

Crucifixes, editorial in school magazine censored

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Censorship rears its head in the first institution that should teach freedom of thought, school. The episode occurred last week, at **Arturo Tosi High School, in Busto Arsizio**. An article in the school magazine “La Voce degli Studenti” (The Students’ Voice) was removed from the publication by the teachers in charge of the editorial committee. The “fault” of the article was that it spoke, in a harsh and sarcastic tone, of the recent, controversial decision of the European Court on Human Rights concerning the presence of crucifixes in school classrooms, following the appeal by a Finnish woman who lives in Italy.

The article (here is the “controversial” text) is the work of Marco Corso, a student in class 5A section H, who obviously did not take well the sudden removal of a piece that, “controversial or not”, had every right to be published in the magazine. This, at least, is the opinion of Marco, who is the editor-in-chief. The removed article was not appropriate for the inside pages, it was the editorial for the December issue. “I had already sent it to the teachers in charge, and they had approved it. Then, when the issue had already gone to press, in fact, 500 copies had already been printed, somebody stepped in and, without informing us, removed my editorial and replaced it with another article by one of the teachers in charge.” Good Heavens! A revolt broke out following this violation of student dignity and press freedom. “On Saturday, there was a meeting,” says Marco. “Everyone was present, student representatives, parents, teachers, school staff.” The Headmaster accepted responsibility for the episode, describing it as a “procedural error.” The piece will be published soon.

Some students inevitably think that there was a targeted intervention by some teachers who did not agree politically with what Marco had written. “**Irrespective of the content** of the piece, which you might or might not agree with, there are students among the editorial staff that do not agree with it, but nobody would have dreamed of censoring it; it’s a matter of principle,” explains Marco. “It is unacceptable for anyone to intervene in this way on students’ free expression, and also for some teachers to have a hand in a publication called “The Students’ Voice”. His reasoning is flawless. “It’s absurd; we have precise regulations on the matter. Teachers can correct our articles, but only the syntax and grammar.”

Marco has asked that the December issue, which has already been “cleansed” of the article, be stopped, while the matter is being investigated. Meanwhile, he has opened a group on Facebook to report the episode, and has received messages of solidarity from a lot of people.

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