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*D. NIKOLIĆ, Three Votive Plaques from Upper Moesia • I. Komatina, A Hypothesis about the Origin of Závaš's Cross • J. HENDERSON & V. ŽIVKOVIĆ, Experiencing Disease and Medical Treatment in Renaissance Italy • F. GUIDA, The Second Eastern Crisis (1875–1878) • A. D'ALESSANDRI, The Opening of the Italian Legation in Belgrade in 1879 • J. I. TOMAŠEVIĆ, Movies about the First World War • M. RISTOVIĆ, The March on Rome and its Consequences • B. MILOSAVLJEVIĆ, Italy in the Writings of Slobodan Jovanović • J. RAFILOVIĆ, Yugoslav-Italian Foreign Trade Relations 1919–1939 • M. T. MRAOVIĆ, Creation of an Alternate Reality • A. EREŠ, The Venice Biennale and Art in Belgrade in the 1950s • E. COSTANTINI, Relations between the PCI and the League of Communists from the Second Post-War Period to the Mid-1960 • M. DOGO, Belgrade 1969–1972 • B. ŽIVKOVIĆ, The Two Last Encounters between Broz and Berlinguer • P. DRAGIŠIĆ, The Yugoslav Perspective on Italian Eurocommunism in the Second Half of the 1970s* ♪

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Petar Dragišić\*

*Institute for Recent History of Serbia*  
*Belgrade, Serbia*

## The Yugoslav Perspective on Italian Eurocommunism in the Second Half of the 1970s<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The article outlines the key elements of the Yugoslav perceptions of the Italian Communist Party's (PCI) ideological and political orientation during its Eurocommunist phase. In addition, it investigates the relationship between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and PCI in the latter half of the 1970s. The article is primarily based on an analysis of Yugoslav archival sources and press materials.

**Keywords:** LCY, Tito, Berlinguer, Italian Communist Party, Eurocommunism

Throughout the history of socialist Yugoslavia, Italy has played an enormously significant role. The Yugoslav interaction with its Adriatic neighbour remained solid and unfolded on multiple levels. Although the territorial dispute over Trieste, which ensued in the last days of the Second World War, tended to disrupt the two neighbours' rapport, the Trieste issue could not annul the excellent potential for the development of a bilateral relationship. The Trieste dispute was tentatively settled with the London memorandum, with the issue of territorial contentions between Belgrade and Rome being finally settled in Osimo in 1975.<sup>2</sup>

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\* petar.dragisic@gmail.com

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<sup>2</sup> The issue of Trieste as part of the relations between socialist Yugoslavia and Italy has been discussed by numerous Yugoslav and Italian researchers, allowing us to conclude that it is the most thoroughly explored aspect of the Yugo-Italian relationship after the Second World War. For previous research on the aforementioned issue, see M. Cattaruzza, *L'Italia e il confine orientale 1866–2006* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007); M. Milkić, *Tršćanska kriza u vojno-političkim odnosima* (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2013); B. Novak, *Trieste 1941–1954* (Milano: Mursia, 2013); B. Dimitrijević, D. Bogetić, *Tršćanska kriza 1945–1954. Vojno-politički aspekti* (The military and politic aspects of the Trieste crisis) (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2009); S. Mišić, *Pomirenje na Jadranu: Jugoslavija i Italija na putu ka Osimskim sporazumima iz 1975* (The Reconciliation on the Adriatic: Yugoslavia and Italy on the Road to Ossimo Agreements of 1975) (Beograd: Fakultet političkih nauka, 2018); G. Valdevit, *Il dilemma Trieste. Guerra e dopoguerra in uno scenario europeo* (Gorizia:

Besides the question of Trieste, the non-complementary foreign policy orientations of Rome and Belgrade during the Cold War also had an adverse effect on the Yugo-Italian relations. Whilst Italy adamantly retained a pro-Western, Atlantic stance from the very beginning of the Cold War divide, remaining a powerful pillar of NATO's southern wing, Yugoslavia, from the mid-1950s, set out on a path towards a neutral, non-aligned position in global relations.

Nevertheless, not even these divergences or the aforementioned territorial dispute were successful in meaningfully disrupting the rapprochement of Rome and Belgrade. Bilateral relations between the two states were being established on various levels – economics, politics, and culture. The interaction between Yugoslavia and Italy was, however, strikingly asymmetric, meaning that Italy retained a much greater significance for Yugoslavia than vice versa. Italy's impact on Yugoslav economics and culture was particularly apparent.<sup>3</sup>

Another special bond between the two countries was the relationship between their respective communist parties. The positions of the two communist parties, however, were not comparable. In Yugoslavia, Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) (that is from 1952, League of Communists of Yugoslavia -LCY) had an unquestionable political monopoly. The Italian communists, on the other hand, apart from the initial post-war years, had no access to the “zone of power” in Rome. Nevertheless, it was a forceful, very large Italian party, which closely followed the ruling Christian Democrats throughout the Cold War phase, incessantly feeding the fears of a “communist danger”.

