



JOINING HANDS FOR A BETTER FUTURE
2017-1-IT02-KA219-036551 CO-FUNDED BY
THE EUROPEAN UNION

DIGITAL DIARY

Part 1



*Lycée Blaise Pascal,
Segré, France*



My electronic diary

I leave the 2 December 2012, I had to join my parents for Christmas .But today it's the 8 January 2013, and I'm here, stuck between France and Algeria .I don't know how long is going to take to join my parents . I'm so upset ,nobody tell me where I have to go , when I can finally leave this place . Anyway I stay positive ,but my little sister came a few weeks ago ,so now she's with me, and she is so stressed .

21 march 2012 ,the terrorist attacks blocked all of airports , bus station ... So we're stuck at the airport and I don't know when our plane is going to take off .It's been a long time since it's happened ,but French security is still vigilant. It's in that moment I asking myself why I leave Algeria to attend school in France . I'm over there since 2008 , I have all of my papers to stay in France, but almost EVERYDAY a policeman or a serviceman is asking me my passport. And that annoy me so much ,I mean ...I understand but juged a person by his origins or his skin is not fair .

Anyway now I just pray for having a plane and see my family as soon possible . Damn! My phone is almost dead . I'm going to call my parents before it turns off and ...Wait ... Why people are yelling ?... Oh my God why are they running ?...Wait , someone says somebody have just killed a military ... My little sister is terrify. Someone is coming ,someone is coming ,someone is com.....

6th of June

Today I have decided write a private diary about my migration. I am leave from Darfur in Sudan for go in Europe. I am currently in the Sahara but I don't know more except we just stay two days around to be packed in one pickup. We are around twenty at the back of that vehicle. I am leave with Talia, my wife, she is thirty four years old. We have leave our country because of war and the poverty. Our child's are die. Our daughter Joyce she was eight years old was die because of famine. Our boy Kossi he was ten years old was die because of the fighting. We have decided try to go in Europe but we don't have destination exact because that depend on the people smuggler. We have just take the minimum luggage for no are in the way. It is an stuffy heat in the Sahara. We don't have a lot for keep hydrated our, we have a danger of dehydration.

7th of June

Today there is standstom in the Sahara. That's slow our journey but we don't know how many time precisely. That night one passenger present with our was die because of dehydration. The tiredness make feel. And I and my wife have fear don't stay alive to our arrival in Europe but we have decided try all the same that risk journey. We think a lot to our children all the time.

8th of June

Our people smuggler announce if all pass well we can arrive at 7pm to Alqawf in Libya. We must give to him the rest for the journey that is one hundred dinard. The transport for I and Talia we have cost

1200 dinards. We have to search another people smuggler for transportation out to Benghazi for go to Malta. We are arrival to Aljawf. The transport was good for I and Talia we don't have any problem despite our tiredness and the heap

9th of June

Yesterday we have succeed find one people smuggler but his vehicle was breakdown. We must find a new people smuggler. Him have advised our walked in the direction of one small village next to, one friends to him can go to Benghazi before long. We are in the journey and we catch sight of the village far away. When we are arrival the people smuggler announce the price. It's cost but we don't have the choice if we want go in Europe as quickly as possible. We've go in the night.

Dear diary,

This day has been very hard again. We are hiding in a old hut, at the middle of the forest. From time to time, I hear some animals.

This morning, my brother, Hizza, throun up. He must be hungry. We left before the rising of sun. We walked a lot. My sister, Adelma, and I have got some blisters but despite that we continue. I carried my little brother from time to time. Will we arrive? I don't know but we will do everything to arrive to Germany.

For the meal, my father, Navid, went to pick up some fruits. It was difficult. We have trouble to find food for everybody. After the meal, we're going for around 3 hours of walking.

