



Jean-François Revel

A Note on Eurocommunism

*There is no such thing as Eurocommunism.
There is only Italocommunism.*

Two expressions have recently entered with perturbing effect into Western political commentary: "historical compromise" and "Eurocommunism." The first has a legitimate birth and father, Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the most important of the Communist parties functioning in democratic nations; it dates from the fall of 1973. The second expression, whose origins are bourgeois and anonymous, appeared in 1975. It was not conceived by the Communists, but the contagious force of its immediate success quickly caused them to adopt it. Enrico Berlinguer first used it in a public speech in June 1976 in Paris, during a turbulent joint rally of French and Italian Communists.

What general impression does the public get from the surprising repudiations and declarations that make up the offer of the historical compromise and Eurocommunism, also known as neo-communism? What the Western Communist chiefs would like the citizens of their countries to be convinced of by their new line comes down to two main ideas. In foreign affairs, the Western Communist parties say they have become independent of Moscow; at home, they henceforth accept democracy, pluralism in political parties, and those basic freedoms that in Marxist-Leninist tradition had always been dismissed contemptuously as "formal." In short, they promise not to take power unless they win it by universal suffrage, to respect the rights of their opponents while they hold it, and to surrender it if they are beaten in an election.

Thus proclaiming themselves purged of their Stalinist essence, the Western Communist parties offer their candidacy for normal participation in political responsibilities, "normal" meaning compatible with the rotation of different majorities in power without the risk of an irreversible and authoritarian change of regime. In fact, since the Second World War, the exercise of power in countries with a strong Communist party has been radically warped by the anomaly of opposition without alternation in office. In France and Italy especially, the Communist parties can achieve considerable electoral success, but an invisible barrier stands between them and power: For to give them power would amount to taking a one-way ticket for an unknown social system that perhaps would be managed from Moscow. That invisible barrier also blocks the route to power for those who are too intimately allied with the Communists.

Are the Communists of Western Europe sincere in their recent profession of faith in democracy? Since for sixty years they have practiced deceit and the sudden reversal of the party line all over

the world, we have the right to be particularly skeptical in their case. And yet, strangely enough, doubting their honesty is today viewed in the West as being in poor taste (not just in Europe, but among political science practitioners in the United States and Canada). Not to believe them is said to amount to "a return to the cold war." In this sense, the Communists have already won the psychological battle, and in any event their democratic overture is a perfect public relations operation.

What can we say with certainty about neo-communism, if we judge it on its performance?

A first observation is that no Communist party has ever democratized power, when it held power, in the country in which it held it. Furthermore, on the only occasion in the West when a Communist party had the opportunity to offer solid proof of its good will by participating in the construction of a pluralist democracy—the case of Portugal—the Communist minority (about 10-12 percent of the vote) used illegal and violent methods in an all-out attempt to win total power. Those socialist regimes, like Algeria, which though not Communist follow the principles of economic collectivism also seem unable to do without a totalitarian political organization. Communist promises to respect democratic methods in the exercise of power have to this date never been put to the test. Those promises emanate from Communist parties which have never held power, or at least not enough power to eliminate other political forces.

Yet the will of the Western Communists to be independent of Moscow seems authentic. It is not new among the Italians, but rarely has it been as clearly stated as it was by Berlinguer in his speeches to the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1976 in Moscow, and to the summit conference of European Communist parties in East Berlin in June. Among the French, by contrast, it is very recent. It dates from the fall of 1975 and, as always with them, it took the form of a sudden shift. The recognition of the right to autonomy in "national ways" to achieve socialism and the rejection of the "single Soviet model" were clearly affirmed, against the desires of Moscow ideologues like Mikhail Suslov and contrary to the wishes of Leonid Brezhnev, in whose mind this summit, so laboriously prepared for two years, was to confirm the authority and the primacy of the Soviet Communist party over all others. It was a serious setback for the Soviets, so much so that the Soviet press printed expurgated versions of the speeches of the Western Communist leaders and of the final statement, eliminating the most heretical passages, so that the people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe remain unaware that Moscow is no longer the capital of world or even European Communism and that its regime is challenged in the West by the Communists themselves. (1) But the seeking of

