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W. Rand Smith, *Enemy Brothers: Socialists and Communists in France, Italy, and Spain*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012. Tables, bibliography, and index. \$75.00 (cl). ISBN 978-164422-1898-7.

Review by Gerd-Rainer Horn, Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po).

For much of the twentieth century, socialist and communist parties played key roles in many Western European societies, though only the former were major players in virtually *all* countries to the west of the former Iron Curtain. In three of the very largest continental Western European states, however, both branches of the Left were visible and often decisive at the very same time. This explains W. Rand Smith's focus on France, Italy and Spain. In addition, the author chooses to concentrate on the twisted and contradictory history of left unity, i.e. the fate of alliance strategies within and between the two political families which were frequently acting more like "enemy brothers" than partners in a joint political project. Last but not least, W. Rand Smith employs the concept of critical junctures as his central analytical tool, arguing in his introduction that there were certain choice points in history when new policies were developed, which, once settled upon, subsequently helped shape national politics in the respective states for several decades. The premises of this opus thus appear stimulating, promising important new insights, and perhaps serving to ignite direly needed discussions amongst scholars concentrating on the history and evolution of the European Left.

Alas, despite the obvious wealth of empirical data, the upshot of the author's efforts comes across as rather disappointingly thin. First of all, historians will be utterly disappointed to realise very quickly that, of the roughly eighty years during which socialists and communists coexisted in all three of these states, only the latter half truly count in the narrative of this book. In fact, the important decades prior to the 1960s receive only scant and rather superficial attention. For the most part, the author really becomes truly detailed and enthusiastic only from the 1970s onward. One of the rationales for this chronological choice is W. Rand Smith's contention that it would have been difficult to compare Spanish developments up to 1975, when the Iberian state was ruled with an iron fist by Francisco Franco, with Italy and France which, since the end of World War II, were benefiting from the rules of parliamentary democracy.

Given that both socialist and communist parties were, certainly up the 1970s, still claiming close ties to the labor movement and were, before and after World War II, actively opposing dictatorial rule in enormously influential resistance movements, the author's refusal to deal in depth with the thirty-year period of 1945-1975, let alone 1920-1945, is hardly convincing. Yet, after reading the scant pages which the author devotes to the crucial decade of the 1930s, this reader became quickly convinced that it was probably all for the better that W. Rand Smith concentrates on the final quarter of the twentieth century. For, what he writes about the origins of the Popular Front period or, worse yet, about the concrete attitudes of and actions by Spanish Anarchists in the mid-1930s, when anarchism was a far more important player in Spanish left-wing politics than communism, is painfully distorted and inaccurate.

What, then, does the author have to say about alliance strategies by Italian, Spanish and French socialists and communists from the 1970s onward (only on Italy does Rand Smith say anything of real

substance with regard to the 1960s)? No doubt the author furnishes the interested reader with much concrete information on the evolution of party policy, electoral results, electoral rules and the manoeuvres of party leaders in all six targeted organisations. And it is here where it becomes evident that what truly interests Rand Smith in the history of the communist and socialist parties is not in the least their remaining ties to their social movement tradition but, instead, their insertion into—and their growing familiarity with—and their consequent manipulation of the respective parliamentary systems within which they operated. Here it also emerges rather clearly that the kinds of electoral rules governing the electoral process in all three states constituted probably one of the most important determinants of alliance strategies, if not *the* most important one. Spanish Socialists thus saw no persuasive reason why they should enter into an electoral alliance with Spanish Communists, as Spain's electoral set-up favoured large national parties and discriminated against weaker national organisations.

