

founded criticisms of the masses," which he would certainly take to heart. That he did so was fully apparent when, after the lapse of more than a year, the second edition of *Tyutyun* finally appeared in December 1953. Transformed according to the principles of "socialist realism," the book was scarcely recognizable.

The capitalist tobacco tycoon, who was the principal "negative" figure in Dimov's story, had been repainted in "more objective"—that is, darker—colors. The "positive heroes"—Communist partisan fighters and workers—displayed commendable traits of character far more conspicuously than before, and

a half dozen new heroes had been added.¹⁰ The individuality and verve of the original were gone. A brilliant novel had been reduced to a stereotyped, mediocre piece of party literature.

Such is the practical meaning and effect of the "freedom of creation" and "non-interference of the party in literature" so ingenuously boasted by Chervenkov in the same breath that he admonished the December writers' conference to toe the party line, or else. . . .

¹⁰ The newly added "positive heroes" were workers, partisans or peasants and included a woman worker who rises to membership of the Central Committee of the BCP.

WESTERN EUROPE

The Italian CP

Part II: The Road Toward a Dilemma, 1945-56

By GIORGIO GALLI

EVER since its re-emergence at the close of World War II, the PCI (Partito Comunista Italiano) has consistently hewed to the tactical line laid down by its leader Secretary General Palmiro Togliatti, upon his return to Italy in April 1944. Under that line, the party has soft-pedalled, almost to the point of repudiation, its originally proclaimed role as the avant-garde of proletarian revolution in Italy. It has turned its back on its beginnings as a sect of insurrection-minded agitators and instead, except for a few fleeting lapses, behaved like an eminently respectable mass party seeking to make its influence felt in national affairs through the normal democratic processes of the ballot-box and parliamentary maneuver.

This tactic, which strives to create a broad block of "people's democratic forces" dedicated to promoting Soviet foreign policy objectives, is certainly nothing new in Communist practice and has been followed, in

varying degrees, by all Communist parties in free world countries in the post-war period. But the PCI, under Togliatti, has pursued it further and with greater persistence than any of its counterparts.

There is no question that the Togliatti line has achieved a considerable measure of success in broadening the popular base of the PCI. In the June 1953 national elections, the party obtained over six million votes, almost two million more than it received in the first post-war elections of 1946. Moreover, in conjunction with its ally, the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) under Nenni, the PCI won control of more than one-third of the seats in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, giving it easily the strongest strategic position of any European Communist Party outside the Soviet orbit.

But the moderate tactical line has had its minus side for the party, too. For the sake of gaining the support of the southern peasantry and disgruntled middle-class elements, the PCI leadership has been obliged to keep a firm brake on working class demands and action and to tone down its economic program. As a result there has been a significant decline in the party's influence and prestige among the industrial

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workers of northern Italy, who have constituted the backbone of the PCI since its birth in 1921.

At the same time, the party line appears to be losing its appeal for the southern peasants, one of its main targets. In the regional elections of June 1955 in Sicily, the Sicilian Communists lost rather than gained votes for the first time since 1948. This could portend that the PCI's attempt to straddle the fence and serve conflicting class interests, which already has weakened the party's grip on the industrial proletariat, is no longer achieving a compensatory expansion of the party base.

Post-War Orientation of the PCI

THE PCI's posture as it appeared immediately after the liberation in 1945 was that of "a mass party," predominantly proletarian, yet which allied itself with parties representing other social classes to establish a democratic, parliamentary type of republic. The basic concept of its new orientation had been succinctly stated by Togliatti at the April 1944 meeting of the PCI National Council in Naples:

We are no longer a sect of agitators but have assumed the responsibility of a great party.¹

Accordingly, the party stifled any reiteration of long-term revolutionary objectives and called for a continuation of the "union of democratic forces" forged during the Resistance. The Fifth Party Congress, which met in January 1946, gave its full endorsement to this policy and set forth the PCI's proposals for revising the constitutional structure of the Italian state in these moderate terms:²

To declare the monarchy obsolete . . . and to determine that the Italian state shall be a democratic republic of physical and intellectual workers supported by a representative parliamentary regime in which the fundamental liberties of the citizen shall be guaranteed and defended.³

Quite apart from the theoretical questions which the PCI's post-war line poses from the standpoint of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, its application in detailed party policies during the 1945-56 period has many interesting facets. One of the most important is the expression and consequences of this line in the vital area of the trade union struggle of the CGIL (Italian

General Confederation of Labor), which has been and remains the PCI's labor arm.

