

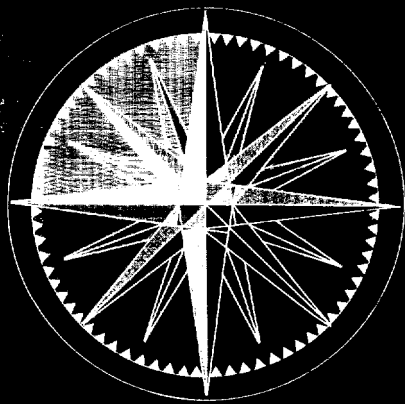
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16 October 1964

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SPECIAL REPORT

THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY TODAY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

MORI/CDF Pages 1 thru 11

EO 12356 1.3(a)(4)
EO 12356 1.3(a)(5)

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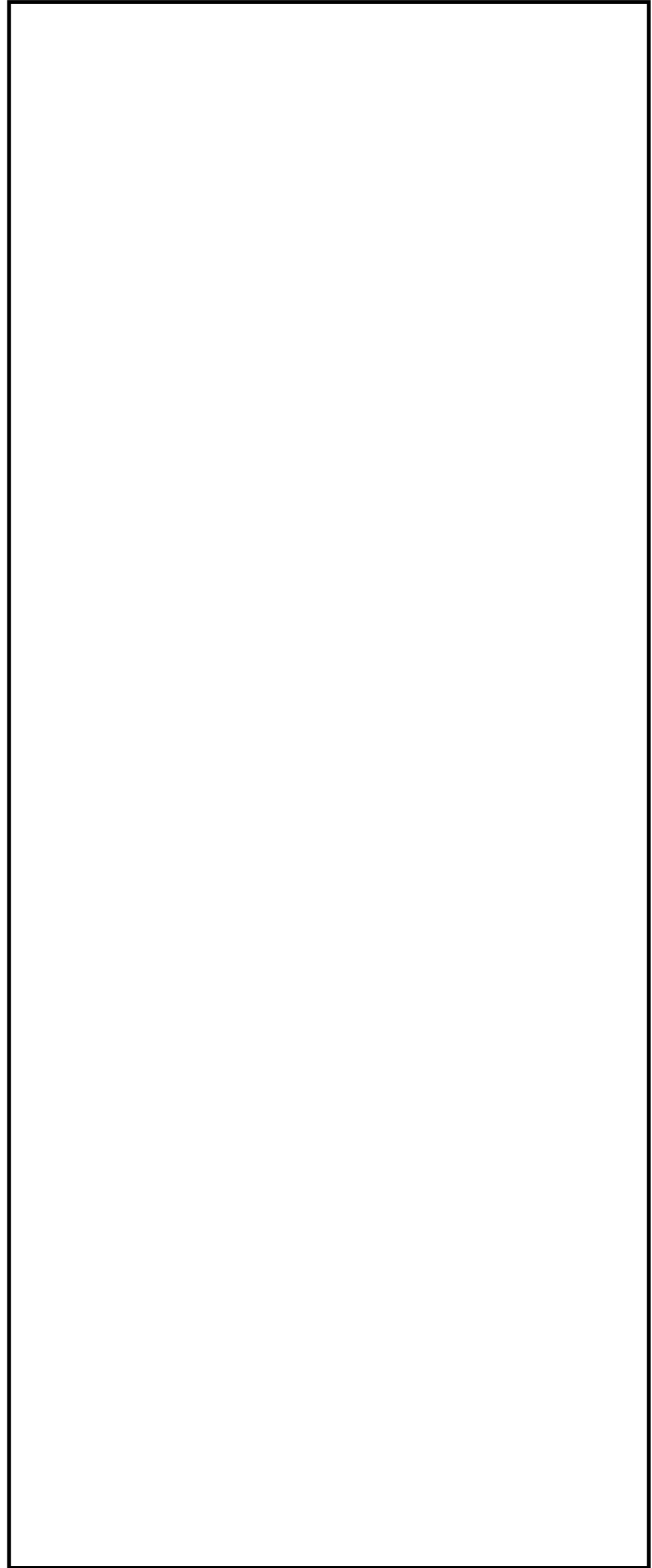
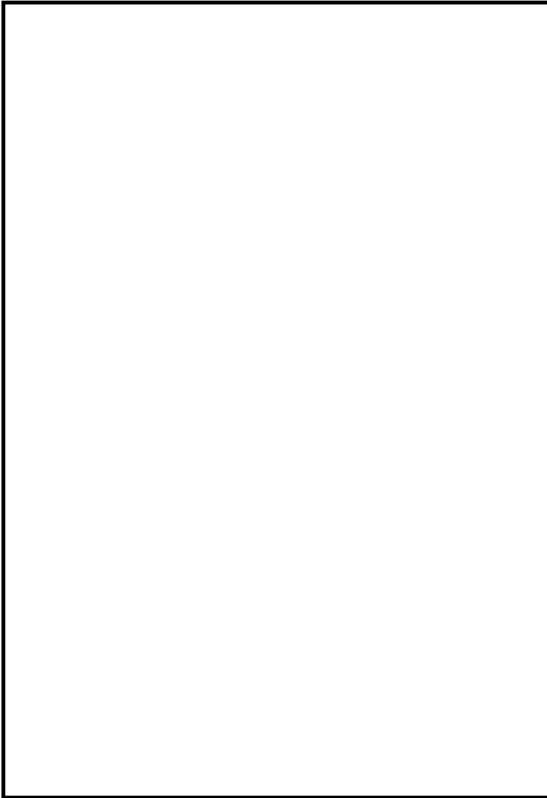
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under conditions where the party was able to secure power in cooperation with a broad range of popular forces in reacting, for example, to an attempted coup from the right. They believed that the Italian Communist Party and, in fact, all Western European Communist parties, could best achieve power gradually by tactical alliances with other leftist parties to transform the "bourgeois state" by reform.