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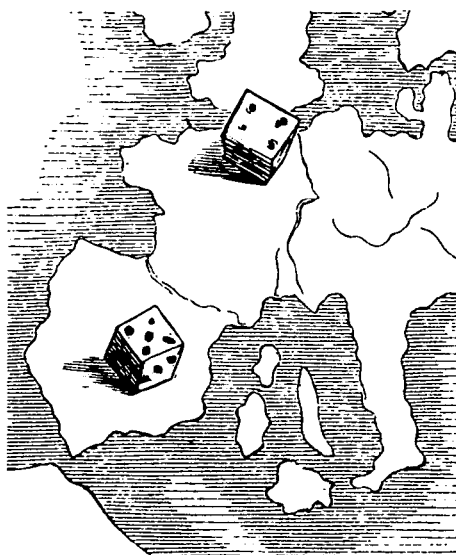
national autonomy in regard to Moscow is not the same thing as democracy at home—de-Russification does not by itself constitute democratization. The “nationalizing” of a Communist party does not mean it has been liberalized. The Chinese, the Albanians, the Yugoslavs, and the Romanians have been able to win total or partial independence from Moscow without democratizing their domestic rule; indeed they have become much *more totalitarian* at home than some docile satellites like Hungary or Poland. How would the Western Communist parties govern in their own countries? That is now the question.

If the Western Communists are holding the Soviet Union at arm's length, it is because they have become convinced that the Russian leaders do not understand how Western societies function and that remaining faithful to the old Marxist-Leninist gospel would doom Communism in the West to a role of eternal and hopeless opposition. In these societies, they have concluded, one must accept the rules of democratic pluralism, based on elections and alternation in power of majorities with different programs; which naturally entails freedom of speech, of information, and of culture, and (as Berlinguer said at the Berlin summit) “the non-ideological character of the state.” The leaders of the Western Communist parties do not limit themselves, as did Tito, Mao, and Ceausescu, to demanding the right to oppress their fellow citizens in their own rather than the Russian manner; they define their “national way” as democracy and the rejection of oppression. The question then is whether this democratic way is compatible with the substance of Marxism. Are the Western Communist parties in the process of being transformed imperceptibly into reformist, social democratic parties? Or have they merely understood that they can put the electoral system to intelligent use to win office under perfectly legal conditions, and establish solid, uncontested bases with a view to later achieving a monopoly on power? If the first hypothesis is accurate, then they must be allowed to participate in government in Western nations on the same terms as other political parties. But if the second hypothesis is correct, they must be denied that participation. But then the Western democracies would be betraying their own basic law, their reason for being, by discriminating against certain of their citizens, a discrimination that would poison public life. Which of the two hypotheses is the right one?

Let us first consider which countries the idea of Eurocommunism can apply to. The situations are so incomparably different that the idea appears to be a phantom. Greece has two Communist parties, one hostile to Moscow and the other favorable; between them they drew less than 10 percent of the vote in the most recent elections. They seem unlikely to be candidates for power for a long time, as do the Portuguese Communists (who received 7 percent of the vote in the presidential election of June 20, 1976). The Spanish Communist party, which was at once banned and tolerated until being legalized this April, slowed the country's cautious evolution toward democracy by demanding legalization immediately after Franco's death. The legalization which did take place this year provoked an immediate uproar in the army; had it taken place in 1975 or 1976, when the Communists were demanding it, it would probably have been too much for the heirs of Franco to swallow, and would have created a risk of civil strife and rightist backlash. Thus, although Santiago Carrillo, secretary-general of the party, is liberal in his statements, it must be observed that by his intransigence he has to the best of his ability pushed Spain toward a dangerous internal fragmentation. In order for the Spanish Communist party to participate someday in Spanish democracy, there must first be a Spanish democracy. But by making maximum demands, while at the same time proclaiming ultra-liberalism, the Spanish Communists have double-crossed democracy and almost

prevented its birth. What is more, by opposing centrist solutions, Carrillo has produced guilt among the parties of the non-Communist Left, to the point of inspiring in them that servility toward Stalinism that one finds among the French Socialists. Here is an example:

