

# **The night lights in Torino**

Today, too, the lights are going to dispel the veil of the Turin night. Those lights are always the same. They are those lights which don't let us see the sky any longer, those lights which remind us that everything is market, that everything is control.

So tonight, too, the light of the street lamps is going to mingle with the light of the advertisement signs and the fires of the streetwalkers are going to mingle with the police sirens. At night Turin is sad, those fires are depressing, those sirens are odious.

We could spend a lot of words on the quarters of Turin when darkness comes down but, after the roundups and some politicians' statements, we think that it is right to say something about those young women who are compelled to sell themselves in the street everyday. We don't think we can just now treat the subject fully. The subject is, unfortunately, big and tragic but we would like to unmask the odious hypocrisy of the police and politicians because we think that it is our duty.

We don't have anything to say to Mr. Berlusconi and his friends when they support the persecution of streetwalkers because their nakedness shocks them and upsets their children. Let them putrefy by watching more plastic and more moral buttocks and tits on TV. On the contrary it is more interesting to dwell upon the behaviour of the police and the parallel statements of the mayor and the head of police administration. We think that a lot of people still remember the roundups of a few weeks ago in Corso Regina Margherita. Policemen in fighting trim leaving the prison vans and hunting the young women in the surrounding parks and avenues. These terrifying scenes are now everyday occurrences in Turin. The young women are chased, compelled to go into the prison vans, driven to the police station. In the end they are expelled, very often after a stay in the Corso Brunelleschi lager.

Such dirty tricks are really intolerable to anybody. But there is something much more intolerable: according to the mayor and the head of police administration, such aggressions, deportations and internments are organized to help prostitutes. The head of police administration Cavaliere, who has declared war on prostitution, has said: prostitutes are clandestine and they are exploited. We must free them by stopping, imprisoning and expelling them and, in the end, compelling them to go back to their countries. Most of these young women live in a slavery condition but saying that the police persecution may help a slave is really a hypocritical nonsense.

The police head Cavaliere, who wants to show the generosity of the present government, has also added that every clandestine prostitute is free to denounce herself and her exploiter. Thanks to her delation she can receive a residence permit provided that she reaches the police station before being arrested. Beyond our strong dislike for delation — even if we realize prostitutes' conditions and we don't judge the few ones who succeed in freeing themselves thanks to the police — it is obvious that just the condition of being blackmailed and of fear, implied in the slavery condition, strongly limits this possibility. And then there is also the risk of possible retortions from their exploiters.

What the police head Cavaliere and the politicians don't tell us is that one of the reasons which compels these young women to sell themselves is just the immigration law. In a few words: if it is almost impossible for a poor person to reach Italy legally, it is only natural that he should arrive here illegally. In order to reach Italy he must often rely on those unscrupulous people who also run the bonfires along our avenues. When he reaches Italy he feels hopeless and hunted because his clandestine condition compels him to isolate himself, to hide, to suffer every abuse of power.

What way out can a poor young woman find if she has got no documents, if she is wanted by the police and persecuted by the same organization which let her immigrate to Italy illegally?

If clandestinity is the cause of the prostitution slavery, slave traders are not only pimps but those who have invented clandestinity, too. Last century in America both the owners of the cotton plantations and the politicians were responsible for slavery. In the same way, today, the politicians who create the clandestinity condition are as responsible for prostitution slavery as the organizations which rule its existence.

So roundups at Pellerina must be seen as deeds of cowardly repression. The war of the police head Cavaliere against the managers of prostitution must be seen as a war between pimps.

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