

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Lesser Mafiosi were said to have been rounded up at gunpoint by the
10
11 hundreds, and many suspected Mafiosi were slain in resisting arrest. Pitched
12
13 battles were fought in many instances between suspected Mafia gangs and units
14
15 of Mori's Carabinieri, in which both sides suffered extensive casualties. (80)
16

(100-42303-295)

17
18 Mass Trials

19
20 Mori and his aides were engaged for many months in persuading
21
22 the public to give testimony against suspected Mafiosi. Promising protection,
23
24 Mori is said to have succeeded in acquiring over a thousand witnesses for the
25
26 prosecution. (81) Although their statements were said to have been clear and
27
28 categorical upon first being questioned, the high incidence of murder and
29
30 intimidation among potential witnesses is said to have taken its toll. The trials,
31
32
33 run in February, 1928, dragged on until 1934. Large numbers of the accused
34
35 were acquitted as witnesses qualified or recanted their original stories.

36
37
38 Trials were held at Termini Imerese, Palermo, Agrigento, Sciacca,
39
40 elsewhere in Sicily. In 1934, the trials extended to the mainland of Italy,
41
42 where hundreds of persons were accused in the court of assize at Reggio
43
44 Calabria, capital of the Calabria province which forms the southernmost
45
46 (82)
47 tion of the Italian peninsula.
48

49
50 Over 1,200 Mafiosi and suspected Mafiosi are said to have received
51
52 sentences ranging from a few months to life. The sites of their criminal

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 operations were alleged to have been chiefly the rural districts of the southern,
10 central, and western provinces, with a heavy concentration in the province of
11 Palermo. Most of the accused were charged with extortion, in many cases a
12 kind of controlled extortion that had continued for many years. The accused were
13 alleged to have individually and collectively established a reign of terror over
14 local property owners of all classes, forcing them to pay tribute in the form of
15 money and other valuable considerations such as cattle and grain, in return for
16 "protection." In most instances they were charged with "banding together for
17 criminal purposes," as well as substantive crimes of various kinds, including
18 murder, attempted murder, assault, blackmail, robbery, theft (especially cattle
19 rustling), and the maiming of livestock. (83)

20
21 In 1935, the Office of the Inspector General of Public Security of
22 Sicily, with the help of prosecutors and Carabinieri of the island identified and
23 arrested about 245 alleged Mafiosi in the Cattolica Eraclea area. They were
24 charged with murder, cattle rustling, and robberies. The sentence of death
25 was allegedly carried out against three of their number; about thirty were
26 sentenced to life imprisonment; and the rest received sentences said to have
27 ranged from twenty to thirty years in prison. (84)

28
29 In 1937, the same office is said to have acted against 211 more Mafiosi,
30 this time the adherents of Favara and of Palma Montechiaro, who were also
31 given severe sentences. (85)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8 **REVELATIONS CONCERNING THE SETUP AND OPERATIONS OF THE**
9 **MAFIA BETWEEN WORLD WARS I AND II.**
10

11
12
13 **Foreword**
14

15 **1. The Question of Reliability of Data from Fascist Authorities**
16

17 Persons concerned with the problem of what the Mafia actually is,
18
19 how it operates, and how to cope with it have seldom turned to the data accumulated
20
21 by the Italian authorities during their campaign against the Mafia in the 1920's
22
23 and 1930's for insight on the problem. The Fascist Government of Premier
24
25 Mussolini is accused of having attacked the Mafia as a political move intended
26
27 (100-42303-X2; 295; 86)
28 to strike at the heart of opposition to its new regime and in doing so is said to
29
30 have employed the familiar totalitarian tactics of political persecution and brutal
31
32 methods. While it is granted that the actions against certain individuals doubtless
33
34 were colored by such tactics, and the facts concerning them perhaps distorted,
35
36 it cannot be gainsaid that, as brute force met the sinister tactics of the Mafia,
37
38 certain details of the Mafia setup and operations hitherto merely hinted at
39
40 and almost wholly presumptive were finally brought to light.
41
42
43

44 **2. Suggestion That Discretion Be Used in Evaluating Such Data**
45

46 In evaluating the material that follows, obtained chiefly from the
47
48 investigations and legal proceedings of the Italian Government in its campaign
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6 against the Mafia in the 1920's and 1930's, it will be necessary to consider data
7
8 concerning individuals in the light of possible distortions of the true facts of
9
10 their individual cases.

11
12 As they relate to basic features of Mafia setup and operations, however,
13
14 the data presented may be relied upon as furnishing the best available description
15
16 (87, 88, 89)
17 of the Mafia in the period between World Wars I and II.

18
19 P. Summary of Features

20
21 1. Mafia Basically a Criminal Philosophy

22
23 Cesare Mori and others who were afforded a close look at the Mafia
24
25 in the 1920's and 1930's confirmed a hypothesis that had gradually been
26
27 developed by previous observers. It was this: In the realm of ideas, the Mafia
28
29 is a diabolical criminal philosophy, * offering its adherents domain over crime
30
31 in return for their souls. In the realm of organizations and operations the
32
33 Mafia is a fluctuating set of practical, conspiratorial relationships, directions,
34
35 and modi operandi among individuals and groups of individuals who adhere to
36
37 Mafia philosophy.
38
39

40
41 In certain times and at certain places, groups of Mafiosi achieved
42
43 local organization, and even loosely federated organizations, aimed at the
44
45 control of crime in their areas, and the planning and perpetration of specific
46
47
48

49
50 * The word philosophy is used here in the general nontechnical sense to mean a
51
52 set of beliefs, attitudes, and convictions bearing upon personal and social
53
54 conduct and, in this instance, lawless conduct.
55
56

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 criminal ventures. Their governing principles of criminal expediency, silence,
10
11 right of the strong, and the tacit acceptance of rule-by-reputation, however,
12
13 made the organization take final form. Thus, despite the diabolical
14
15 effectiveness of Mafia organization as revealed in their successful conspiracies,
16
17 the Mafia tended to reveal only one constant and basic feature: a criminal
18
19 philosophy, common to all of its branches, out of which developed certain
20
21 distinctive criminal manifestations and operations peculiar to the Mafia.
22
23

24 25 2. The Final Degeneration of the Code of Omertà

26
27 As we have previously seen, the code of omertà developed in
28
29 only under oppressive conditions of government. It represented solidarity
30
31 against tyranny; a silence not of fear but a proud reserve; a reserve that
32
33 embodied self-reliance, exemption from the common law, strength,
34
35 aggressiveness, and superiority. All of these qualities tended to attract
36
37 at least secret admiration from the populace under conditions in which the law
38
39 and its enforcers, both determined from despotism, were hated and despised.
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
In the passage of time, the Mafia had managed to retain features of
primitive self-government in the eyes of Mafiosi and those disposed to distrust

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 the law and its enforcers. The Mafia was recognized by an indefinite number of
10 Sicilians as a form of influence that could get things done; a useful though
11
12 expensive moderator between criminals and their victims; and an aggressive
13
14 and generally successful rival of the law itself. Moreover, its core of belief
15
16 and discipline, omerta, had suffered degeneration. It became basically similar
17
18 to the code of silence familiar in underworld operations the world over. It
19
20 represented a solidarity of silence against law enforcement officers seeking to
21
22 apprehend criminals, and a perverted "code of honor" similar to the concept of
23
24 "honor among thieves."
25
26
27

28
29 Omerta had developed a special meaning, however, from its long
30
31 association with a particularly violent class of criminals, that made it a little
32
33 distinct from the underworld code in general. Omerta became a living discipline
34
35 that encouraged all who adhered to it to: (1) refuse to recognize the legal
36
37 authorities; (2) in all matters, even business matters, accept a Mafia contract
38
39 (ordinarily verbal) as the only binding law; and (3) seek ruthlessly to control
40
41 crime, as the "right" of the Mafia. The latter aspect of omerta, with its
42
43 meaning to the Mafiosi, for whom it constituted a way of life, inserted a special
44
45 dynamics into underworld operations wherever it appeared, and revealed itself
46
47 in criminal monopolies or attempts to establish them. This aspect also furnished
48
49
50 a basis for direction and organized forms.
51
52
53

1
2
3
4
5 3. Forms of Organization and Modus Operandi Assumed by the Mafia
6 in the 1920's and 1930's
7
8

9 a. Adaptable Conspiracies
10

11 The Mafia as a whole, representing perhaps in the dictionary sense
12 a vast conspiracy for its adherents were in constant collusion in the commission
13 of crime, did not reveal itself as a complete, definite, organized, illegal entity.
14 Instead, the conspiracies formed by its adherents followed fractional forms,
15 adaptable to the local environment. In the 1920's and 1930's, for example, as
16 well as for many previous years, the Mafia was to be found most strongly and
17 typically represented in the rural districts where greatest opportunity was
18 found for easy plunder, and in them took the form of local conspiracies.
19

20 Above the local level, there were found to be collaboration where
21 expedient and the use of the services of certain persons apparently for the
22 ultimate disposal of stolen goods.
23

24 The most outstanding feature of the concept of Mafia organization
25 at this as well as any previous time in Mafia history was its evasion
26 of precise, clear-cut pinpointing by the authorities. This revealed
27 a quality of adaptability no doubt due in large part to a lack of formal
28 impedimenta such as might have been represented in the constitution, bylaws,
29 and formal administrative techniques of the more conventional type of organization.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 **b. Territorial Rings**
10

11 The broadest unit of organization isolated by the Italian authorities in
12 the prosecutions of the 1920's and 1930's was the territorial ring. The ring
13 operating in the Bisacquino territory, for example, was said to have been a
14 typical Mafia operation of the period. The 148 alleged members of the
15 Bisacquino conspiracy* were charged, in addition to their individual substantive
16 crimes, with "association for criminal purposes" even though precise evidence
17 of such association was apparently lacking in many cases.
18
19

20 **c. The Basic Purpose of the Territorial Ring: A "Protection" Racket**
21
22

23 In the prosecutions of the Bisacquino and Corleone conspiracies, it
24 was brought out that elements of each broad grouping had conspired to terrorize
25 the particular communities (and there were several in each case) over which
26 they held sway. Using murder, assault, threat, robbery, theft, and property
27 damage to create a reign of fear and to establish and maintain the terror-inspired
28 Mafia reputation, the accused were said to have collected tribute from their
29 intimidated victims under the guise of "protecting" their lives and property.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 *The territorial conspiracies were given the name of the principal municipality
48 or the Mafia center from which the majority of the alleged coconspirators derive
49 In this case, Bisacquino, a medium-sized city in southwestern Sicily.
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 d. The Operation of the Territorial Mafia Ring

10
11 (1) The Tyranny of the Few over the Many

12 Available examples of the territorial Mafia rings indicate that
13
14
15 sh rings may have numbered about one to two hundred "members." In
16
17 contrast to their small size, these rings were said to have tyrannized
18
19
20 ay thousands of persons, much in the manner of the typical communist
21
22 tyranny of the few over the many. Although no precise figures are available,
23
24
25 is noted that the Bisacquino conspiracy, for example, composed of 148
26
27 rsons, appeared to have reigned over a territory comprising over a
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
hundred square miles, and embracing at least six municipalities with an
aggregate population of over 30,000 persons. The Corleone conspiracy
presented an even more striking example, for while numbering only 119
members, its effective scope apparently embraced over three hundred square
miles in which were to be found a total population of from 80,000 to possibly
over 100,000 persons.

