TRASFORMISMO AND THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Augustine Amaru

1966

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ABSTRACT

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ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

by Augustine Amaru

The problem of this study centers around the Italian "style" of politics, trasformismo. This practice involved agreement of the parliamentary majority to share power with the opposition if the latter ceased to function as an opposition. The consequence of the practice is the ultimate assimilation of the opposition into the government and the disappearance of active parliamentary combat between the two or more meaningful choices.

The function of this "style" prior to World War I was to limit access to the political activist subculture to a certain number of groups -- the nobility, the industrialists, the professionals, the civil service and the merchants. New groups were allowed access to the political system only to the extent that they agreed to play the game of politics according to the rules prescribed by those elites which were already a part of the activist subculture.

Although the system sharpened the political combat and encouraged the aspiring urban and rural lower classes to seek refuge and support among the proliferating revolutionary and protest movements, it played an important role in evolving a

regularized method for integrating new groups into the political system.

Because willingness to accept the norms of the political activist subculture was a prerequisite for participation, the Communist Party of Italy encountered many difficulties as international pressures immediately after the Bolshevik revolution prevented it from being responsive to the nativist orientation to political action. This study traces the Communist Party's transformation from a party that initially failed miserably because it did not recognize the accepted norms of political competition, to one which not only learned them but became a master of them through its varied political activities underground during the Fascist period and the war, and openly after World War II.

Analysis of historical data, party pronouncements and evaluation of the writings of the leading figures of Italian Communism, Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti, were the chief techniques that guided the research.

TRASFORMISMO AND THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

By

Augustine Amaru

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Political Science

1966

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The break-up of the Roman Empire signaled the beginning of a long series of invasions of Italian territory that were to reshape the face of Italy. Centuries of political domination by Huns, Vandals, Goths, Lombards, Franks, Normans, Saracens, and Germans slowly influenced the evolution of a new civilization. By the twelfth century, despite the patch-work quilt of medieval feudalism that had replaced Roman centralization, a new Italian nation was in the making. At this point in the history of Europe, D'Azeglio's comment to his Piedmontese king in 1870, "Sire, we have made Italy, now we must make Italians,"[1] might very well have been applied to France, Britain and Spain as well, for there was as much raw material necessary for the forging of a modern nation state in Italy as had been present in those aforementioned countries. However Italy was not destined to enjoy the luxury of several centuries of political and economic unification to create a truly viable nationalism. After the twelfth century, fresh invasions by the Germans, French and Spanish were to freeze regional differences into six more centuries of local parochialism; hence national disunity. Thus, upon

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[1]Hentze, Margot, Pre-Fascist Italy, (London; G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1939), p. 11.

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the leaders of the "Risorgimento fell the task of creating simultaneously the new Italy and Italians, a reality which has confronted many of the new countries of Asia and Africa in the second half of the twentieth century.[2]

It was in this atmosphere of nation-building after 1870 that the modern political style of trasformismo (transformism) developed. The persistence of provincialism or campanilismo (this term aptly illustrates the local feeling that goes just as far as the bell's sound) was as serious a handicap to building a modern Italy after 1870, as tribalism is an obstacle to modern statism today in large portions of the underdeveloped world.

Trasformismo, sometimes called Giolittismo, was born after the fall of the "right" (the successors to Cavour) in 1876. Agostino Depretis and Francesco Crispi were the earlier articulators of this parliamentary device, later perfected by Giolitti (hence the interchange of names). Trasformismo was an intricate system of political accomodation which was used to change members of the opposition into supporters of the dominant party. Practices which sustained the system included favors, bribery, political pacts, electoral corruption and violence at the polls.[3]

Contemporary partisans of stable liberal democracy as found in Great Britain and the United States have reassessed earlier evaluations of Giolittismo in the light of the so-called

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[2]Maurice F. Neufeld, Italy: School for Awakening Countries; the Italian Labor Movement in its Political, Social and Economic Setting, 1800 - 1960 (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1961), p. 119.

[3]Ibid., p. 3.

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guided democracies in modern Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Their verdict seems to vindicate Giolitti to some extent and in fact implicates his detractors, whether enemies of parliamentary government such as Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto, or its champions such as Gaetano Salvemini, as major contributors to the demise of constitutional government in Italy in 1922. These modern critics can see that in retrospect Italy in many ways constitutes a living model or laboratory for the developing nation.

Salvemini himself, in 1945, after almost two decades in exile and as a direct result of observing and participating in the Anglo-Saxon democracy which he so admired and felt lacking in pre-Fascist Italy, wrote:

> For while we Italian crusaders attacked him Giolitti from the Left accusing him of being -- and he was -- a corruptor of Italian democracy in the making, others assailed him from the right because he was even too democratic for their taste. Our criticism thus did not help to direct the evolution of Italian public life toward less imperfect forms of democracy, but rather toward the victory of those militarist, nationalist, and reactionary groups who had found even Giolitti's democracy too perfect.[4]

Trasformismo represented a style peculiar to Italian politics. As we look back we can see that it was a necessary stage in the evolution of representative government. The turn from this essentially positivistic approach to the passionate, revolution-

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[4] Arcangelo William Salomone, Italy in the Giolittian Era, Italian Democracy in the Making, 1900 - 1914, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), p. XIX.

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ary, violent and irrational movements after World War I arrested the slow progress of Italian politics toward liberal democracy.

Giolitti, in the years between 1903 and the beginning of World War I, had been aware that the emergence of a large Socialist movement was an unavoidable phase in the industrialization of Italy. Therefore, he saw the need for some concessions to the emerging working class organization, both political and economic, as essential to the stability of the Italian state. A liberal democracy supported by moderate socialists was actually in the making when the Great War broke out. The war and its aftermath created an environment within which those who had been opposed to gradual progress were able to force the gradualists into swift retreat. Social democracy's demise within the Socialist movement eradicated the progress that Giolitti had made in procuring some degree of legitimization of working class claims among his ruling class colleagues. The increase in militancy and the diminution of gradualism within the Italian Socialist party discouraged any further rapprochement with the Liberal-Conservative combination that had held sway over Italian politics since 1876.

It is not intended to pass Giolittismo off as liberal democracy as it exists in the United States and Great Britain. It is, however, a central theme of this paper, that Giolittismo allowed "ever-expanding political democracy and liberty."[5]

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[5]Neufeld, op. cit., p. 201.

This expansion of liberal democracy, slow as it was, did provide a continuity of parliamentary government that could have served as a firm foundation upon which the newly-enfranchised worker and peasant classes could settle into a system more truly representative of the majority.

The experience of the more modern developing nation has shown that if it survives the transitional phase immediately following independence of one party rule, without succumbing to totalitarianism, the possibility of democratic government is greatly enhanced. Concessions of the dominant political groups to ascendant political forces help to expand the appeal of the dominant groups. As a result, the stability of the emerging nation is not easily threatened by foreign and domestic crises.

In Italy the liberal-conservative coalition was unwilling to grant even the slightest concessions. But on the other hand, neither was the extreme sinistra willing to structure its demands through the existing political system, because it remained aloof for the most part from collaboration with any political elements even remotely committed to the old order. Thus Giolitti's balancing skills met with failure when the full force of the working class in numbers began to exert its influence on the political scene. Both the old liberal-conservative combination and its new Extrema Sinistra opposition, failed to sense the possible consequences of the political vacuum which they conspired to create by their unwillingness to compromise with each other. On the other hand, Mussolini astutely sensed the significance of

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this vacuum. His dictatorship was to teach the successors to the pre-Fascist political groupings, who took their places in the hastily re-organized parliamentary system after World War II, that trasformismo had been, by comparison, a mild form of repression but a necessary one given the peculiar circumstances of Italian society in the aftermath of the Risorgimento.

Significantly, the lesson of trasformismo was learned by the Marxist parties in the post-Fascist era. Lack of clear-cut policies and programs had been a major aspect of the earlier trasformismo. Willingness to incorporate the opposition's program into its own was a cardinal rule of trasformismo. The appeals of the PCI (Communist Party) and PSI (Socialist Party) have barely been distinguishable for most of post World War II's years. Furthermore, both the PCI and the PSI have gradually become less distinguishable from the dominant Christian Democrat party (DC). However, it should be noted that the term trasformismo, as applied to Italian politics in the post-Fascist era in this study, is intended to describe mainly ideological change and conversion.

There has been a cross-fertilization between the Marxist parties and the DC in that the latter has incorporated ideological elements and programs of the former. The PSI's more recent marriage to the DC in the center-left government is reminiscent of Giolittian tactics. The persistance of the highly centralized system of local government continues to be an advantage to the modern day practitioners of trasformismo who have a hold on the central administration.

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6 *Ibid.*, p.

The historical relationship between trasformismo and the highly-centralized unitary organization of Italian government since unification bears some attention. Cavour had seized upon the patriotic atmosphere of ardor for unification to stretch the Piedmontese administration over the whole of Italy. The necessity to counteract centuries of regional parochialism in an emerging nation is obvious.

Imposition of Piedmont's centralized bureaucracy over the rest of Italy between 1860 and 1870, although a threat to the provincialism of all members of a region, was accepted, and even welcomed, by the landowners, businessmen and other large property owners. These privileged groups took solace in the fact that unification had been consummated with a minimum of social dislocation.[6]

The major consequence of the extension of the Piedmontese administration was the establishment of the prefect system, following the French example. This highly centralized system encouraged the use of patronage and favors by the government as a means of control; it is through this system that trasformismo was able to flourish. Furthermore, the system served as a model for the organizations of other public and private institutions outside of government, regardless of their political or economic complexion.

The prefect became the agent of the central government in the province (the equivalent of the department in France) of

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[6] Ibid., p. 76.

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which there were sixty-nine at first; presently there are ninety-two. The prefect was used to control and shape the progress of local elections by Giolitti and other transformers. What the prefect could not accomplish by cajoling, bribery and promises, he achieved through his control of the local police, which was a national force responsible to the Minister of the Interior. Salvemini informs us:

> Under Giolitti's rule, the interference of the prefects with local government and elections reached unprecedented heights of brutality. Where the electorate was refractory to pressure and the elected mayors and town councillors refused to bow, the prefect not only dismissed them, but managed local and national elections. If an election had to be carried out, the police in league with the government supporters, enrolled the scum of the constituencies and the underworld of the neighboring districts. In the last weeks before the polls, the opponents were threatened, bludgeoned, besieged in their homes. Their leaders were debarred from addressing meetings or even thrown into prison until election day was over.[8]

Management of elections by Giolitti was most rampant where public opinion was almost lacking; this condition prevailed mostly in the South. But Giolitti's solid block of deputies from the half of the peninsula south of Rome, together with about half of the northern deputies who were independently elected, gave him a working majority. The remaining freely-elected northerners initially remained in opposition, but the futility of opposition

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[8]Salomone, op. cit., p. XIX.

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under the circumstances of an assured, "managed," majority soon became obvious to the hold-outs and they eventually traded their independence for political favors; in other words, were transformed.

The power of the prefect under Fascism was increased and the already limited power of local elected government was further decreased. The post-war Christian Democratic government has perpetuated some of these centralizing measures of the Fascists, particularly by retaining the expanded role of the prefect; this has made it possible for the ruling party to employ a modification of Giolitti's trasformismo. The major objectives of latter-day Giolittism have been to:

1. Prevent the revolutionary left from achieving power (as long as it remains revolutionary).

2. Preserve the status of major traditional ruling groups such as the landowners, the industrialists, the Civil Service and the Church.

3. Permit the recruitment of new personnel for the developing economy without abrupt change or displacement of traditional institutions.

4. Gradually satisfy demands for better living conditions without precipitous changes in the structure of society.

5. Continue to control the central seat of government in Rome through electoral dominance in more backward rural areas and in small communes (particularly in the South, as in Giolitti's case).

6. Restrict the influence of the revolutionary-left in those local areas where it is dominant through control of the central seat of government.

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To be sure, the power of the prefect today, although greater than in pre-Fascist days, is more subtly though just as effectively used. The extension of suffrage and the expansion of mass parties, with a consequent creation of party bureaucracy in most communities, has made it impossible for the prefect to singlehandedly "deliver" the election. However, Norman Kogan has the following to say about the prefect:

> The prefect still plays a role in the elections . . . working out campaign strategy with local progovernment leaders and ecclesiastics, raising whatever influence he has to make a favorable impression on the local voters. Again, this influence is most effective in rural areas where the shrewd allocation of public works can change voting patterns. Close relations between the prefects and the state agencies purveying public works is the logical consequence.[10]

As the Christian Democrats have been the chief beneficiaries of the new trasformismo, so have the Communists thus far been the chief victims. The PCI has not been unmindful of the reality of the Italian style. The quarantine that has prevented the party from participating in the central government has caused it to gradually moderate its position. The PCI's electoral captivity of local governments in centers such as Bologna and Modena in central Italy, has not allowed it to create a red belt splitting Italy in two. The legal relationship between the central and local government, again, is crucial. Corruption, scandal, ineffi-

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[10]Norman Kogan, The Government of Italy, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1962), p. 159.

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[11] Ibid., p.

[12] Ibid., p.

ciency and embezzlement of public funds are virtually unknown in areas where the Communists control local government.

The provinces and communes are subject to immediate scrutiny and direction by national government not only in regard to functions but also in the all-important area of finances. Most of these supervisory prerogatives of the national government are exercised through the prefect whose duties include:

1. Responsibility for maintaining law and order in the province.
2. The power to veto any act of a provincial or communal government.
3. The power to suspend local government personnel, from hired employees to elected officials.
4. The power to dissolve communal or provincial councils, or local government agencies, and to appoint prefectoral commissioners in place of a dissolved body.
5. The power to approve the creation of any ad hoc agency between two or more local governments for limited purposes.[11]

The prefect has quite a bit of discretion in exercising the above powers. Moreover, he is a political appointee, subject to removal at will by his superiors in Rome. Thus he is a partisan official and is apt to be much more conscientious in applying his controls against communes and provinces in which the left-wing parties are in control and quite relaxed in exercising authority against local governments that are dominated by Christian Democratic alliance parties and right-wing parties.[12]

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[11] Ibid., p. 155-156.
[12] Ibid., p. 156.

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The weight that the central government holds over the head of the local Communist governments through use of the prefects has been instrumental in the party's incorporation of major elements of the majority coalition's doctrine and practice into its own movement. In this manner, the PCI has been able to perpetuate itself as an independent political organization. Yet, in much the same way that the Social Democrats (PSDI) and later the PSI have been transformed, the PCI is in the same process of transformation. This process differs from Giolittismo in that the organizational lines of the transformed parties remain. However, the opening to the left has demonstrated that more than doctrinal transformation has occurred in contemporary trasformismo. The abandonment of the PCI by prominent Communists and subsequent affiliation with the PSI after Nenni contracted his alliance with the Christian Democrats, suggests that more than a passing similarity to the 19th century and early 20th century Italian political style exists.

How the Marxist movement in Italy failed to be transformed at a time that this was most crucial, not only to its own existence, but to the very existence of parliamentary government, is a major question that this study will endeavor to answer. Subsequent awareness by the PCI of the realities of Italian politics led to important changes in doctrine and practice. These changes are an important preoccupation of this study. Finally, the dilemma that confronts the Communist party of the future is analyzed. Can the party be transformed even further without erasing

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the lines between it and other political parties in Italy, such as the PSI and PSDI, which appear to have struck a bargain with contemporary Giolittismo, as the price for participation in the government. Is the PCI position comparable to that of the northern political elements during the Giolitti era, which, having made a vain attempt to play an independent role, chose to be transformed rather than be relegated to a status of permanent opposition?

What prospects are there for the party to become more than a party of protest? Is a modern brand of trasformismo the only means by which this large mass movement (the PCI) can hope to extricate itself from the role of permanent opposition it has played throughout its whole history. Is it possible and desirable for the PCI to go the way of the Nenni Socialists in a future "opening to the left"?

