

ITALIAN ROAD

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TO SOCIALISM

COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION

ITALIAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Documents of the 12th Congress
of the Italian Communist Party

COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION

DATA ENTERED

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REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

(*Excerpts*)

LUIGI LONGO

Our 12th Congress meets in a complex and contradictory situation, pregnant with possibilities, but also with dangers.

1968 was the year of the great victory of the Vietnamese people, which forced the Americans to suspend the bombing of North Vietnam and accept the Paris negotiations. In the name of our congress, I express our warmest salutations to the comrades and people of Vietnam and our fraternal hope that the present negotiations will lead to full recognition of their right to freedom, national independence and peace.

But 1968 offers a varied picture: an advance in the revolutionary consciousness of the peoples, but also serious phenomena of retreat and uncertainty on the level of ideals.

In Italy, 1968 was the year of our great success in the political elections and of vast movements of workers, peasants, students and other strata of the population. It is a fact that our congress meets in a situation of profound social and political crisis; protest and popular struggles are becoming increasingly extensive and conscious; uncertainty and uneasiness are growing in the ruling groups and among men of democratic tradition.

The vastness and complexity of the problems facing the country today arise from two factors: on the one hand, the effects of the changes which have taken place in the structures of society and, on the other, the failure of the centre-left and the crisis of the christian democrat power system.

It is therefore obvious that our congress cannot and will not be a congress of ordinary administration. The transfor-

mations that have taken place and are maturing within Italian society have expanded the leadership role of the working class in the process that will lead Italy to socialism.

The struggles of the Italian working class are new and imposing. Last Wednesday Italy ground to a halt during the general strike for pensions and social security. This struggle is a great battle for economic and social reform and, at the same time, a great democratic battle aimed not only at guaranteeing more civilised living conditions to the aged, but also at winning new important power positions for the workers.

Likewise, the struggles in the factories against the intensification of exploitation, for wage increases, work speeds, better hours, job security and grading go beyond the normal confines of simple demands and take on a deep political meaning, first of all for the nature of the demands themselves, but also for the number of workers involved in action for the renewal of their collective agreements.

Thus also the bitter struggle to abolish the system of differential wage zones and the shame of substandard wages touches not only the workers concerned, but the very future of many parts of the country, especially the south and the islands. These are vast, united struggles that involve millions and millions of workers and peasants and affect the whole economic policy and democratic life of the country. And finally, the battle for the right of assembly in the factory and the Workers' Bill of Rights are an important, decisive part of the general struggle for democracy and socialism.

In the course of recent years, the very development of the productive forces has extended the arch of possible alliances of the working class. Some had predicted that in the present phase of capitalism and in the system of state monopoly capitalism, the alliances of the working class in its struggle for socialism would tend to change and narrow. Facts have shown the contrary to be true.

The subjugation of the agricultural productive process to modern industry has given rise to a strident contradiction

between the masses of agricultural producers and the great industrial monopolies, the policy of state monopoly capitalism and the policy of the Common Market. This explains why in recent times, despite the drastic reduction in the number of persons employed in agriculture, we have witnessed so many movements and struggles, not only among farm workers and day-labourers, such as those in Avola and those now taking place to obtain a democratic system of job distribution, doing away with the shameful system of hiring in the market square, but also among sharecroppers and renters and among small landed peasants. Even more sizable independent farmers have at times joined the struggle to obtain a fairer return on their labour and improve their bargaining power.

It is obvious, therefore, that for the working class alliance with the peasants remains an essential element in its struggle to transform society, even in the present situation. The same holds, although in a different manner, for broad strata of the productive lower middle classes in the cities. It holds for the masses of women, who have fought great battles to carry forward their emancipation movement.

At the same time, new possibilities for alliances and unity have arisen between the working class, broad strata of intellectuals, technicians, research workers and the student masses. The collocation of the student movement depends not only on what the students think of it or the radical criticism of the capitalist system that a part of them advances, but primarily on the position that the schools and universities occupy today in our society, dominated by the monopolies and state monopoly capitalism, and within the framework of the scientific and technological revolution.

The fact that in Italy the schools and universities also suffer from grave delays and insufficiencies in no way reduces these contradictions; on the contrary, it makes them all the more strident and profound. During 1968, in Italy as elsewhere, we witnessed the development of a imposing movement of university and secondary school students, a wave of agitation that has deeply shaken not only the scle-

rotic schools and universities, but also Italian society as a whole.

Thus there has been a massive widening of the field of social forces interested in a democratic and socialist transformation. The political problem that emerges from this new situation is that of developing the platform of struggle and initiative that best favours the convergence and collaboration of such numerous and varied social forces around common goals of transformation. Such a platform must be antimonopolistic, antiauthoritarian and anti-imperialist. It must be capable of providing a constructive, unifying outlet for all these pressures, even the most advanced, and preventing them from wearing themselves out in sterile explosions.

It is obvious, however, that we are not dealing with shortlived flareups or unpredictable explosions, but with deeply rooted phenomena, which are not only Italian. This increases our responsibilities and those of all the democratic political forces. The 19 May elections, which gave 10 million votes to the united forces of the leftwing opposition, clearly indicated a firm desire for political change on the part of a large section of the Italian people.

Our analysis is based on this combination of facts which, taken together, pose a clear political problem; the problem of a radical transformation of government policy and structural changes permitting a new development of democracy towards socialism. The profound crisis through which the country is passing today derives from the refusal to recognise this problem and provide a solution in the direction of renewal. It is a crisis that arises from the productive process and affects all national life, culture, justice, family and even religious life.

There is a common element in all the working class, peasant and student struggles in these years: a firm, democratic determination to participate directly in the leadership of society and the state; an irresistible decision to assert the dignity of man and the citizen; a sharp refusal to be subjected to any form of oppression and authoritarianism. There are many who observe all this with serious concern and

others with fear. We instead greet what is happening with the satisfaction of one who has been and is the conscious promoter of this political and ideal reawakening, although, of course, not the only one. We are well aware that within some parts of the present movement there emerge at times ideas and tendencies with which we do not agree. It is our right and our duty to criticise and reject such positions. For many years now we have abandoned the sectarian and narrowminded criterion of thinking that everything that does not coincide with our views must be rejected en masse. We consider the variety of pressures, interests and goals that animate the working class, popular and democratic movement not only as an objective fact of reality, but also as an expression of the width and quality of the movement itself. In the *Communist Manifesto*, we read: "The communists... do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement".

In our opinion, those tendencies that reject everything that does not correspond to preset schemes, rather than considering each thing as an objective fact of reality that must be made a constructive element in our action for the transformation of society, are not marxist or leninist. And it is for this reason that our recognition of the value of the different contributions and the autonomy of the various movements is far from being an tactical expedient.

On the basis of these political and theoretical premises, we have made every effort to grasp and understand the new phenomena emerging in society, without prejudice or dogmatism. Our position with regard to the student movement has been particularly positive and open. Certainly, trying to understand does not mean acritically accepting everything and every position: on the contrary, it means trying to discover how much is or can be useful in every fact and position and how much is negative and must be rejected and combated. We feel that what is happening today in Italy, the younger generation's determination to count more, to change this unjust and inhuman society, is also in part

the fruit of the correct policy and the long and patient struggle carried forward in these past years by our party: from the struggle against the fascist regime to the thought and conscious, heroic sacrifice of Antonio Gramsci and so many other comrades; from the armed fight against fascism in Spain to the war of liberation in Italy; from the battle for the Republic and the Constitution to the often bloody battles of these past twenty years for land, work, freedom and peace. The value of these struggles lies not only in having regained our democratic freedom and in having defended it, thus keeping open the road of advance towards socialism. This is very important, but it is not everything. We have also advanced along this road, even if with difficulties, delays and also errors. Without us and without our policy favouring unity, Italy would be something different from what it is today. How many countries in this part of the world, from Spain to Portugal, to Greece, are still living under fascist regimes? In other countries, such as Federal Germany, where fascism is not in power, the new ferments do not find a reference point with the strength and prestige of a party such as ours. Today Italy is a country with a great political, ideal and moral tension. We understand and share the impatience of the younger generation. We are aware that we must make every effort to step up the pace of our march forward, but this can and must be done by drawing on the lessons, faith and energy of the struggles of the past as well. We must not forget that in all these years, the Italian workers have made important social progress, reaching a series of goals ranging from the sliding scale in wages to certain gains in welfare and social security, from a sharp increase in pay in some sectors to the land reform that broke up the feudal holdings in the south in the years between 45 and 50 and the very important recognition of wage parity for women in principle. In all these years, the Italian workers have set in motion a process of transformation of society, a process undeniably marked by deep contradictions, injustices and distortions, but still sufficient to put the political and class struggle on a

higher level. It is along a line of democracy and struggle that we have succeeded in defeating the reactionary attempts of the christian democrats, rejecting the "trick law" of 1953 with a great popular mobilisation and with the vote, overthrowing Scelba's police regime and in 1960 defeating Tambroni's attempt to impose an authoritarian regime open to fascist forces. Let it be clear, we have not won all this by ourselves, but together with the other antifascist, democratic and socialist forces. Thus we have succeeded in maintaining and consolidating a decisive part of the united trade union and cooperative organisations, and today it is possible to raise the problem of trade union unity concretely. We are perfectly aware of the limitations of the gains made so far, limitations due in large part to the breakdown of the popular unity realised during the war of liberation. We know that a regime of real freedom and economic and social progress cannot be stably won until the conservative and reactionary forces are deprived of the economic and political bases of their power. For this reason, we fight not only to gain ever new positions of strength and power for the working classes, but also for the socialist transformation of Italian society, that is, for the passage of all economic and social power into the hands of the workers, peasants, technicians, intellectuals and productive middle classes, organised in a solid national unity, in which all the progressive social forces, all the valid interests are represented, in which all freedoms are guaranteed, with the exception of freedom to exploit other men and to speculate on the poverty and health of the poor.

