

# **The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain**

Postwar Change and Continuity A Casebook

Edited by

**Peter Lange and Maurizio Vannicelli**



## The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain

First published in 1981, *The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain* presents a comparative and integrative overview of the development of three Communist parties in the postwar Europe. Through the systematic presentation of the most important documents of the Communist parties, the book provides an access to the basic declarations and positions to illustrate the strategic and ideological evolution of these three parties in the advanced industrial democracies. Eurocommunism, the editors argue cannot be usefully understood as a phenomenon which suddenly appeared and equally as rapidly disappeared, in the 1970s. Rather it is a process of adaptation and change which characterizes the development of all three parties since World War II. The explicitly comparative organisation of the documents into five basic themes -general strategy, alliances, party organization, international policy, policy toward the communist movement, allows the reader both to follow any single party in a specific policy area or to compare the parties in response to major domestic or international events of significance. Rich in archival material, this book will be an invaluable resource to scholars and researchers of European Politics, comparative politics, comparative communism and modern European history.



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# **The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain: Postwar Change and Continuity**

*A Casebook*

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Casebook Series on European Politics and Society*

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**Center for European Studies, Harvard University**

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*To Abbey*

## Foreword

Students of European affairs and of communist movements may greet another volume on what is generally called eurocommunism with a mix of exasperation and incredulity. Has not enough been said already about a phenomenon that was treated far too seriously while it lasted, and that now deserves to be buried?

However, the mass of documents painstakingly selected by Messrs Lange and Vannicelli have a great and original merit: they allow the readers to judge for themselves rather than having to rely on the speculations and categorical opinions of innumerable commentators. And the subtle introductory essays written by Lange and Vannicelli constitute neither special pleading nor attempts at prophecy, they neither point with pleasure nor denounce with alarm. They put in historical and national perspective something that has never been a single movement, and even less a wave sweeping Western Europe (which it would be in America's national interest either to break by building a barrage, or to greet by splashing happily in it). They are dealing, on the one hand, with a common problem: the situation of three major West European communist parties, linked to Moscow since the beginning of the Third International by ideological and institutional bonds, yet out of the government (which it is the objective of any revolutionary party to conquer, or at least to share), and operating within rapidly industrializing (some might say even post-industrializing) Western societies, in which the industrial proletariat has grown along lines far more complex than those forecast by Marxist dogma, in which the political systems, through various tribulations, have led not to single-party 'socialism' but to varieties of representative and pluralist democracy, and which all belong to what the Soviet Union considers to be the American camp. But Lange and Vannicelli, on the other hand, are looking at a complex process: trying to define a communist way adapted to the specific realities of their country has been, for the three parties in question, anything but simple and clear; it has never taken them on a single straight road; they have followed separate, winding paths, which have converged at times and diverged at other moments. This is precisely why the term 'eurocommunism' has always been misleading.

All that it should suggest is an attempt to find a road that is not necessarily and constantly that of Moscow – either in the realm of ideology, or in that of policy, or in organization, or with respect to the issue of Moscow's control of the apparatus. But even in so far as relations with Moscow are concerned, it is always necessary to ask three distinct questions. In which of these areas does the party try to assert its originality or autonomy? Since when, and for how long? And who initiated the quest (after all, Moscow's control is not incompatible with the definition of separate national strategies) or, to put it somewhat differently, to what extent did Moscow incite, or merely accept, or actually oppose which search? Moreover, the party's relation to Moscow is not the only interesting problem. There is also the relationship of the party to the other national political forces, and to the national society: how radical a transformation of it does the party seek, with whom, at what price? And there is the relation of each of these parties to the other communist parties of Western Europe, and to the developing European Community.

It is clear that different answers have been given to these questions at different moments by all three parties. Even though there have been some (not many) joint

meetings between their leaders, they have remained divided, in the first place, by their very different pasts: their organization, ideology and strategies had never been the same – and the contrast was particularly sharp between the French, with their attempt to control membership, their *ouvriérisme*, their defensiveness, and the Italians with their mass party and Gramsci's hegemonic idea. They have also been separated by contemporary divergences in three areas: the effect of recent national experiences (with the Spanish and Italian parties, after the traumatic experiences of prolonged dictatorship, giving priority to anti-fascism, while the French party sometimes behaved as if bourgeois democracy was the main enemy), the effect of recent foreign experiences (the French and the Italian parties drew opposite lessons from the turmoil and tragedy of Allende in Chile), the effect of the national situation – both that of the party (which, in France, controls the largest share of the working class, whereas the PCI still shares it with the Christian Democrats) and that of the country (in which the general stability of the regime, and the role and importance of the socialist parties, are of course key factors).

Precisely because of national differences, and because of the twists and turns of each national strategy (twists and turns that can only be understood by reference to the international situation – in turn, appraised differently in each country – and to the domestic political constellation of the moment), it never made any sense for American policy-makers to respond to the so-called phenomenon of eurocommunism in a monolithic way. We were not dealing with a monolith traveling on a pre-programmed trajectory. There exists, indeed, a double problem – the integration, or lack of integration, of the working class in the society and polity of Western European countries (and the formidable tensions that result from the lack of integration), and the costs which American foreign policy and strategic positions would suffer if the communist parties of Western Europe came to power (an expression which is itself far too vague, since there are degrees of power, as the Italian case demonstrates). But the answers are different in different times and places, and it can never be assumed as a matter of principle that the costs would always necessarily be so high as to offset the advantages which both Western European nations and Washington itself might find in a less imperfect relationship between that part of the working class that keeps supporting the communist parties, and the rest of the national society.

This volume documents the common questions and the multiple responses – for instance, the different attitudes toward the EEC, toward the superpowers' contest, toward political alliances, or the different responses to demands for greater freedom of expression within each party and for a loosening of 'democratic centralism.' Published at a time when the divergences seem greater than ever and when the contrast between the French party's abrupt zigzags and 180-degree turns, and the sinuous, almost baroque set of Italian variations and arabesques is at its most obvious, this volume is useful not because it is the documented balance sheet of a failed and dead experiment, but because it allows one to understand the continuing process and drama that result from the multiple reactions which ever-changing events suggest to three parties faced both with a common predicament and with different national situations.

STANLEY HOFFMANN



## Acknowledgements

The preparation of this casebook, the first in the Center for European Studies series on European politics and society to be published by George Allen & Unwin, became, in tritest terms, a learning experience for all involved. When the idea of this casebook first emerged, it seemed a relatively simple and useful task: the collection, translation, editing and assembling of Italian, French and Spanish communist party documents within a framework designed to show the development of the three parties and their domestic and international roots. As with all 'simple' projects, the reality turned out to be something quite different. The voluminous output of documents by the French and Italian parties kept several Harvard students, notably Liz Sherwood, Mary Jo Connelly and Giovanella Cingano, busy during the summer of 1978 reading, collecting, xeroxing and analyzing materials. On the other hand, even the crevices of the extraordinary Harvard library system did not hold the Spanish documents which we needed – the PCE had too recently come 'above ground' to have created a broad distribution system for its materials. So, with minimal funds available, we prevailed upon a Harvard senior who had written his thesis on the Spanish Communist Party, Dan Rabinowitz, to take a Laker flight to London and hitch-hike to Madrid, where he spent a sleepless week xeroxing.

Financial constraints and a desire on our part to keep the casebooks an educational project in their production as well as in their usage led us to hire student translators and editors for the collected materials. Special recognition for this laborious work during the winter and summer of 1979 must go to Paul Mattick, Jr, for his elegant and efficient translations of French documents, and to David Quilter, who not only employed his sizeable language skills by translating documents in all three languages, but also organized a whole contingent of undergraduates who worked many hours on translations. As time went on, more and more students became involved in this work, many of them learning of the eurocommunism project from courses they took from professors and teaching fellows affiliated with the Center for European Studies. We will never be able to reimburse properly our translators for their work, but our great appreciation goes to Lisa Doneghy, Frank Gellardin, Dominique Ghossein, Kate Gitlow, Susan Heard, David Low, Edith Scott, Nicole Sinek, Kerry Sorenson, Sandro Tombesi, Janet Towse, Vicente Valle and Fernando Vidal.

The difficult task of editing the documents for consistency, coherence and readability, while maintaining the particular style and flavor of each party and each language, was assumed by Neal Johnson, a Harvard senior, during the summer of 1979. It was at this point that the particular human resources of the Center for European Studies became invaluable: resident country experts or natives could be called upon for evaluation and analysis of phrases, shades of meaning, and so on. In this category, very special appreciation is extended to Antonio Bar, a research associate of the Center from the University of Zaragoza in Spain, and Paul Friedrich, a Harvard German Kennedy Memorial Fellow, who gave freely of their time and knowledge.

