

## «IL FASCISMO IN ITALIA HA PERSO TRA I GIOVANI LA SUA AURA ROMANTICA». UN TESTO SULLA GUERRA DI SPAGNA DI GAETANO SALVEMINI

Lorenzo Grilli

Il testo che presentiamo è direttamente collegato al dialogo epistolare con Carlo Rosselli e all'*Appello di "Giustizia e Libertà" agli italiani d'America perché aiutino la lotta in Spagna e in Italia* del febbraio 1937<sup>1</sup>, dovrebbe risalire alle settimane tra fine marzo e aprile<sup>2</sup>, e venne forse preparato per uno di quegli interventi con i quali Salvemini integrava il suo insegnamento alla Harvard University e i suoi studi alla biblioteca Widener, continuando così a svolgere quell'attività politica di resistenza all'egemonia fascista a cui si era dedicato<sup>3</sup>. Non, in piccolo, un *Under the Axe of Fa-*

1. L'*Appello* (in "Giustizia e Libertà", Parigi, 5 febbraio 1937), era firmato da Libero Bastinelli, Alberto Cianca, Emilio Lussu, Carlo Rosselli e Silvio Trentin ma, per prudenza nei confronti delle autorità americane e della propria condizione di immigrato, non da Salvemini che ne scriveva a Carlo Rosselli in una lettera del 23 gennaio 1937 in questi termini: «La circolare dovrebbe chiarire i seguenti punti: 1. La colonna si formò subito mentre altri discuteva o tagliava la corda, e si trovò in Spagna a fine agosto, perdendo subito i suoi primi uomini a Huesca. 2. La colonna è formata di elementi tratti da tutti i partiti italiani, ed ha esplicitamente dichiarato che è andata in Spagna a combattere il fascismo e non a partecipare alle lotte tra fascisti locali. 3. La colonna è diventata il centro di organizzazione di altre forze locali. 4. Enumerare brevemente le operazioni a cui ha partecipato. 5. Dare i nomi delle persone finora cadute e delle forze combattenti mese per mese. 6. Spiegare la necessità di aiuti finanziari: le somme finora raccolte e spese; capitoli delle spese; equipaggiamento dei volontari e viaggio fino alla frontiera francese; sussidi alle famiglie; viaggi ai volontari che tornano a casa feriti, o malati, o in licenza, ecc. Una circolare a base di fatti sono sicuro che procurerebbe un migliaio di dollari. Ma potete voi firmare questa circolare senza incorrere nei rigori della recente legge Blum?» (in E. Signori (ed.), *Fra le righe. Carteggi fra Carlo Rosselli e Gaetano Salvemini*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2009, pp. 285-286; e cfr. *ivi*, pp. 78-83, 289 n. 12).

2. Per la datazione, cfr. nota introduttiva al testo.

3. Cfr. E. Tagliacozzo (anche ed.), *Salvemini negli anni d'America. Prefazione* a G.

*scism*<sup>4</sup>, non un corposo testo storico, nessuna nota a piè di pagina, quindi, per un pubblico internazionale e soprattutto di americani ai quali certi nomi, certi eventi storici, certi luoghi geografici dovevano apparire lontani, se non esoticamente europei, e a cui la crisi del '29 e i nuclei ideologici della loro democrazia dovevano essere e più vicini e tanto scontati da poter recepire, come già proprio, lo scandalo salveminiiano, empaticamente espresso in una trasparente presa di posizione, tra ciò che nell'attuale Guerra civile spagnola poteva essere "buono" e ciò che era "cattivo", tra chi aveva rinunciato alla tranquillità, alla carriera, al benessere, alla famiglia e alla vita per difendere strenuamente le proprie idee e chi, uomini e soprattutto governi, simpatizzava, nascostamente aiutava, ignorava per *Realpolitik*, ingannava, espelleva, imprigionava, uccideva.

Chi avesse voluto ascoltare Salvemini, da americano e quindi da una certa distanza e con oramai quella certa consapevolezza di superiorità, variamente diffusa nell'opinione pubblica statunitense<sup>5</sup>, non avrebbe potuto che vedersela confermata, quella differenza e, tuttavia, quei nomi stranieri, di italiani imprigionati, fuggiti, feriti e immolatisi, che si richiamavano ai nomi noti di Garibaldi, di Mazzini o a un comunismo individuale disubbidiente al partito, certo non bolscevico, non staliniano<sup>6</sup>, non avrebbero che potuto richiamar loro quelle lotte e quei principi fondanti la loro centocinquantenaria cittadinanza e, forse, messi ancor più in evidenza dal fatto della crisi economica, dalle motivazioni al suo superamento, da quella stessa definitiva diversità tra un al di qua e un al di là

Salvemini, *L'Italia vista dall'America*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1969, pp. IX-XLII; Id., *L'opera di Gaetano Salvemini negli Stati Uniti d'America*, in "Rassegna Storica Toscana", 1974, pp. 19-36; Id., *Gaetano Salvemini, un profilo biografico*, Bari, Laterza, 1963<sup>4</sup>, pp. 81-87; H. Stuart Hughes, *Da sponda a sponda. L'emigrazione degli intellettuali europei e lo studio della società contemporanea (1930-1965)*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1977, pp. 119-141; Ch. Killinger, *Gaetano Salvemini e le autorità americane. Documenti inediti del FBI*, in "Storia contemporanea", 1981, n. 3, pp. 403-439; Id., *Gaetano Salvemini. A Biography*, Westport (Connecticut), Praeger, 2002; Id., *Gaetano Salvemini, gli intellettuali americani, la politica americana*, in P. Audenino (ed.), *Il prezzo della libertà. Gaetano Salvemini in esilio (1925-1949)*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2009, pp. 43-53.

