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The following pages reflect a difference of views inside the Embassy as to our proper policy towards the Italian Socialists and as regards the possible creation of a so-called "center-left" coalition government not including the Socialists but dependent on their abstention in parliament. As reported below, I felt that we should do our best to attract the Socialists away from the Communists and that, in 1960 and 1961, we should take a position, both overtly and covertly, of neither favoring nor opposing such a government. However, I am, and always have been, quite prepared to support whatever policy and tactics have been officially approved, and I have never felt that the views I hold must prevail. Some officers, including myself, were concerned less at the difference of views than over the possibility that some of the Embassy's reasoning and motives were not understood in the Department. None of the following is intended to argue that one or another viewpoint was "right". Most of the paper is simply an attempt to clarify some of the statements appearing in the Inspector's lengthy report.

Background

Over ~~the~~ most of the postwar period Italy has been burdened with the largest Communist Party (PCI) in the Free World and the third largest in the entire world (the Indonesian Communists have now overtaken the Italians but I believe the latter were still ahead during part of the period covered in this paper - 1957-1961). The PCI has been receiving close to 23% of the nation's votes. Mussolini's Socialist Party (PSI) has had a long record of cooperation with, and submission to, the PCI. The combined Communist and Socialist vote is close to 40% of the total. In the absence of any "democratic alternative" to the Christian Democrats (DC), such as the Laborites in Britain or the Social Democrats in Germany, the DC has remained in office, alone, or in coalition with some very small democratic parties, since shortly after the war. Many things have been accomplished and Italy is now enjoying years of unprecedented prosperity, but there has long been such popular discontent over such issues as the need for significant economic and social reforms, a more equitable distribution and more modern utilization of the fruits of prosperity, and a diminution of the temporal influence of the Catholic Church. These views are shared by many inside the DC itself. In addition, the DC inevitably has centered on itself the deep-seated and traditional skepticism and cynicism of the population vis-a-vis all Italian governments. The party no longer enjoys a majority vote. Meanwhile, despite prosperity, the Communist vote does not decline and Communist influence remains very strong in many, if not most, sectors of Italian life. Differences between classes are marked and the Communist party is popular among the poor to a considerable extent as a vehicle of protest.

For several years there has been a tendency on the part of the PSI to assert its independence from the PCI and to enter the so-called "democratic area" of Italian politics. The Hungarian Revolution, in late 1956, helped those Socialists (the so-called "autonomists") who had been working towards this goal. The autonomists, however, are by no means in complete agreement among themselves, and are not only handicapped by their inability to change rapidly (without losing popularity) their appalling previous record of collaboration with the Communists, but also are influenced by the emotional experience of the anti-Fascist period, provincialism, timidity, ineptness, lack of acuity, fear of losing control of the PSI, fear of finding themselves on the losing side, and most of the other glibly factors which usually influence politicians. In addition, they have been by no means certain that the Church and the conservative wing of the Christian Democrats would agree to allow the DC to collaborate

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with the Socialists indirectly, and eventually directly, in the governing process. Nevertheless, the autonomists still hold a majority inside the MSI and have been able to achieve considerable progress away from the DCI, although much still remains to be done in this respect. Deam and the other autonomist leaders are most reluctant to allow another split to occur in the party, and they certainly want to avoid the example of Saragat's followers who left the DCI over a decade ago to form a small Social Democratic party which has since lost, rather than gained, in influence. The autonomists want to remain in control of the DCI at almost any cost, hoping that if a split must come it will be the leftwingers who will leave this time, and only the hard core of their most obstinacious and dangerous leaders. One of the most important drawbacks from our viewpoint is that while the Socialists' public and private position on foreign affairs has improved considerably, the DCI has reached only a point which could probably best be described in a single word as "neutralist". Meanwhile, the DCI is skillfully helping the Socialist leftwingers overtly and covertly (including financially) in desperate attempts to regain control of the DCI, or at least to halt the autonomists' progress, and it is very possible these attempts will succeed. One of the main Communist-DCI leftwinger themes is that the DC will never agree to collaborate with the Socialists unless the latter "betray the working class" by ceasing all endeavors to better living conditions. The autonomists, on the other hand, try to show that the DCI is not condemning itself to isolation and futility by moving away from the Communists, and that as it does move it will be able to play an increasingly useful role in Italian politics. Thus the DCI is the arena for a complex struggle which is important, perhaps decisive, in the fight against one of the largest Communist Parties in the world in an area of vital importance to the United States.

