

# "THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE" AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Presented by NIAF in conjunction with Boston University, American Jewish Committee and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. >>

## A Unique Shelter Conference relates Italians' rescue of Jews during Holocaust

By Bennie DiNardo

Like millions of European Jews, Ivo Herzer was confined to a concentration camp during World War II. A native of Zagreb, the capital of the virulently anti-Semitic state of Croatia in present-day Yugoslavia, Herzer saw more than 50,000 of his countrymen exterminated during the Holocaust.

Herzer not only survived his captivity, but has devoted the last 40 years of his life to thanking his captors in the Italian army.

Unlike their Axis allies, the Germans, the Italian people, army, and even the Fascist government of Benito Mussolini, despite an official policy of anti-Semitism, heroically rescued and hid tens of thousands of Jews who otherwise would have perished in the Holocaust.

The massive Italian rescue effort on behalf of native Italian Jews and refugees from other southern European countries, unknown even to many scholars of The Holocaust, received some long-overdue attention last week at Boston University (BU).

"Italians and Jews: Rescue and Aid During the Holocaust," a conference sponsored by the National Italian-American Foundation on November 6 and 7, brought together scholars and students from around the country for the first time to draw attention to one of the few more positive episodes to emerge from the tragedy of the Holocaust. John A. Volpe, former Massachusetts governor and ambassador to Italy, and also recently the foundation's president, greeted the conference participants.

"The Holocaust is the darkest occurrence in modern history," BU president John Silber told the 100 conference-goers in his opening remarks. "We must attempt to understand it."

To understand why the Italians were able to save approximately 80 percent of Italy's 40,000 Jews from extermination while six million Jews across Europe perished, the public must first recognize Italy's efforts, say conference organizers.

For Herzer, an engineer and immigrant, the conference marked a major victory in his long campaign to repay his Italian rescuers. He first approached the foundation with the idea for the conference a year ago, and served as conference chairman because he remembered the words his father told him when his family came under the protection of the Italian army: "If we survive the war, we must not forget how the Italians saved our lives."

"It was possible to help Jews," Herzer said. "But throughout Europe, so very few stood to help." Herzer's family members fled Zagreb when Hitler installed a puppet government of Croatian Fascists, sought refuge with the Italian army, and



John A. Volpe, former governor and ambassador to Italy, greeted participants in a conference on the Italian rescue of Jews during the Holocaust.

were smuggled into Italian-controlled territory of the Croatian coast.

Placed in two different concentration camps Herzer and his family feared the worst, and certainly never expected the kind of treatment they received. "It was the most fantastic thing," Herzer recalled. There were synagogues for worship schools, and even organized athletics for the children dubbed "camp Olympics."

Herzer has several theories why Italians have never received credit for their efforts. "For Jew to praise and openly talk of Italians as being good is very difficult," Herzer said. "Italians were on the other side. They were a formal, powerful ally of Germany."

Also, Herzer believes, the public incorrectly equates Italian Fascism with Nazism. "I wouldn't be here today if Fascism were Nazism," Herzer said. And, finally, Herzer thinks that the immense tragedy of the Holocaust overwhelms the rescue. "It took years and years to absorb the tragedy that occurred in Eastern Europe," he said.

Professional historians at the conference agree with Herzer's personal experience. "The Italian had to help in the face of government and leadership trying to please the Germans," said Paul Bookbinder, history professor at the University of Massachusetts.

Bookbinder speculated that Italy has not received its proper recognition because of the shame it felt at losing 8,000 Jewish victims to the Holocaust. Many Italians "feel they could've done even better," Bookbinder said.

FUNDED BY:

- Boston University
- The National Italian American Foundation
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- Paulucci Foundation
- American Jewish Committee

The first 'Holocaust in Southern Europe' conference was held in 1986 at Boston University hosted by BU President John Silber. Holocaust experts from Italy, France, Germany and Canada addressed the Italian rescue of Jews in Croatia, France, Italy, Greece and Albania.

Other topics covered were: the life of Mussolini and his relationship with Hitler and the experience of prisoners in Italian internment camps. Speakers included Dr. Susan Zuccotti, Prof. Meir Michaelis, Dr. Menachem Shelah and Dr. Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, Father Robert Graham, Andrew Canepa, Liliana Picciotto Fargion, Klaus Voigt and Dr. Sam Oliner.

## Nazi, Soviet atrocities exceed Italian destructive aptitude, Silber says

By Dawn Toth  
Staff writer of The Daily Free Press

The people and the government of Italy did not show the destructive aptitude of the Nazis during the Holocaust or that of the Soviet Union after World War II, Boston University President John R. Silber said yesterday.

Speaking at a two-day conference "Italians and Jews: Rescue and Aid During the Holocaust," Silber gave an abbreviated history of Italians and Jews during the Holocaust, remarking that the Italian effort on behalf of Jews is not well known.

The conference presents the history of the rescue of Jews and the aid given Jews by Italians and the Italian government during the

entire Nazi era of World War II. It also explores the factors at the base of the Italian attitude toward Jews in WW II and may generate further research.



President John R. Silber

foul-ups along the way." Even though she registered early last semester, her courses did not get processed until mid-August.

"It takes a long time, I had to go through the registration line to pay my bill, even though I pre-registered," she added.

At the College of Engineering, Sargent College and SFA required courses are designated according to each student's major, leaving students to choose only electives.

"Engineers don't get much of a choice," said Arthur Walker, an ENG sophomore. "I don't have to worry about what I'm going to take, it's pretty easy in that respect."

Please see Silber, page 6



# "THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE" AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Presented in conjunction with New York University and conference co-chairs Lewis Rudin and Baronessa Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimo. >>



## The Virtually Unknown Story of the Holocaust in Southern Europe

by Dr. Maria Lombardo, Education Director, NIAF

With the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, it is timely to finally discuss what happened in southern Europe during the Holocaust. Due in part to the recent tremendous success of Spielberg's "Schindler's List" and other media efforts, much of the world has heard of the rescue efforts in northern Europe, particularly those of Oscar Schindler (one individual working within the bureaucracy to save Jews), the massive Danish rescue efforts by a general population, and those of Raoul Wallenberg (a Swedish diplomat working virtually alone).

But how many people have heard of the rescues in southern Europe? Here, in contrast to northern Europe, we see not only civilians helping their neighbors and strangers, but bureaucrats

working within the bureaucracy to save Jews. Such Italian efforts were evident both in Italy and the

mat's defied orders in order to save Jews. The Italian army saved Jews in Croatia by taking them into

that as the Ustasha in Croatia was rounding up Jews and sending them to death camps, the Italian army officials and soldiers worked efficiently to save Jews by getting them into safe havens in Italy.

Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian businessman posing as a Spanish diplomat, falsified exit papers for over 10,000 Jews in Budapest.

