

Special Report:

PCF's Jean Elleinstein—Agent or “Communiste de Boudoirs”?

Following the August 6, 1975 publication in Pravda of Konstantin Zarodov's "The Leninist Strategy and Tactics of Revolutionary Struggle," which re-asserts the significance of the dictatorship of the proletariat for the revolutionary process in Western Europe, bourgeois press and governmental agencies as though on cue started to howl about "renewed, dangerous Soviet designs to promote violent revolution and the establishment of Eastern-style people's republics in the democratic West."

To no one's great surprise the Anglo-American agent leaderships of the Italian and Spanish Communist parties began to echo their master's voices without delay. Principled political agreement between PCI leader Giorgio Amendola and U.S. anti-communist columnist Victor Zorza has by now become commonplace. What is distressing is that starting in late August-early September the French Communist Party (PCF) increasingly opened the pages of their paper L'Humanité, and their journals France Nouvelle and Cahiers du Communisme to similar denunciations of comrade Zarodov's thesis and an associated debate about the "phenomenon of Stalinism," with a certain Jean Elleinstein of the CERM (Center for Marxist Studies and Research) as the main protagonist of the anti-Stalinist fronde.

Elleinstein, age 47, "Communiste de boudoirs," and a kind of French structuralist version of Eduard Bernstein, in recent months has become the ever-more-vocal center for considerable polycentrist, liquidationist, and anti-Soviet sentiment and activities in the PCF. The boldness with which "the Italians" in the PCF are now putting forward their treasonous arguments (for a convincing example see Jean Rony, "Italy in Motion," France Nouvelle, September 28, 1975) was greatly aided by the break created by Elleinstein's anti-Stalinist writings. Elleinstein himself, of course, is an "Italian" par excellence and has named Amendola as the one he feels closest to among communist leaders.

While we do not, at this point, possess the pay stubs to identify Elleinstein as a paid agent of Anglo-American intelligence services, two things can be established with certainty and should be sufficient to prompt the PCF leadership to re-evaluate its mistaken and dangerous "freedom of criticism" attitude toward Elleinstein and his co-factioneers. First, Elleinstein's entire outlook as evidenced by his writings is not that of a communist, but of a "democratic socialist" of the Second International variety. His scholarly anti-Stalinism has created inside the PCF precisely the kind of "democratic" anti-Soviet ambience which social-democratic agents deployed by Anglo-American intelligence depend upon to do their dirty work and introduce disorientation into working class ranks. Second, Elleinstein's present burst of activity — when confronted recently with the obvious political

consequences of his writings he defiantly responded, "I intend to write more and more" ("J'ai l'intention d'écrire de plus en plus") — comes precisely at a time when "anti-Stalinism"

"I suppose you are trying to say that I am an agent of Anglo-American secret services. Well, I don't say that you guys are Russian agents. It is possible to have independent positions, you know."

(Elleinstein in a recent discussion with ELC members in Paris).

has become the catch-word and rallying cry of a repulsive and criminal alliance from Willy Brandt and Olof Palme to sundry Maoist and Trotskyist countergangs, deployed and funded by the CIA and NATO agencies, to prevent at all cost the elaboration and implementation of a European-wide revolutionary working class strategy.

In light of the simultaneous all-out NATO-inspired PCI-PCE attack on the unity, integrity and fighting power of the communist movement, confirming the worst of Zarodov's suspicions:

"The modern-day compromisers do not even pay lip service to the independence of the proletarian party. They would like to dissolve it into an ideologically amorphous organization into an alliance created entirely on the basis of the formula 'unity for unity's sake'."

The reproduction in the pages of leading PCF publications of Amendola's and Carrillo's anti-Soviet, polycentrist, pluralist line by Rony, Elleinstein and Co. is no minor issue and the contents of their "argument" cannot be dismissed as a relatively inconsequential petit bourgeois aberration. At the recent Copenhagen NATO conference the most reactionary Rockefeller-led U.S. imperialist circles declared open class warfare and resumption of Cold War tactics against the Soviet Union. Amendola and Carrillo, both of whom have been witting agents of the Anglo-American intelligence establishment for over thirty years, are now executing the orders of these circles to liquidate the largest Communist Party of Western Europe to realize Amendola's long-standing "partito unico" idea and then to join forces — the catch-word is convergence — with the Christian-fascist troops of "left wing" DCer Bassetti in Italy and of pro-Maoists Tindemans and Strauss European-wide. Defense of such policies is no petit bourgeois disorder but advocacy of the policies of the class enemy.

