

Auguri Italia!

Antonella Iovino (March 18, 2011)



The 150th Anniversary of the Unification Celebrated in the Scuola d'Italia Auditorium.

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On Thursday, March 17, Italy was celebrated in Rome, in all Italian cities, and in the world. It was a day of joy and pride, of sense of belonging and of common desires for the future, shared by all the Italian communities of the world. Even though the different time zones belated the time for celebrations, the common feelings knocked down any distance.

The celebrations in New York began with the students of the Scuola d'Italia who sang the Italian and American national anthems, symbolizing the double identity of the Italian-American community. Italy



and America are two countries that meet and are linked through the life and activity of the members of the community. Consul Talò's welcoming greetings were aimed towards all those people who come from Italy or feel close to it, recognizing Italy as a cultural homeland. "We celebrate the past that enriched us and the future that we promise to build together" said Talò. "Let us feel like brothers, so that our different identities may coexist: Italian, European, regional and abroad, even of the country of arrival. We have been united and will be in the future, this is our strength and such a sentiment is even more alive abroad. That is why we are here, today, at the Scuola d'Italia, to be with our family and our community that we feel as ours, certain that the future is of us Italians in the world who build a better future for the new generations".

Riccardo Viale, president of the Italian Cultural Institute, underlined the importance of such a celebration by leaving a mark on the conscience of the new generations. "March 17 is the anniversary of the proclamation of the United Kingdom of Italy, a date forgotten by many because of the strong friction that can still be felt among the social and economical scenes around Italy", said Viale, "but this gap may be bridged by giving a sense of responsibility to the regional ruling classes of the country" he concluded.

The students of the Scuola d'Italia staged "La piccola vedetta lombarda", a tale from De Amicis' novel "Cuore", the story of a young kid who dies during the Risorgimento after being shot by the enemy while scouting in the name of the love for his country, the Lombard people. They recalled many mottos and songs of the Risorgimento such as the acronym VIVA V.E.R.D.I. (Vittorio Emanuele Re D'Italia), the Spigolatrice di Sapri and Va' Pensiero. Remembering important figures such as Saragat, they read articles 1 and 2 of the constitution recalling John Fitzgerald Kennedy's words "We are all sons of your civilization" for the contribution of the Renaissance to the flourishing of modern society.

Silvana Mangione, Vice General Secretary of CGIE, contributed an important description of our flag: it was created in 1794 by two young revolutionaries, Luigi Zamboni of Bologna and Giovanbattista De Rolandis of Asti, who chose white and red because they were the colors of Asti and Bologna and green just to not repeat the French colors. Green, white and red became the colors of freedom, equality and fraternity. They were welcomed by the Cispadane Republic which then joined with the Transalpine Republic, becoming the Cisalpine Republic. Trying to survive, the Borbons themselves adopted it for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Once it had become the flag of Italy, Carducci described it as the true symbol of our country: the white of the mountains, the green of the valleys and the red of the volcanoes. Mangione gave an original flag, with horizontal stripes and symbols of the Cisalpine Republic to the President of the Scuola d'Italia, as a gift of the Federation of Workers Abroad, an homage to all those Americans who love Italians and recognize their contributions abroad.

The director of the Garibaldi Meucci Museum of Staten Island talked about Meucci and Garibaldi's sojourn in the building that now hosts the museum and underlined their contributions to American history: the represent respectively Italian creativity and entrepreneurship, the two greatest traits that Italy exported abroad.

The celebrations were concluded with the brief performance of screenwriter Mario Fratti as Garibaldi who imagined a dialogue between the hero and a journalist of the late 19th century, who had reached his home by boat. Fratti envisioned an old Garibaldi, nostalgic of the past, of the love of Anita, of Mazzini, Cavour, King Victor Emanuel, faith and the courage of the battlefield. He depicted the hero of the Risorgimento as strong, with "leonine" courage, who never stopped believing in the values that inspired him, never losing the emotional afflatus that accompanied him in every expedition of his life. "I wrote this brief piece because I believe in the unification of Italy", the screenwriter told us, "I was happy to play the figure of Garibaldi, the maker of the Unity, and I will for ever be against anyone who wishes to divide our country".



Links

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/13jpg-1>

[2] <http://www.i-italy.org/16940/auguri-italia>