
ZENITH AND DOWNFALL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN FAR-LEFT: LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF YUGOSLAVIA AND EUROCOMMUNISTS IN THE LATE 1970s

Luka Filipović, PhD*

ABSTRACT: *From the perspective of our current time, it seems to be easy to neglect how dynamic the changes of social reality were, whose effects were experienced by the contemporaries of the late 1970s, and also, how politically significant and internationally influential the far-left parties and labour unions in the countries of Western Europe were. In a short period separating the “long year of socialism in Europe” (1974–1976) from the beginning of neoliberal reforms in the early 1980s, Eurocommunist parties reached both the zenith and the downfall of their influence in the domestic politics of Mediterranean countries and in international Marxist initiatives. At the same time, a similar path would be followed by Yugoslav communists, who became the closest associates and financial supporters of Eurocommunist parties, with LCY reaching the height of its influence on the European far left, only to lose it in a seemingly sudden turn of events. This paper will examine the potential manifestations of a long-term social and historical process that only became visible towards the end of the last decade of the “welfare state” in Europe. The presented research results were derived from applying the classical historical method to archival sources, while the same results were subjected to the comparative method to identify potential factors that may have influenced the stated process.*

KEYWORDS: Eurocommunism, democratic socialism, welfare state, neoliberalism, League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Communist Party of Italy

Times of “great enthusiasm” and the zenith of Yugoslav influence on the European far-left

When Italian and French writers and filmmakers present the social reality of both rich and poor urban quarters in the late 1970s, there was a constantly recurring theme of conflict on the Italian and French far-left, with the clashes between Eurocommunists, socialists, anarchists, new-age university movements or new-age ter-

* Research Associate, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1810-6175>; E-mail: luka.filipovic@isi.ac.rs

rorists often influencing every sphere of public and private life. When confronted with the testimonies of how seemingly insignificant differences in understanding of similar ideologies articulated the animosities that broke apart political coalitions, unions, student organisations or even families and personal relations, we are tempted to forget the broader picture that tells the story of how the political and everyday life of two greatest military and economic powers of the Western Bloc became almost entirely dominated by the left-wing parties and movements.¹ Various studies in social sciences and humanities have been devoted to analyses of numerous factors that could have potentially made possible for the leftist parties and movements to regain influence and popularity they held during the “Red Spring” (*Primavera Rossa*) of Europe (1946–1949), and to almost achieve a peaceful transition of economic and political systems in Italy and France less than a decade after the rebellions of 1968 and just years before the beginning of neoliberal reforms in the Western Bloc.²

One of many factors which had certain contribution towards the strengthening of leftist parties and labour unions was the creation of Eurocommunism, which allowed communist parties of the Mediterranean to more effectively address the direct consequences of fast social changes that were occurring in welfare state era Western Europe, as well as to expand cooperation with other far-left and eventually, left-wing centrist parties both within their own countries, and in the growing sphere of European Economic Community.³ What is now commonly recognised as the Eurocommunist ideology was gradually developed through a similar process of implementing reforms in political practices and changing principles that defined the official party ideologies of Italian, French, Spanish, and Greek communist parties.⁴ Analysed sources indicate that the same ideas which reformist factions gathered around led to debates among French communist philosophers and members of the Italian party (PCI) leadership almost immediately after the end of the Second World War, and that economic changes of the early 1950s contributed considerably to the

¹ Aurélie Andry, *Social Europe “in the long 1970s”: The story of a defeat* (Florence: European University Institute, 2017), 93–143; Herbert Obinger and Carina Schmitt, “Guns and butter? Regime Competition and the Welfare state during the Cold War”, *World Politics*, vol. 63, no. 2, (2011), 246–270; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “Poverty and Progress”, *The American Scholar*, vol. 33, no. 4, (1964), 594–606.

² André Albuquerque Sant’Anna and Leonardo Weller, “The threat of communism during the Cold War: A constraint to income inequality?”, *Comparative Politics*, vol. 52, no. 3, (2020), 2–30; Klaus Petersen, Michele Mioni and Harbert Obinger, “The Cold War and Welfare State in the Western Europe”, in: *International Impacts on Social Policies. Global Dynamics of Social Policy*, edited by Frenk Nullmeier, Delia González de Reufels and Harbert Obinger (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 43–59; Alessandro Brogi, “Ending Grand Alliance Politics in Western Europe: US Anti-communism in France and Italy, 1944–7”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 53, no. 1, (2018), 134–157.

³ Silvio Pons, “The rise and fall of Eurocommunism”, in: *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 45–65; Donald Sassoon, “The rise and fall of the European Communism 1939–1948”, *Contemporary European History*, vol. 1, no. 2, (1992), 139–169; Mandel Ernest, *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism* (London: Verso Publishing, 2016), 11–34.

⁴ Vjekoslav Mikecin, *Evrokomunizam i socijalizam* (Zagreb: Globus, 1979), 148–221; Philip Elliott and Philip Schlesinger, “On the stratification of political knowledge: Studying Eurocommunism, an unfolding ideology”, *The Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, (1979), 55–89; Giuseppe Vacca, “The ‘Eurocommunist’ Perspective: Contribution of the Italian Communist Party”, in: *In Search of Eurocommunism*, ed. Richard Kindersley (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981), 105–146.

growing prominence of the Italian and French early reformists.⁵ Reformist factions within Mediterranean parties expanded their influence through the 1950s and especially in the 1960s. Still, it was not until the Czechoslovakia crisis in 1968 and subsequent “great split” on the European far-left that future Eurocommunist parties were ready to abandon the tradition of appropriating principles of the Bolshevik socialist model, since they were aware that such a course of action would inevitably lead them to conflict with the powerful Communist party of the Soviet Union, and all the parties of the Eastern Bloc.⁶

Recorded conversations between Yugoslav and Italian communists show that many members of the PCI leadership felt quite comfortable discussing their reformist ideas with the LCY members in the early 1960s, and that during the times of rising tensions on the European far-left in 1967, Luigi Longo managed to obtain enthusiastic assurances from Josip Broz Tito that Yugoslav party would support Italian communists in the enactment of their already made reformist plans, as well as during the anticipated conflict with the Soviet party.⁷ During the political turmoil of 1968 and after the split of European communist parties at the 1969 summit in Moscow over the question of Soviet responsibility for the invasion of Czechoslovakia⁸, League of Communists of Yugoslavia greatly expanded its policies of providing financial aid to the reformist fractions of Spanish and Greek communist parties in exile, while at the same time cutting the financial and other forms of support for those fractions that remained in close relations with the leadership of Soviet party.⁹ When the reformist fraction of the French party finally started to openly criticise those policies of party leadership that they had defined as “Stalinist”, Yugoslav communists organised and financed numerous programs for research visits, conferences and vacations for those French communists and union representatives who were supporting the reforms of PCF policies and eventually, the formal adoption of the new Eurocommunist ideology.¹⁰

⁵ The Archive of Yugoslavia (Arhiv Jugoslavije – AJ), found 507, League of Communists of Yugoslavia, section IX, Commission for International Relations and Cooperation, files 395–427, Recorded conversations (of LCY members) with the leadership of Italian Communist Party (abbreviated: AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-427, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership).