4. New York, The Viking Press, 1936.

5. Cfr. M.L. Salvadori, *L'Europa degli americani. Dai Padri fondatori a Roosevelt*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2005, pp. 472 e sgg.

6. Sul punto, cfr. G. Salvemini, *Sulla democrazia*, a cura di S. Bucchi, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2008, e in specie Id., *Democrazia e dittatura*, ivi, pp. 23-52 e *Il concetto di democrazia e il concetto di libertà nel XVIII secolo, discorso letto nell'incontro annuale dell'American Historical Association tenutosi a Philadelphia nel dicembre 1937 in occasione del 150° anniversario della Costituzione degli Stati Uniti*; R. Vivarelli, *Parigi 1935. L'intervento di Gaetano Salvemini al Congrès international des écrivains pour la défense de la culture*, in "Rivista Storica Italiana", 1997, n. 2, pp. 640-649; P. Audenino, *L'esilio di un maestro di libertà*, in Ead. (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 11-39.

dell'Atlantico che la Grande Guerra poteva aver mostrato e che il dopoguerra poteva aver reso ancor più evidente. Sia che si approvasse l'atteggiamento tendenzialmente isolazionista del governo federale come opzione migliore sia che, più semplicemente, lo si accettasse come dato di fatto, o persino si avessero idee già chiare e nette su un'immaturità italiana, su un fascismo a far da argine al pericolo comunista, su un'immigrazione da tenere sotto controllo, la concretezza morale e la rappresentazione controfattuale di Salvemini avrebbero potuto far comunque breccia: se una delle due parti agiva con mezzi subdoli e meschini, la ragione doveva essere, per lo più almeno, dalla parte opposta.

E così se l'inglese qui utilizzato da Salvemini, forse attraverso una traduzione altrui, potrebbe apparire ripetitivo e non immune da certe costruzioni di frase un poco italianizzate, la consapevolezza del suo *target* e del suo obiettivo, che la struttura di un testo devono perseguire, specie nell'ipotesi fosse testo da leggere in una conferenza, non lo sono affatto e sono anzi frutto delle esperienze stimolanti che la sua esperienza americana gli aveva portato, ora<sup>7</sup>, della concretezza del suo modo di pensare, da sempre, e del suo indomabile carattere che rimuoveva la sua sofferenza e le sue incertezze di *Italian exile* per ridare alla propria esistenza pienezza di senso, per guardare, ancora una volta, al futuro. Una breve introduzione storica ottocentesca e preunitaria allora, e quindi la presentazione del documento di indubitabile autenticità che provava l'intervento mascherato di Mussolini, e poi altri fatti e fatti concreti, battaglie, combattimenti, e uomini con l'individualità del loro nome e cognome, della loro morte, della breve biografia delle loro origini, del perché avessero deciso di lasciare l'Italia e di essere lì, in Spagna: Mario Angeloni, Carlo Rosselli, Mario Rietti, Romeo Pontoni, Fernando de Rosa, Giordano Viezzoli, Randolfo Pacciardi, Guido Picelli, Pietro Jacchia, Luciano Zannoni, Nino Nannetti, Rosario Palumbo, Raffaele Rossetti<sup>8</sup>; e, nella parte finale,

7. Ad esempio, cfr. *Lettere inedite di Gaetano Salvemini a Bernard e Mary Berenson*, a cura e con introduzione di I. Origo, in "Nuova Antologia", 1982, n. 550, pp. 177 e sgg.

8. Mario Angeloni (1896 – ferito mortalmente a Monte Pelato il 28 agosto 1936), Mario Rietti (1907 – ferito mortalmente a Tardienta e deceduto il 2 settembre 1936), Romeo Pontoni (1899 – ferito mortalmente a Monte Pelato e deceduto il 5 settembre 1936), Fernando de Rosa (1908 – caduto a Cabeza Lájjar, Sierra de Guadarrama, il 16 settembre 1936), Giordano Viezzoli (1910 – aviatore caduto presso Toledo il 30 settembre 1936), Randolfo Pacciardi (1899 – allontanatosi dalla Spagna in seguito alla mancata realizzazione di una legione completamente italiana, sarà segretario del PRI e più volte ministro nell'Italia repubblicana), Guido Picelli (1889 – caduto a Mirabueno il 4 gennaio 1937), Pietro Jacchia (detto Piero, 1884 – caduto a Majadahonda il 14 gennaio 1937), Luciano Zannoni (1907 – risulta aver operato con i "guerilleros" in Spagna dopo la vittoria franchista), Nino Nannetti (Bassi, 1906 – poi ferito mortalmente a Bilbao e deceduto il 21 luglio 1937), cfr. Associazione italiana combattenti antifascisti di Spagna (ed.), *La Spagna*