A child was alone on the way. He must have 6 years old. Alone and so young. It hurt my heart. Then, we went in his meeting to help it. We gave him the rest of water that we had left. I got down Hizza and took Rostam, the child, on my back. Hizza went on the back of my dad. Later, in the journey, Rostam told us that his brother was dead, they were very hungry. His parents were dead too at home. This children became of Syria. This is now 11 days he's gone. Why must we bear all this? We didn't ask for anything! All these poor children are for nothing. Back, on the

way, we met an old man with a lot of bags. It was very hard!
But we are trying to entertain ourselves to forget. Hizza and Rostam
get on very well. They have fun on the path by telling jokes
or playing with what they find. It does some good for them
to amuse as many. Later, on the track, we have seen at the
far a hut old, the one whose I spoke to you just before.
The night is fall. Hizza and Rostam sleep, snuggle against
my dad. Adalma try to sleep but she is afraid all those
noise. The nights are more and more fresh. We didn't have take
enough hot clothes. Dad beckons me to sleep. Before sleeping,
I think about tomorrow. We'll go cross the sea. But I ask
myself some questions. Are we going find some person
for us make pass? The tomorrow day, is it going be difficult?
I have only a haste, to have arrived finally!

Lima Sammar

Dear diary,

It has been days, weeks, months, I don't know anymore, I can't tell how long we've been on this boat, how long we've been out of water and food. On this journey to Europe, hundreds of people, just like me, risk their lives so that maybe one day, we'll walk on the Italian beaches, our destination.

I can only wonder, how will I be welcomed in Europe? Will I be accepted in their society, me, a 26 years old black Syrian, who his by the way Muslim?

I now regret leaving my father and sisters behind, but I also know, that now all I can do for them is to live, to get Europe and maybe one day, bring them to our new home.

On this small boat, I can see people starving. All the women and children are put in the level below so that they don't freeze. But I also know that if this sinks, they'll be the first to drown. I and the rest of the men are on higher level, freezing to death. All he we can do now is hope. Hope that the European cost guards come and rescue us. Hope, that Allah will hear crying and begging and send his disciples to come and save us. Hope that we don't die, today.

I have stories about how some European countries refuse to help us. They say that we are disguised terrorists infiltrating their countries. I honestly hope that those stories are false, because if Europe doesn't want us, than we have nowhere to go to, and if we have nowhere to go, we shall die.

Dear diary, I now hope that Allah shall guide us through these dangerous and deep waters, and pray for him to guide us on this journey, that we will arrive on the European land. I hope that we shall arrive to our destination... I wish only to be safe from the war. After all, we are all human beings, the differences between us is where we were born. I mean, after all, if you are Syrian, you are in great trouble. War is coming, where I come from, we accuse the Europeans and the Americans of being the cause of the war. Of course, we might hate them, but we hate more the extremist. All I want is safety, freedom and a new home.

14/03/15

Today is a D-day. Finally, I leave Damas and my native country, the Syria. It's 7.a-m, I go out of my house with my pregnant wife, Malika. I watch oe last time my home, chuck a last glance to the sleeping city, to take a look at the detoyed district of the city which represented formerly the oriental splendour. Now, I join my brother and my mother at the big place of the city.

16/03/15

Currently, we are to Beyrouth, a harbour city of Liban where we wait our smuggler to join the Greece. My brother and my mother wait we. The smuggler, a swarthy man we do ascending at the dinghy with more of 300 persons which hurry. Finally the smuggler announce the departure and the boat slowly progress.

01/04/15

We have been in Pylos for 10 days, a Greek city adjoining the sea. I was separated from my brother Mohamed and our mother Ismira died. At this memory, the emotion overwhelms me, the swell was very strong during the trip, I saw my mother die before my eyes with other people. The smuggler had cheated on us. Fortunately we were rescued by a Greek rescue boat and that's where I lost sight of my brother. I still have no news of him, and I hope he is well.

01/05/15

I am in Italy, I managed to cross the borders of Albania and those of other countries whose name I do not remember. I have almost reached the goal of my trip but I can not cross the French border. We have suffered a lot during the last month, hunger, cold and sickness have touched us a lot. We managed somehow to avoid the patrols and other controls of the army. So we decided, my wife and I to cross the Alps but we for more safety, we prefer to wait for the return of good weather to pass the mountains.

15/05/15

We were welcomed in Lyon by an association, Hand in the Hand, which helps refugees to obtain papers, to find work, in short to integrate into society. The nightmare finally ends, we have crossed Europe, regularize our situation and my wife will soon give birth. I am going to be a dad!

