

The concept of the European Community

Almost all people, from the birth of the Roman Empire to today, when asked "What is Europe?", have always answered by analyzing the question from a geopolitical point of view, stating that it is a continent made up of a collection of independent states.

Today, Europe has become a community where people of all nationalities share not only the bureaucratic and financial aspects of the EEC but also its history, culture, and the hopes it carries as its heritage.

The concept of the **European community** refers to the idea of a group of European countries working together to achieve common goals, overcoming political, economic, and cultural divisions. This concept primarily emerged after World War II, with the aim of promoting peace, stability, and economic well-being in Europe.

Throughout history, the idea of a European community has evolved. Starting from the Napoleonic era, when Napoleon Bonaparte dreamed of uniting Europe under a single empire, the concept continued to develop. World War II, with the devastation it caused, highlighted the urgency of preventing future conflicts and creating cooperative ties between European countries.

This concept of a European community, united under a single flag and law, in the style of the United States of America, began to spread in cultural circles since the late 1700s and was later revisited and evolved throughout the 19th century, ultimately coming to fruition with the creation of the Council of Europe.

This collection aims to show, through aphorisms from historical figures, how the concept of a European community was born and how it has evolved throughout history.

COLLECTION PLAN:

1 – Napoleon Bonaparte (3 sheets):

The general who united all the European peoples under his banners in the Grande Armée.

2 – Carlo Cattaneo (3 sheets):

The necessity, after the revolts of 1848, for peace under the flag of the United States of Europe.

3 – Victor Hugo (3 sheets):

A writer and politician who understood the importance of creating a united and cohesive Europe in order to stand on equal footing with the United States of America, an emerging world power.

4 – Giuseppe Garibaldi (3 sheets):

The precursor of the Schengen Agreement... peoples, in order to feel free, must have the freedom to move freely within Europe.

5 – Giuseppe Mazzini (3 sheets):

The "Young Europe": a new Europe that abandons old nationalistic interests, where peoples unite to achieve a common and shared goal.

Total sheets: 16



Napoleon Bonaparte can be considered one of the pioneers of the European community; this can indeed be read in the *Memorial of Saint Helena* (first published in 1823):

"We need a European law, a European Court of Cassation, a single monetary system, equal weights and measures, we need the same laws for all of Europe. I would have wanted to make all the European peoples one single people... Here is the only solution!"



Scaled reproduction of the envelope with its destination.



France, 1972 – Letter from Nice to Milan dated 15/12/1972, franked for a total of 1.20F, in perfect accordance with the rates of the French Republic in effect from 01/08/1971 for third-class mail up to 100g addressed to European countries.



France, 1972 – Limited luxury proof (edition of 25 pieces) of the stamps on the theme of Napoleon (History of France) with values of 0.45F, 0.60F, and 0.65F.

The Battle of the Arcole Bridge was fought from November 15 to 17, 1796, near the town of Arcole in the province of Verona. The French army, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, clashed with the Austrian army. The stamp depicts the episode in which Napoleon, to encourage his troops to advance under the Austrian artillery fire, positioned himself in front of them and marched all the way to the Arcole bridge, holding the flag of the Army of Italy.



Napoleon united the European peoples under his banners in a single army known as the **Grande Armée**. In this vast army, citizens from Bavaria, Poland, Italy, Saxony, the Netherlands, France, Austria, Croatia and other nationalities took up arms to follow the ideals of the Emperor.

Napoleon's **infantry** was divided into two main corps: the **line infantry** (*Infanterie de Ligne*) and the **light infantry** (*Infanterie Légère*).

In the French Army of 1803, there were 90 regiments of line infantry and 26 regiments of light infantry. Between 1813 and 1814, the number of line infantry regiments had grown to 137 (numbered from 1 to 157).



Intact buttons from the 51st and 75th line infantry regiments of the Grande Armée of Napoleon (1803 - 1814).



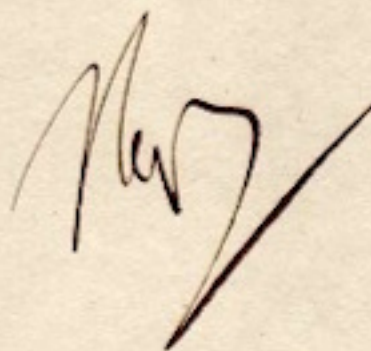
Germany, 1813 – Letter from Hermsdorf dated 13/08/1813 to Lille, with a red cancellation "N°16 GRANDE ARMÉE" (known only in red – Kulmbach 1806). The distance covered was 693 km, and, according to the law of 09/02/1810, it was taxed at 8 décimes (tax rate for a journey between 500 and 600 km for first-class mail).



Poland, 1808 – Letter from Striegau dated 06/06/1808 to Caen, with an aqua green cancellation "N° 14 GRANDE ARMÉE" (known in northern Germany – Rostock 1808). The distance covered was 1162 km, and, according to the law of 24/04/1806, it was taxed at 9 décimes (tax rate for a journey between 600 and 800 km for first-class mail).

W 8.
Mon fils, faire placer des postes sur le chemin du
Simplon, & prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour que
la communication s'y établisse par voitures, si tout-à-fait
les routes sont en bon état.
J. Cloud le 10 juin 1806

votre affectionné Père



M. Prince Eugène Napoléon.

Autographed letter by Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), at the time Emperor of the French, from Saint-Cloud on 10/06/1806, addressed to the son from the first marriage of his wife Joséphine, Eugène de Beauharnais (1781-1824), Viceroy of the Kingdom of Italy. The letter, folded in four, was placed in an outer envelope and transported by the imperial courier service, and was registered by the recipient with the number N°5.

