

Origins of the Archival System of the Institutes of the Resistance

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1. Introduction

The origins of the first three Institutes for the History of the Resistance in Italy (those of Piedmont, Liguria, and Lombardy which together would give rise in 1951 to the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy) were strongly influenced by an archival necessity: to give a suitable place to the documentation concerning the national liberation struggle and the experience of CLN government. This was not only in order to avoid dispersion of the documentation but also to protect it from acquisition by others, particularly by the administration of the State Archives which was considered unfit to appreciate and exploit its full value. It was clearly a cultural policy choice never before taken in Italy in that it led to the direct preservation of nationally significant documentary material by those who had produced it, first as combatants for liberation and later as representatives of regional CLNs associated in a network of private institutes coordinated in a non-hierarchical manner.

The top-priority demand for preservation and for tracing of sources appears in the charter of the Historical Institute of the Resistance in Liguria [1] effected on 10 September 1947, which specified as the first task of the newly created institution the collection and ordering of "all documents and relics that concern the history of the Resistance in Liguria and communications about them wherever they may appear." However, a series of circumstances (not all of an exclusively practical nature) led to conservation approaches at the Ligurian Institute which would give a much greater role to the administration of the State Archives there than in Piedmont and Lombardy. This was not without consequences in the orientation of later research activity and in the full utilization of documentary material not concentrated in the CLN archive or left in private possession.

This paper intends, therefore, to begin by reconstructing the events in the creation of the original archival nucleus of the Ligurian Institute, contextualizing them in the debate that was taking place between 1946 and 1947 in north-central Italy over the best destination for the archives of dissolved CLNs, and then to describe subsequent acquisitions as well as reorganization and inventory projects carried out over the years, concluding with the computerization project currently in progress.

2. The debate over the destination of the CLN archives

The Piedmont CLN was the first to concern itself in a systematic way with collecting and preserving for historical purposes the documents produced in

the clandestine period. Already in July of 1945, it had established an historical office at its headquarters with the aim of "finding and systematically gathering documents related to developments in the military and political fields in the struggle for liberation from the Nazi-fascist tyranny during the twenty months preceding 15 July 1945." [2] As Giovanni De Luna observes, this office could have been considered a direct branch of the Historical Office operating at the Piedmont Regional Military Committee, from which it inherited men, means, and skills." [3] Nevertheless, the transition from a military structure, which conceived the functions of its own historical office as strictly similar to those of the Joint Chief of Staff, to an organ of civil government such as the CLN had to contribute to opening the field of documentary inquiry and to making possible research projects with a broader perspective.

The quickness with which Piedmont's CLN developed its own historic archive is probably also connected to the fact that an employee of the State Archive of Turin, Matteo Sandretti, was among its managers. Sandretti was then serving as secretary general of the Regional Government and became one of the founders of the local Historical Institute of the Resistance.

The archives became the object of fierce debate within the CLNAI just one year later, at the time of the decision of self-dissolution, which also brought about the immediate "historicization" of the documents produced in the course of activities carried out by the CLN between April 1945 and June 1946. In the circular on the modes of dissolution of the Lombard CLNs, issued by the CLN of Lombardy on 1 July 1946 and subsequently restated in almost identical terms by the CLN of Piedmont [4], provisions were given to avoid the loss of documentation produced up to that point. District, city, and company CLNs, whose operations were to cease immediately, were instructed transfer their archives to their respective provincial CLNs. These provincial CLNs, operating as liquidation offices, were obliged, in turn, to aggregate their own archival material with that of their dependent CLNs and transfer it to their respective regional CLNs. The collection and organizing of archival material became, therefore, the fundamental tasks of the regional and provincial liquidation offices (in addition to the accounting and administrative reporting normally associated with closing an entity) in the awareness that such material constituted "evidence of the intense, complex, and constructive work of the CLNs and of their peculiar functioning," [5] and that it should be carefully protected.

At the beginning of July, the CLN position regarding the destination of the thus-agglomerated documents still seemed quite open to State administration of the archives. The circular issued by the Lombard CLN concluded, in fact, with the assurance that "the archives which result from the unification of all the papers of the CLNs of the Lombard Region will be collected by this regional CLN which will deposit them with that public archival entity which gives the best guarantees for their preservation for the purpose of future historical work." This phrase was repeated in similar circulars of the Piedmont CLN, which later would become the most strenuous opponent of entrusting their own archives to public institutes. On the other hand, a different tone was

struck in the subsequent circular issued by CLNAI on 31 July, which extended to all subordinate CLNs archival prescriptions similar to those elaborated by Lombardy and Piedmont but which concluded by emphasizing that "definitive arrangements have not yet been made for the deposit of the CLN archives" and advised therefore "not to make either deposits nor promises of deposit in order to avoid troublesome disputes in the future." [6] According to Emilio Re [7], this tightening was provoked by the invitation from the Archives Department of Lombardy to allow the deposit of CNL and CLNAI documentation in the relevant State Archives, since the functions they perform were completely comparable to those of state offices [8].

