THE LEFT IN FRANCE, ITALY, AND SPAIN

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Some Introductory Thoughts
William E. Griffith

Much has been written about "Eurocommunism," less about "Eurosocialism," and even less about the West European Left tout entière. This book analyzes the Left in the three Latin European countries, France, Italy, and Spain, where it is of great political and economic importance.

Particularly in the United States, the expectation, and often the fear, that the West European Left, or even the West European communists, will come to power has considerably diminished. It is therefore the more appropriate to study it now as a phenomenon and a policy problem. We have attempted to isolate what seems to us its most important aspects. The three first chapters are all written by experts who are non-nationals of the country concerned. The other chapters also are written by internationally recognized experts in the field.

One methodological point: I seriously question the use of the current clichés "Eurocommunism" and "Eurosocialism." In the case of the former, the policies of the French Communist party (PCF) are by now in almost all respects but one, its attitude toward the Soviet Union, markedly different from those of the Italian (PCI) and Spanish (PCE) communist parties - if not always in theory, as in the case of parliamentarianism, then at least in practice. The French and Spanish socialist parties are large while the Italian is small. All three are different in theory and practice from the two major governing social democratic parties in Western Europe, the West German SPD and the British Labor Party. "Eurocommunism" and "Eurosocialism"
therefore conceal reality more than they illuminate it.

Until its defeat in the April 1978 French parliamentary elections, it seemed that the Left was at the threshold of power in Latin Europe. The Italian communists, the Spanish socialists, and the French socialists and communists all seemed to be on the way to form governments or at least to participate in them to a major degree. It is useful to begin, therefore, by outlining why the Latin Left was rising before we turn to why it has so far not succeeded to take over, or to participate in, power.

Firstly, left wing parties historically usually gain votes when the economic situation worsens, as it has since the quadrupling of oil prices subsequent to the 1973 Middle Eastern war. The result has been stagflation in much of Europe, the more serious in exactly those Latin countries which have no domestic energy resources and where exports have not compensated for increased oil imports as they have in West Germany. The previous period of affluence, which generally had enfeebled the left, made the contrast, and therefore the gain for the left, even greater. And stagflation breeds political mobilization and discredits parties in power.

Secondly, the Latin right had been long in power. It was tired, often corrupt, in Spain discredited by Francoism, in France bereft of de Gaulle, and in Italy harassed by scandal and terrorism. For most Latin intellectuals, the right wing had also been discredited by its collaboration with the Nazis in World War II. They have thus generally been leftist in sympathy, a trend which intensified in the 1970s.

Thirdly, rapid modernization and the consequent intensification of political and social mobilization, favored the left. The Roman Catholic
Church in Latin Europe is weaker less integralist and thus less of a barrier to the rise of the left. Fourthly, the perceived decline of the cold war, resulting from east-west detente, made the Latin non-communist left less likely to be polarized against the Soviet Union. The Latin communists also profited from detente, because they were thereby less tarred by association with a warlike Soviet Union and therefore more able to recover a nationalist or semi-nationalist image. Fifthly, affluence produced an intellectual, professional, and service sector of Latin society, many of whom have rejected centralized, stratified, bureaucratic, consumerist, affluent West European society in favor of an attempt to return to "community" (Gemeinschaft), in the hope of recovering its cohesive, decentralized, egalitarian values. This trend, which surfaced dramatically in the May 1968 Paris demonstrations, combined the Latin heritage of utopian socialism and anarcho-syndicalism with ecology, anti-nuclear movement, and other aspects of the New Left, the results of the "alienation of affluence." It began and reached its peak before the post-1973 stagflation. It left behind it a New Left sensibility, a taste for extreme left-wing radicalism, and the ideology of workers' self-administration, often known by the French term autogestion. Autogestion has become one of the principal goals of French socialism today. It combines the heritage of French anarcho-syndicalism, the attraction of this aspect of Yugoslav communism, and the current enthusiasm for decentralization and communitarianism.