Since Togliatti's death, party leaders have emphasized that his policies will be continued in toto. It has always been an absolute necessity to emphasize party unity, and it is particularly so now on the eve of the national municipal elections next month.



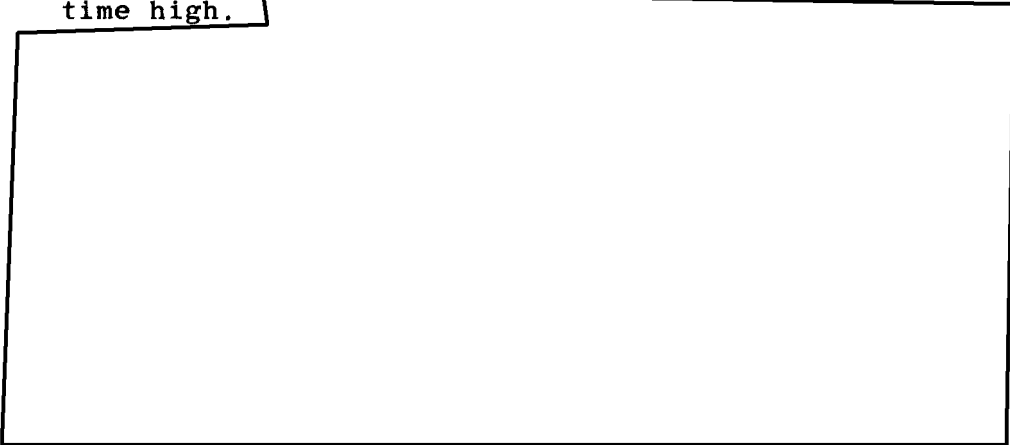
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THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY TODAY

The Italian Communist Party (PCI) is the second largest, and the most influential Communist party in a developed country. It is the leading exponent in the non-Communist world of greater autonomy for national Communist parties within a framework generally acceptable to Moscow. Although PCI membership is declining, the party has captured slightly over a quarter of the national vote in Italy, and its ability to attract support is now at an all-time high.