The final organization and assemblage of the casebook was done in the fall and winter of 1979–80. The preparation of the essays was the product of much discussion, debate and drafting among the editors in trying to take account of the shifting fortunes and policies of the three parties. The final version of the introductory essay was

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prepared by Peter Lange, the section essays by Maurizio Vannicelli and Peter Lange. Harvard students Suzanne Marilley, Carlos Navarez and Liz Sherwood researched the glossary. Throughout the lengthy process of production, the staff of the Center for European Studies tolerated innumerable pressures and disruptions. Marilyn Arsem, Peggy Coulson-Graceffa, Bob Allen, Jeanne Finning, Emily Odza, Donna Isaac-Gelfand and Jill Singer all gave many extra hours to type, xerox, proof-read and edit. We would also like to thank Hilde Stempel, Kenji Ogata and Barbara Talhouni who managed to type the final manuscript from heavily edited material.

Although any casebook of this type is mainly the product of a lot of hard work and much drudgery, we feel that the inclusion of undergraduates (American and European), Center Associates and staff make it a uniquely special expression of the Center's approach to the training and teaching of European politics. This approach, however, would have been impossible without the incomparable day-to-day oversight of the project by Abby Collins. Her administrative skills and unflagging attention to detail were combined with a spirit of the project as a whole which enabled her to enthuse all those who became involved and to give the good-spirited nudge when things began to drag. Without her this casebook and the larger project of which it is a part would never have seen the light of day.

# **Dilemmas of Change: Eurocommunism and National Parties in Postwar Perspective**

Only a few short years ago, examinations of contemporary political trends in Western Europe had to come to terms with eurocommunism. The political gains of the southern European communist parties and the apparent, and self-declared, similarity of their doctrinal and strategic evolution seemed sufficiently important to warrant sometimes dire warnings from leaders of the major Western democracies, sharp criticism from high levels of the Soviet Union and inclusion in textbooks on comparative European politics. A vast number of scholarly articles analyzed the nature and future of eurocommunism and of the nations in which the eurocommunist parties were playing an increasing role. Whether hailed as a new, more advanced form of Marxism or denounced as another chameleon-like reincarnation of the communism of old, whether welcomed as a long overdue adaptation of Western European communism to Western traditions or decried as a chimera which, if successful, would signal another step in the decline of the West, eurocommunism was the subject of endless debate. The nature, purpose and future of NATO and of the European Economic Community, the possible evolution of relations between the superpowers, the prospects for democratic life in Italy, France and Spain, all these and other momentous issues seemed to hinge in important respects on the real significance of the emerging eurocommunist movement.

Today, not only the sense of urgency which attended the discussion of eurocommunism but the theme itself have largely disappeared. Even before the splits among the parties which emerged over critical questions such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, eurocommunism seemed in decline. The political losses suffered by the parties, their drawing back from the eurocommunist self-characterization and from the public encounters among party leaders which were so much a part of its symbolism, the revival of forms of party behavior which some had judged to be surpassed, the general sense that there was a conservative trend in Europe which would once more isolate the parties, drove eurocommunism from the pages of the press, the columns of the pundits and the research of scholars. If, only a short while ago, the predominant questions had been 'What is eurocommunism?' and 'What are its likely consequences?', today many would seem inclined to ask, should they even think it worth doing so, 'Did eurocommunism ever exist?' Others would simply conclude that the concept of eurocommunism was never more than an artifice imposed by ideologues, trendy journalists, naïve academics and overanxious policy analysts on an unchanging and perhaps unchangeable communist reality.

It has been an assumption in the preparation of this casebook that these latter views, like the initial analyses of eurocommunism to which they were a reaction, have been based on a flawed approach to the issues raised by the development of the southern

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European communist parties. The approach had tended to treat eurocommunism as a fixed doctrine and/or as a stage of party change with specifiable traits against which the 'progress' of any particular party might be measured. In contrast, we have found it more useful to understand eurocommunism as a *process* of change. This process has been gradual, uneven, and often halting and contradictory, but it has occurred along different dimensions which are identifiable, as are the features of party life which are undergoing transformation, and some of the critical turning points and causal factors. The final outcomes of the process remain uncertain and not wholly defined. We know more about where the parties have come from, what they have been reacting against and how they have reached their present positions than about where they might go and what they are striving for. The documents reflect clearly the degree to which the parties have changed in the postwar years, as well as the often fitful and uneven character of the process of change. They also show the extent to which the process of change seems more the product of an uncertain groping for new positions in the face of pressures beyond the parties' control than the result of a calculated movement toward clearly defined goals.

If the first feature of our approach is that we treat eurocommunism as an open-ended process, the second is that we view this process as one of gradual and mediated adaptation of the parties to the domestic and international contexts in which they have operated. Highlighting this interdependence of the parties with their national and international environments is a departure from the analytical standpoint which treated communist parties as almost wholly self-contained, ideologically driven agents of a foreign power, 'organizational weapons' entirely alien to the societies in which they functioned. This latter standpoint led analysts to concentrate on factors entirely internal to the parties – their ideology, their system of discipline – and on their linkages with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its goals. Sensitivity to the parties' interdependence with their domestic and international contexts, in contrast, requires that in analyzing change one pay heed not only to those factors which have affected all three parties similarly and to those which have been peculiar to individual parties, but also to the ways in which even experiences common to all the parties have been filtered by national settings and party traditions, sometimes leading to very different responses on the part of the individual parties.

The interplay between the general and the specific, between what is shared and what is peculiar, has been extremely important in guiding the selection of documents. We have sought to provide the student or scholar with a clear sense of the development of each of the national parties. At the same time, we have assured that there are sufficient common points of reference – events to which all the parties have reacted, issues they have all faced, problems they have all had to manage – to allow for comparison. Thus, the reader should be able to observe and judge, over time, how much, in what way and, to some extent, why each party has changed or not changed along a variety of dimensions.

In the remainder of this introductory essay we will present the outline for the analysis of the parties which guided preparation of the casebook and which we think useful in understanding eurocommunism. Before turning to this schema, however, a few obvious questions raised by the organization of the casebook should be answered.

## **Why these parties?**

Eurocommunism, as we define it, is not confined to the Italian, French and Spanish communist parties, nor is it a uniquely European phenomenon. Other communist parties in Europe have been subject to the same process of change in recent years: and some, such as the Swedish, have been transformed in a more substantial and coherent fashion than any of the southern European parties. The Japanese Communist Party has developed its doctrine, strategy and specific policies in ways which parallel the southern Europeans. Eurocommunism, then, is a widespread process and is associated not so much with Europe as with advanced industrial democracy.

There are, of course, obvious exceptions: the communist parties of Portugal and the United States, to cite two prominent examples. The exceptions would suggest that eurocommunism is less likely to emerge in societies which are less developed and more peripheral to the advanced industrial political economy and/or in communist parties which are politically and socially isolated within their societies and can hope to achieve national power only on the heels of major social upheaval. Why these two conditions should make eurocommunism less probable will become clear below as we discuss the factors which have promoted its development in other countries.

Within the range of cases in which eurocommunist developments are present, the selection of the southern European parties was based on three intersecting criteria. The first was practical. Our intention to provide a historical panorama of party development along a number of policy dimensions required the presentation of a large number of documents for each party, thus limiting the number of parties which could be covered. On a more substantive basis, we decided that, given the limitation on the number of parties to be examined, we should concentrate on those which were both relatively large in membership and electoral terms and which have played and continue to play a major role in the political development of their respective societies. Finally, we also wanted parties which have played a prominent role in international politics, both within the communist movement and, due to their presence, strength and policies, in relations among the major Western powers. On these bases, the Italian, French and Spanish communist parties (PCI, PCF and PCE) are by far the most appropriate cases.

## **Why begin with the end of the Second World War?**

Eurocommunism is a concept of the 1970s. Its origins, while somewhat contested, date from the middle of the decade when the parties of Italy, France and Spain appeared both to be making major gains in domestic politics and to be moving rapidly toward revision of most of their traditional Marxist-Leninist doctrines and practices. The PCI's (Italian Communist Party's) acceptance of NATO, the PCF's (French Communist Party's) abandonment of the dogma of dictatorship of the proletariat, the PCE's (Spanish Communist Party's) of the acceptance of the Spanish monarchy all came at about the same time and, tied to a number of other changes, appeared to signal the emergence of a new movement. Some went so far as to think that a possible third great schism was developing within international communism. Whether or not that was the case, to all but the experts on European communism, something wholly new

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seemed to be emerging, a notion both symbolized and reinforced by the coinage of a new term, eurocommunism.

Both the suggestion of novelty and the expectations which accompanied it were exaggerated, exaggeration which explains in considerable part the speed with which the term has been abandoned subsequently. There were a number of novel revisions of doctrine undertaken by the parties in the mid-1970s, some of them of considerable importance, especially for the parties' relations with other parties and social forces within their countries and for their ability to achieve legitimacy in a broader international setting. None the less, with a few notable exceptions, the parties had been laying the ground for these revisions for a number of years as they gradually responded to changing conditions in the national and international context in which they operated.