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CHAPTER II

ITALIAN MARXISM RETREATS FROM TRASFORMISMO

A. Italian Marxism's Role in the Breakdown of Italian Constitutional Government

Italian Marxism in the last decade of the 19th century had begun to evolve as a force only partially dedicated to the principle of violent revolution. The Socialist party, mainly through the influence of Filippo Turati, began to play a leading role in the extrema sinistra, which was the first evidence of any true opposition in Italian parliamentary politics since Depretis initiated trasformismo in 1876.

Paradoxically, the PSI was learning the Italian style of trasformismo even while it was building opposition to the traditional ruling forces in Italian society. It was successfully becoming a party of opposition through its ability to articulate working class interests within the framework of parliamentary government.

World War I and the Bolshevik revolution retarded and eventually arrested assimilation of the Socialists into Italian parliamentary politics. Transformation of PSI ideology in the direction of reformism diminished and a more militant revolutionary ideology became more prominent. However the vast majority of the Socialist leaders had ceased to be revolutionary activists; thus when the moment for revolution was ripest, they decided to take ad-

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vantage of it. Unwillingness to act in a revolutionary situation exposed the basic weakness of the PSI. Said exposure enabled the Fascists to eliminate the Marxists as a parliamentary threat as well as a revolutionary one.

The late arrival of Italy into a community of large, cohesive nation states had dire consequences for the prospects of Italian representative government. Termination of the Risorgimento in 1870 was followed by the evolution of a peculiar variety of parliamentary government known as trasformismo. As the term implies, this political technique involved transformation or conversion of an opposition party to the support of the majority or government party. Conversion was almost always followed by total assimilation of the minority opposition into the majority parliamentary group.

Under these conditions, a tradition of organized opposition did not have an opportunity to become incorporated as part of a nascent political culture in newly-united Italy. The patterns of parliamentary dictatorship restricted access to the political activist subculture to those who accepted the norms of the small elite whose power rested on a very narrow basis of support. The master of trasformismo, who led the government group in the parliament at any given time, was more often than not an astute praetitioner of a delicate art that required balancing of the competing hierarchical forces that comprised the only politically active segment of the total population. At the same time, this arbitrator of elites was exhorted to keep mobility of the still-un-

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Thus it can be seen that politics in the new Italy was "representative" to the extent that the participants were those who represented a mere fraction of the population, with a stake in continuing the essentially inequitable social structure which existed in pre-unification days. When a "combinazione" was no longer able to successfully satisfy the needs of the elites, it was toppled from power and a new master of "trasformismo was entrusted with the responsibility of guarding the bastions of privilege and traditionalism. The new transformer would continue the job of making deals in order to re-stabilize the political situation in favor of the traditional hierarchical forms.

Under these conditions, a leader could dominate the political stage for periods of ten years or more. Such periodic re-entrenchment of the dominant traditional-hierarchical forces had the effect of maintaining the size, however small, of the openings so painfully chinked in the armor of traditional Italian social structure by the liberalizing currents of the Risorgimento (as manifest by Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldo and others). Centuries of political alienation were followed by decades after 1870 during which the bulk of the population, unable to widen the openings made by the heroes of the reunification, remained socially isolated from the political institutions of the new Italian state.

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in Italian society were perpetuated by the political system that evolved after 1870, and that Italy was fertile ground for the emergence, growth, and success of mass movements or parties of protest, with a strong ideological orientation. Rather than allegiance to the state as citizen, compliance with the state as subject became the rule.[13] The urban working man, unavoidably caught up in a developing industrial society, reserved his life's allegiance for a revolutionary labor movement and transmitted his cries for help through revolutionary parties that called for a radical transformation of society. Thus Marxists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists competed for the loyalty of the working class in both the political and economic arenas. Somewhat belatedly, the Catholic Church renounced its own voluntary isolation from Italian politics and sanctioned the formation of another political movement of protest, the Popular Party. Finally, ultra-nationalists and super-patriots injected still another fundamentalist protest group into the arena of active politics; this took the form of Fascism.

The peasant, particularly in the South, remained loyal to his family and commune. Political activists of whatever stripe, who aspired to places of prestige and power in the formal government institutions, were viewed as foreign and extraneous, just as were those who preceded them, whether Greek, Roman, Germanic, Arabic, French, Austrian, Spanish or Piedmontese. The government was something strange, remote, which periodically came, only to take,

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[13]Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), p. 309-310.

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Italy's involvement in World War I widened the cleavage that already existed between the great majority of the Italian people and their leaders. The socially advantaged who controlled the government alone, actively supported Italy's entrance into the "great war" in 1915. However, it was the majority whose allegiance lay elsewhere than with the government who had to bear the brunt of the war effort. The masses who had been granted only the slightest economic and social concessions were called upon to fight a war which had very little significance for them.

The nature of the fighting on the Italian front hardly served to draw together rulers and masses that history had so conspired to separate. Morale of the troops in the rugged, mountainous terrain between Italy and Austria then was quite low. The retreat at Caporetto, one of the great military disasters of history, underscored the lack of common cause between the Italian worker-peasant, now foot-soldier, and his government's efforts to achieve greatness by participation in the war. Mass desertions thus further complicated an already inept and mismanaged administration of the war. Miraculously, with some help from the French front, the Italians were able to stem the advance of the Austro-Hungarian armies for the duration of the war.

The damage that Caporetto had done to Italian morale and the cause of national consciousness and unity was minor compared to the Italian frustrations at the Versailles Conference

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[14]W. Hilto
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P. 84.
[15]Ibid., p

The humiliation of the Orlando government at the conference table injected a further feeling of disenchantment with the war and exacerbated disillusionment with the established order. Caporetto's consequences were to reverberate in Italian society throughout 1919 and 1920 in the revolutionary movements that occurred at that time.[14]

The concept of the "lost" or "mutilated" victory is significant not only because it later became a rallying point for ultra-nationalists and Fascists in the swiftening breakdown of parliamentary government, but also because it prevented the establishment of effective government now that openings into the long disenfranchised lower socio-economic strata had finally been enlarged. The rebuttal of the Sonnino-Orlando negotiating combination (particularly the Big Three's refusal to honor the secret treaty of London of 1915, which had dangled before Italy's eyes the Dalmatian coast as well as Trentino and Trieste), proved portentous in the revolutionary atmosphere of 1919-1920.[15] Anglo-American -- French roughshod treatment of Italian national aspirations served as fodder for the Marxian dictum that the capitalists eventually devour each other in internecine warfare. Also, the abject helplessness of Italy in the face of such treatment at the hands of her allies gave confidence to and encouraged the mass movement in Italy, the leaders of which were now convinced of the

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[14]W. Hilton Young, The Italian Left: A Short History of Political Socialism in Italy, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1949), p. 84.

[15]Ibid., p. 85.

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Caporetto had been the first real opportunity for a socialist revolution in Italy, coinciding as it did with the October Revolution in Russia. At the time of the great retreat, some Socialist leaders in Italy, following the example of Lenin, exhorted the Italian infantryman to turn his rifle against his capitalist exploiters. The revolution in Italy didn't materialize, as this favorable opportunity slipped by. Partly because of endemic economic crises, resulting in unemployment and inflation, the Marxist leadership was to be furnished with another appropriate occasion to implement the revolution.

Between the armistice of 1919 and the Fascist seizure of power in 1922, Italian politics were in a constant state of flux, creating instability. For the first time, Italy had an electorate that approximated universal manhood suffrage. The election of 1919 was the first election in which the workers and peasants were able to make their true force in numbers felt at the polls. In that election, the Socialist party (which was still a united party) emerged as the most powerful party in Italy, capturing 157 seats out of approximately 500. The second most powerful party was the late-arriving Partito Populare (a brand of Catholic socialism which today survives in the extreme left-wing of the Christian Democratic Party), which won 100 seats.[16] The Socialist and popular parties together controlled just a little bit better than half

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[16] H. Stuart Hughes, The United States and Italy, (Cambridge; Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), p.64.

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of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. They were both truly mass parties; together they represented a majority of the Italian electorate. The prospects for true parliamentary democracy seemed bright. What prevented the emergence of an articulate and unified coalition representative of the working man? One problem lay in disagreements that rent the Marxist movement in Italy. In other words, the Socialists did not function as a cohesive unit. Another problem was that the Socialists, even had they been able to agree among themselves, would have considered the possibility of coalition with the Populari out of the question. Not only the fierce anti-clericalism of the Socialists, but also Socialist commitment to revolution as an instrument of social change, excluded any attempt to use parliamentary techniques for social reforms.[17]

It is significant that until the electoral reform of 1919 which had created a mass electorate, the Socialist party of Italy had not decisively incorporated in its official program, the concept of violent revolution. At the Bologna Conference of October, 1919, shortly before the parliamentary elections, the party came out definitely in favor of violent revolution based on the model of Russia. The new declaration stated "The Proletariat must resort to use of violence to defend itself against bourgeois violence, to conquer power, and to consolidate revolutionary con-

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[17]G. D. H. Cole, Socialist Thought: Communism and Social Democracy, 1914-1931, Part I., (London: Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1958), p. 372.

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The Bologna Congress represented a major revision of the old "Program of the Socialist Party," promulgated in 1892. But the Congress was not as brash as its new committment to violent revolution might suggest, for the declaration was qualified to allow participation of the party in the upcoming election; this was done in order to utilize "the organs of the bourgeois state in order to carry out the most intensive propaganda for Communist principles and to effect the overthrow of bourgeois domination."[19]

The old reformist Socialist Fillipo Turati, who had been chiefly responsible for the revisionary tone of the 1892 declaration, personified the professional parliamentary Socialist reformer with much prestige and popularity among the professionals, but little among the masses. But, was Turati any more out of step with realities in 1892 when the working class was far from completely enfranchised than the Socialist party of 1919, which had the support of an enfranchised working class, but also social conditions ripe for revolution? The point is that Turati's position in 1892 was impractical from the viewpoint of gaining votes; on the other hand, the party's stand in 1919 was impractical both from the viewpoint of gaining votes and from that of undertaking a successful, violent revolution. Thus the party's position in 1919 was ambivalent, indecisive, contradictory and wavering at a time when the most steadfast policy was demanded, be it violent or

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

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[20] Ibid., p

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This ambivalence proved to be permanently damaging to the Socialist movement, not only because it forestalled decisive revolutionary action at the critical moment when it was needed, but also because, by advocating violent revolution, the Socialists were ascribing their electoral appeal to the working classes alone, whose support they were assured in any event.

The dominant faction of the Socialist party in 1919 was not convinced that the movement would prevail at the time, at any rate, in an attempt to challenge the power of the bourgeois state to resist revolution. Needless to say, the events in Russia in 1917 served as an impetus for the reorientation of Socialist party strategy in Italy. However, as G. D. H. Cole points out:

> There was, of course, no real analogy between the conditions which had existed in Russia up to 1917 and those which existed in Italy in 1919; for in Italy the bourgeois revolution, or at any rate, the bourgeois system of government, for which the Russians had to fight in 1917, was already in being . . .[20]

An evaluation of the development of the Marxist movement in Italy must take into account the different conditions that existed there vis-a-vis the Russian situation. The events in Russia in 1917 conferred on the Socialist party in Italy an urgency which had not been characteristic of the majority point of view in the movement since 1892. G. D. H. Cole says:

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[20] Ibid., p. 337.

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> necessary to follow out the same broad course in Italy; and this strategy fitted in with the unreadiness of the Italian Socialists to proceed at once to attempt a complete proletarian revolution.[21]

To the (essentially) higher level of political development that existed in the form of the Italian bourgeois state in comparison to Russia, must be added inability of the Italian Socialists to win support of any consequence in the countryside (with the possible exception of Emilia, Tuscany and Umbria in central Italy). The late arrival of Don Luigi Sturzo and his Catholic Populari Party on the Italian political scene apparently occurred soon enough to deprive the Socialists of a source of mass support that was essential in a still-predominantly agricultural country -- the peasantry. The Socialists had never made much headway with a program of social reform in a basically traditional agricultural population unassimilated into an emerging technological economy.

From the point of view of a high level of participation which is an important criterion in measuring the effectiveness of a particular government, the behavior of the members of the Socialist Party in the period under discussion approximated more closely the behavior of voters in our own country as participants, than did the peasants in their support for the Populari Party. In discussing the behavior of contemporary Communists in Italy,

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[23]Ibid., p.

Almond and Verba state:

> Italian Communists, by our definition, may be viewed as participants: they are aware of and involved in politics, and they have an active sense of their own political competence -- despite the fact that they would cease being participants in the same sense if their party came into power. This is also true of the supporters of the Fascist right, insofar as they take an active part in public affairs. It is paradoxical that the majority of politically involved and informed Italians are opposed to the contemporary constitutional and democratic regime and that the bulk of the support for this regime comes from Italians who are oriented as subjects or as parochials.[22]

Almond and Verba's observation is based on data drawn from a later era; what is important for our purposes is the high level of political participation found among members of a major segment of the Italian Socialist movement of the early part of the World War I era. Also, it is easily substantiated that the bulk of the peasants who supported the Popular Party of 1919 - 1922 were not very active participants, and were oriented either as subjects or parochials or both.[23]

As for Almond and Verba's view that the Communists would cease being active participants in the same sense if they came into power, Socialist insistence on participation in the bourgeois government (at least of a majority in 1919 - 1920, a period in which the prospects for successful revolution were very high) speaks for itself. The importance of all this is that the Italian Marxist movement which was on record from 1892 on as favoring a

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[22]Almond and Verba, op. cit., p. 310.
[23]Ibid., p. 309-310.

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more reformist approach to Socialism, officially changed its dogma after the Bolshevik Revolution in favor of violent revolution, but, when confronted with several golden opportunities never took the essential crucial step to implement this dogma. The process continued after World War II when the Communists who had split off at Leghorn in 1921 became the dominant Marxist group. Again there is contradiction between professions of a revolutionary nature and exhortations to participate in the government.

The requirements of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet state were very decisive in aggravating the conflict within the Italian Marxist movement, but more important was the C. P. S.U.'s role in arresting the development of a Marxist movement that had exhibited definite tendencies in the direction of acceptance of at least part of the institutional framework of the evolving bourgeois state in Italy. It was in 1919 - 1920 that what later became Togliatti's "Italian road to socialism," should have been taken. But it was the road <u>not</u> taken, as will be indicated.

B. The Split of the Italian Marxist Movement

The period between the armistice of 1919 and the Fascist seizure of power in 1922 was a very complicated one, politically. Italy, as we have seen, was embarking upon a new era. Complete enfranchisement of her masses seemed to point to the prospects of an extensive program of social reform. However, the war, the Russian revolution, the "mutilated victory" and consequent social and economic problems had created an atmosphere of general instability.

In this atmosphere occurred the "sit-down" strikes of September, 1920, which represented the high point of revolutionary energy in Italy after World War I. These strikes eventually grew into the more radical and revolutionary "occupation of the factories." An atmosphere of semi-anarchy prevailed. The workers ran wild, committed acts of violence at will and were not imprisoned for them. Violence had become the order of the day. Confronted with an atmosphere of mob rule, the government felt helpless to stop the workers.[24]

Giolitti, one of the old trasformismo, had returned officially to active politics in June of 1920, when in this period of crises, he assumed the office of Prime Minister. The more established elements in Italian society hoped that Giolitti would

[24]Rene Albrecht-Carrie, Italy from Napoleon to Mussolini, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 141.

perform one of his old balancing acts, thus bringing order and stability out of confusion and instability.[25]

Instead of suppressing the sit down strikes, Giolitti looked the other way when the workers began occupying the factories at will. This tactic proved to be the true measure of the Socialist's revolutionary fervor. Suppression by the government may have been the necessary spark for a working class movement that was not too certain what course to take. An unquestionably revolutionary movement would have considered the helplessness of the government and the factory owners sufficient reason to light the tinder box. Apparent acquiesence on the part of Giolitti, who personified the forces of privilege and reaction, would hardly appear to be sufficient assurance, to a revolutionary movement, that its goal had been accomplished. That Giolitti's inaction took the sting out of the workers' seizure of the factories merely serves to indicate that the so-called revolutionary vanguard, the Socialist Party, was not very revolutionary at all. The "sit-downs" were initiated by the workers themselves. Success of the action was dependent upon direction from the Socialist leadership. Any delay in the imposition of the direction from above would work to the advantage of Giolitti and the property owners, who were confident that the workers would discredit themselves by their inability to manage the factories.

