

The idea has attracted wide attention and interest both in Europe and America. The PCI, it is said, now wields a lot of clout and prestige, particularly since the recent election in which the Communists got more than 33 percent of the vote. The ruling Christian Democratic Party received barely more than a percentage point higher.

This very large vote for the PCI has been the occasion for a flood of very laudatory articles about the party in the bourgeois press. It has especially been praised for the efficient manner in which it has conducted itself in regional governments under its control and in municipal affairs generally. But most of the articles have handed the PCI accolades and plaudits for its moderated course, for its efforts to become "respectable" and to have finally come "of age."

The high command of the party, under the leadership of Enrico Berlinguer, has explained the party's great success by its ability to win the confidence of the masses. Most frequently the party's success is attributed by its leaders to wise political tactics, to their sagacity in political maneuvering with bourgeois parties, and most of all, to their flexible approach in winning the masses.

PCI LINED UP AGAINST PORTUGUESE CP

The Italian CP, it is said, is free of that rigidity which characterizes other CPs, such as the Portuguese party. The PCI leaders have skillfully utilized the recent reverses of the Portuguese CP (PCP), with whom they are sharply at odds, to ingratiate themselves with the Italian bourgeoisie, as though to say, "See, we are different!" Alvaro Cunhal, the PCP leader, has roundly condemned the Italian CP, which is said to have more in common with the political approach of Mario Soares (the Portuguese Socialist Party leader) than with Cunhal.

However that may be, and there is much to be said about the rapidly changing situation in Portugal, the Togliatti-Berlinguer strategy should be examined on its own merits, and independently of the Portuguese experience.

The idea of a working class party participating in a bourgeois cabinet is certainly not a new one, no matter what new glittering name it is given. Practically since the beginning of the First International, the idea of a workers' party taking a post in a capitalist cabinet as distinguished from election to a bourgeois parliament, has been considered unprincipled and a desertion to the camp of the class enemy.

EARLY MARXISTS SCORNE CABINET POSTS

During the days when the European working class was increasingly under Marxist influence, the idea of participating in a bourgeois cabinet was regarded with contempt and opprobrium, and Marxists—especially those of the German, Polish, French, and Russian Social Democratic parties, both before and after the split in 1903—were the most scornful of the idea, which they saw as an expression of opportunism and rank class collaboration.

But as the movement grew in breadth and scope, and as capitalism entered its phase of rapid, so-called "peaceful" development, opportunism as a social trend in the working class movement became formidable. Soon thereafter, it found its political and theoretical expression in Bernstein's famous revision of Marxism.

However, by the turn of the century the Second International had truly become the representative of the international working class. It had grown by leaps and bounds, and was still to widen and deepen its influence in Europe, America, and Japan. In spite of the perilous growth of opportunism, the Marxist revolutionary element grew stronger and stronger. Its grip upon the advanced elements of the working class, especially in Germany, Austria, and France, was strong and profound, so that when the Second International of Social Democratic parties met in Paris in 1900, it passed a resolution roundly condemning the idea of any Social Democrat taking a cabinet post in a bourgeois government.

DENOUNCED MILLERAND

The resolution was not introduced as an abstract exercise in Marxist strategy in the pursuit of the class struggle. It was purposely introduced to condemn a well-known French socialist leader, Alexandre Millerand, who took the post of Minister of Commerce in a bourgeois cabinet in 1899.

It was the first time that a Social Democratic leader had done so. His action set off a violent controversy in the world socialist movement between the opportunist elements and the Marxists.

Millerand's desertion was made all the more odious because he took a seat in the same cabinet with General Gallifet, the hangman of the Paris Commune. However, the resolution denouncing Millerand was not based on this aspect, which was regarded as incidental. Capitalist prime ministers often like to balance out their