stilla, La Riccia, Matteo Cristofaro, and Paul De Angelis. Cristofaro and De Angelis had also been the founding members of *Italia Libera*, and Cristofaro alongside Omero Schiassi was a member of an Italian Anti-fascist Movement in 1942. See E. Deleidi, interview with the author, 23 May 2002, Fawkner, Vic. (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author); “Draft of the minutes of the LIA’s executive committee elections”, circa 1963, courtesy of the Emilio Deleidi Private Collection.

¹⁸⁴ For instance, in June 1959, the LIA formed an assistance committee in solidarity with the unionised Italian-born seamen on strike. Also, during the economic crisis of 1961, it formed another assistance committee in favour of unemployed Italians. See, Lega Italo-Australiana, *Il Nuovo Paese*, April 1963.

¹⁸⁵ From the LIA program printed on the inside of membership tickets, courtesy of the Emilio Deleidi Private Collection.

¹⁸⁶ The publication of *Il Nuovo Paese* has escaped the notice of nearly all historians. Only M. Gilson & J. Zubrzycki list it in their bibliography of the Australian foreign-language press. See M. Gilson & J. Zubrzycki (1967) op. cit., Australian National University Press, Canberra, p. 203.

“conservative” *Il Globo*, which began circulation four years earlier. As recalled by *Il Nuovo Paese*’s former editor Emilio Deleidi, *Il Globo* “was leaning toward the well-off elites”.¹⁸⁷ *Il Nuovo Paese*’s first editorial justified the *raison d’être* of the monthly:

It was necessary, not delayable that someone took the initiative to create something that our migrants have been waiting for from some time. The newspaper *Il Nuovo Paese* was born in this way, arising from nothing, not from someone’s initiative, but rather from a communal necessity, wanted, sustained and indistinctly financed: by the worker in the factory, to the shopkeepers, the merchants and the white collar workers. It was therefore by large consensus of our community that *Il Nuovo Paese* cannot be but a genuine expression of our migrants. *Il Nuovo Paese* has been created as an independent democratic newspaper with an action to provide for the necessities that logically present themselves in a nation of a different language. Its program aims to provide a stronger closeness, understanding, and reciprocal collaboration between the Italians who live in this country, and the Australian society with which it shares, day by day, necessities and aspirations.¹⁸⁸

Il Nuovo Paese’s aim was to be a community paper that was to be supported and funded by the factory worker as well as the shopkeeper, the dealer, and the professional.¹⁸⁹ To appeal to the widest possible readership, the LIA wanted to convey the message that *Il Nuovo Paese* held no political and organisational affiliations, even with LIA itself. Thus neither in the credits nor in the editorial was the LIA mentioned. The only references in *Il Nuovo Paese* appeared in form of brief news items. While the first issue bore the name of Emilio Deleidi as editor, this was then replaced for

¹⁸⁷ E. Deleidi, interview with the author, 23 May 2002, Fawkner, Vic (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author).

¹⁸⁸ Percé [*sic.*] è nato *Il Nuovo Paese*, *Il Nuovo Paese*, April 1963.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

“security reasons” from the second issue onwards with the name of another LIA member, Assunto Colli.¹⁹⁰ *Il Nuovo Paese* took these measures in order to not appear as a communist newspaper. Deleidi has recalled an episode that significantly highlights how alive the anti-communist feelings in the 1960s still were:

In Australia, to speak of socialism is like speaking of the devil. [...] In the second year we used to live in Brunswick and there was a corner milkbar, at the corner of Dawson Street. We used to go there to buy the milk, at this time here, since we had distributed the newspapers at the milkbar and also where they sell newspapers, normal. I remember one time I went there to buy the milk. When inside I also took a newspaper, bought it, and I commented to the lady behind the counter ‘Good newspaper this one, I always read it, good newspaper’. I actually made it! She responded: ‘Oh no, no, no. Don’t take it home, they say it’s a communist newspaper. It’s dangerous, we don’t want it anymore. We’re going to tell the delivery man to not bring it anymore’. In fact, neither the milkbar nor the newsagent wanted it any longer. *Il Globo*, Randazzo. Randazzo, got it? So there we closed the bracket of the sale. It was difficult. [...] None would support us, they were all scared. ‘Absolutely, for the love of God, that newspaper, no. That there is a communist newspaper’.¹⁹¹

Although *Il Nuovo Paese* pretended to be a social and commercial newspaper, it mostly offered an alternative, left-wing source of information aside from *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* for Italian-speaking readers. A letter to the editor by Federico Sabatini of Griffith (NSW) indicates an example of the kind of readership *Il Nuovo Paese* attracted: “[...] Finally the Italian workers have a newspaper

¹⁹⁰ E. Deleidi, interview with the author, 23 May 2002, Fawkner, Vic (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author).

