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Teofilo Petriella : Marxist Revolutionary

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Teofilo Petriella: Marxist Revolutionary

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2014

Michigan Technological University

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After reading about the Copper Country Strike Symposium, I felt it would be important to include the Italian population's contributions to an event marred by "The Italian Hall Tragedy." This turned into a more difficult task than I expected. Having researched and written about a variety of topics on Great Lakes history, I learned about an Italian socialist name Teofilo Petriella who worked for the Western Federation of Miners in both Michigan and Minnesota. While looking through secondary sources for more information about Petreilla's activities, it became apparent that Finnish scholars dominated the field of Copper Country strike history. Authors such as Michael Karni, Arthur Puotinen, and Auvo Kostiainen have written extensively on the topic of Finnish immigrants. For example the exploits of Antero Tanner, Ida Pasanen, and Leo Laukki have been widely covered including their activities with the American Socialist Party, Industrial Workers of the World, and Western Federation of Miners. Croatian immigrants have their own heroes with the martyred workers, Steve Putrich and Diazig Tizan, who were killed by deputies, along with Ana "Big Annie" Clemenc, a brave heroine who led several marches during the strike. However, Italians played important roles in the 1907 Mesabi Range Strike and the 1913 Copper Country Strike and their accomplishments also deserve recognition at this commemorative event.

The story of the 1913-1914 Copper Country Strike goes beyond the confines of Michigan's Upper Peninsula as many of the participants had personal connections with other mining regions including the Mesabi Range in Minnesota and the Butte, Montana copper fields. Populations often moved between the three locations in search of jobs and opportunity. The mining communities of the Upper Peninsula supplied trained cadres of Michigan miners to open the new iron fields on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range. All three regions needed experienced hard rock miners, regardless if they sought copper or iron. The miners also had ties to their homelands in such diverse locations such as Sweden, Finland, Italy, and the Balkans. The ethnic diversity of the miners initially led to conflict, especially between the Northern and Southern Europeans. However, the shared experiences of the harsh

working conditions in the mines, expensive living conditions, and low wages, along with enduring the long, cold winters led to a growing sense of commonality that was reinforced by the formation of labor unions.

The corporate-enforced low wages and poor working conditions led to the radicalization of disgruntled miners. One of the early labor leaders who united the diverse mining communities of Michigan and Minnesota was Teofilo Petriella, an immigrant socialist from Circello, Italy. Born in 1878, Petriella eventually climbed to the position of Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Naples, while also serving as a politician representing the Popular Party in the national government, and worked as a literary editor in Italy.¹ Arriving in the United States, accompanied by his wife Anita, Petriella would soon participate in a series of labor actions. *The Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune* stated that Petriella came to the United States around 1900 and joined Italian Anarchist and Socialist movements in East Coast cities. In 1904, he worked for the Socialist Party in New Jersey and Ohio before moving to Michigan, where he united members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and Western Federation of Miners (WFM).² Even at this point, he sought to unite the workers in the copper fields in Michigan and Montana, organize them, and lead them out on a strike that would cripple the copper industry. To that end he began to publish the newspaper *La Sentinella* in 1906 with the help of Peter Gedda in Calumet, Michigan. Shortly afterwards, Petriella was asked to organize the miners in Minnesota, which brought an end to the newspaper. The task then transferred to Frank Schmelzer, who continued efforts to bring order to the chaotic labor situation in the Michigan copper fields.³

¹ Rassegna storica del Risorgimento Biblioteca Nazionale Di Firenze Fondo Gennarelli; Gennarelli AC, http://www.risorgimento.it/rassegna/index.php?id=53236&ricerca_inizio=0&ricerca_query=&ricerca_ordine=DESC&ricerca_libera=. (accessed April 1, 2014).

² "Black-Hearted Rascal Exposed," *The Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, March 23, 1907.

³ Western Federation of Miners, "Stenographic Report Held in Odd Fellows Hall, Denver, Colorado, 1907." 308. http://books.google.com/books?id=wq03AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA602&dq=Petriella+michigan&hl=en&sa=X&ei=SnM4U9_ZF-jg0gGGjYEg&ved=0CCsQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Petriella%20michigan&f=false. (accessed April 1, 2014).

