# Bettino Craxi and the Normalization of Italian Politics: Challenging the PCI and Reorienting Foreign Policy

By

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Probably it is still too early for a dispassionate discussion of Bettino Craxi's role in first as secretary of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and then as Prime Minister and his role in the history of the Italian Republic. Italian intellectuals tend to demonize leaders who challenge prevailing assumptions. The stranglehold that a refined Communist ethos held on Italian culture still seems to survive despite the end of communism. In cultural affairs, the paradigm that Thomas Kuhn found in science may also hold: that intellectuals do not change their mind and that different interpretations of events, to be accepted, must await the disappearance of the old generation.[1] However, it is not too early to make a beginning.

## The "Italian Anomaly"

Of Craxi's multifaceted actions during his meteoric rise to fame between July 16, 1976 and August 4, 1983, when he became Prime Minister, the most important was his attempt to reduce the influence of the Italian Communists within the political system and to replace it with Socialist influence. This attempt necessarily involved foreign policy, because the PCI at the time was still oriented toward the Soviet Union and exerted a powerful attraction on an important part of the Italian intelligentsia. Craxi was not motivated by a priori anti-Communism—as many of his enemies on the left believed—but by a crucial difference between Italy and other Western European countries that slowed Italy's modernization. The Communist parties of the rest of Western Europe were small, while the Socialist parties dominated the left. In Italy it was the opposite: the "Italian

anomaly." Despite the intellectual sophistication of many of the PCI's leaders, and Enrico Berlinguer in particular, this state of affairs made Italy an abnormal country when compared to the rest of Western Europe. The large number of votes "captured" by the PCI could not be utilized to bring the party into the government to help reform the country. There existed what Alberto Ronchey dubbed the "Fattore K," that is, no Communist party in the West could come to power, because of their close ties with the Soviet Union and the opposition of the United States. This may have been unfair from the Italian Communist viewpoint, but the Communists, despite the distance they often took from Moscow, still frequently followed an unquestioning course in favor of the USSR when it came to making decisions that regarded Italian policy.

Besides this aspect, there was another factor that galled Craxi, as it irritated other Socialists: the subordination of the PSI to the PCI ever since the Popular Front elections of 1948. Those elections transformed the PSI into an auxiliary party of the Communists, useful for gathering the votes of non-Communist leftists and crucial for projecting the power of the PCI further into the normal, Western-oriented Italian political spectrum. From the early 1950s, Pietro Nenni and the autonomists had fought a battle to liberate the PSI from PCI tutelage,[2] only with partial success given the economic, ideological, and organizational superiority of the PCI and thanks also to the persons the PCI had succeeded in infiltrating into the PSI leadership (those with the "doppia tessera"). Nenni had succeeded in bringing the Socialists into a Center-Left alignment, but, thanks in no small measure to Communist sabotage, but not only to that, the Center-Left can be considered at least a political failure. Given the strength of the PCI—no matter how "different" that organization claimed to be—Italy would remain paralyzed politically.

By the 1970s, with Secretary Franceso De Martino making clearer than ever the subordination of the PSI to the PCI, the Socialists continually lost votes, hitting a historic low of 9.6% in the 1972 and 1976 elections. The backlash against this second election .led to the naming of Bettino Craxi as Secretary at the Midas Hotel

Ever since his youth, Craxi had been an autonomist who chafed at Communist control of the PSI and distinguished himself by his opposition to it. He published reviews critical of the Soviet Union, established a Socialist club inspired by the ideas of PSI founder Filippo Turati, and worked with *Critica Sociale*, Turati's old journal. He soon attracted the attention of Pietro Nenni, whose support helped him get elected to the Central Committee at age 23, but his open hostility to the PCI got him excluded from that body in 1959. The Party assigned Craxi to organizational work at Sesto San Giovanni, where the Communists opposed him. Following the stint in Sesto, Craxi threw himself into the politics of Center Left Milan where, over the next fifteen years, he gained control over the unruly Milanese party, demonstrating uncommon organizational ability—something that Nenni notably lacked. In 1970, Nenni named him as one of three vice secretaries as the most reliable representative of autonomist values. From this position, Craxi worked against the historic compromise" between Communists and Socialists on the grounds that it made the Socialists irrelevant. He theorized a "Socialist pole," i.e., returning to formal partnership with the Christian Democrats but seizing the political initiative for the Socialists.[3]

Thus, when Craxi became PSI secretary, he had the reputation of a solid worker, not brilliant, but one who valued Socialist traditions and defended them against all comers.

