

FOR A FISTFUL OF REASONS - About the "Papolla Trial"

**Where it is explained that a fascist is a fascist and that the choices of life
are not harmless opinions**

On December 16, 2004 in Rovereto, I will be tried together with another comrade on the of multiple aggravated injuries for giving town councilor and National Alliance (AN) group leader Enrico Papolla a fist in the face.

Since it is a fairly instructive story with regards to the society and times in which we live, I am taking the opportunity to say a few things publicly, first of all about the events, and then about the version of the events that the press and local political groups have put forth. These are banal considerations that I address to women and men who are not so.

That July 7, 2003

The best way to not understand some events is to remove them from their context. That Monday, July 7, 2003, did not arise out of nothing.

The previous week, our third occupation in less than a year – the Bocciodromo of via Parteli, that is, the former Collodo – was evicted after a month of discussions, struggles, concerts and collective life. We had transformed a building that had been empty for years (and was still unused) into a livable place free from money and hierarchy. It was a breach against real estate speculation and against increasingly exorbitant rents, a practical critique of social isolation and the privatization of spaces. On Saturday [June 28], the National Alliance, *Forza Italia* (Force Italy) and Trentino-Tyrolese Youth had called for a rally in front of Bocciodromo to demand its eviction from the authorities and call for more repression against anarchists. The eviction came on Thursday with a huge deployment of police. Not satisfied, the AN fascists organized a gazebo in the city for July 5 to demand more repression against anarchists in view of the Riva summit of September. About ten comrades went down to the streets to oppose this latest reactionary endeavor. Within a few moments, about thirty fascists and neo-nazis, mainly from the Veneto Skinhead Front, came out with clubs, Roman salutes and "Bastard who gives up". They are the guard dogs called who the "post-fascist" councilors of the AN call, bullies with shaved heads who come in aid to their godfathers in double-breasted suits. Papolla is also there. A comrade ends up on the ground; the others resist as long as they can, and then they all take off on a spontaneous march, painting anti-fascist slogans on the walls.

The next Monday, while we were in the city flyering, putting up posters and explaining what had happened on Saturday through a megaphone, we saw Papolla walk by. I went up to him, by myself, and insulted him. He mumbled that it was none of his business (speaking with the courage of his ideas) and awkwardly put up his hands first. He got a fist in the face. No other comrade touched him, he did not fall to the ground, nor was he thrashed. The flyering continued. Papolla staged a miserable spectacle. First he called the newspapers and then the ambulance. Through an obliging doctor, he declared that he had been struck in the ribs in order to fabricate a prognosis of 44 days (this is where the charge of serious injury comes from). Later, he accused seven people, but his version of events did not stand. In the end only two of us are under investigation. Unlike the fascist coun-

cilor, informer and liar, I assume my responsibility. I gave him a fist in the face and I claim it as mine.

The piece in play

The next day a full-fledged media lynching began, a unanimous political chorus of condemnation. Even the spokesperson of the *Disobbedienti* and councilor from *Rifondazione Comunista* Donatello Baldo immediately rushed to help by expressing his solidarity with Papolla. Fancy that, the respectable left and the respectable right. They all speak of a beating, seven against one. No one brings up the events of Saturday, when the streets were filled with uniforms. But the greatest falsification relates to the reasons given for the happening. The newspaper describe a "paramilitary squad that flyers in the city". According to the political parties, we are the fascists. Being pilloried in this way makes you fully aware of what someone called ethical solitude, but it also reveals, in a negative sense, what the rulers fear.

The technique in use here is as hateful as it is unified. These monopolizers of public discourse transform conflicts of ideas, practices, values, worlds into generic differences of opinion. I hit Papolla only because he thinks in a different way than me, i.e., I am intolerant, and therefore a fascist. Period. And round goes the democratic merry-go-round. But are the things that oppose anarchists to fascists mere opinions? Does a party that actively supports constant repressive activity against all forms of dissent, a policy of raids and expulsion against immigrants, bombings in Afghanistan and genocide in Iraq (to give a few examples) represent an opinion? Are the deaths, the concentration camps, the poverty, the desperation just opinions? Figures like Papolla have no blood on their hands only because someone else does their dirty work for them. Isn't he the one who proposed closing the historical center to immigrants in the evening? So on that July 7, he only got a small taste of what immigrants suffer every day in the barracks, prisons and concentration camps. Isn't the Roveretan section of his part that group that invited general Amos Spiazza, who was implicated in the Piazza Fontana slaughter and various other *coup d'etat* conspiracies, to a conference? Are the bombs in the plazas and on the trains also just opinions?

Less than a year before that July 7, a group of fascists had attacked the participants in an anti-racist assembly at the university of Trento. The fascists took the worst of it. In July 2004, almost two years after the events, six of us were arrested for aggression. The provincial secretary of the AN expressed solidarity with the fascists – "the youth of the right" for the occasion – and demanded the iron fist against us. By virtue of the well-known Jesuitical double standard, these nostalgists for *il Duce* attack us, and if it goes badly for them, they make themselves out to be the victims and denounce us to the police who are always diligent in trapping subversives. In the same way, the Papollas instigate repression, practically organize a world conformed to their ideologies, call the neo-nazi mastiffs into the streets. If someone calls them to account even a bit, however, then they speak of intolerance, lack of respect for opinions, etc.

Almost nobody objected to the Roman salutes seen in the streets of Rovereto that Saturday, a spectacle that had not been witnessed for years. In the meantime, fascist aggression around Italy (with one comrade dead, others sent to the hospital, social spaces set on fire and so on), covered up by the police and fomented by state racism, are no longer considered. Certainly not just opinion.

After all those who gave their lives to bring down fascism, today the Papollas are in power, recommending and protecting police brutality, imparting lessons in public morality, arresting and trying revolutionaries, with the full complicity of the institutional left. "That April 25, comrade, not leaving your rifle," said the song.

I confess, I have no tolerance for the authorities and their practice of exploitation and segregation, because the world in which they force us to live is a constant fist in the face to me. Here is the reason why all political parties have made a protective ring around the fascist councilor: if their concrete responsibility were to be glimpsed behind the play of opinions, if the mechanisms of this world based on inequity and war were perceived in their bureaucratic activity, who would tolerate them, other than slaves and the resigned?

In character as well as in principle, I do not raise my hand against those who think differently than me. I fight, even with force, those who want me to submit and who imprison or kill those like me – and this is quite different. When a fascist or a cop attacks me, I don't scream that my choices are just opinions. I know what is at stake. Here again is the difference: those who want power have to disguise their intentions and delegate the dirty work, while those who yearn for freedom will say what they want and do what they say. The meanness of a man without dignity like Papolla should not deceive us. On December 16, it won't just be a fist in the face that goes on trial, rather it will be an idea and a practice of daily rebellion, i.e., a way of life. And I affirm all this with head held high.

Having never sought justice in the lines of the penal code and not recognizing the judgment of any court, it is in the public square that I am interested in discussing. Time for stroll, a struggle, a piece of life.

Rovereto, Italy, November 2004

Massimo Passamani

Guerra Sociale (2002-2010)
critica libertaria al capitalismo

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