**The Role of Togliatti**

Palmiro Togliatti, one of the last of the Comintern leaders of the mid-1920s, helped establish the PCI in 1921 and was its unchallenged boss for almost 30 years before his death last August. His prestige and political ability enabled him to control internal rivalries for power and facilitated effective party discipline. Togliatti always favored and, whenever possible, pushed for refinements and changes in classic Marxist doctrine in the best interests of PCI, but never to the extent of outright con-

flict with the USSR. In his last "testament"--as in 1956--for example, he pressed for fuller and more rapid "de-Stalinization." Although the PCI was forced to pull back in 1956, the publication of the final testament emphasized more strongly than ever before its determination to maintain a public image of autonomy in order to push strategies tailored to fit circumstances in Italy.

Togliatti, like the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, (CPSU), was convinced that revolution by armed struggle would be disastrous in Italy except

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large "center" of the party is more or less in general agreement on policies.

Although the party as a whole is concerned over how to adapt itself to the conditions of an increasingly affluent society, the main point of difference among its members is how far and how fast it must go in this process. The "rightists" argue that the PCI cannot remain permanently in opposition without eventually facing demoralization and disintegration. They, therefore, stress the need to achieve power within the limits imposed by the democratic system. In this connection, the party has made a strong attempt to obscure its essentially authoritarian and subversive nature and develop a public image as a democratic force prepared to step down, once in power, if its popular mandate were lost. The right wing also favors joining forces with other parties on the left in promoting specific projects which they think will push Italy toward the gradual acceptance of Socialism.

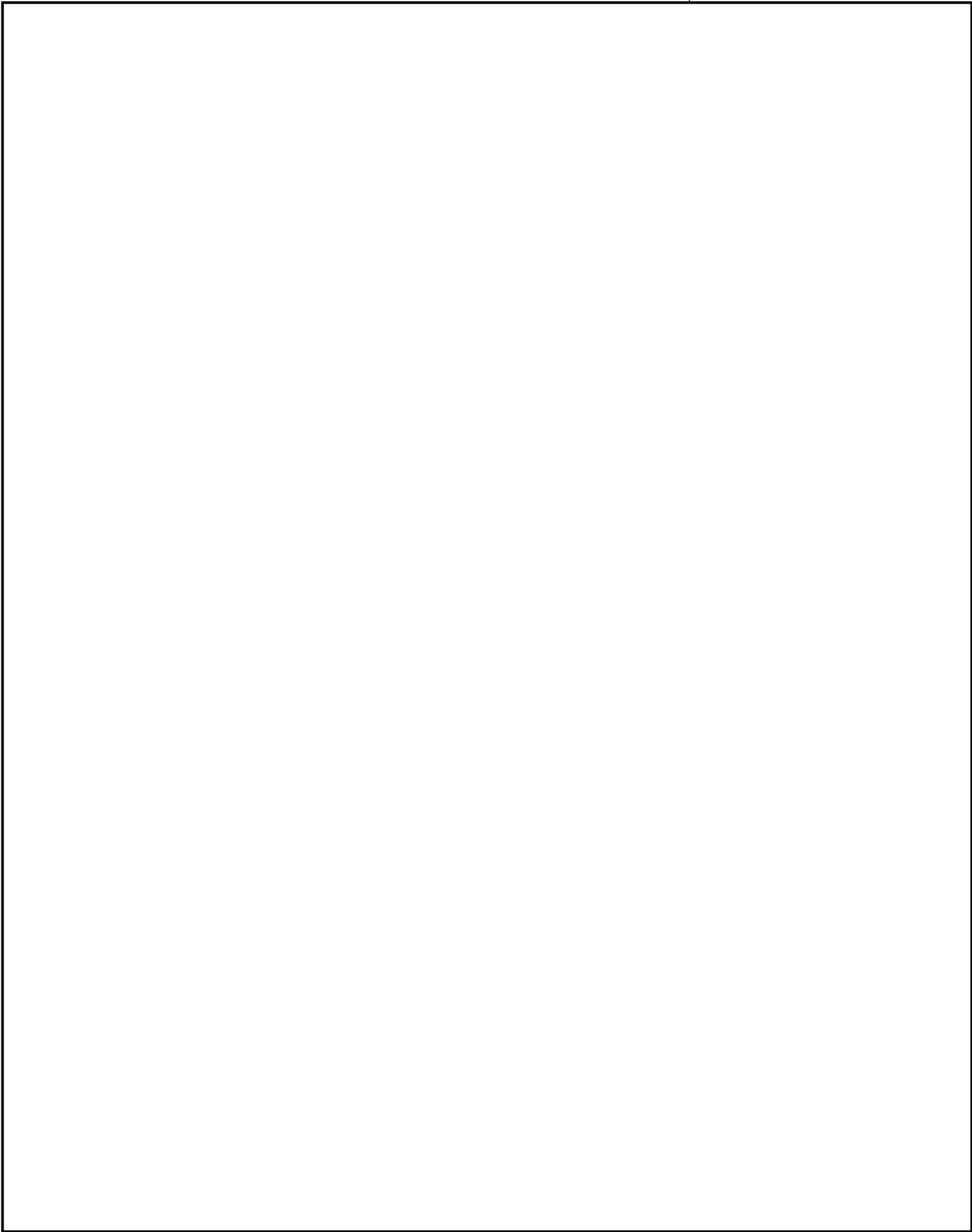
In general, the positions held by the right wing are in line with those that Togliatti propounded although the "right," in contrast with the "left," advocates that tactics be employed to permit a broader and more rapid adaptation to the changing Italian society.

