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ILO Committee Report on Soviet Violations of
International Labor Conventions

An International Labor Organization (ILO) Experts Committee--composed of distinguished jurists from both East and West--has prepared a report for next month's annual Conference which is critical of Soviet labor practices.

At last year's Conference only a parliamentary maneuver enabled the Soviets to prevent the assembly from adopting a similar report which specified instances where Soviet law contravenes ILO Conventions. Moscow is extremely sensitive to publicity over its violations of the Forced Labor Convention, and this embarrassment is especially acute when such charges emanate from such international forums as the ILO. The USSR can again be expected to make an all-out effort to prevent adoption of the report.

The document finds Soviet law incompatible with ILO Conventions in that it imposes "an obligation on all able-bodied citizens to engage in a gainful occupation, failing which they are liable to compulsory direction to specific work, subject to penal sanctions." The report asks Moscow to conform to the provisions of the Convention that forbids "the imposition of labor as a preventative measure by an administrative body upon persons who have not been found guilty of any offense by any judicial instance."

The report also requests the Soviets to provide further information on the enforcement of obligations imposed on management of

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collective farms, and expresses hope that legislation will be enacted to permit collective farm members to terminate their membership by unilateral decision, subject only to a reasonable notice. Finally, the report notes that Moscow has not, as requested, provided any new information relating to the ILO Convention on Freedom of Association.



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Leader of Italy's Christian Democrats Calls
for a "New Majority"

Christian Democratic party leader Fanfani's criticism this week of the center-left coalition formula is probably part of his strategy aimed at attracting support on the right in the June 15 nationwide regional and local elections. Fanfani has been vying for increased support from conservative voters by emphasizing anti-communism and calling for tougher measures to combat political violence and crime.

Speaking at the end of a Christian Democratic strategy session, Fanfani recommended that his party look to alternatives other than the center-left alliance--Christian Democrats, Socialists, Social Democrats and Republicans--that has been the basis for most of Italy's governments since 1962. He said that the "new majority" should be open to all who oppose fascism and increased influence for the Communist Party.

Fanfani's exclusion of those sympathetic to the Communists is a barb aimed at the Socialists who have recently cooled on the idea of Communist participation in the government but have yet to rule it out unequivocally. The Socialists are also open to criticism for their alliances with the Communists in numerous local governments.

Fanfani's remarks are likely to be seen as a call for the replacement of the Socialists in the national governing coalition by the small and conservative Liberal Party. This formula--which was commonplace in the 1950s--was tried briefly again in 1972 but with

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disappointing results. The Liberal vote has shrunk over the years to less than 4 percent, and the 1972 experiment is generally thought to have established the impossibility of governing Italy for long with only a slender parliamentary majority against the combined opposition of the Socialists and Communists.

In addition to its appeal to the right, Fanfani's resurrection of the center-right formula is probably intended as a threat to the Socialists. The Socialists have been pressing the Christian Democrats for a larger share of power in the national government. Fanfani is putting the Socialists on notice that it remains possible--at least mathematically--to form a government without them.

Fanfani's proposal, however, will heighten differences between him and other Christian Democratic leaders, such as Prime Minister Moro and Foreign Minister Rumor. Both have recently reemphasized their commitment to continued cabinet collaboration with the Socialists.

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French Socialist-Communist Relations May Enter
New Phase or, Is the Winter of Our Discontent
Really Over?

French Socialist leader Francois Mitterrand's call for a summit of the Left Alliance--Socialists, Communists and Left Radicals--may signal the opening of a less antagonistic phase in the relationship between Socialists and Communists in France, but significant differences remain.

The Socialist initiative, announced on May 4, came at the conclusion of a party conference held to consider the state of relations between the two major parties of the French Left. While making this gesture to promote joint action, the Socialists, by endorsing a program of autonomous development of the individual parties in the Alliance, also appear to have noted their determination to promote vigorous open competition with the Communists. The Communist response to the summit invitation was guarded--it will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Central Committee toward the end of this month--but members of the Central Committee have admitted that, in principle, they are not opposed to a summit.

Move Toward Reconciliation

The Socialists are playing from a position of strength, as demonstrated by public opinion polls which confirm that the party continues to make major gains. According to one recent survey, the Socialists would win 34 percent of the vote if an election were held now, Communist support would slip markedly to 13 percent.

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Socialists have also been buoyed by Mitterrand's trip to Moscow late last month. The visit went better than the Socialists had expected--they had reportedly feared that it would degenerate into petty bickering. The warm reception accorded Mitterrand by the Soviet leaders, which stressed the areas of common accord and skimmed lightly over the many areas of disagreement--supported the Socialists' contention that they had been accepted by the Soviets as an authentic revolutionary party capable of governing France.

There are also indications that the propitious moment for reconciliation may be at hand. The two main factions within the Socialist Party--the majority composed of Mitterrand supporters and the minority left-wing CERES group--remain bitterly divided over several issues. They nevertheless appear to have patched up their differences on the crucial question of Socialist-Communist relations.

The long winter of Communist invective against the Socialist Party also seems to be yielding to a spring thaw, possibly because the internal struggle within the Communist Party--with the prickly aggressiveness toward all exterior relations that accompanied it--has died down for the time being.

Outside pressures for closer cooperation are increasing. Left Radicals point out that the strained relationship is preventing the Left from profiting as it should from current domestic economic problems. In the labor field, the Communist-dominated General Confederation of Labor and the Socialist-leaning French Democratic Confederation of Labor are complaining that political quarrels are getting in the way of effective trade union action.

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Differences Unresolved

However great the pressures for cooperation may be, however, there are a number of basic issues inhibiting closer working relations between the Socialists and the Communists. Probably the most sensitive issue, and one which both parties shy away from mentioning in public, is the growing strength of the Socialist Party.

The Communists are chiefly concerned over the Socialist Party's inroads into the working class electorate, which the Communist Party has always insisted it alone can truly represent. It is here, according to the Socialists, that the main bone of contention lies. How much pluralism within the Left can the Communists tolerate?

The issue of plurality caused the two parties to lock horns when the French Communist Party applauded the plan for a single (Communist-controlled) labor federation in Portugal, a development viewed by French Socialists as an example of dictatorship by a small minority. The same issue again split the Left Alliance when Communists argued that a single analysis of French economic conditions should be imposed on strategy meetings between the two parties. The Socialists insisted that the presentation of divergent views "would not betray the workers."

Equally fundamental differences separate the two parties in the realm of foreign affairs. Recent Communist criticism of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, in particular, their accusation that Franco is "reintegrating" under Giscard, have attracted little backing from the Socialists. Mitterrand's followers hew to the line of the Left Alliance's "Common Program" which concedes that NATO must continue to exist until the Warsaw Pact is laid to rest.

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The French Communist Party's tendency to follow Moscow's line has also created tension on issues concerning the Common Market and the arms limitation talks.

Less Antagonism, More Competition

With good will on both sides, a summit of the Left Alliance could paper over some of the cracks, at least in the short term. Relations may become less antagonistic, but Mitterrand's call for autonomous development of the parties will also insure that they become even more openly competitive. This element of competition is already strong at the grass roots--in factories, at trade union meetings, and in commerce--where the Communists often reject unified action in order to enhance the role of their own party.

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Mitterrand borrows Marchais' hammer to hang the banner of the Left Alliance

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