

Book Reviews

New Italian Migrations to the United States, Vol. 1: Politics and History Since 1945.

Edited by Laura E. Ruberto and Joseph Sciorra.

Afterword by Donna Gabaccia

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017.

218 pages.

The study of immigration to the United States is generally organized according to period of entry. Scholars presume that the era in which migration occurs denotes a wide range of characteristics associated with a group's experience. These may include their regional and national origins, their reasons for migrating, their demographics, religious affiliation, political outlook, location of settlement, level of education, occupation, context of reception, racial categorization, patterns of interaction with the criminal justice system, residency status, and a broad range of other factors.

Among the most significant of temporal markers is the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (the Hart-Celler Act). Prior to the mid-1960s, most immigrants to the United States were of European origins. Since then, most have been non-Europeans. Reflecting on this change, a substantial literature addressing the most recent immigration wave was produced between the 1960s and late 1980s.

Despite the marked shift in the national origins of migrants to the United States since 1965, a sizable number of European migrants have continued to enter as of the latter part of the twentieth century. Among these are approximately 600,000 immigrants from Italy, whose history is the focus of this collection. In the introduction, editors Laura E. Ruberto and Joseph Sciorra point out that "significant research has considered the experiences of Italian immigration after World War II as they relate to countries like Australia and Canada but little research has been written about the phenomenon in the United States" (4). The editors explain that their anthology works toward filling this gap as it considers the impact, influence, and experience of Italian immigration to the United States since the end of World War II.

New Italian Migrations to the United States, Vol. 1: Politics and History Since 1945 features essays by scholars representing the fields of history, political science, sociology, and the humanities who explore the experience of recent Italian migrants through concepts, theories, and methods associated with research on postwar populations. Accordingly, they are able to examine the experience of a long-established nationality group through prisms that reflect contemporary social, political, and contextual framing. These include

examinations of skilled and professional immigrants, transnationalism, the new second-generation approach to assimilation, replenished ethnicity, neighborhood decline and gentrification, the impact of whiteness, and the formation of media-based identities.

The volume's first three essays concern the earliest years of post-World War II Italian immigration, which were shaped by the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. In different ways, Stefano Luconi's "Italy, Italian Americans, and the Politics of the McCarran-Walter Act" and Maddalena Marinari's "'In the name of God . . . and in the interest of our country': The Cold War, Foreign Policy, and Italian Americans' Mobilization against Immigration Restriction" document Italian Americans' opposition to the law's limits on the entry of Italians who were suffering dire social and economic conditions in the wake of World War II. The authors recount how Italian American citizens, organizations (including the American Committee on Italian Migration), political leaders, newspapers, the Catholic Church and Italy's Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi all sought enhanced opportunities for Italians to settle in the United States.

Drawing on the political imperatives of the Cold War, the activists asserted that the exclusion of impoverished Italian workers would drive them into the hands of the Communist Party. For additional support, Italian Americans joined forces in these campaigns with other restricted ethnic communities (including Jews, Greeks, and Poles) and the Democratic Party.

The pro-migration effort was ultimately unsuccessful, due to the congressional override of President Truman's veto of the McCarran-Walter Act. Nevertheless, the chapters demonstrate that this ethnic mobilization yielded benefits in the form of political ties and enhancements to the reputation and influence of the Italian American community that far exceeded those available during the prewar period. The fact that long-term legal, political, and social benefits were acquired through what was initially seen as an unsuccessful pro-immigrant movement might offer encouragement for contemporary advocates coping with the current anti-immigration climate.

Despite the McCarran-Walter Act's exclusion of Italian immigrants, Elizabeth Zanoni's chapter, "'A Wife in Waiting': Women and the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act in *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* Advice columns," explains how the same law granted women with U.S. citizenship the opportunity to sponsor the emigration of nonresident Italian husbands. Zanoni explores these Italian American women's relations with their immigrant spouses through excerpts from letters published in the popular advice column of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, the nation's largest Italian-language daily.

