

FRANCE

Spirited debate stirs Communists, Socialists

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of view. Many of his specific criticisms, notably of sudden policy switches imposed by the leadership on militants obliged overnight to learn to justify what they had been condemning, such as the nuclear strike force, were widely echoed throughout the party. But it is unlikely that many party members would go along with his radical critique of PCF theory, organization and strategy.

In any case, there is no way to find out, since those who think they might agree on a new approach cannot get together to hash it out without committing the mortal sin of "factionalism," which even Althusser hastened to condemn. It seems that the vast majority of PCF members, however unhappy they are over the election results, and however much they feel that their leaders have been less than totally sincere, agree that "democratic centralism," including the ban on factions (introduced into the Bolshevik party "temporarily" by Lenin in 1922), is necessary to be effective.

Rank-and-file members habitually deprive themselves of the means to work for desired changes within the party by accepting the existing structure, convinced, perhaps, that if such structural means existed, "others" would take advantage of them to tear apart the party. The leadership is good at silencing one internal opposition by brandishing the specter of another.

Marchais could correctly point out that the critics who blossomed in *Le Monde* throughout April were not in agreement among themselves. Getting together on a critical position is "factionalism," while not doing so means emitting individual "monologues." Among those monologues, the outlines of various potential minority factions could indeed be discerned.

Elleinstein on the fortress.

In contrast to Althusser's "revolutionary left" critique, PCF historian and unsuccessful Latin Quarter candidate Jean Elleinstein presented a "right-wing," "reformist" critique—more limited than Althusser's because basically in accord with the 22nd Congress. Elleinstein agreed with Althusser that de-Stalinization within the PCF needed to be carried further and that the party needed to stop behaving like a "besieged fortress." But whereas Althusser imagines a party that would be the revolutionary ferment of the working

class, Elleinstein is thinking of how to expand the party's influence within the intelligentsia and the middle classes.

The USSR is not a model but rather even an "anti-model," and "socialism as we mean it does not exist anywhere," Elleinstein wrote. "We know now that the revolution in our country can only be the result of a long process" involving major structural reforms enabling economic, social and cultural transformations from which socialism may emerge. This implies broad inter-class alliances able to hang together over the long haul. "The historic alliance of workers, employees, middle class salaried people and intellectuals, which should constitute the new ruling bloc...appears to have been badly neglected in this period," he complained. The party must drop its anti-intellectualism and make major changes in its policies and practices to win over middle class salaried people, engineers, technicians, junior executives and intellectuals.

"The true historic compromise in France depends on a real *rapprochement* between Socialists and Communists," Elleinstein argued. The PCF must overcome the distrust aroused by its Stalinist past. "We were right to criticize the PS at the time of the Nantes Congress and subsequently to denounce what Jean-Pierre Chevenement called... 'the Soares line,' but the way we did it was so brutal, so clumsy, that it played no slight role in the defeat of the entire left in March 1978," he argued.

Unlike Althusser, Elleinstein expresses views that have some chance of gaining ground within the PCF if, as is suspected, they are secretly shared by certain top party leaders, in particular Paul Laurent, responsible for the Paris region and considered the leading "Eurocommunist" liberal on the powerful seven-man secretariat. Democratic centralism and the ban on factions means that dissident views can progress in the party only insofar as they are championed by one leader or group of leaders in their in-fighting with each other.

Elleinstein's friendly nod to Chevenement's CERES left-wing minority of the PS, not habitual in the PCF despite the CERES' frequent agreements with PCF positions, marks a *rapprochement* at least between Communists and Socialists who have in common a commitment to the union of the left and an admiration for the Italian Communist party.

Elleinstein is currently negotiating with the editors of the moribund weekly *Politique Hebdo* about launching a new political weekly next September in collaboration with such Communist intellectuals as Christine Buci-Glucksmann, the CERES, and such varied intellectual stars of the left as Claude Bourdet, Alain Krivine, Francois Maspero, Regis Debray and Nicolas Poulantzas. Such a mixed bag, if it can be labelled, might be called the "alternative party" left in that all tend to think in terms of a party or parties that do not exist. The purpose will be mainly to provide the analysis and debate squelched in the parties and to try thereby to influence them, or so it seems.

Socialist rivalries.

In the Socialist party, rivalries between leaders are public knowledge, tending to co-opt and distort rank-and-file dissension, when it is not simply ignored. Thus,

Didier Motchane

LEFTWING SOCIALIST
& CRITIC OF MITTERRAND
"Socialists like Rocard who supported Mitterrand's line last year have no right to criticize him this year."



