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Migrant Associations: Political Opportunities and Structural Ambivalences. The Case of the Federation of Free Italian Colonies in Switzerland

Toni Ricciardi and Sandro Cattacin

Through the analysis of a migrant association in Switzerland, the Federazione delle Colonie Libere Italiane in Svizzera (Federation of Free Italian Colonies in Switzerland—FCLIS), we attempt to understand the transformation of organisational logics and their connection to economic and socio-demographic changes, but also to transnational political opportunity structures. We analyse the FCLIS's actions, initiatives and operational strategies through a transnational lens, concentrating specifically on its gradual transition from its original focus on a political diaspora to a focus on trade-union policy and claims directed at Swiss and Italian authorities.

In memoriam Leo Zanier (1935–2017).

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Founded in 1943, the FCLIS was once the largest migrant association in Switzerland. Because the FCLIS has existed for more than 70 years, an analysis of this association makes it possible to examine the history of a unique migrant association, and to understand how and why it changed over time. Conceptually, we treat the FCLIS as reflecting the limited agency of migrant associations in Switzerland and the ways in which inherently transnational political opportunities tailor such associations' activities and foster ambivalent decisions within them. Apart from describing the important history of this association, we examine the seldom-described structural ambivalence of migrant associations concerning their territory of influence and orientation, focused as they are on both their members' country of origin and the country of residence.[1]

From the case study, we derive two hypotheses that we believe can be generalised to other associations in Switzerland and elsewhere, although we leave the testing of these hypotheses to further research:

- such associations are useful as places for newcomers helping to be find information facilitating the inclusion in the place of arrival and when they can play the role of mediator, and they decline when the migration flow or discrimination diminish;
- the double orientation towards both the country of origin and the country of residence creates a structural ambivalence that makes migrant associations fragile.

The year in which the first Free Colonies founded its Federation, was one of the worst in twentieth-century European history. For Italy, 1943, probably more than 1945, was the year that determined its subsequent geopolitical, economic, and social role in the international arena (Salvemini and La Piana 1945). During the Second World War, Switzerland was confronted with completely new conditions. The latent threat of occupation accelerated military defence and resistance measures, including the readiness to move troops to the extreme line of the Swiss National Redoubt, impregnable fortresses high in the mountains (Jost 1998). In 1942, for the first time in its history, the country closed its borders to refugees. But violent condemnations of that action forced the authorities to allow entry to the most pitiful cases. In July 1942, hundreds of thousands of refugees were deported from the country, and only 8300 were granted asylum (Kreis 2000).[2]

After the German occupation of Northern Italy, Switzerland, for the first time since the Napoleonic era, was surrounded on all sides by a single hegemonic force (Holenstein 2014). While Northern Italian politics had been in the hands of Italians, the federal government could be confident in the security of its southern border, as the Italian government had in June 1939, under Swiss pressure, guaranteed to respect Switzerland's neutrality (Chevallaz 2001). Italy kept its promise, for obvious economic and strategic reasons, but also because irredentism and territorial claims had come to an end.[3]

After the armistice of 8 September 1943, Switzerland stopped applying the strict refoulement measures against asylum seekers. About 45,000 Italians (Broggini 1993), including more than 3800 Italian Jews (Audenino and Tirabassi 2008), arrived in the country. This was made possible by the fact that Switzerland, adopting extraordinary flexibility, created a new category of military refugees. In addition, it created university camps with the aim of re-establishing and consolidating the friendship and collaboration that Mussolini's regime had gradually worsened (Viganò 1991).

The FCLIS as an Anti-fascist Diaspora Organisation

In the founding of the Free Colony of Zurich, the nucleus of the Federation, the role of the anarchist movement and the socialists was essential. The latter, which had escaped the reactionary laws and repression of General Bava Baccaris, initiated *L'Avvenire dei Lavoratori* (The Future of the Workers), the first Italian-language periodical of information and propaganda in Switzerland (linked to the Italian Socialist Party), and, a few years later, the *Ristorante Cooperativo* (Cooperative Restaurant), a meeting place for socialists, but also republicans and anarchists, and later for exiles and anti-fascists as well (Ricciardi 2012, 2013).

