

1954, Addio Trieste...

The Triestine Community of Melbourne

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the product of my original work, including all translations from Italian and Triestine. An earlier form of Chapter 5 appeared in Robert Pascoe and Jarlath Ronayne, eds, *The passeggiata of Exile: The Italian Story in Australia* (Victoria University, Melbourne, 1998). Parts of my argument also appeared in 'L'esperienza migratoria triestina: L'identita' culturale e i suoi cambiamenti' in Gianfranco Cresciani, ed., *Giuliano-Dalmati in Australia: Contributi e testimonianze per una storia* (Associazione Giuliani nel Mondo, Trieste, 1999).

Adriana Nelli

ABSTRACT

Triestine migration to Australia is the direct consequence of numerous disputations over the city's political boundaries in the immediate post-World War II period. As such the *triestini* themselves are not simply part of an overall migratory movement of Italians who took advantage of Australia's post-war immigration program, but their migration is also the reflection of an important period in the history of what today is known as the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region..

1954 marked the beginning of a brief but intense migratory flow from the city of Trieste towards Australia. Following a prolonged period of Anglo-American administration, the city had been returned to Italian jurisdiction once more; and with the dismantling of the Allied caretaker government and the subsequent economic integration of Trieste into the Italian State, a climate of uncertainty and precariousness had left the Triestines psychologically disenchanted and discouraged. Although historically Trieste did not have a tradition of migration, many chose to emigrate during this period. Among those who left were former employees of the Allied Military Government who were concerned for their future, but there were also others with stable employment.

Importantly, Triestine migration displays many atypical characteristics when compared to Italian migration in general. Unlike many other Italian migrants, most Triestines came to Australia as part of complete nuclear family units, many were assisted passage migrants and a significant number of these were in possession of trade qualifications on their arrival. Importantly, furthermore, the Triestines are the only immigrants of Italian origin to have mass migrated from an urban environment. And, as this study highlights, this factor has impacted on the migratory experiences and the identity and community making process of this group.

The Triestines who immigrated to Australia during this period were particularly aware of themselves as Triestines. Political and economic forces had historically fostered the development of a Triestine identity and during the post war period, when many of these immigrants had experienced a sense of betrayal, the act of migration served to strengthen a feeling of circumscribed Triestine identity once more.

By narrating and analysing the immigrant experiences of this group, this research reveals that this identity was also reinforced by the migration experience and process as the urban mind-set of the Triestines initially set them apart as ‘strangers’ within both the Anglo-Saxon reality and the Italo-Australian one. By negotiating both similarities and difference in the context of a shared immigrant experience, the Triestines were, however, successfully able to become part of the Italo-Australian community, but they continued to maintain a distinct sense of their own identity as Triestines. What emerges from this study is that this enduring sense of identity can be seen to be tied, not to essentialist notions of identity, but to a continued and dynamic process of negotiation which allowed the *triestini* to adopt various ‘positionalities’ which became part of a dialectical process of identity construction.

By examining the migrant experience of both first and subsequent generations of Triestines in the Australian city of Melbourne in a historical context, this study thus highlights the importance of both the past and the present experience in the process of migrant settlement and identity construction. The study is based on archival and field research, including interviews with 75 informants. It holds in balance a story of group formation (how the Triestines evolved as a group within Melbourne) with an account of group identity (who they were as Triestines).

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CHAPTER 1

The narratives of Italian migration to Australia

ITALIAN MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

The history of immigration to Australia is inherent in the history of Australian development: historically, Australia has consistently expanded its population through immigration. Italians have been part of this process since the early days of British colonisation and such early Italian migration to Australia consisted of individuals, predominantly male, who settled throughout all the colonies and who were also representative of various regions, classes and professions. Such immigrants, termed 'adventurers' (Bertelli 1986) or 'scouts' (Pascoe 1992a), were often itinerant workers who either integrated into the structures of their host society or eventually returned to Italy, and as such they did not constitute a cohesive community.

It was not until the 1850s that a more sizeable settlement of Italians occurred. During this period one of the first major groups of Italians to establish migratory chains with Australia were the *ticinesi*, settlers from the Swiss-Italian canton of Ticino, while during the latter part of the century--as a result of the social and political upheaval caused by the process of Italian political unification--the arrival of predominantly Northern Italians, particularly from Lombardy and Piedmont, contributed to the formation of larger settlements. The pre-World War I period was similarly characterised by the arrival of more Northern Italians and these immigrants originated particularly from the Veneto region and the Friulian provinces--areas which could already boast an established history of both international and chain migration. However, despite the already-established flow of chain migration, pre-World War I Italian migration to Australia remained numerically contained, and although the introduction of the quota system in the US had bolstered Italian migration to Australia in the 1920s, it was only during the post-World War II period that migration from Italy took on mass proportions.

At the end of World War II, Australia embarked upon a carefully planned, large-scale immigration program. Circumstances were particularly favourable at this time--the fear of invasion had acted as a catalyst in motivating and conditioning public opinion to seeing the

necessity for a larger population, and the shortage of labour was such that a planned mass immigration program came to be envisaged as an essential element for economic growth and national expansion. The international situation at that moment also favoured Australia's apparent need to attract migrants and throughout war-torn Europe large numbers of people, particularly those displaced by the vagaries of war, awaited an opportunity for re-settlement. Although the preference had originally been for Anglo-Saxon and Northern European immigrants, when insufficient numbers of these 'more desirable' immigrants were not being attracted, Australia found it necessary to open its doors to Southern European migration and it was during this period that the greatest spurt of Italian immigration took place.

For the Italians, the impetus to emigrate came from a harsh economic reality--a direct consequence of the devastation caused by the war. In this period poverty and havoc were characteristic of many localities throughout Italy, but historically, the process of 'uneven development' that had plagued Italy since its political unification, coupled by a decision by postwar Italian leaders to direct the resources necessary for reconstruction towards the already industrialised North, precipitated the South into an economically backward and impoverished state. Emigration was advocated by the Italian Government as the only solution to these problems and was consequently seen as the only way out by many of the impoverished peasants from the *mezzogiorno* regions. As a consequence, the majority of Italians who immigrated to Australia during this period were *contadini*--peasants and farmers who came mainly from the South but also from the Northern regions and provinces of Veneto and Friuli. According to Ware (1981: 28), in fact, the main regions of origin in order of importance have been Sicily and Calabria, and immigrants to Australia from these regions comprised 60 per cent of all Italian postwar immigrants (Bertelli 1984a). Other regions of relevance were, however, the Northern regions of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia, followed by the Abruzzo Region in Central Italy (Ware 1981: 28).


THE TRIESTINE EXAMPLE

Included in the migration figures for the Friuli Venezia Giulia region were also the Triestines--a group representative of an established urban culture. Little is actually said in the published literature about this group of immigrants since incomplete recognition is given to the fact that the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, which had been constituted only in 1963,

had included two quite separate regions--that of Friuli which had had a largely agricultural economic base, and the Julian Region which comprised the city of Trieste, which had an historically urban economic character, as well as the Istrian hinterland, which was on the contrary, more rural in nature. Julian immigration, and notably Triestine immigration has largely been overlooked or ignored as a result of the failure to distinguish these two culturally diverse groups of immigrants. and most literature on Italian immigration to Australia continues to fail to make such a distinction. Pascoe (1987: 22-23) for example, fails to differentiate between the Friulians and the Triestines when talking about the historical development of the Friulian Province and Friulian folk heritage:

Friuli passed from being a Lombard duchy to Hapsburg rule after 1500. In 1866 the western half became incorporated into the new Italian nation and then in 1919 the eastern half was also won by the Italians. In 1947 much of the east... was ceded to Yugoslavia, along with Istria and Rijeka (Fiume).

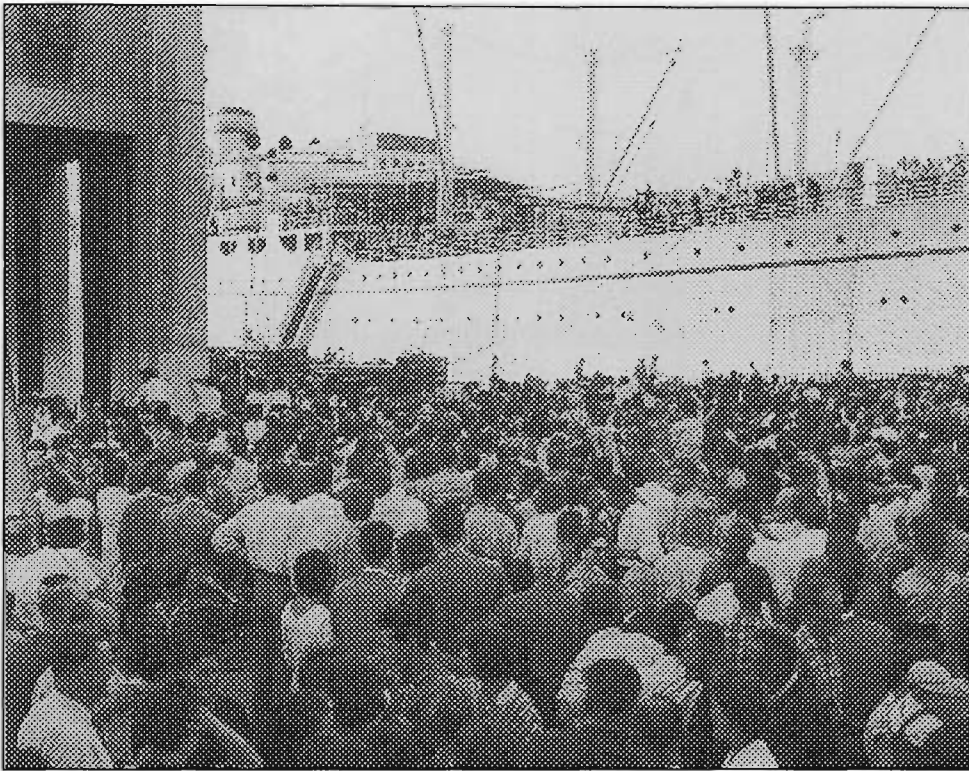
By confusing the Julian region with what is loosely termed the eastern part of Friuli, Pascoe fails to acknowledge the existence of two distinct identities--that of the Friulian and that of the Julian and more specifically, that of the Triestine. The fundamental importance of this distinction lies in the fact that while the Friulians were representatives of a peasant culture, the Triestines were essentially urban. Pascoe is not alone in his error. In statistically categorising the Southern European immigrant

<p><i>Alfredo Z. Begli</i></p> <p>Nome <i>Anna</i></p> <p>Padre <i>Marcello</i></p> <p>Madre <i>Olga Filippi</i></p> <p>nato il <i>10. 4. 1915</i></p> <p>a <i>Trieste</i></p> <p>Stato civile <i>conjugata</i></p> <p>Cittadinanza <i>Italiana</i></p> <p>Professione (Art.) <i>Collegata</i></p> <p>Residenza <i>TRIESTE</i></p> <p>Via <i>Franco 10</i></p> <p>CONGIUNTI E CONTRAVENTI NIENTE</p> <p>Matrimonio <i>Italia</i></p> <p>Compartimento <i>Adm. 868</i></p> <p>Capelli <i>cast.</i></p> <p>Occhi <i>cast. R.</i></p> <p>Contrassegni nient.</p>		 <p>FORMA DEL VIZIARIO <i>Cash. Am.</i></p> <p>TRIESTE</p> <p>AGENZIA DEL DITO</p> <p>TRAT. ARRETR.</p> <p>24 APR. 1938</p> <p>24 APR. 1938</p>
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Anna Cecchi's identity card, 1956

into region of origin prior to world War II, Price (1963: 22) places Trieste under the category of 'Southern Slavs' and Istria under that of Croatia--failing to acknowledge not only the historical developments of the area but also the Italian ethnic identity of some of its immigrants.

With regard to the number of Triestines in Australia prior to World War II, Price (1963: 121) observes that between 1892 and 1899, 123 Triestines had arrived, and that in the period between 1890 and 1940 a total of 150 males had come to Australia from Trieste (Price 1963: 22). Although Trieste had been under Hapsburg rule until the end of World War I, it can be assumed, nonetheless, that a number of these were ethnically Italian. It was during this period in fact, that itinerant Triestine artists such as the composer Alberto Zelman¹ and the painter Vincenzo



Farewelling family and friends, Trieste, c.1955

¹ Italian musicians became popular in Australia after the Cagli and Pompei Company came to Sydney and Melbourne in the early 1870s (O'Brien 1988:29) and Alberto Zelman senior, in fact, arrived in Sydney in 1871 and toured with the company as its conductor. He later settled in Melbourne where he married Harriot Eliza Hodgkinson and pursued a career as a piano teacher, composer and conductor. His son Alberto Vittorio Zelman followed in his footsteps to become a prominent violinist and conductor. In 1906 Zelman junior founded the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and as a tribute to his memory, the Zelman memorial Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1933 (Fairweather 1984). In his memory a plaque was also placed in Trieste's Anglican church.

Brun² settled in Australia. Although little appears to be known about Triestine migration before World War II, the Triestines were certainly not a group which was well represented in Australia before this period, for, unlike its neighbouring Friulian province, Trieste had had no tradition of emigration.

It was not until after World War II that Triestine emigration took on mass proportions. Emigration from the city of Trieste and the entire area once referred to as the 'Julian Region' (which once incorporated not only the city of Trieste but also the towns of Monfalcone and Gorizia and the Istrian hinterland, most of which was ceded to the former Yugoslavia after World War II) is a reflection of an important period in the history of the region now known as Friuli Venezia Giulia. In this period the area witnessed the diaspora of displaced persons from the ceded territories, as well as the immigration of Triestines in 1954, when the city was returned to Italian political administration after almost ten years of administration by an 'Allied Military Government'.

The reality remains that, in 1947, when the then Australian Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, entered into an agreement with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) to settle displaced persons in Australia--the first Italians to arrive as a result of this agreement were the Giuliano/Dalmati (a group of Italians dispossessed as a result of territories being surrendered to the former Yugoslavia). The Triestini followed: 'then followed the rest of Italy' (Ugolini 1992: 136).

1954 had marked the beginning of Triestine mass migration, most of which was directed towards Australia, but by the early 1960s emigration from Trieste had become insignificant. As a group the Triestines were essentially 'atypical' Italian immigrants to Australia. They were representatives of an established urban culture, many had possessed some type of qualification upon migration, while a significant number had migrated as complete nuclear family units. Moreover, although only 16.6 per cent of all Italians who arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1973 were 'assisted passage' immigrants (Jordens

² Vincenzo Brun was born in Trieste in 1857. He arrived in Melbourne in 1888 and shared a studio with Chrisman, in Flinders Street. He exhibited his work regularly at the Victorian Artists' Society up until 1905 (Cresciani 1996).

1995: 56), in contrast a significant number of Triestines had benefited from the 'Assisted Passage' scheme. (Price 1963: 279)

REGIONAL TIES AND THE ITALO-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

Multiple waves of migration from selected regions and migration on such a large scale did not fail to foster the development of what is generally termed the 'Italo-Australian community' (Bosworth 1988: 615), and although chain migration initially contributed to the formation of regional settlements (Bertelli 1986), it was this very process that laid the foundations that in turn helped to develop a sense of common identity and belonging amongst Italian immigrants generally.

The term 'community', as Pascoe (1992a: 85) notes, implied that Italian immigrants, irrespective of their region of origin, had more in common with each other than with the wider society; and as Italian immigrants they shared common experiences--experiences that were further moulded by the assimilationist policies of the 1950s and 1960s. Subsequently, the sense of 'community' amongst Italo-Australians evolved not so much because of a shared deep sense of nationhood, but more so because the act of migration had thrust these immigrants into a situation whereby a feeling of alienation from the wider society was initially part of their experience and where the need for a sense of belonging was an essential element for personal survival.

This sense of community was not only based on abstract feelings of belonging, but within the boundaries of the Italo-Australian neighbourhoods it developed a more concrete geographical base. Here an Italo-Australian identity found expression through the social relationships that form an intrinsic part of ritual and ceremony; and it became manifest in institutional structures, such as the Italian shop or newspaper, that provided the community with a 'cultural backbone' (Pascoe 1992a) that could ensure its perpetuation.

While such clear manifestations of community life can imply, especially to the uninformed onlooker, the existence of a relatively homogenous community, the reality remains that the Italo-Australian community is, on the contrary, an essentially heterogeneous one; and one of the major characteristics of this community has always been and has remained its diversity. Italian settlement in Australia has not only been

marked by occupational and class differences, but most importantly, as we continue to emphasise, by regional variations.

In Italy, regional identity has been historically shaped by geographical, economic and political forces, all of which have been reinforced further by the instability of changing political alliances that have worked against the development of a unified national consciousness; and as a consequence: ‘...each part of Italy differs so much in language, social structure and cultural tradition that the maintenance of a local identity is an enduring feature of Italian cultural identity.’ (Pascoe 1987: 11)

Such regional ties have remained strong amongst Italian immigrants and the evolution of an Italo-Australian identity has not precluded the maintenance of ties or loyalty towards *paesani*, or people from the same village or region. The mutual-aid societies, which were amongst the first Italo-Australian institutions to be established, reflected these differences; and subsequently many of the Italo-Australian social clubs established during the 1960s and 1970s have continued to reflect the regional loyalties of Italo-Australians. Such loyalties undoubtedly emphasise linguistic variations and cultural cleavages as well as differing political traditions--and it is these differences which have given rise to varied social customs, family organisation and habits amongst the Italo-Australian community. Most importantly, furthermore, regional ties have also provided a sense of identity that is not purely psychological in nature, but one which is part of a much wider web of experience; and that as such has proven to be a ‘blue print’ that has governed the migrant experience itself.

The need to examine the process of migration and the migrant experience in terms of region of origin has not been a new concept—the demographer Charles Price (1963) expressed the importance of this fact and noted that:

With such marked differences between migrants from various regions of origin in Italy...., it is clearly misleading to speak in general terms of ‘Italians’...; we must grapple with particular village, districts of origin... and reinterpret the migration process in their light. (Price 1963: 297)

Such a point is also reflected in the work of Cinel (1989) who highlights the importance of regional variations by exploring the correlation between the differing historical development of the various regions of Italy, emigration and the settlement of Italians in San Francisco. By

uncovering the nexus between the historical development of the Italian regions and the emigration process Cinel not only reveals the inadequacy of the deterministic ‘push/pull’ explanation of emigration, but also the fact that in San Francisco Italian immigrants unwittingly settled in their new society in patterns that reflected their *paese*, and that region of origin also impacted on the choice of occupations by immigrants. Similar patterns are also revealed by Pascoe’s (1987) study of Italian migration to Australia in which the immigrant experience is examined in terms of three different regions of origin. Further emphasis on the need to understand Italian immigration in terms of regional diversity is provided by Bertelli (1985: 33-73), whose study of the Italian family provides a comprehensive insight into the intricate complexities of the heterogeneity of Italian family life. Other sociological studies—such as that of Cronin (1970), which examines the effects of migration and any resultant change or continuity amongst Sicilians immigrants in Australia and shows how the core values which governed the private lives of these individuals remained stamped with traditional characteristics; and Huber (1977) whose study uncovers the regional loyalties of the Trevigiani and the Calabresi in Griffith—also highlight the complexity of regional differences and the effect of these differences on the migrant experience. In terms of the territory once known as the Julian region, recent work by Nodari (1991; 1996) and Fait (1999) has drawn on official statistics and nominal rolls in an attempt to delineate and quantify migration from this area, while the work of Cresciani (1996; 1999) has prepared the way for further research.



Grison family and friends, social club, Melbourne, late 1960s

RESEARCH AIMS

The diaspora from the city of Trieste (as well as from the larger Julian and Istrian hinterland) is a phenomenon that still needs to be documented and this work proposes partly to fulfil this need by documenting the experiences of Triestine immigrants who settled in Melbourne. As noted, very little is known about Triestine migration and the experiences of the Triestines as somewhat 'atypical' Italian immigrants to Australia. Studies which focus on the history of Italian migration to Australia and the immigrant experience in this country either tend to talk about Italian migration in general terms (for example, the study edited by Castles, Alcorso, Rando & Vasta 1992) or otherwise analyse the migration process and experience in terms of regional differences that only highlight the different cultural traditions of peasant culture (for example: Pascoe 1987; Huber 1977; Cronin 1970). The general aim of this present study is to document the migration history of a particular group of migrants by providing both a descriptive and theoretical account of their experiences. It thus aims to look at who the Triestines actually are, their history, cultural identity and the reasons for migration as well as the settlement process. In this context this research proposes essentially to fill an existing void in the history of Italian migration to Australia and to contribute to the understanding of the impact of regional differences on the Italian migrant experience. It endeavours to do this by introducing the added dimension of the urban-rural dichotomy and by examining how historical forces and the 'urban consciousness' of the Triestines impacted on their immigrant experience in terms of the settlement process, social organisation, community formation and identity, as well as cultural continuity or change. The research, which focuses on the experiences of first, second and subsequent generations of Triestines, thus also aims to contribute to the discourses about cultural identity and identity formation among immigrant communities. In attempting to achieve these quite broad aims, the research more specifically aims to:

- (1) place the research within an historical framework that enables the exploration and analysis of the social, cultural, economic and political reality of the city of Trieste and Triestine immigrants;
- (2) investigate the reasons behind the decision to emigrate and the factors that led to the migration of the Triestines as a group;

- (3) comprehensively document, describe, analyse and interpret the migrant experience of the Triestines in Melbourne in the context of the Italian Australian community in general as well as in the context of the wider society;
- (4) explore and analyse the process of 'community formation' and 'identity making' amongst the Triestines and the factors that served to mediate and negotiate these processes; while theorising about identity and identity formation amongst immigrant communities;
- (5) critically examine theories of identity formation in relation to cultural maintenance and change and apply them to the Triestine immigrant experience--thus highlighting how the Triestines interacted and negotiated with their new reality; and
- (6) present and analyse relevant documentary material, such as for example, photographs and unpublished literary material produced by Triestine migrants, as historical evidence and as expressions of identity.

CHAPTER 2

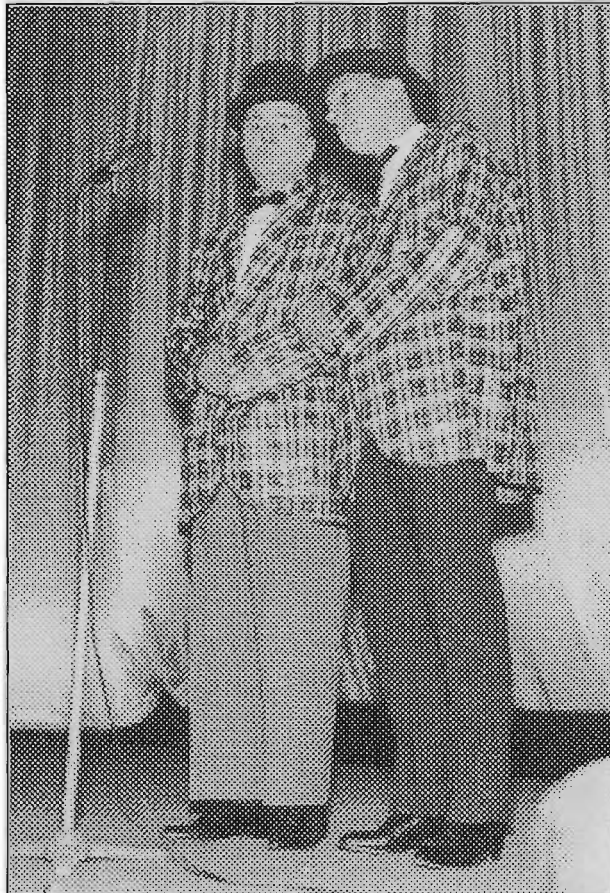
Methodology

This study of the Triestine community of Melbourne generally aims at adding to the existing body of knowledge on Italian migration to Australia. In order to meet both the specific and general aims of the research, the thesis has been placed within an historical framework and has been divided into two sections. The first section provides relevant historical background information and an analysis of the political, cultural and economic realities that have influenced Triestine identity making as well as the phenomenon of migration and the migration process itself. The study is also placed within the context of Italian immigration history and experience in Australia, and this allows for the development of a narrative of Triestine migration which allows for some degree of comparison with the Italian Australian community in general. The 'narrative' also provides the basis for describing, interpreting and analysing the immigrant experience of the Triestines both historically and in terms of community formation and identity making; the last of which is also the focus of the second section of the study. With regard to the latter, the work is not based on a set of hypotheses, but rather on some theoretical assumptions that take into account both the fluid and essentialist nature of identity and the dialectical relationship between the two. To achieve the aims relevant to both sections a combination of methodologies has been employed.

The research design is thus essentially based on a combination of complementary qualitative methodologies; namely oral histories--the term frequently used interchangeably with the term 'the recorded in-depth interview' (Yow 1994: 4)--and ethnographic research. The use of qualitative methods such as these allow for an interpretive understanding of the migration experience of the Triestines, the characteristics of this migration as well as the processes of identity making. Actions and thoughts which have, over time, formed patterns of meaning, constitute part of the data which reflect the Triestine migrant's collective social and cultural life, while the continued interplay of individual experience provides a dynamic framework within which the group's collective identity exists. In this context a qualitative approach also takes into account the subjective and conscious perception of individual experience and activity which posits the immigrant as an active agent in the migration process. The research has also been supplemented and complemented by archival research--both in Trieste and Australia--as

well as by the analysis of photographs and materials produced by the migrants themselves.

The first of the specific methodologies employed in the study is the oral history interview. The collection of data through this qualitative method is particularly appropriate to both the historical and sociological focus of this the research. Importantly, it facilitates ‘the understanding of a multiplicity of experience in a total life context’ (Yow 1994: 24) and provides personal testimonies which contain references to the larger group that both defines and articulates a shared reality. These personal memoirs provide a relevant source of information on the past and form the basis for an historical account of the Triestine immigrant experience which reveals important details of daily life--details often overlooked when analysing the immigrant experience--as well as details of significant events and situations, and many of the sentiments experienced in relation to these. The oral history method allows people to develop their own stories and to reveal incidents and particulars of their past that they consider to be, or to have been, significant. Often if a particular event or experience is vividly recalled it is because it has remained part of the individual psyche and consequently it remains an experience that



Oral culture: Roberto De Rose' performing with Angelo Cecchi

continues to influence thought and action. Furthermore, since the oral history interview allows the subject to reflect on the content, and thus to offer interpretation as well as fact, this helps to provide an understanding of how individual Triestines see and interpret their experience, adding significant insight into particular values and views of the world that can be seen to characterise the group. The inherent subjectivity of the oral history interview is thus also particularly useful in analysing the process of cultural identity maintenance or change amongst Triestine immigrants.

A ‘snowballing’ sampling technique within the Triestine community was employed to find participants for the oral history interviews, while more specific selection of participants was then made on the basis of gender and age. In fact, selection reflects the aim of the study to examine the immigrant experience of both male and female and of both first and subsequent generations of Triestine immigrants. While the ‘snowballing’ technique was important in locating subjects who perhaps had little personal involvement with the formal institutions of the Triestine community, particular individuals were, however, also, selected for their achievements in the wider society or for their role within the formal institutions of the community. In all, 75 Triestines, representative of both first and subsequent generations, were interviewed.

The interviews aimed at obtaining a collection of life histories which were gathered around the general theme of the immigrant experience. Interviewees were asked to talk about their life both in Trieste and Australia and were encouraged to develop their own stories at a pace that allowed them to rekindle memories of the past and reflect upon them. The process aimed at being as ‘unstructured’ as possible. However, it was often found that interviewees needed ‘a starting point’ and for this purpose an ‘interview guide’ provided the basis for the memoirs and ‘open-ended’ questions guided the interview process. Although some of these questions elicited specific information in terms of demographic details, the questions generally served as prompts that allowed the interviewees to talk widely and freely about particular events and situations. Essentially topics and questions in the ‘interview guide’ were arranged in chronological order, allowing subjects to provide a ‘life history account’ of their experiences as ‘Triestine migrants’. This helped the process of ‘remembering’, which generally resulted in more detailed accounts, but also encouraged subjects not only to narrate particular events, experiences and feelings but also to reflect upon them.

Oral history interviews were conducted in the home of participants on an individual basis after appointments had been made by telephone.

The interview process itself was facilitated by the oral history methodology, which is characterised by the interaction between the interviewer and narrator, and which allowed a sense of collaboration to be established. This rapport was further enhanced by the researcher's own cultural and linguistic knowledge of the group.

On each occasion the purpose of the interview was explained in detail, highlighting the aims of the research and how the data would be used. Verbal consent to tape the interview was also requested of each subject. It was further explained to the informants that the interview would be transcribed, that transcripts of the interview would be available, and that this would enable them to make any changes or delete any parts of the interview itself. Furthermore, in order to meet the requirements of anonymity and confidentiality set out by the University's Ethics Committee, and since a number of interviewees had themselves requested not to be identified in the thesis, the interviewees were not identified by name in the writing up stage. Exceptions to this were made when mentioning particular individuals in light of their contribution to the community or to the wider society.

Ethnographic research has included participant observation through participation in community events and activities, personal networks and unstructured discussions held with members of the Triestine community (both first and subsequent generations) recorded in field notes.

The interview data was then coded and analysed. To supplement the oral history methodology, which generally focuses on recurring themes and common meanings of the shared experience, this study also made use of a suitably adapted grounded theory approach, that of Strauss (1987), in order to analyse the data and arrive at a more theoretical understanding of the phenomena studied. According to Yow (1994: 8) the oral history methodology 'is close to the basic principle of grounded theory' and in this instance the advantage of this approach for data analysis is that it permits the development of many concepts and their linkages, which in turn helps to capture the complex nature of the phenomena studied--ensuring 'conceptual development and density'. In terms of analysing the immigrant experience of the Triestines, the grounded theory approach consequently also helps provide insight into the relationships and processes which have mediated and continue to mediate how individuals and collectivities experience reality, and is particularly useful in analysing and conceptualising the identity-making process. Furthermore, such an approach is useful in analysing not only

the oral history data, but also the data recorded in ethnographic field notes.

In line with the grounded theory approach, both the coding and analysis of the data became an intertwining process. Once the oral history interviews were transcribed, the data from these, together with the field notes, were scrutinised in 'microscopic' detail and tentative themes and concepts identified, noted on the margins of the transcripts of the interviews and field notes, and subsequently sorted into numerous 'provisional' categories and sub-categories. The analysis became systematically focused on emergent patterns as this initial 'open coding' procedure (Strauss 1987)--which involved the constant comparison of various events, incidents and indicators contained in the data and the saturation of codes with the data--thus began to open up the inquiry in terms of generating codes and tentative but explicit concepts and their relationships.

Data were entered manually into a matrix so that the unstructured data from the interviews and field notes could be structured, and together with the 'loose', 'open coding' procedure, more intense analysis of categories was also carried out. This involved analysis centred around particular categories which resulted in specific knowledge about the properties and dimensions of the categories and the various relationships and linkages between them. Subsequently, more systematic 'selective coding' (Strauss 1987) delimited the coding to only those variables related to the 'main theme' and the 'basic social processes' or theoretical stages (Glaser 1978) emerging from the data. This 'narrowed' the categories to a number of 'core categories' with which other categories and sub-categories were linked and allowed the analysis to become conceptually focused. After sorting, these categories were hence designated under headings. For example, the data revealed that a significant number of Triestine immigrants had, on their arrival in Australia, been sent to the Bonegilla immigrant reception centre. This occurrence was particularly important for the research, not only in terms of narrating the experience of this group of migrants--and because historically it was associated with the fact that Triestine migration was a new phenomenon and that a significant number of Triestine immigrants had been 'Assisted Passage immigrants'--but also because the 'Bonegilla experience' was linked to the concept of identity formation amongst the group and thus to the theoretical understanding of identity construction as a process.

‘Analytical memos’ (Strauss 1987) were written in conjunction with the various stages of coding and these incorporated ideas and questions about the codes and their relationships, as well as comments based on the researcher’s ‘experiential data’--according to Strauss (1987: 9) experiential data should not be ignored since it can bring theoretical sensitivity to the analysis. Memoing was thus particularly useful in helping to generate connections between categories and helped raise the data to a conceptualisation level.

In order to shed light on the important ‘immigration years’, archival material was accessed in Trieste itself. This included records of ship movements as well as important documentary evidence of the migration phenomenon provided by the local newspapers during those crucial years. Such evidence has been instrumental, together with the oral histories, in documenting the reality that is not always found in public records, helping to provide a view of events that led to migration from the view point of the general public and the immigrants themselves.

Other records viewed and analysed in Australia have included minute books and annual reports of past and present associations (where available). Personal records and papers of individual migrants were also viewed and the archives of the local Italo-Australian newspapers were consulted for the purpose of finding historical evidence of community activities. Archival searches in Australia also led to the use of the ‘Ships nominal rolls of passengers’ (which lists port of departure, place and date of birth as well as the occupation of the passenger) as a source of information with regard to the number and the demographic characteristics of migrants from Trieste.

Photographic imagery and locally produced material complements the oral history interviews and ‘field work observations’ and brings together important historical documentation relating to Melbourne’s Triestine community, which provides not only evidence of particular activities but also reflects the character and identity of the community. Locally produced material has included newsletters produced by existing and defunct Triestine associations as well as literary output by members of the community--which includes material in the form of prose and poetry written, over the years, both in dialect and Italian.

The use of a combination of these qualitative research methodologies has resulted in a very particularised account of the Triestine immigrant experience.

CHAPTER 3

Trieste and its emigrants

A HISTORY OF TRIESTE

Trieste is situated in the northeastern part of Italy, at the northern tip of the Adriatic Sea. It is essentially a modern city that has developed only in the course of the past two centuries, and it possesses a unique economic, social and political character. Forming since 1963 part of the 'Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia', Trieste at the end of the C20th is Italy's smallest province, in total covering an area of only 212 square kilometres.

In the historical context, Trieste must, however, be referred to as part of the former 'Venezia Giulia Region (Julian Region)'--a region defined as the territory between the Italo-Austrian border of 1866-1918 and subsequently as the Italo-Yugoslav frontier of 1920 (following the Rapallo Treaty). This was an area of 8,843 square kilometres which comprised all of Istria (now part of the former Yugoslavia and the *Carso* or Karst plateau, including the smaller urban centres of Pola (Pula), Fiume (Rijeka) and Gorizia.

Contested during both world wars, Trieste has been since the C19th a setting for conflict between opposing national and political ideologies. This conflict culminated in the struggle for Trieste (and surrounding territories) after World War II and it was the events that took place after the war that led to the establishment of a mass migratory flow from the Julian region to Australia. The significance of this flow was that--unlike the then neighbouring province of Friuli--Trieste had until that time no tradition of migration.

As a natural crossroads between the Italian peninsula, the Balkans, and central Europe, the geographical setting of the Julian Region has had both strategic and economic implications. For two thousand years ownership of the region had been contested frequently because of its importance both as a strategic frontier zone and as the most convenient 'northern' outlet to the sea. It became, consequently, an area of thoroughfare where conflict between rival expansionist forces resulted in frequent changes in sovereignty.

Essentially, the Romans arrived in the Julian area after conquering the Illyro-Celtic peoples who originally inhabited the area, and the consequent domination by the Romans continued until the disintegration of the Roman Empire. Subjected to various invasions by Byzantines, Goths, Huns, Ostrogoths, Lombards, Avars and Slavs, the area was then broken up into various autonomous municipalities, the rulers of which were in constant conflict. As a result of this constant intrigue, the independent municipalities eventually sought the protection of either the Austrian Duchy or of the Venetian Republic, and in 1382 the independent municipality of Trieste opted for the protection of Austria while the area along the Istrian coast preferred Venetian rule (this Venetian connection is visible in the architecture and the townscape in this area). The whole Julian Region, as such, became the focal point of rivalry between the Venetian Republic and the Hapsburg Empire and clashes between the two powers continued repeatedly until the Hapsburgs dislodged the Venetians from the Istrian coast. Except for a relatively brief period of French rule during the Napoleonic era (1796 - 1815), Trieste remained under the control of the Hapsburg Empire until World War I (536 years in all), when the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire saw the Julian area and the city of Trieste annexed to Italy (Borghese 1982: 3 -11).

Ethnicity in the Julian region, particularly in the city of Trieste, has historically demonstrated a dynamic and complex character. The Italian ethnic presence in fact originated in Roman times, when Latin culture permeated Julian cities and influenced the local Celtic peoples. Subsequently, the process of 'Italianisation' was further reinforced in the region by the Venetian influence and presence (especially along the Istrian coast), as well as by the migration of Italians, or *regnicoli*, as they were called, from the Kingdom of Italy. Trieste thus became the destination for Italian migrants from the Emilia Romagna and Puglia areas, as well for the Friulians, for whom seeking foreign work, as labourers in Trieste, was a traditional part of their survival strategies.

However, the Slavic presence in the area has also had a long history of settlement, since the Slavs accompanied the Avars into the region and Slavic migration continued thereafter. Considerable 'mixing' or intermingling of the Slavic and Italian populations consequently occurred, as the Julian historian, Angelo Vivante (1945: 128), noted:

Si crede che... L'italianita' e slavismo nella Giulia siano due termini ben definiti e rigidamente antitetici... [che] si presentano da una parte gli Italiani... dall'altro lato gli slavi... Questo appare

a prima vista troppo semplicista, e essenzialmente irreale... le due collettività linguistiche sono tutt'altro che nette e definite... Nella Giulia si è andato lungamente svolgendo un fenomeno demografico spiegabile dall'incrocio di due nazioni...¹

Generally, the Italian speaking communities settled in the urban coastal centres of the region while the Croats and Slovenes favoured the rural interiors. Despite the fact that the Slavs, namely the Slovenes, were to remain a group over-represented in the agricultural sector of economic activity (Cattaruzza 1992: 195), as the phenomenon of urbanisation began to take a stronghold, many Slavs also moved to the cities or towns, particularly Trieste, and a spatial integration process between the Italians and Slavs began to take place. By 1910, 56,916 Slovenes lived in the city of Trieste (Cattaruzza 1992: 194). Moreover, since the urban Slavs were a heterogeneous group that had been recruited from a broad social spectrum which represented all social classes, in the city, a Slavic bourgeoisie class also slowly emerged. With the establishment of cultural institutions and the organisation of cultural activities, initiated by this bourgeoisie class, the spontaneous assimilation of the Slavs, which had up to that point in time taken place, began to be replaced by a sense of national pride - a pride that was being reinforced by the awaking of nationalist sentiment throughout mid 19th century Europe.

German and Austrian administrators and functionaries had also settled in the larger urban centre of Trieste, and were soon followed by members of the Austrian commercial classes. Up until the 1500s only German Barons, Counts and government functionaries were generally to be found in the city, but by the 1700s public servants, bankers and commercial entrepreneurs had also made Trieste their home. While in the beginning this group had constituted a separate ethnic minority or enclave in the city--for unlike the Italians and Slavs in the region they did not become assimilated--with the passage of time many (most notably those of Austrian origin) did assimilate to Triestine culture. (Borghese 1982: 26-30) A well-known example is the Triestine writer Ettore Schmitz, better known as Italo Svevo, one of Italy's most celebrated authors, whose fiction exemplified the *Mitteleuropa*.

The Jews are yet another ethnic group present in the city which must be recognised as having had significant impact on Triestine culture.

¹ 'It is believed that ...*italianita*' ... and 'slavism' in the Julian region are two distinct and rigidly antithetic terms...[that] present the Italians on one side ...the slavs on the other... This appears immediately too simple, and essentially unrealistic...the two linguistic collectivities are anything but distinct and definite ...Over a long period of time, in the Julian region, there has been a demographic process taking place which can be explained as the meeting of two nations...'

Despite the fact that the Jews formed an ethnic enclave or *ghetto* in the city, they mainly integrated into Triestine culture, and the Jewish influence made its presence felt in many 'cultural spheres' of Triestine life, particularly literature, as exemplified by the well-known Triestine poet, Umberto Saba. Other numerically less significant groups present in the city have also included the Greeks, the Armenians and a small number of Hungarians.

This long standing ethnic diversity of the Julian region was of no real significance in political terms until nationalism became a major force throughout Europe during the mid-C19th, when the concept that political boundaries should correspond to ethnic groupings plainly created particular problems in areas of mixed ethnic populations. In this context, the Italians, inspired by the *Risorgimento* ideal of a unified Italy, were the first to claim the Julian region on ethnic grounds. However, the impetus behind the aspiration to 'redeem' the Region did not become wholly manifest until 1866, when Italy had gained Venice from the Hapsburgs. (The Kingdom of Italy had been formed in 1861 when the remainder of the peninsula had become politically unified.)



The urban character of Trieste, 1950s

Historically, the notion of irredentism had been slow in taking a stronghold in the Julian region, since by the mid-C19th Trieste was still too ‘cosmopolitan’ in outlook, and too lacking a well defined political national consciousness. As Vivante explained, Trieste possessed:

*...un ceto mercantile senza coscienza nazionale e politica, coscienza nazionale ancora in formazione presso le classi colte e classi popolari assenti...*²

Irredentism, moreover, had never really been a mass movement. Throughout Italy it had drawn support from the republican Left, which had been inspired by the ideals of democratic nationalism as espoused by Giuseppe Mazzini, and in the Julian region Italian irredentism had subsequently manifested itself largely through cultural organisations sponsored by Triestine intellectuals (and the Italian bourgeoisie in Istria) (Rabel 1986: 95). Unlike the Triestine intellectuals, who did not depend on trade and commerce for a living, the Italian-speaking commercial classes had not favoured inclusion in Italy because they believed Trieste’s economic prosperity rested on its favoured position in the Hapsburg Empire.

Many workers in Trieste were also beginning to assume that their interests would be better served by an ‘internationalist socialist’ regime rather than Italian or Yugoslav nationalist one.³ Rapid industrialisation and the expansion of trade through Trieste’s port in the latter half of the C19th had been responsible for the development of a large working class in the city, which was predominantly made up of people of diverse ethnic origins--predominantly Italians and Slavs--and amongst these masses a cosmopolitan spirit also prevailed (Pacor 1964: 64). Hence, when in 1891 the Socialist Party was established, it was to prove yet another barrier for irredentists of nationalist sentiment. This new political force perceived the ‘enemy’ solely on class terms, and for the Julian working classes, the ‘enemy’ thus became the local bourgeoisie or the capitalist class rather than the Austrians or the Slavs. As a result, irredentism in the region became partially neutralised by this new growing socio-political reality.

Moreover, it had not only been the working class that had found itself drawn towards socialist ideologies, and by the early 1900s the Party also recruited followers amongst the middle class as well as amongst the

² '[Trieste possessed] a mercantile class without a national and political conscience, a national consciousness still in the process of being formed amongst the educated classes and the absence of the more ‘popular’ [subaltern classes]...' (Vivante 1945: 29)

³ Conversely, in Istria the ethnic struggle did on one level coincide with class conflict, since most absentee land-owners had been Italian, while the peasantry had been predominantly Croatian.

intelligentsia. Furthermore, the Triestine Socialist Party had also displayed some rather 'particular' characteristics, as the comments from the Triestine writer and intellectual, Anita Pittoni (1968: 31) clearly highlight. It was:

*...Partito che fin dagli inizi si distingue fondalmente dai partiti socialisti degli altri paesi soggetti agli Asburgo per il suo autentico, intransigente spirito internazionalista ed europeistico, e naturalmente repubblicano.*⁴

Clearly, not only did Triestine socialists display a distinct aversion to any overt nationalist sentiments or ideology, but also present amongst the masses associated with the Socialist Party was the aspiration for the Julian region to become an independent republic (Pacor 1964: 64; Novak, 1973: 30).⁵

Irredentism in the Julian region had consequently remained of a somewhat academic nature until a young patriotic anarchist, Guglielmo Oberdan(k) sought to add vigour to the movement by attempting to assassinate the Emperor, Franz Josef (*Francesco Giuseppe*). The attempt failed and Oberdan was sentenced to death, but Julian irredentism now had had its martyr, and, as the C20th approached, the Italian nationalist movement in the region increasingly drew its impetus from the growing struggle against an emerging Slavic influence. The Italian Irredentist Movement thus became absorbed into a more exalted and dogmatic form of nationalism, one that subsequently sought to defend the 'Italianness' of the area not only against Austrian imperialism, but also against the perceived threat of a newly emerging Slavic consciousness (Borghese 1982: 41 - 46).⁶

Trieste and Trento thus became the major territorial objectives as Italy entered World War I, and the dreams of the Italian irredentists in the region were fulfilled when a defeated Austria ceded both the South Tyrol and the Julian region to Italy. Nonetheless, from a local perspective the settlement of the Italo-Yugoslav frontier dispute failed to neutralise local ethnic animosity. This animosity was to be further fuelled by the advent of fascism, with its programs of anti-socialism and Italianisation--

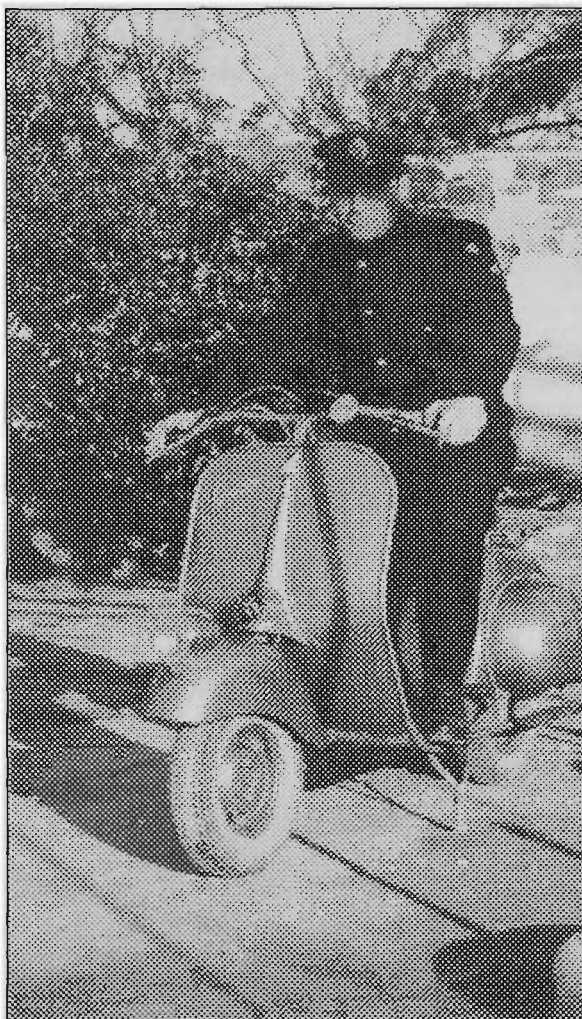
⁴ It was 'a Party that from the very beginning fundamentally distinguishes itself from the Socialist parties of the other countries under Hapsburg rule for its authentic and intransigent and naturally republican spirit.'

⁵ Pittoni (1968) also notes that in 1918 it was proposed to the Austrian Parliament to transform Trieste into a neutral State under international protection.

⁶ By the early 20th Century ardent nationalists had claimed all of the Julian region and a large part of Dalmatia, not taking into account the Slavs that lived in the area.

including the enforced Italianisation of Slavic surnames and the exclusive use of the Italian language in schools--which only served to stimulate irredentist sentiment in Yugoslavia. Although a non-aggression pact signed with Yugoslavia in 1937 was to improve Italo-Yugoslav relations briefly, with the onset of World War II, the Italian and Yugoslav nations were to become direct adversaries, further impassioning irredentist feelings in the Region (Borghese 1982: 47-50).

With the end of World War II, Trieste was once again the source of international controversy, for one of the direct repercussions of Italian and Yugoslav involvement in the war was the reopening of the Italo-Yugoslav frontier problem. This factor saw the re-emergence of the particular nationalistic, ideological and economic issues that had troubled the region since the C19th, with the added complication that the fate of Trieste was now linked to the outcome of a broader East-West confrontation. Despite the fact that demarcation of the Italo-Yugoslav border in the region was supposedly based on local ethnic and economic considerations, it was, in the final analysis, a compromise in resolving such a confrontation, and a compromise in which Trieste had become a mere pawn.



A member of the Venezia Giulia police force in Trieste, early 1950s

Essentially, after a brief period of German occupation, the city of Trieste had found itself under the dual occupation of its liberators--Yugoslavian and New Zealand troops. On 1 May 1945, the city had in fact been occupied by Yugoslavian troops; however, with the fear of Communism beginning to surface and an increasing Italian propaganda demanding the retention of all the Julian region, Allied forces had arrived in Trieste the following day. Facing political pressure from the Allies, Marshal Tito subsequently withdrew his troops after 40 days of occupation, and accepted a new division of the Julian region. The region was then divided into two zones, named Zone A and Zone B. The dividing line between the two zones, called the Morgan Line, left Trieste and part of the Istrian coast (as far as Pola/Pula) under the control of an Allied Military Government--this area was known as Zone A--and the remaining area, known as Zone B, was placed under the administration of a Yugoslav Military Government (Novak 1970, Unger & Segulja c.1989).

With the end of the war an international commission, comprised of foreign ministers from France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, investigated the possibility of various boundary proposals--and in particular the economic impact that the various proposals would have on Italy. The Paris negotiations however, failed to yield an agreement and hence a compromise was reached. With the 1947 Peace Treaty, therefore, part of Istria (including the cities of Pola/Pula and Fiume/Rijeka) was further ceded to Yugoslavia, while another part of the area, comprising Monfalcone and Gorizia (only part of Gorizia) was ceded to Italy. The remaining territory, that is, the city of Trieste itself, together with a minute part of Istria and the *Carso* (the Karst Plateau), was incorporated into a separate State called the *Territorio Libero di Trieste (TLT)*--the Free Territory of Trieste (FTT)--that was to have been administered by a UN-appointed Governor. With this solution to the 'Trieste problem', neither side would thus gain the much disputed territory, and Trieste would become an international free city and port, returning to its historical role of serving central Europe (Borghese 1982: 11-13).

While the search for a Governor that was deemed as 'suitable' to both eastern and western bloc countries continued (Novak, 1973: 265), the Free Territory of Trieste (FTT) was hence divided into two Zones--Zone A, comprising the city of Trieste itself, which was to be administered by an Allied Military Government (AMG), and Zone B, which came under Yugoslavian administration. While this situation was to have been only temporary, the failure on the international diplomatic

In 1948, however, Cold War tensions worsened in Europe and the 'Trieste problem' was once again brought to the top of the agenda of the international community. Czechoslovakia had been taken over by the Communists, and the US was preparing for the formation of a formal Western Alliance (NATO), while in Italy an electoral victory for the Italian Left might have alienated a strategically important nation. The April elections in Italy, consequently, provided an occasion for re-consideration of the status of Trieste. With the *1948 Tripartite Declaration*, in fact, the view that a Free Territory would prove unworkable was put forward and under the circumstances it was proposed that the FTT be returned to Italy in order to aid democratic forces in the country. Meanwhile, while the Italian Right continued to press for the implementation of the Tripartite Declaration, the Left, notably the Communists (and the Soviet Union), continued to favour the FTT (Rabel 1986: 112-126).

Moreover, at a time when Communism could no longer be viewed as a monolithic movement driven by the Soviet Union (as a result of the Tito/Stalin split) and the West was supporting a political and military relationship between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey (The Balkan Pact), the Tripartite Declaration, as a basis for solving the 'Trieste problem', seemed no longer a viable solution. The Governments involved in the 'Trieste negotiations' hence favoured direct Italo-Yugoslav negotiations and this factor alarmed many Italian irredentists. Uncompromising attitudes thus continued to prevail and the 'Trieste question', caught in this web of competing interests, remained unresolved (Rabel 1986: 112 - 126, Unger & Segulja: p.13).

With another possibility of victory by the Italian Left looming, the 'Trieste problem' was thus once again of major concern to Western powers. The Italian Government warned that it could not go before the electorate after five years with the 'Trieste problem' still unresolved. Italian ratification of the European Defence Community Agreement was still being awaited by Western powers and the possibility of an election of a Communist-led Government was particularly worrying (Rabel 1986: 112-126).

As a consequence of this situation, as well as the protests and diplomatic manoeuvres, on 8 October 1953 the US and British Governments announced that the city of Trieste, together with all of Zone A, would become incorporated into Italy. With the London Memorandum of Understanding of 1954, the Peace Treaty of 1947 was

thus modified, and after nine years of Anglo-American administration the Allied government ceded the administration of Zone A to Italy. Zone B, despite a series of protests, was left in the hands of the former Yugoslavia. The status of this agreement was however, deemed to be legally temporary (*L'Indipendenza*, 15 January 1962: 1) for the Memorandum did in fact leave open the possibility for any future Governments to take up territorial claims (Unger, 1988: p.38) and the final status of the region was only settled on October 1, 1977, with the *Treaty of Osimo*, with which Italian and Yugoslav sovereignty in the respective Zones was formally recognised.

AN ECONOMIC PROFILE

Before the C18th, Trieste was a relatively small, autonomous, self-contained centre where trade had remained relegated to exchanges with other centres along the Adriatic coast. The institution of the free port in 1719 by the Hapsburg Empire, however, marked the beginning of a progressive increase in trade passing through the city: roads were improved, the port restructured, insurance companies emerged, and the city benefited economically since the goods that arrived in the port were actually traded within the city. The city consequently established itself as a major Mediterranean port (second only to Marseilles), and by the 1850s Trieste was the seventh busiest port in the world. Hence, economically Trieste developed as a major 'emporium city', with a structure based on trade and commercial activity; but the period encompassing the latter part of the C19th and World War I witnessed a phasing down of entrepreneurial initiatives and the transformation of this mercantile emporium into an increasingly industrialised centre and point of commercial transit rather than trade. This economic reality was to continue into the 1950s and was to remain a factor tied to the geographical and cultural reality of a hinterland that was bound to the vagaries and whims of political power struggles. The economic success of Trieste consequently constituted a political improbability since any expansion in its sphere of economic influence was invariably impeded by the opposing political ideologies to which the city was subject.

After World War I, Trieste came under Italian jurisdiction for the first time, and turmoil prevailed within the structures of the Triestine economy: the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire eroded the historical economic role of the city since the outcome of the war had made it impossible for Trieste to continue with its traditional commercial activities. Triestine commerce could now only be international, and this

was becoming extremely difficult as the collapse of the empire had determined the formation of restricted, impoverished and highly protected markets. The outcome of the war had also led to a fall in the value of the Austrian currency and a consequent depreciation in bank deposits in Trieste. This impoverishment of Triestine capital was further aggravated by the fact that Triestine capital investment tended to be concentrated throughout the Austrian Empire rather than in Italy. It was a period of economic stagnation for the city, a recession that the Italian administration had hoped to overcome by focussing on the expansion of industrial production (this would be less dependent on an international market). Shipbuilding had already featured as an important industry in the Triestine economy since a certain number of ruling class families who had already become involved in shipping had viewed shipbuilding as a logical extension. 'Lloyd Austriaco', an insurance company based on the 'Lloyds of London' model, for example, had extended its economic interests first to shipping and subsequently to the ship building sector and in 1914 this company owned 61 ships totalling 220 thousand tonnes; while the Cosulich Maritime company had been in possession of 280 thousand tonnes. As a result, Triestine shipyards had ranked seventh in the world in terms of naval production. However, despite the fact that such basic industrial structures had already been in place in the city, the Italian administration did not provide any further basis for sustained economic growth. While major Triestine shipbuilding industries, through a process of rationalisation and concentration of capital, had been able to expand, a more general expansion of Triestine industry--one that would ultimately lead to a restructuring of the Triestine economy as a whole--had been dependent on State intervention (Apih 1988: 108 - 119, Sapelli 1988: 217-226). The Italian Government, however, did not view this course of action favourably, as was made clear by a declaration made by an Italian Minister in 1927:

La zona industriale di Venezia e` quella cosa dove i veneziani hanno speso 400 milioni dei loro denari... ed hanno domandato allo stato cento milioni soltanto... vi assicuro che se Trieste sapra` e vorra` fare altrettanto, avra` in me il suo migliore avvocato. Ma se... la zona industriale dovesse servire per le industrie sconquassate, allora diro` che queste industrie vadano dove vogliono. (Il Piccolo, Trieste, 5 June 1927)⁷

⁷ "The industrial area of Venice is where the Venetians have spent 400 million of their own money...and have asked the State for only 100 million...I assure you that if Trieste would be willing and capable of doing the same, then it will find in me a true advocate. But if...the industrial area were to serve the needs of faltering industries, then I would have to say to these industries that they must provide for themselves."

In 1928 an 'industrial area' was nonetheless established in the city by the Italian fascist Government and although institutionalisation of such an area was accompanied by an advantageous fiscal policy, the Government failed to provide a policy which made provision for the establishment of basic industrial infrastructures. Many industries consequently failed to compete even on the Italian market and were never to overcome their initial difficulties. In determining the border between Yugoslavia and Italy, the 1920 *Treaty of Rapallo* had introduced stability and diminished political tensions, but the Triestine economy nonetheless continued on a downward spiral. Even shipbuilding, which was perhaps the industry least affected by the economic downturn, had, by 1921, been forced to retrench 1,500 employees. Clearly, although 1921 had generally been a difficult year throughout Europe, the economic recession in Trieste was symptomatic of the longer-term problems which plagued the city. In this period, in a desperate attempt to re-vitalise the Triestine economy, the ruling class proposed the formation of an 'economic region' comprising the Julian and Friulian territories. This was an attempt to overcome an inherent sense of *campanilismo*, or isolationist tendency, which was stifling the fluidity of the Triestine economy; but the Friulian territory, whose economy was still largely agricultural, felt a traditional bond to Venice, where the Triestine proposal was not well received (Apih 1988: 100-119, Sapelli 1988: 223-234).

The interaction with the Italian economy had undoubtedly influenced the economic reality of the city: between 1918 and 1922 the average depreciation of stocks and shares on the Triestine Stock Exchange was 26 per cent; industry was clearly faltering, Triestine commerce was constantly and rapidly declining, and by 1929 the importation of coffee, which had been one of the most profitable trading commodities for the city, had completely ceased. The infrastructure of the port was also becoming outdated and, although throughout the 1920s the port remained second only to the port of Genoa in terms of tonnage handled, this masked a basic problem. In 1938 the movement of goods through the port of Trieste totalled 3,380,866 tonnes, while 25 years earlier it had been 3,449,730 tonnes. While quantitatively this decline in the traffic of goods through the port may not appear to be significant, it should be viewed in the context of a population that had increased in size from 229,000 in 1918 to 250,000 in 1936 (Apih 1988:100 119, Sapelli 1988: 228-234).

Importantly, moreover, the nature of goods handled had also

changed and now comprised predominantly raw materials such as iron, minerals, combustible fuels and cereals, all of which entailed low handling costs and provided low margins of profitability for traders. This factor heralded the transformation of commercial activity in the city and as fewer and fewer goods were actually traded in the city, fewer intermediaries trading commercial enterprises remained. Not even the construction of a new rail network that linked the city and port with its new hinterland had been sufficient in helping to boost a languishing economy. In this bleak economic reality only the insurance companies, albeit the strongest and most solidly established ones, were able to maintain their capital. In the C19th Trieste had boasted 73 insurance companies and, despite the fact that some were destined to disappear, the capital held by Triestine insurance companies totalled a third of all capital held by insurance companies throughout the whole of Italy. The Triestine economic structure, however, now gravitated towards industry; and by 1936, 40 per cent of the Triestine population was employed in industry, only 15 per cent of the population remained employed in commerce, while 11 per cent was employed in the transport and communication sector. Amongst some of the most important industries in the city were the Stock (distilleries) Group of Companies, the Dreher Brewery, several chemical plants specialising in the manufacture of paint, paper mills, shipyards and associated metallurgical industries, as well as two large oil refineries that handled 450,000 tonnes of crude oil annually. However, even the presence of these seemingly 'solid' industries had been unable to reverse a negative trend that had been created by the absence of a vigorous and dynamic industrial base and this situation had undoubtedly been aggravated by the effects of the worldwide depression of the 1930s (Apih 1988: 100-125, Sapelli 1988: 223-234).

