

# Amadeo Bordiga – Beyond the Myth and the Rhetoric

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Our party has never made a fetish of Bordiga. Even when he was alive we openly disagreed with some of his principles, but mainly with the way his ideas were deformed by more than a few of his epigones when making use of his name. We are thus in better position to speak of him, of his high stature as a militant, of his untiring work as an organiser, and also of his own limitations.

As a result, whilst we reject the apologetic tone usually adopted in an “obituary,” and which Bordiga would have rejected with his usual wisecrack that it was rubbish, we aim to show what can be accepted and defended because of its contribution to revolutionary theory, and what we don’t consider to be in historic continuity with the international communist left, and particularly that which has come to be known as the “Italian Left.”

## What We Owe to Bordiga

We owe to Bordiga the theory of abstentionism, a tactic articulated in a period of the worst form of parliamentarism based on personal clientilism, corruption, and the jobs for the boys system that germinated in the Socialist Party in the South of Italy. It led to the formation of the Abstentionist Fraction within the Italian Socialist Party, which created the theoretical-practical premise for the revival of marxist thought degraded by the democratic degeneration, and the profound struggle against parliament, the major bulwark of a corrupt and corrupting parliamentary democracy.

We owe to Bordiga the revival of the theoretical framework of scientific socialism, along the fundamental lines bequeathed by Marx and Engels, reinvigorating the best, the most politically aware, of the Socialist Party. This had been crushed in the vice of a social democracy which had led the Party into the seats of Montecitorio <sup>[1]</sup>, which had Kautsky as its “Pope,” which replaced revolution with evolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the Giolittian <sup>[2]</sup> parliament.

We owe to Bordiga the correct theory of the relationship between party and class on which the success of revolution depends. We can state, without fear of exaggeration or contradiction, that the definition of such a relationship is a fixed point in Marxism, representing a happy fusion between the experience of the “Italian Left” and that of Lenin in the victorious conclusion to the October Revolution. And we must add that what Bordiga produced on “party and class” not only served as a Marxist reference point to the parties which were being formed in the wake of the October Revolution in the post First World War period but it is still a classic, and will remain so in the period up to the next proletarian revolutionary wave. To ignore or weaken its terms, even if done in Bordiga’s name or that of some vague approximation to Bordigism, would be to undermine the meaning of the revolutionary party and its permanent role of giving a lead in working class action.

We need to go back to the Platform elaborated at the Congress of Imola <sup>[3]</sup>, which posed the basis for the formation of the Communist Party of Italy at the Congress of Livorno <sup>[4]</sup> (1921), to follow the formative steps of a party dynamic from which Bordiga, more and better than anyone else, drew from living experience the objective and subjective facts to elaborate his theory of the party in relation to the class.

Organic centralism? Democratic centralism? We would call it dialectical centralism, in greater coherence with the Bordiga of then, who is for us not the best Bordiga but the consistent Bordiga. Dialectical centralism because it starts with pressure from below, even if it is irrational, received and rationalised by the leadership, it returns to the rank and file to be translated into action in a concrete political way.

To give credit to a theory of organic centralism and attribute its elaboration to Bordiga who never recognised its paternity, in the name of an anti-democratic conception takes us into absurdity and makes Bordiga look ridiculous. He, on the other hand, took responsibility, and not just a formal one, for the Rome Theses <sup>[5]</sup> which in the part relating to direct and indirect tactics makes explicit the Leninist claim of accepting the opportunities offered by democracy itself in the interests of the revolutionary party.

How much importance did he give to so-called “vote counting” as a symbol of the democratic method which legitimates the existence in central committees of a majority and minority, which are mechanically linked by this vote? The writer of these lines remembers how Bordiga himself reacted to the decisions taken at the last meeting held in Naples. This had to decide whether or not to dissolve the Committee of Intesa <sup>[6]</sup> on the peremptory invitation of Zinoviev, First Secretary of the Communist International. Put in a minority, Bordiga who accepted the dissolution “sic et simpliciter” perceived with stunned sadness that it was the first time he was in a minority (the words are his own) in the very regroupment of the left which carried his name. Besides being irreverent not to

say laughable is the way *Programma Comunista* puts Bordiga alongside Lenin, by praising him “as the restorer of Marxism on an even higher level, not through his personal virtues but given the historical situation he eliminated the last link with any democratic leftovers, even those which were involuntary, exterior or linguistically formal.”