The timing of the dramatic new stances at mid-decade was undoubtedly related to the particular conjuncture of international and domestic developments: the springtime of détente, the severe strains of stagflation, the decay of conservative regimes too long in power. All these presented the parties with new opportunities for national power. The timing was also a product of a kind of implicit co-operation/competition among the parties as they sought to benefit from the image of innovation and strength projected by any one of them and to avoid being seen as a laggard, out of step with the revisionist march. The parties' eventual acceptance of the 'bourgeois' term, Eurocommunism, to characterize their new, common front was part and parcel of the process. Of course, in such a situation the room for tactical maneuver was considerable. It is not surprising, therefore, that one of the parties, the PCF, often seemed more a free rider than an innovator, less a convinced eurocommunist than a seconder of the initiatives of others. The French party, the documents clearly show, was more willing than the others to try to capitalize on the conjuncture without developing broader analyses or drawing more general theoretical and strategic conclusions. None the less, even for the PCF, and certainly for the others, most of the new positions which were subsumed under the term eurocommunism had foundations in longer processes of change and adaptation; and when they did not, only a long retrospective view could show this to be the case.

This, then, suggests why we have felt that an analysis of eurocommunism as a process of party change must be historical. Only thereby can one identify its roots and causes, its coherence and contradictions, the degree to which it is common to several parties or peculiar to one or another. It appeared important to provide sufficient documentation to allow the reader to see to what extent any of the parties has taken the lead and been consistent in its revisionism, and under what conditions change has occurred and has been more or less rapid, or even reversed.

But how far back should one go? The PCI traces the roots of its postwar strategy and of many of the positions which it has assumed in recent years to the heritage of Antonio Gramsci, one of the party's founders, its second general secretary and a major Marxist, and Italian, theoretician, who died in 1937, after eleven years in fascist prisons. The Spanish and French parties make lesser historical claims, in part because they have less eminent national theoretical traditions. For these parties' changes, which eventually led to some of the positions of the 1970s, appear to date from the traumas of 1956, or even later developments. Thus, the problem of starting point, always an issue in historical analyses, is complex.

The decision to begin with documents from the immediate post-Second World War years was based on two considerations. First, the development of the parties since 1945 can be interpreted as evolving attempts to find doctrines and strategies for influence and power within structural constraints which challenge Marxist-Leninist dogmas and traditional communist strategies. These constraints, and the problems they posed for the parties, can be traced to the years immediately following the end of the Second World War. In the international arena, the *division of Europe* harshly posed for the parties the problem of what balance to strike between their loyalty to the Soviet Union and the fact that they would have to operate in countries under the United States' strategic, political and economic umbrella. The fact that the Soviets basically accepted the division while at the same time making clear (after 1947) that they intended to use the Western parties as instruments in the Cold War struggle with the United States only aggravated the problem. In domestic politics, the immediate postwar years were marked by the re-establishment and consolidation of democratic regimes in France and Italy, and the survival and reinforcement of Francoism in Spain. For the Spanish party, this meant merely that the clandestine struggle would continue, a prospect for which a Leninist party was well suited. For the French and Italian parties, however, the problem was how to seek power in a democratic context while at the same time remaining true to the parties' Leninist and internationalist identity. In the domestic political economies, the immediate postwar years signalled the firm rooting of processes of advanced capitalist development which were increasingly to confound the communists' catastrophic economic predictions and the social and political consequences they drew from them. Even in the first years after the war, the parties had to recognize that the immediate socialization of their domestic economies was improbable. The problem, which became more intense as capitalist reconstruction (in France and Italy) took hold and as the Spanish economy became successfully industrialized, was how to analyze the emerging political economy of an advanced industrial welfare system and how to devise a strategy which might win support both within a more affluent and socially differentiated working class and among other social strata. This problem, and the constraint to which it was linked, was closely related to the preceding two. Together, they meant that the parties were, from the immediate postwar years, faced with a profound tension between their traditional analyses and ways of doing things and the realities of the postwar Western European world.

This brings us to the second consideration in choosing the immediate postwar period as a starting point. The three parties did not immediately respond to the new constraints and the problems posed by them. After an initial period of moderation, corresponding to the time of their participation in broad national coalition governments and a relatively relaxed international atmosphere, the parties returned to more rigid, traditional and pro-Soviet positions. There were differences. The PCI much more than the PCF sought to maintain some of the policy lines which it had developed at the end of the war. None the less, both parties basically pursued policies which reflected their traditions and their linkages to the Soviet Union. The start of their gradual adjustment to the international and domestic constraints which they already faced was to await events in the 1950s. The documents from this earlier period, therefore, establish a base line against which later developments can be judged, as well as, in a few cases, showing some of the ways the parties responded to the peculiar conditions immediately after the war.



The preceding remarks should enable the user of this volume to identify the major features of its organization and the major premisses on which that organization is based. In addition, we have begun to indicate some of the factors which we feel can explain the development of the eurocommunism process. In the pages which follow, we want more systematically to offer an interpretation of eurocommunism, indicating some of its basic dimensions and postwar determinants.

Eurocommunism is, for us, a process. Such an interpretation may seem obvious to many, but it is worthwhile spelling out its several implications. The accuracy of this interpretation can thereby be better judged in light of the documents.

To consider eurocommunism as a process implies, first of all, rejection of the view that the development of the post-Second World War parties has been simply the product of rational, instrumental calculation on the part of party leaders in pursuit of ideologically derived goals. This instrumentalist interpretation has been common, and often justified, in the past. It is consistent with the Leninist doctrine of the vanguard party of professional revolutionaries. It is also consistent with much of communist practice in the period between the wars when the parties were relatively small, their internal discipline rigid and when the political climate was polarized and highly charged. Goals, strategies and tactics determined in Moscow could be, and were, imposed on the national party organizations and were implemented with discipline, regardless of their appropriateness to the national circumstances in which any individual party found itself or of the preferences of national party leaders or members. The parties then were truly 'sections of the Third International.' The most dramatic example is, perhaps, the acceptance of the consequences of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939, which required a sharp break with the policies and alliances which the national European parties had been pursuing since the equally centralized and abrupt shift to the policy of the Popular Front in 1934.

In the postwar period this instrumentalist interpretation seems increasingly less appropriate. The reasons for this will be sketched below: they have to do with the kinds of changes in the parties' environments which were indicated earlier as characterizing the postwar period. They have to do as well with the changing role and character of the parties' electorates and with modifications in their organizations. On the one hand, the parties have assigned increasing importance to electoral politics. The size of the party vote, both in absolute terms and relative to preceding elections, has become a measure of the success of party policies, a sign of the extent of their national legitimacy and a criterion by which to judge the strength of their position with respect to other parties, particularly other parties on the left. The shifting policies of the PCF in the 1970s, for instance, cannot be understood without paying heed to the party's battle with the French Socialist Party for electoral dominance of the left. At the same time, the salience of electoral politics has led the parties to broaden their electoral appeals. As the parties' electorates have become more heterogeneous, however, party policy, especially at election time, has increasingly reflected this heterogeneity. It has, therefore, shifted to adjust to the pressures coming from different sectors of voters and/or has had the effect of obscuring potential contradictions and inconsistencies. On the other hand, the parties' organizations have also become less wieldy. Larger memberships, less strict criteria of membership, the erosion of old revolutionary models and myths, the increasing involvement of the parties in electoral and

institutional politics have been coupled with a declining capacity to encapsulate, indoctrinate and discipline members. Supporters have become less communist, more Italian, French, or Spanish. This change has not been of equal extent or speed in the parties. It has gone farthest and fastest in the PCI. The French and Spanish parties have been slower to change the way they make and implement policies, even when the policies themselves have been similar to those of the Italians. None the less, none of the parties is any longer an 'organizational weapon' in the hands of party leaders, much less of the leaders of the Soviet party. They have become societally embedded institutions. Thus, their policies are today the product of a mix of goal-oriented behavior determined by party leadership (influenced by the national, international and party contexts) and adaptive behavior reflecting the interaction of party members and cadres with the societies in which they live and work. It is out of this crucible of intention and adaptation that the process of eurocommunism has developed.

A second implication of the interpretation of eurocommunism as a process is that it is to be understood historically and not just as the product of the contemporary conditions in which the parties operate. Such a historical perspective does not simply mean paying heed to the long development of each party's strategy, although this is certainly part of what is intended. It also means taking note of the ways the past conditions the present. This conditioning takes several forms. First, it appears as the conscious rejection of past values, strategic orientations and tactics by leaders and members, either because these have fallen into general disrepute (for example, Stalinism) or because they have been judged inappropriate to promotion of the parties' goals in the postwar world and in their specific national contexts. Secondly, it appears as a response to the experiences of the parties themselves, to the policies that have succeeded or failed and to the ways party members have reacted to policy innovation or stagnation. Finally, and at a less conscious level, the historical conditioning of party policy appears as the response to the larger national and international processes of stability and change with which the parties interact and to which they adapt.

