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ITALY: Party  
Foreign relations

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PCI STANDS WITH THE YUGOSLAVS

Summary: The Italian Communist Party's message to the Yugoslav party congress may be described as a political manifesto which demonstrates the post-invasion strengthening of the "Rome-Belgrade-Bucharest axis." The PCI emphasizes the themes of autonomy, sovereignty and non-interference, again condemns the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and calls for a "new unity," based on equality and open debate, which would exclude "excommunications."

The Italian Communist Party's message to the Yugoslav Party Congress, delivered by Giorgio Napolitano, was far from the formal greetings customary on such occasions: in fact, it amounted to a political manifesto, placing the PCI firmly at the side of the independent Yugoslav regime in the current inter-party confrontation. The stress throughout was on the full autonomy of each party and the complete sovereignty of each socialist state. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was again condemned explicitly; "any theory of a guiding state or party" was rejected. The statement pledged that the PCI would work for a "new unity" of anti-imperialist action which would extend to the non-Communist forces so impressively represented as guests at the congress. Such unity was to be reached through free debate and confrontation, "free from any interference and pressure," through "a method which would exclude excommunications, summary sentences and injurious polemics." (1)

Napolitano's message opened by observing that "we are participating in your congress in the conviction that we can draw from it useful elements of knowledge and reflection, and in the more general conviction that an open and positive confrontation with the different experiences and positions is today the principal condition for the development and unity of the international workers' and Communist movement."

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(1) L'Unità, 14 March 1969

### Vision of "New Unity"

After discussing the PCI's domestic policy positions, the message said that the party stood for an independent and neutral Italy, which would contribute to the process of doing away with opposed military blocs. "On this terrain ... we have met and will meet with you, dear comrades, and together we intend to meet with all anti-imperialist and progressive forces." The socialist states and the Communist parties were important in this struggle, "but much wider and more varied is the spectrum of forces in which the movement against imperialism and for peace can find support." The message went on:

The frontiers of socialism itself do not coincide with the frontiers of the socialist countries. It is this necessity for a new and wider internationalist vision which we support in the debate with the other workers' and Communist parties. As regards relations between the Communist parties and the socialist states, in particular, Comrade Longo in his report at the Twelfth [PCI] Congress reaffirmed our clear position of disagreement and reprobation toward the intervention of the five Warsaw Pact countries in Czechoslovakia, and emphasized the "value of principle" which, in face of the questions raised by such an intervention, we more than ever attribute to the full respect for the autonomy and sovereignty of each Communist party and each socialist state. [He emphasized also] the rejection of any theory of a guiding state or party, and therefore also the rejection of any theorization of a unity of policy and struggle which is not always and in all its aspects the result of free debates and free acceptance [of positions], free from any interference and pressure.

We consider inconceivable any idea of re-establishing a ruling center of the international workers' and Communist movement. We hold that the objective of a new unity ... involves questions of method and content.

We are thinking of a method which would exclude excommunications, summary sentences, injurious polemics. We are thinking of a content of increasing cross-fertilization [*compenetrazione*] between the experiences and the struggles which are developing in the socialist countries, in the colonial and ex-colonial countries, and also in the countries of advanced capitalism.



The PCI stood by the judgement expressed by Togliatti after his talks with Tito in January 1964, that the great contemporary task for the working-class movement lay in "the search for new ways of advancement toward socialism through the working-out of new forms of progressive, democratic power, together with the organization of a socialist economy in new ways." The message continued:

The elaboration and discussion of this theme, suddenly broken off in 1968,<sup>(2)</sup> must be developed with the greatest seriousness and openness. We are particularly interested in your experience because of the fact, also underlined by Comrade Togliatti, that "both the link between economic development and forms of democracy, and the possibility of economic planning in a market regime are themes which are being posed in all the advanced capitalist countries, where the working classes are managing to press forward in a constructive and positive way with their struggle for socialism.

The message pledged that the PCI would work to strengthen still further the links of "friendship and collaboration" between the two parties. With a final reference to one of the key themes of the Belgrade congress, the message added that the Italian party would "continue to work ... for a new and broader unity of the international workers' movement." The omission of the word "Communist" from the traditional formula may not have been accidental.

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2. Emphasis added.