The party's "left" has severely criticized the leadership particularly for not having

Party Politics

The basic differences of opinion within the party are matters of interpretation of the party line, particularly what tactics are to be followed toward the center-left. These cannot be readily categorized as representing right or left "factional" positions. The

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made a stronger effort to block the formation of the center-left government and wants a much more aggressive opposition to it. Leftists' deplore the party's "moderate" stand against the government as little more than "bourgeois" democratic opposition, and argue that present policies will result in the loss of party integrity. The left-wingers argue that as the PCI moves to the right in its attempt to transform the state from within--which they realize is necessary--it runs the danger of being transformed and loses its Communist character.

The Party "Democracy" Problem

A debate is now intensifying among the party's rank and file over the lack of intra-party democracy in determining party policies. In Togliatti's day, policy formulation, to a considerable degree, was a one-man operation. His decisions stuck because the party organizations were tightly disciplined and because the membership had faith in the PCI's mission. The present debate, if Longo fails to control it, could turn symptoms of discontent among the cadres into outright factionalism which would severely undermine party unity.

Party leaders publicly insist that "democratic centralism" be used in such a way as to permit meaningful participation by the cadres in party decision making. At the party's Conference on Organization last March, Ingrao and other left-wingers

vigorously pushed this line, but they were pulled up short by Togliatti. Whether or not his successors can control the left on this issue remains to be seen, but the odds appear to be against it.