This was, undoubtedly, a legitimate request from the legal point of view, and it fully recognized the role performed by the CLNs in the immediate post-liberation period. However, it was bound to provoke suspicion among the leaders of the CLNAI that the archival administration, at that time subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior as is well known, intended to appropriate documentation of the resistance movement for the purpose of political normalization and to remove it from public access. The archival law then in effect, in fact, placed such temporal limits on access to documentation kept in the State Archives as to provoke fear that the CLN archives, if they were to be transferred there, would no longer be utilizable for those projects of historiographical development that were already being planned. [9]

The contrast between CLNAI and the archival administration was sharpened with the circular distributed on 14 August 1946 by the Central Office of the State Archives, which adopted the initiative of the Lombard archival department, inviting all the archival departments to press for the deposit of the CLN archives of their respective jurisdictions into the State Archives. This arrangement, among other things, gave rise to the clear territorial diversification in the destinations of documentary materials verifiable today: most CLNs of southern and central Italy chose, in fact, to go along with the ministerial urgings, while in the regions north of the gothic line (to which was added Tuscany) the CLN leaders became progressively aligned on a position of absolute intransigence toward any presumed interference by the state administration.

The first occasion of confrontation on this subject was the convention of the regional CLNs held in Genoa from 21 to 22 December 1946 [10], during which the December 22 morning session was dedicated to the specific problem of the archives. In opening the debate, the terms of the question were dramatically enunciated by Azzo Toni, representative of the PSI of the Ligurian CLN. He said, "The background is as follows: we had decided to entrust the State Archives with the preservation of our documents and there are, also here, the prefectorial circulars urging their delivery. Well, even in light of today's discussions, we express our utter distrust in the state organs and refuse to hand over to that bureaucracy the documents of the CLN. We will find a different solution to the problem if we carry out, as I hope, the project promoted by the Piedmont CLN." [11] It was left to the Partito D'Azione member, Alessandro Galante Garrone, representing the Piedmont CLN, to

illustrate the proposal for the creation of a national institute for the collection and utilization of the historic memories of the Resistance. This national institute, however, would have to operate in a largely decentralized form: "just as the war of resistance was articulated region by region with the regional CLNs, it is similarly logical that this work of preservation of the documents, etc., be conducted region by region." [12] It was a project of strongly innovative content and, perhaps for this reason, not immediately comprehended. The Piedmontese motion was finally approved unanimously, probably due in part to the lack of valid alternatives. Nevertheless, the minutes of the meeting elucidate well the doubt and hesitation, not only of a financial nature, experienced by most of the regional representatives who evidently found it difficult to conceive of a cultural institution that would operate completely autonomously from the traditional channels of ministerial financing. They tended, rather, to fall back on preexistent models. Significant, in this sense, seemed the appeal by the representative of the Emilia Romagna CLN who proposed that the work of documentary collection and care should in some way fall within the activity of the Deputazione di Storia patria[13], while Gianluigi Balzarotti (Cecconi), of CLNAI, suggested pressing for the economic support of the Ministero per l'Assistenza post-bellica [14], e Mario Bendiscioli, of the Lombard CLN, emphasized that his own Liquidation Office did not have "any means" available. [15] The president of the CLN of Veneto communicated with a certain candor that the provincial CLNs of his region had almost all deposited their archives with the State Archives, with the exception of that of Udine which had preferred to deposit them with the local Historical Museum of the Risorgimento [16]. Beyond the general declarations remained a notable operating uncertainty and, not by chance, the meeting concluded with the request for the Piedmontese CLN to draft and circulate a report in which the various phases of "concretization" of the proposal to establish a national institute would be better detailed. [17]

At the beginning of the following year, an exchange of letters between Mario Bendiscioli and Alessandro Galante Garrone, regarding the draft of the plan for the establishment of a "Foundation for the Resistance" distributed by the Piedmont CLN according to what had been agreed in Genova, demonstrated that the uncertainties had not yet been overcome. Though granting a generic Lombard approval, Bendiscioli was keen to assert that he would have looked more favorably on the creation "of an historical Institute for the collection and reprocessing of materials documenting the resistance, which had a structure fundamentally similar to that of the currently existent Institutes for Medieval and Modern History" and, therefore, of a public and centralized character. [18] It was probably this ulterior attempt to divert the initiative onto a more conventional path that led Alessandro Galante Garrone to draft a long note in which he analytically examined the drawbacks inherent in the solution suggested by Bendiscioli. Beginning with the inevitable bureaucratic red tape and continuing through a clear declaration of mistrust toward the official historiography, he concluded finally with the top requirement, according to the Piedmontese: "It seems to us essential that research projects be conducted on a regional level and that initiatives of single regions be allowed the greatest autonomy." The actions of collecting and making use of the documents of the

Resistance should therefore be grounded, at least initially, "in the spontaneous, autonomous initiatives of the periphery."

In light of this vital conviction, which by then had become unshakeable, the Piedmont CLN gave up all attempts to create first an institute of national character, even one operating in a largely decentralized form, and decided instead to quickly establish an Association for the History of the Resistance in Piedmont, urging the other regional CLNs to do the same. The appropriate connections would be established once these first associative nuclei had emerged. This is, in effect, what happened. The Piedmont Association, established on 25 April 1947, provided a concrete operational model which became the template, in some places quickly and in others more slowly, for the national scale. The birth of the first regional historical institute of the resistance also represented a point of no return in the relationship between the leadership of the northern CLNs and the archival administration. On the thirteenth of July of the same year, in fact, a meeting in Turin brought together the commissioner of the State Archives, Emilio Re; representatives of the CLNs of Lombardy, Veneto, Liguria, Tuscany, and Emilia-Romagna; and representatives the Piedmont historical Institute, the only one legally established at that date. The meeting aimed to agree on a common scientific agenda for the collection and utilization of documentation pertaining to the Resistance, by then definitively assigned to the nascent Institutes. Based on the considerations specifically illustrated in the report issued to the central Office of the State Archives the following month, Re believed it most appropriate to adopt an open attitude toward the Institutes that would put an end to the disagreements of the previous year and would allow both the immediate protection of documentation that would otherwise run a great risk of dispersion and its rational arrangement. Therefore, putting aside the arguments over who should legitimately be charged with the preservation of the archives of the disbanded CLNs, he chose instead to specify "the necessary guarantees on the preservation and collection of the documents" that the State required from the Institutes in order to grant them autonomous responsibility for preserving the documents -- starting with the publication of a census of all the documentation found. [21]