When Petriella left Calumet, Michigan for the Mesabi Range in the summer of 1906, he continued with his labor unification efforts. His presence only added to tensions between the Oliver Mining Company, a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, and the workers after a failed wildcat strike in 1905, when miners walked out over low wages. Italian and Slovenian miners had demanded a ten-cent a day pay increase, which mining officials denied. Instead, they brought in special deputies to break up the labor movement, leading to a violent confrontation. Slovenian leaders gathered three hundred miners at the Porter Mine, a strip-mining pit, where some men began to shoot at laborers still working during the strike. Special deputies confronted the immigrant miners and fired back into the crowd. Two strikers died and a third man was wounded in the skirmish.⁴ In the aftermath of the violence, the strike failed and miners began to organize unions to protect their livelihood.

The WFM asked Petriella to organize these ethnically diverse miners on the Mesabi Range. In a 1907 report to the WFM, Petriella noted that the steel trust had earned a net total of \$156,624,273, but had only paid out \$47,765,540 in wages to the 202,457 men they employed.⁵ This was important information the miners needed to know because they had not been given a raise in two years. Unfortunately none of the WFM organizers spoke Slovenian, Italian, or Finnish so they could not effectively communicate with the vast majority of disgruntled workers. Petriella's arrival heralded a new beginning for the organization efforts because he could address the Italians in their native tongue. He also brought in Finnish and Slovenian speakers to assist in the recruitment drive. With their help, he was able to establish or found new union chapters in Hibbing, Chisholm, Buhl, Virginia, Eveleth, and Aurora, plus many other smaller communities in the region. Within these organizations, Petriella split the membership along ethnic lines, which allowed immigrants to organize with their fellow countrymen.

⁴ "Miners Walk Out," *The Mesabi Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, April 15, 1905.

⁵ Teofilo Petriella Report to Western Federation of Miners, 7.

However, the WFM held monthly meetings with all members to build fraternity among the diverse ethnic groups.

Using fiery oratory, he brought together the region's Finnish Socialists, Western Federation of Miners, and the Industrial Workers of the World under his centralized leadership. In a 1907 speech he stated:

“To accomplish my task I need not take much of your time: neither do I need to make a speech. It will suffice to call your attention to the condition of our everyday life, as the Western Federation of Miners is nothing but the natural outcome of the appalling conditions which live, we slaves of the mines. For a moment go with me to the main streets of Hibbing. Look into every open door as we pass by; then recall the house in which you live; cast a glance into the nasty shanties of the various locations swarming with human beings. It will not be hard for you to notice the contrast which exists between the stores piled with merchandise that the dealers do not know how to sell, and the shacks of an immense army of workers who need everything and can buy very little.”⁶

His speeches lauded the WFM and derided other organizations such as the American Federation of Labor and the Brotherhood of Steam Shovel and Dredge Men for being ineffective. By emphasizing that the workers should run their own chapters with a great deal autonomy, he helped to empower the Italian, Slovenian, and Finnish workers. Many of whom had no voting rights because of their immigrant status. During his speech, Petriella bluntly stated he was a dedicated socialist, but clarified that membership in the WFM did not require membership in the American Socialist Party because it was a labor union and not a political organization. He encouraged the miners to:

“Forget the difference of occupation and of nationalities, and join hands with us. We are oppressed by the same master: let us react against him united and harmoniously. A unified action means victory: and we must win out for ourselves and our children.”⁷

These words helped to forge a coalition of ethnically diverse miners as they prepared to strike for better wages and working conditions on the Mesabi Range.

⁶ Teofilo Petriella, *The Western Federation of Miners on the Mesaba Range: An Address Delivered November 26, 1906, at a Social Entertainment of the Hibbing Mine Workers*, University of Wisconsin-Madison Library, Micro fiche PAH L 1644.

⁷ Ibid.