In the March 27, 1976, issue of the Spanish magazine *Cuadernos para el Dialogo* (*Notes for a Dialogue*), the following appeared under the name of a non-Communist writer, Juan Benet: “I firmly believe that as long as people like Alexander Solzhenitsyn exist, the concentration camps will and must continue to exist. Perhaps they should even be under better surveillance, so that people like Alexander Solzhenitsyn cannot leave them without having acquired some education. But the mistake of letting them out having once been made, nothing seems to me to be more hygienic on the part of the Soviet authorities (whose tastes and criteria concerning subversive Russian writers I often share) than to seek a means of ridding themselves of such a plague.” Now, *Cuadernos para el Dialogo* (a strange kind of dialogue!) is the organ of the left wing of the Christian Democrats in Spain! Recently it has allied itself with the Socialists and Communists. The editor of the magazine, Joachin Ruiz Gimenez, is the leader of the “left” Christian Democratic movement, and he is also the vice-president of the Institute of the Rights of Man in Strasbourg (the René Cassin Foundation). Juan Benet's article followed a Spanish telecast (March 20, 1976) in which Solzhenitsyn dared to say that the Spanish in 1976 enjoyed greater freedom, or endured fewer shackles on their freedom, than the Soviet people, a statement which is both accurate and easily proved, but which constitutes ideological heresy. In choosing what they call a “strategy of rupture,” that is, a test of strength with the regime of King Juan Carlos and with the army, the Spanish leftist parties by their actions are contradicting the basis of the “Eurocommunist” strategy—even if Carrillo defends that strategy in speeches in Berlin, Paris, and Rome.



The situations of the French and Italian Communists, which have little relation to that of the Spanish, also differ greatly one from the other. French and Italian Com-

munists agree on the “national way” as against the Soviet model and on the acceptance in theory of the rules of pluralist democracy. But beyond those two general principles, they agree on hardly anything else. The Italians are against extending the role of the public sector in the economy, while the French back a program of extensive nationalization. The Italians want to form a coalition with the Christian Democrats, a government of national union (minus the neo-fascists); the French, by contrast, reject not only any collaboration but even consultation with the majority of President Giscard d'Estaing and with the “reformers” of the center-left, in short with any political party which does not subscribe to the joint platform of the Left, which foresees the abolition of capitalism by means that explicitly reject social democracy (accused of collaboration with capitalism). The Italians are Atlanticist, advocates of European political unity and the election of the Parliament of Europe by direct universal suffrage; the French vehemently oppose that idea, waving the specter of “abandoning national independence” and seizing every opportunity to make of themselves, in opposition to Atlanticism and Europe, the champions of a kind of Red Gaullism.

In reality, therefore, there is no such thing as Eurocommunism. There is only Italocommunism.

In Italy the Communists propose not “rupture” but an *alliance* with the adversaries of Marxist socialism. This idea of the “compromise” came to Berlinguer from pondering the events in Chile. The fall of Allende, Berlinguer explained in a series of articles, (2) demonstrated that a Marxist coalition, even though victorious at the polls, could not manage society democratically without con-

cluding a kind of pact of non-aggression and even of co-operation with its adversaries, at home as well as abroad. Even if the general elections of June 20 and 21, 1976, had made the Communists Italy's leading party, Berlinguer said he still would have sought an association with the Christian Democrats. Thus his analysis ruled out in advance any *complete* overturn in Italian politics. Besides, the election results made such an overturn impossible, at least in a democratic context. The Communists continued to gain ground after their success in the June 1975 regional elections, for their vote rose in twelve months from 32 to 34.4 percent of the total. But the Christian Democrats gained more ground, so that their lead over the Communists rose from barely 1.9 percent in 1975 to 4.3 percent in 1976.

But the heart of the matter lies elsewhere: If one wants to understand the historical compromise, one must examine areas other than government and the legislature. What matters much more is the *unofficial compromise which already exists in the nation*. The Communists may well come to control all Italy without having a single minister in the Cabinet. First of all, virtually three-quarters of the laws adopted since the 1946 origin of Italy's present institutions were drafted in consultation with the Communists. Furthermore, for a long time, but especially since the regional elections of 1975, the Communists have held power in the main provinces and in almost all the major cities. Even Rome now has a Communist city administration. This regional power carries a lot of weight in a nation where the central administration has far fewer prerogatives than it does in France, and besides is operated by a totally ineffectual bureaucracy.