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

which interprets their aspirations, a newspaper that worthily and fully defends their rights, a newspaper that presents a clear and objective interpretation of international events to our migrants. The birth of *Il Nuovo Paese* is a fundamental journey in the history of the Italian workers in Australia, just like the *Neos Kosmos* has been for the Greek Community.”¹⁹²

The paper mainly contained news items concerning unions, political, social, and sport issues. Particular emphasis was put on discrimination suffered by migrant workers in Australia and elsewhere, ranging from low-paid salaries to the lack of social security or pension funds. Ample space was also given to articles regarding local trade union initiatives and struggles in form of interviews which trade union officials, reports of workers’ dismissals, pay-rises, work-related accidents, strikes, trade union’s public meetings and so on.

Il Nuovo Paese reprinted news items from the international and Italian left-wing press, such as *L’Unità*, the newspaper of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), and the progressive *Vie Nuove*. Such news items regarded, for instance, social and political injustices against the African-American population in the United States and in South Africa, or the peace movement marches organised around the world at the time of the Vietnam War. Several articles revoked episodes of the Italian Resistance during the Second World War. These and other articles stimulated in particular the interest of some readers, among whom some were former partisans themselves.¹⁹³

Although *Il Nuovo Paese* managed to have a maximum circulation as high as 5,000, it suffered a chronic funding problem. It had to rely almost exclusively on volunteers for management, editing, and distribution, because the hiring of professional journalist was simply too expensive.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, the Italian-Australian League (LIA) was supposed to be the “mass organisation” of the

¹⁹² Lettere al Direttore, *Il Nuovo Paese*, July 1963.

¹⁹³ See, for example, Lettere al Direttore, *Il Nuovo Paese*, March 1965.

¹⁹⁴ E. Deleidi, interview with the author, 23 May 2002, Fawkner, Vic (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author).

Communist Party of Australia (CPA) within the Italian-Australian community.¹⁹⁵ But like the Italian-Australian Club (CIA), by the late 1960s, it was isolated and divided and its activities “had been reduced to dinner-dances” in a hall hired by the CPA, the Albion Hall on Lygon Street, East Brunswick.¹⁹⁶ Eventually, in 1966, *Il Nuovo Paese* ceased publication and moved its editorial office to Sydney, in the hope to be re-launched soon thereafter.¹⁹⁷

Editors turned political candidates: the case of Giuseppe Di Salvo of *Il Progresso Italo-Australiano* and Nino Randazzo of *Il Globo*

Il Nuovo Paese was not the only left leaning Italian-language newspaper in circulation in Australia in the post-war period. Like the members of the LIA organisation, some newly arrived migrants who were to enter Australian politics through the labour movement or the political party structures, were quick to realise the need to supply (and have an effect on) the emerging Italian community by launching an Italian-Australian newspaper, more often than not the offshoot of a grassroots organisation. Some immigrants-turned-editors would go even further and put to the test their political ambitions. This is the case, for instance, of merchant naval captain, labour movement activist and immigrant advocate Giuseppe Di Salvo.¹⁹⁸

In Melbourne, an organisation similar to the CIA formed at the end of the 1950s: the Italian-Australian Labour Council (CIAL). The CIAL was established around 1956 by a retired sea captain, Giuseppe Di Salvo, Nino Randazzo, then an Australian Labor Party (ALP) member and union organizer, and Giovanni Sgrò, a

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ C. Carli (1982) *op. cit.*, p. 21; J. Armstrong (2001) *The Cook & the Maestro: Two Brothers, Two Countries, Two Passions*, Lothian, South Melbourne, Vic., p. 196.

¹⁹⁷ C. Carli (1982) *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁹⁸ For a detailed biography of Giuseppe Di Salvo see P. Strangio (2006) Di Salvo, Giuseppe (1902-1988), Australian Dictionary of Biography – Online Edition, see <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au>.