Being capital-intensive, industries such as shipbuilding had come to rely on capital in the form of loans to maintain productivity, and with the onset of the depression the problems faced by these industries were great. Consequently, these loans were discharged by the newly established IRI (Institute of Industrial Reconstruction) which had been created by the Mussolini Government to help Italian industry survive the 1930s depression) and in return IRI was to become a shareholder in these companies. The consequence of these actions was that in Trieste, IRI directly administered all banks and most shipbuilding industries. Such intervention, although beneficial in the short term, proved to have a detrimental effect on the Triestine economy, for the strong presence of the public sector in the economic fibre of the city initiated the process of stagnation in local wealth and a consequential decline of further entrepreneurial initiative. The absorption of local Triestine industries by

IRI had encompassed one of the broader problems faced by Trieste during this era: economic incorporation within the Italian State. In this economic reality decisions in terms of capital re-investment which were essentially the core of local autonomy and prosperity were less and less likely to be in the hands of the local ruling class (Sapelli 1988: 210-237).

In the aftermath of World War II, the economic problems faced by Trieste were exacerbated: the separation of Trieste from Istria had meant a further loss in the city's hinterland, while the destruction of existing industrial plants as a result of the war and the climate of instability that permeated the economic leadership as a result of political uncertainty, had alienated capital investment in the area--a factor which was clearly seen in 1953, when, after a declaration made by the US and Great Britain of their intention of ceding Zone A to Italy the possibility of armed conflict prevailed, and eight thousand million Lire were withdrawn from local banks.

However, despite the political uncertainty and the economic precariousness that prevailed in all sectors of Triestine society, the city did not immediately experience the full economic impact of the devastation caused by the war. The Allied Military Government (AMG), as a caretaker Government in Trieste, had been essentially interested in maintaining political stability, a stability which focussed on the containment of Communist ideology and influence, and this climate had significant consequences for the economic 'wellbeing' of the area. Consumer goods, medicine and fuel were all made directly and widely available by the AMG; and while local industries were undergoing a period of rationalisation thus offering only limited employment opportunities, the AMG saw the availability of employment as a means of maintaining political stability and provided opportunities through growth in its administrative sector. An effort was also made by the AMG to revitalise the port of Trieste, and in 1948 it guaranteed the extension of international trade agreements for the city. Trieste consequently enjoyed a period of economic prosperity. In 1949, in fact, the quantity of import/export goods that were handled by the port structure increased to 3,482,491 tonnes, an increase in 32,761 tonnes from 1913, the highest figure previously recorded. The following year the total tonnage of import/export material handled by both the port and rail services also reached an all-time high, with a total tonnage of 5,933,934, a higher figure than the 5,378,647 tonnes previously recorded in 1938 (which had been the best result achieved under the Italian administration). In 1948, furthermore, the European Recovery Program (ERP) had also provided 18 million dollars for the reconstruction of Zone A, 6 million of which

were to be re-invested in new machinery, equipment, and raw materials for industry; and as the damages to Triestine industry and shipbuilding caused by the war were being repaired, economic prosperity in the city increased (Apih 1988, Sapelli 1988).

By 1952-1953 the standard of living in the city had improved dramatically and although unemployment rose to 15 per cent, this was also the result of the sudden influx of large numbers of Istrian refugees. With a population of 272,675, 130,000 Triestines were now employed in local industries, many of which were now enjoying favourable economic circumstances. The ship building industry which still represented the largest industry in the city (and employed approximately 16,000 people), had, in the three year period from 1948 to 1951, for example, built ships for a total of 120,000 tonnes and a further 76,000 had been due for completion in the following months. The building industry was also buoyant as 3,000 new dwellings were being built in an attempt to curb the housing shortage caused by the war and influx of refugees. Yet, despite the fact that the area enjoyed a standard of living that was higher than that experienced in the surrounding territories, many basic problems still needed to be addressed. As a representative of the AMG in Trieste, General Airey, noted in his 1948 report to the Security Council, Trieste still possessed an economic structure that was 'akin to artificial respiration' (Apih 1988: 179 - 181).

Essentially the Triestine economy had become dependent on the AMG; however, while the creation of the Free Territory of Trieste (FTT) in 1947 appeared to be a further obstacle for the economic integration of Trieste into the Italian State, the Italian influence on the Triestine economy was already apparent. In 1948 the AMG and the Italian



Valerio Borghese speaking at political meeting, Trieste, mid-1950s

Ministry of Foreign Affairs came to an agreement that aid previously received directly from the US would subsequently be allocated through ERP and further agreements then ensured that such funds could not be used in ways which could prove unfavourable to Italy and to the Italian economy. Furthermore, although it was in direct violation of the Peace Treaty Agreement, Rome continued to directly administer all capital in Trieste that had been invested by IRI. IRI also provided funds for the modernisation of its existing plants and this factor caused some degree of hostility on the Italian front since these actions were viewed in terms of added competition for 'Italian' industry. Decisions made by the Italian State subsequently were not always in the best interest of the Triestine economy. Thus, although generally the funds provided by Italy did generate some re-vitalisation of industry, by 1954, 51 per cent of all those employed were still largely employed in the tertiary sector, and 22 per cent of these remained employed in public administration (Aph 1988: 186-190). This was a precarious situation, as the local Press lamented:

...Le conseguenze per Trieste della seconda guerra mondiale sono state di gravita' cosi' eccezionale da non potersi paragonare a quelle di alcun'altra citta' italiana... ...l'anormale situazione di una prolungata occupazione militare straniera ha creato un grave fenomeno di occupazioni fittizie...si consideri il numero di dipendenti da enti pubblici che ammontano a 31673, oltre un terzo dell'occupazione totale...⁸(Giornale di Trieste, 26 ottobre 1954: 6)

Economically, 1954 was a significant year for the city: Zone A was to come once again under the jurisdiction of the Italian state and although this finally brought political stability, the departure from the city of the Allied forces had also meant a loss of nearly 25 million Lira a day in disposable income. It was thus once again a period for the re-evaluation of the economic role or function of the city. Shipping and the ship building sector were in a state of decline and Lloyd Triestino, which in 1937 had possessed ships for a total of 705,000 tonnes, now only possessed 193,000 tonnes. Trade was also once again declining and the traffic of goods that passed through the port of Trieste mostly comprised goods in transit. This factor is clearly demonstrated by the trade figures; for, while in 1913 56 per cent of goods passing through the port were raw material products and 44 per cent were finished products likely to be traded in the city, by 1955 the flow of finished products had decreased to

⁸ 'For Trieste the consequences of the Second World War have been exceptionally disastrous, more so than in any other Italian city...'/ '...the abnormal situation of a prolonged foreign military occupation has created a grave phenomenon of fictitious employment...what needs to be considered is that the number of workers employed in public administration totals 31673, over a third of overall employment...'

only 19 per cent, and that of raw materials had increased to 81 per cent. These figures exemplified a process which was already visible in 1954 and which was to continue well into the 1960s.

By 1968, in fact, only four per cent of goods flowing through the port of Trieste were being traded in the city, a decline of 26 per cent since 1938 and 76 per cent since 1914. Thus, although in this period Trieste remained the second most important port in Italy in terms of the quantity of goods passing through the port, 80 per cent of the tonnage was in the form of oil which flowed through the city without value being added or without necessitating the establishment of spin-off industries. Fundamentally, the fact remained that although the Italian Government had provided for an injection of funds and the establishment of new structures such as the industrial 'free zone', the city was still economically plagued by the loss of its traditional role (Apih 1988: 191).

The complete organic integration of Trieste into the Italian State took place with the establishment, in 1963, of the Special Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, and the city was subsequently left to cope with the economic solution of a State attempting to re-structure and rationalise industrial activity on a national scale. The solutions proposed for the Triestine economy had been those already planned in 1954, and they proved devastating for the ship building sector particularly--as these industries had been largely state owned after the take over by IRI in the 1930s. The relocation and closure of industries such as the San Marco dock yards was the direct consequence of the implementation of these proposals and the action resulted in large scale and often violent demonstrations against the State that left the economy, as well as the social fibre in the city, in a state of turmoil. While the surrounding territories began to expand economically, the Triestine economy remained stagnant--limited by factors such as the lack of physical space for economic expansion as well as competition from Yugoslavian ports such as Fiume and the closure of the Suez Canal (Apih 1988: 183-188, Sapelli 1988: 244).

In terms of demographic growth the city also remained stagnant, for in the period between 1951 and 1961 in fact, the Triestine population was relatively stable (270,1164 in 1951 and 272,900 in 1961) and at a time when most port cities in Europe were experiencing demographic as well as economic growth, the Triestine economy was burdened by an ageing population, a reality brought about by the loss of a large percentage of more productive and skilled components through emigration--components which were ultimately replaced by the influx of

mostly rural, unskilled as well as ageing refugees from Istria (Apih 1988: 191). Such events helped consolidate the economic characteristics of a depressed area that the city presented in this period.

TRIESTINE CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE, AND IDENTITY

An understanding of the Triestine community, its particular migratory experience and its adjustment to Australian society, requires some form of definition of the social and cultural character of this particular group. By culture what is implied is the essence of a way of life of a people, the development of which is usually concomitant with the historical development of the society itself. In this context Triestine society has not been static, but rather it has been a society where the impetus for development and growth originated from the establishment of a flow of constant migration into the city and in the C18th this factor was highlighted 'by the variety of races and costumes that could be observed in the city' (Apih 1988: 14). As previously noted, this phenomenon allowed for the development of a cosmopolitan society whose cultural character was consolidated by the basic influences of Latin, German and Slavic culture. The development of an economic structure based entirely on commercial enterprise also imposed a strong 'urban logic' in the development of the city and of Triestine society and these factors contributed to the formation of a city that has often been considered as unique amongst Italian cities. The consequent development of a 'Triestine mentality' in its citizens, both in terms of popular culture and in terms of the arts, can hence be understood within the framework of a people of diverse ethnic origins forming a 'composite whole' and possessing unequivocally 'particular' and shared cultural characteristics that encompass both language and behaviour. To define Triestine cultural character and identity one must, as Michel David (1966: 374) points out, define Trieste itself:

*Un clima violentemente antitetico con inverni nordici ed estati mediterranee un incongruo di popoli non ben mescolati... costumi nordici--il gusto dei caffè'intimi, la spregiudicatezza e l'aspetto sportivo delle mule e delle donne, e le abitudini venete piu' tradizionali, una cordialita' aperta, un dinamismo spensierato e una tendenza al pessimismo... sono indubbiamente caratteristiche di una gente tesa... tra poli diversi...*⁹

⁹ 'A violently antithetic climate with Nordic winters and Mediterranean summers, a landscape

The cultural complexity of Trieste and its people has essentially been influenced by the city's geographical position which distinguished the city as a border town at the crossroads of three worlds: the Latin, seen to be rich in cultural tradition and artistic heritage, the German, often characterised by a practical sense of administration, and the Slavic, often defined and stereotyped as full of 'provincial spontaneity'. In relation to this complexity the writer Scipio Slataper (1912) lucidly expresses the sentiments involved:

*Tu sai che io sono slavo, tedesco
italiano... del sangue slavo ho in me
le nostalgie strane,
un desiderio di
nuovo, di foreste abbandonate...
del sangue tedesco ho l'ostinazione
mulesca, la voglia e il tono dittatoriale
...questi elementi sono fusi nel sangue
italiano che cerca di armonizzarli,
di equilibrarli.¹⁰*

As noted, ethnic influences had historically played an important role in the formation of the city of Trieste and of Triestine culture, but it was the predominance of the Triestine dialect amongst all classes, and the sense of a perceived 'Triestine identity', that created unity in the city.

Historically, furthermore, while strong traditions of Italian culture had been implanted in the area by medieval Venetian settlements--this is especially the case with Istria--Trieste had developed its 'urban consciousness' under the domination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This factor not only helped implant 'northern' cultural traditions, but also served to reinforce Triestine identity above all else. Being the only port of the vast Hapsburg Empire Trieste had developed both economically and demographically, and it was the consequent urban expansion that transformed the city into a cosmopolitan commercial centre that set the

in contrast between sea and mountain, an incongruity of different people not well assimilated... Nordic habits--the love of intimate coffee shops, the open mindedness and the sportslike appearance of the women and the most traditional Venetian habits, an open cordiality, a carefree dynamism, and a pessimistic tendency ... are without doubt characteristics of a people living on the edge... of opposite poles...'

¹⁰ 'You are aware that I am Slav, German, Italian...of Slavic blood I have within me strange nostalgic feelings, the longing for something new, of abandoned forests... of German blood I have the mule like obstinacy and a dictatorial tone... these elements are fused in my Italian blood that endeavours to create harmony and equilibrium.'

tone for modern Triestine society.

The rapid process of economic growth that had resulted from the expansion of trade brought about by Trieste's status as 'free port' (1719) had made it difficult for the local aristocracy, who had been the custodians of Italian tradition and culture, to integrate into the new, expanding economic structures of the city (as they had been able to do elsewhere in Italy). This aristocracy had remained a static entity, economically and geographically confined to the walls of the 'old' Trieste, while a new city known as the 'Borgo Teresiano'--named after Maria Theresa of Austria--developed under the auspice of the Hapsburg Empire. Directly governed by Vienna, through the mediation of a 'Trade Committee' that functioned as a decentralised office of the Austrian Administration, Trieste hence became the site of vast commercial aspirations, and as entrepreneurs from varied national and cultural backgrounds took advantage of favourable trade conditions, a new and powerful 'merchant bourgeoisie' emerged. As the Triestine writer, Leghissa (1971: 90) notes:

*Mancava qui, l'aristocrazia del sangue ... li sostituivano i grandi capitani dell'industria e del commercio... dominavano costoro la vita economica della città, e in parte anche la spirituale...*¹¹

In this expanding society, few bonds remained with the city's medieval origins and consequently not only did Trieste develop as a largely 'middle class' society, but, importantly, one dominated by a powerful and expanding merchant class, a class that, as a result of its multicultural nature, did not possess a national consciousness.

The cosmopolitan nature of this merchant class is highlighted by the appearance of surnames such as Bosquet, Schell-Grist, Rodriguez de Costa, Freytag, Kohen, Vucetiv and Apostulopulo amongst the founding members of one of Trieste's major insurance companies, then known as the 'Lloyd Austriaco'. Other well-known surnames found amongst the Triestine ruling class were Bruck, Reyer, Giannichesi, Lutteroth, Revoltella and Sartorio. (Apih 1988: 29) These characteristics help explain the apolitical stance of this class, as well the entrenchment of a marked cosmopolitanism in Triestine society during an epoch of rising nationalist sentiment. For this somewhat cosmopolitan merchant class,

¹¹ 'What was missing here, was the true aristocracy...: they were substituted by the captains of industry and commerce... It was they who dominated the economic life of the city, and in part also the 'spiritual' life...'

political representation within the municipal structures of the city was not seen as important, for they saw themselves and their interests as well represented through the stock market and the stock exchange--the stock exchange had, in this period, become an important centre of local power since local authorities and the Government often consulted with the 'Stock Exchange Committee', which was instituted in 1755. For this class, consequently, any political ideology took on a narrow perspective, a perspective that had been influenced and indeed formed by local interests that were very often of a general nature. This class tended to see its role in Triestine society as being an economic and social one, and in this context they perceived Triestine society as possessing its own unique identity (Apih 1988: 29-35). It was in essence a society that had become the meeting point of other nationalities and cultures and where a sense of unity had evolved, influenced by the common pursuit of economic goals, the accumulation of capital and a spirit of entrepreneurship.

This active merchant class became a major catalyst in the development of a new Triestine society and overall the demographic and economic development of Trieste had led to a significant transformation in the social structure of the city. Many of the classes that had once been dependent upon the aristocracy became absorbed into the growing urban structure. Thus the Slavic peasantry as well as those engaged in fishing become employed as wharf labourers and a new proletariat emerged. The increase in port activities had required an increase in the use of manpower for the loading and unloading of ships as well as for work in the warehouses where goods were stored and the Triestine proletariat had initially developed around these activities. During this period not only had merchants, attracted by the possibility of quick profit, come to Trieste; but among the immigrants were also many artisans and labourers, mostly comprised of Venetians, Friulians and Slovenes from the surrounding territory. This 'immigrant proletariat' also brought with them many 'traditional trades' and amongst the early Triestine proletariat were, for example, Slovene bakers as well as Friulian ice-cream makers and vendors (Apih 1988: 7). Initially, nonetheless, the paternalistic or more traditional internal structures of the larger companies did not favour the formation of an industrial proletariat, however the consequent process of industrialisation did lead to the development of a modern working class, and by 1910, 30,000 Triestines were engaged in industrial activity which gravitated around, or was linked to, the shipyards and dockyards and to ship building. (Apih 1988: 74) Importantly, this type of industry required the use of specialised skills and eventually resulted in the emergence of a working class that was represented by a relatively high proportion of skilled tradespeople.

Economic expansion had, however, also led to the development of a large middle class, employed in what today could be termed as 'service industries'. Initially, German functionaries had constituted the 'old' Triestine middle class, but as new companies had begun to flourish in the city, many Italian nationals soon joined the ranks of an emerging, industrial middle class. In this context it is worth noting that by 1908 there had been established in the city of Trieste no fewer than 54 insurance companies, 19 banks, 50 newspapers and periodicals, 36 shipping companies, 8 hospitals as well as other private commercial enterprises. (Apih 1988: 74) Furthermore, economic expansion had also led to structural change within some of the firms themselves: many of the companies that had been based on 'paternalistic' or traditional structures began to develop more bureaucratic models of management and the consequent result was an even further expansion of this class (Apih 1988: 57-104).

Since the early proletariat had not been monocultural in character, the consolidation of this group had not played a crucial role in the formation of an Italian identity amongst Triestines, and this factor had further been influenced, as previously noted, by the formation of a Triestine Socialist party that had institutionalised an internationalist sentiment and had advocated autonomy for the city. The formation of the middle class, on the other hand, had been important in that it had represented an opposing element to the ruling merchant classes. This class tended to develop a 'national consciousness' based on class conflict and antagonism towards a rich and cosmopolitan ruling merchant class: For this group Trieste needed to develop as an 'Italian city' and their particular notion of identity was closely linked to cultural/artistic development and production. The Italian language had been the language used in business transactions but at that time most Triestines completed any higher education in Graz or Vienna (the Hapsburg administration, insisting that Trieste was not monocultural, had not conceded to the establishment of an Italian university in Trieste) and their knowledge of the Italian language therefore, often remained confined to the knowledge of the Triestine dialect. (Apih 1988: 47) The establishment of educational and cultural institutions that would foster a national Italian identity--which would stand in opposition to the 'cosmopolitan' nature of the ruling merchant class--was hence seen by this group as a weapon or means of coming to terms with conflicting class interests.

However, the middle class did not remain a homogeneous element in Triestine society, for with the establishment of varied cultural

institutions--by 1908 there had been established 38 cultural and scientific institutions--a growing number of intellectuals also joined the ranks of the Triestine middle class, and, with 'fresh' input, new ideas soon began to flourish. Many of these intellectuals were Italian nationals, but amongst this class were also local Triestines who had studied in Italian cities; while after the mid 1800s, with the politicisation of the Slovene urban proletariat, Slavic intellectuals (who formed a Slavic middle class) were also present in the city. This 'new' middle class, characterised by an intellectual elite, viewed Triestine society as a culturally diverse society that was unified by a shared interest in commerce or commercial activity and this vision was, as such, not antagonistic to the views espoused by the dominant merchant class. Thus, while these intellectuals recognised and accepted the dominance of the Italian language, they also recognised the cosmopolitan nature of Triestine society. Such a view was closely linked to the social reality of the society itself, because these intellectuals, in having become aware of the existence and the needs of the proletariat, were also aware of the relevance of an immigrant culture which included not only that of Friulians but also that of urban Slovenes and of other less numerous ethnic groups. The acceptance of this immigrant proletariat and their culture led to the firm establishment of the notion of Trieste as a truly cosmopolitan city, a city with a unique identity that the intellectuals thought well worth preserving (Borghese 1982).

Liberal reform, the fact that the Austrian Administration had had no intention of assimilating the Triestines, and the economic orientation of political thought in Trieste, had, however, allowed Triestine society to develop as a fundamentally Italian society; and this factor had been further reinforced by the fact that the Triestine ruling class did not possess a 'dominant culture' which was hegemonic in nature or outlook. In this context Trieste was by all means a city with Italian cultural traditions, but it had, nonetheless, also remained a city with a very definite and particular character. As such it became a city where an 'Italian identity' had been formed by the filtering of often conflicting elements, an Austrian/Italian society whose cultural blueprint had been touched by the influx of various other realities and traditions that were also assimilating into the very society they were influencing. It was in essence an incongruous society where an Italian consciousness had developed concurrently with notions of a politically autonomous Trieste.

The cosmopolitan nature of Trieste was characterised not only by the fact that Triestine society developed as a fundamentally middle-class society--and was thus imbued by middle-class values--but also by the fact that it was a totally urban society. The development of Trieste had in fact

remained solely an urban phenomenon--a development based on commercial activity that had not required the establishment of a nexus between the city and its surrounding territory. The dominant merchant class had shown no interest in investing effort or capital into the surrounding countryside and as such no bond or sense of unity developed between the city and its hinterland (a factor which later was to prove to have serious consequences for the whole Julian region). This urban character also impeded the creation of a sense of unity with a wider surrounding territory, and this had been the result of the structure of social relationships which were based on labour market relationships--the Friulians for example (and to some extent the Istrians as well) had refuted the establishment of such ties to the city since many immigrants from these areas had joined the ranks of the so-called 'subordinate' classes and notions of exploitation prevailed which created animosity between these territories. These factors fostered an urban culture which was completely disassociated from the peasant culture of the surrounding territory and consolidated a sense of insularity within the city itself. Such insularity became manifest in the desire for autonomy that was present in the city and it made it difficult for Trieste to fit comfortably into the political or social mould of either Austrian or Italian society. This feeling was succinctly expressed by the Triestine Von Bruck (a member of the Stock Exchange Committee) when, in relation to the intention of the Committee of financing the transfer of a German secondary school to Trieste, had commented, 'We are Triestines, we are cosmopolitan, we have nothing in common with either the German or the Italian nationality'. (Coons 1983: 21)

Importantly, the political relationship between Trieste and the Hapsburg Empire cannot be solely and simplistically understood in terms of 'oppression' by a State imposing its colonial powers, but rather in light of the economic function that the Hapsburgs had bestowed upon the city. From a social perspective, in fact, Austrian legislation had been progressive in nature. By 1885, for example, the working day had been reduced to eleven hours while the laws regulating child labour had prohibited the employment of children under twelve years of age (in Italy during this period it had been nine years of age). By 1869, furthermore, the minimum school leaving age had been set at fourteen years and this had significantly increased the rate of literacy within the city. While in 1871 as much as 43 per cent of the population had been illiterate, by 1900 the proportion had fallen to 14 per cent. The State had also instituted *scuole cittadine*--a form of 'community' school that had aimed at providing general education for people unlikely to pursue further studies. (This type of education was non-existent in Italy.) Such liberal

legislation, which is typical in periods of transition in industrialising societies, had been directed towards the lower strata of Triestine society, and in a sense these factors helped mitigate against any feeling of hostility towards the Hapsburg administration that may have been present in some members of the working class or within the so-called 'subordinate classes'. In essence, members of all social strata of Triestine society were conscious of the important role of Trieste as an economic enclave of the Hapsburg Empire, but any sense of identification with this colonial power had historically become fused with an underlying sense of 'autonomy' that was itself plagued by feelings of complete Italianness and confronted by an emerging Slavic nationalism. By the turn of the century, consequently, the city of Trieste was in the ambiguous position of being peripheral both to Italian culture and to the Hapsburg Empire, while at the same time remaining a central meeting point of these and other cultures. This contradiction in development did not fail to reinforce the paradoxically complex nature of Triestine identity.

Throughout this period the city had undoubtedly expanded demographically and, as noted, this had occurred as a result of the influx of migrants which had began since the declaration of Trieste as a Free Port (1719). This influx continued and even in 1910 only 57 per cent of residents had actually been born in the city of Trieste itself (Apih 1988). These immigrants had found tolerance and complete freedom of cultural expression in the city of Trieste. Discriminatory feelings amongst the population, if present, were often not of a 'nationalist' or 'racist' nature but tended to be embodied in a sense of 'superiority' felt by the urban dwellers towards their 'peasant' counterpart. (Borghese 1982: 4)

Complete freedom of expression had also been allowed to all religious traditions and practices (the *Tolleranza* of 1791). Established in the city were places of worship of many religious denominations: as well as one of the largest Jewish temples in Europe, Anglican, Methodist, Greek, Greek Orthodox and Armenian religious practices were also represented in the city. Thus, although Trieste had remained essentially Catholic, the free flow of ideas had provided a fertile climate for growth of discussion and debate. Luther (Germany) and Calvin (Switzerland) had instigated new religious ideologies and the ideas of the Reformation and Protestantism circulated freely in Trieste, more so than in other Italian cities. The ready acceptance of new religious thought and the absorption of these ideas within the Triestine psyche subsequently threatened the stronghold of 'traditional Italian Catholicism' and as a consequence Triestine society developed as a largely secular society, one where many of the Government functionaries were quite often Masons. (Apih 1988: 11) This liberal minded Triestine society perceived religion as 'private'

rather than 'social' property and in this regard the Triestine newspaper *Il Piccolo* noted:

*Da noi la confessione religiosa, le pratiche del culto. Il grado della devozione, sono riguardati da tutti come questione puramente individuale... come la proprietà*¹² (16 June 1889)

Even Triestine Catholicism had been influenced by 'outside' factors, as Zovatto and Radole (1991) observe, and needed to be distinguished from the 'Italian' Catholicism of Istria. Triestine urban Catholicism was characterised by a 'northern influence', whereby the relationship between man and God is of a personal, introspective nature, in other words, not a relationship which is filtered or manifests itself through external organisations and institutions or through socio-religious ceremony or ritual.

According to Weber, a necessary precondition to the economic development of modern capitalist society is the separation of religious ideology from the economic life of the society. 'Rational' economic conduct can only develop when religious forces and codes of conduct based on these forces do not influence market-place relationships and this was certainly the case in Triestine society. Here the dominant values highlighted the need for pragmatism and to some extent the 'pursuit of profit'. It was undoubtedly a class society dominated by a powerful merchant class, but also a society which was not entirely impermeable, one in other words, where some degree of social mobility did prevail. It was a city where economic activity had been animated by a monarchy that had instilled notions of efficiency: the establishment of a campaign to stamp out the practice of begging (Apih 1988: 11) is but one example of the new values that recognised such practices as antagonistic to the 'work ethic' regarded as important in an economically expanding society. The accumulation of capital and the spirit of entrepreneurship became a fundamental element of Triestine society and these values were consolidated by the presence of Germanic institutions and the 'models' implicitly proposed by them. A sense of 'professionalism' also became a valued trait and soon developed as a strong moral foundation upon which all social relationships were based upon--Triestines consequently developed Nordic rather than Mediterranean work practices and this equipped citizens with a sense of practicality and an inclination towards punctuality and precision. A sense for the 'private', which is a distinctive

¹² 'Here religious confession, religious practice, and the degree of devotion, are regarded by all as a purely personal matter... not unlike private property.'

feature of urban societies, was furthermore, also an important characteristic of this society, and this tendency was reflected in most cultural manifestations. This private and somewhat introspective element is evident in Triestine literature where the practice of self-analysis prevails and where the human condition is examined in terms of internal conflict rather than from a sociological perspective--a style which is exemplified in the work of one of Trieste's most famous novelists, Italo Svevo. Clearly, Triestine literature, like all other manifestations of Triestine culture, while remaining essentially Italian, also contained elements of a cosmopolitan, *mitteleuropean* nature. This could only be the natural outcome since writers such as Stuparich, Slataper and Benco were of Slavic origin, while others such as Michelstaedter and Svevo (Ettore Schmitz) were of German background, and Umberto Saba of Jewish.

Embodied in these so-called 'dominant values' of Triestine society however, were not values based on the reproduction of aristocratic models of behaviour--since the nobility had been historically absent in the development of Trieste (separation from the aristocracy is possible in a mobile, urban culture and in this respect Weber notes that a feature of medieval European cities was that in the South the nobility generally settled in the city itself while in the North they were generally excluded)--but rather what can be termed as a 'middle-class spirit' where reality was perceived as a personal creation and where one felt a sense of control over one's destiny. (Apih 1988: 75) This, once again, is a feature of an urban society, since peasant or folk societies tend to acquire fatalistic attitudes often based on religious beliefs. Middle-class values were implicit in what may be termed the 'lifestyle' that was typical of Triestine society. This was a society where the rewards of economic activity were more than often associated with the most fundamental necessities of human existence, one where hedonistic pursuits and the search for the 'good life' characterised the cosmopolitan environment of Trieste. A love for the outdoors predominated in this urban society that characteristically separated leisure activities from the world of work and production, and the term *andare a spasso*, which often appears in the novels of Italo Svevo and which literally translates to 'going to amuse oneself', became synonymous to going on outings--be it in the urban environment (*la passeggiata*-- the stroll through the city streets) or in the countryside. This was the period in Triestine history in which the celebration of Carnevale became famous for its extravagance and people from all walks of life participated with enthusiasm in the festive nature of the occasion. Such extravagance is noted by Gasperini (1951: 51):

*A Trieste non si lanciano, come nella maggior parte delle città italiane, pallottoline di gesso e rifiuti... Un vagheggino di qui... lancia in un'ora perlomeno venti fiorini di bomboni.*¹³

It was also the period in which the opera season in Trieste became renowned and the city developed strong links with the world of music. This world did not, however, remain the sole domain of the more affluent classes and Trieste (as distinct from many other Italian cities) became a city where a 'mass public' responded to cultural manifestations driven not only by intellectual curiosity, but also by an emergent need for distraction and entertainment. (Guagnini 1988: 341) This need for 'social activity' was characterised by the love of music--especially operettas and Viennese waltzes, but also theatre and coffee, and the consequent flourishing in Trieste of theatres, 'eating houses', 'trattorias', 'osterias' and Viennese-type cafes--all of which also reflected the various ethnic influences present in the city. (Leghissa 1971)

While this culture generally reflected the needs of the more affluent middle and ruling classes, it did nonetheless permeate all social strata of Triestine society. For the less affluent working or 'subordinate' classes the cosmopolitaness, the gaiety and economic orientation of Triestine urban culture, was often based on an acceptance of reality and on a sense of adaptability that was often mitigated by satire and humour, traits which are all clearly revealed in the words of Triestine songs which reflect the popular culture of the C19th:

*...Xe questo el modo triestin/ che la vadi ben/ che la vadi mal/
sempre alegri e mai pasion/viva la e po' bon!*¹⁴

And again:

*...Per i debiti non i te impica/ la forca non i te da/ mandeghe la
lista al diavolo/ e lui li paghera.
Cento, duecento forse piu'/ se non li paga el diavolo li paghera'
Gesù'.*¹⁵

¹³ 'In Trieste, unlike most other parts of Italy, people did not throw pieces of chalk or rubbish... Any Triestine gentleman... would throw in an hour at least twenty florins worth of candy.'

¹⁴ '...This is the Triestine way/ If all goes well/ If all does not/ Always happy/never sad/ Hurray! Hurray!'

¹⁵ '... They don't hang you for your debts/ They don't give you the death penalty/ Send a list

*...i ga el capoto al Monte/ ma i vol far Carneval. Se non ghe xe
luganighe i magna pan e aio/ do croste de formaio/ Ma i vol far
Carneval...*¹⁶

These songs portray an inherent desire to take part in the 'good life' despite the constraints of a more sombre reality. They highlight a sense of defiance rather than hostility in the face of a reality which must come to terms with class differentiation. The songs reveal a festive spirit within the Triestine psyche, and, despite the fact that they may also be a superficial, if not incomplete, observation of Triestine society, albeit, the working class of this society, they do highlight a cult-like obsession for portraying stereotypic symbols. As such they are an intrinsic part of a 'myth-creation' process which both nurtures and defines identity. They suggest an eagerness, in a sense, of presenting a well defined identity--an aspiration which seems typical of a people still uncertain about their identity.

Within this complex and developing society Triestine women did not fail to make their presence felt: Amongst literary circles for example, women were not only present but were also perceived as possessing an autonomous role within the society. The educated Triestine woman consequently, was not infrequently found in what could be classed as managerial positions (Apih 1988: 76) and there developed an image of the Triestine woman as being of an independent, autonomous nature. The fact that women possessed some degree of economic opportunity is typical of many urban cultures and whilst this 'autonomous spirit' may not have been indicative of a 'liberated' woman in late C20th feminist terms, it was nonetheless a trait that was not entirely relegated to the more educated classes. Many women workers were also to be found in the midst of the developing working class and while exploitation and class distinctions prevailed, many of these women were also seen as possessing this 'autonomous spirit' that through the process of 'myth creation' was to become a stereotypical symbol of Triestine women generally.

to the devil/And he will surely pay them. One hundred/ Two hundred maybe more/ If the devil doesn't pay them, Jesus surely will.'

¹⁶ '...They've pawned their coats/ but they want to have fun [at the Carnevale]/ If there are no sausages/ they eat bread and garlic/ A couple of crusts of cheese/ But they want to have fun [at the Carnevale].'

In the C19th a typical example of such a woman would be a category of women workers called *sessolote*. These women were independent workers who shelled coffee beans, rubber, pepper and nuts. They were in a sense self-employed artisans who took their trade to different households and merchants who required their skills and labour. (As industrialisation took place these women became absorbed as 'factory workers', working fixed hours shelling and cleaning these goods in the warehouses near the port area.) These women were seen to possess a strong and independent character. They were seen and personified as straightforward women who spoke their mind and did what they wanted to do with determination. The writer Leghissa describes them as being:

*Magnifici tipi di popolane triestine, note per la schiettezza del carattere e per la lingua senza peli... Pronte a menar le mani...*¹⁷
(Trieste che passa, 1971: 30)

Another group of women of working-class category mythically described as possessing similar characteristics were the *venderigole*. These women were the stall holders in the local market-place' where they sold fruit and vegetables, and they also were seen and depicted as possessing the ability to 'stand up' for themselves as the popular song *La venderigola*, written in 1895, illustrates:

*Son de mestier venderigola in piazza/
Son triestina, matona, sincera/
Mi trato tuti con bela maniera/
Solo un scartozzo non posso soffrir.
El vien, el palpa, el sbecola,
el resta la impala'/
A dirme stupidezzi/
che proprio non me va.
Se ancora--el guarda--el stuziga/
ghe tiro drio un limon;
go brazzi stagni e forti/
Che nova? Sior paron.*¹⁸

¹⁷ 'A magnificent example of a working-class Triestine woman, noted for her frankness and her ability to speak her mind..., she was not unknown for her use of physical force...'

¹⁸ 'I am by trade 'Vederigola'/ I am a Triestine, good-humoured, sincere/ I treat all with respect/ There is only a certain type I cannot stand/ He comes, he touches, he fiddles/ He stands there and talks of nonsense I don't care to hear about/ If he continues to stare and tease/ I'll throw a lemon at him; I have strong solid arms/ Who do you think you are? Kind sir.'

The song has a double meaning: by focusing on the touching and tasting of the fruit and vegetables it makes sexual allusions; while the reference made to the 'Sir' suggest an ironic reference to class differentiation.

According to this Triestine song, the woman depicted appears defiant in the face of attempted domination, be it on gender or class terms.

Interestingly, popular Triestine songs of the period which were part of this 'myth creation' process, made frequent reference to women; as the words of another popular song suggest:

*Fazzo l'amor, xe vero/
cossa ghe xe de mal?/
Se tuto el santo giorno/
sfadigo a lavorar/
Xe giusto che la sera/
me fazzo compagnar...*¹⁹

This 'autonomous spirit' and sense of defiance was generally fostered by economic independence.

Traditionally, Triestine society developed as a liberal society, one that had flourished in the midst of *mitteleuropean* culture and although the disintegration of the Austro Hungarian Empire after World War I and the subsequent advent of Fascism in Italy brought radical change--the exodus of many non-Italians and part of the capitalist/merchant class, as well as the influx of other Italians into the city, led to the disintegration of the cosmopolitan/*mitteleuropean* world-- Triestines from all social classes continue to refer to Trieste's traditional and mythical image. This is an image that is reactive in nature and binds Triestine identity to a *mitteleuropean* world that contemplates a 'mythic past', relating it to what Trieste could have become. In this context, Triestine society does not negate the core of its very identity--its Italianness--but rather refuses to identify with all that is non functional in contemporary Italian society. The elections held in June 1992 revealed a vote of protest for Italy's traditional parties and a return to political parties which focused on local politics (that have a political leaning to towards the Right). (*La Nazione*, 9 June 1992: 1) Local themes, furthermore, have continued to dominate Triestine culture, and interest in the past has been kept alive by activities which include exhibitions, which are all open to the general public (in

¹⁹ 'I like to flirt, it's true/ And what is wrong with that?/ All day long I work hard/ It's only expected that in the evening/ I would want to go out...'

1992, for example, an exhibition that highlighted the city's cosmopolitan identity was based on James Joyce, the years he resided and worked in Trieste and on his relationship with the Triestine writer Italo Svevo). Most importantly, while such ties with a *mitteleuropean* past have led to the creation of anachronistic symbols in Triestine society it has, at the same time, made a relevant contribution in fostering the acceptance of new ideas, an example of which are the psychiatric reforms made by the psychiatrist Franco Basaglia in the 1970s that allowed Trieste to become a pilot city for the World Health Organisation.

At the end of the C20th the presence in the city of international institutions such as The International Centre of Theoretical Physics, as well as other international research bodies and educational institutions (such as the International School of Trieste, and the United World College of the Adriatic which offers the International Baccalaureate) continues to confer upon the city a sense of 'internationalism'. But for Triestine society generally, this world thrives in a vacuum and has only but a slight influence on the cultural life of the city itself. Questions of identity--as exemplified by a letter sent to the Triestine paper *Il Piccolo* (2 January 1992: 4), which stated that 'The Radetzsky March' should not feature as the grand finale piece of the New Year Concert in Trieste, since Trieste is an Italian and not an Austrian city--are still prevalent in Triestine society, as members of this urban culture endeavour to come to terms with both its past and its geographical reality. As the psychoanalyst E. Jorgan (*L'Espresso*, 22 April 1984) points out: 'If by neurotic what is meant is someone who lives in the present conditioned by an uneasy past, then Trieste is neurotic'. Characterised by this existential identity crisis, Triestine society is undeniably an urban society, a society that flourished with the expansion of capitalist activities and whose cultural character was influenced by this as well as by the reality of the presence of different ethnic groups. As a consequence of these factors, the essence of Triestine culture is reflected in the city of Trieste itself --a city where Triestines were above all else Triestines and where a sense of *campanilismo* was not incongruent to its urban cosmopolitan nature and 'European consciousness', but where these contrasting elements formed a dialectical relationship. In other words, the port functioned as a symbol of Trieste's *campanilismo*, while being at the same time the symbol of its economic prosperity and thus the source of its cosmopolitanism and the essence of its urban culture. The prosperity of the past has certainly never been forgotten by Triestines and can be seen to have greatly influenced Triestine culture and mentality to the very end of the C20th.

THE EMIGRATION YEARS

The political and economical turmoil related to the events that followed the end of World War II can be associated to two migratory flows from the former Venezia Giulia Region. The first, occurring between 1947 and 1951, linked to the Peace Treaty of 1947 (which saw Istria ceded to Yugoslavia) was characterised mainly by the exodus of Istrian and Dalmatian refugees who came to Australia through the displaced persons program; and a second flow occurring between approximately 1954 and 1961, related to the events preceding and following the dismantling of the Allied Military Government in 1954. Unlike the first flow, this second flow was a 'voluntary' type of migration that coincided with the expansion of Australia's immigration program and the implementation by the Australian Government of the Assisted Passage Scheme. It was a flow above all demographically represented by *triestini*, many of whom entered Australia as 'assisted passage migrants' (Price 1963: 279) through organisations such as ICEM (Intergovernmental Committee for European migration). This had been a migratory flow that had stemmed not only from the devastation caused by the war; but also from a sense of underlying uncertainty that prevailed in the city.



The Crescini couple depart Trieste, c.1955

The mood of the city during those difficult years is important to identify. A palpable sense of disorientation had already begun to emerge as a consequence of the 'political limbo' that had resulted from the contestation of the area. Although a monthly report prepared in 1947 by the Allied Government described the average Triestine as '... a person who is today, almost totally discouraged', a Doxa survey in March of the same year found that even though many considered their situation as precarious, very few Triestines had, at that point, actually considered leaving the city. (Apih 1988: 173) This tension was, nonetheless, further compounded by a political reality that witnessed not only the divisive nature of opposing ideologies and ethnic alliances, but also a prolonged presence of a caretaker government that was paradoxically seen as both an 'intruder' in an essentially Italian society and as a provider of economic well-being. As a consequence, the implications of the political events leading to the dismantling of the Allied Government, were for the Triestines both economic and psychological and it is basically these elements which can be seen as tentative 'push' factors in the migratory process.

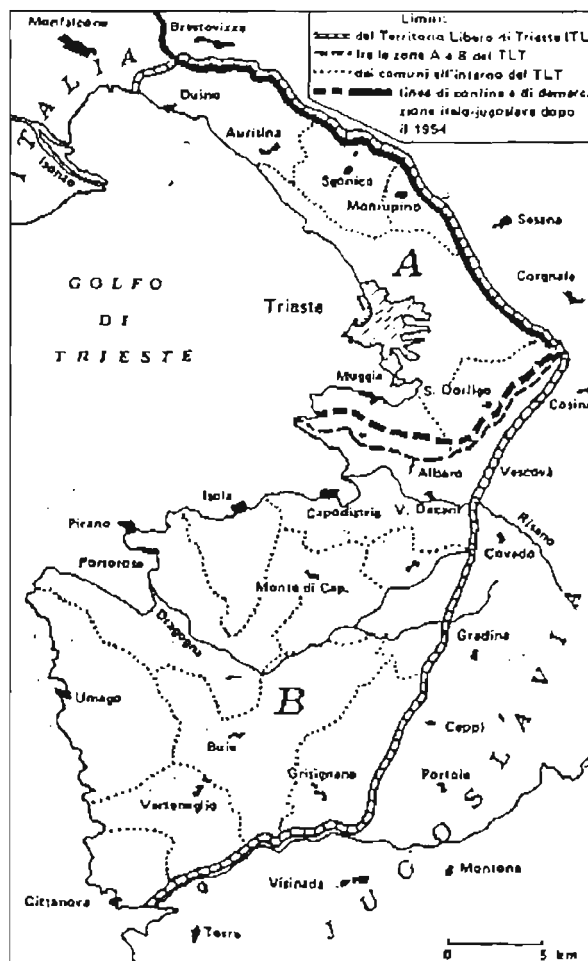


fig. 2 The Free Territory of Trieste (Valussi 1972: 198)

Essentially, the concept of the Free Territory of Trieste had been a controversial one that had divided the city both ideologically and psychologically. The institutionalisation of this 'international' area in 1947 had been a compromise that had not been well accepted by the two interested parties: besides both Yugoslavia and Italy making claims on the area on ethnic grounds, Yugoslavia had claimed that the area had never gravitated towards the Italian economy. Meanwhile the Italian State claimed it also had an historical right to the city since it had been Italian funds that had provided stimulus for an economic recovery from the crisis caused by the disintegration of the economic unity of the Hapsburg Empire. The notion of the Free Territory of Trieste, however, did find support amongst a growing 'Indipendista' movement in the city. This movement embodied the feeling of autonomy that had been present in the city since the C19th and it was representative of all strata of Triestine society. It was a locally-based movement that believed that economic well-being was more important than nationalism and, although it largely identified with Italian society, supporters envisaged themselves as somewhat 'particular' Italians whose political and economic strategies were based on the belief that only independence from both Italy and Yugoslavia could protect Trieste's historic role of major import/export port for central Europe. Although in 1949 the 'Indipendist' movement obtained only 9.7 per cent of the vote (compared to the 39 per cent obtained by the Christian Democrats and 21 per cent by the Communists), the movement did gain momentum and by 1952 had achieved a total of 15 per cent of the vote in Trieste. Amongst the supporters of the movement were many Allied Military Government employees who were interested in preserving their employment but also many who were ideologically opposed to a return of the Italian administration--including non-Communist Slovenes as well as the pro-Soviet Communists who were not happy with the politics of Tito--and by 1952, consequently, a united front of pro-'indipendists' came close to obtaining 38 per cent of the vote (Apih 1988). The message was quite clear: a least a third of the population in Trieste was unfavourable to annexation to Italy.

The political mood of this period was certainly polemical in nature and while the city remained divided by those factions desiring annexation to Yugoslavia on the one hand and the return of the Italian administration on the other, the 'Indipendists' continued to advance their cause by making it known that without the votes of those Istrian refugees who were present in the city during the 1949 Municipal elections, the percentage of the population not in favour of a return to the Italian

Administration would have been much larger. In terms of their eligibility to vote, it was further noted that the stipulations of the 1947 Peace Treaty had, in fact, not been followed. These stipulations had stated that only Italians resident in Trieste since 10 June 1940 were eligible to vote, yet, in reality, all Italian residents in Trieste had been considered as eligible and hence allowed to vote in the 1949 elections. It was undoubtedly a period tainted by nationalism, ideology and pragmatism, one that is remembered by one Triestine immigrant as a period of 'political passion', where 'political disputes could be heard everywhere', a period when differing points of view often led to insults and violence.

The population in Trieste was becoming demonstrably more tense, while the Italian and Yugoslav Governments continued diplomatic negotiations, and an agreement seemed difficult to reach. By 1952 it was clear that the division of the Free Territory of Trieste between the two countries would ultimately be inevitable; however, improved economic conditions in the city had also legitimised the claims and the policies of the 'Indipendist' movement and this only served to increase political instability. Further, realising that any increased radicalisation of politics in the city could only polarise the slow process of reaching an agreement, the Allied Military Government--which had at one point in time shown favour to the idea of incorporating the Free Territory of Trieste into the Italian State--also began to take a more neutral stance. This angered the irredentists and the Italian Right (represented by the caretaker Government of Giuseppe Pella) who saw this stance as ignoring the Tripartite declarations. Improved relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia (especially after the death of Stalin in 1953) was also seen by the nationalists as offering Yugoslavia an added advantage in the Trieste negotiations and this acted as an incentive in their push for a firmer stance in the negotiations. On the basis of these talks, rumours of complete annexation of both Zone A and Zone B to Yugoslavia prevailed, resulting in the placement of Italian troops along the border of Zone A. The Yugoslavian Government made it clear that it considered this action as an act of aggression and with the crisis exacerbated by the official declaration (8 October 1953) that Zone A would be annexed to Italy, Yugoslavia retaliated by placing their own troops along the border of Zone B. Fifty thousand Yugoslav and Italian soldiers consequently faced each other and the danger of international conflict was real. The tension in Trieste was explosive and violent demonstrations took place in a city that, in the memorable phrase of Diego De Castro (1981: 275), 'regurgitated arms.'

Generally the decision to cede Zone A to Italy had not been well

accepted: while the Centre-Right faction of the Christian Democrats supported the decision as a temporary compromise that could lead to further pressure and negotiation and the eventual annexation of Zone B, the Centre faction of the Christian Democrats, as well other Italian political parties, protested what they considered to be a betrayal of the Istrian territory. The decision was of course vehemently protested on economic grounds by the Indipendists and by the Democratic Slovenes (who saw Italian nationalism as a threat to their ethnic identity) as both these groups showed their eagerness in maintaining the status quo. Political and economic uncertainty consequently prevailed and most Triestines felt a sense of apprehension towards the decision as further tension mounted in the city when Yugoslavia moved its troops into Zone B, blocked the Zone B/Zone A border and surrounded the city of Trieste with its military force. In this climate of political tension the various factions continued to diffuse their own propaganda: the Indipendists warned of an imminent coup to be carried out by Italian extremists (Novak 1973: 414), while various Italian nationalist groups warned of the infiltration of Yugoslavian elements that would ultimately take control of Zone A for Communist Yugoslavia. The city was thus in a state of chaos and as the dynamics of these events further unfolded, the tension present erupted into riots and eventually into what was to resemble an uprising.

Essentially 3 November 1953 marked the beginning of a violent and tragic period for the city and the catalyst for the violence had been the removal of the Italian flag by the Allied Military Government from the municipal buildings. On this particular day, in celebration of Trieste's patron saint and of the 35th anniversary of the landing of Italian troops in Trieste, the Mayor had defiantly flown the Italian flag from the municipal building; while the Allied Military Government—having been so fearful of Yugoslavian military intervention had banned the flag from being flown--had acted immediately in having it removed. Demonstrations marked by incidents with the civil police followed and as the tension intensified the violence became less sporadic. More serious incidents consequently occurred between 5 and 6 November and in this instance 500 to 600 demonstrators attacked pursuing police with stones. In an attempt to disperse the demonstrators, orders were given to open fire above the crowd; tragically, however, shots were actually fired into the crowd resulting in death and injury. This particular incident subsequently became the trigger for further riots, the worst of which happened the following day. On this occasion demonstrators raided the headquarters of the Indipendist Movement and then vented their anger on the civil administration offices, where members of the police were once again attacked with stones. The retreat of the police following this attack only

served to encourage the wrath of the demonstrators who then resorted to the use of hand grenades. During this attack two police vehicles were burned, four more people were killed, and 70 more were injured. The Allied Military Government advised that if further attacks were to take place, they would have no option remaining but to open fire on the demonstrators.

This 'uprising', witnessed by the people of Trieste, created a mood of anger mingled with desperation and a sense of hopelessness. It was now, even more so, a city divided by ideology, ethnicity, nationalism and pragmatism and it was, above all, a city where accusations, allegations and questions remained unanswered. Why had the shots initially been fired? How did the demonstration get out of hand? It had been noted in fact that although many of the demonstrators had been students, there had been present amongst the organisers others who were not only older but also known for their nationalist fanaticism. In relation to these events, Diego De Castro notes that '*La manifestazione fu preparata in Italia sotto forma di pacifica manifestazione... fu pianificata in città da elementi nazionalisti... si trasforma in rivolta quando si inserirono le squadre in parte pagate, ma non si è individuato il finanziatore.*'²⁰ This view finds support elsewhere: General Winterton, who was part of the Allied administration, described these events as '...a well-organised attempt...; a plan taciturnly approved by high-ranking Italian officials'. (Apih 1988: 181) Despite such allegations, the main targets in this turmoil had, however, been the Allied Military Government--considered by many as an 'alien intruder'--as well as those Triestines employed by the Allied Government, notably members of the Venezia Giulia Civil Police Corps. It was towards this group of police--who represented the Free Territory of Trieste, and were thus seen to be traitors to Italian nationalist sentiment--that the hostility and violence were often directed. The hostility present was clearly reflected and voiced in the newspaper headlines of the time:

*La polizia spara sulla folla inerme.
Cosa si vuole?*²¹ (*Giornale di Trieste*, 6 November 1953)

Such headlines did not fail to depict the police themselves, as the instigators of the violence against their own compatriots. Both the local

²⁰ 'The demonstration was organised in Italy as a peaceful manifestation... It was planned in the city itself by those with nationalist sentiment... It was transformed into a revolt when infiltrated by "partly paid squads", but the financial backer was never identified. (Diego De Castro, *La questione di Trieste*, 1981, II, 699.

²¹ 'The police open fire on the unsuspecting crowd. What more do we want?'

and the Italian press had undoubtedly initiated a defamatory campaign against the Civil police Corps, and thus further divided the city, setting Triestine against Triestine, as emotive descriptions of the events talked of an ‘unexplainable punitive action’ by the police towards their own fellow Triestines. In their nationalistic fervour the papers appear however, to have offered only one side of the story, and in recalling these events half a century later, some ex-members of the Civil Police settled in Australia, could still remember the anguish and perplexity experienced at the time. ‘The shots fired’, recalled one ex-member, ‘seemed to originate from nearby windows and not from the police’. The situation was, to say the least, ambiguous and many questions remain unanswered, such as ‘why had the police, on that particular day, been ordered to carry their service revolvers rather than the batons they usually carried?’ A few former members of the Police Corps were still wondering decades later if it was all just a political manoeuvre in which they were the pawns. The nationalistic propaganda initiated by the local press continued, culminating on 26 October 1954--the day Italian troops sailed into the Triestine port-- when the headlines declared:

*L'Italia in ogni cuore
nel giorno del grande ritorno.* ²²(*Il Piccolo*, 26 October 1954: 1)

Persecution of the Civil Police Corps by the local papers did not cease, however. On 2 November 1954 the Triestine paper, *Il Piccolo*, published the names of 36 ex-Civil policemen, members of what was described as the ‘notorious mobile squad’, and contended that their ‘spontaneous’ decision to leave the city and accompany the English troops to England, was evidence of a guilty conscience.

Accompanying the sense of desperation and anger felt by Triestines during this period was also a continued sense of uncertainty. The dismantling of the Allied Military Government in 1954 exacerbated the climate of precariousness, for not only had the AMG created employment for the Triestines, but its presence had also stimulated the Triestine economy as a whole. On the importance of the AMG as a source of economic well being Novak (1970: 473) wrote:

Many Triestines knew their economic well being came directly or indirectly from the presence of the Allied troops and the AMG. About six thousand AMG civil policemen were receiving comparatively high salaries... Apart from those directly employed

²² Italy in every heart/ On the day of the long-awaited return.

by the AMG, merchants, dockworkers, food stores and the entertainment industry profited from the presence of the Allies.

Therefore the issue, as discussed above, consisted in the fact that Italy had to come to terms with the specific social and economic reality of re-inserting the 'Free Territory of Trieste' back into the Italian economy. Trieste was a city that had been abruptly deprived of its hinterland and, despite some initiatives by the Italian government, the problems persisted. The Istrian section of the Indipendist movement consequently accused the Italian administration of political pragmatism (since most Istrian refugees were Christian Democrat voters) and of having amassed 50,000 Istrians in the city, thereby aggravating unemployment and housing problems. (*Trieste Sera*, 22 May 1958) With regard to these factors Novak (1973:440) notes:

*A Trieste la situazione economica era critica. Ci fu un incremento nella disoccupazione e molte persone furono costrette a partire per l' Australia.*²³

As a result of these events, hostility between the Triestines and the Istrians also grew as many members of the Triestine working class saw the arrival of these new members of the Triestine community as a threat to their livelihood. It was clear that the city, once faced with political uncertainty, was left to contend with economic precariousness: the Allied administration had provided a prolonged period of economic well being for the city. Even reassurances made by the Italian Government with regard to employment opportunities for former employees of the AMG (a proposed act of parliament was to provide continuity of employment for AMG employees who were Italian citizens) had not proved effective in dissipating the feelings of precariousness that prevailed in the community. Many former AMG employees thus preferred to accept redundancy packages from the Italian Government. Compensation payments of up to one month's salary for every year of service (*Il 1954 a Trieste e nel Mondo: undicesima puntata*) proved enticing for many, who, having become disillusioned with political polemics, decided to leave a city plagued with uncertainty.

For the Triestines the response to the psychological and economic tensions experienced in these years had clearly been migration. Amongst the emigrants consequently, were many former employees of the Allied

²³ In Trieste the economic situation was critical. There had been an increase in unemployment and many people had been forced to leave for Australia.

Administration, notably members of the Civil Police Corps who had had to cope not only with economic uncertainty but also with a political reality that had labelled them as traitors. Such sense of demoralisation, nonetheless, was felt amongst all members of Triestine society. Present amongst the emigrants were also members of other occupational sectors of the community--such as technicians and tradesmen (*La Bora*, April 1978: 5-6)--many of whom had stable employment. (*Il Piccolo*, 11 August 1955: 1) For most Triestines this was the first experience of mass migration and the sense of anguish that prevailed in the city was effectively conveyed by the bitter words of a poster affixed to the *Toscana*, a passenger ship carrying Triestine immigrants to Australia, which read:

*La mamma e' tornata, i figli partono*²⁴

478/601 **LLOYD TRIESTINO** 579
STABILIMENTO DI LINEE DI NAVIGAZIONE - SEDE IN TRIESTE
 Capitale Sociale Lit. 200.000.000 - Riserva Legale Lit. 100.000.000

SERIE 130 DATA 19/05/55 0144

BIGLIETTO D'IMBARCO DI TERZA CLASSE

Nella nave di bandiera Italiana **TOSCANELLO** PER LA DESTINAZIONE **PARIGI**
 in partenza da **TRIESTE** il giorno **19/05**

Trasporto 1 posto di classe di terza. Consegna: **Trasmissione, imbarco, sbarco e ritorno**

DURATA DEL VIAGGIO GIORNI 11 e comprese le fermate nei porti di scalo.
 La durata del viaggio sarà abbreviata in un giorno per ogni volta che sarà richiesto dal nostro direttore.

COGNOME e NOME	CLASSE		TARIFFA e AZIONI					TOTALE
	ANZI	NOV	1	2	3	4	5	
1. CECCOPI Angelo	1		1					1
2. CECCOPI Anna	1		1					1
3. _____								
4. _____								
5. _____								
6. _____								
TOTALE			2					2

Da **TRI** a **PARIGI** a **PARIGI** a **TRI** **710,-**

Imbarco e sbarco _____

Tassa di imbarco _____

Quota d'assicurazione e di porto **Lit. 2.000,-**

TOTALE Lit. 710,-

Importo pagato _____

Salvo la restituzione in caso di incidente _____

Accompagnatore: **IGNAZZINI**

Stampa circolare con firma e data 19/05/55

²⁴ 'The Mother has returned, the children leave.' (Pacor 1964: 361)

Ticket for two on Lloyd Triestino ship *Toscanelli*, September 1955

These were bitter words, depicting Italy as an 'undeserving mother' and highlighting the culmination of a long period of frustration and instability for the people of Trieste. Nonetheless, these sentiments were certainly not those voiced by the Triestine press, where the phenomenon was seen in light of the influx of Istrian refugees into the city:

...Il nostro territorio e' oggi uno dei piu' densamente popolati d'Italia; e il fatto che in questi dieci anni abbia accolto circa 40 mila profughi dai territori istriani, e' una delle ragioni che spiegano il 'fenomeno' dell'emigrazione.

This completely ignored the emotional intensity that was associated with the social reality of this period and with the emigration process itself.

Indeed, the emigrants were in fact described as having

*Scelto volontariamente il proprio destino... molti di essi hanno lasciato un lavoro, un'occupazione. Bastava osservare l'entita' dei baggagli e il numero di moto mezzi che venivano caricati a bordo...*²⁵

Since the phenomenon of migration could not be seen to possess a purely economic motive, it was analysed as an individual matter rather than one fuelled by a complex social reality; in this context it became a phenomenon that did not warrant further investigation by the newspaper journalists.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS OF 1954

The years referred to as the 'emigration years' undoubtedly constituted a period of turmoil, both political and economical:

After the war ended I went to work for the English. I worked in the storerooms and later as a driver. Then the Italian administration returned and the English left, I left my job because I thought that

²⁵ 'Our territory is today one of the most densely populated territories in Italy; and the fact that in the last ten years it has opened its doors to approximately 40 thousand Istrian refugees provides one explanation for the phenomenon of emigration.' (*Il Piccolo*, 28 July 1955: 4)
'...voluntarily chosen their own destiny..., many leaving behind employment [and] an occupation. All that needed to be observed was the amount of baggage, and the number of motor vehicles that were being loaded onto the ship... (*Il Piccolo*, 11 August 1955)

there would be nothing there for me... I had some bad moments being unemployed, but generally I got work doing a bit of this and the other... I had a wife and a young daughter and we were living with my brother and his wife--it was not an ideal situation. There was a shortage of housing and you just couldn't find an apartment--that was the main reason why I left ..., but at the time in Trieste there was this feeling that there was no future. There were also a lot of battles, a lot of 'manifestations' [demonstrations]. I never got involved in politics, I felt Italian, that yes, but I also felt very disillusioned. At times I had a few arguments myself, but nothing much. I didn't care to collaborate with any side because I was sick and tired and I really didn't care any more. But there were people, even between friends..., there were always heated arguments. I was just tired, and when they opened up immigration for Australia my wife and I thought about it and we decided to take the plunge.

and

You just couldn't find an apartment, we were newly weds and well..., with all the Istrians, all the refugees, you can't blame them personally, they were escaping... But the Government..., they were given preference for public housing and even for jobs..., they needed them of course... It was political expediency really--I mean it was the beginning of the Cold War and Trieste was on the border with a Communist nation... With the Istrians they could be sure that they would vote anti-Communist and... in the end we left.



