

remains important to this day, “because it highlights the inhumane working conditions to which industrial workers can be subjected.” The next link, *Sweatshops and Strikes*, provides a description of working conditions and labor activism before 1911, including the famous Uprising of the Twenty Thousand in 1909, and a primer on sweatshops in the contemporary United States by UNITE! (Union of Needle Trades, Industrial, and Textile Employees). Subsequent links—*Fire!*, *Mourning and Protest*, *Relief Work*, and *Investigation, Trial, and Reform*—vividly recount the events of March 25 and afterwards. Peppered throughout are additional links to a rich variety of primary sources held by the Cornell University Library. Verbal documents, including letters, poems, newspaper articles, and the criminal trial transcripts give a sense of the lives of garment workers, the dangers of the factory, and the politics of union organizing. Photos show poverty, harsh working conditions, and the performance of class and ethnic solidarity. Cartoons are particularly memorable, with striking images that range from the poignant to the macabre. Audio recordings of interviews with three survivors, one of whom, Pauline Pepe, was an Italian American, convey the most deeply personal views of the fire. Links to the list of victims and that of witnesses reinforce the personal aspect of the tragedy.

Students, educators, and others who want access to additional information and resources about the fire can follow links to a selected bibliography with juvenile, primary, secondary, and audiovisual sources, as well as instructional materials for educators. Young researchers may also wish to consult a helpful set of “Tips for Student Projects” that explains the difference between primary and secondary sources and offers instructions for proper citation.

As conveyed by the web text and primary sources, the story of the Triangle fire is a story about the effects of industrialization on people. If the comments in the Visitor’s Book for the site are any indication, almost a hundred years later, the deaths of so many young female workers in a factory fire still has a powerful effect on those who come into contact with it.

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A Blog from WWII. Diary of an Italian Deportee.

<http://anitaliandeportee.org>

(accessed April 23, 2009–November 12, 2009)

The title of this online narrative, *A Blog from WWII. Diary of an Italian Deportee*, evokes the jarring image of soldiers and prisoners with laptops in their hands, as opposed to the pen and paper of letters or old notebooks. Building on such a paradox, this website joins possibility and impossibility, past and present, under the sign of computer science. The website offers a digitized version (in both the original Italian and an English translation) of the entire diary of Oreste Maina, who was deported from Italy to Germany in 1943. This review covers the diary from its first

posted entry (Maina's deportation on September 23, 1943) until November 12, 1944. The authors of this original idea are Rosanna Del Buono, Oreste's granddaughter, a first-generation Italian-American translator and film subtitler who works and lives in Rome, and Nicola "DeeMo" Peressoni, a designer and a communication consultant, who lives in Bologna.

The first thing that strikes a reader about this endeavor is that it overcomes the secrecy or jealousy—sometimes even the indifference—that covers much original historical material in Italy. The average Italian often does not see the value in old relics from the past or recognizes only their affective value. It is not uncommon that he/she does not want to make personal or family stories public and prefers to keep them hidden away in a drawer. Indeed Del Buono admits, on the site's *Our Project* page, that she "felt apprehensive about sharing such a personal relic with the entire world," and thus she withholds many details from the general public, promising to give them, perhaps, at the end of the diary. She does not explain who Oreste was exactly: We do not learn his job, his age, his family, his position in his hometown, or even how he fared after his return from Germany (if he ever came back), nor when or how he died. We do not even know when the diary will end.

This uncertainty is part of the whole experience of deportation. The project is kept "in progress"—a way to keep the duration of the diary "in time," as if the diary were being written again today. Each entry appears on the same day it was penned, only sixty-six years later. A great idea—even if some readers might be left wanting for more. In our e-mail exchange (November 9, 2009), the authors explained it as an attempt to make readers enter the mind of Oreste Maina, who lived in total uncertainty about his future. On the other hand, reading it as a whole, from the beginning to (temporary) end, retains the great power of a novel, and readers cannot help but be engrossed with Maina's adventures in the concentration camp, in the fields where he loads vegetables, in the factory and in the barracks, in the hospital where he plays Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow* on the guitar, enchanting the nuns, and in the terrifying desolation of the bombing of Munich.

Take the first sentence of the diary: "German soldiers with machine guns are positioned on all the streets of Casale": It was September 23, 1943, in Casale di Carinola in the southern province of Caserta. In that round-up, Oreste and several other men were "asked" to follow the German soldiers, who brought them to work camps in Germany. Oreste was able to keep a diary of those days, written in a secure style and with very few mistakes. We gather he was a strong man, brave enough to barter in the black market, and clever enough to fool the German nuns by artificially raising his body temperature during a hospital stay. His writing becomes heartfelt with the length of his deportation: "I am fed up with this miserable existence. 13 months away from my loved ones in a wretched land where all that exists is work and slavery!" (October 25, 1944). The nostalgia he feels comes across so strongly, especially when he thinks of the warm water in Casale, of the figs he used to gather in October, and especially of his little daughter Marinella: "when I left she was 5 months old, now she is 15 months old and must be running in the streets with her brother, I imagine she already says 'papa,' her mother must have taught her! But she doesn't know me!" (July 25, 1944).

The dual-language version, English and Italian, is particularly valuable because it pierces through the silence wrapping this part of Italian history and because it

reconnects a family broken by immigration. The website claims that 1,500 subscribers receive the almost-weekly blog, and several of them have already commented on the entries. Relatives of Oreste Maina, both in the United States and in Italy, rejoice at the possibility of sharing his personal diary. Entering this blog is, therefore, like entering the family parlor, and overhearing the comments of his descendents, ranging from pride (for example, he never sold himself to the Fascists, suggest some commentators) to gratitude. Thus the immigrant side of the family gains virtual access to the family legacy.

The uses of this website are innumerable. Schools and teachers should use it as a firsthand source for their students, who are already familiar with blogging techniques. Moreover, this source is a blessing for researchers who know how difficult it is to read archival material. Here, they find it already deciphered (handwritten documents can be illegible) and typed.

Therefore, although it's not necessary to critique what is "lost in translation," it is interesting to consider what seems to be gone, or lost, because of it. The "aura" is lost. The smell of old paper. Gone, in the transmigration of media: from page to web page, from ink to bytes, from handwriting to font. Even clicking and scrolling through the blog are contrary to leafing through a bound document. Keeping this in mind, this love for yellowed pages and tilted handwritings of the past, I cannot but enthusiastically welcome this original and most useful electronic diary from World War II.

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