We have emphasised this extract in order to show their confusing remixing of ideas and methods. The Bordigist theoretical project is now up in the air, unrelated to reality in a frenzy of idealist subjectivism, a long way from serious Marxist methodology and totally alien to the work and real theoretical framework of Bordiga. We can then understand why defining and legitimising a certain organic centralism in the way the main bodies and life of the revolutionary party operate was never a preoccupation of Bordiga, nor practised by him in his life as a militant. The consequence of this theory is that, in place of a Central Committee elected in a Congress by democratic centralist methods we would have, for example, permanent Commissars who do and undo according to criteria left by the inheritance of Stalinism.

Nevertheless, it has to be recognised that it is easy to retrace in many of Bordiga’s writings as in many of his personal attitudes, insights, and more or less clever and polemical original ideas, which he never followed up with any profound theoretical development through a close examination of the accumulated experience of the workers’ movement at any given moment of its long history. And this is the case with “organic centralism” which some dubious Marxist epigones try to twist in a mistaken subjective way, as has already been shown in practice, thus damaging the organisation and the validity of the Leninist experience. Such damage is not always curable.

We owe to Bordiga the reversal of a political tradition of the Socialist Party where the minimum programme, that of a tactic, was everything, whilst the maximum programme, that of the strategy was nothing, reduced to a simple and ritual enunciation of a hypothetical, vague conquest of power by the working class via the law of evolution (the theory dear to reformists of the “ripe pear which falls on its own”). Like any change it had at times a paradoxical aspect where an absolute negation was replaced with an affirmation just as absolute. This was also true of Bordiga: the term “tactic” disappeared from his writings to be substituted by that of “strategy.” And it gave the impression of reducing the dialectic to two fixed contradictory terms although for Bordiga it was the only, if drastic, way of really breaking the reformist tradition of political thought and practice. This put the accent on strategy which dialectically has within itself the possibility of overcoming the limited and momentary tactical issue of the present, in the fuller and more real vision of the strategic event of the future.

From personal experience we can draw on two episodes which are illuminating and particularly significant to understand how the tactical moment becomes dialectically valid within the framework of a class strategy. We are talking here of the indications indirectly given by Bordiga soon after he was thrown out of the leadership of the party of Livorno by the new Gramsci-Togliatti [\[7\]](#) centre regarding the line to be taken inside, and not outside, the parliamentary circus, in a situation of profound disarray provoked by the assassination of Matteotti [\[8\]](#). This wasn’t a moral question, he counselled, nor a question of a parliamentary secession of the Aventine type [\[9\]](#) following the democratic parties in the illusion that fascism could be fought in the name of a bourgeois morality offended by a vicious assassination, or in the name of the defence of parliament as the institutional guarantee of real democracy, or even in the name of the defence of the royal institutions and the prerogatives of the Savoy Monarchy [\[10\]](#). This line of conduct reluctantly followed by the party centre, slowly and in zigzags, was devised and developed in Bordiga’s house and echoed in the speech which Grieco read to the Chamber of Deputies, This was the same Grieco who, until then, was the chosen disciple of Amadeo and who a few months later would become the “implacable” enemy of the “Italian Left” [\[11\]](#).

This line was most significant for the anti-fascist tactic of the Party leadership. Faithful to the policy of the Russian state, it ended up lining up the Party on one side of an imperialist war. In its theoretical justification for this it distorted of Lenin’s theory of imperialism, in a shameful and vulgar way. It so doing it undermined the activity of the revolutionary party which is to oppose imperialist war by transforming it into a class war: an ideology and task which only the communist left defended then and continues to defend today.