The Existentialist-Structuralist Ambiance in the PCF

Aside from the immediate political conjunctural context and significance of Elleinstein's anti-Stalinism, a closer reading of his various tracts identifies this Garaudy student as a typical representative of the existentialism-structuralism of the Levi Strauss-Crozier Althusser-Foucault variety. The Elleinstein phenomenon is thus only the latest example of a specific vulnerability to anti-working class "theories" incurred by the PCF through its continued toleration — since at least the mid 1930s — of the existentialist and the somewhat later-developed structuralist phenomenalist disease. As is otherwise best demonstrated through the case of the ultra-left Karl Korsch — who in the 1912 - 1914 period was recruited to the British foreign office-sponsored Fabian Society and whose circle of "intellectuals" inside and outside of the KPD in the 1920s and 1930s created the necessary openings for British anti-Comintern operations — anti-Marxist philosophies are (at least since Marx founded the First International socialist organization) never mere "honest" petit bourgeois disorders, but always also vunction as "police philosophies." That is, these philosophies are consciously fostered and employed by the bourgeoisie for intelligence and counterinsurgency purposes. Structuralism is no exception. Crozier and Althusser-student Foucault were sponsored by the Tavistock Institute, Fabian Society-created and Rockefeller-funded headquarters and proving ground of Anglo-American counterinsurgency operations. Thus Tavistock psychiatrists R. D. Laing, David Cooper, etc., in the early 1960s undertook several studies — such as reported in Laing's 1962 paper "Existential Philosophy and Psychoanalysis" — in which the most significant individual and social-psychological features underlying existentialism and structuralism are identified from the standpoint of clinical psychiatry.

Undoubtedly the knowledge gained from such investigations then became instrumental in subversive operations directed against the PCF (and specifically its youth and student organizations) in the middle and late 1960s. The 1966-67 Althusser affair is a case in point. At that time, a sizable group of structuralist Althusser disciples left the PCF to form a separate Maoist organization (comparable to the more important 1966 Il Manifesto "left" Maoist split-off from the PCI which was actually engineered by the Amendola clique) and entire PCF sections succumbed to disorientation and disorganization from which they did not recover until after 1968, is a case in point. Much as Elleinstein's present use of structuralist devices to counterpose his "structures démocratiques" to the hated notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Althusser as early as 1962-63 in his *La Pensée* essays "Contradiction and Overdetermination" and "On the Materialist Dialectic" used all sorts of nauseating structuralist jargon ("complex structured whole" substituted for Marx's "concrete living whole"

etc.) to give Mao's mumbo-jumbo of "principal" and "secondary contradictions" the appearance of Marxist theory and thus prepare the ground for the positive reception of Maoist ideology by large numbers of especially younger PCF members and intellectuals. In these efforts of elevating Mao's wretched *On Contradiction* into a Marxist classic, Althusser received valuable assistance from his structuralist brethren Godelier and Charles Bettelheim.

When the PCF politbureau finally ousted Althusser for his activities, the damage had been done, and it would be more than naive to assume that British intelligence — well-equipped with Laing's psychological profiles — had simply been a curious bystander and passive admirer of Althusser's wrecking operation. Once it is understood that existentialism and structuralism directly map onto and are the expression in philosophical disguise of some of the worst features of the French ideology, they can be used deliberately and effectively for subversive purposes against anyone who gives them credence as genuine theories and methods of analysis.

While the Althusser affair is indicative of the general character and the necessary evaluation of the Elleinstein phenomenon, the historical roots of the problem go back at least to the immediate post-World War II period, when large numbers of coffee-house intellectuals whose fundamental philosophical outlook was existentialist or phenomenologist found a temporary political home in the PCF and met with minimal opposition to their position from the PCF leadership. There is a direct line which connects that 1945 -47 Paris intellectual swamp with the Althusser ambiance of the 1960s and the fascist cult of the "Sartre of the 1960s" and present structuralist pope, Althusser disciple Michel Foucault. That Foucault is not a PCF member is not what is important here. What is of immediate concern is that the methods employed by Elleinstein to viciously discredit essential concepts of Marxist theory are identical to those employed by Foucault to derive that "man is dead," crushed by overwhelming structures, capable at best to struggle for a kind of liberation allowing him to express his basic drives and desires — a bestial, fascist nightmare, which Foucault acts out in his experimental work among Left Bank lumpen strata and the inmates of prisons and mental institutions. It emerges that the right, social-democratic PCF member Elleinstein and the "anti-humanist" gauchiste lumpen apostle Foucault are adherents of structuralism for the same basic psychological reason: their deep-rooted petit bourgeois fear of collective humanity, the inability to comprehend or deal with the actual, active social process, the need to petrify the live organism, to convert it into a dead structure, and finally the attempt to manipulate and rearrange the oppressive structure to find some room ("the democratic right") to act out one's infantile desires — those are the identical psychological motives of the right winger Elleinstein and the "left" radical Foucault. In more than one respect they resemble the complementary

pair of right opportunist Bernstein and ultra-left Korsch. Are they in the service of the same British employer?