quasi occorresse a una Storia che ripete se stessa il ricordarsi che sono soprattutto gli uomini convinti di loro stessi e delle proprie idee a farla, quella storia, lo scontro fra italiani e italiani, e — anche qui Salvemini ben consapevole del suo pubblico, di ciò che poteva avere come ovvio pregiudizio di ascoltatore — la necessità di segnalare come le sconfitte militari, i “Caporetto”, non fossero cosa da italiani, come la volontà o meno di combattere, come l’esperienza di guerra che può anche voler dire conoscere l’arte di non sacrificarsi inutilmente, fossero fatte di mezzi quanto di motivazioni forti. E, per Guadalajara, all’

Italians who had been deceived or forced into serving a political idea that was repugnant to their consciences, surrendered to other Italians, who were fighting for the liberty of Spain in the expectation of fighting eventually for the liberty of Italy. The wonder is that before disbanding and surrendering they fought for a whole week.

Salvemini doveva allora far aggiungere, a penna, quella frase sull’aura romantica che tra i giovani italiani il fascismo aveva perso<sup>9</sup>. Una sentenza poco motivata dai fatti? Un testo pensato per raccogliere consenso, e finanziamenti, negli Stati Uniti o in Inghilterra, ma rapidamente superato dagli eventi storici che lo supportavano e quindi messo da parte per essere in seguito parzialmente riutilizzato<sup>10</sup>? Qualcosa si stava muovendo e, forse, qualcosa Salvemini poteva aver percepito, pur se ormai fuori d’Italia da 12 anni, attraverso i suoi contatti, le sue letture, o i suoi studi, che prevedano, fra l’altro, da una parte una sistematica e documentata replica alla propaganda diretta o indiretta del regime italiano, dall’altra una relazione non sempre piana con “Giustizia e Libertà” che, tra i dubbi e le poderose difficoltà, rientrava nella prospettiva di medio/lungo periodo del dopo-Mussolini e che, da lì a poche settimane, a Bagnoles de l’Orne il 9 giugno 1937, vedeva l’assassinio dei Rosselli. Un “is going to lose” sarebbe stato forse più storicamente prudente<sup>11</sup>. Ma non era qui il luogo, e

*nel nostro cuore. 1936-1939. Tre anni di storia da non dimenticare*, Milano, AICVAS, 1996, dove non compaiono i nominativi né di Palumbo (Rosario Palumbo, cfr. nota introduttiva al testo) né di Raffaele Rossetti (1881-1951).

9. Si vedano le note t e 5 al testo salveminiiano.

10. Per l’ipotesi di una “prima stesura” dove l’impegno politico, supportato dalle evidenze storiografiche, si intreccia con l’interpretazione storiografica, resa viva da una presa di posizione politica, in un modo di lavoro tipico di Salvemini, cfr. nota introduttiva al testo.

11. Così come, in sede privata, apertamente e senza reticenze, pessimismo dopo certa delusione in seguito agli avvenimenti etiopici e spagnoli, critiche e diverse prospettive potevano emergere, là dove non avrebbe avuto senso portarle a livello di una controproducente polemica pubblica, cfr. lettere del 23 gennaio, del 10 e del 23 febbraio 1937 in E.

le flessioni verbali, talvolta, hanno il loro buon diritto a cedere ai desideri e agli auspici.

Gaetano Salvemini  
*Italians in the Spanish War* [marzo-aprile 1937]\*

History repeats itself. In 1825 Italian exiles fought in Spain under the walls of Cadiz and Barcelona in the liberal ranks against the French army

Signori (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 284-291. Anche cfr. Id., *Introduzione* allo stesso volume, pp. 46-92; G. Salvemini, *Prefazione* a C. Rosselli, *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, Torino, Einaudi, 1967 (anche in Id., *Scritti sul fascismo*, vol. II, a cura di A. Merla e N. Valeri, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1966, p. 599); Id., *La guerra di Spagna e l'unione dell'Italia alla Germania*, in Id., *Preludio alla seconda guerra mondiale*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1967, pp. 764-770. E, per il rapporto con Rosselli, cfr. R. Vivarelli, *Carlo Rosselli e Gaetano Salvemini*, in *Giustizia e libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1978, pp. 69-97; N. Tranfaglia, *Carlo Rosselli dall'interventismo a Giustizia e libertà*, Bari, Laterza, 1968.

