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*Bogdan ŽIVKOVIĆ*

Institute for Balkan Studies, SASA

[bogdanzivkovic@live.com](mailto:bogdanzivkovic@live.com)

### **Inspiring Dissent: Yugoslavia and the Italian Communist Party during 1956\***

**ABSTRACT:** This paper analyzes the relations between the communist parties of Yugoslavia and Italy during 1956, one of the most important years of the history of communism. The dissenting nature of those relations, which were based on the mutual wish to limit the Soviet hegemony within the global communist movement, is in the focus of this analysis. Finally, this paper aims to demonstrate how the roots of the close friendship between the two parties during the sixties and seventies can be traced back to 1956, and how the Yugoslav communists influenced or tried to influence their Italian counterparts.

**KEY WORDS:** communism, Yugoslavia, Italian Communist Party (PCI), 1956, Cold War, dissent

This article is going back to the initial point, both chronological and ideological, of the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The chronological aspect implies the fact that, after a harsh conflict, the two parties finally restored their relations in 1956. The ideological aspect refers to the fact that the relations between the two parties obtained a new political quality in 1956, i.e. that from that point on a conjuncture of perspectives between the two parties was present, based on their mutual wish to limit and challenge the Soviet hegemony in the communist movement. Even though Yugoslavia and the PCI were divided by different historical experiences, in some aspects even by different views

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and interpretations of Marxism, the ideal of autonomy and of liberation from Soviet imposed dogmas became the binding element between the two parties, and the foundation of their relations for decades after 1956.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of this article is to, through a meticulous source based analysis of certain episodes in the inter-party relations during 1956, shed some light on Yugoslav attempts (and partial success) in encouraging and influencing the PCI to express dissent and fight for autonomy from the USSR. It goes without saying that this phenomenon was crucially intertwined with a process of wider scope – the dissent that arose within the communist movement after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), catalyzed by the Khrushchev's Secret Speech. Nonetheless, a special Yugoslav impact on the reformist tendencies in the movement is worth highlighting. This phenomenon is already noted in case of some other parties,<sup>2</sup> and the Italian communists also perceived Yugoslavia as an attractive model of autonomous communism and defiance to the USSR. It was a matter of prestige Yugoslavia gained on the basis of its conflict with the Soviets from 1948.

The episodes that will serve as case studies of the argument and construct the core of this article, are: 1) Palmiro Togliatti's visit to Belgrade in May and its immediate aftermath (launching of the theory of polycentrism and its correlation to the Moscow declaration of Yugoslavia and USSR); 2) The visit Luigi Longo and a PCI delegation made to Belgrade in October; 3) The contacts between Yugoslav officials in Rome and the PCI's inner opposition, particularly with Eugenio Reale.

Finally, it should be also noted that, although this paper is primarily based on unpublished sources, it also takes into account a vast body of international literature. Regarding Serbian and ex-Yugoslav authors, this paper relies on the publications of Saša Mišić. Mišić wrote on the relations between Yugoslavia and the PCI in the period from 1945 to 1956,<sup>3</sup> which were heavily influenced by the Cominform split and the Yugoslav-Italian

1 One of the first results of the rapprochement based on those principles was already visible in 1964. In January Togliatti visited Belgrade and formed a *strategic alliance*, as the Italian historian Marco Galeazzi has defined it: Marco Galeazzi, *Il PCI e il movimento dei paesi non allineati 1955-1975*, (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2011), 246-247.

2 Ljubodrag Dimić wrote about such Yugoslav impact in Hungary, where, during 1956, many reformist circles in perceived the Yugoslav system and its relations with Moscow as a role model for the transformation of their country. Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, (Beograd: Arhipelag, 2014), 201.

3 Saša Mišić, "Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy, 1945-1956", *Italy's Balkan Strategies (19th-20th Century)*, ed. Vojislav Pavlović, (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, 2015), 281-292; Саша Мишић, „Обнављање односа

territorial dispute. The aim of this article is to show how, in difference to the period and crucial topics depicted in Mišić's work, the Yugoslav-PCI collaboration in 1956 was, besides being a renewal of inter-party relations, also an interlude to the fruitful ideological collaboration of the two parties in the following decades. Regarding the Italian and international literature on PCI, this paper adheres to the school of thought which ascribes more agency and autonomy to Togliatti and the PCI in 1956. As we shall see in the following pages, such a conclusion is strongly supported by Yugoslav sources of that era, and it challenges interpretations that accentuate the PCI's allegiance to Moscow.<sup>4</sup>

*The Relations Between the Yugoslav and Italian Communists  
From the Comintern to 1958: A Brief Overview*

The relations between the two parties in the Comintern era, from the early twenties to the WWII, remain to a large extent obscure. However, one thing can be said with certainty – the Italian party was much more important and powerful than its Yugoslav counterpart. Due to such power dynamics, the PCI's leader Togliatti even arbitrated in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia's (CPY) internal disputes.<sup>5</sup> World War II radically changed the nature of those relations. As Gian Carlo Pajetta tersely wrote, encapsulating the essence of the new situation: "They conducted a revolution and we have not."<sup>6</sup> Led by ideological fanaticism and self-confidence de-

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између Савеза комуниста Југославије и Комунистичке партије Италије 1955–1956. године", *Токови историје* 2/2013, 121–145.

- 4 For a different interpretation of PCI's history, "which stresses the international-domestic interaction", and an insightful overview of the historiographical body of work on this topic, see: Giovanni Gozzini, "Italian communism", *The Cambridge History of Communism*, Volume II: The Socialist Camp and World Power 1941–1960s, eds N. Naimark et al., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 597–618.
- 5 More on Togliatti's role during the Fourth Congress of the CPY, held in Dresden in 1928: Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988, Prva knjiga*, (Beograd: Nolit, 1988), 160, 261; Stefan Gužvica, *Before Tito. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia During the Great Purge (1936–1940)*, (Talin: Talinn University Press 2020), 41, 50. - During the last meeting between him and Togliatti, Tito also mentioned Togliatti's authority to intervene in internal affairs of the Yugoslav party. Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archives of Yugoslavia - AJ), 507/IX – 48/I-266, Završni razgovori 21. I 1964. u zgradi SIV-a. Togliatti himself sometimes highlighted and sometimes completely denied his role in the history of the Yugoslav party. Marco Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito. Tra identità nazionale e internazionalismo*, (Rome: Carocci editore, 2005), 23, 147.
- 6 Gian Carlo Pajetta, *Le crisi che ho vissuto. Budapest Praga Varsavia*, (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1982), 40. - Marco Galeazzi also wrote about the impact of that fact on the party relations: Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito*, 58–59.

rived from their successful revolutionary struggle, the Yugoslavs wanted to be the teachers of revolution, and were convinced that the unsuccessful Italian comrades should become their students and implement Yugoslav advice in their party line.<sup>7</sup>

The key to understanding the relations between the two parties from 1943 to 1948 is in the conflictual relationship between Yugoslav radicalism, PCI's moderate policies, and the Soviet ambiguity between those two opposing visions. This dynamic was first noticed and best elaborated by Silvio Pons.<sup>8</sup> While the Yugoslavs wanted an immediate conflict with capitalism, their Italian comrades had a moderate party line, and favored a collaboration with the West. The Soviet foreign policy itself was ambiguous, reluctant to adhere to one of the two mentioned strategies, and such indecisiveness left the conflict between the Yugoslav and Italian party open. The Trieste dispute, i.e. the dilemma should the city belong to Italy or Yugoslavia, was one of the questions where the conflict was most visible. However, that conflict was not a mere national confrontation, but linked to a broader issue – the different visions for the future of communism of the two parties. While the Yugoslavs believed that the socialist countries should expand at the expense of their capitalist neighbors at any cost, the Italian communists were convinced that it was not wise to create conflicts between the two nascent ideological blocks.<sup>9</sup>

During the First conference of the Cominform, in September 1947, it seemed that the USSR strongly supported the Yugoslav views. The representatives of Moscow and Belgrade were united in an attack on the PCI

7 That arrogance, combined with constant and pressuring Yugoslav advices, led to unpleasant conversations between Yugoslav and Italian communists. In one of them, evidently frustrated, Togliatti said to his Yugoslav interlocutors that “regarding the revolution in Italy, leave us to do it”. Silvio Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia. L'URSS, il PCI e le origini della guerra fredda (1943-1948)*, (Rome: Carocci editore, 1999), 219.

