
A ‘Mediterranean New Left’?

Comparing and Contrasting

the French PSU and

the Italian PSIUP

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Abstract

This article argues that Gerd-Rainer Horn’s model of a ‘Mediterranean New Left’ encompassing both the French Parti socialiste unifié (PSU, 1960–1990) and the Italian Partito socialista italiano di unità proletaria (PSIUP, 1964–1972) needs to be significantly revised. It agrees that, half a century on from the events which gave rise to their foundation, this much misunderstood part of the political spectrum, midway between social democracy and the far left, is worthy of rescue from the ‘enormous condescension of posterity’, but questions how similar the two parties actually were. Major differences emerge, especially in the nature of each party’s relationship with communism, with the philsovietism of the PSIUP contrasting with the PSU’s evolution towards an anti-Leninist decentralist socialism of self-management. Yet, at the same time, important new evidence is uncovered about the concrete political and personal links that developed between leading intellectuals of the PSIUP and PSU, an example being the friendship of the Italian parliamentarian and theorist Lelio Basso with the journalist Gilles Martinet, later French ambassador to Italy. Other transnational links, both across the Mediterranean and to eastern Europe, are explored. Furthermore, the location of the roots of both parties in the 1940s generation of anti-fascist resistance calls into question prevailing assumptions equating the New Left with the youth of the 1960s, with wider implications for our understanding of the development of the European left across the twentieth century.

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I

When we think of 1968 and the New Left, we tend to think of diffuse and chaotic social movements rather than political parties, and insofar as we think of the latter, it is the far left *groupuscules* that tend to spring most spectacularly into the pages of the history books.¹ However, as Gerd-Rainer Horn argues in his major 2007 survey, *The Spirit of 68*, ‘To write a history of the New Left without giving prominent attention’ to the larger parties that embodied it is ‘like composing a study of Eurocommunism’ without mentioning communist parties. Within a broader argument about 1968 as a phenomenon that deeply affected not just students but societies as a whole, especially in Mediterranean as opposed to northern Europe, Horn stresses the role of ‘three flagship organizations’: the French Parti socialiste unifié (PSU), the Spanish Frente de liberación popular (FLP) and the Italian Partito socialista italiano di unità proletaria (PSIUP), arguing that they constituted a ‘Mediterranean New Left’² that has been rather written out of history.

The space occupied by these parties, midway between social democracy and the far left, is an important, but much belittled and misunderstood, area on the political spectrum, because it falls between at least three different stools. Mainstream social democrats tend to accuse these parties of having ‘preferred suicide to compromise’,³ of being utopian dreamers – which is not totally without foundation: the PSU’s chief fixation of *autogestion* (workers’ self-management) has been described in one book as *la dernière utopie*⁴ – but often pay them the compliment of stealing their ideas and sometimes their personnel as well. For communists, they were petit-bourgeois – behind which there is a certain sociological truth – and of too little electoral weight to bother much with. And for the far left, parties like the PSU ducked the supposedly fundamental question of reform versus revolution (thus Trotskyists refer to them as ‘centrist’), being just that bit too respectable, too willing to engage with existing institutions. But there is surely something of interest here that deserves rescue from the ‘enormous condescension of posterity’,⁵ not least because they were numerically much bigger than any of the *groupuscules*. The PSU had about 16,000 members, and the PSIUP as many as 100,000.⁶ PSIUP and PSU electoral support reached a peak

¹ See, e.g., Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération*, 2 vols. (Paris: Seuil, 1987–8); Diego Diego Giachetti, *Oltre il sessantotto: prima durante e dopo il movimento* (Pisa: Franco Serantini, 1998); Isabelle Sommier, *La violence politique et son deuil: l’après-68 en France et en Italie* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1998); Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (London: Pluto, 2002); Jean-Paul Salles, *La Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (1968–1981.) Instrument du Grand Soir ou lieu d’apprentissage?* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005); Aldo Cazzullo, *Il caso Sofri* (Milan: Mondadori, 2004).

² Gerd Rainer-Horn *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 148–52.

³ Spencer Di Scala, *Renewing Italian Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 148.

⁴ Frank Georgi, ed., *Autogestion, la dernière utopie* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003).

⁵ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1968), 13.

⁶ Marc Heurgon, *Histoire du PSU*, vol. 1 (Paris: La Découverte, 1994), 105–6; Roland Cayrol, ‘Histoire et sociologie d’un parti’, in Michel Rocard, ed., *Le PSU et l’avenir socialiste de France* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 33; PSU Documentation, *1960–2010: 50ème anniversaire de la création du PSU* (Rouen: Copie Plus, 2010),

of 4.5 per cent and 3.9 per cent in the Italian and French parliamentary elections of May and June 1968 respectively, which makes an appropriate vantage point from which to assess them, because it is so clearly linked to the revolts that we would more readily associate with the late spring of that year. As the parties on the ballot paper most associated with the revolt (since the *groupuscules* further to their left were either being banned or anyway tended to view elections as a ‘trap for fools’, ‘parliamentary cretinism’, etc.), theirs was the most direct immediate translation into real votes in real ballot boxes of the ‘spirit of ’68’. The PSIUP received the votes of some 1.4 million Italians, while the PSU obtained 5.7 per cent in those constituencies where it stood and 7.4 per cent across Paris – almost as much as François Mitterrand’s Fédération de la gauche démocrate et socialiste. While not huge in absolute terms, these are significant figures for minor parties in multiparty systems, particularly if the comparison is with a time when far left candidates did stand, such as Alain Krivine, who had to work hard to get even 1 per cent in the French presidential elections of 1969 and 1974.⁷ Moreover, such parties were not simply protest vessels, for the PSU had more than a hundred mayors across France; while at its height the PSIUP had a share in local power in fifty-seven cities and towns with a population of over 20,000, as well as some twenty-three deputies and fourteen senators in the Italian legislature.⁸

Horn’s stress on these parties is thus well founded, and fits into the beginnings of a revival of interest in the PSU in particular – suggested notably by two academic conferences held in Rennes in 2007–8 and their papers published in time for the PSU’s fiftieth anniversary in 2010, as well as a series of workshops that have led to the publication of a history of the party’s student wing, written collectively by its surviving participants.⁹ But the salient issue that remains to be grappled with is Horn’s assumption of similarity between these parties. Did Horn’s ‘Mediterranean New Left’ actually exist at the time? Or have the parties been too neatly shoehorned together in retrospect? This article aims to interrogate Horn’s claim by comparing and contrasting two of his trio in more detail. It proposes that Horn’s argument needs to be significantly revised, suggesting that there were in fact major differences alongside the similarities that he emphasises. Both differences, especially in the nature

129, claims that as many as 100,000 people passed through the PSU during its thirty-year existence; Alexander De Grand, *The Italian Left in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 137, estimates 70,000–100,000 at any one time for the PSIUP; L. Covatta et al., *Storia del Partito socialista. Dalla guerra fredda all’alternativa* (Venice: Marsilio, 1979–81), III, 330, cites the PSIUP’s claim of 164,520 at the end of 1964 as probably exaggerated (Italian parties during the *partitocrazia* of the pre-1994 First Republic were notorious for inflating their membership statistics by producing falsified party cards).

⁷ ‘Gli scrutini parlamentari’, *Corriere della Sera*, 21 May 1968; ‘La progression du PSU’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 27 June 1968; Alain Krivine, *Ca te passera avec l’âge* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 183.

⁸ Guy Nania, *Un parti de gauche: le PSU* (Paris, 1966), 129; Geoffrey Pridham, *Political Parties and Coalitional Behaviour in Italy* (London: Routledge, 1988), 208. Under the French electoral system, the PSU at its height had four National Assembly members.

⁹ Tudi Kernageleenn, François Prigent, Gilles Richard and Jacqueline Sainclivier, eds., *Le PSU vu d’en bas. Réseaux sociaux, mouvement politique, laboratoire d’idées (années 1950–années 1980)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes 2009); Roger Barralis and Jean-Claude Gillet, eds., *Au cœur des luttes des années soixante. Les étudiants du PSU. Une utopie porteuse d’avenir?* (Paris: Publisud, 2010).

of each party's relationship with communism, and similarities emerge by means of uncovering important new evidence about the concrete political and personal links that developed between members of the PSU and the PSIUP. I shall argue that the fact that the roots of both parties lay in the 1940s generation of anti-fascist resistance further calls into question prevailing assumptions equating the New Left with the youth of the 1960s, with wider implications for our understanding of the development of the European left across the twentieth century.