Guelfo Zamboni, an Italian Consul in German-occupied Greece in 1942, saved Jews from being deported to Auschwitz by official diplomatic means. He has heard of the ordinary Italian priests and soldiers who tried to rescue 85% of the Jews. Susan Zuccotti's book, *The Holocaust*, states that there were about 37,100 Italian Jews and about 8,100 foreign Jews in Italy, a total of 45,200. In 1942,



Dr. Maria Lombardo and survivors Louis Goldman, Imre Rochlitz, Sabrina Hreliezer at the Holocaust in Southern Europe conference in N.Y.C.

Italian occupied territories of southern France, Albania, Croatia and Greece. The Italian experience is also unique because Italy was officially allied with Germany and that the Italians were sympathetic not only to the fate of Italian Jews but to foreign Jews as well.

Italian bureaucrats and diplo-

Italy and in southern France by hiding them in hotels. Many such Jewish survivors, including Imre Rochlitz, whose son produced the "Righteous Enemy" documentary film on the subject, and historians and survivors Menachem Shelah of Israel and Ivo Herzer of America, have attested to the fact

### FUNDED BY:

- New York University
- Lewis Rudin
- Baronessa Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimo
- The National Endowment for the Humanities
- Casa Italiana at NYU
- NIAF

More than 22 multi-ethnic groups served on the Advisory Committee for this conference held at New York University. Professor Claudio Segre, whose father had left Italy with Enrico Fermi (physicist and creator of world's first nuclear reactor) joined Professor Paul Bookbinder in the presentation of Christian Jewish Relations and the Holocaust in Southern Europe. Survivor Imre Rochlitz from Rome was joined by other survivors who described his family's rescue by Italians. The conference was dedicated to Guelfo Zamboni who, during his time serving as Italian Consul in the German-occupied Salonika, Greece, saved more than 280 Jews from being deported to Auschwitz in Poland.



...continued on page 4



# "THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE" IN WEST BLOOMFIELD, MICH.

Presented in conjunction with the Holocaust Memorial Center of Michigan. >>

## NIAF SPONSORS HOLOCAUST CONFERENCE Highlights Italy's Role as Savior



Frank D. Stella



Dr. Maria Lombardo

businessman and NIAF chairman.

Rabbi Charles H. Rosenzweig, founder and executive vice-president of the Holocaust Memorial Center, gave the opening remarks along with the NIAF Chairman, Frank D. Stella. Dr. Maria Lombardo, daughter of Nazi slave labor camp survivor, moderated the conference.

The keynote speaker was Professor Paul Bookbinder of the University of Massachusetts. He spoke on the background of the Holocaust in southern Europe and discussed the historical significance of the oppression and rescue of southern European Jews during World War II.

Other speakers included Martin Reno Garagiola, president, Italian American Cultural Center; Jim Holley, minister, Little Rock Baptist Church; Seymour Gretchko, superintendent, West Bloomfield Schools, and Rabbi Leonardo A. Britran, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, B'Nai Israel Center. They discussed lessons today's society can learn from the Holocaust rescue efforts in southern Europe.

The conference was one of 17 on the Holocaust, organized by the NIAF under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SPEAKS AT CONFERENCE

Giorgio Sonnino, a Holocaust survivor, spoke at a conference in Detroit in June. Giorgio Sonnino, a Detroit resident, described his experiences while living in Rome under Mussolini's racial laws at the time of the Holocaust.

The conference featured the acclaimed documentary, "The Righteous Enemy," describing Italian military efforts to subvert the Nazi round-ups of the Jews in Italy and the Mediterranean. A photo exhibit on the Jewish Ghetto of Rome, was on display during the conference. The exhibit was prepared by ITALY/ITALY Magazine.

The Holocaust conference was sponsored by the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), the nation's leading advocacy group for Americans of Italian descent, and the Holocaust Memorial Center.

"Despite the 1938 racial laws enacted by Mussolini's fascist government, Italian military personnel, diplomats, clergy and civilians saved more than 50,000 Jews in Italy and in Italian occupied territories in southern France, Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece," says Frank D. Stella, a Detroit

### FUNDED BY:

- The National Endowment for the Humanities
- Holocaust Memorial Center, Michigan
- The National Italian American Foundation

In addition to a tour of the city's Holocaust Memorial Center, the other highlight of this event was a photo exhibition of the 'Jewish Ghetto of Rome' prepared by Italy/Italy Magazine. Historian Dr. Paul Bookbinder discussed oppression and rescue in Southern Europe during the Nazi era.

As moderator, Dr. Lombardo led a discussion on the moral lessons of the Holocaust with West Bloomfield Schools' Superintendent Dr. Seymour Gretchko, Rev. Jim Holley of the Little Rock Baptist Church, Rabbi Leonardo Bitran of Congregation Sharey Zedek, B'nai Israel Center and Martin Garagiola, President of the city's Italian American Cultural Center.

### Risking All For Brotherhood



Summer travels and Jewish journeys... The article discusses the historical significance of the Holocaust in southern Europe and the role of Italian military efforts to subvert the Nazi round-ups of the Jews in Italy and the Mediterranean.

### Italian List of Policyholders May Include Survivors' Names



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### Summer Travels and Jewish Journeys

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FEATURE



# "THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE" IN MIAMI, FLA.

Presented in conjunction with the American Jewish Congress Southeast Region Consulate General of Italy. >>

AMERICA Oggi **COMUNITA'** martedì 7 marzo 1995 2

## Miami Beach. Il convegno della Niaf sugli ebrei salvati in Europa durante il secondo conflitto mondiale

# Ah! Questo cuore italiano...

**Antonino Ciappina**

"Cuore italiano, non hai uguali al mondo", ha detto Sabina Heliczer, attrice-chiave al convegno indetto dalla "Niaf", National Italian American Foundation, sugli ebrei salvati nell'Europa Meridionale dagli italiani durante il secondo conflitto mondiale, svoltosi venerdì 3 marzo presso la Doral Ocean Beach Resort, a Miami Beach.

"Odiai i cristiani, finché non combitti i italiani", ha detto a sua volta William Wolf, altro ebreo sopravvissuto al genocidio grazie agli italiani. Caduto in mano ai nazisti del regime di Vichy, nel marciello Petain, a Nizza, venne strappato con le armi in pugno da coraggiosi soldati della Polizia Militare Italiana. I Carabinieri.

Sabina Heliczer e William Wolf sono stati i principali oratori al convegno della Niaf, che aveva per tema: "The Holocaust in Southern Europe: Italian and Jews, one persecution to rescue and aid".

L'olocausto nell'Europa Meridionale: italiani ed ebrei: dalla persecuzione al soccorso (finito).

Il convegno è stato organizzato dalla dot.ssa Maria Lombardo, "education director" della "Niaf", dopo aver constatato che l'80% degli ebrei si salvò in Italia grazie al rispetto della vita umana degli italiani: rispetto per il quale uomini e donne, laici e religiosi, non esitarono a rischiare la vita, spesso finite vittime del loro coraggio altruista e generoso.