Italian non-Communists react to the present DCI trend away from the DCI in different ways. Some, including both skeptics and optimists regarding the possibility of its success, are in favor of it and genuinely hope it will succeed. Others, either openly or secretly, seem governed more by such considerations as a dislike for all Socialists, per se, and fear lest DCI participation in the democratic area eventually will diminish the influence of the conservative wing of the DC, or help to put through certain economic or social reforms, or curtail the power of the Catholic Church. The United States has been, and is, involved in Italian internal politics in ways which will not be discussed here, and our policy vis-a-vis the Socialists, both overt and covert, and regardless of whether it is passive or active, could well have an important influence on the course of events in Italy. Italian politicians frequently seek the Embassy's off-the-record views on Italy's internal affairs, and it is by no means unusual for them to request confidentially our assistance in one form or another.

The foregoing is a very superficial and inadequate summary of a complicated political situation which involves both risks and opportunities for us.

Embassy Policy

Shortly after arriving in Rome, in the fall of 1957, I was given the assignment of reporting on the activities of the Social Democrats, Republicans, Socialists and Communists, the first two of which are wholly in the democratic area and frequent

allies of the DC, although to the left of that party. These four parties remained "assigned" to me throughout my stay in Italy, with the exception of the Communist Party which from time to time was delegated to others in adjusting the workload. Another officer also frequently covered with me the activities of the Socialists and Social Democrats. My contact with the Socialist autonomists began in early 1958 and expanded rapidly thereafter. In addition to their defects mentioned previously, the autonomist leaders also seemed to be labouring under many misconceptions, some of them grotesque (there had been no direct contact between the Embassy and the PSI prior to this), as to life in the United States, the nature of our society, and American foreign policy aims, in general and in Italy specifically. The general line I followed with them was: the United States was not opposed to economic and social reforms, nor was it hostile to all Socialists or leftists as such, as shown by our good relations with democratic left wing parties in other countries; the Embassy did not necessarily favor the conservative wing of the DC over other political groups (a view then widely held in Italian political circles); we hoped very much that the PSI would continue coming away from the PCI and would help to strengthen Italian democracy; we hoped the autonomists would become stronger inside the PSI; we were engaged in a life and death, world wide struggle with the Soviet Union and would be very much concerned by anything, including Socialist foreign policy views, which might threaten our alliance with Italy; and, we desired the widest possible contact with all political parties except the Communists and Fascists. At the same time I sought openings and occasions for discussing the facts of life under Communism in Poland (including the heroic role of the Catholic Church there) and the Soviet Union, and for supplying information about the United States and its real aims. Neither the Embassy nor the Department objected to these activities, which were reported in detail, along with, of course, information as to the struggle for power within the PSI.

The new Political Counselor arrived in Rome in the fall of 1958 and, to my knowledge, at least, my relationship with him was not only entirely correct but quite friendly. There were typical differences of opinion and judgment from time to time among all of us in the Political Section but so far as I was aware there was no disagreement over: the possibility and desirability of the autonomists' pulling the PSI further away from the PCI; and, the desirability of economic and social reforms in Italy.

