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SARAGAT, Giuseppe

ITALY

Political Secretary of the Democratic Social Party

Giuseppe Saragat is the political secretary of the Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI), the second largest democratic party in Italy with 19 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 5 in the Senate. He is a firm and consistent supporter of the Atlantic alliance, of the US against the USSR, and of Italian democracy against Communism and Fascism.

Saragat was born in Turin on September 9, 1898. He joined the Socialist Party in 1922, and by 1925 he was a member of its National Directorate. Forced into exile in 1926, he fled to Austria and later (1930) to France, where he became associated with Italian Socialist leader Pietro Nenni. Returning to Italy in 1943, he participated in anti-Fascist activities behind the German lines. Imprisoned by the Germans in October 1943, he escaped in February 1944. Presided over Constituent Assembly 1946.

Saragat broke away from the PSI in 1947, in opposition to Nenni's close collaboration with the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and founded with his followers his Democratic Socialist Party.

Saragat has served in several postwar Italian cabinets as Vice Premier. Although his party has participated in the formation of subsequent governments, since 1957 Saragat has refused additional ministerial appointments.

Described as a profoundly sincere man, and one who is willing to stand or fall on his own convictions, Saragat has a thorough knowledge of Marxism, and is well informed on economic, social, and political problems throughout Europe. He is an intellectual and an excellent polemicist. However, he is not a very good organizer, nor does he like to become involved with detailed problems. He is an admirer of American democratic traditions. He has praised President Kennedy's July 4 Philadelphia speech on Atlantic inter-dependence.

One of Saragat's sons is a Catholic priest and another is a member of the Italian Foreign Service. His wife died in January 1961. He speaks excellent French and German but his English is limited.

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