8 Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia*; Silvio Pons, “A Challenge Let Drop: Soviet Foreign Policy, the Cominform and the Italian Communist Party, 1947-9”, *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War 1943-53*, eds Francesca Gori, Silvio Pons, (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 246-263. - Italian historian Aldo Agosti underlined how Togliatti's moderate views, aimed at containing left extremism, dated back to the period of his work in the Comintern. Aldo Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti. A Biography*, (London New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 50.

9 Regarding the issue of the relations between Yugoslavia and the PCI regarding Trieste see: Mišić, “Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy, 1945-1956”, 281-286. Regarding PCI's policy on Trieste see: Patrick Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa. Il PCI, il confine orientale e il contesto internazionale 1941-1955*, (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2010); Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia*, 174-182; Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito*, 57-82.

and its moderate policies.<sup>10</sup> However, in criticizing the PCI, the Soviet representative Zhdanov was not as fierce as the Yugoslav Kardelj.<sup>11</sup> It was only one of the signs, at that time not understood by the Yugoslav communist leadership, that Moscow, in fact, saw a bigger problem in the CPY than in the PCI. When only a year later, at the Second conference of the Cominform, the Soviets decided to attack the Yugoslav party, Togliatti was the ideal ally in that conflict, as he was opposed to Belgrade for years.<sup>12</sup> The Conference initiated a profound conflict between the USSR and Yugoslavia, and at the same time radicalized the already existent, but not publicized, conflict between the Italian and Yugoslav communist parties. During that period, and with the full support of the PCI, the Soviets established a center for anti-Yugoslav propaganda in Trieste.<sup>13</sup> On the other side, Belgrade supported and financed some dissident groups in the PCI.<sup>14</sup> In this heated atmosphere, any contact with Yugoslavia was considered as a “relation with the enemy”.<sup>15</sup>

After several years of conflict, the relations between the parties were restored in 1956. The renewal of inter-party relations was not a fruit of an autochthonous initiative, but the result of certain changes on the international scene. Firstly, in 1954 Italy and Yugoslavia agreed to a de facto division of the disputed territories,<sup>16</sup> which lowered the tensions in It-

10 Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia*, 98–105, 194; *Zapisnici sa sednica Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta KPJ (11. jun 1945 – 7. jul 1948)*, ur. Branko Petranović, (Beograd: Službeni list, 1995), 213–219, 587–588, 598.

11 Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia*, 108–109, 201–204. - In the aftermath of the conference the Yugoslavs went even further, insisting on a revolution in Italy. One of the most vivid evidence of that is their plan to, with Hungarian assistance, intervene in a possible civil war in Italy after the elections in April 1948. Elena Aga-Rossi, Victor Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin. Il Pci e la politica estera staliniana negli archivi di Mosca*, (Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 2007), 238.

12 As Silvio Pons showed, the Soviet representatives at the congress used Togliatti and his reputation for the anti-Yugoslav propaganda. While the Soviets gave a prominent role to Togliatti, and praised him in their internal reports, the parts of his speech in which he defended the PCI's moderate party line and its mass character were excluded from the reports sent to Stalin. Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia*, 130–132, 224–225.

13 Vidali and the Trieste communists were in charge of a “center for the fight against Tito”, organized by the USSR and the PCI. Aga-Rossi, Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin*, 259; Patrick Karlsen, *Vittorio Vidali. Vita di uno stalinista (1916–56)*, (Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 2019), 231–280.

14 Mišić, “Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy, 1945–1956”, 287–288; Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*, 213.

15 Pajetta, *Le crisi che ho vissuto*, 42.

16 For more about the Trieste crisis and its impact on the relations between Yugoslavia and Italy see: Dragan Bogetić, Bojan Dimitrijević, *Tršćanska kriza 1945–1954*:

aly regarding this question, creating a climate more favorable for a future reconciliation between the PCI and Belgrade. However, more important than the agreement between Belgrade and Rome were the actions of the Soviet secretary general. Khrushchev's visit to Belgrade in 1955 was the first shock, legalizing, for the first time since 1948, contacts with Yugoslavia.<sup>17</sup> The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU was even more important, enabling the PCI to build its relations with Yugoslavia on a free and liberal mutual rethinking of many political issues. In such a political climate, the Italian and Yugoslav communists bonded almost instantly. The clearest signs of that friendship in the making were the visits of the two party leaders, Palmiro Togliatti and Luigi Longo, made to Belgrade, in May and October 1956. Their friendship was based on subversive ideas, on a wish to be more autonomous and challenge the Soviet hegemony within the communist movement. The limits placed on de-Stalinization after the Hungarian crisis put a pause on that friendship, as Moscow, once again, was not looking favorably on Yugoslavia. A new conflict between Moscow and Belgrade was in the making, culminating in a second break in the official relations, in 1958. The PCI followed USSR's lead and gradually cooled its relations with Yugoslavia once more, to the point of cutting off ties.<sup>18</sup>

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*vojnopolitički aspekti*, (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2009); Miljan Milkić, *Tršćanska kriza u vojno-političkim odnosima Jugoslavije sa velikim silama 1943-1947*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2012); Federico Tenca Montini, *La Jugoslavia e la questione di Trieste, 1945-1954*, (Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 2020); Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Le conflit de Trieste, 1943-1954*, (Brussels: Éditions de L'Institut de sociologie de L'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1966); Bogdan Novak, *Trieste, 1941-1954: The Ethnic, Political, and Ideological Struggle*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Diego De Castro, *La questione di Trieste. L'azione politica e diplomatica italiana dal 1943 al 1954*, (Trieste: Edizioni Lint, 1981); Raoul Pupo, *Fra Italia e Jugoslavia. Saggi sulla questione di Trieste (1945-1954)*, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1989); Massimo de Leonardis, *La "diplomazia atlantica" e la soluzione del problema di Trieste (1952-1954)*, (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1992); Raoul Pupo, *Guerra e dopoguerra al confine orientale d'Italia, 1938-1956*, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1999); Luciano Monzali, *Gli Italiani di Dalmazia e le relazioni italo-jugoslave nel Novecento*, (Venezia: Marsilio, 2015).

17 For more about the relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR in the late fifties see: Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*; Svetozar Rajak, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the early Cold War: reconciliation, comradeship, confrontation, 1953-57*, (London: Routledge, 2010); Veljko Mićunović, *Moskovske godine 1956/1958*, (Zagreb: Liber, 1977).