Triestini on ship coming to Australia, c.1955

While it is a period remembered by most Triestine immigrants as a time of 'political passion' when 'heated political arguments could be heard everywhere', it was essentially those immigrants who had been members of the Venezia Giulia Police Corps (VGPF), and their families, who reflected upon this period as a time when they had been made to feel like traitors for having been employed by the Allied government:

I was working as a saleswoman and one woman I worked with had different political views and we would argue because she was nationalistic and I was pro-Indipendist... My husband was a *cerino* [policeman] in the Venezia Giulia Police Corps, and this one time she called my husband a traitor, saying that she would spit on people like him. It was very insulting and I remember ... we began to pull each other's hair, there in the shop where we worked. The owner of the shop had to separate us...

and

Many criticised and spoke in bad terms of those who had worked for the Allies. They told us we had served a foreign nation and treated us like traitors, but in this period in history this 'foreign nation' had helped not only Trieste but the whole of Italy. As we were leaving, on the bow of the ship we raised the Triestine flag...

While throughout the post-World War II period this sense of hostility, experienced on a personal level, had been a reflection of differing ideologies, with the return of the Italian administration in 1954, hostility was also experienced at an institutional level; and it was then, it has been noted by one interviewee, that many Triestines '... had been made to feel like strangers in their own country'. It is these sentiments that are exemplified in the following reflections:

When Italy took over everything changed. Of course they brought their own people and when they came they didn't tell us, 'Don't panic, don't worry, you will keep your job'. When they came they took over and left us in doubt. They left us wondering ... Of course they couldn't have two police forces ...! And we were not being told not to panic. I was working in the office and the messages coming through were that they could not guarantee a future for us--there was this sense that they were encouraging us to leave. Those who were smart stayed, some of us instead were

frightened. The smarter ones who stayed behind kept their jobs, they all were placed into good government jobs, but they had created a sense of panic...

I have many books on the history of Trieste and what happened during this period, but I can tell you that it is difficult to describe how we were made to *feel*. On this day in 1955 there was a celebration at the Lanterna, I had been part of the Fiscal Section of the Venezia Giulia Police Force and they got together our old platoon of the former VGPF and made us go along. We were in the courtyard with the rest of the Italian *Guardie di Finanza* [the Italian fiscal police]--they had the stars attached to their uniform, and we didn't. An Italian General had come from Gorizia; they had a podium up the front, and all these authorities were around the podium and the General was standing on the podium. At one point the General got down from the podium and proceeded to walk among the troops saluting them. He did this with all the *Guardie di Finanza*--the one with the stars that were the 'Italian *Guardie di Finanza*'. We were lined up at the very end of this courtyard and when he reached us, when he reached the VGPF platoon, he just turned his back without passing in front of us, without passing our platoon. This is the sacrosanct truth. Of course we were very disappointed, we felt humiliated.

Then this young man, this friend of mine, Stelio ..., who was a Sergeant in the fiscal section of the Police Corps with me, he started mumbling, 'What is this? What do they want, these sons of bitches?' And we were right at the back, at the very entrance of the courtyard, and the podium was at the very front, and then suddenly this Stelio broke the ranks and walked out into the courtyard, marching in the English manner, in the way we had been taught--marching in a very resolute way. And we all asked ourselves, 'What is this person doing?' And he walked straight up to the General, he saluted in the English manner, and then he said 'General Sir, in the name of all the former members of the Venezia Giulia Police Force, I ask you the reason as to why you did not deign to pass in front of us? Excuse me, Sir, but who do you think we are, sons of bitches?' And then he turned and walked back to his place. So even here you can witness the sense of discrimination experienced. Then the Chief Inspector of the *Guardie di Finanza*, he had also been part of the Allied Military Government, when everything was over he called Stelio into his office and said, 'You are crazy, I will fire you', and so on. And Stelio told him, 'What do

you think you can do now?’ He was leaving for Australia the following week.

As a matter of principle it was an act of discrimination and this influenced the way we felt at the time. We Triestine immigrants came from a situation that was very, very complex. If you meet a Triestine who doesn’t want to know about Italy, and there were probably a lot back in the 1950s and 1960s--not so much now because there has been a sense of reconciliation--but if you hear a Triestine talk this way, you have to understand them, the situation they were confronted with in that period. I never say these things any more because I don’t want any arguments.

and

It was Sunday, 27 November, 1955. We were supposed to leave from the *Stazione Marittima*. It was the *festa dell’emigrante* [migrant day] and on that Sunday in the Port of Trieste there were American ships that had come especially for the day. At the same time there were thousands and thousands of people there wanting to see the *Toscana* off; the ship was leaving for Australia on that same day. They were frightened that there could be demonstrations and protests, and so what did they do? They made us leave from *Scalo Legnami* in the port of Trieste. Now this was a customs area and the general public was not allowed access, so no one could enter, no one could come and see the ship off or say good-bye to friends and relatives. This was a terrible act on the part of the Italian authorities; heavens above, we were leaving, the people on the wharf were waiting to say their good-byes and they put the ship in another area. The Italian customs did not want to let anyone in, but of course what happened was like a revolt anyway, because people pushed the gates open and forced their way through... It was very insensitive, a bad gesture on the part of the Italian authorities towards Triestine emigrants and their families..

Clearly for most Triestines the decision to leave Trieste thus appears to be the result of a complex set of circumstances which included ideological as well as economic factors--mainly in terms of the sense of precariousness experienced in relation to employment and housing. Rather than pinpoint specific reasons for migration, however, many Triestines remembered this period, and the events that led to the ‘emigration years’, as a time of ‘emigration psychosis’ and ‘emigration fever’. Such phrases have been used frequently by Triestine immigrants

to articulate succinctly their reasons for deciding to embark on a new life in Australia, and, in this context, the use of such metaphors in the process of remembering evokes a clear understanding of the experience of migration for Triestine immigrants and Triestine society in general. For the Triestines, migration was thus an 'aberration', a 'diseased state' which had affected Trieste's populace for a period of time, and which led to a contagious and almost undefinable desire to escape. During this period Australia became the major country of migration for Triestines, as most interviewees noted 'everyone was talking about Australia then', it had for a time become 'the flavour of the month'.

AUSTRALIA AND THE IMMIGRATION PROGRAM

With no links to Italian migratory chains around the world, the Triestines were also facilitated in the migration process by the events unfolding in Australia at the time. During this same period, as noted, one of the major objectives of Australia's economic policies--economic growth--had led to an unprecedented volume of demand for labour which had been exacerbated by a declining rate of growth in the labour force caused by low birth rates in the 1930s. Moreover, the war had also led to a deficit in the number of apprentices and hence to the number of skilled workers in Australia after the war (Salter 1978: 35). This demand for labour was met through an immigration program that incorporated a host of migration agreements and schemes, and essentially the 1948 agreement with the International refugee Organisation (IRO) was followed in March 1951 with the signing of an 'Assisted Passage scheme' between Australia and Italy. Under such a scheme the selection of workers to be recruited was made by the Commonwealth Government on the basis of information and requests supplied by the then Department of Labour and National Service and the agreement stipulated that immigrants were to remain in employment approved by the Commonwealth Government for a period of two years (Salter 1978: 25-26).

During this period, the outbreak of the Korean War had resulted in a shift from the need for manpower for economic development to the need to provide labour for industries considered vital to defence, particularly food production in the rural sector; and in 1951 instructions were issued to selection officers in Europe to concentrate on rural workers when selecting immigrants under the migration agreements. Many rural and unskilled workers were recruited from Italy during this

period (Salter 1978: 45). However, with the reversal of the buoyant economic conditions--conditions that had been the direct result of rising demand and export prices for Australian metals and wool during the Korean War--many Italian immigrants were left without any designated employment (culminating in the riot in the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre in 1952). For the first time since the 1930s recession, Australia had experienced unemployment: the Government responded by cutting both assisted and unassisted migration in 1953. Although the recession, which was over quickly, had affected the employment prospects of some categories of immigrants, there remained nonetheless a shortage of skilled workers. In 1954 the assisted passage agreement between Australia and Italy was reinstated and skilled workers sought. Recruitment of skilled workers was thus taking place at a time when Trieste was still recovering from the turmoil of the post war years and the uncertainty, and in some instances the animosity, fostered by the return of an Italian administration, had led the Triestines to consider migration.

In 1952, moreover, Australia had become a founder member of the successor to the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, (ICEM--otherwise known as CIME in Italy), which oversaw the movement of emigrants. Australian migration officials worked through ICEM and, while the chief migration officer was placed in Rome, sub offices with immigration staff attached were also found in the Italian cities of Messina, Naples, Milan, Genoa and Trieste. The Trieste office of ICEM was well placed near the city's largest barracks of the Venezia Giulia Police Corps (VGPF) and the main focus of this office, called *Casa dell'emigrante* (House of the emigrant), was the recruitment of immigrants for Australia. The presence of the ICEM office in the city and the propaganda distributed during this period undoubtedly played at least a minor role in influencing and facilitating the migratory phenomenon in Trieste, as did the 'discriminatory' mind-set of Australian selection officers, who most likely viewed the urban Triestine as a more 'assimilable' type of settler.

In Australia the large-scale immigration policy begun after World War II had in fact been accompanied by the institutionalised ideology of 'assimilation'--which referred to the process of 'social absorption' of migrants. This policy, which reflected the Australian Government's desire to maintain the homogeneity of Australian culture, affected the selection of Southern European migrants, and, with regard to Italian migration in particular, northern Italians were seen, at the time, as being of a more suitable type of migrant since they were seen as being more

‘assimilable’:

...It would be our advantage to select the best offering and not just accept those who are fortunate enough to have relatives abroad... In our selection policy we would place main emphasis upon the recruitment of Northern Italians of suitable type. (Minute, Heyes to Holt, 16 August 1950, p.7; AA (ACT) A445/1, 194/2/3, quoted in Jordens 1993)

Such a ‘discriminatory’ mindset against Southern Europeans and Italians from the southern regions of Italy was also recalled by a former functionary of the Department of Immigration, Keith Stodden:

...there was a marked preference for northerners and the rationale was that there were so many Southern Italians and Greeks coming at their own expense that we needed to counter balance this voluntary flow by selecting better skilled, better educated, more northern... tall and fair-looking people who came from regions in the north of Italy. In this period ‘Assisted Passage’ promotion tended to be carried out more in the industrialised north than in the rural and agricultural south.²⁶

This mindset was also immortalised by Philip Jones in his novel *La Bora* (1961), which is set in Trieste during the ‘emigration years’. In his novel, Philip Jones, who had worked as a Selection Officer in Trieste in 1955 illustrates how Selection Officers reflected the culture of the society of which they were part, particularly when it came to interpreting the Immigration Department’s criteria for migrant selection:

It's better up here. The northern Italian is ten cuts above the bloke from the south. He's better fed, better educated. He can get work and that helps him to maintain his essential dignity. He's taller, and he's not so--er--sunburnt. (Jones 1961: 59)

In such a discriminatory climate, as Keith Stodden further explained, ‘...Selection Officers were favourably impressed with the better-educated, more skilled, prospective Triestine immigrants’.²⁷ The selection of prospective immigrants was nonetheless, a stringent procedure. Immigrants required a clean bill of health and, in a Cold War climate, Interviewing and Selection Officers were required to reject those prospective immigrants who were deemed to have political tendencies

²⁶ Keith Stodden, interviewed by Adriana Nelli, Melbourne, 24 November 1994.

²⁷ Keith Stodden, interviewed by Adriana Nelli, Melbourne, 24 November 1994.

that gravitated towards Communist ideologies. As Cresciani (1996) notes, 'the information gathered...was then exchanged with the General Command of the *Carabinieri* in Rome and also transmitted to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation...and these procedures explain the reason why many Triestines were rejected without any explanation.'²⁸

Influenced by this complex series of events and circumstances, many Triestines decided to emigrate to Australia. As previously noted, a large number of these immigrants were former employees of the Anglo-American Administration, particularly former members of the Venezia Giulia Police Corps who were now disenchanted, discouraged and even bitter. A few had gained some knowledge of the English language, while most had become familiar with Anglo-Saxon culture, ways and work practices, and such familiarity provided an unconscious (at times even conscious) affinity towards Australia, as some interviewees explained:

I had worked for the Americans and respected how they worked. Italy represented chaos, there was no respect for rules. Once when I stopped this fellow to give him a fine he looked at me, and in an arrogant way he said, '*lei non sa chi sono io*'--'You don't know who I am'. This made me angry. But Anglo-Saxon culture was serious, it was ordered, there was respect, and I liked that...

...I had a desire for change... I had always been attracted to the Anglo-Saxon mentality, it was 'cleaner' than the Italian one..., and immigration was being promoted, so... I came...

During this period, hence, the Triestines emigrated to Australia en masse. As assisted passage immigrants, many former employees of the Anglo-American administration, as well as a significant number with trade and other qualifications, left Trieste--mainly as complete nuclear family groups.²⁹ The decision to emigrate was made not only by the male 'breadwinner', but also by the wife, or by both partners:

²⁸ With regard to selection criteria based on the health and the political tendencies of the applicants, one interviewee recalled that she had initially been rejected on the grounds that her chest X-rays had revealed an anomaly. Having had chest X-rays only months earlier that had not revealed the presence of disease, she appealed the decision, and some time later her application was accepted. She concluded, after having witnessed other similar stories, that her X-rays had probably been 'swapped'. Interestingly, another interviewee recalled that her son, who had been politically active in the Trieste's independent movement, had not been rejected, although as a child he had suffered from a form of lung disease. In this context, archival research of migrant selection documents and medical examination forms could reveal further information.

²⁹ 'Assisted passage' immigrants were eligible to immigrate as complete family units.

...We talked about it, discussed it and decided together...

and

My husband was the one who really didn't want to come to Australia, I was the one who pushed for it, because after the war it wasn't easy to find apartments... We were living with my parents and I wanted a home of my own...

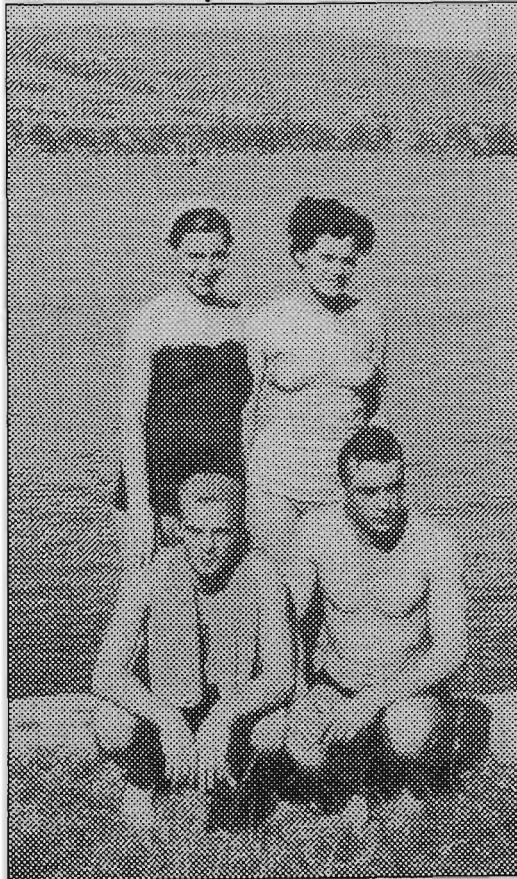
Although it had been a decision often made with a degree of bitterness, it had not, nonetheless, been a decision accompanied by symbolic gestures of 'breaking away', of severing from a difficult past and starting a new existence in a new land. Symbolically, the act of migration had represented the 'breaking away' from the Italian State rather than from Trieste. It was not poverty that the Triestines were escaping, and indeed rather than leave behind items that continued to bind them to the past and to their city, many Triestines prepared for the voyage and their new life by purchasing goods such as cameras, movie cameras and various items of clothing. These consumer goods not only represented the urban outlook of Triestine immigrants, but symbolically they were items that represented a continued attachment to their past and their city. Such an image of the Triestine immigrant was incongruent with the stereotypical image often used to portray the Italian immigrant of this epoch--a sad figure with a suitcase tied with rope--but importantly it also highlighted that the Triestine expectation of the migrant experience was incongruent with the reality that in most cases awaited them.

Coming from a port city that had never before experienced mass migration, the notion of boarding an ocean liner to travel to the other side of the world, had held for some immigrants its own fascination--the immigrant 'journey' was even envisaged by these individuals as a journey of discovery and adventure:

...our [the Triestines] immigration to this country was not only for political or economic motives, it was also an adventure. We talked to friends and discussed with them where we would go, we were curious what it would be like down here. The trip was an adventure. First we stopped at Port Said and then Colombo and then we began thinking, 'Where are we going to end up?' At the end of the earth?'. We didn't know what to expect, it was an adventure, you see.

Although Australia had been looking for permanent settlers in selecting migrants, Triestine immigrants had not envisaged their departure from Trieste as permanent and their two year commitment to Australia was only to be an interlude. Just like the tourist who sets out to explore new horizons, they had eventually expected to return, although in reality few did:

Weeks before my departure I talked about wanting to buy a camera and my brother made fun of me, saying, 'Where do you think you are going, on a cruise?' Maybe I did feel like a tourist... I was sad about leaving my family, yes, but I felt excited..., and I had it in my mind that it was only going to be for two years and that then we would go back. Going to Australia was going to be an adventure... There would be work for us, we would work, but then we would return to our city. I had always had this vision of myself as a traveller, even when I was younger I had wanted to go and work on board a ship..., but then on the day we left I felt a sense of desperation--everyone crying...--then my brother came up to me to kiss me good-bye and he put a new camera around my neck. It was his going away present..., and I thought, 'Why am I doing this?' But we, like all the Triestines, were caught up in the events of the city, and we were moved by the force of inertia...



Pregnant Yolanda Grison with hand on husband' s shoulders and friends,
Trieste, 1951

These accounts encapsulate the paradox of this and many other departures by Triestine emigrants. The seemingly prevailing sense of excitement and euphoria that accompanied the idea of the journey became intertwined not only with the sadness and grief individuals experienced as they left behind their loved ones and their city, but also with a complete sense of betrayal and tragedy experienced by Triestine society as a whole. Emigration as a solution to the ills of a region which was being integrated into the Italian State was not well accepted by Triestine society. The 'emigration years' had constituted a dramatic period in the history of Trieste, and both the embarkation and sailings from the *Stazione Marittima* (the port of Trieste), and the departures from the train station where immigrants left to travel to other ports of embarkation,³⁰ have been well documented photographically to illustrate this point.³¹ The moving scenes of these departures and the general sense of loss experienced is also described by the Australian writer Philip Jones in his novel *La Bora*: 'An accordion broke into the swinging tune of "Trieste mia",³² and the crowd began to sing.' (Jones 1961: 175), as well as by various Triestine writers at the time:

...Tutto il cuore della città era là, ... in quegli addii: tutto il temperamento del popolo triestino si esprimeva in quelle manifestazioni del popolo che sa essere spiritoso anche tra le lacrime, vivace nella disgrazia. (Stuparich 1955)³³

and

...Qui non si è mai visto qualcosa di simile. Abbiamo la sensazione di una catastrofe e la Castelveide, così bianca, appare come un sepolcro che inghiotte la nostra gente... Quelli della Castelveide con gesti, fischi, urli, fazzoletti, lampadine tascabili lanciano segnali, saluti, messaggi...niente allegria. Pare una partenza per la guerra, per un viaggio verso l'ignoto e senza ritorno... Trieste va in Australia. Chi poteva immaginarlo? (Vidali 1982: 68-69)³⁴

³⁰ Other ports of embarkation were Genoa and Naples. However, for Triestine immigrants the major port of embarkation remained Trieste and sometimes Genoa.

³¹ The *Archivio Storico Foto Omnia* in Trieste contains numerous moving photographs of the departure of Triestines from their city.

³² The song *Trieste Mia* is a Triestine song, in dialect, which talks of the nostalgia of being far from the much loved city.

³³ '...The heart of the city was present, ... in those farewells: the temperament of the Triestine people expressed itself in those manifestations of a people that know how to maintain a sense of humour amidst the tears, a sense of vivaciousness in the face of tragedy.' (Gianni Stuparich, 'Trieste emigra' in *Il Lavoratore*, 1 August 1955)

³⁴ 'Nothing like this has ever been seen here. We have the sensation of a catastrophe and the Castelveide, so white, appears like a sepulchre that swallows our people... Those on the Castelveide.

These descriptions not only reflect the impact of the act of migration to Triestine society, but also its relevance to the identity-making process itself. The reference made to 'our people' provides an image of a circumscribed and cohesive identity that immediately distinguished Triestine immigrants in terms of 'temperament' as well as their motivation for migration. The fact that migration was a completely 'new' as well as a 'tragic' experience for the city, further acted to mobilise, on an emotional level, a sense of Triestine identity that had in the past been moulded by other historical and political forces. Indeed, Triestine immigrants came to Australia with a clear and strong sense of this identity, as a popular Triestine song of the period highlights:

*Domani se imbarchemo
partimo per L'Australia
...Triestini fe' fagato
che 'l batelo xe in partenza
Trieste resta senza
de un vero Triestin.*(Noliani 1975)³⁵

For the city of Trieste the 'tragedy' of mass migration was hence seen to be the loss of the 'genuine Triestine', and subsequently an inherent part of the historical narrative of emigration from the city became the circumscribed definition of this group that set them apart as a collectivity. Political and historical forces had thus led to the renegotiation of a Triestine identity that had now become 'mythically' and inexorably tied to the migration process.

In the final analysis, Triestine migration to Australia can generally be understood as the outcome of the culmination of the tension experienced throughout this period. This migratory flow had clearly not arisen from ingrained conditions of poverty, but more so from an immediate need for both economical and political security after years of precariousness, which had led to an overall sense of psychological disillusionment that had rapidly penetrated all sectors of Triestine society.

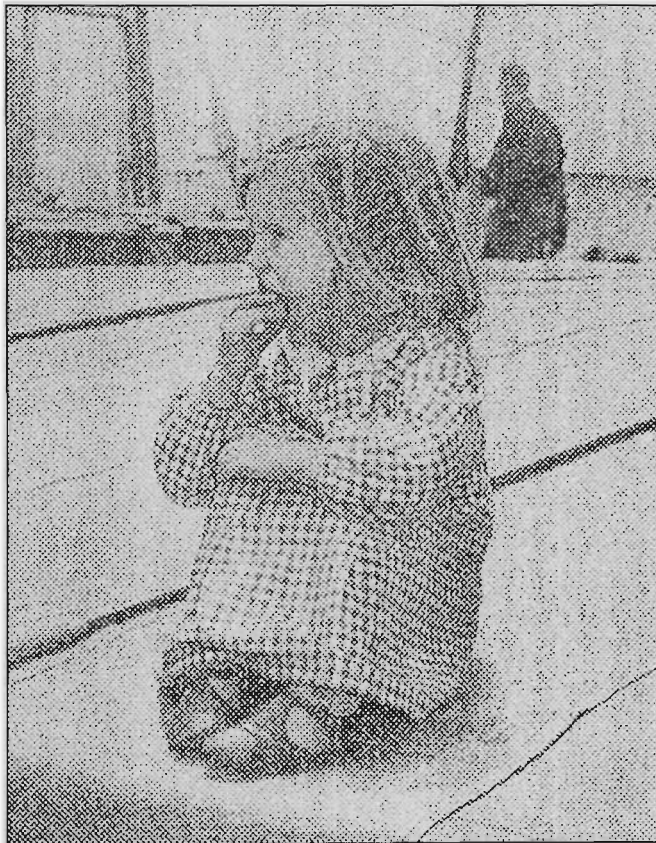
with gestures, whistles, screams, handkerchiefs, flashlights, send signals and messages... There is no joy. It seems like a departure for the war, for a trip towards the unknown from which there will be no return... Trieste goes to Australia. Who could ever have imagined it?

³⁵ 'Tomorrow we will board the ship/ We are leaving for Australia/ ...Triestines, pack your bags that the ship is leaving/ Trieste will remain without a genuine Triestine.'

Although for the Triestines political commitment had generally not been a priority, and those who had been politically active in the city had only numbered five to seven per cent of the population (Apih 1988: 173), more subtle, underlying political motives should however, not be ignored--as the Triestine historian, Apih (1988: 186) observes:

*...la reazione piu' drammatica fu l'emigrazione, ...piu' della meta' di costoro avevano un'occupazione, per cui il fatto ha anche un risvolto politico.*³⁶

Although not the sole determining factor of Triestine migration, political disillusionment was undoubtedly part of an overall feeling of alienation and psychological apathy that had engulfed the Triestine psyche during this period. This reality not only witnessed the emigration of Triestines, but most importantly endowed them with an already well-defined sense of collective Triestine identity.



'What Does The Future Hold?' for 4-year-old Fulvia Fortuna, asked *The Age* on its front cover for Friday, 6 January 1956.

QUANTIFICATION OF THE EMIGRATION PHENOMENON

³⁶ '...the most dramatic reaction was emigration, ...more than half [of those who emigrated] had an occupation, therefore there was also a political motivation.'

It is difficult to measure exactly the actual numbers of immigrants flowing to Australia from what had been the Venezia Giulia region. The best we can do is use external measures as a means of approximating the number.

With regard to the first flow, which comprised the Istrians, no official statistics are available, since the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) recruited migrants without the need for official documentation. It is, however, the second flow of migration from the area with which this research is concerned. For the early period of this second migratory flow—which essentially comprised *triestini*—no ‘complete’ set of official statistics appear to be available, since an Italian Registry Office was not instituted in the city of Trieste until December 1954.

This surprising lack of statistical information was commented upon at the time: ‘*Sul numero dei triestini che hanno lasciato la città... si sono date molte versioni, con cifre contrastanti e spesso inaccettabili...*’³⁷ (*Il Piccolo*, 28 July 1955: 4) The same newspaper, however, commented a week later, presumably after an investigation, that there was indeed an approximate figure available for public circulation: ‘*Si raggiungerà così circa 8 mila persone partite per l’australia...*’³⁸ These eight thousand Triestine emigrants supposedly left the city of Trieste in the period between 1954 and August 1955. According to a local bulletin, *L’Andamento Economico del Territorio di Trieste nel 1956*, the number of Triestine workers and their families who emigrated to Australia in 1955 totalled 5,203, while for 1956 the figure was 1,939—a total for this two year period of 7,142. With reference to Triestine migration to Australia up until 1956, Pacor (1964) further notes that ‘*nel 1956 il numero degli emigranti salì a 12,126...*’³⁹ Different sources seem to reveal different figures, all by and large approximations.

The figures available for the Province of Trieste, which refer only to the years 1955 and onward, do however show that the mass of the overall migratory flow from Trieste to Australia occurred within a period of three to four years. During this period—1955 to 1958—according to

³⁷ ‘On the numbers of Triestines that have left the city..., we have been given many versions, all [revealing] contrasting and often unacceptable figures...’

³⁸ ‘We have now got to the figure of approximately eight thousand people who have left for Australia...’ (*Il Piccolo*, 6 August 1955: 4)

³⁹ ‘In 1956 the number of emigrants had risen to 12,126...’ (Pacor 1964: 360-361)

such 'official statistics', 7,734 people migrated to Australia (see Table 1). A statistical study of Julian migration by Donato and Nodari (1996: 72) similarly reveals that between 1955 and 1965, 21,893 individuals left the Julian area, and of these, 9,808 (almost 45 per cent of the total) emigrated to Australia.⁴⁰ Although as official statistics these figures are perhaps the most reliable, variations to these figures are however possible, as in many instances 'cancellations' were not always reported, or at least not always reported immediately, to local authorities.

Fig.1 Australian migration to and from the Province of Trieste, 1955 to 1977
(Source: ISTAT (Istituto Centrale di Statistica); Note *Data relative only to the Municipality of Trieste)

YEAR	ENROLLED	CANCELLED	NETT
1955	1	3262	-3261
1956	2	3061	-3059
1957	156	998	- 842
1958	311	419	- 108
1959	228	130	+ 98
1960	163	81	+ 82
1961	180	81	+ 99
1962	241	51	+190
1963	236	287	- 51
1964	372	47	+325
1965	188	378	- 190
1966	204	171	+ 33
1967	161	159	+ 2
1968	191	132	+ 59
1969	166	133	+ 33
1970	188*	143*	+ 45*
1971	177	81	+ 96
1972	302	154	+148
1973	243	131	+112
1974	116	75	+ 41
1975	84	75	+ 9
1976	85	45	+ 40
1977	75	49	+ 26

⁴⁰ Donato and Nodari (1996) note that the remainder emigrated to Canada and the United States (27.5 per cent), Europe (approximately 17 per cent--mainly to Germany and Switzerland) and Latin America (7.16 per cent)

On the 'Australian side' few statistics specifically relating to the Triestines are available. Marchesi (1988) notes that figures on immigrants from Trieste arriving in Australia 'are only available for a limited category of assisted migrants between 1953-54 and 1956-57' and states that during these two years 'some 5,244 people arrived in Australia from Trieste'. In terms of 'migrant selection' documents available, it appears that the majority of the records pertaining to 'Non-British' European migration between 1951-1965, held by the Australian Archives, have been listed at 'item level' rather than arranged by ship name and date of arrival, and this makes tracing the migratory movement of the group more problematic.

The availability of more precise figures for 1954 is, however, tied to the fact that in 1954 the recruitment of immigrants in Trieste took place exclusively through the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), and subsequently under the auspices of the agreement made between the Australian and Italian governments. The recruitment through ICEM in Trieste was known as the '2750 Project' and consisted in the selection of 2,750 assisted passage migrants from Venezia Giulia (most likely Triestines) holding Italian passports.⁴¹ By the beginning of 1955, with the return of Trieste to Italy, this scheme had come to an end, and the figures for Italian migrants from the Venezia Giulia area were absorbed into the general statistics for Italian assisted passage migrants.

Such sources allow nonetheless, for an estimated figure of Triestine emigrants (in the period between 1953 and 1960) in the range of approximately 10,000-12,000. This estimation is not wildly incongruent with the 'official' numbers suggested by a former Australian President of Julian Associations, who stated that, by 1964, a total of 13,240 Triestine migrants had come to Australia through the port of Trieste alone (some Triestine immigrants had departed from Italy from other ports such as that of Genoa).

The ships that carried Triestine emigrant passengers to Australia were essentially the *Toscana*, *Toscanelli*, *Castelverde*, *Aurelia*, *Flaminia* and *Fairsea*. These ships departed directly from the port of Trieste, while

⁴¹ Details of the project together with shipping lists, including 'Trieste Movement Lists 1954-55' were provided by former Immigration official, Keith Stodden, interviewed by the author on the 24/11/94. The 'shipping lists' were also copied by the Italian Australian Records Project (IARP) at Victoria University and are available on microfilm..

the *Australia* and *Oceania* departed from the port of Genoa and the *Castelfelice* from the port of Naples.⁴² From the shipping records available in Trieste, it was possible for the Trieste section of ANEA to approximate the number of Triestines who boarded these ships; and from such sources it has been estimated that approximately 20,000 migrants from Trieste and the adjoining Shire of Gorizia left for Australia between 1954 and 1960.⁴³ A further attempt to quantify the migratory phenomenon from the Venezia Giulia area has also been made by Fait (1999), who provides a detailed analysis of the 'ship nominal rolls' uncovered in the State archives in Trieste. Based on this source, which lists 'approved assisted passage' migrants between 1954 and 1961, Fait (1999) arrives at a figure of 9,614, of whom 67.54 per cent were stated as born in Trieste. Not all Triestines, however, came as assisted passage migrants, and Fait (1999) through a complex series of calculations subsequently arrives at a tentative total figure of approximately 22,000 individuals who migrated to Australia from the Julian territory as a whole. Considering that in 1954 the population in Trieste numbered 270,919, these figures represent a migration rate in the vicinity of approximately 4.8 per cent of the total Triestine population.⁴⁴ Moreover, the concentrated 'mass exodus' of Triestines in the brief period of only a few years meant that in 1955 Triestine migration represented '*...una proporzione di circa 5 % sull' emigrazione italiana dal 1946 in poi*'⁴⁵ (*Il Piccolo*, 6 August 1955: 4) and 13.4 per cent of general Italian migration to Australia in the two year period between 1955 and 1956.⁴⁶

These figures, subsequently, can be reconstructed within our broad understanding that Triestine emigration defied the conventional models of Italian emigration. In the traditional literature on Italian migration, there is a pronounced seasonality in the figures, with peak flows around December of each year after the main crop is harvested. This is not a factor in Triestine emigration. Cresciani refers bitterly to the Triestine

⁴² A very small number of Venezia Giulia migrants also arrived via air, while 44 former members of the Venezia Giulia Police Force boarded the *Straithaird* bound for Australia via the UK. (Stodden-*Trieste Movement Lists 1954 -1955*). These forty - four migrants had been part of the notorious Venezia Giulia Police Force's *Nucleo Mobile* - Mobile squad, who had presumably fled the city. At the time their migration files were deemed to be 'secret'. Three of these migrants stopped at Fremantle in Western Australia, the remaining went to the Bonegilla reception centre.

⁴³ This figure is based on an analysis carried out by A.N.E.A. (Associazione Nazionale Emigrati Australia) in 1988 on the occasion of a photographic exhibition titled 'Trieste Remembers Australia' held in Trieste from 15 to 23 October 1988.

⁴⁴ Based on an approximate figure of a total of 13,000 Triestine emigrants

⁴⁵ '...a proportion of approximately 5 per cent of all Italian migration from 1946 onwards [1946-1955].'

⁴⁶ This percentage is based on the figures of the 'Movement of Italian citizens to and from Australia' for 1955 and 1956 as provided by Bertelli in C.I.R.C. Papers No. 24, 'Italo-Australians: Some facts and Figures' and on the figure of 7,142 Triestine migrants for the same two year period.

emigration as ‘lemming-like’. There is no doubt that it differed from the other flows. In a rural context, say, such as Treviso, the pattern was quite different. A village would send a number of sons out to the foreign destination in one December, and then subsequent flows would occur in successive years, depending on the availability of jobs in the *paese*. If longer-term emigration to the overseas destination was thought to be warranted, women and children would follow the men, often up to seven years later. In every respect, the Triestine story was different. Although the intensity of Triestine migration allows it to be classified as ‘a mass movement’, the brief duration of the flow which included a significant number of assisted passage migrants makes it a somewhat atypical form of ‘chain migration’, one that did not generally provide a continuous or prolonged flow of migrants or successive waves of arrivals.

The first ship to depart from the city taking with it Triestine immigrants to Australia in ‘mass proportions’ was the *Castelverde*. At exactly 9.10 p.m. on 15 March 1954, laden with passengers, most of whom were Triestines, the *Castelverde* departed for its sea voyage of 25 days before reaching the shores of Australia. Those *triestini* on board the ship, and those that were to follow, represented, as one respondent stated, ‘the cream of our [Triestine] youth’. Many of those emigrating had secure employment and were in fact qualified tradespersons.

*Hanno lasciato Trieste 1422 lavoratori... 696 in possesso di una specializzazione...[e] ...964 avevano un' occupazione stabile.*⁴⁷ (*Il Piccolo*, 6 August 1955: 4)

As noted, a considerable number of these immigrants were ‘assisted passage’ migrants, and as Fait’s (1999) analysis, as well as the media reports of the day highlight, the majority of these immigrants came to Australia as complete nuclear family units⁴⁸,

*...fino ad oggi hanno lasciato Trieste 1422 lavoratori e 1651 familiari...*⁴⁹ (*Il Piccolo*, 6 August 1955: 4)

⁴⁷ ‘...1422 workers have left Trieste..., 696 possessing a specialised trade’ and ‘...964 had secure employment.’

⁴⁸ This factor is also reflected in the figures quoted in ‘*L’Andamento Economico del Territorio di Trieste nel 1956*’ which show that, in the two year period between 1955 and 1956, of the total number of Triestine immigrants who came to Australia nearly half were family members. While a further reference to this factor is made by Valentinsig (1988) who also notes a distinctly higher number of family units than individuals in the statistics of Julian migration.

⁴⁹ ‘...Up until today 1422 workers and 1651 family members have left Trieste.’

*Anche questa volta i bambini triestini che affrontano il lunghissimo viaggio verso il Nuovissimo Continente sono assai numerosi. Si tratta di 35 bambini da 1 ai 10 anni...*⁵⁰ (*Corriere di Trieste*, 23 November 1955)

Moreover, return migration of this group has not been significant. (Saraceno 1981: 196) Once again, exact figures are not available, but it has however been estimated by the Triestine sector of ANEA, the Association for returned Italo-Australian migrants, that only approximately one-third of all those who once emigrated from the city of Trieste have decided to return to settle there on a permanent basis. Today it is estimated that there are in Australia approximately 25,000 Triestines, encompassing first, second and third generations.

For these Triestines that are now part of a wider Italo-Australian community, the nature and the somewhat 'atypical' characteristics that defined the migratory flow from Trieste was to significantly influence the settlement process as well as the identity of the group. Despite a migratory flow that has been characterised by its intensity and brevity (a factor that has not helped to provide opportunities for a continued or prolonged renewal of a Triestine-Italian identity), for this group what has remained significant is the nexus between the Triestines and their city, and the sense of identity that has emerged from this bond. In 1990 a plaque inscribed with the words of a Triestine immigrant was laid on the pier where many immigrants once stood to farewell their loved ones and their city. The plaque commemorates the exodus that took place and comprises these words:

*Trieste diede a ciascuno un
pezzo del suo cuore
Un seme
Fu piantato per bene
Nel suolo duro e lontano
Nacque un nuovo fiore
Dal profumo nostrano.*⁵¹ (Varagnolo)

This eloquently portrays the sense of identity that has endured.

⁵⁰ Once again the number of Triestine children that will face the long voyage towards the Newest Continent is very high. There are 35 children between the ages of 1 and 10 years of age.

⁵¹ 'Trieste gave each one/ A piece of her heart/ A seed/ It was well planted/ In a harsh and faraway soil/ It gave birth to a new flower/ But with the perfume of the old.'

CHAPTER 4

The theory of migration

SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Migration, or a person's physical move from one place to another, is a complex phenomenon that involves much more than the obvious change of residence. As a process it often entails consequent changes in occupation and economic status. For many, migration implies the extreme change from a rural pattern of life to an urban one--and thus from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft* patterns of relationships. For all migrants, however, emigration embodies a change from one socio-geographic reality--with its inherent set of physical constraints, values and established roles--to another, where different norms and codes often prevail. Essentially, therefore, all migration assumes a process of re-adjustment or 're-socialisation', which presents for each migrant group--and more subjectively for each immigrant--varying degrees of difficulty in making 'appropriate adjustments'. Not surprisingly, the anxieties which accompany such change not only centre upon the struggle to defend or recover meaningful social and economic relationships, they also entail a confrontation with one's own cultural or ethnic identity.

The adult immigrant changing from one socio-cultural environment to another is facing the receiving society both as an individual and to some degree also as a product of their native society. Immigrants enter a new country as 'strangers' (Schutz 1964) who tend to define experience in the new socio-cultural reality within the framework of the 'old culture', and they subsequently also experience 'differences' which can be seen to be more or less explicit and include 'differences' based on the broader aspects that affect immigrant life--such as the physical environment, the spoken language—as well as in the structure of interpersonal relationships. Since meaningful interaction is accomplished on the basis of shared symbols and a collective taken-for-granted reality, a migrant's 'thinking-as-usual' is questioned during the process of migration when immigrants are often confronted by barriers to interaction. This social knowledge and the taken-for-granted' understanding of reality--which once allowed meaningful interaction to be accomplished--is challenged by the new society. Migrants

hence witness their understanding of the social world and the reality that surrounds them being disputed, and in the process they also experience a challenge to their very identity.

Understandably, ‘differences’ between the immigrant and members of the receiving society can reveal an incongruence in the way of ‘thinking about’ and ‘responding to’ everyday situations, and this consequently highlights the fact that each individual person derives a sense of purpose and participation from the sense of belonging to a particular culture. Since it plays a significant part as a socialising influence on behaviour within a society, culture can be seen as a link in understanding the shaping processes that underlie the development of personality traits. Cultural identification, in this context, becomes an important aspect of personal identity, for, even if only in a very general sense, the cultural group to which one belongs may be seen, at least in part, to affect an individual’s identity through its role in the socialisation process. As an individual, a person’s experience and behaviour is undoubtedly unique; however, personality formation through the process of socialisation involves the acquisition of ‘cultural knowledge’ or a cultural baggage which ultimately allows for the harmonious interaction between the individual and other members of the society. Such a process involves acquiring shared beliefs as well as common goals and aspirations. Through the socialisation process an individual becomes a member of society, endorsing beliefs, social attributes and role behaviour that is appropriate to a particular society, ethnic group and familial unit. Consequently, as De Vos (1975: 374) notes: ‘Ethnic identity requires the maintenance of sufficiently consistent behaviour to enable others to place an individual or a group in some given social category, thus permitting appropriate interactive behaviour’.

THE OBJECTIVE/ SUBJECTIVE DICHOTOMY

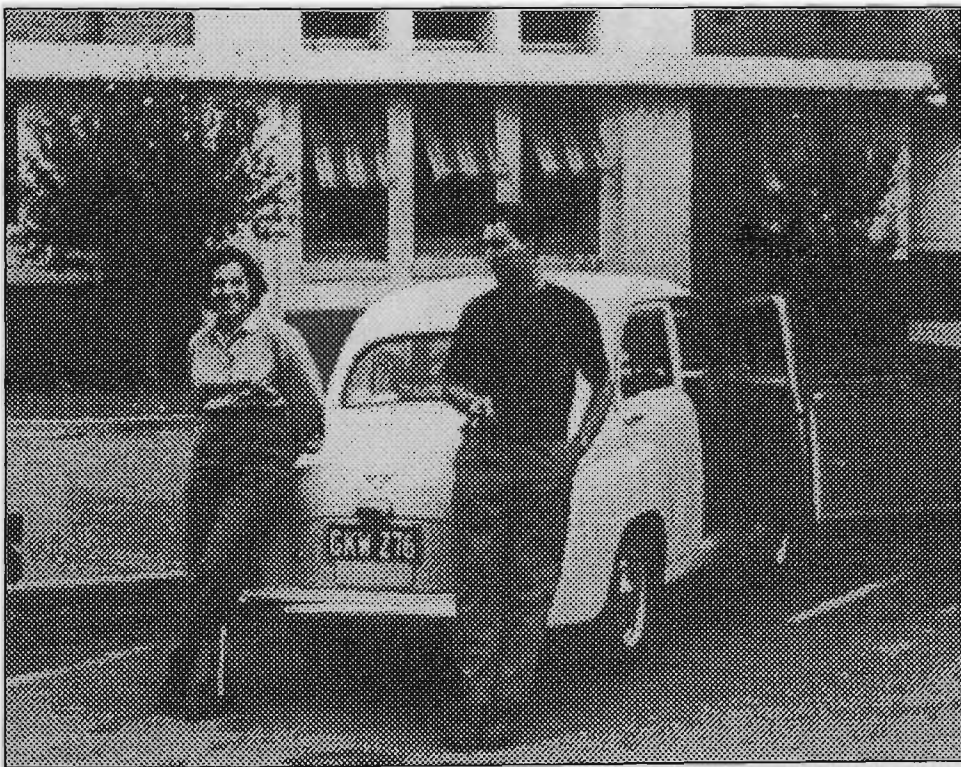
Implicit in this is the relationship between the culture (and the social structure) on the one hand and the personality on the other. Within a given society individuals learn what is expected of them, they internalise the norms and values of that society, and this leads to some degree of behavioural uniformity amongst members. In some theoretical discussions, a variety of terms such as ‘basic personality structure’ (Parsons 1951: 226-228), ‘modal personality’ and ‘national character’ (Kovacs & Copley 1975)

have been used to describe such uniformity. Although in terms of individual identity these concepts are seen to refer only to one component of the personality (Parsons 1951: 226-228), from this perspective a culture may be seen as possessing a stereotypical set of characteristics said to reflect the main cultural traits with which the society defines itself and with which individuals identify. Such a structuralist approach, however, tends to reify ethnic groups, and ethnicity is hence understood as merely an expression of the primordial loyalty of its members. In reality, cultures are in a constant state of flux and nothing better highlights this feature than the example of those immigrants who nostalgically return 'home' only to discover that not only have they themselves changed, but that the 'old ways of thinking' or the 'old way of doing things' have also changed back home. Although it is worth remembering that a certain uniformity in accepted values, norms and customs are essential for the 'functioning' of any society--and that consequently within societies there is usually consensus regarding habits, attitudes and motives that function to place behavioural limits upon individual behaviour--a person's or a group's behaviour is of course not predetermined since identity can prove to be fluid, tenuous and complex. Phenomenologists in fact stress the subjective, cognitive elements of ethnic behaviour. As individuals, members of a society possess both their own idiosyncratic personality, as well as the subjective awareness of themselves that allows them to mediate reality. Berger and Luckmann (1966), for example, contend that identity is a 'social construct' which encompasses an understanding of the self in terms of a *constant* negotiation with reality. Such an approach helps expose the complexity that characterises identity and identity construction in changing social and cultural realities.

In essence, a sense of identity is dialectically linked to the broadly based cultural identity of a particular society which is itself changing over time. Most importantly, since self-identification is mostly developed and reinforced through the process of the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley 1964)--whereby the self concept is derived from an individual's perception of the reaction of others to particular behaviour--it becomes a conscious part of the self, a conscious awareness of 'what' and 'who' one is in relation to others. A strong sense of self is consequently developed by contrasting oneself to other individuals or groups; and this contrastive process is most apparent in the migration process when contact with 'strangers' can suggest to the individual the existence of 'alternative ways'. It is thus the migration experience that allows particular cultural traits to become self-consciously apparent, and it is this contact with groups or individuals who are perceived

as 'different' that often enhances the relevance of one's ethnic or cultural identity. Ethnic identification therefore clearly implies subjectively knowing who one is, and to some degree it also assumes consciously relating to a group in terms of the stereotypic expectations of the group (since the identity itself is often manifested through symbols and stereotypes, as discussed earlier). Ethnicity or ethnic identity, consequently, cannot be defined by behavioural criteria alone, but must also be examined in terms of how individuals feel about themselves.

As a self-perceived group, an ethnic group is often seen to hold a common set of cultural attributes--including common norms and values, as well as traditions--which are all embedded in the cultural heritage of each individual member of the group. However, while such deterministic conceptions of ethnicity have tended to define 'past-orientated' forms of identity as 'primordial' and unchanging, the dynamic nature of culture is often understood and underlined by the ethnic groups themselves. Deterministic views of ethnic identification have tended to negate the subjective nature of identity, and in the context of the migrant experience they thus tend to simplistically circumscribe any continued form of ethnic identification to the sphere of the 'ghetto'. It is, however, precisely the



Young married Crescini couple, Melbourne, c.1960

conscious *realisation* of who one is that allows individuals to mediate their identity. Clearly, ethnic identity--like other forms of identity--is being continually renegotiated, taking on various meanings in the course of a person's life experience--especially as such an identity comes into contact with a dominant 'alien' culture, or even other cultures, in the process of migration. The essential meaning of culture is the notion of it being a 'blueprint' for living, with cultural patterns evolving continuously in time. For the individual, ethnic or cultural identity is thus part of the continual definition of the self--a definition that in the context of the migration experience takes on various forms and meanings. As such, 'ethnic identity' is not simply a 'residue' or a primordial sentiment, but also a dynamic response to the immigrants' historical experience, as well as to the current reality in the society in which they live. In this context ethnic groups can no longer be regarded as simply a product of particular social and historical conditions, for their reality is also in part defined by a conception of the self which is continuously mediated by the present.

CONCEPTUALISING ETHNIC IDENTITY

The study of migration, whether it possesses an historical or sociological focus, is in essence the study of change and continuity. Broadly viewed it allows researchers to examine the effects of geographical and socio-cultural movements, and the consequent impact of the interaction between the dominant culture of the receiving society and the 'ethnic' communities that come into contact with it. The concept of 'ethnic identity' is a key factor relevant to the process of migration and various theories have influenced the thinking about cultural identity, cultural continuity and change--many of which have endeavoured to predict the outcome of the immigrants' adjustment to changing physical, economic, social and cultural conditions.

Formal analysis of the relationship between immigrants and the receiving society began to develop at the time when mass migratory movements--particularly movements of Southern and Eastern Europeans, who were perceived as 'strange'--were beginning to be seen as a threat to existing socio-cultural systems, initially in the United States and subsequently in countries such as Australia. The 'assimilationist' concepts formulated in the context of such a climate expressed notions of cultural homogeneity and a philosophy based on the belief of the superiority of

English cultural patterns. Such was the philosophy of *Anglo conformity* in the United States (Gordon 1964:85) and in Australia--which espoused the desirability of the complete assimilation of migrants. This meant that immigrants were expected to discard their native culture and their cultural bonds with the homeland and endorse new ideas, customs and values, totally identifying themselves with the host society. The *Melting Pot* theory, which derived its name from an American play of the early 1900s, was a variation of such a philosophy and it was based on the belief that all the cultural patterns and beliefs which were brought into the United States by immigrants would eventually blend with the existing culture to form a new society. While in contrast to the philosophy of 'Anglo conformity', 'Melting Pot' theory presented the process of migrant 'absorption' into the host society as a natural rather than a forced one (Glazer & Moynihan 1964), it was nonetheless based on ideas of migrant assimilation, and the breakdown of ethnic identity.

Such simplistic assumptions regarding ethnicity, however, were abandoned because they were seen to be incongruent with the immigrant experience and inapplicable to the understanding of the reality of the survival of ethnicity or ethnic identity. The tenacious capacity for the survival of cultural patterns amongst ethnic groups led to the formulation of alternative concepts that could be used in analysing the immigrant experience. Consequently, the theory of 'cultural pluralism' with its many dimensions was, in contrast, a more complex concept that began to gain popularity in the United States. This concept highlighted the reality of the existence of ethnic groups as 'sub groups' in the society, as well as accepting the maintenance of some degree of ethnicity or ethnic identity amongst the groups.(Cronin 1970: 3; Kolm 1982: 39) The complexity of this theory was the result of the numerous possibilities of interrelationships between the factors that combined to make 'plurality' a multi dimensional concept (Cronin 1970: 3; Kolm 1982: 38); but, despite its multi-dimensional nature, as a concept it was in essence nothing other than an ideology that gave public recognition to an already existing reality. Such early theories were thus in a sense polemical, in that more than analysing the immigrant experience, they were essentially viewpoints or statements which described how immigrants were expected to behave in the host society and this is clearly exemplified in Australia's 'assimilationist' policies of the 1950s and 1960s.

Studies of immigration which proliferated in the United States during the early 1900s, although providing evidence of the persistence of ethnic identity in the migration process, and thus valuable insight into the immigrant experience (Thomas & Znaniecki 1918; Wirth 1928, for example), were criticised for their characteristically descriptive nature and their lack of appropriately analytical methods (Taft 1965), which inhibited the development of theoretical frameworks from which generalisations could be drawn and inferences made. However the theories of ethnicity that did emerge, although professing to an approach which adhered to a more 'scientific' basis of social investigation (Taft 1966; Eisenstadt 1954, for example) were based on the structural conceptions of ethnicity and on notions of assimilation and the eventual abandonment of any form ethnic identification. For example, Gordon, in his study of *Assimilation in American Life* (1964), identified different types of assimilation--namely, cultural assimilation or acculturation and structural assimilation--and further saw the process of assimilation as possessing a sequential nature. Such writers were preoccupied by the development of indices which would supposedly determine an immigrant's 'assimilation' (absorption, adjustment or whatever other concept was used) and also by the formulation of the 'phases' or stages of change through which the immigrant was supposedly to proceed along the way to complete assimilation. Probably the most common index of assimilation has subsequently been that based on behavioural conformity (often described as acculturation) which included factors such as language, customs, food, dress and general behaviour. However, apart from such explicit 'external' criteria, other facets of assimilation were also identified. With regard to the 'stages' or 'phases' of the so-called incorporation of the immigrant into the receiving society, Taft (1966) in fact made a number of distinctions and described assimilation as a 'multifaceted process', distinguishing areas of assimilation which were categorised as 'cultural knowledge and skills', 'social interaction', 'group membership', 'integration into the group' and 'conformity to group norms' (Taft 1966: 6)--while further considering such aspects of the assimilation process in terms of both subjective or 'internal' and objective or 'external' factors. The various aspects of the process was then measured not only in terms of the 'acquisition of cultural knowledge and behavioural norms', but also in terms of the immigrant's identification with Australia--which was seen as the pivotal aspect of the process of assimilation and which was seen to correlate with the degree of satisfaction with Australian life (in areas such as employment and standard of living), the sense of perceived similarities with 'Australians', as well as the degree of social participation with 'Australian'

society (Taft 1966: 63-66). However, while clearly such indices and variables as those used by Taft in his study may have been important indicators of just how well immigrants adapted to their adopted country, and how well they actually 'fitted in' or integrated, adjustment to a new environment is much more complicated than a process which defines immigrants as moving in a straight line in terms of a continuum, whereby they pass from complete alienation from the new society to complete assimilation and the subsequent loss of the original identity. These theories failed to expose the full complexity of the nature of ethnic identity--an identity that can hypothetically be seen to persist despite any apparent 'acculturation' or conversely one that can be refuted despite the lack of such 'acculturation'.

In Australia, assimilationist policies which emphasised the importance of 'dispersal' and 'non-confrontation', and subsequently encouraged the absorption of migrants into existing institutional structures (Martin 1971), did not result in the complete 'absorption' of 'new Australians' (as immigrants were defined in the context of assimilationist philosophy). In fact, as Bottomley (1979: 8-9) notes, in such a climate the organisations and associations established by immigrants themselves often confined their activities 'to their own cultural activities', which were non-threatening, but which did nonetheless 'delineate a distinct sphere of social life', which encouraged ethnic differences to be retained while still allowing migrants to adapt to their new reality. Moreover, as Bottomley further notes, the heterogeneity of Australian society, where numerous sub-groups often co-exist and where differentiation is based on distinctions between social classes and religion as well as ethnicity, has often provided 'immigrants with opportunities to retain at least some of their earlier meaning systems or to modify them in their own way' (Bottomley 1979: 10).

Although more current debates on identity and ethnicity essentially accept that identity and culture are social constructs that are subject to negotiation and change, such debates, nonetheless, encompass a broad range of approaches to the problem of cultural identity, identity construction and reformulation; and in recent years a number of writers have begun to examine the nature and process of identity formation from various theoretical perspectives, all of which negate the notion of essentialism.

In contrast to assimilationist models, a conception of ethnicity that influenced discussions of immigrant adaptation in the 1970s was that

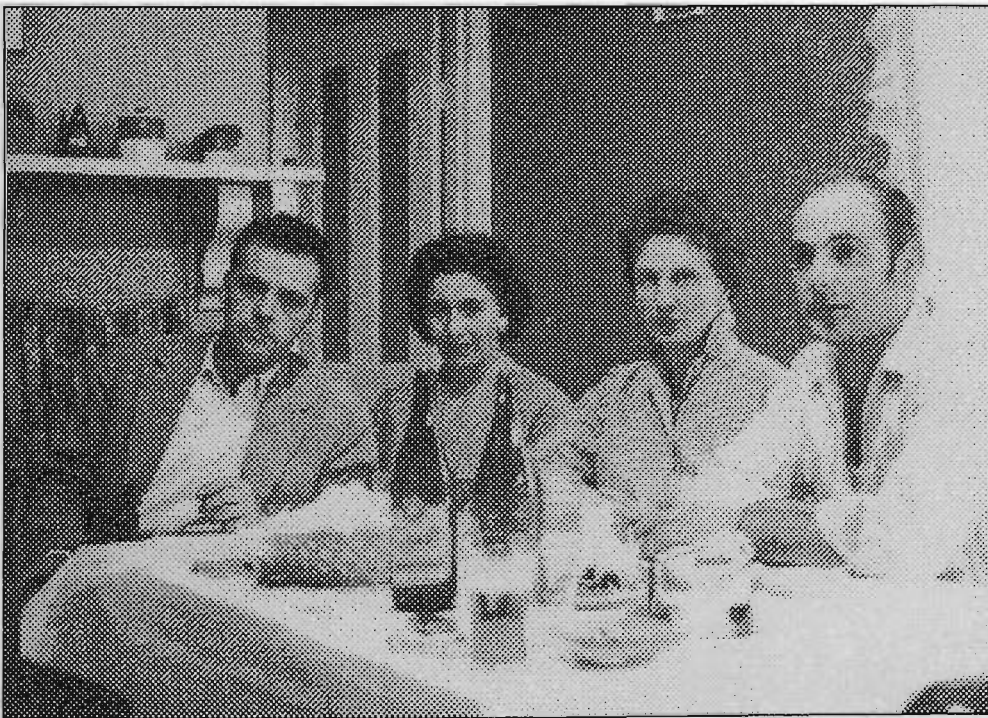
proposed by Glazer and Moynihan (1975), who saw the continued viability of ethnic identity in American society as having taken on a political/economic dimension whereby the 'identity' served to further specific interests. Inherent in this approach was the subjective element of ethnic behaviour and identity.

In terms of ethnicity, a number of other writers have also theorised about the politics of identity, particularly in the context of the rise and the politics of nationalism as a local and international force. Gellner (1987; 1992) and Hobsbawm (1990), for example, explore and analyse the history and the construction of national identities, exposing identity formation as a political and cultural process which creates identity narratives using myth and 'history', and which in many instances gives rise to what Anderson (1991) defines as 'imagined communities.' Importantly, such literature questions the often taken-for-granted understanding of ethnic identity as a 'fixed entity' tied to the nation state.

More recently, the implications of globalisation for identity and identity formation have also been explored by various writers, notably Giddens (1990; 1991), Beck (1992) and Lash & Friedman (1992) who similarly propose that what distinguishes modern from traditional societies is that the former are characterised by rapid and constant change. Giddens' analysis (1990; 1991) also incorporates the notion of 'reflexivity' or rather the self conscious process of identity negotiation. Unlike traditional societies where cultural and social life is governed by fixed roles and conventions which are rooted in the past and where identity is inscribed and taken for granted and people think of themselves as belonging to a whole; modernity is seen by Giddens to create and legitimise 'reflexive subjects', who are open to choice and are thus subject to autonomy and freedom. Giddens highlights, moreover, that changing forms of identity can be viewed as the consequence of wider social and cultural changes and emphasises the transformation of 'time' and 'space' and the effect of such transformations on the society in terms of how the social relations become 'disengaged from local contexts' (1990: 21).

The process of 'time and space' transformation and its impact is further explored by Friedland and Boden (1994), who also argue that such processes help obfuscate the boundaries of community and identity, and Harvey (1989: 241) who suggests that as a result of constant and accelerated technological advances, the dynamic nature of 'time and space' have

impacted on identity in that it has led to an expansion of the 'now' to '...the point where the present is all there is...' Carter, Donald and Squires (1993) also explore such issues and suggest that the 'time/space compression' has resulted in the stability inherent in 'community', 'place' and 'homogeneity', being replaced by fragmentation (1993: viii). Adopting a perspective based on Hegelian philosophy--whereby everything human is seen as subject to change, and experience is viewed not as an 'Authentic Essence,' but a narrative which is continuously transforming over time--McCumber (1997) similarly criticises the conceptual incoherence of 'essential identities'. He proposes instead, the notion of the 'dialectical identity', whereby the particular history of a group and their unique experiences are 'always in constant interplay with a larger history...' (1997: 177), and 'essentiality' is explained as a dynamic entity rather than a static one. For McCumber, consequently, identities have a history during the course of which properties are continuously added and subtracted. As a result, the characteristics of a community can never be perceived as permanent. In this context, theories of postmodernity highlight the notion of historical discontinuity and rupture, and subsequently, cultural identification is understood as a continuous process that is impacted upon by the inherent fragmentation in society. Laclau (1990) consequently argues that modern societies are characterised by social divisions and difference and that from such fragmentation a multiplicity of 'positions' or 'identities' emerge.



