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The European Labor Committee

The ELC Problem

Since 1972, extension into Europe of a U.S.-based radical movement known as the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) has created in West Germany (FRG) an office which conducts defamatory political actions against prominent persons and organizations of the FRG. The movement, known in the FRG primarily as European Labor Committee (ELC), consists of fringe radicals who produce pamphlets and operate an information service that purports to be an intelligence service. The ELC has also founded an FRG political party of no evident significance.

Initially, zealots of the ELC had "their arms raised against all," which caused Spiegel to characterize the group as "Operation Paranoia." Its members were also described by a London newspaper as "harmless lunatics." In time, however, the ELC demonstrated ability to harm by insult its favorite ideological blackhats. Because of the movement's American origin, this burdens U.S.-FRG relations.

The primary target for the ELC's political criticism is the Social Democratic Party (SPD), especially its Chairman Willy Brandt and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Other ELC targets of note: Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme; British Prime Minister Harold Wilson; Maoism in all its forms; selected leaders of the Communist Party of Italy (PCI); and, above all, Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller, who, according to NCLC/ELC legend, directs a vast conspiracy to control the world for which CIA is the executor.

Such is the nuisance value of the ELC that the SPD, in 1974, felt compelled to rule membership in the ELC or

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activities on its behalf incompatible with SPD membership. The German Communist Party (DKP) has taken a similar position. In October 1975, the Foreign Press Club (VAP) in Bonn, after considerable struggle, expelled two of the movement's news service "editors." In December 1975, a German court found ELC and its news service representatives guilty of libel and slander against SPD Chairman Brandt.

Another target of the ELC is NATO. In 1975, the ELC produced what purported to be a classified NATO military study called "MC-14/4." Some Germans of authority found it rather convincing. On the basis of this paper, at least one interview was conducted by NS-IPS representatives with a Bundeslag military expert. Such provocative approaches to FRG politicians and officials, as well as to officials NATO headquarters, are part of the ELC modus operandi and that of its new service.

In summary, the ELC strives to fit the description of one authority who classified its members as "anti-fascists who, though not ideologically serious, are potentially dangerous nuts."

FRG Roots of the ELC

The German ally of the NCLC first appeared in the FRG during May 1972, with the distribution of pamphlets, one entitled Parliamentary Cretinism, criticizing severely the political situation in the FRG. The group's "First Strategy Conference" was held in June 1973. It attracted international attendance and founded the ELC in the FRG. A "Second European Conference on Strategy toward Socialism" was organized by the ELC in Frankfurt/Main, during April 1974, and there have been two further "strategy conferences" since then.

Following the third such conference, in December 1974, a closed meeting of ELC delegates and other inter-

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national associates took place at which the European Workers Party (EAP) was founded as the FRG political arm of the movement. (This repeats the pattern of the NCLC, the electoral arm of which is the U.S. Labor Party, or USLP.) The EAP has statutes, a directorate of four officers and a Land directorate of the same size in Northrhine-Westphalia as well as perhaps a score of "leading members" who also belong to the ELC. The EAP has participated in state elections, with insignificant results.

In March 1974, the news agency of the movement, the New Solidarity International Press Service (NS-IPS, sometimes designated "ips") entered the FRG scene. (The choice of name may have been meant to cause confusion with the print information activity of USIA in Washington, which uses "IPS.") The NS-IPS operates a wire service using several telex machines from its office in Wiesbaden. The cost for the service is 4000 DM per month for the "IPS World News Roundup Telex Service" and 50 DM per month for the "ips Weekly Bulletin." In late 1975, the NS-IPS was estimated to have less than 20 subscribers in the FRG; most of them probably political associates who do not pay announced rates for the service.

Rough estimates have placed total membership of the ELC in Europe at less than 300, of which probably at least half are FRG members. The FRG movement has contacts in various north German cities, in the Ruhr, in Bremen and Hamburg. But the ELC's main office, and that of the NS-IPS, is in Wiesbaden at Schiersteinerstrasse 6. There works Helga Ljustina, member of the ELC directorate, federal chairman of the EAP and one of the NS-IPS "editors" tossed out by the VAP in Bonn.

U.S. Origins of the ELC

The NCLC, with headquarters in New York, in 1974 claimed 23 chapters scattered through the major cities

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of the U.S. Its "philosophical origins" reportedly can be found in attitudes of the "National Caucus of S.D.S. Labor Committees" which emerged from the Columbia students strike of the late 1960s. Founder and gospel preacher of the U.S. movement is Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche Jr., once better known as Lyn Marcus, who was born in 1922 in Rochester, New Hampshire, and raised as a Quaker. A conscientious objector early in World War II, LaRouche has stated he was "converted from Kant to Marx" by communists he met at a labor service camp. Subsequently he did join the U.S. Army and served as medical corpsman in India and Burma, where he allegedly contacted local communist parties.