⁶ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

⁷ AJ, found 837, Cabinet of the President of the Republic, section I-3-a, Information about the visits of Palmiro Togliatti, Luigi Longo and Enrico Berlinguer (abbreviated: AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44, Information about the visits of PCI leadership).

⁸ Although, it should be mentioned that the aforementioned summit in Moscow itself was focused around the split between Chinese and Soviet communists parties, which was, according to some scholars, the primary reason why Soviet party needed the support of the Western communist parties. Unresolved disputes over the Czechoslovakian crisis were, on the other hand, a reason used by the Western parties in order to refuse the Soviet demands (John P. Sontag, “International Communism and Soviet Foreign Policy”, *The Review of Politics* vol. 32, no. 1, (1970), 78–90).

⁹ Luka Filipović, “Finansijska politika Saveza komunista Jugoslavije prema komunističkim partijama Italije, Francuske, Španije i Grčke krajem šezdesetih godina 20. veka”, *Istorija 20. veka*, no. 2, (2022), 477–494.

¹⁰ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-212, Information about the visit of PCF directorate member A. Kazanova; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-230, About the help provided to French journalist A. Gerec; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-236, Reports about the visit of French philosopher and PCF member Roger Garaudy.

After the communist parties of the Mediterranean changed their ideologies and reformed their political practices, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia continued to support Eurocommunist parties in their conflicts with Eastern Bloc parties, both publicly, in international institutions of the Labour movement and in the organisation of the European far-left, and behind the curtains.¹¹ That was done through sharing confidential information with the French reformists, replacing the Soviets in providing protection and various services of Yugoslav state institutions to Spanish and Greek communists in exile, including military aid to the resistance groups in Greece, and participating in the secretive plans of Italian communists to direct minor parties and movements towards the reformist course.¹² In the realm of Italian and French domestic politics, which was becoming increasingly unstable with the beginning of the political crisis of the 1970s, League of Communists of Yugoslavia invested significant efforts into contributing to the expansion of Eurocommunist political influence, and thus Yugoslav party institutions and labour unions often took the role of mediators and organisers of various platforms for negotiations about cooperation between French communists and socialists, as well as between Italian communists, socialists and democratic Christians.¹³ Lastly, Yugoslav party and state institutions participated in, or even financed, the implementation of numerous PCI initiatives aimed at bringing together various leftist parties and movements within the European Economic Community and in the regions of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa, and South America.¹⁴

Through investing the rising Yugoslav international influence within the countries outside Eastern and Western Bloc, as well as the increasing economic power of Yugoslav state, League of Communists of Yugoslavia achieved a constant rise of its influence on the European far-left, and during the last decade of the welfare state policies in Europe, finally managed to succeed in creating a significant opposition to the previously hegemonic control that Soviet party held in increasingly complex sphere of relations between leftist parties and movements in Western Europe.¹⁵ Some contemporary authors of articles published in the Italian and French press assessed that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia achieved the greatest success of its policies towards Eurocommunist parties during the conflict between the Eastern and Western communist parties that accompanied preparations for the Conference of the European communist parties in Berlin, which lasted from 1974 to 1976.¹⁶ Through careful tactics and long term planning, group of the Western communist parties that was under the informal leadership of Italian and Yugoslav party managed to hold their

¹¹ AJ, found 142, Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia, section A, files from the years 1974–1978, Reports on international cooperation (abbreviated: AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences).

¹² AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/1-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

¹³ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-331, Information about the internal changes in French party and changes of PCF attitudes.

¹⁴ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-427, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

¹⁵ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences.

¹⁶ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, Information on the writings of French and Italian Marxist newspapers about the social and political situation in Yugoslavia.

position in complex negotiations with the Eastern Bloc parties, and to further improve it by capitalising on the dynamic changes in both geopolitical situation and individual social reality of Western and Eastern European countries during the times that were to a certain degree shaped by the new circumstances of the *détente*.¹⁷ That allowed Yugoslav and Italian communists to finally reach a compromise with the Soviet party towards the early summer of 1976 which included the Soviet formal recognition of the political benefits that arrived from the changes of political practices (but not of party ideologies) of Mediterranean parties (which was considered by PCI and LCY leadership to be an informal recognition of the idea that principles of Bolshevik socialist model could not be universally applied to every country and historical time), and in turn, parties under the influence of PCI and LCY only agreed to sign a document stating their support to Soviet party's commitment towards the principles of the *détente*, which allowed the Soviets to showcase to the governments of Western Bloc that they still hold some, though rapidly diminishing, control over some of the most influential political parties in Western Europe.¹⁸

During the increasingly frequent visits of General Secretary of PCI to Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito and Enrico Berlinguer spent many hours in confidential and cordial conversations about the plans of LCY and PCI to expand the influence of the informal group that was already named the Reformist Bloc of Marxist parties outside Mediterranean into the sphere of European politics and outside the limitations presented by international institutions of Labor movement into the undefined and seemingly borderless, but ever expanding sphere of the global far-left.¹⁹ Just a few weeks after the Berlin conference, delegations of LCY and PCI met with two main topics of discussion prepared for the agenda of the meeting – organising a large political initiative of many major and minor European left-wing parties and movements to strengthen the foundations of the continental welfare state, and organising forums for discussion about expanding cooperation between Eurocommunists and those communist or socialist parties of Middle East, Africa and Southern America whose party ideologies evolved like the one followed in designing the reforms of Yugoslav socialist model.²⁰ Ambitious plans of Yugoslav and Italian communists also included increasing mutual support for Spanish and Greek communists that was expected to contribute to the process of reestablishing the influence PCE and KKE held before the civil wars in Spain and Greece, as well as cooperation in the efforts to undermine the remaining influence of the political elements which supported right-wing dictatorships in the Mediterranean countries.²¹ To the contemporary analysts from numerous LCY party institutions, that was the time of great enthusiasm on the European far-left,

¹⁷ AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Berlin Conference of 1976, Materials for preparations of Yugoslav delegation in Berlin.

¹⁸ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-48, Reception of the general secretary of PCI, Enrico Berlinguer.

¹⁹ AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Berlin Conference of 1976, Reports of Yugoslav delegation present in Berlin; AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Berlin Conference of 1976, Analysis of the LCY delegation work and achievements.

²⁰ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-543-555, Analysis of the correspondence between the institutions of LCY and PCI.