14/02/18

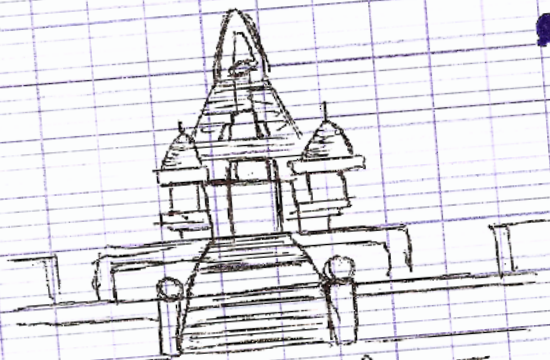
I found this diary in the attic and decided to publish it to show how difficult it is to leave one's country and give up one's roots. By the way, I called my little girl Ismira in memory of my mother and so that this horror never happened again.

Tuesday 23 October:

12.35 pm

It's been three hours that my plane landed. I reserved a room for 4pm. So I decided to explore a little the city. I'm going to stay in India for 13 months, so I have already search some informations about the city. If I come here it's to see with my own eyes the India's "hide part". That one who's not in the prospectus, the poorest part. I decided to go in India for an humanitarian mission. When I landed, the smell attacked me. In the town that was worst. But the center of the town was wonderful. I saw the temple of Lakshmana.

It was beautiful. The woman was wearing traditional clothes. The red dress was so magnificent. I stayed one hour. I took photo and I made draw a little.



to the town's outside. The condition was more difficult. The smell was horrible. That was a real bidonville. I can't stay here because of the law. I had to return to my hotel. That was a hard first view.



I think I'm going to sleep.

The travel make me tired. I think I'm going

to continue this diary of my travel.



Today, it's a D-Day. I leave my home country.

My name is Mohamed Khalifa, I am Syrian, I am 31 years old, I live in Damas, Syrian capital. I have a woman named Karima and a son named Tarek. I am a fighter for the Syrian army, but I have just been fired from my post. That's why I decided to leave my country of origin because there is war.

It is 8 o'clock, I leave my house, with my woman and my son. I look for one last time my house. A house which was destroyed however by bombs and gunshot.

It is 9 o'clock, I arrive in the largest square of Damas, where there is a crowd overflowing. I join my brother and my mother, whom I had not heard from for weeks.

16/03/2015

We are now in Beirut, capital of Lebanon, where we will take the boat to reach Greece, in Pyllos. At 10 o'clock, we will take the boat accompanied by a huge crowd that is pressing to get places in the boat. At 11 o'clock, we take the boat. The boat slowly starts and it is here that tears begin to come to my eyes.

01/04/2015

We have been in Pyllos for about ten days. Before arriving in Pyllos, we were victorious at a storm on the high seas, which caused some victims, including my mother, who did not succeed to go back to the surface of the water. It was only 65 years old. I am stunned and collapsed by this awful news. Fortunately, me, my wife, my son and my brother were rescued. However, when we arrived, we have lost sight of my brother.

Diary

Intimate

Monday 20 February
2014,

Dear diary, I'm
writing you for
say you than I'm
fine. The travel
has been long. It
was very hard to
walk all this
kilometres, to cross
the borders, to fight
every day against

myself and it's
always the case
in France. I'm
hiding all the
time. I'm own
papers of identity.

Friday 20 February
2014,

Good morning, this
night, I've slept

outside. Of course,
I didn't sleep well.
I still haven't
of House. I still
haven't of money,
of job. It's
complicated but
I don't regret of
be gone of the
Syria. I couldn't
stay otherwise

I die in cause
of the war.

Saturday 25
February 2014,

I'm worried
for my family.
I haven't heard.
I blame myself
of have left them
over there.

I feel so alone
in France.

I.I.S. Leonardo da Vinci

Potenza, Italy



My name is Lucia and I am 20 years old. My parents died two years ago and now I'm the only one who takes care of the family: I've got three brothers and four sisters, and they're all younger than me. Three months ago two of my sisters, Rosanna and Carmen, left our village to go to America. They are 17 and 16 years old and they're two clever girls, we all had high hopes for them; we knew many families that moved and now have a better life in the other continent and we all decided they deserved this possibility.

Of course we are not rich, it was incredibly difficult to find the money to buy the tickets from here to Naples, where the ships leave for America, and then from there to New York, but we managed to do it. They left one day at 5 in the morning. They left with nothing but a small bundle, a pair of shoes, a change of clothes and little money, maybe just to buy three new vests once arrived. I cried a lot, but I still don't know if I cried for them, leaving and starting a new life without any certainties, or for me, staying here with no possibilities of improving my family's conditions.