Also of great importance was the network of anti-fascist exiles. The Free Colonie was founded in Geneva in 1925, the *Società Mansarda* (Mansard Society) in Zurich in 1927, and the *Colonia Libera Italiana* (CLI) in Zurich in 1930. Its activities soon spread throughout Switzerland (Ricciardi 2013). During the 1930s, other Free Colonies were founded, and the *Colonia Proletaria Italiana* (Italian Proletarian Colony) was established in Ticino with many local sections. Between the late 1930s and the early 1940s, associations and Colonies spread significantly as a diaspora organisation of people helping to destabilise the fascist regime and waiting to return to reconstruct Italy.

In July 1943, with the arrest of Mussolini, the Italian dictatorship collapsed, followed by a conflict between fascism and the official organs of the monarchy. Italian anti-fascists in Switzerland immediately inserted themselves in this struggle with the triple aim of establishing contact with Italians in Switzerland who had been influenced by fascist and religious propaganda, countering Italy's ambiguous consular policy, and directing migrants towards the ideals of democracy and freedom (Signori 1983).

According to the founder of the FCLIS, Ferdinando Schiavetti, the Free Colonies had to educate people in freedom and democracy, be popular, and talk to the masses (Ricciardi 2013). In addition, they had to be characterised by a severely censorious attitude towards fascism, in order to discourage sympathy among those who had been fascists out of necessity or conformity, and especially among the majority of non-fascists who had passively accepted the propaganda of the regime. The FCLIS was not an instrumental organisation, but instead an attempt to renew Italian anti-fascism and transform those who had been the backbone of the regime for decades. It was a grassroots movement strenuously defended by loyalists that was able, at a time of crisis and disorientation, to be a reference point for all Italians who were part of the so-called permanent migration to Switzerland.[4]

The FCLIS, officially established on 21 November 1943, presented itself as the future mass organisation of all Italian migrants in Switzerland, definitely anti-fascist, but with the aim of attracting all Italian migrant workers, even those who had never openly opposed fascism. Although it clearly leaned to the left and especially towards the Communist Party, it made no reference to any political party.

Support for Refugees and the Displaced

After 8 September 1943, the FCLIS found itself heavily burdened, due to both the policies of the Swiss authorities and the large number of Italians arriving in Switzerland. Its headquarters soon became the location for meetings, debates, and political and social events. The FCLIS was the first truly democratic laboratory for Italian migration in Switzerland, looking hopefully to a new Italy modelled on the anti-fascist Resistance.

The Colonies strengthened the Federation, founded new chapters, supported the Resistance, and helped refugees. Various *Comitati di soccorso ai rifugiati civili e militari* (Rescue committees for civilian and

military refugees) were established, and between 1943 and 1945 they successfully assisted the thousands of Italians who arrived in Switzerland.[5]

At the end of 1944, the FCLIS experienced rapid growth: there were more than 20 federated chapters (local Colonies), among them the *Unione Donne Italiane di Zurigo* (Italian Women's Union of Zurich),[6] and each had its own statute. The FCLIS's statute included its principles, which were approved by the Federal Conference in Zurich on 28 May 1944.[7] Among these principles were the reconciliation and unity of all Italian groups and associations established abroad with the clear purpose of opposing fascism, and the FCLIS immediately launched its assertive action to assist migrants with future Italian governments.

The goal of the association was to create a democratically elected council of migrants to represent the communities of Italians abroad by supporting their interests and aspirations. The transnational spirit was born.

Reorganisation of the Colonies: Engagement in Switzerland

At the end of the war, the FCLIS became a more structured organisation. Its most qualified leaders, along with escapees and exiles more generally, returned to Italy. After 1945, Italy, devastated by the war, had to reconsider its geopolitical engagement and undergo an institutional transition from monarchism, which had been poisoned by its complicity with fascism, to republicanism (Ginsborg 1989; Pollard 1997; Gabaccia 2000). In contrast, Switzerland, unhurt by the conflict, began a period of unprecedented economic growth that led it to become the primary post-war destination for Italian migrants (Mayer 1966; Ratti 1995; Piguet 2005). Indeed, between 1958 and 1976, Switzerland absorbed 50% of Italian migration to foreign countries (Ricciardi 2013).