The positive conclusion of the dispute with the state administration was officially sanctioned in the course of the Superior Council of Archives session on 1 July 1948 [22], during which Emilio Re managed to gain approval for the line of conduct he had been following up to that moment, arguing that, even if in principle the CLN archives should be considered to have State relevance, the Historical Institutes of the Resistance were the most qualified parties to track down and assess the documentary holdings that testify to the events of the national liberation movement in that they were the only ones in a position to assure the trust of those who guarded the papers, protecting them from dispersion or destruction.

3. The birth of the Historical Institute of the Resistance in Liguria

According to the testimony left to us by Luciano Bolis, director of the Liquidation Office of the Ligurian CLN [23], he was urged to promote the

establishment of an historical Institute for the Resistance in Liguria by Giorgio Vaccarino, who purposely went to Genoa in the spring of 1947 to show him what was being done in Piedmont. Until that occasion, Bolis had not taken an active part in the debate on the destination of the CLN archives. The minutes of the Genovese congress of December 1946, in fact, show that Azzo Toni and Pilade Queirolo were the representatives for Liguria. Still, the project of creating a network of institutes for the history of the Resistance, described to him by Vaccarino, met Bolis' approval, particularly because it would permit him to resolve a pressing practical problem - that of finding an satisfactory arrangement for the "voluminous archive of the regional CLN," at the time being held in an apartment requisitioned by the CLN in the days of the Liberation but which would have to be returned to the owner.[24] Bolis was therefore invited to participate at the meeting in Turin on 13 July 1947, and and it was on that occasion that he met Emilio Re.

"I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Bolis in Turin the next July and, naturally, he made a very good impression," wrote Emilio Re to Matteo Sandretti on 31 August 1947. [25] "Despite his name, he was a republican in addition to being a man of culture, and he immediately inspired my trust," [26] maintained Luciano Bolis many years later, recalling his impression of the archival administration functionary with whom he had agreed to deposit the CLN documentation in the State Archive of Genoa. The relationship of mutual esteem that developed between Bolis and Re thus made it possible to test a form of collaboration between state administration and CLN leadership, which had no comparison in other regions and which held a particular value for both. Bolis' attitude toward the archives of the Resistance was, in fact, much less intransigent than that of other intellectuals who were also combatants for liberation. Though respecting and understanding the positions of those who felt inclined "not to trust the State, or better that state, considering, in part justifiably, how reactionary and anyway not particularly well disposed it was toward the Resistance, rather than appreciating it, tending rather to try to forget it as quickly as possible," [27] he repeatedly expressed a favorable opinion toward the active participation of the state administration in the care and study of the documentation produced by the CLNs and the partisan formations, in as much as the Historical Institutes of the Resistance would have to operate "within the State and find there their citizenship rights like any other expression of national life." [28]

Emilio Re, for his part, probably saw in Bolis' openness to dialogue an opportunity to claim for the State Archives a scientific consulting and active preservation role that was being denied to them elsewhere.

The first step in this common action took the form of two meetings held in Genoa on 5 and 8 September 1947. The first of these, to which were invited the representatives of the parties of the Ligurian CLN, was of an essentially "political" nature in that it gave Re the opportunity to confront the "visible fear that the documents of the CLN, if handed over to the State Archives, would in effect be 'swallowed' and would practically disappear," explaining that, on the contrary, any documentation deposited would always remain accessible to the

members of the CLN or their representatives and that any limits on access to documents of a confidential nature could be specified in the text of the deposit agreement. [29] The second meeting, of a technical nature, took place at the Archival Department (Soprintendenza) which had its seat at the time in via Tommaso Reggio together with the State Archives. The purpose of this meeting was to fine tune the concrete formalities of collaboration between the State archivists and the CLN representatives; the latter would have to coordinate operations of tracking down documentary material still held by private parties, while the archivists would handle the reorganization and inventorying. It was perhaps at that point that Bolis was accompanied on a visit to the warehouses of the Archive, of which he left us an evocative description in his memoirs; they evoked in him "a positive sense of stability and security, contrasted with the growing disorder of the outside world where we former resistance fighters find ourselves underhandedly forced to the defensive. [30]