Communist Party of Australia (CPA) member who later joined the ALP.¹⁹⁹ It was, according to Allan's topography of migrant political activity in Victoria,²⁰⁰ an extra-party ethnic adherent organisation not formally linked with the ALP but one that had organised the Italian-Australian community to vote for it.²⁰¹ In 1956, the CIAL began publishing its bi-monthly, then monthly, *Il Progresso Italo-Australiano*, which was distributed through a number of unions. Based at the Trades Hall in Carlton *Il Progresso Italo-Australiano* and the CIAL during the 1960s organised "Italian migrants within the union movement, in support of the ALP, and against the Vietnam War",²⁰²

The fortunes of the CIAL, and partly of its newspaper, were closely linked to the political career of Di Salvo, "who was [*Il Progresso Italo-Australiano*]'s first editor, and its director and driving force for the remainder of his life".²⁰³ Di Salvo ran for a pre-selection bid for the Victorian federal seat of Batman in 1966. Although he was endorsed by all three delegates of the ALP Batman Federal Campaign Committee and enjoyed a friendship with Labor politicians Arthur Calwell and Jim Cairns, his bid failed.²⁰⁴ Left-wing unions, which then dominated the ALP Victorian Central Committee and had the ultimate say on pre-selections, eventually backed another candidate, J. W. Anderson, the former Mayor and Councillor of Heidelberg, Melbourne.²⁰⁵ Many Italians felt that this was an intolerable and anti-migrant interference by the left-wing unions and as a result, left the CIAL in large numbers marking its

199 For a detailed biography of Giovanni Sgrò see S. Battiston (2004) *History and collective memory of the Italian Migrant Workers' Organization FILEF in 1970s Melbourne*, unpublished PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne, pp. 166-167.

200 L. Allan (1978) *Ethnic Politics - Migrant Organisation and the Victorian ALP*, *Ethnic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 23.

201 *Ibid.*, p. 24. Note that a few hundred Italians joined the CIAL, of which only a handful later joined the ALP. See C. Carli (1982) *op. cit.*, p. 16.

202 M. Lopez (2000) *The origins of multiculturalism in Australian politics 1945-1975*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., pp. 435-36.

203 P. Strangio (2006) *op. cit.*

204 L. Allan (1978) *op. cit.*, p. 24; C. Carli (1982) *op. cit.*, p. 18; P. Strangio (2006) *op. cit.*

205 *Ibid.*

quick demise.²⁰⁶

Besides Di Salvo, Nino Randazzo also attempted to forge a political career, at state level in 1964. By then, he was editor of *Il Globo* and no longer in the CIAL. He was nominated Democratic Labor Party (DLP) candidate for the seat of Fitzroy during the 1964 State elections. The DLP then enjoyed a special relationship with prominent figures of the Italian community. Randazzo's was "the first political attempt to win the Italian vote by appealing to the ethnic loyalties of Italians".²⁰⁷ Although the electorate seemed ideal with its high concentration of Italians,²⁰⁸ despite the full support of *Il Globo* and the DLP electoral machine, Randazzo was defeated.²⁰⁹

A new left-leaning Italian-Australian biweekly launched: *Nuovo Paese*

In the 1970s a new left-leaning newspaper appeared in the Italian-speaking print media in Australia, *Nuovo Paese*. The circulation of *Nuovo Paese* fuelled to some extent a political divide in the Italian community between the "conservative" *Il Globo* and the "progressive", newcomer *Nuovo Paese*, which mirrored the conflicting views and political ambitions of the respective editorial boards. When *Il Nuovo Paese* folded in 1966, there were some failed attempts by the Italian-Australian left to re-launch the newspaper (or launch a new one) and to continue to provide an alternative, left-leaning view in the Italian press scene.

There had been rumours for some time that a newspaper called *Nuovo Paese* or *Nuova Era* might be published by Italian and Australian communists in a joint venture; yet mistrust between the two had condemned the project, as PCI official and journalist

206 C. Carli (1982) op. cit., p. 18.

207 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

208 However, many Italians in Fitzroy were not naturalised, and thus could not vote. See J. Jupp (1966) *Arrivals and Departures*, Melbourne, Cheshire-Lansdowne, 1966, p. 94.

