

Kolpe

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(b) R. 1/2
(c)



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good stuff. I think the schism is coming. Is it time yet to submit? (B)

On a submission, I am involved to wait until we see X in para. 2, and the internal repercussions are a little clearer.

Your reference
Our reference
28 January 1982
(in substantially para X in para 5 looks in interesting)

WRD
* SERIALIZED

K G MacInnes Esq
Information Department
FOOJSTRY

- 2 FEB 1982

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Ke. 2.

SOVIET CONDEMNATION OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (c)

1. I expect you saw Moscow telegram No. 50 and our own telegram No. 28, which respectively summarised the recent exchange of words between Pravda and L'Unità; or, more exactly, between the communist parties of the Soviet Union and Italy. We shall shortly be writing separately to WED, with copy to you, about the repercussions of this latest Soviet "ex-communication" on the internal Italian political scene. But there are some important wider considerations which I think fall within your parish.

2. Here we have the Soviet authorities - through Pravda - denouncing a Western European communist party for criticising the suppression of Solidarity and the military take-over in Poland; for effectively playing the imperialists' game; for not recognising that the Soviet Union is and remains the "cathedral" of international Marxism - Leninism; for casting doubt on its achievements in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and for suggesting that there is a "third" [democratic] way, between social democracy and "real socialism" as practised in Eastern Europe; and doing so in a hectoring and abusive manner which allows of no dissent. I enclose a slightly abridged translation of Unità's firm but measured response; and I see from Moscow's telegram that they likewise will be sending you the full text of the Pravda article. The question is what use we can make of this war of words.

3. From an Embassy standpoint, a distinction needs to be drawn between the internal Italian consequences of the dispute and its wider repercussions. On the first, I need only say that it is not yet proven that the PCI and the Soviet authorities are in full schism; and as yet neither side has approached this question so directly. The PCI, for its part, argues that ever since the Cominform's dissolution in the early 60's, no-one has the power or the right to expel an individual party from the international communist community. If I read the Pravda article correctly, the Russians are arguing that the PCI has put itself beyond the pale, so that the question of expulsion from the ranks - at this stage anyway - does not formally arise.



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4. In any case, the immediate reaction of most of the other Italian parties has been that of "wait and see". As I said, we shall be reporting developments here in more detail; but it follows that it would be quite wrong for us to do the PCI's work for it by seeming to defend its democratic credentials. In Italy, at any rate, that is still in dispute. If we are going to make use of this exchange, therefore, we need to stress the Soviet rather than the Italian side of the account: the intolerance shown towards other communist parties if they do not toe the Soviet line, the pretensions to infallibility, the shrill tone of Pravda's denunciation compared with the reasoned rejoinder in Unità.

5. It is for you to decide, but I can see advantage in your circulating the Pravda/Unità texts to a wide range of our posts overseas, especially in the third world. I think the Soviet text speaks for itself, and must surely be an "own goal" in the eyes of those who are not already totally committed to the Soviet way of thinking. No doubt most of our posts can find a discreet way of making these texts available to the local press, politicians and other leaders of opinion, without as it were putting an Embassy stamp on the envelope. That would not exclude a deeper subsequent analysis on your part in FCO background brief or in the monthly "Communist Policy and Tactics" (about which name we have complained before, so far in vain!). But, as seen from here, the less we intervene directly - as distinct from finding a way to make the texts themselves available - the better. There are some particularly useful quotes in Unità's riposte. Research Department can no doubt check our translation against the original (I understand that they receive Unità on a regular basis) before any action is taken.

6. It would be useful to have your thoughts on all this so that we can judge what material, and how much, to send you in future. This recent exchange is probably only the first salvo. The Unità article says explicitly that other commentaries may follow; and there is speculation in the Italian press that Brezhnev is reserving a final denunciation of the Italian party for a future occasion should the Russians fail in what appears to be an effort on their part to appeal to the PCI's Marxist (or sentimentally pro-Russian) base over the heads of the PCI's leaders.

Your ever
Tom

T L Richardson

cc: Heads of Chancery:

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REPLY TO PRAVDA:
OUR POSITION EMERGES FROM THE FACTS.

26 January 1982.

(slightly abridged)

We expected a Soviet reply. It has come. We published the full text of the Pravda article yesterday. Its tone is not exactly that of someone who wants to argue reasonably but of someone who claims to express a final politico-ideological judgement, due to a function of 'centre' or 'guide' that long since (end of III International 1943, dissolution of Cominform 1956) has been declared at an end, and which we have always rejected...

The article makes peremptory statements and deductions - every criticism of Soviet policy is 'sacrilegious' and equals 'anti-Sovietism', and 'anti-Sovietism' means an alliance with 'imperialism'. We want to start from facts and to make judgements based on facts..

We shall probably follow up this reply by others. We shall publish in full everything the Soviet comrades write about us. Unfortunately they have not done likewise: Soviet citizens know what CPSU says about our documents but are not familiar with these documents...

