

# Liliana Segre



# The life

Liliana Segre was born on 10 September 1930 in Milan.

She lived with her father Alberto and paternal grandparents, after losing her mother. She is of Jewish origin and was expelled from school at the age of eight when the racial laws came into force in Italy.

She and her father then tried to escape to Switzerland with a permit from the Como police headquarters, but they did not believe the paper they had. It was 30 January 1944, when Liliana Segre found herself in a cattle car on the underground track 21 of Milan's Central Station together with 50/40 other people. On this train there was no water or light, just a bucket to do their business.

From this platform, between 1943 and 1945, 15 convoys of thousands of Jews left for the gas chambers as a result of Nazi-fascist persecution. Of the 776 Italian children under the age of 14 who were deported to the concentration camps, only Liliana and 24 others survived.

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When they **get off the train**, there were prisoners that had the order to unpack and there were the Nazi soldiers that had to divide the new detainees.

Since that moment, she never saw her father again. It was **February 6th, 1944**. She was interned in the female sector of the camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

**Each morning**, she was awakened with a beating, got out of the bunk bed where she slept with other 4 girls and then she drank a cup of some kind of tea.

Then, they went out into the courtyard, the soldiers called the roll and the prisoners had to stay in line in the cold. She **worked outside of the camp** in a munitions factory with 700 other girls and women, who **worked day and night shifts**.

She still believes that's the reason why she is alive today.

After the exhausting hours of work, she walked back to the camp where, for dinner, she received only a piece of bread.

**During the night**, in the Lager, they could hear the cries of those who went to the gas chambers and the calls of mothers to their children and of husbands who had lost their wives.

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That year and a half spent in the concentration and extermination camp, for Liliana remains a **nightmare** even today.

She still has the memory of when he had to line up naked for the choice of the shack where she slept, of the striped dress, the yellow star and the cold. That hard hell until the middle of **January 1945** when, with the advance of the Russians, the Nazis decided to evacuate the camp.

She, together with the other prisoners, started a week-long march to **the Malhow camp in Germany**, where she stayed until April 1945. **The liberation** arrived on **may 1st**: "we couldn't believe it" says Liliana Segre "we were exhausted but of a happiness that, even today, I cannot describe how big it was. I was able to return to Italy four months later, at the end of **August 1945**."

Another train journey but with open wagons. It was summer and we were still alive.



## Senator of life

The **19th January of 2018**, same year of the 80th anniversary of the fascist racial laws, Sergio Mattarella, president of the Italian Republic, based on the article number 59 of the Italian constitution, has named Liliana Segre **senator for life** because she "illustrated the homeland with high merits in the social field". **She is the 4th woman in history to assume this role.**

**She spoke for the first time in the Senate** recalling the racial laws and her memory of deportation, and she also declared her firm intention to oppose any discriminatory laws against nomadic peoples and minorities and stated that she wouldn't give the vote of confidence to the Government



"I have never forgiven, as I have not forgotten the Shoah, and while I was in Auschwitz for a moment I saw a gun on the ground, I thought I'd pick it up. But I didn't. I realized that I was not like my killer. By Then I became a free and peaceful woman.

So Liliana Segre, 90, remembered the horrors of the Holocaust in her last public testimony to the Citadel of the Peace of Rondine, near Arezzo, in which many students from countries live differently and sometimes at war with each other, to whom symbolically passed the witness.

Speaking of racial laws Segre also recalled that "one day in September of 1938 I became the other". I know that when my friends talk about me My Jewish friend is always added.



In **november of 2019**, because of some increasing threats and insults that were turned to her via the internet, the prefect of Milan assigned her to an escort.

On **December 10** of the same year, the Municipality of Milan and the national association of Italian municipalities organized a large event to show her the support of small, medium and large municipalities.

More than 600 mayors participated and marched with her to Piazza della Scala where **the tricolor band was donated to the senator for life** who intervened from the stage saying:

«We are here to talk about love and leave hate to the anonymous keyboard haters. Instead we look at each other as friends even if we meet only just for a moment.»

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# The Death March

A few days before the Soviet army entered **Auschwitz, on 27 January 1945**, was forced by the Nazi soldiers with the eighty thousand internees still able to stand to set off towards Germany, in a forced march that became known as **the Death March**, because the snowy roads of Poland were strewn with the corpses of prisoners who had not endured hunger and frost, or who were finished by the SS with a gunshot.

She was freed at Malchow, a subfield of Ravensbrück, **on 30 April 1945**.

When she returned to Milan, only her maternal grandparents and an uncle had survived. **Of the 605 people in his transport, only 20 returned.**

