

RESTRICTED

Mr Culshaw O/R
Mr Seeley

Reference

Enter the Italian Committee (21)
1/3
Mr. Seeley Dept
Mr. [unclear]
R. 4/3

MR YOUNG'S CALL ON DOTI MECHINI (PCI)

1. Mechini was friendly and would like to see more of us at lunches etc; indeed he asked if PCI officials could be included on Embassy reception guest lists!
2. Discussion of Poland and the PCI/ PCUS spirit was fairly predictable. Mechini insisted that PCI criticism of socialismo reale was nothing new. In Poland itself, he foresaw a thorough going military regime on nationalist Pilsudski lines - nothing to do with communism. There was a hint that PCI relations with Third World parties of the left might go through a sticky patch until the PCI had got their point of view across. He criticised the recent PCF congress, which he attended: no attempt to discuss policy there.
3. We asked about the base. He admitted that the PCI had internal problems. Many PCI supporters had romantic and misleading ideas of life in the Soviet paradise. He had had to tell party greybeards that not everyone in the Soviet Union had a house or a pension. Cossutta was taking up an ideological stance, whereas one should begin, as Berlinguer did, with the facts and then draw the appropriate conclusions. He expected the PCI to lose some votes - but not too many - if there were early elections. The PSI and other lay parties would gain, but more from the DC which he described as a "passive" party, incapable of renewing itself. His argument against early elections was that it would lead to more blank votes, qualunquismo, and a lurch to the right. But I rather think he was resigned to their taking place.
3. As you can guess, he had no clear formula to offer on the Terza via. France under Mitterand seemed to come closest. Planning and administrative efficiency were ingredients. He said several times that the big change taking place in PCI views was the more cooperative attitude towards social democrats in Italy, Europe and elsewhere. Social Democracy in Germany and France had had "remarkable successes" (though of course it was not enough). The PCI would not object to Craxi as PM. But the only hope for real change was the alternativa, including all the minor lay parties.

Richardson
T L Richardson

24 February 1982

cc: Mr J R Young
WED
FCO

WR50111
-2 MAR 1982
INDEX
L DB