

book, more than any other, made Italians aware that Jews had not just been afflicted by the Germans in 1943–1945; their plight commenced under Fascism and, to an extent, the persecution was home grown.

Primo Levi's career was a barometer of changing attitudes. Gordon, who has previously authored a study of Levi, writes brilliantly about his transition from almost unknown memorialist into a public intellectual during the 1960s and 1970s, and finally his apotheosis as a moral figure addressing a global audience. Yet Levi was careful to cultivate a universalistic appeal suggesting that there was 'nothing specifically Jewish' about the *lager*.

If it is possible to say that by the 1960s 'the Holocaust' had become common knowledge, a subject of general talk, with its own vocabulary, in the 1980s this phenomenon became 'an avalanche'. It was appropriated for so many causes and was the subject of such ritualised obeisance that it became a 'dead metaphor'. 'The Holocaust became a metaphor for power, ideology and violence; for oppression, Fascism, capitalism and the bourgeoisie; and with it emerged a new version of the archetype of the "Jew" as victim and simultaneously as the emblematic figure of modernity' (p. 131). Even so, mention of the war and the fate of the Jews continued to touch a raw nerve. For Romans, the massacre at the Fosse Ardeatine was a touchstone for rival versions of resistance history and collaboration. Recurrent, if rather hapless efforts to prosecute German war criminals ensured the periodic inflammation of controversy. The fate of the Jews was also a theme for exploring national identity.

The end of the Cold War allowed for greater interpretative fluidity and contestation. New research produced evidence that tarnished the reputation of Italians as a *brava gente*. The resurgence of the right since the 1990s caused left-wing activists to throw the spotlight on the fate of the Jews at the hands of Fascists in the 1930s and 1940s. Italians bickered over whether the tragedy of the Jews should be remembered on 16 October, the date of the Rome *razzia*, or 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Right-wingers demand that the victims of Communist tyranny should be recalled, too.

These conflicts have made the building of a Holocaust museum an explosive proposition. As my family and I discovered at the Villa Torlonia, in the absence of agreement it was easiest to agree on an absence. Sometime, Robert Gordon may have to update his study. In the meanwhile it will serve as an outstanding guide to the last 70 years, full of insight, subtle distinctions, and always readable.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2013.871423>

**The Art of Making Do in Naples**, by Jason Pine, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012, x + 361 pp., US\$25.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8166-7601-9

More than any other Italian city, Naples has long been a focus of anthropological inquiry. Since the 1970s, local and foreign anthropologists alike have grappled with the city's complexities and apparent contradictions and, in doing so, have directly or indirectly challenged normative understandings of Italian and European urban modernity. Above all, the city's popular classes

have held significant allure as the bearers of a particular set of values and practices but also as a group that has been persistently denigrated, exoticised and misunderstood by both Neapolitans and outsiders. *The Art of Making Do in Naples* by the American anthropologist Jason Pine, which explores the local phenomena of neomelodica music, is situated in this tradition. Neomelodica music is essentially the pop music of the city's popular classes. It consists of 'Neapolitan-language melodramatic pop ballads set to simple disco and rock beats' (p. 70) and embellished with microtonal melismas that 'at once invoke [the] arabesque songs of Turkey and the voicy, ostentatious ballads of *American Idol*' (p. 78). Lyrics speak of love and betrayal and of the trials and tribulations of life in Naples. Occasionally they may also allude to family members in prison. Following a flurry of national media interest in the late 1990s, neomelodica music has since been viewed, at best, as a curious form of kitsch, at worst, as 'the product and expression of a backward and illicit economic culture' (p. 76). Despite a few stars breaking into the mainstream such as Gigi D'Alessio, neomelodica music continues to be isolated from the dominant music industry. Yet, over the last 20 years it has evolved into a vibrant independent scene supported by a series of private and pirate television networks and avidly consumed by hundreds of thousands of fans mainly concentrated in the Naples metropolitan area but also diffused across southern Italy and among Italian migrant diasporas.