There was friction between the FCLIS and Swiss authorities, which had regarded associations of migrants in general, and of foreign workers in particular, negatively since the Mansard Society (Cerutti 2005). At the same time, the FCLIS was faced with exponential growth in the number of migrants, who received no support from Italy. The 1948 recruitment agreement between Switzerland and Italy marked a milestone. For Italy, this was not the first agreement, which was signed with Belgium in 1946 (Morelli 1988; Colucci 2008; Ricciardi 2016a). For Switzerland, however, this was its first recruitment agreement, which led other countries to pursue similar treaties with it (Cerutti 1994; Bade 2003).

Egidio Reale, linked to the FCLIS, became Italy's ambassador to Switzerland, but the organisation nonetheless completely opposed the appointment. During the negotiations for the 1948 agreement, the FCLIS accused the Italian government of selling out its migrants.[8] Italy's conditions were extremely difficult: high unemployment rates characterised some areas of the country, whose only export was labour.

During the first post-war decade, the FCLIS coordinated migrants' reception and protection. One of the most significant examples was the *Assistenza italiana* (Italian Assistance) of Zurich (1944–1976), founded to fill the gap in Switzerland's provision of social and economic assistance for Italians,[9] which soon became a sort of parallel employment office for many job seekers. The FCLIS also campaigned to improve Italian workers' rights. In particular, it attempted to secure the right to social security (like the Swiss had),[10] a free passport,[11] and discounts for travel by train to Italy, to name only a few of its aims. Until the 1970s, its central concerns revolved around social rights.

Between the mid-1960s and the late 1970s, the FCLIS began to be interested in the educational and professional integration of second-generation migrants. The FCLIS's *Centro informazioni scolastiche* (School Information Centre—CLI) in Zurich was a small experiment and, at the same time, an example of partnership in a concrete project between the FCLIS, the authorities, and companies in Zurich. In fact, some of the financing for the foreigners' education came from Swiss companies, and some from the Italian Foreign Ministry. The Centre took care to provide direct and immediate support to families, following children with difficulties in school through all stages of their education. During this period, the way in which the FCLIS and the cantonal chapters understood their role in Switzerland shifted, as the FCLIS president during this period, Leonardo Zanier, made clear: 'Forget Italy, we have to find a way to be part of this country, to count in this country' (cited in: La Barba and Cattacin 2007).[12]

The Colonies main activities in this period focused on social assistance, and in particular on the intermediation between Swiss institutions and Italians. In addition, the Colonies were engaged in raising awareness of their agency among the many Italians who, in the 1980s, were still afraid to contact the authorities (Cattacin and Pellegrini 2016).[13]

Although the Colonies proclaimed themselves to be apolitical, their proximity to the Italian left and trade unions was known. The greatest difficulty was the Swiss government's policy against the politicisation of foreigners, introduced in February 1948.[14] Fears of social unrest from

people who came from a country characterised by bitter trade-union struggles and hopes of ensuring a clear separation between trade unions and political struggles, caused the government to consider foreigners a threat to the political peace.

The prohibition against foreigners' participation in political activities related to their own country led to the expulsion of Italians for communist activities, which affected the Free Colonies. Between 1949 and 1979, several thousand Italians were expelled from the country (Cerutti 1995). Even in Switzerland, the Cold War produced a system of mistrust, control, and surveillance, and a scandal regarding illegal surveillance files on Swiss and foreign citizens living in Switzerland erupted in 1989.[15] In addition, it should be remembered that while supposedly communist activities were banned, in the 1950s more than a hundred fascists were still living in the country, tolerated by the government. The deportations resulted in increasing mistrust between Swiss authorities and the associations.

The activities of the Colonies were expanding rapidly, and in order to attract Italian workers it was necessary to offer them access to trade-union membership. Thus, the FCLIS's headquarters began to host Inca-Cgil, the largest leftist Italian trade union.[16] The first Inca office in Switzerland opened in Bellinzona in 1957 (Lanza 2007), followed by one in Zurich in 1959, Basel in 1962, and Lausanne in 1975.[17] Their opening was hindered by Swiss authorities, which favoured Catholic trade unions,[18] and by Swiss trade unions, which wanted to avoid the weakening of their position (Schmitter Heisler 1980).