18 Without the ambition to explain Togliatti's complex relation with the Soviet Union, a quote from Togliatti's letter to Gramsci, written in 1923, seems to capture the essence of it: "entering into open battle with the Communist International, putting ourselves outside of it, then finding ourselves without powerful material and moral support, reduced to a tiny group held together by almost solely personal ties' would

Therefore, 1956 was a very dynamic year in the relations between the two parties, marked by unusually strong amplitudes. After all the differences and conflicts in the past, there was a striking closeness between the parties until November, as a result of an ideological conjecture. After November, the relations deteriorated. This deterioration was imposed by Soviet directions, to which the PCI wanted to remain faithful despite its obvious inclinations towards collaborating with Yugoslavia. Such contrasting ideas produced an ambiguous view of the other on both sides during 1956, which consisted of parallel feelings of mistrust and closeness. The ambiguousness was more clearly expressed on the Yugoslav side. From the very first contacts the Yugoslavs were cautious, bruised by the painful experience of conflict with the Italian comrades, and not willing to completely open themselves up for collaboration. While the two most important figures in the Italian party came to Belgrade, the Yugoslav delegation to the PCI's congress in December was fairly low in rank. During the Hungarian crisis a sense of disappointment dominated the Yugoslav reports about the PCI. The situation was evaluated as a silent comeback of Stalinism and a severe failure of de-Stalinization. But the other and different aspect of the relations was the opinion, clearly and explicitly articulated in Belgrade, that the PCI was special, a party closest to Yugoslavia within the entire international communist movement. Nuances in the Italian views were noted, a 'healthy' de-Stalinist climate, intimate critiques of Moscow, a hidden but existing sense of autonomy and freedom. The conclusion was that attention should be paid to the PCI, and that a full collaboration should be developed with this party. In spite of its connections with Moscow, a flow of ideological creativity was noted. The experience of the previous conflict was painful, but at the same time it was admitted that the PCI's critiques of Yugoslavia were the mildest, compared to the aggressive propaganda attacks coming from the other parties within the Soviet dominated communist movement. The same argument was repeated in 1962, in the circumstances of a new reconciliation. Due to those understandings, the 1962 reconciliation was not temporary, but permanent.<sup>19</sup>

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entail 'losing all real and practical immediate influence on the development of the political battle in Italy". Donald Sassoon, "Foreword", in: Agosti, *Palmyro Togliatti*, xiii-xiv.

19 The last two paragraphs, a synthesis of the relations between two parties from 1956 to 1963, are based on the author's archival research conducted for his PhD thesis: Bogdan Živković, "Yugoslavia and Eurocommunism. Yugoslavia and the Italian Communist Party in the Sixties and Seventies", (PhD thesis, Sapienza University of Rome,

Although the 1958 conflict can obfuscate the importance of the inter-party collaboration during 1956, the foundation for the close and friendly collaboration of the two parties during the sixties and the seventies was laid in this turbulent year. As mentioned earlier, the wish to dissent against the USSR and to fight for greater autonomy within the communist movement was the binding element between the Yugoslav and Italian communists. This paper's intention is to localize, articulate and analyze that phenomenon, with a particular focus on Yugoslavia's role in inspiring dissent among the Italian communists.

*Undermining Soviet Hegemony: Togliatti in Belgrade – Tito in Moscow – The Theory of Polycentrism (May–June 1956)*

In historiography, the uprisings in Poland and Hungary are symbols of Khrushchev's total loss of control over the process of de-Stalinization. It is certain that de-Stalinization was not a controlled process at that moment, but the real question is – was it fully controlled by the USSR since its beginnings? The Soviet leader was not even remotely aware of the impact his actions will have in Eastern Europe.<sup>20</sup> Focusing on the crisis inside the socialist camp, i.e. Poland and Hungary, historians tended to underestimate the importance of two events which took place in June 1956 and are crucial in the history of de-Stalinization. Those events involved the Yugoslav and Italian communist parties. The first one was the Moscow declaration,<sup>21</sup> and the second one was Palmiro Togliatti's theory of polycentrism.<sup>22</sup> The subversive essence of the ideals promoted in the

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SARAS – Dipartimento di Storia Antropologia Religioni Arte e Spettacolo, December 2020).

20 Anne Applebaum, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944–1956*, (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 481–489.

21 The Moscow declaration, signed between the Soviet and Yugoslav party representatives on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1956, renewed the relations between the two parties and promoted the principles of equality, independence and recognition of alternative models of socialism. Mićunović, *Moskovske godine 1956/1958*, 529–530.

22 Togliatti's theory opposed the centralized structure of the movement, promoting the need to develop greater autonomy for national parties and a bilateral, not centralized, form of relations between communist parties. It was believed that in that way it would be easier for parties to cope with different regional realities in which they were acting, and, therefore, to create alternative paths to socialism, differing from the Soviet model of 1917, and more corresponding to their contemporary situation. Donald Sassoon, *Togliatti e il partito di massa. Il PCI dal 1944 al 1964*, (Rome: Castelvecchi, 2014), (e-book), 92–108; *Evrokomunizam i socijalizam*, ed. Vjekoslav Mikecin, (Zagreb: Globus, 1979), 7–20.



declaration and Togliatti's theory clearly demonstrates that the process of de-Stalinization was not controlled by the USSR even before the uprisings and crisis a few months later. It can be even said that the Soviet leader Khrushchev lost control over de-Stalinization in the very moment he initiated the process – at the pulpit of the CPSU congress in February 1956.

Unfortunately, the sources from the Archives of Yugoslavia do not give a detailed insight into Palmiro Togliatti's visit to Belgrade in May 1956. However, it can be said with certainty that this visit was a crucial overture to the above mentioned events that took place in June. That importance and correlation between the Moscow Declaration and Togliatti's theory was already noted in historiography, one of the first authors to underline it being François Furet. In his book *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, Furet wrote: "Togliatti was using the renewal of the relations between Tito and the USSR in trying to create a new pole that would be relatively independent from Moscow."<sup>23</sup> The following pages draw heavily from the inspiring notion made by Furet.

In May 1956 Yugoslavia was facing a major turning point in its history. The experience of conflict with the Soviet Union was traumatic, as the country was on the verge of famine and ideologically divided, a problem which was solved by constructing Yugoslav Gulags. At the same time, the fierce conditions hardened the Yugoslav communists, provoked their ideological creativity, and opened them to other parts of the world, which led to the most important idea Yugoslav socialism created – non-alignment. Therefore, when the Soviets invited the Yugoslavs to cooperate once again, Belgrade was determined that the relations had to be on equal basis. The relations between the two states were renewed in 1955, but inter-party relations were kept frozen. In spite of the fact that the Yugoslav leaders were obsessed with the wish to be recognized as communists once again, after the slander that was directed against them from the Soviet bloc in the previous years, there was a strong feeling within the Yugoslav political leadership that reentering the communist movement led by Moscow could be a dangerous move. Leaving the state and the party to Soviet authority and mercy, like in 1948, was unacceptable. At some point this prolongation had to come to an end. The Twentieth Congress and Khrushchev's new foreign policy changed the Yugoslavs' minds. It was thought that the time had come to accept the most important Soviet request – renewal of inter-party relations. Although the new Soviet course was favorable, Tito still wanted to reaffirm Yugoslav political principles. Hence, the Yugoslav

