

BIOGRAPHY OF AN INDUSTRIAL TOWN

Terni, Italy, 1831-2014

Alessandro Portelli

PALGRAVE *Studies in Oral History*



Palgrave Studies in Oral History

Series editors

David P. Cline
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, USA

Natalie Fousekis
California State University
Fullerton, USA

‘A premier publisher of oral history.’ - CHOICE

The world’s leading English-language oral history book series, *Palgrave Studies in Oral History* brings together engaging work from scholars, activists, and other practitioners. Books in the series are aimed at a broad community of readers; they employ edited oral history interviews to explore a wide variety of topics and themes in all areas of history, placing first-person accounts in broad historical context and engaging issues of historical memory and narrative construction. Fresh approaches to the use and analysis of oral history, as well as to the organization of text, are a particular strength of the series, as are projects that use oral accounts to illuminate human rights issues. Submissions are welcomed for projects from any geographical region, as well as cross-cultural and comparative work.

More information about this series at
<http://www.springer.com/series/14606>

Alessandro Portelli

Biography
of an Industrial Town

Terni, Italy, 1831–2014

palgrave
macmillan

Alessandro Portelli
Università di Roma
Rome
Italy

Palgrave Studies in Oral History
ISBN 978-3-319-50897-9 ISBN 978-3-319-50898-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-50898-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017936933

English language rights only

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2014

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover image © Paolo Carnassale/Getty

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

FOREWORD

This book is a condensation and rewriting of two earlier books: *Biografia di una città* (*Biography of a Town*, 1985) and *Acciai speciali* (*Specialty Steel*, 2008). They were written and published in Italy 30 years apart, but it makes sense to put them together because they are held together by a place—Terni, an industrial town in Central Italy—and a method, oral history. I grew up in Terni, though I wasn't born there; and when I moved back to Rome I thought I'd never set foot in it again. But when I began to research folk music and working-class stories, Terni drew me back like a magnet, and I've never really left it again. I recorded the first songs and stories there in 1969, kept it up for more than 40 years, and have not stopped yet. So, this book is also held together by a lifetime's relationship with a place, with its history, and with its people.

In terms of time, this is the 200-years long story of how Italy, and Terni, went from rural roots to postindustrial society—the short complicated life of the industrial revolution, its beginning, its glory days, its demise. In terms of space, this is the story of how a center—the multi-sector industrial conglomerate, the company-town model—was created, and how it fell apart, piece by piece. Paraphrasing Dilsey, one of William Faulkner's great African American characters: I've heard about the beginning, now I see the end. Or at least, the beginning of an end.

The thirty years between the two books also mark changes in oral history. When *Biografia di una città* appeared, oral history was still considered marginal, unreliable, and too radical; by the time *Acciai Speciali* came out, oral history had refined its methodology and theory and had become (even too) respectable. I hope this book retains at least some of the excitement of

an earlier, pioneering time—which is why I retain, almost unchanged, the original 1985 introduction.

Thanks to the long duration of the research, the interviews cover at least a century: the oldest interviewee was born in 1886; the youngest in 1990 (I started out interviewing people 50 years older than me, and ended up interviewing people 50 years younger). So, on the one hand, the narrators' memories lead us back to a long gone past—the *Risorgimento*, the birth of the Italian nation, the dawn of industrialization; on the other hand, they gaze toward a cloudy, uncertain future. We can follow this evolution, even in translation, through the changes in language; if we pay attention to the dates of the interviews, we can see that those made in the 1970s and 1980s don't sound like those of the third millennium. There is a tangible shift, from the vernacular speech—steeped in politics, in class organization and identity, that prevails in the first part—to the ironic, disenchanted, depoliticized language of the younger generations, more educated but just as angry.

Every book is made by many people. This is especially true for a book of oral history, which is made of the voices and stories of many, many narrators (230 quoted in these pages, and about 50 more for whom I didn't find a place). My debt to them is too huge for conventional thanks—let the book itself be my praise for these famous women and men. But I also need to ask their forgiveness: for using only fragments of many fascinating life stories; for being unable to keep up all the personal relationships created at the time of the interviews; for the loss of quality and power when their words were transferred from the sound of the voice to the written page, and from their varieties of Italian to an English that tries its best to sound at least colloquial.

Many colleagues and friends made this work and this book possible. Many of them are no more, and their absence is a painful wound. I shared with Valentino Paparelli the early years of fieldwork in Valnerina; he and his wife Franca De Sio gave hospitality, support, and friendship for more than 30 years. Both were there for my family and me at a difficult time; and I still ask Franca's help whenever I need something in Terni's public library. Gianfranco Canali was a friend and comrade to the fullest meaning of these precious words; there is much of his work in these pages. He and Rosanna Canali opened their home to me, introduced me to people, and made contacts for me, with incredible generosity. Later, Rosanna again opened her house to the young Circolo Gianni Bosio researchers that had come to Terni at the time of the 2004 general strike.

I owe Gisa Giani a wealth of material, sources, literature ideas—and an example of personal, undaunted courage. Bruno Zenoni, Lucilla Galeazzi, Enrico Cardinali gave me access to different social contexts, and supported me with advice and criticism. The comrades of Radio Evelyn (the local independent radio station), ANPI and ANPPIA (the associations of former partisans and of victims of Fascist persecution), the CGIL and FIOM unions (first, Marcello Ricci, Azelio Fulmini, Remo Righetti, Ivo Carducci, Roberto Giovannelli; next, Lucia Rossi, Attilio Romanelli, Gianfranco Fattorini, Alessandro Rampiconi, and CISL's Faliero Chiappini) opened doors and created contacts. So did the young people of the alternative cooperative La Strada and the Youth Workshop (Marco Coppoli). Alessandro Toffoli introduced me to a younger working-class generation, very different from the workers I had met in the past. Mayor Paolo Raffaelli understood the meaning of what I was doing and supported me all the way. Tina Moretti Antonucci, Agostino Marcucci, Marco Fornarola, Santi Minasi, Ulrike Viccaro, Greca Campus, like Paparelli, Canali, Cardinali and Ricci, allowed me to use tapes and transcripts of their own interviews. Laura Znacchi and Antonella Fischetti transcribed most of the *Acciai Speciali* interviews. I owe historians Renato Covino and Giampaolo Gallo a wealth of advice, knowledge, critical support; my publisher Carmine Donzelli is the one who had the idea of making *Acciai speciali* first and of putting the two books together in one later. Mariella Eboli read critically a number of versions of these texts; and Carlo Ginzburg helped me understand what book I wanted to write when I first began.