## The Plan

Once he became secretary, Craxi unveiled an ambitious program to renovate the party and to thrust it once more into the forefront of Italian life. In a clear document presented to a November 1976 Central Committee meeting, Craxi declared the PSI's independence by wrenching the party back to its tradition and to its basic tasks as a political organization.

Craxi considered ideological clarity an essential element in the PSI's survival. He expressed pride in Italian and European Socialist tradition as the real source of PSI strength. As such, he embraced revisionism, identifying it with reformism, and making it official party policy at a time

when reformism (unlike the present) was a dirty word. According to him, reformism was the continual quest for a method capable of gradually transforming capitalism into socialism. Only by constantly adapting Socialist theory to reality could the Socialists maintain their commitment to economic and political pluralism. This method was the opposite of communism, which favored forceful implementation of a preconceived ideology.[4]

Because theory would be useless without a powerful organization to implement it, Craxi called for immediate and drastic action on several fronts. In order to keep the PSI's image clean and curb corruption, Craxi endorsed extension of the recently created Central Control Commission's investigative powers. He promised to overhaul the Party's financial administration, which had produced a catastrophic economic situation and had weakened the Party's internal democratic life. The new secretary next tackled the myriad factional divisions that from its origins had paralyzed the Party's life. The dilemma was how to avoid the Leninist "democratic centralism" applied by the PCI that prevented freedom of expression while at the same time preventing that freedom from coagulating into powerful dueling currents that lacerated Party life. Of course, this was an impossible mission (the Communists would run into similar problems with the end of "democratic centralism") but Craxi suggested a middle course. He pledged freedom of expression but vowed elimination of PSI mechanisms ensuring the survival of Socialist currents and promised to make it more difficult for them to appeal to the general public. He called for revitalization of the federations and the Party sections and close cooperation with Socialist union leaders, thus linking the party more closely to society and ending the isolation in which it frequently found itself. In this way, the Party could strive to ensure that only persons committed to its ideals joined the organization, not people primarily interested in getting elected to local political office.[5] Concretely, Craxi called for implementation of organizational revisions suggested by a national congress on PSI structure held in Florence in February 1975.[6]

The major problem that faced the PSI was its incapacity to implement Socialist principles widely accepted by large strata of Italian society. This fact led to the contradiction between the PSI's consistently poor voting performance and widespread approval of its ideology. In the June 1976 elections, for example, the Socialists blundered by insisting on Communist participation in the cabinet as the only means of resolving the nation's political crisis. Voters who agreed with this analysis voted for the PCI; those who disagreed voted for the DC—leaving the Socialists out in the cold. Once again, the obvious emerged: the Communist connection was deadly for the Socialists. *Mondo Operaio* observed that maximalism had always spelled disaster for the Socialists while the Communists had made spectacular electoral advances by appropriating the reformist heritage that rightly belonged to the Socialists. Other European Socialists had come to power by demonstrating that they knew how to govern, even when, as in Germany, they had originally been part of a coalition. The Italian Socialists should do the same, distinguishing themselves sharply from the PCI, which, unlike the PSI, could not enter the governing area.[7]

Craxi hoped to implement these policies as secretary by outlining a vast program of social reforms which the PSI would pursue during his tenure. He committed the Party to tax, education, health, and justice reform, revision of the Concordat, protection of the environment, demilitarization of the national police, and civil rights.[8]

However, in attempting to implement this program, Craxi would run into the same problem as Nenni's Center-Left: DC stalling and PCI sabotage in order to maintain its hegemony of the left. Communist domination had to be destroyed because of the powerful Italian Communist ties to Moscow—and Craxi believed that Communist actions belied Communist rhetoric on this issue. The Communist connection to Moscow made it a certainty that the PCI could never offer a valid alternative to DC rule. Even worse, Communist hegemony of the Italian left blocked the evolution of the Italian political system into a more normal order of the Western type and guaranteed DC control of the government. This was Giorgio Galli's famous "imperfect bipolarism," which,

however, boiled down to a de facto Catholic-Communist duopoly that, in one form or another, has remained down to the present day.