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23 François Furet, *Prošlost jedne iluzije*, (Beograd: Paideia, 1996), 561.

leader went to Moscow in June 1956 with a new platform, a declaration which established the principles of equality, sovereignty and autonomy in the relations between the two parties. On June 20<sup>th</sup> 1956 the declaration was signed, and the first blow was struck to the foundation of the Soviet hegemony within the communist movement, announcing the further centrifugal tendencies which erupted in the fall of that year.<sup>24</sup>

Josip Broz Tito was aware that the principles he promoted, and which protected the Yugoslav independence, had to become global in order to be valid. His policies in creating the Non-aligned movement were based on the same rationale – Tito's core idea was that the principle has to become global. Therefore, he opposed the regionalism of the Bandung conference in 1955, contrasting it to the globalism of the Belgrade conference in 1961.<sup>25</sup> Tito tried to develop the same pattern in his struggle to set the party relations with Moscow on equal terms, wanting the concept to be applicable for all the parties within the communist movement. In that context, Togliatti's visit was crucial for Tito. As multiple sources reveal,<sup>26</sup> the Yugoslav president rushed the visit, wanting to have a meeting with the "most liberal" communist leader prior to his trip to Moscow. In Tito's perception, establishing a connection with the Italian general secretary, based on the idea of independency and equality between the communist parties, could be a potent weapon for changing the entire movement. Having in mind that just a month later in his theory of polycentrism Togliatti asked for the same (the end of Soviet hegemony), it is clear that he also had his reasons and was enthusiastic to come to Belgrade and discuss a new vision for the communist movement.

The scarce documentation from the Archives of Yugoslavia, however, provides two crucial pieces of information about Togliatti's visit. The first one is that the main topic of the conversations was the effort to reform the communist movement. Bilateral issues, like Trieste, were put to the side. From this visit on, during the following decades, international topics overshadowed the importance of bilateral issues in the contacts between the two parties, giving a global character to their collaboration. The second piece of information contained in the Yugoslav sources is the pronounced stance of the Italian guest that the relations between the com-

24 Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*; Rajak, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*; Mićunović, *Moskovske godine 1956/1958*.

25 About this Tito's rationale and the conference: Драган Богетић, Љубодраг Димић, *Београдска конференција нестврстаних земаља 1–6. септембра 1961*, (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2013).

26 Мишић, „Обнављање односа“, 135–136.

unist parties should be bilateral, while he strongly opposed the idea of a centralized organization like the Cominform.<sup>27</sup> In an interview he gave to the Yugoslav newspaper *Borba*,<sup>28</sup> Togliatti emphasized his new and subversive ideas – a need for different and alternative paths to socialism, as the circumstances were different from those of Russia in 1917; and the impression that other social groups, not just the working class, were starting to veer towards socialism.<sup>29</sup> Togliatti was strongly encouraged by the Yugoslav experience and his stay in Belgrade to publicly come out with his new vision. Returning to Rome, he wrote to the CPSU explaining how Tito wants to collaborate with other communist parties, but in a bilateral form, not through a centralized organization. In that letter to Moscow, Togliatti strongly approved Yugoslav views, and Belgrade's role of a bridge to the non-communist left in the world.<sup>30</sup> The same message, that Yugoslavia should stay out of the socialist camp and independent, Togliatti promoted to his Italian comrades, who had an impression that their leader broadened his perspectives during the visit to Belgrade.<sup>31</sup>

After the meeting with Togliatti, Tito traveled to Moscow. As Khrushchev signed the Moscow declaration, validating Yugoslav ideas, it seemed that a great success was achieved. The impact the declaration had on the PCI was instant. As mentioned, during the negotiations in Moscow, Togliatti gave the famous interview to the Italian review *Nuovi Argomenti*, launching the theory of polycentrism. The Italian general secretary was encouraged by the Yugoslav example to stand up against Soviet hegemony and he publicly declared his party's focus on the special, Italian way to socialism.

The Yugoslav influence was furtherly demonstrated in June, when a PCI delegation led by Gian Carlo Pajetta visited Moscow and asked for a reform of the relations between their party and the CPSU, based on the principles of the Moscow declaration. The Soviet answer was cold and sobering. The Soviets were very critical of Togliatti's new theory, respond-

27 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I, 139. - The same information is underlined in Agosti's biography of Togliatti: Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*, 235–236. In this visit, Agosti sees a clear sign of a new and more active foreign policy of the Italian party.

28 According to a cordial exchange of letters between Togliatti and *Borba*'s correspondent from Rome, the famous Yugoslav journalist Frane Barbijeri, the interview had not gone unnoticed in Yugoslavia. Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Archivio del Partito comunista italiano (FG APCI), Estero, MF 447, p. 1447–1478.

29 *Evrokomunizam i socijalizam*, 3–4.

30 Мишић, „Обнављање односа“, 136.

31 Pajetta, *Le crisi che ho vissuto*, 48–49.

ing to it in a dogmatic manner. His claims about the need to go further, and give more profound critiques of the Soviet system than it was done at the Twentieth congress of the Soviet party, particularly irritated Moscow. The Soviet leaders were offended by Togliatti's statement that their society suffers from deeper degenerations, not just from mistakes made by one man. Responding to Pajetta's request regarding a reform of the PCI-CPSU relations, Khrushchev answered that the Moscow declaration was signed on Yugoslav request, not by Soviet intention, and that the relations with the Yugoslav party remain problematic.<sup>32</sup>

This reaction, like the subsequent development of the Yugoslav-Soviet relations, demonstrated that Khrushchev had made only a tactic withdrawal in his relations in Belgrade. Any other form of the communist movement, except the one led and dominated by the USSR, remained unacceptable to Moscow. The PCI reacted to the Soviet pressure with a gradual moderation of their requests and of their previous internal reform, while Yugoslavia entered a new conflict with the USSR that escalated in 1957 and 1958.

#### *The Question of Non-communist Left: The October Talks*

Just a few days prior to the escalation of the Hungarian crisis, which subsequently caused another rift between the Yugoslav and Italian communists, a delegation consisting of high ranking PCI officials visited Yugoslavia in October 1956. The Italian guests, led by Togliatti's deputy Luigi Longo, had a chance to talk with all of the most important leaders of the Yugoslav party – Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Aleksandar Ranković, Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, Veljko Vlahović and many others. Due to the long period of conflict and break in the communication between the two parties, the main aim of the visit was to get better acquainted with the Yugoslav system. The PCI delegation wanted to know more about the new aspects of Yugoslav socialism and its developments after 1949.<sup>33</sup>

Among many topics discussed during the visit,<sup>34</sup> two issues were directly questioning the Soviet hegemony and dogmas. As in the conver-

32 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-138, Šifrovano pismo – Mićunoviću – Moskva; Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito*, 153.

33 FG APCI, Estero, MF 447, p. 1765.

34 It is worth noting that one of the important topics discussed in the meetings during the visit was the stance of the Trieste communists in regards to the reconciliation with Yugoslavia. When in 1955 Moscow decided to renew relations with Belgrade, the Triestines were not willing to accept such a change of policy. Their leader Vittorio

sations with Togliatti in June, Josip Broz Tito talked extensively about his vision of a new and more autonomous communist movement. The second issue that deserves to be particularly underlined in the context of this paper is the topic of the relations with the non-communist left. The Yugoslavs enthusiastically advocated establishing and strengthening contacts with various left non-communist parties and movements. At that time, the PCI officials were unwilling to accept such ideas.<sup>35</sup> However, during the following years, the Italian communists significantly changed their stance on this issue. Just a few years later, the PCI established important contacts with the German social democrats, the SPD,<sup>36</sup> and during the seventies one of the most important ideas of Eurocommunism was opening up to the European and global non-communist left.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it is crucial to mark the moments in which the Yugoslavs, by their advice and example, led their Italian comrades to reconsider the Moscow propagated views on this issue.

Relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR were the main topic of the talks with Tito. In analyzing these conversations, it is important to underline that the PCI went through politically turbulent times in the months before the Hungarian crisis, not only after the tragic events in Budapest. The identity and legitimacy of their party were deriving from the prestige

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Vidali went as far as criticizing Khrushchev directly. Only after a strong pressure from the party central in Rome, Vidali and his comrades moderated their criticism. However, it was evident that the Trieste communists still harbored resentment towards Yugoslavia, hence it was a topic the Yugoslav party wanted to discuss with the PCI delegation. The stance of the Trieste communists towards Yugoslavia was a regional characteristic, both in 1956 as in the following decades. It was constantly in collision with the policies of the party's leadership Rome, which sought to strengthen ties with Belgrade. Hence, this undoubtedly important topic is not the subject of analysis in this article, focused on the relations between the two parties' centrals. For a reconstruction of the discussions on this issue during the talks with the PCI delegation in October 1956 see: Мишић, „Обнављање односа“, 141–143. Regarding Vidali's stances towards the reconciliation with Yugoslavia in 1955/1956 see: Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 239–241; Karlsen, *Vittorio Vidali*, 268–279; Maurizio Zuccari, *Il ditto sula piaga. Togliatti e il Pci nella rottura fra Stalin e Tito 1944–1957*, (Milan: Mursia, 2008), 305–315.

- 35 Marco Galeazzi wrote that, during Togliatti's visit to Belgrade in June, there was a similar course of conversation on this topic: the Yugoslavs propagated collaboration with the non-communist left and Togliatti, while supporting that view, emphasized the need for unity of the communist movement. Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito*, 151.
- 36 Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism. The West European Left in the Twentieth Century*, (London New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 335.
- 37 Silvio Pons, “The Rise and Fall of Eurocommunism”, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Volume III: Endings, eds Melvyn P. Leffler, Odd Arne Westad, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 60.

of the USSR and Stalin, the great victors of the Second World War. Khrushchev's secret speech severely undermined the idealizing image of the Soviet Union and *Baffone*,<sup>38</sup> foundation of the belief in communism among many Italians. Being fully aware of that, the PCI leaders feared new conflicts in the communist movement, and were even ready to sacrifice their autonomy (for instance, by renouncing Togliatti's idea of polycentrism) to prevent them. For the Italian communists, a united communist movement was the only chance to preserve the prestige of the communist idea.

Realizing such fears and perceptions of his guests, at the very beginning of the conversation Tito calmed his Italian counterparts talking about Yugoslavia's good relations with Moscow, underlining that those relations were based on the principles of the Belgrade and Moscow declarations. As mentioned previously, the Yugoslav leader wanted to expand those principles and make them universal, so he underlined them once more in his conversation with the PCI delegation. At the same time, the Yugoslav president also wanted to talk about certain negative aspects of the relations between Belgrade and Moscow. Demonstrating how deeply offended he was, Josip Broz Tito talked about the secret Soviet letter to other communist parties in which the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) was labeled as a social democratic party. Although criticizing the pressure from Moscow to join the socialist camp, Tito did show a certain understanding for the Soviet point of view. In his words, such Soviet pressure on Yugoslavia was more of an attempt to pacify the situation in Eastern Europe and prevent further escalation of political troubles, and he added that, in his view, Khrushchev did not share such views.<sup>39</sup> Tito concluded his address by underlining certain key Yugoslav principles, which defined his party's outlook on socialism. To the strict notion of a socialist camp the Yugoslav president opposed the idea of a "Socialist world",<sup>40</sup> a flexible and more democratic path for promoting socialism globally, without the hampering effect of hegemonic pressures that can only spoil

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38 Mustachioed, a man with a mustache – the nickname Italian communists used for Stalin, showing their highly emotional relation to Joseph Vissarionovich.

39 Like the Italian communists, Tito considered Khrushchev to be the most "liberal" individual within the leadership of the CPSU, who was fighting against Stalinists. Therefore, on several occasions, he wanted to support Nikita Sergeyevitch. More about this Yugoslav perception of Khrushchev in: Rajak, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*.

40 It is worth noting that in a parliamentary debate held on June 13<sup>th</sup>, just a month after his visit to Belgrade, Togliatti used that same expression while talking about Nehru and Sukarno, and their inclination towards socialism. Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito*, 143.

the mutual relations of left actors. According to Tito, led by those principles Yugoslavia succeeded in developing socialism in various parts of the globe. Yugoslav contacts and impact in India, Burma, Ethiopia and Egypt, which were socialist but not communist countries, were Tito's key examples of this Yugoslav success. The Yugoslav president was convinced that his country would not be able to accomplish its mission if it was a part of the socialist camp, as there were serious doubts regarding USSR's foreign policy in those countries. Critically noting that the Soviets do not believe in the strength of other socialist forces, Tito calmly finished his address concluding that, however, Yugoslavia will help Moscow more by acting independently, than as a part of the camp.

Luigi Longo replied to Tito in an affirmative but restrained manner, obviously impacted by Moscow's reaction to the PCI's dissident actions. In spite of such restraint, Longo repeated the support of his party to the Yugoslav foreign policy and its desire to remain outside the socialist camp. He stated that the only important thing was that the Yugoslav activity was socialist in its essence, hence useful to the PCI also, so the form of that activity was not important.<sup>41</sup> It was obvious that the Soviet pressure had not undermined the PCI's respect for the independent Yugoslav position, therefore leaving it as a potential influence on the Italian communists.

The question of collaboration with the non-communist left was raised in various conversations during the visit. With the exception of talks with Tito, during which the Italian communists supported his views on the issue, and invited the Yugoslavs to help them in establishing better relations with Italian social democrats,<sup>42</sup> this question remained one of the rare divisive points during the otherwise very successful visit. The Yugoslav ideas and views on these issues were not acceptable for their Italian guests. During one of the first conversations, Veljko Vlahović, head of the LCY's department of foreign relations, engaged in a severe critique of Stalin's policies. As an antipode to such views, he underlined the Yugoslav faith in the ability of social democrats to develop their ideas, and a firm belief in their importance for the working class. Milentije Popović continued in the same anti-Soviet tone, saying that the sharp distinction between the world of capitalism and the world of socialism, forced by the USSR, was an illusion, especially in a time when, even in the most capitalistic coun-

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41 This reconstruction of the conversations between Tito and the Italian delegation is based on the minutes from that meeting. AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-145, Bilješka o razgovorima sa članovima delegacije Komunističke Partije Italije na prijemu kod druga Tita.

42 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-145.

tries, economies were becoming more centralized and planned. These Yugoslav views provoked a brusque reaction on the other side – Velio Spano answered that the bourgeoisie can corrupt the working class, and quoted Lenin to justify his views. To those quotations Vlahović responded that, in fact, the Yugoslav views on social democracy were based on Lenin's ideas, and in fact represented their development. Other Italian guests warned that the most important fact is which class had the power, and to that Popović responded in a provoking manner, saying that not even Stalin gave the power to the working class.<sup>43</sup> These reactions of the PCI delegation demonstrate how distant the Italian communists were from the Yugoslav acceptance of the non-communist left, although they eventually, a couple of decades later, accepted similar ideas regarding this question.