TEXT: "My son, set up positions along the Simplon route and take all necessary measures to ensure communication by carriage, if, however, the roads are in good condition. Your affectionate father."

Napoleon I wanted to build, in preparation for the conquest of Austria, a direct connection between Milan and Paris that would be passable by carriage (for the transport of cannons). This way, the Grande Armée would be able to move swiftly up to the borders of Austria. On October 17, 1800, the emperor indeed gave the order to construct a road along the old mule track of the Simplon, "pour faire passer les canons." In this letter, dated 10/06/1806, we can see how Napoleon I had anticipated that the Fourth Coalition against France would soon be formed (August 1806), and, consequently, he wanted to ensure that the Simplon road would be safe and passable by the wagons carrying cannons.

Carlo Cattaneo from the volume: *"On the Insurrection of Milan in 1848 and the Subsequent War. Memoirs"*, printed in Lugano in 1849.

"We will have true peace when we have the United States of Europe... The ocean is turbulent and swirling, and the currents have two possible outcomes: autocrats, or the United States of Europe."

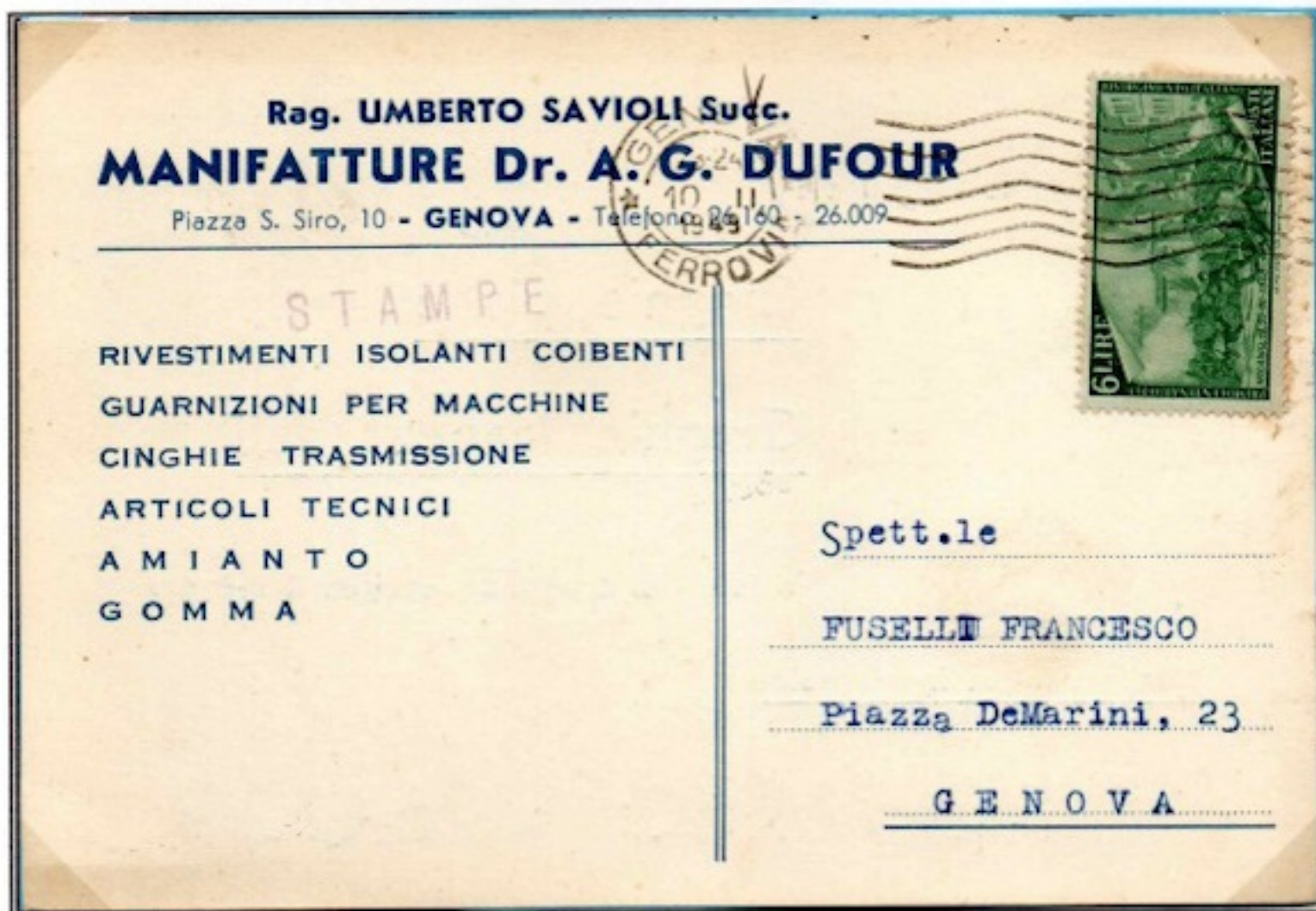


Italy, 1848 – Letter from Milan dated 15/11/1848 to Drôme (France). The letter bears a red "T.S." stamp, indicating a tax of 14 centimes according to the French tariff, as well as a red "DOPO LA PARTENZA" (after departure) stamp and a red cancellation from 19/03/1848 (the beginning of the Five Days of Milan). On the reverse, there is a transit mark for Lyon dated 19/03/1848 and an arrival mark at the destination on 21/03/1848.



