

the organisation of Cosa Nostra. This is where the authors look at the effects of jail terms on the mafia affiliate and the everyday functioning of Cosa Nostra. Data range from extracts from intercepted conversations to other court files that might shed light on these aspects, and are related more to the functioning of Cosa Nostra and its political strategy than to the purely criminal activities of the various clans. Chapter 6 deals with the infamous trial known as ‘La Trattativa’ (The Negotiation) and its court results of the past decade. In 2018, Palermo courts did affirm that the state entered a pact with Cosa Nostra to stop the terror-like strategy in the 1990s, thus confirming the weight of the political dimension of Cosa Nostra in the past decades. Finally, Chapter 7 looks at Cosa Nostra in the last 15 years, the new scenarios that have emerged and doubts that remain when reading contemporary events in the light of such a complex past.

From the beginning, the authors share their interpretation of the abovementioned core contradiction. This contradiction exists because there is still a tendency to consider mafias as ‘normal’ criminal phenomena, operating against public order. Rather, the authors say, we should be able by now to recognise how mafias are in fact a system of criminal power that is essential to the function of various interests and that satisfies a ‘demand of mafia’ in political, economic and entrepreneurial circles. Indeed, this idea is not new in research by historians and sociologists. However, the most important analytical key of this book – which adds considerable vigour to the already existing theoretical standpoints on the politics of the mafia – is the centrality of memory. A discourse on memory is even more necessary at the beginning of the third decade of the 2000s, when knowledge moves through super-fast and hypertrophic channels and there is the perception that everything is new and/or accessible all the time, anywhere. This book is not only an important collection of historical and judicial data, but it also connects this data with the direct experiences of two authors who lived that history first-hand. Books and data on Cosa Nostra are widely available today; what is missing is not the knowledge of the phenomenon itself but the systematisation of this knowledge through socio-historical and socio-judicial lenses.

The contribution of this book is precisely this: it’s an attempt to build historical memory collectively, so that readers of today can continue to ask difficult questions about yesterday and can try and understand how local phenomena, such as the events that characterised Cosa Nostra and took place Sicily in the 1980s and 1990s, still shape national identity.

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Turpi traffici. Prostituzione e migrazioni globali 1890–1940, by LAURA SCETTINI, Rome, Biblink, 2019, 231 pp., €18.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-96244-81-4

This book sheds light on a fascinating but underexplored aspect of the history of Italian migration: the international dimensions of prostitution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was a period in which prostitution was becoming globalised and Italy and Italian women were very much part of this trend. Prostitution, as Schettini demonstrates, was both a reason for women to migrate as well as something migrant women could end up being forced into because migration had made them so vulnerable. This is a surprisingly wide-ranging book for such a

seemingly specific topic, and its many themes, beyond globalisation and migration, include women's work, politics, and national identity.

Schettini starts with a sure-footed introduction in which she debunks the myth that all prostitutes were vulnerable victims and urges us to see prostitution as a complex phenomenon. While some women were duped and tricked into a profession where they were exploited and mistreated, there were others who displayed enterprise and agency, moving around repeatedly to improve their situation. Some eventually become madams, businesswomen running brothels in their own right. Drawing mainly on the historiographies on other countries, Schettini also discusses the problematic and misleading nature of the term 'white slave trade', with its imperialist and racist connotations, which was in vogue at the dawn of the twentieth century.

The internationalisation of prostitution in Italy was closely connected to the enormous migratory flow of Italians around the globe. In the first part of the book, which is amply illustrated by the stories of individual women (and some men, mainly pimps), she takes us on a tour of the role and experience of Italian prostitutes in six different locations: Malta, Libya, Egypt, the USA, Argentina, and Panama. This enables her to explore colonial and non-colonial contexts as well as both the Mediterranean area and the Americas. Her main sources for this wide-ranging exploration are archival documents conserved in the records of the Ministero dell'Interno in the Archivio Centrale dello Stato. The lens through which we view these varied locations are primarily, therefore, the eyes of state officials and bureaucrats, the police, consulates, and so on. The documentation is surprisingly rich, and it enables the author to illustrate many of her points with illuminating stories of individuals who, for one reason or another, came to the attention of the authorities. The Italian state displayed a great deal of interest in this rather specialised migratory flow, partly due to concern with the potential damage to women but also (perhaps mainly) because it was seen as something which could undermine the reputation of the Italian nation. This did lead to worries about the emigration of adult women but the focus of control measures was primarily on minors, since the prostitution of adults, provided they worked in licensed and regularly inspected brothels, was perfectly legal in Italy at the time.