The second tactical experience understood as part of a strategic aim took place at the heart of the internal crisis of our party [\[12\]](#). From its foundation the *raison d’être* of our party, as it still is, was not to attempt a polemic addressed to the PCI from the outside to redress its ideological deviation and opportunism, but rather to establish a revolutionary party from within the “Italian Left” at a time when this was objectively missing. The disagreement mainly concerned the way of looking at the union and factory organisations which we considered to be indispensable for a revolutionary party because they not only relate to the class but the need to increase the number of cadres capable of carrying out its basic tasks which the others argued was a left social democratic practice = which party policy should reject.

Bordiga, who never joined our party [\[13\]](#), but theoretically collaborated with it in a serious way (though not as an active militant), decided to take part in the debate. He defended the view that intermediate bodies (union organisations) are needed between the party and the class. These are the famous transmission belts without which the party would lack an instrument for directly contacting the class which the unions organise and lead in the struggle for demands – i.e. they have nothing to do with the specific tasks of the revolutionary party. But it is above all the existence of these intermediary bodies between the party and the class that creates the first and permanent condition for the party to be able to draw the working masses and their struggles towards it. Such struggles define the conditions of the party’s existence, confirm the validity of its ideas, and create the possibility of its growth at the

same time as that of the class as a whole. Through them the party can prepare its political instruments and human material in order to join in the daily struggle and thus increase and deepen it in order to raise the particular and immediate to the universal. In other words, widening and deepening the objective and superstructural possibilities for revolutionary growth.

This intervention had a small echo at the time amongst those comrades who were disgusted by union activity with the real animosity of neophytes: but once the split had taken place in the internationalist organisation the U-turn which we all know about then took place without any critical justification which a change of position of this type would normally merit.

It's worth recounting these two episodes to show how carefully Bordiga, and with him the "Italian Left," confronted and resolved the difficult problem of revolutionary tactics both in the realm of theory and in its practical application in order to expose the myth, if it was needed, of a Bordiga, and a left wing of the Party, incapable of grappling with tactical problems. What is true about this accusation, so dear to Gramsci and Togliatti at the time of their tireless and dark attacks on the leadership of the Communist Party of Italy (in 1923) to have the left replaced (a substitution which took place it is worth repeating, not through a decision of the party membership which was overwhelmingly on the left <sup>[14]</sup>, but by virtue of the new Russian policy to which the Centre of the Third International conformed in every aspect, even meddling in the internal activities of the parties of the single sections of the International), is that the Left has always, openly and resolutely opposed tactics as such. In other words tactics which are detached from any class strategy: the Left openly and resolutely opposed the short-term, immediate tactics of Gramsci and Togliatti which made the Communist Party of Italy the party of systematic compromise, as well as pursuing the useless policy <sup>[15]</sup> of an Italian, peaceful path to socialism.

Up to now we have briefly examined in an objective way what Bordiga, the militant revolutionary, passed on in the way of a body of thought and lessons. These were born out of an experience which covered a period of struggle which was one of the most intense in the revolutionary movement. This experience undoubtedly shaped the inheritance of the Italian Left and therefore the revolutionary party. We would however be in dereliction of our duty as militants of a revolutionary party if we were not also objective in analysing the limits of his thought and personality. We cannot remain silent, for sentimental or supposed politically opportunist reasons, on what in the work and attitude of our comrade we consider contradictory and a deviation from our tradition.

