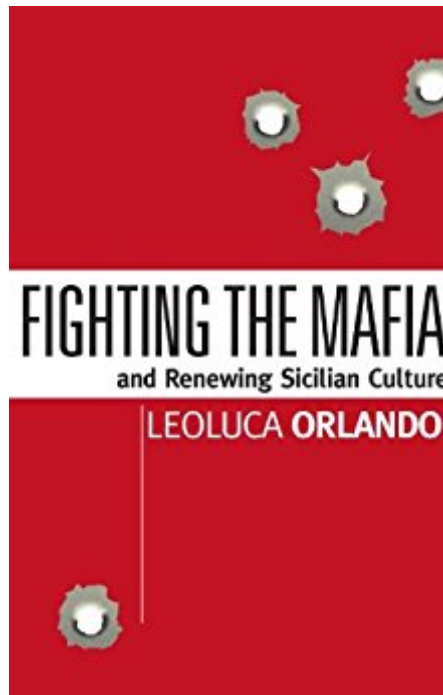




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Fighting The Mafia & Renewing Sicilian Culture



Synopsis

Growing up in an aristocratic family that seems almost to have stepped out of the pages of *The Leopard*, Leoluca Orlando entered law and politics in the late 1970s as one of the young idealists identified with the Catholic Church who were challenging the Mafia's control of Sicilian life. At about the same moment, life in Sicily was becoming more perilous. As if the "old" Mafia had not been bad enough, a new and particularly vicious Mafia sect based in the town of Corleone was murdering its way to power. Fueled by profits from the international heroin trade, this mafia gansteristica made Sicily into an Italian Lebanon and filled the international press with pictures of bloody bodies—those of Mafia rivals as well as police and government law enforcement officials. One of the figures most prominently identified with Italy's offensive against the Mafia, Orlando has endured repeated assassination attempts and even today travels with a bodyguard. Fighting the Mafia is his dramatic tale of witness and survival, of his effort to expose Mafia infiltration into the highest levels of Italian life and politics, and of the movements he helped to build—in schools and churches and at the ballot box—to recapture Sicilian culture and inspire a renaissance of democracy.

Book Information

File Size: 1765 KB

Print Length: 250 pages

Publisher: Encounter Books (January 1, 2010)

Publication Date: January 1, 2010

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0049H9BWS

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #517,296 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #201

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Europe > Italy #221 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Italy #992 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies &

Customer Reviews

I lived in Sicily for 2 years - during the mafia trials - and had no clear idea of everything that had gone on before my time there. My neighbors would not even talk about it. This book was a fascinating read and really eye-opening!

In modest language Orlando shows us how beautiful Palermo and with it Sicily, has been brought back to its rightful position. The story is one of bravery, persistence and the creation of community spirit in a city whose society had been systematically attacked. Orlando continues to be a force for good in the world, and to fight international crime, now the model for wild and successful schemes to kill, cheat and enslave people in places all around the world, through money and power unfettered by scruples. It's not as if we don't know what he is talking about. Examples abound. This is a good and encouraging story, true, exciting, and well told by one of the protagonists. By all means read it.

Fighting The Mafia and Renewing Sicilian Culture by Leoluca Orlando is an authentic chronicle of the incredible travails of the Sicilian people as they struggled to overthrow the yoke of the Mafia and the corrupted politicians with whom they were allied. Orlando recounts the story as only one who was in the midst of the battle can do it. If you know anything at all about the history of the Mafia in Sicily and the US you realize that the story is authentic and understated. Enough detail is provided to support the narrative but there is no sensationalism, as incredible as that may sound. The book ends on a chilling note. Much remains to be done.

My first visit to Sicily - and I hope not my last - took place this May. Our group had planned just a short visit to Palermo. Everything I had read said the city was chaotic - evidence of Mafia contamination all over; dirty, inadequate services, horrible traffic and somewhat dangerous. But some of the jewels were still there and worth the visit, we concluded. What a lovely surprise - We found a different Palermo from the one described in "Midnight in Sicily, and "On Persephone's Island." Renovation all over; the Teatro Massimo newly re-opened and a city with a bright, good feel to it....After reading this book, I feel I had an insight into some of the ways this was done. If Stille's "Excellent Cadavers" takes you through the legal battles, this book talks about political and cultural changes as seen by its mayor. At first I was a little concerned with self-aggrandizement and Stille

doesn't seem to be too great a fan, but I came to respect Orlando's story....I am very curious and would like to find out more about Orlando and also want to go back to Palermo, with more open eyes this time....By the way, the traffic was still terrible.

This is a remarkable book. It is both a suspenseful story of the attempt to root the Mafia out of the Sicilian bone marrow and also the story of making the culture free and autonomous. Leoluca Orlando is central to both of these narratives. Indeed, he embodies them in the courageous and dangerous life he has led. It would seem impossible to bring off a combination of The Godfather, The Leopard, and the Book of Virtues, but he has done it here. This story is unforgettable. It is a great read and would be a great movie.

This book tells an amazing story and has been a true inspiration for many people. Other groups/institutions/governments have tried to duplicate the methodology that was used in Sicily to improve their own cultures - moving from crime and corruption to a "culture of lawfulness." To see how a society has been able to move forward is great - it takes courage to be an optimist and obviously Leoluca Orlando and the people who worked with him were very courageous!

Overall an interesting read, but it was a little wordy. Mr. Orlando is a politician not a professional writer, and that was obvious.

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