²¹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-887, Materials received from the Central Committee of the KKE interior; AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-18, Information about the visit of Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of PCE.

which was expected to culminate in the new “historical compromise” between Italian communists and democratic Christians, leading towards expansion of welfare state policies and the eventual transition of social reality in Italy that would result in the creation of a new economic and political system.²²

“Almost a socialist state in a capitalist world”: Death of Aldo Moro and the end of “historical compromise”

Analysed sources show that many contemporary authors of articles published in French and later, Spanish and Greek party newspapers viewed reforms conducted by the Communist Party of Italy as a cause of unprecedented political success of Italian communists in the late 1970s, and subsequently, as a model according to which they could define their own reformist policies.²³ Italian communists were the first to formally change their party policies and define a new party ideology (then referred to as “Italian way to socialism”) in 1969, over the course of the XII Congress of PCI held in Bologna, and the first to adopt the term Eurocommunism, invented by the press and media, to describe the new Marxist ideology.²⁴ The Italian party was also the first communist party of the Mediterranean that proposed the gradual change of social reality through the expansion of welfare state policies as the end-goal of the new party ideology and primary objective to be taken into account when discussing political practice, which opened up new possibilities regarding cooperation with the other leftist parties, and even parties that participated in Italian governments.²⁵ Lastly, the Italian Communist Party was the first to achieve considerable political success after the introduction of Eurocommunist reforms, which, according to Italian socialist estimates, was already evident in the early seventies, when the popularity of PCI started to rise again after more than a decade of decline.²⁶ After the PCI’s “historical success” in the 1976 Italian elections, authors of the reports of the LCY Office for International Relations concluded that “political benefits of Eurocommunism” were decisively proven both by the election results and by the subsequent beginning of negotiations between Enrico Berlinguer and Aldo Moro about the cooperation between Italian communists and the government.²⁷

A path for the expansion of cooperation between the fraction of democratic Christians gathered around the personality of Aldo Moro and the reformed Communist Party of Italy was laid by the many new party policies PCI specifically defined to uphold the principles of the proposed, yet never formally adopted, program for regulating political practice that was referred to as a “historical compromise”.²⁸ The

²² AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-426-513, Reports on political and social situation in Italy.

²³ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-52-81, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-210-255, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-712-779, Information on the development of cooperation between LCY and PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

²⁴ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-429, Reports of the Yugoslav delegation present at XII Congress of PCI in Bologna.

²⁵ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-427, Materials sent by PCI, explanation of the “*Italian road to socialism*”.

²⁶ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-427, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

²⁷ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-426-513, Reports on political and social situation in Italy.

²⁸ Emanuele Bernardi, “Aldo Moro and Enrico Berlinguer”, in: *The Oxford Handbook on Italian politics*, ed. Erik Jones, and Gianfranco Pasquino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 368–377;

term itself arrived from a series of articles written by Enrico Berlinguer and other members of PCI leadership about the possible cooperation between the communists and the state, to which Aldo Moro replied with numerous expressions of cordial support towards both proposed PCI reforms and discussions about ways to improve relations between democratic Christians and communists in Italy.²⁹ Later, both Italian communists and democratic Christians started to frequently use the term “historical compromise” to describe multiple possible future scenarios in which PCI and parties of the Italian government were supposed to exchange political concessions in order to contribute towards stabilising political crisis and calming down the rapid increase of social tensions that followed the beginning of the “years of lead” (*Anni di piombo*) in Italy.³⁰ Thus, according to the assessments of both Yugoslav and French communists, “historical compromise” became a “purposely undefined term”, used in order to referee to expected future cooperation but to “cast a shadow” over its changeable intended extent, the price that would be paid in currently unacceptable political concessions, and seemingly approaching time when the final terms would be agreed upon in growingly complex negotiations between the narrow inner circles of Enrico Berlinguer and Aldo Moro.³¹

While Italian communists presented the final version of the “historical compromise” as a distant and uncertain future during their conversations with the representatives of Eastern Bloc parties, they were frequently and elaborately speaking to their Yugoslav counterparts about the expected expansions of collaboration with democratic Christians since the beginning of the political crisis within most countries of Western Europe and the Mediterranean in the early 1970s.³² After their success in the Italian elections of 1976 and subsequent compromise with the Soviet party in Berlin, Italian communists finally informed the LCY delegation in Rome of their estimate that PCI would soon begin to participate informally in the formulation of Italian state policies and to cooperate closely with the new government.³³ During the meetings with the Yugoslav union representatives, sources close to the party leadership of democratic Christians confirmed that Aldo Moro views the government created after the election of 1976 as only a temporary solution, until the final compromise was reached with the leadership of PCI, and Moro’s vision of a government comprised of socialists and democratic Christians and supported by the Communist Party of Italy could be materialised at last, bringing an end to the age of political strife and social tensions in Italy.³⁴ According to both the testimonies of Italian communists and contemporary political analysts, it was planned that Italian communists would provide the government with their political support and their help in the excessive police and military actions against the “new age” terrorist groups of both far-right and far-left

Bas Dianda, *A History of the Seventies: The political, cultural, social and economic developments that shaped the modern world* (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2017), 91–125.

²⁹ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, Information on cooperation between PCI and democratic Christians.

³⁰ Alberto Ronchay, “Guns and Gray Matter: Terrorism in Italy”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 57, no. 4, (1979), 921–940, Richard Drake, *The Aldo Moro Case* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 18–32.

³¹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-426-513, Reports on political and social situation in Italy.

³² AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-427, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

³³ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-317, Analyses of the reports about the meeting of LCY and PCF delegations.

³⁴ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-392-426, Information about the cooperation between LCY and PCI.

ideologies. In turn, the new government would consult PCI in defining its domestic policies, giving Italian communists and labour unions under PCI influence a certain amount of participation in the process of defining new social policies.³⁵

Italian and Yugoslav communists expected that, through the expansion of welfare-state policies in Italy, the political power of the PCI and labour unions would increase dramatically, allowing them to pressure future governments to grant even more concessions, thereby further increasing the influence of Italian communists and unions.³⁶ In their numerous articles published in various Marxist journals around Italy and Europe, Enrico Berlinguer and other members of the Italian party leadership expressed that the previously stated outcome was the ideal model for achieving “peaceful transition” of Italian social reality, which they had already defined as the most important goal of their efforts to create a new party ideology back in 1968 and 1969.³⁷ Analysed sources show the existence of a common belief among Italian party members and other Eurocommunists, that evolved around the idea that further expansion of welfare state policies would ensure continuation of the already started process, during which a constant increase in social policies and union power would become socially normalised to a degree which would allow for the belief in left-wing economic principles to become a social norm. At the same time, strengthened labour unions, university movements and various working class social groups would have enough money and free time to devote themselves to the matters of cultural inequalities, thus contributing towards the already started expansion of their conceptions about human rights as well as various humanitarian and egalitarian ideas that only became determining questions of heated public debates during the civil rights movements of 1950s and university rebellions of 1960s.³⁸ That process would eventually make it inevitable for all political parties and movements to adjust their ideologies further, propose economic policies and political practices in accordance with the dominant leftist principles, thus making it possible for the Italian society to peacefully evolve from the capitalist reality towards a form of socialism, and later, towards a Marxist utopia.³⁹

The time of enthusiastic hopes shared by Italian and Yugoslav communists was cut short when, in 1978, Aldo Moro was first kidnapped and then murdered, for which a far-left terrorist group named the Red Brigades claimed responsibility. Still, many theories have emerged to address numerous speculations about the involvement of external factors. That left Moro’s faction of democratic Christians in a weakened position just as they were about to face the steadily growing opposition to the notion of “historical compromise” in yet another power struggle within the party.⁴⁰ Italian communists offered their help in searching for Moro’s murderers, and eventually, the continuation of the talks about the possible expansion of cooperation to

³⁵ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Information about the political parties in Italy.