Pine is not merely concerned to examine neomelodica music as a particular cultural form that interweaves issues of class identity and representation. He is also interested in the social milieu where the music is produced and performed. Drawing on his filmmaking skills and linguistic competence (in chapter two he recounts in detail his experience of learning Neapolitan dialect), Pine participates in the scene as a producer of music videos. From this intimate position, he is able to explore how people strive to achieve a sense of personal sovereignty and self-determination in what is a precarious and at times treacherous industry. The neomelodica scene represents a 'contact zone' (p. 9) where formal, informal and illicit economies overlap. Pine's stated goal is to penetrate and decipher this contact zone and to examine how participants embrace, avoid and rebuff the industry's entanglements with organised crime. As a result of its immense popularity, the scene has inevitably attracted the interests of the Camorra, some of whose affiliates have managed singers and have even composed songs. However, according to Pine, the Camorra is not a circumscribable 'thing' that simply imposes its rule upon everyday life and corrupts all in its path. Rather, it needs to be understood as an indeterminate system that often has material consequences upon economies and politics but which also crucially generates affective and aesthetic atmospheres that register themselves in the social relations and sensory experiences of its 'territorialized residents' (p. 14). It is this atmospheric presence of the Camorra, and the fear, seduction and disdain it variously provokes, which hangs over neomelodica music.

The book is divided into two parts. The first three chapters draw on ethnographic vignettes, historical and journalistic accounts and cinematic representations of Naples to introduce and examine, respectively, the Camorra, neomelodica music and the Neapolitan *sceneggiata*. Chapter one provides an overview of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century development of the local criminal organisation. It also interrogates proverbial truths, first and foremost the one contained in the chapter's title 'where there's money, there's the Camorra', so as to point towards the ineffable and affective dimensions that have framed understandings of the Camorra over time. The chapter ends with a short sketch of the rise of Silvio Berlusconi, which, instead of seeking to establish a direct lineage with organised crime, suggests that 'the art of making do' is neither a specifically Neapolitan nor a lower class phenomenon but rather resonates with a hegemonic ideology in contemporary Italian society. Chapter two explores the origins of neomelodica music in early twentieth-century classical Neapolitan song, post-war *musica*

*leggera* and the *canzoni 'e mala* (songs of the underworld) of the 1970s, and highlights the factors that led to its rise during the 1990s, such as the establishment of local TV stations catering for a popular Neapolitan public. It constructs a meticulous taxonomy of the musical, verbal and performative elements of neomelodica song and critically discusses the political and moral economy of the industry and its relationship with the mainstream media. Chapter three briefly traces the history of the *sceneggiata* – the popular Neapolitan melodramatic genre that ‘concerns the struggle between good and evil and the moral ambiguities of justice’ (p. 84) – and how this is typically reflected in neomelodica verse and live histories. The first part of the book is intricately written and at times requires repeated readings to draw out Pine’s nuanced arguments. Of the three chapters, the second is especially rewarding and original.

The second part of the book concentrates on Pine’s extended fieldwork in and around Naples. Pine’s ethnographic prose is superb, possessing a narrative tension that captures the excitement, disappointment and tedium of getting by in the informal music industry as well as the author’s own difficulties and sense of unease in dealing with communication ‘saturated with irony, flirting, warnings and histrionics’ (p. 15). Shifting between trips to makeshift TV studios and underpaid performances in banquet halls, we follow former pianist Pasquale and his neomelodico son Fulvio as they together endeavour to carve out the teenager’s singing career. We are introduced to Maria, a neomelodico groupie infatuated with the singer Fabio who in turn, and in perfect *sceneggiata* style, publicly milks her adulation to the wrath of her husband. We meet Pine’s business partner, Giuseppe, who creates musical arrangements from a small office in the Neapolitan periphery and is enticed by the opportunities afforded by organised crime. In the final chapter, Giuseppe leads Pine to Gaetano, a local drug-dealing boss with an interest in the neomelodica scene who is uncannily calm and accommodating in his interactions with Pine. The book’s denouement sees Pine finally succeed in entering the contact zone only to be faced with the indeterminacy of the Camorra’s influence over the industry as doubts are raised over Gaetano’s true criminal identity. Can he make it as a boss-impresario? Is he even a camorrista? At the end rumours circulate to the contrary.

