

Isobel Williams, *Allies and Italians under Occupation: Sicily and Southern Italy 1943-45*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Bibliography, Index, Map, Tables, Photographs, 2 Appendices. 308pp. ISBN 978-0-230-572259-1 (Hardback). Price £60.00

The Allied decisions to invade first Sicily then mainland Italy in 1943 entailed substantial military campaigns to wrest control of those territories from Axis forces. This carried the attendant necessity to occupy and administer all regions behind the advancing frontline. The tenacity of Axis resistance to the Allied advance up the Italian peninsula defied preliminary expectations, in consequence extending the duration of the occupation beyond that initially envisaged and planned for. Beneath her broad title, Isobel Williams's monograph focuses upon the reestablishment of law and order *post bellum*, along with its counterpoint, criminal activity, which she identifies, correctly in the opinion of this reviewer, as fundamental to the success or failure of the occupation.

Aspects of this topic have already been covered explicitly or obliquely by scholars with distinct concerns, spanning operational military history to Italian social history. Many operate within distinct traditions, often relying exclusively upon different types of evidence and diverse methods. The result is an immensely complex historiographical landscape. Broadly speaking, the overall efficacy of the occupation in restoring law and order remains ambiguous; usually characterised as negative. As Williams indicates, many of these studies are problematic, for reasons to follow, and undertakes the ambitious task of providing a holistic appreciation of the overall situation.

The first concern with much of the existing literature and addressed by Williams in her opening chapter arises from the structure of the systems to impose law and order. Britain and America, as the two nations supplying the bulk of the forces of occupation shared primary responsibility for imposing military governance. Uniquely, the Allies took the decision to structure the Civil Affairs hierarchy by alternating British and American officers in positions of responsibility. The Italian surrender and the establishment of the pro-Allied *Regno del Sud* on 10 September 1943 altered the political dimension, shifting the occupation from one of an opponent to one of an ally. To provide a local presence in order to police the civilian population, the Allies extensively relied upon cooperation with established Italian institutions, primarily the *Carabinieri*, increasingly supplemented by other Italian police forces. Italian courts were also used to dispense justice to Italian civilians in certain instances. Military policing remained the responsibility of Allied nations. Consequently, responsibility for responding to the same criminal scene was devolved between three nations, with different jurisdictions and varied priorities between military and civil authorities. In addition to this, the paperwork produced to underpin these efforts is now archived

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in three countries and was written in two languages. Many previous historical surveys have thus been based upon partial evidence from only one perspective, or from only one partner. They capture facets of the situation, as experienced by some of its players. Williams deploys American, British and Italian sources, as befitting this international effort.

The following chapters are structured thematically to address various categories of criminal activity and the responses devised, often with a high degree of pragmatism by these civil and military authorities. Transplanting a foreign army (with an estimated one million men passing through between 1943 and 1945, and approximately 600,000 present at one time) onto a nation of 41 million, already suffering from three years of war, is apt to have an impact. Williams devotes four chapters to issues arising from this force. The next three chapters consider Italian civilians. These are followed by two chapters on collaborative crimes, the black market and prostitution. This thematic structure is ultimately the most sensible way to approach this subject. Ostensibly, chronological coverage, detailing overall fluctuations in criminal activity across the board and the authorities' response, sounds appealing. But, as Williams convincingly argues, this is not a realistic prospect, due in part to the scope, quality and disparity of the evidence and also to the paramount need to consider the different attitudes and approaches to combating crime in detail. Her overall conclusions are predictably nuanced; she delivers a more holistic appreciation than has hitherto been available. Overall, she reveals high instance of adaptability and compromise. In terms of specifics, the Allies are exculpated from certain incidents, notably high numbers of traffic incidents, yet blamed for others, including the atrocities perpetrated by the French Moroccan *Goumiers*.

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