209 J. Jupp (1966) op. cit., p. 94; C. Carli (1982) op. cit. 17.

of the party newspaper *L'Unità* Diego Novelli noted down in the report of his 1971 visit to Australia.²¹⁰ Novelli thought, during his visit, that the publication of a periodical would be beneficial and saw an opportunity for the PCI to run its editing directly. He stated confidently: “[...] the first issue of the periodical, which must be published by early October [1971], will be supervised by myself directly from Turin. I will then send the photolytic to Australia. From the second [November] issue onwards the job needs to be taken over by the Press and Propaganda Committee in Rome”.²¹¹

In the months to come, however, the proposal became caught up in the political and personal disputes between the newly created (1971) independent PCI federation and the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In 1972, the CPA National Secretary, Laurie Aarons vented all his frustration to the PCI Head of the Emigration office in Rome Giuliano Pajetta about the:

[...] continuing delay in the publication of the newspaper, although we have guaranteed the necessary finance to produce the first three issues. Our latest information is that the newspaper is to be printed in Melbourne, and there has been no further discussion with us since we received the letter dated August 7th [1972], informing us of this fact.²¹²

The idea of publishing a periodical was raised once again in 1973. The First PCI National (Australian) Conference in April of this year entrusted the Italian communists of Sydney with the task of launching, editing and distributing a periodical.²¹³ Yet, it was the editor of the Rome-based Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and Their Families (FILEF)'s newspaper *Emigrazione* and PCI

²¹⁰ Fondazione Istituto Gramsci (FIG): Archivi del Pci (APC), Partito, 1971, Estero, mf. 162, ff. 118-123, D. Novelli, *Nota per ufficio di segreteria (Pecchioli) – Viaggio in Australia*, 6 settembre 1971.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² FIG, APC, Partito, 1972, Estero, mf. 53, f. 1084, L. Aarons, *Lettera a Giuliano Pajetta*, Sydney, 30 agosto 1972.

²¹³ FIG, APC, Partito, 1972, Estero, mf. 46, ff. 225-226, *Mozione conclusiva della conferenza delle organizzazioni del PCI in Australia del 20-21 Aprile 1973, Sydney*.

activist Ignazio Salemi, during his visit to Australia in September to November of 1973, who gave encouragement by backing the idea to involve Australian trade unions rather than the CPA. FILEF emerged as a new migrant organisation in Italy in 1967 and set up branches in several countries which were home to Italian communities. It enjoyed the support of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The CPA-affiliated Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) in particular expressed interest in financing the enterprise by bulk buying five or six thousand copies of the paper for their Italian-language members. Salemi wrote in his travel notes:

At both Sydney and Melbourne the comrades have placed the necessity of an Italian-language newspaper that it differentiates itself from other existing newspapers in Australia and that beyond an instrument of propaganda it is an instrument of organization. That need is quite felt by Australian comrades and has been strongly acknowledged most of all by the companions in Melbourne, who, through a large metallurgic union, have also taken on financial commitments that will cover the expenses of a print – ten thousand copies of a fortnightly paper containing four pages – financed intended as a prepayment of five or six thousand copies of the paper that should be distributed between the Italian workers belonging to the union where he is employed. There still needs to be built, in Melbourne and in the rest of Australia, the network of “friends” for the distribution and the sale of the remaining copies and for the development of the newspaper so that it assures a growth in terms of sales and in the number of pages and frequency of print. The introductions have been made but it is obvious that an objective such as this requires some intense work.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ FIG, APC, Partito, 1973, Estero, mf. 65, ff. 731-734, I. Salemi, *Nota sul viaggio in Australia, Rome, 30 September – 15 November 1973*, [novembre 1973].

Salemi returned to Australia in March 1974 and an agreement with five trade unions was eventually reached to support the publication of *Nuovo Paese*.²¹⁵ He encountered great enthusiasm among left-wing Italians for the endeavour, which can be seen as highlighting their greatly felt need for their own periodical:

[...] There has been one encouraging event. When I first arrived in Australia I had started to think about these things, and one day they came to visit me – it wasn't even at my address – a group of people of Veneto origins from Mildura, together with a certain colonel Simoni. [...]. They came to me and said: You know, we've heard around that there's someone who wants to create a workers newspaper for the labour party... We have made a petition between us and we brought it. Coming from Mildura to Melbourne to find me, with three hundred and eighty dollars was certainly not a joke as I remember that the plane from Melbourne to Sydney costed thirty dollars. It was quite a lot for those times.²¹⁶

Salemi's journalistic experience was essential to fill what FILEF activist Joe Caputo indicated as the intellectual gap among Italian communists. This had proved to be not only the main impediment for the launch and editing of a new periodical, but also for undertaking more wide-ranging initiatives. Caputo recalled:

Our problem was this. [...] Until 1970 the only activists we had, the most prepared, were [Emilio] Deleidi and myself—but with my level of Italian, even today I have difficulty with because my education

²¹⁵ Alongside the AMWU, the Miscellaneous Workers Union (MWU), the Operative Painters Union (OPU), the Clothing Trade Union (CTU), the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union, and the Meat Workers Union (MWU) pledged to support the publication of *Nuovo Paese* and to buy it in bulk for their Italian-language members.

