

EXCLUSIVE

PCI Backs Andreotti, But Gov't Still Shaky

ITALY

The meeting of the Italian Communist Party's Central Committee which opened March 14 appears to have determined a shift in the life expectancy of Italy's Andreotti cabinet. One week earlier, when Parliament was engaged in a ten-day marathon of hearings around a series of Lockheed scandals, it had been the nearly unanimous opinion of the Italian and major international press that the beleaguered Andreotti cabinet would soon go the way of Italy's typically short-lived governments.

Since its inception, the Andreotti government has served as a primary focus of European and Third World resistance to the financial policies of lower Manhattan, and has repeatedly taken the lead in negotiations with developing sector nations and the socialist bloc on behalf of the new world economic order. Representatives of the IMF have been in Italy seeking to break the government's will to pursue such policies, by imposing austerity conditions as the price of an IMF loan. The threat to the Andreotti regime had been carefully coordinated to maximize this pressure.

Andreotti's future openly came into question when ex-Prime Minister Aldo Moro assumed a tough posture in behalf of the accused ex-government ministers during his Lockheed hearings testimony. In his capacity as one of the historic national leaders of the ruling Christian Democracy (DC), Moro refused to accept any compromise with the Communists, demanding instead that the PCI either withdrew its position in behalf of indictments for the accused or risk early legislative elections. With his speech, Moro had left Premier Andreotti virtually without the capacity to maneuver between his own Christian Democratic party and the Communists, the two political groupings which form the basis for his government.

A few days after Moro's speech, the other major postwar DC leader, former Premier Amintore Fanfani, issued a frontal attack against the government by charging it with direct responsibility for the series of mass student riots which have plagued the country since the beginning of the Lockheed hearings. With the support of large sections of his own party thus withdrawn and stunned by a continuing wave of large-scale street rioting, Andreotti was left hanging by a slender thread.

The Communist Central Committee convened on Monday with the first two speakers presenting the opposing lines. Senator D'Alema began with a lengthy argument which in substance adopted the posture of the rioting students. That is, he argued that the PCI had betrayed the left through its unholy alliance with Christian Democrat Andreotti dating from late June when the party agreed to adopt an "abstentionist" tacit support of the new government. D'Alema's position

explicitly legitimized the series of major riots led by student anarchists and "leftists" extremists which had terrorized Italy's leading urban centers over the two preceding days shouting slogans of attack against the Communists for their "betrayal" of the left's cause.

D'Alema was answered by Paolo Bufalini, one of the top party leaders. Bufalini began by characterizing the leaders of the so-called student riots as "squadristi" reminiscent of the Mussolini period. Not only must the party not accede to the pressure which the riots were orchestrated to exert, he argued, but the PCI must rather demand that government authorities investigate the leaders of the riots to uncover the underlying plot against Italian national sovereignty which lay beneath them. Making a tacit link between Moro and Fanfani, the well-orchestrated riots and the Lockheed hearings, Bufalini went further to accuse "sections" of the Christian Democracy of de facto plotting against the Andreotti government.

Having laid out the main lines of his argument, Bufalini then proceeded to outline the tactical shift in PCI policy that must emerge from the Central Committee. Andreotti, he said, must be supported, but only in the context of mass PCI organizing to ensure rapid entry of the party into the government itself. The Andreotti government, he stated, is not our government, but it is the only possible government until such time as the Communists themselves enter the cabinet. In sum: support for Andreotti but only contingent on PCI government entry in the immediate future.

Bufalini was followed by a battery of approximately thirty speakers—the majority of whom referenced his speech to indicate support for his policy. As had occurred with the last Central Committee plenum a few months earlier, centrist general secretary Enrico Berlinguer was diplomatically refused speaking rights at the close of the meeting. Instead, hard-liner Giorgio Napolitano was once again chosen to deliver the closing statement summing up the consensus reached by the leadership. Napolitano's speech, which was faithfully echoed by the ensuing final communiqué, laid out the following points:

- condemnation of "squadristi" riots, together with demands to uncover the national and international orchestrators of the attempted Italian "destabilization";
- affirmation that "there is no turning back for the PCI. The party must overcome the "government of abstentions" to achieve greater direct government responsibility;
- announcement that the PCI would initiate a period of mass organizing to ensure that this goal would be met in the near future;
- definition of the PCI as a "party of struggle" with the responsibility for such direct organizing instead of being limited to acting through the vehicle of the trade unions.