The confusion and the inability on the part of the Socialists to provide leadership for the workers in the 1920 crisis, were to crystallize the lack of unity that had always been endemic

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[25]Hughes, op. cit., p. 64.

in the Socialist leadership. As a result of the debacle of 1920, permanent division of the Socialists into three major groups occurred. These groups were: Revisionist (Social Democratic - PSDI); Maximilist or revolutionary (Socialist - PSI); and Communist (PCI). This division, which took place at the Congress of Leghorn in 1921, has persisted to this day.

In short, the marriage of parliamentary and revolutionary tactics proved a failure for the Socialists. Simultaneously, the ruling classes were given an accurate estimate not only of the lack of a unified revolutionary spirit and ideology among Socialists, but also of a basic lack of organizational cohesiveness. The announcement by Lenin of the famous "Twenty-One Points," which defined the qualifications that a party must satisfy in order to take part in the Third International, dealt the final death blow to any semblance of organizational unity among Italian Socialists. The Twenty-One Points augmented Socialist problems because they were published at the very time that the "sit-down" strike was in progress. The inopportune timing of the Twenty-One Points for Italian political conditions is discussed by G. D. H. Cole:

> At the very moment when the Socialists and the Trade Unions were shrinking back from actual revolution, the Bolsheviks delivered to the Socialist Party the bombshell of the Twenty-One Points' agreed to at its second congress. The Moscow ultimatum . . was published in Avanti on September 21, 1920, accompanied by an editorial strongly criticising its terms and saying that whoever had drafted them could have known, singularly little about Italy or its Socialists. The issue that counted for most in the reception of the 'Twenty-One Points' arose, not out of the policy of the Socialist Party but out of the specific demand that it should expel the leaders of its right wing, including the deeply respected Turati, its outstanding

> international figure. . . To expel him and his fellow reformists would mean a split that would by no means stop short at the eviction of the reformist wing. It would involve, at the least, a considerable proportion of the Socialist deputies, and a large part of the Trade Union following of the Party, and would divide the whole working class movement at a moment when, in the face of developing aggression of the Fascists, it seemed more necessary than ever to close the ranks.[26]

Immediately after being confronted with the Twenty-One Points, the Socialist Party Directing Committee met and voted seven to five in favor of accepting them. This action did not reflect the feeling of the majority of the party, which did not meet in a body until January of 1921, at Leghorn, at which time the party was primarily preoccupied with drafting a response to Moscow in full Congress. The Leghorn Congress became, as we have already seen, the symbol of affirmation of the Socialist Party split. The occurrence of the Fascist rise to power, confronted with only a weak and disunited opposition, is again underscored by the fact that the Congress was called at a time when unity was of the essence.[27]

While the Socialists debated compliance or noncompliance, the Fascists were carrying on a systematic campaign of violence and destruction which was to reduce the Socialist Party and the Trade Union movement to mere shadows of their past strength. Cole recounts:

> Thereafter, the debate within the party took place to the accompaniment of a series of violent clashes with the Fascist black shirts, who in one town after another, set to work to raid

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[26]Cole, op. cit., p. 64.
[27]Hilton-Young, op. cit., p. 381.

> and destroy Socialist Trade Union and cooperative buildings and equipment, to beat up working class militants, or dose them with castor oil, and to commit all these outrages practically without interference from the police and often with their connivance.[28]

What evidence is there to substantiate the hypothesis that Soviet Communist interests superseded domestic Italian Socialist interests? Can it be said that Moscow, which had the most to lose by Fascism's accession to power, did, by its Comintern demands, render the major impediment to Fascist power (i. e. the Socialist Party) helpless? And further, were the Turin Communists, particularly Gramsci and Togliatti, and Bordiga, the abstentionist who became major spokesman of the Comintern in Italy after the Leghorn schism, ever in a position to push the Italian working class over the brink into violent revolution?

To be sure, the Italian Federation of Metal Workers (F. I. O. M.) constituted the hard core of a definite minority trade union settlement in favor of revolution. Gramsci and Togliatti had built up quite a following among the metal workers of Turin. But the General Confederation of Labor (C. G. L.), the largest and most powerful labor organization with which the F. I. O. M. was affiliated, was more moderate than the majority of Socialists, although more radical than the parliamentary Socialist party. The Socialist left wing of which Gramschi and Togliatti were a part, and the F. I. O. M. were fairly much in agreement that the proper course should be revolution. However,

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[28]Cole, op. cit., p. 382.

the majority of the C. G. L. and of the parliamentary Socialist Party, mostly followers of Turati, were not in agreement as to what non-revolutionary course to take.[29]

The C. G. L. program called for a major reorganization of the Italian state, which included demands for a republic, abolition of the Senate, proportional representation, full control of foreign policy in the Chamber of Deputies, abolition of the political police, the introduction of certain Swiss-type direct democracy popular initiative and referendum measures, and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly which would revise the traditional conceptions of property and introduce land reform. The C. G. L. never explicitly defined how the Constituent Assembly should be elected, what its composition should be, or how it would implement the proposed reforms. The majority of the reformist Socialists, being advocates of pragmatic parliamentary politics, therefore were highly skepital of a plan that appeared to them nothing more than an idealistic general statement of philosophy rather than a practical, realistic and feasible program of action.[30]

Although, as has been indicated, the C. G. L. was to the left of the parliamentary Socialist group, in a sense it was to the right of the official position taken by the Socialist party as a whole at the Bologna Congress (which came out in favor of the revolution). A major reason for this was the manner in which it was organized. Rather than a closely-knit national

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[29] Ibid., p. 374.
[30] Ibid., p. 374-375.

federation of large industry-wide units with strong control at the center (the F. I. O. M. was an important exception), control remained for the most part in local Chambers of Labor which united workers in various crafts and industries in a specific local community. Power in the C. G. L. then was quite dispersed, which has hardly been a characteristic of trade unions organized in the "Leninesque" tradition.[31]

In addition to its organization, another aspect of the C. G. L. which was not apt to lend itself to revolutionary brinksmanship was its main emphasis on strikes as a mechanism for improving workers' conditions; and on demands for reform legislation and government fiscal policy to ensure prices beneficial to labor. Conversely, an important revolutionary prong in the C. G. L. was its call for worker participation in the management of industry, a basically syndicalist strain in this essentially Marxist workers' organization.[32] It was this exposure of the C. G. L. that proved to be particularly vulnerable to Fascist assaults on the labor movement, armed as the Fascists were with a labor doctrine that included strong strains of syndicalism that had earlier been incorporated as part of D'Annunzio's romantic nationalist movement.

This was the prevailing attitude of the C. G. L. that the Turin Communists had to contend with if they were ever to wield the Italian movement as an effective instrument of revolution. Did they succeed? If we jump ahead at this point to the conse-

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[31]Ibid., p. 375.
[32]Ibid., p. 375.

quences of the Socialist split at Leghorn on the trade union movement, we find that less than one-third of the C. G. L. seceded to Communism (433,000 out of 1,436,000).[33] Hardly a large enough percentage when we take into account that Marxist influence among the peasants was almost nonexistent. Such a lack of support would have been compensated for at least partially by the support of a unified labor movement. At any rate, the Communists lacked this control. Apparently Moscow was prepared to sacrifice two-thirds of the trade union movement and almost that same percentage of the Socialist Party in order to get an unquestionably loyal revolutionary party.

Leon Trotsky, in a speech before the Third Congress of the Communist International on June 29, 1921, illustrated the sensitivity of the Bolshevik leadership to charges that the Comintern was simply an instrument of Soviet national policy.

> . . . Today our perfidious and wily enemies are spreading a legend -- one of those most fervent disseminators is your Turati -- a legend to the effect that to bolster our domestic situation, we are demanding of all our parties that they engage in revolutionary actions which have no connection whatsoever with the political and social development of the respective countries. If we permit people who propagandize such ideas to remain much longer in our International, we can very well create a very difficult situation for the International.[34]

Trotsky also points to certain inconsistencies between Italian Socialist theory and actions:

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[33]Ibid., p. 385.
[34]Leon Trotsky, The First Five Years of the Communist International (New York: Pioneer Press, 1945).

> . . . Were one to judge the party from the political standpoint, one would have to conclude -- for this is the only possible explanation -- that the ISP [PSI] verbally conducted a revolutionary policy, without ever taking into account any of its consequences. Everybody knows that during the September events [the sit-down strikes] no other organization so lost its head and became so paralyzed by fear as the ISP which had itself paved the way for these events. Now these facts are proof that the Italian organization -- and we should not forget that the party is not only ideas, a goal and a program, but also an apparatus, an organization -- this Italian organization could have secured victory by unswerving activity.[35]

What is important as Trotsky's words are scrutinized in the light of this study is the question of whether Gramsci and Togliatti, eventual spokesman for the Comintern, were themselves consistent in thought and action with Leninist theory? The answer should be prefaced with a review of the ideological and organizational dialogue that culminated in the formation of the Communist Party and eventually, as Mussolini came to power, the foundering of the entire Marxist movement in Italy.

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[35] Ibid., p. 262.

C. The Formation of the Communist Party of Italy

The announcement of Lenin's "Twenty-One Points" coincided with the crisis of September, 1920. The Leghorn Congress of January, 1921, was the arena in which the different factions in the Socialist Party locked horns over the question or rejection of Moscow's conditions.

Based on the analysis of the problems of the fall of 1920, we are aware that the division in the Socialist Party focuses on the conflict between those who were wary of Socialist adherence to parliamentary methods and the reformist element within the party which had prevailed prior to 1917. The latter group's influence and control had been vastly decreased by the Bolshevik revolution. This cleavage gave rise to the "Maximilist" wing which essentially encompassed those who wished to pursue the maximum program of the party and who desired to abandon the reformist and gradualist program that had been pursued by the Socialist leadership until 1919. This group, which was to be in the majority between 1919 and 1922, adhered to a strict policy of Italian Socialist autonomy from Moscow. This stand led to a split in its (the Maximilist) ranks. Thus there emerged the "pure" Communist or Moscow-oriented group, which became the major force within the Italian Socialist movement for acceptance of Lenin's "Twenty-One Points."

At Leghorn, there were again three factions and each presented a major resolution:

1. The "Communist" resolution -- which called for the complete and unquestioned acceptance of Lenin's "Twenty-One Points." This resolution was introduced and supported by the young Turin Communist intellectuals Antonio Gramsci (1891 - 1937) and Palmiro Togliatti (1893 - 1964), as well as Amedeo Bordiga, the so-called abstentionist who had been against electoral participation all along.

2. The Unitarian resolution which proposed adherence to the Third International, but did not wish to split the party as the price for remaining in the Comintern, which the party had joined in 1919.

Those who introduced and supported this resolution included most of the older left-wing leaders of the Socialist Party, including Serrati (1872 - 1926), Pietro Lazzari (1857 - 1927), and the rising young Pietro Nenni (1891 -). They refused to be dictated to by Moscow as to what members should be expelled and when expulsion should take place. They agreed with the principles of the Comintern, but did not wish to be organizationally subservient to it.

3. The Reformist or "Concentrationist" resolution -- which stated that the Italian Socialist Party could not, under any circumstances, be dictated to by Moscow; that party policy should be formulated in Italy; that no one should be expelled from the party; and that continued unity of the party should be its primary objective.

This resolution was introduced and supported by the

group headed by Turati and most of the C. G. L. leaders. These men, for all intents and purposes, were unqualifiedly against the "Twenty-One Points." They rejected them in principle as well as organizationally.[36]

The center or "Unitarians" led by Serrati, received the largest number of votes -- 98,000. The left, or Communists, received 57,000. The right, or "Reformist" group tallied 14,000 votes.[37] These results were a direct rebuff to the Comintern. Bordiga, who had been in favor of abstention from parliamentary electoral activity at the Bologna Congress of 1919, but who had nevertheless formally remained in the PSI, addressed the Congress and declared his intention to lead the left out of the PSI and to form the Communist party. Bordiga next announced the expulsion of the PSI (now comprised only of the "Unitarians" and the "Reformists") from the Comintern, whereupon the Communists adjourned to another meeting hall in Leghorn and organized the Italian Communist Party as a section of the Third International. What is significant here is the inability of Moscow to influence the choice of leadership in the new PCI. Bordiga had not been the fair-haired boy of Moscow for two reasons: first of all, he had been an abstentionist, that is, he had been uncompromising in his attitude toward electoral participation at a time when Moscow had favored such a course as a

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[36]Hilton-Young, op. cit., p. 121.

[37]Mario Einaudi, Jean-Marie Domenach, Aldo Garosci, ed., Communism in Western Europe, Part III, "The Italian Communist Party," by Aldo Garosci, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1951), p. 157.

means of broadening the organizational base of the extreme left. Secondly, he had advocated secession from the PSI when it became obvious that most of its leaders were not uncompromising revolutionaries and able to act so in a crisis. Moscow had originally endeavored to convert Serrati, the PSI leader, to its point of view, and only after having failed in this, had Moscow decided to split the Socialist movement by backing the extreme left. Having decided this, the Kremlin tended to favor the Gramsci - Togliatti - Turin group centered around the publication, Ordine Nuovo, which it viewed as more amenable to Soviet policy.

Bordiga had expressed the view that the energies of Socialists, rather than being utilized in futile parliamentary activity, should be directed toward such revolutionary activities as the organization of Soviets and military groups which would be primed for the inevitable revolution.[38] Here, implicitly, is a Communist theory of "continuing" or "international" revolution, which has the flavor of a later Trotskyism that became focused in the Fourth International. In fact, Bordiga's heris in Italy, now merely a splinter group, differ from the Revolutionary Communist Groups (Trotskyists sic) only to the extent that the Bordiga group regards the USSR as a regime of State capitalism, while the Trotskyists consider it in the words of Trotsky himself "a degenerate working class State"[39] governed by a bureaucracy.

Bordiga appears to have been the chief beneficiary of the

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[38]Ibid., p. 159

[39]Leo Labedz, ed., Revisionism: Essays on the History of Marxist Ideas (New York: Frederick Praeger, Inc., 1956), p.325.

formation of the Communist Party. Despite lack of Moscow support, and at times against its outright opposition, Bordiga was emerging as the first leader of the new Communist party, over the Ordine Nuovo group, which had Moscow's blessing. The abstentionist was delayed, at the most, by Moscow, in his plans to force secession of the extreme left wing from the PSI. By delaying his separation until the Leghorn Congress, Bordiga was in fact able not only to realize his long-sought goal of separation, but also to abscond with a broader base for his extreme left faction. Between 1921 and 1926, the party became a chief exponent of abstentionism despite the opposition of the Comintern. Bordiga had obtained Moscow's support without completely subverting himself to its control. One of the chief frictionsin the new Communist group between the Bordiga faction and the Turin group became the question of the degree of Comintern control. Bordiga saw this international revolutionary organization more as a means of acquiring prestige, status, and legitimacy, rather than as a directing hand. Ideological controversy over this question, between the two groups, inevitably became manifest in a more substantive manner over the Comintern requirement that the cell unit of organization should be the basis for local organization. Up to the time of the formation of the PCI, the section unit of local organization had prevailed.[40]

Bordiga's successful intransigence within the Comintern continued at the Second Congress of the PCI in 1922, where his

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[40]Charles F. Delzell, "The Italian Anti-Fascist Emigration, 1922 - 1943," Journal of Central European Affairs, XII (April, 1952), p. 20 - 55, p. 38.

demands for a reasonable degree of autonomy of Bolshevik control were met by the Congress' decision to retain the section system whereby all members of a given locality were included as members of a unit. In other words, the geographical unit of party organization (section) which had to be swept away by all parties to the "Twenty-One Points" was retained.