²¹⁶ I. Salemi, interview with the author, 3 April 2003, Rome, Italy (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author). On the figure of Simoni see G. Cresciani (2003) *The Italians in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-Port Melbourne, p. 115.

was not undertaken in Italy; my Italian is self-taught, reading books, magazines and the newspaper. We never had a group of people well prepared on an intellectual scale, not even organic intellectuals from a Gramscian point of view. So we felt this gap. Those few which we had, like Deleidi, who writes in Italian, it's not that they were grand intellectuals, they just didn't have the capacity to elaborate complex thoughts. The reason why we were in the position we were in the left was because we didn't have the intellectual capabilities nor the human resources. Those few who we had, had distanced themselves. [...] Coming back to FILEF, Salemi had what was lacking from us. He had an activist ability, he was dynamic in the sense that he was able to invent activity, but he also had the ability to analyse the situation. Even if he already had maybe forty years of age, he was very dynamic, he was very full of energy. He succeeded in creating much interest around himself.²¹⁷

Easily “mistaken for one of the many combative and workerist papers that emerged in Italy after the 1968 student movement”,²¹⁸ *Nuovo Paese* was an effective means of broadcasting the activities and initiatives, as well as left-wing political thinking, of FILEF in Australia. Launched on 1 May 1974, *Nuovo Paese* was perhaps the first major, visible initiative that FILEF undertook in Australia. The closing-down eight years before of what can be considered its predecessor, *Il Nuovo Paese*, the periodical of the LIA, left them without a locally produced paper reflecting their views and reporting their issues.

Nuovo Paese was purposely launched on May Day²¹⁹ and bore the catchy sub-heading “learn to recognise your rights”. In its first

217 J. Caputo, interview with the author, 14 January 2003, Brunswick, Vic (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author).

218 C. Carli (1982) op. cit., p. 27.

219 Note that in Australia May Day is celebrated every first Sunday of May.

editorial, *Nuovo Paese* elucidated its mission: “to fill the vacuum of the lack of information regarding the struggle and the successes of local workers, and of other countries that constitute the reality of this world – of which even Australia is part”.²²⁰ *Nuovo Paese* aspired to make its readers aware that the working classes in Italy and Europe in general were successfully having their demands fulfilled at the time and that the lack of adequate information in Australia about these successes contributed to maintain “[...] privileges and life styles that indeed are, by 1974 standards, of another era”.²²¹

Nuovo Paese republished news items from *L'Unità* and informed about local Labor and trade union initiatives, dedicating, again, extensive space to the coverage of struggles of the Italian workers' rights movement and its powerful bargaining power during union disputes, taking it as a role model for local union actions. In this way, the paper offered an alternative source of information to the Italian-Australian community.

According to Brennan Wales, *Nuovo Paese* was in comparison to *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma*, more abreast with the times and more in tune with multicultural Australia by including a higher percentage of news items dedicated to local and international issues.²²² In a survey he conducted on the news content of *Il Globo*, *La Fiamma*, and *Nuovo Paese* he concluded the latter was by far more committed to covering Australian, Italian and international news, and far less sport and local Italian migrant clubs news oriented.²²³

Moreover, *Nuovo Paese* contained the highest percentage (20 percent) of news items in English, compared to *Il Globo* (5

²²⁰ Australia is also part of the world, *Nuovo Paese*, 1 May 1974.

²²¹ Anche l'Australia e il mondo, *Nuovo Paese*, 1 May 1974.

²²² B. Wales (1988) *La stampa italiana nell'Australia multiculturale*, in Atchison, J. F., Andreoni, G. and Andreoni, H. (eds) *L'Australia multiculturale: il caso italiano*, Il Velcro, Roma, p. 136.

²²³ According to Wales survey, *Nuovo Paese* dedicated 46,8 percent, 19,2 percent, and 15,4 percent respectively to Australian, Italian and international news coverage. *Il Globo* on the other hand allocated for the same type of news only 8,3 percent, 16,7 percent, and 6,3 percent of coverage. Sport and local migrant clubs news, took up 1,9 percent and 3,8 percent of coverage in *Nuovo Paese*; in *Il Globo* covered these with 23,8 percent and 11,9 percent of its content. See B. Wales (1988) op. cit., p. 153.

percent) and *La Fiamma* (3 percent). Wales argued that while *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* essentially offered news items in English for second-generation Italian-Australians who were less familiar with the Italian language, *Nuovo Paese's* purpose was to expand its readership beyond the Italian-speaking community, distributing the newspaper in factories and the like.