The Membership Problem

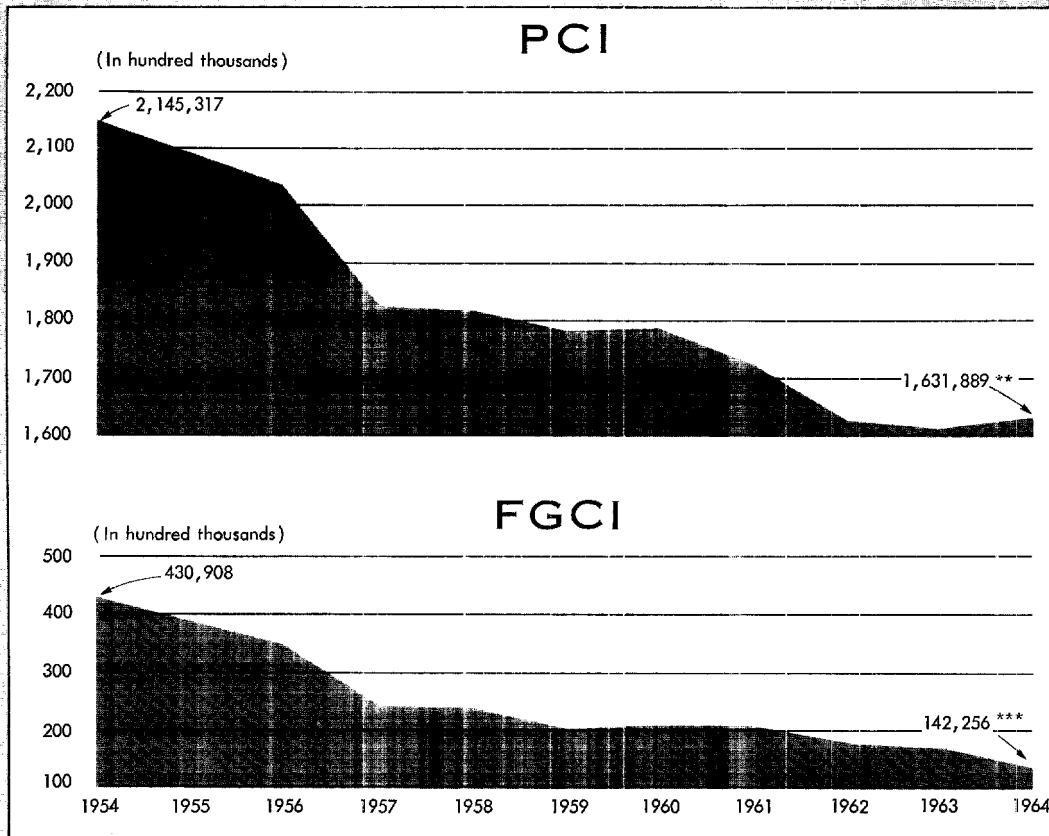
In the past decade, membership in the PCI has dropped by almost 25 percent--513,000-- and that of its youth organization (FGCI) by 60 percent--290,000. The party anticipated that membership losses would occur as a result of its adaptation to socioeconomic changes in Italy, but it probably did not anticipate losses on this scale. Although all party leaders express concern publicly over membership losses, this is somewhat exaggerated and is, in part, an attempt to spur party cadres to intensify their activities.

The party, moreover, is troubled by the fact that the gap between its voting strength and its membership is greatest in industrial centers even though the number of industrial workers in Italy has been rising sharply. The FGCI membership drop in part reflects the inclusion of many of these into the PCI proper; the failure to attract young members in any significant numbers is a nagging worry.

The party, nonetheless, remains the second largest force in Italian politics. Its membership is as large as, or

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ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY & YOUTH MOVEMENT (FGCI) MEMBERSHIP DATA*



ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP BY OCCUPATION*

	1954		1963	
	NO.	%	NO.	%
Workers (in industry)	856,314	40.0	643,733	39.5
Laborers and Salaried Employees	382,257	17.8	206,684	12.7
Sharecroppers and Tenant Farmers	262,227	12.2	173,975	10.7
Farm Owners	84,317	3.9	91,374	5.6
Craftsmen, Tradesmen, & Small Entrepreneurs	112,063	5.2	101,818	6.2
Professional Men				
Intellectuals & Teachers	11,398	0.5	9,496	0.6
Office & Technical Workers	47,433	2.2	36,828	2.2
Students	6,252	0.3	5,313	0.3
Housewives	289,148	13.5	202,327	12.4
Employed at Domicile [¶]			15,565	1.0
Pensioners [¶]			113,986	7.0
Others	93,903	4.4	29,451	1.8

*Critica Marxista, Sept.-Dec. 1963 issue, pp. 196-7

** As of 15 June; L'Unita

*** as of 10 April; L'Unita

[¶]In 1954 the category "Pensioners" and this group was probably distributed among the other categories and in that for "Others." Similarly there was no category for those "Employed at Domicile," who were included in the category "Housewives."