\* In Archivio Salvemini, II. Dall'esilio al secondo dopoguerra, busta 21/1, cc. 15 datt., con correzioni ms., non aut., num. [1]-3, 3 bis, 4-14. Cfr. I.S.R.T., *Archivio Gaetano Salvemini. I. Manoscritti e materiali di lavoro*, inventario a cura di S. Vitali, Roma, Ministero per i Beni culturali e ambientali – Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1998, p. 202. Si tratta di un testo dattiloscritto di 15 pagine con correzioni probabilmente di Salvemini, ma dalla forma molto chiara: il che potrebbe far pensare a un'agevolazione per la lettura sia come lavoro di collaborazione per la traduzione sia come testo per propaganda o per conferenza finalizzato alla raccolta di finanziamenti pro Spagna in collegamento all'*Appello di "Giustizia e Libertà" agli italiani d'America perché aiutino la lotta in Spagna e in Italia*, in "GL", Parigi, 5 febbraio 1937 (cfr. E. Signori, *Introduzione* a Id. (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 78-83). I numeri delle pagine 3 (in luogo di 2, da «would not only make» a «across guarded Italian frontier»), 3 bis (da «Most of these volunteers» a «but hastened to Barcelona, where is») e 8 (da «Thus a / battalion» a «newspaper for libel») sono a penna, gli altri dattiloscritti, a segno forse di interventi sul testo che erano ancora in corso. Nelle note alfabetiche si segnalano i cambiamenti a penna apportati al testo dattilografato, che è stato riprodotto senza apportare alcuna modifica o correzione neppure in caso di eventuale errore (ad esempio: Nanetti per Nannetti, entrused per entrusted; surrendered per surrendered; divergencies per divergences; Caporetto per Caporetto). Come usuale nel suo metodo di lavoro, di cui questo testo può rappresentare un buon esempio di "prima stesura" (cfr. G. Salvemini, *Scritti sul fascismo*, I, a cura di R. Vivarelli, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1961, pp. XII-XIV), Salvemini ne avrebbe riutilizzato lunghe parti in *Carlo e Nello Rosselli – A Memoir*, Londra, edizioni di "Giustizia e Libertà", [marzo 1938], ora nel capitolo 8. *Abissinia e Spagna*, in Id., *Carlo e Nello Rosselli*, nei suoi *Scritti vari (1900-1957)*, a cura di G. Agosti e A. Galante Garrone, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1978, pp. 701-706 (in specifico: da «At the end of July» a «with patriotic traditions» alle pp. 702-703; da «In October 1936 it appeared» a «all were respected» alla p. 704; da «In March 1937» a «they fought for a whole week» alle pp. 705-706, qui segnalate rispettivamente alle note numeriche 1, 2 e 4

which had invaded Spain to restore King Ferdinand to the throne, and in this army other Italians fought, among them Charles Albert, the future king of Piedmont.

During the Carlist civil war from 1833 to 1840, Italian exiles again fought side by side with the liberals, while Charles Albert, now on the throne, aided the Carlists with arms, money, and diplomatic intrigues. «Next to God and my army», declared the Pretender, Don Carlos, «the greatest assistance has been rendered to my cause by the King of Piedmont».

In 1923 Mussolini received with favor Primo de Rivera's coup d'état. Vice versa, in 1926 Italian anti-Fascist exiles participated in the attempted uprising in Catalonia planned by Colonel Macia. In 1931 the downfall of the monarchy in Spain was regarded by both Fascists and anti-Fascists, in Italy and abroad, as a defeat for Mussolini. But the Spanish elections of 1933, which swept the Right into power, were a victory for him. A docu-

indicandone l'inizio e la fine). Per la possibile datazione tra il marzo e l'aprile 1937, nel testo salveminiiano l'ultimo avvenimento è la battaglia di Guadalajara (8-23 marzo 1937), e non si accenna invece ad Antonio Cieri, anarchico caduto il 10 aprile 1937 (data del comunicato ufficiale; in "GL", 16 aprile 1937); risulta poi una citazione letterale ivi compreso l'errore di ortografia sul nome di Nannetti, nella parte finale del testo salveminiiano, di Alberto Cianca, *Volontari antifascisti in Spagna. Valencia, febbraio (ritardata)*, in "Giustizia e Libertà", 5 marzo 1937, n. 10 («Pure sul fronte di Madrid una formazione spagnola è comandata da un giovane italiano: il tenente colonnello Nino Nanetti; così come sul fronte di Aragona un largo reparto di truppe catalane è agli ordini di Rosario Palumbo, reduce dalle due battaglie di Irùn e di Huesca», si veda nota 3 al testo; ma cfr. anche "GL", 26 febbraio 1937, n. 9 per le notizie sul Battaglione "Garibaldi"; e cfr. *Antifascisme italien en Espagne*, in "Fascisme et Italie. Bi-mensuel de 'Giustizia e Libertà'", 1937, n. 1, in coda al n. 11 del 12 marzo 1937 nell'edizione "GL" di Feltrinelli reprint del 1966, per la citazione dell'elogio alle truppe italiane di Macnamara); si aggiunga infine che, da una lettura delle buste 21/2 e 21/3 dell'Archivio contenenti appunti per conferenze e di studio sulla guerra di Spagna che vanno dal 1936 a oltre il 1937 (cfr. I.S.R.T., *op. cit.*, pp. 202-203), ma che non riprendono in alcuna parte il testo qui pubblicato, Salvemini risulta essersi allontanato da Cambridge proprio alla fine di aprile, o inizio maggio, avendo riutilizzato sia il retro della lettera con la quale Frieda Wunderlich lo ringraziava dell'imminente prestito della sua camera all'università («IV 19 1937. Dear Mr. Salvemini, I thank you very much for your great kindness to allow me the use of your room. You need not clean anything up for me. It is a great convenience for me to roost in a private room in the university. Thank you for helping me in this way. We missed you very much at our celebration. With kindest regards, cordially Frieda Wunderlich, Johnson Hall, 411 West 116th Street, New York»), sia parecchi foglietti intestati «The Charles, 3333 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Md» con citazioni dal "New York Herald Tribune", dal "New York Times", e altri giornali di quei mesi. Ringrazio il "Comitato per la pubblicazione delle opere di Gaetano Salvemini" per l'autorizzazione alla stampa e per la gentile ospitalità all'Archivio dell'Istituto storico della Resistenza in Toscana; un tenero bacio di arrivederci Andrea, nelle tue fiere, piccolissime, per sempre nostre, undicesime settimane.