While the book is rooted in the town of Terni and its surrounding hills, the final chapters open up to the global context. This was made possible by the help of other friends and colleagues in many parts of the world. In India, Anita and Nitin Paranjape, from Abhyviakti media for development cooperative in Nashik, arranged the visit and the interviews at the ThyssenKrupp plant in Igatpuri, where Anita helped me as a brilliant and participant interpreter. In Brazil, Karen Worcman and Rosali Henriques, from São Paulo's Museu da Pessoa gave me their interviews from the ThyssenKrupp Bilstein and Ibirité plants. Paulinho Almeida from the University of Uberlândia (Minas Gerais) and Yara Khouri from the Catholic University in São Paulo coordinated and carried out the Brazilian side of the international ThyssenKrupp project I had been hoping to set up (in South Africa, Maria Suriano and Noor Niefertgodien of Witswatersrand University tried to interview ThyssenKrupp workers in Johannesburg, and

were frustrated by the difficult political climate and the uneasy relationships between university and unions).

This book is about 30% shorter than the sum of the two original texts, but I trust that nothing of crucial importance was sacrificed. I did a tighter editing of the interviews, cut repetitions and digressions, eliminated most of my comments and explanations, reduced notes to the barest essential minimum, and introduced very little new material (such as the brief report on the 2014 steel strike). All the original recordings are available at the Archivio Sonoro “Franco Coggiola” of the Circolo Gianni Bosio in Rome.

Woody Guthrie once wrote that the words he was using were “borrowed” from the many people he met and heard in his wanderings; he was in debt to these people, and they in turn were in debt to others, in the long chain of memory and tradition; what we have is only the sum of what we owe.¹ This is true for every word and for every person cited in this book; but there are people that I owe and miss most of all. This book is dedicated to Dante Bartolini, Amerigo Matteucci, Gianfanco Canali, and Valentino Paparelli.

Alessandro Portelli

NOTE

1. Woody Guthrie, “People I Owe”, in *Born to Win*, ed. Robert Shelton, New York, Collier Books, 1968, p. 18.

CONTENTS

Part I Biography of a Town

1	Introduction: Speaking, Writing, and Remembering	3
2	The Red and the Black: Rebels, Patriots, and Outlaws	15
3	How Green Was My Valley: Feudal Landlords and Struggling Peasants	33
4	How Steel Was Tempered: The Making of a Working Class	51
5	Rebels: Socialists, Anarchists, and the Subversive Tradition	91
6	The Iron Heel, or, We Didn't Have Any Trouble: The Coming of Fascism	113
7	Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Surviving and Resisting Fascism	151
8	Apocalypse Now: War, Hunger, and Mass Destruction	175

9	Red Is the Color: The Gramsci Brigade and the Resistance	191
10	The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: Economic Boom and Industrial Crisis	223
11	Staying Alive: The Rise of Alternative Cultures	247
Part II Specialty Steel		
12	David and Goliath: The Town, the Factory, and the Strike	279
13	The Workers and the World: Terni Steel in the Age of Globalization	309
14	The Empire Strikes Back: The Town, the Factory, the Strike—Reprise	333
15	A Tale of Two Cities: Death, Survival, and Powerlessness in the Neo-Liberal Age	347
16	Epilogue: Working-class Sublime	373
	Index of Names	381
	Subject Index	389
	Index of Places and Notable Things	393

ABBREVIATIONS

ARCHIVES

ACLT	Archivio della Camera del Lavoro di Terni (Archive of Terni Labor Exchange)
ACP	Ministero degli Interni—Affari Comunali e Provinciali (Ministry of the Interior—Municipal and Provincial Affairs)
ACS	Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Central State Archives)
AGR	Ministero degli Interni—Affari Generali e Riservati (Ministry of the Interior—General and Classified Affairs)
ANPI	Archivio della Sezione di Terni dell'Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia (Archive of the Terni section of the Italian Partisans' Association)
APC	Archivio del Partito Comunista Italiano (Archive of the Italian Communist Party)
ASCT	Archivio Storico del Comune di Terni (Terni Municipal Historical Archive)
ASST	Archivio Storico della Società Terni (Terni Company Historical Archive)
B	Busta (folder)
CPC	Casellario Politico Centrale (Central Political Records Office)
DPP	Ministero degli Interni—Divisione Polizia Politica (Ministry of the Interior—Political Police Division)
Gab.	Ministero degli Interni—Gabinetto (Ministry of the Interior—Cabinet)
PS	Ministero degli Interni—Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza (Ministry of the Interior—General Police Division)
SPD	Segreteria Particolare del Duce (Mussolini's Personal Secretariat)
SPEP	Situazione Politica ed Economica delle Province (Report on the Political and Economic Situation of the Provinces)
TAS	Terni Archivio Storico

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

AST	Acciai Speciali Terni (Terni Specialty Steel)
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (General Italian Labor Federation)
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Federation of Labor Unions)
F	Fascicolo (File)
FIM	Federazione Italiana Metalmeccanici (Italian Metal Workers Federation—affiliated to CISL)
FIOM	Federazione Impiegati e Operai Metalmeccanici (Italian Federation of Steel Industry Employees—affiliated to CGIL)
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista (National Fascist Party)

Unless otherwise noted, the quotes from the newspapers *Il Messaggero* and *l'Unità* are taken from the local Terni edition.