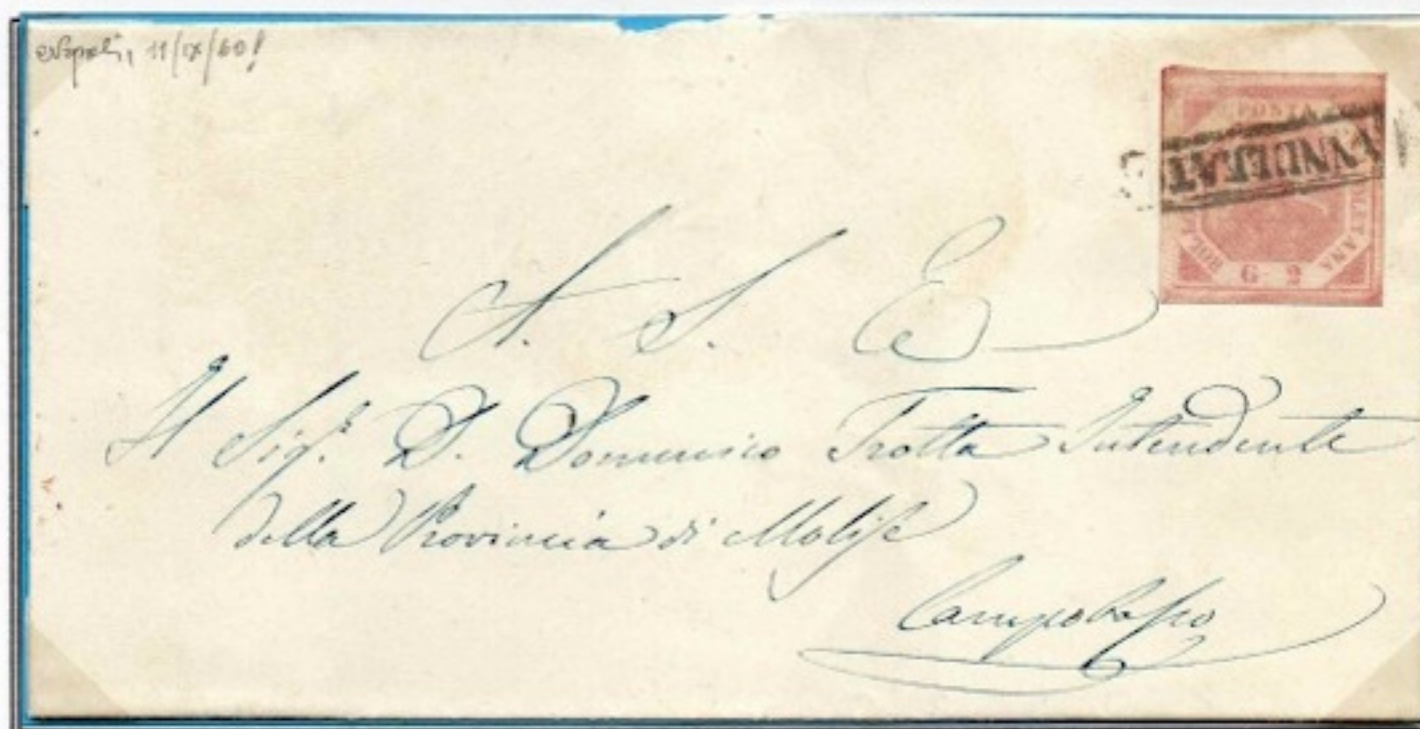
Italy, 1848 – Medal issued by the provisional government (March 18 - August 5, 1848), opus: L. Eisel. White metal, 132.46 grams, 75 mm. The obverse features the busts of Enrico Cernuschi, Carlo Cattaneo, and Giulio Terzaghi. Reverse: "AI MILANESI COMBATTENTI L'AUSTRIACO INSIDIOSO CHIEDEVA UNA TREGUA. IN CONSIGLIO DI GUERRA COSTITUITI PROPUGNARONO PEL POPOLO LA LOTTA E LA VITTORIA 20 MARZO 1848" (To the Milanese fighters, the insidious Austrian requested a truce. In the established war council, they advocated for the people, the struggle, and victory, March 20, 1848).

Cattaneo developed his ideas of an Europe as a confederation of states, based on the model of the United States of America, during the **Five Days of Milan**.



Italy, 1949 – Printed matter postcard from Genoa to the city, dated 10/11/1949, and arrived on the same day. Franked with 6L, 1L in excess, according to the tariff in effect from 10/08/1949 (5L for printed matter up to 50g).

In 1860, he also tried to promote his ideas of a united confederation of peoples during the unification of Italy, meeting **Garibaldi in Naples** in an attempt to convince him to create a confederation of republics of Italian states.



Italy, 1860 – Outer envelope from Naples to Campobasso (with arrival mark on the reverse dated 11/09/1860), franked with a 2 grana pink-brown stamp, 1 plate. The letter was sent during the period of Garibaldi's dictatorship and, most likely, by September, Cattaneo had just arrived alongside Garibaldi in the role of advisor.

ON THE RIGHT: Scaled reproduction of the red arrival mark at the destination on 11/09/1860 in Campobasso.



Carlo Cattaneo was a democrat and a republican, opposed, like Giuseppe Mazzini, to the idea of a monarchy's dominance. However, he was also an opponent of Mazzini, as he believed that, due to the deep historical and social differences between the peoples, there should not be a unitary and centralizing model of governance, but rather a federal one. It was his studies, particularly in law, that led him to develop this federalist and republican conception, which would eventually make him one of the key figures in the Milan insurrection.

Detail showing the recipient of the letter, lawyer V. Poggi, friend and colleague of Carlo Cattaneo.