The timing and procedures that were followed to finalize the handover of the Ligurian CLN archive were in all cases heavily considered. During the first meeting of the representatives of the CLN parties, convened by Bolis on 8 October 1947 to discuss the proposal to establish an historical institute in Liguria on the Piedmont model, no final decision was taken as to the destination of the archives, pending Azzo Toni's investigation into the possibility of obtaining suitable space from the city [31], since he was unfavorably disposed toward collaboration with the state administration. Only on the following 19 November, in the deliberations over establishing the seat of the nascent institute at the Casa di Mazzini, was the proposal to deposit the papers at the State Archives approved. It is clear that, on that occasion, Bolis was able to stress the fact that the spaces assigned to the Institute were too small to allow the transfer of all the documentation, even if Toni was granted ten more days to check whether any alternative solutions could be found. The attempt, however, did not bring favorable results and on 20 December 1947, the board of directors of the Institute officially requested the regional CLN to transfer its archival property, with the exception of papers required for the conclusion of procedures already in process at the Liquidation Office. Finally, on 21 January 1948 the board of governors of the Institute acknowledged the deposit and decided to " give executive course to the preceding decision taken on 19.11.1947 to establish the aforementioned papers in deposit at the local office of the State Archives".

The delivery of the documentation occurred, therefore, through a procedural course that allowed the Institute to maintain ownership of its own archive, leaving open the possibility that it could revoke the archive when, as occurred recently, it had an appropriate space. Deposit by an entity in the process of dissolution, as was the Liquidation Office of the CLN at the time, would instead have compromised any future possibility of reclamation, because the archive would have become state property. The deposit agreement provided, moreover, that the State Archive would handle inventorying and that access to the archive would be granted to parties authorized by the Institute.

Along with the CLN archive, that of the dissolved Partito d'Azione of Liguria, which was not merged into the PSIUP as happened in the national seat, was also deposited. [32]

4. The continuation of documentary acquisition activity by the Ligurian Institute and the work of inventorying

The collaboration between the State Archive of Genoa and the Ligurian Institute, so tenaciously pursued by Bolis and Re, withered away in just a few years. In fact, as it turned out, the directors of the Archive, with the exception of Felice Perroni [33], never took an active part in the scientific projects of the Institute; and Bolis expressed regret in his memoirs that the CLN archive had not yet been utilized in the way he had expected. [34] On the part of the Institute, once Bolis had resigned from his post as director, an attitude of mistrust toward the archival administration reemerged and solidified in a proposal to withdraw the CLN archive, put forward by the new director, Amedeo Viale, and discussed at length in the board of directors meeting of 30 October 1957. To tell the truth, the arguments adopted by Viale, as recorded in the minutes, seem rather contradictory. On one hand, he asserted that the deposited material had not been adequately "catalogued" and that, therefore, it would be better to take it back in order to make better use of it. On the other hand, he complained that, in the archive, "anyone with the Institute's permission can handle and leaf through the documents that are, thereby, constantly becoming more deteriorated" and that, in his opinion, it would have been much better to carry out a "precise selection" of "truly interesting" documents which could be consulted only in microfilm and photocopy. At the end, it is not at all clear in his proposal which needs prevail -- the demands for greater divulgation or those for greater reserve. What is very clear, instead, is the desire to align with the other Institutes of northern Italy, none of which had deposited their documentation with the State Archives. Viale's proposal, openly supported by president Mario Cassiani Ingoni, was approved. A single negative vote was cast by the historian Teofilo Ossian De Negri, who on that occasion also expressed himself on behalf of Lazzaro Maria De Bernardis. De Bernardis, however, embraced the majority opinion at the following board meeting on 20 February 1958. Still, even this time, the effort came to a standstill over the apparent lack of suitable physical space in which to keep the documents. After vainly seeking to obtain additional facilities at Casa Mazzini from the City Office of Fine Arts, the managers of the Institute had to again give up the attempt to keep their own archival materials. In the board of directors meeting of 13 January 1962, Cassiani Ingoni admitted that the return appeared difficult to obtain in the short term and emphasized that the material kept at the State Archive was anyway easily accessible. An undated and unsigned report on the "documents kept at the State Archives of Genoa" which probably dates back to these years suggests that they had been the object of inexpert reorganization: "The documents were divided in envelopes by civil servants of the State Archives of Genoa according to criteria inspired by the needs of various Offices in the sphere of the CLN of Liguria; the envelopes themselves were then numbered chronologically, without any subdivision by subject." According to the anonymous author of the report, the prechosen order would not always prove to be most functional. [36] Such an judgment

would no longer be valid today, as is demonstrated by the tests carried out during the last inventory operation of the archive which will be discussed later, and was probably determined by the scarce archival experience of the writer.

If anything, it showed that the available consultation tool, a simple stock list, did not account for the complex structure of the holding and, above all, did not highlight the agglomerative character of the archive, established at the Liquidation Office of the regional CLN through the progressive delivery of documents from the local CLNs. This characteristic, moreover, ended up being disregarded by the same managers of the Ligurian Institute, as shown by the choice in 1982 to allow the documentation of the provincial CLN of Imperia, together with that of subordinate organisms, to be transferred by the State Archive of Genoa to the local Institute for the history of the Resistance. [37]

The proposal to withdraw the CLN archive, in any event, became part of a larger plan for utilizing the documentary heritage of the Genovese Institute, which had been significantly increased by a donation from Giambattista Lazagna [38] between 1956 and 1957. Charged for many years with the complex activity of organizing the documents, as well as tracking down and acquiring new writings, was Maria Eugenia (known as Genny) Burlando, who was secretary of the Ligurian CLN from the clandestine period until dissolution and then joined the staff of the Historical Institute of the Resistance in 1956. [39]