In spite of the cordial tone of the entire 10-day visit, agreement on the vast majority of issues, even the problematic bilateral ones, and explicit words of praise for the Yugoslav system, the principles propagated by Vlahović and Popović remained divisive. On several occasions the Italian communists talked more about their views, expressing their belief that the socialist world had clear borders, in contrast to the Yugoslav view of a more fluid delimitation between socialism and capitalism. For the PCI, capitalism was not changing in its essence, but only giving certain concessions to the socialist forces. In the discussions on this issue the Yugoslav officials continued to elaborate their faith in the importance of social democracy. Vlahović and Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo went even further, talking about the example of American trade unions, underlining that such political actors should not be neglected due to their anti-communism.<sup>44</sup>

The last event where the issue of the non-communist left was corroborated was the final conversation, in Ljubljana, with Edvard Kardelj. The main Yugoslav ideologue repeated, like his other comrades, that the Soviet thesis about “the capitalist surrounding of the socialist states” had no sense. His main argument for this claim was the claim that in the capitalist countries both the state intervention in economy and the socialist forces were rapidly growing, thus breaking the barrier between socialism and capitalism. Although strongly emphasizing the need to collaborate with a wide range of left forces in the world, Kardelj showed some

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43 Ibid.

44 Ibid. - Interestingly, in 1971 Enrico Berlinguer took a similar stance. At the meeting of the PCI's Central Committee he talked about the need to reinforce the link with the “progressive” political actors in the United States. Galeazzi, *Il Pci e il movimento dei paesi non allineati*, 216.



respect and understanding for the PCI's position that the collaboration between communist parties was always the most fruitful and important on the left. The Slovene leader also agreed with his guests on the point that social democracy was distancing itself from Marxism, but, on the other hand, he underlined that it was crucial, particularly in capitalist countries, to collaborate with those parties in the quest for the common goal – the strengthening of socialist forces. For Kardelj, that collaboration had to be on equal grounds, without imposing ideological models on each other. Regarding the socialist camp, Kardelj stated that this form of collaboration was appropriate only in a situation where socialism was under attack. In a world where socialism was becoming stronger, which he believed to be the global situation at that time, the socialist camp could only be a hegemonic factor that imposes its solutions to other socialist forces, and pushes them away from the communists. At the end of the conversation, Kardelj talked about *the dictatorship of the proletariat*, since Yugoslavia was facing criticism and propaganda attacks from the Soviet bloc, which accused it on having given up on this crucial Marxist principle. Kardelj stated that his party had modified and expanded this idea, in order to include other social classes in the country's political sphere. Kardelj's views were similar to those propagated by other Yugoslav officials during the visit, but his tone was significantly different, and he showed more understanding and respect for the different views of the Italian guests. Therefore, the discussion regarding this issue was less conflictual, but the PCI delegates remained unconvinced. They responded to Kardelj by emphasizing the relations between the communist parties, advocating for the bilateral form of those relations. At the end of their exposition on this issue, the Italian communists briefly added that they also wanted to collaborate with the non-communist left.<sup>45</sup>

The Yugoslav reports about the visit highlighted the rare issues that remained unclarified and divisive. The most important ones were: views on capitalism, social democracy,<sup>46</sup> the existence of a clear frontier between socialism and capitalism, the wish of the guests that the collaboration between the communist parties had to be closer than the relations with other left-wing parties and organizations.<sup>47</sup> The PCI officials who vis-

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45 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-145, Zabeleška sa razgovora delegacije CK KP Italije i CK SKJ 14-X-1956.

46 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-145, Zabeleška sa putovanja sa delegacijom KPI u Hrvatsku i Sloveniju, dne 11. do 15. oktobra 1956.

47 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-145, Černeju – Rim, Mićunoviću – Moskva.

ited Yugoslavia in October 1956 were undoubtedly distant from Yugoslav views on those issues. Ironically, during his visit to Belgrade only two decades later, in March 1975, the then general secretary of their party, Enrico Berlinguer, said something revolutionary different regarding those issues: "Continuing to affirm the existence of a communist movement united by a shared ideology and separate from the rest responds to a narrow view of the possibilities."<sup>48</sup>

### *Containing Dissent: The Case of Eugenio Reale*

The episodes discussed above were definitely not the only examples of the subversive and anti-Soviet collaboration between Yugoslavia and the PCI. Even during the difficult days of the Hungarian crisis, Togliatti maintained contacts with the Yugoslavs and felt free to express criticism of Soviet actions, showing his intimate views seldom shared with others.<sup>49</sup> It is worth underlining that Yugoslavia in 1956, as a symbol of defiance to Soviet hegemony, also inspired and was admired by many members of the PCI that became Togliatti's inner-party opposition.

As in the case of the French communist party, the PCI suffered a major blow in 1956. A significant number of its members, particularly the intellectuals, had left the party. This phenomenon was caused both by Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress, that posed the question of the repressive nature of Soviet communism, and by the Soviet military intervention in Hungary, which represented a pinnacle of that repressive nature.<sup>50</sup> Hence, on this basis, an opposition within the party was formed, and it questioned the leadership of Palmiro Togliatti. Certain important actors within that opposition viewed Yugoslavia as a foothold for articulating their anti-Stalinist views. In their contacts with the Yugoslav officials, Umberto Massola, Mario Alicata and Velio Spano expressed harsh criticism towards the Soviet Union and Palmiro Togliatti. The main point of their critique of Togliatti revolved around his soft stance on Stalinism, and these party officials wanted to present themselves as the true

48 Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution. A History of International Communism 1917-1991*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 286.

49 On November 29<sup>th</sup>, in a long conversation at the Yugoslav embassy with Anton Vratuša, Togliatti confidentially exposed his disagreement with various Soviet actions (in Hungary, Albania etc.) to the Yugoslav. AJ, 507/IX - 48/1-156, Razgovor sa Toljatijem 29. XI '56. na prijemu u Rimu.

50 Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, 228, 266-267; Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*, 242-244.

anti-Stalinist forces in the PCI.<sup>51</sup> Besides these contacts with high ranking officials of the PCI, the Yugoslav embassy in Rome also noted a Yugoslav impact across the party, in its lower echelons – for instance, certain communist groups in Milan wanted to have a copy of Tito's Pula speech,<sup>52</sup> in order to have a better understanding of the situation in Hungary.<sup>53</sup> Their request was reflected in the stance that Furio Diaz, one of the PCI's leading intellectuals, took at the party's congress in December, when he stated that regarding Hungary Tito and Kardelj were more correct than Togliatti.<sup>54</sup>

Among all of those names, the most important one was that of Eugenio Reale. Reale was one of the most prominent members of the PCI,<sup>55</sup> and one of Palmiro Togliatti's most intimate friends.<sup>56</sup> We do not know much about his prior contacts with Yugoslavia. When the Yugoslavs were distancing themselves from him, in 1957, he cynically stated that one of the possible reasons for his expulsion from the party was his uninterrupted contact with Yugoslav comrades, even after 1948.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, it is obvious that the contacts between Belgrade and Reale were preserved even during the time of the conflict. Hence, unsurprisingly, he was one of the most pro-Yugoslav members of the PCI during 1956, always agitating for better relations between the two parties.<sup>58</sup> Unexpectedly for such a high ranking member of the party, the Soviet interventions in Hungary

51 All of them, despite expressing criticism for Togliatti, eventually remained members of the party. Reports on the conversations between Yugoslav officials and Massola (listed under his *nom de guerre* Quinto): AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-138, Zabeleška o razgovoru sa Kvintom 12. III 1956 g.; Alicata: AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-137; Spano: AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-141.