The communist elites in Rome and Belgrade maintained a close partnership for the greater part of the Cold War. Still, the exchanges between the two

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Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 1999); P. Dragišić, “Tito's War after the War: Yugoslav Territorial Claims against Austria and Italy, 1945–1949”. In *The Alps-Adriatic Region 1945–1955. International and Transnational Perspectives on a Conflicted European Region*, eds. Wolfgang Mueller, Karlo Ruzicic Kessler, Philipp Greilinger, (Wien: New Academic Press, 2018), 31–51; R. Wörsdörfer, *Il confine orientale. Italia e Jugoslavia dal 1915 al 1955* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> For various aspects of the Yugo-Italian relations during the Cold War era, see F. Rolandi, *Con ventiquattromila baci. L'influenza della cultura di massa italiana in Jugoslavia (1955–1965)* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2015); L. Monzali, “La questione jugoslava nella politica estera italiana dalla prima guerra mondiale ai trattati di Osimo (1914–1975)”. In *Europa adriatica. Storia, relazioni, economia*, a cura di Fanco Botta e Italo Garzia, (Bari: Editori Laterza 2005), 15–72; M. Bucarelli, *La “questione jugoslava” nella politica estera dell'Italia repubblicana (1945–1999)* (Roma: Aracne editrice, 2008); M. Capriati, “Gli scambi commerciali tra Italia e Jugoslavia dal dopoguerra al 1991”. In *Europa adriatica. Storia, relazioni, economia*, a cura di Fanco Botta e Italo Garzia, (Bari: Editori Laterza, 2005), 157–165; П. Драгишић, *Шта смо знали о Италији?: погледи из Београда на Италију 1955–1978* (What did we know about Italy? Views from Belgrade), (Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 2019).

parties were not without hiccups, caused equally by the bilateral Yugo-Italian tensions and by the dynamics between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup>

These bilateral tensions in the relationship between the Italian and Yugoslav Communist Parties were fuelled by the aforementioned Trieste issue, which, in the immediate post-war period, contaminated the association of not only Belgrade and Rome but both countries' communist parties. According to Yugoslav sources, the majority of the PCI leadership, including Palmiro Togliatti, its leader at the time, perceived the Yugo-Italian Trieste dispute as a "sentimental question" for the Italian people.<sup>5</sup> Besides, the Italian communists' leader disapproved of the pro-Yugoslav orientation of the PCI's Julian Venetia faction.<sup>6</sup> The indicator of a certain remoteness in the relations of the two communist parties was also Kardelj's criticism of PCI's course during the September 1947 Cominform conference in Sklarska Poremba. Namely, Kardelj attacked PCI's tactic in the struggle for coming to office in the Italian socio-political system. The most influential Slovenian communist did not approve of the Italian communists' participation in the civic, non-communist cabinets during the initial post-war period.<sup>7</sup>

The conflict between the communist elites in Belgrade and Rome escalated the following year. The Cominform Resolution, adopted in June 1948, dra-

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<sup>4</sup> The relationship between the Yugoslav communists and the Italian Communist Party (Partito comunista italiano – PCI) was investigated in numerous works by Italian and Yugoslav authors. See S. Mišić, "Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy 1945–1956". In *Italy's Balkan Strategies (19th – 20th Century)*, ed. Vojislav Pavlović, (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan History SASA, 2015), 281–291; P. Dragišić, S. Mišić, "I Partiti comunisti italiano e jugoslavo durante il conflitto jugoslavo-sovietico del 1948–1949 nelle fonti diplomatiche jugoslave", *Qualestoria* 1 (2017), 89–101; M. Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito. Tra identità nazionale e internazionalismo*, (Roma: Carocci editore S.p.A. 2005); M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga. Togliatti e il Pci nella rottura fra Stalin e Tito 1944–1957* (Milano: Mursia, 2008); P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa. Il Pci, il confine orientale e il contesto internazionale 1941–1955*, Prefazione di E. Aga-Rossi, Leg. (Gorizia: Leg Edizioni, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia (AY), League of Communists of Yugoslavia (507), Commission for International Relations (IX), 48/I-39, KPI - About the political line/About the leaders of the PCI (1946).

<sup>6</sup> AY, Office of the Marshal of Yugoslavia (836), I-3-b/322, Confidential reports of the MP of the SFRY in Rome, Mladen Iveković, to the Marshal of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, on the conversation with the General Secretary of the CP of Italy, Palmiro Togliatti, Rome, August 10, 1947.

<sup>7</sup> *Совештания Коминформа. 1947, 1948, 1949. Документы и материалы*, (Москва, 1998), 196. (Soveshtaniya Kominforma). According to Kardelj, this coalition-forming policy orientation of PCI was not in accordance with the People's Democracies principles of government formation, which involved an alliance of the working class with "the other working masses" and under the guidance of the communist party, which would hold the commanding posts in the state. That was not the case in Italy, Kardelj concluded.

matically soured the relationship between Belgrade and Moscow, in turn leading to a sudden and pronounced break of the previously tight bond between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. This split had its ideological, political, and security aspects. This phenomenon has been exhaustively discussed in both Yugoslav and international historical scholarship, and hence this well-researched question shall not be further investigated here. For the purposes of this paper, suffice it to say that it was a dramatic turning point that severely affected the relationship between the communist parties of Yugoslavia and Italy. The fact that PCI backed the Cominform Resolution led to a complete rupture of the ties between the two parties. The connections between the Yugoslav and Italian communists were restored following the normalisation of the relations between Belgrade and Moscow in the mid-1950s.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, even after the “reconciliation” of the party elites in Rome and Belgrade, the relationship of the two parties was not entirely independent of the Soviet-Yugoslav interrelation.

