

Interviewee: Guido Calabresi

July 27th, 2017

New Haven, CT

RG-50.030*0942

Summary

- born October 18, 1932 in Milan, Italy
- Former Dean of Yale Law School
- Appointed judge by Bill Clinton in Early 90's
- Comes from old prominent Italian Jewish Family
- His mother is from the Finzi-Contini family
 - Prominent Jewish Family
 - Mother: Bianca
- Father is a Massimo (sp) Calabresi
- Guido can trace back his roots/family tree 2000 years to Titus (Roman who took Jewish Slaves from Palestine to Rome)
- Calabresi provided an overview of various family members from the Calabresi, Finzi-Contini, and Minerbi families
- He described how his parents met
- He has an older brother by 2 years who is now deceased
- Family left Italy as a result of racial laws enacted by Mussolini against Jews in 1938
- Father had wanted to leave for a very long time but his father (interviewee's grandfather) did not want them to leave; mother's parents also didn't want them to leave
- The father was a cardiologist
- The paternal grandfather died in the late 30's and there was nothing holding them back as far as leaving the country
- They were very wealthy/prominent
- Many of his large extended family stayed
- Guido says his whole family survived
- Some had married Catholics
- Land could be held by non-Jews
- The family had a difficult time leaving because they eventually left when the war already started
- There were not many ships leaving from Italy
- Many false starts to their exit from Italy

- The family had all their money in Italy, no foreign bank accounts
- They could not take anything with them except their suitcases
- They went from great wealth and coming over on a very luxurious boat to poverty when they arrived in the US
- They stayed at a hotel in Manhattan for something like \$10 a month
- Their introduction to American Life was stark
- His father had received a fellowship at Yale that allowed him to come to America in the first place but that fellowship was postponed
- Family felt many limitations
- At Yale, they felt left isolated because the environment was very white and WASP
- A feeling of being “other” and a “refugee”
- A feeling of having belonged to many worlds but also not belonging
- There was an Italian-American community in New Haven
- Many members of that community had been seduced by Fascist propaganda and were supporters of Mussolini
- Guido’s parents had been heavily involved in anti-Fascist activities since the early 20’s.
- Some (a minority) in the New Haven Italian American community were thrilled to meet other anti-Fascists
- This was another reason why his father wanted to leave. It wasn’t just about being Jewish, but also being a prominent, public figure in the anti-Fascist movement since the 1920’s
- After the war, the sons (Guido and his brother) returned to Italy to visit and were back in their former prominence during this visit
- Guido and his brother were uncomfortable with this and so they returned to the U.S.
- Guido speaks about his own career
- Also speaks about various extended family members whom he still speaks to who went to Palestine, Brazil, and stayed in Italy
- He is currently writing a book about the family members who stayed in Italy