II

Clearly there were important points in common. Both parties were formed largely out of moral dissatisfaction with the practice of social democracy in power: in the PSU's case, with the role of Guy Mollet's Section française de l'internationale ouvrière (SFIO) in the Algerian war and, in the PSIUP's case, with the entry of Pietro Nenni's Partito socialista italiano into a coalition government with Aldo Moro's Christian Democrats in 1963. It was this initial refusal that allowed them to adopt the role of the conscience of the left; opponents accused them of assuming a moralistic, even messianic tone, especially in the PSIUP's case, since the initial split was not so much over specific policies as over the principle of being in a bourgeois government at all, leading to establishment accusations of their being *'il cartello dei "no"'*,¹⁰ as if they were toddlers whose instinct was to always say 'no' before knowing what the question was. In the case of the PSU, the rebels who founded the party in 1960 were united, as Jean-François Kesler puts it, by a moral reflex seeking a return to a purity of origins that he compares to the Reformation.¹¹ The phrase 'one no, many yeses',¹² might come to mind, except that there were also many 'no's; alongside the big 'no' to the SFIO from those who came via the Parti socialiste autonome, there was a diverse set of other 'no's: the communists of the Tribune du communisme saying 'no' to the lack of democracy within the Parti communiste français (PCF); various independents in the Union de la gauche socialiste who had been saying 'no' to the institutional left for many years; and Catholics in the Mouvement de libération du peuple saying 'no' to the traditional association of the Church and the right. Indeed, both the PSU and the PSIUP made more overtures towards the possibility of working with Catholics than had previously been the norm on the left.¹³ Yet the key role of both parties was to form an important bridge between official politics and the new movements of 1968. Whatever aspect of 'the 68 years' one looks at, from immigration to the environment, from *autogestion* to student unionism, one so often seems to find the

¹⁰ Alberto Sensini, 'La dissidenza dei socialproletari', *Corriere della Sera*, 14 May 1968.

¹¹ Jean-François Kesler, opening remarks at '50 ans plus tard... le réalisme c'est toujours l'utopie', conference held at Issy-les-Moulineaux, 10 April 2010.

¹² Paul Kingsnorth, *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* (London: Free Press, 2003).

¹³ See also Lelio Basso's speech in PSIUP, *10 congresso nazionale, Roma, EUR, 16-19 dicembre 1965* (Milan: Gallo, 1966), 376.

PSU centrally placed in the background somewhere¹⁴ – but often modestly unwilling to flag up its presence. According to one story that circulates among PSU veterans, one of four activists regularly handing out leaflets together on a single-issue campaign discovered one day that all of them were PSU members, but none of them had known it.¹⁵ Yet many a famous French intellectual passed through the party, from François Furet to Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie to Pierre Vidal-Naquet,¹⁶ and many anglophone specialists of France came under the PSU's influence.¹⁷ A similar point could be made about the PSIUP, for better or for worse. Paul Ginsborg's influential *History of Contemporary Italy* is dedicated to Vittorio Foa (1910–2008), one of the leading figures in the PSIUP. The same issue of *New Left Review* that contained Perry Anderson's famous essay 'Components of the National Culture' also carried an article hailing the PSIUP's theoretical contributions. The Sicilian anti-Mafia activist Peppino Impastato, killed in 1978, had been a PSIUP member. Alberto Franceschini, one of the two founders of the Red Brigades, claims to have first met the other one, Renato Curcio, via a mutual friend who was a PSIUP member.¹⁸

The two parties did exist in overlapping worlds, in that mutual contacts took place on a fairly routine basis.¹⁹ This needs to be placed in the context that the PSU was by temperament a deeply internationalist party and invited delegates to its conferences from many countries, of which Italy was only one. The PSU's first congress, in March 1961, for example, included Paolo Vittorelli of the PSI's then left wing, who claimed that the PSU's task was 'identical to ours', but also speakers from Cameroon, Chile, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia and Yugoslavia, as well as a message of support from Britain's Michael Foot – described as 'an ardent friend of the PSU'.²⁰ Yet by the time of the PSU's sixth congress, in March 1969, delegates from Mediterranean countries were more preponderant among the foreign delegates than the previously well-represented northern Europeans.²¹ On the other hand, the PSU later admitted

¹⁴ Kernagelell et al., *PSU vu d'en bas*.

¹⁵ Paul Oriol and Anne Couteau, interview with author, Paris, 2 Jan. 2006.

¹⁶ Barralis and Gillet, *Au coeur des luttes des années soixante*, 37 n. 30, 157; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Paris–Montpellier PC–PSU 1945–1963* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Mémoires*, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 1998).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Charles Hauss, *The New Left in France: The Unified Socialist Party* (Westport: Greenwood, 1978); Vladimir Fisera, 'The Unified Socialist Party (PSU) since 1968', in David Bell, ed., *Contemporary French Political Parties* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 108–19; Vladimir Fisera, 'The French New Left and the Left-Wing Regime', in Stuart Williams, ed., *Socialism in France: From Jaurès to Mitterrand* (London: Frances Pinter, 1983), 155–64. Giving the present paper at the ASMCF's conference uncovered at least four members of the audience who had been members of or sympathisers with the PSU.

¹⁸ Jon Halliday, 'Structural Reform in Italy: Theory and Practice', *New Left Review*, I, 50 (1968), 73–92; Tom Behan, *Defiance: The Story of One Man Who Stood Up to the Sicilian Mafia* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007); Alberto Franceschini and Giovanni Fasanella, *Brigades Rouges* (Paris: Panama, 2005), 69.

¹⁹ For example, PSU representatives took part in a PSIUP conference on agriculture in Bari in February 1968. *La Tribune Socialiste*, 14 March 1968.

²⁰ *La Tribune Socialiste*, April 1961. The political style of Foot (1913–2010), who was of the same anti-fascist generation as the PSU's early leaders, was characterised by a comparable sense of moral fervour.

²¹ Vladimir Fisera, *Construire un autre monde: la politique internationale du PSU (1960–1969)*, special issue of *TREMA*, 13 (2010), 32.

that its international policy lacked a general strategy and tended to react to events.²² The PSIUP was if anything even more internationalist: party documents tended to discuss several different international issues before even mentioning the situation in Italy. It had a section of Italian emigrant workers in Paris, Nuova Internazionale, which published a bulletin entitled *Noi emigranti*. It could be argued that the notion of a Mediterranean left was present in embryonic form, with Nuova Internazionale envisaging for itself a kind of vanguard role in seeking a collective agreement on emigrants' rights that would apply as well to Spanish, Portuguese, North African, Greek and Turkish workers.²³ Indeed, in April 1968 the PSIUP hosted in Rome, jointly with the Italian Communist Party, a full-scale Conference of Progressive and Anti-Imperialist Forces of Mediterranean Countries. As well as the PSU and PCF, the conference brought together both other leftist opposition parties from Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain (including the FLP) and Turkey and the ruling parties of Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Yugoslavia, positing a vision of transMediterranean solidarity against imperialism. But by 'imperialist' the conference's title referred predominantly to US rather than French hegemony in the region: the PSU's *La Tribune Socialiste* highlighted the conference with a front-page photograph of a US aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean. Opposition to US imperialism at the height of the Vietnam War was one of the ideological elements in which all participants could share. Thus the conference passed general resolutions denouncing US imperialism, Israeli aggression and Greek, Portuguese and Spanish fascism, and making vague calls for the unity of anti-imperialist and progressive forces and for the Mediterranean to become 'a sea of peace, where each people can freely build its future'.²⁴

But there was an elephant in the room: not a fault line between the French and Italian parties but that between those delegates from the former colonising countries of the northern Mediterranean and those from the former colonised countries of the southern Mediterranean (which points to a certain gap in Horn's thesis, in that his Mediterranean New Left appears limited to the northern Mediterranean). The PSU was represented at the Rome conference by Marc Heurgon (1926–2001), one of the party's leading organisers, and later its historian, who before taking up politics full-time had been working on a Ph.D. thesis on the Mediterranean in the age of Napoleon.²⁵ Heurgon's speech and post-conference analysis are interesting for his attempts to resolve the key contradiction of being anti-imperialist but from the rich north: he seems to have been trying to grope towards some formula whereby the French left still could be major actors in the Mediterranean despite the evident constraints of the colonial legacy. Heurgon was critical of what he referred to as 'Bandung-type' responses to imperialism, which lumped together progressive and reactionary forces in the Third World in nationalist fashion, and welcomed the

²² Commission Internationale, 'Stratégie internationale', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 23 March 1972.

²³ 'Il Documento Programmatico del PSIUP', May 1964, 285–310; and 'Le tesi del Ite Congresso', December 1968, 341–71, both reprinted in *IV Congresso del PSIUP: la scelta del PSIUP per l'unità di classe nelle nuove condizioni della lotta politica in Italia* (Rome, 1972); PSIUP, *10 congresso*, 572–76.

²⁴ 'Resolution', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 18 April 1968.

²⁵ Heurgon, *PSU*; Le Roy Ladurie, *Paris–Montpellier*, 253–54.

Rome conference as a way of getting past this. He argued that ‘one cannot seriously attempt to disguise the global confrontation between progressive forces and imperialist forces by presenting it as a conflict between “North” and “South”, between “poor” countries and “well-off” countries’, hailing such recent developments in the West as black revolts in the United States and student revolts in Europe as proof of the necessary ‘intimate liaison between the revolutionary struggles of the third world and the class struggles in the industrialised countries’.²⁶ But Heurgon considered that only limited progress had been made at the conference, identifying three examples of problems that arose. First, the chief North–South disagreement was over the Arab–Israeli conflict. Whereas the Arab delegations had refused to allow Israeli socialists to be invited to the conference, the PSU had unsuccessfully argued that they should be, taking a more nuanced, two-state position on the conflict, and offering its own services as a kind of peace mediator, having bilateral contacts on both sides.²⁷ Heurgon accused the Arab delegations of participating in a ‘union sacrée’²⁸ of progressives and reactionaries, thereby replicating the same nationalist criteria as did colonial states in the past, instead of solidarity across frontiers, races and nations. Second, the recent split in the Greek Communist Party had impeded effective decisions on action against the dictatorship of the colonels in Greece. And finally, there had not been enough on social and economic structures within Mediterranean countries. Although Heurgon, Jacques Sauvageot, Michel Rocard and Jean-Marie Vincent took part in discussions in Algiers that November regarding future common action between the participants in the Rome conference,²⁹ little came of this. It might be concluded that the conference’s attempts to paper over the North–South divide and establish new relations based on co-operation and equality had not been entirely successful.