This would become apparent already at the end of the 1950s, when the program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, adopted at the LCY’s Seventh Congress in 1958, led to a new cooling of the ties between Belgrade and Moscow. Namely, to an extent, PCI partook in the camp’s criticism of Yugoslav “revisionism”. Still, this crisis in the relations between the two communist parties was far from the intensity of the conflict between the communist elites of Yugoslavia and Italy in the aftermath of the Cominform Resolution. What is more, even this crisis in the relationship between the two parties was soon overcome, following the new Yugoslav-Soviet reconciliation in the early 1960s.<sup>9</sup>

The good relations between the two communist parties in the 1960s led to frequent contacts between LCY and PCI officials, as well as various forms of Yugoslav material support for their Italian “comrades”. The Yugoslav regime financially supported the PCI’s officials’ annual vacations in Yugoslavia and covered the Italian communists’ medical expenses in Yugoslavia, with Belgrade also financing the living expenses of the PCI’s newspaper “Unità” correspondent in Yugoslavia. According to Yugoslav sources, the Yugoslav regime donated 100 million lira to the Italian communist party in 1969.<sup>10</sup>

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The key political and ideological principles that the PCI advocated in the second half of the 1970s were grouped into a complex concept dubbed Eurocommunism and then promoted by the three leading communist parties of Western Eu-

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>9</sup> П. Драгишић, *Шта смо знали о Италији?*, 177–178.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 230–231.

rope – the communist parties of Italy, France and Spain. The proximity of their views, in addition to the intensive communication of these communist parties, led in the second half of the 1970s to the formation of an informal Eurocommunist bloc of Western European countries. The close ties of the Yugoslav and Italian communists, discussed in the previous paragraphs, bring us to an analysis of the relationship of the Yugoslav regime towards the Eurocommunist orientation of the PCI.

The concept of Eurocommunism is most precisely outlined in the unofficial manifesto of this Marxist experiment – *Eurocommunism and the State* by Santiago Carrillo, the leader of the Communist Party of Spain. At the end of 1977, Carrillo summarized his Eurocommunist views in an interview for the *Komunist*, the LCY's newspaper. He emphasized the commitment of Western European communists to a non-violent struggle for socialism, in alliance with non-communist social actors. Besides, Carrillo further accentuated, Eurocommunists argued for the independent development paths of communist parties, clearly implying the emancipation of the Western European communists from Moscow (Carrillo never mentioned this explicitly, but it can be easily inferred).<sup>11</sup>

Contesting the strategy of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, ignoring the Soviet experience in constructing socialism, immanent in the Eurocommunist course, significantly shaped the orientation of the PCI in the second half of the 1970s. The outcome was a strategy of a "historic compromise", that is, CP's entry into the "zone of power" in alliance with the Socialists and the Christian Democracy (Democrazia Cristiana, DC).

Given the aforementioned close ties between the Italian and Yugoslav communists, Belgrade carefully followed this evolution of the PCI, analyzing

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<sup>11</sup> "Шпањолски комунисти у демократском преображају своје земље", (Spanish Communists on democratic change of their country) *Комунист* (Komunist), November 14th 1977. "Keeping in mind the development of modern day weaponry, the communists of Western Europe – the Spanish ones included – are not of the opinion that turning an imperialist war into a civil one would be a feasible path towards the socialist perspective. That is because a world war would be the suicide of all social classes. On the other hand, we consider the development of the global socialist forces as heading towards the proletarian vanguard and other wider social forces attaining an ever increasing desire for participation in the struggle for socialism. That is a pretty broad alliance of urban and rural workers, cultural forces, mid-layer anti-monopolistic actors who make up the greater part of the society. This allows for a wider, more democratic, and, in turn, relatively more peaceful road to socialism, which does not involve the usurpation of power through an armed resurrection and understands the protection of power through democratic forms, with respecting political and philosophical pluralism (...) Every workers' party should integrate into the interests of its own people and should become the staunchest representative of its interests. This renders the independence of every party and every state necessary for the expression of their own domestic and foreign policy (...)"

the roots of its commitment to a historic compromise and trying to predict the scope of this ambitious strategy.