La dot.ssa Lombardo, nel suo breve intervento introduttivo alla conferenza, ha reso noto che nel suo intento di far conoscere il contributo italiano al salvataggio degli ebrei durante il secondo conflitto mondiale dove mancare non poco per ottenere una sovranzione dal "National Endowment for the Humanities", mentre a avuto incondizionato appoggio dall'Anti-Defamation League e dall'American Jewish Committee.

Ha attribuito le difficoltà incontrate in sede federale al fatto che gli ebrei sopravvissuti alla rabbia razzista dei nazisti ed messi in America, provenienti per la maggior parte dai Paesi dell'Est e in minor parte dall'ovest: pochi dal sud Europa, Italia in particolare, che sono rimasti in Italia, con gli italiani condividendo i valori migliori che rendono la vita degna di essere vissuta.

La dot.ssa Lombardo ha preparato il convegno come sprone nella preparazione del convegno le sofferenze che ancora affliggono suo padre, che fu ufficiale dell'Aviazione Italiana: arrestato dopo l'armistizio dell'8 settembre 1943 per la mancanza di revoca dell'editto antiebraico di Mussolini da parte di Badoglio, dalla Grecia dove era con le truppe di occupazione, finì in mano agli esteticisti croati, che lo rimandarono fino al limite della resistenza umana. Lo salvarono soldati italiani.

Le piaghe festose - ha commentato Maria Lombardo - sono guarite, ma quelle psichiche sono rimaste e lo sviluppo psichico adesso, tanto che, a cinquant'anni di distanza, la notte si sveglia con grida di dolore, accadendogli di ritrovarsi per vie



inisterase, nel sonno, nel subconscio, ancora in mano ai suoi aguzzani.

Sabina Heliczer, ebrea tedesca, ha raccontato che dalla Germania ripartì prima con il fidanzato, uno studente di medicina ebreo, in Austria, poi in Italia, dove aiutò lui a laurearsi, insegnando tedesco. Si sposarono a Roma, nella stampa, e vissero d'amore e d'accordo con gli italiani, tanto che diedero le fedi d'oro a Mussolini in cambio di quelle di acciaio, all'epoca della Campagna Etiopica; vissero confortevolmente anche prima e durante la seconda guerra mondiale, fino all'armistizio, che diede ai nazisti via libera per infierire sugli ebrei.

Invece di cercare di nascondersi, però, scelsero una via eroica: si diedero alla macchia, unendosi ai partigiani, dopo aver affidato i due figli ad amici. Lei divenne partigiana a 15, nelle Marche, come attestò un certificato - emblema prezioso - firmato da un comandante partigiano. Abilissima nel cucito, quando non era in azioni di guerriglia, cuciva pantaloni per aiutare i partigiani inglesi ed americani a camuffarsi, usando tovaglie che otteneva dai contadini.

Inghesi ed americani che riuscivano a fuggire dalla prigione, messi in borghese alla meglio da Sabina ed altre donne italiane della sua tempra, raggiungevano San Benedetto del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno), dove era ad attenderli un sommergibile. Mentre, però, i prigionieri inglesi ed americani fuggiti riuscivano a trovare la libertà grazie all'aiuto di Sabina e delle sue

compagne, per molte di loro non fu così.

Il merito di Sabina, forse unico medico alla macchia nelle Marche, straniero per giunta, che non esitò ad andare ad assistere chiunque, partigiano o fante dei campi, finì per essere catturato. Tradotto in carcere, ad Ascoli Piceno, nonostante i tormenti più atroci, non rivelò i nomi dei combattenti della libertà che erano stati suoi commilitoni; i carnefici, quando al resero conto che non avrebbero cavato fuori una parola da lui, per ritorsione, gli cavarono gli occhi e poi lo rinchiusero nel più atroce dei modi.

Ma il racconto di Sabina Heliczer non finisce qui: il figlio maggiore, chiamato per sberleffiare il padre, al vederne il cadavere straziato seminudo, impazzì e, più tardi, da adulto, i riflessi non più pronti come persona normale, morì a Parigi.

William Wolf, spiegato perché aveva odiato i cristiani prima di aver conosciuto gli italiani, ha raccontato con voce appena percettibile, sopraffatto dall'emozione, che si ritrovò un profugo ragazzo in Francia perché i genitori erano fuggiti dalla Polonia natta, dopo che il nonno era stato ucciso davanti ai loro occhi dai polacchi razzisti, a colpi di batonnetta. Giunti in territorio francese, la madre era stata catturata dai nazisti; appreso da altri ebrei che a sud c'erano gli italiani che non lo perseguitavano, padre e figlio a marce forzate, riuscirono a rag-

giungere Nizza: la città era divisa in due: la parte nord, pattugliata da tedeschi e francesi ligi al maresciallo Petain, del regime di Vichy; la parte sud da italiani. William Wolf, soffermandosi in un'azione, ha informato il folto uditorio - erano anche il console generale d'Italia Marco Rocco, e l'on. Frank Grassi presidente della Niaf, che quando a lui non c'era la guerra, aveva imparato a cantare; era "cantor" (cantista solista) e sinagoga ed anche sin esibiva in occasioni di feste; aveva appreso a cantare, pi canzoni italiane; napoletane, per l'esattezza.

Entusiasta alla vista del mare, a lui la prima volta per lui, e soprattutto vista dei militari italiani, per attirare loro attenzione, si diede a cantare a polmoni, sciorinando una dopo l'altra "Marechiaro", "Torna a Surriento", "O Mio".

Ottenne l'effetto voluto: dei soldati avvicinarono a lui, dandogli buffetti e rezzandogli la testa ed, allora, ha di gioco la carta che solo Dio può aver ispirato: "Siamo ebrei sotto protezione italiana; quelli là - aggiunse indicando i soldati francesi di guardia poco distanti - vogliono portare nei campi di sterminio in Germania, alstati!" I soldati italiani scattarono come una molla, scitirono ai francesi che si erano avvicinati.

Poiché i francesi insistevano per un padre e figlio, gli italiani, rivelatisi a Polizia Militare-Carabinieri, armi in mano, costrinsero i francesi a dar loro solo i due polacchi, ma anche altri tre ebrei che erano già in un'autocarro pronti per essere tradotti al più vicino campo di concentramento, lungo la verso la Germania.

Informati che, forzati dentro un autocarro come sardine, erano altri otto prigionieri in attesa di essere deportati carabiniere andarono a liberarli, e sempre in pugno contro i francesi additi. Come per miracolo, ha finalizzato il nome Wolf, risacrono a rastrellare quarantina di autocarri e vi imbarcarono tutti gli ebrei, partendo in colonna verso frontiera: superato il confine, dietro protezione di un costone di roccia, le scendevano tutti noi, dicendoci: "Andate montagnani; disperatevi per non dare l'occhio; lassù vi aiuteranno".