Gramsci eventually triumphed on the organizational issue in 1925 when the cell system was finally accepted by the party. This action denoted the triumph of the Turin group in establishing the organizational principles laid down by the Comintern directing the "bolshevization" of the party. Gramsci had managed to prevail over Bordiga by the tactic of having a larger executive committee pass a resolution condemning the "Trotskyite" views of Bordiga and his faction. The 1926 Congress which had to be held in Lyons, France, because of the consummation of the Fascist takeover, expelled Bordiga from the executive committee. Gramsci was recognized as leader and Moscow for the first time presumably had an unquestionably obedient party in Italy.[41] But the victory was now somewhat hollow, as all political opposition to the Fascist regime had, by this time, been driven underground, imprisoned or forced out of the country.

The new Communist party had to endure these internal growing pains simultaneously with its assault on the PSI while it was also systematically being whittled down to a mere shadow by the Fascists. The task of the Communists as the newly-initiated representatives of world revolution in Italy was apparent. One of the enormous

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[41] Ibid.

objectives that lay before them was the infiltration of the working class movement which remained for the most part in the Socialist camp. The PCI, which had been born in order to do the job that the PSI had failed to do, apparently was unwilling or unable to accomplish this task. The PCI, which, by its very nature as a revolutionary party, should have had both the determination and the ability to function as a highly disciplined underground army to then successfully take the initiative against the Fascists. What then prevented the PCI from doing this?

The fundamental division within the PCI, between the Bordiga wing and the Turin group, almost from the very start of the party, rendered it an ineffective instrument in the struggle against Mussolini. The Fascist threat was treated within the context of historical determinism by Bordiga. This encouraged poor estimates of Fascist strength. Dismissing the Fascist movement as simply another bourgeois force that could not run contrary to the normal development of history, the Bordiga group convinced itself that it was impossible for the Fascists to "turn back the clock of time." Gramsci, on the other hand, saw pragmatic value in what he called "mechanistic" determinism, even though he considered it "vulgarization" of Marxism that should not be allowed to lull the leaders of the revolution into any illusions:

> . . . the class struggle seems to be a series of defeats for the working class. Mechanistic determinism is then a formidable morale builder making for cohesion, perseverence, patience and stubbornness. The worker says to himself, 'I have been defeated for the moment, but the logic of history works for me in the long run, etc.' What seems to be an act of individual will is actually an act of

> faith, a travesty . . . But when the oppressed class becomes the ruling class, responsible for the economic activity of the masses, then mechanistic determinism becomes a clear and present danger.[42]

Furthermore, Gramsci, unlike the Bordiga wing, was fully aware of the danger of the potential reaction that was to gain the upper hand in 1922. He wrote, in 1920:

> The actual phase of the class struggle in Italy is the phase which precedes one of two alternatives: wither the working class conquers political power, opening the way to new modes of production and distribution that will permit a renewal of productivity; or an enormous reactionary victory of the propertied class will take place, No violence will be overlooked to subdue the industrial and agricultural workers and to subject them to servile labor: they will try to smash inexorably and irretrievably the organs of political struggle of the working class (the Socialist party) and they will seek to incorporate the organs of economic struggle, the unions and the cooperatives, in the machine of the bourgeois state.[43]

As the strength of Fascism and D'Annunzio-type militant nationalism began to increase, Gramsci was aware that the new conditions required strategy designed to preserve civil liberties. This meant united-popular front tactics. Prior to the Worker's Front, initiated in 1922, the party had followed Bordiga's policy of non-collaboration with other parties. The shift to united front tactics was in keeping with Lenin's initiation of the "united front" but unfortunately it came too late for Italian conditions.[44] In March, 1924, Gramsci founded a new organ, L'Unita, to replace

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[42]Carl Marzani, The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci (New York: Cameron Associates, Inc., 1957), p. 8-9.
[43]Ibid., p. 11-12.
[44]Garosci, op. cit., p.162.

Ordine Nuovo, which had ceased publication in 1922, due to constant acts of terror on the part of the Fascists.[45] The very title of the new publication suggests an even greater emphasis on united front tactics and the demise of the Bordiga faction. The success of Gramsci in the dispute over tactics is further indicated by Gramsci's election as secretary of the party in 1924.

Between 1921 and 1924, the PCI had been rent by the constant friction between the "Bordiga faction" and Gramsci's Ordine Nuovo group. Bordiga was able to prevail at least until 1922, when his first setback came, as was indicated above; the PCI participated in the Worker's Front. Between 1922 and 1924, the two wings remained constantly divided on this issue, which is largely responsible for the Party's ineffectiveness during this period.

Setback after setback was suffered by the PCI in this disunified period. The Party's attempts to increase its influence over the working class by trying to infiltrate the CGL ended in failure. The Chamber of Labor in Turin, which was one of the strongholds of Communist trade union strength, was burned twice in 1922. In March, 1923, ten thousand Communists were arrested. Bordiga, Gramsci, Tasca and other prominent Communists were tried; but because civil liberties had not been completely suppressed by then, they were released by the regular judiciary.

The relentlessness and severity of the stepped-up attacks of violence on the part of the Fascist "Squadristi" ("storm troopers") was encouraged by the basic inherent disunity and weak-

[45]Antonio Gramsci, The Modern Prince and Other Writings, trans. Louis Marks (London: Lawrence and Wishart, Ltd., 1957, p. 17.
[46]Ibid., p. 164.

ness that the Fascist leadership had surmised to be present in the Marxist movement. Actually, about the time of the sit-down strikes and the Comintern debate, Mussolini was considering a deceleration of his campaign of violence. He had thought of forming a coalition with the Popular Party, the right wing of the trade unions, and even with the right of the Socialist Party, with himself at the head of the government. Such a move was opposed by certain militant nationalist elements in the Fascist movement, which joined Mussolini after the twilight of D'Annunzio's Nationalist movement. This merger came about when the D'Annunzio faction had been dislodged at Fiume by Italian troops.[47] In fact, Mussolini actually signed an accord with the Socialists, agreeing to end his campaign of terror; however, this militant-nationalist faction was in favor of an all-out campaign to stamp out all Socialists' influence in the political arena and in the working class movement. The faction was large enough and influential enough to induce a large percentage of the Fascist movement to repudiate the pact, whereupon Mussolini resigned his leadership of the movement. A short time later, he repudiated the agreement he had made with the Socialists and resumed his leadership role in the Fascist movement; however, now he faced restraints on the execution of the plan to liquidate Socialist and trade union sovreignty.[48]

After the "march on Rome," which culminated in Mussolini's accession to the Prime Ministership, he did not suppress the

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[47]Cole, op. cit., p. 383.
[48]Ibid., p. 386.

opposition immediately. "Legal" political freedom existed until late 1925, although "de facto" freedom was increasingly constricted. Coercion by the Fascist militia in the form of physical violence was the major method of sweeping away the vestiges of political freedom that remained after Mussolini's unconstitutional rise to power.

In 1924, the Fascists managed to acquire a majority through a new election law (which was passed with the help of the Popular Party, which had become increasingly conservative mainly because of the prodding of Pius XI and certain parochial elements who feared Socialist revolution) under which the party or coalition receiving the largest plurality would get two-thirds of the total number of seats, even if it were a minority of the total.[49]

On May 30, 1924, Giacomo Matteotti, a rising young Reformist Socialist stood in the Chamber and proceeded to deliver a condemnation of unconstitutional Fascist tactics that singled out, particularly, Mussolini's conduct of the recent election. Matteotti was hooted down by the Fascist deputies. Ten days later he was kidnapped by five Fascist thugs, murdered and thrown into a ditch where his body lay undiscovered for two months. Public wrath as a result of this action was uncontrollable, forcing Mussolini to make a public display of punishing the five suspects who had been identified by witnesses who saw them commit the act. The five men were tried and given prison terms. Fascist control was then relaxed for about six months.[50]

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[49] Ibid., p. 388.
[50] Young, op. cit., p. 139.

During these six months no effort was made by the Socialist and Communist deputies to regain a meaningful foothold in the parliament. Instead, they sought to make a last-ditch effort to shake the Fascist stranglehold on Italian society by withdrawing from the Chamber in protest. The withdrawal became known as the "Aventine," which was a reference to Caius Gracchus and his supporters who gathered around the Temple of Diana on the Aventine Hill.

Gramsci, having prevailed in his intra-party struggle to establish the popular front idea, led the Communist deputies out of the Chamber along with other members of the opposition (150 in all). This secession was precisely what the Comintern had been opposed to all along; in fact it was the very "abstentionism" that Bordiga had advocated. Nevertheless, it was true to the principle of united front collaboration. It is interesting to note that abstentionism, to which Moscow was opposed, and united front, which Moscow supported, happened to be one and the same in this case. Gramsci's decision to place the united front idea above parliamentary participation (the antithesis of abstentionism) proved to be a disasterous action for the PCI. Later, the party, realizing its mistake, left the Aventine and returned to the Chamber. Needless to say, the Aventine Secession proved to be a disaster for the entire left.

Had Gramsci been as astute in 1924 as he had been in 1920 when he recognized that Fascism was not an ordinary bourgeois movement, he would have immediately realized the futility of forcing Mussolini to resign at the sight of a mere protest of

opposition deputies. The "Aventine" in fact, served to underline the lack of potency of the anti-Fascist opposition. It simply met periodically to reaffirm its opposition to Fascist unconstitutionality. It had no particular action program based on a position of strength to use as a means of dislodging the Fascists.

At any rate, Gramsci belatedly realized the futility of getting the Aventine to agree to decisive action. Then he decided to lead the Communist deputies back into the Chamber where he continued to condemn the Fascists. Gramsci's return was well timed in the sense that it preceded Mussolini's permanent exclusion of the Aventine members from the Chamber on the ground that they "had forfeited their seats by absenting themselves for six months."[51] His decisive action contrasted with the obvious impotence of the Socialists and other opposition parties. Heretofore the PCI's prestige was considerably enhanced as one of the directors in the fight against Fascism.[52]

Mussolini's speech in January, 1925, informing the Aventine of its exclusion was accompanied by a statement denying any responsibility for Matteotti's murder. Shortly after, the anti-Fascist opposition was further suppressed through press censorship, special political courts and the granting of exclusive bargaining rights to the newly-formed Fascist Labor Unions.[53]

On November 9, 1926, Mussolini launched a series of arrests of opposition party leaders. Most of the PCI's executive

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[51]Cole, op. cit., p. 389.
[52]Gramsci, loc. cit.
[53]Cole, op. cit., p. 390.

committee was arrested, including Gramsci, Terracini and Bordiga. Togliatti escaped arrest only because he was in Moscow attending the Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee, to which he was the Italian delegate.[54] The less fortunate ones were given stiffer prison terms, from which they never emerged alive (with the exception of Gramsci, who was released in 1937, only to die a month later). From that time to 1943, the PCI functioned as an underground organization, with the top leadership spending most of its time in exile.

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[54]R. W., "Togliatti: Master of Maneuver," Communist Affairs I (Nov,-Dec), p. 21.

CHAPTER III

TOGLIATTI LEADS ITALIAN COMMUNISM BACK TO THE ITALIAN STYLE OF POLITICS

Introduction

In addition to silencing the revolutionary left, suppression of the non-Fascist parliamentary opposition by Mussolini also symbolized the bankruptcy of all non-totalitarian political groupings, whether Giolittian or liberal democratic. The mass media of communication, the educational system, the courts and the police were firmly drawn under Fascist control between 1925 and 1930. By 1930 the church, the crown and the armed forces had been thoroughly neutralized.

So ended Italy's experience with parliamentary forms, and with it the retardation of Italian Marxist evolution into a full-fledged participant in the political struggle Italian style (la lotta politica italiana). The PCI, which came into existence through foreign (Bolshevik) inspiration, began the arduous task of accumulating a broad mass following through their appeals, designed to exploit the peculiar circumstances of the Fascist regime. Superior Communist organization and financing by weak Socialist party organization and poor financing radically reduced competition from the other major Marxist parties. While the program of radical reconstruction of society was distilled from international

Communism on the one hand, appeals to Italian nationalism, culture and temperament gave to Italian Communism what later became known as its polycentric character. Palmiro Togliatti perfected this technique.

In pre-Fascist Italy, the Marxist movement had taken a road that led it away from proper understanding of the Italian political style. The PCI, in the twilight of the Fascist regime, was determined that the error of too rigid an ideological position on the part of the radical left would not be committed a second time. Hence the vacuum left by the fall of the Fascist regime was at least partially filled by a Marxist movement that did not disdain political participation within the framework of the bourgeois state.

From the very beginning of the renewal of Constitutional government in post-war Italy, the Communist party was in the center of the stage, and thus was forced to become a skillful practitioner of a modern trasformismo.

A. Italian Marxism Reaches Its Low Point

The imprisonment of most of the PCI executive committee and consolidation of Fascist totalitarian control led to a temporary collapse of the Communist underground. Suppression of all anti-Fascist opposition brought about emigration of those Communist leaders who managed to elude capture in the initial wave of arrests. Most PCI leaders fled to France where they set up a line of communication with the mere outline of a party that remained in Italy. The Communist "emigre" press in Paris published Stato Operaio (Workers' State) until 1939. Vita Operaia (Workers' Life) was another Communist "emigre" publication. The Communist press also printed various pamphlets plus other forms of mass printed matter.[55]

These activities were not very spectacular, and attracted little attention in Italy. The Comintern expressed dissatisfaction with the PCI's tactics as an underground organization. It hoped that the party would make greater efforts to infiltrate Fascist mass organizations. The Comintern's lack of appreciation of the futility of such actions in a totalitarian state is further shown by its insistence on organized strikes, factory meetings of workers, and so on. Such tactics had been employed with little success, even before complete totalitarian suppression.

Between 1926 and 1928 the PCI, following the direction of

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[55]Delzell, op. cit., p. 39.

the Comintern, pursued a united front policy. Fascism was the major target of Communist agitation. Non-Communist anti-Fascist groups were ordinarily not attacked; when they were, it was only on the charge of being complacent in the struggle. After the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Stalinist policy dictated a shift in emphasis from the Fascist target alone to all non-Communists. Social democracy was now considered nothing less than Fascism and labeled "social fascism." The PCI was now required, according to Comintern dictates, to attack all non-Communist Socialists.[56]

Such indiscriminate grouping together of Fascists and Socialists caused a significant amount of turmoil within the party. Not only were the Communists handicapped in their subversive activities by this new directive, but certain important key leaders openly expressed their disapproval. Among the dissidents were such men as Angelo Tasca and Ignazio Silone. In September of 1929, Tasca was expelled from the party as a Bukharinite; in July, 1931, Silone, who had been disenchanted with the Stalin movement long before that time, was also officially expelled for the same reason.[57] These two men had desired a broad anti-Fascist alliance, the absence of which, throughout most of the period between 1919 and 1926, had been largely responsible for Mussolini's success. Ever since the formation of the party, this had been an issue between the Bordiga faction and the Ordine Nuovo group. Togliatti had, from the very start, been second only to Gramsci in the latter group. What then was his reaction to Moscow's liquidation of the

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[56]Garosci, op. cit., p. 39.
[57]R. W., op. cit., p. 170.

Right Opposition in Russia and its subsequent demands, through the Comintern, that all local Communist parties follow suit in denouncing Bukharin and all Communists everywhere who could be identified with his orientation?