The new Deputy Chief of Mission arrived in early 1959 and quickly evinced decidedly different views (as he obviously had every right to do) on the need for reforms and on the possibility of the Socialists' drawing away from the Communists. At this time I was the head of the so-called internal political reporting unit and the two reporting officers under me, both of whom had wide contacts in other Italian political parties (so that we accounted for a very high percentage of the Embassy's total direct daily contact with Italian political circles), began expressing growing concern to me over what they considered to be a tendency to try to slant Embassy reporting. At the time I thought their worries exaggerated and told them so (later I came to agree with them). At the same time, I frequently expressed my own opinions and judgment on Italian politics to the Political Counselor, and I note that his Efficiency Report on my work at that time comments that I was willing to argue "unpopular views". There was no doubt but that they had become unpopular and were arousing increasing irritation and criticisms. (The Inspector points out that the

Deputy Chief of Mission has recently given credit for various aspects of my work, including my contribution in gradually changing the Embassy's attitude vis-a-vis the PSI. I appreciate this praise. I would add only that of course the question of my specific ratings never became a central issue either with my superiors or with the Inspector).

At this point I should perhaps make reference to the occasional comments by the Political Counselor and Deputy Chief of Mission, which started at about this time, that I was "specializing" in my work and becoming absorbed in only one aspect of Italian political life. I was of course only carrying out my assignment, as I had done previously. Other officers covered other political parties. As a matter of fact I tried to develop the widest possible range of contacts, including artists, bankers, journalists, cab drivers, priests, conservative and "progressive" politicians, Foreign Office functionaries, Iron Curtain diplomats, etc. My next to the last evening in Rome was spent at the home of the wealthy, well known ultra conservative deputy and boss of Salerno, Carmine De Martino, and a very pleasant evening it was.

Early in 1960 it seemed to many people that a so-called center-left government, that is a DC-led coalition not including the Socialists but dependent on their abstention in parliament, was a possibility. I prepared a lengthy Despatch attempting to assess the risks and opportunities involved for the United States in such a government as compared with the risks and opportunities presented by other types of Italian governments. After much analysis, it reached the conclusion that the risks involved in a center-left government should not be considered as overriding (of course this was not based on anything as naive as "trusting" Deasi or as primitive as regarding the center-left as a cure-all for Italy's many complex problems). This recommendation bore with it the implication that we should not attempt to prevent a center-left government in Italy, and should be neither "for" nor "against" it. Among other things this reflected the "carrot and stick" viewpoint countenancing increasing DC-PSI cooperation as the Socialists drew away from the Communists. This was sent to the Department as a personal "memorandum", under cover of Despatch 1062 of May 4, 1960, indicating that this did not represent the Embassy's official position. The memorandum eventually received highly favorable comment from different areas in the Government, including the Italian Desk. Perhaps its recommendations were incorrect. It is quite possible to favor a contrary position, of course, and I mention all of this not to try to show who was "right" (I certainly did not insist the "memorandum's" recommendations had to be accepted by the Embassy), but only to explain the problem the Embassy was studying and to point out that not only was there some support for this viewpoint among the senior officers but in the Department as well. So far as I know our official attitude vis-a-vis the center-left has now been for some time that we are neither for nor against it, and will not attempt to prevent it from coming about.

Some time after Despatch 1062, a series of meetings was held with several of the senior officers to work out an official Embassy recommendation. The result, Despatch 1164 of June 6, 1960, took a position that a center-left government would not be acceptable until such time as the Socialists had broken all ties with the Communists and would be certain not to advocate the compromise of policies of basic importance to the United States, whereas a center, a center-right or a DC-Fascist government would be acceptable from our viewpoint. I was not present at the meetings but I asked

one of the officers who had participated, and whose views I knew, whether he agreed with all of these conclusions. He did not. I mention this to explain my remark to the Inspector that the position taken in Despatch 1164 had not reflected the unanimous viewpoint of the senior officers.

I did not agree with the position taken in Despatch 1164, of course, but it never occurred to me that another must necessarily prevail. What had been giving me and others great concern, however, were the views which the Deputy Chief of Mission had now been expressing orally for some time to the effect that the center-left was impossible, that Norini himself did not want it, and that at any rate the thing to do was to drive the Socialists back towards the Communists. These opinions were not set forth in Departmental or Embassy communications, including Despatch 1164, that I have seen. There was no question, of course, but that the Deputy had (as he should have) a predominant voice in proposing Embassy policy for the Ambassador's approval. It was felt that if this was part of the reasoning behind the Embassy's recommendations and activities, overt or covert, it was desirable for the Department to be so advised.