The third implication of viewing eurocommunism as a process is that change in the parties' ideological positions, strategies and policies need not be uniform and consistent but may instead appear in some arenas and not in others. Whether change is the product of intention or adaptation, there is no reason to assume that it will occur uniformly in all areas of party life. From the standpoint of the leaders, even if they wish to revise party values or policy, they are unlikely to do so in one dramatic shift, for the risks both in terms of the support of members and the reactions of those outside the party are indeterminate, and so too are the advantages. Thus change is likely to be incremental and often disguised in small changes in nuance. Furthermore, leaders may feel that change in one area of party policy, let us say toward greater moderation in domestic affairs, requires stability or even change in the opposite direction in another area of party affairs – foreign policy, for instance. In this sense, the European communist parties are increasingly like other political parties and large institutions. Since the transmission of directives from top to bottom can no longer occur with the discipline of the past, and since members and supporters have multiple ways of expressing their discontent with policies, ways which may damage the ability of the party to implement any policy, leaders are likely to search out the mix of tradition and innovation which they feel most likely to maintain effective party performance in the short run while promoting long-run change toward stances they prefer. Uneven

change, therefore, is not just the expression of the weight of tradition or of a lack of clarity of purpose, although it may be both of these; it is also often a counsel of wisdom.

To the extent that change is the product of adaptation, unevenness and inconsistency are even more likely. The world does not, except in occasional abstractions of social scientists, change in consistent and uniform ways. Contradictory processes are often at work. Institutions, including European communist parties, which are adapting and responsive to these processes are also likely to be changing unevenly and in sometimes contradictory fashion. Party leaders, seeking to behave strategically, may seek to impose coherence where adaptation, if left alone, would be even more incoherent. None the less, as we have already noted, it is unlikely that even leadership's intentional intervention will bring uniformity and consistency to party behavior.

The fourth implication of viewing eurocommunism as a process is that its development is unlikely to be linear: reverses are possible. This is the case for two reasons. First, we have already suggested that change in the parties is the product of adjustment, both intentional and adaptive, to changes in the national and international environments in which the parties operate. There is, however, no reason that these external conditions develop in any linear way. To take but two examples, neither steady untroubled Western economic growth nor international détente have proven irreversible characteristics of the post-Second World War world. To the degree that the communist parties have been adjusting their ideologies, strategies and policies to come to terms with these external conditions, it should not come as a surprise if sharp changes or even reverses in direction were to take place in party policy. This need not suggest that all change in the parties is contingent, subject to rapid abandonment in the face of environmental change. If this were the case, the process of eurocommunism would itself lose most of its significance. Rather, what is intended, on the one hand, is that one should not expect change in the parties to occur without reversals, and, on the other hand, that the process of eurocommunism can be identified precisely in those features of party change which, over an extended period of time, resist even reverses in the pattern of external change to which the party changes were initially a response.

The second reason why the process of eurocommunism may be subject to reversals is that the party leaderships which to some extent are guiding the process are not themselves certain of where they wish to carry their parties. While there may be some clarity about what positions – ideological, strategic, policy – need to be abandoned, it seems that the leaderships are far less clear about how their parties can best pursue their goals in a changed and changing world. As a result, it should not come as a surprise that positions are sometimes undertaken and subsequently abandoned. Reactions to new postures, both within the parties and from social and political forces outside the parties, may lead to rethinking and to different attempts to accomplish similar ends. In this sense, the process of eurocommunism can be viewed as the expression of political experimentation on the part of historically formed political parties seeking to adjust deeply entrenched ideological values and modes of analysis, strategic perspectives and policies to economic, social and political conditions never before encountered. That this process of experimentation and party change, especially in a world which is itself changing, should often take the form 'two steps forward, one step backward' is perhaps unsettling for those who need to make public policy toward the eurocommunist parties but should not be surprising for those who analyze them.

For the latter, the task is to identify what is enduring and what transient in the process.

The final implication of thinking of eurocommunism as a process is that the individual European communist parties cannot be expected to develop in precisely similar ways. This conclusion follows naturally from what has been discussed in the preceding pages. All of the factors which influence the process have taken somewhat different forms with respect to the national parties. The historical traditions and patterns of internal organization of the parties are different. So too are the domestic economic, social and political environments in which the parties have operated. And so too are the positions of the countries in the international system, their national traditions with respect to international politics and the ways in which events, both in the international system generally and in the international communist movement, have affected national politics and the parties themselves. To expect the process of eurocommunism to look alike in each of the three cases, therefore, is to ignore historical specificity.

Again, however, this point can be pushed too far, suggesting that eurocommunism as a general process does not exist. We would not agree, and we think the documents clearly show this is not the case. Rather, the historical specificity of the cases should alert us, on the one hand, to look for those factors which, while beneath the surface, have influenced the development of all three of the parties, pushing all three to abandon doctrines and practices which they shared in the past and to seek new positions, many of which have traits in common. These factors will be highlighted when we turn to a brief examination of the dimensions of eurocommunism. On the other hand, we need at the same time to be sensitive to the ways these general factors, and the issues and problems they pose for the parties, have been filtered through specific national traditions, experiences, institutions and processes and have been mediated by the internal traditions and organizational characteristics of the parties themselves. As we have suggested at several points, it is this interplay between the general and the specific in the parties' environments and the ways these external pressures are mediated both by the intentionality of party leaders and the less conscious processes of party adaptation which lie at the heart of the process of eurocommunism. A brief overview of the dimensions of this process should enable us more concretely to identify what is enduring and what fleeting in that process.

## **Dimensions of Eurocommunism**

The process of eurocommunism has been uneven. The pace, regularity and consistency of change have differed from party to party. They have differed as well as one examines different aspects of doctrine, strategy and practice in any individual party. The latter requires that one identify divisions within the process which facilitate its analysis. The documents collected in this volume have been divided into five categories (general strategy, political and social alliances, internal party affairs, relations with the international communist movement, relations with the international system). This division provides the reader with a general overview of the development of the various parties' strategies and with more specific detail on issues toward which ongoing policy decisions and adjustments have been necessary. The emphasis in these divisions is on eurocommunism as a process reflected in statements about practical

political policies and how these are justified (or not justified) in terms of doctrine. Our focus, then, is on the outcomes of the process and each section is preceded by an introduction which highlights features of the documents which are of particular interest from a comparative standpoint.

The process of eurocommunism, however, can be analyzed as well from the standpoint of the extent and character of the breaks which the development of the parties' policies has made with the traditions of Leninism and the Third International. The focus here is on dimensions of change, on the general factors which have influenced the process in all the parties and on the ways these have been filtered through specific national conditions and experiences. In the next few pages we will look at the process from this perspective. No extensive description will be undertaken. Rather, we want simply to lay out an overview which can be used by the reader to give some causal ordering to the general and party-specific developments.

Two general dimensions of change from traditional doctrine and practice can be identified: subordination/autonomy (with respect to the policies of the Soviet Union) and one-party rule/democratic pluralism. In turning to a brief discussion of these dimensions and of the factors which have promoted change along them, it is worthwhile restating two points previously discussed. First, it is much easier to delineate the specific content of the doctrines and policies which the parties have been abandoning than that of the positions toward which they are moving. All of the parties appear to have made a significant break with their traditional postures toward the Soviet Union and toward one-party rule. But to differing extents, none of the parties has settled on precise consistent understandings of what policies are implied by autonomy from the Soviet Union or acceptance of democratic pluralism. Nor have they entirely brought their ideological doctrines into line with their developing strategies and stated policies. In this sense, and the differences among the parties need to be stressed, change has been more a negation of the past than movement toward clearly formulated, ideologically embedded positions on which the parties have settled. Secondly, focusing on these dimensions makes clear once again both the extent to which the process of change has often been the response to events and conditions over which the parties have had little control and why this has meant that the process has often been fitful and subject to reverses.

### **Subordination/Autonomy**

Prior to the end of the Second World War, the history of the relationship between the European communist parties and the Soviet Union was fundamentally one of subordination, a subordination expressed in the fact that during much of this period the parties called themselves 'sections of the Third International.' This should not suggest that there were no disagreements between the national party leaderships and the Soviet and International leaders. There were several important disputes. None the less, it was decisions taken at the international level which were determinant of national party doctrine and policy. Part and parcel of this relationship was the parties' acceptance of Soviet ideology, revolutionary strategy and model of development.