Xenophobia Unites, Italy Divides

The 1960s represent a central moment in the history of the FCLIS and Italian associationism abroad. During this decade, the migrants came mainly from Southern Italy. The fact that the arrivals were men without families who lived in sheds exacerbated negative Swiss perceptions of Italians (Stolz 2001). The view started to emerge that things had been better with Northern Italian migration (Risso and Böker 1964). In fact, migrants from several countries started to arrive at this time. Between 1955 and 1964, Italy and Switzerland engaged in a slow and difficult renegotiation of the 1948 agreement. The structural conditions of the two countries had changed. Switzerland could draw on the labour of other countries, but the birth of the European Community, growing West German demand for labour, and the economic boom in Northwest Italy put Italy in a stronger position. In 1964, Italy and Switzerland

signed a new agreement, which entered into force in February 1965 and marked the end of Switzerland's open-door policy, without resolving the seasonal-workers issue.[19] Meanwhile, in 1963 Albert Stocker had founded the *Anti-Italiener Partei* (Anti-Italian Party), which in 1965 mobilised old xenophobic feelings (Skenderovic 2003; Cattacin and Oris 2013) and led what turned out to be a decade of anti-foreigner initiatives, although none of them were ever put to a vote.[20]

The so-called 'Schwarzenbach-Initiative' of 1970, which would have limited foreign workers to 10% of the total workforce and required the deportation of some 300,000 foreigners, was crucial to the FCLIS's ability to achieve, even if only for a short time, the goal it had set for itself of uniting the world of Italian associations in migration. The foreign labour is the biggest domestic issue facing Switzerland in 1970.[21] Despite their mutual hostility, Italian laic and Catholic associations began to collaborate with each other, and also with Spanish migrant associations. Between 1969 and 1974, Italian associations and Swiss trade unions began collaborating for the first time. The significance of xenophobia for the government directly influenced the institutionalisation of movements that promoted it (Skenderovic and D'Amato 2008; Skenderovic 2009). The Colonies experienced their moment of greatest expansion: 117 chapters, nearly 19,000 members, 30 football teams, and several film clubs (La Barba 2005, 2013; Ricciardi 2016b).[22] This was also the beginning of the FCLIS's metamorphosis (Cattacin and Domenig 2012; Cattacin 2015). Even the Italian presence in Switzerland changed, in regard to not only regional origins, but also the fact that in 1965, for the first time, foreigners with a yearly work permit surpassed seasonal workers (Niederberger 1982, 2004).

The Decline of the FCLIS

The FCLIS's links with Italy were strong after the Second World War and diminished during the 1960s. By the mid-1970s, direct relations with the Italian regions had intensified. This link had already been established in the FCLIS's twenty-third Federal Congress in 1969.[23] The FCLIS thought it could cope with the changes that would soon manifest in Italian associative life in Switzerland. But things turned out differently: on several occasions, the FCLIS tried to involve the dozens of territorial associations in its activities, but the response was rarely

positive. With the delegation to the Regions of migration affairs in Italy, the FCLIS definitively lost its privileged position as mediator with Italy.

Regarding its activities in Switzerland, and after the referendum phase and the full institutionalisation of xenophobic movements, the Colonies focused on the *Mitenand* or *Être solidaire* initiative (Togetherness Initiative), an unsuccessful decades-long struggle to abolish the seasonal workers' statute. Here also the FCLIS made a decisive error in judgment. Having contributed to the radicalisation created by the initiative, it also contributed to the structural weakening of the FCLIS itself, and to a change in its subsequent strategies.

Symbolically, the first phase of the FCLIS—which involved its capillary structure and exponential growth in its importance in the context of Swiss migration—ended in April 1978.[24] With the death of Giovanni Medri, the historic president and founder of the Mansard in Zurich, an era came to an end. The 1980s saw one of the last generational changes of the association's major representatives. The first half of the decade was still characterised by the 'Togetherness' issue, and the FCLIS's coordination activities continued for a few years longer, although, after the failure of the April 1981 'Togetherness' vote, 'a period of reflection'[25] began. The confusion increased, and 'an effort to reach a stance consistent with those who want a change'[26] appeared necessary.

The 'Togetherness' committee[27] continued to meet, and its goals always remained the same: to end temporary work permits, promote integration, ensure family reunification, and stabilise foreign labour, even if its official policy was hardly 'to stabilise foreigners and protect human rights.'[28] Even the problems of some foreign workers in Switzerland remained unchanged (Wanner et al. 2009).