The attitude of the Latin working classes toward such issues as autogestion, ecology, and "no growth" is complex. The communist parties have generally opposed them, for most workers regard ecology and "no growth" as
fads of the affluent, while the communist leaders see autogestion as a threat to their own control of industry in a left-wing government. Yet for many workers autogestion is a way of increasing their own power and lessening that of the capitalists. And for the intellectual, professional, and student strata autogestion provides a utopian "third road" between western capitalism and eastern bureaucratic socialism: the last best hope of a new, "pure" socialism.

There are other political reasons for the recent rise of the Latin left. It is primarily working class-based. The Latin left-wing parties, communists as well as socialists, have understood that the revolutionary road to power is closed to them for the foreseeable future and that therefore they are unlikely to come to power unless they can attract a significant proportion of the middle-class vote, and that to do so they must move toward reformism. The reasons why they have done so are thus the same ones which drove the pre-1914 German Social Democrats in the same direction. Both of them moved with the same slowness, reluctance, and evolution of practice first and theory later.

It was thus primarily domestic compulsions, not foreign policy developments, which pushed the Latin left toward reformism. This move was earlier and more rapid in Italy, much more recent in Spain, because of the duration of Franco's caudillismo, and least among the French socialists, who, exceptionally, moved toward the left, and the French communists, who moved the most slowly and the least toward the right.

But foreign policy developments also played a significant role in improving the Latin left's electoral image. One of these was their increasing
distance from, and criticism of, Soviet and East European policies. Two West European tendencies also favored this same trend: the tarnished image of West European unity and the rise of West European nationalism. As Western Europe became stronger, it became more nationalistic, less dependent on and influenced by the United States, and also less attracted to, and less fearful of, the Soviet Union. The massive Soviet nuclear and conventional military buildup in Europe did not reverse this trend, for the signature in the early 1970s of SALT I, the German treaties, and the CSCE final declaration intensified East-West detente in Europe and thus diminished fear of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union also declined rapidly as an attractive model of anything except military power. This decline centered among intellectuals, notably in Paris, and its influence spread from there throughout Latin Europe. It reflected the Latin left's disillusionment as Moscow crushed its hopes, which it had once had, of liberalization and reform in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Moscow's crushing of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 was the first major impetus of this disillusionment. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was the second and more severe one. Brezhnev's increasing domestic repression, in contrast to Khrushchev's erratic and partial tolerance of the "thaw," brought imprisonment, consignment to insane asylums, and exile to Siberia to many Soviet dissidents. Rising anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union plus the 1967 Middle Eastern War revived Zionism there and intensified Soviet repression of it. Then, because western indignation about this repression rose, Moscow allowed enough dissident intellectuals to leave so that their horror stories, which intensified the greater impact of Solzhenitsyn's
Gulag, of the repression took hold in Western Europe. Moreover, any attractiveness of the Soviet model of technological modernization was destroyed by massive Soviet imports of Western and Japanese technology and of U.S. grain. Finally, those Latin communists who had believed in Soviet-led "proletarian internationalism" lost their faith in it after the Sino-Soviet split, the Mao-Nixon rapprochement, the Soviet-American agreements, and, most recently, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. By now, for the great majority of the Latin left, the Soviet Union is no longer the future they once dreamed of but a repressive, imperialist, backward state whose military power they fear but which is for them not a model but an anti-model of socialism.

The Latin left has for some time been returning to the traditional political aims, strategies, and tactics of the traditional national leftist parties and to much of the historic political cultures. This process began the earliest with the PCI, much later with the PSOE, and has only just started in the PCF. The Italian left is pro-European and so is the Spanish; the French left is unenthusiastic (PS) or hostile (PCF). The Italian and Spanish left is less anti-American and would like Washington to be less against it; the French left, especially the PCF, is anti-American and anti-West German. Indeed, at a time when Giscard and some of the moderate French center and right are moving toward a partnership with Bonn and rapprochement with Washington, the French left is "Gaullosocialist" and "Gaullocommunist."