But bilateral PSU–PSIUP contacts were for the most part between small groups of leading activists,³⁰ and the longest-lived of those relationships were between individual intellectuals rather than the parties as such; as Alain Savary put it in 1962, ‘They can be summed up today in some contacts that are more personal than collective.’³¹ Often those relationships pre-dated the parties, and to understand them fully we need to

²⁶ Marc Heurgon, ‘Une étape utile’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 18 April 1968.

²⁷ Marc Heurgon, ‘En Méditerranée aussi’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 18 April 1968; Marc Heurgon, ‘Préparer la contre-offensive’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 1 Feb. 1968; Roland Cayrol, ‘Michel Rocard parle’, in Cayrol, *Le PSU et l’avenir socialiste de la France. Histoire et sociologie d’un parti* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 49, boasted that the PSU was the only party which could have both Fatah and Israelis at its conferences. Bernard Ravenel, a prominent organiser of the PSU’s international activities who later became president of the Association France–Palestine, notes (‘PSU: la recherche de l’équité’, *Confluences Méditerranée*, 72 (2009–10), 103–6) that while shifting markedly during the 1960s from pro-Zionism to support for Palestinian resistance, the PSU continued to argue that the existence of an Israeli state was an irreversible fact that could not simply be reduced to imperialism. Following Heurgon’s death, Ravenel is currently working on a second volume to complete the *Histoire du PSU* begun by Heurgon.

²⁸ Heurgon, ‘Une étape utile’.

²⁹ ‘Une délégation du PSU à Alger’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 14 Nov. 1968.

³⁰ For example, two members of the PSIUP’s international commission visited the PSU’s national bureau in early July 1968: ‘Contacts avec l’Italie’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 18 July 1968.

³¹ Alain Savary, ‘Projet: Reflexions sur le parti’, report to members of the PSU national bureau, 27 June 1962, Fonds Gilles Martinet, Archives d’histoire contemporaine, Centre d’histoire de Sciences Po, Paris (hereafter FGM), MR6/2.

get away from the stereotypical association of the New Left with youth and consider the role of people who were already in their fifties or sixties. It is revealing that the PSU's newspaper, *La Tribune Socialiste*, once featured an article complaining about age discrimination in the way in which left-wing meetings were conducted,³² which would have been unlikely to appear in other *gauchiste* papers. At least one prominent member of the PSIUP was old enough to have fought in the First World War,³³ and there were many in both parties whose political engagement dated from the inter-war period. Perhaps the best example of individual ties between the two were those between Gilles Martinet (1916–2006) and Lelio Basso (1903–78), documented notably in Martinet's archive, now held at Sciences Po in Paris. Martinet, whose many claims to fame include having been the editor-in-chief of the Agence France-Presse and the founder of what is now *Le Nouvel Observateur*, French ambassador to Italy and Alain Krivine's father-in-law, was in the PSU's early years its deputy national secretary.³⁴ Basso, a long-standing Socialist parliamentarian, known for having introduced an article on workers' participation into the 1947 Italian Constitution,³⁵ was a member of the Russell Tribunal on US war crimes in Vietnam, a major international Marxist theorist, the best-known intellectual in the PSIUP and, for a time, its president.

While their interest in each other's countries stretched back into history – Martinet wrote a dissertation at the Sorbonne on Napoleon's campaign in Italy, and one of Basso's hobbies was collecting books about the Paris Commune³⁶ – they shared an important generational experience of resistance during the Second World War. Martinet, who had first hitch-hiked to Italy as a student in summer 1936, was involved in the Resistance in Paris before marrying Iole Buozzi, whose father Bruno Buozzi was a famous Italian trade union leader, previously exiled in France, handed over by the Vichy regime to Mussolini and shot by the Gestapo the day that Rome was liberated.³⁷ Basso, meanwhile, was a longstanding anti-fascist activist and one of the leaders of the Milan insurrection of 25 April 1945.³⁸ Both Basso and Martinet were in the 1940s already involved in parties with similar names and not dissimilar positioning to the future PSU and PSIUP: Basso's Movimento di unità proletaria merged with

³² 'Les vieux et la révolution', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 24 May 1972. Illustrated with a cover picture of a tragic elderly figure with his head in his hands, the article argued that the far left privileged youth, with a militaristic vocabulary of struggles and battles, and an atmosphere where those who shouted loudest were the only ones listened to, citing an 83-year-old militant who had stopped going to meetings as a result.

³³ Emilio Lussu (1890–1975), founder of the Sardinian Action Party.

³⁴ Gilles Martinet, *L'Observateur engagé* (Paris: Lattès, 2006), 131, describes himself as 'le vrai patron du PSU' at that time, although Jean-François Kesler, *De la gauche dissidente au nouveau parti socialiste* (Toulouse: Privat, 1990), 361, downplays the extent of his day-to-day influence.

³⁵ Fondazione Lelio e Lisli Basso, *La via alla politica* (Milan: Angeli, 1999); 'Profilo biografico di Lelio Basso', in Lelio Basso, *Scritti scelti: frammenti di un percorso politico et intellettuale (1903–1978)* (Rome: Carocci, 2003), 35.

³⁶ Mercedes Sala, ed., *La Comune di Parigi nella Biblioteca Basso* (Florence: Olschki, 2005).

³⁷ Martinet, *Observateur*, 29; Olivier Forlin, *Les intellectuels français et l'Italie (1945–1955): médiation culturelle, engagements et représentations* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), 39. Appropriately for a journalist, he participated in the liberation of Parisian newspaper offices in August 1944. Gilles Martinet, *Cassandre et les tueurs* (Paris: Grasset, 1986), 60–2.

³⁸ 'Profil biografico di Lelio Basso', 34.

the PSI to form the PSIUP, the name under which the Italian Socialists traded until splitting in 1948, while Martinet had been involved in the similarly short-lived Parti socialiste unitaire.³⁹ Their friendship lasted from their first meeting at a socialist conference in Warsaw in 1948 until Basso's death in 1978. In 1958, for example, an audience of Milanese intellectuals was rather disappointed to hear from Martinet that De Gaulle was not actually installing a fascist dictatorship (the contrary view being widely held on the Italian left).⁴⁰ In the early 1960s they made various attempts to set up a society for international socialist studies; although apparently hampered by their being too busy to arrange a mutually convenient date to meet, this eventually bore fruit in the multilingual *International Socialist Journal*, published in Milan.⁴¹

Basso was a regular visitor at PSU congresses⁴² and party headquarters in Paris, and was much in demand as a speaker at PSU student branch meetings,⁴³ while Martinet later described Basso's battle with Nenni at the PSI's fateful 1964 congress in the EUR exhibition centre on the outskirts of Rome, at which the PSIUP broke away, as one of the most extraordinary oratorical duels he ever witnessed.⁴⁴ But by the late sixties the connection between each man and his party was fraying. Martinet took a more hands-off role in the PSU in order to avoid accusations of a conflict of interest with his editorship of *France-Observateur*. Basso had meanwhile become disillusioned with the PSIUP, in 1968 resigning as president and not even renewing his party card.⁴⁵ As Martinet wrote to Basso in January 1969, 'I note, like you, a terrible discrepancy between the possibilities that the situation offers and the behaviour of the parties on which we should theoretically be able to rely.'⁴⁶ One can see at this point a certain retreat into theory, with both seeking to establish socialist study centres.⁴⁷ This is connected to the fact that Martinet clearly did not see eye to eye with the younger, radicalised *gauchistes* who formed the bulk of those who joined the PSU in the aftermath of 1968. (Some flavour of the atmosphere of the time is given by the fact that a dispute took place in the PSU over whether or not students at Nanterre University had been justified in emptying a dustbin onto Paul Ricoeur, the PSU-sympathising Christian socialist philosopher and dean of the humanities faculty.⁴⁸) In 1971 Martinet launched

³⁹ 'Lelio Basso', in *Dizionario storico politico italiano* (Florence: Sansoni, 1971); Martinet, *Cassandre*, 66–9.

⁴⁰ Martinet, *Cassandre*, 128–9; Gilles Martinet and Sergio Romano, *Une amitié difficile: entretiens sur deux siècles de relations franco-italiennes* (Paris: Association Dante Alighieri, 1999), 78.

⁴¹ Basso to Martinet, 18 Feb. 1960, Martinet to Basso, 11 April 1960, 17 May 1960 and 31 May 1960, Basso to Martinet 8 June 1960, Martinet to Basso 1 July 1960, 13 Aug. 1960, 31 Aug. 1960, 24 Sept. 1960 and 28 Dec. 1960, FGM, MR25/12; *International Socialist Journal/Revue internationale de socialisme*, Milan, 1964.

⁴² For example at that of its forerunner, the Union de la gauche socialiste in 1958. Belgian, North African, West German and Yugoslav delegates were also present, as well as Dorothy Thompson of the British *New Reasoner*. Dorothy Thompson, 'Delegation Fraternelle', *New Reasoner*, 7 (1958–9), 108.