Early in 1946, the economic objectives of the PCI were defined in the following terms:

In the industrial field, the party proposes the nationalization of large monopolistic combines, big banks and insurance companies; the institution of national planning and of a system of national control of production, the first step in which will be the general establishment and recognition of management councils. In the agricultural field, the party proposes the liquidation of large landed estates, limitation of large capitalist ownership . . . and consequent protection of the small and average landowner.⁴

As these objectives indicated, the PCI leadership believed that what might be termed structural reforms were consistent with the maintenance of an economy of markets and private initiative—that is to say, they could be attained without complete expropriation of the capitalist class. The management councils were to become the pivot of initiative in industry. Professor Antonio Pesenti, a recognized Communist economist who for a time was Finance Minister and later headed the Labor Commission of the Constituent Assembly, defined their role in these terms:

The function of the management council must not be a class function, but a technical function for the improvement of production. . . . In order that these objectives may be achieved, it is desirable that representatives both of labor and of capital sit together on the management councils.⁵

Dual Control of Industry

THE PCI advocated the dual control principle, as set forth by Pesenti, for two reasons. The first was that it saw in the management councils an entering wedge toward achievement of its economic objectives. Second, in an Italy economically prostrated, it was forced to the realization that any move to accentuate class conflicts might prove a boomerang by imposing an obstacle to reconstruction and economic revival.

To tackle these problems successfully, it was essential that the forces of labor and capital be combined as effectively as possible. But naturally the solutions advanced by Italian labor organizations, then united in the CGIL as the sole national labor confederation, differed from those put forward by the employers.

The latter stressed the necessity of cutting back the over-expanded labor force, while the CGIL insisted just as vigorously that dismissals of surplus workers

¹ *Rinascita*, Rome, No. 3, 1944. (*Rinascita* is the monthly theoretical organ of the PCI.)

² The Fourth Congress was held in 1931 at Dusseldorf and Cologne.

³ *La politica dei comunisti dal quinto al sesto congresso—risoluzioni e documenti raccolti a cura dell'ufficio di segreteria del Pci* (The Policy of the Communists from the Fifth to the Sixth Congress—Resolutions and Documents Assembled by the Secretariat of the PCI), pp. 6-14, *passim*. This official party record is henceforth referred to by the abbreviated title, *La politica*.

⁴ *La politica*, p. 13. Until 1947 the PCI continued to put forward these objectives in its program offered as a basis for Communist participation in the government, but no government accepted them.

⁵ Preface to *Il dibattito sui consigli di gestione* (The Debate on the Management Councils), a collection of studies by the Constituent Assembly. Picardi, Milan, 1946, pp. 5-6.

by industry be stopped. In August 1946 the PCI stepped into the controversy in support of the CGIL, urging that the problem be solved "by increasing opportunities for employment and thus furthering the plans for [national] reconstruction."⁶ The CGIL succeeded in obtaining a temporary suspension of dismissals. But the PCI's intervention failed to secure any real solution of basic differences through acceptance of the principle that workers as well as employers were entitled to a voice in deciding how and according to what criteria the productive factors which they represented should be combined.

Here lay the real point at issue. The CGIL kept on striving to realize the dual control principle through the establishment of management councils, but its efforts were unsuccessful. By the end of 1947, about half a year after the Communists had been expelled from the government, it was abundantly clear that the Italian economy was being reconstructed along the old lines of private initiative with the employers firmly in the saddle.⁷ Togliatti's "great party," despite its increased size and strengthened organization, had clearly failed to advance the realization of its economic objectives—a failure which could not help but have serious repercussions among the industrial workers of the north.

Indeed, even the objectives fixed by the party in 1946 had been far too modest to satisfy these militant elements. This was explicitly recognized by the party leaders in an analysis of the June 1946 elections for the Constituent Assembly, which had revealed some weak spots in the northern provinces of Piedmont, Lombardy and Veneto.⁸ The analysis said:

In these areas during the war of liberation, the masses participating in the struggle, who constituted the most aggressive section of the Italian people, set for themselves very advanced goals; however, in view of the conditions under which the political struggle was developing in Italy and the rest of Europe, these goals could not become the objectives of the entire people after the liberation.⁹

In other words, the PCI-led northern workers in 1945 had hoped for speedy attainment of a maximum socialist program, and when the party came out, after

⁶ *La politica*, p. 97.