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Has the Latin left passed the peak of its power? If so, why? Although it has made major gains in the bourgeoisie, they have not been enough for it to grasp power, or even to participate in it. The principal reason, in
my view, is that the Latin left has not been reformist enough and therefore has not appealed to enough of the new voters and the non-working class floating vote to put it in power. The bourgeoisie's understandable fear of a major economic crisis if the left came to power, brought about by capital flight and ending in currency collapse and autarky, remains great. For the Latin countries cannot individually or collectively isolate or insulate themselves from the other OECD economies and from the need for U.S., Japanese, and West German economic aid - and none of these three has confidence in the Latin left. Indeed, given the ever-rising economic power of West Germany, neither prosperity nor independence for West Europe can be attained and preserved without its active participation - and this would be at a price that little of the Latin left would like or would even be willing to pay.

Whether the Latin left has passed its peak we do not, and cannot, know. We can only say, in early 1979, that it is still out of power. Moreover, while the Labor Party's duration in power may well be numbered, the SPD is stronger and more united than it was two years ago, while the CDU/CSU is in a leadership crisis. The French left, sharply split, seems hardly likely to gain power for at least a decade to come. In early 1979 the Spanish socialists lost another parliamentary election, and the Italian communists ceased to support the Christian Democratic government at a time when public opinion polls showed that they would probably lose, not gain votes in the next election. But even if the PSOE were to form a government in Spain and the PCI participate in one headed by the DC in Italy, France, West Germany, and Great Britain, the three most important West European countries, would still be under conservative or social democratic rule. Thus the Latin left
is not likely to become a major factor in European or global politics in
the near future.

This also seems now to be the general perception in the United States
and Western Europe. And this perception is itself an important political
reality. When one remembers how much talk there was about "Eurocommunism"
in 1977 and early 1978, and how it has almost become an "un-issue" since
the French Left's April 1978 defeat, one can see in retrospect that "Euro-
communism" and "Europe going left" have turned out to be over-drawn "threats"
indeed. On the other hand, in addition to the usual dangers of prediction
in politics, there is another looming factor which may give the Latin left
something of a new lease on life: the intensification of stagflation likely
in Europe (and in the USA and Japan) as a result of the Iranian crisis and
the probable forthcoming global excess of oil demand over supply.
The Latin Left Turns Toward Reformism

Having sketched the present situation of the Latin Left, let us turn to a more detailed consideration of its drift toward reformism. One must first of all repeat the first qualification which this statement requires: this is far more true in Italy and Spain than in France.

The Latin Left has not been weak enough to fall into sectarianism but not strong enough to come to power by either revolutionary or electoral means. Revolution became increasingly unrealistic and by now out of the question. The Latin communist parties, once the cold war was on in earnest, could not realistically expect to come to power by Soviet help, political, revolutionary, or military. The same cold war threw the communists out of government in France and Italy and split the socialists, turning the French socialists, and some of the Italian socialists, against them.

The key factor in pushing the Latin left toward reformism was the rising prosperity of Western Europe and its association, in the minds of so many voters, with the Catholic center-right parties. These same parties were also closely associated with anti-Soviet and anti-communist policies. When opportunity replaced frustration, reformism was born again.

As I have remarked above, the parallels to the growth of reformism in socialist parties around the turn of the century, notably the German SPD, are striking indeed.

Yet there are great differences among the Latin left in this respect, some going back even to the turn of the century. The historical and ideological traditions of Latin communism, socialism, and social democracy are, like the three Latin countries themselves, different from each other
and from the northern European left, notably the SPD. Anarchism, anarcho-
syndicalism, different intensities and degrees of pervasiveness of nationalism,
and more flexible Marxist ideology (for example, Labriola and Jaures) made
the Latin Left susceptible to right and left "deviations" from Kautskyst
Marxist orthodoxy.

Let us take Italy as the most useful place to begin, for it is a country
where the left began to change the first, has changed the most, and where a
communist party has the best chance of sharing power. The traditions of
Labriola and Gramsci gave Italian communism a different, less sterile,
intellectually more appealing, and politically more moderate ideology than
was the case in France or Spain. Its repression under Mussolini and its
major role in the Resistenza gave it political legitimacy: the PCI is
thought by most Italians to be the most left Italian political party, not
a group of Russian agents. Italian socialism's split and the flexibility of
the PCI made it, uniquely in Western Europe, far more powerful than either
socialist party or both. The smaller majority socialist party, the PSI, was
not social democratic and the PDSI, which was, was far smaller still.