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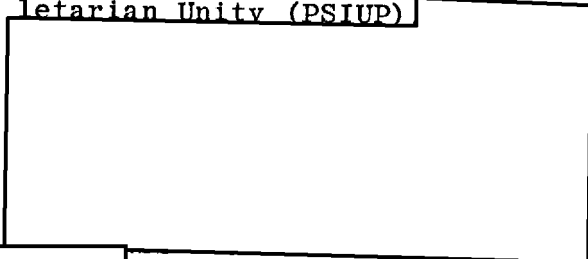
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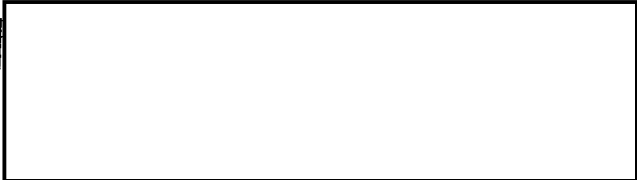
larger than, that of the Christian Democrats. In the April 1963 parliamentary elections it won 7.8 million votes, a gain of over one million in five years. The gain attests to the party's ability to exploit the "opening to the left" for its own purposes as well as its excellent organizational structure. One out of every four Italians votes for the party out of disenchantment with the failure of previous governments to enact socio-economic reforms and through a conviction that the PCI is the most effective instrument for forcing successive governments to adopt policies that will contribute to a better way of life.

The PCI and the Center-Left

Since 1955, the Socialist Party (PSI) of Pietro Nenni has painfully moved away from close cooperation with the Communists. In January 1964, a significant number of Socialists, representing much of the party's pro-Communist left wing, renounced Nenni's party and founded the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP)