But the PCI was conspicuously silent on the key issue of economic program, leaving undefined the content of its support for Andreotti, and its own willingness to take

on the IMF, directly in question.

On March 22 a series of bilateral meetings is now scheduled to begin. They will take the format of consultations among the leaders of the Italian political parties along the lines of a proposal first issued by the Socialists a few weeks earlier. As a result of the decision taken at the PCI Central Committee, the Italian press has now announced that the battery of meetings will now take on the character of formal negotiations for Communist and possibly Socialist entry into the government. Two weeks earlier, Prime Minister Andreotti had proposed during an interview to the French daily *Le Monde* that he would be willing to accept entry into his cabinet of qualified members from both of these parties. At that time Andreotti's announcement had received no endorsement from members of his own party. Following the PCI Central Committee, the head of the Christian Democrats' foreign affairs bureau, Galloni, authored an article for the daily *Il Giorno* endorsing the concept of government responsibility for "all Italian democratic parties". At the same time, the Italian press reported on March 17 that Prime Minister Andreotti had held a series of meetings with Aldo Moro and the rest of his party leadership. Using the leverage inherent in the PCI's restated support of his government, the Christian Democrats' secretariat was forced to issue an official statement in unanimous support for Andreotti.

While the Italian government has been momentarily stabilized by the action of the Communists, its future is

still very much in doubt. The absence of programmatic initiative from the PCI leaves Andreotti without the vital weapon to defeat further attacks — widespread popular consciousness that the road to economic recovery necessarily leads through a new monetary system. In particular, the PCI's failure to address itself to the question of youth unemployment underlying the manipulated student riots — a misery for which IMF austerity policies are directly responsible — can only lead to continued instability.

Moreover, a second round of Lockheed hearings is already under preparation by the Commission of Enquiry of Parliament, this time threatening the possible impeachment of the President of the Republic for presumed implication in the Lockheed bribery case. Similarly, the student provocateur riots continue, and a section of the powerful metalworkers trade union is continuing to endorse the "revolt of the student" in direct opposition to PCI orders. If the demand issued by Bufalini for "naming the names" of the combined Lockheed-riots orchestrators is not fulfilled in the near future, and if the PCI fails to make the proper programmatic offensive, the destabilizations will continue and the government's progressive orientation will be vitiated. The PCI will thus be boxed into a position from which it will both be incapable of supporting the current government or moving to assume a credible measure of power itself.

Left Wins First Round Of French Municipal Elections, Population Rejects Barre Plan

FRANCE

The "Union of the Left" coalition comprised of the Socialist, Communist and Left Radical parties took control of numerous major cities in the first round of the French municipal elections March 13, and is expected to consolidate its gains in the March 20 run-off. Though evenly distributed throughout the country, the left's growth did not reach such proportions in Paris where Gaullist lists led by former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac edged the (Atlanticist) Independent Republican and Centrist slates of Industry Minister Michel D'Ornano, President Giscard d'Estaing's personal choice for mayor. Chirac, in whose favor D'Ornano has since withdrawn, is expected to win easily at the expense of the left March 20.

A close examination of the nationwide results leads to the following preliminary conclusions:

1) Both the high level of voter participation (72 percent nationally) and the Union of the Left's gains indicate widespread rejection of the Giscard government's austerity program ("Barre Plan").

2) All parties broadly identified with Giscard's "presidential majority" suffered significant losses, especially the small Centrist formations, whose electorate is rapidly switching to a pro-Union of the Left posture. The Gaullist tendency succeeded in maintaining itself wherever it is led by strong personalities known for their opposition to various aspects of Giscard's Atlanticist de-industrialization policies. By contrast, except in Paris, Chirac's tactic of systematic alliance between the RPR Gaullist party and the Giscardians against the "totalitarian" Union of the Left seems to have failed.

3) The spectacular results of Trotskyist and other extreme-left candidates in some cities — 12 percent in Orleans, 9.5 percent in Montbéliard, seat of the largest Peugeot auto plant in the country, 7.5 percent in Rouen — reveal a rapid process of radicalization among strata of especially working-class youth threatened with unemployment, who reject the Communist Party's capitulation to its Socialist partners' electoral opportunism and "zero growth" proclivities.

4) While in Paris the Rockefeller-funded counter-insurgent "Friends of the Earth" received about 10 percent of the votes, various "environmentalists", led by leftist splinter groups or independents, registered