As soon as he returned from Moscow in 1944, Togliatti adopted a long-
term, gradualist, parliamentary strategy for coming to power. His support
of Soviet policy during the cold-war period was calculated but reluctant. As
soon as he felt able, beginning briefly in 1956 but clearly after 1959, he
turned toward a more autonomist course. After 1968, when it condemned the
Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the PCI was primarily identified in
Italy with Italian rather than Soviet interests. By the late 1970s it
endorsed not only West European unity but NATO as well. Yet it did not
intend to sever party relations with Moscow and it continued to support Soviet
foreign policy on almost all but European issues.

Spanish socialism and communism today was forged in the underground and exile struggle against Franco. They were therefore by practice as well as by tradition radical, for the radicalizing effect of the Civil War was further intensified by the struggle against Franco thereafter. Indeed, it was the failure of this struggle as long as Franco lived, the moderating impact on Spanish political life of the surviving memories of the Civil War and the intense determination to avoid a repetition of its slaughter, and, finally, the prosperity in which by the late 1970s Spain lived which moved the PSOE and PCE toward reformism. Spain is traditionally a nationalist country and the PCE was still tarred by its abjectly pro-Soviet policies during the Civil War and the long years of exile and underground thereafter. The PSOE, on the other hand, in the mid-1970s had its sclerotic exile leadership replaced by a young, dynamic, and flexible one from within the country. Finally, the skill in maneuvering of King Juan Carlos and his second prime minister, Adolfo Suarez, gave the PSOE and the PCE all the opportunities and all the disincentives necessary to push them toward a more moderate, and for the PCE a more nationalist, course.

The French left, like France itself, is very different. France has always believed itself to be the natural political and cultural center and leader of Europe. It alone has a truly Jacobin left tradition: a revolutionary nationalism of the left. It alone was long dominated by a popular Résistance figure of the nationalist center-right, General de Gaulle. It alone now has a socialist party which is stronger than the communists. The PS combines left socialism and autogestion, intellectuals, the service classes, and some workers, and like the Gaullists and the communists, is suspicious of the
United States. Indeed, one of the many reasons why the unity of the French Left has never really occurred is that the PS is so much a creature — the only one in Western Europe — of the intellectual and service strata ("post-industrial" is the fashionable cliché, but I am skeptical of its usefulness), while the PCF is still the party of the encapsulated, alienated, ouvrieriste working class. It is not surprising, therefore, that the PCF could not accept the probability of the PS being stronger than it if the Left won, and that it therefore preferred to lose rather than to win. By now the PCF is autonomist vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, that is, it neither breaks with Moscow nor obeys its general line. It is also anti-U.S., anti-West German, and anti-EEC — that is, "Gaullo-Communist." The PS, still reeling from the shock of defeat, seems caught in a struggle between Mauroy and Rocard on the one hand and the aging Mitterand on the other.

Had the French left won the April 1978 parliamentary elections, France today would be in economic crisis, Western European unity set back, monetary unity out of the question, and West Germany the most powerful state in Western Europe. But because the left lost, and because the Gaullists are weakened, Giscard's position now seems unchallenged, his relations with Schmidt are closer than ever, the European Monetary System (EMS), which he and Schmidt sponsored, has gone into effect, and, ironically enough, Western Europe, led by Giscard and Schmidt, is taking a more independent attitude toward the United States: exactly what the French left declared that it would do itself! Thus one once again sees the continuity of French politics.
Le trahison des clercs

It is difficult for English-speaking readers, unless they are steeped in the culture of Latin Europe, to rate highly enough the role of intellectuals there — one far greater than in the Anglo-Saxon world. And while in the United States and Great Britain the general political stance of most intellectuals is on the left, this is far more so in Latin Europe. Indeed, implementing Gramsci's doctrine of egemonia, the PCI has long worked to bring Italian intellectuals to its side, and it has in large part succeeded. In France one of the leading traditions of intellectuals is pas d'ennemis à gauche. For this reason, out of the French Jacobin nationalism of which it is a part, and of the leftist tradition of the Résistance, post-World War II French intellectuals were overwhelmingly Leftist. This prolonged their engagement in and sympathy for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and their reluctance to condemn, for example, the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution.