a. "confined himself to senting", cancellato.

ment of indubitable authenticity, recently published by the Spanish Government, has revealed that on March 31, 1934 Mussolini entered into an engagement with General Barrera and other leaders of the Spanish anti-Republican groups, pledging himself to furnish them immediately with 1,500,000 pesetas, 20,000 guns, 20,000 hand grenades, and 200 mitrailleuses for the purpose of bringing about the overthrow of the Republic and the restoration of monarchy: «this aid had only a preliminary character and would be followed at the suitable time by a still more substantial assistance, in the measure in which the work accomplished justified it, and in which circumstances rendered it necessary».

In the summer of 1936 the time to keep those promises arrived. In the first weeks of the Spanish civil war Mussolini sent<sup>a</sup> the insurgents pursuit and bombing planes, artillery, ammunition, specialists in motorized warfare, and small contingents of men. Italian aeroplanes and troops led by Italian officers contributed to the defence of Majorca and the reconquest of Ibiza.

Immediately the Italian exiles opposed their open intervention to the masked intervention of Mussolini<sup>1</sup>. At the end of July one of the groups in which the exiles are organized, “Giustizia e Libertà”, launched an appeal for the formation of a legion of volunteers to fight as an Italian unit at the side of Spanish popular militias. The world had wished to ignore the 2000 Italians who had laid down their lives in Italy between 1921 and 1926, fighting against the Fascists; the 3000 Italians who from 1927 to 1936 had been sentenced by the Fascist Special Tribunal to an aggregate of thirty thousand<sup>b</sup> years’ imprisonment; the thousands of men and women who had been interned on penal islands; and the thousands of intellectuals and workers in Italy who had accepted poverty rather than renounce their dignity as men. The anti-Fascists who went to fight in Spain would not only make<sup>c</sup> a demonstration of active solidarity with the Spanish people, but also show Mussolini and his admirers in other countries that Fascism has not been able to destroy among Italians the tradition of Mazzini and Garibaldi.

Neither the French nor the Spanish Governments were in favor of this undertaking. They raised the objection that Spain’s need was for arms not for men. Moreover, they did not want to give Mussolini a pretext for intervention, just as if the dictator were not already intervening without any pretext at all. Even the leaders of the Communist Party in France opposed that first group of pioneers. They thought that only doctors, medicine, and

1. Inizio, cfr. nota introduttiva.

b. “3000”, cancellato

c. “intended not only to make”, modificato.

foodstuffs should be sent to Spain. The first Italian anti-Fascists were able to reach Spain only because the Barcelona Government disobeyed the Madrid authorities and welcomed their aid. In France they had to travel singly to the Spanish frontier.

The first Italian unit, 150 strong, set out from Barcelona on August 19 for the Aragonese front. Democrats, socialists, communists who had revolted against the orders from their leaders<sup>d</sup>, anarchists, forgetting party quarrels and doctrinal divergencies, had come together from the most diverse countries. Some had come from Italy, defying the dangers of a flight across the closely guarded Italian frontier. Most of these volunteers were mature men who had fought in the World War. All were prompted by strong political sentiments. They turned out to be very useful to the Spanish militias, who needed to learn the art of fighting without unnecessary sacrifices.

On the morning of August 28 the column had its baptism of fire near Almudevar, on the road between Huesca and Saragossa. Attacked by much more numerous and better equipped forces, after five hours' fighting they repulsed the assault, took some prisoners, and captured a cannon, some guns, and other war materials.

In the battle, together with other soldiers, fell the commander of the column, Mario Angeloni. He was born in a family in which democratic ideas were traditional. He had taken part as volunteer in the World War of 1914-18, with the rank of an officer, winning several medals for valor. In the years following the war he was an opponent of Fascism and sacrificed wealth and professional career to the political struggle. His law office and his house were looted several times, and he himself was wounded and banished from his city. At the end of 1926 he was arrested, sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and sent to the Island of Lipari. In the spring of 1932 he succeeded in escaping from Italy to France. When the Spanish revolution broke out, Angeloni was ill. He did not wait for recovery but hastened to Barcelona, where his ability as an organizer marked him out to be the commander of the first Italian unit. He fell while he was leading the assault upon an enemy tank.