There were numerous factors which contributed to this relationship. The parties had been born of the Russian revolution, of Lenin's efforts to build a European

communist challenge to the dominant socialist parties of the Second International and to the new Soviet state's sense that its survival depended on revolution in the West. By the late 1920s the Soviet party had been able to impose its will on the individual national parties, often through the direct selection of their national leaderships. Secondly, once the parties were formed, the Soviet party and nation became a fundamental resource in their attempts to promote revolution at home. On the one hand, the myth of the revolution was at the heart of the parties' ability to win and mobilize support. On the other hand, the parties were convinced that the Soviet Union's existence was essential to their own survival. Soviet interests, the interests of world revolution and the interests of the individual national parties were inextricably intertwined, and the final judgement of what policies best served these interests lay at the center of the movement, in Moscow.

By the end of the Second World War some of this structure had begun to break down, in part through the action of the Soviets themselves. The recognition in 1935 that the rise of fascism signalled the need to develop communist strategies which might differ from those which had been used in 1917, and the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, began to loosen the bonds between the parties. Furthermore, the prestige which the French and Italian parties gained during their respective national resistance movements gave them autonomous resources in developing national support. There is little doubt, however, that at the end of the war even the Italian party, which seemed most inclined to develop a national strategy, and which had an independent theoretical tradition on which to draw in developing that strategy, remained fundamentally subordinate to Soviet direction. There was, for both the Italian and French parties, greater flexibility in the period of flux of the immediate postwar years, but with the onset of the Cold War and the creation, on Soviet initiative, of the Cominform, tighter subordination was restored. This is most clearly evidenced in the parties' acceptance of the Soviet-inspired criticisms of their policies at the first meeting of the Cominform in 1947, their strident rejection of the Marshall Plan, their willingness to follow the Soviet lead in condemning Yugoslavia and their mobilization against the formation of the Atlantic Alliance. In a period of intense international and domestic tension and hostility toward communism, close links to the Soviet Union and acceptance of its guidance were, for the Western communist parties, almost a necessity. The ideological and material resources which they derived from this relationship were critical to their survival and the polarized situation left little room for maneuver.

The years since 1956 have been marked by the development of more autonomous postures. On ideological issues the parties have, to varying extents, abandoned many of the precepts which have been traditional in the communist movement and which the Soviet Union continues to espouse. The parties have also become increasingly critical of the Soviet model of a socialist society and have abandoned the notion that this model is appropriate to the countries in which they operate. Again distinct differences still remain between the parties. Finally, the parties have taken foreign and domestic policy positions which are in disaccord with those of the Soviet Union. Domestically, for instance, the parties have pursued political alliances of which the Soviets publicly disapproved. In the area of foreign policy, the parties have lent varying degrees of support or acquiescence to institutions and policies of which the Soviets disapprove (the European Economic Community) or which have an anti-Soviet function (NATO), and have openly opposed Soviet foreign policy behavior (Czechoslovakia, and, more

recently, PCI and PCE condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan). The specific details of how the development of greater autonomy has proceeded can be followed in the documents. In general, one can say that change has come first in strategy and on specific policy issues and only later, and much more slowly, in ideology and in general conclusions about the USSR. It has been most difficult when the adoption of new positions required not just quiet and subtle differentiation from tradition or from the Soviets, but open and explicit confrontation with them.

The development of greater autonomy has also not proceeded as far, as fast, nor as coherently in all three parties. The PCI began earlier, has sought autonomous positions on a wider scale of issues and has been more consistent in its positions on these issues. The PCE, although operating in clandestinity for much of the postwar period, has also had a fairly long and consistent pattern of autonomous positions. Its relations with the Soviet Union, in fact, have been worse than those of the Italian party, and the PCE's (or, at least, Santiago Carrillo's) criticism of the Soviet model of socialism has been more systematic and thoroughgoing than that of even the PCI. The French party has been later and less consistent in the development of autonomy. Its positions have seemed more contingent, both because they have often come as the result of sudden shifts in policy and because they have, for the most part, been poorly integrated into a changing ideological posture. None the less, even the French party, at least until Afghanistan, appeared somewhat more autonomous from the Soviet Union than in the past.

This raises a final point about the dimension of autonomy. To say that the parties have developed a more autonomous relationship to the Soviet Union does not mean that their positions, especially with respect to foreign policy issues, are never, or even only rarely, consistent with those adopted by the Soviets. The parties have not become, and cannot be expected to become, anti-Soviet and/or pro-American. Nor have they abandoned many of the traditional values which would lead them to support movements and regimes, especially in the Third World, which they view as revolutionary and which the USSR also supports. None the less, when examining the whole range of issues, ideological, strategic, domestic and international, which traditionally have been of concern to the USSR, which affect Soviet interests (as a world power and as a state whose legitimation is strongly tied to ideology) and on which the Soviets express views and criticize the European parties, it is clear that the three parties with which we are concerned have greatly increased their autonomy.

Less clear is how far this process will go and how it might conclude. Particularly the Italian party seems to have reached the point at which its continued unwillingness to repudiate Soviet traditions and behavior *in toto* and to join wholeheartedly the Western camp is becoming the last major obstacle to its participation in national government. At the same time, the increasing frequency and clarity of the party's differences with the USSR make ever more glaring the failure to carry these criticisms to a more systematic level. Finally, as the party approaches governmental power, it is increasingly faced with the need to develop positions on foreign policy issues which cater less to points of principle (where the party can seek some middle ground between Soviet and Western positions) and more to the practical needs of statecraft in a divided world. The party's reluctance to continue the rapid development of its foreign policy and of its analysis of the USSR in the late 1970s may, in part, have been a product of the recognition of these difficulties and of a cautious response to them and to their



potential consequences. Of course, the peculiar national and international standing of the PCI makes these problems more difficult for that party than for the others. Nevertheless, they cannot fail to influence the ways in which autonomy develops in the other parties as well. For all three, it is factors such as these which help us understand the sources of the hesitancy and experimentation which characterize this development and the process of eurocommunism as a whole. It is also worthwhile recalling that when the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan once again placed the question of autonomy at the top of the agenda, the PCI (and, more weakly, the PCE) increased their criticism of the Soviet Union and deepened their analysis of the sources of the Soviet's behavior. For these parties, autonomy was further advanced.

### **One Party/Democratic Pluralism**

The orthodox posture of the communist movement to the liberal democracy of the West was disdain or, at most, highly instrumental and tactical support. The communists viewed Western democratic institutions as 'bourgeois democracy,' the expression of the class power of the bourgeoisie. Behind the institutions of fictive political participation and power embodied in the electoral and legislative process lay the invisible, but for that more powerful, exercise of class power. Democratic procedures might at times offer a useful terrain on which to carry forward the fight for socialism in the present, but they were wholly without importance for the socialist state of the future. In the latter, the dictatorship of the proletariat was the appropriate expression of state power.

Underlying this analysis was a fundamental tenet of the classical communist (and also socialist) interpretation of Marxism: that the economic dimension of society, its modes of production and exchange, deterministically shape the political dimension. Politics and political institutions did not have an independent determinative role but rather were nothing but the expression of the relations of class power expressed in the mode of production. Thus, the political institutions of any historical period were (and could be) nothing more than the most appropriate means by which the economically dominant class could exercise political rule and buttress its economic power. It followed, in this interpretation, that the institutions of one historical epoch (defined in terms of class relations) would be wholly outmoded and inappropriate in another epoch. More concretely, the institutions of the era of the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie would be abandoned after the revolution and the ascendancy of the proletariat and the establishment of socialism. The 'dictatorship' (in 'real' if not in formal terms) of the bourgeoisie would be replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat which would, in the course of the revolution, destroy the bourgeois state, replacing it with institutions which would allow the attainment of a true democracy, possible because of the change in class relations in the economic structure of society.

This conception of the revolutionary process and of liberal democratic institutions had, as its complement, a conception of the role of the communist party which stressed its 'vanguard' function, its privileged access to the correct interpretation of both doctrine and strategic and tactical insight and its need to pursue disciplined action. Such a party would be small and difficult to enter, made up of 'professional revolutionaries,' of the 'few but good,' who would submit to the disciplines of

democratic centralism and would commit their lives to revolutionary activity. The party was to be separate from the masses, for its function was to help them create a revolution which they would be unable to achieve, or even aspire to, without the guidance of the vanguard. It would be in close contact with the masses, would seek to organize and mobilize them, sometimes even with clandestine or disguised leadership through 'front' organizations, but it would always be sensitive to the dangers of 'tailism,' of falling victim to the limited, non-revolutionary consciousness of the masses. Furthermore, even in the 'construction of socialism' (i.e. a transitional phase to communism in the orthodox view), this party would have to continue to exercise leadership. It would have to be the agent of the proletariat's dictatorship for a period, assuring that the new socialist society under construction would not succumb to reactionary attempts. Thus, whatever the original intention in Leninist theory, the tendency toward one-party dictatorial rule received legitimation in the thinking of the Third International, in the acceptance of the Soviet Union as a socialist model and in the ideological and practical dependence of the Third International parties on the Soviet Union.