In the report of the LCY delegation that attended the 14th PCI Congress in 1975, Berlinguer's idea of a historic compromise with the socialists and Catholics (Christian Democracy) was at the same time described as novel and as a project that had, albeit in different forms, already featured in the earlier history of PCI. In the same report, it was noted that Antonio Gramsci pleaded for the cooperation of communists and Catholics, which was supposed to become an "obstacle to fascism", and it was also underlined that in 1944 Togliatti emphasized the need for Italian national unity, that is, "the historic meeting of communists and Catholics on the Italian road to socialism". It was further remarked that Enrico Berlinguer, PCI's leader, elaborated the idea of a historic compromise in the Central Committee and the main Controlling Commission meeting in December 1974. According to the same Yugoslav analysis, the latter two parties of the Cold War Italian political triangle – the Christian Democracy and the Socialists – did not take well to the aforementioned communists' initiative: "It can be said, without a doubt, that no other move made by the Left in Italy after the war has caused as much interest and at the same time confused its adversaries (Christian Democrats), while putting their semi-ally (Socialists) into an uncomfortable position."<sup>12</sup>

The Christian Democrats' resistance to the idea of a historic compromise with the communists was in the same report interpreted as a corollary of the Catholics' fear that an alliance with the Communists would severely threaten the position of the Christian Democracy in the Italian political system: "DC (Democrazia Cristiana - P.D.) considers the Italian communists' proposal primarily as a shrewd tactical move to get the communists into the orbit of power and start introducing the policy of a totalitarian regime and state capitalism. The DC is further convinced that the PCI's intention is to isolate the DC and discredit it amongst the electorate and the Italian society in general (...) The negative attitude of the DC and civic parties is conditioned by their class interest, that is, by their awareness of the radical changes that a coalition with the PCI would have on Italian society on all levels, primarily economic, social and in foreign policy. The DC is also aware that accepting the historic compromise would mark the end of its monopoly over political and economic life in Italy, which has lasted for three decades and which the DC does not intend to relinquish for as long as possible."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> AY, CPY, IX, S/a-277, Report of the delegation of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia from the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Italy, June 1975.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

The Socialists' (PSI) resistance to the idea of a historic compromise was, in the Yugoslav view, a corollary of their fear of marginalisation in a potential coalition of Communists and Catholics. However, there was some outside resistance, too. Thus, the report of the LCY delegation that attended the 14th PCI Congress underlined that the West, namely Washington, had strong reservations about the possibility of PCI's rise to power. Such a development would have further endangered Rome's pro-Western course: "Lastly, there is fierce resistance from external forces, primarily the US and NATO, which, due to Italy's geostrategic position, have a vital interest in preserving its class composition and pro-Atlantic orientation. Both the Italian establishment and external factors (the US) agree that the realisation of a historic compromise would irrevocably call into question these two main options of contemporary Italy."<sup>14</sup>

The Yugoslav side looked favourably on the Communist strategy of a historic compromise. The Yugoslav press clearly pointed to this conclusion in relation to the Italian Communists' orientation. It is further corroborated by the reactions in Yugoslavia to the murder of Aldo Moro, a Christian Democratic leader who played a prominent role in bringing the Christian Democracy and Communists closer in the late 1970s. Belgrade claimed that this assassination of a proponent of the idea of bringing together Catholics and Communists was an outcome of "the dark forces meddling from below". Moro's aspiration for the Communists to join his party "at the helm of the country" was lauded as an act of political realism.<sup>15</sup>

The *Komunist* newspaper referred to Moro as "a protagonist of a policy of bringing together Italian democratic parties". It concluded that his murder reflected the fact that "the process of democratic opening and political cooperation on a wide national base" was opposed not only by "a handful of adventurers" but also by "a well-oiled machinery of powerful forces of the dark and reaction". It emphasised that Moro believed that the way out of the political and economic crisis that Italy was facing was to "bring together all the democratically-oriented forces".<sup>16</sup>

Besides the fact that the Belgrade press lamented the murder of a Christian Democratic protagonist of the Communist-Catholic rapprochement, the Yugoslav regime's positive stance towards the idea of a historic compromise was unequivocally confirmed during the official visit of Enrico Berlinguer to Yugoslavia in 1975 and his conversation with the leader of the Yugoslav CP and head

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Italija posle ubistva Alda Mora", (Italy after the assassination of Aldo Moro) *Borba*, 11th May 1978.

<sup>16</sup> "Ubistvo Alda Mora – Tragično upozorenje", (The Assassination of Aldo Moro - Tragic warning) *Komunist*, 15th May 1978.



of state, Josip Broz Tito. In his conversation with the secretary general of PCI in March 1975, after the aforementioned 14th Congress of PCI, Broz touched upon the question of PCI's position on the historic compromise. Berlinguer reminded Broz that the PCI's congress had been concerned with the party's orientation towards "the widest possible opening towards all the progressive democratic forces, Catholics included".<sup>17</sup> In his toast at the luncheon with Berlinguer, Broz explicitly supported this course of the Italian Communists. Namely, he wished the secretary general of PCI and other Italian communists to "keep moving forward to bring together all the progressive forces" in Italy. He added that he considered PCI's stance on drawing together "as many progressive people as possible" to be "quite right".<sup>18</sup>

Along with its positive assessment of the Italian Communists' efforts to come closer to the Catholic segment on the Italian political spectrum, the Yugoslav regime was supportive of the Italian Communists' efforts, as well as those of the communists in France and Spain, to break away from Moscow, in accordance with the principles of Eurocommunism, and to build their own path to socialism.