### **Bordiga's Limitations**

Bordiga lacked a true evaluation of the dialectic because the basis of his education was largely based on scientific facts <sup>[16]</sup> which led him to see the world and life on the level of rational development when the reality of social existence and of revolutionary struggle often poses a world a good part of which obeys irrational impulses. The methodology based on mathematical certainties, which belongs to science, is not always in agreement with a methodology based on the dialectic which is movement and contradiction and this, when it comes to analysing revolutionary politics and perspectives, is no small matter. It is in the light of this underestimation of the dialectical method in the Marxist sense that we identify the reasons for the futility of the Bologna Congress (1919) in terms of achieving a fundamental clarity about reality and the immediate perspectives for the Socialist Party. It was practically finished as a party of revolution, though alive and kicking as a parliamentary party, and there was a need to work in that Congress for the formation of a new party, either through a split by those who were in favour of revolutionary action, or by the coming together of the revolutionary left inside the old structure to wait for the right moment to make the break. This was both a necessary and sufficient condition to bring into being an ideologically and organisationally mature communist party which could take on the role of spur and guide to the working class whilst a revolutionary outcome was still possible. At Livorno (1921) the situation had already changed and the forces of the working class were in fact in retreat under the pressure of the Fascist reaction. Bordiga himself, who took on the major responsibility for the theoretical and political orientation of the abstentionist left, didn't understand that at Bologna, and not later, a start should have been made in building the Communist Party. Such a historic endeavour demanded a platform which should not have had a tactical expedient like abstentionism as its essential component but a platform, not unlike that of Lenin's party, which attracted around it all the forces of the left ready to fight for the proletarian revolution. In such a party abstentionism would have been able to play a significant role, (even if not pre-eminent one), in acting as a healthy antidote to the rapidly growing electoralism of the worst type.

A correct dialectical interpretation does not pose the question in terms of fundamental contradictions as in the case in point, electoralism and abstentionism but in terms of the historical motives of a class in its economic and political totality. The proletariat, the subject, is the class opposed to those who rule it, the bourgeoisie (capitalists).

This period of Bordiga's personal and political life practically ended with the ejection of the Left from the leading bodies of the Party and as a result the compulsory end of Bordiga's leadership. But above all it was the consciousness of the collapse of the Third International as the centre of leadership of the world revolution which brought about in Bordiga that psycho-political trauma which accompanied him for more than forty years until his death <sup>[17]</sup>: an inferiority complex which prevented him from putting out of his mind the butchery of that enormous international organisation which collapsed so suddenly on top of those who had believed in its continuity and force with a certainty which had more of the mystical than the scientific.

His political behaviour, his constant refusal to take on a politically responsible attitude, has to be considered in this particular climate. Thus many political events, some of great historic importance, such as the Trotsky-Stalin conflict and Stalinism itself were disdainfully ignored without an echo. The same was true for our Fraction abroad in France and Belgium, the ideology and the politics of the party of Livorno, the Second World War and finally the alignment of the USSR with the imperialist front. Not a word, not a line on Bordiga's part appeared throughout this historic period which was on a wider and more complex level than the First World War. By contrast the First World War had offered to Lenin the objective basis for a Marxist analysis condensed into "Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism" and the "State and Revolution" pillars of the revolutionary doctrine and theoretical premises of the October Revolution.

We had to wait for the end of the war and the Fascist experience to re-establish real contact with the comrades and members of the organisation who still remained. First of all there was contact with Bordiga to let us know what he was thinking on the major issues and what he intended to do as a communist militant. It wasn't a case of asking Bordiga to assume responsibility at the centre of the Party even if his support as advisor and "anonymous" collaborator of the Party was full and constant when he was not being inspired by a general political orientation which was not always in tune with that of the Party.

His way of speaking diverged from ours even if his method of analysis was more or less as always. He maintained that we should not speak of the Russian economy in terms of "state capitalism" but of "state industrialism," not of a socialist October Revolution but of an anti-feudal revolution and, therefore, of an economy which was tending towards capitalism. But he did not seem greatly convinced of what he was saying and the corrections he brought into his thinking a short time later seem to confirm this. And then what is the reason for an ideological cover so fragile and in so obvious contradiction with his past and above all with the points of the platform of the "Italian Left" which were developed by Bordiga himself? We don't want to get involved in a psycho-political drama where the main component is fear, even and above all, physical, of a rupture with the past which he had built with his consciousness, even more with his intelligence and creativity, the masterpiece of his political life lived so intensely in the 1920s. The label "state capitalism" had a class significance, "state industrialism" did not. He thus left things as they had been or as he wanted them to be.