In February 1977, *Nuovo Paese* added four more pages, thus expanding from an initial volume of eight to twelve pages. Its editors proudly stated that “[...] the unpretentious workers’ weekly, successor of ill-fated ones, successfully passed the test of time and it is now about to grow”.²²⁴ Twelve unions in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland were by now distributing it and in Melbourne it was also sold, for fifteen cents, in ten milk bars, five bar/restaurants, three shops and one newsagency.

Nevertheless, *Nuovo Paese* failed to become a widely read newspaper and could not compete with the commercially oriented *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo*, despite offering more news and being distributed by dozens of trade unions. During the First FILEF National Congress of October 1977, its editor at the time, Umberto Martinengo, explained why: *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* sold approximately 30,000 and 15,000 copies a week respectively, *Nuovo Paese* only approximately 6,000 copies a fortnight.²²⁵ Due to its limited circulation, *Nuovo Paese* also attracted fewer classified advertisements, the majority of which were linked to FILEF members owning their own businesses. For example, five of the six classified of *Nuovo Paese* in February 1977 were paid by FILEF members: “Pizza Restaurant Edelweiss” by Tom Diele, “Cleaning Service” by Vincenzo Mammoliti, “Frattali’s Designing Services” by Umberto Frattali, “Ladies Hairdresser of Frank di Roma” by Frank Lugarini.

Although *Nuovo Paese* began to obtain funding from the Italian

²²⁴ Editoriale, *Nuovo Paese*, 19 February 1977.

²²⁵ U. Martinengo, *Caratteristiche e funzioni della stampa italiana in Australia – il ruolo di Nuovo Paese*, paper no. 3 delivered at the First FILEF National Congress, October 1977, FILEF Melbourne Archive (FMA).

government through the Italian Commission for the Italian Press Abroad from 1978 onwards, it was run almost exclusively on a voluntarily basis, with a network of distribution essentially maintained by volunteers. In 1978, Umberto Martinengo, who held *Nuovo Paese's* editorship between 1976 and 1978 (he then became a *La Fiamma* correspondent) pointed out that the distribution process left much to be desired: "The situation today, even if it has improved with respect to some time ago, is still unsatisfactory, at least for what concerns Melbourne: only very few mates participate in the process of distribution, and if they manage to touch only a few sales points, the potential is enormous and mostly unexplored. As far as the Unions are concerned, there are not many that distribute in the factories: very often, they buy them and they leave them in the secretaries' offices."²²⁶

Martinengo also recalled that "[...] Rome's strategy for the paper was essentially to reduce its circulation."²²⁷ Stefano de Pieri, *Nuovo Paese's* editor between 1978 and 1980, stressed that working for *Nuovo Paese* was to a large degree a labour of love.²²⁸ Financially, *Nuovo Paese* could cover editing and printing costs but was able to retain little for individual salaries.²²⁹ With the departure of Martinengo in 1978 and de Pieri in 1980, Cira La Gioia, a graduate from Apulia who migrated in the late 1970s, became the new *Nuovo Paese's* editor until 1983, when the editor office was transferred to Sydney. In 1986, *Nuovo Paese* became monthly. Since 1989, Frank Barbaro from the FILEF office of Adelaide has edited *Nuovo Paese*.

²²⁶ U. Martinengo, Relazione, Prima Conferenza Stampa e Propaganda del PCI in Australia, 28 June 1978, FMA.

²²⁷ U. Martinengo, interview with the author, 24 December 2002, Carlton, Vic (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author).

²²⁸ S. de Pieri, interview with the author, 22 January 2004, Anglesea, Vic (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author).

²²⁹ Ibid.