42 (2) Leadership Vestcd in One Chief and His Lieutenants

43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
Nichelangelo Gennaro was described as being the undisputed chief
of the Corleone conspiracy for a number of years prior to his death in 1924.
His lieutenants were said to have been Detto Marcellino Binenti and Giuseppe
Bontaglia, who assumed joint leadership of the ring after Gennaro's death.
It is indicated that Binenti assumed the position of chief prior to 1929.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Territorial leaders were considered personally capable of committing
10 violence, and were accused of murders in some cases. Binenti, however,
11 presented the picture of the more sophisticated chief, who although personally
12 ruthless and considered capable of any crime, is said to have eschewed actual
13 involvement in violent acts, limiting himself to planning operations, cashing in
14 on them, and utilizing Mafia pressure to further his political plans.
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 (3) A Powerful Chief of a Territorial Ring May Have Been
23 the "Head of the Mafia"
24

25 Michelangelo Gennaro was said to have succeeded, during his reign
26 as chief of the powerful Corleone conspiracy, in acquiring the reputation of being
27 all-powerful in the Sicilian Mafia.
28
29
30
31

32 It has been noted that the Mafia used a system of "rule-by-reputation"
33 in the sense that without formal means of electing chiefs, the prestige of a man
34 served as the index of his status in the ruling hierarchy. A Mafioso is said to
35 have built such prestige by several means, including such factors as: (a) personal
36 influence; (b) the intangible "psychological drop" that one member of the animal
37 kingdom exerts over the less assured; (c) a reputation for ruthlessness and craft
38 (d) skill in arbitration; (e) the acquisition of wealth; (f) the acquisition of tacit
39 backing in the shape of a large number of relatives including those by marriage;
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6) the reputation for absolute observance of the Mafia "code of honor";
7
8
9) powerful connections, and other more or less intangible factors which
10
11 in sum impressed the otherwise unprincipled Mafiosi.

12
13 In the absence of more formal systems of announcement, it is
14
15 likely that the reputation of Michelangelo Gennaro as the leader of the powerful
16
17 Corleone conspiracy may have in the course of time encircled the island on
18
19 the Mafia grapevine, bringing him superlative prestige, and thus insuring his
20
21 recognition and acceptance by the majority of Mafiosi as "all-powerful" in the
22
23 Mafia. No doubt the fact that other chiefs deferred to him entered into the
24
25 picture as well, and perhaps may have assured his prestige and insured his
26
27 position more than any other factor.

30
31 (4) The Use of a Cover Organization
32

33
34 Although a cover organization was not always reported to be a
35
36 characteristic of a Mafia ring, it was noted that the powerful Corleone
37
38 ring used a cover organization known as the "Circolo degli Agricoltori"
39
40 (Agriculturists' Club), the president of which was Pinenti himself.

41
42
43 It was in the privacy of this club, formed of Mafiosi only,
44
45 that the major plans of operation were said to have been hatched.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 (5) The Local Groupings

10 Local groupings of Mafiosi, formed of the toughest hoodlums in the
11 vicinity and led by self-imposed local chiefs, were believed to have perpetrated
12 most of the actual overt acts of the conspiracy. They were accused of having
13 done so singly in many cases, but often in pairs or small groups.
14
15
16
17
18

19
20 (6) The Connection of the Local Groupings with the General
21 Conspiracy: A Permanent Common Agreement Said To Exist
22

23 The Supreme Court of the Kingdom of Italy held in April, 1934, that it
24 was clear from the whole of the statements made by witnesses and injured parties
25 that the word Mafia indicated an association of persons permanently bound by a
26 common agreement, namely that to impose upon and exploit the honest and quiet
27 citizens, and commit crimes against property and persons. "Mafiosi" were those
28 belonging to such association. It was averred by the Court that the same
29 evidence that pointed to the general existence of the criminal association also
30 served to bring about the identification of the single members.
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 (7) Some Alleged Proofs of the General Conspiracies:
42 Associations; Meetings; Identification of Different Functions
43 of Members of the Rings; Apparent Similarity of Intent;
44 Similarity of Modus Operandi; Alleged Fixing of Responsibility
45 for Overt Acts Appearing as Manifestations of a Conspiracy
46
47
48

49 Points made in the prosecution's attempts to prove general conspiracy
50 in each of the territories included: (1) observations by police officers and other
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6 witnesses of the conduct of the individual defendants and the associating of the
7
8 defendants with each other; (2) the organization of crime in the territory (the
9
10 identification of chiefs, members, the composition of groups domineering over
11
12 certain local areas, and meetings of the local were cited as illustrations of
13
14 such alleged organization); (3) the sorting of different functions by various
15
16 alleged members of the ring, e.g., some were said to have acted as
17
18 collectors, some as "fences," and some as planners of the crimes;
19
20 the apparent similarity of intent on the part of all Mafiosi, i.e., to
21
22 monopolize crime and tyrannize over the lives of citizens residing in their
23
24 areas; (5) the similarity of modus operandi: e.g., the use of terror and
25
26 acts to extort tribute from victims and other typical manifestations of
27
28 Mafia as described by its victims; and (6) the fixing of responsibility for
29
30 certain event acts which appeared to be manifestations of a conspiracy.
31
32
33
34

35
36 (3) Overt Acts: The "Caretakers"

37
38 In 1927, the courts at Palermo were said to have reported that one
39
40 the characteristic activities of the Mafia association in that territory was
41
42 manifested in the institution of "Caretakers."
43
44

45 The "Caretakers," attributed to themselves such assignment by the
46
47 Mafia, appeared at harvest time in the various rural localities in order to
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 collect tribute or payment for the "guarding" or "protection" of the operation
10 which had led to the harvesting. Harvest time appeared to have been the only
11 time the Maffiosi appeared in the areas. The protection was believed to be
12 mythical. No guard had been posted in these areas over the year.
13
14
15

16
17 Any persons not assigned by the Mafia who tried to collect or act as
18 guards were reported to have been murdered by the Mafia.
19
20

21
22 In other instances, availing themselves of the intimidating power of
23 the Mafia association, individual members allegedly appeared in the fields at
24 harvest time in order to extort part of the harvest. If the victims failed to pay
25 the demanded tribute, their crops were stolen or destroyed until they complied.
26
27
28

29
30
31 (7) Overt Acts: Continuous Extortion; Murders; Robberies;
32 Other Crimes
33
34

35 In some cases the extortion practices seem to have been continuous.
36
37 - Maffiosi of certain districts had attached themselves permanently as parasites
38 upon the farmers in those areas many years previous to their prosecution, and
39 had never released their hold over the farmers. The extortion of one Mafioso
40 against two farmers of the Corleone area gave the character of being continuous
41 in operation; for example, from 1916 to 1926. The extortions of another
42 Mafioso of the same territory against an entire family were said to have continu
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51 from 1913 until 1925.
52
53
54

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 In some instances, Mafiosi have used murder; the threat of robbery;
10 robbery itself; as well as theft, arson, maiming of livestock, and other means
11
12 of terrorism as object lessons for the people of the area, especially the
13
14 victims, in the advisability of compliance with Mafia demands.
15
16

17 In other instances, Mafiosi have committed robberies and all manner
18
19 of other crimes, especially the rustling of cattle, for the profit there was to be
20
21 found in the specific crimes themselves.
22
23

24 A customary modus operandi which is usually cited as an example
25
26 of the monopolistic control over crime in general, that was reported to have
27
28 been enjoyed by the Mafia, involved the "ransoming" of stolen goods. The
29
30 monopoly of the districts over which the Mafia exercised the most complete
31
32 domination discovered that after goods or cattle were stolen, a person often
33
34 appeared to act as a "mediator," offering to get the goods back at a price.
35
36 This technique was said to have been practiced as early as 1838, as we have
37
38 seen in a previous portion of this monograph. In the 1920's and 1930's, this
39
40 technique was believed to have reached virtual perfection, it having been
41
42 determined that the Mafia could return the goods to the victim in most
43
44 instances, a feat which the police almost never accomplished. Using this
45
46 technique, the Mafia collected from a third to a half of the value of the
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

several zones were well established, most of them having been functioning for many years, and in some cases for centuries.

Thus it is possible that the administration of the Mafia in Sicily was not conducted by a fixed hierarchy, but was left almost entirely to the relatively autonomous control of certain territories by the gangs residing in them. Above that level, it is likely that administration was elaborated only in the expedient relationships among territorial chiefs, and in the radiating lines of influence, patronage, and the exchanges of valuable considerations consequent thereto that existed between these chiefs and persons of great business and political importance or influence, especially in Palermo.

The fencing of stolen goods may have represented the most nearly continuous type of interterritorial administration, although no information has been developed to date indicating that the function of the fence was formally assigned by the Mafia hierarchy. In this, as in most other aspects of Mafia operation, it is probably necessary to conceive of a continuous criminal operation of violent and broad scope, rather than a neat pattern of administration formulated in advance and carried out punctiliously.

(3) The Findings of Cesare Mori

Cesare Mori, after several years of close contact with the operations of the Mafia, came to certain conclusions which bear examination.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8 (a) Variable Forms; A Caste?
9

10 Mori revealed that the Mafia takes protean forms. On some occasions,
11 for example, certain Mafiosi have grouped themselves into something resembling
12 a conventional-type organization, with secret statutes, distinctive signals, a
13 definite hierarchy, and the choice of leaders by elections. Ordinarily, however,
14 this formality is not present, the groupings following expedient forms or no
15 definite form at all beyond deferring to self-imposed chiefs.⁽⁹⁰⁾
16
17

18 Mori suggested that the Mafia as a whole might be considered to have a
19 caste character. Its elements, commonly imbued with a special way of feeling,
20 understanding, and acting, are drawn together by a kind of mental and psychic
21 affinity of the type that creates societies of like-minded persons everywhere. In
22 the case of the Mafiosi, the mutual attraction lies in a shared morbid determina-
23 tion to impose one's will upon others, for power and profit, and a common
24 preference for a particular style of modus operandi. Jointly held, these morbid
25 values isolate Mafia adherents as a whole from the environment into a class by
26 themselves, a kind of caste.⁽⁹¹⁾
27
28

29 (b) A System of Local Oligarchies
30
31

32 Mori considered the Mafia as a potential state, its visible form
33 consisting of a system of local oligarchies, autonomous in their respective
34 zones, but responsible to one conducting line.⁽⁹²⁾
35

36 *Ambiguous in translation: may mean "responsible to one ruler."
37
38

1
2
3
4
5
6
7 (c) No Recognition Signs, Statutes, Elections
8

9 Mori pointed out that there were ordinarily no recognition signs used
10
11 the Mafiosi as there was no need for them; the Mafiosi had no difficulty in
12 (93)
13 recognizing each other.
14

15 There were ordinarily no statutes. The Mafia groups needed no
16
17 written constitution and no bylaws. The unwritten laws of omerta and the
18 (94)
19 traditions of the Mafia sufficed.
20