The Grison family newly arrived in Melbourne (Emilio, Yolanda, Germana, Valerio)

While the concepts of discontinuity and fragmentation of identity appear to characterise many of the writers reviewed, Foucault (1973: 345) however explains that rupture does not entail absolute change, but also incorporates significant continuities. For Foucault, historical discontinuity in essence only marks the period of historical transition from one era to another, when 'things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterised, classified and known in the same way', and that in such a process continuities still persist (1973: 217).

Stuart Hall (1990; 1993; 1996) also reminds us that 'cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories', but further stresses that identities '...like everything which is historical..., undergo constant transformation' (1990: 225). Such a discursive approach accepts identity as a process, a construct which is never essentialised or completed. Consequently, for Hall, identity is never an accomplished fact, but rather '...a 'production' which is...always in process'. It is a process, moreover, which is '...constituted within, not outside, representation' (1990: 226). It is precisely because of this, Hall further notes, that identity needs to be understood as being produced within 'specific historical...sites' (1996:4). In this context, Hall argues, identity is 'not an essence but a positioning' which remains arbitrary. The sense of self is then made up of different 'positionalities' which are linked by the narratives of the self.

Homi Bhabba (1990; 1994; 1996) further develops the concept of fragmentation in terms of identity construction and argues that identities are formed through the process of 'cultural translation' and 'hybridity'. For Bhabba the notion of 'cultural translation' implies an intrinsic imitation, re-interpretation or appropriation of cultural elements and symbols which are 'translated' or 'rehistoricised'. In this context Bhabba also views identity as never being complete or essentialised, and he locates identity within a continual process of 'hybridity' or what he terms as the 'Third Space' of enunciation--the intervention of which challenges the sense of historical identity as a homogenising force. This process, Bhabba argues, enables an on-going negotiation of difference and new identities or 'positions of enunciation' to emerge in those *interstices* or 'in-between' spaces that can be created as a result of the migrant experience.

Adopting the postmodernist approach which defines ethnicity as a socially constructed category, Sollors (1989) and Conzen (1990) argue that in modern societies ethnic identity can be re-conceptualised as an *invention*,

whereby ethnic groups constantly ‘renew’ their identity in response to a changing reality. According to Conzen and Sollors, as a consequence, the so-called ‘symbolic’ aspect of identity becomes the most important element in cultural and ethnic identification as the migrant experience creates fertile ground for the reinterpretation of tradition, and even the *invention* of new symbols of identity, in order to sustain group solidarity.

While such conceptions of identification highlight, above all else, the subjectivity and agency inherent in identity, other writers have contested the ‘all that is solid melts into air’ argument proposed by writers such as Berman (1982), advocating what has been termed the ‘coexistence thesis’ (Luke, 1996). Writers such as Heelas (1996), Luke (1996), Adam (1996) and Lash (1996) all explore issues of ‘detraditionalisation’ and the limits of reflexivity and agency, challenging the notion that the ‘traditional’ has disappeared entirely. Luke (1996), for example, asserts that reflexive subjects cannot be seen to exist in a vacuum and that the development of reflexivity in subjects necessitates a set of fixed rules or conventions which regulate social life. He notes that, in this context, ‘...modernity itself perhaps develops traditional properties as new generations adapt its premises and implications to their everyday life’ (1996: 117). Thus, while these writers concede that ‘detraditionalisation’ might have indeed taken place ‘...rather than being envisaged as leading to-across-the-board eradication of all traditions, it is seen as competing, interpenetrating or interplaying with processes to do with tradition-maintenance, rejuvenation and tradition construction’ (Heelas et al. 1996: 3).

All-encompassing notions of subjectivity, agency and reflexivity are also challenged by Bourdieu (1992) who reiterates that ‘social beings are at least partly the product of social conditioning’ (1992: 132). In this context Bourdieu introduces the concept of *habitus* as a mediating factor between the subject/object dichotomy that has characterised much of the theorising about identity formation. Bourdieu asserts that although *habitus* is a ‘product of history’, it is above all else ‘an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures’ (Bourdieu 1992: 133). According to Bourdieu, therefore, such acquired ‘dispositions’ are transformed by subsequent adjustments to circumstances, although these adjustments are themselves biased by pre-existing perceptions. Within such a dialectical process, the concept of *habitus* is envisaged not as a determining factor in identity construction, but rather as an important

mediating construct--a construct nonetheless, whereby those who occupy similar positions in social and historical space tend to possess a common understanding of the world. According to Bottomley (1992) the notion of *habitus* encapsulates an important concept for the analysis of the immigrant experience and the immigrants' negotiation of ethnic identity. *Habitus*, which Bottomley (1992) describes as the 'embodiment of history', is seen to have particular relevance to understanding the construction of identity amongst second generation immigrants since '...it should be possible to see something of the reproduction and reformulation of cultural beliefs and practices as they are handed down from parents to children. It should also be possible to see some of the effects of the differing social and historical environments within which parents and children developed' (1992: 123).

Other writers have also explored the 'historical' dimension of identity, not as an all determining force, but as a mediating construct that challenges the sense of complete fragmentation inherent in postmodernist conceptions of identity, by highlighting the relationship between past and present. Budick and Iser (1996), for example, explore this relationship in terms of the use of memory and point to how remembering can help overcome dislocation, while Morley and Robins (in Carter, Donald & Squires 1993) explore the uses of memory in reconstructing a fictionalised past in film. The theme of identity and its relationship to memory is also explored in works of fiction. The postmodernist novelist, Milan Kundera, for example, explores the themes of displacement, fragmentation, discontinuity and their relationship to memory in his short story, 'Lost letters' (1996), in which the protagonist (an emigre from Bohemia) endeavours to recover old diaries precisely to preserve a fading sense of selfhood.

In dealing with the politics of identity and the sense of rupture experienced in migration, Glenda Sluga (1994) also suggests that memories can be a form of mediation between the experience of migration from an 'old world and the public non recognition of that experience in the new world.' She implies that, in this context, memories do not merely constitute nostalgic wallowing, but a negotiation with present reality where memory becomes a process tied to 'imagining communities delineated deep in time as well as in space, but without specific chronological or territorial markings'--a process of negotiating personal identity which is not tied to essentialist concepts.

The notion of collective memories and their relevance to individual and group identity is also explored by Darian-Smith and Hamilton (1994), who explain that the preoccupation with identity is in fact a preoccupation with claiming a past which becomes accessible through memory. Memories, they highlight, link us to 'place', 'time' and 'nation' and once they are shared they are transformed into the collective memories through which individuals structure, understand and mediate reality. Paul Connerton (1989) adds that collective memories are both reflected and re-reinforced through 'culturally and temporally' specific activities such as ritual, and notes that myth plays an important role in the formation of collective memories that are often used to mobilise nationalist sentiments or group identity. In this context, Connerton notes that particular artefacts, songs and mythical stories can carry group memories and can be seen to be particularly relevant to understanding how collective memories are passed on to other generations (1989: 19). Memories, however, do not only entail the articulation of the past or the recounting of information. Connerton (1989) suggests that since all memories contain traces of negotiation with the social world, the restructuring and the retelling of memories often reflect how individuals or groups define themselves and even highlight the boundaries of this self definition. As Fischer (1986) suggests, communities can thus be recreated through the definition, conscious or otherwise, of a migrant experience mediated by memory.

Ganguly (1992), who examines how 'memories of the past provide crucial discursive terrain for reconsolidating self hood and identity', similarly contends that memories of the past comprise 'a renovated and selectively appropriated set of memories and discourses', and that these act upon the identity at various levels since the past itself is interpreted by individuals in light of present circumstances and subjectivity. Memories are thus seen to contain both the story of the experience and the present perception of the experience. While emphasising a link between past and present, such approaches underscore the sense of continuity without linking memory to an essentialist notion of identity construction.

EMOTION, PLACE AND IDENTITY

Conceptualisations of identity which highlight the reflexive ability of individuals to see themselves as others see them have often tended to

highlight the cognitive nature of identity construction without addressing its emotional dimension. The nexus between identity and emotion is explored by Campbell and Rew (eds) (1999) who note that nationalism is in fact the mobilisation of emotion through the use of affective elements which are defined by the experiential, subjective nature of identity, and which often draw on a perceived sense of inclusion or exclusion. Campbell and Rew in fact, stress that 'identity and affect are obverse sides of self-consciousness' and that 'there can be no social identity which does not possess an affective component' (1999: 17).

The act of migration encapsulates the economic, social as well as cultural implications of establishing oneself and one's family in a new country and it is in essence an act that is emotionally charged. Migration as a process, consequently, involves for the migrant, dealing with the feelings and sentiments associated with both the homeland and the newly adopted society. In this context, immigrants transport and mediate their culture of origin not only through beliefs and ideas but also through feelings and sentiments and it is on an emotional level that expressions of attachment to a group or collectivity are often made. For the immigrant, moreover, an emotional sense of attachment may not only manifest itself in terms of the



Political meeting, Trieste, mid-1950s

collectivity or group, but also in terms of 'place'. 'Place' can have a variety of meanings, it can be associated to landscape, location and personal involvement and it remains part of an individual's identity even if that individual moves. In essence 'place' is the fusion of space and experience. Intrinsic to the process of migration, consequently, is often the 'emotional tie' with the homeland, or even a particular city, town or village, and any understanding of ethnic identity must deal with the influence this attachment may have on the identity.

While on one level the sense of attachment to 'place' could be interpreted as the 'love of country' often defined as 'patriotism', and thus the notion of place equated with nostalgia and stasis; importantly, identification with place also implies shared experiences which enhance the sense of 'inclusion', and which become inter-woven with the geographical space itself. In the Italian context the term *campanilismo* (a term implying an attachment or sense of belonging which is spatially confined to being able to hear the chiming of the bell from the bell tower of one's town) is often used to describe such a circumscribed sense of community loyalty and identification that has resulted from this nexus. On an emotional level, moreover, places can also become inter-woven with significant events or with an individual's own personal story, and thus attachment to place may entail a process of biographical attachment to places and landscapes which allows a sense of historical and ancestral continuity to persist or develop. The stories and rituals inexorably linked to place come to represent, in the migration process, a powerful emotional link between future and past. This bond with a real or often 'imagined' world based on often obscure or mediated memories, is part of the immigrant experience which may prove difficult to define or categorise. It thus often remains an abstract part of individual identity and for the group an often sub-conscious influence that allows collectivities to recreate, in the new country, a sense of place that mediates the rupture between past and present. Such a bond with the place of origin, subsequently, does not deny the fluid or dynamic nature of the identity and the ability of individuals to mediate reality. Rather, it tends to highlight the interactive nature of identity construction and acknowledges the 'subjective awareness' that is heightened as a result of the immigrant experience. In this context an emotional attachment to place nurtures an evolving identity.

NEGOTIATING IDENTITY: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

As Cronin (1970: 6) notes, many sociological and anthropological studies of 'culture change' or cultural continuity have tended to be 'anti historical' in that they have not dealt with the complete 'process' of the migration experience, but have mostly concentrated on '... the structure and function of an ethnic society.' While such an approach has provided some interesting and useful insight into the immigrant experience, it has nonetheless failed to provide a broader understanding, one that has allowed a complete grasp of the congruencies and incongruities of the two cultural systems involved in the process, as well as an understanding of the impact of social and cultural differences in respect to any change or continuity that does occur (including the mode and form that change or continuity may take). Macro-cultural forces such as the social structure and the cultural history of a particular society play an important role in forming the ideological basis for ethnic identification, as well as influencing the formation of attitudes towards change or continuity; and the subjective forces that underlie the identity can often serve to encourage its change or maintenance. Since it is accepted that identity needs constant support, that it must be socially confirmed to be maintained, what is needed is an understanding of how migrants protect their world from disruption and how discontinuity is mediated and managed. The interrelationship of culture, society and personality inherent to identity maintenance or modification and the migrant experience, clearly requires an analysis which deals with both the socio-cultural and psychological dimension of ethnic identification, as well as one that explores the significance of various background factors. These factors can be seen to include the 'original' culture of the immigrant, the immigrant's life and life experiences before leaving the culture of origin, and the process of migration itself. Other factors that need to be considered are of course the culture and role of the receiving society, the impact of early migration experiences and what Bottomley (1979: 18) defines as the 'patterns of interaction' associated with the migrant experience as a whole, and most importantly '...some understanding of what that interaction means'.

Undoubtedly factors that may be seen to have significant influence on 'change' and 'continuity', whatever the form 'change' or 'continuity' may take, will be those factors, that on an individual basis, may be seen to influence 'adjustability' and attitudes towards change. These factors can

include age, gender, education, occupation, class and status, and the inter-relationship of these factors may also be important. For example, while younger immigrants may be less committed to established cultural patterns and social roles, and thus appear more 'open' to change, other factors such as education and status could also be of relevance. Generally speaking, formal education is often instrumental in helping an individual relate rationally to the world and, consequently, should make the acceptance of new societal frameworks more likely. However, if migrants should find that their qualifications or their professions are not recognised as of value in the new society, then status expectations may not be met and this may result in immigrants clinging to their ethnic identity, in what is often an attempt to help mediate a situation that can be perceived as threatening another component of the 'total' identity of the individual.

In this context it should be noted that there remains an aspect of ethnic identity closely related to the reality of 'change', and this is associated to the quality and strength of identification to the original culture. This sense of identification may not necessarily be correlated to the above factors, and further to the nexus between the identity and the sense of place, a continued sense of ethnic identification may in fact also be understood in the context of the relationship between immigrants and their 'old' culture. In other words, if migrants feel that their 'old' culture possesses some prestigious aspects they feel is worth identifying with, then these 'aspects' may provide the individual with a sense of past that can become the focus of the migrant's sentiments--a sentiment that can continue to nurture a sense of ethnicity, and which can become embodied in the institutions and structured groups of the ethnic community. In her study of the Greek community, Bottomley refers to the concept of 'ethnic honour' in relation to what is valued as correct and proper aspects of the culture of origin, but also notes that 'Members of an oppressed minority may actually develop a sense of ethnic dishonour as they absorb the negative valuations offered by the dominant majority'.

(Bottomley 1979: 26) While such heightened cultural awareness is often a characteristic of groups that are faced with the threat of 'losing' their ethnicity, and it highlights an identity tied to the reality of the homeland, it is also inexorably linked the actual process of interaction with the receiving society. The reality of the immigrant experience can, consequently, be to some extent determined by the atmosphere or mood as well as the opportunities that are offered to the immigrant by the receiving society.

What is important, moreover, is also the strength of the ethnic group in the receiving society. 'Ways of seeing and ways of doing things' need to be legitimised and formalised through group activity and this requires numbers large enough to sustain cultural institutions as well as activities. Culture is after all a product of group life, and although not in a deterministic sense, both the physical or numerical strength, as well as the psychological strength of the group--in terms of cohesion and determination to support particular cultural patterns--is ultimately important in fostering the maintenance or change of ethnic identity. The reinvigoration of group identity furthermore, can also be seen to be influenced by the very nature of the migration--in other words if the migration occurs as part of a group, as in the 'chain migration process, or if the migration of particular ethnic group occurs in separate waves, then each wave of new immigrants entering the group reinforces ethnic cultural patterns as well as identity. Such processes moreover, also help establish 'continued' interaction between the homeland and the country of emigration - another important factor which not only encourages continuity but also highlights the fluid nature of identity.



Triestine women enjoying the summer sun, Trieste, August 1956

As we have noted, any analysis of the nature of ethnic identity, as well as any change (and the nature of such change) that may occur as a result of the process of migration, will of course also need to take into account factors that may be regarded as the more essentialist aspects of the culture of origin of the immigrant. These are generally based on the historical development of a particular society and they may include the political, ideological as well as the economic structure of the society and aspects of a culture which are inevitably linked to a particular time in history. Similarly regional 'sub cultures', religious affiliations as well as urban/rural characteristics are also all basic components of the particular culture, and such factors are in themselves significant in that they can be seen to influence the form and content of the ethnic identity. Importantly, hence, the degree of folk culture preserved in contrast to the level of urbanisation of a particular society or culture, may for example, highlight an emphasis on strong cultural traditions, kinship relationships and stable community patterns (that are characteristics of agrarian societies) as opposed to weaker bonds of kinship, the substitution of primary contacts with secondary contacts, and the expanded process of interaction and differentiated social relationships, that are inherent to urban societies. In the context of ethnic identity and its relationship to change during the migrant experience, such patterns (which in the case of folk societies are often reinforced through ceremony and ritual) may then also be seen either to encourage or to discourage a strong involvement in the culture of origin.

Fundamentally, in the relationship between the immigrant and the receiving society the problem involves the impact of two cultures upon each other, as well as the response of the individual immigrant to this impact. Apart from the problems associated with 'fitting in'--which in itself does not imply total conformity with existing patterns of social and cultural behaviour, but rather the ability to achieve autonomy within the new cultural framework--immigrants are also faced with the challenge of maintaining their identity. Why and how that identity is maintained, why cultural change does occur, together with the process, mode and context of the change, are dependent on the interplay of concrete historical as well as situational factors that encompass a variety of personal, social, cultural, political and economic realities. Essentially, 'ethnic identification' can be seen to be a phenomenon that is culturally constructed by members of migrant groups themselves--both through their interaction with each other as a group, as well as with the homeland and with non members. What is required, therefore, is an interpretation of such an experience--one that can serve to highlight the

various forces that interact and serve to mould a particular experience and identity. As Geertz notes:

Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun ...and the analysis of it [is] therefore not an experimental science in search of a law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (Geertz 1973: 5)

These discourses pertaining to ethnicity, cultural identity, memory and affect are highly relevant to this study, and they are useful in analysing the identity making process of a group of Italian immigrants who have perceived themselves both as Italians and as Triestines. The literature on the history of the Giulian area and of the city of Trieste suggests that the Triestines have constantly negotiated their politically contested identity and that, indeed, identity was, for this group of Italians, a process negotiated on the basis of everyday experiences and everyday realities that were very much governed by the interplay of economic forces, the spread of nationalism, and the ethnic intermixture of the area. Such literature also suggests that the Triestines share a common urban, rather than peasant or traditional, background. However, while as representatives of an urban group, they did not undergo 'detraditionalisation' in the process of migration, this research suggests the Triestines have sought to re-establish a way of life that was congruent with their past experience and culture, but that this sense of being both Triestine and Italian in a new land took on a new meaning. The study takes into account both the taken-for-granted dimension of identity that is a part of essentialist theories, as well as the fractured and fluid dimensions which allows identity to be negotiated. It consequently focuses on the dialectical aspect of identity formation by locating identity in the processes that constitute the experience of migration and dislocation as well as in the historical and political process that mediated the construction of identity before migration. Contestations over identity in the host culture therefore were not as novel a challenge for Triestines in Melbourne as they might have been for other immigrant groups.

Chapter 5

The migration experience

BONEGILLA AND THE EARLY YEARS

In another sense the Triestines were like any other group, for the act of migration, which embodies a change from one structural reality to another, is for most migrants a shared experience. The initial sense of geographical displacement, the challenges faced in a new society of being obliged to start over, are only but a few of the features that highlight the common threads that link the experiences of all migrants. Encompassed within this collective reality however, can be found differences of class and gender as well as the sense of distance often nurtured by the diverse past of individual immigrants and immigrant regional groups. It is within the context of this shared experience that such differences are paradoxically, not only subdued but also delineated and highlighted.

During the ‘assimilationist’ era of Australian immigration history the reality into which migrants were immersed was inevitably in many ways a shared one. The process of ‘social absorption’ that characterised the period of mass migration after the second World War meant that on their arrival migrants were expected to abandon their own language and culture and adopt the language and the culture of mainstream Australia. Classified as ‘new Australians’ migrants were thus officially and symbolically stripped of their past reality and branded with this pseudo identity that was tied only to their immediate experiences as migrants. In this context, one Triestine immigrant recalled his first few days in Australia by saying:

...before we disembarked in Melbourne I wasn't quite sure what to expect ... then after those first few days, after being taken to Bonegilla, I just thought to myself ‘where am I?’ At the camp there were other Triestines, we were in many I remember, but there were also other Italians and people of other nationalities and even if you didn't speak the same language, even you couldn't understand each other, you could tell by the look in the their eyes that these people were all asking themselves that same question...

For many Triestines, as well for many migrants generally, it seems that the realisation of this sense of a ‘shared experience’ occurred at the moment of entry into the country, when immigrants were processed and

often herded to migrant reception centers such as Bonegilla. These centres were generally located in remote areas, and Bonegilla, a former army base which served as a prisoner of war camp during the second World War and then as an immigrant reception center after 1947, was positioned near Albury-Wodonga. The remoteness of this locality suited the government's immigration policy precisely because it served the function of alienating the migrants from their 'previous identities' and occupationally classifying them as either labourers (if males) or domestics (if females). Politically and ideologically Bonegilla thus helped delineate the boundary and set the points of demarcation between the migrant reality of the 1950s and 1960s and the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. In doing so immigrant reception centres such as Bonegilla helped provide a point of reference and impose a sense of unity to the migrant experience. (Sluga 1994: 196-201)

Bonegilla has undoubtedly been a common point of reference for a significant number of Triestine immigrants. As I have previously noted, what characterised Triestine migration to Australia was precisely the fact that such migration has been almost an aberration in the history of the city--a phenomenon occurring for a few short years at a distinctive point in time. Importantly therefore, Triestine immigrants, many of whom were 'assisted passage' migrants, had no previously established links of chain migration and no other point of reference on arrival into the country. For a significant number of Triestine immigrants (in this instance, 65 per cent of the sample) Bonegilla became their first place of residence. This was a place that has not only evoked memories of a reality shared with the other immigrants at the Centre, but most importantly a place where a sense of community and belonging amongst the many Triestine immigrants present in the Centre was first nurtured:

When I arrived at Bonegilla I met up with over a dozen friends, or people that I had known in Trieste... and many other Triestines were arriving in Bonegilla all the time...at night we would all get together just to talk, to let our feelings out, share our hopes and our fears with other Triestines... this was important for me because although it was such a shock to be there, to be in Australia', at least I had the feeling that I didn't have to face this experience alone... Together with other Triestines you could share a joke, you could cry but at the same time you could sometimes also laugh at the comical aspect of the situation...

Undoubtedly the Triestines, like the other immigrants housed in Bonegilla on their arrival in Australia, found themselves '...waiting to be

given a good job and queuing up for food...' and sharing the realisation that their recently acquired status as 'new Australians' had meant that any skills or qualifications that they had brought with them were officially unrecognised (Sluga 1994). Importantly, however, the Triestines also found themselves in Bonegilla 'together as a group'. Many of the immigrants had been employees of the Venezia Giulia Police Corps (VGPF) and they had formed a very particular group of Italians that had shared common experiences. This not only helped emolliate the sense of dislocation and the harsh reality of immigrant life but also fostered a strong sense of group identity and belonging already embedded in the psyche of the individual Triestine migrant.

Moreover, possibly because the Triestines present in Bonegilla between 1954 and 1959 were quite numerous and possibly because a significant number of these had immigrated as complete nuclear family units (unlike other groups of Italian migrants which were mostly represented by single male immigrants) the Triestines were housed in a separate block from other Italians in the Centre, as one immigrant explained:

In that period in Bonegilla we had our own special area, an area just for the Triestines. Block number 10 was reserved just for the Triestines. When a ship arrived with 450 Triestines and 300 from other parts of Italy, they would send the others to block number 13 and the Triestines to block number 10.

This undoubtedly encouraged a sense of group identity and what is unwittingly conveyed by such a recollection is an implicit sense of 'we' and the 'others', a declaration and affirmation of an identity tied to the city of Trieste but also of an identity being renegotiated and renewed in a different context, in a different location. Bonegilla, as Sluga notes (1994: 202), embodied the collective experience of migrants, but paradoxically, within the confines of this isolated migrant reception centre, the political yet unconscious process of refuting 'absorption' manifested itself through the subjective decision to maintain a nexus with a 'regionalised' identity. Although the fate of the Triestine migrant had, on arrival in Australia, become inexorably bound to the fate other migrants, in particular other Italian migrants; the very nature of Triestine migration fostered 'separation'. Hence even in these very early stages of the migration process, the Triestines "...had [their] own special area...", an area that provided at least a tenuous sense of place and provided the basis for a sense of cohesiveness and community.

For the Triestines in Bonegilla, subsequently, the sense of physical displacement experienced as a result of the act of migration was in part compensated by this awareness of belonging to a particular group, in a particular place. The sense of camaraderie experienced while in the camp was a common theme in many of the interviews, as this excerpt clearly exemplifies:

...there was a young Triestine when we were at Bonegilla and when he arrived he was devastated, he was alone because, since he didn't have any particular trade or qualifications that the Government was interested in, he had had to immigrate alone, he had had to leave his wife and young child behind. It was his birthday that day and we immediately found some of his friends in the camp, we got all our friends together and threw a party for him. We even bought a record player and a happy birthday record. We would do this, we would go to Wodonga to the deli and buy food and things ..., it felt as we were relatives.

The recollections of migrants who have had personal contact with Bonegilla have often been fragmented and contradictory (Sluga 1994), but significantly for the Triestine migrants who had spent time at the camp it appears that the experience was generally lived and perceived in more positive, or at least more accepting terms; as the individual recollections of those interviewed reveal:

Of course Bonegilla camp was horrible, it was a reception camp, people who came there were only to spend a few weeks or month there and then move on to employment. Bonegilla was not meant to be and couldn't be a resort like in Queensland. It was a reception centre and it was comprised of barracks, but you had to adapt...

and

Back in Trieste you ate veal and at home now perhaps you eat veal but in Bonegilla you had to eat mutton because that was all that was available... You had to adapt... I spent two years in a prisoner of war camp in Germany and if we would have had in Germany what we had in Bonegilla... Poor Bonegilla... We shouldn't place any blame on Bonegilla... No one forced us to come to Australia, you signed the forms voluntarily and you had to accept the bad with the good.

There also seems to be a sense of objectivity and emotional detachment in the Triestines' description of Bonegilla, as the words, written in Triestine dialect in the form of a rhyming parody, by a Triestine comic in Australia, further highlight:

*Son piu' de dieci giorni a Bonegilla,
e spetemo che i ne daghi un bon lavor
per la boba dovemo star in fila
no xe mal ve lo giuro sul mio onor
Xe un bel campo che par una zitadina,
in fila le barache come soldai...¹ (Franchi 1979)*

And, although those Triestines interviewed who had personally experienced life in Bonegilla denied neither the 'strangeness' of the environment nor the 'absurdity' of the regimented reality with which they were confronted, they did not seem to recall the sense of desperation often experienced by migrants in Bonegilla on a personal level, but rather associated the hardship and frustration experienced at the camp to other migrants:

I saw people, other Italians, who were going crazy because they had left everything behind, they were there and there were no jobs available...

Located in a remote country area, 'in the middle of nowhere' (as one interviewee recalled), Bonegilla was certainly a strange and alien environment for Triestine immigrants who had essentially been urban dwellers. Yet even in this respect the reaction of those interviewees who had been to Bonegilla had not been entirely negative; and two of these interviewees in particular noted that they had thought the countryside in the area of the camp had been 'pretty'. While one interviewee further explained that his friends from Melbourne, who had at the time come to Bonegilla '...to visit some of the people they knew there', had also '...come to the area for a holiday'. While such a reaction demonstrates the ability of these migrants to accept and negotiate their new environment, their behaviour also highlights the developing of a network of friendship among Triestine immigrants as well as the perceptions and traditions of an urban group which was able to view the rural setting of

¹ 'I've spent more than ten days here in Bonegilla,/ as we wait to be given a good job/ For the food we have to queue/ But it's not that bad I swear to you./ It's a pretty camp, it's almost like a village./ Like soldiers the barracks, all in a row...'

the reception centre in terms of recreational activities--as a holiday destination.

What can generally be concluded from these descriptions and recollections is that despite the fact that a sense of 'rootlessness' and disillusionment was a reality for many migrants in the camp, for the Triestines it was a reality that was undoubtedly mitigated by the nature of Triestine migration which, as previously noted, had helped foster the maintenance of their particular shared identity. Most Triestine migrants had not 'left everything behind' upon migration (but rather had brought their immediate family with them), nor were they generally burdened (as were many other Italian immigrants) with the added responsibility of having to provide for a family back in Italy. It was, hence, also in this context that the boundaries of this group's perceived sense of separate identity (which was based not only on nationhood, but above all on past shared experiences) were strengthened.

It seems the Triestines were, to a certain degree, able to experience Bonegilla as a point of synthesis for the collective migrant experience but also as the point of departure from the 'other' realities that encapsulated and defined migrant life in the camp. Thus, if historically Bonegilla is understood as a symbolic moment or point in the process of cultural transition, in the context of the Triestine experience such transition must paradoxically also be interpreted as having provided an important sense of continuity. The subjective awareness of being a distinctive and cohesive group rather than still only part of an amalgam of disorientated Italians or *paesani*, provided a focus nurtured not only by the personal narratives of the past but also those of the present. One distinct manifestation of such a focus, even in such early stages of the migration process, was the soccer game between the Bonegilla Soccer Team and the, as yet 'unofficial', Triestine Soccer Team, which took place in Bonegilla in October 1959. On this occasion a group of soccer players, many of whom were Triestines from Melbourne, were brought together to form a team. Members of the team, which had been organised by a Triestine in Bonegilla named Attilio Dereani, wore the uniforms worn by the official 'Triestina' soccer team back in Trieste. This occasion, which resulted in the formation of the official Australian counterpart of the US Triestina Soccer Club in Trieste, was surely an important moment in the historical development of a Triestine community. It can be seen, consequently, not merely as an expression of a clearly defined group identity but also as the expression of the nexus and the networks that had developed between Trieste, Australia and Bonegilla.

This establishment of networks in the migrant reception centre did not, however, remain circumscribed to groups of Triestine migrants; and within the broader Italo-Australian context, certain individuals did take on more active roles within the camp. Attilio Dereani, for example, had not only played an instrumental part in bringing together an informal 'Triestina' soccer team, but on various occasions also took on the role of spokesperson for individual Italians in Bonegilla who had experienced particular hardships or trauma. During his stay at the Reception centre, Dereani in fact contributed frequently to the local Italo-Australian press by writing, often anecdotal accounts, of life in the camp; but importantly he also signalled to the Italo-Australian media and to media personalities active in the community (such as Mamma Lena), the plight of particularly 'needy' and desperate Italian immigrants.²

Nevertheless, the welfare of Italian immigrants in Bonegilla did not generally appear to become a political issue for most Triestines in the camp. Apart from the conservative nature of the Italo-Australian press, which may have helped to dampen the politicisation of any growing feelings of dissatisfaction with regard to how the problems faced by some migrants in the camp were handled by the authorities; Triestine immigrants have generally appeared to have distanced themselves from the political reality in which they were immersed at the time. At most what was lamented by those interviewed was what was deemed to be the 'invisibility' of Italian consular staff, and little responsibility or criticism was directed towards the Australian government. In discussing Bonegilla and the reality of camp life, in fact, one interviewee denounced a critical article written by Franca Arena in response to her own experiences at the centre and suggested that the allegations made in the article, that her 'ill children were denied milk and that she was unable to communicate her concerns', were probably spurious. Further evidence of this lack of political involvement was also provided by another interviewee when she remembered that:

...They had what can be called a small revolution because the sauce for the pasta was made with chops and the chops had bones, so what happened was that when you ate the pasta you got bone fragments in your mouth. This was especially dangerous for the children. People were so upset about this that they almost revolted, in the dining room one day some men picked up their plates of

² Mamma Lena was Lena Gustin, radio broadcaster, journalist, and welfare worker, who worked with Sydney's Italian community from the 1950s to the 1980s. Her husband Dino Gustin was a journalist from Trieste who helped produce her radio programs. (See Mitchell Library *Manuscript Guides*, No. 17, *Italians in New South Wales*.)

pasta and threw the plates into the faces of the cooks... After that things changed and they got an Italian cook. I must say that they tried, after all it was a camp, but really they would try and remedy anything that was wrong...

From this somewhat objective recollection of the event that took place in the camp and the interviewee's use of the third person (they) to refer to the instigators, it is clear that she chose to distance herself from the action taken by those present on that day. Furthermore, although such form of collective action was not judged as inappropriate, the interviewee's empathy appears to lie with the Commonwealth immigration authorities in Bonegilla, who were in fact seen to be doing all possible to meet the needs of newly arrived immigrants.

Similar sentiments were expressed by a significant number of both male and female interviewees who had spent some time in the camp, providing further evidence that as a group the Triestines seem to have been generally quite accepting of the austere and limbo-like existence that has come to characterise the reality of Bonegilla. Essentially, although the individual narratives of this group reveal that for most, this early stage in the migration process represented the '...more difficult years' and that for many Bonegilla was their first encounter with a reality that was alien; what also becomes apparent is that this period was a time when a dynamic sense of group identity first began to emerge and that it was an identity that was both moulded by and subsequently helped mould the Triestines' experience of Bonegilla.

With regard to the conditions experienced in the camp, it should further be highlighted that while few Triestine immigrants would have been present in the camp during the 1952 economic recession--when disillusionment and frustration, not only with the lack of employment possibilities, but also with what Sluga (1994: 201) terms as the 'patronising attitudes' of the authorities, led to demonstrations and riots (in which 2000 Italian migrants in the camp took part) (Fox 1992: 158)--the overall conditions in the camp had not necessarily improved a great deal by 1954. As Sluga (1994: 201) notes, 'little was ever done to rectify the social situation in these camps in any fundamental way'. Yet despite this reality, for the Triestines, as one interviewee explained:

...This was a time when we were young and enthusiastic and even if everything around us appeared strange, even if it was depressing to be here and we just couldn't believe where we had ended up, we could always see the comical side of things. Maybe we laughed so

that we wouldn't cry, I don't know, but maybe it's because we were able to joke about things that made life easier... our *muli* (guys) and our *mule* (girls) were a bit like this... so for us being in Australia and finding ourselves in a place like Bonegilla became like a bad dream and an adventure at the same time...

Acceptance of a situation that was less than ideal was hence made possible not only because these immigrants were young but more importantly because they were able to share the experiences that were part of their new reality and diffuse feelings of negativity through a 'culturally shared' sense of humour.

The conscious awareness of this 'necessity' for empathy and shared understanding, and for social interaction based on an underlying structure of shared values and goals, fostered not only a sense of belonging to a growing Triestine community but also the cognisance that for many Triestines Bonegilla had become, at least for a brief period of time, an important part of an expanding network. During their stay at Bonegilla two interviewees had, in fact, accepted employment with the Commonwealth Centre, and had remained in the camp with their families for a longer period of time. While one of these men had had no particular qualifications on migration and had willingly accepted a position as a cleaner, the other, who had been a qualified nurse, found work in the dispensing storeroom of Bonegilla hospital. This interviewee soon became the ambulance driver for the camp hospital and chose to remain in Bonegilla for a period of five years.

Conditions at the camp may have been primitive, but in many instances life within its confines became familiar and provided a sense of security, particularly in terms of shared experiences. This is precisely the experience described in a story called 'Josef in Transit', in which for the protagonist the time spent at Bonegilla, although alienating, also encouraged a sense of belonging--so much so that leaving the camp becomes difficult:

On the train Josef watched the land, still, wide, bare, intimidating, slip by once again... Little by little the great tide of which they were part is disappearing, thinning into smaller and smaller streams, reaching for new and distant destinations. Soon there would be no group, no common identity at all, only single individuals, isolated, finally alone.³

³ 'Josef in Transit', included in a collection of short stories by James McQueen, *Uphill Runner*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1984, p.55.

However, while this description encapsulates the paradoxical nature of the feelings of many migrants, for the Triestines, added to their sense of common identity as migrants and as Italians was also a distinct sense of community and of belonging to a particular group. This had resulted not only because the Triestines had historically shared a common worldview, but also because the nature and processes of their migration had led to circumstances that had encouraged the nurturing of their identity. Within Bonegilla the Triestines first established themselves as a group, creating networks and friendships that followed them beyond the boundaries of the camp. Often these networks served the purpose of helping to find employment:

...I was there for a while and then a friend of mine said to me, come to Melbourne, where I work the boss loves Triestines, and he helped me get a job there...

but most importantly they became the structure and they helped form the basis for the development and growth of a distinct Triestine community.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND THE BUILDING OF COMMUNITY

For the Triestines in particular, the early establishment of networks was very important. As previously mentioned, it would appear that a significant number of Triestine immigrants did not have relatives or family already in Australia who were able to aid them in the settlement process, and upon their arrival many depended on hearing the familiar voices of friends from Trieste or friends they had made on board ship or at Bonegilla. The Triestines, like most other immigrants, at least initially established social relationships with 'their own people' and it was the cultural familiarity inherent in these relationships that served to buffer the initial blow of culture shock.

Like most immigrants furthermore, the Triestines had generally been ignorant of life in Australia before migration, and upon their arrival their expectations were often shattered. Although the exodus from Trieste had had demonstrably economic connotations, in that these migrants were generally seeking, '...a sense of security'; as has been demonstrated, the Triestines did not generally migrate to escape ingrained conditions of poverty and the conditions initially encountered by this group were hence to prove disappointing. In terms of the availability and

quality of housing and accommodation, in particular, all of those interviewed who had been aged between 20 and 40 years, upon migration, recalled the sense of desolation experienced. During the period of postwar reconstruction Australia had been experiencing a shortage of labour and supplies that coupled with a sudden influx of migrants resulted in a shortage of housing (Collins 1975: 108) and the high cost of rental accommodation. Accepting what was available thus became the norm for most newly arrived Triestine immigrants; and most rented from Italo-Australian landlords who had come to Australia a few years earlier and had already established themselves in their country of adoption. While many newly arrived Italian immigrants initially stayed with family or relatives, for those with no family connections in Australia, rental accommodation was mostly found through word of mouth and through broader networks in Melbourne's Italian community, within Italian neighbourhoods--with local Italo-Australian business proprietors often acting as 'informal agents'. Triestine immigrants were no exception to



Triestine family on verandah of Melbourne home, late 1950s

this trend. On their arrival in Melbourne they consequently settled in those suburbs that already possessed a high concentration of Italians, predominantly in Melbourne's inner western and inner northern suburbs, which are located a short distance from the central business district. Suburbs such as Footscray, Brunswick, Carlton, North Fitzroy, Kensington, Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds were thus amongst the first suburbs of residence for Triestine immigrants, but by the 1960s the suburbs of Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds had become the focus of Triestine community life.

As a result of the housing shortage, newly arrived Triestine families, like many other Italian immigrants seeking accommodation upon their arrival, had found themselves obliged to board in houses which were sometimes occupied by various families and individuals:

When we first arrived in Australia we went to a house in Footscray. In Droop street. It was owned by Italians, Calabrians, who rented out the various rooms. There were sixteen people living in the house. It was a big old weatherboard house. We arrived in July and it was cold and humid, and the house was cold and musty. There were three of us in the family and we lived in one room. We would take turns for cooking with the other boarders--many of them were single men--and we shared the toilet and bathroom. It was really terrible. The toilet was outside and I remember being too frightened to go because I had seen rats... I had never felt so poor... Can you imagine, the owner told us not to use so much hot water and that we should use the bath water to wash the dishes...!

and

...We rented from an Italian family. The Italians used to rent their houses to the Triestini, they paid off their houses like this... They had all these people living with them... Some owners weren't bad but some were always complaining and telling us to take only one shower, or to have a bath but to take it all together--all the family together! Other times they would be telling us to turn off the radio... They paid for the gas and electricity, you see. In those times they let out rooms but they would be living there also. This was not the situation we had expected when we left Trieste...

These conditions proved disheartening, especially for those Triestines whose decision to emigrate had been influenced by the lack of

suitable housing and accommodation back in Trieste. A significant number of interviewees in fact recalled that while after the war in Trieste apartments were scarce and the rents high, the very same problems were also initially encountered in Australia. Moreover, the European urban reality of apartment life, where ideally families lived as nuclear units, had clearly moulded the values that the Triestines had brought with them, and what this group had generally aspired to when deciding to come to Australia had been a place to live as a family unit:

One of the main reasons why we left Trieste was because we didn't have an apartment of our own--we had to share an apartment with my brother and his wife back in Trieste--young couples, I think, should live on their own. So you can imagine our disappointment...

Once this was attained, the Triestines did generally feel a greater sense of satisfaction, as the following recollection reveals:

It was a tiny, single fronted house, ...attached on both sides and it was run down. The toilet was outside and it had a small ugly concrete yard with a shabby looking tin fence, ...but after years of married life it felt good to be living without my mother and father... I felt as if my married life was just beginning even though I then had to take in a boarder because the rent was too high...

The cost of rental accommodation was, however, often high in proportion to the wages earned by Italian and Triestine immigrants who had joined the ranks of the Australian working class, and a number of interviewees recalled that while the wage of a factory worker was then 'about eleven pounds per week', the cost of renting a room with shared facilities was 'around three pounds', while the cost of renting an old house in the inner suburbs was 'around six pounds per week'.

The fact that in many instances the accommodation found was 'provisional' and part of a series of moves and relocations also caused some stress among Triestine immigrants. Although they had yearned for their 'own space', renting had, nonetheless, generally been the norm for this group of urban dwellers for whom the purchase of a home or property did not yet form part of their mentality. For this group of Italians renting back in Trieste had almost always implied a long-term agreement or contract, while in Australia 'renting' was mostly seen as a temporary arrangement until a house could be purchased. Moreover, in contrast to Italian immigrants of peasant background--whose world had been shaped

by the land and a social system where land ownership was the only guarantee of security (Bertelli 1985: 42), and for whom the purchase of land and of a home had been of paramount importance, an aspiration that they had brought with them from Italy--for the Triestines property ownership was a new concept which had not yet become part of the urban working class and lower middle class outlook in Trieste in the 1950s. Thus while once in Australia many Italian immigrants were prepared to live frugally to achieve their aim, for the Triestine immigrant saving to buy property or a home was a way of coping with the reality of migrant life which was only absorbed in the course of time. Subsequently the Triestines, while initially often lacking any sense of 'frugality' and 'sacrifice', tended to spend money on making the temporary rental accommodation more 'livable' by 'painting walls' and at times even 'laying new linoleum on the floors'. Although, as one Triestine noted, 'the Italian landlords loved the Triestini as tenants because a lot of the times we spent our money on fixing up their houses'; this only exacerbated the stress when the time came to '...move, because the premises were required by the owner who needed the house or room for relatives arriving from Italy'.

The issue of housing was, however, only one of the problems faced by these migrants and, as this study reveals, their disappointment was not only associated with material or economic reality but with the initial sense of *alienation* that was essentially the result of coming to terms with a reality that was foreign and strange. On arriving in Melbourne, many remembered feeling a sense of desolation. One Triestine immigrant in particular recalled a vivid image of 'rows of shabby weatherboard houses, ...deserted and dirty streets with papers being blown around in the wind...' --an impression undoubtedly shaped by the cultural baggage carried by the migrant.⁴ Despite the fact that for this group of immigrants, the act of migration had involved a geographical shift from one urban centre to another, the physical diversity of the Australian city actually helped to compound the sense of disillusionment and alienation experienced in those early years. Part of the urban consciousness of these migrants was an image of the European city, where people lived in apartment blocks in the city centre itself, and where such a centre was animated by the everyday life, and often ritualistic behaviour, of individuals. This was not the urban reality that Triestine immigrants were confronted with when they arrived in Australia. In this context, in the diary-like account of his

⁴ The image of papers blown around the streets of Carlton also appears in Giorgio Mangiamale's *Il Contratto*, a short film made in the same period. There it serves to underline the sense of alienation experienced by immigrant Italian building workers.

impressions of Australia and his own experience of this country, the Italo-Australian-Triestine writer Valerio Borghese observed:

This is not a city and it is not a rural area; I cannot find a suitable definition. I am certain of one thing only: I don't like it. (Borghese 1996: 6)

Suburbia of the Australian kind did not immediately appeal to the Triestine immigrant. Both visually and socially it offered a reality, an urbanity, that was completely alien to the Triestine experience of city life; and within this reality different habits and different customs prevailed. This is certainly reflected in nearly all the accounts of this early period provided by interviewees and in some instances the physical and social reality proved to be so alien that it evoked a sense of 'un-reality':

The first Sunday that we spent here in Melbourne--six of us, three couples--we took the train from Coburg into the city, to Flinders Street, and it was empty. But we walked, we were curious, we wanted to see and explore the city... Then at a certain point we looked around us in Swanston Street and we realised that we were totally alone... Not a living soul, just the six of us! We felt as if the end of the world had come. It was like the set from a movie, we thought it couldn't be real ... At 2 p.m. in the middle of the city--it was frightening!

The 'strangeness' of the environment and the 'shock' experienced--is lucidly and simply revealed by the declaration of one respondent: '...the most dreadful shock of my life I received when I set foot in Australia.' This is a constant theme in the narratives of all those interviewed. Descriptions of 'empty', 'depressing' streets were provided by the interviewees, who lamented the absence of any form of 'street life' in Australian cities in the 1950s. Statements such as, 'there was nowhere to go', and, 'it was so dead', exemplify the sensations experienced by many Triestines on their arrival in Australia. Importantly, these statements also expose particular social needs and priorities which reflect the urban nature of Triestine identity, as the following description further demonstrates:

They had a lot of meat here, but practically nothing else. At six o'clock the pubs closed and people would disappear from the face of the earth...

In this image of life in Australia provided by a Triestine interviewee, the abundance of meat sarcastically referred to unwittingly becomes a metaphor for the necessities of life, while the pub epitomises Australian social life. Inherent in this description are the 'urban values' of the interviewee, for whom the 'bare necessities', such as food, were seen as almost of secondary importance, especially in comparison to needs that can be termed to be of an essentially recreational nature.

In his autobiography, *Inside Outside: Life Between Two Worlds* (1992), Andrew Riemer describes similar sensations and sentiments being experienced by his own family on their arrival in Australia in 1947. His family, from Budapest, shared this distinctly urban outlook:

So powerfully ingrained within their consciousness was the image of European city life... They longed for a world where you could go for a stroll in the evening to do a spot of window shopping or meet your friends in a cafe'... What we were conscious of were the miles and miles of... mean bungalows, ...a depressing world of dormitories where there was no need to walk the streets unless you had to 'go out' to get something done... (Riemer 1992: 27, 28, 44)

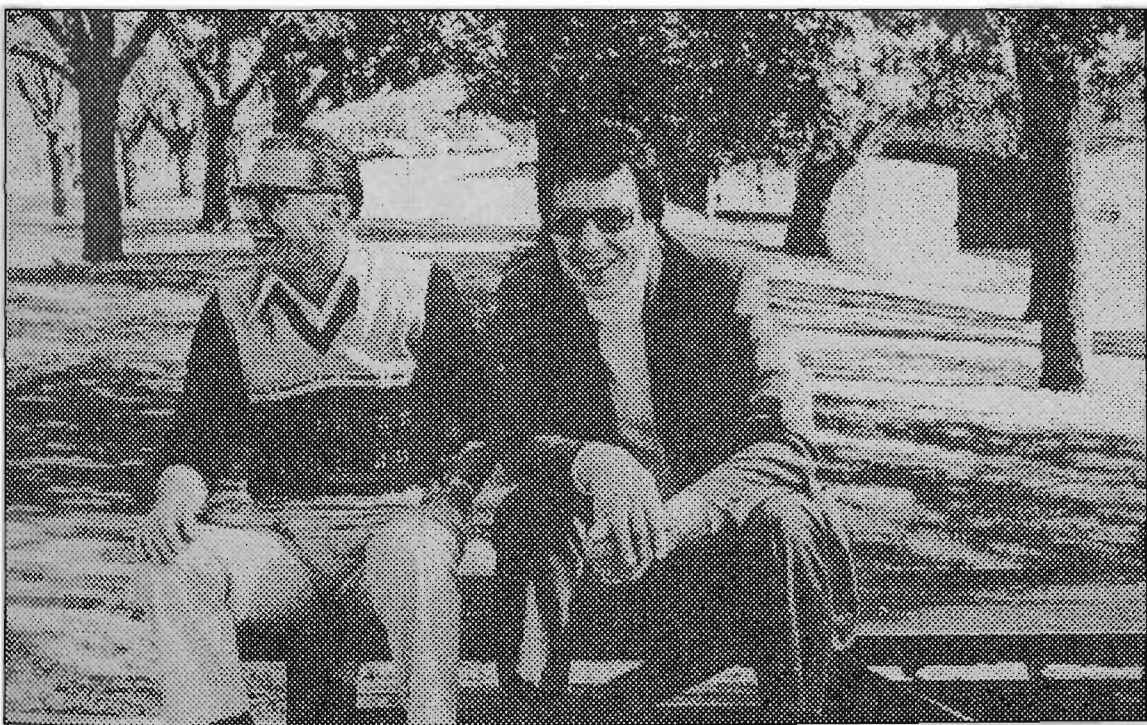
Reimer's description of his family's reaction to Australia and what it offered encapsulates the reactions and sentiments expressed in the narratives of those Triestines interviewed. Initially, what all the respondents missed most was a 'lifestyle' that had been moulded both by their Italianness and their essentially urban habits. While the *passeggiata*, the evening stroll, is an intrinsic part of Italian urban culture, it is in essence, a ubiquitous Italian ritual that finds expression in many Italian towns; and hence what distinguished these Italian immigrants was not so much their 'longing' to re-create the *passeggiata* in Australia, but their nostalgia for a world that reflected urban habits and a cultural reality that had historically found its roots in the old Hapsburg Empire. For the Triestines, consequently, the *passeggiata* or the promenade in the city streets, also represented an opportunity for friends--both male and female--to meet in cafes, in a tradition that reflected the culture of a distinctly urban Italy but also of Central Europe:

In the evening, particularly when it was warm, we were accustomed to going for a stroll and then going to have a coffee... In Trieste on a Sunday morning you would also go--have something to drink, an aperitif, and meet with friends...

It appears that while the absence of any comparable establishments in Australia helped form indelible memories amongst all those interviewed, in many instances, it led to an initial shift in habitual patterns of behaviour, as many Triestines began to meet and socialise within the confines of each other's home. Paradoxically, it was also this 'shift' that became one of the building blocks of the Triestine community in Melbourne. Like the experience of Bonegilla, for respondents--and for members of the Triestine community generally--these early years represented a time of consolidation: their identity had been challenged as the new reality imposed a set of environmental restraints on their behaviour, and they found solace within a growing network of Triestines.

Just as these Triestine immigrants had experienced alienation from the Anglo-Saxon world with which they were confronted, the strangeness of this new environment was not, furthermore, always mediated by a sense of belonging to a wider Italo-Australian community already established in Melbourne. If anything, a cultural cleavage with this community was at times also experienced, as the testimony of these interviewees lucidly reveal:

During those first years in Australia, ... we would go for a walk in the evening, but I was left with a sense of desolation because there was nothing here. I remember living in Brunswick and



Guido Franchi and fellow comedian Angelo Cecchi relaxing on a park bench, Melbourne, 1970s. *Triestini d'Australia*

Kensington; there were many Italians living in these suburbs, so we would go into those Italian espresso bars that were only frequented by men. These places gave us even more of a sense of desolation and I think that they were quite sleazy...

and

...In Trieste we were used to going to cafes, so here in Melbourne I remember going into one of those espresso bars with a friend of mine, who happened to be pregnant at the time. When we walked in, there were no women--only men--and they stared at us as if we were from another planet... You can imagine when we ordered some milk with cognac, like we used to when it was cold in Trieste, ...they looked at us with horror and told us that we should go to an Australian pub...!

From the retelling of such experiences it is clear that both these women had not only felt alienated from the wider society, but they had also come to realise that they would not fit comfortably within the Italo-Australian structures of that period. The Italo-Australian men present in the espresso bar on that day had clearly questioned and rejected the 'Italianness' of the two Triestine women by pejoratively suggesting that they belong in an Australian pub. The process of defining group identity in itself implies the dual process of inclusion and exclusion, and on remembering these particular moments of their immigrant experience these women reveal not only the 'urban nature' of their specific Italian cultural habits, but also the complexity of the process of 'exclusion' and the forces present in the new society that helped further mould their sense of identification. By exposing a facet of 'otherness' and difference--which in some respects distinguished the Triestines from other Italian immigrants and allowed them to become consciously aware of this difference--these experiences undoubtedly helped consolidate a specific Triestine identity. It became therefore a fluid and dynamic identity, tied to both the past and the present, one that strengthened a growing sense of 'community' within the group.

With a clear sense of their own identity and an acquired understanding of their new environment, Triestine immigrants were able to establish patterns of behaviour that were reminiscent of the 'lifestyle' they had left behind. For the Triestines, part of this process entailed the adoption of what Pascoe (1992: 94) describes as 'placemaking strategies',

which includes the ritualisation of activities and the taking over of a particular territory. For Triestine immigrants in Melbourne this meant finding a suitable establishment that would provide them with a place where they could meet after their *passeggiata*. The obvious choice of the Triestines, who were then still influenced by an urban identity that attracted them to the central business district of Melbourne, was a cafe' called the 'Legend', which, in the 1950s and 1960s, was situated in Bourke Street, not far from Swanston Street, and next door to where the old Tivoli theatre once stood. The cafe' itself had Greek proprietors, but a number of Triestine women, including two of the interviewees, had initially found employment in the cafe' and a network of Triestines soon flocked there on Saturday mornings, before the cafe' closed at 12 o'clock:

Our people would come into the city in the morning, do a bit of shopping, and then go there... It was a regular appointment for all Triestines. Each week on a Saturday morning we would meet at the Legend to have a chat and have a coffee because we all had this desire to stay together.

...It was like a small island in the city centre, like a small piece of Trieste...

Whatever time you walked into the Legend, you would always come across at least three or four Triestines. They made good coffee--it was like in Trieste... Going there was like holding onto what you were used to, your habits...



Anna Cecchi and Anita Zabotto serving at the Legend, Bourke Street, Melbourne.

This ritual of meeting other Triestines in the city cafe' was quite casual and informal, yet it provided, in Pascoe's terms (1992: 95), '...a new and different relationship between the inhabitants of a space and the territory itself'. As a consequence, this group's initial feelings of alienation began to dissipate and their own sense of cultural identity was once again re-established and re-enforced in a new context and a new environment. As the network of Triestines in Melbourne began to expand, they also began to patronise, although to a lesser extent, other cafes within the central business district, and subsequently Pellegrini's in Bourke Street, and Via Veneto at the top end of Collins Street, also became two other well-known 'meeting places' of Triestine immigrants. It was initially within the confines of these establishments that the Triestines, as a small, and under certain aspects distinct, 'community' of Italo-Australians, attempted to establish what can be termed as meaningful and satisfying social relationships which were to provide them with a shared sense of cultural continuity. It was from these locations hence that Triestine immigrants organised the first group excursions and outings in a manner that clearly reflected their distinctly European urban ways.

These were not, however, habits that could withstand the forces of change inherent in the reality of a different cultural and physical environment. Meeting in cafes in the city centre was not always a practical solution, particularly on a Saturday morning when many Triestines were now committed to overtime work in their various places of employment. With life centred around suburbia and many Triestines now settled in the north western Melbourne suburbs of Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds, the custom of meeting in the city was not always the most congenial solution to meeting the social needs of this group. However, while the city centre did not remain the focus of Triestine recreational and social life, the café as an informal meeting point continued to play an essential role, and consequently various cafés, in many instances run by Triestines themselves, were established in the suburbs in the 1960s-- particularly in suburbs such as Moonee Ponds and Ascot Vale. In Moonee Ponds we were told that 'there was a coffee shop owned by Triestines'. Meanwhile in Union Road, Ascot Vale, 'Demetrio', a milk bar that was part of the old cinema (in the mid-1970s the cinema was bought by an Italian family and converted into a reception centre) also functioned as a meeting place for many Triestines. In contrast to the Italian 'espresso bars' (that had mushroomed in all the suburbs with a high population of Italians) which were predominantly the domain of

men, cafés such as ‘Demetrio’ provided the Triestines with ‘familiar surroundings’ in which both men and women could feel at ease. Ironically, just as Triestine women had felt ill at ease frequenting espresso bars, so did the ambience of ‘Demetrio’ prove disconcerting to some other young Italian male immigrants who misconstrued the presence of women in these establishments:

The bar Demetrio was a place where many Triestini went, ...especially after work. It gave you somewhere to go before going home again... Many Triestine women went there because they used to stop off and do the shopping in the Italian grocery store nearby... One time there was a group of women, all Triestine, drinking coffee, chatting and smoking, and this young Italian fellow walked in [and] his eyes nearly popped out of his head, he was all excited because he thought we were all prostitutes sitting around waiting... The owner had to calm him down and explain to him, and she told him that it was best if he left.

During this early phase of the migration process other Triestine meeting places had also included ‘Don Camillo’ in West Melbourne, ‘La Scala’ in Droop Street, Footscray, as well as ‘Bar Barcola’ and the ‘Castel Felice’, both situated in Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds. ‘Bar Barcola’ was named after a locality in Trieste and the ‘Castel Felice’ after one of the immigrant ships that had brought Triestines to Australia. These two establishments, together with the local pub situated on the corner of Mt Alexander Road and Maribrynong Road in Ascot Vale had, however, attracted the patronage of mainly Triestine men who were involved or interested in, the newly formed Triestina Soccer Club. This period thus marked the beginning of slow but progressive change in some of this group's ‘habitual ways’, and by the early 1960s the Triestines, who now no longer frequented the city locales that had once been their preferred meeting places, became drawn into a different cycle:

The Triestini used to go there... in the city, on a Saturday morning, but then they formed the Triestina soccer club and it helped bring a lot of people together, it ‘shifted’ the [focus of] the community...

Just as Cinel (1982) found for San Francisco, research by Pascoe (1987) has confirmed that immigrant groups unwittingly settle in patterns which reflect their *paese*. In Melbourne’s main Italian suburb of Carlton, for example, the Trevisani and other North Italian migrants were found multiply dispersed throughout the locality, while the immigrants from

Matera were found to be bunched together as if they still lived in agrotowns. Although the Triestines had in the first instance, as previously noted, settled throughout all the traditional 'Italian' suburbs of Melbourne, after a series of relocations they also chose to live in close proximity to one another in the adjoining suburbs of Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds, at some distance from the large majority of other Italo-Australians who had settled in Melbourne's inner northern suburbs. Although the Triestines had in the first instance sought the cultural comfort provided by the Italian *ambiente* of suburbs such as Carlton and Brunswick, they had generally also felt comfortable in an urban setting and had quickly fostered and further developed their own distinct sense of community by finding their own niche in the city centre.

Thus while the majority of Italo-Australians sought to create a new *ambiente* for themselves in Carlton, the Triestines had readily accommodated themselves to what was already available in the wider Australian society. However, although the Triestines had sought to transplant and re-create their own way of life in Melbourne, the contexts had been different. Far removed from the city of Trieste, the ritual of meeting in cafes, for example, eventually lost its meaning in the sprawling metropolis of Melbourne. Despite this, it had helped focus this group's sense of identification. The Triestines' interaction with other Italo-Australians and the wider Australian society, furthermore, highlighted both contrasts and similarities in personal and familial values. This factor also provided fertile ground for the building of a community that would continue to manifest a sense of ambiguity towards the Italo-Australian reality of which this group was now part.

A PARADOXICAL EXPERIENCE

A distinguishing characteristic of this group of Italian migrants is undoubtedly observed in the way the Triestines experienced and organised leisure time in the new society. In recalling their life in Trieste before migration, interviewees revealed that although the period after World War II was experienced as a time of uncertainty, it was also remembered with fondness as a time of youth. It was a time when a variety of social, recreational and sporting activities punctuated the working week and rendered life enjoyable:

...After working in a confined space indoors, in a stuffy office for so many hours a day, my Sunday off, which was usually spent outdoors, was absolutely essential... I enjoyed spending time outdoors with a group of friends.

This highlights the fact that a particular feature of urban, industrialised society is the division of time. While in rural societies time is perceived in terms of natural cycles that provide a sense of continuity, in contrast, the fragmentation and division of time inherent in industrial-urban societies creates a distinction between 'work time' and what is perceived as 'free time', or rather, 'leisure time' (Cavallaro 1981: 56-57). Cavallaro's study of Calabrians in Bedford, Great Britain, for example, reveals that Calabrian immigrants exposed to both concepts of 'time' as a result of migration, were unable to integrate completely into the new temporal dimension, and that subsequently, 'leisure time' was continuously transformed into 'work time', with migrants establishing and cultivating vegetable patches (*l'orto*) which served to reconnect them to rural culture and to the concept of time experienced in terms of cycles (1981: 76). A similar pattern of behaviour can also be observed in Italian immigrants who migrated to Australia from a rural background.