The confirmation of the role that we have played in all these years presupposes a deep and dispassionate examination of all our action and the political line we have followed. In fact, a large part of our pregress debate has been devoted to going over the stages of our progress, underlining errors, deficiencies and weaknesses, which we have no intention of denying or covering up. We know, for that matter, that the progress of the working classes has never been and cannot be a triumphal march. The important thing

is to be able to draw the necessary lessons from each experience of the working class movement. The Italian working class and popular movement has not succeeded in blocking the advance of a certain type of economic development dominated by the monopolies which has exasperated the imbalances and distortions of the Italian economy and society. Recognising this does not mean agreeing with La Malfa, who, to lighten his own responsibilities and those of his various allies, from the liberals of yesterday to the socialists of today, claims that we are all responsible for the present situation in Italy, government and opposition alike. This statement has a sense only if we recognise that the government forces, which having the means and the possibility to give a different direction to the course of events, not only have done nothing in this sense, but have actually worked in the direction diametrically opposed to the interests of the people and the country. The opposition, on the other hand, has not succeeded in fully developing its struggle and overcoming this state of things, although here it is only fair to remember the extent to which it has been persecuted and deprived of its possibilities of action—it is enough to recall the anticommunist persecution and discrimination in the factories, in the public administration and the delimitation of the majority. These responsibilities are not only qualitatively different; they are of opposite nature. And it is a fact that the popular forces in the opposition have succeeded in waging an untiring battle in defence of the interests of the workers and the nation, and that they have thus succeeded in preserving and increasing the strength and combativeness of the working class and democratic movement. One thing we must remember, frankly and with pride: we, communists, have never abandoned our deep faith in the capacity, intelligence and combative spirit of the Italian working class; our efforts and those of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of communist militants to organise and guide the struggle for renewal and freedom have never weakened. The same cannot be said for the Socialist Party, which, under the leadership of the social

democrats and Nenni, has given in to the pressure of the forces of social conservatism. Nor can it be said for those who, while claiming to represent leftwing positions, hastened to decree that the beginning of neocapitalism marked the end of marxism and class struggle, when massive technological changes and new forms of exploitation were introduced into the factories in the 1950s. And again, later on, with the monopolistic expansion of the 1960s, while so many fell victim to reformistic, technocratic and dirigiste illusions, others hastened to announce the inevitability of the integration of the working class into the capitalist system and the consequent stability of the centre-left.

On our side, with patience and tenacity, we worked to prepare the working class counterattack and the reawakening that we are witnessing today. And thus while others proclaimed the solution of the agrarian question, the southern question and the question of women's rights by neocapitalism, we continued and continue to believe, on the basis of the facts, that the monopolistic bourgeoisie is not capable of solving these contradictions. And once again, not more than three or four years ago, when our usual "leftwing" critics theorised the death of ideology among the younger generation, we rejected their arguments and held to our faith in our general ideas and in our youth. In all these years, i.e., against all schematism and dogmatism, against all sectarian exasperation and against all tendencies to give up the fight, we have sought to develop an ideological and political line of concrete struggle and concrete construction of the Italian road to socialism, which has led to the present situation and the possibilities existing today to make new, concrete leaps forward.

You know that with the Rumor government we are faced with an attempt to revive the formula and policy of the centre-left. It is the contrast between the programme of this government and the problems of country that leads us to reconfirm our determined and clearcut opposition and our commitment to work for a change in political line and a democratic alternative to the centre-left. Admittedly, the

government has been forced to recognise, after years and years of stubborn refusal, the existence of some problems and to make certain concessions. Thus after massive peasant struggles, it has had to admit that the demand for a national solidarity fund cannot be rejected. For the question of pensions, the government has had to undo the purse strings and find 400 billion lire, which, just a few months ago, the Hon. Colombo and the Hon. Moro swore could not be found in any manner. As can be seen, the struggles of past months and the outcome of the elections have served a purpose. But we observe the absence in the government of any precise intention to solve such problems as a reform of the welfare and social security system or the renewal of the schools and universities, although on this last point it has been forced to make some changes. But our position is not based on a judgement of this or that measure alone.

We hold that it is the general lines of the economic and social policy of the government that are mistaken and contrary to the interests of the workers and the nation. They are, in fact, the same lines followed by the other centre-left governments in these last years, and the results are there for all of us to see.

The official figures on unemployment and underemployment are once more close to a million. Underemployment of women is on the increase. Emigration and flight from the countryside continue and are increasing. Productive investment has been for years stagnant and lower than the 1963 level, but the scandalous export of capital continues. Scientific and technological research is seriously behind the times. These are the results of a policy dictated in substance by the laws of maximum monopoly profit and which have imposed a certain type of economic development, to which the living conditions of the workers and peasants, the emancipation of women, the problems of the south, of the peasant economy and agriculture, of the schools and universities, of city planning, of conservation, of the health and security of the population have been sacrificed. And they

call this planning! The Pieraccini Plan has turned out to be what we said it would be: a mistaken, unrealistic document, destined to serve as a smokescreen for the choices of the monopoly groups and fail miserably in its promises. From the point of view of freedom, democracy and the activation of the Constitution, nothing seems to indicate that this government intends to deal seriously with the problems raised by the recent working class and student movements, which it continues to repress with police brutality. The government is against the disarmament of the police on duty at public demonstrations, despite the requests of the trade unions, the Sicilian regional assembly, the Friuli-Venezia Giulia regional council, and even the responsible parliamentary commissions. Even on the question of the right of assembly in the factories and schools, the government is reticent and uncertain, whereas this is simply a matter of recognising a right directly derived from the Republican Constitution.

Nor can the presence in the government of the Hon. De Martino's current or the leftwing christian democrats soften our opposition. In practice, this presence serves only to cover up the continuation of an old policy. For the Hon. De Martino and the men of the leftwing christian democrats it constitutes yet another case of giving in to pressure, which cannot be justified with the argument of a state of necessity and dangers from the right. We are not unaware of the existence of these dangers. But they are concerned precisely by the failure of the centre-left to solve the problems of the country and the workers. The very elephantine composition of the Rumor government, the way in which it was formed, its programme and its obvious impotence do not in any way fight, but rather feed, the existing authoritarian and anti-constitutional dangers. The Hon. Rumor's government solution is not a political solution. The precariousness and instability of the situation are increasingly evident.

How can the crisis be overcome? How can a democratic alternative to the centre-left be built? The answer is not simple. On the one side, we have the failure of the centre-

left policy, or rather, its political and ideal exhaustion; on the other, we cannot say that a new majority is already formed. On the one side, we have a powerful, united mass movement that raises the problems of transformation of the structures, order and very customs of the nation. On the other, we have the deafness and resistance of the ruling classes. On the one side, we have the pressing and general demand for broader, direct democracy, for real participation in the leadership of the state and society; on the other, a certain crisis in the functioning and authority of the representative institutions.

We, communists, want to work for a positive solution to the crisis. And for this, we must have a firm anchorage to something more than abstract political formulas or nebulous ideology. I believe that we must hold firm to two key points. The first concerns the grave dangers that can arise in the present situation from the refusal to recognise the crisis and exhaustion of the centre-left. The second concerns the duty on the part of all the forces of the left to support and carry forward the movement of the workers and youth, and to work so that this movement can find positive outlets in new victories on the economic and political plane. We do not in any way think that everything can and must be reduced to the movement alone and to pressure from below. Nor are we in favour of just any movement in whatever form it takes, according to a conception of "spontaneity" of the class struggle. But, at the same time we do not hold up our party as the exclusive representative and only guarantor of the masses in movement. We know perfectly well that there are other important leftwing opposition forces besides ourselves. We know that other progressive forces are also present within the centre-left majority. But more in general, our capacity and the capacity of all the forces of the left must increasingly lie in uniting the most advanced movements and the most radical positions with the broadest possible strata of the Italian people. Finding a political solution to the present crisis is not a job that can be carried out by the vanguard

alone nor by any single party. We reconfirm our conviction that the joint efforts of various forces, working in the same direction and with the support of all the people, will be necessary to save Italy from the present crisis and start her down the road to democracy and socialism. If this does not occur, if those who want to separate the vanguard from the broad popular masses prevail, all progress towards the socialist transformation of society will become much more difficult indeed.

And it is precisely for this reason, for the responsibility that we have as a great revolutionary and democratic force, that we intend to express our position on certain initiatives and forms of struggle. We share the deep indignation that unrestrained luxury and waste arouse in the minds of those who work and often lack the bare necessities of life. The struggle against waste, luxury and corruption must be a basic part of our battle. But the experience and elaboration of the communist and working class movement all point to the necessity for a revolutionary movement to condemn and isolate manifestations of the anarchist type that separate small groups from the masses, often leading them to certain defeat. Certainly, new forms of struggle must also be experimented, if we are to make the most of the inventiveness of the masses. But the goal must always be that of interesting and attracting to the democratic and socialist struggle the broad working class, popular and lower middle class masses. Yes, we know that socialism is a question for today in Italy; it is so in the consciousness of the broad popular masses and it is so because it is not possible to fully solve the basic problems of Italian society without transformations in the socialist direction. But we also know that these transformations cannot be initiated unless we can build, according to Gramsci's expression, a new power bloc, capable of isolating the monopolies and the most reactionary and backward forces and of uniting around the working class all those forces that are spurred by their own interests against the monopolies. This tie between the democratic struggle and the socialist struggle constitutes the central

core of our policy, of the *Italian road to socialism*. We do not intend to limit our struggle to an abstract and propagandist contraposition of our alternative to the present situation, passively waiting for the "qualitative leap" that will take us from the centre-left to a new majority and a new organisation of social and political relationships in Italian society. The situation is such that we must deal with the most urgent problems while still in the opposition.

By working today, even in the opposition, to find positive solutions for the problems of the working masses and the country, we not only carry out an action capable of exploding the contradictions of the majority, but at the same time we contribute to advancing the process of collaboration among all the forces of the left, socialist, catholic and democratic, and to maturing the conditions for a new majority and a new political leadership of the country. Along this road, which is the road of bitter, democratic mass struggle, we shall advance towards socialism. This is our line, and it is on the basis of this view of the development process of Italian society that our strategy and tactics are framed. The point of departure and the reference point of our whole battle remains the Republican Constitution.

The Italian Republic arose out of an armed struggle of the working class and the people; it was born out of a national democratic revolution, led by the working class—and by our party. This republic of ours is not a bourgeois democratic parliamentary republic of the traditional type, but rather of a new type. It is such because of its birth, and because of the programme of renewal that inspires the Constitution. It is such, above all, because in our republic the representative assemblies must rest if they are to be truly alive, functional and democratic—on the organisation and permanent mobilisation of the masses, on the parties and trade unions, on local autonomy and on grass roots democratic organisation.

It is for this reason that we, communists, have devoted so much of our attention and our struggle, so much of our organisational ingenuity, to the organisation and continual

mobilisation of the masses and to the creation of mass organisations open to all forces and various forms of direct democracy: the national liberation committees, factory management committees, land committees, committees for the south, valley and mountain committees, and town and neighbourhood assemblies and councils. We have fought and fight for the democratisation of the peasant cooperatives, for the democratic reform of the agricultural unions. In some regions, such as here in Emilia, we have devoted great energy in building people's community centres, and cultural and recreational organisations. Admittedly, in recent times there has been a dimming in our initiative on the level of direct, grass roots democracy. This is due in part to the crisis of unity of the popular forces, but not only to this. A certain relaxation in militant commitment, in organisational work and activity has also weighed on the situation. We shall fully overcome these delays by working to ensure a new development and renewal of Italian democracy, setting such concrete goals as the right of assembly in the factory, in the schools and universities, the Workers' Bill of Rights, the management of the welfare agencies by the workers themselves, the reform of employment bureaus, and the disarmament of the police at public demonstrations and functions. Other goals of particular importance and urgency are, aside from the realisation of the regions, judicial reform and the reform of the public administration and the police code. We want a new, advanced democracy, capable of fulfilling to the maximum the working class and popular need for participation; a democracy based on productive activity itself and expressed through a broad, well developed system of local autonomy. Let us remember Palmiro Togliatti's words: "We are democratic because we move within the sphere of the Constitution, of democratic custom and the legality that it determines, and we demand from all respect for this legality and the application of all the constitutional norms by everyone, and first of all, by the government. We have fought for and won the field of democracy in order to go forward, on this basis, towards

socialism. It would therefore be absurd for us to deny it. On the contrary, we defend it."