Togliatti had advanced between 1924 and 1927 mainly because the Turin Communists had been opposed to Bordiga's internationalism and "continuing revolution" from the very beginning of the PCI and even before. Therefore when Bordiga had been identified with Trotsky, justly or unjustly, Togliatti had been one of the chief beneficiaries, along with Gramsci, particularly in terms of Moscow support. However, in 1928 and 1929, Togliatti was not very enthusiastic in his denunciation of Bukharinism, and in fact was actually accused by Moscow of "Bukharin-like vacillation." He lamented the new Comintern tactics of "class against class" because it presaged the isolation of the PCI from the rest of the anti-Fascist bloc. This was apparently the juncture at which Togliatti made the decision which all Communists who survived the purges of the 1930's had to make eventually; that is, the decision to be on Stalin's "side" regardless of how frequently and crassly the Stalinist position changed.[58] Was it abeyance of conscience, ambition, the will to survive, or unscrupulousness? It could have been any of these or a combination. Togliatti was an immensely complex personality; his motivations are no doubt beyond our competency to determine. In any event, Togliatti made the decision to submit himself to Stalin's whims on the occasion of the elimination of the Bukharin Right Opposition. He did not raise an

[58] Ibid.

open word against Stalin from about 1930 to 1956.[59] Word and action differ, however, and from 1944, when he returned to Italy, until 1956, after the 20th Party Congress when he joined the chorus of denunciation of Stalin, many of his actions did not reflect Stalinist views.

We do know one thing: Togliatti's faithful recantation of Stalinist slogans between 1930 and 1944, did not cost Togliatti and Italian Communism very much. Mussolini had such a tight control over all political activity in Italy that these slogans had little effect one way or the other on the Italian working class.

Silone tells us that Togliatti was impatient with Moscow's apparent lack of insight into the specifically local problems of the PCI, particularly vis-a-vis the Fascists. Specifically, Silone says that the International, as it was constituted, left a lot to be desired, but it was the result of objective historical factors and it was necessary to wait until these changed.[60]

During the period between 1929 and 1934, Togliatti faithfully executed the new policy of the Comintern. He proceeded to attack Fascism as the "militant organization of the bourgeoisie based on the active support of social democracy," which was Stalin's new definition. He served notice that the PCI would not participate in any "emigré" anti-Fascist combinations, be they sponsored by Socialists, Republicans or non-Communist trade unions. Togliatti picked at any patriotic democratic Socialist groups, even if their sole reason for existence was to combat Fascism. An example was

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

the Roselli brothers' Justice and Liberty organization. He attacked Nenni and Saragat, the newly-emerging leader of the Reformist, right-wing Socialists.[61]

Following Hitler's rise to power in Germany, the Comintern reversed its policy and sanctioned the new popular front strategy. It was now officially correct to collaborate with the Socialists and other democratic anti-Fascist groups. In keeping with the new policy and in the aftermath of an attempted Right-wing coup against the Third French Republic, Togliatti, who was in France at the time, emulated the French Communist Party and made a pact with the left-wing Socialist (Nenni) which opened the way for a broad popular front with all democratic parties.

The PCI pursued popular front tactics from 1934 through the Ethiopian Crisis and the Spanish Civil War. The party supported League sanctions against Mussolini for his invasion of Ethiopia. The other popular front groups were persuaded to join the PCI in this action, which proved to be quite a feat; national resentment was at a fever pitch, even among rabidly anti-Fascist groups, as Italy was cast in the role of international villain by world opinion and the League.

The PCI helped to organize the Garibaldi Battalion of the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. Togliatti emphasized the "international" nature of the struggle, but was always careful to subordinate questions of democracy, anti-Fascism and national liberation, to the interests of the Soviet state.

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[61] Ibid.

It is believed that Togliatti played his part in the physical elimination of those participants on the Republican side whose policies and philosophies were inimical to Stalin -- particularly Trotskyists and Anarchists.[62]

The measure of the success of Communist Popular Front tactics in the Garibaldi battalion in Spain lies in the fact that the party was so conscientious in hiding its domination. "Justice and Liberty" was the only anti-Fascist group that refused to "join" this military unit even though it (J and L) was a member of the Popular Front; it participated in Spain as a separate unit.[63] Luigi Longo, later leader of the Italian Partisan resistance, number two man in the post-war PCI, and finally successor to Togliatti as leader, upon his death, was the political comissar of the Garibaldi Battalion. This unit proved to be one of the more efficient ones in the Brigade. Communist political direction of other political groups seemed to be neither resented nor a handicap to efficient, cohesive functioning. The same smooth direction was later to be applied by the PCI in the Italian anti-Fascist - Nazi resistance toward the end of World War II. Again, the Communists played a major role in leadership and organization, and it was neither resented nor rejected by the other political groups.

After the fall of Barcelona, Togliatti made his way back to France and from there to Belgium, and finally to the USSR where he remained until the allies invaded southern Italy.

The signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact caused another reversal

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[62] Ibid., p. 24.
[63] Delzell, op. cit., p. 41.

in Popular Front policy. Approximately at the time of the pact, the PCI, which was then temporarily an appendage of the French party, was attending the conference of that party which was to decide policy in the event of war. Togliatti designated himself as in favor of continuing the anti-Fascist Popular Front. On August 23, 1939, when the Nazi-Soviet Pact was announced, Togliatti obediently and immediately reversed his decision and the PCI dutifully but reluctantly refrained from attacking the Fascists.[64] Popular Front tactics were quickly resumed with the German invasion of the USSR.

The conquest of France caused most of the Italian Communists who had emigrated there, and who did not become politically inactive by going into hiding, to be arrested by the Germans and turned over to the Fascist authorities. Most of the major leaders were confined on a prison island close to Naples. Included in this group were Longo, Roveda, Secchia and DiVittorio. This island served as a sort of command post for the Italian resistance.[65] The incarcerated PCI leaders maintained liason with outside functionaries who laid the groundwork in the reconstitution of the Italian underground, which had been reduced to a mere shadow of its former existence.

Therefore, when Mussolini fell in 1943, the Communists merely had to finish the work of resuscitation of their apparatus in the north which had already begun; the Fascist regime was

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[64]Garosci, op. cit., p. 172.
[65]Delzell, op. cit., p. 175.

in the last throes of its independent (i. e. of the Germans') existence. Such activity still had to be carried out underground as the Germans were in control of the north until 1945. However there was now a foreign occupation, a fact that made it an easy matter to recruit underground workers and resistance fighters. What's more, Mussolini's new northern Italian Social Republic was so obviously a quisling regime of the Germans, with little or no autonomy, that what little polular support the Fascists had had in the difficult years between 1940 and 1943, as military defeat mounted upon defeat, practically disappeared between 1943 and 1945.

Herein lies an important and crucial period in the evolution of the PCI to rank as the major mass party of post war Italy. The organizational preparedness of the PCI to swing into vigorous action has already been cited. Analysis of the background of the Italian Marxist movement has indicated that originally the PCI had little mass support in comparison to other mass parties, particularly the Socialist and Popular parties. In the underground period between 1926 and 1943, actual PCI membership has been estimated at between fifteen-hundred and three thousand members. Yet after 1943, the party returned to active political life as the great mass party of Italy, holding the support, if not the allegiance, of a majority of the working class. Possibly more important in evaluating the PCI's new status as the chief mass party was its ability to obtain control over the major mass economic and social organizations, particularly the trade unions, a

control which it had never possessed before. Consequently, it is pertinent to investigate how and why the PCI was able to set itself up as the genuine mass party of Italy.

B. Launching of the "Italian Road to Socialism" -- the PCI Becomes a Truly Mass Party

When Togliatti shed the ill-cut Soviet-made suit that he wore when he arrived in Naples from Moscow in 1944, he also shed, for the most part, the Stalinist role he had played since the anti-Bukharin campaign. To be sure he was to continue to pay lip service to the demands of Soviet foreign policy, but only on a few occasions (the Trieste crisis, in the opinion of the author, being most prominent) was his ideological subjugation to Stalin in the area of cold war politics to weaken the position of the PCI in the Italian political arena.

Togliatti's lieutenants had played a major role in launching the great strikes of March, 1943. (Some had taken place as early as December, 1942). The March strikes demonstrated the lack of control that the Fascist regime exercised over the masses by this time. The success of Communists in the popular front and their underground and resistance tactics made it possible for them to exercise a high degree of influence in the strikes. After the fall of Mussolini and the release of the imprisoned Communist leaders, another im portant step in consolidating control over the trade unions was the appointment of the Communist Giovanni Roveda as one of the three commissioners of the workers' confederations. The monarchist government that had succeeded Mussolini in the south, incorporated the former Fascist trade union organization

under the control of the commission. This fact and the appointment of Roveda created fertile ground for future Communist control of a substantial portion of the trade union movement. With the revival of the old G. G. L. and the centralization under it of many workers' groups which, before Fascism, had been independent, the PCI was in the position to subvert the working class movement to its own interests.[66] Communist organizational skill, coupled with the new popular front and the resistance made it possible to strap newly-revived local unions to the side of centralized authority. The resistance itself combined labor, political and military activities under a highly centralized, though multi-lateral, organization.

Immediately after the fall of Fascism, King Victor Immanuel appointed Marshal Pietro Badoglio as Prime Minister at the head of a ministry composed of non-Fascist ultra-Conservatives and Monarchists. Hastily, a loose alliance of six democratic parties was formed in which the PCI participated. This alliance, however, was not legally recognized by the Badoglio government and constituted a sort of "shadow" opposition whose first objective was to influence the royal government to sign an immediate armistice with the Allies. Badoglio delayed in hopes of bargaining for better terms. The delay gave the Germans the needed time to assemble enough troops along the Brenner and then, in one quick action, to occupy all of northern Italy.[67]

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[66]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 180.
[67]Hughes, op. cit., p. 131.

As the Germans advanced on Rome, the Badoglio government fled to Brindisi in Apulia (in the heel of the boot) where it continued to function under allied protection. From that time on it was to follow the allied advance until it reached Rome.

After failing to influence the royal government to sign a speedy armistice, the shadow opposition demanded the abdication of the king and the establishment of true party government. Further, only when these conditions were met, would they participate in the government. The PCI, continuing its popular front policy went along with the opposition six. However, in the spring of 1944, Togliatti arrived upon the scene, reassumed directly the reins of the PCI and immediately announced that the Communists would participate in the government under any conditions, including the continued presence of the king on the throne, at least for the time being. Also, he had no objections to collaborating in the same government with the former Fascist, Badoglio.[68]

Consequently, a six-party cabinet was formed on April 20, 1944, with Badoglio as Prime Minister, and Benedetto Croce (the noted Italian philosopher), Count Carlo Sforza and Togliatti as ministers without portfolio.[69]

The PCI had gone full circle from the 1920's when it had condemned reformist Socialist participation in governments that were actually more oriented in the working class direction than was Badoglio's. But it is only accurate to point out that Togliatti's

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[68]R. W., loc. cit.,
[69]Hilton-Young, op. cit., p. 167.

and Gramsci's views regarding parliamentary participation in the early 1920's did not prevail over Bordiga's.

The concept of the struggle for political power had been a major element of Gramsci's thought. Power should come first, so that the economic condition of the working class could thus be improved later.[70] Togliatti's eagerness to participate in a government composed of Monarchists, 19th century Liberals and even former Fascists goes even further than Gramsci's. Whereas Gramsci (and Togliatti) in the 1920's had believed that participation in parliament should be an opposition force in coalition with other working class and reformist parties, Togliatti, in 1944, went even further and sanctioned actual participation in a government, which included reactionary and even bourgeois parties. A trip to the king's palace by Turati, merely to discuss the possibility of participation in a coalition that would have included the Popular Party and a few other liberal republican groups, led to his expulsion in 1922 by the Socialist party.[71] The contrast between the Reformist Turati's action in 1922 and the supposed revolutionary Togliatti's collaboration in 1944, and the consequences of each respective case suggests not only a significant evolution in the orientation of Togliatti's ideology and strategy, but also a basic change in the political climate of post-Fascist Italy.

Togliatti's 1944 announcement, which marked the beginning

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[70]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 12
[71]Cole, op. cit., p. 87.

of the post-war growth of the PCI as more a revisionary party and less a revolutionary one, cannot be dismissed as a shift of tactics on the part of Stalin. He reiterated incessantly between 1944 and 1948 his determination to cooperate indefinitely with the Socialists and Christian Democrats for the creation of a democratic republic.[72]

Togliatti's endeavors to create a truly "national" rather than a "class" party is further illustrated by his attitude toward the problem of the Italian south. The Communist party "would appeal to all groups including Catholics, peasants, and members of the bourgeoisie -- no matter what they believed. . ."[73]

Recognition by Togliatti of the necessity to acquire the support of peasants, Catholics and traditionalists resembled the national Communism that is to be found in much of the underdeveloped world. Southern Italy's problems, to a great extent, called for solutions that might well be applied in the Middle East and North Africa.

Again, the Gramsci influence on Togliatti is evident. Just before he was arrested in 1926, Gramsci had become preoccupied with the problem of the South. In his writing on the South, he tries to show that decisive changes in Italian political, social and economic structure could come about only through the unified action of the workers of the industrial North and the peasants of the agrarian South. Gramsci states:

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[72]R. W., op. cit., p. 24-25.
[73]Ibid., p. 25.

> The proletariat will destroy the southern agrarian bloc to the extent to which through its Party, it succeeds in organizing even larger masses of peasants . . but it will succeed in a more or less large extent in this obligatory task according to its capacity to break up the intellectual bloc which forms the flexible but very resistant armour of the agrarian bloc. . . This work is gigantic and difficult, but precisely because of this it is worthy of every sacrifice . . .on the part of those intellectuals of the North and the South (and they are many more than one thinks), who have understood that only two social forces are essentially national and the bearers of the future: the proletariat and the peasants. . .[74]

Togliatti's adherence to Gramsci's ideas on the South is manifest in activities in the area of land reforms. The PCI was extremely critical of the Chrisitan Democratic land reforms which involved certain spectacular, highly-publicized projects which did not begin to solve the problem. The official PCI program for land reform called for the sweeping transfer to peasants of all land-holdings more than 250 acres large. This was unrealistic as a proposal in itself and nothing more than a show of theoritical display of faith with Leninist theory. But the more moderate and pragmatic tone of the post-war PCI is illustrated by its preoccupation with the more technical problems of administering what inadequate land reform legislation the Christian Democrats did pass. The Communists were dissatisfied with the administrative units used by the government to redistribute expropriated land, and suggested the use of co-operatives instead. The Communists also attacked the quality of the land marked for distribution. Government administrators were also accused of favoritism in the distribution

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[74]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 57.

of the richer plots.[75]

Collaboration by the PCI in the government continued through the duration of the war. The party received the strategic Ministry of Justice in the Bonomi government (left of center) but failed to get the other two key ministeries, interior and defense. This hardly proved to be a tragedy to the Italian Communists, in view of the presence of the British and American forces that would have made a Communist seizure impossible anyway. We know from Togliatti's writings that he considered the balance of internal and external forces disadvantageous to a Communist take-over. Under such conditions, he felt the best policy was for the PCI to identify with the democratization of Italy in the process with the support and loyalty of the majority of the working class.[76]

This more moderate policy was continued even after Stalin announced the end of the wartime "Grand Alliance" in February, 1946, and with it, the suspension of the popular front and the re-imposition of the class struggle. The events in Greece vindicated Togliatti's policy. In 1947, he is reputed to have told his representatives, departing for the first Cominform meetings, that if Italian Communists were criticized for not being successful revolutionary tacticians, to reply that "we could not transform Italy into a second Greece, and that is in the interest not only of ourselves but also of the Soviets."[77]

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[75]"Progress in Italian Land Reform," World Today, VIII (January, 1952), p. 104-111.

[76]R. W., op. cit., p. 25.

[77]Ibid.

