

Togliatti clamps down on the “pro-Chinese”

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ROME, Sept. 30 -- During the past two months, the world press has circulated news about the "pro-Chinese" groups active in Italy. The source of this information is undoubtedly the allusion made in the text of the July 14 statement of the Communist party of the Soviet Union [CPSU] concerning allegedly "factional" activity inspired by the Chinese in Italy and centering mainly around a group of members and leaders in the Padua federation.

The truth is that a left oppositional grouping appeared in this city well before the Sino-Soviet conflict reached its present - tension. The Chinese, it can be stated with assurance, had nothing to do with this. The initiative came from the rank and file as a result of their own experiences.

It should be evident that a leftist criticism of Togliatti must necessarily appear analogous to the criticisms lodged by the Chinese. But this holds not only for the Padua group but also for all the Communist groups and organizations of the left that appeared long before the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet conflict.

The real situation can be briefly summarized as follows. Many small groups now exist, most of them composed of a few militants and most of them without any solid organizational structure. Among them are the two groups in Padua who, after a period of division, appear to have reunited (these are the militants referred to in the CPSU letter); a group of militants in some of the towns of Sicily, partly in and partly out of the CP; a third group in Rome composed of CP militants under the influence of a leader of the Italy-China Association who was recently expelled from the CP, and finally a small group in Milan which calls itself "antirevisionist."

The latter group has published Italian translations of certain documents of the Chinese and maintains contact with them for this purpose.

The leader of the group in Rome is in complete agreement with the views of the Chinese and visited Albania last summer.

The two groups in Padua, which appear to have fused, are considering starting a publication. There is no evidence up to now that the Chinese have either approved or sought such a venture. They seem instead to favor an attitude of cautious waiting. It is not excluded that the Albanians rather than the Chinese are pushing the idea.

The Sicilian group is for critical support of the Chinese positions. They disagree with the Chinese rejection of de-Stalinization. They, too, are considering bringing out a publication.

It should be observed, in addition, that some of these groups, along with members holding Trotskyist views, have supported the Italy-China Association which was founded toward the end of last year.

After waiting some months, the Togliatti leadership launched a violent offensive against the Italy-China Association, formally banning CP members from participating in it (up until then the majority of members of the Association belonged to the CP).

Real provocations have been organized in hope of discrediting this Association and the Chinese. Grotesque as some of the provocations have been, at least one was taken for good coin by a paper as serious as the Paris Le Monde. Any "juicy" items that may appear currently in the capitalist press concerning the

Association and Chinese partisans in Italy should be viewed with considerable suspicion.

Within the Communist party, the Togliatti leadership has organized a very vigorous offensive against the Chinese with the evident aim of blocking formation of any kind of pro-Chinese opposition formation. At the July meeting of the Central Committee, Pietro Secchia, who was dropped from the party Secretariat in 1955 for indulgence toward leftist elements, made a long speech, demanding in substance that the party not participate in the conflict. Togliatti immediately responded in a violent way. His speech was never reported by the party press.

Discussion is occurring among different party bodies but the atmosphere is often different from what it was in 1956 and again in 1961 after the Twentieth and Twenty-second congresses. In those instances the Togliatti bureaucracy was on the defensive. Today it is carrying the attack in a relentless way.

In consequence, the pro-Chinese elements, who do not want to risk a break, do not take the floor. Militants hesitate at speaking although they are not convinced by the Khrushchev line. There are quite a few of them.

Nevertheless in certain instances very good discussions have occurred with the open participation of Trotskyist elements. Among the youth, Chinese sympathies are quite pronounced and some branches have come out openly in favor of the Chinese.

Rather well-founded rumors have been circulating concerning the pro-Chinese attitude of certain former leaders of the Milan federation who were removed by the "de-Stalinizers" who now head this important party sector. Up to now, however, they have initiated nothing although they are certainly hostile to the current Togliatti course.

Followed up in report

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DOCTOR TOGLIATTI TO THE RESCUE

ROME -- Nuova Generazione, organ of the Italian Communist Youth, became widely known for its audacious criticisms, especially immediately following the Twenty-first Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. However, the issue which appeared during the first week of October published the following in relation to the commemoration of the victory of the Chinese Revolution:

"On the occasion of the anniversary of the great event which marked the end of the feudal subjugation and imperialist exploitation of 600 million people, despite the profound differences which separate us from the Chinese comrades, we, the Young Italian Communists, wish them the greatest success, certain that the current difficulties in the international workers movement can be overcome, not by a dogmatic appeal to principles and to unity, but through a concrete revolutionary confrontation and a free discussion among all the CP's."

In face of such a timorous and orthodox passage, readers are likely to conclude that the spirit of the Italian "Young Turks" has been broken. Unfortunately the readers of Nuova Generazione have no way of knowing that a different text was prepared and even printed and that it was not until after intervention from above that the copies already printed were withdrawn, and a new text prepared and printed.

The censored text was as follows:

"The People's Republic of China has celebrated the fourteenth anniversary of its glorious Revolution. During the festivities at Peking, Comrade Chou En-lai declared that he was convinced that the present ideological differences among the socialist countries will finally be resolved on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and in addition he expressed support for a policy concerned with faithfulness to principles, to the elimination of differences, the strengthening of unity and the struggle of all combined against the common enemy. The Italian Communist Youth wish the Chinese comrades more and more success on the road to constructing socialism."

It must be admitted that it was a slick job of doctoring and that Togliatti, who considers himself a consistent "liberalizer," is not above using shady methods to demonstrate to the public that his party is unanimously behind a line one hundred per cent hostile to the Chinese.