THE NARRATORS

This list includes only interviewees quoted in the text. When last names are not available, they are listed by first name; married women are listed under the name they used in the interview. Names in quotes are pseudonyms. The name is followed by year of birth and place of birth if other than Terni. Next is the place(s) of work and principal professional activities in the person's life course (for women who also worked outside the home, homemaking is implicit). "Unemployed" and "homemaker" do not exclude occasional temporary, irregular, cottage work. The dates and places (if other than Terni) of the interviews follow (the one listed first is the one most often used).

Unless otherwise noted, all interviews were recorded by me in Terni. Other interviewers are designated by initials: Tina Moretti Antonucci and Settimio Bernarducci (TMA-SB); Gianfranco Canali (GFC); Enrico Cardinali (EC); Marco Fornarola *et al.* (MF); Agostino Marcucci (AM); Valentino Paparelli (VP); Marcello Ricci (MR); São Paulo's Museo da Pessoa (MP). When the same person was interviewed in different occasions by different interviewers, the initials refer only to the interview they accompany.

I don't include the pseudonyms of the interviewees from India.

All the original recordings can be consulted at the Circolo Gianni Bosio's "Franco Coggiola Sound Archive," at Rome's House of Memory and History.

- Keji Adumno** (1983), translator; 7.15.2008 Rome
 «**Alberto**» (ca. 1962), unemployed; december, 1982 (EC)
- Emanuele Albi** (1979), AST, 3.18.2008
- Marco Allegretti** (1973), contractor firm worker; 3.18.2008
- Alfonso Alongi** (1975), AST-Turin office employee; 5.13.2008
- Roberto “Anafreak” Anafri** (1974), AST; 5.26.2008
- Agamante Androsciani** (1902), *Terni*; exiled for anti-fascism, 1930s; 6.21.1982
- Gianna Angelini [Filipponi]** (1923, Germignano [Rieti]), school teacher; partisan; Piediluco, 9.3.1982
- Antonio Antonelli** (1923), *Terni* steel worker, fired in 1953; building contractor; partisan; Castiglioni 7.7.1973
- Carlo Arcangeli** (1922, Spoleto [Perugia]), *Terni* Morgnano peat mines; railroads; Spoleto, 1.21.1981
- Maria [Felcini] Arcangeli** (1903, Spoleto [Perugia]), homemaker; Spoleto, 1.21.1981
- Ciro Argentino** (1971 Naples), AST-TK Turin; FIOM union organizer; 3.11.2008, Turin
- Costantino Armiento** (1975, Turin), AST-TK Turin; 3.6.2008
- Foscolo Armini**, *Cantamaggio* organizer and performer; 5.2.1980
- Claudio Aureli**, Meraklon; union organizer; 9.16.2008, 11.22.2016
- Aurora** (ca. 1915), Alterocca printshop; 1979 (MR)
- Aldo Bartocci** (1909); engineer; *Terni* manager; 10.25.1980 (GFC); 17.11.1979 (TMA-SB)
- Gildo Bartoletti** (1896), *Terni* steel worker; 2.17.1974 (VP)
- Marco Bartoli** (1970), AST; 3.18.2008
- Dante Bartolini** (1909, Castiglioni), *Terni* steel worker, fired in 1952; farmer, shoemaker, barman, hog killer; poet, singer, storyteller; partisan; Castel di Lago, 4.29.1973; 11.3.1972; 4.8.1972; Rome, 5.11.1975
- Isolina Bastoni [Vecchioni]** (1923), homemaker; 5.1.1979
- Settimio Bernarducci** (1921), *Terni* specialist; artist; 2.20.1980 (TMA); 1979 (MR)
- “**Luciano Berni**” (1959), AST; 6.2.2004
- Eduardo Bertolini** (1964), mechanical specialist, TK Ibirité plant, Ibirité, July 2017 [Museo da Pessoa]
- «**Rocco Bianchi**» (unknown birth place, Abruzzi), Arsenal, fired in 1951; 1.4.1976
- Spino Biancifiori** (1925), *Terni* steel worker; Cantamaggio organizer and performer¹; 5.2.1980

- Guerriero Bolli** (1915, Montoro), *Terni* office employee; local historian; 12.23.1981
- Vincenza Bonanni [Vannozzi]** (year and place of birth not known), farmer; partisan; 10.13.1981 (GFC); 10.27.1981 (GFC)
- Silvia Bonifazi** (1965), high school student; 6.31.1982
- Guido Botondi** (1945), *Terni* steel worker; regional FIOM secretary; 3.2.1980
- Gino Brunelli** (1919), carpenter; 9.16.1980
- Nevio Brunori** (1954), AST; FIOM rank-and-file representative; 3.18.2008; 4.29.2008
- Loretta Calabrini** (1960), university student; 6.21.1982; 8.31.1982
- Luigi Cambioli** (1929), *Terni* executive; 5.1.1979; 4.29.1984
- Gino Campanella**, former *Terni* chief of personnel; 9.26.1979 (TMA-SB)
- Greca Campus** (1983), filmmaker; 6.19.2008 Rome
- Calfero Canali** (1916), *Terni* maintenance worker, fired in 1953; 4.30.1979; 8.30.1982
- Gianfranco Canali** (1950), school bus driver; local working-class historian; 9.12.1979; 7.9.1980
- Martina Canali** (1981), social worker; 9.16.2008
- Viscardo Caneschi**, *Cantamaggio* organizer and performer; 5.2.1980
- «**Luigi Capello**» (ca. 1895), policeman; Papigno company guard; 7.7.1973
- Rita Cappanera** (1963), vocational school student; 9.12.1979
- Santino Cappanera** (1933), *Terni* steel worker; 9.12.1979
- Sante Carboni** (1901, Ancona); Bosco; railroads; partisan; 10.18.1982
- Enrico Cardinali** (1957), university student; 6.24.1980; 7.9.1980; 5.4.1983
- Sergio Cardinali** (1965), secretary, chemical workers union; 5.9.2008
- Ivo Carducci** (1945, Sangemini), *Terni* steel worker; FIM union organizer; 5.4.1983; 7.27.1979
- Mauro Carnassale** (1961), Arsenal janitor; musician; 4.30.1985
- Francesco Carocci** (ca. 1910), farmer; *Terni* steel worker; partisan; traditional singer; 7.29.1973
- Andrea Carsetti**, AST, union activist; 11.22.2016
- Isoliero Casseti** (1949), *Terni* steel worker; FIOM union organizer; 5.2.1980
- Luigi Castelli** (1948), *Terni* specialist; 1.9.1981
- Umberto Catana** (1915, Collescipoli), *Terni* iron carpenter; 12.29.1982