After the war, LaRouche joined the (Trotskyite) Socialist Workers Party in 1948 and remained a member until 1957. His subsequent attendance at Northeastern University in Boston was brief because the studies "bored" him. In the mid-1960s, LaRouche taught courses at the "Free University" in Greenwich Village and there founded a political action group which worked with the S.D.S. At that time, reportedly, the gospel according to LaRouche consisted of "outdated computer terminology and sexology, along with arcane and archaic psychological terms." As Lyn Marcus, LaRouche achieved some prominence in connection with the Columbia students strike.

In preparation for the 1976 presidential election, in which he will be the USLP candidate, LaRouche reverted to his original name. No recent data on the USLP program is available. It presumably soft-pedals the original NCLC goal, namely "control of the American labor movement within two years and the establishment of a world workers government within five years." That this was not achieved, in the NCLC view, is due mainly to the machinations of "the Rockefeller clique and its lackey the CIA." The NCLC decision to expand operations into Europe is consistent with the internationalism of the movement, which also claims branches in Canada,

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Latin America and Greece. The ELC publishes a quarterly (Internationale Bulletin) for the "revolutionary intelligentsia" said to be issued in eight languages.

The ELC clearly draws inspiration from the U.S. movement. In addition, the ELC has claimed, as recently as 1975, to be receiving funds from the American brethren to support the movement in Europe.

World View of The ELC

U.S. paternity for the ELC is manifest in one of its circulars, dated November 1975, which reports the CIA and the FBI to be using the Symbionese Liberation Army and similar "Zombie groups" in attempts to assassinate President Ford and USLP candidate LaRouche. Both movements clearly trade in political grotesque. The same goblins are employed.

Economic theories of LaRouche are also reflected in a program used by the EAP during FRG state elections in 1975. It calls for an immediate increase in the production of tractors, other agricultural vehicles and fertilizers; the securing by treaty of foreign markets, especially in developing countries and in COMECON countries; and the establishment of a Eurorubel market. This sort of infantile politics is characteristic of the ELC. It explains why established FRG parties do not know the EAP exists.

The Trotskyite tenor of the NCLC was again evident in the early activities of the ELC: though leftist, it was not sympathetic to Soviet-led communism. This would explain the DKP denunciation of the ELC in Germany. Until early 1974, ELC demands for struggle against Moscow-oriented CPs were a feature of its literature. This line has, in the meantime, given way to calls for cooperation with the Soviet Union, with orthodox CPs

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and with left-wing Social Democrats against the "maoist plague" (from an ELC/EAP press conference of late June 1975). More recently, ELC fliers have identified CPs deemed unworthy of cooperative support, namely the CPUSA, the Spanish CP and the PCI, in particular Enrico Berlinguer and Giorgio Amendola, two notable exponents of "Italian communism." Other PCI factions have been lauded by the ELC.

Who Funds the ELC?

This poses the question of whether Soviet support might be deduced from the ELC's shift to approval of Soviet policies and its attacks on CP elements which present problems for Moscow. However, evidence of Soviet support is not available. Nor is there any evidence of support, overt or covert, from any other government. Given the history of the NCLC/ELC, that it was conceived by the planning staff of an intelligence service is highly unlikely.

Investigators of the U.S. movement concluded that it was quite likely self-supporting, that it drew heavily from resources of middle-class elements attracted to it, who constitute the majority of its active members. There were tales of members dissolving trust funds for the benefit of the NCLC. In addition, the movement was reportedly borne along by a youthful, ideological dedication which amounted almost to religious zeal: NCLC activists were said to contribute \$24 per month and to work for token pay. Reporters spoke of the authoritarian air, the puritanical atmosphere of the movement and of its members' total commitment.

A degree of youthful fervor and a stricter life style than one associates with modern radical cliques are said to be present in the ELC. Of its twenty leading activists, only one was born before the war ended in 1945. Frankfurter Allgemeine, reporting the Brandt

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libel trial, described ELC defendants as "students whose behavior in court was beyond reproach." With dignity they responded to charges that they depicted Brandt in an SS uniform, called him an agent of the "Rockefeller empire," and accused IG Metall chief Eugen Loderer of belonging to a secret, Rockefeller-directed "trilateral commission" for "world planning." Zeal is the opiate of the shameless.

Still, the telex machines in the Wiesbaden office of the ELC/IPS rent for a price, hardly to be compensated for by dedicated work on weekends for Siemens. It is doubtful that contributions of ELC members and sympathizers, even when added to the claimed U.S. subsidy, are sufficient to offset estimated costs of the movement's activities. Someone must fund the ELC, even though U.S. and FRG internal security services have no clarification to offer on this point. They view the NCLC/ELC as a sect rather than a political movement, hardly a serious threat to domestic stability.

In the FRG, however, the ELC's aggressive and defamatory actions against political leaders cause official concern. And for U.S. officials in the FRG, it is awkward to acknowledge that the ELC is inspired and, to some extent, supported by a U.S. parent organization. Since this can not be denied, however, it is useful to know some details about the background of the ELC and of the U.S. counterpart NCLC.

February 1976

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