

Thousands of Italians Here Rally Against Ethnic Slurs

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By PAUL L. MONTGOMERY

Tens of thousands of Italian-Americans filled Columbus Circle yesterday afternoon for a communal outpouring of pride in the land of their forebears and outrage at the practice of equating Italians with criminals.

In a vast, waving field of American flags and Italian tricolors, the crowd sang and danced and cheered the two-and-one-half-hour stream of speakers. Their greatest applause was reserved for Joseph Colombo, who is carried on Justice Department lists as the leader of one of the six Mafia "families" in the city.

In the midst of the festive atmosphere and ethnic rhetoric, however, there was an edge of pent-up anger — what Italians call being "affocato." It came out after the rally, when 12,000 from the gathering marched through Centra Park to the headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation at Third Avenue and 69th Street.

The F.B.I. office has been picketed nightly since April 30

by supporters of the Italian-American Civil Rights League, which organized yesterday's rally. The group accused the bureau of discriminating against Italian-Americans in its surveillance of underworld activities.

The surging crowd of marchers forced the police to fall back twice around the F.B.I. office as barriers were trampled underfoot and tempers flared.

Two policemen on crowd-control duty were stabbed in a scuffle on Third Avenue near 70th Street during the confrontation. Although there were thousands of marchers in the area, the police could find no one who said he had seen the incident.

The two patrolmen, one stabbed in the back and one in the chest, were in fair to satisfactory condition last night at Lenox Hill Hospital.

Mr. Colombo's eldest son, Anthony, one of the organizers of the rally, mounted a police

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soundtruck and asked the crowd to disperse.

"We have achieved a greatness here today," the 25-year-old furniture dealer shouted to the milling crowd. "We are one now. We must keep this peaceful and nonviolent. As a favor to me, be a super-human-being now—turn around and go home."

There was some booing from the gathering, but in a few minutes they were straggling down the side streets toward home. A rally marshal with a bullhorn urged them on gently with: "Have a glass of wine now and a plate of spaghetti in your house."

The picketing of the F.B.I., which gave rise to yesterday's rally, began on the day that the elder Mr. Colombo's second son, Joseph Jr., was arrested on a conspiracy charge. The father and Anthony, joined by perhaps 30 friends on the first night, organized the early protests.

Colombo Jailed Once

The elder Mr. Colombo, who lives in Brooklyn, spent 30 days in jail in 1966 for refusal to answer questions of a racketeers grand jury. It is the only time he has been in prison, although he has a record of 12 other arrests on charges of minor offenses.

Anthony and Joseph Jr. both have families and are engaged in legitimate businesses. Through the picketing and formation of the Civil Rights League, they have been vociferous in their complaints of F.B.I. surveillance of their homes and harassment of their private lives.

When the plans for the rally were announced early this month, they apparently evoked genuine and deeply felt sympathy among many Italian-Americans in the metropolitan area.

"This thing just snowballed," said Natale Marcone, a retired union official who is president of the Civil Rights League.

Based on a computation of the area filled by the crowd in Columbus Circle yesterday, and assigning two square feet to each person, the gathering would have numbered 31,200. The police estimate was 40,000. Mr. Marcone's was 620,000.

Signs and Buttons Displayed

Columbus Circle was filled with red, white and green streamers and Italian and American flags formed of carnations. Hawkers moved through the crowd in the sun, selling buttons reading "I'm Proud to be Italian" and "Kiss Me, I'm Italian" and "Italian Power" for 50 cents each.

Supporters of the protest carried such signs as "Italians Are Beautiful" and "25% of World War II Veterans were Italian-Americans — Be Proud" "There Are No Italo-Americans on the Board of Education." One man in a gorilla costume held a placard that said: "F.B.I. is using gorilla tactics."

Although the crowd was overwhelmingly Italian-American, it was not exclusively so.



The New York Times

Patrolmen subduing a protester outside F.B.I. headquarters on 201 East 69th Street



The New York Times

Anthony Colombo taking part in unity day program.

Steven Metel, who is 13 years old, circulated with an Italian ice in one hand and a placard reading "Jews of Flatlands Support Americans of Italian Descent."

Thomas D. Carpenter, a bearded film worker, said he was attending out of curiosity and because he believed that "any generalization leads to discrimination."

The long line of speakers — politicians, labor leaders, officials of fraternal clubs and priests — generally supported the protest.

Congressman Speaks

Representative Mario Biaggi, Democrat of the Bronx, noted that of 22 million Italian-Americans in the United States, only 5,000 were involved in organized crime.

"That's better than the 99 and 44/100ths purity of Ivory Soap," he said, continuing:

"Without a doubt, the F.B.I. and its director, J. Edgar Hoo-

ver, deserve the respect of us all. Let us not fall into the trap of employing for our own use that which we condemn. Because of the misconduct of a few, let us not use a wide black brush on the F.B.I.—and let not the F.B.I. or any other law-enforcement agency use the same brush on us."

Former Controller Mario A. Procaccino was loudly cheered by the crowd.

"Don't let anyone imagine that when looters, arsonists and bombers are being coddled and treated like heroes, we are going to stand by and permit the smearing and harassment of innocent people whose sole crime is that they are related, friends or neighbors, or just happen to be Italian-American," he said.

Lindsay's Name Boomed

Deputy Mayor Richard R. Aurelio, who represented Mayor Lindsay, was roundly booed at the mention of the Mayor's name. His brief address was inaudible to the crowd. He was asked later if he had found the auspices of the meeting prejudicial.

"The only auspices that I know of is a group of Italian-Americans protesting against discrimination in the Italian-American community," he replied. Representative Adam Clayton Powell was also heavily booed when he tried to speak, but his cries of, "Right on, right on" pierced the uproar. "This nation is for all, not just the Wasps," he told the crowd.

"Anyone who doesn't understand what America owes to Italy doesn't understand America," said Representative Allard K. Lowenstein, Democrat of Nassau County, to loud cheers.

Anthony LaRosa, a 12-year-old from Brooklyn, his head barely peering above the massed microphones, stilled the crowd with his address.

"I am a young Italian-American boy who doesn't want to grow up labeled," he said. "I

want to grow up with my constitutional rights, not to be harassed and discriminated against."

Many attacked the news media for presenting what they said was a false picture of Italian-Americans, particularly for the use of Italian words such as "Mafia" or "Cosa Nostra" to describe the entire underworld.

Anthony Colombo called on the crowd not to buy any newspapers on July 4 or 5 to protest such treatment.