21
22 Ordinarily there was no election of chiefs. The leaders assumed
23 (95)
24 their positions by self-designation and self-imposition.
25

26
27 (d) No Rules for Admission or Expulsion
28

29 Mori observed: "There are no rules for admission. When a person
30
31 has the desired qualifications* he is absorbed automatically."
32

33 He noted also that a Mafioso is automatically expelled, by force if
34 (96)
35 necessary, when he loses his qualifications.
36

37
38 (e) The Rule for the Distribution of Plunder
39

40 Cecare Mori observed: "The rule for the distribution of plunder
41 (97)
42 is the right of the most powerful and... silence."
43

44
45
46 Ambiguous in translation: may mean "desired number of votes."
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 (f) Difficulties in Investigating the Mafioso: Identification
10 Problems

11
12 The primary difficulty in investigating a Mafioso consisted in
13 identifying him, said Mori. The Mafioso presented "a front which is often
14 ambiguous, doubtful, equivocal, and not precise."⁽⁹⁸⁾
15
16

17
18
19 The misleading front assumed by the Mafioso arose from several
20 factors, especially the following: (1) the misleading criminal record of the⁽⁹⁹⁾
21 Mafioso, revealing numerous acquittals for lack of evidence, and few if any
22 convictions; (2) the denial of Mafia adherence by the Mafioso when questioned by
23 the authorities; (3) the simulation of legality in the operations of the Mafioso, or
24 the assertion of such legality by the Mafioso; (4) the lack of formal means of
25 gaining "membership" in the Mafia, and thus the lack of formal means of
26 identification of a Mafia adherent; and (5) the custom of Mafiosi who had become
27 rich through their Mafia operations of withdrawing from open criminal activities;
28 buying into legitimate businesses; and concealing themselves behind a cloak of
29 respectability.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

44 The simulation of legality, for example, was demonstrated in the
45 typical Mafia protection racket, in which the Mafiosi, when apprehended,
46 displayed outraged innocence and asserted that the victims, the landlords of the
47 estates, or even the government itself had contracted for their services as guard
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 The challenge of the concealed Mafioso and the difficulty of proving

10 Mafia adherence were emphasized by Mori.
11

12
13 (g) The Concealed Mafioso
14

15 Mori provided an invaluable warning concerning the puzzling figure
16 who appears to be a wealthy, legitimate businessman, but whose past is clouded
17 with allegations of Mafia activity.
18

19
20 Mori pointed out that many a Mafioso who has become wealthy through
21 his depredations ostensibly "retires" from underworld activity. He may invest
22 in legitimate businesses and put on the appearance of respectability. If he
23 avoids illegal involvements he may live for some time for all practical purposes
24 immune from legal punishment, though his past may catch up with him in the
25 form of a bullet from an old acquaintance brooding over an unsettled score.
26

27 According to Mafia custom, said Mori, a wealthy Mafioso who chooses
28 to retire from the active criminal scene is said to have become "redeemed,"
29 and this kind of "redemption" is the aim of many Mafiosi.
30

31 As Mori pointed out, however, persons "redeemed" (by the ugly
32 standards of the Mafia) tend to return to active crime when opportunities arise
33 for doing so while retaining an air of respectability. Further, at no time will
34 they give material cooperation to law enforcement.
35

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 Thus it was that the typical figure appeared of a man who presented
12 the appearance of wealth and respectability but whose Mafia reputation made it
13 safe to assume that he was either covertly engaged in criminal operations, or
14 was available for such operations when opportunities might arise. This type of
15 hidden Mafioso often could be considered the more dangerous variety, possessing
16 not only wealth and accumulated legitimate connections, often political, but an
17 underworld apparatus available to him for whatever criminal venture he chose to
18 embark upon.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

27 - (h) Mafia Adherence Generally Hereditary

28
29 Cesare Mori pointed out that Mafia adherence was generally considered
30 to be hereditary. It was virtually a birthright of the sons of a Mafioso. However,
31 some may not avail themselves of this birthright.
32
33
34

35 One could also assume the role of a Mafioso with ease if his grandfather
36 great-grandfather, or even an uncle was known as a Mafioso. The way this was
37 done, it is said, was by collecting tribute, using the name of the elder with its
38 implied threat to insure compliance with the demands made.
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 Scattered instances of the use of oaths and initiation ceremonies were
46 reported, though the ordinary prerequisites for general acceptance as a Mafioso
47 appear to have been: (1) being born into a Mafia family; and/or (2) otherwise
48
49
50
51
52
53

1
2
3
4
5
6 offering convincing proof of indoctrination in Mafia principles and tradition,
7
8 e. e., conformance with the code of omerta and proof of ruthless disposition
9
10
11 revealed in acts of violence such as that of murder.

12
13 The recurrence of familiar given names and middle names among
14
15 Mafiosi not known to have been the scions of large Mafia families suggests
16
17 also that it may have been the practice of some important Mafiosi to have a
18
19 (101, 102, 103)
20 member of persons.

21
22 (i) The Need for Careful Investigation
23

24 In view of the difficulties involved in identifying the Mafiosi, Mori
25
26 underscored the need for alert perception, thorough investigation, and careful
27
28 evaluation. By these means, the facade of ambiguity screening the Mafioso
29
30 could be penetrated and specific relationships with other Mafiosi and specific
31
32 (104)
33 criminal activities could be isolated by which his adherence could be pinpointed.

34
35 Mori indicated that it would be profitable to keep in mind that the
36
37 Mafioso reveals himself when off guard in certain acts, modus operandi, and
38
39 (105)
40 attitude. It is noted that the acts of the Mafiosi in the 1920's and 1930's
41
42 embraced a wide range of criminal activity, but were chiefly those of
43
44 extortion and murder. The modus operandi, though various, were chiefly
45
46

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 the use of terror and of the terror-inspiring reputation of the Mafia to intimidate
10 victims and collect tribute. The attitude was one of arrogant superiority and
11 power domination.
12
13
14

15 Several means were used by the prosecution during the Mafia trials of
16 the 1920's and 1930's to identify persons as Mafiosi. Apparently the most common
17 method involved identification by witnesses of persons who had actually
18 committed the crimes attributed to the Mafia; another involved the reputations
19 of the accused persons as Mafiosi; another relied on testimony as to the observed
20 daily relations between and association of the defendants. The last point seemed
21 to be heavily emphasized, and counted as a prime factor in determining whether
22 or not a person was to be referred to as a Mafioso and thus charged in the general
23 conspiracy in his territory of residence. The importance of observed ties and
24 association was indicated by the fact that a number of criminals, picked up in the
25 police net that drew in the Mafiosi, were eventually absolved of being Mafiosi,
26 i.e., of participating in the local Mafia conspiracy, because no witnesses could
27 be found to testify concerning their associative ties with persons already
28 (106,107)
29 identified as Mafiosi. Thus the need for careful penetration into the closeness
30 of ties, family, business, criminal, and other, as well as the frequency and
31 purpose of contacts between suspects, was first underscored as a means of
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 identifying them as Mafiosi. The primary move in such case was seen to be
10 the identification of a nucleus, a few persons who could be most readily and
11 easily proved to be Mafiosi, and then, as a secondary step, demonstration of
12 relations between an individual considered a Mafia suspect, to persons
13 already identified as composing the Mafia nucleus.
14
15
16
17
18

19
20 (j) The Logic of the Mafia
21

22 Mori pointed out:
23

24 "...the Mafia does not have statutes but it derives laws and
25 discipline from the solidarity which is understood as the law
26 of the underworld. It obtains exceptional strength from a
27 logic which is all its own." (108)
28
29
30
31

32 "Beginning with the almost mystical conception that the underworld
33 exists, and it must exist since it was created, it not only denies all
34 the efficiency of the legal provisions which were intended to fight
35 it but it believes that the struggle against crime, as it is understood
36 and practiced by social defense organizations, is an error, a useless
37 waste of time, and an unnatural reaction." (109)
38
39
40
41

42 "...the Mafia...with the ethical inversion which is characteristic
43 of its psychology...does not fear prison as much as school...does
44 not fear the judge as much as the teacher...." (110)
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 "...the carabinieri, the judge and the prison can cut down the ranks
10 of the Mafia...a temporary condition because the organization can
11 always be built up from the influx of new recruits." (111)
12
13
14

15
16 "However, the school, the teacher and the children strike the Mafia
17 at its foundations.... They...determine its breakdown and its finish
18 by a more or less slow decline (of its men)." (112)
19

20 (k) It Knows the Underworld and Acts as Moderator For the
21 Underworld
22

23 "...the Mafia...knows the underworld in all its complexities....
24 It is informed about the perpetrators of...crime.... When it
25 liquidates someone, it does not worry about mistakes. It is sure
26 of what it does." (113)
27
28

29
30
31 "According to official statistics on cattle stealing... (based on figures
32 of many years ago) the victim had a (small) chance of recovering the
33 animals....expenses...loss of work...and the possibility of revenge."
34 (114)
35

36
37
38 "Second case: the victim turns to the Mafia...."
39
40
41

42
43 "In 95% of the cases...the Mafia recovers the booty and returns it
44 to the victim. It receives a reward of about 1/3 of its value." (115)
45
46
47

48 "...while the authorities asked the victim to talk (which was not
49 always healthy), the Mafia asked him to be silent.... While the
50
51
52

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

authorities took a year's time for their investigations and proceedings, the Mafia without any noise and without disturbing anyone cleaned up the matter in a few days." (116)

"In this way, the Mafia was able to twist the situation to its complete advantage...exploited the people and the criminals...by serving as mediator between the criminals and the victims. Naturally, this mediation was not free of charge for either party. It has been said more than once that the Mafia was the moderator of the underworld." (117)

(1) It Substituted for the Law

"This is how the Mafia was able to substitute itself for the law.... Society...was automatically put aside and it slowly found itself confronted with a serious obstacle: silence." (118)

4. The Mafia Distinguished from Crime in General

Simplists, according to Cesare Mori, tended to lump the Mafia with (119) crime in general. As Mori pointed out, and as abundant illustrations from the various court proceedings of the time tend to confirm, the Mafia was a phenomenon somewhat distinct from ordinary crime. It was also distinct from the usual organized crime though it did represent the latter to many Sicilians who lived under its tyranny.

What was the difference between the Mafia and ordinary organized crime? This difference is not clear, but certain outstanding features of the Mafia make it obvious to the foreign observer that the Mafia was not a normal

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 manifestation of organized crime as it might appear in any country or environ-
10 ment chosen at random. The Mafia was a special type of crime involving an
11 unusually ferocious attempt to monopolize or to control crime, for greater and
12 more effective profiteering. The typical Mafia manifestation, constituting the
13 most common charge brought against Mafia groups throughout the island,
14 consisted in continued and controlled extortion perpetrated by the local Mafia
15 groups in their particular areas, and accomplished by intimidation of the public
16 through the terror inspired by the Mafia reputation.
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

27 While to Sicilians these aspects represented "organized crime"
28 in the areas in which it was particularly strong, the distinction might
29 be logically assumed to be more obvious in other countries, where the
30 Mafia groups, with their special tradition-based dynamics and customs
31 might not so easily be said to be generally representative groups. Thus
32 the monopolist tradition of the Mafia, joined with special modi operandi
33 designed to secure the desired monopoly, and special family customs used
34 to sustain and strengthen it, were to cause the Mafia groups to reveal them-
35 selves to law enforcement agencies in other countries as special power cliques
36 within organized crime and tending toward its domination. To the extent that the
37 Mafia groups were to succeed by their special dynamics, coupled with necessary
38 adjustment to the conditions of the new environment in taking over organized
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 criminal operations in other countries, they were to become synonymous with
12
13 organized crime in these countries.