In an outright clash of two conceptions of the socialist development – the Soviet one, which pleaded for the leading role of CPSU in the international communist movement, and the Eurocommunist one, which insisted on individual roads to socialism, or to put it differently, opposed replicating the Soviet model – the Yugoslav communists sided with the biggest CPs of Western Europe (those of Italy, Spain and France). The Yugoslav side publicly took its stance at the conference of European Communist Parties, which took place in June 1976 in East Berlin. The Yugoslav party leader's speech at this pan-European meeting of Communists showed a clear commitment to pluralism in terms of attaining socialism. He thus lent direct support to the Eurocommunist distancing from the political and ideological monopoly of Moscow in the international communist movement: "There is a shift in political atmosphere happening on that basis, which directs wide strata of working people towards advanced social transformation. Under such pressure, all the societal forces have a duty to reconsider their views and values and seek proper solutions. As for the praxis of socialism, there are likewise no permanent solutions, given once and for all and applicable to all circumstances. It is likewise followed by difficulties and contradictions. The passage of time brings about new demands, in accordance with the development of productive forces and social consciousness – hence the neces-

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<sup>17</sup> AY, Cabinet of the President of the Republic (CPR), I-3-a/44-59, Note on the conversation between the President of the CPY, Josip Broz Tito, and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Italy, Enrico Berlinguer, on March 29th 1975.

<sup>18</sup> AY, Cabinet of the President of the Republic (CPR), I-3-a/44-59, President Tito's toast at a luncheon in honor of Enrico Berlinguer.

sity of different paths in the struggle for socialism and its further development. What matters is that the solutions offered by the progressive forces today arise from the real interests of the working class and working people.”<sup>19</sup>

Eurocommunist forces, which were, as already mentioned, supported by the Yugoslav side, took the upper hand at the conference. The final report from the Berlin conference highlighted the autonomy of communist parties in seeking their path towards a socialist society. Thus, a formal line of demarcation was drawn between, on the one hand, the Berlin conference, and on the other, the policy of Comintern (and, later, Cominform). The report stated that European communist parties that attended the conference “will develop their internationalist, comradely and voluntary cooperation and solidarity, on the basis of the great ideals of Marx, Engels and Lenin, with unwavering respect for equality and sovereign independence of each and every party, non-interference in their internal affairs, and acknowledgement of freedom of choice with regard to different paths of the struggle for progressive social transformation and socialism.”<sup>20</sup> A few days later, despite the Eastern European CPs (especially the Bulgarian Communist Party) showing no enthusiasm for the quoted passage in the final report from the Berlin conference, it was characterised by the *Politika* newspaper as “a significant set of principles of permanent value and relevance.”<sup>21</sup>

To understand the position of the Yugoslav regime on the concept of Eurocommunism, or the Eurocommunist course of PCI, it is not of particular importance to grasp the impact of the Berlin conference. Much more significant was the fact that LCY publicly and vocally supported the aspirations of the Italian communists, as well as the communists of France and Spain, to break away from Moscow. That stance was not affected by the fact that neither PCI

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<sup>19</sup> “Tito: Uvek smo se suprotstavljali i suprotstavljaćemo se svim oblicima mešanja u unutrašnje stvari drugih”, (We have always been opposed and will continue to do so, to any form of interference in the internal affairs of the others), *Politika*, 1st July 1976.

<sup>20</sup> “Završni dokument Konferencije evropskih komunističkih i radničkih partija o miru, bezbednosti, saradnji i društvenom napretku u Evropi”, (The Final document of the Conference of Communist and Labour Parties on Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe), *Politika*, 3rd July 1976.

<sup>21</sup> “Korak napred u Berlinu”, (A Step Forward in Berlin) *Politika*, 4th July 1976. An analysis of the Department of International Relations of the Presidium of CC LCY (Odeljenje za međunarodne odnose i veze Predsedništva CK SKJ) underscored that the speeches of the Eastern European party representatives deviated from the aforementioned theses on the need for a greater autonomy of communist parties, i.e. their independence from Moscow. AY, CPY, IX, S/a-297, Department for International Relations and Relations of the Presidency of the CC LCY, Analysis of internal reactions and assessments of socialist and other progressive parties and movements, as well as some ruling circles and structures in the world, to the holding of the Conference of European Communist and of workers’ parties in Berlin, November 23rd 1976.

nor the French Communist Party pleaded to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty during their Eurocommunist phase, although this contradicted the Yugoslav non-bloc orientation.<sup>22</sup> I believe that Belgrade, through its support for the Eurocommunist programme of PCI and the other two big Western European Communist parties, wanted to affirm and corroborate its own aspirations to search for an individual path to socialism, independently from Moscow and other Eastern European parties. In defending the right of Eurocommunists to their autonomous socialist development, the Yugoslav regime also defended its own socialist course, albeit different from the one the Eurocommunists took. Thus a 1977 report of the Presidium of LCY underlined that the principle of the autonomy of communist parties, which dominated the Berlin conference, was an idea that the Yugoslav Communists had championed ever since their confrontation with the Cominform in 1948.<sup>23</sup>