"E così fu", ha concluso William Wolf. "Sono qui a raccontarvelo per quel padre di Carabinieri che non esitarono a rischiare la vita, per salvarci; ma poi non credeva ai suoi occhi, nella met nel cuore ancora sanguinante il po finto a batonnetta! Erano in molti spettatori con gli occhi umidi di pianto alla fine dei racconti di Sabina Heliczer e William Wolf. Di Sabina sappiamo che convertita al cattolicesimo; Will Wolf non ha detto nulla in merito, ma solo aggiunto che il padre non si stan mai di ripetere: "Ce cristiano e cristiano a me, date italiani!".

Nella foto, seduti, da sinistra, Sabina Heliczer, William Wolf; in piedi, sed da sinistra il giudice John Gale dot.ssa Maria Lombardo.

- FUNDED BY:**
- National Endowment for the Humanities
  - Anti-Defamation League
  - American Jewish Committee
  - American Jewish Congress/Southeast Region
  - Consulate General of Italy
  - The National Italian American Foundation

Along with a tour of the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach, a conference was held at the Doral Ocean Beach Resort. In addition to accounts by Dr. Paul Bookbinder - a historian from the University of Massachusetts- survivor Sabina Heliczer introduced her book "On the Run Italia." Community leaders from the American Jewish Congress and Dade County Public Schools' Holocaust educator reiterated the importance of including Italy's role in the Holocaust to school curriculum. The Mayor of Bal Harbour issued a Proclamation to Dr. Lombardo on behalf of NIAF and the National Endowment's work on the subject.

## City of Miami Beach Proclamation

**Whereas:**

The City of Miami Beach commemorates the premiere of a new documentary describing the rescue of thousands of Jews in Italy during the Holocaust. Italian military personnel, diplomats and civilians saved more than 50,000 Jews in Italy and in Italian-occupied territories. Rescuers will relate the story of their motivation in rescuing Jews and what we can learn from these Righteous Gentiles and the moral lessons of the Holocaust as it applies to today's society will be elaborated upon; and,

WHEREAS: The National Italian American Foundation, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress/Southeast Region, is sponsoring this conference, as part of a series funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, entitled "The Holocaust in Southern Europe;" and,

WHEREAS: Guest speakers will include Paul Bookbinder, Arthur Teitelbaum, Mark Freedman, Joan Canner, and Miriam Klein Kassonoff, each giving an overview of the Holocaust in southern Europe and Christian-Jewish relations in Italy during the 19th and 20th centuries; and,

WHEREAS: We are honored to join this distinguished group in dedication of helping to preserve the heritage of the nation's estimated 26 million Americans of Italian descent, the country's fifth largest ethnic group.

NOW THEREFORE, DO I, Seymour Gelber, as Mayor of the City of Miami Beach, hereby proclaim Sunday, March 3, 1995, as

**THE NATIONAL ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION'S HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE DAY**

in the City of Miami Beach.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the great seal of the City of Miami Beach to be affixed.

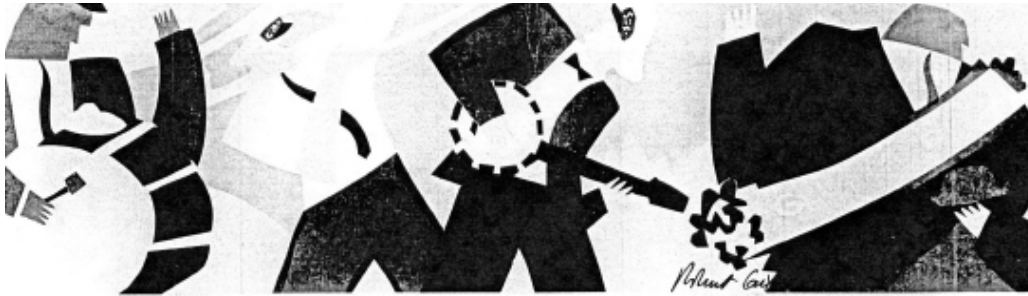
Date March 3, 1995 Mayor Seymour Gelber





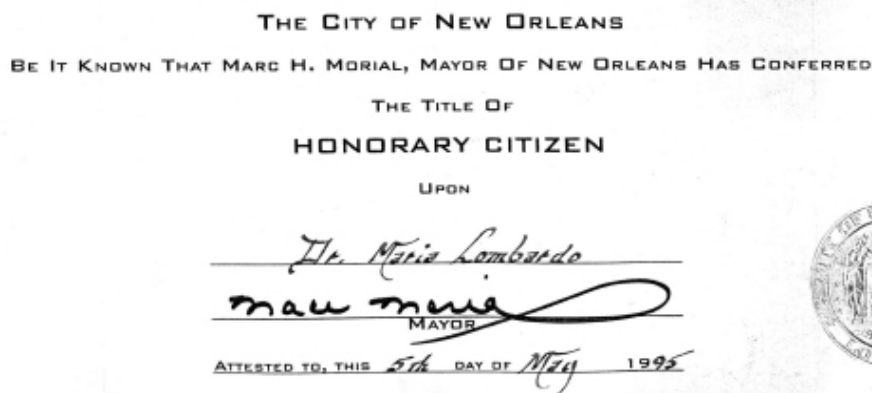
# “THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE” IN NEW ORLEANS, LA

Presented in conjunction with the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans (CRC) and The Jewish-Italian Civic Association. >>