In order to break the PCI's dominion of the left and the vicious cycle of Catholic-Communist control, Craxi envisioned an alliance between the PSI and the small lay parties, what he called the "Socialist pole."[9] Completing this design, Craxi made PSI cooperation with other European Socialist parties a main theme of his administration. Seizing the opportunity of the upcoming European Parliament elections, he urged collaboration and assumed an active role in the Socialist International as its vice president. He thus countered Berlinguer's famous but artificial "Eurocommunism" with the more organic "Eurosocialism," a concept that survives in the European Union. Craxi lauded Eurocommunism as the attempt of Western Communist parties to differentiate themselves from the authoritarian Marxism-Leninism of the East but considered it a proof of Communist backwardness. On the contrary, Eurosocialism counted on a democratic tradition to confront Europe's premier problem: that of a "Socialist alternative to the conservative and reactionary forces of Europe."[10]

**The Party**

In order to implement his ideas, Craxi needed to have control of his own party—no small task for any Socialist leader. The late 1970s were also a decade that witnessed dramatic developments, including the oil crisis, rapid inflation, a declining lira, the Lockheed bribery scandal, and escalating terrorism. Within the PSI, Craxi moved decisively to eliminate as threats to his power Giacomo Mancini, Francesco De Martino, and Enrico Manca. In hindsight, one might conclude that Craxi succeeded only too well in dominating the party, and this contributed to his downfall, but such is the irony of politics.

Craxi reached agreement with UIL leader Giorgio Benvenuto. Benvenuto had chafed at De Martino's predilection for the Communists and threw his organization's influence behind Craxi.

Benvenuto quickly announced that he would put workers' interests above party concerns and foster internal union democracy. He bitterly complained about the manner in which the Communist-dominated CGIL had relegated Socialists to a secondary position, pledging Socialist action in all three unions to end party primacy. Craxi's policy of PSI independence from the Communists thus entered union affairs, reversing a long history of Socialist passiveness. Benvenuto's actions provoked a Communist counterattack, but it backfired and they uncomfortably found themselves tarred with an antiworker brush.[11]

**The Challenge**

The struggle between the Socialists and the Communists seemed an unequal one because the Communists appeared unstoppable. The enormous increase in the number and seriousness of terrorist incidents in 1977 created a national emergency. Furthermore, as inflation worsened, the Andreotti "non-no confidence government" froze wages—touching off a strike wave and social unrest. The six parties of the "constitutional arc," including the PCI, discussed converting their abstention into an active majority in July 1977 but failed to agree.[12] Supported by Aldo Moro, the PCI claimed full equality in the ruling coalition as the price for their identification with Andreotti's unpopular policies. Had the PCI succeeded it would have meant the political eclipse of the PSI.

Craxi shrewdly interpreted the discussions as a privileged relationship among Berlinguer, Moro, and Andreotti and emphasized Communist co-responsibility for Andreotti's policies. In Paris for a meeting with Mitterand, Craxi told *Le Monde* that the PCI's supposed evolution away from Muscovite Communism left him unconvinced and that Socialist opposition to the "historic compromise" constituted a threat that no one could ignore. In October 1977, Craxi told the Central Committee that the PSI would no longer enter Center-Left coalitions that sanctioned PSI inferiority to the DC and boldly announced his intention to break the DC's near-monopoly on the Quirinale in the 1978 presidential elections.

In the meantime, Berlinguer reaffirmed the PCI's Eurocommunist principles at the November 1977 CPSU congress, including pluralism, civil and religious liberty, autonomy from Moscow, and the historic compromise. Later in the month, Communist parliamentarians signed a statement accepting NATO. These moves strengthened Berlinguer's position within the Italian context and induced Republican Party Chairman Ugo La Malfa to call for a "national solidarity" government in which the PCI would have a part. Communist-inspired labor agitation pressured DC recalcitrants to agree and Moro cautiously guided the operation bringing the PCI into a full political partnership. The political form PCI cooperation would take was a one-party cabinet headed by Giulio Andreotti.

However, the American State Department disagreed with the discussions that aimed to bring the PCI into the ruling coalition and issued a formal rebuke (written by Richard Gardner) which, for some reason, seems to have surprised the Communists.[13] Discussions continued despite American displeasure until agreement was reached. Craxi's opposition gave rise to a mini-revolt in the PSI, but he quickly snuffed it out.

