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Abstracts

SILVIO BERARDI, *Repubblicanesimo e antifascismo nel carteggio Arcangelo Ghisleri-Giulio Andrea Belloni (1923-1938)*

The correspondence between Arcangelo Ghisleri and Giulio Andrea Belloni took place in the lapse of time between 1923 and 1938 (date of Ghisleri's death) and includes about 350 writings, comprising various letters and postcards. This large amount of documentation, mostly unpublished, is kept at the Domus Mazziniana in Pisa. Arcangelo Ghisleri was born in 1855 in Persico Dosimo, a little village near Cremona. Therefore, he was already an elderly man at the time of his correspondence with Belloni, but his spirit, regardless of his age and life troubles, was still young and vigorous. Follower of Mazzini's principles in the demand of a higher sense of politics and follower of Cattaneo's principles in revaluing reality's pragmatism and positivism, the Lombard intellectual always adhered, with deep belief, to the Republican ideas and, during Fascism, he proudly devoted himself to disseminate the thought of his two masters, Mazzini and Cattaneo, notwithstanding the censorship.

He was a reliable journalist and founded and directed many magazines. He was a fruitful writer and highlighted the Savoy's Monarchy faults as well as the lies of a corrupt parliamentarianism. As a well distinguished geographer, he did not consider geography as an end in itself, but a means to better understand life and people's history. Much younger than Ghisleri and born in Rome on 1902, Belloni also admired republican ideals and, at the same time, deeply respected Ghisleri, considering him as a master. In the correspondence between these two friends the values of republicanism are frequently reflected and, in both personalities, there is the resolute desire to redeem a priceless cultural heritage, containing the spirit of the Italian Risorgimento.

In his correspondence with Belloni, Ghisleri used to confidentially talk about the past and the years of his youth. He also shared with him opinions on politicians and intellectuals with whom he had various disputes, such as the Honourable Giovanni Bovio, Benedetto Croce, Enrico Ferri, always with his peculiar tolerance and spirit of good will. Nevertheless, the exaltation of the republican ideals did not prevent them from considering with extreme realism the errors of the Italian Republican Party, too often in service of the power. Their moral intransigence enabled them to criticize, when necessary, their political affiliation. The Fascist regime, defined by Ghisleri as actual totalitarianism, was considered by the two intellectuals as an impediment to cultural development, since the censorship blocked the circulation of the works of art, able to strengthen, above all, youth's spirit. Especially Belloni, during the Fascism years, personally suffered imprisonment, because he never wanted to swear allegiance to the regime. Ghisleri, in his old age, devoted himself to read the authors of the Risorgimento and to try to republish their best works. As he used to highlight to his young friend, during the years of Mussolini's regime he often chose to be silent, not in a passive and sterile way, but in a constructive and active way, as the only cure against melancholy.

The correspondence ended on 1938 August 3, which is the date of the last letter from Ghisleri to Belloni. A few days later, on August 19, the intellectual died in his home in Bergamo, which was his sanctuary. While Italy mourned above all the geographer's death and did not realize that a valiant fighter for democracy and freedom had passed away, on the contrary, Mussolini understood it very well.