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Errico Malatesta
Communists and Fascists
1924

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We are not scandalized by the violence and electoral plots [pastette elettorali] of fascism. Workers must face the matter. The communist conception of electoral and parliamentary tactics does not logically exclude, not even on our part, the... plot [pastetta]. If we could make *plots* and chase opposing voters away from the polls, it would be comforting because we would be closer to being able to deploy forces ripe for the offensive.

So says the engineer Bordiga in *l'Unità*, who aspires to be the *Lenin*, in reduced copy, of communist Italy.

And this is the fundamental reason why fascism was able to triumph and still continues to ravage.

There has been — and not only among those who call themselves communists — a lack of moral revolt against the abuse of brutal force, against the contempt for freedom and human dignity, which is the characteristic of the fascist movement.

Too many people, even among the victims, have thought: *we would do the same if we had the force*. Naturally, many who

have thought so felt attracted to the side where the force was or seemed to be.

But then, if the Communists triumphed, what difference would there be from fascism?

The same bullies, the same thugs who now beat, burn and kill in the name of great Italy, would run into the ranks of the communists and beat, burn and kill in the name of the *proletariat*; and the engineer Bordiga would find himself in the same position in which Mussolini seems to find himself: after having incited the beast to get on [salire su], he would like to curb it in order to avoid the inevitable fall to which excesses lead, and he could not.

The revolution will have to be carried out in the name of justice, freedom and human solidarity and proceed with methods inspired by justice, freedom and solidarity. Otherwise, one will only fall from one tyranny into another.

We had already written this commentary on Bordiga's lines, which we took from Reggio Emilia's «*La Giustizia*», when we are told that from the context of Bordiga's article those words took on another meaning.

We have not been able to obtain the text of the article, but let our comment pass anyway, because the meaning of those words seems too clear for us to speculate about it.

After all, even if Bordiga didn't mean exactly what he said, we have heard those things, and even worse, to be said personally by many communists. It is quite the style of a sect.