BELOW:

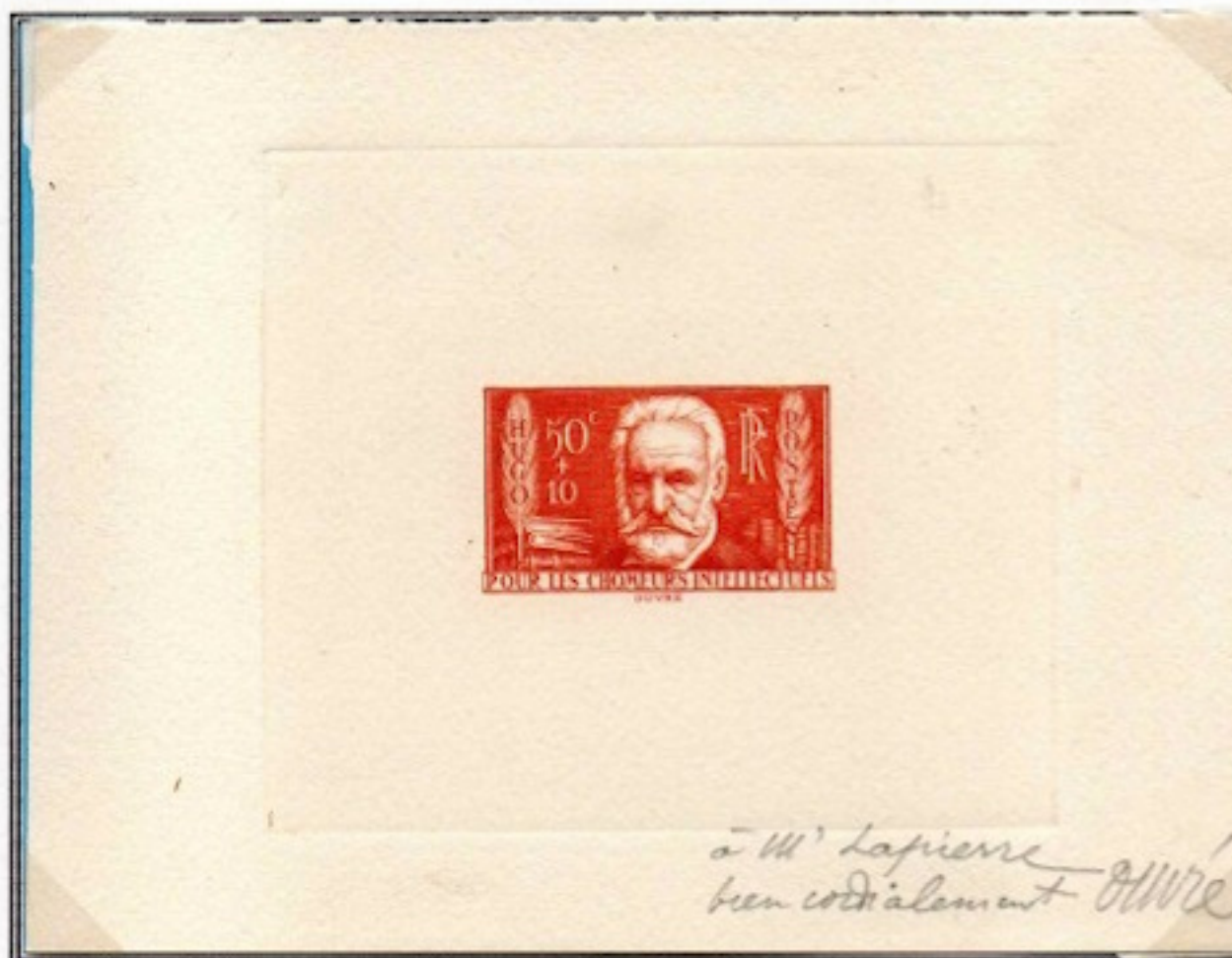
The last of the three handwritten pages by Carlo Cattaneo, in which, to obtain the most accurate opinion possible, Cattaneo informs his correspondent that he will send the original documents and bids them farewell.

Italy, 1826 – Letter from Milan dated 14/10/1826 to Modena, autographed by the patriot Carlo Cattaneo on a bifolio of paper. The subject of the letter is a legal matter (Cattaneo graduated in law in 1824 and practiced law for a brief period before being more drawn to historical and political studies).

In the letter, it is evident how Cattaneo was always seeking a dialogue with his correspondents and how he was inclined to analyze, study, and seek a scientific and technical approach to both legal matters (as in this case) and the moral challenges he was constantly faced with.

Victor Hugo, from the speech delivered at the Paris Peace Congress on August 21,

"There will come a day when these two immense groups, the United States of America and the United States of Europe, will stand face to face, extending their hands across the seas."



The speech Victor Hugo delivered at the Paris Congress was an expression of hope for universal peace, envisioning the creation of the United States of Europe through an intuitive and providential federalism that was both European and universal. His intention was to replace tyrannies with democracies, wars with mediation and agreements between nations, and to bring out the human fraternity of the European peoples.



France, 1936 – Artist's proof of the 50+10F "Victor Hugo" stamp, signed by the designer Ouvre with the dedication "at Mr. Lapierre, cordial souvenir."



ABOVE:

Scaled detail of the back of the envelope with the mechanical postmark "Save time by replying by air," showing transit in Paris and arrival in Gothenburg.

TO THE RIGHT:

France, 1935 – Airmail letter from Saint-Nazaire dated 04/09/1935 to Gothenburg, Sweden. Franked with a total of 2.25F, in perfect accordance with the tariff of the French Republic effective from 08/06/1934 (0.75F for first-class letter postage + 1.50F air surcharge for Europe).



In honor of Hugo, as with Garibaldi, one of the balloons used to transport mail for the Parisians during the Siege of Paris in 1870 by the Prussians was named after him.