⁴³ Reports in *La Tribune Socialiste*, 1 Feb. 1968 and 18 July 1968; Jean-Claude Gillet, 'La reconstruction de l'organisation étudiante (fin 1964–fin 1966)', in Barralis and Gillet, *Au cœur des luttes des années soixante*, 121, n. 168.

⁴⁴ Gilles Martinet, 'Pour Lelio Basso', 1978, FGM, MR26/1.

⁴⁵ Martinet, *Observateur*, 131; 'Dati biografici', in Fondazione Lelio et Lislà Basso, *Via alla politica*, 61.

⁴⁶ Martinet to Basso, 23 Jan. 1969, FGM, MR13/6.

⁴⁷ Basso to Martinet, 7 Jan. 1969, and Martinet to Basso, 23 Jan. 1969, FGM, MR13/6.

⁴⁸ Kesler, *Gauche dissidente*, 383, n. 6; Francois Dosse, *Paul Ricoeur: les sens d'une vie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1997), 477.

a fierce attack on the extremist ‘ideological terrorism’ of those in the party who, while hiding behind the label ‘workers and peasants’, were in fact, Martinet considered, a mixture of eternal students, marginal sociologists and self-hating managers, with the assistance of ‘a few old “Mohicans” of the literary world’ – in short, the ‘lumpen-intelligentsia’.⁴⁹ Martinet knew what he was talking about, since he was later to describe his seventeen-year-old self of 1933 as ‘a perfect little *gauchiste*’.⁵⁰ Ironically, although his book on 1968, *La conquête des pouvoirs*, was successful in Italian translation, when he went to the island of Elba to receive a book prize for it, the ceremony was disrupted by a crowd of far left activists from Potere operaio demonstrating against the sacking of workers from a local factory.⁵¹ Basso’s position was not dissimilar: influenced by Rosa Luxemburg, he attempted to theorise a middle way between reformist surrender and the violent conquest of power, seeing this obsession of impatient latter-day leftists as owing more to Stalin, Babeuf and Bronterre O’Brien than to Marx or Lenin:

Her synthesis of day-to-day struggle and ultimate goal is more than ever necessary to resist the opportunism and revisionism which have reduced the proletariat of the West to abject surrender, as well as the pseudo-Marxist extremism which ignores the essential intermediate steps and wants total revolution ‘here and now’.⁵²

Basso and Martinet’s intellectual exchanges were not the only ones between members of the two parties. The writings of Basso⁵³ and Foa were regularly cited by PSU authors, notably André Gorz (1923–2007). Gorz’s 1964 book *Stratégie ouvrière et néocapitalisme*, which drew on the arguments of Foa and several other Italian authors about union organisation, was very influential in PSU circles,⁵⁴ perhaps partly because they were more likely to be composed of the new proletariat of specialists, technicians and professionals stressed by Gorz than the ‘old’ blue-collar proletariat. The book was in turn influential in Italy, and Gorz modified his views under the influence of a number of thinkers associated with Italian *operaismo*, including Foa. As Alain

⁴⁹ Gilles Martinet, ‘Contre l’idéologie de la lumpen-intelligentsia’, *Tribunes libres pour le VIIe congrès*, supplement to *La Tribune Socialiste*, 3 June 1971. It was interesting that Martinet should use the phrase ‘lumpen-intelligentsia’, because it also appeared in the famous anti-Althusser polemic by the English historian E. P. Thompson, ‘The Poverty of Theory: Or An Orrery of Errors’, in Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and other essays* (London: Merlin, 1978), 195. Thompson, like Martinet a veteran of the Second World War and the ‘First New Left’ of 1956, was similarly exasperated by certain tendencies of the post-68 ‘Second New Left’. He was the husband of the aforementioned Dorothy Thompson, who had described Martinet in 1958 as ‘a most impressive speaker and seemed to be very popular amongst all sections of the delegates’.

⁵⁰ Martinet, *Cassandre*, 32.

⁵¹ Martinet, *Observateur*, 159; Gilles Martinet, *Les Italiens* (Paris: Grasset, 1990), 296–97.

⁵² Lelio Basso, introduction to *Rosa Luxemburg – scritti politici* (Rome: Riuniti, 1967), trans. by Douglas Parmée as *Rosa Luxemburg: A Reappraisal* (London: André Deutsch, 1975), 133; cf. Lelio Basso, ‘El uso de la legalidad en la transición al socialismo’, in Lelio Basso et al., *Transición al socialismo y experiencia chilena* (Buenos Aires: Rodolfo Alonso, 1974), 15–73.

⁵³ E.g. Jean-Marie Vincent, ‘Pour continuer mai 1968’, *Les Temps Modernes*, August–September 1968, reprinted in his *Les mensonges de l’Etat* (Paris 1979), 32.

⁵⁴ André Gorz, *Stratégie ouvrière et néocapitalisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1964), 45, 46, 47–8, 57, 67, 69, 72, 116, 154; Mitchell Cohen, ‘Andre Gorz’, in Robert Gorman, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of neo-Marxism* (London: Mansell, 1986), 175.

Lipietz was to recall following Gorz's suicide, 'Under the influence of Italian *opéraisme* [*sic*] (Trentin and Foa in the trade unions, Rossanna Rossanda in *Il Manifesto*, he expanded his concerns to the mass workers, the skilled workers of the big factories that were the foundation of *Potere operaio* (Negri) and *Lotta continua* (Sofri, Viale), the spiritual parents of France's "Gauche ouvrière et paysanne" – the far left PSU faction to which the young Lipietz belonged and Martinet objected. It is significant that Lipietz, today a Green MEP, stresses the transEuropean dimension of *Stratégie ouvrière et néocapitalisme*, which argued against the 'national protectionism' of the PCF and its trade union confederation, the Confédération générale du travail (CGT), and for the workers' struggle to be internationalised – mirroring the arguments within the French left over the European constitution forty years later.⁵⁵

III

There were differences, however, in the social composition of the two parties. The word 'proletarian' in the PSIUP's title was not simply a rhetorical flourish of the type that adorned the names of some far left groups which were in fact composed primarily of students and ex-students. Many officials in the Confederazione generale italiana del lavoro (CGIL), the largest trade union confederation in Italy, were in the PSIUP,⁵⁶ and indeed the CGIL's secretary, Vittorio Foa, sat on the PSIUP's central committee. It is clear how unlikely the non-existent equivalent⁵⁷ sounds (if any of the CGT leaders had been in the PSU). Compared with the PSU there was a more marked old-style workerism to the PSIUP, whose statutes defined it as an 'organisation of working class struggle which continues the class and internationalist tradition of Italian socialism opened at the Genoa congress of 1892 of commitment to class unity'.⁵⁸ It was consistent with such a conception that the PSIUP's Paris section advised its members to join the CGT. The party's strong performance in the 1968 Italian election was largely based on support from working-class voters disillusioned with the PSI's record in government, to some extent prefiguring the 'hot autumn' the following year in the factories.⁵⁹ By contrast, the PSU placed considerable emphasis on the white-collar

⁵⁵ Alain Lipietz, 'André Gorz and Our Youth', *Studies in Political Economy*, 81 (2008), 191–3; Gorz, *Stratégie ouvrière*, 156–74. At this time, Gorz's articles were also beginning to appear in English, in Ralph Miliband and John Saville's *Socialist Register* – as a result of the continental contacts developed by Miliband's previous involvement in Basso's *International Socialist Journal*. Michael Newman, *Ralph Miliband and the Politics of the New Left* (London: Merlin, 2002), 123. This may help place in context Miliband's failed attempts in 1974–7 to set up an 'Independent Socialist Party' (Newman, *Miliband*, 238–48) that sounds suspiciously like a British PSU or PSIUP.

⁵⁶ Ian Birchall, 'The Common Market and the Working Class: An Introduction', *International Socialism*, 27 (1966–67), 10–18.

⁵⁷ While the CGIL differed from the CGT in enjoying official Socialist participation, and Gino Bedani, *Politics and Ideology in the Italian Workers' Movement* (Oxford: Berg, 1995), downplays the extent of its subservience to the PCI, the essential equivalence remains that contemporaries widely considered both CGT and CGIL as transmission belts into communism.

⁵⁸ PSIUP, *20 congresso nazionale del PSIUP, Napoli 18/21 dicembre 1968* (Rome: Gallo, 1969), 555.

⁵⁹ PSIUP, *10 congresso*, 573–6; Paolo Farnesi, *The Italian Party System (1945–1980)* (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), 13; Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency* (London: Verso, 1990), 44.

intermediate layers that party theorists like Serge Mallet conceptualised as the ‘new working class’,⁶⁰ but which might alternatively be described as the new middle class. From the home addresses of the early PSU leadership, it is clear that they were almost all Parisian, mostly living in the better-off parts of the city (and all male,⁶¹ though this last was true of the PSIUP as well). For example, there was what might be described as a touch of *gauche caviar* about Martinet, who lived in the sixteenth arrondissement and whose friends included the US ambassador to Fiji. The same could be said of Heurgon, who as the son of the chair of Latin at the Sorbonne and of a château owner, had sufficient self-confidence to justify his abandonment of an apparently promising academic career by explaining that ‘Rather than studying and teaching history, I prefer to make it.’ And to examine Michel Rocard’s period as PSU leader is to witness a bizarre double life – by day the brilliant young technocrat oiling the wheels of the Pompidolian state, by night penning articles with titles such as ‘Is France Heading for a Revolution?’ While this was to an extent offset by a more socially varied membership in certain areas of provincial strength, it would be fair to say that blue-collar trade unions were not the PSU’s strongest source of support and were poorly represented in the party’s leadership.⁶² Whereas lists of PSIUP candidates give the impression of a greater proportion in blue-collar occupations, probably reflecting the generally greater impact of New Left ideas on the Italian than French working class in this period. One set of statistics suggest that as many as 94 per cent of PSIUP members were workers, peasants or artisans,⁶³ which compared with no more than 23 per cent of the PSU.⁶⁴ On the other hand, we might note that Foa, as a former lawyer,⁶⁵ was an example of the type of intellectual-cum-trade-union leader found frequently in Italy, but rarely in France or Britain.