These interrelated doctrines began to erode during the 1930s under the impact of the rise of fascism. The Western parties and the Soviet Union, after first treating fascism as simply a different institutional manifestation of the bourgeoisie's dictatorship, came to realize that there had been advantages for the working class in the liberal democratic institutions and in the pluralistic political process. The new approach was legitimized in the policy of the Popular Front adopted at the Seventh Congress of the Third International in 1935. It was, however, a policy which remained very instrumental or tactical in character: the political alliances with socialist parties which were sought by the communists often were very contingent and much of the purpose was better to protect the Soviet Union from the threat posed by a spread of fascism in the West. This instrumental character was underlined by the fact that the decisions of the mid-1930s were only very limitedly integrated into communist ideology: concepts like the dictatorship of the proletariat with all its implications remained fundamentally untouched. None the less, the innovations of the Seventh Congress have been used by the Western parties in the post-Second World War period as a starting point for their doctrinal revisions.

The process of theoretical and strategic revisionism of the eurocommunist parties in the years since the Second World War has proceeded along several fronts. First, as already discussed, the parties have abandoned the Soviet model as appropriate for the West. In this area, as in the others we shall discuss, the Italian and Spanish parties began earlier, have gone farther and have been more thoroughgoing in their theoretical rethinking than the French party. Secondly, the parties' analyses of modern capitalism, as well as their practice, increasingly suggest to varying extents that there does indeed exist a degree of autonomy for politics. Liberal democracy, with its affirmation of basic civil and political rights and freedoms for *all* members of the community, has been a fundamental achievement which the working class has a stake in and which must form the basis for socialist society in Western Europe. The French party has been more equivocal about whether these rights will be part and parcel of a fully socialist society than the other two parties, but all agree that they must be preserved in the process of building socialism. This does not mean that the parties view these institutional guarantees and procedures as all that is required in order to build and maintain

socialist society and 'real' equality. The economic bases of society and the failure to provide individuals with opportunities for participation other than through the electoral and legislative process continue to restrain full liberty. Thus, the parties wish to extend the opportunities for participation, to create participatory mechanisms beyond (but including) those of the classical liberal institutions, as the economic bases of the society are transformed.

In practical terms, this revised theory of the socializing and socialist state has led the parties to declare themselves favorable to pluralism of political parties, arguing that even under socialism parties other than that (or those) of the working class will be allowed to exist and operate freely. Free elections will be conducted and the parties will be willing to leave office should they fail to win an electoral mandate to rule alone or in coalition. Individuals will be free to practice their religious beliefs, to organize themselves politically and to express dissent within the limits of legality. The independence of the judiciary and the existence of free and autonomous trade unions have also been guaranteed.

As all of the preceding suggests, the parties have abandoned the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Italians abandoned this concept early in the postwar period and their creation of a 'new' mass party with membership criteria very different from the classical Leninist party was the embodiment of a different approach, first at the practical level and later at the doctrinal one, to the issues of the party and of political struggle for socialism in Western democratic societies. The French party, by contrast, only abandoned the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1974, and with such brusqueness, discipline and lack of developed theoretical justification that doubts about its commitment to the new approach remain. In the case of all three parties, nevertheless, their practice from the mid-1950s to the 1970s has increasingly been to seek widespread alliances in which the working class would win a 'hegemonic' position through competitive struggle. Again, however, the French party has gone less far and has moved with less consistency and commitment than the other two parties. Its contribution to the rupture of the Common Program alliance with the Socialist Party when it appeared that the PCF might emerge as the junior partner in that alliance suggests the extent to which the PCF is still torn between the old and the new, unable to make a firm commitment at the practical level to the implications of revised theoretical and strategic positions. Even with the recent developments, however, the PCF, and of course the other parties to a far greater extent, have broken with the theoretical and strategic dogmas of their past on the questions of the relationship between democracy and socialism.

What are the general factors which have contributed to the development of the process of eurocommunism along the two dimensions just discussed? Without entering into a lengthy discussion, four major factors can be cited. The first factor of importance has been the decline – one is almost tempted to say collapse – of the Soviet myth. This began dramatically in 1956 with Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalinism. It has been furthered and accelerated by the increasingly apparent difficulties encountered by the Soviet model of domestic political-economic development both in the USSR and in Eastern Europe, by the continuously repeated repression of dissent in the Soviet bloc nations and by the need for the Soviet Union to intervene militarily to secure its control and block internal evolution in a democratic direction in its satellites. Together, these events have highlighted the lack of relevance

of the Soviet model for the Western European parties. More important, they have made the Western parties' identification with the Soviet Union ever less a resource which can be used to build and mobilize support domestically. Old party members may retain an attachment to the myth, however tarnished, but the young generations of communists are increasingly less attracted to the contemporary Soviet model, even when they continue to be attached to the revolutionary heritage of Leninism and of the Russian revolution. Thus, over the course of the last twenty-five years, revelations about the Soviet Union's past and present internal regime and Soviet international behavior have greatly increased the domestic political advantages to the parties to weaken their ties to the Soviets and to develop independent positions on the relationship between democracy and socialism. At the same time the constraints on the parties' ability to seek to exploit these advantages represented by the commitments of members have declined.

A second factor working in much the same direction has been the break-up of the international communist movement, particularly the split between the Soviet Union and China. Here again the effect has been to destroy old models and to undermine traditional principles. The Sino-Soviet split and the more general decay of unity among the communist parties has led to a gradual re-evaluation among the French, Italian and Spanish parties of the concept of proletarian internationalism, with its traditional meaning of placing defense of the Soviet Union's interests (as defined by the Soviets) above all national party interests or international values. With the PCI in the forefront, the parties have gradually sought to redefine proletarian internationalism – rechristened 'internationalist solidarity' at the 1976 Conference of European Communist Parties in Berlin – diluting its traditional content. This change has been enhanced by the Soviet Union's altered status in the international system. As the USSR has become a superpower, has been increasingly unable to present itself as an embattled national threatened by capitalist encirclement and has itself operated in the international system to promote its national rather than revolutionary interests, the European parties have been able to distance themselves from the Soviet conception of appropriate international behavior. In this regard, the partial unity among the three parties achieved in the 1970s (the narrow conception of eurocommunism) was of major importance. It enabled the parties to escape the charge of the Soviets and their allies that they were placing national interests above the interests of the international movement. Furthermore, it allowed them to operate in international communist conferences to assure that their more autonomous postures would attain international recognition and could not be isolated. The 1976 Berlin Conference of European Communist Parties was exemplary in this regard, for by working together the euro-communist parties and their allies such as Yugoslavia were able to win agreement to a reinterpretation of proletarian internationalism, to the idea that international conferences should not be binding on national parties and to the more general principle that parties could assume dissenting positions within such conferences and within the movement.

A third factor working to increase the parties' development of greater autonomy has been their growing recognition that their close attachment to the USSR was an insurmountable obstacle to their efforts to win national power. With the waning of the Cold War and the opening of new domestic opportunities for political and social alliances and electoral gains, the incentives to develop autonomous domestic and

foreign policy stances which would create the possible terrain for compromise with other domestic forces have grown.

Here domestic and international economic, social and political developments within the West have come to play a crucial role. The consolidation of the domestic political regimes (in Spain, the promise of and then the transition to democracy), the relative successes of the domestic political economies and the increasing economic and political-military interdependence of these societies have become facts which the parties could no longer ignore. The traditional catastrophic interpretations by the parties of their respective domestic societies were no longer theoretically or practically credible, even to much of their membership, much less to potential voters for the left. Furthermore, both domestic economic success and economic interdependence increasingly constrained the credible options which the parties could pursue. To propose policies which would promote the isolation of their countries from the West or which would lead to severe economic costs for even their own – now better off – working- and middle-class supporters, was likely to be counter-productive. Thus, to varying extents, the parties had developed a stake in their domestic political economies. Finally, the parties also had to come to terms with the political-military commitments of their countries. The Atlantic Alliance, like the Warsaw Pact, had become a fundamental fact of European life and the behavior of the USA and USSR gave no reason to presume that this was likely to change in the near future. Even the economic difficulties and political-military strains among the Western nations in the later part of the 1970s did little fundamentally to change the situation. While opening new political opportunities, these strains did nothing to alter the basic structural linkages which had been built up over the preceding decades.

The parties responded to these evolving conditions at different rates and with diverse specific policies. The different characteristics of the national party systems and of the particular national political problems of highest priority were important in this regard. So too were the peculiar features of each national economy and the foreign policy traditions of each nation. None the less, all of them adjusted first their strategies and then their ideological doctrines to the incentives inherent in the new situations. These incentives might not, in themselves, have been sufficient to wean the parties away from the Soviets and from their traditional dogmas. After all, for all three parties, and especially for the French, adjustment lagged behind change in the parties' environments. In the context of the other factors cited, however, these incentives became increasingly important.