James S. Pasto's "Immigrants and Ethnics: Post-World War II Italian Immigration and Boston's North End (1945-2016)" and Donald Tricarico's "New Second-Generation Youth Culture in the Twilight of Italian-American

Ethnicity” discuss intergenerational relations between prewar-era Italian Americans and first-generation Italian immigrant youth via the concept of segmented assimilation. Pasto describes how despite recent arrivals’ higher class standing and greater familiarity with the language, food, and culture of their country of origin, they were nevertheless denigrated as “greaseballs” by Italian American peers who sought to pressure them into adopting their own street-wise oppositional culture. Postwar arrivals able to resist co-ethnic socialization (this included a large fraction of girls whose immigrant parents restricted their access to the oppositional street culture) maintained a transnational outlook, encompassing both Italian and American culture and an immigrant work ethic that fostered their upward mobility.

Tricarico’s chapter explores the development in the 1970s and 1980s of a working-class “guido” subculture in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, a large, but changing, Italian American community that was being revitalized by the settlement of thousands of postwar Southern Italian immigrants. He observes the formation of a distinctive guido culture, with its elaborate displays by young men and women, many of them from the new first generation, of exaggerated “Italian” expressive traits that challenged prevailing academic assumptions regarding the apparent irrelevance of ethnic identification among contemporary European groups in American society.

The last chapter, “The Kingmakers of Fresh Pond Road: Ethnic-Political Brokers in an Italian American Community,” by Ottorino Cappelli and Rodrigo Praino, explores the cultivation of transnational influence among holders of dual citizenship by ethnic political brokers with ties to both the United States and Italy.

The book concludes with an Afterword in which Donna Gabaccia reflects on the volume’s interrogation of periodization, an analytical process that “both defines history and powerfully shapes what scholars and readers, regardless of discipline, can learn from and know about the past (186).”

In sum, *New Italian Migrations to the United States, Vol. 1*, provides distinctive and significant insights into recent Italian immigrants while also offering instructive comparisons with other migrant populations.

I would have enjoyed reading more about the racial dimensions of post-World War II Italian Americans’ interactions with African Americans as economic rivals, co-workers, employees, and customers. Relations among Italian Americans and African Americans in the entertainment industry, unions (such as the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union) and in politics would be an especially enlightening area of exploration and could contribute to our understanding of whiteness.

This reservation notwithstanding, the anthology yields basic knowledge about a previously understudied group of Italian migrants while also revealing

the assumptions that structure the study of migration. A second volume, focusing on the culture of this postwar community, has just been published. The success of Volume 1 in achieving both of these ends makes it of exceptional value for students, scholars, and general readers.

—STEVEN J. GOLD
Michigan State University

Jazz Italian Style: From Its Origins in New Orleans to Fascist Italy and Sinatra.

By Anna Harwell Celenza.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

255 pages.

An increasing body of research has been published in English in the past few years about the different facets of European jazz. Most of it deals with France and England, with some attention to Germany. For many other European countries, this literature exists only in the national languages. Musicians of Italian heritage are mentioned in all jazz history books, where the Italian presence at the music's birth in New Orleans has been widely discussed, but to my knowledge this is the first extended study in English of early Italian jazz.

A narrative about Italian jazz forms the body of the book, framed by a prologue and an epilogue, anchored by Frank Sinatra's early career, his first radio broadcast in 1935, the failed tour with the Hoboken Four, and his rediscovery by Harry James in 1939. Celenza's provocative thesis is that Sinatra in those four years developed his style based on inspiration from Italian swing singers (principal among them Natalino Otto [1912–1969]) he heard on recordings and on the radio while living in the Hoboken, New Jersey, Italian community. In a reversal of the usual one-way history of influences and inspirations, Celenza gives a full background story, rethreading back to the birth of jazz in New Orleans with its well-established Italian presence, then moving to the perception of jazz as "futurist" in the United States during the 1910s and 1920s and to the arrival of American jazz in Italy immediately after World War I.

From there, she traces the development of jazz in Italy until the end of World War II in 1945. Celenza offers a rich history of jazz in Italy during these decades. Jazz had been embraced by Italians as early as 1919 when *La lettura* magazine published what is possibly the first European reportage about the new music in New Orleans. In fact, in 1917 the young Italian guitarist Vittorio