How can we promote today the workers' struggles for immediate demands, for reform of the economic and political structures of the country and for the advance of Italian society as a whole? We cannot forget, in the first place, the united, mass nature of the struggles taking place. We have worked a great deal in these past years around our conception of the relationship between the political party and the mass organisations and movements. We have fought for the full autonomy of the trade unions. We have opposed all tendencies to consider the function of parties bypassed by the times, to set the parties against the mass organisations and political and trade union organisations against the spontaneity of the various movements. Today, we can see the results. Without this theoretical and political battle, those forces that tend either to deny the parties any function at all or to place all their cards on an ideological and "party" conception of the movements and mass organisations would have prevailed. The result would have been a fragmentation, a disjointing and consequently the shrinking and stagnation of the movement as a whole. And we wish to remind those comrades who in the course of the pre-congress debate brought up the problem of the party's calling strikes, that the trade unions' efforts for unity and progress towards organic trade union unity are not only pillars in the defence of the immediate interests of the masses, but also have a great political value for renewal and democratic progress.

Here then is the first commitment our congress must reconfirm: the full and unconditional support of our party to these struggles by workers, peasants and all the working strata of the population. When we reconfirm this commitment, it is not simply because we are the party of the working class. We feel that the progress of these movements for immediate demands gives rise to problems at a new level, both in the economic field and in the area of social and political relationships. We are convinced that the

improvement of living conditions of the workers and the broadening of democracy and the right to participation are indispensable conditions for a new direction and a different sort of development in all the economic, social and civil life of the country.

As we wrote in our draft theses, the goal to pursue is the massive and rapid expansion of employment and the internal market, by means of democratic planning that increases public intervention in new forms, that eliminates parasitism and waste, that places the activity of the great concentrations of industrial and financial power, the general policy of investments and the financial market under control and for this purpose maps out a suitable fiscal policy. Such planning has become a dramatic and urgent necessity. The international monetary crisis, the increasingly strong trends both in the United States and in Europe towards the resurrection of protective tariff barriers and the crisis of the Common Market itself all gravely threaten our economy. The ruling economic and political forces have assigned too preponderant a role to foreign demand in our national economic development and too modest a role to the expansion of the internal market. The level of international competitiveness reached by the Italian economy, largely through intensification of exploitation, represents a factor of weakness that can dramatically explode as a result of unilateral acts by other countries. Under such conditions, the need for a decided enlargement of the internal market is unanimously recognised. Anything but incomes policy then. What Italy needs is a general and over all rise in working class and peasant incomes, the elimination of all belts of substandard wages, particularly among women workers and in the south.

We are well aware that not everything can be solved along this road. Our country is seriously behind the more advanced countries with regard to scientific research, the modernity of its industrial apparatus and the overall efficiency of its economic system. Unused human and material resources are on the increase. Under these conditions, we

are moving towards a situation in which, on the one hand, we will suffer from insufficient scientific and technological development and, on the other, precisely as a result of this new phase, we will be faced with a worsening of the problems of the south, of agriculture, conservation, the schools and social security. We must impose a new scale of priorities, a different scale of consumption that favours social consumption, education, health and popular housing. We strongly emphasise—thus accepting the criticism directed at the theses on this point—our commitment to struggle for the south and for the autonomy and rebirth of the islands, because this is still today, more than ever, a central point in our whole battle. The same holds true for agrarian reform; this must be a great political battle of the widest possible ideal scope. Again the same can be said of the battle for women's rights. And finally for the battle for conservation, in which regard we must admit that there has not been the necessary continuity on anyone's part, despite the recurrent floods that should call our attention to this problem. In 1969 we hope to organise an important initiative: a national conference on conservation, to be prepared through thousands of assemblies and initiatives on the part of the local elective bodies and with struggles and movements among the population interested in this or that problem.

This then is the goal we set for our action in the country and in Parliament: a change in economic and social policy, a drastic revision in the direction of public spending, within the framework of a new and democratic organisation of society and the state, of a type of truly democratic planning. But how can this struggle be waged? What levers can and must we use?

I feel that the attention of the party must be concentrated in three directions: a new policy for the state industrial holdings; a new investment policy in agriculture; reform of the schools and universities.

The struggle for a new role and policy for the state industrial holdings must aim at making the public sector the

pilot sector in the upgrading and modernisation of our industrial apparatus, in the industrialisation of the south and in the transformation of agriculture. The goal must be a massive increase in investments, together with the elimination of the present technocratic trappings, bureaucratic baronies and uncontrolled potentates, in order to place all the activity of the state holdings under control by the workers, by Parliament and the regions.

This battle must be developed in Parliament, in all sectors of public opinion and in all zones of the country; it must mobilise the unemployed and young people looking for jobs, and it must be carried into the municipal councils and all the local and regional assemblies. But it must start from the factory and aim at winning a new type of management for the industries with state holdings, in which an efficient parliamentary and public control is united with control over management by the workers in forms to be devised. Workers' assemblies in the factories and regional conferences to discuss planning of state industry in the individual regions can be instruments, among others, in creating this pressure and exercising this control.

We also give the greatest importance to the struggle and initiatives for a new organisation of Italian agriculture, particularly in view of the outlook for our agriculture and our peasants within the Common Market. For this reason, we give our full support to the movement of agrarian conferences, which, zone by zone, select the investment and transformation goals, mobilise all the categories of agricultural workers for these goals, create permanent leadership bodies for the struggle, press for a democratic transformation and an effective operation of the development agencies in all the regions and finally tie all these things in with the battle to do away with all forms of sharecropping and renting and for a democratic operation of employment bureaus. In short, the peasants and agricultural workers must be made the protagonists in the process of renewal. The monopolies' hold over the countryside, exercised in part through the Federconsorzi, must be broken. In these two battles for

the state industrial holdings and for investments in agriculture, political and economic problems, democratic and socialist goals are united.

The same can be said for the struggle for a democratic reform of the schools and universities. This struggle concerns not only the students and democratic teachers, but all the workers, since the question of the schools has become one of the essential questions in the democratic and socialist renewal of our country. The communists want to be an increasingly active part of this struggle, in the country, among the workers, in the schools and in Parliament, indicating immediate as well as longrange goals and fighting for their realisation. This will be a bitter, difficult battle. The major goals are today: the full recognition of democracy in the schools and the right to education. We commit all our militants to this struggle, with the purpose of warding off reactionary manoeuvres aimed at isolating the most advanced part of the students and at throwing off on the students the responsibility for a crisis situation that instead lies with the ruling classes and the government.

With these three examples, we come to the heart of the problem of structural reforms. In the course of the pre-congress debate, many comrades underlined—with frequent reference to “May” in France—the close tie existing between goals of economic nature and goals of political nature in the conquest of new positions of control and power by the working class and its allies. A critical examination of the developments and results of the struggle for reforms in recent years is necessary and useful. The debate here in the next few days will undoubtedly furnish contributions in this regard. Other important elements of evaluation can be found in the organisational report of the central committee. It is a fact that certain battles—for example, the battle for reform in city planning—have bogged down, while others have not had the necessary continuity and emphasis on the national level. I am thinking here of the battle for the regions, for a new direction in state industrial holdings and certain aspects of the battle for southern develop-

ment and agrarian reform.

Thus there have been limitations and defects, some quite serious, and on these points we must deepen our analysis. However, it seems evident that the task of this congress is to establish a close relationship between our general position on structural reforms and the concrete choices we must make today to concentrate our political initiative around certain goals. Our job is not just to exercise pressure, however intense, for these goals, but to build a democratic movement capable of imposing certain solutions.

Our efforts must today be aimed at consolidating the movement, not only with the traditional forms of organisation, but also with new forms that will prepare it to absorb new pressures and new contents. Italy will never start down the road of a new economic development unless there develops in the factories, in the rural areas, in the schools, universities and cities, an action that imposes a radical change in the direction of investments, through the most varied forms of pressure and the organisation of suitable instruments of struggle, control, administration and self-administration (as, for example, in the welfare and social service agencies). We call the party to this action. It is, in substance, the battle for the transformation of the state, for the access to power of the working classes.

Our strategy of structural reform is not an abstract government programme, a sort of "counterplan", nor a series of measures which, taken together, would change the capitalist system; nor is it an abstract attempt to create continual dents, leading up to the general crisis of the system. Our strategy aims at realising modifications in property relations and in the political system capable of breaking the ruling bloc, leading entire new social groups to new political experiences, winning and consolidating more favourable conditions for a more advanced struggle and enabling us to build a new bloc of political and social forces. It involves, therefore, coordinated battles for the conquest of real and realisable goals which have an overall value as factors of political and social advance and also as a force

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of persuasion in favour of a leftwing alternative. It is essential to prevent the creation of any artificial contraposition between grass roots unity and our policy for unity with the other political forces or between the new forms of direct democracy and forms of representative democracy. This contraposition, of which there is so much talk today, is in reality completely senseless.

The masses cannot be seen as a no-man's-land, ready to follow whoever sets out to conquer them. This is not the case. Various political and ideological orientations are already present and at work among the masses.

And, if it is true that ideas cannot be changed except through experience and struggle, it is also true that these struggles and this unity cannot be realised unless we work for them both at the bottom and the top. Equally senseless is the contraposition between direct democracy and representative democracy, especially in this era of state monopoly capitalism. We must fight for a profound renewal of our representative democratic institutions and, at the same time, for new forms of direct democracy, new positions and possibilities of leadership for the workers and all citizens. Without the struggle of the organised masses, without the democratic pressure of the country, the life of elective assemblies inevitably degenerates into parliamentarism and sops to constituencies. But it is a grave mistake not to see how the struggle of the masses and the democratic action of the country can provoke shifts and crises within the parties and political forces, within the political camps and the elective assemblies themselves.

In short, it is of decisive importance that we hold firm to our vision of the road of advance towards socialism and not forget that this road, in our situation, is not only parliamentary, but rather also parliamentary. Our road is that of a struggle leading to progressive conquests and transformations within the state and society and to the creation of a new power bloc.