As for the economy, the big industrialists are the first to say that Communist participation is indispensable to the management of Italy. The best-known among them, Giovanni Agnelli, repeated that belief after the 1976 elections in a striking interview published in four languages in four European papers. (3) And why should Berlinguer demand nationalization when the Italian economy is already in the process of nationalizing itself, spontaneously and on the sly? In fact, Italian capitalism is dying; for a long time it has been incapable of capitalist "accumulation." Shareholders and entrepreneurs no longer hold power. Firms live on their loans from the banks, which in the last resort means the Bank of Italy: On the one hand, then, they are increasingly at the mercy of credit accorded by the state; on the other, they are ever more under the control of the unions, which in turn are largely controlled by the Communists.

In May 1976, for example, the industrial association of Bologna published a report in which it deplored "the sort of crusade against management as such, a crusade carried on not only by certain politicians or union leaders, but also by part of the intellectual and cultural world, and even the judiciary." In support of that view, the report told about the landmark case of a judge who convicted the head of a business of "anti-union behavior" because he had anticipated his employees' demands and thus had cut the ground from under the unions' feet! (4) Here again, why should the Communist party mount a violent assault on the means of production and distribution? It would be superfluous: Italian business already is almost in a situation of direct management by the unions, subsidized by the state, which in turn is subsidized by foreign capitalism. Thus, in a sense the Italian Communists are already in power, and they are adopting a conciliatory stance to avoid a backlash. They have succeeded in dominating the society rather than seeking in vain to gain control of the state. In so doing the Italian Communists have only been following, to the letter and for a long time, the teaching of their great theoretician, Antonio

Gramsci. Gramsci's principle was that the Italian Communist party must begin by influencing the culture, winning the intellectuals, the teachers, implanting itself in the press, the media, the publishing houses. The party has been doing just that since 1945 and it has been spectacularly successful. A majority of the most prestigious names in art, film, and literature are Communists or Communist sympathizers. But, more profoundly though less visible to foreigners, the fundamental establishment of the Communist view of the world and of history will become evident to anyone who takes the trouble to study schoolchildren, for example, and to examine the textbooks they currently use.

In Gramsci's view, the state will become separated from the ruling class when the latter is no longer capable of managing it, and then it will fall like a ripe fruit. So there is no reason to seek combat. As a strategy, that isn't "Leninist," but it certainly is effective.

In order to help win acceptance of their omnipresence within the nation, the Italian Communists are careful not to challenge foreign policy. The historical compromise can be stated as follows: the state to the Christian Democrats and the nation to the Communists. Which amounts to saying: foreign policy to the Christian Democrats and domestic policy to the Communists. Five days before the 1976 elections, Enrico Berlinguer declared that, as of

June 1976, he felt more at ease building Italian socialism under the protection of NATO than if Italy were a member of the Warsaw Pact. (5) By contrast, the French Communists want to change the fundamentals of French foreign policy.

After "Eurocommunism," the "historical compromise," and the demand for "national ways to socialism," the great sensation of the beginning of 1976 was the French Communist party's repudiation of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." That alone was enough to make many exclaim as if they had seen a miracle. They forget just two things. First, no Communist party *actually holding power* has ever renounced dictatorship; the Western parties at the

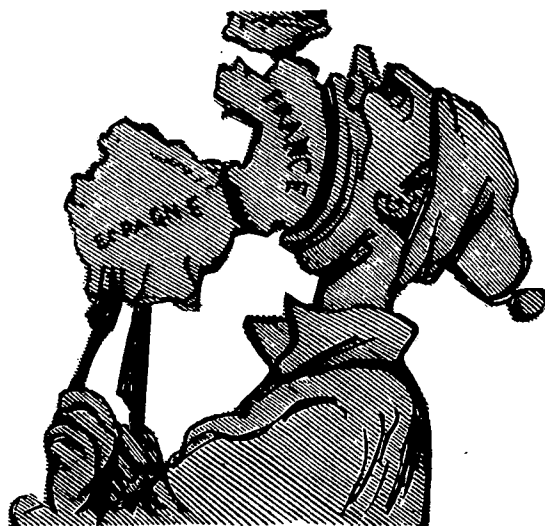
moment are renouncing a power they do not have. Secondly, the "renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat" is a theme that appears periodically in the history of Communism, as does the proclamation of independence from Moscow.