It is striking that the 'Polish events' only appear in the Soviet article as a pretext for accusations against Italian communists and are otherwise never mentioned... It is completely false to say that PCI leaders showed 'sympathy for right-wing extremists in Solidarnosc'. On the contrary, as everyone knows, we constantly denounced the harm and serious danger of conservative dogmatic action and of extremist action.

But the basic fact, powerful and macroscopic, is that millions of workers joined Solidarnosc, in fact the overwhelming majority of the working class. How can all these be termed counter-revolutionaries? The workers and the majority of the people are the only force that can make socialist power legitimate in Poland...The PCI is on the side of the workers, for a socialist society founded on their initiative and participation..

It is our national and international duty to be always on the side of socialism, defending its class basis, its ideals, its prestige. It is not we who oppose the interests of socialism, but those responsible for an economic/political policy that a whole people has rejected...

We are convinced that the Polish crisis is so profound that it requires an equally profound and courageous change and renewal. Pluralism will take different forms in different countries, varying with national traditions and realities, but in every case only appropriate forms of democracy will permit the expression of different social, economic, religious, cultural, political, trade union needs...

We never denied the negative role played by the Polish extremists - but why were they not politically isolated? why did they have such a large following among the Polish working class? The basic problem was that the model could not be questioned: symptomatic was the insistence that the new trade union statute had to include the statement that the party held its dominant role in the union - a highly arguable statement and certainly not likely to increase the prestige of the party among the workers..

The need for renewal was recognised by the POUP central committee, but in fact all the elements of change were re-absorbed by the party and any real change was prevented. Internal conservatism, external pressure by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, contributed to this...

Completely unfounded - built up from arbitrary and twisted extracts from our texts - is the accusation that we ignored the historic conquests of the Russian Revolution and the conquests of socialism. All our documents, including the most recent, contain a clear recognition of these events. With the October Revolution began the process of building new forms of society not based on capitalism, a large part of the world escaped from the logic of capitalism - seeking maximum profit as the final aim and supreme economic force - and from imperialist exploitation of colonial peoples.

We are not unaware of the positive aspects of society in the countries of socialist trend. The Soviet Union made a decisive contribution to the war against Fascism and to the victory over Nazi/Fascism. But the structure of the world has changed. Imperialism is no longer a dominant force, can no longer do whatever it wants. In the atomic era, the preservation of peace is not merely a supreme good, it is an absolute necessity to avoid the suicide of humanity... New and original roads to socialism have been created, which, in our view, can and must be peaceful and democratic...

But what causes the crises that periodically explode in one or other of the countries of socialist trend? When we read the Pravda article about the 'rich, dynamic life of real socialism..' we remember what Togliatti wrote, in his Yalta Memorandum about the 'difficulties, contradictions, new problems..etc.' and that the worst thing would be to give the impression that everything was fine and then suddenly find ourselves facing a difficult situation and having to explain it..etc... And when he wrote this (1964) there had not yet been the crises of Czechoslovakia (1968) or Poland (1970, 1976, 1980) - but there had been Khrushchev's secret speech to the CPSU XX Congress and his pitiless criticism at the XXII Congress...

When we ask questions and criticise realities or condemn serious acts performed by the Soviet Union or another socialist country, (military invasion of Czechoslovakia, of Afghanistan) our criticism is rejected without the slightest analysis of the facts and is treated as 'denigratory' and 'offensive'. Then, when a

crises like the Polish crisis suddenly explodes, it is revealed that everything had gone wrong, that the development and investment plans were all wrong, that there were serious social inequalities and scandalous situations of privilege, even of corruption, in the party, and the Poles themselves change nearly all their leaders and - we find this disconcerting - expel Gierak from the party, put him in prison, bring him to court. Do these facts not do harm to the cause of socialism?...

Is not this type of behaviour - substituting exalted propaganda for reality, with in some cases a return to the method of the 'personality cult' - that which generates scepticism and discredit, keeps the workers away from the party, lowers moral tension and political activity, and has a negative effect on productivity? Truth is inseparable from revolutionary tension.

We return to the question that cannot be eluded - what causes the crises that periodically explode in this or that country of socialist direction? Are they always caused by imperialism or by counter-revolutionary plots exploiting mistakes, etc.etc. (These things exist, we know it only too well, but if we have a crisis we have to find the reason in ourselves)..

When we talk of the unbreakable link between democracy and socialism, we do not propose our model to other countries with different historical and traditional experiences. We fight to get ahead on our own road. But in however many different shapes they may take, democracy and socialism must go forward together. [Another long quotation from Togliatti's Yalta Memorandum, about delays and resistance to change in the Soviet Union, etc.]

25 years after the XX Congress

There has been no progress on this road, everything has ground to a halt, it appears to us there has actually been involution. We are convinced that if the communist party, in these countries, put itself at the head of a reforming movement, the crises could be avoided.... The Pravda article cites many figures of members of committees, etc. We should like to know in which party or trade union assembly, in which soviet - apart from discussion and criticism of practical, organisational problems - can a dissenting communist, a dissenting citizen, express his dissent and where this will receive publicity?