14
15 Thus, Mafia rings were on their native soil considered special
16
17 criminal rings, i.e., criminal rings with certain typical manifestations and
18
19 special dynamics and to a much more significant degree may be so considered
20
21 under the distinctly different environmental conditions of other countries.
22

23
24
25 5. Other Distinctive Features

26
27 a. The Importance of Family Ties

28
29 Perhaps the most significant feature of the composition of Mafia
30
31 groupings was to be seen in the way in which certain families and related
32
33 family groups were dominant in Mafia operations.

34
35 In certain areas, strong Mafia families held monopolies of the
36
37 Mafia operations. The Cassisi families, for example, are said to have
38
39 reigned as the local Mafia over the municipality of Contessa Entellina in
40
41 Western Sicily. They maintained this monopoly until the Mafia group in a
42
43 neighboring municipality wiped out the Cassisi by wholesale homicide.
44 (120)

45
46 The Scallisi of Corleone were said to have been a powerful
47
48 Mafia family. The hereditary aspect of the Mafia may also be illustrated
49
50 by the Scallisi. Although the precise identities of the persons involved may
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8 never be known, numerous persons in the Corleone area bearing the surname of
9
10 Scallisi were convicted of Mafia operations. Some of their apparent relationships
11
12 were as follows: The patriarch, defunct at the time of the Corleone trials in the
13
14 1920's and 1930's, was Francesco Paolo Scallisi. His sons were indicated as
15
16 Giuseppe, born October 13, 1886, Giovanni, born January 21, 1882, and
17
18 Calogero, born August 16, 1892, all at Corleone. All three were accused of
19
20 Mafia activity. Giovanni and Calogero also had sons, Giovanni having had four,
21
22 sons, and Calogero, one. All of the sons were also tried and sentenced for
23
24 Mafia activities. In addition, reaching into the third living generation, Mariano,
25
26 apparently a grandson of the fruitful Giovanni and a young man of about 25 at
27
28 the time of the Mafia trials, also was accused of Mafia activity. It must be
29
30 emphasized that confirmation of the birth records and identities of these
31
32 individuals is lacking and not immediately obtainable. (121)
33
34
35
36

37 Family trees of this type apparently aided the authorities in ferreting
38
39 out Mafia adherents. It was commonly accepted at the time that: (1) Mafia
40
41 adherence was chiefly hereditary; and (2) Mafia operations were dominated by
42
43 strong Mafia families or combinations of them.
44
45
46

47 In addition to the traditional inheritance of Mafia "membership,"
48
49 other reasons for the frequent appearance of families as basic elements in the
50
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 compositions of Mafia groupings may have been: (1) the typical Sicilian custom
12
13 family solidarity; (2) the desire for more than ordinary trust in persons in
14
15 collusion with whom the criminal operations were to be perpetrated; and (3) the
16
17 need for special backing in a family system of private justice such as that
18
19 symbolized in the tradition of omerta. The presence of other members of his
20
21 family, or the presence of close relatives was an obvious deterrent to anyone
22
23
24 string to attack the Mafioso, as the operation of vendetta could be easily
25
26
27 preseen. In this sense, also, the Mafioso with the large family and many
28
29 family ties could be confidently assured of special power both within and
30
31 outside the Mafia, a power that could not be easily resisted either by
32
33 victims or other Mafiosi who would wish to challenge his authority.
34

35
36 b. The Vendetta and Other Divisive Factors

37
38 (1) The Vendetta

39
40 Perhaps one of the most striking features of relations within and
41
42 among Mafia groupings is their potential, and often active enmity, caused in
43
44 many cases by the practice of the custom of vendetta. This custom called
45
46
47 down upon the offender the wrath of the victim's family within the Mafia
48
49 groupings just as surely as it operated elsewhere.
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10 Visualizing a collection of Mafiosi composed of certain families not
11 tightly linked by intermarriage and in competition with each other for criminal
12 opportunities, the spillover of their crimes, and general supremacy in the Mafia,
13 it is easy to see how quarrels quickly developed into violence, violence into the
14 death of a member of one family, and the retribution by that family against the
15 person of the offender. Adding to that situation the reaction of the offender's
16 family after his murder for revenge, the typical pattern of a blood feud was
17 observed, one that ordinarily continued until the families concerned and often
18 their friends and families were drawn into the pattern of wholesale murder, the
19 original cause of which may have faded from memory.

20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33 Such blood feuds could be observed among the Mafiosi of the 1920's
34 and 1930's, causing the splitting and realigning of groups and cliques, as well
35 as the wiping out of whole groups and the families represented in them. (122)

36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
A peculiar feature of the vendetta, and one that made it virtually impossible for the authorities to fix responsibility for any of the murders said to have been perpetrated by the hundreds each year for the purpose of revenge, was in many cases its delayed-action aspect. It has been said that the delayed-action aspect was an index of the degree to which the potential assassin desired to relish the thought of revenge and to visualize the actual scene in which he

2
3
4
5
6
7uld take the bloody vengeance. Another factor that was of more significance
8
9 the authorities has been said to be the fact that the potential assassin, by
10
11 ending the time between the offense he or his family suffered, and the murder
12
13 revenge, permitted the creation of a multiplicity of motives, many of them
14
15 the recent than his own, for the murder of the victim. Thus the real motive
16
17 the vendetta murder was effectively buried from the perception of all
18
19
20
21 ept those directly cognizant of the circumstances. They, of course, never
22
23 ed. This made the task of law enforcement officers extremely difficult.
24

25
26 (2) Other Divisive Factors

27
28 The associative tie that bound Mafiosi to each other in criminal
29
30 spiracies was not only strained by complex and deep-rooted plans for
31
32 vetta and by frequent murders, but often was jeopardized by the natural
33
34 it and disposition of the typical Mafioso. When the associative tie
35
36 ame an obstacle against ambitions to appropriate all gains or to become
37
38 (123)
39 leader, the rebellious killed or were killed.
40

41
42 Expectancy that such fighting for supremacy among Mafiosi
43
44 d cause the dissolution of all Mafia groups proved to be a vain
45
46 however. Unfortunately the Mafia conspiracies, though exhibiting
47
48 ost constant internal stresses and flux neither dissolved nor stopped
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 their antisocial and illegal activities. The Mafia adherents generally found
12 common cause when it came to victimizing the public, or putting up common
13 defense against citizens or the authorities. (124)
14
15
16

17 An incident mentioned in connection with the early campaigns of the
18 Italian authorities against the Mafia serves to indicate the possibility that an
19 informant may occasionally be found whose hatred for fellow Mafiosi is stronger
20 than his fear of the retribution he expects for giving information concerning them.
21
22 In the case of a Mafia group tried in 1929, the members of the group were said
23 to have been identified by a Mafioso who had quarreled with his fellows and had
24 sought revenge by denouncing them to the authorities. The group was duly
25 apprehended. However, the informant was said to have paid for his violation of
26 the omertà code with his life. (125)
27
28

29 c. Infiltration of Legitimate Professions and Occupations
30

31 The Mafia trials resulted in the convictions of a number of persons who
32 were formerly prominent in the affairs of their respective communities. Several
33 lawyers, politicians, and former mayors of towns were said to have been convicted
34 of Mafia crimes, some of them having been charged with taking leading roles in
35 the Mafia conspiracies in their territories. (126, 127, 128)
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 The conviction of Reverend Vincenzo Balamonte, a priest of

12
13 Borgia, Sicily, for participation in the Bisacquino conspiracy, has been

14
15 ted as a shocking example of the extent to which the Mafia had penetrated

16
17 the existing social order, infiltrating in this instance into the very bastions
18 (128, 129)

19
20 defense against the archetype of evil represented in the Mafia spirit.

21
22 b. The Friends

23
24 The term "the friends" was said to have been commonly used by

25
26 the Mafiosi in referring to their allies.

27
28
29 - After Paolo Schilleri of the Bisacquino conspiracy had received

30
31 several extortion letters he is said to have been approached by the Mafiosi

32
33 Bartolomeo Andrella and Giuseppe Lanza, who told him they were sent by

34
35 the friends" to collect the money. (130)

36
37
38 c. Murder

39
40 By the 1930's, murder had become a distinctive feature of the Mafia.

41
42 Mafia assassins were said to have been motivated by a wide variety of purposes:

43
44 personal revenge (vendetta); supremacy within Mafia groups, or supremacy of

45
46 one group over another; monopoly of the spoils of a Mafia operation; reprisal

47
48 against victims who refused to comply with Mafia extortion demands;

49
50 compliance with personal wishes of a high Mafioso. I. e., murder on order;

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 Mafia discipline, including punishment of Mafiosi for violation of the Mafia code
12 of silence, or for misappropriation of plunder; elimination of interlopers among
13 the criminal elements; robbery; and, in some instances, perhaps, for the sole
14 purpose of establishing a fearsome reputation.
15
16
17
18

19
20
21 VI. THE MAFIA IN THE 1940'S
22

23
24 A. Opportunism during the War Years
25

26 Conflicting reports came out of Sicily during World War II, indicating
27 - on the one hand that the Mafia was collaborating with the Axis, and on the other,
28 that the Mafia was on the side of the Allies. There were still other reports that
29 (100-271996-27)
30 indicated collusion between the communist movement in Sicily and the Mafia.
31
32

33 By the War's end, correspondents reported that the actual role of the
34 Mafia was still uncertain. (134) One thing, however, can be said with certainty. The
35 War years found the Mafiosi with only one aim: to exploit those tragic years to
36 their fullest for whatever power and profit were to be found in the misery of the
37 people and the plight of the combatants.
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 B. Black-Market Operations
48

49 During the War, the Allied Forces in Sicily encountered the Mafia armed
50 (64-200-233-30)
51 and in control of black-market operations. Some reports indicated that the
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8 Fascist regime had given the Mafia complete freedom to establish monopolies
9 (62-75147-34-154, p. 2)
10 in return for support of the regime.

