

# Will CP Rule Italy?

anon.

1976

“A spectre is haunting Europe—the Spectre of Communism.”

— from *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx & Frederick Engels

One hundred and eighteen years later Communism is again haunting the combined heads of the world bourgeoisie, but in a way Marx or Engels never could have anticipated.

“Communism” now haunts Europe in the form of electoral activity with the pledge by Communist party leaders to play the game according to the rules set up by the capitalist state.

With national elections set for June 20, the massive Italian Communist Party (PCI) is seen by all observers as set to overwhelm the Christian Democrats (DC) at the polls and be poised to assume a share of the national political power. The DC, after 30 years of rule, has become decrepit and corrupt with the *sotto governo*, the national patronage system, creating chaos throughout the Mussolini-era bureaucracy.

Also, Italy's economy has sunk continually lower, with strikes, unemployment, inflation, deteriorating social services, and crime announcing that the DC is no longer able to do its job for the Italian ruling class. And the only party with a large, popular following which is untouched by the major corruption scandals is the 1.7 million member PCI.

Opposition to the assumption of even shared power by the Communists is widespread from the American capitalist class and its outspoken toadies like Henry Kissinger through to sections of the Italian bourgeoisie itself.

Correspondingly, political power is nothing that the PCI has aspired to, knowing since the Stalin days following World War II that a Communist Party victory in the West would not be tolerated by the imperialisms of the U.S., England or France. Wanting to maintain the wartime alliances after WW II at almost any costs, Stalin ordered the popular CP's of both France and Italy to not seek political power in hopes of appeasing the Allies and enhancing the Soviet Union's ability to get reconstruction loans from the U.S.

The Western nation Communists have never been seriously interested in gaining state power for their respective parties, but have been content to operate politically as the “loyal opposition,” all the while trying to bring their country's politics as close as possible in line with the demands of Soviet foreign and economic policy.

## Confronted With Power

Now, confronted with power that it really does not want, but that it has no option but to accept, the PCI has to walk a tightrope knowing that the situation they will inherit is an extremely shaky one. The feeling of many is that even with the PCI's reputation for efficient administration, they will be unable to shore up the faltering Italian economy. Also, they fear an eventual Chile-style solution that undoubtedly is right now in the contingency planning stages at CIA headquarters.

Like the party of Salvador Allende, the murdered Chilean president, the PCI will probably not gain an absolute majority and will have to rule through a coalition government so as not to leave a substantial proportion of the population in opposition to it as in Chile.

The coalition that the PCI hopes for is not with the other parties of the Left, but with the dinosaur DC itself, which would create a ruling coalition that would represent a full 70% of the voters. The PCI is banking on such an arrangement as being their hedge against a CIA-inspired coup.

The DC, for their part, will probably accept such an offer (the so-called "Historic Compromise") if it appears as though a liberal Democrat will win the U.S. elections in November. However, if they see a possibility of a Reagan or Ford victory, they may force the Communists to go to the Left for their coalition, banking on the U.S. to oust their opponents and reinstall them in power.

If the PCI were to gain an absolute majority of seats, something no party has done since the War, there is no telling what the reaction of any of the principals would be.

"But why bother," some may ask? If all that is going to occur is the PCI receiving a few ministries in a new government, why make the effort? The PCI has no choice; power is being thrust upon them by the virtual collapse of the bourgeois parties.

What is clear though, is that the PCI will not come to power as a revolutionary party. Instead, it has bent over backward to assure both the Italian and world bourgeoisie that it has no intention of doing anything other than straightening out that nation's troubled capitalist economy.

PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer, who arrives at rallies in a chauffeur-driven car and was picked as Italy's most respected politician in a recent poll, has made every effort to publicly divorce his Italian party from the taint of totalitarian Stalinism.

Recently, he and French CP head Marchais renounced the dictatorship of the proletariat, declared their independence from Moscow, and pledged themselves to respect "the liberty of thought and expression, of the press, of meeting and association," etc. All of this to allay the fears of Italian voters that once the PCI gains power, they might be unwilling to relinquish it.