But what had drawn French intellectuals, communist, socialist, and free-floating leftist to the East was essentially their emotional rejection of bourgeois society in France and of "Americanization," i.e. of mass culture, which downgraded the aristocratic, elitist role which French intellectuals have always seen it legitimate for them to play. The Vietnamese and Algerian wars added to this revulsion against French colonialism. Thus Ho Chi Minh and Castro, and for a time Mao, other available and attractive idols, replaced Moscow in their pantheon.

It was in Paris, Rome, and Madrid the double impact of the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring and of the influx of stories, often personally told by
émigrés, about Soviet repression which finally cured most Latin intellectuals of what Raymond Aron had so correctly—and so long ago—called the "opium of the intellectuals." The publication of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* was the final blow for many—certainly for those *nouveaux philosophes* who have recently had such a *succès d'estime* in Paris. Today in Paris, and if not today, then tomorrow elsewhere in the Latin countries of Europe, intellectuals are no longer pro-Soviet and many are increasingly becoming anti-Soviet. This trend reinforces the other reasons why the French, Italian, and Spanish communists have taken their distance from the Soviet Union. Yet the anti-Americanism and pro-"third worldism" of leftist Latin intellectuals still make it all the easier for these communist parties to continue to endorse Soviet foreign policies, particularly outside Europe.
Yugoslavia and Autogestion

Many West European intellectuals have always had a certain fondness for the "two and one-half International" - something which keeps alive their belief in socialism while condemning or at least not endorsing its Soviet realization. Yugoslavia has been one post-1948 locus classicus of this attraction, although for many, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Cuba and Vietnam were for a while even more appealing. Yugoslavia has one aspect, autogestion, which has become particularly attractive to Latin European intellectuals, students, and some workers. Why?

If communism is identified with Soviet bureaucracy and social democracy with capitalist bureaucracy, if one believes that small is beautiful, and if one retains from Marxism the belief in the virtue, ability, and centrality of the working class, autogestion offers, it would seem, the perfect new dream. This is the more so in Latin Europe, where the traditions of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, although no longer embodied in significant political movements, still persist. And the rapid rate of industrialization, technological progress, and therefore inevitably greater complexity of society in post-1945 Latin Europe intensified its appeal. Autogestion, developed in Paris, has become the most distinctive ideology of the PS. (It is also popular in the PSOE and the PSI.) The communist parties have been in general hostile to them, as Lenin was and the Soviet Union still is, for autogestion would destroy the leading role of the communist party. However, the PCI and PCE have made some mildly favorable statements on the subject.

Whether one thinks autogestion practical or not, and Engels and Marx certainly did not, it is clearly a Sorelian myth in the French socialist left.
In political terms, it is another barrier to reconciliation between the PCF and the PS - although even without it, there are plenty of other barriers to prevent that.

The rest of the reformist ideology - as opposed to autogestion - of the Latin Left is in my view transitional, that is, it is unlikely to stay where it is now. Rather, it will probably move more in the direction of social democracy or, less likely, go backward toward Leninism. This has been the course of reformism in the past, and the presumption should therefore be that it will continue to be so. Second, unless there is a major economic crisis in Western Europe, the impetus of affluence toward reformism will also continue. Third, while ideology normally comes after practice, as Bernstein case after de facto SPD revisionism in Imperial Germany, once the ideology does appear it acquires a force of its own. One can see this with Carrillo's Eurocommunism and the State: as long as he or people like him remain in control of the PCE, the party is unlikely to reject the ideology in his book, and particularly younger cadres are likely to be attracted to it. Finally, while it seems to me unlikely, as it does to Prof. Urban, that the Latin communists will break with the Soviet Union, the continued tension between them and Moscow will push them to define more clearly their reformist views.