They wrote to me when they arrived in Naples after six days and they told me their journey went well, they didn't walk a lot because they were lucky enough to stay on the cart most of the time. They were going on board and they felt very nervous. After that letter I hadn't received anything from them until yesterday: Rosanna wrote to me and she said she is now in Ellis Island, her immigration request has been accepted and she has to wait there for 40 days before leaving and entering the city. But after this good news she told me that Carmen is not with her and she has no idea where she could be right now. When they were on the ship there was a problem she has told me nothing about and Carmen was forced to move to another ship which took her probably to South America.

I am not brave enough to inform my siblings and I can't find a way to help Rosanna and Carmen...what should I do? Lord help us all.

Lucia

I'm Carmen and I'm 16. Actually, next month I will be 17...this means that I'm becoming an adult. An adult! People say that when you reach adulthood you can't act like a baby any longer. Well, I don't know if I still need a little bit of time or I've already entered the adults' world for my current situation.

I know exactly where I come from: a very poor Italian family made of three brothers and five sisters who own **NOTHING**. Sometimes our eldest sister, Lucia, starves to feed the younger ones. She told me and my almost twin-sister (we were born with only 10 months' difference) to go to America, find something with our skills that could keep us alive. What I don't know is where I am now. What happened? I've never arrived at Ellis Island. Why? I was so confused that I remember only the sea (an endless sea) and the ship which literally **SAVED** my life. Rosanna? Well, I really hope she survived.

I'm in this new country full of people who all stare at me and speak a strange language...they even make fun of me! When I try to say my name they say: "Oh, señorita Carmencita!" and I do hate that name!

I'm a vase full of fear and worries, but everyday I try to keep the hope alive. My siblings are constantly in my thoughts, I always wonder whether they are good or whether Rosanna has got to her destination safe and sound or not. Finally...what about me? Will I survive? Will I be able to handle all of this? In these moments I understand that yes, I'm ready to be an adult for me and my family.

With love and nothing else

Carmencita ----> NO! Carmen

My name is Rosanna, I'm 17 and I left my family three months ago to go to America and find a job to help my brothers and my sisters; I left them in Potenza with my eldest sister Lucia who will take care of them while I am absent from home. I left with my sister Carmen, my "twin" (because she was born just 10 months after me), one morning in June to arrive in Naples and then to board to Ellis Island. We reached Naples in one week, and we took with us only little money, shoes, some pieces of bread and cheese to eat during the voyage, and clean clothes. In Naples we were visited by a doctor to receive the permission to continue our journey: if we had been ill, we wouldn't have had any chances to board!

After four hours, my sister and I boarded the 'Saint Lucy': when I read the name on the ship I immediately thought of my sister Lucia, alone in our terrible and miserable land.

The voyage was awful, I felt sick every day and every night, because I'd never ever been on a ship in my entire life, so I didn't eat much, even if we had three meals a day.

Five or six days before the arrival at Ellis Island, at 5.00 A.M. a deep voice woke all the passengers up and invited us to go to the deck. There the captain said that 5 passengers had to go with him on a new ship which would arrive directly in New York, without stopping at Ellis Island to make other examinations. Straight away I said to Carmen to go on the new ship without me. Crying she left me without saying a word.

I arrived at Ellis Island one week later.

I was subjected to all the examinations and now I live in a tiny apartment in New York with a Sicilian girl, she's a very lovely girl with great ambitions: she would like to be a teacher and in her spare time she makes Sicilian cakes and sweets for poor people.

Every day I work hard in a small factory, with other women, for my family in Italy and every hour I think of my twin Carmen: I'm still waiting for her, I don't know where she is, but I hope with all my heart she's fine!

I hope everything goes well!

Rosanna



My Dear diary,

My name is Felicia Muscio and this is the first time I've written to you.

Yesterday I arrived in Chile.

I came all the way down here to rejoin my husband Vittorio who's been living here for four years.

His journey to Chile was adventurous, but mine, together with my daughter Rose, aged only four, seemed impossible to me.

We arrived from Oppido to Naples in a cart - it was such a long way! - and then by rail. At the port we were visited before sailing to Buenos Aires. It was awful, I felt stupid, I did not understand what they were saying to me, I felt terribly confused, they asked me so many questions, but in the end, thanking God, they let us leave.