11
12 In 1943, dispatches from Sicily revealed that the American Third
13
14 Division when on the Messina drive had chosen Castel d' Accia about 22 miles
15
16 from Palermo as its rear echelon headquarters. This little town was
17
18 discovered to be a Mafia area and the center of black-market operations.
19
20 Allied authorities raided the Mafia stronghold, capturing two notorious Mafia
21
22 leaders and a number of the subjects in the black-market ring. (131)
23
24

25
26 1944: Crime Wave; Popular Report as a Means of Identifying a Mafia
27 Operation
28

29 -1. Crime Wave in Sicily
30

31 Reports filtering out of Sicily in 1944 revealed a revived Mafia with
32
33 banditry and kidnappings a common occurrence throughout the Sicilian countryside.
34
35 Although official police statements concerning the Mafia during the War years
36
37 were lacking, American correspondents in Italy reported that at least eight
38
39 independent Mafia gangs had been identified. The unusual feature of these
40
41 gangs, the reports continued, was that there apparently was no common
42
43 agreement among them concerning territorial rights. (132)
44
45

46
47 Whereas in the past, a victim of a territorial gang might receive in
48
49 effect a guarantee of immunity of attack by another gang, this no longer held true.
50
51

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 One Vittorio di Salvo, a wealthy landlord of Palermo, was said to have been
12 kidnapped while motorboating and held six days until he paid a 2, 500, 000-lire
13 ransom. When released he asked for safe conduct, only to be told that the
14 (133)
15 gangs could no longer guarantee protection as they operated independently.
16
17

18 19 20 2. Popular Report as a Means of Identifying a Mafia Operation

21
22 In the absence of precise criteria established by a thorough
23 investigation of the Mafia by a competent investigative agency, a task
24 which has not been consummated to this day, details of Mafia operations have
25
26 perennally been identified by means of popular report, "common knowledge,"
27
28 opinion, hypothesis, the "educated guess," fragmentary deductions, and incomplete
29
30 conclusions of the Italian police authorities and others who have come to grips
31
32 with the Mafia over a period of many years.
33
34
35
36

37
38 This situation, though unconscionable to all who are deeply concerned
39
40 with the Mafia threat, carries within it a potential means to its own, at least
41
42 partial, solution. Popular report, opinion, and hypothesis were perhaps of more
43
44 value in identifying a Mafia operation than they ordinarily appear to be with
45
46 reference to pinpointing a subversive operation or a criminal conspiracy of
47
48 another type. Why is this so? There are two related reasons: (1) one of the
49
50 Mafia's chief instrumentalities of crime was its reputation, a reputation which
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

it brought home most precisely to the public itself; and (2) the Mafia tended to
keep a monopoly of its useful reputation. In the first instance, the Mafia
used its terror-inspiring reputation to apply political and other pressure, to
dominate all forms of opposition both criminal and legitimate, and to enforce
compliance from its victims. Public opinion could not fail to be aware of the
Mafia under such circumstances. In the second instance, the Mafia reputation
was jealously monopolized by the Mafia. We have seen in the Mafia operations
of the 1920's and 1930's that the interloper who tried to use the Mafia reputation
to enforce his own demands was eliminated. While this monopoly may have
been strained due to dislocations during the War years, there were indications
that efforts were being made by the Mafia to retain it.

Under circumstances such as these, with the Mafia depending in
great part on rule-by-reputation, the public's opinion had special meaning.
Moreover, the Mafia's efforts to delimit the use of this reputation to its own
elements tended to narrow the chances for error in the opinion held by the
public.

The importance of public report and, even, opinion under circumstances
such as these should be a clear indication to all investigative personnel that
personal convictions concerning the existence of the Mafia should not be quickly

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10 labelled "opinion," and swept into the discard. Few sources will be found, after
11 all, who can articulately describe the basis for their convictions of the existence
12 of the Mafia. Sicilian background or acquaintance with Sicilian customs on the
13 part of the source should be a flag to the investigator that the source may be
14 cognizant of Mafia operations in a manner not easily explained to a non-Sicilian.
15 Patience is required, and the realization that the perspective of that source may
16 very well be only a partial view of the Mafia considered as a whole, but an
17 essential one for the eventual piecing together of the entire picture of the Mafia.
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

27
28 D, 1945: Civil Disorders; Rise of Giuliano; Mafia Control of Criminal
29 Activities; Mafia "Timelessness"
30

31 1. Civil Disorders
32

33 The years 1944 and 1945 were a time of widespread disorders in
34 Sicily, some of them attributed to the Mafia. Uprisings were reported in
35 Palazzo-Adriano; in Catania; in Ragusa; and in the Agrigento Province, with
36 (134, 135)
37 many casualties experienced. The Mafiosi of the towns of Naro and Palma
38 Montechiaro took advantage of communist-inspired ill-humor in those areas
39 to encourage open revolts, and in the course of the revolts committed robberies,
40 lootings, and the wholesale murders of the male members of certain families
41 (135; 136)
42 which had been marked for extinction.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 2. The Rise of Giuliano; Mafia Control of Criminal Activities

10 The Mafia attempted to absorb and control the widespread
11 delinquency experienced throughout the island during the War period in order
12 (136)
13 to perpetuate its traditional monopoly of criminal activities. The case of
14 the notorious bandit Salvatore Giuliano has been cited as an example. Giuliano
15 is said to have been groomed and aided by the Mafia, which took a cut of 10
16 (137)
17 per cent of his profits as he expanded his operations.

18 Giuliano first became prominent in 1945, and through a five-year
19 career of murder and banditry acquired world-wide notoriety. His career
20 was cut short by the Mafia when he exceeded all limitations and apparently
21 began to slip from Mafia control. The Mafia is accused of having engineered
22 his death in 1950 and in doing so to have revealed that in cases involving Mafia
23 discipline the code of omerta may be expediently abrogated. Giuliano is said
24 to have been betrayed to the police by whom he was slain in a final gun battle.
25 Another Mafia technique was said to have been revealed in the elimination of
26 Giuliano's actual betrayer, thus providing an ostensible righteousness to the
27 (138)
28 whole affair in line with the underworld code.

29 3. Mafia "Timelessness"

30 Numerous accounts were written in 1945 stressing the apparent
31 timelessness of the Mafia, pointing out that the campaign of the Italian

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 authorities against the Mafia between the two World Wars obviously had not
12 (139)
13 crushed the Mafia. These comments were strongly reminiscent of another such
14
15 comment made in the American press in October, 1890, over a half century
16
17 previously, in which it was observed with some surprise that the Mafia was
18
19 again active despite assurances by the Italian authorities during the previous
20
21 summer that at long last the Mafia had been destroyed. (140)
22
23

24 Benito Mussolini had himself been forced at last to concede that the
25
26 struggle against the Mafia would not cease until the traditions of the Mafia had
27
28 vanished from the minds of Sicilians. The events of 1945 revealed that these
29
30 traditions were being constantly refreshed. (141)
31
32

33 The Mafia thus had acquired in the eyes of its observers over many
34
35 decades the timelessness of tradition, and in the opinion of many, the resiliency
36
37 of an institution.
38

39
40 E. 1945-49: Mafia Adaptability

41
42 1. Support of Expedient Causes

43
44 a. Political Separatism

45
46 During the postwar period a political movement aimed at separation of
47
48 Sicily from Italy attracted many thousands of adherents throughout the island.
49

50 The Mafia was reported to have been deeply involved for its own purposes, of
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10 course, which included the expansion of its own brand of control and the
11 consolidation of its system of "stiletto justice."^(142, 143)
12

13
14
15 b. Status Quo of Economic Structure
16

17 In 1947 it was indicated the Mafia took up the cause of the wealthy
18 landowners in the struggle against land reform. Once again, the Mafia
19 supported a cause that was expedient, and in this case mandatory for its
20 survival, for the projected breaking up of the landed estates would have meant
21 disaster for its centuries-old protection racket. Sicilian communist leaders
22 charged the Mafia with having murdered seven labor leaders in three months
23 to discourage the land-reform movement.⁽⁶²⁻⁷⁵¹⁴⁷⁻³⁷⁻⁸¹⁾
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 2. Hydra-Headed Manifestations
34

35 The expedient methods used by Mafiosi to group themselves for
36 specific ventures or to meet specific threats to their over-all domination of
37 crime and life generally in Sicily revealed themselves in hydra-headed
38 manifestations. The war years had seen the Mafia operating in an apparently
39 free-style manner with gangs perpetrating their violent crimes in virtually
40 autonomous fashion. Smash the gangs, it would seem, and the Mafia was
41 finished. Observers looked the other way, however, to see another face of
42 Mafia, the streamlined organization of the black-market monopoly, with its
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 chiefs and subchiefs. Now in the postwar years, with the black-market rings
10
11 apparently accounted for, still another countenance appeared, more formidable
12
13 than its predecessors.
14

15 The Mafia that effected considerable consolidation of its forces to
16
17 smash the land-reform program was called the "New Mafia." It was composed
18
19 of elements of the traditional Mafia reinforced by Army deserters; robber gangs
20
21 not originally Mafiosi but born in the confusion of the War; extremist separatists;
22
23 and, some assert, deportees and other criminal elements returned from
24
25 America, who tried to impose themselves as leaders of the expanded Mafia.
26
27

28 The "New Mafia," with its increasing know-how in the field of
29
30 racketeering and political pressures found itself able to have adherents elected
31
32 to the National Constituent Assembly in Rome. Such Mafia delegates placed
33
34 themselves on the tickets of parties for which they had no particular affection
35
36 in order to extend Mafia influence. The tentacles of the Mafia reached out to
37
38 extend into the police force and to wrap themselves about provincial and
39
40 (62-75147-37-81)
41 municipal authorities as well.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 XII. THE MAFIA OF THE PRESENT
12
13

14 The Mafia Exists in Sicily
15

16 Before considering the Mafia of the present in Sicily it may be
17
18 profitable to set the record straight on the existence of the Mafia in Sicily.
19
20 An on-the-spot study made by a highly responsible arm of the United States
21
22 Government located in Sicily in late 1955 confirmed the existence of the Mafia
23
24 (100-42303-306 encl.)
25 beyond the shadow of a doubt. The Italian authorities as this is being written
26 (100-42303-269, 295)
27 have stated their convictions that the Mafia exists, as do other authorities. The
28
29 only denials of Mafia existence appear to arise from (1) certain politicians and
30
31 others with vested interests in denying the existence of the Mafia; (2) observers
32
33 who are unenlightened concerning the distinctions between the Mafia and
34
35 organized crime generally; (3) Mafia themselves when questioned by the
36
37 authorities; and (4) some Italians, especially Sicilians, who seem to be
38
39 ashamed of the fact that members of their race constitute the Mafia.
40
41
42

43 The perseverance of the so-called "Feudal Mafia" on the landed
44
45 estates of Sicily was confirmed by the study made in late 1955. In addition,
46
47 more recent observations have indicated additional divisions of the Mafia in
48
49 Sicily. In the Palermo area, for example, there are groupings known as the
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

"Mafia of the Gardens," the "Mafia of the Docks," and the "Mafia of the Markets" in the Aspromonte hills of Calabria and elsewhere, there are Mafia-subsidized bandit gangs which turn over a percentage of their profits to the Mafia.

The problem is not whether the Mafia exists--but rather (1) what it is, (2) what it does, and (3) what can be done about it.