This is why we think it is a positive thing to return now to these debates with a more mature and perceptive experience than we could have had in the 1940s or so. A late and not very convincing justification of the theory of "state industrialism" re-appeared almost incidentally in *Programma Comunista* No. 3 (February 1966) from the same author. We copy from the article "The New Enterprise Statute in Russia"

"First remark: the statement that state enterprises are "principal links" implies the existence of non-state enterprises and as a result "private" activity in the vulgar sense of the term and reconfirms our old assumption against "state capitalism" in Russia in which we recognised rather a "state industrialism." Other "links" exist, other firms, in the Russian economy which compete in the economic process."

The justification which the author himself gives for it not only confirms our analysis at the time but clearly demonstrates the fact that his imprecision in relation to the nature of the soviet economy was essential to him. It was useful then for hiding the political desire to reject (we say "then" because that's where the evidence comes from) any rigid class formulation like "state capitalism" and to which all the theoretical and political framework of the Internationalist Communist Party had been linked since it was founded.

The theoretical justification he gives us borders on the limits of banality if by this he aimed to create a new economic category which had never existed before, either in the history of the capitalist economy, or in the experience of the first phase of the socialist state.

This phase of development of the capitalist economy was clearly outlined by Engels in his masterly "Anti-Duhring"

"...the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies [trusts] and state property show how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees." op. cit. p. 385 (Moscow 1954)

This is not a quibble over words but a political judgement of fundamental importance if there is a will to take the revolutionary party down a clear and coherent path in the face of the most disconcerting problems in the post-war world. The statement that the state enterprises act as principal links in the national economy implies the existence of non-state enterprises, and consequently "private" activity, which is characteristic of the entire unequal development of capitalism right up to its period of maximum development. It also belongs to the lower phase of socialism which increases the power of "its" state capitalism and overcomes it in the dialectical form of the socialist state gradually getting rid of capitalist and pre-capitalist relics in the state enterprises which the revolution has inevitably dragged behind it in the historic course of building a socialist society.

And it is this type of state capitalism which Lenin conceived and which the later strengthening of the socialist sector would have to overcome and win over within the framework of a revolutionary power where the greatest guarantee was the exercise of the political dictatorship of the armed proletariat. But the nature of the state capitalism which the revolutionary party was faced with in the midst of the Second World War and in the immediate post-war period (this is what happened at the centre of our organisation

and to which this note refers) was radically different and had very different characteristics which we would like to quickly examine even if compelled to be brief:

State capitalism under Stalin did not tend toward socialism but towards the consolidation of the power of traditional capitalism in the form of strongly centralised state enterprises, made possible by the passage of the private industrial economy into the orbit of the state set up by the October Revolution.

The insertion of the USSR in the Second World War had no element of socialist justification, but on the other hand thousands of a bourgeois justifications of a capitalist nature, with obvious imperialist implications, as the Yalta Conference between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill (1945) would later show. This placed Russia amongst the great beneficiaries in the share-out of war booty. It is the same unscrupulous tactical elasticity which saw Russia at first connive with Hitler (as if with Hitler's battalions you could get to socialism) in the partition of Poland and then after a 180 degree turn alongside the Western democracies (as if socialism could be a common goal of the greatest plutocracies in the world).

The Soviet economy remained, in its fundamental structure as it was in Stalin's time. Khrushchev's liberalisation, more theory than reality, and the anti-demagogic nature of the technocrats <sup>[18]</sup> taken together, have not done much to bring significant changes, or only in just a few sectors. They do however reveal interesting episodes in a series of super-structural crises in the political, economic and military apparatuses, as the experience of the last few decades abundantly demonstrate.

We need to make a clear class distinction between the time which could be defined as that of Lenin and that which began with Stalin, and which has continued without deep or substantial modifications by his successors.