The Yugoslav Communists continued to express their sympathies towards the Eurocommunists and to distance themselves from Moscow even after the conference of European communist parties in East Berlin. The Yugoslav regime's position came to the fore during the clashes between Moscow and Eurocommunist parties in 1977 and 1978. Namely, in June 1977, at a congress of Czechoslovak journalists, Vasil Bilak, a member of the Presidium of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, fiercely attacked the Eurocommunist parties. He defined Eurocommunism as "a buzzword and a product of anti-Communism and bourgeois ideology". The orientation of the communist parties of Italy, France and Spain was, in Bilak's view, a mixture of "petty-bourgeois reformism and national communism", or "an old revisionist product in new packaging".<sup>24</sup>

Not long after Bilak's condemnation of the Eurocommunist course, an assault on Eurocommunism came from an even "higher-powered" place. Namely, the *Novoye Vremya* (The New Times) magazine, a Moscow-based foreign policy journal, sharply criticised Santiago Carrillo (the secretary general of the Spanish CP), "the apostle of Eurocommunism", and his book "Eurocommunism and the State". *Novoye Vremya* emphasised that Carrillo propagated anti-Sovi-

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<sup>22</sup> AY, CPY, IX, S/a-297, Department for International Relations of the Presidium of CC LCY, Analysis of internal reactions and assessments of socialist and other progressive parties and movements, as well as some ruling circles and structures in the world, to the holding of the Conference of European Communist and of workers' parties in Berlin, November 23rd 1976.

<sup>23</sup> AY, CPY, IX, S/a-311, Department for International Relations and Connections of the Presidency of the Central Committee of CPY, Report on the International Activity of the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between the 10th and 11th Congresses, September 22nd 1977.

<sup>24</sup> "Bilakov napad na evrokomunizam", (Bilak's attack on Eurocommunism) *Politika*, 19th June 1977.

etism, was openly in favour of a split in the international workers' movement and advocated a version of socialism detached from the theory of Marxism-Leninism. Moreover, the Soviet magazine identified Eurocommunism as "Western Atlanticism".<sup>25</sup>

The Yugoslav side openly condemned the attacks on Eurocommunism coming from Moscow and Prague. In an article published in the *Politika* newspaper on June 28th 1977, the Soviet campaign against Eurocommunists was characterised as "a rejection of autonomy and authenticity" of Western European communist parties. The author of the article in the Belgrade daily newspaper added that these attacks were reminiscent of "certain precedents in the past, when enemies of communism were constantly being discovered in the so-called world communist movement".<sup>26</sup> Although *Politika's* journalist made no explicit reference to Cominform's confrontation with Yugoslavia in 1948, it is clear that the sentence quoted above alluded, either primarily or among other things, to that episode in the history of the international communist movement.<sup>27</sup>

Yugoslavia lent its support to the Eurocommunist parties again half a year later, at the beginning of 1978, when the Soviets stroke again. This time, the *Novoye Vremya* magazine criticised Manuel Azcárate, a member of the Executive Committee of CC of the Communist Party of Spain. An article in *Politika* unequivocally supported the right of Eurocommunist parties to an individual road to socialism and at the same time criticised Moscow's insistence on the Soviet monopoly in the international communist movement.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "Kariljo optužen za antisovjetizam", (Carillo accused of anti-Soviet attitude) *Borba*, 24th June 1977.

<sup>26</sup> "Pravo na autentičnost", (The Right to be Authentic) *Politika*, 28th June 1977.

<sup>27</sup> The aforementioned article from the *Politika* newspaper was coincidentally published on the anniversary of the Cominform's passing of the Resolution on Yugoslavia.

<sup>28</sup> "Smisao napada na evrokomunizam", (The essence of the Attacks on Eurocommunism) *Borba*, 23 January 1978. "(...) it is absurd to oppose 'pluralism' in choosing the path of socialist development, i.e. to imagine the variety of paths to socialism as an 'anti-socialist ideology', which is directed by the imperialist powers in order to undermine 'genuine', that is, 'real' socialism in one or more countries. It is indisputable that both the reaction and imperialism are attempting to undermine our movement, or even to confront Communist Parties where possible. However, that does not mean that an effective weapon against them is homogeneity, embankment, or an absolutisation of one particular (Soviet – P.D.) experience; the least of which would be some sort of institutionalisation of unity. On the contrary, it is the autonomy of communist parties, that is, their emancipation from the ruling centre and turn towards their own peoples and the working class that represents the best way to weaken the reaction and imperialism. (...) The bottom line is to allow communist parties to be autonomous and independent in formulating their own political strategy and tactic, in order to transform their societies and build socialism. 'Eurocommunism' in that sense represents a new socialist alternative which is suitable not only for the contemporary national but also international

The Yugoslav president and party leader publicly supported the Eurocommunist road to socialism as well. As articulated in a joint statement released after a meeting with Enrico Berlinguer, the Italian Communists' leader, in October 1977, Broz supported the right of the Eurocommunist parties, including the Italian Communist Party, to choose their own path to socialism.<sup>29</sup>