While the miners tried to create their first unions, the Oliver Mining Company reacted by creating of an elaborate spy network to track down organizers. If a supervisor identified any union organizer, they “black balled” the person and prevented him from working in any of the mines of the region. One of the few mining company records covering the union organization in preparation of the 1907 Mesabi strike came from Willard Bayliss, Superintendent of the Pillsbury Mine. His notebook covering the events has been edited with pages most of the pages removed from July and August, 1907, during the strike. Nonetheless, the surviving information indicates that the Finnish, Italian, and Austrian (Slovenian) miners waited until after the conclusion of Bill Haywood’s [leader of the IWW] murder trial in Boise, Idaho, before embarking on the strike. Bayliss stated that the organizers worked in conjunction with other miners in Michigan. His records indicated that a “spy” attended all the meetings of strike leadership composed of “Petriella, Koln, Lucas, McGuire, Kovish, Antimacki, Macki, Anderson, Roseman, Tromfors, and Mahoney.” He indicated that the strikers in Chisholm began with 1671 members but the number fell to 331 by the first week of September. Of the strike leaders, a man named Pater Masianovich emerged as a leader of the union’s paramilitary defense force after special deputies had burned down his house.⁸

As the unionization drive continued, Hibbing’s Socialist Party leader, a Swedish immigrant named G.F. Peterson began to support unionization. Peterson wanted to build a multi-ethnic coalition of workers to unite all miners. To help build multi-ethnic solidarity, Peterson published a local multilingual newspaper called the *Worker* in Finnish, English, and Slovenian to support the WFM.⁹ The Finnish immigrants of the region wanted their own organization based on experiences in confronting czarist autocracy in Finland. In August 1906, Finnish immigrants from across the Mid-West formed the *Suomalainen Sosialistijarjesto* (Finnish Socialist Federation) in Hibbing. The organization soon became a

⁸ Edwin Bayliss Papers, Iron Range Research Center, Notebook annotations June 30, 1907- October 18, 1907.

⁹ “Miners Organize,” *The Mesaba Ore and The Hibbing News*, May 10, 1906.

major contributor to the American Socialist Party.¹⁰ During the same period, the first recruiters from the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) also arrived on Mesabi Range and began to recruit immigrants into their union.

To secure his leadership position, Petriella removed political moderates who opposed his actions. G.F. Peterson, Socialist Party leader and editor of *The Worker*, became the first victim of Petriella's wrath when the Italian leader forced Peterson to resign from both the newspaper and the union.¹¹ By July, 1907 Petriella organized Minnesota District Union #11, which united Finnish Socialists, the WFM, and the IWW under his control. The union members demanded that Petriella immediately stage a strike for an eight-hour work day, higher wages, and safer working conditions.¹² The dismissal of Peterson, along with call for a major strike, led to Petriella's vilification in local newspapers as an "anarchist" who sought to undermine the American way of life.¹³ Both the American public and middle-class immigrants feared the imminent eruption of violence in their communities and sought to suppress the unionization activities of miners.

The arrival of Theofilo Petriella on the Mesabi Range and his subsequent unification of local unions caused major disputes within the Italian, Slovenian, and Finnish ethnic enclaves. All three enclaves broke into factions as supporters flocked to Petriella's organization, while detractors formed a united opposition movement. For example, Herman Antonelli, a merchant who helped to build and lead the Immaculate Conception Church, became an outspoken opponent of radical Socialists and the IWW

¹⁰ Auvo Kostianen, "Finnish-American Workingmen's Associations," <http://genealogical.fi/emi/art/article257e.htm> (accessed June 6, 2001).

¹¹ "Mr. Peterson No Longer Recognized," *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, April, 22, 1907.

¹² "Constitution Adopted by Locals of the Western Federation," *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, July 20, 1907.

¹³ "No Place in this Country for the Emblem of Bloody Anarchy," *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, July 20, 1907.

among Hibbing's Italian population.¹⁴ The situation turned into a political and ideological battle of wills within the Italian enclave between Petriella and Antonelli.

As the possibility of a major strike in the summer of 1907 loomed, Herman Antonelli, along with other American, Finnish, Swedish, and Slovenian leaders of Hibbing, drafted a resolution not to support the miners in the forthcoming labor strife. The committee published an inflammatory statement in the *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune* where they stated, "The Western Federation of Miners was conceived in hell and came to the surface in a band of vicious thugs that operated under the name of the Mollie MacGuire," a reference to Irish miners who led violent strikes across the United States.¹⁵ Claude M. Atkinson, the editor of the newspaper, also formed a vigilance committee that helped suppress public demonstrations by miners.¹⁶ Thus, the propaganda and personal attacks against the unions and their organizers continued unabated and led to Petriella's emergence as an arch-villain in charge of a gang of "marauding bandits" among Hibbing's leading citizens.