52 On November 11<sup>th</sup> Tito held a speech in the Croatian city of Pula, in which he, while partially defending the second Soviet intervention in Hungary, criticized both the Soviet actions and the actions of the Hungarian party, blaming them for the crisis in that country. It was an important event in Yugoslav history, as it was the starting point of a new Yugoslav-Soviet conflict. Rajak, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*, 181–188.

53 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-150.

54 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-158, referat DSIP-a 17. XII '56. - Unlike Massola, Alicata and Spano, Diaz went further in opposing Togliatti and left the party after the congress. Antonio Giolitti, one of the most articulate voices of the opposition at the congress, followed the same path. While we have not found any evidences of his direct contacts with Yugoslavia at that time, it is worth noting that he had some pro-Yugoslav views, even in 1948 when he was forced by Togliatti not to question the Soviet actions taken against Belgrade. Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*, 197.

55 Among other things, the fact that he, with Luigi Longo, was the PCI's delegate at the first conference of Cominform speaks for itself. Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*, 189.

56 *Ibid.*, 173.

57 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-175, Reale 2. 1. 1957.

58 Мишић, „Обнављање односа“, 126–128.

provoked a strong reaction by Reale, leading him towards a conflict with Togliatti, which resulted in Reale's expulsion from the party. At the very beginning of that conflict, one of his first moves was to contact Yugoslavia. His intention was to coordinate his activities with Belgrade and obtain financial support from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav contacts with Reale were very intense – he met with Anton Vratuša three times, on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and the 30<sup>th</sup> November 1956. During those conversations, Reale was intransigent in his attacks on Togliatti. Even recalling Togliatti's mistakes from the Comintern era, Reale was keen to show that his former friend was and would remain a Stalinist, therefore he was the crucial obstacle to PCI's ideological progress. In fact, Reale wanted to convince the Yugoslavs that they should abandon the PCI, and shift their attention and support to the Italian socialists and to a new project he was making. In order to do so, Reale wanted to present himself as the true Yugoslav friend. On the one hand, he claimed that Togliatti privately said that he would have done the same as Stalin in 1948. On the other hand, Reale went to the Albanian embassy to protest the executions of certain alleged Titoists in Tirana. The project that Togliatti was creating, and for which he hoped to obtain Yugoslav support, was a magazine which gathered the most prominent PCI dissidents.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, Yugoslavia was offered, by Reale and others,<sup>60</sup> to support the work of the most important PCI dissidents. However, from the initial contacts between Vratuša and Reale, it was clear that Belgrade would eventually refuse to collaborate. Such a choice can be considered unexpected. Only five years earlier, the Yugoslavs supported Valdo Magnani and Aldo Cucchi in their secession from the PCI,<sup>61</sup> and in 1956 Yugoslavia had not hesitated to have contacts with the opposition in the French communist party.<sup>62</sup> Also, the Yugoslav reports on the PCI's Eight congress, held in

59 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-154. - A communist journalist named Marco Cesarini Sforza was part of the same project. On several occasions he also asked for Yugoslav financial aid and other help in organizing the magazine, promising that it will have a pro-Yugoslav stance. AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-144; AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-175.

60 Fabrizio Onofri and Marco Cesarini Sforza. AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-175.

61 For more about the "Magnacucchi" case, as it was known in the Italian public, see: Federico Tenca Montini, Saša Mišić, "Comunisti di un altro tipo: le simpatie filo-jugoslave in Italia (1948-1962)", *Acta Histriae* 25 (2017) 3, 785-812; Mišić, "Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy", *I magnacucchi. Valdo Magnani e la ricerca di una sinistra autonoma e democratica*, eds Giorgio Boccolari, Luciano Casali, (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1991).

62 Velio Spano underlined that fact in a conversation with Yugoslav diplomats in late November. AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-153.

December 1956, clearly show sympathies for the views of this anti-Togliatti opposition, which was starting the periodical mentioned above.<sup>63</sup> In spite of all that, the answer to the proposed collaboration was negative, and Vratuša even immediately informed Togliatti about this case, coordinating the mutual actions in bringing Reale back to the party.<sup>64</sup>

The outcome of the Reale case<sup>65</sup> is one of the clearest signs of an alliance in the making between Yugoslavia and the PCI. It shows that, even in a time when the differences between the two parties were growing and a new conflict was on the horizon, Yugoslavia had not wanted to jeopardize Togliatti's authority in the party by supporting his opposition, in spite of the fact that the opposition was ideologically closer to Yugoslavia than the PCI's general secretary. Belgrade clearly perceived its relations with Palmiro Togliatti as a potent foundation for future collaboration, and despite all of his perceived ideological shortcomings considered him a politician of autonomous views, close to Yugoslavia. The collaboration between Yugoslavia and the PCI during the last years of Togliatti's life, particularly during 1963 and 1964,<sup>66</sup> demonstrates how the Yugoslav decision to support Togliatti was a long term choice that paid off for Belgrade.

### *Conclusions*

The phenomenon of ideological impact, i.e. how a certain political factor influences another one's policies, is not something that can be precisely defined and clearly traced. However, the contacts between Yugoslavia and the PCI during 1956, and in particular the three case studies that were analyzed in this paper, demonstrate certain attributes of such a phenomenon.

The first case study, Togliatti's visit to Belgrade and its immediate aftermath, demonstrates an ideological conjuncture between two parties, based on the mutual wish to limit and challenge the Soviet hegemony within the communist movement. Without any doubt, the main impulse for Togliatti's shift towards a more autonomous policy came from Moscow, due to the Soviet questioning of Stalinism, but the Yugoslav influence on Togli-

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63 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-157.

64 AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-154.

65 This expression is the title of a Yugoslav report on contacts with Reale. AJ, 507/IX – 48/I-175, Slučaj Reale.

66 Богдан Живковић, „Од новог помирења до стратешког савеза: односи југословенских и италијанских комуниста од 1962. до Тољатијеве посете јануара 1964. године“, *Историјски записи* 3–4/2020, 121–146.

atti was not marginal. That influence can be divided in three aspects. The first aspect was already noticed by Furet – the most subversive Togliatti's act, his *Nuovi Argomenti* interview, was made during Tito's visit to Moscow, when Khrushchev signed a declaration that strengthened the belief that a time of greater autonomy for the national communist parties was coming. Hence, the Yugoslav actions toward undermining Soviet hegemony encouraged Togliatti to step forward with his dissent. The second aspect regards the impact of the visit to Belgrade on Togliatti, as it is evident that Tito had made him an advocate of Yugoslav foreign policy principles. Togliatti's defense of these principles in his letter to Moscow and in the conversations within the PCI leadership, described in the aforementioned Gian Carlo Pajetta's memoirs, strongly testify to a change in Togliatti's perspective on Yugoslavia, a country that was just a few months earlier perceived by the Italian communists as "moving away from socialism". The third aspect of Yugoslav influence, and its most palpable proof, is seen in Pajetta's requests to the Soviet leaders, made during the visit to Moscow in June 1956, to restructure the relations between the PCI and the CPSU on the basis of the Moscow declaration.