⁷ This tendency became even more accentuated after the defeat of the Communist-led People's Democratic Front in the April 1948 election.

⁸ These weak spots were exceptions to the generally strong showing of the PCI in the north, which sharply contrasted with its weakness in the south. The over-all election results gave the PCI and the Socialists together 40 percent of the vote and 219 seats in the Constituent Assembly (Socialists, 115; Communists, 104), while the Christian Democrats alone polled 35 percent of the vote and obtained 207 seats.

⁹ *La politica*, p. 71.

the liberation, for national alignment on the political plane and class collaboration in the economic sphere, large segments of the workers either were disgruntled or clung to the belief that the PCI's strategy was purely temporary and designed to be supplanted by revolutionary tactics as soon as a favorable opportunity arose. So widespread was this interpretation that Togliatti felt obliged to voice the following warning in a circular letter addressed to PCI provincial organizations in August 1946:

Whenever we delve into the minds of our comrades, we find the strangest conceptions of what communism should be, conceptions which are difficult to reconcile with our political line. Acceptance of this line [by party members] is often superficial or formal, or is justified by the same foolish characterizations as our opponents allege regarding us—"tactics," trickery, secret plans, and so forth.¹⁰

In view of this intransigent sentiment deplored by Togliatti, it was only natural that the Communists' exclusion from the government and the subsequent stiffening of the employers' stand, as evidenced by abandonment of the PCI-sponsored plan for dual control of industry and by the carrying out of mass dismissals, evoked a typically strong reaction among the workers. At first the party leadership tried to minimize it, affirming in August 1947 that "only to a limited extent have there been deviationist manifestations."¹¹ But November found Togliatti impelled to voice a stronger caution "not to close our eyes to evidences of infantile and maximalist extremism . . . [and] tendencies to consider that there is no longer any other course but to fight."¹²

Even as he uttered his November warning, however, Togliatti found himself under pressure from another quarter—and one which he could not very well ignore—to inject a more aggressive note into PCI policy. At the secret conference of European Communist leaders held at Warsaw in September 1947 to establish the Cominform, Andrei Zhdanov, expositor of the new and more militant Moscow line, had vigorously condemned the French and Italian parties for their moderate, hesitant policies and demanded more aggressive revolutionary tactics. Togliatti, though opposed to the Zhdanov line, found it expedient to make some half-hearted gestures of compliance.

It was against this background that the PCI's policy entered a short-lived phase of greater militancy during the winter of 1947-48. Under orders from the party headquarters for a "campaign in the town squares," a series of coordinated riots took place in various urban centers in November. Shortly there-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 386.

after, a joint Socialist-Communist general strike was carried out in Milan, involving seizure of the town hall, and a wave of strikes, rallies and mass demonstrations followed in other localities, principally in the north where the emphasis was on resistance to lay-offs occasioned by the industrial readjustment program.

None of these moves, however, was pressed with real determination by the party leadership. It was evident that Togliatti intended to keep a brake on the extremists in order not to prejudice the PCI's extensive political maneuver designed to broaden the party base by embracing middle-class elements and the southern peasantry.

PCI Recruiting Campaign

THE party's effort to extend its following had been stepped up following the Constituent Assembly elections of June 1946, in which the middle class and southern Italian vote had been heavily conservative. In July a special section was set up within the party leadership to direct work in southern Italy. This was followed in August by steps to intensify propaganda directed at overcoming the party's "separation from the middle classes."

Further action was taken on the heels of Communist exclusion from the government in May 1947. It was then decided to "launch another big recruiting campaign directed particularly toward the middle classes." In a report to the PCI Central Committee, Togliatti defined "the fundamental strategic objective" of the campaign as "the institution in our country of a system of progressive democracy . . . attainable only if we create and maintain a wide, solid block of people's democratic forces."¹³

Thus, the PCI strove to effectuate the mass party concept outlined by Togliatti upon his return from exile. With the advanced working class in the north as the pivot, efforts were made to bring under the party banner social categories which generally lacked any socialist tradition—the middle classes, the sub-proletariat, and the landless southern peasantry.