## **Capitalism is Safe**

However, more important than its assurances to the Italian voters are the PCI's guarantees to the world bourgeoisie that Italy will remain within the capitalist orbit.

To that end they promise that they have no plans to eliminate the stock exchange, but rather to reform it; that they have no program for any extended nationalization of industry; that they want Italy to remain within the capitalist Common Market; and finally, and most important, they want Italy to remain within NATO, the anti-Soviet military and political alliance, that also finances counter-revolutionary activity across Europe.

To bolster this, the Communists have even selected candidates from outside their party that leave no doubt where their sympathies lie. One of their senatorial candidates is a retired militarist, 67-year-old Nino Pasti, formerly a four-star general who served as NATO's Southern Europe Air Force Commander, who Time Magazine quoted as saying, "They (the Communists) are fully reliable."

Also, to end the PCI's anti-Catholic reputation, the party has nominated several prominent Catholic intellectuals in hopes of convincing the Catholic middle class to ignore the Pope's directive against voting for the PCI.

Most serious, however, is how the assumption of power by the PCI will effect the Italian working class, who it claims to represent. Although two generations of Stalinist treachery apparently has not caught up with them, the PCI has a long record of breaking strikes, particularly those started spontaneously by workers outside of the PCI-dominated unions, as well as dispossessing apartment building squatters in cities where PCI local governments control the police, and attacks on militant demonstrations.

The PCI boasts of its record of "good government" in the major cities where they have been elected, all the while under a capitalist regime, and brags how it "managed" a restless working class through their trade union structure during the recent political and economic difficulties.

No wonder in a recent interview published in the London *Observer*, Guido Carli, former governor of the Italian Central Bank, said that the Communists, rather than a threat to Italy, “were a force for stability.” A high-ranking capitalist like Carli complimenting an alleged revolutionary party should be a source of great embarrassment, but instead is repeated by the party to show that it is “safe”—in other words, safe for capital.

In a laudatory article about the Italian CP, Pete Hamill, in the April 2, 1976 *Village Voice*, writes, “The Communist-Party leadership could have fomented more trouble if it had so chosen; instead it presented itself as the party of moderation and good sense.” This is a classic case of damning with faint praise. To whose benefit other than the bourgeoisie and the capitalist State could these alleged communists have operated? Certainly not the working class.

## Foreign Capital, Too

To assuage the fears of foreign investors, Eugenio Peggio, a spokesman for the PCI on economic issues, told *Fortune* magazine, organ of the U S ruling class, that the Communists “do not have any prejudice against foreign capital, and in particular American capital.” In other words, the PCI will leave imperialist investments intact.

Peggio did tell *Fortune* (while sitting beneath a portrait of Lenin, according to the magazine) what was needed “is more government aid to private enterprises.” These are the words of a man who calls himself a communist only through a severe misunderstanding of the term.

## Chile On The Horizon?

The real spectre haunting Italy at this time is obviously not communism, since the PCI has committed itself to the managing of capital in that nation, but the spectre of Chile, with its bloodbath for the working class. The scene is set the same—an affirmation of the bourgeois parliament and constitution by the so-called revolutionary party rather than the call for their abolition and the establishment of democratic workers councils; an unarmed proletariat facing a reactionary military which has strong ties to the American CIA; a chaotic economy to be inherited by a leftist party and the ability of the U S corporations and their Italian partners to further wreck it.

At the time of the French revolution, St. Just declared, “Those that make half a revolution dig their own graves.” Although the Italian Communists can hardly be accused of making even half a revolution, recent history suggests strongly that the graves are already beckoning to the Italian workers unless they shift their support from the PCI to their own initiative.

A proletariat armed, committed to the destruction of all the institutions of capitalist society—the State, parliament, the Army, wage work and commodity production—could bring about an authentic communist revolution. Any other road is one traveled hundreds of times before—that of the dependence on leftist politicians who “represent” the workers—and it is the road of certain defeat.



anon.  
Will CP Rule Italy?  
1976

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/273-june-1976/will-cp-rule-italy>  
Fifth Estate #273, June 1976

**[fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fiftheestate.org)**