When the strike began in August 1907, after approximately two to three thousand workers left their jobs in Hibbing.¹⁷ The Oliver Mining Company worked in conjunction with town officials to bring an end to the labor strife. Mayor Weirick forbade any marching or picketing in the streets of Hibbing.¹⁸ To help repress the strike, the Oliver Mining Company brought in nearly two hundred special deputies who immediately attacked the miners. In Hibbing alone, the deputies shot two strikers and stabbed three others, though similar incidents occurred across the Mesabi Range. The deputies established armed patrols, which fired on anyone seen trespassing on company property. The Oliver Mining Company organized a private jail with abysmal living conditions on company property to house arrested strikers.

¹⁴ For a detailed description of the battle between Finnish church forces and radical labor unions see Arthur Puotinen's, *Finnish Radicals and Religion in Midwestern Mining Towns, 1865-1914*, 210-225.

¹⁵ "The People Talk," *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, July 27, 1907.

¹⁶ Leroy Hodges, "The Vermillion and Mesabi Ore Ranges of Northern Minnesota Concerning Immigrant Life and Institutions" (United States Immigration Commission, 1906), 45.

¹⁷ "Miners Declare That Strike is Still on and Men Have Courage," *The Labor World*, August 10, 1907.

¹⁸ "Visited Petriella" *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, August 4, 1907.

Townsppeople worked with mining officials. For example, Hibbing's Judge Brady handed down severe penalties for "pernicious activity" and convicted Theofilo Petriella for carrying a gun on public streets.¹⁹ He was forced to pay 1,000 dollars for bail, which put a sizable dent in the strike funds.²⁰

Nonetheless the Italian, Slovenian, and Finnish miners continued their support of Petriella throughout July and early August 1907 when the strike closed most of the mines across the Mesabi Range as 10,000 to 16,000 joined the strike.²¹ After merchants refused to sell groceries to the miners on credit, Petriella organized special co-ops to distribute food to the miners, an act that garnered him further support and helped sustain the strike.²² Petriella received help from John D. Mahoney, acting president of the Western Federation of Miners, although, cooperation between the two remained strained throughout the strike because Mahoney felt that Petriella had not sufficiently organized the union to succeed. The strike lost impetus after co-op supplies dwindled and the Oliver Mining Company introduced thousands of strikebreakers. As the strike lost initiative in August and September, the Western Federation of Miners closed its offices in Hibbing and Petriella fled the region under a cloud of suspicion over alleged misappropriation of strike funds.²³ According to Newspaper reports from the following year, Petriella was cleared of any financial wrongdoing during the strike and had returned to Italy where he resumed his teaching job.

In the aftermath of the strike, WFM leaders would be able to apply some of the lessons learned on the Mesabi Range to the growing labor unrest in Michigan's Copper Country. As the WFM organized the people of Copper Country, they continued to organize immigrants along ethnic lines, just as they had under Petriella's leadership. During rallies around the Calumet region, delegates from the Finnish,

¹⁹ "They Still Trifle with Human Rights up on the Mesabi Range," *The Labor World*, August 24, 1907.

²⁰ Jack Lynch, "Petriella Brains of 1907 Strike,"

http://www.hibbingmn.com/news/years_of_yore/article_9a2d9290-ee82-5421-b481-92b4012fef38.html?mode=jqm. (accessed April 1, 2014).

²¹ Neil Betten, "Strike on the Mesabi: 1907," in *Minnesota History* (40/7, Fall, 1967), 340-347.

²² "Visiting Petriella," *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, August 3, 1907.

²³ "Pulled Up Stakes," *Mesaba Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, September 7, 1907.