The parliamentary elections of April 18, 1948 provided an initial test of the worth of these tactics. The Communist-led People's Democratic Front, which embraced Nenni's PSI and some small leftist groups, obtained only a little more than 30 percent of the total vote, its support coming largely from the workers in northern and central Italy. By and large, the only middle class votes won by the PCI came from contract farmers and small landowners in Emilia, Tuscany and Umbria; neither the urban middle class (professional people, government employees and skilled workers)

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 273.

nor the predominantly agricultural population of the south was penetrated to any appreciable extent, and their vote was decisive in the sweeping victory of the Christian Democratic Party, which won 47 percent of the popular vote and an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

The election failure, however, did not lead the PCI high command to alter in any way its strategic directives envisaging a mass party embracing the middle class and peasants. This strategy, which dictated a continuing curb on extremist action by the working class component of the party, was implicitly reaffirmed by the critical events of July 1948.

The background against which these events transpired was one of increasing labor unrest in the north as a result of the election defeat. On July 14, as Togliatti was leaving parliament, he was seriously wounded by bullets from a revolver wielded by a Sicilian student of fascist leanings. News of the attempt evoked a loud and spontaneous outburst of protest, particularly in the north. The PCI daily organ *L'Unità* came out in Milan the same afternoon with a banner headline, "Down with the Government of Assassins!" The CGIL issued immediate orders for a general strike, which was interpreted among the rank and file as a call for mass action to overthrow the government.

The response of the workers was violent. At the big Fiat works in Turin, all the executives were seized as hostages. In Genoa police armored cars were captured. In Milan, while the police remained inactive in their barracks, Communist activists disarmed the guards at plants where agitation was being carried on. In Tuscany local government offices were occupied.

The PCI leadership now had to make a quick decision whether or not to risk an all-out test of strength. It evidently considered the risk not worth the candle, for on July 15 word was passed down that the strike was not to be carried to extremes. The police and civil authorities regained control of the situation, and on July 16 the strike was called off.

Coming on top of the party's failure to achieve political power legally in the April elections, its inability or unwillingness to organize a sudden, smashing blow to win control by force in July had a decisive effect in depressing the fighting spirit of the Communist masses in the north. At the same time, the extremist political tinge apparent in the CGIL's action on July 14-15 touched off internal dissensions which had been building up for some time between the Communist-led majority and the Christian Democratic, Social Democratic and Republican minorities within the confedera-

ation. The latter now walked out of the CGIL, eventually setting up the rival CISL (predominantly Christian Democratic) in the fall of 1948 and UIL (mainly Social Democratic and Republican) in 1949. Unified Communist leadership of the Italian workers was at an end.

Thus, the events of 1948 demonstrated that the strategy of the PCI not only had failed, up to this point, to win any appreciable support from the middle classes and peasantry, but also was causing the party to lose influence and prestige among the workers. Despite this, as the July crisis clearly showed, the basic strategy of the PCI leadership remained unchanged. The northern industrial proletariat, which in the main continued to look to the party for leadership, still was the axis of this strategy, with tentacles reaching out to draw in the urban middle classes and poor southern peasantry.

Only the party's goal had been scaled down in view of the April election setback. It was no longer the achievement of "progressive democracy" through installation of a people's front government, but the more modest one of creating a big party of constitutional opposition.

Difficult Role of the CGIL

WHILE the PCI mobilized its organization and propaganda apparatus to press its campaign among the middle class elements and in the south, the CGIL was assigned the vital task of keeping intact the strategic axis of the whole operation—the advanced industrial proletariat. In line with overall PCI tactics, the CGIL directorate evolved a concept of working-class action dubbed "the opposition which rules." Under this concept the working class, by championing not only its own interests but the common interests of all social categories except big capital, would seek to organize an opposition so strong that neither the government nor employers could disregard it.

