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Non-ruling CPs/7

• ITALY: Party

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CONFERENCE ISSUES: PCI FIRES ANOTHER WARNING SALVO

Summary: As the pre-conference debate gets under way in Moscow, the PCI has reaffirmed its anti-showdown stand. A dispatch in L'Unità gives a significantly new definition of the function of the preparatory group -- to "collect documents presented by various parties." The writer stresses that, in view of the commitment to avoid excommunications, the "Chinese question" cannot be a major subject of debate at the conference -- and at the same time notes that mounting Soviet polemics against "Mao's group" have adopted the language of anathematization.

As the "enlarged working group" (1) of Communist party delegations continues secret debates in Moscow on the coming international conference, the Italian Communist Party has fired a salvo across the bows of the CPSU -- warning, in effect, that attempts to reassert Soviet authority at the conference will be resisted.

An article in the March 12 issue of L'Unità by the paper's Moscow correspondent, Adriano Guerra, offers a challenging new description of the function of the working group. When the group was set up at the Budapest preparatory meeting in last November,

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- (1) At the latest Budapest session the original working group of eight parties grew to 20 (including the Rumanians, Spanish and British on the "Italian side," and the East Germans and pro-Soviet parties of Latin America on the other). This indication that a sharp struggle was going on in the preparatory meeting was confirmed when 33 delegations turned up for the start of the "enlarged" meeting in Moscow, with more (including the Italians) to come.

it was stated that it had been given the task of preparing "the draft documents on the forthcoming conference." (2) During the recent Budapest session, which lasted a week and a half before the transfer to Moscow last weekend, it was learned that four draft documents were in question--one on the anti-imperialist struggle, an appeal for peace, a resolution on Vietnam and (as urged by the CPSU) a document on the centenary of Lenin's birth. But Guerra's new definition of the duties of the working group goes beyond the preparation of draft documents, to introduce an element of confrontation and debate: the group, he writes, has been "charged with collecting the documents presented by the various parties." (3) This indicates that the PCI insists that any party has the right to present dissenting views at the Moscow Conference -- and to stand by them against a majority of delegations.

During the Budapest meeting, Guerra writes, "two episodes attracted the attention of observers: the new tension created between the Soviet Union and China in connection with the Ussuri frontier incident, and the refusal by all Warsaw Pact parties, with the sole exception of the Rumanian CP, to send delegations to the congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia." Sensitive issues, indeed -- and he proceeds to discuss them.

Conflict Not to be Debated

In its "neutralist" reaction to the frontier clash, (4) the PCI had already made it clear that it would not allow this escalation of the Sino-Soviet conflict to sway it from its stand that there must be no attempt at the conference to "excommunicate" the Chinese regime. Guerra reaffirms this position with some subtlety:

As regards the problem of relations between the Soviet Union and China, it seems that there is no intention on the part of anyone to place the "Chinese question" at the center of the Moscow debates, if only because -- as all parties have made clear -- the task of the conference is not to "launch excommunications" but to confront the problems of unity of anti-imperialist action in full recognition of the existence of divergences within the movement. It is inevitable, however, that the Ussuri incident, with its grave implications on the level of international relations, cannot but play its own objective role in the debate between the parties.

(2) Communique, World Marxism Review, January 1969.

(3) a.g. (Adriano Guerra), "La Conferenze di Mosca non discuterà il dissidio URSS-Cina," L'Unità, 12 March 1969; emphasis added.

(4) See RFE Research report, "PCI Warns: No Ex-communication of Chinese," 21 February 1969, by Kevin Devlin.

Having thus warned against attempts to "excommunicate" the Chinese Guerra goes on to note that the Soviet campaign against the "Mao group" has taken on tones of just that sort of anathematization which the PCI has condemned. Thus, Trud of March 11 charges that "Mao's clique is [acting] in solidarity with the blackest forces of imperialism," while Kommunist claims that the coming ninth congress of the Chinese party will in reality be "the constituent congress of a new political organization," marking "the definitive break of the Chinese CP with Marxism-Leninism."

