

## ITALIAN COMMUNISTS DEFY MOSCOW

At its 12th party congress last week, the Italian Communist Party defied Soviet threats of retribution and reiterated its condemnation of the intervention in Czechoslovakia, thus taking another step toward establishing itself as a normal democratic party in Italian eyes.

The disunity in Eastern Europe stemming from the invasion of Czechoslovakia was further exposed at the congress. Yugoslav and Rumanian speakers drew enthusiastic applause for restating their opposition and for rejecting Moscow's doctrine of "limited sovereignty." The speeches of the other Eastern European representatives varied from Bulgaria's clear-cut defense of the intervention to Hungary's vaguely expressed formulation about the need to "guard against counter-revolution."

Although the USSR's chief delegate to the congress asserted that the Soviet duty was to help defend Socialist victories and that the Warsaw Five had helped Czechoslovakia, Moscow's public reaction to the criticism has been restrained and the Soviet press has focused on the more agreeable aspects of the meeting. The Soviet response was probably tempered by the Italians' willingness to attend the World Communist Conference next May and by Moscow's desire not to disrupt preparations for the conference by a shouting match.

An additional setback for the Soviets occurred when 46-year-old Enrico Berlinguer was confirmed as secretary general Luigi Long's heir-apparent. Berlinguer has been one of the foremost critics of the Soviet intervention. In his address to the congress, however, he said, "Anyone who expects us to break with the Soviet Union has al- 25X1 ways been and will be disappointed."

Over all, the 12th congress was a distinct success for the Italian Communists in their effort to persuade the Italian public that theirs is a normal political party fit to play a governing role. Even Adolfo Battaglia, a leader of the Republican Party, the smallest but most strongly anti-Communist partner in the government coalition, was moved to offer his personal impression that "the Communist Party has made enormous and perhaps conclusive steps forward toward its establishment as a democratic party."

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Italian Communist Leader Luigi Longo Condemns Soviet Action in Czechoslovakia

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