⁶⁰ Patrick Massa, ‘Les classes moyennes vues par le PCF et le PSU (1962–1968)’, *Vingtième Siècle*, 37, 1 (1993), 45–54.

⁶¹ See Bibia Pavard, ‘Du contrôle des naissances à l’avortement libre et gratuit: histoire d’un combat pour et par les femmes au PSU (1961–1979)’, in Kernalégnenn et al., *PSU vu d’en bas*, 305–16; Dominique Bazaire, ‘Les filles aux ESU’, in Barralis and Gillet, *Au cœur des luttes*, 189–90, which accuses Heurgon in particular of failing to take women seriously.

⁶² ‘Commission exécutive nationale’, n.d. (c.1962?), FGM, MR6/2; Martinet’s entry in *Who’s Who in France 1971–1972*; Martinet’s description of his childhood as ‘bourgeois’, although tempered by the fact that his father was the son of a gardener; Martinet, correspondence with John London, FGM, MR 26/1; Kesler, *Gauche dissidente*, 408; François Pertus and Jean-Claude Gillet, ‘Regards croisés sur Marc Heurgon’, in Barralis and Gillet, *Au cœur des luttes*, 157–65, in which Pertus detects in Heurgon’s political style a certain aristocratic disdain for petit-bourgeois values, although Gillet contests this description; Michel Rocard, ‘La France va-t-elle vers une révolution?’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 12 Sept. 1968, although the content of the article was less dramatic than the front-page headline. On these tensions in Rocard see Julien Rennes, *Itinéraire d’un homme politique de gauche dans la France de 1967 à 1974: Michel Rocard, du PSU au PS* (Nîmes: Lacour, 2000).

⁶³ ‘I Candidati alla camera’, *Corriere della Sera*, 18 May 1968; Anna Celadin, *Mondo nuovo e le origini del PSIUP* (Rome: Ediesse, 2006), 107, citing *Mondo Nuovo*, January 1965.

⁶⁴ Kesler, *Gauche dissidente*, 408, figures for 1966. Roland Cayrol and Yves Tavernier, ‘Sociologie des adhérents du Parti socialiste unifié’, *Revue française de sciences politiques*, 19 (1969), 705–6, gives a figure of 18.5 per cent for 1968, with the percentage of workers having declined since 1960.

⁶⁵ Martin Clark, ‘Vittorio Foa’, in *Biographical Dictionary of European Labour Leaders* (Westport: Greenwood, 1995), 316.

But perhaps the most marked difference, and one neglected by Horn, was the nature of each party's relationship to their respective national communist party. The default relationship of the PCF to the PSU was one of mutual hostility. In 1968, for example, *L'Humanité* accused the PSU of being Pompidou's *franc-tireurs* within the left, and Rocard remains a hate figure in communist circles to this day.⁶⁶ While the PSU paid lip service to the aim of eventual left unity, they nevertheless vociferously defended their existence as an independent, dissident left not susceptible to communist hegemony. For Jacques Sauvageot, most famous as one of the triumvirate of spokespersons for the French student movement in 1968, the key question posed by the PSU was 'How should we construct in the modern world an alternative to capitalism which would not be that of "actually existing socialism"?'⁶⁷ Unlike some other left dissidents, the PSU explicitly rejected a Bolshevik-type conception of the party; indeed, its approach has been described as the opposite of Leninism. The PSU's deliberate decentralism was diametrically opposed to the PCF's centralism, presenting *socialisme autogestionnaire* as the positive alternative to the authoritarian Soviet model.⁶⁸ This is easy to explain historically, since many in the PSU were members of the generation of 1956, revolted by both Suez and Hungary, both Western and Soviet imperialism, and therefore anti-Stalinism was a point of principle. Indeed for some of the party's leaders, this went back earlier. Martinet, for example, had broken with the Communist Party as early as 1938 over the show trial and execution of Nikolai Bukharin. For Claude Bourdet (1909–96), a prominent PSU councillor in Paris, nationally respected Resistance hero and anti-colonialist, the origins of his independent leftism can be traced to the Resistance and the immediate post-war period, when he considered that the PCF needed to be kept in its place because of its tendency to take over everything.⁶⁹ Suspicion of the PCF came particularly naturally to those PSU members who had previously been in the SFIO, at daggers drawn with the PCF throughout the early phase of the cold war during the Fourth Republic.

Whereas the equivalent phase of history of the Italian Socialist Party, from which the PSIUP leaders had come, was quite different. The PSI had chosen the opposite side of the cold war from the SFIO, preferring a subordinate relationship to the PCI, and was expelled from the Socialist International as a result.⁷⁰ Robert Ventresca

⁶⁶ Laurent Salini, *L'Humanité*, 20 June 1968, cited in 'Le PCF parle du PSU', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 18 July 1968; 'Michel Rocard: l'homme qui fait payer le peuple', *L'Humanité Dimanche*, 20–26 Aug. 2009.

⁶⁷ Vincent Pincheral, 'La liaison ouvriers–paysans', in PSU, *Des militants du PSU présenté par Michel Rocard* (Paris 1971), 178–9; Robert Chapuis, 'PC–PSU: quelques explications', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 29 Nov. 1972; Jacques Sauvageot, 'Introduction', in Barralis and Gillet, *Au coeur des luttes des années soixante*, 21.

⁶⁸ Heurgon, *PSU*, 116–20; comment by former PSU militant at 'Le PSU vu d'en bas', conference, Rennes, September 2008; Michel Rocard, 'Nos divergences avec le PC', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18 Dec. 1972; Rennes, *Rocard*, 95–97.

⁶⁹ Forlin, *Intellectuels*, 38; Gilles Martinet, *Les cinq communismes* (Paris: Seuil, 1971); Claude Bourdet, *L'aventure incertaine: de la Résistance à la Restauration* (Paris: Felin, 1998), 277–302, 434–6.

⁷⁰ Guillaume Devin, *L'Internationale socialiste: histoire et sociologie du socialisme internationale, 1945–1990* (Paris: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1993), 33.

suggests that ‘the Nenni socialists appeared to many of their own supporters as little more than communists in socialist clothing’,⁷¹ and the SFIO itself accused their Italian counterparts of having 700–800 functionaries paid out of PCI funds.⁷² It was not surprising, therefore, that many of those who objected to the PSI’s later repudiation of that path by getting into bed with the Christian Democrats should be philosoviet. While the PSIUP was no monolith, also containing, like the PSU, a mixture of left-socialists looking for strategic renewal and post-68 radicals, there was also a significant number of the PSIUP’s cadres, without real equivalence in the PSU, who could easily be caricatured as old-style Stalinist bureaucrats. To begin with, the party’s hammer and sickle logo⁷³ somewhat gave the game away. Many PSIUP officials had been followers of Rodolfo Morandi, whose chief contribution to the PSI in the 1950s had been to create a powerful party bureaucracy based explicitly on Leninist notions of democratic centralism⁷⁴ – a doctrine that, as we have seen, was anathema to the PSU. And the ‘class unity’ alluded to in the PSIUP’s statutes was code for willingness to be steered into a front dominated by the PCI as the largest party of the proletariat. The PSIUP was thus frequently dependent on PCI patronage, seeking to hang on to its coat-tails by running joint lists in local and senatorial elections, and, following the introduction of regional devolution in 1970, ruling as a coalition in the ‘red’ regions of Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna. In one district of Bologna, when a PSIUP representative tried to act independently of the PCI on local issues he was forced to resign.⁷⁵ Its overall direction can therefore be placed as much within an older tradition of Italian ‘maximalism’ (i.e., ideological purists who refused to make any compromise with the bourgeois order) as within the New Left: opponents accused them of archaic ‘palaeo-Marxism’.⁷⁶

This is not really a charge that could be levelled at the PSU, given its associations with what Rocard later called the ‘second left’, suspicious of the Jacobin centralist traditions of both PCF and SFIO.⁷⁷ There was scarcely any such thing as orthodoxy in the PSU, since one of the most notable features of the party was its rich ideological diversity, renowned as it was for absurdly complex seven-way faction fights. Although there was a minority PSU current led by Jean Poperen which also favoured unity of action with the communists,⁷⁸ this was much less influential than the equivalent in the PSIUP, and it was not starry-eyed about the USSR, given that many of the

⁷¹ Robert Ventresca, *From Fascism to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Elections of 1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 261.

⁷² Paolo Mattero, *Il partito inquieto: organizzazione, passioni e politica dei socialisti italiani della Resistenza al miracolo economico* (Rome: Carocci, 2004), 265.

⁷³ ‘La bandiera del PSIUP’, *Corriere della Sera*, 13 Jan. 1964.