The Yugoslavs assessed that the Communist Party of Italy had some reservations about certain parts of Carrillo's book, as well as his public appearances, irrespective of the fact that it too condemned the aforementioned article published in *Novoye Vremya*. Belgrade noted that PCI favoured a less offensive policy towards Moscow: "CP of Italy is demonstrating a deep understanding of CPSU's anxiety, which is seen as being on the defensive and should not be forced to kneel down further."<sup>30</sup>

Although the joint statement released after Tito's meeting with Berlinguer suggests unequivocal support of the Yugoslav leader for the Eurocommunists and PCI on their path to socialism, the available minutes of the meeting reveal that Broz made some critical remarks concerning the Eurocommunist course. While he was critical of the very term "Eurocommunism", his main gripe had to do with the Eurocommunists' public and harsh attacks on Moscow. Tito implicitly suggested to Berlinguer to opt for dialogue instead of an open and public confrontation with Moscow. At the same time, he assured Berlinguer that he had already condemned the Soviets for their attacks against the Eurocommunist course. These stances of the Yugoslav leader were entirely in accordance with the then-policy of Yugoslavia towards the USSR. Contrary to its enduring insistence on autonomous existence within the international communist movement, Yugoslavia was not ready for a decisive break with Moscow. Thus Broz showed understanding for both sides' arguments in the dispute between the Eurocom-

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circumstances and conditions. Anything other than that means meddling into the internal affairs of particular communist parties and particular countries. That is true whether it concerns communists joining the government, or their alignment and identification with one or more socialist countries, whose ideological and political conceptions they must accept as absolute."

<sup>29</sup> "Susret Tito–Berlinguer", (Tito meets Berlinguer) *Politika*, 5th October 1977. "Comrades Tito and Berlinguer reasserted their respective parties' (LCY and PCI) full solidarity and support for all the forces which advocate the natural and inalienable right of every party and movement to choose, freely and independently, ways and methods of struggle for socialism and its development (...) They emphasised the vital importance of strict adherence (in practice) to the principle of non-interference, and the right of every party to decide autonomously its path of development, taking into account their countries' particular features and the interests of their own working class and people."

<sup>30</sup> AY, Cabinet of the President of the Republic (CPR), I-3a/44–61, Service for Foreign Policy Affairs, Information on the Communist Party of Italy in the light of the current situation and relations between the CPY and the PCI, October 1st 1977.

munists and the USSR. His wish to deescalate this conflict can also be detected: "President Tito asked [Berlinguer] why the term "Eurocommunism", which was coined by the bourgeoisie, is being utilised. It breeds confusion, since there is only one communism for the whole world. (...) President Tito confirms this is an issue, adding that it has been discussed in China, as well as during his recent visit to Moscow. We said the term is inadequate and wrong, but at the heart of the matter is the relationship of communist parties towards the notions of the Berlin conference, i.e. to what extent they accede to the particular forms of partisan behaviour. In conclusion, "Eurocommunism" is not a good term. President Tito added that in Moscow there were also talks about CPSU's departures from the principles of the Berlin conference. We openly told them they were not good. (...) There was not much talk, Tito added, about Carrillo's book, though it was visible that the Soviets were bitter about it. We explicitly told them that we disagree with the way the open polemic with CP of Spain was carried out. President Tito then said that he had not read Carrillo's book. However, if the book interferes in any internal affairs, if it provides one-sided criticisms of other countries' domestic systems, we cannot agree with that either. Such issues should not be discussed publicly, regardless of systemic failures. One should be realistic, for such a large state can hardly be expected to accept public criticism (underlined by P.D.). We told them that we disapproved of the attacks in the first article published in *Novoye Vremya* (...) On the whole, we wanted to calm the situation down (underlined by P.D.) (...) President Tito further said that no other CP in Europe, apart from LCY, had that much experience or such experiences at all with CPSU, whether in 1948 or later. But even then, we insisted on dealing with the issues calmly and through a dialogue; we wanted to keep them within the inner circle, avoiding unnecessary publicity, and that turned out to be a good decision."<sup>31</sup>

The Yugoslav regime's desire to alleviate the tension between the Eurocommunists and Moscow was reflected in a sentence uttered by Aleksandar Grličkov, secretary of the Executive Committee of the Presidium of CC LCY, taken from his conversation with PCI's high officials, Giancarlo Pajetta, Sergio

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<sup>31</sup> AY, Cabinet of the President of the Republic (CPR), I-3-a/44-61, Note on the conversation between the President of the Republic and the President of the CPY Josip Broz Tito with the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Italy Enrico Berlinguer, October 4th 1977, in Karadorđevo. From the quoted passage, we see that Broz was critical of the concept of "Eurocommunism" at a meeting in Karadorđevo. It was a Yugoslav citizen, however, who is thought to have coined the term. His name was Frane Barbieri, and he claimed to have invented the term; by his own account, the term was coined in 1976. F. Barbieri, *Ljjeva i desna skretanja* (Zagreb, 1987), 82.