³⁶ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-543-555, Analysis of the correspondence between the institutions of LCY and PCI.

³⁷ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-536, Information about the writings of Marxist newspapers in Italy.

³⁸ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-427, Materials sent by PCI, explanation of the “*Italian road to socialism*”.

³⁹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-429, Reports of the Yugoslav delegation present at XII Congress of PCI in Bologna.

⁴⁰ Luka Filipović, *Evrokomunizam i Jugoslavija 1968–1980* (Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2023), 383–398.

Berlinguer's cousin, Francesco Cossiga, and other democratic Christians who were still in favour of continuing Moro's policies towards communists. However, at the same time, Italian communists during their visits to Yugoslavia testified that they were completely aware that their dreams about socialist Italy were condemned to be buried with Moro, since the same internal powers which could have helped Red Brigades achieve the goals of their attack would never allow for Cossiga not to share the fate of Moro if he continued in his path. The external factors which may have been responsible for the murder of Moro would never allow for a semi-socialist state to be gradually developed within the borders of the Western Bloc.⁴¹ Authors of the reports that were coming from various party offices of LCY concluded that from that moment, only further distancing was possible in all imaginary future developments of relations between Italian Eurocommunists and the two major government parties, democratic Christians and socialists, which would slowly but inevitably lead to isolation and eventual loss of prestige and influence of PCI not just in Italy, but also on the European far-left.⁴² Analysed sources indicate that numerous contemporaries found hard to believe how close Italian communist party came to actually become an unofficial part of the government, as well as how close Italy came to become what authors of the articles in Yugoslav party press described as "*almost a socialist state in capitalist world*" in the end of the long-term historical process that was interrupted by the death of Moro and abandonment of the "historical compromise".⁴³

Failed investments of the Yugoslav and Italian communists in the restoration of far-left influence in the political life of Spain and Greece

The correspondence between LCY and PCI in the aftermath of Moro's death shows that after the failed attempt to achieve compromise with the ruling parties of Italy, Italian communists grew increasingly distant from the other political parties and movements in Italy, while the period that LCY analysts once described as a "times of great enthusiasm" slowly transitioned to the "times of defeatism", which was marked by gradual abandonment of the reforms conducted within the PCI domestic political program.⁴⁴ According to the assessments of leading Spanish and Yugoslav communists, their Italian counterparts even briefly tried to compensate for the lost prestige and political power in Italy by zealously working to expand their influence in international organisations of European far-left, and for a short period of time even succeeded in the effort to renew many of their international policies and programs that were to a certain extent neglected during the negotiations on possible compromises with the Italian government, as well as to revive a shadow of former optimism

⁴¹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-633-688, Information about the current state of cooperation with PCI.

⁴² AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, Information about the political parties in Italy; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-426-513, Reports on political and social situation in Italy; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-317, Reports about the meeting with PCI delegation.

⁴³ AJ, SKJ, II/2-b-(244-252), Ideological commission, Materials from the assemblies of the federal Ideological commission in regard to the worker's movements in Europe; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-543-555, Analysis of the correspondence between the institutions of LCY and PCI.

⁴⁴ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-543-555, Analysis of the correspondence between the institutions of LCY and PCI.

among the left-wing parties of Western Europe.⁴⁵ Over the course of their renewed long meetings about possible international initiatives of communists parties of the Mediterranean, Europe and countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, members of PCI and LCY jointly concluded that restoration of former influence held by Spanish and Greek communists before the civil wars in Spain and Greece was of primary condition for the favourable outcome of their efforts to “breathe new life” into the already diminishing sphere of far-left influence in Western Europe and hold back the rising tides of socialist or early New Right popularity.⁴⁶

Yugoslav and Italian communists tried to define common policies of providing financial and numerous other forms of support for Spanish and Greek communists, as well as various programs of cooperation between those labour unions that maintained close ties with the parties of the Mediterranean far-left, to help PCE and KKE regain their once dominant position in the changing political life of Spain and Greece.⁴⁷ Together with the Yugoslav government, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia decided to utilise the still-growing international influence of the Yugoslav state to help Greek and Spanish communists return from exile and to initiate negotiations to expand cooperation with the provisional governments of Greece and Spain. Yugoslav communists also set a unique historical precedent by expanding financial aid to Greek and Spanish parties upon the return of KKE and PCE leaderships from exile, and by increasing budgets for medical care, free vacations, and research visits to Yugoslavia for Greek and Spanish communists. On their part, Italian communists organised seminars for their Spanish and Greek counterparts in Italy, which allowed them to observe the inner workings of the reformed PCI party structures. They provided PCE and KKE party institutions with considerable amounts of Marxist literature by Eurocommunist authors, as well as the expertise of senior PCI members and union officials, who travelled to Spain and Greece to help local party boards and unions implement democratisation reforms and build decentralised administrations.⁴⁸ However, recorded conversations between PCI and LCY delegations show that, despite all the mentioned actions, members of the Italian and Yugoslav party leadership still had doubts that the favourable historical moment for the expansion of PCE and KKE influence in Spain and Greece had already passed.⁴⁹

Even during the first months that followed the end of right-wing dictatorships in Greece and Spain which marked the “long year of European democratic socialism” (1974–1976), authors of the reports produced by LCY and PCI party offices showed certain concern that popularity of the Greek and Spanish party, whose leaderships were returning from exile, did not meet the expansion expected in the times of political turmoil which followed the fall of far-right regimes.⁵⁰ Already in 1975, over the course

⁴⁵ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-10-18, Information about the visits of Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of PCE.

⁴⁶ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences.

⁴⁷ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-317, Analyses of the reports about the meeting of LCY and PCF delegations.

⁴⁸ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-1-710-736, Analyses of the drafts concerning financial aid to the KKE interior; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-889, Information on cooperation with Central Committee of KKE interior.

⁴⁹ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-48, Reception of the general secretary of PCI, Enrico Berlinguer; AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-59, Recorded conversations between Josip Broz Tito and Enrico Berlinguer.

