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Jennifer Guglielmo, ***Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*** **(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).**

This book is destined to change the way historians think about Italian American working-class women. The existing literature, Guglielmo observes, "has often emphasized the conservative and repressive nature of Latin patriarchal culture and ignored or underestimated the ways in which women carved out spaces to express their own power" (23), and studies of Italian American radicalism almost always focus on male leaders. But utilizing an extensive range of sources — including oral histories, radical publications, and government surveillance files — *Living the Revolution* presents a groundbreaking, compelling, and inspiring narrative that reveals a rich history of female resistance and radicalism. This radicalism manifested outside of political parties and mainstream unions, and instead took the form of acts of "everyday resistance" and participation in the anarchist and syndicalist movements.

Employing the theories of James Scott, Guglielmo unearths the "hidden transcript" of Italian women's resistance, bringing to light "the complex ways they challenged or thwarted communal and patriarchal control over their lives." (124) Storytelling, spiritual practices, and the creation of informal "networks of mutual support and reciprocity" (118) all empowered women in their homes and communities. Moreover, they regularly engaged in labour demonstrations, wildcat strikes, and joined anarchist groups and the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. Italians eventually did join the mainstream garment workers' unions, but only after these organisations had proven themselves effective in the strike wave of 1909-19 and the Italians' own anarchist groups and IWW locals had been repressed.

Despite the book's subtitle, the geographic heart of *Living the Revolution* is actually Paterson, New Jersey. As Guglielmo relates, it was there that, in 1897, female Italian anarchists formed the Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna (Women's Emancipation Group), the first organisation of its kind in America. Their model spread among Italian radicals in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Illinois, and beyond. As anarchist feminists, these groups' members "sought revolutionary change to end all systems of oppression and hierarchical authority, whether in the form of industrial capitalism, the government, the church, or the men in their families and communities" (164). They promoted free love and revolutionary childrearing, and took part in labour organisation and anti-clerical activities. These women, Guglielmo persuasively argues, "were in ways more complete in their critique of power than later generations" (8), and their "diasporic feminism" was distinct in that it "did not seek [women's] inclusion or authority within the modern nation-state" (4), but rather aimed to abolish the state as an institution of authority and privilege. Their story promises to reshape the historiography of

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anarchism, feminism, and Italian Americans.

Guglielmo traces the transnational connections that shaped her subjects' lives, and her chapter on "Women's Cultures of Resistance in Southern Italy" is one of the best overviews of its kind in English. The absence of a similar discussion of northern Italian women, however, is striking, as the Paterson anarchists who are so central to the book were "composed mostly of northern Italian textile workers." (145) In fact, most of the female radicals profiled by Guglielmo hailed from northern Italy, and she notes that many of Paterson's anarchists "had come to know one another through labor struggles and mutual aid organizations in their homelands" (148), but provides no detailed description of these activities. It is true that most Italian anarchists in New York City and in the United States at large were of southern extraction (as were around three quarters of all Italian immigrants), but a section dealing with the background of their northern counterparts would have been welcome.

Specialists in anarchist history will find a few minor points of contention. Guglielmo's description of Errico Malatesta as an "anarcho-syndicalist" (144) obscures Malatesta's more complicated relationship to syndicalism, which he considered insufficient in itself. She also incorrectly places Malatesta as a cofounder of Paterson's newspaper, *La Questione Sociale,* (149) and describes an incident in which he was assaulted by "a follower of [Luigi] Galleani" (301 n. 40), when in fact the assailant was a partisan of Giuseppe Ciancabilla — who preceded Galleani as the leading proponent of anti-organisationist anarchism. Ciancabilla supporter and regicide Gaetano Bresci is also called a "*Galleanisti*" (148). Of less consequence, Osvaldo Maraviglia is referred to as the editor of New York's anarchist *L'Adunata dei Refrattari,* (224) when in fact he was the newspaper's administrator (196). These are, however, small quibbles, that in no way detract from Guglielmo's immensely important contribution.

Almost everything that follows the Paterson section of the book represents a kind of anticlimax, chronicling the drift of Italian women away from their radical roots and into increasingly conservative labour unions, white privilege, and in some cases even fascism. "By the 1940s," Guglielmo concludes, "Italian Americans had learned to demand change not through revolutionary, internationalist, working-class solidarity but with the terms of interest-group liberalism — relying on a sense of white citizenship to justify their claims upon the state." (264) *Living the Revolution* therefore offers a cautionary tale for social movements and activists as well as a usable past. For both reasons, it is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of feminism, radicalism, immigration, and working-class life.

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