Differences "Inevitable"

What Guerra implies is made explicit by Carlo Galuzzi, the PCI's leading spokesman on inter-party matters, in a front-page editorial in the same issue of L'Unità. (5) Galuzzi discusses the intensified Sino-Soviet conflict in a tone of solicitous neutralism. The "unacceptable affirmations" of Chinese anti-Soviet polemics are rejected, but Galuzzi goes on to observe:

The Chinese positions have, however, found propitious terrain in a certain way of conceiving in theory and implementing in practice relations between Communist parties and socialist states, in the increasingly evident tendencies to identify inter-party polemics with inter-state polemics ... and in moves to separate parties from their leading groups on the basis of a unilateral and debatable judgment of the experience of each individual Communist party and socialist state. From this has emerged the tendency to transform every disagreement into ideological and political conflict, and hence to exacerbate divergences instead of working to identify and overcome them.

The language is deliberately obscure, but the reference to Soviet hegemonic tendencies (and to the Czechoslovak question, for example) is fairly clear.

Something more than the mere reaffirmation of "internationalist sentiments" is needed to overcome this situation and "prevent other divergences, though of a different nature and intensity, after those of last summer [i.e., in connection with the invasion of Czechoslovakia -- K.D.], from deteriorating into further, grave tensions between other socialist countries," Galuzzi goes on. The PCI's position is that "the existence of divergences and conflicts cannot be considered only as the expression of errors and deviations from principles -- and it is not known who is supposed to have the duty of safeguarding or defending [these principles] -- but must be considered above all as the product of situations, evaluations and political-strategic perspectives that are diverse and at times also conflicting." Such differences

(5) "La Tensione tra Cina e URSS," L'Unità, 15 March 1969.

are "not only possible but perhaps, in a certain sense, inevitable," and what matters most is that they must not be allowed to hinder "common action against imperialism." Which again means: no ex-communication.

Conflicting Attitudes

Galuzzi does not mention the other grave problem discussed by Guerra -- the worsening of relations between Yugoslavia and the interventionist regimes. In connection with this, Guerra suggests that conflicting attitudes may be observed in Soviet statements. On the one hand, there are still calls (as in the recent Izvestia article by V. Zagladin) for unity of anti-imperialist action, which must be pursued in spite of differences. On the other hand --

There are those who (as in today's Sovietskaya Rossiya) invite the movement to conduct a "struggle on two fronts," against right-wing and left-wing opportunism. This struggle is conceived in terms of absolute unreceptivity (chiusura) to the richness and multiplicity of the experiences which the revolutionary movement offers today; in this view the situation is characterized not by the ever stronger presence of the anti-imperialist movement -- with all its divisions and rifts -- but by the offensive of imperialism, which is depicted as trying to besiege the socialist fortress, with the aid of revisionist "fifth columns."

This issue of L'Unità (March 12) leaves the reader in no doubt where the PCI stands in the inter-party struggle which has sharpened with the approach of the conference. In addition to Guerra's dispatch on the preparatory meeting and Galuzzi's neutralist editorial on the Sino-Soviet conflict, it contains:

*A long report from Belgrade, by Franco Petrone, on Tito's speech at the opening of the Yugoslav congress, reporting his attacks on Stalinism, his condemnation of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and his vindication of Yugoslav independence;

*A report from Sergio Mugnai in Bucharest, on the Scinteia article of March 11, which used the anniversary of the Comintern to condemn "any resumption of methods of interference in the affairs of other parties";

*A report from Silvano Goruppi in Prague on the warm attitude of the Czechoslovak press to the Yugoslav congress;

*A report from Bonn giving the West German spokesman's account of the conversation between Ambassador Tsarapkin and Chancellor Kiesinger on the Sino-Soviet border conflict;

*A report from Peking on the continuing anti-Soviet demonstrations in China -- brief but objective.