



Mr Goodison

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PCI/CPSU RELATIONS

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1. I submit a draft reply to Michael Simpson-Orelebar's letter of 1 February in which he comments on the recent exchanges between the Italian and Soviet Union Communist parties. The draft incorporates EESD comments.

2. Although these exchanges do not constitute a complete break between Rome and Moscow, there is no doubt that relations between the two parties have reached an all-time low. The implications are of far-reaching importance both internationally and on the Italian domestic scene. It is however by no means clear what will happen next. There will presumably be a cooling-off period while Signor Berlinguer attempts to bring the reluctant base of the party back behind him; but that will not be an easy task. An estimated 25% of the PCI have traditionally looked to Moscow; the new direction and respectability which Signor Berlinguer seeks can hold little appeal for them if it means cutting themselves off from what is in effect their spiritual home.

22 February 1982

D A S Gladstone
Western European Department

To is/ke. J.M. 23/2

23/2



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 February 1982

M K O Simpson-Orlebar Esq
ROME

Dear Michael,

PCI/CPSU RELATIONS

WRD 0111

24 FEB 1982

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1. Thank you for your letter of 1 February which contained a full and interesting analysis of the effects of the continuing slanging match between the PCI and the CPSU. We have, of course, been following these developments closely and share your view that the open deterioration in relations between the two parties over the past months has gone too far to be readily healed. By seeking to appease Moscow at this late stage Signor Berlinguer would signal failure of his 'third way' for European Communism and would lose the extra respectability which the Italian Communist Party has just gained in the eyes of potential partners.
2. I agree with you that relations between the PCI and the CPSU are not necessarily damaged beyond repair. Subject to Moscow's views, the Russians will, I believe, be anxious to avoid a further split on Yugoslav or Chinese lines, which could only weaken the world Communist movement. They will, as you suggest, probably hope that the hardliners in the PCI may yet stage a comeback. On the PCI side, my impression is that the leadership will wish to avoid any complete break with Moscow but will enter a period of self-examination, during which both they and the party base can consider options for the way ahead. Initial reactions from other Italian political parties seem to suggest that the PCI needs to establish its own identity more clearly before they toy further with ideas of an alliance with it.
3. I note, incidentally, that there has been no move towards democratic socialism. By riding roughshod over the pro-Moscow party members Signor Berlinguer is perpetuating a policy based on the principles of democratic centralism. Personally, I do not disagree with Rakowski's statement to Oriana Fallaci published in the Times of 23 February: 'I promise you that if Berlinguer were in power and had to face a crisis like ours, he would have declared martial law sooner than we did', even though the PCI have publicly rejected the principle involved. By that I do not mean that Berlinguer's criticism of the CPSU is only tactical in inspiration. I do mean that people behave differently if it is their house on fire, or someone else's.



4. We must keep a careful watch on reactions from the public and party base to the new situation. The party base must surely be dissatisfied at being led in a direction in which it does not want to go. In this context we look forward to receiving a record of your lunch for PCI leaders (para 3 of Tom Richardson's letter of 28 January to Roy Osborne). It will be interesting to have an account of the present situation from the horses' mouths.

5. It is not easy to guess what will happen in the long run. If tension in Poland eases it should be easier for Signor Berlinguer to seek some form of rapprochement with Moscow, thereby bringing his party base back into line, but I doubt whether that will happen in time to prevent further internal squabbles over the direction that it should now take.

6. One thing is certain. If it was difficult to analyse the Italian internal political scene before this winter, the PCI/CPSU exchanges have introduced a joker into the pack that makes the business of prediction even more of a challenge. But it seems likely that a spring election (and I make no predictions as to whether there will be one) would reveal a further lessening of support for the PCI at the polling booths. Small indication as it is, I was interested to learn that at last weekend's election at Lamezia the upward trend in electoral support for the centrist parties continued, primarily at the expense of the PCI. If you don't know what the PCI stands for and you don't think it is going to gain power, why vote for it?

7. The next issue of Communist Policy and Tactics will include a piece on PCI/CPSU relations. I enclose an advance copy from which you will see that it includes some unacknowledged quotations from your letter. The piece will probably be further revised before publication to take account of the most recent conciliatory article in Pravda (the appearance of which tends to confirm that the Russians are anxious to avoid a complete break).

Yours ever,

Alan

A C Goodison