Despite Stalin's rejection of popular front tactics, Togliatti renewed the 1930's pact that he had promulgated with Nenni. The pinnacle of his policy of collaboration could very well have been his support of the Lateran pacts, a direct contradiction of Communist anti-clericalism.[78]

The crossroads at which Togliatti had to finally make a stand on his moderate-democratic policy came in 1948 when the presence of the cold war finally became impressed upon men's minds. Would Togliatti call forth his proven resiliency and abruptly shift to more revolutionary tactics of class struggle? He chose to continue in the tradition of Gramsci and heed the balance of social and economic forces, both internal and external. Despite fierce condemnation in the Cominform and in the Soviet press, Togliatti continued to vie for a broad base for his party. The attack on Togliatti's life gave the more "sectarian" elements in the party the pretext for which they had been searching in order to launch a major campaign of violence, strikes and riots that for a day or two seemed to portend revolution. The uprising was quelled. Togliatti lived and when he returned to take charge of the party again, the "sectarians" were removed from positions of authority and responsibility.[79] The defeat of the Communist-Socialist list in April, 1948, and the crisis stemming from the assasination attempt of July of that same year, turned the PCI into an opposition party. But the future course of the party as a reforming force in Italian society had been permanently

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[78]Ibid.
[79]Ibid.

charted. The PCI had driven firm roots into Italian society; it had grown from a splinter group into the largerst mass party in Italy, and it had constructed a highly efficient electoral machine which it had all intentions of using as the best way or the "Italian road" to socialism.

C. Italianization of an Alien Ideology -- Gramsci and Togliatti: The Polycentrists

> . . . diversities between one country and the other are rather great. That is why every party must know how to act in an autonomous manner, The autonomy of parties of which we are decisive champions is not just an internal necessity for our movement but an essential condition for our development under present conditions.
>
> Therefore we would be against any proposal to create once again a centralized international organization. We are firm supporters of the unity of our movement and of the international workers movement, but this unity must be achieved in the diversity of our political positions, conforming to the degree of development in each country.[80]

The above words of Palmiro Togliatti, from his testament, were written expressly for Khrushchev, but because of Togliatti's untimely death, became the property of his heirs within the PCI and were subsequently published. The quote is typical of the "polycentrist" Togliatti at the latest stage of his ideological development.

The memorandum which represents the very antithesis of statements made by Togliatti in his days as a Stalinist (particularly during the 1930's) may very well have its roots deep in the early intellectual molding of Togliatti's political personality, as well as in the processes of social and economic change in Italy.

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[80]Palmiro Togliatti, "Text of Memorandum on World Communist Topics," New York Times (September 5, 1964), p. 2.

Togliatti faced many challenges in his lifetime as a Communist. Most of them required a well-developed adaptative mechanism to which Togliatti's legacy is ample testimony.

Togliatti first coined the term "polycentric" in an interview with Nuovi Argomenti in 1956:

> The Soviet model should no longer be obligatory. . . The complex of the system is becoming polycentric, and in the Communist movement itself one can no longer speak of a single guide.[81]

We were witnessing at the time of the Nuovi Argomenti interview, a Togliatti who was inaugurating a process of major readjustment of Italian Communist theory in line with strategies that had been employed since 1944. This process was not to be entirely completed by the time of Togliatti's death in 1964. However, the memorandum laid the groundwork for whether a final disposition of the process which would permit the PCI to remain a continuing force in shaping the course of Italian social and economic life, or a degeneration into an ideological debate that would split the movement in two. If the latter transpires, the party would no doubt become more isolated from the mainstream of Italian politics than it has ever been since 1944. Togliatti's flexibility has caused ideological flux in the past, as has the sensitivity of all Communist parties to any local pressure, particularly in Western Europe, and more recently in Eastern Europe. But ideological strain within the PCI has never taken the form of a major schism since its founding. Possibly because of Togliatti's leadership, even the turmoil caused by de-Stalinization after 1956

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[81]Labedz, op. cit., p. 327.

did not become the occasion for a major split; hence the decline of the PCI as a major pressure group in Italy was avoided.

Certain "revisionist" groupings within the party did develop which saw a contradiction between Togliatti's renewed emphasis on parliamentary democracy, with a new ideological vigor after 1956, and his acquiesence in the repressiveness of Stalinism, not only in the USSR, but in the satellites (particularly Hungary). These factions claim that it was impossible for the PCI to present itself as an advocate of liberal democracy in the light of this contradiction. At any rate, those who identified with this position began to view the PCI as having embraced the outlook of orthodox reformist Marxism, which accepted the political trappings of bourgeois society (such as democratic liberties) as permanent inheritances of social and cultural change. Moreover, having permanently acquired democratic libertarian institutions from bourgeois society, mankind would have the opportunity to develop and perfect them further, not only in the gradual march to socialism, but also after socialism had been achieved.[82]

Transplanted to this time-honored gradualist Marxist tradition by these deviant factions within the PCI, was "the influence of modern sociology, of neo-positivism, of Gramsci in his factory council period, and of the idea of the 'leadership of the proletariat' in antithesis to the more rigid conception of dictatorship."[83]

New publications sprang up which have expression to the

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[82] Ibid., p. 328.
[83] Ibid.

various shades of color among these right-leaning segments. Tempi Moderni, edited by Fabrizio Onofori, a former PCI central committee member, and Passato e Presente, dominated by Giovanni Giolitti, a former Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, are two of these organs. Eugenio Reale, a former Communist Senator, inspired the weekly Corrispondenza Socialista. Reale led his faction out of the PCI and into the PSDI (Social Democratic Party of Italy). Giolitti. eventually became a PSI deputy in the Chamber .[84]

Another persuasion that manifest an aberrant reaction within the PCI. to Khrushchev's secret speech at the 20th Party Congress, was found in the internationalist-Trotskyist groups. This trend included the survivors of the Bordiga faction, who were gathered in the International Communist Party, and the Revolutionary Communist Groups (Trotskyists). These splinter groups, lacking a popular following, criticized the PCI principles, in domestic as well as the international realm, and its complicity with Stalinism. These left-wing groups adopted an "I told you so" attitude in reaction to the 20th Congress disclosures. The Trotskyists emphasized Khrushchev's attacks on Stalinist bureaucracy, whereas the Bordiga "internationalists" singled out Khrushchev's reforms as a means to illustrate the tendency away from socialism that was progressing in the Soviet socio-economic system.[85]

Within the PCI, a group whose views approximated the "left-wing internationalists" outside the party, gained impetus as the events of 1956 unfolded. The group centered around the

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[84]Ibid., p. 329.
[85]Ibid., p 329.

organ, Lettere ai Compagni, and was known as the "Azione Communista." This faction focused on criticism of the PCI parliamentary approach pursued since 1944, and repudiated the party leadership's view that working class power could be achieved without violent revolution. As this group's ideological position began to resemble more the left-wing international groups outside the party, particularly in its insistence upon the Leninist postulate of violent revolution, it too was expelled from the party.[86]

The basic Leninist structure of the PCI which did not permit ideological deviation from the leadership's point of view is ample testimony of the continuing adherence to the principle of "democratic centralism." Giolitti and Reale on the right, and other divergent opinions on the left could not co-exist in the same party with Togliatti and the official position of the leadership, given the continuing Leninist structure of the party. In other words, in internal organization, the PCI remained Leninist-centrist although autonomy of Moscow was successfully established. Spiritual accord with the C. P. S. U. was retained, particularly to the extent that it enabled the PCI to rationalize its long identification with Moscow. Complete renunciation of approximately forty years of conjugal, if not passionate, union with the Moscow party, would have loomed as so unabashed a "svolta" (turnabout) that the PCI's already proven ability to organize and retain significant portions of the electorate would have been severely impaired. Worse still, future obstacles to expanding electoral sup-

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[86]Ibid., p. 328.

port, on which is contingent the success of the "Italian road to socialism" would become insurmountable. Basic understanding of this dilemma of the PCI is demonstrated by K. S. Karol, when, in discussing the legacy of Togliatti , he says ". . . for a man who has given the best years of his life to creating such a valuable prize as the Italian CP, the risk of smashing it must seem equally unacceptable."[87]

It was evident that up to a few months before his death, Togliatti had not buried the ghost of Leninist-centrism. Even as apocalyptic a figure as Gramsci, in Togliatti's eyes is not allowed to become a wedge for abandoning monolithic control and organization of the PCI. It seems that Gramsci, in 1926, had written a letter to Moscow, as spokesman for the PCI, protesting the unfortunate treatment of Trotsky and the left-opposition. This was a story that had been circulated by Italian Trotskyists ever since Trotsky's elimination from the Soviet political scene. Some of these Trotskyites had been close friends of Gramsci when they were still in the PCI. They claimed that Gramsci had addressed the letter to Togliatti, who was then Italian Comintern delegate in Moscow. Togliatti had always avoided acknowledgement of the incident and the letter. However, in the summer of 1964 (two months before his death) Togliatti not only confessed to having received a letter, but also published his version of its contents in Rinascita, the principal weekly of the PCI. A copy of the letter was not to be found in the PCI archives because Togliatti

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[87]K. S. Karol, "The Legacy of Togliatti," New Statesman (August 21, 1964), p. 242.

claimed to have given it to Bukharin. Nonetheless, having taken notes upon receipt of the letter, Togliatti claims to have been able to recreate its text fairly accurately. In addition, Togliatti published his reply to Gramsci.[88]

Togliatti published Gramsci's letter, in the opinion of Karol, as a PCI counter in the Sino-Soviet dispute. What is important in this correspondence for the present analysis of Leninist-centrism in the Italian party, is not Gramsci's call for mercy in regard to Trotsky and his friends, but Togliatti expressing dismay and disapproval that Gramsci should be critical of Stalin and his clique, particularly that he should infer that Stalinists "were capable of taking unreasonable measures" against the minority.[89]

Togliatti is so concerned that the world understand the continuing Leninist nature of the party that he is willing to use the "founding father" and "patron saint" of Italian Communism to illustrate that no one, no matter how high or revered, can violate party discipline after a decision has been taken by the leadership. It is possible to interpret Togliatti's motives in divulging his long-kept secret, as a means of suggesting a possible rehabilitation of Trotsky through the back door. In that case, it is interesting that he should use the same vehicle, both to "resurrect Trotsky" and to posit a stern reminder of unquestioned party centralism. The former would be directed toward widening

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[88]K. S. Karol, "Togliatti Resurrects Trotsky," New Statesman, Vol. 67 (June 19, 1964), p. 938-940.

[89]Ibid., p. 940.

the base of the party, the latter to ensure continued functioning of democratic centralism within the party.

That the PCI will be at cross purposes by seeking a consensus on one hand and maintaining monolithic control on the other is again explicitly suggested by Karol:

> Togliatti had abandoned with a good deal of finesse the greater part of his Stalinist dogma, but not that part of it which postulated monolithic discipline inside each party and the unchallengeable authority of its leadership. On this he has been fighting a losing battle. He is too clearheaded not to know that unanimity at the apex of the party can never be permanent, and that in the last resort the base has to be called in to arbitrate on the divergencies of the leadership. He always foresaw that the novel experience of public disputation between Italian Communists would begin when he had gone.[90]

Gramsci's 1926 protest letter to Moscow exposes the anti-Stalinist flank in the PCI from its early history. An earlier chapter of this study referred to Togliatti's basic distaste with the Stalin camp at the time of the anti-Bukharin onslaught. Togliatti then made the decision to survive as a directing force in the PCI and compromised himself with the most obvious victor. Gramsci, on the other hand, never had to make that choice as he was imprisoned by Mussolini, never to emerge again as an active politician. It has also been indicated that Gramsci was undergoing an ideological transformation about the time of his capture. This evolution in the Italian theorist's thought has been mentioned particularly in reference to the southern question. Gramsci's thought contains three major stages: the first was his factory

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[90]Karol, "The Legacy of Togliatti," p. 242.

council period (1919-20); secondly, in 1920-21, he allotted an important role to the primary function of the party; and lastly, attached great significance to the party in enacting the role of leading a revolution in an underdeveloped country (1924-26).[91]

Togliatti emphasized any one of these stages of Gramsci's thought to unify PCI actions with theory in any given situation when it suited his purpose. In all three stages, the peculiar character and interests of Italian conditions are manifest. Only in the second stage is the Bolshevik influence prominent. The first stage was strongly shaped by the American Marxist, de Leon, who was strongly imbued with syndicalist ideas. Throughout all three of these stages runs a thread of Crocean idealism in which Gramsci's thought was spawned before he became a Marxist.

During any one of these three intellectual intervals can be found a Gramsci who by word or deed made clear his primary committment to specific Italian revolutionary aims over any other (the national aspirations of the Soviet state, for example). Reliance on Gramsci as a unique ideological guide for Italian Communism is conveyed by Togliatti in the PCI daily, Unita, of March 15, 1956:

> The search for an Italian road towards socialism has been our constant preoccupation. I believe I can say that it was also a preoccupation with Antonio Gramsci, who in all his political action, and particularly in the last period of his life, was concerned to provide an Italian version of the lessons of the Russian revolution.[92]

Togliatti again credits Gramsci with the origination of a

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[91]Labedz, op. cit., p. 327.
[92]Ibid., p. 326.

specifically Italian outlook toward Marxism to which the contemporary PCI is heir. In his June 24, 1956, report to the Central Committee of the PCI, the Italian Communist leader states:

> . . . our party had the good fortune to have been founded by Antonio Gramsci, the thinker who, I believe, in Western Europe, contributed greatly, in the last 50 years, to the thorough examination and to the development of Marxist doctrine on the basis of intellectual developments in the entire West and of a profound knowledge of our country. It is necessary to refer to Gramsci and our entire doctrine. It is necessary to remember that this doctrine is the most advanced and effective among doctrines which help to understand the economic, political and social world, and correctly evaluate the currents of thought and action which move through history, to face and solve the questions of national and international life. We must know how to draw from this doctrine. . .[93]

Any attempt to unite the theory of Marxism-Leninism with PCI action within the modern bourgeois state cannot avoid a confrontation with Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat" and Lenin's conception of the state. Togliatti leaves little doubt in treating the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that it is not applicable to contemporary Italian conditions:

> Is this position still entirely valid today? Here is a subject for discussion. When, in fact, we state that it is possible to proceed toward socialism not only through democracy but also try using parliamentary forms, it is evident that we are correcting something in this position, taking into consideration the changes which have taken place in the world.[94]

Confession by Togliatti to having accepted Stalin's position of "the exacerbation of the class struggle along with the pro-

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[93] Russian Institute, Columbia University, ed., The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism, "Palmiro Togliatti's Report to the Central Committee of the PCI" (June 24, 1956), p. 202-3.

[94] Ibid., p. 234.

gress of socialist society. . ."[95] leads to further dismantling of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" concept. Support for such a changed position is found not only in Lenin,

> Lenin said clearly in the beginning, that the organizational forms which the doctatorship of the proletariat took in Russia would not be compulsory in all countries.[96]

but also in Gramsci:

> In the formation of leaders the premise is fundamental: does one wish there to be always rulers and ruled, or does one wish to create the conditions where the necessity for the existence of this division disappears? In other words, does one start from the premise of the perpetual division of the human race, or does one believe that his is only an historical fact, answering to certain conditions? Nevertheless it needs to be understood that the division of rulers and ruled, though in the last analysis it goes back to divisions between social groups, does in fact exist, given things as they are, even inside the bosom of each separate group, even a socially homogeneous one.[97]

Gramsci's view in analyzing the role played by elites in fomenting and leading revolutions is at first glance consistent with Stalin's, except that the Italian is concerned that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" should be "self-liquidating." Gramsci would never have countenanced the transformation of the "dictatorship" into a permanent hierarchy insulated from the mass and using the Marxist doctrine as camouflage.[98]

To Gramsci goes the distinction of being the first Communist to draw the parallel between the totalitarianism of the right (Fascism) and that of the left (Stalinism), however inadvertently. The

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[95] Ibid., p. 231.
[96] Ibid., p. 235.
[97] Gramsci, op. cit., p. 143.

implication is that Soviet totalitarianism is a product of the Stalin era. Prominent scholars in the area of Soviet studies and of totalitarianism in general, such as Hannah Arendt, Bertram Wolfe and Karl Friedrich, analyze Stalinism as the transformation of Lenin's revolutionary dictatorship into complete totalitarian rule.[99] Togliatti is living testimony that ex-Stalinists did not take the lead in defining their former allegiances as totalitarian. Gramsci, however, developed a theory of totalitarianism based on his observation of the Fascist state. From his prison cell Gramsci wrote:

> The modern prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual; it can only be an organism; a complex element of society in which the cementing of the collective will, recognized and partially asserted in action, has already begun. This organism is already provided by historical development, and it is the political party: the first cell containing the germs of collective will which are striving to become universal and total.[100]

Such words were directed against Fascism under which Gramsci had struggled for survival. Thus, we have what George Lichtheim calls "a Marxist critique of totalitarianism." Gramsci's criticism of Mussolini's Fascism can be applied almost verbatim to Stalin's regime. Mussolini himself defined the Fascist state as totalitarian in 1932:

> The Fascist conception of the state is all-embraeing; outside of it no human or spiritual values may exist, much less have any value. Thus understood, Fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist state, as a synthesis and as a unit which includes all values, in-

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[99]Robert C. Tucker, The Soviet Political Mind: Studies in Stalinism and Post-Stalin Change (New York: Random House, Inc., 1960), p. 5.

