
NOTES & TOPICS

Señor Carrillo's Schism

By Hugh Thomas



SANTIAGO CARRILLO'S quarrel with the Soviet Union has now made headlines in the newspapers throughout the West. The subtlety of the Russian replies and Carrillo's own relaxed responses must be serving the cause

of Spanish Communism well, both in Spain and abroad. It is important, therefore, to be certain what it is that the leader of the Spanish Communist Party is really saying, and what he is not. That is perfectly possible and easy since Carrillo's text *Eurocomunismo y Estado* is available to read.

The book first of all makes a definite break with the Soviet Union. Of course, that does not exclude the possibility that, at some time in the future, for tactical reasons and in circumstances which cannot now be foreseen, the quarrel may be patched up; but Carrillo has said so many unforgivable things about the present character of the Soviet régime that it is hard to imagine that he personally will ever be forgiven. For example, Carrillo has said in an interview on French television that "There is very little chance that Russian tanks will ever reach Spain to quash an experiment of the same kind [as Dubcek's] and . . . if they did the Spanish people would be ready to fight them." (*The Times*, 15 July 1977). Then in his book Carrillo tells us that in Russia "the new state which emerged from the Revolution was forced to create a new force of repression. And under Stalin that force ended up controlling everything." That was almost said by Khrushchev, but not quite; for, by implication at least, it criticises Lenin as well as Stalin. As for the present, Carrillo assures us that though the Russian state is not, of course, "a bourgeois state, neither is it an authentic workers' democ-

racy." Furthermore, the arms race and the general conditions in the world "do not favour the transformation of the Soviet state into a State of workers' democracy."

"A State in which the Army and the organs of authority have so great a role runs the risk of considering power as its prime object. It tends to convert ideology into an instrument of power."

Again in his interview on French television Carrillo has compared the relations between Russia and East Europe to "the friendship between a shark and a sardine."

In addition, Carrillo allows himself to criticise or at least comment freely about all the great names in the Communist theoretical tradition as well. He tells us—a fact which is obvious to those who try to read them without faith—that "the very Marxist texts themselves suffer from obscurities and even at times contradictions." After reminding us that Engels spoke of the shortly-to-be-expected "extinction of the State", Carrillo tells us that "in practice, things have turned out to be much more complicated."

In another passage, Carrillo makes the admission that, in the work of the German revisionist, Karl Kautsky, ". . . there are certain abstract reasonings . . . which . . . can seem reasonable." That is quite a big admission for a Communist. Lenin also receives some criticism on theoretical grounds, in addition to the one which I have mentioned above, when talking of the Soviet state: thus, we hear that Lenin was wrongly led "to underestimate and to belittle the general concept of democracy." To say that Lenin on two occasions at least, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* and also in *State and Revolution*, spoke in "a confused manner" shows a refreshing willingness on Carrillo's part to think for himself. As he himself says, "we Communists have changed various points of view."

THUS IT IS OBVIOUS that "Carrilloismo", if not all of *Eurocomunismo*, has taken leave of a number of dogmas. That is surely excellent news. On the other hand, there is nothing in Carrillo's book which suggests that he has abandoned his general desire to achieve "*la transformación político-sócial*" or his acceptance of the vocabulary of the old days in defining what that will mean: for example, "the defeat and the political and social displacement of the exploiting classes." But does that mean the disappearance of all private enterprise? Well, perhaps not immediately. We are told that we can expect "the co-existence of public and private forms of property during a long period" and that during "the stage of political and economic democracy prescribed in our programme which is not yet

Socialism" there will still be recognition of "the role that is represented by private enterprise. . ."

Well, that's all right so far as it goes, but the implication is clear: sooner or later, Don Santiago envisages a society in which "private enterprise" will disappear, being replaced by "national planification." Even indeed during the preliminary stage of continuing acceptance of private enterprise, those firms will be expected to collaborate in a national plan—"planification racional y nacional." How long will this early stage last? We are not told. Perhaps though it will be as long as private industry of a sort survived in China (from 1950 until the cultural revolution of 1966); or perhaps as short as private industry lasted in Cuba (from the revolution of 1959 until 1968).

Clearly, then, Carrilloismo seems to fall far short of a recognition that capitalist dynamics have a substantial part to play in the achievement of the good life which he says he aspires to create, and will always have so. This is not simply a matter of private enterprise being important for securing that variety as well as quality of product which Europeans of the future will want to ensure—but because democratic freedoms, to which Carrillo says he is devoted, also need the whole array of private newspapers, advertising agencies, voluntary organisations dependent on gifts, and so on, which it has at present in the successful democratic societies. Capitalism should be constrained to make an effective contribution to the preservation of natural justice through fiscal means but anyone who envisages its complete disappearance is not making a contribution to the achievement or the maintenance of an open society.