After Angeloni's death the Italian column passed under the command of Carlo Rosselli, who had been wounded in the same action. Rosselli belongs to a rich family with patriotic traditions<sup>2</sup>; Mazzini died at Pisa in the house of a Rosselli. Rosselli wished to devote himself to the study of economics but in 1925 he gave up his studies in order to throw himself into the struggle against Fascism. He founded a review which after a few

d. "who... leaders", aggiunto.

2. Fine, cfr. nota introduttiva.



months was suppressed. In July 1925 his house in Florence was sacked, and in October of that year he escaped death as if by a miracle. Obligated to abandon Florence, he was several times attacked at Genoa, where he had established himself. In November he organized the flight from Italy of Filippo Turati, the former leader of Italian socialism. Having taken his friend to safety, he returned to Italy, was arrested, took all the responsibility for his acts in a trial which has become famous, and after ten months in prison was sent to the island of Lipari<sup>e</sup>. His flight from Lipari in 1929 has been related by his two companions, Nitti and Lussu. In Paris he became the soul of a new anti-Fascist group, "Giustizia e Libertà" (Justice and Liberty). A lively writer and controversialist, he directs a weekly newspaper bearing the same name as the group. He was expelled from Switzerland for having organized in 1930 the flight of an aeroplane which dropped thousands of anti-Fascist manifestoes on the city of Milan. In 1931 he was arrested in Germany for attempting to organize an exploit of the same type. It was he who sent out the first call for the formation of the Italian exiles' column.

Between September and December 1936 the column suffered many grievous losses. On September 2 Mario Rietti died. This young man came from a family of rich Milanese manufacturers. He was a communist sympathizer. From a special correspondent of the "Daily Express" and other English newspapers he had become a combatant. Another loss was that of Romeo Pontoni, a workman. His legs were blown off by the explosion of a grenade, but he managed to ask his comrades for a pencil and piece of paper on which to write his last farewell to his wife and children, and died crying «Long live liberty!».

In November, in conjunction with Catalonian units, the Italian column occupied the station of Almudevar. The lack of troops for reinforcements prevented it from pushing the action to the limit. "The Manchester Guardian" emphasized the moral value and practical importance of that first Italian column.

At the same time other Italians were going to Spain one by one, joining other groups that were fighting. In September there were on the aviation field of Madrid eighteen Italian exiles: pilots, gunners, observers, and mechanics. Others fought at Irun, on the Guadarrama, in the Asturias.

On September 15, near Peguerinos, on the Guadarrama front, Fernando de Rosa met his death. Born at Milan in 1908, he belonged to the generation which had grown up in Italy under the Fascist climate. While he was studying at the University of Turin, he had become a militant anti-Fascist. Profiting by his skill as an alpine-climber, he acted as a liaison agent between the anti-Fascists living in Italy and those of the emigration. Dis-

e. "of Lipari", aggiunto.

covered, he fled across the Alps. On October 24, 1929, at Brussels, as a protest against the support which the monarchy of Savoy had given to Fascism, he fired a revolver shot from a great distance during a ceremony in which the hereditary prince of Italy was participating. Released from prison in October 1934, he went to Spain and took an active part in the insurrection against the Right government. On the failure of the insurrection, he went of his own free will before the victorious authorities, taking upon himself the responsibility not only for his own acts but also for those of others. He was condemned to thirty years' confinement. The elections of February 1936 opened his prison doors. He fought in the streets of Madrid against the military sedition of July 1936 and took part in the actions for the defence of the city. He fell while at the head of the Spanish battalion, "Ottobre" (October), struck down by a bullet in the forehead.

On September 30 the aviator, Giordano Viezzoli, met his death in the sky above Toledo. He was born at Trieste in 1910. His father, Giuliano, had played an active role in the irredentist conspiracies against the Hapsburgs, fought in the World War as a volunteer in the Italian army, and had been twice condemned to death by Austria. Giordano, while serving as a sergeant in the Italian regular army, had conceived the plan of fleeing from Italy on the plane which he himself piloted, taking with him his father and brother. Brought before the Special Tribunal, he was condemned to six years of imprisonment. The penalty was later reduced, and Giordano succeeded, after dramatic adventures, in joining in France his father and brother, who had also fled from Italy. His youth, beauty, modesty, kindness, and purity of mind made him the admiration of his companions in exile. Serving as an aviator in Spain, he destroyed a rebel aviation field at Avila and blew up the station at Merida. The Government of the Republic offered him a commission as a lieutenant in recognition of his valor in war; but he refused, preferring to remain a simple private. While flying over Toledo, he was attacked by four Italian planes in the service of the rebels and was killed by an explosive bullet as he was helping a wounded comrade.

<sup>3</sup>In October 1936 it appeared clear that Mussolini and Hitler had thoroughly committed themselves to intervention in Spain. Only then did the Madrid Government cease to offer resistance to the formation of other Italian columns. Thus a<sup>f</sup> battalion of Italian anti-Fascists was organized at Albacete and sent to cooperate in the defence of Madrid. It took the name of the "Garibaldi Battalion". Its units<sup>g</sup> were called by the names of the best known martyrs of the anti-Fascist cause. One company<sup>h</sup> took the name of

3. Inizio, cfr. nota introduttiva.

f. "Thus a", aggiunto.

g. "units", a penna, sostituisce "divisions".

h. "company", a penna, sostituisce "division" dattiloscritto e "unit" a penna.

