

Declaration

To whom it may concern

The undersigned Franca Sraffa, born in Pisa on 17th January 1934, resident in Marina di Pietrasanta (Lucca) in via Duca D'Aosta 19, declares what follows:

In the month of August 1943, with my mother Felicina Barocas, who was then pregnant, I went to Farnocchia di Stazzema, a place on the mountain among forests, not far from Pietrasanta, the town where my grandparents, Federigo Abramo Ventura and Ersilia Barocas, were then living. They owned a clothes shop in Via Mazzini. Staying in Farnocchia should have been only a short vacation on the advice of the physician, in view of my mother's conditions and of the hot weather.

Afterwards, because of the end of the Fascist regime and of the ensuing rapid developments of war events, we were obliged to remain there because it was dangerous to come back to Pietrasanta. The situation had become particularly dangerous for my family who was Jewish on both the side of my father, Aldo Sraffa, and of my mother. At that time some anti-Jewish writings had indeed appeared near my grandparents' shop in Pietrasanta. Also my father reached us then in Farnocchia, and for a long time we lived in a house near Piazza del Carmine. Sometimes also my uncle, Augusto Ventura and his wife Giuseppina Trevi come to our place. It was in Farnocchia that on 18th October 1943 was born my sister, Donatella-Miriam (who would afterward die on 19th September 1986).

When my sister was born, the midwife of the village, Siria Catelani, who was of Fascist ideology, went to the German Command to denounce the presence in the village of a Jewish family. In this condition of serious danger we were received for some days by the parish priest, Don Innocenzo Lazzeri, who concealed us in his rectory. It happened, however, that the same midwife informed the fascists or Germans of our refuge, and a patrol came to search the rectory. I remember always those terrible moments. We had locked ourselves in a hidden place of the rectory and my sister of a few months was feeding from my mother's breast. If it happened by chance that she would stop sucking the maternal milk and would start crying, our presence would be revealed. In that case, my family and myself, together with the priest who had hosted us, would have incurred into a serious life danger.

This episode made clear to us and to Don Innocenzo that staying in Farnocchia was no longer safe for us. We collected our most necessary belongings, and, accompanied by two persons of the village, went, on 8th December 1943, to Greppolungo, a small hamlet in the municipality of Camaiore, on the other side of Monte Gabberi, at about 5 kms distance from Farnocchia. We remained there for about one month, changing often residence, in the fear that we could be discovered. Eventually we received a message saying that Dr Mario Lucchesi, the son of the

Director of the Hospital of Pietrasanta, Pietro Lucchesi (both very good physicians and very generous ones) had organised our transfer to a more safe place, a peasant resort on the mountains called *Il Tendaio* near San Pellegrino in Alpe, in the municipality of Castiglione Garfagnana (Lucca). We were said to go down to Camaiore and wait there for the arrival of Dr Mario Lucchesi, who, with a small car, drove us to his house in Castiglione Garfagnana, where we arrived in the evening. We were well received and nourished there. On the next morning, some members of the Rossi family from Tendaio (among them Giuseppe Mansueto and his son Franco) brought us to their house, which was about 15 kms away from Castiglione. I remember a woman of the family who was bringing on her arms my sister who was then a few months old. At the Tendaio we were hosted with great generosity. In particular, Maria Rossi, the wife of Giuseppe Mansueto, and the sister of Maria, Rosina Rossi were especially attentive. As it had happened with Don Innocenzo Lazzeri, these persons risked their life, because at those times it was considered a very grave crime to shelter or protect Jewish families. The Rossis had also received other persons in difficult conditions. I remember that, in order to escape the danger of being discovered, some members of the family and their guests kept organizing guard duties, so that they could watch the possible arrival of patrols of fascists and Germans. With my family, and with my uncle Augusto Ventura, and his wife Giuseppina Trevi, we could stay at the Tendaio for about one year and half, until June 1945, that is until the end of the war. We were always treated with great care and generosity by the Rossi family.

