

witness at Caruso's trial. Alianello declared that he had ten names cancelled from the list of condemned prisoners at the Fosse Ardeatine: two chosen at random and eight names of Jews. According to him, these eight Jews owed him their lives.

Debenedetti reconstructs Alianello's logic. Alianello wants to prove in the court of public opinion that he was one of the good guys. If the most characteristic connotation of Fascism was the persecution of Jews, he will offer the most incontrovertible connotation of antifascism: the protection of the Jews (p. 59). Debenedetti disqualifies this double game: you cannot transform black into white, massacre into magnanimity. A reflection, perhaps, also on the ineffectiveness of postwar justice and purge processes. Crimes against Jews became very difficult to prosecute after the amnesty issued by Minister of Justice Palmiro Togliatti in June 1946, and many criminals were not convicted.

La nave di Teseo's new edition of these two stories is welcome and necessary. Debenedetti's message is important today more than ever to fight resurgent racist discourse. The publishing house perhaps missed an opportunity to add to the tributes in the book one from a present-day historian: such an engagement would have further enhanced the long-standing documentary value of Debenedetti's book. Nevertheless, the edition is clear and easy to read, and the two tales are short and poignant, making the book a good educational tool for students.

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## ***The Many Meanings of Mina: Popular Music Stardom in Post-war Italy***

**by Rachel Haworth, Bristol, Intellect Press, 2022, xix + 240 pp., £80.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-789-38560-1**

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At the 2022 Sanremo Festival, there were at least two notable Mina-related events: the third night was opened by the host Amadeus paying tribute to Italian president Sergio Mattarella, sworn in for his second term that day. Amadeus recalled that Mattarella had attended the singer's legendary last concert in 1978. The tribute ended with the orchestra striking up Mina's 1962 hit, 'Grande, grande, grande'. This nod to the deep roots of Mina in Italian postwar history, through the fandom of the country's now-octogenarian president, was supplemented the next night when, among the artists performing covers, emerged the eventual winners Mahmood and Blanco. The young pair (Blanco was only 18) chose to perform Gino Paoli's 'Il cielo in una stanza', a huge hit for Mina in 1960. The emotional cover showed the enduring relevance of Mina, summed up by the spectacle of Gen Z icon Mahmood wearing a Fendi skirt and knee socks, singing one of the great songs of the Italian postwar songbook, at the nation's biggest national-popular event.

Rachel Haworth's monograph is the first substantial analysis of Mina's career, and builds on her longstanding work on the singer. It considers the multiple facets of Mina's star persona and the mechanisms of its construction over time, from her emergence in the late

1950s to the present. As such it addresses Christine Gledhill's classic 1991 division of the star's representation into 'persona', or the modes of projection of an authentic self, and 'image', or the construction of a star identity out of critical and fan discourse. As Haworth cogently argues, the Mina persona/image is the product of a series of conjunctures: the various mediums that made her famous (music recording, TV, film); discourses (press, gossip, scandal and fan discussions); and the conjuncture of history itself. Mina, to follow Richard Dyer's foundational articulation of the cultural power of the star, negotiates, and sometimes resolves, the ideological contradictions of her times. Mina's stardom both reflected and anticipated social and cultural changes, showing what was emerging in culture, but also modelling new types of youth and femininity.

The book is divided into chapters which, while broadly chronological, focus on a different key medium that shaped Mina's star persona, thus foregrounding the changing technologies of representation and media platforms that have constructed her as a trans-medial star, in Haworth's reading. The first chapter outlines the context in which Mina emerged as a pop star in the late 1950s; as well as the familiar narrative of the economic boom which drove new kinds of consumerism and a nascent youth culture, it emphasises the 'musicalisation' of postwar Italy and how new technologies like the jukebox, alongside radio and cinema, formed a sonic backdrop and site where cultural change was felt and transmitted. In Haworth's meticulous account, Mina's rise to fame at this time is no accident, but the product of this historical, cultural and technological conjuncture.

