

## Giorno della Memoria in New York - Program

I. I. (January 08, 2015)



Giorno della Memoria in New York is a collaborative initiative of the Consulate General of Italy, Centro Primo Levi, the Italian Cultural Institute, NYU Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò, the Italian Academy at Columbia University, CUNY's John Calandra Italian American Institute and Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi.

The 2015 program marks the 60th anniversary of the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Milan, the second oldest Holocaust research institute. Programs on January 25th and February 9th are held in collaboration with the Jewish Museum of Rome.

Centro Primo Levi is the recipient of an endowment of the Viterbi Family Foundation in memory of Achille and Maria Viterbi. Programs are made possible through the generous support of the Cahnman Foundation and Claude Ghez.

Tickets for the Museum of Jewish Heritage can be purchased online from the museum's website. All other programs are free and open to the public. No reservation is required.

#### PROGRAM

**Sunday, January 25 at 2:00 pm**

Museum of Jewish Heritage

36 Battery Park Place

Tickets at [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org)

Film Screening: Oro Macht Frei

Directed by Jeffrey Bonna. Produced by Jeffrey Bonna and Catherine Campbell. Executive Producer Joel Markel. Original music composed and performed by Yotam Haber.

Introduction by Alessandra Di Castro, Director of the Jewish Museum of Rome

After Italy's Armistice with the Allies (Sept 8, 1943), the country was divided: Mussolini's Italian Social Republic and its German ally, soon to become the occupying force, took over the peninsula from the Alps to area south of Naples, while the Anglo-American troops occupied Sicily, Puglia, Calabria and part of Campania. The Italian Social Republic issued an order of arrest for all Jews in its territory, carried out by the Germans and partly by the Italian police. Oro Macht Frei tells the story of the nine-month Nazi occupation of Rome through the testimonies of nine Roman Jews, archival footage, family photos with the participation of renowned historians Alexander Stille, Susan Zuccotti, Liliana Picciotto, Frank Coppa and Robert Katz. In addition to individual stories of Jews in hiding and arrest, OMF examines the period of Mussolini's Racial Laws (1938-1945) and the Catholic Church response to the roundup of the Roman Jews. This draws the viewer into personal reflection on the Holocaust in Italy through the experiences of the Roman Jewish community.

Recovered Memory - A special screening of a nine minutes archival film of the Della Seta family will precede the program. The only known video document of Italian Jewish life before the Holocaust, the Della Seta family films were shot in 1923-24 and feature weddings, leisure time and other daily activities. Italian journalist Claudio Della Seta found the films in his family home and never hoped they could be seen again. Recently he discovered that the National Restoration Institute had the capability to restore and digitalize them. After 91 years the films were brought back to life in all their splendor, wit and tenderness. Courtesy Della Seta - CDEC - Csc-Cineteca di Stato

**January 27, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm**

Consulate General of Italy

689 Park Avenue at 69th Street

Ceremony of the reading of the names of the Jews deported from Italy and the Italian territories.

The list of Jews deported from Italy was compiled over the course of 60 years by the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Milan and published by Liliana Picciotto: *Il Libro della Memoria. Gli ebrei deportati dall'Italia (1943 - 1945)*, (*The Book of Remembrance. Jews deported from Italy 1943 - 1945*, Mursia, 1991, 2002)

Between 1938 and 1945 European Nazi and Fascist regimes, and the people who supported them annihilated millions of Jews and thousands of homosexuals, handicapped, mentally ill and gypsies,



labeled as “stranger,” “unwanted” and “subhuman”. Prejudice and racial hatred put a halt to the lives of millions and devastated the societies in which these crimes were perpetrated.

On January 27, 1945 the Soviet Army entered the extermination camp of Auschwitz, starting the liberation process. In the year 2000, this date was chosen to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to promote the fight against racism. Following the efforts of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, Research and the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, Italy, Germany, and France established it as a national observance day. They were soon joined by all the countries of the European Union and the United Nations.

### **January 29 at 6:00 pm**

John Calandra Italian American Institute at CUNY

25 W 43rd St 17th floor, NYC

**New Documents on the Deportation of the Jews of Rhodes.** The Discovery of the Carabinieri Collection in the Dodecanese State Archive. Marco Clementi, University of Calabria

In 2011 the police in Rhodes, (Greece) contacted the Dodecanese State Archive concerning the discovery in a basement of a large collection of Italian documents. In November 2013, a team of scholars identified the records as the archive of the Carabinieri’s Central Special Bureau, a political police that, between 1932 and 1945, collected information on individuals, businesses, ethnic groups, spies, important events and political personalities. The records, which were thought to be lost, had remained for 66 years in the room where the Carabinieri had left them in 1945. A high number of these 100,000 files concern the local Jewish community in Rhodes, following the creation of the central governing body of the Italian Jewish communities (UCII) in 1931, to the deportation of July 1944. Their story can now be re-examined under new light based on a much broader evidence of their interactions with the Italian authorities. The documents of the Central Special Bureau are currently been catalogued and digitized by the Greek State Archives and with the support of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Marco Clementi (University of Calabria) received a PhD in Contemporary History from the University of St. Petersburg and holds a degree in Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures from the University "La Sapienza" in Rome. His publications include *Storia del dissenso sovietico* (2007), *L'Alleato Stalin* (2011), *Camicie Nere sull'Acropoli* (2013). He is a member of the St. Petersburg Memorial’s scientific council.