The ideological and political development of the socialists (as opposed to social democrats) is more difficult to divine because more inchoate. Basically, the same reformist trends are at work. The competition with the increasingly reformist communists intensifies them. The younger leaders and cadre, more flexible than their elders, intensify them. One may of course argue that the contrary is occurring in the PS, and that is still true. Yet its left wing, the CERES, is itself factionalized, and in the long run, after
its defeat, it is likely also to become more subject to reformist pressures.

Dr. Timmermann has shown that another reason why the Latin socialists are tending toward reformism is the influence on them, within the revitalized Socialist International, of the social democratic parties, notably the SPD. Conversely, because the Latin communists have become more reformist and the PS more leftist and autogestionnaire, there is also another tendency in the opposite direction. Moreover, that the Italian and Spanish leftist parties are pro-EEC, while the PCF is against, does not mean that the former are pro-American. On the contrary, they hope that the EEC can become an independent Western Europe, if not equidistant between Moscow and Washington, then at least an equal and not too warm ally of the United States. In any case, communist-socialist convergence in Western Europe does not soon seem likely.

Prof. Urban's great contribution in her chapter, I believe, is that she has demonstrated convincingly not only why the Latin communists do not break with the Soviets but why the Soviets do not break with them. If, as seems likely, this uneasy coexistence continues, we will really have entered a new era of inter-communist relations: neither allegiance nor expulsion, "neither peace nor war." In this context, the 1976 East Berlin communist conference, as much as the Soviets have been denying it, was not only a watershed but in fact the most convincing signal of this new era. The recent Indochinese imbroglio is likely, in my view, to lengthen rather than shorten this new phase. Insofar as this new phase stabilizes itself, the great unknown in Soviet-European communist relations will again become Yugoslavia after Marshal Tito. For in the international communist world the West European communists need the Yugoslavs and Romanians as allies against Soviet pressure just as much as the latter need them. The Indochinese imbroglio
has had one other effect: it has so divided the West European communists among themselves and vis-à-vis the Yugoslavs and Romanians that any "Eurocommunist unity" has become even more of a myth. Rather, we are faced, and are likely to continue to be faced, with shifting, complex coalitions and varying degrees of coolness vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

Finally, Western, and particularly American policy. I find Prof. Lowenthal's analysis rare in that it throws more light than heat on the controversy. I do not, however, entirely agree with his policy proposals. That the West European governments and the United States would prefer that the communists not enter western governments seems to me both obvious and in principle desirable. This is true, particularly for the United States, not primarily because they are "communists" - as indeed, *grosso modo*, they still are - but because of their foreign policies. (That their domestic policies and those of socialists allied with them and dependent on the alliance, would bring economic crisis and therefore hurt the OECD economies altogether is true but also not the primary western policy problem.) It is, rather, that with the exception of the PCI and PCE policies toward Western European unity, and partially toward NATO (but only partially), communist and some socialist foreign policies are much closer to those of the Soviet Union than to those of the United States and the major West European governments - including the SPD-FDP coalition in Bonn. That these foreign policies reflect the views of their constituencies and are caused by them, not primarily by following the Soviet line per se, is also true, but in the last analysis irrelevant, for Western governments must judge the Latin left's foreign policies by their results, not their motives.

Even so, Professor Lowenthal's tactical judgments seem to me to be
largely, if not entirely, valid. It would be a blunder, because it would be counter-productive, for Washington, or Bonn, or other West European governments, to declare constantly their determination to prevent the left from coming to power. If it does, they must deal with it. But there is, in my view, and here I differ with Prof. Lowenthal, no convincing argument why they should not on occasion declare them, and several arguments, notably that they have the right and duty to declare their interests, why they should, while also stating that they will accept whatever decision the peoples of the Latin countries decide to take. Even if western governments wanted to remain as sound on this issue as Prof. Lowenthal would have them, I doubt that they could. Certainly Washington cannot and in my opinion should not as well. But western governments should also be aware of and acknowledge changes. For western flexibility, as Prof. Lowenthal concludes, is not only necessary per se on this issue but is the best way to assure that Moscow loses more on this issue than the west does.
Footnotes