It is a long time since we saw any effective critical research or reflection on something that doesn't work well, on the causes of crises in relations with other countries/communist parties. What has caused the most serious of all these crises - the contrast with China? We did not hesitate to reject what we thought were wrong positions taken up by the Chinese, but we are convinced that not all the wrong was, or is, on one side only. It would be of the greatest value if both sides reopened the dialogue, overcame the disagreements, with reciprocal respect for non-interference and mutual security, and so to détente and peace...

Although 25 years have passed since the CPSU XX Congress, the hopes which it raised have not been realised in practical political terms, neither inside the Soviet Union nor in its relations to other countries. We take this into account, and we have constantly stated this in all our documents and talks.

Our autonomous judgement cannot do less than take into account the concrete actions of Soviet foreign policy. If we gave up our autonomy of judgement, we should deny our responsibility to Italian workers. The defence of peace is paramount. There cannot be peace without respect for the independence of peoples. Therefore we have always supported efforts made by the Soviet government towards negotiations on disarmament, and so on.

We don't just fight with words

We cannot support the Soviet Union in matters that go clean against these objectives, such as armed intervention in Czechoslovakia and in Afghanistan. These actions met our resolute opposition. A different attitude would not be understood by the grandiose peace movement that has been impetuously growing in Europe in recent months and in which we play an active part. This movement energetically opposes the armaments race but also defends the right of every people to select their own road to peace: it has received a serious blow from recent events in Poland. For our part, we shall continue to give the movement our fullest support; we are convinced that the rigid opposition of military/ideological blocs in Europe must be overcome..

We repeat: if we had given in to the pressurising of CPSU leaders to attend the Paris conference of European CPs (April 1980), which aimed to start a European peace movement, we should have approved of a meeting that, owing to its very unilateral composition, could not lead to any mass movement (as experience showed), and should have remained isolated from the powerful movement that has been shaking West European countries...

The Pravda article gives a picture of our foreign policy that is false and is a calumny. The division of Europe into two blocs is a fact: our objective is to overcome this. This means détente, disarmament, a reciprocal initiative to renew the East-West dialogue, negotiations on arms reduction. That is our line: we proposed a 'moratorium' on medium-range missiles in December 1979.. We are not merely combative in words: we do not support proposals we consider mistaken; but we are a considerable political force in Italy and in Europe and we can make an effective contribution to détente, etc.. Slightly different from 'hoping to soften up NATO'...

We firmly support a strategy of peace that will save humanity and is the basis of the fight for socialism. We have always approved the Soviet Union when it followed this line; we are in favour of dialogue and negotiation between USSR and USA; but when the Soviet Union goes in for military intervention in other countries, pressurising the non-aligned movement, we promptly and openly show our disagreement. Now, who is

giving an alibi to imperialism? He who criticises acts that do not respect the independence and sovereignty of every people and every state, or he who performs these acts that are in patent contrast with the strategy of peace?

The PCI has always made the fight against imperialism one of its main policies, with mass demonstrations, parliamentary and political activity, solidarity, when the victims of imperialist action were USSR, China, Algeria, Vietnam, Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, and today Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, the fight against racism in South Africa and for the independence of Namibia, against dictatorship in Turkey, and for the rights of the Palestinian people. We do not boast about this: it seems to us quite natural...

And because we have always fought and go on fighting, in the name of these our principles, we have taken our stand on Polish events...The principles of independence and sovereignty of peoples must not be merely words but facts, part of the inalienable heritage of the socialist movement...

Pravda positively caricatures PCI policy when it accuses us of being 'anti-Soviet' and of using the expressions of the 'enemies of socialism'... We do not fix denigratory labels on anyone; equally, we will not allow such methods to be used against us...

Our criticism and analysis of socialist society are presented as 'passage into the camp of the forces fighting socialism'. This operation considers the world as a rigid division into two camps, between which one must choose, accepting or rejecting one or the other, in toto. This conception does not fit the modern world, with its different forces, movements, peoples, social classes, developing countries sincerely aiming at socialism but refusing to be caged in such an over-simplified contrast; to say nothing of the non-aligned movement, which is a marked reality in the modern world. This manichean vision considers any criticism, even an autonomous analysis, as a hostile act, asserting that he who is not with us is against us. This has already done considerable harm to the cause of socialism..

The very conception of a single 'real socialism' must be firmly rejected.. What is being claimed is always a political and ideological 'orthodoxy' proclaimed from the pulpit, which has ended by transforming the lessons of scientific socialism (especially those of Marx and Lenin) from live instruments of analysis and knowledge into a dogmatic ideological system, returning to the 'guide state' and the mentality and will to supremacy.

In fact we find ourselves facing the wish to rebuild around the CPSU a single centre of world control of communist parties and liberation movements. The language of the Pravda article shows this - intolerant, peremptory, full of statements with no basis in fact or reasoned argument..

It seems strange to us that CPSU leadership has learnt nothing from the numerous serious facts and ruptures of the past (Yugoslavia, China) that did so much harm, not only to the cause of socialism but also to the Soviet Union itself.