France, 1870 – Ballon Monté from Paris dated 16/10/1870 to Fumel (Lot et Garonne). Transported by the balloon "Victor Hugo," it bears transit marks from Agen and an arrival mark at the destination on 22/10/1870. Franked with 0.20F, the tariff for first-class letters up to 10g within France, according to the tariff of the Empire in effect since 01/01/1862.

It is said that when he was asked for permission to name one of the balloons after him, the poet replied, "Merci, ex imo corde" (thank you, from the bottom of my heart), as now he could fly in the skies for them.

Victor Hugo was one of the ardent supporters of a united and peaceful Europe. Several European countries recognize him as one of the idealistic precursors of a European community.



France, 1964 – 5 franc NF banknote of 1964, issued by the Bank of France, features a portrait of Victor Hugo on the front, with decorative and symbolic details related to his cultural significance on both sides.

The 5-franc (New Franc – NF) banknote with Victor Hugo was issued during a time when France was undergoing a period of economic transformation. France had recently undergone a series of changes in its monetary policy, seeking to improve the stability and management of its currency after the difficult post-war years.

In 1960, France adopted the new franc, which was worth 100 old francs. The issuance of new banknotes, such as the 5-franc note in 1964, was part of this process of modernizing the currency.

Handwritten letter in French, dated 02/09/1834, addressed to Antony Thouret. The text is written in cursive and includes a small note at the bottom left.

Laure. 27m
J'ai d'abord une campagne
d'un genre mis à
travaux. Je te prie de
me dire si tu es en
position d'approuver le tout.
Je me place dans une
position que j'ai fait,
à la fin, je ferai
ce que tu feras.
Victor Hugo

Note: Je n'ai rien de plus à te dire. - HZ

Hugo was made a **Peer of France** in 1845 and became a **deputy of the Constituent Assembly** in December 1848, alongside his republican friend **Anthony Turret**, with whom he often discussed major issues: against child labor, against the death penalty ("The death penalty is the characteristic and eternal sign of barbarism"), on the condition of women, in favor of peace, universal suffrage, and free thought. These were all issues that, a century later, would become the foundations of European society.

TEXT:

"I've just returned from a fantastic one-month campaign. I found your letter. I still love you and approve of you in everything. In my place, you would have done what I do, and in your place, I would have done what you are doing. Your always friend (who believes in you) blindly. Victor Hugo."

Additionally, Hugo mentions Thouret's work "**Toussaint le Mulâtre**" (a work about Toussaint Louverture, the leader of the Haitian slave revolt of 1791) with the note: "I do not yet have Toussaint", indicating that he had not yet read the work, but was aware of it.

Thouret responds under Hugo's signature with a note: "Note: I refused to request my release", which could refer to Thouret's political or personal situation at the time, possibly in connection with his involvement in revolutionary activities or imprisonment.

The exchange between the two highlights their intellectual bond, political engagement, and personal connection. The reference to **Toussaint le Mulâtre** suggests their shared interest in social issues, such as the **fight against slavery and the rights of people**, which were common themes in Hugo's and Thouret's works.

Handwritten letter in French, dated 03/09/1834, addressed to Antony Thouret. The text is written in cursive and includes a small note at the bottom left.

Monsieur Antony Thouret
à la prison de la Waast
Douai

France, 1834 - Letter sent by postal due dated 02/09/1834, autographed by Victor Hugo, addressed to the lawyer and politician Antony Thouret (1807-1871), who was imprisoned at the d'Waast prison in Douai due to his republican views. The front of the letter bears a postage tax of 5 centimes and the date of dispatch. On the reverse, there is the arrival stamp from Douai dated 03/09/1834, indicating when it was delivered to the prison.

Giuseppe Garibaldi, in a letter to a French deputy in 1881:

"Here is the goal we must achieve; no more barriers, no more borders."



Italy, 2007 – 5 euro coin issued by the Italian State Mint for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Garibaldi 1807 - 2007.

Italy, 1932 – First air mail letter from Rome to Vienna dated 07/08/1932, franked with (VERY PARTICULAR USE for air mail) 15c Pneumatic Post for a total of 4.45L, with a 5c excess according to the tariff in force from 01/07/1930 for a letter up to 20g (1.25L for first-class letter up to 20g abroad + 2.50 delivery for express + 0.75L air surcharge for letters up to 20g following the air route Rome – Milan – Trento – Munich).

According to the Portorose Agreement valid from 01/06/1926 for Austria, the letter should have followed the 1L tariff, and in this case, the envelope would have been overpaid by 20c.



ON TOP:

Italy, 1910 – 50th Anniversary of the Southern Plebiscite, Archive proofs in gray and green.

ON THE RIGHT:

Italy, 1911 – Letter from Naples to Verona dated 25/01/1911, for 15 cents, perfectly in accordance with the tariff in force from 01/09/1905 (first-class letter up to 15g).

Garibaldi is known worldwide as the hero of the two worlds (Europe and America) because he fought, following his principles of freedom, also in Brazil, defending the Republic of Rio Grande do Sul.



Rhodes, 1932 – The airship Graf Zeppelin made the outbound flight of its eighth journey to South America, departing from Friedrichshafen on 09/10/1932 at 21:43 and landing in Recife (Pernambuco) on 13/10/1932 at 00:23.