By contrast, French rules favoured electoral coalitions, explaining the ease with which François Mitterand united the newly reinvented French Socialist Party behind an electoral alliance with Communism (and others). Italy was closer to France in this respect and, at first sight, one might thus be surprised that, in Italy, no union of the Left ever came about or was ever even seriously attempted. But, in Italy, the powerful presence of a hegemonic Christian Democracy altered the parameters of electoral politics. Through much of the 1960s, then, Italian Socialists understandably focussed on alliance policies targeting Christian Democracy rather than Italian Communists. And when the electoral fortunes of Italian Communism reached a highpoint during the 1970s, Italian Communists thus likewise looked towards Christian Democracy as a partner rather than Italian Socialism.

In short, as both socialism and communism had increasingly evolved towards political parties primarily orientated towards parliamentary politics, their alliance choices were entirely logical for political operators less and less concerned with social constituencies and social movements, which once had been crucial to hoist these organisations to prominence in the first place. The six Western European parties at the center of Rand Smith's attention were increasingly fixated on the (hoped for) exercise of parliamentary power, rather than on a shift in the overall direction of society and economy. Such, at the very least, are the conclusions to which this reader arrived after the careful perusal of this book.

Had Rand Smith clearly put forth similar conclusions, then the book might have been more rewarding. Unfortunately, while Rand Smith's data easily allows the drawing of such conclusions, the author himself, entirely focused on parliamentary and party-political rules and manoeuvres, never says as much. For Rand Smith, in fact, apparently unable to imagine any other successful policies other than those which perpetuate and enhance the socio-political status quo, the growing accommodation to the dominant paradigm is a self-evident and laudable matter of course.

It is clear that his real sympathies lie with the, on the whole, electorally far more successful Socialist parties rather than the Communist detachments. For Socialists, Rand Smith writes, "the true impact of the 1970s was...the rise of strong, decisive leaders—Mitterand, González, and Craxi—who not only concentrated authority within their respective parties but also served as the architects of new programmatic and/or alliance strategies that, for better or worse, established their party's trajectory for years to come" (p. 199). Communists, for various reasons, had more difficulties in adapting to the ways of the modern world than the generally more flexible Socialists. "Socialist Party culture demonstrated a considerable capacity for social learning, whereas Communist culture did not" (p. 72). These words, written in the context of the discussion of French politics, could easily apply to the Spanish case too. Even in Italy, Socialist Party leaders were far more successful than their Communist rivals in accessing the feeding troughs of governmental power, apparently the most crucial if not the only criterion for success in the author's view.

What makes the reading of this book a rather tiring affair, however, in the end is not so much Rand Smith's single-minded focus on manoeuvres between and within political parties at the expense of any

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meaningful attention to social movements operating at the basis of all three societies. It is the author's gift of endlessly repeating similar or even virtually identical points throughout the seven chapters of his book which tested this reader's (generally tolerant) attention span. No doubt, the unfortunate decision to present separate country studies in chapters two to four, then two ostensibly more analytical chapters (five and six), flanked by an introductory and concluding chapter (one and seven), made it possible for such repetitions to occur with great frequency, as certain insights are thus presented on up to five different occasions, sometimes with little variation in wording.

What, then, happened to Rand Smith's promised use of the concept of critical junctures in the analysis of policy choices in these three important Western European states? Truth be told, this concept, which in fact does hold promise if employed astutely, in the end plays little explanatory role for the book as a whole. Yes, of course, Socialist parties and Communist parties at certain moments made decisions concerning alliance strategies which, once adopted, set a pattern for several decades. In the Spanish case, it was the immediate post-Franco transition period which proved crucial; in the case of France it was the 1972 Union of the Left Agreement which was pathbreaking. In Italy, however, each of the two political families experienced their Bad Godesberg at different conjunctures. Italian Socialists chose Christian Democracy as alliance partners in 1963; the Communist Party did so ten years later. In substance, then, Rand Smith is unable to present more than three national case studies with six main actors, with few meaningful links between their trajectories. It is this absence of a "red thread" which renders this book little more than an accumulation of empirical data, which are, in any case, almost without exception taken from other secondary works. Anyone already somewhat familiar with one or more of the specific case studies will likely find little of interest in the book as a whole.

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