- Giovanni Catoni** (1908), upholsterer; *Terni* steel worker; 5.26.1979 (AM)
- Vincenzo Ceccarelli** (1939), Sit-Stampaggio; factory council member; 1.12.1983
- Faliero Chiappini**, (1949), secretary, Terni CISL union; 9.16.2008
- Poliuto Chiappini** (1911), office worker; city councilman; 6.26.1984
- Chiara** (1980), unemployed, 16.2000
- Ilario Ciaurro** (1889), painter, potter; 12.23.1981; 9.3.1982; 7.16.1979 (TMA-SB)
- Claudio Cipolla** (1977), AST; FIOM organizer; 2.18.2008
- Gianni Colasanti** (1940), Catholic priest; 4.3.1984
- Diname Colesanti [Fagioletti]** (1921), Fucati,¹ Grüber; 4.8.1980; 2.28.1980
- Antonina [Galeazzi] Colombi** (1913), Centurini ; 6.26.1979
- Cesare Conti** (1915, Arrone), restaurant owner; 1.9.1981
- Mario Conti** (ca. 1925), *Terni* steel worker; 5.11.1979
- Marco Coppoli** (1967), social worker; 2.29.2008
- Corrado** (1965, Rome), unemployed; 5.25.1981
- Faliero Corvo** (1910), *Terni* steel worker; FIOM official; 10.28.1980 (GFC)
- Taurino Costantini** (1937), Polymer ; CGIL union employee; 9.16.1980; 2.5.2004 (MF)
- Raul Crostella** (1926), *Terni* steel worker; CGIL union employee 12.14.1983
- Gaetano Cruciani** (1891), Centurini, Arsenal, Elettrocarbonium; 9.17.1980
- Augusto Cuppini** (1911, Fabriano), *Terni* skilled steel worker; musician; 12.30.1980
- Januário Cosme Damião** (1950), executive, TK Ibirité plant, Ibirité, July 2017 [MP]
- Daniele** (1966), clothing store sales clerk; 5.2.1981
- Riccardo De Cesaris** (1958), university student; 8.31.1982
- Enzo De Michele** (ca. 1950), *Terni* steel worker; factory council member; 7.27.1979
- Graziano De Renzo** (1966), unemployed; 5.4.1983
- Franca De Sio** (1949), librarian; 2.29.2008
- Diana** (1925), homemaker; 3.24.1984, Rome
- Saturno Di Giuli** (1902, Piediluco), Papigno; interned for anti-fascism, 1930s; partisan; painter; 4.8.1980, 1980

- Ezio Di Loreto** (1928), *Terni* steel worker, 3.11.2008
 Fabbrica Umbra Cioccolato e Affini—Terni—a chocolate factory.
 «Ersilia» (ca. 1915), bar owner; 5.25.1981
- Canzio Eupizi** (1909, Todi), state insurance employee; 3.27.1984
- Fabrizio** (1964), unemployed; 5.25.1981
- Mario Fagioletti** (1920), *Terni* steel worker; 4.8.1980
- Ines Faina** (1922), middle school teacher; partisan; 7.7.1983
- Rosetta Falchi** (1912), Arsenal; 9.17.9.1980
- Gianfranco Fattorini** (1959), FIOM official; 2.16.2008, 4.6.2008
- Amalia [Falchi] Ferri** (1899), Grüber, Centurini, Arsenal; 9.17.1980
- Emilio Ferri** (1917), National Electricity Agency employee; director, Center for Economic and Social Studies; 9.17.1980
- Lázaro de Figueredo Júnior**, engineer, TK Ibirité plant, Ibirité, July 2017 (MP)
- Alfredo Filippini** (1897, Ferentillo), tramways; coal seller; jailed for anti-fascism, 1920s-30s; partisan; 7.6.1973
- Ambrogio Filippini** (1930), cooperative movement official; jailed at age 2 for his father's anti-fascism; 5.11.1979
- Mario Filippini** (1924, Piediluco), *Terni* steel worker; city employee; partisan; 9.3.1982
- Fabio Fiorelli** (1921), *Terni* office employee; former vice-mayor, alderman; 2.26. 1984
- Maurizio Fioretti**(1968), electrician; musician; 7.2.2008
- Pasqualino Frattaroli** (ca. 1930, Marmore), farm hand; municipal employee; 7.7.1973, Marmore
- Alba Froschianti** (1912, Collescipoli), owner, Froschianti Iron Foundries; 6.16.1982
- Azelio Fulmini** (1957), radio reporter; musician; 7.9.1980
- Mario Gabrielli** (1925), steel works technician; factory council member; 6.3.1980
- Rosanna Gabrielli** (1958), university student; 4.19.1980, Rome
- Aldo Galeazzi** (1910), *Terni* steel worker, janitor, athlete; 10.12.1979
- Franco Galeazzi** (1944), salesman; 3.19.3.1984
- Lucilla Galeazzi** (1950), musician; 6.6.1979, Rome
- Laura Galli** (1921), homemaker; active in Catholic charities; 1.27.1984
- Alberto Galluzzi** (1983), AST; 6.23.2008
- Battista Garibaldi** (1952), *Terni* steel and office worker; 5.5.1983, 4.16.2008, 11.22.2016
- Guido Giacinti** (1919), carpenter; Centurini; 9.16.1980