Schettini introduces us to a world that included both women drawn into prostitution by men (and some women) who lured them abroad with promises of respectable jobs, often in domestic service or artistic professions of various kinds like cabaret performance, and also 'professional prostitutes'. These 'professionals' were women who had already been working as such in Italy and now sought higher wages and improved prospects further afield. In some of the countries Schettini looks at (particularly the US and Argentina), foreign prostitutes were the target of hostile campaigns that portrayed them as threats to the moral integrity of the host nation. In others, they were more welcome. In the Americas, the migration of Italian prostitutes was very much part of the broader migratory flow as their main clientele tended to be Italian migrant men, but this was less true in Mediterranean destinations.

The second part of the book examines the international dimensions of prostitution in Italy itself, both in terms of the Italian state's engagement with international organisations concerned with regulating and reforming prostitution in these years, as well as the situation and treatment of foreign prostitutes working in Italy. Here Schettini explores, for example, Italy's engagement with the League of Nations, which actively investigated trafficking and sought to end it. The League's abolitionist approach was unpalatable to the Fascist government, which remained firmly convinced of the benefits of a licensed brothel system. Mussolini's government continued to insist on the idea that Italy was a country where the 'necessary evil' of prostitution was well controlled by the police and where trafficking was practically non-existent.

In the final chapter, Schettini uses police registration files to explore the lives of foreign prostitutes working in Italy. This group, in which Frenchwomen predominated, were mostly ‘professional prostitutes’, to whom the police seem to have issued permits more or less automatically. A minority of the files, however, belonged to clandestine prostitutes, ‘kept women’, or simply women who seemed to be at risk of falling into prostitution. Those in this second group were mainly repatriated to their countries of origin. As Schettini concludes, despite the urgings of international organisations to try to prevent the migration of prostitutes, the Italian authorities, until 1940 at least, had no problem with foreign ‘professionals’ so long as they were adults employed in licensed premises, even in cases of women whose route into prostitution had involved violent abuse, abandonment, or destitution.

Schettini’s excellent book offers us insight into a neglected aspect of the history of Italian migration. It is very well researched and written and the many carefully argued points it makes are wonderfully illustrated by the biographical examples. It contains much food for thought for anyone interested in the history of prostitution, migration, or the history of Italian gender relations more broadly.

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Italian Neorealism: A Cultural History, by CHARLES L. LEAVITT IV, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2020, xi + 313 pp., \$85.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4875-0710-7

The foundation for any canonical reading of Italian cinema is neorealism, the film movement which would inspire such diverse international phenomena as American film noir, the French New Wave, and Brazilian *Cinema Novo*. Yet film scholars have been hard-pressed to define what neorealism is: a genre, a moment, a philosophy, an orientation, a mode? While many Italian studies of neorealism have continued this conversation, Charles Leavitt’s recent intervention makes an important move away from the problematics of categorisation; it focuses instead upon neorealism’s centrality in Italian cultural criticism. This original, intensively researched approach makes his book a unique contribution to the historiography of Italian cinema.

Leavitt begins by framing neorealism as first and foremost a ‘complex cultural tendency’ (p. 4) that found its expression as an ongoing conversation among the Italian intelligentsia in the first half of the twentieth century. His holistic approach examines neorealism not just as a cinematic expression but in a wide range of Italian cultural forms, including painting, poetry, prose, theatre and music. Each chapter compares one film with another artistic work not as discrete texts but as representative texts of a specific intellectual discourse regarding neorealism. By diminishing the traditional focus on textual analysis in film studies, the book argues for increased recognition of the centrality of the critical debates that took place amongst the leading figures in Italian cultural theory.

In his first chapter Leavitt asks, ‘What was neorealism?’, taking as a primary example Luchino Visconti’s *La terra trema* (1948), which has been viewed as the most orthodox of neorealist films. Leavitt declines to proclaim it a neorealist urtext but instead argues that films such as Visconti’s