In the executive session of 12 March 1956, Cassiani Ingoni brought up the necessity for reorganizing the archival material kept on site, consisting of documents made available by various representatives of the Ligurian Resistance after the deposit of the CLN papers in the State Archive, and proposed that the project be entrusted to Genny Burlando, assisted on a voluntary basis by Mrs. Sardo, Ferruccio Parri's sister, under the direction of Gianbattista Lazagna. At the following meeting, 16 July 1958, the work of reorganizing was described as "already well advanced" and Burlando was officially put in charge of "both the already existent Archive at the Institute... and the Archives of the Ligurian CLN deposited at the State Archive, which they hoped and presumed would be returned." The request for restitution, as we've seen, was then abandoned, and no evidence has been found of interventions carried out by Burlando on the material deposited in the State Archives. Most likely, her responsibility regarding that material was limited to knowing what was there in order to better orient scholars who, via the Institute, asked to consult it. The current arrangement of the documentation then kept at the Institute, however, dates back undisputedly to the reorganization begun in 1956.

Neither Genny Burlando nor Giambattista Lazagna were archivists (it's pointless to hide the fact) and, therefore, their work was not built on a solid doctrinal foundation but only on the enthusiasm and desire to hand down the memory of events in which they had directly participated. Without the scientific orientation, which only the active participation of the archival administration staff could provide (and it should be remembered here that the director of the State Archive at the time, Giorgio Costamagna, was perhaps not the most

suitable person, in terms of preparation and interest, to offer advice on contemporary archives), the organization of the documentation already acquired by the Institute (and of that which was subsequently acquired) was carried out according to completely unscientific criteria. Basically, documents from all sources were divided into a few artificial collections and gathered in envelopes and files on the basis of a classification grid that would supposedly make their retrieval easy. In reality, this choice -- though quite common among those who are not archival specialists -- resulted, over time, in extreme difficulty in tracing the origins of the enormous collection of thoroughly heterogeneous materials, in many cases left or donated by well-known people. Only later did awareness that the archives needed to be categorized on the basis of origin become widespread among those responsible for the archives of the Institutes for the History of the Resistance, thanks to scientific coordination activities carried out by the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy. As a result, the last collections acquired by the Ligurian Institute were no longer broken down into the great thematic collections established in 1957-58, but were more correctly kept distinct from one another. [40]

A first description of all the documentary material owned by the Institute, edited by Renato Monteleone and Mauro Negri, was published in the magazine of the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy in 1972 [41] and subsequently reprinted, without modification, in the Summary Guide to the Archives of the Historical Institutes of the Resistance of 1974. [42] At that time, the stock of documentation held at the Institute was quantified in 38 envelopes, divided "by subject" in the following way: Military Activity, Political Activity, Period of Badoglio government, Gimelli Collection. As can be well understood, the first three divisions were completely unnatural, while the "Gimelli collection", consisting exclusively of documents collected by Giorgio Gimelli for drafting the monograph, *Military Chronicles of the Resistance in Liguria* [43], could be said to be the only category endowed with coherence. Within each "subject," the organization of files was supposed to respect "the hierarchical order of the military or political organisms" that were operating in Liguria between 1943 and 1947. [44] This, however, was an a priori classification, as shown by the fact that certain files existed only on paper as "awaiting future acquisitions." In addition, while the material classified as Military Activity, pertaining to the activity of the partisan formations, was already remarkably substantial, that classified as Political Activity was quite minimal and consisted mostly of local CLN documents that, for various reasons, had not reached the Liquidation Office in Genoa in 1946 and photocopies of documents deposited in the CLN holdings at the State Archive. This provides an additional confirmation of the difficult relationship between the managers of the archive of the Institute and the state administration at that time. Regarding the CLN collection, furthermore, the curators of the inventory adopted excessively concise descriptive criteria and passed the judgment, already expressed in the anonymous report previously cited, that the documentation had been reordered in an arbitrary manner.

The Monteleone-Negri inventory was also republished, but with significant

changes, in the second Guide to the Archives of the Resistance, edited by the Archives and Library Commission of the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy and published in 1983 in the archival administration series. [45] Changes were made particularly in the level of analytics of the descriptions: those pertaining to the holdings kept at the Institute were streamlined, while more space was given to the CLN collection, which they chose to describe envelope by envelope, no longer unifying envelopes of similar content. From the inventory notes of that collection were also eliminated the most critical remarks regarding the alleged manipulations performed by personnel of the State Archive.