Matteotti, the right-wing socialist deputy who was assassinated in Rome on June 10, 1924. Another company took the name of Gastone Sozzi, the young communist who in 1928 was butchered by the Fascists in the prisons of Perugia. Another company called itself after Lauro de Bosis, the young democrat who in 1931 flew in an aeroplane over Rome, scattering anti-Fascist manifestos, and was drowned as he was returning from Rome to Corsica. The choice of these names is proof that in the battalion no political faith had a monopoly. All faiths were admitted, all were respected<sup>4</sup>.

As leader of the battalion the volunteers chose Randolfo Pacciardi. The latter had taken part while very young in the World War and for his valor had been proposed for the gold medal<sup>i</sup>, the highest military decoration. After the war he was graduated as a lawyer, and had begun to exercise his profession when he also was drawn into the Fascist tornado. In the second half of 1924 a Roman newspaper accused the present Marshal Balbo of having ordered the assassination of a parish priest, Don Minzoni. Balbo prosecuted the newspaper for libel. Pacciardi pleaded the cause of the defendant newspaper and succeeded in winning its acquittal for having proved its statements. In 1926 he was sentenced to five years' internment on a penal island, but managed to cross the Alps and take refuge in Switzerland. Here he resumed the struggle against Fascism and uncovered a plot of *agents provocateurs*. The Swiss Government, which did not want Mussolini's agents to be disturbed on Swiss territory, expelled Pacciardi. But from France he continued to contribute to the Italian newspaper at Lugano, as if he had never been expelled from Switzerland. No man was more deserving than this republican-democrat to be chosen by all groups, without distinction of political faith, as the leader of the Garibaldi Battalion.

On November 13, at Los Angeles, in the Cerro Rojo sector, the battalion, which had just arrived on the fighting front, took a formidable position by assault, conquered it, and defended it victoriously against the counter-attacks of the enemy. At Pozuelo, four times in two days they recaptured positions, the loss of which would have been fatal for the defence of Madrid. At Palacete, without any orders, they launched into an attack which reestablished a line that had been broken. At Boadilla del Monte, several times, at the cost of serious losses, they succeeded in saving the situation. In the early days of January 1937 they led a strong offensive in the Sigüenza sector and with the aid of other units, all placed under the command of Pacciardi, reached all the objectives that had been set, succeeding in passing where other divisions had failed. Mirabueno, Almadrones, other villages were occupied and securely garrisoned. Many prisoners were taken and an important body of war material was captured. "The Iron

4. Fine, cfr. nota introduttiva.

i. "and had been awarded the gold medal, for value", sostituito.

Battalion”, it was termed by the commander of the International Brigade. «The Italian battalion is the best of all those of the international brigade, the best by reason of the technical competence, the capacity, and the valor of its leader, the cohesion, the discipline, and the courage of its officers and soldiers», wrote Captain Macnamara a British M.P. After visiting the Madrid front<sup>j</sup>.

Among those who fell in these combats was Guido Picelli, the vice-commander of the battalion. An organizer of workers' unions and popular orator, he had been elected as a socialist deputy in 1921, and in 1922 had directed the armed defence of the city of Parma against the attacks of the Fascists. Later he joined the communist party. Condemned to internment on a penal island<sup>k</sup>, he succeeded in making his escape from Italy and, going to Russia, worked in Moscow as a laborer in a factory. Thence he had gone to France and later had enlisted among the Italian volunteers.

In the middle of January the battalion participated in the defence of the Jarama sector, succeeding after ten days of furious fighting in foiling the rebels' attempt to occupy the road from Valencia to Madrid. In that battle the commander, Pacciardi, although wounded stayed on the firing line in order not to abandon his soldiers. Among the fallen in this action was Pietro Jacchia, a man in his fifties. Born in Trieste, he had been one of the animating forces of the irredentist movement in Venetia Giulia before the World War. During the war he had been a volunteer in the Italian army. He was a personal friend of Mussolini's, and in 1919 had adhered to the Fascist movement. Soon he recognized that he had made a blunder. After the Matteotti murder he became a determined enemy of Fascism. He had to take the road to exile, leaving his work as a teacher in an Italian secondary school. He was an exquisite poet, with a perfect knowledge of several languages. First in Holland, and then in England, he lived by giving lessons. In August 1936 he enlisted in the first Italian column under a false name, in order to protect from persecution relatives living in Italy, and took part in the fights<sup>l</sup> on the Aragonese front. In October he was wounded while trying to leave the trenches to rescue a comrade. As soon as his wound was healed, he hastened to the Madrid front, where he fell fighting as a private soldier. «By fighting for liberty», to use his own words, «he wished to redeem what he regarded as a sin and a shame, once having believed in Fascism».