It needs to be added that toleration on the part of the PCF throughout its post-World War II history and accommodation to various forces of petit bourgeois neurotic disorders elevated to the status of philosophical method has not only laid the party open to a succession of counterinsurgent attacks, but, just as importantly, has led to an identification of the notion of communist intellectual with a parade of despicable clowns, agents and gigolos from Merleau-Ponty to the fellow travellers of the 1950s Sartre and Levi-Strauss to Garaudy to Althusser and Bettelheim and now finally Jean Elleinstein. It is a most urgent task that the motion of intellectuality, rather than signifying impotence, ridicule and betrayal, be reclaimed by the party's determined communist political leadership, grounded in Marxist theory and capable of designing and executing a revolutionary working class strategy based on a firm grasp of Marx's dialectical method.

Elleinstein on Stalinism

The outstanding feature of Elleinstein's characterization of the phenomenon of Stalinism — in the following, reference is made to a 1974 interview with Elleinstein in André Harris' and Alin de Sédouy's *Voyage à l'intérieur du Parti Communiste* (Journey into the Communist Party), Elleinstein's recent book *Histoire du Phénomène Stalinién* (History of the Stalinist Phenomenon), and the article "La démocratie et la marche à socialisme" ("Democracy and the March to Socialism") in *France Nouvelle* of September 23 — is that it contains absolutely nothing new: ample empirical proof of Rosa Luxemburg's remark in "Social Reform or Revolution?" that Bernstein's theory was the first, but simultaneously the last attempt to create a theoretical foundation for opportunism. "We say: the last, because in Bernstein's system opportunism has gone — negatively through its renunciation of scientific socialism, positively through its marshaling of every conceivable bit of theoretical confusion — to a point where there is nothing left to be done."

Elleinstein's "theories" can indeed most conveniently be characterized as a kind of Bernsteinism in structuralist guise — i.e. Bernstein made palatable to the French petit bourgeois through the good services of the structuralist masters at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes. No longer is the movement everything — now it is the structure of the movement, its democratic structure, the democratic way . . .

"The essential thing . . . is the patient search for necessary openings to make society progress toward socialism via a democratic way, because this way is the revolutionary way in our countries and in our time."

Again and again Elleinstein obsessively returns to the motion of "structures démocratiques" as the central theme of his "theorizing."

In the *France Nouvelle* piece much of human

history is surveyed from the standpoint of the progressive evolution of democratic structures, especially in the bourgeois period — with such unfortunate interruptions as Nazi Germany (and presumably Stalinist Russia). Elsewhere (*Voyage*, p. 274) the problems of Lenin's Bolshevik Party are diagnosed as those of "A party without democratic traditions . . . , which grew clandestinely amidst Revolution and war." Finally, "le phénomène démocratique" is pursued all the way into the realm of "Pleasure and Eroticism."

"what is true — I believe this demands deep reflection from us — is that there is a democratization of pleasure" and "today, there is a democratization of eroticism, eroticism becomes a mass phenomenon." (*Voyage*, p. 284).

Such democratic structures, whose ultimate justification is moral rather than historical or political, cannot — and here we come to the political pay-off of the concept — be expected to arise in such culturally backward countries as Russia of the turn of the century, which explains the peculiar authoritarian character of Russian socialism, is at the root of the phenomenon of Stalinism, and makes clear "why Soviet socialism ("socialism means freedom of expression") is not a socialist model for France." Nor, of course, is Lenin's concept of revolution (including his and, by implication, Zardov's concept of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat) — developed as it was in Russia (wasn't it rather London, Stuttgart, Zürich, etc.?) in the period before and during World War I — a model for the revolutionary struggle in France today.

"We must take into account the specific terrain of countries which have experienced the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment, bourgeois revolution and industrial revolution all along the four centuries and more which have elapsed since the end of the Middle Ages. What profound difference with 1917 Russia in historical evolution! Mobile warfare was then followed, after the failure of revolution in Europe in 1917-21, by position warfare. Revolution under the brutal and rapid form which it had in 1871 and 1917 is an exception in the history of western countries. Socialist revolution in the West can only be a long process, long prepared by the proletariat and realized according to numerous and diverse phases based on democratic processes which do not lead to restrictions of freedom, but, on the contrary, to their expansion. The dictatorship of the proletariat can thus only refer back to the theoretical concept Marx talked about. It does not represent a short-term, or even long-term, objective. It has no, it can no longer have, an operational role."