The Americans, even though this was the period of the conservative Republican Ford administration, had taken notice of Craxi's activities and not only approved of them but were very impressed with him. In a conversation with me on June 11, 1985 at his house in Nahant, Massachusetts (I must say, a very modest one), former Ambassador John Volpe told me: "I met Craxi back in early 1976 or late 1975, when he took over from De Martino, even though he was a Socialist and some of our people didn't feel that we ought to deal closely with the Socialists….But when Craxi became secretary of the party, I said, 'well, let's take a look at this fellow.' I had him for lunch at least three or four times, usually one on one. …I was very impressed with the man.

"President Ford had already asked me to stay on as ambassador to Italy should he have won in 1976, and even before the elections I had suggested to Craxi that I hoped that he would make a

visit to the United States, and I'd see to it that he got a good reception. And he had agreed to come in the spring of 1977….

"I mentioned this invitation to my successor, mentioned my luncheons to him, and told him I thought he was a comer and would be a leader in the country, not just in the party….

"I always had a feeling that some day that man would lead the country, and I was right in my conclusion."

Later, during the Reagan administration, Giuliano Amato also worked behind the scenes in Washington, D.C., in 1982 to explain to the Americans why a Craxi-led cabinet was desirable. In a conversation with me on February 2, 1983, Amato informed me that he had had a round of meetings with American Embassy and State Department officials, during which he had received expressions of support for Craxi's becoming prime minister. When I asked his opinion of why a conservative American administration might favor a Socialist as premier, Amato said that he had emphasized the usefulness to the United States of a stable Italy and had convinced the Americans that Craxi could provide that stability.

This support also existed in Rome in the American embassy. The embassy boasted the presence in important positions of former State Department proponents of the center-left such as Charles Stout and Pat Garland, experienced and sophisticated analysts of the Italian situation who expressed to me their support for Craxi. American supporters of Craxi took his case to an elite American audience. In a knowledgeable *Foreign Affairs* article published in the spring of 1982 (60, no. 4), former cultural attaché Joseph La Palombara examined the political situation and concluded: "Taken together, these factors lead people to ask not whether the PSI will gain control of the national government, but when—and with what consequences."

The previously mentioned agreement to bring the PCI into the ruling coalition represented a defeat for Craxi's policies, but the kidnapping of Moro by the Red Brigades soon overshadowed it. The Moro affair allowed Craxi to come to the forefront once again. While the Christian Democrats

and Communists were adamant in refusing to open negotiations for Moro's life, Craxi favored them. The Socialist secretary's negotiations failed to save Moro's life, but they did have important effects. By skillfully leading extraparliamentary leftist forces, Radicals, unionists, and prestigious intellectuals in an attempt to save Moro, the Socialists asserted their commitment to humanitarianism and limitation of state power while showing up the scarce Communist sensibility toward these traditional leftist values. The DC, as well, had violated the Christian conscience against the pope's clear wishes. Indeed, Craxi had seized the international limelight by working with the Vatican, in addition to the UN and important foreign leaders. In cooperating with the DC, the PCI seemed to moderate opinion to have confirmed its insistence on joining the corrupt DC governmental system. The PSI, on the other hand, recaptured its independent identity and demonstrated is ability to stand up both to the PCI and to the DC.[14]

Confirmation of this change in attitude arrived in the local elections of May 1978. Sympathy for Moro swelled the DC vote, but the PCI dropped 8.8 percent from its 1976 high. The *Corriere della Sera* declared Berlinguer the great loser because the PCI had lost all possibility of becoming an alternative to the DC. The surprise winner was Craxi, whose party increased its consensus by 4 percent. His challenge to the governing majority on the Moro case, judged a political disaster, had turned out to be the opposite.[15]

Craxi's offensive continued in June 1978, when Italy voted on two referenda which the PCI supported but in which the PSI left its voters free to cast their ballots as they wished. When the referenda failed, Berlinguer attacked the PSI, but Craxi had achieved his aim in differentiating his party from the Communists and the Catholics. Morally defeated by the referenda results, Berlinguer set out to recoup his losses by forcing the resignation of President Giovanni Leone—who had been under fire because of malfeasance charges leveled by *Espresso* writer Camilla Cederna[16]—and attempting to determine his replacement. Berlinguer aimed to show that the "historic compromise" coalition could determine who the next president could be, but Craxi, who a

year before had announced plans for the next chief executive to be a Socialist, secured the election of Socialist Resistance hero Sandro Pertini.[17] In achieving his aim, Craxi had blocked Catholics and Communists from electing "historic compromise" candidate Ugo La Malfa, had made good his claim for the PSI to receive its share of national political offices on a regular basis, and had affirmed PSI ability to act independently and successfully against its more powerful rivals.