[100]Lichtheim, op. cit., p. 368.

> terprets, develops, and lends additional power to the whole life of a people.[101]

Contrast Gramsci's writing in the days before the Fascist regime, the "Factory Committee" or early Ordine Nuovo phase (1919-1920). In an article written for Ordine Nuovo, Gramsci bares the de Leon-syndicalist element in his theory. In answer to the question 'Why is it that no congress of Factory Committees has ever been held in Italy?' Gramsci answers:

> Yes, there is in Italy, in Turin, the germ of a workers' government, the germ of a Soviet. It is the Factory Committee. Let us study this workers' institution, investigate it. Let us also study the capitalist factory, but not as an organization for material production which would require specialized knowledge we do not possess. Let us study the capitalist framework for the working class, as a political organism, as the 'national territory' of worlers' self-government.[102]

The scheme of "factory councils" is inherently more democratic in the representative sense than the later two phases of Gramsci's work. He sees them as a peculiar historical development independent of the party and the trade union which contrasts with the pre-eminent role that he later ascribes to the party:

> . . . in the Party and trade unions the worker plays his role voluntarily, signing a written pledge -- a contract which he can tear up at any moment. The Party and the trade unions, because of this 'voluntary ' character, because of their 'contractual' nature, are not to be confused with the councils which are representative institutions. . .and do not develop mathematically, but morphologically, and

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[101]Tucker, op. cit., p. 4.
[102]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 23.

> in their higher forms tend to give a proletarian meaning to the apparatus, created by the capitalist for the purpose of extracting profit, of production, and exchange. . .[103]

There emerges from the "factory council" days a strong anti - bureaucratic bias and adherence to a syndicalist concept of representative democracy:

> . . . the factory councils . . . are assumed to be a form of 'historical' association only comparable to that of the present-day bourgeois state . . . the factory council is an institution of a 'public' character while the Party and the trade unions are associations of a 'private' nature.[104]

This theme of the Factory Councils is also found in the Workers' Councils in Russia, Hungary and Bavaria, after World War I; in English Guild Socialism, and later in the anti-Stalin working class movements in the Hungarian and Polish revolts of 1956. Gramsci does not intend to entirely dispense with political government in the manner of Proudhon's anarchism. Marx's comment on the "industrial character of the Communist society of producers" in analyzing the Paris Commune is given by Gramsci as the inspiration for the syndicalism blended with Lenin and de Leon, which is the basis for the Ordine Nuovo - Factory Council movement.[105] Caution in drawing a distinction between the voluntary nature of the party as an association and the Factory Council as an involuntary association, similar to the state, accentuates the necessarily limited character of the party's activity in the peculiar circumstances of Italy which Togliatti revives soon after World War II.

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[103] Ibid., p. 25.
[104] Ibid., p. 24-25.
[105] Ibid., p. 27.

The dichotomy that Gramsci makes between the Factory Council and the party and the voluntary nature of membership in the party leaves open the question of internal organization of the party which later becomes Leninist and remains so within the framework of an open society containing many voluntary associations. Involuntary association of the worker in his role as industrial producer with other workers later has its counterpart in Togliatti's definition of the involuntary nature of the worker's membership and participation in the bourgeois democratic state after 1944. It becomes palatable to tolerate this condition as long as the party has its autonomy to continue its role in changing Italian society to the benefit of the working class.

Concern, after 1956, among the PCI leaders, that the bureaucratic centralism typical of Communist parties might hinder effective communication between the party and the masses is indicated by Togliatti in his June 24, 1956, report to the PCI Central Committee:

> . . . for a party which is shut up in itself, which has become bureaucratic, in which prevails the tendency not to think but only to command and obey, is not in a position to establish a broad connection with the masses, that connection which we have always wanted the party to establish and which ought to be the essential characteristic of our party. Hence, a continual struggle for internal democracy within the party, for strong activity and internal alertness on the part of our organizations, which cannot and should not interfere with political and work discipline or with the method of democratic centralism.[106]

Gramsci's interpretation of bureaucracy, written while he

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[106]"Palmiro Togliatti's Report . . .", p. 241.

was imprisoned by the "bureaucratic centralist" Fascist state, seems to have guided Togliatti's words in the preceding quotation. Gramsci said, in part:

> 'Organicness' sic (organicità) can only come from democratic centralism which is centralism in movement, so to speak, that is, a continued adjustment of the organization to the real movement, a tempering of the thrusts from below with the command from above, a continuous intrusion of elements which emerge from the depths of the masses into the solid frame of the apparatus of rule . . . it is 'organic' because it takes account of the movement, which is the organic means for the revealing of historical reality and does not become mechanically stiffened in the bureaucracy.[107]

The recognition by Gramsci that some measure of equilibrium between the leadership and the mass must be maintained is obvious in the statement "a tempering of the thrusts from below with the command from above. . ." Moreover, Gramsci considers this equilibrium not only a means of conflict resolution within the party, but also within the wider context of the state:

> The prevalence of bureaucratic centralism in the State indicates that the ruling group is saturated, becoming a narrow clique which strives to perpetuate its selfish privileges by regulating or even suffocating the birth of these forces that are homogeneous to the fundamental ruling interests.[108]

Again, Togliatti imitates his mentor in analyzing the role of the party organization vis-a-vis the wider society:

> Let us remember what Lenin said, that organization is the 'sole' weapon which the working class has in its hands with which to strike the adversary. However, it is impossible for a practical program of organization to take the place of a policy. In the last analysis, if one is reduced to an organizational program detached from ever new and substantial political undertakings, one is faced

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[107]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 174.
[108]Ibid.

> with deficiencies and failures, and it is impossible to achieve the advances which objective conditions would render possible.[109]

In essence, Gramsci's (and subsequently, Togliatti's) acceptance of the existence of competing forces within hierarchies has been crucial in shaping the contemporary Communist ideology, which views the PCI as an important instrument of social change without recourse to violent revolution. Social groups in periods of "organic crisis" (or during crises of authority) desert their traditional parties. In other words, the traditional party no longer represents the interests of a particularsocial group or class which consequently seeks its agent of representation elsewhere. Such crises of authority, Gramsci feels, are dangerous because it is in these periods of instability that demagogic appeals to emotion by "men of destiny" are most successful.[110]

Yet sometimes the traditional ruling class which already has a large trained bureaucracy is able to retain control by making a few concessions and minor changes in policy. Gramsci calls this an "organic" solution to the problem of an aspiring progressive force or class exerting itself against the conservative traditional force. But when the demagogue (apparently Mussolini) or "divine leader," as Gramsci labels him, is catapulted to power, this is a sign that the traditional force was not able to adapt itself to the new conditions. At the same time, the aspiring "Progressive" force is not developed enough to prevail over the

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[109]"Palmiro Togliatti's Report . . .", p. 242-44
[110]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 174.

weak and inflexible, but more experienced conservative group. Thus, Gramsci says, a condition of "static equilibrium" (totalitarianism) reigns. Gramsci feels that this situation unveils an important deficiency in any political party, that is "the capacity of the party for reacting against the spirit of habit, against the tendency to become mummified and anachronistic."[111]

The problem of bureaucratic anachronism is the most acute cause of rigidity and lack of flexibility. In the words of Gramsci:

> In analyzing this party development it is necessary to distinguish:: the social group; the mass of the party; the bureaucracy and High Command of the party. The bureaucracy is the most dangerously habitual and conservative force; if it ends up by constituting a solid body, standing by itself and feeling independent from the masses, the party ends by becoming anachronistic and in moments of crisis becomes emptied of all its social content, like an empty shell.[112]

Togliatti again echoes the founding father of Italian Communism when he expresses his abhorrence of party bureaucratic obduracy in organization:

> The struggle for a proper internal administration was not connected to a debate on present and urgent political questions. From this came the limited effectiveness of this struggle, the limitations on internal democracy of the party, the tendency to restrict this democracy, corporal's pettiness, and lastly the failure to develop our political action.[113]

Further blame for party ineffectiveness in dealing with contemporary problems is again ascribed to hierarchical inelasticity within the party, particularly with reference to the question of free exchange of ideas. In his June 24, 1956, speech to the Cen-

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[111] Ibid., p. 175.
[112] Ibid.
[113] "Palmiro Togliatti's Report . . .", p. 145

tral Committee, he speaks very favorably in alluding to a meeting of Communist intellectuals in Rome. He refers to "an atmosphere of outlet" here and there as being a departure from orderly discussion, but nevertheless hails the open and free interaction of ideas as a way of drawing more members into increasingly active participation in the party "as this is the only way in which it is possible to contribute to increasing democratic life in the party, to combating bureaucracy, corporal's pettiness and stagnation."[114]

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[114] Ibid., p. 263.

CHAPTER IV

THE PCI OF THE FUTURE: CONTINUATION OF A PARADOXICAL ROLE?

It has already been mentioned that Gramsci had become quite aware of Leninism as the theory and practice of a revolution in an underdeveloped country. His writings at all stages of his intellectual growth are fraught with an awareness of the role that the vanguard of the proletariat should play as leader of the masses that are precipitously thrust upon the political scene. Adam Ulam's premise, in the Unfinished Revolution, that Marxism replaces more "radical forms of socialism, in particular, anarchism and syndicalism, does parallel, with some modification, the Italian Marxist experience. In replacing these two "isms" as the major anti-state and anti-industrial protest movement, Marxism is not only able to assimilate elements of, but also "to become the organizational expression of, other forms of socialism. . ."[115]

Ulam says that syndicalism and anarchism become obsolete ideologies as a rallying call to the working class at that stage of the society's development when the pattern of industrialization is permanently embossed on the society. However, no sooner does the realization of the permanence of industrial-urbanism manifest

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[115]Adam Ulam, The Unfinished Revolution (New York: Random House, Inc., 1960), p. 153.

itself than "the same forces that had made the worker abandon the mere spirit of opposition to the state and industry, the mere principle of the workers' association as a substitute for any more comprehensive philosophy of politics and society, make him chafe under doctrinaire Marxism and push him toward a more pragmatic and evolutionary type of socialism." [116]

After the failure of Mazzinian idealism to turn the Italian national awakening in the direction of a republic and the establishment of the Savoy Monarchy, the Bakuninite Anarchists became major socialist and revolutionary influence in Italy. Mazzini's thought had always been uncompromisingly anti-materialist. Furthermore his rejection of class warfare brought him into direct confrontation with both Marxism and Anarchism. The failure of republicanism precluded any possibility that the Mazzinians would play a major role in the social and economic transformation of Italian society. Mazzini's ideas were so closely tied to the Italian struggle for independence from foreign domination that when that act was accomplished with Cavour and Victor Immanuel at the helm, his lure as a social revolutionary was lost. In the rush to assume the mantle of social revolution that followed Mazzini's demise, Bakunin's victory over the Marxists is symbolized by the July 28, 1869 announcement by the London General Council, that Bakunin's Geneva-based group (The International Alliance of Socialist Democracy) had been accepted

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[116] Ibid., p. 106.

into the First International. Thus, Bakunin, who had been active as a revolutionary in Italy since 1864, had been given the "nod" by Marx and his London friends to pursue the anarchist cause under the aegis of the organized international socialist movement.[117]

The impact of Bakunin's triumph on the subsequent evolution of Italian socialism is best summarized by Richard Hostetter in his monumental work on the origins of the Italian Socialist movement:

> From the Italian point of view, the identification of Bakunin and his group with the First International was of cardinal importance, for it meant that the international socialist movement was to penetrate the peninsula under the sponsorship of a small clique of agitators and organizers closely bound by personal ties to the Russian revolutionary and sharing with him a body of socialist doctrine deriving not from the Communist Manifesto or Das Kapital, but from Proudhon and Pisacane, as edited and revised by Bakunin. In delaying the debut of 'scientific socialism' in Italy by more than a decade, this, from the Marxists' point of view, was a calamity.[118]

On the basis of Hostetter's statement alone, anarchism's precedence over Marxism might well appear to have been the result of clever intrigue on the part of Bakunin. However, most of Bakunin's success as a violent revolutionary, until his appointment to the International,, had occurred during his residence in Italy and would continue there through the 1870's. Most historical data point to the greater appeal of anarchism over Marxism in the early stages of industrialization in Italy. The

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[117]Richard Hostetter, The Italian Socialist Movement: I. Origins (1860-1882) (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1958) p. 120-121.

[118]Ibid., p. 121.

syndicalists enjoyed the second place in terms of appeal to the nascent Italian working class. In fact, even Antonio Labriola, the great Italian Marxist theorist of the 19th century, and Gramsci's professor and the source of his early inspiration (at Turin University) was strongly influenced by syndicalist ideas. The Romagna (Emilia) traditionally recognized as the cradle of Italian revolutionary socialism and today probably the strongest center of Communist support in Italy, was an anarchist and syndicalist stronghold before the Marxists gained any major following there. The Italian trade union movement as earlier pages pointed out, has always had strong synsicalist currents running through it, whether directly controlled by Marxists or Fascists. The flourishing of anarchism and syndicalism in areas where the "newness of industrialization has not killed off the peasant mentality"[119] that preempts Marxism, is consistent with early anarchist and syndicalist appeal in such islands of urban industrial growth as Naples and Palermo in the south and Livorno and Bologna in central Italy. These cities are still surrounded by a predominantly peasant culture (although the two central cities' hinterlands have recently undergone more rapid integration into industrial society[120]). Bologna, the capital of Emilia, remains the most thoroughly Marxist city in all of Italy in terms of both national electoral criteria and control of local government electoral offices.

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[119] Ulam, op. cit., p. 153.
[120] Ibid.