B. Summary of Recent Developments concerning the Mafia

1. The Mafia and the Smuggling of Narcotics

Publicity concerning the Mafia's role in the smuggling of narcotics into the United States reached its zenith in the 1950's. Actually the Mafia had acquired its monopoly of this racket through a long, deadly, but unpublicized struggle launched as far back in the past as the late 19th Century. About 1895, for example, the Mafia is known to have set up a recently arrived Sicilian immigrant to the United States in an olive oil importing business in order to smuggle narcotics into the United States. The narcotics were concealed in casks of the drums of oil arriving from Sicily. (100-42303-282, p. 4)

In 1930, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics of the U.S. Treasury Department was organized. Shortly thereafter, narcotics agents in tracing the illicit drug traffic from the peddler to his ultimate source came upon the

2
3
4
5
6
7 Mafia and found it to have the monopoly of a drug smuggling racket that
8 stretched across the Atlantic to origins in Sicily and Italy. At the Sicilian-
9
10 Italian end of the axis, in the 1950's, were found such deported gangsters as
11
12 Francisco Coppola, Serafino Mancuso, and Salvatore Lucania (Lucky Luciano);
13
14 as well as the former narcotics fugitive Settimo (Sam) Accardi, all identified
15
16 by the Narcotics Bureau as prominent Mafiosi. (145)
17
18

19
20
21 2. The Increasing Importance of the Industrial and Commercial Mafia
22 and the Decline of the "Classical" Mafia
23

24 The "classical" Mafia, also known as the "Feudal Mafia," operated
25
26 on the great landed estates in Sicily, and still does. It has been largely
27
28 dependent, economically, upon the landowner and his gabellotto, the entrepreneur
29
30 who rented the estate from the landowner and sublet it to tenant farmers. The
31
32 gabellotto used the Mafia to guarantee peaceful operation of his lands. When the
33
34 feudal landed aristocracy was molding the environment, the Mafia clung to it
35
36 parasitically as the outstanding source of money and power. Times are
37
38 changing in Sicily however. Industrial and commercial activities are increasing.
39
40 Moreover, some top-echelon Mafiosi themselves have become money people.
41
42 Thus, while the Mafia still operates on the landed estates in more or less the
43
44 same fashion as it has for centuries, the Mafia is also pursuing another path,
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 trying to join and control the industrial and commercial activity where it is
12 (100-42303-306, p. 32-33)
13 taking the place of the landowner.
14

15 The commercial activity of Sicily is centered in the island's
16 capital, Palermo. Palermo has become the scene of Mafia rivalry,
17 principally between modernized gangs operating in the dock and market areas
18 of the city. Whereas clashes occurred in the countryside between rival
19 territorial gangs of the classical Mafia of the 1920's and 1930's, with homicides
20 reaching fantastic proportions, similar clashes have occurred more recently in
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29 - the Palermo market area.
30

(146)

31 Thus the scene of operations has shifted somewhat in Sicily, though
32
33 the basic motive and modus operandi of the Mafia have remained the same: to
34
35 dominate criminal operations for the fat profits they provide, and to accomplish
36
37 this domination by terror and force.
38

39 C. Basic Features of the Present-Day Mafia

40 1. Foreword

41
42
43
44
45 An interpretation of the nature, modus operandi, and forms assumed
46
47 by the present-day Mafia in Sicily follows. Views upon which this interpretation
48
49 was based were obtained from a variety of sources, chiefly Sicilian and Italian,
50
51 and were limited in the main to the most recent majority views.
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 A fresh interpretation will of course be required in the future as

12
13 (3) the Mafia adapts itself to changing conditions of environment in Sicily,
14
15 and (2) some investigative agency at least has succeeded in placing reliable
16
17 informants within the Mafia groupings themselves.
18

19
20 2. Definition

21
22 The Mafia in Sicily in 1953 is a fluid power pyramid of officially
23
24 unrecognized but powerful politico-criminal bosses with their influential
25
26 connections and their criminal bands and retainers who enter into expedient
27
28 conspiracies of varying duration, organization, and size; practice the Mafia
29
30 customs of protective silence, vendetta, murder, extortion, putting in fear,
31
32 collecting tribute, smuggling, kidnapping, robbery, and other crimes; and
33
34 seek to dominate crime and to acquire behind-the-scenes control of justice,
35
36 outwitting, commerce, and politics, for the power, profit, and prestige to be
37
38 derived therefrom.
39
40

41
42 3. Associative Tie

43
44 The Maffiosi in Sicily are drawn together by family tradition,
45
46 family connection, and/or a common desire for the illicit profits, prestige,
47
48 dominating power, and protection to be acquired by affiliation with the
49
50 Mafia society.
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 **Basic Philosophy**

12
13 On analyzing all the main aspects of the Mafia, the philosophy of this
14
15 criminal group may be summed up in the following statements:
16

- 17 1. Public justice is a myth.
- 18 2. There is no such thing as impersonal justice between man and man.
- 19 3. Law enforcement is perpetually abusive, ineffective, and
- 20 corruptible.
- 21 4. It is not only futile and wrong to turn to the law and its enforcers
- 22 for help or to give them information that will help in the detection,
- 23 of crimes but it is traitorous and punishable by death.
- 24 5. Private revenge (vendetta) is the only honorable justice; and this
- 25 right should be reserved to the victim, or if he dies, to his family
- 26 or close friends.
- 27 6. The human environment is basically unfriendly and exploitative.
- 28 7. The laws of God and the constituted authority of man are inferior
- 29 to private authority and power.
- 30 8. Success in life depends upon the domination by the strong and
- 31 masterful of the weak, the helpless, and all opposition.
- 32 9. Protection from unfriendly forces in the environment, especially
- 33 the law, demands a conspiracy of silence.
- 34 10. A man's effectiveness in life depends upon his capacity to summon
- 35 force, influence, patronage, and the strongest, cleverest, and
- 36 most absolute authority.
- 37 11. Protection demands placing oneself in a position of solidarity with
- 38 such absolute authority locally.
- 39 12. Such absolute authority is represented in the body, and especially
- 40 in the chief, of those who hold these beliefs most strongly,
- 41 practice them most extremely, and form in effect a super-
- 42 government, i.e., the Mafia.
- 43
- 44
- 45
- 46
- 47

48 Holding to these beliefs as principles, the Mafiosi arrogate to themselves
49
50 the power to act as judge and jury; pass sentence of death; demand and receive
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 tribute; impose their will upon others; and have their will accepted as the
12
13 supreme authority in spite of and in preference to all existing laws of God
14
15 and man.

16
17 5. Laws of the Mafia

18
19 More generally recognized than the Mafia philosophy are the laws
20
21 which the Mafia operates day by day. All Mafiosi know them:

- 22
23
24 1. To be apprised of criminal operations in the community, and
25 to dominate over the criminals for a cut of the profits or the
26 taking over of the most lucrative operations.
27 2. To be absolutely silent about any crime witnessed, no matter
28 who commits it.
29 3. To refrain from informing the authorities about crimes that are
30 committed. Instead, the Mafioso should be always ready to
31 confuse the issue by giving false testimony.
32 4. To sell protection to the rich.
33 5. To resist public authority under the pretext of wanting to
34 avoid the laws of an immoral and usurping government (thus
35 perpetuating the traditional excuse for the Mafia).
36 6. To show "courage" by carrying weapons, by knifing people, or
37 shooting them from ambush.
38 7. To feign forgiveness for an offense so that revenge can be
39 taken at an opportune time and place.
40 8. To personally avenge personal offenses. Currently these can
41 include almost any offense, not only traditional "affairs of
42 honor."
43 9. To be overbearing in every manner as a means of dominating
44 persons and situations.

45
46
47
48 6. Administration

49
50 7. Over-All Administration

51
52 The Mafia is not known to have a fixed hierarchy of leadership or
53
54 formal centralization of authority in one single controlling organization. Instead,
55

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 it depends for its administrative machinery above the local level upon the existing
12 relationships among local chiefs who, as a practical matter, are usually either
13 collaborating with each other; vying for the control of territories; or feuding, as
14 expediency, ambition, vendetta or the conflict of interests may dictate.
15
16
17
18

19
20 Closer coordination of local chiefs is sometimes effected under certain
21 conditions, such as: (1) for collusion in a lucrative criminal venture extending
22 beyond the borders of a particular locality; (2) for mutual protection and
23 assistance in the event of a common danger, such as opposition from the police;
24 and (3) for the holding of court in the event of major questions concerning the
25 division of territories or a decision concerning the fate of one of their peers who
26 must be disciplined.
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34

35 In addition to the lateral relationships among local chiefs, there is
36 reason to believe that there is a network of relationships leading upwards from
37 each of them to prominent Mafiosi who have attained greater prestige and
38 influence, especially those in political, professional, and business positions.
39 The latter can be turned to for protection in high places and, no doubt, for general
40 intelligence concerning Mafia operations, and for information upon which
41 particular criminal ventures can be launched.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 b. Leadership and Chain of Command

12
13 Leaders or chiefs of the Mafia are not, as a rule, elected either locally
14
15 above the local level, but achieve positions of importance when they can
16
17 command respect from other Mafiosi. This comes about from growing power
18
19 and success and, more significantly, from the fear they are able to instill if their
20
21 wishes are not complied with.

22
23 The local chiefs often are men with no visible connection with the crimes
24
25 they authorize and derive profit from. They generally have considerable local
26
27 prestige, and are not only deferred to by the local Mafiosi but are sought out by
28
29 others in the community for aid in recovering stolen property, for decision in a
30
31 local dispute, for permission to take certain action in the community, or for the
32
33 assistance of their patronage and influence in a particular venture. In the latter
34
35 respect, the local Mafia chief operates a jealously guarded system of patronage
36
37 in his territory, much as a "ward heeler" might in our country, and in turn
38
39 defers to and seeks the patronage of more prominent Mafiosi who outrank him
40
41 in prestige, such as those who may be found in Palermo.

42
43
44
45
46
47 c. Family Connections as a Means for Establishing and Consolidating
48
49 Power

50 In a society where an entire family can be wiped out in a vendetta, a
51
52 strong and extended family is mandatory for survival. Such implicit life insurance
53
54

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 as revealed in the size and strength of one's family can be, and usually is, built
12 up through judicious intermarriages between elements of strong Mafia families.

13
14
15 Each intermarriage is also a means of establishing and consolidating
16 personal power in the Mafia, and thus become a technique that, along with the
17 custom of acquiring "godsons," is practiced by the ambitious Mafia chief.