However, while for these immigrants the habits of the traditional Italian peasantry have found expression in the backyard vegetable patches and the ubiquitous, annual *salsa* rituals of Italo-Australian suburbia, for the Triestines this world was as much an alien one as was the reality of Anglo-Australian society:

...When we rented our own place, ... I planted flowers in the garden, I loved all the flowers here, and you would see the gardens of the houses, ...having lived in an apartment, you know. But the landlord was Italian and he was annoyed; he told me it was a waste of space and that flowers are for the dead...

In the backyard there was this area where they had cultivated potatoes. We had to dig everything up and plant grass because we didn't know the first thing about growing vegetables, and, besides, after working all week there was already enough work to do in the garden...

...My son came home from school and told me all his friends who were Italian were making the *salsa* and bottling tomatoes... For them it was something the family did together and they told him it

was fun and my son wanted to be able to say he did it too, but it wasn't something we had ever done...

In this context, although the physical diversity of the Australian city had contributed significantly to feelings of immediate disappointment and alienation, the Triestines as a group did not experience an overwhelming sense of culture shock. For the Triestines, who had always experienced time as 'fractured' and divided, there were pleasant memories of excursions to *Val Rosandra* (a rocky valley on the outskirts of the city of Trieste), of going to the beach, and of skiing trips with the so-called 'white train' which once took groups of young skiers to the snow fields. These memories in fact fuelled the desire of this group to recreate the lifestyle they had left behind. Consequently, just as the typical Italian immigrant experience was mostly characterised by hard work, frugality and a social life centred around family networks and the church, it was above all the exigent and immediate need for a social life--one that could provide relief from the long working week and the restraints of family commitments--that characterised the early immigrant experience of the Triestines. Importantly, it was also on the basis of these experiences that Triestine identity was once again renegotiated, redefined and moulded.

Intrinsic to urban society is the social as well as economic stress on the efforts of the individual rather than the family unit. In this context, a city is characterised by secondary rather than primary contacts. It is a place where urbanites tend to encounter one another in highly segmented roles and associate with a greater number of organised groups--a place, consequently, where the bonds of kinship are often less binding than in rural societies. Characteristically, a number of Triestine immigrants, both male and female, had been members of sporting Associations in Trieste,⁵ and once in Australia they sought to continue with sporting and recreational activities that occupied their 'leisure time'. It was these common 'goals' and interests that also brought the collectivity together and allowed the group to venture beyond the boundaries of an Italo-Australian space and the more intimate social relationships of family life. In Australia, sports such as soccer, bocce and boxing have been those most frequently patronised by Italians (Mosely et al. 1992: 96), and it has been through such activities that members of the Italian community have often manifested an expression of group identity and solidarity. Indeed,

⁵ A number of interviewees, both male and female, recalled having been members of sporting associations and clubs, and the sporting activities undertaken in these organisations had been basketball, baseball, athletics, speleology and mountain climbing.

Triestine males, like their Italo-Australian counterparts, had also displayed a keen interest in these sports, but rather than follow Melbourne's Italian soccer team, Juventus, Triestine males in Melbourne almost immediately directed their efforts and loyalty into establishing the Triestina Soccer Club. In the sport of boxing the Triestines even had their own representative, in the form of Aldo Pravisani, who became Australia's Lightweight champion in the mid-1960s. However, although such sports--the game of soccer in particular--had undoubtedly encouraged a sense of circumscribed community loyalty and belonging amongst the Triestines, these had essentially been male spectator sports which were not inclusive of all members of the collectivity.

Subsequently, in addition to these traditionally Italo-Australian male recreational pursuits, the Triestines were also inclined, particularly in the early period of settlement, to be involved in sporting or recreational activities which were not readily identified as 'ethnic' and that had, moreover, also incorporated the participation of women.⁶ For many Triestine immigrants consequently, an interest in skiing, mountain climbing and the outdoors in general, led, in the first instance, to the formation of informal networks and friendships based on these recreational and sporting interests.

These 'early years' were, for many Triestine immigrants, years of intense group activity that helped expand friendship networks while fostering an understanding and acceptance of the new reality that existed beyond the boundaries of the community itself:

There were a lot of groups of Triestine friends back then... I was happy those first few years because we had a lot of friends, a lot of good company; it was great...

...Those early years were good years, we had a lot of fun, we used to go on excursions all the time, even here. There were many Triestine families who would come on these excursions and we went skiing, to the beach, we would go for picnics and barbecues. We all had young children, but we were well organised... I remember one particular excursion, we had this big group, a good company of friends--young married couples and families with young children--and coming back from a day trip to the snow we stopped at a hotel in the country. We had this big group in the hotel and we were all singing these Triestine songs and the

⁶ Although boxing was not considered an 'ethnic' sport, Italian boxers had achieved prominence in the sport during the 1950s and efforts were made by promoters to secure Italian fighters by sponsoring their immigration.

Australians there, they joined in. They were enjoying themselves too and they began buying us beers...

...Camping trips, going to the snow, we did a lot of things back then... We were probably amongst the first to ski Mount Buller before they built all the facilities, they didn't even have chair lifts, they pulled you up with a rope...

In Melbourne outings were often made to places that reminded the Triestines of their city. Places such as the Grampians and Hanging Rock, on the outskirts of Melbourne, for example, became popular destinations, since topographically they were not dissimilar to the rocky valley of *Val Rosandra* where these immigrants had once spent time in the outdoors. In summer, the beach was another popular destination of the Triestines. 'Beach culture', which developed as part of the city's mass culture, has had a long history in the city of Trieste, and this influenced the habits of the general population which over the years developed a strong sense of confidence with the water.⁷ (Caroli 1996: 50)



Tug of war during an outing, Melbourne, 1960s

⁷ This confidence is exemplified by the Triestine, Olga Bison, who, as part of a challenge, at the age of 85, dived from the Princes Bridge into Melbourne's Yarra River (*Herald-Sun*, 24 January 24 1996: 1).

Consequently, unlike most immigrants who came to Australia with little experience of swimming and familiarity with beach culture (Moseley et al. 1992: 212), the beach became an important point of reference for Triestine immigrants, and part of a 'placemaking' strategy that enabled them to feel at home in the new society. The 'sea-side' fostered an emotional bond and sense of place that transcended national boundaries:

I had been in Australia for six months and I had not seen the sea for what seemed an eternity. And when I saw it I cried...

I couldn't possibly live without the sea, even if it's not in front of your door, you still know that it's close by, that it's there. Take a city like Milan: I couldn't live there, it would be too difficult for me.

Popular amongst groups of Triestine immigrants in Melbourne during the 1950s and 1960s were places like St Kilda and the Brighton Beach baths. Once again, these places were reminiscent of 'home'--both places had bathing establishments with facilities for bathers that included diving boards at the 'deep water end' of the establishment, and St Kilda also offered an air of urbanity which appealed to the Triestine immigrant:

...There was nowhere to go and at least St Kilda was better than other places; it had the sea and there was a bit of movement, a bit of life. In the 1960s there was also Acland Street--the Jewish community had their cafés there--so we would go with other couples, with the family...

In Trieste we had the beach clubs in the city, *l'Ausonia* was one--a type of establishment with all the facilities. So we would often go to St Kilda or to Brighton to the beach. There they used to have the enclosed establishments with facilities, and many Triestines went there because that was the sort of thing they did back in Trieste. In Trieste you had the diving boards and there in St Kilda and Brighton you had that too, not just the shallow water...

By providing a sense of continuity, these activities, which paradoxically also immersed Triestine immigrants into the culture of the host society, helped reinforce a sense of 'separateness' and a distinct sense of Triestine identity. While in the 1950s and early 1960s, for a significant number of Italian migrants in Australia it had been the

Catholic Church that had provided this sense of continuity and belonging, for the Triestines, who had come from an essentially secular society, or at most a society where religion was perceived on a more personal or private level, the church had been an institution with which they did not readily identify. In the period of mass migration following World War II, immediately before the establishment of regional social clubs, Italian community life in Melbourne had centred mainly around the inner suburb of Carlton, the Italian Mass celebrated at the church of the Sacred Heart, and the functions organised in the parish halls in the area. Although Triestine immigrants also frequented many Italo-Australian establishments, including cinemas in which Italian films were screened, in general they did not regularly attend Mass or take part in parish life. Moreover, since as a group they had mostly emigrated as complete nuclear family units with young children (with only a limited number of single males arriving), there was often a limited need for individuals to seek to expand their network of acquaintances outside the community for the purpose of seeking a partner. Networks of friendships amongst these first-generation Triestines thus generally tended to remain circumscribed within the collectivity--with separate nuclear family units forming the basis of the informal networks.

It was within these networks that Triestine immigrants continued to feel most at ease. Venturing outside the confines of the traditional Italo-Australian space had been part of a 'placemaking' process that enabled Triestines to express their identity and to preserve some of their lifestyle habits; however, the process had not occurred without some degree of tension and occasions when an overwhelming sense of alienation from the new reality were still experienced--particularly when negotiation with this reality was not mediated by the presence of other members of the community:

...One evening I decided to go to the cinema. My husband was working overtime that night so I went with my young daughter. We lived in North Carlton and the city centre was close by, so I thought, well I can go to the cinema there. I don't know what I was thinking, maybe that I was still in Trieste. And it was rather scary... I can't remember the name of the film, but it was a horror film and the cinema was filled with bodgies and widgies, carrying on. And there I was with my six-year-old daughter, this young woman by herself with her daughter. I had no idea that at night it wasn't the place to be, ...it was frightening.

Understandably, the apparent ‘strangeness’ of certain ‘cultural practices’ did not fail to provide a sense of culture shock amongst the Triestines. However, the new reality that had confronted Triestine immigrants during these early years had encompassed two dimensions--that of Anglo Australian society, and an Italo-Australian reality--in which regional differences were constantly mediated by the shared condition of being migrants who had been confronted by the consequences of the official politics of ‘assimilation’. The experience of cleavage as well as the perception of similarity with both realities clearly characterised the paradox of the Triestine immigrant experience. As such it was to become an experience that enabled the Triestines to identify an affinity with particular aspects of Anglo-Australian culture while still experiencing a sense of remoteness from the wider society, as the following reflections exemplify:

An Australian is sort of like a Triestine. They both had the mentality of living day to day. When I got here, for migrants everything was work, work, work, it was a terrible shock for us [Triestines], but they [the Australians] were used to drinking their beers and we also drank the odd beer; but even so we really couldn't be part of their way of life...

...The *viva la' e po' bon* attitude of the Triestine was a bit like the ‘work hard, relax hard’ philosophy of life of many Australians, a bit like the ‘she'll be right’ attitude. ...Then in other ways we were different...

This affinity between the Triestines and the Australians is perhaps best understood in terms of social class and the values and mentality inherent to particular social classes in industrial societies. Paradoxically, however, it was the urban and more ‘consumer-orientated’ values that formed an inherent part of the Triestine psyche, and that also served to highlight what the Triestine immigrant had initially perceived as ‘alien’ in Australian society. Just as the sprawling, ‘suburban’ reality of the Australian city had significantly impacted on the Triestines’ perception of life in Australia, ‘first impressions’ also appear to have been tinged with perceptions of the state of fashion in Australian society of the 1950s and 1960s:

What we found when we came you couldn't believe... They were all the same here, they dressed all the same. The men had horrendous square shoes, pants that were wide like this and

haircuts that were cut with a bowl on the head. Unbelievable. Our guys had always dressed in a sporty but elegant style...

...The men were all dressed in grey, but what was amazing was to see was the women with hair rollers walking down the street...

And what was even more absurd was the women who went dancing in the town halls on a Saturday night, they wore these so-called ball gowns, and they would be waiting for the tram... Fancy getting on public transport with a ball gown, it's absurd...

That a preoccupation with fashion had long been part of Trieste's urban culture had been noted in 1905 by James Joyce;⁸ this preoccupation was visibly illustrated in the narratives of Triestine immigrants, many of whom recalled buying new clothes before leaving their city.

Interestingly, even after more than 40 years, particular items of clothing were also remembered with fondness by some Triestine immigrants as they recalled their first years in Australia. This sense of attachment to items of clothing that reconnected the Triestines with their city and their lifestyle is exemplified in the rhyming verse written in dialect by a Triestine immigrant reflecting ironically on his life in Australia:

per quanto no'l me ocori...

penso al mio capoto.

No xe question de bori...

ma'l iera 'ssai finoto.

Sempre me lo ricordo:

De pele de camelo...

portado in brazo a bordo

in caso che xe gelo.⁹ (Varagnolo 1987)

Although the verse symbolically expresses a continued attachment to the way of life and to the identity of the society left behind in the process of migration, such reminiscing also unwittingly highlights the urban, consumer-orientated values of a society where the dictates of fashion

⁸ In a letter to his brother James Joyce had advised his brother to come to Trieste well-dressed, and had noted that '...the Trieste people are great stylists in dress, often starving themselves in order to be able to flaunt good dresses.' (Letter written by James Joyce to Stanislaw Joyce, 12 July 1905, quoted in Hartshorn 1997: 25)

⁹ As much as I don't need it.../ I think about my coat/ It's not a question of its worth/ But it was truly elegant/ Always I will remember it: In camel hair.../ Over my arm I took it on board/ in case of ice and snow.

governed individual behaviour. These values were inherent to the Triestine identity.

The observations made by interviewees about the Australian manner of dress in the 1950s reflect the fact that the urban background of the Triestines coloured their perceptions, causing them to experience both a sense of 'difference' and even of 'superiority' in this regard. However, in other spheres of life and in the negotiation of everyday existence, it was indeed the urbanity of the Triestines that essentially led this group to recognise a degree of affinity between themselves and the wider Australian society. This factor is also reflected in many of the individual narratives of Triestine immigrants:

...I don't think that there was really much difference between our way of seeing things and how the Australians saw things-- personally, after working all day I wanted to go and enjoy myself even if it meant spending some of what I earned... The Australians I worked with had the same ideas, but the other Italians there, they had other ideas...

This interviewee thus explained this consensus in values in terms of the fact that one of his main priorities as a young, single Triestine, had been that of enjoying himself, and to this immigrant such an ethos was more in line with the general Australian mentality and worldview than with the more down-to-earth priorities of members of the Italo-Australian community in the 1960s. Inherent in his behaviour and worldview was not only the concept of the division between 'work time' and 'leisure time', but also the 'consumer-orientated' values of industrial society. Based on these values, for the Triestines, the expectation of what Australian life should offer contrasted greatly to some of the values and the consumption patterns of other Italian immigrants:

In Trieste we lived day to day and by the end of the month we never had any money. We never even dreamed of putting away money to buy a house, we just lived from day to day. Now everyone in Italy buys their own apartment, but then it was different... When we came to Australia buying a house suddenly became important, that's what you had to do, and I suppose that when you are away from your home you need that sense of security. In the beginning, though, it wasn't in our mentality. The 'Italians' made a lot of sacrifices and I suppose that we weren't prepared to go to the same lengths... They watched every penny and they were well organised--they grew their own vegetables, made everything at home, and saved what they could. More than

us [the Triestines]. They lived very frugally and we [the Triestines] used to laugh at them, make jokes, not in a nasty way... But *they* bought the houses and *we* paid them rent! In the end they ended up buying two or three houses and we just had the house that we lived in... That's not say we are not proud of what we have achieved, but we lived differently. I suppose we just couldn't make the same sacrifices because we weren't used to it. That's not to say we didn't experience hard times or make sacrifices, but we tended to live for the day. For example, this friend of mine, he came here in summer and it was very hot, he couldn't stand it, so what did he do? He went out and bought a fan. The fan cost him all the money he had, and then he had to borrow some money to buy food, but he just did it anyway, without thinking too much about the next day, about the future... Later we even joked about it... He didn't have anything to eat but at least he kept cool!

For Italo-Australians generally, consumption patterns were tied to a peasant social system where land ownership and financial security were of paramount importance. (Bertelli 1985: 42) But for the Triestines, meeting 'immediate needs' had often taken precedence, and this behaviour was more in line with the behaviour of the local Australian industrial working class. For the Triestines, the 'Italo-Australian way' of coping with the reality of migrant life was only absorbed in the course of time, after the initial disorientation with the reality that surrounded them had dissipated.

These experiences cannot be viewed as attributes that simply characterise Melbourne's Triestine immigrants. Most importantly, these experiences effectively helped define the conditions of being a distinct collectivity and characterised the Triestine group in relation to its Other(s), or the way in which members of the collectivity defined themselves in relation to their Other(s). The reality that the Triestines had left behind upon migration had impacted significantly on the group. Their initial feelings of homesickness and despair was not only tied to their separation from their loved ones but also to their 'displacement', to their separation from their city and from the way of life they had left behind. By endeavouring to recapture particular aspects of this way of life Triestine immigrants had overtly displayed their loyalties and their identity. The city of Trieste had thus been an important symbol, a point of reference on which the identity of the group was based. As part of the migration process, however, new points of reference had also begun to emerge, highlighting the dynamic nature of identity formation. Clearly, although Triestine immigrants had experienced their new reality in light

of their sense of being Triestines, their negotiation and construction of a Triestine identity in Australia had also occurred in the context of their new experiences.

The 'informal gatherings' of Triestines beyond the boundaries that constituted the traditional Italo-Australian space could be interpreted as part of the propensity of the Triestines to embrace and adapt to new experiences. However, in essence such a practice merely reflected an element of Triestine identity that was destined to become partly static since it remained, at times, incongruous with the new reality. In this context the sense of collective identity inherent in the informal networks that had formed, reflected only tenuous structures that were not impervious to change. Continuity hence was only achievable through some degree of negotiation with the new reality that led to the inevitable formalisation of networks. With the group becoming residentially concentrated in the Melbourne suburb of Ascot Vale and the adjoining



Birthday party for an eight-year-old.

suburb of Moonee Ponds, the sense of collectivity began to take on a new meaning. Various Triestine clubs and associations thus emerged from the already established informal networks of Triestine immigrants in Melbourne. While informal gatherings continued to take place in various establishments throughout the suburbs, it was now more and more through the institutional structure of the 'clubs' that group outings and activities were organised. In Melbourne's Triestine community the establishment of such institutional structures had occurred at a relatively early stage of the migration process, and they soon became important structures in drawing the community together. Their emergence in fact served to formalise and consolidate the sense of 'belonging' and of 'community' that for many had already begun to emerge in Bonegilla. In establishing an institutional structure Triestine immigrants in Melbourne were thus making another clear statement regarding their identity, revealing that it was not simply a form of 'Triestine *campanilismo*' or an expression of regional loyalty tied to the past, but an identity which was also based on this group's collective immigrant experience.

THEATRE AND THE EXPRESSION OF A TRIESTINE IDENTITY

During these years the perception of being somewhat 'distinct' Italian immigrants was undoubtedly reflected in the Triestines' expression of their own sense of identity. With the formalisation of networks in Melbourne in the early 1960s, this expression also took the form of live theatre evenings which were based on the *avanspettaclo* tradition--a tradition similar to 'vaudeville', whereby comical and mostly satirical theatrical pieces and sketches were interspersed with song and dance. These theatre evenings, performed in Triestine dialect, had been inspired by the arrival in Melbourne of a well known Triestine comic and actor, Roberto Ruan, whose stage name was Roberto De Rose'.

De Rose', who immigrated to Australia in the early 1960s to be reunited with his son--who himself had immigrated in the 1950s--came to Melbourne with a life-time of experience in the theatre. During his long career he had worked in theatres throughout Italy as a method actor and comic, and had been one of Trieste's most well known exponents of the *teatro dialettale* (theatre in dialect)--which had characterised the *avanspettacolo* and which was popular in the city during the period between the two world wars. In Trieste, the most famous exponent of the *teatro dialettale* had been Angelo Cecchelin, an actor-comic who

frequently used satire and parody as a means of social criticism in his theatrical pieces. In the 1920s Cecchelin had established his own theatre company in Trieste, and Roberto De Rose' had been part of this theatre group before founding his own group in 1927. (*La Fiamma*, 9 April 1962: 27)

In Melbourne, Berto De Rose' (as he was known) had proposed to do the same, and he made his debut on an Australian stage at the 'La Scala' theatre in the inner-western Melbourne suburb of Footscray on 11 March 1962. (This was the same venue as the café.) The performance, which had been organised by Ferruccio De Castro, and had included the artistic collaboration of Angelo Cecchi and Rossana De Rose', as well as a cast of singers and the *balletto Alabarda* group of dancers,¹⁰ was a great success. (*Il Globo*, 20 March 1962:10) Further regular performances were organised and an amateur theatre company known as the *La*

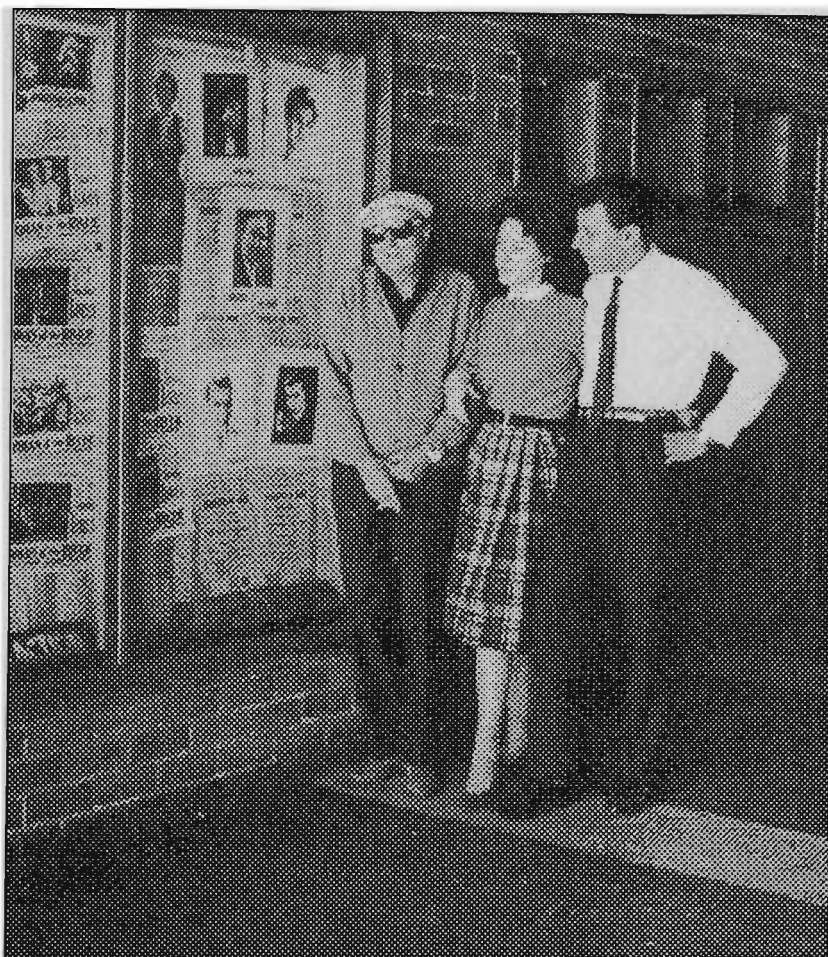


Dodger for Teatro La Scala, March 1962

¹⁰ Other names associated with the performances were Gino Spadaro and Lucy Lucilla. Singers who also regularly appeared on stage were Tonina Chemm and Angelo Bruni. Silvano Furlani directed the orchestra.

Filodrammatica Italiana di Melbourne was established in 1964. The theatre group raised money by organising regular fortnightly dinner dances, held in the Scouts Hall at 273 Victoria Street, Brunswick, and continued to stage 'variety' performances in the Triestine dialect until the latter part of the 1960s, the time of De Rose's death.

The establishment of this group and these performances in dialect represented, for Triestine immigrants, another important point of reference that provided individuals with a sense of continuity. As a 'transposed tradition', the staging of the *avanspettacolo* performances thus became more than an expression of identity in the new society, since, moreover, they reinforced the identity and the sense of 'Triestineness' experienced in relation to both the 'Other' and to the Triestine society these immigrants had left behind. As part of the process of migration and the negotiation of identity in the new reality, the theatre of De Rose'-- now staged on the other side of the world in the Melbourne suburb of Footscray--provided a point of synthesis between past and present which



Comedian Roberto De Rose' with Triestine friends in Melbourne.

re-confirmed the identity of individuals who had experienced cleavage and rupture as part of their experience of migration. In a sense these performances and the presence of the well known Triestine artist, De Rose', had provided, for the group itself, tangible evidence of the existence of a collectivity made up of Triestines from all walks of life-- most importantly, individuals who were defined as representing 'the real Triestines'.

In this context, the formation of the *teatro dialettale* represented more than the continuation of a tradition, but the tradition itself-- for it was in Australia, specifically in Melbourne, that one of the individuals who had embodied the tradition of the *teatro dialettale* now lived:

...De Rose' and his performances were important for me because it made me feel like I had never left Trieste! It was like being *there*, only he was *here*. For the Triestines living in Melbourne, Triestines like De Rose' represented the 'real' Trieste, the *Triestin patocco* [the genuine Triestine]. It was his humour and the characters he portrayed in his sketches and also the fact that he



Dancers part of the De Rose' theatre group in Melbourne

used the Triestine dialect. It was these things that you were familiar with, that you felt an affinity to, and when we were there in the theatre you forgot you were so far away from your city, it was like being back in Trieste. De Rose' died here in Melbourne and it was a great loss to the Triestines here, but also for the city of Trieste--it represented the end of an era.

In the 1960s the *avanspettacolo* performances in Melbourne thus served as an important link to a particular place and time, but they also provided somewhat more formalised occasions during which the Triestines in Melbourne would come together as a collectivity, and during which a shared sense of heritage was unwittingly celebrated and the sense of Triestine identity reaffirmed. Despite the fact that the theatre group, *La Filodrammatica Italiana di Melbourne*, endeavoured to appeal to a wider audience,¹¹ one that shared a broader Italian cultural heritage, the cast and those involved with the group had been predominantly Triestine, the comical sketches continued to be presented in dialect, and even the content material remained of the type generally accessible only to a Triestine audience.¹² These factors undoubtedly delineated a boundary that helped define the identity of the group while 'outsiders' to the cultural milieu were excluded.

Although with the death of De Rose', the theatre group, *Filodrammatica Italiana di Melbourne*, did not remain active, the tradition of the 'comical and satirical sketch in dialect' was continued by Triestines such as Angelo Cecchi and Guido Franchi.¹³ Throughout the 1970s and 1980s performances, although of a more sporadic nature, were organised by the pair, who often performed their comical sketches during Triestine club functions. In the late 1970s, in memory of the comic, De Rose', a variety show during which a prize was awarded to the best performer was subsequently organised by the Triestine club, the Venezia Giulia Police Force (VGPF) Association. This event, aptly named 'Targa De Rose--Aria de Trieste', was held in the Moonee Ponds Town Hall and

¹¹ This is clearly evident from the very name of the theatre group itself --which highlights Italianness while making no reference to a Triestine identity. Fliers and advertising material pertaining to the group also reflect the desire to appeal to a wider audience.

¹² The comical sketches performed were not only in Triestine dialect, but since they often referred to characteristic aspects of life in Trieste, they were not generally appreciated by 'outsiders'.

¹³ Guido Franchi died in Melbourne in 1998. He was well known amongst the Triestine community in this city not only for his performances but also for his writing of satirical vignettes and comical sketches as well as poetry, always written in the Triestine dialect. He was described by Triestine immigrants as someone who had embodied the 'Triestine spirit'.

was directed by Angelo Cecchi and Guido Franchi. On this occasion, although the comical sketches presented by Franchi and Cecchi retained an essentially Triestine character, participating acts--in a similar vein to other 'variety' type performances organised by members of Melbourne's Italian community during these years¹⁴--reflected the varied regional background of the wider Italo-Australian community. However, despite such an attempt at reviving and 'broadening' the original *teatro dialettale/avanspettacolo*, a decrease in interest ensued.

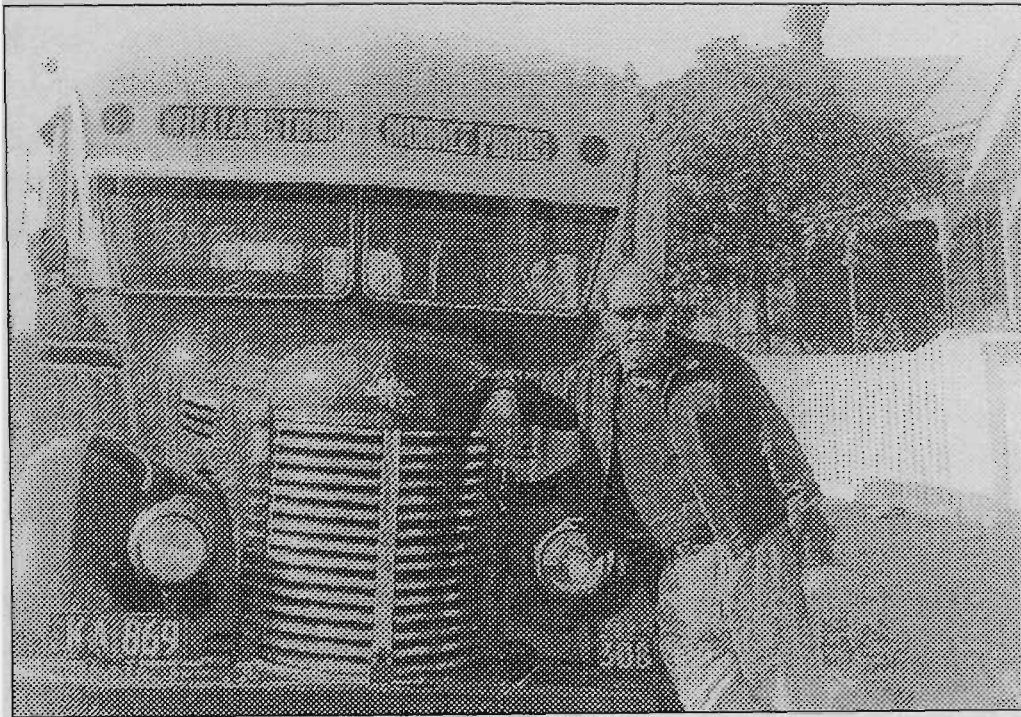


Guido Franchi performing in a comic sketch, probably at the Triestina Soccer Club, 1970s. Here Franchi portrays the Triestine immigrant as a 'tourist', complete with safari hat and binoculars *Triestini d'Australia*

¹⁴ Other variety type shows organised in the 1970s by members of the Italian community in Melbourne included 'Arcobaleno' directed by Rolando Endirgo (who was born in Istria and whose father's uncle was the Italian composer Smareglia) and Melbourne's Italian song festival which was coordinated by Rolando di Bari (who was also born in Trieste).

Chapter 6

Earning a Living in Postwar Australia



Angelo Framalico, bus driver on the Williamstown-Moonee Ponds route

RECRUITMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

The urban background of the Triestine immigrant undoubtedly ensured a familiarity with industrialised society, but most importantly it also resulted in the immigration of a group which was heterogeneous in terms of qualifications and skills, and which comprised a significant number of highly skilled industrial workers. Their value to the Australian economy was obvious to migration officers, both in Trieste and in Australia. Indeed, Australia's particular emphasis on the selection and recruitment of skilled migrants in 1954 resulted in a large number of Triestine immigrants arriving in Australia with specific qualifications and skills which were to allow them

a degree of social mobility from low-skilled to higher-skilled employment.¹ According to Charles Price (1986: 27-29), of the 41,000 Italians who arrived in Australia under the Assisted Passage Scheme, 45 per cent were unskilled, while the remaining 55 per cent had possessed some type of skill upon arrival--and it can be assumed that a considerable number of these had been Triestines.² Moreover, Francesco Fait's analysis (1998) of the 'ship nominal rolls' of migrant ships departing the port of Trieste for Australia (which recorded details of assisted passage migrants, including details pertaining to the 'occupation last performed') reveals that well over half of the occupations of the Triestine Assisted Passage migrants registered on the nominal rolls, belonged to those categories of employment which required formal qualifications. This factor is also reflected in the demographic details provided by interviewees.³

Although during this period the recruitment of skilled workers had become a priority for Australia, the process of selecting candidates had been a particularly stringent one, especially in Italy. Having become cognisant of the problem of the recognition of qualifications of European tradesmen, Australia had dispatched a delegation--the Eltham Mission--to Germany, Holland and Italy, to report on the standards of training in these countries. The findings reported that in Italy there existed such a diversity of standards that it could not be guaranteed that Italian tradesmen possessed the training, employment experience and skills which would meet Australian standards, and the Mission thus recommended that in Italy an individual examination of each tradesman seeking to emigrate be administered. (Salter 1978: 43-44)

¹ As already noted, the recruitment of skilled migrants from Italy predominantly occurred when the Assisted Passage Agreement between Australia and Italy was reinstated in 1954. See Salter (1978), *Studies in the Immigration of the Highly Skilled*, Canberra: ANU Press, pp 32 - 61.

² It can be fair to assume this since, as Charles Price noted in *Southern Europeans in Australia* (p.279), Italian migrants assisted by the Australian Government have predominantly included families from Central Italy and Trieste.

³ The Triestine immigrants interviewed for this study clearly do not represent a statistically large sample, however in terms of demographics they do reflect the statistical data elaborated by Francesco Fait (1998). Of the 75 Triestines interviewed, 57 of these had completed their schooling in Trieste - of these, two had completed University, 15 had a secondary school Diploma or technician diplomas and 34 had completed middle secondary schooling - or what in Italy's educational system was once called the *avviamento* (courses which provided a 'pathway' to employment by combining study and apprenticeships - namely in the skilled trades and in the sales or clerical occupational sectors). Only six interviewees stated that they had left school after completing primary school. In fact the majority (40) had been employed in occupational sectors which had included the skilled trades and clerical and sales (the skilled trades and clerical categories also included those interviewees who had worked for the Allied Military Government). In terms of the sphere of employment, 22 had been employed by the Allied military Government, 19 in industry and 15 in commerce.

For prospective Triestine migrants, many of whom had had extensive experience in some of the major Triestine industries--*i cantieri* (the steel and the ship building industry) and *fabbrica macchine* (automobile industry)-- '[this] *prova d'arte* [practical test] was a nonsense of a test ...' which proved to be no barrier at all in the selection process. In this regard, in 1955 Vincent Greenhalgh, who headed the 'Australian Mission' recruiting migrants in Italy, expressed his pleasure on the large percentage of highly skilled workers recruited in Trieste, acknowledging, at the same time, the impact of such intense recruitment on the local labour market.⁴ Those Triestines who had been employed by the Allied Military Government, in the Venezia Giulia Police Force (VGPF), regardless of their trade or professional qualifications, were however, recruited as 'generic workers' and labourers. The women were classified as either 'dependents' or 'domestics'.

Despite a recruitment process that had emphasised the importance of skilled trades amongst the candidates, there was still much uncertainty and ignorance as to the employment prospects and what was to await Triestine migrants on their arrival in Australia. Essentially, there were no established patterns of sponsorship or patronage amongst this group of immigrants. Migration from the area had been a new phenomenon and there were no established 'chains' or links with the country of migration which could help inform prospective migrants of job opportunities or the economic reality that awaited them. In November 1955, the Triestine newspaper, *Il Corriere Di Trieste*, reported that, according to information provided by ICEM, emigrants embarking the migrant ship *Toscana* were for most part to be directed to work in rural areas where they were to be employed as fruit pickers and subsequently in the canneries:

*Gli emigranti che partiranno con il 'Toscana' sono destinati per la maggior parte ...alla raccolta delle frutta... Secondo le informazioni che ci sono state fornite.. .dopo il raccolto della frutta, i lavoratori saranno immediatamente assegnati ai grandi conservifici della regione...*⁵

⁴ Archivio di Stato di Trieste, Ufficio Regionale del Lavoro e Massima Occupazione, busta No. 143

⁵ 'The emigrants leaving on the *Toscana* will, in the majority of cases, ...be directed to employment in fruit - picking... According to the information received...once the fruit-picking has been completed, workers are to be immediately directed to the large canneries in the region.' (*Il Corriere Di Trieste*, 23 November 1955: 4)

The newspaper did not question the 'suitability' of the urban Triestine for work in the rural sector--preferring not to discourage further emigration by emphasising the positive aspects of employment that could otherwise appear as merely seasonal:

*Come si puo' constatare, si tratta di un lavoro a cicli successivi, che garantisce agli emigrati un'occupazione permanente, non troppo pesante, ed a quanto risulta, molto ben retribuita...*⁶

Their suitability was, however, questioned when in 1955 an Italo-Australian delegation was sent to Italy to assist selection officers in the recruitment of cane-cutters. At the time ICEM had in fact suggested that the recruitment of cane-cutters begin in troubled Trieste, however, the delegation had not considered the urban Triestine as a suitable candidate for this type of work and had 'resisted this suggestion because the sugar industry had had little and poor experience with canecutters from there.' (Douglass 1995: 279). In Bonegilla, meanwhile, many newly arrived Triestines had listened to stories and had witnessed fellow Italians being assigned to work in rural areas and had immediately feared that they also would be obliged to fulfil their contract in a rural and isolated locality. Guido Franchi (1975: 4) wrote in Triestine dialect of this in one of his rhyming parodies, in which he describes this fear with a hint of irony and humour:

*Se senti finalmente bone nove
i ciama per mandarne a lavorar
pensemo come mati chi sa dove?
a cane po dove tel vol andar!*⁷

As Franchi goes on to describe, such a concern was for the urban Triestine, generally unfounded:

*El giorno xe riva' anche per Gigi
ghe domando che novita' che'l ga':
le cane xe pel muss! lui me disi
noi semo tutta gente de zita'!*

⁶ As can be seen, this involves employment based on successive cycles, that guarantees the emigrants a permanent occupation, work that is not too heavy, and which, according to our sources, is very well paid... (ibid.)

⁷ 'Some good news finally we hear/ They'll call us up to send us off to work/ We frantically ask ourselves, "Where to?"/ "Cane cutting! Where else would it be?".

*L'amico Gigi gavu' in pien ragon,
i ga' vardado ben in muso tuti
gavemo vu una gran sodisfasion
i ga' manda' in zita' sposai e puti.*⁸

TRIESTINE SKILLED LABOUR

In postwar Australia it was to be in the cities rather than in rural areas that the Triestines, like many other newly arrived Italian and other Southern European migrants, were to find employment. During this period of postwar reconstruction migrant workers had of course been required for the construction of major infrastructure works. Italians, including Triestines were, for example, among the migrant workers who built the Trans-Australian railway, earlier in the C20th, (Cresciani 1966) and who were involved in projects such as the Snowy Mountain Scheme. Large Italo-Australian companies such as the Electric Power Transmission Pty Ltd (EPT) and Transfield also relied heavily on migrant labour and employed many Italian workers, particularly skilled workers. Subsequently many Triestines, particularly those skilled in relevant trades, were to find employment in these companies. In this regard, as Cresciani highlights (1996: 11), in the EPT offices in NSW only the Triestine dialect was spoken. Meanwhile, in major Australian cities such as Melbourne, an expanding building industry had also begun to absorb large numbers of immigrant labour. However, this industry, which had traditionally recruited its work force amongst Italian immigrants--in particular northern Italians from the Veneto and from Friuli--did not attract the essentially 'industrialised' Triestine worker who had had no prior experience with this type of work. In the period between 1953 and 1954, for the first time Australian factory production had also begun to exceed the output of primary industry. (Collins 1975: 108) Subsequently heavy industry, as well as the manufacturing sector, in fact also became amongst the major employers of immigrant

⁸ 'The day has come also for Gigi/ I ask him what news it is he brings:/ "Cutting cane is for donkeys!", he tells me/ "And we are all just city folk!"/ Gigi my friend was right / They had looked at all of us in the face/ To our satisfaction/ Both married and single to the city they sent.'

labour.⁹ It was thus primarily Australian industry that served as the first point of entry into the Australian work force for both skilled and unskilled Triestine workers.

Triestine migrants, who had already been part of an industrial labour force, subsequently integrated quickly and well within the economic structures of industrialised Australian society. Despite the fact that in reality no qualifications were automatically recognised and that the unions--concerned that the sudden influx of what was often thought of as cheap labour, would erode the conditions and entitlements of Australian workers--endeavoured to impede the employment of immigrant skilled workers with what was best described by interviewees as 'exaggerated requests for documentation and proof of qualifications and ability', most Triestines with trade qualifications generally had no problems in finding suitable employment:



Bookbinders from Trieste, 1968 *Angelo Cecchi*

⁹ Many Triestines with trade qualifications were directed to work in the steel works at Port Kembla in Wollongong, NSW and this resulted in the development of a significant community of Triestines (and Julians in general) in the area.

Only a few days after my arrival, a friend, a person I had known in Trieste, contacted me and told me there was work available for qualified tradesmen like me. He got me a job. It was so quick that I had to say, 'At least wait a week until I get adjusted!' ...What I found with my trade was that Australia was very behind, very antiquated with work practices. Because the Triestines, the ones with trades, were highly specialised, they stood out here in Australia.

Skilled Triestine workers arriving in Melbourne almost immediately found work in the many factories and engineering workshops around the city, and quickly established a reputation as highly skilled, competent workers who were sought after by employers, as interviewees further explained:

When you went to see about a job they would ask, 'Where are you from?' and you'd say, 'Italy'. 'Yes, but what part of Italy?' 'From the North'. 'But where in the North?' 'From Trieste'. And they would say, 'Yes, yes okay'. They took us on immediately because the Triestines had a reputation...

One Triestine tradesman in particular is well remembered amongst members of Melbourne's Triestine community. Named Marino, this Triestine immigrant had been nicknamed *manine d'oro* ['hands of gold'] for his ability. The story goes, in fact, the 'the boss bought him a house so that he would stay working for him'. Because Triestine migration was not characterised by an already established chain which channelled newly arrived migrants into certain industries or work places, particular factories or workshops employed predominantly Triestine workers because of the reputation of the Triestine tradesperson as an efficient worker and because of an existing network of friendships based on past work affiliations. (Many Triestine immigrants had been 'work mates' in Trieste where they had been employed in the city's major industries.)

As with Italian immigrants generally, established networks within the community enabled both skilled and unskilled Triestines to establish themselves economically. From the mid-1950s to the latter part of the 1970s, in the inner Melbourne suburb of Brunswick, *Lux Foundries* employed numerous Triestine tradesmen as well as unskilled workers in general. The foundry, which became known amongst the Triestine community as *Ferrier* (being a truncated version of the Italian word for

foundry, *ferriera*) was part of *Chef*, the producers of kitchen stoves. (The company was later known as Craig & Seeley and was subsequently incorporated into the Southcorp Group.) For many Triestines in Melbourne *Ferrier* was in fact the first point of entry into the workforce in Australia, just the first of many moves and changes in occupation. For others, however, the company provided a source of long term, stable employment and it remained dominated by a Triestine workforce for many years. At least initially, however, employment at *Ferrier* offered members of the community a sense of belonging and continuity, as one interviewee noted when recalling his period of employment there:

They were all Triestines there, there were some Italians from other regions, but not many. Only the boss wasn't Triestine--he was Australian. Even though I had never done this type of work before and that I didn't like it, I really did like working with other Triestines...

In Melbourne's inner west, in the traditional working class suburbs of Footscray and surrounds, new industries and factories were also making the most of the influx of immigrant labour in the area, and in the nearby suburb of Tottenham, a factory which had only just begun producing conveyor belts in steel was to become another point of reference for skilled Triestine workers. In Paramount Road, Tottenham, *Mechanical Services*, as the factory was known, also employed predominantly Triestine workers. One former employee who came to the factory straight from the Bonegilla camp and remained there until his retirement in 1992, recalled his own experiences and how the factory had benefited from the contribution of Triestine labour:

The Triestines made that factory! The owner of the factory had just started out on this venture, he had taken out this big loan and when he realised that these young guys did precision work--that they didn't make one mistake--he was happy to hire only Triestines. That's how I got the job, even if I didn't have trade qualifications myself. At first I worked there as a labourer, and then one of the managers, who was also Triestine, mentioned that I had worked as a driver in Trieste and so they helped me get my endorsed license and I began making deliveries around the city. But the others, they were all people with trades who came to Australia with a lot of experience. They were fitters and turners who had worked in the automobile industry in Trieste. They did excellent work and their experience was priceless.

These were skilled people who knew everything about the work involved--drafting, everything. And the boilermakers too, with their experience in the dockyards, they knew their trade well... Do you know what it means to complete a project without making one mistake? This factory made big conveyor belts, all in steel, for quarries, and when he got his first big jobs, sometimes these workers would see the drawings and send them back saying, 'This is wrong. we can't do this', and they were right. If they would have gone ahead then half way through the job they would have had to throw everything away. Can you imagine the costs involved? The experience that these guys brought with them, the fact that they could start and finish a job competently, saved that factory a lot of money. The owner trusted these workers. So you can understand why the owner wanted to employ Triestines. But it wasn't only the experience of this particular factory and I think I can say that in all the other factories that 'our' tradesmen went to it was the same...

The automobile industry, historically a large employer of immigrant labour, was another industry in which many Triestines had often begun their working lives in Australia. At Fishermans's Bend in Melbourne, the Holden Motor Company offered employment to both skilled and unskilled immigrant labour. Within the structures of such a large organisation a degree of mobility was often also possible, and it was not unknown for Triestine tradesmen to work their way up the occupational ladder--from the factory floor or workshop, to foreman and to supervisory positions which often required greater technical know-how, competence and responsibility. Even in cases where a degree of downward mobility was initially experienced by skilled or qualified Triestine workers forced to accept positions as process workers or labourers, this was generally only a temporary phenomenon which was often remedied as soon as employers became aware of the level of skill demonstrated:

At first they didn't believe my trade qualifications... Then when they realised that in two hours I could finish the work that it took others all day to complete, they put me in the office and they sent me back to school--they found a place where I could study drafting...

However, although for many of the skilled Triestine workers international migration from one urban locality to another clearly did not

result in downward mobility, for those who held qualifications that had once provided them with access to the professions, finding work in their particular field of endeavour was often more difficult and required determination, frequent changes in employment and in many instances also the willingness to retrain. Although significantly fewer in number than the skilled tradesmen, among those Triestine immigrants who had been in possession of formal qualifications upon migration, were also a number of Triestines who had completed high school, diplomas which qualified them as technicians in various fields, and in some instances university degrees. Often having held administrative positions with the Allied Military Government, mostly as part of the Venezia Giulia Police Corps, before migration, these immigrants had experienced first-hand the sense of precariousness that had engulfed the city after World War II, and, once in Australia, they, like many other qualified migrants, generally found themselves forced to accept what work was available to them.

For a small minority of qualified professionals who had worked for the Allied Military Government in Trieste, long-term employment within an Anglo-Saxon structure had nonetheless, undoubtedly helped provide some prior knowledge of the English language, as well as an understanding and appreciation of Anglo-Saxon institutional structures and work practices. In such cases the determination to find suitable employment was often more intense and focussed, and the difficulties experienced minimal, as an account by an interviewee who had worked as an architectural draftsman for the Allied Military Government reveals:

...I could already speak English. ...I had been head technician, head draftsman for the Allied Military Government for four years, and this experience had improved my English, my understanding of the culture... I knew exactly what I wanted to do when I came to Australia. I knew I wanted to continue to study architecture. Here I studied at the University of Melbourne and at RMIT. I came in 1956 and I had no difficulty at all. At Melbourne University I sat for an examination and I was given credits for what I already knew... When I came here the Triestines that were here were all very negative, and they said, 'You'll see, you'll never work in your profession!' Instead, after three days, I was already working. I actually had a choice of jobs. One was for a large architectural office, another was for a small architectural office, while a third option had been working for the Government. I chose the small firm; it was in Toorak. There I had to

deal with all aspects of the work as well as adjust to the Australian accent. But I had no problems whatsoever. ...I worked and studied. I worked in this firm for many years and it gave me great satisfaction and I remember it with appreciation. In Italy it would have been difficult, there would have been so many factors to deal with--you couldn't really operate outside the politics--I found the Anglo-Saxon culture 'cleaner', more progressive, everything functioned with more logic...

Experiences such as these, were however, generally not the norm. The majority of those Triestine immigrants who had been employed by the Allied Military Government prior to migration, in fact arrived in Australia with very little, or with no knowledge of the English language.¹⁰ And the process of a satisfactory 'occupational integration' was often a prolonged one. Such a factor was highlighted by most of those interviewees who arrived with professional qualifications, and is further supported by details to be found in a survey of postwar immigrant professionals working as architects, undertaken in 1971 by Salter (1978: 140). The survey reveals that five respondents with qualifications from what was recorded as the 'Trieste Technical Institute' had registered with an unidentified State Registration Board (and had received exemptions for parts of the examination set by the Board) in 1963. Considering that mass migration from the city of Trieste had all but come to end by this time, it is evident that these Triestine professionals had indeed experienced some setbacks before attempting to establish and regain their occupational status.

Generally, not only were immigrants' qualifications not recognised in Australia, but poor English language skills, lack of local knowledge, and lack of knowledge of Australian institutions, all often thwarted efforts made by many Triestine immigrants to improve immediately their employment status. Australian authorities in Bonegilla had been, moreover, more concerned with placing people in employment quickly, rather than with providing advice or taking into consideration past employment experience and qualifications, and initially expectations were mostly not met:

¹⁰ In a survey conducted by Nodari (1991) amongst 196 Julian immigrants (including Triestines) resident in three Australian cities, it was found that approximately 80 per cent of these could not speak, read or write any English upon their arrival (p.67).

...They sent us--me and my husband--to work for Downer, who was the Minister for immigration. It wasn't what we expected. According to the interpreter it sounded as if it was going to be totally different... We went there, but it wasn't for us, because in reality they were looking for a *contadino* and a domestic, and we had never done this type of work. We stayed three weeks.


The process of finding employment appropriate to the qualifications one possessed was, consequently, often a rather arduous one, which generally involved a considerate and helpful 'Australian boss' who helped direct the particular individual in the right direction. For one interviewee, who had worked as a surveyor, and subsequently for the Allied Military Government in Trieste, establishing a new career had initially involved working in numerous factories around Melbourne before being encouraged and helped to retrain at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT):

In the beginning I was disappointed, but there was a lot of work around, and so I changed jobs always in search of something better... My first job in Melbourne was with General Motors Holden, only for about a week or so, then after that I went to *Ferrier* where I worked as a spray-painter... Then I went to another factory, The Australian Radio Corporation, Astor, I think it was. There I worked as an inspector. Then one day during tea time I was reading *The Sun* newspaper, and I saw that they were looking for draftsmen, so I went to my boss who was Dutch, and I explained, 'It's like this... They are looking for draftsmen, can you help me?' And he took me to the engineer who headed the section where I worked and we talked and he said 'All right, I'll give you six months to prove yourself!' After that time I just continued. Naturally I went back to school, I went to RMIT, and later I became head draftsman there at Moorabbin. From there I moved to [inaudible], ...where I was also head draftsman, and then in the end I went to the Board of Works, once again as head draftsman. I stayed there until I retired.

In the 1950s the need for skilled labour, and in particular the 'unsatisfied demand' for professional workers in the engineering and technological sectors (Salter 1978: 67) had, in the final analysis, provided a degree of opportunity for advancement to those Triestine immigrants who had possessed some form of formal technical training and qualifications.

Although, in most instances, as immigrant workers they undoubtedly had had to overcome some initial difficulties, once these barriers had been overcome, satisfactory economic integration into the wider society was possible. For those Triestines with more 'generalist' or non-technical qualifications, finding employment commensurate with qualifications was, however, generally much more difficult:

...I worked for Pirelli, the tyre factory--in the office there. Then I was a Sergeant in the Venezia Giulia Police Corps. ...But they noticed Pirelli [on my resume] and they sent me to Dunlop tyres, of course not in the office but in the factory!

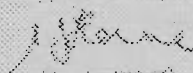

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
DATE: 15/11/58
BY: [REDACTED]

TO: THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE
FROM: [REDACTED]

RE: Conciliation & Arbitration Act 1946-48

During a visit by an Arbitration Inspector to the premises of the Lee Valley Ry. Ltd., it was found that during the period you were employed by that Company within the past twelve months you had not been paid the correct shift penalty rate while employed on a permanent night shift. The amount of the underpayment was £1.2.8, from which 3.0, tax has been deducted, leaving a balance of £1.4.8, which has been collected on your behalf. A cheque for same is enclosed.

Yours faithfully,

(S. J. JONES)
Inspector-in-Charge,
Arbitration Inspectorate.

Enc.

Angelo Cecchi gets wage justice, May 1960.

In many instances this kind of experience led individuals to seek employment and status within the structures of the 'Italo-Australian community'. Valerio Borghese, the Italo-Australian writer from Trieste, had experienced these difficulties first hand. He had been actively involved in the politics and problems that had assailed his native city before immigrating to Australia, and arrived in Melbourne with journalistic experience (Abiuso et al. 1979: 169), but his qualifications and experience had proved useless. Initially finding employment as a labourer with the Victorian Railways (also a large employer of immigrant labour), his search for more 'suitable' employment led him to work for various businesses owned by members of Melbourne's Italo-Australian community. (Borghese 1995: 17-26) Eventually he settled for employment at Australia Post, undertaking further study for a Masters degree and teaching Italian. Similarly, Alessandro Faini, who had been an Inspector in the Venezia Giulia Police Corps (Faini 1984: 3), spent many years as editor of the Melbourne editions of *La Fiamma* newspaper.

TRIESTINE WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

While the skills of Triestine migrant men received at least some degree of recognition in the workplace, the skills of migrant women, including those of Triestine women, were all but completely ignored by both Australia and Australian employers. Although Italian immigrant women were, upon migration, mainly classified as 'dependents' and 'domestics', their participation in the Australian work force and their economic contribution has, however, been of paramount importance to Australian society. In the postwar period, immigrant labour provided a significant proportion of the work force for most Australian industries, particularly manufacturing; and, according to 1966 census figures, 55 per cent of Italian-born women in the work force were at the time also employed in this sector. In the clothing and textile industries, moreover, 48 per cent of the workforce had been made up of immigrants (Collins 1975: 113), and it was predominantly in this sector in which a strong concentration of immigrant women, particularly Italian-born women, could be found.

In this respect the fate of Triestine women arriving in Australia in the mid-1950s was initially no different to their Italo-Australian counterparts. Like their compatriots who had immigrated from rural localities and small villages, and who had never before been part of an industrialised workforce, work on the production line and as machinists in clothing factories was a new experience for Triestine women. While a number of interviewees had been employed in clerical work, or more generally in service industries, particularly in the retail sector, before migration, industry in Trieste had mostly gravitated towards shipbuilding and the mechanical trades--a sector in which women were traditionally not represented at all. Consequently, despite the fact that unlike many other Italian women who had come to Australia, many Triestine women had possessed experience as paid workers in an urban, industrial economy, once in Australia they were, however, forced to adapt to a reality in which their original occupational status was most often lost.

The fact that many Triestine women had already worked outside the home back in Trieste, coupled with the reality that ‘...in Australia too, one wage was simply not enough’ in order to achieve the economic security and a dignity of life that they had expected, meant that as immigrants Triestine women were generally eager to find employment. While the exigent need to contribute economically meant that Triestine women sometimes also took in lodgers in order to supplement the family income,¹¹ as part of the immigrant mass generally considered to be ‘factory fodder’, newly arrived Triestine women, like many other Italo-Italian women, mainly found employment in the factories as machinists and process workers or as cleaners in hospitals and office blocks. These jobs added to the culture shock already experienced in other spheres of life. They were tedious and monotonous jobs and the working conditions and workers’ rights in these jobs often left much to be desired; and immigrant women in general experienced gender as well as racial and class exploitation in the workplace. Although Triestine women were in many instances, not new to institutionalised gender inequality in the workplace, already having experienced it first hand before their arrival in Australia:

¹¹ Huber (1977) notes that women from northern Italy, in this instance from the Veneto region, were more likely to supplement the family income in this manner. Although Triestine women did at times take in lodgers, this was not generally the norm--mainly because Triestines generally immigrated as complete family units and there were comparatively fewer Triestine single males. Added to this was also the fact the Triestines had also remained circumscribed within their own networks.

After the war they brought in a new law, that any woman who married could automatically be dismissed, and so I lost my job because of marriage after thirteen years of working in the office of an insurance company. In 1955 when I married this law was still applicable. I am the victim of a law that today no longer exists. But this was the law then and any company was free to enforce the law if they so wished. If a particular company chose not to, then fine, but the reasoning behind it was that in 1945, when all the men who had been called into the army returned from the war, they needed work and so the women who were married were dismissed, a few at a time maybe, but they were--for example, in my place they employed a young graduate who had just finished studying...

They soon discovered the Australian reality to be no better, and in many respects it was felt by most female interviewees that workers' conditions and entitlements in Australia had left much to be desired. Although an expanding economy had generally made factory work easy to find, many of these workers soon learned that they could be fired at the whim of bosses and supervisors:

...My child was often sick so my boss said to me, 'You've had too many days off work', and I was fired...

and in the early years this often led to an almost continuous movement from one factory to another. The precariousness of this situation was especially felt in the textile industry where in many small factories migrant employees were often not unionised. Often the slightest fluctuations or downturns in the economy could thus result in the loss of a job and of income:

When we arrived my husband soon found work, but it was close to Christmas time and the factory closed for the holiday period, and there was no money coming in. In the factory where I had just started to work they sacked a lot of the women because the boss said that business was slow, and so I was without work. ...We had no money at all and I was going to all the clothing factories around Brunswick, Carlton and Fitzroy, asking, 'Have you got a job for me?' In 1958 the economy was not too good... I had never seen an industrial sewing machine in my life and at that moment wherever you went they were asking for women with experience, so you had to lie, but then if you weren't fast enough, bad luck!

This was a totally new reality for many Triestine women workers who had come from situation where as workers they had at least been provided with some basic rights:

In Italy if you had a job they couldn't sack you just like that. They had to pay you, they had to give you your entitlements, your *liquidazione* [a form of redundancy payment]; this was the law, so at least you had something. But here one day you could be working and the next day they would say to you, 'You finish today...'

Work in factories exposed migrant women not only to exploitation but also to sexual harassment. As one woman recalled, 'The foreman used to slap some of the women on the backside as they walked past...' And this was most often accepted-- although not always without a sense of resignation--as this same interviewee remembers, 'And the *Triestine* used to tell the foreman off, swear at him in dialect.'

Few options were, however, available for migrant women such as these. Regardless of qualifications, skills and prior experience, factory and unskilled work was generally the only type of employment most easily accessible:

If you didn't find work in one factory you tried somewhere else, but you could always get something... I had never used a sewing machine, but that didn't matter, they showed me what to do... This was the type of work that was easy to find...

Such work did not, however, bring with it a new-found sense of financial independence or freedom, but rather the political powerlessness inherent in the status of 'migrant worker'. However, like other migrant women workers, Triestine women duly accepted both the work and their subaltern position. At most the women lamented the work to be highly unpleasant and even dangerous:

...It was horrible work, those industrial machines were fast, the garments used to slip out of your hands, one time the needle went right through my thumb but the next day I was back at work...

and

Soon after I arrived in Australia I found work in a factory where they made swimsuits... When I walked in, the first thing I saw was these rows of machinists working, they were all with their head down, they weren't even allowed to lift their heads, they couldn't exchange a word... I started and I sat down at the machine, but, after a while, on impulse, I got up to leave and a friend of mine who had started with me said, 'Are you crazy, where are you going?' I can't remember, but I think I said, 'I'm not going to work in a place like this'. Then later I found out that other places were the same. I hated factory work, it was like being in a prison...

Coming from a background whereby those women who had had experience in the paid work force had mostly been employed in administration or the retail sector, factory work was often seen as an unpleasant but unavoidable starting point:

I worked for about three months in a factory but it wasn't the job for me. After that I worked at the Legend café in the city. Another two Triestine women also found work there. They wanted Italian people who knew about coffee and cafes. We didn't know how to make coffee, but we were used to going to cafes to drink coffee, and this Calabrian who worked at the Legend had also worked in Trieste before coming to Australia, and he told the bosses--who were Greek and Australian--he knew us girls. When I started, I didn't know a word of English but we helped each other and we learned. I worked there for seven years and later I found work in a pharmacy close to home. I worked there part-time for a while and then I went to work for Myers in the city. I worked in the fashion department and I enjoyed it; there I could dress nicely. I always enjoyed dressing nicely and working with the public.