On this subject Kostas Papaioannou reminds us of some damning evidence:

As early as 1946 all the Communist parties in the world (including the Chinese) had discovered the virtues of "democracy" ("progressive," "people's," or "new") as well as the relativity of the Soviet "model" and the plurality of "national ways." As Mathias Rakosi, the well-known apostle of the independence of the Hungarian nation, said, "in the last twenty-five years the Communist parties of the world have learned that there exist several paths that lead to communism." Another important "democrat," George Dimitrov, said in his turn, "Bulgaria will not be a Soviet republic, but a people's republic, in which the governing role will be played by the great majority of the people. There will be no dictatorship."

But doubtless the prize goes to Klement Gottwald, the future president of the people's republic of Czechoslovakia. In a report he made on September 25, 1946, to the central committee of the party, he went so far as to say, "As experience has already shown, and as we have been taught by the classics of Marxism and Leninism, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviets is not the only way to socialism. Given the presence of certain forces in the international sphere (the proximity of the Red Army) and in the domestic sphere (a position in the Ministry of the Interior), we can envisage still another path leading to socialism...that is equally true for our country." (*Rude Pravo*, September 26, 1946.)

Several days later, and after recalling that the means by which the Soviet Union blazed its trail to socialism do not represent the only possibility, Gottwald added, "...Marxism conceived in a creative spirit always



takes into account the concrete situation, the time and the place, when it determines its attitude toward a given problem.... A new kind of democracy is born, we call it people's democracy. Thus life in practice has confirmed the theoretical provisions of the Marxist classics, according to which there exists a way to socialism other than that which passes by way of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet regime. Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland, and also Czechoslovakia have engaged themselves on this other way." (*Rude Pravo*, October 5, 1946.) (6)

There were many then who thought the Communists had changed. In France, Maurice Thorez, secretary-general of the party, who had spent the entire war in Moscow, gave on his return to Paris in 1946 a resounding interview to the *Times* of London in which he explained that the French party would henceforth establish its political line in complete independence, without letting itself be influenced by Moscow.

Three years later, all these positions were in their turn repudiated, and the victims of the Budapest and Moscow trials paid for the new line with their lives. As Papaioannou points out:

"We continually emphasized and spread the theory of Czechoslovakia's supposed special path toward socialism," "confessed" Josef Frank, assistant to the secretary-general of the Communist party and one of the victims of the Slansky trial. For his part, Ludvik Frejka, Gottwald's chief economic adviser, "confessed" that "...to achieve our conspiratorial designs, more precisely, to achieve the plans of the Western imperialists, especially the American monopolists, we spread among the Czechoslovak people our opportunistic theory, according to which it is possible to build socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat...."

We know what followed: the hangings, the terror, the total loss of national independence, the cultural stagnation, the transformation of Czechoslovakia into an underdeveloped country....

Since 1920, there have always been two phases in Communist party tactics: the open phase of the extended hand, and the closed, hard phase of the "class front" or "class struggle." The two alternate with punctual regularity, and great skill is employed in finding a new vocabulary for each return to the open phase. Political propaganda depends on the shortness of memory; it gambles on the amnesia of the masses and, even more incredible, that of many "specialists."

Thus, in order to evaluate the import of any new Communist party line, one must consider, as one does for any other political party, not declarations of intent but actual behavior. And in practice the French Communist party remains Stalinist. Since its switch in favor of pluralist democracy, the party has loosed on the public an avalanche of books on liberty, laborious homework essays, schoolchildren's term papers written on management orders, by the young, by the old—unaware of the comic implication of these manifestoes for freedom, all written on command and pouring forth within a few months, fruits of the marvelous spontaneity of minds working in a harmony as close as the co-ordination between the hand and the eye. But in spite of this feverish libertarian output, the methods of *L'Humanité* remain Stalinist: It never discusses a point of view, it only discredits the person. Even those journalists who are sympathetic to the Communists, if they are unfortunate enough to differ even in the slightest degree from the positions taken by the party, are accused of being "agents of the Minister of the Interior," that is, police collaborators, a level of political discourse that is purely Stalinist. Here is one example among many (from *L'Humanité*, May 13, 1976):

Le Monde never marks time in its anti-communism. Under the signature of Thierry Pfister, *Le Monde* writes that in view of the supposed "many reservations provoked by the line adopted by the 22nd Congress...the political bureau of the French Communist party decided at its meeting May 11 to mark time." This pseudo-information calls for just one comment. Does the fact that this paper and/or this journalist are lending a helping hand to operations aimed at the Communist party and its policies mean that they now are in the service of M. Poniatowski?" (7) (*Le Monde* made no protest.)