On May 25 (1960) the Department sent a telegram asking for the Embassy's suggestions for revision of an NSC paper, particularly (if I remember correctly) as they might reflect our up to date estimate of the Socialist Party. Around midday of the date the suggestions were due (June 29) the Political Counselor called me in, handed me a copy of his draft reply, said that I and the other political reporting officers available at the time could suggest any changes we saw fit, but that in all frankness he could not promise they would receive much consideration and that at all events he had already sent the Department an advance copy of his response. I and the other officers read over the draft as quickly as possible and then hastily looked over part of the original NSC paper. It seemed to us that the problem was so complex that there was insufficient time for there to be any genuine consultation on this important matter or to prepare any lucid justification for changes we might want to propose. The memorandum we sent to the Counselor stated we did not feel sufficient time remained for us to make any useful contribution, although we were in basic disagreement with the draft because we feared that more in what it did not say than in what it did say, it might lead to decisions which could indirectly benefit the Communists. We added that of course we would be glad to discuss the matter in detail if the Political Counselor wished. The memorandum was not intended to be disrespectful nor was there any indication the Counselor considered it so. As a matter of fact, considerable discussion and consultation followed in subsequent days and the original draft was changed significantly. The memorandum was not designed to make a record in any sense other than trying to emphasize that although we did not have any better suggestions ready at the moment we did not agree with the proposed revisions and were very worried about the Communist angle.

By this time efforts to form a center-left government in Italy had failed and the political trend had swung sharply to the right. Fanfani, a well known opportunist and adventurer, formed a Christian Democratic government dependent on Fascist support, thereby increasing the chances of a polarization of the internal political scene between an extreme right and left. Politicians began to speculate privately as to whether Fanfani might not be preparing to arrange to stay in power for many years. Some were extremely worried. I had also become very disturbed over the situation inside as well as outside the Embassy. Some of the officers shared my anxiety, which arose less from what the Embassy's policy recommendations said than from what they

did not discuss, including some of the reasoning and motives behind the recommendations. At the same time we were very uncertain as to whether the Ambassador was aware of the opinions of the internal political reporting officers and of their concern over the internal Italian political scene. It might be noted in passing that the Political Counselor, who represented the section at the senior officer meetings, had never disagreed with, or questioned, in my presence the above-mentioned views of the Deputy Chief of Mission, and he had indicated several times in response to our inquiries that he shared those views. In these circumstances I went to one senior officer in the political section who attended the top level meetings and was aware of our concern and asked for his informal opinion as to whether the misgivings of the internal political reporting officers had really been made sufficiently clear; and, whether he felt the Ambassador would be displeased if I went to him directly. His answer in both cases was in the negative. After considerable hesitation I did ask to see the Ambassador on July 1 (in so doing I skipped one link in the chain of command, for the Deputy Chief had gone to Austria, on vacation). At the time it seemed to me that if I did this there was a very good chance that the Embassy's official position would be reviewed and sooner or later would either change or be clarified, but that my intervention would prove detrimental to me. I felt that the stakes involved for the United States were now so high as to be an overriding consideration.

The Inspector has since written that I have claimed the Embassy's views have changed only because of my efforts, whereas other factors have also been involved. I was referring to my specific intervention with the Ambassador, while trying to show why I took that step. I believe the Embassy's policy position would not have been re-considered at that time if I had not gone to the Ambassador. What our eventual position and role in Italian affairs would have been otherwise I do not know of course. Perhaps my intervention with the Ambassador was not useful. But I am not, nor have I been, concerned with arguing these matters, and I certainly would not wish to disagree with any view the Inspector holds as to the development of the Embassy's policy recommendations.