This, actually, is no longer Bernstein speaking, but is an argument first developed explicitly by Karl August Wiltfogel, one of Bernstein's most despicable comrades in service to the British

Foreign Office. During the 1920s Wiltfogel was a member of the KPD and in 1925 he joined the Institute for Social Research ("Frankfurt School") as their specialist for studies of the Asiatic mode of production. After his emigration to the United States he became a China expert for the OSS-CIA related Institute of Pacific Relations and finally, in 1951 and by then a rabid anti-communist, he denounced a large number of his former friends and associates to the McCarran Senate Internal Security Committee. To Wiltfogel is due the characterization of Leninism as the adaptation of Marxism to "oriental despotism," and Elleinstein clearly owes a great deal to this notion. So, by the way, does Rudi Dutschke, former West Berlin anarchist SDS-leader and author of a just published book which elaborates at length the Wiltfogel thesis.

Significantly, Elleinstein's purpose in adopting Wiltfogel's slanderous characterization of Lenin and the Soviet Union becomes most obvious in his discussion of Stalin himself. Stalin, described principally as a butcher of millions of people, came to power in the Soviet Union because of "the conditions in which revolution triumphed in Russia. In my view, this is a specifically Russian phenomenon..." (Voyage, p. 275). But what Elleinstein really wants to hit is the hated concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat: "... the dictatorship of the proletariat tends to become identical with the dictatorship of the party, and rapidly, the dictatorship of the party tends to become identical with the dictatorship of one man or group of men. . . ."

The conclusion, of course, which the reader is supposed to draw is that "Stalinism" and the dictatorship of the proletariat are closely associated, and that both were appropriate or at any rate explainable in the context of Russia's history of oriental despotism. What about the actual history of the Stalin period? To suit Elleinstein's purpose of using "Stalinism" to discredit the dictatorship of the proletariat it must be presented as primarily a long series of atrocities. Consequently the Histoire du Phénomène Stalinién provides us with no new insight into the phenomenon referred to in the title; additional light, however, is shed on the Elleinstein phenomenon. Situating it, as was done above, in the existentialist-structuralist audience does not sufficiently reveal the full extent of its sickening mixture of indifferentism and moral imbecility.

We limit our discussion and review of the Histoire to two key points: the Moscow trials and Bukharin's opposition to Stalin's 1929 total collectivization and rapid industrialization policy. First, the Moscow trials: detailed evidence which will be presented in coming installments of the "Political Intelligence" series in New Solidarity under the title "Canaris" will demonstrate that the evidence on the basis of which in 1937 Tukhachevsky and the Red Army general staff were tried and convicted, was prepared, laundered and played into Stalin's hands by German and British intelligence agencies — i.e., that Tukhachevsky et al. were victims of a joint German-British intelligence operation. The operation was explicitly in the interest of the British Foreign Office which envisaged at the time deploying Nazi Germany as a kind of gigantic "Freikorps" against the Soviet Union

and after a Soviet defeat wrest European hegemony away from a weakened Third Reich. Much as the massive post-war "Operation Splinter Factor," the anti-Tukhachevsky operation relied upon British intelligence estimates that it would be relatively easy to play on Stalin's strong paranoid tendencies and have him get rid of individuals the British wanted to see eliminated, if only one provided him with sufficiently convincing "evidence" against them.

Now, Elleinstein claims to be a professional historian and expert on the Stalin period. Could it be that he was totally unaware at least of the relatively wide-spread hypothesis advanced by the Soviets themselves that Tukhachevsky was the victim of a German Intelligence operation? And if he was aware of this, how then can a simple, unqualified condemnation of Stalin be upheld?

Second, the case of Bukharin. There is no room here for a detailed discussion of all the ins and outs of Stalin's 1929 decisions and Bukharin's opposition. One thing, however, ought to be totally clear to every one: if in 1929 Stalin had not opted for all-out industrialization and single-mindedly pursued that policy in subsequent years, then the Soviet Union would not today exist and would rapidly have collapsed under the first onslaught of Hitler's armies as Hitler himself had expected and hoped for.

Defense of the Soviet Union, of course, is not Elleinstein's strong suit. Aside from that the defense of Bukharin has an important present factional purpose — and here the circle closes and we find Elleinstein once again in the company of his Italian co-factioneers. Defense of Bukharin, whose understanding of surplus value never advanced beyond that of a shrewd Kulak, is a sly and relatively safe way of preparing the way for the introduction of Maoist ideas, needed for the purpose of giving a "socialist" cover to fascist economic policies. The PCI's Amendola clique is openly pursuing precisely such a course. Thus the PCI's Unità just featured a review of some recently published Mao tracts, approvingly quoting Mao to the effect that Stalin "showed great mistrust of the peasantry. He excessively sacrificed agriculture to both light and heavy industry. In sum, he did not know how to walk on two legs." The author of the review is Giuseppe Boffa, expelled from Czechoslovakia in 1968 for spying.

Whatever Elleinstein's possible Maoist leanings, he has not revealed them openly as yet. Doing so might get him kicked out of the party — something he cannot afford: it would spoil his game of bourgeois-baiting in his posh, très grand bourgeois surroundings.

