



www.anzosignorelli.com
© Franco Signorelli

Giorgio Perlasca
Fotografie di Franco Signorelli ©
L'utilizzo e la pubblicazione della presente immagine è concesso solo alla Fondazione Giorgio Perlasca, per le
attività di promozione, diffusione, pubblicazione e/o riproduzione, anche parziale, deve essere concordato con l'Autore.



Due video sotto con le traduzioni delle testimonianze

Video 1 –

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qT7FeabUS3E&feature=related>

August 15, 1992. Giorgio Perlasca dies, the man who in the winter of 1944/45 succeeded in saving single handed thousands of Hungarians of Jewish religion from nazi extermination by pretending to be a Spanish Consul.

Back in Italy after the war he doesn't tell anyone about his story, thinking that he just did what he had to do. His deeds finally came to the light thanks to some Hungarian women. His name is in Jerusalem, with those of the Righteous among the Nations, and a tree to his memory was planted on the hills that surround the Yad Vashem Museum.

Video 2 –

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oN_jjB0SXVk&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PL8CB9F1B00FB3168C

THIS FILM IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF GIORGIO PERLASCA AND OF ALL THOSE ITALIANS WHO CARE ABOUT OTHERS. IN HIS PLACE, WOULD YOU HAVE DONE THE SAME ?

In August 1944, while the Allied advance in Europe was well under way, power was seized in Budapest by the Arrow Crosses of Szálási, the *Nyilas*: that is,

Nazism at its fiercest and most delirious state. Hungarian Nazi fanatics promised Hitler one million soldiers for the Third Reich and the extermination of Hungary's 800,000 Jews. The Jews were rounded from the countryside and detained in the capital's Ghetto. Every day hundreds of Jews were lined on the banks of the Danube, had their shoes removed and were shot. The only hope for survival was to shelter in the diplomatic missions of the five neutral countries: Holy See, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. At the end of the war, only 200,000 out of 800,000 Hungarian Jews had survived executions, starvation and deportation.

(Perlasca) "In the days after the seizure of power by the Nazis they imposed the star on the front and the back, and this impressed me a lot because I had never seen anything similar. To see men and women branded this way was not something that I could approve of. Quite the contrary. Then I saw Hungarian Nazis chase a child that must have been seven or eight years old, reach him and kill him on the street. I asked people passing by why, and who was this child. They replied that it's a Jewish child."

This is the building of the Spanish Embassy in Budapest, more or less the way it looked like in 1944. Here Perlasca, who had remained alone after the departure of the real Consul, decided to self appoint himself Consul of Spain, and began creating his own protection network.

This gentleman is Abraham Ronai, and is a very well known actor. He left Hungary after the war and now lives in Israel. It's the first time that he comes back to this place, and immediately recognizes the premises he entered as a child where he obtained a safe conduct.

(Ronai) "Everything is exactly as I always imagined it. When I first came here I was 12 years old. I had taken off the yellow star and wore my boy scout uniform. Here there was a desk, and behind the desk a secretary. I was a thin boy at the time. At the gate there was a tall doorman who wouldn't let me in. I asked him if he had kids. He said yes I do, get in. The secretary then called a man who came down the stairway. A quarter of an hour later he came down with a protection letter for me and my whole family. I was so happy. I didn't have to go back to the Ghetto, humiliated, to die of hunger. I didn't know it was Perlasca, I learnt it later because the letter was signed by him. They sent us to a house that had the Spanish flag, and that gentleman Perlasca came to bring us food. I also remember egg powder, which for us was just like gold.

Mrs. Weitz came to this house in the fall of 1944 with her parents. They managed to escape from a raid that had involved her entire condominium. They were desperate.

"Perlasca came immediately. He took all our pictures and names. Twenty four hours later he returned with the safe conducts, stamped and signed. You know what they said: relatives living abroad applied on your behalf for Spanish

citizenship, which the Government of Spain has granted. While waiting for the voyage you will live in this building. He also placed a placard on the door: this building is under the protection of the Embassy of Spain and therefore no-one can enter. He came every day, consoled us, brought food. No-one ordered him to do what he did. He could have left, gone somewhere safe. The last time I saw him was in January 1945, then I read on the paper that he had left and had been greeted at the railway station. I don't exaggerate when I say that he was the only real hero that I ever met, an experience that alone can fill a lifetime. To see how, also in circumstances like these, a man can remain a man and help others.

(Journalist) "Did you give a letter to all those who came to the Spanish Embassy?"

"Yes, of course. Everyone. There was no discrimination nor choice."

(Journalist) "What about the money?"