Registered airmail letter dated 20/09/1932 from Rhodes to Recife (Brazil), franked for a total of 9.75L (7L for the Zeppelin airmail tariff to Brazil + 1.50L for registration + 1.25L for the aerogram letter tariff, perfectly in accordance with the royal decree of 03/03/1932). It bears the departure circular postmark "FRIEDRICHSHAFEN 10.10.1932 0-1," the special red commemorative cancellation of the flight: "LUFTSCHIFF GRAF ZEPPELIN / 8. SUDAMERIKAFAHRT / 1932," and on the reverse the transit and arrival stamps in Brindisi, Milan and Pernambuco

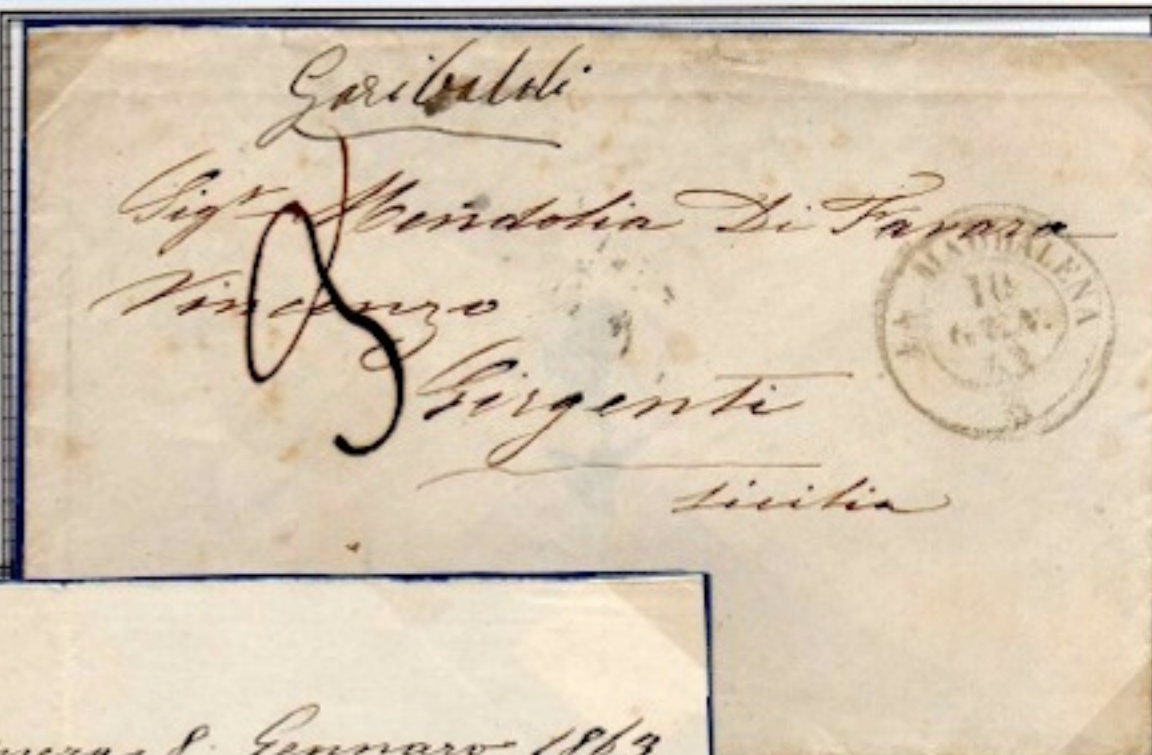


His struggle against oppression in favor of an international unity of peoples were also recognized by the French republicans, who, during the **siege of Paris in 1870**, named an air balloon in his honor.

France, 1870 – Ballon monté of 21/10/1870 from Paris to Dieppe. Letter transported aboard the airship "Le Garibaldi" and arrived in Dieppe (postmark on the reverse) on 01/11/1870, franked for a total of 0.20F, perfectly in accordance with the imperial tariff for a first-class letter up to 10g for domestic mail in force from 01/01/1862.



Italy 1863 – Autographed letter by Giuseppe Garibaldi dated 08/01/1863 from Caprera addressed to Girgenti, taxed upon arrival with 9 cents. The envelope bears the departure cancellation from La Maddalena on 10/01/1863, and on the reverse, the transit and arrival stamps from Genoa, Palermo, and Girgenti.



Caprera 8. Gennaio 1863.

Signor Mendolia Favara

Vi ringrazio della vostra gentile offerta, ma per ora non mi muovo da Caprera però conto in appresso visitare Girgenti, e stringervi di persona la mano

Gravate per momento mi affettuosa saluta dal sempre V^{ro}

G. Garibaldi

Al Sig.
Mendolia Di Favara Vincenzo
Girgenti

From **Caprera**, letters were sent to him from all over the world: statesmen, politicians, and thinkers who wanted to exchange ideas and proposals with him.

Garibaldi (that was poor) never rejected taxed letters and always responded to everyone, making the recipient pay the postage.

ON THE LEFT:

The letter concerns the latter's invitation to visit Girgenti. The hero thanks the sender but, still recovering from the surgery and the wounds sustained during the failed liberation of Rome, says that he cannot leave Caprera. He finally hopes to go and shake his hand in person sooner or later.

From this letter, it is clear how Garibaldi cared deeply about his correspondence and, in particular, how he always wanted to respond to everyone (not just to illustrious figures). Furthermore, it is very likely that, to avoid the recipient not receiving his reply by refusing to pay the arrival fee, he specified at the top of the letter that the sender was him, "Garibaldi".

Giuseppe Mazzini, father of Giovine Europa (Young Europe), quoted in Paolo Brezzi, *Realtà e mito dell'Europa*, Studium, 1954.

"The new era is destined to constitute humanity... it is destined to organize a Europe of peoples, as independent as their internal mission, united among themselves with a common purpose."



Italy, 1922 - Registered letter from Torre de Passeri to Rome dated 16/10/1922, franked with Michetti and Mazzini 25c. plus 40c Mazzini for a total of 0.90L, perfectly in accordance with the rates in effect from 01/01/1922 (letter up to 15 grams, first-class postage 40 cents + registration 50 cents = 90 cents).