With regard to industry the CGIL renewed its efforts along the lines of the earlier PCI proposal for a joint management system. At its Genoa Congress in 1949, it launched a "Labor Plan" which envisaged a reorganization of the national economy based on cooperation between employers and workers. The former ignored the plan and went ahead with their own industrial readjustment program. The PCI and CGIL responded by accusing the government of favoring the employers' plans for "monopolistic concentration" of Italian industry, involving the disappearance of once-flourishing industries and causing chronic

shortages of consumer goods. *Rinascita*, the theoretical organ of the PCI, declared:

The accentuation of the internal contradictions in our economy has posed for the working class not merely the problem of protecting and improving its way of life, but even of obtaining employment and opportunities for work. The resistance to lay-offs and the seizure of factories . . . are the first manifestations of the turning point in the battle of labor.¹⁴

Actually this last statement was an exaggeration. Although some rough fights took place, involving in one instance the death of six iron foundry workers at Modena in a clash with police, worker resistance and seizures of plants were not enough to prevent implementation of the readjustment plans of the factory managements. Needless to say, the CGIL's grandiose idea of forging the working class into an "opposition which governs" was equally unsuccessful. Both the CGIL as a whole and many of the more aggressive individual labor groups under its banner came out of the fight seriously weakened, either through the dispersion of some groups or through the tendency of the more highly skilled workers, less vulnerable to lay-offs, to become indifferent to union conflicts.

Although continuing to shout the standard formulas by way of propaganda, the CGIL began to fall back into labor unionism of the traditional type and increasingly centered its attention on demands that were no longer of a general or basic character, but specifically limited in scope, such as wage increases. In the fall of 1951 it launched a great national campaign for a 15-percent pay increase for industrial workers, calling this essential to boost the Italian economy to a higher level by "substantially increasing the purchasing power of the domestic market."¹⁵

The campaign, however, was conducted listlessly so far as strikes and agitation were concerned, for aggressive action ran directly counter to two basic directives of PCI policy: on the one hand, to attract the middle classes by playing down the class character of the party; on the other, to give all possible support to the foreign policy objectives of the Soviet Union. The latter aim had assumed much greater importance in PCI strategy because of the stepped-up pace of the international cold war, Togliatti's letter to the Milan Federation in April 1951 testifying to this change:

The PCI is willing to withdraw its opposition, both in parliament and in the country, to any government which, by radically modifying Italian foreign policy, that is to

¹⁴ Bruno Tretin, "Sorte e difesa dell'industria meccanica," (Prospects and Defense of the Engineering Industry), *Rinascita* July 1951, pp. 348-9.

¹⁵ Vittorio Foa, "La questione dei salari" (The Question of Wages), *Rinascita*, October 1951, pp. 457-8.

say, by causing Italy to withdraw from those commitments which are inevitably leading toward war, will prevent our country from being dragged into the vortex of a new conflict.¹⁶

As it affected the action of the CGIL, this policy of increased subservience to Soviet interests meant that nothing must be done to exacerbate relations with those management circles which were likely to exert their influence in favor of a neutralist foreign policy. As a result, labor union action in the factories was restricted to the relatively milder forms, such as slow-down strikes or walk-outs in just one section of the plant at a time. Such localized, watered-down action alternated with purely political agitation, for example the demonstrations organized on the occasion of the Italian visits of General Eisenhower, then NATO commander, in January 1951, and of his successor, General Ridgway, in May 1952.

By the summer of 1952, the CGIL campaign of limited demands had ended in complete frustration, even failing to secure any betterment of wages. This naturally caused the aggressive spirit of the workers to decline still further, but on the overall political front the PCI was able to gain increased support for its opposition policy by making capital of allegedly reactionary, anti-democratic tendencies on the part of the de Gasperi government.

PCI Advance in 1953 Elections

PARTICULARLY useful grist for the PCI propaganda mill was furnished by the so-called majority electoral law, which the four government parties

¹⁶ *L'Unità*, April 4, 1951.

pushed through parliament with a view to assuring a solid parliamentary majority for de Gasperi's centrist coalition in the upcoming elections of June 1953. The law provided that any coalition of parties obtaining one-half of the total votes plus one would automatically receive almost two-thirds of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies; if such a majority were not obtained, the usual rule of proportional representation would apply.

In the election campaign the PCI made this law the paramount issue, and the results of the balloting on June 7 revealed a marked upsurge in Communist strength. The PCI obtained over 6,000,000 votes (as compared with 4,360,000 in 1946 and roughly 5,000,000 in 1948); and the Communists and Nenni Socialists combined polled 35 percent of the votes, winning more than one-third of the seats in the Chamber. The Communist vote showed a significant increase among the southern peasants and in limited sectors of the middle class hostile to the government's policy. In the north, the PCI held its own generally, but there was a noteworthy though very slight decline in some of the big urban industrial centers.