Together with the *Associación de trabajadores emigrantes españoles en Suiza* (Association of Spanish Emigrant Workers in Switzerland—ATEES), the FCLIS participated as a junior partner in the Swiss Trade Union's petition for a 40-hour workweek. This was a very important issue for the FCLIS, which had always identified the trade-union movement as the only protector and defender of workers' rights—in contrast to the Swiss trade unions, which considered migrants as competition and only slowly adopted full participation rights for foreigners in their statutes (Stohr 2013). Undoubtedly, times had changed: the differences between the FCLIS and trade unions were attenuated, probably because of changed views regarding Italians, who came to be considered a traditional presence in Switzerland.

The issue of foreigners' electoral participation was discussed at the Winterthur conference in 1977. Beginning in the 1980s, requests to permit foreigners to participate in elections were repeated to individual cantons and municipalities. But always the fear of foreign infiltration and mistrust of the left-wing coalition in which the FCLIS was engaged caused the requests to be declined (Marquis and Grossi 1990; Mahnig 2005).[29]

The number of failed FCLIS initiatives in Switzerland and the loss of key figures and competences, including the closing of social services, schools, and information platforms caused a crisis for the FCLIS that was only partially ameliorated by its return to Italian politics and the diaspora logic of political engagement in Italy. As the culmination of the shift back to Italian politics, in 2006 the president of the FCLIS was elected to the Italian Senate and began to influence Italian authorities to intervene in Switzerland. This decision to leave Swiss politics and the shift towards social problems related to the Italian community—a shift prompted by the continuous defeat of direct political interventions in Switzerland—may have slowed the decline of the FCLIS, but not stopped it (Eggert and Giugni 2010).

Conclusion

As we have seen, between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s the FCLIS was characterised by the use of the political opportunities that Switzerland and Italy opened to them. In particular, it focused on obtaining social rights for Italians in Switzerland, and on improving political stability and economic growth in Italy. Italian authorities dealt with the FCLIS as a significant association until the 1960s, but their attitude shifted in 1970, when Italian regions were encouraged, with substantial resources, to deal with migration and form territorial associations abroad. Consequently, support for associations with an ideological and national basis decreased. The FCLIS was aware of the problem, but it underestimated its seriousness in the mistaken belief that it could continue to exercise a leadership role in Swiss associationism.[30]

The FCLIS still exists. In 2013, it celebrated its seventieth anniversary and had 48 chapters across Switzerland and probably fewer than 5000 members. Despite its longevity, it is a completely different organisation than it had been. Inevitably, the average age of its members is higher than it was. Its political and social role in Switzerland today is marginal, and its activities are more oriented towards Italy and Italian elections than to Switzerland.

The key years of success and decline were 1948, when Switzerland and Italy signed their first agreement on foreign workers; 1964, when the agreement was renewed; 1969, the year of the Schwarzenbach-Initiative (the most famous xenophobic initiative); 1977, the year that the 'Togetherness' initiative, the first pro-foreigners initiative, was launched; 1981, the year in which 'Togetherness' was voted on and massively rejected; and 2006, when the president of the FCLIS was elected to the Italian Senate.

The FCLIS was born in a double opportunity structure, combining the nearness and openness of Switzerland with the possibility to act as an anti-fascist movement in Italy. The development of the FCLIS indicates that this double opportunity structure was always ambivalent and determined the association's possible range of action. While its influence on Italian authorities allowed it to change conditions in Switzerland—through negotiations between the two countries—its drift towards Swiss politics and attempts to influence Switzerland failed. Not only were the strategic partners the FCLIS chose—left-wing non-governmental parties and established left-wing trade unions that favoured Swiss workers over foreign workers—problematic, but its attempts to promote political rights vis-à-vis Swiss cantons and localities marginalised the FCLIS in Switzerland even more. Among several other initiatives, the FCLIS lost its biggest fight since the end of the 1960s—the attempt to abolish the seasonal workers' statute. The latter only finally happened after 2002, when bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the European Union entered into force.

It is not surprising that its political difficulties in Switzerland and its difficulty in understanding the Swiss political landscape outside its main field of expertise in social rights and the trade-union movement caused the FCLIS to reinvest in Italian politics, which today remains its only battleground. This focus on Italy does not mean that the FCLIS is no longer influential in Switzerland, but the way in which it exercises that influence is the same as it was after the Second World War—by mobilising Italian authorities to intervene in Switzerland.