I have mentioned my conversation with the Ambassador previously. He expressed no irritation or annoyance and asked me to prepare a memorandum which, he said, would receive due consideration and might lead to reopening the question of Embassy policy. Before the memorandum could be drafted, Rome and some of the other leading cities were the scene of the most violent outburst of fighting and rioting in Italy in many years, as the Communists exploited the government's link with the Fascists and attempted to bring about a complete polarization of the political scene. Lives were lost and many were injured. As an eyewitness in Rome, I sustained a minor dose of tear gas. Fortunately the Socialist Party and the democratic left did not join with the Communists in these endeavors, although their leaders privately were very worried lest they might be forced to do so eventually if the general situation did not improve. The memorandum, signed by me and another officer, consisted partly in pointing out what we thought were risks involved in the recommendations of Despatch 1164, and of urging either that the Embassy discuss and evaluate those risks for the Department's benefit or, if the Embassy did not regard them as risks, to state as much. It also asserted that the political reporting officers were disturbed less by the Embassy's actual recommendations than by Embassy policy views, oral as well as written. Among other things this paper was subsequently discussed at a meeting of the senior officers, one of whom later told me that the Ambassador had disagreed specifically with the Deputy Chief's oral statement,

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repeated on this occasion, that the Socialists should be driven back towards the Communists. Naturally this relieved much of my anxiety on that score (and of course I never went to the Ambassador again). Eventually another policy paper was prepared, by the Deputy Chief, and sent to the Department as Despatch 257 of September, 1960, weighing many of the pros and cons in the matter of the center-left. I was invited to attend one of the senior officer meetings discussing that paper and when the Ambassador asked for my opinion I stated that I thought it was better than the previous one, although I still did not agree with its conclusion. It was this Despatch which the Inspector mentioned as bearing the names of the senior officers in agreement. The reason I told the Inspector it was not unanimous was that it did not specify two senior officers who participated, at least one of whom was not in agreement. Once more I mention this not to try to argue the case of who was "right" or "wrong" but to clarify the Inspector's comments on this Despatch in his report.

When I apologized several times to the Political Counselor immediately after having gone to the Ambassador, he replied that he was not angry but only hurt that I had not asked him to let me do so beforehand, and that if I had asked him he did not think he would have denied me permission. We never mentioned the subject again until the Counselor's return, en route to Budapest. The Inspector's report points out that the memoranda to the Ambassador should have been sent to the Political Counselor for passing on to the Ambassador, rather than sending the latter the original and the Counselor a copy (although actually the memorandum was addressed to both the Ambassador and the Counselor). I agree and regret this oversight. I can only say that in the rush of events at the time I did not think of this nor, I believe, did anyone else. At all events the point had never come up previously.

In August, 1960, on the evening before I started annual leave, the Deputy Chief asked me and the Political Counselor to come to his office. He said that he had been talking with one of the political reporting officers and had been surprised to hear that the latter felt that he, the Deputy Chief, favored driving the Socialists back towards the Communists. He asked whether I also thought he wanted any such thing. I said that I did and I recalled to him that he had said that on previous occasions, and also that a center-left solution was impossible. I added that I had also been very worried over the possibility that the Embassy might have intervened covertly to block the previous attempt to form a center-left government. I mentioned that it was anxiety over his oral statements that had been the main reason for my going to the Ambassador. The Deputy Chief stated that there had been a misunderstanding and that what he had meant was that it would be good to drive the Socialists towards the Communists so that they would rebound all the harder, and that the center-left was impossible that year but perhaps not the next.

During that leave period, as I mentioned above, I flew to New York. While there I decided to make a one day visit to the Department to ask the appropriate personnel officer that my tour of duty be shortened solely in order to permit me to re-settle my mother, who had suffered a heart attack in Rome. I informed the Deputy Chief immediately upon returning to work. Almost as soon as I came back the Political Counselor left for an assignment on the Selection Boards and while in Washington was reassigned as Chief of Mission at Budapest.