A subsequent and significant increase in the documentary endowment of the Institute occurred a few years later, in 1986, following the acquisition of the collection known as "Gimelli 2," which consisted of documents used for the new revised and expanded edition of Military Chronicles of the Resistance in Liguria. [46] This increase pushed the leaders of the Institute to arm themselves with new research tools that would exploit the potential offered by information technology, making available to researchers not only a traditional inventory on paper but also a database, searchable by key words. The program they used was CDS/ISIS, developed by UNESCO and, at that time, in widespread use due to its free availability to institutions and cultural organizations. Thanks to this new work tool, it became possible to create more analytic and homogeneous descriptions for individual files than was previously possible. But the intervention [47] did not stop at checking and supplementing the earlier descriptions. Even the introductions to the various "collections" were radically revised; for each one, the story of how it was formed was, in fact, summarized in an exhaustive manner for the first time. These introductions indicated whether a "collection" consisted of a miscellany of documents from various sources or of material which could be traced to a single source, and whether the ordering was attributed by the Institute or resulted from earlier lists. Moreover, the stock and structure of the archive changed with respect to the 1983 Guide, and not only due to the acquisition of the second Gimelli collection. In fact, the documents of the so-called "Badogliano" collection, whose stock consisted of only one envelope, had been integrated in the intervening years into the larger "Burlando collection," that is, into another collection of original and copied documentation pertaining to the years between the first and the second world wars. This collection was begun by Genny Burlando (and later named for her) on the basis of the same criteria she followed in organizing the documentation already in the Institute's possession. Beside the two major categories of Military Activity and Political Activity appeared for the first time a collection called "Various Documents," which assembled together completely heterogeneous documentary material, among which are the papers of the Regional Commission for the Recognition of Partisan Qualifications and the documents of the Commission of Inquiry on the Rescue of the Port of Genoa, the establishment of which was promised by the Historical Institute of the Resistance in 1948 for the purpose of verifying which organizations, institutions, and persons had cooperated, sometimes without knowledge of each other, in defending this fundamental public infrastructure from the threat of destruction during the withdrawal of German troupes. [48]

Newly described were also, in addition to "Gimelli 2," the Tuscany collection, consisting of copied documents relating to the history of the "Oreste" Garibaldi Brigade donated in stages by Lilio Giannecchini who had been its vice-commander, and the Scrivia collection, consisting of the papers of Aurelio Ferrando, commander of the Pinan Chichero division.

As for the CLN collection, the introduction was completely rewritten in a more balanced manner, expressing for the first time the hypothesis that the arrangement of the documentary material had preceded its transfer to the State Archive. The relevant description, though, was once again kept at a lower analytic level than those adopted for the collections preserved at the Institute.

In 1999, the Institute's move to spacious new facilities finally made possible the old aspiration to withdraw the CLN archive and, thereby, to reunify in a single location all the archival material possessed. [49] The physical rejoining of the documentation was followed by a new research project directed toward the critical re-examination of previous inventories and toward inserting the descriptions of the holdings into the online Guide to the Archives of the Resistance promoted by the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy. [50] The operational choices adopted by the work group responsible for the intervention [51], which for the first time since 1947 included a member of the Archival Department, were to give only new descriptions and not to alter in any way the collections that were established in the Institute, inasmuch as their ordering criteria, even if largely questionable, could now be considered historicized, being themselves evidence of the way in which decisions were made to organize the memory of the liberation struggle in Liguria. Besides, the impossibility of retracing their original sources rendered the arrangement they had received practically irreversible. What seemed essential, instead, was a more specific analysis, from a historical-archival point of view, of the CLN collection, the order of which had repeatedly evoked perplexity, and the structure of which had not yet been brought fully to light. In this case, in fact, one was faced with an archive or, better yet, with several archives produced by various Ligurian CLNs in the course of their activity and, therefore, open to a reorganization, even if only virtual, which sought to restore the original order.

The key to understanding the complex internal articulation of this material was sought both in the directives on the arrangement of archives and registers issued by the Ligurian CLN in 1945 and in the previously mentioned circular issued by the liquidation office of the CLNAI on 31 July 1946 which, in addition to calling for the collection of the peripheral CLN archives at the regional liquidation offices, had established detailed criteria for ordering the documentation thus collected. The examination in connection with these directives allowed clarification of some aspects not highlighted in earlier inventories: most importantly, that the separation of the "documents of the resistance period" from those "of the period that runs from the liberation of north Italy to the dissolution of the CLN," as well as the ordering, by office, of

the documents relating to the period of the CLN government, and the sequence of the files within both the divisions, was established with the 31 July circular. [52] In short, therefore, the comparison of the archival indications provided by the CLNAI with the order in which the documentation deposited at the State Archive was presented made it possible to discredit the accusations that the arrangement of the CLN archive had been carried out with criteria arbitrarily chosen and applied by archival administration staff. Even the mingling of papers of heterogeneous subjects seen in some files, for a long time attributed to extravagant unifications carried out by civil servants of the Archive, turned out to depend rather on the improper conservation of papers at the offices in which they had been produced, left uncorrected during the reorganization at the CLN Liquidation Office, presumably for lack of time. One finds oneself, therefore, faced with a fundamentally complete documentary set, organized as it was from the beginning, that is from the moment the Ligurian CLN archives were brought together at the Genovese Liquidation Office. Evidence for the substantial wholeness of the collection is also given by numerous lists drawn up at the offices in the process of delivering the documents. Through these, it is possible to highlight meager gaps and to verify how in numerous cases the documentation was left physically intact, to the point that one can still find it in its original packaging, often consisting of simple commercial envelopes or narrow bands of humble material, given the difficulty of obtaining proper stationery supplies immediately after the war. Only the provincial CLN archives bear traces of subsequent rearrangement, for example the superimposition of different marks or classifications and the re-use of the file jackets. Even the choice not to discard or reject anything, agreed in 1947 by Bolis and Perroni despite the contrary opinion of other CLN representatives, permitted this enormous archival set to be preserved in its entirety. [53]