In short, Santiago Carrillo has, at least in my opinion, made a number of important concessions about the basis of his Party programme; but I believe that he should consider making one or two more. Capitalist enterprise in Spain since 1945 has made a spectacular recovery from

its apparently decayed state of the 1930s; and any fair-minded person must recognise surely that it rather than state enterprise has been responsible for the great growth in living standards that has characterised the countries of the West during this period (even if that fact has sometimes been forgotten because of the increase of corruption that has gone with it in some countries). In this respect, incidentally, Señor Carrillo goes less far than his most able and most frankly open-minded lieutenant, Ramón Tamames, who in his own most recent writings, appears to envisage the co-existence of private with public enterprise indefinitely.

There are one or two other points where the reader must raise his eyebrows when reading *Eurocomunismo y Estado*. For example, Carrillo

very honestly tells us that

"there was a time in which Communists were profoundly convinced that Trotsky and Trotskyism had transformed themselves into agents of Nazism" (p. 149).

Now, however, he admits that that was not so, and he adds about Andres Nin that

"[Nin] was assassinated and did not try and flee to the enemy camp" (p. 151).

That admission had been made by him already, as a matter of fact, in

his earlier book, *Demain Espagne* (published when Carrillo was still an exile in France). Yet even so he still speaks of the activities of the POUM and the friends of Durruti in May 1937 as a "putsch", an "armed putsch." That view cannot be sustained.

I also think that Santiago Carrillo is excessively pessimistic when he says that "those who demand a plural and parliamentary development" in places where "historically those institutions have never existed are crying for the moon. . ." I cannot accept that. It may prove difficult to achieve effective democracy in certain Asian and African countries, but I do not believe that it is impossible. Most countries, even in Europe, have developed democracies only relatively recently; there have been new ones in the last



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generation in the Third World (Venezuela, India); and until someone invents a better or freer system people will look in the end (after many bitter experiences based on more sen-

sational alternatives) to democracy as the only way to assure themselves of freedom from tyranny, of human rights unmolested by arbitrary power.

Letter from Germany

Of Murder & Secret Pleasures

"Is the Spirit of Death Abroad in the Land?"



SCRAWLED ON A wall at Göttingen University—"Wer verurteilt Dregger? (Who will pass the death sentence on Dregger?)." That question was the open threat to yet another leading West German political figure. It was only one of the cynical reactions to the murder of the West German Federal Attorney, Herr Siegfried Buback in April. A paper entitled *Provinz*, published in Wiesbaden, put Alfred

Dregger, together with Franz-Josef Strauss and Horst Herold (head of the Federal Criminal Investigation Department), on a "list of traitors to the people (*Volksverräter*)" in which the first two names, those of the murdered jurists, Chief Justice Drenkmann and Buback, were crossed out. Eight years earlier, in 1969, the Union of German Student Organisations (*VOS*) published a first "black list" of West German "killer scientists." Do these things represent an escalation in threats of violence? What has changed since the hey-day of "Marcuse's children"?

Bitter struggles for power and ideological conflicts between Communist parties and groups refute the idea that all radicals and extremists, whether they toe the Moscow line or are deviant anarchists, act in accordance with an overriding plan carefully worked out on general-staff lines. However, their reaction to the murder of Buback shows that there is at least one point on which they agree, i.e. their hatred of parliamentary democracy, its "bourgeois" representatives and liberal institutions.

That is why they all described the assassinated Federal Attorney as "a murderer"; it's a bitter old German saw, *der Ermordete ist schuld*. The so-called K groups frankly expressed their

pleasure at the murder, while the Socialist *Basisgruppen* in the universities expressed their approval with rather more reserve and discretion. "*Klammheimlich*" is the word that has almost become an Underground slogan. The ideologically orthodox—those who follow the line of the German Communist Party and Moscow, from the Spartakus Marxist Students'

TEN YEARS AGO it was the Marxist philosopher Jürgen Habermas who in disagreement and disgust with the turn of events in West German student militance, spoke darkly of "Left Fascism." But the Fascists were killers—fanatics who didn't hesitate to indulge in foul murder—who reached for their revolvers readily and without conscience. Here, surely, were idealists, well-meaning young persons only trying to devote themselves to cultivate gentler and fairer ideals than were incorporated in post-War German and European society . . .

In June 1922 a fanatical right-wing group in Berlin (and in the gang was the young and promising writer, Ernst von Salomon) shot dead Walther Rathenau, the influential and cultivated German financier. In July 1977 a fanatical left-wing group in Frankfurt shot dead (the last bullet being fired a half-inch from his right temple) Jürgen Ponto, the Bundesrepublik's most successful and intelligent younger banker.

Are we dealing with a case, in Thomas Mann's phrase, of "transposed heads"? Has old German Right become new German Left? Ponto, like Rathenau, was only a "symbol", a "thing of a System", and was murdered by a gang led into his house by none other than his god-daughter, carrying roses. The Chief Justice of West Berlin, Günter von Drenkmann, was murdered at his front door on his birthday by ostensible congratulants. The Bundesrepublik's Chief Prosecutor, Siegfried Buback, was gunned down (with chauffeur and bodyguard) by a sharp-shooter on a Suzuki motorcycle, a death mourned officially by the nation but openly "rejoiced in" by almost all the representatives of Germany's university students and by thousands of Marxist sectarians and revolutionary splinter-groups.

Is there, as the author of the following report (he is an editor of the "*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*") asks, a spirit of death abroad in the land?