I have already commented on the matter of the memoranda of conversations. I might add that the Deputy Chief of Mission, who became Charge d'Affaires at

approximately this time, had expressed irritation with memoranda which he felt were providing background in the Department for analyses of the Italian internal situation, and particularly of the role of the Socialist Party, with which he did not agree. He emphasized he wanted more analysis and cited two previous bad examples of memoranda, one reporting a conversation I had had with a prominent Christian Democrat from approximately the center of the DC who had speculated favorably on the possibility of future collaboration with the Socialists. The Charge pointed out that reports such as these, if submitted without Embassy evaluation, could be most misleading in Washington. I agreed with him that this might be true in some cases, although I frankly do not believe it was true of memoranda I had been preparing. I also emphasized that I was willing, even eager, to do analysis, and had been doing quite a bit of it, even though it seldom met with his approval, but that I did want to make a special plea for continuing the memoranda, for otherwise the Department would be deprived of useful material, that is, what Italian politicians were saying to us in private (both pro and con) about the center-left, an important and complicated problem which still gave rise to much evaluation, doubt and misunderstanding. I added that since I knew the Charge would not agree with my analysis or assessment, for instance in the specific case he had cited, I wanted to request that we continue to send in any pertinent reports of conversations I was having with any judgment, analysis or comments he would care to add. I think that during the period the ban on memoranda existed, that is, until shortly before the Inspector's arrival, it became more difficult for the Department to make an independent assessment of the Italian political situation. At all events, as mentioned previously, the Department complained of the absence of the memoranda.

In concluding this lengthy memorandum, which has attempted to touch on most of the points mentioned in the Inspector's report, I would like to emphasize once more that none of my notions above were prompted by a conviction that I had a monopoly of truth or wisdom, or that my views were necessarily the best, or that I had to make them prevail at all costs. And I have been, and am, quite ready to follow the orders of my superiors and to help in carrying out whatever official policy has been laid down. I tried repeatedly to make these points clear to the Inspector, and to convince him that at the time I went to the Ambassador I had been disturbed less by a mere difference of views than by my fear that the Department was not being fully informed of the reasoning and motives influencing our recommendations in a situation in which the stakes for our country were extremely high. I agree that the responsibility for maintaining good relations rests most heavily with subordinates and I believe I have a fairly good understanding of the proper relationship between a superior and subordinate (I have had supervisory experience in political work both at Moscow and in the Department).

Following the inspection, or just as it ended, there occurred the conversation described by the Deputy Chief of Mission in his comment on my Efficiency Report of June, 1961, covering the period from October, 1960 to June, 1961. This was just before I left for my temporary assignment at the Laon Conference (at the end of June, 1961) and, I believe, the last or next to last time I have ever talked with the Deputy, for he had gone to sit on the Selection Boards before I returned to Rome from Geneva. At the time my main concern was not over the far less important matter of specific ratings, or evaluation of my judgment, or estimate of my total contribution

last rather at the prospect of having the former Political Counselor's report, criticizing me for lack of discipline and cooperativeness, become a part of my permanent record. During the conversation the Deputy Chief patiently emphasized that he would repeat once more what he knew had "shocked" me, and what "had shocked Ambassador Zellerbach" when the Deputy had said it on occasions in the past, namely, that "the best thing would be for the leftwingers to regain control of the Socialist Party". The point I would like to make clear here, and indeed throughout the entire memorandum, is that while I disagree strongly with this view (for I think that if the leftwingers regained control of the PSI party apparatus they would be able to, among other things, influence many party members and voters away from the autonomist policy), I would be prepared to do everything I could to help achieve that goal if it became official policy. Our official policy, as expressed both in communications from the Department and the Embassy, calls for trying to encourage the Socialists away from the Communists, and I have never read anything which would even suggest that we hope for a victory by the leftwingers inside the PSI. It might be added that this is a matter of more than academic interest at this time. Some of the Socialist rightwingers have been urgently seeking covert financial assistance from us to help counteract Communist influence and activities in their party, and they even visited me in Geneva (during the Laos Conference) on more than one occasion to urge a favorable decision on our part. Without discussing the merits of their requests, I would only submit that in coming to a decision in matters of this kind the question of whether all concerned really want the rightwingers to remain in control of the PSI is of some pertinence.

I apologize for the length of this memorandum to any intrepid soul who has persevered in reading this far. A much shorter memorandum would have been preferable but the subject is an extremely complicated one. And I did want to clarify all misunderstanding and confusion as to the issues involved and the nature of the difference of views within the Embassy.