18
19
20
21 d. Headquarters

22
23 While not maintaining a specific central headquarters, the Mafia chiefs
24 use certain places for conveniences of the sinister Mafia court. As explained
25 above, high-level meetings are infrequent, though when they do occur they are
26 said to take place there days in hotels, chiefly in Palermo, in contrast with the
27 more austere surroundings of the Santa Maria al Borgo fruit warehouses of
28 Palermo which were formerly used for this purpose.
29
30
31
32
33 (147)
34
35
36
37

38 e. Local Meetings

39
40 Meetings at the local level are also on a restricted basis, being held
41 ordinarily for the purpose of planning a robbery, kidnapping, or other crime;
42 for dividing spoils; or for planning retaliation against someone who has broken
43 silence, informed, or otherwise has antagonized the local Mafia group.
44
45
46
47
48

49 f. Becoming Affiliated

50
51 The most common method by which a person acquires membership in
52 the Mafia is by being "brought into it." The young man assumes a Mafia role in muc
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 the same manner as the sons of men in the respected professions are most
12
13 readily accepted in their fathers' professions.
14

15 Special calls and rituals are not generally required for acceptance
16
17 to the Mafia in Sicily. Three prerequisites exist: (1) the Mafia aspirant
18
19 must not have divulged any helpful information whatever to the police concerning
20
21 crimes; (2) he must be considered a "respected man," i. e., having rendered
22
23 great service to the Mafia, having killed someone, having participated in a
24
25 kidnapping or extortion operation, or in some other manner having demonstrated
26
27 manifest capacity for ruthless crime; and (3) he must be sponsored by a Mafioso,
28
29 known as his "godfather."
30
31

32 The induction procedure is simple: the aspirant's "godfather"
33
34 recommends him to the local Mafia chief. The decision is up to the chief. If
35
36 he decides in favor of the candidate, the latter is irrevocably a Mafioso.
37
38 Death is his only way out. The decision is made quickly, and if accepted
39
40 the new Mafioso makes his status known right away to other Mafiosi in the
41
42 locality. (149)
43
44

45 46 47 2. Recognition of Members 48

49 The Mafiosi refer to themselves as "the friends." They seldom
50
51 refer to the "Mafia" as such. The salutation "Fraternal Friend" has been
52
53 used by Mafiosi in correspondence with each other.
54
55

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 Other than these methods of mutual recognition, little more is needed.
12
13 Most fellow conspirators know each other. No universal recognition signs made
14
15 with gestures are known to exist.
16

17
18 h. Discipline
19

20 The Mafia code of discipline is the unwritten code of omerta, which
21 broadly speaking means solidarity against the law, and "honor among thieves."
22 Giving information to law enforcement officers is the most heinous crime in the
23 code, and is punishable by death. Other derelictions, for example, dishonesty
24 in dividing spoils, failure to comply with a Mafia agreement or to fulfil an
25 assigned obligation, or failure to comply with a judgment of a Mafia court can
26 also mean assassination. Breeding authority is likewise considered a capital
27 offence.
28

29 In the meeting of "justice" the assassin chosen for the task is sometimes
30 assassinated in turn to reduce the chances of detection.
31

32
33 7. Modus Operandi
34

35 The chief modus operandi of the Mafia is the acquisition of dominion
36 over all criminal operations through the elimination or cowing of other criminal
37 gangs by murder, and terrorizing, and the control of legitimate business
38 operations of the community, for the joint aim of power and a cut of all profits,
39 criminal and otherwise.
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 The operation of the protection racket is handled by collection of
12
13 tribute for alleged protection in the name of the "friends" or in the extortion
14
15
16 te followed by a visit from the "friends."

17
18 Behind-the-scenes opportunities for graft and corruption through the
19
20 application of Mafia pressure are preferred almost exclusively to the taking of
21
22 public responsibility, and the Mafia sponsors candidates for election to insure
23
24
25 elligation and acquire a hold over public officials.

26
27 Weapons used in committing crimes vary, though the shotgun has
28
29 often been used, and the knife has been virtually standard equipment.
30

31 8. Criminal Activities

32
33 Criminal activities attributed to the Mafia are of a wide range, though
34
35 the most common of them include murder, extortion, the protection racket,
36
37 kidnapping, robbery, smuggling, and theft. Generally speaking, the Mafioso
38
39 selects the most lucrative field of crime, whatever it may comprise at the
40
41 moment. Thus the smuggling of narcotics has attracted many Mafiosi.
42

43 9. Mafia Gangs

44 a. The Feudal or Village Mafia

45
46
47 In the western part of the Island of Sicily the feudal or village Mafia
48
49
50 is still an institution. The feudal estates lying about the small villages are
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8 managed by the gabellotti. They often belong to or at least have access to the
9 Mafia in order to control the labor situation, to extort privileges from the
10
11
12
13 landowner, et cetera.
14

15 The local Mafia chief has the power to keep order or to unleash
16
17 destruction and crime on the estates nearby. To keep him friendly, the landlord
18
19 pays him for protection and offers him opportunities for contacts and friendships
20
21 with important people of the upper class and good connections with the political
22
23 machine.
24
25
26

27 The hold which the Mafia chief has over the landowner can be illustrated
28 (100-42303-306, encl. p. 18)
29 with a typical example: The landowner, "Mr. A," may decide to sell a piece of
30
31 his land, or to enter into some other economic transaction. The Mafia chief,
32
33 whose business it is to keep informed of all intended transactions by means of a
34
35 reliable grapevine, will go to "Mr. A" and offer his "services," saying he has the
36
37 right person for "A" to sell to or to transact his other business with. If "Mr. A"
38
39 refuses the Mafioso's services, thefts will occur within the next few days from
40
41 his estate. "Mr. A" will usually get the point, ask the Mafia leader for his
42
43 suggestion, and comply with it. If he does not, and reports the matter to the
44
45 police or goes ahead with his own plans, someone close to him is found dead,
46
47 and other crimes occur on the estate. Even if the landowner complies
48
49
50
51
52

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 After the first thefts, the opportunity is not wasted by the Mafia leader, for
12
13 approach the law enforcement and asks for money for the boys to cure their
14
15 same at his side does the criminal acts and to prove that no grudge is held.
16
17
18 Some of the more highly organized of the feudal Mafia groups had
19
20 and in some cases still have) an understood organization, though in no known
21
22 uses a written or openly accepted form of hierarchy. There is a head man
23
24 known as a capo famiglia (head of the family) who is recognized as head of the
25
26 group because of his age, intelligence, past activity and experience. He may
27
28 have a helper. Below them are small groups of Mafiosi, usually groups of
29
30 about ten each, over each of which there is another petty leader. In any
31
32 community, the whole Mafia group is numerically small and has seldom reached
33
34 high as 20 members. The direct influence of the capo famiglia may be
35
36 confined to one community or several, depending upon his degree of prestige
37
38 and power. Everywhere his influence reaches, all common criminals, whether
39
40 Mafiosi or not, are available for instructions by him, and comply unhesitatingly
41
42
43
44
45 out of their fear of him.

46
47 The top Mafioso in any district today is generally known by his
48
49 prestige and reputation. He can and does select certain political candidates

50
51 his support, and even while incarcerated can keep his contacts and
52
53
54
55

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 This kind of Mafia is losing ground as the landowner's importance in the
12 economic picture decreases. The Mafia chief still can be found in the countryside,
13 however, and still can offer blocks of votes to whatever candidate makes him the
14 best offer in terms of patronage and other favors. (100-42303-306 encl. p. 33)
15
16
17
18

19
20 b. Rival Mafia Gangs

21 The Mafia in the city of Favara, in the Province of Agrigento of western
22 Sicily, offers a good example of the basically autonomous nature of local Mafia
23 gangs. Favara is a city of about 25,000 people. Two Mafia gangs vie for
24 supremacy in this city, one called the "Vine Leaves," and the other, the "Flat
25 Tails." Murders occur continually as these gangs clash over territorial rights.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

31
32
33 c. Illiteracy, Superstition, and Poverty Aid the Mafia

34 In Palma Montechiaro, a town in the Province of Agrigento, the Mafia
35 is strongly favored in its development and continued hold over the population by
36 illiteracy, superstition, and poverty.
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

Encouraging the illiteracy of the populace and utilizing their
superstitions and dependence upon tradition, the Mafia keeps its own tradition
foremost and prevents awareness of anything better than Mafia domination.
Poverty produces innumerable recruits from which the Mafia can select
adherents.

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 d. Stresses in the Mafia Prevent Complete Consolidation

12
13 Mafiosi of the town of Siculiana in southern Sicily are closely related
14
15 to the Mafiosi of nearby Cattolica Eraclea, and of Montallegro, another
16
17 neighboring town. It might be expected from this that considerable potential
18
19 existed for consolidation of Mafia power in organized form throughout the
20
21 entire area enclosed by this triangle of relationships. The situation is
22
23 confused, however, and complete consolidation (which is not a traditional
24
25 feature of the Mafia, at any rate) is prevented definitely by the presence of
26
27 not one, but two Mafia gangs in each of these towns, and a constant power
28
29 struggle between these pairs of gangs for criminal supremacy. Added to the
30
31 factor of vendetta, which makes for constant tension even within a particular
32
33 group of Mafiosi, the basic operating principle of domineering, so characteristic
34
35 of the individual Mafioso and of any particular group to which he belongs, acts
36
37 in circumstances in which the Mafia generally has a monopoly control over
38
39 crime in a particular community to prevent ultimate consolidation into a vast,
40
41 totally organized group of criminal despots.
42
43
44
45
46

47 e. Mafia Groups in the Palermo Area

48
49 (1) Three General Groupings

50
51 Three general groupings of Mafiosi are said to exist in the Palermo
52
53 area: the so-called "Mafia of the Gardens"; "Mafia of the Docks"; and "Mafia
54
55 of the Markets."
56
57
58

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 (2) The Mafia of the Gardens
12

13 The Mafiosi belonging to the group known as the "Mafia of the Gardens"
14
15 operate in the hinterland around Palermo, where by extortion and patronage they
16
17 have seized monopoly control over the most precious of the farmer's prerequisite
18
19 for operation: the water supply. The Mafia distributes water to those who submit
20
21 to the imposition of a "tax" that makes the price of the water exorbitant. Water
22
23 is withheld from those who cannot or will not pay tribute to the Mafia, leading to
24
25 ruined orchards and the loss of entire harvests.
26
27

28
29 (3) The Mafia of the Docks
30

31 The "Mafia of the Docks" is a term used to describe the Mafiosi who
32
33 have acquired a virtual monopoly of every form of racket on the docks of Palermo,
34
35 one of the most important of Sicily's ports. This Mafia grouping is a new
36
37 species of Mafia organized along modern gangster methods. The Mafiosi of the
38
39 dock group serve chiefs that are younger than the average Mafia leader (the
40
41 latter are generally middle-aged or older). Instead of handling assassinations,
42
43 through local help, they tend to import hired assassins from out of town to
44
45 perform the task of keeping competitive groups under control.
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

2
3
4
5
6
7
8 The dockside Mafia extorts from the day laborers, making them "kick
9
10 back" part of their wages to work on the docks. It forces acceptance by the
11
12 various industries involved on the docks of only those supplies that are furnished
13
14 by merchants who have a percentage contract with the Mafia. In addition,
15
16 controlling the docks as it does, the Mafia is able to control smuggling in and
17
18 out of the important port of Palermo.
19

20
21 (4) The Mafia of the Markets
22

23 The so-called "Mafia of the Markets" is a group of only about a
24
25 hundred Mafiosi who are assisted by a large number of strong-arm men,
26
27 bodyguards, and assassins. The Mafiosi deal with the wholesalers in fruit,
28
29 meat, contraband cigarettes, beer, soft drinks, and many other products,
30
31 taking a cut of all profits in the sale of these items under the guise of
32
33 middlemen. They have in this way gained control of almost all of the city's
34
35 food supply, and have the most lucrative racket of all the Mafia groups. The
36
37 control of a few Mafiosi over the economic fortunes of thousands of people
38
39 can be readily seen in the fact that Palermo is a city of a half-million people.
40
41

42 Like Mafia groups everywhere, these Palermo groups struggle for
43
44 economic supremacy among themselves, leading to gang killings that are
45
46 spectacular. There is observable among these groups however, in spite
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 of this rivalry, a strange tie that appears always to link Mafia groups more
12
13 strongly than appears to be the case between any of these groups and gangs
14
15 of non-Mafiosi.
16

17 Many of the Mafiosi of the docks and markets are said to be deportees
18
19 from the United States.
20

21
22
23 10. Relationships between the Mafia in Sicily and Mafiosi in the
24 United States
25

26 The Mafia gangs of the docks and the markets, while retaining basic
27
28 Mafia traits, tend to display more of the characteristics of American gangs than
29
30 the rural Mafia groups generally display. This has been explained as the result
31
32 of a vicious circle: the taking of the Mafia system to America from Sicily in the
33
34 many waves of immigration that have occurred since the middle of the 19th Century;
35
36 the modification of Mafia in the United States, and the return of certain Mafia,
37
38 déportees from America after they have acquired more sophisticated methods of
39
40 operation through their experience in the American rackets.
41
42

43
44 Whether or not this position is wholly correct, the frequent immigration
45
46 of Mafiosi to the United States is a historical fact. Beginning around the 1860's,
47
48 Mafiosi immigrated to America occasionally to escape prosecution or to seek
49
50 greener fields for exploitation. Such opportunities were to be found in the new
51
52 colonies of Sicilian and Italian immigrants that had reached vast proportions in
53
54

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

New Orleans, New York, and other port cities of the United States prior to the
turn of the century. (100-42303-317 p. 13)
A number of Mafiosi fled Sicily for America in the 1920's
during the campaign of the Italian authorities against the Mafia.