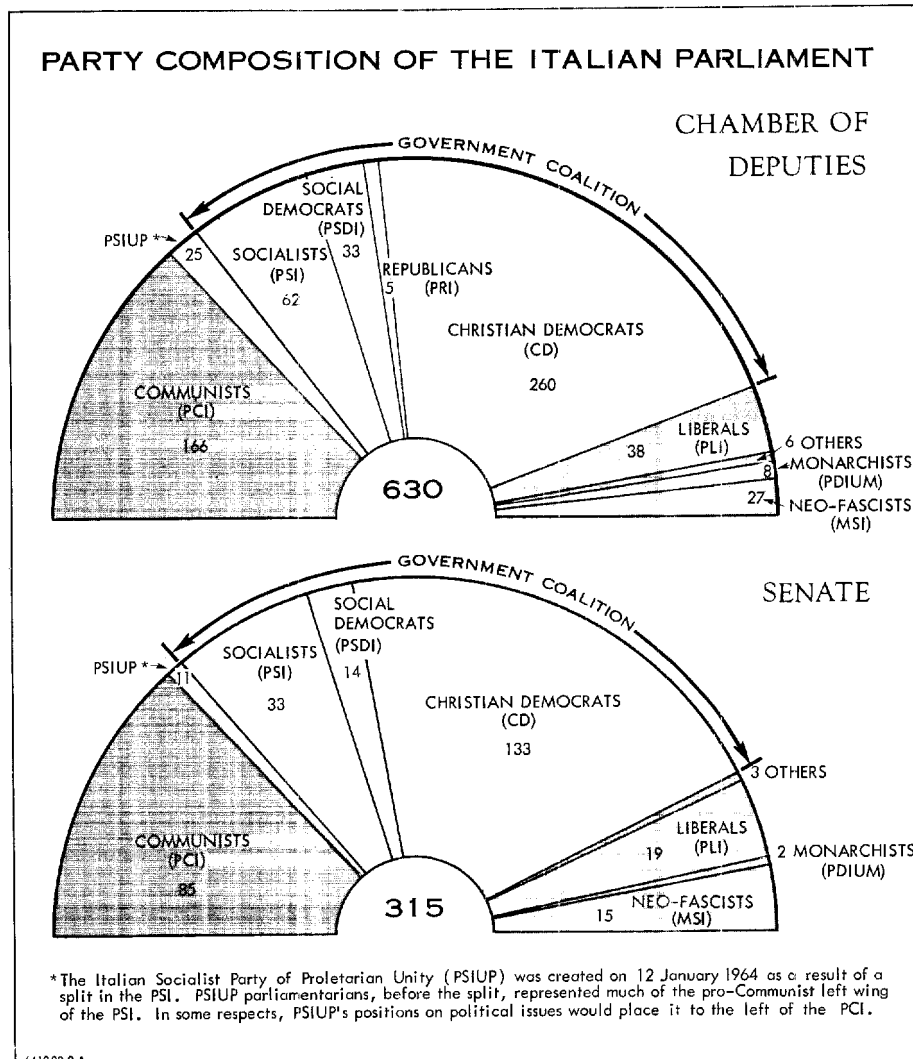
The Socialist participation in the government since last December is the most serious potential threat that the PCI's "national unity" tactic has suffered since the end of the war.



Faced with the fact of the center-left, Togliatti stressed that a "real turn to the left" --that is, genuine progress on the reform front--was out of the question without the PCI. He also asserted that the Socialist leaders had been seduced by the Christian Democrats into compromising the very "class character" of their party.