Craxi followed up his political success by seizing the ideological initiative on the left. In 1977, the Socialists had proposed that the Venice Biennale theme be dissent in Eastern Europe, setting off howls of protest from the PCI and the Soviet Ambassador. In 1978, Craxi's friend Ugo Finetti published a book on dissent within the PCI. Finetti denied that the PCI had really abandoned Leninism and concluded that Berlinguer had imposed a "monolithic and lonely revisionism" on the PCI for tactical reasons, had trailed the Spanish and French Communist parties in denouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat, had failed to support Spanish leader Santiago Carrillo's opposition to Moscow, and could not be trusted.[18]

During the summer of 1978, the PSI escalated its ideological attack by condemning the heritage of Togliatti and Lenin in the PCI. A press war resulted as *L'Unita* defended Togliatti and suggested that the Socialists did not understand Lenin, while *Avanti!* piteously exposed Communist ambiguities and contradictions. The debate stung Berlinguer into announcing that the Italian Communists sought a "third road" between Eastern-style people's democracies and Western European social democracies.[19]

The debate's bombshell culmination came in an August 27, 1978 *Espresso* article published under Craxi's name but actually written by Luciano Pellicani. Ever since the beginning, the article argued, Socialist thought combined different and even mutually exclusive elements: anarchists vs. authoritarians, collectivists vs. individualists, Stalinists vs. anti-Stalinists. The most important struggle raged after the Bolshevik Revolution between advocates of state power for the implementation of socialism and supporters of Western style pluralism.

For the pluralists, socialism surpassed liberalism and realized the individual's full potential by installing social control of the economy and strengthening society vis-a`-vis the state. On the contrary, the Marxist-Leninists wished to suppress the free market and to have the state rule society. In short, these true heirs of the French Revolutionary Jacobins wanted to cancel all traces of the individual. Thus, Eastern style communism is not a deviation from the Marxist-Leninist doctrine or the result of errors, but its concrete application. Furthermore, Lenin believed that, left to their own devices, workers could only move within the limits of the capitalist system's laws, developing, at most, a "trade union consciousness." Political consciousness could only be brought to them from the outside, by intellectuals. It therefore became the lot of these intellectuals guided by Marxist principles to organize and direct the workers' movement.

In other words, far from being the ideology of the working class, Leninism is "the philosophical justification of the historic right of the intellectuals to govern the working masses in an autocratic manner." Leninist communism wishes to regenerate humanity, forcing it to seek control of all aspects of life. This leads to the bureaucratization of life and complete state ownership and control. Leninism institutionalizes a single command center and absolute centralization and becomes a religion disguised as science. "Leninism and pluralism thus are antithetical terms, and if the first prevails the second dies."

Unlike Leninism, democratic socialism seeks "socialization of the values of liberalism, diffusion of power, egalitarian distribution of wealth, equal opportunity, the strengthening and development of institutions which foster working-class participation in decision-making." Democratic socialism does not impose orthodoxy on anyone, recognizing as the most precious right the right to make a mistake. In short, social democracy and communism are incompatible.[20]

As might be expected, this article touched off a furious debate, with the PSI becoming the center of a national debate for the first time since the 1950s. However, aside from the usual charges of anti-communism, the Communists proved unable to answer the charges on ideological grounds.

Berlinguer took a hard line against Craxi, reaffirming his belief in Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, and Togliatti and vowing that he would never give up his Communist heritage.[21] By making clear his continued acceptance of Marxism-Leninism, however, the Communist secretary confirmed Craxi's doubts about the PCI's supposed democratic evolution and lost support among influential noncommunist politicians formerly convinced that the PCI had undergone a fundamental change. Craxi's moves had clearly helped scuttle Berlinguer's "historic compromise."

The remainder of 1978 witnessed a series of quarrels between the Communists and the rest of the majority over Italian economic measures, EEC financial policies, the "Euromissles" debate, and attitudes toward a number of scandals. These disputes shattered the previous trust among PCI, Catholic, and lay political forces. In January 1979, the PCI Directorate announced Communist withdrawal from the ruling coalition, provoking a government crisis. With Craxi's help, the PCI had suffered a major defeat. It had supported deflationary policies and wage restraints, causing it to lose face with unions and workers in return for minimal participation in the ruling coalition. The result was loss of electoral momentum. These developments combined with the decline of DC vote share would set the stage for the non-DC cabinet of Giovanni Spadolini, and for Craxi's own government.

