
Introduction

Massachusetts Congressman Thomas P. O'Neill once famously remarked that in the United States, "all politics are local." O'Neill made a good point, but it was only half true, because local politics in the United States, especially during wartime, have also been shaped by the political and religious loyalties that immigrants bring with them. Government officials who fail to take account of such loyalties and rivalries may find themselves duped into becoming partisans on one or another side of local political battles when they make decisions about who is and who is not a security risk during wartime. Their commendable zeal to protect the nation from harm can lead them to violate the constitutional rights of citizens while doing nothing to protect domestic security. That is exactly what happened in the case of Sylvester Andriano, an Italian-born San Francisco attorney and local government official who was forcibly removed from the West Coast in 1942 on the basis of politically inspired false charges that he was a Fascist agent. The Andriano case provides a cautionary tale about the sometimes deleterious impact on our national life of religious and ideological zealotry in our communities, no-holds-barred political competition in

our big cities, and fallible power-seeking public officials in our national security agencies during wartime.

This book is about the ordeal of Sylvester Andriano, but it is first and foremost a book that means to restore our appreciation of the impact of European political and religious rivalries in the political cultures of American cities in the first half of the twentieth century. The setting is San Francisco, California, the second-largest city west of the Mississippi River at the time. During the World War II years most of the city's residents were Irish, German, or Italian immigrants, their children, and their grandchildren. These men, women, and children made up nearly two-thirds of the city's population at a time when 94 percent of San Franciscans were persons of European descent. The devout Catholics among them asserted their faith-based convictions in public debates about a range of issues, as did a variety of zealous anti-Catholic residents, including Communist Party members. And San Franciscans kept informed about and were deeply concerned with, disturbed by, and divided over the political crises that roiled European affairs, from Mussolini's March on Rome in October 1922 to Hitler's Blitzkrieg against Poland in September 1939. When the United States entered World War II, anti-Catholic activists seized on the fact that Italy was now allied with Germany and Japan against America to convince domestic security officials that Sylvester Andriano was a Fascist agent.

Anti-Catholic zealots targeted Andriano because he served as president of the Catholic Men of San Francisco, a Catholic Action program established by Archbishop John J. Mitty in 1938. After Mussolini and Hitler signed their Pact of Steel agreement on May 22, 1939, and especially after Italy declared war against the United States on December 10, 1941, Andriano's anti-Catholic Masonic, Socialist, and Communist enemies seized the opportunity to remove the Catholic attorney from political influence by accusing him of being a Fascist agent. Federal and state loyalty investigating committees, the FBI, and the U.S. Army accepted the truth of the bogus charges and issued Andriano an "individual exclusion order," forcing him to be relocated away from coastal states on the grounds that he was a security risk.

In order to better understand the story of Andriano's ordeal, I begin by detailing the transnational political rivalries that divided many American cities between the First and Second World Wars: rivalries between devout Catholics and committed anti-Catholics in Italian communities and between Catholic anti-Communists and their Communist Party competitors. Then I zero in on the operations of the California and federal legislative loyalty investigating committees in 1941 and 1942 and on the consequences of J. Edgar Hoover's expansion of the FBI's domestic security responsibilities at the beginning of the war.

During the 1930s Sylvester Andriano emerged as the leading figure in a faith-based cultural and political reform movement known as Catholic Action. Along with other militant lay men and women, Andriano joined his local archbishop in using church resources to battle communists, socialists, freethinkers, and anarchists, as well as reformers who advocated birth control, divorce, eugenics, and the undoing of traditional gender role definitions. He also participated in the cultural and business outreach programs of the Fascist government of Italy. To Andriano, this seemed legitimate; after all, Italy and the United States maintained friendly relations, and ethnic pride could arguably coexist with loyalty to America. Once war broke out, however, Italian American Catholics such as Andriano, who regarded themselves as nonpolitical, became vulnerable to charges that their attempts to foster ethnic pride in their Italian heritage constituted collaboration with the enemy.

On August 19, 1940, six days after the Luftwaffe unleashed its deadliest attack in the Battle of Britain, a witness testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) that Andriano was "indubitably the fountain head of all Fascist activities on the Pacific coast." In May 1942 the California legislature's Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities (known as the Tenney Committee for its chair, Jack Tenney) announced that Andriano and two other San Franciscans, journalist Ettore Patrizi and attorney Renzo Turco, were the ringleaders of California Fascism. Andriano denied all the charges under oath in 1942, but the Tenney Committee nonetheless declared him a security risk, and in September

the U.S. Army served him with an order that excluded him from the Western Defense Region.