Despite their big success at the polls, the PCI and PSI proved incapable of translating it into practical results in parliament. The Pella and Scelba governments continued, with only slight differences, the political line of the preceding centrist administration—uncompromising struggle against the leftist opposition.

While the political position of the PCI thus showed little real improvement, the trends that were already

Another Western Communist Corrects An "Error"

The Glorious Stalin . . .

Stalin—who has written golden pages in world history, whose lustre time can never efface. . . . Never the dictator, never to lay down the law, always eager and willing to listen, to understand another's point of view. . . . No words, no monuments, no tributes can ever do justice to the revolution in people's minds and actions, in changing world history, in freeing millions from darkness, oppression, poverty and misery that have been brought about by the work of Comrade Stalin. . . . Eternal glory to the memory of Joseph Stalin.

—Harry Pollitt, *London Daily Worker*, March 7, 1953.

. . . Was Really A Dictator

Stalin established, bit by bit, methods of personal leadership, and did not make provision . . . for proper functioning and collective leadership within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. More and more Stalin based himself on the theory of the intensification of the class struggle within the socialist state, even after complete victory over capitalists and landlords had been established. . . .

—Harry Pollitt, *London Daily Worker*, March 24, 1956.

tending to bring about a crisis in the CGIL continued unabated. The employers, in an ever stronger position, intensified their anti-Communist pressure, imposing increasingly severe limitations upon the opportunities available to CGIL activists for agitation and propaganda.¹⁷ The non-Communist labor organizations, favored by the employers' attitude and by the CGIL's failure to win positive results, steadily gained in strength at CGIL expense. Finally, the centrifugal force which tended to detach the more skilled workers from the CGIL was further accentuated as the major industrial combines, having completed their readjustment programs (at the cost of some "structural" unemployment), were at last able to grant pay increases to these categories.

The cumulative effect of these factors was decisively bolstered by the *conglobamento* (package wage increase) agreement which the General Confederation of Italian Industry concluded in June 1954 with the non-Communist CISL and UIL, and which granted at least a slight improvement in pay affecting some three million workers. The CGIL refused to sign the agreement but in the end was obliged to enter into separate agreements on the same terms.

This defeat was the culminating blow which caused the CGIL to lose thousands of votes in the shop-steward elections held during the winter and spring of 1954-55. The result was that the confederation was deprived of its majority position on the shop-steward committees of various important industrial combines in the north—Fiat in Turin, and Falck, Innocenti and Officine Meccaniche in Milan—which had always been Communist strongholds.¹⁸

Even after these setbacks, the CGIL still remains the most important Italian labor organization. On a national scale, it continues to control about 65 percent of the votes for the shop-steward committees and has millions of non-Communist members who see it only as an instrument of labor protection. But, left out in the cold by the joint initiatives of the plant managements and rival union organizations, the CGIL finds itself in an exceedingly uncomfortable situation. At Fiat, Ilva, Pirelli, Montecatini—that is to say, in the key sectors of the Italian economy—the plant manage-

¹⁷ These limitations were especially drastic following an agreement concluded in May 1955 with regard to the functioning of the shop-steward committees in industrial plants. Article 10 of the agreement made any contact between workers and members of the committees within the plants subject to authorization by the managements.

¹⁸ This trend became less marked subsequently. For example, in the October 1954 elections at the Pirelli plant in Milan, the second largest Italian factory after Fiat, the CGIL retained its majority on the shop-steward committee, though by a reduced margin.

ments have either concluded or are about to conclude separate agreements with the CISL and UIL. The CGIL, which in 1951 boasted of achieving "the greatest labor union unity ever attained in a capitalistic country," now faces serious competition.¹⁹

Loss of Faith in Communist Leadership

BASICALLY, the deteriorating position of the CGIL reflects a loss of faith among the Italian working class in the confederation's Communist leadership and in the overall political leadership of the PCI. Agostino Novella, one of the PCI's most dependable representatives in the CGIL, guardedly admitted as much in an analysis of the confederation's failures at its Executive Committee meeting in April 1955. He said:

A certain lack of confidence has penetrated some working class strata regarding the prospects for a definitive solution of their problems and of the basic problems of Italian society.²⁰

Had Mr. Novella been willing to speak more frankly, he might have specified that the lack of confidence stemmed from a feeling that the PCI, with the CGIL as its labor arm, had failed not only to gain for the working class the political leadership or co-leadership of the country, but even to obtain any substantial improvement of its economic position.

