



The Mafia: History and Legend

Marco Gasparini

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An illustrated history of the Mafia, focusing on this highly developed criminal organization both as a cult subject and an important social phenomenon. Movie classics like *The Godfather* epitomize our fascination with the underworld of the Mafia, conjuring images of cigar-smoking dons and shoot-outs in pizzerias. But behind the romantic myths of "men of honor" and omertà lies a very real world of murder, racketeering, and organized crime. Marco Gasparini traces the evolution of the Mafia from nineteenth-century Sicily to the streets of twentieth-century New York, to the international cartels that rule the illegal drug and arms trades today. In this authoritative volume he exposes the many secrets of an "octopus" organization that has remained impenetrable for decades, despite the efforts of heroic crime fighters such as New York police officer Joe Petrosino and the similarly ill-fated Italian judge Giovanni Falcone almost a century later. We discover the Mafia's greatest godfathers, underbosses, and "soldiers," as well as its pentiti (or turncoats) and the most formidable wives of Mafiosi. This book not only focuses on the original Sicilian Cosa Nostra and its various branches—such as Al Capone's Chicago Outfit or the still existent Corleonesi—it also features the equally bloody Neapolitan Camorra, which inspired the compelling documentary *Gomorrah*, and the Japanese Yakuza, the largest organized crime group in the world today, as well as the ever-growing Russian and Chinese "mafias." *Mafia* reveals the multi-faceted reality behind a phenomenon that has sparked the popular imagination for decades.

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