Andriano's public career included both city politics and Catholic Church activities, and by the early 1920s he counted himself among the *prominenti*, the North Beach Italian American district's leading business and professional figures. In the late 1920s Andriano and his friend and law client Angelo Rossi had both gained citywide influence by serving on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Rossi became mayor in 1931, sent Andriano to Europe as the city's delegate to an international conference, and appointed him to the police commission. Andriano also served on a local draft board. A close associate of Archbishop Edward J. Hanna in the latter's efforts to promote greater religious activity among San Francisco Italian Catholics during the 1920s, Andriano developed even stronger ties with Hanna's successor, coadjutor Archbishop John J. Mitty, who officially replaced Hanna in 1935. Mitty delegated Andriano to organize a new Catholic Action program called the Catholic Men of San Francisco. With the mayor's support and assistance, Andriano and Archbishop Mitty commenced a citywide campaign to shape municipal reform and labor relations according to a program based on Catholic moral principles.

Andriano's assumption of leadership in San Francisco Catholic Action triggered a campaign *against* Catholic activism from three different local sources linked to transnational political competition. One assault came from the leaders of the city's Italian Masonic organization, who regarded Andriano as an embodiment of the monstrous political offspring produced by the Vatican's illicit embrace of Fascist evil. A second set of attacks came from the anticlerical critics of Pope Pius XI among the anti-Fascist political exiles from Italy (*fuorusciti*), who regarded devout local Catholics as morally equivalent to the bureaucrats running Benito Mussolini's allegedly criminal regime. A third offensive against Andriano, Rossi, and Catholic Action derived from the local Communist Party (CP). Local party leaders followed up their success in shaping the strategy and tactics of the 1934 waterfront and general strikes with a vigorous program of labor organizing and electoral politics. Like its counterparts in

leading cities in the United States and Europe, the San Francisco CP followed the program of the Communist Third International organization (Comintern) and denounced Catholic cultural authority and political influence in its San Francisco publications and public meetings.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and three days later Italy declared war on the United States. Self-appointed superpatriots and public officials joined forces in the weeks to come and set out to identify dangerous and disloyal Italian-born residents. Andriano's and Rossi's various critics seized the opportunity provided by the national emergency to discredit the leadership of Catholic Action and weaken Catholic political power in the city. International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) president Harry Bridges (a secret member of the Communist Party who went by the name "Rossi" in clandestine communications with the Comintern) and several other critics of Catholic activism volunteered to testify before state and federal un-American investigating committees that the mayor and his former police commissioner were Fascist agents "potentially dangerous" to the United States.

Previous historians, beginning with John P. Diggins in 1972, have illuminated the complex divisions within California's Italian American communities during the period. They have established that the investigation and exclusion of Andriano, Patrizi, and Turco were the products of accusations by anti-Catholic critics within the Italian American community who harbored political grievances, as well as of post-Pearl Harbor security considerations and anti-Italian ethnic prejudice on the part of public opinion shapers and government officials outside the community.

This book demonstrates that Andriano's exclusion also derived from his militant Catholic activism and the reaction it engendered both inside and outside the Italian American community. Local Bay Area political and religious rivalries between Catholics and anti-Catholics in the Italian American community and between Catholic anti-Communists and their Communist Party adversaries played a major role in Andriano's designation as an "un-American" citizen who was "potentially dangerous" to the security of the nation.

Andriano's ordeal was also the product of a separate set of dynamics related to J. Edgar Hoover's expansion of the FBI's counterintelligence responsibilities from 1936 through the years of World War II and beyond. Hoover's zeal in seeking to increase his bureau's power and public prominence by expanding its role in counterintelligence has been documented by several historians, but the Andriano case and its demonstration of the influence of anti-Catholicism and local politics on national security investigations have been lost to history.

I became interested in Sylvester Andriano while engaged in a project documenting the competition between the Communist Party and the Catholic Church in San Francisco during the 1930s and 1940s. As I read through one after another collection of archival records, including correspondence between Andriano and a Catholic Action colleague, Communist Party records, the National Archives, Andriano's FBI file, army and navy documents, and letters and reports in the Chancery Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco, I learned about Andriano's ordeal and discovered that he was innocent of the charges and had suffered a terrible injustice at the hands of government authorities. But I did not write this book merely to correct the record and defend Sylvester Andriano's good name.

My major purpose is to demonstrate how international and national events impinged on the political culture of a major American city from World War I to World War II, eventually influencing domestic security politics after Pearl Harbor. Throughout the book I draw extensively on the historical record to present the actual voices of the participants in the events. I begin with a brief account of Andriano's background and career and then provide a detailed narrative of his role in Catholic Action and San Francisco politics, including local consequences of the victory of Fascism in Italy, the Lateran Accords between the Italian state and the Vatican, the labor conflicts of the Great Depression, the Communist Party's role in local politics, and the outbreak of World War II in Europe and the Pacific. The final chapters describe the security investigations of Andriano and discuss the implications of his case for our understanding of the impact of loyalty investigations on civil liberties in time of war.