

Post-Election Italo-Trumpism: Part One

Jerry Krase (November 19, 2016)



The day after the Presidential election I was in England to deliver the keynote address at the University of Central Lancashire’s “Fieldwork Photography Symposium.” I had already voted for Hillary Clinton on the Working Families Party line by absentee ballot from Brooklyn. My opening remarks were “Yesterday there was a battle in the U.S.A. between the Anti-Christ and the Whore of Babylon, and the Anti-Christ won.” Given that many in the audience had mistakenly voted for Brexit and were now suffering the consequences of populism, I knew they’d understand the metaphor.

As I had predicted, Italian American New Yorkers, or at least the vast majority of their neighbors, voted for President-Elect [Donald Trump](#) [2]. From a quick reading of the election returns outside of the Big Apple far and near, Italo-Trumpism had spread from sea to shining sea.

This raises two questions: “Why?” and “How” might Italian Americans be rewarded for their fealty to the Trumpster?” Since the answer to the first, is more complicated, I will only address the second here. As was obvious during the campaign, more or less prominent Italian Americans were way out there as loud supporters of The Donald and his agenda. Among them were America’s Mayor [Rudy Giuliani](#) [3], New Jersey’s Governor [Chris Christie](#) [4], and “America’s Toughest” Sheriff [Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County](#) [5], Arizona (the latter lost his (re)election bid to fellow Italian American but liberal Democrat [Paul Penzone](#) [6]).



Shortly following the Trump victory, Reuters ran a story “Factbox: Short list of potential picks for Trump administration” that included a number of known Italian Americans, and a few “potentially” Italian Americans (Those with Italian sounding last names that I have italicized):

For Secretary of State: Rudy Giuliani.

For Attorney General: Rudy Giuliani, Chris Christie, and [Pam Bondi](#) [7], (Florida Attorney General)

For Homeland Security Secretary: Joe Arpaio.

For Environmental Protection Agency Head: [Mike Catanzaro](#) [8] (energy lobbyist, G.W. Bush EPA official).

A day later The New York Daily News added:

For U.S. Trade Representative: [Dan DiMicco](#) [9] (Former Nucor Corporation CEO).

For Commerce Secretary: Chris Christie and Dan DiMicco

While I am writing this, it was announced that Kansas Congressman Mike Pompeo would be proposed for CIA Director.

As might be expected, some of these choices have not been well-received by The New York Times and other newspapers that had endorsed [Hillary Clinton](#) [10]. According to a NYT Editorial Why Rudy Giuliani Shouldn't Be Secretary of State “...he would be a dismal and potentially disastrous choice.” Noting among other things his problematic business ties and “Mr. Giuliani has given paid speeches to a shadowy Iranian opposition group that until 2012 was on the State Department’s list of foreign terrorist organizations.”

One might also think that Chris Christie’s appointment to almost anything in the new administration would be problematic given his potential indictment vis a vis the George Washington Bridge Gate scandal. Especially since a few of his minions, Bill Baroni and Bridget Anne Kelly, have already been convicted and facing a lot of hard time. However, not only won’t Chris get rewarded for his yeoman campaign services, he was removed from the presidential transition team by The Donald’s son-in-law and closest adviser Jared Kushner. Jared purged Chris because, as U.S. Attorney he sent Jared’s father Charles up the river in 2005 for tax evasion, witness tampering and (My oh my!) illegal campaign donations.

In the forthcoming “Post-Election Italo-Trumpism Part Two,” I will analyze and discuss more closely the Italian American presidential vote in New York City. Many of the most wrong-headed political commentators are bending over backwards to explain how they weren’t really as wrong about the election as they actually were. Most still think that ethnicity doesn’t matter; everything was about race and class as in the “Revenge of the poor and working class whites.” I believe that even well-educated, and well-off, Italian Americans are an excellent example of the wide range of white ethnic voters who were perilously ignored, except for “deplorable” comments, by Hillary and the Democratic National Committee.

Although not a compliment, Italian American are no more racist, homophobic, and misogynist than non-Italian Americans. What made the difference for the majority of Italian Americans in voting for Donald, besides his pomposity, I believe, was concern for their own, and their families’, security and economic future; not the plight of others. The remnants of traditional Italian values of insularity (family and home) also easily translate to protectionism, and even isolationism. Placing their faith however in the promises of someone so much like [Silvio Berlusconi](#) [11] may not bode well for “our” future, but nevertheless deserves to be analyzed and understood.

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Links

- [1] <http://test.italy.org/files/rudygiuliani.jpg>
- [2] <http://www.trump.com/biography/>
- [3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudy_Giuliani
- [4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Christie
- [5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Arpaio
- [6] <https://penzone2016.com/about/>
- [7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pam_Bondi
- [8] <http://cgcn.com/team/mike-catanzaro/>
- [9] <http://www.dandimicco.com/about-dan.html>
- [10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Clinton
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