

Must-Reads: The Italian Brothers

Chiara Morucci (February 17, 2012)



Foreign editor of La Stampa Paolo Mastrolilli presents at Calandra Institute his latest work, "The Italian Brothers," a novel inspired by the lives of his father and his uncle during World War II.

On February 15 at [John D. Calandra Italian/American Institute](#) [2], Italian journalist Paolo Mastrolilli presented his last work, "The Italian Brothers," a novel translated from Italian and published by Robert L. Miller.

Introduced by Dean of Calandra Institute Anthony Tamburri, Miller told the audience about his deep passion for Italy and Italian culture, and said that translating to English Mastrolilli's historical novel has been a very exciting experience.



Mastrolilli's novel revolves around the story of two Italian brothers that joined the Italian Army during World War II, the one as a member of the Marine Corps, the other in the [Bersaglieri](#) [3] assault troops, and of their miraculous reunion after the end of the conflict.

One of the two brothers could not readjust to a new civilian life in Italy, and his struggle with a reshaped world leaves room for psychological introspection and historical analysis in the story.

"The Italian Brothers" has its factual foundation on unpublished documents studied by Mastrolilli, and it's based on a real story.

The novel is in fact inspired by the lives of the author's father and uncle. During the war, Mastrolilli's uncle joined the Italian Marine Corps while his father enrolled in the Bersaglieri and fought in Libya and Egypt. He was then deported in a POW Camp in Northern India for five devastating years.

Mastrolilli's uncle, whom had lived the terrible war years in Italy, was more conscious than his brother of the atrocities and crimes of the Nazi-Fascist dictatorships, and he decided to join the Secret Services to fight against the regime, while living in hiding in Rome.

Mastrolilli's father instead, being far from Italy, remained anchored to the nationalistic ideals of the fascist rhetoric to maintain a link with his homeland and to stay faithful to it, therefore he refused to surrender to the British troops in India even after the armistice.

Mastrolilli's novel powerfully tells the story of a generation of Italians, and it accurately describes the years of War World II, the Italian Fascist regime, the Italian Civil War after the armistice, and the difficult conditions of Italy right after the war.

"The Italian Brothers" is a great occasion to further understand what being Italian means and how distance can reshape the sense of belonging. It is definitely a must read for Italian lovers and Italian heritage bearers.

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[3] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bersaglieri>