⁷⁴ Samuel Barnes, *Party Democracy: Politics in an Italian Socialist Federation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 45; Di Scala, *Renewing Italian Socialism*, 80–83.

⁷⁵ Pridham, *Parties and Coalition Behaviour*, 198–9; David Kertzer, *Comrades and Christians: Religion and Political Struggle in Communist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 227–9.

⁷⁶ De Grand, *Italian Left*, 166; Sensini, ‘Socialproletari’.

⁷⁷ Vincent Duclert, ‘La “deuxième gauche”’, in Jean-Jacques Becker and Gilles Candar, eds., *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol. 2 (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 435–51.

⁷⁸ Bernard Ravenel, ‘Un enseignant dans le PSU’, in PSU, *Militants du PSU*, 8. Prior to becoming a PCF dissident, Poperen had in 1952 acted as a kind of ideological policeman in defence of the party line

Poperenites had previously left the PCF. If we are looking for a French equivalent of this time to the PSIUP's maximalism (about which there was a rather Jacobin-like⁷⁹ sense of mission), Jean-Pierre Chévènement's Centre d'études, de recherches et d'éducation socialistes might be closer than the PSU.⁸⁰

In fact the majority of the PSIUP, led by Tullio Vecchietti (1914–99), were sometimes referred to as *carristi*⁸¹ – ‘tankies’ – because they had defended the sending of Soviet tanks into Hungary in 1956. When the same thing happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the PSIUP, as Maud Bracke puts it, ‘assumed incoherent positions’ – at first criticising the invasion yet then actually criticising the PCI for having opposed it and thereby reinforced antisovietism. While Horn does acknowledge the role of the PSIUP's position on Czechoslovakia in the decline of the party, he presents it in rather isolated fashion, the only context given being that New Left parties like the PSIUP came to be seen as *too* decentralised after the failure of May 1968, leading to a turn to Leninism. Arguably this misses out the longer-term heritage of Stalinist-influenced modes of action that helped to condition the PSIUP decision to be more royalist than the King over Czechoslovakia, and places a question mark over Horn's claim that it was ‘equally multifaceted, pluralist, open-minded and open-ended’.⁸² If it was pluralist in the sense of being composed of different currents, that did not mean that everyone within it was committed to a pluralist society. It was an article of faith among the *carristi* that they had a certain tradition of Italian exceptionalism to live up to, that of ‘the historic commitment of the united Socialist Left, always in solidarity with the October Revolution, with the development of the Socialist countries and with liberation struggles against imperialism’, a commitment which they felt differentiated them from other Western socialists.⁸³ Thus among the foreign delegates at the PSIUP's first congress in Rome in December 1965 Jean-Marie Vincent of the PSU had to wait his turn to speak behind official representatives from the USSR and other communist states, who received applause from the audience. Similarly, at the PSIUP's second congress in Naples in December 1968, the PSU's Serge Mallet and Pierre Molineau had to rub shoulders not only with more predictable Western New Leftists such as Karl Dietrich Wolf of the German Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS) or John Watson of the Black Panthers but also the likes of

on the French Revolution: David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals 1914–1960* (London: André Deutsch, 1964), 295.

⁷⁹ Giuseppe Carlo Marino, *Biografia del sessantotto* (Milan: RCS, 2004), 167.

⁸⁰ At one point in the early PS's factional struggles Mitterrand accused Chévènement of ‘maximalism’: Marcelle Padovani, ‘Les “courants” socialistes’, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 29 April 1972. While after joining the PS, Martinet collaborated with CERES on the journal *Frontière*, their fundamentally contrasting aims led to the demise of the journal: Emeric Bréhier, ‘Le Ceres et l'autogestion au travers de ses revues: fondement identitaire et posture interne’, in Georgi, *Autogestion*, 187–201.

⁸¹ Giuseppe Mammarella, *L'Italia dopo il fascismo 1943–68* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1970), 354; ‘RM’, ‘Sono confluiti nel Pci due terzi dei socialproletari’, *Corriere della Sera*, 18 July 1972; De Grand, *Italian Left*, 127.

⁸² Maud Bracke, *Which Socialism? Whose Detente? West European Communism and the Czechoslovak Crisis, 1968* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 226–7; Horn, *Spirit of '68*, 156, 151.

⁸³ ‘Il documento della maggioranza: confluenza per l'unità di classe nelle nuove condizioni della lotta politica’, in *IV Congresso del PSIUP*, 17.

Professor G. P. Franzov, vice-director of the Marxism-Leninism Institute of the USSR, and delegates from the communist parties of Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Hungary and East Germany, whose leader, Walter Ulbricht, sent along a fraternal message.⁸⁴

Some contemporaries claimed, therefore, that the entire creation of the PSIUP was simply a plot hatched by a group of crypto-communists within the PSI, who were actually clandestine members of the PCI. It has even been suggested that the PSIUP was in receipt of subsidies from Moscow,⁸⁵ something of which no one has ever thought to accuse the PSU. A name often mentioned in relation to such theories was Vecchietti,⁸⁶ the leader of the left wing of the Socialists during the seven years preceding the formation of the PSIUP, and then the new party's secretary-general, although the evidence remains inconclusive. Some scholars of Italian communism have argued that the PCI leadership (although not the party's left wing) was in fact opposed to the creation of the PSIUP, having a greater interest in keeping the socialist left inside the PSI, from where it could continue to exercise leverage against the social-democratisation of the party, and thereby continue to supply votes to PCI-led local councils.⁸⁷ But whatever the immediate electoral interest of the PCI, it is not necessary to construct a conspiracy theory in order to note that the political preferences of many in the PSIUP were temperamentally and willingly pro-Soviet. As Raphael Zariski noted at the time of the factional struggles that preceded the birth of the party, the attitudes of *carristi* were partly motivated by sentiments derived from resistance memories.⁸⁸ While Zariski did not specifically mention Vecchietti on this point, the argument does seem to fit for him. Vecchietti was, like Basso or Martinet, of the generation for whom solidarities forged during the period of anti-fascist struggle in both countries could continue to influence the political choices of the 1960s. Vecchietti was a historian-cum-journalist who, while studying at the Sorbonne's Institute for Napoleonic Studies, mixed with the Italian anti-fascist exiles of late 1930s Paris, co-operating with the PSI and the non-communist Giustizia e Libertà group, but possibly also the PCI, before taking part in the resistance in

⁸⁴ PSIUP, *10 congresso*, 8–11; PSIUP, *20 congresso*, 537–43.

⁸⁵ Covatta, *Guerra fredda*, 330; according to Fisera, *Construire un autre monde*, 28, the PSU's Abraham Behar made similar accusations against the PSIUP. Anna Celadin, 'Intervista a Vittorio Foa a cura di Anna Celadin', in Celadin, *Mondo nuovo*, presents three pieces of evidence to support the suggestion: the party paper was printed at the same printworks as the communist daily *L'Unità*; (unspecified) internal PSIUP sources have confirmed the rumour of funding from the Eastern Bloc; and Vecchietti and Valori often appeared on tours of Eastern Europe. It is interesting that presented with this, Foa said that he did not know about it, on the grounds that others dealt with the party press, but did not actually deny it.

⁸⁶ E.g. Altiero Spinelli, *Diario europeo 1948–1969* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989), 400, diary entry for 10 April 1961.

⁸⁷ Donald Blackmer, *Unity in Diversity: Italian Communism and the Communist World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968), 244; Grant Amyrot, *The Italian Communist Party* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 65; Giorgio Galli, *Storia del Pci* (Milan: Kaos, 1993).

⁸⁸ Raphael Zariski, 'The Italian Socialist Party: A Case Study in Factional Conflict', *American Political Science Review*, 56 (1962), 382.

Rome.⁸⁹ Then, as editor of the PSI's newspaper *Avanti!* during the 1950s, Vecchietti had indeed favoured unity with the Communists at every opportunity.⁹⁰ But this is not to say that he was simply an unreflective apologist for Stalinism. Recent research by Giovanni Scirocco has shown that Vecchietti was part of a group who, in spite of their later philocommunist, had originally come to the PSI in the 1940s via Basso's Movimento di Unità Proletaria (MUP), having read Luxemburg and Trotsky, rejected socialism in a single country and wanted Europe-wide socialism and European federalism. When it came to 1956, the arguments, Scirocco suggests, were not so much about Hungary as about the implications for Italy. Vecchietti criticised the first Soviet invasion of Hungary, but supported the second, and above all argued that it should not be an excuse to ditch irrevocably the communist comrades with whom they had gone through so much together, and thereby play into the hands of the right.⁹¹

Even those in the PSIUP who took a more critical line had to take into account the weight of the *carristi*; thus in 1968 Vittorio Foa 'judged negatively' the invasion of Czechoslovakia, but bent over backwards to note that many good comrades disagreed, and argued merely for an 'positive open and fraternal critique' of the 'country which came out of the October Revolution' as opposed to 'servile obedience'⁹² – although later Foa was to blame the likes of Vecchietti for the failure of the PSIUP. Ultimately the tragedy of Lelio Basso was, as Martinet recognised, that he never managed to convince a majority in either PSI or PSIUP of his unorthodox line, hence his resignation as president in the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis.⁹³

The PSIUP's outlook reflected the fact that it had a hefty central party apparatus inherited from the PSI – precisely what the PSU, with its rather amateurish and at times shambolic habits, did not have.⁹⁴ Whereas the typical PSIUP election candidate was a full-time party or union functionary, people did not generally join the PSU to build a career as a party apparatchik, since the number of paid full-time officials was extremely low – at times only one, compared with about 500 in the PSIUP. Thus while it was the sign of a good local PSU militant ritually to denounce the party

⁸⁹ Fondazione istituto Gramsci, 'Tullio Vecchietti', www.teamsviluppo.com/GuidaGramsci/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=191&Itemid=826u (accessed 8 June 2010); Associazione nazionale partigiani d'Italia, 'Tullio Vecchietti', www.anpi.it/uomini/vecchietti_tullio.htm (accessed 8 June 2010); *Who's Who in Italy 1990* (Milan: Who's Who in Italy, 1990), 2002–3, which is the only one of these sources to mention the PCI. It may also be speculated whether it was more than coincidence that Vecchietti was the third of the political strategists considered in this article to have had a Napoleonic fixation.