The time of Lenin, from the October Revolution to the start of the New Economic Policy (NEP) is characterised by the workers' state based on the Soviets and the Communist Party and all based on the armed forces of the working class. The working class exercised its own dictatorship even though facing obstacles and difficulties of every kind. These were provoked by the temporary halt to the offensive of the forces of the international proletariat and the immediate prospect of a concrete revolutionary extension across Europe. In order to stay on course towards socialist objectives the dictatorship made concessions to the class enemy as an indispensable short term tactic within the strategic vision of returning to the revolutionary offensive. In the big picture of Lenin's time state capitalism represents a calculated risk of a sought after and temporary break from the objective needs of the market economy, which though restricted was fraught with danger. The market was controlled by the state of the dictatorship in which the game of supply and demand, the function of capital, profit itself, and the use of surplus value were marginal features, regulated in the general interests of the socialist economy itself.

These fundamentally important reasons, acquired by the revolutionary vanguard since the beginning of the process of degeneration, have been the basis of its struggle. This was originally articulated through open denunciation, then through its organisational and political separation, first in the work of the left fraction <sup>[19]</sup> then in the party <sup>[20]</sup>. In the process of defining itself as a party it rediscovered the basis of revolutionary communism and internationalism.

We are not concealing the fact that within these problems which we have raised a line of political coherence emerged and developed which must appear for what it is. It cannot be silenced nor be distorted by the arbitrary superimpositions of a mystificatory character on it.

And this has been, and still is, our finest, even if most thankless, battle. To each his own and we need to recognise in Bordiga a logical coherence in his attitude which began with his silent obstructionism in the Central Committee <sup>[21]</sup> after the Lyons Congress (1926) <sup>[22]</sup>, and found its natural conclusion in the letter/testament addressed, it was no accident, to Terracini <sup>[23]</sup>.

This discussion of ours may seem, on a sentimental level, bitter and perhaps inhuman, but we are referring here to the value Marxists give to the role of human beings in the ups and downs of history and we are sure we have interpreted the profound meaning of the teachings of Bordiga himself. He wanted the interests of revolutionary action to be above any political-ideological by-product, and that also includes degenerated Bordigism.

*Onorato Damen*

## Notes

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1. The Italian Chamber of Deputies (parliament) is to be found on Montecitorio in Rome.

2. Giovanni Giolitti (1842-1928), President of the Council (i.e. Prime Minister) five times between 1892-1921. The strong man of Italy in the years before the First World War, he symbolised the access to power for the generation which had not taken part in the Risorgimento. After the factory occupations of the Red Two Years (1920-21) he allowed the Fascists 35 seats in parliament from his own right wing bloc thus opening the door to power for their repression of the working class.