It is not true, for that matter, that nothing is ever decided in Parliament. The origin of the hesitations, slowness and

loss of prestige of Parliament is to be sought primarily in the efforts of the governments to undermine its duties and functions, in the confusion and internal contradictions of the majority coalition. The problem, therefore, is political, and it is substantially the same for Parliament, the regions and the municipal governments.

We are holding our congress here in Bologna and in this city we find clear confirmation of what we have just been saying. The city government, led by the communists and the other leftwing forces, is the driving force of a new and democratic life for the whole city and a source of effective participation by the workers and citizens in leadership. But let me mention yet another example. In recent weeks here in Emilia and in other regions, the workers in the sugar industry and entire population have developed a bitter struggle to defend their jobs. And the sugar monopoly has in the end been forced to yield. Not only have the dismissals been withdrawn, but these industrialists will no longer be able to do as they please in every situation, as they had intended and as the government and the Common Market had consented. The struggle is now being extended to the basic problems of agriculture and industry, including the nationalisation of the sugar industries, which stand as a prime example of parasitic industry. But this has been obtained because our comrades in Emilia and in other zones have succeeded in combining a trade union struggle by the workers and peasants with a common initiative with the other parties on the political level in the city and provincial councils, an initiative that has also had repercussions in Parliament and in the government. This is the road. Mass struggles and united political initiatives. Clearcut goals for structural transformation and democratic planning and collaboration, even if only partial, in solving the problems of the workers and the country.

We have never favoured the theory of "the worse it is, so much the better". Even in this situation of deep conflicts and bitter social struggles, our aim is not anarchist convulsions, but struggles and movements that renew demo-

cracy from deep within, that open the way to the great popular masses to bring their full weight and rights to bear on the basic decisions concerning their work, their life and the life of the nation.

We know that the failure of the centre-left has meant that this system is incapable of giving the country a government up to the needs of the moment. The result is a vacuum, so to speak, as has been recognised on various sides. And from this there arises, as Ferruccio Parri has said, a call, an invitation to the PCI, our party, to take on all the responsibilities for the future of Italy that derive from its organisation, its capacity for struggle and politics, and its ideal perspective.

The problem that lies before us and, at the same time, before all leftwing and democratic forces in Italy, is that of overcoming the present social and political crisis, in order to permit a change in the direction of government and in the operation of our democratic institutions and put an end to the growing gap between civil society and political society that is so often denounced today. We are facing, if not exactly, a paralysis and a vacuum of democratic power, at least a grave insufficiency. But through this sort of vacuum pass the policies of the big economic powers. It is under these conditions that reactionary dangers and authoritarian temptations can emerge.

It we denounce these dangers, it does not mean that we underestimate the capacity for struggle of the democratic and antifascist forces, beginning with our party, which have already shown on many occasions that they are capable of blocking any open reactionary attack. On the contrary, it means calling them to vigilance and to the struggle. We—and with us, we feel sure, the other democratic and antifascist forces, the vast majority of the working class and Italian people—will not permit the repression of the various movements for renewal, which are, for that matter, irrepressible. And in every moment we shall always be at our post to repel and crush, with all means, any authoritarian attack, basing ourselves on the democratic consciousness of

the masses and antifascist forces, on their unity and determination to defend—with all means—the Constitution, democracy and the republic.

Besides, we must also say that these reactionary threats must not be used as alibis by leftwing forces to cover up their surrender to the christian democrats. It is obvious that every concession by the leftwing forces only worsens the situation of the country. The crisis of the christian democrat power system and the failure of the centre-left threaten to involve the republican institutions themselves, paralysing and discrediting the democratic regime. It is also true, however, that new possibilities for overcoming the present situation are opening up. Within this framework, a deep crisis is shaking the PSI and the DC. The Socialist Party is paying the price of the negative consequences of unification with the social democrats. The consolidation and development of the PSIUP—demonstrated by the recent electoral victories—have confirmed the validity of the motives that persuaded the socialist left to build a class-conscious, unity-oriented and truly autonomous socialist force. The withdrawal of other comrades at the time of unification with the social democrats also indicated the sharp rejection by an important part of the Socialist Party of the social democrat sell-out and the centre-left policy. The 19 May election expressed the harsh criticism of the electorate for a mistaken policy. The crisis of the PSI which came out so dramatically at the congress a few months ago arises from the fact that, despite everything, the socialist consciousness of a large part of the militants, and also of some groups of leaders, is not dead; it resists and refuses to accept the policy of social democratic unification. New class conscious and socialist pressure for unity are emerging within the PSI in relation to the struggles now developing in the country. And this is taking place despite the fact that with social democratic unification, the social composition and usage within the Socialist Party have undergone a serious transformation. But the crisis arises from and is led by socialist resistance and consciousness of the

need for unity. I am here referring in particular to those forces grouped around comrades Lombardi and Santi that make up the leftwing of the PSI, but also to other groups and men in the Hon. De Martino's faction and all those who refuse to abandon the idea of a class policy, together with the rest of the left.

We are convinced that the Socialist Party will not overcome its crisis and win back the place that is its due in Italian political life until the social democratic groups and factions have been defeated and isolated.

For the christian democrats, the situation is more complex and intricate. Events and developments within this party have confirmed the judgement we expressed after the 19 May election. At that time, it almost seemed that the only real loser was the Socialist Party. We immediately said that this was not so. The loser was in fact the centre-left policy, and therefore also the christian democrats, who had no alternative to offer.

The crisis of the DC is therefore also a result of 19 May, of the exhaustion of the centre-left and the pressures growing in the country. Naturally, questions of personal power and rivalry connected with the nature of the Christian Democrat Party and the way in which the political battle is waged within this party are also involved. But we hold that these are not the most important factors. We are dealing, in reality, with a crisis that strikes at some of the main pillars of christian democrat interclassism. We have only to think of the so-called peasant ideology of the DC and the problems of the family and women's rights. Or, above all, of the crisis of a party that has governed Italy for over twenty years and today must recognise that it can no longer control the situation. Finally, within the Christian Democrat Party the positions of organisations such as the Association of Catholic Workers and new, no longer marginal and silent, episodes of conscious breaking of catholic political unity are beginning to make themselves felt.

We follow all these developments in the conviction that the defeat of the conservative forces which dominate the

DC leadership, the breaking of the cage of christian democrat interclassism and the overcoming of the concept that underlies the political unity of catholics in the DC are in the interest of Italian democracy. But the crisis of the Christian Democrat Party must be seen in a much vaster framework. At our 11th Congress, we already observed that the turmoil affecting the entire catholic world was a sign that a deep christian consciousness is destined to come into conflict with the conditions of exploitation and limitations of freedom and human dignity that characterise the capitalist societies and therefore turn with interest towards socialist ideas. The dialogue, now that it has moved out of the stage of methodological disquisitions, has become a mass phenomenon, which tends to develop around the great questions of peace, social renewal and the liberation of man.

As we dispel the false problems and begin to solve others that have been badly put, the dialogue is becoming a search for common action, within a confrontation of traditions and new ideas on the future of human civilisation. It is an aspect of a much broader democratic convergence. All these combined facts have created the conditions for a new process in the direction of unity, which has already begun. Evidence of this process can be found not only in the trade union struggles and various movements that unite quite different forces, but also in the highly significant cases of reconstruction of leftwing and united democratic coalitions in certain city and provincial governments. A process of coming together, of understanding and alliance has thus gained ground among the advanced democratic and working class forces of the left that want to fight for socialism. A more homogeneous grouping has thus emerged on the left among ourselves, the PSIUP, the autonomous socialists and the figures and groups organised around Parri.

Even those leftwing forces existing within the majority parties and those not connected with any party look with interest and with hope to the progress of this development towards unity and also to our proposal to work for the creation of a great new party of struggle for socialism.

We confirmed this proposal in our theses and we intend to reconfirm it here. It answers the need not so much to offer a class alternative to social democratic unification—carried out in the manner and with the poisonous fruits and disastrous effects that we have seen—as to verify the hypothesis, establish the possibilities and compare opinions concerning the platform of a new political organisation of struggle for socialism which ends the present fragmentation and dispersal of the consistently socialist forces. This goal is in no way a contradiction or an alternative to the urgent political task of building a broader unity of democratic forces, both lay and catholic. For this task, we must develop collaboration and agreements—in the country and in Parliament—among all the forces that want to see certain problems solved. These solutions may be partial and limited, as long as they fit into a line of clearcut democratic development, of social renewal and a policy of peace and national independence. There is no contradiction—as I said—between this policy, which, for the sake of brevity, we can call a policy of *democratic unity*, and our goal of working for the creation of a new political formation of struggle for socialism. In fact—as the whole history of our country shows—it is the working class that constitutes the fundamental leading force in the struggle for democracy and socialism and for a policy of democratic and national unity. The greater the political weight of the working class, the clearer and more concrete become the prospects for socialism, and the more solid and vigorous the structure and wealth of the country's democratic life. This is, in substance, the Italian road of advance towards socialism.

All this is contrary to any exclusivistic and integralist conception. But it also requires that the progressive catholic forces rid themselves of all residual integralism, that ideological barrier which has been the principal tool of the christian democrat power monopoly. It requires the repudiation of all confusion between the religious and the temporal, and rigorous respect for the basic principle of our Constitution: "The church and state are each sovereign in

their own spheres". It requires the acceptance without reserve by everyone of what we proclaimed at our 11th Congress: that the state—even the socialist state—must be neither confessional nor ideological, but rather lay and democratic.

In the acute political crisis through which we are passing, one problem emerges above all others: the problem of relations with the PCI, of the function and responsibility of our party. The fact that so much is being said in this regard is yet another proof of the complete failure of the centre-left and its aim of isolating the communists. Our party, this great democratic, socialist, popular and national force, is today the fundamental factor in the Italian political situation.

At our 11th Congress, we dealt with the problem of relations between the majority and the opposition. And today our approach is gaining ground, to the point that within the Christian Democrat Party itself needs and ideas that seem to move in that direction are coming to light and are cause for almost scandal in conservative and moderate circles. We follow these developments with due attention. In the concrete, the abolition of the so-called "delimitation of the majority" is an objective problem of Italian democracy. If democracy is to live and Italy is to be renewed, every preclusion, every prejudicial question of ideology, must fall, not only in word, but also in fact. It would be vain and hypocritical to shed tears over the undermining and discrediting of our institutions, if we did not seek the causes and responsibilities, and above all if we did not repudiate, both in principle and in practice, the policy that had hindered and hinders the vitality of these democratic institutions.