We arrived after a long journey, little Rose and I travelled across Argentina on a noisy train. I was so frightened... and worried... But, most of all, I was desperate... As soon as we got off the train, we found a good man who took us - on a mule! - to the capital of Chile, Valparaiso. After that, we caught a steamboat and we arrived in Iquique.

It was then that I finally could hug Vittorio. He told me that in recent years, his first job had been shovelling the birds' yelp, but it was hard work, in terrible conditions. He told me that his companions had been recruited in Chinese ports. Then he worked as a "water salesman", as a shopkeeper, a milkman and finally he has become the owner of a carriage company.

I'm very lucky to have married a man like him. But now it's time for all of us to set to work, my new life is waiting for me.

Dear Diary, I'll update you tomorrow.

Kisses, Felicia



Dear diary,

It's been a long time since I last wrote to you, but I have been really busy. I have moved to another country for one year, away from home, away from everything: my parents, my friends, my whole life.

I know it's a big step, I know that it's a challenging adventure, but if you don't jump off the edge, how are you going to know what it's like to fly, right??

I miss home, but I don't regret making this decision, I love travelling, I love meeting new people and getting to know new cultures from all around the world.

Travelling gives you perspective on life and you get the chance to explore beyond your limits. You experience what it's like to be alone, completely alone. I love the responsibility and all the memories that travelling gives you.

I miss my parents so much but I guess it's normal, on the other hand I love the family that I've created here.

I've learnt so much about myself and the world around me that now I finally understand it.

Back home I didn't know what it was like to be on my own and to look after myself, but thanks to this experience I will be able to take care of myself in the future.

In the beginning it was frightening because I felt the weight of all the responsibilities that I had and I feared failure, but I didn't let fear take advantage and I grew stronger than I ever was.

I will cherish this experience all my life, because it's given me a sense of responsibility that I never had, awesome memories and a family away from home.

Because of this experience I got to know new people, I made new friends, I got to know first-hand a new culture and all its traditions.

It was really nice talking to you again, *Francesco*



Dear diary,

I've finally done it. I promised myself I would have done everything I could, and I did. After years spent on planning my new future life, I arrived in Germany last month. I left everything in my possession, I said goodbye to my family, I bought a huge bag and put all my personal things in it; then my friend and I took the train and here we are. The journey was long and we had to face some problems: my friend gets easily scared when it comes up to rats and people said that there was a whole family on the train who stole stuff during the night, no need to say she didn't sleep AT ALL. However, the rest of the time everything was quite good.

When we arrived there, it was 9 am and many people took care of us. Now I have a home, I live with my friend, we're looking for a job, but the language is a very big problem; we found one about two weeks ago, but we got fired the week after as we couldn't speak a word. I'm trying to learn something and I think I'm doing a great job; my friend instead, she seems upset all the time, she's not trying to improve anything, I think she has already given up and she'll try to go back home soon. That's why I need to make new friends, I don't want to go back home, but I don't want to stay here alone either. I like it here, even if I miss my parents and my siblings a lot, maybe one day they'll come and visit me for a while.

I really hope everything is going to be alright this time.

I'll write to you soon,

Your best friend. Gaia

17 October 1902

It's not simple for me to speak about my situation. Well, I'm Maria and I'm 40 years old. My husband Roberto had to leave Italy 10 years ago and went to Boston to look for a job. Now he is a worker in a steel factory and I haven't seen him since the day he went to America. He left with our son Donato, who was 10 at that time. Since then I have been living alone with my other two children, Sofia and Vito, and I have decided to reach Roberto. I can't wait anymore and my guys are ready. I need to see them, I need to see my son. But the thing that scares me the most is that Roberto could have met another woman, married her, had other children, he could have forgotten us or, worse, they could be dead. Here in the village I have heard about a cholera epidemic in America and I'm afraid they are dead because of that.

I'm determined to find them anyway. I have prepared everything for our leaving. I had to sell Donato's baby clothes, the gold watch that my grandfather gave me, my wedding ring and earrings (they were gifts and I used them only on that occasion - they were very expensive). Meantime Roberto has been sending me money from Boston and I have been able to raise the money to buy return tickets (they can send us back to Italy if we don't meet the necessary requirements to live there). That's one of the reasons why I don't think he married again or he wouldn't have sent us money in any case. But my mom always told me "never say never" and I'm still in doubt. I've made the passports and soon we will leave the village to go straight to Naples, where there are ships setting sail for America, North and South. Everybody tells me that life is different in that world because there's work for everyone, everybody can become somebody important, everybody earns food and then they become rich sometimes. They can have a decent house with the bathroom and bedrooms for all the children. It's always been my dream, a big, comfortable house. I'm sure that we could be happy there, all of us.