This suggests the final factor which has created both the opportunity and the necessity for the parties to develop greater autonomy and revised positions of the relationship between socialism and democracy: the relaxation of international tensions, or, in its more recent formulation, the *détente* process. The importance of the *détente* process to the parties' willingness and ability to adjust to the changing conditions in which they are operating cannot be overemphasized. On the one hand, relaxation of tensions between the superpowers created the possibility for greater domestic maneuver, especially in France and Italy where it contributed to a depolarization of domestic politics and the opening of new opportunities for alliance-building. It is worthwhile remembering in this regard that in his speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956, Khrushchev not only announced the possibility of peaceful coexistence with the West but also declared the

legitimacy of different (from the Soviet's) and parliamentary paths to socialism. Thus, even from the Soviet standpoint, there has been a linkage between better superpower relations and greater strategic autonomy for the national parties.

On the other hand, détente has reduced the degree to which the parties' international and domestic policy choices had to be evaluated in the light of a harsh zero-sum calculus: anything not pro-Soviet was pro-American, and vice versa. With the decline of tensions and increase of co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United States, the Italian, French and Spanish parties could at one and the same time accept their nations' alignment with the West and the European Economic Community and seek to promote more 'progressive' foreign policies within their own nations and the Western alliance. This, in turn, allowed the parties to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of even more traditional supporters while also appealing to other sectors of the population and to potential domestic allies. Finally, especially in the case of the PCI, it enabled the parties to seek to extend their international ties to socialist and social democratic parties in the rest of Europe and even to try to find some *modus vivendi* with the United States. The specific ways that détente has made itself felt have depended on the specific national circumstances in which each of the parties operated, but in all cases the relaxation of international tension enabled the parties to develop their autonomy from the USSR and to increase their theoretical and strategic accommodation of pluralistic democracy.

These, then, are the factors which have contributed to the development of the process of eurocommunism along the two dimensions outlined. The specific ways these factors have made their influence felt in each of the parties can be followed in the documents and the introductory notes. In concluding this essay, however, we need briefly to reflect on how the process has proceeded in order to offer, if ever so tentatively, some thoughts on the possible future of eurocommunism.

As this volume was going to press the eurocommunism which was such a fashionable topic of conversation and analysis in the 1970s appeared to have met its demise. The French Communist Party had made a major contribution to the collapse of the Common Program by becoming intransigent just as the left seemed within reach of electoral victory in 1978. It had then retrenched on many of the more open positions, in both domestic and international politics, which it had been developing in the 1970s. The retrenchment culminated in the party's strong and vociferous support for the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, a position not supported by either the PCI or the PCE. While the PCF did not abandon all the terrain across which it had advanced since the early 1960s, there was little question that the process of eurocommunism as it applied to the French party had undergone a sharp reversal.

Such a reversal did not take place in the Italian and Spanish parties. Their condemnation of the Afghan invasion, quicker and stronger in the case of the PCI, represented a further growth of autonomy. Nor did either party abandon the alliance policies which they had been pursuing domestically, despite the fact that the prospects that such alliances would be soon achieved and national power attained seemed dimmer than a few years before. Nevertheless, even in these two parties there was evidence that the process of eurocommunism had slowed, that the parties had become more sensitive to the dangers inherent in advancing change further, and less certain about the direction in which they should be moving.

The slowdown and hesitancy, and even the partial reversal of the PCF, are under-

standable when the process of eurocommunism is viewed from the perspective suggested in this essay and supported in the documents. If conditions from 1968 to the late 1970s promoted the rapid development of the process, subsequent developments have worked in the opposite direction. Since the late 1960s all of the causal factors we have cited promoted autonomy and democratic revisionism. To cite but a few important developments: the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the decay of the ruling parties in all three countries, the acceleration of interdependence, the flowering of détente. By the middle of the decade all three parties seemed convinced that events were working to their benefit. Subsequent developments proved this optimism unfounded. Domestic factors showed that the path to power might require even greater change if an approach to national government was to be likely. Reactions set in within the parties themselves. And, perhaps most important, détente decayed and then collapsed, shrinking the parties' room for maneuver, raising the internal potential party costs of moving too fast and reducing the probability that those possible allies on whom the success of the parties' policies depended would respond in the desired fashion. In this light, the fact that the Italian and Spanish parties have largely persisted in advancing, if more slowly, along the dimensions of the eurocommunism process is noteworthy. It would seem to signal that the commitment of these parties to their eurocommunist postures – a commitment developed over a lengthy period of years and with considerable, if lagged, theoretical backing – is relatively firm even if there are hesitations and doubts about where, how and when to proceed.

But what of the PCF? Can it still be considered a eurocommunist party? How does its recent reversal of policy reflect on the analysis of the process as a whole? And can it be expected once again to progress along the dimensions of the eurocommunism process? The answer to the first question can be no more than 'perhaps.' The party has undertaken a marked retrenchment in recent years which has led to sharp polemics with its former *confrères* in Italy and Spain and to its isolation in French politics and, increasingly on the French left. At the same time, the PCF has not abandoned some of the significant revisions of doctrine, strategy and policy which it undertook from the early 1960s onwards. This is most evident, but perhaps least significant, at the level of doctrine where the party has not reverted to the traditional dogmas of the communist movement. At the strategic and policy levels principles have been maintained, but behavior has generally reverted toward past patterns. Even here, however, exceptions are to be noted: even at the height of its support of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the PCF continued its criticism of the Soviet treatment of dissent and its exiling of Andrei Sakharov. On the whole, the reversals in PCF policy raise serious doubts about the extent to which its commitments are, or ever were, solid rather than opportunistic. Until further evidence emerges, however, the future path of French communism is uncertain. Present evidence points in the direction of an end to French eurocommunism, but the bases remain for future shifts, perhaps on more solid ground back to the eurocommunist process of development.

The recent reversals of French policy also allow us to reflect a bit further on the character of the process of eurocommunism as a whole. As we have indicated at several points, the PCF has always been the laggard. It undertook serious policy and strategic change later than the other parties and it never developed the theoretical backing for its new positions that the Spanish and Italian parties did. The differences in the rhetoric of the parties, and especially the contrasts between the PCI and PCF as

reflected in the documents, are striking in this regard. Furthermore, the PCF remained much more a party of cadres rather than becoming a mass party like the PCI. The result was that the adaptive pressures from below (restraining pressures from below were present in both), as contrasted to the adjustments of policy imposed from above, were never as strong. The relative weight of traditionalists in the core constituencies of the PCF seems likely to be much higher than in the PCI. In the case of the PCE, the Soviet attempt to promote a split of the party in 1969, under the direction of Enrique Lister, allowed the party to expel many of the traditionalists; and many of the party's leaders and core members entered after the party had adopted distinctly eurocommunist positions. Finally, for historical reasons the PCF has always been more sectarian than either of the other parties. Fundamental to this are two factors, one historical, the other contemporary. First, unlike the other two parties, the PCF did not spend a major portion of its history fighting dictatorship in its country. The latter experience in the PCI and PCE appears to have made them peculiarly sensitive to the advantages of democracy and its fragility in their countries, to have encouraged them to try to develop a wide net of social and political alliances and, more generally, to the need to develop strategies and policies adjusted to the national peculiarities of their systems. Secondly, the dynamics of conflict within the left in France have been different from those in the other two countries. The PCF in the 1970s, as well as in earlier periods, had to contest for dominance of the left with a Socialist Party (PS) which was often electorally stronger and more dynamic. When, in the last decade, the party sought to reach some compromise with the socialists, it found itself increasingly the loser in the bargain. This outcome served to confirm its more traditional posture of hostility and open conflict within the left. The PCI did not face this problem, for it has for most of the postwar period been both the larger and the more dynamic of the left parties. In the 1960s, during the first years of socialist participation in national government, the PCI was, in fact, somewhat more hostile to the PSI than was its usual practice. The PCE is also the smaller party on the left and may in the future face problems – although not necessarily adopt solutions – similar to those of the PCF. In the present period, however, the lengthy process of consolidation of the democratic regime and the necessity for the two left parties to co-operate in local government and in the face of a large and heterogeneous center-right coalition have encouraged co-operation tempered by electoral and policy competition.

Taken together, these contrasts between the PCF and the other two parties highlight once again the extent to which the process of eurocommunism cannot be understood simply as the adjustment of all the parties to a general set of factors but must also be seen in light of the ways these factors have been mediated by the particular experiences of the parties.