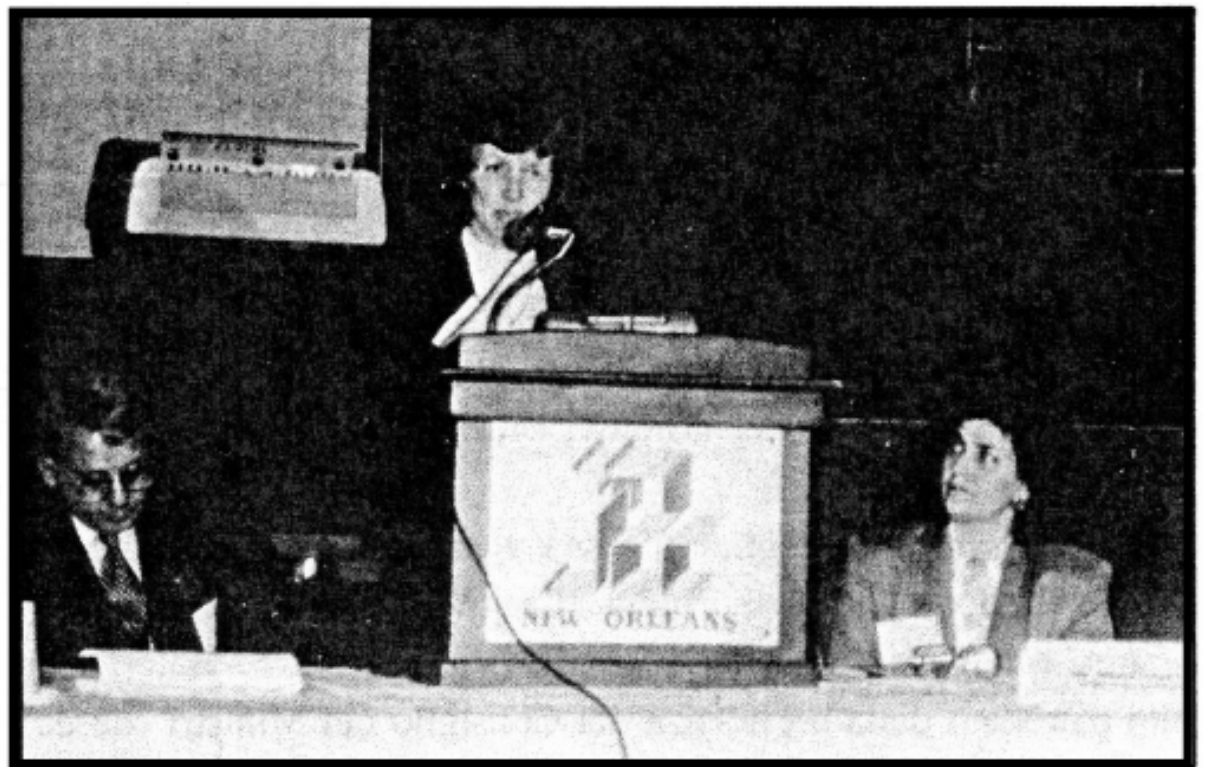


## FUNDED BY:

- The National Endowment for the Humanities
- The American Italian Renaissance Foundation
- The Anti-Defamation League
- The Jewish-Italian Civic Association
- Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans
- The National Italian American Foundation



Beginning with opening remarks from community leaders including Mr. Joseph Maselli and the Mayor of New Orleans John Morial, the conference highlighted local survivor Mickey Oreman, who shared her story about an Italian woman (Cesarina) who had acted as a wet nurse for her and her sister while hiding them from the Nazis. Historian and author of who “Italy and the Holocaust,” Dr. Susan Zuccotti, presented on the oppression and rescue of Jews in Southern Europe. Leaders from the New Orleans justice system, Xavier University and other organizations discussed moral lessons from the Holocaust and their applicability to the New Orleans community.



*Un momento della conferenza di New Orleans: da sinistra a destra, Joseph Maselli, vice-chairman della NIAF, Prof. Susan Zuccotti del Bernard College, e la Dott. Maria Lombardo direttrice di questo progetto e direttrice della NIAF per l'educazione*

# "THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE" IN CHICAGO, ILL.

Presented in conjunction with The Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans. >>



## FUNDED BY:

- The Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans
- The Office of the Governor of Illinois
- Facing History and Ourselves
- The Consulate General of Italy
- The American Jewish Committee
- The Italian Cultural Institute
- The Office of the Mayor
- The Anti-Defamation League
- The National Italian American Foundation

The conference featured historians and Holocaust survivors addressing Italy's role as a safe haven for Jews during the Nazi takeover from 1933-1945. The heroism of Italians who saved 85 percent of the 50,000 Jews of Italy was recounted.

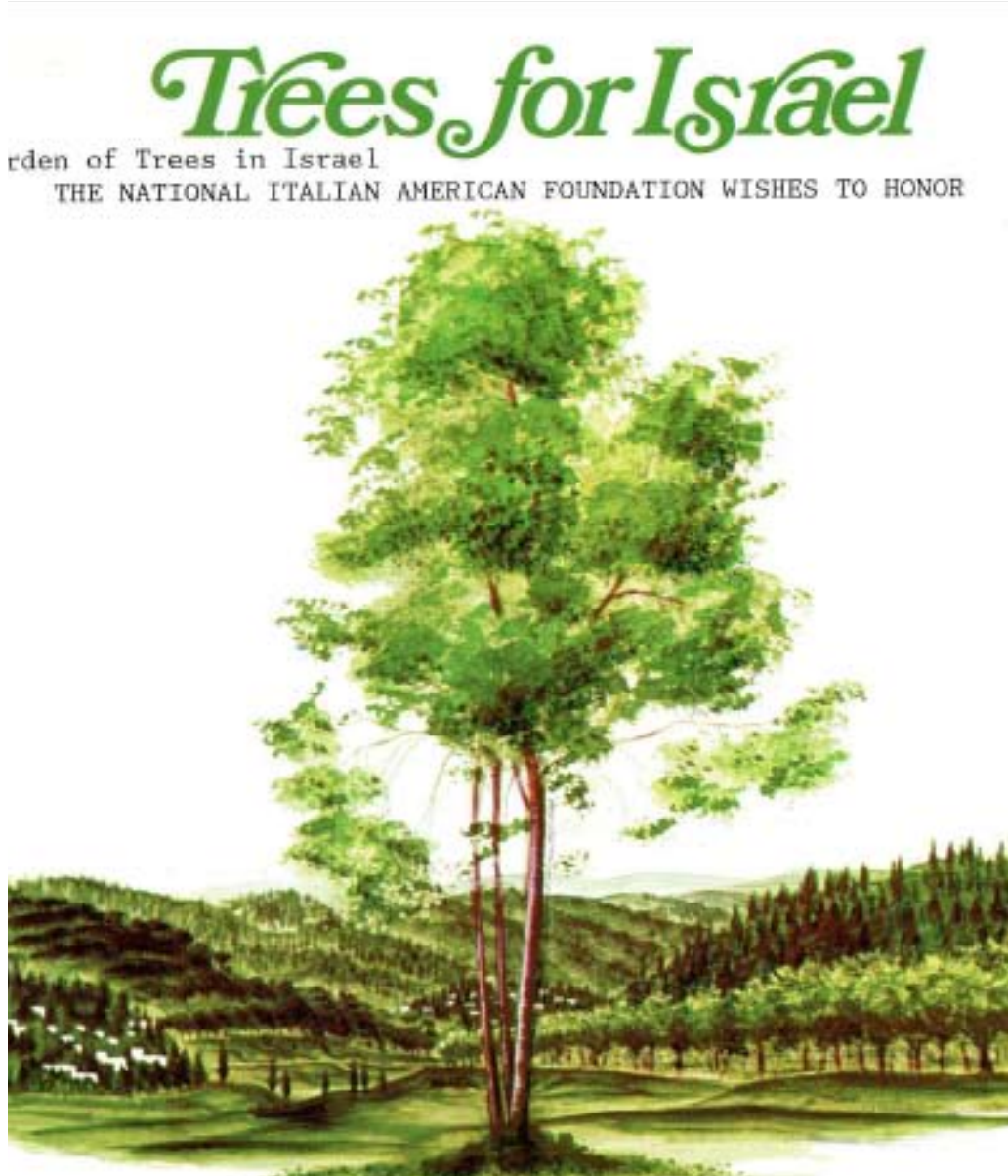


Survivors gave first-hand accounts of the rescues, which were spearheaded by neighbors, military officials and diplomats. The high point of the gathering was a planned reunion between a survivor and her rescuer. Dr. Fernando Giustini, whose grandfather gave up his bed for a then-pregnant Helen Deutsch, was introduced to Deutsch herself in an emotional meeting. Both the tears and smiles were captured by local television stations and broadcast throughout Chicago. More than 15 multi-ethnic organizations collaborated on the event, which also included a panel discussion with professors and community leaders addressing the relevance of the Holocaust to modern times.