The reconstruction of the events and procedures by which the archive was formed also brought to light how it would not have been possible to consider the set of documentation inherited by the Institute from the Liquidation Office as a single collection, even if chronologically distinguished in pre- and post-liberation sections. On the contrary, this set constituted a grand "supercollection" in which were concentrated many distinct archives - among them, most importantly, the papers of the Genovese CLN which had simultaneously fulfilled the functions of government organ at a provincial and regional level, and those of the CLNs of La Spezia, Savona, and Imperia (this last, as previously mentioned, was extracted in 1982), and finally those of so many local and company CLNs. The onerous but necessary choice was made to give each of these collections, including the very small ones, an historical-institutional-archival introduction from which it would be possible to briefly review the life of its producer and the events surrounding the transmission of its documents to the regional CLN archive, in most cases documented in the list of delivered material. As far as the sequence of files within each collection is concerned, it was considered inappropriate to physically reorganize them, since the material had already been accessed frequently and inventoried multiple times. Instead, a virtual reorganization was undertaken, made possible by the program adopted, only where it was believed that researchers would be aided by having the descriptions displayed in a different order than

that in which the documentation is physically arranged.

The collection of the Partito d'Azione required a similar treatment, because it contains papers produced by both the Ligurian Union, a regional body, and the Provincial Federation of Genoa -- the two of which had become partially mixed during a reorganization effort probably carried out at the Liquidation Office.

At the end of this intervention, which is already in an advanced stage of implementation, it will be possible to reach two important objectives: first of all, to provide online accessibility to the descriptions of the entire documentary heritage of the Institute, and secondly, to encourage the utilization of the CLN and Ligurian Partito d'Azione collections, until now not fully probed due, perhaps in part, to the perfunctory research tools with which they were furnished.

Note

[1] In April 1997, the Institute, following a statutory modification, assumed the name "Ligurian Institute for the History of the Resistance and the Contemporary Age" (Istituto ligure per la storia della Resistenza e dell'Età contemporanea).

[2] G. De Luna, "Tre generazioni di storici. L'Istituto per la storia della Resistenza in Piemonte 1947-1987," in *Italia contemporanea*, n. 172 (September 1988), p. 53.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Both the circulars, respectively dated 1 and 8 July 1946, are preserved in the Archive of the Historical Institute of the Resistance in Piedmont (heretofore referred to as ARP), b. E ISRP 1, fasc. 1.

[5] *Ibid.*, CLN of Lombardy, "Procedures for dissolving the CLNs" (Modalità di scioglimento dei CLN), 1 July 1946.

[6] A copy of the circular is preserved in the Archive of the Ligurian Institute for the History of the Resistance and the Contemporary Age (heretofore referred to as ARL), CLN Postliberation Collection (Fondo CLN postliberazione), b. 34, fasc. 2.

[7] Emilio Re, functionary of the archival administration, was named Commissioner for the archives in October 1944 after, that is, the Central Administration of the Archives returned to its Roman seat. In that position, he concerned himself from the first days of the Liberation, with the recovery of the documentation of central State organs, transferred north by the Salò government (Cf. E. Gencarelli, "Gli archivi italiani durante la Seconda guerra mondiale," Rome, Central Office for Archival Assets, "Quaderni della Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato 50," 1979, p. 56). Much less known and studied are the close relationships that Re maintained with the liquidation offices of the CLNs of north Italy, in order to guarantee the protection of the documentation pertaining to the national liberation movement according to procedures shared with the archival administration.

[8] Refer to the exhaustive report on this subject: "Gli Archivi della Resistenza e la loro assicurazione al patrimonio storico Nazionale," sent by Emilio Re to

the Central Office of the State Archives on 28 August 1947, prot. 8953.39, of which a copied is preserved in ARP, b. E ISRP 1, fasc. 2.

[9] This referred to the law of 22 December 1939, n. 2006, of which article 14 rendered inaccessible documents of a political and confidential nature dated after 1870 and "pertaining to foreign policy or internal administration". The relative term of 40 years (extendible in certain cases to 50 and 70) for the consultation of archive documents was introduced only with the subsequent DPR n. 1409 of 30 September 1963.

[10] Several copies of the convention minutes are conserved in ARL, CLN postliberation collection, b. 21a, fasc. 7.

[11] Ibid., p. 26

[12] Ibid., p. 27.

[13] Ibid., p. 30. The minutes do not report the speaker's name.

[14] Ibid., p. 29.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., p. 30.

[17] Ibid., p. 31.

[18] Letter from the Liquidation Office of the Lombard CLN (signed by Bendiscioli) to the Liquidation Office of the Piedmontese CLN, 10 January 1947, in ARP, b. E ISRP 1, fasc. 2.

[19] "It is not risky to suppose that the same Central Council of Historic Studies would view, if not exactly with suspicion, certainly with limited sensitivity and understanding, historical studies addressed to a field in which the "professional" historians are not trained, and for which many feel, due to a lack of personal experience and a particular mindset, an instinctive reluctance." (ARP, b. E ISRP 1, fasc. 2, Typewritten note by Alessandro Galante Garrone addressed to "dear companions," p. 2).

[20] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[21] "Relazione del convegno tenuto a Torino il 13/7/1947 per la costituzione degli Istituti storici della Resistenza", in ARP, b. E ISRP 1, fasc. 3.

[22] A transcription of the minutes of the Superior Council of Archives is accessible on line at www.archivi.beniculturali.it.