⁵⁰ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-526-565, Conversations with Italian Communists about the situation in Greece and Spain.

of numerous meetings held between delegations of LCY and PCI to determine new policies concerning cooperation of Mediterranean communist parties and creation of wider international leftist initiatives, Yugoslav and Italian communists assessed that momentum of already fast social changes in the Mediterranean region would be rapidly increased in years that would follow the end of more than half a century long period which was defined by rise and fall of numerous far-right dictatorships and military juntas in the countries across the region.⁵¹ During their first meetings after the death of Francisco Franco and the beginning of political transition in Spain, Josip Broz Tito and Santiago Carrillo concluded that Spanish communists might suffer a considerable loss of influence if the popularity of far-right decreases rapidly, and during the course of the long-term process in which political situation in the country would change in such a manner that another civil war becomes highly unlikely future scenario in the perceptions of contemporaries.⁵² Even though far-right organisations that viewed themselves as successors of Frankist regime attempted to initiate coup d'état in Spain only in 1981, Spanish communists already started suffering from significant decrease in PCE election results starting from 1977 onwards, with many prominent members of both fractions that were again unified in one Communist Party of Spain leaving the party in order to join the socialists, whose popularity was constantly on the rise during the times of transition.⁵³

As soon as they had started to conduct official visits to Yugoslavia and Italy, members of the interior Greek party leadership conveyed to their Yugoslav and Italian counterparts that many Greek communists were abandoning the ranks of KKE and joining the social democrats, left-wing liberals and even centrist parties and movements, which were able to achieve most political gains from the turmoil that followed the fall of military dictatorship in Greece. Members of LCY delegation noted that Greek communists spoke about the actions of those who had quit the KKE with "moderately disappointed, but calm voice", while emphasising estimations that former communists were quitting the party because they understand that far-left political prominence would slowly fade away without a presence of politically significant far-right power that would keep reproducing social tensions and fears, which communist parties could then articulate and integrate into their revolutionary agenda.⁵⁴

Furthermore, Yugoslav and Italian communists assessed that one of the major factors that contributed towards gradual weakening of political position held by Spanish and Greek far-left parties and labour unions was almost constant infighting between increasingly distant and different groups of Marxists, anarchists and those inclined to New Left ideologies, which became more common without an integrating effect of the "common enemy" that would create a powerful enough threat to force various groups on the far-left to overcome their disagreements in order to form a unified resistance.⁵⁵ For example, in the last months of 1978, Yugoslav and Italian communists enthusiastically discussed numerous plans to organise conferences, semi-

⁵¹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-317, Analyses of the reports about the meeting of LCY and PCF delegations.

⁵² AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-18, Report about the meeting of J.B. Tito with S. Carrillo, General Secretary of PCE.

⁵³ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-147-155, Reports on political and social situation in Spain.

⁵⁴ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-860-868, Reports about the meetings held with the leadership of KKE interior; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-848-898, Reports about the social and political situation in Greece.

⁵⁵ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences.

nars, and vacations to bring together various new groups on the Greek and Spanish far left, as well as to promote their cooperation with the KKE and the PCE. Only a few months later, in the summer of 1979, authors of the reports coming from the LCY Office for International Relations and Cooperation felt the need to especially focus their attention on the failures of Greek and Spanish communists to find common ground even among the divided fractions of their own parties, concluding that it was extremely unlikely that communists parties would ever again become the unifying force on the Greek and Spanish far-left.⁵⁶

At the same time, Yugoslav and Italian communists started to share their thoughts on the seemingly constant rise of popularity and increasing influence of the socialists on the left-wing of the political spectrum in most Mediterranean countries, while on the right-wing, they encountered the appearance of the first continental followers of those ideas that had already been recognised as the ideologies of the New Right in Great Britain and the United States.⁵⁷ During his many visits to Yugoslavia, Santiago Carrillo often spoke to Yugoslav communists about how the left-wing parties were getting much more moderate with the turbulent years of political crises, terrorism and cultural changes in Western Europe, while the right-wing parties were becoming more radicalised and were attracting many more young people, representatives of the working class and academics than ever before.⁵⁸ Just before the death of Josip Broz Tito, leaders of KKE wrote to the LCY party offices expressing concern that with the constant decline of the internal Greek party influence, social democrats and left-wing liberals in Greece were becoming the only political forces capable of resisting the “ever growing appeal” of those right-wing parties that were “claiming to have new economic and cultural solutions for social tensions”, but it was questionable would the moderate left even be interested in resisting those new forces whose influence had already managed to spread all the way from the financial centres of transatlantic world to the rural Greece, or it would make a political bargain with them.⁵⁹

Authors of the articles in Italian Marxist papers testified that Italian communists feel a certain obligation to express feelings of shock and doubt when confronted with the facts about rising socialist power in Spain, but fail to devote attention to the fact that, while the PCI was stagnating both in terms of its domestic and international influence, Italian socialists were gaining prominence. The new socialist president of Italy, Sandro Pertini, was becoming an unofficial leader of continental European resistance against the first concepts of neoliberal economic reforms.⁶⁰ However, Italian communists themselves often spoke about how their French counterparts were completely disregarding the fact that support of their traditional voters was slowly going over to the newly rising faction of the socialists led by François Mitterrand, who would

⁵⁶ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-526-565, Conversations with Italian Communists about the situation in Greece and Spain; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-634-694, Information on cooperation and communication with the Italian Communist Party.

⁵⁷ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-634, Information about the PCI attitudes towards other Marxist parties in Europe.

⁵⁸ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-10-18, Information about the visits of Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of PCE.

⁵⁹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-887, Materials received from the Central Committee of the KKE interior.

⁶⁰ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-536, Information about the writings of Marxist newspapers in Italy.

eventually win in the presidential race against the PCF leader, Georges Marchais, though the communist party would eventually become a part of the socialist government in France. Still, according to the French communists' own estimates, it would "leave the socialist government much weaker than it has joined it".⁶¹ Although contemporaries could not have known it in the last years of welfare-state economic policies in Western Europe, the time that Berlinger's successors in PCI later named the "time of socialist governments and neoliberal reforms" was already approaching.⁶²

Gradual distancing – Slow marching consequences of the abandonment of reformist policies in Yugoslavia

In the last months of the period that would be remembered as the "welfare state era" in Western Europe, the influence of communist parties in Greece and Spain was rapidly decreasing, while the two biggest communist parties outside the Eastern Bloc were entering a period of political isolation, which was in the case of French communists a "self-imposed" exile from the institutionalised politics in France, and in the case of Italian communists, a consequence of rising pressure from the socialists on the left and failure to find a common cause with the democratic Christians.⁶³ Analysed sources show that a significant number of PCF Central Committee members openly spoke to their Yugoslav counterparts about their calculated plans to increase their influence through distancing themselves from everyday political problems. On the other hand, Italian communists assessed that PCF isolationism was a desperate gamble to retain the votes of those who were still finding themselves on the margins of society despite the welfare state policies, and whose animosities towards the entire new "political class" arising in France, as well as towards state institutions themselves, were being increasingly articulated by the ideologies of New Left movements.⁶⁴ On the other hand, PCI was suffering from the political consequences of the failure to move forwards with its plans of creating new European leftist initiatives, which increasingly included integrating far-left parties into initiatives started within the institutions of European Economic Community, and was unable to showcase its international influence to the Italian public, especially to the growing moderate-left majority, which was, in the words of PCI leadership, "already impressed on the daily basis" by Pertini's continuation of Nenni's expansion of the international significance of the Italian socialists.⁶⁵

However, PCI and PCF still held the position of second most popular parties in their countries judging by the election results, while possessing such social influence in

⁶¹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-339-356, Reports about the meetings with the members of PCF leadership.