Other Italian exiles, all<sup>m</sup> communists in this case, incorporated in a company of the Dimitroff Battalion, are fighting on the same Jarama front. An Italian socialist, Major Zannoni, is at the head of the defence of an

j. “the Canadian Macnamara has written”, sostituito.

k. “deportation”, sostituito.

l. [parola non leggibile], sostituita.

m. “all” aggiunto.

important sector at the Casa del Campo. To another exile, the young lieutenant-colonel, Nanetti, is entrusted the command of a Spanish battalion. Catalanian forces are placed under the command of the exile Palumbo, a survivor of the battles of Irun and Huesca<sup>5</sup>. Raffaele Rossetti, the war hero who sank the Austrian battleship *Viribus Unitis* during the World War and won the gold medal, serves in the Spanish navy<sup>n</sup>.

<sup>6</sup>In March 1937, on the Guadalajara, the Italian anti-Fascists found themselves face to face with three<sup>o</sup> Fascist divisions sent by Mussolini to the conquest of Madrid. The facts are known. About 30,000<sup>p</sup> men, after a week of furious fighting, were arrested and defeated. On March 18 the defeat was transformed into a rout. The Fascists left on the field 3000 dead and a vast booty composed of cannons, mitrailleuses, camions, guns, munitions, foodstuffs. A thousand Fascists, soldiers and officers, were taken prisoner. Many surrendered voluntarily, fraternizing with the Republican troops. The intervention of the Garibaldi Battalion, beside the Spanish brigades, was the decisive factor in the battle. In sending the congratulations of the Spanish Government to General Miaja, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and General War Commissioner, Alvarez del Vayo, expressed his admiration for the Garibaldi Battalion, «a glorious symbol of the heroic struggle for liberty against Fascism the invader».

The defeat of the three<sup>q</sup> Fascist divisions at Guadalajara has awakened in many newspapers the memory of Caporetto, that is, the defeat suffered by the Italian army in October 1917. All<sup>r</sup> the European armies had their “Caporetto” during the World War. The French and English armies opened the war with a disastrous defeat on the Belgian frontier, thanks to which the Germany army almost reached the gates of Paris. The history of the Austrian army in the summer and autumn of 1914 and in the spring of 1915 is nothing but a series of “Caporetto”. The Russian army in May 1915 had at Gorlice one of the most colossal “Caporetto” not at the beginning of the war, like the French and the Austrians, but after they had been weakened by two years of hard fighting. From March to May, 1918, the English and French had another “Caporetto” in Picardy, losing 6800 square<sup>s</sup> kilometres of ground, 2800 pieces of artillery, and 200,000 prisoners. The English alone had more than 180,000 dead, wounded, and lost.

In the battle of Guadalajara there met face to face anti-Fascist Italians, who were fighting for an ideal cause to which they had dedicated their lives,

5. Cfr. nota introduttiva.

n. “army” sostituito.

6. Inizio, cfr. nota introduttiva.

o. “two”, sostituito.

p. [numero non leggibile], sostituito.

q. “two”, sostituito.

r. “But all”, sostituito.

and Italians who had been sent to Spain to fight for a cause that was completely unknown to them. Some had been deliberately deceived. They had enlisted, thinking they were going to Ethiopia, where they would find work and a livelihood for themselves and their families. One fine day they discovered that they had to fight in Spain. No interest of their own country was at stake. They had not reason to fight against the Spanish people, nor did any motive urge them to support the Spanish generals, bishops, and big landowners. The danger of communism left them indifferent: What would they have to lose if communism triumphed in Spain or even in Italy? Could they fear for their wealth? They had none. Could they fear for their liberty? Liberty to them was only a memory. The easy victory which had been promised them when they disembarked in Spain, had changed into stiff fighting. And to crown all, they found themselves fighting other Italians, whose banner bore the name of Garibaldi. It is no wonder that they listened to the appeals of their fellowcountrymen and refused to fight for a cause that was not and never could be theirs. Italians who had been deceived or forced into serving a political idea that was repugnant to their consciences, surrendered to other Italians, who were fighting for the liberty of Spain in the expectation of fighting eventually for the liberty of Italy. The wonder is that before disbanding and surrendering they fought for a whole week<sup>7</sup>.

After the battle of Guadalajara the continued influx of new volunteers induced the Spanish military authorities to expand their organization. The battalion was transformed into a brigade, composed of three battalions and still commanded by Pacciardi.

It is difficult to foresee the future course of events in Spain and their influence on European politics. Italian Fascist legions and Italian anti-Fascist volunteers find themselves in opposing camps, and the Fascist legions have been beaten. Fascism in Italy among young men has lost its romantic aura<sup>8</sup>. A new phase has opened in the history of the struggle against Fascism in Italy.

Gaetano Salvemini<sup>u</sup>

s. "square", aggiunto.

7. Fine, cfr. nota introduttiva.

t. La frase è aggiunta a penna.

8. La frase viene ripresa, riferita a Mussolini come responsabile diretto dell'assassinio dei Rosselli, nella forma «L'aureola di romanticismo che egli era riuscito a creare intorno al suo movimento nei primi anni della lotta e della conquista si è dissipata», in G. Salvemini, *Prefazione* (1938), a C. Rosselli, *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, Torino, Einaudi, 1967, p. 14.

u. La firma è aggiunta a penna.