### **February 4 at 6:00 pm**

Italian Cultural Institute

686 Park Avenue, NYC

**Sixty Years of Holocaust Research in Italy: The Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Milan**

Opening remarks, Giorgio Sacerdoti (President, CDEC, Milan) Liliana Picciotto (CDEC, Milan)

Starting in the last months of World War II, surviving family members of Jews who had been deported to extermination camps prompted the first attempts to locate their loved ones and gather information about their journeys and fates. Soon after, in 1945, the Union of the Italian Jewish Communities created the Comitato Ricerche Deportati Ebrei, CRDE, (Research Committee on Jewish Deportees). Adolfo Massimo Vitale, a colonel of the Italian army dismissed during the Racial Laws who had long lived abroad, led the Committee. It was Vitale who compiled the first list of the Italian deportees.

In 1955 the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation opened in Venice with the mission to



reconstruct Jewish life and preserve the remnants of its past. Vitale's list became indispensable in tracing the destiny of the Italian deportees and in writing the history of the Shoah in Italy. Without Vitale's early work, much of would have been lost forever. Following this first phase, the research was advanced under three of CDEC's directors, Roberto Bassi, Guido Valabrega and Eloisa Ravenna. During this time CDEC moved its headquarters from Venice to Milan, where records concerning the deportees were permanently transferred.

In 1972, CDEC's staff decided to cross-reference Vitale's list in order to follow proper historiographical standards. They initiated new research aimed at collecting every available document in any relevant archive inside and outside of Italy. This phase was entrusted to Giuliana Donati, who was involved with the project until 1974.

Under Donati's guidance, CDEC acquired a large archive of handwritten documents, containing individual name cards for each victim. The available biographical data for each name was thoroughly checked and new data was added. In 1979, CDEC considered publishing the complete list of all Jews who died in Italy or were deported from Italy in the 1943-1945 period. This project was directed by Liliana Picciotto.

In the meantime, new documents come to light: the census of 51.000 individuals the fascist government recorded as Jewish in 1938, the registry of Italian jails with the names of Jews who were arrested, the records collected by prosecutors during the trials of Nazi war criminals operating in Italy. Vitale's original list was vastly expanded through these new documents. In 1986, CDEC received its first computer, a rarity at the time, which transformed research capabilities: the data collected up to that point was merged into an innovative database. In 1991 Liliana Picciotto published *Il Libro della Memoria. Gli ebrei deportati dall'Italia (1943 - 1945)*, (*The Book of Remembrance. Jews deported from Italy 1943 - 1945*, Mursia, 1991).

Three subsequent editions came out as the research continued to expand. In 2013 the database- which in addition to Jews deported from the Italian peninsula included those from Italian controlled Aegean Islands- was finally made available online. CDEC also made available the database of foreign Jews interned in Italy, a work-in-progress curated by Anna Pizzuti and the late Francesca Cappella at the Scuola Normale di Pisa.

CDEC is preparing to publish the results of a vast research project regarding survival strategies of Jews in Italy, based on the analysis of over 8,000 personal stories. This will be the first comprehensive historical analysis conducted nation-wide on survival and rescue, cross-referencing testimonies, documents and other historiographical records.

## **February 9 at 6:00 pm**

NYU Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò

24 West 12th Street, NYC

Unrecovered Memory: The Jewish Communal Library of Rome

Panel discussion

Serena Di Nepi, University of Rome La Sapienza, Jewish Museum of Rome, Agnes Peresztegi, Commission for Art Recovery, Alex Karn, Colgate University, Natalia Indrimi, Centro Primo Levi, New York.

On September 30th and October 1st 1943, two German officers visited the building of the Jewish

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Community of Rome. They headed to the third floor where the libraries of the rabbinical academy and that of the Jewish community were held. Both collections were invaluable, the latter being one of the most comprehensive pre-modern Jewish libraries in the world. The communal library was created at the beginning of the 20th century gathering the book collections of various pre-unification Jewish institutions. It contained about 5,000 volumes including incunabula and cinquecentine. The only existing catalogue had been compiled in 1934 by Isaia Sonne.

The officers examined the books. On October 11th they returned to announce that the libraries would be seized. Two days later the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, the German agency in charge of seizing Jewish books and art, sacked the building and took both libraries. The two libraries allegedly were transferred to Germany aboard three trains: two in October and a third one in December.

In 1946, the Allies located the Rabbinical library near Frankfurt and facilitated its return to Rome in 1950. No trace was ever found of the Jewish communal library of Rome. Although various investigations were conducted, the last as part of the Anselmi Commission on the confiscation of Jewish assets in 1999-2001, its fate remains obscure. Over the years, hypotheses multiplied and at least one volume emerged in a US library. Information and testimonies concerning its departure remain vague, research incomplete and many questions are still open. A panel of experts will analyze the history of the investigations and discuss future efforts to recover this precious library.

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#### **Links**

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