⁶² AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-656-688, Information on correspondence and communication with the PCI.

⁶³ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-110-162, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-779-825, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-290-339, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-565-636, Information about the development of cooperation with PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

⁶⁴ Diplomatic Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Serbia (DAMSPRS), Belgrade, Political Archive of the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, France, Year 1980, Folder 40, Reports on the conversations with PCF leadership (abbreviated: DAMSPRS, PA, France, 1980, F-40, Reports on the conversations with PCF leadership).

⁶⁵ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-634, Information about the PCI attitudes towards other Marxist parties in Europe.

many local communities that could only be described as astonishing from today's perspective, and keeping control over the majority of labour unions, who were able to retain their position as significant political and economic powers even in the last years of the welfare-state era in Italy and France.⁶⁶ The only area in which Italian and French communists were significantly pushed back by the rising power of socialists and early neoliberals was the ever-expanding sphere of international relations of the major political parties in contemporary Europe. It should be mentioned that Italian communists later testified that they were, back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, almost entirely unaware of how the early New Right activists used the institutions of European Economic Community to increase their influence within their own countries, while the socialists gained prominence through the complex manoeuvres of asserting their role as "defenders of welfare state" and negotiating with the economic reformists.⁶⁷ Failures to expand their influence within the "uncharted" territories of growingly institutionalised and centralised Western European politics could have only contributed towards determination of both PCI and PCF to return within the "well-known spheres" of European leftist movements, and to finally finish at least some of their old plans about integrating remaining far-left parties of the Mediterranean region in formal and informal interest groups as well as starting new initiatives within the international organisations of the Labor movement.⁶⁸ In this regard, both Italian and French communists counted on the support from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, which had previously showed the will to finance their endeavours of pushing back against the Soviet control in the sphere of relations between European Marxist parties, as well as to invest its significant international influence into expanding cooperation between the Eurocommunists and the left-wing parties and movements from Middle East, East Asia, Africa and South America.⁶⁹

Despite that, reports from LCY party offices suggest that Yugoslav communists in 1978 and 1979 did not approach the propositions of PCI and PCF leaderships about expanding their cooperation in the field of relations between Marxist parties of Europe and of the world nearly as enthusiastically as they did just a year or two ago, during the zenith of both Eurocommunist influence in Western Europe and LCY influence on the European far-left.⁷⁰ The League of Communists of Yugoslavia cordially accepted the invitations of the PCI and the PCF to participate in the process of defining new international initiatives to be organised by the Italian, French, and Yugoslav communists. Still, records of Yugoslav state and party institutions clearly show that the formal acceptance was not followed by the sudden or even noticeable expansion in the amounts and forms of financial aid provided to Eurocommunist parties, as had happened through the late 1960s and much of the 1970s.⁷¹ Another pattern that was

⁶⁶ DAMSPRS, PA, F-65, F-41, Italy, France, 1980. Information on the attitudes and activities of PCI and PCF.

⁶⁷ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-536, Information about the writings of Marxist newspapers in Italy.

⁶⁸ DAMSPRS, PA, France, 1980, F-40, Report about debates in France over the suggested economic reforms of EEC.

⁶⁹ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences.

⁷⁰ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-339-356, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-656-688, Information on cooperation with PCI and PCF.

⁷¹ L. Filipovic, *Evrokomunizam i Jugoslavija...*, 461–478.

slowly beginning to fade from the traditions that marked close relations between the Yugoslav and Italian parties was the custom of holding multiple meetings of PCI and LCY party delegations in Yugoslavia or Italy whenever there was a cause to organise them. These consultations, which over time became almost a ritual in the relations of the two parties that lasted for several days, included expensive hotel receptions and dinner parties, and were repeated, depending on the circumstance, either every month or at least once in three months, became an occurrence that was repeated once or twice a year starting from 1979 onwards.⁷² The intensity of written correspondence between PCI and LCY, which used to be maintained on a weekly and sometimes daily basis, not just between official party institutions but also between individual members of PCI and LCY party leaderships, slowly decreased towards the end of the “last decade of welfare state in Europe”. At the same time, the tone of some letters, notes and documents that were almost regularly exchanged between PCI and LCY institutions started losing its usual, everyday simplicity, with familiarities that were warm to an almost rude extent, and was beginning to regain its cordial but formal, polite but distant character that it had before the turbulent events of 1968 and 1979.⁷³

On the other hand, sources that testify about the visits of Eurocommunists leaders to Yugoslavia and their meetings with Josip Broz Tito from 1977 to 1979 do not contain any noticeable examples of new phenomenon in relations between LCY and communist parties of Mediterranean that could be described as gradual distancing, unlike in the case of documents of LCY party offices and official correspondence between Yugoslav communists and their Western European counterparts.⁷⁴ Thus, the continuation of extremely familiar and cordial relations between Josip Broz Tito and general secretaries of Eurocommunist parties should not be interpreted as an indicator that process of distancing had not already begun while the internationally influential president of LCY was still alive, but rather as an argument in favour of the hypothesis that it was the personal relations of Josip Broz Tito with the leaders of Western European parties that kept the distancing of LCY from the communists parties of Mediterranean from becoming apparent to the contemporaries to the extent it did soon after the funeral of Yugoslav leader in May of 1980.⁷⁵ Almost immediately after the death of Josip Broz Tito, all the general secretaries and even their deputies ceased both to come to Yugoslavia and receive delegations of Yugoslav communists personally.⁷⁶ Yugoslav party and state institutions soon started reducing the amounts dedicated to financial aid for the Eurocommunist parties, while still frequent correspondence between the highest levels of

⁷² DAMSPRS, PA, Italy, 1980, F-65, Information on the meetings with the members of party leadership of PCI.

⁷³ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-634-694, Analysis of the correspondence with the members and institutions of PCI.

⁷⁴ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/46-61-62, Reports about visits of Enrico Berlinguer; AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-358, Information about the visit of Georges Marchais; AJ, KPR, I-3-a/110-11-18, Receptions of Santiago Carrillo and Dolores Ibarruri.

⁷⁵ About the last encounters of Josip Broz Tito and Enrico Berlinguer, see Bogdan Živković, “The two last encounters between Broz and Berlinguer – the epilogue of an alliance”, *Balkanica*, no. 1, (2022), 273–300.