There's another thing that scares me: the immigrant inspection. They told me it is a place called Ellie or Elise Island. I'm not sure about that. I just know that they will check our health conditions, they will make us some tests in order to see whether we are mentally ill or not (in

the first letter Roberto sent me he said that they test our memory and our knowledge of English - I can't speak a single word of it! Roberto also told me some words like "good morning" or "good night"). It's really easy to become ill during the journey, especially on the ships. I beg God above to spare us illness, otherwise they will send us back to Italy, as I said before, if it's something incurable or if we don't pass those tests. But I'm ready to face everything, just to see my baby again even though he's not a baby anymore! And my Roberto too, of course. I miss him so much and I'm sure that we could all be happy in Boston. The whole family finally reunited in such a rich land called America! In conclusion, I'm scared of the difficulties and risks of the voyage, especially for Vito, the youngest kid. He's always been a bit weak in health and I pray to God for his safety. Sofia is really smart and she can manage everything perfectly. And, as mom said, never say never!

Maria



Here it's so difficult... it's a struggle for survival ! On the whole, my dad and I are fine and in some days we will get to Chile, we don't know exactly the place we are bound for, but somebody says we are expected to wait a bit and we are going to be subjected to some tests useful to state whether we are ill or not. There could be the possibility of coming back if we don't pass them.

I always sleep, I can do nothing else, I often cry because I miss my mother and my little siblings, they'll join us when my father starts working...for now I will write to them whenever possible. Here we can't do anything, we are all close to each other and it's always very dark, we have to stay still, and you're lucky if you're able to find your own space where to sit. There's the worst smell on earth... I usually have problems to recognize my dad, I feel alone. I just want to get to my destination as soon as possible, I am hungry, thirsty and tired... they give us nothing to eat, sometimes people at the stations throw bread for children. I don't know what time it is and what day is today, I've completely lost track of time...

See you tonight

Yours, *Liliana*



Dear Diary,

It's been four long years since my family and I arrived here in New York. It's still so hard, I still feel homesick and I miss everything of my dear native land, even working in the sun, picking up our fruits and products, which were the only thing that could feed us all. I even miss the smell and the taste of our Lucania, the Cruschi, talking to Rosa, our neighbour, and going with her to the market. I miss the feeling of being part of a community: people here still look at me with contempt, they judge me on my bad use of language and on the colour of my skin. You know, here you must be black or white, nothing can be in the middle and the problem is that my skin is neither black nor white: it's just sallow.

I remember how difficult it was at the beginning, when Antonio and I arrived here with our two children, Agata and Francesco, and with just a bundle containing all we had: almost nothing. We had sold our goods to have the money to buy a ticket and to have access to the new world and to be a part of the American dream.

We had been told that everybody could find a good job, even become rich, once landed there, that someone would have welcomed us, that our children could even have the possibility to study. Well, it wasn't so easy, really. . . I remember my anxiety, my fear once I heard that we should have done more medical examinations and someone would also ask us some questions to check our mental stability. When they asked

if I could speak English and if I could write and read, I was almost sure that they would have sent us back to Italy, to our misery and poverty, to the hopeless land that is still so dear to us, despite everything.

I didn't know a single word of English and the fact that I couldn't understand anything scared me the most. I prayed to the Lord for a miracle, I prayed to my patron, San Gerardo, for days.

Thanks God, Antonio, my husband, knew someone that gave us help and introduced us to this great and strange land. Life here is so hectic: they don't travel by donkey, they always walk and talk fast, they are impatient. They don't eat pasta (to be honest, I don't like what they cook), they don't speak my dear dialect. Above all, I can't blame myself: after two years, I finally found a job: I work for a textile company and my husband has also finally found an occupation. We are trying to save enough money, so our children will finally have the chance to continue with their studies, but it's so difficult... I have to work for about fourteen hours per day and when I come back home I'm so exhausted, but it seems like it's never enough. I remember I used to spend all the day in my fields, in the open air, and now my boss closes me and my colleagues into a room; I miss the fresh air of the mountains in my lungs that now are already full of pollution. I miss my little, poor house, while here there are the so-called

"Skyscrapers". I miss my people that are so far from me, even if I've met some lovely people here. But I have to hold on and be strong for my husband and my children. This is still the dream land and I'll continue to dream for my babies.