⁹⁰ Mattera, *Il partito inquieto*, 230, 246.

⁹¹ Tullio Vecchietti, 'Il drama di Budapest', *Avanti!*, 25 Oct. 1956, cited in Giovanni Scirocco, *Politique d'abord: il PSI, la guerra fredda e la politica internazionale (1948–1957)* (Milan: Unicopli, 2010), 203, and in Mattera, *Partito inquieto*, 266; Tullio Vecchietti, 'Il punto critico dell'Ungheria', *Avanti!*, 3 Nov. 1956, cited in Scirocco, *Politique d'abord*, 209.

⁹² Vittorio Foa, speech to PSIUP central committee, translated as 'Une signe de faiblesse' in *La Tribune Socialiste*, 10 Oct. 1968.

⁹³ Celadin, 'Vittorio Foa', 175; Martinet to Lisl Basso (Lelio Basso's widow), n. d. (1980s), FGM, MR25/12; 'Dati biografici', 61.

⁹⁴ Sensini, 'Socialproletari'; Heurgon, *PSU*, 103–5.

appareil, there was not actually much of an *appareil* in existence, partly on principle to avoid the practices of the old SFIO apparatus. More typical of PSU election candidates and leaders was a teacher or academic politically active in their (at that time rather more generous than today) spare time.⁹⁵ Arguably more innovative than the PSIUP, and therefore parallel to some aspects of the French PSU's attempts to raise newly public post-materialist issues from environmentalism to abortion rights was the Italian Radical Party. Although the Radicals had stood on a common list with PSIUP in the municipal elections in Rome and Genoa in 1966, they (again like the French PSU) fundamentally differed from the PSIUP on the issue of subordination to the communists.⁹⁶ The Radicals' character as less a party structure than a collection of individuals fighting single-issue campaigns⁹⁷ had some similarities to the PSU – although with less of an umbilical cord tying it to the old left.

Nevertheless, for all its apparent 'modernism', the PSU's own attitude to the Soviet bloc was, as Peter Deli has argued, not without its ambiguities.⁹⁸ From 1967 the PSU enjoyed a hegemonic position in the French national students' union, the Union nationale des étudiants de France (UNEF), during which time UNEF perhaps surprisingly remained a member of the Prague-based, Soviet-bloc-controlled International Union of Students (IUS). UNEF's vice-president for international affairs, the PSU activist Jean-Daniel Bénard, attended the World Festival of Youth in Leningrad in August 1967 with no apparent qualms, enjoying friendly discussions with Russian and French communists. On the other hand, Bénard was deported from Bulgaria in July 1968 for planning an unauthorised demonstration, and following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia the following month succeeded in preventing the IUS from holding its executive committee in Prague 'under the protection of Russian tanks'.⁹⁹ Although Manuel Bridier (a leading figure in the PSU's Paris federation, who played an important role in the party's move towards the extreme left after May 1968) resigned from the Association France–URSS after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, it might be asked why he was in it in the first place, since he described the invasion in relatively restrained language as a 'mistake'. His resignation letter made it clear that, rather like Foa, he considered the USSR, despite his differences of opinion with it, to be the country of the October Revolution and therefore part of the same socialist camp as himself.¹⁰⁰ The attitude of Bridier, the party's 'Monsieur Relations Internationales' as Vladimir Fisera puts it, reflected the radicalisation of the PSU's

⁹⁵ P. A. Allum and G. Amyot, 'Regionalism in Italy: Old Wine in New Bottles?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 24, 1 (1970), 63; 'Candidati alla camera'; Kesler, *Gauche dissidente*, 358–363; Covatta, *Guerra fredda*, 330; Hauss, *New Left*.

⁹⁶ Massimo Teodori, Piero Ignazi and Angelo Panebianco, *I nuovi radicali, storia e sociologia di un movimento politico* (Milan: Mondadori, 1977).

⁹⁷ Giachetti, *Sessantotto*, 138–40.

⁹⁸ Peter Deli, *De Prague à Budapest: les sursauts de la gauche française* (Paris: Anthropos, 1981).

⁹⁹ Jean-Daniel Bénard, 'L'action internationale du BN de l'UNEF: 1967–1968', in Barralis and Gillet, *Au cœur des luttes des années soixante*, 243–9; Jean-Daniel Bénard, interview with Jean-Philippe Legois, 3 Feb. 2003, Conservatoire des mémoires étudiantes, www.cme-u.fr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=98&Itemid=45 (accessed 29 June 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Published in *La Tribune Socialiste*, 12 Sept. 1968.

international positions, increasingly influenced by militant thirdworldism, away from its previous policy of non-alignment and towards a notion of frontal opposition to Western imperialism, while remaining significantly more critical of the Soviet bloc than was the PSIUP. Although the PSU had mostly been enthusiastic for the Prague Spring, it also contained on its Maoist fringes those such as the philosopher Alain Badiou, who objected on the grounds that the Czechoslovak reform communists had been too influenced by petit-bourgeois humanist ideology, with both Soviet and Czechoslovak leaderships cast as revisionists seeking to liquidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁰¹ These were examples of how dogmatic ways of thinking, which the New Left had originally been anxious to avoid, too often slipped back in during the heady aftermath of 1968 as a way of proving one's leftist credentials. Even Basso, who had a soft spot for North Vietnam, explicitly rejected the idea of an equivalent to the Russell Tribunal for human rights abuses in the Soviet bloc.¹⁰²

IV

There are parallels, but also divergences, in the decline and fall of each party. If 1968 was the high point, then 1972 was crunch time. The PSIUP was already in decline by the time of the first Italian regional elections in 1970, when its loss of votes to the PCI¹⁰³ suggested that, to borrow the phrase made famous in another context by Jean-Marie Le Pen, voters preferred the original to the copy. Sensing this, the PSU appears to have ditched the PSIUP by early 1972, judging by the coverage in *La Tribune Socialiste*. While still devoting significant space to Italian affairs, rather than the PSIUP it instead became excited about Il Manifesto, a New Left breakaway from the PCI – believing that they had found a new partner who, like themselves, was critical of reformism and official communism but also of the excesses of the ultra-left: quite close to the revolutionary movements, but not too close. In February 1972, Lucio Magri of Il Manifesto told a PSU delegation led by Rocard that ‘The PSIUP is finished, the left of the PSIUP no longer exists, the serious people have left it.’¹⁰⁴ He was not exaggerating; even Basso, for whom the party had been ‘my last hope’, at this point issued a grandiose *mea culpa*, regretting that the party under his leadership had failed to tackle the underlying issue of a transformation in human relationships, which had been becoming more selfish for the last 2,500–3,000 years: ‘But unfortunately not even the PSIUP knew how to give a global answer to the problem. It answered in terms of politics, of governments, of parliament, of elections, but not of civilisation.’¹⁰⁵ Although the PSU’s paper sent three reporters to cover the

¹⁰¹ Fiserá, *Construire un autre monde*; Pierre Gremion, *Paris Prague: la gauche face au renouveau et à la régression tchécoslovaques* (Paris: Jussaud, 1985), 74–9.

¹⁰² Basso, *Scritti scelti*, 59; Basso, ‘Un Tribunale Russell per i paesi dell’Est’ (1977), in *Scritti scelti*, 306–12, which argued that whereas dictatorships in Latin America were intrinsically linked to capitalism, abuses in the USSR were not inherently linked to the Soviet economy.

¹⁰³ Allum and Amyot, ‘Regionalism’, 71.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Il Manifesto cherche à aider à l’autoorganisation des luttes’, *La Tribune Socialiste*, 17 Feb. 1972.

¹⁰⁵ Basso, ‘La mia utopia’, *Panorama*, 16 March 1972, repr. in Basso, *Scritti scelti*, 56, 57.

Italian elections of May 1972, they barely mentioned the PSIUP, except in the context of its members leaving for Il Manifesto. After the elections, the PSIUP's decline in the share of the vote to 1.9 per cent meant that it could now be dismissed by *La Tribune Socialiste* as 'un vulgaire groupuscule', which had in any case become much too philosoviet since 1968.¹⁰⁶ Few tears were shed in Paris over the PSIUP's decision to wind itself up at its final congress in July 1972. The fact that the majority of the party followed through the logic of their maximalism by going into the PCI further underlined the contrast with France.