However, Craxi's challenge to Communist hegemony on the left impacted the foreign policy arena.

**Reorienting Foreign Policy**

In foreign policy as well, Craxi had his greatest differences with the Communists. It is important to note, however, that Craxi did not automatically tend toward a pro-American foreign policy—although he was an admirer of John F. Kennedy—but rather an independent one within the limits of the possibilities of a middle-sized power. In short, he did not believe in a slavish foreign policy. For example, Craxi's admiration for the United States did not prevent him from criticizing

that country's Vietnam policy in the 1970s. He openly protested against them in an open letter to Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in 1967.[22] As the PSI person in charge of foreign affairs, representative to and vice president of the Socialist International, and member of the Chamber of Deputies' Foreign Relations committee, Craxi traveled to Europe, North, and South America. Despite his pro-Americanism, he distinguished himself as an opponent of the United States' Chilean policy. This independent attitude foreshadowed his pro-Arab policies after he became Prime Minister, despite early Israeli sympathies, and his objections to American heavy-handedness at Sigonella.

If Craxi's ardor for the United States blew hot and cold, he consistently remained critical of the Soviet Union and its allies. Craxi considered his generation marked by the Soviet repression of Hungary. Friendship with Jiri Pelikan, a "Prague Spring" leader he met in Czechoslovakia and befriended in Italian exile, and Spartaco Vannoni solidified his impressions. Long conversations with Vannoni—Raphael Hotel owner, former PCI financier who bolted from the party after the Soviets repressed the Hungarian revolution, former assistant to the Italian Ambassador in Warsaw, businessman with close Eastern European connections—convinced Craxi that the PCI would never break with Moscow. At a conference of Czech exiles in Paris, Craxi accused the Soviet Union of following only its national interests and called on Western Communists to demonstrate dissension from Russia in deed rather word.

Following through on these feelings, the Italian leader adopted a critical attitude toward French Socialist Francois Mitterand's union with the Communists, objecting as well to the French economic program because, he believed: "There is a contradiction between the proposals of public control of the economy and the renunciation of coercive means." Craxi preferred Willy Brandt's SPD as a model, and he established a special relationship with the German leader and with Spanish Socialist and future Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez.[23]

However, Craxi's most important foreign policy function before becoming Prime Minister was undoubtedly his role in the placement of American "Euromissiles" in Europe. When the Soviets installed their SS20 missiles aimed at the capitals of Western Europe, German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt informed the Americans that something should be done. Soviet hardliners aimed at utilizing the missiles as a wedge to encourage Germany to abandon the Western alliance, allowing reunification of Germany at the price of its neutralization, and the SPD seemed willing to go along. Had this strategy succeeded, the West would have faced a grave situation in which Europe would have been at the mercy of the USSR. Eventually, the question resolved itself into these terms: the Germans would accept the stationing of Pershing 2 missiles on their soil if the Italians would have allowed cruise missiles to be installed in Sicily. In Italy the Socialists held the key to installation of the missiles. Craxi agreed to placement of the missiles. Later Gorbachev admitted that the successful deployment of these missiles determined the defeat of the hardliners in Moscow and the failure of the Breshnev policy of intimidation because the Westerners had stood up to the Soviets. The effect this decision had on the eventual fall of the Soviet Union is incalculable.[24]

Within Italy, however, this was the last straw for the Communists. The Euromissile affair contributed to the end of the "national solidarity" phase of Italian politics as the Communists voted against installation of the missiles. The PCI campaign against Craxi reached a fever pitch, reaching even leftists in the United States, as the Communists became more determined than ever to eliminate him.

In fact, Craxi's foreign policy was pragmatic, seeking to be beholden neither to the United States nor to the USSR. The Euromissile affair, however, did not foreshadow a habitual pro-American policy, as Craxi's actions in the *Achille Lauro* affair and his pro-Arafat policy demonstrated. Craxi showed that he was not afraid to take unpopular stances in foreign policy, as in domestic policy.