# “RESCUE AND AID DURING THE HOLOCAUST” IN BEVERLY HILLS, CA.

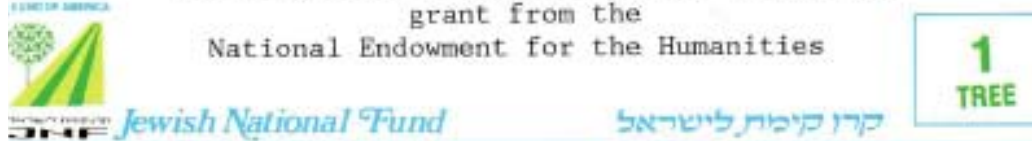
Presented in conjunction with the Anti - Defamation League  
The American Jewish Committee. >>



**Trees for Israel**  
Garden of Trees in Israel  
THE NATIONAL ITALIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION WISHES TO HONOR

כי תבואו אל הארץ ונטעתם (ויקרא י"ט, כ"ב)  
AND WHEN YE SHALL COME INTO THE LAND AND YE SHALL PLANT (Leviticus 19:23)  
Mother Superior Luigina Pacelli and The Italian Partisans  
of  
Corno, Capo di Ponte (Province of Brescia) and San Vittore, Mila  
For Rescuing  
Rischa Bonder  
During World War II

"The Holocaust in Southern Europe" 1993-1995  
grant from the  
National Endowment for the Humanities



**Jewish National Fund** קרן קיימת לישראל

**FUNDED BY:**

- The American Jewish Committee
- Simon Wiesenthal Center
- The National Italian American Foundation

A two-day conference held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel brought together speakers from all over the world to give witness to the plight of Jews in Italy and Italian occupied territories during the Holocaust. In attendance were historians Dr. Meir Michaelis and Dr. Menachem Shelah from Israel; Father Robert Graham, Dr. Liliana Picciotto Fargion from Italy. U.S. speakers included Dr. Sam Oliner, Dr. Paul Bookbinder and Dr. H. Stuart Hughes. Leaders from the National Italian American Foundation and Claudio Martelli of the Italian government acknowledged survivors as well as local humanitarians.

Special guests included Anna Maria Alberghetti, Alan King and Leonard Nimoy. At one of the two luncheons held, the Giorgio Perlasca Humanitarian Award was presented to Father Victor Salandini for his tireless efforts on behalf of migrant workers in California. Trees were planted in Israel in honor of Italian rescuers.



Dr. Maria Lombardo, Joan Baez and Ginetta Sagan

# “THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE” IN PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Presented in conjunction with *The A William Salomone Collection of Drexel University and the Consulate General of Italy.* >>



## FUNDED BY:

- Drexel University
- Consulate General of Italy
- The American Jewish Committee
- Holocaust Awareness Museum
- The Anti-Defamation League
- German Society of Pennsylvania
- Gratz College
- The National Italian American Foundation
- The National Endowment for the Humanities

The conference began with an introduction by Dr. Philip Cannistraro of Drexel University. His remarks focused on the rise of Mussolini and his relationship to Italian soldiers and ordinary citizens. Dr. Cannistraro addressed the influence of Mussolini's Jewish mistress, Margherita Sarfatti, on his leadership style. Jewish survivors spoke of the brave efforts of Italian citizens who risked their lives by sheltering them. In a reception that followed, Drexel University announced its acquisition of an Italian library for its students and faculty.

| <b>Program</b>    |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| 12:30 – 1:00 p.m. | <b>INTRODUCTIONS</b><br>Dr. Nunzio Pernicone, <i>Moderator</i><br>Hon. Frank Guarini, <i>President, NIAF</i><br>Dr. Richard Breslin, <i>President, Drexel University</i><br>Dr. Franco Giordano, <i>Consul General of Italy</i><br>Mr. Matthew DiDomenico, <i>NIAF Regional Vice President</i><br>Dr. Maria Lombardo, <i>NIAF Project Director</i>  | 4:15 – 5:15 p.m. <b>PRIMO LEVI'S INTERPRETATION OF THE HOLOCAUST: THE LIMITATIONS OF A WITNESS</b><br>Prof. Claudio Segre, <i>University of Texas, Austin.</i><br><br>Primo Levi's memoirs describe the concentration camp world in all its daily horrors. Yet his theory about the causes of the Holocaust has been called superficial. The presentation will discuss this paradox and evaluate Levi's contribution to an understanding of the Holocaust. |
| 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.  | <b>THE SURVIVORS SPEAK (ROUND TABLE)</b><br>Nilda Aaronson<br>Rabbi Maer Relles ( <i>invited</i> )<br>Jean Spitzer ( <i>invited</i> )   | 5:15 – 5:45 p.m. <b>DISCUSSION</b><br><br>5:45 – 6:45 p.m. <b>VIEWING OF AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY: "RIGHTEOUS ENEMY"</b>  |
| 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.  | <b>MARGHERITA SARFATTI AND THE DILEMMAS OF JEWISH IDENTITY</b><br>Dr. Philip V. Cannistraro, <i>Drexel University, Philadelphia.</i><br><br>The presentation examines the life of Margherita Sarfatti, a Jewish founder of Fascism. After almost 20 years as Mussolini's lover and advisor and a central figure in the Fascist regime, Sarfatti was exiled under Italy's anti-Semitic laws of 1938. |  |
| 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.  | <b>THE ITALIANS AND THE HOLOCAUST</b><br>Dr. Susan Zuccotti, <i>Barnard College, New York City.</i><br><br>The presentation seeks to explain why 80% of the Italian Jews survived the Holocaust. It discusses the status of the Jews in Italy before and after the anti-Semitic laws of 1938, focusing on Mussolini's policies, the roundups and deportations after October 1943.                   |  |
| 4:00 – 4:15 p.m.  | <b>BREAK</b>  |  |

| <b>Advisory Committee</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Matthew DiDomenico, <i>NIAF Regional Vice President</i>          | Linda Carozzi, <i>Esq., Philadelphia Conference Assistant</i>                                |
| Prof. Mary Costanza, <i>Artist and Instructor at Gratz College</i>   | Prof. Philip Rosen, <i>Director Holocaust Awareness Museum and American Jewish Committee</i> |
| Michael Slotznick, <i>Esq., American Jewish Committee</i>            | Barry Morrison, <i>Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League</i>                             |
| Theodore R. Mann, <i>Esq., Jewish Fund for Christian Rescuers</i>    | Michael C. Rainone, <i>Esq., Chairman, National Italian American Bar Association</i>         |
| Bernard J. Frietag, <i>President, German Society of Pennsylvania</i> | John Terhula, <i>President, Balch Institute</i>  |
| Michael Blum, <i>President, Nationalities Service Center</i>         | Rabbi David Wortman, <i>Jewish Community Relations Council</i>                               |