Michel Rocard "People must be given security RIVAL TO MITTERRAND to accept change."

since Michel Rocard's post-election criticism of the PS campaign immediately aroused suspicion that he was playing on dissatisfaction to advance his own ambitions within the PS, all the other Socialist barons rallied around Mitterrand to put down the upstart. Rank-and-file criticism, suspected of being a Rocardian ploy, was all the more easily smothered.

Didier Motchane, the number two of CERES, the PS's official minority, announced indignantly that Socialist leaders who, unlike the CERES, had supported the line laid down by Francois Mitterrand at the Nantes Congress last year had no right to come complaining about him now, and that the CERES would not stand for it. At the first PS convention since the defeat, held in Paris the last weekend in April, the CERES refrained from criticizing Mitterrand's leadership, apparently to avoid enhancing Rocard's position in any way.

Rocard himself made a speech in which he took giant steps in the rightward direction he has been heading for years, by stressing the need to give people enough sense of "security" to accept change. Security is permanent identity, he said, which in a market society is "largely based on one's income compared to others." Thus, to achieve socialism, inequalities must be preserved. Since Rocard has already expressed opposition to nationalizations, considering the ownership of the means of production secondary, it becomes harder and harder to see what sort of socialism he has in mind.

Of all Socialist leaders, Rocard is the most hostile to the PCF. In a recent radio interview, he dropped the opinion that the real truth about the PCF is that it is "useless." Socialist Pierre Joxe immediately castigated the remark as "childishly aggressive." Considered brilliant, ambi-

tious, and potentially most acceptable to international capitalism, Rocard is watched with deep misgivings by other left-wing politicians, who will surely try to trip him up every step of the way.

It is surely no coincidence, but rather the mark of skillful demagoguery, that on some points nothing sounds so much like Rocard as the post-election line of Marchais. Both are talking about political struggle "at the base," about "autogestion" (self-management), and the need to take up new issues, such as ecology and feminism. Both may be preparing for a struggle for influence among personnel in key sectors of the economy, where the intelligentsia is gaining on the proletariat in terms of numbers, while frequently being "proletarianized" in terms of responsibility and status.

The unusually large volume of audible criticism in the PCF in recent weeks has made it clear to everyone, first of all, that a great deal of free debate does go on among party members, and second, that the leadership is free to make of such debate what it will. Those who are discontented can leave. As in any other party. Indeed, it is also obvious that the PS is scarcely more democratic than the PCF, let alone the right-wing parties, where the leaders lay down the law without even having to worry about murmurings from below.

In a press conference on May 3, Marchais dismissed recent signs of opposition as "small marginal discussions of no interest to the party." The time had come now to turn to serious things, notably the "struggle at the bottom" to spread "democracy everywhere, at all levels of the enterprise, the neighborhood and on up to parliament." The task of the party now is obviously to democratize other institutions, not itself.



Report from Lebanon by John Judis

A MINI WORLD WAR

Lebanon used to be the intellectual and financial capital of the Mideast. Tourists flocked to its seaside resorts and to Beirut's fashionable Hamra district.

It was also a country where different religious and national groups lived side-by-side: Maronite and Greek Orthodox Christians, Sunni, Shi'ite and Druze Moslems, Jews and Palestinians. Before the war, when both Christian and Moslem Lebanese championed the Palestinian cause, they pointed to themselves as evidence that a democratic secular state could work in the Mideast.

But now Lebanese religious and national groups have become warring armies bent upon each other's destruction, and Beirut and much of southern Lebanon is a shambles.

The center of Beirut is bombed-out rubble. Weeds grow through the cracked walls of uninhabited seaside resorts. Refugees from the Israeli invasion of the south squat in abandoned buildings and in tent cities.

Beirut is no longer one city, but two, divided by the *Place des Martyrs*, across which the Phalangists and Lebanese National Movement lobbed rockets at each other. To get from one side to the other, it is necessary to change taxis at the *Place des Martyrs*; taxi drivers from each side are unwilling to journey to the other.

East Beirut, as well as northern Lebanon, is largely Christian territory, ruled by the Phalangist and National Liberal party militia. The Palestinian refugee camps that used to dot its perimeter were forcibly evacuated during the war.

West Beirut retains its mixture of Moslems, Christians, Lebanese and Palestinians. It includes cosmopolitan *Ras Beirut*, where the embassies and university remain, as well as the tumbledown shacks of the "belt of misery" and the Palestinian refugee camps. The PLO and the different Lebanese parties have their own militia anxiously guarding their buildings and the surrounding streets.

There are no Lebanese police and hardly any army. And without police or army, the Lebanese state cannot enforce its will over its feuding citizens. For all intents and purposes, there is no Lebanese state.

