

DIFFICULT YEARS AND EXILE

After the Garibaldi episode of 31 July 1849, which occurred while Domenico Maria Belzoppi was holding the office of Captain Regent for the fourth time, hostile protests began against him from the Mazzinian fringe in San Marino.

He was accused of having facilitated the entry of papal and Austrian troops into the Republic on 25 June 1851, and the subsequent arrest of 35 political refugees after numerous searches of suspicious houses, and arrogant and authoritarian behaviour towards the population by soldiers.

From this moment on, Belzoppi was one of the most hated rulers of San Marino, who were accused of being a traitor and a corrupt man working for the Vatican in the many anonymous "infamatory pamphlets" that were posted around the country.

To defend himself, on 19 July 1851 he wrote a long motion to the Prince and Sovereign Council pointing out that the slanders circulating about him were only "*a defamation born from darkness*", and that he had not betrayed the Republic.

However, the document failed to appease the gloomy resentment toward him, and his name continued to be the target of fierce attacks, such as the one launched against him in both the "Satira dei 5 B" of 1853 in which he was threatened with death, and in the work titled "Al Popolo Sammarinese".

His fifth and last term as Captain Regent then coincided with the assassination of Giambattista Bonelli on 14 July 1853, and with one of the most tragic and gloomy periods in the whole history of San Marino, in which two other prominent citizens of the country were later killed: lawyer Gaetano Angeli, on 14 March 1854, and Dr. Annibale Lazzarini, on 26 August.

Worn out by the restless and dangerous situation that had arisen in the Republic, terrified by the poisonous and alarming attacks against him, on 18 March he wrote a letter to the Captains Regent in which he declared himself tired of "*public life that, from its very beginnings, brought him nothing but anxiety, slander, and dangers*", and in need of peace for himself and his family, he resigned from all his duties.

He quickly left the village to move to a house of his own in Verucchio, but the slander and suspicions against him did not cease. On 14 December 1854, he therefore wrote another long letter to the Council in which he explained his getaway, also pointing out the too many local problems that had to be solved in order to return to social peace.

The document is very important for the examination it contains of the causes that, in his opinion, had led to the difficult situation of those years in San Marino.

In order to recover "*his insulted honour*", in this letter, Belzoppi also asked the Council, to initiate proceedings in which anyone could officially report him as a traitor and corrupt man working for Rome, but no one did.

He has not accepted any more offices of any kind.

He died in Verucchio on 8 February 1864.