



THE EXECUTION OF THE “HIERARCHS” OF THE ITALIAN SOCIAL REPUBLIC

You can find this point of interest in Dongo - Path 1 - Stage 1

DESCRIPTION

(Drawn from the descriptive panel on site)

«Walter Audisio “Colonnello Valerio” and Aldo Lampredi “Guido”, a CVL (Corpo Volontari della Libertà – *Volunteer Corp for Freedom*) officer, arrive to Dongo from Milan in the early afternoon of 28 April 1945, coming from Milan. They are at the head of a group of Partisans from the “Oltrepò pavese” area. Their equipment and new uniforms generate suspicion among the Upper Lake Partisans, who fear a blitz by the Fascists, and it is only after a thorough check of their credentials that they transfer command and prisoners to them. “Valerio” communicates the order received from the CLNAI (Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Alta Italia - *Committee of National Liberation for Northern Italy*) to execute the main figures of the Italian Social Republic, and draws up a list of those condemned to death. Mayor Rubini, who is not in favour of the execution of the arrested men, resigns in protest. The prisoners are assembled in the “Golden Hall” of Palazzo Manzi and then led through the square filled with people. Fifteen Fascist government ministers and hierarchs are shot shortly after 5 pm of April 28th by a firing squad led by Alfredo Mardini “Riccardo” in front of the railing on the lake, which still carries the marks of the shots fired on that occasion. At the time of the execution, Marcello Petacci, the brother of Claretta, tries to make a run through the streets of the town and dives into the lake, where he is mortally wounded. The bodies are immediately transferred to Milan on a truck, and, along the way, in Giulino di Mezzegra, the corpses of Benito Mussolini and Claretta Petacci are picked up. They will all be brought to Piazzale Loreto, a symbolic location where, on 10 August 1944, fifteen Partisans and Anti-Fascists taken from the S. Vittore prison in Milan, had been shot by the soldiers of the “Muti” Legion and abandoned in the square as a warning to the people of Milan».

The executed in Dongo were:

Alessandro Pavolini, General Secretary of the Republican Fascist Party
Francesco Maria Barracu, colonel, Under-Secretary to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers
Ferdinando Mezzasoma, Minister of Popular Culture
Augusto Liverani, Minister of Communications
Ruggero Romano, Minister of Public Works
Paolo Zerbino, Minister of Interiors
Luigi Gatti, former Prefect of Milan, Mussolini’s Secretary
Paolo Porta, Party Secretary of Como
Idreno Utimpergher, commander of the Black Brigade of Empoli
Nicola Bombacci, one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party (1921), who later adhered to Fascism
Pietro Calistri, captain and pilot of the National Republican Air Force
Goffredo Coppola, rector of the University of Bologna
Ernesto Daquanno, journalist, director of the “Agenzia Stefani” press agency
Mario Nudi, employee at the Fascist Copnfederation of Agriculture
Vito Casalnuovo, colonel of the Republican National Guard, Mussolini’s adjutant.