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RELATIONS BETWEEN SOVIET AND ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES

1. Pravda on 13 February carried a rejoinder to PCI comments in Unita and elsewhere on the earlier Pravda and Kommunist articles (my telno 050).

2. The article began by saying that it was the PCI leadership which had initiated polemics against the CPSU rather than vice versa. Differences between the two parties had appeared long ago and attempts to explain the CPSU's policies had repeatedly been greeted with attacks against the Soviet party. The Pravda and Communist articles had not been an attack on the PCI but rather a defence of the existing socialist state and socialist community and of their ideals and also a warning not to underestimate the role of socialism and of the Soviet Union. The main message of these articles was to bring to the notice of the Italian party the paramount duty and concern of Communists to defend peace, which was impossible without the Soviet Union and Socialist Community.

3. Pravda noted the Italian statements since the earlier articles which recognised to some degree the role of the Soviet Union in the defence of peace and in the working class movement. But the article also noted the PCI support for the Chinese leadership. In the earlier articles the CPSU had not avoided the issue of Poland where the duty to help a people in trouble proved an acid test of the genuine internationalism of the PCI leadership.

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4. In conclusion the article said that the CPSU was not interested in sharpening the polemic nor would it retreat from polemic imposed on it. It called on the PCI to take a more serious approach to the ruthless reality of class struggle in the world arena. The cause of peace and socialism was not served by the PCI leadership's concentration on confrontation with the CPSU rather than the struggle against imperialism.

5. Comment follows by bag.

KEEBLE

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