Segre and Antonio Rubbi in July 1977 in Rome. Among other things, Grličkov told his Italian interlocutors that they have to “curb their anti-Sovietism”.<sup>32</sup>

The dramatic developments in Afghanistan at the very end of the 1970s once again brought to the fore the concord between the Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy. Both parties condemned, in their respective ways, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Merely several days after the Soviets began their offensive in Afghanistan, the Yugoslav Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs underscored that “foreign intervention in any form, or imposing foreign will upon sovereign states, is unacceptable”.<sup>33</sup>

A few weeks after the Soviets began their intervention in Afghanistan, Belgrade hosted a high-level delegation of PCI headed by Paolo Bufalini. At a meeting with the LCY delegation, led by Aleksandar Grličkov, the Italian guests strongly condemned USSR’s campaign in Afghanistan. Bufalini emphasised that it was “an open and mass invasion that employs disgraceful methods”. Furthermore, he claimed that PCI’s assessment that Belgrade’s position on the question of Afghanistan was more cautious than the Yugoslav standpoint on the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea. Grličkov replied, however, that LCY’s stance is in accord with PCI’s position on the question of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. To corroborate his point, Grličkov added that Yugoslavia had condemned the Soviet actions in Afghanistan at the UN, requesting an immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops.<sup>34</sup>

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The proximity of the viewpoints of the regime in Belgrade and the Communist Party of Italy in the second half of the 1970s, during the short-lived rise of the Eurocommunist concept, enabled a phase of fairly close cooperation between the Yugoslav and Italian Communists. The good relations between the two parties are attested by frequent meetings of high party officials (Tito and Berlinguer met three times from the mid-1970s), public demonstrations of positive attitudes towards one another. The close relationship between LCY and PCI was substantiated by the material support provided by the Yugoslav regime to the

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<sup>32</sup> AY, CPY, IX, 48/I–566, Report of the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Presidium of the Central Committee Aleksandar Grličkov, on the conversation with representatives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy in Rome, July 12th and 13th 1977.

<sup>33</sup> “Nedopustiva je svaka strana intervencija ili nametanje svoje volje suverenim državama”, (All foreign intervention or interference in the affairs of a sovereign state is inadmissible) *Politika*, 31st December 1979; 1st & 2nd January 1980.

<sup>34</sup> AY, CPY, IX, 48/I–603, Information on talks between representatives of CPY and PCI, 12–14. January 1980 in Belgrade.

Italian Communists. According to the Yugoslav source materials, LCY donated 200,000 dollars to the Communist Party of Italy at the end of 1978. At its October 1978 meeting in Brdo Castle near Kranj, the Presidium of CC LCY decided to act on PCI's request for financial support. Stane Dolanc, the then-secretary of the Presidium of CC LCY, suggested a sum of 200,000 dollars in aid.<sup>35</sup>

Indicative of a high level of trust that the Italian Communists confided in their sister party in Yugoslavia was the intention of a number of PCI's high-ranking officials to defect to Yugoslavia in case of a right-wing coup in Italy (which was speculated upon during the so-called Strategy of Tension period in the 1970s). This plan of escaping potential repressive measures in Italy is attested in Yugoslav intelligence sources.<sup>36</sup>

### *Summary*

The relationship between the Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy in the Cold War era was characterised by multiple ups and downs, which were caused, on the one hand, by processes in the international communist movement, and on the other, by bilateral issues between Yugoslavia and Italy. However, cooperation between the two parties from the early 1960s was close and multilayered. Communication between the Yugoslav and Italian Communists in the second half of the 1970s was intense. During that time, the Communist Party of Italy, along with the communists in Spain and France, espoused a Eurocommunist orientation, which implied a departure from the idea of revolutionary conquest of power, as well as distancing from Moscow. Yugoslavia openly supported the Eurocommunist orientation of the Communist Party of Italy and other Eurocommunist parties. Hence there was close cooperation between the communists in Yugoslavia and Italy in the second half of the 1970s. During this period, Yugoslav media reported sympathetically about the CP of

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<sup>35</sup> AY, CPY, IX, 48/I-585, Presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy, Information on the request of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy grant them financial aid, December 5th 1978; AY, CPY, IX, 48/I-585, Presidency of the Central Committee of the CPY, Information on the handing over of aid by the CPY to the Communist Party of Italy, December 18th 1978.

<sup>36</sup> AY, CPY, I-5-b/44-18, Service for Foreign Policy Affairs, Internal Affairs in Italy, 7th February 1975. In addition to this, PCI considered the possibility of transferring its archives and financial resources (up to that point deposited in Switzerland) to Yugoslavia. In his conversation with a member of the PCI's main office, Giovanni Cervetti, Stane Dolanc accepted this proposal. AY, CPY, IX, 48/I-579, Note on the conversation between the secretary of the CPY Central Committee Presidency, Stane Dolanc, and the member of the PCI Directorate, Giovanni Cerveti, July 27th 1978



Italy, while the highest-ranking Yugoslav officials publicly supported the Italian communists.

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