**Italian Anomalies**

In the end, Craxi's policies by which he hoped to create a "normal" Italy in which his country would resemble more closely other Western countries—becoming more open to modernization—failed. Many reasons exist for this failure, some of which were of Craxi's making and certainly will be discussed. Craxi's politics imparted a new fluidity and dynamism to Italian politics and, in some ways, pointed to a new, pragmatic, and non-ideological future. He helped expose the contradictions of Italian communism and of the operations of the Italian political system—and both fought back. The fight was in part responsible for his downfall, and certainly for his demonization by the media which has prevented an impartial, detached, and unbiased examination of his role.

In the end, the "normalization" of Italy could not be accomplished by one man, no matter how active. The anomalies went beyond the major one identified by Bettino Craxi. It was not only the existence of a large Communist party and a small Socialist organization that contributed to the paralysis of the Italian life, and to limited ability of Italy to modernize itself that continues to cost the country so dearly. A politically powerful Church, an out-of-control magistracy, an inefficient and arrogant bureaucracy, and a discordant political culture continue to make Italy a "difficult" democracy—if not downright "strange"—instead of a fully developed one.[25]

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# NOTES

For Kuhn's explanation of how new scientific concepts become accepted, see Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

[2] For the details of Nenni's realignment, see Spencer Di Scala, *Da Nenni a Craxi: Il socialismo italiano visto dagli USA* (Milan: SugarCo, 1991), pp. 152-182.

[3] See Craxi's comments in "Il ruolo del PSI," *Mondo Operaio*, January 1976.

[4] Bettino Craxi, *Costruire il futuro* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1977), pp. 130-35.

[5] Ibid., pp. 141-67.

[6] *Il Partito socialista. Struttura e organizzazione: Atti della Conferenza Nazionale di Organizzazione*. Pp. 17-305; and "Il PSI nelleanalisi post elettali," *Mondo Operaio*, July-August 1976.

[7] Sisnio Zito, "Per il rinnovamento del PSI," *Mondo Operaio*, July-August 1976.

[8] Craxi, *Costruire il futuro*, pp. 57-76.

[9] Ibid., pp. 79-96.

[10] Ibid., pp. 97-111, 129, 168-70.

[11] See Giorgio Benvenuto, *Verso un nuovo sindacato: L'iniziativa della UIL per l'unita` del movimento* (Venice: Marsilio, 1977), pp. 15-24; and Aldo Forbice, *Austerita` e democrazia operaia: Intervista a Giorgio Benvenuto* (Milan: SugarCo, 1977).

[12] Giorgio Galli, *Storia della DC* (Bari: Laterza, 1978), pp. 435-39.

[13] Mario Margiocco, *Stati Uniti e PCI* (Bari: Laterza, 1981), pp. 280-81.

[14] Giorgio Galli, *Storia del partito armato 1968-1982* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1986), pp. 168-70.

[15] Gianfranco Piazzesi, "Il grande protagonista e` il partito di Zaccagnini," *Corriere della Sera*, May 16, 1978.

[16] Camilla Cederna, *Giovanni Leone: La carriera di un presidente* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1978).

[17] *Critica Sociale*, July 1978.

[18] Ugo Finetti, *Il dissenso nel PCI* (Milan: SugarCo, 1978), pp. 198-243.

[19] The debate can be followed in Ernesto Galli della Loggia, "La crisi del Togliattismo," *Mondoperaio* June, 1978; *Avanti!*, July 21 and 27, 1978; *L'Unita*, July 12 and 22, 1978. Berlnguer's interview is in *La Repubblica*, July 28, 1978.

[20] Bettino Craxi, "Il vangelo socialista," *L'Espresso*, August 27, 1978.

[21] Paolo Mieli, *Litigio a sinistra* (Rome: L'Espresso, 1979), p. 19.

[22] Antonio Ghirelli, *L'effetto Craxi* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1982), p. 38.

[23] Ghirelli, *L'effetto Craxi*, pp. 88, 89; Giancarlo Galli, *Benedetto Bettino* (Milan: Bompiani, 1982), pp. 25, 59-60.

[24] Lucio Colletti, "Ricordando Bettino Craxi," *Mondoperaio* (Nuova Serie, 5), November-December, 2000, p. 64.

[25] See Frederic Spotts and Theodor Wieser, *Italy: A Difficult Democracy* (Cambride: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and *Guardian Unlimited.* "Special Report: Italy," January 24, 2004..