Has there really been in these years a homogeneous and selfsufficient majority? It would be difficult to say yes. Has there been a free democratic dialectic, permitting the formation of majorities that really correspond to the needs of the country? We deny it. We have had majorities that are anything but homogeneous, kept in power through

undemocratic expedients which have violated the functions and rights of Parliament. Thus it has happened that with the exhaustion of the centre-left the majority forces, in the impossibility of agreeing to a general political line and a common perspective, have sought agreements on individual programmatic points, calendars and legislative formulas, which have then broken down in the face of reality. Particularly with the Moro governments, the practice of seeking and proposing equivocal, insufficient halfmeasures, of recourse to verbal, dialectic acrobatics, to reticence, ambiguity and procrastination, has prevailed. And this practice continues today in an aggravated form. This has meant recourse to extraparliamentary agreements, stipulated in the usual smokefilled rooms behind the back of public opinion. It is for this reason that Parliament has been hindered in its operation. The formation of real majorities around individual problems has thus been prevented, and with it the development of a new political line.

All this has arisen from the fact that the anticommunist barrier—which is contrary to the Constitution—deprives Parliament and our democratic life of a decisive wing, which is made up by our party and all the leftwing opposition. This wing is decisive not only because of its numerical size, but also, and above all, because of its quality, i.e. the forces it represents, and the social, political and ideological pressures it interprets. Since we represent the vast majority of the working class, we are a decisive part of the Italian workers and people. Outside this line of reasoning, any discussion of relations with us will inevitably be ambiguous or a means to some other end.

In our opinion, these things must be kept well in mind by the factions and men of the christian democrat leftwing and by those persons, such as the Hon. Moro, who—while not arriving at a fully critical evaluation of the events of recent years—have begun to use a certain language and arguments in our regard, the importance of which we do not underestimate. The Hon. Moro has come to recognise that only by listening to and seriously evaluating the op-

position's arguments and the aspirations and expectations that it expresses can the government hear the voice of the whole country and that only in this way can there be truly correct democratic practice. We could remind the Hon. Moro that this was precisely what we demanded at our 11th Congress. This demand has unfortunately gone unanswered in these years, and it is to this, in the last analysis, that we owe the aggravation of the evils Italian society suffers. But we have no intention here of harping on a retrospective polemic.

What interests us today instead is knowing whether the Hon. Moro's position is consistent with and suited to the urgent necessities of the situation. To us, in all sincerity, it does not seem that the answer can be affirmative. And for two major reasons. The first reason is that the Hon. Moro does not indicate what is to be, in substance, the new direction in policy. He has yet to point to any characterising political choice. He has not indicated such a choice with regard to the great social problems that underlie the acute tensions in the country. And above all, he has yet to indicate it with regard to foreign policy and atlanticism, thus jeopardising his whole line of reasoning. It is on the basis of concrete choices in foreign policy, internal policy and economic policy that we evaluate the positions of every force and every political figure, sensitive as always to every position and initiative taken in favour of a peaceful policy and a conception more suited to the dimensions and new nature of problems in the contemporary world. The second reason is that there remains in the Hon. Moro's position an element of ideological discrimination, however attenuated and vague. Now, let it be clear: we reject all ideological confusion and we demand for ourselves—and recognise for others—the right and the duty to be ourselves. But there can be no real, free, full democratic dialectic, no real democratic development, unless all residual ideological discrimination, and this means all exclusivism, all integralism, is repudiated and the autonomous, nonideological dimension of political life and the state is fully accepted.

Speaking of responsibilities, it would be all too easy for us to turn the question back on those of the christian democrats and their allies with regard to the present condition of the country. Nevertheless, we do not reject discussion of our responsibilities, which naturally also means discussion of our function. Before us lie a number of tests on which we can be judged. 1969 will be a year of great social struggles and important international deadlines. The democratic political forces are called by the facts themselves and by the unity of the working class and popular struggles to find positive solutions for the most pressing economic and social problems and to work, at the same time, to guarantee the peace and security of the Italian people and the independence of the nation. On these questions clear stands and precise choices will be necessary. 1969 will also be an election year. The regional elections are due to take place, and we will fight to see that they are held. We shall also have city and provincial elections in all parts of Italy. We look to these elections not only as an important opportunity to reconfirm the forward march of the forces of the united left, but also as an occasion for greater unity and collaboration with new forces, to break down the old barriers and outworn schemes, to go beyond the centre-left towards a new democratic majority. We feel that it is possible and necessary to experiment new majorities in the future regional, provincial and city assemblies, regardless of the position in the government or on the opposition of the various leftwing, democratic forces.

“This is a moment”—Ferruccio Parri has written—“when the responsibilities of the Communist Party have multiplied.” We feel this just as strongly. There is a growing awareness that without our contribution, the problems of the nation, of Italian democracy cannot be solved. The pressing needs for social renewal, for courageous action, for realisations and concrete reforms coincide with the equally pressing need to restore Parliament and all our democratic institutions to full and correct operation. This is urgent if we are to grasp the strong, justly impatient and at times

exasperated and confused pressure growing in the country and make it the impetus for a new democratic development on the road to socialism. We are aware of our function along this road and we want to exercise it. We are aware of our responsibilities and we want to fulfil them, in the interest of the working masses and in the interest of Italy.

* * *

I shall devote the last part of my report to certain questions concerning the life of our party, which is the major force in the struggle for the democratic and socialist renewal of Italy. I shall begin with this figure: this national congress has been prepared by 109 federation congresses and by about ten thousand section congresses. In these assemblies and in the commissions, more than a hundred thousand comrades have had a chance to speak.

Forty per cent of the members of the federal committees elected in these recent congresses are comrades who are now for the first time entering provincial leadership bodies, for the most part, young people and workers.

This is the result of a massive, organised democratic activity, which has been developed in every city, in every province and in every region of Italy. Our democratic activity is such that no other party or organisation can stand comparison.

Participation in debates and decisions has been higher by far than in the past, more committed and impassioned. Routine and bureaucratism have been almost completely absent in our congresses this time. If anything, in some cases, there has been an excess of vivacity, in the sense of a disorderly and confused development of the debate, which has irritated some groups of comrades. This is unfortunate. But vivacity is certainly better than boredom.

Various elements have contributed to this development. First of all, the participation of youth: young workers, peasants and students. This total participation of youth has raised and raises new problems of great importance for the

party. It is a fact that these young people—at times hypercritical and even diffident, at times full of enthusiasm and trust, but always demanding—are turning in mass towards our party in particular, in which they see the necessary point of reference and the most valid interlocutor. This represents, after Resistance, the first real wave of youthful involvement, although the first signs became visible around 1960. We welcome this new fact and we are aware that we must not disappoint these young people. This awareness is also reflected in the fact that the congresses have deeply renewed the leadership groups both in the sections and the federations.

A mass of young people who have matured in the working class, peasant and student struggles of these past years has come to hold leadership responsibility in the party. This is a fact of great, positive importance. We have thus laid the groundwork for establishing a tie and a broader unity with the masses of Italian youth. Obviously, this must also lead to a new, stronger tie among the various generations and experiences present within the party itself.

But this commitment and the fact that a large number of comrades from the FGCI (Youth Federation) have moved into party work do not mean that the final outcome of the process of renewal of the party and the FGCI is not still an open question. Our young people are engaged in experimentation and we share the goal that inspires them: the search for a new tie with the young masses and new forms of organisation and political action that go beyond the traditional concept of a youth federation modelled on the example of party, its organisational and leadership formulas and its internal life.

But it is evident that the problem is not just a matter of a different organisational structure. The real problem is to understand the new terms of the condition of youth, of the forms and objectives that the revolutionary political commitment of young people can assume today in a society such as the Italian; the problem is that of the outlet, the nature

and the ends of a political youth organisation that can serve as a point of reference, of unification for progressive and revolutionary youth and therefore become a mass organisation.

These are not simple questions: we have seen this not only in the debates within the FGCI, but also in the congresses of our federations. The participation and contribution of the young people in the FGCI is positive, and it will become increasingly so, if and to the degree that these young comrades succeed in avoiding the tendency to think they can overcome the "small party" idea and practice by becoming a group or faction of the "big party". The interlocutor, the primary reference point, must be, for the party and for the FGCI, the masses of youth and their real movements. The problem—to which our congress must also make a contribution—is the choice of organisational forms in which this commitment must be translated.

The participation of old militants in the congresses has also been greater and more committed. They realise that we are passing through a delicate moment, in which everything is again being opened to discussion. For this reason, they feel that they have something to say and the duty to say it, as the bearers of a patrimony of struggles, experiences, ideas and culture which must be confronted with the new things that are emerging. If the debate in our congresses has been broad and lively, this is because our party and our leading bodies have not closed themselves up in the face of new events, but have rather taken a position open to the new and to experimentation, even if selfcritical, without claiming to be the fountainhead of truth, but with the faith that comes from our history and our strength.

This open attitude and this willingness to experiment must increasingly characterise all our activity, for this is the way to move ahead. This is the method we have followed with success in these past years, for example, in the preparation of the Florence agrarian conference and the workers' conferences in Genoa and Turin, which have en-

abled the party to critically verify and, in part, already overcome the limitations encountered in the creation of a great organised political force within the factory and among the younger working class generation. We have made important progress in the preparation of the congress and in the promotion of young working class cadres, and we must continue all the more rapidly along this road at all levels, because it is here that our real strength lies, because the party will continue to advance to the degree that it succeeds in fully expressing the determination of the working class to count more, to have more power, in the factory and in society.

In the face of the great conflicts taking place in the world and in Italy, it is not surprising that in many congresses there was an increase in debate on ideology at the expense of political discussion, and on strategy at the expense of immediate tasks and work. In this there is undoubtedly the expression of an objective need, an indication that what interests comrades today is the historical prospect, socialism and the large problems of humanity and its destiny. There is also an indication of a reawakening of interest in theory and in marxism. Nor is it surprising that this reawakening is often expressed in tendencies that are somewhat unilateral and idealistic.

We must not, however, stop at recognising this fact, but work to push this interest ahead towards a deeper understanding of the real revolutionary prospect, of our line and of marxism itself. This understanding must be developed to the point where it grasps the decisive value of the tie between theory and practice, between daily needs, immediate demands and present movements and the crises at work within the political forces and groupings. These are not marginal points, but points that touch the very substance of our party.

Because our party is not a party of pure propaganda, but a party of struggle, "a party that makes politics". Our party is not a party of cadres alone, but a "mass party". Ours is a party that is not interested only in indicating prospects, but

in dealing with problems and solving them in the interest of the workers and the country. Ours is a party of struggle and opposition, which has, however, national, government-type leadership functions and responsibilities.

We are—and we want to be—an increasingly united democratic party. But we have nothing in common with the concept and practice of so-called monolithism. An essential part of our method—of our way of conceiving democratic centralism—is that reservations and misunderstandings with regard to the political decisions of the central committee are not considered reasons for division. We constantly seek unity through debate and the contribution of all militants. Real unity is only the unity of a living organism, deeply rooted in the reality that surrounds it.

There is absolutely no contradiction between full freedom of debate and decision, even by majority rule, on the one hand, and unity and discipline in action, which is essential for a fighting, mass revolutionary party such as ours, on the other. If these two aspects are separated and opposed, both one and the other rapidly degenerate.