NOTE:

The envelope features a twin franking with ONLY 42 days of possible overlap.

La Giovine Europa was established on April 15, 1834.

It represented one of the first organically conceived attempts to create a democratic political pact of unity and brotherhood between Young Italy, Young Poland, and Young Germany.

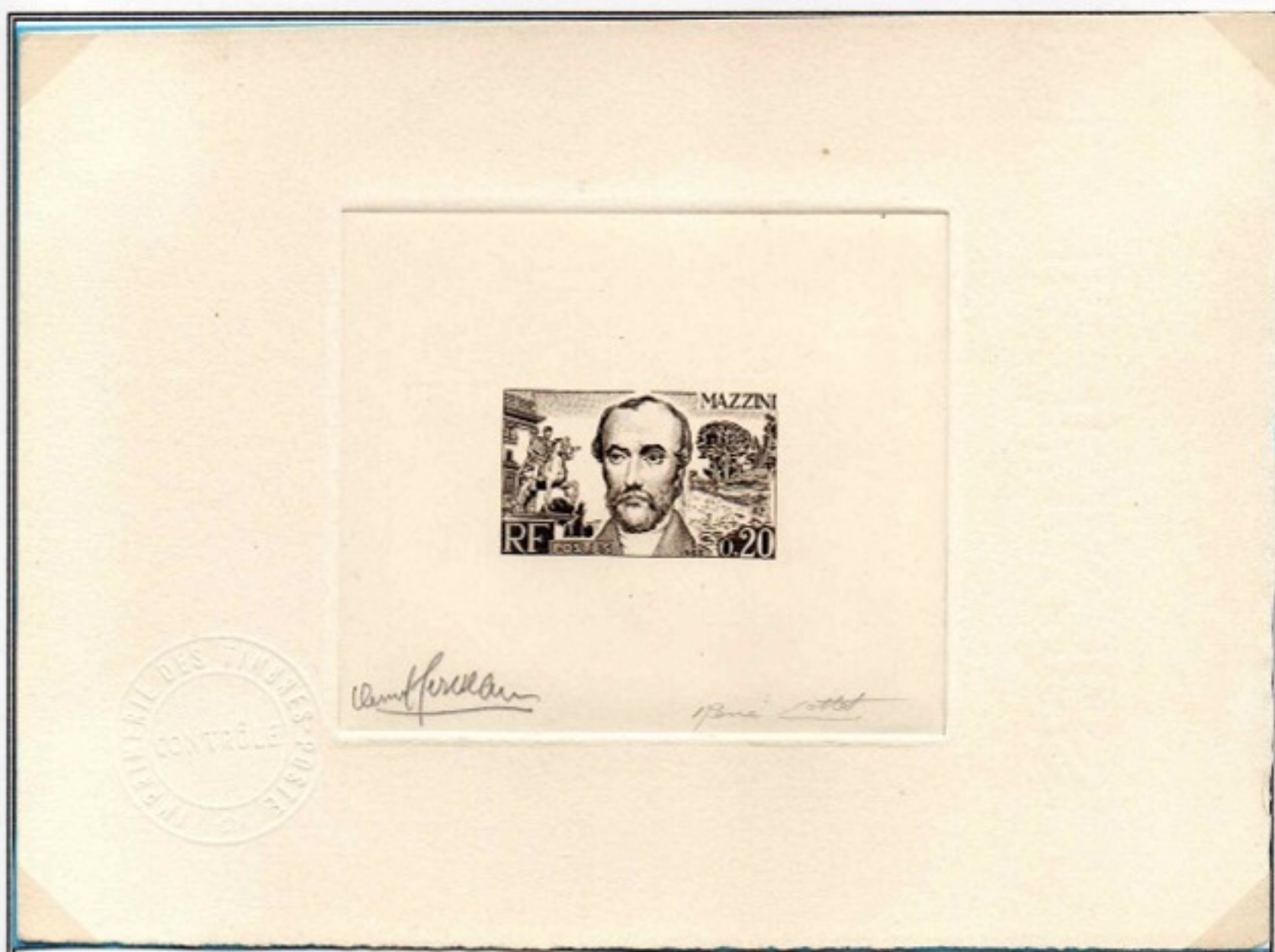
Italy, 1949 - Letter from Rome to Avezzano dated 19/09/1949 with the postmark tag 'Gioia di vivere profumo d'orchidea bianca' (Joy of living, scent of white orchid). Franked for a total of L20, perfectly in accordance with the first-class letter postage rate according to the tariff in effect from 10/08/1949.