The second case study, the Yugoslav attempts to persuade the Italian communists to collaborate closely with the non-communist left, demonstrates that the Yugoslav communist perceived themselves as teachers of the revolution in their relations with the PCI.<sup>67</sup> The difference in comparison with the 1943–1948 period was that the Yugoslavs were more flexible in 1956, showing less arrogance and aggressiveness. At the same time, this case study also shows that Yugoslavia had not succeed in promoting certain ideas to the Italian communists. However, although it was a failed policy in 1956, it was a long term success – in the sixties and seventies, the idea of a global collaboration of all left-wing movements and parties was to become an important aspect in the close and fraternal relations between the two parties.<sup>68</sup> During 1956 the PCI was somewhat isolated on the global scene, and the Yugoslav communist were one of the rare, if not the only, interlocutors of the Italian party that propagated such views. Therefore, it is no surprise that in the sixties and seventies, when the PCI opened up to the idea of strongly collaborating with the non-communist left, Belgrade was perceived as one of the foremost allies on that path, and an important bridge to various international left actors.

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67 That attitude can be seen in many internal Yugoslav reports regarding the PCI, which were full of paternalistic remarks.

68 As it is shown in Galeazzi's book: Galeazzi, *Il Pci e il movimento dei paesi non allineati*.

The third case study, the Yugoslav contacts with the PCI inner-party opposition, is probably the most evident example of the Yugoslav influence on Italian communists. It demonstrates the symbolical power of the Yugoslav prestige, based on the country's conflict with the USSR in 1948, which attracted many communists who wanted to remain faithful to the idea of communism, but not to Moscow's hegemony. Yugoslavia was a unique paragon of reference for those reformists, as it conflicted with the Soviet Union and questioned its power, but remained communist. This case study also shows a feeling of respect and trust Belgrade had for Togliatti, in spite of all their mutual differences. This Yugoslav stance from 1956 proves that the alliance achieved in 1964 was not a coincidence, but a result of continuity and policy which was pursued for years.

### Summary

The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, held in February 1956, initiated the process of de-Stalinization within the global communist movement. Such political climate favored a stronger contact between the Yugoslav and Italian communists. The Yugoslavs were known for their autonomy and defiance to Moscow, thus an attractive interlocutor for the Italian communists, who, under the leadership of their general secretary Palmiro Togliatti, started to strongly demonstrate similar aspirations. Hence, with the Yugoslav encouragement and impact, the PCI and its leader started to act more independently, questioning Soviet dogmas and hegemony. Togliatti's *Theory of Polycentrism* was the most important act in that direction, and it was impacted by the Yugoslav-Soviet agreement on equally based inter-party relations, i.e. the *Moscow Declaration*, signed between the two parties in June 1956. However, the Yugoslav impact on the PCI was somewhat limited. Still distant from a radical rethinking of their policies, the Italian communists were reluctant to adopt certain Yugoslav ideas, like the one of closer collaboration with the non-communist left. On the other hand, the inner-party PCI opposition was more attracted by the Yugoslav foreign policy, adopting it almost completely.

Still, the Yugoslav decision was not to engage in a closer collaboration with the inner-party opposition, but to give its support to Palmiro Togliatti. Belgrade had a certain level of understanding for Togliatti's wish not to dissent radically for Moscow. Hence, when in the early sixties Togliatti continued on his path of ideological evolution and greater autonomy, Yugoslavia became once more an important ally for the PCI. Thus, it was

a choice that payed of to Belgrade. In the long-term, Yugoslavia managed not only to establish closer relations with the Italian communists, but also witnessed to a stronger ideological transformation of the PCI which led it to adopt the afore mentioned principle propagated by Belgrade – collaboration with the non-communist left. Although the results of the collaboration between the Yugoslav and Italian communists during 1956 were ambiguous, Yugoslavia undoubtedly managed to exert a certain level of ideological influence on the PCI. The 1956 collaboration and the Yugoslav influence on the PCI were the foundation for the future alliance between the two parties, which came to life in the sixties, and achieved its pinnacle in the seventies, during the years when Enrico Berlinguer was at the head of the PCI.

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## Резиме

Богдан Живковић

### Подстицање непослушности: Југославија и Комунистичка партија Италије током 1956. године

АПСТРАКТ: У овом раду анализирани су односи између комунистичких партија Југославије и Италије током 1956, једне од најзначајнијих година у историји комунизма. У фокусу анализе је побуњеничка природа тих односа, заснованих на заједничкој тежњи ка ограничавању совјетске хегемоније у међународном комунистичком покрету. Циљ овог чланка је да прикаже како се у међупартијској сарадњи оствареној током 1956. могу пронаћи корени блиских односа и савезништва двеју партија током шездесетих и седамдесетих и како су југословенски комунисти покушавали, и делимично успевали, да изврше идеолошки утицај на Комунистичку партију Италије.

Кључне речи: комунизам, Југославија, Комунистичка партија Италије (КПИ), 1956, Хладни рат, непослушност

Двадесети конгрес КПСС-а, одржан фебруара 1956. године, означио је почетак процеса дестаљинизације у међународном комунистичком покрету. Таква политичка клима водила је југословенске и италијанске комунисте ка остваривању развијенијих и ближих односа. Како су италијански комунисти, под вођством Палмира Тољатија, почели снажније да исказују жељу за самосталнијим вођењем партијске политике и отпором Москви, Југославија је постала важна референтна тачка за Комунистичку партију Италије и додатно ју је охрабривала у промени политике и односа према Совјетском Савезу. Најзначајнији потез у том правцу била је Тољатијева *теорија полицентризма*, која је умногоме била охрабрена и инспирирана Московском декларацијом, потписаном јуна 1956, којом су југословенска и совјетска партија уредиле своје односе и промовисале принцип једнакости партија. Југословенски утицај на КПИ је ипак био ограничен. Италијански комунисти нису били спремни на радикалније модификације својих идеолошких уверења, те КПИ није прихватала одређене југословенске идеје, попут оне о ближој сарадњи са некомунистич-

ком левицом. Са друге стране, за разлику од водећих руководиоца, значајан број италијанских комуниста који су током 1956. постали унутарпартијска опозиција Тољатију био је привучен југословенским погледима и у потпуности их прихватао.

Упркос томе, југословенска одлука била је да се подржи Тољати а не његови противници, иако су они били идеолошки ближи Београду. Југословенски документи јасно указују на то да је СКЈ имала разумевања за Тољатијеву потребу да не оде предалеко у сукобу са СССР-ом. Стога је, када се лидер КПИ раних шездесетих вратио на политику већег отпора Москви, Југославија наново постала важан савезник његове партије, тиме показујући да је избор из 1956. био дугорочно успешан. На дуге стазе, Југославија не само да је успела у остваривању ближих односа са италијанским комунистима већ је остварила и одређени идеолошки утицај на КПИ, која је временом прихватила многе југословенске погледе, попут оног о важности сарадње са некомунистичком левицом. Иако су првобитни резултати међупартијске сарадње остварене током 1956. године били амбивалентни, та сарадња и поменути идеолошки утицај били су темељ будућег међупартијског савеза, који је започет у шездесетим а свој врхунац доживео седамдестих, у време када је лидер КПИ био Енрико Берлингуер.