With the new migration flows from Italy and the diminishing discrimination against Italians in Switzerland, it is possible that the FCLIS will continue to survive, but it will certainly not play a significant role in the lives of these migrants or in Swiss society more generally (see Table 1, which summarises the history of the FCLIS). This role has been taken over by more dynamic associations focused on services and leisure activities and without political or ideological links to trade unions or political parties.

Table 1 Development of the FCLIS, 1940 to the present

Period	*Political opportunity structures*	*Personal resources (leaders)*	*Challenging contexts and responses*
1940–1950: Founding of the FCLIS as anti-fascist movement (intellectual diaspora)	Refugees in Switzerland before the closing of the borders; freedom; proximity to Italy	Diaspora of intellectuals	Return migration of intellectuals and new Italian migration from rural areas in Northern and Northeast Italy
1950–1960: Reorientation of focus from anti-fascism to workers' claims (trade unions)	With the Italian government, efforts to improve living conditions in Switzerland	Northern Italians with trade-union experience	End of migration from the north, beginning of the 'mediterraneisation'
1960–1970: Contacts with Swiss political organisations and trade unions	Xenophobic movements and solidarity movements that promoted political expression among Italian migrants	Northern Italians with trade-union experience; first specialised schools for Italian migrants and their children	Beginning of the sedentarisation of Italian migrants, children's inclusion in Swiss schools
1970–1980: Political activities in Switzerland and crisis of the trade-union model	Coalitions with radical left-wing parties and Christian solidarity movements. Emergence as a political organisation through direct democracy ('Togetherness' initiative and local initiatives for political rights)	Northern Italians with trade-union experience	Regionalisation of Italian migration, identity issues, marginality
1980–1990: Weakening of its political role and redefining the FCLIS as an Italy-oriented association	Local political initiatives for political rights; voting rights for Italians living outside Italy, a renewed focus on Italy, parliamentary representation in Italy	Reduction in revenue and decrease in staff; loss of competences (schools; trade union; politics)	Demographic change: ageing; new associations and politics of institutional inclusion; focus on migrants from Kosovo
Since 2000: Marginalisation of the FCLIS as an instrument for Italian politics	No relevant initiatives in Switzerland; focus on Italy	Decline and further weakening	New Italian migration, new technologies, new associations; focus on irregular migration and asylum seekers

The FCLIS was not the only association to help migrants during the peak years of Italian migration, but it was certainly the most significant one, and its history makes it possible to reconstruct some aspects of the Italian presence in Switzerland, a presence that has changed the history of both countries.

Notes

1. Research on migrant associations focalises in general on the territory of their constitution or on the transnational activities, and seldom on the link between them. See for instance Moya (2005).
2. *FCLIS, Ambasciata e consolati*, Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv (Swiss Social Archive—SSA), Ar 40.20.5.
3. In the mid-1920s, fascist and irredentist movements were established in Ticino, and they persisted until the mid-1930s. In 1925, more than 20 fascist headquarters were established there. See Franzina and Sanfilippo (2003) and the notes of Claude Cantini, member of the Lausanne CLI, during the national assembly of the FCLIS: SSA, Ar 40.10.15,
4. FCLIS, *Letteratura, Quaderni di Agorà*, March 1994, SSA, Ar 40.20.19
5. FCLIS, *Atti fondativi. Rifugiati*, SSA, Ar 40.30.2.
6. The association, founded on 20 June 1945 in Zurich, aimed to establish a network of associations of Italian women in Switzerland. After Zurich, another chapter was established in Basel. See FCLIS, *Corrispondenza e propaganda*, SSA, Ar 40.20.18.
7. FCLIS, *Delibera di approvazione. Congressi fino 21/1965*, SSA, Ar 40.40.1.
8. FCLIS, *Convegni, riunioni, Bollettino per i soci* 10 (1948), SSA, Ar 40.50.4.
9. FCLIS, *Organisazzione, Statuto dell'Assistenza italiana di Zurigo*, SSA, Ar 40.20.11.
10. Governo Italiano, "Convenzione italo-svizzera in materia di assicurazioni sociali del 9 aprile 1949, ratificata dal Governo Italiano il 6 marzo 1950," *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, no. 73 (28 March 1950).
11. FCLIS, *Problemi Italiani, Petizione passaporto*, SSA, Ar 40.70.15.
12. This message was taken seriously until the beginning of the 1980s by all FCLIS presidents, in particular Guglielmo Grossi.
13. FCLIS, *Centro Informazioni Scolastiche (CLI), Annual Report of Zurigo 1982, Federazione e scuola: Canton Zurigo, February 1983*, SSA, Ar 40.50.2.
14. Bundesrat Br, *Bundesratsbeschluss vom 24. Februar 1948 betreffend politische Reden von Ausländern*, AS 1948, 119. This decree had the same objectives as the social peace of 1937, which had included Swiss trade unions in political processes and reinforced their power, but also attenuated their disruptive role; see Zanetti (1980).