Within the French Communist party—as evident in the voting in the party organizations, the elections to positions of leadership, the ban on factions within the party, the always unanimous votes in support of the leadership, and the bureaucratic authoritarianism

in the Confédération Générale du Travail (the unions run directly by a member of the party's political bureau and the brutality of the CGT's thugs)—the basic personality remains totalitarian, despite the party's rhetorical efforts to disavow it. As Branko Lazitch, one of the most encyclopedic experts on Communism, wrote: "Why should the French Communist party, if tomorrow it is in the government, respect the freedom of action of the *anti-Communist* opposition when it does not tolerate the slightest Communist opposition within its own ranks?" (8)

Nor is there any democracy *within* the Italian Communist party. Thus Lazitch's quite accurate observation applies equally to Italy. If the Communists have become sincerely democratic, why do they not prove it *right now*? Instead, they prove the contrary every day.

Furthermore, the totalitarian philosophy has spilled over onto the French Socialists, for while the latter have become more numerous at the polls than the Communists, they have on the other hand become ideologically submissive to them. Their intolerance is in no way inferior to that of vintage Stalinists. Thus, the Socialist philosopher François Châtelet, a member of the "study group" formed by François Mitterrand to draw up the "Socialist charter of freedoms," stated that: "The fascist state is the free state reduced to its essence." (9) That is the most orthodox of Marxist-Leninist views on the state. If, then, *for the Socialists* (not just the Communists), there is *no essential difference* between a fascist state and a free state, how can we believe that they will vigorously defend the latter? It would seem logical that other objectives would have higher priority. In addition, a delegation of the French Socialist party invited in 1976 by the Hungarian government declared that it was "favorably impressed by the successes in the building of socialism by the Hungarian people *under the direction of the working class and its party*," (10) thus adopting as its own a Stalinist formula, without the slightest reservation, to praise a party that governs alone and by totalitarian methods. (11)

The political analyst must follow the historian's procedure of affirming nothing that is not based on documents that are verified and authenticated. History, of which political analysis is a branch, is based not on favorable or unfavorable prejudices but on distinguishing facts that can be confirmed from conjectures that cannot. A politician has the right to *bet* on unconfirmable conjectures, at his own risk (or rather at the risk of others); the analyst must refuse to do so and must limit himself to facts that can be confirmed.

What are the facts about Eurocommunism that can be confirmed? In summary:

1) The Communists in all the nations that they govern maintain the structure of the totalitarian state, that is, a total monopoly over the economy, politics, the police, unions, culture, the legislature, the judiciary, the military, information, and education.

2) The proclamation of "national ways" to achieve socialism independently of Moscow in no way changes the first point. The Chinese and the Albanians have long since broken with Moscow, but they remain no less totalitarian.

3) In the case of the Communist parties that are not in power and that operate in the West, the theme of renouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat is not new, and furthermore is not accompanied by any democratization within those parties. At the present time, taking a rigorously historical view, we lack decisive proof as to how they would wield power were they in office.

4) If Eurocommunism and the "renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat" mean anything, they must lead to an open and avowed transition from a Marxist-Leninist character to a reformist and social democratic character. Without that, the purported new line of the Communist parties *has no logical coherence and no practical possibility of being implemented*. But no Western party has yet dared to break ranks in that direction, because to do so would threaten with disintegration the internal cohesion of the party, which is based on centralism and obedience.

5) The meaning of this tactic thus is limited. Without denying that there may be a sincere evolution toward social democracy among some *individuals*, like Dubcek and probably Berlinguer,

one must not lose sight of the fact that the essential thrust of Communist movements is still toward monopoly power. Up to now, their behavior makes sense only in terms of the conquest of monopoly power, whatever "ways" or means may be considered most likely to result in that conquest. □

1. The Italian Communist daily, *L'Unità*, printed in boldface type the passages that *Pravda* had censored from the speeches of Berlinguer and other Western leaders.

2. Enrico Berlinguer, "Riflessioni sull'Italia dopo i Fatti del Cile," *Rinascita*, September 28, October 5 and 9, 1973.

3. The *Times* of London, *Le Monde*, *La Stampa*, *Die Welt*, July 6, 1976.

4. Quoted in *Il Sole 24 Ore*, May 15, 1976.

5. Interview in *Corriere della Sera*, June 15, 1976. This statement was omitted from the text of the interview published the following day by the

Communist paper *L'Unità*, probably to avoid shocking the party rank and file.

