

## L'AFFAIRE MATTEOTTI. STORIA DI UN DELITTO

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**D**uring the months of April, May and June 1924, Giacomo Matteotti —the great opponent of the fascist movement— took his work as a political representative to the extreme. From the moment of his death, the socialist representative became a symbol of anti-fascism for broad ideological sectors worldwide, first in Italy and then in countries with immigrants of Italian origin; also in European regions with the presence of emulators of Mussolini. Fabio Fiore's editorial project is planned in the context of the commemorations of the centenary of Matteotti's kidnapping in Via Arnaldo da Brescia (Rome, June 10, 1924). In this sense, *L'affaire Matteotti. Storia di un delitto* tries to highlight the philosophical legacy of the Italian lawyer and thinker; showing a clear ontological commitment to the defense of democratic values and the promotion of the concept of non-violence.

The book is composed of an introduction, six chapters, bibliographical references and, in the final part, a section of acknowledgements. In the first pages, it is argued that the crime against Matteotti was the key moment in contemporary Italian history, which demonstrated the systemic exhaustion of the liberal monarchy and the structural parasitism of the new management model led by Mussolini. The first chapter, *Meccanica del delitto*, discusses how the State crime was planned. The second chapter, *Esecutori*, describes the group of criminals and their position of power within the National Fascist Party. The third chapter, *Mandanti*, with a historiographical summary, focuses on delimiting the intellectual authorship of the crime. The fourth chapter, *Moventi*, reflects on the motivations of the criminal group. The fifth chapter, *Esiti*, delves into all the historiographical underdevelopments and the lack of knowledge of some events around the spring and summer of 1924. The sixth, *Per Giacomo Matteotti*, highlights the importance of democratic reformism, the need to guarantee multi-party balance in institutions and the validity of the discourse rejecting all forms of violence.

In the first pages, the scene of the crime and the methods of violent repression by the *black-shirts* emerge. The political leadership of the fascist dictatorship, which had so often used this method of persecution, aggression and elimination of political opponents, with the connivance of the judicial and police authorities, could not imagine that the consequences of the murder would shake the highest magistrates of the State. When the body of the leader of the Socialist Unitarian Party was found, on August 16, 1924, many citizens spontaneously paid tribute (an altar with flowers and gifts) at the place where the corpse was found. From Rome to the burial place, the funeral procession was greeted with applause and floral offerings by tens of thousands of citizens shocked by the brutality of the murder. Also, on the occasion of the repercussions of the kidnapping and fatal outcome, special attention is paid to the statements of the executive bodies, the arrest of the murderers and the first measures of judicial investigation.

In the second and third chapters, Fabio Fiore compares the actions of the group of criminals and the methodology of the persecution and repression of the *squadrist* phenomenon. Although propaganda and official information initially tried to exonerate President Mussolini of that attack, the truth is that the spokespersons of the executive in the Chamber of Deputies did not argue against the theories that spoke of a State crime. The official discourse focused on talking about the need to maintain social order at all costs and to neutralize the agents who hindered the political reforms that the country needed at that time.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, the thematic development of the work delves into the motives of the fascist movement for the elimination of the opposition leaders and into all the informational shadows surrounding the assassination (which favoured the design of propaganda stories in the past and which have contributed to the emergence of mythifications about Matteotti's murder). The author provides some insights into the main theories proposed by the historiographical community in Italy regarding the assassination, specifically focusing on the interpretations of the coordination of organized repression and the initiative of the units implementing the repressive acts. The practices of information chaos and systematic confusion implemented by the fascist government's communication bodies are also analyzed in these pages, with particular attention being paid to the forensic reports and judicial resolutions between the summer of 1924 and the winter of 1926 (against Marshal De Bono).

The sixth chapter pays tribute to the political thought and theoretical approach of Giacomo Matteotti, with a structure of biographical sequence, interconnecting the differ-

ent facets of this historical figure: personal life, academic career, practice of law, political militancy, institutional representation, anti-war activism, intellectual production, etc. It constructs an image of an idealistic thinker and committed activist, who identified fascism as one of the great threats to the interests of the Italian people and peaceful cohabitation on the European continent. In these pages, the author reviews some descriptions of Matteotti's personality from the last third of the last century to the present moment. Linearly, ideas are provided on the motivations of the Italian State apparatus in the two judicial processes (1925 and 1947), making a partial description of the respective socio-political situations.

*The Matteotti Affair. History of a Crime* is a work with several elements of essay composition since it is not a historical investigation based on documentary and oral sources, but rather an investigation of theoretical synthesis and dissemination of historical interpretations surrounding the assassination. The book supports the idea that it is necessary to make a permanent review of the past, not assuming any previous interpretation as valid so that historical facts are understandable and assimilable for all subsequent generations. The socialization of historical knowledge is raised as a necessity to consolidate the plural and truthful interpretation of the past. Secondly, the text mentions the crisis of the anti-fascist model and the decline of democratic values today, while concepts such as propaganda repression, alternative memory and retrospective responsibility are diluted.

In the book as a whole, Fabio Fiore carries out an exhaustive historical analysis of the crime and its social, political and cultural consequences in Italy. At the same time, he reflects on the consequences of these sad events throughout the decades. In short, trying to draw a contractual comparison, the author speaks about the need to continue investigating key issues of the 20th century, which in many ways continue to have ideological and, to a lesser extent, legislative and jurisprudential repercussions. In this sense, there are relevant events that must transcend over time, like case studies (within the theoretical-conceptual framework of the repressed and silenced past) for the learning of history among the new generations of Europeans. In an interpretive way, in several sections of the book the conclusion is reached that there are some political legacies that, despite the inexorable passage of time, cannot be rejected in any case.

## 1. REFERENCES

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