⁷⁶ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International Cooperation, Reports on cooperation with leftist political parties and labour unions of Italy, France, Greece and Spain.

the party leaderships of LCY and communist parties of the Mediterranean rapidly decreased until it finally came to an end in a period from 1981–1984, depending on the specific case of an Eurocommunist party.⁷⁷ The fact that one historical event such as the death of a single person, no matter how significant was the influence that person wielded, can mark an end of a long-term historical process, should almost without an exception testify that process had taken a different path then perceived by contemporaries even during the lifetime of that significant individual, with the disappearance of that “great name” from the “historical stage” only making the consequences of the long-term changes more visible.⁷⁸

In the case of League of Communists of Yugoslavia and Eurocommunist parties, we can see the clear signs of mutual mistrust as early as during the 1977 conference of Mediterranean communist leaders in Madrid, when authors of the reports produced by LCY offices concluded that neither Spanish, nor French, and “not even Italian” communists had disclosed in full detail to their Yugoslav counterparts what was discussed during the private meetings of Enrico Berlinguer, Santiago Carrillo and Georges Marchais.⁷⁹ That was, however, only a minor incident in otherwise very close and trustful relations that were continuously renewed during the time of still expanding cooperation between Yugoslav communists and Eurocommunist parties, that serves only as “an exception that proves the rule” but also as a reminder that LCY, PCI, PCF and KKE were, despite all the cordialities and personal friendships between their party leaderships, still parties with separate, though often similar ideologies, internal structures and party interests.⁸⁰ An example of open disagreement between LCY and the Eurocommunist leadership predates the Madrid conference. It stems from differences over the very term Eurocommunism. While the Yugoslav communists passionately supported Eurocommunist reforms, they most often refrained from the usage of the usage of the term Eurocommunism, judging that it could be interpreted as indicating the further distance from the older Marxist ideologies than it was practically useful, especially in regard to relations with Eastern Bloc communists and other parties that participated in the international institutions of the Labor movement, which became only point of disagreement found in the sources that testify about the relations between Josip Broz Tito and Enrico Berlinguer.⁸¹ Despite that minor difference in opinions on terminology, Berlinguer was very fast to act when the first open criticism of Yugoslav socialist model, leadership of Josip Broz Tito and the evolution of LCY policies appeared among the authors of articles in Marxist journals sponsored by PCI in 1978 and 1979, quickly distancing himself and party leadership from the opinions of individual Italian communist authors, apologising to LCY leadership and even conducting disciplinary enquiries within the party to determine why was the

⁷⁷ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-110-162, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-779-825, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-290-339, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-565-636, Information about the development of cooperation with PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

⁷⁸ AJ, KPR, I-2/68, Analyses of conversations between Josip Broz Tito, Santiago Carrillo and Enrico Berlinguer.

⁷⁹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-565-636, Information about the attitudes of Italian communists and cooperation with PCI.

⁸⁰ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences.

⁸¹ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/46-61-62, Reports about visits of Enrico Berlinguer.

“new generation” of PCI reformists expressing criticism towards the official party attitude about LCY and Yugoslav socialist model.⁸²

However, at the beginning of the 1980s, Italian party leadership seemed to be almost perfectly content with the increasingly open and radical criticism of Yugoslav party leadership and even the continuity of relations between PCI and LCY, while many leading Greek, French and even some Spanish communists found it necessary to formally distance themselves from the political successors of Josip Broz Tito.⁸³ Although that happened when Eurocommunist parties had been going through internal strife, which influenced the process of decentralisation towards particularisation, it can be concluded that various animosities towards the LCY were harboured long before there was a need to criticise the party leadership, keeping relations with Yugoslav communists that were, at the time, growing increasingly distant.⁸⁴ The causes of the newly found resentment towards Yugoslav communists among their formerly closest foreign associates and personal friends, should be searched in the long-term consequences of the process that started with the abandonment of reformist policies in Yugoslavia after the turbulent events of 1972 and 1974, but became visible to a certain number of Mediterranean Marxists only during the years that followed the death of Josip Broz Tito and the subsequent manifestations of accumulated political tensions and economic problems in Yugoslavia.⁸⁵

Analysed sources indicate that some of the leading Italian and French communists were already in 1972 to a certain extent disturbed by the events in Yugoslavia that followed the downfall of the so called “liberal groups” within the Yugoslav party leadership, as well by the expelling of the professors from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade, but were still ready to keep silent about their true attitudes towards the new policies of Yugoslav party and state institutions, and even to support Yugoslav communists to a certain degree.⁸⁶ After the adoption of the new Yugoslav institution in 1974, Italian communists offered their cordial congratulations to Yugoslav leadership, but also kept asking about the certain ideological principles behind some aspects of new state policies, especially those that they politely defined as “rather different, but to an insignificant degree” from the principles upon which Eurocommunists conducted their reforms, and which both PCI and LCY jointly promoted in the international organisations of the European and global far-left.⁸⁷ Many significant events that marked the “long year of European socialism” (1974–1976) brought LCY even closer to the Eurocommunist parties than it was the case before, while at the same time making it easier for the leaderships of the communist parties from the Mediterranean to focus their attention on the dynamic political changes and rising tensions within their own countries. Thus, they neglected their debates about the internal social reality of Yugoslavia to a certain degree, which they had so passionately waged back in 1968 and 1969, when they declared Yugoslav reformist policies to be the “ideal model”

⁸² AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-513-536, Information about the writings of Marxist newspapers in Italy.

⁸³ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-634-694, Analysis of the correspondence with the members and institutions of PCI.

⁸⁴ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-395-427, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

⁸⁵ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-110-162, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 33/I-779-825, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-290-339, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-565-636, Information about the development of cooperation with PCI, PCF, PCE and KKE.

⁸⁶ AJ, SKJ, II/2-b-(244-252), Ideological Commission, Documents for preparation for the sessions.

⁸⁷ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-427-513, Recorded conversations with the members of PCI leadership.

