

FATHER GIROLAMO TAGLIAFERRO

Belonging to a family known as anti-fascists, in fact two of his brothers were killed by the regime, Father Girolamo Tagliaferro always worked in defense of the weakest, assisted partisans, Allied prisoners, Jews and political fugitives.

In particular, he collected clothing, food and medicine to send to the partisans in the mountains and worked hard to save the Jews who were in Schio and the surrounding area. He housed 45 of them, who were from Ferrara, Trieste and from Yugoslavia – including sisters Ada, Bice and Lidia Morpurgo and the Eppinger and Bruckner families - lodged part of them in the House of Providence and the remainder by the nuns of the Sacred Heart parish, procuring false identity documents that would enable them to reach Switzerland.

Carlo Fölkel and his aunt Enrica Steif were also saved through his efforts. For these actions, he was persecuted by the fascists and isolated by his superiors.

FATHER PAOLO LIGGERI

He became a priest in Milan in 1935, and in September 1943, after the bombings that hit the city, he organized a social welfare center called "La Casa." He not only assisted those who had lost their homes but also gave hospitality to the politically and racially persecuted. Father Liggeri offered refuge to young defectors to the republican draft and organized clandestine expatriation expeditions for Jews and anti-fascists.

For this, on March 24, 1944, he was arrested by the fascists, incarcerated in San Vittore and then deported to the camps of Fossoli, Bolzano, Mauthausen, Gusen, Mauthausen again and finally to Dachau. Liberated by American troops on April 29, 1945, he returned to his work at "La Casa" and wrote the book "The Red Triangle" about his experience in the camps. He died in Milan on September 3, 1996.

ELVIRA AND ERNESTO CATTANEO AND MOTHER SUPERIOR SISTER TERESA, BORN COLOMBA TAMANZA

Jewish child Yehudith Kleinman was born in Venice on July 16, 1938, she was the daughter of Anna Haselnuss and granddaughter of Lea Elertt, who died in Auschwitz. She survived the Holocaust thanks to the actions of the Cattaneo family and Mother Superior Sister Teresa.

Yehudith was living with her family in Desio, after several years in Milan, when her mother and grandmother were arrested and deported. The child was saved thanks to her neighbors, Elvira and Ernesto Cattaneo, who faked that she was their daughter.

With great readiness, in fact, Elvira, at the time of her arrest, managed not to arouse suspicion by pretending that the little girl who was playing with her daughter Fiammetta was also her own child. Yehudith will then be hidden in the convent of the "Handmaids of Charity" and protected by Mother Superior. The latter will be subject to hard interrogation by gendarmes who suspected the presence of Jewish girls in the convent. Yehudith and Fiammetta will see each other already elderly many years later. The story is recounted in the book-testimony "The Little Girl Behind the Eyes. Story of a little girl who resists the Shoah" (Panozzo Publisher).

MUSSIE ZERAI

Eritrean priest and activist founder of the NGO Habeshia 'immigrant lifesaver,' has been assisting migrants on multiple fronts for more than two decades, from their conditions in camps in Libya to the risks of crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean, giving a voice to those who do not have one. Its mission is to help them at collection centers in transit countries and along migration routes, institutions and government chancelleries throughout Europe, and the municipalities that receive them. Habeshia has become a reference point for this type of aid; the organization also provides migrants and refugees with administrative, legal, and specialized education assistance and is very active in condemning violations of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen, Israel, and Europe. Zerai's cell phone never stops ringing, his number is written on the walls of a Misrata prison, they call him from everywhere for help: from Libyan lagers, Egyptian prisons, refugee camps in Sudan... Zerai has also been charged with aiding and abetting illegal immigration and has been subjected to a denigrating campaign and attacks conducted at every level by the Eritrean regime, which does not forgive him for helping thousands of refugees escape. All charges were recently dropped after prolonged investigations. Mussie Zerai was also nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.

LODOVICO TARGETTI

Influential wool industrialist, during the months of German occupation at the risk of his own life he housed many Jewish citizens fleeing deportation in his manor house in Moltrasio, a few kilometers from the Swiss border. He welcomed them into the house, provided them with food and entrusted them to a group of partisans to accompany them across the mountains to safety. When circumstances permitted, Targetti personally accompanied the fugitives through the area's impassable trails.

His story is told by his son Riccardo Targetti, former chief prosecutor of Milan.

LUCA ATTANASIO

Convinced that diplomacy could contribute to the achievement of world peace, in parallel with his diplomatic commitments, he and his wife Zakia Seddiki engaged in humanitarian projects in aid of African civil society. Together they started the Mama Sofia charity, which supports Congolese street children and provides assistance to mothers in critical situations. In October 2020 he received the Nassiriya International Peace Prize "for his commitment to safeguarding peace among peoples."

He was killed in an ambush while traveling on a World Food Program (WFP) convoy in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to which he had been ambassador since 2017, on Feb. 22, 2021.