This situation prompted the CGIL to make a serious reappraisal of its position and policies at its 4th Congress, which met in Rome from February 28 to March 4, 1956. The top confederation leaders frankly admitted that insufficient account had been taken of changes in the productive structure of Italian industry during recent years, and that both employers and the rival labor organizations had been able to strengthen their positions because of the CGIL's mistakes. But when it came to revising past policies so as to provide specific remedies for these mistakes, the Congress inevitably faced a tough problem because of the restricting necessity that its revisions fully accord with the basic political strategy of the PCI.

The Congress did nothing to disturb the party line. Its principal policy shift was a decision to conduct future agitational activities mainly at the company level, by plant or group of plants, using the same tactics already adopted some time ago by the CISL. The leaders, of course, denied that this meant being

¹⁹ The 1951 boast was made by Giuseppe di Vittorio, Secretary General of the CGIL, in an article, "Verso il VII congresso del Partito" (Toward the Seventh Congress of the Party), *Rinascita*, March 1951, p. 125.

²⁰ As reported in *L'Unità*, April 30, 1955.

"towed along" by the rival organization and stressed that, while the tactics were similar, the CGIL, unlike the CISL, would make "its point of reference the workers' working and living conditions, not the productivity or profit of the enterprise."²¹

This innocuous decision, though adopted, did not satisfy the more militant elements. Their spokesmen declared that the new tactics would only cause the CGIL's labor struggle to lose its edge; that the question of "struggles of greater duration must be considered" (Luciano Lama, Chemical Workers' Union); and that, instead of mere pinpricking, "much harsher actions are required, which will seriously hurt monopolistic interests" (Montagnana, secretary for Piedmont).²² In his concluding speech, however, CGIL Secretary General di Vittorio carefully hedged on this crucial issue, declaring ambiguously that "strikes of all kinds and durations may be good . . . provided they are suited to the desired objectives."²³

Thus, the CGIL Congress marked no significant advance toward a solution of the fundamental problem facing the PCI: how to regain the workers confidence without sacrificing its present major political objectives. In a decade, Togliatti's "great party" has become rooted in the social consciousness of wide strata of the Italian people, but it has lost its character as an instrument for achieving the hegemony of the proletariat. The resultant decline of its prestige among the workers is the inevitable forfeit which the party has had to pay for pursuing policies conditioned by its tactic of extending the social base and electoral strength of the party, and by its strategic objective of supporting the foreign policy initiatives of the USSR.

Rather than alleviating the difficult situation confronting the PCI, the doctrinal and policy shifts decided at the 20th CPSU Congress in Moscow have introduced a new disturbing factor. At first glance, Khrushchev's declarations concerning the possibility of achieving socialism by parliamentary means might be taken as complete ratification of the line persistently followed by Togliatti since 1945. This interpretation, however, is much too simplified in the light of a careful analysis of the Soviet party leader's statements.

Reduced to its essentials, the pertinent passage of Khrushchev's speech of February 14 declared that in a number of "highly-developed capitalist countries" the working class has a real opportunity to "unite the overwhelming majority of the people under its

leadership" and "capture a stable majority in parliament." In the same passage, however, Khrushchev spoke of basing the conquest of parliament on "a mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat," and he further qualified his position by stating that "sharp revolutionary class struggle" will still be inevitable where the capitalist system is protected by the "military and police apparatus."²⁴

This is, on the face of it, anything but a categorical pronouncement. It is questionable, first, that Italy is a "highly-developed capitalist country," though Khrushchev's specific mention elsewhere in his speech of French and Italian Communist electoral successes makes it logical to assume that he had these two countries in mind as places where the parliamentary triumph of socialism is possible. If so, they are presumably not in Khrushchev's other category of countries where control of the military and police apparatus is so strongly in the hands of the capitalist bourgeoisie that it can be wrested away only by "revolutionary class struggle." Yet many Italian Communists, disillusioned by the past failure of Togliatti's popular front tactics, are likely to see it otherwise and cite Khrushchev's declaration as supporting a more aggressive, revolutionary line for the PCI.

This latter contention finds further support in Khrushchev's reference to basing the conquest of parliament on "a mass revolutionary movement." The difference between this and Togliatti's strategy is obvious. Togliatti's is based, not on parliamentary action supported by mass struggle, but on parliamentary action which practically excludes mass struggle or reduces it to a minimum.