Pine’s book is structured in such a way as to foreground his ethnographic insights. References to theoretical and secondary literature are kept to a minimum and confined to endnotes, allowing Pine to focus on weaving the plot of his ‘melodrama of contact’ (p. 17). This said, the author’s complex and at times elusive argumentation in the first part would have been more accessible had there been a clearer discussion of the book’s key concepts such as affect, sovereignty and precarity and their specific genealogies within the Neapolitan context. Similarly, more attention could have been paid in the second chapter to the identities and positions of ‘critics’ and ‘middle classes’ who by and large remain anonymous and voiceless. As it stands, Pine risks reaffirming the idea of Naples as a dual city – the popular classes versus all other Neapolitans – something he rightly debunks in earlier stages of the book.

Leaving aside these points, *The Art of Making Do in Naples* represents a notable achievement. Pine penetrates a world into which very few outsiders, never mind anthropologists, have ventured. As well as the first in-depth ethnography in any language of the neomelodica phenomenon, the book makes a fundamental contribution to our understanding of organised crime in contemporary Naples. A reviewer quoted on the book’s back cover enthuses that Pine’s book serves as ‘a great companion to Saviano’s Gomorrah’. I disagree entirely. By underlining the affective atmospheres produced and exploited by the Camorra, Pine offers an *antidote* to the quick-fire, morally-inflected interpretations of organised crime that have dominated post-Gomorrah Naples, not least the groundless claims that it lay behind the city’s recent municipal waste crisis. Over the last two decades Neapolitan anthropologists and historians have flagged up

the multiple ways in which members of the popular classes stigmatise the Camorra's presence in their neighbourhoods. Pine goes one step further to examine how participants in the neomelodica scene enter into contact with organised crime and critically negotiate its impact on the industry.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2013.871427>

**Il partito provvisorio. Storia del PSIUP nel lungo Sessantotto italiano**, by Aldo Agosti, Rome–Bari, Laterza, 2013, 296 pp., €25.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-581-0838-3

Aldo Agosti's book concerns the history of one of the lesser-known and least studied post-war Italian political parties: the PSIUP (Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria/Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity). The PSIUP was established in January 1964 by a group of cadres and MPs belonging to the so-called *sinistra socialista*. These were left-wingers from the PSI (Partito Socialista Italiano/Italian Socialist Party) who had rejected the party's decision to endorse the so-called *centrosinistra* and participate in a government coalition with the DC (Democrazia Cristiana/Christian Democrats). The PSIUP lasted just eight and a half years, of which the last two were characterised by a progressive and inexorable decadence. Given its short lifespan and the modest results it achieved in the few elections it fought, the history of the PSIUP would appear to be suitable material for a journal article, or for an essay in an edited collection, rather than for a book. However, Agosti convincingly explains his decision to devote more coverage to this small but pugnacious socialist party by arguing that its history sheds light on a variety of issues with respect to post-war Italian history, in particular *il lungo sessantotto italiano*.

The research is primarily based on the PSIUP's archive, which is analysed here for the first time. Agosti has consulted printed sources too, above all *Mondo Nuovo*, the journal of culture and politics of the PSIUP. As a leading authority on the history of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) – the British historical community probably knows him for his impressive biography of the PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti – it is not surprising that Agosti also quotes frequently from documents held in the PCI archive, housed (along with the PSIUP archive) in the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome.

Agosti argues that the decision by the *sinistra socialista* to split the PSI on the eve of its participation in national government – an opportunity denied to the party since 1947 – was ultimately consistent with the history of the PSI itself. In fact, this was the legacy of the political doctrine known as *massimalismo*. Postulating the refusal of compromises and alliances which would make the party divert, even momentarily, from its ultimate goal to create a socialist society in Italy, *massimalismo* had exerted, since 1919, a continuing fascination on a consistent part of both the party's leadership and its constituency. In its post-war manifestation, *massimalismo* entailed cooperation with the PCI and solidarity with the Eastern European socialist regimes. According to left-wing socialists, these cornerstones would secure the PSI's class nature and save the party from the ever-present temptation of choosing a social democratic option. This explains why the socialist left could not accept to be in government with the DC, an inter-classist party which had cast itself as fundamentally anti-communist.