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Mr. Young 17/3
Mr Osborne
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Your reference

Our reference

Date

9 March 1982

17 MAR 1982		
PA	Action Taken	
✓	DS	

Jean Keim

PCI/CPSU

- Your letter of 3 February.
- We are surprised at your assessment that there would be little third world interest in the full texts of this dispute. The PCI are well known in many parts of the third world - its leaders travel a lot, in Africa and elsewhere - and the fact that Western Europe's largest Communist Party has so uncompromisingly criticised Soviet policy, and socialism as practised in Eastern Europe, should surely have some impact. I am glad to see that you are making use of the dispute in your Polish Chronology, Communist Policy and Tactics and a possible background brief; I hope that you will consider further ways of deploying any new material we can get.
- There is no sign yet of the PCI backtracking; indeed their leadership is now engaged in a major effort to convince and reassure the party base about the present anti-Soviet line. The party may continue in practice to serve certain Soviet foreign policy interests (e.g. over disarmament) but the intricate web of contacts, and the militants' view of Moscow, can never be quite the same again. While I don't disagree with your comment that the PCI "remains part of the world Communist movement" this rather begs the question of what the world Communist movement amounts to in practice, and how far individual Communist parties' interests reflect those of the Soviet Union.
- Unita, as Kathryn Colvin will know, has continued to publish numerous articles and letters on the rift with Moscow, including some statements by Berlinguer. None of them, however, has done more than restate the PCI's basic position as set out in the attachments to my earlier letter. The exchanges between Kommunist and Rinascita have been just a replay of the main theme in a minor key. The only further text worth enclosing in translation with this letter is the PCI Direzione document of 9 February attacking the attitude of Cossutta and his supporters in the party: a good example of "democratic centralism" in action, tending to tarnish the PCI's image as a sophisticated party which has left the unpalatable aspects of Leninism behind. We shall soon report further on this and on the overall reaction of the base.



5. Finally, I suggest that the reactions of other Communist parties, in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, may merit some attention. You will, for example, have seen Robert Culshaw's letter of 4 March to Osborne in WED about the Chinese view; many posts in Communist countries have reported the attitude of their local party to the dispute.

Yours ever,
Tom

T L Richardson

cc: D A S Gladstone Esq
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Chanceries:

MOSCOW

WARSAW

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EXTRACT FROM DOCUMENT OF PCI DIREZIONE, PUBLISHED IN UNITA ON
10 FEBRUARY 1982

"[General Introduction on PCI attitudes to the Polish crisis]

The Direzione warns the party of manoeuvres which can now be seen, in some cases encouraged and assisted from outside, which tend to create organised groups opposed to the free debate now taking place in the party.

The strongest and most serious reply to these manoeuvres consists in our capacity to develop political dialogue and struggle in broad daylight, tolerating the ideas of everyone, with full respect for the rules of the Statute which assist, and must apply to, everyone. To break those rules would mean forcing the party to lose its autonomy, to re-trace the paralysing experience of some socialist and social democratic parties; and it would mean making it more difficult for each person to express his ideas and disagreements without the risk that they would be exploited.

The Direzione has discussed the position and behaviour of Comrade Cossutta with reference to the public demonstration of Perugia.

In the speech he made on that occasion Comrade Cossutta presented the decisions of the leadership in a distorted version; he sought to pass off as optional ideological variants what were in fact binding political choices concerning the events in Poland, foreign policy, developments in the struggle for socialism, and the nature of relations between the PCI and other communist parties, workers, socialists, and progressives. In this way he contested the validity of those decisions, taken by an overwhelming majority vote of the party's leading organs; he spoke of "fractionalism by the majority" and in fact invited Comrades to take no account of those decisions. Incidentally, he has thus fallen short of the undertaking he gave to the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission on 13 January to consider their decisions valid for everyone.

The Direzione believes that positions of this kind go beyond the manifestation of legitimate dissent, and therefore must openly deplore them."

ROME

9 February 1982