Chapter Two addresses Mina's early pop career through a discussion of her engagement with two different musical styles of the late 1950s – *urlò* and *canzone all'italiana*. It shows how the threat of Mina as an *urlatrice* – a genre borrowing from US rock n' roll and the source of moral panic in Italy – was ultimately defused by her presentation as a girl-next-door and by her participation in Sanremo. Chapter Three extends this analysis by focusing on the *musicarelli* films she made between 1959 and 1963. Analysis of her performances in these ten films addressed to a new youth audience, and how they are constructed visually and sonically, shows both how she often featured as herself in order to authenticate the films' diegetic world, and how she was used as a character to blur the lines between character and star. Haworth suggests that these appearances align with the function of Mina's star persona in the 1960s, to reconcile tradition and modernity, innovation and familiarity.

Chapter Four examines the press scandal of 1963 when Mina became pregnant out of wedlock to her still-married boyfriend Corrado Pani. While the scandal was an element out of her control and diffused her image as transgressive, to the extent that RAI banned her, Haworth shows how ultimately Mina wrested back this out-of-control star image: she was presented as redeemed via motherhood, a narrative she helped shape by releasing carefully selected photographs. To scandal was added tragedy when her brother died, but Haworth demonstrates how this private tragedy also showed off the new kind of Italian family she had built. Both events brought to the fore both her vulnerability and her resilience, arguably the keys to her image.

Chapters Five and Six focus on her television appearances in the 1960s and 1970s: television was a powerful ideological and pedagogical tool in shaping her star status and Mina was nationally diffused as an avatar of both new and traditional values. While Haworth always pays close attention to the framing techniques and costumes as ways of positioning Mina for the audience, it is particularly interesting to read about her use of famous male co-stars on *Studio Uno* as a way of rehabilitating her image post-scandal; about her promotion of Italian brands such as Barilla pasta on *Carosello*; and about her own status as part of Italian cultural heritage as she celebrated RAI's past on *Milleluci* in 1974.

The final two chapters look at her iconicity in different ways: Chapter Seven discusses her album covers through the years until now, and concludes that since her retirement in

1978, her shape-shifting yet recognisable image, carefully controlled by Mina and her team, has become a site onto which fans project memories and desires. Her physical absence allows for fan involvement: the section of the final chapter on the Mina fan group on Facebook argues that a collective, prosthetic memory of the star is constantly being constructed through the images and memories shared on social media, alongside the tributes by RAI in 2020 which drew on the institutional weight of the RAI televisual archives. As Haworth argues, Mina is ‘everywhere yet nowhere’. Her curated image still has the emotional power of a deeply felt memory, even for younger generations, sometimes felt as a nostalgia for former media forms like early television.

In the conclusion Haworth briefly addresses another aspect of Mina: that of camp, reading her through the Sontagian lens of excess, artifice and theatricality. Mention of drag performances as Mina might allow us to open up an aspect that Haworth has not been able to analyse, which is that of Mina as gay icon. More audience research is needed here, but the camp aspects of Mina and her diva vulnerability have made her perfect for appropriation by the queer star Mahmood, or by Italian-American drag queen Aquaria, who was photographed as Mina for *Vogue Italia* in 2018. Ultimately Haworth’s excellent book points forward to many *more* meanings of Mina, yet to be explored.

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## **‘L’espoir quotidien’. Cultures et imaginaires socialistes en France et en Italie (1944–1949)**

**by Virgile Cirefice, Rome, École française de Rome, 2022, 580 pp., €35.00 (paperback), ISBN 9782728315314**

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Since at least the end of the last century, ‘political culture’ has become a key concept in political history. However, its adoption has not always resulted in real methodological innovation, as it has frequently been used to ‘rebrand’ the traditional examination of ideological debates, party congresses, and the political struggle between the élites – thus running the risk of losing much of its heuristic potential. Cirefice’s work is the proof that, if properly used, the idea of political culture can still enable the historian to carry out an original and innovative analysis.

‘*L’espoir quotidien*’ is a rich and in-depth investigation into the collective identities, imaginary, and behaviour of Italian and French socialists, at a turning point in their history, during the first years after the Second World War (1944–9). It adopts a comparative and case-study approach, identifying three Italian and three French federations of different geographical, political, and sociological backgrounds and studying them through a wide variety of sources.

This variety is, indeed, a remarkable aspect of the book: starting from the assumption that the political culture of militants and supporters is not only a complex and multi-dimensional subject, but also one for which there is little direct evidence, Cirefice chooses