We have no intention of reducing our party to the level of those parties where democracy has degenerated into power struggles between factions. Facts show that when the struggle between factions breaks out, it no longer matters what you think, what you do and what you are worth; all that matters is whether you are with me or against me. When a party degenerates to this point, democracy disappears and the tendency to fragmentation prevails.

Under these conditions, a party—and particularly a proletarian party—cannot carry out its proper function. A party exists and has reason for existence to the degree that it has an idea to realise and a policy to carry out. A party must therefore be efficient, functional with respect to its purposes and homogeneous with its principles and ideals. Obviously, we are not talking here of technical or bureaucratic or merely organisational efficiency, but of political

efficiency. This requires, first of all, a precise perspective, the choice of a realistic and consistent line and firmness in political and ideological battle; it requires rigorous practices, the kind of practices that can be expected in people who are animated by the universal goals of justice, progress, freedom, equality and peace. Democracy demands the method of majority and minority and the acceptance by the minority of the majority decisions.

But is this enough? I do not believe so. Real democracy requires that we seek what is valid in every different, and even conflicting, point of view. This is the sense of our centralism, which is infinitely more democratic than those systems that lead to a division between winners and losers, giving the former exclusive rights in decisionmaking and leadership. In a situation such as the present, it is inevitable and it is useful that different points of view are expressed within the party. In any case, it is a fact that they exist.

Joining the party, entering the party, particularly for young people, cannot possibly mean immediate acquisition and acceptance of the party's line in its entirety. It must mean, instead, a process of continual acquisition and collective elaboration, together with a process of participation in the struggle and in the formation of our political line and leadership activity. But for such a process of free dialectics and unification to take place, a method and a practice that prevent the crystallisation of dissent, a method and a practice that reject the spirit of faction and group, are necessary.

Stubbornly maintained prejudicial dissent, preconceptions and presumption that ignore the reality of the party, its history and its real ideological and political positions, do not favour democracy; on the contrary, they destroy democratic dialectics and undermine unity. And in this regard, we must say that—within the overall framework of a healthy party such as ours that has seen its democratic life and its unity grow in recent years—there have still been, even in our pre-congress activity, certain negative manifestations of

the sort I have just deplored, which must be combated and overcome. Tolerance, which is necessary in our method, must never mean neutrality or laxness. We need greater rigour in seeing things as they are and in saying so; we need truth.

This means that we must conserve and defend everything that is valid and change everything that must be changed, either because it is mistaken or because it is outdated. Nothing can be renewed if we throw out the party's patrimony. Continuity and renewal are inseparable in a robust, living organism. The decisive thing, for internal party democracy as well, is a correct political line; it is holding firm to the democratic struggle for socialism. At the same time, of essential importance is a correct conception of marxism, not as an ossified doctrine, not as a body of principles set down once and for all, but as a political consciousness of historical processes and real movements, as a doctrine and method of critical and historical investigation.

This doctrine and this method are proper to the working class, as a revolutionary class which has everything to lose from prejudice and dogma and everything to gain from an objective, openminded examination of reality. Unity and discipline must therefore be a daily, free and responsible conquest, resulting from a free, dialectical exchange among honest and faithful militants.

A unity enforced from above in the name of a dogmatised doctrine is foreign to us, to the conception, history and practice of our party, the party of Gramsci and Togliatti. A unity based on authoritarianism and dogmatism is a false, weak, shortlived unity.

The element of confrontation and dialectics between positions and the element of unity and discipline must therefore always be united. And this is what we understand by democratic centralism and what we reconfirm as the foundation of our party life.

I know that at this point the usual objections will be raised that such a formula in itself does not guarantee any-

thing. This is true. In his *Prison Notes*, Gramsci wrote: "Democratic centralism offers an *elastic formula* that lends itself to many incarnations; it lives in so far as it is interpreted and continually adapted to necessities; it lies in the critical search for *that which is the same in apparent diversity* and instead *distinct and even opposed in apparent uniformity*, to organise and tightly connect that which is similar..." It is a fact we have moved ahead along the road of an increasingly democratic method, practice and mentality in the life of our party. And we have seen that this has not cost us anything in unity, discipline and capacity for struggle, as is shown even in the results of our recent congresses. Quite the opposite. Defects, however, still exist, and some of them very serious.

But we are here to discuss them, to study forms of organisation and institutions to ensure an increasingly correct application of democratic centralism. We want to guarantee further development of party democracy: we want to update and renew the party's organisation, its rules of internal life, its working and leadership methods; we want to make the participation of all militants in the elaboration of the policy and decisions of the party ever broader and more effective.

We also want to grow. There are already many of us, but there must be more—more members in the PCI and in the FGCI—because this is the condition for carrying out today's tasks, for being present and able to fight in all fields of national life.

Those areas where communist organisations are the strongest numerically are also the areas where the party's ties with reality, with the new developments of the situation, with the needs and new forces expressed by society are the strongest. In these areas, there is a greater democratic tension and will to struggle in the masses and a richer democratic life within the party. This is the situation in those regions, cities and towns where—as here in Emilia—party membership often represents half of our electorate, which reaches very high percentages, and where we hold

absolute or relative majorities. These are the most advanced, cultured, democratic regions of Italy. They are the surest bulwark of antifascism and Italian democracy and the vanguard in the struggle for the democratic and socialist renewal of Italy.

We must also grow to develop our party democracy. We have almost nine million voters. Let us work to see that an ever larger number of these men, women and young people join the party, bringing the contribution of their intelligence and passion to our mass, democratic struggle and participating in the elaboration of party decisions.

Before concluding, I should like to devote a few more words to a general question. It is quite commonly said that the revolutionary party must foreshadow the new society, the new socialist state. I believe this to be true only in part. In Gramsci himself, this foreshadowing is understood in the sense that "the revolutionary party is the instrument and historical form of the process of inner liberation, through which the worker develops from *executor* into *initiator*, from *mass* into *head* and *guide*, from *arm* into *brain* and *will*". Thus in the formation of the communist party we find only "the seed of freedom that will have its development and full expansion after the working class state has organised the necessary material conditions".

Furthermore, the conditions in which Gramsci meditated on the function and nature of the revolutionary party were completely different from those in which Togliatti conceived the "new type communist party" within the framework of a struggle and advance towards socialism along a democratic, national road, concept which we clarified in the Programmatic Declaration of the 8th Congress and have continued to confirm and develop in recent years.

In Togliatti's conception of the "new party", the party is essentially a "political formation, an instrument in the struggle to transform society". The party is an instrument for the assertion of the working class, within a broad grouping of class and political alliances, within a new his-

torical bloc. According to our conception and according to the real process taking place, various parties and political forces will take part in the revolutionary process, in the access to and management of power, in the building of socialist party. The party is thus a part, a fighting force. It cannot foreshadow the entire society: it cannot set itself up—even potentially—as the socialist state. To do so would mean falling into an integralist vision. The guarantees of the democratic nature of the state and socialist society and the guarantees of party democracy, both for today and for the future, are given, first of all, by the way in which the struggle for socialism is conducted today. It is the real process of development towards socialism that determines the conditions and forms of socialist society and the socialist state, that creates new relationships among the parties and forces taking part in this process, new groupings and thus new forms of political and civil organisation. In all this lies the most effective and valid guarantee of the democratic and pluralistic nature of the socialist society we want to create in Italy, a socialist power based on popular consensus. And this depends primarily on us, on our political line, on our perspective. But it does not depend solely on us. It also depends on the presence, orientations and actions of all the other forces that participate or want to participate in the democratic and socialist transformation of the country, and, to a certain extent, it depends on our adversaries.

These are the questions that our 12th Congress is called upon to debate and on which it will have to democratically declare itself.

During the three years that have passed since our 11th Congress, the party has continued to grow. The struggles of the workers of every strata and sector have grown, as have the anxieties and struggles of the younger generation. All this has further increased—we are well aware of the fact—the responsibilities of our party. All the democratic forces are looking to us, to our congress, with interest, expectation, hope and faith.

An expression of this expectation can be found in the presence here in this hall of guests from every democratic tendency and of a large number of Italian and foreign journalists. I extend our welcome to all of them. In particular, I extend our thanks to those political figures, some in the government, who, in statements to the press, have expressed, from their various points of view, the deep interest of all the Italian democratic forces in our congress.

But this is also the congress of an internationalist force and an element in the life of the international communist and working class movement. Proof of this lies in the presence here of so many delegations from communist and working class parties, from liberation movements and progressive forces from over forty countries. To everyone, we extend the warmest greetings and thanks of our congress.

We must and want to live up to these expectations, and particularly the expectations of millions and millions of workers and young people, who are fighting and want to fight to open the road for a better and more just future in Italy.

We are told that, to this end, we must give answers that are not general, but concrete, more realistic, more immediately applicable, more suited, both to the needs expressed from below and the political and social reality we must reform; that we must therefore express a well thought out political commitment. We are told on many sides that we cannot expect our allies, both present and potential, to adopt our ideological framework. We are asked to overcome the limitations of "frontism"; we are warned not to place our cards on illusory party pride and pursue a majority with bits and pieces of other democratic forces. We are asked if we are still willing to move according to the vision that permitted the creation of the democratic state after the Resistance, if we are still convinced that the problems of Italian society can be successfully faced within a common framework with the other democratic forces, without ideological exclusivism.

I have attempted to answer these questions and observations and I feel sure that the congress will clarify and com-

plete this reply. We are fully aware of the strength of our party and the responsibility it bears. We are also aware that, to a large extent, our strength is due to the fact that we have always based our action on the need for the widest possible democratic unity and that we have moved forward in these years precisely because we have offered not an abstract alternative, but the concrete prospect of building a new majority of all the leftwing forces, socialist, lay and catholic; and because we have made the necessity of collaboration among the catholic, socialist and communist movements an essential element in our policy, not only for the solution of today's problems but also for the solution of longrange problems.

To those who have said, like Comrade De Martino, that they expect from our congress "the definition of a clear political line that opens up concrete and realistic prospects for the left in Italy and produces at a full renewal suited to the characteristics of our times and the configuration of a socialist society with human features", we reply that this is our commitment, our goal and that our efforts will be in this direction. But this commitment and these efforts cannot be of the communists alone.

This commitment and these efforts must increasingly involve all the leftwing forces, socialist, lay and catholic, because the task of overcoming the crisis now harrying the country and of starting Italy along the road of democratic and socialist renewal is not a task for one party alone—even if this party is as strong as ours—but the common task of all the leftwing, democratic and progressive forces, of all the live forces of society.

We do not presume to be sufficient—either for today or for tomorrow—to all the needs and aspirations of Italian society. Such a presumption is completely foreign to the history of a party that was born with Gramsci, grew with Togliatti and has become robust and great precisely because it has always made every effort—during fascism, during the Resistance and during these past twenty years—to continually measure itself against the reality in move-

ment, to be rooted in the popular mind, to be open and sensitive to everything positive and valid expressed by society in the course of its development.