# ITALIANS & JEWS

Rescue & Aid During the Holocaust

**WELCOME**

Roc Zitello, National Italian American Foundation  
 Anita Gray, Jewish Community Federation  
 Conference Co-chairs  
 Denise Dufala, WOIO/CBS-19  
 Mistress of Ceremonies

**PRESENTATIONS**

Dr. Maria Lombardo, Education Director  
 National Italian American Foundation  
 Sara J. Bloomfield, Acting Director  
 U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

Sy Rotter, prod  
 "A Debt to Honor"

**TESTIMONIAL**

Carmelo Fumar  
 Sharon Friedma

**ROUND-TABLE**

**LESSONS TO BE LEARNED**

Sister Mary Louie  
 Notre Dame (C)  
 Robert Goldberg  
 Jewish Comm.

**MEMORIAL CANDLE-LIGHTING**

**RECEPTION**

Prepared by local Italian and Jewish chefs



**IN HONOR OF**  
 American Jewish Committee  
 And-Delaware, Local  
 Jewish Education Center  
 Jewish Community Center  
 Commission on Catholic Community Action  
 From Cleveland Board of Rabbis  
 From Cleveland Board of Jewish Education  
 Italian Sons and Daughters of America  
 Jewish Community Center of Cleveland

**IN HONOR OF**  
 Consul General Dr. Achille  
 Ambassador Carl G. Rossi  
 Honorable Anthony G. Calabrese  
 World War Veterans  
 Honorable Stuart Friedman  
 Robert Lubling  
 Maria Lombardo, Ph.D.  
 2011/11/10  
 Assunt Fusi

## “THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE” IN CLEVELAND, OH.

Presented in conjunction with the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, Commission on Catholic Community Action, B'nai Brith and the Consulate General of Italy. >>

**FUNDED BY:**

- Consulate General of Italy
- B'nai Brith

Sara J. Bloomfield, Director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and Dr. Lombardo served as the keynote speakers for this conference attended by more than 750 people. Sy Rotter presented a debut of the film “A Debt to Honor” narrated by Alan Alda. Testimonials from the audience provided credence to the conference theme that Italians helped Jews escape Nazi persecution in both Italy and Greece. A photo exhibit of Rome’s Jewish Ghetto prepared by Italy/Italy Magazine was on view.



Dr. Maria Lombardo, Ph.D.  
 Sister Mary Louie  
 Sister Mary Louie  
 Sister Mary Louie  
 Sister Mary Louie  
 Sister Mary Louie

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 Westlake, Ohio 44145  
 25988 Highland Road  
 Richmond Hts., Ohio 44143  
 Ph. 216-488-4800



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# La Gazzetta ITALIANA

VOLUME 4, NO. 5

SEPTEMBER

503 years and counting of great Italian American Heritage • 1492-1995+

## A New Chapter for The History Books: ...The Holocaust in Southern Europe

by Dr. Maria Lombardo, Education Director, NIAF

With a generous grant from the United States Endowment for the Humanities and the support of the Embassy of Italy, the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) in Washington, D.C. has embarked on the organization and

remained so until the Allies arrived and then it switched sides? My father's story is one of an Italian soldier in the aeronautics corps who was sent to fight in North Africa and eventually ended up in Italian-occupied Greece. When

many other survivors, he suppressed his story, but for years had continuous nightmares that affected our entire family. Then years ago, an elderly Jewish gentleman named Ivo Herzer, who was suffering from

Racial Laws; how the Racial affected this relationship; actually happened to the national Jewish both in Italy the Italian occupied territory in Southern Europe before 194 their faith after the German in



# "THE HOLOCAUST IN SOUTHERN EUROPE" IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA.

Presented in conjunction with San Francisco's Fort Mason Center and the U.S. Holocaust Museum. >>

## Actor Robert Loggia featured at Holocaust Survivors Conference

Italian rescue of Jews topic of April 8 conference in San Francisco's Fort Mason

Hollywood actor Robert Loggia and Holocaust eyewitnesses now living in San Francisco will describe the little-known story of Italy's rescue of the Jews during World War II.

The conference, "The Holocaust in Southern Europe: Italians and Jews: From Persecution to Rescue and Aid" will take place Monday, April 8 at the Cowell Theater, Fort Mason Center, Marina Blvd. and Laguna Street from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. It is free and open to the public.

Loggia will speak on "Ghosts from the Past: Nazi Concentration Camp Experiences" based on research he did for his role in the film "Triumph of the Spirit."

Two Holocaust survivors: Ginetta Sagan and Zdenka Levy, will describe how they and their families were rescued by Italians. They were among an estimated 57,000 Jews rescued by Italians during the Holocaust.

Sagan is co-founder of Amnesty International in the Bay Area. She was nursed back to health by Italian nuns near Milan after 14 months of torture by Mussolini's secret police.

Levy was born in Croatia, was persecuted there and then went to Italy with her family where they eventually sailed for the U.S.A.

Historian Andrew Canepa will discuss Christian-Jewish relations in Italy during the Holocaust. Dr. Maria Lombardo



Joseph Maselli, NIAF Vice Chairman, at podium with Dr. Maria Lombardo at presentation of Holocaust Conference in New Orleans, May 1985.

do, NIAF director of education, will discuss the Italian Resistance Movement. Ernest Weiner from San Francisco's American Jewish Committee and Rabbi Stephen S. Pearce, Ph.D. of The congregation (Imanu-El) will address the Holocaust's moral lessons. L'Italo-Americano's Maria Gloria will speak on "The Assisi Underground."

Also present will be Giulio Prigioni, Italian consul general of Italy; Ester Prigioni, chair of Shalom Italian, who founded a program on Italian-Jewish studies, and Jeffrey McCapocchie, president of Amici dell'Italia Foundation.

The conference will give the San Francisco premiere of the documentary, "A Debt to Honor," featuring the accounts of Italian rescues and narrated by Alan Alda.