The role of Marxism in modern culture has been, and will continue to be, a highly flexible one. Ulam points out that Eduard Bernstein, the humanitarian revisionist, and Georges Sorel the violent irrationalist, both turn to Marxist theory in support of their quite diverging conclusions:

> To Sorel, Marx is the anarchist, the ancestor of syndicalism and the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the workers. To Bernstein, Marx is primarily the social democrat and humanitarian. If one discounts the revolutionary phraseology of Marx's younger days, obsolete now under the conditions of socialism in twentieth century Europe, one finds, holds Bernstein, the real scientific socialism. If one discounts the deposit of earlier socialist theories and utopias, retorts Sorel, one finds the real Marx: the revolutionary, the proponent of the violent take-over by the workers. Both the democrat and the believer in violence find in Marxism what they are seeking. Both the acceptance and rejection of industrialization and contempt for democracy, which is syndicalism invoke Marx.[121]

Similarly, Gramsci wrote of this fusion of Marxism and other social movements: "Marxism has been a potent force in modern culture and, to a certain extent, has determined and fertilized a number of currents of thought within it."[122] He felt that the most important blending of Marxism occurred in certain idealist philosophers, among whom he included Sorel, Gentile and Croce. At the same time, Marxism was identified with what Gramsci called "traditional materialism" by "orthodox" (positivist) Marxists. The combination of Marxism with idealism occurred mainly among "pure" intellectuals and the transfusion with traditional mater-

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[121]Ulam, op. cit., p. 154-155.
[122]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 82.

ialism among more "practical" intellectuals who were more closely tied to the masses. The former, who were spokesmen of the prevailing ruling class, were astute enough to borrow certain aspects of Marxism in order to narrow the gap between their abstract theorizing and the realities of the day. This gave the ruling group a temporary new lease on life. The "orthodox" materialist Marxists, on the other hand, were forced to borrow elements from idealism in order to temper their appeal to the masses, whose materialism was disguised by religious transcendentalism: " . . . it was necessary for Marxism to ally itself with alien tendencies in order to combat capitalist hangovers, especially in the field of religion, among the masses of the people."[124]

The significant and continuing importance of Marxism's linkage with other philosophies is important in weighing the contention that Marxism has been and will continue to be an important agent of social change in modern culture. Its influence has been diffused throughout the atmosphere of modern culture "which modified old ways of thinking through hidden and delayed actions and reactions."[125]

Development of a popular culture has never been accomplished in any social movement, according to Gramsci, by the intellectuals, but by the people as a whole. The intellectuals of a previously dominant group who were key architects of the new cultural developments (for example: Luther and Calvin) deserted the movements they had inspired under pressures from the enemy. It was

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[124] Ibid., p. 85.
[125] Gramsci, op. cit., p. 88-89.

necessary to recruit a new group of intellectuals from the masses whose loyalty to the movement would be unswerving under attack. But this fashioning of new leaders would be a slow and gradual process, rendering the movement sterile for a time. A process similar to this has occurred in Marxism:

> The great intellectuals formed in its soil were few in number, not connected with people, did not come from the people but were the expression of the traditional middle classes to which many reverted during the great historical 'turning points'. Others remained, but in order to submit the new concept to revision and not to win an independent development for it. The assertion that Marxism is an independent, original concept is the assertion of the independence and originality of a new culture in birth which will develop with the development of social relations. What exists at each turn is a varying combination of the old and the new, creating a momentary equilibrium of cultural relationships corresponding to the equilibrium in social relationships.[126]

Herein lies a key theoretical sanction for the present Communist party of Italy, which sees itself as an adaptable carrier of social and cultural change, yet reluctant to admit that its adaptability and flexibility constitute revisionism. Togliatti accepts this role for the PCI, as innovator, and at the same time repudiates the label of piecemeal reformer:

> Of course, following a democratic line of development could not mean and never was intended to mean for us, the empty affirmation of the necessity for specific reforms. It meant the struggle of the masses, and first of all, of the working class; it meant a great and continuous effort on the part of the working class to make broader and broader alliances with all those strata which can

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[126]Gramsci, op. cit., p. 88-89.

> and should be interested in a thorough alteration of society.[127]

Gramsci classifies Bernstein and other revisionists in the same category as Luther and Calvin: as intellectual leaders who abandoned their revolutionary movements; however he also acknowledges, as we have seen, the interbreeding of Marxism and other social philosophies. When Bernstein announced his revisionism publicly, it is said that an "orthodox" remarked to him that most Marxists agreed with him, but it was unfortunate that he should feel the compulsion to say so in public places.[128] Perhaps Togliatti viewed the contemporary PCI leadership as the "new" intellectual leadership of which Gramsci spoke, as originating within the masses, after the retreat of the "old" group. Admittedly, this is a highly hypothetical proposition. In any event, it is highly doubtful that Togliatti would consciously have gone to that extent to rationalize his actions on so specific a philosophical question, and that the question <u>by itself</u> would have much significance in practical politics. But what is of maximum political relevance in the above statement of Togliatti is that the PCI has no intention of abandoning the leadership of the working class movement in Italy and its role as a major instrument of social change, however conditions change and force the party into newer and wider alliances.

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[127]Togliatti, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 239.
[128]Ulam, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 161.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The dilemma of the Italian Communist Party regarding the difficulty of shedding the Leninist-Stalinist past has been posed. The continuing impact of Marxism on modern culture in effecting social and cultural change, as having defined a role for the PCI of the future, have been analyzed. But, can the party adapt to the social and economic changes that itself admits are essential for the triumphs of the working class, and still keep its Leninist-centrist organization intact? If it fails in this, and factional disputes split the party asunder, then the party will either disintegrate or become a minor and impotent force in Italian society. However, the need to hold the party together as a centralized, disciplined force will not be a condition of PCI survival forever. At the point where Italian society develops that mass ideological parties of protest will be rendered obsolete, electoral campaigns would then take the form of achieving consensus by organizing electorates regardless of ideological loyalties. The efficient and highly organized PCI could then function as a party of consensus containing a variety of viewpoints without fear of disintegration as a center of political power. This presupposes the continuing elasticity of the party to meet changing conditions which it thus far successfully

demonstrated. Furthermore, the party can take consolation in the fact that the poverty of the south promises to be a problem for many years to come. This could provide an interim period for the party during which it could assume a dual role. On the one hand, in the local politics of the developed north, its radicalism might very well become obsolete, as pluralistic tendencis increase. There the party can be expected to not only continue, but expand Togliatti's policies of moderation. But the southern problem will furnish the PCI with economic conditions of an earlier generation in the north during which the party's superior organization replaced more radical ideologies. Ulam's insight may very well serve as a future model for the perpetuation of the PCI and a paradoxical capitalist development of the south, culminating at last in a mature economic-political integration of all of Italy:

> A vigorous growth of capitalism helps the growth of Marxist socialism among the workers; but, also, a speedy extinction of Marxism of syndicalist and anarchist feelings among the workers can be a flourishing development of capitalism![129]

The important question still remains -- will the traditional Italian political style allow necessary adaptation to take place? Would it be possible for the PCI, which has learned the lesson of the Italian style of politics, to lead an even more schizophrenic existence? Certainly the workings of modern *trasformismo* on the PCI were obvious as we observed Togliatti's practical approach (usually followed by ideological redefinition).

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[129] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

The paradox of a party with a revolutionary appeal in one region (the South) and a moderate reformist one in another (the North) is not so outlandish that we cannot conceive of it as a possibility. The Democratic Party of the United States has often had different appeals to voters in the north and south. But in Italy emigration from the south to the north and from rural to urban locales is further complicating the dilemma of the PCI.

Voting data show without question that the PCI is most successful in attracting the support of southern migrants to Milan, Turin and other northern industrial centers where they find themselves living in conditions at least as depressed, if not moreso, than those they left at home.[130] Studies conducted in the strongly left-wing regions of central Italy, particularly Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna (the so-called red belt) indicate that the peasants who migrate from the surrounding countryside of a large city to the city proper, tend to vote Communist in even greater numbers.[131]

Most observers of Italian voting behavior believe that the Communist party benefits most, of all the parties, from the continuing movement of the population from rural to urban setting. Where there has been significant migration from the countryside the Communist vote has increased. In fact it is in these areas that the recent Communist gains have been the greatest. The

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[130]Joseph LaPolambara, Interest Groups in Italian Politics (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 4.

[131]Ibid., p. 90.

gains of 1963, however, were probably somewhat due to disenchantment on the part of many workers and trade union members with the "opening to the left."

We have seen that peasants, newly-initiated into the urban culture, tend to vote for the most radical parties of the left. The PCI no doubt attracted many of these newly-arrived migrants because of the nature of its campaign, that is a fierce condemnation of its former socialist (PSI) allies. The PSI on the other hand, managed to hold its own while the Communists gained about one million votes. The Social Democrats made impressive gains, while Christian Democrats incurred serious losses. The Liberal Party (PLI) gained votes at the expense of the DC; probably because of the right of center voters who were protesting the DC's left-leaning tendencies.

It is obvious that the PCI appeal to this disenchanted, recently-urbanized population, will continue as long as the party remains a protest movement. A hard core of the Communist vote is made up of indignant, aroused intellectuals and deprived minorities. However, in the traditionally left-wing areas, such as Tuscany and Romagna, the PCI has dominated town and city governments since immediately after the war. Hence voters have feared that extension of the Christian-Democratic-Socialist Alliance to the local government, could mean the overturn of local Communist regimes which have been the model of civic virtue and efficiency. In this case, votes for the PCI may be an expression of desire to preserve the status quo, which is actually a Conservative gesture.

Small industrialists, merchants, shop owners, bureaucrats in co-operatives, adult education institutes, nurseries, kindergartens, recreation centers and many small enterprises owe their positions to the policies formulated by the local Communist regimes and to the efficient implementation and enforcement of these policies. In these local settings, Mauro Calamandrei emphasizes, the PCI is a "party of the local ruling groups, largely managerial in function and fairly indifferent and independent of the central party headquarters in Rome."[132]

Can the PCI exploit the new rural arrivals in the cities and industrial centers as a source of electoral support and still retain intact this stable bloc of voters who have been defined above as "conservative"? A decidedly radical appeal seems to be essential to attract the former peasants not yet assimilated into their new environment in the cities, Calamandrei aptly summarizes the continuing importance of this group to Communist success at the polls:

> Once starving farm workers join a gang of miners or enter an industrial plant . . . they quickly acquire the democratic spirit. Their erstwhile fatalism is transformed into anger over past and present injustices, often making them advocates of radical political positions.[133]

Thus urban immigrant Communist votes registered in protest against the government for its failure to implement rapidly enough the progressive social goals of the "opening to the left," cannot

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[132]Mauro Calamandrei, "Understanding Italy's Vote: Why the Communists Gained Strength," The New Leader, XLVI (May 27, 1963) p. 14-15.

[133]Ibid.

be counted on by the PCI unless its program appeals to these radicals' sentiments. To revive this protest vote the party must structure its program on the basis of repudiation of the status quo. In so doing, the PCI may very well capture most of it, but what of the elements in Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany, who have voted Communist constantly, and who view the arrival of large numbers of southern migrants as an intrusion and threat to their security? The cost of strapping the new urban immigrant elements to the party could well be the loss of this long-standing support.

Another source of alarm to the PCI, despite the gains of 1963, could be the Christian Democratic losses to both the Conservative parties as well as the left of center parties. The right of center Liberal party doubled its 1958 vote, partially at the expense of the DC, in addition to picking up some additional votes that previously belonged to the defunct Monarchist party. Desertion by Conservatives of the DC right wing in protest to the "opening to the left" would not be a direct source of concern to the PCI, in that the shift involved a source of voters that has never been even remotely a target of the Communist appeal. However, the ability of the Socialist party, organizationally and financially one of the weakest parties to retain intact its mass support (only a loss of 0.4 per cent in 1963) in the face of the fierce Communist attack on its collaboration with the DC, is revealing. The Social Democratic Party increase, from 4.4 in 1958 to 6.3 in 1963, is even more significant evidence of increasing endorsement of the

"opening to the left" by progressive-minded, though non-Communist voters.[134] Voting data indicate that the left-wing of DC made impressive gains, while the party as a whole dropped from 42 to 38 per cent of the vote. This is further evidence of approval of the moderate left collaboration betwenn the DC, the PSI and the PSDI.[135]

PSI and PCI are quite similar in that they both attract the working class vote. About two-thirds of Italy's working class vote is attracted to the three major Marxist parties. The PCI attracts most of that vote, but it is interesting to note that it is the most proletarian of all the parties. About fifty per cent of the PCI vote consists of unskilled workers and their wives. Data on the educational level of voters as well as occupational level strongly demonstrate the proletarian character of the PCI. It is noteworthy also that ninety per cent of Communist party supporters have had no education or only elementary education. Merely two per cent have had upper middle school or university education.[136]

The vast majority of the peasants who migrate from the land to the urban industrial centers have little or no education. The Communists, as has been indicated, attract these votes and will continue to do so. But data also indicate that the other Marxist parties are more successful than the Communists in attracting better educated and more skilled members of the working classes. Also the PSI is much more successful (and the PSDI even more so)

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[135] LaPolambara, op. cit., p. 191.
[136] Ibid., p. 94.

than the PCI in attracting lower-middle and middle class support.[137]

This brief evaluation of Italian voting data vis-a-vis the most recent parliamentary election indicates then, that the PCI is the chief initial beneficiary of the process of mobility from rural agricultural to urban-industrial environments. However, the PSI, PSDI and DC (left-wing) are apparently more successful in gaining the support of workers as they experience educational/occupational mobility from manual occupation to skilled and white collar occupations. The process of economic development in Italy seems to thus far effect the same changes in breakdown in extremist ideological orientation and in moderation of political choice as it moves forward, that we are able to observe in the history of British political and economic development. The PCI thus has the prospect of looking forward to a condition in which new urban arrivals experience their first extra-familial associational contacts (outside of the church) in the Communist party, and so become a major bulwark of Communist support. On the other hand, those who continue to live and work in the city and consequently acquire more skills, education and income, are more attracted to the progressive appeals of the other Marxist parties and popularistic Catholic political organizations. So what is gained by the PCI through economic development and horizontal mobility (for our purposes from country to city and farm to

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[137] Ibid., p. 95.

factory) is eventually lost through vertical mobility.

The PCI will thus be compelled to continue the astute policies of Togliatti that fashioned the party as a haven for a wide variety of political interests. The successors to Togliatti must not allow themselves to be lulled into false security that may be engendered by Communist predominance in local government in the "red belt" and a few other selected areas. Filtration of the DC-PSI cooperation from the national level to the level of the local government politics is bound to occur sooner or later. The PSI, for example, would have much to gain from coalitions with the Christian Democrats on a local level in "red belt" towns and cities where they are second to the PCI in strength and where they have had to accept a role subordinate to the PCI, as the price of fellow-traveling, much as they previously had accepted in the days of Nenni-Togliatti collaboration in parliament.

Transformation in ideology in response to economic changes--that is essential. The inspiration to effect this transformation should exist; too many party leaders and workers have no profession and thus no source of income outside the party.[138]

The PCI of today includes a large number of bureaucrats and politicians who have delicately and painfully constructed and maintained the PCI through war, domestic repression and many years as a highly successful opposition party. They have become too dependent on the party to allow it to wither away for

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[138] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

lack of sensitivity to changing realities. Inability of the PCI to adapt to changing conditions has not been one of the deficiencies of the party. In the tradition of Italian politics, it is presently skillful as any party in the art of trasformismo..

This by itself would entitle it to a continuing role on the Italian political scene. Is it possible that the PCI as an organization will cease to be creative in its ability to adapt to social and economic realities? An attempt has been made in this study to trace the evolution of the PCI as a highly adaptive political mechanism. Abdication of an increasingly important place in Italian society because of unwillingness and/or inability to adapt would represent a sharp break with past behavior for the Italian Communist Party. The Italian political practice of turning oppositions into majority combinations or coalitions has been a continuing feature of Italian political life.

The period in the early 1920's when the combination did not materialize, in retrospect appears to have been a departure from the Italian style before that time. Giolitti and other "transformers" always sought to legitimize their non-democratic actions in terms of the parliamentary model. The totalitarian state made no such pretenses. The crisis of social, political and economic change that came about in the wake of World War I further fragmented an already proliferated Italian political culture. The post World War I period was an era during which frustrations of all segments of Italian society ran deep, leading to highly emotional responses on the political stage. Charismatic

leadership sought to fill the gap caused by the inability of the newly-enfranchised classes to successfully contract and stabilize political combinations. The leaders as well as the rank and file members of the expanded mass political organizations had not yet become socialized to the norms of trasformismo. Immediately after the catastrophe of the triumph of Fascism began the long process of socialization to the norms of trasformismo. In the underground, in exile, as a leader in the resistance during the war and as the leading mass party of protest after the war, the PCI served its apprenticeship.

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