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Oral history interview with Ignazio Meleddu

Interviewer: Filippo Petrucci ; Date interview: 2020 April 5 ; Language: Italian

Summary

Ignazio Meleddu was born on June 22, 1923 in Laconi, in Sardinia, Italy. He spent his childhood in his village, went to school 8 km away on foot. Learn the morse alphabet as a child from his father's colleagues who was stationmaster. At 16 he had an accident at work. He enrolled as volunteer in 1940 but had a series of diseases, first malaria and then meningitis. Go home for a license. In the spring of 1941 he was in Turin, in the 1st military engineering regiment. He was sent to Bari with a few colleagues, but he did not know at the time if he would be sent to Africa or the Balkans. In June 1941 he was sent to Albania. He was a "marconist" (radio operator because he knew the Morse language very well, learned as a child) and is sent to many parts of Albania, Balkans and Greece. In Greece he witnesses some violence done by the fascists. On September 8, 1943, the Germans asked his military company what they wanted to do and who they wanted to continue fighting. Nobody wanted to fight and they became military internees who were used in the labor camps. He avoided heavy work because of the injury he sustained as a boy. He ends up first fixing locomotive tachographs and then, after being hospitalized for jaundice, he ends up in the countryside helping farmers. He has an excellent relationship with the host family and stays there for a year in the countryside, working hard but also living well; he remained in contact with that family and returned to visit them in 1968 and 1984. Then, at the end of the war, he was transferred to Ebensee for a few weeks, where they were also Jews. A long journey from Innsbruck to the Brenner by train, then, always by train, to Bologna and then Naples where he embarked. He arrived in Cagliari on the morning of 1 July 1945, and at 10 pm he arrived in the village Nurallao, where his family was staying. He returned home after five years of being away from the family; for five years, very little information was sent to him (because letters were controlled by military censorship).

Topical Terms:

Balkan war
Fascism
Forced work
IMI (Italian military internees)
Jews
War prisoners
War volunteer (to be able to work as stationmaster)
World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives, Italian.
Youthful propaganda brainwashing

Geographic Names:

Balkan Peninsula
Bari
Belgrade
Bitola (Macedonia)
Bratislava
Cagliari
Cossovo
Danubio

Durazzo
Ebensee
Firenze
Isole Strofadi
Laconi
Linz
Meana Sardo
Montenegro
Tirana
Torino
Zante