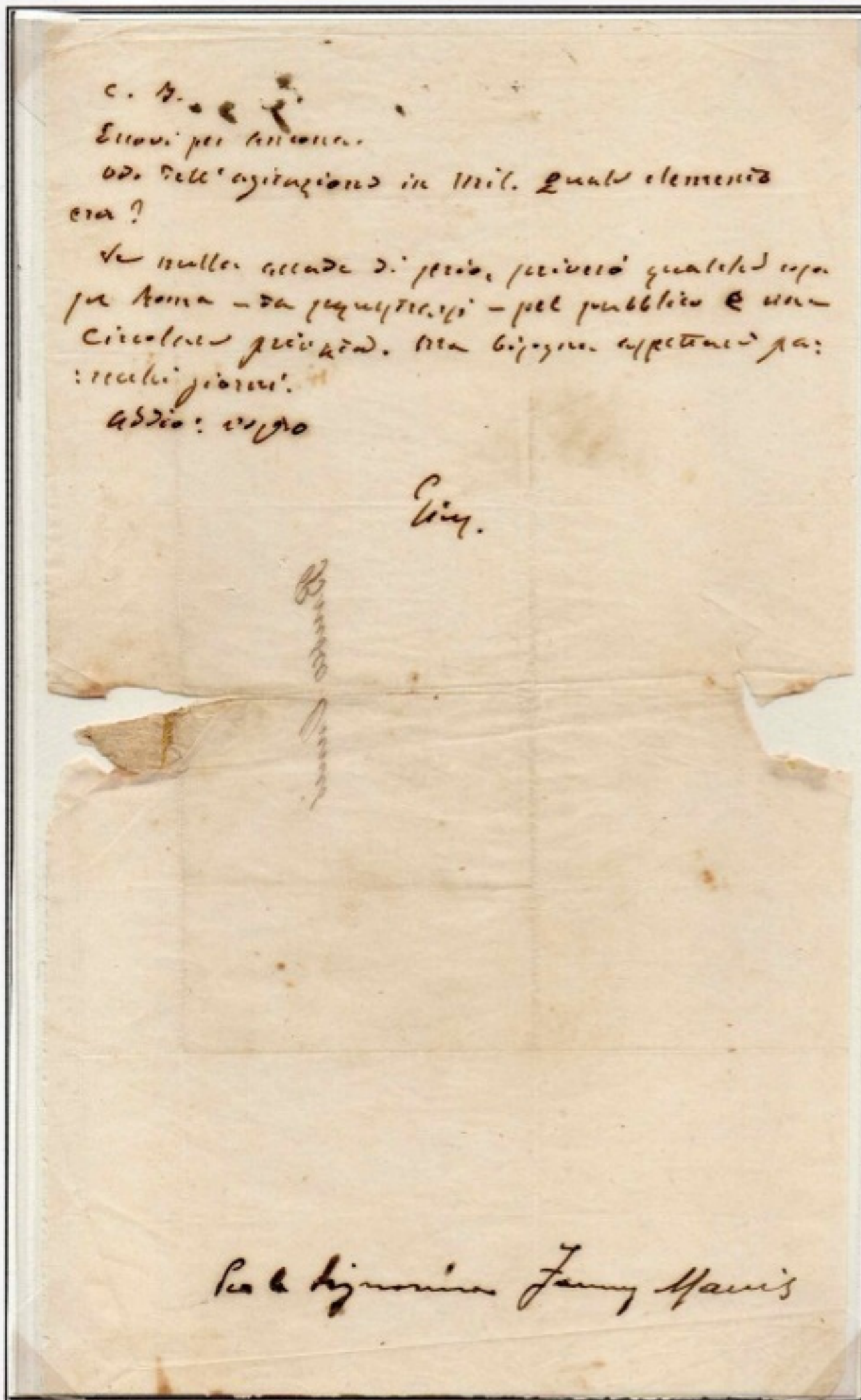
Mazzini is therefore considered, not only by Italy but especially by France, one of the most illustrious figures of Europe.



France, 1963 – Letter from Port-de-Bouc, B. du Rhone to Delmenhorst (West Germany) with a franking of 0.20F. On the left, a purple postmark of the inaugural voyage of the ESSO DEURSCHLAND tanker ship.



France – Artist's proof in gray of the 0.20F stamp 'Illustrious Figures of Europe' featuring Mazzini. The proof bears the signatures of both the artist and the engraver.



After the events of 1848, the program of alliances between the peoples of **Giovine Europa (Young Europe)**, established on April 15, 1834, was resumed by Mazzini when he found himself in **exile in London**.

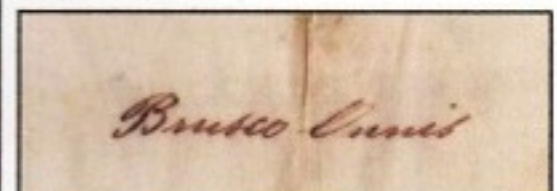
There, he founded a European Democratic Central Committee with the aim of placing the **European democratic movement** at the forefront of the liberation and independence process of the peoples of the old continent.

With this intention, he invited charismatic figures who shared the same ideals and came from all over the continent to participate in the Committee: from the French Ledru-Rollin to the German Arnold Ruge.

Mazzini was indeed convinced that the main driving force behind the European democratization process could only come from Italy, where the 'bright examples of the **Milanese revolts and the Roman Republic** left ample space for the action of democracy.' (Roberto Villari, *Storia contemporanea*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 1982).

BELOW:

Detail of the recipient of the letter:
Brusco Onnis.



Letter traveled and delivered by hand from London/Lugano, handwritten by Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), most likely dated between 1852-1853, and addressed to Milan to his friend and journalist Vincenzo Brusco Onnis (1822-1888).

TEXT: 'C.M. (My Dearest), Here I am again. I hear of agitation in Milan. What was the cause? If nothing serious happens, I will write something about Rome – to be provided – for the public and also for private circulation. But we must wait several days. Goodbye: Yours, Gius.'

The text is of historical interest as it shows how Mazzini, in exile after his experience in the Roman Republic of 1849, where he was one of the triumvirs along with Garibaldi and Saffi, remained deeply interested in Italian politics and events. The agitation he inquires about was most likely the unrest between 1852 and early 1853, which culminated in the anti-Austrian revolt of February 6, 1853.

Mazzini signs 'Gius.' as he often did while in exile to avoid being recognized in case the letter fell into the hands of Italian officials. For this reason, he preferred to entrust letters to trusted individuals rather than the postal service.

A later note is present where the letter is handed over to Mazzini's future biographer, Fanni Manis: 'For Miss Fanny Manis,' who became famous for her biography *A spiritual daughter of Giuseppe Mazzini* (Lina Brusco Onnis).