

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

Anti-Copyright



Errico Malatesta
United Proletarian Front
1920

The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader, edited by
Davide Turcato, translated by Paul Sharkey.
Translated from “Fronte unico proletario,” *Umanità Nova*
(Milan) 1, no. 35 (8 April 1920).

usa.anarchistlibraries.net

United Proletarian Front

Errico Malatesta

1920

Sad to say that even today, on the eve of battle, with the old world already wobbling and when it will require just a determined push to topple it once and for all, there are still some workers fighting and nearly hating other workers merely because these belong to different, rival organizations and parties.¹³⁵

Today the bourgeoisie's and government's only hope of salvation is such division in the workers' ranks, and so whoever, for whatever reason, fans the fires of discord rather than striving to bring all the forces of revolution together under a single umbrella is a traitor to the cause of human emancipation.

We are anarchists and we fight solely for the success of our ideal. But the first step along the way that is to lead us towards our radiant ideal is the overthrow of established institutions, and so all who fight those institutions are our comrades-in-arms.

Whereas others, driven by a spirit of rivalry and a lust for hegemony, may try to portray us as sectarians, we still reach out a hand to all men of sincerity and combat only those methods that seem to us to run counter to the revolution, and such

men whenever they turn up, are plainly betraying the cause they purport to serve.

In Italy there are two major proletarian organizations that ostensibly have their sights set on destruction of the capitalist system: the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* and the *Unione Sindacale Italiana*.¹

Most of our sympathies certainly lie with the *Unione Sindacale*, since there are lots of our comrades among its leaders and its direct-action methods suit our tactic best.

That said, there are many comrades of ours in the *Confederazione del Lavoro* and the masses affiliated to the *Confederazione* are—and this is what matters most—genuine workers actually prompted by the very same spirit as the mass membership of the *Unione Sindacale*. Above all else, the masses from both organizations must fraternize with one another and fight as one.

If the *Confederazione*'s regulations are such as to thwart the honest expression of the wishes of the membership, those regulations need to be fought against and an effort made to change them; if many of the *Confederazione*'s leaders are, as they appear to us to be, collaborationists busily snuffing out any suggestion of revolt, smothering any movement, then those leaders have to be fought against and steps taken to ensure that the masses do not let themselves be led like sheep by bad shepherds.

But the masses need to be united and it would be a lethal error to try to dissolve one organisation in order to bolster the other. All organisations need to be pushed forward by our entering them and bringing our spirit to them.

Let the workers bear this in mind:

¹ The membership and leadership of the older and larger *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* significantly overlapped with those of the socialist party, while the *Unione Sindacale Italiana*, founded in 1912, had a revolutionary syndicalist orientation.

When the bosses exploit them, they pay no heed to party distinctions and starve them all the same; when the *carabinieri* pepper their chests with the king's lead, they do not bother to ask first what sort of membership card they carry in their pockets.

Let that at least be a lesson.