Now I need to go, bye!

Kiss, Antonietta.



My Dear Diary,

This is the first time I've written anything like this in my life. I have taken the decision of writing a diary, because I don't want to lose my precious memories, the memories of my native country, my childhood house, my village, my friends and what remains of my family left behind. I want to keep all my memories to pass them on to my children and to my future grandchildren.

They will have to know where we all came from, they will have to know that their father and I decided to leave our much beloved, very beautiful land to give them a better future. We had to leave because we had nothing left after the war had taken the very little we had before it started.

I cried in silence for days when the letter Antonio sent us from New York finally arrived. He said that he had found a job and a very small house where we could live 'happily' together. It was a nightmare, I didn't want to leave, yet I had to. I knew I would have never returned home again, just like all the others who had left before us. Nobody ever came back. For this reason we called America 'The land of the dead living'. There was only an 'outward journey'.

My little son Rocco was too young to understand all the suffering and my frequent fits of despair. The day we left, he was instead excited and stirred by the sight of the handcart we had to travel by to go to Naples where we had to take the ship that left for America. His happiness was the only comfort I had. The sight of my son Rocco and his cheerful face gave me the strength to go on and look ahead with a little flame of hope in my sick heart.

The journey to Naples was exhausting and endless. Rocco behaved quite well, because

he was *too* thrilled at the sight of the wonderful landscape of our beloved Italian country. We passed and stayed for the night in lots of villages and some towns. In the end, we finally reached Naples.

It was a bit of a shock to me, because it was a very large city with buildings of every sort. Some buildings were new and very big, some were old and small. We even passed under an enormous castle. I had never seen anything like that in all my life. The streets were full of people. I didn't know that there were such noisy crowded places.

What a contrast with my small, peaceful village I had lived all my life till that day! I felt as I was already in another country, in another continent. In Naples all the inhabitants spoke a language I didn't understand. They all shouted and spoke in a very loud voice. It was a bit frightful and Rocco, after a while, started crying because he didn't understand what was going on. It seemed all so chaotic and confused.

Now, my Dear Diary, it's high time for me to leave you, because I have to cook something and lay the table before my husband Antonio comes back home after a very long working day.

I will write and tell you all about the long journey we had to go through, to come here to this new, strange, foreign land where we are living now.

So goodbye for now, until tomorrow evening when I will have some spare time to recollect all my memories of my previous life and of my endless journey to my new life.

Yours, *Carola*



Luigi Tammone's diary

From Naples to New York.

January 30th, 1940

<i>Assets</i>	<i>Value in Italian lire</i>
<i>Equipment</i>	50
<i>Land</i>	300
<i>Shed</i>	150
<i>Stable</i>	75
<i>Livestock</i>	100
<i>House</i>	200

Today a gentleman from Filiano has bought the old shed, with the money I got. I'm going to buy the tickets to leave to America. Oh yes, leave or die. Now you can't live here anymore. The land is parched and the livestock are sick. Our family is now barely able to bring food on the table. My brother Luca is leaving with me! It will be easier for both to have a future in America. I do not deny being afraid, but I am confident that I can have a better life and be able to help my parents financially when I find a job.

January 31st

An old cardboard suitcase tied with rope is placed behind the front door. My mother is arranging it: sheets, towels, underwear and some warm clothes. They say that in America it's colder than here. Now we're going out to say goodbye to all our relatives that we might not see anymore.

February 1st

Today is the departure day. Uncle Vito is taking us on donkeyback to Potenza where we will take the coach to Naples.

February 2nd

Finally after travelling hours by coach we arrived at the port of Naples, and we were amazed to see how many people like us are waiting to get on the ship to America. I am very worried about the idea of leaving and leaving my country; however, I am willing to do so to try to have a better future. I see many people carrying huge trunks full of clothes and personal items on the ship, and others crying while saying farewell to their loved ones who accompanied them to the ship.