- Vittorio Giantulli** (1937), *Terni* steel works specialist; 5.3.1983
- Enrico Gibellieri** (1947), engineer, Centro Sviluppo Materiali; former president, European Coal and Steel Community; 3.18.2008 Vasanello (Viterbo)
- Veniero Giontella** (1930), high school teacher; 1979 (MR)
- Vincenza [Fossatelli] Giontella** (1907), seamstress; 1979 (MR)
- Mario Giorgini** (1910), *Terni* steel works foreman; 9.20.1979 (TMA-SB)
- Roberto Giovannelli** (1943), *Terni* steel worker; CGIL union organizer; 6.11.1982
- Giuseppe Giovannetti** (1899), Arsenal, Bosco; first Terni Communist Party secretary, 1921; 4.8.1981 (GFC); 6.12.1981; 10.23.1981 (GFC); 10.23.1981 (AM)
- Fosco Girardi** (ca. 1950), *Terni* office employee; factory council member; 7.27.1979
- Adelia Grimani** (1905, Santa Lucia di Stroncone), homemaker; traditional singer; 6.4.1980, Santa Lucia di Stroncone (VP)
- Irene Guidarelli** (1896), Centurini and Grüber; 7.16.1980
- Jamghili el Hassan** (1976, Taza, Morocco), contractor firm worker; 2.7.2008
- Ines Tanfani Inches** (1898), homemaker; partisan; 2.18.1984 (GFC)
- Giuseppe Laureti** (1924), self-employed turner; *Terni* steel worker; 16.9.1980
- Giovanni Lelli** (1941), judge; 9.17.2000
- Arnaldo Lippi** (1899), *Terni* skilled steel worker; jailed for anti-fascism, 1922; partisan; city alderman; 12.30.1979; 1.5.1980; 9.3.1982; 11.15.1978 (AM)
- Angela Locci** (1904, Valenza), Centurini; 6.12.1981, Piediluco
- Claudio Locci** (1924, Valenza), photographer; Papigno; fired in 1948, refugee to Czechoslovakia; partisan; 3.30.1981; 6.5.6.1981
- “**Luisa Longhi**”, (1961), store owner; 5.2.2008
- «**Rita Luciani**» (ca. 1932), homemaker; 1979 (MR)
- Maddalena** (1924), Centurini; 3.24.1984, Rome
- Riziero Manconi** (1894), Arsenal, Siri, Nera Montoro; 7.16.1980
- Luca Marcelli** (1972), AST, 6.24.2008
- Pietro Marcelli** (1948), AST technician; 2.12.2008.
- Marcello** (1957), unemployed; 5.27.1981
- Stefano Marchetti**, (1980), university student; 7.8.2008
- Roberto Mariottini** (1949), *Terni*; 3.24.1984, Rome
- Gisela Marins**, cultural officer, Brazilian Embassy; 6.5, 2012 Rome

- Marisa** (1925), textile worker; 3.24.1984, Rome
- Sergio Martinelli** (1947), Sit-Stampaggio; 1.13.1983
- Umberto Martinelli** (1913, Massa Martana [Perugia]), Polymer, Bosco, Arsenal; 1.3.1983
- Amerigo Matteucci** (1919, Polino), construction worker; mayor of Polino; traditional singer; 12.14.1974, Orte (Viterbo)
- Maggiorina Mattioli** (1899), seamstress; 2.28.1980
- Ferruccio Mauri** (1926, Narni), municipal employee; partisan; provincial alderman; 4.8.1983
- Maurizio** (1959), unemployed; 6.11.1982
- Walter Mazzilli** (1948, Piediluco), provincial alderman; 7.7.1983
- Armando Mazzocchio** (1886), *Terni* gantry cranes supervisor; 9.25.1979 (TMA-SB)
- Giovanni Mencarelli** (1902), food store owner; 3.27.1984
- Anita [Ceccarelli] Menichelli** (1926, Greccio [Rieti]), homemaker; 1.7.1981, Rome
- Luigi Menichelli** (1920, Greccio [Rieti]); *Terni* steel worker; partisan; 1.7.1981, Rome
- Arnaldo Menichetti** (1911), *Terni* steel worker; FIOM union official; vice-president, Terni Province government; 11.3.1980 (GFC)
- Giuseppina Migliosi** (1900), seamstress; Grüber, Centurini; 10.17.1980
- Felice Pop Mihai** (1984, Satu Mare, Romania), contract firm worker; 20.2.2008
- Maurizio Millesimi** (1952), municipal employee; 7.31.1982
- Lidia Montecaggi** (1918, Calvi), homemaker; 1979 (MR)
- Riziero Montesi** (1890), tenant farmer; 7.6.1973
- Donatella Montini** (1959, Torre Orsina), university student, 5.8.1980, Rome; associate professor, 5.2.2008, Rome
- Bruno Moscatelli** (1904, Papigno), Bosco; jailed (innocent) for killing a Fascist, 1922; 8.11.1980, Anzio (Rome)
- Giovanni Nardi** (1910, Campiglia [Livorno]); taylor; *Terni* steel worker; 7.16.1980
- Francesco Nulchis**, journalist; 5.8.1980 (TMA-SB)
- Carlotta Orientale** (1893), Centurini; provincial secretary, Unione Sindacale Italiana, 1916; 5.20.1980, Rome
- Alfio Paccara** (1926), city alderman; *Terni* steel worker, factory council member; 9.17.1980
- Maurizio Pacini** (1970), AST; 2.29.2008