6. *L'Express*, January 26, 1976.

7. The Minister of the Interior. Emphasis added. Can one imagine the howls of rage from the Communist leaders should one or another of them be accused of being in the service of the KGB?

8. "Les Communistes et la liberté," *Le Figaro*, February 10, 1976.

9. *Elements pour une analyse du fascisme* (Paris, 1976). (Seminar by M.-A. Macciocchi.) The sentence above was quoted and approved by the Socialist weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 21, 1976.

10. *Le Monde*, June 1, 1976.

11. We might add that the failure of Hungary's "new economic structure" as well as the people's absolute contempt for the system, socialism in general, and Marxism in particular, are known to all visitors and observers. So why should the French Socialist party act as propagandist for a regime that the Hungarians only endure under Soviet compulsion?

Charles S. Hyneman

Leviathan Unbound

The concentration of power in Washington is stifling political diversity and experiment, and undermining representative government.

In a recent national poll a sample of the American population was asked whether big business, big labor organizations, or big government appeared to present the greater threat to personal freedom in the United States. More of the respondents named big government than either big business or big labor, and big government led in the contest for greatest threat by a substantial margin. The continuing concentration of authority in Washington long ago became a critical problem for me, and at least a decade ago a reallocation of authority resulting in increased reliance on state and local governments moved into first place on my list of political goals. It affords me no little pleasure to learn that the wilderness I have been exhorting may be home ground for a lot of people ready to hear what I have to say.

I.

Until a decade or more after the Civil War had ended, the business of the national government was mainly confined to conduct of foreign affairs and the defense of the nation, provision for a monetary system, and encouragement or construction of internal improvements. The 1880s saw the first steps in a monstrous expansion of national authority that we are now familiar with and may well have had too much of. Regulation of interstate railway traffic was initiated in 1887. The first anti-trust act restraining monopoly in business and industry came three years later. In 1913 a constitutional amendment opened up all the pocketbooks of the nation to a federal income tax, and ten years after that the Supreme Court ruled that the national government can invade any

aspect of American life subject to governmental authority in so far as its objectives can be achieved by imposition of a tax or outlays of money. The avalanche of New Deal legislation launched in 1933 touched virtually every aspect of production, commercial dealing, employment, and finance that seemed critically related to recovery from the Depression or to the vitality of the American economy. For a few years these unprecedented projections of national power met some resistance in state and federal courts but by 1937 a conservative majority in the Supreme Court had given way to a successor majority appointed by the mastermind of the New Deal, and what had been regarded as invasions of the domain of the states were declared to be necessary and proper executions of power vested in the United States. It is now widely believed, and I should think with good reason, that those who make the policies coming out of the national government are no longer restrained in any significant measure by uncertainties as to what may be necessary and proper for exercise of a delegated power or by a supposition that certain matters were reserved by the Constitution for determination by state governments.

This is not the end of the matter. Congressmen, bureaucrats, and judges are now engaged in stretching out the equal-protection-of-the-laws clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to distances which create a lively prospect that the ability of state and local governments to provide model demonstrations of public service will be sharply curtailed. The forward-looking venture of a local government in extension of health services or improvement in the quality of education, for example, results in a non-uniformity or unevenness in benefits at the hands of government readily observable when a larger scene is surveyed. From a long time before the establishment of republican government on this continent diversity in governmental policies was thought to be appropriate so long as equal treatment was accorded to all within the particular jurisdiction. Hills and valleys on the political map were proof that backward communities, by looking about them, could contemplate models of imaginative and bold endeavor to advance the common good.

It is not to be supposed that any devotee of an egalitarian dogma deplores experimentation or the display of exemplary statecraft.

Charles S. Hyneman, Distinguished Professor of Political Science Emeritus at Indiana University, has long been concerned with the ability of the American people to control their government. His principal writings on this subject are *Bureaucracy in a Democracy* (1950), *The Supreme Court on Trial* (1963), and *Popular Government in America* (1968). He was President of the American Political Science Association in 1961-62. This article is adapted from an address delivered at California State University-San Diego, the University of Houston, and Wabash College.