

9.117 Names to Never Forget

Paola Aurisicchio (January 29, 2016)



Again this year the City has commemorated the Holocaust victims by reading the names of over nine thousand Jews deported from Italy during the Nazi-fascist persecution. The readers were representatives of the Institutions, members of the Italian and Jewish communities, students and New York personalities like John Turturro.

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"When I arrived at [Auschwitz](#) [3]", Stella Levi remembers, "I didn't exist anymore, I couldn't recognize myself, while before I used to be Stella, I had my name. This is why reading the names aloud today is so relevant".



Stella Levi, important voice who survived the terrifying German concentration camp, was one of the many reading out the 9117 names of Jews deported from Italy during the Nazi-fascist persecution. The occasion was the Remembrance Day established by the United Nations in 2005 to commemorate the Holocaust victims. For the last few years this day is commemorated with this ceremony in Park Avenue, by the [Consulate General of Italy](#) [4].

For over seven hours, from 9 am to 4 pm, representatives of the institutions, students and New York personalities took turns at the lectern enunciating the names of the Italian Jews victims of the Holocaust.

This was an initiative organized by the [Primo Levi Center](#) [5], the Italian Institute of Culture in New York, [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò](#) [6], NYU, the [Italian Academy](#) [7], Columbia University and the [John D. Calandra Italian American Institute](#) [8]CUNY.

"Memory plays a fundamental role in preventing these barbarities from reoccurring" said the Italian Consul General in New York Natalia Quintavalle, while the director of the Primo Levi Center Alessandro Cassin reflected on how the perception of this day has changed and what the true meaning of the anniversary of the Auschwitz liberation, 27 Jan 1945, is.

"We should ask ourselves what is this day for" Cassino said. "For those who are alive today and for those who struggle to approach to past".

Present at the ceremony also the students of the Italian School Guglielmo Marconi, accompanied by the principal Maria Palandra and by the students of the Bronx High school of Science who read a few passages from the novel "The truce", by [Primo Levi](#) [9].

"It's important and necessary to help the students understand the meaning of this horrible page of our history", the principal Maria Palandra stated.

Among the coordinators also the Deputy Consul Isabella Periotto and the Vice Consul Chiara Saulle who underlined the importance of Remembrance Day. " We organize this Remembrance Day event every year" Periotto said " nd we read the names of the Italians deported between '43 and '45", while Saulle added " We commemorate the victims of the [Shoah](#) [10]. This day is to remember what has been a horrible past".

Why is remembering important? The question was answered by Giorgio Van Straten, director of the Italian Institute of Culture in New York. He highlighted how "antisemitism and racism are unfortunately still partly present and there is still a lot of work to be done". A warning also seconded by Anthony Julian Tamburri, Dean of the John Calandra Insitute, who explained how it is "important to rememeber because this day affects the Italian American community".

Joseph Sciamè, President of the Italian Heritage & Culture Committee added that memory needs to be kept alive and that "the Italian community with this commemoration pays tribute to its Jewish friends."

Finally, Peter S. Kalikov, president of H. J. Kalikow & Company, also took part in the reading and quoting Stalin he said: "A death is a tragedy, one million deaths are statistics. For this reason reading this endless list of names is so crucial".

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[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_concentration_camp

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