To be able to work with the public, as a significant number of Triestine women workers had been accustomed, had required of course an acceptable level of knowledge of the English language. However, in the assimilationist climate of the 1950s and 1960s, the Government's institutional response to migration had left much to be desired in terms of the provision of suitable adult English language classes. Although instruction in the English language had for many begun back in Trieste--where introductory classes had been organised for intending migrants--and had

subsequently continued on board ship and at Bonegilla, once migrants left the camp and became absorbed into the work force, classes were only made available in local schools, after working hours. Thus migrants exhausted from the day's work, which in most cases also included long hours of overtime, and families with young children, if they managed to attend at all, often dropped out quite quickly:

...The first thing they offered us were jobs in factories. ...No assistance. I remember going after work to classes in a school. It was an old State school and the teacher who taught us would say, 'This is a cup', and then like parrots we would repeat this, one by one around the class, so by the time the teacher went around the whole class most people would be asleep. We were all tired from a long day's work and it was very difficult for us to go and sit in a cold classroom in the evening. It was impossible and even more so for those people who had small children. It was a totally ridiculous situation. The English that I learnt was what I learnt myself, little by little--reading the newspaper and listening to the radio...

Working in factories where the work force mostly comprised other Italian migrants also exacerbated the problem of language acquisition, since they could always get by with just speaking Italian. For a number of Triestine women who had been eager to learn the language, this problem was however, tackled with obstinate resolve and a determination that often involved tediously reading English language newspapers with the aid of a dictionary and taking note of unknown vocabulary. As a group, Triestine women were generally well aware of the limitations inherent to not possessing, at the very least, an adequate command of the English language. The ability to identify the problem and to endeavour to resolve it on an individual level reflected the literate, urban-industrial culture of Trieste that had also fostered a sense of individualism and personal responsibility:

When I arrived what upset me most was not knowing the language, not being able to understand what they were saying. I suddenly realised that if I didn't learn the language my life would be very limited, so I got down to it and started to learn immediately...

For a few, this problem was hence even seen as best resolved by employing a private tutor:

I did have some private lessons, and I did that for over six months and it helped me quite a lot. At night I came home and I went to my lessons across the road from where I lived and then after about six months I went on to do an advanced course... Those lessons helped me a lot and I learned... This helped me find a better job and in the end this job, working with the public, helped improve my English even more...

The majority of Trieste-born women interviewed did indeed feel that over the years they had acquired a more than adequate grasp of the English language. By the late 1960s and 1970s a number of Triestine women who had arrived in Australia in the 1950s aged in their mid-twenties and even thirties had in fact found work in some of Melbourne's large department stores, such as Myer and David Jones, and chain stores such as London Baby Carriages and Sussan. A few who had had clerical and accounting experience in Trieste also found work in an office environment, although like the men, they also remained predominantly relegated to working for Italo-Australian firms such as, for example, the well known 'Borsari' store situated in Melbourne's Lygon Street.¹² A small number of Triestine women as well as Triestine men were, in the course of the 'immigrant experience', also to become self-employed.



Yolanda Grison in her Ascot Vale shop, 1971

¹² One of the interviewees recalled working in the office at Borsari, while Borghese (1996) writes of his wife's experience working as a bookkeeper for the same firm (7-28).

TRIESTINES IN BUSINESS

Historically a large proportion of Italian migrants have made the move from being wage earners to becoming independent workers as owners of small business (and in some instances even large businesses), and in this regard Collins (1992: 76) notes that 'by 1981, 24 per cent of Italian-born males in the Australian work force were categorised as employers or self-employed, while only 16.4 per cent of Australian-born men were in this category'. He notes, moreover, that while this phenomenon can be understood in terms of the 'desire for independence', inherent in the worldview of the Italian peasantry (see also Price, 1963: 142; Pascoe 1990), and in some instances in terms of the continuity of a family tradition, the move into small business ownership is also seen as reflecting the immigrants' negative experiences as wage labourers. In other words, the endeavour to form a small business was related to the discrimination experienced in the work place or a 'blocked' or downward social mobility: generally, as unskilled manual wage earners, the migrants' prospect for advancement in the workplace was often very poor.

Even in this respect the immigrant experience of the Triestines has proved in some ways to be different to that of their Italo-Australian counterparts. No official statistics are available in terms of the region or place of origin of self-employed Italian migrants, however, both the study by Nodari (1991) and the present research,¹³ although both not based on a statistically representative sample of the community, seem nonetheless to lend credence to the view that as a group, Triestine immigrants have not as readily as other Italian immigrants, embraced self-employment as an alternative. Although Triestine immigrants came from what was historically defined as a 'mercantile' society, where the economic value of entrepreneurship had prevailed, Triestine society had subsequently developed an industrialised urban culture which was generally marked by class differentiation. Unlike the Italian peasantry and the more 'independent' artisans generally representative of skilled workers from rural centres, Triestine workers had mostly comprised both skilled and unskilled industrial workers, all already well accustomed to the status of 'employee'. Thus while Italian migrants from a peasant background aspired to

¹³ The study by Nodari (1991) which included 194 Giulian respondents from various Australian cities, highlights the fact that at the time the survey was conducted, of the 51 per cent who were still working, only 19 per cent were 'independent workers' (1991: 49). The present research also reveals that of the 75 Triestines interviewed for the study, only five had ever been self-employed in Australia.

independence and the artisans sought a sense of continuity in employment status, for the Triestines such a sense of 'continuity' was, in the process of migration, achieved in the workplace as employees, and further reinforced by the fact that for many, the skills, trades and qualifications they had brought with them had in many instances allowed them to experience both a degree of job satisfaction as well as a degree of mobility that had satisfied their aspirations.

Despite this reality, a number of Triestines did however, for varied reasons, establish their own businesses throughout Melbourne. The statistical analysis carried out by Nodari (1991), which also compares the number of Julian migrants categorised as self-employed before migration, to the number of those who became self employed in Australia, suggests that Julian immigrants (including Triestines) have, in general, demonstrated a slight tendency to become self employed in the migration process. In this regard one interviewee suggested that 'opening up your own business in Australia was not as complicated as in Italy because you had less bureaucracy to deal with'. Moreover, in some instances the business established by the individual did reflect the fact that the Australian reality offered few immediate prospects for immigrants to enter a particular field.



Signora Crescini in her camera shop, Brunswick, c.1970.

One Triestine immigrant who had worked as the official photographer for the Allied Civil Police Corps in Trieste, arrived in Australia in 1956, and seeing few possibilities for employment in this field in the wider society, had by 1958 opened up his own photographic studio which he ran until 1972. The business was located in the heart of an area of Italian primary settlement, the inner northern suburb of Brunswick. During this time however, the photographer also found himself using his artistic talents in other ways, and over the years he accepted work as a sign-writer while also spending some time as a scenographer for the Melbourne Theatre company. In the 1960s the Crescini photographic store was also located in Sydney Road, Brunswick. The store offered photographic services as well selling photographic equipment and even a selection of Italian books and magazines to the many members of Melbourne's Italian community that resided in this inner city locality. At the time, the proprietor, Gianni Crescini, also used his skills and knowledge to write a regular column on the art of photography for the Italian-language newspaper, *Il Globo*; however, he later retrained as a teacher and went on to teach Italian up until his retirement. In both cases the status lost in the process of migration was re-acquired through self-employment - an activity that also allowed the two men to expand their fields of endeavour.

Also servicing both the Triestine and the wider Italo-Australian community in this early period was *Pasticceria San Giusto*, at 163 Lygon Street, East Brunswick. The cake shop first opened its doors in the mid-1950s. It was perhaps the first business established by a Triestine immigrant in Melbourne and it was established by the Triestine pastry chef, known as 'Gino pasticcer', who in Trieste had worked for *Pirona*, one of the most prestigious cake shops in the city. The East Brunswick *pasticceria* soon became a well-known institution amongst Melbourne's Triestine community who flocked there to buy the distinctive cakes they had enjoyed in Trieste. As one interviewee remembered, the *Pasticceria San Giusto* made the *paste creme* [vanilla slices] and the *Krapfen* [doughnuts] just as they had made in Trieste. Initially they had also made some of the 'smaller' style cakes popular in Trieste such as the traditional 'marzipan pig's head', but these sweets proved popular only with the Triestines and were generally considered 'too small' by many of the other Italian customers, and so were discontinued. However other traditional Triestine sweets, such as the *presniz*, were made specifically for Christmas and Easter, and even after the original Triestine owner sold the business to other Italians in the 1970s, the *pasticceria* kept its original name and continued into the 21st century to use

many of the recipes of the original owner and to attract the custom of Triestines from around Melbourne.

Like many of the businesses initially established by Italian post-war immigrants, among the first to be opened by the Triestines had in fact been those that had required only a minimal capital outlay. During the postwar period numerous espresso bars and cafés that attracted the custom of predominantly Italian males appeared in those suburbs with a high density of Italians, and similarly a number of cafés were also established in the traditional Italian suburbs by Triestine immigrants.¹⁴ These establishments often served the function of ‘meeting place’ for Melbourne’s Triestine community; however, with the advent of ‘social clubs’ their popularity began to wither and by the late 1970s many had become defunct. The cafe *Don Camillo* has been one exception. Originally established in the early 1960s by the Triestine boxer, Aldo Pravisani--who subsequently returned to Trieste--and situated in the inner-city suburb of West Melbourne, this establishment, which was once mainly frequented by members of the Italian community, particularly Triestine sporting enthusiasts and Triestine families, had ironically, by the 1990s become part of Melbourne’s own developing ‘inner urban lifestyle’. In this context, like the *pasticceria San Giusto*, as a cultural institution, the cafe has continued to assert a Triestine identity while accommodating itself to the broader cultural milieu of Melbourne.

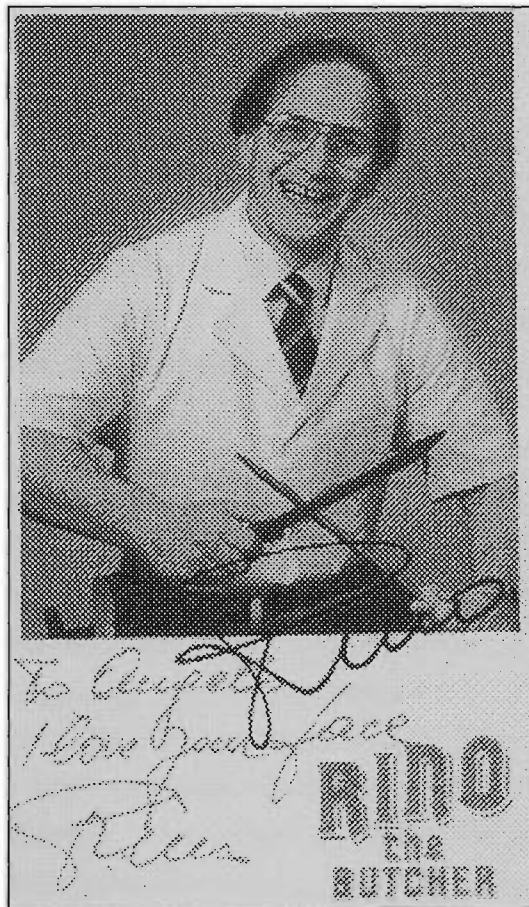
These ‘early cafés’, of course, were not the only type of small business established by Triestine immigrants in postwar Melbourne, and in the 1960s a relatively small number of Triestines also established various other types of retail outlets. These establishments did, however, like the cafés, remain predominantly tied to the ‘enclave economy’ of the Italian community. In the early 1960s Gulli’s Gift shop in Elgin Street, Carlton, sold an array of goods, including children’s wear, *bomboniere*, and even Italian chocolate Easter eggs, predominantly to members of the Italian community. However, like ‘the photographers’, Triestines generally established small businesses not only in predominantly ‘Italian neighbourhoods’ but most importantly in fields of endeavour in which they already possessed some skill or knowledge. Included in this group were, for example, self-employed hairdressers, butchers, as well as dental technicians and proprietors of heavy engineering workshops. In the instance of the latter, rather than seen as a means of regaining ‘employment status’, the

¹⁴ For example, the Miramare Espresso Bar in Sydney Road, Brunswick.

choice to establish a business was often made on purely economic grounds, as one interviewee explained:

...I changed jobs and worked in different places, then I worked in the dockyards as a skilled worker but the pay was poor so I left and I opened up my own engineering workshop...

Small businesses such as these, moreover, were often not exclusively bound by an 'ethnic enclave' economy, and often provided for the immigrant proprietor added opportunities for contact with the wider society. In the mid- to late-1960s, 'Rino the butcher', as he became known, became a regular guest on one of Melbourne's most popular evening variety-entertainment shows, 'In Melbourne Tonight'. His initial appearance on the show was tied to his business activity as a butcher; however, the witty remarks exchanged between the show's host and Rino ensured his continued presence on the show and a cult following. Although the presence and acceptance of 'Rino the butcher' on Australian television during the 1960s



Rino the butcher appeared on popular Australian TV program, In Melbourne Tonight, early 1960s.

heralded the wider acceptance of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic culture' professed by the multicultural policies of the mid-1970s, Rino's 'ethnicity' had defied the then stereotypical conception of Italian migrants. As such he had presented the image of a migrant who was able to grasp the nuances of Anglo-Saxon culture, and was hence seen as more 'assimilable' and thus acceptable to a cultural industry which has long been known for its reluctance to acknowledge the migrant presence.

In the final analysis, the urban-Triestine was reflected in the type of business activity selected by Triestine immigrants, choosing to become self-employed. In this regard, while a small number of self-employed Triestines in Melbourne opted to establish retail businesses and even 'food related' businesses such as restaurants, they have, however, been notably absent in the fruit and vegetable trade, a business niche that was traditionally dominated predominantly by Southern Italians of rural background. Self-employed Triestines have, moreover, also been absent from the building industry, a business sector in which northern Italians from the Veneto and Friuli have long played a pivotal role in Victoria. This phenomenon is also best understood in terms of the 'industrial' nature of Triestine identity. Triestines in general did not arrive in Australia with experience in the building trade, as in Trieste work in this industry was historically undertaken by 'immigrant labour'--Slovenes and sometimes Friulians seeking seasonal work. As Pascoe (1992b) notes, the construction of buildings requires not only hard work but also a degree of teamwork that is not required of industrial workers, and it is this 'team spirit' that is most often found amongst the northern Italian peasantry more so than amongst members of an industrialised workforce.

It is not surprising then that the economic impact of Triestines, in terms of both the 'migrant employee', as well as the self-employed business person, has been greatest in those spheres of economic activity that related to the technical and industrial skills that were in great demand in postwar Australia, and that, as a group, the Triestines had brought with them on migration. The impact of these skills is perhaps best highlighted with the example of the Trieste-born architect Erminio Smrekar, who migrated to Australia in 1956. Smrekar, who, after working for a small architectural firm in Melbourne established his own architectural practice in the mid-1960s, has been described as 'a leading individualistic and innovative architect'. Throughout his long career he has taken on a wide range of commissions and his contribution to Australian architecture includes the

design in the early 1970s of what was initially called the 'Old Melbourne Inn', St Vincents Private Hospital, and an array of projects which include various churches, retail outlets, distinctive restaurants as well as commercial and residential buildings throughout Victoria and as well as overseas. As human artefacts, the buildings designed by Smrekar do not fail to display and reflect the architect's values and identity. In Victoria Parade, in Melbourne, the St Vincents Hospital appears as a motel-apartment-like hospital that blends comfortably into the essentially inner-urban environment of the central business district periphery. The Old Melbourne Motor Inn, is yet another example. It is an eclectic building, the facade of which is constructed with a variety of materials, mainly oddments of former buildings that reflect Melbourne's architectural past--without expressing nostalgia for any particular style or era. In this design Smrekar brings aspects of the past into the present in quite a functional way. This reflects his own experience, and his ability as a migrant to relate to the present without feelings of nostalgia, and to feel integrated and even 'assimilated' into Australian society without having distanced himself in any way from his Triestine-Italian identity. Although one of Smrekar's earlier projects, the design of 'Casa D'Italia--a project which was never completed--was criticised as 'inadequate' by the local Italian-language newspaper, *Il Globo*, (26 February 1963: 7), Smrekar has, nonetheless, had a continued relationship with Melbourne's Italian community.

One of Smrekar's first major projects was in fact in Carlton, Melbourne's Italian district, where he designed the Lygon Lodge, a distinctive five-storey motel and restaurant. Other Carlton projects have included the San Giorgio restaurant in Cardigan Street, the design of Lygon Court, a shopping complex with a town piazza feel, and the 'Clock Tower' development which spans between Drummond Street and Lygon Street, and recreates the small village atmosphere complete with an enclosed piazza. Among his other 'Italian community' projects have been the Veneto Club, the refurbishment of the factory in the Melbourne suburb of Essendon that was to become the Triestine's community 'San Giusto Alabarda Club', and a variety of large homes in the suburb of Bulleen which were designed with a distinct 'Mediterranean feel' for an Italian clientele. The most striking of Smrekar's residential designs is undoubtedly 'Miramare', an imposing home built near Philip Island, a rural locality in Victoria. The home was aptly named 'Miramare' (a name used for many seaside villas which in Italian suggests the meaning: 'gazing at the sea') for it offers uninterrupted views of the ocean. However, to Triestines the name is a signifier of belonging, for it

conjures visions of the Miramar Castle built by the Archduke of Austria, Maximilian of the house of Habsburg, and his bride. This Miramare Castle, which is a stark white, turreted, almost 'fairy-like' castle, sits imposingly on a small promontory which juts out into the sea overlooking the bay of Trieste, and is one of the city of Trieste's chief symbolic monuments. In using the name Smrekar is adopting a naming strategy which communicates and reasserts his own Triestine identity--an identity that now sits comfortably in a new cultural landscape.

WORK, IDENTITY, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY

Just as it had for the vast majority of migrants, work assumed a dominant significance in the migrant experience of the Triestines. It not only provided a source of income that allowed migrants to establish themselves economically, but it also helped define their economic and social status and their overall place in the new society. Work provided a sense of identity, not only in the eyes of others, but in the migrant's own eyes. Firstly and most importantly, however, work characterised the essence of being a migrant. 'Everything was work, work, work in Australia' expressed one interviewee in recalling the immigrant experience, while another noted that 'in Australia everyone worked twelve hours a day'. This had been a reality that had shocked the Triestines when they had first arrived. It was not that they had not been prepared to work hard, but an existence focussed on work alone, without time allocated to 'leisure', had seemed, in the first instance, inconceivable. Yet they adapted. They quite readily took on the role and identity of the 'migrant worker', accepting overtime work and even working at two jobs--as a number of interviewees noted, this was probably something they would not have done in Trieste even if they had had the opportunity to do so.

In the postwar era, Australia was seeking and recruiting 'workers' who were to become 'factory fodder', and in the factories the class position and 'occupational identity' of these workers became intertwined with their status as migrants. However, while as migrant workers seeking out a new life in a new country the Triestines had more in common with other Italian migrant workers in Australia than with their Triestine counterparts back in

Trieste, Triestine migrants refused to become entirely absorbed by this identity, preferring to accept it as an identity peripheral to their circumscribed identity as Triestines and more specifically as 'Triestine workers'. 'Our *muli* [boys] were all qualified and highly skilled tradespersons and technicians', was the phrase which in one form or another was reiterated by all those interviewed--even by female interviewees and those interviewees who had made it clear that they themselves were not qualified and had been 'generic workers'. Although implicit in this phrase was a distinct sense of belonging to a group which was delineated, and which distanced itself from the 'other' in terms of occupational status, this was not however, a denial of the Triestine's position as an Italian migrant worker who had been discriminated against and labelled by the adopted society. It was, rather, a statement that both reaffirmed and defined the paradoxical identity of this group as Italian-Triestines in Australia, and part of this identity had become associated with their definition of themselves as workers. In this context, work subjectively became both a 'shared migrant experience' as well as one of disjuncture, and an integral part of the myth-making process that helped sustain the identity.

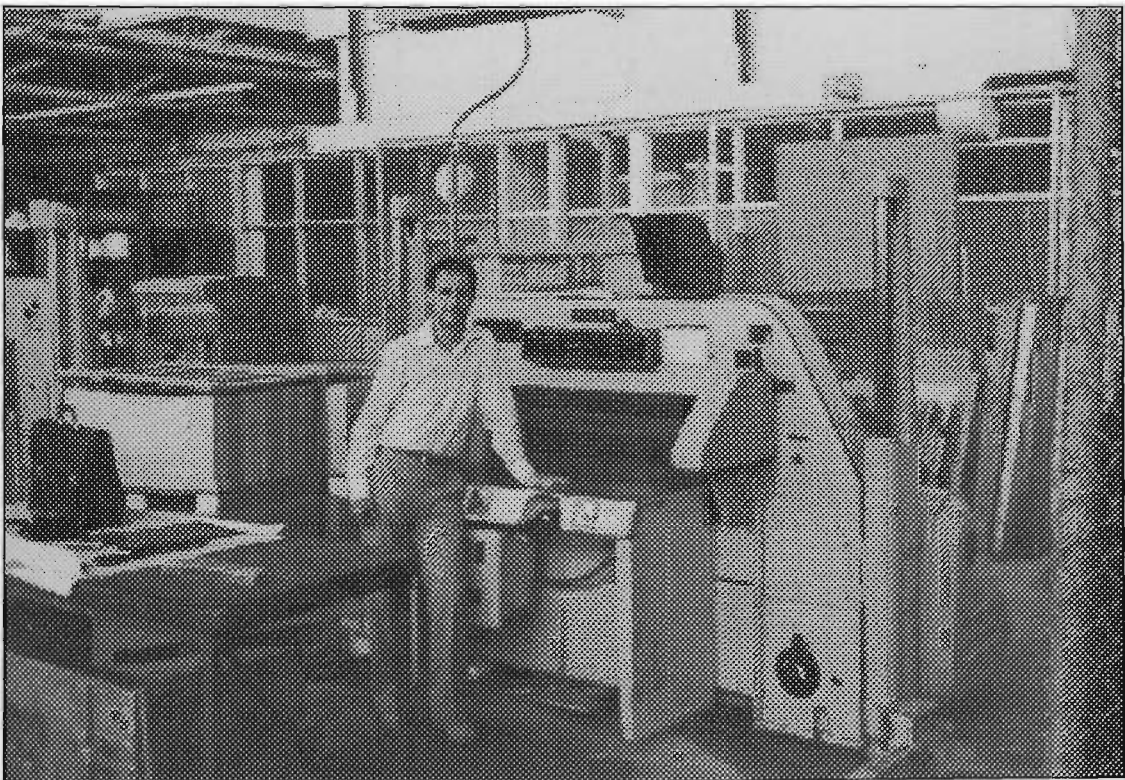
Arguably the workplace had generally been a place of synthesis, a place where social interaction with the 'Other'--especially when that 'Other' comprised Italian migrants from different regions--had indeed helped broaden the boundaries of identity. However, in industries, factories or other places of employment where Triestine workers figured prominently, as they had done so at *Ferrier* or Mechanical Services, social networks remained circumscribed and the language of communication was the Triestine dialect. In such cases even the management was forced to learn the ways of the Triestines, as one interviewee recalled of *Ferrier*: '...only the boss was Australian but he had to learn the Triestine dialect...'; while at Mechanical Services Triestine workers had indeed ably established a connection between the factory and their city, as one former employee explained:

...The boss, he was Australian--one year he went on a trip overseas, and of course he went to Trieste. He wanted to visit the city where so many of his workers came from. And he went to visit some of the guys that had worked for him, guys that had gone back to Trieste. They had kept in contact. Naturally they took him everywhere. He

was impressed because he said the city even had a pub--they had taken him to *Dreher*.¹⁵

Although such circumstances had fostered a strong feeling of identification that in the first instance appeared insular and somewhat static, in effect the social relationships and roles established in the workplace had encouraged the development of a Triestine identity that became reinforced not only through its connection to the past, but more so to a sense of continuity that was adapted and made relevant to the new reality.

While the occupational status of 'skilled worker' had partly defined the Triestine identity in Australia, and endowed it with a positive connotation that was to encourage its maintenance, the concentration of Triestines in particular industries and in particular factories also allowed for an expansion of networks that sustained the development of a Triestine community. Earlier it was noted that as a group the Triestines had settled in the inner northwest suburbs of Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds. Most often these suburbs constituted an area of primary settlement for the Triestines,



Silvio Fantoma, printer, April 1982.

¹⁵ In Trieste the *Dreher* once comprised a brewery where Dreher beer was produced as well as a large *birreria*, as it was called, which was essentially an Austrian-style 'beer house'.

while many others who had initially settled in suburbs such as Footscray, Kensington and Brunswick, were attracted to the area by network connections and the fact that ‘...many Triestines were already living there.’ Although the area was not quite as ‘industrialised’ as other suburbs where Italians had first settled, a number of factories did nonetheless offer local employment to migrants, particularly to the many Triestines now living in these suburbs. Not far from the suburb of Ascot Vale, just across the Maribyrnong River in fact, was the Government Ammunition factory where Triestine men and women had found employment at only a brief commuting distance from their home.

Even closer to many Triestine homes, in Union Road, the main shopping strip of Ascot Vale, was the Four n’ Twenty pie factory. In the 1950s and 1960s the factory offered plentiful employment to any migrant willing to work long hours and shift work, and it similarly became an employer of Triestine labour--mainly Triestine women who had initially sought unskilled labouring work in light industry and manufacturing, but also a number of Triestine men who had no particular skills to fall back upon. In Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds, almost at the door of Moonee Ponds Junction, was also the Lingerie factory, Lilliput Pty Ltd. It was here that during the 1960s and early 1970s quite a number of Triestine women worked as machinists. The factory was conveniently located close to transport and home, and to the Puckle Street shopping strip where a small coffee shop which ‘sold coffee beans and made a good cup of coffee’ had been established by a Triestine couple.¹⁶ It was here that Triestine women, making a dash from the factory at lunch time or after work, often enjoyed ‘a coffee and a cigarette’.

Gradually, during the late 1950s and 1960s, several Triestines had, in fact, also established shops and services in the Moonee Ponds/Ascot Vale area. Further along Puckle Street could be found Gianna’s Beauty Salon and, of course, ‘Rino the butcher’, while just over the railway line, across the road from the Moonee Ponds train station, where Puckle Street becomes Ormond Road, was Svara’s Gift shop. During these early years the Union Road shopping strip in adjacent Ascot Vale took on an even more distinct Triestine flavour. While in Moonee Ponds businesses had then been predominantly ‘Australian’, Ascot Vale had already possessed a somewhat Italian character, and as a number of Triestine small businesses were

¹⁶ This establishment was opened in Moonee Ponds by the son of Demetrio, who had established Demetrio’s espresso bar in Ascot Vale.

established, they provided an added dimension and an important point of reference for members of Melbourne's Triestine community.

Amongst the earliest businesses established in the area by Triestines was Demetrio's espresso cafe at 199-203 Union Road Ascot-Vale. The café was established in the late 1950s by the Demetrio family and was taken over by another Triestine family (the DeMarchi family) in the mid-1960s. As previously mentioned, Demetrio's soon became a meeting place for many of the Triestines that lived and worked locally. Triestine women would often go there after having shopped at the local continental grocery store owned by the De Fazio family (Italians of Calabrian and Aeolian descent), and the local fruit shop owned by the Natoli family (also of Aeolian descent). Further along Union Road, close by to the Four 'n Twenty factory, two Triestine sisters, married to the Pellis brothers, established and ran a small family restaurant, and over the road was Mondo's cafe. A few years later, Renato Scherian, together with a partner, opened up another restaurant at number 213 Union Road; while over the road at number 234 was a bakery run by the Triestine Franz Rustja and his German partner, Annie, or Annuza, as she was known to Triestine customers. To all Triestines in the area Franz himself was known as *el pek*--an old Triestine term meaning 'baker'. Franz, a big man, remembered for his piercing blue eyes, worked alone at making the bread while Annie served behind the counter. He made '... the *cornetto* and *pane all'olio*, good bread just like in Trieste...', and in a way his bakery shop was the precursor to the many 'hot bread shops' later established throughout Melbourne. In the early 1970s, Franz Rustja, and his partner Annie, returned to Trieste and the business was taken over by an Italian family. Years later, in the 1990s, a Chinese family bought the business but continued to make the *servolana* loaf--a loaf of bread named after a suburb of Trieste.

During these years other businesses run by Triestine immigrants were also associated with the area. Fabio Rosin established Rosin Real Estate in Maribyrnong Road Ascot Vale, just a few doors down from Union Road; while the Fortuna family sold ceramic tiles from a small warehouse just down the street from Union Road. At 205 Union Road, the baby and children's wear store, *Bimbi Eleganti*, otherwise known as Grison's Baby Wear, was established by Yolanda Grison in 1965. Yolanda Grison had had experience in children's wear and fashion back in Trieste and the business was named after one of the best-known and prestigious children's wear stores in that city. On the other side of the world, in the suburb of Ascot

Vale, *Bimbi Eleganti* gained a reputation for selling quality local and imported merchandise and catered to a broad customer base that comprised Italians as well as Anglo-Australians who often came from surrounding suburbs to shop at the store. Yolanda Grison remained in business until her retirement in 1982: during this time she was identified by members of the local Italian community as *la triestina*. This 'title' not only functioned to highlight her region of origin, but also identified her as member of a distinct group within the broader Italo-Australian community in the area.

I. GRISON—BABY WEAR	
BIMBI ELEGANTI	
305 UNION ROAD, ASCOT VALE 3032	
Telephone: 37 1571	Date _____ 19__
M_____	
\$____	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* USE OUR CONVENIENT LAY-BY SYSTEM.* PAYMENTS TO BE MADE FORTNIGHTLY.* LAY-BYS NOT RETAINED AFTER 3 MONTHS.	
00049 - 1 ©COTTON CLOTHING COMPANY LIMITED	

Sales docket, Grison Baby Wear shop, Ascot Vale, early 1970s

With many Triestines living, working and even establishing their business in the neighbourhood, a sense of community had indeed developed. These were years when ‘you could go down the street and always be sure that you could exchange a few words in your dialect because there were Triestines coming home from work or doing shopping, maybe sitting in a café...’ Thus, although the Triestines had felt comfortable in an urban setting and had readily accommodated themselves to what was available both within Melbourne’s Italian community and as well as the broader society, the Moonee Ponds/Ascot Vale area became a place of emotional and cultural significance. It was here that Melbourne’s Triestines were able to create their own *ambiente*, their own microcosm, that sat comfortably within the Italo-Australian *ambiente* and provided a mitigating sense of belonging. The placemaking process that had begun when the Triestines first set foot in the Legend cafe in Melbourne’s Central Business District had continued, but this time the result was an expression of a more visible and durable sense of identity. Although years later many Triestines were to move to other suburbs (especially to the newly developing areas of Avondale Heights and East Keilor), and although most of the businesses once established in the area by Triestine migrants had stopped trading by the mid 1980s (a time when many were reaching retirement age), the Moonee Ponds/Ascot Vale area has remained identifiable with Melbourne’s Triestine community. It is, after all, in this area that Triestines chose to establish their clubs and associations--the main institutional structures of the community.

CHAPTER 7

The clubs and associations

THE FORMALISATION OF NETWORKS

Ethnic community organisations, associations and clubs have mostly developed as a result of the formalisation of networks that informally link particular ethnic communities. A network is essentially a system of linkages that connects individuals by creating a common field of interaction and it most often finds its basis in both kinship and personal relationships, with particular common interests or characteristics such as ethnic origin also serving to generate actual linkages. In the case of networks based on ethnicity, family and friends may still initially constitute the original network, with networks coalescing into groups as linkages expand and most people in the network become 'linked' to one another. Common ethnic origin, as well as a shared experience as migrants, both serve to reinforce the web of network ties. Thus as a 'linkage' ethnic origin is more likely than kinship networks to become the basis of the establishment of more formal groups which lead to the establishment of particular ethnic associations and organisations.

Essentially, in the early period of the migrant experience, when many migrants are still unsettled, lack competence in the English language and experience more profoundly the sense of disorientation and cultural cleavage that is typical of the migrant experience, the need for companionship, friendship, group life and a sense of belonging are all factors that act as catalysts that push for the expansion of the personal network. However, the expansion of the personal network, for these very same reasons, remains circumscribed within the confines of the particular ethnic community and it is within these confines that migrants are able to meet often very specific material, psychological and social needs. It is within this context, hence, that the ethnic organisation is born.

In meeting these immediate needs of the migrant population, ethnic associations and clubs also inadvertently help both provide and preserve a sense of continuity between past and present, providing a point of reference that often acts as a safeguard for the individual's sense of personal identity. Hence, while these organisations become established in response to what can be claimed to be real and tangible

needs--whether material, emotional or social--they less explicitly help serve the function of keeping alive traditions and maintaining group identity. As institutions they become the cultural structures of the particular ethnic communities that they represent.

Historically Italo-Australian associations and clubs have also developed as a response to particular needs and the establishment of societies of Mutual Aid, such as the Aeolian Islands Association (established in both Sydney and Melbourne during the 1920s and modelled on the US association), that helped assist Italian migrants in the settlement process before World War II, bear witness to this. However, as well as being an example of an association that has helped meet the immediate needs of its members, the Aeolian club also represents one of the first Italo-Australian associations to emerge as a formalised network from the informal networks and the informal gathering of Aeolian Island migrants in their own homes. In the postwar period, and more specifically during the 1960s and early 1970s, this process was repeated: the emergence of similar regional and provincial institutions in this period underlines the fact that Italians in Australia have never constituted a single homogeneous and socially cohesive community, but rather one based on regional ties (not to mention socio-economic and even other interests). Thus, while associations such as the Cavour Club, established in Melbourne in 1917, embraced Italians of all regions (for historic reasons that the name of the association in itself suggests), most associations that developed during the mass migration period reflect the network ties that can be associated with the chain migration process of the postwar years. During this period 'village' ties and networks emerged as regional clubs that focussed on recreational activities, but the period also witnessed the emergence of sporting associations such as the Marconi and Apia clubs in Sydney and the Juventus club in Melbourne. These associations essentially reflected the main sporting interests of the Italian male immigrant, and it was this interest in the game of soccer that at least initially served to unite Italian males of all regions and provinces; although in some instances, and most specifically in the case of the Triestines, even these sporting associations were affiliated regionally.

The Triestine experience in establishing recreational and sporting clubs has been, from this perspective, no different from that of other Italians groups; since the associations that the Triestines formed on their arrival in Australia reflected their affiliation with their region and more specifically with their city of origin. For the Triestines, in fact, such 'affiliation' was perhaps even more strongly felt since the political

and social upheavals experienced in the city between 1945 and 1954 had left them 'disillusioned Italians'--with often ambivalent sentiments towards the 'mother country'--and had induced in them a heightened consciousness of their own local identity. When the Triestines immigrated to Australia, consequently, they did so with a strong sense of who they were as a group, and this factor can also be seen to have set them apart even from other Julian immigrants. In some instances, therefore, it was regional ties that influenced the development of an association (as in the case of the 'Julian' associations now found in Sydney and Western Australia, for example, that encompasses not only the Triestines but also the 'Istrians', 'Fiumani' and 'Dalmatians'), but more commonly it was the bond that the Triestines had, and still have, with their city, that led to the foundation of specifically Triestine associations in both Melbourne and Adelaide (and even in Sydney the Triestines had initially had a separate club).

Like the Aeolian and many other Italo-Australian clubs, the Triestine associations in Melbourne were founded as a result of the informal networks that linked the community. As a consequence of the migrant process itself, many Triestines already had relatives, friends or even just acquaintances in Australia. This was especially the case with the former members of the Venezia Giulia Police Force who had emigrated en masse. Many of these immigrants had been work colleagues and had shared the same sense of uncertainty with the return of the Italian political administration. Many others established friendships with other Triestines on the ship on the way to Australia; while yet again others found new friends amongst the other Triestine immigrants housed in the migrant reception centres where they were initially housed-- in most cases in the same 'blocks', as was the experience in Bonegilla. Like other immigrants and like other Italian immigrants from the various regions that represent areas of major migration to Australia, sharing the same provenance, culture, and immigrant experience, led to the development of numerous networks that brought individuals together into a group that can be defined as the Triestine community. This was a community that was also to establish its cultural structures in the form of social, recreational and sporting associations.

Before the formation of more formalised structures, however, the Triestines-- like the Aeolian Islanders and Italian immigrants from other regions and provinces--met in people's homes; and for years after many still held fond memories of these gatherings where lasting friendships

were often forged. For the *triestini*, however, the home was not the only meeting place. Transposed from an urban society and culture that had traditionally found its expression in the city itself, the Triestines in Melbourne had immediately gravitated towards the city centre where, as noted earlier, the Saturday morning ritual included meeting in cafés such as the ‘Legend’ and Pellegrini’s in Bourke Street. It was in these cafés that many Triestine families gathered and met, and it was from here in fact that the first excursions and the first ‘community’ activities were planned. The subsequent outcome of these ‘informal gatherings’ and informally planned activities was the formation of quite distinct Triestine associations that reflected not only the Triestines’ experience as Italian immigrants but, at least initially, also the cultural baggage and the way of life that this group brought with them.

CLUBS AND THE FABRIC OF SETTELEMENT

Interestingly, one of the first Triestine associations to be founded in Melbourne was the ‘Triestina pallacanestro’, or the Triestina basketball team--a team that had found its roots in Brisbane but was moved to Melbourne almost immediately as the Triestine presence in the southern city began to grow. The team was founded in 1954/1955, by E. Capolini (who had originally settled in Brisbane), G. Mengaziol and Pecchiari. With players such as Giorgio Corincic, Pasinati (a well-known name in Italian soccer--Pasinati’s uncle had played for the Italian national team that had won the world cup in Paris in 1938), Dessardo, Calligaris, Boscarato, Mansutti as well as other Triestines that had immigrated to Australia during 1955 and 1956--the team participated in the Victorian Basketball Amateur Association championships. In 1962 the team was promoted to the State League (series A) and by 1969 the association had two senior teams (that competed in the VABA 2nd division and CYMS B grade), two junior teams, and a women’s team.

Undoubtedly the team highlighted one of the sporting passions of the young Triestine immigrant, many of whom had played the game themselves in Trieste. However, while many Triestines who were sporting enthusiasts soon became faithful supporters, the association lacked the ‘social’ component that would allow the club to become totally integrated into the broader Melbourne Triestine community. Playing in Albert Park, the team remained successful well into the 1970s but, although social evenings were also part of the sporting calendar, as

an association the 'Triestina Basketball' remained peripheral to the notion of a club or organisation as a cultural structure that would ultimately become part of the 'placemaking' process or part of a 'second home', and what today many Triestines refer to as 'the club'. But, despite the limits of this sporting organisation in bringing together the community, the Triestina basketball team remained an important testimony as to the 'way of life' that these immigrants had brought with them.

Organised sport had played an important role in the lives of many Triestines prior to migration and it seems only natural that this passion remained an essential part of their cultural baggage in Australia. In this context it becomes understandable why amongst the earliest associations to be established in Melbourne by Triestines was in fact also a sporting association called 'Unione Sportiva Triestina'--which was to include under its 'umbrella' a number of different sporting activities.

Apparently

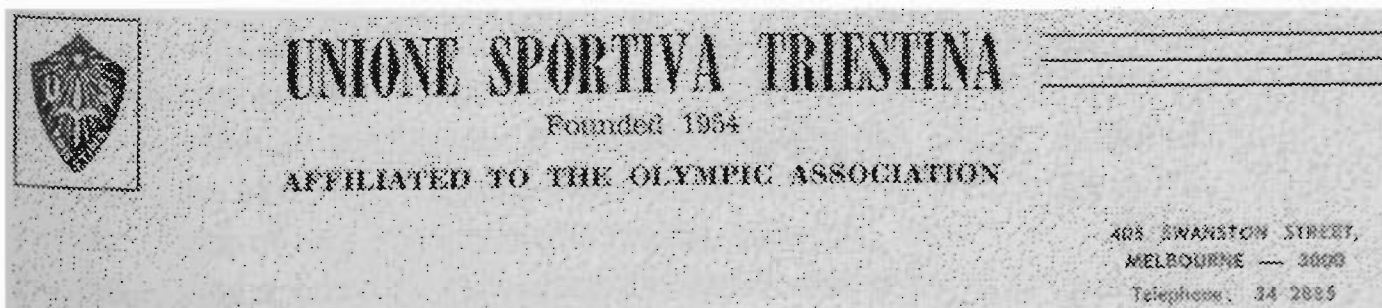
founded in 1954 by a group of Triestine sporting enthusiasts, this association was affiliated to the Olympic Association but in these 'earlier' years it appears to have had no known legal premises of its own. The association however did have its own logo--a logo borrowed by the



Athletics team of young Triestines.

Melbourne association from the 'Unione Sportiva Triestina in Trieste--an organisation that continued to incorporate the city of Trieste soccer team, as well as swimming and water polo teams. At this early point in time however, apart from incorporating the Triestina Basketball club, this association appears to have remained not much more than 'an idea in the making'. 1954 was the year that had marked the beginning of the Triestine exodus and the Triestine immigrants already present in Australia in this period were probably still relative 'newcomers', eager to maintain links with their city, but still possessing few means that would allow them to carry forth an organisation that had been established with the aim of following in the footsteps of its sister organisation--The Unione Sportiva Triestina--in Trieste.

The rare memories and the vague and abstract recollections of this early institution, are today only barely part of the collective memory of the 'older' Melbourne Triestine community, and as such they in fact fail to help shed light on the elusive beginnings of this organisation. What efforts were made to further the interests of this association during these years that witnessed the continual influx of Triestine migrants into Australia and to Melbourne remain evanescent? Perhaps this association's apparent initial failure to take hold beyond the realm of 'an idea' can be understood in light of the web of networks necessary to give rise to such an organisation. It must be remembered that the Triestines, unlike Italian immigrants, for example, from the Aeolian Islands, were not part of a migration process that had spanned over the years. Rather they were part of an almost tempestuous process that resulted in large numbers of Triestines all arriving within a period of approximately seven years, a reality that highlights the fact that for the Triestines time was clearly the essential element required before a web of network ties could be



Letterhead of the short-lived Unione Sportiva Triestina, established in 1954

established and expanded. Once this process had begun, however, the Triestines quickly demonstrated their resolve to symbolically recapture a part of the city and a part of the reality that they had left behind when they had acted on their decision to emigrate. If the 'Unione Sportiva Triestina' that was founded in 1954 had faded into insignificance almost immediately after its inception, lying dormant because the network of Triestines in Melbourne had not yet sufficiently expanded, the association was nonetheless resurrected in 1959 once the numerical strength and the network linkages of the Triestine community had grown and expanded.

In 1959, there emerged a newly established 'Unione Sportiva Triestina' (no longer affiliated with the 'Triestina Basketball' association), registering its constitution and the traditional 'U.S. Triestina' colours of red and white with the VSAFA. For a very brief period of time the official 'home' of this association was a café bar in west-suburban Sunshine owned by Vittorio Marinaro, who for a very short time had also become President of the association. Yet even from this new beginning, the club appears to have had its share of problems, as internal conflict developed in terms of what was deemed to be the particular individual goals of the President as the owner of a café endeavouring to build his business, and the more general goals and needs of the association itself. Marinaro consequently stepped down as President, while the founding executive committee of the association then sought a new 'home'. This committee comprised the honorary President, the President of the U.S. Triestina of Trieste, the Vice President, Mr Guido D'Aquino, the Chairman, Mr Bruno Perentin, the treasurer, Mr Luciano Zigliotto, and the secretary, Mr Bruno Borcich. This association now had a new but temporary 'legal' address based in a private home in the inner-western suburb of Yarraville (at 64 Pentland Parade). It counted 118 members and appears to have drawn much of its membership from the surrounding suburbs of Spotswood, Footscray and Sunshine, as well as from the Moonee Ponds and Essendon area. Once again, in a similar vein to the 'Unione Sportiva Triestina' in Trieste, the Melbourne association planned to initiate various sporting activities including athletics and soccer. It had also aimed to incorporate within its structures the existing 'Triestina basket' (an endeavour that was doomed to fail). Lack of money remained a reality, however, and the possibility of establishing a Triestine soccer team risked remaining a chimera if not

perhaps for the initiative of a Triestine by the name of Attilio Dereani, who while still housed in the Bonegilla reception centre suggested to friends in Melbourne the possibility of organising a friendly game of soccer in Wodonga that same year (as mentioned in earlier chapter).

In October 1959 soccer players from various other teams in Melbourne were given on 'loan' to the U. S. Triestina and wearing the red and white colours of the Italian counterpart in Trieste (guernseys that had been donated by Triestine local authorities) the team reignited the passions of the many Triestine immigrants in Melbourne. It was from this friendly game at Bonegilla that the Triestina soccer team was born. The association was subsequently to find a new home in rooms above the 'Castel Felice' restaurant in Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale, while playing in Ormond Park in Moonee Ponds. However, the costs of maintaining a successful soccer team were high and, although in this period the club counted between 250 and 300 members, it remained plagued by financial difficulties, internal conflict and factional cleavage. At this stage the main focus of the association became the game of soccer and, under the guidance of Bruno Tessari, and later Otello Sandrin, the soccer team began its ascension from the fourth division of the VSF to beating the more prestigious Juventus in the 1st division of the State League in 1963. Maintaining its home ground in Ormond Road, Moonee Ponds (for which a 99-year lease had been obtained), the team continued to have large numbers of Triestine supporters who identified closely with the association and at least initially many supporters brought their young sons along, and with the additional equipment donated by the 'Lloyd Triestino' of Trieste, junior teams were also instituted.

During the mid-1960s, while the association had firmly and successfully established its roots in its home ground in Ormond Park, Moonee Ponds, it had been felt by many members that there was need for a 'social component' to the club. This would allow for the participation of wives and children in recreational and social activities and to ultimately serve the purpose of maintaining Triestine ways and Triestine and Italian culture. Organised social activities had always been part of the agenda even of the earlier association--which in its initial stages had foreseen the provision of a range of activities that were to include not only dinner dances but also excursions, chess competitions and theatre activities. (In fact even before sporting activities, dinner dances and excursions were organised.) Subsequently, with the soccer team successfully established, the need for 'a place to get together' was considered by many members to be the next step in forming an

association that partly reflected a specifically Triestine identity within an already existing Italo-Australian one. It would also meet the needs of a group of immigrants that was still young, active and eager to interact socially with others who shared their world view and their experiences both as immigrants and as Triestines. Without club rooms or premises that could act as 'a meeting ground' for men, women and children alike, sporadically organised activities such as dances and award nights became the only events that brought the community together as a cohesive group. During this period, consequently, members of 'the Triestina', as the association became known, sought solutions to these needs by 'illegally' using a large rented house in Ormond Road in Moonee Ponds for informal gatherings and activities such as card games, for members and their families. Lacking any solid, more formalised structures, and taking on a somewhat 'clandestine' character--since the activities were illegally taking place in the midst of suburban housing--these particular social activities were, however, short lived. But the exigent need for a social outlet for members remained and eventually resulted in the formation of an independent 'social' section of the soccer club. It was during this period that the 'Triestina San Giusto Social Club' was established, expanding its activities to include, amongst other things, athletics for both boys and girls.

The 'Triestina', as the association continued to be called, subsequently became one of the most important structures established by the Triestine community of Melbourne. However, like most associations and, in particular, ethnic associations, the 'Triestina' and the Triestina Social Club were not immune to internal conflict and division. This conflict was in regard to leadership, but, in particular, it was conflict with regard to the common purposes, goals and the direction of the association that eventually led to a split. For some of the executive members of the 'social section', an organised sporting activity such as soccer was seen as financially crippling--since they considered that the money funnelled into soccer would detract from the goal of establishing an institution with its own premises and a physical structure that would ultimately provide a place for all Triestines, young and old alike, to meet and interact and maintain traditions. For others, however, sport was seen as an important activity that would be beneficial to the association since it could act in attracting the interest of Triestine youth, and by doing so ensure the cultural continuity of the association. As a result of these differing points of view no agreement as to the direction the association should take could be attained and, eventually, when compromises could no longer be achieved, a split was inevitable. As a result of that split, in

1969 an association was formed which was to become known as the San Giusto Alabarda Social Club. During these years, members of the Triestine community, and even members of the associations themselves, continued to patronise both associations. Both associations continued along the path to achieving their shared yet contrasted aims. In the latter part of the 1970s, with local government approval, the Triestina Soccer Club built new changing rooms and club rooms (which were colloquially known as 'La baracca' -- 'the hut' or 'the shed', and 'il bunker' -- the bunker) on its home ground in Ormond Park, Moonee Ponds. In 1978 the San Giusto Alabarda' association purchased a factory in Willow Street, Essendon, which was then converted into club premises that would still be occupied by the Association into the late 1990s.

The Triestina Soccer and the San Giusto Alabarda have effectively been the only two Triestine associations in Melbourne to build physical structures that formally represent the Triestine community. However, over the years other Triestine associations, namely the Val Rosandra Club, established in April 1964, the VGPF Association founded in 1972 for ex-members of the Venezia Giulia Police Force, and the 'Movimento Donne Trieste' (Triestine Women's Movement Association, MDT) founded in 1989 have been associations that have also characterised the Triestine immigrant experience. However, while the establishment of so many different associations representing immigrants from one Italian city point to a group that is fragmented and lacking in cohesion, it is also important to understand the relationship of such organisations to one another. In this context, while to a certain extent the cleavages can be perceived as being based on the personal differences and the conflicting ideas, aims and ambitions of particular individuals within the organisation; the development of so many associations and the varied nature of the associations themselves highlight the reality that the Triestines, as a community, are a heterogeneous group of immigrants and that the associations that have been established by this group have not always operated in direct competition with each other. The very nature of these associations in fact characterise the varied experiences, interests and world views of a diversified, urban society.

For example, in 1964 a club called the 'Val Rosandra Club' was formed, referring to that valley in the hinterland of Trieste:

per venire incontro ai desideri di moltissimi ..., per dare agli appassionati della montagna la possibilit  di continuare nel loro sport preferito...¹

Although the association had intended to satisfy any cultural interests with the establishment of a library, its main function had been that of organising outings to places such as Hanging Rock and the Grampians, as well as providing tuition in rock climbing and skiing. During the mid-1960s the association, that was informally organised from the home of the founder in Brunswick, had its own mini bus and organised excursions that met the social and sporting needs of a group of immigrants who had already been enthusiasts of these types of activities in Trieste. In contrast, the VGPF Association was established to bring together a group of individuals who had shared particular experiences at a particular time in Trieste. Despite the name of the organisation, which immediately creates a vision of a particular political situation in the Trieste of the early 1950s, the organisation, however, has never either espoused particular ideologies nor demonstrated any particular political leanings. Most of the activities organised by the association--which over the years have included the ubiquitous dinner dances, men and women's basketball, excursions and trips as well as theatre evenings--have, in fact, been quite similar in nature to the activities organised by some of the other Triestine associations in Melbourne.

'Movimento Donne Trieste', on the other hand, was formed through the initiative of a woman, Lidia Crescini, at a later stage in the migration process, when many women, now retired from work, felt that the existing Triestine institutional structures were not meeting their increasing needs. Disillusionment with what the established associations offered, the feeling of exclusion from what was perceived as a male-dominated Executive Committee within the San Giusto Alabarda Club, personality clashes and the consequent inability to reach compromises that would have allowed for such a group to develop within the structures of an already existing association: these were all factors that led to the formation of this group. This group has focused on issues of women's health, as well cultural activities such as, for example, poetry readings, book discussions as well as visits to places of interest such as art galleries.

¹ 'To please the desire of many ..., to give to those with a passion for the mountains the possibility to continue with their preferred sport...' (*Il Globo*, 21 April 1964 p.4)

THE POLITICS OF CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Objectively, splits within existing organisations and the evolution of both new formal and less formal structures can be interpreted as the result of a community endeavouring to develop institutional structures that reflect the heterogeneous nature of an urban society as well as the nature of the phenomenon of Triestine migration itself. However, this tendency has given rise to criticism by members of the community who view this lack of cohesion solely in terms of individual motivation, petty rivalries, power struggles, and a total lack of regard for the future. 'It's a shame we can't be more united', and '...30 clubs representing three Triestines...' are some of the bitter comments that reflect the disappointment of those who had envisaged a more formally established cohesiveness within the community and who had witnessed the mostly failed attempts at arriving at such cohesion. Throughout this period of intense associational activity attempts were in fact made at establishing a closer cooperation between the existing Triestine clubs and, during the latter part of the 1960s, the 'Federation of Triestine clubs in Australia' was established through the efforts of Alberto Campana in Melbourne and Andrea Succhi, President of the 'Trieste Association' of Sydney. In Melbourne the Federation included 'Triestina Soccer', the 'Triestina Basketball', the 'San Giusto Social Club' and the Trieste Social Club (which appears to have been another small splinter group established when the cleavage between the San Giusto Social club and the Triestina Soccer club began to grow). It was called the 'Trieste San Giusto Club, but the intended cooperation was never, to all intents and purposes, achieved. From 1969 the 'Triestina Basketball' remained with the association for only two seasons and then, since the economic needs of the team could not be met, returned to constitutional independence. The San Giusto Social Club continued as the social section of the Triestina Soccer club, and the splinter organisation--the 'San Giusto Alabarda Club'--was formed. Further attempts at amalgamation later occurred between the 'Venezia Giulia Police Force (VGPF) association' and the 'Essendon City Triestina San Giusto Social Club', but also proved unsuccessful. Meanwhile no outcome resulted from the initial discussions held between the 'San Giusto Alabarda and the 'Soccer' club over the endeavour to amalgamate the two organisations.

However, while the attempted amalgamation of Triestine organisations in Melbourne was not successful, the establishment in Trieste of the 'Giuliani nel Mondo' (Julians throughout the world)

association in 1970 provided these Triestine clubs (as well as other Julian associations) with an umbrella association. This umbrella association was to establish links between the many Julian--including Triestine--associations, and their city and Region of origin. It was like other similar regional associations established throughout Italy to provide links with Italian immigrants around the world. Among the major aims of this umbrella association have been those of promoting and organising initiatives that have aimed at fostering cultural links with the Venezia Giulia area and at encouraging a sense of cultural continuity amongst the emigrants from the area. Importantly, it has been precisely these links that have led, to some degree, to a heightened sense of cooperation amongst the various Triestine (as well as Julian) associations in Melbourne, but even such an association has not been successful in eliminating an existing and deeply ingrained sense of hostility between the 'San Giusto Alabarda' and the 'Movimento Donne Trieste'. It has been this enduring sense of animosity amongst members of the executive of both associations that has led to the alienation of the more recently formed 'Movimento Donne Trieste' from the 'Giuliani nel Mondo' association (since the MDT required the vote of the 'San Giusto Alabarda' association in order to be allowed to become part of the Federation of Giuliani association and to be eligible to receive support from the *Regione* in Italy.) In this regard individual members of both organisations lay the blame on the uncooperative and uncompromising nature of 'the other'. However, what can undoubtedly be interpreted as being the result of conflicting aims and ambitions of individuals within the organisations, can also be seen in terms of power struggles and petty rivalries. Moreover, to some degree it can also be understood in terms of conflict in gender roles--with the President of the 'Movimento Donne Trieste' claiming that within the Executive of the 'San Giusto Alabarda Club', discrimination had become institutionalised (a claim dismissed by members of the San Giusto Alabarda).

Any inherent inequality in gender relations and roles within Triestine organisations in Melbourne has not always led to conflict. Traditionally, it was the men who laid the foundations for the sporting associations that became established in the 1950s, and it was men who initiated the discussions that were to lead to the establishment of 'social' clubs. Nonetheless, over the past few years the women have managed to make their voice heard in the social club committees, and the 1990s witnessed the election of women onto the Executive Committee of San Giusto Alabarda Club. However, the committees of these associations had remained for many years dominated by men, while the women often

worked on the side, providing support and guidance through the 'women's auxiliary'. They often helped to organise functions and worked tirelessly in the kitchen, helping to make the function an economic success for the association. In this respect Triestine associations have shown themselves to be neither structurally nor organisationally very different from any other Italo-Australian associations that mushroomed in Australia in the aftermath of mass migration. However, while it is clear that it was the men who founded and managed the more formal Triestine associations, particularly the sporting associations, it is also worth noting that the 'Triestina basketball' at least featured a women's team, and also that it was in fact a woman who was one of the founding members of the 'Val Rossandra Club', which, although different from the other Triestine sporting associations--such as the 'Triestina soccer club' or the 'Triestina basketball club'--was nonetheless an organisation which reflected the particular sporting interests not only of men but also of women. Indeed, many of the women interviewed claimed to have been involved in sport in Trieste, and among their sporting pursuits were in fact outdoor sports which included rock climbing, skiing and speleology. Thus, if on one level Triestine men had taken on the initial role of 'formal organisers' within the context of the more formally established organisations, it seems that the women were, nonetheless, capable of exerting an influence. While in essence the Triestine women did remain relegated to managing the less formal groupings, and while these groupings have been predominantly social and cultural in nature, this role has not excluded the possibility of the more formalised involvement that becomes apparent in organisations such as 'The Val Rosandra Club' and the 'Movimento Donne Trieste'. The involvement of women in the foundation of the former, and their role in the conception and establishment of the latter, reveals that Triestine women have been capable of understanding and acting upon their own specific needs at different points in the migration process. Consequently, in the earlier years of settlement, when Triestine women, like the men, were young and active, an alternative to 'soccer' as a sporting pursuit, that involved both men and women, proved attractive. At a later stage of settlement, when a large proportion of Triestine women in Melbourne had reached the age of retirement and had found themselves without the restrictions of work and family commitments, the establishment of an organisation that catered to their interests and their condition as women--who were now no longer able to pursue the more strenuous physical activities but who were still interested in remaining active both socially and culturally--seemed more than ever appropriate.

Interestingly, the conceptualisation and foundation of the 'Movimento Donne Trieste' (MDT) association should not, however, be considered solely in terms of the outcome of the immigrant process whereby, as has been suggested by Vasta (1992b), new experiences and opportunities in Australia have allowed women to develop new roles. Rather, it becomes important to note that the idea for the Melbourne association developed from an established link in Trieste itself. As the President of the MDT in Melbourne noted:

...the idea developed out of one of my visits to Trieste, where I met the President of the 'Movimento Donne Trieste' in Trieste ... and she suggested that perhaps we should set up a group here.

It was from this suggestion that in fact the Melbourne group developed and, although the political focus of the Trieste group (a focus that leans to the Left of the political spectrum) was not adopted, the focus on cultural and social pursuits together with the focus on women's health issues became the model on which the Melbourne association based its principal aims. Essentially, the 'Movimento Donne Trieste' developed independently of the National Italo-Australian Women's Association inaugurated by Franca Arena in 1985. The MDT has operated, and continues to operate, on a local level, meeting the more immediate needs of a group of women who are part of an ethnic group that is rapidly ageing. In this context the group has gained a mention in a study conducted on 'ageing in Australia', and has been praised as an example of older women that have successfully been capable of organising themselves (the title of the study was not recalled by the interviewee).