It was the denigration of Stalin, however, which was by far the most important development at the 20th Congress. The effect of this on Togliatti's personal position as undisputed, virtually singlehanded leader of the party may be unsettling, especially in view of the singular parallel between the rise of the two men to power and the methods of its achievement. Togliatti may be able to convince the party rank and file that everything that happened at the Moscow Congress confirms his own theses, but it will only be because he has full control of the party machine, the party press and other organs for disseminating information to party members, not because it is the objective truth. And there is reason to believe that the currents unleashed from Moscow may prove too strong for Togliatti to control.

²¹ CGIL Official Press Release on 4th Congress Proceedings, p. 31.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 59.

²³ *L'Unità*, March 4, 1956.

²⁴ *Pravda*, February 15, 1956.

Recent Studies of Communist Affairs

THE UNITED STATES

Russia Since Stalin: Old Trends and New Problems (series of 16 articles), in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January 1956.

The expert analyses of 16 specialists in Soviet affairs have been combined, under the capable editorship of Philip E. Mosely, into an excellent symposium.¹ Is the Soviet Union after Stalin more responsive to the aspirations of its own people for a better life and for peace? How can the oft-stated Soviet belief in the inevitable world-wide triumph of communism be reconciled with Moscow's recent espousal of co-existence with other political systems? Can we expect a calmer and less tension-ridden world? These broad questions are posed by Mr. Mosely in his foreword. And in an attempt to provide meaningful answers, he has organized the articles into four large sections—"Political and Social Developments," "Economic Developments and Problems," "Cultural Life," and "Soviet Role in World Politics."

In an introductory survey article Barrington Moore suggests that the Soviet need to obtain higher production and productivity is the basic reason for the relaxation of internal tension. He stresses, however, that in the context of Soviet society the relaxation of tension, which means less coercion and a more "rational" use of natural resources, men and technology, does not imply more democracy—an opinion in which John Hazard, after a painstaking review of "Governmental Developments in the USSR Since Stalin," also concurs. Mr. Hazard observes that the slight administrative decentralization which has been carried out in the interests of efficiency has been accompanied by "very little lessening of centralization in the interest of public participation in the making of decisions."

¹ The exigencies of space have prevented specific mention of the following articles: Joseph A. Kershaw, "Recent Trends in the Soviet Economy"; M. Gardner Clark, "Soviet Iron and Steel Industry: Recent Developments and Prospects"; Robert M. Slusser, "Soviet Music Since the Death of Stalin"; Paul E. Zinner, "Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe."

Merle Fainsod's article on "The Communist Party Since Stalin" indicates that the different methods used by Stalin's successors have had tangible positive results within the Soviet Union. "Whatever the motives which have inspired this activity, the result has been to project an image of personalized and humanized leadership which suggests a change from the past." Mr. Fainsod feels, however, that softer methods are not indicative of a substantial change in the party's position in Soviet society: "The supremacy of the party continues to be the alpha and the omega of Soviet rule." Nor can the habits ingrained in the present leaders by twenty years of Stalin's rule be shed easily. Although Khrushchev has not yet "attained a position of indisputable primacy," his post as First Secretary of the CPSU, and as head of the recently formed Section of Party Organs for the RSFSR, offers him many opportunities to do so.

The section on "Economic Developments and Problems" highlights the basic problem of the Soviet Union today: the chronic shortage of consumer goods and of food caused by the doctrinaire emphasis of Soviet economists on a high rate of industrial growth at the expense of consumer wants. Gregory Grossman, in an article on "Soviet Agriculture Since Stalin," indicates that farm production could be increased somewhat if a large portion of the resources and manpower now dedicated to military uses were applied in the agricultural sector. But he also feels that substantial and continuing improvement in the food situation is impossible unless monetary incentives for the peasants are vastly increased and consumer goods become generally available. Unfortunately for the Soviet people, the present order of priorities in the Soviet Union makes this unlikely; nor will there be significant imports of consumer goods.

In this connection, Oleg Hoeffding expects Soviet foreign trade "to remain the trickle that it is today." Its purpose will likewise remain unchanged: to bind the satellite economies more closely to the Soviet economy, and to woo underdeveloped areas with promises of loans and machinery. Thus the Soviet people can expect only partial amelioration of their