To our catholic friends, who raise the question, we can reply with serenity that it is not in our party that they must hunt for integralism. Nor, on the other hand, do we think that our efforts at elaboration have by now reached the peak of truth and that our task from now on lies solely in repeating what we have already discovered. And this is true not only with regard to the immediate political struggle, but also for our general outlook, for our ideal and cultural battle and for the way in which we conceive marxism itself.

Following the teachings of Gramsci and Togliatti, our party has always attempted to make its own contribution of thought and struggle to the democratic renewal of Italian culture, according to a conception in which the assertion and continual enrichment of marxism are never separated from a dialectical and critical confrontation with all the ideological and cultural currents, and in which, therefore, marxism asserts itself concretely as the axis of the struggle and of a broader, more diversified movement of social, civil, cultural and moral renewal. For this reason, we have given and give so much importance to the cultural battle and to the function of intellectuals in the life and struggle of our party. This function is today further increased by the new role acquired by science and technology in society. I feel that the party must make every effort to adapt itself to these new needs and this increased function.

We know that the task for which we are struggling, advance towards socialism in democracy and peace, in an industrially advanced society with a wealth of democratic and civil structures, is a historically new task that requires imagination, political intelligence, critical consciousness, a sense of history and an ever firmer anchorage to all aspects of national life. But we also want to move forward through a common effort with all the other leftwing forces—not only Italian, but also European—open to all confrontations

and to collaboration with all the democratic forces that want to contribute with their action and their research to find a positive outlet from the present state of decay and paralysis.

All this is necessary, but it is still not enough. The decisive thing is the struggle of the great popular and young masses, of all the men and women who do not identify with this society and who are ready to fight for a new society. Let us look to the future and, at the same time, let us look to the present, because Italy is sick; Italian society has remained behind, often terribly behind, with respect to the ferments that shake it, the imbalances that agitate it and the anxiety and desire for renewal that animate the great popular masses and its young people..

Our congress must live up to these expectations and hopes. This is the task that lies before us in the coming days and that we must carry out with all our political passion and with all our sense of responsibility, for the future of our country, for the cause of peace, democracy and socialism.

REPORT OF THE POLITICAL COMMISSION APPROVED BY THE 12TH CONGRESS

The 12th National Congress of the PCI approves the theses presented by the outgoing central committee and submitted to pre-congress debate, Comrade Luigi Longo's report and the conclusions of the discussions.

In particular, the congress underlines its full approval of the theses and Comrade Longo's report on three essential questions: our interpretation of peaceful coexistence; our conception of the democratic road of advance towards socialism; our line for a new proletarian internationalism, from which we derive the autonomous collocation of the PCI within the international working class, communist and revolutionary movement and our action for a new unity of the international working class and communist movement, founded on the equality of parties and reciprocal respect for sovereignty and independence...

The congress authorises the new leading bodies to integrate the draft theses on the basis of Comrade Longo's report and the following considerations which have emerged from the contributions of the provincial congresses and the national congress.

On the Italian Political Situation

1. The development of the social struggles in recent months confirms and further underlines the indications drawn from the growth of the movement in recent years and the exceptional value of the struggles that have characterised 1968. The mass movement has greatly expanded and has found expression, and at the same time new impetus in the victory obtained by the leftwing in the 19 May election. Although zones and sectors of lesser tension per-

sist, the movement has drawn in new social groups, previously less active in the struggle.

At the centre of these movements, we find the working class which bears the brunt of the decisive and bitterest part of the social conflict in progress. At the same time, the university and secondary school masses, large peasant forces, wide strata of white collar workers, technicians and the urban lower middle class, and important groups of intellectuals and research workers are also in motion. The commitment to the struggle of the younger generation has been decisive. Wide strata of women workers and students have also shown great militancy.

An extension of the unification process at the trade union level, and in some cases also at the political level, is under way. There is evidence of a higher level of maturity in trade union as well as political consciousness. There is, in general, a radicalisation of the social conflict, both with regard to the new, higher level goals that many struggles now set and to the breadth of the forces involved. The movement has also developed in new and original forms, and it must find increasingly wide support in public opinion and the broad popular masses.

These movements are rooted in the new contradictions and old, unsolved problems of Italian society which grow out of the structure of this society itself and the policies followed by its governments and, most recently, by the centre-left governments. Nevertheless, these movements would not have been and would not be possible without a party such as ours, with a clear policy for unity and struggle and that offers concrete and positive solutions, without the presence of great autonomous, class, unity oriented mass organisations. It is this presence that has made it possible to give a future and a framework to the various pressures that have emerged from civil society and to the new and original experiences that have developed in the heat of the struggle.

2. Taken together, these movements and struggles express the desire for a radical economic and political change

of course. Goals of reform and goals that involve a change in power relations are increasingly emerging in a series of demands.

In certain aspects and sectors of the movement, the very foundations of capitalism are being contested. In general, the movements express the need of the broad masses to count more through an extension and renewal of democracy and through forms of direct democracy. They express condemnation for the persistence of strident injustices, old and new.

This general meaning of the present struggles does not emerge in every movement in explicit form and it does not emerge in all the movements at the same level. These struggles arise from concrete unsatisfied needs, from problems that demand immediate solution. This has been and is the case for the question of wage zones, for integrative bargaining at the firm level, for defence of the workers' health, for pensions and reform of the pension system, for a fair return on peasant labour, for the solution of the crisis situation in entire agricultural sectors, of unemployment among the educated and the downgrading of professional capacities, etc. This variety and differentiation of the movements is one of the reasons for their strength and expansion and must not be underestimated. We must obtain concrete results on the goals around which each movement arises. The winning of partial goals leads to new mobilisations and new struggles.

Overcoming defects and weaknesses, we must build struggle movements around the problems of freedom, renewal and progress that are deeply felt by the broad masses, problems around which there exists a strong charge of protest and fighting spirit, as yet unexpressed (as, for example, the question of women's rights, the problem of a general reform of the administration of justice and the connected reform of our civil, penal and police codes).

In the face of the vastness and multiplicity of the movements in progress, the capacity of our party, together with all the leftwing forces involved in the struggle, to direct

the action of the masses towards general political outlets has been decisive.

3. The new centre-left government's economic and political answer to the present crisis is substantially conservative. The essential question of a new type of economic development is ignored as is the problem of the extension and renewal of democracy.

Faced with the pressure arising from the masses and the contradictions this pressure creates within the majority social and political bloc, the government reacts with marginal measures and sketchy attempts at sectoral intervention. The energetic pressure of the masses forces the government to make certain concessions, but the basic line, which is the negation of a policy of structural reforms, remains the same, and old policies, which have already failed at the expense of the masses in the past, are being dragged out again.

Even when these pressures arise directly from the state apparatus itself, the method of repression often prevails.

The line of the new government must be firmly opposed. This line, by leaving unsolved problems that have become acute and dramatic, by allowing and aggravating the erosion of our democratic institutions, aids the development of the seeds of open reaction. We must thus allow the centre-left no respite; we must liquidate it and advance a new united bloc of all the popular leftwing forces.

4. In recent times, the situation in the Mediterranean has further deteriorated as a result of the renewed violence of the Middle East crisis and the increase of the military potential of NATO in the area. The danger of the policy of Atlantic subordination, reconfirmed by the centre-left government, is thus greater than ever. This policy has led to a further military integration of Italy as a base at the disposal of the United States and NATO, in contrast, among other things, to our signature on the Nonproliferation Treaty. In this situation, the congress underlines the need already firmly stated in the theses for a vast mobilisation and struggle in the country and in Parliament for the with-

drawal of Italy from NATO, for a foreign policy of active neutrality and peace, for the dissolution of the military blocs, for European security, on the basis above all of the recognition of the borders presently threatened by German revanchism, and to turn the Mediterranean into a sea of peace—through the collaboration of all the interested peoples.

Within this framework, the congress expresses its solidarity with the Arab peoples and underlines the urgent necessity to find a solution to the Middle East crisis, eliminating all the political consequences of Israeli aggression on the basis of the total application of the UN resolution of 22 November 1967. The congress underlines the need to work for the complete recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian-Arab people, who are the valid representatives of their own cause and to whom the Italian communists express their full solidarity.

Strategy of Reforms and Immediate Goals

Experience has confirmed the full validity of our strategy of reforms and alliances as a line of advance towards socialism in the phase of state monopoly capitalism. Substantial progress has been made in the penetration of this line into the consciousness of millions of workers and citizens and also in the winning of initial partial goals. This has been the case for the questions of school reform, for the reform of the pension and welfare system and agrarian reform, to name a few. The struggle against the monopolies in the sugar industry has aroused awareness of the need for a democratically organised nationalisation in this sector.

These and other examples clarify our conception of the strategy of reforms. It contains the elements of a clear programmatic proposal, which tends to unfold through a complex and varied plan of struggles on various levels: struggles for immediate, specific demands, direct struggles for reform, and initiatives for unity at all levels. These struggles must be aimed at winning real changes in the eco-

conomic and social structures and in the power balance, at breaching the conservative structures of the state; they must be aimed at shifting broad social forces politically, at breaking the alliances on which the rural bloc rests and at building a new bloc of social and political forces.

In the struggle for reforms, it is essential that we establish a direct relationship with the problems of the broad working masses, that we propose positive goals around which social forces can be mobilised, that real results be obtained, from which we can move on to new and greater gains. This line must be supported and given substance through specific demands, even if only partial, through a continual updating of our goals and forms of struggle, in relation to the concrete situation as it unfolds, to the evolution of the economic and political situation and to the partial gains already obtained. These goals fit into the framework of our vision of a plan of democratic development of the Italian economy and society capable of constituting a valid alternative to the policy of the monopolies.

The struggle for popular participation, for multiple forms of direct democracy that strengthen the ties between the representative democratic institutions and the popular masses, is an essential part of this policy of reforms. Hence the urgency of struggle for the right of assembly in the factory and other forms of grass roots democracy, such as community and district agricultural conferences, peasant associations, the right of assembly in the schools, neighbourhood councils, new forms of management of the social services by the citizens themselves, and so on.

These forms of grass roots democracy, which answer the masses' pressing demand for participation, also fit into our conception of the expansion of democracy, because their development gives new, more advanced characteristics to other necessary elements in our democratic life and in the popular and social struggle (the trade unions, the parties, our elective assemblies). In this way, the struggle for a full development of our constitutional democratic regime, understood in its essential elements and in its possible and

necessary evolution, must become more vigorous and persuasive. This policy for renewal draws its validity from the wide bloc of class and political forces which can be mobilised for a deep transformation of the state and to fight and eliminate the tendencies towards involution produced in our democratic institutions by the development of monopoly capitalism and by the policy of the government parties against the autonomy of Parliament, the regions and the other elective assemblies.