(Perlasca) "Yes, the money. We first used the Embassy funds, but they were scarce. Then I used some of my money that I had with me. Then the money of the Jewish Council. When this also ran out I went to the protected homes, which I knew thanks to my own intelligence service, and ordered - not asked - people to give me one thousand, two thousand and so on. I used the money to buy groceries on the black market. After mid December I was accompanied by a police officer who carried the standard of Spain. I felt like a medieval knight, but it was useful.

Mrs. Hoppe, at the time aged 16, found shelter with her mother in this house, protected by the Spanish Embassy. In December 1944, under the bombings, everyone moved in this basement.

(Hoppe) "I was lying here. When the *Nyilas* came to look for youths to take away, they covered them with coal. Here was my poor mother. We lived in terror. There was an Opera singer here and, when there was some silence, she sung us airs from Operettas and other tunes. Perlasca came almost every day. He brought us food and warned us when the *Nyilas* approached. They told us children that he was an Ambassador and all things in the world were in his hands. If it wasn't for him, we would have also found death on the Danube. Because in the other houses, those of the Swiss and the Swedes, the Jews were taken out, brought to the river banks and executed. In this home, thanks to Perlasca, we were truly defended. Today, from here, I express my eternal gratitude. I will never forget what he did for us poor Jews."



Oramai da qualche anno ricordiamo il 27 gennaio la Shoah, lo sterminio di oltre sei milioni di ebrei in nome di una folle ed aberrante ideologia.

Se non vogliamo però che questa data lentamente diventi una mera ricorrenza e consuetudine istituzionale è necessario ed importante darle contenuti, coinvolgendo specie le giovani generazioni, quelle forse più distratte dalla frenesia della vita moderna ed impegnate a rincorrere mode passeggere o miti contingenti.

La Memoria di quello che è successo deve rimanere viva in noi tutti affinché quanto successo possa anzi debba diventare un monito perché atrocità del genere non abbiano più a ripetersi.

E la miglior maniera per ricordare la Shoah ma anche ogni altro genocidio o pulizia etnica, e ve sono state tanti nel corso del secolo scorso, è ricordare oltre alla tragedia anche i *Giusti*, quelle persone cioè che seppero dire no, seppero opporsi anche a rischio della propria vita non rimanendo indifferenti dinnanzi al male che cresceva poiché sono la dimostrazione che qualsiasi persona può adoperarsi per contrastare il male.

E Giorgio Perlasca è uno di questi Giusti, forse il più famoso sia per la straordinarietà della sua vicenda in cui riuscì a strappare a morte certa oltre 5200 ungheresi di religione ebraica inventandosi un ruolo non suo, quello di diplomatico spagnolo, lui che non era né spagnolo né diplomatico, sia per i suoi successivi 45 anni di silenzio. Se non fosse stato per alcune donne ebrei ungheresi che lo ritrovarono nel 1988 a Padova, pensionato ottantenne, la sua vicenda sarebbe andata dispersa. Ma il destino dispose diversamente.

Perché non raccontò nulla, nemmeno in famiglia? Perché si limitò a scrivere e consegnare nel 1945 un memoriale, che andò disperso, al Governo italiano e spagnolo ? Perché non rivendicò nell'Italia del dopoguerra meriti, onori e ricompense?

Esiste un racconto della tradizione ebraica che secondo me dà il vestito su misura a Giorgio Perlasca ma in fondo a tutti i Giusti. *"Esistono sempre al mondo 36 Giusti, nessuno sa chi sono e nemmeno loro sanno d'esserlo ma quando il male sembra prevalere escono allo scoperto, si prendono i destini del mondo sulle loro spalle e questo è uno dei motivi perché Dio non distrugge il mondo."*

Terminato questo periodo tornano tranquillamente alla vita normale, alla quotidianità di tutti i giorni, dimenticando quasi quanto fatto perché ritengono di avere solamente il loro dovere.

"Ma lei cosa avrebbe fatto al mio posto vedendo delle persone uccise, perseguitate solo per un diverso credo religioso", era la risposta che Giorgio Perlasca dava a chi gli chiedeva perché lo aveva fatto, perché aveva rischiato la vita quando poteva andarsene tranquillamente in Svizzera attendendo lì la fine della guerra.

Affiancare al duro, drammatico e doveroso ricordo delle atrocità del periodo il racconto, la testimonianza dei Giusti è importante per dare un senso compiuto alla Memoria, ma soprattutto per dare un segnale positivo, un esempio da imitare, nelle piccole e grandi cose della vita. Il testamento spirituale di Giorgio Perlasca è racchiuso in una semplice frase detta a Giovanni Minoli (Mixer 1990) che gli chiedeva il perché questa storia doveva essere ricordata: lui rispose senza pensarci troppo, con immediatezza *"Vorrei che i giovani si interessassero a questa mia storia unicamente per pensare, oltre a quello che è successo, a quello che potrebbe accadere e sapere opporsi, eventualmente, a violenze del genere"*.

Il Presidente

Franco Perlasca