- Alfeo Paganelli** (1908), *Terni* steel and foundry worker; musician; 1.5.1980
- Celsa Paganelli [Galeazzi]** (1912), Centurini, Grüber, Arsenal, Roversi shoe factory; 6.26.1979; 10.2.1979; 1.5.1980
- Claudio Pagliaricci** (1945), Sit-Stampaggio; factory council member; 1.13.1983
- Andrea Pagliarola** (1983), Meraklon; 7.8.2008
- Gino Paiella** (1914, Narni), Catholic priest, parson of Collescipoli; 12.29.1982, Collescipoli
- Giampaolo Palazzesi** (1943), doctor; 17.9.2000
- Valentino Paparelli** (1946), manager, Terni province tourist office; 2.5.2004; 2.29.2008
- Emidio Pasquini** (1908, Narni), artisan; 6.11.1982, Narni
- Paolo Patrizi** (1945), journalist; 1.26.1984, Rome
- Valtero Peppoloni** (1916, Moiano [Perugia]), *Terni* steel worker, sanitation worker, school janitor; 4.25.1981
- Alberto Petrini** (1925), Sit-Stampaggio; *Terni* steel worker; 10.30.1980
- Settimio Piemonti** (1903), *Terni* steel worker; 7.9.1980
- Giovanni Pignalosa** (1970, Naples), AST-TK Turin; 3.17.2008 Rome
- Pompilio Pileri** (1905, Rosciano), shepherd; traditional musician and singer; 3.28.1976, Rome
- Roberto Pinoca** (1946), *Terni* steel worker; union representative; 9.12.1979
- Maria Pitotti** (1919), homemaker; farmhand; 11.4.1974, Labro (Rieti)
- Trento Pitotti** (1919), shoemaker; *Terni* steel worker; traditional singer; 12.14.1974, Orte (Viterbo); 28.6.1970, Labro (Rieti)
- Sandro Porrazzini** (1953), *Terni* steelworker; university student; 6.21.1982; 8.31.1982
- Salvatore Portelli** (1913, Rome); government employee; 8.30.1979, Gaeta (Latina)
- Antonio Proietti** (1920, Piediluco), sanitation worker; partisan; 7.7.1973, Piediluco
- Francesco Proietti** (1929, Spoleto [Perugia]), *Terni* Morignano peat mines; *Terni* steel works; 1.2.1981, Spoleto
- Leonardo Pulcini** (1915, Villa Pulcini [Rieti]), farmer; 6.2.1973, Villa Pulcini
- Paolo Raffaelli** (1953), journalist; Mayor of Terni; 2.6.2004; 10.14.2003
- Giorgio Ricci** (1951), office worker; 7.4.1980; 7.9.1980

- Remo Righetti** (1901), *Terni* steel works, Centurini, Arsenal, Salit mechanical works; jailed and exiled for anti-fascism, 1930s city alderman; 9.12.1979
- Roberto Risoluti** (1959), university student; 7.9.1980
- «**Luisa Roberti**» (1897), Grüber; 1980
- Attilio Romanelli** (1955), FIOM official; 2.18.2008
- Roberto Rondinelli** (1990), student; 2.12.2008
- Lucia Rossi**, secretary. Terni Camera del Lavoro (Labor Exchange); 2.16.2008.
- «**Luigi Rossi**» (1929), Polymer; 9.8.1982
- Christian Rubino** (1977, Turin), AST-TK Turin; 6.3.2008
- Antonio Ruggeri** (1938), *Terni*; 9.12.1979
- Gianni Sabatini**, (1970), AST; FIOM organizer; 18.2.2008
- Ivano Sabatini** (1928), disabled *Terni* steel worker; 1.26.1976 (VP)
- Mario Sabatini** (1925), Papigno; partisan; 7.7.1973, Marmore
- Emanuele Salvati** (1977), AST; 6.3.2008, 11.22.2016
- Giovanni Salvati** (1916, Stroncone), shepherd, farmer, State Archives janitor; 7.7.1982, Collestatte
- «**Anna Santini**» (1925), shop owner; 1979 (MR)
- Gallerana Sabora** (1903), Papigno, Arsenal; 1979 (MR)
- Saris** (1965), student; 5.25.1981
- Mario Sassi** (1906); city employee; musician; 1.12.1983
- Ida Sbarzella** (1906), *Terni* foundry worker; 1.30.1980 (TMA-SB)
- Fabio Scipioni** (1965), student; musician; 4.30.1985
- Severino Severini** (1915), *Terni* steel worker; CISL union organizer; 4.2.1984
- Daniele Tacconelli** (1980), AST; 7.2.2008
- Fabrizio Terranova** (1980), tourism and theater operator; 5.13.2008
- Vittoria Terzaroli** (1907), seamstress; PCI; 3,24.1984, Rome
- Comunardo Tobia** (1920, Papigno), Papigno; partisan; CGIL official; 12.29.1982
- Alessandro Toffoli**, (1979 Rome), university student; 6.19.2008
- Agata Trinchi** (1909), state insurance employee; 7.7.1982
- Elchide Trippa** (1919, Paris [France]), office worker; vernacular poet; 2.29.2.1980
- Mario Tronti** (1931, Rome), university professor; member of Parliament; 10.9.1980, Rome
- Alvaro Valsenti** (1924), Bosco; Communist Party full-time worker; local government official; writer; 9.8.1982; 10.18.1982

Guglielmo Vannozi (ca. 1915, Onelli [Perugia]), farmer, miner, partisan; 10.13.1981 (GFC), 10.27.1981 (GFC), Onelli
Alfredo Vecchioni (1919), Paganica [Rieti]), store owner; *Terni* steel worker, fired in 1953; 5.1.1979
Iginio Vella (1944), *Terni* skilled steel worker; 4.29.1984
Mario Vella (1938), salesman; 4.29.1984
Antonio Venturi (1918), *Terni* steel worker; 1.26.1976 (VP)
Vero Zagaglioni (1913, Narni), Papigno, *Terni* steel works; jailed for anti-fascism, 1939; partisan; 6.21.1981; 11.12.1980 (GFC)
Bruno Zenoni (1908, Marmore), barber; jailed and exiled for anti-fascism, 1930s; partisan; local government official; 6.24.1980; 6.7.1980; 3.3.1981; 13.9.1978 (AM); 21.6.1980 (AM); 26.5.1979 (AM); 24.II.1981 (GFC)
Evelina [Collazzoni] Zenoni (1911, Marmore), farmhand, merchant; 6.24.1980
Menotti Zocchi (1931, Figline Valdarno [Arezzo]), Polymer; union representative; 12.29.1982, Collescipoli
Leopoldo Di Girolamo (1951), doctor, mayor of Terni; 11.5.2016