15. According to the 1993 report by Georg Kreis, 900,000 people had been spied upon. Two-thirds of them were foreigners living in Switzerland (Kreis 1993).
16. INCA-Cgil consists of the acronyms of the *Istituto Nazionale Confederale di Assistenza* and the *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* (National Confederal Assistance Institute and Italian General Confederation of Labour).
17. FCLIS, *Organizzazioni affini italiane*, SSA, Ar 40.20.15; Ar 40.10.20.
18. In 1959, the *Gruppo operai italiani* (Italians Workers' Group—GOI) was born. It adopted the statute of the *Associazioni cristiane lavoratori internazionali* (Christian Associations of International Workers—ACLI) with minimal changes, to make it acceptable to the Swiss authorities. Immediately upon its creation, it obtained 800 members. In addition, in February 1960 the first ACLI office in Switzerland opened in Winterthur. In 1961, the Swiss ACLI was officially established; in 1962, the ACLI's first organisational secretariat was created; in 1963, the *Ente di formazione professionale* (Company of Professional Formation—ENAIP) was opened, while the ACLI, in collaboration with local agencies and institutions, opened offices throughout Switzerland (Aarau, Basel, Bern, Bodio, Geneva and Lugano). See Plutino (2008).
19. Kew, Richmond, *Italian Workers in Switzerland*: *Communication of the British Embassy in Rome to the Western European Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, London, 16 October, 1969, The National Archives (TNA), Switzerland Economic Affairs: Position of Italian (and other foreign) Workers in Switzerland FO 33/820; FCLIS, *Congressi XXII-XXIV, 1967–71. Relazioni XXIII Congresso*, Olten, 22–23 March 1969, pp. 18–19, SSA, Ar 40.40.2.
20. The Anti-Italian Party was characterised mainly by its aversion to Southern Italians (Udris 2011). Nineteen sixty-five was also a key year because of the industrial disaster in Mattmark, in which 88 people died (56 of the victims were Italian). The Swiss public was profoundly shocked by the tragedy, as it was the first time that Swiss citizens and foreigners died side by side for the development and growth of the country. It is almost impossible to establish whether and how the Mattmark catastrophe influenced electoral choices during the xenophobic initiatives. Regarding the Mattmark tragedy, see Ricciardi (2015).
21. Kew, Richmond, *Communication of the British Embassy in Bern to the Central European Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, London, 23 December, 1969, TNA, Switzerland Economic Affairs: Position of Italian (and other foreign) Workers in Switzerland, FO 33/820.
22. Regarding the organisational structure of the Colonies, see 'Relazione storica' tenutasi durante il Convegno 25 anni delle CLI in Svizzera,' Zurich, November 1968.

23. FCLIS, *Congressi XXII–XXIV, 1967–71. Relazioni XXIII Congresso*, Olten, 22–23 March 1969, pp. 18–19, SSA, Ar 40.40.2.
24. FCLIS, *Corrispondenza e propaganda, Comunicato stampa FCLIS*, Zurigo, 24 April 1978, SSA, Ar 40.20.18.
25. FCLIS, *Mitenand, Lettera d'invito per programmare un intervento comune al Consiglio federale* (n.d. January 1983), SSA, Ar 40.70.11.
26. Ibid.
27. There were 67 "collective members" of the referendum movement (15 September, 1980); ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. FCLIS, *Politica della FCLIS, Rapport de la commission chargée d'examiner la pétition pour le droit de vote communal et cantonal à tous les étrangers*, Geneva, 18 December 1980, SSA, Ar 40.70.3.
30. FCLIS, *Congressi XXII–XXIV, 1967–71. Relazione generale di Gianfranco Bresadola al XXIII Congresso*, Olten, 22–23 March 1969, pp. 18–19, SSA, Ar 40.40.2.

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