***Nuovo Paese* vs *Il Globo*?**

In the 1970s, *Nuovo Paese* played a significant role in the Italian-Australian press and probably beyond, for its strong focus on advocating the migrants' cause, for portraying a rather controversial image of the migrants' life in Australia, and for attempting to raise the cultural level of the community by promoting engagement with contemporary cultural products from Italy. Its stance diverged from that of *Il Globo*. By analysing *Il Globo*'s ideological and cultural roles, Carli pinpointed the profoundly different approach to news reporting between *Il Globo* and *Nuovo Paese*:

Il Globo has consistently presented Italians with a quite distorted picture of Italy. Italy in its pages has been presented as crisis ridden, with many of the articles on Italy being the so-called "cronaca nera", that is stories of rapes, assaults, murders, terrorism and scandals. It has fostered an image of Italy which altogether neglects the positive social and political changes which have occurred in the period since the Italians emigrated. Yet while Italy and the rest of the world are presented as areas of unrest, the Italians in Australia are presented as living an idyllic and peaceful existence.²³⁰

Carli's argument was that *Il Globo*, by expressing the tenet of its owner the Valmorbidia family, who stood for the Italian-Australian establishment for him, presented a conservative yet unrealistic portrayal of the Italian-Australian community, one in which the community was to be seen as "well-established, successful and unified".²³¹ Conversely, *Nuovo Paese* (and FILEF) were keen to present a less edifying representation of the community, one that took into account a working-class viewpoint. Ultimately, FILEF aimed to jolt the political consciousness of Italian migrants in

²³⁰ C. Carli (1982) op. cit., 29.

²³¹ C. Carli (1982) op. cit., 30.

Australia into “a more advanced stage of political awareness”.²³² A typical example of this was the pressure FILEF exerted on Italian consulates to abide by 1967 Italian legislation, which aimed for a greater level of participation of Italian migrants in the decision-making processes concerning the funding by the Italian government of education and welfare activities.²³³ In the same way, FILEF exerted pressure in institutions within and beyond the Italian-Australian community for the “fostering of a “cultural conscience” among Italian workers”.²³⁴ For this reason, FILEF developed its own cultural groups which included: courses on Italian language, history, political and social movements, economics; organisation of concerts, of music and theatre groups, showing of films, and so on.²³⁵

At the same time, FILEF’s activism was challenging the authority of some well-established institutions within the Italian-Australian community such as the welfare agency Committee of Assistance to Italians (COASIT) and the conservative newspaper *Il Globo*. COASIT was thus far “*the* Italian welfare voice”,²³⁶ the institutional response of the Italian government to the welfare needs of Italian migrants. The allocation to FILEF of a Welfare Rights Officer Program grant in 1974 and the establishment of a welfare office created “a major crisis” for COASIT,²³⁷ and produced a more-or-less declared rivalry between the FILEF and COASIT, although according to Umberto Martinengo, who a few years after he worked in FILEF’s *Nuovo Paese* moved to COASIT as coordinator of Education Services, such rivalry was,

²³² G. Cresciani (1988) *Migrants or Mates: Italian Life in Australia = Emigranti o compari: vita italiana in Australia*, Knockmore Enterprises, Sydney, p. 281.

²³³ This legislation was aimed at reforming Italian consulates around the world by establishing consultative committees for the administration of migrant affairs and funding. In Australia, the implementation of this legislation was delayed for more than a decade. See R. Licata, Comitato unitario e comitati consolari, paper no. 2 delivered at the First FILEF National Congress, October 1977, FMA.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ FILEF’s 10 years of activities, *Nuovo Paese*, [1982].

²³⁶ A. Jakubowicz, M. Morrissey, and J. Palser (1984) *Ethnicity, Class and Social Policy in Australia*, University of New South Wales, Kensington, NSW, p. 62.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

in reality, nothing but an occasional forced controversy. Recalls Martinengo:

I remember that some wanted to make a mountain out of a molehill... Because then, if there is FILEF, which is left, then there must be a counter-party – if there is Coppi there must also be Bartali – who is of the right. Hence let's say: FILEF is left, COASIT is right, it is closer to the conservative parties. There has been some ridicule but nothing out of the ordinary.²³⁸

Although it did not aim to challenge *Il Globo* as a mass selling newspaper, FILEF's *Nuovo Paese* disputed the conservative values expressed in *Il Globo*.²³⁹ Italian and Australian conservative quarters were neither sympathetic to FILEF's way of demanding reform, nor to the changes it brought about. They saw in FILEF's willingness to jolt the political and cultural consciousness of Italian migrants in Australia the opportunity for the Italian-Australian Left that is the Italian Communist Party (PCI), to become an influential Italian pressure group in close contact with the Australian trade unions and the Labor Party. FILEF was "largely a PCI influenced organisation",²⁴⁰ or as explained by Caputo an *organizzazione di massa allargata* (enlarged mass organisation)—that is, an organisation whose task it was to gather support among communists and non-communists.²⁴¹ To convey the thought that FILEF was an organisation open to people of various ideological creeds and political backgrounds its president and secretary were usually not PCI members. In Rome, FILEF's president was Carlo Levi, who although of left-wing background was not a PCI member; in Melbourne, FILEF's secretary and president were both ALP members, Giovanni Sgrò and Umberto Frattali respectively.