In Beirut, the largely Syrian Arab Deterrent Force limits the war to minor bombardments and occasional sniping. The Force is nominally under the Lebanese president's control, but it answers only to Syrian President Hafez Assad. These troops are stationed behind sandbags throughout West Beirut and at the border with the East.

In southern Lebanon, a 6,000-strong UN force stands between the Israelis and the Lebanese National Movement.

A recipe for war.

Talking to representatives from the different parties, one hears widely different accounts of the war's cause. The National Front of the Phalangists and National Liberals blame it on the Palestinians and, secondarily, the Soviets and the pan-Arab, pan-Islamic forces. The Lebanese National Movement blames it on Israel, the U.S., and the National Front, in roughly that order.

But the most compelling description I heard of Lebanon's problems came from a man caught in the middle, Calil Habib, who heads the Mid-



Tyre after Israeli shelling.

Lebanon has become a battleground for Christians and Moslems, for pan-Arabism, for Palestinians and Israelis, and for the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

dle East Council of Churches. Habib rejected explanations that looked solely at one side or the other. "What is going on is a mini-world war by proxy," he said.

According to Habib, Lebanon has become a battleground for Christians and Moslems, for pan-Arabism, for the Israelis and the Palestinians, and for the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Superimpose these conflicts upon a divided society with a weak state, glaring inequalities, and historic rivalries among national and religious groups, and you have a recipe for war.

You also have a situation that defies internal solution.

Moslem vs. Christian.

When the French carved Lebanon out of Greater Syria in 1926, Beirut served as a trade center between Europe and the Mideast. After the creation of Israel in 1948, it replaced Haifa as the major trading city for the Mideast. With the growth of oil revenues, Beirut and Lebanon boomed during the '60s.

But in the '70s, the world recession stalled Lebanon's growth. Beirut's suburbs became swelled by impoverished Moslem immigrants from the countryside, refugees from rural poverty and Israeli bombs. The differences in development between the largely Christian north and largely Moslem south became more pronounced.

This poverty and inequality fueled historic resentments between the Moslems and the Maronite Christians. The resentments centered on Lebanon's political system.

Since 1943, Lebanon has been governed by a "national covenant" that divided up power and

offices among the different religious groups according to a French-conducted 1932 census. The Maronite Christians got the most powerful government posts of president and army head and also enjoyed a six-to-five edge over the Moslems in parliamentary representation.

The Moslems charged that the Christians had used their political power to develop the roads, schools and electricity of the north, while letting the south deteriorate.

The Moslems demanded that the proportions be rearranged according to a new census, one that would show that the Moslems were now a majority. But the Christians refused to conduct a census. In 1958, this was to be an issue in the brief Moslem uprising. In the '70s, it again became an issue.

PLO base in Lebanon.

The other major issue was the Palestinians.

An estimated 200,000 Palestinians migrated to Lebanon in 1948, most of whom settled in UN-funded refugee camps. By the '70s, their numbers were estimated as high as 600,000, or one-sixth of Lebanon's estimated population.

Initially, all Lebanese politicians championed the Palestinian cause. Many Palestinian refugee camps in northern Lebanon were on land donated by Christian monasteries. But Israeli reprisals for PLO actions inside Israel took their toll on Christian support. On Dec. 31, 1968, the Israelis blew up 13 Lebanese airliners at the Beirut airport and began retaliatory bombing raids in the south.

The Lebanese army attempted to curb PLO commando operations in the south, which led to frequent armed clashes. The Arab states then stepped in and arranged a meeting in Cairo in November 1969 at which the Lebanese government and the PLO signed an agreement guaranteeing PLO freedom of movement and armed presence within Lebanon.

When King Hussein drove the PLO out of Jordan in late 1970, Lebanon now became the PLO's main base of operations, and Israeli raids increased.

The PLO, for its part, attempted to stay out of Lebanese politics and to present itself as an advocate of compromise and moderation. But, fearful of becoming isolated from the Lebanese populace, it also established ties with Lebanese workers and with the Lebanese National Movement. As a result, it found itself increasingly linked, in right-wing Christian eyes, with the Moslem and left-wing threat to their ascendancy.

Political polarization.

By 1975, Lebanon had become polarized between a largely Christian National Front, on the one hand, and the Lebanese National Movement, on the other. The differences between the two groups, though complex, tended to break down along lines of right vs. left.

The Front parties were pro-Western, pro-capitalism, and in favor of maintaining the political status quo. They denied that Lebanon was part of the "Arab world." "Lebanon is Arab only in the sense that it speaks better Arabic than the rest of the Arab world put together," former UN representative and Front leader Charles Malik told me.

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