February 3rd

We finally left. My brother and I are travelling in third class, because we are not a very wealthy family and in order to get the money for the tickets we had to sell many of our

family assets. It's hell here that only those who live it can understand. We live in pitiful conditions, we have only a little more than a square meter each, and this is why every day new conflicts arise for those who want to get more space for themselves.

February 10th

It's been a week now since we left. It's difficult to sleep because of the constant quarrels between the other passengers, and because of the heat, and the only way to let some air in is through a small window, which allows you to look at the sea.

February 13th

The journey is proceeding quite well, we have just learned that we will arrive in New York in less than two weeks if the weather is fine.

February 17th

Now it's been two weeks since we left. These days I've made friends with some guys who like me can't wait to get there, because you can no longer live in the conditions of poor hygiene and chaos that reign in the third class. The only thing that gives us comfort is the opportunity to eat three times a day, which for me and my brother is big news because at home we eat only twice a day.

February 24th

It's dawn and we've just arrived at Ellis Island. I thought that I would no longer have to suffer humiliation and discrimination, but no, as soon as we got off the ship we had to wait for a large number of medical and psychological examinations to be made and then a long wait to get the answer. Some guys I met were sent back because they are illiterate. My brother and I have passed checks and now we will go in search of our relatives who came here a few years ago, but we know nothing about them. When we find a place to stay, I will start looking for a job to feed my brother and me. Thus my new life begins.



DIARY OF A MIGRANT

Part 1

I left overnight, just like an escaping jailbird, fleeing one source of danger to embrace a new one as big as the sea, with whose perils I had to put up for 32 long days. The day before I had been avoiding my mother's loving attentions, the poor unwitting woman had clearly not perceived my intentions, fetching me some clothes that were wretched by hard farm work. In those instants I found my father, who was, indeed, aware of everything, trying to conceal his concern, though I knew that his suffering would eventually arise and heavily affect everyone. His caresses were just some clear harbingers of his pain.

What I was striving to leave behind was not only misery, but also an imminent wedding: my parents had promised me in marriage to a man who was certainly not wealthy, yet he owned some lands on which we could have easily lived. He was even older than my father and, sadly, the only thing I knew about him was the number of the lands he possessed. I was one of four starving children and marriage was, at that time, the only solution my parents had envisioned for our family.

Everybody was speaking about "Merica", people from my hometown, who had left several years before, had sent an awful lot of letters, there, women could work in laundrettes or even in tailors' workshops, they were authentic labourers... Some voices would quote queer sentences, incomprehensible to our ears. They would speak of female or feminist movements, social-something or so; the people from America were always uttering words like "liberty", "rights", which seemed to us some weird overseas crazes, though I eventually realized that the only "weird" thing was actually in the small town where I was born.

I was always dreaming of becoming a teacher, but what would have been of me in a shepherds' town where children could be counted on the fingers of one hand? There I had to steal groceries to be able to afford the lessons I was taking, whilst in other nations female writers were being overwhelmingly backed up.

My father was not willing to listen at all. I suggested that we left together, but he knew that, in that case, if something had gone wrong, everything would have been lost. I, therefore, opted for the lesser evil, I left all alone.

"New York"... I did not even know what that meant, I could only guess: either to die or to live decently, and surely not to lead the life of a beast. Everybody feared such a journey in my town, somebody even said that our fellow people would only be considered as some sort of "white slaves" in America, in addition to inexorably having to face aggressions, freaks, or even death.

I had turned to two married women whose husbands lived there. The idea of a secure connection was appeasing, then, my father's eyes were so motivating. Despite firmly stating that he would not take part in my undoing, he took care of everything: he obtained my passport and bought warm clothes for me to wear, he even helped with the packing. He suggested that I did not bring any precious items, for my luggage would be left unattended in some sort of van, and that I be well covered up. I only put some valueless family memories in it.

I left with a couple of "lire" that my father had earned selling three cows, promising myself that I would pay him back. Of that night I can only remember his feeble look, contracted by an indefinable grimace, partly covered by one of his hands, which was crushing a wrenched tissue. The trip was horrendous, I overheard statements like "to them we do not belong to the white race, we're just some dirty Mafiosi pigs!", which completely smothered my hopes, thus filling me with remorse. Some said that even Swiss monks saw us as primitive and superstitious people.

Everything was daunting for me at that moment, I had unconsciously severed the thread that was binding me with my hometown.

I literally went through hell in the Celtic's third class...