Even though there was not a declared rivalry between *Nuovo*

²³⁸ U. Martinengo, interview with the author, 24 December 2002, Carlton, Vic (minidisc and full transcription in possession of author).

²³⁹ C. Carli (1982) op. cit., pp. 27-31.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

Paese and *Il Globo*, occasional editorial commentary suggested the diametrically opposite political views of the respective editorial boards. For instance, the publication by *Nuovo Paese* in February 1975 of the findings of a social survey conducted among 400 families in the area of Coburg-Brunswick – which underscored the common belief in the good, or at least above-average, living conditions of the Italian migrants suggesting instead that, overall, Italian-Australians were economically, socially, and culturally disadvantaged and discriminated against when compared with the Australian population²⁴² – stirred up the local press, *Il Globo* included.²⁴³ But it was during the deportation case from Australian of *Nuovo Paese*'s editor Ignazio Salemi (1976-1977) that a “confrontation” between the two newspapers was sparked.²⁴⁴ The press in Australia, including *Il Globo*, before and throughout the court case depicted Salemi as a dangerous “red”. People from anti-Salemi and anti-FILEF quarters sought to instill in the broader public a sense of the danger he supposedly represented, in the process misrepresenting facts concerning FILEF as well as Salemi and his case. For the editor of *Il Globo* Nino Randazzo, FILEF wished to incite a scandal, a “riot”, using the pretext of the court case, while Salemi was nothing but a qualified and highly experienced “political agent”, who did not have “any right to the amnesty, reserved for (genuine) illegal immigrants”.²⁴⁵ According to *The Herald* Salemi even had links with the Italian underworld, a view that was later quoted by *Il Globo*—mafia links which

242 See S. Battiston (2004) op. cit., p. 17.

243 D. Twomey, Immigrants exploited, says survey, *The Australian*, 17 February 1975; Italians live in poverty – survey, *The Sun*, 17 February 1975; Italians doing dirty work, *The Age*, 17 February 1975; N. Randazzo, Italiani in Australia morti di fame?, *Il Globo*, 24 February 1975; G. Wright, Bottom of the list or beautifully integrated? That's... the Italian question, *The Sun*, 6 March 1975.

244 On the Salemi deportation case see S. Battiston (2005) Salemi v MacKellar revisited: Drawing together the threads of a controversial deportation case, *Journal of Australian Studies*, N. 84, pp. 1-10.

245 N. Randazzo, Una speculazione politica che non interessa gli italiani d'Australia, *Il Globo*, 16 August 1976.

turned out to false.²⁴⁶ A letter sent to MacKellar after Salemi's deportation by one Angelo Sergi from "Turkey" seems to betray the absorption of some of the anti-Salemi propaganda, referring to the "dago bastard" Salemi as "a well known communist and one of the heads of the dreaded mafia".²⁴⁷ During this period the editorial commentary of *Il Globo* was anti-communist and the linkage between FILEF Australia and the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which Salemi personified, offered *Il Globo's* editor Nino Randazzo the opportunity to challenge the initiatives of the local Italian communists and left-wingers.

Conclusion

The main struggle by Italian-Australian left newspapers in the post-war period was to stay afloat. Plagued by chronic funding problems, *Il Nuovo Paese* folded after just three years in 1966. *Il Progresso Italo-Australiano* and *Nuovo Paese* managed to overcome funding issues by being sustained by the Australian trade unions, Italian government subsidies and the labour of love of several members of their respective organisations, the Consiglio Italo-Australiano del Lavoro (CIAL) and the Italian Federation of the Migrant Workers and their Families (FILEF). Overall these Italian-Australian left newspapers wished to offer to local Italian-language readers a progressive, left-leaning view of the world, in a way counter-balancing the presence and dominance of the conservative Italian-Australian press, the Melbourne-based *Il Globo* and the Sydney-based *La Fiamma*.

²⁴⁶ A. Cheesewright and R. Willis, Salemi listed on visa, *The Herald*, 23 September 1977; Misteriose coincidenze, *Il Globo*, 26 September 1977.

²⁴⁷ A. Sergi, Letter to M. MacKellar, undated, FMA.