NOTE

1. Fabbrica Umbra Cioccolato e Affini – Terni – a chocolate factory

PART I

Biography of a Town

Introduction: Speaking, Writing, and Remembering

I PROPERTY OF LANGUAGE

Enzo De Michele. I started at the steel works in June, 1972. Three days later we held the first general assembly to discuss career progression and working conditions, and I was amazed at the sight of those men that just a few minutes earlier were bending their heads to their work, dirty and all, and now they went up to the podium and stated their problems, their hopes—whistles, jeers, but yet we spoke out.

Bruno Zenoni. I mean, workers—back then, when the workers had a meeting—in Terni we had no intellectuals—they had a common language, you know. Then, when intellectuals joined, perhaps you'd see them making faces at you because some comrade may have made a mistake or tried to use a word he doesn't know what it means and said it wrong, then—I'm talking about myself—a worker notices it and shuts up, he's a volunteer anyway, he steps back and shuts up. Back then, leaders didn't rub in your inferiority in the property of language, today it weighs upon you.

On May Day, 1973, in a tavern just outside of Terni, Amerigo Matteucci opened the singing with a traditional *stornello*:

Adesso che mi trovo qui presente
Mostra' non mi vorrei tanto ignorante
Saluto chi mi ascolta vede e sente

Saluto chi ci sta sulla mia mente.

[Now that I am here in your presence

I hope I don't seem too uncouth

I greet those who listen hear and see me

I greet the one who is on my mind.]

Amerigo Matteucci was following the traditional custom of asking permission to make himself heard in public by paying homage to the community and to its shared rules of poetic improvisation. We will hear more from Matteucci in the course of this book. A construction worker and Communist mayor of the tiny hill village of Polino, Amerigo Matteucci was both a guardian of tradition and as modern as they come.

In Umbria, where the factory was dropped down wholesale upon a complex rural background, the language of urban, industrial workers was also made possible by the survival of these traditional forms. As Communist leader Giancarlo Pajetta wrote, local Communists “also inherited the oral tradition.” On the other hand, Raffaele Rossi, a historian and a regional Party officer, pointed out that the Party “taught thousands of illiterate men and women how to read newspapers and books, how to discuss them and understand them.”²

At the end of the 1960s, the Communist Party federation of Terni discovered that the crisis of orality and the inadequacy of the written forms of communication were endangering class unity. “The relationship...between old Party or union leaders and young workers no longer takes place as it did in the past, when the old would teach the young the basics of the job and the history of the factory, of the strike, of the struggles.” Factory papers, not written or distributed by workers, and distant from their experience, failed to bridge this gap.³

The question, then, was not writing a better paper, but who wrote it. Pajetta's and Rossi's remarks suggest that the working class was granted only a partial access to literacy: they were taught to read, but hardly ever to write; not to express their own culture, but to receive someone else's. In a dialogic improvisation of *stornelli*, as Amerigo Matteucci sang the praises of learning and culture, his antagonist Dante Bartolini sang back: “I am the teacher in the school and I teach you the master's words.”

Discourse from below is thus relegated either to an imperfectly mastered writing, or to an orality that is devalued in the eyes of its very bearers. The fear of appearing “ignorant” and “uncouth” is related less to respect of one’s equals than to one’s uncertain right to speak to one’s superiors. In his autobiography partisan chief Alfredo Filippini apologized: “It is written as a worker may be able to write.” The best-known song of Dante Bartolini, the epic poet of Resistance in Umbria, ends: “Please excuse me\I am not a composer\A worker’s son\I can’t speak any better.” In the 1920s a report by Terni’s Communist federation recalled the days when “workers hardly ever joined in the debate, in their own speech, because they were awed by lawyers, professors, teachers, doctors.”⁴ Even in the 1980s those who got up to speak in general meetings risked the “jeers” of their own peers.

Proper language, then, founds the property of language. This book aims to question both. In order to survive, the speech of common people and of the non-hegemonic classes had to strengthen itself using forms and structures more sophisticated than those as yet achieved by the appropriation of writing. This is why I rely on oral sources: not because they are more “authentic,” but because they remain a privileged form of expression of the working class and the common people.

2 SOUNDS

Roberto Pinoca, a factory worker, was about my age, so I automatically addressed him with the familiar “*tu*” form. A while into the interview, I noticed that he was using the formal “*lei*” address instead. So I asked him, “Excuse me, are you addressing me this way, or the tape recorder?” He hesitated, “No, no...” and then, “All right—the tape recorder.”

The uses of *tu* and *lei* in this conversation suggest that even a one-to-one interview, when recorded, becomes a form of public discourse. This process is more complicated than it appears at first sight. Oral history begins when the encounter of researcher and narrator generates a two-voiced dialogue that will later be written down, interpreted, published. From the beginning it is the result of interference. “It would be easy,” comments German writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “to claim that each line of this book is a document. But it would be an empty word. As soon we get a closer look, the document’s supposed ‘authority’ crumbles under our fingers...No, sources are inherently debatable, and there is no criticism that can sort out all of their contradictions.” And he was writing about written sources anyway.⁵

In one interview, Russian semiologist Jurij Lotman says, “the self is interested in the fact that the other agent is indeed ‘other’.” Yet, Lotman’s abstract model places both “agents” on the same plane; in actuality, “observer” and “observed” relate to each other across all possible forms of inequality. The “observed” protect themselves from the reifying gaze of the “observers,” using a variety of techniques of dissimulation, silence, and complacency. Inequality, then, results in a distortion of data, and this is the hard political core of any field encounter. Unless we strive to turn the interview into an exchange of gazes between different but equal subjects, “the observed person is reduced to the status of a thing,”⁶ while the observer is reduced to an annex of his tools.