(in the words of Enrico Berlinguer the “bright Yugoslav example of abandoning Bolshevik authoritarianism and exclusionism”) for the policy changes they defended in the clashes with their own conservative fractions and Eastern Bloc parties.⁸⁸

But towards the end of the “last decade of the welfare state” in Europe, another process was on the verge of manifesting its long-term consequences. Especially the reactions of the young Italian and Spanish communists who criticised Berlinguer and Carrillo for keeping close relations with the “Eastern Bloc party outside the Iron Curtain” testify in favour of the hypothesis that the same process of expanding upon the reforms of internal democratisation, decentralisation and pragmatic deradicalisation was advancing in the Eurocommunist parties towards the point of realisation that they were facing difficulties finding common ground with the Yugoslav party which was stagnating in its unfinished reformist course.⁸⁹ On their own behalf, and even before the death of Josip Broz Tito, Yugoslav communists showed signs of becoming increasingly displeased with the extent to which Eurocommunists were pushing their reformist policies. They were especially discontented with the compromises that Italian and Spanish parties were ready to accept in order to expand cooperation with the moderate leftist or even left-wing centrist parties, even though it was Yugoslav communists themselves who strongly urged future Eurocommunists to change their attitudes towards cooperating with other political parties only a decade ago, and had been ever since providing financial incentives and destinations for the talks about cooperation on the Mediterranean left, as well as trying to moderate conflicts between communists, socialists and other leftist political forces within the region.⁹⁰

The slow marching process of distancing between the Yugoslav communists and Eurocommunist parties could have been one of the factors that influenced minor but still noticeable decrease in enthusiasm of LCY leadership to continue devoting attention and resources of Yugoslav state and party institutions towards the realisation of the growingly ambitious plans of Italian communists about expanding the influence of Eurocommunist fractions in other parties and forming new political initiatives of communists parties in the Mediterranean. That may also influenced the later decision of Yugoslav communists to join the French communists (which had by that time started the abandonment of Eurocommunist reforms) in their refusal to participate in the debates about the neoliberal economic model, and thus not to support the initiatives of Italian, Spanish and Greek communists to form a new international initiative of the European far-left parties against the economic reformist in the continental Europe in the early 1980s. Left without their most important allies within the sphere of relations between the European Marxist parties, and weakened by internal strife as well as pressure from the socialists and New Left, Eurocommunists were left isolated to face the growing power of neoliberal movements in the Western Bloc, whose rise to power would mark the beginning of the end for the last politically significant parties of the European far-left of the 20th century.

⁸⁸ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 30/I-317, Analyses of the reports about the meeting of LCY and PCF delegations.

⁸⁹ AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 48/I-565-636, AJ, SKJ, 507-IX, 122/I-110-162, Information on cooperation with PCI and PCE.

⁹⁰ AJ, SSRNJ, A-074-078, International cooperation, Reports on Mediterranean conferences.

REFERENCES

- Andry, Aurélie. *Social Europe “in the long 1970s”: The story of a defeat*. Florence: European University Institute, 2017.
- Bernardi, Emanuele. “Aldo Moro and Enrico Berlinguer”. In: *The Oxford Handbook on Italian Politics*. Editors Erik Jones and Gianfranco Pasquino, 368–377. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199669745.013.28>
- Brogi, Alessandro. “Ending Grand Alliance Politics in Western Europe: US Anti-communism in France and Italy, 1944–7”. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 53, no. 1, (2018), 134–157. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009416678919>
- Dianda, Bas. *A History of the Seventies: The political, cultural, social and economic developments that shaped the modern world*. Delaware: Vernon Press, 2017.
- Drake, Richard. *The Aldo Moro Case*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Elliott, Philip, and Philip Schlesinger. “On the stratification of political knowledge: Studying Eurocommunism, an unfolding ideology”. *The Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, (1979), 55–81. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1979.tb00325.x>
- Ernest, Mandel. *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism*. London: Verso Publishing, 2016.
- Filipović, Luka. “Finansijska politika Saveza komunista Jugoslavije prema komunističkim partijama Italije, Francuske, Španije i Grčke krajem šezdesetih godina 20. veka”. *Istorija 20. veka*, no. 2, (2022), 477–494. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29362.ist20veka.2022.2.fil.477-494>
- Filipović, Luka. *Evrokomunizam i Jugoslavija 1968-1980*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2023.
- Mikecin, Vjekoslav. *Evrokomunizam i socijalizam*. Zagreb: Globus, 1979.
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. “Poverty and Progress”. *The American Scholar*, vol. 33, no. 4, (1964), 594–606.
- Obinger, Herbert and Carina Schmitt. “Guns and butter? Regime Competition and the Welfare state during the Cold War”. *World Politics*, vol. 63, no. 2, (2011), 246–270. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887111000025>
- Petersen, Klaus, Michele Mioni, and Harbert Obinger. “The Cold War and Welfare State in Western Europe”. In: *International Impacts on Social Policies. Global Dynamics of Social Policy*. Editors Frenk Nullmeier, and Delia González de Reufels, Harbert Obinger, 47–59. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86645-7_5
- Pons, Silvio. “The rise and fall of Eurocommunism”. In: *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*. Editors Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, 45–65. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521837217.004>
- Ronchay, Alberto. “Guns and Gray Matter: Terrorism in Italy”. *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 57, no. 4, (1979), 921–940. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/20040207>
- Sant’Anna, and André Albuquerque, Leonardo Weller. “The threat of communism during the Cold War: A constraint to income inequality?” *Comparative Politics*, vol. 52, no. 3, (2020), 359–393. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5129/001041519X15615651139989>

- Sassoon, Donald. "The rise and fall of West European Communism 1939-1948". *Contemporary European History*, vol. 1, no. 2, (1992), 139–169. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777300004410>
- Vacca, Giuseppe. "The 'Eurocommunist' Perspective: Contribution of the Italian Communist Party". In: *In Search of Eurocommunism*. Editor Richard Kindersley, 105–146. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-16581-0_6
- Živković, Bogdan. "The two last encounters between Broz and Berlinguer – the epilogue of an alliance". *Balkanica*, no. 1, (2022), 273–300. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2298/BALC2253273Z>

ZENITH AND DOWNFALL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN FAR-LEFT:
LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF YUGOSLAVIA AND EUROCOMMUNISTS
IN THE LATE 70s (1976–1980)

Luka Filipović, PhD*

Summary

During the second half of the 1970s, parties on the Western European far left experienced both the zenith and the decline of their popularity and political influence. At the same time, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia reached the zenith of its influence among the far-left parties of the Mediterranean. It began to witness a gradual decline in its role within the turbulent currents of relations between the largest Marxist parties outside the Eastern Bloc. The following years would see the gradual drift away from the Yugoslav party and Eurocommunist parties, as well as numerous political setbacks that Mediterranean communist parties suffered during the time of socialist and early neoliberal governments. While trying to navigate the increasingly complex relations between the former allies and contribute to the formation of an international initiative against neoliberal reforms in continental Europe, Yugoslav communists finally found that the long-term effects of internal changes within their party had caught up with them. Subsequently, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia opted to support the French Communist Party in its pending conflict with the Italian communists over how to respond to the growing influence of neoliberal parties and movements. In the end, the Italian party was left isolated both internally and in relations with the other European Marxist parties after the death of Aldo Moro had cut short their attempts at finalising a political compromise with their government, while Yugoslav and French parties abandoned both the last remains of their reformist policies and the notion of a collective struggle against neoliberalism.

KEYWORDS: Eurocommunism, democratic socialism, welfare state, neoliberalism, League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Communist Party of Italy

* Research Associate, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1810-6175>; E-mail: luka.filipovic@isi.ac.rs