Hence the necessity to wage a struggle to win new instruments of direct democracy, and at the same time to strengthen all our other democratic institutions, to renew our elective assemblies, to carry out a general, deep reform of the state against all the authoritarian and bureaucratic tendencies due to the ruling classes, and for a political decentralisation based on regional and local autonomies.

Within this line of struggle, the draft theses indicate the immediate goals to be achieved and the essential points around which changes in economic policy and structures must be reached to deal with the problems of employment, the necessity of raising the living standard of the masses and the historical ills of the country. Among these, we must underline the tragedy of emigration that humiliates millions of workers, depopulates entire regions and impoverishes the country. On this point, a more determined struggle is necessary.

Within the framework of our action for a new type of economic development, an urgent question is represented by the need for a new collocation and a new role for state industry and the whole public sector of the economy. We must arrive at a democratic reform on public enterprises that will make them a central instrument in the battle for this new type of development.

In particular, the struggle for reform and change of direction in the public sector must be aimed at making this the pilot sector in a new industrial development, in the industrialisation of the south, in the transformation and

social reform of agriculture. Today, a vast extension of public investment, particularly in certain vanguard sectors of key importance for new economic development, scientific research and technology, is indispensable. Certain measures of nationalisation and control over large private groups have become not only necessary, but urgent, as is the case for the nationalisation of the sugar industry.

The struggle for these goals must be waged jointly with the struggle to eliminate the bureaucratic power centres now existing in the public sector, in order to place all the activity of this sector under the control of the workers, of Parliament and the regions. This battle must be developed in all our elective assemblies and in the country; it can and must become a goal common to all the struggles waged within firms with state holdings.

Greater precision must be given to those goals (for example, reform of the credit and fiscal system, reform of the distribution network) which emphasise the common struggle of the working class, peasants and urban lower middle classes and can consolidate their alliance against the monopolies (including the development of cooperatives).

On the Southern Question

The struggle in the south has also entered a new phase, and the southern question is increasingly becoming an element in the struggle for the democratic and socialist transformation of the country. The policy of incentives and substandard wages, pillars of the selfdefeating line followed by the centre-left, as by former governments, is under mass attack. This policy has objectively aggravated all the ills that plague the south and, with it, the country: unemployment, mass emigration, backwardness, imbalances. Social conflict in the south has thus spread and grown more bitter in the factories, in the cities and in the rural areas.

The south finds itself increasingly in conflict with the present type of national development; on the other hand, the monopoly oriented power system that has replaced the

old agrarian bloc is beginning to fall apart. For these reasons as well, the possibilities for social and political alliances around a policy of reform are widening.

The struggle against wage zones, in so far as it strikes at one of the concrete ways in which the subordination of the south to the needs of the monopoly concentrations takes place, has marked the emergence of a new consciousness of its own function among the southern working class, at the head of a united southern and national movement. Here we have proof that the government has not been able to achieve its goal of breaking the unity of the southern people and separating them from the great national movements for renewal, for the greatest impulse towards the unification of the movement has come precisely from those areas where the development of the productive forces is the greatest.

The working class struggle has been paralleled by the growth of movements for agrarian reform and transformation, for the abolition of all forms of tenant farming, for the defence of peasant produce. These movements approach the questions of southern agriculture in a new way, within the struggle to give land to those who work it, against agrarian rent, against the subordination of the peasant enterprise to the policies of the monopolies and the EEC, against the chaos reigning in the interior zones.

The southern question (and within this framework, the rebirth of Sicily and Sardinia through local autonomy) must become more than ever an essential national question, and investment choices in industry and agriculture must be decided accordingly.

On Cultural Struggle and Student Movement

The problems of cultural struggle are today of great importance. In today's society these problems take on new aspects, as a result of the transformations that have taken place in the social fabric and that attribute directly productive functions to science, the increasingly close rela-

tionship that tends to be established between culture and politics and the manipulation to which cultural activity is subjected by industry and the market forces.

Awareness of these processes has been speeded by the great political events of the past year and by the struggle of the student masses and new cultural forces. The conflict between those who struggle for the freedom and renewal of culture and those who work for its subordination to power and its integration into the system unfolds today on a more advanced level.

The different class collocation of a growing segment of intellectuals also raises the problem of a unity with the working class and the other progressive classes, of a unification of positions and specific proposals which will permit the waging of a struggle closely tied to the emancipation process of the workers in all existing cultural institutions, beginning with the schools. We must create new centres of antagonism, so as to promote actions, research and positive experiences within the specific sphere of culture, art and science, singling out the mechanisms through which science and technology are used as instruments of power and indicating concrete ways in which science and technology can instead be placed at the service of man.

On this basis, the struggle for freedom in research, artistic creation and scientific experimentation takes on a new content. At the same time, all mechanical reduction of ideal and cultural commitment to immediate political needs must be eliminated.

It is thus evident that struggles for educational reform, for the right to education and the use of science to man's benefit are not sectoral struggles. The party and the working class movement as a whole, overcoming all delays, must directly shoulder their responsibilities in these fields as well (the schools, science, communications, etc.) and make every effort to promote precise goals capable of creating a permanent mobilisation of the masses and a generalised growth of democratic and socialist consciousness among intellectuals.

The party must give more careful attention to the whole range of problems raised by the student struggles. These struggles express more than simple pressure for school reform; they contain a strong charge of antagonism that aims at the transformation of society in the socialist direction.

On Women's Rights

In the present phase of capitalist development in Italy, the question of women's rights stands out as a problem that can only be solved through the radical transformation of the structures of society.

The fighting spirit shown by broad masses of women and the platform advanced by the mass organisations for women's rights demonstrate the maturity of the political consciousness of women in Italy. When women reject a condition of subordination, of exploitation, of exclusion from the productive process, when, that is, they refuse to continue to act as unconscious props in the oppressive equilibrium of the capitalist system, they become a decisive force in the struggle for the transformation of society.

Overcoming the difficulties presented by the lower level of social aggregation among women and the multiplicity of their points of conflict with the system, we must more vigorously develop a vast, autonomous and diversified movement for women's rights, a movement that strikes at the central problems of full employment for women, of the development of services, of the reform of family law (including the institution of divorce), of the class and discriminatory nature of the schools, and that stimulates the development of forms of popular participation in the schools, in the welfare organisations and in the management of all social services.

The Party and Mass Movements

The experience of recent years, with the growth of the trade union and other movements, has demonstrated the validity of the policy of autonomy, unity, democracy and

the organisation of autonomous movements of the worker and other social groups and strata, in opposition of the theory of spontaneity. The need arises from within the mass movements and organisations to consolidate, extend, and renew all the forms of organisation of the working class, peasants, commercial lower middle class and artisans, etc., guaranteeing above all a greater democratic vitality. This need is particularly acute and urgent in the south. The growth of rank and file participation of workers in the leadership of the struggles must be seen as an essential condition not only for the development and success of the movements, but also to ensure the continual correspondence of the goals and forms of struggle to the real needs of the masses.

Together with a development of organisation, we must continually promote forms of struggle that avoid any separation between the vanguard and the masses and instead arouse broad popular solidarity and the formation of the widest possible social and political alliances—as has occurred in the case of the southern working class in its fight against wage zones, in the case of certain great strikes against important monopoly industries (Fiat, Montedison, Pirelli, Marzotto) and around certain mass struggles of students.

For the party, the development of the autonomy of the movements implies increasing need to become a force capable of intervening in every aspect of social and political life, of favouring the development of unity and struggle at all levels, of proposing partial and over all positive solutions to the problems interesting the masses. Not only individual communists, but the party as such must measure itself against the complex of problems arising from within the mass movements and from the conditions of capitalist exploitation existing within the factory and society.

As has been the case for pension reform, for democracy in the factory and schools, for the health protection of workers and in other areas, this direct commitment of the party not only does not hinder, but aids the autonomous

and united movement of the masses and, at the same time, permits a growth of political consciousness among them.

*Building of a Political Unity on the Left and
a Democratic Alternative to the Centre-Left*

Together with the growth of the mass movements and their unity, political unity on the left has also increased and must increase still further. Important results have been achieved in collaboration among the forces of the leftwing opposition (PCI, PSIUP, leftwing independents, autonomous socialists), each conserving its own autonomy. Under pressure from the mass movements, from the 19 May election results and the failure of the centre-left, new tendencies towards unity are emerging. The trend towards reconstruction of leftwing, city and provincial councils has a clear political value. Converging positions are beginning to emerge on problems of great importance.

Important changes are taking place within the political forces. The crisis of the Italian Socialist Party and the Christian Democrat Party is deepening. This crisis is due to the deep fissures emerging within the system of social alliances on which the political monopoly of the christian democrats rests and to a loss of ideological hegemony on the part of the ruling forces.

The crisis of the PSI and the DC must be grasped in its present developments. With the PSI, the fragility of both the analyses and the strategic hypotheses underlying social democratic unification (the end of imperialism, neutrality of the state, chances for haphazard reformism) and the basic error of the political policy of division on the left are becoming increasingly evident. Important segments of the PSI now recognise this crisis condition and raise the problem of a new road of advance towards socialism.

In the christian democrat camp, growing contradictions are emerging between the policy of the DC leadership and the popular forces which have hitherto been held prisoners by the political unity of catholics and interclassism. Significant expressions of these contradictions can be found in

the demand for increasing autonomy from the DC voiced by important sectors of the Association of Catholic Workers and the Italian Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The outbreak of new conflicts within the Christian Democrat Party itself is also symptomatic. On the other hand, widespread doubts are arising about the mixing of religion and politics, in relation to new phenomena within the catholic world. Catholic dissent has spread; it has made an important contribution to the debate and research of the Italian left and, through a laborious process, increasingly seeks ways of direct political commitment.

All this is a sign of changes that are maturing. But to build a real democratic alternative to the centre-left, it will be necessary to shift massive social forces in favour of a new political and economic solution, defeating christian democrat interclassism and social democrat reformism. Through this process, the existing political forces will also be induced to adopt new directions. This requires constant work at all levels. The social struggle must be accompanied by a great effort towards discussion, convergence and collaboration, even if only partial, around urgent problems, within the elective assemblies and in all situations.

The elements of a new programme and a new structure of the Italian left must spring forth from this debate and common action. The road to a new majority, which the country so urgently needs to deal with the dramatic problems of its renewal, passes through this combination of social movements, of confrontations and political results, in such a way as to obtain a new deployment of political forces, new aggregations of leftwing forces, both lay and catholic and a reorganisation and restructuring of the left as a whole.

It will thus be possible to find an answer to the problem of a change in progress that can no longer be postponed. Along this road the communists will work to safeguard peace, guarantee and develop our democratic regime and ensure a new democratic and socialist future for the Italian people.

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