The effort to be “faithful” and “authentic” has generated attempts at exact and literal reproductions, based on criteria of objectivity and neutrality that are systematically frustrated by the subjective interference at the moment of creation of the document, and by the failure of writing to fully convey the impact of orality. In this work, such criteria have been frequently bypassed: verbatim *reproduction* may be less faithful to the quality and meaning of the sources than a *representation* that also requires—though I never attributed to them a word they had not actually said—a touch of “manipulation.”⁷ When I submitted their quotes to the narrators, only in a couple of cases did they criticize them for not being faithful enough; all the other remarks that were expressed (and some that weren’t) complained instead that I had been *too* faithful to their spoken language. They felt that by retaining the colloquial, vernacular, everyday speech used in the interview I was indeed making them look “uncouth” in public.

Respecting the narrators, then, also means respecting their right to self-representation. This right, however, must be tempered with the researchers’ faithfulness to themselves and their task of reporting as honestly as possible what they have seen and heard, and of interpreting it as boldly and freely as necessary. Thus, what appears in these pages is, in the main, a close transcription of speech, but also, often, the result of a negotiation and a compromise on spelling, grammar, syntax, lexicon, punctuation and accent.

The awareness of the interview as public discourse, however, raises questions of cultural status in speakers who are used to a more vernacular form of expression. Indeed, self-denigration is inscribed in the language; as a Fascist youth paper put it in 1943, Terni’s dialect is not as sweet as Venice’s or as lofty as Siena’s, “it is rough, sloppy, full of phonetic alterations.”⁸ Some speakers, however, claim it as a badge of identity:

Elchide Trippa. I say “Piedilugu” not “Piediluco”. Why, if I’d say Pie-di-luco [people would say], have you been strolling down main street? How come you talk so clean? “Miranna”, not “Miranda”.⁹

Sandro Portelli. I noticed that people try to disguise whether they’re saying a “t” or a “d”...for instance, when they’re supposed to say “andando” [going].

Trippa. “Antanto”. That’s right. And for me this is...this is wrong. If I was to narrate all this nonsense in dialect, I’d do it a lot better. I’d talk a lot less and tell a lot more.

In a poem, Dante Bartolini apologizes (in ungrammatical spelling) for his scant education: “*che poca scuola o fatto lo sapete/ecco perché mi venco a lamentare/la colpa chi la ha la indenterete...*”.¹⁰ Like many central or southern varieties of Italian, Terni’s dialect neutralizes the contrast between voiced and unvoiced stops after a nasal consonant, and follows all nasals with voiced consonants. Therefore, Dante cannot hear (and therefore spell) the difference between standard “*intenderete*” and “*indenterete*.” Sometimes, this dilemma is solved by assimilating the voiced stops to the nasal sound (Trippa’s “*Miranna*” for “*Miranda*”). Often, however, speakers assume that what sounds right to them (nasal + voiced consonant) is automatically wrong, and reverse the vernacular rule by following all nasals with unvoiced stops (Dante’s “*venco*” for “*vengo*”). Many speakers, in fact, are so much aware of the difficulty that they try to blur the distinction: either by pronouncing the same word in a number of different ways (I have heard the word *andiamo* [we go] pronounced, often by the same person in the same conversation, in a number of different ways: *antiamo*, *andamo*, *annamo*, *anniamo*, *agnamo*, as though hoping that at least one attempt may prove correct), or by trying to generate an uncommitted, “lax, half-voiced” sound, a sort of *shwa* that cannot be pinned down (or transcribed).

I dwell on these linguistic minutiae because these strategies are a consequence and a sign of an uncertain cultural status. The hesitant, whispered, *in-between*, “half-voiced” sound, and the assumption of being always wrong are the cultural expression of an ever unfinished transitional social mobility and change, half way between country and town, dialect and standard language, working and middle class, oral culture and schooling or mass media. They are paralleled by incongruities and excesses

in clothing, food, furniture: the wrong make-up of many young women; the excess sugar in the cup of coffee offered to visitors; the elaborate chandeliers and trinkets on the large TV sets and heavy furniture of working-class living rooms. No wonder all requests for corrections came from more status conscious, socially mobile interviewees, or from politicized working-class “aristocracy” concerned with its public image.

Transcribing, says Willa K. Baum, is a work of art, close to translation, though with less leeway (of course, in this version of the book, I am translating transcriptions).¹¹ In this process the historian becomes both the writer/*écrivain* of his own text and the writer/editor/*scripteur* of other people’s speech. Each act of transcription, from putting in a comma upwards, is an act of interpretation. A good translation must first of all function in the new language; often, it must distance itself from the original text in order to preserve its quality and meaning; a good edited transcription, however, has less leeway in that, while it must result in readable writing, it also needs to remind readers of its oral and dialogic origin. The ambivalence of oral history, then, also emerges in the double form of respect for its sources: keeping intact and/or trying to make sure that it functions on the page as it does on the tape; respecting the letter and/or saving quality; respecting and violating at the same time the rules of both orality and writing, and generating a constant tension between the two—“If you decode this work and present it exactly as it is and all, many of those who begin to read will not read until the end” (*Azelio Fulmini*).

Everyday speech is language in progress, made of false starts, paratactic corrections, broken and run-on sentences, repetitions, excesses, digressions. It can be compared to what philologists call a *variorum* edition: a text that includes all its earlier versions and preliminary materials. Some “cleaning up” may be necessary, out of respect for the rights of the readers, the self-representation of the speakers, and the space limitations of writing and publishing. One strategy I used has been to only use words that the interviewees had actually said, foreground those words that express what I felt to be the speaker’s final intention, but also retain enough traces of the “preliminary material” to allow readers to recognize the speakers’ work with language and individual voices. Much is lost, much is altered; I trust, however, that enough remains to convey a sense of how these words were created and by whom.