

Battle Lines Drawn On Development Over Control Of Italy's Communist Party

August 27 (NSIPS) — The battle lines for control of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) have been drawn between the top post-war Atlanticist leadership of the party and its working class base. The PCI's secondary leadership has taken up the challenge of the present international situation and is using the administrative means at its disposal — particularly reflected in the party daily, Unità — to challenge the Atlanticist leadership over the key issue facing Italy today: development.

This is more than internal party in-fighting. According to knowledgeable party sources, there is a coup underway for control of the base. Enrico Berlinguer, Secretary General of the PCI and top Atlanticist agent, is now confronted with the threat of an all-out party split. Berlinguer and Co. have been challenged by 50 PCI Parliamentarians to support the pro-development government of Premier Andreotti — or else the pro-development forces within the party will form their own party. The working class base would support this initiative. As pro-development faction leader of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), Giacomo Mancini told Berlinguer and LaMalfa (Italian Republican Party chairman) do not represent their respective secretariats. The pragmatic leadership of these parties is responding to its constituency's "no" to austerity.

Control of the Press

This party coup is reflected in the strong political stand that

Aug. 28 (NSIPS) — The following is excerpted from an article appearing in the Aug. 25 L-Unita, the newspaper of the Italian Communist Party, written by PCI economist Francesco Speranza. Speranza attacks those forces who are presently attempting to stall the construction of a large steel complex in the Calabria region of southern Italy. Significantly, the steel plant is well known to be a "pet project" of Italian Socialist Party (PSI) leader Giacomo Mancini, an ally of the new Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti. The publication of the article reflects pressure from Mancini's collaborators within the PCI.

.... to say that the steel crisis caused by the ship-building and construction industries crisis,.... should lead us not to build complex V, means to view things in an abolutely static way. It means assuming that our country can procede without initiating a program centered on construction, agriculture, transportation and energy; without initiating a process for the reconversion of our productive apparat. Such a position could be considered useful for programming stagnation and recession, not only in steel, but in all economic sectors as well

the PCI daily Unità has consistently taken over the past week. Until now the paper has emphasized domestic day-to-day affairs in the country. But since a debt moratorium proposal was approved at the Colombo summit of the non-aligned countries, Unità has emphasized international economic affairs, releasing daily reports and updates on the Colombo meeting. Unità's emphasis on the key issues of economic development has led to a sharp curb on the writing assignments of the party's leading Atlanticist economists — Luciano Barca and Eugenio Peggio — and more space for the pro-development party economists. A prime example of this new breed of PCI leadership is seen in the Aug. 25 article by Francesco Speranza. Speranza, in the context of an overall pro-growth position, defends the continuation of the construction of Gioia Tauro, the massive state-owned steel complex in the South, which has long been a favorite project of Mancini.

Economic development, now, is a purely political question — and for a Communist Party like the PCI this means a reaffirmation of strong international links with its allies in the development fight. Unità has assumed a strong support of the Gaullist-led anti-austerity fight in France. Yesterday Unità warned that if President Giscard provoked the Gaullist opposition as seen in the forcing of Premier Chirac's resignation in order to implement austerity, Giscard will be destroyed.

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