3. National Conference of the Communist Fraction of the PSI 28-9 November 1920.

4. Founding Congress of the Communist Party of Italy (PCd'I) in January 1921.
5. Theses approved at the Second Congress of the PCd'I in March 1921.
6. Created in April 1925 to struggle against the Zinoviev-inspired Bolshevisation of the PCd'I. The declaration of the Committee of Intesa (Understanding or Alliance) was signed by Bordiga, Bruno Fortichiari, Onorato Damen, Francesca Grossi, Ugo Girone, Fortunato La Camera, Mario Lanfranchi, Mario Manfredi, Ottorino Perrone, Luigi Repossi, Carlo Venegoni who were the principal leaders of the PCd'I, all members of the historic left of the Party. It was dissolved on the injunction of the Comintern in July 1925.
7. Palmiro Togliatti (1893-1964). A former Ordinovist he became the henchman of Stalin. Under the name Ercoli he was an executioner of the working class during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9). He became General Secretary of the PCd'I after Gramsci was arrested and sent to the islands off Sicily (where he joined Damen and Bordiga). He returned to Italy as head of the renamed Italian Communist Party (PCI) which he headed until his death in 1964.
8. Giacomo Matteotti (1885-1924) secretary of the PSU (Unitary Socialist Party – a right wing split from the Socialist Party). He was assassinated in June 1924 by a Fascist group shortly after denouncing the Mussolini Government.
9. On the 27 June 1924 the Matteotti assassination provoked a protest reaction (which took the name the Aventine Secession referring to the history of ancient Rome when the plebians revolted against the patrician Senate by taking themselves onto the Aventine Hill in 449 BC) by some deputies of the “democratic” opposition who refused to take their seats. For several weeks the Mussolini Government seemed on the point of collapse in the face of a wave of indignation across the country. Bordiga and the left communist tendency opposed this abstentionism. He demanded that the party struggle for the last time using “revolutionary parliamentarism.” Repossi, a member of the left of the party returned to parliament to denounce Mussolini’s cops in the name of the PCd'I. For the Italian Left if parliament was historically no longer an arm which the workers could use as in the Nineteenth Century here they were still a means to oppose all the factions of the capitalist class whether democrat or Fascist. For the Italian Left it was necessary to show that the only effective way to stop Fascism was to fight for the proletarian revolution.
10. Italy was united in the nineteenth century under the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia headed by the House of Savoy.
11. Ruggiero Grieco (1893-1955). At first a member of the Abstentionist Fraction after Bolshevisation he became a Stalinist. Damen has had a memory lapse here. It was Repossi and not Grieco who returned to the Chamber of Deputies. Luigi Repossi (1882-1957) was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the PCd'I in 1921. He was expelled from the Party in 1929 as would Bordiga, Damen, and Fortichiari in the period 1930-33. After the war, with Fortichiari he played an entryist role in the PCI of Togliatti. Bordiga never forgave him and refused to see him even on his deathbed.
12. In 1952.
13. Bordiga did not join the Internationalist Communist Party between 1944 and 1952 but did write the series of articles called “Sul filo di tempo” (On the thread of time) in the party theoretical journal *Prometeo*.
14. In May 1924 at the clandestine Congress of Como of the PCd'I the Left still had an overwhelming majority over the right (Tasca) and centre (Gramsci). It was slowly removed from leadership of the PCd'I (between 1923-6) by bureaucratic measures with support of the Communist International and its emissaries, most notably Jules Humbert-Droz and Manuilsky.
15. A policy of narrow horizons limited to legal reformism and permanent compromise with capital.
16. Bordiga was a qualified engineer and always maintained an interest in what was scientific and rational.
17. From his exclusion from the PCd'I in 1930 until his death in 1970.
18. By “anti-demogogic” Damen meant the cult of personality around Stalin denounced by Khrushchev in 1956.
19. The Fraction of the International Communist Left which published *Bilan* and *Prometeo* (amongst other journals) in France and Belgium in the 1930s.
20. The Internationalist Communist Party (founded 1943).
21. Bordiga decided not to speak any more in the Central Committee after the Lyons Congress because he thought there was nothing more he could do there. He had been re-elected to the Central Committee against his will.
22. Unable to meet in Italy the Third Congress of the PCd'I took place at Lyons (20-26 January 1926). In it the Left were defeated and isolated as a fraction in the PCd'I and the International. Gramsci achieved this by threatening the delegates who were paid party officials that they would lose their party jobs if they voted for the Left. The votes of absent delegates were counted for the Gramsci faction. Bordiga and Venegoni were threatened with expulsion if they did not take up their seats on the Central Committee to represent the Left. Bordiga was elected one of the delegates of the PCd'I to the Sixth Enlarged Executive of the Communist International (February-March 1926). For Bordiga’s speech there see [leftcom.org](http://leftcom.org) or [The Communist Left in the Third International](#).
23. Umberto Terracini (1895-1983), Founded *Ordine Nuovo* with Gramsci. He was part of the first Executive Committee of the PCd'I in 1921 with Bordiga, Repossi, Fortichiari and Grieco who were all members of the abstentionist fraction. In 1947 he was behind an opposition within the PCI which the Communist Left at the time described as a purely personal attempt to replace Togliatti as leader. The letter of Bordiga to Terracini was sent on 4 March 1969.]