THE ROLE OF CLUBS IN IDENTITY FORMATION

In further analysing the development of this and other Triestine associations that were founded in Melbourne throughout the years, it becomes even more apparent that time and distance have not really diluted the 'psycho-cultural attachment' that still exists with the city of origin. With the MDT in Melbourne such an attachment has helped foster both the renewal of network ties and the establishment of new networks in Trieste. It has in fact been the establishment of these new networks that have in turn fostered the eventual development of this association. In the case of those sporting associations founded in the early part of the immigrant experience, what again becomes apparent is this 'cultural link'

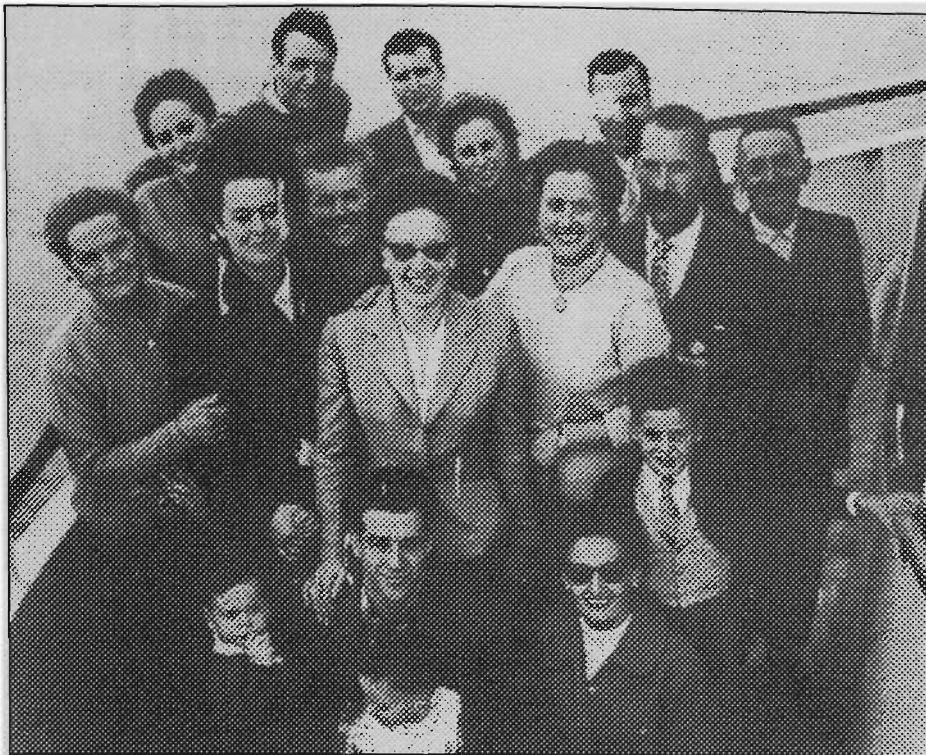
--although this time embodied in the distinct cultural baggage that Triestine immigrants brought with them--and it is thus no coincidence that, as already noted, the first associations to be established by Triestine immigrants were the sporting associations. Thus while it has generally been accepted that the establishment of network ties reflects Southern European cultural patterns, and the establishment of formal community structures such as clubs reflects the adaptation by Italian immigrants of Anglo-Australian patterns and models, this assumption does not completely help describe, nor help to understand, the nature of Triestine associations in Melbourne. The past experiences of the Triestines have in this regard been an influencing factor and it should be remembered that Triestine culture had already been exposed to the organisational structures of associations of a sporting type. In Trieste, mountaineering, for example, had strong, well-grounded traditions, and even in 1883 the 'Societa degli Alpinisti Triestini' (the society of Triestine mountain climbers) united people interested in this particular activity. Many of the Triestines who came to Australia in the 1950s had belonged to such associations and it had been their experiences within these structures in Trieste that had also helped foster and mould the development of the clubs, or least of the particular 'type' of associations that did evolve and that have since come to represent the Triestine community of Melbourne.

As another expression of Triestine immigrant identity these characteristics add significance to the fact that the Triestines were among the first Italian immigrants, in the postwar period in Melbourne, to actually establish what has since been identified as regional and provincial associations. Hence, for example, while the Juventus club in Melbourne united most Italians in their passion for the game of soccer, the Triestine immigrants--originating from an urban centre where the local soccer team had been successfully playing in the 'series A' alongside teams such as the Juventus--and where many had left behind already existing connections to sporting associations and structures--demonstrated their identity by establishing their own sporting associations almost immediately after having immigrated to Australia. The speed with which these associations were established once again reflects not only the existing sense of local identity that these immigrants brought with them, but also provides an insight into the characteristics of an identity shaped by a diversified urban culture which embodied a range of varying experiences.

If at least initially, however, Triestine immigrants did not rely on existing Anglo-Saxon models or even other Italo-Australian models

(embodied in associations such as the Cavour club and the Eolian Islands Association, which had been established much earlier), with the passing of the years most Triestine associations in Melbourne did inevitably incorporate into their annual calendar of events some of the types of activities and functions that came to characterise almost all Italo-Australian associations of the postwar era. Inevitably, therefore, the dinner dance became a regular social gathering for Triestines, as it did for other Italo-Australians during the 1960s. This ritual, mainly because it fulfilled a particular need of Triestines (and other Italo-Australians) as immigrants, provided a formalised opportunity for a particular group to maintain a network of friends and acquaintances. However, as already noted, in the first instance the Triestines had fulfilled this need by frequenting particular meeting places such as cafes (as they had done so in Trieste), but the different cultural reality of the wider society made it difficult for such an unstructured ritual to survive. As a structured and formalised ritual on the other hand, the dinner dance, or *cena danzante*, provided Triestine immigrants with the assurance that they would be able to meet up with friends and perhaps make new ones. It became in essence the most important event in the calendar of the social clubs, fulfilling the function of providing not only a 'public meeting place' where families (including children) and friends could get together, but also that of providing the 'sense of an occasion', with entertainment, music and food being provided for, within the circumscribed ambience of the community itself. The 'dinner dance', with all its formality, has been an Anglo-Saxon cultural practice readily adopted by the Italo-Australian associations generally, but in adopting this method of socialising a degree of formality was nonetheless dropped. Children, subsequently, were always an integral part of the 'Italo-Australian dinner dance', and this was no different in the dinner dances once organised by the Triestine associations--particularly since most Triestines had immigrated as family units. With the dropping of the rigid formal structure of the dinner dance, most Italo-Australian associations in fact adapted their own customs and cultural practices, which soon blended into the occasion. For the Triestine associations, such an adaptation meant that dinner dances took on a more distinctive 'Triestine character', with the recreation of an atmosphere of the local *osteria*, or local 'tavern'. Characteristically such an ambience was created by the band, which, particularly in the early days of the clubs, usually included Triestine musicians who would ultimately play a series of Triestine songs with which all present would sing along.

Over the years the celebration of Triestine identity became a distinctive feature of most Triestine clubs and associations. While inclusion of events such the yearly 'beauty pageant'--with the election of a 'Miss' that then went on to participate in the 'Miss Italian Community' quest (as well as the participation in community celebrations such as the 'Festa della Repubblica')--legitimised the clubs' status in terms of being seen to belong both to the larger Italo-Australian community as well as to the wider Anglo-Australian society. Most Triestine associations also offered their own unequivocally, culturally distinct, brand of activities. Thus, while it can be said that there has been a slight tendency towards 'cultural homogenisation' in respect of organisational structure and in terms of the activities on offer, Triestine clubs have nevertheless expressed their identity, particularly in the early period, through the organisation of live theatre nights that in the Triestine tradition featured 'comical sketches' and made use of the Triestine dialect. The serving of traditional Triestine foods has been a further expression of this identity: during the 1980s, for example, the 'San Giusto Alabarda Club' organised Sunday lunches called the 'Triestinissima', when some of the typical Triestine meals such as sausages and sauerkraut were served. Rather than espousing the development of a nexus with what can be seen, in terms of associations and clubs, as an 'Italo-Australian' tradition, the organisation (in the late 1980s and early 1990s) of evenings such as, for example, the 'serata tirolese' ('Tyrolean evening') and the 'serata ungherese' ('the Hungarian evening, an evening comprising Hungarian music and food) appear to highlight a cultural affinity not only with the Trieste that members of these associations had left behind, but with a city and cultural tradition reminiscent of the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Similarly, to this very day, in Trieste itself, the Austro-Hungarian Empire continues to remain in many ways a symbol of the nature of Triestine identity within the context of the wider Italian one. So too the organisation of such activities unwittingly demonstrates a nexus, not with a culture or static identity that is relegated to the past, but rather with one that is dynamic and still in the process of defining itself.



Ferry outing, Port Phillip Bay, c.1960

Although manifestations of identity of this nature have nevertheless remained sporadic, the prolific production of newsletters, bulletins and other publications by Triestine associations can also be seen as expressions of this urban and literate identity. All Triestine associations in Melbourne have, at least at one point in time, produced either a newsletter or a similar type of publication on a more or less regular basis. The contents of these publications have partly served the purpose of keeping the local Triestine community, particularly members of the association, informed in relation to club activities and events, as well as in relation to any decisions made by the club executive. However, other articles and snippets of information have nevertheless acted as a constant reminder of the Triestine identity. Articles on Triestine history, places of interest in Trieste, Triestine artists and identities, both in Melbourne and in Trieste, as well as current news from Trieste: these have all been regular features of these publications. The front pages, furthermore, have always displayed particular Triestine symbols--either a logo (the 'alabarda') or drawing or photographs of locations or buildings--that are the physical representations of Triestine identity. Examples of past and present publications include *L'Eco* (published by the VGPF association), *Piccolino* (published by San Giusto Alabarda) and the more recent *Traguardi* (published by the Movimento Donne Trieste). These all highlight the role that these publications have played in maintaining 'cultural connections' and in reinforcing the images and symbols on which the identity is based. The exclusive use of particular symbolic imagery not only alerts readers and prospective

readers to the nature of the association that these publications represent, but also serves to alienate those who have no prior knowledge or past connections with the symbols used. During the latter part of the 1980s in similar publications of the 'Giuliano--Dalmato Club' in Canada, the image of the maple leaf was added as part of the front cover. This was intended as a clear symbol of its identification with both Julian and Canadian culture. (Eisenbichler 1995: 77) In the case of the Triestine associations in Melbourne the lack of symbolic reference to the wider society only serves to highlight the clear cut identity of the association as well as what appears to be a resultant insularity that has come to characterise particular Triestine associations in Melbourne.

Both the VGPF association and the 'San Giusto Alabarda' have in fact characteristically displayed this sense of insularity; consequently both associations have unwittingly tended to limit their membership to predominantly Triestines, and above all to Triestines of the first generation. In this context the 'ex-VGPF' association has attracted membership mainly from those members of the Triestine community in Melbourne that had once been part of the Venezia Giulia Police Force back in Trieste. This factor, as well as the fact that the association has lacked any formal 'physical facilities', has with the passing of time limited the scope of the association. The 'San Giusto Alabarda' association, despite the fact that it has succeeded in creating a sound institutional structure in terms of facilities, has been, however, an association that has generally been accessible mainly to those who have demonstrated an understanding of the symbols of Triestine identity. Located in a renovated factory, in the inner Melbourne suburb of Moonee Ponds, the 'San Giusto Alabarda' club premises not only characterise the urban nature of the Triestine identity but the 'closed location' (the club is accessible only via a small lane, a fair distance from the main street) also symbolises the insularity of this identity. Many other Italo-Australian regional associations (like the Veneto club, the Abruzzo club and the Calabria club, for example), have tended to become more open and welcoming by being not only more 'geographically accessible', but also, for example, by advertising their availability to the Italo Australian community and by offering restaurant facilities open to the general public. In contrast, the 'San Giusto Alabarda' club has unwittingly found itself unable to adapt to an increasingly homogenised 'Italo-Australian' identity. The Triestine Soccer Association, on the other hand, has perpetuated this sense of insularity to a much lesser degree. As a sporting association aiming for success, the soccer club has always

attracted the interest of soccer enthusiasts from many regional backgrounds (in fact Tessari, one of the earlier Presidents of the association was from the Veneto Region). Soccer players as well as coaches, have over the years, also come from different ethnic backgrounds. From this perspective the soccer club has certainly been more 'open' in its outlook; but it has paradoxically been an 'openness' that has impacted on the club's identity. In this respect the financial problems experienced by the association have served as a catalyst for change--leading to the amalgamation of the 'Triestina Soccer' with the 'Maribyrnong Soccer Club' in the 1970s and another amalgamation in the 1990s with the neighbouring Calabria Club's 'East Brunswick Regina' soccer team. Operating in the context of the wider society has also meant that the 'Triestina Soccer Club' has since been forced to abide by the rules laid down by the Australian Soccer Federation that prohibited the use of 'ethnic names'--and for the club this has undoubtedly meant the loss of an important symbol of its identity.

For sporting associations such as the Triestina Soccer club this, even if somewhat gradual, loss of identity has been the inevitable result of the very nature of such associations--which requires some degree of social interaction with other groups as well as a degree of conformity to the wider society. Perhaps the only existing Triestine association that has made any explicit and 'disinterested' effort to remain 'open' to the wider Italo-Australian community has in fact been the 'Movimento Donne Trieste' (MDT). Meeting in Coburg, one of the Melbourne suburbs that has witnessed a high concentration of Italians, this group has in fact managed to attract the interest of Italo-Australian women from various regional backgrounds. This has been possible because gender, as a particular facet of identity, plays an important role in the actual process that is cultural identity. This process at times allows women to 'identify' themselves as women and to share together common interests and concerns--as the President and founder of 'Movimento Donne Trieste' herself noted:

... As women we can be more accepting of others because as women we share more things in common. As women we have our health at heart, the children, the grandchildren and even cooking and recipes. We can share these things as women. This cuts across barriers.

However, even in this case, while this reality points to an association open to cultural change, even within the 'Movimento Donne Trieste' such change has in essence occurred on a simply superficial level. According to the President of MDT, in fact, this group endeavours to speak standard Italian in the presence of women from other regions, but as a group they revert back to communicating in the Triestine dialect once these other women have gone. Importantly, however, while the MDT President herself is critical of what she perceives as a tendency for Triestines to become particularly 'insular', noting that the 'Triestines with their sense of superiority ... tend to think that their dialect will do [and] they have no shame about this,' the magazine produced by this group continues to offer readers symbols of a specifically Triestine identity. Most issues of this magazine appear to include stories and images relating to some aspect of Trieste, highlighting, hence, a sense of *campanilismo* that for the President is simply an expression of pride in her native Trieste and a desire to 'teach others about our city.' This desire essentially encapsulates not only the sense of identity, and of belonging, that is still much a part of both this and other Triestine associations, but also the sense of 'exclusiveness' that is inherent in the fact that it is the symbols of Triestine identity that continue to be valued above all 'other' symbols and identities.

Over the years the use of such symbols by all the Triestine associations has been an important tool in maintaining a sense of cohesion between institutions that have, at times, reflected the different aims and ambitions of individual members but also the different interests of a heterogeneous Triestine community. The sense of *campanilismo* inherent in the symbolic use of representations of the city of Trieste and in the continued and exclusive use of the Triestine dialect within the walls of these associations remains perhaps one of the most enduring characteristics of Triestine identity. As such these associations have also served to reinforce and continually define the nature and the boundaries of such an identity, providing a sense of continuity that is often challenged in the migration process. In this context, while for most Triestine immigrants in Melbourne the establishment of specific Triestine clubs and associations has helped meet specific needs, for some--albeit a few--this perceived need has been regarded as the manifestation of an inability to 'integrate' within the structures of the wider society. For some Triestine immigrants, consequently, Triestine associations in Australia have represented a notion of *campanilismo* and a sense of identity that remains inward looking and insular--a characteristic that can act to thwart social mobility in the new society. Subsequently, a small

number of Triestines have found that what these associations have offered them has failed to meet their 'expanding needs'. These Triestines have often chosen a somewhat peripheral position in relation to these associations, maintaining an embryonic link with these institutions that are in essence the cultural structures of the Triestine identity in Australia, but preferring to participate in the activities organised by the 'Triestine club' only sporadically.

As a result of changing realities, and also as a result of the migration process itself, not all the associations established in Melbourne by Triestine immigrants survived into the 1990s. Essentially Triestine mass migration to this continent was an aberration in the history of the city, a temporal phenomenon that witnessed the mass movement of mostly young, nuclear family units--a migration, in essence, that failed to provide (even in the 1960s) new Triestine immigrants who would not only bring with them a sense of cultural renewal but also specific needs that the already established associations could meet. In this regard, while cultural links have been maintained and renewed through the overseas trips taken by individuals and also through the efforts of the *Regione* through the Giuliani nel Mondo association in Trieste, the reality remains that most first-generation Triestines in Melbourne, or in Australia for that matter, are rapidly ageing (even to a greater degree than Italian-born immigrants generally). Thus Triestine associations characteristically proliferated in the earlier period of the migration process. Inevitably, those associations that were predominantly activity orientated and tended to be structured less formally, such as the 'Val Rosandra club', for example, have since disappeared, while the more formally structured associations such as the 'San Giusto Alabarda' and the 'Soccer Club' have to date managed to endure the test of time. The continued survival of such associations, however, lies also in their continued relevance and hence in a structural 'ability' to incorporate change. Importantly, rather than an accomplished fact, the foundation of immigrant clubs and associations has in essence been part of the immigration process itself and as part of this process the adoption of some degree of change becomes inevitable. For regional associations such as the Triestine clubs, reconciling relevance (to the wider society as well to the Italo-Australian one) and change with the maintenance of a specific Triestine identity, becomes an important challenge that will undoubtedly influence the very survival of these associations.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic that has pervaded all the associations established by Triestines in Melbourne since 1954 has been their specifically Triestine identity. This is an identity that has been

nurtured, particularly in the latter years of the Triestine immigrant experience, by some degree of contact with the contemporary cultural reality of Trieste. In this period, Triestine singers, choirs, bands, actors and authors have visited associations in Melbourne, and in particular the 'San Giusto Alabarda Club'. This has undoubtedly helped reignite a sense of belonging as well as a sense of identity. It has, however, also helped Triestine associations establish firmer relationships with the local Institute of Culture and with other Italo Australian institutions, subsequently allowing the club to remain a relevant institution within the wider Italo-Australian context. Historically, the 'San Giusto Alabarda' association, with its inherent Triestine identity, has been able to transcend class and gender differences; it has to date been able to retain a sense of 'insularity' and to maintain its identity, while still actively being a part of a broader immigrant reality. For the association once known as the 'Triestina Soccer', however, the incorporation of change has been much more dramatic. While this change has enabled the association to remain relevant to a broader community, it has also resulted in at least the partial loss of the original identity. Paradoxically, however, it has been the 'Triestina Soccer' club that has traditionally attracted younger members, while associations such as the 'San Giusto Alabarda' and 'The Movimento Donne Trieste' continue to struggle with a membership that is rapidly ageing. Even though such associations have thus somehow managed to remain relevant to a broader community, this relevance has not been extended to those Triestines of the younger generation.

Although throughout the 1980s and 1990s the San Giusto Alabarda Club organised golf tournaments and in an attempt to encourage 'younger members' to the association, endeavoured to establish an Australian Rules football team and a women's volleyball team,² attracting Triestine youth proved difficult. In the mid-1990s this problem was tackled by the Giuliani nel Mondo organisation in Trieste. The Association, which had already been organising 'stages' or visits to the region for the Julian youth, indeed encouraged and initiated the making of a Giuliano-Dalmati youth network that was formalised in December 1998. Numerically, however, the network has not been strong and a number of members subsequently chose to affiliate themselves with a broader youth network previously established by the official Italian welfare agency Co.As.It. This indeed tended to reflect the fact that a purely circumscribed

² The volleyball team was organised by a younger Triestine, Marino Dereani, and was quite successful for a while.

Triestine identity, or even a Julian identity for that matter, had become less tenable.

CHAPTER 8

The survival of Triestine identity

SETTLEMENT AND THE EXPERIENCE OF ETHNICITY

The departure of Triestines from their city was characterised by strong sentiments of attachment and belonging that, as discussed, had been moulded by cultural and political processes which had helped define the Triestine immigrant identity. The immediate postwar period had left this group in no doubt with regards to who they were, as one interviewee candidly revealed:

We felt Triestine. When they interviewed us for English classes at Bonegilla when we arrived they asked us if we were Italian. And we said: 'No, *Triestini*!' And they didn't understand, but that is how we saw ourselves, that is how we felt...

Tied to this subjectively defined identity had been a sense of defiance and pride, that, together with the feeling of 'otherness' experienced with regard to both Anglo-Australians and other Italian immigrants, had initially encouraged a circumscribed and distinct sense of community.

As noted earlier, these 'early years' had constituted a period of intense group activity for Triestine immigrants in Melbourne. It had been during these years that their 'urban experience' and hence the 'urban facet' of Triestine identity had influenced and directed the group's attempt at establishing meaningful social and economic relationships in the new society. In this context, moving beyond the boundaries of what, at the time, had spatially, socially and psychologically, encompassed the Italo-Australian reality had thus been an expression of the identity itself. It was less an indication of a 'shift' in social behaviour brought about by an acceptance of new ways and values. In fact, as we have also seen, Triestine immigrants concomitantly established their own clubs and associations. Unlike most postwar Italian regional associations, that were formed only after the immigrants had achieved a degree of economic security, these Triestine associations were established very early in the migration process. However,

while this also had been a phenomenon that reflected both the strength and urbanity of Triestine immigrant identity, the associations themselves predominantly functioned to provide an added focus for Triestine social life rather than broad and diversified institutional support for Melbourne's Triestine community. Consequently, although on one level a strong sense of Triestine identity was experienced and maintained, Triestine immigrants also needed and sought the support of the wider Italo-Australian institutional structures--particularly those structures such as the Italo-Australian press that encouraged and supported the Italian language and identity. In this context, Trieste's ambiguous and contested relationship with the Italian nation-state was played out in the lives of its emigrants. Moreover, the host culture, even as it moved from its policy of assimilation through to integration in the 1960s and much-vaunted multiculturalism in the 1970s--had real difficulty distinguishing the Triestines from the Italians, and the people of Trieste found themselves classified in the larger collectivity. Their news was reported in Melbourne's Italo-Australian newspaper, *Il Globo*, whose editors claimed them as colleagues in the immigration travail. Their businesses were frequented by Italo-Australians generally, and the Triestines themselves patronised Italo-Australian businesses and professional services. The Triestines also adopted the *Koine* of the Italo-Australians, using words such as *fattoria* and *fensa*. Generally the overall effects of settlement became part of a complex process that mediated a Triestine-Italian/Italo-Australian identity.

Life in Australia during the 1950s and early 1960s had often proved difficult for immigrants. The architects of Australia's postwar immigration program had envisaged that these 'New Australians' would shed their cultural identity and would assimilate socially and culturally to the Anglo-Australian population, and government policies were designed to bring this about. In such a climate, newcomers, who were expected to immerse themselves into Australian society and cope, were provided no assistance in the settlement process. Inherent in the ideology of 'assimilation', moreover, was the notion that Anglo-Australian culture was the only acceptable and legitimate culture. This inevitably fostered intolerance and discrimination towards those who were seen as 'different'. Most of the Triestines interviewed did not recall experiencing any explicit form of racism and typically declared:

...We didn't have any problems with discrimination or racism, or with Australians, and actually most Australians that we met and that we got to know have always been very nice to us...

However, this was unwittingly explained by the interviewees themselves as being due to the fact that often in appearance they tended to resemble the 'more acceptable' northern European migrant:

Actually, when we got here a lot of Australians didn't believe we were Italians. They thought we were Dutch. Even now they say, your accent is not Italian, you're Dutch...

Indeed, in reality, most had experienced, at least initially, at the very least, the sense of 'not being well seen by Australians'. As another interviewee exemplified, 'they looked at you from the top down, with a sense of superiority'. In this regard, in 1965 the Triestine immigrant, Valerio Borghese, after five years in Australia, voiced his opinion to Melbourne's daily evening newspaper, *The Herald* (29 April 1965). His letter to the paper was an appeal for better understanding and tolerance and it highlighted that discrimination was mostly the result of ignorance and misunderstanding on both parts. In essence, although the letter clearly established Trieste as Borghese's place of provenance, it did nonetheless highlight both his Italian identity and his 'migrantness'. In lamenting the lot of the immigrant in Australia, Borghese thus brought to light the added dimension of belonging to a broader collectivity that shared the same reality. His plea led to media interviews and to the response of the general public which subsequently led to Borghese receiving a number of invitations by Anglo-Australians aimed at fostering 'understanding and friendship'. It even led to the formation of a voluntary association with similar aims, the 'Migrants' Welcome group'--the establishment of which was met with a degree of scepticism by Borghese himself (Borghese 1996: 89-90). In effect the formation of voluntary bodies such as this, as well as the likes of the more formal coordinating bodies, the Commonwealth-financed Good Neighbour Councils, proved to be little more than tokenistic, and played a very limited role in the settlement and adjustment process of Southern European immigrants. In reality no assistance was given to immigrants to help them integrate and participate in the new society.

By the mid-1960s it had become evident to the Australian Government that immigrant identities would not simply dissolve and that

the immigrants themselves were not merely 'New Australians' who would eventually blend into the Anglo-Australian cultural and social landscape. The associations established in Melbourne by members of the Italian community, which were principally devoted to maintaining Italian culture, particularly the various regional versions of Italian culture (as the Triestine example highlights), bear testimony to this reality. However, such associations generally functioned in isolation from the broader society and the political reality of Australian life. Thus even though economically many Italian immigrants had been successful, they remained alienated from the decision making process (Jupp 1966). Like most postwar Italian migrants, the Triestines had not been overly preoccupied by such matters and confronted their lack of participation and political voice with a degree of indifference and even apathy. In a way, many had considered themselves as the 'victims of politics' and although they seemed aware that their migrant status afforded them no political leverage, and although the accounts provided by the interviewees highlight that they considered Australia to have been 'primitive' particularly in terms of worker privileges and rights, provision of universal health care, as well as political debate, Triestines generally expressed an appreciative view of Australian democracy:

From Australia we learnt what democracy was all about. In the relationship between the individual and the government there was little bureaucracy and you were always treated with courtesy... You always received a quick answer to your questions...



Grisson family and friends at home in Ascot Vale, late 1960s

Even someone like Borghese, who understood political processes after having been politically active in his city of birth, had only been prepared to view the migrant reality as an existential dilemma. In a more general sense the Triestine immigrant was, nonetheless, concerned about the economic and political situation in Australia. As one interviewee stated, 'I had to worry about what it was like here in Australia because I lived and still live here'. After having spent over half of their lives in Australia most first-generation Triestine immigrants have become Australian citizens. Although there is no way of measuring these numbers with statistical accuracy, it should nonetheless be noted that all those interviewed for this study had become Australian citizens on average after five years in Australia. These figures are also supported by Nodari's survey (1991) of Julians in Australia (of whom just over half of those surveyed had resided in Trieste before migration), which reveals that ninety per cent of those surveyed had taken out Australian citizenship. When compared to the 1976 census figures which bring to light that only sixty per cent of Italian born persons had taken out citizenship, it appears that the Triestines may have generally been less reluctant to sever ties with the past. However, while becoming naturalised Australians had accorded Triestine immigrants the power of the vote, this in itself did not foster an emotional bond with the adopted nation.

Some felt it had been in their interest to take up citizenship. This in itself was a pragmatic stance that did not preclude a sense of annoyance at having to swear allegiance to a monarch to which they had no connection; and some, even if they had left Trieste feeling that they had been betrayed by their nation, had paradoxically experienced a sense of reluctance, a sense that they were symbolically severing links with their country. For a number, citizenship had also provided the added burden of seeing their children drafted into the Australian army during the period of the Vietnam War. A Triestine was one of the two Italians killed in Vietnam during this period. Taking up citizenship was, nonetheless, not generally experienced as an act that had made any tangible or psychological impact. It was merely accepted as being part of the process of settlement, a decision often made once these immigrants realised that they would probably not return to Trieste. After a number of years in Australia Triestines still subjectively saw themselves as Triestines, although an emotional sense of belonging to the Italian nation state (rather than to Australia) as well as to the Italian community in Australia, had now become more pronounced:

I feel Italian. I don't feel any sense of belonging with Australian society. You know, some people would say 'I am *triestina*', and they go around declaring this all the time. I say I'm Italian but I happen to come from Trieste. I don't think it is nice to go around specifying where you are from as if you are superior. In the past some Triestines have shown a sense of superiority towards other Italians here, calling them peasants. I don't like it. We are all Italians and we are all immigrants.

Well, I have to say that I am *triestina* and Italian, even if we are naturalised we can never be Australian.

I say that I am Italian and that I come from Trieste.

I can't be Australian because I was born in Trieste, my formative years were passed in Trieste and I have an emotional attachment to the city. But I feel a free citizen, a citizen of both worlds.

Citizenship and identity were thus differentiated. In the migration process they had been clearly experienced as separate realities which did not necessarily coalesce. While being a citizen was interpreted as being 'integrated' and fitting into the structures of the host society, and even with feelings of satisfaction with the path chosen and with life in Australia;¹ identity was seen as tied to the emotions, to 'feelings' of attachment to place. Identity was thus seen by some of the interviewees themselves as being deterministic and static. In reality the migration and settlement process had both reinforced and set new parameters for a Triestine identity that was also characterised by its fluidity.

CHANGE AS A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION

A degree of change was, of course, an inevitable part of the settlement process. However, when such a shift in identity was consciously and continuously experienced as rupture and cleavage, a personal sense of

¹ In this context a number of interviewees expressed that they felt 'at home' in Australia and fostered a sense of affection for this nation. This sense of affection, however, in no way diminished their feeling for Trieste. Their attachment to Trieste was seen as inevitable.

alienation often ensued, as the words of a poem written by Borghese (1990) nostalgically and eloquently reveal:

*Non e' vero
che il pane che mangio
e il vino che bevo
in questa terra ,
a me sempre straniera
e' lo stesso di prima.
Nulla e' piu' com'era
Tutto qui e' diverso
anche l'aria che respiro.
Ed anche noi, gli emigrati,
lo spazio e il tempo
ci ha ormai mutati.²*

For those Triestines who experienced change as part of a collective and dialectical process whereby the group negotiated and mediated the course of change, a sense of continuity prevailed. This allowed Triestine immigrants unconsciously to experience any apparent shift in habits and values as a necessary and inevitable strategy for adaption and integration without altering or disrupting the subjective and emotional sense of self, or rather the Triestine immigrants' concept of their own identity. As described earlier, the Triestines had in the first instance endeavoured to maintain habits and ways that reflected an urban-Triestine-Italian way of life, but, removed from the context which invested their habits with meaning, in a different spatial and cultural setting, this had not always been possible. The shift that occurred did, however, both mould and reinforce the identity in a different context. These new contexts were above all else, interaction and stronger identification with 'other Italians'. The Triestines adapted quickly to some Anglo-Australian practices that were seen as 'superior' to what had been considered as 'chaotic Italian behaviour':

We have learnt how to behave with order, and we have learnt to have patience, to wait our turn. This is a more civilised way. To get onto a tram or a bus we have learnt to form a queue without pushing in

² It is not true/ that the bread that I eat/ and the wine that I drink/ in this land/ always alien to me/ is the same as it once was./ Nothing is as it was/ All here is different/ Even the air that I breathe./ And on we the emigrants,/ space and time/ have had their toll.

and fighting our way on. When I went back to Italy these were the things I couldn't tolerate any more.

But the cultural changes that in many instances mediated Triestine identity in Australia were now characterised by a new-found affinity with Italo-Australian values and ways which reflected a cultural system tied to a peasant past. In Melbourne a number of Triestines began to look upon their 'backyard' with fresh enthusiasm and caring for a small vegetable patch in which they had planted the *radicchio triestino* became an integral part of their recreational activities. For these Triestines, the shift was brought about by their adaptation to an environment that was originally lamented as having little to offer in terms of recreation. Ironically, the perception of what constituted 'recreation' had changed, and it was this shift that led to the view that it was now in Trieste that they would feel ill at ease:

Here [in Australia] there are more things to do to pass the time: you can look after the garden, the flowers, plant *radicchio*. You know you can't buy the Triestine variety at the greengrocer's? You can't do that living in an apartment on the fourth floor. Friends come to visit and you return the visit. In an apartment you are too cramped. I wouldn't know how to pass the time there [in Trieste] now. You can go for a walk, have a coffee but then there isn't much else...

The importance of home ownership has been another example. Many interviewees remembered buying their house in Australia as an important milestone, an achievement, they noted, that would not have been possible in Trieste at the time. Not only because this may not have been financially possible for some, but because at the time it was not part of their mentality or worldview. According to the 1991 census figures, Italians in Australia had the highest rate of home ownership (72.4 per cent) when compared to both the total Australian population (41 per cent) as well as to other overseas-born persons (41.6 per cent). (Bureau of Immigration and Population Research 1994) Members of Australia's Triestine community are included in these statistics. All those interviewed in fact owned their own homes and one interviewee explained his own metamorphosis in this regard:

In Trieste I would not have dreamt of owning my own home, I would have just been happy to pay the rent on an apartment for our family... This idea was new for me... I learnt from the Italians here. Here you

always heard about houses, buying them, paying them ... this and that. And then I started to think. In the beginning, no, but then--here you saw the other Italians, they owned houses and they would rent them out. The house I rented was owned by *calabresi*--I paid them rent and I used to criticise them. 'They live like *poveracci* [paupers]', I used to say, because the way they lived, it's hard to explain, they seemed to be making so many sacrifices. Then I realised that some things were more important to them. I understood why and I began to think that maybe I had to prove to myself that I didn't come all this way for nothing. I had a responsibility. So I worked long hours and saved a deposit... I taught my own son that doing this was important and when my son got married he had already saved for deposit for a house together with his fiancée. Probably if I stayed in Trieste I would have continued living like always, even if things got better...

For other Triestine immigrants, such as the comedian-writer Guido Franchi, achieving the aim of home-ownership had come at a cost. A shift in values was seen as an inevitable part of the process by Franchi, but it was accepted with regret at the loss of the original Triestine identity--which is seen to be typically characterised by *morbin* (a Triestine word meaning gaiety and a zest for living). The words of one of his rhyming verses written in Triestine dialect, which have also been set to music (Franchi 1979³), express Guido Franchi's sentiments:

*I ani xe passadi
monotoni e contadi
la casa la gavemo
in venti ani de pagar,
la baba la lavora
per rotondar la paga,
seno' xe poche ciacole
bubane no ghe se.
...la caseta xe aredada
le coltrine tute bianche...
Xe 'ssai de far, de bazilar,
xe 'ssai de netar,*

³ Franchi set his words to the music of a well-known Italian song by Domenico Modugno, 'L'uomo in Frac'.

*iera meo si le case popolari,
solo camera e cusina,...
cossa far de sto' giardin
che no gavemo piu' morbin.
Credeme a mi che xe cussi'
xe proprio cussi' credeme a mi.⁴*

In commenting on the settlement process, another interviewee declared, 'Here in Australia we have become more Italian than the Italians'. The statement pithily acknowledges change and the fluidity of identity. It suggests that not only have the Triestines adopted some of the attitudes of those perceived as the 'other' Italians in Australia, but also that these 'Italians' are to be differentiated from the Italians back in Italy. Clearly, it would be wrong to view Melbourne's Triestine community solely in terms



Hobby painter Lidia Crescini, with scenes of Trieste

⁴ The years have gone by/ monotonous and predictable/ we have a house/ which takes twenty years to pay/ the woman she works,/ to make ends meet/ otherwise there is little to say/ there is no abundance /.../ the house it is well furnished/ the curtains all in white.../ but there is much to do/to fuss / to clean/ Public housing was much better/ one room and kitchenette/.../ what to do with this garden / now that our happy carefree spirit is gone/ Believe me it is like this/ it is indeed like this believe me.

of a static model of identity, for cultural processes are in many ways historically specific. However, although in the migration process the narrative of the Triestine collectivity met and intertwined with the narratives of other Italian immigrant collectivities, as well as that of the Anglo-Saxon community, it would still be deceiving to assume that there has been a 'fusion', in the sense of the various identities coming together to constitute another separate and circumscribed identity--a homogenised Italo-Australian identity. Alternatively, the Triestine experience can be seen to highlight a dynamic process of negotiation with the 'other' which has led the collectivity to experience a sense of self in terms of changing frames of reference which require different definitions--what Hall terms 'positionalities'. In this context Triestine immigrants have viewed themselves as both Triestines and Italian immigrants now living in Australia--'How I present myself to others, what I say, depends on the moment, the situation and the person', explained one interviewee.

BELONGING AND PARTICIPATION IN ITALO-AUSTRALIAN LIFE

The failure of assimilationist philosophies in postwar Australia had seen Italian immigrants successfully maintain aspects of their culture. In the inner-city areas of Melbourne Italians had created their own communities complete with shops, services, churches and newspapers which helped provide support networks and a sense of belonging. Yet in the early 1960s this so-called 'Italian community' was still characterised by regional distinctions and identities, and politically it was still alienated from both the Australian and Italian reality and lacked any real sense of cohesiveness. It had, above all, been the process of interaction with the Australian dominant culture that had bonded these sometimes disparate and even antithetical identities. Improved diplomatic relationships between Italy and Australia and the politics of multiculturalism were also to play a role.

In 1967 the visit of Italy's President Saragat stirred a flurry of activity as a committee (CIC, the Italian Coordinating Committee) was established to coordinate the involvement of the various Italian clubs and associations in the visit. Saragat's visit marked Italy's recognition of

Italians in Australia and was followed by a series of initiatives. In the late 1960s the welfare agency, Co.As.It., was established, and in the early 1970s a branch of the Federazione Italiana dei lavoratori Emigrati e Famiglie (FILEF) was also opened in Melbourne. These organisations provided an added dimension to the Italian *ambiente* in Melbourne. They provided the 'political face' of what now at least superficially presented as a self-determined and more 'regionally unified' Italo-Australian community. Moreover, the politics of multiculturalism, which saw the introduction of reforms and new policies towards immigrants by the newly-elected Whitlam Labor government in 1972, had initially been based on the notion of social justice rather than cultural pluralism, and this also encouraged the involvement of ethnic spokespersons and organisations in a political process, even if they mostly remained relegated to the realm of welfare policies and ethnic affairs. This new reality did, nonetheless, encourage ethnic groups to develop their own leadership and to generate their own elites, and in the case of the Italian community it also provided further impetus to politically define Italian immigrants as belonging to a circumscribed Italo-Australian community. In the late 1980s the establishment of representative structures such the *Comitato Italiano al Estero* (COMITES) and the *Consiglio Generale Italiani Estero* (CGIE), established under the aegis of the Italian government in 1989, further consolidated the Italo-Australian political dimension of the community.

Few Triestines were to become part of this process in Melbourne. Among those to have achieved a degree of 'status' within the community has, however, been the Trieste-born Vietnam veteran, Dino De Marchi, who immigrated to Australia with his family in 1955. Representing the conservative side of politics in Melbourne, De Marchi was appointed Senior Vice President of the Melbourne suburb of Ivanhoe branch of the Returned Services League (RSL). He has also held the position of State Councillor for the RSL and that of Chairman of the Sir Edward Dunlop Medical Research Foundation. In 1989 De Marchi stood as an independent candidate for the Australian Senate but was unsuccessful. In 1996 he again tried to enter the world of Australian politics when he stood as a Liberal candidate for the Coburg seat in the Victorian parliament, but lost. His Italian background had proved of no consequence in a traditional Labor seat, even if a significant number of voters in the seat had been Italians. In 1998 he was on the Liberal ticket for the Senate but was once again unsuccessful. Interestingly, in representing the interests of the predominantly Anglo-Australian institution, the RSL, De Marchi came in

direct conflict with one of the most important structures of Melbourne's Italo-Australian community--the Italian language newspaper, *Il Globo*--when he instigated legal action on behalf of the RSL.⁵

Nereo Brezzi has been another Triestine to have made a contribution to furthering the interests of an Italo-Australian community. For a number of years he was a Board member of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), established by the Fraser Liberal Government, as part of that government's commitment to multiculturalism; and in 1997-1998 he served as the President of Melbourne's Italian Chamber of Commerce.

As a collectivity the Triestines in Melbourne have historically mostly remained removed from the so-called 'politics' of the Italo-Australian community, as a former President of one of the Triestine clubs, noted:

Our club never really cooperated much with other Italian clubs or with the Italian community in Melbourne, apart from participating in festivities like the *festa della Repubblica*...

However, at different times individuals have demonstrated a desire and a need to be part of broader Italian community structures. In this context Triestines have, over the years, made important contributions not so much to the political life, but more so to the social and cultural development of Melbourne's Italian community. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, an important and recognisable figure in Melbourne's Italo-Australian community was Rolando Di Bari, who was the founder and for many years the organiser and presenter of the *Festival della Canzone Italiana*, the Italian song festival that was held in Melbourne every year throughout these decades.

Another Triestine to have demonstrated active involvement within the Italian community has been the writer-poet Valerio Borghese. Borghese has contributed widely to the literary articulation of the immigrant experience and his work reflects the desire to maintain a cultural and linguistic identity that is both Italian and Italo-Australian. His efforts have earned him the

⁵ For an example of DeMarchi's views, see Dino DeMarchi, 'Italian-Australians: Contributions to Medical Research', in Piero Genovesi and Walter Musolino, eds, *In Search of the Italian Australian into the New Millennium: Conference Proceedings, Melbourne, 24th, 25th, 26th of May 2000*, Gro-Set Pty Ltd, Thornbury, pp.493-499.

epithet of 'Italo-Australian writer' (Rando: 1992). In the field of artistic endeavour the Triestine artist Armando Severi became one of the first members of the *Centro Italiano d'Arte* established in Melbourne in 1963 and he has since won a number of prizes for his work. In 1970 Severi was also responsible for establishing the *Gruppo Amatori Dell'Arte*. A younger artist, who arrived in Melbourne from Trieste at the age of ten, Domenico De Clario, taught art at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. His work has gained him recognition not only among Melbourne's Italian community, which during the 1999 *Italiafest* awarded him Melbourne's Italian community art and literature prize, but also in the mainstream forum. Similarly the architect, Erminio Smrekkar, has made a name for himself both in Australia and internationally, with his name being listed in the *Who's Who in the World*. Also born in Trieste is the contemporary Australian painter Stanislau Rapotec.

In the field of Italian language maintenance and teaching, Triestines--both first and second generation--have also made a contribution, and in fact the Triestine Gianni Crescini held the position of President of the Victorian Association of Language Teachers (VATI) for a number of years. Triestines of course have also demonstrated their commitment and sense of belonging to an Italo-Australian reality in less explicit and visible ways. Olga Baldassi for example, worked for many years in a voluntary capacity with the Italian pensioner groups established by Co.As.It., while Marcella Capolino, in memory of her husband, Ervinio Capolino, donated to the Italian language radio station, Rete Italia, her deceased husband's vast and rare record collection of opera and classical music. A special archive was established at the radio station to contain the numerous records that it had taken Capolino over forty years to collect (*Il Globo*, 7 July 1997).

The contribution by Triestine immigrants to the development of an Italo-Australian community undoubtedly demonstrates the desire to be part of a broader reality where regional identities come together to meet the exigent needs of individuals. While this desire to participate highlights the emergence of a sense of belonging to Italo-Australian structures which have helped add meaning and purpose to the actions of individuals, it also highlights that the various regional collectivities, such as the Triestine collectivity, are not readily absorbed through this process of interaction, but that, rather, they contribute by bringing with them particular elements of their cultural baggage. In Melbourne the *Coro Adriatico* (Adriatic Choir), established by a group of Giulian immigrants including Triestines, has

become an important cultural institution of Melbourne's Italian community. The choir, established in the early 1970s, reflects the tradition of 'singing together' in choral groups of the northern regions of Italy, particularly the areas that constitute the city of Trieste and surrounds, Friuli, and the Veneto Region. It was the first Italian men's choir to be established in Melbourne,⁶ to be followed by the formation of the *Veneto Choir* in 1995 and the *Furlan Choir*. Since song and music as form of expression can overcome the limits of the spoken language, the Choir has been successful in reaching out to the wider community with a vast repertoire that has included Triestine songs, and in this context it has been called upon to perform for many community (both Italian and Anglo-Australian) functions and festivities. While to the 'insider', that is, to the Triestines themselves, the songs sung by the Choir have often served to reinforce the group's collective memory and identity, they have at the same time also served to open up the cultural boundaries of the Italo-Australian community itself, and to offer to the wider society yet another facet of Italo-Australian identity.

The existence of an Italo-Australian identity, as Pascoe notes (1992a: 93-97), in many ways still hinges on the cultural traditions of a pre-industrial Italy, on the folk traditions and rituals of the Italian peasantry that have been re-elaborated and imbued with new meaning. Generally, the Triestines have not readily identified with all facets of this identity. As we have seen, some of the 'backyard rituals' of Italo-Australia--the salsa and salami making--were indeed alien to the urban Triestines. Rather, it has been the 'public face' of an Italo-Australian identity--an identity that often finds expression in celebration--with which the Triestines have demonstrated greater affinity. Triestines, like Italians in general, have demonstrated a propensity to socialise in the public rather than private domain. Understandably, therefore, the *Festa della Repubblica* celebrations and the *Lygon Street festa* are as significant to the Triestine collectivity as they are to other Italian collectivities in Melbourne. Although the *festa* can be seen to have its roots in the Italian village *sagra* (Pascoe 1987: 128), and hence re-connects participants to an ancestral past tied to peasant origins, as urban dwellers the Triestines were not necessarily totally estranged from this peasant tradition that has continued to coexist with an urban Italy. Even in Trieste itself, during the *fiera di San Nicolo'*--an annual fair that traditionally takes place

⁶ In Queensland, the Giuseppe Verdi Club was established even earlier, circa 1958. It also was established by immigrants from the Triveneto regions, including Istrians and Triestines who had immigrated to the State.

on the occasion of the feast day of *San Nicolo'* (Saint Nicholas being the father Christmas figure in Trieste) on the 6th of December--an avenue in the city centre is completely taken over by stalls selling everything from fairy floss and food to toys and clothes. Moreover, before Lent, the ritualistic, parody-like festivities of *Carnival* in Trieste, like in other parts of Italy, also marks a time of celebration when people from all walks of life come together and take over the city streets with the common hedonistic purpose of having fun. Today, among Melbourne's Triestine community these traditions have become a distant reality. Initially, the Triestine clubs had organised activities around these occasions, as one interviewee remembered:

In my club we used to have a good time, my wife and I. For *Carnevale* we would always dress up in costume. Many Triestines would dress up, but things began to change, and the young people, you can't blame them, they haven't been born into the same culture as we have. In Trieste everyone would dress in costume for *Carnevale* and go out to parties, we had fun. It was our tradition.

However, maintaining these traditions in 'isolation' proved unsuccessful precisely because they remained circumscribed to a temporally and spatially distant reality, and hence became insignificant to the younger generations. Interestingly a decline in the popularity of events organised by Triestine clubs around these traditions began to take place, not only at time when the younger generations were expressing their disinterest in these activities, but most importantly at the time (the mid-1970s) when public events such as the *Lygon Street festa* were established and began to characterise the expression of an Italo-Australian identity. For the Triestine collectivity, therefore, Melbourne's *Lygon Street festa* 'took over' the function of these 'fading' regional and particularised traditions. In this context the *festa* helped sustain a sense of continuity with the past, while still providing a link to the experience of migration and settlement by positioning the Triestines together with members of all the other Italian collectivities, in an 'Italo-Australian' reality.

TRIESTE REVISITED

Various factors had influenced the early settlement experiences of the Triestines. These have been brought to light and examined in previous

sections. But essentially this stage had generally been characterised by a sense of belonging that was delimited by the collectivity itself. During this early stage Triestine immigrants had mainly socialised amongst themselves, and the networks developed had generally remained circumscribed.

However, even in the latter stage of settlement, when the structures of a developing 'Italo-Australian' community began to offer a broader range of possibilities, and when the cultural markers that distinguished the social world of Triestine immigrants--which had once been symbolically structured by different lifestyles and different schemes of perception--had become a little blurred, and the 'boundaries' of the collectivity itself more fluid, the Triestines in Melbourne continued to experience and nurture a sense of self that remained tied to the Triestine immigrant collectivity, as well as to a symbiotic relationship with the city of Trieste itself.



The directorate of the Trieste section of ANEA, November 1986: rear: Pietro Losapio, Claudio Settipittich, Saverio Cimador, Adriano Straziota, Giorgio Gregori; front: Vittoriano Brizzi, Mario Loperfido, Alberto Lagoi, Claudio Miklaus, Giorgio Michelazzi

After more than forty years in Australia, Triestine immigrants in Melbourne have continued to express their regional identity--their 'Triestineness'--by still predominantly socialising with other Triestines, and by frequenting Triestine clubs and speaking the Triestine dialect.⁷ The oral accounts of the immigrant experience highlight that although in the later years of settlement, first-generation Triestines who arrived in Australia as adults, did established friendship relationships with other Italians, and less frequently even with Anglo-Australians, it is still with other Triestines that these immigrants have established more intimate friendships and with whom they continue to feel most at ease:

I have friends who are *siciliani, calabresi, abruzzesi*... We got to know them here in Australia, we didn't know them before, like they didn't know us. They are good people, more open, more hospitable than us, more typical of the southerners, but all my close friends are *triestini*. I like to joke around and I think that the Triestines have their own typical sense of humour and I feel more comfortable joking around with other Triestines. I think that with Italians all the different regions have their own way of joking around...

and

I feel Triestine more than anything else and I enjoy being with other Triestines. Other Italians would have to come second I suppose. The way I act with Triestines I can't do that with other Italians, you have to measure your words because there can be misunderstandings; and with Australians, I don't really have Australian friends, just acquaintances...

In fact, this tendency is explained by the members of the collectivity themselves as being the result of a continued sense of 'difference' experienced in relation to Italian immigrants from other regions, particularly in terms of values and habits:

⁷ This is understandable also in terms of the fact that the Triestine dialect has been used by Triestines of all classes in Trieste. One interviewee explained that 'Trieste was the only city in which you went into a public office and they would speak to you in dialect if you were Triestine. In any other city in Italy, the clerks in the office speak standard Italian'.

It is very difficult to communicate in a comprehensive way sometimes because people from other regions sometimes live very differently and the differences can be marked. You can see this when you talk about certain things, even family matters... In Italy, maybe, these differences don't exist any more, or maybe they are not as marked, but here you still experience this.

However, what also must be considered are the characteristics of Triestine migration. As noted, migration from Trieste occurred in a period of only a few short years, and the migrants that came during this period were predominantly part of family units. Many had worked together or had been part of the Venezia Giulia Police Force. In essence they had formed a somewhat cohesive social group that had little 'real' need to establish more intimate friendship networks outside the collectivity. Moreover, given the demographic characteristics of this group of adult, first generation immigrants, it can be assumed that relatively few had the need to seek marriage partners in the new society. The relatively few numbers of individuals that did arrive in Australia as singles have been absorbed in the general statistics pertaining to Italians in Australia.⁸ In-marriage rates were high amongst Italian immigrants in post war Australia, (Pascoe 1987: 183-184) however, individual cases seem to highlight that single Triestines also readily married outside the Italian community. One well-known case in Melbourne was the Quagliotti family--the wife of this first-generation Triestine was the well-known aboriginal leader and activist, Winnie Quagliotti, who passed away in 1989.⁹

In the year 2000 the majority of first generation Triestines form part of a rapidly ageing population of Italian born immigrants, the mass having immigrated to Australia, on average, aged between twenty and thirty, and some even at forty years of age. They came, moreover, in a relatively short time span--between 1954 and 1961--and most have reached or are very close to retirement age. Having become 'pensioners' has provided yet another 'positionality', yet another dimension to their ethnicity and identity. In a

⁸ One interviewee noted that in 1955 the migrant ship *Toscanelli* carried mostly single Triestines and that the ship had been baptised 'the bachelor ship'. Although most likely amongst these immigrants there were those who were married or engaged, but who were forced to leave their partners behind because they were unqualified, undoubtedly there were also unattached singles.

⁹ Another Triestine married to an indigenous Australian is Trieste-born Clely Yumbulul, married to the artist Terry Yumbulul. The couple met in 1972 when Clely was working as a secretary to the town clerk in the Echo Island Mission in Arnhem Land (*The Australian*, magazine, 22-23 June 1991)

sense ageing Italians in Melbourne have faced retirement collectively and throughout the suburbs they have organised themselves into separate Italian elderly citizens' clubs, the majority of which have come under the organising umbrella of Co.As.It. However, although some individual Triestines have used their identity as both Triestines and Italians as a strategy for negotiating the process of ageing in Australia, Triestines immigrants, in general, have shown a reluctance to join these Italo-Australian structures. In fact the first Italian pensioner club to become established in Melbourne--which was in the suburb of Moonee Ponds (a suburb where traditionally many Triestines had first settled and where many still resided), had, in 1993, no members who had been born in Trieste.¹⁰ This was an indication that the Triestines generally preferred to patronise their own associations, as one Triestine clearly stated, 'I don't go to any Italian pensioner clubs, I'm not interested. I go to my club'. Those Triestines who have demonstrated more of a propensity to join Italian pensioner groups, have by and large been women.¹¹ This has indeed occurred in the Italian pensioner club in the Melbourne suburb of Ascot Vale, but even in such cases, as the Ascot Vale example highlights, when participating in the activities organised by the clubs, Triestine members have tended to form their own clique. 'Sometimes I go to the Italian pensioner club in Ascot Vale when they have a function or an outing, but then I always organise it so that other *triestini* come along, we form a little group there...'

The fact remains that while the migrant experiences of the Triestines in the context of both the wider society and an Italo-Australian community has indeed positioned the Triestine collectivity as both the 'same' and 'different', and while the boundaries of 'difference' have been continually re-positioned in relation to the process of migration and settlement, a strong sense of historical continuity still persists among members of this community. This sense of continuity, this sense of belonging to a group which has remained emotionally and embryonically connected to the city of Trieste, was highlighted by one interviewee, who pithily summed up the immigrant experience of the collectivity in the following way:

¹⁰ Information obtained from the President of the club interviewed by the author in 1993 - for a study of elderly Italo-Australians living in the area.

¹¹ Triestine women themselves have noted that 'gender identity' has cut across regional barriers.

Everyone said, 'Let's go to Australia!', and so off we came to Australia. There were no more Triestines left in Trieste, in our city. We left our hearts there. We are part of that city, part of the history. But we could all be together here in Australia, and in fact here in Australia we Triestines have remained together. We have done things together. We have a club, we all know each other in one way or another. We were young together and now we are old.

The relationship of Triestine immigrants with the city of Trieste, which over the years has manifested itself in different ways, is essentially tied to 'place'--to the personal biographies which unfold and which are irrevocably linked to history and geography--but also to a city, to a Trieste which is experienced as a purely geographical expression, and to which a deep emotional attachment has been formed.

Clearly 'place' constitutes the *ambiente*, that environment which is familiar and which nurtures a sense of belonging precisely because within it the individual experiences continuity and the ability to carry on as usual. A number of interviewees conceptualised their relationship to 'place' in the sense of being able to feel 'at home'.

It is the places around the city that I miss most. Places that made me feel good. Places you went to on outings: Val Rosandra, Prosecco, Muggia. You used to go with a large group of friends, enjoy the countryside and then eat out in a local *trattoria*. I mean here in Australia there are a lot of places, a lot of restaurants, especially now, but the atmosphere is missing. I don't get the same feelings, the same sensations here. They are very nice but, it's another thing those places, that atmosphere, rustic and genuine, you get the fresh air of the high places... you really savour the experience.

For a number of Triestines immigrants this aspect of 'place' became tied to nostalgia and stasis. It embodied a sense of place that was connected to a world with which ties were severed in the migration process. Hence for some it had become a nostalgic construct, the notion of Trieste as memory, a 'place' that in reality no longer exists. Indeed, some Triestines no longer experienced the same sense of attachment and belonging to the Triestine *ambiente* back home, precisely because this *ambiente* was perceived as having changed with the passing of time:

When I went back to Italy and I set foot in Trieste I saw that everything had changed. It was strange, it didn't give me any satisfaction, it didn't feel as if I belonged there any more. It was like I didn't know my city any more.

However, such a conceptualisation of 'place' also entailed 'a way of being', a way of experiencing the world that influenced the settlement experience. Not every interviewee had felt this same sense of distance from the Triestine *ambiente* on their return visits--'To tell you the truth I went there three times and each time it was like I had never even left...'--for 'place' is often a matter of individual perception based on personal experience. However, even those that did, could not ignore the fact that a sense of continuity still pervaded their existence; because, as we have already seen, as a collectivity the Triestines had ably recreated their own *ambiente*--one that had retained some aspects of the original, while accommodating itself to other realities and changing needs:

There were many *triestini* here and that made things a lot easier, plus we had our meeting places and then our clubs. We did things together and that made life in this country a lot easier.

and

What I miss, well, we sort of have it here as well. We have our culture and we try and live the life we lived back in Trieste.

A more static and somewhat essentialised aspect of Triestine identity can however, be observed when we look at the emotional attachment to the city of Trieste articulated by all the interviewees. This is much more than a sense of place tied to the *ambiente* or tied to the personal memories of place, as the following declaration reveals:

...it wasn't the Trieste I had left behind, everything had changed, but even though it has changed, it's still my city, I love my city, it's who I am, I'm Triestine...

Most of the interviewees mentioned the unchanging physical beauty of the city as a point of attraction, a point of pride that mobilised the emotions and the sense of identity, but which in no way competed with their contentedness in Australia. The following excerpts from the interviews with

Triestine immigrants reveal the intensity of the emotions experienced in relation to the city itself:

Now we have lived here more than in Trieste, we are used to the peacefulness and the quiet we have here. We like it here. But Trieste, it is beautiful city, when I think about it I feel like crying. We went back three years ago and my son came, and he said to us, 'How could you have left this city?' He was right.

The Triestine panorama, every now and then, it flashes before my eyes. It is beautiful.

I almost feel ashamed to talk about it now, even when I was there I thought they would make fun of me. When I went back I had the sensation, I thought that it was actually impossible that I was there in Trieste. As I walked around I had the urge to touch the walls, caress the walls, and say 'I'm here', 'I've come back'. It felt like something incredible...

When I went back after eighteen years, as I was entering Barcola and I saw the Castle of Miramar with the sea in the background, the tears started to come down...

These recollections reveal much more than a sense of nostalgia, than a pining for a place that has been romanticised through memory and that no longer exists. As noted earlier, 'place' is often understood as the fusion of space and experience, however, in this context, the city of Trieste as 'place' appears to have absorbed experience and history to the point where they are no longer relevant:

Coming down with the cable tram from Opicina, from high up, I could see the city itself and the sea. It had a certain effect on me. It was moving. I realised how much I love the city. I love the sea, I love the panorama. I love the San Giusto Castle, the Castle of Miramare, the Victory lighthouse. Everything! Everything! They say Trieste has changed. Some criticise the city and say that it has lost its notoriety, that it's a city going downhill. That the Istrians have taken over. What can I say, they have a right to live somewhere just as I live here. But for me, I don't care about these things. I don't care what happened in the past or how I lived in the past. Good or bad, it

doesn't matter. The politics, everything that went on and that goes on now, I don't care. For me Trieste remains my city. Trieste remains Trieste.

For Triestine immigrants, their city has become reified in the migration process. Trieste itself has thus become a concept, a spiritual and cultural metaphor that encapsulates the Triestine identity. It has metaphorically come to symbolise what Boudeau defines as *habitus*--the unconscious dispositions that define the identity itself. It is little wonder, therefore, that many Triestine immigrants asked themselves, like James Joyce one did, 'Why is it I am destined to look so many times in my life with eyes of longing on Trieste?'¹²

The continued 'pull' of place has also been experienced by Triestine artists in Australia who, through their work, continue to express their sense of identity and belonging. As an artist, Armando Severi has articulated his psychological and emotional attachment to his native city by painting the city's symbols of Triestine identity, 'the castles of *Miramare, San Giusto...*'



'I love the sea...': Lucio Crozzoli, Yolanda Grison and Novella Tamburin at South Melbourne beach, Christmas 1968

¹² Letter from James Joyce to Nora, quoted in Hartshorn, P; 'James Joyce and Trieste', Greenwood Press, Connecticut 1997.

Although the bulk of his work is varied, ‘painting Trieste’ became for Severi, an almost ritualistic and cathartic process: ‘What I enjoy most, what gives me the most pleasure, is painting my city’. Similarly, for Domenico DeClario, the city of Trieste became a symbol that he used to reassert and define his own identity. A versatile artist, he had experienced migration as rupture, whereby the sea and the journey had created a powerful dividing line, a boundary, between his former life and his new life; and his art has also characterised his search for identity. In this context, part of his artistic endeavour has included a return journey to the city of his birth, where he followed the trail from *Molo Audace*, the pier in Trieste where the ships bound for Australia had once departed, to the *San Giusto* Castle, one of Trieste’s identifying symbols. Along this brief pilgrimage of self-discovery De Clario stopped to paint. Blindfolded, unlike Severi he did not paint images of Trieste, but rather used the paint ‘as a kind of receptive material’, a ‘seismograph’ that recorded his inner turmoil and transmuted his feelings into colour on canvas. For De Clario this was a way of being ‘reborn’, of ‘validating and reasserting whether I actually existed’. In some ways the experience of De Clario exemplified the experiences of the second and subsequent generations of Triestines.