Croatian, Italian, Hungarian, and Polish communities gave speeches to their respective communities.²⁴

One of Italian delegates named Ben Goggins would eventually emerge as the strike leader for the approximately 2800 Italians who lived in the mining region.²⁵

Working and living conditions in Copper Country mirrored those on the Mesabi Range. The areas of Calumet, Houghton, and Hancock, Michigan had a great disparity wealth, in much the same way Petriella spoke of in Hibbing before the 1907 Mesabi Strike. Additionally, some of the Minnesota strike organizers moved to Michigan and renewed their efforts to organize the copper miners.²⁶ Their ideas gained traction because of the rampant poverty, caused by low wages and high prices. Beginning in 1904, a series of wildcat strikes had erupted throughout Copper Country. For example, immigrant trammers launched a strike in protest over a ten percent wage reduction and an increased workload as officials laid off a quarter of the laborers. Approximately 300 newly arrived Italian and Finnish trammers walked off the job, idling an additional 1800 men. They eventually went back to work after having their wages restored. Similar events occurred in 1905 and 1906 as workers walked out over low wages, causing further concessions, which was viewed a sign of weakness by the mine owners. In August 1906, Charles L. Lawton was appointed superintendent of mines and ushered in an era of harsher reactions to work stoppages.²⁷ He took a dim view of immigrant socialists who were organizing the immigrants.

Lawton's firm stance on refusing to negotiate with miners would have serious consequences in the following years. Miners grew increasingly dissatisfied with working conditions and wages in Copper Country. The mining companies attempted to reduce labor costs through the introduction of the single man drill, an extremely heavy piece of equipment that had a propensity to fall over and kill the operator.

²⁴ Gary Kaunonen and Aaron Goings, "Community in Conflict: A Working-Class History of the 1913-1914 Michigan Copper Strike and the Italian Hall Tragedy (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 116-117.

²⁵ *Senate Documents, 63rd Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 8* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914), 134.

²⁶ Arthur W. Thurner, *Rebels on the Range: The Michigan Copper Miners' Strike of 1913-1914* (Lake Linden: John H. Forster Press, 1984), 31.

²⁷ Hyde, 14.

The WFM also pointed out that the workers in Montana earned more money than the Michigan miners, which fueled greater discontent. Between 1908 and 1913, membership in the WFM increased from a few hundred to 7000 men.²⁸ By the summer of 1913, simmering tensions between the discontented miners and company officials began to boil over as the call for a strike gained support.

When the strike began in July, 1913 a wave of violence swept through the mining district, prompting Governor Woodbridge Ferris to deploy the Michigan National Guard to the region. Their presence did not prevent acts of violence perpetrated by men on both sides of the strike. Deputies shot and killed two innocent miners in Seeberville during August altercation. In the aftermath of the murders, miners retaliated by shooting at trainloads of replacement workers brought to Copper Country to reopen the mines. As the strike progressed, acrimony increased as mining officials refused to negotiate an end to strike. Their intransigence led Charles H. Moyer, president of the WFM to realize the strike had been lost in October, 1913 but he continued efforts to support the copper miners.²⁹

The strike also split the mining district's Italian immigrant population. The region had one Italian language newspaper, *Il Minatore Italino's*, which sided with the mining officials and rejected the reforms demanded by the discontented laborers. The paper's stance led Ben Goggin to write an Italian language section for the WFM's newspaper, the *Miners' Bulletin* published by the WFM.³⁰ Approximately 25% of the paper's content was written in Italian, which illustrated their importance to the strike efforts.³¹ Not only did Goggin write stories, he also led Italian miners in a series of protests and marches. Goggin was helped in his work by Bernardo Goggia, who also played a significant role in organizing the miners. Their activities were reported in the Italian language section of the *Miners' Bulletin*. In one story, Goggin was arrested while protesting for "unlawful assembly" and forced to pay

²⁸ Kaunonen, 98.

²⁹ Arthur W. Thurner, "Charles H. Moyer and the Michigan Copper Strike, 1913-1914," in *Michigan Historical Review* 17/2 (Fall, 1991), 12.

³⁰ Russell Magnaghi, *Miners, Merchants, and Midwives: Michigan's Upper Peninsula Italians* (Marquette: Belle Fontaine Press, 1987), 19.

³¹ Magnaghi, 61.