However, the irony was that the PSU was itself going through a series of severe organisational crises in 1972 that appeared to call the very existence of the party into question. Such prominent figures as Heurgon, Vincent, Bridier, Jacques Kergoat and Bernard Lambert all left that year, to go in various directions. In October the former bureau of the party's Paris federation openly declared that 'The PSU no longer has its *raison d'être*.'¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the divorce between Martinet and the *gauchistes* had been consummated on 29 January, when he resigned from the party, suggesting that it was in danger of becoming merely a small party, devoid of any sense of realism and incapable of taking responsibility:

It finds itself preserved from electoralism but also, alas, from the spirit of responsibility. Unable to obtain results, it seeks to acquire merits, and for that does not hesitate to take utopian or demagogic positions that bear no relation to the possibilities offered by current struggles. I am referring here not only to the behaviour of the PSU but to that of all the organisations which for more than forty years have attempted to establish themselves opposite social democracy and the Communist Party.¹⁰⁸

This last sentence suggested he had the PSIUP in mind, which is confirmed by a letter that he wrote a few months later, citing the failure of the PSIUP as example of a wider trend towards 'the "curse of small organisations"', to which the PSU could not be immune.¹⁰⁹ After Basso's death in 1978, Martinet was to judge that, ultimately, Basso's attempt to provide an alternative to the twin dangers of an inferiority complex vis-à-vis communism or a slide to centrism had unfortunately failed. Foa, too, in retrospect concurred with this judgement; the PSIUP had been just as rigid in its party form as that which its founders had found disagreeable about the old PSI.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Jean-Claude Bauvet, 'Sur les forces politiques en Italie', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 26 April 1972; Maguy Guillem, Jean-Yves Langonay and Jean-Yves Romo, 'L'Italie avant les élections', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 4 May 1972; Jean-Claude Bauvet, 'Beaucoup de bruit pour rien en Italie', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 24 May 1972.

¹⁰⁷ André Barjonet et al., 'Si le PSU a encore sa raison d'être', *La Tribune Socialiste*, 15 Nov. 1972, citing *Le Monde*, 18 Oct. 1972; Frédéric Duchamps, 'Partiront? Partiront pas?', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 29 May 1972; Marcelle Padovani, 'PSU: convalescence en ours', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 13 March 1972; Jean Poperen, *L'Unité de la gauche 1965–1973* (Paris: Fayard, 1975) 411; Rennes, *Rocard*, 91.

¹⁰⁸ Martinet to PSU Bureau national, 29 Jan. 1972, FGM, MR6.

¹⁰⁹ Martinet to André Garnier, 5 June 1972, FGM, MR6, which also bemoaned the influence of 'an original social-Christian ideology' in which 'a populist and voluntarist ethical vision' had replaced rationalist, materialist argument.

¹¹⁰ Martinet, 'Pour Lelio Basso'; Vittorio Foa, 'Introduzione', in Foa, *La cultura della Cgil: scritti e interventi 1950–1970* (Turin: Einaudi, 1984), xvii.

The year 1972 can thus be seen as an important moment of disillusion, and of transition on the New Left in both countries towards greater realism. As the effervescence of the '68 years' reached the beginning of a rather long end, a sense of impasse in both independent left parties dovetailed with the wish of established parties to cherry-pick the most useful bits of the movement. In France the principal beneficiaries of this, with the departure of Rocard and his followers, were the Socialists. Rocard, who later suggested that 'I became aware of the cultural and intellectual disappearance of the PSU from the end of 1972', by when it was clear to him that the Socialist and Communist parties' Common Programme for government would actually work, finally decided to throw in the towel after a disappointing 3.3 per cent in the parliamentary elections of 1973, starting a journey that led to his becoming prime minister fifteen years later.¹¹¹ In Italy the immediate beneficiary was the Communist Party, with the result that Vecchietti went straight into the PCI's central committee and spent the latter part of his career as a Communist senator, in which capacity he was to serve on various committees of the Council of Europe and the Western European Union, as well as becoming vice-president of the Italian Senate's commission on foreign affairs and emigration. On the other hand a 9 per cent minority of the PSIUP, including Foa, chose instead the PSI, and in a context where the new French PS was admired in Italy, the ideas of Martinet, and his fellow ex-PSU member Alain Savary, became influential on those seeking to spice up the reformist ideas of the PSI.¹¹²

Yet both the PSU and the PSIUP were brought together in death as well as in life. Even when Martinet had been installed by François Mitterrand in the ambassador's residence in Rome, the Palazzo Farnese, Vecchietti wrote to him recalling the 'by now remote' PSU-PSIUP glory days with a certain 'nostalgia'.¹¹³ Basso's followers set up the Lelio Basso International Foundation for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples. In both cases there were diehards who tried to carry on, like Japanese soldiers who refused to believe the war was over. The 20 per cent of the PSIUP members who refused to join either PCI or PSI combined with other groups, including *Il Manifesto*, to form the Partito di unità proletaria, later Democrazia proletaria, which existed until the early 1990s, although some of them in their turn amalgamated with the PCI. Meanwhile the rump of the PSU, which continued to enjoy good relations with Democrazia proletaria, tenaciously held aloof until 1990, when it voted to dissolve itself just days after the PCI did the same; some of the ex-PSU still exist independently as *Les Alternatifs*.¹¹⁴ Former members of the PSU can still be found in many corners of the left, especially in campaigns linked to alter-globalisation,

¹¹¹ Rennes, *Rocard*, 98.

¹¹² 'Il secondo documento di minoranza: per continuare nel PSI la milizia di classe', in *IV Congresso del PSIUP; Who's Who in Italy 1990*, 2002-3; Giuliano Amato and Luciano Cafagna, *Duella a sinistra: socialisti e comunisti nei lunghi anni 70* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), 120.

¹¹³ Vecchietti to Martinet, 22 June 1982, FGM, MR24/3.

¹¹⁴ Lelio Basso International Foundation, ed., *Theory and Practice of Liberation at the End of the XXth Century* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1988); Giachetti, *Sessantotto*, 134; Martin Bull and James Newell, eds., *Italian Politics: Adjustment under Duress* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 46, 55; PSU Documentation, 1960-2010, 53, 115, 129.

anti-racism and international solidarity,¹¹⁵ and the same is true of the PSIUP. That Fausto Bertinotti, former leader of Rifondazione comunista (and president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies in 2006–8), was in the PSIUP in his youth should ring certain bells for historians. Is there not something rather PSUish about Bertinotti's vision¹¹⁶ of a party taking a profound turn to follow the movements while at the same time keeping one foot in the institutions? Bertinotti's memoirs reveal that as a young man he was an aficionado of French films and books of the 1960s, as well as of the eclectic range of theorists associated with the PSIUP, including Basso and Foa. Indeed, his non-communist background may have contributed to the relative success that Rifondazione enjoyed for a time after its launch, in the apparently unpromising period that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, enabling him to stress his innovatory side in response to hostile caricatures of the party as being composed of unreconstructed Stalinists.¹¹⁷ In a not dissimilar way, ex-PSU politicians in France have been able to use the ethical and intellectual prestige deriving from having been in the party as political capital.¹¹⁸ This was evident, for example, at a conference to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the PSU, at which Rocard received a largely favourable reception from the audience, despite its being predominantly composed of incorrigible grass-roots activists, who might have been expected to accuse him of having betrayed principles for power. With the passing of time, it seemed that the shared memory of what Rocard nostalgically evoked as 'our youth'¹¹⁹ had healed the wounds of the past.

In the final analysis, then, the notion of a Mediterranean New Left is a promising one that does help to liberate us from a stereotypical image of 1968, of isolated student rebels without social forces or political structures to support them, which is too dependent on generalisations from northern Europe. Furthermore, the idea did have some resonance at the time for the actors, for whom the Mediterranean was a important zone of action. But, as we have seen, the PSU and PSIUP were some way from being carbon copies of each other, presenting rather contrasting ideologies, outlooks and cultures of activism. Moreover, arguably Horn's arguments fit in a wider trend in the historiography on 1968 to present too sharp a dichotomy between a pristine, libertarian, activist New Left and a wicked, conservative 'Old Left'. The so-called New Left in fact had deep roots in the old left, and it is at the intersection between the two, as well at the borders between countries, that some of the most fruitful possibilities for understanding what happened half a century ago may lie.

¹¹⁵ Daniel Gordon, 'Le PSU et les luttes de l'immigration: perspectives nationales et internationales', in Kernalegenn et al., *PSU vu d'en bas*, 327–36; Jean-Claude Gillet, 'Epilogue: La mémoire vive', in Barralis and Gillet, *Au coeur des luttes des années soixante*, 369–99.

¹¹⁶ 'Intervista a Fausto Bertinotti a cura di Anna Celadin', in Celadin, *Mondo nuovo*, 187–202; Hilary Wainwright, 'The Left and Power – the Italian way', *Red Pepper*, May 2005.

¹¹⁷ Fausto Bertinotti, *Devi augurtiche la strade si lunga* (Milan: Adriano Salani, 2009), 17–39; Sondra and Stephen Koff, *Italy: From the First to the Second Republic* (London: Routledge, 2000), 51.

¹¹⁸ François Prigent, 'Les réseaux socialistes PSU en Bretagne (1958–1981): milieux partisans, passerelles vers le PS, rôle des chrétiens de gauche', in Kernalegenn et al., *PSU vu d'en bas*, 73–92.

¹¹⁹ *50 ans plus tard... le réalisme c'est toujours l'utopie*, 10 April 2010.