[23] Regarding Luciano Bolis, secretary of the Ligurian Action Party in the clandestine period, silver medal for military valor, subsequently representative of the European Federalist Movement and high functionary at the Council of Europe, Cf. "Dalla Resistenza all'Europa. Il mondo di Luciano Bolis," edited by D. Preda and C. Rognoni Vercelli, Genoa 2001, and in particular for the period in question, the essay by D. Veneruso, Luciano Bolis founder of the Historical Institute of the Resistance in Liguria and organizer of the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy.

[24] L. Bolis, "Le origini dell'Istituto storico della Resistenza in Liguria (1946-1953)," in *Storia e Memorie. Annali dell'Istituto storico della Resistenza in Liguria*, 1989, pp. 156-157.

[25] ARP, b. E ISRP 1, fasc. 2.

[26] L. Bolis, *Le origini...* cit., p. 164

[27] Ibid., p. 165.

[28] Cf. E. Ronconi, "Quasi quarant'anni dopo," in *Italia contemporanea*, June 1986, n. 163, pp. 79-81.

[29] Letter by the Superintendent of Archives, Emilio Re, to the Central Office

of the State Archives on 12 September 1947, prot. 8953.39, of which a copy is preserved in ARP, b. E ISRP 1, fasc. 3.

[30] Ibid.

[31] The minutes of the Board of Directors of the Historical Institute of the Resistance for Liguria are preserved at the headquarters of the ILSREC.

[32] L. Bolis, *Le origini...* cit., p. 156.

[33] Felice Perroni was also among the founding members of the Institute, as one can understand from the deed drawn up on 9 June 1950 which legally sanctioned its establishment.

[34] Ibid., p. 165.

[35] The question of restitution of the CLN archive was tackled in the board of directors meetings of 16 July 1958 and 9 and 17 April 1959, in addition to the meeting already mentioned.

[36] The text of the report is preserved in the archive of the ILSREC, together with the inventory of the CLN collection compiled at the State Archive of Genoa, in a folder titled "Analytic Inventory of the Archival Documents of the Ligurian CLN, 1943-1947" (Inventario analitico documenti archivi CLN liguri (1943-1947)).

[37] The record of delivery to the Historical Institute of the Resistance in Imperia of documents of that city's CLN is recorded at the State Archive of Genoa 13 December 1982, prot. 3157.VII/3/3.82.

[38] The attorney, Giambattista Lazagna, member of the board of directors of the Institute, was vice-commander of the partisan division, Cichero (on his donation, Cf. *Guida agli archivi della Resistenza*, edited by the Archives-Library Commission of the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy, Rome, Ministry for Cultural and Environmental Assets, 1983, p. 551).

[39] The hiring decision was made at the 21 December 1955 meeting of the board of directors.

[40] This is verified, for example, by the documents donated in multiple batches by the partisan commander, Lilio Giannecchini (Tuscany). The first of these were inserted in the collection called "Military Activity Collection" ("Fondo Attività militare"), while those delivered subsequently were kept separately in the collection which was named for him.

[41] "Guida sommaria all'archivio," edited by R. Monteleone and M. Negri, in *Il Movimento di liberazione in Italia*, XXIV, nn. 106-108.

[42] *Guida sommaria agli archivi degli Istituti di storia della Resistenza*, Milan, National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy, 1974, pp. 27-50.

[43] The first two volumes of G. Gimelli, *Cronache militari della Resistenza in Liguria*, were published in 1965 and 1969, respectively, edited by the Ligurian Institute, under the umbrella of a larger publishing project on the history of Liguria launched in collaboration with the University of Genoa in the context of similar initiatives organized by the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy

[44] *Guida agli archivi della Resistenza...* cit., p. 552.

[45] *Guida agli archivi della Resistenza...*, cit. In these headquarters, besides Monteleone and Negri, Silvia Panti and Rossana Urbani were also named as curatori della voce.

[46] G. Gimelli, *Cronache militari della Resistenza in Liguria*, Genova, Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia, [1985], voll. 3.

[47] for which Stefano Benassi, Patrizia Bocconi e Erminia Ferriani were responsible.

[48] L. Bolis, *Le origini*, ... cit., pp. 171-173.

[49] The withdrawal was authorized by the Central Office for Archival Assets with note 7 June 200, prot. 2.18138.

[50] The latest version of the program, entitled "Guida. La versione informatica della 'Guida agli archivi della Resistenza'. Programmi, procedure, software e stampe", was introduced at the Sixth European Conference of Archives, held in Florence from 30 May to 2 June 2001.

[51] consisting of Stefania Paoletti, who worked on the CLN collection with the assistance of Silvia Traversa; Francesca Alberico to whom we are indebted for the review of the descriptions of the documents of private collections; and Monica Colombara, who took care of the Action Party collection. Elisabetta Ariotti, as archival superintendent for Liguria, coordinated the entire intervention, which was financed thanks to a contribution by the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia (CARIGE).

[52] Cfr. nota 6.

[53] "The same Cassiani, for example, then rebuked me for not having made a selection of the documents before delivering them, so as to eliminate those that, in his judgement, did not show true historic interest; while I, instead, held rigorously to Perroni's advice ... not to run the risk, inherent in such an operation, of involuntarily eliminating something that might have been considered irrelevant at the moment but which, by unforeseeable circumstances, could have taken on greater importance in the future, keeping in mind the aim of creating the most complete and impartial historical reconstruction possible." (L. Bolis, *Le origini...*, cit., p. 165)