In the recent rash of published statements concerning the Mafia by
journalists and other observers in America, a number of assertions have been
made that the Mafia "world headquarters" is in Sicily. To justify such
assertions, it would doubtless be necessary to demonstrate: (1) a compactly
organized Mafia system in Sicily, itself, responsible to a definite governing
board; (2) a speedy and uniform communications network spanning the Atlantic
to America and other Mafia-infested areas; and (3) some evidence of the
moving of vast illicit fortunes from America and other countries in which
Mafiosi may be found, into the hands of a few top-echelon Mafiosi in Sicily.
Available data concerning the Mafia at this time fail to indicate that such is
the case. A more likely possibility appears to be that some degree of
coordination does take place between Mafiosi in Sicily and those in the United
States (as, for example, in the illicit narcotics traffic) though, as in the
traditional operation of the Mafia in Sicily itself, it is probable that there
is no single, centralized organization administering the extensive activities
of all Mafia elements wherever they may be found.

2
3
4
5
6
7
8 Some, and perhaps extensive, coordination between the Mafia in
9
10 Sicily and Mafia elements in the United States is indicated in the frequent
11
12 visits of Mafiosi and suspected Mafiosi residing in the United States to confer
13
14 with Mafiosi in Sicily. The visits of Carmine Galante and Giuseppe (Joe) Bonanno
15
16 to Palermo, Sicily, in September, 1957, have been viewed with
17
18 considerable interest in the light of their indicated attendance at the
19
20 notorious convention of hoodlums at Apalachin, New York, on November 14, 1957
21
22 (100-42303-282 [REDACTED] 1/14/58)
23 b7D
24 An informant has recently furnished data tending to indicate that the
25
26 Mafia in Sicily is well informed on the activities of its American counterpart,
27
28 receiving at least a portion of this intelligence through visits of American Mafios
29
30 to Sicily. Correspondence between Mafiosi in Sicily and the United States has
31
32 been uncovered by the Federal Narcotics Bureau, some of it couched in
33
34 veiled language reminiscent of the Aesopian language familiar to Bureau
35
36 personnel who have conducted extensive communist investigations. The term
37
38 -"Uncle Angelo," for example, has the meaning "the police"; and terms having
39
40 the meaning of the head of a factory indicate that the person being referred
41
42 to is a local Mafia chief.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

11. The Broad Picture

The Mafia in Sicily is an unofficial feudal system of power and patronage established and maintained by craft and force. It is a malignant throwback to the days of Niccolo Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia, many of whose principles it employs in modern dress. The scheming Maffiosi, wherever they may be found, silently arrogate to themselves on the one hand powers of government authority, such as regulation, patronage, and taxation, while on the other hand they rob the people and force themselves parasitically into the inner circles of the state.

Observers in recent years have pointed out that the Mafia no longer can claim even the miserable excuse for its existence it once held out to the people: the control of crime. While it is true that the Mafia controls crime in the sense that it dominates certain criminal operations wherever it can, it moderates the extent of crime only to the bearable limit, beyond which further trespass would mean either the destruction of the productive society upon which it depends for its parasitic living, or a popular rising against it in a wave of reprisal that would encompass the destruction of its elements.

SOURCES

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Chicago; London; Toronto: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Wm. Benton, Publisher, 1958) vol. 14, p. 619.
2. William Agnew Paton, Picturesque Sicily, (NYC: Harper & Bros., 1898) p. 361.
3. Cesare Mori, Con La Mafia Ai Ferri Corti (With the Mafia at the Range), (Verona, Italy: A. Mondadori, 1932) pp. 58-59.
4. The Columbia Encyclopedia (NYC: Columbia University Press, 1950) p. 1819.
5. Renato Candida, Questa Mafia (This Mafia), (Rome: S. Sciascia, 1956) pp. 53-54.
6. Candida, op. cit., pp. 55-57.
7. E. J. Hobsbawm, "Political Theory and the 'Mafia'", The Cambridge Journal, VII (Sept., 1954), p. 741.
8. William L. Langer, An Encyclopedia of World History, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952) p. 585.
9. Candida, op. cit., pp. 58-59.
10. Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 745.
11. The Encyclopedia Americana (New York, Chicago: Americana Corp., 1944) vol. 18, p. 112.
12. The Columbia Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 1195.
13. Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 744.
14. Ibid., p. 740.
15. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (NYC: Macmillan Co., 1937) vol. 10, pp. 36-38.

16. Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 741.
17. Candida, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
18. The Columbia Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 1819.
19. Candida, op. cit., p. 62.
20. Langer, op. cit., p. 658.
21. The Columbia Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 1819.
22. Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, Unabridged, (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam Company, 1956) p. 1478.
23. Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 620.
24. G. De Felice Giuffrida, Mafia e Delinquenza in Sicilia, (Mafia and Crime in Sicily) (Milan, Italy: Societa Editrice Lombarda, 1900) p. 19.
25. Webster's, loc. cit.
26. Candida, op. cit., p. 53.
27. Paton, op. cit., p. 359.
28. Charles William Heckethorne, The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries, (London: George Redway, 1897) vol. I, p. 279.
29. Paton, op. cit., p. 360.
30. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, loc. cit.
31. Paton, op. cit., p. 360.
32. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, loc. cit.
33. Candida, op. cit., p. 63.
34. Ibid.

- 2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
35. Candida, op. cit., p. 64.
36. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, loc. cit.
37. Ibid.
38. Candida, op. cit., pp. 133-135.
39. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, loc. cit.
40. Ibid.
41. The New York Times, October 20, 1890, p. 1.
42. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, loc. cit.
43. Ludovico Corrao, Mafia o Delinquenza Comune? (Mafia or Crime in General?) (Palermo: A. Renna, 1956) pp. 18-20.
44. Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 620.
45. Harpers Weekly, July 12, 1902, pp. 908-909.
46. Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 620.
47. Francis Marion Crawford, Southern Italy and Sicily and the Rulers of the South, (New York: The Macmillan Company, c. 1900) Vol. II, p. 365.
48. Paton, op. cit., p. 361.
49. Ibid., p. 362.
50. Ibid., p. 363.
51. Ibid., p. 362.
52. Ibid., p. 362.
53. Paton, op. cit., p. 366.
54. Ibid., p. 368.

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 55. Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 619.

10 56. Crawford, op. cit., p. 371.

11 57. Paton, op. cit., p. 367.

12 58. Crawford, op. cit., p. 370.

13 59. Ibid., p. 371.

14 60. Ibid., p. 371.

15 61. Paton, op. cit., p. 367.

16 62. Ibid.

17 63. Paton, op. cit., p. 368.

18 64. Crawford, op. cit., p. 371.

19 65. Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 741.

20 66. Candida, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

21 67. Mori, op. cit., pp. 51-55.

22 68. Harpers Weekly, loc. cit.

23 69. Mori, op. cit., pp. 51-55.

24 70. Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago and London: Encyclopaedia Britta
1947) vol. 20, p. 602ff.

25 71. Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, Old World Traits Transplanted
(New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1921) p. 247.

26 72. The New York Times, January 16, 1951, p. 28.

27 73. Candida, op. cit., p. 83.

28 74. Ibid., p. 84.

- 2
3
4
5
6
7 75. Ibid., p. 90.
8
9 76. Ibid.
10
11 77. Larger, op. cit., p. 989.
12
13 78. Mori, op. cit., p. 307.
14
15 79. The New York Times, May 2, 1929, p. 2.
16
17 80. Mori, op. cit., p. 301.
18
19 81. The New York Times, June 23, 1934, p. 30.
20
21 82. Ibid.
22
23 83. Analysis of the Hearing of April 15, 1934, Supreme Court of the
24 Kingdom of Italy, Second Penal Section, Register 10077 Relating
25 to the Cases of 119 Mafiosi. (Basic data was obtained by Federal
26 Narcotics Bureau from original court records.)
27
28 84. Candida, p. 93.
29
30 85. Ibid.
31
32 86. Encyclopedia Britannica, 1958, op. cit., p. 620.
33
34 87. Analysis of the Hearing of April 15, 1934, loc. cit.
35
36 88. Analysis of the Court Proceedings Against 153 Mafiosi at Assize
37 Court, Sciacca, Sicily, August 22, 1929. (Basic data was obtained
38 by Federal Narcotics Bureau from original court records.)
39
40 89. Mori, op. cit., pp. 71-74.
41
42 90. Ibid., p. 81.
43
44 91. Ibid.
45
46 92. Ibid.
47
48 93. Ibid.
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62

- 2
3
4
5
6
7 94. Ibid.
8
9 95. Ibid.
10
11 96. Ibid., p. 82.
12
13 97. Ibid.
14
15 98. Mori, op. cit., p. 85.
16
17 99. Ibid.
18
19 100. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
20
21 101. Ibid., pp. 89-90.
22
23 102. Analysis of the Hearing of April 15, 1934, loc. cit.
24
25 103. Analysis of the Proceedings at Sciaccia, loc. cit.
26
27 104. Mori, op. cit., pp. 84-85.
28
29 105. Ibid., p. 85.
30
31 106. Analysis of the Hearing of April 15, 1934, loc. cit.
32
33 107. Analysis of the Proceedings at Sciaccia, loc. cit.
34
35 108. Mori, op. cit., p. 91.
36
37 109. Ibid.
38
39 110. Ibid., p. 92.
40
41 111. Ibid.
42
43 112. Ibid., pp. 92-93.
44
45 113. Ibid., p. 96.
46
47 114. Ibid., p. 97.
48
49 115. Ibid., p. 98.
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62