The conference is co-sponsored by the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) under the direction of Joseph

Rusconiello, NIAF Mid-Atlantic regional vice president; Shalom Italia, Amici dell'Italia Foundation, the Holocaust Center of Northern California; the Consulate General of Italy; the American Jewish Committee and the Italian Catholic Federation.

It is one of 13 Holocaust conferences organized by the NIAF under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The conference is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required. Contact Amici dell'Italia Foundation, 353 Sacramento Street, Ste. 600, San Francisco, CA 94111. Tele: (415) 837-0235 or FAX: (415) 951-3699.

### FUNDED BY:

- The NIAF Mid Pacific Region
- Shalom Italia and Amici dell'Italia
- Holocaust Center of Northern California
- The Consulate General of Italy
- American Jewish Committee
- Italian Catholic Federation

The conference was dedicated to the late historian Claudio Segre who also served on the National Endowment for the Humanities Advisory Committee for the 'Holocaust in Southern Europe' program.

The questions addressed at the event, featuring actor Robert Loggia were:

- What is the Jewish-Christian experience in the history of Italy?
- What happened to the community of 47,000 Italian Jews and 10,000 foreign Jews in Italy and to the thousands of Jews in Italian-occupied territories during World War II?
- What were the Racial Laws of 1938 and what impact did they have on Italy's Jewish community?
- Why did 80 percent of the Jews in Italy survive the Holocaust, while 80 percent of the Jewish population in other parts of Europe perish?
- Who were these Italian rescuers?
- What was their motivation in rescuing Jews?
- What can we learn from these "Righteous Gentiles?"

### Italians and Jews - Holocaust Rescuers Conference

Actor Robert Loggia and Holocaust eyewitnesses now living in San Francisco will describe the little-known story of Italy's rescue of the Jews during World War II at a conference to take place on Monday, April 8. The conference, "The Holocaust in Southern Europe: Italians and Jews: From Persecution to Rescue and Aid" will be held in San Francisco at the Cowell Theater, Fort Mason Center, Marina Blvd. and Laguna Street from 1 to 5 p.m. It is free and open to the public.

Loggia will speak on "Ghosts from the Past: Nazi concentration camp experiences" based on research he did for his role in the film "Triumph of the Spirit." Two Holocaust survivors, Ginetta Sagan and Zdenka Levy, will describe how they and their families were among an estimated 57,000 Jews rescued by Italians.

Historian Andrew Canepa will discuss Christian-Jewish relations in Italy during the Holocaust. Dr. Maria Lombardo, NIAF director of education, will discuss the Italian Resistance Movement. Ernest Weiner from San Francisco's American Jewish Committee and Rabbi Stephen S. Pearce, Ph.D. of The Congregation (Imanu-El) will address the Holocaust's moral lessons, and L'Italo-Americano's Maria Gloria will speak on "The Assisi Underground." The documentary "A Debt to Honor" will also be shown.

The conference is free and open to the public; pre-registration is required. Contact Amici dell'Italia Fdn., 353 Sacramento St., Ste. 600, San Francisco, CA 94111. Tel: (415) 837-0235 or (415) 951-3699.



# Remember the Holocaust

## "REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST" IN WASHINGTON, DC

*Presented in conjunction with 18 federal agencies. >>*

Every year the U.S. government commemorates the Holocaust. In 1998, Dr. Maria Lombardo was invited to organize an event recognizing the Italians' role in fighting the Nazis. Eighteen U.S. Federal Agencies collaborated to commemorate survivors of the Holocaust with a thoughtful program and conference, which included presentations from Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and remarks from survivors Ginetta Sagan, and Salvatore Lombardo. Also in attendance were Mayor Stefano Vaccari of Nonantola and U.S. Officer Albert Materazzi, representing survivors of Villa Emma in Nonantola. Local news broadcaster Andrea Roane served as emcee of the program. Guests enjoyed artwork by Walt Whitman High School students depicting their impressions of the Holocaust on display throughout the Lincoln Theatre. At the conclusion of the event, Dr. Lombardo's "Risking All for Brotherhood," published by Italy/Italy Magazine in Rome, Italy was handed out to attendees.

1. U.S. Department of Education
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture
3. U.S. Department of Transportation
4. U.S. Department of State
5. U.S. Information Agency
6. U.S. Housing and Urban Development
7. U.S. Department of Veteran Administration
8. U.S. Department of the Interior
9. U.S. Department of the Treasury
10. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
11. General Service Administration
12. U.S. Department of Commerce
13. Small Business Administration
14. NASA
15. U.S. Department of Labor
16. U.S. Department of Justice
17. Federal Emergency Management Agency
18. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Holocaust in Southern Europe

April 21, 1998

12:00 noon

The Lincoln Theater

1215 U Street, NW

U Street/Colorado Metro Stop

Washington, DC

## World War II Survivors Speak at Holocaust Conference

*18 Federal agencies and the NIAF sponsor event*

WASHINGTON, DC — World War II survivors Ginetta Sagan, honorary chairman of Amnesty International, and Jay Sommer, visiting professor at Long Island University, spoke about their wartime experiences in Italy at a conference, "The Holocaust in Southern Europe: Risking All For Brotherhood," Tuesday, April 21 at the Lincoln Theater (1215 U Street NW) from noon to 2:30 PM. The conference was free and open to the public.

Other participants included Stefano Vaccari, mayor of the Northern Italian town of Nonantola on behalf of Holocaust survivor Tilla Offenberger; Salvatore Lombardo, a Nazi slave labor camp survivor; and Albert Materazzi, who served in the U.S. Army in Italy during World War II. The

Italian American Foundation (NIAF), the nation's leading advocacy group in Washington, DC for Americans of Italian descent.

"The Holocaust in Southern Europe: Risking All For Brotherhood" will address the courageous acts of Italian military officers, soldiers, and ordinary people, who rescued Jews from Nazi persecution during World War II in Italy and Italian-occupied territories.

Despite the 1938 racial laws enacted by Mussolini's fascist government, Italian military personnel, diplomats, clergy and civilians saved more than 47,000 Jews in Italy and in Italian occupied territories in southern France, Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece.

Participants include: Andrea Roane, co-anchor of Channel 9

man, United States secretary of agriculture; Hon. Frank Guarini, former U.S. congressman and NIAF vice chairman; and Dr. Maria Lombardo, NIAF education director and daughter of a Nazi slave labor camp survivor.

A photo exhibit, "The Jewish Ghetto of Rome," courtesy of Italy Italy Magazine and art work on the moral lessons of the Holocaust by students from Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Maryland are featured during the conference. Singer Paloma Ciancio, recipient of the NIAF/Sergio Franchi Music scholarship in voice performance, will perform musical renditions from World War II.

For further information, contact Dr. Lombardo at 202/387-0600.

*Editors Note: This news release was mailed to us after the event took place. Hows*