\$50 bail.³² In all Goggin was arrested seven times during the strike, but charges were dropped in five instances. Only the charge of “noise and disturbance” led to a fine, while a second offense of “assault and battery” occurred on December 26th, but was seen as way to keep him off the streets in the aftermath of the deaths at the Italian Hall.³³ In order to keep track of the strikers, William R. Todd, president of the Quincy mine employed several spies. He hired D. R. Ortella, an interpreter from Hancock, Michigan to supply thumbnail sketches of fifteen Quincy workers of Italian extraction. Another informant also provided the names of seventeen suspected of union organizing. They shared information between mining companies in order to create an informal “blacklist” but the program failed to achieve any lasting success.³⁴ The miners persisted in their Sisyphean efforts to extract concessions from the intransigent company officials to no avail.

During this protracted struggle, the Italian Hall in Calumet emerged as an important fixture among the diverse groups of miners. They would meet in the hall to hear speeches and coordinate activities. The building gained a reputation as a hotbed for radicals after individuals such as Carlo Tresca came in November to address the striking miners. As an Italian immigrant, Tresca could reach out to his fellow countrymen in their own language. He also represented the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an organization affiliated with the WFM but with a more confrontational approach to ending strikes. The IWW advocated “direct action” or violence in order to force concession from company officials.³⁵ These activities at the Italian Hall came to the attention of the gained a reputation for socialist agitation and local mining officials wanted to do something to shut the place down.

At the same time, the WFM’s Women’s Auxiliary wanted to provide local children a Christmas treat to offset the bleak conditions caused by the strike. On Christmas Eve, 1913 approximately 400

³² *Miners’ Bulletin*, September 11, 1913.

³³ Kaunonen, 150.

³⁴ Charles K. Hyde, “Undercover and Underground: Labor Spies and Mine Management in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *The Business History Review* 60/1(Spring, 1986), 19.

³⁵ Kaunonen, 176.

men, women and children had gathered at the Italian Hall to celebrate the holiday season. Their festivities were interrupted when an unknown individual burst in and shouted “fire” to the people crowded into the building. During the ensuing panic, 73 people were trampled to death in a stairwell as they tried to flee the perceived danger. In the aftermath of the massacre, public opinion turned against mining officials and their supporters. Unfortunately, this did not translate into any concessions to the miners and a much more subdued strike limped along. Finally, in April, 1914 the miners quit the strike and reapplied for their positions in the mines.

While the 1907 Mesabi Strike and the Copper Country failed, Italian immigrants played noteworthy roles in organizing and leading miners in both regions. Individuals such Teofilo Petriella, Carlo Tresca, Ben Goggin, and Bernardo Goggia each contributed in their own way to the plight of the overworked and underpaid miners of Michigan and Minnesota. Petriella laid the ground work for the 1913 Copper Country strike by printing a socialist paper in Calumet and helping to recruit men to join the Western Federation of Miners. His role in the 1907 Mesabi Range strike also deserves mention because of the innovative technique of organizing ethnic groups to work together for a common cause. This can be seen in the formation of diverse ethnic chapters of the WFM, which would periodically meet to coordinate activities. While his organizational skills continued to be used, Petriella’s legacy quickly faded in the Great Lakes, resulting in only brief statements about his activities in books and journals. After Petriella returned to Italy and continued his teaching, he moved to Argentina in 1920, where he joined an Italian immigrant community there and resumed his socialist political agitation. Petriella met an unfortunate end in 1925 after he, his wife, and child were murdered in a train car in Argentina. His death was covered in the Hibbing papers and became a cause for celebration for Herman Antonelli and other Italian immigrants who opposed unionization of local mines.³⁶

³⁶ “Former Range Strike Leader Killed,” *Mesabi Ore and Hibbing Tribune*, July 21, 1925.

Carlo Tresca also met a violent end for his political activities. Once the Copper Country strike ended 1914, Tresca went on to lead the 1916 Mesabi Range strike that also failed to achieve any lasting results. His activities in other strikes around the United States finally ended in 1943, when he was gunned down by unknown assailants on the streets of New York City. Ben Goggin and Bernardo Goggia also faded into the background and their activities have also received scant attention by labor historians and Great Lakes scholars. What that means is that there are still new topics to explore in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, especially the activities of Italian immigrants, but that remains to be seen.