The question of whether the PCF is likely once again to take up the process of eurocommunism raises the issue of whether the process as a whole is likely to continue. On the one hand, it seems unlikely that the three parties will in the near future move in tandem as they did in the mid-1970s. To the extent that the co-operation of this period encouraged development in all the parties, this spur to revision is unlikely to reappear. On the other hand, the underlying factors which encouraged the process of eurocommunism over the course of the postwar period have not disappeared, nor do they seem likely to. From this longer perspective – the one advanced in this essay and inherent in the selection of documents – it seems improbable that the process has



come to an end, even for the French party. Such predictions, however, are clearly hazardous, for they make assumptions not only about the future development of the factors which have promoted eurocommunism, but also about the decisions taken within the parties themselves. It is, perhaps, more judicious to put this hypothesis another way: to the extent that the parties, including and especially the French, fail further to respond to the factors which have led them to become more autonomous and more pro-democratic over the course of the postwar period, they will probably consign themselves to political ghettos, within their political systems. In the case of the PCF, acceptance of such a position would be consistent with recent behavior, but not with much of that of the last twenty years. For the PCI and PCE, it would be a major reversal of perspective, one which is consistent neither with their recent behavior nor with the development which is amply documented in the pages which follow. From this standpoint, then, the process of eurocommunism seems likely to continue, with many of the twists and turns that have been inherent in it from its beginnings.

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## PART ONE

### *National Roads to Socialism*



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# Introduction to Part One

The strategy of a national, democratic and peaceful road to socialism is at the core of eurocommunism: it is, indeed, the fulcrum from which all other aspects of eurocommunism derive. The search for strategic and ideological autonomy from the Soviet Union, the acceptance of the democratic 'rules of the game,' a gradualist approach to change, the adoption of the characteristics of a mass party, are manifestations of the strategy of the national, peaceful road to socialism; they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing expressions of the factors shaping the eurocommunist position.

The intuition of a national, peaceful road to socialism is neither new nor original. The debate between proponents of revolutionary means of struggle and advocates of peaceful transition has been an integral part of the evolution of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The entire history of the working-class movement has been marked by this debate. With regard to the eurocommunist parties, in the immediate post-Second World War period the leaders of the French and Italian communist parties publicly committed themselves to a peaceful road to socialism. This commitment, however, was undeveloped; and to differing degrees it was attenuated during the Cold War. It has only been since 1956 – at different rates and with differing degrees of coherence and conviction – that the parties have reaffirmed and elaborated such a strategy. As it is presented today, this strategy is regarded not only as an expedient to attain power but also as a program of government and the basis on which socialist society is to be built in the West.

By assigning ideological legitimacy to the concept of national roads to socialism, the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU represented a turning point in the parties' ability to elaborate such a strategy. The Soviet Union's acceptance of the principle of diverse roads to socialism opened the way to the parties' development of strategic postures better adapted to the national contexts in which they operated. The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU was significant in another respect: Khrushchev's revelations about Stalinism promoted and eventually impelled the development of domestically rooted models of political struggle and of 'indigenous' visions of socialist society. In the years after 1956 the domestic structures (meaning the historical conditions, patterns of socioeconomic development, institutional arrangements, and so on) facing the parties became even more important points of reference for their strategic choices.

The peculiar characteristic of a strategy of a peaceful road to socialism lies in its search for a synthesis of traditional communist goals and strategic principles, and the constraints and opportunities stemming from the domestic and international conditions of a given country. Such a strategy, to the extent it is fully elaborated, enables the parties to respond to societal and international change. It therefore represents an explicit rejection of the rigid ideological dogmatism of the Third International period, of the old tendency to act politically according to preconceived blueprints.

The realization that the Bolshevik experience is unrepeatable has been central to the parties' adoption of strategies of peaceful, national roads to socialism. Basic to this

realization is the conviction that the methods of struggle used by the Bolsheviks for acquiring political power are inappropriate to the West, that the domestic and international conditions of 1917 Russia differ fundamentally from those in contemporary Western Europe. For the eurocommunist parties, the 'storming of the Winter Palace' formula is a thing of the past. This is why they argue that each communist party should have its own original model of socialism, one in which the characteristics and requirements of the national context predominate over pre-existing models and previous experiences.

In more concrete terms, the adoption of nationally rooted roads to socialism means, above all, that the eurocommunist parties have come to accept democratic rules of political behavior. Parliament and state institutions have become the channels through which the eurocommunist parties seek to bring about changes in society. Social mobilization and the use of the pressure on political institutions which it can generate remain part of the strategic vision; but respect for parliamentary and democratic legality shapes the use made of mobilization and the parties' more general operational code of behavior. The anti-system posture of old has been largely abandoned; the eurocommunists have committed themselves to working within and through the system in the pursuit of their goals.

Gradualism is another factor basic to the strategy of the peaceful road. As envisioned by the eurocommunist parties, transformative changes in society can occur in a gradual fashion. The strategy of the (violent) overthrow of the existing system and its replacement by a new (socialist) system has given way to one of gradual change, of step-by-step structural reform of capitalism. It should be stressed, however, that the parties emphasize that their gradualism differs, both in content and in kind, from that of social democratic parties. While for the latter, they argue, the goal is to make the existing system of liberal democracy more just through reforms of some of its features, the ultimate, long-range goal of the eurocommunists is said by them to be the transformation of the *entire* system, its evolution into a socialist society in which elements of liberal democracy and of socialism would coexist.

If gradualism is the method by which eurocommunist parties act politically, reforms are the means they advocate for bringing about far-reaching changes in society. Indeed, policies of reform have become the basis on which the platforms of the parties rest. On the one hand, the immediate reforms demanded by the PCF are more sweeping than those of the others. On the other hand, the content of reforms increasingly diverges. Whereas, for instance, extensive nationalizations were common to the platforms of all the parties until the mid-1960s, they remain central only in the program of the PCF. Experience with nationalized industry has contributed much to the PCI's skepticism about such a policy.

Differences of a similar nature emerge in the parties' posture toward the economic crisis of the 1970s. While the PCI and PCE moved significantly toward establishing priorities among and generally moderating their reform demands, the PCF was insistent in pressing for the full program of very extensive reforms formulated at the beginning of the decade. These differences reflected diverse views on the responses the parties should adopt to the crisis of the national economy. The Italian and Spanish communists, arguing that it would be counter-productive to try to build socialism out of the debris of capitalism, were determined to contribute to the resolution of their respective countries' economic difficulties, while at the same time introducing

structural change. The French communists, in contrast, showed no intention to adopt such a stance, explicitly rejecting the proposition that they should in any way contribute to the 'management' of capitalism's crisis.

In the evolution of the eurocommunist outlook, the strategy of the national, democratic and peaceful road to socialism has increasingly come to incorporate principles of political, economic, ideological and cultural pluralism. These principles, furthermore, are to varying degrees becoming recognized as integral to the socialist society they wish to construct. Non-communist parties will be allowed to operate freely. Alternation of power will continue to be the accepted rule of behavior and Euro-communist parties have committed themselves to leave power if the electoral verdict should be unfavorable to them. Organized opposition will be tolerated. In the economic realm, private property will be permitted to exist; small- and medium-sized enterprises will not be nationalized. Finally, those personal and collective rights commonly associated with liberal democracy will be maintained both during the transition from capitalism to socialism and in the socialist society.

It is evident that such a conception of socialism involves the abandonment of many traditional Marxist-Leninist dogmas. The parties have revised their doctrines at different rates. They have also made differing efforts to justify their revisions in theoretical terms and to confront them with ideological traditions. This is illustrated by the manner with which they have treated the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Common to all three parties is a recognition that this notion is incompatible with the strategy of a peaceful and democratic road to socialism. The PCI, immediately after the war and much more forcefully after 1956, critically re-examined this dogma and it disappears from its rhetoric in the mid-1960s. In fact, by the end of that decade even the vanguard role of the party is abandoned. The PCE too shows a lengthy history of critical re-evaluation of the concept and abandoned it entirely in the final stages of Francoism. In contrast, the PCF displayed little inclination to reappraisal until the mid-1970s when the party leadership summarily, but not unambiguously, banished the concept. All three parties now recognize that in the West dictatorial power need not be pursued by any class. The building of a socialist society will result from a set of alliances in which the working class is increasingly to acquire predominance due to its capacity to exercise hegemony. Here again the Italian and Spanish parties have gone much farther in their elaboration of this set of ideas. The differences in the patterns and timing of ideological and strategic development and in analytical style reflected in this illustration appear consistently throughout the documents.

When viewed chronologically, the documents in this section on the national road to socialism show significant continuities. Abandonment of revolutionary means of struggle, legality, parliamentarism, the need for alliances and policy gradualism, are the most conspicuous examples. None the less, for each of the parties there are evident points of acceleration of strategic development. The immediate postwar period, when the French and Italian communist parties were part of national coalitions and participated in the rebuilding of the constitutional order, represents one such phase. During the Cold War, however, the growth of the strategy of the national road to socialism was stalled, and in some cases reversed. The year 1956 marks another watershed. The initial signs of a relaxation of international tension, the denunciation of Stalinism and the Soviet acceptance of the possibility of national and peaceful roads to