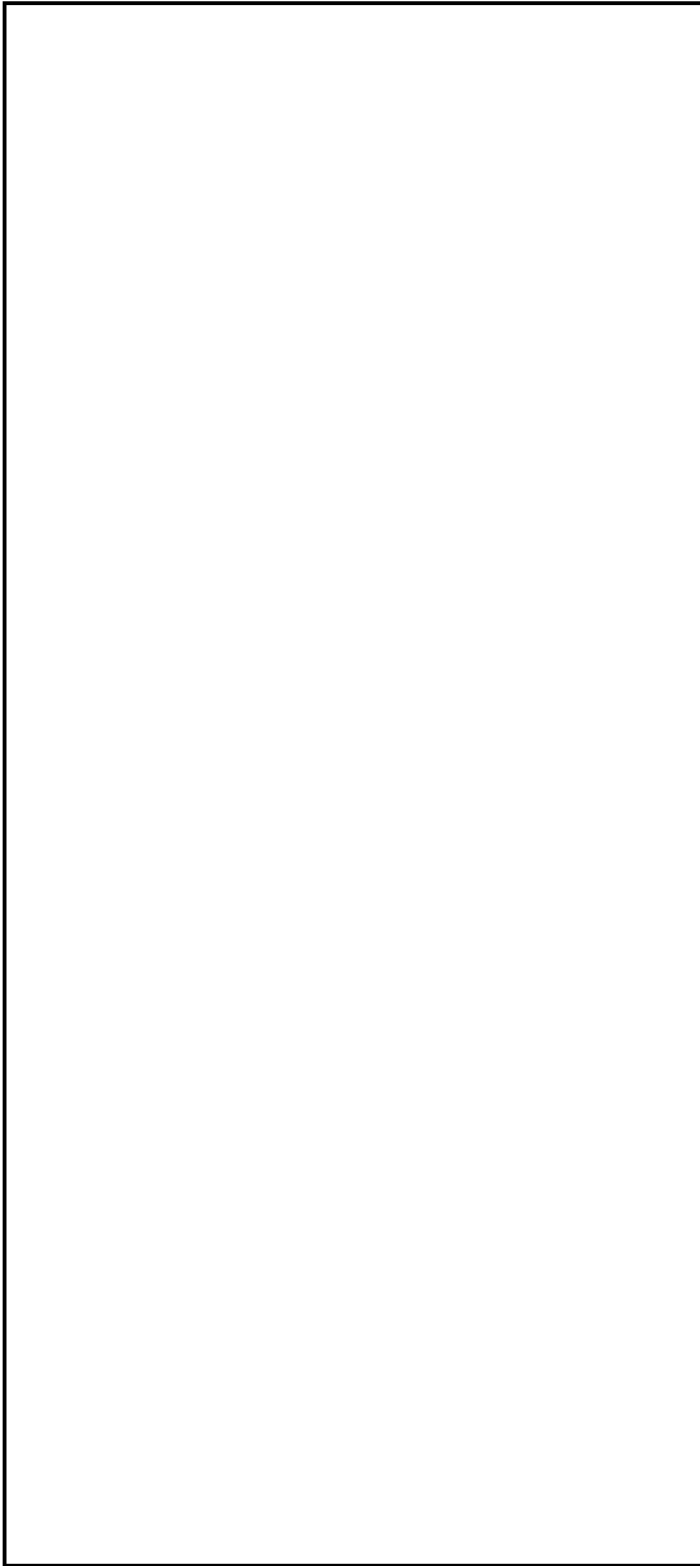


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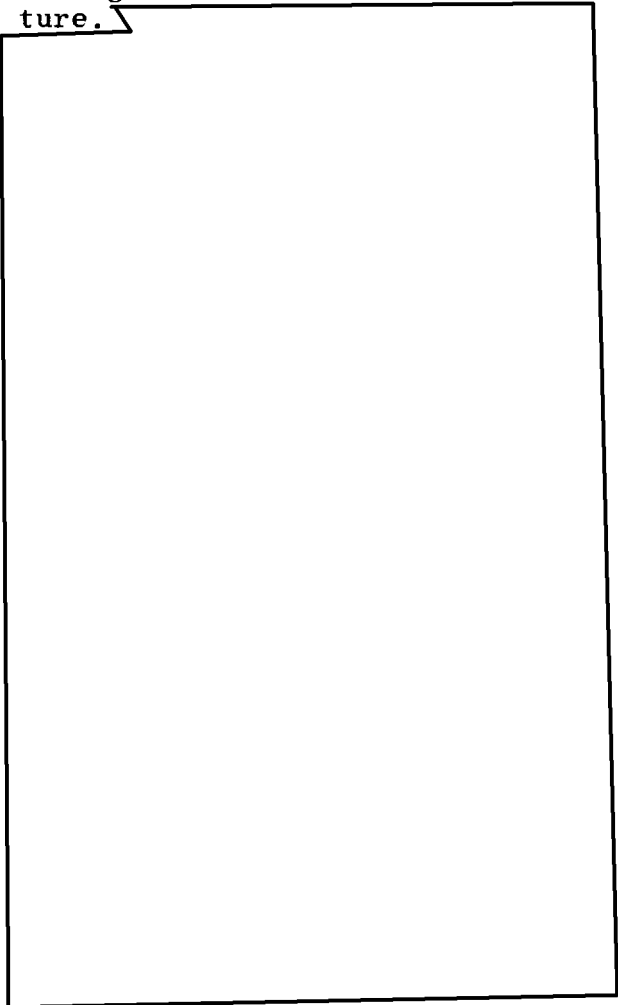
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Outlook

It is too early to predict how the PCI's efforts to cope with problems posed by Togliatti's death will turn out. It would appear, however, that the party's present high caliber leadership, together with its strong organizational structure will forestall any significant loss of strength in the foreseeable future.



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