By the early 1970s many Triestine immigrants had begun to make the pilgrimage ‘home’. Some immigrants returned only once or twice, others were to make the journey many more times. These return visits became part of the migration process, part of re-establishing connections with the family and friends left behind, but also with Trieste itself. Even if some found that the city and the ways of its inhabitants had changed, this too became a way of reasserting the Triestine identity, of uniting the Triestine collectivity in a distant land. Many immigrants perceived that, after all, it was they who were the ‘real Triestines’, the sons and daughters who in 1954 had made the ultimate sacrifice for their city. If Trieste had changed, it was, in a sense, seen as being so because, they, the emigrants, had left. In this context Trieste had indeed remained Trieste, since the emigrants themselves embodied the city. It was after all a city that belonged to its emigrants, while its emigrants belonged to Trieste. Return visits also helped reinforce the sense of place through nostalgia, as many sought out the ‘places’ and ‘haunts’ of their youth. The *Bagno Ausonia*, the Ausonia Beach club, was re-visited and frequented by many *australiani*,¹³ a fact that has been

¹³The term used by Triestines in Trieste to denote the emigrants that left for Australia. The term is also commonly used through out Italy to describe the emigrants.

documented in a book on the history of this 'beach club' (Caroli 1996: 23). Others congregated in the bar in *Piazza Goldoni*. Even the local press reaffirmed the connections by publishing articles and cartoons that acknowledged the emigrants' existence and the impact of their emigration on the city.¹⁴ Return visits helped Triestine immigrants come to terms with their identity--as migrants, Italians and as Triestines--but they also helped to reconnect the city with its own history. For many Triestine immigrants, it was at this point that reconciliation with their past and with their sense of being Italian had occurred. Identity was once again renegotiated and renewed. If once a number of Triestine immigrants had harboured a sense of resentment over the events that during the postwar period had impacted on their lives so dramatically, return visits had allowed their feelings to mellow as they forgot the past and savoured the present:

The first time I went back, everything annoyed me, the way they lived. Getting onto a bus was like getting into a fight and then in all the public offices they were rude. It was typically Italian. It was what I didn't like. I just wasn't used to the rudeness any more. But then I went back two more times, and, well, I think I got used to it. It wasn't such a shock. I think I was more relaxed, I ignored things like that, and I just enjoyed being there, without making comparisons all the time...

The return visit, which had essentially been an individual and rather personal pilgrimage, became a public and collective experience when the Triestine immigrant, Luciano Sandrin, returned to Trieste from Melbourne on his Yacht, the *Sabaloo*. In February 1983, Sandrin, who had immigrated to Australia in 1955, set out, with three other crew members, to sail around the world--the most important destination being Trieste. This was a symbolic return voyage, not only for Sandrin, but for the whole Triestine collectivity, many of whom were part of the crowd that witnessed and cheered his departure. As his yacht entered the Triestine harbour in July that same year, he was greeted by vessels large and small and the resonating sound of sirens. On another shore another Triestine crowd had gathered to cheer. This was indeed a home-coming after the odyssey that reunited two

¹⁴ Over the years many articles and cartoons have appeared in the Triestine local press with regard to emigrants. One such cartoon appeared in *Il Piccolo* (Trieste, 30 December 1996). This satirical cartoon depicted Italy as a mother figure who was waiting to be accepted as part of the European Union. She was standing on the pier in Trieste and an older woman who represented Trieste, was ironically advising her that 'if she was not wanted in Europe, she could always go to Australia',

distant worlds, two distant realities. Footage of Sandrin's voyage and of his 'home-coming' was shown in Triestine clubs in Melbourne. For Triestine immigrants the actual viewing of this footage became a shared, moving and cathartic experience that gave public recognition to the collective identity of Melbourne's Triestines. Symbolically, Trieste and the Triestines had welcomed home 'their own'.

Throughout the process of migration other events served to reconnect the Triestine collectivity in Melbourne to their native city and to contemporary Italy. In a formal sense 'reconciliation' with the past had begun at an earlier date, and was marked by the official visit by the then Mayor of Trieste, Bartoli, in the early 1960s. Some Triestines remember this occasion as an emotional moment, when both their Italian and Triestine identity had received official recognition:

...the Consul General was there together with the Mayor of Trieste, I remember they played *Fratelli d'Italia*, the Italian national anthem and Triestine songs. It was moving.

Later, more concrete steps were taken by Italian regional governments with the formation of Associations such as the *Giuliani nel Mondo* in 1970, which aimed to bring together all the Julians of the diaspora. As previously noted, such an association became an umbrella organisation for Triestine and Julian clubs throughout the countries of Julian immigration. In this context the *Giuliani nel Mondo* Association adopted the pivotal role of reinforcing connections and identity, often through sponsoring return visits for the elderly and, as previously noted, the organisation of 'stages' for Julian youth with the intent of reconnecting them with the area's history and culture--a rediscovery of their roots. The Association, together with the Italian Cultural Institute, also sponsored and organised cultural events, such as the photographic exhibition 'Trieste Past & Present', held in Melbourne in 1987, visits by various Triestine artists and performers, as well as the presentation of the *San Giusto d'Oro*,¹⁵ which was presented to the Julians of Australia in 1986 as public recognition that honoured their efforts and achievements as a community of immigrants in Australia (*Il Piccolo*, 26 October 1986: 13).

¹⁵ The San Giusto d'Oro is a statue, sculptured in gold, of the patron saint of Trieste (San Giusto). The prize is awarded by Triestine journalists. Every year it is awarded to a citizen of particular worthiness.

Certainly the 1980s and the 1990s marked a period in the immigrant experience of the Triestines when strong links with their city had reinforced continuity and identity. The performance of a play in Triestine dialect by the Trieste-based theatre group '*La Contrada*', which was performed as part of the Melbourne Italian Arts Festival in the 1990s, attracted large audiences of Triestine immigrants in Melbourne. So did the Illersberg Choir, which on occasion of the Bicentenary celebrations performed at both the San Giusto Alabarda Club and at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. Most importantly these cultural exchanges also helped foster stronger links and greater cultural understanding and awareness between the Triestines, the Italian community, and the wider society.

However, while these 'links' had certainly helped re-invigorate identity and a sense of continuity, the Triestines themselves had not remained passive participants in this process. As this research has shown, when they had first arrived, despite the sense of rupture experienced, the Triestines had endeavoured to maintain some of their ways, and they had also organised themselves relatively quickly into a collectivity, with its own structures and cultural vigour. Throughout the years, in Melbourne, Triestines like Guido Franchi continued to write his vignettes in Triestine dialect, and in a Triestine tradition he continued to perform comedy sketches together with his fellow comedian, Angelo Cecchi, until his death in 1998. Others, like Angelo Cecchi, also wrote poetry, while a few preferred to express their sentiments by penning Triestine songs which were sometimes even recorded back in Trieste.¹⁶ The writing of these songs, even after many years of settlement, reflect not only an enduring sense of identification with the city of Trieste, but also the continued development of a cultural nexus between the city and its emigrants.

¹⁶ The Melbourne-based Triestine immigrant, Attilio Dereani, wrote the words to a song which in 1989 won the *Festival della canzone triestina*--the Triestine song festival--held in Trieste each year. The words to the song reflect the sense of nostalgia still experienced: '*...Per quella/ terra/ l'amor esiste ancor/ Trieste mia/ ti ho sempre nel mio cuor...*' ('For that/ land/ I still feel love/ My dear Trieste/ you are always in my heart...'). Another Triestine wrote a song in dialect that was recorded by the well-known Triestine artist, Lupi (1984). The words to this song also reflect nostalgia and a continued attachment to place: '*Za troppo tempo xe passa'/ che su quel molo iero pronto per partir/ l'ultima occhiada ghe go da/ sora quei monti della mia città./ Quando mi penso a ti go nostalgia/ anche se non lontan Trieste mia/ Te go lassado el cuor andando via/...*' ('Too many years have passed/ that on that wharf I stood ready to leave/ and that last glance I gave/ to those hills of my city./ When I think of you I fill with sadness/ even is I am far from you my dear Trieste/ On leaving you I left you my heart/...')

Thus as individuals they also adopted their own unconscious strategies, their own ways of maintaining a connection with their past, their city and their subjective notion of who they were. An important strategy was indeed reflected in the conversation of these immigrants, who would often not just talk of 'home' as a concept which had embodied past experience, or as a geographical expression which was nostalgically remembered as a place of natural beauty, but also as a 'space' which needed to be recalled in minute detail. One interviewee remembered how, when she had been younger, growing up in Melbourne in a Triestine family, the topic of conversation had often turned to 'home', especially when a group of Triestine friends gathered together, but that often this 'talking of home' became a discussion on the streets of Trieste:

When there was a group of *triestini* together they would always start to talk about Trieste... and they'd go on and on. Sometimes it got boring because they didn't talk about things that happened in the past, but they'd go on for ages talking about the streets in the city--the name of this one and that one, and sometimes they'd argue about them, one would say this street was called such and such and someone else would say no it wasn't. It was like a competition to see who remembered more. And then they'd say if you lived there then you must have known so and so. And on like that. It was like a test on who knew the most...

No other immigrant Italian group studied in Australia has demonstrated this fascination with the streets and urban features of their home-town. Such conversations that focussed on recalling localities and street names were attempts at re-creating mental maps of the city, but most importantly, for members of the Triestine collectivity, they became a way of confirming their own identity to other Triestines, as well as to themselves. As a strategy, recalling the urban features of Trieste mitigated against fading memories of place, and enabled Triestine immigrants to maintain a sense of concrete, physical continuity with their city, and to mediate the sense of 'physical' rupture and dislocation experienced in the migration process. Moreover, since the city of Trieste has historically been a place of immigration, Triestine emigrants also had to demonstrate an intricate knowledge of the city before affirming a Triestine identity. In a sense this knowledge defined identity and was a prerequisite for being a 'real Triestine'. Such definitions became particularly important in the migration process, when the identity

was challenged both by the host society as well as 'back home', as a particular incident recalled by one interviewee highlights:

...when I went back, I got on the bus and when it was time to get off I told the bus driver to 'Stop here' and I said the name of a street... He looked at me as if I was mad and said 'Where do you come from, the moon? That street isn't called such and such...' He wasn't that young and I said to him 'Where do you come from...?' If the name of the street had changed he should have known how it used to be called...

In writing about postwar Trieste, unfulfilled expectations, and the diaspora that followed, Ara and Magris (1987:171) noted that those who had abandoned Trieste during this period were destined to remember the city constantly:

*Questi esuli partono portando con sé nostalgia per la città e rancore per la medesima, che non ha loro permesso di piantarvi radici...e con un risentimento edipico che li spingerà a desiderare segretamente di tornarvi e a non tornarci neanche per una settimana...a parlarne sempre male e soprattutto a parlarne sempre...*¹⁷

Indeed this is what Triestine immigrants did. Importantly, these memories, these recollections, this constant 'revisiting' of Trieste, are now part of the shared collective memories of a group, which in the twenty-first century, comprises first, second and subsequent generations of Triestines.

THE SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT GENERATIONS

When Triestines chose the path of emigration they did so, as we have seen, as family units, which in many cases comprised young children. Although strictly in terms of statistical analysis these children are not seen to be part of

¹⁷ 'These exiles leave, taking with them both a sense of nostalgia and a sense of bitterness for the city that did not allow them to stay and plant firm roots...and a sense of oedipal resentment that will force them to secretly desire to return and not to return, not even for a week...to speak of it in negative terms but above all to always speak of it...'

the second generation, from a sociological and psychological perspective they can be seen to have shared similar experiences to those children of Triestine born parents born in Australia,¹⁸ and subsequently both of these groups will be referred to as the second generation. Moreover, as Vasta (1992a:155-156) notes, a further definition of the second generation is that based on how individuals perceive their own identity. This perception often emerges from the relationship and the process of interaction between the individual, the individual's family and community and the host society. Importantly, it is this subjective construction of identity which allows for the emergence and manifestation of 'multiple identities' in the migration process.

There were many Triestine children who came to Australia aged between one and ten, while others were born soon after. A former President of the *Giuliani nel Mondo* in Australia estimated that, together with these 'subsequent generations', the Triestines in Australia had numbered around 25,000 in the early 1990s. In many ways these children shared the same experiences to those of their parents--the family, friends, the home environment and the community all provided a sense of continuity. In other ways they had been thrust into an environment that was strange and alien--the world of the schoolyard alienated them from the collectivity and forced them almost immediately to establish social relationships with peers who were 'strangers', and who, at least initially, they did not understand. The narratives of this generation of Triestines highlight that in effect they had to reconcile these two realities and come to terms with a multifaceted identity which positioned them as 'Italian migrants', Triestines, Italo-Australians and Australians.

As a group, this generation appeared aware that their lives had been governed by the consequences of a choice that had been made on their behalf. It has often been documented that one of the main factors motivating Italians to migrate to Australia was that of providing opportunities for their children that they thought would not be available to them in Italy. However, for the Triestines, this factor appears to have had little relevance. In the narratives of Triestine immigrants such a motivation did not rate a mention, even among those first generation interviewees who had migrated with young children. In a sense second generation Triestines faced their own

¹⁸ The term 'second generation' is used to define those who immigrated with their parents at an early age. The use of the term in this manner usually defines as 'second generation' those children who arrived in Australia aged ten years of age or under.

migration process, and their own dilemma of settlement. Those who had come as young children had their personal memories of place, their own nostalgic feelings of rupture, of having left behind loved ones and friends and even pets:

I remember the place where I lived, where I went to school, even if it was just for a very short time. I also remember the place where my aunt used to live and the park where I used to play and the beach I always went to with my family. I remember these things vividly. I remember lots of shopping areas and a lot of social things. And I remember these things--these places, the things we used to do--as happy times. My life was happy, that's the feeling I get when I remember the Trieste of my early childhood. Then all of that came to an end. I didn't understand why. I just remember saying good-bye to everyone. Then my life wasn't happy. I couldn't see it then, but in retrospect when I look back and think about how I used feel I can see that I wasn't happy.

and

...and I cried for my cat. On board the ship I was crying and people asked 'Why are you crying?' and I said 'I want my cat!', and they would say 'You'll see there are lots of cats in Australia', but I was inconsolable. I had a photo of my cat..., maybe I concentrated all my sadness into missing my cat... It was the beginning of a difficult time, a lonely time...

While as a collectivity as a whole, Triestine immigrants had quickly developed friendship networks that mediated the rupture of migration, the fact that their immigration had occurred within a relatively short time span, and that it was not typical of the chain migration process, whereby those already in the host country provided support networks for those newly arrived immigrants, meant that many Triestine children whose parents both worked, were mostly left to face everyday reality alone. Triestine families were essentially not large extended families, and often this group of 'second generation Triestines' were 'only children'. This and the fact that in the early years of settlement these families lived a somewhat transient existence with frequent changes of houses and schools, exacerbated the sense of being alone:

I can vividly remember every place we ever lived and I remember the schools I went to. Instances of not going to school because no-one would know anyway. Our first place of abode was in North Fitzroy, but we moved around a lot--Carlton, Brunswick, Fitzroy, Pascoe Vale, Glenroy. That's just the different suburbs, but we also moved in the same suburb. We had eleven moves in one year. I went to a lot of different schools. It was hard to keep friends that way. I was an only child and even though we lived with different people, they all worked and none of them ever had children. I was the only child in the whole household. My parents both worked. It wasn't a happy childhood, it was a lonely existence. Basically I hated it and I didn't know that I didn't like living here. It has just been in the last ten years that I realised that that's why I was so unhappy.

and

When I think of growing up in Australia, especially those first years, what I remember is the loneliness. My parents left for work early. I was six years old and I would get myself ready for school, my mother left a big clock, and I had learnt the hours, and she used to say 'Leave when the big hand is here and the little hand is there', and that's what I would do. And when I came home I was alone again too. One day I came home from school sick and vomiting and I just had to deal with it myself...

Children of Triestine immigrants, were, in the early years of settlement, often the forgotten 'victims' of migration. Families were facing their own dilemmas--dealing with the initial culture shock and a sense of negativity that had been brought about by the fact that initially many were disappointed with what they found, '...what we had left behind was a thousand times better than what we found here when we first arrived'. As the account of one interviewee highlighted, life as part of nuclear family unit which had been deeply affected by the impact of migration, was often a tortured existence when the problems of family members were absorbed by the children:

...They were unhappy, my mother was always crying in front of us. We had no choice but to take that on... It was very irresponsible of them...

It was then, also within the family unit, that the children of Triestine immigrants soon began to understand their 'otherness', that they had come from another place and that their lives had been disrupted by the migration process. Life outside the family, especially within the school structure, further added to this subjective understanding of themselves as 'migrants'. While the adults had protected themselves from culture shock and ethnocentric attitudes by sheltering within their own community, those of the second generation found themselves with little choice other than that of living between two cultures.

The government policy of assimilation had not envisaged the need for systematic provisions to aid the transition of migrant children into the Australian school system. Within the boundaries of the school, Triestine children, like other migrant children, were expected to learn English and abandon links with their culture of origin. Although, as the narratives of these 'younger Triestines' suggests, no overt discrimination was experienced within the system itself, they had indeed experienced an indifference to their needs and the more subtle clues suggested to them that Anglo-Saxon culture was superior. As an ideology, assimilation had thus encouraged discrimination and racism which had filtered down to the school yard, and had been instrumental in encouraging the stereotypical images of the Italian migrant that confronted these children. For those who had already attended school in Trieste, adapting to a different system, to different educational values, had helped create an environment that was both strange and threatening. 'Otherness' as an ideological construct also confronted and threatened the identity of these children as their culture was devalued and even ridiculed:

I'd spent three years at school in Trieste in the 1950s and I was like a young man, a little gentleman, and then coming here it was mayhem. It was like a lunatic asylum--kids in the school ground fighting, rolling on the ground. They would have been carted off in Trieste. After the war school in Italy was a humanist thing--you learned history, geography, the Classics--and in first year you wrote with a pen. Here instead you wrote with a pencil. Also there was a big gender divide, boys had to be tough. I remember the first day at school I was introduced to someone and I went to shake their hands and I got a push and a punch in the stomach--like 'Hi!' As a male at lunchtime you always had to have a fight. And then there was this incredible aggression that I had never encountered before, based on

your culture, the country that you came from. I had no choice, I had to take on what was projected on to me and that was that I was Italian. They didn't see you as an individual, you were just Italian or a wog and that's why there was so much aggression...

The threat to the identity brought about by such confrontation was often dealt with in a decisive way, and the decision to identify as an Italian-Triestine was a conscious effort, as the same interviewee explained:

I took it on. It was a war and I can say that I won because I did really well at school, despite everything. But I made the initial decision to remain Italian, it was the only thing I could do. I was flying the flag for my father and I was defiant, but I still fitted in... Everything was very physical here so I became sports orientated, I became involved with sport, typically Australian sport, football and cricket. I had always been physical in that way, my father had been a sportsman, so that was an easy way of fitting in, but I never gave up my identity as an Italian-Triestine.

Various strategies for coping and for integrating into the school structure were indeed adopted by individual members of this group. Another interviewee similarly recalled that her artistic ability had allowed her to be readily accepted by her teachers and peers:

I was good at drawing and the other kids and the teacher were fascinated, so I helped a couple of girls in the class and we became good friends even if I didn't know any English yet...

while others found themselves renouncing their Italian-ness and becoming 'Aussies', even though they continued to view their Triestine identity with a degree of confusion and interest:

...I integrated and learnt the language really quickly and became an Aussie, it just happened. There weren't many Italians in the State Schools I went to and I mixed mainly with Aussies. They couldn't say my name so I changed it instantly,... But apart from them not being able to pronounce my name, that was the only thing really. I know there were instances of discrimination. I never experienced it. Actually I had no problems, I fitted in really well in all my schools. I didn't look Italian for one and my surname didn't sound Italian. My

parents didn't look like the typical Italians either and that made a big difference too, and then of course they were different in other ways as well. But when I was young that was a bit hard to understand, so to me I became an Aussie, but it isn't like I forgot the Triestine dialect. I can speak it perfectly and Italian as well. It was living between two cultures.

Although at times rejection was expressed by the refusal by some Triestine children to speak Italian or 'dialect' in public:

My son became embarrassed when I spoke Italian in public, he used to say 'shoosh' and tell me to speak quietly. Sometimes he would put his hand on my mouth...

a degree of confusion often ensued when it came to negotiating the rejection of other cultural symbols and practices which were often associated to the stereotypical definition of what it meant to be Italian in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s. In this context members of the second generation noted that they felt '... different to other Italian kids in some ways'. Thus defining the Triestine identity and what it meant to be an Italian-Triestine in the context of the host society also became an important part of negotiating identity for this group. Although many continued to speak, if not Italian, at least the Triestine dialect with their families at home, like many other Italian migrant children they had been embarrassed by the negative stereotype of Italians--'The Italian woman dressed in black, maybe even fat and with a moustache'--advanced, and were eager to distance themselves from this image:

I remember this day when mum had to come to school, it was parent-teacher day, or something, and when some of the other girls saw my mother they asked why she wasn't dressed in black and they commented on how she looked 'Australian'. I said to them, 'Do you think that all Italians dress in black and look the same? I don't think so!' And I laughed. I didn't pretend to be Australian, but really I was happy to distinguish myself, saying 'Yeah, but I'm different'. I think I was just trying really hard to fit in. To be the same as the others. But then really it wasn't as if I was just pretending not to be like that, because in reality I wasn't...

Often, but not always, this notion of being somehow ‘different’ had stemmed from the fact that, as most of those interviewed noted, they ‘didn’t look Italian’, particularly in light of the stereotypes advanced. But most importantly what subjectively distinguished this group was essentially the family values and cultural practices that governed their existence. The ‘urban’ background of Triestine migrants had made them less reliant on binding extended family networks, obligations and honour. Moreover, as a group, second generation Triestines did not experience the constraints of what has often been defined as the ‘typical Italian family’ in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s. They also did not experience, as many other young Italians had, any profound conflict between the ways of the wider Australian society and that of their family. While many other Italo-Australian girls were faced with restrictions related to chastity and family honour during this period (Huber 1977), Triestine youth, both male and female, characteristically experienced complete freedom. Consequently, for many of the second generation, the rejection of Italian-ness did not necessarily entail a questioning or rejection of many of their own family values:

I realised that I could be myself without necessarily being ‘Italian’, that is, being Italian like everyone expected Italians to be. All the family obligations, all that ... about the big weddings and those showy things... I was Italian but I wasn’t like that, my family wasn’t, and it wasn’t like I was trying or pretending not be like that. Some people might have thought that I was trying to be different, but really I wasn’t...

Like their parents, in fact, they had been challenged by the paradox of feeling both the ‘same’ and ‘different’ from both other young Italo-Australians as well as from Anglo-Australian youth. Coming to terms with their own identity in the host society thus entailed negotiating and coming to understand both the differences and similarities which would provide them with a clear perception of self and the ontological security to participate fully in the wider society:

...at Christmas and Easter there would only be the four of us, maybe five or six. But that’s it. I had cousins here but we never really saw them much. There were no cousins of cousins, you know. I’m not used to that. I don’t like it. I had a few acquaintances that were Calabrian and they had a wedding every week-end, a christening

every second week. It was just outrageous. I suppose we are just the other extreme. But we are more casual. We don't have these rigid rules, we don't get offended... My girlfriend is Calabrian. I get on well with her parents, no problem there. Only there's a big difference with how they do things and how we do things. She loves coming around to my parents' place because it's so relaxing. We sit around, we eat and we talk. I tend to get stressed out when I go there because they talk really loudly, they make a big fuss over you like you're a king. They are more formal. I mean they are really nice, they are fantastic hosts, it's just a bit much, you know...

In such a process 'difference' was always mediated by the inevitability of similarities, some which like the notion of 'family', of 'working hard' and of 'owning your own home', have become an important characteristic of Italo-Australian life and culture:

I would never say I was Italian, always Australian, and then sometimes I would say that my parents were Italian and that they came from Trieste. When I went to Melbourne Uni, we rented houses with friends around Carlton and North Fitzroy, just hung around--mainly Australian friends, and I felt more like them. In retrospect, though, I think that that never really felt right, and I ended up buying my own house. I was taught to work hard and save ... and the family having meals together at the same time..., even if it didn't always happen. I only have a small family, no extended family, our relationship is casual but I am close to them. I get on well with them and to me I think that being close to my family is not an Australian way. I've got Australian friends who don't get along with their family at all. That's what made me Italian.

Growing up in 'Italo-Australia' in the 1960s and 1970s, second generation Triestines, in particular the girls, also found the sense of difference that they themselves had experienced was indeed also observed by 'others' who were often quick to compare and interpret these differences, providing and imposing their own perceptions and definitions of what 'being Triestine' entailed:

Many Italian men that I have met and known here in Australia used to comment that they have always had the impression that Triestine

women were 'loose' women. And that's because we used to have this complete liberty that back then most of the Italian girls didn't have...

For members of the second generation of Triestine immigrants who grew up during these years, 'fitting into' Australian society had perhaps proven to be a simpler process than for many of their Italo-Australian counterparts. As noted, Triestine immigrants had come from an urban, heterogeneous and stratified reality which had provided individual members of the collectivity with a broad range of experiences and expectations that can also be seen as having become embodied in 'habitus'. This 'habitus' reflected a social world structured by particular lifestyles, 'predispositions' and beliefs that were not all challenged or devalued in the migration process of Triestines, and which were hence readily accepted, rather than rejected, by members of the second and subsequent generations.

An 'immigrant work ethic' did, nonetheless, continue to guide the actions of this group. Like many other Italo-Australians, the children of Triestine immigrants successfully participated in various spheres of Australian life. Recognition for work well done came to Emilio Forti--a Triestine-Italian science teacher in a Victorian high school who had always been told by his father to strive for excellence--when in 1995 he won the 'teacher of the year' award. Another example is Professor Mauro Sandrin who, as Director of the Austin Research Centre in Melbourne's Austin Hospital, has become an important figure in the field of medical research.

Coming from a background where for many Triestines sport had been part of their 'lifestyle' activities, second generation Triestines also chose sport as means of expressing their determination and drive. However, while Italo-Australians have traditionally demonstrated their sporting prowess in sports such as soccer, boxing, weightlifting and at times even in more 'Australian' sports such as Australian Rules football and cricket (Pascoe 1987: 208-210), second generation Triestines have also shown an interest and have become successful in sports that have traditionally been dominated by Anglo-Saxon youth and that only recently have begun to be penetrated by youth of ethnic background in general. In swimming, Robert Gleria swam for Australia and reached the finals in the Commonwealth Games in 1986, although he later took up the offer to join Italy's national swimming team (*Il Globo*, 4 September 1986). In surf-lifesaving, a sport long the domain of the mythical 'bronzed Aussie', Mark Occhilupo was to make a name for himself. The son of a Trieste-born father and an Anglo-Australian born

mother, after a long 'career' in surfing, Occhilupo won the World Surf Championships in 1999. In tennis, Mark Phillippousous, the son of a Trieste-born mother and a Greek father, has also reached international fame. Another Triestine to have represented Australia was Robert Scigni. A basketball player and a finalist in the 1985 'Italo-Australian Sportsman of the Year Award', Scigni was a member of Australia's national basketball team and first represented Australia in the 1982 world championships. (*Il Globo*, 13 May 1985: 30)

Indeed, many second generation Triestines found that they could easily maintain all aspects of their Italian-Triestine identity while still feeling an integral part of the broader society. Although identity construction became for this group, a process of negotiation with both Anglo-Saxon reality and an Italo-Australian identity, members of this generation who were conscious of their own parent's 'positionalities' moved freely and without hesitation between cultural domains. During the mid-1960s, when many of the second generation were entering adolescence, an informal network of these 'younger Triestines' had developed. These were the sons and daughters of those Triestines who frequented the social and soccer club. They soon formed a group who met regularly at the club dances and who subsequently chose to socialise outside the club, often meeting for picnics or at the beach during the summer months, just like their parents had done in their youth in Trieste. Those who had been part of this network had maintained a clear, subjective perception of their own Triestine identity. They had listened to the Triestine songs sung at 'the club' and had absorbed a sense of continuity that they took with them beyond the boundaries of the Triestine collectivity:

When I was about 15 years old I used to like going to the club, we had this group and we all hung around together and do things together even outside the club. At the dances we had our own table and at the end of the night, when they used to play the Triestine songs, we just all sang along too. We learnt all the songs there. We used to have a great time, it was good then...

Such a network had, however, remained static. This had occurred primarily because not all Triestine youth in the 1960s and early 1970s had attended the functions organised by Triestine associations, and with no new members entering the group there had been no 'renewal' or growth. Although a number of those who had originally been part of this network remained

friends, the friendships established became individual relationships which did not result in the same sense of collective identity that first generation Triestines had experienced. Members of this informal network, moreover, were also part of other broader networks and affiliated with other groups. Triestine parents had overall, neither encouraged nor discouraged participation in the Triestine community network, nor in the broader society, and many 'young Triestines' perceived at the time that they indeed could choose whatever identity 'suited their needs'. While a number of second generation Triestines remained distanced from the Triestine community and from the Italo-Australian reality in which the Triestine community was placed, and hence defined their identity solely on the basis of interpersonal family relationships, others had negotiated the fact that part of their choice had also included an informal network of younger Italo-Australians that had begun to develop during this period:

I had two distinct sets of friends. I knew some Triestines from the club and sometimes we went out together--sometimes we went to the San Remo ballroom. They used to have an Italian dance there. It was a funny place in away because a lot of Italian girls came with chaperones back then and we used to think that was funny, it was like something from another time, but we still went and we made friends with other Italians there. Then I had another group of friends from school and we went to pubs and other haunts like that. It was like two different worlds, I was leading a double life ... In the end I thought 'Yeah, I'm Italian, but I'm different because my parents come from Trieste and they brought me up differently to other Italians here', but at the same time I also felt Australian because I was living here and participating in things here. I was part of this world, not the world that my parents lived in...

Although, unlike their parents, this group's own subjective sense of being Triestine was more subdued, when identifying themselves as Italians, like their parents, they did still highlight their Triestine heritage. In this context both Philloppousis and Occhilupo, during interviews with the Australian media, have not just noted that one of their parents had been born in Italy, but in fact stressed that they had been born in Trieste, Italy. However, while the reality of 'otherness' and 'difference' did at times serve to delineate a uniquely Triestine identity, for those members of the second

generation without an understanding of the well defined boundaries of the identity, a sense of confusion often lead to feelings of alienation:

In my late teens and into my 20s I knew nothing about Italy, or about Trieste. My parents never told me. It was never discussed. Sometimes they spoke about their youth but with their friends. To me it was like they weren't connected any more. They were here so they were Australian, but they weren't Australian. And we didn't really have a culture at home. We didn't go to church so there were no beliefs or anything. I didn't even make my Communion because I went to a state school and it wasn't important to them. There was nothing in the house that said 'Italian', like Madonnas or religious things. It was really a strange upbringing. It was nebulous, nothing. Yet I was crying out to belong to something but I didn't realise this until later. I had no sense of belonging and I think that I realised that that was what was missing in my life. When you think of the *Triestini* we are probably the most unlikely Italians of all. I don't think we fit into the Italian culture here--from our attitudes to our family belongings. I can only speak personally, but I didn't really fit in with the Italians here, their culture was alien to me. But I couldn't really understand the *triestini*. I look at my mum's background and she was a princess, she was spoilt rotten and always had everything. I found that with a lot of the *triestini* looking good was one of the important things, but they weren't that good with money--making it and keeping it like some of the other Italians here... I mean to me they projected the image that they weren't like the *contadini* and they weren't like the working class but then sometimes they adopted all the basic working-class attitudes... I grew up not knowing, not understanding...

Within the circumscribed reality of the migrant experience, some second generation Triestines became confused by the paradoxical nature of their own experiences. Others, however, realised that they had been provided with some degree of agency and that, as it had been for their parents, often this fluidity was determined by the different 'positionalities' and the different contexts in which both they themselves, as well as others, defined their identity. Clearly for this group, cultural identity has been tied to their own personal and subjective interpretation of the migrant experience, more so than it had been tied to a sense of historical continuity. Importantly therefore, how second generation Triestines identified and defined

themselves ranged from: 'Triestine', 'Italian', to 'Australian of Italian heritage' and to 'Italo-Australian whose parents come from Trieste'.

First generation Triestine immigrants had come to Australia with a relationship to a 'lived' past that had moulded their experiences as immigrants. This experience in turn made manifest and subsequently served to reinforce a cultural identity that in the migration process had been negotiated through difference and change. For the second and subsequent generations however, such a bond had become more tenuous. It had nonetheless, been embodied in a form of *habitus*, that allowed this group to experience the present from a perspective that was not entirely their own, but that still incorporated a degree of subjectivity and reflexivity, and also through memory. Essentially their link with a past heritage was absorbed through the filter of their parents' relationship to that past. It therefore became a past constructed through the narrative of memory which articulated the boundaries of the self. In this context, the migrant experience of this generation was mediated by memory. The life the parents of second generation Triestines had lived in Trieste, and the perceptions of that life, impacted greatly on this group and, generally, those whose parents had spoken at length and positively of their life in Trieste had a clearer subjective awareness of their own identity and ethnicity. As 'younger Triestine immigrants' they had more ably overcome the negativity attributed to the status of migrantness, the negative stereotypes and the devaluation of their Italian-ness that the politics of assimilation had imposed. It was this 'awareness' that had allowed the identity to be negotiated.

This is best highlighted by an example of an interviewee whose parents had spoken very little of their life in Trieste, and when they had, it had been with a tinge of resentment and negativity. Growing up in Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s as an only child within a nuclear family unit, detached from the collectivity and cut off from community networks, history and any sense of continuity, his identity, or rather his being a Triestine-Italian, essentially became tied only to his status of migrantness and to this interviewee's own migrant experience which had brought with it the negative connotation of the definition of 'wog'. The lack of awareness of alternative definitions had precluded the possibility of negotiation. In a sense he accepted this static and imposed identity and continued to harbour a disinterest for a heritage and identity with which he associated 'inferiority'. Although he identified himself as an 'Italo-Australian' he changed his name

by deed poll to what he understood as being the Anglo-Saxon equivalent, and had generally shown little interest in learning about his heritage.

On the other hand, the narrative of another second generation Triestine reveals how her parent's memories of life in Trieste had coloured her sense of belonging and of place in Australian society. From her mother's descriptions and recollections she re-created an idyllic Trieste, a place untouched by time and history which mediated her own discontinuity:

My mother told me about Trieste. Not just about what she used to do, but all the young people, and how groups would meet and then go to the beach and enjoy themselves. The *Viale* in Trieste with all the cafes was a meeting place..., and I was fascinated by this place.¹⁹ Social life in Australia seemed arid in comparison. I went out, I did this and that but it never really felt right because I had this idea in my mind of what it should be like... I had this sense of belonging there. It was more me, who I felt I was, they were the things I wanted to do...

Although in this instance a sense of dislocation was enhanced by the memories of place, the memories themselves reflected the cultural markers used by the collectivity to define itself. As such the memories thus served to provide a clearly defined frame of reference by which to understand cultural differences and similarities that both affirmed the identity and allowed negotiation to take place. Another interviewee recalled vividly the first time he visited Trieste as an adult as a time when what once was a nebulous and distant part of his family life suddenly became tangible and real. Walking the streets of Trieste he had been able to re-live the memories of his father and began to understand the basis of his own Triestine identity.

Into the C21st the Triestine community in Australia spans several generations. Triestine youth who have grown up with the policy of multiculturalism, which at least on a superficial level encourages a sense of pride and places some degree of value on ethnic identity, have been tormented by the ambivalence of their identity to a lesser degree. In this sense members of these 'subsequent' generations no longer highlight their 'Triestineness' as a defence mechanism against the negative definitions of

¹⁹ The *Viale* refers to Viale XX Settembre, an avenue in Trieste which was well known for its many street cafés and as a meeting place for youth.

Italian identity presented in the 1950s and 1960s. Many Triestines of the younger generations happily identify as 'Italians' because they now associate with that identity the positive images of fashion, art, history and creativity.

As an ideology, multiculturalism has, however, also tended to provide ready-made frames of reference that help define the cultural identity of ethnic groups in Australia. And while such a policy has perhaps encouraged the construction of an Italo-Australian identity that cuts across regional and provincial boundaries, particularly amongst the 'younger generations, it is still an identity that is bound together by cultural symbols that relate to a peasant or rural social system:

...My boyfriend says that we [the Triestines] haven't got the same obligations to family, that we can do what we like. I think I am close to my family, but I do things because I want to not because I have to... His family is large and they all have to visit each other, it's very formal, more traditional.

The larger extended family networks, the Italian wedding and the saint day celebrations may thus all be symbols and rituals that are still very much part of the immigrant reality of Italo-Australian youth today (Vasta 1992b:167), but they are, however, very rarely part of the reality of those Italo-Australian youth with Triestine parents or grandparents. It is in this context that these generations continue to be faced with the paradox of the Triestine-Italian identity in Australia.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was two-fold. Firstly, it attempted to provide an historical account of the phenomenon of Triestine migration to Australia in the context of the broader Italo-Australian experience. It endeavoured to do this by exploring the economic-political forces that led the Triestines to choose the path of migration, as well as the characteristics of the migration, and the immigrant and settlement experiences of this group. Secondly, using as a basis the historical account of this group's migration process, as well as an understanding of the political, social, cultural and economic history of the Julian territory, it also attempted to trace, examine and analyse the process of community and identity-making amongst the Triestines in Melbourne. The data for this work come from fieldwork, including oral history interviews and participant observation, as well as from library and archival research. Although occasionally reference is made to specific numbers--particularly in terms of quantifying the migration of Triestines and the characteristics of their migration--in terms of analysing the settlement experience there is no statistical sample and no attempt to be representative. The study is interpretive rather than experimental. The 75 people interviewed for this study were identified using a snowball sampling technique.

Triestines arguably represent only a small component of Australia's Italians, but one that is no less important when attempting to understand the Italian immigrant experience as a composite whole. In the migration process Triestine immigrants were actively involved in making their own history, a history which needs to be acknowledged and understood in its particularity. To continue to overlook their collective experiences and contribution would detract from the complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of what has become known as the Italo-Australian community, as well as diminishing the impact that this community has had on the wider society.

Importantly, Triestine migration has undoubtedly also reflected a significant political period in the history of what is now known as the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. However, the two provinces, that of Friuli and that of Venezia Giulia, must be distinguished in terms of understanding the

migratory processes. The region itself was only formed in 1963 with the intent of establishing stronger bonds between Trieste and the rest of Italy, and while the province of Friuli had a long tradition of emigration, the area of Trieste had, on the contrary, traditionally been a place of net immigration. In fact the area's economic growth had historically been dependant on the influx of people (often of various backgrounds and nationalities) and emigration occurred only in times of political disruption accompanied by economic uncertainty.¹

In the post-World War II period, as we have seen, the political boundaries of the territory of Venezia Giulia were again redrawn, and the area was carved up in line with the vagaries of international diplomacy. It was these events that resulted in a migratory flow from the area that was primarily directed towards Australia. As a consequence of the 1947 Peace Treaty, which saw part of the Julian territory ceded to the former Yugoslavia, many Italians (Istrians and Dalmations) who had resided in the ceded territory, left as displaced persons. However, migration from the city of Trieste itself began in mass proportions only in 1954, when the London Memorandum of Understanding made official the temporary boundary dividing the proposed Free Territory of Trieste into Zone A (and governed by an Anglo-American military administration) and Zone B (governed by Yugoslav troops). In 1954, the city of Trieste, and a small area of hinterland, was thus returned to Italian political administration, while Zone B remained under Yugoslav rule. As we have also seen, emigration from the area was a brief but intense phenomenon that can essentially be understood as being tied to these events, and by the early 1960s it had already slowed down markedly. Although Triestine immigrants can be classified as 'economic migrants', in that they responded to the changing economic reality experienced within the city, as has been reiterated throughout this dissertation, Triestine immigrants were not escaping ingrained conditions of poverty and this classification in isolation ignores the complexity of a situation that led the immigrants themselves to describe the motivation behind the mass exodus as a 'fever' or as a 'psychosis'. In essence, Triestine migration represented the collective refusal to participate in the

¹ Nodari (1999: 45-46) notes that the first migratory movements from the area occurred immediately following World War I, and were undoubtedly associated with the dismantling of the Austro Hungarian Empire, which saw the area come under Italian political administration. During this period of political and economic turmoil many Germans and Slavs left the area, but also a number of Italians, most of whom emigrated to the Americas.

economic life of a nation state that had fallen short of their expectations. In this context a political dimension cannot be ignored.

In Trieste, the events that both preceded and followed the 1954 London Memorandum of Understanding had indeed led to a sense of contagious uncertainty. Added to the political instability experienced during this period was the impact of the sudden influx into the city of a large number of Istrian refugees, as well as the effects of the dismantling of the Anglo-American administration--which caused a marked downturn in the economy and brought with it a climate of precariousness for those Triestines who had been employees of the Allied Military Government. This coincided with the time when Australia had 'reactivated' the 'Assisted Passage Agreement' with Italy and was seeking to recruit 'skilled workers' for Australia's expanding industries. Australia thus proved an attractive alternative, especially for those who had developed a respect for Anglo-Saxon ways during the period of Allied administration. A significant number of those who chose the path of emigration were in fact skilled workers and many had been former employees of the Allied Military Government who had received no assurances about their future. Indeed, what emerges from the oral narratives on which this research is partly based, is the fact that some Triestines had harboured a deep sense of disillusionment and resentment towards the political processes that had seen them treated as mere 'pawns'. These sentiments often resulted in paradoxical feelings towards the city, but particularly towards Italy as a nation state and 'mother country' which was seen as having let the Triestines down. One interviewee pithily described these contrasting sentiments:

Trieste will always be our city: more than any place in the world it will always be home. Then of course Australia has also had something to offer us migrants; but Italy, let's leave Italy aside..., but then if anyone else criticises Italy, then we immediately feel a sense of resentment. And for me this is the paradox of Triestines here in Australia.

As this research has highlighted, this sentiment impacted significantly on the early settlement experiences of the Triestines. The act of migration itself had provided them, at least initially, with a very strong sense of circumscribed Triestine identity and cohesiveness which set Triestine immigrants apart, even from the Istrians and Dalmations.

Triestine migration differed markedly from the pattern of migration from other Italian regions. Within the context of postwar Italian immigration to Australia it revealed several atypical characteristics all of which also impacted on the settlement process in such a way that helped reinforce the cohesiveness of the collectivity. Firstly, as a mass movement Triestine immigration only occurred within a brief time span and was thus characterised by its intensity. In fact, it did not represent a traditional process of 'chain migration' since many Triestines immigrated to Australia with their immediate nuclear family and did not join friends or relatives on their arrival--but rather were assisted passage immigrants, many of who were housed in Commonwealth immigration camps and hostels such as Bonegilla. However, while Triestine immigrants did not establish traditional 'chains' that served to channel immigrants into existing networks, the presence of large numbers of Triestines, particularly in camps such as Bonegilla, the fact that many had worked together as employees of the Allied Military Government or in the major Triestine industries, all contributed to strengthening a circumscribed sense of belonging. Secondly, a significant number of Triestine immigrants were qualified and skilled industrial workers, while some possessed other formal qualifications. Such a characteristic served as a source of positive identification for the Triestine immigrant, and modified the negative status attributed to 'migrantness' in the host society. In this context it defined the boundaries of an identity that was not devalued in the migration process. Thirdly, and most importantly, unlike other postwar Italian immigrants who mass migrated to Australia, the Triestines were the only immigrant group of Italian origin to have mass migrated from an urban culture.

The urban nature of Triestine society had exposed these immigrants to a variety of social experiences which were mostly characterised by secondary rather than primary social contacts. In this respect, while amongst Triestine immigrants the bonds of kinship were weaker, the networks among friends and acquaintances developed relatively quickly. It is not surprising that, as we have seen, the Triestines established regional clubs and even a theatre group, much sooner than most other Italian regional collectivities who mass migrated in the postwar period. The formation of these associations represents the formalisation of network ties and the fact that many Triestines already arrived in Australia with the knowledge and experience of having participated in similar sporting and cultural associations. Soccer and basketball clubs were formed within months of *triestini* arriving in Australia. Moreover, the values implicit in Triestine

urban culture that was part of the cultural baggage and mind-set of this group, helped define the Triestine immigrant in relation to the 'other', which in this instance comprised both the members of the Italo-Australian community as well as the broader Australian society. Thus for the Triestines the perception of 'otherness' once again reinforced the paradox of their identity. Indeed this research has shown that many Triestines experienced both a sense of belonging and of distance from the Italo-Italian community of which they were nominally part. 'Otherness' subsequently became part of a process of identity making and negotiation which highlighted the fluid and dynamic nature of identity itself.

In trying to define the Triestines as a group which subjectively defined itself as both the 'same' and different' from a broader Italo-Australian community, I examined the historical processes--in light of the political, social, cultural and economic reality of the area--that had originally helped mould and maintain a localised Triestine identity. Although historically Trieste had strong traditions of Italian culture, it had essentially developed its 'urban consciousness' under the domination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This occurred when as the only sea port for the Hapsburg Empire, Trieste had grown economically and demographically into a cosmopolitan centre where a Triestine identity developed alongside an Italian identity that was essentially made manifest as a result of the rise of nationalism and irredentist sentiments. This historical perspective provided a basis for understanding the potential sources of Triestine identification as both a distinct Italian regional group and as a collectivity in the migration process. In this context it also hints at the fundamental role in the formation of a collective identity played by Triestine historiography. This in turn allows for an understanding of the 'myth-making' process through which particular 'identity characteristics' were 'essentialised' and subsequently seen to embody the Triestine identity itself. Most importantly, it also highlights an identity continuously being shaped by the interplay of political forces and changing cultural, social and economic realities.

The study is therefore based on the proposition that identity is a complex, dynamic, social process which involves agency as well as 'conditioning' in the form of cultural knowledge and understanding, and that identity is formed as a result of the dialectical relationship and interaction between these two factors. The research reveals that in the early stages of the migration process the Triestines had been bonded together by history, by the fact that they experienced their new reality in light of their past and their

culture. The very act of migration had heightened this group's subjective awareness of being Triestine, rather than being merely Italian; and their early migrant experiences reveal that their urban mind-set had determined how they viewed their new reality as well as their life-style patterns and choices. Despite the sense of rupture and even cultural alienation experienced during these early years, the Triestines, who derived from what was historically a diverse, cosmopolitan and urban society, demonstrated their ability to feel at ease in an urban setting by their propensity to extend their social activities outside the boundaries of an Italo-Australian space, and even to create their own *ambiente* outside these boundaries. Don Camillo's and 'The Legend' are interesting examples of this process at work. These experiences seem to suggest that the 'culture shock' experienced by the Triestines was based more on factors relating to 'life-style' habits rather than deeply rooted differences in mores, values and roles.



Our unique history: The Grison family (Emilio, Yolanda, Valerio, Germana) at the Mornington peninsula, late 1960s

However, the Triestines remained, at the same time, part of an Italo-Australian reality that met other important needs and reflected the fact that despite their disappointment with the Italian nation state, they remained inherently Italian. Thus in Melbourne their construction of a Triestine identity also took place in the context of their engagements with this reality as well as with that of the host society. Subsequently, the inability to maintain particular ways and habits in the host society, the persistence of similarity alongside difference, particularly in terms of the shared immigrant experience and the pejorative connotation associated with 'migrantness' and ethnicity, as well as the need to expand the field of interaction, led to the negotiation and re-positioning of the Triestine identity within the boundaries of an Italo-Australian community. Certain poets, architects, businessmen and others from Trieste identified themselves both inside and outside the Italo-Australian collectivity with remarkable dexterity.

In order to comprehend the impact of migration on the sense of 'being' Triestine experienced at the moment of migration, it is important to acknowledge that cultures are continually in a state of flux, but also that to some extent people are able to subjectively choose and control their 'cultural development' and traditions. From a theoretical perspective this study thus highlights the dialectical nature of identity construction as we observe the 'essence' of Triestine identity not as a set of static characteristics which maintain an 'essentialised' group identity, but as something which transforms itself over time to meet new challenges. As McCumber (1997: 176) highlights when discussing the concept of 'dialectical identities', '...we must recognize that in the course of our unique history we may come to identify ourselves--in certain aspects--with any other group which experiences a sufficiently similar history'. For the Triestines the historical moment of migration impacted profoundly on their subjective sense of being firstly 'Triestine' and then 'Italian', but the process of migration, as a narrative historically experienced and shared within the context of a broader Italian community, did indeed allow, as we have seen, for mediation and even 'change' to occur. However, while McCumber (1997) proposes the notion of the 'dialectical identity', from a philosophical perspective, as 'nothing more than a series of transformations' which 'constitutes a mortal community', one destined to extinction; the Triestine experience appears to point to a dialectical identity which has maintained a particular sense of continuity precisely because the dialectical relationship has allowed past experience to influence the way present reality is experienced and lived. In

this context Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', as an 'open system of dispositions' which mediates between the 'essentialised' notion of identity - with its static characteristics which are seen to embody the identity itself - and an all encompassing fluid identity constantly in a state of flux, is a particularly important concept in understanding the immigrant experience of the Triestine collectivity. While the urban nature of Triestine identity did not encompass traditional cultural practices and ritual which, as has been suggested (Sollers: 1989, Cozen: 1990, for example), have been selectively reinterpreted and re-fashioned to maintain group solidarity amongst Italian immigrants, the Triestines retained their *triestinita*' through continued self definition based on a view of reality that was tied to their 'essentially' urban Triestine identity, but also to their experience as Italian immigrants that had also been moulded by their urbanity and sense of 'otherness'. Thus the migration experience, through such a dialectical process, was able to both reinforce the group's Triestine identity as well as a sense of belonging to what was often perceived as a characteristically 'different' Italian community. Importantly, the notion of 'habitus' can also be seen to be relevant in understanding the migrant experiences of the second and subsequent generations of Triestines, many of who continued to define themselves as both the same and different to other Italian migrants, and effectively used this definition as a personal strategy against the negative stereotypes of Italian migrants imposed by the host culture. Since the identity was reinforced and even re-conceptualised in a new context, as a result of new experience, it can also be understood in terms of what Hall (1990; 1993; 1996) defines as a 'positioning' - a dynamic process of negotiation which allowed Triestine immigrants to constitute the sense of self according to the changing context of being a Triestine, an Italian, a migrant and even more specifically, an Italian migrant. It might thus be concluded that such awareness of self combined with the inherent subjectivity of perception and ascription, point to the fact that identity also concerns what individuals themselves consider they belong to, both in terms of ideas as well as emotional experience. This subjective perception of both personal belonging and collective identity is best elucidated by the second generation interviewee who linked identity, on an emotional level, to ageing members of the first generation, who are symbolically seen to represent an important link to Triestine identity in the context of the immigrant experience:

...I hear that this or that *triestino* or *triestina* has died and it affects me... I don't know how to explain, I mean most of the

time I don't know these people personally or very well, sometimes not at all, but I hear about it from my parents, and I feel sad, and when I think about why, well to me it's a generation that is dying, they are all getting old and it's moving. I mean, when you think about it I think I feel sad for myself because they represent part of my world, and when they are all gone there will be nothing, it's like part of me will have no connection. I will always be Italian, someone from an Italian background, but this more, let's say, more personal connection, I think will be lost for me...

This subjective sense that the Triestine identity will eventually be 'engulfed', or is destined to merge with the larger whole, was also expressed by a first generation Triestine who was quoted earlier as having unwittingly noted that just as Melbourne's Triestine community had immigrated together, it was now growing old together--an observation that automatically excludes from the 'community' those of the second and subsequent generations. This research shows, however, that even amongst second and subsequent generations, there is still an enduring sense of 'difference' subjectively experienced in terms of both the host society and the Italo-Australian community of which many feel an integral part. Consequently, even if the group does come to lose its distinctive characteristics, its particular way of experiencing the world, the identity of the collectivity will always include the story, the narrative of how, as a distinctive group of Italian migrants, they came to identify with the broader community of Italian migrants or even the larger whole.

Such a 'connection' and sense of continuity has also been maintained through memory. This research highlights that part of the collective memory of the first generation of Triestine immigrants is a record of their resemblances and similarities that unite them and distinguish them as a collectivity, but it is also a record of the emotions tied to the process of migration and place. The oral history narratives that tap into these collective memories reveal how the personal narratives are in fact part of interconnecting narratives from which the group derive their identity. Moreover, continuity has been maintained by the informal transmission of these 'memories' to subsequent generations and they have contributed to the sense of Triestine identity still experienced by this group. Through the narratives of this group of immigrants, which bring together the fragmented narratives of life in Trieste and those of rupture and dislocation brought

about by migration, we can observe not only the dialectical process of identity formation but also the subjectivity inherent in identity construction as process which allows both mediation to take place and change and continuity to coexist.

While in the host society the Triestines had reproduced their identity by collectively negotiating transformation and difference, the link of memory allowed them to maintain a hold on their own subjective notion of selfhood and thus provided a sense of ontological stability. Particularly amongst first-generation Triestines, it also resulted in well-defined identity boundaries. Importantly, the memories of this group, especially in later years, were not always mediated by the present reality, in the sense that thinking about the past was a way of affirming how much better off or worse off they were in the present. Thus, while in the first instance these memories allowed the Triestines to re-create for themselves a sense of place; later, thinking about, and recalling the city of Trieste, had itself become a strategy for maintaining a sense of continuity. In this context, 'Trieste' lies at the centre of the cultural identity of the collectivity. It continues to give the identity meaning and a point of reference, even though for many this 'Trieste' has become a concept devoid of chronological or territorial specificity which continues to embody the notion of 'Triestine-ness'.

In Trieste the well known poet, Umberto Saba, in writing about his city, provided a clear example of the sense of belonging to place when he wrote: 'My city that is alive in every part, has a little corner that is made for me, for my life,' while as an immigrant the Triestine Valerio Borghese noted just the opposite about his sense of place in Australia, when he metaphorically described Australia as 'a beautifully made suit which isn't made to my size'.

d)	Marital Status: (Include information on Spouse/Children/etc)

e)	Memories: Life in Trieste at the time. Memorable events in life of individual. Memorable events in the City of Trieste.

f)	Immigration:
Why?	
When?	
Why Australia?	
Who made the actual decision to emigrate?	
Did the family emigrate together? Alone?	
Did other members of the family follow at a later date?	

2. EARLY MIGRANT EXPERIENCE: AUSTRALIA

a)	Year/Month of arrival in Australia
b)	Other friends/relatives/already here?
c)	Where in Australia?
d)	Immigrant camps?
e)	First place of residence – Suburb?
f)	Were other Triestinos in suburb?
g)	Were other Italians in suburb?
h)	Other suburbs lived in?
j)	Work:
	First job?
	Later?
k)	First impressions of Australia/significant experiences?
l)	Social Life:
	Friendships (mainly Triestines/other Italians/etc.)
	Social life:
	Friendships (mainly Triestines/other Italians/etc.)
	Activities/leisure/etc
	(eg meeting with friends, relatives, etc.)

Meeting places? (eg Cafes? Clubs? Etc)

3. **LIFE IN AUSTRALIA PRESENTLY**

a) Job/Employment (if retired – last position held)

b) Place of residence?

c) Friendships (Triestines/other Italians/Australians)

d) Marriage partner – How did you meet?

e) Remarried?

f) Social Activities/Interests: Time monthly spent with friends/relatives/immediate family
Particular hobbies

Preferred leisure activities? (eg Theatre/cinema/restaurants/visiting/going to clubs/etc
Affiliation to clubs/church: Do you belong to an Italian club – Triestine? How often?

g) Other Interests: Eg politics, particular sports, etc)

h) Language: Language skills now (as compared to knowledge of English on arrival?
Reading in English language?
Size of library?

i) Children: Some insight into life of children (if any)
Any particular problems?
If children are married do they see them often?

e)	Return to Trieste
Have they gone back?	
How often do they go back?	
What did they find changed (if anything)?	
Would they return on a permanent basis?	

f)	Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with life in Australia?

g)	Sense of achievement/failure...

h)	Any feelings of alienation...

j)	Citizenship:
Are they Australian citizens?	
What year was citizenship taken out?	

k)	If retired, how do they view their retirement in Australia? Any associated problems?

l)	How do you describe yourself to others?

m)	Sense of belonging:
In Australian society generally?	
In the Italian community?	
In the Triestine community?	

5. FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR SECOND-GENERATION TRIESTINES

a)	Language:
Language spoken at home?	
Degree of fluency in Italian language/Triestine dialect?	

b)	Visit Trieste:
Ever? (How many times?)	
Impressions?	

c)	Friendships:
With Australians?	
Other Italians?	
With other Triestines?	
With others?	

d)	Life in Australia:
Does the life they lead reflect an Australian way of life?	
Does the life they lead reflect an Italian way of life?	
Does the life they lead reflect a Triestine way of life?	
In what way would their lifestyle differ from each of these (if at all)?	

e)	Identity:
	How do they perceive their own identity?

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Mariuccia Flego and her family about to depart Trieste for Australia, 1956

APPENDIX: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES

In all 75 respondents were interviewed. Of these, 66 were born in Trieste, while nine were born in Australia of parents born in Trieste. In terms of gender 38 of those interviewed were male and 37 female.

AGE OF INTERVIEWEES

80 years or over	3
70 - 79 years	29
60 - 69 years	21
50 - 59 years	8
40 - 49 years	5
30 - 39 years	2
20 -29 years	5
under 20 years	2
TOTAL	75

YEAR OF MIGRATION

Of the 66 interviewees born in Trieste all migrated to Australia in the years between 1954 and 1960, as follows:

1954	16
1955 - 1956	29
1957	10
1958	7
1959	Nil
1960	4
TOTAL	66

AGE ON MIGRATION

1 - 9 years	8
10 - 19 years	2
20 - 29 years	27
30 - 39 years	26
40 - 49 years	3
TOTAL	66

TYPE OF PASSAGE TO AUSTRALIA AND INITIAL DESTINATION

Of the total number of interviewees who were born in Trieste, 47 arrived as 'Assisted Passage' migrants. Forty two (65 per cent of those interviewees born in Trieste) of these had initially been housed in Bonegilla Immigrant Reception Centre, two went to Greta, while the remaining 22 initially stayed with family or friends.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OBTAINED BEFORE MIGRATION*

*These figures relate to the educational background of the interviewees born in Trieste who completed their studies in that city and thus include only those who immigrated as adults (57 interviewees). A small number of these also went on to complete further studies in Australia (Two interviewees completed a diploma, two a degree and one a higher degree).

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
No schooling	-	-	-
Primary School	2	4	6
Completed middle - secondary, <i>Avviamento</i> * or technical qualifications	16	18	34
Completed Secondary School (High School Diploma)	9	6	15
Tertiary	2	-	2
TOTALS	29	28	57

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OBTAINED BY THOSE WHO COMPLETED THEIR SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA

Eighteen interviewees completed their schooling in Australia (nine of these interviewees were born in Trieste while another nine were born in Australia) and of these four interviewees had completed their education to Lower Secondary level, five had completed High School, seven had completed degrees and one had completed a higher degree

OCCUPATION ON MIGRATION

These figures relate to those interviewees (57) born in Trieste and who immigrated as adults.

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Unemployed	1	2	3
Unskilled - labourer, process worker	3	-	3
Skilled - Trade, Sales	11	10	21
Clerical	9	8	17
Professional - Including qualified technicians	4	1	5
Self Employed	1	2	3
Home Duties	-	5	5
TOTALS	29	28	57

SPHERE OF EMPLOYMENT

Figures once again relate to those interviewees who were born in Trieste and who immigrated as adults. In total 57.

Allied Military Government	22
Commerce	19
Industry	15
Other	1
TOTAL	57

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Of the 57 interviewees who immigrated to Australia as adults only five claimed to have possessed prior knowledge of the English language. Four of these five interviewees had been employees of the Allied Military Government. Of these 57 interviewees, 40 claimed to now have a very good grasp of the English language, 2 claimed they still possessed very poor English language skills, while 15 claimed to be able to ‘get by’.