I have a very strong memory of that period, and both myself and the persons of my family we owe our life to these benevolent and brave persons. Since then I am a very good friend of Franca, the daughter of Giuseppe Mansueto and Maria Rossi, who is still alive. And I consider her mother, Maria, a real saint.

I am seriously convinced, that because of the help they gave us in that difficult period, those persons who have saved our life deserve to be included in the number of the Righteous among the Nations of Israel. Among them particularly Don Innocenzo Lazzeri and Maria Rossi. And, moreover, Dr Mario Lucchesi, Giuseppe Mansueto Rossi, and their children, Franco e Franca Rossi, and the sister of Maria, Rosina Rossi.

Faithfully,

Franca Sraffa, widow Venturelli (signed)

Marina di Pietrasanta, 18th April 2015

Declaration

To whom it may concern

The undersigned Elisa Pardini, born in Farnocchia (province of Lucca – Italy) on 19th December 1933, and living in the same place at the address, Via Broto n.1, declares the following:

I was in Farnocchia at the time of the war. In that period I was living in a house situated in Piazza del Carmine. A family of Jewish from Pietrasanta came to live just near our home: Mr Aldo Sraffa, his wife Felicina who was then pregnant, and their daughter Franca Sraffa. I was hanging out with those persons and particularly with Franca who was about of my age. One day I told Franca to come with me to the Mass, but she said that she would not come. It was in this way that I eventually realised that she and her family were of Jewish religion. Sometimes some of their relatives also came to Farnocchia, persons belonging to the family Ventura who owned a clothes shop in Pietrasanta. My mother, Eugenia Ulivi, knew well this family because one of her cousins was a saleswoman in their shop. I remember only the first name of this cousin of my mother, Giorgia. In the period the Sraffas were in our village, a baby girl was born, to whom was given the name Donatella. Suddenly, about the end of 1943, the Sraffas were no longer seen in the village. I asked several times my mother where they had gone, but my mother never said a word on that. After the war I happened to know that for some days they had been hosted by our parish priest, Don Innocenzo Lazzeri in his rectory, and afterwards they had run away from Farnocchia. On the next year Don Innocenzo was killed in the Nazi massacre of Sant'Anna di Stazzema. At those times it was very dangerous to host Jewish and give them any sort of help. Despite the fact that he was aware of the dangers he could encounter, Don Innocenzo did not hesitate to do it. As a matter of fact he made his utmost in order to help persons in difficult conditions who have looked for a refuge in Farnocchia in order to escape the dangers of the war.

Faithfully

Elisa Pardini (signed)

Farnocchia – 18 April – 2015

Declaration

To whom it may concern

The undersigned, Franco Bertelli, born in Farnocchia in the municipality of Stazzema (Lucca) on 7th July 1929 and resident in the same place, in Via Piastre n. 9 with the present statement declares what follows:

In 1943 I was in my village which at that time hosted a great number of evacuees who tried to escape the dangers of the war. Among those person there was a family of Jewish from Pietrasanta, who lived in a house in Piazza del Carmine, not far from my home (that house was destroyed because of the war).

At a given moment, due to the dangers incumbent on person of Jewish religion, this family was obliged to leave her home and was hidden in the rectory of the Church of San Michele by the parish priest, Don Innocenzo Lazzeri. In that period, to host or help Jewish could cause very serious consequences, and our priest made it with generosity, knowing the dangers he could meet.

Don Innocenzo was eventually killed in the nearby village of Sant'Anna di Stazzema on 12th August 1944, in a massacre in which were killed more than 500 person, among residents and evacuees. I believe that, because of the help he gave to the Jewish family from Pietrasanta who had taken refuge in our village, Don Innocenzo deserve to be included among the Righteous among the Nations of Israel.

Franco Bertelli (signed)

Farnocchia – 18 April – 2015